

## **Jinnah and British Balochistan: Dynamics of Political Mobilization During the Struggle for Pakistan**

Farooq Ahmad Dar\*

### Abstract

This paper examines Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah's policy and political strategy toward colonial Balochistan, focusing exclusively on the British Administrative Districts, while setting aside the princely states and tribal territories existed in the province. Largely based on primary sources, the study aims to explore how Jinnah viewed Balochistan's political significance within the broader framework of the Pakistan Movement and how he nurtured political awareness and support in this otherwise politically deprived province. The paper investigates Jinnah's connectivity with the people and leadership of Balochistan, his strategy to win over the electoral college comprising of Shahi Jirga and the non-official members of the Quetta Municipality, and his dealing with the colonial administrative mechanism of the province. It argues that Jinnah's commitment to the Balochistan cause and his strategy to convince the local populace managed to align British Balochistan with the demand for Pakistan.

**KeyWords:** Jinnah, Balochistan, Balochistan Muslim League, Qazi Isa, Quetta, Kalat.

---

\* Professor, Department of History, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad., farooq @ qau. edu.pk

Balochistan,<sup>1</sup> though economically backward and administratively marginalized, held a position of considerable importance in the political landscape of South Asia during the twilight of the colonial era. Despite its limited social and economic development, and almost non-existent political representation under British rule, the region's geographical, strategic, and political significance grew as the demand for Pakistan gained momentum. Recognizing its potential role in shaping the destiny of the Muslim nation, Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah viewed this overwhelming Muslim-majority province as a key region that needed to be integrated into the larger struggle for Muslim nationhood. He realized that in order to get success in the province, both constitutional guarantees and political consensus were required. On one hand he struggled to convince the British for giving Balochistan its constitutional and political rights, and on the other he undertook consistent efforts to win the confidence of both the local sardars and the common masses. Through visits, engagements, and correspondence, Jinnah aimed to mobilize support for the All-India Muslim League's vision, while assuring the indigenous people that their traditions, autonomy, and interests would be safeguarded in the future Muslim state. His approach combined diplomacy, political networking, and tactical negotiations, marking a significant chapter in the League's campaign to bring Balochistan within the fold of Pakistan.

Jinnah was the first national level Indian leader to raise the voice for the political rights of Balochistan. His advocacy for constitutional reforms in the province can be traced back to March 20, 1927, when he made this demand a part of the Delhi Proposals (Hayat, 2014: 155). This was followed by the discussions on the issue in the Calcutta session of the Jinnah faction of the League in December the same year. Identical demand was also included in his famous fourteen points which became a non-negotiable minimum for the League in 1929. When Jinnah came back from the self-exile, he continued pleading the case for Balochistan. He presided over the session of the League's Council on February 16, 1935, in which it was demanded that besides being awarded provincial status, the province should also be given representation in the Central Legislature. In the meeting it was also discussed that if Balochistan was not made a full-province, it should be at least made part of Sindh. It also called for freedom

---

<sup>1</sup> During the colonial rule, Balochistan was divided into three broad political and administrative regions, i.e. the British administrative Balochistan or the Chief Commissioner's province; the princely states including the Khanate of Kalat, and feudatories of Lasbela, Kharan, and Mekran; and the tribal areas where the British exercised indirect control through Political Agents and tribal agreements. The focus of this paper is confined mainly to British Balochistan, while the princely states and tribal areas, if discussed, will be addressed only marginally.

of speech, association, and press; introduction of the system of elections in the local bodies; codification of the customary law; and reforms in the jirga system in British Balochistan (FMA, NAP, F. 220/15). During this period Jinnah also remained in contact with the local leadership including Mir Yusuf Aziz Magsi (Mujahid, 1990: 196).<sup>2</sup>

Year 1937 proved to be a turning point in the history of All-India Muslim League. At the Lucknow session of the party, Jinnah's major focus was on accommodating leaders of the Muslim majority provinces. He personally sent invitations to the eminent leaders from these provinces (FMA, NAP, F. 170/9). Likes of Sikandar Hayat Khan, Fazul Huq, and Syed Muhammad Saadullah<sup>3</sup> not only attended the session but also joined the League. Balochistan was also represented for the first time in any League session as Muhammad Khan Gilzai was also present there (FMA, NAP, F. 170/27). The resolutions passed at the end of the session demanded for the protection of fundamental rights of the people of Balochistan and the introduction of reforms in the province. League's constitution was amended and five seats were reserved for representation from British Balochistan in the Council of the party (Qaisar, 2018: 155). These steps taken by the League were seen in Balochistan with optimism (QAP: NAP, F. 1094/159–60). During the Sindh Provincial Muslim League Conference held at Karachi in October 1938, a Baloch delegation led by Allah Baksh Gabol visited Jinnah at Abdullah Haroon's residence.<sup>4</sup> They asked Jinnah to fight the case for the constitutional reforms in the province and the lifting of the ban on recruitment of the Balochs in the army, that was in place since 1925. Jinnah reminded that he was working on this agenda for over a decade and promised to continue his complete support in future (*Daily Gazette*, October 9, 1938).

Jinnah's relationship with Balochistan entered a new phase when Qazi Muhammad Isa, a dynamic young Barrister from Pashin, decided to join Muslim League. Jinnah found in him a lieutenant who could act as a bridge between the League and the people of the province. Jinnah assigned Isa a task to organize Balochistan chapter of the party.<sup>5</sup> Balochistan Provincial Muslim League was formally established at Quetta in a meeting held on

---

<sup>2</sup> Yusuf Aziz Magsi visited Jinnah at his Malabar Hill, Bombay residence several times both before and after Jinnah's self-exile. However, he last visited him on January 31, 1935.

<sup>3</sup> All three of them were the Chief Ministers of Punjab, Bengal, and Assam respectively and before this session were not members of the League.

<sup>4</sup> Besides Gabol, the deputation consisted of Jamal Khan, Lagani Baluch, Gorani Baluch, Fakir Muhammad Dura Khan, Abdullah Ghaffar Khan, F. Dura Khan, Muhammad Usman Brohi, Umar Bux, Subra Khan, and Ali Muhammad Khan Nabadad.

<sup>5</sup> Besides Jinnah, Qazi Isa also remained in touch with other League stalwarts including Liaquat Ali Khan, Bahadur Yar Jang, Khaleeq uz Zaman, Ifikhar Hussain Mamdot, Muhammad Islamil, Abdullah Haroon, and Zafar Ali Khan.

July 10 and 11, and Isa was unanimously elected as its president. Sardars of various tribes from all over Balochistan including the Achakzai, Bugti, Jogezei, Kansai, Mandokhel, Rind, Shahwani, etc. participated in the meeting. They set educational facilities, representation in government services, and constitutional reforms in the province as the objectives of the party. Isa drafted a constitution for Balochistan Muslim League, which was approved and adopted (Afzal, 2013: 421). A formal request for affiliation of the Balochistan chapter was sent to the central Muslim League, which on the recommendation of Jinnah was endorsed on August 27, 1939 without much scrutiny (FMA, NAP, F. 293/8-9). Isa and his team, under the direct guidance of Jinnah, worked hard and within few months the League offices were established at district level and thousands of people including tribal Sardars, ulema, and local leaders, joined the party. On Jinnah's advice, Isa authored a book on Balochistan in English to highlight the issues faced by the province at global level and started a newspaper, *Al-Islam*, from Quetta, which acted as the mouthpiece of the League in the province (Kausar, 1991: 318). Keeping in view of his services for the League, Jinnah nominated Isa as the member of the Working Council of the party (FMA, NAP, F. 293/14-15). On Isa's request the Balochistan's quota in the Central Council of the party was raised from five to ten.<sup>6</sup>

In order to spread the agenda of the League and to counter the pro-Congress propaganda in the province, Jinnah sent Zafar Ali Khan to Balochistan. He in collaboration with the local League leadership toured different cities and addressed big public meetings (BWIBS, August 4, 1939, IOR. L/PS/12/3219). Muslim League member, Mir Ghulam Bhik Nairang, on September 18, 1939, moved a resolution in the Central Assembly for the establishment of provincial autonomy in Balochistan on the same footing as in other provinces. However, the resolution was defeated by 40 to 11 votes (Mitra, 1990: 104). On the other hand, a delegation from Balochistan consisting of Isa, Prince Abdul Karim<sup>7</sup> and other leaders attended the meeting of the Council of the League on August 27, 1937 (FMA, PNA, F. 293/14).<sup>8</sup> Next month, a strong contingent of leaders from Balochistan including Isa, Prince Karim, Arbab Karam Khan, Malik Abdullah, Abdul Ghaffar Khan Achakzai and Nawab Mehrab Bugti

---

<sup>6</sup> Isa moved the resolution at the Allahabad annual session and Mir Jafar Khan Jamali seconded it. The five new members were: Malik Usman Khan, Mir Din Mohammad Khan, Malik Amir Jan Khan, Mian Abdul Karim and Begum J. See (Afzal, 2013: 421.)

<sup>7</sup> It is interesting to note that Prince Abdul Karim, brother of the Khan of Kalat, who revolted against the state of Pakistan in 1948, supported Jinnah and the Muslim League and actively participated in the Pakistan movement.

<sup>8</sup> Liaquat Ali Khan asked Isa to send five names from Balochistan with full addresses to be nominated to the AIML Working Committee.

attended the meeting of the League's Working Committee, held at Delhi. At this occasion, Jinnah asked Isa to address the participants and brief them about the progress of the party in Balochistan. When Jinnah called for his followers to celebrate the "Day of Deliverance" on December 22, 1939, people in Balochistan responded to his call (*Al-Islam*, Quetta, December 25, 1939).

Representation from Balochistan at the epoch-making Lahore session of the League was quite visible. In a meeting of Balochistan Muslim League, held on February 26, 1940 it was decided that fifteen members and thirty volunteers under the leadership of Isa would represent the province at the twenty-seventh annual session of the party. Prince Karim announced a donation of twenty decorated belts and two hundred yards cloth for the uniform of volunteers (*Jang*, Quetta, March 27, 1987). A smart Balochi headed the Guard of Honour presented to Jinnah at the Lahore Railway Station upon his arrival. Isa, on March 24, while supporting the Lahore Resolution, assured that the people of Balochistan, being "the gatekeepers of India," would "be prepared to render every kind of help" to "their brethren in the Minority Province" after the creation of the anticipated Muslim State(s) (Pirzada, 2007: 315). On the sidelines of the session, Jinnah invited Isa and three students from Balochistan – Fazal Ahmad Ghazi, Malik Abdullha Jan Kanshi, and Fateh Muhammed Baloch – to a tea party, and encouraged them to share their candid opinion on the proposal presented during the session (Kausar, 1991: 35). In another meeting with Sardar Muhammed Usman Khan Jomezai, Jinnah wanted the indigenous youth to take the message of the League to the remotest areas of Balochistan (Sayed, 2008: 49).

Balochistan Muslim League became even more dynamic after the passage of the Lahore Resolution. The idea of a separate Muslim state was welcomed in the largely attended public meetings held at Quetta, Pashin, Qila Saifullah, etc. On Jinnah's instructions, Abdul Hamid Badayuni toured Balochistan during April and in his public addresses criticized Congress and the Nationalist Muslims (BWIBS, April 26, 1940, IOR. L/PS/12/3219). Balochistan Muslim League organized its first annual conference on August 26-28, 1940 and invited Jinnah to preside over it. Due to health issues, Jinnah could not come, yet he sent Liaquat as his replacement (QAP, NAP, F. 335/86). Through a message read out at the Conference, Jinnah called upon the people of Balochistan to "organize, unite and stand by the policy of All-India Muslim League like a block of steel." and help the organization achieve its "goal" (QAP, NAP, F. 302/42). In his presidential address, Liaquat asserted that Balochistan "holds a unique position" with its people being blessed with "fine physique and martial temperament." He added that the British had

treated Balochistan in an “unjustly” way and its “parallel cannot be given anywhere else in India” (*Inqilab*, Lahore, August 2, 1940).

Muslim League, in March 1941, again demanded for the reforms in Balochistan in the Central Assembly, but the motion was once more defeated by 40 to 18 votes (Isa, 1944: 10-11). However, it did not stop Jinnah from raising the question of bad governance in Balochistan in the same Assembly. He asked where the government was spending money when the school enrollment rate in Balochistan was at least four times lower than that of the worst-performing province of India, and had remained “stationary” for the last decade (IOR, V/9/165). On the other hand the activities of Balochistan Muslim League steadily expanded and the people of the province started contributing to the League fund started by Jinnah. On March 23, 1941, in order to celebrate the first Pakistan Day, a ceremony was organized in Quetta, where Isa took salute of the Muslim League National. Next month a delegation representing Balochistan, consisting of provincial leaders and National Guards, participated in the Madras session of the League (Sayed, 2008: 51). The annual session of the Balochistan Muslim League in July 1942 was a bigger show. Jinnah sent Iftikhar Mamdot to preside over the session in which support for Pakistan, confidence in Jinnah’s leadership, provincial self-government for Balochistan, and release of Abdur Rehman Bugti, were the key highlights (FMA, NAP, F. 293/51-52).

Support for Jinnah in Balochistan was on the rise but intra-party conflicts, specially the one between Isa and Jaffar Jamali became a big worry for him. Isa’s growing involvement in addressing country-wide issues kept him away from the province for long periods, causing important matters to remain pending for months. Jamali, after being elected as the Chairman of the provincial Civil Defence Committee in June 1942, started openly criticizing Isa for the way he was leading the provincial League (FMA, NAP, F. 302/23). Jamali also challenged Isa’s backed newspaper *Al-Islam* and launched his own *Tanzeem* to replace the former as the mouthpiece of the provincial League. In order to mediate between the two Jinnah decided to visit Balochistan for three weeks in June-July 1943, something he was planning for the last few years. Accompanied by his sister Fatima, Jinnah boarded Quetta Mail from Karachi on June 24. Likes of Jamali, Usman Jomezai, Abdul Ghaffur Khan Durrani, Maulana Abdul Kareem, etc. embarked the same train from Sibi so that they could take care of their leader during his journey. Jinnah briefly addressed big assemblies of masses, who had gathered at the stations where the train stopped. The crowd was charged with emotions and were chanting slogan, “Quaid-i-Azam Zindabad” (*Al-Islam*, June 26, 1943).

On his arrival at Quetta Railway station on June 26, he was warmly welcomed by a gathering of approximately fifty thousand people (Axmann, 2008: 168). who had come to have a glimpse of Jinnah.

President, office bearers and council members of Balochistan Muslim League; Muslim League National Guards; representatives of Muslim Students Federation; and other organizations formally greeted him and presented him with garland. Markets and streets were decorated on his way (*Al-Islam*, June 27, 1943). Jinnah thanked the people of Balochistan for giving him “royal welcome” and said that he would “always remember” it. He acknowledged that the “Musalmans of Baluchistan” have “awakened” and thus “no power on earth” could deprive them from accomplishing their “cherished goal.” He appealed before them to “stand united” and work hard to achieve “Pakistan” (*The Morning News*, Calcutta, June 30, 1943). In the following days, Jinnah attended a large number of visitors including deputations of Kalat National Party, Jamiat Ulema-i-Hind, Anjuman-i-Islamia, Quetta Bar Association, local businessmen, sardars, and tribal chiefs (Kausar, 1991: 115-26). Prince Karim and Khan of Kalat’s Secretary, Abdur Rauf, also met Jinnah, and assured him of Khan’s full support for the cause of Pakistan (Sayed, 2008: 52). In a meeting of the Balochistan Muslim League held on July 2, Jinnah took pride in the “unfurling” of the “national flag” on the “soil of Baluchistan” and asked the audience to “stand united under this flag” and to make “sacrifices” for the attainment of their “final goal.” He assured that in spite of being a “small province,” Balochistan would become “the most important part of Pakistan” (*The Morning News*, July 4, 1943).

Next day, in the evening, Jinnah inaugurated the third annual meeting of the Balochistan Muslim League held at a decorated pandal at the ground of Islamia High school Quetta. In his presidential address he told the people that he remained very busy in reorganizing the party since the “League was revived in April 1936,” yet he had “never forgotten Baluchistan.” He said that Balochistan had “got a wonderful history” but the people of the province were “backward in every way, educationally, economically, socially and culturally” because they were practicing “an ancient system” which was “full of defects.” He questioned that why Quetta was “kept in moribund condition” and pleaded that the “citizens of this town” should be “entitled to have their proper share in the civic life.” He asked the “Sardars, Nawab, and Chiefs” to realize their “responsibilities,” and “duties,” and to come “in line” with their “people” and their “nation.” He asked them to lay the “foundation of nationalizing people” by creating “healthy social conditions.” He added that they “must raise” the standard of the common men “educationally and economically” and generate a sense of “honour and pride” amongst them. He cautioned the people of Baluchistan to abstained themselves from the “propaganda” of Congress, which had “done its very best” to “corrupt” and “mislead” the Muslims of South Asia. Jinnah assured that the “minorities in Baluchistan,” under the League’s dominance, would be “dealt with fairly

and justly.” He promised that “a sense of security and confidence,” as a “paramount duty” of a “civilized government” would be guaranteed to them. He added that after the withdrawal of the British, the “Muslim India” should become “Pakistan,” which would love to live with Congress dominated “Hindustan” as “good Neighbours” (FMA, NAP, F. 293/34-47).

The following morning resolutions were presented ratifying the Lahore Resolution of 1940, and the Resolution passed in the Delhi session of 1943 rejecting the idea of a federal or confederation government in India; demanding reforms in Balochistan, elections for the Municipal Committee, and promotion of education in the province; setting the creation of Pakistan as their ultimate goal; and accepting Jinnah as their leader and ensured him that Balochistan would stand with other provinces in the struggle for Pakistan (*Al-Islam*, July 6, 1943). Commenting on the resolutions, Jinnah said that it shows that the people of Balochistan “have begun to understand” their “difficulties and liabilities,” and if they would all “gather under the League flag” they would “not only get over” their “own restrictions” but would also become “a source of real power to Muslim India.” When he was presented with a sword, he promised to use it “only in defence.” He, however, made it clear that “knowledge is a greater force than sword,” and asked the youth of the province to “go and acquire it.” He asked them not to “run after cheap slogans or catchwords,” and that their “first duty” to themselves, their “parents,” and their “nation” was to “concentrate” wholeheartedly on “education” (Ahmad, 1968: 521-23). A large number of people including women, for whom segregated enclosure was set up, attended all sessions of the conference. On July 5, a special session of the Women wing of Balochistan Muslim League was organized by Isa’s wife. Lady Abdullah Haroon presided the session, while Fatima Jinnah was also present. The women of the province decided to stand shoulder to shoulder with their men in Jinnah’s struggle for Pakistan (Kausar, 1991: 166-67).

Jinnah’s love for education was evident in every stage of his life. During his stay in Quetta, he decided to visit Intermediate College in Quetta and interacted with the students. He asked them to focus on their studies because “if they enter the world arena” after finishing their education, “brighter chances” would “welcome” them. He tried to make them understand that their land was an “uncut diamond” and “when properly cut” it would have the “finest setting in Muslim India.” He told them that it was their duty “to build up the national life” of their people by raising them “educationally, economically, socially and politically.” He advised them to “work like missionaries” and consider the opportunities as a “sacred trust” (*The Eastern Times*, July 7, 1943). In his address to the Balochistan chapter of the Muslim Students federation he said that it was only due to their “constant organizational work” Balochistan had not only

“secured a place on the map of India,” but had put “a foot on the world map,” and that the “foreign radio stations” were developing interest in presenting news about them. He simultaneously tried to educate them that they still have a long way to go and in order to be a “great strength for” themselves, and for the “whole of India,” they had to “give up” their “lethargy,” apply their “mind readily,” “be steady,” and “work hard” (*Star of India*, July 10, 1943).

Once he was done with his activities in Quetta, Jinnah decided to visit different parts of the province in the last leg of his tour. He first visited Pashin, the home town of Isa, on July 8, where he stayed overnight. He received a warm welcome and a great reception was hosted in his honor. Jinnah appreciated the efforts of the people of this region in organizing them under the banner of Muslim League and predicted that if they would “continue to work in the same spirit,” the time was not far when they would get their own “homeland of Pakistan” (*Star of India*, July 10, 1943). Next Jinnah visited Kalat between July 10 and 12. Prince Karim, who had come to Quetta to receive Jinnah, accompanied him during his journey. On their arrival, Khan of Kalat, Ahmad Yar Khan, himself received Jinnah. A gracious reception was organized, guard of honor was presented, city was decorated, and people in large number assembled. Special camps were established at Harboi Hills and Chapar Garden to make Jinnah’s stay pleasant and comfortable. Lavish feasts were hosted in his honor. During this trip Khan developed personal friendship with Jinnah and assured him of his full support for the League during the Pakistan movement (*Inqilab*, July 17, 1943). Jinnah also visited Ziarat from July 14 to 16, where he met Albray Mitcalf, Agent to the Governor-General of Balochistan, and briefed him about the “sentiments, desires, grievances, and the demands” of the people of “British Balochistan” (*The Leader*, Allahabad, July 21, 1943). Before his departure from Quetta on July 18, Jinnah assigned Isa the task to write a booklet in English on Balochistan, highlighting the case for the province. He wanted the booklet to be circulated in circles that matter including the members of the Central Legislative Assembly and the press.<sup>9</sup>

Jinnah’s first visit to Balochistan proved to be a great success. It broke barriers between him and the local people and leadership. He made them realize that the demand for Pakistan was genuine need of the Muslims of South Asia and that Jinnah was sincere to his cause. They did not challenge Jinnah’s acts, even when they were against their traditions, for instance,

---

<sup>9</sup> Isa authored a booklet with the title, *Baluchistan: Case and Demand*, in which he called for a series of reforms, including the establishment of a permanent judiciary, an elected municipal committee in Quetta, a degree college and additional schools for both boys and girls, the creation of a district board, opportunities to develop mineral resources and promote agriculture, and greater employment of locals in government services. For details see, (Isa, 1944).

by allowing the women to participate in political gatherings. He also managed to bridge the gulf between the two factions of Balochistan Muslim League and brought Isa and Jamali together under the banner of the League. However, this unity proved short lived and amity evaporated only months after his departure. Durrani, Secretary of the Civil Defence Committee, in alliance with Isa, refused to operate with Jamali and alleged that the latter was working against the larger interest of the party (FMA, NAP, F. 302/32). Jamali had his own objections against Isa and Durrani (FMA, NAP, F. 293/50–52). On Jinnah's instructions the Central Committee of Action tried to look into the conflict but failed to resolve it (FMA, NAP, F. 155/10-12). Yet, efforts to fight the case for Balochistan at the center continued.

Jinnah, after the Karachi annual session of the League, sent a memorandum to the Agent to the Governor-General raising various reform issues. In March 1944, Liaquat moved a resolution in the Central Assembly in which he demanded for the appointment of Committee with a task to look into the political issues related to Balochistan. Though the British government did not accept the major demands of the League leadership, yet they agreed to accept some of them, such as reserving one seat for a representative from Balochistan in the Central Legislature, introducing an elective system in the Quetta Municipality, and increasing the educational fund for Balochistan.<sup>10</sup> When, in January 1945, Wavell nominated Nawab Assadullah Khan Raissani as Balochistan's representative to the Council of State, Jinnah opposed the appointment. He argued that that the nawab, on one hand did not possess sufficient education or personality, and on the other was not the true representative of the sentiments the indigenous population (Axmann, 2008: 114).<sup>11</sup> Balochistan Muslim League also supported Jinnah on this issue. They stood behind him as Nawab Muhammed Khan Jomezai and other leaders of the province sent telegrams to the Viceroy telling him that the "Muslim League" was "the sole representative of Muslims" and Jinnah was their "sole official spokesmen" (BWIBS, July 18, 1940, IOR. L/PS/12/3219). They also backed Jinnah's stance at Simla Conference (*Inqilab*, July 20, 1945).

In the beginning of autumn 1945, Jinnah's health declined, but with Central Assembly elections due in December and Provincial elections in January 1946, he first set up the League's Parliamentary Boards before taking care of his health. As the cold and dry climate was suitable for his lungs, his doctor advised him to retreat to Balochistan (Wolpert, 1984:

<sup>10</sup> Both AIML and Balochistan Muslim League protested against the introduction of joint electorates and demanded for separate electorates. They also kept asking for the reforms to be introduced in Balochistan as in other provinces. (*Dawn*, Delhi, June 10, 1944.)

<sup>11</sup> Jinnah wanted Isa to represent Balochistan and had openly admitted so in conversation with William Rupert Hay, the Agent to the Governor-General.

250-51). He arrived in Quetta on September 15, where he stayed as Isa's guest for almost three weeks. On the invitation of the Khan of Kalat, he also visited Mastung and stayed there for more than a week as Khan's personal guest. The main purpose of Jinnah was to take rest but it was not possible for him to completely isolate from the political scene at that crucial juncture of the history of freedom movement. Due to the conflicts emerging between different partymen on the subject of the distribution of election tickets, he had to issue a press statement on the day of his arrival in Quetta. He clarified that the only forum to decide about the nomination of election candidates were the Provincial and Central Parliamentary Boards, and no individual, even Jinnah himself, could "interfere with the functions and duties of the two Boards" (*Dawn*, September 16, 1945). He constantly remained in contact with the League leaders and others via letters during his stay in Balochistan. Even few of the Punjab and Sindh leaders also personally visited Quetta to discuss the internal conflicts and formulating election's strategy (*Dawn*, September 28, 1945). He listened to the broadcast address of Wavell and Attlee from Quetta and responded to them (*Dawn*, September 21, 1945). He also kept an eye on the international developments and criticized US President Truman's Palestine emigration proposal for the Jews (*Civil and Military Gazette*, October 3, 1945).

Owing to his bad health, Jinnah's 1945 visit to Baluchistan was quite different from his first trip in 1943, when he frequently met local people. This time, his interaction with them was very limited. During the first couple of weeks, Jinnah mainly remained within the boundary walls of Isa's residence, yet he held sessions of political discussions with his host. Although very selective, a few guests visited Jinnah and discussed the future of Balochistan with him. However, by the time he moved to Mastung, his health was a bit stable and he for the first time during this trip had a public appearance. He visited a school where besides students a sizable number of local dignitaries had also assembled. Jinnah clearly told them that the creation of "Pakistan" was "the only solution to India's constitutional problem" and "the only way for both the Hindus and the Muslims of India to live honourably and independently." He asked for the "support and prayer" from the people and government of Kalat (*Star of India*, October 9, 1945). Staying with them for ten days, further enhanced Jinnah's relationship with the Khan and his brother. Jinnah also interacted with the senior statesmen of Kalat. Even the elements in Kalat state, who were considered as the staunch opponents of the idea of Pakistan, had developed a personal bond with him. Mir Abdul Aziz Kurd, the Law and Justice Minister of Kalat State, being one of them. On October 15, Kurd's nephew, on his behalf, presented a bouquet to Jinnah (*Al-Islam*, October,

20, 1945), a gesture that said it all. During his stay at Mastung, Jinnah also met Jamali and discussed with him the politics of Balochistan and Sindh.

Jinnah's last four days in Quetta before his departure from the province on October 20, were full of activities. On October 16, in a meeting organized by Balochistan Muslim League, he acknowledged that Balochistan, gradually but surely had occupied "an important position in the all-India affairs," and its residents had started thinking about the "vital matters" including "how to live the life of freedom and free from subjugation." Yet, he reminded them that their "administration" was "political and semi-military" and thus was "incapable of appreciating people's feelings and civil rights." To him, the province was "being governed with rules and regulations" which were "foreign in every respect." He mentioned that both Congress and the European members in the Central Assembly "remained silent on the Baluchistan issues," but League consistently contested the case of the province. He pointed out that it was only because of efforts of the League that Balochistan got representation in the "Central Legislature," "elected Municipal Committee for Quetta," "nine lakhs of rupees" for "education," and a promise that "after the war a commission with a majority of non-officials would be appointed and sent to Baluchistan to make recommendations with regard to reforms to be introduced in the province" (*Dawn*, October 18, 1945). Next day, Jinnah interacted with the students and told them that the "first and foremost question" was if the "electorate constituted of Muslims" wanted "Pakistan," or it would support the Congress demands of "Akhand Hindustan," and "Hindu raj." Jinnah cautioned them that though they had "very well understood their position," still they "must study politics" and treat its study "as part of their education." He added that if the government would prevent them from doing so it would be not good even for government itself (*Star of India*, October 18, 1945). Jinnah also attended an at home given by Balochistan Muslim League in the lawns of the Town Hall, Quetta, which was attended by around five hundred residents of the province. (*Star of India*, October 20, 1945).

Before the conclusion of his tour, Jinnah had an appointment with William Rupert Hay, the Agent to the Governor-General, in the morning of October 19. In the meeting that lasted for about one hour, Jinnah discussed the Balochistan affairs with him in the light of the Muslim demands as embodied in Balochistan Muslim League's resolutions adopted from time to time (*Dawn*, October 20, 1945). After Jinnah's departure, Balochistan Muslim League devised a systematic plan to enroll new members and establish branches across different parts of Balochisgtan. Balochistan Muslim League and the Balochistan chapter of MSF sent their delegations to Sindh and North-Western Frontier Province to participate in the party's campaign during the general elections (Afzal,

2013: 425). They also collected “silver shells” and “silver bullets” and contributed handsome amount in the League’s fund generated for the election campaign. When the only election was held in Balochistan on one seat reserved for the province in the Central Legislative Assembly, Jinnah decided not to file the nomination of the League’s candidate and decided to support Mohammed Khan Jomezai against Congress’ backed candidate Abdul Samad Achakzai. Jomezai managed to defeat his opponent by sixty-one to thirteen votes.<sup>12</sup> Balochistan Muslim League also performed well in the elections of the Quetta Municipality.

As the time passed, popularity of Jinnah and the League was on the rise in Balochistan. Many leaders from other parties, including Nazim-i-Aala of Khaksar Party in the province, and one of the Congress’ candidates in the elections of Quetta Municipality, started entering the folds of the League (*Al-Islam*, August 25, 1946). Even the Muslim Children of Sibi and Loralai decided to stand behind the leadership of Jinnah and established Children Muslim League (BWIBS, May 29, 1946, IOR. L/PS/12/3219). Protest meetings were held in different parts of the province including Quetta, Zhob, Sibi, and Chagai, in response to Jinnah’s call to celebrate Direct Action Day and a sizeable number of persons renounced their titles, given by the British, in protest (BWIBS, September 4, 1946, IOR. L/PS/12/3219).<sup>13</sup> When riots broke out in Bihar, Isa toured different areas of the province and on his appeal people observed “Bihar Dar,” and “Bihar Fund” was established. National Guards from Balochistan were sent to Patna to help their Muslim brethren in dealing with the communal situation (FMA, PNA, F. 371/16). Workers of the Balochistan Muslim League were also sent to Lahore to participate in the agitation against Khizar Hayat Tiwana’s Government along with their Punjabi brethren (Sayed, 2008: 60). To get themselves physically fit to fight for the cause of Pakistan, Jinnah Physical Training Club was established in Quetta, and the youth were requested to attend the physical exercises (BWIBS, October 23, 1946, IOR. L/PS/12/3219).

The year 1947 marked one of the most demanding periods in Jinnah’s life, as he was simultaneously engaged with the Indian National Congress and the British in a bid to carve out a separate Muslim state during the

---

<sup>12</sup> Though Nawab Mohammad Khan Jomezai contested this election as an independent candidate, he previously had remained President of the Zhob district Muslim League between 1939 and 1943. Jinnah’s decision proved vindicated as Jomezai completely supported the League’s decisions. Like other members of the party, he boycotted the inaugural session of the Constituent Assembly on December 9, 1946, and also voted in favor of Pakistan under the June 3, Plan.

<sup>13</sup> Baluchistan Weekly Intelligence Bureau Summary, The list includes Nawab Arbab Karam Khan Kansai, Seth Fida Ali, Ali Bhai, Malik Faqir Mohammad Kansai, Sardar Ghulam Muhammed Khan Tareen, Malik Shahjahan Khan, and Maulvi Abdul Rashid Khan.

final phase of his political struggle. In spite of his busy schedule, he continued regular communication with the leadership of Balochistan, keeping himself informed about developments in the province and directing them on ways to address ongoing challenges. Before the Pakistan Conference was convened in Quetta on April 27 and 28, Isa met Jinnah on April 20, discussed the political situation of the province and sought his guidance. Jinnah also sent Choudhry Khaliquzzam as representative of the Central League to participate in the Conference. The resolution passed at the end of the conference demanded for Balochistan's allegiance to Pakistan, after the departure of the British (*Al-Islam*, April 29, 1947). When the matter of disagreement amongst Balochistan leaders were brought before Jinnah in May, he asked them to remain "united under the Muslim League," and urged them to adopt "unity and discipline" as their "motto." He was confident that Pakistan was "in sight" and Balochistan would be "part of it," and promised that "all matters and every question will be settled justly and fairly" once their "own government" would be "established" (*Star of India*, May 21, 1947).

Unlike other provinces, there were no political institutions existed in Balochistan, and thus it was difficult to set a procedure for determining the wishes of the people of the province. In order to solve this puzzle, Louis Mountbatten decided to constitute a body comprising of the members of Shahi Jirga, excluding Sardars nominated by Kalat Sate, and non-official members of the Quetta Municipality to decide the future of the province. Jinnah refused to endorse the idea of limiting the franchise to just sixty-two persons, and wanted as big an electoral college as possible. He suggested that all the ration card holders should be allowed to vote in the referendum. In case it was not possible he wanted all Maliks and Motabars to vote, and even if that could not be arranged, he wanted all members of the distrust jirgas to give their verdict, as a last option (Mansergh, 1982: 535). Isa clearly pointed out that the League was not ready to approve the "so-called Shahi Jirga and the Quetta Municipality" as the electoral college to decide about the future of the province. To him the Shahi Jirga, "in reality," was not a true representative body of tribes, and believed many of its members had "no *locus standi* in their tribes." In his opinion, many of them were in the Jirga because of their relations with the "local officers of the Political Department." He added that "some tribes" were given "out of proportion" representation and some "bigger tribes" were given "proportionately inadequate representation" (QAP, NAP, F. 302/144-6). In spite of the League's objections, the Viceroy excused himself from enlarging the electoral college as it would take extra time and thus decided to adhere to the plan he had already prepared (Mansergh, 1982: 580-83).

Jinnah and his team did their utmost to make Balochistan become a part of Pakistan. He appealed before the affluent Muslims across the country to contribute to the Pakistan Fund that could be used, along with other

purposes, to meet the expenses to run for the referendum in Balochistan (*Dawn*, June 17, 1947). He persuaded the voters in Balochistan to “vote in favour of joining Pakistan,” and asked them to realize that the province could gain “politically, geographically and economically,” only by taking this decision. He added that Pakistan “alone” could “help them in their educational, social, economic and political uplift.” He promised that in Pakistan “all classes and interests” will get “even justice and fair play.” In his opinion, the “salvation of Mussalmans” was in “complete unity, solidarity and discipline,” and thus wanted them to show “trust and confidence in the leader” who had “served” them “for the last ten years.” He hoped that the electoral college would not be “misled by the propaganda” of their “enemies putting class against class and one particular interest against another,” and would “unanimously decide in favour of joining the Pakistan Constituent Assembly” (*Dawn*, June 26, 1947). Jinnah sent Zahid Hussain to Quetta so that he could brief the sardars about the economic prospects of Pakistan. Based on his arguments, the Quetta based alumni of Aligarh University published a monogram discussing in simple words about the economic benefits for Baluchistan by joining Pakistan (Kausar, 1991: 303-04). Jinnah also deputed Abdur Rab Nishtar and Ayub Khuro to supervise the referendum in the province.

The leadership of Balochistan Muslim League was as committed as the central Muslim League in convincing the electoral college to vote for Pakistan. Due to Jinnah’s efforts the traditional rivalries among the indigenous leaders subsided, though only for the time being, and they worked hand in hand to run the League’s campaign. Isa, Jomezai, Jamali, Durrani, Ghulam Muhammad Khan Tareen, Jahngir Khan and others played a major role in convincing Sardars to vote for Pakistan. Largely attended rally organized by Muslim Students Federation and Muslim National Guards was enough to convince the sardars that the public support was with Pakistan. Few sardars who were initially uncertain, thinking it was a campaign against the Khan of Kalat, decided to support Pakistan when told that the choice was between Pakistan and India (Kausar, 1991: 310-12). Even few days before the referendum the pro-Pakistan leadership was sure of their victory. Jomezai and Jamali in a joint statement claimed that the Sardars of Balochistan had decided in the best interest of their people to join Pakistan. They declared that those who were talking about independent Baluchistan were their enemies and enemies of Islam. They announced to give any sacrifice for Pakistan (*Nawa-i-Waqt*, Lahore, June 28, 1947). Jomezai called Jinnah on the night of June 26, and shared the list of pro-Pakistan sardars. Jinnah wished him and his colleagues the best.

Voting took place on June 30 at the Town Hall, Quetta. Fifty-two members of the Shahi Jirga and ten non-official members of the Quetta

Municipality were supposed to vote. However, three representative of the Jirga and five of the Municipality did not turn-up. This left only fifty-four votes casted on the day. Though it was expected that the verdict would come in favour of Pakistan, yet hardly few could have thought that the house would give a unanimous verdict (IOR, L/PO/6/123). When the result was announced, people inside the hall, and a huge crowd waiting outside, chanted the slogan 'Pakistan Zindabad.' Jinnah appreciate the "firm resolve" of Balochistan to "enter the Pakistan Dominion," and promised to "welcome" them and help them to attain "prosperity and progress." He reiterated that "no interference" with "*riwaj*" of the people of Balochistan would be "allowed," and "all agreements and allowances" would continue until the habitants of the province themselves demand to change it (*The Pakistan Times*, Lahore, August 13, 1947). Jinnah wanted Mountbatten to make Balochistan a "Governor's Province" before the transfer of power (Manserg, 1983: 220-21). This, however, was not possible because of the legal and constitutional difficulties pointed out by the British Government (QAP, NAP, F. 2/241-2).

In conclusion, Jinnah's engagement with Balochistan constitutes an important, though often understated, dimension of Pakistan's freedom struggle. He considered Balochistan not only as a territorial concern but as a community deserving of equal political representation and dignity. His consistent advocacy for the constitutional and political rights of the province reflected his deep commitment to democratic principles and his love and respect for the people of Balochistan. Through his leadership skills, arguments, and personal interactions, he succeeded in gaining the support of both the local elite and the common masses. His hard work helped transform a politically marginalized region into an active participant in the national cause. Jinnah's efforts for the integration of the people of the province with the larger Muslim nationalist struggle in South Asia proved successful and this overwhelmingly Muslim-majority province decided to stand behind the Muslim demand of a separate state. Jinnah's vision and guarantee of provincial autonomy appealed to the Baloch leaders, who saw in him a statesman capable of addressing their long-standing grievances. This trust culminated in the ever-increasing popularity of the League in the province, eventually resulted in a unanimous vote by the electoral college, constituted by Mountbatten against the wishes of Jinnah, in favour of joining Pakistan. The decision reflects the success of Jinnah's inclusive politics and his ability to create unity across distinct cultural and regional identities. His role in Balochistan thus stands as evidence to his belief that Pakistan's strength would lie in equal opportunities and respect for the aspirations of all its people, irrespective of their diverse background.

## References

- Afzal, M. R. (2013). *A history of the All-India Muslim League, 1906–1947*. Oxford University Press.
- Ahmad, J.-u.-d. (Ed.). (1968). *Speeches and writings of Mr. Jinnah (Vol. 1)*. Sh. Muhammad Ashraf. “Albray Metcalf holds important meeting with Mr. M. A. Jinnah.” (1943, July 21). *The Leader*.
- Axmann, M. (2008). *Back to the future: The Khanate of Kalat and the genesis of Baloch nationalism, 1915–1955*. Oxford University Press.
- Baluchistan main Pakistan ki himayat. (1947, June 28). *Nawa-i-Waqt*.
- Freedom Movement Archives, National Archives of Pakistan. (n.d.). Freedom Movement Archives [FMA, NAP]. National Archives of Pakistan.
- Government of India, Central Legislative Assembly. (1941). *Proceedings of the Central Legislative Assembly (IOR V/9)*.
- Government of India, Intelligence Bureau. (1946). *Baluchistan Weekly Intelligence Bureau Summary (BWIBS, IOR L/PS/12)*.
- Hayat, S. (2014). *The charismatic leader: Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah and the creation of Pakistan*. Oxford University Press.
- Isa, Q. M. (1944). *Baluchistan: Case and demand*. Muslim League Publication.
- Kausar, I.-u.-H. (1991). *Jid-o-jehad-i-azadi main Balochistan ka kirdar*. Research Society of Pakistan.
- Mansergh, N., & Moon, P. (Eds.). (1982). *Constitutional relations between Britain and India: Transfer of power 1942–47 (Vol. 11)*. Her Majesty’s Stationery Office.
- Mitra, H. N., & Mitra, N. N. (Eds.). (1990). *The Indian annual register: A digest of public affairs of India, 1940 (Vol. 2)*. Gian Publishing House.
- Mujahid, S. A. (1990). *Quaid-i-Azam and his times: A compendium (Vol. 1)*. Royal Books.
- “Muslim League selects election candidates.” (1945, September 16). *Dawn*.
- Pirzada, S. S. (Ed.). (2007). *Foundations of Pakistan*. National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research.
- “President Truman’s Palestine proposal is ‘monstrous and highly unjust.’” (1945, October 3). *Civil and Military Gazette*.
- Qaisar, S. (2018). *Jinnah and organizational politics of All-India Muslim League [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]*. Quaid-i-Azam University.
- “Quaid-i-Azam meets Baluchistan’s tribesmen.” (1947, August 13). *The Pakistan Times*.
- Quaid-i-Azam Papers, National Archives of Pakistan. (n.d.). Quaid-i-Azam Papers [QAP, NAP]. National Archives of Pakistan.

- “Quaid-i-Azam receives warm welcome from students in Quetta.” (1943, July 7). *The Eastern Times*.
- Sayed, J. H. (2008). The Balochistan Muslim League. *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture*, 29(1), 39–62.
- “Students must support the idea of Pakistan.” (1943, July 10). *Star of India*.
- Wolpert, S. (1984). *Jinnah of Pakistan*. Oxford University Press.
- Yum-i-Nijat ki taqreebat. (1939, December 25). *Al-Islam*.