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**COMMUNITARIAN RESPONSE TO THE LAHORE
RESOLUTION OF 1940 IN THE BRITISH PUNJAB: AN
ANALYTICAL DISCOURSE
(Part I)**

Dr. Akhtar Hussain Sandhu

Associate Professor

Government Islamia College Civil Lines, Lahore, Pakistan.

Abstract. Romila Thapar writes, “Hindu and Muslim communalists had their organizational bases in the 1920s such as the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha. Despite it being in essence anti-nationalist, the two-nation theory is now effectively not questioned. If anything it is once again being endorsed by some political parties.”¹ It is a stark reality that emergence of a movement has some philosophical background with a variety of demands. The best solution to this problem is to redress the grievances of the aggrieved faction along with a countering philosophy. In British India, the philosophy of nationalism and democracy paved the way for majority rule which intoxicated the Hindus who sidelined the Indian minorities particularly the Muslims and the same is being repeated in present India while dealing with the minorities. The current wave of the ‘Hindu nationalism’ in India with full force roots in the pre-partition political set-up about the Muslim League had been crying for decades and its voice was deemed as conspiracy. Philosophy, ostensibly religious in nature worked as a pushing force behind the political alignment in British India. Western philosophy of territorial and religious nationalism is repeatedly overlooked by many scholars, who take all the political parties except India’s Indian National Congress as ‘communal,’ fundamentalist, and perhaps ‘undemocratic’ too. Congress posed to pursue the western philosophy of secularism; Muslims and Sikhs followed the religious cult of nationalism. A contest between the religious communities appeared on the concessions and opportunities propounded by the *Raj*, which transmuted nationalism to communalism. Consequently, political leadership worked, in fact, mainly for their respective communities. Hindus for Hindustan, Muslims for Pakistan and Sikhs aspired for Sikhistan. Abuse of nationalism or communalism is best dealt with if change comes and makes its place in the equation without brutality and violence. Nonviolent movements represent intellectual contest, rather than physical fight. The Muslims felt jubilation on the passage of the Lahore Resolution² on the 23rd March 1940, which demanded Muslim homeland. The All-India Muslim League set a clear direction of its struggle but it caused anxiety for the Sikh political

leadership mainly dominated by the Shiromani Akali Dal. The Hindu press and leaders individually and massively cried against the League's partitioning scheme, while the major Hindu political forum, the Indian National Congress, could not chalk-out an abrupt reaction as a formal strategy. Mental agony overwhelmed the Sikhs on the idea of Pakistan and they relentlessly protested against it. Many tried to prove that the Lahore Resolution reflected a vague plan and Muslim masses did not back the partition scheme, nevertheless the factual position is that the League was very clear about its demand and enjoyed the majority's voice on its back. This article looks into the responses by the political stakeholders in the British Punjab to the Lahore Resolution.

(This article consists of two parts. The second part will appear in next issue of *Al-Hikamt*).

Key Words: Lahore, Communalism, British rule, religious nationalism, Muslim rights, Pakistan, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs

India celebrates its republic day on 26th January³ while Pakistani nation celebrates republic day on 23rd March. Congress leaders aired the demand for *purna swaraj* (complete independence) in a proclamation, while the League demanded Muslim homeland in a 'mass gathering' at Lahore that testifies to their belief on democracy based on the people's will and decision. The Lahore Resolution reminds the popular decision made by the Indian Muslims in favour of Pakistan. The All-India Muslim League organized itself on the religious identity, but the rights including demand for separate homeland were processed through democratic strategy under the western philosophy of nationalism, political representation, constitutionalism, concessions and even separatism. The League launched all the movements under the western philosophy and the Lahore Resolution on 23 March 1940 was a demonstration of the same zeal which impacted immensely on the Punjab politics. The Founding Father, Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, was not the first who sought the solution to the communal intricacy in the territorial divide on religious lines rather many had already predicted and proposed the divide as solution to the communal problem in British India. From the Punjab, Lala Lajpat Rai (1865-1928) in 1924 had suggested partition of the Punjab on religious line as a solution to the on-going communal problem.⁴ The word 'Pakistan' was used first by Syed Ghulam Hasan Kazmi in July 1928.⁵ Allama Muhammad Iqbal floated an idea of a sovereign Muslim state in 1930.⁶ Sikhs dissatisfied with the living and working experience with the Muslim Unionists, League and other Muslim groups demanded re-demarcation of the Punjab at the Round Table Conference in November

1931.⁷ In the same conference, Pandit Nanak Chand of the Punjab Hindu Mahasabha laid stress on the re-demarcation of the Punjab on the religious affiliation. He demanded an impartial boundary commission to draw a line on religious basis and the new unit would survive under the Indian federation.⁸ After the Gandhi-Irwin Pact on 5 March 1931, MK Gandhi (Hindu leader) before leaving to join the Round Table Conference, talked to different leaders on the communal question. A Sikh delegation under Master Tara Singh declared Gandhi as the Sikh representative in the RTC and handed over 17 Sikh points including the re-demarcation of the Punjab.⁹ Ch. Rehmat Ali vaguely talked to partition India and Afghanistan and create Muslim states. The Pakistan Majlis or Majlis-i-Kabir¹⁰ had issued the map of Pakistan with the new boundaries of the Subcontinent even before the Pakistan Resolution was presented. Sir Zafarullah Khan also used word 'Pakistan' in his scheme presented to the Viceroy on 6th March, 1940.¹¹ The Pakistan scheme was not an abrupt move at the Lahore session rather it was being discussed in the political circles a few years earlier. On 1st May 1939, Quaid-i-Azam had made the British clear that a Muslim state had become the fate of the Indian Muslims:

...no pronouncement or statement should be made by His Majesty's Government which would in any way militate against the basis and fundamental principles laid down by the Lahore resolution for division of India and creating Muslim States in the North-West and Eastern zones and it may be stated that ideal now has become the universal faith of the Muslim India...¹²

The arrogant Hindu leadership was keen to rule over the Subcontinent under the mechanism of electoral politics, the Sikhs desired to have the entire Punjab as their sovereign state while the Muslims claimed the Muslim majority areas in the north east and north west as a Muslim state. The communitarian position, obviously conflicting, engaged the religious communities in a communal fight. The politically well aware people sensed the subtle situation of the communal gulf between the Muslim and non-Muslim communities, which could ostensibly drag India towards a geographical split and urged the responsible Hindu politicians to ponder over the gravity of the situation and suggest some remedy well in time to avoid unrecoverable loss to the Indian integrity but the Hindu leadership showed no welcoming overtures towards the Muslim rights.

The World War-II started in 1939 increasing the importance of the Punjab, a recruitment base and food basket for entire India. Human resource and food are key factors to secure victory in a battlefield the British required the Punjab to be a peaceful province far away from communal and political instability. Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communities had been providing man-power to the British, therefore, their respective political parties were making the fullest use of this support. In return, every community expected a handful share in the political power that again created an environment of communitarian contest because a concession to one community could affect the position of the other one. The Punjab Premier had dual job i.e., to ensure recruitment amid the opposition and to maintain peace in the presence of communalism. He was under duress on dealing with the Muslim League which had plunged into the provincial electoral politics in 1936 and the Unionist Muslims had become its members in October 1937. Sir Sikandar Hayat, the Premier, participated in the drafting process of the Lahore Resolution commonly known as the Pakistan Resolution¹³ while the Hindu and Sikh allies had already been crying against the Premier's tilt towards the League. British under the stress continued the policy to keep the League away from the Punjab because the League's influence in the Punjab would undermine the political patch-up among the Unionists who belonged to different religions. In 1937, the Congress ministries exposed the anti-Muslim mentality and the Muslims suffered until they resigned in 1939 and the League observed the 'Day of deliverance.' In this stringent environment, the Lahore Resolution was passed which alarmed all the stakeholders.

Lahore Session and Lahore Resolution

In the first session held on 22nd March 1940 presided over by Quaid-i-Azam, Nawab Shah Nawaz Khan Mamdot rejected the political system which had established authority of the Hindus in internal and the British in external affairs. In the second open session on 23rd March, Choudhari Khaliqzaman from United Provinces said that the British had been "exploiting Indians in the name of nationalism." Muslims and Hindus could never be merged into one nation.¹⁴ He said that Muslims in the Muslim and non-Muslim parties, decision on votes and the Congress attitude convinced the Muslims to opt for separation.¹⁵ Quaid-i-Azam had declared that the Lahore session would be a landmark in the future of the Muslims of the Subcontinent. Distinguished Punjabi Muslim leaders, like Premier Sikandar Hayat, Khizr Hayat Tiwana, Mian Abdul Haye and Shah Nawaz of Mamdot, welcomed Quaid-i-

Azam to the ceremonial Railway platform of Lahore. The people in thousands were waiting for their leader outside the Railway Station while the streets had been decorated to show love and devotion for the League leaders.¹⁶ In his presidential address on 23rd March, Quaid-i-Azam gave a complete reply to the ideology propounded at the Congress session at Ramgarh¹⁷ by saying that the spiritual, financial, cultural, social and political differences between the Muslims and non-Muslims were fundamental and deep-rooted which had maintained the dividing line between the two throughout the centuries. After experiencing a close interaction of thousand years, both the communities never merged into each other and continued to remain separate and distinct. Merely the democratic constitution could not unite them forcibly. Binding them to such a system was an un-natural and artificial effort of the British in the guise of the democratic system.¹⁸ The main theme of the Lahore Resolution is as under:

...no constitutional plan would be workable in this country or acceptable to the Muslims unless it is designed on the following basic principles, viz., that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted, with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary, that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority, as in the North-Western and Eastern zones of India, should be grouped to constitute Independent States... That adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards should be specifically provided in the constitution for minorities in these units and in the regions for the protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests in consultation with them...¹⁹

The text of the Resolution covered the main dimensions including:

- a. Mention of the communal problem of India;
- b. British endeavor to unite the Indian communities;
- c. Muslim majority areas were demanded as Pakistan;
- d. League set a destination

The Resolution revived the pestering issue of communalism with full force and defined it as a 'majoritarian' phenomenon. This was due to the fact that Hindus were pursuing a policy which forced the Muslims to perceive the former's political drive as stride to enslave the latter after the British departure. The British had consistently been endeavouring to unite the religious communities living in the Subcontinent but the League termed it as a futile and fruitless effort. The solution the League

moved was a sovereign Muslim state consisting of the Muslim majority areas in the north-western and eastern zones of India. The League's program eliminated all the confusions shared from time to time by the Hindu, Sikh, Muslim and British leadership about the ambiguity regarding the League's claim of having the popular support behind its demands. As a comprehensive document, it cleared that the League intended to challenge all the Muslim political parties working at the provincial level and to make them realize that only the League would be justified in representing the Muslim community from top to bottom level. The Muslim masses were made aware of the major shift in the political power and the new political direction created a confidence and clarity of destination. A sane mind could easily comprehend the very pertinent aspects of this scheme but the non-Muslim leaders tried to project it as ill-worked out and confused scheme while the Muslims immediately got the ultimate objective of this resolution without any need of clarity and seemed prepared to face all the challenges coming in the way to materialise it.

Sikh Reaction

The Muslim state was not an abrupt show of the Muslims, rather this idea "had been in the air since 1930, and the idea of a physical division of the country had been underlined by the Muslim League throughout 1939."²⁰ Therefore, the rival community was ready to fully oppose it. Even before the passage of the Lahore Resolution, the Sikhs raised their voice against the expected Muslim demand for a separate country. The All India Akali Conference was held at Attari (15 miles from Lahore) on 10-11 February 1940 in which the Akali Sikhs from all the parts of India participated. Isher Singh Majhail, Professor Ganga Singh, Santokh Singh, Sant Singh (MLA) and Partap Singh (MLA) condemned the idea of a separate Muslim state. They also criticized the Unionist ministry in his speech. Teja Singh of Akarpura said in his presidential address that the Unionist Muslims were spending the government finances to spread Islam. The speakers expressed determination to strengthen the Congress position. They also advised the audiences to set up the Akali Fauj Centres in every village.²¹ To H. N. Mitra, the Sikhs pledged in this conference to resist the Muslims by all possible means who desired to convert the Punjab into 'Pakistan.'²² On the question of Pakistan, according to Joseph T. O'Connell, they were ready even to sacrifice Indian independence which was their political creed.²³

Demand for division and opposition to it went simultaneously as parallel forces. Where the Lahore Resolution invoked a hostile reaction among all the factions of the Sikhs there it provoked a new sense of entity among the Indian Muslims which appeared to determine the clear-cut destination of Pakistan. It proved a 'bomb-shell' to the Sikh community who, despite the rampant factionalism, were firmly united on one point, opposition to the Pakistan scheme. To Tai Yong Tan, the Resolution of 1940 brought a colossal unrest for the Sikh community. Their anger was genuine because it was a direct threat to the economy, canal colony lands, religion and existence of Sikhs.²⁴ On 24 March 1940, Kartar Singh and Master Tara Singh led a Sikh procession in Amritsar and condemned the idea of Pakistan. They advised the Sikhs to get ready for sacrifices against the Muslims.²⁵ Sikhs were hit the most by the Lahore Resolution and the Shiromani Akali Dal declared it out rightly "a declaration of the civil war."²⁶

Master Tara Singh argued soon after the League's resolution that if the Indian Muslims feared the Hindu majority, the Sikhs too feared the Muslim domination in the Punjab.²⁷ The Pakistan scheme created panic among the Sikhs and the recruitment efforts in 1940 were severely downed. Major-General Lockhart reported that the main factor behind the Sikh reluctance to join army and the desertions was the Sikh fear that if they went to the front abroad, their property, lands and villages would be attacked and occupied by the Muslims who desired to capture the Punjab. The Sikhs, therefore, wished to live in India to protect their families and community from the Muslims. The Sikhs would be contented if the concessions were to be given to the Congress rather than the Muslim League.²⁸ The Sikhs were well aware of the danger if it existed but the situation required them to come up with remedies. Master Tara Singh himself writes in his book that Pakistan meant 'Muslim Raj' either in the name of Pakistan or without it. To him, Pakistan created a new sense of prejudice in the Muslims and increased apprehension of the non-Muslims. The rule in the Punjab by the Unionist Muslims was enough to irritate the Sikhs but the Leaguers had been pinching them more and more by adopting the word 'Pakistan.'²⁹ On 20 May 1940, 125 Sikh leaders gathered at Lahore and established Guru Raj Khalsa Darbar to achieve an independent state of Khalistan with the boundary from Jumna to Jamrud. They also planned to have two more states including Takht Sri Hazur Sahib (Hyderabad State) and Takhat Sri Patna Sahib. They claimed to regain the areas under the Sikh rule. In the next meeting

presided over by Gopal Singh Gargaj on 23 May, the Sikh leaders discussed the practicality of the scheme.³⁰ This meeting was a countering measure to the idea of Pakistan. The Sikhs were alarmed about the proposed *Sharia* laws in the Muslim state³¹ therefore, they believed that in Pakistan, the Sikh existence would be in danger.

Sikh Strategy

Sikh parties remained disunited throughout the political history of the British Punjab but all voiced against the partition scheme. However this uniting factor could never bridge their differences. The Muslim domination in the provincial legislature convinced them to propose an increase in their representation from time to time. The situation became worse after the League had declared a plan to have a permanent Muslim 'domination' in the Punjab. The prime Sikh strategy was to show utmost annoyance through the press, mass gathering and statements. A day after the Pakistan Resolution, the Akalis organized a conference at Anandpur in which Giani Dhanwant Singh and Master Ajit Singh strongly criticized the idea of Pakistan.³² On 27 March, the executive committee of the Shiromani Akali Dal in a meeting at Amritsar condemned the Pakistan scheme.³³ The Khalsa National Party held a conference at Lahore on 29 March in which the idea of Pakistan was rejected. Sundar Singh Majithia (the Revenue Minister) warned that the Lahore Resolution was fraught with grave dangers. A resolution passed at the conference expressed the Sikh sentiments that "it would be the height of audacity for anyone to imagine that the Sikhs would tolerate for a single day the undiluted communal Raj of any community in the Punjab which is not only their homeland but also their holy land."³⁴ According to the resolution:

In the opinion of the party the resolution of the Muslim League has created a situation which may mean a parting of the ways for the Sikhs and Muslims with whom the Khalsa National Party has been co-operating in the Provincial Autonomy regime in the best interests of the province and the Sikh community.³⁵

On the 29th March 1940, the City Akali Jatha of Amritsar passed a resolution against the League's demand for the Muslim state.³⁶ All the Sikhs who had otherwise been disunited gathered against the Pakistan scheme. The Communist Sikhs favoured the Muslim right of self-determination but appeared confused in their response to the Pakistan scheme. They on 5th April arranged a conference at Attari which was

attended by the eminent leaders like Sohan Singh Josh, Ghulam Fatima and Gopal Singh Qaumi to give a reply to the Akalis. The conference deplored the communal activities of the organizations such as the Khaksars and the Akalis at the same time opposition was raised to the Pakistan scheme. Although the Intelligence reports considered it a weak counteraction to the Akali conference of March 1940³⁷ but through the speeches they had conveyed their message to the Sikhs, Muslims and the Hindus that on the issue of the partition scheme of the League they were with the Sikhs and Congress. They raised objections to the Akali Dal on its religious claim to represent all the Sikhs. They were equally opposed to the Akali verdict which claimed that their political opponents were “traitors to the *panth*.”³⁸ At Pherala (Lyallpur) on 6th April 1940, Master Tara Singh briefing the audience about the Akali understanding on the current political scenario and the Akali policy to deal with the situation said that the Sikhs were fighting a war for survival. The weak position of the British in the world war could result in a great change in the politics while the Leaguers had called the Sikhs for a civil war. He further maintained that the British government had discouraged the Sikhs therefore they had “become religiously very weak.”³⁹

Giani Kartar Singh, the brain of the Akalis, held that the Muslim scheme of a separate state aimed to enslave the Sikhs.⁴⁰ The SGPC postulated the Sikh co-operation with Sir Sikandar on the war efforts to his resignation from the League.⁴¹ In an anti-Pakistan conference at Lyallpur, Master Tara Singh repudiated the ideology of Muslim separatism.⁴² In a Sikh *diwan* at Nankana Sahib, the Pakistan scheme was deprecated.⁴³ The Pharala Akalis Conference (Lyallpur) on 6-7 April 1940 attracted a big throng to which the Sikh leaders like Ishar Singh Majhail, Master Tara Singh, and Kartar Singh MLA, delivered anti-Pakistan speeches with determination that the Sikhs “would forcibly resist” the idea of Muslim state. They even demanded that Sir Sikandar should disown the League⁴⁴ to show his impartiality.

Baba Kharak Singh of the Central Akali Dal maintained that the vivisection of India would never be allowed and the Sikhs would undermine the anti-India campaign.⁴⁵ The Sikhs expressed their anger in the speeches made in the Akali Conference held at Hasanabdal. They termed the Lahore Resolution as the end of peace of the region.⁴⁶ On 15th April 1940, at Lucknow, Master Tara Singh, President of SGPC,

made a tirade in the UP Sikh Conference decrying the League resolution for a Muslim state and demanded the UP government to treat the Sikhs justly and not behave like the Unionist Muslims towards them.⁴⁷ He further said that the Pakistan scheme would mean a civil war and “the Muslims would have to cross an ocean of Sikh blood”⁴⁸ for the accomplishment of their task. The Central Khalsa Youngmen Union in April 1940 pledged to suffocate the Pakistan scheme.⁴⁹ The Sikhs launched a series of protests through conferences in which they condemned the Pakistan scheme but were silent on counter proposals as solution to the communal problem which could be acceptable for all the stakeholders. The Sikh conferences attracted big gathering from the rural areas who conveyed the anti-Muslim feelings to the other community members. They also rejuvenated Sikh bitter memories of the Mughal oppression and their sacrifices.

Master Tara Singh in resistance to Pakistan urged the Sikh militants to get ready for an action to block the possibility of emergence of Pakistan.⁵⁰ In July 1940, the government reports depicted the Sikh intention that they would undermine the hopes of the Muslim self-determination at any cost. For this purpose, they had started purchasing weapons and ammunition. They were buying Kirpans and axes in large numbers so that they could use them in case of a fight.⁵¹ The SGPC and the Akali Dal organized a commemorative ceremony for the Sikh martyrs of the Ghallughara.⁵² A gathering of 20,000 Sikhs pledged to resist the Pakistan drive⁵³ along with the revival of the Akali Saina (Sikh army).⁵⁴ The Muslims protested and condemned the Ghallughara Day celebrations and warned that such activities would “inflame the communal feelings” in the region.⁵⁵ Despite sensing the Muslim feelings, they kept on launching anti-Muslim activities throughout the region. Another Ghallughara Conference was arranged at Gujarwal (district Ludhiana) on 15th June 1940. The leaders held a secret session in which they discussed the establishment of the Sikh state if the British government collapsed. The report informed that “the distrust between the Sikh and Muslim communities in the Ludhiana district.”⁵⁶ Dr. Satyapal considered the Sikhs as communalists on the celebration of the Ghallughara Day.⁵⁷ The Sikhs organized the Ghallughara days or conferences almost in all the Sikh centers and caused friction between the two communities. Nothing was done however to stop this communal hatred. The British government was not taking the Sikh activities against the League’s Pakistan scheme seriously.⁵⁸ The Sikh press fully participated in the anti-Pakistan activities with a pledge that they would

never let the Muslims establish their rule over the Sikhs. The Muslims had to face fierce hurdles⁵⁹ in the making of Pakistan.

An array of the non-Muslim political forces was intimidating the Muslims through speeches, press statements, physical training and parades. In April 1940, the SGPC held a meeting at Amritsar in which Dalip Singh Doabia expressed that the creation of the Muslim state would remain a dream for good. He hoped that the Sikh legislators would “withdraw their support from the Unionist ministry unless its Muslim members dissociated themselves from Muslim League.”⁶⁰ The Khalsa Defence League was organized in 1940 under the Maharaja Patiala with Master Tara Singh and Giani Kartar as its members. The pro-government Khalsa National Party refused to co-operate with the Khalsa League on the inclusion of the Akali Dal. The clash of personalities remained a permanent feature of the Sikh politics⁶¹ despite raging campaigns against the Pakistan scheme.

The Issue of the Qadiani State

In November 1940, the Sikhs came to know that the British desired to establish an Ahmadi⁶² state (covering an area of 10 miles) in Qadian, district, Gurdaspur, which caused bitterness between them and the Muslims. A big procession of the Akalis passed through Qadian chanting anti-Qadiani state slogans. Udham Singh Nagoke, Parlok Singh, Teja Singh Akarpuri and many others addressed the conference (17-18 November) held near Qadian. Parlok Singh appealed to the government not to form “an infant *Pakistan* in the Punjab.” Nagoke spoke against the proposed Ahmadi state and Pakistan and exhorted the Sikhs to join the Congress and the Akali Dal. Pandit Dhirat Ram of Qadian told stories of the painful experiences of the non-Ahmadis of the area and requested the Sikhs to save them from the cruelty of the Qadiani Muslims.⁶³ The Sikhs found allies in the Hindu Mahasabha. In December 1940, an Anti-Pakistan Conference was arranged under the chairmanship of Mr. Anney, a Mahasabha leader, who said that the Muslims were planning to rule India without using weapons. The Conference also condemned the Pakistan scheme. Thousands of non-Muslims attended this Conference including Master Tara Singh.⁶⁴

Sikhs and Hindus seemed on the same page against the Muslims as their anti-British stance meant an enslavement of the minorities specifically the Muslims. According to Khushwant Singh, the main purpose of the Sikh recruitment was to arm the community so that after the British departure they might utilize these army men as the Khalsa *fauj*.⁶⁵ The Hindu Mahasabha had a similar sentiment. Its Working Committee on 22 September 1940 passed a resolution opposing the Gandhian approach on the recruitment. The leaders said that the war was a big opportunity “for the general militarization of the Hindus, and for the organization of the system of India on sound and up-to-date modern lines, so that India be converted into a self-contained defence unit.”⁶⁶ The Sikhs and Mahasabha Hindus were united against the Muslim League and were trying to increase their fighting potential and capacity.

Congress Reaction

In practical parlance, the mode of struggle was democratic in nature but the basis of the League’s demand for Pakistan was the Two-Nation theory. *The Times of India* threw light on the League session of Lahore and wrote that the Congress Session of Ramgarh highlighted the single nation theory in India as Maulana Abul Kalam Azad had argued while the League retaliated with the Two-Nation theory.⁶⁷ The popularity of the League pervaded all the Muslim minds. Raghuvendra Tanwar depicted the post-League session situation that “With every passing day after the adoption of the Pakistan Resolution the League moved one step closer to its goal of a separate home land for Muslims.”⁶⁸ The sane minds could look into the sharply changing situation. *The Times* portraying importance and numerical strength of the Muslims wrote that the course of Muslim feelings could not be “brushed aside.” The other communities would have to accommodate them in the constitutional war. “The French are a minority in Europe, which does not imply that they must submit to German domination.”⁶⁹ The Punjab Governor wrote to the Viceroy that the Congress’ claim to lead India had been challenged by the League and the Hindu leadership should not ignore the Muslim importance.⁷⁰ Quaid-i-Azam himself asserted in January 1941 that the “Muslim League now represents 90 per cent Mussalmans”⁷¹ in the Subcontinent which stamped the increasing Muslim support for the League leadership to continue their struggle.

The Congress leadership adopted erratic attitudes towards the Lahore Resolution. In the beginning, they tried to conceal their real feelings about the Resolution but they could not help exposing

themselves with the passage of time. Sir Chimanlal Setalvad said that Jinnah's Pakistan scheme would be disastrous to the interests of all the communities equally.⁷² In a meeting of the Congress in 1940, Rajendra Babu said that "the recent resolution of the League meant civil war." Rajendra Babu maintained without caring as to what his leader Gandhi was uttering in favour of the Muslim separatist movement. In the same meeting, Gandhi had pledged, "If Muslims want separatism, he will not oppose."⁷³ Gandhi in April 1940 declared the fight against the Muslim scheme of partition through nonviolent methods⁷⁴ but at the same time he conceded that all the communities had a right to demand their due political share which suited them. Jawaharlal Nehru, C. Rajagopalachari, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and other Congress leaders considered that the Pakistan scheme was absurd. They believed that the Muslim masses would never back it. The other Congress leaders expressed their incapability to oppose it if the Muslims desired it. During May 1940, they made it clear that the Congress wished no use of coercion against the Pakistan demand. The Congress did not make any 'formal' statement or pass any resolution against the Lahore Resolution of the League until April 1942.⁷⁵ Master Tara Singh points out that the Congress had accepted the right of self-determination of the Muslims but not of Pakistan⁷⁶ however the Congress leaders including Gandhi obviously supported Pakistan if it was a demand of the Muslim majority. So as a party, the Congress was not clear as to how they could better deal with the Pakistan resolution and this confusion continued up to the partitioning decision. The situation after the Lahore Resolution shows that no community including the British had any sympathy for the partitioning scheme presented by the League. The British may have been conducive to the Muslim rights but they showed no favour for the Pakistan idea. Therefore, the League leadership had to plead its case on the universally accepted principle of self-determination.

Congress' attitude towards Muslims remained a question throughout the political history of British India. They hardly unleashed generosity on the issue of constitutional concessions for the Muslims. Many exhorted them to be benign with the most important minority but no attention was paid. Demand to separate Sindh from Bombay Presidency was mooted by Harchand Rai C.I.E. in 1913 at Karachi⁷⁷ but later on it was taken up by the Muslim League as a political creed. It should have been treated as an indicator to the sensitive situation but the Congress hardly dealt the issue with sympathy towards the Muslims. In

June 1931, an analysis published in the *Manchester Guardian* seems pertinent to share that insistence on the separation of Sindh from Bombay by the Indian Muslims revealed their dissatisfaction with the Hindu treatment on the issue of the Muslim rights and for the reason they were heading towards partition.⁷⁸ So the Congress apathy was a traditional mark on the issue of Muslim rights.

British Response

Ruling and local political protagonists were constantly in contact with each other as the principal stakeholders and even before the Lahore Resolution was passed both blocs had been observing and pondering over the political developments. On 1 July 1939, Quaid-i-Azam wrote a letter to J. G. Laithwaite, Private Secretary to Viceroy, that the British would have to concede the idea of Muslim state.⁷⁹ As far as the British response to the Pakistan scheme was concerned, they, as usual, favoured united India and seemed satisfied that the Muslim demand had no backing of the Muslim majority provinces. Lord Linlithgow⁸⁰ expressing his adverse remarks against the League and Jinnah's move wrote to Zetland⁸¹ that they could not make a plan as an alternative to the Hindu domination.⁸² Zetland supported Linlithgow's standpoint by saying that he disagreed in April 1940 with the League's proposal for the Indian vivisection. He was of the view that to concede such a demand would mean to dishonour the efforts of the British and Indians for the unity of India.⁸³ In fact Zetland had always been in favour of the united India. He had expressed the same in 1938 by saying that they would have "insuperable difficulties" in the acceptance of any move that would result in the territorial separation from the Indian Union.⁸⁴ Sir Roger Lumley, Governor of Bombay, reported that although the partition idea was not new but this resolution mattered as for the first time it was backed by any major political party. The Hindus, even Muslims and non-Muslim minorities were angry on the League's partition scheme. He further writes that "my first impression of the reactions here is that Jinnah's speech at Lahore is likely to lose him a good deal of support from educated Muslims here and from other minorities." He feared that the Congress anger on the League could turn against the British as well.⁸⁵ Governor of Bihar said that Jinnah's scheme of partition was to invite civil war but this call could gather massive support from the community.⁸⁶ R. F. Mudie rejected the idea of partition on the reason that Hindus and Muslims were not distinctive nations and more importantly the expected foreign attacks on the

proposed dominions would never let them survive so the proposal seemed a bargaining move to upset the Congress.⁸⁷ Lord Linlithgow reported in April 1940 that many points enunciated in the Lahore Resolution could be criticized “and we clearly could not accept and endorse them.” He also attributed Jinnah’s partition scheme in response to the unreasonable attitude of the Congress.⁸⁸ Moreover, in 1942, Linlithgow wrote to Amery⁸⁹ that it was the Hindu community which “made a mistake of taking Jinnah seriously about Pakistan, and as a result they have given substance to a shadow.”⁹⁰ The Congress leadership followed this strategy and tried to ignore the League leadership.

The Congress had many friends in England⁹¹ who always paved the way for the Congress’s popularity through effective propaganda. The press generally supported whatever the Hindu leadership stood for.⁹² All these fronts were facilitating the Hindu struggle, even Sir Stafford Cripps, a friend of Nehru, extended greetings to the Congress leadership on success in the 1937 elections and later had been continuously in contact with him before he was sent to India in 1942.⁹³

On the other hand, the Muslim League was busy in spreading the idea of Pakistan among the Muslim masses. According to the Intelligence Reports, the League held eleven meetings at mosques in the districts of Lahore, Amritsar, Rohtak, Jullundur, Jhelum, Karnal, Gurdaspur, Lyallpur, Jhang, Rawalpindi and Simla, celebrated the ‘Pakistan Day’ on 19 April and passed pro-Pakistan resolutions. In the Rawalpindi meeting, Dr. Muhammad Alam declared that the Muslims were ready to sacrifice their lives for their own cause but not for the Hindu *Raj*.⁹⁴

(To be continued)

End Notes

¹Romila Thapar, *The Past and Present: Forging Contemporary Identities Through History* (New Delhi: Aleph Book Co., 2014), 111.

²It is generally perceived that the non-Muslim press projected the Lahore Resolution as the ‘‘Pakistan’ Resolution’ but as a matter of fact, the Muslim or pro-Muslim press too used the word ‘Pakistan’ as *Civil and Military Gazette* used the same wording the very next day. *CMG*, 24 March 1940.

³26 January 1950 the day when Indian constituent assembly replaced 1935 Act. The day was selected because on 26 January 1930 Gandhi and Nehru issued the declaration of Indian independence (*Purna Swaraj*). Jawaharlal Nehru, *Towards Freedom*.

⁴Kirpal Singh, *The Partition of the Punjab* 2nd ed. (Patiala: Punjabi University, 1989), 10.

⁵Aqeel Abbas Jafri, ‘‘Lafz Pakistan ka Khaliq kaon?,’’ daily, *Express (Sunday Express)*, 27 March 2011, 6-7.

⁶Presidential Address of Dr. Muhammad Iqbal on 29 December 1930, Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada, ed., *Foundations of Pakistan, All-India Muslim League Documents: 1906-1947* (Karachi: National Publishing House Ltd., 1970), 159.

⁷Sikh Memorandum presented by Sardar Ujjal Singh at Indian Round Table Conference (Second session) 12 November 1931, file no. 15, Quaid-i-Azam Papers.

⁸See details, A Punjabi, *Confederacy of India* (Lahore: Ripon Printing Press, 1939), 243-262.

⁹Ram Narayan Kumar and Georg Sieberer, *The Sikh Struggle: Origin, Evolution and Present Phase* (Delhi: Chanakya Publications, 1991), 122; see also *International Journal of Sikh Affairs* 8 (November 1998): 2, Editorial.

¹⁰Majlis-i-Kabir was another organization which was using the word Pakistan. Majlis-i-Kabir-i-Pakistan was founded in 1937 by the young Lahorites including Abdullah Anwar Baig, Khurshid Alam, Sahibzada Abdul Hakim, Sarwar Hashmi and others. It used a letterhead with a map of Pakistan. Its leaders were in touch with the League leaders but after the Lahore Resolution this organization went into background. Sarfraz Mirza, *Tasawar-i-Pakistan se Qarardad-i-Pakistan Tak* (Lahore: 1983).

¹¹MSS. EUR. F 125/135.

¹²Letter from MA Jinnah to J. G. Laithwaite, Private Secretary to Viceroy on 1 May 1939, MSS Eur F/125/148, Linlithgow Papers; see also, Ikram Ali Malik, comp., *Muslim League Session 1940 and the Lahore Resolution* (Islamabad: NIHCR, 1990), 137.

¹³Khushwant Singh, *History of the Sikhs: 1839-1964* vol. II (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), 241. Not only Sir Sikandar Hayat but also the other prominent Unionist Muslims participated in the session. Ashiq Hussain Batalvi, *Chand Yadein Chand Ta’surat*(Urdu) (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 1992),195-97.

¹⁴Punjab Police Intelligence Report in Ikram Ali Malik, *Muslim League Session 1940*, 172-74.

¹⁵Ch. Khaliqzaman’s Speech in Favour of Lahore Resolution, Muslim League Papers, File no. 214. See also, Ikram Ali Malik, *Muslim League Session 1940*, 160-162.

¹⁶*CMG*, 22 March 1940.

¹⁷At Ramgarh Session of the Congress, the Hindu leadership ensured that all decisions would be made by the assembly elected on adult franchise.

¹⁸Ibid., 24 March 1940.

¹⁹Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada, ed., *Foundations of Pakistan*, 340-41; for detail see, Dr. (Miss) Kaniz F. Yusuf, Dr. M. Saleem Akhtar and Dr. S. Razi Wasti. *Pakistan Resolution Revisited*. (Islamabad: National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research, 1990) and Latif Ahmad Sherwani, ed., *Pakistan Resolution to Pakistan, 1940-1947* (Karachi: National Publishing House Ltd., 1969).

²⁰Joseph T. O'Connell et al., *Sikh History and Religion in the Twentieth Century* (New Delhi: Manohar Publications, 1990), 235.

²¹Secret Police Abstract of Intelligence, file no. S-408, para.73, NDW, Islamabad.

²²H. N. Mitra, ed., *The Indian Annual Register 1919-1947* vol. 1 (1940)(New Delhi: Gian Publishing House, 1990), 356-57. According to Mitra, the Akali leaders held conference on 12 February 1940 at Atari and expressed concern over the idea of Pakistan. Joseph T. O'Connell et al., eds. *Sikh History and Religion in the Twentieth Century*(Toronto: University of Toronto, Centre for Sikh South Asian Studies, 1988), 235n.

²³Joseph T. O'Connell, *Sikh History and Religion*, 239.

²⁴Tai Yong Tan and Gyanesh Kudaisya, *The Aftermath of Partition in South Asia* ((London: Routledge, 2000), 101-102.

²⁵Secret Police Abstract of Intelligence, file no. S-408, para. 151.

²⁶Shiv Kumar Gupta, "Sikhs and the Partition of the Punjab," *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 58th Session, Bangalore, 1997(Aligarh, 1998): 591-98; see also Indu Banga, "Crisis in Sikh Politics, 1940-47," in Joseph T. O'Connell, *Sikh History and Religion in the Twentieth Century*, 236.

²⁷*The Times of India*, 25 March 1940 in Anita Inder Singh, *The Origins of the Partition of India: 1936-1947* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987), 60.

²⁸Note by Major-General Lockhart, Military Secretary, India Office, L/PO/6/106b (iii) ff 266-559.

²⁹Master Tara Singh, *Pakistan* (Gurmukhi) 2nd ed. (Amritsar: Shiromani Akal Dal, n.d.), 2.

³⁰*The Tribune* (Lahore) 22 May 1940.

³¹Anita Inder Singh, *The Origins of the Partition of India*, 60.

³²*The Tribune*, 27 March 1940.

³³Secret Police Abstract of Intelligence, file no. S-408, para 151.

³⁴Mitra, *The Indian Annual Register*, vol. 1 (1940), 357 also see Gurnam Singh Rekhi, *Sir Sundar Singh Majithia and his Relevance in Sikh Politics* (New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications, 1999), 125-126

³⁵O. P. Ralhan and Suresh K. Sharma, eds., *Documents on Punjab* 6, part II, Sikh Politics (1927-1947) (New Delhi: Anmol Publications Pvt. Ltd., 1994), 491.

³⁶Secret Police Abstract of Intelligence, 1940, file no. S-408, para 16.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Rajiv A. Kapur, *Sikh Separatism: The Politics of Faith* (London: Allen & Unwin Inc., 1986), 197.

³⁹Presidential Address by Master Tara Singh, Letter from Akali Dal to Maharaja Kapurthala on 11 April 1940, Political Department, Political Branch, IOR: R.1/1/3554, File no. 15 (22)-P (S) 1940.

⁴⁰*The Tribune*, 2 April 1940.

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- ⁴¹Ibid., 5 April 1940.
- ⁴²Ibid., 8 April 1940.
- ⁴³Secret Police Abstract of Intelligence, 1940, file no. S-408, para 191.
- ⁴⁴Ibid., para 178.
- ⁴⁵*The Tribune*, 11 April 1940.
- ⁴⁶CMG, 14 April 1940.
- ⁴⁷Mitra, *The Indian Annual Register*, vol. 1 (1940), 358.
- ⁴⁸Joseph T. O'Connell, *Sikh History and Religion*, 236.
- ⁴⁹*The Tribune*, 18 April 1940.
- ⁵⁰CMG, 18 April 1940.
- ⁵¹S. Qalb-i-Abid, *Muslim Politics in the Punjab, 1921-47* (Lahore: Vanguard Books Pvt. Ltd., 1992), 238-39.
- ⁵²In February 1762 Ahmad Shah Abdali brutally put the Sikhs to death at Kup (near Malerkotla) costing the lives of 15,000 Sikhs in a day. It is called *Wadda Ghallughara*, the great killing.
- ⁵³*The Tribune*, 28 May 1940.
- ⁵⁴Secret Police Abstract of Intelligence, 1940, file no. S-408, para 230.
- ⁵⁵Ibid., para 244.
- ⁵⁶Ibid., para. 300.
- ⁵⁷Ibid., para 242.
- ⁵⁸Letter from the Viceroy to the Governor Punjab on 18 April 1940, Mss. Eur F125/149, 31 Linlithgow Papers.
- ⁵⁹Fortnightly Reports, 30 April, 1940, L/P&J/5/243.
- ⁶⁰Secret Police Abstract of Intelligence, 1940, file no. S-408, para 164 and 178.
- ⁶¹Sangat Singh, *Sikhs in History*, 2nd ed. (New Delhi: Uncommon Books, 1996 and 2005), 210.
- ⁶²Ahmadi or Qadiani people were the followers of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian (District Gurdaspur) but other Muslim sects opposed his religious beliefs since its inception. In Pakistan, they were declared non-Muslims.
- ⁶³Secret Police Abstract of Intelligence, file no. S-408, para 515.
- ⁶⁴Qalb-i-Abid, *Muslim Politics in the Punjab*, 239.
- ⁶⁵Khushwant Singh, *History of the Sikhs*, vol. II, 240-41.
- ⁶⁶H. N. Mitra, ed., *The Indian Annual Register*, vol. II, 1940, 75.
- ⁶⁷*The Times of India* (Bombay) 25 March 1940; see details in Editorial of CMG, 24 March 1940.
- ⁶⁸Raghuvendra Tanwar, *Politics of Sharing Power: The Punjab Unionist Party, 1923-1947* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 1999). 150.
- ⁶⁹CMG, 28 March 1940.
- ⁷⁰Punjab Police Intelligence Report in Ikram Ali Malik, *Muslim League Session 1940*, 186-187.
- ⁷¹PREM 4/45/1, National Archives, Kew Garden London.
- ⁷²CMG, 28 March 1940.
- ⁷³Proceedings of Congress Working Committee, Wardha, 16-19 April 1940 in R. J. Moore, *Churchill, Cripps, and India, 1939-1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 39.
- ⁷⁴CMG, 14 April 1940.
- ⁷⁵Sangat Singh, *The Sikhs in History*, 236-37.
- ⁷⁶Master Tara Singh, *Pakistan*, 2.

⁷⁷For detail see, Hamida Khoro, *Documents on Separation of Sindh from Bombay* (Islamabad: NIHCR, 1982).

⁷⁸Tara Chand, *History of the Freedom Movement*, vol. IV (Lahore: Book Traders, 1972), 167.

⁷⁹Letter from M. A. Jinnah to J. G. Laithwaite, Private Secretary to Viceroy on 1 May 1939, MSS Eur F/125/148, Linlithgow Papers; see also, Ikram Ali Malik, comp., *Muslim League Session 1940*, 137.

⁸⁰Linlithgow remained the Indian Viceroy from 18 April 1936 to 1 October 1943.

⁸¹Zetland was the Secretary of State for India during the period of 1935-1940.

⁸²Letter from Linlithgow to Zetland in Prof. Waheed-uz-Zaman, *Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah: Myth and Reality* (Islamabad: National Book Foundation, 1976), 59; also see Sikandar Hayat, "Quaid-I-Azam Jinnah and the Demand for a Separate Muslim State: Resolution Reappraised," *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan* XXIV (October 1987): 12.

⁸³Waheed-uz-Zaman, *Myth and Reality*, 59; Sikandar Hayat, "Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah and the Demand for a Separate Muslim State," 12.

⁸⁴Letter from Zetland to Linlithgow on 13 December 1938, *Oriental India Office Collection*, vol. III, F I 25/6.

⁸⁵Letter from Sir Roger Lumley, Governor of Bombay to Linlithgow on 30 March 1940, Linlithgow Papers, MSS.EUR.F. 125/54.

⁸⁶Telegram from Governor of Bihar to Linlithgow on 1 April 1940, Linlithgow Papers, MSS.EUR.F. 125/108.

⁸⁷Note by RF Mudie, Chief Secretary, UP to Governor-General on 31 March 1940, Linlithgow Papers, MSS.EUR.F. 125/108.

⁸⁸Telegram from Linlithgow to Secretary of State for India on 6 April 1940, Linlithgow Papers, MSS.EUR.F. 125/19.

⁸⁹Leo Amery was the Secretary of State for India during the period of 1940-1945.

⁹⁰Letter from Linlithgow to Amery on 5 September 1942, MSS.EUR.F. 125/11.

⁹¹K. K. Aziz, *Britain and Pakistan: A Study of British Attitude towards the East Pakistan Crisis of 1971* (Islamabad: University of Islamabad Press, 1974), 30.

⁹²Ibid.

⁹³R. J. Moore, *Churchill, Cripps, and India*, 4-9.

⁹⁴Secret Police Abstract of Intelligence, 1940, file no. S-408, para 292.