

Dossier : Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali

What is the background of the Jamali tribe of Baloch and of Ex-Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali himself?



1. During the pre-1947 independence struggle led by Mahatma Gandhi, large sections of the Pashtun and Balochi tribes of the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Balochistan, under the leadership of Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, the Frontier Gandhi, Abdus Samad Khan Achakzai, the Balochi Gandhi, and the traditionally pro-Gandhi Balochi tribal Sardars of the Mekran Coast of Balochistan strongly opposed the two-nation theory propagated by Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the leader of the Muslim League (ML), and refused to support Jinnah's demand for the partition of India.

2. Amongst the few Balochi tribes, which, however, did oppose Mahatma Gandhi and support Jinnah, were the Jamalis, whose then Sardar, Mir Jafar Khan Jamali, was embroiled in a land dispute involving his purchase of 150,000 acres of land for Rs.40,000 from the Khan of Kalat. The British authorities refused to authorise the purchase and register the purchase deed in the name of Jafar Khan Jamali. He went in appeal to the High Courts in Mumbai and New Delhi, both of which upheld the British order. He then took the case to the Privy Council in London which held the British order null and void and declared him the lawful owner of the land.

3. Jafar Khan's case was argued by a team of three lawyers consisting of Jinnah, Bhulabhai Desai and Chaudhry Mohammed Ali. In return for his help in enabling Jafar Khan Jamali win the ownership of the land, Jinnah sought the assistance of the Jamali tribe

for countering the strong influence of Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian National Congress (INC) in Balochistan and the NWFP. Jafar Khan and his family joined the ML and were in the forefront of the anti-Gandhi and anti-INC forces in Balochistan till the creation of Pakistan on August 14, 1947. Jafar Khan instigated the Mullahs of Balochistan against Gandhi and the INC and managed to secure the endorsement of a tribal jirga for Balochistan joining Pakistan.

4. When Jinnah visited Jacobabad in the tribal belt (on the Sindh-Balochistan border) for the first time on October 16, 1938, the tribals of the region, overwhelmingly pro-Gandhi and pro-Congress, boycotted him. He could not even get a place to stay. The local administration, controlled by the Congress, saw to it that even the waiting room of the local railway station was locked up. On hearing this, Jafar Khan rushed to Jacobabad, rallied his Jamali supporters, got the Congress workers beaten up and forced the local Mullahs to hold a reception in honour of Jinnah at the local Eidgah.

5. After this embarrassing experience, Jinnah did not venture into the tribal belt again till June, 1943, when Jafar Khan organised an incident-free visit to Quetta, the capital of Balochistan, by Jinnah and his sister Fatima. Jinnah described the Jamali tribe as the ML's "gateway to Balochistan".

6. After Pakistan became independent and the death of Jinnah and the assassination of Liaquat Ali Khan, the then Prime Minister, Jafar Khan and his tribe remained staunch supporters of Fatima Jinnah and critics of Ayub Khan and his military regime. They opposed the merger of Sindh, Balochistan, the NWFP and Punjab into an one-unit called West Pakistan. He was imprisoned a number of times by the Ayub regime.

7. After his death on April 7, 1967 at Karachi, the Jamali tribe under the leadership of his brother Haji Shah Nawaz Khan Jamali and then his son, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, the present Prime Minister, ingratiated itself with the political and military leadership. Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, not known to be a man of principle and widely reputed to be an opportunist, kept switching sides between the Pakistan Muslim League (PML) and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP), depending on who made the highest bidding for his services.

8. The elections of 1970 saw the Bengali nationalists of the then East Pakistan, under the leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's Awami League (AL) and the Balochi nationalists of Balochistan under the leadership of the sardars of the Bizenjo, Marri, Mengal and other tribes sweep the polls under the guidance of Ghaus Bux Bizenjo, the leader of the National Awami Party (NAP). The refusal of Gen. Yahya Khan, at the instigation of Z.A. Bhutto, to allow the AL assume office in Pakistan set in motion a train of events, which ultimately led to the birth of Bangladesh, with Indian help.

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9. A similar refusal by Z.A.Bhutto to let the Balochi nationalists assume office led to a revolt by the Bizenjo, Marri, Mengal and other tribes. During the next four years (1973-77), on the orders of Z.A.Bhutto, the Pakistani Armed Forces crushed the Balochi revolt, killing thousands of Balochis. Bhutto ruthlessly used the Air Force to crush the revolt.

10. The Jamali tribe led by Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali colluded with Z.A.Bhutto and the military to crush the nationalists. The nationalist leaders appealed to Indira Gandhi, then Prime Minister, to come to their assistance just as she had gone to the help of the AL in the then East Pakistan.

11. Though her sympathies were with the Balochi nationalists, who had always, in the past, stood by Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress, she could not assist them for operational and political reasons. First, India did not have a common border with Balochistan. Second, India's well-tested covert action capability, which served it so well in East Pakistan, was land-based and not sea or air-based. Third, the Indian Navy's reach, overt or covert, did not extend beyond Karachi. Fourth, in East Pakistan, India had a valid reason for intervention in the exodus of millions of refugees into India. There was no such valid reason in Balochistan. There was large-scale exodus of refugees, but they went into Afghanistan and did not come into India. Fifth, Bhutto, the Army and the ISI had succeeded in creating a wedge between the Pashtuns and the Balochis by settling a large number of Pashtun ex-servicemen in Balochistan, including Quetta. Sixth, the Shah of Iran had made it clear that he would not allow an independent Balochistan to come into being as this could lead to a demand for the merger of the Balochi areas of Iran into the new independent State.

12. The hatred of India is a typical characteristic of the converts to Islam from the so-called backward classes of the Hindu community and their descendants. The Balochis and the Pashtuns, who were the descendants of the Muslim migrants into India from Afghanistan, Iran and the Central Asian Republics, did not share this hatred. Compared to Sindh, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Bengal from where most of the Hindu converts migrated to Pakistan, the Pashtuns and the Balochis were economically backward and ill-educated, but in their thinking they were secular and cosmopolitan. It was for this reason that after Pakistan was born in 1947, the only substantial leftist and Marxist pockets in then West Pakistan were seen mainly in the tribal belt.

13. After Bhutto, the Army and the ISI crushed their revolt, the survivors of the revolt led by leaders such as Atullah Khan Mengal, Khair Bux Marri, Sheroo alias Tiger Marri etc crossed over into Afghanistan and took shelter there. The leftist Government in Kabul welcomed them with open arms, trained and armed them and used them against the Afghan Munjahideen backed by the CIA and the ISI. Many of the Balochi youth were taken by the Soviet troops to Moscow for higher education in the Lumumba University and other places. They all

came back to Afghanistan converted to communism.

14. Worried over the spread of communism and over the assistance rendered by them to the Soviet and Afghan troops in their operations against the surrogates of the CIA and the ISI, the US and Pakistan mounted a campaign to decimate the Balochi nationalists operating from Afghan territory. **Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali and his tribes placed their services at the disposal of the CIA and the ISI.**

15. As a reward for his services, the CIA suggested to Gen. Zia-ul-Haq to make him the Prime Minister after the 1985 elections. Zia instead made Mohammad Khan Junejo, a Sindhi, the Prime Minister in order to counter the growing influence of Benazir Bhutto, a Sindhi, in Sindh and the Seraiki areas of southern Punjab. Junejo, like Jamali now, was also considered a non-entity, who would meekly carry out the dictates of the military. Initially, he did, but subsequently grew in stature and started resisting Zia's orders. It was the differences between the two over the way Junejo handled the Afghan proximity talks in Geneva and over the enquiry into the blasts at the army arsenal at Ojehri, which reportedly killed over 300 innocent civilians, which led to his dismissal by Zia in 1988 and the ordering of fresh elections. Before the elections, Zia was killed in a plane crash.

16. Jamali has now been second time lucky. There has been a convergence of interests between Musharraf and the US over his being made the PM----firstly, to protect the US oil and gas interests in Balochistan, about 30 per cent of which are controlled by Texas-based companies; secondly, to protect the US air bases in Balochistan, which play an important role in the war against the Taliban and Al Qaeda and which might play an even more important role if the US decides to make a pre-emptive strike against Iran's nuclear establishments; and to counter the spread of the influence of the fundamentalist parties from the Pashtun to the Balochi areas.

17. Jamali has till now been carrying out the wishes of Musharraf and the US. He calls Musharraf his boss. Next to Musharraf and his Cabinet colleagues, the other person he meets most frequently is Nancy Powell. There are already some indications that Musharraf has been disappointed over his failure to browbeat the opposition into accepting the amendments to the Constitution introduced by Musharraf in the form of the LFO and into giving up their opposition to his continuing as the Chief of the Army Staff. Musharraf has also been worried over the failure of Jamali to prevent repeated attacks by unidentified elements on the pipelines carrying gas and oil from Balochistan into Punjab and Sindh.

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