
Before Historicity of the Multan Convention (7-9 Oct. 1956) of the Markazi Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam West Pakistan

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The attachment of the people of Punjab with Islam has a long history owing largely to the preaching undertaken by prominent *Sufis* such as Hazrat Ali Hajveri popularly known as Data Ganj Bakhsh as well as Sayyid Jalauddin Bukhari, Makhdoome Jahanian Jahangasht, Baba Farid Ganj Shakar, Bahauddin Zakria and Sayyid Abdul Latif Qadri prominently known as Bari Imam. In the British India, Punjab played, its due role to organize ulema on the platform of Jamiatul Ulema-i-Hind (JUH) wherein Maulana Abol Wafa Sanaullah and Maulana Maula Baksh from Amritsar, Maulana Mohammad Ibrahim Sialkoti and Maulana Sayyid Daud Ghaznavi participated as founding fathers.

Maulana Abdul Qadir Qasoori, another *alim* from Qasoor was member of the JUH Executive Committee. In the 54 member All India Muslim League (AIML) Parliamentary Board Punjab had three members – Maulana Ishaq Mansehrvi (originally he belonged to Hazara in the NWFP), Maulana Abdul Qadir Qasoori and Maulana Sayyid Shah Zainuddin at par with Bihar while the rest provinces including Bengal and UP each had two representatives. The entire frontline leadership of the *Ahrar* including Chowdhry Afzal Haq, Maulana Sayyid Ataullah Shah Bukhari, Maulana Habibul Rahman Ludhianvi, Maulana Sayyid Daud Ghaznavi, Maulana Mazhar Ali Azhar, Maulana Zafar Ali Khan, Maulana Abdul Qadir Qasoori and Ghazi Abdul Rahman hailed from the Punjab.

Some of the above leaders and also Maulana Noorul Din Layallpur (now city's name is Faisalabad) also suffered various

imprisonments at Multan Jail. During the final phase of the movement for the establishment of Pakistan, the ulema from Punjab participated in the evaluation of the idea of a separate state of Pakistan in the light of *Shari'at* and Maulana Khair Mohammad Jallandhari of Multan and Mufti Mohammad Hasan of Lahore under the guidance of Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi, a noted scholar of Islam, at times head of Darul Ulum Deoband and a sufi supported the righteousness of the course of demand for Pakistan adopted by AIML. They were joined by the Khatib of Shahi Masjid of Lahore, Maulana Ghulam Murshad and other Sunni, Brelvi and Shia ulema. (Pirzada: 1980) Prominent amongst those who opposed the establishment of Pakistan from the platform of JUH included Sayyid Ataullah Shah Bukhari and Maulana Ahmad Ali Lahori. Punjab was also a centre of Hindu revivalist movements Punjab Arya Parti Nadi and also the abode of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian who founded *Qadianiyyat* which has been ruled as a sect outside the pale of Islam through the Constitution Second Amendment Act 1974.

Maulana Lahori was a close disciple of the JUH leader, Maulana Husain Ahmad Madni who continued his opposition to the idea of Pakistan throughout the history and even exerted his utmost influence to win over Sylher for India in referendum. To further improve the veracity of supporting the idea of a composite nation consisting of Hindus, Muslims and others alike, Maulana Madni's lieutenants legitimated it on religious grounds in a *fatwa*. (Jawaz) The Deobandi ulema associated with the All India Jami'at Ulema-i-Islam (AIJUI) questioned the veracity of this ruling and a detailed *fatwa* issued by Mufti Shafi, the Grand Mufti of Darul Ulum Deoband was endorsed by Maulana Khair Mohammad Jallandhari who later setup Madrasa Arabia Khairul Madaris at Multan. (Shafi)

After Pakistan came into being Maulana Lahori sought the advice of Maulana Madni about his political mission in the new Muslim state. Maulana Madni directed him to concentrate his energies on Pakistan. The text of the letter has been reproduced in Maulana Lahori's biography developed by Abdul Hameed. (Khan: 1968, 105.) With this Maulana Lahori stepped in political activity. The pro-AIML now renamed as Pakistan Muslim League faction of the ulema who had set up AIJUI in 1945 under the leadership of Allama Shabbir Ahmad Uthmani invited the

former workers and leaders of the JUH to join hands with them for realization of the religious objectives of the creation of Paksitan which according to the present author they accepted halfheartedly. They were not working comfortably with their former opponents, the leaders and workers of the AIJUI now renamed as Markazi Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam Pakistan (MJUIP) whose struggle had crowned with success and Pakistan came into being. However, they responded in a cold fashion and did not display any warmth at any occasion. The MJUIP leaders put in all efforts to assimilate them in the mainstream of the party and it was in this spirit that in 1955 Maulana Ahmad Ali Lahori was made one of the five Vice Presidents (14 April 1955 – 7 October 1958).

The followers of Maulana Madni now rallying round Maulana Lahori did take part in various efforts for the framing of Islamic constitution, among others the framing of 22 Basic principles of Islamic State drawn by Ulema of the all schools of thought and the *Khatme Nabuwwat Tahrik* (1952), independently and in unison with the ulema associated with the M JUIP. Maulana Lahori and Mufti Mahmood had appreciated the 1956 Constitution as a victory of the Muslim masses and the ulema. (*Invitation Letter of the Convention*) A detailed review was, however, published later. (Mahmood: 1956) Their mutual political rivalry appeared to have been partly dismissed largely through a comment which was made by Maulana Sayyid Abu Zar (Muaviya) Bukhari, the son of veteran *Ahrar* leader Maulana Sayyid Ataullah Shah Bukhari:

My father used to say that he opposed the idea of Pakistan to the hilt. Pakistan came into being despite that. We lost. The AIML won. Now that Pakistan has come into existence, we consider it a part of our faith to protect it and pledge to offer any sacrifice in this connection. For us, the creation of Pakistan is like a son who marries a girl contrary to the wishes of his parents and brings the bride to his parent's home. The moment the bride enters the house of her in-laws, it becomes incumbent on *ghairatmand* parents to protect her to the last. We take

Pakistan that way and are ready to offer even our lives to safeguard its solidarity and integrity.
(Personal Interview)

The devotees of Maulana Madni and also those of Maulana Maududi never made such a bold admission about the political modus-operandi of their mentors. This apparent token of love for Pakistan, however, was not enjoying deeper attachments, especially the followers of Maulana Madni who were uncomfortable in a setup where their mentor (Maulana Madni) was not held in high esteem. Some of heartbeat emotions about Maulana Madni by his admirers included:

“*Sheikhul Islam*”, *Taballah Tharah*”, *Mujahide Azam*,
“*Ghauthe Azam*,
Sheikhul Arab Wal-ajam”, “*Yagana badahar*”, (with)
“*makarmashe wahbi*”.
(Qasim: 715, 54, 108. Kamal: 75. Pirzada: 1992)

Naturally those sharing this perception of Maulana Madni were not ready to concede errancey on his part about opposing the demand for Pakistan. On the other hand contemporary actors in the historical process which culminated in the form of Pakistan were not ready to endorse that high pitch reverence of Maulana Madni. The impartial comments of Muslim Philosopher Allama Iqbal (Iqbal: 278) and scholars like I.H. Qureshi (Qureshi: 345) clouded even a tithe of the above reverence and rated the Maulana other way round. In fact despite composing the reply of Iqbal’s quatrain by several devotees of the Maulana, his followers’ experienced (even experience now: Author) a worse type of depression when referred to Iqbal.

To recapitulate, ultimately the faction decided to create their own platform in October 1956 for which unifying factor was the personality of Maulana Ahmad Ali Lahori joined and assisted by Mufti Mahmood *sadar madarras* in (*madrasa*) Qasimul Ulum and the *Ahrar* leader Maulana Ghulam Ghaus Hazarvi, all spiritually likned with Maulana Madni. Qasimul Ulum located at Katchey Road in Multan played a pivotal role in Deobandi political aspirations. It was constructed on a piece of land where Maulana Madni had delivered an address. He has been described

as the first patron of the seminary. (Qasim:40) Maulana Madni (probably due to submissiveness) described himself as “*nange aslaf*” (53)

Jamia’s biographer, author of *Ahadsaz Qiyadat* and at times editor of its weekly organ, *Tarjuman-e Islam* (Lahore), Ahmad Husain Kamal recollects the factors leading to the Multan Convention by analyzing the post-1947 political developments saying: Maulana Ahmad Ali Lahore trained at the hands of Maulana Madni cooperated (after Pakistan came into being) with Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Uthmani unreservedly, but his successors secluded themselves and eventually Pakistan’s politics passed on to men like Iskander Mirza. The religious leadership was promoting the viewpoint of Parvez and Maududi and the youth were getting attractive to either American culture’s characterlessnesses or imaginary dreams of socialism. It is high time to free Pakistan’s people from the shackles of dirty politics and pave the way for emergence of real Islam. The imminent need is that righteous people should come forward to guide the nation. (Kamal, 73) Examining the above explanation historically, these facts did not have any weight. Appreciation of the 1956 Constitution by Mufti Mahmood and Maulana Lahori hardly left any major confrontational ground. The real purpose, therefore, was to organize a platform of the Madni school.

The three day Convention commenced on 7 October 1956 at the Hall of Khan Muhammad Bahram Building in Multan with Maulana Khuda Bukhsh in the chair. Sayyid Hamid Miyan recited from the Holy Quran. Maulana Ahmad Ali President of the reception committee delivered his address. Ulema he pointed out were the segment of Islamic society assigned the task of protection of the revealed truth of God Almighty as state in the verse.

Inna Nahnu Nazzaalnal zikra was Inna Lahu Lahafizun.
(Alhujrat, Holy Quran. *Ulema-i-Islam Maghribi Pakistan*, 14.)

The magnitude of this power of the ulema was experienced by the rulers in the recent most *Tahrike Khatme Nabuwat*. The likewise missionary zeal was imminent to make Pakistan a real Pakistan – land of the pure. (17) He pointed out the allegation of

Indian Premier Jawaharlal Nehru about revolutionaries in the Pakistan government who suffered trials and tribulations for freeing India from the shackles of British slavery and the comment of NWFP Premier Dr. Khan that our ulema, excepting Maulana Obaydullah Sindhi did not suffer for Indian freedom from the alien masters. Maulana Lahori surprised at Dr. Khan's ignorance and added names of Sheykhul Hind Maulana Mahmudul (sic.) Hasan, Mulana Taj Mohammad Amroti of Shikarupur, Maulana Sheikh Abdul Rahim of Hyderabad, Maulana Ghulam Mohammad of Dinpur Sharif, Maulana Abdul Qadir, Maulana Abo Mohammad of Lahore, Maulana Abdul Haq and he himself (Maulana Lahori), Maulana Hamdullah of Panipat, Maulana Husain Ahmad Madni, Mufti Kifayatullah, Maulana Ahmad Saeed, Maulana Uzair Gul of Malakand, Maulana Hasrat Mohani and others. (18-20) His claim that "none of them was Congressite" was contestable. While in the earliest phase Sheykhul Hind Maulana Mahmud Hasan established Congress in Kabul, (Khan: 1985, 109) Maulana Madni, Mufti Kifayatullah, Maulana Ahmad Saeed and he himself has been part and parcel of the Congress policy of opposing the demand for Pakistan on political and religious grounds from the platform of JUH, an ally of the Congress. He made a complete black out about the ulema like Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi, Allama Shabbir Ahmad Uthmani, Maulana Zafar Ahmad Uthmani, Maulana Ghulam Murshad, Pir Ghulam Mojaddid Sirhindi, Maulana Raghib Ahsan, Maulana Mohammad Akram, Pir of Sarsina Sharif, Pir Jamaat Ali Shah of Alipur Syedan and several others who fought shoulder to shoulder with the AIML for the establishment of Pakistan in the length and breadth of India in general and the Muslim majority provinces in particular. (Pirzada: 1995)

In fact latter were the real founding fathers of Pakistan from the viewpoint of Muslim nationalism and not those who fought for Indian independence from the platform of Congress committed to uphold Indian unity and the idea of a composite nationalism. (Pirzada: 1995) He recalled the pronouncements of Quaid-i-Azam, Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan and the Punjab Premier Iftikhar Hussain Mamdot to the effect that "Pakistan would have Islamic Constitution", "enforcement of Islamic law and framing of all laws on *shari'at* and expressed the view that

“a deviation from that principled stand would be treachery to Pakistan, treachery to the founding fathers and treachery to the Pakistan Muslims”. (*Ulema-i-Islam Maghribi Pakistan* 22-23) He described the enactment of the 1956 Constitution a victory of the Muslim masses and a humiliating defeat to its opponents, secularists, atheists and agents of the West. (24-25)

The Convention unanimously agreed for the setting up of Markazi Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam West Pakistan (MJUIWP) as a political party and elected Maulana Ahmad Ali Lahori as its President. Maulana Ghulam Ghaus Hazarvi was elected as Secretary General, Mufti Mahmood and Maulana Mohammad Amir Minchinabadi were nominated as Vice Presidents and Maulana Abdul Wahid as Secretary. (27) The aims and objectives of the party were conglomerating ulema on a single platform to promote Islam, enforcing Islamic teachings in all walks of life, striving for introducing Islamic judicial system, replacing the inhuman capitalist and atheistic socialism and communism, setting up an educational system to inculcate fear of God Almighty and help promote the right and wrong, promote *Jihad*, fraternal ties instead of regional linguistic and racial prejudices, fraternity of Muslims at global level and to set up Muslim voluntary social rehabilitation centers to quell the incidents of un-Islamic acts of false religious creeds. (28-29)

The party was organized at national, regional (West Pakistan), district and primary level. (30-31) While its membership was open to any two-Anna (a currency unit) paying adult Muslim, saving a frontline scholar and former sympathiser of AIJUI Maulana Khair Mohammad Jallandhari (who was also a signatory of the famous *fatwa* in support of the demand for Pakistan and the joining of AIML (Shafi: 48) contrary to the JUH) it was a gathering of the Deoband school linked with the religious and political ideology of Maulana Madni of course in the precincts of a new state of Pakistan. Maulana Daud Ghazanavi and Ahle Hadith leader appeared to be their likeminded. (*Ulema-i-Islam Maghribi Pakistan*, 5) The only other exception, however, was Maulana Abdul Sattar Khan Niazi, a Muslim League leader elected to the Punjab Assembly in the 1946 elections on AIML ticket, and Sunni by sect. (8)

Looking at the Convention from regional aspect it appeared to be a gathering of Deobandi ulema across Pakistan in general

and Multan in particular who overwhelmingly had spiritual ties with Maulana Madni. The contingent of Multan outnumbered the entire Convention.: Multan 42, Bahawalnager 3, Sargodha 5, Mianwali 3, Jhang 1, Muzaffargarh 11, Jhelum 2, Rawalpindi 7, Mongtomery (now Sahiwal) 4, Sialkot 1, Bahawalpur 7, Toba Tek Singh 3, Gujranwala 1, Lahore 6, Sheikhpura 2, Campbellpur (now Attock) 2, Khangarh 1, Dera Ghazi Khan 1, Gujrat 1, Layallpur (now Faisalabad) 1, Rahim Yar Khan 1, Shujaabad 1, Karachi 1, Khairpur 2, Quetta 3, Nawabshah 1, Mastung 1, Larkana 1, Mardan 3, Hazara 12, Dera Ismail Khan 16, Bannu 5 and Peshawar 1.

The unifying factor for the whole gathering was Qasimul Ulum. The Darul Ulum had been established at the place where once Mulana Madni delivered a speech in 1365 AH/1945 AD. The entire team of founders, organizers, teachers and even members of its *shura* were devotees of Maulana Madni, educated at Darul Ulum Deoband or at Mufti Kifayatullah's Madrasa Aminia in Delhi. Most of them played a key role in the subsequent political topsy turviness in Pakistan. These included Maulana Mohammad Masood, Maulana Abdul Qadir Qasimi, Mufti Mohammad Abdulah, Maulana Mohammad Shafi, Maulana Khuda Bux, Mufti Mahmood (Qasim: 7-8), Maulana Mohammad Abdullah Darkhawasti, Maulana Shamsul Haq Afghani, Maulana Ubaidullah Anwar, Maulana Hamid Miyan, Maulana Mohammad Amir, Maulana Syed Niaz Ahmad Shah and Sheikh Mohammad Yaqub. (30). The above gathering was, therefore, fully representative of the Deoband's Madni faction of course with a focus on Multan, where they had comparatively better number which was evident from the number of participants from elsewhere.

Since the AIML had won tremendous victory in the 1945-1946 elections in cooperation with the AIJUI and ulema of others schools of thought, the overwhelming majority of the ulema in general and the Deobandi ulema in particular were their associates in the establishment of Pakistan who did not like to weaken the MJUIP by creating its pre-independence off-shoot under the former JUH leadership. This was the main reason in exceptionally poor representation of the Convention from principal cities like Peshawar, Karachi, Lahore, Rawalpindi and Quetta. 6 and 7 delegates from Lahore and Rawalpindi, 3 from

Quetta and 1 each from Karachi and Peshawar proved that the organizers were not able to locate adequate number of political associates from most of the areas which had massive following of the Muslim League and the MJUIP. The poor representative character of the Convention was evident from the sum total of delegates from Sindh and Balochistan - 9, that of NWFP-36 and Punjab-106 including 42 from Multan alone.

A prominent organizer Maulana Abdul Qadir Qasimi told the author that invitation was extended to the leaders and workers of the MJUIP, but none of them attended excepting Maulana Khair Mohammad Jallandhary, a follower of Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi and supporter of the idea of Pakistan. Maulana Jallandhary belonged to Multan and appeared to have attended the Convention in courtesy only, as taking into cognizance his status and fame at all-India level which was not comparable to any one of the delegates in the Convention, he was not associated with any forum of the new party. The Secretary of the MJUIP Maulana Matin Khatib told the author that they objected to the holding of Multan Convention which was an attempt to reactivate the JUH's faction in Pakistan. However, we decided to ignore it, to avoid the impression that like politicians the ulema are also daggers drawn at each other. (Interview) Maulana Lahori made a mention of discord of a leader of MJUIP (appeared to be Maulana Matin Khatib. Author), about the Multan Convention in his address. (Roodad,8)

The Multan Convention and the subsequent MJUIP Executive Committee (2-3 December 1956) adopted the following resolutions: The MJUIWP criticized the foreign policy of Pakistan and demanded to exert its utmost to stop the atrocities by its allies, Britain and France against Egypt and Algeria and to extend wholehearted support to them. If those Western allies do not accept Pakistan's plea, diplomatic relations with them should be severed.

Through another resolution the party opposed the grant of representative status to the non-Muslims in the elected Assemblies being un-Islamic and also flouting the practice of the pious Caliphs. Such a representation was unjustified in the light of both separate and joint electorates as it affords opportunity to them to participate in the affairs of the Islamic state. However the non-Muslim citizens should be generously treated and

guaranteed protection of life, liberty, freedom of belief and respect.

The party invited the attention of the government about unjust treatment to the workers of the Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam, *Tahuffuze Khatme Nabuwwat* and *Tanzime Ahle Sunnat* as a result of order of the Qadiani Chief Secretary of the West Pakistan Government.

The MJUIWP took strong exception to the violation of human rights, delay in the enforcement of Islamic teachings and violations of democratic norms. The party emphasized the emergent need of curbing parochial feelings and creation of conducive conditions for the holding of fair and free elections.

Another resolution held the Mirzais, both of Qadiani and Lahori denominations outside the pale of Islam and that like other non Muslim minorities' in-eligible for membership of elected legislatures, and added that their judgments should not be applied on Muslims. The party also exhorted the federal and the provincial governments to ensure implementation of this resolution for upholding the real spirit of Islam. Finally the MJUIWP expressed apprehensions on the sectarian attachments of bureaucracy to the extent of the rituals of *shi'a* sect. They expressed scruples that such patronage could turn into a shia-sunni clashes.

It may be noted that the nature of the MJUIWP was sectarian. Its mention of the membership of Muslims meant only Deobandi Muslims and so was the attitude of its parent body (Khan: 1985,196) the JUH. (*Ulema-i-Islam Maghribi Pakistan: 39-43*) The JUH, Cownpore established as a result of JUH's disintegration however had a different attitude. It invited a delegation of the *shi'a* ulema to participate in its formation session. (Manglori: 1945,574). The sectarian aspect was dominant in almost all parties founded and operated by the ulema during British India continuing so till the Multan Convention, though a claim to the contrary (was) is made by all religious parties. (*Ulema-i-Islam Maghribi Pakistan: Roedad.*)

Conclusion

Multan Convention was a significant development in Pakistan's party politics in general and the religious politics in particular. The above explanation proves that the pith and soul of the Convention was to create platform of the workers, leaders and devotees of anti-Pakistan JUH stalwart Maulana Madni who had suffered a defeat not only in the 1945-1946 elections in the length and breath of India, but also by way of final creation of Pakistan. Eventually the Madni faction's political career became dormant and the MJUIP an ally and freedom fighter along AIML was generally held with esteem being a legitimate religious party looking after the interests of the Pakistani masses. The workers and leaders of the former JUH though associated with the MJUIP were not comfortable because of demoralized image of their spiritual mentor Maulana Madni in their eyes, and they finally decided to set up their own party. The letter of Maulana Madni to Maulana Lahori came to be a formal permission and the seat of Qasimul Ulum which had gained the status of conduit of the Deoband lineage finally unfolded their political program. There is good weight in the argument advanced at the Convention to the effect that the activity of the associates of Allama Shabbir Ahmad Uthmani had been confined, and they were not turning unto the exigency of time to check secularism, westernization of society and growing politics of greed and lust of power. The MJUIP did not challenge the holding of Multan Convention and made their own organization inactive. Ultimately it was the MJUIWP which remained on political scene and continues as such till today.

The MJUIP did re-organize itself to contest the 1970 elections but failed to win any seat. Ever since, the debate of Congressite and opponent of the idea of Pakistan about the MJUIWP has eliminated and it's this faction that is on political horizon and has made tremendous contribution to the national politics during the last over three decades of Pakistan's history.

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