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Quaid-i-Azam's Visit to the Southern Districts of NWFP¹

Muhammad Aslam Khan* & Muhammad Shakeel Ahmad**

Abstract

In this paper an attempt has been made to explore the detailed achievements of Quaid-i-Azam's visit to southern NWFP i.e Kohat, Bannu and DI. Khan. Historians always focused on Quaid's visit to central NWFP like Islamia College Peshawar, Edward College Peshawar, Landikotal and other places, but they have missed to highlight his visit to southern NWFP. Quaid-i-Azam visited all the three Southern districts Kohat, Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan of NWFP on very short notice. Therefore no proper security arrangements were made and media did not give proper coverage to his visit. The details of Quaid's visit to Southern NWFP is still unexplored by historians. This paper is a new addition on the existing literature on Quaid-i-Azam.

Keywords: Quaid-i-Azam, NWFP, Khyber Pukhtunkhwa, Pakistan

To Pakistanis, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, is their George Washington, their de Gaulle and their Churchill.

Quaid-i-Azam visited NWFP thrice in his life span. For the first time, Quaid arrived in Peshawar on Sunday, the 18th of October 1936² and stayed for a week from 18th to the 24th of October at the Mundiberi residence of Sahibzada Abdul Qayum Khan³. The political situations in the province were quite blurred at that time. Quaid visited Edward College and Islamia College Peshawar. He listened to the opinions of people from all shades of life and had friendly exchange of views with all of them. A number of delegations from all over the Province also met him. At the end of his visit Mr. Jinnah told the press that he was entirely satisfied with his visit to Frontier province and cherished strong hopes of a bright future³. For the second time Quaid visited Frontier province

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from 22nd to 27th November, 1945 and stayed at house of Khan Bahadar⁴ and addressed the rallies at Landi kotal, Mardan, wazir bagh, Islamia College⁵, Edward College Peshawar and Monki Sharif. As a result of his meeting with Quaid-i-Azam, Pir of Monki⁶ joined Muslim League and without any delay started tour of the North-West Frontier Province to win people's support for the Muslim League. On October 1, 1945 Pir Sahib organized a historic meeting of the Ulema and Mashaikh at Peshawar, which passed resolutions expressing full loyalty to the Muslim League and reposing complete confidence in the leadership of Quaid-i-Azam.

For the last time Quaid-i-Azam visited NWFP in 1948 as a Governor General of Pakistan. He started his 10 day visit of NWFP on 11th of April 1948 and visited the province from Khyber to Gomal. The independence loving people of NWFP offered him a warm welcome wherever he troubled to go in the province. Although enough have been written on Quaid's visits to, Islamia College Peshawar, Edward College Peshawar, Landikotal and other place of the Province, but no mention of his visit has been made in any source to the Southern districts of NWFP, Like Kohat, Bannu and D.I.Khan except mention of a few lines about Quaid's visit in a work written in Urdu by Aziz Javed under the title "Quaid-i-Azam Aur Sarhad"⁷. Therefore an attempt is made to present some highlights of Quaid's visit to Kohat, Bannu and D.I.Khan commenced on 16th of April 1948. Quaid-i-Azam visited all the three Southern districts, that is, Kohat, Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan of NWFP on very short notice. Therefore no proper security arrangements were made and media did not give proper coverage to his visit.

All of a sudden on 16th of April, it became rife in the air that Quaid-i-Azam was to visit Kohat, Bannu and D.I.Khan. The news spread like a jungle fire in the length and width of the districts and the adjacent tribal area of North and South Waziristan⁴. The News awakened the people and they started gathering in Bannu and D.I.Khan and Kohat. They used bicycle, tongas, and horseback to reach respective district capitals. They walked miles and miles on foot to be in Bannu and D.I. Khan for having a glimpse and greeting of Quaid. The local Serais⁵ and open meadows were jam-packed with the villagers who have come from suburb villages. There was zeal and jubilation everywhere. Everyone was zealous in his own way and eager to express his love and respect for Quaid. Impelled by their love for Quaid, a huge crowd spreading over miles, stretching between the Islam Chawki (the landing ground) and Bannu Fort (where he was to have short stay).⁶

Quaid-i-Azam landed on Islam Chawki ground in Bannu at about 10 a.m from a small Dakota aero plane. He was accompanied by

Miss Fatima Jinnah and ADC.⁷ As soon as he came out of the aero plane he was welcomed by Station Commander, Deputy Commissioner Superintendent Police and Superintendent Engineer (S.E PWD). The S.E (PWD) describes that “when Quaid was shaking hand with me, I raised my Karakuli cap I was wearing from my head with left hand in zeal to show respect to Quaid but Quaid immediately corrected me saying young man you do not have to take off that cap”.⁸ The district administration of Bannu had been already instructed by high ups that Quaid will not accept travelling in any kind of military vehicle. Therefore Superintendent Engineer (PWD) carried Quaid-i-Azam, Mother-i-Millat and ADC in his car to Bannu Fort.⁹ The eight miles road leading from Islam chawki to Bannu Fort was in proper condition. All the masonry works were painted white and both sides of the road were planted with freshly cut branches of date trees the night before the Quaid arrival which retained their freshness and made the scenery colorful and pretty to look at. S.E describes that when they have covered some distance Quaid-I-Azam quietly remarked to Fatima Jinnah “these date trees on both sides of the road seem to have been grown over night”¹⁰

When the car reached the Fort, the enthusiasm of the public was beyond expectation. People wanted to have a glimpse of Quaid and tried to touch the car in which Quaid was seating. The love for the leader was apparent from the faces of the public. After reaching Fort, Quaid rest for a while and it was announced to the public that the Quaid-i-Azam was to address after having refreshment. After a while when Quaid appeared on the terrace to address the gathering assembled outside the Fort. The crowd raised the full throated slogans of *Allah-o-Akbar*, *Quaid-I-Azam zindabad* and *Pakistan zindabad*. Quaid slowly waved his hand in acknowledgment of the greeting from the people¹¹. As Quaid started his short address in Urdu the crowd immediately became silent and attentive. The father of the nation outlined the affairs of Pakistan in their true prospective and advised the audience to serve now Pakistan that had come into being after a lengthy and hard struggle. Quaid exhorted the audience to uproot dishonesty; bribery from society and avoid mutual grudges among themselves and also stressed on the need of hard work, honesty and true spirit.¹²

According to eye witnesses, Quaid in his short address respected the intelligence of the audience and treated them as mature and sensible individuals. While he talked he maintained calm and collected posture worthy of his position. His talk came straight from his heart and went direct into the hearts of the audience because people have had full faith in him and his words were believed in whatever manner they were spoken. The crowd remained spell bound but now and then raised

slogan of Quaid-i-Azam Zindabad when they were over joyed and could no longer control their feeling of appreciations.¹³ Quaid-i-Azam also visited and stayed for a while at the Hawaili (residence) of Damsaz Khan and met with the local leaders and activists of Muslim League and discussed the emerging situations after the birth of Pakistan. After half an hour the program of Quaid at Bannu came to its end but the sweet memories were remembered and talked about long afterwards. Quaid left for Dera Ismail Khan in the same plane.

When Quaid's aero plane landed on D.I.Khan air port at noon he was given warm well come by large crowd, with green flags in their hands, assembled outside airport. Some poor patriots wanted to present gifts and garments to father of the nation but district administration could not allow them to come closer to him due to the absence of proper security arrangements. Quaid was anxious to meet the people but the green shirts workers act as a wall erected between the Quaid and the public¹⁴. Governor NWFP Sir Albroz Dandas, Chief Minister Abdul Qayyum Khan and Sahibzada Khurshid (Political Resident of tribal area) were present at airport to welcome the father of the nation. Quaid was carried to circuit house in procession where after lunch he met with delegates from different walks of life, like Muslim league members of NWFP provincial assembly, local representatives of Muslim League, tribal leader, Sheikh and nomads of Afghan border. The tribal as well as local visitors of Quaid complained the scarcity of food grains. Quaid show sympathy and promised to solve their problems as early as possible¹⁵. Miss Fatima Jinnah was separately received by women delegation led by lady pir Abdul Latif Zakori the district president of women wing D.I.Khan. She arranged a lunch for Fatima Jinnah and presented precious gifts to her on her return¹⁶.

In Polo ground stage was prepared for Quaid-i-Azam under the supervision of district administration, where the nobilities like pir Abdul latif Zakori Fateh Referendum¹⁷ and Nawab Qutbuddin (Nawab of Tank) the district presidents of Muslim League respectively of both D.I.Khan and Tank and others were waiting anxiously the father of the nation to address the people. Quaid delivered a short address in Urdu in which he stressed on unity and discipline and asked them to cooperate with government for solving the mushroom of problems faced by the newly born state of Pakistan¹⁸. He stressed on the need of dedication and hard work. He also highlighted the importance of vote and exhorted on the crowd to make correct use of vote for true nourishment of democracy.¹⁹ He added "he knows how much you love Pakistan and also realizes your backwardness and poverty". He assured them that he will try his best to ease their difficulties"²⁰. Large number of members of

Wazir and Mehsud tribes were present at this occasion. Quaid-i-Azam returned to Peshawar the same evening after his successful visit to Southern districts.

On reaching Peshawar he issued special directions to NWFP provincial cabinet for solving the food grain shortage problems faced by the people of D.I.Khan. The next day The Provincial Revenue Minister Muhammad Abbas reached D.I.Khan for delivery and distribution of wheat. He called on meeting of district officers as well as district presidents of Muslim League. Due to exchange of hot words between Pir Abdul Latif Zakori and Nawab Qutb-ud-din they were expelled from grain distribution committee and the distribution work was accomplished by officers of district administration.

In his visit of Southern districts Quaid was impressed by the passions and love of these remote areas for freedom. While he was visiting Kohat he met Pir Shahin Shah (MLA) a famous leader of independence movement who separated from the Indian National Congress and Joined All India Muslim League. At an occasion in 1930 Pir Sahib has sworn that he will not wear cap or turban and will remain bare headed unless his country got independence. When Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan was introducing Pir Shahin Shah to Quaid-i-Azam he also told the related story of his swearing. When Quaid heard it he smiled, stood up and greeted Pir Sahib. Quaid told him, "I congratulate you, now we are totally free from the yoke of British slavery and your swear has been fulfilled and you should wear the cap"; Quaid-i-Azam wore him cap with his own hand. Pir Sahib thanked Quaid and started wearing cap from that day²¹.

At the end of the visit of southern districts while Addressing to the Tribal Jirga at Government House, Peshawar on 17th April, Quaid said, "I am glad to note that you have pledged your loyalty to Pakistan, and that you will help Pakistan with all your resources and ability. I appreciate this solemn declaration made by you today. I am fully aware of the part that you have already played in the establishment of Pakistan, and I am thankful to you for all the sympathy and support you gave me in my struggle and fight for the establishment of Pakistan. Keeping in view your loyalty, help, assurances and declarations we ordered, as you know, the withdrawal of troops from Waziristan as a concrete and definite gesture on our part--that we treat you with absolute confidence and trust you as our Muslim brethren across the border. I am glad that there is full realization on your part that now the position is basically different. It is no longer a foreign Government as it was, but it is now a Muslim government and Muslim rule that holds the reigns of this great independent sovereign State of Pakistan. It is now the duty of every

Mussalman, yours and mine, and every Pakistani to see that the State, which we have established, is strengthened in every department of life and made prosperous and happy for all, especially the poor and the needy... You know that the Frontier Province is a deficit province, but that does not trouble us so much. Pakistan will not hesitate to go out of its way to give every possible help – financial and otherwise – to build up the economic and social life of our tribal brethren across the border”.²²

Notes and References

- ¹ NWFP is now renamed as Khyber Pukhtunkhwa (KPK) under 18th Constitutional Amendments.
- ² Muhammad Anwar, "Quaid Visit to Peshawar in 1936" paper presented at the International Congress on Quaid-i-Azam held at Quaid-i-Azam University (Islamabad, 19-25 December, 1976) 99
- ³ Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum Khan became first Chief Minister of NWFP in 1937.
- ³ Muhammad Anwar Khan, "Quaid-i-Azam Visit to Peshawar 1936", published on <http://m-a-jinnah.blogspot.in/2010/07/quaid-e-azam-visit-to-peshawar-in-1936.html> (retrieved on 25-01-2012)
- ⁴ Ibid
- ⁵ Aziz Javed, *Quaid-i-Azam Aur Sarhad*, (Peshawar: Idara Tasneef-o-Taleef, 1976) 112-120
- ⁶ Pir of Manki was a religious leader from NWFP and was staunch supporter of Muslim League during 1946 elections.
- ⁷ Aziz Javed book is poor in chronology and has written only a page on the visit of Quaid in 1948 and is based upon unverified hearsay.
- ⁴ S.A. Rashid Collection, Serial No.13 Bundle No.1, NWFP Archives, Peshawar
- ⁵ Inn or Restaurant
- ⁶ English Daily *The States man* (New Delhi: 16th April 1948)
- ⁷ AIDE- DE- CAMP
- ⁸ S.A. Rashid, op.cit
- ⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰ Ibid.
- ¹¹ Muhammad Shafi Sabir, *Quaid-i-Azam aur Soba sarhad*, (Peshawar: University Book Agency, 1976) 295
- ¹² S.A. Rashid, op.cit
- ¹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴ Aziz Javed, op.cit, p.227
- ¹⁵ Aminullah Khan Gandapur, *Tarikh-i-Sarzamin-e-Gomal*, (Islamabad: National Book Foundation, 2008) 409
- ¹⁶ Prof. Faizullah, *Meher Safa Muhammad Abdul Latif Zakori*, (Lahore: Muslim League Writer Academy, nd) 112
- ¹⁷ Pir Abdul Latif Zakori, a renowned pir and scholar who possessed thousands of followers in Lakki Marwat, D.I. Khan and Punjab. Pir Sahib used his influence in favor Pakistan during referendum in NWFP at the time of partition and won the title of Fateh referendum for him.
- ¹⁸ Prof. Iqbal Nadeem, *Aina-i-Tareekh*, (Dera Ismail Khan: Raza Publishers, 2008) 216
- ¹⁹ Aminullah Khan Gandapur, op.cit, 409
- ²⁰ Urdu Daily *Nawa-i-Waqt*, Lahore, 16th April 1948
- ²¹ Muhammad Shafi Sabir, op.cit, 296
- ²² *Speeches and Statements of Jinnah 1947-48*, (Karachi, Oxford University Press, 2007) 201