

Lahore Resolution and Politics in NWFP

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Abstract:

The Lahore Resolution which was later rechristened as the Pakistan Resolution was the culmination of the efforts of Indian Muslims to have a separate homeland of their own. It gave a sense of purpose and direction to the Muslim community and precipitated their energies to a goal which was well nigh possible to achieve as never before. In the pre and post 1940 era, the NWFP which has recently been renamed as Khyber Pukhtoonkhwa (the Abode of the Pukhtoons) was a scene of hectic political activities, alliances and intrigues. The present paper examines the men and matters of NWFP on the eve of the Pakistan Resolution. It adumbrates the dramatic events that unfolded themselves in that crucial time when the Pakistan Movement was on its zenith and had reached the point of no return.

Text of the Resolution:

The Resolution was passed at the 27th annual session of the All-India Muslim League held on 23 March, 1940.¹ It stated:

“Resolved that it is the considered view of this session of the All-India Muslim League that no constitutional plan would be workable in this country or acceptable to the Muslims unless it is designed on the following basic principles, viz geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted, with such territorial adjustments as may be necessary, that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority as in the North-Western

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and Eastern zones of India should be grouped to constitute 'Independent State' in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign."²

In his presidential address, Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah touched upon the Two-Nation Theory. He said that the present unity of India was artificial, dating from the British period and maintained by the British bayonet. Furthermore, he said that democracy was not suited to India and that "the Muslims are a nation and they must have their homelands, their territory and their state."³

The Resolution was presented in the evening at the public meeting attended by a mammoth gathering. Some estimated the number at one lakh.⁴ The Premier of Bengal, Maulvi Fazlul Haqq, was asked to move the Resolution. The text of the Resolution was in English and Mawlana Zafar Ali Khan rendered it into Urdu there and then.⁵

Sarzamin- i Be Ayeen:

Mawlana Muhammad Muhammad Ali Jauhar once visited the Frontier Province and what he saw there led him to describe that place as *Sarzamin-i Be-Ayeen* (Land without a law or Constitution). This was precisely how the British treated this area. The excuse of special circumstances was always used to deny political reforms or concessions to the N.W.F.P. The province was carved out from the Punjab in 1901 in order to secure a closer and more immediate control over the region. But the reforms of 1909 were not introduced in the N.W.F.P. Similarly, the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms of 1919 were also not recommended for the Frontier Province for security reasons,⁶ nor did the Government of India Act of 1919 entail any change for this province. As if the treatment meted out to the N.W.F.P so far was not enough, the Simon Commission

which was appointed in 1927 and which completed its report in 1929 likened this province to a 'powder house'⁷ and therefore not suitable for political reforms. On this step-motherly treatment given to the N.W.F.P., Dr. Iqbal criticized the Simon Commission in the following words:

As to North-Western Frontier Province, it is painful to note that the Royal Commissioners have practically denied that the people of this province have any right to reform. They fall far short of the Bray Committee, and the council recommending them is merely a screen to hide the autocracy of the Chief Commissioner. The inherent right of the Afghan to light a cigarette is curtailed merely because he happens to be living in a powder house. The Royal Commissioner's epigrammatic argument is pleasant enough, but far from convincing. Political reform is light, not fire; and to light every human being is entitled whether he happens to live in a powder house or a coal mine.⁸

Civil Disobedience Movement:

The ensuing sense of deprivation caused political unrest in the N.W.F.P. which resulted in the civil disobedience movement in 1930; the blood-bath at the Qissa Khawani Bazar about the same time, and large scale incarceration, demonstration and firing incidents at other places such as Hatyan and Takkar.⁹ Because of this unrest, the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms were extended to the N.W.F.P in 1932. The province got a Governor and Legislative Council with forty members.¹⁰

Under the Government of India Act of 1935, responsible government was extended to the N.W.F.P and the province was treated like other province. The Legislative Council was upgraded to Legislative Assembly. The number of seats was also increased from forty to fifty and the system of nomination was abolished.¹¹

Elections of 1937:

Elections to the Provincial Legislature were held in 1937. The Frontier Congress secured 21 seats in a house of 50; the remaining 29 seats went to three other groups¹² of which the Progressive Party of Sahibzada Sir Abdul Qayyum, rightly called the Sir Sayyid of the N.W.F.P., was one. Sahib Sir Abdul Qayyum was asked to form a ministry which was installed on 1st April, 1937.¹³ The ministry was hardly in office for six months when on 3 September, 1937, it faced a no-confidence move from the Congress leader, Dr. Khan Sahib,¹⁴ the elder brother of Abdul Ghaffar Khan. The Congress Parliamentary Board consisting of Mawlana Abul Kalam Azad, Babu Rajendra Prasad and Sardar Vallabhai Patel visited the province and as a result of their deliberations, Dr. Khan Sahib was asked to form a Government.¹⁵ The Congress ministry remained in office for about two years and three months .e. till November 1939.¹⁶ when the Second World War broke out.

Second World War:

Britain declared war on Germany on 3 September, 1939.¹⁷ Two days later, India followed suit not for the sake of aiding democracy but as a Congress leader put it, "as a helpless dependency tied to the apron-strings of British Imperialism".¹⁸ The Viceroy postponed the federal part of the Government of India Act of 1935 and started enlisting support for the war. Consequently, the Viceroy decided to expand his Executive Council to include representatives of popular opinion in it. The idea was to appease the Indians. Both Gandhi and Jinnah were offered seats on the Council Board but both turned down the offer. Instead the Congress demanded of Britain to state the aims of the war. If the idea was, it argued, to preserve the democratic way of life, then Britain, following the maxim of

“charity begins at home” might as well install a responsible government in India¹⁹ and leave. The Viceroy in the meantime interviewed people of different shades of opinion and came to the conclusion that since there was a great deal of disagreement among Indians themselves, the issue of forming a responsible government should be postponed until the victory in the war. At this the Congress leaders declared that they would have nothing to do with the war efforts as India had been dragged into it against her will.²⁰ As a corollary of this, all the Congress ministries after having passed anti-war resolutions resigned en bloc on 6 November, 1939.²¹ The All-India Muslim League marked the occasion with Deliverance and Thanksgiving Day, on 22nd December, 1939, expressing satisfaction over the termination of Congress rule.²² This was the natural outcome of the atrocities committed by the Congress ministries to their Muslim subjects. After the resignation of seven Congress ministries Governor’s rule was imposed in those provinces in accordance with the Act of 1935.²³

The Congress refused to offer aid to Britain in her war efforts, but the Muslim League was willing to cooperate with Britain, for any political change in India was viewed as disastrous by the Muslim League.²⁴ The friendly attitude of the Muslim League towards the British has been interpreted by some to mean that the Muslim League could not afford to take on two enemies, i.e. the British and the Congress at one time.²⁵

The Quaid’s Role and Strategy:

By the time of the Second World War, Jinnah was the established leader and the sole representative of Muslims. He was shrewd enough to capitalize on the errors of the Congress and not to miss any opportunity to extract political gains for his constituency. As a prerequisite for his support in the war efforts

he was able to impress upon the Viceroy the significance of minorities and get for the Muslim League the right to veto "as the only organization that can speak on behalf of Muslim India."²⁶

After the resignation of Congress ministry, the Quaid-i-Azam was very much eager to install a Muslim League dominated ministry in the N.W.F.P. He failed in this struggle but continued his efforts. There were two obstacles in the formation of a Muslim League ministry. First, there were Hindu and Sikh MLAs in the Frontier Assembly who would not support the Muslim League thanks to the concept of Pakistan that was embedded in the Muslim League struggle, and secondly, the Frontier Muslim League was riddled with factionalism.²⁷ Two important persons in the Frontier Muslim League, i.e. Sardar Aurangzeb Khan and Khan Bahadur Sadullah Khan, were always at loggerheads with each other, each considering himself as a natural choice for premiership. Sardar Aurangzeb Khan was a leading lawyer from D. I. Khan. Abdul Qayyum Khan called him the 'star politician' of the Frontier.²⁸ According to Abdul Qayyum Khan, Aurangzeb was the first to go over to Mr. Jinnah who appointed him a member of the Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League²⁹ and he was the leader of opposition when Congress was in power.

K. B. Sadullah Khan was a retired D.C. and a leading landlord of Utmanzai in Tehsil Charsadda, District Peshawar. He was among the sincere friends of Quaid-i-Azam.³⁰ He participated in the proceedings of Pakistan Resolution and two of his sons, namely Yaqub and Riaz acted as personal bodyguards of Quaid-i-Azam.³¹ He was the president of the Frontier Muslim League from 1938 to 1940. In the coalition

government of Sahibzada Sir Abdul Qayyum, K. B. Sadullah was chosen as minister for agriculture,³² and in December 1937, he attended the Calcutta meeting of the All-India Muslim League.³³

After the fall of France to the Axis powers in 1940, the Working Committee of the Congress proposed to the British to find a formula which would enable the Congress to support Britain in her war efforts. This was not in consonance with Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence who derived his politics, as he claimed, from religion or ethics.³⁴ Consequently, he was relieved from the responsibilities of Congress for a while. Abdul Ghaffar Khan (1890-1988), nicknamed Frontier Gandhi who was described as 'a man of God'³⁵ by Gandhi, followed the same line of action and resigned from the Frontier Province Congress Committee. This was followed by a large number of resignations by the Khuda'i Khidmatgars (The Servants of God), a quasi-political organization founded by Abdul Ghaffar Khan. Originally, the Khuda'i Khidmatgar movement was confined to social reform. It aimed at weaning the Pathans from the ruinous social practices, such as extravagances, displayed on the occasions of marriages or funerals. Very soon, however, it assumed a political nature and became affiliated with the Indian National Congress in 1931.³⁶ It will be pertinent to point out that the affiliation of Abdul Ghaffar Khan and his Khuda'i Khidmatgars with the Congress was not based on ideological grounds; rather it was a matter of historical coincidence. The friendship between the two is traceable to the times of the Khilafat agitation.

The August Offer:

In response to the Congress overtures, the British offered the so-called 'August Offer.' According to this offer made

through the Viceroy on 18 August, 1940, the new constitution was primarily the responsibility of the Indians themselves.³⁷ There were two provisions in the 'August Offer' i.e. the British obligations as regards the war must be fulfilled and the minority opinions must not be overridden²⁸. The Congress rejected the offer for it did not go far enough to meet their demands for real power and also because it implicitly recognized the possibility of Pakistan. In these circumstances, Gandhi assumed the leadership of Congress and spearheaded the individual civil disobedience movement. This was not a public movement and only qualified persons were supposed to make anti-war speeches and court arrest. The first arrest was made on 17 October, 1940.

In the N.W.F. P., the civil disobedience movement ended in fiasco. On 14th December, 1940, Dr. Khan Sahib and a few other Congress leaders shouted anti-war slogans but the response they evoked was so little that the authorities did not even bother to arrest them.⁴¹ Towards the end of February, the movement had almost died out. Even Abdul Ghaffar Khan made "practically no effort to stimulate the Congress activity,"⁴² and Dr. Khan Sahib resumed his medical practice. In March, Abdul Ghaffar made a last effort to enliven the movement but without any success at all. On 25th April, he suspended the movement completely ostensibly because of the harvest season.⁴³ The Quaid-i-Azam made a sarcastic comment on the civil disobedience movement, namely, that freedom of India could not be won merely by shouting.

Propaganda in favour of Britain:

As regards the mobilization of public opinion during the war, the Government spread a network of mullahs and other religious leaders. A certain retired Government servant Kulli

Khan and Colonel Robinson were entrusted the task of 'h ring the people to spread the Islamic propaganda in favour of Britain and against the Russians and Germans. Kulli Khan and Robinson were paid for that purpose.

Among the mullahs and religious leaders who allegedly became instrumental in the scheme of Kulli Khan, there was a certain Mullah Marwat. He belonged to the Khaksar movement but Kulli Khan persuaded him to give up his Khaksar activities and preach Jihad in favour of Britain. Another person ed in the scheme was Fazl Din, son of Mullah Powinda and he biggest potential source of trouble among the Mahsuds⁴⁴ The Pir of Manki Sharif and Badshah Gul, son of Haji Sahib of Turangzai, are also said to have participated in the Islamic propaganda. Badshah Gul was required to work in the tribal areas. Jansson maintains that these people were paid by the Government either through Kulli Khan or Robinson.⁴⁵ However, the truth of the matter seems to be that since in the initial stage of the war the Soviet Union was fighting on the side of Germany, the war was taken to mean as one betw en Communism and Religion in general. Generally speaking, in the Islamic Weltanschauung a definite bias is found in favour of Religion as opposed to irreligion. In other words, Muslim would prefer a Christian to a Communist; though the fo mer is deviated from true Religion in the Islamic sense; nevertheless, he professes a type of Religion which is superior to the stark atheism of the latter hence the involvement or enthusiasm of the mullahs in the war propaganda. Whether or not the ullahs actually received money for the propaganda remains to be confirmed by other coeval sources.

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In addition to the mullahs, a large number of prominent Muslim Leaguers, such as Nawab Zafar Ali and Taj Ali Khan⁴⁶ were also involved in the scheme.

The Cripps Mission:

The Second World War passed through several phases. Japan gained success by capturing the greater part of the East and Southeast Asia and in the spring of 1942 it occupied Burma which was a part of India till 1936. The Japanese force stood at the gates of India and rumors were in the air that disgruntled India would fall to Japan like a ripe apple.⁴⁷ In that critical situation, Britain hurriedly sent an emissary, Sir Stafford Cripps, to India on a peace mission. Cripps brought a promise of independence after the war was over,⁴⁸ other demands of Congress such as the elevation of India to a Dominion status and the formation of a Constituent Assembly had also been conceded in the plan. But there were other provisions in the plan which hinted at the possibility of partition. The Cripps plan was rejected both by the Congress and the Muslim League though for different reasons. The Muslim League was not happy with the prospects of a Constituent Assembly elected by proportional representation because an Assembly thus formed might have opted for the Union of India. Furthermore, the Muslim League insisted on an immediate and unequivocal stand on the issue of partition whereas in the Cripps plan partition had been relegated to the realm of possibilities.⁴⁹ The Congress rejected the plan for it could not wait till the end of the war for the control of Government to be transferred to Indian hands and also because the plan envisaged the possibility of partition which was an anathema to the Congress.

Quit India Movement:

The failure of the Cripps plan widened the gulf between the Congress and the Government. In July 1942, the Working Committee of the All-India National Congress met at Wardha and passed the 'Quit India' Resolution which read that the British rule in India must end immediately failing which the Congress would be compelled to launch a mass movement against the British.⁵⁰ The 'Quit India' movement was the most serious threat to the British suzerainty since the days of the Great War of 1857, As a prelude to the 'Quit India' movement, Gandhi said:

Here is a mantra, a short one, which I give you. You may imprint it upon your hearts and let every breath of yours give expression to it. The mantra is, 'do or die.' Take a pledge with God and your conscience as witness that you will no longer rest till freedom is achieved and will be prepared to lay down your lives in the attempt to achieve it. He who loses his life will gain it; he who will seek to save it shall lose it. Freedom is not for the coward or fainthearted.⁵¹

The movement started when Gandhi advised Britain to leave India to God or even to anarchy and leave the country.⁵² He argued that the withdrawal of Britain was necessary for the preservation of India. Japan was fighting with Britain and it might have invaded India for the purpose of supremacy if nothing else. But in the event of Britain's voluntary withdrawal the bait would be removed and Japan would not deem it necessary to make a battlefield of the country.⁵³

Soon serious disturbances erupted. By the end of 1942, 60,000 people had been incarcerated and about one thousand had lost their lives. In the N.W.F.P. alone 6,000 people were imprisoned.⁵⁴

Civil Disobedience Movement in NWFP:

In the Frontier Province, all the powers for conducting the civil disobedience movement were delegated to Abdul Ghaffar Khan by the Frontier Province Congress Committee. The courts, offices, police stations, post offices and railway stations were raided in Bannu, Kohat, Tank, Mardan and Peshawar.

Abdul Ghaffar permitted the cutting of telephone and telegraph wires, removing of railway lines, damaging of bridges and other acts of sabotage on the condition that the saboteur was ready to hand over himself to the police and make a clean confession of his acts. "This would add", he said, "to the moral courage of the worker and set an example of uprightness and bravery to the people and also save them from being victims of harassment and suspicion."⁵⁵ Abdul Ghaffar himself walked on foot from Charsadda to Mardan along with a group of fifty men and was arrested in the vicinity of Mardan.

The 'Quit India' movement did not assume alarming proportions in the N.W.F.P. as it did in the rest of the country. Cunningham, the Governor of the N.W.F.P. ascribed the failure of the movement so far to a distinct hardening of Muslim opinion all over the NW.F.P against the Congress.⁵⁶ In response to the 'Quit India' movement, Jinnah raised the slogan of 'divide and quit.' He characterized the movement as fantastic, the object of which was to coerce the British to leave minorities to their own fate.⁵⁷

The 'Quit India' movement strengthened the position of the Muslim League. The Congress leaders were away from the political scene and the League took advantage of their absence. This was more so in the N.W.F.P., where the Provincial Muslim League suffered from what may be called the paucity of men of high caliber. The internal squabbling among the

Frontier Leaguers has been alluded to above. Ten Congress MLAs from the N, W.F.P, were in jail and seven other seats had fallen vacant because of deaths or other reasons.

Ministry of Sardar Aurangzeb Khan:

In January 1943, Aurangzeb Khan the Muslim League leader in the Frontier Assembly strove to mobilize support for a ministry under his leadership. Aurangzeb convinced Cunningham of his majority and as a result a Muslim League ministry under the premiership of Aurangzeb was installed on 25th May, 1943.⁵⁸ Abdul Qayyum Khan, before his conversion to Muslim League in 1945, remarked tauntingly that the first and last legislative act of the Aurangzeb ministry was to pass a bill almost trebling the pay of the ministers.⁵⁹ During the premiership of Sahibzada Sir Abdul Qayyum there were three ministers in the Frontier cabinet; Dr. Khan Sahib increased the number to four and Aurangzeb enhanced it to five. This was too much for a small province which existed on a subvention from the Centre, lambasted Abdul Qayyum Khan.⁶⁰

Tendulkar maintains that the Aurangzeb's ministry managed to keep itself in office mainly because of the continuous incarceration of the opposition members in the Legislature.⁶¹ Furthermore; he accused the ministry of stupidity, inefficiency and corruption. The ministry did not rise above the petty skirmishes that surfaced in its rank and file. For example, K. B, Sadullah Khan did not cease to challenge the premiership of Aurangzeb and continued his efforts to undermine it. He was not happy because he considered himself a more suitable candidate for premier-ship. In the autumn a private motion recommending the Government to restore with retrospective effect all the imams and other stipends that has been suspended by the Congress ministry.⁶² Aurangzeb said he

was sympathetic to the motion and promised to look into the matter but nothing came out of it. In addition to this, Sadullah Khan urged the ministers to declare their policy on 'Pakistan' which was also a sensitive issue. Aurangzeb tried to lie low but Sadullah would not let him do so. He said that Aurangzeb had been called the 'Lion of the Frontier' and had been "heard roaring whenever there had been a meeting [where he pleaded the cause of Pakistan and that is why I wish that he should declare his policy on this point."⁶³ But this time too Aurangzeb evaded the issue. In fact, the Provincial Muslim League had been divided into two groups, one led by Aurangzeb and the other by K. B. Sadullah Khan. Quaid-i-Azam thought that it would be in the interest of the province, if Aurangzeb was replaced by Sardar Abdur Rabb Nishtar as the party leader. Nishtar, however, opposed the idea.⁶⁴

In November 1944, Sadullah Khan informed Jinnah that he could no longer support the ministry and if a vote of no confidence was tabled against it, he would vote in favour of it.⁶⁵ On 12th March, 1945, a vote of no confidence was passed against the ministry by 24 votes to 18. One of those supporting the motion was Sadullah Khan.⁶⁶ Four days later; the second ministry of Dr. Khan Sahib came into being.

It appears that the Provincial Muslim League had no ideology or programme which could compete with the highly organized band of the Khuda'i Khidmatgars.

The situation was aggravated when according to Abdul Qayyum Khan, the Muslim League made two great blunders. First, it did not examine the credentials of those whom it put at the helm of affairs. For example, some members who were hostile to the League joined it overnight when they noticed prospects of power and patronage in it. Secondly, it could not

put an end to the rot which had set in as a result of putting a minority party in power.⁶⁷ That is to say, when it was given a chance to form a Government it did not do anything to repair its image.

The first thing which the Congress ministry did was to release Abdul Ghaffar Khan and the Khuda'i Khidmatgars who had been imprisoned during the 'Quit India' disturbances.

The Simla Conference:

In June 1945, Lord Wavell invited all the political leaders of India to a conference at Simla.⁶⁸ Supposedly, the aim of the conference was to "ease the present political situation and to advance India towards her goal of self-Government"⁶⁹ The issue of the formation of the Viceroy's Executive Council was also discussed. The conference failed however because Wavell could not accept the conditions of Jinnah for the entry into the Council. These conditions emphasized inter alia, that the Muslim members of the Council could be nominated by the Muslim League as the latter was the only legitimate spokesman of Indian Muslims.

The failure of the Simla Conference brought to the fore the question as to who was the spokesman of whom. This question as well as the future of India was left to be settled in the general elections held in the winter of 1945 and 1946. The results of the elections showed a decisive victory for the Muslim League in all the Muslim majority provinces except the N.W.F.P. where the Congress won the day by securing 19 Muslim seats as opposed to 17 Muslim seats won by the League.⁷⁰ The Muslim League leaders attributed the success of Congress to the personal influence of Khan Brothers. In the N.W.F.P., the Congress enjoyed support at grass roots level whereas the Muslim League allied itself with the big Khans.⁷¹ The Frontier

Congress carefully avoided the issue of 'Pakistan', in the election campaign and instead harped on socio-economic reforms. It pointed out to the Muslims that the real fight was for bread and butter. In November 1945, Jinnah visited the Frontier Province to give 'fillip' to the League catnapping.⁷² This was the second visit of Quaid-i-Azam to the N.W.F.P.; earlier, he had visited the province in 1936. That time too the visit was intended to boost the morale of the Frontier League in the elections of 1936.

It should be pointed out that the results of the general elections in the N.W.F.P. should not be viewed as a barometer for the idea of 'partition' or 'Pakistan' as both the concepts were still not clear to the Frontier mind. As regards the success of the Congress in the N.W.F.P. Hudson makes a meaningful comment. "The Frontier Muslim made allies with Congress because he loved Hindus better than the British but because he wanted to be ruled by nobody."⁷³ When the prospects of subordination to the Hindu Raj became real his allegiance shifted.⁷⁴

The Third Ministry of Dr. Khan Sahib:

As a result of the general elections, Dr. Khan Sahib was asked to form a ministry. This was his third and last ministry. Abdul Ghaffar was authorized by the All-India National Congress to appoint ministers. In addition to Dr. Khan Sahib who became the chief minister, the following ministers were appointed. Qazi Ataullah (revenue), Yahya Jan (education) and Mihr Chand Khanna (finance). The ministry looked like a family affair as all the ministers except Mihr Chand were related to Abdul Ghaffar either by birth or marriage. The chief minister was his brother. Yahya Jan was his son-in-law and Qazi Ataullah's daughter had been married to one of his sons.⁷⁵

This distribution of portfolios could have been a mere coincidence: however, it led some to accuse Abdul Ghaf r of greed, niggardliness and nepotism.⁷⁶ The induction of Dr Kan Sahib's third ministry coincided with the expiry of Cunningham's term as Governor of the N.W.F.P.; he was replaced by Olaf Caroe.

The Cabinet Mission Plan:

In the spring of 1946, the British Government made yet another effort to find a solution to the problem of India. Three Cabinet Members were sent to India with a plan which came to be known as the Cabinet Mission Plan.⁷⁷ The Cabinet Mission interviewed various political figures such as Gandhi, Jinnah, Patel, Abul Kalam Azad and the Quaid-i-Azam on the question of the constitutional future of India. The Congress favoured one Constitution making body for the whole of India, whereas the Muslim League insisted on two constitution making bodies, i.e.: one for India and the other for Pakistan.⁷⁸ Quaid-i-Azam told the Cabinet Mission that the solution to the problem of India lay in its division. Finding no agreement between the two major political parties, the Cabinet Mission published its own Plan on 16th May, 1946. The Plan offered a three-tier programme. First, there would be the Union of India enjoying such powers as defense, communication and foreign affairs. Secondly, the provinces would be divided into three special groups, i.e. group 'A' consisting of the Hindu majority provinces; group 'B' consisting of the Muslim majority provinces of the Punjab, N.W.F.P., Sindh and Baluchistan; group 'C' consisting of Bengal and Assam. As for the formation of the constituent assembly, the provincial legislatures would serve as Electoral College. Roughly speaking, for a population of one million one member had to be elected. The provincial quota would be

observed and the various religious groups residing in a particular province would be given a share in proportion to their population.

Initially, the constituent assembly would meet for the general order of business. Then the members would be divided into three special groups as explained above. The special groups would form provincial constitutions for their provinces and a group constitution if they so desire. After this the constituent assembly would meet to form a constitution for the whole of India. When these constitutions are implemented each province would be entitled to opt out of the group that it originally belonged to after the general elections. This was the long term plan. In the short term, an interim Government would be formed giving equal representation to all major parties. The Muslim League initially accepted the plan for two reasons. First, it was an effort to find a solution to the problem of India and secondly the seeds of the idea of 'Pakistan' could be found in the plan. The Congress leaders interpreted the plan in their own way. They accepted the long term aspect of the plan and rejected the short term aspect on the issue of representation in the Interim Government. The Viceroy had suggested the formula of 5: 5: 2. That is five members had to be taken from Congress, five from Muslim League, one Sikh and one Indian Christian. This formula was not acceptable to the Congress who demanded more seats. The Congress also objected to the compulsory grouping of the provinces, especially the N.F.P. and Assam, where Congress ministries were in power. The Congress insistence on the inclusion of a nationalist non-League Muslim in the Interim Government was yet another point of departure. On the other hand, the Viceroy had promised that in the event of one party refusing to enter the Interim Government, he would ask the other party to go ahead

and* form the Interim Government. But when the Congress refused to enter the Interim Government and the Viceroy was reminded of his previous promise or commitment, he 'at his words. Because of this intransigent attitude of both the British and the Congress, the Muslim League withdrew its former acceptance of the Cabinet Mission Plan and instead resolved to achieve Pakistan through 'Direct Action.' 16th August was declared as the 'Direct Action Day.' All the Leaguers ere directed to renounce the Government titles.⁷⁹ As a result of the 'Direct Action Day', a mass communal violence erupted in Calcutta, then the capital of Bengal, which ended in the 'Great Calcutta killing.' As many as 5000 people were Killed n a few days.⁸⁰ According to another estimate 20,000 people were either killed or seriously injured in three days.⁸¹ A chain of communal violence followed at other places. Noakhali in East Bengal and Hazara in the Frontier Province witnessed w ves of communal massacre. These mass killings demolished the facade of Indian unity, if there was one, and lent sup the oft-repeated assertion of the Quaid-i-Azam that partition was inevitable to solve the Indian problem.

On 2nd September, 1946, an Interim Government was installed in the Centre under the leadership of Jawaharai Nehru. The latter was given the portfolio of External airs, The Muslim League which had initially refused to join the interim, Government on the issue of parity and Muslim representation, joined it in October 1946.

Nehru's Visit to NWFP:

In October 1946, Nehru paid a visit to the Frontier Province ostensibly with the purpose of figuring out for himself how much veracity was there in the rumours that "oppositio m the Province was being worked up only by the machinations of

anti-Congress British officials.”⁸² Abul Kalam Azad and Gandhi advised Nehru not to undertake the visit but Nehru persisted, The Governor Caroe went down from Peshawar Delhi and stayed there for three days to dissuade Nehru from his Frontier visit. Such a visit, Caroe told him, would not strengthen the Frontier Congress ministry but weaken it; for “the banners of Islam against the Hindus would be unfurled.”⁸³ On 16th October, 1946, Nehru arrived in Peshawar by air. He was driven to the Premier’s House where he was received’ by Abdul Ghaffar Khan. Some five thousand Muslim League volunteers clad in green uniforms and carrying lances, spears and staves headed by Abdul Qayyum Khan who had recently resigned from the Congress lined the road leading to the entrance of the aerodrome. When Nehru emerged, slogans were raised against him. Dr. Khan Sahib was so disturbed that he took out his revolver and threatened to shoot. When Abdul Qayyum was asked as to why the protest had been arranged when Muslim League had decided to join the Interim Government, he replied, “There will be no peace in the Frontier Province even if there is peace elsewhere.”⁸⁴

Wherever Nehru went signals of ‘no-welcome’ were given to him. In Khyber Agency, stones were thrown at him. In Malakand his vehicle was fired at and he received minor injuries. In North Waziristan the tribal Malikis did not reciprocate Nehru’s ‘Regime of Love.’ On the contrary, the Malikis told him bluntly that they considered Hindus as their *hamsaya* (serfs or slaves). Of course, Nehru could not control his temper and retaliated by calling them recipients of Government allowances and pitiful pensioners.⁸⁵

The Third June Plan and NWFP:

On 20th February, 1947, the British Prime Minister

Mr. Attlee made a statement in the House of Commons that Britain would withdraw from India before June 1948. At the same time the termination of the viceroyalty of Lord Wavell was also announced; he was replaced by Lord Mountbatten.

Mountbatten arrived in India on 20th March, 1947. His task was to arrange for the peaceful transfer of power to Indian hands preferably on the pattern of the Cabinet Mission Plan and if that was not possible then to partition India as a last resort. Mountbatten had long meetings with various leaders and came to the conclusion that an agreement on the basis of the Cabinet Mission Plan was not possible. In secret, therefore, he started working on a plan of partition. Mountbatten called a conference of Provincial Governors on 15 and 16 April and made them acquainted with his plan with a view to find out their reaction. The idea of a referendum in N.W.F.P was first conceived in that conference.

In the changed circumstances, when the partition was near at hand, the N.W.F.P. presented a difficult and baffling scenario. It was a Muslim majority Province with a Congress ministry which had ideological differences with the Muslim League. Mountbatten decided to visit the N.W.F.P, and find out for himself what the situation was like there. The visit took place on 28 and 29 April. The Frontier Muslim League had arranged a demonstration of one lakh people. The people had gathered at Cunningham Park (now Jinnah Park) and their programme was to march towards the Governor House. Mountbatten had a meeting with Governor Caroe and Dr. Khan Sahib and it was decided that in order to forestall the demonstration Mountbatten himself should go and show

himself to the crowd. The scheme proved successful. So the hostile crowd turned friendly and for once the shouts 'Pakistan Zindabad' were replaced by 'Mountbatten Zindabad'.⁸⁶ Later in the day, Mountbatten met with various leaders such as 'Abdul Qayyum Khan, the Pir of Manki Sharif and Samin Jan who had been especially released from jail for the occasion. These leaders had been imprisoned in connection with the civil disobedience movement which had been started against the Congress ministry. The three Leaguers demanded the imposition of Governor's rule and general elections in the N.W.F. P.

The Mountbatten's partition plan was ready by May. The plan conceded the fundamental demand of the Muslim League, i.e. Pakistan. Provinces had to be given choice to join India or Pakistan. Punjab and Bengal had to be divided so that Hindus and Muslims of those provinces could vote separately. Quaid-i-Azam objected to the partition of the Punjab and Bengal as that would lead to a 'truncated' and 'moth-eaten' Pakistan. A referendum had to be held in the N.W.F.P. to decide which constituent assembly would the people of that province join.

By now all Congress leaders, except Gandhi, had reconciled themselves to the idea of partition. Gandhi was relentlessly hostile to the partition of India. He had said, "Vivisect me before you vivisect India."⁸⁷ To him partition was tantamount to the cutting of the baby into two halves. But he also changed his mind and by June he had accepted it. When the All-India National Congress agreed to the principle of partition the ground slipped from under the feet of Abdul Ghaffar Khan and the Khudai Khidmatgars. They did not know what to do. Both geographically and religiously it was impossible for the

N.W.F.P to join India. Abdul Ghaffar was disillusioned. He felt that Gandhi had "thrown him to the wolves."⁸⁸ When Azad saw the extreme dejection of Abdul Ghaffar, he suggested to him that he should join the Muslim League. But then Abdul Ghaffar was too proud and too independent a person to condescend. He could not appreciate the assertion or claim that the Muslim League was a representative body of the Muslims. On the contrary, he claimed that the Muslim League was a political party just like the Congress and there was no reason for him not to join the party of his choice,⁸⁹ In other words. Islam and Muslim League were not identical in his train of thought.

The plan of partition was announced on the third June hence it came to be known as the, 3 June Plan. According to this Plan, 15 August was declared as the day of the emergence of two independent states, i.e. Pakistan and India. The distinguishing feature of the 3 June Plan was that whereas in the Cabinet Mission Plan the provinces were given the choice to secede, that choice was now snatched away. It was argued that such an arrangement would lead to the Balkanization of India.

Referendum in NWFP:

Abdul Ghaffar Khan frowned upon the idea of referendum or general elections in the N.W.F.P. He argued that the people of the province had given their verdict against Pakistan only sixteen months ago and a referendum at that stage would be used as an excuse of coercion and violence. His adversaries, however, interpreted the opposition of Abdul Ghaffar to referendum in a different vein. They held that the winds were now blowing in a different direction; Abdul Ghaffar Khan fully knew that and he was certain that in the changed circumstances his party would lose the referendum. Meanwhile several

abortive attempts were made to forge a rapprochement between Abdul Ghaffar and the Muslim League. One such effort was made by the Principal of Islamia College. Also, Mountbatten arranged a meeting between Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Quaid-i-Azam at the Viceroy's House. According to Mountbatten, "Jinnah refused to have any discussion with Abdul Ghaffar beyond extending an invitation to him to come to his house."⁹⁰ In that meeting Abdul Ghaffar Khan put forward three conditions to Jinnah, These conditions were: Pakistan should leave the Commonwealth; the N.W.F.P. should enjoy complete provincial autonomy and the settled and tribal areas should be allowed to unite in one administrative unit. Jinnah agreed to the demand of provincial autonomy but as regards the other two terms, he said they should be left to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan.⁹¹ Thus the meeting ended in failure.

The referendum was held on 6th July, 1947, and continued for ten days. Both the Congress and the Khuda'i Khidmatgars continued their propaganda against Pakistan. Quaid-i-Azam appealed to the Muslims of the N. W.F.P. to remember that they were Muslims first and Pathans later.⁹²

Abdul Ghaffar Khan and the Khuda'i Khidmatgars boycotted the referendum and instead harped on the formation of an independent Pathan state, i.e. Pakhtunistan. He cited the example of Turkey, Afghanistan and Iran and asked, if those countries could become independent states why could not Pakhtunistan.⁹³ Abdul Ghaffar's opposition to Pakistan could be summarized thus: First, he was suffering from some degree of Anglophobia and in the back of his mind there was the fear that even after partition the British might stay in Pakistan. Secondly, he thought that Frontier was a relatively smaller province in Pakistan and in Pakistan it might be dominated by the Punjabis.

Finally, in Pakistan the Khuda'i Khidmatgars might be outmaneuvered by their old enemies, i.e. the Muslim League. However, it should be pointed out that the demand for Pakhtunistan was more of a bargaining counter than any true or genuine desire for separation.

The results of the referendum went overwhelmingly in favour of Pakistan. About 99.02% votes went to Pakistan and 0.98% to India.⁹⁴ Ideally, the Congress ministry in the N.W.F.P. should have joined the Muslim League. But it did not. Consequently the ministry was dismissed by Quaid-i-Azam, the first Governor General of Pakistan. It is said that Dr. Khan Sahib refused to salute the flag of Pakistan and therefore he was dismissed.⁹⁵ A new ministry under the leadership of Abdul Qayyum Khan was installed.

Conclusion

The NWFP presented a scene of hectic political activities. The towering personalities of the Khan Brothers had overshadowed the presence of the Muslim League in NWFP. Dr. Khan Sahib was able to make Congress ministries three times. The success of the Congress could be attributed to two factors. For one thing, the affairs of the Muslim League were in the hands of big Khans as well as the civil servants; the former had no roots among the masses and were viewed as the stooges of the British. As for the latter, they were divided and notorious for intrigues instead of providing tangible service to the people. Secondly, despite the fact that the elections of 1946 had been fought on the issue of Pakistan, the Muslim League did not make enough progress sufficient for forming a ministry. On the other hand, the congress leaders were shrewd enough to evade the issue of Pakistan and instead they harped on the theme of socio-economic reforms which rang favourably to the people. However, on the occasion of referendum, when the issue of Pakistan became a matter of life and death as it were, the people of NWFP voted overwhelmingly in favour of Pakistan.

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