

**MUSLIM LEGISLATORS CONVENTION (1946):
IMPACT ON THE CREATION OF PAKISTAN**

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The historic Muslim Legislators Convention played very important role, in the creation of Pakistan. The convention is as much important as the Sindh Muslim League Conference of October, 1938 held at Karachi, and famous Lahore Convention of March, 1940. This convention was organized in the building of Muslim Educational Institute, Delhi. About five hundred Muslim's elected representatives attended the convention. Fifty were the members of the Council of the State Central Assembly and four hundred fifty were the members of the Provincial Legislatures.

In order to resolve the constitutional problems of India different schemes and proposals were under discussion. Quaid-e-Azam took a very firm stand over the creation of Pakistan. In reference to Cripps Proposals of 1942, Quaid-e-Azam on April 2, 1942 stated at Allahabad that the scheme was really dead. How deeply disappointed all Muslims were to find that "entity and integrity of Muslim Nation has been expressly recognized. Any attempt to solve the problem of India by process of avoiding the real issues and by over emphasising the territorial entity of the province. Muslim India will not be satisfied unless the right of national self determination is unequivocally recognized".¹

Chakarwarti Rajgopal Acharia published his own formula popularly known as CR formula, in July 1944. Gandhi and Jinnah through correspondence and meetings discussed this formula, in the end Gandhi gave his own formula that was also rejected by Quaid-e-Azam.

In his letter of September 25, he wrote: "But not you have . . . made a new proposal of your own on your own basis. . . and it is difficult to deal with it any further, unless it comes from you in your representative capacity . . . why not they accept the fundamentals of Lahore Resolution and proceed to settle details".²

Viceroy Lord Wavell convened a conference of Indian leaders at Simla on June 25, 1945 to discuss constitutional problems and formation of Executive Council. This conference also failed to bring about any understanding between the leaders. Addressing the closing session of the conference on July 14 Mr. Jinnah said that "Pakistan and United India were diametrically opposed to each other . . . Musalmans of India were determined to have Pakistan".³

Labour Party won the elections in Britain in 1946. Muslims in the subcontinent were apprehending rough attitude from new Government of Prime Minister Attlee. Congress leaders expressed their jubilation over the formation of Labour Government. They were having cordial relations with Labour Party leaders.

The outgoing Government had made certain promises and had given assurances to the Muslims. "The labour victory in Parliament was hailed by Hindu press as triumph of congress and attempts were renewed to assure that Muslim opinion should be completely ignored in the shapping of Indian Policy".⁴

On February 19, 1946, British Prime Minister announced to send Cabinet Mission to India to promote in conjunction with leaders of Indian Union, the early realization of full self-Government in India".⁵ On 15th March

in his statement referred to 'complete independence as a possible goal for Indian constitutional development if Indians so chose'.⁶

Cabinet Mission was given the task to hold meetings and discussions with the leaders and elected representatives of India regarding the future constitutional set up. The Mission consisted of three cabinet ministers: Secretary of State Pathick Lawrence, Sir Stafford Cripps and Mr. Albert Alexander. Sir Stafford Cripps was not new to the people of India; he had brought his proposals in 1942. Muslims were aware of his pro-Congress attitude and his friendship with Nehrus and Birlas. Previously his proposals were rejected by Congress and Muslim League.

The Working Committee of All India Muslim League in its resolution of April 11, 1942, while announcing that the proposals in that form were unacceptable to them, expressed "their gratification that possibility of Pakistan was recognized by implication, by providing establishment of two or more independent unions in India".⁷

Cabinet Mission was sent as a fresh move after Second World War by the Labour Government to settle the political and constitutional problems. The new British Government made it clear that "it would not be right to force the Muslim majority provinces into joining the new constitutional arrangement against their wishes, but at the same time it would not be proper to allow any minority, however, large and important to veto the attainment of self-government for the rest of India".⁸

Despite the un-sympathetic attitude of the Congress, Muslim League was making political gains under the dynamic leadership of Quaid-e-Azam, Muhammad

Ali Jinnah. In the elections of the Central Legislative Assembly, held in December, 1945, Muslim League secured 87% of Muslim votes casted in Muslim constituencies and captured 30 seats. Quaid-e-Azam declared the 11th of January, 1946 as 'Victory Day' and was celebrated by Muslims through out India. This victory encouraged Muslim League to work hard to have a landslide victory in the ensuing Provincial Assembly elections. Finally Muslim League captured 450 seats out of 533 Muslim seats. "In Punjab Muslim League obtained 79 out of 86 Muslim seats. In Bihar 34 out of 40 Muslim seats, 55 out of 66 in U.P., 30 out of 30 in Bombay, 13 out of 14 in C.P., 4 out of 4 in Orissa, 31 out of 34 in Assam, 29 out of 29 in Madras, 113 out of 119 in Bengal and in Sindh it secured 21 out of 24".⁹

The cabinet Mission members arrived on March 23, 1946 at Karachi and reached Delhi on 24th March, 1946. The mission started its series of discussions with the leaders of various political parties.

In January 1946 a parliamentary delegation was sent to India to meet Mr. Jinnah and Abul Kalam Azad, Congress President and others. Professor Richards led the ten members delegation, and had meetings with leaders, and returned month before the Cabinet Mission left for India. "Most of the members agreed that some form of Pakistan would be conceded and the sooner the better".¹⁰

G. Allana writes that "apprehensive that the Cabinet Mission may be stampeded into a decision that may go against the demand for Pakistan, the Mission having been subject to the terrific pressure by all the anti league forces, the Quaid made a spectacular move. He decided to call a convention of all Muslim members of Cen-

tral and Provincial Assemblies that had returned on the league ticket".¹¹

The convention continued for three days, fiery speeches were made by the delegates. Khan Abdul Qayum Khan a member from NWFP threatened the British Government and said, "Thanks God we have one flag, one leader, one platform and one ideal, Pakistan, to fight for. We are only waiting for the final order to do whatever is considered necessary for the attainment of Pakistan".¹² Sir Feroz Khan Noon, a big land lord and seasonal politician who had remained member Defence, of Viceroy's Advisory Council, rejected the plea of the opponents "that the creation of Pakistan will face a defence problem to the sub-continent". He said "We are prepared to welcome Soviet Union as they support our cause of freedom, where-as Hindus and Britishers are opposing our cause of freedom. He warned the Britishers that a new suraj of subcontinent is rising among the people of Punjab particularly the big land lords. He said communism is spreading and as for myself, if I have to loose every rupee that I possess, if that is the only way to salvation and freedom for Musalmans, I am prepare to loose it".¹³

Sardar Shaukat Hayat member from Punjab said that "I speak for the Punjabi soldier and I say that three quarter million mobilized soldiers in the Punjab are pledged to achieve Pakistan". Addressing to Jinnah he said 'You Sir' are holding us back, and we beg of you to give the word of command. Let us prove to the doubting how we can, and how we mean to defend our Pakistan".¹⁴ Nawab Iftikhar Hussain Mamdot President Punjab Muslim League and member Punjab Assembly spoke that "we are asked how we will defend Pakistan. I would say that if stalwart soldiers of Punjab could defend Britain against

Nazi aggression, they can also defend their hearth and homes".¹⁵ Chaudhry Khaliq-uz-Zaman said that "Muslim will now decide their own destiny. We will lay down our lives for Pakistan".¹⁶ Mr. Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardi, a popular leader and Premier of Bengal, in his speech asked "what next? We want to live in peace. We do not intend to start a civil war, but we want a land where we can live in peace. . . I have long pondered whether Muslims are prepared to fight. Let me honestly declare that every Muslim in Bengal is ready and prepared to lay down his life"; and turning to Quaid-e-Azam he demanded: "I call upon you to test us".¹⁷ He moved the resolution as under:-

"This convention of the Muslim Legislators of India, Central and Provincial after careful consideration hereby declare that the Muslim Nation will never submit to any constitution for United India and will never participate in any single constitution making machinery set up for the purpose, and that any formula devised by the British Government for transferring power from the British to the peoples of India, which does not conform to the following just and equitable principles, calculated to maintain internal peace and tranquility in the country, will not contribute to the solution of the Indian problems.

"1. That the Zones comprising Bengal and Assam in the North East and the Punjab, North West Frontier province, Sindh and Baluchistan in the North West of India, namely Pakistan Zones, where the Muslims are in dominant majority, be constituted into a sovereign independent state and that an unequivocal undertaking be given to implement the establishment of Pakistan without delay;

"2. That two separate constitution making bod-

ies be set up by the peoples of Pakistan and Hindustan for the purpose of framing their respective constitutions.

"3. That the minorities in Pakistan and Hindustan be provided with safeguards on the lines of the All India Muslim League Resolution passed on the 23rd March 1940 at Lahore.

"4. That the acceptance of the Muslims League demand of Pakistan and its implementation without delay are the Sine Qua Non for the Muslim League cooperation and participation in the formation of an interim government at centre.

"This convention further emphatically declares that any attempt to impose a constitution on a United India basis, or to force any interim arrangement at the centre contrary to the Muslim League demand will leave the Muslims no alternative but to resist such imposition by all possible means for their survival and national existence".¹⁸

The resolution was unanimously passed by the members and in full enthusiasm they signed a pledge which reads as "I . . . most solemnly affirm that I shall willingly and unflinchingly carry out all the directions and instructions which may be issued by the All India Muslim League, in pursuance of any movement that may be launched by it, for the attainment of the cherished national goal of Pakistan. Believing as I do in the righteousness and justice of my cause, I pledge to undergo any danger, trial, or sacrifice which may be demanded of me".¹⁹

Quaid-e-Azam in his historic speech at the conclusion of the convention said: "What are we fighting for?"

What are we aiming at? .It is not theocracy, not for a theocratic state. Religion is there and Religion is dear to us. All the worldly goods are nothing to us when we talk of religion; but there are other things which are vital, our social life, our economic life, and without political power, how can you defend your faith and your economic life". Referring to the case of minorities he said "If Britain in Goldstones time could intervene in Armina in the name of protection minorities, why should it not be right for us to do so in the case of our minorities in Hindustan - if they are suppressed?".²⁰

Addressing the Women delegates of the convention he said: "No nation can achieve anything unless its women go side by side with men-even to the battlefield. We Muslims have got every thing drained, intelligence, capacity and courage-virtues that our nation must possess. We have lost the fulness of our character. And what is character?, Highest sense of honour and highest sense of integrity - conviction- incorruptibility -readiness at any time to efface one self for the collective good of nation." He concluded by saying: "Is Britain going to decide the destiny of hundred million Muslims?. No nobody can. They can obstruct, they can delay for a little while, but they can not stop us from our goal. Let us, therefore, rise at the conclusion of this historic convention full of hope, courage and faith. Inshah Allah, we shall win".²¹

Convention had a lasting impact on the political developments at that time. Though the Hindu press developed displeasure and invoked enmity among the Hindu masses. But among Muslims Muslim League became the last hope to achieve freedom and separate Muslim home land. Even the visiting members of the Cabinet Mission became aware of the views of newly elected Mus-

lim Legislators. This convention paved a way for Quaid-e-Azam and gave him a solid mandate to settle with Britishers and Congress. It became crystal clear that Pakistan was the first and the last demand of the Muslims, and Quaid-e-Azam was the sole leader, torch bearer of the Muslims and under his leadership, despite many odds, difficulties and opposition, Muslims achieved Pakistan.

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