

PalArch's Journal of Archaeology
of Egypt / Egyptology

**EMERGENCE OF RELIGIO-POLITICAL LANDSCAPE IN JHANG; A
CASE STUDY OF THE POLITICS OF MAULANA MUHAMMAD
ZAKIR (1903-76)**

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Abstract

In Indian freedom movement, the Ulema and the Sufis played significant role. This ideological as well as *realpolitik* battle was fought in whole Indian subcontinent. Muslim community was divided into two schools of thought as far as their response of nationalism was concerned. One was proponent of the concept of Indian nationalism. Second was the strong supporter of Muslim nationalism and was in the favor of creation of a separate state. Religious and political leadership struggled for the protection of the rights of Muslims. These rights were political as well as religious. This article aims at signifying the role of religious leadership especially the role of Maulana Muhammad Zakir. This contribution of Maulana Muhammad Zakir was being played at three levels: his personal appeal, his Sufi institutional support and his engagement with the leading Muslim political party i.e. All India Muslim League. The study is exploratory, descriptive and analytical.

Introduction

Ulema and Sufis refurbished the society of Indian subcontinent with social justice, cultural harmony, literary activities, devotion towards God, self denial, humanistic services. These traits attracted the population and laid the foundation of new arena. Sufis came with the invaders but settled here and became popular among the masses due to their humanistic traits. The Ulema promoted the Islamic literature and became the custodians of the Islamic teachings. The Sufis did not attach themselves with the royal courts and remained intact with the devotion of God. The Ulema challenged the rulers and even furnished them with Islamic teachings. In this way, two schools of thoughts were developed. One was representing by Sufis and the second was Ulema. Sufis themselves were also well versed with the teachings of Quran and Sunnah. Both of these schools created their circles among the masses who used to blindly follow them. In this way, the Indian society came under the influence of Islamic teachings.

After the War of Independence (1857), the British regime was established in the sub-continent and they subjugated the whole Indian society. Muslims came under

fire due to their involvement in the War of Independence and the Hindus became the ally of the British regime. The basic concepts of the religion of Islam were threatened with new discussions and rational interpretations of the religion. Politically, there was no room for the Muslims. Under these circumstances, the role of the religious figures was very crucial. It was their responsibility to defend the religious elements and secondly to protect the Muslim community from atrocities of the British government.

The British government gradually introduced constitutional reforms in the Sub-continent and gave political rights to the local masses. The Hindu dominated political party congress was influenced the politics and it was being expected that congress would rule for a long time with under the umbrella of the British regime. On many occasions, the Hindu-Muslim clashes came to Surface. Under these circumstances it was imperative to strengthen Muslim community. According to Dr Tanvir Anjum,

Civil society theorists have developed state-civil society relational models, which can broadly be classified into four types: (i) confrontational model of civil society; (ii) autonomous model of civil society; (3) collaborative/associational model of civil society; and (4) mediational model of civil society. In premodern period, the Sufis adopted meditational model for resolving the differences of the people. They played role as a bridge among the state and the people. For the betterment of the people, the Sufis joined politics and contested elections.

Maulana Muhammad Zakir did not confine himself to monastic affairs. He served people through establishing institutions and electoral politics. Though his ancestors did not like their participation in politics but Maulana Muhammad Zakir introduced himself as religious scholar as well as politician also. He was the founding father of politics in Gadi Muhammadi Jawan. He remained unbeaten in field of politics. He set new pattern and introduced new trends. Through the power of vote, he ended the feudal pressure on slaves. The siege of chiefs and feudal lords was broken. He spread the message of social equality on Islamic grounds. There was also an awareness of political and social consciousness and a sense of duty. Ordinary people started to contest elections against sardars and got victory. Maulana Muhammad Zakir also established educational and religious institutions. He served humanity through his various political activities and movement. He brought change in *Khankahi* system. He was a true follower of Pious Caliphs of Islam. His ideology about politics was based on historical foundations laid by Pious Caliphs instead of old *Khankahi* order. To say that he did not want to take part in politics, and he took part in politics only just on his Pir's Order, is not authentic. He had a political consciousness and mission. There were many other perspectives behind it. The political context of pious caliphs was uncovered by Professor Dr. Aman Ullah Bhati in his book *Islam Aor Khankahi Nizam*. He elaborated as under

‘Life of Hazrat Abu Bakr, the first caliph of the Muslims, was neither a monastic life and nor a life of seclusion. On the contrary, he was a great Mujahid after the death of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), he protected the Muslims in every aspect. He fought against the deniers of Zakat and the deniers of the end of Prophet hood. So, the state affairs continued to run smoothly. Just Christianity in the West promoted monasticism as a way to escape from the social and collective system of human society. Similarly, the Sufis turned a blind

eye to the political and social aspects and as a result, these sectors fell into the hands of vested interests'¹

Mualana Muhammad Zakir protected the Muslim community against the policies of the British government. Rowlett Bill accompanied by the Punjab atrocities and then came the spoliation of the Ottoman Empire and the Khilafat. The one attacked Muslim liberty, the other their faith. Most of the Muslims either expended their political energies or their precious goods on the Khilafat movement.² After the end of World War 1, the Muslims of India were very anxious about the future of Turkey. They demanded that the Khilafat should not be abolished. Palestine, Syria, Arabs and the holy centers of the Muslims should remain under the control of Khilafat. Indians started Khilafat Movement on October 27, 1919. This day was also celebrated as 'Khilafat Day'. The Muslims and the Hindus joined the Khilafat Conference on 23 November 1919 and decided to start non-cooperation movement for acceptance of their demands.³ Thirty thousand persons were sent to jail till December, 1921 to January, 1922. These prisoners were both Muslims and Hindus.⁴ Khilafat was the sign of power and unity for the Muslims and Islam.⁵ Maulana Muhammad Zakir was studying at the Madrassa *Dar Ul Uloom Zia Shamsh Ul Islam Sial Sharief*. Hazrat Khawaja Muhammad Zia –ud- Din Sialvi was active member of the Khilafat Movement. All the educational activities of the Madrassa had stopped and all the energies were being spent only for Khilafat.⁶ A Khilafat committee was formed in Sargodha Sahiwal under the patronage of Pir of Sial Sharif. Hundreds of volunteers were enlisted. This city was the center of Khilafat Movement. 'Maulana Muhammad Zakir started practical politics with this movement. He was an active member of the Punjab Khilafat Committee⁷ and was nominated as commander of volunteers. A uniform was set up for volunteers. Shirts and trousers were green and Afghan hat was worn. The Khilafat Committee held processions and rallies all over the district. A meeting was organized by the District Khilafat committee in Bhaira city on March 17, 1922. Posters were put up everywhere for the publication of this meeting. A large *carvan* from Sial Sharif went Bhaira Sharif. The prominent members of the *carvan* were Mulana Muhmmad Zakir, Abdul Haq, Abdul Aziz etc.⁸ Police locked down the entire city. The police inspector ordered the meeting to be canceled; fearing arrest. Police announced that Maulana Muhammad Hussain and all his associates should be arrested. As soon as the rally started, police arrested Maulana Muhammad Zakir, Abdul Aziz and all other volunteers on March 19, 1922. On March 20, Prisoners were produced in the court of magistrate in Sargodha Jail, he sentenced them to

¹Professor Dr. Aman Ullah Bhati, *Islam aor Khankai Nizam* (Lahore: Dar-us-Slam, 2004), 15-16.

²Wolpert, *Jinnah of Pakistan*, 67.

³R. Ambedker, *Pakistan or the Partition of India* (Bombay:, 1946).139.

⁴Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography* (London: 1936), 80.

⁵ Wolpert, *Jinnah of Pakistan*, 256.

⁶Haji Muhammad Murid Ahmaed Chisti, *Fouz-al-Muqal Fi Khulfa-e- Pir Sial*, vol.viii (Karachi: Anjuman Qamer-ul-Islam Sulaimania, 2011), 216-225.

⁷Jamia Muhammadi Sharief, *Mahnama Al Jamia* (Chiniot: Jamia Muhammadi Sharief, September 2017), 34.

⁸Hakeem Atta Muhammad Qureshi, *Yad e Ayam khodnosht Sanwah* (Jhang: Matboha Dr Abdullah shah Hashmi, n.d), 6-20.

imprisonment. He was kept in Sargodha, Jehlum, Lahore and Rohtak jails respectively. Maulana Muhammad Zakir was sentenced to one and a half years with hard labor.⁹

During imprisonment in jails, Maulana Muhammad Zaki and his companions made special arrangements for education and training of their companions. He formed a society in prison “*Bzum Asseeran-e-Jehlun*”. Regular recitation of Holy Quran, *Naat* and poetry were arranged in it, so teaching work continued in the jail. Maulana Muhammad Hussain Ajmeri Sial Sharif memorized the holy Quran in Jail. Khan Muhammad, Hakeem Khair Ahmad and Maulana Muhammad Zakir read Hadith Sharif and Usul Fiqh from Muhammad Hussain Ajmeri. Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Zakir read History of Washington, *Tariekh e Islam* by Syed Amir Ali, *Seerat Nabi* by Allama Shibli Nomani. Maulana Muhammad Daud Sahib studied English from Maulana Syed Habib Malik. In this way, Prisoners of Khilafat movement reformed the prisons to a great extent on the strength of its organization and fearless leadership.¹⁰

Maulana Muhammad Zakir also played vital role in Kashmir Movement. This movement was launched as solidarity with the Kashmiris. The Ray Zada Tartilok Chand (Governor) ordered the police to shoot the Muslim Kashmiri on 13 July 1931. About 22 Kashmiri were killed in the firing. The incident took place when many Kashmiri people had gathered to watch Abdul Qadeer trail at Srinager and a Kashmiri Muslim started giving Friday Azan.¹¹ A Youngman Muslims Association launched a peaceful protest movement.¹² During this movement, Many people were killed and thousands were injured in the clashes and violence. The Muslim-Hindu riots broke out. This was the first Movement after the Khilafat Movement in which Indian Muslims took an active part. About 40,000 people were imprisoned and many young people were martyred. The Kashmir Committee was formed on July 25, 1931. Allama Muhammad Iqbal was also Member of this Kashmir Committee and Mirza Bashir-ud-Din became its president. The President of the committee became controversial and many religious Ulema criticized him. Allama Muhammad Iqbal separated himself from this committee due to Mirza Bashir ud Din leadership. Majlis e Ahrar emerged as a huge party for the independence of Kashmir¹³

The “*Kashmir Chhlo Movement*” was also started in Jhang district. A *carvan* led by Maulana Elahi Bakhsh left Chiniot for Kashmir. He was martyred under the tyranny of Dogra Raja. When his dead body reached Chiniot, there was chaos everywhere. Processions were held on all sides in Chiniot.

Mulana Muhammad Zakir lead the first *carvan* of Muhammadi Sharif and left for Kashmir on December 3, 1931 which consisted of seven people. He was arrested and sentenced to two months in prison. In Jail, Maulana Muhammad Zakir fought for the rights of the prisoners.¹⁴ He formed an organization inside the jail called “*Tehreek-e-bahmi Hamdrdi*”. He was the advocate of independence of Kashmir. He

⁹Thaeem, *Tareekh-e-Chiniot*, 307.

¹⁰Asir, *Ziker-e-Zakir*, 123.

¹¹“Kasmiri Martyrs Day observed.” *The Nation*. 14 July 2015. Retrieved 13 April 2020.

¹²G. H.Khan, *Freedom Movement in Kashmir New Delhi: Light and Life*, 1980), 126.

¹³Kashmirii, *Syed Atta Ullah Shah Bukhari: Sanwah WA Afkar*, 256-258.

¹⁴Muhammad Nafeh, “*Hazrat Molana Ki Zindagi Kay Chand Kabl-e-Ziker Paehloo*,” Mahnama Aljamia: Molana Muhammad Zakir Numeber, February, 1977, 10-12.

always raised his voice in favor of Kashmiris for their freedom in his monthly Magazine the *Al-jamia*.

During Pakistan Movement, the Sajjada Nasheen of Sial Sharif played active role and urged devotees to launch campaign in favor of the creation of Pakistan. Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah himself nominated Hazrat Khawaja Qamer-ud-Din Sialvi the president of the Muslim League of Sargodha District. On the directions of Sial Sharif, Maulana Muhammad Zakir traveled all over the district.¹⁵ He was elected vice president of district Jhang in 1943. During the elections of 1946, he became the member of working committee. Other members were Col. Syed Abid Hussain, Noor Muhammad Chaila, Rai Ahmad Noor Sangra, Sardar Syed Ahmad Shah. Maulana Muhammad Zakir formally joined the Muslim League in 1947. Maulana's aim was to strengthen the ideological foundations of Pakistan.

After 1947, Maulana Muhammad Zakir played his role to strengthen the ideological foundations of Pakistan. He remained in Muslim league till 1951. The Muslim League was dominated by vassals and feudal lords. Maulana Muhammad Zakir and all other party leaders had deprived from party tickets of Muslim league. All tickets were distributed among feudal lords and Nawabs. Maulana Muhammad Zakir separated himself from the Muslim League and became involved in the organization and development of the new organization. Muhammadi Movement launched by Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Zakir resulted in creating Islamic sense and political rights. Monopoly of feudal lords in field of politics was abolished. So role of Movement of Jamia Muhammadi was like Aligarh movement as explored by S.N. Sen author of *history of modern India*. He had written that,

“Aligarh Movement resulted in widening the gulf between the Hindus and the Muslims which culminated in the foundation of Pakistan. But the Aligarh Movement did much to awaken the Muslim community.”¹⁶

Punjab Provincial Assembly Elections 1951

The first Punjab provincial Assembly elections were held between 10 and 20 March 1951. The Muslim league and Jinnah Awami Muslim League were two major parties which were contesting. Mian Mumtaz Doltana was the Chief Ministerial candidate from the Muslim League. He had the support of Prime Minister Liaqat Ali Khan and Governor General Khawja Nazim-ud-Din. Iftikhar Hussain Mamdot was the candidate from Jinnah Awami Muslim League. Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Zakir, as an independent candidate, contested the election against Sardar Ghulam Muhammad Shah in district Jhang. He was a ticket holder of the Muslim League. Muslim league distributed tickets of member's legislative assembly in district jhang on unjustified grounds. Rai Ahmad Noor Sangra was deprived of a party ticket which was district president of Muslim league. Vice president Maulana Muhammad Zakir was deprived of party tickets too. Mohammad Zakir drew attention to the forced injustice in distribution of party tickets among the Scholars and patriots. He warned of its dangerous results. He convened a meeting on the subject and formed a political platform called the People's United Front¹⁷.

¹⁵Jamia Muhammadi Sharief Jhang, *Mahnama Aljamia* (Jhang: Jamia Muhammadi Sharief, September 2017), 34.

¹⁶Haroon-ur-Rasheed, *Pakistan the Successful Culmination* (Lahore: Emporium, 2011), 32.

¹⁷ All the public leaders of three tehsil should be included in the party. Imams of the Mosques should be invited and motivated for participation. The scope of Muttahidda Mahaz was extended to Chiniot, Jhang and Shorkot. Every second or third week the meeting of the respectable personalities began to be

Maulana Muhammad Zakir won the elections of 1951. He defeated Sardar Ghulam Muhammad Shah and was elected a member of the Punjab Assembly.¹⁸ Despite the opposition of the ruling party, the chiefs were defeated. During his election campaign, he faced below mentioned challenges

1. In the rural areas, biraderies, caste, factions, sects and personality worship played significant role in politics. But in Sardari Rayiatt culture, the most important dominant element was economic dominance, fear and to enliven the illiteracy which played key role in determining political affiliations and the impending consequences on the rural fabric of the villagers' life. As, this ominous activity is practiced by the feudal lords frequently in the rural areas.
2. The vast jagiris were tightening feudal hegemony over community to control Pakistani politics. Many tenants were cultivators on their lands. Their children livelihood depended on their lands. So this economic domination forced them to vote for them to protect themselves.¹⁹
3. Cattle theft for vote was considered a support rather than a crime. A member of legislative Council has been accused that he stole the voter's animals to get votes. After receiving the votes, he returned the stolen cattle to the owners.²⁰ Cattle theft technique for political gain was also carried out in the constituency of Maulana Muhammad Zakir. Chaudhry Bahawal Khan Sajanka and Mian Sultan Mahmood Bhuta were one of the aficionados from Chak No.155. Their horses were stolen by thieves at one night before Election Day of 1951 election. Horses were stolen to create fear to attain votes. Chaudhry Bahawal Khan Sajanka got injured severely by the thieves, but Mian Sultan Mahmood ignored the stolen cattle incident and emphasized: every man and woman should vote in the red box for Maulana Muhammad Zakir. Not only we will follow the foot prints of the thieves, but also will find the stolen horse later.²¹
4. Maulana Muhammad Zakir's politics based on the theory of social equality succeeded in challenging the feudal lord through the subjugated people of the constituency. The people dared to stand up against feudal lords with their obsession of religion, spirituality and to attain personal identity. A new Piri Mureedi culture flourished versus Sardari Rayiatt culture. Fear was over.

West Pakistan Assembly Elections 1956

One Unit was being built. The four provinces were merged into one unit. The one Unit (West Pakistan) assembly was to be elected through indirect elections from the four assemblies. Elections were to be held for the One Unit Assembly through indirect elections from all the four Assemblies. It was decided that this assembly should be formed by dividing one-third of the number of former members of the assembly and retaining the remaining two-thirds. The seats allocated to Punjab were

held. This Mahaz was also supported and guided by Hazrat Qamru-UD- Din Sialivi. He said: in order to create unity among the Islamist parties, Islamist parties should form a board of four members. So, the direction for this party was given by Pir of Sial Sharief too. Jamia Muhammadi Sharief, *Mahnama Aljamia* (Jhang: Jamia Muhammadi Sharief, September 1970), 9.

¹⁸Zubairi, *Tariekh-e-Jhang*, 467.

¹⁹ Hamza Alvi, *Jagirdar aur Samraj*, trans. Tahir Kamran (Lahore: Fiction House, 2016), 151.

²⁰ Sir, Hugh Trevasakis, *Punjab of Today* (Lahore: Oxford, 1931), 277.

²¹ Interview with Mian Muhammad Yar Bhuta, the family member of Mian Sultan Mahmood.

minimized from 50% to 40%, and same rule was implemented on the district level. It was suggested that the members in each district would compete in two parts according to their respective political groups.²² Jhang district had nine members. All of them were in the Muslim League earlier. The Shah Jeewana group consisted of four members. They joined The Republican Party which was founded by Dr. Khan.

Three members of the United Front, Maulana Muhammad Zakir, Sheikh Muhammad Saeed and Muhammad Mohsin Lali, were still associated with the Muslim League. Two members, Mian Nawaz Ali Sial and Ghulam Haider Bharwana, were indecisive yet.

The people thought that only the Shah Jeewana group would win due to strength of their members and they need only one member. The group also included Colonel Abid Hussain and Major Mubarak Ali, both were government ministers. Col. Abid Hussain was also the Secretary General of the Republican Party. 'The Republican Party was fully supported by President Sikender Mirza and Governor of West Pakistan.'²³ It was as a result of Maulana Muhammad Zakir's political acumen and wisdom that both members Ghulam Haider Bharwana and Nawaz Sial joined the Awami Ittehad Group. Thus, Maulana Muhammad Zakir MLA indirectly became a member of the West Pakistan Assembly.

Elections 1970

NW 47 (Jhang 2)

Sr No	Candidates	Party	Votes
1	Maulana Muhammad Zakir	MJUP	66,837
2	Sardazada M. Ali Shah	PPP	62,711
3	Sardazada Zafar Abbas	Ind.	43,446
(Official record of the election commission of Pakistan)			
	Registered votes	268,337	
	Total votes polled	181,982	
	Valid votes	172,994	
	Turn out	67.8	

(Official record of election commission of Pakistan)

In the 1971 elections, the PPP had a long way to go. The elections of 1971 were a turning point in the PPP's revolution." the manifesto of Pakistan people's party was:

1. Islam is our faith
2. Democracy is our polity
3. Socialism is our economy
4. All power to the people
5. Slogan of Roti Kapra Makan

The perception has developed that Maulana Muhammad Zakir was the only candidate in political history that never campaigned for elections. He did not go to the people to ask for votes. No election rallies were held. He stayed in his hujra during the election campaign. The people of the area would come to him and assure him of

²² Sheikh Muhammad Rafique, *Tareekh-e-Pakistan* (Lahore: Standard Book House, 2020), 165.

²³Rafique, *Tareekh-e-Pakistan*, 166.

their support. If there was any kind of election campaign, it was run by the supporters there.²⁴

Maulana Muhammad Zakir fielded one member for each seat from the platform of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam. Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Zakir contested the 1971 election against Sardar Muhammad Ali Shah. Sardar Muhammad Ali Shah was defeated and Maulana Muhammad Zakir succeeded.²⁵

During election campaign, A delegation of Jamaat-e-Ahmadia from Chenab Nagar requested Maulana Muhammad Zakir: We are ready to give you our 10,000 votes if you accept. But Maulana Muhammad Zakir Sahib said, Sorry, I can't represent you." When the workers resisted, Maulana Muhammad Zakir said, Should I get votes from them and become their representative? So, should I represent them or not?" Everyone said it should be done.

He said, "If there is a dispute between the Muslims and the Qadianis, then whom I should represent?"

All of them said that he would represent the Muslims. So Maulana said, "If I ask them to vote, they will vote for me because I will represent them by becoming their servant. If I do not represent them against the Muslims, it is as if I had betrayed them by violating my pledge."²⁶

Impact on political culture

1. Maulana Muhammad Zakir's participation in politics was an open challenge to feudal system and vadera culture of Jhang.
2. His participation in politics of District Jhang was the beginning of political awareness and social equality.
3. Religious and political ideologies began to emerge in Sardari Raiyatt culture.
4. Pierre Muridi, Gadi Nashien, Ulmas and mosque played a significant role in politics.
5. The historical analysis and contributions of Sadaat's politics is of utmost importance to understand the political services of Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Zakir. In the political arena, Maulana Muhammad Zakir had challenged the attitude of their electoral politics. Shah Jeewana Sadat was counted among the Nawabs, Sardars and feudal lords of District Jhang. In World War 11, Major Mubarak Ali and Colonel Abid Hussain used their influence to provide donations and recruits to the British. In recognition of their service, they were awarded the rank of Major and Colonel by British Government. Colonel Abid Hussain remained a member of the Unionist party. In 1946, he was appointed a member of the Lahore Reception Committee at a meeting of the All India Muslim League. In 1945, he was elected a member of the central assembly by the Muslim league. At the direction of Quaid-e-Azam, Col. Syed Abid Hussain was working to smooth public opinion in the favor of the Muslim League in NWFP. He was elected a member of the Punjab Assembly in 1951. He was minister of education in central Cabinet in 1954. In 1955, he held the post of Minister of Communications in the West Pakistan Interim Assembly. Major Mubarak Ali was also elected a member of Provincial Assembly in 1937 and 1946 elections. He took active part in freedom movement. The Punjab Muslim

²⁴Jamia Muhammadi Sharief Jhang, *Mahnama Aljamia* (Jhang: Jamia Muhammadi Sharief, September 2017), 34.

²⁵Thaeem, *Tarieek-e-Chiniot*, 117.

²⁶Saad Ullah, *Tazkara Maulana Muhammad Zakir*, 500.

League launched a no-confidence motion against Khizer Hayat Tiwana Ministry. Major Mubarak Ali and Colonel Abid Hussain were arrested in this movement.²⁷

Conclusion

There is no blinking fact that Maulana Muhammad Zakir gave a new shift to the spiritual life of his family and indulged into politics. It was the beginning of religio-political role of Jamia Muhammadi Sharif. Jhang district had become the land of feudal and no representation of the ordinary people was existing. The Saadat of the land of Jhang had adopted the role of feudal rather than religious symbols for the masses. They preferred modern education for themselves and their children. Under these circumstances, Mulana Muhammad Zakir introduced religi-political landscape to the people of Jhang.

²⁷Sadiq, *Jhang the Land of Two Rivers*, 216.