

THE ROLE MUSLIM STUDENTS IN THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE: AN ASSESSMENT

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Abstract

The present piece of research devolves into the history of freedom struggle by pinpointing the role of Muslim students in search of freedom from foreign rule of British imperial masters. The Muslim struggle for freedom in the Indian subcontinent started with the avalanche of 1857 and culminated in the establishment of separate Muslim homeland in the form of Pakistan. Indeed, various motives and compulsions worked behind it. It goes without saying that growing political consciousness among the Indian Muslims and their increasing apprehension about their safer future provided raison deter for their political struggle in India. During this rigorous effort, several forces, organizations, groups or classes of the Muslims played a very significant role to liberate their homeland from British raj. The role of Muslim students in our regeneration and liberation is comparatively more conspicuous, crucial and constructive. They definitely acted as the vanguard of the Pakistan Movement particularly in the last two decades i.e. 1930s and 1940s. This research endeavour, however, highlights the pros and cons of Muslim students' politics with reference to their efforts they made for the liberation of their homeland

Keywords: British government, Muslim students, freedom struggle, separate homeland, Pakistan.

Introduction

Although political consciousness among the Muslim students had developed long before the crucial period of 1930s and 40s yet Aligarh College played a significant role in this respect. It definitely promoted political consciousness and national interests among the Muslim students even during its early stages. The Tripolitania episodes (1911) and the Balkan wars (1912-13) were undoubtedly great politico-military crises over which the Indian Muslims generally were mentally perturbed and sharply reacted to these crucial developments. The Muslim students in India did not remain behind. The Muslim students

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at that juncture of history were fully politically conscious and were aware of the sociopolitical situation which was developing in the subcontinent (Zaman, 1978). Hindu as a majority community had become increasingly intolerant and aggressive and as a reaction the Muslim students suffered discrimination at the hands of the Hindu students. Realization the gravity of the situation in late 1930s, the Muslim students envisaged the idea of forming a separate Muslim students organization. Hence, they took it a challenge to meet in the days to come (Bari, n.d).

. Nevertheless, the responsibilities of Muslim students were two-fold - the first was to identify themselves as stalwarts of a separate organization and secondly to liberate and rebel against the dead weight of the Hindu-dominated All India Students Federation. Under a separate Muslim Students Organization they were to take up such crucial matters as *Sree* and *Padma* crest of the Calcutta University: the Vidya Mandir Scheme in the Central Provinces: the anti-Islamic crest of the Nagpur University: singing of the *Vande Matram* and to show veneration to the Congress tri-colour flag in addition to bowing before the picture of Hindu saints in the Hindu majority provinces (Mirza, 1937). A separate Muslim students body was established for the reasons that “that Hindu Students Organization, the All-India Students Federation was a Congress-ridden students body which was dominated by a section the socialists and that the Muslim students as members of that organization did not like to be called socialists ... the genuine demands of the Muslim students were not adhered to in that body and if at all irresolution was ever moved by a Muslim students, it was thoroughly rejected by the majority community”. Under these circumstances the Muslim students organized their own body in late

1930s. It was a formal begging of the students community in Muslim major areas of the subcontinent (Mirza, 1988).

It is worth mentioning here to refer some events that occurred immediately after the formation of the All-India Muslim Students began to muss their majority strength in the educational institutions in the Congress governed provinces. They started a movement in the colleges and universities to harass the Muslim students thereby adopting different tactics especially on annual convocations. They would force the Muslim students to follow their Hindu dictums and perform their religious rituals on such occasions and, the authorities would take least notice of it. After the formation of the All-India Muslim Students Federation things began to settle down (Mirza, 1998). This was now the ripe time to take firm steps to contribute practically to the cause so important for the Muslim students. The organizers diverted their attention towards forming provincial branches. For this purpose, they made tours of different provinces. In Bengal the already working All-Bengal Muslim Students League had come into existence. It was affiliated to the AIMS F and it was in association with this branch, that the first annual session of the AIMS F was organized at Calcutta in December 1937. The Muslim Students felt jubilant as their first session was presided by Quaid-i-Azam. It may not be out of context to say that the Quaid's decision to preside over the deliberations of the Muslim students' organization was the first instance in his entire political career. Till that time, he had never patronized any effort for a separate Muslim students' body. In fact, he had always been supporting non-communal students' organizations. The reason for this change of heart, on the Quaid's part, is not difficult to know. Soon after starting the task of reorganizing the All-India

Muslim League, he had realized that if the Muslim League intended to win the battle of Muslim freedom it must secure the cooperation of Muslim students. Thereafter, he never missed any occasion that facilitated close cooperation between him and the students. He would enter into touch with the students by means of correspondence and personal meetings. The students also kept the Quaid informed of their day-to-day activities and their achievements (*Inqilab*, 2 November 1941).

Quaid-i-Azam and All India Muslim Students Federation

It goes without saying that the great Quaid always guided the students' community on every critical juncture. On 28 December 1937, the Quaid in his Presidential address to the Conference, made a most philosophic speech. Highlighting certain political issues in a lucid style he affirmed that "in any constitution that might be framed for the government of the country, there should be adequate safeguards for the rights and interests of the Muslims". He turned the Congress 'mass contact campaign' as 'massacre contact" (Quaid-i-Azam Papers, F/962). Recollecting the difficulties which the students had faced regarding the formation of the Muslim Students Federation, the Quaid expressed concern over complaints of the Muslim students, who, on different occasions, had been ousted from the working committees of students' bodies of certain educational institutions merely for being Muslim. If fighting for one's community rights, he said, was termed as communalism then, "I am also a communalist". Concluding his address, the Quaid took the Muslim youth into confidence and shared with them his efforts in regard to his work of organizing the Muslim India. Soliciting their cooperation, he asked the students that: 'I have only rung the alarm bell. The bell is still ringing. But I do not see the

fire brigade. I want you to produce the fire brigade. And God willing, we shall extinguish the fire'. This is something matchless throughout the history (Indian Annual Register, 1937).

Moreover, the Quaid, also agreed to honor the request of the Federation to inaugurate its second annual session held at Patna in 1938. The importance of this session was that it was on the occasion of its annual session. How clear was the Quaid when in his address to the Muslim students he exhorted them to prepare themselves for "sacrifices for the advancement of the community and the freedom of the country". He several warned the Muslim students not to be carried away by mere catchwords of the Hindu Congress (*Inqilab*, 30 December). He wanted the Muslim students to remain abreast of the Congress false ideals and to get prepared "to give a battle to all these [British, States and Congress] forces" and added that "it would be better for the students to make up their minds to do so..." Besides holding conferences, the AIMSFI ably handled two important fronts, i.e., Social and Intellectual by bringing out reading materials in the students, journals and magazines and by establishing study circle for the Muslim masses, especially the students (Mirza, 1978). The most important of all these was the Awakening which had the Quaid's blessing and on various occasions its Editor-in-Chief had been clamoring for the Quaid's advice on matters relation to the affairs of Muslim India and of the students. The Quaid-i-Azam in a message to its issue of September 1940, made the Muslim youth realize what their responsibilities were and what they were required to do in the fast-changing times. He said:

“Be prepared, the youth of India has a special duty towards the community. They are looked upon as the flower of the nation and correspondingly they have a greater responsibility to be showered. Besides being the strong arms of their nation, they will in turn have to work also as its brain. So they must think, qualify, equip and prepare themselves till the call for action comes. It is only then that you will discharge efficiently your duty and responsibility which may fall upon you with credit and honor to yourself and your people” (Indian Annual Register, 1938).

All India Muslim Students Federation and All India Muslim League

Naturally, ties between the students' community and Muslim League were strengthened. The Federation at that time had indirectly become a subsidiary body of the All-India Muslim League responding fervently to the directives of the Quaid. Having full faith in the Quaid's leadership it resolved to place the services of the Muslim students at his disposal. Through a resolution, the Federation declared that ‘the Muslim students of India are totally opposed to the idea of a constituent assembly to frame a constitution proposed by the Congress’ because “in the opinion of the AIMS F, it is bound to establish ‘Hindu Raj’ in India”. It further resolved that no constitution will be acceptable to the Muslim youth which is not approved by and consulted with the Muslim League which alone can speak on behalf of Muslim Nation in India’. The Federation in very clear words condemned “all those people who say that the Muslim youth of India are not behind Mr. Jinnah”. Besides, the AIMS F for the first time requested the Quaid to make a provision for including at least one Muslim student, from amongst the Provincial Federation, into the Council of the All-India Muslim League to provide

scope for the representation of the sentiments and opinions of the Muslim youth (Mirza, 1978).

Their organizational spirit at the time of the League's historic session attracted attention of all and sundry. They formed different committees, organized gatherings and made the creed of the League known to almost every Muslim in India. In this respect, the Punjab branch of the AIMS F extended tremendous support to organizers of the session. The students took lead in advancing the Pakistan Resolution on 24 March 1940, with the Quaid presiding over their session (Mirza, 1937).

The early forties, the hectic days of the Pakistan Movement were full of enthusiasm amongst Muslim masses of the subcontinent. The Muslim youth, who played an effective role in the liberation struggle, was seen in the forefront in almost all the provinces of undivided India. The province of the Punjab, being the citadel of the Muslim students' activities, all over the subcontinent and took the Punjab Muslim students under his fostering care. The students under his inspiring guidance played a memorable role in the Pakistan Movement. The most important and effective aspect of their endeavor was the holding of several conferences at different places in support of the idea of Pakistan (Indian Annual Register, 1938).

The period following the March Session of the All-India Muslim League in 1940 was marked by some notable conferences arranged by the Punjab Muslim Students, Federation. In view of the ineffectiveness of the Punjab Provincial Muslim League, the Muslim Students Federation took up the task of popularizing the Pakistan Scheme. A number of conferences were organized under its auspices

within a short period of which the Special Pakistan Conference of March 1941 was most important. The Lyallpur Faisalabad Educational Conference presided by Haji Sir Abdullah Haroon (1872-1942), the Lyallpur Pakistan Conference under the Presidentship of Malik Barkat Ali (1885-1946), underline the importance of the year 1941 in the history of the Muslim youth's struggle for the creation of Pakistan (Indian Annual Register, 1941).

The Punjab Muslim Students Federation held a successful Educational Conference at Lyallpur on February 15 and 16, 1941, with Haji Sir Abdullah Haroon as President. Zuhur Alam Shaheed, President of the Reception Committee, discussed some crucial problems of the Muslim students regarding educational matters and the indifferent attitude of the Punjab University. He forcefully argued for religious education of the Muslim students and laid stress on the introduction of Islamic history and promotion of research. Haji Sir Abdullah Haroon exhorted the students to face manfully the great and grave responsibility by striving to achieve the goal before them (Indian Annual Register, 1944). Advising the students he said, 'during vacation you should enter villages on foot and carry to your propel there the massage of hope and courage. Continuing, he said, that "the Indian Muslims have now come to live in two water-tight compartments; there are those who live in cities and there are those who are scattered in the villages but cut off and isolated from each other. The two must now come together, and the only bond that can bring the tie them together is the bond of mutual intercourse, service and sympathy" (Indian Annual Register, 1944).

The most important of these conferences as indicated earlier, was the Special Pakistan Conference held on March 2, 1941, at Lahore. It was presided by the Quaid-i-Azam. This Conference was a landmark in the history of the Students Federation. Though the Quaid encouraged the organization of the Muslim students all over the country, but he saw its most pressing need in the Punjab. The provincial League, as already referred to earlier, was divided into groups and the Unionists had formed the majority section, though its loyalties were divided (*Nawa-i-Waqt*, 1944). “The older urban section was free from this handicap and contained some very distinguished and dedicated personalities but had not been able to provide a firm basis for the Muslim League in the province”. In these circumstances, the value of a dynamic organization, free from the handicaps of the Unionists and broader based than the small urban group, was obvious. The Quaid, very correctly gauging the situation, took the students’ organization under his fostering care and under his guidance it worked as a subsidiary organization of the League in the Punjab (Ahmed, 1968).

It was the first enterprise of its kind. The salient feature of this occasion was that for the first time the Quaid-i-Azam was under complete escort of the students and the Provincial League leaders were not allowed to disturb in the protocol. Arrangements for the Quaid’s stay, programs and visits were altogether directly managed by the Federation for three days at Lahore. The Quaid, in other words, was practically the guest of the students during his stay in the provincial capital (*Pakistan Times*, 14 November 1942).

A special feature of the Conference was the gathering of a large number of Muslim girl students who participated in the Conference.

Earlier, a girl students section of the Students Federation had been formed with the help of Lady Abdul Qadir, Fatima Begum (1890-1958). Begum Salma Tasaddaque Hussain and Miss M. Qureshi. They rendered considerable help in the arrangement for the ladies attending the function (*Dawn*, 14 April 1946). The Conference was inaugurated on March 2, 1941 at the Islamia College ground, Lahore. Mirza Abdul Hamid, President of the Punjab Muslim Students Federation, in his Address, read out a detailed account of the prevailing circumstances and threw ample light on the activities of the Punjab Muslim Students Federation (*Pakistan Times*, 10 November 1946).

The Quaid-i-Azam, in his presidential address, pinpointed different political issues and problems confronting Muslim India. Paying tributes to the Federation, he remarked:

“I have also watched your organization of this Conference of this Conference and your deliberations and let me heartily congratulate you for the way in which you have organized this Conference. I also wish to convey, not only to the young men here, but to a large body of Muslims of Lahore and those who have come from different parts, that I really appreciate and feel happy that there is a small band of young men who have tried very hard to organize this Conference of the Punjab Muslim Students Federation. But, I think, those who have worked for it, those who have labored it, must have the fullest satisfaction that their labors have borne the fruits, and they are fully rewarded for their work” (*Indian Annual Register*, 1944).

The conference ended with strong endorsement of the Pakistan Resolution passed by the All-India Muslim League in March 1940. It may be added that since the passing of the Resolution from the students

platform, perhaps no political quarter had so far so categorically supported the Resolution in the early 1940s (*Dawn*, 20 November 1946).

Punjab Muslim Students Federation and its Activities

The activities of the Punjab Muslim Students Federation gathered momentum when they decided to hold a meeting under the presidentship of the Punjab premier, Sir Sikandar Yayat Khan (1892-192). Since the Premier had shown his interest in presiding over the deliberations of the Federations, a meeting was held on July 5, 1941 at Lyallpur (*Dawn*, 16 June 1947). It was in this conference that the Punjab Premier hurled bitter invectives on the students' movement and bitterly criticized the Pakistan Scheme. Adverse remarks of the Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan from the students' platform created unrest amongst the League-minded people, especially the Muslim students. The matter was brought to the notice of the Quaid-i-Azam and immediately afterwards on July 20, 1941, the students successfully arrested the deteriorating situation by holding a pro-Pakistan Conference with Malik Barkat Ali as President (*Dawn*, 7 June 1947). In a big gathering of students and Punjabi Muslims, Malik Barkat Ali most lucidity elaborated the philosophical justification of the Pakistan Scheme. He severely criticized the Premier's presidential Address and said:

“That the foes of Pakistan and some others from amongst our own camp, who want to win cheap popularity at the hands of our Hindu countrymen to whom Pakistan is at the moment a sort of poison cup, have spread so many falsehoods about Pakistan that it is necessary at the out-set to give a true historical retrospect of the events that have led

to and have culminated in the demand of Pakistan as the only solution of India's difficulties and the only guarantee of this vast subcontinent taking its proper place amongst the free and independent nations on the earth." At the end of the Pakistan Conference, a resolution was passed in which Sir Sikandar's assertions made in his speech of July 5, 1941, were repudiated as "utterly untrue" (*Nawa-e-Waqt*, 13 September 1947).

The students, activities continued to expand towards the propagation of the Pakistan idea. The year 1942 witnessed a huge annual conference of the Federation at Jullundhur. Once again, the endorsement of the Pakistan Resolution was the special feature of the Session. The opening of the year 1944 was once again marked by two important and successful Conference of the Federation, held at Lahore and Rawalpindi respectively. The fourth Annual Session of the Federation was organized at Lahore with the Quaid-i-Azam as President. It was inaugurated on March 18, 1944. The Quaid was brought to the Pindal followed by Muslim Students, Guards with naked swords amidst shouts of Quaid-i-Azam zindabad (*Pakistan Times*, 14 November 1942). The meeting was attended by a large body of students and some Provincial dignitaries such as the Punjab Premier, Khizer Hayat Khan Tiwana, (1909-1975). Education Minister, Mian Abdul Haye, Sayyid Amjad Ali, Private Parliamentary Secretary; Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan (1895-1963); Mian Allah Yar Khan Daultana; Sir Maratab Ali; Qazi Mohammad Isa (1914-1976) and the Parliamentary Secretaries. The Chairman of the Reception Committee, Mumtaz Muhammad Daultana in the course of his address said that the Muslims were eager and willing to come to any reasonable agreement with the Sikhs to satisfy their aspirations. He analyzed the three fronts on which

the Muslims had to face the struggle, namely, the Hindus, the British and the Muslims, who attempted to disrupt the organized unity of their nation. He warned Muslim Students not to fix their eyes too intently, in hope or in despair, on their legislatures and not to be dismayed if their 'Pakistan Ministry' acted too often on a 'non-Pakistan' way (*Pakistan Times*, 14 November 1942).

The Quaid-i-Azam in his thought-provoking presidential address assured the Muslim youth that they had a bright future if they would put-forth courage and energy, galvanize the Muslim League and its programme, throw away fears and continue to be united and act under discipline. He asked them to change their mentality and notions radically and begin to realize that all of them could not depend or live upon Government jobs. He wanted them to take to industries and commerce in which they were nowhere and where wide avenues were open to all. Referring to the aims and objects of the Federation, the Quaid exhorted the students to do their utmost to arouse political consciousness among the Muslim students and do everything in their power to prepare them to partake in the struggle for the achievement of Pakistan and act as a corporate body in order to have the grievances of the students removed (Zaman, 1978).

The conferences and sessions organized by the Punjab Muslim students was the marked feature of the year 1944 both in the history of the province as well as the Students Federation. Soon after the Lahore Conference, the Sialkot branch of the Federation, organized a huge meeting under its auspices, on May 1, with the Quaid-i-Azam as President. The Quaid observed that this Session was no less important than that of Lahore organized in March 1940. In the course of his

address delivered in Urdu he said, "I am not a young man like you but your youthful spirit and enthusiasm have made me young. It is through your untiring efforts during the last seven years. I feel today that you have strengthened my hands tremendously. "Later, he appealed to Ahrars, Jami 'at Ulama, Shias, Jats, Rajputs, Afghans and Momins to sink their differences and strengthen the League (Mirza, 1937).

The session concluded with a resolution adopted reiterating complete faith and confidence in Quaid-i-Azam, leadership. In the next month, the Students Federation organized another successful Conference at Rawalpindi under the Presidentship of Sardar Shaukat Hayat Khan on June 19, 1944, who after his arbitrary expulsion from the Punjab cabinet had joined the Muslim League (Mirza, 1988). The Rawalpindi Conference was inaugurated by Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan (1895-1951) on June 19, 1944. In this gathering, a large number of League leaders participated and amongst those who spoke were Sardar Abdur Rab Khan Nishtar (1899-1957), Finance Minister from Frontier Province, Qazi Mohammad Isa from Baluchistanm Sardar Aurangzeb Khan, Frontier Premier and Liaquat Ali Khan (Bari, n.d).

The students Federation decided to hold divisional conferences in all the five Divisions of the Province and it was in compliance with this decision that an important Muslim Students Divisional Conference was organised at Amritsar on October 10, 1944 under the presidentship of Amir Ahmad Khan, Raja of Mahmoodabad (1914-1973), the President of the All-India Muslim Students Federation. Sardar Shaukat Hayat Khan, inaugurated the Conference. Thanking the students, he called October 10 as a historic day in the history of the Student Federation. He said that the students contribution for the nation was

exemplary and said if the League were the structure of the nation, the students were its soul. He further remarked that at times, when some individuals with poor foresight would frustrate the rank and file of the Muslim, it was the students who would come forward and with undaunting courage and devotion exercised their strength and brought the whole community on one platform. Shaikh Sadiq Hassan and Mohammad Abdus Sattar Khan Niazi also delivered strong speeches. Rafa Sahib of Mohmoodabad, in his presidential address laid stress on Islamic teachings and patriotism. He pointed out that it was impossible for the Muslims to live according to Islamic codes of life unless they were free and independent (Mirza, 1998).

The impact of the students conferences was noticed when thousands of Muslim masses flocked together under the banner of conferences nullified the anti-League propaganda in rural areas and effectively damage the Unionist popularity and enthuses. These activities of the students infused spirit and enthusiasm not only amongst students' rank and file but also effectively turned the general trend of the Muslim mind, making them realize their separate identity and the importance of achieving a separate homeland where Muslim could live according to their faith and aspirations (Quaid-i-Azam Papers, F/962).

This idea was then brought to the motive of other Muslim students of the Muslim University Aligarh. The question of formation of a Federation was freely debated. On 8 November 1936, the proposal was formally put to debate at a meeting of the University Union, where Mohammed Noman moved a resolution which reads:

“We the students of the Alighrh University, are of the opinion that it is desirable and expedient to form a Central Muslim Organization of the students on an All India basis (with such name as the All-India Muslim Students Federation) in order to create a common platform for Muslim Students of all Universities, Colleges and other provinces in this country with a view to bring about closer social contacts, a better cultural, political, economic and relationship and to be able to cooperate and share more effectively and usefully in the activities and deliberations of the all-India Students Federation” (Quaid-i-Azam Papers, F/962).

During the same period, the AIMS F organized its session at Nagpur under the presidentship of Quaid-i-Azam on December 26, 1941. It may be mentioned here that the students had been continuously writing to the Quaid to preside over it. This correspondence lasted between August-December 1941. It was a historic day in the history of C.P. and Berar Province when Nagpur became the centre of Muslim politics where the entire provincial Muslim leadership flocked together and spoke freely on the Lahore Resolution reiterating their faith in Pakistan. Abdul Qadir, Chairman of the Reception Committee, Mohammad Noman, Deputy President of the AIMS F and Raja Sahib of Mahmudabad, President, AIMS F addressed the gathering. While hoisting the League flag, Raja Sahib said that the “Pakistan Movement had come to stay and even a thousand Savarkars could not check it”. Criticizing the Congress movement, the students, in the end, adopted a resolution expressing their whole-hearted supported to the Quaid saying: “This conference solemnly assures Mr. Jinnah that the Muslim youth will be ready to go to any length, under his leadership for the

achievement of their sacred ideal, popularly known as Pakistan...”
(Indian Annual Register, 1944).

Besides attending to the above conferences, the Muslim students engaged themselves in observing Pakistan Days (on March 23) every year and, also celebrating Quaid’s birthday on December 25 each year. These ceremonies reflected the students’ attachment with the League’s creed and their beloved leader especially after the ugly event of a dastardly attack on the Quaid’s life in 1943. Since that time, the Muslim students offered their voluntary services to perform the duties as the Quaid’s guards at his residence. This practice continued throughout the Pakistan movement (*Pakistan Times*, 14 November 1942).

Electoral Politics and the Role of Muslim Students

The students’ activism reached its seventh when the general elections were announced after the failure of the Simla Conference in 1945. How magnificently they responded to the call of the Quaid by taking the election campaign into their hands, hardly needs any mention. The selfless workers of the Muslim youth poured into every corner of the country canvassing for the League candidates contesting elections to the Central as well provincial Assemblies. Their stupendous work in the elections attracted attention of the entire Muslim India and Quaid, at whose call had they sacrificed their studies, greatly eulogized their selfless performance for having wrecked the Congress citadels all over (*Nawa-e-Waqt*, 13 September 1947).

In March 1946, the Cabinet Mission arrived in India to examine the constitutional problems and suggest a solution to it. After lengthy discussion with the Indian political leaders, the Mission put

forth a plan on May 8, 1946, which was not accepted by the Hindu Congress and thereafter by the League and nothing concrete came out of the proposals, and the Cabinet Mission left India on June 29 leaving the country in a precarious political situation. The League had rejected the proposals in its meeting on April 9, 1946, which was fully endorsed by the Muslim youth all over (*Inqilab*, 30 December 1941). The students appreciated the stand taken by the Quaid on this occasion and sent telegram to this effect. Moinul Haque Chaudhry, the General Secretary, AIMS F sent a telegram to the Quaid on May 22, 1946, saying:

“Cabinet’s proposals totally unacceptable to Muslim nation in general and youth in particular. British Government has stabbed us from back. Congress design sinister - your concession more than what we can concede - Kindly stick to those and reject Cabinet proposals - Assuring every sacrifice on behalf of Muslim Youth”. In another telegram to the Quaid, the Vice-President of the AIMS F expressed his faith in the League and wrote: “The Muslim youth are ready to your back and call. Our aim is Pakistan or Perish. We assure full support to the decisions of the Legislator’s Convention”. Rejecting the Mission Plan, the students openly declared to have ‘Pakistan or Perish’. Thereafter, they made tremendous show of discipline during the League’s Direct Action programme of August 16, 1946. As an organized but unpaid volunteer corps, the students took active part in obedience to the Quaid’s directives and gave least chance of objection from any quarter (*Nawa-i-Waqt*, 13 November 1944).

Thus, the Muslim students, as in the past, travelled every corner of the province pleading for the cause of the League and

Pakistan and were ultimately successful in drawing large number of voters to the polls who gave their verdict in favour of Pakistan. When the newborn country-Pakistan came into being on August 14, 1947, the Muslim youth faced boldly in numerable hardships and miseries as true Pakistanis. They volunteered themselves during the refugee relief work and worked with utmost devotion to ameliorate the sufferings of the horror-stricken refugees (*Pakistan Times*, 14 November 1942).

During these hectic days, the Muslim youth had been attending to their national duty quite fervently. The AIMS F expanded its sphere of activities even to London and to some extent in America too. The Muslim students with a view to propagate the cause of the League formed their branches in early 1948 in these countries. These branches observed Pakistan Day, celebrated Quaid's birthday and organized symposia and conferences on the political issues of India (Mirza, 1937).

All India Muslim Students Federation and the Role of its London Branch

The London branch was established at Islamic Culture Centre at Regents Park. A Committee was appointed to carry out a recruitment campaign among Muslim Students already in that country and to prepare enrolment programme of three Muslim students expected from India before the end of the year. Miss Fatima Nabi was elected President of the Convening Committee which included six other members. The London branch of AIMS F boycotted a reception given on October 16, 1946, by London Majlis in honour of the three members of the British Cabinet Mission (Mirza, 1998). The Muslim students of this branch in a statement informed that they boycotted the function

because the London Majlis was a Hindu dominated organization from which the majority of Muslim League students had resigned. Miss Fatima Nabi declared that “a few Muslim office bearers in the Majlis on way after the composition of the body on November 3, 1946, the Annual National Convention of the India Muslim Students was organized at the Islamic Culture Centre, London. On this occasion the Muslim students completed the formation of the Great Britain Branch of the AIMS F. The Federation pledged to support the AIML in its demand for Pakistan. The convention sent a message to the Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah explaining their willingness to offer every sacrifice to attain Pakistan. Earlier the Quaid had sent a cablegram wishing success to the Convention and had stressed that “stand united and work for Pakistan”. Among resolution carried was one welcoming the entry of the League into the Interim Government (Quaid-i-Azam Papers, F/962).

The General Secretary of the London branch issued a message on November 18, 1946, saying that the AIMS F branch in Britain had set up a Reception Bureau under the charge of Obeidur Rehman to look into the requirements of the incoming fresh Indian Muslim students. The Executive Committee of the AIMS F branch in Britain decided at a meeting that there should be wide exchange of ideas between Muslim scientists, technicians and engineers as to how best they could help in the building up of a really sound and highly industrial Pakistan. The Committee, therefore, invited attention of Muslim students who were studying science, technology and engineering and directed them to get in touch with the AIMS F, London branch (*Inqilab*, 30 December 1941).

The Association of Muslim Students in America

In the like manner, the Muslim students had organized their association in America in November 1946, bearing the name “The Association of Muslim Students in America”. This organization had its branches in New York, California, Illinois and Canada. The Association, as it claimed in the beginning stood as social and religious organization of Muslim students whose main object was to serve the longer interest of humanity through the promotion of better understanding between various nations of the world. It published official bulletin known as Muslim News Bulletin (Mirza, 1937). According to Amin Khan Tareen, the Organizer of the Association while writing in his report (probably sent to the head office of the AIMSF), about the activities of Muslim students in America, sometime later in June 1947, stated that the Muslim students had declared their goal in Pakistan when they were on board the “Marine Lynx” on their way to America for higher studies in July 1946. According to his report there were thirty Muslim students traveling by the ship by the ship while there were three hundred non-Muslim going to America by the same ship. During the journey they would discuss about political affairs in Indian and at times would get excited on Hindu-Muslim question. An incident, as stated by Tareen “did effect the relations of Hindu and Muslim passengers and the ship was naturally divided into Pakistan and Hindustan” (Indian Annual Register, 1937).

Meanwhile the confusion had become more confined in the Indian body politic. On February 20, 1947, Lord Attlee, the Prime Minister of Britain, terminated Lord Wavell and fixed June 1948 as the date of the transfer of power from British to the Indian people. In place of Wavell, Lord Mountbatten was announced to be the new Viceroy of

India, who after reaching Delhi in March 1947, took up the task of meeting India leaders for solution of the constitutional problem and eventually announced his plan of transfer of power on June 3, 1947.

The Muslim youth kept on closely watching the political developments. Side by side, they continued to fulfill their national duties. According to June 3 Plan, a referendum was to be held in Frontier Province and Sylhet (Mirza, 1998). The Quaid appealed to Muslims to work enthusiastically for it with hope and courage. Thus, the Muslim students in response to the Quaid's directive attended to their task fervently. The Acting General Secretary of the AIMSF, Ali Mukhtar, in a statement on June 4, 1947, called upon the Muslim students to attend their duty of the hour. With regard to referendum, he said every that "I feel sure that the Muslim students of Frontier would strain every nerve to see that the brave Pathans who have solidly stood behind the League, are allowed to give their free and free verdict on this issue (*Pakistan Times*, 10 November 1946).

Conclusion

The Muslim students, as travelled every corner of the province pleading for the cause of the League and Pakistan and were ultimately successful in drawing a large number of voters to the polls ---who gave their verdict in favour of Pakistan. When the newly born country - Pakistan came into being on August 14, 1947, the Muslim Youth faced numerable hardships and miseries boldly as true Pakistan. They volunteered themselves during the refugee relief work and worked with utmost devotion to allay the sufferings of the horror-stricken refugees. The creation of Pakistan in 1947 was accompanied by many crucial issues most traumatic of which was that of the refugee problem. The

students again played a distinctive role in this regard. They volunteered themselves during the refugee relief work and worked with at most devotion to allay the sufferings of the horror-stricken refugees. The PMSF trained students' batches for first aid and other duties. It issued appeals to the Muslim youth to donate bold for the wounded and sick refugees from East Punjab and other parts of India. The branch federation of different colleges organized relief work in accordance with the directions of the provincial body. They did commendable service in the Walton Refugee Camp. The month of September 1947 was very important for PMSF as it whole concentrated on the relief activities by collecting funds medicines, clothes, utensils and other necessitates of life. The President of the Federation, Zia-ul-Islam issued a lengthy appeal to the students in early September 1947, directing them to make every possible effort to lessen the sufferings of the displaced persons lying in the camps. In a worked, the students extended maximum cooperation to the camp's organizers. They toured a number of villages collecting food grains. One of their responsibilities at this hour of trial was to see.

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