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## **Jinnah and Palestine Question**

### **Abstract**

*Palestine has been honored place for the Muslims which faced troubled phase after conclusion of WWII. For Indian Muslims, it was important due to its status as first Qibla and Jinnah, as leader of the Muslims, raised his voice in support of the Palestinian Muslims throughout his political struggle. He always supported the Arab cause and, despite the British pro-Jewish policy, he maintained cordial relations with the Palestinian leadership. All India Muslim League, under Jinnah, passed resolutions over every turmoil and ensured its un-tiring support for their Arab brethren. The research endeavors to highlight Jinnah's stance over the Palestine question during last phase of his political struggle.*

The Ottoman Empire participated in World War I in alliance with the Axis Powers. After conclusion of war Turkey was forced to surrender all of its Middle Eastern territories including Palestine. The British policy over Palestine was fulfillment of Balfour Declaration (1917) which allowed Jewish settlement to their claimed ancestral lands. The Indian Muslims launched Khilafat Movement to save their Qibla-i-Awal, the institution of caliphate and other holy places in Middle East. But the movement could not produce tangible political gains except ushering a wave of protests in support of the Palestinian Muslims by celebrating 'Palestine Days' as gesture of solidarity with the Arabs<sup>1</sup>. All India Muslim League rejected migration and settlement of the Jews and forcible expulsion of the native Arabs<sup>2</sup>.

Palestine issue gained significant attention under leadership of Muhammad Ali Jinnah. He not only broadened League's roots among the masses but also took up Palestine issue as part of its political roadmap<sup>3</sup>. In April 1934, Jinnah attended meeting of AIML Council that, along with other issues, proposed a delegation to inform viceroy over Palestine problem, unjust Balfour Declaration and deprivations of the Arab inhabitants of Palestine<sup>4</sup>. In April 1936, Amin-el-Husseni formed Arab Higher Committee which embarked a general strike against oppression and Jewish settlement which turned into an armed revolt<sup>5</sup>. The reports of revolt and subsequent measures to suppress the rebels jolted Indian Muslims<sup>6</sup>. The League observed "Palestine Day" while Punjab Provincial Muslim League observed 19 June 1936 to show solidarity with the Arabs<sup>7</sup>.

Lucknow Session of the League censured the British policy towards Palestine and highlighted public reaction to the international situation<sup>8</sup>. Plight of the Palestinians and the British policies could usher disastrous impact from inside and outside India<sup>9</sup>. Jinnah mentioned that the British policy of deception was destroying trust over the proclamations and honor of the promises which were made to the Arabs<sup>10</sup>.

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Jinnah said, "I am speaking not only of the Musalmans of India but of the world, when I say that Great Britain will be digging its grave if she fails to honor her original proclamations, promises and intentions – pre-war and even post war - which were so unequivocally expressed to the Arabs and the world at large"<sup>11</sup>. He further assured his support to the Arabs and gave them message of hope on behalf of AIML<sup>12</sup>. The League resolution demanded implementation of the recommendations of the Royal Palestine Commission, and the policy statement by Secretary of State for the Colonies should be implemented without further delay"<sup>13</sup>. It also emphasized League of Nations to immediately terminate the mandate due to its inhuman terms<sup>14</sup>. The influential rulers of the Muslim states were appealed to utilize their influence to safeguard the holy places of Palestine from enslavement<sup>15</sup>. Furthermore, League showed its full trust in the Supreme Muslim Council and Arab Higher Committee to resolve Palestine dispute<sup>16</sup>.

League Council passed a resolution to observe "Palestine Day" on Friday 26 August 1938 to "condemn unjust, inhuman and repressive" policies of the British government<sup>17</sup>. The day was remarked to "offer prayers for complete success for the Arabs for their just cause and their struggle for freedom of their homeland"<sup>18</sup>. A 7 member committee was appointed to contemplate measures to pressurize the British government for the Arab cause<sup>19</sup>.

Jinnah sent Ch. Khaliqzaman and Abdur Rehman Siddiqui to attend international conference on Arab Question. He wanted to reserve a seat for India during the proceeding but his request was turned down. Khaliqzaman was directed to just assist the Grand Mufti during the proceedings. The two member delegation also visited London, Cairo, and Near East to assess the situation to report back in India<sup>20</sup>.

Jinnah took up Palestine issue in Patna Session and stated "I know how deeply Muslims have been stirred over the issue of Palestine. I know Muslims will not shrink from any sacrifice if required to help the Arabs who are engaged in the fight for their national freedom"<sup>21</sup>. Furthermore, Jinnah condemned the British government that "all of our sympathies are with those valiant martyrs who are fighting the battle of freedom against usurpers"<sup>22</sup>. Moreover, League rejected Balfour Declaration as unjust, and applauded the Arabs as 'heroes and martyrs'.<sup>23</sup> It expressed its confidence and trust in the Grand Mufti as true leader of the Arabs<sup>24</sup>. Jinnah allowed a full day deliberations over Palestine issue on third day of Patna Session<sup>25</sup>. All-India Palestine Day was observed on February 8, 1939 and an adjournment motion was launched in the Central Assembly<sup>26</sup>.

On 26th March 1939, Jinnah presided the working committee meeting that resolved "Palestine issue should stand over till the British proposals are known"<sup>27</sup>. The British White Paper of 1939 envisaged single state solution of Palestine conflict and designed future Jewish state<sup>28</sup>. Jinnah chaired another meeting of working committee on 2-3 July 1939 which examined findings of the 'white paper' published over Palestine. It concluded after listening to the delegates that the findings were "most unsatisfactory and disappointing and totally unacceptable"<sup>29</sup>.

Furthermore, Jinnah wrote to the Supreme Arab Council of Palestine through Baghdad consulate in Bombay to assured his support for Palestinians efforts to pressurize the government of India in favor of the Arab demands<sup>30</sup>. He also wrote

to Viceroy Lord Linlithgow over Muslim concerns on Palestine and its religious importance for the Muslims<sup>31</sup>. The Arab revolt was over but its repercussions were horrible, Jinnah realized the plight and opened 'Palestine Fund' to help the crisis ridden people of Palestine<sup>32</sup>. A committee was appointed under Ch. Khaliquzzaman to devise mechanism for fund collection and dispatching money to the deserving people in Palestine<sup>33</sup>.

Jinnah not only supported cause of Palestinians and reiterated that "the policy of the British Government towards the Arabs in Palestine has wounded deeply Muslim feelings and sentiments and all representations on that behalf have had no real effect so far"<sup>34</sup>. Jinnah's dedicated and concerted efforts for the Arab rights a majority of available Muslim delegates attended the session<sup>35</sup>. The Lahore session 1940 was also a vivid example where he demanded concrete measures to resolve the issue instead of assuring endeavors that "we want that the British government should in fact and actually meet the demands of the Arabs in Palestine"<sup>36</sup>. The League resolution showed concerns over "inordinate" delay in settlement of Palestine issue and demanded that "no arrangements of a piecemeal character will be made in Palestine against the pledges given to the Muslim world, and particularly to the Muslims in India"<sup>37</sup>.

The 'White Paper' on Palestine raised new fears in minds of the Muslims. Jinnah expressed his reservations to Viceroy Lord Linlithgow, who replied that the rights of Palestinians must be preserved and assured. He pledged "you may rest assured that every consideration has been and will continue to be given by His Majesty's Government to legitimate Arabs claims"<sup>38</sup>. Jinnah was authorized by the League Council to "fix a day for the purpose of expressing and demonstrating deep sympathy and concerns of Muslim India with the Muslim countries" which would possibly be under attack during the WW II<sup>39</sup>. Furthermore, Jinnah directed Red Crescent Branch of Muslim League National Guards to remain ready to be sent to Middle East in emergency relief work.<sup>40</sup> Jinnah fixed 1st November 1940 as "Muslim Day of Observance" to pray for the Muslim countries around the globe. He "impressed upon all the Muslims to give all the assistance that they could give to the Muslim countries<sup>41</sup> it is our duty to help our Muslim brethren wherever they are because Islam enjoins that it is our duty to go to the rescue of our Muslim brethren"<sup>42</sup>. The League again pledged to stood up for rights of their Arab brothers and freedom for Palestine. Furthermore, it assured "its Arab brethren in Palestine that Muslim India will stand by them in their fight for their rights against the domination of international Jewry"<sup>43</sup>.

Jinnah was assured by the viceroy that under new regulations no immigrants would allowed violating rights of the Arab agriculturists. Jinnah chaired a meeting of League council which demanded protection of Arab rights as per assurance from Lord Linlithgow, the then viceroy<sup>44</sup>. League Council warned the British government of dire repercussions in case of further injustice and "result in the frustration of their national aspirations for independence will be greatly resented by the Muslims of India"<sup>45</sup>.

Jinnah visited Aligarh in March 1944 and spoke about issues of national and international importance to the student gathering. He reiterated his demand for protection of the Arab rights which the government had promised since start of the

war. Jinnah said "we are faced with another serious issue at the moment namely the Jewish problem in Palestine. If President Roosevelt, under the pressure of powerful Jewry, commits the blunder of forcing the British government to do injustice to the Arabs in Palestine, it will set the whole Muslim world ablaze from one end to another"<sup>46</sup>.

Jinnah's efforts and service for cause of Palestine did not go unnoticed or without any response from the Arabs. Muhammad Amin-el-Husseni, Mufti of Palestine, wrote to Jinnah and thanked Jinnah for his valuable services for the Arabs and his devotion for cause of the Muslims. Mufti further commended "that you are making continuously for the service of Islam and the Muslims not only in India but all the Muslim countries; and I would affirm to you that the whole of Islamic world values you and the Muslim League's stand and admires your continuous blessed efforts in the service of the Muslims"<sup>47</sup>. Jinnah's interview was published in the New York Times which showed his concerns over developments on Palestine question. He responded that "he will go to any length to help" the Palestinian brethren in their quest for their rights. He further clarified that they could do "whatever we can do, violence, if necessary"<sup>48</sup>.

On 25 April 1946, Anglo-American report on Palestine was published in London which jolted the whole Muslim world setting aside all previous promises to the Muslims and Arabs. Jinnah considered this report as a whole "the greatest betrayal of the Arabs" without considering any human values<sup>49</sup>. Jinnah presided over meeting of the League working committee which discussed report of the Arab-American Joint Committee of Inquiry on Palestine<sup>50</sup>. He clearly rejected that as it was "violation of the solemn and unequivocal pledges given by the British Government to the Arabs themselves and also the Muslim India"<sup>51</sup>. The League committee rejected the report and resolved that it "will create a grave situation not only in Middle East but also in India where the Muslims are pledged to help the Arabs of Palestine against aggression"<sup>52</sup>. Jinnah also announced 10 May as "Palestine Day" to remark solidarity with the Arab brethren<sup>53</sup>.

The British and the United States representatives analyzed "Anglo-American Report on Palestine" with focus on possibility of division of Palestine into four zones with reserved Jewish zone<sup>54</sup>. Jinnah himself was entangled in the domestic politics but he criticized the report and demanded urgent stop to the Jewish settlement in Palestine and immediate expulsion of already settled Jews to either Australia, Canada or anywhere else<sup>55</sup>. The clauses of white paper promised to stop all Jewish immigration to Palestine by 1st April, 1946. But the situation exacerbated due to the British submission to American supported Jewish and Zionist propaganda.

Jinnah's efforts for cause of Palestine were noticed in whole Middle East. He sent delegations to Muslim states to get their support and to explain them Pakistan cause<sup>56</sup>. Mufti Muhammad Amin-el-Husseni again wrote to Jinnah on 16 October 1946 and thanked Jinnah for his support and said "Muslims of the world would remember how the League under leadership of Jinnah favored and cared for the affairs of the Muslim countries like Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Western Trablus, Indonesia and all other countries of North Africa"<sup>57</sup>.

Jinnah was interviewed by Duncan Hooper, Reuter's correspondent, over future foreign policy of Pakistan. When he was asked about partition of Palestine, Jinnah out rightly rejected it. He said the partition plan was "bound to be the gravest disaster and unprecedented conflict not only between the Arabs and the authority... but the entire Muslim world would revolt, and Pakistan will have no other option but to support to the Arabs"<sup>58</sup>. He repeated his concerns in his interview to BBC that the "Muslims of the Sub-Continent had been compelled to condemn in strongest possible manner the unjust and cruel decision of the United Nations concerning the partition of Palestine" and also pledged support to the Arab brother in all possible means<sup>59</sup>.

After creation of Pakistan, Jinnah remained supportive to the cause of Palestine as he was in pre-partitions days. A delegation was sent to Cairo to participate in Inter-Parliamentary World Congress on Palestine to be held in last week of August 1947<sup>60</sup>. Furthermore, Zafrullah Khan was sent to represent Pakistan in the United Nations and attend deliberations of UN Ad Hoc Committee over Palestine. Zafrullah vividly declared Balfour Declaration as illegitimate and clearly rejected partition of Palestine that Pakistan would not accept that unjust plan<sup>61</sup>. Jinnah admired Zafrullah for his role and dedicated work and declared that he worked in accordance of policy guidelines from the government of Pakistan. Jinnah also censured the partition scheme as division of Palestine was against will of the people<sup>62</sup>. He said that Pakistan had no other option except to support Arabs to avoid outrage as consequence of illegitimate partition<sup>63</sup>.

Jinnah came to know the decision to divide Palestine against all efforts and aspirations of the Arabs. He endeavored to convince the American president Harry S. Truman via a cable message. Jinnah made appeal to think about rights of the Palestinians and tried to convey pitfalls of partition<sup>64</sup>. But the time had gone for such diplomatic efforts as the US got 33 votes in favor of the partition plan. Pakistan was one of those states which cast their vote against this scheme<sup>65</sup>. Jinnah termed the decision for partition as "unjust and cruel" and pledged to "help cause of the Arabs in Palestine in every possible way"<sup>66</sup>.

## **Conclusion**

Jinnah's support for Palestine was not political stunt to get maximum support of the Indian Muslims for his political manifesto. Rather it was heart felt and sincere gesture for liberating the Palestinian Muslims and their natural right over their lands. Though League was a minority party with limited resources to influence international politics yet Jinnah did his utmost to support Palestine in potential ways. As president of the League, he kept this issue as part of agenda of almost every annual session and meeting of the League. He censured the Government of India and Great Britain for their apathy towards issues of their mandate. While as governor general of newly born state, Jinnah endeavored to support Palestine in the United Nations to prevent vote for creation of Israel. Neither Pakistan had such strong diplomatic lobby at that movement nor it had influence over great powers to do so. But Jinnah's efforts for Palestine will always be remembered.

## Notes & References

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- <sup>1</sup> League resolutions over Palestine in Syed Shariffudin Pirzada, ed., *Foundations of Pakistan: ALL-India Muslim League Documents*, Vol. III (Islamabad: NIHCR, 2007), 229 and for Palestine Day, Ibid., 244
- <sup>2</sup> Umbreen Javed and Malik Touqir Ahmad Awan, "Pakistan and Question of Recognizing Israel: Historical Issues and Future Prospects," *South Asian Studies Journal* 29, no.2 (January 2014): 61-62
- <sup>3</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>4</sup> Resolution II of meeting of All India Muslim League Council, Pirzada,ed., *Foundations of Pakistan: All-India Muslim League Documents 1924-1947, Vol.III*, (Islamabad: NIHCR, 2007), 206 also see Freedom Movement Archives, National Archives of Pakistan, Islamabad, Vol. 219, 51-52
- <sup>5</sup> George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening: Story of the Arab National Movement* (New York: J.B. Lippincott , 1939), 355-360
- <sup>6</sup> *NWFP CID Records* File no. 12/10/12, Vol. II, 69-71 another report by S.P. Kohat about developments regarding Palestine. Ibid., 97
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>8</sup> *The Indian Annual Register*, 1937, Vol. II, 402-403 also Pirzada, *Foundations of Pakistan*, Vol.II, 238
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid., 239
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid., 239-242
- <sup>11</sup> Pirzada, ed., *Foundations of Pakistan*, Vol. II, 245
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid., 246
- <sup>13</sup> Resolution III, *Resolutions of All-India Muslim League from October 1937 to December 1938*. Published by Nawabzada Liaqat Ali Khan, 1944
- <sup>14</sup> Clause II of the resolution III, Ibid.
- <sup>15</sup> Clause III of the resolution III, Ibid,
- <sup>16</sup> Clause IV of the resolution III, Ibid.
- <sup>17</sup> Resolution V of the meeting of Council of All India Muslim League, Pirzada, ed., *Foundations of Pakistan*, Vol. III, 244
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid., 244
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid.,244-245 (names were Moulana Shoukat Ali, Moulana Zafar Ali Khan, Abdur Rehman Siddiqui, Moulana Qatab-ud-din Abdul Wali, Moulana Hasrat Mohani, Moulana Mazharuddin, and Aziz Ahmad Khan was as convener of the committee)
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>21</sup> Presidential Address of Jinnah to 26th Annual Session of All India Muslim League, Pirzada, ed., *Foundations of Pakistan*, Vol. II 278
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid., 278
- <sup>23</sup> Resolution V, Ibid.
- <sup>24</sup> Resolution V, bid.
- <sup>25</sup> Resolution V , Ibid., 287
- <sup>26</sup> The details are available in, Ibid., F. 49, 81-88 and 117

- <sup>27</sup> Pirzada, ed., *Foundations of Pakistan*, Vol. III, 259
- <sup>28</sup> *Middle East Papers* available at [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/brwh1939.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/brwh1939.asp) (21-01-2018)
- <sup>29</sup> Resolution VI, Resolutions of All India Muslim League Council, Pirzada, ed., *Foundations of Pakistan*, Vol. III, 265-266
- <sup>30</sup> QAP, F. 479, 14
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, F. 498, 29
- <sup>32</sup> Text of resolution in Pirzada, *Foundations of Pakistan*, Vol. III, 266
- <sup>33</sup> Other members were Sir Abdulullah Haroon, Abdur Rehman Siddiqui, Haji Abdussatar Esa Saith, and Sir Currimbhoy Ebrahim see; *Ibid.*, 266
- <sup>34</sup> Resolution 8 and 9 of the Working Committee of All India Muslim League, *Ibid.*, 277
- <sup>35</sup> Abdullah Haroon to Jinnah, 17 July 1939; Resolution X of AIML Council meeting, QAP, F. 479, 14 and AFM, Vol. 262, 78
- <sup>36</sup> Jinnah's presidential address on 23 March 1940, IAR, 1940, Vol. I, 307-308 also see Pirzada, ed., *Foundations of Pakistan*, Vol. II, 306
- <sup>37</sup> Resolution II, *Ibid.*, 317
- <sup>38</sup> Linlithgow to Jinnah, 27 June, 1940, Atique Zafar Sheikh and Muhammad Riaz Malik, ed., *Quaid-i-Azam and The Muslim World: Selected Documents, 1937-1948*, (Karachi: Royal Book Company, 1990), 56
- <sup>39</sup> Meeting of AIML Council held on 29 September 1940 under Jinnah Resolution VII, Pirzada, ed., *Foundations of Pakistan*, Vol. III, 299
- <sup>40</sup> Resolution VIII passed in meeting, *Ibid.*
- <sup>41</sup> The proceedings of AIML branches in, QAP, F. 274, 156; F. 1023, 5-6 and F. 902, 22 also see AFM, Vol. 291, 48
- <sup>42</sup> QAP, F. 722
- <sup>43</sup> Resolution VII of AIML Council meeting November 8, 1942, Pirzada, ed., *Foundations of Pakistan*, Vol. III, 330
- <sup>44</sup> Linlithgow to Jinnah, 27 June 1940, the letter referred the new laws and resolutions to protect rights of the Arabs and to put sanctions on the Jewish migration to Palestine.
- <sup>45</sup> Resolution VI of meeting of AIML Council, Pirzada, ed., *Foundations of Pakistan*, Vol. III, 335
- <sup>46</sup> Waheed Ahmad, ed., *Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Jinnah: The Nation's Voice*, Vol. III (Karachi: Quaid-i-Azam Academy, 1999), 396-397
- <sup>47</sup> Muhammad Amin-el-Huseni to Jinnah, 12 October 1945, Sheikh and Malik, *Quaid-i-Azam and The Muslim World*, 122
- <sup>48</sup> Waheed Ahmad, ed. *Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah: The Nation's Voice: Towards the Popular Verdict*, Vol. IV (Karachi: 1999), 439-440
- <sup>49</sup> The summary of report in *Transfer of Power*, Vol. II, 445
- <sup>50</sup> The meeting held under Jinnah on 27 April 1946 at Delhi. Resolution II, Pirzada, ed., *Foundations of Pakistan*, Vol. III, 346
- <sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 346
- <sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 346
- <sup>53</sup> *Transfer of Power*, Vol. VII, 445

- <sup>54</sup> Analysis of report was published in *Dawn*, 31 July 1946
- <sup>55</sup> Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada, *Quaid's Correspondence*(Rawalpindi: Guild Publishing House, 1977), 155
- <sup>56</sup> QAP, F. 884, 381-382
- <sup>57</sup> Muhammad Amin-el- Husseni to Jinnah, 16 October 1946, Atique and Malik, *Quaid-i-Azam and the Muslim World*, 156
- <sup>58</sup> Muhammad Rafique Afzal, ed., *Selected Speeches and Statements of Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah* (Lahore: Research Society of Pakistan, 1980), 439
- <sup>59</sup> Atique and Malik, *Quaid-i-Azam and the Muslim World*, 166
- <sup>60</sup> *Star of India*, 25 August 1947
- <sup>61</sup> UN Documents on Palestine, 7 October 1947, UNA, A/AC-14/SR-7/2 and UN Documents on Palestine, 7 October 1947, UNA, A/AC-14/SR-12/6
- <sup>62</sup> Jinnah's Interview with Duncan Hooper, 25 October 1947 in *Jinnah: Speeches and Statements 1947-1948*, 58-60
- <sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 60-65
- <sup>64</sup> Jinnah to Harry S.Truman, 8 December 1947, in Riaz Ahmad(ed), *Quaid-i-Azam- A Chronology*(Karachi, 1981), 135
- <sup>65</sup> Farooq Ahmad Dar, *Jinnah's Pakistan: Formation and Challenges of a State*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2014, 314
- <sup>66</sup> Jinnah's Interview with Robert Simson, 19 December 1947, NAP, F. 188. GG/15-6