

A REVIEW OF POLITICAL AWAKENING IN NWFP (1901-1947)

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Abstract

The former NWFP, now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was separated from the Punjab in 1901 by Lord Curzon, viceroy of India. This province was kept deprived of the blessings of Constitutional Reforms till 1932 and this area was known for a long time as Sarzamen-e-Bay-Ayin (the land without law). Educationally the Frontier Muslims were the most backward and it was at that time when the Edwardes Memorial School and later on Edwardes Mission College was opened in Peshawar. In 1913, Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qayum Khan laid the foundation stone of the Islamia College and the Collegiate School. These institutions created political consciousness among the Pakhtuns which helped the various movements like Khilafat Movement, Hijrat Movement, Khudai Khidmatgaars Movement and anti Rowalt Act Movement which aimed at evicting the British from the sub-continent.

Key words

NWFP, Political Awakening, Congress, Khudai Khidmatgars, Muslim League.

Introduction

The Viceroy of India, Lord Curzon separated NWFP from the Punjab in 1901 and named it as the North West Frontier Province. The British rulers kept the Muslims of NWFP completely outside the orbit of growth and progress. Even the constitutional reforms granted to the other provinces were denied to them. Some 'communal-minded' Hindus opposed the introduction of all such reforms. They pleaded for the strengthening of the power and authority of the executive. They felt further insecure and threatened by the armed tribesmen and looked for official protection. They were convinced that the only remedy was in re-amalgamation with the Punjab. This was all due to their fear of losing a voice in a 93% Muslim majority province as well as their desire of strengthening their co-

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religionists in the Punjab by giving them a stronger position in that province. Moreover, the separation deprived them of all those reforms and other benefits which from time to time were introduced by the Government of India in other provinces of British India. To put more pressure on the Government, the minorities in the NWFP turned to the Hindus and Sikhs in other provinces and asked them to bolster their stand on the re-amalgamation demand.¹ By about this period, the Aligarh Movement sponsored by the Mohammadan social reformer Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, had started yielding fruitful results. The Muslims of the newly created Frontier Province were influenced greatly by this movement and in late 1908 or early 1909, a few of its students receiving education at Aligarh University, were instrumental enough to persuade Nawab Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum Khan to initiate a similar renaissance in NWFP, especially in the field of education to boost up the morale of the Muslims socially, culturally and economically. They provided a donation of sixty six rupees to Sahibzada as a token assistance towards the sacred cause. And this gesture brought lakhs of rupees in a meeting held at Town Hall, Peshawar on May 29, 1911 from the leading Khan's and elite of the NWFP Province.²

At the time of creation of new Province in 1901, the entire area was backward in almost every field of activity particularly in the sphere of education. It was an undeniable fact that education enables masses to think for themselves and urges them to fight for their rights. An excerpts from a report published in 1901 about the state of education in NWFP says:

“Educationally, Frontier Muslims were the most backward. Though they constituted 92.1 percent of the total population of the province, the percentage of Muslim boys attending institutions of all kinds was 11.7 compared with 36.6 and 22.3 in the case of Hindu and Sikh boys respectively. In 1901-02, the province possessed one hundred and fifty four primary schools, which contained 7365 boys. The number of vernacular and Anglo vernacular Middle and high schools was only eight and the total students in these institutions were 5082. As far as collegiate education was concerned, it was in 1901 that initiative was taken in this direction by the Church Missionary Society. They opened an intermediate arts classes in Edwards Collegiate School at Peshawar with six students.³ According to Dr. Fakhur-ul-Islam “ The Missionary education, introduced by the British aimed to cool down the religious sentiments of the Pathan. Interestingly this Missionary institution created political consciousness among educated class. They, though a fraction of the population, started taking interest in the affairs of India. Besides the local print media, they managed to subscribe two news papers like *comrade*, *Al-Hilal*, *Zamindar* and the *Lahore Tribune*. These papers played a vital role in molding the public opinion. On the Indian level the foundation of Muslim League in 1906, acceptance of the Muslim's demand for separate

electorates in 1909 and the annulment of the partition of Bengal in 1911 left indelible impression on the minds of the Frontier people. These developments combined with events taking place in the international politics especially the Muslim World. The attitude of British towards Turkey and masterminding of Balkan war in 1912-13 were considered by the Pathan as British conspiracies against the Muslim Ummah.⁴

The Sahibzada who was later very rightly titled as the Sir Syed of the Frontier, laid the foundation stone of Darul-Uloom-e-Islamia, the Islamia College and the Collegiate School in 1913 as a fructification of the Islamia College Movement, which was launched in NWFP exactly on the pattern of Aligarh Movement. We can even find today students of the Islamia College wearing black *achkan* (*Sherwani*) and the white *shalwaar kamiz* as was and is worn by the Aligarh students.⁵

These educational institutions in fact created a stir in the life of downtrodden Pakhtuns whose civil liberties had been trampled and who were deprived of the freedom of speech and expression of thought while British Officers with complete autocratic powers had been appointed to crush Muslim hostility to the British rule. The attitude and other administrative underhand tactics rather added to the increased vigor and fury of the Muslims towards the alien rulers and the vociferously sided with and helped the various movements aimed at evicting the British from the sub- continent.⁶

After the creation of NWFP, the British-Indian authorities proceeded to set up a military regime of the most rigid type in the Province. Abdul Qayum Khan described the harsh attitude of Government towards the people of this area as follows "These Pakhtuns in their view required a special course of treatment. In their opinion, Pathan was a mad fanatic, almost a savage animal, and if for no other reason, at least for the sake of his neighbors in the Indus valley, he must be subdued. The frontier was linked to a gunpowder magazine, and to introduce reforms, in such a land, considered like holding a match to gunpowder and the explosion was of course inevitable."⁷

The NWFP was politically calm during the First World War (1914-18). But in the years that followed the province's apparent isolation from India's political currents came to an end. It would be better to refer here to the Rowalt Act. The Act was tantamount to curb political activities. It also provided for suspending ordinary court procedure and authorized arrest without warrant or trial.⁸ This act was promulgated in 1919 but the people were not satisfied with the Act. It spread a wave of discontent throughout the country. To curb the chaotic conditions India was passing through after the World War 1, the government of India had passed the said Act, which aimed at curtailing the rising launched by

the Congress and others. The Act further intensified the situation. The situation turned into a worst possible one when the army fired at a mass meeting held to protest against the Act at Jallianwalla Bagh, Amritsar, on 13th April 1919 killing hundreds of men and injuring thousands. Martial Law was imposed in Punjab.⁹ This incident also engulfed the frontier province where mass meetings were held to express sympathy with the dead and hatred for the British brutality. Martial Law was also imposed in Peshawar and several arrests were made. The Red-Shirt leader of Utmanzai, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan was arrested. People were disarmed and fine was imposed on them.¹⁰

The NWFP remained untouched by political developments in India till the end of World War-1. With the passage of time the Government considered that the political, strategic and military position of the province warranted different treatment. Rather certain tyrannical and autocratic laws were imposed upon the people like Frontier Crime Regulation (FCR) and Murderous Outrage Act of 1877. According to the Frontier Crime Regulations the Deputy Commissioner of a district was empowered to refer both civil and criminal cases to *Jirga* (Council of elders). A *Jirga* consisted of more than three members who were nominees of the Deputy Commissioner.¹¹

The Deputy Commissioner has the power to revise the decision of the *Jirga* and no appeal could be made to the Higher Court against the decision. Under the Murderous Outrage Act, a person could be given death sentence even on a mere suspicion of murder. Carrying a rifle in the evening in the Cantonment area was enough to prove that the person was a culprit. The accused was not allowed to have a defense counsel but only a statement for his defense. The culprit could be hanged till death anywhere from a tree, wall or in a city square. In some cases they even burnt the body in fire or quicklime.¹²

In short the people were denied normal court procedures, tyrannical regulations were made for the people and they have no right to challenge them. Maulana Mohammad Ali Johar described the situation in the province as *Sarzamin-e-Bay-Ayin* (the land without law).¹³

The *Khilafat* Movement and the People of Frontier Province

The history of the sub-continent shows that whenever the Muslims of this sub-continent were in trouble it was the *Pakhtuns* who came to their rescue. From Mahmud of Ghazna to Ahmad Shah Abdali history is a witness to this fact. It was for this reason that the great Muslim scholar of the eighteenth century, Shah Waliullah appealed to the Pakhtuns to strive hard for the establishment of an Islamic State. He visualized the Pakhtun region as a potential Islamic state of the future. Inspired by the teachings of Shah Sahib, a great Mujahid, Syed Ahmad Shaheed Barailvi, along with his disciples, chose this region to be the centre of

this Islamic Revivalist Movement. The movement was doomed to fail in achieving the objective of setting an Islamic state in this region. However, a positive result of the movement was that the people were inspired with a spirit of *Jihad* against the British Raj. Swat (Saidu Baba), the Mullah of Karbogha, the Mullah Mast, Mullah Powinda, Hadda Mullah, the Babara Mullah, the Haji Sahib of Turangzai and Faqir of Nangrahar- All these great freedom fighters were the product of the same movement and they let the tribal Pakhtuns against the British in different areas of the frontier at different times.¹⁴

At the end of the World War 1 when the British started treating Turkey disgracefully, a movement of great religious and political enthusiasm emerged, known as *Khilafat* Movement with its central *Khilafat* Committee at Bombay under Ali brothers, Maulana Muhammad Ali and Shaukat Ali. In the political history of the Frontier Province *Khilafat* Movement was the first ever regular mobilization of the masses on the religio-political basis through a network of several committees at the Tehsil Level. It welded together the entire province for the first time in political partnership. For example in Hazara the Khilafatists stirred up anti-government sentiments in the rural areas of Mansehra Tehsil and adjoining tribal area until the government jailed their leaders in June 1920. In Bannu city a *Khilafat* Committee was established in late 1919 and quickly spread to the surrounding countryside, where it mustered support from members of the Bannu tribal elite.¹⁵

***Hijrat* Movement And The Frontier Province**

The effect of the reprisal against Turkey as a result of the Paris Peace Conference (1919) led to a large scale Muslim *Khilafat* agitation in India. The worst place affected by the *Khilafat* agitation turned out to be the province of the North-West Frontier because of its geographical proximity with Afghanistan. It became the first spring board where the unprecedented *Hijrat* Movement was launched in 1920. A *Hijrat* Committee was established in Peshawar city for catering the needs of the down country and local *Muhajirin* to Afghanistan. It is said that thousands of Muslims from the Frontier alone went for the “religious obligation” of *Hijrat* to Afghanistan. The Movement, though it failed to achieve the desired goals, was considered by many as a great political victory in, at least, showing to the government that the Muslims in the Province, not deterred by the special laws, could go up to any extreme in conformity with their co-religionists in India for and elsewhere in Asia for the glory and honour of Islam.¹⁶ According to Fakhru'l Islam “There is a difference of opinion on the issue whether the *Hijrat* proved to be useful or harmful for the Indian Muslims in general, and those of NWFP in particular. Both schools, for and against the *Hijrat*, support their opinion by arguments. In the opinion of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, it was a futile exercise. He recalls the deliberations of the All India *Khilafat* Committee

Conference Delhi in 1920 wherein a young man Aziz proposed the *Hijrat*. At that time nobody took it seriously but later on it became a reality. Ghaffar Khan termed it an “unfortunate joke” as the cause of tremendous loss of lives and property of the Frontier people. Moreover, as he argues, it was the result of a forceful *fatwa* of the Mullahs who declared that any man who does not go on *Hijrat* will have to divorce his wife.¹⁷

The Role of *Khudai Khidmatgaar* Movement in NWFP

The study of Frontier politics would remain incomplete if we deny the substantial role of *Khudai Khidmatgaar* Movement in the struggle for freedom. In September 1929 Abdul Ghaffar Khan formed an organization called the Afghan *Jirga* which soon attracted large number of followers in the rural areas of the Province, especially in Peshawar District. Side by side with this he set up another organization called the *Khudai Khidmatgaars* (servants of God), volunteers organized on quasi-military lines. Both had the same aims; complete independence from the British, Hindu-Muslim unity and the reform of *Pakhtun* society. Soon the *Khudai Khidmatgaars* overshadowed the Afghan *Jirga*. Because the red shirts they wore as uniforms, the British dubbed them “Red Shirts”.¹⁸

No accurate figures are available regarding the exact number of *Khudai Khidmatgaar* members and the branches however, a careful study reveals that the membership reached between twelve to fifteen hundred, many factors contributed to the popularity of the *Khudai Khidmatgaar* because different sections of the Pushtoons society interpreted its programme in their own way: to the Pashtuns intelligentsia, it was a movement for the revival of Pashtun culture with its distinct identity to the smaller Khans, it was a movement that demanded political reforms for the province that would enfranchise them and give them a greater role in the governance; its anti colonial stand suited the majority of the anti-establishment ulema, who always regarded the British rule in the sub-continent as a ‘curse’. No other movement had ever received such a tremendous response, as did the *Khudai Khidmatgaars*. Abdul Ghaffar Khan also emphasized the communal harmony in the province. Therefore the membership was kept open to all, irrespective of any discrimination of caste or community.¹⁹

The *Khudai Khidmatgaars* Movement was affiliated with the Frontier Province Congress Committee in 1931 but for all practical purposes it did remain a separate body in its content and form, only providing an electoral strength to the latter in political affairs.²⁰

Constitutional Developments in NWFP:

NWFP was placed under the direct control of the Government of India in 1901, through a Chief Commissioner and Agent to the Governor General, the

Punjab enjoyed the prerogative of having a legislative council created in 1897. Thus the agencies and the settled districts were linked together through the Chief Commissioner. A Revenue Commissioner assisted him, with his Provincial headquarters at Peshawar. The Districts were controlled by the Deputy Commissioners who in turn were assisted by Assistant Commissioner at Tehsil level. Along with Acts of Legislation passed by the Governor General in Council, or by the Punjab Legislation Council, there were a number of Regulations issued by the authority of Governor General, e.g.

1. The Frontier Crimes Regulations of 1901.
2. The murderous Outrages Regulations of 1901.
3. The North West Province Law and Justice Regulations of 1901.
4. The Court of words Regulations of 1904.
5. The Hazara Forest Regulations of 1911.
6. The NWFP Constabulary Act of 1915.
7. The NWFP Validation and Indemnity Regulations of 1920.
8. The NWFP Security Regulations of 1922.²¹

The above mentioned Acts and Regulations added nothing to the constitutional development in the province but to intensify the situation. The government did not seem to be in hurry even to think of such a concession at the cost of safer method which could effectively deal with the tribal situation. Strategic locations and the internal instability were regarded the main cause of keeping it away from the reform schemes introduced in other provinces of British India.²²

Even after a decade of the formation of NWFP, it was not considered fit for constructional reforms. The Montague Chelmsford Report (1918), while recommending diarchy in other provinces did not suggest any change in the administration of the Frontier Province. The Report pointed out that, "For reasons of strategy the personal administration of the chief Commissioner should continue and no principle of responsibility should be introduced. However, some form of advisory council, adjusted in composition and function to total condition was recommended. But the government of India decided to shelve the issue for the moment".²³

The NWFP Enquiry Committee or Bray Committee Report

The British Government's reluctance to introduce political reforms in the Frontier province blocked the way of Minto-Morlay and Montague Chelmsford Reforms. When the demand in this regard caught the momentum, the Government of India formed a committee in April 1922, consisting of three Englishmen, three Muslims and two Hindus under Sir Dennys Bray, the Foreign Secretary, to report on the desirability of NWFP with the Punjab or of granting

the Province reforms. The Englishmen joined the Muslims to write a majority report, which favoured Constitutional Reforms for the North-West Frontier Province. The two Hindus argued at great length that the Frontier would be better governed as part of the Punjab, but no matter how they tried to mask it, their differences with the majority were obviously communal. The Committee Report in October 1922 against the re-amalgamation scheme and recommended grant of liberal institution with certain safeguards.²⁴

The Provincial Government seemed too reluctant in having any sort of reforms in the Frontier. They would not commit such a folly and that too at a moment when there was every possibility of the Frontier nationalists coming out openly in support of the Afghan cause which they did. This view was shared by the loyalist class which could see their worst days if the political firebrands had been allowed to resort to street politics.²⁵

Another class which violently opposed the grant of reforms to the Frontier Province was the Hindu-Sikh minority in the Province, which though numerically stood at not more than three percent of the total population, was comparatively more educated, rich and articulate than the Muslims majority.²⁶ A typical instance of Hindu opposition to the introduction of reforms is given below as embodied in the resolution passed by the Hindu Sabha, Dera Ismail Khan on February, 1926.

“The Hindus of Dera Ismail Khan assembled in this public meeting to protest respectfully but strongly against attempts being made by calling a clique for the introduction of the so-called reforms and of election of local bodies in the NWFP. Owing to the peculiar conditions obtaining in the NWFP, its contiguity to the border and facilities with which raids, decoities, kidnapping, murders and other serious crimes against the Hindus are committed with impunity or connivance of local Pathans; the fanatic and unruly temperament of the illiterate masses easily misled by bigoted educated agitators; the recent incendiarism and loot in Kohat, fires in Nowshera, D.I. Khan and other places; the existence of secret Muslim revolutionary societies; the open advocacy of Muslim press of the Muslims Raj with the help of Afghanistan and the dream of pan-Islamism engendered by recent events in other Muslim lands, this meeting is of the opinion that it is absolutely necessary for the safety of Hindus that the hands of the executive should not be weakened by transferring authority to the class already dominant in the administration. The meeting further puts on record its firm conviction that the introduction of elective system is sure to aggravate factional feelings and promoted riots and disturbances.”²⁷

The Hindu Sabha's Resolution exacted strong reaction full of hate and condemnation for the Sabha from the Muslim Association (the fore-runner of the

Muslim League) of Dera Ismail Khan. The Association vehemently demanded reforms for the province.²⁸

On the other side at the national level the All Indian Muslim League too adopted a resolution on 29th 30th and 31st of December 1926, at Delhi demanding reforms for NWFP. The resolution's text runs as under:-

That the All Indian Muslim League regrets that the government have not taken any action regarding the question of reforms to be introduced to the NWFP, in spite of repeated demand of *Mussalmans* for legislative Assembly embodied in its resolution, which was carried in March 1926 without a division. The League urges once more that it is now high time that the government should give effect to the recommendations of the majority report of Bray Committee and thus allay the feelings and apprehensions of the *Mussalmans* not only of NWFP but of All India Muslim League regarding this matter.²⁹

Simon Commission and NWFP

The Bray Committee was followed by another Statutory Commission, commonly referred to as the Simon Commission under the Chairmanship of Sir John Simon, consisting of Lord Burnham, Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal, Edward Cadogan, Stephen Walksh, Richard Lane-Fox and C.R. Attlee. Later Walsh resigned and was replaced by Vernon Harshorn. The Commission visited India in February-March 1928 and again in Oct 1928 and April 1929.³⁰ Among the aims of the Commission were to inquire into the working of the system of government, set up under the act of 1919, the growth of education, and to report whether and to what extent, it is desirable to establish the principle of the responsible government, or to extent, modify and restrict the degree of responsible government then existing in India.³¹

The Commission also visited Peshawar in November 1928. Meetings, deputation's, petitions and processions were arranged "all of which were meant to impress in one way or another".³² In view of "absorbing interest, the peculiar character and the special military and political difficulties which were associated with NWFP; the Commission came to the conclusion that the responsibility for the administration of NWFP cannot be separated from the responsibility for the peace and control over the tribal areas. Only thus can the security of NWFP be effectively maintained."³³

The Commission entirely shared the view of the Bray Committee that "Provision ought now to be made for the Constitutional advance of the North West Frontier Province" and in formulating their scheme of constitutional advance in some detail, they agreed that "the situation of the Province and its intimate relations with the problems of Indian defense are such that special arrangement were required". The Commission recommended a council, with

elected and nominated members in equal proportion. The elected members would be chosen by a special constituency of being landholders that is the Khans, big municipalities and District Boards and ex-soldiers. The legislative powers of this Council were to be limited, with law and order kept as reserved subjects. The Chief Commissioner should preside over the legislative Council. He should have powers to appoint a deputy a reside when necessary.³⁴

Round Table Conferences and NWFP

The first and second Round Table Conferences took place in London in 1930 and 1931 respectively. Despite the intensive lobbying in London, Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum Khan successfully pleaded the case of reforms to be introduced in the Frontier. A sub-committee was formed in the first Round Table Conference to consider the Frontier issue in greater detail. The Committee met in December 1930, and submitted a report on 16th January 1931, recommending in principle, the status of a Governor's Province for NWFP and the introduction of reforms of 1919 act there.³⁵

Impact of 1940 Lahore Resolution on the Politics of NWFP

On March 23, 1940, the Lahore Resolution was passed which proved as a foundation stone for the establishment of Pakistan within seven years. It is unparalleled in the history of the world that a nation had achieved its goal in such a short time as the All India Muslim League achieved after Lahore Resolution. The North West Frontier Province not only played a vital role in the historic Lahore Resolution of 1940 but also proved that the idea of a separate land in the subcontinent was floated here. I.H.Quraishi says:

“The concentration of Muslim majorities in the North- West and North East of the Sub-continent could not remain unnoticed by the political thinkers. Syed Jamal-ud-Din al Afghani, the famous worker in the cause of World Islamic Unity, first thought of the possibility of a Muslim republic embracing the present Central Asian (Socialist) republics, Afghanistan and the Muslim majority areas in the North West of the Subcontinent.”³⁶ The Muslim Leaguers of NWFP fully participated in the Lahore Resolution and boosted the moral of All India Muslim Leaguers who gathered in Lahore for the noble cause. When the Lahore Resolution was passed and all delegations went back to their respective areas, the NWFP contingent came back with a new enthusiasm. The NWFP Muslim Leaguers worked day and night in every nook and corner of the Province and took the Muslim League's message from door to door. The Congress was sure that NWFP was under the control of the Khan Brothers. But when Pandit Nehru, the external affairs and Common Wealth relations; minister of the interim Government of India visited NWFP he himself realized that the Congress had lost the Province. As everywhere he was received with black flags and anti-Congress

slogans, and even pelted with stones, in spite of the fact that there was a Congress ministry in the Province. In 1947 referendum, the people of NWFP voted in majority against the Congress ministry and consequently a Muslim League ministry, under Abdul Qaiyum Khan, was formed and the Congress Ministry of Dr. Khan Sahib was dismissed. If the Lahore Resolution had not been passed, the fate of the sub-continent of Indian would have been quite different from the present one.³⁷

The Aftermath of 1946 Elections

Once the War in Europe had ended, events on the Indian Stage determined the direction and tempo of Frontier politics. Lord Wavell, the viceroy, convened a conference at Shimla in June 1945 to discuss a possible interim Government of India. The Shimla Conference collapsed because of an issue of representation of the Indian Muslims. The viceroy then, on the demand of Quaid-e-Azam, scheduled new legislative elections for February in 1946 to determine the relative strength of the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League.³⁸

Beneath the grand political issues of the campaign of both the rival parties laid a severe factionalism so much so that at one point Cunningham, the Governor of NWFP, went so far as to contented that the “elections in the province being fought not on any kind of Party Programme but on grounds of personal faction feeling”.³⁹

In some areas factionalism produced a confusion of political alliances that is inexplicable if party labels alone considered. With the revision of the electoral roll in 1945, over 20 percent of the Province’s population was registered to vote, a figure which included a few women but practically every adult male. Polling took place between Jan 26 and Feb 14, 1946. The Congress won eleven of the twelve minority constituencies, losing only to *Akali-Dal* in Peshawar. The Party also captured nineteen of the twenty-seven Muslim seats it contested. While its allies in Dera Ismail Khan, the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind won two more. The Muslim League was victorious in the remaining seventeen Muslim constituencies.⁴⁰

The Congress victory among the Pakhtuns was decisive. The party gathered 51.90% of the vote in the remaining 20 constituencies it contested. The figures for the Muslim League were 39.40%. The League on the other hand, emerged as representative of the Province non-Pakhtun Muslims.⁴¹

In the elections of 1946, the Congress won a majority in the NWFP and formed her Ministry under Dr. Khan Sahib.⁴² During the crucial period, after the elections, Jawaharlal Nehru visited Peshawar and the Tribal Areas. But his tour turned out far from successful. His reception in the province was quite cold. The League workers staged demonstrations against him. “When Jawaharlal landed at

the airport, he found thousands of Pathan massed there with black flags and shouting anti-slogans. Dr. Khan Sahib and other Ministers who had to receive Jawaharlal were themselves under police protection and proved complete ineffective. As Jawaharlal came out, slogans were raised against him and some people in the mob wanted to attack his car. Dr. Khan Sahib was so worried that he took out his revolver and threatened to shoot. Only under this threat did the crowd give way and the cars had to come out under police escort.”⁴³

Distribution of Muslims Rural seats by districts in Legislative Assembly elections in the NWFP 1946.

District	Congress	Muslim League	Jamiat-ul-Ulema
Hazara	1	8	-
Mardan	4	1	-
Peshawar	6	1	-
Kohat	4	-	-
Bannu	2	2	-
D.I.Khan	1	1	2

Source: Erland Janson, *India Pakistan or Pukhtoonistan*, Stockholm: Almaqvist and Wiksell International: 1981, p.152

Result of the Elections to NWFP Legislative Assembly 1946

Party	Total	Muslim Rural	Muslim Urban	General Rural	General Urban	Sikh	Land Holders
Congress	30	18	1	6	3	2	-
Muslim League	17	13	2	-	-	-	2
Jamiat-ul-Ulema	2	2	-	-	-	-	-
Akali Dal	1	-	-	-	-	1	-
Total	50	33	3	6	3	3	2

Source: Erland Janson, *India Pakistan or Pukhtoonistan*, Stockholm: Almaqvist and Wiksell International: 1981 p.152

The Reorganization of the Frontier Muslim League

The election results showed that in the absence of functioning party organization there was little hope of League’s Islamic ideology overcoming the Frontier Congress ethic appeal. That lesson was reinforced by a rapid expansion of the Frontier Congress in 1945-46. The party had 24,215 primary members by March 1946, more than three times the number enrolled during World War-II. ⁴⁴

After the revival of the League in NWFP its Movement started gaining day by day. The Congress felt so much terrified by this tremendous success of the League that Dr. Khan Sahib's Government started terrorizing and vilifying the League. Abdul Qayum Khan accused the Frontier Congressmen and said, "I think the Congress must accept the demand of the Muslims for Pakistan, which is the only way out of the every difficult situation. The other alternative is war of the knife."⁴⁵

The Civil Disobedience in NWFP (1947)

By 1947 the election results of the previous year were no longer an accurate gauge of public opinion. Political sympathies had shifted, but there was no institutional way for the change to be reflected in Provincial Assembly. The Muslim League could call for Dr. Khan Sahib's resignation, but with its solid majority in the Assembly, the Frontier Congress could not be expected to surrender willingly its control of the Provincial Government. Since the Muslim League had no legal resources, it resorted to extra constitutional means to displace the frontier congress. It launched a Direct Action Campaign which brought the normal operations of government to a halt, It touched off a wave of communal violence.⁴⁶

By that time Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan, a vertern Congress leader of the Frontier and at one time Deputy Leader of the Congress party in Central Legislative Assembly, had resigned from Congress and joined the League. He was now leader of the opposition in the Frontier Assembly. On February 20, 1947 he was arrested at Mardan, where the Muslim League had just won a by election. His arrest added fuel to the fire and flared the people who rose in protest against the congress Government in the Province. In order to deny the Muslim League opportunities to convince the masses in favour of Pakistan, the congress government banned public meetings and processions. But the gallant and enthusiastic league workers defied this ban. Mr. Fida Mohammed Khan a young advocated from Peshawar, led the first procession. The protest meetings and processions followed it all over the NWFP. Khan Abdul Qayyum, Samin Jan Khan, were most prominent among those who organized and led these demonstration. Even purdah-observing women, who had never taken party in any public demonstration also came out in thousands and faced all manner of repression and suffering. This movement brought about quick and ardical change in the public opinion and the people of NWFP was disillusioned with the Congress and convinced that their destiny lay with establishment of Pakistan.⁴⁷

Lord Mountbatton's Partition Plan and NWFP

The struggle between the Congress and the League was going on when Mountbatten Plan or the 3rd June plan about the future of Sub-Continent was

announced. According to the plan two separate Constituent Assemblies were to be set up and different areas were to choose which Assembly to join. The people of NWFP had to give their will through a referendum whether to join India or Pakistan, “In North West Frontier Province the terms of referendum gave the usual two choices to the voters either to join the existing Indian Constituent Assembly or to join new Constituent Assembly. But Ghaffar Khan, the Red Shirt leader, insisted that people should have a third choice i.e. to vote for an independent Pukhtunistan. The Referendum was held on 6-17 July, 1947, and 289,244 votes were cast in favour of joining the new Constituent Assembly as against 2,874 for continuing with the existing Constituent Assembly”.⁴⁸

Result of the Referendum:

Total number of votes cast	292,118
Votes for Pakistan	289,244
Votes for India	2,874
Total electorate	572,798
Turn-out in Percent	51.00

Source: Erland Janson, *India Pakistan or Pukhtoonistan*, Almaqvist and Wiksell International, Stockholm, 1981, p.222

Conclusion

While going through the history of freedom movement in NWFP, one observes the strange phenomenon at that particular juncture.... Just a year back people voted for the Congress Party nonetheless the elected government was ruling but the popular sentiments of Islam loving people of NWFP isolated and paralyzed the then ruling party. Mainstream uprising in favor of Pakistan had given such a swing that Congress leadership was unable to present any positive option instead the leadership adopted a very negative approach of so called Azad Pakhtunistan through Bannu Resolution. Eventually Congress lost the ground to the Urban Muslim League. Bacha Khan and his followers could not sustain the referendum results. In fact the entire NWFP including Tribal belt opted for Pakistan. Henceforth we shall salute our elders for the wisdom and conscious accepting PAKISTAN with open heart and mind.

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42. Dr. Khan Sahib (1883-1958) belonged to a leading family of Muhammad Zai clan, son of Bahram Khan and elder brother of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. He received his M.R.C.S (Member of Royal College of Surgeons) Degree from England, in 1930. The public firing in Qissa Khwani Bazar, Peshawar induced to enter public life and was soon arrested and sentenced to three years rigorous imprisonment and lodged with his brother in Hazar Bagh central Jail and was released on 27th August 1934 but was not permitted to enter this province. He was elected in absentia the Congress member of Central Legislative Assembly. He was also a Congress member of NWFP Legislative Assembly in 1937 and leader of opposition from the side of the Congress party. He was elected as the first Congressite Chief Minister of NWFP. He reassumed this office for the second time in March 1945 and again for the third time in the end of February 1946. He was also a member of West Pakistan Assembly and Chief Minister of West Pakistan in 1956.
43. Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, *India Wins Freedom* (New York, Longmans Green Ltd., 1960), p.183.
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