

POLITICS OF SINDH FROM 1936-1946: RIVAL IDEOLOGUES ON COMMON PLATFORM

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Abstract

Politics of Sindh from 1936-1946 is full of significant events. It was the time when Sindh became a province for the first time and Sindhi politicians obtained the opportunity of self-governance in their own province. They had been under strict British bureaucratic rule for over eight decades since the advent of British Raj. It was in the year 1936 when they were successful in separating Sindh from Bombay. The participation in the movement of separation of Sindh from Bombay Presidency equipped them and trained them in modern politics. The social set up of Sindh also played significant role in shaping ideologies of these politicians. Although Sindh was predominantly Muslim majority province but there were economic differences among the people of Sindh. Majority of the Muslim population consisted of working class and peasants. Handful of Muslims were part of the elite class of the province. These were the Muslims who were granted titles like of Khan Bahadurs by the British Government. In this scenario, these Sindhi politicians belonged to varying ideologies. Some of them were champions of the poor and peasants. Others remained loyal to the British Government and for varying self-interests. Even when they later joined All India Muslim League they kept their old ideologies with them. It was for this reason, while being members of the same political party these politicians remained rivals. This attitude not only damaged the political structure and atmosphere of the province but it also affected the Post-Partition politics of Pakistan.

Keywords: *Sindh, Muslim League, Elections 1945-46, provincial assembly, freedom*

Introduction

At the Battle of Miani fought on 17th February 1843, British East India Company troops successfully defeated Sindhian forces and overthrew the ruling family of Talpur Mirs. This conquest was culmination of British policies towards Sindh which they had initiated from the onset of their contacts with the rulers of Sindh. This British policy towards Sindh can be divided into two phases, each phase characterized by certain desirable objects. In the beginning, intention of East India Company was to forge reliable and commercially profitable relations with the rulers of Sindh. This can be marked from the year 1635 C.E when East India Company successfully secured a royal Mughul decree allowing them to trade from port of Lahri bunder, situated in the Indus delta. In this way East India Company carried out trade activities from this new seaport till 1662 C.E.¹ After a period of almost a century trade activity of East India Company with Sindh once again resumed in the year 1758 C.E, when the Amir, Ghulam Shah Kalhora gave permission to East India Company to have their factory established at Thatta. This permission was also followed by concessions relating to customs duty.² However, under the rule of Ghulam Shah's successor Sarafarz Kalhora East India Company was made to close its factory and abandon all commercial activity in Sindh.³ The East India Company remained aloof from Sindh till 1799 C.E when once again rulers of Sindh were engaged in negotiations. This time purpose of negotiations was not solely commerce, but East India Company also sought that soil of Sindh should not be granted to any other European nation for trade activity. This they stipulated on the account of their fear of French invasion of India. East India Company achieved these goals, and Mr. Nathan Crow was sent to Sindh as a political agent. Although the new Talpur ruler Fateh Ali Khan received Mr. Crow warm heartedly but a year later on his own directives Mr. Nathan Crow was asked to leave Sindh within ten days.⁴ East India Company had been expelled earlier by the Talpur ruler, but the fear of French invasion demanded that friendly relations must be established with rulers of Sindh. This was achieved by hard efforts of Mr. Henkey Smith in 1809 and first ever formal treaty was concluded between East India Company and Amirs of Sindh on 22 August of the same year. The fourth article of this treaty highlights the political motive of East India Company in Sindh as it reads as under,

The Government of Sindh will not allow the establishment of the tribe of the French in Sindh.⁵

Subsequently the first treaty was followed by another signed on 9th November 1820 C.E. In which both parties assured each other to continue mutual intercourse.⁶ Following to this treaty, for next ten years that is to say till 1830 C.E. East India Company adhered to policy of non-interference towards Sindh. To this we can say that it characterized the first phase of East India Company's relations with Sindh where the purpose was to secure commercial interests in Sindh against all rivals.

It was in the second phase where the commercial interests of East India Company were coupled with the political goals. This time East India Company Directors feared that Russians might advance towards Indian sub-continent as British, and Russians were at arms with each other. This rivalry of nineteenth century is better known as "The Great Game". This imperial war had its direct impact on Afghanistan, Persia and on Punjab and Sindh. At the time, policy of East India Company was to maintain buffer region between themselves and the Russians. Thus, in this way, this imperial rivalry shaped the relations of British with Afghanistan, Sindh and Punjab states.

In case of Ameers of Sindh, from 1838 C.E onwards East India Company signed multiple treaties and almost in all treaties East India Company started to extend their dominance over affairs of Sindh and encroached the authorities of local rulers. In different clauses of these treaties, it seemed that Company officials tried to increase their influence on Ameers of Sindh by trapping them in unwanted treaties. They tried persistently in every successive treaty to make Ameers and Sindh dependent on East India Company in all terms. For instance, the treaty signed in 1839 C.E between Meer Roostum Khan of Khairpur State and East India Company, a clause was inserted under which Meer Roostum Khan was barred to establish and even enter in negotiations with the ruler of any other state.

Meer Roostum Khan, and his heirs and successors, will act in subordinate cooperation with the British Government, and acknowledge its supremacy, and not have any connexion with any other chiefs and states.⁷

Succeeding clause of same treaty further stated,

The Ameer, and his heirs and successors, will not enter into negotiation with any chief or state without the knowledge and sanction of British Government; but the usual amicable correspondence with friends and relations shall continue.⁸

Similar clauses were also part of treaty signed with Ameers of Hyderabad viz., Meer Noor Mahomed Khan, Meer Nusseer Khan, Meer Mahomed Khan, and Meer Sobdar Khan in 1839 C.E.

However, after suffering a defeat in First Anglo-Afghan War (1839-1842 C.E) relations started to sour between Ameers of Sindh and East India Company. By this time some Company officials had formed the opinion that withdrawal of British forces from Afghanistan might inspire Indian states to raise arms against them. From this point onwards Company officials in Sindh and even the then Governor of Bombay, Sir George Arthur had become skeptical about intentions of Ameers of Sindh. This is quite evident from his note written in September 1842 C.E. In this minute, Sir George Arthur explains that conditions in Sindh demanded strengthening of British forces in different parts of Sindh. He refers to intelligence report in which it had been highlighted that Ameers of Sindh were considering rising together in arms against British just like Afghans had done in Afghanistan.

The same digest goes on to state, that confidential agents are about to be sent from Hyderabad to Khyrpore, “to consult with the Upper Sindh Ameers. as to leaguings against us;” and” much excitement prevails in Hyderabad, regarding the report of the British having been expelled from Candahar, which is stated to have come from Kelat;⁹

Not only this, but East India Company viewed several acts of Ameers of Sindh as violations of Treaties signed with them earlier. For instance, letter of Meer Roostum Khan to Maharaja Sher Singh of Lahore of April 1842 C.E breached an article of Treaty of 1838 C.E under which it was maintained that Ameer, his heirs and successors will not enter in negotiations without knowledge of the British Government. It was this moment that we can say that British officials formally started to view the Ameers as a possible threat to their possessions and interests in Sindh.

The above situation did not change even with the coming of Sir Charles Napier in October 1842 C.E. who was then entrusted to deal with Ameers of Sindh and take every possible measure to ensure British interests remain secured in Sindh¹⁰. Sir Charles Napier held totally different view about Ameers of Sindh. To him Ameers of Sindh were not more than tyrants ruling over their subjects with cruelty also they had violated the terms of previous treaties Therefore, this demanded strong action

against them. This is evident from his letter written on October 17th 1842 C.E. to Governor General Lord Ellenborough.

By treaty, the time for which we may occupy our present camps is unlimited; but there is such hostility to us on the part of the Ameer such a hatred to the treaties-such a resolution to break them in every way; there is, among their people, such a growing attachment to the British rule, that putting these facts together, the question arises whether we should abandon the interests of humanity, and those of the British Government (for in this case they are one), and at once evacuate Sindh;¹¹

If we remain, our camps will soon be filled with the subjects of the Ameer, flying from their oppression.¹²

Apart from this, Sir Charles Napier raised a charge against Ameer of Sindh that they have violated the term of Treaty of 1839 C.E. under which they were not permitted to levy taxes. To the Ameer this clause was meant only for the British whereas, Sir Charles Napier insisted that this meant for Sindhis subjects too. Clause XI of this treaty states,

No toll will be levied on trading boats passing up or down the river Indus, from the sea to the northernmost point of that stream, within the territories of the Ameer of Hyderabad.¹³

Obviously the Ameer of Sindh in no way would have accepted this interpretation of the above clause because it would have deprived them of their fundamental source of revenue. To quote Sir Charles himself, "Verily your Highnesses speak truth, and I will not listen to a word your subjects may say against you; but the treaty says no tolls shall be levied. It is not your subjects, therefore, but we who complain."¹⁴

Thus, this resulted in further worsening of relations between Ameer of Sindh and British which ended up with British annexation of Sindh in 1843 C.E.

After defeating the Ameer, Sir Charles Napier announced the commencement of British East India Company rule in Sindh and made his proclamation of conquest in these words,

The Talpoors have been overthrown by the British and are

dethroned-Scinde belongs to them no longer. All revenues to be paid to the ameeers are now to be paid to the English.¹⁵

By this proclamation, rule of British East India Company began in Sindh. Sir Charles Napier was appointed as the first Governor of Sindh, and he remained in his office from 1843-1847. Immediately after the conquest Sir Charles Napier took certain measures and the purpose of these measures was firstly, to solidify the rule of British East India Company. Secondly, lay the foundations of support in favour of British authorities in Sindh. To achieve these goals Sir Charles Napier established an effective police department in Sindh. He also took popular decisions like abolition of slavery in Sindh.¹⁶ In order to gain loyalty of chieftains and sardars of Sindh Sir Charles Napier returned their *jagirs* and allowed them to wear arms which was considered mark of dignity and governor's confidence in them. Sir Charles Napier used to address these sardars and chieftains in these words when they appeared before him to assure their loyalties with the British East India Company.

Take back your sword. You have used it with honour against me, and I esteem a brave enemy. But if forgetful of this voluntary submission you draw it again in opposition to my government, I will tear it from you and kill you as a dog.¹⁷

In this manner Sir Charles Napier succeeded in bringing peace in his newly conquered province. Chieftains and sardars by this voluntary submission regained their lost *jagirs*. On the other hand, Sir Charles Napier achieved his most significant goal of laying the foundations of support in favour of British rule over Sindh.

Now it was time for the new government to concentrate on administrative affairs of Sindh. But unfortunately, this new setup headed by Sir Charles Napier did not deliver effectively as it was thought. It is evident from the fact that in the first three years from 1843-1846, this new administration had made Sindh indebted to total 138 lakh of rupees.¹⁸ The reason behind this financial crisis was heavy expenditures of new government. Secondly this new administration was facing difficulties in collection of revenues. This was admitted by government officials that they were unable to collect projected revenue targets for the first six months following the conquest as there was disorder in the province. This was followed by locust's attack which had almost annihilated crops. Third reason for the stress upon financial resources of Sindh was the salaries paid to Bombay army soldiers who were stationed in Sindh.

Besides this, not enough concentration was laid on the public works. This fact can also be verified by the statement of Mr. Bartle Frere who was later on appointed as Chief Commissioner of Sindh in 1851.

In 1851 there was not a mile of bridged or of metaled road, not masonry bridge of any kind- in fact, not five miles of any cleared road- only one set of barracks (for a troop of horse artillery) of higher class than 'temporary', not a single permanent shed for an arsenal,¹⁹

Unfortunately, successive Chief Commissioners in Sindh utilized their energy and available resources more on construction of infrastructure and on collection of revenue. Education sector received less attention from the British authorities in Sindh. It is evident from the fact that even after four decades of their conquest not a single intermediate college was established in Sindh by the British authorities. D.J Science College was established in the year 1885 C.E by the efforts of civil society and Dayaram Jethmal contributed huge sum for construction of college. In the recognition of his services the college was named after him.²⁰ Another institution Sindh Madressah-tul-Islam was also established in the same year by the efforts of Khan Bahadur Hassanally Effendi who was head of National Muhammadan Association, Karachi branch. Besides Karachi, National Muhammadan Association had its branches at Sukkur, Shahdadpur and Larkana. The purpose of this organization was to impart modern education to the Muslims of Sindh.²¹

The construction of Sind Madressa College to some degree minimized the grievances of people of Sindh but due to the lack of proper attention of government most of the issues of the province remained unanswered. Limited number of educational institutions in Sindh bared an ordinary man to acquire modern education. Only sons of sardars and chieftains were able to acquire modern education. As a result of this, these sardars and landlords became acquainted with modern education and later involved themselves in politics. Besides them, businessmen also acquainted themselves with modern education and they too got involved in politics. These men from the elite class later formed political parties in Sindh and became representatives of the populace of Sindh.

Faces of Modern Politics of Sindh

The first two decades of twentieth century witnessed significant

events in Indian politics. In these years the course of Indian politics changed, and it remained so until independence. It was in these first two decades of twentieth century when communal element became part of Indian politics. Now, Indian politics was much centered round this communal question. Some important events which took place in these first two decades of twentieth century were basically results of this communal element. The foundation of All-India Muslim League in 1906 was the most significant event in this respect. One of the objectives given for the formation of All-India Muslim League included,

- b) To promote and advance the political rights and interests of the Muslims of India, and to respectfully represent their needs and aspirations to the Government.²²

By the formation of All India Muslim League the communal element became permanent in Indian politics. The first session of the All-India Muslim League was held in Karachi in 1907. In this whole development, politics of Sindh was initially different from the rest of Indian politics. Sindh was Muslim majority province with 70 per cent Muslim population. Among the minorities Hindus were largest in number.²³ Despite of this huge difference in numbers both Muslim and Hindu communities in Sindh lived with peace and harmony. There was religious tolerance present in these two communities, and it was also observed that Hindus along with Muslims visited shrines of Sufi saints and paid their reverences.²⁴ In such atmosphere and social setup Sindh remained immune from communal politics. This is evident from the most significant chapter of Sindh politics where Hindus and Muslims jointly presented the case of Sindh before the British authorities. With the departure of Sir Charles Napier in 1847 Sindh was amalgamated with the Bombay Presidency. As a result of this decision, Sindh lost her autonomous provincial status. Lack of attention of authorities towards Sindh made life of common man miserable. Sindh as compared to other regions of India became deprived one. This unjust treatment of British authorities developed sense of deprivation among Sindhis. Interestingly, this sense of deprivation was equally felt by Muslims and Hindus. Therefore, they launched a movement for restoration of Sindh's autonomy and they demanded Sindh should be separated from Bombay Presidency. The first ever demand made in this regard was from the platform of Indian National Congress in 1913. Furthermore, the person who made this demand was not a Muslim, but he was a Hindu named Harchandrai Vishindas. In his speech he said:

On the conquest of Sind by the British in 1843 it was administered as a separate Province with Sir Charles Napier as its Governor. After his departure in 1847, it was annexed to the Bombay Presidency and still continues to be so, although in several matters the Commissioner-in-Sind, unlike the commissioners of other Divisions, of the Presidency, has been invested with powers of the local Government. Still the Province possesses several geographical and ethnological characteristics which give her the hall mark of a self-contained territorial unit.²⁵

It was in this phase where leading Muslim politicians actively participated in this movement and at the same time it gave them an opportunity to get themselves acquainted with modern political issues. Politicians like G.M Syed, Sheikh Abdul Majid Sindhi, Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah, Muhammad Ayub Khuhro, Allah Bux Soomro, Sir Abdullah Haroon became very much active in politics. Besides other politicians these were the men who became face of modern politics of twentieth century Sindh. In another development, when communalism became rife, Harchandra Vishindas also opposed the separation of Sindh

Men of Dissimilar Ideologies

If one can draw some similarities between these politicians of Sindh then they will include that they all are Muslims, most of them acquired modern education most of them belonged to the elite class. Some of them were sons of landlords or themselves landlords. Besides this most of them had religious following of masses as they belonged to Sayid or Pir families. But above all these similarities their political understanding and approach mattered most. Despite of the fact that communal element had become central topic of discussion and permanent element of Indian politics these men were not attracted by this question. Interestingly even after 1930 these men did not align themselves with any all-India party. The views which these men held during that period are worth mentioning here.

Sir Haji Abdullah Haroon stated,

Any attempt to set up a communal party in the future assembly to follow the All India Muslim League line would prove disastrous.²⁶

Sarah Ansari in her article “Muslim Nationalist or Nationalist Muslim? Allah Bakhsh Soomro and Muslim Politics in 1930s and 1940s Sindh” writes about Allah Bakhsh Soomro.

In contrast to many of his fellow Sindhi Muslim politicians who gravitated to varying extents in the direction of the All-India Muslim League (AIML), Soomro seemed resistant to its pull, leaning instead towards a pragmatic nationalism that saw him align himself with ‘Nationalist’ Muslim initiatives at the all-India level.²⁷

She further writes,

From early 1938, Soomro seemed to embark on a political career that revolved around, or was at least characterized by, deliberate attempts at cross-communal cooperation.²⁸

Abdul Majid Sindhi formed Sind Azad Party in 1932. He formed this party with an objective of working for an autonomous Sindh state.²⁹ Besides this he, himself and his party became representative of poor peasants and working class. Once again this party and politics of Abdul Majid Sindhi were more province oriented.

Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah was a very prominent figure in Sindh politics. In 1913 he joined the All-India Muslim League.³⁰ When Sindh regained her provincial status and elections were held to the Sindh Legislative Assembly; Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah did not contest elections on All India Muslim League party ticket. He contested these elections on ticket of his own political party called Sindh Muslim Political Party.³¹ This attitude and nature of politics shows that Sindh politicians were less interested in all India parties like Congress and All India Muslim League.

Ghulam Murtaza Sayed belonged to the landed Sayed family of Sann, District Dadu.³² His first exposure to the politics came in the days of Khilafat Movement. He himself also organized Khilafat Conference at his hometown Sann in 1920. At times of movement of separation of Sindh from Bombay Presidency, Sayed became its prominent activist. In 1930, he organized Hari Committee for the legal rights of the peasants.³³ For centuries poor peasants were living in miserable conditions in Sindh. They were first exploited by the Hindu *banias* and later when British gained rule over Sindh their conditions further worsened. The British

authorities awarded large pieces of lands to their protégé's. Sayed believed that it was then time to protect interests of poor peasants and working class of Sindh against landlords and businessmen. It was for this reason Ayesha Jalal has mentioned him in these words.

He now claimed to be the champion of the poor against Ghulam Hussain's oligarchs.³⁴

This was the brief introduction of prominent politicians of Sindh and their varying approaches and ideologies. In the early years of their politics, they aligned themselves with the regional political parties. It was for this reason All India Muslim League did not secure any seat from Sindh in the 1936-1937 elections. All India Muslim League tried its best to convince prominent politicians of Sindh to have its party tickets. But almost all the prominent politicians of Sindh preferred regional political parties over All India Muslim League. This situation did not change by 1938 and it was after resignation of Congress Ministries when things started to change in favour of the All India Muslim League in Sindh.

Infighting of Groups

The Sindh Legislative Assembly was set up when Sindh regained provincial status. The Sindh Legislative Assembly was provided with 60 seats. There were 19 General seats, Muslims 34, Commerce, and Industry 2, European 2, Landholders 2 and Labour 1. The elections to the assembly occurred in 1937. In these elections, parties which participated included Sindh Azad Party, Sindh United Party which was organized on the lines of Punjab's Unionist Party. Seth Haji Abdullah Haroon was founder of this party. Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah founded his Sindh Muslim Party. In the elections Sindh United Party secured 21 out of 34 seats and emerged leading party in the assembly. But then the Governor of Sindh Sir Lancelot Graham invited Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah to form government in the province.³⁵ Interestingly, Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah's party secured only three seats. This was an absolute violation of the democratic principle of majority rule. This also opened doors of floor crossing in the house. Some of the members of Sindh United Party defected and joined Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah's Group. With support of independent Hindu members, European members and defected members from Sindh United Party Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah formed the government. But his ministry remained for a

short period of time in office. The clash of ideologies became the main reason for the removal Sir Ghulam Hussain's ministry. In this regard G.M Sayed made following confession.

We put the following important points of our manifesto before Sir Ghulam Hussain:

1. The passage of a law on Land Alienation
2. The passage of the Tenancy Rights Act
3. Steps to ease of loans through a Debt Reconciliation Act
4. Exemption from paying interest on government loans.
5. Abolishing protocol restraints and privileges for attendance before the commissioner and collectors
6. An end to the practice of nominating members to the local bodies

Points 5 and 6 were accepted but the more substantive points such as 1,2,3 and 4 were not. We tried our best to convince Sir Ghulam Hussain, but he was adamant. At this in consultation with the independent group and the Congress, we threw the Ghulam Hussain Government out on a one-rupee cut motion and formed a new cabinet with the help of Hindus.³⁶

The next ministry was headed by Allah Bux Soomro. He remained in office from 1938-1940. It was in the period of his ministry when two significant events occurred in Sindh. Firstly, All India Muslim League became successful in winning over the support of most of the prominent politicians of Sindh like Sir Haji Abdullah Haroon, G.M Sayed, Muhammad Ayub Khuhro, Gazdar and others. Here it is significant to recall that these were the same men who had maintained provincial stance and were unwilling to accept any all-India party. It happened in the year 1938 when organization of All India Muslim League was reconstituted in Sindh.³⁷ Second incident that occurred during this time was of Masjid Mazilgah dispute. This dispute emerged between Muslims and Hindus over a building in Sukkur. Muslims claimed it to be handed over to them. On the other hand, Hindus also made claim on this building. This created law and order situation in province. On political grounds Allah Bux lost confidence of Hindu members in his ministry and his ministry was removed in the year 1940.³⁸ At the same time, this Masjid Manzilgah dispute disturbed the centuries old relationship of peace and harmony between Muslims and Hindus of Sindh.

The new ministry was headed by Mir Bandeh Ali Talpur. In his cabinet he included prominent Muslim Leaguers like G.M Sayed, M.A Khuhro and Sheikh Abdul Majid Sindhi. After one year in office this ministry also collapsed. Once again Allah Bux formed government in the province. Unfortunately, this time also he had to face a law-and-order situation in province. The first one was due to the Hur unrest in the province. Secondly, as he was aligned towards policies of Congress, he himself questioned the British policies in India. Later on he renounced his title of 'Khan Bahadur' together with his OBE (Order of The British Empire). Governor of Sindh dismissed his ministry.

Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah returned to the office of Premier of Sindh in 1942 after negotiating with the Sindh Provincial Muslim League. Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah joined Muslim League and he also offered ministries to Sindh Provincial Muslim League. In this way new ministry was set up in Sindh. By this time some significant events had already occurred in Indian politics. Most significant was the Lahore Resolution presented by All India Muslim League in 1940. This demanded serious efforts from the member of Sindh Muslim League. Here it is important to note that all those politicians who earlier opposed communal politics in Sindh, were now in the forefront of this communal demand. They actually took the responsibility of spreading the message of All India Muslim League across Sindh. Most notable was G.M Sayed. In 1943, G.M Sayed became President of Sindh Provincial Muslim League. He toured Sindh and reorganized Sindh Provincial Muslim League in Sindh. New branches were setup and membership were increase by his efforts. G.M Sayed also presented a resolution in Sindh Legislative Assembly in favour of demand of Pakistan in 1943.

Sir, I rise to move the following resolution: -

This House recommends to Government to convey to His Majesty's Government through His Excellency the Viceroy, the sentiments and wishes of the Muslims of this Province that whereas Muslims of India are a separate nation possessing religion, philosophy, social customs, literature, traditions, political and economic theories of their own, quite different from those of the Hindus, they are justly entitled to the right, as a single, separate nation, to have independent national states of their own, carved out in the zones where they are in majority in the sub-continent of India.³⁹

By this time no one had any idea that the person who presented a resolution in Sindh Legislative Assembly in favour of Pakistan Demand would become a critic of All India Muslim League politics in the later years. This change of mind did not occur suddenly, but it had some significant reasons behind it. These reasons are discussed below.

Firstly, G.M Sayed had pro-leftist approach. He was of the opinion that in order to achieve prosperity it was important to elevate the down-trodden class. Sindh was Muslim majority province, but Hindus had monopoly and great influence over the economic life of the province. Poor Muslim peasants were living in miserable conditions. They had no opportunities for upward mobility. In this hour of need, Muslim landholders, *zamindars*, *sirdars* and *pirs* were not on the side of poor peasants. These people had aligned their interests and loyalties to the ruling elite. The ruling elite British authorities were least interested in improving the conditions of poor peasant of Sindh. Therefore, in order to protect the rights of poor peasants he organized Hari Committee. The foundation of Hari Committee is a proof of his leftist approach in politics. Besides this he tried to uplift poor working class against Muslim landholders, *zamindars* and *sirdars*. Even at the time when he joined All India Muslim League, he had this approach in his mind. It is clear from his following statement.

The Muslim League was a communal party, which had a fair sprinkling of British loyalists, many of whom had been knighted or made Khan Bahadurs. It had no programme for the emancipation of the people. It lacked sincere workers and I thought that if devoted workers like my colleagues and me joined it, we could change its character and turn it into an anti-imperialist and pro-people party. It was in this spirit that I joined the Muslim League.⁴⁰

So, it was the approach which G.M Sayed carried out even when he had joined All India Muslim League. But things were not simple and easy as he thought. For one thing he was right that All India Muslim League was party of Khan Bahadurs and landholders. It had no exception in Sindh too. Many Khan Bahadurs and landholders had also joined All India Muslim League and were prominent members of Sindh Provincial Muslim League. Therefore, it became clear that there was going to be an intra-party struggle within the ranks of Sindh Provincial Muslim League. In this struggle, Sayed group was challenged by the same Khan Bahadurs and landholders. Most prominent among them were Sir Ghulam Hussain

Hidayatullah, Khan Bahadur Muhammad Ayub Khuhro and Yusuf Haroon. G.M Sayed first decried the corruption of the opponent group. G.M Sayed wrote number of letters to Mohammad Ali Jinnah and addressed him about the corruption of fellow party Leaguers.

A new hope was born and all over the villages and towns of Sind, the Muslims looked forward to their Ministers to inaugurate a regime that will be broad based on the cooperation of the people and inspired by a zeal for their welfare and carry out the Muslim League programme. Stop.

The experiment has gone for a year and three quarters and nothing substantial has been done in the constructive field. Stop. Corruption has become the order of the day. Stop. The working Committee has before it a long list of the misdeeds of some of the Ministers.⁴¹

Hatim A. Alavi also wrote about the corruption of Ministers in his letter to Mohammad Ali Jinnah, dated 6 August 1944.

My dear Quaid-i- Azam, it is true that with the exception of Dr. Hemandas, none of our Ministers are honest and do not let an opportunity slip by of fattening themselves financially;⁴²

M.H Gazdar wrote a letter to Mohammad Ali Jinnah and informed him about the intra party conflict between the Sayed group and the Haroon group.

The Alwahid Company was started and [its] control take over by the late Sir Abdoola Haroon to serve the Muslim League. We all subscribed and also asked others to do so to strengthen the League. But the paper is now being used to hit G.M Sayed and the League as long as the former remains President. The paper`s policy is that of a paper which appears to be a personal property of Haroons.⁴³

Here for the purpose of impartial analysis it is important to mention the observations of Governor of Sindh regarding the cabinet ministers of 1940. Governor Graham writes in his letter to the Viceroy,

My Finance Minister is Shaikh Abdul Majid, a converted Hindu with no property and no interest of corrupt nature but something

of the fanaticism of a convert in the first generation. I like him personally and my finance secretary reports for him that he is honestly endeavouring to understand the position and are prepared to accept advice. He is, or recently has been secretary of the Sindh branch of the Muslim League but I have never found him tiresome on that account.⁴⁴

For Muhammad Ayub Khuhro he writes,

Khuhro is probably one of the most dishonest men ever sworn in as minister. He is entirely shameless as a liar and has no objection to be told that he is a liar. The Secretary, Public Works Department and myself are kept very busy endeavouring to prevent corrupt deals on the part of this minister and I am by no means certain that a time will not arise when I shall have to ask you whether in your opinion that material at my disposal is sufficient to justify my dismissing him... I remember being warned by Brabourne before I came here that I should find Khuhro the most dishonest man in Sindh; but I was not aware then that I should have the pleasure of having him [as]one of my ministers.⁴⁵

G.M Sayed continuously addressed Mohammad Ali Jinnah and informed him about the corruption of Ministers in Sindh Government. In a meeting with the Premier of Sindh Sir Ghulam Hussain Hiadaytullah and G.M Sayed, Quaid-i-Azam urged Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah to put an end to this evil. As published by a report of *Daily Gazette* on 6 December 1944.

The question of corruption that is prevailing in the Sind administration was discussed. This is unfortunately the case not only in Sind but in other provinces also, and even Delhi is not free from it. Nevertheless, it was urged upon Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah that he should take immediate steps to put an end to this evil, and, if necessary, appoint a special officer for this purpose.⁴⁶

On another occasion G.M Sayed once again informed Mohammad Ali Jinnah in person about the corrupt practices of the Ministry. He sums up Jinnah's response in these words,

I apprised him in detail of the grievances we had against the Ministry. Mr. Jinnah said the War was on and the Prime Minister of Sindh was in the good books of the British and that the Muslim League Ministries were functioning with the help of the British bureaucracy. It would be expedient under the circumstances, therefore, to tolerate the Ministers' acts of omission and commission.⁴⁷

Even this response from the central high command did not distract G.M Sayed from his tireless efforts of promoting and propagating the message of All India Muslim League in Sindh. But the two by elections and at the time of general elections of 1945-46, G.M Sayed was defeated and sidelined by his fellow party men. In the by election of Shikarpur, Sayed found himself in conflict the then Premier Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah. In this by election Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah who himself was landholder wanted party ticket for his son. G.M Sayed along with other members of Parliamentary Board did not issue ticket to Anwar Hidayatullah, son of the Premier of Sindh. As a result, there aroused differences and dislike between these two men. In the 1945-1946 general elections there was a deadlock between Sayed Group and Khan Bahadur Muhammad Ayub Khuhro group. As result, the matter was refereed to Central Parliamentary Board. To this G.M Sayed objected. He was of the opinion that matters of Provincial party should be vested in local Sindh Provincial Muslim League. President and party members should be autonomous in taking decisions. His protest was not answered. On the other hand, the approach of Central command of party may be best analyzed from the speech of Mohammad Ali Jinnah which he delivered on 12 August 1945. He stated,

We shall have time to quarrel among ourselves and we shall have time when these differences have to be settled.... We shall have time for domestic programme and policies, but first get the Government. This is a nation without any territory or any Government.⁴⁸

But Sayed was so disappointed that he along with other members of Muslim League in Sindh Legislative Assembly opposed his own ministry. On this All-India Muslim League took disciplinary action against G.M Sayed and removed him from the office of President of Sindh Provincial Muslim League.

G.M Sayed sums up his conflict with Mohammad Ali Jinnah in these words,

No, this was not a conflict between two highly assertive personalities who were determined to have their own way, this was rather the inevitable conflict between two essentially different attitudes and ideologies, that had gathered its momentum as years had rolled by. He was the mighty angel from the top that viewed the surface with an indifferent sweep, and whose unchallengeable authority could not be dictated; mine was the humble view from the bottom, working its way from the concrete realities of my province. I felt confident that my feet were planted on solid earth and this conflict had arisen out of the very real problems that had cropped up within my range of experience. These problems had to be solved first before there could be any bigger problems demanding solution.⁴⁹

Conclusion

From the above detailed analysis of politics of Sindh from 1936 to 1946 it becomes clear that this was a significant period in history of Sindh and the region which became Pakistan in 1947. It was the period when for the exemplary communal harmony amongst Hindus and Muslims was put to test. These two communities lived in communal harmony and religious tolerance for several centuries. Even when Indian politics was occupied with the communal question people of Sindh and politicians of Sindh kept themselves away from communal politics. This was the time when Sindhi people for the first time exercised their democratic right of vote. Their representatives were in assemblies and government was set up consisted of their leaders. It was a hope for people of Sindh for prosperity. Unfortunately, it was the same time when they witnessed bitter communal conflicts. Besides this it was the first time Muslim League had won over the support of Sindhi politicians by the end of 1938. But bringing of leading Sindhi politicians under umbrella of All India Muslim League created problems instead of providing solutions to the problems. These local Sindhi politicians had their different ideologies and approaches. In many respects, they were ideologically opposed to each other. Even the goal of achieving Pakistan did not unite them. As a result of this, there emerged mistrust in hearts of these men towards

each other. Not only this, but there emerged mistrust for the central command of All India Muslim League. Some of these Sindhi politicians were of the opinion that local provincial bodies should be left autonomous from the influence and dictation of central command. This sense of mistrust continued even after creation of Pakistan and in fact this sense of insecurity remained dominant in the succeeding years of partition of India.

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