

COMING ALIVE TO POLITICAL EXIGENCIES: MIANWALI 1901-1947

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ABSTRACT

Mianwali is a region inhabited by various tribes and kinships or biradaries as it is put, in a local parlance. Economic interests and ethnic prejudices had fostered inter-tribal rivalries and stunted mutual harmony and social cohesion. The British saw the protection of this tribal structure as imperative for the consolidation of colonial rule in the region. This Article deals with the process of political mobilization in the Mianwali District. The establishment of the Unionist Party as the sole political organization in the district till 1940, dominated by landed aristocrats of the district. The British had trusted and tried allies who had pro-British orientation in the politics. The study also seeks to enquire ‘whether the politics in Mianwali was centered on the state agency or whether the natives were the active participants in it’? I will also examine the role of Ahrar movement, particularly its impact on the urban people of the district. Until 1940, the League had no political clout that could secure a political niche for it in the district. With the withdrawal of the British support from the Unionists, the League gradually gained strength in the district. The focus will be on, how the rural Pirs and Sajjada Nishins martialled their disciples and through pir-murid network infused anti-government feelings in the district and mobilized rural voters for the League in the name of Islam. As the political setting of Mianwali reflects, the British had well entrenched influence in the region and there was no dissenting voice.

KEYWORDS: Unionist Party Colonial, Sajjada Nishin, Muslim League, Punjab