

The history of the lahore resolution history essay



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Few individuals significantly alter the course of the history. Fewer still modify the map of the world. Hardly anyone can be credited with creating a nation-state. Muhammad Ali Jinnah did all three. Hailed as a “ Great Leader” (Quaid-e-Azam) of Pakistan, Jinnah virtually conjured that country into statehood by the force of his indomitable will.

The Lahore Resolution commonly known as the Pakistan Resolution was a formal political statement adopted by the Muslim League at the occasion of its three-day general session on 22-24 March 1940 that called for greater Muslim autonomy in British India. This has been largely interpreted as a demand for a separate Muslim state, Pakistan. The resolution was presented by A. K. Fazlul Huq.

FROM March 22 to March 24, 1940, the All India Muslim League held its annual session at Minto Park, Lahore. This session proved to be historical. The session was held between 22 March and 24 March, 1940, at Manto Park (now Iqbal Park), Lahore. The welcome address was made by Nawab Sir Shah Nawaz Mamdot. In his speech, Jinnah recounted the contemporary situation, stressing that the problem of India was no more of an inter-communal nature, but manifestly an international. He criticized the Congress and the nationalist Muslims, and espoused the Two-Nation Theory and the reasons for the demand for separate Muslim homelands. According to Stanley Wolpert, this was the moment when Jinnah, the former ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity, totally transformed himself into Pakistan’s great leader.

On the first day of the session, Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah narrated the events of the last few months. In an extempore speech he presented his

own solution of the Muslim problem. He said that the problem of India was not of an inter-communal nature, but manifestly an international one and must be treated as such.

To him the differences between Hindus and the Muslims were so great and so sharp that their union under one central government was full of serious risks. They belonged to two separate and distinct nations and therefore the only chance open was to allow them to have separate states. In the words of Quaid-i-Azam:

“Hindus and the Muslims belong to two different religions, philosophies, social customs and literature. They neither inter-marry nor inter-dine and, indeed, they belong to two different civilizations that are based mainly on conflicting ideas and conceptions. Their concepts on life and of life are different. It is quite clear that Hindus and Muslims derive their inspiration from different sources of history. They have different epics, different heroes and different episodes. Very often the hero of one is a foe of the other, and likewise, their victories and defeats overlap. To yoke together two such nations under a single state, one as a numerical minority and the other as a majority, must lead to growing discontent and final destruction of any fabric that may be so built up for the government of such a state”.

He further said,

“Mussalmans are a nation according to any definition of nation. We wish our people to develop to the fullest spiritual, cultural, economic, social and political life in a way that we think best and in consonance with our own ideals and according to the genius of our people”.

On the basis of the above mentioned ideas of the Quaid, A. K. Fazl-ul-Haq, the then Chief Minister of Bengal, moved the historical resolution which has since come to be known as Lahore Resolution or Pakistan Resolution. The Resolution declared:

“ No constitutional plan would be workable or acceptable to the Muslims unless geographical contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary. That the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in majority as in the North-Western and Eastern zones of India should be grouped to constitute independent states in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign”. It further reads, “ That adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards shall be specifically provided in the constitution for minorities in the units and in the regions for the protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative, and other rights of the minorities, with their consultation. Arrangements thus should be made for the security of Muslims where they were in a minority”.

The Resolution repudiated the concept of United India and recommended the creation of an independent Muslim state consisting of Punjab, N. W. F. P, Sindh and Baluchistan in the northwest, and Bengal and Assam in the northeast. The Resolution was seconded by Maulana Zafar Ali Khan from Punjab, Sardar Aurangzeb from the N. W. F. P, Sir Abdullah Haroon from Sindh, and Qazi Esa from Baluchistan, along with many others. The Resolution was passed on March 24. It laid down only the principles, with the details left to be worked out at a future date. It was made a part of the All India Muslim League's constitution in 1941.

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It was on the basis of this resolution that in 1946 the Muslim League decided to go for one state for the Muslims, instead of two. Having passed the Pakistan Resolution, the Muslims of India changed their ultimate goal. Instead of seeking alliance with the Hindu community, they set out on a path whose destination was a separate homeland for the Muslims of India-with a great name of Pakistan.

Perspective:

The background of Pakistan Resolution is that in 1937, provincial autonomy was introduced in the Sub-continent under the Government of India Act, 1935. The elections of 1937 provided the Congress with a majority in six provinces, where Congress governments were formed. This led to the political, social, economic and cultural suppression of the Muslims in the Congress ruled provinces. The Congress contemptuously rejected the Muslim League's offer of forming coalition ministries. The Muslims were subjected not only to physical attacks but injustice and discriminatory treatment as regards civil liberties, economic measures and employment and educational opportunities. The Congress Ministries introduced the Wardha scheme of education, the object of which was to de- Muslimise the Muslim youth and children. According to the British historian Reginald Coupland, " It was not only the Working Committee's control of the Congress Ministries that showed that a ' Congress Raj' had been established. It was betrayed by the conduct and bearing of Congressmen. Many of them behaved as if they were a ruling caste, as if they owned the country."

Mr. Ian Stephens, former editor of the newspaper ' Statesman' and an eyewitness to the working of the Congress Ministries, says:

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“ The effect of these simultaneously on many Muslim minds was of a lightning flash. What had before been but guessed at now leapt forth in horridly clear outline. The Congress, a Hindi-dominated body, was bent on the eventual absorption; Western-style majority rule, in an undivided sub-continent, could only mean the smaller community being swallowed by the larger.”

The animosity shown by the Hindus to the Muslim and their own experience of two-and-a-half year Congress rule strengthened the Muslims belief in their separate Nationality . The discriminatory attitude coupled with attempts by the Hindu dominated Congress to suppress the Muslims impelled the Muslims to finally demand a separate sovereign state for the Muslims. However, the Muslim demand was violently opposed both by the British and the Hindus; and the Congress attitude towards the Muslims led to the hardening of the Muslims belief that only a separate homeland -Pakistan -can guarantee their freedom. This demand was put in black and white on 23rd March, 1940. After adoption of the Pakistan Resolution, Quaid-e-Azam had a clear objective before him and he struggled hard to achieve it.

In one of the meetings, he said:

“ We are a Nation of a hundred million and what is more, we are a Nation with our distinct culture and civilization, language and literature, art and architecture, legal laws and moral codes, customs and calendar, history and traditions, aptitudes and ambitions. In short, as Muslims we have our own distinctive outlook on life”.

He further said that by all canons of international laws, we are a nation. In 1945, Quaid-e-Azam proclaimed that only Muslim League represented the Muslims, and proved it to the hilt during 1946 polls, winning 100 per cent seats at the Centre, and 80 per cent in the provinces. Nothing could have been more conclusive to shatter the Congress claim of being a national body. If the British had read the writing on the wall in this verdict, Pakistan could have come into existence two years earlier without bloodshed. With his charismatic personal Quaid-e-Azam turned the dream of a separate homeland into reality on 14th of August 1947.

Aims and Objectives of Lahore Resolution:

The Muslim majority areas of India should be merged so that the Indian Muslims may have an area where they could establish their independent state.

The Muslims, who are in minority in the independent units and areas, should be consulted with and their interests should be provided with the protection in the constitution.

Since the present constitution does not provide protection to the Muslims' interests, it is not acceptable to the Indian Muslims at all.

The Muslims of India cannot accept the amendments proposed by the British government in the present constitution so long the entire constitutional plan is not revised from the scratches.

Prior to implementation of the amended constitution, the Muslim leaders should be invited to extend their view about the amendments and this constitution should not be implemented before the consent of the Muslims.

The executive committee of the Muslim League should be advised to prepare an action plan in the light of the principles mentioned above making arrangements to take over all the matters and controls in both the wings; proposed East Wing and West Wing of Pakistan.

Significance of Lahore Resolution:

Making the common will for the achievement of Pakistan was a must for which Muslim league had been making efforts just after its inception. This objective was achieved after 7 years in the form of Lahore resolution. This Resolution changed the direction of South Asian politics radically. The presentation of Pakistan Resolution broke the dreams of Indians into pieces for the consolidated (Akhand) Bharat. The apprehension of Indians was shaken on the ruins of which the building of Pakistan could be constructed.

Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah said that the 27th session of Muslim league proposed to be held in Lahore will create a new history of the fate of India and this statement of Quaid was culminated into truth in this session because after this resolution , the entire Muslim population of India unanimously gathered under the undisputed leadership of the Quaid. It was decided in this resolution that there should be separate constitutional bodies for Hindus and Muslims.

It is also proved by the Lahore resolution that the resolution is the most important sentiments amongst all others which could convert impossible into

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possibilities. The Muslim who were in minority in the different areas of India also favored Pakistan resolution although they were fully aware of the fact that there areas will never go to the lot of Pakistan but the effective leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah prepare them to favor the Muslim cause. The concept of Muslim league was altogether changed after the Pakistan resolution and now it was not a political party but it emerged as the awami party which makes the establishment of Pakistan possible on the basis of majority demand and strength.

It was one of the most important resolution ever passed because it created the history and affected millions of people

It is the culmination (a logical consequence) of the two nation theory.

It became a turning point in the history of the Muslims of India. i. e. there was an era before the Lahore Resolution and there was an era after the Lahore Resolution (After the resolution a large number of Muslims started joining Muslim League and hence Muslim League was called as Sole Spokesman of Muslims)

Hindu Reaction:

Hindu rejected the resolution immediately and called the resolution as Vivisection of Mother India (i. e. its murdering India)

Later Developments:

August 1940 offer:

The World War II started in 1939 that required heavily men powered battlefield. The British who always believe in bargaining announced an offer in August 1940:

Expansion of the Viceroy's Executive Council and the setting up of National Defense Council.

Special importance to the views of minorities in the revision of the constitution.

Power could not be transferred under a system that will not be acceptable to large and powerful minorities in India.

Dominion Status: the ultimate goal

Cooperation of Indians for the war.

Congress rejected it and started Non-Cooperation movement 1940-41. And the Lahore Resolution remained the ultimate goal for the Muslim League.

The Cripps Mission (March 1942):

The constitutional proposals for seeking Indian cooperation for war efforts:

Dominion status

Indian constitutional body to frame constitution

Princely states would be represented.

The Cripps Mission negotiated with Indian leaders and issued the proposals.

The Congress rejected the proposals and demanded that a responsible

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government would be set up immediately after the war. The defense affairs should be under the Indian control. The Muslim League also rejected the proposals and repeated its stand that the Muslims could not live in Indian Union. The Hindus started Quit India Movement in August 1942 seeing British in trouble. The Muslim League stayed aloof and responded by saying that divide and quit India.

Gandhi-Jinnah Talks (September 1944):

MK Gandhi did not accept the Hindus and Muslims as Two Nations and emphasized on the freedom of united India. Jinnah told him that the Muslims could never budge even a single inch from their ideological and constitutional demand.

Analysis:

The Resolution draws attention towards the following important points in the text.

First, the phrase “ independent states” is used instead of “ independent state” in the content. The presence of “ s” with the word state in the original text becomes significant in context of 1971 secession of East Pakistan to become Bangladesh. It has been argued that the initial intention was to form many individual states in the areas where Muslims are in majority rather than single state for the Muslims of India. The fact that the resolution was presented by a Bengali nationalist, Fazal-ul-Haq, adds weight to the argument that according to the resolution East Pakistan was never supposed to be the part of Pakistan.

Second, mandating the “ safeguards” to be enacted to protect the minorities in the “ regions” that later will become Pakistan and presence of a whole paragraph in a very short document addressing the issue of minority rights shows that how concerned the founding fathers were about the subject. Has enough been done to achieve what the founding fathers wanted for the minorities living in Pakistan?

But what strike most is the democratic and the revolutionary nature of the resolution. The resolution came after thrashing of the Muslim League in 1937 elections where it only won few seats which were reserved for Muslims in Sindh, Punjab, Bengal, Balochistan, and NWFP and within 6 years of time it changed the whole scenario with the overwhelming success of Muslim League in 1946 elections (425 out of 496 seats reserved for Muslims) which the League ran on the platform of creating a state of Pakistan. The momentum generated by the passage of the Lahore Resolution actually allowed the Muslims to build a huge support and rally the Muslims of the sub-continent for the demand of independent state of Pakistan.

Third, Lahore Resolution is allegedly in clear about the areas to be included in the states. In response to Beverly Nicholas’s question that why Pakistan has not been defined in detail, Jinnah replied, “ All details were left to the future and future is often an admirable arbitrator.... It is beyond the power of any man to provide in advance a blue print in which every detail is settled.” The resolution was deliberately kept vague to take full advantage of elements of uncertainty and the power of manipulability. It also distracted the congress from targeting a visible goal set by the league. Muslim League

purposely left this matter ambiguous to get as many Muslim majority areas as possible, including some in the Muslim minority provinces.

Fourth, a question is usually asked as to why the word Pakistan was not mentioned in the Resolution and why there is no reference to the princely states like Kashmir.

The word Pakistan as coined by Chaudhary Rehmat Ali was used in specific context in which he proposed the idea of Bengal and Assam to constitute a separate Muslim state of Bang-i-Islam. The Lahore Resolution pointed to the areas of both North-western and eastern India. The resolution did not favor the exchange of population. The word was not used as it could give the impression of pan-Islamism and scare the British and provoke Hindu propaganda. But when the Hindu press regarded the Lahore Resolution as the Pakistan demand, the Quaid owned it without hesitation. Madras session of the league in April 1941 formally adopted Pakistan Demand as the goal of the Muslim League.

As for making any reference to the princely states, they did not lie within the constitutional jurisdiction of the British India and the League's interest was confined to Kashmir whose ultimate fate depends on the league's strength in the British India. Other important issues were, the resolution did not mention of an Islamic state based on the rule of Shariah. And it also visualized territorial adjustments.