

Development of Pakistan Movement in Sindh during the Ministry of Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah 1942-1947

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Abstract:

The year 1942 is very crucial in the history of the Pakistan Movement as well as the Freedom Movement. It was because of the Japanese advance from the East towards British India in early 1942 that Prime Minister Winston Churchill decided to send Sir Stafford Cripps, Leader of the House of Common, to India. This is known as the Cripps Mission which was meant for the purpose of getting support for the British in their War efforts from “all the forces of Indian life”.¹ The need for this arose for the British Government because of the Congress leaders’ ambivalent attitude in World War II. Sir Cripps came with a well prepared statement which was published on 30 March 1942 in India.² In this statement it was professed by the British Government that after the end of World War II the British Indian Government would hold elections to the provincial assemblies for the purpose of deciding the future of the country in consultation with all the elected members representing different segments of political opinions.³ This declaration was not acceptable to the Indian National Congress led by M.K.Gandhi who wanted unilateral surrender by the British in favour of Congress in Government in which no other political party should have any share. But the British were not ready to accept this as they thought that they were responsible to all the major communities in India particularly Hindus and the Muslims. Instead the British Government decided to use force and crushed the Civil Disobedience Movement initiated by the Congress leaders in August 1942 by arresting Gandhi and other Congress leaders. Thus this Movement was crushed by iron hand of the Government. This created a political gap which was filled up by the Muslim League or other political parties in forming the provincial governments in various provinces. All these factors did help in the development of Pakistan Movement in 1942. Allah Bakhsh Ministry in Sindh was dismissed in September 1942 by the

Governor because of his pro-Gandhi stance. The Governor also asked Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah to form a new Ministry. The new Ministry in Sindh was formed in Oct 1942 and continued to function till the creation of Pakistan on 14 Aug 1947. Sir Ghulam Hussain's Ministry did play a pivotal role in further popularizing the Pakistan Movement. All these aspects are discussed in this paper.

The Cripps Mission failed to get support from the Congress in War efforts and on 12 April 1942 it left British India for England.⁴ On Gandhi's guidance, the Congress Working Committee in its resolution of 14 July 1942, demanded that the British should leave India and hand over power to Congress representatives only so that the Indian armed forces could be stationed in different parts of the world during the World War only under the guidance of the Congress. Otherwise, the Resolution threatened, the Congress would start a non-violent movement "under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi" to achieve its goal of Indian freedom.⁵ By this statement it was a clear message for All India Muslim League led by Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah that Congress does not give any kind of weightage to the Muslims as a separate entity or their concept of Pakistan. Quaid-i-Azam and other leaders of the Muslim League equally well understood all this negative behavior of the Congress leaders. Quaid-i-Azam and Muslim League were very firm in their demand for Pakistan and they were not going to surrender before Congress.

Opposing this demand of the Congress, Quaid-i-Azam issued a press statement to the Foreign Press on 31 July 1942 by which he said: "The latest decision of the Congress Working Committee on 14 July 1942, resolving to launch a mass movement if the British do not withdraw immediately from India is the culminating point in the policy and programme of Mr. Gandhi and his Hindu Congress of blackmailing the British and coercing them to concede a system of Government and transfer power to that Government which would establish Hindu Raj immediately under the aegis of the British bayonet thereby throwing the Muslims and other minorities and interests at the mercy of the Congress Raj".⁶ This statement of the Quaid upset the entire Hindu Congress leadership

particularly C. Rajagopalachari, who was very close to Jinnah. Consoling Rajagopalachari, Gandhi wrote to him that this statement of Jinnah “should not upset” him.⁷ When the British did not accept the Congress demand, the Congress started Civil Disobedience Movement in August 1942 by passing “Quit India” Resolution. The British Government acted swiftly and arrested Gandhi and other top leaders of the Congress and sent them to jail.⁸ Gandhi was arrested and shifted to Aga Khan Palace in Poona. Responding to these arrests of the Congress leaders, Jinnah issued a press statement on the evening of 8 August 1942 in which he said: “I deeply regret that the Congress has finally declared war and has launched a most dangerous mass movement in spite of numerous warnings and advice from various individuals, parties and organizations in this country”.⁹ L.S. Amery, Secretary of State for India, termed the Congress mass Civil Disobedience “a deliberate campaign to sabotage” the British “war effort”.¹⁰ In his statement of 15 August 1942, Rajagopalachari appealed to Jinnah for help at a time when entire Congress leadership is in trouble. Jinnah called a meeting of the AIML Working Committee on 16 August 1942 at his Bombay residence and discussed the matter for two and a half hours, after which, Jinnah in a special interview said: “The Muslim League would join a provisional war-time Government if it had equal voice with Hindus and assurance of Pakistan after the war. It would also consider any suggestion for a solution from any authoritative source”.¹¹

The British Government wanted to get support of Jinnah and his All India Muslim League which had emerged most popular party after the Congress. On this basis Jinnah agreed to allow the provincial Muslim League leaders in the Muslim majority provinces to form their own Ministries, if they were asked to do by the British Government. In this scenario the Ministries in the provinces of Sindh, NWFP, Bengal and Assam were formed by the Muslim League leaders which did help promote the cause of Pakistan Movement during the War years. Here in this paper I will be discussing only the role and function of the Muslim League Ministry in Sindh headed by Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah which was formed in October 1942 and continued in office not only during the War years but

up to the creation of Pakistan in August 1942. In this way Sindh became the vanguard of the Pakistan Movement during 1942-1947 and it was on this basis that Karachi was selected as the Capital of Pakistan which, however, was later shifted to Islamabad by Gen. M. Ayub Khan in 1960. For the purpose of this paper the role and function of Sir Ghulam Hussain's Ministry in Sindh for the cause of Pakistan is the subject matter of this paper.

The All India Muslim League headed by Quaid-i-Azam was against the Congress Civil Disobedience Movement. So was the case with most of the Muslims who formed about 90 million in British India, a fact which was also mentioned by W.Churchill, the British Prime Minister, in one of his statements issued on 10 September 1942.¹² Allah Bakhsh was the Chief Minister of Sindh. When Gandhi was arrested, he issued a number of statements in support of the Congress Civil Disobedience Movement and in sympathy with Gandhi, a matter disliked by the British Government.¹³ Therefore, the Sindh Governor dismissed Allah Bakhsh Ministry in September 1942 and asked Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah to form the Ministry. Allah Bakhsh was dismissed because he was not only in connivance with the Congress leaders but also wanted to create a food crisis in the province so that the British Government face food shortage in the country.¹⁴ Dismissal of Allah Bakhsh sent a wave of pleasure all over Sindh province. A number of resolutions in this regard by the local Muslim League branches in almost all the districts of Sindh thanking the Governor in this regard were also passed. A Branch of Muslim League in Hyderabad in its meeting held on 12 Oct. 1942 not only congratulated the Governor of Sindh for this action but also showed that the Muslims of Sindh were strongly opposed to the Congress Civil Disobedience Movement and were fully committed to Jinnah's Pakistan Scheme.¹⁵

The Governor also asked Sir Hidayatullah to prove his majority in the Sindh Assembly as was required under the Government of India Act 1935. On this Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah proved his majority in the Sindh Assembly on 14 Oct 1942. He enjoyed the support of 29 MPs out of 34 in the Sindh Assembly.¹⁶ Thus Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah

joined as Chief Minister of Sindh as part of Jinnah's strategy to form such government during the World War II. On 19 Oct 1942 Khan Bahadur M.A.Khuhro and M.H.Gazdar, the two Muslim League nominees joined the Ghulam Hussain Cabinet.¹⁷ Khuhro was PWD Minister while Guzdar was Irrigation Minister. They joined the Sindh Cabinet with the consent of Jinnah. Guzdar was Chairman of the Karachi City Muslim League while Khuhro was President of the Sindh Muslim League as well as Leader of the House in the Sindh Assembly.¹⁸

On 23 October 1942, Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah announced that he has joined the Muslim League.¹⁹ On this occasion he issued the following statement:

I had invited the co-operation of my Hindu friends in the Assembly both in the interests of their own community and also of the province as a whole. It should be a matter of great satisfaction to all that two of these Hindu friends have now joined my Cabinet. It is equally a matter for considerable regret, however, that some of them have taken up an attitude of antagonism. The two Hindu Ministers are now being subject to picketing and various other forms of pressure. In view of these circumstances and in the interest of my own community, which have also a claim on me, I have decided to join the Muslim League. I need scarcely say, however, that this action on my part will in no way whatever affect my attitude towards the Hindu community and I may assure them that their interests will be duly safeguarded.²⁰

Actually Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah was an old Muslim Leaguer, but two years ago the Sindh Provincial Muslim League Working Committee objected to his continuance as member of the Muslim League because he was Leader of the Muslim League Parliamentary Party.²¹ Therefore, he resigned from the Muslim League. Now, after becoming the Chief Minister, he again joined the Muslim League. The two Hindu Ministers who joined his Cabinet were: 1) Dr. Hemandas, 2) Rai Saheb Gokaldas. Some other Ministers like Pir Illahi Bakhsh, Minister for Education, were also expected to join the Muslim League soon.²²

Various resolutions by local Muslim League meetings in a number of cities of Sindh were passed welcoming Hidayatullah's joining the Muslim League.²³ On 31 December 1942, Sir Hugh Dow, Governor of Sindh wrote to Lord Linlithgow that the position of Sir Ghulam Hussain's Ministry in Sindh Assembly has become "strong". It was also reported by the Governor that PWD Minister, Pirzada, "who was a sort of personal assistant to Allah Baksh" has changed his position and "decided to join the Muslim League".²⁴

British Government of India reported to the Secretary of State for India in March 1943 that "The Muslim League is strengthening its position in what may be called "Pakistan" Provinces -- those where Muslims are in a majority and especially in the way of asserting control over Ministries; thereby giving further evidence of its following the tactics of the Congress."²⁵ This was because of Quaid-i-Azam's moves in the four non-Congress provinces of the Punjab, Bengal, Assam, and Sindh to persuade the Muslim members of the provincial assemblies of these provinces to join the Muslim League. The first success in this way was achieved in Sindh and then followed by other aforementioned provinces.²⁶

There was a food shortage in the country in general and worse situation in Bengal in 1943. Lord Wavell, the Viceroy, called the four Chief Ministers of Bengal, NWFP, Punjab, and Sindh to meet him in Delhi to devise the measures to tackle the food crises in the country as most of the grain was supplied by these provinces. Such a meeting took place in Delhi on 16 November 1943 in which Kh. Nazimuddin, Chief Minister of Bengal, Nawabzada Malik Khizer Hyat Khan, Chief Minister from the Punjab, Sardar Aurangzeb Khan, Chief Minister of NWFP, and Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah, Chief Minister of Sindh participated. This meeting was presided over by the Viceroy, Lord Wavell. In his opening address Wavell apprised them of the gravity of the situation in the whole country. He also apprised them of the general food situation in the world and at all-India level. Then he called upon the respective Chief Ministers to inform him of the food situation in their provinces. Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah informed about the satisfactory food situation in Sindh and controlled situation of

prices in his province. Wavell “admired the way in which Sind had controlled prices”.²⁷

After this, certain Hindu members of the Sindh Cabinet feared that as if the Chief Minister and the Muslim members of his Cabinet would act against the interest of the minorities in Sindh. Assuring them in this regard, Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah and other Muslim Ministers in the Sindh Cabinet gave the Hindu Ministers their “solemn assurance” that they would not do anything affecting minority interests without consultation with their Hindu colleagues.²⁸ Despite his joining the Muslim League, Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah assured on 1 November 1942 that “fair treatment would be meted out to all parties in the province”.²⁹ Usually the provincial ministries continued up to the elections which were held towards the end of 1945 and early 1946, but Sir Ghulam Hussain served as Chief Minister till 14 August 1947 because the Ministry served the interests of the masses and emerged successful in the elections. This goes to the credit of Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah and his colleagues that they worked very hard to popularize the cause of Pakistan. This was a period when the Pakistan Movement became at its peak in Sindh.

This does not mean that the Ministry of Sir Ghulam Hussain did not face any challenge. As a matter of fact, there were a number of challenges faced by him during his Chief Ministership both internally and externally. First challenge he faced was from G.M.Sayed, President of Sindh Muslim League. This challenge came after Dec 1943 when the Pakistan Movement was at its peak. The differences between Ghulam Hussain and G.M.Sayed came to limelight after the Karachi session of the AIML held in December 1943.

The Karachi session of AIML was successfully held on 24-26 December 1943 in which between 15000 to 60,000 persons, mostly Muslims participated.³⁰ The session was held with much preparation on the part of the Muslim League in collaboration with various local Muslim organizations including the Muslim National Guards.³¹ For instance, at a

meeting of Karachi Muslim League National Guards held on 19 Dec. 1943 it was decided to present a pledge of allegiance written in blood to Quaid-i-Azam that they would sacrifice their life for the cause of Pakistan. Thirty Muslim National Guards “volunteered to contribute their blood for the pledge”.³² The Session was presided over by Quaid-i-Azam. Three Chief Ministers from three Muslim majority provinces, Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah from Sindh, Malik Khizar Hayat Khan Tiwana from the Punjab and Sardar Aurangzeb Khan from the NWFP (KPK) participated in this session. This session was organized under the chairmanship of G.M.Syed, Chairman of the Reception Committee being President of the Sindh Muslim League with the support of Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah, the Chief Minister, and other Muslim League workers.³³ About one hundred Muslim leaders from all parts of British India participated in this session.³⁴

On the first day, Quaid-i-Azam was taken through the city in a procession consisting of about 4000 Muslims, including the delegates, visitors, National Guards from the Punjab, UP, NWFP (KP), Baluchistan and Sindh. Various local bodies also participated in the procession. A number of arches named after various Muslim League Ministers and leaders were erected on the route. The decorated Cart in which Quaid-i-Azam, was seated was drawn by 31 camels, ridden by Muslims wearing Arab costume. Enroute the slogans such as “Allah-o-Akbar”, “Quaid-i-Azam Zindabad”, “Muslim League Zindabad”, and “Pakistan Zindabad” were shouted.³⁵

At this session Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah delivered a marvelous short speech. Actually Hussain Imam moved fourth resolution at this session by which AIML’s concern was expressed regarding the “shortage and rising prices of all necessities of life throughout the country” which was allegedly caused by the wrong “policy pursued by the Central government during the last four years”.³⁶ Speaking in support of this resolution Sir Ghulam Hussain said that the Sindh Government was doing everything for the protection of the rights of the *kisans* to the extent that “landless cultivator got 50 per cent of the produce for himself”. This was not done in other provinces. Charging the Federal Government for the food

crisis, he blamed: "Who is responsible for this man-made famine in India? It is the irresponsible Government at the Centre that is responsible for this famine". He also explained that his government opposed a number of taxes which the federal government wanted to impose on the poor tillers of land. Continuing, he said: "We cannot sacrifice the majority of the poor farmers of Sindh at the cost of pleasing the Centre." During the course of his speech he also explained that when Lord Wavell, the Viceroy, came on his recent visit to Karachi he was informed of all these matters and concerns of the Sindh Government. He also explained that during our government "we did not care much for big landlords". He was very happy to announce that in the recent famine crisis in Bengal his Ministry made a big present of Rs. 200,000/- to Bengal "in the form of reduced prices of rice sold to them".³⁷ Sir Kh. Nazimuddin, the Bengal Premier, endorsed these remarks of Sir Hidayatullah.³⁸ Towards the end of this session the Organizing Committee thanked Sir Hidayatullah for helping in holding this session in Karachi.

There was another important issue during 1943 and that was the murder of Allah Bakhsh on 14 May 1943, while he was travelling in a Tonga in his hometown of Shikarpur. This issue was also faced by the Ministry of Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah because M.A.Khuhro, the Education Minister, in his cabinet, was doubted by the Government "to have a good deal to do with the murder of Allah Bakhsh".³⁹ The reasons of his death are shrouded in mystery with the exception of one scenario and that was that he was opposed to the creation of Pakistan.⁴⁰ However, the issue could not rise because no evidence was brought to notice of the police or the court. The other reason was the anti-Congress and pro-Pakistan feeling had emerged very strong amongst the people of Sindh particularly amongst the Muslims. Most of the Muslims belonging to his own constituency had turned out against him because of his pro-Congress attitude and anti-Quaid-i-Azam statement. His other weakness was that he had become a Congress tout against the Muslim League and had received a lot of funds from the Congress. It was in connivance with the Congress leaders and Maulana Abul Kalam, the Congress

President, that immediately after when Pakistan Resolution was passed in March 1940, he arranged All India Azad Muslim Conference in Delhi on 27-30 April 1940 just to counter the Pakistan Scheme of All India Muslim League.⁴¹ In this Conference representatives of Jamiat-ul-Ulamai Hind, Majlis-i-Ahrar-ul-Islam, All India Momin Conference, All India Shia Political Conference, Khudai Khidmitgars, Krishak Paraja Party, Anjuman-i-Watan, Baluchistan, All India Muslim Majlis and Jamiat Ahle Hadis participated.⁴² Funds for arrangement of this Conference were provided by the Congress but it failed to create any impact against the Muslim League whose Pakistan slogan had advanced and had become very popular.⁴³ Because of these reasons he could not win his sympathizers when he was assassinated in May 1943. In the elections of 1946 all these parties were wiped out and it was only All India Muslim League's Pakistan cause which did win with a thumping majority of 90 per cent voters.⁴⁴

Since 1944 Hidayatullah faced stiff bickering from the Muslim League camp itself. This was mainly headed by G.M.Syed, President of the Sindh Muslim League, who was charged by the Sindh Premier as acting in the hands of his enemies in the Congress camp. Syed created a lot of difficulties for Hidayatullah which were complained to Quaid-i-Azam. In some matters the Quaid agreed with him, while on others he did not interfere with the decisions of the Sindh Cabinet or those of the Sindh Muslim League Council or the Sindh Muslim League Parliamentary Board. It was on minimum matters that Jinnah intervened because he was heading the party at the all-India level as its President with full democratic norms allowing the local and provincial units to function with full democratic norms keeping in view the opinion of their respective people. Wherever Hidayatullah erred he warned him, but when he was right he supported him. Mainly Hidayatullah remained loyal not only to the Quaid but to the cause of Pakistan. It was because of these bickerings that Jinnah was ultimately convinced to endorse the recommendations of the Sindh Muslim League Parliamentary Board not to award the League ticket to G.M.Syed for the coming elections to Sindh Assembly in February 1946. For these reasons Syed even turned out not

only against Jinnah, but even against the idea of Pakistan. Continuing the same policy after the creation of Pakistan, Syed championed the cause of Sindhu Desh. He maintained this posture until his death on 25 April 1995. The federal government in Pakistan faced a lot of difficulties in handling him.

The issue with which differences between Syed and Hidayatullah deepened related to Shikarpur bye-election campaign in December 1944. Syed was supporting Ghulam Nabi Pathan, where the Premier Hidayatullah was supporting his younger son for this bye-election. The editorial of Daily Gazette, Karachi supported the candidature of Premier's son and termed Syed's stance unreasonable.⁴⁵ In his letter of 29 December 1944 he informed Jinnah: "I have no doubt that Mr. Syed must be writing all sorts of false stories to you to save his face now. He is not only a dictator, but is above all law, and is a law into himself. But no action has yet been taken by you against him for his unconstitutional behavior during this whole affair."⁴⁶ Gazdar was a Minister in the Cabinet of the Sindh Premier. He was actually Syed's man. His attitude with the Premier was also not genuine. Writing about him in the same letter, Hidayatullah wrote: "I cannot, however, tolerate Mr. Gazdar for a moment longer now. In spite of his assurances to you and to me, he is still intriguing against me. They are trying to stab me very soon, and so I must get rid of him at once. I cannot allow a disloyal and treacherous colleague with me in the Cabinet." Regarding Syed he further wrote: "It is not my concern now what the Syed party are doing as regards K.B. Maulabux. They have put a dummy candidate, the brother of Pir Pagaro, for reasons best known to them". Lastly, he urged upon Jinnah: "Kindly reply to me at once".⁴⁷ Responding to this call, Jinnah replied on 2 January 1945 that recently he had settled certain matters in Delhi meeting in the presence of Syed, Liaquat Ali Khan and Hidayatullah. Jinnah advised Hidayatullah to act according to the arrangements settled in this meeting.⁴⁸ At the same, Jinnah told Hidayatullah: "You can understand that I cannot interfere with the normal functioning of the Central Parliamentary Board or the Committee of Action, as was acknowledged by all at our last meeting in Delhi". At

the same Jinnah assured Hidayatullah: “As regards the Muslim League Party in the Sindh Assembly, you are its Leader, and so long as you enjoy the Party’s confidence, you can handle the question regarding Mr. Gazdar in such a manner as you may think proper, and this position of yours was recognized by all the others who were present at our last meeting”.⁴⁹

Hidayatullah also participated in the AIML Legislators’ Convention held in Delhi on 7-9 April 1946 presided over by the Quaid-i-Azam in which more than 400 Muslim Legislators from all parts of British India participated. As desired by Quaid-i-Azam, H.S.Suhrawardy moved a resolution by which ambiguity regarding the Lahore Resolution of 23 March 1940 was removed. Suhrawardy’s resolution demanded: “That the zones comprising Bengal and Assam in the North-East and the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan in the North-West of India, namely Pakistan zones where the Muslims are in a dominant majority, be constituted into a sovereign independent State and that an unequivocal undertaking be given to implement the establishment of Pakistan without delay”.⁵⁰ Speaking in support of this resolution, Hidayatullah, congratulated the Muslims of the minority provinces for joining their Muslim brethren in their struggle for Pakistan. He also declared: “There was no Muslim who did not believe in Pakistan. Even Malik Khizar Hayat Khan and Dr. Khan Sahib were not against it”. He also declared that “90 percent Muslims were with the League and were determined to achieve Pakistan”. He also made it clear: “We shall not accept anything less than Pakistan. Every man in Sindh will resist the imposition of a government unacceptable to Muslims with all possible means”.⁵¹

Elections of 1946

At the time of announcement of holding of provincial elections, all the Provincial Ministries were dissolved so that free and fair elections could be held. The Ministry of Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah was also dissolved. As leader of the Muslim League he also participated in the elections and won the election on the Muslim League ticket. The provincial elections were completed by the end of February 1946. The

election results for the Sindh Provincial Assembly members were as follows:⁵²

Muslim League	28
Congress	22
Nationalist Muslim	3
Muslim G.M.Syed party	4
Europeans	3
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Total	60

Since Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah was leader of the majority party, he was called by the Governor to form the Ministry.⁵³

Other functions and issues of the Hidayatullah Ministry 1946-1947

On 12 March 1946 Chief Minister Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah presented the Budget of the Government of Sindh for the year 1946-1947. The specialty of this Budget was that it was a surplus budget. A gross revenue of Rs. 2,13,16,000 was shown surplus. Of this 175 lakhs was to be transferred to the Land Revenue Equalization Fund and Rs. 35 lakhs to the post-war development plan for the year thus leaving a net surplus of Rs. 3,16,000. The estimated revenue was Rs. 8,03,29,000 and the estimated expenditure for the year was Rs. 8,00,13,000 which also included the contributions to the equalization and post-war development projects.

Another specialty of this Budget was that the expected receipts and expenditures for the year 1944-45 were balanced with the actual receipts of Rs. 8,80,07,000. A number of grants from the Central Government to the Sindh Government were reduced such as in the areas of police, development of roads, and some other departments. The major decrease was to the police department which went up to 50 per cent. This shortage was skillfully met by the Chief Minister and his team by

pooling resources from the revenue and taxes collected from the province. A sizeable grant was fixed for the police department and for the development of roads and official buildings in different districts. It was also shown in the budget that wheat from the farmers will be purchased at the controlled prices and the surplus wheat will be exported to other provinces as was done in the previous year 1944-45.

Government of Sindh planned to increase the salary structure of the employees of the whole province in the light of price hike after the end of World War II. For this purpose an amount of Rs. 60 lakhs or more was intended to be spent for the welfare of the employees.⁵⁴

Sindh Legislative Assembly also passed a number of Bills and Acts which related to different matters for the uplift of the province. Two bills for establishment of a University and for improvement of Sindh Muslim College were also passed. In this way it was for the first time that a provincial government decided to establish first University in the province which showed the will of Sir Ghulam Hussain for the improvement of the standard of education.⁵⁵

The Cabinet Mission consisting of Lord Pethick-Lawrence, Secretary of State for India, Sir Stafford Cripps, President of the Board of Trade, and Mr. A.B. Alexander, First Lord of Admiralty landed at the Karachi airport on 23 March 1946.⁵⁶ The Mission reached Palam aerodrome, Delhi on 24 March.⁵⁷ On 4 April 1946 a meeting of Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah, Sindh Premier, was arranged in Delhi with Lord Wavell, the Viceroy and Members of Cabinet Delegation in which various questions regarding Pakistan and Sindh were asked from him. In this meeting Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah made it clear that since the elections of 1937, Jinnah had been trying to get cooperation from the Congress Party and Gandhi but he failed. Instead, the Congress wanted to crush the Muslim League by supporting or bribing those Muslims like Maulana Azad or Dr. Khan Sahib in NWFP (now KPK) or G.M.Syed in Sindh. Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah made it clear that “the consequence had been that Muslims were now united as never before, and had come to believe that the only solution was

Pakistan”.⁵⁸ As leader of the Muslim League in Sindh he was committed to follow the official policy of Muslim League guided by Quaid-i-Azam.⁵⁹

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, President of the Indian National Congress, who was aspiring to become first Prime Minister of India after attainment of freedom, disliked this popularity and sound footing of Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah. These feelings of Nehru were expressed on 10 July 1946 at a Press Conference in Bombay. While he showed his design of solo flight in the coming struggle to be led by the Congress by ignoring the Muslim League and all the Minorities of British India including the Muslims, he showed his ill will to remove Hidayatullah out of his office of Chief Minister by some way or the other so that popularity of the Pakistan Movement in the Sindh province could be checked.⁶⁰ Nehru planned to push Hidayatullah “out of his job”.⁶¹ On 5 September 1946, Pandit Nehru wrote to Wavell, the Viceroy, and charged Sindh Governor of favouring Hidayatullah, a point to which Wavell disagreed and said that the Governor of Sindh was performing his duty in a fair manner.⁶² The point of dispute between Nehru and Wavell was that Nehru on the one hand was pleading that vote of no-confidence against Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah should be allowed to be moved by the Governor, but Wavell’s perception was that both “the parties are equal”. If this situation is allowed to happen there will be chaos in the Sindh province. In this situation when the British Government is involved to settle the matter between the Muslim League and the Congress disturbance in any province would be disastrous. Moreover, an extreme communal situation has arisen in the country after the “Great Calcutta Killings” on 16-17 August 1946 Direct Action Day, the British Government is not ready to go for election in any province because this will invite an open fight between the Muslims and Hindus resulting into chaos and disturbance which will go beyond the control of the Government.⁶³ In this scenario the Government was not ready to go for fresh elections in any province.⁶⁴ This situation was further confirmed by a Note of Turnbull and Sir D. Monteath on 7 Sept 1946.⁶⁵ It was further affirmed in these Minutes that Hidayatullah’s Ministry is very popular. It was also stated that

“Sindh is a Muslim majority province where Muslims are 3.2 out of 4.5 millions”. Any move to install Congress Ministry will create law and order situation in the province.⁶⁶ This situation became so important that when Prime Minister Attlee was informed of this by Lord Pethick-Lawrence, he said that it would be “madness to have an election in Sindh of all places at the present moment”.⁶⁷

The other option was the formation of a coalition Ministry in Sindh. But for this the Muslim League Ministry of Hidayatullah was not ready to form a coalition Ministry with the Congress Members of the Assembly. Thus an interesting situation developed similar to that of 1937 when the Congress Ministry was not ready to form coalition Ministry with the UP Assembly members of the Muslim League. Reporting to the Viceroy in this connection, Sir F. Mudie, Governor of Sindh, to Lord Wavell, the Viceroy in his letter of 8 January 1947 wrote: “Now they say that they will not agree to a coalition in Sindh unless Coalition Governments are formed in the Congress Provinces as well”. This point also figured on 13 Dec 1946 when Lord Pethick-Lawrence, Secretary of State for India, had his conversation with Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan at the India Office, London. Jinnah and Liaquat said in this meeting that “they were quite willing to do so in the Muslim majority Provinces provided similar Coalitions were set up in the Hindu majority Provinces”.⁶⁸ The Governor rightly noted: “This was also Jinnah’s line when I saw him”.⁶⁹ This change of mind was based on realities favourable to the achievement of Pakistan which appeared eminent. This situation developed because of tense situation in Bihar and some parts of UP where the Muslim lives were endangered. A number of Muslim villages in Bihar had been burnt alive by the Hindus which had far reaching effect at the all India level.⁷⁰ This had deep impact on all the Muslims living in all the provinces but particularly in Sindh and other Muslim majority provinces.⁷¹ On 13 December 1946 Jinnah was interviewed by D. Maller of the BBC. During this interview Jinnah expressed the strong need for the establishment of Pakistan in these words:

We want the division of India into Hindustan and Pakistan because that is the only practical solution, which will secure

freedom for both Hindus and Muslims and the achievement of stable and enduring governments of Hindustan and Pakistan, which I am confident, will settle down as friends and neighbours like Canada and the United States and other sovereign States both in the North and South America.⁷²

Jinnah added that he wants division of the subcontinent into “Hindu India and Muslim India” because “we differ in our history, culture, language, architecture, music, law, jurisprudence, calendar and our entire social fabric and code of life.”⁷³ Jinnah also added that this will give Pakistan “opportunity to develop in accordance with their own culture and ideology so as to contribute to the advancement of the world as a whole.”⁷⁴ The cause of Pakistan was further explained by Jinnah in his press statement issued on 13 December 1946 from London on the eve of his departure for home.⁷⁵ On 10 Feb 1947, Mudie also reported to the Viceroy that Ghulam Hussain was totally in favour of Jinnah’s stance to boycott the Constituent Assembly, while Khuhro’s stance was wavering. Thus Sindh Muslims were generally following the line of Jinnah and Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah.⁷⁶ It was because of these reasons that when Lord Mountbatten joined as the new Viceroy in place of Wavell in March 1947, Nehru wanted “dismissal” of Mudie as well as Hidayatullah from Sindh immediately for which Mountbatten, despite his leanings towards the Congress, was not ready.⁷⁷

When Prime Minister Attlee declared in the Parliament on 20 Feb 1947 that by 1948 the British will transfer power to the Indians, it also had deep impact on Sindh and its people. While Khuhro and G.M.Sayed wavered in their responses, Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah was strongly of the view that Muslims of Sindh as whole were for Pakistan.⁷⁸

Effects of Direction Action Day, 16 August 1946 on Sindh

On the call of Quaid-i-Azam Direct Action Day was fully observed throughout Sindh in all the major cities of the province including Karachi, Hyderabad, Sukkur, Shikarpur and Larkana. In the gatherings and meetings arranged in these cities, though held peacefully, demand was made that under the

leadership of Quaid-i-Aza *Jihad* should be started to achieve Pakistan. Though the meetings passed away peacefully as planned by the Provincial Government, but the Hindus in general were perturbed about safety of their lives.⁷⁹

For four days (16-19 August) the situation was very tense particularly in the provincial capital city of Calcutta in which Hindus and Muslims clashed with each other. There was a lot of looting and arson of each other's shops and houses. Thus lawlessness prevailed in the city for which Jinnah called upon the people to be peaceful and avoid bloodshed. The Muslim League leaders peacefully led their protest on 16 August in the main bazaar of Calcutta which was disrupted by the Hindu 'goondas', resulting in resistance by the Muslim National Guards. Thus Hindu-Muslim clashes broke out in the city which continued for four days in which, according to a newspaper report, between 2000-3000 people were killed and thousands were injured.⁸⁰ This was done despite the evacuation and rescue work done by the Army. Savage butchery and maiming took place in Calcutta riots. Living in the heart of a zone where murder, loot and arson raged for four days the terror-stricken cries of victims were heard of their being maimed and stabbed. The Army personnel could not do much as well-armed hooligans surrounded the area. Equipped with plentiful supplies of petrol from a pump the owner of which had abandoned it in his flight for safety, the mob carried out a campaign of arson. Buildings were set on fire and fed liberally with looted motor fuel. Fortunately, the concrete structure often resisted the flees till the heavily over-worked fire brigade could arrive. It was late on 19 August that the British and Indian soldiers were able to restore peace in the city.⁸¹ Though there were still stray cases of arson in certain parts of the city reported on 22 August, the situation had improved tremendously. Police and Military were still on patrol duty.⁸² As per requirements of the League resolution, the Muslim leaders of Bengal and Assam renounced their titles conferred on them by the British.⁸³

The killings in Calcutta also had deep effect on the Hindu leadership but their response was different. They were

concerned with the Hindu lives instead of the Muslims. For this they blamed the Governors of the concerned provinces for having failed to save the Hindu lives. Writing in this connection Sardar Patel in a letter to Sir Stafford Cripps on 19 Oct 1946 wrote that the Governor of Bengal did nothing when this Calcutta Great Incident happened. This incident was repeated at Noakhali at a much larger scale. Still the Governor of Bengal did nothing to save the Hindu lives. He also indicated that “now what is happening in Eastern Bengal is much worse and Calcutta incident pales into insignificance before Noakhali.”⁸⁴ He also apprehended that the same condition may not happen in Sindh.⁸⁵ The large number of Muslims killed at the hand of Hindu goons was not the concern of Congress or Hindu leadership.

Acceptance of 3 June 1947 Partition Plan

The AIML Council in its meeting held in Delhi on 9 June accepted this plan “as a compromise”.⁸⁶ As the language of the text of the Resolution sound in a pragmatic manner, it was in a careful manner that the Partition Plan was accepted by the Muslim League: “The Council of the All-India Muslim League, after full deliberation and consideration of HMG’s statement dated June 3, 1947, laying down the plan of transfer of power to the peoples of India, notes with satisfaction that the Cabinet Mission’s Plan of May 16, 1946, will not be proceeded with and has been abandoned. The only course open is the partition of India as now proposed in HMG’s statement of June 3. The Council of the All-India Muslim League is of the opinion that the only solution of India’s problem is to divide India into two—Pakistan and Hindustan. On that basis, the Council has given its most earnest attention and consideration to HMG’s statement. The Council is of opinion that, although it cannot agree to the partition of Bengal and the Punjab, or give its consent to such partition, it has to consider HMG’s plan for the transfer of power as a whole. The Council, therefore, hereby resolves to give full authority to the President of the All-India Muslim League, Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah, to accept the fundamental principles of the Plan as a “compromise” and to leave it to him, with full authority to work out all the details of the Plan in an equitable and just manner with regard to carrying

out the complete division of India on the basis and fundamental principles embodied in HMG's Plan, including Defence, Finance and Communications. The Council further empowered the President, Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah, to take all steps and decisions which may be necessary in connotation with and relating to the Plan".⁸⁷ This language of acceptance of the Plan shows that the drafters of this Resolution had high sense of all aspects of the demand for Pakistan. It was under the given circumstances that the Plan was accepted.

This resolution was passed by a majority of 460 members of the League Council. Only 8 voted against it.⁸⁸ This minority was supported by the Khaksars led by Allama Mashriqi, who criticized Jinnah for accepting the "truncated Pakistan", who demonstrated against this meeting. Some sixty Khaksars were arrested by the police. While all this happened, Jinnah kept on presiding the meeting in a cool-minded and "unperturbed" manner.⁸⁹ In his address, Jinnah pleaded that the Muslims should undertake for making the "truncated Pakistan" work.⁹⁰

The effect of 3 June 1947 Partition Plan was very good. Sir F. Mudie, Governor Sindh, submitted his report in this connection to Lord Mountbatten, the Viceroy, on 7 June 1947 in which he submitted: "The Sindhi Muslim is very pleased. Pirzada Abdur Sattar issued quite a good statement urging acceptance".⁹¹ It was further informed by the Governor: "The British community and the Muslims are very pleased about Dominion Status. They recognize that it is the only possible alternative to the civil war, which everyone, until your latest announcement, assumed. to be inevitable".⁹²

Sardar Patel wrote a letter to Lord Mountbatten on 10 June 1947 with which he sent the above Resolution passed by the Muslim League Council along with the text of the speeches delivered at this meeting which he received from the Intelligence Bureau. He expressed his deep concern in this way that "the Resolution is contradictory and there is studied evasion of straightforward acceptance. At one place, it says it cannot agree to the partition of Bengal and the Punjab or give

its consent to such partition. At another place, it says it accepts the fundamental principles of the plan of June 3rd as a compromise.” Patel further expressed his deep concern that “the position is such as is bound to fill us with grave apprehension”.⁹³

Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah, the Sindh Premier, also attended this meeting. Summary of his speech is reported as follows:

He dilated upon the existing internecine quarrels in the country and said that Pakistan was being offered in such a truncated form to them that there was no life left in what they were getting and added that from the geographical point of view the best and most prosperous portion of Pakistan had been taken away. He added: “I have three main objects before me, on the basis of which I appeal to you to accept this plan: 1) that because of international considerations, the Britishers are quitting India and that they are bound to hand over power to someone before leaving the country. It is clear that after the British had left, we could have battled with an armed and powerful nation and wrested Pakistan, because it is not possible for any power to keep ten million men subdued for any considerable time, but there could be no guarantee that even then you could have obtained the full recognition of your demand even after bloodshed on a much more extensive scale. 2) On a matter of principle you can get only those areas in which Muslims are in a majority. You may acquire these areas either today or tomorrow after a fight. Even in the original resolution demanding Pakistan, it had been laid down that the Muslim majority areas should be included in the proposed Muslim State. This is true that the Pakistan which is being offered to you today is weak but you must remember that now you have been acknowledged as a separate nation. Such a nation will be sovereign in its own country, and will solve its own problems. I wish to assure you on behalf of Sindh that we have been working very hard to bring about numerous improvements in the province and vast constructive schemes are under consideration, as a result of which our province will soon become prosperous. I would also request that if any of you have any constructive ideas, you may let us know about them. We will rapidly industrialize our country and will provide a haven to refuge to Muslim trades and craftsmen who would choose to

migrate into Sindh from the Muslim minority provinces. We have removed the consideration of Sindhi or non-Sindhi from our province and we will see that Sindh will soon progress far.”⁹⁴

After 3 June 1947 Jawaharlal Nehru and other Congress leaders pressurized Lord Mountbatten to convince Quaid-i-Azam to accept Mountbatten as the common Governor-General of India and Pakistan, a matter which created doubts in the mind of Jinnah about the sincerity of Mountbatten and Congress leadership that they did not accept the reality of Pakistan from the core of their heart. This strengthened the Muslim popular belief that within months of the creation of Pakistan they intend to undo Pakistan through Mountbatten. The Quaid sensed the forthcoming danger and brought the matter to the All India Muslim League (AIML) Council that nominated the Quaid as Pakistan’s first Governor-General. Mountbatten was informed on 2 July by Liaquat Ali Khan about this decision. But when Mountbatten insisted, Liaquat Ali Khan, Honorary Secretary of AIML, wrote on 5 July to Mountbatten indicating Quaid-i-Azam as Pakistan’s first Governor-General. This was a shock not only to Mountbatten but to the entire Congress leadership. When Mountbatten in his meeting insisted Jinnah to change the decision, the Quaid was determined; rather he suggested that Mountbatten should become super-Governor-General of both India and Pakistan, an idea which was not acceptable to Mountbatten and the Congress leadership. When the Indian Independence Act was passed in July 1947 it was announced by the British Government that Jinnah would be the first Governor-General of Pakistan. Congratulating the Quaid-i-Azam in this regard Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah wrote letter on 11 July 1947: “My dear Quaid-i-Azam, Our heartiest congratulations and our warmest blessings on your appointment as Governor-General of Pakistan. I am most happy, and so are all of us here, over this most felicitous event”. He also wrote: “Kindly let me know what we should do for your reception here. As Premier of Sindh, I wish to give a banquet in your honour. I do hope you

will accept it. Kindly let me know well in advance when you are coming to Karachi.”⁹⁵

The process of partition plan of 3 June 1947 was successfully implemented because of the wise policies of Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah who kept united all the internal groups including that of M.A.Khuhro whose vision was less broad than that of Hidayatullah. It was because of his efforts that on 26 June 1947 the Sindh Provincial Assembly by a vote of majority decided to join Pakistan and facilitated to make Karachi as the first capital of Pakistan to enable the Federal Government function successfully.⁹⁶ The detail of this is that members of the Sindh Legislative Assembly met in Karachi in a special meeting and decided for Sindh’s joining the Pakistan Constituent Assembly.⁹⁷ The 33 members of the Muslim League were present who voted for Pakistan. Other two Muslim League members who were absent on account of their illness, could not attend the session.⁹⁸ Two nationalist Muslims – Khan Bahadur Haji Maula Bux and Sardar Khan Khoso – remained “neutral”.⁹⁹ Three European members did not participate in the voting. While declaring the result of the voting the Speaker remarked: “Sindh has arrived at the portals of Pakistan first – Congratulations”.¹⁰⁰ Pirzada Abdul Sattar, the Revenue Minister, in a statement to the press said that with the passage of this resolution the State of Pakistan had, therefore, “taken its birth today”.¹⁰¹ Still 20 votes went against this resolution.¹⁰²

Karachi to be the Capital of Pakistan

Sindh Government headed by Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah was very helpful when Quaid-i-Azam declared Karachi as the capital of Pakistan where Secretariat of the Federal Government of Pakistan would be established. A number of arrangements in this regard were made. On 19 June K.J.Thoules, Chief Engineer of the Posts and Telegraphs Department and Mahomed Hussain, Director of Telegraph in New Delhi, came to Karachi and discussed the necessary matters with the Sindh Ministers and local officials.¹⁰³ The

Muslim League High Command also constituted a Housing Committee headed by N.A.Faruqi, District Magistrate of Karachi, as its Chairman, and Ali Mohamed Baloch, Rent Controller of Sindh, as its Secretary. The other two members of this committee were Executive Engineer and the Military Administrative Officer. This Committee was authorized to make all office and lodging arrangements for the staff of the Pakistan Central Secretariat before 15 August 1947.¹⁰⁴

On 8 July it was decided that Sindh Government will move into the Napier Barracks, while the Pakistan Secretariat will be accommodated in the present Sindh Secretariat and Assembly Building, Karachi. Karachi will thus be the capital of both Sindh and Pakistan.¹⁰⁵I.P.M.Cargill, Finance Secretary to the Sindh Government, revealed to the pressmen in Karachi that about 12,000 personnel, including families of members of the Pakistan Government, would move into Karachi from the beginning of August. He also stated that necessary lodging and office arrangements for the staff and their families are being made.¹⁰⁶

Sindh Government's help in Transfer of Power and Founding of Pakistan

The Sindh Government made arrangements for holding first session of the Pakistan Constituent Assembly in Karachi on 10 August 1947 which continued up to transfer of power on 14 Aug 1947. The Quaid was elected President of the Assembly. On 13 Aug Lord Mountbatten came to Karachi and on 14 Aug 1947 he transferred power to Quaid-i-Azam as President of first Constituent Assembly of Pakistan. It was on this basis that Federal Government of Pakistan started functioning from 15 Aug 1947. Arrangement for the offices of different departments of the Central Government and accommodation of the officers and employees of all the Central Government were made by the Sindh Government. In this the personality of Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah did play a pivotal role. Moreover, in the welcoming the influx of Refugees from Hindustan into Karachi and other areas of Sindh were also facilitated by the Sindh Government.

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