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# The Pir of Manki Sharif: His Role in the Pakistan Freedom Movement

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## Abstract

The battle for Pakistan was fought in the whole of India but in the North West Frontier Province (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa)<sup>1</sup>, it acquired a unique character in the sense that here the proponents of the Muslim Nationalism and Pakistan were confronted not with a hostile Hindu majority, as was the case in the rest of India. Rather they had to deal with their fellow Muslim Pukhtuns under the banner of Khudai Khidmatgar Movement. The main political philosophy of the movement and its leader Abdul Ghaffar Khan, since their merger in the congress in 1930, was based on the concept of Indian Nationalism instead of Muslim Nationalism and were struggling for their goal of the United India. This article aims at highlighting the role of the Pir of Manki Sharif in the freedom movement and the creation of Pakistan. In the line of this argument, his crucial struggle that he led during the final phase of the partition drama would be explored. In the larger context it would be discovered to locate and critically evaluate the role he played in popularizing the Pakistan Movement among the Pukhtuns of the settled and tribal areas.

## Historical Background

The former North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) was established in 1901 on the initiative of Lord Curzon, the then viceroy of India. Before that the administration of the settled districts of this province and the un-administered tribal belt were the responsibility of the neighboring province of the Punjab. The main aim of separating these areas from the Punjab and giving them a separate provincial status was to bring this province directly under the control of the Government of the British India.<sup>2</sup> Although the British government established the province, they did not introduce the political, social and economic reforms, introduced in other parts of India under Mento-Morley (1909) and Montague-

Chelmsford (1919) reforms due to security considerations.<sup>3</sup> Some leaders of the province and Muslim leaders of India such as Allama Iqbal and the Quaid-i-Azam raised their voice for introduction of reforms and giving it rights and status at par with other provinces. But the local Hindu leadership and the Congress opposed introduction of all such reforms in the province.<sup>4</sup> It was only under the Government of India Act 1935 that the province was brought at par with other provinces of India in political sphere.

So far as starting of political activities in the NWFP is considered, the Hindus first took lead by forming a provincial branch of the All India National Congress in the first decade after the establishment of the province. On the Muslims side, the first serious attempt was made in 1913 when Mian Abdul Aziz Advocate and Ali Abbas Bukhari established provincial branch of the All India Muslim League at Peshawar.<sup>5</sup> But this branch of the AIML was banned by the British authorities due to the anti-British activities of its leaders.<sup>6</sup> Maulana Fazl-e-Wahid, known as the Haji Sahib Turangzai, and Abdul Ghaffar Khan also started their reform movement in the province during the same period. Their emphasis was on spreading education and eradication of social evils and corrupt practices among the Pukhtuns. Abdul Ghaffar Khan also held a large protest meeting at his native village Utmanzai against the incident of firing on innocent citizens at Jalianwala Bagh, Amritsar, on April 13, 1919.<sup>7</sup> The Khilafat Movement was also carried out in the province in which Abdul Ghaffar Khan and some other prominent political personalities of the time took part.

In 1929, Abdul Ghaffar Khan founded the Khudai Khidmatgar Movement and in 1930 merged it into the All India National Congress. The same year, in consequence of the civil disobedience movement, ordered by Mr. Ghani, strong waves of political uprising were felt. Abdul Ghaffar Khan along with his Congress associates went to prison and his movement gained tremendous popularity in the province. In 1937 elections Congress emerged as the single largest party in the assembly. In view of the Congress' indecision to form governments in the provinces over the question of governors' interference in ministerial affairs for protection of minorities, Sahibzada Abdul Qayum Khan formed government in the province with the support of independent and some Hindu-Sikh members. Later on, Dr. Khan Sahib tabled a motion of no confidence against his ministry and himself formed a Congress ministry. The Khan Sahib's government resigned in 1939 along with other Congress ministries in other provinces. After some political manoeuvring Sardar Aurangzeb Khan, the Muslim League leader in the provincial assembly, was able to form government in May, 1943.<sup>8</sup> During the intervening period the province was run by the Governor. During the historical session of the All India Muslim League held in Lahore in March, 1940, in which the Pakistan resolution was passed, a large number of people, including Sardar

Aurangzeb, Bakht Jamal Khan and Mian Zia-ud-Din were present. Sardar Aurangzeb Khan seconded this resolution on behalf of the Muslims of the Frontier Province.

### Family Background and Political Carrier of the Pir of Manki Sharif

Amin-ul-Hassanat, popularly known as the Pir of Manki Sharif, was born on February 01, 1922 in the village of Manki (Nowshera) in a famous family of hereditary saints. He belonged to the Dalazak tribe of the Pukhtuns.<sup>9</sup> His grandfather Abdul Wahab was authorized successor of the famous frontier saint of the *Qadriah* spiritual order, the Akhun of Swat (Saidu Baba) and had taken part in the battle of Ambella against the British along with the saint. He had a large circle of disciples who were known as "Sheikhs".<sup>10</sup> Abdul Wahab's son and successor, Abd-ur-Rauf, himself an imminent saint, died in 1934 and was succeeded by his son Amin-ul-Hassanat, the Pir of Manki Sharif. The Pir of Manki got religious education from Maulana Abdul Hannan.

In the early phase of his life, the Pir of Manki Sharif remained aloof from active politics. He took part only in the religious gatherings organized by his disciples in various parts of the province. He did not favor practical politics but at the same time he was anxious about the welfare of the Muslim nation. He wanted to serve the Muslims. He had started opposing the Congress since the days of the Quit India Movement (1942). He knew that the main aim of the Congress in asking the British to leave India without partitioning it between the Hindus and Muslims was the establishment of Hindu rule over whole of India.<sup>11</sup> Although his thinking and ideas were in harmony with those of the All India Muslim League, he did not join it until the Simla Conference of August 1945. By that time momentous changes had taken place in the political landscape of India. The Quit India Movement started by the Congress for blackmailing the British government into submitting to their demand of handing over to them the reins of power to the exclusions of the Muslims of India had failed. The Congress leaders had been incarcerated and the Allied were winning the war against Germany and Japan. In India correspondence had started between Mr. Gandhi and Jinnah over the question of Pakistan but no agreement was in sight. The Congress had ended its antigovernment movement and the new viceroy, Lord Wavell, had taken charge of his new responsibility.

The failure of Gandhi-Jinnah talks convinced Lord Wavell that the deadlock in India could be broken only by the intervention of the third party, the British government, between the Congress and the Muslim League.<sup>12</sup> For this purpose he submitted his plan to the Secretary of States for India. He proposed to call a conference of the principal party leaders and representatives of the minorities for

discussing formation of a provisional government at the centre whose talks would be to carry on the war against Japan and form the constituent assembly for drawing the future constitution of India and negotiate with the British government a treaty for the transfer of power.<sup>13</sup> For this purpose the Viceroy called a conference of political leaders and Chief Ministers of the provinces in Simla in June, 1945. On the question of composition of transitional government deadlock emerged between Jinnah and the Congress leaders. He insisted that all Muslim members of the Viceroy's Executive Council were to be nominated by the League. He demanded a declaration by His Majesty's Government giving the Muslim's right to self-determination and equality for Muslims with all other communities in the interim government.<sup>14</sup> The Viceroy and Congress leaders were not ready to accept the claim of the League as the sole representative of the Muslims of India. But the Jinnah knew the importance and seriousness of the matter, so he stuck to his guns and thus the Simla conference failed.

The failure of Simla conference had favorable impact on Muslim League politics in former NWFP. The message of Pakistan began to popularize among the educated and common people of the province.<sup>15</sup> Like many other Muslims of the province, Syed Amin-ul-Hassanat, the Pir of Manki Sharif, also got convinced that the Hindu-Muslim alliance was impossible and that the religious leaders should come forward for the welfare of the Muslim nation. He became the supporter of the Muslim League from the core of his heart. He thought that only the League could protect the interests of the Muslims of India.<sup>16</sup> The same year, besides the Pir Sahib, some front rank leaders of the Congress, such as Abdul Qaiyum Khan, Deputy Parliamentary Leader of the Congress in Central Legislature, Arbab Abdul Ghafour and Ghulam Muhammad LundKhawar, Provincial President of the Congress, also joined the League fold. Their joining of the party infused a new vigor in the provincial Muslim League in the frontier province.<sup>17</sup>

The Pir of Manki Sharif started his active politics by arranging a gathering of religious personalities in his native town of Manki in Nowshera. It was attended, among others, by such notable personalities of the All India level such as Allama ShabbierAhamd Usmani, Maulana Abdul Hamid Badayuni, Pir Jama'at Ali Shah and the Pir of Zakori etc. These religious personalities conferred with each other for a few days and came to the conclusion that, in order to fight the British and the Hindus, they would have to come out of their monasteries to take part in practical politics. For this purpose and with a view to work in organized form they established an association with the name of *Jamiat-ul-Asifiya*.<sup>18</sup> Despite his refusal he was made president of this organization. In this meeting it was decided to support the All India Muslim League in the coming elections.<sup>19</sup> They also demanded the Muslim League leadership to ensure that Pakistan would be an

Islamic state where no law, contrary to the Islamic Shariah would be promulgated. The Pir of Manki Sharif informed Jinnah of these developments in a letter addressed to him. In his reply Jinnah thanked him and other ulema for their whole-hearted support to the cause of Pakistan.

In November, 1945, the Quaid-i-Azam paid his second visit to Peshawar. He was given a warm reception by the people of the province. He addressed a huge public rally at Shahi Bagh Peshawar on November 21 for which elaborate arrangements had been made by the provincial Muslim League. On November 24, Jinnah, on his way to Mardan from Peshawar, stayed with the Pir of Manki at his village and took tea with him. The Pir Sahib had already been informed by Jinnah of his intension to meet him at his village. He was given a warm reception by the disciples of the Pir sahib. Jinnah in his address thanked him and his disciples and urged them to work for the attainment of Pakistan and support the Muslim League in the coming election.<sup>20</sup>

#### Elections of 1945-46

The winning of the 1945 elections in Britain by the Labor Party and failure of the Simla conference paved the way for the elections to the central and provincial assemblies in India. The main object in holding these elections was to judge the representative character of the Congress and Muslim League. The need for these elections had risen as a result of Jinnah's insistence during the Simla conference that the League represented the overwhelming majority of the Muslims of India. These elections, as announced by the Viceroy, Lord Wavell, were held between January 26 and February 19, 1946. Both the Congress and Muslim League vehemently contested these elections in former N-WFP like the rest of India. The main thrust of the Congress was all maintaining the unity of India while the League focused on the creation of Pakistan. Leaders of the All India Level form both the major parties visited the province and tried to boost up the morale of their respective parties in the elections. The Pir of Manki Sharif played a very important role in the elections in support of the Muslim League. He sent a letter to Jinnah and apprised him of the bitter organizational and financial conditions of the Frontier Muslim League during the crucial period of the upcoming elections. Jinnah urged the Frontier Muslims to work strenuously towards the attainment of the goal of Pakistan.<sup>21</sup> The Pir Sahib and his disciples visited various parts of the province and urged the Muslims of the province to vote for the Muslim League. When the elections results' were announced, the Congress got absolute majority in the province winning 19 out of 38 seats reserved for Muslims and 11 out 12 seats in the minority. The Muslim League got 17 out of the Muslim seats. Thus the Congress had support of 30 members in the house of 50. Dr. Khan Sahib formed government in the province. As a whole the Muslim League

performance was exemplary. It won all Muslim seats in the central assembly and 446 out of a total of 495 Muslim seats in the provincial assemblies. It was a decisive victory for Pakistan.<sup>22</sup> It proved beyond any doubt that the Muslim League alone represented the Muslims of India. Even in the former NWFP, the popular Muslim vote secured by the Muslim League was larger than those obtained by the Congress.<sup>23</sup>

### The Cabinet Mission Plan

On February 19, 1946, the British government announced its decision to send to India a special Cabinet Mission consisting of three Cabinet ministers, to seek in association with the Viceroy, Lord Wavell, and in consultation with the leaders of major Indian parties in agreement on constitutional matters relating to future India. This step was taken in view of the failure of the Gandhi-Jinnah talks in Simla conference. The most important issue before the Cabinet Mission was the settlement of mutually irreconcilable positions of the Congress which stood for the united India and the Muslim League which were determined to achieve Pakistan by Partitioning India. The Cabinet Mission held several rounds of talks with leaders of the Congress and Muslim League but could not bring about an agreement between these two parties. In an attempt to reconcile these two extreme positions of the two main parties, the Cabinet Mission presented its own scheme of three tiers federation of the provinces of India.

Provinces in each group were authorized to seed as many powers to be dealt with in group's capacity as they would agree upon. This plan presented by the Cabinet Mission was meant to fulfill at one and the same time the Muslim League's demand of ensuring fullest Muslim autonomy in the areas in which they were in majority and the Congress' demand of maintaining unity of India.

The Congress, for all practical purposes, rejected the Cabinet Mission plan on account of their own interpretations of the grouping scheme in it and the power of the Hindu-majority constituent assembly to amend it as it willed. But despite all this, the Viceroy, Lord Wavell, with the concurrence of the British government on August 06, 1947 invited the Congress leader, Mr. Nehru, to form government at the centre. This was against the assurances held out to the Muslim League by the Viceroy and against sense of justice and fair-play. This infuriated the League which passed a resolution which urged the Indian Muslims to observe 16 August as 'Direct Action Day' as a protest against the decision of the British government to hand over power at the crucial period to the Congress to the exclusion of the Muslim League. This was the first time in history of the Muslim League that it bade farewell to peaceful constitutional methods in politics

and resorted to unconstitutional blackmailing.<sup>24</sup> This Direct Action Day was observed throughout India. Like other parts of the country, the people of the province showed great enthusiasm in making this protest a success. The Pir of Manki Sharif remained very active in it. Various meetings were held. He presided over a huge public gathering at Masjid Mahabat Khan Peshawar. He urged the Muslims to renounce the British awarded titles and to prepare themselves for jails or being shot. He offered himself for the later course. After the meeting a very large procession was taken out from the Mosque through Peshawar city.<sup>25</sup>

### Nehru's Frontier Visit and Pir of Manki

Nehru had assumed office as Vice President in the Viceroy's Executive Council and as member in-charge of External Affairs and Common Wealth Relations Department. This portfolio included tribal affairs and tribal areas. At the provincial level Governor of the province had also additional charge of 'peace and welfare' of the tribes in his capacity as agent to the Governor General. The Governor of the province, Sir Olaf Caroe, in view of sensitivities of the tribal people, had already in 1946 placed his strong impression on record that tribal affairs should not be handed over to a non-Muslim member of the Viceroy's Executive Council. This matter had been discussed at the highest level but no workable solution of dividing the charge in the External Affairs Department could be chalked out. Mr. Nehru was aware of all these developments.<sup>26</sup> A few days before he took over charge in the Viceroy's Executive Council, bombing operations had been started against an 'offending' tribe in Waziristan. After taking over charge, Mr. Nehru decided to visit the area on 'suggestions of senior officers' of the External Affairs Department. This was a politically motivated visit aimed at 'giving a well-timed boost to the sagging morale of his beleaguered Congress colleagues.'<sup>27</sup>

At that time there was communal frenzy in other parts of India, so this visit was most likely to vitiate political atmosphere in the province. Even the Congress' supreme leader, Gandhi, and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad were against Nehru's proposed visit to the Frontier and tribal areas at that critical time. They thought it a risk for Mr. Nehru's life and would rally the opposition by giving them a focus for attack.<sup>28</sup> The Governor of Frontier, Caroe, specially flew from Peshawar to Delhi to dissuade Mr. Nehru from undertaking his proposed visit. He argued that this intended visit would, instead of strengthening, weaken the provincial Congress Ministry and increase hatred for the Hindus among the Muslims of the province.<sup>29</sup> The Governor was very worried about his visit. Even the Viceroy, Lord Wavell, advised him that if he were to undertake that visit at all, he should consider taking a Muslim colleague of the interim government with him 'to show a united front.'<sup>30</sup>

But all this failed to shake Nehru in his determination to visit the province and tribal areas. The Frontier Muslim League had already expressed its displeasure over the installation of a Hindu government at the centre against the wishes of the Muslims. The Provincial Muslim League had expressed this indignation through a resolution passed in a huge rally under the president-ship of the Pir of Manki Sharif at Peshawar.<sup>31</sup> Now the intended visit of Nehru acted like fuel on the fire. The Muslim League leadership of the province carried out an organized propaganda against this visit and aroused anti-Congress feelings among the Muslims. The Pir of Manki Sharif was the moving spirit behind all this campaign. He undertook a tour of the province and tribal areas and warned the Muslims of the political motives of the intended visit of Nehru. In one of his speeches he stated that he was prepared for the sake of Islam to shoot the governor and the Viceroy if he received an order from the Muslim League High Command.<sup>32</sup>

The Pir Sahib's visit to the tribal areas was so timed as just to precede Nehru's visit. So when Nehru arrived in Peshawar on October 16, 1946, there was a large scale popular resentment among Muslims of the province against him. At the Peshawar airport he was greeted by a huge demonstration organized by the Muslim League. In Waziristan he was given a cold reception. In Malakand Agency his car was stoned by hostile demonstrators. He was accompanied by Chief Minister, Dr. Khan Sahib and Abdul Ghaffar Khan. Similar treatment was meted out to him in Khyber Agency. In Charssadda, the home town of Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Nehru was accorded an enthusiastic reception. He blamed Muslim officers of the Political Department for stage managing these hostile demonstrations against him.<sup>33</sup> An enquiry conducted under Justice Clark of the Madras High Court exonerated Sheikh Mahbub Ali, the Political Agent of Malakand, of all such charges against him. But the Viceroy still sent the officer on compulsory retirement.<sup>34</sup> The Pir of Manki had a great hand in making a success of protest demonstrations against Nehru's visit to the Frontier.

### His Role in the Civil Disobedience Movement

The Muslim League was strengthening in the province day by day. It was no longer the Muslim League dominated by a few landlords. It had become a popular party lead by dedicated and selfless leaders whose main aim was to serve the Muslims.<sup>35</sup> This group included the Pir of Manki Sharif, Bakht Jamal Khan and Arbab Abdul Ghafoor Khan. Some prominent leaders of the Frontier Congress, such as Abdul Qaiyum Khan, Samin Jan Khan and Mian Abdullah Shah, had greatly helped in popularizing the Muslim League and its cause among the masses.



There were large numbers of Pukhtuns in various big cities of India in connection with different kinds of employment. In October, 1946 Hindu-Muslim riots started in various parts of India. The tails of these gory incidents were told by those people of the Frontier who had just recently returned from riots affected parts of India. The Muslim League also sent its delegations to the areas where the Muslims had greatly been affected. These delegations brought tails of the atrocities perpetrated by the Hindus upon the Muslims in various parts of India under rule of the Congress. This created a sense of hatred among the Muslim inhabitants and Hindu-Muslim riots started in the province. Dr. Khan Sahib acted sternly against those involved in riots in the province. This created a sense of resentment among the Muslim League circles against the Frontier Congress Ministry.<sup>36</sup>

The Shortage of food and other consumables such as cloth, kerosene oil, sugar etc. in the province and complaints of the Muslim Leaguers that depots in these commodities were being allotted to the Congress members only further deteriorated the situation.<sup>37</sup> On February 20, 1947, a meeting of the Provincial Muslim League was held in Peshawar which was presided over by the Pir of Manki Sharif and attended by all party leaders. It was decided to start a civil disobedience movement in the province against the Congress ministry. Next day the movement was launched. The main motive of the Frontier Muslim League in launching the movement was to weaken the provincial Congress government by eroding its popular base through unconstitutional means. Having support of the solid majority in the provincial assembly and backing of the Congress dominated interim government at the centre; they could not dislodge it through constitutional means.<sup>38</sup> The movement was started from Mardan. This movement got further urgency due to the announcement of Attlee, the Prime Minister of Britain, on February 20, 1947 to the effect that power would be transferred to the Indians by June, 1948. The Frontier Muslim League got a new incentive to dislodge the Congress ministry which was part of their proposed Pakistan project.<sup>39</sup> It was a large scale movement. It got further encouragement by the fall of the Unionist ministry in the Punjab as a result of large scale Muslim League demonstrations against it. The Pir of Manki Sharif, in this connection visited the southern districts and the adjacent tribal areas. At Tank he met several tribal maliks and exhorted them to be prepared for a *jihad* against the non-Muslims. He instructed his disciples to arm themselves to face the new challenges.<sup>40</sup> He held successful meetings in D. I. Khan, Bannu and Kohat districts, Bhittany tribal territory and Khyber Agency.

The main demands made at these meetings were the release of Muslim League leaders, the removal of restrictions placed on Muslim League and restoration of Mr. Pasri, the convert to Islam, to the Muslim to whom she was

alleged to have been married.<sup>41</sup> There were also strong demands of resignation of the provincial government. In an address at Hangu on 9 March, 1947, the Pir of Manki Sharif asked residents of the tribal areas to declare that they had no faith in the Tribal Areas Committee appointed by the Constituent Assembly.<sup>42</sup> In this connection he also addressed meetings at Peshawar and Mardan. He acted as the moving spirit behind this whole agitation during the Civil Disobedience Movement. He provided a series of large number of his disciples at the disposal of the movement. They played very important role in this respect. He was assisted by Mian Abdullah Shah, Sher Bahadar Khan and other local organizers. This council delegated its authority to the district leaders and retained its role of advising and sustaining the movement at the district levels.<sup>43</sup> He addressed most of the meetings arranged by the Provincial Muslim Leagues in various districts. He was arrested on March 28 which resulted into 'serious break of rioting in Mardan'. Thousands of other Muslim League activists had already been arrested and imprisoned in various parts of the province. In protest against his arrest, 04 April was observed in Peshawar and other cities 'the Pir of Manki Day'.<sup>44</sup> The movement did not recede with the arrest of the Pir Sahib. The situation got worsened day by day.

In these circumstances, the Governor thought that it was essential that the view of the electorate be ascertained through fresh elections and the province be, in the meantime, placed under the Governor's rule. But Nehru was opposed to the idea of holding fresh elections. He accused the Governor of anti-Congress bias and demanded his replacement.<sup>45</sup> During the Governors' Conference in which Nehru, Liaqat Ali Khan, Sardar Baldev Singh, Field Marshal Auchinlack and the Governor of former NWFP were also present, Mountbatten proposed elections in the Frontier before the transfer of power. Nehru strongly objected to this proposal, although he did accept in principle that it would be desirable to ascertain the views of people before a final decision in this respect was taken.<sup>46</sup>

In a meeting in the Viceroy House on April 16, 1947, also the Frontier situation came under discussion. Governor Caroe explained the situation in the province and held the Provincial Muslim League responsible for starting agitation against the provincial government on few pretexts and for taking law into their hands. He pointed out that in the previous elections both the Congress and the Muslim League had got nearly the same number of votes but now anti-Congress trend was on the increase. The Governor favored fresh elections in the province but the Viceroy and Nehru opposed elections at that point of time until the Viceroy received a reply from the British Government in this respect. But they did not oppose elections as such. They said that elections be announced after the final date of the transfer of power had been announced. The arrest of the Pir of Manki Sharif also came under discussion in this meeting. The Viceroy expressed

his desire to free the Pir Sahib if there was an agreement on continuation of such kinds of high level meetings. But Nehru opposed him and said that this would create a bad impression unless and until the Muslim League called off the on-going agitation against government.<sup>47</sup> Governor Caroe did not agree with Nehru and said Pir Sahib's release would have congenial impression on the province and in tribal areas where he had large circles of disciples. On April 17, Nehru, in a letter to Viceroy, agreed with the idea of elections in principle but at the same time pointed out that its announcement at that juncture would be considered a victory for the League policy and an act of enmity towards the Congress.<sup>48</sup> Thus he practically rejected the prospect of holding fresh elections in the province.

Mountbatten remained closely in touch with developments in the province. The situation appeared critical to him so he decided on April 21, to go himself to Frontier Province to assess the situation. "This and a short trip to the Punjab in July were the only provincial visits he paid during his Viceroyalty".<sup>49</sup> He visited Peshawar along with Lady Mount Batten on 28-29 April 1947. He held meetings with the Governor, Olaf Caroe, Chief Minister Khan Sahib, and leaders of the Congress and Muslim League. From the Muslim League side he met the Pir of Manki Sharif and Abdul Qayum Khan who had specially been released for this purpose. The Muslim League delegation made it clear to the Viceroy that a reference to the people of the province was the only solution to decide the conflicting claims of the Congress and Muslim League.<sup>50</sup> The Viceroy took conflicting positions with the Congress and League leaders. To the former he stressed the need for elections before transfer of power so as will of the people with regard to future of the province could be ascertained. To the League leader he made it clear that they had adopted an unconstitutional method for removal of the provincial government and imposition of Governor's rule in the province and that he would not support such a line of action.<sup>51</sup> He assured them of fair play on his part. On the second day of his visit the Viceroy went to the Khyber Agency and met tribal elders who told him that under no circumstances would they submit to the Hindu domination. Leader of the Mahsuds and Wazirs pressed hard for partition and dismissal of the Congress government in Peshawar.<sup>52</sup>

In their talks with the Viceroy on April 28 at Peshawar the Frontier Muslim League delegation had demanded that they be allowed on payroll to go to Delhi of consultation with Jinnah. The Viceroy agreed with this and asked the Governor to make arrangements in this regards. Accordingly, a Muslim League delegation consisting of the Pir of Manki Sharif, Khan Abdul Qaiyum Khan, Samin Jan Khan, Mian Abdullah Shah and Arbab Noor Mohammad Khan arrived in Delhi from Peshawar on May 2, 1947. They held two meetings with Jinnah. In one of the meetings Liaquat Ali Khan and Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar were also

present. They apprised Jinnah for not calling of the movement against the Congress Ministry of N-WFP.<sup>53</sup>

The situation was changing fast. On May 18, Lord Mountbatten flew to London with a new plan for the transfer of Power to the Indian hands. "Thus instead of solution of the Frontier problem by removing the Congress Provincial Ministry, the British Government, in agreement with the congress leaders, went to solve the whole problem of the division of India. This signified the impact of the Frontier problem on the central government rather on the whole of British Government".<sup>54</sup> On June 3, 1947, the partition plan was announced by Mountbatten on All India Radio. This was followed by speeches of Nehru and Jinnah expressing their acceptance of the partition plan. According to this plan referendum was to be held in former N-WFP to ascertain people's verdict as to whether they wanted to join Pakistan or remain in the Union of India. The All India Congress had endorsed this Partition plan on the condition that no fresh elections would be held in the Frontier Province. That's why the Partition plan, instead of acceding the Muslim League's demand for elections in the province, provided for referendum.

With the announcement of the Partition Plan, the Civil Disobedience Movement in the province was called off. But it is a fact that it was this movement which forced the British to decide the issue of Pakistan.<sup>55</sup> Now Pir of Manki focused all his energies on winning the forth coming referendum in the province. On June 17, Jinnah announced the constitution of a four member committee to supervise and control the Muslim League organization in the province and to make arrangements for the referendum. The committee was composed of I. I. Chandigarh, Ghazanfar Ali Khan, the Pir of Manki Sharif and Syed Wajid Ali. The committee was to remain in close contact with him and worked according to his guidance.<sup>56</sup> Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Dr. Khan Sahib boycotted the referendum on the plea that the Frontier province had not been given the option of remaining independent in the Partition Plan. The Viceroy told that this option had been withheld on the insistence of Nehru who argued that if right to independence is given to N-WFP then other provinces of India would also demand such right. The Pir of Manki Sharif worked day and night for the achievement of the goal of Pakistan and the Frontier province becoming its constituent part. He toured all parts of the province and urged the Muslims to vote for Pakistan in the forthcoming referendum. He remained in close contact with Jinnah and faithfully carried out his instructions.<sup>57</sup> The referendum was held under Lieutenant General Rob Lockhart who had been appointed Governor by replacing Caroe against whom objections had been raised by the Congress. Fifty thousand troops were concentrated in the province to help the Police keep order. The referendum was held from July 6 to 17 in a peaceful manner. There

were 289,244 votes for Pakistan against 2,874 for India. Those who voted for Pakistan were 51% of the total electorates and 78% of those who had voted in the 1946 elections in the province. In this way N-WFP became part of Pakistan in a democratic manner by the verdict of the People and through strenuous efforts of Pir of Manki Sharif.

## Conclusion

From the fore-going discussion we may conclude that the Pir of Manki Sharif played a very important role in the freedom struggle for Pakistan. He played the most important part in popularizing the Muslim League and its ideal of Pakistan among the rural inhabitants of the province. He had a large following among the Pukhtuns in the settled districts and tribal areas. On his orders all they worked hard for the achievement of Pakistan. Weakening the strong hold of Abdul Ghaffar Khan and the Congress in the Frontier province was not an easy task. It was largely due to the influence and tremendous efforts of the Pir Sahib that this gigantic task became easy.

## Notes and References

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- 1 The province of N-WFP (North-Western Frontier Province) was changed into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa through a constitutional amendment in 2010. In early 2010, the process of renaming proceeded and the Senate of Pakistan confirmed the name change to *Khyber Pakhtunkhwa* in the 18th Constitutional amendments on April 15 2010.
- 2 Parshotam Mehra, *The North-West Frontier Drama 1945-1947: A Re-Assessment* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1998), p.21.
- 3 *Ibid.*, p.23.
- 4 Mohammad Anwar Khan, *The Role of NWFP in the Freedom Struggle* (Lahore: Research Society of Pakistan, 2000), pp.49-68.

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- 5 Riaz Ahmad, ed. *The Frontier Muslim League 1913-1947: Secret Police Abstracts* (Islamabad: National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research, Quaid-i- Azam University, 2008), pp. 1-12.
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