

MUSLIM LEAGUE AND COMMUNAL POLITICS IN SOUTH-EAST PUNJAB

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ABSTRACT

Any constitution that might be built, would prove disastrous, destructive and harmful not only to the Muslims but to the British and Hindus also. For the peace and happiness of the people of this subcontinent, the only course was to separate homelands by dividing India into two autonomous national states.ⁱ He further stated that the Hindus and Muslims had different religious philosophies, social customs and literature. "They neither inter-marry nor dine together, and indeed they belong to two different civilizations which were based on conflicting ideas and conceptions." Their views on life were different. It was quite clear that Hindus and Muslims derived their inspiration from different source of history. They had different epics, episode and their heros were different.ⁱⁱ

Keywords: *Religious Philosophies, Social Customs, Civilizations, Source of History.*

Introduction

The 27th session of all India Muslim League opened at Lahore on Friday March 22, 1940. The Muslim League adopted the Lahore Resolution popularly, known as Pakistan Resolution,ⁱⁱⁱ which was based on two nations theory. Jinnah emphasized in his Presidential address that the problem in India was not of inter-communal character but it was inter-nation.

Jinnah reiterated and emphasized that the Muslims were not a minority but a separate nation. They would neither accept the rule by the British Government or Congress nor their joint rule.^{iv} He appealed to the Mussalmans to organise themselves and broadcast the message of the League to every Mussalman. After the Lahore resolution, the Islamic identity emerged in a more compact form not only in this region but also in other parts of India. In the election of 1937, the Muslim League did not succeed to get even a single seat in this region. It is clear that after the Lahore resolution Jinnah had started to claim that Muslim League was the only sole representative organisations of the Muslims and was at par with Congress.^v

Jinnah stressed before Congress as well as the British Government to accept the Muslim League as the sole spokesman of the Muslim community.^{vi} Jinnah wanted others to talk to him and him alone as the spokesman of all Muslims with regard to the share of power of the Muslim community.^{vii} When Congress started establishing mass contact with the Mussalmans, Jinnah reiterated that it was to divide and weaken and break the Mussalmans. He further added that it was an effort to detach them from their accredited leaders and it was a dangerous move.^{viii}

Jinnah was trying to convince the Muslims of the country that the only way to protect their religious, social, economic and political status was the establishment of independent Pakistan nation and Congress was trying to establish a Hindu Raj. Jinnah criticized the democratic system which was based on the concept of a homogeneous nation and urged that this was not applicable to heterogeneous nations like India. Further he stated that it would only serve the interest of Hindus.^{ix} He demanded that no declaration regarding the question of constitutional advance nor any constitution would be framed and finally adopted without the consent and approval of the All-India Muslim League.^x

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Jinnah appealed to the Muslims of the Punjab to organise the Punjab Muslim League and take the message of the Muslim League from village to village and house to house. He emphasized that when "you organise yourself you would be able to get your rights."^{xi} He declared that "we would march forward with complete unity as disciplined soldiers of Pakistan."^{xii}

The working Committee of the All-India Muslim League appealed in 1942 to the Muslims not to participate in the mass Quit India Movement initiated by the Congress in pursuance of their objective of establishing Congress Hindu domination in India.^{xiii} That would relegate the Muslim nation of hundred millions to the status of mere subjects of Hindu Raj. He further noted that in fact it was a "serious onslaught against the Mussalmans" of this country.^{xiv} Jinnah made a speech at Muslim League Legislators conventions which was held in Delhi on 7th-9th April wherein he stated that, "we are a nation of hundred million, and what is more, we are a nation with our own distinctive culture and civilization, language and literature art and architecture, names and nomenclature, sense of value and proportion, legal laws and moral codes, customs and calendar, history and traditions, aptitudes and ambitions, in short we have own distinctive outlook of life and of life. By all canons of International law, we are a nation. The road to freedom lies through Pakistan and we are determined to fight till the ditch for our rights inspite of the British or the Congress".^{xv} After the Pakistan Resolution the Muslim League launched a campaign to convince the Muslims that in Pakistan lay the future glory of Islam and, therefore, all the Muslims should support Pakistan.

The British were deliberately helping to strengthen the Muslim League according their divide and rule policy to counter the Indian national movement. During the war when the British Government was facing a serious crisis, they neglected the Congress and sought the co-operation of the Muslim League. The Punjab Provincial Muslim League formed a war League at Ambala Cantonment, with Chaudhary Mohammad Ibrahim, Municipal Commissioner, as president, and Mehtab Ali Khan as Honorary Secretary. The League enlisted about five hundred members and funds were collected for contributing to the war purposes Fund.^{xvi} The League issued an appeal for funds to the public. Linlithgow wrote to Sir J. Harbert on 16th July, 1942, "I think it is very important that we should tactfully and wisely try to mobilise public opinion and encourage the parties and prominent individuals who do not infact, agree with Gandhi policy and the Congress resolutions, to say so in public and point out the inconsistencies and weaknesses in it."^{xvii}

Sir Hallet of the United Province wrote to Linlithgow, "we must keep on friendly with the Muslims and I feel sure we shall be able to do so as accepting the Principle of Pakistan".^{xviii} The Governor of Punjab, Glancy wrote to Linlithgow, "Pakistan slogan is gaining momentum."^{xix} The League influence grew in all India politics, first, with the Viceroy's Aug. 1940 Declaration and later with the Cripps Mission's acceptance of demand of the Muslim League.^{xx} Jinnah claimed that the Muslim League was now only authoritative organisations of Muslim India and had taken Muslims out of darkness.

The Muslim League succeeded in forcing Sir Sikander Hayat Khan and the Premier of Assam to resign from the National Defence Council. Encouraged by the success, the Muslim League not only demanded similar humiliating action against Fazl-ul-Huq, Sir Sultan Ahmed, the Nabab of Chhatari and Begum Shah Nawaz, but threatened forth its anathema against both the British Government and the Hindus.^{xxi} Jinnah observed that all that was being done in the interests of the Mussalmans.^{xxii}

He emphasized that their clear cut and crystalized goal was Pakistan, which was now an article of faith with the Mussalmans. The Muslims' defence and destiny, and glory of Islam lay in Pakistan.^{xxiii} He further declared that the Muslims would be organised and would sacrifice their very lives for the attainment of their cherished goal - Pakistan.^{xxiv} Jinnah further stressed that for achievement of their goal, the important thing was political training for every Muslim. While the Mussalmans had made remarkable progress in the sense that they had brought millions of Mussalmans under the banner of the Muslim League, yet much remained to be done.^{xxv} He further emphasized that every Muslim should be prepared to make sacrifice for the achievement of Pakistan.^{xxvi} There would be no compromise on the fundamentals of Pakistan and its sovereignty.^{xxvii}

The thirtieth session of All-India Muslim League was held at Delhi on April 24, 1943 under the Presidency of Jinnah, and he emphasized that the Punjab was the cornerstone of Pakistan and appealed to the delegates from the Punjab to organise the Muslims in name of Islam and the nation in the place of sectional interests, jealousies, tribal notions and selfishness.^{xxviii} He criticized the clanish and caste organisations like the Rajput Sabha and Jat Mahasabha, which were characterised as un-Islamic. Sir Chhotu Ram had been claiming that Jat Mahasabha represented Muslim Jats also.^{xxix} Jinnah sought to counter his propaganda.

References

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- v The Tribune, June 30, 1945.
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- vii The Tribune, June 24, 1942, p.4.
- viii The Indian Annual Register, Vol.2, July-Dec. 1937, p.404.
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