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THE AGRARIAN REFORMS OF THE UNIONIST PARTY UNDER SIKANDAR'S MINISTRY AND THE REACTION OF THE OPPOSITION PARTIES IN THE PUNJAB POLITICS

Abstract:

This research article aims to explore the Agrarian Reforms of the Unionist Party under Sikandar's Ministry in the Punjab Politics. The Unionist Party had an agenda to achieve through the improvement of rural areas and to uplift the deteriorating condition of the 'Agrarian Class'. To achieve this end, Sikandar Hayat Khan, in accordance of his Party's manifesto, introduced the Agrarian Reforms to facilitate the major communities of the British Punjab such as; the Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs, who would live in a complete communal harmony to flourish and become prosperous in the province. This study endeavors to prove that the main priority of the Unionist Party about the Agrarian Reforms was just to fulfill the demands of the major communities of the Punjab or in other words, its fundamental purpose was the rural development within the province. Further, this article depicts the performance of the Unionist Party for the agriculturists' welfare and the protection of the rural class and its interests. Moreover, it investigates the demands, claims and the resentment of the opposition and its reactions against the Agrarian Reforms during Sikandar's Ministry. In addition to this, this research intends to explore the Provincial Muslim League's immense favor for the Sikandar's Ministry, not only regarding the communal issues but also to support the Unionists' Agrarian Reforms. It also deals with the Sikandar's accommodative behavior and his administrative skills to keep the Punjabi communities in perfect harmony, shedding light on, whether all the classes were fully satisfied with the performance of the Punjab Premier or how much he remained successful in protecting the interests of the rural and backward societies of the Punjab province.

Keywords: Punjab Politics, Sikandar's Ministry, Agrarian Reforms, Opposition's Reaction, Challenges and Prospects, Unionists' Policy.

Introduction

The word 'Reform' has its etymological roots to the Latin expression 'reform' that means the improvement or amendment of what is wrong, corrupt, unsatisfactory, etc.¹¹ The use of the word in this way appeared in the late 18th century and it is believed that it originated from Christopher Wyvill's association movement which identified the 'Parliamentary Reforms' as its primary aim. Reforms are generally

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distinguished from ‘Revolution’² as the latter means basic or radical change; whereas the former stands just for fine tuning or at most redressing serious wrongs without altering the fundamentals of the system. Reforms seek to improve the system as it stands never to overthrow it completely, whether it would be the government or a group of people themselves.³

The term ‘Agrarian Reforms’ primarily refers to the redistribution of the agricultural production and it is for the existing public or private landlords, and the peasants, tenants, tillers who work on such lands as workers without ownership. The lack of ownership also creates reservations for the landless class regarding the protection of their rights. These reservations create more questions for this class and put them in a confusing situation regarding the investment in the land. Moreover, they suffer lack of motivation, feel powerless and also worry about their status in the rural areas. Through such reforms, huge benefits are bestowed upon the rural classes such as the reduction of rural poverty, improvement of nutrition, increased crop production and appeasing of social unrest. Further, these reforms minimize the challenges of urban migration by the villagers due to the backward conditions of the rural areas.⁴ As a result, these reforms help to improve the condition of rural population and also ensure the safety and security of their rights, thus, removing their poverty, strengthening its community and maintaining a social equality and equilibrium among the societies.⁵ The cultivators had to give almost half of the total production of the land as a tax, but generally it considered a sheer injustice and subsequently peasants were thrown into pathetic conditions.⁶ It was an arrangement with the rural community because general ownership of the land prevailed in the Punjab and other regions.⁷

As far as the case of the Punjab is concerned, the Unionist Party was the first to cater for the needs of the rural population by extending the beneficent activities of the Government for rural and also well deserving backward areas of the Punjab province. The schemes for rural development and elevation of the peasantry were the first initiative launched in the Punjab by the Unionist Party before any other province or political organization. When the Unionist Party contested the elections of 1936-37 and secured a grand victory; the rural members entered to the legislature without any delay and assembled to establish a ‘Unionist Group’ (a council of landlords or zamindars), the attraction and glamour of their Party program made their success possible in the elections.⁸ Actually, they influenced the voters economically, socially and religiously during their election campaign. Most of the members of the Punjab Legislative Council who joined them were powerful and influential landlords and *pirs* who facilitated the British district officials, Zaildars as well as honorary Magistrates.⁹ The independent candidates also made hay while the sun shone and declared their loyalties to the Unionist Party. In final count, the Unionist Party claimed the allegiance of 99 out of the 175 Assembly members.¹⁰ The Provincial Muslim League managed only two seats in the elections while the Unionist’s supremacy in the countryside was established and its greatest strength laid in the rural Muslim constituencies as it got 73 out of the 75 rural Muslims seats.¹¹ However, all except one of the rural Hindu *jat* seats in the Ambala Division which was the majority area of the *jat* Zamindars (land-owners) was won by Unionist Party.¹² Thus, the rural voters remained under the influence of powerful landlords, *pirs* and *sajjada nashins* like the previous

practice in the Legislative elections.¹³ The Khalsa Nationalist Party with thirteen Sikh members and the Akali Dal with eleven numbers decided to support the Unionists' Government in the Punjab.¹⁴

After taking the office as the Premier of the Punjab on 1st April 1937, Sir Sikandar built up a personal circle within the Punjab Assembly (majority of big Zamindars) that the Governor Emerson (1881-1962) was impressed since he became crucial for the Party's success and to hold the Punjab.¹⁵ The ministers endorsed this dexterity and agility in the first year of their presentation and contribution. In April 1938, the Governor also wrote to the Viceroy that the success of the Punjab Government was largely dependent on the popularity and personality of Sir Sikandar and it would be very difficult to replace him, if he was not able to carry the Premiership for any reason.¹⁶ On assumption of office, Sikandar delivered his speech; he started by explaining his constraints and difficulties:¹⁷ "the Punjab Cabinet is under no delusion as the nature and extent of the limitations and restrictions which the Government of India Act imposed on the autonomy of the provincial sphere. Nevertheless, in pursuance of the clearly expressed wish of the electorate, it has undertaken the task of running the administration and securing the utmost good out of the new constitution".¹⁸ According to him, in order to provide the requisite relief to the peasantry and remove the problem of unemployment, it would be necessary to explore fresh avenues and examine the existing sources of revenue with a view to augmenting the income to the extent which would enable them to take appreciable measures to mitigate the burden of the poor classes.¹⁹ After 1937, the first legislative move of the Unionist Party was the exclusion of clause from the Government of India Act of 1935, which defines 'the disqualification of honorary magistrates, sub-registrars and *Zaildars* from the election'.²⁰ The Punjab Premier Sir Sikandar also wanted to introduce reformatory plans and reforms regarding the development and welfare of the province.

The Agrarian Reforms of the Unionist Party under Sikandar's Ministry

Sir Chhotu Ram and Sir Sikandar were well aware of the Party's victory which was mostly based on the standing of its rural candidates and that only a third of those enfranchised had actually voted to the Unionists.²¹ They, therefore, sought to widen the circle of the Unionists' support by establishing a rural 'Zamindar League Organization' and supported to introduce the program of Agrarian Reforms.²² This stance was the establishment of the "Zamindara Raj" in the Punjab province and they claimed that five out of six ministers were '*Pucca*' or '*Taqsalī Zamindars*' (means the landowners of vast tracts of land) and also maintained a communal balance in the Cabinet.²³ Sikandar Hayat continued to bring administrative, constructive and practical measures during his ministry after assuming the office as the Premier of the Punjab. He was quite eager to introduce the reforms for the welfare of the Punjabi community of the province.²⁴ He also provided land grants in the Canal Colonies to his supporters (like his close ally Nawab Mehr Shah etc.).²⁵ The Muslim League initially criticized Unionist Party for giving such grants exclusively as a reward for the political loyalty. In spite of this criticism by the rivals, the Unionists continued its policy agenda of decreasing the influence of the moneylenders. The Unionist Party allocated a large portion of budget within available resources to uplift the rural community.²⁶ Nevertheless, it

did not bring forward any radical step about Agrarian Reforms as these were unpleasant to its landed elite and *pirs*' supporters.²⁷

The need for the Agrarian Reforms had been eagerly pushed by Sir Chhotu Ram whose experience in the rural Punjab politics and deep influence amongst the Haryana *Jats biradary* was highly valued by Sir Sikandar.²⁸ Sir Chhotu Ram was committed to grasp the chance provided by the Unionist Party in electoral success for the implementation of the policies which he had been supporting for the last twenty years through his message in the columns of '*Jat Gazette*'.²⁹ Sir Sikandar, although more vigilant than Sir Chhotu Ram, was also passionate and enthusiastic for the Agrarian Reforms.³⁰ He believed that the major problems of the Punjab province were economic rather than religious or communal and the Unionists were capable enough to deal with these issues.³¹ Chhotu Ram devoted his career to uplift the peasants' social and economic status and to decrease the moneylenders' influence in the Punjab.³²

Sikandar Hayat, as mentioned earlier, vehemently believed in the development of rural areas. Early in 1937, he advised the Unionist Ministers to launch a Six-Year Plan of rural development which allocated money for the betterment of the education and to establish the schools.³³ However, the agenda of the reforms was initiated in 1937-38, by the Punjab Premier, from the platform of the Unionist Party, introduced a Six-Year Program for the development of remote areas, model farms, establishment of the schools, health care units, advanced sanitation and the drainage system.³⁴ In this regard, the Unionist Government passed many 'Agrarian Bills' in the mid of 1938, for the betterment of the agriculturalists and for the benefit of massive agrarian population of the Punjab province.³⁵ According to Ian Talbot, the Agrarian Program's centerpiece was provided by the laws introduced during the 1938 summer session of the Punjab Assembly. As land reform was unpalatable to the Unionist Party's elite supporters, Chhotu Ram was again given his head in pursuing the moneylenders and traders.³⁶ The Punjab Premier would have liked to table these measures much earlier, but due to the controversy over the Sikandar-Jinnah Pact in 1937, the matter was intentionally delayed.³⁷ However, the Sikandar's Ministry passed a number of Acts to fulfill its promise of 'lightening the burden of the peasantry and uplifting the backward classes' through its agrarian program, firstly introduced as the 'Agrarian Bills'.

The Agrarian Bills of the Unionist Party (The Golden Laws)

In fact, with the introduction of 'Provincial Autonomy', the ministry formed by the Unionists had comparatively more free hand to accomplish its task and pursue its Agrarian Reforms. The issue of debts was the top priority for the Unionist Party as it had been its main program and focal theme since its inception.³⁸ These 'Agrarian Bills' were: i) 'The Punjab Alienation of Land Second Amendment Bill', (Act X of 1938) commonly known as the Benami Transactions Bill³⁹ which empowered the Deputy Commissioner to declare all transactions null and void, if these were found to be in violation of the original Act.⁴⁰ This bill was passed by the Assembly on 16th July 1938 and received the Governor's assent on 23rd February 1939; ii) 'The Punjab Registration of Moneylenders Bill'⁴¹ (16th July 1938) was passed in order to establish effective control over the production of the money lending by convincing moneylenders to get licenses and to curb the

influence of moneylenders, and this bill came into effect from 15th June 1939;⁴² iii) 'The Punjab Restitution of Mortgaged Lands Bill' (21st July 1938) in order to terminate old mortgages of land (effected before June 8, 1901 and still subsisting) on payment of a reasonable compensation, when necessary by the mortgager to the mortgagee. These legislative ratifications attacked the moneylender's position by closing the excuses in the Land Alienation Act of 1901;⁴³ iv) 'The Punjab Relief of Indebtedness Bill'; this bill determined the percentage of debts.⁴⁴ It further provided that no decree or claim could be passed against an agriculturist debtor for any sum more than twice the original amount; v) 'The Punjab Agricultural Markets Products Bill 1939',⁴⁵ popularly known as the 'Mandi Act' mainly intended to save the growers of agriculture's production from different malpractices of brokers and shopkeepers. This bill was passed by the Assembly on 2nd February 1939.⁴⁶

Furthermore, the Unionist's Ministry took many steps to fulfill its promise to ease the burden of the poor cultivators and uplifting the peasantry classes. The ministry established 'Debt Cancellation Boards' at district level to reduce the burden of loans of the farmers and tenants. To establish these boards in all the districts which scaled down agriculturalists debts from 40 million to 15 million, the role of the Debt Conciliation Boards was also further streamlined by this Act.⁴⁷ The Debt Conciliation Boards earlier came into existence under the Punjab Relief of Indebtedness Act, 1935, with such Boards being set up in each district. The objective of the Boards was to settle debts amicably and fairly. The new Act, however, had provided that if creditors failed to appear before these Boards or failed to prove their claims by their documents, the case of the creditors against the debtors was to be discharged.⁴⁸ Besides, a provision in the Act added that if a creditor refused to accept the settlement decision of these Boards, he would not be able to claim any interest on the amount after the date of the decision of the Board.⁴⁹ While these Boards provided much needed relief to the debt-ridden peasantry of the Punjab at the same time, they also enabled evasive and dishonest debtors to avoid paying genuine and fair creditors.⁵⁰ The Act was an important legislative measure in the history of debt relief. Chhotu Ram, as usual, provided a lead in the forceful defense of its provisions.⁵¹ Sohan Singh Josh was among the strong opponents saying that most provisions of the Act were aimed to benefit the big farmers.⁵²

The Unionist Ministry also issued a notification under Section 61 of the Civil Procedure Code which exempted the whole of the crop of an agriculturalist debtor and a proportion of the yield of his grain crop from attachment in the execution of civil decrees.⁵³ As mentioned earlier, the Provincial Government was against dishonesty done under *benami* transactions; 'The Punjab Alienation of Land Second Amendment Bill' addressed that issue and therefore closed hitherto the loopholes created by the *benami* transactions.⁵⁴ This amendment not only plugged the loopholes in the 1900 Legislation, but made all the previous *benami* transactions null and void.⁵⁵ "The Punjab Restitution of Mortgaged Lands Bill" also compelled the moneylenders to obtain licenses, to curb the influence of moneylenders and to control the business, it was like an accountability system in the Unionists Legislations.⁵⁶ The Sikh and the Hindu moneylenders claimed that it was just a cloak for the confiscation of their lands.⁵⁷ They wanted to include the transactions relating to the agriculturalist moneylender classes which had been

grown-up after the 1900 Act. However, this demand of the both communities was finally rejected. As a result, over 200, 000 Sikhs and Hindus returned, and about 700, 000 acres were transferred to their real owners.⁵⁸ Sunder Singh Majithia echoed Chhotu Ram's words when describing the need to defend the cultivators from the *Bania*. The former, possessed *lathi* which could break all other *lathis* this was his *behi* (account book) and the *lathi* of the *zamindar* is powerless to shield him from the *lathi* of *Bania*.⁵⁹ Meanwhile, a conference was held by the Unionists at Lyallpur (Present Faisalabad), regarding above mentioned issues and to get a vote of confidence from the masses and also the objective was to remove and resolve the conflicts and controversies among the communities of the province.

All Punjab Zamindara Conference under Sikandar's Ministry at Lyallpur

The Punjab's Premier, Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan arrived at Lyallpur along with Malik Khizr Hayat Tiwana and the other Unionist Ministers (Sikandar's Cabinet) on the evening of 3rd September, he reached there by train from Lahore. The crowded station of Lyallpur was decorated with 'Union Jacks' (Unionists Flags) and bunting.⁶⁰ The conference was organized by Sir Chhotu Ram and Sir Sikandar from the platform of the Unionist Party at Lyallpur, which was held in September 4, 1938, in which more than 150, 000 agriculturalists (including Kisan and Zamindars) expressed their support for these 'Agrarian Bills' which, later on, were called as the 'Golden Acts' or 'Golden Laws' and also as the 'Golden Bills'.⁶¹ The Conference commenced shortly afterwards in a huge 'Pandal' which had been prepared on the 'Dusehra' ground at Lyallpur. Khizar Tiwana took his seat on the platform but this was very much Chhotu Ram's and Sikandar's show.⁶² They launched a spirited defense of the 'Golden Bills' before an audience of the Hindus, Muslims and Sikh *Jats*, which were nearly getting suffocated with the heat, despite the constant whirring of 200 electric fans.⁶³ Sunder Singh Majithia severely rebuffed the charge that he was betraying his Sikh faith by upholding the interests of the Sikh cultivators against their non-agriculturalist brethren.⁶⁴ To gain credit and to popularize their rural party, the Punjab Premier himself and his ministers like Chhotu Ram and Mian Abdul Haye made extensive tours of the province.⁶⁵ Their speeches explained the benefits of these legislations for the peasants, who were mostly ignorant and illiterate.⁶⁶

The Punjab Premier, Sir Sikandar advised to establish a network of the Unionist branches which would create a locus of power independent of the rural chieftains. The trick was to work through them to found an organization which might later be used to punch them into line.⁶⁷ The task proved beyond him, although a beginning had been made in October 1937. The invitation to hold a Zamindara League meeting at the residence of the Punjab Muslim Leagues' President Mian Iftikhar Hussain Mamdot at Mamdot Villa, Lahore, was in fact issued under the signature of Nawab Allah Bakhsh Tiwana.⁶⁸ About two hundred prominent landowners attended this meeting for the protection of the rights and interests of all landowners, peasants, proprietors and tenants in the province.⁶⁹ According to Ian Talbot, a patchy organization was established during 1937-38. This was significantly strongest in the East Punjab where Chhotu Ram's populist style won support from the *Jat* peasant proprietors. The lack of progress elsewhere was a

costly failure. A great opportunity was lost to institutionalize the popular support aroused by the 'Ministry's Agrarian Program'.⁷⁰

The parliamentary secretaries, such as Ahmad Yar Daultana and Syed Afzal Ali Hasni who were close to the Punjab Premier also made statements in the press, while supporting the legislation and denouncing the attitude adopted by their opponents on the subject.⁷¹ In the conference of Lyallpur, which attracted a huge gathering of thousand souls, representing the agriculturists from the various parts of the province. The leading Unionists addressed the gathering, arguing that their part was working for the agriculturists' welfare and for the rural interests.⁷² The Premier asked the agriculturists not to fear anyone or to be affected by any agitation. He further added that 'if anyone violates the laws in the province, I will smash his head'.⁷³ To continue this transformation, he urged the present members to spread a network of 'Zamindara League Branches' in every corner of the Province.⁷⁴ But the measure of the political success of the agrarian legislation did not lie in the spread of Zamindara League Organization; even after the elections, Unionists organization remained very weak.⁷⁵ The significance of the bills lay in their effect on the prestige of the Unionist ministry which had successfully asserted itself, at least for a moment, as the upholder of the structure of local, and tribal political power in the rural Punjab.⁷⁶ Indeed, if the Ministry had brought a revolution in the Punjab, it was a revolution that sought to sustain this agrarian structure in Punjab's rising "democratic" system.⁷⁷

Chhotu Ram addressed such gatherings and dressed in the attire of a village elder, carrying a knobbed stick and wearing a turban in his favorite white or parrot green colors.⁷⁸ He insisted that only simple fare was provided for the guests and always preferred milk to be served instead of tea as this was the 'real food' of the *Jats*.⁷⁹ He criticized a speaker at a rally in Sonapat when the latter began to speak about religion before a mixed audience, asking him that this was not proper place to do so, thus re-emphasizing the Unionist Party's secular outlook.⁸⁰ Sunder Singh Majithia during his speech declared: "I am alone in my individual capacity, have held over 100 meetings there. The Unionist Government had no need to bus in the throngs of farmers which attended these meetings for they came out with true enthusiasm."⁸¹ Similar speeches were delivered and statements were made by Sir Sikandar and Chhotu Ram in a conference held later at Rohtak.⁸² These statements were given a good deal of publicity by the pro-Unionist paper, *The Civil and Military Gazette*.⁸³ The paper widely publicized the attitude of Malik Barkat Ali, a political opponent of the Unionist Ministry, who had declared that in spite of his differences with Sikandar, he would still support the Agrarian legislation of the Unionist Party.⁸⁴ The Provincial Muslim League also gave overwhelming support to Sir Sikandar over the Party's Agrarian Reforms.⁸⁵ One evident feature was that even Malik Barkat Ali who was Sir Sikandar's old political rival also sided with the Unionists, he wrote numerous articles to defend the Party's position in this regard.⁸⁶

On the other hand, many other political rivals of the Unionist party, organized a Kisan Conference in September 1938 at Lyallpur which coincided with the Zamindara Conference that was being organized by the Unionists in the same town.⁸⁷ However, the response to the Kisan Conference was very poor and it failed to acquire the extent of the support that was expected from the peasantry with

small-holdings. On the other hand, the Zamindara Conference of the Unionist Party which was addressed by Sir Sikandar Hayat and Sir Chhotu Ram attracted a massive crowd of over 1.5 Lac people.⁸⁸ The political agenda of the Unionists that the land holders were a class by themselves irrespective of which community they belonged to, stood out successfully in the Lyallpur Zamindara Conference.⁸⁹ In short, the Agrarian Reforms and the conferences held by the Unionist Party aroused a great deal of enthusiasm amongst the Punjab's classes and as a result, the standing of the ruling party and its Premier Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan was greatly enhanced.⁹⁰ At the one hand, the Agrarian Reforms strengthened Unionists' hold over its rural supporters for the unionists, on the other hand, its aggravated the tension within the Punjab Congress to launch the propaganda movement in the countryside to empower itself.

The Uproar of the Opposition Parties, Congress' Propaganda and the Unionists' Political Strategy

The agrarian reforms made the Unionists even more popular amongst the rural community.⁹¹ Moreover, the tenants and cultivators gained maximum advantages from the steps taken by Sikandar's Ministry. On the other hand, the 'Golden Bills' shattered the Congress' hopes to get the mass support in the rural areas, as they had launched campaign against the Unionists, but all the efforts made by Congress were in vain.⁹² The Congress' evasions regarding the 'Golden Bills' further undermined its support in the towns, whilst, in the rural areas, it divided the Sikh and the Hindu peasants due to its weak policy.⁹³ The issue intensified by the Congress on the Assembly floor engendered the factional rivalry. While, the favour for the Agrarian Reforms from the Governor in the following words: 'that was the effect of pulling the Unionist Party together' mean that the Unionists were going to unite themselves. The Congress' song attack on the Zamindari Ministers appeared massively forlorn:

Utho naujawano zamana badal do

Chhotu, Sikandar, Tiwana badal do

Badal do Majithia, Jogindar badal do

Manohar, Haye, Daultana badal do

(Arise young-men! Change the world, Remove Chhotu, Sikandar, Tiwana, Remove also Majithia, Joginder, Manohar, Haye, Daultana).⁹⁴

On the other hand, it was the period of the peak of the Unionist Party, as Maulana Zafar Ali Khan (1873–1956), paid tribute to Sikandar's Ministry in his poetry:

Kuch dinuo men yahan phir Daure-Akbar anay wala hai,

Sikandar hai Abul Fazal Aur Manoohar lal, Todarmal.

(Before long will come here again the regime of Akbar the Great, Sikandar is like Abul Fazl and Manohar lal is like Todarmal).⁹⁵

The political attacks and counter attacks continued from the both sides. However, the Punjab Premier, Sikandar Hayat Khan criticized the Congress policy saying that he had expected that Unionist Government would hear some useful

suggestions from the members of the Congress opposition members, but he was very sorry to say that they had been utterly disappointed to find that their criticism had been irrelevant and had halted the welfare, progress and prosperity in the province. In spite all of this, Sikandar Hayat Khan followed the Party's program and continued his efforts regarding the 'Agrarian Reforms' in the Punjab province to uplift the rural community and the agricultural sector.

In 1937, Congress leaders had long criticized the Unionist reliance on the Land Alienation Act in Punjab.⁹⁶ They saw it as a smokescreen to protect landlords' interests. The Unionists had easily deflected such criticism by portraying it as the self-interested-pleading of a largely urban Hindu non-agriculturalist constituency, but in 1937 the position became more difficult. After pro-Congress All-India *Kisan* Committee decided to set up a Punjab Provincial Committee, regular *kisan* committees were formed in many districts of central Punjab and the canal colonies, maintaining a steadily increasing volume of correspondence with the Central Punjab *Kisan* Committee at Amritsar.⁹⁷ The *Kisan* Conference organized mainly by the Congress and addressed by Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964) and others could attract only 15,000 people.⁹⁸ They said that a worthwhile and gainful opposition could not be established against the agrarian legislations of the Unionist Party in spite of widespread publicity that partly and significantly indicates that the majority of rural Punjab's populace accepted the party's stand vis-a-vis the legislations. All over the Punjab, several meetings were held in this regard especially in Amritsar district.⁹⁹ A large number of farmers attended these meetings out of genuine enthusiasm. Chhotu Ram was always the star of these meetings which were held across the length and breadth of the state.¹⁰⁰ In 1937 and 1938, these committees undertook widespread antigovernment activities, particularly against settlement operations in the districts namely as Lyallpur, Amritsar, and Lahore.¹⁰¹

The Unionist Agrarian Legislation in 1938, underscored the central symbolic position or the concept of the 'agricultural classes' in the reformed political system. The bills, which were called 'Golden Bills' by the supporters and on the other hand, the opponents called 'Black Bills'.¹⁰² In the political context of 1938, their symbolic significance was unmistakable. They underscored, once again, the predominance of local political influence over the power of capital in the rural Punjab because the political results of these bills were immediate.¹⁰³ The Agrarian Bills were part of that broader agenda of Sikandar's Ministry who, as the Premier of the Punjab, focused on the economic development of the province. But unfortunately, the non-landowner class objected and criticized the Unionists' policy and thus, the sectarian differences became wide-spread in the province. The Hindus were maneuvering the social and religious sentiments in order to get the benefits. It was debated that the objective of the agrarian legislation was only to suppress the non-landowner sections and reinforce the British imperialism.¹⁰⁴ The Punjab Congress, which had established itself as the champion of the peasantry after the 1937 elections, found its position seriously undermined.¹⁰⁵ Although unwilling to oppose legislation that stood to benefit many Punjabi cultivators, the Congress could not, at the same time, support legislation that attacked the interests of its non-agriculturalist financial backers. There can be no doubt, the Governor wrote, "that the prestige of the Ministry and its supporters has been greatly

augmented by the passage of ‘The Agrarian Legislations’, and more than three hundred local associations urged an early implementation of the legislation”.¹⁰⁶

The Deteriorating Graph of the Congress’ Popularity in the Punjab

In the Punjab Assembly, the introduction of these ‘Agrarian Bills’ resulted in a wave of anger and resentment among the representatives of the non-agriculturists, such as Hindus¹⁰⁷ but their representative political parties, the Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha were not in a position to hinder the legislation.¹⁰⁸ The Congress was in a great dilemma since the introduction of these reforms in the Assembly. A large number of people from the urban and the money lending classes were its chief supporters.¹⁰⁹ The Agrarian Reforms were in fact highly detrimental to the interests of these classes. As anticipated, the Hindu press led by *The Tribune* launched a series of attacks on the measures, which were termed ‘communal’.¹¹⁰ The Unionist Party’s association with the Muslim League under the Sikandar-Jinnah Pact also came under fire. It was argued that the purpose of the legislation was only to crush the non-agricultural classes and strengthen the British imperialism.¹¹¹ The line taken by the Hindu press, however, could not be supported openly by the Congress Party because the proposed measures were intended to benefit the Punjab’s poor peasantry and were, therefore, in line with the policies of the Congress; its high command sent orders not to oppose bills and remain neutral and the Unionist sponsored Bills were therefore passed without much opposition.¹¹² Although, the provincial Congress leadership issued statements, attacking the Sikandar’s Ministry yet, it appealed to their supporters not to participate in any campaign against the Agrarian Reforms.¹¹³

The Congress high command’s wishes were obeyed, but the Punjab Congress’ position among its supporters became highly vulnerable.¹¹⁴ The Punjab Hindus cared more for their own interests than for the high command’s wishes. Congress statements failed to satisfy the great majority of Hindus and the Hindus now called upon their representatives to resign from their assembly seats. As a result of this situation, a rift also erupted between the Punjab Congress and the Congress high command; Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargava, the Punjab Congress leader resigned and expressed his inability to lead Congress Party.¹¹⁵ Similarly, Dr. Satya Pal, a veteran Congressman, also joined Bhargava in expressing lack of confidence in Congress’ orders.¹¹⁶ Being under pressure from his supporters, Dr. Pal also resigned from his council membership; he declared that he would resign his seat in the Punjab Assembly if his supporters support him in this regard.¹¹⁷ Lala Duni Chand, another veteran Punjabi Hindu leader, opposed the high command’s interference in the Punjab Congress affairs.¹¹⁸ Lala Duni Chand and Dr. Satya Pal became vocal in their criticism of its communalism.¹¹⁹ This tension between the Punjab Congress and the Congress’ high command continued for some time. In early 1940, two leading congressmen in the Punjab, Gopi Chand and Sirdar Ajit Singh, resigned from their seats as a mark of protest against unjustifiable interference in the Punjab affairs.¹²⁰ This action, however, failed to change the mind of the Congress’ President Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (1888-1958), who was also considered a Congress expert in the Punjab politics as a top leader had deputed to look after and direct the affairs of the Muslim majority provinces.¹²¹ In February 1940, on the eve of Maulana Azad’s visit to the Punjab, the matter of resignations again came up for discussion. Some rapprochement was made

between the two parties where Congress president Bhargava agreed to take his resignation back.¹²² Another change was that a Punjabi Muslim Congressman, Mian Iftikhar-ud-din was appointed as President of the Punjab Congress Committee.¹²³ The choice of a Muslim was made with the intention of giving the impression that the Congress was not a purely Hindu body and that it not only represented the Muslims but also endowed them with high positions in its organization.¹²⁴

The Reaction of Hindu Mahasabha

Now, we shall discuss the reaction of another Hindu Party in the Punjab known as the Hindu Mahasabha.¹²⁵ This party, like the Congress was also chiefly supported by urban Hindus which has been the main targets under the Agrarian Legislation. As soon as the Unionists tabled the Agrarian Bills, the Mahasabha held an emergency meeting in Lahore under its veteran, Bhai Parmanand who was a Punjab Mahasabha leader.¹²⁶ Various resolutions were passed, condemning the Bills as 'communal', accusing the Unionists of promoting a class-war between agriculturists and non-agriculturists. The Hindu Mahasabha Party asked its supporters to fight the unionist legislation tooth and nail. The Mahasabha also threatened an agitation against the measures; the Governor was asked to intervene in the situation, exercising his special powers to withhold his assent to the Bills.¹²⁷ Later on, Bhai Parmanand described the Agrarian measures as the root cause of all the evils.¹²⁸ He also wrote an 'open letter' to the Punjab Premier Sir Sikandar, published by *The Hindu*, calling the Agrarian legislation 'communal oppression and Bolshevism'. Likewise, in an article in *The Tribune*, Bhai Parmanand voiced the demand for more representation for the non-agriculturist classes in the Punjab Assembly, and advocated the abolition of communal electorates.¹²⁹ Another famous Mahasabha leader and a farmer Punjab Minister, Dr. Gokal Chand Narang, (President of Hindu Mahasabha) helped the 'non-agriculturist association' in organizing protest meetings.¹³⁰ In July 1938, another such meeting at Lyallpur against the 'Black-Bills' was held in which, Sir Gokal Chand delivered provocative speeches, attacked and threatened a Civil Disobedience Movement.¹³¹ However, this threat was a shame in reality even the Parmanand Group was divided on the issue of launching a full-fledged agitation; majority of opinions favored resistance by constitutional means.¹³² Nevertheless, the association, under Gokal's guidance, continued with the agitation. It commemorated a 'Black-Bills Week' from 15 to 21 August 1938 viz, 'a black week'; a delegation was sent to the Governor with a request to withhold his assent to the Bills; and when the Governor gave his approval to the Bills, the Association condemned his action and expressed its distrust of the Punjab Government.¹³³

The reaction of the ministerial section of the Punjab Hindu Mahasabha Party is also worth bringing under consideration here. The Mahasabha group (Raja Narendra Nath's Group) in the coalition ministry was greatly embarrassed by the Unionists' legislation.¹³⁴ Despite being a part of the ministry in power, Raja Narendra Nath and M. K. Puri (an important member on the government benches) vehemently opposed the Agrarian Bills; both made bitter speeches within and without the Assembly.¹³⁵ Of these two, Raja N. Nath proved to be swifter; he resigned from his seat in the Assembly in protest against what he called discriminatory legislation.¹³⁶ Such a defeatist approach, however, soon ended his

political career as well as marring the credibility of his party.¹³⁷ The Punjab Premier and some ministers were condemned for what they called carrying on a “mischievous and malicious propaganda” against the non-Zamindar Hindus of the Punjab.¹³⁸ This anti-Unionist propaganda could not achieve much. The minister continued with the help of the Punjab Muslim League and the Hindu Ministerial Party, the Khalsa Nationalist Party.¹³⁹

The Dissenters Challenging the Unionist Leadership: Sikandar Ministry under Trial

As it happens in politics, leaders of various factions and groups, under the pressure of their supporters challenge the top leadership of the party. The same happened in the middle of 1938, when the Unionist Party was still facing the communal issue of the Mosque *Shahidganj* and planning to table its Agrarian Reforms, a bloc within the party was formed by the members, generally dissatisfied with their leadership.¹⁴⁰ There were several reasons for this lack of confidence; for instance, 'the dissident group' (consisting 12 members) quite often complained against the bureaucratic attitude of some of the ministers who were not easily accessible. They also accused the Chief Parliamentary Secretary, Nawab Ahmad Yar Khan Daultana, of being 'unreliable, bumptious and something of a bully', and portrayed another important Parliamentary Secretary, Syed Afzal Ali Hasni, as being the most corrupt.¹⁴¹ Most of the assembly members spent a huge amount for securing their elections and most of them expected material advantages for themselves in return to their large expenses. Beside these accusations, 'the dissident group' felt that they had been deprived of their due share of the loaves and fishes of office.¹⁴² Some of them had been given much more than their fair share in the Assembly and the Ministry such as an appointment as zaildar, sub-registrar and honorary magistrate or a post in government service for a relative and that the ruling 'Noon-Tiwana Faction' as Sir Firoz Khan Noon.¹⁴³ A leading member of this group was Raja Akram, a disciple of a well-known *Pir* (religious leader), who at that time was facing a trial for conspiracy of murder. Sikandar was accused by the *Pir's* disciples of deliberately trying to send their religious leader to jail.¹⁴⁴ 'The dissident group' had recently showed its strength by defeating a leading member of the ministerial group, Sardar Khan Noon, in a by-election in the Shahpur district, hitherto a stronghold of the 'Noon-Tiwana Group'.¹⁴⁵ The dissident group did not give the above reasons for disagreement with the ruling party, but instead chose to exploit the issue of high water rates in the Punjab.

Here, it may be pointed out that Sir Edward Maclagan (1864-1952) had increased the water rates shortly before retiring as the Governor. The Congress had then tried to exploit the issue, but Malcom Hailey (1872-1969) as a Governor of the Punjab succeeded in controlling the situation with the help of the Unionist Party.¹⁴⁶ N. S. Sacher, a leading Congressman, was behind a move recommending the government to reduce the existing water-rate by 50 percent. He argued that the government was not entitled to receive a return of 13 percent from water rates while the railways were not getting more than 3 percent return.¹⁴⁷ Soon, the leader of the Unionists 'dissident group', Mian Nurullah, acting contrary to the advice of his party, moved a resolution in the Assembly, urging the government to reduce the water-rates by 50 percent. Mian Nurullah announced his resignation from the ruling party, disclosing to the press that his party had failed to fulfill its

promises.¹⁴⁸ He also asked the Speaker to allot him a seat on the opposition benches.¹⁴⁹ Along with him two other members of his own tribe (*Arian*) and Ch. Rampart Singh, a very influential member of a non-Muslim group in the coalition, also became active against the Unionist Party. Shortly afterwards, three other important Unionists deserted their party; one was the Pir of Mokhad Sharif, one of the most influential religious leaders of the Punjab. The *Pir* switched his loyalty to the Congress party and started attending the private meetings of the arch enemies of the ruling party, the 'Ahrar-Congress Group'.¹⁵⁰ The Hindu press naturally supported the dissidents and once again criticized the Sikandar's Ministry's links with the League, accusing the ministry of failing to eradicate corruption from the province.¹⁵¹ Bhargava told the press that the opposition was now strong enough to carry a no-confidence motion against the Sikandar Ministry.¹⁵²

It was speculated that at least sixty one members of the Assembly were prepared to topple the ministry, pro-Unionists dailies, such as *The Civil and Military Gazette*, expressed fears about the breakdown of ministry in the near future.¹⁵³ While, the situation was not as bad as the opposition and the press had projected it. The position of the Unionist leader and Sikandar Ministry was certainly under threat and trial.¹⁵⁴ The League's support was once again very important in order to keep the Muslim opposition to a minimum level and Malik Barkat Ali again encouraged the Sikandar's Ministry. The League's leadership was discouraging every move which could impair Sikandar's strength in the Assembly. Jinnah was believed to have threatened Barkat Ali with expulsion from the League if he did not accept Sikandar as his leader in the Punjab.¹⁵⁵ The League's attitude considerably discouraged the Muslim element, trying to break away from the Unionist Party. Thereafter, the Punjab Premier Sikandar was in a much stronger position to deal with the situation; he was also helped by the Governor and was given the services of an experienced I.C.S. officer.¹⁵⁶ First Sikandar held several meetings of his own party, and then, as a solution, a move was launched by the ministerial benches, whereby, it was arranged that one of the supporters of the ministry would put a motion of no-confidence against the ministry.¹⁵⁷ Ian Talbot is of the view that the Muslim League was similarly powerless since Malik Barkat Ali only bolstered it along as the Assembly member. Efforts to launch a vigorous propaganda campaign in the rural areas were blown both by the popularity of the golden bills and its national organizations dependency on the Unionists.¹⁵⁸

By now, the Premier had calculated that he still had the confidence of the Assembly. In this regard, the motion of no-confidence was presented in the Assembly which was defeated by 112 to 53.¹⁵⁹ As anticipated, this 'Command Performance' gave a good deal of satisfaction to the ministerial party and discouraged its opponents, showing that the ministry could carry on without their support.¹⁶⁰ The Chief Secretary of the Unionist Party issued statements, criticizing the role of the dissident group, and implying that the party, after their defection, was much happier and united and also that it would carry out its program of rural development.¹⁶¹ In fact, the 'Agrarian Bills' did not relate to the class differences of the Punjabi communities as these communal issues were not a new phenomenon in the Punjab province. These issues were germinating severe problems, Sir Sikandar during his Ministry made many efforts to develop harmony and unity among the various communities of the province. In order to discourage

the communal issues, Sikandar Hayat convened a 'Unity Conference' in Simla in summer of July 1937, in which he gathered various communities of the province with a view to observe the roots of the communal differences and to address all their reservations.¹⁶² Although this conference was remained successful to maintain peace and to promote communal harmony and unity among the major communities of the province.¹⁶³ An interesting elaboration of the concept of communalism was provided by Sir Chhotu Ram in an issue of *The Light*, on 1st April, 1935.¹⁶⁴ Though, the Unionists made serious efforts to curb the sectarianism in the province, yet the opposition parties were reluctant to acclaim it.¹⁶⁵ According to the new party policy which was introduced in 1938, the Muslims were given 50 percent, Hindus 30 percent and the Sikhs 20 percent respectively.¹⁶⁶ Nevertheless, the Provincial Muslim League gave massive support to the Unionists over Agrarian Reforms as well as the communal issues.¹⁶⁷ The Unionists followed constant conduct in the religion and in sectarian matters. After observing it, the party policies prepared and applied by Punjab Premier which were completely based on a non-sectarian at provincial level and also for getting support of the League at national level.¹⁶⁸ The 'Sikandar Ministry' was beard by the Punjab Muslim League so that its strength could be used as a pawn on the chess-board of Indian politics.¹⁶⁹

In short, the legislative measures which were directed towards improving the condition of the agriculturists and of other rural people had on the whole gathered widespread support from various sections of rural society in the Punjab.¹⁷⁰ While some support was based on the merit of the legislation, some was derived from propaganda.¹⁷¹ It is difficult to overlook the fact that its collaborative politics and isolation from the national political mainstream despite the Unionist Party was able to retain, most of the period it was in power, the goodwill of the rural masses of the Punjab.¹⁷² According to Ian Talbot, "the Unionist Party's agrarian reforms had two major effects; consolidating its hold over on rural supporters and so exacerbated existing tensions within the Provincial Congress that its mass-contact movement in the countryside lost all its effectiveness".¹⁷³ The period from 1937 to 1942, during Sikandar Ministry, considered as the time of more efficacy and also correctly known as the era of progress and prosperity in the Punjab Province, which also recalled as the period of the 'Golden Laws'. Even today, the old people remember nostalgically the revolutionary period's enactments of new laws for the improvement of life in rural Punjab, for the emancipation of the peasantry from debt, for more protection against exploitation by traders, etc. The differences in the conferences organized simultaneously by the opposition parties like Congress and the Unionists in Lyallpur in 1938 was the best example of the Unionist lead over the Provincial Congress.¹⁷⁴ While just about 15,000 people attended the Congress-organized conference addressed by Jawaharlal Nehru, on the other hand approximately 1.5 lacs people turned up to participate in the Unionist-organized conference addressed by Sir Sikandar Hayat and Sir Chhotu Ram.¹⁷⁵ Apparently, Sikandar's agrarian reforms were peasants' elevation oriented but having an abysmal and impartially analyzing glance, though we regrettably discover some advantageous facets of this very step. Implicitly its flawed facade became visible as its concentrated potential was solely and extravagantly being exhausted on a single section of society; this manifesto signaled more politicized and it has generated ripples of rancor and tumultuous anarchy instead of inserting unanimity

in the society. While conjecturing it, we can say categorically that the immediate and intrinsic incentives behind such a maze were just to make its roots deeply ingrained in the soil of people's hearts; and subsequently, to ooze politically invested interests pertaining to it.

Conclusion

To sum up the whole debate, it is now established that, Sir Skandar Hayat Khan's efforts to put aside the activities of Punjab's money lending class were successful to a great extent. Sikandar Ministry from 1937-42 maintained a balance towards the rural development in matters of allocation of funds and pursuance of the development schemes in the Punjab. This policy enabled them to establish considerable goodwill among the masses in the rural areas. The support and widespread acceptance of the Unionist Government is best reflected in the peasants' response to the 'Golden Agrarian Laws', and also in the fact that no worthwhile opposition could stand up against the Unionist Party policy during these years of Sikandar Ministry. The party's program for working to improve the quality of rural life and to minimize the burden of rural debt was not only a fundamental objective of the Unionists but also a political compulsion that enabled it to stay afloat. The result of the pro-rural policy of the Unionist Party was in fact expected of it. The grand triumph of the Sikandars' political shrewdness was the agricultural legislation which became popular during the introduction of 'Golden Bills'. These 'Golden Laws' protected the peasants from the monopoly of the moneylenders. The next major development was the increasing of Muslim quota in the Government Jobs. In 1927, the percentage of the Government jobs was 40% for the Muslims, 40% for Hindus and 20% for Sikhs, while under the golden laws of the Unionists, which were passed in 1938, the percentage quota was increased for Muslims up to 50% for Hindus up to 30% and for Sikhs it remained at 20%.

In a nutshell, this article has given a fresh perspective with respect to the 'Agrarian Reforms' in the Punjab politics which had not been properly thrown light upon by the scholars even until now. Sir Sikandar prepared a comprehensive case against the moneylenders' interests and succeeded in protecting the interests of rural and backward communities of the Punjab. The 'Agrarian Bills' were part of that broader agenda of Sir Sikandar who as a Premier of the Punjab focused on the development of the province. The objectives of these reformative measures of the Unionists were to give relief to all the classes of the cultivators and even moneylenders. However, the Unionist Party did not introduce any agrarian reforms based on sectarianism. The non-landowners objections were just to aggravate the sectarian conflicts which became wide-spread throughout the Punjab. The Hindus provoked the religious sentiments in order to get political advantages. It can be concluded that the main objective of the Agrarian Reforms was only to crush the non-agricultural moneylender classes and strengthen the British policies. These reforms further aimed at uplifting the rural peasantry and putting the province of the Punjab on the trajectory of progress and development.

Notes and References:

¹ The term ‘Reform’ explains: a, to put or change into an improved form or condition; b, to improve or amend by change of form or removal of faults or abuses. See *Merriam Webster Dictionary of English*.

² The word ‘Revolution’ means change of any type and the term ‘Revolution’ generally referred to current economic, social, political and cultural trends beyond the Agrarian or Industrial revolution. It aims to show that socialism was a safe home for the technical and scientific changes.

³ *International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences* (Thomson Gale: Copy Right, 2008). Also see, Percy Bysshe Shelley, *A Philosophical View of Reform* (London: Oxford University Press, 1920), 60.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Mohinder Sing, ed., *History and Culture of Punjab* (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributers, 1989), 205-207.

⁶ Ibid., 205.

⁷ Ibid., 207.

⁸ Ian Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana: The Punjab Unionist Party and the Partition of India* (Great Britain: Curzon Press, 1996), 69. For details see also, Civil & Military Gazette, Lahore, 3rd February, 1937.

⁹ Ibid., 69 also see, Mohinder Sing, *History and Culture of Punjab*, 207.

¹⁰ Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj: 1849-1947* (New Delhi: Manohar Publisher, 1988), 112 and Ian Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana: Punjab Unionist Party and the Partition of India*, 68.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ian Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana*, 69 and Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj*, 114.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Raghuvendra Tanwar, *Politics of Sharing Power: The Punjab Unionist Party, 1923-1947* (New Delhi: Manohar Publisher, 1999), 109-110.

¹⁵ Ian Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana*, 69.

¹⁶ Raghuvendra Tanwar, *Politics of Sharing Power*, 111 and Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj*, 116.

¹⁷ *The Tribune*, 2 April 1937. Also cited by, Raghuvendra Tanwar, *Politics of Sharing Power*, 111-112 and Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj*, 116.

¹⁸ Raghuvendra Tanwar, *Politics of Sharing Power*, 111.

¹⁹ Ibid., 111-112. Also see, Ian Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana: the Punjab Unionist Party and the Partition of India*, 69.

²⁰ Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj: 1849-1947*, 116. For details, see *The Punjab Legislators* (Lahore: Punjab Provincial Assembly Secretariat, 1987), 1. Also see Daily *Inqilab* Lahore, March 11, 1939-1941 and Mohinder Sing, *History and Culture of Punjab*, 205.

²¹ Ian Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana: Punjab Unionist Party and the Partition of India*, 69.

²² Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj*, 116 and Ian Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana*, 69.

- ²³ See Mohinder Sing, *History and Culture of Punjab*, 206 and Raghuvendra Tanwar, *Politics of Sharing Power*, 109 and Ian Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana*, 69. Sikandar's Cabinet members were; Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan, Malik Khizr Hayat Tiwana, Sir Chhotu Ram, Manohar Lal, Sunder Singh Majithia and Mian Abdul Hayee. For details, see Lionel Carter, *Punjab Politics, 1940-1943: Strains of War, Governor's Fortnightly Reports and other Key Documents* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 2005), Enclosure to no. 95. Government House, Lahore, January 11th, 1942. 290-291.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, 207.
- ²⁵ Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj*, 116.
- ²⁶ Raghuvendra Tanwar, *Politics of Sharing Power*, 125 and Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj*, 117.
- ²⁷ Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj*, 117.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, 117 and Raghuvendra Tanwar, *Politics of Sharing Power*, 110.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, 117.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, 117.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*
- ³² Ian Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana*, 81, see fn, no 27 and Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj*, 117.
- ³³ Lajpat Rai Nair, ed., *Sikandar Hayat Khan: The Soldier-Statesman of the Punjab* (Lahore: Institute of Current Affairs, 1943), 19 also see Ian Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana*, 71.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, 19. Also see, Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj*, 117.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*
- ³⁶ Ian Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana*, 72.
- ³⁷ For details, see David Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam; Punjab and the Making of Pakistan* (London: I.B. Taurus), 174-76 and S. Qalb-i-Abid, *Muslim Politic, in the Punjab, & Punjab Politics: 1921-47* (Lahore: Vanguard publisher, 1992), 200-201.
- ³⁸ Raghuvendra Tanwar, *Politics of Sharing Power*, 112.
- ³⁹ Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj*, 118. For details see, Punjab Government Gazette, 17th July 1939, 119.
- ⁴⁰ Governor to Viceroy, 8 July 1938, L/P & J/5/238, IOR.
- ⁴¹ For details see, Punjab Legislative Assembly Debates, Vol.-V (Lahore: 1938), 123. Also quoted by, Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj*, 84. For more details see, Punjab Government Gazette, 2nd September 1939, 111-114.
- ⁴² Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj*, 118. For details see Punjab Government Gazette, part-1, 9 June 1945
- ⁴³ M. A. Zaidi, *Evolution of Muslim Political Thought in India*, 162-166. Also see K.K Aziz, ed., *The All India Muslim Conference, 1928-1935, A Documentary Record* (Karachi: National Publishing House Ltd., 1972), 29. For further detail, see S. Qalb-i-Abid, *Muslim Politics in the Punjab*, 204-205 and Ian Talbot. *Punjab and Raj*, 117-118.
- ⁴⁴ Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj*, 118.
- ⁴⁵ N. H. Mitra, ed., *Indian Annual Register*, Vol-II, 1938, 196-229. Also cited by, S. Qalb-i-Abid, *Muslim Politic, in the Punjab*, 204.

- ⁴⁶ Raghuvendra Tanwar, *Politics of Sharing Power*, 116-117.
- ⁴⁷ Ian Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana*, 71.
- ⁴⁸ Punjab Government Gazette, 5th October 1940. Also cited by Raghuvendra Tanwar, *Politics of Sharing Power*, 117-118.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid.
- ⁵⁰ Ibid.
- ⁵¹ Ibid.
- ⁵² Raghuvendra Tanwar, *Politics of Sharing Power*, 117-118.
- ⁵³ Ian Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana*, 71.
- ⁵⁴ Ibid., 72. Also see, Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj*, 83-84.
- ⁵⁵ Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj*, 84.
- ⁵⁶ Ian Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana*, 72.
- ⁵⁷ Ibid.
- ⁵⁸ Ibid. Also see, Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj*, 119.
- ⁵⁹ Ian Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana*, 72.
- ⁶⁰ Ibid., 72. Also see, Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj*, 119.
- ⁶¹ See Satya M. Rai, *Legislative Politics and the Freedom Struggle in the Punjab, 1897-1947* (New Delhi: 1894). Also see Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj*, 119-120. For details see Ian Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana*, 72. For more detail, see David Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam*, 150. Mohinder Sing, *History and Culture of Punjab*, 207.
- ⁶² Ian Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana*, 72.
- ⁶³ Ibid. For details see Civil & Military Gazette, Lahore, 6th September, 1938.
- ⁶⁴ But the Akali Sikh political parties encouraged arguments between the ruling Unionist Party to reassert its political influence in the Punjab. For details see, Ian Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana*, 72.
- ⁶⁵ Chhotu Ram was personally hurt by the attitude of Moneylenders. Mian Abdul Haye had been an important minister in the Punjab Cabinet not only with Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan but also continued with Sir Khizr Hayt Khan Tiwana. The government wanted them to get in touch with masses; it therefore highly appreciated such tours. See Agnithori and S. N. Malik, *Chhotu Ram: A Prolific Courage*, Delhi, 1978. Also see, (Governor to Viceroy, 24 August, 26 October 1938, L/P & J/5/240, IOR; Viceroy to Governor, 30 March 1938, Linlithgow collection, 125/86 IOR.)
- ⁶⁶ See Civil & Military Gazette, Lahore, 12 & 13 August, 6 September, 13 & 22 October 1938.
- ⁶⁷ Ian Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana*, 71.
- ⁶⁸ Ibid.
- ⁶⁹ Ibid.
- ⁷⁰ Ibid.
- ⁷¹ Civil & Military Gazette, Lahore, 6th August 1938, 16 January 1939.

⁷² S. Qalb-i-Abid, *Muslim Politic, in the Punjab, 205*. For details see Civil and Military Gazette, Lahore, 6th September, 1938.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ S. Qalb-i-Abid, *Muslim Politic, in the Punjab, 204-207*. For details see, Ian Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana*, 71.

⁷⁵ Congress party was in great trouble by its supporters. For details, see S. Qalb-i-Abid, *Muslim Politics in the Punjab, 204-7*. Also see, Ian Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana*, 69.

⁷⁶ Ian Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana*, 68. And S. Qalb-i-Abid, *Muslim Politic, in the Punjab, 204-207*.

⁷⁷ Ian Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana*, 68 & 73. And S. Qalb-i-Abid, *Muslim Politic, in the Punjab, 204-207*.

⁷⁸ Chhotu Ram stood head and shoulder above the Muslim Unionists as a public speaker; he addressed crowds of peasants for hours till the end without a microphone. Ian Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana*, 73-73. Also see, Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj*, 117. For detail study see, Pream Chaudary, *Punjab Politics: The Role of Sir Chhotu Ram*, (Delhi: 1984), 235-290.

⁷⁹ Ian Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana*, 73.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid. Also see, Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj*, 119.

⁸² For details see Civil & Military Gazette, Lahore, 13th October, 1938.

⁸³ Civil & Military Gazette, Lahore, 15th October, 1938.

⁸⁴ Civil & Military Gazette, Lahore, 14th August, 1938.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Rafiq Afzal, *Malik Barkat Ali: His Life and Writings* (Lahore: 1969), 48-49.

⁸⁷ Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj*, 120.

⁸⁸ Raghuvendra Tanwar, *Politics of Sharing Power*, 118.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 118-119.

⁹⁰ Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj*, 119. For details see, Lionel Carter, ed., *Punjab Politics, 1940-1943: Strains of War, Governors' Fortnightly Reports and other Key Documents* (New Delhi: Manohar publishers, 2005), Governor to Viceroy, 26 October 1938, L/P & J/5/240, IOR.

⁹¹ Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj*, 119.

⁹² Ibid., 120.

⁹³ Ian Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana*, 73.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Maulana Zafar Ali Khan (1873–1956), fostered many movements such as *Majlis-i-Ittehad-i-Millat* (MIM), in 1935 as well as *Neeli Posh Tehreek*. He injected a new life among the freedom lovers of India. He was a versatile personality; politician, great poet, literary figure. The lines of his poetry also cited by, David Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam*, 146.

⁹⁶ Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj*, 119-120 Also see Ian Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana*, 73.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 120-121.

⁹⁸ Raghuvendra Tanwar, *Politics of Sharing Power*, 119. For details see, Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj*, 119-120.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ For details see, Civil & Military Gazette, Lahore, May and August, 1938.

¹⁰² Raghuvendra Tanwar, *Politics of Sharing Power*, 117. For details see, Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj*, 120.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 117.

¹⁰⁴ S. Qalb-i-Abid, *Muslim Politics in the Punjab*, 206. Also see Satya M. Rai, *Legislative Politics and the Freedom Struggle in the Punjab, 1897-1947* (New Delhi: 1894), 305.

¹⁰⁵ Congress party was in great dilemma from its supporters. For details, see S. Qalb-i-Abid, *Muslim politics in the Punjab*, 205-207.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Qalb-i-Abid & Massarrat Abid, *Punjab Politics: Dyarchy to Partition*, (Lahore: Research Society of Pakistan, 2012), 256.

¹⁰⁹ See, Lionel Carter, ed., *Punjab Politics, 1940-1943: Strains of War, Governors' Fortnightly Reports*, 30, July 1938.

¹¹⁰ Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj* 120. For details see, *The Tribune*, July & August, 1938.

¹¹¹ Qalb-i-Abid & Massarrat Abid, *Punjab Politics: Dyarchy to Partition*, 257.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ See, Civil & Military Gazette, Lahore, 13th August, 1938.

¹¹⁴ Qalb-i-Abid & Massarrat Abid, *Punjab Politics: Dyarchy to Partition*, 257-258.

¹¹⁵ *The Tribune*, 5-7 August 1938, provides a great deal of detailed coverage on this issue.

¹¹⁶ Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj*, 119. For details see Civil & Military Gazette, Lahore, 18th January, 1938.

¹¹⁷ Qalb-i-Abid & Massarrat Abid, *Punjab Politics: Dyarchy to Partition*, 257.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj*, 88.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 121. For details see Civil & Military Gazette, Lahore, 12th January -16th March, 1940. For more details see, Fortnightly Report, Government of Punjab, (FNR) 30th July 1938, IOR.

¹²¹ Qalb-i-Abid and Massarrat Abid, *Communalism in India: The Role of Hindu Mahasabha* (Lahore: Research Society of Pakistan, University of the Punjab, 2008). 101.

¹²² Qalb-i-Abid & Massarrat Abid, *Punjab Politics: Dyarchy to Partition*, 258.

¹²³ See, Civil & Military Gazette, Lahore, 14th & 16th February, 1940.

¹²⁴ Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj*, 120-121.

¹²⁵ Hindu *Mahasabha* (HM), was founded in 1906 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. 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).

¹²⁶ Qalb-i-Abid & Massarrat Abid, *Communalism in India: The Role of Hindu Mahasabha* (Lahore: Research Society of Pakistan, 2008), 62.

¹²⁷ Civil & Military Gazette, Lahore, 29th June & 19th July, 1938.

¹²⁸ *The Tribune*, 31st July 1938 also quoted by Civil & Military Gazette, Lahore, 8th August 1938.

¹²⁹ Fortnightly Report, Government of Punjab, (FNR) 15th September 1938.

¹³⁰ S. Qalb-i-Abid, *Muslim Politics in the Punjab*, 207 and Raghuvendra Tanwar, *Politics of Sharing Power*, 117.

¹³¹ Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj*, 120. Also see Civil & Military Gazette, Lahore, 2nd August 1938. Raghuvendra Tanwar, *Politics of Sharing Power*, 117.

¹³² Civil & Military Gazette, Lahore, 5th August 1938.

¹³³ Raghuvendra Tanwar, *Politics of Sharing Power*, 117. Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj*, 120. For more details see, Civil & Military Gazette, Lahore, 13th August & 6th September, 1938.

¹³⁴ S. Qalb-i-Abid, *Muslim Politics in the Punjab*, 207.

¹³⁵ Qalb-i-Abid & Massarrat Abid, *Punjab Politics: Dyarchy to Partition*, 259. For details see, Civil & Military Gazette, 29th June and 17 & 26 July 1938.

¹³⁶ S. Qalb-i-Abid, *Muslim Politics in Punjab*, 208.

¹³⁷ Ibid., Also See, Civil & Military Gazette, 18th October 1938.

¹³⁸ Qalb-i-Abid & Massarrat Abid, *Punjab Politics: Dyarchy to Partition*, 259-260.

¹³⁹ **Khalsa National Party** was founded by two Sikh leaders; Sir Sundar Singh Majithia and Sir Jogendra Singh in 1936. The membership of the party was open for all, and the central headquarter of the party was in Amritsar.

¹⁴⁰ S. Qalb-i-Abid, *Muslim Politics in the Punjab*, 208. For details, see Civil & Military Gazette, 6th June to 17th June 1938.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Malik Firoz Khan Noon (Shahpur, Punjab, 1893-1970) belonged to landlord family of the Punjab province. He worked as a member in the Punjab Legislative Council 1920-36. He also has been the member of Viceroy's Legislative Council in 1942-45. For detailed studies, see Firoz Khan Noon, *From Memory* (Lahore: 1966).

¹⁴⁴ Qalb-i-Abid & Massarrat Abid, *Punjab Politics: Dyarchy to Partition*, 260.

¹⁴⁵ Ian Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana*, 69.

¹⁴⁶ S. Qalb-i-Abid, *Muslim Politics in the Punjab*, 209.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. Also see, Raghuvendra Tanwar, *Politics of Sharing Power*, 119-125.

- ¹⁴⁸ Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj*, 129. For details, see Civil & Military Gazette, 25th January 1939.
- ¹⁴⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁵⁰ Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj*, 129.
- ¹⁵¹ See Civil & Military Gazette, 22nd January 1939.
- ¹⁵² Ibid.
- ¹⁵³ Ibid and Civil & Military Gazette, 13th January 1939.
- ¹⁵⁴ S. Qalb-i-Abid, *Muslim Politics in the Punjab*, 209.
- ¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 209-210.
- ¹⁵⁶ Ibid. For details see, Lionel Carter, ed., *Punjab Politics, 1940-1943: Strains of War, Governors' Fortnightly Reports*, Governor to Viceroy, 27th January 1939.
- ¹⁵⁷ Qalb-i-Abid & Massarrat Abid, *Punjab Politics: Dyarchy to Partition*, 262 and *Muslim Politics in the Punjab*, 210.
- ¹⁵⁸ Ian Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana*, 73.
- ¹⁵⁹ S. Qalb-i-Abid, *Muslim Politics in the Punjab*, 210.
- ¹⁶⁰ Ibid.
- ¹⁶¹ Qalb-i-Abid & Massarrat Abid, *Punjab Politics: Dyarchy to Partition*, 262.
- ¹⁶² Lajpat Rai Nair, ed., *Sikandar Hayat Khan: The Soldier-Statesman of the Punjab*, 20 and Ian Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana*, 77.
- ¹⁶³ Ian Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana*, 77.
- ¹⁶⁴ Mohinder Sing, *History and Culture of Punjab*, 210. For details see, Sajjad Zaheer, *Light on the League-Unionist Conflict (Bombay: 1944)*, 21.
- ¹⁶⁵ Qalb-i-Abid & Massarrat Abid, *Punjab Politics: Dyarchy to Partition*, 240.
- ¹⁶⁶ Mohinder Sing, *History and Culture of Punjab*, 205. Also see S. Qalb-i-Abid, *Muslim Politics in the Punjab*, 204.
- ¹⁶⁷ Ian Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana*, 73-74.
- ¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 74.
- ¹⁶⁹ Sajjad Zaheer, *Light on the League-Unionist Conflict*, 21.
- ¹⁷⁰ Raghuvendra Tanwar, *Politics of Sharing Power*, 118.
- ¹⁷¹ Ibid., 125.
- ¹⁷² Ibid., 125-126.
- ¹⁷³ Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj*, 117.
- ¹⁷⁴ Raghuvendra Tanwar, *Politics of Sharing Power*, 126.
- ¹⁷⁵ Ibid.