

## Pakistan Library Association: The Difficult Beginnings

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### Abstract

This paper traces the history of the initiative that led to the formation of the Pakistan Library Association and deals with the difficulties it faced in its functioning during the first few years of its life. It uses primary documents dealing with this period especially those related to its formation, constitutional difficulties, and operational problems. It tries to explain the reasons why senior librarians stayed away from it in the initial period. It also tries to rectify certain factual mistakes made or inappropriate interpretations of previous writers which were considered important for the younger generation.

**Keywords:** Pakistan Library Association; History; Professional associations

### Introduction

Any historical writing must depend on primary sources of evidence which have to be judged to make sure that these are authentic, accurate, and complete. Working with the official records, which are created unwittingly during routine operations, is very easy. Other primary historical evidence includes written personal communications of those individuals who were actively involved in the historical events being studied. The contents of such records need to be carefully examined. Another category of primary historical evidence includes the personal narratives of contemporaries. However, such material must be cautiously verified and corroborated with other sources.

Secondary sources of historical evidence include historical writings, based on primary historical evidence, and personal

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narratives of those somewhat removed, by time and space, from the historical events under study. Sometimes such material has to be used due to the scarcity of primary historical evidence but it must also be judged very carefully and corroborated with whatever historical evidence is available. In such cases the writer must come under the microscope and judged for his knowledge, ability, neutrality, and any signs of personal interest or bias.

Not much has been written about the history of the Pakistan Library Association (PLA), especially on its beginnings and its working during the initial years. There is only one well-documented and detailed piece of writing on the history of PLA covering the period from its foundation to 1992 (Khurshid, 1996, see Note 1). It seems that Khurshid wrote this paper based on whatever primary documents were available to him in his personal collection and on the basis of his knowledge of working closely with the Association. It may be noted that, due to the two-yearly term of headquarters, all PLA records were handed over from the Karachi office to Lahore office during late 1973, then sent by the Lahore office to Islamabad during March 1976, and seemed to have been kept there. It is, therefore, reasonable to assume that Khurshid did not have access to the PLA archives while writing this history. Even then his paper is a very comprehensive, authoritative, and scholarly treatment of the topic. However, his coverage of the initial movement for forming PLA and its first three years is insufficient. A couple of very significant events are given a passing reference without giving further details or explanation. Khurshid must have known details of these events. It seems that at that point, diplomacy or deference, not to raise controversial issues, comes in the way of scholarship.

More than a decade before Khurshid's paper was published, Haider (1984) lamented the lack of writings on PLA's history except "few fragmentary notes" (p. 53). While referring to some historical writings, he regrets that "it appears that instead of an academic approach the writer is presenting Prof. Moid as an angel of purity" (p. 29). It is unfortunate that while admonishing other writers for exaggeration, Haider's own judgments are

questionable when he labels Moid as the “Father of Pakistan Librarianship” (1984, p. 26), the “Founder of Country’s first Graduate School” (1984, p. 47, see Note 2), the founder of the Modern Librarian (1981, p. 37, see Note 3), and “the Melvil Dewey of Pakistan” (1981, 2007, see Note 4), claims that can hardly be justified. As a matter of fact, a group of writers on similar historical issues have engaged themselves in misstatements of fact and outright exaggeration, wittingly or unwittingly, without any fear of contradiction.

### Purpose and Sources

As is evident from the foregoing paragraphs, there is a need for a detailed historical study of PLA. The present study has a limited purpose. No published work provides a detailed account of the beginnings of PLA and its operations during the first few years. Khurshid’s (1996) study, comprehensive though it is, does not treat these two areas fully. As pointed out earlier, he does mention some issues but leaves them without further detail or explanation. The present study will make an effort to fill in the gaps left in his study, especially focusing on the formation and the first few years of the working of PLA.

The evidence used in this paper has been derived from primary documents. These documents consist of a complete personal file of Abdur Rahim, Librarian, Punjab University Library, who started participating very early in the discussions that took place for the formation of PLA. This file, handed over at his retirement to this writer, contains letters received from and written to PLA by him, copies of letters written to PLA by senior librarians from Dacca (East Pakistan), Peshawar, and Karachi and forwarded to him for information, and his personal correspondence with some leading librarians on certain operations of PLA. This file begins with the first official circular letter No. PLA/01 addressed to all librarians. This circular only mentions ‘1956’ and no specific date. Later letters indicate that this circular enclosing the five-page draft constitution and membership form, was sent to all librarians in the beginning of October 1956. The last two letters in the file are dated 8 December 1958 and 30 June 1959 from PLA reminding

him to pay his membership dues for 1958 and 1959 to which he never replied. I also possess some hand-copied documents from the PLA files which I did during my tenure as its Secretary-General from January 1974 to February 1976. Some of this material was used in the author's book *Public Library Legislation in Pakistan* (Anwar, 1996). In addition, I possess published proceedings of the early PLA conferences which contain some relevant evidence. It would have been ideal to have access to the PLA archives but the material that is available to me is sufficient to meet my limited objectives.

Only five published papers were considered relevant for this study. The study by Khurshid (1996) and four other writings have been used, wherever felt necessary, as secondary sources.

### Forming the Pakistan Library Association

When, where, and on whose initiative did the move for establishing PLA begin? These are intriguing questions which have never been dealt with accurately. Khurshid (1996), citing Moid (1958a) mentions that a meeting of the Pakistan Bibliographical Working Group (PBWG) "held on July 6, 1954, constituted an Adhoc Committee, with H. A. Qazi as its chairman, to form a national association" (p. 5). Moid (1958c) stated that PBWG "accepted the proposal of A. Moid and Akhtar H. Siddiqui in 1956, and appointed a Committee with H. A. Qazi ... as its convener to contact librarians of Pakistan with a view to forming the Pakistan Library Association. As a result of his [Moid] and that of Mr. Akhtar H. Siddiqui, who took active interest in the formation of the PLA, the first general election by ballot was held in March 1957, and accordingly the PLA came into existence" (Haider, 1984, p. 53-54). Both Khurshid and Haider, using Moid as their only source, give two different dates for the formation of the Ad-Hoc Committee (see Note 5). While Haider gives full credit to Moid as the initiator and leading figure in the formation of PLA, as do several other writers, Khurshid, avoiding to mention the names of the members of the Ad-Hoc Committee, does not even mention Moid's name until he lists the names of the first elected officers of

the PLA Executive Council (1996, p. 5). He seems to have been fully aware of the inappropriate claims that Moid was the main force behind the formation of PLA made by others. However, he seems to have decided to avoid embarrassment by not providing the true evidence.

The primary sources provide an altogether different picture. Habibuddin Ahmad Qazi, Convener of the Ad-Hoc Committee, in the first official letter issued on behalf of PLA, No. PLA/01 dated ... [October] 1956 (Qazi, 1956a), circulated to all librarians in the country says as follows:

You are perhaps aware of the fact that a few meetings of the local librarians were recently held in Karachi under the chairmanship of Dr. Imdad Husain, Deputy Educational Advisor to the Government of Pakistan, to consider the formation of an All Pakistan Library Association. As a result of the second meeting, which was also attended by a representative from East Pakistan, the Pakistan Library Association was formed and an Ad-Hoc Committee, consisting of Messrs. Qazi Habibuddin Ahmad, ... S. Vilayet Husain, ... and Akhtar H. Siddiqui... , was set up to draft the constitution for the Association. It was also decided that the copies of the draft constitution be sent to all the librarians of the country for their comments, as it would not be possible for them to come to Karachi. The Ad-Hoc Committee was also authorized to transact the business of the Association till the election of the Executive Council. You are, therefore, requested to please send in your comments on the draft constitution, if any, at a very early date. Copy of the draft constitution is enclosed herewith.

This cyclostyled letter reproduced on ordinary fools-cap paper, which also enclosed a membership form, was issued by H. A. Qazi as Convener of the Ad-Hoc Committee. There is no doubt that the initiative came from PBWG on July 6, 1956. A lot of

discussion, activity and contacts must have taken place from that date on, including the preparation of the draft constitution which involved a good amount of work, until the second open meeting of the librarians from Karachi referred to in the circular letter which constituted the Ad-Hoc Committee. Moid was holding an important position in Karachi at that time. His absence from the Ad-Hoc Committee formed in a publicly called gathering of librarians raises the question about his active role or his influence in the professional circles at that time in spite of his being a senior member of PBWG. However, it negates the claim of him being the initiator, leading participant, or the founder of PLA as made by Haider and many others. By October 21, 1956, exactly when is not clear from the evidence available to this writer at this time, Moid was accommodated on the Ad-Hoc Committee in place of S. Vilayet Husain (Qazi, 1956b, 1956c, see Note 6).

Almost all correspondence, including the initial circular letter that was sent out at the beginning of October 1956, was signed by H. A. Qazi as the Convener and Chairman and issued from his office. Some of these letters are typed on the letter-head labeled 'Pakistan Library Association (in Formation)'. Some routine letters were issued by A. H. Siddiqui. The evidence presented above does not support the contention that Moid was either the initiator or the leading figure in the movement for the foundation of the Pakistan Library Association.

#### From Constitution to Constitutional Crises

The first circular letter No. PLA/01 dated ... [October] 1956 was also sent to the East Pakistan Library Association (EPLA). By that time, no more than three librarians from East Pakistan had become member of PLA. The officers of EPLA, very logically, decided to circulate the draft constitution to its membership for comments (Ahmad Husain, 1956). Meanwhile, the Ad-Hoc Committee must have received comments from some librarians from West Pakistan. Without waiting for the comments from EPLA or any librarian from East Pakistan, it held its meeting on October 14, 1956, which discussed three issues (Qazi, 1956b):

Adoption of the Constitution: ... decided that the copies of the amended constitution be sent to the members enrolled so far and also to the other librarians .... 2. Election of the Office Bearers..... 3. The First All Pakistan Librarians' Conference at Karachi: The Ad-Hoc Committee decided that before holding the First Conference of the Librarians, the Constitution should be adopted by the members and election of the Office Bearers be held.

These decisions were conveyed to EPLA vide letter No. APLA/56/43 dated October 16, 1956 (Ahmad Husain, 1956). This was the same letter that was circulated to all librarians on October 21, 1956 (Qazi, 1956b).

Officers of EPLA strongly, and legitimately, reacted to these decisions and sent a 3-page letter including their response and comments on the draft constitution. The letter sent by the Convener of EPLA responds that "Before, however, we could come to finalize our aims, and communicate them to you, your intimation of the "acceptance" of this [constitution] has reached us. This, I hope you will agree, creates an anomalous situation in as much as opinion from the librarians in this wing of Pakistan seems to have been ignored" (Ahmad Husain, 1956). Were the reservations of EPLA communicated through this letter given any serious consideration? Were they ever formally contacted on the issues raised by them? We will know the answers later. But the Ad-Hoc Committee soon pronounced that "The Constitution of the Association has now been approved by almost all the leading and principal librarians of both the wings of the country. In its last meeting the Ad-Hoc Committee had decided to convene a Conference of Librarians at Karachi in the first week of December, 1956, to adopt its Constitution, and elect the Office-bearers for 1957" (Qazi, 1956c). The claim that librarians from both wings had approved the constitution was a misstatement but the contents of the letter left a hope that the proposed constitution could still be amended by the General Body during the forthcoming conference in December 1956. That conference, as planned, could not be

held. The question that is not answered by the documents available to this writer is whether the constitution, in any way, was approved by the General Body. However, this is amply evident that EPLA was not sent an official reply to their comments (Khan, 1957). In such a situation, it was understandable why the librarians from East Pakistan stayed away from PLA.

However, the Ad-Hoc Committee, in their collective wisdom, decided to conduct elections early in 1957. Going by the list of members circulated at the time of election (copy available in Rahim's file), by adding the two names listed as elected but not included in the list, PLA membership came to only 35: 15 from Karachi, 16 from West Pakistan, and only four from East Pakistan. Ahmad Husain decided, and conveyed his decision, to abstain from voting in protest (Ahmad Husain, 1957). Election results were declared on March 6, 1957. The Executive Council was composed of 15 members: seven from Karachi, and four each from East and West Pakistan. M. S. Khan, elected as Vice-President, strongly objected to the way their suggestions for the constitution had been treated (Khan, 1957) while Ahmad Husain declined to associate himself with PLA under that constitution (Ahmad Husain, 1957). Only then, the PLA officials in Karachi realized what damage their inattention to East Pakistan had done.

Whereas no replies to earlier communications were generally sent to East Pakistan, M. S. Khan and Ahmad Husain were now being repeatedly requested and persuaded to agree to serve on the Executive Council (Moid, 1957a, 1957b). After repeated requests and a long time, Moid gave up and turned to Rahim (one of the three elected Vice-Presidents) for help. "I would now request you to use your good influence to bring them [M. S. Khan and Ahmad Husain] to compromise in the general interest of the Association" (Moid, 1957c). It was with the diplomatic efforts of Rahim that M. S. Khan and Ahmad Husain agreed to attend the first meeting of the PLA Executive Council which was being planned in August 1957.



The first meeting of the Executive Council, with a listed agenda of 16 items, was held on August 17, 1957, with Dr. Mahmud Husain in the chair. According to the Minutes of the Executive Council meeting (PLA, 1957), only M. S. Khan and Ahmad Husain, out of the four representatives from East Pakistan, came to attend the meeting. The first item on the agenda was the Secretary General's report on the formation of PLA. As soon as the first item was dealt with, M. S. Khan requested the Council "to finalize the constitution in the light of the suggestions and comments made by the Ad-Hoc Committee of the East Pakistan Library Association and he also requested the Secretary General to take up one by one all the points which had already been communicated to him to be placed before the Council" (PLA, 1957, p.1). Ahmad Husain and A. Rahim also made similar points. The discussion continued for quite some time with no end in sight and the Secretary General insisting that the constitution had already been adopted by the Association and could only be modified by the General Council. The deadlock was broken by the chairman by proposing the setting up of a sub-committee to "examine the constitution and make recommendations". A sub-committee consisting of: M. S. Khan, A. Rahim, G. B. Moreland, Abdus Subuh [Qasimi], Ahmad Husain, and A. Moid was formed and asked to submit its recommendations as early as possible. (PLA, 1957, p.1). M. S. Khan and Ahmad Husain must have felt somewhat satisfied with the Council's decision and left for Dacca with the hope that the necessary changes in the constitution would be worked out soon. This was not to be. The responsibility for conducting the business of the sub-committee must have rested with the Secretary General. Rahim's file does not contain any evidence of the meetings of this sub-committee or any recommendations thereof. This attitude must have frustrated the librarians of East Pakistan who stayed away from PLA for quite some time and focused their attention on EPLA.

### Dissenting Voices on the Working of the Association

During late 1957 and early 1958, there was some inappropriate handling of the selection of individuals for sponsored participation in international conferences or similar assignments.

Such selections were made first by nominations from PLA members followed by a postal voting by the Executive Council. There is evidence of some situations where some members either did not get the ballot papers or got these very late. Such complaints were made with the PLA President but were of no avail. On March 19, 1958, Rahim, disappointed with this attitude, wrote a long 3-page letter direct to the PLA President complaining about the working of the Association, giving examples of mismanagement. He concluded his letter by saying "I, therefore, resign membership of the Association as well as the office I am holding. I would not like to be associated with an association, the affairs of which have been and are being conducted in a manner, which, to say the least, is not above board" (Rahim, 1958, p. 3). Rahim, after not hearing any thing from the President for quite some time, decided to make the letter public and circulated it among all the members of the Executive Council. After receiving the letter, Qasimi (1958a) wrote back as follows: "while I agree with the contents of the letter, I cannot agree with the conclusion to resign from the association. A vote of no confidence or any such step would have been better to take..... We should try to set the association on proper lines and not to quit it in its very beginning". In the meanwhile, Moid, in his letter dated 30 April 1958, requested I. S. Bokhari, based in Lahore, to meet Rahim saying "I feel un-easy over his attitude. Will you kindly go to him and persuade him that his active cooperation how immensely is needed by the Association? He should be one of the strong pillars of the Association?" (Moid, 1958b). Strangely, while Moid was trying, in writing through other colleagues, to persuade Rahim to change his mind, his resignation was not placed before the Executive Council when it met the next time on July 20, 1958 which Rahim decided not to attend. When Fazal Elahi raised the issue of Rahim's resignation, the President said that he did not remember it and forwarded all the correspondence to Moid. The Secretary General declined to have received the resignation! At that point, Qasimi (1958b) placed his copy on the table. That caused some anxiety and Fazal Elahi intervened by saying that further discussion of the issue would cause embarrassment and that he was authorized by Rahim to withdraw his resignation

(Fazal Elahi, 1958a). Fazal Elahi saved the embarrassing situation. It may also be noted that H. A. Qazi, Vice-President, had also resigned during this period and the Executive Council in the same meeting co-opted Fazal Elahi in his place (Qasimi, 1958b).

Unfortunately East Pakistani librarians did not get any of the changes made in the constitution that they were expecting and decided to have minimal relations with PLA. With M. S. Khan and Ahmad Husain located far away, Rahim becoming inactive, Fazal Elahi also got frustrated. On 26 August 1958, he wrote to Rahim: "I am trying to get affairs of the Association straight & I count on your help and assistance. If I don't succeed, I will clear out" (Fazal Elahi, 1958b). He actually did clear out in October when he sent a post-card to Rahim saying: "I am tired of this Association. I have subsequently resigned as Vice-President. This news perhaps will be welcome" (Fazal Elahi, 1958c). One must wonder why did three vice-presidents, all senior to Moid in the profession, decided to resign one after the other in a short period of time. There must be strong reasons for them to do so.

There are two more detailed letters from Fazal Elahi on Rahim's file. One learns a lot from these letters as to why these senior leaders were disappointed with the Association. In one of these, Fazal Elahi says that "it is high time everybody took stock of the situation and decided what course of action was necessary under the circumstances. ... Vilayet [Husain] is letting his membership expire. I am doing the same after resigning from the [office of] Vice-Presidentship" (Fazal Elahi, 1958d). Rahim remained with the Association for a while, then left the association disappointed and unannounced by not paying his annual membership dues (Saify, 1958, 1959) as was done by Fazal Elahi and Vilayet Husain, but some time later both of them joined the association again.

### A Chance for Change

There was a change of leadership in PLA by June 1960 which is not directly mentioned in any document in Rahim's file. A letter dated 8 June 1960 is signed by Fazal Elahi as the

'Honourary Secretary' of PLA (Fazal Elahi, 1960). Did this change happen as a result of the annual elections, or did Moid resign his position? This is not clear from any of the documents available. During mid-1961 Moid left for the United States for higher education (Haider, 1984). After taking over PLA leadership, Fazal Elahi immediately started working on organizing the next conference and general elections. His employers, the American Friends of the Middle East, decided to shift their offices to Lahore and along came Fazal Elahi. He, while busy with the preparations of PLA conference and elections, suddenly fell ill and passed away on November 29, 1961 (Khurshid, 1962). The burden at this crucial time fell on Anis Khurshid who must have been the next in line. The 4<sup>th</sup> annual Conference of the Pakistan Library Association, due to the untiring efforts of Khurshid, was held as planned at Lahore on schedule during December 26-29, 1961. However, the participation from East Pakistan was disappointing, with only five delegates. Only two, out of 11 papers, were presented by the delegates from East Pakistan (PLA, 1962). It appears that Ahmad Husain with his colleagues had come determined to make a last effort to have a fair voice in the affairs of PLA which so far had been denied to them. He lobbied with senior librarians who were already unhappy with the past working of the Association.

Luckily, the leadership of PLA had already changed. As a result of Ahmad Husain's lobbying efforts and full support of some senior librarians, the 1961 PLA Conference "approved the principle of rotation of headquarters after every two years to three Zones in this order: Karachi, Dacca, and Lahore" (Khurshid, 1996, p. 14). The following two resolutions moved by the Executive Council were also passed by the General Body (PLA, 1962, p. 106):

Resolved that on a formal request from the East Pakistan Library Association the headquarters of the Pakistan Library Association shall, for the next term of two years, be at Dacca, provided that the Provincial Association continues to be affiliated to

the Pakistan Library Association and further that the East Pakistan have on the roll of membership of the Pakistan Library Association a strength not less than double the total number of Executive Councilors of the Pakistan Library Association. The last date of the above-mentioned request is 7<sup>th</sup> February, 1962.

Further resolved that in order to enable the Pakistan Library Association to function with the requisite quorum and executive authority, the election to the following offices shall be restricted to members residing in East Pakistan.

1. Secretary
2. Assistant secretary
3. Treasurer.

The delegates from East Pakistan were very happy when they returned even with one-third rather than one-half of their due. They did not insist on equal treatment and sacrificed partly to save the Pakistan Library Association. PLA now flourished in East Pakistan. The other constitutional amendments promised to them on August 15, 1957, through a sub-committee that never seemed to have met, were decided almost six years later during the 5<sup>th</sup> PLA Conference held at Dacca during January 5-8, 1963 (Khan, 1965). The PLA members from East Pakistan came to Lahore in 1965, with a large delegation, to attend the sixth annual conference organized by the Executive Council that was based in Dacca. As an indication of their strong interest in the affairs of PLA, exactly half of the 30 conference papers were presented by the delegates from East Pakistan, interestingly an equal distribution between the two wings (PLA, 1965). This could have been a deliberate message of fairness and being just, a privilege denied to them during the first four years of PLA? Finally, the difficult period of PLA history had luckily come to a happy ending.

### Alleged Opposition by Senior Librarians

The situation reviewed above must have created heart-burning among many leading librarians. There were many senior librarians all over the country with most of them working in government related libraries, especially in Karachi. They had done a lot in catering to the needs of the profession. They had participated in the development of the Directorate of Archives and Libraries and the nurturing of the Liaquat Memorial (later National) Library. They founded PBWG and developed its many programmes and actively participated in the initial stages of the formation of PLA. However, some stalwarts, such as Vilayet Husain who was somehow shunted out of the Ad-Hoc Committee to accommodate Moid, do not appear in the list of PLA members circulated before the first election. It was some time later that Fazal Elahi prevailed upon Vilayet Husain to enroll as a member (Fazal Elahi, 1958e). There were many others who, with time, either lost interest in or disassociated themselves from PLA because of the circumstances discussed above.

With this background in mind, one needs to understand two comments about these librarians made by Khurshid (1996) as follows:

The membership in the early years of its founding was very small. Even the senior working librarians in government libraries of Karachi ... abstained from becoming its members (p. 7).

This assessment is not accurate as far as the first round of enrolment of members and the first elected Executive Council were concerned. Out of the 14 members from Karachi, six came from government-related libraries including many senior librarians. There must have been resentment among some of them due to the fact that one of their leading colleagues was removed from the Ad-Hoc Committee to accommodate Moid. Although Vilayet Husain stayed away from PLA for some time, five of the seven members of the first elected Executive Council were senior

government librarians from Karachi. However, with time their disappointment with the working of PLA increased as brought out in the previous section and they either left or kept away from it. Khurshid (1996) comments on this situation further:

They [senior librarians] instead had formed the Government of Pakistan Library Association. This new association was locally-based in Karachi and was strongly opposed to PLA. The name of this Association also gave the impression of the government's patronage to it which was unofficially available to the Association because some of their members were working in the Department of Archives and Libraries, in the Liaquat Memorial Library or other government libraries subordinate to the Ministry of Education and hence, were able to use their influence against PLA in the government circle (p. 7).

Many of these senior librarians were active in the Karachi Library Association, formed much before PLA, which was also local in every way. What was wrong in forming an association of librarians working in the government libraries which would eventually have attracted membership from outside Karachi? Why would members of this association work against PLA, a national professional outfit? As pointed out earlier, five of the seven members of the first elected Executive Council from Karachi were senior government librarians. It seems that clash between personalities and style of managing PLA created a situation that led to the alienation of senior librarians not only from Karachi but from all of over the country. As a result, librarians in East Pakistan focused their energies on EPLA. Those from West Pakistan, excluding Karachi, the federal capital, attended to the West Pakistan Library Association. And some others might have decided to wait for a better time. What could have those senior librarians from Karachi, who stayed away from PLA because of its working, done? They had an option to form their own association and that is exactly what they did. This point needs further exploration and can only be settled through access to the archival

material. Khurshid (1996) concludes his remarks quoted above as follows:

The opposition was so strong from this end that PLA's first request to the then President of Pakistan for inauguration of its first conference at Karachi, some time early November 1957, or so, was outright rejected (p. 7).

The available evidence does not support this contention. The date mentioned by Khurshid, with some doubt, is not correct. It was the Ad-Hoc Committee that announced on October 21, 1956 the decision to organize "The First All Pakistan Librarians' Conference at Karachi" and that "the Constitution should be adopted by the members and election of the Office Bearers be held" (Qazi, 1956b). The Committee started the preparations immediately. On November 20, 1956, Qazi (1956d) started sending letters to some dignitaries, eminent educationists, and others soliciting goodwill messages for the conference. This letter begins as follows:

I have the honour to inform you that the First Conference of the Pakistan Library Association is going to be held at Karachi during the first week of December 1956. It is expected that Major-General Iskander Mirza, the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan will inaugurate the Conference and Dr. Luther Evans, Director-General of UNESCO will be the principal speaker on this auspicious occasion.

That goal seems to have been unrealistic. By October 26, 1956, the Association had "enlisted not more than a dozen members" (Qazi, 1956e). The constitution had yet to be adopted and the association registered with the government. Would the President of the country agree to inaugurate its conference at such a stage? Even after the adoption of the constitution and holding of elections for the Executive Council, PLA remained a small and



weak organization for some time. Its membership out of Karachi from both East and West Pakistan remained small, not because of lack of interest but because of the feelings of neglect as explained above. This weakness is evident from the fact that repeated requests from the Secretary General of PLA (Moid, 1957d, 1957e) to obtain a copy of the Report prepared by L. C. Key, an Australian consultant, on the development of libraries in Pakistan was denied by the Ministry of Education (Dilawar Hasan, 1957). The request to the President's office in November 1956 was made by H. A. Qazi, himself a senior government librarian, who was the Convener of the Ad-Hoc Committee. Therefore, the Government's rejection of the November 1956 (not 1957) request of PLA was not that surprising and can not be attributed to the opposition of anti-PLA senior librarians, if there were any at that time. However, in a year's time, when PLA stood as a recognized professional body, such a request was made again and was accepted. The first PLA conference was inaugurated on January 9, 1958 by the President of Pakistan.

### Conclusion

Khurshid (1996) concludes his paper saying that "It would thus appear that PLA has had not [?] a smooth going during the 35 and some years of its existence. ... So much so that the Association was faced with a number of constitutional crises as well. But one way or the other the Association was able to survive them" (p. 25). The present study focused on the beginning period from 1956 onwards of the history of PLA, dealing in detail with the problems identified but not given full treatment by Khurshid. By using primary historical evidence, which perhaps was not available to Khurshid, it deals with the first constitutional crisis which paralyzed the Association for quite some time. No other writing provides details of this problem. In addition to the constitutional problem, the first few years of the Association were marred by managerial crisis and clash in personalities as brought out in the various sections of this paper. Both these issues might have originated with a personal desire to have sole power, both constitutional and managerial, to govern the profession from the federal capital. All in all, the working of the Association during the

first few years of its life lacked democratic values and norms, a tendency which unfortunately emerged again after 1976 and is still continuing.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup>This paper is historical in nature and must, out of necessity, mention the names of persons relevant to the discussion, both as actors in historical events and as sources of historical evidence. Their names will be mentioned without any appellations or designations for reasons of scholarly writing. Using names in the text such as Khurshid, Qazi, Ahmad Husain, Moid, Rahim, etc. does not, in any way, mean disrespect for them. All of the persons mentioned are leaders of the profession and must command high respect and due recognition. Writing history, based on primary sources, is a necessity which sometimes may not be to our liking. One can never go forward without understanding the past. The readers of this paper are requested to view the paper in that context and not take it as a piece of writing critical of early leaders.

<sup>2</sup>The facts are that the University of the Punjab started a library science training programme in 1915 which was revised, expanded and restricted to graduates in 1928. However, the Vice-chancellor was given the authority to allow admission to an undergraduate working librarian. This programme was upgraded to a post-graduate Diploma in Librarianship in 1946 which was to begin from 1947. Its regulations and other details were published in the university calendar. Unfortunately, this diploma could not be started because all senior librarians from the Punjab University Library and several other local libraries migrated to India in 1947. However, the syllabus of the Certificate in Librarianship, which was already post-graduate since 1928, was extensively revised by A. Rahim, a graduate of the University of Toronto and the first to obtain a North-American qualification, in 1953. A. Moid started a post-graduate Diploma, but it was not the first post-graduate programme in Pakistan. No 'library school' meaning Department of Library Science existed in Pakistan, in any university, before the

beginning of the master's programme in 1962. My personal information, based on my memory, if it serves me right, during my study at the University of Karachi during 1963-64, is that the Department existed unofficially and was created officially some time towards the end of 1963 or beginning of 1964. During 1963, Anis Khurshid was still holding the position of Assistant Librarian at the Karachi University Library and was regularly asked by the Acting Librarian to spend some time there. Anis Khurshid used to complain about this to his friends in my presence. It meant that no faculty positions were budgeted up to that time for which the papers were moving in the university administration. When the Department was officially, Anis Khurshid was appointed as lecturer retrospectively from August 25, 1962.

<sup>3</sup>This journal had started publication in 1930 as an official organ of the Punjab Library Association and was briefly suspended due to the disturbances of 1947. It was only re-started and A. Moid was one of the editors with very senior librarians such as Fazal Elahi. The leading role must have come from Fazal Elahi and Khawaja Nur Elahi.

<sup>4</sup>Dewey was a pioneer in three areas: playing a major role in establishing ALA, starting library science education, and developing DDC. In relation to A. Moid, the first two areas have been discussed above. Moid has no noticeable contribution in the field of classification.

<sup>5</sup>Khurshid, quoting Moid, mentions July 6, 1954 as the date of the meeting of PBWG that constituted an Ad-Hoc Committee. This seems to be either a memory lapse on the part of Moid or a typo mistake. The date must have been July 6, 1956 (see Qazi, 1956a). Such errors appear in other parts of Khurshid's paper also where 1979 is given instead of 1976 (p. 20) and 1957 instead of 1956 (p.7). The correct year of PBWG meeting is 1956.

<sup>6</sup>The letter No. APLA/56/45 dated October 21, 1956 is the first letter on Rahim's file which carries the address 'c/o Karachi University Library'. It appears that cyclostyled letters were sent using this address although these were issued in the name of H.

A. Qazi. The letter dated November 22, 1956, signed by H. A. Qzai, addressed to Dr. M. Ahmad, Educational Adviser, Ministry of Education, for the first time includes all the three names of the members of the Ad-Hoc Committee including that of A. Moid. The first letter signed by Moid is No. L/PLA/ dated March 12, 1957 in which the results of the election were announced.

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