CHAPTER VI

MOTIVE FOR PAKISTAN

AND

AKALIS' COUNTER-DEMAND FOR KHALISTAN

Muslim League Demand for Pakistan

The Second World War, which involved the British in a grim struggle for survival, gave the Indian Muslims a golden opportunity to manoeuvre for political advantage. In March 1940, at the annual conference of the Muslim League at Lahore, they declared themselves a separate nation and demanded that portions of India where they were numerically in a majority be sliced off and constituted into a sovereign Muslim State.¹ With the Muslim League demand for Pakistan

¹ The idea of Pakistan was first propounded by the philosopher-poet Islam, Allama Mohammad Iqbal, in his presidential address at the annual session of the Muslim League at Allahabad in 1930. The religious dream of the poet was given the shape of concrete political formula.

In a pamphlet entitled "Now or Never", published in 1933, he advocated division of India into two spheres: Muslim and Hindu. He wrote: "We don't inter-dine, we don't inter-marry. Our national customs and calendars, even our diet and dress, are different. Hence the Muslim demand a separate national status."

In the hands of a politician of Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah's cold, unyielding logic, will and subtlety, this doctrine of separation was charged with an ominously practical meaning. Pakistan became the accepted creed of the Muslims of India. Mr. Jinnah once said: "Let the British, before they quit, make an award giving the Muslims their bit of the country, however small it might be, and they would live there, if necessary on one meal a day."
the whole outlook of political parties in Punjab underwent a sea of change. Little attention was henceforth devoted to constitutional problems, while more and more time began to be given to evaluation and criticism of this new factor in politics. Punjab politics now entered a new era.

Sikh Reaction -- Demand for Khalistan

Sikh opposition to the Pakistan scheme was more bitter since an overwhelming majority of the Sikh population was settled in the Punjab. In other provinces, the Sikhs were an insignificant part of the population. Pakistan would mean Muslim Raj to them and it was all the more painful particularly when they remembered that they had ruled over the Punjab hardly a hundred years ago. The All-India Akali Conference held in 1940 at Attari, a village between

These words truly reflected the temper of Muslim India. The Muslim League achieved its goal in August 1947 when India was divided into two parts -- India and Pakistan, the later became a sovereign Muslim State.

Mehta, Asoka, Patwardhan, Achyut, Communal Triangle, Kitabistan, Allahabad (1942), Pp. Appendix III.

Also Coupland, R. Indian Politics (1936-1942), Pp. 198-207.

The credit for coining the word Pakistan goes to Chaudhari Rahmat Ali. He coined the word thus: 'P' for Punjab, 'A' for Afghanistan (Part of North-West Frontier Province), 'K' for Kashmir, 'S' for Sind and 'T' for Baluchistan. It must be noted that unfortunately the eastern part, namely Bengal, was left out in such a name formation though, in actuality, it is a part of Pakistan.
Lahore, and Amritsar, viewed with deep concern the growing endeavour of certain Muslims to convert the Punjab into a part of Pakistan, and decided to resist such a demand by all possible means. The Khalsa National Party, too, passed a resolution at its meeting in Lahore on March 29, 1940, condemning the demand for Pakistan.

Two more Sikh conferences were held at Lahore in June under the presidency of Baba Kharak Singh of the Central Akali Dal group and Sant Singh of the Shiromani Akali Dal group, respectively, to condemn the League demand for Pakistan.

Not to speak of Hindus of western Punjab, even eastern Punjab's Hindu Jats like Sir Chhotu Ram opposed the idea of Pakistan. While addressing a Jat conference at Sonapet, he said that he would resist

3. Mitra's Register (1940), Vol. I, p. 397; The Tribune, 2-4-1940

The resolution said: "That the division of India into Hindu and Muslim independent states, as envisaged by the recent resolution of the Muslim League, was fraught with the most dangerous consequences, detrimental alike to the best interests of the various communities in general and the country as a whole; that the resolution (demanding division) had created a situation which might mean parting of the ways for the Sikhs and the Muslims with whom the Khalsa National Party had been co-operating in the best interests of the province and the Sikhs; that the party hoped that saner counsel would prevail and a catastrophe that was staring the country in the face would be averted; that it would be the height of audacity for anyone to imagine that the Sikhs could tolerate for a single day the undiluted communal rule of any community in the Punjab which was not only their homeland but also their holy land; that as a logical consequence of the League resolution the Sikhs would be fully entitled to claim back the sovereignty of the Punjab which was only held as trust by the British during the minority regime of Maharaj Dalip Singh."

4. The Tribune, 10-6-1940
with force any attempt to create an Islamic State.\(^5\)

On December 1, 1940, an anti-Pakistan conference was convened at Lahore and addressed by Dr. M. Chaman, (later Governor of Crissa), Mahaotee Krishan, Krishan Gopal Dutt (later Finance Minister, East Punjab), Jalal-ud-Din Amber Mulla, (a Christian leader), Prof. Abdul Majid Khan, nationalist Muslim, Raja Narinder Nath, Hindu leader, Giani Kartar Singh and Master Tara Singh. It passed a resolution against the proposed formation of Pakistan.\(^6\)

In the beginning, the official Congress attitude was somewhat indifferent. At its Amarguru Congress in 1940 it did not take any notice of the League resolution. Congressmen were busy at the time with individual satyagraha launched by Mahatma Gandhi.\(^7\)

Dr. V.S. Chatti of Ludhiana published a pamphlet demanding establishment of a buffer state between India and Pakistan to maintain peace. He named this buffer state Khalistan. The Khalistan of his conception included some of the predominantly Sikh districts of Punjab, the Sikh States of Patiala, Nabha, Jind, Faridkot and Kalala, and non-Sikh states such as Malerkotla and Siala Hill States. The Punjab districts included in "Khalistan" were Ludhiana, Jullundur, Ambala, Ferozepore, Lahore, Amritsar, Lyalpur, Gujranwala, Sheikhpura, Montgomery, Bissar, Nohtak, Kurnal and Multan. Besides these, Delhi, a portion of Sind, Bahawalpur and Sajpatana were also included.

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5. The Tribune, 2-4-1940; Shastri, Raghuvir Singh, *Sir Chhotu Ram*, Fp. 336-342
6. The Tribune, 2-12-1940
to permit a passage to the sea. He wanted the Maharaja of Patiala to head that State and to have a cabinet of representatives of federating States. 3

In response to an invitation by Sikh leaders like Baba Curdit Singh, Ranjodh Singh Tarsikha, Jagjit Singh, editor of Khalsa Sewak, and several others, about 120 representatives of various Sikh organisations of Amritsar district assembled at Amritsar on May 19, 1940, to discuss the Khalistan scheme. The conference evolved the concept of Khalistan to include territory from Jammu to Jammu which the late Maharaja Dalip Singh had given as "amanat" (trust) to the British. A demand was also made for establishing two more Sikh States, one at Hazoor Sahib in Hyderabad Deccan, and the other at Patna in Bihar. A sub-committee of 21, with power to co-opt 10 more, was formed to do propaganda for Guru Khalsa Raj. 9 Another conference was called on May 24 at Jagraon where the Sikhs of the Malwa region reiterated the demand for Khalistan in case the Pakistan scheme of the Muslim League was accepted by the British Government. 10 To avoid any future constitutional disaster in the country, C. Rajagopalachari, veteran Congress leader, came out with a "sporting offer" on August 23, 1940, to persuade his colleagues in the Congress Party to accept a nominee of the Muslim League as Premier of India with a right to nominate persons of his own choice in a national government. His purpose was to promote an agreement with the Muslim League with a view to attaining independence for the country. 11

8. The Tribune, 14-4-1940, Dr. V.S. Bhatti, Khalistan Scheme; Also Rajendra Prasad, India Divided, p. 254
The working committee of the Shiromani Akali Dal considered the offer unjust, undemocratic, anti-national and detrimental to the rights of non-Muslim communities. The offer, in its opinion, violated the pledges given by the Congress to the Sikhs and other minorities in 1929 at the Lahore Congress. It demanded from the Congress High Command immediate repudiation of the offer. It also viewed "with grave suspicion the utterances of G. Rajagopalachari expressing readiness to accept the Pakistan scheme under certain circumstances and requested the Congress to immediately clarify its position with regard to the scheme in clear and unequivocal terms, assuring the Sikhs and other non-Muslims that the Congress would oppose the scheme under all circumstances." The Shiromani Akali Dal also called upon the Sikhs to carry on a persistent agitation against the Pakistan proposal. 12

Crisis Mission

Despite the protests of leaders of various political parties, the possibility of a Muslim State coming into being was specifically recognised in the British War Cabinet's formula presented to Indian political parties by Sir Stafford Cripps in the spring of 1942 when the British fortune seemed to be ebbing away. Pearl Harbour was

9. The Tribune, 21-5-1940, Sikhs consider Khalistan Scheme
10. The Tribune, 29-5-1940, Sikhs want buffer State
11. Menon, V.P., Transfer of Power, p. 96
12. The Tribune, 11-9-1940, Akali Dal Working Committee's Resolution
   Also Akali Patrika, 12-9-1940
attacked and occupied by Japan on December 7, 1941. Singapore fell on February 15, 1942 and Rangoon on March 7, 1942. Four days later Winston Churchill, who had replaced Chamberlain as Prime Minister of Britain, announced in the House of Commons that Sir Stafford Cripps would visit India to seek the assent of leaders for the constitutional position of India—both present and future. Sir Stafford arrived in New Delhi on March 23 with a scheme for India's constitutional status, popularly known as the "Cripps proposals."  

Prior to Sir Stafford's arrival, Lord Linlithgow sent invitations to all the political parties to meet the former in New Delhi. Between March 24 and 29 Sir Stafford Cripps met almost all prominent leaders of Indian political parties and the Viceroy, his Executive Council, and Governors of provinces. The third All-India Akali Conference, scheduled to be held at Vahilla, Lyallpur district, at the end of March under the presidency of Master Tara Singh, was postponed on account of the arrival of Sir Stafford Cripps.  

Sir Stafford had brought with him a draft proposal on the future of India with the object of creating new Indian Union which would constitute a Dominion Associate with the United Kingdom and other

13. *Indian Review*, April 1942, The Diary of the Month, p. 200
15. Ibid
16. Akali Patrika, 23-3-1942, also The Tribune, 23-3-1942
Dominions. It conceded the right to any province to go out of the Union, and the right of non-ceeding provinces to agree upon a new constitution of their own with a status equal to that of the Indian Union. In substance, the proposal accepted the principle of Pakistan.

The minorities shuddered at the idea of reversion to Islamic theocracy of medieval ages. There was a storm of protests from all the parts of the country, for it was, as Birdwood says, "the official clue to the future." A deputation of the Sikhs met Sir Stafford Cripps on March 31, 1942, and told him that the cause of the Sikh community had been "lamentably betrayed" because it was unjust to allow the extraneous trans-Jhelum population, which only accidently came into the province, to dominate the future of Punjab proper. The deputation also pointed out that the population of the Sikh states of Patiala, Nabha, Jind, Kapurthala and Faridkot, which was about 25 lakhs, had only 20 per cent Muslims, while the population of the Muslims in the other area from Delhi to the banks of Savi, was only 45,05,000 out of a total population of 121,151,000; and if the two were combined the ratio of the Muslim population would go down still further.

Baba Kharek Singh, the President of the Central Akali Dal, declared on April 1, 1942, "that the Proposals of the War Cabinet

17. Indian Year Book (1942), Times of India Press, Bombay, Pp. 313-319
19. The deputation consisted of Master Tara Singh, Baldev Singh,
not only conceded to all intents and purposes the separatist demand for partition of India but actually encouraged the idea of separatism by holding out hope to every religious community, which ultimately was bound to spread through ... whenever they are even in a bare majority.  

The acceptance of these proposals will, therefore, mean complete frustration of the national movement. "What was more, the scheme was totally unacceptable as it did not provide for an effective safeguard for the rights of the Sikhs. Master Tara Singh, Giani Kartar Singh and Giani Sher Singh declared that Pakistan would be formed on "their dead bodies". The proposals, on the one hand, did not offer any permanent solution to the national tangle, on the other, they tended to create fissiparous communal tendencies. It could never be acceptable to the Congress and to the leaders dreaming for united independent India.

Quit India Movement

Cripps went back but he left behind a bitter trail of disappointment. The feeling of frustration was intensified as the conviction grew that British imperialism was not willing to part with India, happen what may. The Congress felt desperate and as the agony of war

Sir Jogindra Singh and Ujjal Singh.

20. The Tribune, 1-4-1942. The letter of the Sikhs deputation to Sir Stafford Cripps, dated 31-3-1942. Also see Birdwood's A Continent Experiment, pp. 256-259.


22. Ibid
was prolonged, the temper of the people rose. There were some who welcomed the Japanese advance with a fond hope born of spite and hatred of British rule. In this mood of despair the All-India Congress Committee met in Bombay on August 7, and 8, 1942, and passed the "Quit India" resolution. The British Government retaliated immediately and early in the morning of August 9, a large number of Congress leaders were arrested all over the country.

The Akalis were divided over the issue of "Quit India" movement. One group, led by Master Tara Singh, opposed it, while the other, led by Giani Gurmukh Singh Sisafir, Pratap Singh Nazir, Darshan Singh Phuruman, Udham Singh Bagoke and others favoured it and offered themselves for arrest. The group led by Master Tara Singh even helped the Britishers in recruitment for the army. On September 26, 1942, in his presidential address to the All-India Akali Conference at Lyallpur, Master Tara Singh declared in unequivocal terms that he did not believe in the "sunny" doctrine of non-violence as preached by Mahatma Ghandhi and advised the Sikhs in their own interest and in the interest of their country not to be fools to be carried away by momentary enthusiasm. By one of its resolutions the Akali conference demanded that India be declared an independent sovereign state and a "provisional National Cabinet" be formed forthwith.

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The Quit India movement and the differences between the Congress and the Akalis gave the leader of Muslim League an opportunity to exploit the situation. For silencing Sikh opposition to Pakistan and thereby strengthening the demand vis-à-vis the rest of India, Mohamed Ali Jinnah made more than one attempt to placate the Sikh community by inducing them to accept Pakistan on the basis of guaranteed political, religious and economic safeguards. At one stage it looked as though a section of the Sikh leadership would accept Jinnah's proposal. One of them seemed to be impressed with the argument that whereas in an all-India federation the Sikh community would be a drop in the ocean, it would not be a negligible factor in Pakistan, not only because of the proportion of Sikh population in the population of Punjab, but also by virtue of statutory guarantees offered to them by the Muslim League leader. Eventually, however, Mr. Jinnah's overtures were turned down because the bulk of the Sikh community was opposed to Pakistan.27

At about the same time there began to grow up in the Sikh community a tendency at exclusivism and self-reliance. This was due, on the one hand, to the growing militant Muslim League campaign for Pakistan and, on the other, the feeling that Hindu leadership


27. India Year Book (1946), Times of India Press, Bombay, Pp. 902-903
might not hesitate to sacrifice the Sikhs for a settlement with the Muslim League on the all-India level, whereas the bleak feelings of doubt and distrust among the Sikhs apparently thwarted their political aspirations, the exhortations of the Sikh leaders like Master Tara Singh created in them self-confidence to face the alarming situation at all costs.

28. Ibid