

CHAPTER 8

The Centralisation of Muslim Politics

Jinnah's self-appointment at the hub of Muslim politics in India was opening a range of problems which he found increasingly difficult to manage. The difficulties were caused by his foisting of a modern construction of Muslim nationalism, with its roots deep in liberal European thought, on to a largely agricultural, traditional Muslim society. At the heart of the problem lay the issue that the construction of Muslim nationalism in a constitutional democratic framework was a foreign concept that had not been given time or experience to evolve amongst Sind's Muslims.

A commitment to the ideology of Muslim nationalism had demanded a dramatic shift on the part of the key stakeholders in local Muslim political life. However, the All-India Muslim League was too inflexible an organisation to provide an adequate forum where disparate explorations of the issues that the Pakistan movement was throwing up could be aired. How would the transition of rural Muslim society to Muslim nationhood occur, and where exactly was it a transition to? What did Muslim nationalism really mean? Jinnah was encouraging as many answers to those questions as there were aspirations and dreams, but he could not provide solutions when those visions came into conflict with each other. Apologists for Jinnah tried to stall pragmatic considerations of Pakistan by arguing that:

the form of Government [will] ultimately [be] determined by, what Rousseau would call, the general will of the people. But before there is a Government, there must be a State. Thus Pakistan alone, which is our claim to separate statehood, can ensure the continuance of conditions essential to our free development for a cultural and national entity.¹

The emphasis upon creating the state first and leaving the details until later was Jinnah's only chance of capturing India's diverse Muslim groups. However, Jinnah was dependent upon Muslim politicians whose positions in the colonial system of authority in the Muslim-majority provinces gave them power to manage the details of provincial administration. Most were not ideologists, unlike the theologians and the intelligentsia from the Muslim-minority provinces. They were practitioners in the exercise of managing territories that were already defined by linguistic and administrative boundaries. Not only was their role to manage the 'details' of those provinces, but their own places in any future state depended upon what those details were. This chapter will show that as the prospect of Pakistan loomed closer with Jinnah's increasing status at the centre of Muslim politics, the importance of these details increased correspondingly

I

The importance of the Simla Conference (July 1945)

In mid-1945, Wavell convened a Conference for the purpose of setting India's post-war future. The intention of the Conference was to bring the Congress and the League leaderships together who, under the facilitation of the British, were to reach an agreement on constructing a representative council to determine India's

¹ Aziz Beg, 'Islam and Right of Self-Determination', *Dawn*, 10 December 1944.

future.² However, Jinnah's refusal to accept any Muslims other than Muslim Leaguers on the Executive Council resulted in the Conference's breakdown and he emerged from the ruins of the collapsed Conference as an hero for Muslims. Importantly, the Viceroy's acceptance of Jinnah's refusal effectively handed him a *de facto* power to veto constitutional talks on India's future.³ The timing and effect of Jinnah's real success in scuttling the Conference formed a landmark in Muslim politics in India. Thereafter, many Muslims clearly recognised in Jinnah an authority that could be exercised to achieve something for them in the transfer of power. Jinnah's actions at the Conference gave substantial impetus to the processes of communalism because they caused from the remaining Muslim opponents a last ditch struggle. The Simla Conference was a watershed in that across British India, no matter what stage the processes of communalism were at, the political positions of Muslims outside of the League dramatically declined. Following the Conference, large scale defections from every political organisation to the Muslim League occurred.⁴

Ironically, Jinnah's heightened political status at the centre of Indian politics coincided with a rejection of his involvement in Sind's affairs by the executive of the Sind Provincial Muslim League. Their dissension was not over his position in politics at the all-Indian level. Indeed, Muslim Leaguers of all shades of opinion recognised that they needed Jinnah, for he was the man who could deliver Pakistan. Yet with that capability came a resentment that was due to his centralising of Muslim politics. Jalal has accurately identified provincialism as a key feature of the politics of the Muslim-majority provinces, but she goes much too

² Source documents on the Simla Conference can be found in N. Mansergh, E.W.R Lumby, and P. Moon (eds), *Constitutional Relations Between Britain and India: The Transfer of Power 1942-7* [hereafter *TOPI*] (London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1971-1983), Vol. V. Accounts are contained in Jalal, *Sole Spokesman*, pp. 126-136, and R.J. Moore. *Churchill, Cripps, and India 1939-1945* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1979), pp. 143-145.

³ Wavell to Amery, 15 July 1945, L/P&J/8 524:ff. 22-4, in *TOPI*, Vol. V, p. 1262.

⁴ Pendrel Moon to Stafford Cripps, 11 January 1946. Mss., Eur.D. 714/72, *TOPI*, Vol. VI, p. 771.

far in arguing that Jinnah was irrelevant to Sindhi politics.⁵ However, the unfolding of events in the province (in particular, Jinnah's refusal to allow Sind's Muslims decide who would or would not govern the province) led the reformists to reach the conclusion that Jinnah had become too involved in Sindhi affairs. As Sind's importance in the stakes for Pakistan continually grew, Jinnah's relevance in Sindhi politics became increasingly manifest.

'Sind for the Sindhis' and the programme of the Sind Muslim League

Through the Council of the Provincial League, Syed moved to detach Jinnah from internal Sindhi Muslim affairs by demarcating the provincial and the central League's spheres of authority. An overwhelming majority of the Council endorsed a resolution in June 1945 redefining the course of the provincial League. The resolution warned that:

there is a growing tendency on the part of the All-India Muslim League centre to divest the Provincial Leagues of all their inherent powers of control and supervision over Assembly Parties and ministers. This encourages centralism in an excessive degree which is unconducive to the promotion of the spirit of democracy and, on the contrary, definitely mitigates against the *principal of provincial sovereignty*. This policy is unworkable and harmful and must be revised.⁶

The resolution confronted Jinnah with an ideological difference that struck at the heart of his creed of Muslim unity. Syed supported Jinnah's role as the helmsman to bring the Sindhi Muslims to Pakistan, but the resolution clearly rejected Jinnah's control over the provincial League. It was in all respects a warning to the Muslim League High Command to keep its nose firmly out of Sind's affairs.⁷

⁵ Jalal, *Sole Spokesman*, p. 114.

⁶ (Author's italics). Resolution prepared by Syed Ali Mohammed Rashdi, quoted in *Dawn*, 1 June 1945. The resolution was passed by the Sind Provincial Muslim League Council on 1 June 1945. *Dawn*, 7 June 1945.

⁷ In opposing the notion, Haroon unintentionally contributed to Syed's claim by arguing that the resolution was invalid on the grounds that the Council was not empowered to even criticise Jinnah. *Dawn*, 7 June 1945.

The attitude of the executive of the Sind Provincial Muslim League was part of a new direction that it was determined to set for the province. The new course was outlined in the objectives of the Sind League's official programme for 1945-46 and was clearly a reaction to Jinnah's failure to support those who were genuinely trying to make the Pakistan movement relevant to the Sindhi masses. Among the objectives were four main points; which reveal an important and dramatic shift in how the provincial League saw Sind relating to the rest of Muslim India. Firstly, the provincial League was to regain full control over the actions of all League members (especially in the ministry), and of the carriage of discipline. Secondly, the Sind League was to prepare a detailed manifesto which was distinct from the All-India Muslim League's programme. Thirdly, the local League's programme would be based upon co-operating with non-Muslims for the betterment of the province. Fourthly, the rationale of Sindhi ethnocentrism was enshrined as the defining principle for the organisation's course of action. The policy of 'Sind for the Sindhis' was articulated and installed as a primary goal through the specific objective that:

no non-Sindhi should get any land or job in Sind province [as] many key posts were held by non-Sindhis. In future, no such or even sub-ordinate posts should go to non-Sindhis.⁸

Appeals to Sindhism was the recourse the reformists in the Sind League turned to, rather than to Muslim nationalism itself. The appeal to Sindhi ethnicity assumed a greater than previous importance as the reformists used it as their main instrument for achieving the promised utopia for Muslim peasants. The ideological dispute within the Sind League imbued a subtle but important heightened emphasis to the Sindhi definition of Pakistan that became apparent as the conflict between the *mirs* and the reformists deepened.

⁸ Programme of the Sind Provincial Muslim League 1945-46, quoted in *Dawn*, 9 June 1945.

When Syed had first tried to dislodge the *mirs'* ministry in July 1944, an appeal was made by Majid in the Assembly for unity as Sindhis, not Muslims. The basis of the unity, Majid argued, was Sindhi ethnicity, not Muslim nationalism. The reformists recognised that as the goal was sovereignty for Sind, then the wisdom of continued hostility to their fellow Sindhi Hindus should be questioned, now that Muslims controlled the Assembly. Majid suggested that:

we have to live in this province as a single Sindhi United Nation. That is my conception of the future of the provinces of Pakistan. Sind claims along with other provinces the right of self-determination. Sind should consider itself as a nation. Sindhis are a nation. Punjabis for Punjab are a nation [sic].

The time is ripe when we should begin to look at things as Sindhis rather than as Mussulmans or Hindus. That is my vision. That is my conception of Pakistan. Sind is for Sindhis, Bengal is for Bengalis and so on.⁹

The resolution had made an important connection between the Sindhis' sense of ethnicity and the dominant nationalist discourse pervading Indian politics. Sindhis were now defined as a nation. It was a perspective that contributes much to explaining the Pakistan movement in Sind, and also for revealing the roots of Sindhi nationalism that became manifest in the years after Pakistan's creation.

There was a logic in the Sindhis' case that eventually led them towards recognising the shared commonality with non-Muslim Sindhis in promoting the province's interests. Once Muslims had assumed political dominance of the Assembly, the issue of who would control Sind, and how, had come to the fore. Those questions had been evident as the reformists in the League pushed for a radical redistribution of land ownership and applied persistent pressure on the

⁹ Abdul Majid in the Sind Legislative Assembly, 20 July 1944, in *Legislative Assembly Debates - Proceedings of the Sind Legislative Assembly*, V/9/3294, OIOC.

ministry to deny access to Punjabis to any Sindhi lands.¹⁰ It would seem that there was an interchanging of identities depending on which was to be the more politically important at any one time: Muslim or Sindhi; religious or ethnic.

The communalism of politics had initially brought Muslim identity to the fore. There was an enormous communal pressure to keep Muslims and Hindus apart, and to step outside the communalised framework of politics in Sind in 1944 was courting political disaster. However, the more the co-Muslim, but 'foreign' All-India Muslim League propped up the *jagirdars* and *mirs* in power, the less it appeared to the reformist Sind Leaguers that it would deliver legitimate benefits for Muslim society in Sind. Once Muslim power in the Assembly had been achieved and accompanied by legislation and employment curbing the positions of non-Muslims, the perceived dangers to the Muslim body politic dissipated. The cry of 'Islam in danger' was being over-shadowed by that of 'Sind in danger'. The situation was placing the reformists in the League in a dilemma since it forced them to decide between their vision of a more socially righteous Sindhi Muslim state or the nebulous, greater 'Muslim community.'

Majid's resolution was an initial foray by the Sindhi reformists attempting to de-communalise Sindhi politics in order to protect the province from outsiders. However, the rise in Jinnah's status following the Simla conference had shut the door on the prospect of a cross-communal co-operation in Sind. The processes of communalism had seemingly gone beyond the point where cross-communal co-operation amongst the major leaderships of the Muslim and Hindu identities could occur without provoking violent opposition in the public arena.

¹⁰ For recent examples see *Dawn*, 24 March, 7 and 9 June 1945.

II

The executive of the All-India Muslim League initially chose to ignore the Sindhis' line since it could ill afford to draw attention to any departure from the public portrayal of its imaging of a unified Muslim nation on the march. However, the re-orienting of the Sind League towards a more emphatic expression of Sindhi identity revealed that Jinnah was being cornered through his strategy to unite Muslims behind an ill-defined Pakistan demand. He simply could not afford to reject any scheme for Pakistan that promised an extension of independence for the Muslim-majority provinces. To do so would risk the danger of being rejected by the leaderships of those provinces. However, ignoring the disconnection of the provincial League from the parent body at the critical period in history was not likely to sustain the central League's involvement in Sind. The time was approaching fast when Jinnah would be forced to take action to settle the conflict in Sind if he were to salvage the province's role in his 'Muslim nation.'

The All-India Muslim League and G.M. Syed: a 'parting of the ways'

The announcement in July 1945 of general elections for early 1946 proved a double edged sword for the Muslim League in Sind. On the one hand, the elections provided the opportunity for Sind's Muslims to demonstrate their commitment to the Pakistan movement and throw their weight behind the push to create independent Muslim states out of the Muslim-majority provinces. On the other hand, the elections would also emphasise in the public arena the conflict and disunity within the Muslim League. Thus, the election brought not only the opportunity to illustrate support for the Pakistan demand, but it also threatened to shatter the Muslim League.

The 100 applications for the Muslim League ticket for the 35 Muslim seats in the Assembly showed the electoral appeal of the League. It indicated how

widespread the belief had become that a League ticket was a sure entry to the Assembly.¹¹ The election also meant intense competition for the tickets as the factions saw the opportunities it offered: Syed planned the introduction of new blood to the Assembly; Ghulam Ali Talpur sought the bulk of the tickets for his Talpuri/Baluchi kin, and Hidayatullah wanted the tickets to be used as a reward to the *jagirdars* and *zamindars* who remained loyal to his faction. All Jinnah wanted was for the Muslim League to win all the seats available.¹²

In an attempt to ensure that the most prominent and influential landowners stood for the League, Jinnah personally selected the Sind Parliamentary Board and weighted it in the *mirs'* favour.¹³ However, when the *mirs* issued tickets without reference to the Board, Syed closed the Board and ordered its reconstruction 'along more democratic lines.'¹⁴ Once again, the League High Command had no intention of risking the loss of the *mirs* for the sake of Syed's reformers. Jinnah moved to increase the All-India Muslim League's involvement in Sind by assuming complete control of the selecting of all the League's candidates and he refused to leave Karachi until the distribution of tickets was completed.¹⁵

Jinnah publicly blamed Syed for the conflict in the Sind League, which he feared would cost the League dearly, and told Syed that they had reached 'a parting of the ways.'¹⁶ In the midst of the League's most important election campaign in its history, Jinnah was turning his back on the man who had done the

¹¹ The announcement of elections brought a number of defections to the Sind League, the most prominent being Miran Mohammed Shah (the Speaker in the Assembly), Mir Nur Hussain and Pir Makhdum Manzoor, both prominent figures in the Sind and All-India Khaskars. *Dawn*, 25 July and 21 September 1945.

¹² Dow to Wavell, 4 September 1945, L/P&J/5/261, OIOC.

¹³ The Board could allocate League tickets, but all disputes and appeals could only be heard by the Central Parliamentary Committee. *Dawn*, 18 September 1945.

¹⁴ Syed to Jinnah, 3 October 1945, Shamsul Hasan Collection/2/file No.10, vol. VI, cited in Jalal, *Sole Spokesman*, p. 164.

¹⁵ The Central Parliamentary Board's determining of the candidates was unlikely to satisfy many, for it was considered by Dow that its members understood 'less about the intricacies of Sind politics than a crocodile does about algebra.' Dow to Wavell, 18 October 1945, L/P&J/5/261, OIOC.

¹⁶ *BC*, 24 October 1945.

most to mobilise Muslim public opinion behind the Pakistan movement in Sind and who was one of the few Leaguers committed to giving effect to its charter for bringing liberty and justice to the Muslim masses.

In the face of increasing control by the central League over the provincial League's affairs, Syed established contact with the Congress. His purpose was to use their programme to influence the ministry to benefit the masses. To that end, he was able to draw on Congress's resources to campaign against Yusuf Haroon for Sind's sole seat in the Central Legislative Assembly. As for the Congress, it was only too willing to help Syed weaken the League. Apparently the threat of Hindu domination was now of less importance to Syed than that of domination by non-Sindhis.

Syed's involvement in the campaign was to cost him dearly as the League High Command withdrew the League ticket from four of his followers from Nawabshah as punishment for their involvement in opposing Haroon. The districts of Nawabshah and Hyderabad were Syed's most important bases, and without the standing of its members on the League ticket, there was little purpose in Syed continuing his quest for the reformists to control the provincial Government while tied down to the dictates of the League's High Command. Less than a month before polling commenced, Syed formally repudiated the All-India Muslim League's leadership and announced that the Sind Provincial Muslim League was no longer affiliated to the All-India Muslim League.

In justifying his stand, Syed contended that as a young man he had left the Congress because it had 'allowed the considerations of its All-India policies to gain precedence over and preference for the immediate well-being of Sind,' and now the central League had shown itself to be no better at keeping its nose out of

Sindhi affairs.¹⁷ Syed explained that the relations between the All-India Muslim League and Sind had always been finely balanced; Sind would adhere to the central League on all-India questions, but Sindhis were to retain control over provincial affairs.

It was a perception that underscored the earlier pacts which Sikander Hyat Khan and Fazlul Huq had struck with Jinnah. Both pacts had been repudiated by Sikander and Huq over what they saw as Jinnah's intrusion into their provincial affairs. Similarly, Syed contended that the balance between the centre and the provincial League had been broken by the High Command. In Sind's case, it was because of Jinnah's actions to protect the large land-owning interests in power. On the eve of the election Syed publicly argued that:

in determining the course of conduct, we are required to subordinate the good of the people of Sind to the undefined and constantly fluctuating High Command's All-India policy, which today, for practical purposes is being influenced and controlled by Muslim leaders in what are known as Muslim-minority provinces. While claiming to liberate us from the tentacles of Hindu domination, these friends are indeed clearly bringing us under their own dominance; and in order to maintain and sustain their own monopoly of leadership at the Centre, they are not only encouraging reactionary forces in the Province but are also a party to the continued exploitation of the down-trodden masses who appear to be no more than a pawn in their game.¹⁸

Jinnah and the All-India Muslim League Working Committee replied by promptly expelling Syed from the Muslim League organisation.

The conflict between the conservative forces and the League's reformists was another of the double-edged swords that Jinnah had precariously to juggle. On the national level, Jinnah was attempting to portray political conflict among

¹⁷ Syed quoted in *BC*, 27 December 1945

¹⁸ *ibid.*

Muslims as a clash between those who were serving the 'Muslim nation' and those who were not. His relentless campaign against non-League Muslims in the Congress and those in the provinces (e.g. Khizr in the Punjab) were indicative of his strategy to demarcate a rigid line between the League and non-League Muslims. Jinnah's actions were, in effect, channelling the political representation of Muslims into exclusively the League's hands, thereby reducing Muslim opposition to the Pakistan demand. Increasingly Jinnah became the voice of Muslim political expression. The powerful, careful contrasting of the Muslim League organisation with those Muslims who rejected the Party deliberately set in motion a demarcating of Muslims who portrayed the Muslim League as the champion serving the Muslim 'community', whereas Muslims outside of the League were portrayed working against that 'community.'

The quandary for Jinnah was how to manage that discourse when the same question as to who was serving the Muslim 'community' was posed by parties within the League body. The problem for Jinnah was to successfully and cleanly present conflict among Muslims as being exclusively between the League and those outside of the League, before the League tore itself apart.

As the elections neared Jinnah needed to win over the most influential Muslim leaders and to use them to project a Muslim consensus. In order to present the consensus he refused to give credence to any fundamental ideological differences within the Muslim League.¹⁹ Any such disputes were seen as a threat to the mirage of Muslim unity. Jinnah's way of dealing with disputes within the League organisation over ideological issues was to paint the dispute as a conflict between personalities. This was exemplified later in the year when Liaquat Ali was sent to Karachi by Jinnah to rescue the image of the League

¹⁹ In May 1944, the Council of the All-India Muslim League appointed a committee of writers whose function was to bring uniformity of thought and ideology regarding the economic and political renaissance of Muslim society. *Dawn*, 5 May 1944.

which the conflict in Sind was tarnishing. Liaquat repeatedly propounded that 'Muslims have only one ideology, and that is Pakistan'.²⁰

In persistent disputes, such as in Sind, the protagonist with the lesser immediate political influence was eventually portrayed by the All-India Muslim League as a rebel who was not acting in the interests of the Muslim community. It was a strategy that was intended to ensure that the All-India Muslim League had the key power-holders in Muslim society in its ranks, but it was also divisive and held considerable potential to weaken any Muslim unity that had been achieved.

The consequence of the strategy in Sind was that the *mirs* became locked into a relationship with Jinnah that gave them little room to move. The landowning interests had been driven into Jinnah's arms as they needed his protection against the reformists whom he had helped create. It remains conjecture as to whether this was a deliberate strategy on Jinnah's part, but Jinnah demanded a heavy price for the landowning lords the unquestioning public display of loyalty to himself and the programme of the All-India Muslim League.

II

The general elections (winter 1946)

The anticipated elections were dominated by the contest between the Muslim League and its opponents. This was especially so following Jinnah's stand at Simla, for the All-India Muslim League considered that the elections 'will definitely show whether the League is the sole representative body of Muslims'.²¹ Thus, in the summer of 1945, India's political organisations geared up for an election which held the promise of deciding India's future. A League victory would vindicate

²⁰ Liaquat quoted in *Dawn*, 20 October 1945.

²¹ *BC*, 6 July 1945.

Jinnah's claim and go a long way towards forcing the British to include Pakistan in the scheme for India's decolonisation. To Sind's Hindus, it was an election for their political survival as it was their last chance to 'bury Pakistan in Sind.'²² To the Sindhi Muslims, it represented the opportunity to show support for a Pakistan which was understood to mean Sindhistan. For Syed's *pirs* and Hidayatullah's *mirs*, it held the key to the control of Sind and the future politico-economic structure of a perceived independent Sindhi state.

By late 1945 the tide of Muslim public opinion across India had definitely turned the League's way as Jinnah's channelling of Muslim politics into the League's hands proved successful. Across much of India, Jinnah was widely revered by Muslims as the *Quaid-i-Azam* (Great Leader). In the Muslim-majority provinces there had been strong signs that the organisations of non-League Muslims were collapsing as the centripetal force of the transfer of power negotiations located power into the hands of the League High Command. The British, however, sought to quarantine the support for those organisations, especially the League's, since the claims concerning who represented whom had been the kernel of the breakdown of the Simla Conference.

The elections were the acid test for Jinnah. In order to give substance to his claims since 1937 that it alone represented the Muslims, the League presented the elections as a referendum on Pakistan. It was imperative for the League that it won a convincing majority of the 492 provincial assembly seats and the 30 Central Legislature seats.²³ To achieve that result, the League mounted an intensive national campaign which saw *pirs* issuing *fatwas* ordering disciples to vote for the League;²⁴ thousands of students publicising the League's message across the

²² R.K. Sidhwa to Patel, 4 January 1946, in D. Das (ed.), *Sardar Patel's Correspondence: 1945-1950*, [hereafter *Patel's Correspondence*] Vol. II (Ahmedabad, Narajivan, 1972), p. 317.

²³ Wavell to Pethick-Lawrence, 5 November 1945, L/PO/10/22, *TOPI*, Vol. VI, p. 442.

²⁴ *Nawa-e-Waqt*, 19 January 1946, cited in Talbot, 'The Growth of the Muslim League in the Punjab 1937-1946', *op. cit.*, p. 20.

length and breath of India's vilages;²⁵ saturation campaigns in the press that seduced Muslims with promises that Pakistan alone would end the sufferings of Muslims,²⁶ and definitions of Pakistan (often contradictory to each other) that cleverly targeted the rationale of specific audiences.²⁷

Pakistan represented several highly appealing factors to the Sindhi Muslims, and the demand had been well established largely through Syed's organisational activities. Firstly, it meant the rejection of a pro-Hindu, Congress-dominated India as it represented a Muslim raj where Muslims could control their own states. During the course of the League Government, the ratio of Muslims to Hindus in the senior Government Services increased sharply and that situation promised to accelerate in Pakistan.²⁸ This thesis has earlier shown that there was a direct correlation between the anti-Pakistan activities of the Hindu and Congress organisations and the rise of the support for Pakistan. That support flourished in the face of opposition mounted by Sind's Hindus. Moreover, in presenting the election as a referendum on Pakistan, the League promised that a majority vote for Pakistan would mean that no further constitutional or legislative decisions would be required to be thrashed out between the League and Congress at the centre.²⁹

Secondly, the League drew on the same rhetoric as Syed in advocating an uplift for the rural poor and an advance for Muslim society generally. The main

²⁵ For the importance of students in the Pakistan campaign, see, for example, Jansson, *Pakistan or Pakhtunistan*, p. 166; and M. Zaman, *Students' Role in the Freedom Movement* (Karachi, 1978), cited in Hasan, 'Nationalism and Separatist Trends in Aligarh, 1915-1947', *op. cit.*, p. 13.

²⁶ For example, see *Dawn*, 10 February 1946.

²⁷ For example, in October Jinnah told the Secretary of the All-India Shia Conference that Pakistan 'provides for the effective safeguards and the protection of minorities and their religious rights'. Jinnah to Sajjad Ali Khan, 3 October 1945, quoted in S.S. Pirzada (ed.), *Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah's Correspondence* (New Delhi, Metropolitan, 1981), p. 338. However, in November he assured an audience in the NWFP that Pakistan would be governed in accordance with the Sharia'. *Dawn*, 24 November 1945.

²⁸ By January 1946 the percentage of Muslims in senior Sind Government Service had increased 38 percent since the League came to power. *Sind Civil List*, January 1946, V/13/984, OIOC.

²⁹ Wavell to Pethick-Lawrence, 22 October 1945, L/PO/10/22, in *TOPI*, vol. VI, p. 374.

difficulty Syed faced was the fact that apart from his dispute with the leadership of the All-India Muslim League, his platform was identical to the Muslim League's. Indeed, it had been Syed who had prepared the League's election manifesto in Sind. Both publicly advocated land redistribution and the demand for the creation of Pakistan.

Thirdly, Pakistan promised freedom from the domination or competition by non-Sindhis in the creation of a sovereign Sind state. The ideological alternative to Pakistan - a federated India with a strong centre and little in the way of safeguards for minorities - was to be emphatically rejected by the bulk of the Sindhi Muslims. Perhaps the clearest confirmation of Pakistan's enticement for Sindhis came from Liaquat Ali while electioneering in Karachi. When he was asked to define Pakistan he said: 'I have already stated that Pakistan denotes the demand for sovereign Muslim states on the basis of the existing provinces, and it needs no further clarification'.³⁰ Hence, the only difference Syed had with Liaquat's articulated promise for a Sindhi state was that he envisaged that it would be free from interference by the League High Command.³¹

Syed's pro-Sindhi proclivities had left an indelible mark on the direction of the Pakistan movement in Sind, but his championing of Sindhi independence had not been foisted upon his Muslim colleagues. The Sindhi definition of Pakistan was the logical extension of the earlier Sind separation movement, and the election offered the opportunity for that goal to be popularly endorsed and ultimately realised. Although Syed had left the League, the Sindhi definition of Pakistan was a primary plank of the local Muslim League's election campaign.

³⁰ *Dawn*, 20 October 1946.

³¹ *Sind Observer*, (n.d), quoted in SFR Second Half of October, 2 November 1945, L/P&J/5/261, OIOC.

All candidates, Muslim and Hindu alike, centred their campaigns on the issue of Pakistan. In the General seats, the threat of Pakistan consolidated Hindus and other non-Muslims behind the Congress, for it was seen as the only possible counterblast. The sitting Hindu Party MLAs abandoned their affiliations with the Hindu Mahasabha and flocked to join the Congress. The Sind Congress readily accommodated them and dumped many of its longest-standing members in order to make way for the rural Hindu *bagirdars* and *zamindars*. The Hindu political elites' fall from political ascendancy had left Congress as the only alternative with its tactic of buying the province out of Pakistan. Accordingly, the Congress poured ten million rupees into the campaign.³² On a whirlwind tour of rural Sind, Nehru alone was handed more than 200,000 rupees towards that objective.³³ The fear that drove Hindus was that not only would they be politically dominated by Muslims, but that in a separate Sindhi state they would be cut off from Hindu the support of the Hindu political organisations in India.

The Sindhi Hindus did not share the Muslims' desire for a separate state. Early in the campaign, Jamshe'd Mehta attempted to head off making Sindhistan an issue by urging Azad to pass a definitive resolution opposing self-determination on the basis of provinces.³⁴ While Hindus did not share Syed's commitment to a Sindhi state, they were willing to exploit his rivalry with the League leadership by forming an alliance with his group. Syed's expulsion from the League had seriously undermined his position in Muslim politics. His only hope of preventing the reactionary *mirs* from forming the next Government was to link with the Congress on a common platform for socialist reform, but socialism was not Syed's only platform. He made it clear that he was first and foremost a Pakistanist: 'A vote for Syed is a vote for Pakistan' was his election slogan.³⁵ His Pakistan was to

³² R.K Sidhwa to Patel, 4 January 1946, in Das, *Patel's Correspondence*, Vol. II, p. 317.

³³ *Times of India*, 9 January 1946.

³⁴ *BC*, 10 September 1945.

³⁵ *Deccan Times*, 17 February 1946, quoted in S. al-Mujahid, *op. cit.*, p. 399.

be based upon a socialist political economy, but its underlying principle was Sindhi sovereignty. The great paradox of Syed's political career was that after five years of advocating Sindhi separatism from within the confines of a communalised political framework, he found himself in an alliance with an organisation whose creed was Indian unity. It was a contradiction that many Muslim voters were unable to reconcile. Yet his actions reveal where his commitments lay after all. While his involvement in communalised politics had varied, his passion for an independent Sind had been consistent.

The results

The results of the election in Sind illustrate the polarisation between the pro and anti-Pakistan parties. The Congress swept every General seat, and the League won most (but not all) the Muslim seats. The loss of eight seats was an important setback for the League. The success of four Jamiat candidates in the north-west and four of Syed's candidates in the Barrage lands meant that while the League was the Party with the largest number of seats in the Assembly, it did not command an absolute majority.

TABLE 12: JANUARY 1946 ELECTION RESULTS FOR SIND

Party	General	Muslim	Comm.	Land-holders	Labour	Europn.	Total
Congress	19	0	1	1	1	0	22
Hindu Party	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Muslim League	0	26	0	1	0	0	27
Syed League	0	4	0	0	0	0	4
Jamiat	0	4	0	0	0	0	4
Independent	0	0	0	0	1	2	3
Total	19	34	1	2	2	2	60

Source: *Results of Elections 1945-46, op. cit.*, pp. 218-225.

Nationally, the election results were a landslide victory for the League in nearly all provinces. The League's winning 426 of the 492 provincial assemblies' Muslim seats, all the Muslim seats in the Central Legislature, and polling nationally 75 percent of the Muslim vote, suggest an emphatic victory for the cause of Muslim nationalism.³⁶ Nevertheless, as Map 1 (see p. 5) shows, the League's weakest spots were in the north-western Muslim-majority provinces. It has been shown that while the Pakistan movement was well supported in Sind since 1943, the League polled 60 percent of the votes there, a clear majority, but the second lowest for any province.³⁷ Does the result for Sind suggest that Syed had some success in portraying a distinction between the Pakistan movement and the All-India Muslim League?

Jalal has contended that the 'elections provided a clear mandate for no organisation in Sind and certainly for no principle - if they had done that, then a miracle would have occurred'.³⁸ However, it would be a mistake to assume that all candidates outside of the League were opposed to Pakistan. The Sindhi definition of Pakistan was the platform of not just the Muslim League. For this reason Jalal errs in her opinion that a principle was lacking in the results, for she is overlooking the fact that Syed and the League both advocated Pakistan. Of the Muslim votes, the League polled 60.1 percent and Syed's League polled 17.9 percent, 78 percent of the votes cast being in favour of Pakistan (60% of the total votes cast for all seats in the province).³⁹ Clearly, Pakistan was a principle that had been given a mandate.

Not only was Pakistan the dominant ideology, but another important misconception is revealed through an examination of the results. The contention

³⁶ The Congress had a similar domination as it won 922 of the 1093 non-Muslim seats.

³⁷ The League polled its lowest result in the NWFP, where although 92 percent of the population were Muslim, it recorded 42.6 percent.

³⁸ Jalal, *Sole Spokesman*, p. 167.

³⁹ Calculated from *Results of Elections 1945-46*, pp. 218-225.

that the outcome 'rested as usual on the personal influence of the individual candidates'⁴⁰ is proven incorrect, since the results demonstrate that the Sindhi definition of Pakistan swept opponents aside, regardless of their stature. For example, there were 30 sitting members who recontested their seats. Table 13 shows that those candidates who competed on a pro-Pakistan platform in 1946 increased their proportion of the votes polled compared with their results in 1937. In contrast, the sitting Muslim anti-Pakistan candidates (the Jamiat, who presented a different ideology of remaining in an Indian union), substantially lost their electoral appeal in 1946 compared with their results in 1937. Not only did the Jamiat candidates record a 25 percent drop in their percentage of the votes, but collectively their total number of votes decreased as well, which clearly indicates that former supporters had switched their allegiance to the pro-Pakistan candidates.

TABLE 13: COMPARISON OF VOTES POLLED BY THOSE CANDIDATES WHO CONTESTED IN BOTH 1937 AND 1946.

Platform	Percent of vote polled in 1937	Percent of vote polled in Jan. 1946
Pro-Pakistan candidates (Syed and Muslim Leagues)	56.2	59.9
Anti-Pakistan candidates (Jamiat)	60.8	35.0

Source: Calculated from *Elections in India, 1937*, pp. 316-321, and *Results of Elections 1945-46*, pp. 218-225.

The development of identifying with an ideological platform was not confined to the Muslim seats. For example, Harchandrai Tahilram had polled 39.4 percent for Congress in the Karachi district General rural seat in 1937. In January 1946, he was replaced by Vazirani on the Congress ticket, and so stood as an Hindu Mahasabha candidate. On that ticket he could poll a mere 1.5 percent of the vote. Clearly then, the personal influence of the candidates was not the most

⁴⁰ Talbot, *Provincial Politics*, p. 52.

important factor determining the results; party affiliation and electoral platform mattered significantly.

The consequences of the election results

The Pakistan demand had been victorious in the Sind elections, but with the departure of the core of the League's reformists, the Muslim League became weaker in the Assembly. The combined Opposition parties had the same number of seats as the League. However, the League was returned to power through the support of the European members and the Governor, who justified his stand in offering the Government to the Muslim League on the grounds that the incompatibility between Syed's pro-Pakistan platform and Congress's stance on Indian unity was unlikely to make theirs a stable coalition.⁴¹

In what could have been seen as the vindication of Syed's policies, the re-installed *mir* ministry announced that its programme was to ameliorate the conditions of Muslim agriculturalists, to have tenancy rights for *haris*, and to curb of immigration to the province.⁴² While the curbing of immigration was hardly a triumph for Muslim nationalism, it had been Syed's agitation over the failure of the *mirs* to implement the socialist policies that had led to his expulsion from the League. Thus, the *mirs'* continued appropriation of a reformist platform (but not the substance) promised a re-orientating of the structure of state power that it could not deliver.⁴³

The expulsion of Syed had divided the League and again shown that Muslim unity was a fragile entity in Sind. The Hindus were keen to keep the Muslims divided, for it was imperative to their strategy for weakening Jinnah that

⁴¹ Mudie to Wavell, 5 February 1946, L/P& J/5/262, OIOC.

⁴² Sind Muslim League Assembly Party programme issued 12 March 1946, quoted in *Dawn*, 15 March 1946.

⁴³ The *mirs'* transparency was revealed when a Talpuri minister added soon afterwards that a 'mir raj was my birth-right'. Bande Ali Talpur, 19 March 1946, *Legislative Assembly Debates - Sind Legislative Assembly*, V/9/3325, OIOC.

he could not sustain his claim of sole spokesman for India's Muslims. Illustrative of the Congress High Command's desperation to present alternate Muslim leaders was their overturning of the Sind Congress executive's decision to reject Syed as its representative to the Cabinet Delegation. The Delegation, consisting of Sir Stafford Cripps, Lord Pethick-Lawrence (Secretary of State for India), and A.V. Alexander (First Lord of the Admiralty) was the British Government's latest initiative to resolve the communal impasse that was blocking progress towards an agreed transfer of power.

The Cabinet Delegation

It was a dramatic turnaround for Syed to represent Congress's position on Sind to the Delegation when only a few months before he was the president of the Sind Provincial Muslim League.⁴⁴ The prospect of Syed representing the Congress was unthinkable to many, especially in Sind, but his selection was indicative that politicians in the Muslim-majority provinces were used as pawns in the game at India's political centre.

The elections had shown that the Congress and the League were the two bodies which held the key to a settlement on India. In March, a Labour Government under Attlee showed that the British divestment of its Indian possessions had begun in earnest when it sent the Cabinet Delegation to India for the purpose of establishing a constitution-making body and an interim representative Executive Council until the hand over of power was formally made.⁴⁵ The negotiations between the Cabinet Delegation, the Congress and the League High Commands suggested to the Sindhi Muslims that their futures lay in Jinnah's hands, whether they liked it or not. While Jinnah held the Muslims' cards at the centre, the majority provinces made it uniformly clear to the Delegation that

⁴⁴ Syed was authorised to represent Congress in early April. *Dawn*, 3 April 1946.

⁴⁵ See H.V. Brasted and C. Bridge, 'The British Labour Party and Indian Nationalism, 1907-1947', *South Asia*, New Series, Vol. XI, no. 2 (1988)

their preference was for power to be handed to provincial units, not a Muslim centre.

That perception is discernible from the development of the Sindhis' attitudes to the negotiations as they unfolded. In April, Syed cautiously advised the Delegation that India should be restructured into five federations that would delegate only foreign affairs and defence to a common centre.⁴⁶ Syed withheld pushing outright for provincial sovereignty in this instance as he was attempting to use federations with a minimal centre to close off the possibility of the All-India Muslim League from having any central or controlling role over the north-western Muslim-majority provinces. The main prize of provincial sovereignty was embedded in the suggestion that any constituent unit would have the right to secede from the centre if it chose. In a similar vein, though with less sophisticated argument, Hidayatullah told the Delegation that a communal settlement could be reached 'if only all-India politics could be kept out of provincial administration'.⁴⁷

The dominant argument of provincial sovereignty was uniformly put to the Delegation by the premiers of the other Muslim-majority provinces. In arguing for an undivided Bengal, Suhrawardy pressed that Bengali identity was on a par with Muslim identity when he stated that 'religion was not the only governing factor' in determining Pakistan; the 'other factors that were important were those of past history, language and culture'.⁴⁸ Khizr, without the encumbrance of being tied to the two-nation theory, warned the Delegation that relations between Muslims in the various parts of Pakistan would be difficult if they were forced together: 'Punjabis, Sindhis, Pathans and Baluchis all had one religion, but they spoke

⁴⁶ Note of meeting between Cabinet Delegation, Wavell, and Syed, 2 April 1946, pp. 51-52, L/P&J/5/337, in *TOPI*, Vol. VII, p. 92.

⁴⁷ Note of meeting between Cabinet Delegation, Wavell, and Hidayatullah, 4 April 1946, pp. 73-74, *ibid.*, p. 126.

⁴⁸ Note of meeting between Cabinet Delegation, Wavell, and Suhrawardy, 8 April 1946, pp. 93-96, *ibid.*, pp. 163-164.

different languages and were otherwise very different.⁴⁹ Dr. Khan Sahib presented the case even more bluntly when he stated that the people of the NWFP were 'different from their neighbours' and 'would never join Pakistan. If they could not stay in a united India, they would like the province to become entirely independent.'⁵⁰

The consistency of the message of provincialism, not Muslim nationalism, so alarmed Jinnah that he immediately convened a League Legislators' Convention to demonstrate that the negotiations for the future of Muslim India were his domain, not those of the provincial chiefs. The possibility that the Cabinet Delegation could be swayed by the Muslim premiers in any way towards the view that Pakistan implied regional separatism without a Muslim centre forced Jinnah for the first time since the inception of the Lahore resolution to define Pakistan. In the hastily called Convention, Jinnah pushed through the resolution ordering that where the Muslims are in a dominant majority, 'they be constituted into a sovereign independent state'.⁵¹

The resolution's defining of Pakistan as a single state raised considerable alarm among the Muslim-majority provinces. Behind the scenes, Jinnah was forced to placate Bengali delegates to the Convention because it ran counter to their understanding of the Lahore resolution. Jinnah tried to smooth over their concerns by explaining that:

the Resolution was not meant to change the Lahore Resolution but to have one Constituent Assembly for Muslim India for drafting the

⁴⁹ Note of meeting between Cabinet Delegation, Wavell, and Khizr, 5 April 1946, pp. 86-87, *ibid.*, p. 148.

⁵⁰ Note of meeting between Cabinet Delegation, Wavell, and Khan Sahib, 1 April 1946, pp. 37-39, *ibid.*, p. 74.

⁵¹ Resolution of the All-India Muslim League Legislators' Convention, Delhi, 7-9 April 1946, in Pirzada, *Foundations of Pakistan*, p. 513.

constitution *or constitutions* of Pakistan on the basis of the Lahore Resolution.⁵²

Jinnah's explanation of the resolution illustrates that he could not afford to close the lid on the provincial leaders' definitions of Pakistan. The Convention was effectively a means for Jinnah to send an emphatic declaration to the Cabinet Delegation that he alone wore the mantle of speaking on behalf of the Muslim-majority Muslims.

The notion of Pakistan constituting a single Muslim state raised alarms in Sind. It so disturbed Syed that it caused him immediately to abandon his strategy of federations and demand that Sind should be made a sovereign state with its own constituent Assembly in order to ensure that it had nothing to do with the Punjab.⁵³ The subsequent negotiations between the Cabinet Delegation, Congress and the League High Commands caused further discomfort in Sind. In mid-May, when the Delegation tabled a plan that joined Sind, the Punjab and the NWFP into a federation, Syed agitated desperately against any constitutional arrangement with the Punjabis. Mudie accused Syed of playing on the anti-Punjab sentiment in the province,⁵⁴ but Syed was articulating the fears of many Sindhis when he warned that if Sind was compulsorily annexed to the Punjab, the province would become 'a Punjabi colony.'⁵⁵

The League's defining of Pakistan as a single state was also a blow to the *mir* Government. Mudie, like Dow before him, was convinced that the objective of

⁵² (Author's italics). Jinnah quoted in K. Ahmad, *The Social History of East Pakistan*, (Dacca, 1967), quoted in A. Ahmed, 'The 1940 Resolution and Bengali Muslims', *Dawn*, 5 April 1994.

⁵³ Mudie to Wavell 13 April, L/P&J/5/262, OIOC. The Congress High Command saw in Syed's demand for a sovereign Sind the demise of his relationship with the Sind Hindus. See Vazirani to Patel, 23 May 1946, in Das, *Patel's Correspondence*, Vol. III, p. 103, and Patel to Vazirani, 2 June 1946, *ibid.*, pp. 104-105.

⁵⁴ Mudie to Wavell, 24 May 1946, L/P&J/5/262, OIOC.

⁵⁵ Syed quoted in *Dawn*, 11 June 1946.

the League ministry was 'to establish the rule of Sindhi Muslims in the province',⁵⁶ but unlike Syed, the Leaguers were locked into a communalised framework of political relationship with Jinnah. To have publicly confronted Jinnah over the issue would have resulted in their ostracism, for their actions would have undermined his place at the centre. Like Suhrawardy in Bengal, Sind's *mirs* had little choice but to publicly support Jinnah's leadership if they were to maintain his protection (against the Congress and the League's reformist wing) through the use of communal imagery.

The Cabinet Delegation's Proposal (16 May 1946)

On 16 May the Delegation announced a proposal that there should be a Union of India with a centre that handled Defence, Foreign Affairs and Communications. All subjects other than those and residuary powers were to remain vested in the provinces and states. For the initial ten years, provinces would form Groups; the Muslim-minority provinces constituted Group A; the north-western Muslim-majority provinces formed Group B; and Bengal and Assam formed Group C.⁵⁷

The proposal (known as the 16 May Plan) offered a ray of hope to the Sindhis since it included the proviso that any province could 'call for a reconsideration of the terms of the constitution after a period of ten years'.⁵⁸ That edge gave Khuhro sufficient hope for an eventual independent Sind while presently supporting Jinnah at the centre. He announced the Sind League's approval of the Plan because the parity it provided at the centre for the Pakistan groups with the Hindu-majority provinces accorded with one of the cardinal principles which the Muslim League had been demanding. Khuhro's acceptance of the Plan set the tone of the Sind League's compliance with Jinnah's authority in the negotiations at the centre on its behalf. However, he could not resist adding

⁵⁶ Mudie to Wavell, 11 June 1946, L/P&J/5/262, OIOC.

⁵⁷ Statement by Cabinet Delegation, 16 May 1946, L/P&J/10/43: ff. 53-5, *TOPI*. Vol. VIII, p. 587.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

that Sind would demand sufficient weighting in its grouping with the Punjab 'in order that her own interests might be properly safeguarded'.⁵⁹

The All-India Muslim League formally accepted the Plan on 6 June 1946. Jalal has argued that Jinnah accepted the Plan because it came closest to what he always wanted: a united India in which the League figured prominently in the central Government (the fear that Muslims would be excluded from power at the centre was, according to Jalal, the driving force in the All-India Muslim League).⁶⁰ However, sources close to Jinnah claim that he immediately regretted accepting the Plan, and he was left hoping that Congress would reject it or make their acceptance so conditional that it would be unworkable.⁶¹ It can be argued that Jinnah's fear in accepting the Plan was not of the Congress, but rather because he was playing into the hands of the leaders of the Muslim-majority provinces since the Plan structured the power to be located in the provinces (or groups) not the centre. The Plan provided that 'all subjects other than the Union subjects [defence, communication, foreign affairs] and all residuary powers should vest in the Provinces.'⁶² In such a structure, the members of the All-India Muslim League High Command, with their bases in what would be the Hindustan Grouping, would have little influence in the Muslim Groupings.

However, the Congress's refusal to be bound by an acceptance of the Plan effectively torpedoed it and by mid-June it was officially shelved.⁶³ The failure of the Cabinet Delegation restored the initiative to Jinnah. The League's subsequent rejection of the Plan also effectively controlled the Muslim-majority provinces' politicking for sovereignty, at least for the time being. Moreover, the failure of the League to be granted Pakistan triggered an outbreak of communal violence that

⁵⁹ Khuhro quoted in *Dawn*, 28 May 1946.

⁶⁰ Jalal, *Sole Spokesman*, p. 241.

⁶¹ M.A. Isphani, *op. cit.*, pp. 168-169.

⁶² Statement by the Cabinet Delegation, 16 May 1946, L/P&J/10/43: ff. 53-5, *TOPI*. Vol. VIII, p. 587.

⁶³ Consequentially the League withdrew its acceptance of the Plan mid-June.

racked the sub-continent and shook the raj's confidence in its continued capability to administer India. Jinnah's call for 'Direct Action' to achieve Pakistan, described as 'the most historic act in the League's history', left thousands dead and injured across India.⁶⁴

In Sind, although Direct Action was contained by the authorities, the British feared an imminent outbreak of communal rioting in the province since the inconclusive election results. Their initial fear was linked to the prospect that the League ministry might be replaced by the Congress coalition. However, Mudie refused to entertain the notion of a Congress ministry in Sind. To avoid the possibility of Congress coming to power, the Governor dissolved the Assembly in July and re-installed the *mirs* as the caretaker Government until he either imposed his direct rule or ordered fresh elections.⁶⁵ However, the curtailment of the Congress in the state arena failed to dampen communalism in the public arena, because through the failure of the League and Congress to agree on representation in the Constituent Assembly, the prospect emerged that the Congress might be able to form the Interim Government at the centre without the League's involvement.

When Mudie realised that Sind was 'in for very serious trouble unless a League Government regained control of the Assembly', he called fresh elections.⁶⁶ The communalism of recent months and the desperate situation of the Muslim League at the centre presented the election as the Muslims' fight to avoid being subsumed into an Indian Union that would have a strong centre controlled by the Congress. In that environment, the Sindhi Muslims took fright at their vulnerability and emphatically voted for the League. The reformists, with their

⁶⁴ Jinnah quoted in *Dawn*, 30 July 1946.

⁶⁵ Mudie advised that 'in his personal experience a Congress ministry destroyed the morale of the Services. Mudie to Pethick-Lawrence, 25 November 1946, L/S&G/7/906: ff. 29-32, *TOPI*, Vol. IX, p. 470.

⁶⁶ Mudie to Wavell, 21 August 1946. See also minute by F.F. Turnbull, 7 September 1946, L/P&J/8/648, ff. 81-83, *TOPI*, Vol. VIII, p. 446.

association through Syed to Congress, were swept aside. Along with every other non-League candidate in the election, Syed was convincingly defeated by the Muslim League. The Congress's winning of every General seat, and the League's victory in every Muslim seat, reflected perfectly the concentration of political power into those two organisations at the centre. For the Muslims, that meant the centralisation of Muslim political power in the hands of the *Quaid-i-Azam*.

Conclusion

The study of Sindhi politics in the mid-1940s provides an important case study of the Pakistan movement in a Muslim-majority province as it shows the intensity of the communalisation of politics at the time. Yet it also shows more. It reveals that Muslim nationalism alone was insufficient in providing the driving force for the movement among the political elites. The sense of Sindhi ethnicity and desire for independence were important dynamics in the movement, as was the energy produced by the conflict over which ideology would dominate the anticipated Sindhi state of Pakistan. The conflict provides the historian with several points which can be seen as nodes for subsequent political problems that arose in the Pakistan state.

Firstly, it must be asked how genuine was Jinnah in his promulgation of a socialist reform agenda for Muslim society? In consistently backing the large landowning interests against the reformists, Jinnah revealed his belief that Pakistan could not be achieved without absorbing the existing political hierarchy wholesale into the League. While his intentions may have been to improve the conditions of the Muslim masses, his rejection of Syed and the Sindhi League reformists illustrated that appeals to Muslim nationalism carried more importance with the British than with provincial Muslim chiefs.

Secondly, the events surrounding the expulsion of Syed from the Muslim League demonstrate much about how the League's High Command was centralising Muslim politics into its own hands. The League leadership was assuming the role of arbiter of the moral political consciousness of Muslims as the organisation's rules were becoming the rules of the 'Muslim nation'. When Muslim political figures rejected the authority of the High Command, their actions were portrayed by the League's propaganda as no longer defining those of legitimate representatives of the constructed Muslim nation, regardless of their legitimacy as representatives of their constituents in provincial assemblies. For example, when Syed allied himself with the Congress, the emphasis of the League's media was not on his differences with the League on a political level, but on his betrayal of the Muslim nation.⁶⁷ Fazlul Huq and Khizr had been treated in the same way.

The League was undermining the validity of the representative character of the state arenas and assuming a jurisdiction of determining who represented Muslim India. Obviously, the League High Command could not claim a spiritual leadership of Muslims (although its use of the *pirs* and *ulema* went some way in legitimising that claim). What it did claim was leadership of the Muslim nation, and in doing so it elevated the concept of *millat* (community) to the level comparable with the religiosity of the Islamic faith. The League leadership was attempting to intervene between Allah and Muslim society through their proselytizing that Muslims could only properly serve Allah by firstly serving the nation. Thus, the League redefined the notion of *millat* to the point where a Muslim's relationship to the Muslim nation was a pre-requisite for a relationship with Allah.

In politicising the concept of *millat* in that way, the political power of the *millat* was being centred on Jinnah. This was a favourable prospect for the

⁶⁷ *Dawn*, 5 February 1946.

restoration of Muslim power, but ominous for the chances of provincial sovereignty.

CHAPTER 9

The Culmination of Communalism

The future of India's Muslims was in Jinnah's hands, whether or not they saw him as their *Quaid-i-Azam*. It was Jinnah whom the British accepted as speaking on behalf of India's Muslims, and he was determined that the All-India Muslim League was to have the central role in any system of governing the Muslim-majority provinces. In Sind, the domination of the *mirs* in the November elections ensured that the official voice of Muslims emanating from the province was one that supported Jinnah. That public support was a means of protection against enemies from within Sind, such as the Congress and Syed, while sustaining their aspirations for a Sind that would be free from external controls.

Attention has been drawn attention to the role that provincial sovereignty played in Sind's support for the Pakistan movement, and this chapter will show how the Sindhi attachment to provincial independence was manifested in the negotiations for the transfer of power. The awarding of Pakistan as a single state by the British in 1947 hides the importance of the demands for provincial sovereignty. Pakistan, as a single state, was by no means assured until the final moments before the transfer of power. A single state of Pakistan was not the only option the British had placed on the negotiating table. It can be said that Jinnah's winning of Pakistan as a single state was not simply a case of wearing down the British or outflanking the Congress. His out-maneuvring of the Muslim-majority provinces' chiefs was also a reason, albeit an overlooked factor.

This chapter will explain that once Pakistan came into being, provincialism did not dissolve. The Pakistan movement had been driven by several motivations. While Muslim identity was the one commonality that the Pakistan provinces shared, the sense of Muslim nationalism (which had failed to subsume other components during the Pakistan movement), faced considerable strain as the less well projected, but no less powerful, aspects of the movement became manifest in the processes of determining power relationships in the new state. The creation of Pakistan brought the expectation that many of its promised benefits would naturally be delivered, and importantly, that the capacity of the state to meet those promises would impact on its functioning and even its existence.

The chapter also explains how the Pakistan Government and the Sindhi Muslim politicians responded to the failures of the state during 1947-1951 to meet the promises which the Pakistan movement had made. The period is significant because, at the end of 1951, the Sind Government was dismissed and replaced by the rule of the Governor. The imposition of direct rule by the Governor was to symbolise the ultimate failure of the Sindhi Muslims' quest for independence.

I

By February 1947 India was on the brink of civil war. After Jinnah's 'Direct Action' in August 1946 had left more than 4,500 dead and 12,000 injured (mostly in Calcutta and Bombay), rioting erupted in November in Bihar leaving another 6,000 slain.¹ The British Government realised that neither India nor its colonial rulers could wait until the League and Congress High Commands were willing to concede enough of their principles to reach a compromise. On 20 February 1947

¹ The figures for Direct Action are recorded in appendix to the memorandum by the Secretary of State for India, 11 November 1946, R/30/1/9:ff4-7, India and Bury Committee, Paper I.B (46) 35, pp. 45-49, *TOPI*, Vol. IX. Figures for the Bihar riots are recorded in the statement by Pethick-Lawrence, 27 November 1946, Parliamentary Debates, 5th series, House of Lords. vol. 144, cols. 459-460, in *TOPI*, Vol. IX, p. 188.

Attlee made an announcement that changed the nature of the negotiations for the transfer of power. Power was to be handed over no later than June 1948 to authorities established by a constitution approved by all parties in accordance with the Cabinet Delegation's Plan. However, if such a constitution had not been devised by a fully representative Constituent Assembly before June 1948, Attlee claimed that:

His Majesty's Government will have to consider to whom the powers of Central Government in British India should be handed over, whether as a whole or in some areas to the existing provinces.²

Attlee's threat to hand over power to some provinces (i.e. the Muslim-majority provinces) was clearly a means to force Jinnah and Nehru to reach an agreement. Unless Jinnah was willing to compromise, his Pakistan would soon dissolve into a constellation of petty independent states. This was certainly what neither Jinnah, Congress, nor the British wanted, but the threat from provincialism to Jinnah's Pakistan had been plainly evident from the negotiations that occurred in the Cabinet Delegation when Jinnah was forced to head off the fragmentation of his notion of Pakistan by ordering the League Legislators' Convention to define Pakistan as a single state. The Attlee statement was a powerful incentive for Jinnah and he revealed his fears to the new Viceroy, Mountbatten, who had been charged with the act of Britain's decolonisation from the sub-continent, upon his arrival in April that 'a man is a Punjabi or a Bengali before he is an Hindu or Muslim.'³

² Statement of Attlee, 20 February 1947, Command Paper 7047, *TOPI*, Vol. IX, p. 774.

³ Jinnah quoted by Mountbatten in an interview with L. Collins and D. Lapierre, *Freedom at Midnight*, (New Delhi, Tarang, 1976), p. 104.

The drafting of a constitution for a sovereign state of Sind

Attlee's statement produced a markedly different response in Sind than Jinnah's had been. The prospect of transferring sovereign power to some provinces came as pleasing news to the Sindhi Muslims,⁴ and within a week of Attlee's announcement the Sind League proposed that a constitution of a sovereign Sind be drawn up⁵ as 'the matter is so very important.'⁶ Consequently, the Sind League established a Committee to enter into a treaty with the British Government as a sovereign state.⁷ On behalf of the Sind Government, the Committee proposed a resolution for the Sind Assembly that drew not only upon Attlee's February statement, but also on Cripps' Draft Declaration of 1942, which indicated how seminal that declaration had been in encouraging the Sindhis' belief that provincial sovereignty was a possible, if not a likely, outcome of decolonisation.⁸ Thus, the Sindhis had interpreted in British policy from 1942 to 1947 the prospect of provincial sovereignty.

The Sindhis were careful, however, not to close the door on Jinnah since they still needed him at the centre to maintain their legitimacy as political leaders in the eyes of the Muslim populace, and to protect them against Congress's outflanking them to include the province in an Indian Union. To that end, the Sindhi Leaguers stated that their constitution for the province would allow them 'to make arrangements with other provinces or parts of India if and when the question arises.'⁹ Further evidence of the Sindhis' thinking can be found in Illahi's initial correspondence to Jinnah regarding a Sindhi's constitution. Illahi accepted that the

⁴ Mudie to Wavell, 24 February 1947, Mudie Mss., Eur.F.164/46, OIOC.

⁵ Pir Illahi Bakhsh to Jinnah, 27 February 1947, in Z.H. Zaidi (ed-in-chief.), *Quaid-i-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah Papers* [hereafter *Jinnah Papers*] (Islamabad, Quaid-i-Azam Papers Project, National Archives of Pakistan, 1993), First Series Vol. I, F.29./2-3, p. 107.

⁶ Pir Illahi Bakhsh to Hidayatullah, 27 February 1947, *ibid.*, F. 613/2-3, enclosure 1 to Doc. 68, p. 159.

⁷ Hidayatullah to Jinnah, 22 March 1947, *ibid.*, Doc. 185, p. 362.

⁸ For Cripps resolution, see Draft Declaration, 30 March 1942, Cmd. 6350, in Mansergh, *Documents and Speeches*, p. 616. For the draft of the Sindhis' resolution, see Zaidi, *Jinnah Papers*, First Series Vol. I, F.286/23-24, enclosure No. 185, p. 363.

⁹ *Ibid.*

All-India Muslim League might wish to have one committee draft the 'constitutions' for the individual Pakistan provinces, but only on the understanding that each province was 'to have a constitution suited to its own local conditions.'¹⁰ The Sindhis' enthusiasm for constructing their own constitution was clearly a blow to Jinnah's hopes for a Pakistan with a strong central Government. Only groupings of Muslim-majority provinces alone could guarantee Jinnah an effective role in a centre,¹¹ since the sovereignty of individual provinces would provide no place for the All-India Muslim League in Muslim politics because there would be no centre. While Jinnah is reported to have offered tentative approval of the Sindhis' proposal, he refused to be drawn formally on the matter until the All-India Muslim League's Working Committee was consulted.¹² There is no evidence, however, that it ever was,¹³ and the Sindhis were left to refute charges that they had been taken to task by Jinnah.¹⁴ The incident reflects the different agendas that the provincial and central Leagues worked to, and that their relationship was one based on expediency rather than on shared commitment.

It was a stark testimony to the fragility of the notion of the political unity of Muslim nationalism when a number of Muslim-majority regions across India soon followed Sind's lead. The Muslim heartlands of the NWFP, Bengal, and Kashmir each proposed that they too form distinct, independent sovereign states. On 14 May, Suhrawardy met with Jinnah and Mountbatten and proposed the 'Socialist Sovereign State of Bengal',¹⁵ while the Working Committee of the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference (British India) endorsed the call of Hamidullah Khan, President of the Kashmir State Muslim Conference, to declare Jammu and

¹⁰ Pir Illahi Bakhsh to Jinnah, 27 February 1947, F.294/2-3, *ibid.*, Doc. 46, p. 107.

¹¹ Jalal, *Sole Spokesman*, p. 243.

¹² Mudie to Mountbatten, 26 March 1947, L/P&J/5/263, OIOC.

¹³ Zaidi's comment located in Footnote no. 4, Hidayatullah to Jinnah, 22 March 1947, Zaidi, *Jinnah Papers*, First Series, Vol. I, Doc. 185, p. 362.

¹⁴ Report in *BC*, 29 March 1947.

¹⁵ *Dawn*, 15 May 1947.

Kashmir an independent and sovereign state.¹⁶ Again, in those regions' resolutions and announcements proclaiming their intentions, the notion of Muslim nationalism is conspicuous by its absence.

The Plan of 3 June 1947

Having made clear to Jinnah the risk he faced if he failed to come to an agreement on the transfer of power, Mountbatten presented a proposal to the Congress and League High Commands. That plan, publicly announced on 3 June, gained their initial acceptance and gave Jinnah a single state of Pakistan.¹⁷ Both Congress and the All-India Muslim League accepted the Plan because it gave them what they believed was absolutely necessary if their respective states of India and Pakistan were to survive: strong, centralised governments. The Plan was also the culmination of communalism. It was a recognition of the argument that Hindus and Muslims could not share a common state. Equally, it was an acceptance by the British that the two religious identities constituted two separate nationalities.

However, the Pakistan Jinnah had won was a truncated Pakistan, because the Assemblies in the Punjab and Bengal were to decide if their provinces were to be partitioned along communal lines.¹⁸ If in those referendums communal identity overrode regional identity (it was anticipated that this would occur given the state of communal aggression between Muslim and non-Muslims in those provinces), then Jinnah would have NWFP, Sind, western Punjab, eastern Bengal, and the Sylhet district of Assam for his Pakistan state. The loss of Calcutta would place an enormous strain on Pakistan, but Jinnah had realised that the time had come to accept what was on offer or be left with nothing at all. The partitioning of the Punjab and Bengal provinces was a logical outcome of Jinnah's own two-nation theory. The theory held that since Hindus and Muslims consisted of two different

¹⁶ *Dawn*, 13 May 1947.

¹⁷ Statement of 3 June 1947, Cmd. 7136, in *TOPI*, Vol. XI, pp. 89-94.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 91-92.

religious, social and cultural systems, it was not possible for them to live together within one political state. It was, therefore, only logical that if that argument was accepted (as it was now by the British) then the districts of Bengal and the Punjab in which Hindus and Sikhs were in a majority should be a part of India, not Pakistan. To argue otherwise suggests that provincial identity was a powerful text in the Pakistan script.

The Sindhi Muslims were satisfied, though hardly ecstatic, with the Plan. Although they would have a Pakistan that would satisfy their communal fears, there is further evidence to indicate that Muslim nationalism did not occupy the central place in the thinking of Sindhi Muslim elites. Bande Ali Talpur professed that the partitioning of Punjab and Bengal was 'unnatural from geographic, linguistic, social and political points of view.'¹⁹ This argument was the same that opponents of the two-nation theory had used against the Muslim League. However, generally speaking, Sindhi Muslims were not troubled by the partitioning of provinces, for 'Sindhis care little about the Punjab and nothing at all about Bengal'.²⁰

The Pakistan of the 3 June Plan was a single state, and as such signified the end of the Muslim-majority provinces' dreams of provincial sovereignty. The provincialism of the Muslim-majority provinces had served the intentions of the British Government well. The articulating of their desires for provincial sovereignty had driven Jinnah into accepting the 'moth-eaten' Pakistan (a form which he had rejected one year earlier), thereby allowing the British to hand over power to one Muslim state instead of several and so increase the prospect that Britain's strategic interests in the region would be protected.²¹ On 9 June, the Council of the All-India Muslim League voted by an overwhelming majority to accept the

¹⁹ Bande Ali Talpur, 5 June 1947, quoted in *Dawn*, 6 June 1947.

²⁰ Mudie to Mountbatten, 7 June 1947, L/P&J/5/263, OIOC.

²¹ Jalal, *Sole Spokesman*, p. 248.

Plan.²² Since the Council contained the executives of all the provincial Muslim Leagues, their acceptance of the Plan raises the question of why, if the Muslim-majority provinces were so enthusiastic about provincial sovereignty, did they support a plan to bring them into a single state? It would have been more advantageous if they had rejected the Plan and so forced the British Government to hand over power to their provinces as independent, sovereign states.

The key to answering that question lies in the momentum of the communal aspect of the Pakistan movement and the political environment of that summer. The Plan was accepted by Jinnah not as a settlement, but as a compromise, and it was just as much a compromise for the Muslims of the Muslim-majority provinces as it was for Jinnah. His choices were to accept a truncated Pakistan, or nothing at all. Opponents of the Plan within the League's Council claimed that at the League's meeting to decide on whether or not to accept the Plan, they were prevented from participating in the debate. They allege that the acceptance of the Plan by the majority of the Council of the All-India Muslim League was due to fear.²³ The fear factor can explain much about why the majority-provinces accepted a single state of Pakistan. Abul Hashim of Bengal, who attended the meeting, claims that even those who favoured rejecting the Plan and who had most to lose by it, did vote to accept it nonetheless because suddenly the alternative of provincial independence at that point in time seemed 'like a leap in the dark which might only lead to greater disaster'.²⁴

In the case of Sind, Hidayatullah had been warned by Mountbatten that the question of foremost importance facing any province which seceded from an

²² Resolution of the Council of the All-India Muslim League, 9 June 1947, in Pirzada, *Foundations of Pakistan*, p. 568.

²³ Abul Hashim quoted in *Indian News Chronicle*, 14 June 1947, reproduced in Zaidi, *Jinnah Papers*, First Series, Vol. II, Appendix III.8, pp. 847-848.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 847.

Indian Union concerned the ability of that province to defend itself.²⁵ Dividing the defence forces in a manner that would provide viable security for whoever Britain handed power to was seen as the most difficult task facing the British and Indian leaderships. Hidayatullah had a deep-seated fear of Sind being left without sufficient military protection. In April 1940, one of the grounds of his dismissal of the Lahore resolution was because of the perceived impracticability of establishing a separate army and navy.²⁶ The acquisition of a strong security force would present a serious dilemma for Sind. There was a negligible number of Sindhis in the Indian army, and so if the Muslim-majority provinces fragmented, dividing the army along provincial lines would leave Sind without any defence capabilities; an important consideration given that Karachi was one of the busiest ports in Asia and the province would share a border with India. Moreover, the importance of the factor of defence was highlighted due to the reports that well-organised Sikhs in the Punjab were preparing for civil war.²⁷ Indeed, the prospect of five or six little Pakistans confronted by a powerful and possibly hostile Indian Union was a compelling reason for the Muslim-majority provinces' Governments to stand together.

There was also a real fear among Muslims that, notwithstanding the potential for provincial sovereignty contained in Attlee's 20 February statement, power could be transferred completely to an Indian Union should the League reject the 3 June Plan. That scenario was seen by the Sind Government as 'the threat of the worst alternative',²⁸ and in the light of Congress's liberal definitions of what constituted the minimal subjects to be held by a central Government

²⁵ Hidayatullah reporting to Jinnah a conversation he had with Mountbatten on 22 March 1947, in Hidayatullah to Jinnah, 22 March 1947, Zaidi, *Jinnah Papers*, F.286/25-28, Doc 184, *Jinnah Papers*, First Series, Vol. I, pp. 358-359.

²⁶ Hidayatullah, quoted in *BC*, 17 April 1940.

²⁷ Mudie to Mountbatten, 26 March 1947. L/P&J/5.263, OIOC.

²⁸ Bande Ali Talpur quoted in *Dawn*, 6 June 1947.

(defence, foreign affairs, and communication), the Muslim-majority provinces had good reason to fear a considerable loss of control over their existing portfolios.²⁹

There may also have been reasons of personal gain, and fear of the consequences of not voting for the Plan's acceptance, among the provincial Muslim chiefs. It was one thing to have the British Government hand sovereignty to a province, but it was quite another to have to wrest it from a determined Jinnah. No provincial politician had yet got the better of Jinnah, and few who crossed swords with him had managed to keep their political careers intact. Khizr, Fazlul Huq and Syed could attest to that fact. Hashim suggests that the Council members from the Pakistan provinces 'were afraid that the new avenues opened by the proposed establishment of a separate State might be closed to them if they dared oppose the League High Command.'³⁰ Subsequent events in Pakistan were to demonstrate that, in the case of Sind at least, Hashim's hypothesis was accurate. For example, on one hand Hidayatullah, who had been supported by Jinnah against Syed in the dispute within the Sind League, and who made a speech at the Council meeting advocating acceptance of the Plan, was promoted to Governor of Sind at the creation of Pakistan. On the other hand, the pro-Congress ministry of the NWFP, whom Jinnah distrusted, was dismissed within the first week of Pakistan's creation.

There were also positive reasons why the Pakistan provinces' Muslims supported the 3 June Plan. The agreement for immediate Dominion status in the Plan promised protection for the Muslim-majority provinces against an interfering central Government because it would mean the maintenance of the Government of India Act 1935 with its bedrock of provincial autonomy. It was not anticipated by

²⁹ For details of how liberal those definitions were, see the first report of the Union Powers Committee, April 1947, in B. Shiva Rao (ed.), *The Framing of India's Constitution: Select Documents*, Vol. II (New Delhi, 1967), pp. 743-747, cited in Jala, *Sole Spokesman*, p. 261.

³⁰ Abul Hashim quoted in *Indian News Chronicle*, 14 June 1947, *op. cit.*

the provincial leaders who met at the Council meeting on 9 June that a Pakistan Government would exercise the level of centralised authority that it actually did in the new state. Since the April 1946 resolution of the Muslim League Legislators' Convention and the Cabinet Delegation's plan of 16 May 1946 to group the provinces, it was recognised that the provinces might have to join together in some way. The Muslim-majority provinces would have had strong reason to expect that within the Pakistan state they would enjoy a maximum amount of provincial autonomy. The freedom of those provinces had constituted a cardinal principle of the Lahore resolution, and it had been implicit in Jinnah's encouragement for the Muslim-majority provinces to join Pakistan. The All-India Muslim League Legislators' Convention in April 1946 had redefined Pakistan to the extent that it was termed a single state, but it was spoken of as a Commonwealth, rather than as an highly centralised state. This thinking is evidenced by Sindhis such as Pir Illahi Bakhsh when he commented on the Mopplahs' demand for autonomy. He spoke in terms of 'an autonomous state of Mopplastan' that was 'as much an integral part of the Commonwealth of Pakistan as Sind itself.'³¹

Indeed, after the League's acceptance of the Plan, the constitution of Pakistan was the most widely discussed topic in Muslim political circles, and numerous schemes were proposed. For example, Syed wanted to ensure that Pakistan's constitution allowed Sind to have the option to secede from Pakistan, and that the province would have a mandate to veto any constitution which impinged on its autonomy.³² Suggestions similar to that line of thinking came from other than Sind; H. Rahman (Head of the Department of Economics and Politics at Chittagong College), proposed a draft constitution for a 'Pakistan Union of Socialist Republics' which was to consist of a voluntary union of provincial

³¹ Illahi's address to the Mopplahs of Sind, Karachi 14 May 1947, quoted in *Dawn*, 15 May 1947.

³² The suggestion was part of a ten-point programme which also included the condition that 'no outsiders should be given domicile in Sind, irrespective of their period of residence.' *BC*, 5 July 1947.

republics, all of which were free to secede from the Pakistan Union, and who possessed equal status (irrespective of population size) in a National Assembly.³³

The common themes to emerge from the various proposals on the constitutional arrangement for Pakistan were the right of provinces to secede, and the need of the Pakistan units to have equal status: a parity for provincial units based upon ethnic identity. Ironically, these principles mirrored the logic of Jinnah's two-nation theory. Just as he had previously argued for parity with Hindus on the basis of distinct nationhood, the Muslim-majority provinces argued for parity with each other for a similar reason. Both demands for parity were driven by fears of being dominated by the other potential 'partners' within the one political state. In Pakistan, instead of religious identity being the sole determinant of nationality, ethnic identities were elevated to an equal status. Such sentiments did not reflect a resounding endorsement for Muslim nationalism, nor did they demonstrate an adherence to the *Quaid-i-Azam's* final words at the Council meeting which endorsed the 3 June 1947 Plan when he stated that 'now is the time that provincial distinctions of Sindhi, Punjabi, etc., should be removed and the Muslims should pull their weight together'.³⁴

II

The birth of Pakistan

To formalise the acceptance of Pakistan, the Legislative Assemblies of the Muslim-majority provinces were required to vote on whether to join Pakistan or the Indian Union. The members of the Sind Legislative Assembly cast their vote determining Sind's future in late June. The voting was the final but most emphatic

³³ Draft Constitution of Pakistan by H. Rahman, 20 June 1947, in Zaidi, *Jinnah Papers*, First Series, Vol. II, MFJ-Box-23/4, pp. 349-360.

³⁴ Jinnah quoted in Intelligence Bureau Report, Patel to Mountbatten, 10 June 1947, *ibid.*, R/3/1/156, Enclosure to Appendix III.6, p. 845.

display of the communalism of religious identity in the Sindhi state arena as 33 Muslim members voted for Pakistan, while 20 non-Muslims voted against it. In 1937 the Assembly had begun in accordance with the provisions for provincial autonomy in the Government of India Act, but its politics were shaped so powerfully by the communal structuring of representation that a decade later its members decided which state Sind would join according to their religious identity. For Sind, it was the culmination of communalism.

Having made their decision, the Sindhi Muslims in the Assembly marched into Pakistan hopeful, but not certain, that they would finally be masters of their province. In the public arena of Sind, where communal antagonism had manifested itself so often and so violently, the day marking Pakistan's creation did not bring the same outbursts of joy that characterised India's celebrations of independence. In Karachi, Jinnah's victory procession for the forces of Muslim nationalism were through half empty streets in which the inhabitants displayed 'a markedly surprising lack of popular enthusiasm.'³⁵ The uncertainty among the Sindhi public, about what their inclusion into a single state of Pakistan would mean, had existed before Independence day as the arrival of officials from the Hindu-majority provinces 'intensified the anti-non-Sindhi feeling in Karachi' and revived the slogan of 'Sind for the Sindhis.'³⁶

One aspect that the partitioning of India did not bring to Sind was the violence that was unfolding in the Punjab. Sind was largely spared the slaughter that cost half a million lives. There were probably fewer than 200 deaths between Muslims and non-Muslims attributable to the creation of Pakistan, a remarkable achievement in view of the level of Sind's communalism over the preceding

³⁵ *Times of London*, 15 August 1947.

³⁶ Mudie to Mountbatten, 29 July 1947, L/P&J/5/263. OIOC, and SFR First Half July, 19 July 1947, L/P&J/5/263, OIOC.

decade.³⁷ There were several reasons for this. Firstly, due to its importance as a port city, there were many troops stationed in Karachi. Their discipline held and they maintained effective curfews. Secondly, unlike Bengal and the neighbouring Punjab, which were being torn in half, partition did not directly affect Sind since its territories remained intact.³⁸ Consequently, there was not the similar sense of need or panic among Hindus to leave as there was in the Punjab.

Thirdly, due to the reluctance of the Sind Government, Muslim refugees from the Muslim-minority provinces were slow in filtering into the province. The Hindus who were leaving and the Muslim refugees who were entering Sind generally avoided having to share space or see each other as their travel routes were dissimilar.³⁹ The Hindus departed either by train to the east across the sparsely populated Thar district into the deserts of the Rajput states, or sailed from Karachi directly to Bombay, which was similarly not directly affected by partition. The Muslim refugees came by train from the north, and given the civil war raging in the Punjab, the route into India via Lahore was avoided by Hindus.

However, the fact that Hindus were leaving alarmed the Sind League Government since they performed vital roles in the economic life of Sind through their control of the flow of capital. The Sind Muslim League was seen to be genuine in its attempts to keep Hindus in Sind;⁴⁰ to prevent their departure, Hindus were forced to acquire travel permits from District Magistrates and at times ships were banned from docking at Karachi.⁴¹ For the Sind ministry, the politics

³⁷ There were minor outbreaks in Karachi and Hyderabad, and one large riot in early January 1948 between Muslim refugees and Sikh evacuees in Karachi. *BC*, 7 January 1948.

³⁸ The Congress wanted Thar district to be part of the Indian Union, but the British refused as it would be separated from India by the inhospitable Thar desert.

³⁹ In the Punjab, the stories of communal atrocities did much to incite powerful acts of violence. UK High Commissioner, Karachi, to Commonwealth Relations Office [hereafter HC to CRO], 28 January 1948, Opdom No. 8, WS13136-L/WS/1/1599, OIOC.

⁴⁰ HC to CRO, 14 January 1948, Opdom No. 3, WS13136-L/WS/1/1599, OIOC.

⁴¹ In the five month period from August 1947 to January 1948, 50,000 of Sind's 1,300,000 Hindus left for India, *ibid.*

since the early days of the Sind separation movement were centred upon Muslims controlling the province, not removing Hindus from it. This showed that communalism in Sind was not about an inability to live together, as the two-nation theory implied, but was about the distribution of economic and political power. This notion was typified in Abdullah Haroon's presidential speech at the Sind Provincial Muslim League Conference in October 1938, when he warned Hindus that 'they must play their part rightly'.⁴² Both the Sind separation and Pakistan movements were driven by the same twin dynamics: the quest for consolidation of Sindhi Muslim political power and the removal of competition from 'others': non-Muslims and non-Sindhis alike.

III

The Political Inheritance of Sind

Beyond the drifting departure of Hindus, Pakistan initially brought little change to Sind. However, the failure of the central Government of Pakistan to establish and agree on spheres of responsibility between itself and the provinces (in areas not defined by the Government of India Act 1935), caused a pattern of relationships to develop that not only severely strained relations, but were eventually to lead to the secession of East Bengal and problems that plague Pakistan today. There soon arose three issues that can be understood as characterising the relationship between the Sindhis and the central Government: the separation of Karachi from the province; the influx of hundreds of thousands of Muslim refugees; and the central Government's involvement in the affairs of Sind. These three issues epitomised the early political inheritance of Sind.

The problems for Sind began when the Pakistan central Government appropriated Karachi as Federal territory. Initially, the Sind League had welcomed

⁴² Haroon, 8 October 1938, quoted in Mitra, *IAR*. Vol. I, July-December 1938, p. 356.

the siting of the Pakistan capital in its province, for it would grant proximity to political authority and its associated benefits such as employment and contracts.⁴³ 'It is always better to be near the throne than away from it' opined Hidayatullah when Karachi's selection as the capital of Pakistan was announced in July 1947. At that stage there had been no suggestion of Karachi's intended separation from Sind. However, the surprise announcement of its separation produced a violent reaction across the spectrum of Sindhi society. The separation of Karachi came on top of Sindhis rapidly being reduced to a minority in the capital city as the multitude of bureaucrats from JP, Delhi, and the Punjab arrived,⁴⁴ and was a significant blow to Sind because it was the province's political, commercial and industrial centre. The Sindhis discovered that Pakistan had brought partition to the province after all, and it was a partition that was dividing Sindhis from non-Sindhis.

The separation of Karachi from Sind dramatically altered the situation for Hindus as thousands of non-Sindhi Muslims of the central Government apparatus moved into Karachi. The outbreak of a large riot between Sikh evacuees and non-Sindhi Muslims, and the reports that resident Hindus were having their properties confiscated by Muslim refugees produced a widespread fear among Hindus that if the Sind League Government was unable to protect even the interests of Sindhi Muslims in Karachi, the influx of non-Sindhis would see Hindus 'reduced to the degrading position of serfs and helots and even then be in constant dread of insecurity of life and honour.'⁴⁵ Consequentially, the trickle of Hindu migrations became an overwhelming flood that the Sind Government had little hope of stemming. In the six-month period of January to July 1948, 890,000 Hindus were

⁴³ Hidayatullah quoted in *Legislative Assembly Debates - Sind Legislative Assembly*, 16 July 1947, V/9/3369. OIOC.

⁴⁴ HC to CRO, 28 January 1947, Opdom No. 7, WS13136-L/WS/1/1599, OIOC.

⁴⁵ Parsaram V. Tahilramani, *Why the Exodus from Sind?: Being a Brief Resume of Conditions Responsible for Exodus of Hindus, Sikhs and Harijans* (Bombay, Congress Central Election Board, 1948), pp. 3 and 33.

reported to have left the province; 18 times the number that had departed in the first five months of partition, and 65 percent of the total Hindu population.⁴⁶

For the Sindhi Muslims generally, the most disturbing feature of the central Government's policies towards their province was the forced intake of Muslim refugees from all over India. Prior to partition, the Sind League had been accused of distinguishing between Sindhi and non-Sindhi Muslims in the provision of services and facilities. Consequentially, it responded by proudly announcing that the Sind League Government was willing to accept and resettle 30,000 Muslims from the Hindu-majority provinces.⁴⁷ However, by mid-April 1948 in excess of 600,000 Mujahirs had arrived, and thousands more were on their way. Greater numbers would have arrived sooner, but the hostility of Sindhis to immigrants had become so well known in the refugee camps of West Punjab that the refugees had refused to go to Sind, and the central Government had to arrange the forced transfers of the refugees into the province.⁴⁸

The reluctance to allow non-Sindhis into the province was led by the Sind League Government as it sought to ensure a practical effect to its programme of 1945 which specified that no non-Sindhis were to be allowed employment, residence, or land ownership in the province.⁴⁹ The xenophobia of the Sindhis was heightened by the knowledge that the West Punjab Government was culling the East Punjabis from the refugees to ensure the ethnic integrity of the Punjab, while transferring the majority of the mixed refugees from Hyderabad, Bihar, UP and the Rajput states to Sind.

⁴⁶ Statistics of the Pakistan-Sind Joint Refugee Council, cited in HC to CRO, 7 July 1948, Opdom No. 53, WS13136-L/WS/1/1599, OIOC.

⁴⁷ Haroon cited in *Dawn*, 6 July 1947.

⁴⁸ HC to CRO, 18 March 1948, Opdom No. 23, WS13136-L/WS/1/1599, OIOC.

⁴⁹ Programme of the Sind Provincial Muslim League for 1945-46, quoted in *Dawn*, 9 June 1945.

Prior to Pakistan's creation, communalism (the politicisation of religious identity) in Sind had been the result of changes brought by British colonialism, competition within respective religious identities, and fears of domination by 'other' religious identities. In Pakistan, communalism soon came to mean the politicisation of ethnic identity. The changes engendered by the policies of the central Government, and the fears of loss to, and being dominated by, other ethnic identities, served to lay a new foundation for the redefined communalism. The relationship between the provincial and central Governments was an important factor, but equally important was the tangible changes to Sind's demographic composition and redistribution of political and economic power which the Muhajirs brought.

The Muhajirs

The desire to control the economic and political power in Sind had driven the Sindhi Muslims to support the Pakistan movement. The arrival of more than 500,000 Muslims from the Hindu-majority provinces threatened the control that the Sindhi Muslims hoped to achieve through the creation of Pakistan. Their hopes had been dealt a blow by the incorporation of Sind into a centralised state, but at least that state would guarantee that competition from Hindus would be removed. However, a second blow had come with the unexpected influx of the refugees. It was not simply the numbers of immigrants that alarmed the Sindhis, but the distribution and characteristics of the Muhajirs soon mitigated the benefits that Pakistan brought for the province.

The Muhajirs virtually stepped into the places that Hindus had formerly occupied in Sind's political economy. There are several reasons to account for this. The central Government awarded Hindus' mainly urban lands, properties and businesses to Muhajirs ahead of Sindhi Muslims. The Muhajirs were largely qualified to carry out the roles Hindus had performed, since most of them were

educated, literate, and skilled in either clerical, service, manufacturing, managerial, or professional occupations.⁵⁰ The urbanisation of Muhajirs was unique to Sind, because in other provinces they were settled more evenly in the *mofussil*, which facilitated greater integration and assimilation with the existing ethnic identities.

TABLE 14: SETTLEMENT OF MUHAJIRS IN ALL PROVINCES, 1951

	Urban %	Rural %
Sind	69.1	30.9
NWFP	50.0	50.0
West Punjab	36.4	63.6
East Bengal	48.0	52.0
Karachi Federal Ter.	99.2	0.8

Source: Calculated from *Census of India, 1941*, Vol. 12, pt. 1, p. 13, and *Census of Pakistan 1951: Census Bulletin No. 4, Population According to Economic Status* (Karachi, Office of the Census Commissioner, Government of Pakistan, 1953), pp. 62-69.

The settlement of Muhajirs into the cities had important consequences. The large and compact concentrations allowed for isolation from Sindhi culture and the development of a Muhajir identity. By 1951, the channelling of the Muhajirs into the former positions of Hindus had resulted in the Sindhi Muslims still failing to command a majority in most of Sind's important urban centres (see Table 15). As the result of Pakistan's creation and the exodus of Hindus, Sind's Muslims had reclaimed a majority in four cities (only Dadu was a strong majority). However, in the most important cities (those of the Sukkur Barrage areas), the Muhajirs commanded the majority within a few years. Thus, in terms of Pakistan providing Sindhi Muslims with control over the key economic and political centres, their position had actually changed little from prior to its creation.

⁵⁰ F. Ahmed, 'Ethnicity and Politics: The Rise of Muhajir Separatism', *South Asia Bulletin*, Vol. 8, nos. 1 & 2 (1988), p. 34.

TABLE 15: SINDHI MUSLIMS PERCENTAGE OF CITIES (>10,000) 1941-1951

Town	District	Sindhi Muslim % 1941	Sindhi Muslim % 1951
Mirpurkhas	Thar Parkar	28.8	27.3
Hyderabad	Hyderabad	26.4	30.9
Tando Adam	Nawabshah	31.2	30.9
Shahdadpur	Nawabshah	16.9	35.2
Nawabshah	Nawabshah	31.2	40.5
Sukkur	Sukkur	30.1	43.5
Jacobabad	Upper Sind Front.	46.0	56.6
Shikarpur	Sukkur	36.5	58.3
Larkana	Larkana	29.0	54.5
Dadu	Dadu	48.6	70.6

(The figures for Muhajirs in Rohri, Kotri, Tando Allahyar, and Tando Mohammed Khan are unavailable).

Source: compiled from *Census of Pakistan 1951: Census Bulletin No. 4, Population According to Economic Status, op. cit.*, p. 6.

The Muhajirs brought with them to Sind a sense of superiority which further alienated the Sindhis. They had a different emphasis on Islam: theirs was more 'fundamentalist, conservative than the Sufi-influenced syncretic Islam of the Sindhis.'⁵¹ They spoke Urdu, which had the status of Pakistan's national language and the pedigree as the *lingua franca* of India's traditional Muslim rulers. The Muhajirs regarded the Sindhi Muslims not only as lesser Muslims, but also as less civilised.⁵² The display of the belief in their superiority has been typified by comments attributed to the Muhajirs which described the Sindhi Muslims as 'born from the urine of the Hindus',⁵³ and those reported to have been made by Liaquat Ali to a delegation of Sindhi Muslims who sought his assistance in protecting Sind's cultural heritage. It is claimed that he told the delegation that the only Sindhi culture he knew of was 'to drive donkeys and ride camels.'⁵⁴

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Malkani, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

⁵⁴ Liaquat Ali quoted in 'Sindhi personality asserts itself', *Times of India*, 4 October 1983.

There was also a sense of belief among the Muhajirs that Pakistan had been created for them: it was their promised land.⁵⁵ While the centralised state of Pakistan was a compromise for the Sindhi Muslims, for the Muhajirs it was their victory. They brought to Sindh from the Hindu heartlands their sense of a persecuted minority and their fears of being dominated by other, numerically superior, groups. In Sindh they found themselves unwelcome and confronted by a people who emphasised their ethnic identity far more than had been the case in the provinces from which they had originated.

The Muhajirs quickly gained a place of considerable influence in the province. Unlike the Sindhis, the Muhajirs were directly linked to the central Government through the Muslim League machinery, the centralised bureaucracy which they dominated, and their predominance in the cabinet of the central Government; the three components of state power which made the key political decisions.⁵⁶

The rationale of the central Government

The reactions of the Sindhis to the separation of Karachi and the influx of the Muhajirs considerably troubled the central Government. Jinnah realised the need to impose the central Government's will on the provinces. It was imperative for the provinces to conform to the centre's agenda in order for the state to function as a single entity rather than the constituent units pulling the state apart. Jinnah had always been aware that provincialism would be the Pakistan state's greatest threat. Prior to partition, he attempted to influence the Sindhi leadership to follow closely the High Command's line on matters that would require policy from the new central Government. He drew on the ambitions of men such as Yusuf Haroon

⁵⁵ Ahmed, 'Ethnicity and Politics: The Rise of Muhajir Separatism', *op. cit.*, p. 34.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

to present a Sindhi face of the centre's imperatives to dissipate the forces of provincialism. For example, in July 1947 Haroon decreed that:

since our Quaid-i-Azam has forcefully warned us against any tendency to think exclusively in terms of Sindhi, Punjabi, Bengali or Pathan...I can safely assure my Muslim brethren here [Sind] that outsiders are coming here not to rob them of something which they have, but to serve them...Sindhi Muslims have, moreover, absolutely no ground to entertain any fear of domination from any quarters.⁵⁷

Haroon's encouragement to support the High Command's line ahead of Sindhi concerns met with little success, and by the early months of 1948 the central Government had run out of patience with Sindhi intransigence. The immediate result of the Sind Government's failure to support the central Government's policy on the distribution of refugees was the dismissal of the Sindhi Premier, Khuhro.⁵⁸ Illahi Bakhsh, Khuhro's successor, proved only marginally better at toeing the centre's line, and so the Pakistan Government considered various avenues to assert its authority over the Sindhis. One consideration mooted was to dismiss the Sind Government completely and enforce its authority through the imposition of direct rule by the Governor.⁵⁹ Another avenue proposed was to abolish the provinces of the Sind, Punjab, and NWFP altogether and rule the territories through one compliant 'West Pakistan' Government.⁶⁰ Both mechanisms were attempts to resolve the problem of the asserting provincialisms that flared from Karachi to the Khyber and Dacca.

⁵⁷ Haroon quoted in *Dawn*, 6 July 1947.

⁵⁸ In April, Khuhro was dismissed under Jinnah's orders for maladministration. HC to CRO, 22-28 April 1948, Opdom No. 33, WS13136-L/WS1/1599, OIOC.

⁵⁹ The death of Hidayatullah, the Sind Governor, in October 1948, and his replacement by a Punjabi made the prospect of the centre ruling Sind through the Governor easier.

⁶⁰ *BC*, 1 July 1948. This strategy was adopted in 1955 as the north-western provinces were amalgamated into 'One Unit'. The scheme was also designed to offset the numerical strength of the Bengalis, who were similarly asserting their identity centres on issues such as the status of the Bengali language.

The actions of the central Government were not, of course, without reason. Jinnah and the All-India Muslim League High Command knew that unless the fledgling Pakistan state was controlled by a strong centre, it was likely to fragment through the potency of provincialisms and a failure to resolve the most basic problems of establishing itself through an effective state apparatus and defence capability. The new Pakistan state was faced with almost overwhelming difficulties. Unlike Congress's inheritance in India, the All-India Muslim League did not have a ready-made capital such as Delhi with a functioning state apparatus in place. Pakistan was forced to establish its own, while managing some of the most pressing problems that had arisen on the sub-continent in the twentieth-century. With its meagre resources, it had to cope with humanity's worst refugee crisis to date.

The ability to establish an effective central Government was further handicapped by the inherent weaknesses in its own organisation.⁶¹ The relationship between the League High Command and the executives of the provincial Muslim Leagues had always been tenuous. This study has demonstrated that Jinnah's need for maintaining the existing power-holders had resulted in a Sind League leadership whose commitment to the Muslim League was consistently based upon its meeting their own needs of provincial independence. There lacked a structured, disciplined basis similar to that of Congress's. Moreover, the weakness in the centre-province relations was compounded by the membership of the central Government consisting of minority-provinces' leaders whose territorial bases were left behind in India. The cabinet consisted largely of men who lacked power bases (for example, through linkages such as land-ownership or kinship ties) in the provinces wherein they were now trying to impose their rule as the ultimate authority of the state.

⁶¹ A. Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule: The Origins of Pakistan's Political Economy of Defence* [hereafter *Martial Rule*] (Cambridge, C.U.P, 1990), p. 61.

One of the most substantial stresses on the central Government came through the dispute with India over the future of the Kashmir state. The population of the state was overwhelmingly Muslim, but the Maharaja was Hindu, and while he equivocated over whether to join India, Pakistan, or try to remain independent, tribesmen from Pakistan entered in November 1947 and hostilities ensued. The Pakistan Government gave unofficial support to the tribesman, and consequentially, the Maharaja sought military assistance from India and opted to join the Indian Union. The Pakistan Government repudiated the accession on the logic that Kashmir should, by virtue of its Muslim-majority population, become part of its territories.

The effect of the hostilities with India was twofold in Pakistan. Firstly, it consumed valuable resources, both in materials and money, but especially in commitment from the central Government. The Kashmir dispute was a powerful distraction for the central Government from its nation-building activities. Hence, the need to construct a national capital infrastructure in Karachi, the rehabilitation of millions of destitute refugees, and the diplomatic and unofficial war with India gave the central Government little scope or patience to tolerate the assertion of the Sindhis' independent-mindedness. Secondly, the Kashmir dispute triggered a defence mentality in the central Government of 'obsessive dimensions.'⁶² An important aspect of that mentality was the development of the perception that any provincial reactions against the centre were inspired by an hostile India. The result was that the significant distinction between internal and external security threats was all but blurred.⁶³ Thus, actions by the Sindhis to resist the centre's encroachments were considered by the central Government to be subversive

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 49.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

moves by Indian 'fifth-columnists' to destabilise the entire Pakistan state.⁶⁴ Similarly, actions by the centre to keep the integrity of the Pakistan state were seen by the Sindhis as heavy-handed attempts to further subjugate their autonomy.

The pattern of centre-state relations obviously mitigated against the cohesion of the constituent units and the centre into a strong nation-state at the time when such cohesion was so vital. Yet, because of the reactive nature of the responses of the protagonists, the spiralling conflict between the centre and the provinces became a determinant feature of Pakistan's politics. The seeds of many later conflicts within the state can be found to originate in the pattern of centre-province relations that were established immediately after Pakistan's creation (this thesis has shown that the roots to those problems can be traced back to the historical relationships between the Sindhi Muslim Leaguers and the All-India Muslim League). Therefore, it is important to understand the dynamics of the relationships in the post-partition period. Jalal has portrayed how the centre intervened in the affairs of each of the respective Pakistan provinces in Pakistan's early years.⁶⁵ However, the first manifestation of an organised trans-provincial response to the actions of the central Government, occurring six months after Pakistan's creation, reveal much about the weaknesses of the provinces in their dealings with the centre, and how the central Government handled the rise of an opposition from within Pakistan.

The provincial response

The NWFP's Abdul Ghaffer Khan (whose Khitmagar Government had been dismissed a week after Pakistan's creation), prior to partition, led the Khitmagars's

⁶⁴ For example, Pir Illahi's private secretary was arrested on the suspicion of being an Indian agent involved in a plot to bring down Pakistan. See HC to CRO, 1-7 October 1948, Opldom No. 80, WS13136-L/WS/1/1599, OIOC.

⁶⁵ Jalal, *Martial Rule*, pp. 78-100.

demand for the creation of an independent state of 'Pakhtunistan'. However, once the NWFP was a part of the new state of Pakistan, he realised the realities of the post-colonial state and withdrew his demand for sovereignty. By March 1948, he advocated the creation of Pakistan's provinces as autonomous units within the Pakistan state.⁶⁶ To achieve this, he headed an embryonic coalition largely consisting of Pathan, Punjabi and Sindhi political leaders who constituted the All-Pakistan People's Party.⁶⁷ The objective of the Party was to transform Pakistan's political structure into a 'Union of Free Socialist Republics' that offered true political autonomy to cultural and linguistic units within Pakistan. The Party's Convention, held in Karachi, developed a charter that was underscored by a willingness to co-operate with, not challenge, the central Government. The Convention resolved to assist the central Government develop a programme to ensure stability without undermining either the existing central or provincial Governments.⁶⁸ The formation of the Party was a manifestation of the realisation that trans-provincial unity was likely to be the only avenue for influencing the centre's relations with the provinces.

The Party's weaknesses were to characterise many subsequent attempts at organising a trans-provincial opposition to the central Government. The leadership of the Party consisted mostly of politicians from West Pakistan, the absence of a strong Bengali presence substantially weakening its representative claim. Moreover, the leadership of the Party was confined to politicians who had either rejected, or been rejected by, the central Muslim League. Therefore, its leadership consisted of men who stood outside the core of the Muslim League organisations which meant that the Party was not connected to the politics of the governing provincial leaders. This effectively allowed the central Government to use the more influentially placed League leaders in the governments of the

⁶⁶ *BC*, 1 March 1948.

⁶⁷ *BC*, 9 March 1948.

⁶⁸ Resolution of the All-Pakistan People's Party, Karachi 10 May 1948, in quoted in *BC*, 12 May 1948.

provinces to oppose the Peoples Party's leaders. Most importantly though, the Party was to be handicapped by the same provincialism it was attempting to assert. The perspectives of the leading provincial Muslim politicians, whether of Qaiyum Khan in the NWFP, or the *mirs* in Sind, were exclusively on the affairs of their provinces. Linking their political organisations with a trans-provincial structure and agenda would have distracted from their preoccupation with the affairs of their own domains. Thus, the irony of the All-Pakistan People's Party was that in order to assert their provincial identities, its leaders had to subdue their provincialisms.

The All-Pakistan People's Party also suffered from an inability to draw on Islam, the one common denominator among Pakistan's provinces, to build a coalition to oppose the policies of the central Government. This point in particular underscored the failures of the provincial politicians to offset the difficulty of challenging the legitimacy of a Muslim state whose legitimacy was based upon religious identity through asserting their ethnic identities. Moreover, many of the All-Pakistan Peoples Party's leadership had formerly been involved in the Pakistan movement, and thus had promoted the legitimacy of the state. The ethos of the movement to create Pakistan still very much pervaded the public arena. While Jinnah remained at Pakistan's political apex, it was unlikely that any provincially based politician would be in a position to illustrate that the centre's handling of the provinces was a threat to Islam. Moreover, the communal rationale for Pakistan still made Muslims suspicious of leaders such as Ghaffer Khan and Syed because of their pre-partition links with the Congress.⁶⁹ Notwithstanding the All-Pakistan Peoples Party's pledge of loyalty to the central Government, and the handicaps it suffered, it was seen as a considerable threat by Jinnah to Pakistan's territorial integrity and his Government's capacity to hold the state together. Soon after the Convention in Karachi, Ghaffer Khan was arrested and Syed was placed under

⁶⁹ HC to CRO, 12 May 1948, Opdom No 38, WS13136-L/WS/1/1599, OIOC.

house arrest for 'anti-Pakistan activities'.⁷⁰ In the case of Syed, those activities and the rationale behind them were to a large extent the same as those which he had undertaken to build up the Pakistan movement.

To counter any effects the Party's Convention might have on the Sindhis, Liaquat Ali Khan was dispatched by Jinnah to Sind where, in a series of meetings across the province, he urged Sindhis to replace provincialism with 'Islamic unity, sacrifice, and discipline.'⁷¹ While Islamic identity had been a powerful component in communal politics, it remained to be seen whether appeals to Islam would be sufficient to unite Muslims as one nation. With the creation of Pakistan removing the perceived threat from Hindus, the prospect for an all-encompassing Muslim nationalism that transcended restless ethnic identities (believing themselves to be under threat) seemed remote. The experience of the All-Pakistan Peoples Party illustrates the determination of the central Government to maintain its authority over the provinces. Its actions in stifling opposition and resorting to appeals for unity based solely upon Islamic identity (cutting across the demands of its opponents which were structured in terms of provincial or ethnic identity), highlighted the central Government's need for a legitimacy that would accommodate provincial aspirations.

IV

Despite Jinnah's removal of Syed and Ghaffer Khan, provincialism refused to die. The issue of the distribution of power between the centre and states was fast becoming the sharpest thorn among many in the Pakistan Government's side. The failure of the League High Command to create and sustain meaningful, balanced relations with the Sindhis epitomised the core problems that the infant

⁷⁰ BC, 16 June 1948; HC to CRO, 23 June 1948, Odom No. 50, WS13136-L/WS/1/1599, OIOC.

⁷¹ HC to CRO, 9 June 1948, *ibid.*

Pakistan state struggled so desperately with. Since the 1920s, politics in Sind had come to be defined by communalism, provincialism, and the conflict between land-owners and those seeking reforms. These three characteristics formed the bedrock of the Pakistan movement in the province, and even after the departure of the core of Syed's left-wing reformists from the Muslim League in late 1945, the Pakistan movement remained firmly centred on the entwined strand of communalism and ethnocentrism. Ironically, these characteristics were to soon manifest themselves as the most significant internal threats to Pakistan's stability.

Pakistan and the search for the legitimacy of the state

In his inaugural address to the Constituent Assembly, Jinnah proclaimed that citizens of Pakistan 'may belong to any religion or caste or creed - that has nothing to do with the business of the state.'⁷² Yet, by 1950, the existence of the All-Pakistan Muslim League (the title of the former All-India Muslim League) had become so tenuous, and opposition, grounded in provincialism, so vociferous that Liaquat Ali had been continually forced to fall back upon Islam to defend the legitimacy of the state. The refusal of the ruling Muslim League to allow an opposition to develop was a serious impediment to the expression and development of a political consensus as to what the basic features of the Pakistan state were to be.

A source of the problem was the melding of the identity of the All-Pakistan Muslim League with the executive structure of the Pakistan state. Essentially, Pakistan was being administered as if it were the former All-India Muslim League organisation. An important aspect of this situation was that the pre-partition failures of Jinnah to resolve ideological disputes within the League were being

⁷² 11 August 1947, *Quaid-i-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah: Speeches as Governor-General of Pakistan 1947-1948* (Karachi, Government of Pakistan, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, n.d), pp. 8-9, quoted in A.H. Syed, 'Iqbal and Jinnah on Issues of Nationhood and Nationalism', in C.M. Naim (ed.), *Iqbal, Jinnah, and Pakistan: The Vision and the Reality* (New York, Syracuse University, 1979), p. 94.

repeated in the central Government's management of the provincial politicians. However, the task of managing Pakistan was proving far more difficult than advocating for its creation had been, and the differing views of how Pakistan should be governed were proving impossible to contain. Jinnah's former tactic of portraying opponents to the central Muslim League's viewpoint as enemies of Islam was proving less successful as the euphoria of the Pakistan movement gave way to the harsher light of reality. Tanzeem M. Murshid has captured the sense of desperation among the former UP *nawabs* in the Pakistan central Government to withstand assaults on their positions at the apex of political power from the sustained and deepening commitments to provincial identities. She states that:

in an effort to contain the opposition, the ruling party of Pakistan, the Muslim League, claimed for itself the sole right to interpret "what Islam is."⁷³ It equated itself with the state, Pakistan, and with the religion of the majority, Islam. Henceforth any criticism of the Party was interpreted as an attempt to disintegrate Pakistan as well as an attack on Islam itself.⁷⁴

Yet the use of Islam was insufficient to dissolve ethnic identities and only compounded the problem by embedding the contradiction between Islam and ethnicity into the functioning of the Pakistan state. That is, an entwined Islamic and ethnic identity had given the Pakistan movement meaning in Sind, just as it also had in the Sind separation movement. Yet in Pakistan, through promulgations such as 'Islam recognises no distinctions based upon race',⁷⁵ the central Government brought Islam and ethnic identities into direct conflict with each other. The dichotomy in Pakistan between religion and ethnicity as the state searched for a widely acceptable basis of legitimacy was an illustration of the failure of the

⁷³ Speech by Liaquat Ali Khan at the first session of the Pakistan Muslim League Council in Karachi on 20 February 1949 (Government of Pakistan publication), quoted in T. M. Murshid, 'State, Nation, Identity: The Quest for Legitimacy in Bangladesh', *South Asia*, V. XX, no. 2 (1997), p. 7.

⁷⁴ T. M. Murshid, *ibid.*

⁷⁵ Liaquat Ali Khan quoted in 'Report of the Pakistan High Commissioner's Office', London, in *Dawn* (n.d), reprinted in *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, 12-19 March 1949, Vol. I, no. 7, 1948-50, (Bristol, Keesing's, 1949), p. 9867.

Muslims of the former minority provinces' and the majority provinces' to reconcile their penultimate drivers of the Pakistan movement. It suggests that the minority-provinces' Muslims were driven exclusively by their sense of Muslim identity, but for the majority provinces' Muslims, their Muslim identity could not be separated from their commitment to their ethnic identities. The dichotomy is clearly evidenced during 1949-1950 by the inability of the central Government and the provinces to find a common set of basic principles for the constitution of Pakistan.

The Basic Principles Objectives

The Objectives developed by the central Government in 1949 sketched a framework for Pakistan's constitution, but in doing so institutionalised the confrontation between Islam and ethnicity. In many ways the constitution was anticipated by Pakistanis to be the fulfilment of what the Pakistan movement had promised. They anticipated that the constitution would provide the details which Jinnah had tried so hard to avoid defining during the course of the movement. There was an over-whelming expectation among Pakistan's various interests groups that the constitution would settle the direction of the state in accordance with their own respective understandings of the goals of the Pakistan movement.

It is perhaps not surprising that in light of the diverse purposes that had driven the Pakistan movement, and the state of relations between the central Government and Pakistani society at large, the Basic Principles Objectives raised more objections throughout Pakistan than it placated. The dissension was centred on three issues, and it was again no coincidence that those issues were the same three that had lain at the heart of the Sindhis' definition of the Pakistan movement: Islam; ethnicity; and social reform.

The strongest objection concerned the distribution of power between the centre and the provinces. Protagonists of provincial rights maintained that the

Objectives gave far too much power to the centre.⁷⁶ In explaining to the Constituent Assembly the resolution embodying the Objectives, Liaquat Ali decreed that Pakistan 'shall form a federation wherein units will be autonomous with such boundaries and limitations on their powers and authority as may be prescribed.'⁷⁷ That objective was substantially different from the Lahore Resolution of 23 March 1940 which launched the Pakistan movement. That Resolution stated that the Muslim-majority provinces 'should be grouped to constitute Independent States in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign.'⁷⁸ To the Sindhis, Pakistan had promised sovereignty, but the reality stipulated an autonomy bounded by the limitations set by an insecure and suspicious central Government. Thus, Pakistan came to represent the curtailing of Sindhi independence, not its fulfilment. That fact had been evident since Pakistan's first days, and it was to be enshrined in the constitution.

While the centre searched for a means of reconciling the forces of Islamic and ethnic identities as a basis for the state's legitimacy, it also continued its struggle to exert authority over the provinces. Although the provincial chiefs of the NWFP, the Punjab, and Sind had all been dismissed on orders from the centre, by early 1949 a law was passed in the Constituent Assembly which empowered the Governor-General to instruct a provincial Governor to assume full control of entire provincial administrations.⁷⁹ The centre tried to further weaken the powers of the provinces by pushing through laws enabling it to fill vacant seats from the Punjab and Sind in the Constituent Assembly by its nomination, rather than by the democratic processes of the provinces for electing their representatives.⁸⁰ Such

⁷⁶ *Report From Pakistan for 30 October - 12 November 1950*, Opdom No. 23, FO371/84204, Public Records Office, Kew.

⁷⁷ Liaquat Ali Khan quoted in 'Report of the Pakistan High Commissioner's Office', *op. cit.*

⁷⁸ Resolution One, 23 March 1940, Twenty-Seventh Session of the All-India Muslim League, Lahore, 22-24 March 1940, quoted in Pirzada, *Foundations of Pakistan*, p. 341.

⁷⁹ *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, 18 July 1949. Vol. I, no. 7, 1948-50, p. 9449.

⁸⁰ *Report From Pakistan for 24 December 1949 - 6 January 1950*, Opdom No. 1, pt. II, FO371/84204, Public Records Office, Kew.

measures produced a degree of acrimony which 'had hitherto never been heard in the Assembly',⁸¹ and fuelled the fears of provincial politicians from every corner of Pakistan.

Just as the patterns of the relations between the central and provincial leaderships were repeating the earlier patterns of the All-India Muslim League and the Sind Provincial League, the Sindhi Muslim political elites had also returned to the patterns of internal disunity which had characterised the relationships prior to the Pakistan movement. The Muslims' unity had fragmented following the victory of the Sind Separation movement in the early 1930s and allowed the more cohesive Hindu political groups to exploit differences between the Muslims' factions. Similarly, the creation of Pakistan produced bitter infighting as the more ambitious political leaders vied for the 'spoils' in an Assembly which had the competition from Hindus finally removed.

The disunity of the Sindh Muslims was again a weakness that was to cost them, and the province, dearly. However, their disunity was linked to Jinnah's failures of the 1940s to resolve the ideological differences within the Provincial League. It was a burden which all of the Sind Chief Ministers in the period 1947-1951 carried. For example, Haroon was pressured by the central Government and through widespread agitation in the province to introduce the proposed land reforms that had cost Syed his place in the League, but had nonetheless still been promised during the remainder of the Pakistan movement. However, the power of the landowning classes (consolidated by Jinnah) ensured that the reforms introduced into Sind in the late 1940s were the mildest in all of Pakistan and led to Haroon resigning from the Government.⁸² Moreover, the disunity of the Sindhi Muslims allowed the central Government to play them off against each other, just

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² HC to CRO, *Pakistan Review of Events. April-June 1950*, FO371/84202, Public Records Office, Kew.

as Hindu politicians had done a decade earlier, but unlike the Hindus, the central Government was armed with the instruments of state authority to ensure that its will was implemented. When any of Sind's Chief Ministers failed to comply sufficiently with central imperatives, or fuelled Sindhi provincialism, they were promptly removed from office.

Khuhro was removed from office twice, and from August 1947 to December 1951, Sind's ministries averaged less than half the time in office that their counterparts had achieved in the previous decade (a period when Sind's politics were described as the most unstable in India). Khuhro's second dismissal in December 1951 was the most poignant because the removal of his entire cabinet and the imposition of direct rule by the Governor signified that Sind's first period as a self-governing province was over. The freedom the Sindhi Muslims anticipated that separatism from the Indian centre would bring proved short-lived as the Pakistan centre imposed itself far more dramatically and brought far greater changes than Sind had experienced in recent colonial history.

Conclusion

The Sindhi Muslims emphatically demonstrated through their response to Attlee's announcement of 20 February 1947 that the sovereignty of Sind was the goal they had been working towards. At no time had they demonstrated a comparable enthusiasm for a Pakistan that was portrayed as a single state. Their forwardness in advocating the drafting of a constitution for a sovereign Sind was consistent with the Sind Provincial Muslim League's definition of Pakistan since 1943. The roots to that aspiration had reached down into the Muslim elites' responses to the redistribution of political and economic power which colonialism had produced. Yet by 1947 the forces of communalism and Britain's need to protect its strategic interests in the sub-continent decreed that Pakistan would constitute a single, albeit truncated, state. The acceptance of that form of state by the All-India Muslim

League and the Sindhi Muslim League illustrated the need for compromises that both were willing to make in order to prevent their fears (of domination by Congress through being denied any form of Pakistan) from being realised.

The reality of Pakistan failed to provide the Sindhis with the level of control over their affairs which they had cherished so much. At the heart of the trouble lay two main aspects of the consequences of the Pakistan movement. Firstly, the failure of the All-India Muslim League to effectively plan basic strategies to build an infrastructure for the anticipated creation of some form of Pakistan plunged Pakistan into an immediate crisis. Consequently, the crisis mode of the central administration produced unhealthy relations between itself and the provinces. At least in the case of Sind, the relations continued in the same tradition as that of previous decades between the Sindhis and the All-India Muslim League.

Secondly, it has been demonstrated in this thesis that the Pakistan movement was driven by more than a sole commitment to Muslim identity. The imagery of Muslim nationalism provided a veneer that screened the complexity of the many dimensions which collectively constituted the Pakistan movement. The birth of Pakistan meant many things to Muslims. It was the culmination of communalism, yet it was also the start of a reckoning for the legitimacy of a state which had been created on the basis of religious identity but cast by ethnic identities.

Conclusion

Provincialism is one of the more obvious characteristics of Pakistan's politics. It forms a continuous theme throughout the state's history, from Jinnah's repeated urgings to its citizens to forget their ethnic identities,¹ to contemporary times when the question of national integration is recognised as the country's most important political issue.² The significance of the theme is evidenced by the developments that have occurred since Pakistan's creation through the widespread and strengthening commitments to ethnic identities among the provincial leaders and peoples. The most poignant development has been the articulation that their ethnicities constitute distinct nationalities.

It would seem that an over-arching Muslim nationalism has been overtaken by Bengali, Sindhi, Baluchi, Pathan, and Punjabi nationalisms. The breaking away from Pakistan by the Bengalis to form Bangladesh in 1971, and the emergent claims to nationalism by the Makranis, Serikis, and even Muhajirs, attest to the increasingly important place that ethnic identities have in Pakistan. Perhaps the greatest irony of the All-India Muslim League's successful claim of the 1940s (that Muslims were united as a nation) lies in the fact that the members of that nation are now located in, and form an integral part of, not one state, as in colonial India, but three separate states (Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh). Moreover, the component of the nation located in Pakistan has failed to achieve a consensual unity or identity as one nation.

¹ For example, Jinnah addressing the Quetta Municipality, 23 June 1948, cited in *BC*, 26 June 1948.

² S.A. Zaidi, 'Regional Imbalances and [the] National Question in Pakistan: Some Indications', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XXIV, no. 1 (7 January 1989), p. 300.

Contemporary studies of Pakistan consistently point to the danger of the state disintegrating because of ethnic conflicts. However, what scholars and commentators have not provided is a sufficient exploration of the reasons why ethnicity has acquired such an influential position in Pakistan's politics and society. This is especially surprising in light of the standard portrayal of the Pakistan movement which implies that Indian Muslims collectively considered themselves to be part of one monolithic nation. The question such a situation poses is why the failure of Pakistan's people to maintain their sense of Muslim nationhood occurred so easily. It suggests that there are unrecognised factors at work which can expand an understanding of the Pakistan movement and consequently, of the Pakistan state.

I

The purpose of this thesis has been to explain how Sind came to be part of a state which has served its perceived interests so poorly. Through an exploration of pre- and post-partition histories, an explanation of Sind's role in the creation of Pakistan is provided. Accordingly, the thesis provides an insight into how in at least one Muslim-majority province the Pakistan movement was shaped in terms of the goals of a specific ethnic identity.

It has been demonstrated that the notion of a widespread belief in a trans-Indian Muslim nationalism did not, as many historians of the Pakistan movement have suggested, carry in the Muslim-majority provinces the same importance as it did in the Muslim-minority provinces. There is no denying the groundswell of popular sentiment for the Pakistan movement and for Jinnah as the Muslims' prime political leader. It is also clear that communal intransigence and division were the defining features of Muslim nationalism, and through Jinnah's astute, but

at times dangerously short-sighted, handling of the Muslim provincial leaderships the image that Muslims were united in their vision for Pakistan was cleverly presented. Yet the case of Sind demonstrates that the vision for Pakistan among Muslims was neither consistent nor centred in trans-provincial political unity. Within Sind, Muslims obviously shared a common religious identity, but the only goal on which they consistently agreed upon was the isolation of the province and for Sindhi Muslims to have total control over its affairs. Thus, by 1946, India's Muslims were largely unified in their quest for Pakistan, but not over what form Pakistan was to take.

The importance of this thesis lies in the portrayal of what the Sindhi Muslims' definition of Pakistan was, the forces and processes that led to its development, and what its consequences and connections to Pakistan's subsequent politics are. The central hypothesis is that the Pakistan movement was defined by the Sindhi Muslim elites to be the means to achieve a sovereign state of Sind. In explaining the history and consequences of this definition, the following main points have been revealed.

The introduction of British colonialism eroded the position of Sind's rural Muslim elites through the commercialisation of agriculture and changes to land ownership laws. The prosperity of the province was also attracting strong competition from outside Sind, and in 1913 Karachi's urban Sindhi Hindu trading classes commenced a campaign to separate Sind from Bombay and thereby allow Sindhis to regulate and control the economic life of the province. However, by the 1920s, issues such as the Khilafat campaign and the non-co-operation movement had the effect of heightening the development of a Muslim political consciousness and the need for Muslims to assert a stronger force in politics if their interests were to be protected. The connecting of Islamic identity with national politics

stimulated the Sindhi Muslims to blame Hindus and the province's connection with the Bombay Presidency for their weakening position.

The key response from the Sindhi Muslim elites to their declining position was to appropriate the Sind separation movement. Characterised by the emphasis on the reinstatement of Muslim power, the re-oriented movement had the effect of forcing Hindu groups to forge closer ties with Hindu nationalist organisations in order to arm their challenge against the Muslims' reasserting political consciousness. The success of the separatist movement represented for Muslims the legitimisation of their entwining ethnocentric and religious identities, and generated considerable impetus to the development of a specifically Sindhi Muslim political identity. The Sindhi Muslim elites looked to the exercise of political power in the new Sind Assembly as their reward for their majority-community status. It was from this stage that the Sindhis stepped into the arrangements for provincial autonomy in 1937 and brought the province into the national political arena.

Provincial status and the implementing of provincial autonomy in 1937 dramatically intensified the processes of the politicisation of religious identity. The structuring of the institutions of the state apparatus performed a crucial role in determining how much political power specific sections of Sindhi society had access to. The structuring of religious identity as the chief determinant of political power over-emphasised the role of religion and served to channel the conduct of politics in terms of the protection or advancement of the interests of respective religious identities. Coming on top of the sensitivities and fears that the separation movement had produced, the introduction of Sind's Legislative Assembly set firmly the province's politics within the paradigm of communalism.

The conduct of politics in the 1937 general elections and in the state arena of the Assembly reflected the communalising of provincial politics. The election results of 1937 reveal that where a community existed as a religious minority, competition for leadership within that community was more intense than among the majority religious community of the same locality. Groups within minority communities drew upon and politicised religious symbolism as they competed with each other to project their legitimacy as leaders. The importance of religious identity was increasingly manifest in Sind's politics as the fears of the minority community dictated the politics of the Hindu Party and Sind Congress. These parties were able to use their combined strength in the Assembly more effectively than Muslims, enabling them to set stringent conditions (i.e. the protection of Hindu interests and the prevention of measures favouring Muslim agriculturalists) as the basis for an alliance with any Muslims who were willing to abide by them. The unity Muslims had achieved through the Sind separation movement dissolved when the Muslim elites struggled individually to acquire the spoils of office that their majority status suggested. Thus, the initial years of Sind's provincial autonomy consisted of governments led by members of the Muslim-majority, but which were controlled by the Hindu-minority.

The relationship between the All-India Muslim League and the Sind League was a key feature in influencing the politics of Sind, and the nature of that relationship reveals much about the Pakistan movement in the province. The general elections of 1937 had illustrated to Jinnah that if the All-India Muslim League was to have any future political power, it must make its platform relevant to the Muslim-majority provinces. Accordingly, the central League responded enthusiastically to the Sindhi Muslims' calls for assistance, and the results had profound impacts on both their political directions. The Sindhis took to heart the message of the League's leaders that they were to forcibly take from Hindus the power they were being denied in the Assembly. Jinnah advocated Muslim unity as

the means, but other provincial leaders urged Sind's Muslims to use political action in the public arena to achieve what they had been unable to do in the state arena of the Sind Assembly. The effect was an attempt by the Sindhi Leaguers to assume control of the province's politics through an highly symbolic campaign to restore the disused Manzilgah mosque. The intention of the campaign was to galvanise Muslims behind the League's leadership through a pointed demonstration that a politically activated Islamic identity was needed if Muslims' interests were to be safe-guarded. However, the League's local leadership was unable to control a movement that was so firmly rooted in the Islamic cultural discourse, and consequential communal rioting brought Sind to a standstill. The leadership of the Sind League were badly shaken by their foray into mobilising the masses through the potency of an Islamic idiom, and ironically, retreated into a Government alliance with their Hindu opponents in an attempt to restore their credibility as political leaders through the use of patronage and the institutions of the state.

It is contended that the All-India Muslim League was in turn influenced by the message of what the Sindhis saw as the solution to their failure to assert control: the formation of a federation of Muslim-states. The resolution of the Sind Provincial Muslim League in October 1938 played a substantial part in convincing Jinnah that Muslims were unlikely to reach equitable power-sharing arrangements with Hindus, and that the key to the Muslim-majority provinces lay in appealing to their provincialisms. By early 1940 he had agreed that the answer to Muslims' and the League's difficulties lay in the suggestions of Iqbal, Rahmat Ali,³ and the Sindhis: Muslims must have their own states.

³ In 1933 Rahmat Ali, a Muslim student at Cambridge, proposed the establishment of 'Pakistan': a federation of the north-western Muslim provinces.

Yet the Lahore Resolution, which formally demanded that the Muslim-majority areas should constitute independent states, initially made little impact on the Sindhi Muslims because it had not been sufficiently linked with Sindhi politics. Abdullah Haroon, the president of the Sind League and leading advocate of Pakistan in the province, advocated a close connection between Sind and the other Muslim provinces within a single Pakistan state. Thus, while the Pakistan movement was a demand exclusively based upon trans-Indian Muslim identity, it evoked little response from the Sindhis. However, the Sindhi Hindus were deeply disturbed by the implications of the movement, and the intensity and persistence of their reactive campaigns against it played no small part in suggesting to Muslims that perhaps the Pakistan ideal had merit. The bitterness of Hindus' reactions, the ejecting of the League from the Government in 1941, the increasing emasculation of the subsequent Government of Allah Bakhsh, and the repeated attempts by the Congress High Command to use the province in its struggle with the British at the centre, all combined to trigger a reinvigorating of the Sind Muslim League. Moreover, the death of Abdullah Haroon and the breaking of Hindu power in the Assembly through the imprisoning of the Congress opened new opportunities for Sindhi Muslims to achieve their goals.

The installation of a Muslim League Government in 1942 which was free from Hindu influences formed a major watershed in Sind's political history. The installation of a League Government led to an immediate decline in the level of communal provocation from Muslims in the public arena as legislation to curb Hindu power was passed in the state arena. Once Muslims achieved control of the Assembly, their attentions turned to attaining complete control of the province. At this juncture the Pakistan movement was a feature of the national political landscape, and the opportunities it presented to Sind's Muslims became attractive, especially in light of the distinctively Sindhi orientation that the new provincial League president, G.M. Syed, imparted to the movement. In early 1943, the Sind

Provincial Muslim League formally defined Pakistan to mean the creation of the sovereign state of Sind. It was a definition that redefined Muslim politics in the province because it meant that the movement was now centred on Sindhi ethnicity as well as Muslim identity. It was effectively a restoration and an extension of the spirit that had driven the Sind separation movement, and promised to ensure that Sindhi Muslims would control the political and economic life of the province. Both Hindus and non-Sindhis would, according to the Muslims' rationale, be kept in their rightful places. That is, Hindus were to perform their roles in Sind's economic sphere without impacting adversely on Muslim interests, while non-Sindhis were to be excluded from the province, or at the least, be ineligible to own land or enterprises in Sind.

The Sindhi definition of Pakistan had drawn on the encouragement from the All-India Muslim League, in particular the Lahore Resolution of March 1940, the revised constitution of April 1941, and Jinnah's own endorsement (in February 1943) that Sindhis make the Muslim League an organisation to suit their own purposes. Moreover, the British Government's intentions, as contained in the Cripps Offer of 1942, similarly stimulated the prospect of provincial sovereignty. However, by allowing an ethnocentric dimension to influence the Pakistan movement so deeply, Jinnah was undermining the notion of a monolithic Muslim nationalism which publicly underscored the rationale of the movement. This suggests that Jinnah was either leading Muslim-majority provinces such as Sind astray, or that Pakistan was genuinely intended to consist of several Muslim states, not one. In either case, the subsequent awarding of Pakistan as a single state immediately established a tension among its citizens over what the basis of the state was. Nationalisms based upon both religious and ethnic separatisms had the potential to divide the loyalties of its citizens, and in a multi-ethnic state such as Pakistan, unless equitable power-sharing arrangements between the units were instituted the potential for conflict was considerable.

There was a second feature which characterised what Pakistan would mean for Sind: socialism and a radical redistribution of land-ownership, wealth, and political power. Jinnah had consistently articulated that Pakistan was for the poor: it was to be an utopia for the Muslim masses. It was a discourse particularly evident in the speeches and resolutions of the All-India Muslim League's Conference in December 1943 and in Jinnah's actions in consolidating Syed as a provincial League president. Yet the call for reform and a socialist framework revealed the second contradiction in the Pakistan movement: the promise of reforms while strengthening the positions of the conservative land-owning classes. The inability of Jinnah to reconcile the contrasting agendas within the Sind League led to the paralysis of the organisation's leadership and threatened to cost Jinnah his only League Government in a Muslim-majority province in 1945. Evidencing both the ideological confusion within the Muslim League in terms of Pakistan's political economy, and the dependence of the central leadership on the power-holders in the existing state structures, Jinnah rejected the Sindhi reformists when they challenged his authority to determine who would govern the province. In failing to support the reformists to implement the League's stated programme, Jinnah came to be regarded by them as a liability to the interests of Sind, just as they came to be regarded by Jinnah to threaten to his national position. The break between the progressive elements of the Sind League and the All-India Muslim League High Command illustrated the dangers of the contradiction between the central and provincial League agendas and the inconsistent commitment to the publicly stated principles of the Pakistan movement.

In the course of the conflict concerning political-economy, the reformists retreated further into appeals to Sindhi ethnic identity. Muslim nationalist identity had been unable to maintain the relationship between the Sindhi reformists and the central League. However, despite the conflict within the Sind League, the

specific Sindhi Muslim identity remained the key political platform of all factions. The 1946 general elections illustrated that while the Muslim League in Sind could attract 60 percent of the votes, the platform of a sovereign state of Sind polled nearly 80 percent. Thus, the hallmark of Sindhi politics was the commitment to a Sindhi Muslim identity, not to a trans-Indian Muslim nationalism.

The theme of the commitment to Sindhi sovereignty permeates the involvement of the Sindhi Muslims in the ensuing transfer of power negotiations. For example, the Sind League endorsed the Cabinet Delegation's proposal of 16 May 1946 because of the potential it held for provincial sovereignty, while their immediate response to Attlee's statement of 20 February 1947 was to prepare for the drafting of a constitution for a sovereign Sind state. However, in the final negotiations, both within the All-India Muslim League organisation and between it and the British, the processes of the communalisation of India's politics had come too far to allow for bases of identities other than religion to determine the ultimate transfer of power arrangements. The Pakistan movement had redefined politics across the length and breadth of India. In Sind it had held the promise for Sindhi ethnicity to define and determine the province's future independence, but the national decision on the Pakistan movement was decided on the basis of the communalism that it had so strongly influenced.

III

The theme of Sindhi identity did not cease with the creation of Pakistan, and has come to affect the effectiveness and existence of Pakistan's central Governments. The arrival of Muslims from various regions of India since partition has dramatically altered Sind's demography and control of resources and wealth. The Muhajirs' control of Sind's cities brought inter-ethnic conflict into the heart of the province. The tension between Muhajirs and Sindhis simmered until the late

1960s when the martial law administrator, General Yahya Khan (1968-1971), reversed the One-Unit structure of West Pakistan and reconstituted the former provinces.⁴ The implications of restoring Sind's provincial status, and the prime ministership of Pakistan of a Sindhi, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (1971-1975), led to a decline in the Muhajirs' position. The reinstatement to official status of the Sindhi language, the introduction of employment quotas favourable to Sindhis, and the return to Sindhis of properties which had been seized by Muhajirs, elevated the status of Sindhis at the cost of the Muhajirs. Bhutto's Party, the Pakistan People's Party, had come largely to power through harnessing the Sindhis' resentment against their exclusion from involvement in the central power sharing arrangements. Its national victory stimulated in the province the rise of the 'Sindhu Desh' movement, which shared the key component of the Sindhis' definition of Pakistan of 25 years earlier: the creation of the sovereign state of Sind.

The Muhajirs reacted to the reassertion of Sindhism by forming the Muhajir Quami Mahaz (MQM), a movement to protect their interests against the effects of the resurgent ethnic Sindhi nationalism. By the mid-1980s, most Sindhi nationalist movements had coalesced to form the 'Movement for the Restoration of Democracy' for the purpose of pressuring Zia ul-Huq, the military dictator who overthrew Bhutto's elected Government, to re-introduce democratic institutions. Zia had favoured the Muhajirs in order to weaken the Pakistan People's Party and later the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy in Sind, and so again the pattern of Sind's politics being used in contests at the centre-stage of national politics was repeated.

The Movement for the Restoration of Democracy so alarmed the Muhajirs they announced that they constituted Pakistan's fifth nationality (the existing

⁴ Khan had been the second such administrator. General Ayub Khan (1958-1968) had earlier dismissed the central Government because he considered that maladministration, factionalism, and inter-ethnic rivalry threatened the existence of the state.

national movements were those of the Sindhis, Baluchis, Punjabis, and Pathans). Perhaps this action more than any other symbolised the forcefulness of Sindhi ethnic identity and the failure of Muslim nationalist identity to overcome the strength of ethnicity. In 1971, Bengal had broken from the Pakistan state because of the centre's failure to sufficiently accommodate Bengali identity into the functioning of the state. Here the main issue had centred on the status of the Bengali language and the allocation of proportional representation in the Constituent Assembly. There was a logic and continuity to the demands of the Bengalis which, like the Sindhis, had their origin in the deep-seated presence of ethnic identity and their Bengali expectations of the Pakistan movement.

The transformation of the Muhajirs' identity into a discrete ethnic nationality was profoundly significant. While Muslims of the Pakistan provinces struggled with the issue of national identity following Pakistan's creation, the Muhajirs considered themselves to be the embodiments of Muslim nationalism. The Muhajirs had spurned their place in India and risked their lives to come from every corner of the Muslim-minority provinces to find their political and spiritual home in the new Pakistan state. It was a profound commitment to Muslim national identity. Yet, after 35 years in Pakistan, the Muhajirs, their descendants, and the Sindhis had failed to forge a common understanding and agreement on co-existence in the province to an extent that convinced the Muhajirs of the necessity to forge a distinct national identity. Moreover, the Muhajirs' claim of ethnic nationality demonstrated a recognition that a national identity based upon ethnicity, not religion, was the most appropriate discourse within the framework of political action to protect their interests. Since the early 1990s, several thousand people have been slain in ethnic clashes in Karachi and Hyderabad. Karachi, the former centrepiece of the Sindhi Muslims' demands in the Sind separation and Pakistan movements, and later the territorial home of the Muhajirs, has now come to be

regarded as 'a time bomb'.⁵

This thesis has demonstrated that much of Pakistan's dilemma in searching for a legitimate basis lies in its failure to reconcile the goals of Muslim and ethnic separatism (which imbued the Sindhis' involvement in the Pakistan movement) once the multi-ethnic state of Pakistan was achieved. It is one of several contradictions which Pakistan has inherited. To the Sindhis, it is another chapter in their continuing struggle to control the affairs of the province. Contemporary Sindhis may well reflect upon the warning issued to the Sind Legislative Assembly at the height of the Pakistan movement in 1945 by G.M. Syed. Then president of the Sind Provincial Muslim League, he was the man who moved the Pakistan resolution in the Sind Assembly in March 1943 which defined Pakistan to mean sovereignty for Sind. It was he who later prepared the Muslim League's election manifesto for the crucial 1946 general elections, and who could claim the major portion of the credit for building the Muslim League organisation in Sind. Two and an half years before Pakistan was born he warned that:

thousands of people are pouring in from other states and provinces with the result that our land is passing from the hands of Sindhis to non-Sindhis, and also there is every possibility of our province being overpopulated in a short-time, when our descendants will be repenting for our folly for allowing our province to be flooded with, and exploited by, outsiders.⁶

To the Sindhi Muslim leadership, the Pakistan movement was the formal vehicle which expressed the 'Sind for Sindhis' sentiment. In 1944, the Sindhi Muslims described Sindhis as a nation who were demanding the awarding of the Lahore resolution which had stipulated that their province would be sovereign. The

⁵ Justice Nasir Aslam Zahid (Chief Justice of the Sind High Court), Karachi, 29 March 1994, quoted in *Dawn*, 20 March 1994.

⁶ Syed, 22 March 1943, quoted in *Legislative Assembly Debates - Proceedings of the Sind Legislative Assembly*, V/9/3268, OIOC.

legacy of the failure to fully enact that resolution vitally affects Pakistan today, and no doubt will continue to do so until the desires of the Sindhis to have greater control over their province have been satisfied.