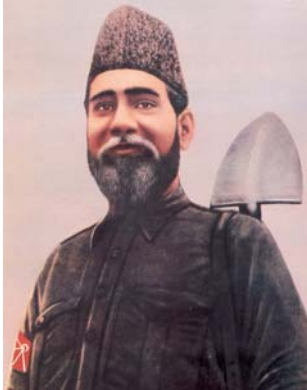


# Assault on the Founder of Pakistan: The Untold Conspiracy

*By Nasim Yousaf*



Allama Mashriqi



Quaid-e-Azam M.A. Jinnah

*“... you have no evidence at all that this man [Jinnah’s assailant] is a member of that movement [Khaksar Tehrik]...you have no evidence that he [the culprit] is a member of the movement, still less that he holds any particular position in it.”<sup>1</sup>*

*— Justice Blagden Bombay High Court, 1943*

On July 26, 1943, at approximately 1:30 pm, Rafiq Sabir Mazangavi arrived at Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah’s (Founder of Pakistan) house in Bombay and asked to meet with him. When informed of the arrival of this stranger, Jinnah emerged from the upper story of his house and came down to meet Mazangavi. Rafiq Mazangavi proceeded to attack Jinnah, and inflicted “minor injuries on his chin and hand.”<sup>2</sup> Immediately following the incident, the assailant was alleged to be a member of the Khaksar Tehrik, a powerful movement founded by Allama Mashriqi.

The above narrative of the attack on Jinnah has been cited in many books and articles, with these works unequivocally claiming that Jinnah’s assailant was a member of the Khaksar Tehrik. But historical papers, interviews (with Mashriqi’s family, Khaksars, and others), and the political realities of the time reveal that the true nature of this assault was much different than what is reported in the literature. In fact, the truth is that the assailant had *no connection* with the Khaksar Tehrik, and rather had ties to Jinnah’s own All-India Muslim League. But why would a former member of Jinnah’s own organization attack

him? And why would Jinnah be so adamant in attempting to implicate the Khaksar Tehrik? The answers to these questions reveal a deep-rooted conspiracy against the Khaksar Movement.

In order to understand why a conspiracy against the Khaksar Tehrik was deemed necessary, it is first important to provide some context. By the early 1940s, the Khaksar Tehrik (founded by Mashriqi in 1930 to bring freedom to British India) had become a force to be reckoned with. A private army with nearly 5 million highly disciplined members (photos of the movement can be found on *Facebook* under “Khaksar Movement in British India”), the Tehrik was the *only party* capable of overthrowing British rule; in fact it had already nearly toppled British rule in 1940 (until Mashriqi was arrested). Nearly three years later, following Mashriqi’s release from prison and the removal of restrictions on his movements in December 1942, Mashriqi again aggressively moved to end imperial rule. Government agencies were carefully watching Mashriqi and were quite nervous about the Khaksar threat, which was apparent from the warnings they issued to Mashriqi. It was clear that Mashriqi and the Khaksars were getting close to achieving their ultimate goal. But the British Government was not the only one who felt threatened by the Khaksars’ march towards freedom. *If the Khaksars were the ones to obtain freedom, this would mean the demise of all other political parties*, including the All-India Muslim League, which was headed by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah; *India’s rule would then be in the hands of Allama Mashriqi*. A conspiracy was thus hatched - in the form of an “attack” on Jinnah - to undermine the power of Allama Mashriqi and the Khaksar Tehrik.

A number of peculiarities regarding the attack on Jinnah support the point that there was in fact a conspiracy. First, Mazangavi came to Jinnah’s house in broad daylight armed with only a tiny knife. Second, it was highly unusual for Jinnah to meet with an unknown stranger without an appointment, yet he came down and met with Mazangavi. And perhaps most suspicious of all, Mazangavi was labeled to be a Khaksar immediately following the incident and without any proof — this allegation was promptly released to the news media. Jinnah did not refute the false allegation nor did he reject the wide publicity the incident was being given. Indeed, shortly after the incident, Jinnah met with the Commissioner of Police in Bombay and stated that “the idea [for the assault] had been planted there [in Mazangavi’s mind] by Allama Mashriqi.” He further referred to Mashriqi as a “very indiscreet gentleman and also extremely pig-headed and obstinate.”<sup>3</sup> Sir Reginald Maxwell (Member of Viceroy’s Executive Council) would later remark in a revealing note on August 03, 1943, “I think Jinnah is anxious to make the most of this attack by representing it as part of a premeditated deep plot and thus rallying Muslim support to himself.”<sup>4</sup>

In the aftermath of the incident, other details surfaced that supported that there was a conspiracy against Mashriqi. One day after the incident, the Viceroy of India (Lord Linlithgow) informed the Secretary of State for India (Lord Amery) in a secret letter (on July 27, 1943) that Jinnah was only “slightly injured” and that the Viceroy had “at once” sent him a “telegram of sympathy.” The Viceroy’s immediate sympathy and sense of relief for Jinnah, a supposed political opponent, raised many questions regarding their

working relationship behind the scenes. While the Government's exact role in a conspiracy is unclear, Jinnah's side must shoulder much of the blame, as it made deliberate, direct attempts to try to implicate Mashriqi and the Khaksars.

To reiterate, there was absolutely no evidence to substantiate that Mazangavi was a Khaksar. In fact, the Khaksars had met with Jinnah a mere one hour after the attack to show their support. According to the Khaksars, Jinnah was in *perfect mental and physical condition* and showed no signs of nervousness in meeting them (which was later communicated to Allama Mashriqi). When Allama Mashriqi first heard the news of the attack, he recognized that this was a ploy by agents of imperialism (whether Muslim or non-Muslim) to damage the Khaksar Tehrik's popularity. He was concerned that the incident could divide Muslims and derail the broader efforts toward independence. He condemned the attack, but also reminded Jinnah to maintain focus on the larger issues at hand:

*"As regards the assailant being a Khaksar, it is unthinkable that Khaksars who spared Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan for three years after his massacre of them [Sir Sikandar's men had butchered two hundred Khaksars on March 19, 1940] and were the only organisation who attended his funeral after his death, could conspire to attack Quaid-e-Azam for whom they have the greatest reverence and respect."*<sup>5</sup>

(In an interview with the Bombay Chronicle on July 28, 1943):

*"The culprit must be brought to book, but I would appeal Qaide Azam as well as everyone in India not to give this incident the slightest political tinge for the sake of the most important things that are happening and the most immense results involved. I would have taken it as a mere accident if the thing had happened with me, and perhaps would not care to give it to the press or even get the culprit arrested, on account of the vital issues before the country."*<sup>6</sup>

Mashriqi knew that the nation was at a critical moment in its quest for independence, and that unity between the Khaksars and the Muslim League was essential; it was important not to let the attack on Jinnah jeopardize the broader mission. But Jinnah ignored Mashriqi's advice and instead opted to capitalize on the incident; he filed a lawsuit against the assassin in an attempt to prove that the assassin was a Khaksar. During the trial, Jinnah's side tried to present any sort of evidence or argument that could implicate Mazangavi as a Khaksar. But its arguments did not hold any water. In fact, in a bombshell revelation during the trial, the assassin admitted that he had actually been the Propaganda Secretary of the All-India Muslim League (Lahore branch) in 1939.<sup>7</sup> Ultimately, Justice Blagden of the Bombay High Court did not find any validity in Jinnah's testimony; in his decision, Justice Blagden pointed out *twice* that Mazangavi was not a Khaksar, stating, *"Actually, you have no evidence at all that this man [Mazangavi] is a member of that movement [Khaksar Tehrik]...you have no evidence that he [Mazangavi] is a member of the movement, still less that he holds any particular*

*position in it.*”<sup>8</sup> Jinnah’s nephew, Barrister Akbar Peerbhoy, recounted this judgment in his book entitled *Jinnah Faces An Assassin*.

Thus, the facts unquestionably indicate that the attack on Jinnah was a farce and that Mazangavi was not a member of the Khaksar Tehrik. In order to cover up the truth, Justice Blagden’s court verdict was neither published nor publicized. Following the verdict, Jinnah again tried to damage the Khaksar Tehrik by calling a meeting of the All-India Muslim League, where he had a resolution passed banning Muslim Leaguers from joining the Khaksar Tehrik. *This came as a blow to Muslim unity and served only to benefit the rulers and anti-Muslim elements.* Meanwhile, the Khaksar Tehrik never passed any resolution banning its members from joining the Muslim League.

Nearly three years after the incident, Mazangavi came forward to reveal the truth, in letters he sent from jail to the editor of “Al-Islah” (weekly newspaper of the Khaksar Tehrik, his letters appeared on March 22, 1946 and May 10, 1946 respectively). In the first letter, Mazangavi wrote, “[translation]...all possible effort was made to crush your organization [Khaksar Tehrik]...Despite the fact that...I have never been a regular member of the Khaksar Tehrik, however, mendacious and fabricated stories were associated [with the Khaksar Tehrik] in an effort to bring a bad name to the reputation of the servants of God [Khaksars], every atrocity was inflicted upon them and continued to be meted out to ensure crushing of the Khaksar Tehrik.” In his second letter, the assassin further wrote that Jinnah’s side made desperate efforts to prove Jinnah innocent and Mazangavi a member of the Khaksar Tehrik.

Despite the overwhelming evidence to the contrary, anti-Khaksar speakers, writers and even many known historians continue to cite Mazangavi as a Khaksar and completely ignore Justice Blagen’s decision. This can only be viewed as a *deliberate attempt to alter history* for vested reasons and must be corrected.

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<sup>1</sup> Peerbhoy, Akbar A. [1943] 1986. *Jinnah Faces An Assassin*. Karachi, Pakistan: East and West Publishing Company, 91-92.

<sup>2</sup> *The Tribune* (Daily) of July 27, 1943.

<sup>3</sup> Letter from Commissioner of Police, Bombay to Director of Intelligence Bureau, Delhi, July 31, 1943 in PHD file No. 17/4/43 – Poll (I), p. 11. Also see *History of the Khaksar Movement in India*, p. 188.

<sup>4</sup> PHD file No. 17/4/43 – Poll (I), p. 10. Also see *History of the Khaksar Movement in India*, p. 189.

<sup>5</sup> Hussain, Syed Shabbir. 1991. *Al-Mashriqi: The Disowned Genius*. Lahore, Pakistan: Jang Publishers, 193

<sup>6</sup> *Bombay Chronicle*, July 28, 1943.

<sup>7</sup> Akhtar, Jamna Das. *Political Conspiracies in Pakistan: Liaquat Ali's Murder to Ayub Khan's Exit*, 149

<sup>8</sup> Peerbhoy, Akbar A. [1943] 1986. *Jinnah Faces An Assassin*. Karachi, Pakistan: East and West Publishing Company, 91-92.