

Landed Aristocracy of the Punjab and Partition of India

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The research paper mainly deals with last decade of British rule in India with special focus on the politics of the Punjab and Landed Aristocracy as a contributory factor in partition of India. The impression that economically powerful class attain political power in every society or region so having these powers the landed aristocracy of cross communal Unionist Party (which kept three major communities united for decades in Punjab) through allegiance to All India Muslim League, has been a contributory factor in partition of India, is the major argument of this research. Had landed aristocracy of the Punjab which assumed power and became ruler in Pakistan after independence played any intentional or unintentional role or contribution in partition of India? Landed aristocracy's role, Sikandar-Jinnah Pact of 1937, Lahore Resolution of 1940, inclination of landed aristocracy towards All India Muslim League, thirst for power, self-interest, mass pressure or economic opportunities, mutual cooperation with British ruler, political engineering by the British rulers, communal divide in the Punjab, decline of Unionist Party, Hindu, Muslim, Sikhs relationship, 1946 elections, partition of Punjab and India are main subjects of the paper. Partition of India is much debated subject but almost historians have written in broader context of overall India and the Punjab. This analytical study is important and original contribution because in this paper landed aristocracy of the Punjab has been explored as major or minor contributory factor in partition of India which earlier has not been studied by the historians specifically. This paper highlights this unique subject.

Keywords: landed aristocracy, the British, Punjab, Pakistan movement, partition of India

After annexation of the Punjab in 1849, the British realized how necessary it was for them to obtain support from the landed aristocracy and nobility who were described as "break water to the storm which would otherwise have swept over them in one great wave" (Bevan, 1929). The British Government's major objective in the Punjab was to gain revenue returns, military recruitment and political support by using landed aristocracy as the main pillars of the Raj. All the policies of the British Government revolve around their major objective of economic gains and military recruitment at any cost and for this main purpose they also needed the political support of local landed aristocracy consisting Hindus, Sikhs and Muslim landlords like Tiwanas, Noons, Mamdots, Daultanas, Legharis, Qureshis, Mazaries, Gardezis, Sials, Arains, Gilanis, Kharals, and Rajas of the Punjab to face internal and external challenges.

The British used this landed aristocracy for the purpose of revenue returns, political support and military recruitment. In return, the landed aristocracy won the titles, *jagirs*, land free grants etc. The sole purpose of the landed aristocracy has been pronounced as self-preservation generally. *Lambardars*, *Zaildars* and some honorary Magistrates were recruited from the landed aristocracy to assist the British Government (Nina, 1985). There was a tendency on the part of the landed aristocracy to share the fruits with British by way of associating themselves with the administration. In the closing years of nineteenth century, the landed aristocracy started to seek political reforms. The administrative, social, religious and economic developments of

the nineteenth century had produced in the Punjab a wealthy landlord class and a group of financiers and opportunists.

In order to build orderly rule and social stratification, the British rulers during seventeenth and eighteenth centuries created loyalist landed aristocracy in India specifically in Punjab. The landed aristocracy strengthened British rule as a tool and intermediary class and nearing the end of British rule caused a major factor in partition of India. Books and books have been written on Punjab, Indian Partition and freedom movement in the Subcontinent and they have presented varied arguments and factors behind the Indian partition in 1947. Too many articles and literature on British India have been published but they simply narrate political history explaining role and responsibilities of political organizations, local and British personalities in the partition and argument of the majority of the writers carries different perspective confusing detached spectators in understanding the real fact and truth.

Almost historians have termed shifting of loyalties by the landed aristocracy from Unionist Party to AIML as factional conflict explaining less about their role as a factor in partition. Ian Talbot in his work 'Provincial Politics and the Pakistan Movement', David Gilmartin in his book 'Empire and Islam', Ayesha Jalal in 'The Sole Spokesman', Iftekhhar H. Malik, US - South Asia Relations 1940-47: American Attitude Towards Pakistan Movement, Syed Noor Ahmad in Marshal Law to Marshal Law, Ishtiaq Ahmed in The Punjab Bloodied Partitioned and cleansed and many more writers have their argument of partition in broader context explaining overall factors and events throughout India but have little mention of landed aristocracy as a factor of partition because the Punjab, ruled by landed aristocracy, was the major center for demand of Pakistan leading to partition of India ultimately. Switching of Landed aristocracy of Punjab from Unionist Party to League had proved last and stronger factor in Partition and almost historians have not given much importance to this factor.

Hassan Javid in his work Class, Power, and Patronage: The Landed Elite and Politics in Pakistan Punjab, has given a background of landed elites but again the issues in question in this paper remain unanswered. The literature on partition and British Punjab may take pages and pages to review but all the writers and historians have paid minimum heed to a specific class and group of landed aristocracy of the Punjab whom division on communal basis caused the last blow to Indian unity and emerged as strong factor in partition of not only Punjab but the India as a whole into two separate homelands on religious lines. The division amongst Muslim, Sikh and Hindu landed aristocracy of the Punjab on religious / communal lines caused a major contributory factor of partition but all the literature on partition has not credited or discredited landed aristocracy as contributory aspect of the Indian partition as a separate subject. This paper is an attempt to decipher and highlight how landed aristocracy in Punjab influenced the overall politics to divide India into two separate countries.

By 1935 Muhammad Ali Jinnah had realized the importance of Bengal and Punjab being Muslim majority provinces and by winning the support of strong Muslim leaders of these provinces the cause of All India Muslim League for wellbeing of Indian Muslims could be strengthened well. As regarded the Punjab Jinnah and Sir Fazl-e-Hussain of Unionist Party could not reach an agreement despite pursuance by Jinnah because of Jinnah's preeminence to independence while Fazl's emphasis on opportunities provided by provincial autonomy (Ahmad, 1985). Jinnah wanted him to run the elections under the flag of Muslim League but he refused to be side tracked. He knew that by hobnobbing with the League, he would scare away the Hindus and the Sikhs. Fazl asked Jinnah therefore rather sternly to leave the Punjab to itself (Raj, 1937)

After Fazl's death on 9 July 1936, Unionist Party's leadership shifted to Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan, a renowned landed aristocrat. Fazl-i-Hussain had complete hold on Punjab politics and Unionist Party from 1923 to 1936 despite opposition from different personalities and groups within from the party. These groups were

striving to gain control and power but Fazl's group was largest and strong. However he faced perpetual opposition from the League Parliamentary Board on the one hand and from Sikandar and his supporters including Sikhs and Urban Hindus on the other (Hussain, 1946).

Sikandar had sympathy of strong landlords like Ahmad Yar Khan Daultana, Nawab Muzaffar Qizlbash and Mir Maqbool Mahmood and he sent Daultana to League's session in Bombay to ensure Jinnah landed aristocracy's support against Fazl. Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan may be termed as political entryism in Unionist Party by Jinnah because he contributed a lot in developing relations between League and Unionist party. Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan, a close companion of Jinnah could be suspected as such political strategy. Sikandar's group of landed aristocracy approached Jinnah through Raja and assured its support in coming provincial elections in Punjab in December 1934 (Mashriq, 1963).

A turning point in the history of Indian partition was Jinnah – Sikandar Pact in October 1937 which actually weakened the ideological and political bases of cross communal Unionist Party and caused strengthening of purely communal AIML (Hussain, 1946). According to this pact, in Punjab a meeting of Unionist Party by Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan will be convened to advise all Muslim members of the party who are not already members of the Muslim League to sign its manifesto and creed to join the League. By signing this Muslim unionists will be subjected to the rules and regulations and mandate of the Boards of AIML both at Central and provincial levels. (QAP, not printed). The League before this pact had virtually no organization in the Punjab (Ali, 1975).

Lucknow Session of Muslim League and consequent Jinnah – Sikandar Pact caused a major dent in Unionist Party and communal harmony not only in Punjab but in India as a whole. Hindu landed aristocrat, Sir Chhotu Ram issued a statement and refuted many of the constructions which were placed on the "Jinnah-Sikandar" alliance; and both he and Raja Narendra Nath denied any change in Unionist policy. Chhotu Ram clarified that presumably no sudden incompatibility to Proja Ministry in Bengal would arise from happening at Lucknow (C&M Gazette, 1937). Sikandar-Jinnah Pact certainly created such communal suspicions which compelled Hindu Landed aristocracy to issue such clarifications to neutralize their followers and voters. Chhotu Ram found justification for this double allegiance in the conduct of the Congress leaders who remain members of the Hindu Sabha and the Congress simultaneously and also referred the Congress' adoption of Sikh League members as its candidates.

In Lucknow Session, Jinnah indoctrinated the participants including landed aristocracy of the Punjab "What we want," he said "is not only a charter of liberty for the majority community, but for all communities of India and minorities living therein. The fundamental principles on which the Muslim League is based are equity, equality – without which there can be no fraternity. Whatever our differences, we desire fraternity of all classes of people and without these three there can be no liberty" (C&M Gazette, 1937). Jinnah had actually given the Charter of Liberty" in the resolution passed by the League on 19 October 1937 and landed aristocracy after attending this session, returned Punjab, Bengal and other areas of India embellished with such ideas of Jinnah. What Hindu India thought more about Jinnah-Sikandar Khan Agreement, if Muslim Unionists become members of the Muslim League in Punjab obligating their allegiance to League, then they come at par with the members of Nationalist Progressive Party and the Khalsa National Party Progressive Party, both of which are purely communal organizations (C&M Gazette, 1937). In April 1938 at Calcutta Session which was also attended by Sikandar, League expressed confidence in Sikandar's policy on Shahid Ganj Mosque issue and assured the Government of Punjab of its help in settling the matter. League decided against the non-cooperation movement (Pirzada, 1970). Sikandar showed his concern on the issue vowing that he would stand shoulder to shoulder with Jinnah and no misunderstanding could separate them (Haider, 1985).)He attended all League meetings including

that on 4-5 June 1938 at Jinnah's residence in Bombay, Provincial Muslim League Conference on 8 October 1938 in Karachi along with companion landed aristocrats and also participated in annual session of League at Patna on 26 December 1938 (Batalvi, 1966). Such active participation by strong landed aristocrat Punjab Premier along with other landlord fellows certainly boasted Leagues morale and importance in all India politics.

During Second World War, British policy progressed to the point of offering India national independence under the influence of prevailing broad secular forces like development of public opinion along liberal lines not only in countries like United States but in Britain as well. Increasing popularity of Muhammad Ali Jinnah and All India Muslim League might have attained the attention of Americans in the early 1940s and that they were fully aware of the military and strategic importance that Indian Muslims were likely to play in any future global strategy¹ (Wilson, Dalton, 1982). American officials, political leaders and journalists had argued ought India's independence to be a paramount objective. In the terminal acts of Indian drive for independence remained more involved in the background. American welcomed Indian partition and the news earned headlines in American newspapers (Gill, 1990). Mountbatten himself acknowledged American influence in Indian partition on 15 August 1947 by attributing it to fulfillment of pledge in Atlantic Charter (Campbell-Johnson, 1951). Moreover, the growth of Indian political consciousness and the evolution of imperialism were closely linked with giving India independence within the next couple of years.

With the very occurrence of Second World War in September 1939, the foremost concern of the British Government was to enlist Indian support for the war and the Viceroy; Lord Linlithgow approached all Indian party leaders to provide support to Britain (Shah, 2000). The Landed aristocracy in Punjab suspended all their activities and extended its full support in every possible manner. On 23 October 1937, in a function at Shalimar Garden Lahore the assurance of loyalty from landed aristocracy and the peasantry of the Punjab was conveyed to the Viceroy saying "all sensible people would naturally wish to avoid war but if war becomes inevitable, the Punjab which is rightly known as the sword –arm of India may be relied upon to discharge its traditional and proud function in a creditable manner" (C&M Gazette, 1937). On August 25, 1939, the Premier, Sir Sikandar Hayat premier Punjab, in a statement assured that resources of the Punjab were at the disposal of British Government and its allies (Grover, 1995). He not only sent his beloved sons to the war front but he himself also visited the Army headquarters at Middle East where the troops from India and Punjab were fighting (Inqilab, 1940). On his return he formally informed the Punjab Assembly that he was satisfied with progress of the Punjabi troops (Inqilab, 1941).

The commitment to the efforts for war from the Muslim landed aristocracy was not affected even when Sikandar resigned from the National Defence Council in August 1941 (Inqilab, 1941) due to the instigation of the League leadership² (Khaliqzaman, 1961). The British Government offered a number of incentives to persuade the people to join the army. Lands were granted to those who helped the government in recruitment of persons and mainly they were the landed elite. They were also rewarded with military rewards. Apart from the manpower, the landed aristocracy also helped the British financially (Inqilab, 1942). During the First World War these Punjabis had fought bravely to secure victory for the British on main fronts.

¹A. Jeyaratnam Wilson, Dennis Dalton (ed), *The State of South Asia: Problems of National Integration* (London: C. Hurst & Co, 1982), p. 28. If analyzed, this fact proved true in global partnership of US and Pakistan during Cold War and ongoing war on terrorism.

²On 25 August 1941, the Working Committee of AIML passed a resolution demanding the resignations of the three Muslim Premiers from the Defence Council. Choudhry Khaliqzaman, *Pathway to Pakistan*, (Brothers Publishers, 1961). p. 255. Muhammad Munawar, *Dimensions of Pakistan Movement* (Rawalpindi: Pap-Board Printers, 1989). p. 142.

As stated earlier, pro-British landed aristocracy dominated the politics of the Punjab. Up to the very eve of independence, the political organization that the British supported—the Punjab National Unionist Party continued to dominate the Punjab's provincial legislative assembly (Low, 1991). The Muslim landed aristocrats had been elected in the assembly not so much due to organizational performance, but owing to their influence in their election constituencies. The British rulers created the landed aristocracy to achieve their major interests which remained intact till their departure from India (Low, 1991).

However, Jinnah's support to the Muslim members of landed aristocracy, to use the League organization, bolstered their local political control (Gilmartin, 1988). The Unionist ministry was afraid of the increasing influence of the Congress in the Punjab. The increasing influence of Congress in Punjab could be due to the reasons that the British rulers were giving importance and consideration to Congress on all India level as the representative party of the majority of the Indian population. Sikandar adapted a rare way to decrease the Congress influence. The activities of the Congress were based on the Communist techniques so he declared some of the Congress workers as Communists, who wanted to work out their program through the Congress. This has been culture to declare the opponents communist tilted to please capitalist British and the American and this trend still existing in Indo-Pakistan. Sikandar also informed the members of the Punjab Assembly that the Communists wanted to bring about a fierce revolution (Ali, 1991).

The Unionists landlords knew it well that they would not be able to face the Congress if once it was established in the province. There was every possibility that the Hindu members of the Unionist Party would join hands with Congress and in that case the Unionists would suffer. The only alternative to check the activities of the Congress was to seek the help of another party with sound political program on all India level. That being the main reason, the Muslim members of landed aristocracy decided that the All India Muslim League (AIML) should be used against the Congress in such a way that both of them were made ineffective in the Punjab. Consequently, opposition from Muslim politicians of the provinces (including Punjab) defeated efforts of Jinnah and rest of the League leaders in cooperating with Congress (Ali, 1991). But ultimately both AIML and the Congress dominated Indian politics as a whole though landed aristocracy of the Punjab actually boasted the League after Sikandar-Jinnah Pact.

Consolidation and encouragement of landed class supported by the British in respective communities was also in the interest of Imperial rulers. In last decade prior to partition the British exhibited similar resilience in resisting forces for advocacy of landed aristocracy's interests. After 1935, the challenge became more severe when Jinnah led Muslim League to press its demands for the rights of Muslims. These challenges endangered communal relation and political understanding engineered by the British in the Punjab. The strong hold of British forced the in power politicians from Punjab to serve British interest instead those of Muslims and the League (Ali, 1976). Viceroy Lord Wavell has written in his memoirs that it was not in the interest of British that Muslim League could emerge as a strong political force in India (Khan, 1995).

The concept of Pakistan had actually challenged the basis of integration of Unionist control in the Punjab. It implied a theoretically different relationship between the state and society – one that promised to undercut Sikandar's relationship with the local rural magnates on whom the Unionists used to rely for support (Gilmartin, 1988). Nothing indicated this more clearly than the debate over the Muslim League's Lahore resolution, which transformed the call for a separate Muslim state into official League policy.

Being a representative of the Muslim landed aristocracy Sikandar played an important role in organizing the 1940 League session and joined with Jinnah in initially drafting the resolution that voiced the demand for Pakistan (Pirzada, 1968). Thus, the twenty-seventh session of the League was held on 22-23 March at Lahore.

Resolutions were moved demanding from the British Government, the grouping together of the Muslim majority areas to create a separate homeland for the Muslims of the sub-continent (Shah, 2000). In the years following 1940, it was hard for Sikandar to face the challenge to maintain his influence within League in parallel to authority of Unionist Party in the Punjab. To free himself to interpret the policy of League with Unionist interests, in 1941, Sikandar tried to convince Working Committee of Muslim League to leave the term Pakistan because it was not in the original text of the Lahore Resolution of March 1940 (Gilmartin, 1988).

Sikandar's public speeches on Pakistan were seemingly, "half way in and half way out" (QAP, nd). Mostly Sikandar and other members of Muslim landed aristocracy reacted to the political threat of pro-Pakistan propaganda by actively discouraging public discussion on Pakistan, particularly in rural Punjab (Jafri, 1977). But for political reasons, they did not dare to deny the concept. Sikandar's defense of position in the Punjab Assembly, in March 1941, provides clear evidence of this ambivalence. "If Pakistan means unalloyed Muslim Raj in the Punjab then I will have nothing to do with it," he said. "Punjab is Punjab and will always remain Punjab whatever anybody may say" (Gilmartin, 1988). To say otherwise would be to undermine the foundations of Unionist power but at the same time he reaffirmed his support of the Lahore resolution.

To Jinnah the Punjab was always a key province which represented opinion of the Muslims of India and the passing of Pakistan Resolution further increased the Punjab's importance. Despite Sikandar-Jinnah Pact in 1938, with the passage of time Sikandar separated himself from the idea of Pakistan as Muslim homeland out of expected annoyance of his non-Muslim allies including Hindus and Sikhs. Renowned Muslim landlords of Unionist Party remained away from Muslim League Conference of 1941 in Lahore. In March 1941, while addressing the members in Punjab Assembly, Sikandar once again stated the concern of Unionist Party for united and autonomous Punjab. He wanted to see the Punjab ruled together by the Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs. Muslim landed aristocracy became aware of the fact that in case if Pakistan were established, the existence of united Punjab would be at risk (Glandevan, 1971).

League still had no basis in the Punjab and in 1941, seven city and six district branches of the League showed membership figure of around 15,000 persons enrolled in ten districts. There was no local League organization at all (Talbot, 1990). Sikandar's death in 1942 caused more serious consequences because Sikandar had been a master at factional manipulation and personal politics through his political skill to prevent a serious disruption of the party. Moreover, he would have behaved differently in the changed circumstances (Munawar, 1989). After his death, the premiership and Unionists leadership went into the hands of another known Muslim landed aristocrat, Malik Khizr Hayat Khan Tiwana but this transition went in favour of the League as Unionist Party weakened due to factional conflict within Unionists.

The Punjab League's weak organization would be disastrous but could not be so because wartime economic dislocation decreased Unionists' popularity and Khizr Tiwana also could not hold rural notables after Sikandar's demise. The situation of discontentment was well exploited by the League as solution to all problems of rural population. In 1943, Sikandar's supporters began to criticize Khizr and started using the Muslim League and the Pakistan concept as an ideological platform for their attacks (Gilmartin, 1988). In the summer of 1943, Shaukat Hayat Khan strongly attacked Khizr's failure to take an effective stand in support of Pakistan. It soon became clear that Shaukat's criticism had the full support of Mumtaz Daultana. Shaukat had also the support of Nawab Iftikhar Hussain Mamdot, who became the President of Muslim League after his father's death. The Muslim League exploited the situation and manipulated farmers and other inhabitants of Punjab because they were severely under burden due to heavy demands and dislocations of war years.

Khizr fully opposed Jinnah and Pakistan and refused to interpret his membership of the League as allowing it to dictate to him and his followers in the Punjab. Jinnah reacted with equal vigor, both within the League and by encouraging revolt amongst the Muslims of the Punjab (Hodson, 1997).

As soon as the war situation improved, the British Government decided to convene a Round table Conference of the Indian political leaders. So on 25 June 1945 a conference at Simla started its deliberations. The presidents of AIML and AINC along with many other delegations attended the conference, but the deliberations at Simla ended in failure because of the differences between Congress and the League³ (Shah, 2000). It made clearer to the landed aristocracy after Simla Conference that Muslim League is well placed now to get better access to patronage and power instead. Not depictions of Khizr and his supporters but such awareness of the landed aristocracy about the improved position of League, attracted them causing huge defections in Unionist Party (Ali, 1976).

Khizr could not overcome the situation owing to his weak hold over the landed aristocracy. Traditional opponents of the Tiwana family seized on Khizr's public break with Jinnah in April 1944 to desert him for the League. They included Shaukat Hayat, Mir Maqbool Mahmood and Mian Mumtaz Daultana. The deserting landed aristocrats played an important role in the League's propaganda campaign in the Punjab. Mumtaz Daultana and Shaukat Hayat, the fresh landlord converts, played vital role in taking the Pakistan message to the countryside in 1944. During June and July they toured all five of the province's Divisions and addressed Muslim League Conferences at Montgomery, Lyallpur, Sheikhupura, Sargodha, Jhang, Sialkot, and Rawalpindi. These attracted large audiences; over 15000 attended the meeting at Multan and 10000 at Montgomery (Talbot, 1990). Such desertions and sudden death of Chhotu Ram caused heavy loss to the Unionist party so the one third of Punjab assembly members had joined League by the end of 1945.

It proved to be a great success as majority of *pirs* and other landed aristocrats had joined Muslim League. Khizr's close companions including his Private Parliamentary Secretary Sayed Amjad Ali and few relatives like Muhammad Mumtaz Khan Tiwana, Malik Sardar Noon and Firoz Khan Noon were supporting League⁴ (Mansergh, 1976). The League was also boosted by the entry of some Punjabi *Pirs* during the years 1944-46. The *pirs* of the Chishti revivalist shrines⁵ were particularly at the forefront of this movement in the Punjab. *Sajjada Nashins* had been waiting for a long time to put politics in the province on a firmer religious footing. Many *pirs* joined the League at this time for personal cum factional political considerations (Talbot, 1990) in response to the communalization of all-India politics and out of religio-political self-interest.

The change in the attitude of the landed aristocracy had multi-dimensional causes and objectives. Some 'conversions' were genuine and at the personal cost of risking official displeasure and mostly were due to

³The differences between Congress and the League emerged regarding the composition of the Executive Council. Jinnah was committed to the cause that Congress would include only Hindu members in its quota. The Congress rejected Jinnah's claim, as it could not accept the League as the sole representative of the South Asian Muslims. Shah, *Ethnicity, Islam and Nationalism*, pp. 148-149.

⁴ Such converts were welcomed by the League though few of these landed aristocrats were opportunist and the League welcomed such converts with open arms, although some landowners were purely opportunists and remained hesitant in demand for Pakistan. N. Mansergh (ed.), *The Transfer of Power in India, 1942-1947* (London, 1976), p. 733.

⁵The main revivalist shrines were at Taunsa, Golra, Sial and Jalalpur.

pressure from below, (tenants and labourers) and the League's authority at all-India level.⁶ Moreover British plan to leave India also demoralized the landlords of the Unionist Party. According to Ian Talbot, many uncertainties and reservations of landed aristocracy about future political developments Khizar himself used to share. Many times Khizr was found expressing his fear that "the British would let down their allies and he and his supporters would suffer for opposing the Muslim League" (Mansergh, 1976) and his apprehensions proved true in the coming years of history.

Despite such flaws, the Unionists Party's grip on the countryside could not be broken overnight. The party continued achieving winning bye-elections of District Board and provincial Assembly in 1944. The progress of League was still slow. As late as May 1945, it could still only boast of a Punjab membership of 150,000 (Eastern Times, 1945). Local factional rivalries were impeding its advance. In Rawalpindi District these were so severe that parallel Leagues competed against each other (QAP, not printed).

Second World War ended in May 1945. Meanwhile Labour Party had assumed power in Britain. The war and the ensuing events began to influence the Indian scene and Labour government decided to hold general elections in India (Eastern Time, 1945). Indian elections were for the purpose to lead India to a democratic government and pave the way towards independence. The major Indian parties did not welcome this declaration of election. Congress wanted more time to organize itself. League was of the view that no solution without Pakistan as a basis was acceptable. But in spite of these limitations, the politicians were ready to the election campaign to secure a role in the legislature. The League approached the voters and persuaded them to cast the vote for League to support the cause of Islam and Pakistan (Shah, 2000).

The landed aristocrats' support within from the Unionists had even surprised Muslim League leaders. Polling took place between 26 January and 14 February 1946 (Shah, 2000). The Muslim landed aristocrats, who have already joined League, invested their material sources and ordered the subordinate tenants to ensure casting of votes in League's favour. The students played a significant role in spreading the League message in rural areas (Dawn, 1946). Khizr Tiwana objected students electioneering that the League had introduced in the Punjab, declaring that it was "an insult for the intelligence of Muslim stalwarts in the Punjab that young students with no knowledge of life or experience should come to preach us" (The Tribune, 1946). Many religious leaders also canvassed for the League and even mosques were used for campaigning purposes (Low, 1991). Response from all walks of life was the result that strong landed aristocrats of Punjab were supporting the cause of League and common public used to follow or depend upon them.

Support from *pirs* and *sajjada nashins* for the league also impacted though majority of landlord *pirs* belonging to established shrines were also motivated to support League. This role played by *sajjada nashins* in League's success was also an indicator to the structure and nature of future state of Pakistan. (Gilmartin, 1979). Many *pirs* had long been allied with land as landed aristocrats in rural Punjab, and during the Pakistan movement many continued to respond to local factional pressures as well. Firstly the religious families joining League were Gillanis of Multan and Sayeds of Sher Garh in Montgomery district (Gilmartin, 1988) which increased support base for League in today's South Punjab.

But all those happenings did not by themselves guarantee the League support. The Qureshi *pirs* in Multan became strong supporter of the Unionist Party as the Gillanis joined the Muslim League. While League

⁶The ever-increasing support for the Pakistan Movement amongst the tenants and labourers of some landowners led a few of them to decide in this instance to follow the wishes of their clients. The League had held some successful meetings in rural areas of the Punjab in July 1944.

used the religious shrines in Multan to propagate Pakistan, the Qureshis started pro-Unionist and pro-British propaganda at their own shrine of Bahawal Haq. *Sajjada nashin* of Sher Shah appealed to his *murids* to vote for Major Ashiq Hussain Qureshi, the Unionist candidate for legislative Assembly. Pir Fazal Shah and Pir Jamaat Ali Shah joining the League used their local influence for Pakistan movement (Gilmartin, 1988). Thus active support of such *pirs* held special significance for the League. During the campaign they issued *fatwas* to their disciples in favor of League. From the areas of prominent *pirs* Muslim League got tremendous results (Eastern Time, 1946).

Heavy reliance on government machinery by the Unionist Party to mobilize voters proved disastrous. Claims of League to be the defender of the cultivators was rather strengthened by them. The counter religious approach of the Unionists against *pirs* proved ineffective. By reciting *Sura Fatiha* at Gujrat and other quotations from Holy Quran in public meetings Khizr tried to prove that the Unionist Party had a greater Islamic justification than the League (Talbot, 1990). The Unionists' strategy of using identical flags to that of League also went in vain.

Finally, Unionists relied on the government to stem the League's advancement in Punjab (Talbot, 1990). The results of 1946 Elections showed ever increasing rapid progression of Muslim League. League in Punjab assembly secured 75 out of the 86 Muslim seats. It won 11 urban and 64 out of total 75 rural seats. Unionist party was restricted to only 18 seats in the House of total 175 members. Khizr could not maintain hold on his party and voters and the Unionists were further reduced to the strength of half a dozen, after several had joined the League, when the results were declared (Hodson, 1997). This was severe blow to the Unionists but due to support of the British government, power still lay with the landed aristocracy associated with Unionist Party. Party programs were still associated to their personal influence. Despite this deteriorating situation of Unionist Party, Khizr was successful in winning election in both the constituencies from where he contested elections (Talbot, 2002) not probably due to the popularity but being landed aristocrat patronized by the British probably.

The majority of the composition of Punjab Assembly after 1946 elections was the Muslim landed aristocrats. This was the first election in the history of the Punjab, which was based on party politics and party programs (Eastern Times, 1946). League, nine short of an absolute majority, needed a coalition with a group in order to govern but Khizr was invited by the Governor, to form the government in the Punjab. Khizr formed a ministry supported by Congress, Akali Sikhs and remainder Muslim Unionists (Hodson, 1997).

This development became unacceptable challenge for League's leadership in the Punjab, which was generally termed as corner stone of Pakistan. The ban on National Guards of Muslim League was exploited by strong landed aristocrats and their supporters as pretext to bring down Khizr's government. This polarization of opinion resulted in gaining popular support of the Punjabi Muslims for Direct Action campaign launched by the Muslim League. Khizr Tiwana strived to keep the Punjab undivided and seek direct dominion status within the British Commonwealth as an independent unit (Hodson 1997). Discouraged by the depressed circumstances Khizr resigned from premiership on 2 March 1947 but agitations discouraged even without any consultation with his Unionist companions. The twenty-four years sway of landed aristocrats associated with Unionist Party was broken thus (Talbot, 2002).

Khizr was convinced that the Punjab would go to Pakistan. While resigning, he also announced that he was "leaving so that the Muslim League can do which is the best for the Muslims" (Inqilab, 1947). When Sir Evan Jenkins talked with the Viceroy on 14th April, during the Governors' Conference, he reported that Khizr had offered, in order to save all the mayhem of elections to lead his Unionist Muslims into the League and so enable them to form a Government. But out of their own interests and understanding, Lord Mountbatten and Sir Evan agreed that a communal government would only make matters worse, and that Section 93 of administration

must continue (Hodson, 1997). Again denial to handover the government to League intensified their demand for the partition of India.

Recalling the victory of League, it was mainly due to its reliance heavily on Muslim landed class even at the cost of old Muslim Leaguers. Almost historians have tried to term this shift of affiliation by landed aristocracy as class interest, mass pressure and the economic opportunities behind attractiveness of Pakistan as the depression years of 1930s substantially caused the indebtedness of Muslim landed aristocracy. Numerous urban and rural propertied Muslim families had become indebted to Hindu moneylenders. Pakistan freed them at a stroke from these debts, which otherwise might have led to major expropriation (Low, 1991). However this could be one aspect also behind this conversion but individual and personal interests alone could not change the path of history.

Communal intensity out of prevalent situation left the locals with limited attainable solutions to the Indian problem. Communal and political engineering led Jinnah and the Muslims to Pakistan as the “only practicable goal” ultimately. Whether 90,000,000 Indian Muslims should be bonded to a Hindu majority government or 60,000,000 Muslims who were residing in the areas forming their majority, are transformed into a separate home land (Sikandar Hayat, 1998).

Under Indian Independence Act, Pakistan came into being on August 14, 1947 and the Government of India Act 1935 was promulgated as the provisional constitution (Provisional Constitution) Order 1947. Consequent upon voting results on 23 June 1947 the Punjab Assembly was divided into two assemblies i.e. East Punjab Legislative Assembly in India and West Punjab Legislative Assembly in Pakistani Punjab.

With the creation of Pakistan, sitting 91 members of the Punjab Legislative Assembly of 1946, majority of whom were landed aristocrats including Muslim Unionist like Khizr Hayat Tiwana, were declared to have been elected to the West Punjab Legislative Assembly restarting their tenure from August 15, 1947. Pakistan at independence had much more land than that of France and many more population than that of Germany to survive whilst inherited religious warfare and economic chaos. Of the approximately 70 million people about 80% were farmers and very few wealthy landed aristocrats (Life Magazine, 1948). Future course of history and politics of not only Punjab but of Pakistan as a whole also revolved around the politics of landed aristocracy of the Punjab.

In early years of Pakistan the landed aristocracy which ascended to the power under patronage of British rulers monopolized the politics at both Punjab and national levels. During the period from 1947 to 1958, Mamdot, Daultana, Noons and other landed aristocrats kept on striving to rule Pakistani Punjab but meanwhile Pakistan had become victim to neocolonialism. Through capitalist industrialization, foreign tutelage, funding and training to bureaucracy, military and religious parties’ leaders, there emerged new elite and ruling classes in Pakistan which in the coming years dominated the politics and gradually sidelined or replaced the traditional landed aristocracy not only in Punjab but in the center as well.

Thousands of books written on the history of Indian partition carrying almost different narratives about the causes, contribution, responsibility and credit of this important historical event. All major stakeholders of partition like British, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs etc. seem narrating the events and contributions suiting to their own interest confusing the students of history to understand the facts. The analysis of some primary sources and events leading to partition of India could help in understanding the facts by detached spectator.

On 30th December 1930, Mahomed Ali (Jauhar) while in London claimed "I am still alive and I can continue working to bring Hindus and Muslims together." His policy was "full power to every Hindu majority in any province, however large, and protection to every Muslim minority; and the same power to every Muslim majority, however small in any province and the same protection to the Hindu minority, however large" (C&M Gazette, 1931). Jauhar has been respected as hero in Pakistan's history though he has been against the Indian partition.

Abul Kalam Azad while narrating about Gandhi, claimed that partition would be over his dead body and he would never agree to the partition but on 2nd April after his first meeting with Lord Mountbatten, Sardar Patel visited him. When Azad met Gandhi on same day he was really shocked as Gandhi's narrative about partition had changed and he did not speak so vehemently against and he repeated the arguments of Sardar Patel (Azad, 1959). The largest responsibility of partition falls on Gandhi and the Congress because they failed to reach an agreement with Muslims and which could preserve the Indian unity (Moon, 1969). Despite these facts in not only India but in the world Gandhi has generally been recognized as an ambassador projecting and securing Hindu-Muslim unity while Jinnah and his Muslim followers have been alleged as architects of the partition.

Master Tara Singh on partition justified opposition from Sikhs to creation of Pakistan because its Sikhs are opposed to Pakistan because its very scheme and ideology was based on communal considerations of extreme nature. The fundamental objective of the creation of Pakistan was not to protect the Muslims but their suspected domination over the minorities and it creates ever-quarreling divisions of the country. This mentality may lead to chaos and anarchy. Hindu and Muslims cannot live united under any circumstances whatsoever, so let us frankly admit that we are obviously unfit for Swaraj and agree to accept foreign rule (C&M Gazette, 1941).

If analyzed the background and mindset of the Sikh community, actually the holy character of Punjab made the Sikhs stand against any scheme which is likely to turn the Punjab into an Islamic state. As a practical proposition they could strike at only one point as the Marhattas struck at the other. If the whole of India could not be liberated from the yoke of foreign Mughal rulers, the Sikhs at any rate liberated a portion of it. The Sikhs revolted against Mughals to carve out their own kingdom because the government was not the government of the people. They could have conquered the whole of Hindustan but their designs were checked by the British who had established their power on the eastern boundaries of the Punjab. The idea of Pakistan will lead to the establishment of hundreds of small warring states which will become an easy prey to an ambitious foreign invader. Muslims should therefore think seriously about the danger of the scheme which they seem to have evolved in a fit of anger desperation.

Gauga in 1946 described Pakistan as a natural heritage of the past. When the advocates of Hindu-Muslim Unity term the English responsible for communal divide, that is not total truth and this blaming on the British as wholly responsible for spreading communalism is equal to deny the facts of recent history. The Muslims could not be exempted from the charge but "the main responsibility for the communal hatreds and passions that sweep the country... lay at the door of Hindus. It is the Mahasabha and not the Muslim League that has laid the foundation of Pakistan" (Gauga, 1946).

The influential magazine 'Economist' in its analysis on Indian problem highlighted 'that a territory of the size of India should form a single political unit may be desirable,' and that the unity which had been imposed on it should be broken may be regrettable but by Western European standards, at any rate, India's division into two separate states would accord with rather than outrage normal expectations. Since Lord Wavell became Viceroy great risks have been deliberately run in a desperate attempt to get the parties to agree. The risk of setting up a purely Congress interim Government was taken as a source of getting the League into Government and same

tactics are being pursued with the Constituent Assembly. The British Government should insist on retaining the executive military authority of the Commander-in-Chief unimpaired until the final transfer or transfers of power to Indians. 'If the Congress insists on its present course and the Muslim League reverts to its original Pakistan project, then the British will have to recognize three states in India along with division of army, a real barrier which preserve India from civil war deluge (C&M Gazette, 1946).

Goodwin, President European Association Madras while speaking of Pakistan on 23 December 1946 declared that the granting of Pakistan would rob India of the one unquestioned boon of unity. 'India in fact would be Balkanized and instead of being a peaceful and stable element in the new international structure she might well become, like the Balkans in the past, a breeding ground for a world war (C&M Gazette, 1946).

As per Ayesha Jalal's narrative, Jinnah belonged to Muslim Minority province and through political movement he actually wanted to use the power of Muslim majority areas as a shield to protect the Muslims where they are in minority but this was not acceptable to the Congress. It was easier for Congress to partition the subcontinent and let these areas go. Even through different disagreements and demands Jinnah hoped to delay the timetable of transfer of power to keep the British incharge to scotch the threat posed by partition of Bengal and Punjab to force the Congress to make some concessions at the center. Upon announcement of 3rd June plan by Mountbatten and Atlee that India would be partitioned in two separate states, Nehru termed it as a 'big advance towards complete independence' but Jinnah left the decision to the League Council to accept the plan or otherwise (Jalal, 1996).

Whether a sovereign Pakistan smaller in size, consisted of only Muslim Majority areas could be the possible and practicable basis of compromise for both since the Pakistan demanded by Muslim League seemed impracticable apparently as it would cause the exclusion of Jullundur and Ambala divisions of the Punjab from Pakistan. Assam except Sylhet is main portion of Bengal where population of the Muslims is 23.6 percent. Thus radical partition of Bengal and Punjab would be against the wishes and benefits of a large portion of population. Cabinet mission had recommended a Union of India, including both British India and the Princely States, dealing with the Defence, Foreign Affairs, and Communication including some powers to raises finance for above three subjects⁷ (IOR, L/P&J/10/42: ff53-55).

At this juncture, when Hindus and Muslims relations became much stressed, America interfered in Indian matters. The American Government perpetually attempted to convince Great Britain to make settlement with the Congress. Two US officials, Ronald A. Hare, Head of the Division of South Asian Affairs, and Second Secretary in US Embassy in India Thomas E. Weil met Jinnah on 1 May 1947. Detail of this visit was sent by the American Charge D' Affairs to the Secretary of State. As per the account Jinnah clearly argued that he was not ready to accept any such scheme for the United and Federated India under any circumstances. All India Muslim League had vowed to achieve Pakistan (Khan, 1988).

Mr. Muhammad Ali Jinnah on 17 March 1946 while in Cairo declared "It is only when Pakistan is established that we (he meant Indian and Egyptian Muslims) shall be really free; otherwise there will be menace of a Hindu imperialist raj spreading its tentacles right across the Middle East." In an interview to Reuter he strengthened his belief that Muslims of India would be able to achieve Pakistan (C&M Gazette, 1946). On the same day Lord Pethic-Lawrence, Secretary of State for India in a debate about India in the House of Lords while agreeing with recommendation of Cabinet Mission said that the time had come for Indians to have

⁷Statement by the Cabinet Delegation and His Excellency the Viceroy (as issued in New Delhi on 16 May 1946). IOR L/P&J/10/42: ff 53-55

independence...and the government has made it clear that no minority should be capable to veto the advancement of the majority (C&M Gazette, 1946).

The preceding paragraphs narrated varying factors and contributions of historians and the stakeholders directly involved in the events nearing partition of India. Even in last days Lawrence seemed stitched to the cause of Hindu majority but events in the Punjab where economically and politically strong Landed aristocracy led the Muslim League contributed last blow to the united India. The outcome is that the Unionists, including Fazl, Sikandar and Khizr, belonging to landed aristocracy, provided political mobilization to the Muslim community in India. They were also successful in bringing Hindus and Sikhs within the fold of the Unionist Party to make it a cross-communal organization.

The Muslim League in Punjab did not attack pro-landed aristocrats policies of the Unionists but it propagated to communalize them to create difference between Muslim and non-Muslim agrarian interests. By doing so League won over the landed aristocracy of the Punjab to use their patronage to reach the grassroots. Members of rural landed aristocracy and military elites crossed over to the Muslim League like Shaukat Hayat Khan Son of Sikandar Hayat Khan.

Many factors brought landed aristocracy to AIML and the Pakistan movement. After intentional or unintentional contribution and cooperation of Sikandar with League and Jinnah, selfless efforts for the uplift of League and the Muslims by major landed aristocrats like Mamdot, Daultana, and Shaukat Hayat etc. have been outstanding. One example is of Sir Feroz Khan Noon, a renowned landed aristocrat, who has been part and parcel of British Government in India on different key positions. Observing the course of events taking shape in Wavell's leadership, he was sure enough to get chance of making a bid for Pakistan. By resigning from Viceroy's Cabinet he intended to work for general elections in 1946. He told Lord Wavell that 'the most important part of India where demand for Pakistan was at peak, Punjab was his own province and that his cousin, Khyzir Tiwana, was premier there, heading the Unionist Party – the party to which he himself belonged - and that unless he went back in Punjab and worked for Pakistan, he would be regretting it throughout the life. He opined that unless the Muslims got political power in an area which belonged to them, they would all have been relegated to the status suffered by depressed classes under conventional Hinduism (Noon, 1966). Leagues' victory in 1946 elections was mainly due to the active support and contribution of landed aristocracy of Punjab.

Owing to wise move and politics of Jinnah those founding and key members of Unionist party caused the strengthening of League in Punjab ultimately and they were major factor in spreading Jinnah's message throughout the Punjab. Jinnah was well aware of the importance of Punjab in wellbeing of the Muslims so he made Punjab the center of his political activities. This resulted in League's victory in 1946 elections of Punjab which made Pakistan a possible destination (Anjum, 1996). Both Mumtaz Daultana and Shaukat Hayat Khan (son of Sikandar) were informing League leadership in the center that Unionists may deceive any time so they suggested organizing League independent of Unionist Party to achieve its objectives for Indian Muslims (Anjum, 1996).

Sikandar Hayat was instrumental in election of Nawab Iftikhar Mamdot as president of Muslim League in Punjab. Upon Mamdot's ascendancy to the presidentship of League Sikandar congratulated him and also denied much speculated 'Sikandar Formula' as an alternative to Lahore Resolution. He emphasized his loyalty to the League and Jinnah. Despite all this Sikandar faced baseless criticism for organizing the League party in the Punjab Assembly (Afzal, 2013).

Jinnah was in perpetual correspondence with the landed aristocracy although he was not much responsive to the letters of old Leaguers even those of Sir Muhammad Iqbal. Mumtaz Daultana, Shaukat Hayat Khan and Nawab Iftikhar Hussain Mamdot seemed close companion to Jinnah as in a letter to Mamdot Jinnah wrote "I have seen Shaukat Hayat Khan and I hope that you will carry out the understanding that was arrived at between you, Mumtaz and me, and there should be no hesitation or question as who should be the Leader of the Muslim League party in the Punjab Assembly. I see no other way except that you should take it up" (SHC, not printed).

Mian Mumtaz Daultana played vital role for Muslim League. He was the person to point out to Jinnah that chief defects in the Wavell proposals would remain only nominal and could have no significance, if before the Shimla Conference a full agreement was concluded between Congress and the League. These are the only two parties that matter. If they agree, as they must in fairness, that the representatives from the Muslims must come only from the Muslim League, then just conclusion has been arrived at. We cannot accept any Muslim outside ourselves. We condemned the participation of non-League Muslims in the Conference but that would remain only a nominal thing if the League and the Congress go to the Conference with one voice (SHC, not printed). Mumtaz Daultana being proactive was not much optimistic about Congress and was of the view that if Congress stitched to its mean tricks, it meant fight and he was ready to fight voluntarily. That had been the spirit of landed aristocracy of the Punjab to cooperate with Jinnah.

Jinnah appreciated that Punjab had made tremendous progress and congratulated him for hard work Shaukat Hayat had done for Muslims (SHC, not printed). Jinnah asked Shaukat Hayat that would you resign from ministry if Jinnah- Khizr dialogue failed and Shaukat Hayat at the same time handed over his resignation to Jinnah though later on Shaukat was removed from cabinet by Governor through an intrigue by Khizr and Chhotu Ram (Khan, 1995). Though major source of landed aristocracy's power was their association with the British rulers but being close to Jinnah they led from the front for the cause of Muslims and the Muslim League. Events at center always affect the politics in the subordinate regions so with ever increasing rifts and communal differences, rest of the Muslims landed aristocrats might also be under religio-moral compulsion to join AIML as major Muslim public opinion under so engineered circumstances was looking towards the League.

When economically powerful class assumed the command of League its narrative and demands got momentum which contributed in League's victory of 1946 elections in the Punjab. This victory of League signaled the end of Unionist party because landed aristocracy and *Sajjada nashins* moved en-block from Unionist to the League. Pir Jamaat Ali Shah, Chishtis and Pir of Sial Sharif stood with Jinnah when League used Islam as a tool in their campaign for Pakistan. The strong backing of religious landed aristocrats, *sajjada nashins* of Taunsa Sharif, Golra Sharif, Alipur Sayyidan and Jalalpur Sharif further strengthened League in the Punjab (Eastern Times, 1945).

Punjab being hub and cornerstone of Indian economy and politics automatically became major factor in Indian future especially after Sikandar-Jinnah Pact in October 1937 and Lahore Resolution in 1940. With the shifting of economically powerful ruling landed aristocracy from communally harmonious Unionist Party to communally nurtured AIML, the partition of India became inevitable. Thus change in affiliation by economically powerful ruling Muslim landed aristocracy of Punjab caused a major factor not only in Indian partition but the partition of Punjab as well. Manipulation and disrespect to public mandate also became factor in Indian disintegration.

In case of 1946 elections in Punjab, AIML was the majority party having 75 seats while then powerful British Establishment manipulated and League was not invited by the Governor to form the government in Punjab. League having majority in the parliament and major population in Punjab started agitations and direct

action strengthening communal friction not only in Punjab but in India as a whole because Punjab had become the hub and corner stone of Indian politics. Thus disrespect to public mandate and consequent events in Punjab proved last blow which led to Indian partition ultimately. Governor's gesture for the formation of coalition Unionist ministry had done less for unity than partition.

Sikhs alliance with League was more feasible option as Sikhs had more suspicions with Congress. Aftermath of Unionist, Congress and Akali coalition ministry strengthened the idea of impossibility of exclusively Muslim rule in undivided Punjab and other Muslim majority areas. Had British invited Muslim League being a majority party to form the government in Punjab instead of Khizr Hayat Tiwana along with extending British patronage (manipulation in League's favor) the future of subcontinent could have different direction. Deprivation from power despite majority of seats in Punjab might have made the Muslims realized that in Hindu dominated United India they would never be able to come into power even after winning elections as happened in Punjab. Thus resilience on the part of landed aristocracy of the Punjab through support to AIML which otherwise had no say in Indian politics before signing of Sikandar-Jinnah Pact in October 1937, provided impetus to League to become a strong contributory factor in Indian partition.

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