PART ONE

The Impact of British Colonialism

It is strange that those who were in favour of its separation [Sind's] from Bombay only a few years ago are now opposed to it. This sudden and somewhat inexplicable change of opinion demonstrates how communal considerations warp and twist our better judgement.

Nehru Committee Report, 1927.¹

¹ Indian Quarterly Register 1928, Vol. II, P oceedings of the All Parties Conference, pp. 118-127, quoted in Khuhro, *Separation Documents*, p. xxxiv.

The Impact of British Colonial Administration

The impact of British colonialism can be understood in terms of the conflict generated between the most prominent stakeholders in Sind. This chapter will demonstrate how the British state apparatus departed from the pre-existing political and economic arrangements, how its management of agriculture eroded the traditional basis of economic and political power, and what groups took advantage of the opportunities the new regime offered.

In this treatment two main points will be revealed. Firstly, as the structuring of economic groups in Sind coincided with religious identity, the re-balancing of the distribution of localised economic and political power came to be understood in terms of defining religious community. That is, the decline of the traditional landed elites and the rise of the urban mercantile interests represented competition between the Muslim and Hindu elites for the positions of pre-eminence (within the parameters of the colonial state). Secondly, the incursion of non-Sindhis into the urban and agricultural sectors began to present a challenge to the Sindhis' share of the wealth the colonial economy was generating.

For the elite Muslims, the introduction of colonialism brought threats on two fronts; from Hindu and non-Sindhi groups. This chapter, therefore, provides the foundation from which to explore the responses of the Sindhi Muslim elites to the

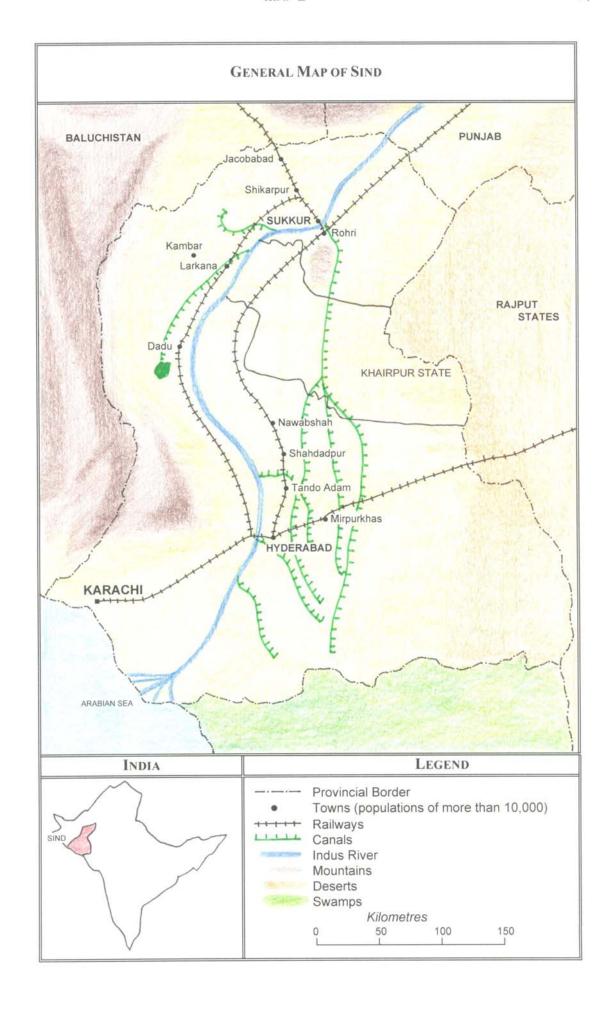
threats they faced. That foundation begins with an overview of the main physical and demographic characteristics of the province.

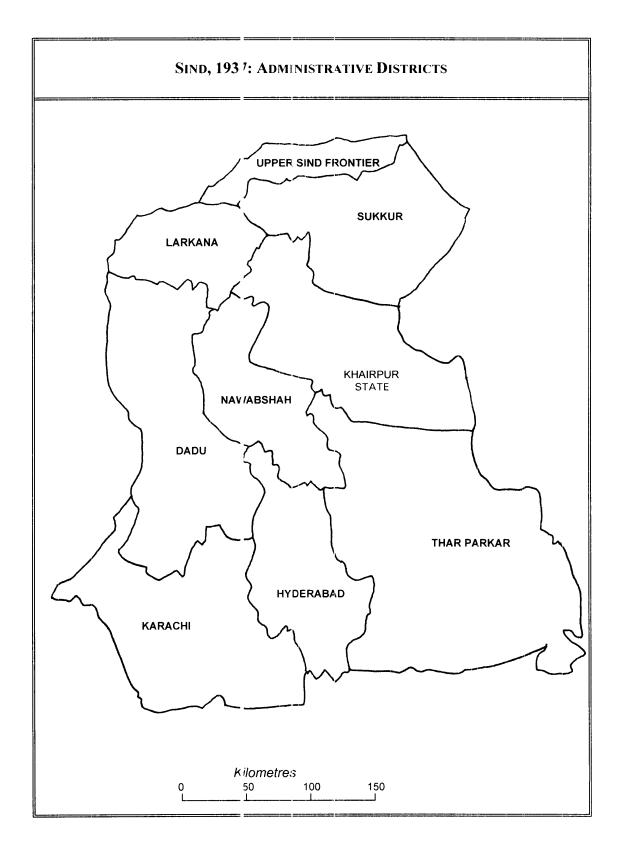
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The land

The geophysical features of the sub-continent have shielded Sind from close involvement with its neighbours and the Indian hinterland. To Sind's north lies the plains of the Punjab, while to the west a crack in the central Brahui mountains holds the Bolan Pass, which for centuries held considerable strategic importance for its access to southern Afghanistan. To the east lies the formidable Thar desert, while to the south lies the salt marshes of the Rann of Cutch and the Indian Ocean.

The Indus river is the lifet-lood of Sind as it carries water and alluvium down from the rich land of northern India (the south-west monsoon which gives sustenance to the Indian peninsula barely affects the province). The river waters the highly fertile soils of Nav/abshah, Hyderabad and western Thar Parkar districts. These districts provide the highest yields of crops in Sind, particularly wheat and cotton. Benefiting from the fertile silt deposits of the Indus valley, the Sindhis developed a self-sufficient agricultural base. By no means totally isolated from trade and cultural developments occurring in the South Asian region, their being surrounded by mountains, deserts, ocean and swamp largely left the Sindhis to develop a very distirctive regional identity. These factors combined to produce among the Sindhis a deep attachment to the province, a faith in their own self-reliance, and an antipathy to outside control.





The people

The strength of the sense of Sin thi regional identity has been assisted by the fact that until the colonial period the overwhelming number of inhabitants were of Sindhi ethnicity by birth. Evidence of Sind's isolation can been seen in its language, Sindhi, which has been described as 'a pure Sanskrit language more free from foreign elements than any other of the North Indian vernaculars.' The only other ethnic group important in the pre-colonial period was the Baluchi, who had been closely involved with Sind's affairs for centuries. The former ruling Talpur dynasty was Baluchi, as were a sizeable proportion of the waderos (largest landowners) who settled in the province as jagirdars of the Talpurs. The resident Baluchis maintained their own language and distinctive customs (especially dress and tribal membership), but there was an understanding with the Sindhis that they shared a common distinction against outsiders.²

The rural population

The total population of Sind was slight when compared with most other Indian provinces of the early twentieth century (3.8 million in 1931). It had one of the lowest population density rates since people generally lived only near the Indus and its canal waters. Like its neighbours, the Punjab and the North-West Frontier Province, it was overwhelmingly rural. Four out of five inhabitants lived in tiny hamlets or farm estates of the *waderos*, the traditional ruling elites, because Sind's history had produced an agricultural political-economy in which only a few thousand landowners possessed all the cultivable lands.

Many of the *waderos* were descendants of the former ruling houses of Talpur, Chandio and Soomro. The holdings of the larger *waderos* were enormous. The estate of the Bhuttos, for example, exceeded 100,000 acres at the start of the

¹ Census of India, 1931, Vol. 8, pt. 2 (Delh, Manager of Publications, 1933), p. 497.

² The term 'Sindhis' is this study refers to people whose mother tongue was Sindhi or a dialect of Sindhi.

twentieth-century.³ Often the estates were so large that they were measured in square miles, not acres.⁴ The largest landowner in British India, Sirdar Chandio of Larkana, possessed more than 300,000 acres.⁵ The power of the *waderos* was consolidated by the dual roles many maintained, since not only did they own the lands on which the peasants lived and worked, but they possessed further influence over them as tribal chieftains (*sirdars*), or as local spiritual guides (*pirs*) who commanded their followers' allegiance in matters both spiritual and temporal. *Pirs* of the stature of Pir Pagaro and the Makhdum of Hala, for example, were credited with in excess of 200,000 and 100,000 disciples respectively.

The importance of the pirs in Sind's rural society cannot be overemphasised. Gilmartin⁶ and Talbot⁷ have demonstrated the significant roles of pirs in rural Punjabi society and politics, and the influence pirs possessed in Sind was even more influential than their counterparts in the Punjab, as Sarah Ansari has shown.⁸ To the masses of the Sindhi countryside the pirs were the very embodiment of the ideal Muslim. The breath of the pirs, it was believed, could heal illnesses, and their sanctity passed down through generations from an original pir who, through Allah's favour, performed miracles as he interceded in the temporal world on behalf of Allah. The success of the pirs in winning over the bulk of the population had been due to their methods of bringing people to Islam through a transition from their Hindu or Buddhist faith rather than by using less subtle techniques such as the threat of the sword.⁹ The pirs of Sind were able to establish good relations with the rulers from an early date and this relationship provided further stimulus for the popular Suhrawardi, Qadiri, and Naqshbandi

³ S. Wolpert, Zulfi Bhutto of Pakistan (New York, OU.P, 1993), p. 11.

⁴ B. Bhutto, Daughter of the East: an Autoviography (London, Mandarin, 1989), p. 29.

⁵ 'History of Alienations in the Province of Sind Compiled from the Jagi and Other records in the Commissioner's Office', 2 Volumes (Karachi, Commissioner's Press, 1886), 1:232, cited in Jones, *Muslim Politics*, p. 7.

⁶ Gilmartin, Empire and Islam, and 'Religic us Leaderships and the Pakistan Movement in the Punjab', op. cit.

⁷ I.A. Talbot, 'The Growth of the Muslim League in the Punjab, 1936-1946', op. cit.

⁸ Ansari, Sufi Saints.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

orders to establish themselve; through the fourteenth to the seventeenth-centuries. By the close of the eighteenth-century it was impossible to travel more than a few miles in Sind without coming to a *sufi* shrine.¹⁰

The traditional power structure in Sind gave the *waderos* complete authority over their tenants. 11 The tenants enjoyed no right of tenure, or indeed rights of any kind. They were often used by landowners as forced labour to maintain their estates and irrigation canals, and were subject to rapacious levels of *batai* (rent in kind) and levies. Even by the 1940s share-croppers had failed to obtain any sort of tenancy or cultivating rights. 12 The disparity between the landowners and the tenants is evident when a comparison is made with the nearby North-West Frontier Province (Table 1).

TABLE 1: AGRICULTURAL CLASSES 1931-32: COMPARISON OF SIND WITH NWFP

	Sind	NWFP
Non-cultivating proprietors	11.4%	8.5%
Cultivating proprietors	7.5%	50.6%
Tenants/labourers	81.1%	40.9%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

Source: For Sind: Census of India, 19: 1, Vol. 8, pt. 2, pp. 160-165; and for NWFP: 'Memorandum by the Revenue Commissioner, No th-West Frontier Province, and Chairman, North-West Province Franchise Committee 27 Apri 1932', printed in Report of Indian Franchise Committee, Vol. III, p. 437, in Jansson, Pakistan or Fakhtunistan?, p. 42

The Table illustrates that Sind's agricultural society lacked a middle class. The absence of richer peasan¹ classes, who could form linkages, or alternate programmes, for the rural masses was of considerable importance in the

11 Report on the Administration of the Bon bay Presidency for the Year 1925-1926 (Bombay, Central Government Press), 1927.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

¹² For details of the conditions of Sind's te 1ant cultivators, see the *Report of the Government Hari Committee 1947-48* (Karachi, Government of Sind, 1949), and Talbot, *Provincial Politics*, pp. 32-33.

twentieth-century political econorny. Unlike Bengal, for example, where there were intermediary landholders and cultivating-owners (such as *jotedars*, *haoladars*, *chukanidars*, *guntidars*), rural authority was concentrated into much fewer hands in Sind and so avenues for political mobilisation were constrained. This freedom produced intense personal rivalry amongst the rural elites, and significant levels of individual independence since there was less agitation from the lower classes and less pressure for the *waderos* to respond to any agitation.

The rivalry amongst the landowning classes was based at two levels. Firstly, as *izzat* (honour, prestige) was the mark of political status, landowners were constantly trying to increase their own standing at the cost of their rivals. *Waderos* not only faced competition and intrigue from those within their same status group, but also from smaller landowners who sought means to improve their own standing. Indicative of the ethos of the ruling elites is the Sindhi word for 'politics' (*siasat*) which is a derivative of the term for vengeance.¹³

The urban population

The agricultural base of Sindhi society had produced the development of only a few very large urban centres. The environs of Sukkur has figured prominently historically because of its location on important trade route junctions, while Hyderabad had prospered in lower Sind since it was developed by the Talpurs (1783-1843) as their capital. Karachi was by far the largest city. It had been the creation of the British in 1843 and its port had risen to prominence because it had introduced Sind's agricultural surpluses to world markets and replaced Bombay as the port handling the Punjab's traffic.

The most important of Sird's other towns were located at canal headwaters or along trade and communication routes. The policies of the colonial

¹³ Wolpert, Zulfi Bhutto, p. 7.

administration had greatly stimulated the development of those towns located near transport routes in the districts well irrigated by canals. Conversely, traditional towns which were unable to serve the expanding colonial state's economy faltered. Moreover, in the outer districts of Sind (eastern Thar, Upper Sind Frontier, Larkana and Dadu) few towns of importance existed because less than five percent of their populations viere urbanised.

Overall, in the course of the early twentieth-century Sind was becoming increasingly urbanised since the growth rate of the population in the towns was twice that of the countryside. The structure of Sind's agrarian society and the rapidly expanding urban centres came to play an important role in Sind's modern political history. This is even more evident when the populations of the towns and the countryside by religious affiliation are revealed.

The population by religious affiliation

The Muslims constituted almost three-quarters of the population, Hindus the remaining quarter, and other religions a mere one percent. Both the North-West Frontier Province and Sind formed the only provinces in British India with overwhelming Muslim majorities. For the Muslims of India this came (in the period under study) to have great significance because Sind, the western Punjab, and NWFP formed a Muslim-majority belt in a sub-continent where (except for eastern Bengal and several princely states) Muslims were the minority of one to three in regard to Hindus. 14 Sind was also of great symbolic significance to the Muslims, for it was the portal where Islam first entered the sub-continent. Unlike many parts of northern India, Islam established itself in Sind through peaceful proselytising rather than through the use of violence, which later invaders employed. This fact has been attributed to the efforts and influence of *sufis*, Muslim holy men whose

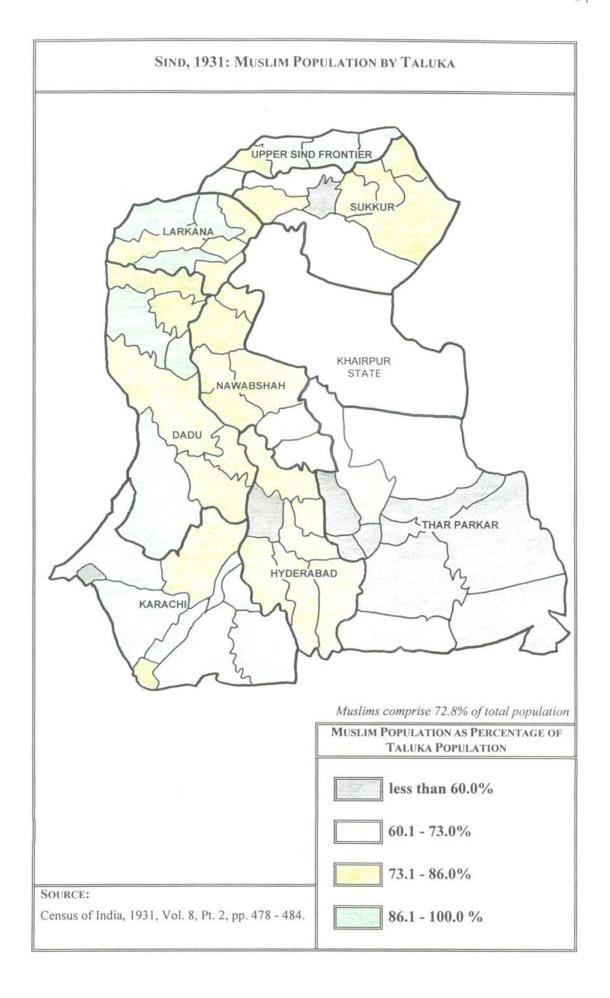
¹⁴ In 1931, Muslims constituted 92 percent of the population of the NWFP, 72 percent of Sind, 57 percent of the Punjab, and 55 percent of Bengal. Ir all other British provinces they were in a minority.

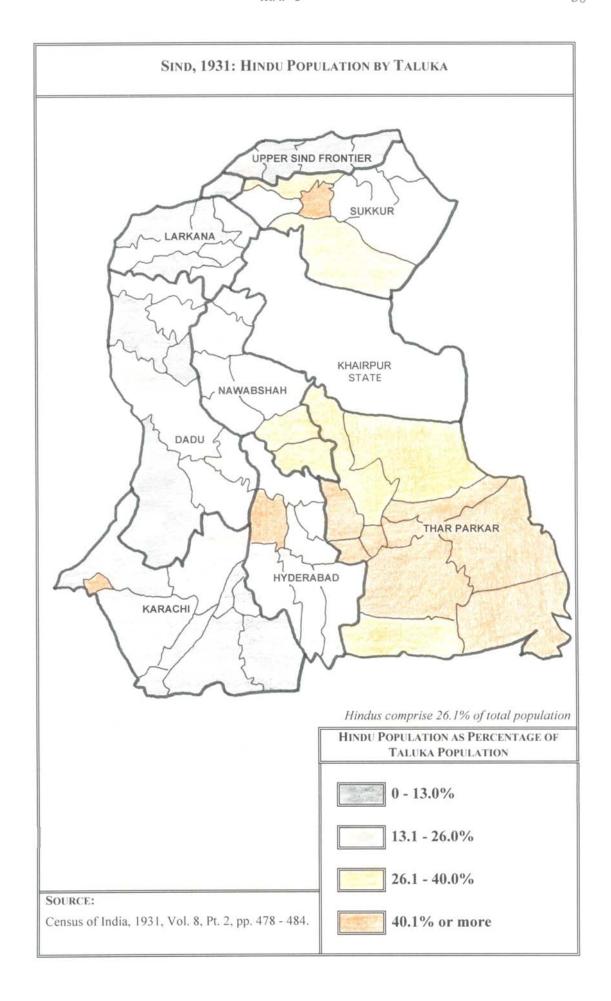
methods appealed to the hearts of the populace. Their descendants, the *pirs*, came to play a critical part in the political developments featured in this study, and more will be said of their role later.

In virtually all *talukas* (administrative sub-divisions of a district) Muslims formed the majority population. Maps 4 and 5 demonstrate that apart from the recently established city of Karachi, Muslims easily dominated (in terms of population) the west bank of the Indus. In the districts of Larkana (83%), Dadu (85%), Upper Sind Frontier (90%), and Karachi (90%, excluding the city) they held majorities well above their provincial mean of 72 percent. In central Sind the Muslims' majority was somewhat lower. In Sukkur, Hyderabad, and Nawabshah they averaged 70 percent. However, in the Thar desert area, with its proximity to the mainly Hindu Rajput states and Gujerat, the Hindus had parity with Muslims. In the eastern Thar, Hindus constituted the majority, although the actual population numbers had little impact on the overall position of the Hindu proportion of the rural population of Sind.

It was in the cities that Hindus made up for their sparseness in the countryside, and the Hindu-Muslim distribution in the first half of the twentieth-century played a crucial role in the development of political identities and actions. Although Hindus comprised only 26 percent of the total province, they constituted nearly two-thirds of the urban population. The conduct of trade throughout Sind was almost wholly in Hindu hands (principally the Lohana and Bhaibund castes). The Bhaibunds were especially important as merchants because they controlled the grain and cotton industries in Sind, 15 while the Amil caste performed the roles of administration and secretariat to the successive Muslim regimes (their name is derived from their occupation as officers and officials of the former ruling houses of Sind).

¹⁵ M. de Webb (ed.), Karachi Handbook and Directory 1925-26 (Karachi, Daily Gazette Press, 1925), p. 21.





In contrast, the Muslims living in towns were generally artisans and labouring classes. There was only a tiny Muslim middle-class in Sind consisting mostly of Memon and Bohra merchants, and an handful of lawyers and doctors. In Hyderabad (the former administrative capital of the Baluchi Talpur dynasty and major centre servicing the canal areas of southern Sind), Muslims numbered only slightly more than a third of this important city's population. The position of Muslims was similar in Sukkur and Shikarpur, the key northern mercantile cities which owed their prosperity to their control of the overland trade routes between western Asia and the sub-continent. Even in Karachi, the thriving commercial and political capital, Muslims were in a minority. In Upper Sind Frontier and Larkana, where Muslims constituted nearly 90 percent of the district populations, they were still minorities in the towns. Thus, in a province where three-quarters of the people were Muslims, the cities were numerically and commercially dominated by Hindus.

Table 2 illustrates that the important commercial and political centres of Hyderabad, Shikarpur and Sukkur, and the trading and transport towns of the regions which serviced the commercial barrage lands, were firmly dominated by Hindus. By the 1930s the larger towns of Sind had been effectively linked by railway and were centred in the regions which had developed a specialisation in cash crops (such as Nawabshah, Larkana, Hyderabad, and western Thar Parkar). As with Karachi, these towns represented the commercial and industrial heartlands of the province.

In contrast, Muslims in the larger cities were only in a majority in Dadu (but the majority had been lost by 1941) and Kambar, which were cities of considerably less importance. In 1931, four cf 13 cities with a population of more than 10,000 had a Muslim majority, but by 1941, only one had. There were a number of small towns in Sind where Muslims also commanded a majority: Matiari, Hala, Narsapur, and Sehwan, but these towns were economically stagnant, and by the early

1930s the populations of both Matiari and Hala were actually decreasing as their Hindu populations migrated to the new canal towns. The British had opened up new acreages for cultivation through immense projects such as the Jamrao Canal¹⁶ and although the Muslim-majority towns were in the region of the irrigation works, they were not on the railway lines¹⁷ or directly affected by the prosperity which the booming cash crop economy brought, and so they faded. Hindus wasted no time moving to centres which had better opportunities, but the Muslims, through a combination of a reluctance to embark on the newer commercial opportunities and through their ties to the towns' spiritual institutions, had lingered. For example: Sehwan was the centre of the Qadiri and Suhrawardi *sufi* shrines, Narsapur contained prominent Naqshbandi and Qadiri *pirs*; and Hala was the home of the Makhdum of Hala (cine of the more influential *pirs* in Sind).

TABLE 2: HINDU PERCI:NTAGE OF CITIES (>10,000), 1931-1941

Town	District	Hindu % 1931	Hindu % 1941
Shahdadpur	Nawabshah	66.5	83.1
Hyderabad	Hydera.ad	70.5	73.6
Rohri	Sukkur	57.4	71.5
Mirpurkhas	Thar Parkar	71.5	71.2
Larkana	Larkana	58.8	71.0
Sukkur	Sukkur	56.1	69.9
Nawabshah	Nawabahah	60.3	68.8
Tando Adam	Nawabahah	75.8	64.1
Shikarpur	Sukkur	63.4	63.5
Jacobabad	Upp. Sind Frontier	49.8	54.0
Dadu	Dadu	41.3	51.4
Karachi	Karach.	46.6	51.2
Kambar	Larkana	35.2	45.9

Source: Calculated from *Census of India*, 1931, Vol. 8, pt. 2, pp. 42-45, and *Census of India*, 1941, Vol. 12, pt. 1, p.13.

¹⁶ The Jamrao canal (1895) immediately be ought 150,000 new acres under cultivation in Hyderabad and Thar Parkar, and accounted for half of 5 ind's total increased crop production at the turn of the century. H. Feldman, Karachi Through a Hundred Years, 1860-1960 (Karachi, O.U.P, 1960), p. 86.

¹⁷ Railway lines revolutionised Sind's trans portation links concerning trade. Even in 1935 there were no more than 140 kilometres of metalled α ad in the province, *ibid.*, p. 174.

The foundations of Sind's demographic composition had been laid in the centuries prior to British occupation. The Amils dominated Government employment, while the Bhaibung's traditionally controlled the province's mercantile activities. The Muslim landowning elites had for their part seemed to be content with this arrangement, because as the dominant group they had viewed such roles which the Hindus performed as beneath their status. However, the advent of Britain's colonial administration altered the balance which had existed under precolonial rulers. The position of the tribal *sırdars* and *waderos* eroded as their control over the resources (which the British used to feed the rapid development of the province) passed firmly into the hands of the urban industrialists and financiers. The former great rural estates of the Muslim lords declined as the fortunes of the Hindu traders literally soared. What were the mechanisms which had so altered the balance between agriculturalists and town-dwellers, and between Muslims and Hindus?

11

The pre-colonial order

To understand the context of the impact of colonialism and the Muslim elites' responses, it is important to recognise that Sind has had a long history of trying to control its own affairs. Throughout its history Sind had largely been bypassed by the centralised empires of the north. Following its conquest by the Arabs in the eighth-century AD Sind was a vassal state to the Ommayyid Caliphate (661-750 AD) and Abbasid Caliphate (750-1258 AD) until their declines. While linked into an empire, Sind's political structure varied little from that which existed earlier under Maurayan or Gupta rulers, or indeed later under the later authorities of the Delhi Sultans and Mughals. Usually a governor (often a Sindhi) would act as regent in lieu of the caliph. Unlike many other provinces though, the governor

depended on local forces rather than on the support of imperial troops, and his role was to ensure that Sind acted as a buffer state against the wilder tribes and to attempt to raise revenues from the tribes within Sind. Medieval Sind was ruled mostly by the local tribes of Soomras and Sammas. Throughout much of their rule of two centuries the Sammas had been independent of the northern Sultans, and at times coalesced with the Mongols against the Sultanate to ensure their sovereignty. Like the Soomras before them, the Sammas reasserted their independence as soon as the Sultan's armies withdrew from Sind. In 1351 AD, the Sultan himself, Firoz Tughluq perished in Sind attempting to subdue the rebellious Sindhis.

Many of the northern empires raided Sind, but few subdued it for long. Thus, the pattern of Sind's relationship with central authorities was clearly established at an early stage. The difficulty of its terrain, the distance from Sind to the Doab region where imperial capitals lay, and the independent mindedness of its tribes ensured that Sind remained peripheral to the rise and fall of the powerful Muslim kingdoms of northern India. More often than not Sind had been ruled by independent tribes. In the Mughal period, the province came to play an important role in the court politics through its value as a refuge for rebel lords. The emperor Humayun (1542 AD), and the princes Khurram (1627 AD) and Dara Shikoh (1658 AD) were just a few of the nobles who fled from the intrigues of the imperial court and sought protection in Sind's deserts. The greatest of the Mughals, Akbar, was born in the eastern Thar during Humuyan's flight.

Even when the Afghans in the eighteenth-century ruled much of India's north they used a Sindhi tribe (the Kalhoras) to rule in their name. The Kalhoras

¹⁸ R.C. Majumdar, (ed.), *The History and Culture of the Indian People: The Mughal Empire*, Vol. 7 (Bombay, Bharatiya Vidha Bhavan, 1934), p. 225.

¹⁹ S. Zaidi, 'The Mughal State and Tribes n Seventeenth-Century Sind', *The Indian Economic and History Review*, Vol. 26, no. 3 (1989).

were constantly harried by Hind J Ranas from the western delta and the Rann of Cutch, and to stiffen their rule they encouraged Baluchi tribes to move into Sind and provide militia.²⁰ This led to the overthrow of the Kalhoras because the Baluchis, now manning Sind's armies, turned on their masters and established their own rule through their Talpur chieftains. Until the Talpur rule, geography still determined Sind's political isolation from its neighbours to the north and east. However, the dawn of the eighteenth-century brought Sind's strategic position between the sub-continent and vest Asia, and its headwaters of the Indus, to the attention of larger powers.

The arrival of the British

The decline of the Mughals in the early eighteenth-century brought to an end five centuries of centralised rule in northern India. In the scramble for spoils, India became a battleground between the Afghans, Mahrattas, Sikhs, and the British. The ability of Ranjit Singh to consolidate the Sikh states in the western and central Punjab in the early nineteenth-century resulted in the formation of a powerful state which stretched from Multan to Kashmir. Ranjit Singh's land was bordered to the east by the ambitious East India Company, but as neither Ranjit nor the Company were ready to clash they remained at peace through a treaty signed in 1809. In this climate of stability both Ran it Singh and the British turned their eyes to Sind.²¹

Several reasons promoted the attention of the British. In their seemingly insatiable quest for trade, the British considered that the Indus had the potential to be one of India's main highways.²² In 1639 and 1738 trading houses had been established at Thatta (on the lower Indus), but both these attempts failed. The

²⁰ H.T. Lambrick, Sind, A General Introduction, second edition (Hyderabad, Sind Adabi Board, 1975), p. 212.

²¹ The Talpur dynasty, which ruled Sind in the eighteen and early nineteenth-century, had divided Sind between scions of the ruling family. For a political history of medieval Sind refer to S. Z. Lari, *A History of Sindh* (Karachi, O.U.P, 1994).

²² Sir John Malcolm quoted in J. Lunt, Bckhara Burnes (London, Faber, 1969), p. 36.

British also feared that, under Napoleon, French involvement in the sub-continent would be revived. Furthermore, with an expansionist Russia edging into central Asia, British possessions had to be protected through the guarding of strategic mountain passes. To this end 3ritain signed several treaties of peace with the Amirs of Sind (1809 and 1820), and sent small reconnaissance missions along the Indus. By 1832 Sind had been drawn into the intrigues of 'the great game' as deals involving the British, Sikhs and Shah Shuja (the exiled Afghan king), but not the Talpur Mirs, were made as part of Central Asian manoeuvring.²³ In 1843 the British broke their treaty with the Amirs, and the East India Company under Sir Charles Napier took direct control of Sind.

The British had high hopes when they annexed Sind. The province provided their military forces with a permanent base close to southern Afghanistan and gave them command of the lower Indus. However the hopes soon turned to disappointments. Contrary to earlier observations, the Indus river proved too unreliable to be used as an high volume trade route. The British had failed to understand that the Indus accounted for only a small part of Sind's commercial traffic. The bulk was shipped across the deserts on camel trains. The extensive trade system, of which Sind vias a part, proved to be equally as difficult to influence. The British discovered that the high volume of merchandise which traversed Sind was merely a transit trade between northern India and Central Asia. What Sind itself produce was consumed in a small local market where prices were so low that the British could not compete. Furthermore, in 1849 the attention of the British turned further north when they captured the Punjab. The Punjab now provided everythin, and more, that they had desired from Sind. It gave greater access to Central Asia, had a sizeable supply of martial manpower, superior transport connections to the rest of northern India, and a market many

²³ The 'great game' was a term later coined by Rudyard Kipling to describe the machinations for control of Central Asia, ostensibly played by Britain, Russia, and a reluctant Afghanistan.

times the size and opportunities of Sind's. The initial consequence of Punjab's annexation was that Sind was all but forgotten by the British.

Early British administration in Sind reflected this attitude. Following annexation Napier ruled the province until 1847. After his departure it was made an appendage to Bombay and came under the successive rule of the Presidency's senior bureaucrats, the most senior in Sind being known as the Commissioner-in-Sind. The administrators were of varying abilities but even the more competent, such as Bartle Frere (1850-1857), were greatly hindered by the Bombay Government's lack of support, especially financial support. The Bombay Government had opposed Sind's attachment, partly because of its hostility to Napier and his policies,²⁴ but probably more so because it became quickly apparent that Sind was a deficit province which was going to need a great deal of financial commitment in order to establish the basic infrastructure of colonial administration.

The lack of willingness from the Bornbay Government and its failure to understand the agricultural and economic conditions peculiar to Sind resulted in a series of errors which were to have far-reaching implications for both the British and the Sindhis. The errors were centred in the Government's mismanagement of the land revenue system and ts failure to understand the nexus between the maintenance of Sind's irrigation systems and the capacity of landowners and cultivators to meet the assessments. For the imperial government, much of the source of revenue was derived from land assessment. This source of revenue was of great important given the early disappointments with the extent of Sindhi trade.

²⁴ H. Khuhro, *Modern Sind*, p. 47.

The impact of colonialism on the agriculturalists

The British had failed to realise that Sind's agriculture was not based upon inundation (like the rest of India), but upon irrigation. The chief characteristic of Sind's system was that the amount of crops which the land could produce was not determined by the quality of the soil but by the quantity of water it received. Sind received negligible rainfall, its sole source of water being the Indus and its tributary channels. These channels and their canals were the lifeblood of Sind. Yet the Indus, with its tremendous fluctuations, could never have been considered as constant or reliable. The situation had been catered for by previous rulers who had maintained their system of land revenue through the use of batai (rent paid in produce) and an elaborate coce of granting remissions to cultivators. In effect cultivators paid high assessments in productive years in order to have remissions granted in leaner times. This system seems to have worked well, although sufficient evidence is lacking to prove its success. Given that Sind's agriculture was not extensively based on cash crops and that this system had existed for centuries, it is reasonable to conclude that it operated in a way which provided rulers with their assessments without devastating the rural populace.

The colonial Government's restructuring of Sind's economy produced profound problems for the landowners and cultivators. In the early years of colonial rule the British had attempted to stipulate cash assessments for fixed periods (usually seven to ten years). However, cash assessments were unsuitable in Sind due to the absence of a cash crop market, and due to the unreliability of the irrigation system. Yet the British compounded the problem by abolishing the system of remissions, thereby removing the cultivators' access to a balancing mechanism. To compensate, the Government introduced *taccavi* loans, which again relied on cultivators raising currency.

The changes to the agr culturalists' mode of revenue assessment were made even more difficult by the outcomes of the Land Settlement Survey. Twenty years after annexation the survey had still not been completed, and was continually modified up to the twentieth-century. The indecision was partly due to the uncertainty of the landowners as to the boundaries of their own properties, but more so to the failure of the Government to determine which type of survey was most appropriate to Sind's unique conditions. The Government of India favoured the system adopted in the North-West Provinces, whereby an assessment was made on a village or unit and that unit determined how much individual members of the unit paid. However, the Bombay Government favoured the system which it used throughout the Presidency, that of the painstaking method of surveying every field and of determining the quality of the soil by making an assessment on each field. Not surprisingly, the Bombay Government chose its own system. In their system, instead of that of the more flexible North-West Provinces, the Bombay Government increased pressure on the landowners who were now required to pay fixed assessments for a set period on all land they owned, regardless of whether the fields produced crops each year or not.

Coinciding with these changes in the land assessment system was the failure of the Government to maintain the canal networks. Under the previous administrations the clearing of canals had been a shared responsibility of the Government, landowners, and cultivators. The introduction of the British system of land assessment with its fixed assessment period and abolitions of remissions meant that landowners and cultivators were no longer in a position to have the financial resources to repair and clear the canals. It was left to those few landowners who possessed the finances, and those who possessed the influence, to command a labour force of peasants to maintain the network of canals and bunds. The Indus carried a tremendous amount of silt and constant effort was required to prevent the watercourses clogging. Bunds were also in constant need

of repair as the river and its trib staries eroded banks and threatened to inundate villages and wash away fields. The Bornbay Government had established a canal department in Sind earlier, but it soon failed to make any headway through lack of manpower, knowledge, and funds. Canal officers had responsibility for up to three-hundred canals, often covering several thousand square kilometres.²⁵ Once canals silted up, tremendous effort was required to clear them. When canals became blocked irrigation stopped and crops failed. Yet in the absence of remissions the cultivators' assessments still fell due. It was not until very late in the nineteenth-century that the British, through their appreciation of the benefits effective canal management had bestowed on the Punjab, began to administer Sind's canals effectively.

The change in land assessments from payment in crops to cash and the abolition of remissions, resulted in cultivators falling into rural indebtedness on a very large scale. 26 Only those landowners and cultivators who were in a position to produce cash crops, or who possessed the financial resources to pay cash assessments on their lands, were able to maintain their holdings. One of the most debilitating effects of the British revenue system was that assessments fell due at harvest time, resulting in cultivators being forced to sell their produce when the markets were saturated and so the prices were low. In turn the cultivators bought their seed and supplies for the riext crop when the harvests had been well cleared and so the prices they paid were higher. The dilemma cultivators faced in Sind was how to raise enough cash to meet the Government's assessments and then pay off their debts to the merchants who provided them with the credit to purchase seeds and supplies when their resources were low. This situation was compounded by the debts incurred to the village *bania* (money-lender) who had

²⁵ R. Burton, 'Scinde, the Unhappy Valley', vol. II (London, 1851), pp. 12-14, cited in *ibid.*, p. 178.

²⁶ D. Cheesman, 'The Omnipresent Bania Rural Moneylenders in Nineteenth-Century Sind', *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol.16, no. 3 (1982), p. 446.

lent the cultivators and landowners the money to pay their assessments, thus further indebting the agriculturalists.

It was the hardships placed on Muslim cultivators, and the resultant prosperity of the Hindu banias and merchants, that contributed to a social and economic restructuring of agrarian Sindhi society. Prior to annexation Hindus had held negligible amounts of land. Pre-colonial Muslim administrations had prevented Hindus from securing land, because in pre-colonial Sind land-ownership was the key to power and authority. Hindu creditors had long existed and performed much the same role as under the later British, although transactions between banias and cultivators were usually performed in kind rather than cash. In the case of bad debts, the most that Hindu creditors could do to defaulters was to claim their movable goods and crops, but they could never dispossess cultivators from their lands. This changed under colonial laws when creditors were able to disposses a landowners who failed to meet their debts and take full ownership of the defaulters' lands.

The result was that within 50 years of British rule almost half the acreage of cultivable land had passed into the hands of Hindu *banias*²⁷ (amounting to over three million acres of irrigated fields²⁸). One study has shown that in a three year period alone (1889-1892) one-fif h of the richest lands in Sind fell into the hands of *banias*.²⁹ By 1913 the Bombay C overnment observed that:

in former years Hindu zamindars [landlords] were rare in Sind; now they are to be found in thousands, partly owing to their having foreclosed mortgaged estates and partly because they find it a profitable investment

²⁷ E.H. Aitken, Gazetteer of the Province of Sind (Karachi, 1907), pp. 335-337.

²⁸ (anon.), Confiscation of Hindus' Propert in Sind (Delhi, Sind Congress Workers' Refugee Relief Committee, 1948), p. 1.

²⁹ H.E.M. Jones, Commissioner-in-Sind, tc Bombay Government, 18 May 1892, No. 2074, Settlement Records for Larkana Taluka, 1892, p. 4, cited in H. Khuhro, *Modern Sind*, p.166.

of capital.30

In the mid-1920s over 30 percent of the total occupied land in Sind had passed into Hindu hands.³¹ The key to the *banias'* power to possess lands lay not in the debt which they encouraged landowners to undertake, but in the interest which was charged upon the debt. By the twentieth-century there was still no restriction on the rate of interest which could be charged on agricultural debts. Rates of nearly forty percent or more were not uncommon.³² Often the interest rates were deliberately set at such a high Level because the objective of *banias* was for the debtors not to pay off their principal sums borrowed, since when these sums were paid the *banias* lost their source of regular income through the cessation of the interest repayments.

Some of the profit which the *banias* made under British rule was reinvested in land (which did not occur elsewhere in India). This is clear from the evidence provided from some of the districts which had been the mainstays of the cash crop system, particularly that of Thar Parkar and Hyderabad. In those areas where new acreages were opened up, Hindus established estates. In other areas, Hindu landowners were often absentee landlords whose estates were managed by the traditional former owners.

The plight of the Muslim a griculturalists was by no means confined to Sind, since colonialism caused upheaval across the sub-continent. Nor was the response from the Government particularly different (albeit weaker) for it was one designed to arrest the decline of the Muslim landowning class without damaging the economic capacities of the Hindus to perform their role as linchpins in the

³⁰ Report on the Administration of the Bombay Presidency for the Year 1911-1912 (Bombay, Central Government Press, 1913) p. 61.

³¹ S.H. Covernton, 'Report on the Subject of Legislation to Restrict the Alienation of Land in Sind by Members of the Agricultural Classes' (Karachi, Commissioner's Printing Press, 1927), p. 19, in Jones, *Muslim Politics*, p. 6.

³² Cheesman, 'The Omnipresent Bania: Ru al Moneylenders in Nineteenth-Century Sind', op. cit., p. 454.

province's commercial flow. The British answer was to legislate against the effects of their agricultural policies. In 1866 the Bombay Civil Code was enacted in Sind and it provided for disputes and other (non-criminal) matters to be settled through the systems of courts. This had the effect of taking the matters of disputes between the *banias* and landowners out of the hands of the British administrators in the field (who had often been able to arrange settlements which did not result in the cultivators being dispossessed). The main result of the Code was that *banias* were able to secure the landed properties of their bankrupt debtors. The Code placed considerable power in the *banias*' hands, for now they not only had the power to sue the landowners for defaulting, but they were also able to extract extremely favourable settlements merely through their threat to sue for settlement.³³ To be called to appear before the courts was humiliating for Muslim landowners, even more so if their case were to be determined by Hindu magistrates.

The failure of the Code to preserve the lands of the landowners forced the Government to pass the Sind Encumbered Estates Act in 1881. Its purpose was to have the estates of the defaulted landowners managed by the Government until the estate was in a position where the debt could be repaid and its financial viability re-established. The Act proved ineffective for two reasons. Firstly, the Act only provided protection to landowners who paid more than Rs.300 tax annually, thereby excluding most of the smaller landowners. Secondly, the *banias* were able to play on the landowners' sense of pride by taunting the Muslims with the claim that the action of being protected by the British against Hindus was disgraceful and cowardly.³⁴ For these reasons the majority of indebted landowners continued to be have their lands disposses sed.

³³ Deputy Collector, Upper Sind Frontier, 8 December 1882, Proceedings of the Sind Commission, Commissioner's Records Office, Judicial department, Karachi, file 1, 1880-1893, Vol. 3, Pt. 1, compn. 4, pp. 270-271, cited in *ibid.*, p. 455.

³⁴ A. Z. Khan, 'Mohammedan Association of Sind', *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Vol. XXXVII (April 1989), p. 119.

Despite the reasons for the failure of the Act, the number of indebted landowners who sought protection under the Act is indicative of how extensive had become the problem of rural indebtedness in Sind. A comparison with the Punjab clearly reveals this point. In portraying the seriousness of rural indebtedness and the need for measures such as the Land Alienation Act of 1900,35 which prevented 'non-agriculturalists' from acquiring land, Talbot emphasises the fact that in 1895 there were as many as 65 encumbered estates in the Punjab, a situation of such magnitude that 'it posed a serious threat to rural stability.'36 In Sind there was no such relief for agriculturalists to be found in a Land Alienation Act. Although there were moves by the Government of Bombay to introduce similar legislation for S nd, they were abandoned as a result of pressure from Hindu lobbyists.³⁷ In the 25 years between 1911 and 1936 more than 250 estates annually (equivalent to four-hundred thousand acres) sought protection under the Sind Encumbered Es:ates Act. The extent of Sind's problem is even more pronounced when it is acknowledged that the Punjab had many times more rural estates than Sind.

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Whilst the annexation of the Punjab initially distracted the colonial administration from Sind, the importance of Sind's strategic location as the Punjab's agricultural production and trade position strengthened was rediscovered. Sind possessed the one critical feature which the Punjab lacked; a

³⁵ For an analysis of the causes, content and consequences of the Act, see N.G. Barrier, *The Punjab Land Alienation Bill of 1900* (Durham, Duke University, 1966).

³⁶ 'Report of the Administration of Estates 1 nder the Charge of the Court of Wards for the Year Ending 30 September 1895', Lahore, 1896, p. 3, Punjab Departmental Annual Reports L/5/VI/ (3), Oriental and India Office Collection [hereafter OIOC], citec in Talbot. *Punjab and the Raj*, pp. 55-56.

³⁷ J. Doulatram. 'Communalism in Land', 1928, in Thakurdas Papers, 72-2 (Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi), cited in M. Hasan, The Communal Divide: A Study of the Delhi Muslim Proposals', in Hasan, Communal and Pan-Islamic Trends p. 285.

safe and accessible harbour. Thus, while Sind had not measured up to early British expectations as a commercial entrepot, the economic pressures exerted by the introduction of the colonial economy into the Punjab directly led to a massive increase in Sind's ability to handle the Punjab's trade traffic.

The early experiments in artificial canals in the Punjab proved extremely fruitful as more and more acreage produced abundant cotton and wheat yields. The American Civil War (1861-1865) had resulted in a boom for Indian cotton, and this affected Sind in two ways. Firstly, it became imperative that the port of Karachi was developed. It was the port closest to India's north-west (especially the canal colonies of the southern F'unjab), and the closest Indian port to the cotton mills of Britain. It was therefore crucial to have transportation links capable of handling large volumes of cotton and wheat exports from the Punjab to Karachi. Secondly, the cotton and wheat booms stimulated the Government's motive to control the maintenance and indeed extension of Sind's canals with the objective of mirroring the Punjab's productivity by opening substantially more acreage for cultivation. By the 1880s Sind was also in a position to take advantage of the transit trade in the massive wheat crop surpluses. Between 1880 and 1883 the tonnage passing through Karachi increased tenfold, and within a decade the port was outstripping even Bombay to become one of the largest exporters in Asia. In the early eighteenth-century Karachi was handling almost 500 million rupees worth of trade annually,38 and in 1912-13 broke all British empire records for wheat exports.39

TABLE 3: WHEAT EXPORTS, KARACHI, 1880-1904

(All figures in tonnes)

, 0	1880	1889	1904
Karachi	13,348	345,440	1,339,18

Source: Feldman, op.cit., pp 53-57.

³⁸ Feldman, op. cit., p. 120.

³⁹ *Ibid*, p. 57.

Overall the province gained substantial economic benefit in the latter nineteenth and early twentieth—penturies, but there were great inequalities in the distribution of the benefits, and the inequalities came to dominate the political landscape of twentieth-century Sindhi politics. Broadly, the inequalities can be recognised in two main areas: between Hindus and Muslims; and between Sindhis and non-Sindhis. The colonia Government failed to understand the unique agricultural environment of Sind and through its consequential land administration policies, it neglected even to maintain the pre-existing conditions of the traditional Muslim land-holders to a large degree. The transfer of revenue assessment from kind to cash radically altered the balance between landowner and credit supplier, thus weakening the position of Muslims in the *mofussil* (countryside).

While the cities expanded and many of the large estates struggled, there were pockets within the countryside which experienced high levels of prosperity. By the close of the nineteerth-century some agriculturalists were benefiting commercially from the extension of the irrigation canals, but it was only waderos who had the consolidated wealth and resources to take advantage of the new opportunities. The most significant opportunities came through the markets for cash crops such as wheat, cotton, oilseeds, and grains. The opportunities were only for those Sindhis in a position to establish crops; but in reality it was those who could finance the cultivation and "ransactions of the cash market production." The establishment of large scale cash crops had been done largely on the new areas opened up through ir igation. In the late nineteenth-century, Hindu landowners competed with Muslim waderos for the purchase of the newly irrigated tracts (Nawabshah, Hyderabac, western Thar, and Larkana). A large number of Muslim landowners had been reticent to switch from their traditional use of the land (in which the size, not the productivity of the land, had influenced their levels of status) to that where money nattered. Others had been unable to maintain their existing estates, let alone convert to large scale cash-cropping. For these reasons

many Muslim *waderos* had no purchased the new irrigation lands under the British, but Hindu capitalists did.

The impact of colonialism on towns

Sind's urban population also was dramatically affected by the changes brought by British rule. However, unlike the r rural cousins, the new order brought enormous financial benefits to those in the towns who were willing, and in a position, to take advantage of the opportunities which the British administration presented through increased mercantile and administrative activity. In the urban centres the great opportunities opened up through the British concentration on establishing a cash economy were seized upon by the Sindhi, Gujerati, and Bombay Hindus and Parsees. The Hindus and Parsees, with their business acumen and capital assets, their control of existing trading networks, financial institutions, and linkages to the great Bombay trading firms, were ideally placed to elevate their positions. Furthermore, contractors (predo minantly non-Muslim) who provided transport and storage facilities, building developments, and service industries, also flourished.

In cities, the tiny Muslim raiddle class faced tough opposition from the more numerous non-Muslim businesses. 40 The Hindu groups were in the best position to move into the expansion of Government administration and bureaucracy which the British favoured. Police forces were established, judicial systems were set in place, irrigation and construction engineering projects were developed, and local councils and clerical departments grew. The administrative expertise of several of the Sindhi Hindu castes, particularly the Amils of Hyderabad, were sought and rewarded by the British. The prominent position of Hindus was equally reflected in government administration. At the turn of the century there was not one Muslim official magistrate in Sind, and even by 1917 Hindus constituted over 80 percent

⁴⁰ For example, the register of commerce and industry in Karachi for 1925 reveals a disproportionately low number of Muslim businesses relative to their population in the city. See de Webb, op. cit.

of the higher ranks of the Judicial Department.⁴¹ The ease with which Hindus filled the posts can be attributed parily to the reluctance of Muslims to be involved in these occupations (for they were traditionally seen as servile occupations), but more so to the superior skills and knowledge (especially literacy) which the Hindu castes had passed on through generations.

It was literacy which significantly demonstrated the contrast between Muslims and Hindus. In 1931, 22.9 percent of the adult male Hindu population were literate, whereas only 3.8 percent of adult male Muslims could read or write. In the politically and economically most important districts of Karachi, Hyderabad, Sukkur, and Nawabshah, the margin was even more substantial (29% compared with 4.4%).⁴² Moreover, the Hindus were far more literate in English, the language of the colonial power.

TABLE 4: COMPOSITION OF MUNICIPAL BOARDS BY RELIGION, 1927

District	Number of Councillors	
	Hindu	Muslim
Karachi	60	49
Hyderabad	70	60
Sukkur	78	54
Larkana	48	45
Nawabshah	24	13
Thar Parkar	21	11
Upper Sind Frontier	11	12
Total	312	244

Source: Bombay Legislative Cour cil, 20 July 1927, pp. 276-277, in Hasan, Communal Politics, p. 269.

The economic ascendancy of the Hindus in the urban centres was reflected in the composition of the distribution of local political power (Table 4). In all but

⁴¹ Political Department File No. 3 (1895), compn. 4, and Political Department File No. 349, (1917), vol. II, Commissioner of Sind Records Office, Karachi, in Ansari, *Political Legacies*, p. 185.

⁴² Census of India, 1931, Vol. 8, pt. 2, pp. 478-485

one of Sind's districts, Hindus out-numbered Muslims in the municipal councils. This dominance gave Hindus the authority to determine which firms would obtain local government contracts; the employment of persons such as teachers, police, and watchmen; and where local land developments would occur and by whom.

In the finance and trade sector the number of non-Sindhis (such as Gujarati and Bombay businessmen) were growing as Sind's opportunities expanded. Similarly, the extension of the canal system and the introduction of the canal colonies had also produced a 'remarkable efflux of Punjabis to Sind' in the late nineteenth-century.⁴³ While the numbers of non-Sindhis were not substantial in relation to the province's total population, their presence was being felt by the Sindhi mercantile communities and by sections of the agriculturalists. The Punjabis were concentrated in the two key areas of Karachi and the new canal colonies of central Sind.

Conclusion

By the early decades of the twentieth-century the key political and financial centres were dominated by Hindus. In both cities and country the Muslim elites were losing ground to the Hindus. The result of the Government's failure to manage and develop trade and agriculture in the province produced a great shift in the balance between the agricultural and the mercantile, mainly urban, classes. Towns and cities performed important roles as market places where produce from the new estates and the north-west of India was traded and shipped through. Commerce, not traditional status, became the key to political power. The position of the great Muslim *waderos'* estates was eroding rapidly in the altered economic restructuring, and the new positions of local authority (councils, boards, and municipalities) were in Hindu hands. In the 1940s Hindus claimed to own as much

⁴³ Census of India, 1891, Vol. 19, pt. 1, p 285.

as 3,000,000 acres of irrigated land, 80 percent of bazaar shops, and 90 percent of businesses and industrial en:erprises.⁴⁴ Importantly, an increasing number of the new businesses and agricult and holdings were not in Sindhi hands.

The inequalities produced had far-reaching political ramifications. It is one of the central themes of this thesis that the later events in Sind's history which led to its integration into the Pakistan state have their root causes in the imbalance produced by the restructuring of agrarian Sind's society, and the prominent position of non-Sindhis in the key provincial commercial and landed interests. Faced with the threat of exclusion from a role in the province's political system the more responsive Muslim elites began to articulate their concerns and to shape their demands.

⁴⁴ (anon.), Confiscation of Hindus' Property in Sind. p. 1.

The Responses of the Muslim Leaders

The roots to the communal conflict that characterised Sindhi politics in the 1930s and 1940s ran deep, and one of the more commanding arteries is the tracing of the Muslim elites' response to the changes in the political-economy brought by British imperialism. One dimension is the fear and frustration triggered by the raj's interference in the balance of power between Hindus and Muslims, while another can be detected in the political reforms of the 1910s and 1920s introduced by the same imperial regime which brought forth two important attributes. Firstly, the encouragement to express political dissatisfaction actively through the increased involvement of locally elected representatives; and, secondly, the potential opportunities in the new institutions of the state to redress economic and political grievances, had far-reaching consequences.

This chapter traces the development of the Muslim elites' responses to the modernising political environment, and in doing so, reveals several important subtexts. Firstly, the leadership roles performed by scions of the Muslim elites were by no means uniform. The three main composite (though by not always united) groupings: the *pirs*, landlords, and urban middle-classes, selected different aspects of colonial rule in which to assert their positions, and the influence the respective leadership groups had on Muslim society in turn shaped the political relationships the elites had with each other.

A second sub-text occurring is the expedient use the Sindhi Muslim elites and the All-India Muslim League organisation made of each other. Each saw in the

other's circumstances opportunities to extend their own positions. By 1930 their respective agendas had proved incongruous, and the consequential disconnecting of the Sindhis and the Muslim League was to have important ramifications for both. The final sub-text is the entwining of the conflict between Hindu and Muslim elites with issues of ethnicity. The events of the 1920s reveal the development of a predominant historical tangent that manifested itself as a specifically *Sindhi Muslim* separatist movement.

Thus, the political history of Sind in the early twentieth-century is an exploration of the expression of the ways by which sections of the Hindu and Muslim elites sought to redefine their political futures within the framework of a decentralising raj. This chapter forms the basis for sharpening the focus on the subsequent events of the introduction of provincial government, which both hastened and intensified the processes brought to light in this study.

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The continuing decline of the Muslim landowning interests and their lack of representation in Government and local bodies prompted several Muslim notables to form the Sind Mohammedan Association in 1884. The main aims of the Association were to promote the educational, social and general interests of Sindhi Muslims by advancing their rights before the Government. The lobbying by the Association produced an extension of the Sind Encumbered Estates Act in 1896, the introduction of the Agriculturalist and Land Improvement Acts of 1889, and the extension of the Deccan Agriculturalist' Relief Act to Sind in 1901. The latter Act

¹ By 1915 it was evident that every impor ant *jagidar*, landlord, lawyer and educated Muslim in Sind was a member (anon.), 'Handbook of Karachi, 1915-16', p. 106, cited in A. Z. Khan, 'Muhammadan Association of Sind', *op. cit.*, p. 117.

was especially important for it imposed a limit of 12 percent on the amount of interest money-lenders could charge.²

The significance of the formation and success of the Sind Mohammedan Association is twofold. Firstly, for the first time leading Muslim elites organised themselves to protect their interests. It represented the combination of rural and urban Muslim leaders, demonstrating that the Muslim responses to the decline in their positions as landowners and their failures to be significantly involved in the prospering commercial and administrative life in Sind were clearly indicative of the reinforcement of class interests with Muslim identity. It demonstrated that the Sindhi Muslim elites envisaged a common identity which was integral to their socio-economic position in society. The political distancing between the Hindu and Muslim elites was also becoming apparent, for there were barely any political associations or organisations in which both Hindus and Muslims freely mixed in late nineteenth-century Sind.

The absence of the Hindu and Muslim landed elites forming a joint platform to maintain their interests was in sharp contrast to events occurring in the Punjab. Large numbers of Punjabi (both Hindu and Muslim) landowners had united in a cross-communal political party early in the twentieth-century exclusively to represent the interests of agricu turalists ahead of the urban classes. It was a clear example of the interests of an economic class cutting across the ties of religious group identity. The merger had resulted from the protection the Land Alienation Act of 1900 provided to landowners through its restriction preventing 'non-agricultural tribes' from acquiring land.³ Thus, in the Punjab in the early twentieth-century, class consciousness amongst he rural landowners had not been subsumed by communal identity. Yet in Sind the traditional agriculturalists' economic position ran

² A. Z. Khan, 'Muhammadan Association of Sind', op. cit., p. 119.

³ For details of the merging of Hindu, Sikl, and Muslim landed interests into the Unionist Party in 1923, see Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam*, pp. 33-38, and Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj*, pp. 80-84.

parallel with Muslim identity. This study will demonstrate that the combination of the centering of economic grievances with religious group identity was to serve as the springboard for subsequent political action.

The second important aspect of the Sind Muhammedan Association (and similar, near-contemporary organisations) is the demonstration that the Muslim elites of Sind (especially the *waderos* and *mirs*) recognised their symbiotic relationship with the raj. The Association's constitution stated that its aim was 'to strengthen the ties of union and loyalty towards the benigh Government.'4 The rationale of seeking to safeguard their interests by appeasing the colonial Government was, of course, by no means unique to the Sindhi elites, since it conformed to the contemporary culture of the landed, conservative Muslim political organisations in India.⁵ The framework that the British established for their exercise of authority had set clear parameters in which the indigenous elites could undertake political action in order to raise their concerns. Accordingly, the early Muslim political organisations in Sind emphasised to the Government that they recognised and accepted the parameters. Their willingness to abide by the colonial Government's definition of legitimate political action directly contributed to the Association's small successes in promoting the landed interests of Sindhi Muslims.

Thus, the early response of the Muslim elites of Sind to the impact of colonialism were to attempt to have their concerns redressed within the colonial framework of authority. Initially, there were no signs of concerted action against either the British Government or non-Muslims. This can be explained by the absence of an anti-imperialist agenda amongst the landed Muslim leadership in Sind, and by the strength of the Muslims' respect for the British system of authority.

⁴ (anon.), 'Handbook of Karachi, 1915-16', p. 106, in A.Z. Khan, 'Muhammadan Association of Sind', op. cit., p. 117.

⁵ For the seminal discussion of the role of the indigenous elites collaborating with the raj in return for increased opportunities of exercising pationage and power, see Seal, *op. cit*.

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The important point to note is that, in spite of the cause of their decline lying at the feet of the British, the traditional ruling classes in Sind chose to build a firm foundation of co-operation with the colonial authority, and this was to have an important impact on Sind's political history.

Although conforming to the colonial framework of legitimate political behaviour, the emergence of the Sindhi Muslims in the political arena was not without its teething problems. Events occurring in the wider Muslim world presented the Sindhi Muslims with a challenge to their overall commitment to British sovereignty. The challenge came with the movement to maintain, and later restore, the Khilafat in Ottoman Turkey

Ш

The introduction of national politics: Sind and the Khilafat movement

The course of the early twentieth-century brought improved communications and contact for the Sindhis with heir Muslim neighbours. The extensive railway network linking the towns and *inofussil*, the circulation of vernacular and English newspapers, and the opening of Karachi as a pilgrimage port for Muslims making the *haj* to Mecca, all contributed to the Sindhi Muslims developing a much greater understanding of events and changes occurring around them.⁶ Through the greater contact came a widening perspective of the Muslim world and an understanding that the positions of Muslims in Indian society were drastically changing. The Sindhi Muslim Leaders discerned that this was occurring in other parts of India and the centres of the Islamic world.

⁶ Ansari, Sufi Saints, p. 78.

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The decline in Muslim society and authority triggered a response within the intellectual centres of Muslim society which came to be known as 'pan-Islamism'.7 The goal of the pan-Islamists was to reinforce the notion of an awareness amongst Muslims that they belonged to the one Islamic community and that the community transcended geographic and political boundaries. Importantly, the rationale for political action became determined by the assessment of how a given action would serve the Islamic community rather than the secular colonial state. The trigger to the pan-Islamic movement in India had focused on the British treatment of the Khilafat and its involvement in the management of the holy sites in Mecca and Mesopotamia (*Jazirat al-Arab*). To the Pan-Islamists, the Khilafa served as a symbolic figure of the Islamic world community, and so they launched an attack on the British over what they saw as the attempt to dominate the religion of Islam and desecrate its holy sites.

The Khilafat sentiment had been brewing in India since 1909, but Turkey's defeat in the First World War had brought the issue to the fore and by 1919 Muslims in many parts of India embarked on campaigns of agitational politics against the raj.⁸ An important turning point in modern India occurred at this juncture as Mohandas Gandhi was able to link the Khilafatists to the Congress's non-cooperation movement.⁹ The Khilafat-Congress alliance was Gandhi's means of uniting two anti-imperialist movements in order to achieve *swaraj* (self-rule). During the course of 1919-1920 Gandhi was able to steer the coalition and direct a concerted attack on British rule.

⁷ For an explanation of pan-Islamism, see J.M. Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam: Ideology and Organisation* (Claredon, O.U.P, 1990).

⁸ For detailed discussion of the Khilafat movement in India, see G. Minualt, *The Khilafat Movement:* Religious Symbolism and Political Mobi isation in India (New Delhi, 1982), and A.C. Neimeijer, *The Khilafat Movement in India 1919-1924* (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1972).

⁹ For discussion of Gandhi's role in the Kh lafat and non-cooperation movements, see J.M. Brown, *Gandhi's Rise to Power, Indian Politics 1915-192?* (Cambridge, C.U.P, 1972), pp. 190-239.

In 1919 many of Sind's Muslims were affected with 'religious enthusiasm' and become involved in the movement. 10 The level of support was largely due, according to British observers, to the role and efforts of the *pirs*. The mainstay of the Khilafat movement in Sind had neither been the urban Muslim elites, nor the landowners; it was the *pirs*. The movement was unique in that it was the first time a large number of Sindhi *pirs* coalesced on a common platform against the Government. There were large numbers of influential *pirs* at the forefront of the movement, *pirs* of the standing of Pir Turab Ali Shah Rashdi, Pir Anwar Shah Rashdi, Pir Mahbub Shah, Maulana Taj Mohammed of Amroti, Pir Ghulam Mujadid Sirhindi and his sons, and the Pir of Jhado. 11

The *pirs* and *maulvis* had achieved the most important contributions to the movement; they had mobilised arge number of volunteers for the campaign; had partly succeeded in convincing Muslims to boycott British cloth; and had raised a considerable amount of funds to support the Khilafat in Turkey. Religious decrees (*fatwas*) were issued by *pirs* declaring the holy sites in Arabia as sacred to Islam, therefore the British could not possess or rule them. 12 Inflammatory anti-British sermons were promulgated from mosques and *sufi* shrines. Rallies and conferences were conducted across Sind. The climax of the movement came when the *pirs* directed their *murids* (disciples) to migrate to Afghanistan rather than remain under British rule. Large numbers of poor rural Sindhis responded. However, the *hijrat* ran into diff culties when the Amir of Afghanistan, discovering that the migrants were largely poor peasants refused them entry.

The Khilafat movement collapsed in Sind for several reasons. The inability of the leadership to reconcile an essentially Muslim cause with secular

¹⁰Weekly Report of the Director for Cent al Intelligence (Sind) 12 and 26 November 1921, J.C. Curry Papers (Centre for South Asian Studies, Cambridge), cited in Hasan, *Communal Politics*, p. 137.

¹¹ Ansari, Sufi Saints, pp. 79-90.

¹² Tribune, 21 March 1919, cited in M. Hasan, 'Religion and Politics in India: The Ulema and the Khilafat Movement', in Hasan, Communalism and Pan-Islamic Trends, p.40.

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nationalism eventually exposed the movement to inherent contradictions between the agendas of the *pirs* and the ideology of the Congress leadership. While events outside the province contributed to its decline, its collapse came through the withdrawal of the Sindhi *pirs'* leadership. Concerned that the Government system of control was being eroded by the *pirs*, who were challenging the legitimacy of its rule, the British raj at first attempted to dissuade the *pirs*. When this failed the British began to attack *pirs* by using those *pirs* who had remained loyal. As the momentum of the movement grew, the British furthered their response with threats of prosecution. Where these failed, *pirs* were imprisoned or exiled. In the cases where *pirs* were prosecuted, the evidence indicates they were made an example of. The flexing of imperial muscle and the failure of the Muslim *zamindars* to support the *pirs* eventually brought most recalcitrant *pirs* back into line. 14

Although the Khilafat and non-cooperation movements both ultimately failed to achieve their stated goals, their importance in Sind is considerable and manifold. Firstly, the movements had the effect of honing the political skills of their leaders, particularly those of the calibre of Abdullah Haroon and Sheikh Majid Sindhi, and brought forth sharp young leaders with a keen sense of what they wanted to achieve. 15 A number were members of Sind's leading *pir* and *saiyyid* (descendants of the Prophet) families, such as Ghulam Murtaza Syed, Miran Mohammad Shah, and Pir Mchammad Ali Rashdi, all of whom came to play leading roles in shaping Sind's path to Pakistan in later years.

¹³ For example, Maulana Faiz ul-Kaim, 'Facts About Khilafat' (Karachi, 1919); Sheikh Abdul Aziz Mohammad Solemen, 'Anti-Khalif Intragues in Sind' (Sukkur, 1919), and (anon.) 'The Khilafat Day in Sind' (Karachi, 1919), cited in Niemeijer, op. cit., p. 91.

¹⁴ Ansari, Sufi Saints, pp. 90-100.

¹⁵ H. Khuhro, Separation Documents, p. xvii. Haroon was a prominent Memon sugar merchant in Karachi. He established Al-Wahid, a Sindhi dail / newspaper to promote the Khilafat cause and was a member of the Sind Khilafat Committee. Majid es ablished nearly two-hundred Khilafat sub-committees throughout Sind, see 'Report of Sheikh Abdul Maj d, Secretary, Jamiat Khilafat of Sind' (Karachi, Al-Wahid Press, n.d), pp. 13-15, in Jones, Muslim Politics, p. 58. Both Haroon and Majid were to play key roles in subsequent Sindhi politics.

Secondly, the emphasis upon religious identity in the non-cooperation movement had heightened the (prowth of religious militancy amongst Muslims and Hindus. In the wake of the collapse of the movement and Gandhi's imprisonment in 1922, the forces of religious fundamentalism which the movement had fostered came to colour local political environments. Jacob Landau has recently shown that the failure of the movement to meld a universalist cause with nationalism led to the breakdown of the movement. A consequence of this failure was that it unintentionally provided a scrip for subsequent rivalries between pan-Islam and nationalism in India. This proved to be particularly true in the case of Sind. The widespread involvement of *pirs* and *mullahs* had imbued the Khilafat movement with an edge which bordered on fanaticism. Judith Brown has shown that the Sindhi leaders of the Khilafat were some of the most extreme in the sub-continent, many with close involvement in 'fanatical' Muslim movements (like the Wahabis).¹⁶

Thirdly, as a primarily pari-Islamic movement, the Khilafat campaign served to reinforce Muslims' consciousness of the vulnerability of their religion and community. While it was not entirely successful as a form of political action, the movement had the effect of heightening Sindhi Muslims' sense of a politically awakening Islamic world. The movement at the very least had sparked a dialogue within all levels of the Sindhi Muslim society over the issue of the relationship between Islam, government and political power. The movement demonstrated to the Sindhi Muslims the collective power of the *pirs* and the potency of the mobilisation of the rural Muslims. Despite inner tensions within the leadership of the *pirs*, the lesson driven home to the Sindhi Muslim elite was that they could, when channelled effectively, demonstrate a political power which had not been exercised since pre-colonial times. The Khilafat movement had shown to the Muslim landowners the potency of religion and of the *pirs* to mobilise expressions of political disaffection.

¹⁶ Brown, op. cit., p. 215.

The Khilafat movement reveals important information about leadership roles within Sind's Muslim society. The *pirs* revealed a willing level of compliance with the colonial authority until Islam's identity was challenged. When Islamic culture was impinged upon by imperial forays, the *pirs* mobilised to defend those institutions which underpinned the definition of Islamic faith. The determinant for activating the *pirs* into agitational action was not simply encroachments upon Muslim society, but the recogn tion that the primacy of Islam was under attack. Thus, the *pirs* had been slow to respond to the Sind separation movement, whereas they had led the movement to maintain the symbolic figure of the Khilafat. Counterpoised against the role of the *pirs* were the actions of the Muslim landed elites. Their framework for political action was determined by an issue's level of conformity with the framework of authority in the colonial state. Of considerably less importance was the criterion of Islamic, rather than a Muslim societal culture.

The collapse of the Khilafat movement and the action against the *pirs* by the Government restored the landed elites to the fore of Muslim political leadership. The movement's dissolution reduced the involvement of the *pirs* in agitational politics, and *waderos* and *zamindars* were quick to recover their place of leadership in Sind's Muslim political forums. Throughout the non-cooperation movement the *waderos* and *zamindars* had maintained their support for the colonial state and their loyalty had provided a strong base for the local authorities. In fact, the Governor of Bombay felt that the absence of riots or the need to impose emergency conditions ir Sind was due entirely to the continuing loyalty of the *zamindars*.¹⁷

¹⁷ Fortnightly Report from Bombay, 16 May 1920, Home Political, Deposit, July 1920, No. 94, Sir G. Lloyd to E.S. Montagu, 27 August 1920, Montagu Mss., Eur.D. 253(25), OIOC, cited in *ibid.*, p. 224.

The return of the upholders of the colonial state (the *waderos* and *zamindars*) to the forefront of Sind's Muslim political society made the question, of how the Sindhi Muslims (imbued with a re-oriented and politically energised Islam) would now relate to the existing political environment, even more pressing. The answer is to be found in the deterioration of Hindu-Muslim relations. It has been well noted that across India in the period after the collapse of the non-cooperation movement communal relations worsened and riots broke out with disturbing frequency. With the collapse of the Khilafat and non-cooperation movements, anti-imperialist sentiments died clown amongst Sindhi Muslims as the landed elites moved to shore-up their political positions in the structure of the colonial state. Importantly, the decline of the Khilafat movement had done nothing to dissipate the aroused anger of the Muslims. The landed Muslim elites instead tapped into the energy of a revitalised Sindhi Muslim identity and turned it against the Hindus and non-Sindhis, their competitors for political pre-eminence.

Ш

The Sind separation movement

The movement to establish Sincl as a separate province had not originated as the Muslim elites' vehicle for re-asserting their political position. It began as an expression of the fears of non-Sindhi competition by the Hindu traders of Karachi. It represented a specifically Sindhi, non-communal manifestation of provincial particularism. However, during the course of the movement from 1913 to 1932, there were several important and distinctive phases, 19 each distinguishable by the direction and composition of the leaderships, and each of which came to shape the political outlook of the Muslim elites to their Hindu neighbours and to Muslim political organisations from outs de the province. By the late 1920s, the movement

¹⁸ J. Masselos, *Indian Nationalism. An History* (New Delhi, Sterling, 1986), p. 176.

¹⁹ H. Khuhro, Separation Documents, pp. (xvi-xliii.

came to be controlled by Sindhi Muslims. Its communal and ethnocentric orientation was a forerunner to the Pakistan movement in Sind.

The first phase

The first phase, from the establishment of the movement in 1913 until the death of Ghulam Mohammed Bhurgri (the leader of the movement's Muslim component) in 1924, achieved little. Apart from establishing the movement, the importance of the first phase lies in the leadership provided by Karachi's Hindu trading classes. It was the urban Sindhi Hindus who initiated the demand because it was they who faced direct competition from the Bombay and Gujerati trading houses. The urban Hindu proponents were led by a Karachi businessman, Harchandra Vishindas, who was a Sindhi member of the Bombay Legislative Council, and under the electoral franchise (of 1909) the Hindu trading classes of Karachi formed his constituency. In calling for Sincl to be established as a province in its own right, Vishindas was primarily advocating the protection of the Sindhi Hindus of Karachi.

Before long Vishindas was joined by Bhurgri, one of the leading Sindhi Muslim politicians of the day. Driginally a wadero of Thar Parkar, he distanced himself from his rural backgrour d to become a successful London-trained barrister, a member of the Bombay Legislative Council, and president of the Third All-India Khilafat Conference (February 1920). In 1923, Bhurgri was the president of the All-India Muslim League and had been a part of the League's four-man delegation to the British prime minister on behalf of the Khilafat movement. Bhurgri's interests lay with the Muslim urban classes. Through Bhurgri, Vishindas brought into the movement the core group of the Muslim urban middle classes. Both Vishindas and Bhurgri were representative of the modern, educated elements of their communities, and the initial phase of the movement illustrated the common feeling amongst the progressive Sinchi elites of the need to protect, for Sindhis, the opportunities that rapid economic developments offered. This development was no

more substantial than in Karach, and it was here that the movement was centred. Driven by Karachi Hindu trading classes, the early movement targeted the non-Sindhi urban commercial interes:s as a danger.

The idea that Sind had ittle in common with Bombay and a lot with the Punjab was often mooted. As Parly as 1856 the proposal to attach Sind to the Punjab instead of to Bombay was rejected on financial grounds. By 1883 several Government of India officials argued that the similar conditions of canal administration and the benefits to be gained by providing Punjab with the control of its own outlet to the sea far out-veighed the rationale for leaving Sind lumped with Bombay. Pagain the idea was rejected on financial grounds, as it was in 1888²¹, 1902²², 1909²³, and 1911. Bombay Government, while concerned with the question of the Punjab's resources, was by no means averse to retaining Sind, because it provided a great training ground for Bombay officials in the arts of irrigation, engineering, and jurisdiction. But it had been Sind's economic prosperity (despite the contention of its lack of development) which linked Sind to Bombay. It is undoubtedly true, wrote Edwin Montagu (Secretary of State, 1917-1922), Ithat Sind gives more to Bombay than Bombay gives to Sind.

In the nineteenth-centur, the debate regarding Sind's administration was carried on over the heads of Sindhis as the Punjab and Bombay Governments quibbled over which province would 'have' Sind. In spite of its minor status, there were views emerging in Sind which strongly rejected being annexed to either Bombay or Punjab. The usually conservative Karachi Chamber of Commerce, for example, represented the anti-Punjabi feeling beginning to surface in Sind when it

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. xx.

²¹ Letter No. 70, 30 March 1888, Mss.Eui.E. 243/51, cited in Ansari, *Political Legacies*, p. 184.

²² Feldman, op. cit., p. 94.

²³ H. Khuhro, Separation Documents, p. 2 x.

²⁴ Feldman, op. cit., p. 94.

²⁵ Letter No. 70, 30 March 1888, Mss.Eur. E. 243/51, in Ansari, *Political Legacies*, p. 184.

²⁶ E. Montagu, 'An Indian Diary' (Londor, 1930), p. 151, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 184.

argued in 1911 that Sind hac 'too recent and too bitter experiences of her [Punjab's] administration, especially on the judicial side, to wish for a closer connection.'27

The possibility of Sind constituting a separate province was never formally raised until the early twentieth-contury. It was not until 1913 that the issue of Sind existing as its own province was presented on a national platform. At the all-India session of the Congress held in Karachi, Vishindas (chair of the reception committee) alluded to Sind's unique geographical and ethnological features giving it the hallmark of 'a self-contained territorial unit.'28 It is ironic that the demand which was to become a forerunner to the Pakistan movement originated as a measure largely to further the interests of Karachi's Hindus.

Vishindas' call, like many local political demands, was overshadowed by the First World War. However, the end of the war brought the Act of 1919 which embodied the principles of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report.²⁹ In accordance with the principles, the Act enlarged the Legislatures and franchises and commenced the process of devolving powers from the centre to the provinces. The most notable feature of the Act was the sharing of responsibilities of government between the centre and the provinces (known as dyarchy).

The measures provided a stimulus to the Sindhis as they pondered what their role would be, and should be, in the environment of increased provincial autonomy. Although the Act had given Sind 19 of the 114 in the Bombay Legislative Council, Vishindas and Bhurgri, the leading Sindhi members, pressed

²⁷ Feldman, op. cit., p. 94.

²⁸ H. Vishindas quoted in A.M.A Shafi, *Heji Abdoola Haroon: A Biography* (Karachi, Pakistan Herald Press, n.d), p. 70, in Jones, *Muslim Poli ics*, p. 32.

For a discussion of the Montagu-Chelms ford principles and the Act of 1919, see Sir A. Rumbold, Watershed in India 1914-1922 (London, Athlone, 1972), pp. 100-126, and P. Woods, 'The Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms (1919): A Re-Assessment', South Asia, New Series, Vol. XVII, no. 1 (June 1994).

for the full benefits of the Act to be passed on to Sind. For example, Bhurgri focused on the incongruence of introducing the Act into India while retaining autocratic institutions (such as the Commissioner-in-Sind) by stressing that the regime of the Commissioner was symbolic of the oppression Sind suffered at the hands of Bombay.³⁰

In spite of his prominence, Bhurgri was the weak link in the Sind separation movement.³¹ His narrow support base of well-educated, urban Muslims had prevented a wider involvement from Sindhi Muslim society. His moderate stance and progressive policies had won few friends amongst the lesser Muslim elites, particularly the *pirs*. Bhurgri had epitomised the progressive Muslim element which disdained the influence of *sufis* and *pirs* in politics. In 1912 Bhurgri had initiated a Muslim Education Cess Bill in the Bombay Legislative Council, but the Bill was seen as an innovation designed to curb traditional Islamic mores, and a campaign against Bhurgri was initiated by the *pirs*.³² In the course of the Khilafat movement, too, Bhurgri had led the 'moderates' against the 'extremists', who were most of the Sindhi *pirs*.³³ Moreover, despite having a connection with the Congress Party and being president of the Muslim League, Bhurgri failed to put the separation demand on either of their agendas. The result was a conspicuous lack of interest in the movement by both the rural religious leaders and the landowners.

The second phase

The direction of the separation movement altered dramatically with Bhurgri's sudden death in 1924. The man who stepped in to replace Bhurgri, Sheikh Majid Sindhi, possessed a starkly different view of the purpose of the movement and

³⁰ G. H. Pir, 'A Glimpse into the History o' Sind Separation, *Al-Wahid*, 1 April 1936, cited in Jones, *Muslim Politics*, p 34.

³¹ H. Khuhro, Separation Documents, p. x viii.

³² Sind Gazette, 2 May 1912, 22 May 1912, 9 July 1912, cited in Ansari, Sufi Saints, p. 109.

³³ Brown, op. cit., p. 206.

what it would achieve for Muslim's.³⁴ Like Bhurgri, Majid had been a member of the Sind Khilafat committee, but his politics lay closer to the *pirs*' Islamic rationale than to Bhurgri's moderate political leadership. In order to increase the involvement of the Sindhi Muslims, Majid adopted the tactic of making the demand an issue at the all-India level. Within a year he was able to have resolutions passed which called for Sind's separation at the 1925 annual sessions of the All-India Muslim League (Aligarh),³⁵ the Congress,³⁶ and the All-India Khilafat Conference.

Majid's tactics began to pay off as a range of Sindhi Muslims began to rally behind the call for separation. Conferences and public meetings were held, bringing forth supportive responses from prominent and influential Muslims. The adoption of the separation demand by a national Muslim organisation such as the Muslim League (a body advocating the protection of Muslim interests), and Majid's astute use of the district Khilafa: committees and *pir* networks effectively coloured the movement with overtones of its being a movement specifically for Sindhi Muslims. By using the Muslim League to incorporate separation as one of its platforms for 'Muslim India', Majid was able to link a regional movement into a specifically Muslim agenda. This development, coinciding with the deterioration of communal relations across India which had been occurring since the collapse of the Khilafat and non-cooperation movements, formed a crucial milestone in the separation movement.

The benefits promised for Sind's Muslims were clear. The functioning of the Bombay provincial government had taught the Muslim elites that it was the majorities which mattered in determining political power, and while the Muslims were a numerical majority in Sind, their attachment to Bombay had rendered them

³⁴ M. Irfan, 'A Brief History of the Mover tent for the Separation of Sind', in *Al-Wahid*, Special Issue Number, 1 April 1936, p. 53, cited in Jones, *Muslim Politics*, p. 35.

³⁵ Jones, Muslim Politics, p. 36.

³⁶ The Congress supported the demand as it was consistent with its principle that provinces should be recognised along linguistic lines.

a minority in the Bombay Legislative Council. It was expected that the establishment of provincial status would bring Sind its own legislature, and on the same basis as that under an expanded franchise, the Muslim elites would naturally dominate. Furthermore, through the existing functions of the colonial framework of authority, those Muslim groups who formed the provincial government would be able to entrench their restored positions through legislation and the rewards that being the guardians of the Government's status quo would bring. Legislation designed to protect their interests (for example, Acts modelled on the Punjab's Land Alienation Act, 1900) were envisaged by the Muslim landowning classes.³⁷ Thus, the creation of a Muslim-majority province of Sind would return a sizeable portion of political power to the Muslim elites.

The potential for Muslims to re-assert themselves under a provincial, Muslim-led government was obvious in a number of areas. Firstly, the changes brought by the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms in the 1919 Act had served only to widen the disparities between the religious affiliations in Sind. The Act had provided for increased involvement by Indians in local government by extending the provisions of earlier local boards and municipalities Acts.³⁸ Table 5: Composition of Municipalities Boards by Religion, 1927 in Chapter 1 illustrates that Hindus dominated the local muricipal boards. The control of the municipalities was important for Hindus and Muslims as it meant control over the distribution of patronage through government employment, public works contracts, and the resourcing of public education. In an increasingly communal atmosphere, control of these mechanisms was more than ever likely to further advantage members of the community which controlled them. Secondly, it was anticipated that control over local administration would mean more and better jobs for Muslims. For

³⁷ S.H. Covernton, 'Report on the Subject of Legislation to Restrict the Alienation of Land in Sind by Members of the Agricultural Classes' (Sarachi, The Commissioner's Printing Press, 1927), cited in M. Hasan, 'The Communal Divide: A Study of the Delhi Proposals', in Hasan, Communal and Pan-Islamic Trends, p. 285.

³⁸ Local Municipal Boards had been introduced into Sind under the Bombay Act of 1884.

example, in late 1924 the third Sind Educational Conference (a Muslim body modelled along the lines of Aligarh's Mohammedan Educational Conference) demanded that all public employment in Sind be awarded in accordance with communal population ratios.³⁹

Thirdly, the enormous potential being realised in Sind's agricultural productivity was crucial to drawing in the landed elites to the separation movement. It was this factor which promised most to redress the decline of the waderos and zamindars. The key lay in the plan to build the longest barrage in the world (the Sukkur, or Lloyd, Barrage). Work commenced in the early 1920s to establish more than 10,000 kilc metres of canals, with an envisaged increase of total cultivable acreage of 30 percent (265,000 acres). The Muslim landowners recognised that they could simply not afford to let the opportunity to take advantage of this boon fall into Hindu, or non-Sindhi, hands.⁴⁰

The potential to take control of Sind's local government and agriculture drew in the Muslim landed elites to the separation movement. Of particular note was the prominence of *waderos* and *zainindars* who represented a younger generation of leadership with a more politically-activated Muslim outlook.⁴¹ At the fore were Ghulam Mustafa Syed, Mohammed Ayub Khuhro, and Miran Mohammed Shah. Both Syed and Shah were lesser *zamindars* with connections to *pir* families, and had been members of the Sinci Khilafat Committee. Khuhro, on the other hand, was a wealthy *wadero* of Larkaria, and like many others in his class, had refrained from participating in the Khilafat movement. However, the involvement of Syed, Shah, and Khuhro illustrates the combining of different elements of rural Muslim

³⁹ Hamdard, 30 December 1924, cited in Hasan, 'The Communal Divide: A Study of the Delhi Proposals', op. cit., p. 285.

⁴⁰ A Government Report at the time warm d that Muslim landowners would rapidly fall into further indebtedness as those with capital (Hin lu and Punjabi farmers) moved into the new acreages opened up by the improved irrigation system. Covernton, 'Report on the Subject of Legislation to Restrict the Alienation of Land in Sind by Member: of the Agricultural Classes', *op. cit.*, p. 285.

⁴¹ Pir Ali Mohammed Rashidi, interview vith A.K. Jones, Islamabad, 1975, in *Muslim Politics*, p. 37.

elite society behind the movement as it developed into a specifically pro-Muslim Sindhi movement. Their sense of grievance over the superiority of the Hindus as financiers (and increasingly as land-owners) could now legitimately find expression in a movement aimed at freeing Muslims from the clutches of both non-Muslims and non-Sindhis. Moreover, the leadership was now far more aggressive and provocative than that provided by previous landowning Muslim elites. The forcefulness of the Sindhi *pirs* in the Khilafat movement left its mark on those aspiring to lead Sind's Muslims. The Khilafat movement in Sind had proved to be a watershed, since the style and composition of the landowning political leadership amongst the Muslims was confrontational to Hindu groups after the Khilafat campaign, whereas the tone had been co-operative prior to the movement.

Challenging the position of the Hindus was a move which fed off the Muslims' sense of injustice and served to satisfy both the urban and the rural Muslim elites' interests. The *pirs* had shown that they needed little encouragement. Even before the collapse of the Khilafat and non-cooperation movement there had been signs of brewing antagonism towards Hindus. A number of *pirs* and Muslims in Sind had refrained from supporting the non-cooperation movement simply because it had involved Hindu leaders. Some Muslims had refused their support because 'it was contrary to Is am to discuss religious questions with Hindus,'42 while powerful *pirs* of the standing of Pir Rashidullah held aloof because the movement had been initiated and controlled by Hindus.⁴³

While Majid and the League promoted the benefits of separation for the Muslims, Hindu organisations in turn were busy in Sind crystallising their community's sense of political dentity. Lala Rajpat Rai toured Sind in 1925 trying to enlist support for local Hindu Sabhas and to establish sangathan ('unity of

⁴² Bombay Police Extract, 1920, par. 932 (0), in Brown, op. cit., p. 224.

⁴³ WR (Sind), 9 April 1921, J.C. Curry Papers (Centre for South Asian Studies, Cambridge), cited in Hasan, *Communal Politics*, p. 161.

Hindus') committees.⁴⁴ His tour had been aimed at uniting the Sind Hindus under the leadership of the Hindu Sak ha in their quest to fight off the Muslim League's demand for separate electora'es. Lajpat Rai's use of Hindu symbolism and institutions in order to achieve a political demand, and of the Muslim League's adoption of the separation demand, both served to leave their mark on Sind. Ansari has found evidence that in 1924 Sind's communal relations were relatively calm, but in the intervening period to 1926 relations between Hindus and Muslims deteriorated rapidly.⁴⁵ In that two-year period, the Muslim League adopted Sind separation as a national platform, and Lajpat Rai rallied Sindhi Hindus to support the Hindu Sabha organisation and reject separate electorates.

In the key years of the separation movement, 1926-30, the Sindhi Muslim leadership of Majid, Khuhro, and Syed roused the rural Muslims as the All-India Muslim League increased the tempo of its pressure for separation. The pressure soon exploded in bloody communal riots in 1926 in Larkana, Khuhro's home base. The riots were followed by further clashes in Jacobabad and Sukkur. These riots were not irrational, rather they were the climax of the Sindhi Muslims' urge to punish the Hindus for what the Muslims considered to be the Hindus' wrongs against them. For the Hindus, their violence represented a corresponding need to demonstrate their physical strength, both to the Muslims and themselves. Both communities had fed off the fears and symbols articulated by the national politicians who claimed to represent their respective 'communities'. It had only been one week prior to the Larkana riots that a conference of prominent Muslim leaders met and agreed in Lelhi on a platform (known as the Delhi Muslim proposals) which sought to protect the Indian Muslims from domination by the Hindu majority in future constitutional advances. In exchange for agreeing to joint

⁴⁴ N.N. Mitra, (ed.), *Indian Annual Regis er*, [hereafter *IAR*] January-June 1925, Vol. I (Calcutta, Annual Register Office, 1926), pp. 378-380.

⁴⁵ Rieu to Home Dept, Bombay, 16 Octo ser 1924, Bombay Proceedings (Home Dept. Conf.), P/70, p. 6, OIOC; 15 June 1926, Bombay Presidency (Home Dept. Conf.), P/71, pp. 58-59, cited in Ansari, Sufi Saints, p. 112.

(instead of separate) electorates, the Muslim leaders demanded four concessions, the most significant of these beir g to separate Sind and to introduce reforms in the North-West Frontier Province.⁴⁶

The Delhi Muslim proposals inclicate that the separation demand was merely a bargaining counter for the All-India Muslim League to secure greater strength at the centre through ncreased representation. Muslim leaders in the Muslim-minority provinces saw the creation of a Muslim-majority province in the north-west as offering a safeguard against the behaviour of the Hindus in the hinterlands of the subcontinent. Mohammad Ali in early 1928 considered that the protection of Muslims in India depended not upon separate or joint electorates, but rather in their holding the Hindus in the north-west as hostages for the good behaviour of their brethren in the Muslim-minority provinces.

Mohammad Ali and the Nuslim League demonstrated that their concerns were not primarily with the welfare of the Muslims of the north-west, but with the Muslims of the minority provinces. It was, after all, from those provinces that the Muslim League's leadership came. The point is strikingly evident in the All-Parties Muslim Conference convened in December 1928. At the conference the Muslim League delegates were willing to give Hindus excess representation in Sind if Hindus agreed to allow Muslims excess representation in the Muslim-minority provinces. The proposal demonstrates that a 'national' Muslim organisation was clearly willing to bargain away the position of Muslims in Sind in exchange for increasing their own representation. Moreover, the Muslim League's actions communicated to Sind's Muslims that the Hindus were a dangerous community, an enemy rather than a partner, and it was a message that further contributed detrimentally to the relationships between the communities in Sind.

⁴⁶ For discussion of what became known as 'The Delhi Muslim Proposals' see Hasan 'The Communal Divide: A Study of the Delhi Proposals', *op. cit.*, pp. 281-301.

The articulation of the Muslims' demands combined with the violence in northern Sind altered the attitude of the Hindus to the separation demand. Although the Congress still accepted Sind's demand for separation, the Hindu Mahasabha (which possessed a greater influence amongst the rural Sindhi Hindus than the Congress), firmly and unequivocally rejected it. At the Sabha's Provincial Conference in Sukkur (May 1927) the proposal to separate Sind was denounced on the grounds that it was now detrimental to the interests of Hindus. President Lala Lajpat Rai declared that:

apart from political and economic expediencies Mahommedans had forfeited the trust of the Hindus and completely shaken their faith and aroused numerous doubts and fears in their minds by their conception of Mohammedanising everything.⁴⁷

The conference marked the evaporation of any remaining vestiges of Hindu support for the separation movement. Backed by the All-India Hindu Mahasabha, Sindhi Hindu leaders began to o ganise a forceful campaign against separation.

The third phase

The third and final phase of the separation movement is distinguished by the Sindhi Muslim elites assuming full control of the separation movement from the Muslim League. The catalyst had been the failure of the All-India Muslim League's advocacy, a fact painfully apparent to the Sindhi Muslims by the release of the Nehru Report in 1928. Earlier, the Congress's acceptance of Sind's separation had become enmeshed in the questions of joint electorates and the weighting for electoral representation of communities, and initially it appeared that Congress had accepted the Delhi Muslim proposals. The prospects of a formal Congress-League agreement had, therefore, seemed on the surface to be bright.

⁴⁷ Lala Lajpat Rai, Sind Provincial Hindu Mahasabha Conference, Sukkur, 1 May 1927, quoted in Mitra, *IAR*, Vol. 1, January-June 1927, pp. 433-435.

The level of animosity bet ween Sind's Hindu and Muslim elites ensured. however, that the path to an agreement would be arduous. An All-Parties Conference had been convened in February 1928 with the goal of reaching a workable compromise on national Hindu-Muslim unity, and as part of the process a sub-committee was established to investigate and resolve the issue of a separated Sind's financial viability. The sub-committee failed to agree on the conclusion. One group (consisting of Muslims and one Parsi) assessed the deficit to be a manageable amount, whereas the remaining members (comprising Hindus) estimated the deficit to be at least four and an half times greater and unmanageable. The influence of the Hindu communalists upon the Congress leadership and its acceptance of the Hindus' perspective undermined its capacity to carry any agreement with the Muslim League into policy.48 Consequentially, the Nehru Report of later that year contended that Sind would only be made a separate province after dominion status had been achieved, and even then subject to appropriate representative weighting for the Hindu minority. The impotence of the All-India Muslim League was fully revealed. A frustrated Jinnah could only lament 'that the Musli ns feel that it is shelving the issue [of separation] and postponing their demand till doomsday, and cannot agree to it',49 and described the acceptance of the Mahasabha's position by the Congress as 'the parting of the ways.'50

In the impasse, the Sindhi Muslim landed elites seized the initiative and assumed full leadership of the separation movement. The League's inability to attain the separation demand had been compounded by its internal split in 1927

⁴⁸ S. Sarkar, *Modern India*, 1885-1947 (Madras, Macmillan, 1983), p. 263.

⁴⁹ H. Khuhro, Separation Documents, p. > xxv.

⁵⁰ Sarkar, *op.cit.*, p. 263.

over the issue of bargaining away the demand for separate electorates.51 The hiatus the stalemate produced gave the Sindhi Muslims the opportunity to shape the movement to suit their needs exclusively by shedding its connections to national Muslim organisations. For example, the League's accepting both disproportionate Hindu represen ation and joint electorates in exchange for Sind's separation (and other concessions, such as excess Muslim representation in the Muslim-minority provinces) had not rested comfortably with the Sindhi Muslim elites. The introduction of joint electorates and disproportionate Hindu weighting in a newly-created Muslim-majority province would threaten seriously to undercut the advantages that separation would bring to the Sindhi Muslims, because the purpose of a separate Sind was not for the Muslims to share power with Hindus, but to claim as much power as there was to be had in the colonial structure of government. Working to the new imperative, the Sindhi Muslim landed elites broke from the weakened League(s) to articulate their conception of the separation demand, and to erect a platform to meet their own needs now, not those of the Muslim-minority provinces.

The leadership of the movement was grasped by Mohammed Khuhro. He immediately worked to replace the Muslim League as the movement's vanguard by spurning its instructions to be opened to be spurning its instructions to be opened to be spurning its instructions to be opened to be opened with investigating possible extensions to the reforms brought through the Act of 1919, and to achieve this the Commission's members visited India in 1928. The absence of any Indians on the Commission had led national organisations to call for a total boycott of co-operating with the Commission. In ignoring the League's call, Khuhro was not only severing a political link between

⁵¹ A split in the ranks of the Muslim League had been brewing for some time. In late 1927 it broke, which saw two rival camps hold their own se sions of the All-India Muslim League. One faction, led by Muhammed Shafi of Lahore, maintained the League's original platform of separate electorates. The other, led by Mohammed Ali Jinnah of Bombay, advocated trading separate electorates for increased Muslim representation in the minority provinces.

the Sindhi and non-Sindhi Muslims, but he was also sharply redefining the demand as a purely Sindhi Muslim issue.

Khuhro used the opportunity to became a vociferous advocate for separation. He structured the goals of the Sindhi Muslim elites into four demands to the Government, none of which related any longer to Muslims outside Sind.52 Firstly, Sind must become a separate, autonomous province, and secondly, advocating that Muslims must have separate electorates. Khuhro argued that a Sind free from an Hindu-dominated Bombay and one that had separate electorates for the Muslims was critical in order to safeguard the Sindhi Muslims' interests. Despite having an overwhelming majority of the population, there were only 59,000 Muslims enfranchised as voters in elections for municipal local boards in 1928, whereas Hindus, numbering only a quarter of the population, had more than 67,000 voters. Thus, through their greater economic strength, Hindus were 'ruling' the Muslims. He argued that under the existing joint electorates for municipal and local boards ban as used their control of the Muslims' mortgages as a lever to manipulate Muslim voters to support the Hindu candidates. However, under separate electorates Muslims were to have their own representatives who would be free from the influence of banias.

Khuhro's other two demands reflected his central argument: Muslims in Sind must have positions in the Public Service proportionate to their population; and educational grants to remove the illiteracy of the Muslims should be incorporated as the first article in the province's budgets.

Backed by the *waderos*, Khuhro maintained the movement's new momentum. In May 1930 he published and widely circulated A Story of the

⁵² M. Khuhro's address to the Simon Com nission, Bombay, 11 November 1928, in Mitra, *IAR*, Vol. II, July-December 1928, pp. 129-133.

Sufferings of Sind A Case for the Separation of Sind from the Bombay Presidency.⁵³ The treatise presented a concise argument against attachment to Bombay (or any other province) based on reasons of geographic, climatic, agricultural, ethnological, cultura, linguistic, and land revenue systems. However, more importantly, it argued not only on a regional basis, but it centred the case for separation in the Muslims' grievances with the Hindus; both Sindhi and non-Sindhi. The Sindhi Muslim elites' demands demonstrate an hardening of their position. In a sense the demands of the Muslims now vindicated the fears of the Hindus, for it clearly demonstrated that the Sindhi Muslims understood separation to mean the curbing of non-Muslims' position; it stood for a 'Muslim raj.'

The Sindhi Hindu elites, now solidly behind the anti-separation movement, tried to match the intensity of the Muslims' arguments. They claimed that Sindhi Muslims had been dazzled by the prospect of a 'Muslim raj' in Sind, and so were blind to the economic realities which separation involved. Of course, what lay behind the Hindus' focus on the economic infeasibility was the fear of losing their dominant position in the affairs of the province. The Sindhi Hindus had found a forceful spokesman in Professor Chablani of Delhi University's Economics Department, and he argued that where Muslims dominated the local municipal board in the district of Upper Sind Frontier, there was a substantial disparity between the taxes imposed on the urban (i.e. mainly Hindu) groups in contrast with those levied on the agricultural (i.e. mainly Muslim) community. The situation was the obverse where Hindus dominated the local boards. The opposition from the Hindus of Sind was heightened by the fear of not only losing their economic prosperity and being lorded over by an illiterate Muslim raj, but of having to finance it as well.

53 Cited in H. Khuhro, Separation Documents, p. xxxix.

⁵⁴ Prof. Chablani's interview with the Simon Commission, 13 November 1928, Mitra, *IAR*, Vol. II, July-December 1928, p. 135.

Chablani further tried to expose the Sindhi Muslims by alluding to the prospect that the British Government might be tempted to reward Sindhi Muslims for their loyalty to the colonial state with a granting of separation. He claimed that the Muslim elites and the Government already enjoyed an arrangement of mutual satisfaction. For example, the Government rewarded Muslim members of the Bombay Legislative Council through advantageous irrigation projects for their support in the Council against the Bombay Hindu members. Hamida Khuhro has contended that the Sindhi Muslims voted *en bloc* for the Bombay Government in exchange for such concessions, and this appears to be the case as at least one piece of evidence shows. Lord Brabourne, the Bombay Governor, had been reticent to support the separation demand since the Government could, as a rule, rely on the Sindhi Muslims support, and without their support the passage of bills and budgets would be very difficult.

The Muslims' persistence, and the Hindus' resistance, resulted in the issue of separation becoming one of the main topics at the Round Table Conferences conducted in London in 1930, 1931, and 1932. The conferences were called by the British Government in order to work out future constitutional reforms. At the 1931 conference a sub-committee gave the first official recognition to the principle of Sind's separation from Bornbay. The recognition was awarded on the grounds of racial and linguistic differences, geographic and communication isolation, and notably, the insistence with which separation had been advocated.⁵⁸ The latter reason was of particular significance for it represented to the Sindhi Muslim elites the leg timising of their entwining of an ethnocentric issue with communal identity.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ H. Khuhro, 'Muslim Political Organisations in Sind', in H. Khuhro, Sind Centuries, p. 175.

⁵⁷ Brabourne to Willingdon, 14 January 931, Brabourne Mss., Eur.F.97/9, OIOC, in Ansari, *Political Legacies*, p. 193.

⁵⁸ 'Indian Round Table Conference, 12 November 1930-19 January 1931, Proceedings of Sub-Committees', Vol. IX (Sub-Committee No. IX (Sinc.) Calcutta, Government of India Central Publication Branch, 1931), p. 91, in Jones, *Muslim Politics*, p. 44

At this juncture the propaganda by both communities in Sind reached an intense level which was sustained for the next two years. The Hindus felt they had been denied the same opportunities that the Muslims had been given to present their case to the Government. A deputation to the Viceroy disregarded the role the Karachi Hindus had earlier played in organising the separation movement by claiming that the proposal for separation had simply been 'an apple of discord thrown among the people of Sind by outside politicians who were making Sind a pawn in all-India politics.'59 The Sindhi Hindus went a step further and reminded the Government of their actual strength by urging that the separation issue should be decided by a Sindhi conference. At the conference Hindus were to be represented proportionately to their political voting strength and their position among land-revenue and income tax-assessees.⁶⁰ Not only was this demand a clear reminder to the Government of the political clout of the Hindus, but it also illustrates that the separation issue was now being fought as an out-and-out communal struggle amongst the elites for provincial supremacy.

The intensity of the Hindu response served to further politicise the Sindhi Muslim elites and to unify their leadership. The leading waderos, zamindars, urban elites, and representatives of pirs met to forge a united stand on separation. The sense of solidarity congealed to form the Sind Azad Conference in 1932. The significance of the Conference is that for the first time in modern Sindhi history the landed Muslim aristocracy and the emergent middle-classes coalesced on a platform which was purely regional and strictly served Muslim interests. The Conference tackled the Hindu opposition by taking issue with the financial argument. It also proposed concrete measures to finance the anticipated deficit a separated Sind would have, the most striking suggestion being that from

⁵⁹ Times of London, 24 July 1931.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*.

Abdullah Haroon, who demonstrated the unity of the Muslim alliance when he proclaimed that the *waderos* and *zamindars* were willing to have their land revenue charges increased by one-sixteenth if Sind were to be separated. In light of such unity and the willingness of the Muslim land-owners to bear the brunt of some of the financial costs, the Brayne Committee (established by the British Government to identify if indeed Sind's projected deficit could be overcome) concluded that the deficit would be less than originally forecast. Consequentially the British accepted the proposal and the announcement of Sind's separation was formally made in December 1932. It was observed that the response in Sind to the announcement was 'strictly along communal lines.'62

Conclusion

The development of the separation movement in Sind had been a reflection of the Sindhi Muslim elites' evolving political identity and assertiveness in political action. The movement further shaped the characteristics of a politicised Sindhi Muslim elite identity. What had began as an inter-communal, purely regional quest for provincial autonomy was overtaken by two powerful factors: the Sindhi Muslims' desire to shape and control their environment; and the benefit that national communal organisations could gain from the divisiveness of the religious communities in Sind which the provement had fed off.

The awarding of autonorny left a number of legacies. For the Sindhi Hindu elites, it left a distrust and antagonism towards the Muslims. For the Muslims, it brought recognition of a new-found sense of self-reliance, a sense of political legitimacy as a distinctly regional *Muslim* identity, an expectation of dominance in the new provincial government and administration, and a disdain and wariness

⁶¹ Abdullah Haroon to Editor, ibid., 21 July 1932.

⁶² Times of London, 29 December 1932.

about national or central political organisations (such as the All-India Muslim League).

It has shown that by the early 1920s the Sindhi Muslim elites asserted their places in the course of provincial politics. The *waderos* in particular had transformed from passive petitioners to the Government into aggressive advocates for their own interests. There were two important factors influencing the transformation. Firstly, the Khila at movement had shown the landowning elites the political potential of the Muslim populace when roused. Secondly, the potency of the movement and the failure of the All-India Muslim League to champion adequately their interests provided the landowning Muslim elites into action. The action was the taking of control of the separation movement in order to gain the power they believed was rightfully theirs. In the championing of exclusively Sindhi Muslim interests, there were decreasing roles for non-Sindhi Muslims who could not contribute effectively towards the separation movement's ethnocentric goals.

The 1920s heralded the era cf mass politics on the sub-continent. The centripetal shift in the distribution of political power to the provinces and the extended franchise were only two of the more prominent features of the increasing democratisation of India's politics. The change in the roles of Indians in the political system was simultaneous with the awarding of provincial status to the Sindhi Muslims. The questions these changes posed for Sindhis were, firstly, how well–placed were the landowning Muslim elites to manage the processes of engineering themselves into a unified government which would fulfil their ambitions of maximising their influence and power in Sind's political economy? Secondly, how would those who had led the battle to retain Sind's attachment to Bombay, the rural Hindus, react to the new environment as a political minority under a Muslim majority in the new Sind Legislative Assembly? The answers are unfolded in the following chapters.