

**SINDH TOWARDS CREATION OF PAKISTAN  
(1937-1947)**

**A BRIEF SURVEY**

By

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The emergence of Pakistan, as an independent ideological State on August 14, 1947 was a unique experiment in the history of Islam as well as of the world. Its establishment was not the work of a single human being or one set of people living in one part of the subcontinent. In fact, it was the result of sincere efforts made by all the Muslim majority as well as Muslim minority areas. In this paper discussion will confine to the role played by the Muslims of the province of Sindh in making the dream of a sovereign and independent Muslim State in the subcontinent come true.

The province of Sindh, after so many decades of its merger with Bombay Presidency for the first time started functioning as an independent province in 1936. Its Legislative Assembly met for the first time on April 24, 1937.<sup>1</sup>

After the first Provincial Elections held under the Government of India Act 1935, Sindh did not get a Muslim League Ministry. This was quite a surprise for Quaid-i-Azam who personally flew into Karachi in October 1938 to apprise himself of the situation. On his arrival he found the root cause of the absence of the Muslim League Ministry to be the disunity amongst the top Muslim Leaguers themselves. After prolonged negotiations with K.B. Allah Bakhsh Soomro and other leaders, the Quaid succeeded in making them to come to an agreement on October 9, 1938. This was signed by K.B. Allah Bakhsh Soomro, Pir Illahi Bakhsh, Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah, Mir Bandeh Ali Talpur, G.M. Syed and Shaikh Abdul Majeed Sindhi. Thus due to efforts of the Quaid a Muslim League Party was formed in Sindh Assembly.<sup>2</sup> But soon after K.B. Allah Bakhsh Soomro betrayed the agreement<sup>3</sup> on the ground that he should be allowed to remain the Premier of the Muslim League Cabinet in Sindh. In the meanwhile a religious dispute developed between the Muslims and the Hindus of the province. This is known as the Masjid Manzilgah issue. This issue assumed the form of a religious movement. G.M. Syed, Haji Abdullah Haroon, M.A. Khuro and many other prominent leaders of Sindh were in the forefront. Both Hindu and Muslim leaders delivered aggressive speeches and inflamed their co-religionists. Being the first Hindu-Muslim conflict in Sindh on such a large scale it disturbed the very cordial, social and political relations

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between the two communities. The brotherly relations turned into enmity and this conflict ended with Hindu migration who left their homes to congregate in their interior ghettos.<sup>4</sup>

The Congress Ministries did their best to distort Muslim opinion, destroy Muslim culture, interfere with their religious and social life and trample upon their economic and political rights. But the dictatorial rule of Congress did not last long and Congress Ministries disagreeing with British over Indian involvement in the World War-II resigned. On the resignation of Congress Ministries, Jinnah appealed to the Muslims of India to observe December 22, 1939 as the 'Day of Deliverance'. It was to be a day of thanks-giving as a mark of relief that the Congress regime had at last ceased to function. And the province of Sindh also enthusiastically celebrated the Day of Deliverance.<sup>5</sup>

From 1939 onwards the political developments in India started taking definite shape. The greater the Hindus laid emphasis on a strong centre the greater grew the Muslim demand for maximum provincial autonomy. And the more the Congress emphasised the principle of Majority rule, the more the Muslims talked of self-determination. As Congress was bent on retaining India united the Muslim League pressed the demand for India's partition. G.M. Syed, a member of the Muslim League Working Committee from Sindh, asserted that 'the Indus Valley Civilization as revealed by Mohen-jo-Daro was a clear indication that the Pakistan territories had never formed part of India'. He went on to say that "Sindh, the Punjab, Afghanistan and the N.W.F.P formed part of the Middle East rather than of the Far East."<sup>6</sup>

Though the idea of Muslim separatism had been floating in the Indian political atmosphere for quite sometime yet none had so far been able to give it a concrete shape. Despite the efforts of Iqbal and Rahmat Ali the need was felt for an established political party to further the idea making it a plank in its programme. This is what the Sindh Provincial Muslim League did in a conference held at Karachi in early October 1938. It was on this occasion that the Sindh Muslim League recommended that the All India Muslim League should devise a scheme of Constitution to facilitate Muslim attainment of complete independence. And it was from this platform that for the first time the word 'Nation' was used for Hindus and Muslims separately. Finally the All India Muslim League at its annual session-historical in retrospect on March 23, 1940 at Lahore, ratified the Sindh Provincial Muslim League resolution of October 1938<sup>7</sup> and adopted the partition of India as its final goal. Jinnah's presidential address to this session proved to be a landmark in the history of Muslim Nationalism in India for it made an irrefutable case for a separate Muslim nationhood

and divided India into Hindu and Muslim states.

On April 27, 1942 Haji Abdullah Haroon, President, Sindh Provincial Muslim League breathed his last.<sup>8</sup> The gap created by his demise was filled by G.M.Syed, who was appointed the President of Sindh Provincial Muslim League on June 13, 1943 by the Quaid. G.M.Syed also was appointed as Chairman of the Organizing Committee of the Sindh Muslim League. The tasks which needed his immediate attention were:-

- a) Organization of Muslim League Head Office
- b) Constructive work through the Muslim League
- c) Encouragement to Muslims for entering trade
- d) Systematic overhaul of the League organization, by incorporating new blood and setting progressive people in the forefront of League activity.

On March 3, 1943<sup>10</sup> Sindh Assembly unanimously approved the Lahore Resolution of March 1940. And again the credit goes to the Sindh Assembly for taking initiative despite severe opposition from the Hindu members of Sindh Assembly who walked out of the hall.

Despite the strongest opposition around him during the annual session of Muslim League held at Karachi, on December 24, 1943, G.M.Syed in his speech not only supported the claim of Pakistan but also invited the Muslims living in various parts of India to migrate and settle in Sindh for good.

During the World War-II the province of Sindh remained much disturbed. Probably nowhere in the country was the effect of the war felt so acutely as in Sindh. The Hurs of Sindh for the first time caught the public eye by their open rebellion and reckless defiance of the established government. The arrest of Pir Pagaro as a result of Hur rebellion was a signal for his followers to challenge the British Government's decision. A regular state of war continued for a long time. The year 1942 goes down in the history of Sindh as the most significant and nerve-shattering year. The province shaken by the War and then Hur rebellion also had to experience the Martial Law. The case against Pir Pagaro which opened on January 29, 1943 ended on 6 February with the announcement of death sentence for him.<sup>11</sup>

On August 21, 1945 the Viceroy Lord Wavell made an important announcement with regard to the holding of Elections to the Central and Provincial Legislative Assemblies in Winter<sup>12</sup> of the same year. It was during this period that differences between Jinnah and G.M.Syed cropped up. G.M.Syed resigned from the Muslim League and formed a separate group. In the forthcoming elections the Muslim League tried its level best to vindicate its claim of representing the Muslim India. Its manifesto may be summarised into two sentences: the Muslims of India are a nation;

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Pakistan is the only sensible solution of Indian problem. The Congress on the other hand based its campaign on the propaganda that it represented the whole of India. And that India would remain united. In Sindh the Muslim League won majority of seats.

The Provincial elections were held in the second phase in early 1946. Hence the case of Sindh again calls for special mention. In Sindh, Muslim League got 27 seats and one independent Muslim joined the Muslim League later on. Three seats went to Nationalist Muslims and four to G.M.Syed group.<sup>13</sup> The Congress had 21 seats, Europeans three and there was one independent labour member. On February 8, 1946 Muslim League formed the Ministry. The Congress and other groups moved no-confidence motion but failed. Due to change of ministries and none of the groups having majority the Governor dissolved the Assembly and installed a caretaker Muslim League government.<sup>14</sup> Later on, a re-election was held in December 1946, in which Muslim League came out with a clear majority.

On June 3, 1947, British Government announced the partition plan according to which Hindustan and Pakistan came into existence<sup>15</sup> as two separate sovereign states. On June 20, 1947 a special session of Sindh Provincial Assembly was called and again Sindh was the first province to opt for Pakistan. The Provisional government of Pakistan was formed in Karachi, Sindh. The Sindh Government placed its offices at the disposal of the government of Pakistan. It was at Karachi, where the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan met for the first time in August 1947, the last Viceroy of India Lord Mountbatten transferred power to the people of Pakistan at Karachi on August 14, 1947. The Quaid-i-Azam assumed office as Head of the State of Pakistan on the auspicious occasion of Jummat-ul-Wida.

Taking an overview of the preceding discussion of the role played by the province of Sindh in the achievement of Pakistan it becomes evident that from 1907 to 1947 it played an unprecedented role. The first regular session of the Muslim League was held at Karachi on 29-30 December, 1907.<sup>16</sup> During this period Sindh was part of Bombay Presidency and it was dominated by Hindu majority. But the separation of Sindh from Bombay Presidency proved to be a significant step towards the achievement of Pakistan. Sindh Muslim League for the first time gave a practical shape to the Lahore Resolution of 1940 on March 3, 1943. Therefore; it was the first province in the subcontinent to make a demand for Pakistan and this assertion later got support from other Muslim majority provinces.

It would thus be observed that Sindh had played a leading role in almost every movement of the Muslim Community and also the independence of the Muslims of the subcontinent.

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