

# Muslim League in Balochistan

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## Abstract

Muslim League is the founder political party of Pakistan. It is generally remarked that it got success in the establishment of a free home land for the Indian Muslims in the form of Pakistan in 1947 but could not keep it united and its Eastern wing was transformed into Bangla Desh in 1971. In the contemporary politics of Pakistan the unrest in Balochistan is raising many questions in the minds of political analysts. The aggressive politics by some Baloch organizations is speaking a language different from that of the federalists. The short political history of Muslim League in Balochistan provides basic information about Pakistan Movement in Balochistan.

## Focus

The chief focus of this paper remains upon the establishment of Muslim League in Balochistan in 1939<sup>1</sup> and that the initiative for it was taken by the people and the leadership of the league responded to their call. The people of Balochistan are as old and true Pakistanis as are the people of other parts of Pakistan

## Limitations

This study is restricted to the period 1920-40. Because it is the time that Muslim League got a political entry in Balochistan. Balochistan got significance in the politics of India when League demanded the provincial status for Balochistan and the introduction of the legal reforms during this period; it is

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<sup>1</sup> Qazi, I. (1975). *Mohammad, Quaid-e-Azam in My Life*. (Urdu), Islamabad, PK.: Mah-e- Nau. Here Qazi has discussed his meetings with the Qaid and the establishment of Muslim League in Balochistan

interesting that Congress was opposing it. This study is closed on the events of the Pakistan Resolution 1940.

### **Establishment**

Muslim League in Balochistan, if we see in reference to its establishment, appeared on the political scene by the political struggle of Quaid-e-Azam and Qazi Issa in 1939 when Qazi Issa met the Quaid in Bombay Race Course through Nawab Taleh Mohammad Khan Palen Puri<sup>2</sup> Here the Quaid asked Qazi about the existence of Muslim League in Balochistan, in response Kazi replied negatively. The Quaid asked Qazi to work for the establishment of the League in Balochistan. Kazi remembers that the first man who joined League at his hands was Akhund Zada Abdul Ali Khan,<sup>3</sup> a Balochistan Muslim.

League passed a resolution regarding their view point and sent it to the General Secretary, All India Muslim League, Delhi, on November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1939 for kind consideration.<sup>4</sup>

But it does not mean that it did not have the deep roots in the people and the general masses as it is generally perceived that the politics in Balochistan was under the heavy impact of Congress propaganda against League, declaring it as the King's Party, but by the struggle of Qazi and his mates League got reception from the general masses and very soon became the first party of the region.

Muslim League was always in the heart and blood of the freedom lovers of Balochistan, just as we find it in other areas of the undivided India, as Muslim League means the freedom from

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<sup>2</sup> Kauser, I. U. H. (1994). *Role of Balochistan in Freedom Movement*. (Urdu), Lahore, PK.: Research Institute of Pakistan, Punjab University, p. 24.

<sup>3</sup> Qazi has Discussed the Details in Ahang, Karachi, PK.: September 7, 1971. p.18.

<sup>4</sup> This letter was written and sent by the General Secretary, Balochistan Muslim League, and sent to The General Secretary, All India Muslim League, Park Mansions, Delhi Gate, Delhi. This letter is also published in, Balochistan Muslim League on the Problems and Reforms in Balochistan, by Dr. Riaz Ahmed, (Islamabad, NIHCR, 2005), p. 1.

the chains of slavery and the freedom movement means Muslim League, both are synonymous to each other. The people of Balochistan are the freedom lovers and the freedom fighters; they never accepted the British sovereignty, rather it was only through a treaty between the Khan of Kalat and the British government that they entered Balochistan. The Marri Bugti areas, Zhob and the areas taken from Afghanistan under Gundmac Treaty were also included in British Balochistan.<sup>5</sup>

The situation of political liberties in Balochistan was very much different and people could not reach even the news papers. Nawabzada Yousa Aziz Magsi wrote an essay, “The Cry of Balochistan”,<sup>6</sup> On this essay Sir Shamas Shah, the Prime Minister of Kalat State was very much annoyed and he issued warrants to arrest Magsi. He was arrested and imprisoned for one year and fined with Rs.12900/-. It was the time when the political parties, political meetings, processions and newspapers had become a regular feature of the daily life.

The establishment of Anjuman-e-Ittehad-e-Balochan was the beginning point of the formal political activities here. The establishment of this organization provided the forum for the freedom movement in this area. On 20<sup>th</sup> November 1031 Anjuman published a pamphlet as, “Shamas Gardi” to express the miseries, griefs and sorrows the Balochs were suffering at the hands of Shamas Shah.<sup>7</sup> Its main points are given below:-

- A.** Shamas Shah was ignoring the desires of the Balochs, hence the British Government should take a serious notice of it and fundamental rights be granted.
- B.** The Prince of Kalat should be elected and nominated according to the desires and wishes of the Balochs.

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<sup>5</sup> Bugti. A. M. (1995). *Balochistan-Political Culture and Tribal System*. Lahore: PK.: Fiction House, p. 155.

<sup>6</sup> Naseer. M. G. K. (1993). *Tareekh-e-Balochistan*. Quetta, PK.: Kalat Publishers, p. 467.

<sup>7</sup> For more details please see Nokein Daur, Quetta, 21<sup>st</sup> October and Balochi Dunya, Multan, June 1973.

C. The Ruler of Kalat should form a Constitutional Government and compose the constitutional Framework.<sup>8</sup> In the political history of Balochistan it was the first formal public demand for their rights and the government of their own.

All India Baloch Conference of December 27-29, 1932 at Jacobabad, is another historic development toward the political awakening and the demand for the rights. His Highness Mir Ali Nawaz Khan of Khair Pur was to preside this conference but due to his sickness he could not and his address was read by his Private Secretary and Khan Abdul Samad Khan Achakzai was unanimously elected to preside this conference. Upon the proposal of Samad Khan the title, "All India Baloch Conference was replaced by, Balochistan and All India Baloch Conference". This conference received much acceptance and was heavily attended by the representatives of Muslims. It included the delegates of Anjuman-e-Ittehad-Balochan, Balochistan, Sindh, Anjuman-e-Anees-e-Makran, Local Associations of Balochistan, Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Sindh, Majlis-e-Ahrar-e-Islam, Anjuman-e-Mujahideen-e-Islam, Jacobabad, Anjuman-e-Islamia, Shikarpur and many other associations.<sup>9</sup>

This conference may be very rightly declared as the foundation stone of "Conference Politics in Balochistan". It passed many resolutions to express its concern over the political, legal and economic conditions of the people of Balochistan. It also demanded the political liberties in Balochistan. In 1933, there were some other political developments in the politics of Balochistan, where Mir Ahmed Yar Khan replaced Mir Mohammad Azam and Mir Yousaf Ali Khan Magsi, replaced his elder brother Sardar Gul Mohammad Khan Zaib and became the chief of his tribe. At this moment Magsi floated the proposal before the State Council for the establishment of responsible

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<sup>8</sup> Janmohammad, (1989). *Essays on Baloch National Struggle in Pakistan*. Quetta, PK.: Gosh-e-Adab, p. 173.

<sup>9</sup> Naseer. Mir Gul khan, *Tarekh-e-Balochistan*. Opcit. p. 496.

Government, but unluckily this resolution could not be passed.<sup>10</sup>

Magsi continued his struggle and went to Lahore to start a newspaper; "AZAD" in collaboration with Mir Abdul Aziz Kurd. This paper motivated the freedom movement and generally demanded that:

- A. An elected assembly and responsible government should be established in Kalat State.
- B. Bolan, Quetta, Nushki and Naseerabad should also be annexed to the State of Kalat.
- C. Lasbella, Kharan, Marri, Bugti and Chaghi should be given back to Kalat.

These demands gave a new tide to the politics and freedom movement in Balochistan. It resulted in the arrest of Aziz Kurd, and was trialed by Shahi Jirga at Sibi in January 1934 and was sentenced imprisonment of three years; Samad Khan was trialed and sentenced imprisonment of five years.<sup>11</sup>

Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah always attached much significance to Balochistan, as the documents of Delhi proposals, Sir Mohammad Shafi's proposals and Quaid's fourteen points formula, all of these documents vividly reflect Quaid's concerns and interests for the People of Balochistan. Quaid-e-Azam was a great supporter of the rights of the people of Balochistan.<sup>12</sup> We observe that he, long before the establishment of Muslim League in Balochistan, raised the voice for the protection of the rights of Balochistan. He demanded that the provincial status should be given to Balochistan and the laws should be enforced in Balochistan as are in other provinces of India.<sup>13</sup> It was because the Quaid wanted the uplift of Balochistan. It also reflects that All India Muslim League had

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid. p. 479.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. pp. 480-81.

<sup>12</sup> Quresi, I. H. (1967). *A Short History of Pakistan*. Karachi, PK.: University of Karachi, pp. 200-02.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. p. 201.

the honor to be among the first who raised the voice for the rights of Balochistan.

Quaid's fourteen points were not appreciated by the Congress.<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, the reason does not operate by itself, application of Reason is not an automatic process, it is we the human beings that do it.<sup>15</sup> Congress did not apply the reasoning but these points gave a new spirit and life to the politics in Balochistan and created a pro Muslim League school of politics. These politicians were having roots in Aligarh, the genesis of Baloch Conference at Khan Garh present Jacobabad (1932). Quaid, during the deliberations of Round table conferences at London, which held three sessions in 1930, 31 and 32, advocated the case of the rights of the Muslims. The Congress refused to participate in the first session, and launched a civil disobedience movement. The Muslims stayed away from this movement which, in the words of Mohammad Ali, aimed not at the complete independence of India but at making the seventy millions of Indian Muslims dependants of Hindu Mahasaba. The Civil disobedience campaign was, however, called off as a result of the Irwin Gandhi Pact and Congress agreed to participate in the second session of the R.T.Conference with Gandhi as its only spokesman. But nothing concrete resulted from the conference except that a federal form of government was to be set up and that the N.W.F.P. was to be upgraded to the status of a Governor's Province.<sup>16</sup>

Quaid was taking practical interest in Balochistan. He emphasized upon Ghulam Bhaik Naurang to draft and present a resolution for the rights of provincial autonomy of Balochistan. In October 1937, the annual conference of All India Muslim League was held at Lucknow<sup>17</sup> "Speaking from the Presidential

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid. p. 201.

<sup>15</sup>Samadani, K. M. A. (2007). *Role of Judiciary in the Constitutional Crisis of Pakistan*. Lahore, PK.: Jahangir Books, p. 7.

<sup>16</sup> Qureshi, I. H., Opcit. pp. 203-4.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. p. 210.

Chair the Quaid declared that, “safeguards and settlements would be scraps of papers unless they are backed by power. Politics means power and not relying on cries of justice or fairplay or goodwill”, he strongly appealed to the Muslims to join the League and strengthen it as the Hindus had clearly shown that the Musalmans cannot expect any justice or fairplay at their hands.<sup>18</sup>“Quaid-e-Azam, Sir Sikander Hayat and Fazal-ul-Haq and other prominent Leaguers discussed the matter of the establishment of Muslim League in Balochistan. This conference approved a resolution to establish Muslim League in Balochistan. “Within a few months of the Lucknow session 170 new branches of the League were established”<sup>19</sup> Although Muslim League had the mass support and supporters in Balochistan, yet Muslim League was not formally established so far, the spade work for the establishment of Muslim League was done in this conference.

The year 1938 witnessed the first meeting of Muslim League at Anderson Road, Quetta in Balochistan. (It was before the formal establishment of the League in Balochistan) It was organized by Malik Jan Mohammad Khan. In fact, this event was not organized by All India Muslim League, rather it was the personal effort of Malik Jan Mohammad, who was a very committed worker and supporter of the League. He himself presided this session. He delivered a very emotional speech in favor of Muslim League. He emphasized upon the people to join the League. He said, “All of us are the Muslims, hence, we should join Muslim League. We should establish a branch of Muslim League right here in Quetta and we should spread it throughout Balochistan. What here I want to point out is that, “the process of the establishment of Muslim League was initiated by the people of Balochistan at their own and Muslim League responded to the call of the people”. This session of the League ended with the emotional slogans, Nara-e-Taqbeer, Allah-o-Akber, Muslim league Zinda Bad, Quaid-e-Azam Zinda

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. p. 210.

Bad”.<sup>20</sup> However, Muslim League in Balochistan was formally established in 1939.

The Aims and Objectives of Balochistan Provincial Muslim League Balochistan Muslim League adopted the following Constitution and Rules:-

**Name:** The association shall be called “Balochistan Provincial Muslim League”.

Aims and Objectives of the League: The aims and objects of the Balochistan Muslim League shall be:-

**A. All India Aims and Objectives**

- a) The establishment in India of full independence in the form of a federation of free democratic states in which the rights and interests of the Muslims and other minorities are adequately and effectively safeguarded in the constitution.
- b) To protect and advance the political, religious and other rights and interests of Indian Muslims.
- c) To promote friendly relations and unity between the Muslims and other communities of India.
- d) To maintain and strengthen brotherly relations between the Muslims of India and those of other countries.<sup>21</sup>

The above mentioned aims reflect the national and international approach of the Balochistan Muslim League, as it is not restricted to the local problems of Muslims of Balochistan rather it is addressing the problems of other religious minorities of Balochistan and extending it to the other nations and Muslims of other countries.

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<sup>20</sup> Kauser, I. U. H. Opcit. p. 23.

<sup>21</sup> Ahmed, R. (2005). *Balochistan Muslim League on the Problems and Reforms in Balochistan: A Collection of Documents*. Islamabad, PK.: NIHCR, p. 2.

## **B. Provincial Aims and Objectives**

- a) To promote education in the province.
- b) To bring the province in line with the other sister provinces of India
- c) To protect the social, political, religious and economic rights and interests of the Muslims in the province.
- d) To help the Muslims in seeking employment in the province.
- e) To help the Muslims in securing the local contracts.
- f) To look after the agricultural and mineral interest and produce of the province.
- g) To help the Muslims of the province in removing their just and (or) legal grievances.<sup>22</sup>

The above quoted objects of provincial Muslim League are of provincial and local nature. But, evidently, the top priority is given to the promotion of education, and it is not only for the Muslims but also for others rather the spread of education is without any discrimination of caste, creed, color or even religion. It shows the mature approach of the founders of the provincial league.

### **Working**

The first formal Conference of the League at Quetta was held on 10-11 June 1939. Qazi Issa presided at this historic session. Dr. Syed Fazal Shah and Sh. Karim ud din appreciated the services of the Qazi for the establishment of the League in Balochistan, and offered him the chair of president. Qazi, in his presidential address, highlighted the problems of the Muslims of Balochistan. He also criticized the secular nationalist sections of Balochistani politics. He emphasized the significance of liberty and freedom. He invited all the Muslims to join the Muslim League with the slogan, "If you are a Muslim you should join

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid. p. 2.

Muslim League". His invitation was supported by Maulvi Bukhari, Ghulam Nabi and Syed Zakir Ali Shah. The next day Maulvi Ghulam Farid gave a very academic address and emphasized upon the Muslims to join the League.<sup>23</sup> The telegram messages of sir Abdullah Haroon, Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan and Quaid-e-Azam were read where the local leadership and the people were felicitated at this event.

Qazi Issa was elected as the President of the Balochistan Branch of the League. He was further requested to compose the executive council to run the affairs and five members be sent to the center from Balochistan. The session approved the following resolutions.

1. The Civil disobedience movement of Ariya Samaj against the State of Hyderabad Deccan was condemned.
2. The organization of National Guards was to be formed
3. Balochistan Muslim League be a part of All India Muslim League.
4. The cruel behavior of the Congress Ministries towards Muslims was condemned.
5. A degree college and an engineering college be established in Balochistan.
6. Reforms in Balochistan be introduced to bring Balochistan at par with other provinces of India.<sup>24</sup>

These resolutions contained the local problems, where vividly the emphasis was on the development and promotion of education. The League was demanding the establishment of Degree College, and, Engineering College. Sympathies were also shown to the Muslims of the rest of India.

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan visited Quetta on 28<sup>th</sup> July 1939. He in his address emphasized upon the unity of the

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<sup>23</sup> Pasban, (June 15, 1939). Quetta: p .6.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. p. 7.

Muslims. He demanded the Constitutional Reforms and the provincial status for Balochistan. He said, “Muslim League is the only political party of the Indian Muslims. The chief object of the League is the protection of the rights of the Muslims and a sovereign separate homeland for them. All the Muslims should join the League to strengthen the Quaid”.<sup>25</sup> His speech was received with the slogans of Muslim League Zinda Bad and Quaid-e-Azam Zinda Bad. He also appreciated the services of the local leadership for the League including Nawab Mehrab Khan Bugti.

The Balochistan Muslim League was formally merged in the Muslim League in the September 1939 session of Delhi.<sup>26</sup> The delegation from Balochistan included Qazi Issa, Arbab Karam Khan, Malik Abdullah Khan, Abdul Ghafar Khan Achakzai and Nawab Mehrab Khan Bugti. Quaid appreciated the services of the delegate for Balochistan Muslim League in very warm words. His words encouraged them a lot and in the coming days they worked with more zeal.<sup>27</sup>

In March 1940 the annual session of the League was held at Lahore, where historic Pakistan Resolution was passed. Qazi Issa supported this resolution representing Balochistan and said, “This resolution reflects our desires and hearty feelings, all of us support it strongly, it is the voice of our hearts”.<sup>28</sup> During the stay at Lahore Quaid met Fazal Ahmed Ghazi, Malik Abdullah Jan Kasi and Fateh Mohammad Baloch and encouraged them for the movement for freedom.<sup>29</sup> While at Quetta Ghulam Mohammad Khan Tareen, Mohammad Usman Jomezai, Malik Shahjehan, Sardar Baz Mohammad Jomezai and other supported

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<sup>25</sup> Pasban, op.cit.

<sup>26</sup> Mah-e-Nau, (December 1975).

<sup>27</sup> Kauser, I. U. H. (1988). *Pakistan Movement in Balochistan*. Lahore, PK.: Maktaba-e-Aliya, pp. 27-28.

<sup>28</sup> Inqilab, (March 26, 1940). Lahore.

<sup>29</sup> Ghazi, F. A. (July 28, 1976). *Story of Freedom*. (Urdu), Sahil Quetta, p. 41.

the resolution.

After the Pakistan resolution the Pakistan movement gained more momentum all over India and similarly in Balochistan, and in the next few years the political scene in Balochistan was very much different. Muslim League and Pakistan were on the lips of the youth and the old equally. This situation disturbed the pro-Congress politicians, but perhaps they did not have many cards to play and the political swing went in the favor of Muslim League and Pakistan. Muslim League won the final round and Balochistan announced the decision in favor of Pakistan and became an inseparable part of the motherland Pakistan.

### **Conclusions**

1. Balochistan strategically and politically enjoys significance nationally, regionally and internationally. Congress had very firm grip on the politics in Balochistan in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and it was generally apprehended that it was the land of Congress, but Muslim League changed the entire scenario and Balochistan became an integral part of Pakistan.
2. The condition of political liberties in Balochistan was not very encouraging, the British administration had kept the land and the people in complete ignorance, absolutely devoid of political liberties, Congress had influence over the tribal Chieftains of the land. But the movement for freedom opened new doors of politics.
3. The first formal organization may be Anjuman-e-Ittehad-Balochan to begin the movement of rights and freedom; it was followed by other organizations and conferences. Balochistan and All India Baloch Conference provided the forum for the movement to demand the rights and freedom. The Cry of Balochistan by Yousaf Aziz Magsi and Shamas Gardi further raised the voices against the tyrannical rule and the stage was set for the Movement for complete freedom.

4. Quaid-e-Azam chose Qazi Issa to begin the work of the establishment of Muslim League in 1939, as in 1938 Malik Jan Mohammad (at his own) had held Rally at Anderson Road, Quetta to invite the people to All India Muslim League on the basis of Muslims in Muslim League, the initiative was taken by the people at their own and the leadership of the League followed it.
5. The people of Balochistan are as much Pakistani as are of other areas of Pakistan. Islam and Pakistan is in their heart and soul, no one should suspect it, and should remain clear about their patriotism. Today their voice is for the rights and development, which every citizen of Pakistan should have.
6. The political problems of Balochistan should be handled in a political way. Dialogue is the only way by which the problems can be handled in a peaceful way. The use of force may increase the problems instead of settling the affairs.