
Comparative Study of the Party Politics in the British Punjab: A Discourse of the Major Political Parties (1885-1937)

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The geo-political, socio-economic, cultural and religious conditions of India played an important role in the formation, identity and the growth of the political parties in the Punjab. The process of the gradual constitutional development in India also registered the political movements in the British Punjab. This research paper traces the initial political growth and the role of the revolutionary politics especially focusing on their mutual interests and inner-conflicts, preceding the factional politics based on split behavior and alliances in the Punjab province. The ever-growing communal conflicts in the region, reinforced by rural-urban division, caused an upsurge of many political, social and religious movements in the Punjab. The present study deals with the comparative analysis of the major political organizations and their role in the future political developments in the province. The Punjab politics holds an immense significance with respect to its capable leadership in organizing their separate identities and platforms in order to procure their vested interests using the powerful tools of their influential political ideologies. This research article also provides a deep political insight on the nature and quality invested in the leadership of the Punjab political parties. It further unveils the socio-political and socio-religious atmosphere laced with deeds and misdeeds that hampered the emergence of democratic values and growth of strong political system in this region. However, it is not the study of a single party but a retrospective discourse on the major political parties of the Punjab such as the Punjab Congress, the Punjab Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha, the Unionist Party, the Majlis-i-Aahrar-i-Islam, the Majlis-i-Ittehad-i-Millat, the

Khaksar Party, the Khalsa Nationalist Party and the Akali Dal etc., along with their intra-party politics influencing the masses in the Punjab under the British Government.

Conceptual Milieu

The British Punjab was the most important center among all the other major centers of the Muslims because of its geo-strategic location, huge Muslim majority population, martial races and the agrarian society.¹ The Punjab Province like Bengal and other provinces was equally important that played a crucial role for the demand of Pakistan. Having different political dimensions from the other parts of India, the British Punjab was a Muslim majority province that possessed strong landed aristocratic culture and agrarian pastoral society.² After the annexation of the Punjab in 1849, the Punjab remained a center of attraction and focal point for the British Government, because of its geo-strategic position and its emergence by the 1880s as the major recruiting area of the Indian Army which motivated the British to make strenuous efforts to win the political support of the major stake holders and landowners of the region.³

It is generally believed that the political parties are an essential institution of a democratic polity and from the Indian point of view, the creation of a political party was inevitable for self-government.⁴ A political party takes shape according to the prevailing conditions, while under alien subordination; it was totally a different in character and nature. Party system is, however, a necessary requirement of parliamentary form of the government.⁵ The quality of political leadership and the mechanism that the political parties apply counts a lot in shaping the nature and direction of the political systems.⁶ In developed countries, the political organizations emerged as a result of grouping of persons on the basis of similarity of conceptions and interests. But in India the parties developed as an outcome of fundamental cleavages in social structures, difference in religion, culture and classes.⁷ Max Weber, a prominent sociologist laid down three stages of party development: from aristocratic cliques to parties of notables and finally to Athenian (plebiscitary) democracy.⁸ According to K.K. Aziz, "In Indian political culture, the party system and its evolution was in its intermediate stage during the British rule in India".⁹ The general pattern of politics in India has been an attempt to establish the personal ascendancy of individual leaders while those who were left out of office or became disappointed with their share of the power and prestige merge together in a temporary alliance to dislodge the ministry. Thus, no basis for a lasting consolidation of any political group has emerged or seems likely to emerge.¹⁰ Simultaneously, the politicians begin gaining grounds for their personal interests than to the national interests.¹¹ For instance, in the Punjab Politics, the Ahrars, who were with the

Hindus before partition, no party could trace its origin to the pre-independence period.¹² The split in the parties is not a new phenomenon; it has long historic traditions since the beginning of the party system. Similarly, the rural and urban sections of population are also not a new dichotomy.¹³ The party system was mainly urban in pastimes, but the power politics was mostly controlled by the landed aristocracy. Unlike their masters, the villagers were in deep political slumber as they were not interested in money making and political profit.¹⁴ Moreover, the personalized approach to politics, the fanning of rural versus urban prejudices, the ultimate suzerainty of the landed aristocracy and the strong centralist set-up that continued to haunt the destiny of people of this region.¹⁵ To study their frame of mind and political training in proper perspective, it is essential to evaluate the nature of feudal dominance and the pivotal role of the major political parties in the shape of comparative study of the Punjab Politics. Thus party lines turned tenuous and clash of personalities became superficially significant.¹⁶ It, therefore, requires a deeper look into the events and developments in the light of the inter-religious and inter-cultural relationships.

The political system given by the British to the sub-continent in 1858 was the culmination of a century-old colonial rule over India. The British, in their own homeland, had a political system based on parliamentary democracy with a well-established tradition of party system and during the process of their political dealings with the people of India; they decided to transplant the same system here in India gradually. The introduction of legislative councils under the Indian Councils Acts of 1861 and 1892, and the expansion of literacy and mobility in India, which heralded political awareness, spearheaded the moment for representative government and party system. However, the Indian political consciousness was formed under the influence of colonial outlook. This led to the emergence of multiple political parties¹⁷ in India and the Indian National Congress¹⁸ (INC) was the first political organization which provided the platform to the people of India for their representation. Hence, the Indian National Congress since its inception in 1885, planned to perform the functions which her Majesty's opposition did in England. The INC was supposed to act as a safety-valve against the discontent apart from being a barometer of public opinion. However, after the creation of INC, many other political, social and religious parties came into being and their branches and franchises were also established at regional and provincial levels.

Punjab Congress

The branch of the Indian National Congress, "The Punjab Congress"¹⁹ was also established in 1885 in Punjab. In the preliminarily stages, the party spread the network of its multiple branches all over the province in an organized way.²⁰ But

unfortunately, the presence of a number of other factors including many socio-religious movements, communal conflicts and rural-urban divisions did not allow the Punjab Congress to flourish its network in this region.²¹ Another death-blow to the Punjab Congress was the 56 percent of the Muslim population in the province which obstructed its popular expansion.²² Though, INC claimed itself to be a non-communal political party but in reality it was dominated by the urban Hindu commercial groups in the Punjab. The claim of the Congress of being a non-communal party was slapped by the fact that the Muslims and the Sikhs were kept aloof from it. Despite its superior organization and non-communal claims, it failed to win the majority support of the Muslims and the Sikhs populace in the Punjab. Another important factor which proved to be problematic and a major obstacle for the Punjab Congress was the Land Alienation Act²³ which was to be passed in 1900 to restrict the land purchase by the urban commercial classes. Before the Act was passed, they proposed to pass a resolution condemning this Act severely in the Congress session, held at Lucknow in 1899. Simultaneously, Maulvi Muharram Ali Chishti, a Muslim member of the Congress held a meeting in Lahore in favor of this legislation. This situation entangled the Congress position between the devil and deep sea as the Congress had to choose one way or the other. One way was to win the support of the rural population by opposing the resolution and the other was to disappoint its urban supporters by passing the Act. At this critical juncture, the INC decided to accept the legislation by passing the Land Alienation Act which earned it great opposition from the urban Hindus. Resultantly, INC splintered into many splits and later on these factions emerged in the form of Hindu Mahasabha in 1915 which led the Urban Hindu class against the Land Alienation Act.

Hindu Mahasabha

The Hindu Mahasabha²⁴ (HM), as a political organization, rose in the reaction to the Congress participation in the Lucknow Pact of 1916. Its aims and objectives included promotion of political, social, racial and cultural interests of the Hindus.²⁵ The Party was Hindu-oriented in its nature and a Hindu as per Mahasabha, was anyone who considered the holy land of Bharatavarsh as his fatherland. It aimed to foster the idea of Hindu brother-hood along with the promotion of martial spirit among the Hindus, attainment of independence and struggle for it through constitutional means.²⁶ Unlike economic interests, its approach to Hindu unity was based on Hinduism but in matters of civic rights, it was to face severe opposition because of its policies based on religious grounds.²⁷ Despite the fact, the members of Hindu Mahasabha belonged to the landed aristocracy and educated Hindus elite-class; it played the role of an opposition party in the Punjab Legislative Council (PLC). The Punjab Congress was given tough time by its strong rival, the Hindu

Mahasabha as its leadership was in the hands of very adroit politicians like Madan Mohan Malaviya (1861-1946) and Lala Lajpat Rai (1865-1928).²⁸ The popularity graph of the Congress in the Punjab province had become too weak to send a sizeable number of delegates to the annual sessions of the INC which made its role insignificant in the Punjab Politics during the initial decades of the 20th century.²⁹

Actually, the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms of 1919, created interest among the different communities to reorganize their political strategies and objectives.³⁰ After the introduction of 'Diarchy System' in India in 1919, the INC, challenging the new political and social conditions in India, reorganized itself into a newly-oriented party.³¹ In response to the oppressive policies and attitude of the British Government like Rowlett Act and the gruesome tragedy of *Jallianwala*³² in 1919, the INC launched non-Cooperation Movement in 1921 incorporating all the communities of India against the British rule. The afore-mentioned torn and troubled political, religious and socio-economic conditions of the Punjab compelled the British Government and its associates to organize a multi-purpose political party based on the pattern of party politics which could be steered in any direction for their vested interests. To be sick of the trend of non-cooperation, the Punjab politicians like Fazl-i-Husain (1877-1936) and Chhotu Ram (1881-1945) decided to leave the INC and established their own separate and independent platform with the name of the Unionist Party in 1923.³³ The Unionist Party's main objective was the uplift of the rural agrarian society of the Punjab as well as the protection of their rights.³⁴

Instead of defying the British Government and to earn their good-will, Sir Fazl-i-Husain, the main architect of the Unionist Party, gave a new orientation to the Punjab Politics in the province and decided to become the part of their administration.³⁵ As a matter of fact, in the Punjab Politics, politically capable leadership fell into the hands of men like Mumtaz Muhammad Khan Daultana (1916-1995), Iftikhar Husain Mamdot (1906-1969), Shaukat Hayat Khan (1915-1998), Feroz Khan Noon (1893-1970), Mushtaq Ahmad Gurmani (1905-1981), Muhammad Zafarullah Khan (1893-1985) and many more whose earliest political education had been in the ranks and files of the Unionist Party and who were the sons and scions of the Unionist stalwarts like Fazl-i-Husain, Sikandar Hayat Khan (1892-1942), Ahmad Yar Khan Daultana (1896-1940) and Shah Nawaz Khan Mamdot (1883-1942) as the main leadership of the party carried the dominance of the rural population by the landed aristocracy of the Punjab.³⁶ In other words, all the landowner classes in the Punjab enjoyed the covert support of the Unionist Party.³⁷ However, in the presence of huge dominant influential landlords and aristocratic culture in the shape of heavy fabric of capable leadership, Unionist Party remained a major hurdle in the popularity of the Punjab Congress in the province.³⁸ On the other hand, taking advantage of this situation, the Hindu communal and sectarian groups like the Swaraj Party, the Hindu Mahasabha, and National

Progressive Party (NPP) voiced their demands in the PLC.³⁹ The informal coalition of legislators like Gokul Chand Narang, Sewak Ram, Gulshan Rai and Ruchi Ram Sahni further weakened the Punjab Congress.⁴⁰ The Hindu factions, who took part in the elections under the Indian Councils Act of 1919, could not give tough time to the Unionist Party. The Punjab Congress, therefore, for the first time in 1926, decided to participate in PLC elections but had to incur worst defeat due to total lack of rural support. The Congress influence was only confined to the towns which were predominantly led by the Hindu urban traders and moneylenders.⁴¹

The political influence of the INC in the Punjab was extremely marred by the Unionist Party as the former could not offer an alternative program for the community benefits like the Unionists' program. Although in early 1930s, INC had decided to extend its influence to the rural areas to strengthen its position according to the changing political scenario of the Punjab Politics.⁴² But its opposition to the Communal Award caused a deathblow to its popularity among the Muslims because the urban members in Congress outweighed the rural members in the Punjab.⁴³ The non-Congress Punjabi Hindu elite who had organized themselves in a separate political group, National Progressive Party⁴⁴ (NPP), an amalgam of various factions, also created problems for the Punjab Congress in the legislature. It was actually a coalition of several political groups, i.e., the Central Punjab Arya Samaj led by Gokul Chand (1878-1969), several miscreants and dissidents led by Narendra Nath (1864-1945), Western Punjab Arya Samaj led by Mukand Lal Puri, and another group led by Manohar Lal (1879-1949).⁴⁵ Muhammad Ali Jinnah's Parliamentary Board provided an impetus for their unity which was reacted by the non-Congress Hindu leaders in the establishment of a common executive committee to nominate non-Congress candidates in the Punjab.⁴⁶ The executive committee, popular as Hindu Election Board⁴⁷ (HEB), succeeded in uniting much of the non-Congress Hindu elements in the Punjab as it comprised not only the leaders of various Hindu factions, i.e., Hindu Mahasabha in the legislature, but also non-political leaders like Hans Raj, Pandit Mehr Chand and Acharya Ram Dev. After a certain period of time, pro-Congress Bhai Parmanand along with his aides under the leadership of Mahashe Krishna and Goswami Ganesh Datt, left the Board and merged themselves with the Congress.⁴⁸ Although the Punjab Congress had won the cooperation of several leading Hindus in urban areas, yet it was still far from winning the majority due to the dominant and influential role of the Unionist Party in the rural constituencies. In 1937 provincial elections, the Punjab Congress failed to create any challenge for the Unionists as the former totally won 18 out of 175 seats including the entire 9 urban seats.⁴⁹ On the other hand, the Hindu Mahasabha could secure only 12 seats in the provincial elections. After the elections of 1936-37, the Unionist Party emerged as a leading and the dominant force in the Punjab. Resultantly, the successful Hindu

Election Board, with its eleven seats, decided to join hands and extend its political cooperation with the Unionist Party.

Punjab Muslim League

The Punjab Provincial Muslim League (PPML), among many Muslim socio-political and socio-religious organizations in the Punjab, attempted at creating the political consciousness among the Muslims after its formation in 1907.⁵⁰ With its increasing popularity among the Muslims, the number of PPML branches and sub-branches had risen to nineteen till 1909.⁵¹ The PPML took keen interest in a number of issues, such as Minto Morley Reforms of 1909, separate electorates of the Muslims, representation for the Muslims in the government services, i.e., district boards, municipal committee, text book committee and their representation in the Punjab University and Urdu-Punjabi controversy.⁵² During 1911-1913, PPML actively supported the Aga Khan's (1877-1957) struggle for the establishment of a Muslim University at Aligarh.⁵³ In a meeting held on April 6, 1919, the PPML decided to act against Rowlett Act as it was against the unconstitutional measures. Soon after the WW-I, the PPML boycotted the celebration of the armistice as Fazl-i-Husain, being its leader, called a meeting and condemned the British policy towards Turkey and urged the Muslims not to take part in the peace celebrations. After the collapse of Khilafat Movement in 1924, the mainstream leadership like Mian Muhammad Shafi (1869-1932) and Malik Barkat Ali (1885-1946) decided to reactivate the PPML in the Punjab province. In order to do this, both of them were elected its president and general secretary respectively.⁵⁴ Even after the reviving measures, the PPML failed to gain popularity as it lacked mass appeal. It had harmonious relations with the All India Muslim League (AIML), till March 1927. The PPML headed towards a split (Shafi League) from AIML after M.A Jinnah put forward Delhi Proposals in 1927 to strengthen the Hindu-Muslim unity.⁵⁵ Accordingly, Mian Muhammad Shafi held a separate session in the Habibia Hall, Islamia College Lahore, in December 31, 1927.⁵⁶ In this meeting Zulfiqar Ali Khan, the chairman of reception committee, submitted the Muslim demands such as separate representation in Legislative Councils (LC) and local bodies on population basis, enforcement of the system of separate electorates, separation of Sindh from Bombay, reforms for the N.W.F.P. and Baluchistan and a pertinent Muslim share in the government services.⁵⁷

The decision against the withdrawal of separate electorates was taken in the PPML's meeting held on January 13, 1928, at the residence of Abdul Qadir. On January 22, 1928, PPML held its meeting under the presidentship of Maulana Abdul Qadir Qasuri in which prominent participants were Muhammad Alam, Saif-ud-Din Kitchlew, Afzal Haq (1891-1941), Maulvi Mazhar Ali Azhar (1895-1974), Zafar Ali

Khan (1873-1956) and Syed Ismail Afghani. Afzal Haq moved a resolution in this meeting advocating the PPML as the true representative of the Muslims of the Punjab, and therefore, it should be affiliated with AIML. Malik Barkat Ali supported the resolution which was unanimously passed.⁵⁸ Due to Nehru Report of 1928, both the All India Muslim League and the Punjab Provincial Muslim League felt a dire need of unity and got together on the same platform by ignoring all the differences between them. M.A. Jinnah consolidated the Muslim demands into his famous fourteen points in 1929 which were to become the demand of the united AIML which was the amalgamation of Shafi League and Jinnah League.⁵⁹ Both the Leagues (Shafi League and Jinnah League) were formally united in 1929 because of their identical views on various issues. During early thirties, the PPML remained ineffective as its leaders could not attract popular support from the masses due to its futile policies. Actually, PPML could not play any remarkable role in rural sphere as it was confined to the support of urban populace. The PPML also kept itself aloof from the Kashmir Movement and Mosque Shahidganj issues which caused a heavy blow to its popularity graph in the Punjab Province. In 1936, the PPML leaders tried their best to restore peace and security in the province when emotional upsurge was at its peak due to the Shahidganj issue.⁶⁰

Although, the PPML had prominent leadership like Mian Muhammad Shafi, Allama Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938), Malik Barkat Ali, Mian Abdul Aziz and Sir Shah Nawaz into its ranks, despite this, it failed to do anything significant in the Punjab Politics as it had no public welfare program.⁶¹ On the other hand, the Unionist Party had introduced comprehensive rural developments program for the uplift of agricultural class of the province.⁶² In the elections of 1936-37, the PPML suffered immensely at the hands of the Unionist Party winning only two seats as the latter was influential and popular in the Punjab.⁶³ The party's position in the province was also weakened by Raja Ghazanfar's, decision to join the Unionist Party but Malik Barkat Ali, a Muslim patriot, kept opposing the Unionists.⁶⁴ The Muslims of the Punjab under the banner of PPML, with its remaining leadership Malik Barkat Ali, Sir Muhammad Iqbal, Mian Abdul Aziz and many others were ultimately convinced to work actively in the province.

Majlis-i-Ahrar-i-Islam

Some other Muslim political and socio-religious parties emerged in 1930s with programs to safeguard the Muslim rights; the Majlis-i-Ahrar-i-Islam⁶⁵ (MAI) was one of them to be more prominent. Majlis-i-Ahrar was certainly impressed by the Bolshevik Revolution⁶⁶ of 1917 which had its impacts all over the world. Subsequently, India was also hit by its powerful tides which caused the emergence of numerous socio-religious political parties with the slogan of revolution. Majlis-i-

Ahrar-Islam was the party which was framed under the impact of the communist ideas that it had spread.⁶⁷ The Ahrars had developed a liking for the ideology of the Bolshevik Revolution because it pronounced deliverance to the oppressed masses from the extortions of the Capitalists, so much so, that men like Maulana Hasrat Mohani (1875-1951) professed to be a communist because of its appealing ideas for the Proletariat. Another factor which led to its creation was the inclusion of those people who had lost hope in both the Punjab Congress and the Punjab Muslim League and were radically opposed to British Imperialism in the sub-continent.⁶⁸ Its nucleus consisted of those Punjabi Muslims who had split with the Congress over the Nehru Report of 1928.⁶⁹ They got full support from those Muslims who believed that they had not enjoyed the social and political importance which they were entitled by their majority in the province.⁷⁰ The motive behind it was to free the Proletariat from the cruel clutches of Bourgeois and to end the exploitation of the Muslims from the selfish political organizations.⁷¹

The Majlis-i-Ahrar-i-Islam was reinforced by those like-minded urban Muslims who were against the predominance of rural influence such as Syed Ataullah Shah Bukhari (1892-1961), Maulana Habib-ur-Rehman, Maulana Zafar Ali Khan, Ghazi Abdul Rehman, Afzal Haq, Daud Ghaznavi (1895-1962), Maulvi Mazhar Ali Azhar and Maulana Abdul Qadir Qasuri. The Ahrar Party was founded under the presidentship of Afzal Haq on December 29, 1929.⁷² In the beginning, the Ahrars drew their support from the middle and lower oppressed Muslim class who could easily be exploited on religious issues for the realization of their political motives. The Ahrars were active in the cities and towns as a political force but in the rural areas they were known as propagator of Islamic values. Lahore, being headquarter, was its main center of activity with its multiple branches all over the Punjab. It gradually developed a highly disciplined volunteer cadre who performed their regular drills with bands and drums in red dresses holding an axe fitted with a long stick. Religion was their main binding force and they were set into political action by national activists that would culminate them into a mixture of religious orthodoxy and social progressivism.⁷³ The party manifesto included the socio-political and socio-religious uplift of the Muslims, promotion of traditional Islamic education, economic well-being, awakening of the political consciousness, infusion of the spirit of Islam and redemption from the British Imperialism, working in co-operation with like-minded institutions and organizations.⁷⁴ The Party agenda showed that it was organized for the social, political, religious and economic welfare of the Muslims, its major aim was to liberate Muslims from the colonial masters.

The Ahrars wanted to promote the traditional Islamic learning among the Muslims as its leaders like Ataullah Shah Bukhari, Chaudhry Afzal Haq and Maulana Mazhar Ali Azhar were against the British educational set-up in India. Generally, the Ahrars represented Islamic fundamentalism in their religious outlook and reflected Congress methodology in their political designs. Its leaders, being Nationalist

Muslims, favored the INC and strongly supported its Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930.⁷⁵ Maulana Habib-ur-Rehman declared in the annual session of the party in 1931 that the Ahrars did not want to commit injustice to any nation as its only aim at protecting the poor and suppressed Muslim masses from the clutches of the rich *Sahukars* (moneylenders) by adopting the radical measures.⁷⁶ Maulvi Mazhar Ali Azhar also proclaimed the same views in his address of 1931, that the Nationalists of India had yet to learn that this world was a plain not only for the rich, but also for the poor as well.⁷⁷

Kashmir Jihad Movement and Ahmedi Issue

The Ahrars became politically prominent when they decided to take part in the Kashmir Jihad Movement in May 1931. The Ahrars played an active role in this movement with mass participation from Rawalpindi and Sialkot to be its main centers. Their stance was also supported by Allama Muhammad Iqbal and many other Muslim intellectuals, as they were fighting to safeguard the rights of Kashmiri Muslims. The Ahmedis⁷⁸ also stepped into the arena to continue the favor of the Kashmiri Muslims by establishing an All-India Kashmir Committee under the chairmanship of Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud.⁷⁹ This eventually, led to a showdown between the Ahrars and the Ahmedis which brought them at daggers drawn with each other. The Ahrars were of the view that Ahmedis were propagating their own creed under the pretext of the Kashmir Committee. Apprehensive of increasing Ahmedi influence in Kashmir, prominent leaders of Ahrars such as Afzal Haq, Syed Ataullah Shah Bokhari, Mazhar Ali Azhar, and later on Shorish Kashmiri (1917-1975), started denouncing them in their public speeches and aroused considerable mass support for their stand and public hatred against Ahmedis.⁸⁰ The Unionists' were against the Ahrar agitation as the former was a Pro-Government Party.⁸¹ The Ahrars also created some difficulties and gave tough time to the Unionists in the province because of its militant character. Opposing the Ahrars' stance on Kashmir issue, the Unionists angrily stated that they would finish the Ahrars in one day because of their fermentation.⁸² A number of Muslim members of the Kashmir Committee isolated themselves from it when they came to know that the Ahmedis were preaching their cult under the Kashmir Committee. The Ahrar activities in Kashmir attracted small bands of aspirants for Jihad from different places like Ahmedabad, Ajmer, Aligarh and Calcutta which showed their vast influence beyond the Punjab. They forced the Maharaja of Kashmir to dismiss his unpopular premier, Hari Kishan Kaul because of his hardline behavior and then they turned their attention towards the Ahmedis who were threatening and bullying Islamic unity within Kashmir.⁸³ This raging situation triggered clashes between the Ahrars and the Ahmedis, resultantly, the Ahrars made determined and deliberate efforts to prevent

the Ahmedis from burying their dead in the Muslim graveyards during early 1930s.⁸⁴ In November 1935, the Ahmedis were declared non-Muslims after a resolution was passed at Sialkot conference as the Ahmedis were a great threat to the orthodox Islam.⁸⁵ Other political extremists along with these orthodox Muslims joined the anti-Ahmedis Movement which made the Ahmedis intensely loyalist to the government in future and they demanded protection for themselves.

Shahidganj Issue and the Party Politics

The Ahrars were also supported by those elements which were dissatisfied with the Unionists for their role in the Shahidganj issue. So, it could claim massive support of certain sections of the Muslims from the Punjab Province until 1935. The Mosque Shahidganj issue proved to be a test-case for the Ahrar leaders to judge their political maturity in this situation.⁸⁶ The Unionists, estimating the importance of this religious issue, grabbed the opportunity and involved the Ahrars into it by offering civil disobedience as the Unionists were shrewd enough and they knew how to manipulate the religious and political issues.⁸⁷ Moreover, all the Muslims looked towards the Ahrars with hopeful eyes on account of their religious orientation. In the beginning, the Ahrars made enthusiastic participation in the Shahidganj agitation as in the meeting, held on July 12, 1935, in the Badshahi Mosque after Friday prayer which was attended by 15,000 Muslims including prominent Ahrar leaders like Mazhar Ali Azhar, Ataullah Shah Bukhari, Afzal Haq and Habib-ur-Rehman. An important announcement was made by Attaullah Shah Bukhari to the public gathering in the Mosque that a separate organization, named the *Anjuman-i-Tahaffuz-i-Masjid* (Mosque Protection Committee), had been formed a few days earlier under the supervision of Zafar Ali Khan, Muhammad Alam, Syed Habib and Malik Lal Khan to cope with the Shahidganj affairs. The Ahrars considered it desirable to leave the matter entirely to the newly made organization.⁸⁸ This stance of the Ahrars towards Shahidganj Mosque incurred serious setback to their reputation including the disappointment amongst their own workers and this situation was exploited by the Unionists to the greatest extent. Actually, the Ahrars wanted to keep themselves aloof from the Shahidganj agitation as they wished to avoid being embroiled in a struggle out of which Muslims were unlikely to emerge with credit. There were rumors that the government had prosecution in view with a restraining effect on their leaders who had no desire to go behind the bars as the upcoming elections to the new council were soon to come next year.⁸⁹

The silence of the Ahrars over the Shahidganj issue near the new council elections provided the opportunity to their opponents to defame them.⁹⁰ The Ahrars adopted the silent approach towards this issue because of their serious concern in the elections as they wanted to be influential over the Punjab Government by securing

enough seats. In 1936, this incentive of political interests of the Ahrars forced them to join the League Parliamentary Board. The prompt decision of the Ahrars to withdraw from the League Parliamentary Board in September 1936 for independent elections marked the immaturity and incompetency of the Ahrar leadership.⁹¹ The soaring inconsistency in the political behavior of the Ahrar leaders and the severe condemnation by the press gave heavy blow to their future political career.⁹² In fact, the Ahrars suffered a lot due to the opposition of well-organized and well-equipped Unionist Party which had sufficient political experience to manipulate the agitated situations under the guidance of its adept leadership. On the other hand, the adroit leadership of the Ahrars knew the technique to bring the people out for demonstrations as they had deft and dexterous orators but unfortunately they lacked the aptitude to mobilize any popular scheme to utilize them well as they should have been benefited therefrom. Consequently, their energies were frittered away in unplanned confrontations with the Unionists and the other parties including the Ahmedis and the British, who cleverly exploited the differences among the leading Ahrar leaders.⁹³ In this political turmoil, charges were leveled against the Ahrars because of the absence of well-planned programs and policies in their party agenda but in spite of their shortcomings, the Ahrars wielded enormous influence and proved to be a powerful challenging force amongst the mainstream socio-political and socio-religious parties in the Punjab. In short, the Ahrar Party was probably one of the most considerable Muslim mass-based movements that pre-partition Punjab had produced but it could grab only 2 seats in the provincial elections of 1937 owing to mismanagement in the party organization by their leadership.⁹⁴ The internal conflicts and the surrounding political malign environment lead to the deterioration graph of the Ahrar party in the Punjab Politics.

Majlis-i-Ittehad-i-Millat

When Majlis-i-Ahrar-i-Islam refused to take part in the Shahidganj agitation, one of its enthusiastic leaders, Maulana Zafar Ali⁹⁵ decided to organize a separate party named Majlis-i-Ittehad-i-Millat (MIM) during the Rawalpindi Conference on September 1, 1935.⁹⁶ This splinter group emerged out of the Ahrars due to their failure in espousing the Muslim cause in the Shahidganj agitation. The MIM's leadership included religion-ridden persons such as Abu Said Anwar, Abdul Karim Shorish and Yasub-ul-Hasan, who knew little about the political tactics. On September 20, 1935, "Shahidganj Day" was observed throughout the Punjab Province by mass gathering and demonstrations with extreme religious fervor. Pir Jamaat Ali Shah⁹⁷ presided over a public meeting of about 60,000 people at the Mochi Gate in Lahore. As a result of exhortations from Pir Jamaat Ali Shah, Ittehad-

i-Millat started a mass-contact campaign giving birth to communal rifts and religious conflicts in the Punjab Province.⁹⁸

After the departure of Pir Jamaat Ali Shah from Punjab to the Southern India, the bridle of the MIM was grabbed by the extremist leaders like Maula Bakhsh and Yasub-ul-Hasan. In May 1936, Maulana Zafar Ali Khan became the president of the party and his old friendship with the Ahrars was completely ruptured. Meanwhile, in 1936, Ittehad-i-Millat decided to join the League Parliamentary Board to contest the elections under the banner of AIML. But soon in June 1936, it withdrew itself with an excuse for the absence of a demand for complete independence in the manifesto of the AIML.⁹⁹ This immature shifting attitude of MIM left it in isolation and it could not get any political alliance to consolidate its footings in the Punjab Province. Moreover, the mutual rivalry between the Ahrars and the Ittehad-i-Millat effected the Shahidganj agitation and the efforts of the MIM to celebrate July 6, 1936, as "Shahidganj Demolition Day" could not arouse much enthusiasm among the masses. Blows laced with harsh words were exchanged and this added fuel to the flames, antagonism culminated in an assassination attempt by an Ahrar on Nasir-ud-Din who was a prominent leader of the Ittehad-i-Millat on August 31, 1936 at Amritsar.¹⁰⁰ Following the aggravated situation, the decision of civil disobedience with some legal restrictions was taken by MIM in a conference which was held on November 15, 1936. On July 9, 1937, it decided to suspend the agitation as the decision of Shahidganj case was pending in the High Court. Actually, Ittehad-i-Millat was the birth-child of the Shahidganj issue and its leaders tried to garner the public sympathy by supporting this hot issue. The Ittehad-i-Millat remained failed in casting any influential impression in the presence of other powerful mainstream political parties in the Punjab Province. On the other hand, among the chief political rivals in the Punjab such as the Unionist Party, the bickering between the Majlis-i-Ahrar-i-Islam and the Ittehad-i-Millat was exploited extremely by the Unionists as they were adept in the art of manipulation.¹⁰¹ It enjoyed only a limited support in the Punjab with no influence in rural areas at all. In the upcoming provincial elections of 1937, the Ittehad-i-Millat could win only 2 seats due to their immature political behavior in the political arena of the party politics in the Punjab.¹⁰²

Khaksar Party

The *Anjuman-i-Khaksaran* (Khaksar Party), another highly disciplined party of the urban Muslims was founded by Allama Inayatullah Mashriqi¹⁰³ on September 1931 in Lahore. The main objective of the Khaksar Party (KP) in the words of its leadership was to organize the party across the Para-military lines by the injunctions of at least one million Muslims aimed at the propagation of harmony among the

masses, by nature it was pluralistic oriented party.¹⁰⁴ Basically, its leaders wanted to create inter-communal harmony among the different communities of the sub-continent to dismantle the British rule while emphasizing so-called non-violent attitude. According to the British Government, the Khaksar Party was designed and structuralized on the Nazi pattern which was a bit proto-Proletarian and more like well-off Bourgeoisie.¹⁰⁵ Its members would wear quasi-military uniform with *bailchas* (shovel) in their hands as their emblem and they were commonly Known as called *bailchabiradari* (brotherhood of the shovel).¹⁰⁶ However, Inayatullah coveted to revive the Muslims brotherhood which was once reflected in the first era of Islam. For the materialization of his ideas, he stressed on the purification of the inner-self by adopting the pious and selfless life.¹⁰⁷

In fact, the Khaksars were in no way antagonistic to government, but were mainly endeavoring to organize the Muhammadans for the purpose of social welfare in order to prove their unity and self-efficiency for the attainment of *Swaraj* (self-rule), in a short span of time by their own methods rather than the ones, employed by the Congress.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, its objective was the social services of the Muslims irrespective of caste, color or creed which motivated it to attack all the elite classes of the society with fanatical ire and fury.¹⁰⁹ As the Khaksars were averse to all those elements, who wanted to fill their pockets by supporting the ruling class. The Khaksar leadership kept themselves aloof from communalism which was the basic political tool mostly adopted by the Unionist Party in its slogans. The Ahrars of the Punjab had a deep grudge against Inayatullah Mashraqi and his party whose attention was centered on the religious re-construction of the Muslim society.¹¹⁰ When the Ahrars failed to give any material support to the Shahidganj agitation, the Khaksars gathered great momentum among the Muslims due to their devotion and commitment to religion and support to the cause of the Muslim unity and solidarity. Inayatullah took active part in the Rawalpindi Shahidganj Conference in 1935 and played an important role by requesting the participants to eliminate their differences and abstain from recrimination against each other. In his address, he asked the delegates to accept the proposal of Muhammad Ishaq and agree to launch civil disobedience for the achievement of their objectives. During the Shahidganj agitation, the Punjab Government expressed its apprehension that the participation of the Khaksars in the Shahidganj agitation might seriously disturb law and order situation of the province as the death of four Khaksars rendered the role of oil on the fire in this agitation.¹¹¹ In spite of a confused political idealism and the lack of proper goals, Khaksars even then remained successful in gaining strength in the Punjab Province. It always gave tough time to the Unionists by waging war against their government in particular and the British in general. Thus, the Unionists, the Majlis-i-Ahrars, the Ittehad-i-Millat, the PPML and other major political parties in the Punjab were always afraid of Khaksar's practice of marching in military formation

carrying shovels in their hands but could not make any important achievement for the Muslims in the Punjab Province.¹¹²

Sikh Political Parties

The Sikhs were the third largest community in the British Punjab after the Muslims and the Hindus. The Sikh political parties were also in the forefront of the national movement in the Punjab Province since the beginning of the 20th century. Many of the Sikh emigrants engineered the struggle in the foreign lands against racial discrimination and waged war against the British dominance. The activities of Singh Sabhas¹¹³ that were rapidly increasing in the 1870s and 1880s caused the establishment of a new central committee called Khalsa Diwan with the purpose of the coordination among the members of the Singh Sabhas.¹¹⁴ The internal rifts between the dissidents split the Khalsa Diwan into Amratsir and Lahore factions. With the passage of time, near the end of 19th century, a number of Singh Sabhas and Khalsa Diwans kept coming into being and their number almost rose to 150. The beginning of the 20th century witnessed the merger of all the various organizations together with the formation of Chief Khalsa Diwan¹¹⁵ at Amratsir in 1902. All the political activities of Chief Khalsa Diwan were funded by Sikh aristocrats and the Singh Sabhas. In this way, Chief Khalsa Diwan also got success in winning the confidence and support of the Sikh preachers who were attracted and impressed by its functions but its moderate and pro-Government political policies angered the militant and young sections of the Sikhs. Soon, the party was recognized as the sole representative body of the whole Sikh community by the British Government in the Punjab Province. The Chief Khalsa Diwan played an important role in the consolidation of the Sikh community by rendering great services in socio-religious as well as political fields to some extent. It inculcated social consciousness and political insight among the Sikh community in the Punjab Province. After this, the Chief Khalsa Diwan got significant importance in party politics of the Punjab to be an influential party at the mass level rivaling the other Sikh political parties in the province. It enjoyed prominent and influential status about two initial decades of the 20th century among the Sikh community.¹¹⁶

Another important Sikh political organization, 'The Central Sikh League'¹¹⁷ was established on 29th December 1919 in Amritsar where its inaugural session coincided simultaneously with the annual sessions of the Muslim League and the Congress.¹¹⁸ The Central Sikh League had a close links with the Congress. Addressing the session of the Sikh League, the president Baba Kharak Singh (1867-1963), the pioneer of Gurdawaras Reform Movement, encouraged the Sikhs to partake in national politics and exhorted them to support the Non-Cooperation

Movement which soon turned into agitation. The main objective of the Central Sikh League was also to procure the right of *Swaraj* through peaceful ways for which it enlisted more than 10,000 Sikh volunteers for the cause of their national movement. It also aimed at the promotion of pantheistic unity, fostering patriotism and public spirit among the Sikhs, organization of their political and economic resources by legitimate, peaceful and constitutional means.¹¹⁹ As the league was mostly influenced by the educated Sikh community such as Master Sundar Singh Lyallpuri, Harchand Singh Lyallpuri and Sardul Singh Caveeshar, they all floated moderate ideas under the leadership of Kharak Singh. By August 1921, the network of the Central Sikh League stretched all over the Punjab with its multiple branches established at Lahore, Ferozepur, Gujranwala, Hoshiarpur, Sialkot and Jallunder. For the procurement of the Sikh interests, the Central Sikh League assayed to get pertinent representation for the Sikhs in the Legislative Council of the Punjab, demanding the Sikh reforms in their worship places along with the continuation of carrying the *kirpan* (a ceremonial four inch curved dagger) which is considered one of their most important religious emblems.

A number of political parties were made in the name of Shiromani Akali Dal in the Punjab. Firstly, the Akali Dal, under the presidentship of Sardar Sarmukh Singh Chubbah, was made to work as a task force for the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee (protection and management committee of Gurudwara), the Sikh religious body in 1920. The party came to prominence under the influential Sikh leader Master Tara Singh (1885-1967).¹²⁰ The Election Commission of India registered the party as "Shiromani Akali Dal" which later became an important Sikh representative body with mass level support of its community. The chief objective of the Akali Dal¹²¹ was to provide a platform and serve as a mouth-piece for the oppressed Sikh community to safeguard their religious and political rights. The non-communal nature of the Unionist Party helped it in magnetizing an innumerable Sikhs from rural areas of the Punjab to join it. Although some Sikh *Jats* were averse to its moderate policies but even then many Sikh *Jats* joined the Unionist Party. In the provincial elections of 1937, the Sikhs rejected the idea to form alliance with the Unionists or any other party. They further preferred to split their forces into the Akali and the anti-Akali group (known as the Khalsa Nationalist Party), as both had minor importance in provincial affairs. The Khalsa Nationalist Party¹²² was formed by two Sikh aristocrats, Sir Jogendra Singh and Sir Sundar Singh Majithia (1872-1941) in 1936. Khalsa National Party wanted to contest legislative elections in the Punjab under the new scheme of reforms introduced by the British Government under the Indian Act of 1935. However, in the provincial elections of the Punjab in 1937, the Akali Dal got 11 seats and the Khalsa National Party secured 13 seats and allied with the Unionist Party coalition government. The Akalis sat in

opposition and made occasional forays into reaching an understanding with the Muslim League, which never reached fruition.¹²³

The revolutionary Naujawan Bharat Sabha¹²⁴ (NBS) amassed in it some left wing parties which egressed from the Ghadr and communist antecedents. The Ghadr Party¹²⁵ and the communist expanded their influence mainly over the Sikh peasantry but the NBS was confined to the urban non-Muslim youth. Naujawan Bharat Sabha was organized by Bhagat Singh,¹²⁶ Chhabil Das and Yashpal in 1926.¹²⁷ The establishment of a complete independent republic of the laborers and peasants of the whole India was the major aim of NBS. It was the NBS that organized the boycott of the Simon Commission¹²⁸ and gathered a big mob in the form of procession at the railway station in Lahore on the arrival of the Commission in India. Though, public opinion for a radical change in the society was mobilized by NBS and the onus of training the people for more militant methods in the political struggle against the British rule in India. The 20th century also gave birth to a pro-communist party, 'Kirti Kisan Sabha'¹²⁹ in 1928 in the Punjab. Chhabil Das, the prominent leader of the Kirti Kisan Sabha, presided over the first conference in 1928 at Lyallpur. It mainly supported the cause of the rural politics for Sikh peasantry. The Kirti Kisan Sabha could not make any progress in the presence of other multiple political parties in the Punjab. Rivaling the Unionist Party with no considerable challenges, it could not make any significant place in the party politics of the Punjab Province as the Unionist Party also proved to be a greatest obstacle in its way of progress because the Unionists well-managed the case of the downtrodden peasantry class in the Punjab Province.

Unionists' Supremacy over the League Parliamentary Board

To strengthen the position of the Muslim community in the Punjab Province, the Unionist Party found it inevitable to adopt a non-communal program as they were compatible to their ideology. Over the number of years, the Unionist Party had established itself on strong footings that decided its strategy to garner maximum seats in the upcoming elections. Irrespective of their caste, color and creed, the party determined to launch its election campaign with the help of their old and trusted allies. With the cooperation of their old non-Muslim colleagues such as Chhotu Ram¹³⁰, the party leadership had a very clear and realistic plan to appropriate political power in the Punjab Politics. The anticipations of the Unionist Party were from the Hindus and the Sikhs as they constituted the major political force in the Punjab which could support them win a dominating majority in the Punjab. As per Khizr Hayat¹³¹, the Unionists' main focus was to consolidate the political cause of the Muslims at the provincial level as well as the rights of other

communities.¹³² The Unionists began to reorganize the Party under the dynamic leadership of Fazl-i-Husain¹³³ after he returned from Dehli. On the other hand, M.A. Jinnah, an important leader of Muslim League, had also returned to India to reorganize the AIML for the forthcoming elections. On April 12, 1936, a session of AIML was held in Bombay under the presidentship of Wazir Hasan, in which a resolution was passed, authorizing M.A. Jinnah to nominate a Parliamentary Board for the organization of election campaign.¹³⁴ The political aims and objectives were almost alike to those of the Unionist Party which were highlighted by *'The Daily Inqilab'* in these words: When there is no difference between the programs of the League Party and the Unionist Party, the formation of a new party was not at all necessary. The latter party ought to have been supported by the League as the Unionist leaders had succeeded in winning the sympathies of a large number of non-Muslims along with the creation of the suitable political atmosphere for the realization of the objects marked by the Parliamentary Board.¹³⁵

The Unionist Party remained as a great challenge for the AIML Parliamentary Board. According to Ian Talbot, "it not only threatened to exclude the League from the power in the key Punjab Province but also its control of the AIMC was a major threat at the center. It even remained influential within the Muslim League as the members of the Punjab Muslim League Council were mainly Unionists".¹³⁶ Soon after the decision of AIML in Bombay, M.A. Jinnah tried to persuade the Unionists for their cooperation in setting up a Central Parliamentary Board. Jinnah's intention was that the Muslims should contest elections all over the India from a common platform under AIML Parliamentary Board. Many a times, Jinnah wanted to persuade Fazl-i-Husain to join the AIML along-with his Unionist colleagues but all in vain. As Fazl-i-Husain told him that the Unionist Party had been working as an established party in the Punjab since its inception. He further explained that the Unionist Party was based upon an economic program and rural development on non-communal and non-sectarian grounds suitable to the political and religious conditions of all the communities in the Punjab Province. Unionists leadership believed that the Unionist Party was the best way to tackle political turbulence and communal problems in the province.¹³⁷ Because the Unionist Party and its leadership assumed that any communal approach to the political tangle of the Punjab was likely to disintegrate Party which was based on an economic program and mutual cooperation among all the communities.¹³⁸ The leadership claimed that the Unionist Party had extended its election campaign to at least 130 constituencies with the absolute majority.¹³⁹ Over the past twelve years, the people of the Punjab had become familiar with the main characteristics of the Unionist Party such as protection of the peasantry from money-lenders and assistance to the backward and economically-weak sections of the society. In this way, the Unionists believed that the best strategy was to stick to the system which had been built on their rural class welfare programs.¹⁴⁰

The Unionists requested M.A. Jinnah not to make it a question of provincial politics versus all-India solidarity so that the Muslims may secure maximum advantage of the local circumstances for the well-being of all the communities of the Punjab. M.A. Jinnah was not in favor of such a political strategy which could target the Muslim representation negatively in the provincial legislatures. The Unionists coveted to contest provincial elections solely without being hassled by AIML, while at the Centre they were ready to co-operate with AIML. The similar suggestions were put forward to Allama Muhammad Iqbal, president of the Punjab Provincial Parliamentary Board of AIML by the general secretary of the Unionist Party which were forwarded to M.A. Jinnah by Allama Muhammad Iqbal in his letter.¹⁴¹ The correspondence between the two on this formula could not produce any fruition. Muhammad Ali Jinnah had to face severe opposition by Unionists because of his suggestions about setting up a Central Parliamentary Board to centralize the all-India Muslim politics excusing that it was totally against the spirit of decentralization to be inherent in the formula of the provincial autonomy.¹⁴² The Unionist leaders asserted that the initiative and elasticity which is needed for the purpose of provincial autonomy should not be sacrificed for the sake of all-India leaders aspirations.¹⁴³ On June 22, 1936, Sikandar Hayat reached Lahore and had a meeting with Muhammad Iqbal and Raja Narendra Nath to discuss the political collaboration of the Unionist Party with the Muslim League.¹⁴⁴

After this meeting, Muhammad Iqbal wrote to M.A. Jinnah that he thought Sikandar Hayat will meet you at Bombay to discuss important political developments of the Punjab Politics.¹⁴⁵ Iqbal further informed Jinnah that Ahmad Yar Daultana met him yesterday and told that the Muslim members of the Unionist Party were ready to accept that in all matters specific to Muslim community, they will be bound by the decision of the League and will never make any party with any non-Muslim group in the provincial Assembly if the Punjab League declares that those League members, returned to the Provincial Assembly on League ticket, will cooperate with that party or group comprising the largest number of the Muslims.¹⁴⁶ Muhammad Iqbal was keen to gain the assistance of the Unionist Party but the Muslim members of the Party were well aware of their strong strategic position in the province and confident of their victory in the up-coming provincial elections, they were in no mood for any compromise or alliance with any other political party.¹⁴⁷ The political leadership of the Unionist Party in the province such as Ahmad Yar Daultana and Sikandar Hayat were in the favor of non-communal approach to win the maximum support of the masses which was the dire need of the hour.¹⁴⁸ When M.A. Jinnah angrily and reactionary told Narendra Nath that "Fazli thinks that he carries the Punjab in his pocket" . . . "I am going to smash Fazli".¹⁴⁹ Then Narendra Nath replied to Jinnah, "You must be very strong then".¹⁵⁰ M.A. Jinnah, during his stay in Lahore, tried his best to cajole Fazl-i-Husain and his party to join

the AIML but the talks proved futile as the differences had grown to be strong and divergent.

According to the Unionists, M.A. Jinnah simply depended upon talks and had done nothing to revive the PPML and Fazl-i-Husain called the League scheme "purely a paper one".¹⁵¹ On the other hand, Fazl-i-Husain had organized and revised the Unionist Party on modern pattern in the form of a non-communal party throughout the Punjab.¹⁵² Sir Fazl-i-Husain controverted M.A. Jinnah on his suggestion of a Muslim Party as former never wanted to label his party as a communal political organization.¹⁵³ In this back drop, Jinnah got immensely disappointed and leaving Lahore, he said, "I shall never come to the Punjab again, it is such a hopeless place".¹⁵⁴ At this critical juncture, in the arena of the party politics of the Punjab, the other socio-religious parties, i.e. Majlis-i-Ahrar, Ithad-i-Millat, Khaksars and some other extremist sections in the province refused to co-operate with Jinnah and withdrew themselves from the Central Parliamentary Board, which left Jinnah empty-handed and disgruntled with no significant political achievement in the Punjab.¹⁵⁵ Although the Ahrars were the last to stand with Jinnah but they also left the Central Parliamentary Board and maintaining their identity, refused to merge into the Punjab Muslim League.¹⁵⁶ The Jinnah's Parliamentary Board was badly broken up by the non-alliance of afore-mentioned socio-religious political parties in the Punjab.

These critical circumstances gave a severe setback to the Punjab League in the province but some of the Muslim urbanites of League like Muhammad Iqbal, Shuja, Taj-ud-din and Malik Barkat Ali tried their best to revive the party by their sincere efforts. But they could not attain success as their efforts had done nothing to organize the Punjab Muslim League.¹⁵⁷ Punjab was the key province of the Indian Muslim politics under the strong influence of the Unionist Party and Jinnah was well aware of its importance and called it a corner-stone.¹⁵⁸ After the demise of Sir Fazl-i-Husain in July, 1936, the Unionist Party suffered from serious leadership loss in the Punjab.¹⁵⁹ Now Sikandar Hayat took hold of the leadership of the party to be the second influential leader in the hierarchy of the Unionists.¹⁶⁰ Sikandar Hayat was more suitable to the Hindus, because of his less aggressive communalism as compared to his predecessor.¹⁶¹ The PPML leadership, Muhammad Iqbal, after the death of Fazl-i-Husain persuaded Sikandar Hayat to enter into a compromise but the latter was not ready to take the risk of abandoning the non-Communal policy. Consequently, Muhammad Iqbal failed to secure the Unionists' support which ushered in a tragic and bigger rift between the Leaguers and the Unionists.¹⁶² The then Governor of the Punjab Sir Herbert Emerson (1934-1938), wanted to empower Sikandar Hayat in the Punjab, so he planned to appoint him as a revenue member.¹⁶³ Now, he was the chief of the party and the highest government officer after the Governor in the Punjab Province simultaneously. During the election campaign, Sikandar Hayat had to drain support from the landlords and the party

maintains its strong influence among the masses. About nine parties such as; the Unionist Party, the Punjab Congress, the Punjab Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha, the Khalsa Nationalist Party, the Akali Dal, the Ahrar, the Majlis-i-Ithad-i-Millat and the Congress Nationalist Party took part in the provincial elections of 1936-37. In the provincial politics the Unionist Party, having the support of all sections of the society, was the only influential one among them.¹⁶⁴ M.A. Jinnah had done his best to strengthen the League position in the Punjab Politics but he could not succeed in it. In result to this, only seven tickets were issued to the League members and only 2 candidates, Malik Barkat Ali and Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan (1895-1963), could be elected from the platform of Punjab Muslim League. The latter, immediately after the elections, resigned from the Punjab League and joined the Unionist Party with a hope to obtain a parliamentary secretaryship in the Punjab Assembly which he got it.¹⁶⁵

The Unionists secured 99 out of 175 seats in the provincial elections while the other parties could not achieve the majority seats in the Punjab.¹⁶⁶ The Punjab Congress managed to get only 18 seats and the Congress Nationalist Party got only 1 seat, while the other non-Congress parties secured only 57 seats. In these elections, the independent candidates were able to win 16 seats.¹⁶⁷ The election results endorsed Unionists provincial strategy and the party was capable of playing a dominant role in the Punjab Politics as compared to other major political parties of the province. However, the Unionists success provided Sikandar Hayat an open chance to get himself elected as the first Premier of the Punjab.¹⁶⁸ Overall, the British Punjab remained a key place in the 'Party Politics during 1885-1937' and its political parties played an important role for the political awaking as well as the protection of rights of their representative communities.

Conclusion

The comparative study of the major political parties in the British Punjab and their performance in the political field indicates that the Unionist Party acquired political supremacy over all of its rivals. Although, the Punjab Congress and the Punjab Muslim League existed in the province since the beginning of 20th century, along-with the other socio-religious political parties like the Majlis-i-Ahrar-i-Islam, the Majlis-i-Ittehad-i-Millat, the Khaksars, the Hindu Mahasabha, the Akali Dal, the Khalsa Nationalist Party and Naujawan Bharat Sabha, but they failed to play an effective role as compared to the Unionist Party. In the party politics of the Punjab, the Punjab Congress, in spite of its non-Communal character and manifesto, also could not acquire an influential position in the rural areas on account of the urban Hindu capitalist domination. It had, undoubtedly, amended its manifesto in 1936 on the pattern of the Unionist Party by giving due importance to the rural population

but it could not avail the support of the rural class of the Punjab because of its capitalists' pro-urban stance. Some of the non-Muslim organizations were working in the political field, including the Kirti Kisan Sabha but their activities were confined to the rural Sikh areas.

The party agenda of the Punjab Muslim League also could not attract the rural class of the province. Being an erstwhile representative body of the Muslims, it was expected to safeguard the Muslim rights but it failed to do the job on account of its divided leadership and had no public welfare program. Making an analysis on the discourse of the major political parties along with their role and function in the British Punjab, the Unionist Party alone could claim the leadership of the masses without being challenged its supremacy. It represented the three major communities the Muslims, the Hindus and the Sikhs with 90 percent support from the rural areas. Being a strong parliamentary party, it also enjoyed government confidence and cooperation in the British Punjab. Sabotaging the position of the Muslim League in the Punjab, the strong-hold of the Unionist Party in the province ousted Jinnah from the arena of the Punjab Politics. The Unionist Party along with the support of landed aristocracy achieved a definite victory over all other political parties in the provincial elections of 1936-37 which added to its prestige and strengthened its foundations. The popularity of the Unionist Party could not diminish as it also held an esteemed stature under the auspices of the imperial Government of the British.

Notes & References

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1. Raghuvendra Tanwar, *Politics of Sharing Power: The Punjab Unionist Party, 1923-1947* (New Delhi: Manohar Publisher, 1999), 134-135.
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5. Safdar Mahmood, *Pakistan Political Roots and Development 1947-1999* (Karachi: OUP, 2005), 117.
6. Ibid.
7. K.K. Aziz, *Party Politics in Pakistan 1947-1958* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications 2007), 181.
8. Ibid, 226.
9. Ibid, 226-227.
10. Keith Callard, "The Political Stability of Pakistan", *Pacific Affairs*, March 1956, 12. Also cited by K.K. Aziz, 227.
11. K.K. Aziz, 227 and Keith Callard, 12.
12. Ibid, 227-228.
13. Ibid, 228.
14. Ibid.
15. Iftikhar Haider Malik, *Sikandar Hayat Khan: A Political Biography* (Islamabad: NIHCR, 1985), 4.
16. K.K. Aziz, 230.
17. Ibid, 180-181.
18. The Main purpose, for which the Indian national Congress was founded in 1885 by A.O. Hume, was to douse the agitation activities in which the Bengal intelligentsia was involved. The party was the representative of all the communities in India; its claim was to be the sole representative of Indian opinion. But soon as due to some national issues the Congress Party adopted anti-Muslim attitude; it was something the British had not bargained for, and taking heed from this lesson they subsequently encourage the formation of 'Regional Parties' in different provinces which they could control easily. For details see, Khalid Shamsul Hasan, *The Punjab Muslim League and the Unionists* (Karachi: Ushba Publishing International, 2005), 29.

19. The Punjab Congress was also established in 1885 but had not played a vital role in the provincial politics and could not compete with its contemporary parties. However, during the provincial elections of 1936-37, the Punjab Congress got 18 seats in Punjab. Raghuvendra Tanwar, *Politics of Sharing Power: The Punjab Unionist Party, 1923-1947* (New Delhi: Manohar Publisher, 1999), 20.
20. Raghuvendra Tanwar, 155.
21. Ibid, 155-156.
22. Ibid, 156.
23. The main objective of 'The Punjab Alienation of Land Act of 1900' was to curb the moneylenders influence. This Act divided the population into agriculturist and non-agriculturalists classes, the latter including the main moneylending groups were forbidden permanently to acquire land in the countryside. This Act also paved the way for the creation of the Unionist Party in 1923. For details see, Ian Talbot, *Provincial Politics and the Pakistan Movement* (Karachi: OUP, 1988), 84-85.
24. Hindu *Mahasabha* (HM) was founded in 1915 by Lajpat Roy, Pandat Madan Mohan and C.Y. Chunta. The basic objective of the party was to unite Hindu community on its platform and to strengthen Hindu religion. Hindu *Mahasabha* strongly rejected the demand of separate electorates. The party had no soft corner for the Muslims. The Hindu *Mahasabha*, lying generally dormant since its foundation in 1915, now acquired a new life and begins to hold its regular annual sessions. The *Mahasabha* followers also took pride in identifying themselves with highly charged communal politics. It won 12 seats in the provincial elections of 1937 in Punjab. For detailed study, see, Qalb-i-Abid and Massarrat Abid, *Communalism in India: The Role of Hindu Mahasabha* (Lahore: Research Society of Pakistan, University of the Punjab, 2008), 3-4.
25. Qalb-i-Abid and Massarrat Abid, *Communalism in India: The Role of Hindu Mahasaba* (Lahore: Research society of Pakistan, 2008), 2.
26. Ibid, 3-5.
27. Ibid, 6. Also see Civil and Military Gazette, 13 December, 1940.
28. Ibid, 4. Also see Ian Talbot, "The Growth of the Muslim League in the Punjab", 1937-1946, 93.
29. In 1885, only two delegates from Punjab attended the first session of Indian National Congress (INC) held in Bombay. In 1891, only five delegates attended its session. Although when INC held its session in Lahore in 1893 and 1900, the Punjabis showed their enthusiasm. Ian Talbot., 92 and Qalb-i-Abid & Massarrat Abid, *Communalism in India: Role of Hindu Mahasaba*, 4.

30. Qalb-i-Abid and Massarrat Abid, 21.
31. Ibid, 21. For details see, Indian's Major Political Parties, IOR L/I/1/607, 2.
32. Almost all the leaders of the political parties of the Punjab opposed the Rowlett Act (also known as Black Act) of Feb 1919, as a result; the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre (also known as Amritsar Massacre) took place in 1919. Jinnah was very indignant and declared, "Jallianwala Bagh was a physical butchery". Sir Michael O' Dwyer was then the Governor of the Punjab and General Dwyer who put fire on the crowd. This incident is considered a great massacre after the World War-I, a large number of people lost their lives.
33. Ian Talbot, *Provincial Politics and the Pakistan Movement*, 82.
34. Ibid, 82-83.
35. Ibid, 83. Also see Qalb-i-Abid and Massarrat Abid, 6.
36. Ian Talbot, *Provincial Politics and the Pakistan Movement*, 96-102. For detail see Raghuvendra Tanwar, *Politics of Sharing Power: The Punjab Unionist Party, 1923-1947* (New Delhi: Manohar Publisher, 1999).
37. Ibid.
38. Raghuvendra Tanwar, *Politics of Sharing Power*, 156.
39. Qalb-i-Abid and Massarrat Abid, *Communalism in India*, 8-9.
40. Ibid, 11-12.
41. Ian Talbot, *Provincial Politics and the Pakistan Movement* (Karachi: OUP, 1988), 84-85. Also see Raghuvendra Tanwar, *Politics of Sharing Power: The Punjab Unionist Party, 1923-1947* (New Delhi: Manohar Publisher, 1999), 156.
42. Raghuvendra Tanwar, 156.
43. Gerald A. Heeger, 'The Growth of the Congress Movement in the Punjab', *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. XXXII, No.1, November 1972, 43. Also see Qalb-i-Abid and Massarrat Abid, *Communalism in India: The Role of Hindu Mahasaba*, 40-41.
44. The Nationalist Progressive Party led by Raja Narendra Nath was the only important political organization apart from the Unionists in the field of the contemporary political parties in the Punjab. The lack of interest in the proceedings of the elections the party could not achieve reasonable seats. For details see Raghuvendra Tanwar, *Politics of Sharing Power: The Punjab Unionist Party, 1923-1947* (New Delhi: Manohar Publisher, 1999), 71.
45. Gerald A. Heeger, 44.
46. *Tribune*, May 5, 1936.
47. In Haryana, out of nine Hindu seats, the Hindu Election Board (HEB) succeeded in winning only one, the Unionists seven, while one seat was

- won by an Independent candidate. Out of eight rural Hindu seats in Jallundher Division, Congress succeeded in two, the HEB in three; and Independent candidates were three. In Multan Division, the HEB won two of the three Hindu seats and one seat went to an independent candidate. In Lahore Division, the HEB won all three rural Hindu seats and in Rawalpindi Division HEB won the single rural Hindu seat. G. A. Heeger, 45.
48. Gerald A. Heeger, 45.
 49. Ibid, 45.
 50. For details see, Khalid Shamsul Hasan, *The Punjab Muslim League and the Unionists* (Karachi: Ushba Publishing International, 2005), 8.
 51. Ibid.
 52. Ibid. For details see, *PaisaAkhbar*, October 15, 1909.
 53. Ibid, 13-16.
 54. Ibid, 21-24 & 40.
 55. Ibid, 36-37.
 56. David Page, *Prelude to Partition* (New York: OUP, 1987), 169.
 57. Abdul Razzaq Shahid, "All-India Muslim League: Split and Reunification, 1927-30", *Pakistan Journal of History & Culture*, VOL, XXVIII, No.1. 2007, 156. Also see Khalid Shamsul Hasan, *The Punjab Muslim League and the Unionists* (Karachi: Ushba Publishing International, 2005), 36.
 58. Ibid, 160. Also see Khalid Shamsul Hasan, 36-41.
 59. Ibid, 158. Also see Khalid Shamsul Hasan, 41-42.
 60. Khalid Shamsul Hassan, 68.
 61. Ibid, 70-71.
 62. Ibid, 29.
 63. Ibid, 92.
 64. Ibid.
 65. The Majlis-i-Ahrar-i-Islam was founded in Lahore in 1929 by Chaudhary Afzal Haq. Its nucleus consisted of urban middle class Muslims some of whom were former Congressmen and had been associated with the Punjab Khilafate Committee. Its leadership was primarily religious. The Ahrars rose to prominence in the Kashmir Jihad Movement and Mosque Shaheedganj Issue. The Ahrar reflected a unique blend of political and religious multicultural representation in the Punjab Province. *Majlis-i-Ahrar* achieved two seats in the provincial elections of 1937 in the Punjab. For details see, Raghuvendra Tanwar, *Politics of Sharing Power: The Punjab Unionist Party, 1923-1947* (New Delhi: Manohar Publisher, 1999), 80. For details see Samina Awan, "Muslim Urban Politics in Colonial Punjab: Majlis-i-Ahrars Early Activism." *JPS*: 16:2. For more details see Samina Awan, *Political Islam*

- in *Colonial Punjab, Majlis-i-Ahrar 1929-1949* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2010).
66. The Bolsheviks Revolution also called the Russian Revolution of October of 1917, which paved a way to Communist Party led by Lenin to power. This revolution took place in 1917 when the labourers and the peasants of Russia revolted against the Bourgeois. As a result, the Proletariat (peasants–working class) powered Lenin and his revolutionaries were called ‘the Bolsheviks’ and the country got new name Soviet Union.
 67. Iftikhar Haider Malik, 47.
 68. Ibid, 47.
 69. Ian Talbot, “The Growth of the Muslim League in the Punjab, 1937-1946” 96.
 70. Iftikhar Haider Malik, 47.
 71. Afzal Haq, *Tarikh-i-Ahrar* (Lahore, n.d.), 8-9.
 72. P.N. Chopra, ed., *Indian's Struggle for Freedom: Role of Associated Movements*, Vol. II (Delhi, 1985), 346-347. For detail see Afzal Haq, *Tarikh-i-Ahrar* (Lahore, n.d.), 8-9.
 73. P.N. Chopra, ed., 348.
 74. Ibid.
 75. Ibid, 346.
 76. I. H. Malik, 47.
 77. Abdullah Malik, *Punjab Ki Siyasi Tehriken* (Lahore, 1971), 109-110. For detail see Afzal Haq, *Tarikh-i-Ahrar* (Lahore, n.d.), 8-9.
 78. It is important to note that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani (1835-1908) of Qadian was the founder of this Movement (Ahmedi Movement or Qadiani Movement). His father's name was Mirza Ghulam Murtaza who was very prominent and influential in Qadian in Gurdaspur District. The first name is derived from the founder of the sect, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, and the second from Qadian, a village in north-eastern Punjab where the sect had its headquarters till 1947. After the death of Ghulam Ahmad, Hakeem Nur-ud-Din (d. 1914) succeeded him as Khalifa-tul-Masih and after his death Mirza Bashir-ud-Din (1889-1965) son of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was elected as Khalifa-tul-Masih al Thani (second). See L.S. May, *The Evolution of Indo-Muslim Thought after 1857* (Lahore, 1970), 137,157. Also see, S. Lavan, *The Ahmadyaha Movement* (Delhi, 1974), 151. Also see Rafique Afzal, 42.
 79. The Ahrar campaign started in July 1931, when all India Kashmir Committee was organized to do relief work for the Kashmiri Muslims. Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmoud, was the spiritual head of the Ahmedies, was its president. The Ahrar propaganda determined the attitude of Muslim

- intelligentsia towards the Ahmedies. For details see *Inqilab*, May 6, September 10, 1933. Also see Rafique Afzal, 42.
80. I. H. Malik, 49.
 81. Owing to his close association with Zafrullah Khan and his stand against sectarian considerations, his sympathies were with the Ahmedis. It was probably due to the reason that the Ahmedis were better organized and being pro-British, more useful for Fazl-i-Husain and Unionist Party. Abdullah Malik, 209. Also see Afzal Haq, 184-186. For further details see, Janbaz Mirza, *Karwan-i-Ahrar* (Lahore, 1975), 179-183.
 82. P.N. Chopra, 360. Also see Rafique Afzal, 40-44.
 83. S. Lavan, *The Ahmadiyah Movement* (Delhi, 1974), 151. Also cited by, L.S. May, *The Evolution of Indo-Muslim Thought after 1857* (Lahore, 1970), 137,157.
 84. See Ian Talbot, 97.
 85. Zafrullah Khan was appointed as officiating member of Governor General's Executive Council in place of Fazl-i-Husain from June to October 1932. It raised a chorus of protests from the Ahrars who claimed that Allama Muhammad Iqbal should have been appointed instead. Fazl-i-Husain was criticized for abetting the creation of an Ahmedi imperium in imperio (state within a state). But he refuted the charge that he was disrupting the unity of the Muslims. For further details see Azim Husain, 314. Also see Rafique Afzal, 40-44.
 86. Fazl-i-Husain and the other Unionists considered Ahrars as their strong rivals. On the other hand, the Ahrars believed that Fazl-i-Husain was one of the secret instigators of Shahidganj agitation. His object was to involve the Ahrars in agitation. The latter were put in a dilemma as they would not be able to participate in the impending general elections. See Sajjad Zaheer, *Light on League-Unionist Conflict* (Bombay, 1944), 16.
 87. Sajjad Zaheer, *Light on League-Unionist Conflict* (Bombay, 1944), 16.
 88. The Ahrar Movement in the Punjab 1931-1938. Secret Report from C.I.D., Punjab, October 10, 1938, 45-46. Also see David Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam*, 101.
 89. P.N. Chopra, 367.
 90. Ikram Ali Malik, ed., *A Book of Readings on the History of Punjab 1799-1947* (Lahore: 1985), 559.
 91. Provincial Reports, Vol., I, 1936-37, Linlithgow Collection, F 125/112 (NDC, M.U.ACC. No. 596).
 92. Y.B. Mathur, *Muslims and Changing India* (Delhi, 1972), 110.
 93. I. H. Malik, 48.

94. W. Cantwell Smith, *Modern Islam in India*, 262-263. Also see, K. C. Yadav, *Election in Punjab: 1920-1947* (Tokyo: Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, 1981), 133-134.
95. Maulana Zafar Ali Khan (1873–1956) was an influential leader and a journalist of a longer standing and of a more active career. He was the editor of the daily 'Zamindar' which was an influential Urdu newspaper. Earlier, he played an active role in the Khilafat Movement during which he was prosecuted and sentenced to five years' transportation. After this he played an important role in Majlis-i-Ahrar and later on established his own political party, 'the Majlis-i-Ittehad-i-Millat'. Maulana Zafar Ali Khan fostered many movements such as *Majlis-i-Ittehad-i-Millat* (MIM), in 1935 as well as *Neeli Posh Tehreek*. He faced many trials and tribulations throughout his political career. He injected a new life among the freedom lovers of India. He made laborious efforts for the success of All India Muslim League which faced opposition from the landlords; especially who belonged to the Unionist Party in Punjab Province. He also rendered great services in the political history of the Pakistan Movement. He died on November 27, 1956 and was buried at Karamabad, Wazirabad, in Punjab.
96. The Ahrar Movement in the Punjab 1931-1938, Secret Report, 47.
97. Pir Jammal Ali Shah (1834-1951), (Ali Pur Sayyedan Sharif, District Narowal, Punjab); was the Sajjada Nashin of Chishti revivalist shrine at Ali Pur. He had close ties with Unionists circle including Mir Maqbool Mahmood. He was amongst the aggrieved leaders of the Shahidganj Mosque agitation in 1935-36 and he left for pilgrimage to Mecca. After his return from Mecca, he supported Muslim League for Freedom Movement. For details see, David Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 1988), 103-105.
98. The Ahrar Movement in the Punjab 1931-1938, Secret Report, 47-50.
99. Ibid, 50.
100. Ibid.
101. I. H. Malik, 48. Also see Gilmartin, 100-107.
102. See, K. C. Yadav, *Election in Punjab: 1920-1947* (Tokyo: Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, 1981), 133-134.
103. Allama Inayatullah Khan Mashriqi (1888-1963, the Scholar of the East), was the son of Ata Muhammad Khan, a petition-writer of Amritsar. He distinguished himself at Cambridge and had served in the Indian Educational Service. He was Head Master of the Government High School Peshawar, before he entered the arena of politics. In 1931, he founded the Khaksar Party in Ichhra, a suburb of Lahore. Khaksar Party, basically a social movement, was launched from Ichhra. The main objectives of this

- movement were to get freedom of India from the British rule and to establish a Hindu-Muslim government in India. Secret Report, from J.T.M. Bennett, No. 2214-54-G.D.S.B.D.1.G., of police about Khaksar Movement, 13. Also see India's major political parties, IOR L/1/1/607, 8. For further details see I. H. Malik, *Sikandar Hayat Khan: A Political Biography*, 64-65. Also see Y.B., Mathur, *Growth of Muslim Politics in India* (Delhi, 1972), 216-217. For more details see, De Amalendu, *History of the Khaksar Movement in India, 1931-1947* (Calcutta: Parul Prakashani, 2009).
104. M. Rafique Afzal, 44-46.
 105. W.C. Smith, 273.
 106. Agha Bashir, *The Khaksar Movement: Past and Present* (Lahore, n.d.), 13-15. Also see Rafique Afzal, 44-46.
 107. See Rafique Afzal, 45.
 108. Secret Report, from J.T.M. Bennett, 13.
 109. Rafique Afzal, 46.
 110. Ibid.
 111. The British Government's apprehension was true to some extent because there were about 7,397 Khaksars, including 649 *Janbaz* (suicide squad). During 1936, there were 23 military camps in Punjab. Mock fights in fact formed the most important activity of Khaksars during this period. See Rafique Afzal, 45-47. Secret Report, from J.T.M. Bennett, 21. Letter from H. Craik to Linlithgow, April 22, 1940, serial No. 16.
 112. Rafique Afzal, *Political Parties in Pakistan*, 47-48.
 113. The first Singh Sabha was founded in Amritsar in 1873. After six years its rival branch was founded in Lahore. The Singh Sabhas' main objectives were to spread education amongst the Sikh communities and to restore Sikhism to its pristine purity. At the beginning of the twentieth century the Singh Sabhas were merging into the Chief Khalsa Diwan. For details see, Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj, 1849-1947* (Delhi: 1988), 60 and Raghuvendra Tanwar, *Politics of Sharing Power*, 38.
 114. Ibid.
 115. The main objective of the Chief Khalsa Diwan was to represent the Sikhs' political demands to the Government. With the passage of time its influence was spread in various provinces of the sub-continent and its branches were also established. The Chief Khalsa Diwan was impeccably loyal to the British Government. For details see, Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj*, 60-61.
 116. Raghuvendra Tanwar, *Politics of Sharing Power*, 38.
 117. Apart from the Congress, the other important political organizations that were relatively active in the Punjab were 'Central Sikh League' and 'the

- Akali Dal'. The Central Sikh League was founded in 1919 at Amritsar. It was closely associated with the Congress and the objectives were the political, religious and the protection of the rights of the Sikh community.
118. Raghuvendra Tanwar, *Politics of Sharing Power*, 41.
 119. *Tribune*, July 23, 1921.
 120. Master Tara Singh (1885-1967) was the chief spokesman of the Sikh community in the British Punjab. Master Tara, a Khatri Sikh who emerged to prominence in the Akali Dal during the Gurdwara Reform Movement. He had many political differences with the Unionist Party and he continued with it throughout his career.
 121. Akali Dal (AD) was also the representative party of Sikh community. It was established on 14th December 1920. Sardar Sarmukh Singh Chubbal, the first President, organized Akali Dal properly. However, it remained under the influence of Master Tara Singh. This party got eleven seats in the provincial election of 1937 in the Punjab Province. See Raghuvendra Tanwar, *Politics of Sharing Power*, 80.
 122. Khalsa Nationalist Party (KNP) was established by two Sikhs; Sir Sundar Singh Majithia and Sir Jogendra Singh in 1936. They were of the view that they would contest the legislative elections from Khalsa Party's platform under the new scheme of reforms which were introduced by the British Government under the Indian Act of 1935. The membership of the party was open for all those who were above twenty one years of age. The central headquarter of party was in Amritsar. Khalsa Nationalist Party was the representative of the Sikh community and in its manifesto it claimed that it was the custodian of fundamental rights of the Sikhs. It achieved 13 seats in the provincial elections of 1937 in the British Punjab. See Raghuvendra Tanwar, *Politics of Sharing Power*, 80.
 123. Khalid Shamshul Hasan, *The Punjab Muslim League and the Unionists* (Karachi: Ushba Publishing International, 2005), 93. See, K. C. Yadav, *Election in Punjab: 1920-1947* (Tokyo: Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, 1981), 133-134.
 124. The national leadership of the Congress was spearheading the fight for freedom from British rule in the Punjab which was in many ways a cornerstone. The party leaders projected a total lack of objectivity. As a result, while the conservative flocked of the Hindu *Mahasabha* radicals shifted to the Naujawan Bharat Sabha. See Tanwar, 78.
 125. The Ghadr Party had been founded in the United States by Har Dayal and Sohan Singh Bhanka in 1913 with the aim of overthrowing British rule from the sub-continent. Some Ghadrites returned to the Punjab on the outbreak of war, hoping to spark off a mass uprising. They made little head way,

- however, mainly because of the invaluable support which the Sikh landowners and *Zaildars* gave the British authorities in their policing of the Movement. Ian Talbot, *Provincial Politics and the Pakistan Movement* (Karachi: OUP, 1988), 104.
126. Bhagat Singh (1907-1931) was a prominent Indian nationalist who considered as one of the most influential revolutionary of the Punjab Politics. He played an important role in the Independence Movement. He belongs to a Sikh *Jat* family and was also associated with Naujawan Bharat Sabha and Kirti Kissan Party.
 127. D.1. Chaudhry, 'Revolutionary Movement in Punjab 1927-1930', Proceedings of Punjab History Conference (Patiala), Punjab Historical Studies Department, Punjabi University, 1982, 377.
 128. The Simon Commission was announced by the British Government on 8th November 1927 under the chairmanship of Sir John Simon to study the progress of the 'Reforms of the 1919' and to formulate principles for further political developments in India. The Simon Commission reached India in 1928. The Commission was everywhere badly treated by slogan chanting crowds and banners bearings the slogan 'SIMON GO BACK'. Jinnah boycotted the Commission and called it "a butchery of our souls". For details see, Khalid Shamsul Hasan, *The Punjab Muslim League and the Unionists* (Karachi: Ushba Publishing International, 2005), 38-43.
 129. Kirti Kissan Party was formed in Punjab in 1926 by Sonhan Singh Josh included many Ghadrtes. The Party was sponsored by Ghadrtes of the Ghadr Party. Its first Conference was held in Lyallpur in 1928. For details see, Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India 1885-1947* (Madras: McMillan, 1990), 250-251.
 130. Sir Chottu Ram (1881-1945) was known as a famous politician in the Punjab as well as a champion of rural interests. Born in Rohtak District, his father was a petty businessman belonging to the *Jat Biradari*. Chhotu Ram was awarded a merit scholarship to St. Stephen's College, a prestigious educational institution of Delhi, in 1905, from where he graduated. Plodding along small jobs to earn a livelihood, he finally secured his law degree from the Agra Law College in 1911, and started his law practice at Agra but ultimately shifted to Rohtak. After 1920, Sir. Chottu Ram formulated a non-sectarian group of peasants. He was also the co-founder of the Punjab National Unionist Party which was established in 1923. A prolific writer, his writings made the petty peasants conscious of their rights. He was a practical man and his maturity of thought was a great boon for Fazl-i-Husain who made him Minister for Agriculture in 1923. Chhotu Ram proved a bulwark for Fazl-i-Husain. After Fazl-i-Husain's death in 1936, he

- became Minister for Development and finally appointed a Minister of Revenue under Sikandar's Ministry in Punjab Cabinet. He worked as a Minister of Revenue till his death in 1945. For detailed study, see Khalid Shamsul Hasan, *The Punjab Muslim League and the Unionists: An Account Based on the Documents in the Shamsul Hasan Collection* (Karachi: Ushba Publishing International, 2005), 31-32. Also see, Sikandar Hayat, *The Charismatic Leader: Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the Creation of Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2008), 148. For more details see, Madan Gopal, *Sir Chhotu Ram: A Political Biography* (Delhi: B.R. Publishing Corp., 1977), 60 and Raguvindra Tanwar, 58. See, Ian Talbot.104.
131. Malik Khizr Hayat Tiwana (Khushab; 1900-1975) was the son of Nawab Malik Sir Umar Hayat Khan Tiwana (1875-1944), who was the landlord of Shahpur District in Punjab. Khizr Tiwana upheld the tradition of loyalty with the British. He became the Minister of Public Works of Punjab 1937-42 in Sikandar's Cabinet. After the death of Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan in 1942, Khizr Tiwana became the Premier of Punjab, 1942-47. For details See, Ian Talbot, *Khizar Tiwana: The Punjab Unionist Party and the Partition of India* (London: Curzon Press, 1996).
 132. Khizr Hayat Khan Tiwana, "The 1937 Election and Sikandar Jinnah Pact', The Panjab Past and Present", Vol. X-II, October 1976, 364.
 133. Sir Fazl-i-Husain (1877-1936), belonged to Batala District Gurdaspur. He was the son of Khan Bahadar Mian Husain Bakhsh, who was distinguished personality during the reign of Sikhs. Fazal-i-Husain got the degree of Bar-at-Law from London. He was the founder of Punjab National Unionist Party in 1923. Sir Fazl-i-Husain strengthened his position step by step and followed a strategy, which the British had perfected after years of experimentation. In the early years of British rule in India, they discouraged the formation of regional and factional organizations as they usually became focal points for undertaking agitation to redress local grievances. Later on, they encouraged formation of country-wide organizations, which could not be influenced by regional politics and could only deal with larger issues. As far as the Unionist Party was concerned, the objective of its creation was very well thought out. This was to act as a force to dissipate and disintegrate the energies and capabilities of Muslim of the Punjab and to restrain them from mingling with mainstream Muslim politics. For detailed study, see Khalid Shamsul Hasan, *The Punjab Muslim League and the Unionists: An Account Based on the Documents in the Shamsul Hasan Collection* (Karachi: Ushba Publishing International, 2005), 29-30. For further study, see Azim Husain., *Mian Fazl-i-Husain: A Political Biography* (Bombay: Longsman, 1946).

134. According to this resolution All India Muslim League (AIML) authorized M.A. Jinnah to constitute a Parliamentary Board in order to strengthen the Muslim community and to secure for Muslims their proper and effective share in the Provincial Governments. According to this resolution, it was essential that Muslims should organize themselves as one party with an advanced and progressive program, and the AIML should take steps to contest the approaching provincial elections.
135. *Inqilab*, June 16, 1936.
136. Ian Talbot, "The Growth of the Muslim League in the Punjab, 1937-1946" 104-108.
137. In fact, Fazl-i-Husain wanted to see parties, similar to Punjab National Unionist Party, emerge in Sindh and N.W.F.P. (present Khyber Pakhtoonkhaw-KPK) and encouraged the formation of the National Agriculturists Party in the U.P. For details see, Imran Ali, *Punjab Politics in Decade before Partition* (Lahore: 1975), 8.
138. Kirpal Singh, "Genesis of Partition of the Punjab 1947", Punjab Past and Present", Vol. V-II, October 1971, 404.
139. Khizr Hayat, 363.
140. Ian Talbot, *Provincial Politics and the Pakistan Movement* (Karachi: OUP, 1988), 87.
141. Allama Muhammad Iqbal wrote: "Daultana saw me yesterday evening. He tells me that the Muslim members of the Unionist Party are prepared to make the following declaration: That in all matters specific to the Muslim community as an all India minority, they will be bound by the decisions of the AIML and will not make any (independent) pact with any non-Muslim group in the Provincial Assembly, provided the League (Provincial) makes the following declaration, that those returned to the Provincial Assembly on the League ticket will cooperate with the party or group which has the largest number of Muslims". Muhammad Ashraf, ed., *Letters of Iqbal to Jinnah* (Lahore, 1942), 11.
142. Madan Gopal, 93.
143. *Ibid*, 93.
144. Ashiq Husain Batalvi, *Iqbal kay Akhari Do Saal*, 309, See for details Azim Husain, *Fazl-i-Husain: A Political Biography*, 333-335.
145. I. H. Malik, 47.
146. *Ibid*, 310-311.
147. *Ibid*, 48.
148. Azim Husain, 306. Also see Raguvindra Tanwar, 71.
149. *Ibid*, 310. Also see Raguvindra Tanwar, 79.

150. Ibid, 310-311. Also see Raguvindra Tanwar, 79.
151. Fazl-i-Husain to Sikandar Hayat, May 6, 1936, in Waheed Ahmad, ed., *Letters of Mian Fazl-i-Husain* (Lahore: 1976), 534.
152. Azim Husain, 311.
153. See *Inqilab*, May 6, 1936.
154. Azim-Husain, 311.
155. Ibid, 311.
156. For details see Samina Awan, *Political Islam in Colonial Punjab, Majlis-i-Ahrar 1929-1949* (Karachi: OUP, 2010).
157. Khalid Shamshul Hasan, *The Punjab Muslim League and the Unionists* (Karachi: Ushba Publishing International, 2005), 56-75.
158. Fazl-i-Husain to Aga Khan, June 22, 1936, in Waheed Ahmad, ed., 597. Also see Ian Talbot, *Provincial Politics and the Pakistan Movement* (Karachi: OUP, 1988), 82.
159. Fazl-i-Husain worked hard to undertake the extraordinary responsibilities and in spite of his ill health, decided to make an elaborate tour covering six districts in order to establish election offices and to settle the disputes between various candidates. Moreover, he spent quite some time in checking files on daily basis, attending to officials and other visitors, and discussing the affairs of the education department. The strain of work further damaged his ill health and he became seriously ill. He lay in this condition for the next eight days and at last expired on July 9, 1936. According to daily *Inqilab*, he died at 10.30 in the night. His funeral prayers were held on July 10, 1936, at 8.30 A.M. and then his dead body was carried to Batala for burial. *Inqilab* (Lahore), July 11, 1936. Commenting upon the death of Fazl-i-Husain, *The Eastern Times* (Lahore) of July 11, 1936, lamented that "Mian Sahib was incomparably the greatest and most successful statesman and politician of modern India". Other newspapers such as *People* (Lahore), *Daily Herald*, *Tribune*, and *Inqilab*, expressed the same feelings. On October 26, 1936, the Punjab Legislative Council (PLC) moved a resolution in honour of late Fazli-Husain. Sikandar admired him and said that "Sir Fazl-i-Husain was not only a leader, but a philosopher, friend and a guide". Sikandar's son Sardar Shaukat Hayat Khan said, "Sir Fazl-i-Husain's only possession was a little land which he had inherited and a small house worth about Rs. 30,000 which he had built, from his savings during his law-practice". For details See, Shaukat Hayat Khan, *The Nation that Lost Its Soul* (Lahore, 1995), 89. Gokul Chand Narang said, "Sir Fazl-i-Husain's life was his sense of the practical". M.A. Ghani said, "He was certainly a great statesman, a great administrator and a great politician in this land of five rivers". Other political leaders expressed their sentiments

- on the same lines. *The Eastern Times*, July 11, 1936, Information Department Government of the Punjab, Report on Newspapers and Periodicals in the Punjab, Lahore, 1936, 293. PLCD, October 26, 1936.
160. Fazl-i-Husain had dominated the Punjab politics for sixteen years (1921-1936) and also played a remarkable role in Indian politics during his stay at Delhi. He possessed an unlimited capacity of head and heart and there were few who could be of his calibre in political sagacity. He spent about 35 years (1901-1936) of active political life and made valuable contribution to Punjab's political evolution as a social reformer, an educationist, a statesman, and an administrator. On July 10, 1936, the Unionist Party met to condole on the death of Fazl-i-Husain and Sikandar Hayat was requested to return to Punjab. Now Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan was the head of the Unionist Party which was also considered most influential and second powerful leader after the demise of Sir Fazal-i-Husain. Sikandar also proved himself a great politician, a successful administrator, an ambassador of communal harmony as compared to his predecessor. Later on, after the provincial elections of 1936-37, Sikandar became as the first Premier of the Punjab. See *Inqilab*, July 14, 1936.
161. *Tribune*, July 23, 1936, Information Department, Government of Punjab, Report on Newspapers and Periodicals in the Punjab, Lahore, 1936. 312.
162. I. H. Malik, 48.
163. According to *Inqilab*, Malik Muzaffar had proceeded on four months leave, Sikandar Hayat was, therefore, appointed 'Revenue Member' in his place and that he would take over charge on October 20, 1936. *Inqilab*, October 2, 1936.
164. Ian Talbot, *Provincial Politics and the Pakistan Movement* (Karachi: OUP, 1988), 86-88.
165. *Ibid*, 79-91.
166. *Ibid*, 87.
167. Khalid Shamshul Hasan, 93. For details see, K. C. Yadav, *Election in Punjab: 1920-1947* (Tokyo: Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, 1981), 133-134.
168. Ian Talbot, *Provincial Politics and the Pakistan Movement* (Karachi: OUP, 1988), 87-91.