

PAKISTAN

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A Modern History

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THE PAKISTAN MOVEMENT: ITS DYNAMICS AND LEGACIES

Just north of the massive Alamgiri gate of Akbar's Lahore Fort, the 1960s modernist concrete structure of the Minar-e-Pakistan rises from its flower vase like base in Iqbal Park. It marks the place where the Pakistan resolution was passed on 23 March 1940 at the Annual Session of the All-India Muslim League (AIML). Allama Iqbal, who first called for a separate state for North Indian Muslims at a League meeting ten years earlier at Allahabad, lies buried nearby within the celebrated Badshahi mosque. However, the spiritual heart of the Pakistan movement was not centred in Lahore but in the Victorian red-brick buildings of Aligarh College some 350 miles to the south-west in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh (UP, formerly the United Provinces). Indeed, the Muslim League was a latecomer not only in Punjab, but also in the other regions which were to form Pakistan.

Writers from such varied intellectual backgrounds as Francis Robinson, Hamza Alavi and Ashok Kapur have linked the 'shallow roots' of the freedom struggle with Pakistan's subsequent problems of political development and national integration. Robinson, drawing on his specialist knowledge of UP, raises three points: first that Muslim separatist politics were primarily a phenomenon of UP; second that developments at the centre rather than the wishes of Muslim majority area politicians led to the strengthening of a Muslim-Pakistan political identity during the pre-partition decade; third that with the possible exception of Bengal, none of the provinces which came to form Pakistan possessed either a widespread positive identification with a Muslim-Pakistan political identity, or sufficiently developed political institutions to sustain it.¹

Kapur polemically asserts that Pakistan's difficulties stem from the way it was created. Unlike the mass Indian nationalist movement with its personal sacrifice and focus on the problem of poverty, 'Pakistan's independence was a result of a combination of British India policy (1920s-1940s) and the willingness of Pakistan's 'leaders' (with no mass

¹ F. Robinson, 'Origins' in W. E. James and Subroto Roy (eds), *Foundations of Pakistan's Political Economy: Towards an Agenda for the 1990s*. (New Delhi, 1992), pp. 33-58.

following or ability to win elections or to form governments on their own, i.e. without British aid) to play the British India government's game of "divide and rule" and then "divide and quit". [...] Pakistan got its separate status as a gift' not 'by adopting any brand of nationalism; or through mass movement... or by conception of liberty, representative government, or majority rule.'²

Hamza Alavi for his part has maintained that ethnicity has dominated Pakistani politics in the absence of a larger concept of nationhood. This failed to emerge during the freedom movement which was weakly based in the 'Pakistan' areas. Alavi attributes this to the limited development within them of a Muslim salariat which was the class most committed to the ideology of Pakistani nationhood.³

Iftikhar Malik and Imran Ali have also linked Pakistan's post-independence problems with the underdevelopment of a supra-regional Pakistani identity under the conditions of colonial rule, while Yunus Samad has pointed to the tensions between regional political identities and Muslim nationalism arising from the ambiguities of the freedom struggle. It is thus of supreme importance to examine the characteristics and legacies of the Pakistan movement in the Muslim majority provinces of British India.

Punjab

The Muslim League was a latecomer in all the future Pakistan areas. In Punjab – termed by Jinnah the 'cornerstone' of Pakistan – it never held power before independence. Punjab politics were dominated by the cross-communal Unionist Party which had been founded by Mian Fazl-i-Husain and Chaudhri Chhotu Ram in 1922. Its appeal rested in the ability to dispense patronage and to ring-fence the interests of the rural communities by upholding the safeguards from expropriation provided by the 1900 Alienation of Land Act. Yet despite the popular enthusiasm generated by the so-called 'Golden Acts' of 1938⁴ which further curbed the influence of the moneylenders, it failed to establish a solid grassroots organisation. In such circumstances, personal influence

² Ashok Kapur, *Pakistan in Crisis* (London, 1991), p. 2.

³ H. Alavi, 'Nationhood and Communal Violence in Pakistan', *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 21, no. 2 (1991), pp. 152-78. See especially pp. 153-63.

⁴ The key measures were the Punjab Alienation of Land Second Amendment Act which removed the loophole of the *benami* transaction, the Registration of Moneylenders Act and the Restitution of Mortgaged Lands Act. The latter enabled persons to recover all the land which they had mortgaged before 1901. In Amritsar district alone over 100 meetings were held during the course of 1938 to celebrate the passage of the 'Golden Acts'.

with the voters counted far more than the party programme in securing election. The Muslim League's pitiful showing in the 1937 Punjab elections, in which it captured just one seat, reflected its narrow social base of support. It was simply unable to garner votes through the traditional channels of political mobilisation in the countryside, the *biraderi* networks, the patron-client ties between landlords and tenants and the networks of disciples of the leading *pirs*.

The pact at Lucknow between the Unionist Premier Sikander and Jinnah following the elections ensured Muslim League Punjabi support in All-India politics, but only at the heavy cost of creating a Unionist stranglehold on its provincial organisation.⁵ An AIML investigation in October 1941 worryingly discovered that in ten districts of Punjab no organisation existed at all and that the total primary League membership of the seven city and six district branches which were able to return reasonably accurate figures was only around 15,000.⁶ One consequence of this was that the early work in popularising the Pakistan demand had to be left to the Punjab Muslim Students Federation. It organised a rural Pakistan Propaganda Committee after a Pakistan Conference presided over by Jinnah had met in Lahore in March 1941. During a twenty day tour it visited fifty villages, and opened a primary branch of the Muslim League in each one.⁷ While this was only a drop in the ocean, it was to be a useful dress-rehearsal for the massive propaganda campaign launched by students at the time of the 1946 elections. During the peak of student activity, the 1945 Christmas vacation, there were 1,550 members of the Punjab Students Federation and 250 Aligarh students engaged in popularising the Punjab Muslim League's message.⁸ This impressive contribution was nonetheless dwarfed in Bengal where 20,000 students answered the League Secretary Abul Hashim's appeal to lose if necessary one year of their studies in the greater good of the freedom struggle.⁹ Works on Pakistan have frequently focused on the prevalence of student activism which, through such powerful bodies as the Baloch Students' Organisation and the All-Pakistan Mohajir Students' Organisation (APMSO), have provided militant activists and leadership cadres for ethnic parties. No links have been drawn however

⁵ See Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj*, pp. 125-32.

⁶ Conference of the Presidents and Secretaries of the Provincial Muslim Leagues, October 1941, vol. 326, pt. 2, p. 74, FMA.

⁷ Report of Muhammad Sadiq: Sheikhupura Student Deputation, 22 July 1941, QEAP File 1099/84, NAP.

⁸ I. Talbot, 'The 1946 Punjab Elections', *Modern Asian Studies* 14, no. 1 (February 1980), p. 78.

⁹ Harun-or-Rashid, *The Foreshadowing of Bangladesh: Bengal Muslim League and Muslim League Politics 1936-47*, (Dhaka, 1987), p. 226.

between its contemporary and pre-independence manifestations. The question remains whether later generations of politicised students drew legitimacy for their actions from the high profile of their forbears in the creation of the state.

However, the key to the Muslim League breakthrough in Punjab lay in the new circumstances created by the Second World War. Within Punjab, the Unionist Ministry was forced to introduce the requisitioning of grain. Its supporters were also hit by inflation. The League was able to give this a communal colouring by pointing out the profiteering of Hindu and Sikh contractors. At the All-India level, the war boosted the standing of Jinnah. Many Punjabi Unionists joined the Muslim League bandwagon after the 1945 Simla Conference, although the Unionists had been under pressure from a revitalised Muslim League from the time of the 1942 Cripps mission. Jinnah cleverly exploited the 'sunshine' of official favour thereby wiping out the earlier shabby Muslim League image in the eyes of the powerbrokers in Punjab and the other Muslim majority provinces.

The untimely deaths of Sikander and the leading Hindu Jat figure Sir Chhotu Ram put pressure on the Unionist Party's fragile factional unity.¹⁰ This emboldened Jinnah to clarify the ambiguous relationship between the Punjab League and the Unionist Party under the terms of his pact with Sikander. He journeyed to Lahore in March 1944 to resolve the matter with the inexperienced Punjab Premier Khizr, but their talks broke down because Khizr would not renege on his commitments to his non-Muslim Unionist colleagues and he was publicly expelled from the League the following May. The Muslim League seized the opportunity to launch an intensive rural propaganda campaign. For the first time ever primary branches were established in such Unionist strongholds as Sargodha and Mianwali. In July alone it was reported that 7,000 members had been enrolled in these two areas.¹¹ Khizr's position was further weakened by Jinnah's wrecking the July 1945 Simla Conference, when he refused to accept the inclusion of a Unionist nominee on any future Viceroy's Executive Council. Lord Wavell's capitulation to Jinnah without a fight increased still further the Quaid-e-Azam's prestige.

The entry of large numbers of landlords and *pirs* into the Muslim League's ranks is conventionally understood as the reason for its reversal in fortune in the 1946 elections. Although it had earlier criticised the Unionist Party for using 'tribalism' and the villagers' superstitious reverence for *pirs* to win political support, the Muslim League did

¹⁰ D. Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam*, p. 186.

¹¹ Report of the Organizing Secretary, Rawalpindi Division Muslim League, vol. 162, pt. 7: Punjab Muslim League, 1943-44, pp. 74ff, FMA.

not quibble about adopting these methods when it was in a position to do so. Wherever strong *biraderis* existed, the Muslim League endeavoured to choose their leaders as its candidates. *Pirs* not only stood for election themselves, but commanded their disciples to vote for Muslim League candidates. Rallies were held at the *urs* of leading shrines and *fatwas* were issued through small leaflets, newspapers and wall-posters.¹² The *pirs'* great moral authority sanctified the Muslim League cause. They made appeals to individual Muslim voters to personally identify with the cause of Islam by supporting the Pakistan demand. 'Your vote is a trust of the community' (*qaum*) warned the *sajjada nashin* of the leading Chishti shrine at Ajmer, 'No question of someone's caste [*zat*] or conflicts of *biraderis* should at this time come before you.'¹³

Unionist attempts to rally support through the religious appeals of '*ulama* from the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind carried much less authority amongst the rural voters. It also further undermined the confidence of the non-Muslim population. While the Muslim League squeezed out the Unionists in West Punjab, the Hindu Jat wing in the Haryana region, shorn of the inspirational Sir Chhotu Ram, was routed by the Congress.

Pressures from below caused the defection of large numbers of the Unionist party's Zamindara League field-workers. The organiser for the Rawalpindi district, Shahzada Sadiq Bukhari, frequently reported to the Unionist Party's headquarters in Lahore that he encountered hostility during his tours of the villages in the summer of 1945.¹⁴ Chaudhri Nur Khan, the Unionist candidate for Chakwal in 1946, had to completely replace all the workers in his *tehsil* as they 'had changed colours'.¹⁵ The problems in the Jhelum district¹⁶ however started right at the top, as the chief worker, Muhammad Iqbal divulged secrets to the Muslim League and obstructed operations until his final dismissal. The situation was little better elsewhere. By the beginning of November 1945, the presidents of the Ludhiana, Rawalpindi and Lyallpur branches of the Zamindara League had all decamped to the Muslim League. Another tell-tale sign of demoralisation was the reluctance of some local activists to work in Muslim majority areas of their districts.¹⁷ These difficulties

¹² Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj*, p. 211.

¹³ Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam*, pp. 216-17.

¹⁴ See for example, his letters of 28 May and 18 September 1945. Personal File of Shahzada Sadiq Bukhari, Assistant Organiser, Rawalpindi Zamindara League, Unionist Party papers.

¹⁵ Bashir Husain, District Organiser, Jhelum Zamindara League, to Mian Sultan Ali Ranjha, 2 January 1946, file D-48, Unionist Party Papers.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 16 January 1946, file D-48, Unionist Party Papers.

¹⁷ Mian Sultan Ali Ranjha to Sufi Abdul Haq, Assistant Organiser, Sargodha District

were brought home forcibly to the Unionist Premier during his election tour of the Jhelum district. He unsuccessfully interviewed 120 people in an attempt to find someone willing to oppose the Muslim League candidate, Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan¹⁸ in the Pind Dadan Khan constituency.¹⁹

The Unionist legacy

History in Pakistan has as elsewhere been written by the victors. There is no place therefore for the Unionist era and its achievements in the official lexicon of historiography. Such figures as Khizr Tiwana are either ignored or written off as 'toadies' of the British and 'traitors' to Islam. It is therefore important to highlight two neglected but supremely important legacies of Unionism for Pakistan: the first is the laying of the foundations for Punjab's domination of Pakistan's bureaucracy; the second,²⁰ the establishment of a South Asian system of 'consociational democracy' which maintained communal peace for over twenty years in the 'Ulster' of India and which provides important lessons for today's strife-torn Pakistan.

As elsewhere in India, Hindus entered the new colonial educational institutions of Punjab in much greater numbers than Muslims. They consequently dominated professions such as government service which depended on Western knowledge. The devolution of responsibility for education following the introduction of dyarchy was seized upon by Mian Fazl-i-Husain as an opportunity to remedy this situation. During the period 1921-6 when he served as Education Minister he launched a vigorous drive to improve the schooling of Punjab's 'backward' communities. Since the Muslims comprised the bulk of these designated groups, they received the lion's share of free scholarships and expansion of schools. In the sphere of higher education, Fazl-i-Husain ordered a reservation of 40 per cent of places for Muslims in prestigious institutions like Government College in Lahore and the Lahore Medical College. Such centres of learning had previously been a Hindu preserve. Muslims further benefited from the opening of intermediate colleges. Within two years Muslim attendance in all institutions increased by

Zamindara League, 13 December 1944, file E-76, Unionist Party Papers.

¹⁸ He was not only a prominent Leaguer and powerful opponent of the Unionists in the Provincial Assembly, but more importantly the uncle of the leading Chishti revivalist, Pir Fazl Shah.

¹⁹ *Dawn* (Delhi), 28 October 1945.

²⁰ See Ian Talbot, *Khizr Tiwana*, which reveals the inadequacy of such stereotypes.

42 per cent.²¹ Female education lagged badly in Punjab as in other provinces, but even in this respect, the region was in advance of other future Pakistan areas. In 1932 for example, 1.6 per cent of the total Muslim female population was receiving schooling in Punjab. This was in comparison with 0.5 per cent in the Frontier and 0.4 per cent in Balochistan.²²

Mian Fazl-i-Husain's reforms earned the censure of the Hindu elite which feared that its professional pre-eminence was under threat. Indeed, Raja Narendra Nath, the Hindu Mahasabha leader wrote to the Viceroy in 1927 and asked for the clock to be turned back from dyarchy to the pre-reform era.²³ Educationally Muslims still trailed behind the province's Hindus,²⁴ but they had achieved a commanding position in comparison with their brethren from the other 'Pakistan' regions. In the competitive examinations for recruitment to the All-India Services, Punjabi Muslims stood second only to candidates from UP, the traditional heartland of Indian Muslim culture and education. Significantly the most powerful bureaucratic post in the immediate post-partition period, that of Secretary-General, was held by a Punjabi, Chaudhri Muhammad Ali. Punjabi representation in the civil bureaucracy supplemented the region's predominance in the army, thereby laying the foundations for the 'Punjabisation' of Pakistan.

Mian Fazl-i-Husain also provided the spadework for the Unionist Party's system of political accommodation, although this was further refined by his successors as party leader, Sikander and Khizr. Under their leadership the Unionist Ministry bore some of the hallmarks of a grand coalition in keeping with classical consociational theory. It also successfully operated such consociational devices as proportionality in recruitment and decision-making. The 1942 pact between Sikander and Baldev Singh, the Akali Dal leader, which increased Sikh representation in government departments and endorsed Sikh 'segmental autonomy' provides a classic example of consociationalism at work. This was all to no avail in the highly charged days of community consciousness in 1946. As a Unionist worker from the Jhelum district reported, 'Wherever I went everyone kept saying,

²¹ S. M. Ikram, *Modern Muslim India and the Birth of Pakistan*, 3rd edn (Lahore, 1977), p. 228.

²² Government of India, *Progress of education in India*, Eleventh Quinquennial Review (Simla, 1938), p. 243.

²³ Hailey to Sir William Vincent, 8 July 1927, Hailey Collection Mss. Eur. E220/11A, IOR.

²⁴ According to the 1931 Census, 32 per cent of those educated in English were Punjabi Muslims, although the Muslim community comprised 52 per cent of the province's total population.

bhai, if we do not vote for the League we would have become kafir. [...] We did not vote for individuals; if we did so, it was only to vote for the Quran.'²⁵

The legacy of the campaign for Pakistan

Turning away from the Unionist legacy, to that of the freedom struggle itself, three factors stand out from the narrative. First the Muslim League was in some respects the Unionist Party re-invented in that it mobilised support in 1946 through the time-honoured 'tribal' allegiances and appeal of a localised Muslim identity based on the Sufi shrines. Second there was at the same time a mass upsurge during the Pakistan movement based on Islamic idealism. Third the League was a latecomer in the future 'corner-stone' of Pakistan. Indeed it never held office there before partition. All three of these legacies were to influence post-colonial political developments.

Despite the propaganda that the 1946 elections were fought on the Pakistan issue, the Punjab Muslim League mobilised votes as the Unionists had previously done through *biraderi* and Sufi networks. The survival of the politics of mediation even at the height of the freedom struggle revealed the post-independence challenge for the Muslim League if it was to fulfil the calls for an individual commitment to an Islamic identity encouraged by Jinnah and others.²⁶ The Khilafat-i-Pakistan ideas of the Punjab League's most ardent student supporters were to sit uncomfortably with the outlook of the rural powerbrokers.

The Punjab Muslim League did not however achieve a breakthrough in 1946 simply because of the factional realignment of the *biraderi* leaders and landowners. The Muslim masses were not just mute bystanders as the landed magnates jockeyed for position. Far greater numbers of Muslims joined in Muslim League processions, rallies, strikes and the civil disobedience campaign in Punjab of February 1947²⁷ than were eligible to vote. By concentrating on legislative politics and the League's electoral breakthrough in 1946 the popular support for the freedom struggle has been obscured. It is however undeniable that there was a groundswell of rural Punjabi support for the Pakistan demand despite its previous neglect by some scholars.²⁸ The Punjab Muslim League's political advance in 1946 resulted from

²⁵ Report by Ch. Shahwali of Ghumman, Zamindara League Worker, Jhelum, 20 February 1946. Unionist Party Papers D-44, Southampton University.

²⁶ Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam*, Chapter 6.

²⁷ See I. Talbot, 'The role of the crowd in the Muslim League Struggle for Pakistan', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 21, no. 2 (May 1993), pp. 307-34.

²⁸ See, for example, Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam*, p. 187.

to anchor this message within the substratum of local rural Islam. Not only Punjab's but Pakistan's future political development was to rest on the state's ability to reconcile this newly-emerged popular consciousness and activism with the established interests of the military and landowning elites.

Khizr shored up the Unionist citadel after the 1946 provincial elections forming a coalition government with the Congress and the Sikh Akalis. But the tide of events both in the province and at the All-India level had turned against him. His banning of the Muslim National Guards early in 1947 prompted the launching of a mass civil disobedience campaign. This second phase of popular participation marked the final advance of the Muslim League in the 'corner-stone' of Pakistan. While the Muslim League was able to topple the Khizr Government, the cost in terms of increased communal tension rendered it unable to form one itself. The Punjab remained under Governor's rule for the remaining five months of the British Raj. This meant that of its famous 'three musketeers' (the Nawab of Mamdot, Mian Mumtaz Daultana and Shaukat Hayat) in the fight against Unionism, only the last had experienced office in the pre-independence era. Nor had his brief term as Minister of Public Works in the Khizr cabinet been a productive learning experience.²⁹ Such ministerial inexperience was not of course unique to the Punjab League leadership, but it was to have important repercussions in the disturbed days which followed the trauma of the province's partition.

Sindh

Few historians would quibble with the notion that the Sindh Muslim League in the early 1940s was a ramshackle organisation riddled by factionalism. This did not impede the wider progress of the freedom struggle, but it meant that the Sindh branch was in no shape to carry out the task of nation building once Pakistan was created. The League's institutional weakness was mirrored in the shallow support for the Pakistan ideal. This resulted not only from the backwardness of the overwhelmingly rural population, but also from the emergence of a Sindhi political consciousness amongst sections of the Muslim elite which coexisted uneasily with support for Pakistan. In the 1940s and indeed throughout the next four decades, Sindhi nationalism was to find its clearest articulation in the activities of G.M. Syed and his followers. Indeed even as the most vocal proponent

²⁹ Khizr had dismissed him on the alleged charge of corruption. Shaukat vehemently pleaded his innocence, declaring that it was a political move prompted by his support for Pakistan.

G.M. Syed and his followers. Indeed even as the most vocal proponent of Sindh Desh lay in a coma close to death in April 1995, police commandos were posted at the entrance to his hospital room.³⁰

The Sindh Muslim League had played only a peripheral role in the two formative influences on Sindhi Muslim politics during the 1920s and '30s – the Khilafat campaign and the movement to separate Sindh from the Bombay Presidency. Its parent organisation had taken up the latter issue from 1925 onwards, but more with a view to using it as a bargaining counter in any future constitutional development than out of solidarity with the Sindhi Muslims. They responded by cold-shouldering it in favour of an umbrella organisation called the Sindh Azad Conference formed in September 1932. The establishment of Sindh as a separate province on 1 April 1936 symbolically foreshadowed the larger partition of India a decade later. The leading politicians in the new province were, however, more concerned with personal rivalries than with larger issues. The Sindh Muslim League was consequently ill-disciplined and its ministers pursued policies designed to keep themselves in power, even if they conflicted with the long-term aims of the parent organisation. A classic example of this was the passage of the Joint Electorates Bill in April 1940.³¹ Fortunately for Jinnah the League did not face an organised opposition. Otherwise determined opponents might have buried 'Pakistan in Sindh'.

The Hindu community³² played a disproportionately important part in Sindh's legislative politics, because of its high socio-economic status and the favourable weightage which it received under the 1932 Communal Award.³³ This ensured it at least one seat in every cabinet. The Hindus' wealth rested on their dominance of trade, commerce and the professions (they also began to acquire large landholdings as a result of Muslim indebtedness), but the community was not split along urban-rural lines as in neighbouring Punjab. The Hindu business classes did however come into conflict with the Muslim Memon, Khoja and Bohra traders. These Muslim 'immigrants' accounted for the bulk of the non-Hindu middle class. Significantly they were more responsive than the rural Sindhis to the Muslim League's appeal.

³⁰ Hassan Mujtaba, 'Death of a Nationalist', *Newsline*, May 1995, pp. 73-6.

³¹ The agreement to introduce joint electorates for local bodies had been part of a 21-point programme accepted between Mir Bande Ali and Hindu Independents before the formation of the Muslim League government in the wake of the Sukkur riots.

³² The Hindus formed 28 per cent of the population, but there were no Hindu majority districts as in neighbouring Punjab, although they had a virtual equality with the Muslims in Tharparkar.

³³ Although the Muslims made up 70 per cent of the total population, they had a bare majority (34/60 seats) in the Assembly.

Indeed it was largely funded by these groups who also provided it with many of its leading figures.³⁴ Perhaps because they were aware of growing sentiment against them, the Punjabi cultivators who had settled permanently in Sindh were also early and ardent supporters of the League. The key to its impact however, in the restricted and largely rural electorate lay with the support of the Baloch and Sindhi landowners and the leading *pirs*.³⁵ Jinnah's inability to convince them to contest the 1937 provincial elections on the League ticket resulted in its failure to win a single seat.³⁶

The Sindh United Party emerged victorious securing a clear majority in the Muslim constituencies (21 out of 34 seats). It had been founded in June 1936 with the express purpose of bridging the gap between Hindu and Muslim Sindhis³⁷ by stressing the importance of economic rather than religious interests. This inspiration was clearly derived from the success of the Unionist Party in neighbouring Punjab,³⁸ as the Unionist leader Mian Fazl-i-Husain had been consulted shortly before the decision to launch the Sind United Party. Its early leadership was drawn from such leading Muslim landowners as Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto, Allah Baksh, Umar Soomro and Yar Muhammad Junejo. Urban Muslim interests were represented by Abdullah Haroon, the prominent Karachi Memon sugar merchant. In his inaugural speech, Haroon declared that the Sindh United Party would make Sindh 'safe' from communal strife³⁹ such as that in 1927 in Larkana caused by the campaign to separate Sind from the Bombay Presidency, and would ensure that 'the communities would work and live in peace.'⁴⁰

The party was weakened by the defeat of its leading figure, Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto, in Larkana. The campaign in the Larkana North constituency had been fought on religious lines with Bhutto's opponent,

³⁴ These included Abdullah Haroon; Hatim Alavi, a Bohra businessman who was at one time Mayor of Karachi; and Muhammad Hashim Gazdar who was a Karachi contractor.

³⁵ Tribal chiefs, large landholders and *pirs* won 27 out of 34 Muslim seats.

³⁶ I. Talbot, *Provincial Politics and the Pakistan Movement*, p. 39.

³⁷ In sharp contrast to contemporary Sindh, during the colonial era the Hindu population was an overwhelmingly urban and wealthy community. It controlled trade and commerce and the middle class professions of law and medicine.

³⁸ Historians have failed to recognise the importance of the Unionist Party as a role model in the Muslim majority provinces. Significantly, Abdullah Haroon had consulted with the Unionist leader Mian Fazl-i-Husain shortly before the decision to launch the Sindh United Party.

³⁹ Up till the modern era Sindh had a tradition of tolerance and syncretism partly derived from Sufi influence. The first serious riots occurred as late as 1927 in Larkana against the background of the separation campaign of Sindh from the Bombay Presidency.

⁴⁰ A.K. Jones, 'Muslim Politics and the Growth of the Muslim League in Sindh', unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, Duke University, 1977, p. 84.

Sheikh Abdul Majid Sindhi employing mullahs and attempting to evoke sympathy by playing on his conversion from Hinduism.⁴¹ Bhutto was portrayed as anti-Islamic and as one who would levy taxes on beards and graveyards.⁴² His defeat had wider repercussions, for it encouraged the British Governor Graham to pass over the Sindh United Party in favour of the Sindh Muslim Party of Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah which had captured just three seats. Hidayatullah's differences with Bhutto were more personal than ideological, dating to their days on the Bombay Council. Moreover, he found it expedient to include members of the Hindu Mahasabha in his coalition ministry. Nevertheless, the future of Sindhi politics seemed destined thereafter to follow not only a highly factionalised and unstable course, but also one in which communal solidarity counted for more than accommodation.

A flurry of Muslim League activity early in 1938 led by Sheikh Abdul Majid Sindhi saw the establishment of branches in such districts as Tharparkar, Nawabshah, Sukkur, Jacobabad and Larkana.⁴³ Progress depended to a large extent on the support of influential landowners such as Muhammad Ayub Khuhro; the Muslim League remained unable to convert the enthusiasm which greeted Jinnah's visit to the province in October 1938 into a disciplined mass base of support.⁴⁴ Legislative politics were marked by a bewildering array of floor-crossings and shifting factional alignments in which, as in today's Pakistan, party loyalties counted for nothing. The only constant factors were the importance of the solid blocs of *Mir* and *Sayed* members⁴⁵ and Hidayatullah's determination to hang on to the reins of power. By March 1938 however he had run out of allies and was forced to resign in favour of Allah Baksh. His coalition government included Hindu Independents, Muslim members of the Sindh United Party and three Europeans.⁴⁶

The pro-Congress leanings of the Baksh ministry led to an upturn in Muslim League fortunes. Abdullah Haroon, Hidayatullah and G.M.

⁴¹ After being disowned by his family he had moved to Hyderabad from Thatta where he began a career as a journalist. He rose to political prominence as the Secretary of the Khilafat Conference of Sindh.

⁴² For further details see Jones, 'Muslim Politics', p. 108.

⁴³ I. Talbot, *Provincial Politics and the Pakistan Movement*, p. 41.

⁴⁴ Jinnah had journeyed to Karachi to preside over the first Sindh provincial Muslim League Conference. He was conveyed through the streets in a three-mile procession in a manner 'befitting a King'. For the significance of such 'regal' displays see I. Talbot, 'The role of the Crowd in the Muslim League Struggle for Pakistan'.

⁴⁵ For details see I. Talbot, *Provincial Politics and the Pakistan Movement*, pp. 36ff.

⁴⁶ Governor of Sindh to Linlithgow, 19 March 1938, Linlithgow Papers, IOR MSS Eur F 125/93.

Syed all joined the party at this juncture. Hidayatullah's subsequent defection in January 1939 on being offered a cabinet post revealed his opportunism. But both Haroon and Syed were prompted by more genuine motives. The latter, who throughout this period posed as the upholder of the *haris*' (peasants) interests, had been angered by a proposed increase in land revenue assessments in the Sukkur Barrage area. His inclusion in the League brought it the valuable support of the *Sayed* grouping within the Assembly. The final blow to the Allah Baksh ministry was dealt by the 1939 Manzilgarh agitation. As early as 1920, Muslims in Sukkur had demanded that the ancient domed building at the Manzilgarh site (meaning a place of rest) be declared a mosque and handed over to them by the Government. The Muslim League, like the BJP decades later at Ayodhya, seized on the dispute over sacred space at Manzilgarh to solidify support on a communal platform.

On 3 October 1939, following five months of agitation, Muslim volunteers pushed past a police cordon and forcibly occupied the site. Communal rioting spread throughout the surrounding districts when government forces re-entered the building some forty-eight days later.⁴⁷ The resulting collapse in law and order toppled the Baksh government as it robbed it of its Hindu support. The Muslim League, although now in government, still faced problems because of its intense factionalism.⁴⁸ Nor was the 'ethnic cleansing' of urban Hindus from Sindh henceforth an inevitability. This in fact only happened after Muslim refugees had arrived from India. Nevertheless, the Manzilgarh agitation undoubtedly marked an important watershed in Sindh's modern history.

The labyrinthian details of Sindh's sordid politics from 1940-7 need not detain us here.⁴⁹ Suffice it to say that such events as the arrest of the leading Muslim Leaguer Muhammad Ayub Khuhro in connection with Allah Baksh's murder in December 1944⁵⁰ should dispel any inclination to view the freedom struggle era through rose-coloured glasses. It has hardly been a case of 'paradise lost' in the post-independence period.⁵¹ The British Governor's summing-up of the situation in 1942 could have been made at any time during the following four decades: 'I have an uneasy feeling', he reported shortly after the formation of

⁴⁷ Jones, 'Muslim Politics', p. 197.

⁴⁸ See I. Talbot, *Provincial Politics and the Pakistan Movement*, pp. 42-55.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, Chapter 2.

⁵⁰ The fact that Khuhro was a leading suspect speaks volumes. He was acquitted, although hardly exonerated. On his release, Yusuf Haroon garlanded him with gold sovereigns.

⁵¹ This point was clearly recognised by the late Khalid Shamsul Hasan who devoted much of his spare time to bringing out the reality of the freedom struggle as it was revealed in his father's Muslim League records. See K. S. Hasan, *Sindh's Fight For Pakistan* (Karachi, 1992), p. xiii.

a second Muslim League ministry headed by Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah, 'that almost any member would be able to form a government with...12 well-paid ministries and parliamentary secretaryships in his gift. [...] The only sensible question which one can ask any politician is whether he is in office or out, and if he is out, his only study [*sic*] is how he can get in.'⁵² While the Muslim League leaders in Punjab entered the post-independence era with little experience of office, their counterparts in Sindh were already well versed in using power to feather their own nests through the manipulation of wartime contracts and the control of rationed and requisitioned goods.⁵³ The establishment of a track record of financial probity, party discipline and reforming zeal was however a different matter.

The Sindh Muslim League of course contained idealists as well as opportunists. Nor should the popular enthusiasm generated by the Pakistan campaign be overlooked. In April 1940 for example, a 10,000-strong procession wended its way through Karachi's streets as part of Pakistan Day celebrations.⁵⁴ Even amid the gloom of the Hidayatullah ministry, progress was being made in enrolling members in local Muslim League branches. During 1943-4, the branches rose from 474 to 547 with an increase in membership from 122,623 to 177,118.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, as the League's *Annual Report* for this period acknowledged, 'We should require years to create political consciousness among [the] Muslim masses in the province, where on account of long distances, scattered villages, illiteracy and local influence it is rather difficult to easily approach the people.'⁵⁶

The Muslim League therefore had to adapt to these realities as it sought to expand in the region. Its dilemma was especially acute at the time of the 1946 elections. The *waderas* alone possessed the money and influence to secure election in the interior of Sindh. But they were primarily concerned with winning power for themselves, rather than piling up votes for Pakistan. By September 1945 a bitter three-way struggle for League tickets had broken out between G. M. Syed, Khuhro and Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah. 'I wish people thought less of Premier and Ministers and thought more of the paramount and vital issue confronting us,' Jinnah admonished Khuhro: 'I do hope the seriousness of the situation will be fully realised. [...] The only issue before us

⁵² Dow to Linlithgow, 5 November 1942, L/P&J/5/258, IOR..

⁵³ S. F. Kucchi, member of the Working Committee Sindh Provincial Muslim League to G. M. Syed, SHC, Sindh, 11:37.

⁵⁴ Sindh FR, Second Half of April 1940, L/P&J/5/255, IOR..

⁵⁵ *Annual Report of the Sindh Provincial Muslim League for 1943-4*, SHC Sindh 1:24.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

is Pakistan *versus* Akhand Hindustan, and if Sindh falls God help you.⁵⁷ Such appeals fell on deaf ears. The Governor Sir Hugh Dow sympathised. 'Jinnah dislikes them all', he wrote to the Viceroy; 'he once told me he could buy the lot of them for five lakhs of rupees, to which I replied I could do it a lot cheaper.'⁵⁸ The clash between the President of the Sindh Muslim League (G.M. Syed) and the Province's Premier climaxed in the former's expulsion from the organisation in January 1946.

The Syed group nevertheless triumphed in the Assembly elections against official Muslim League candidates mainly because of the support which it received from the influential *pirs* and *sajjada nashins* of Hala, Jhando and the shrine of Shah Abdul Latif Bhit.⁵⁹ Far from giving an overwhelming mandate for Pakistan, the elections had thus even put the limited objective of forming a Muslim League government in Sindh in extreme jeopardy. Jinnah had to turn elsewhere in Muslim India to demonstrate backing for Pakistan. The power of the Syed group was not broken until a further round of provincial elections in December 1946. These took place when communalism was rising elsewhere in India following the collapse of the Cabinet Mission proposals. Even so the success of official League candidates had depended on desertions from the Syed camp. The victory had been won in the name of Pakistan, but had rested on the same local loyalties and outlooks which Jinnah had opposed for so long. The Muslim League's troubled state was not however simply the result of personal rivalries and opportunism, although there was no love lost between G.M. Syed and Hidayatullah. The League President from 1943 onwards had presented his case in terms of the clash of interests between the large landholders of Sindh and their labourers and tenants. G.M. Syed complained that the Ministers' support of the landed elite's interests was unpopular and was retarding the Pakistan cause.⁶⁰ When it became clear that Jinnah would not back him in his tussle with Hidayatullah, he became increasingly critical of the AIML leadership, linking its 'interference' in Sindh with the domination of the 'corrupt' Ministers and '*jagirdars*'. As the British departure loomed ever nearer, G.M. Syed increasingly talked of the need for a 'Sindhi Pakistan'. This was cast more in terms of a hands-off Sindh by the central League leadership than the idea of Sindhi nationalism which he was to develop after independence. Nevertheless, he played

⁵⁷ Jinnah to Khuhro, 13 October 1945, SHC Sind VI:10.

⁵⁸ Dow to Wavell, 20 September 1945, L/P&J/5/261, IOR.

⁵⁹ Muhammad Shah Saleh to President of Sindh Muslim League, n.d., SHC Sindh 8:33.

⁶⁰ G. M. Syed to Jinnah, 8 July 1944, SHC Sindh 1:44.

up the existing anti-Punjabi sentiment as for example in his attack on the Cabinet Mission proposals for the grouping of the Muslim majority provinces in north-west India.⁶¹ Through the columns of his Sindhi newspaper, *Qurbani* (Sacrifice), G.M. Syed inveighed against the possible subordination of Sindh to Punjab.⁶² Sindhi separatism fuelled by anti-Punjabi sentiment thus found a favourable environment in which to flourish even before the massive post-partition migration of 'outsiders' into the province.

The North-West Frontier Province

The shallow roots of the freedom movement were evidenced in the Frontier Province both by the institutional weakness of the Muslim League and the abiding strength of a Pushtun political identity which coexisted uneasily with the Pakistan demand. Although a Muslim League ministry held office from October 1943 to March 1945, the League, in stark contrast to its showing elsewhere, won a mere seventeen seats to the Congress's thirty in the 1946 provincial elections. In the June 1947 referendum, however, the province's Muslims voted overwhelmingly for Pakistan, but it was nevertheless clear that the new state would have to tread carefully in order to reconcile Pakhtun sentiments with the requirements of nation building.

In order to fully understand the clash between Pushtun loyalties and Pakistan nationalism it is necessary to briefly examine the Frontier's social structure and historical development in the closing decades of British rule. This will then be followed by an account of the Muslim League's development in the region, before an attempt is made to consider the legacies of the pre-independence era.

The main ethnic division in the Frontier Province existed between the Pushtuns and other social groups. Although the Pushtuns formed less than two-fifths of the population⁶³ they were socially and politically dominant. Non-Pushtuns did not own land, nor did they have the right to participate in the tribal councils – *jirgas*. Among the non-Pushtuns only *pirs* were traditionally allowed to own land. Both their spiritual status and their standing as impartial brokers in a society divided

⁶¹ Mudie to Wavell, 24 March 1946, L/P&J/5/262, IOR.

⁶² See, for example, the issue for 11 June 1946. Sindh Muslim League, Part IX, 1944-6, vol. 386, FMA.

⁶³ While the Pushtuns predominated in the surrounding tribal areas, they were in a minority in the British province. Non-Pushtun Muslims formed 55 per cent of the population, Hindus and Sikhs 8 per cent and the Pakhtuns 37 per cent. Non-Pushtun Muslims predominated in the Hazara and Dera Ismail Khan districts, while in Peshawar, Kohat and Bannu, Pakhtuns formed a clear majority.

by lineage rivalries enabled them to acquire political influence. The ascendancy of the predominantly rural Pushtun community meant that political parties which failed to appeal to its interests were inevitably confined to the margins. It also ensured that traditional Pushtun '*taburwali*'⁶⁴ political alignments would structure the operation of modern parties in the rural areas. The penalty of intermingling *taburwali* with party politics was that if one local faction joined the Muslim League its traditional rival would join the Congress and vice versa. The British patronage of the large Khans and the growing aspirations of smaller Khans also structured political developments. The latter provided the leadership of the Congress-Khudai Khidmatgar (Servant of God) movement, while many of the larger Khans turned to the Muslim League in the 1940s to safeguard their interests. The Khan brothers, Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Dr Khan Sahib, who for a generation were the outstanding political leaders of the Frontier Province, based their power around the factions of the smaller Khans. Important political repercussions also flowed from the few Hindu and Sikh residents and their virtual invisibility in the rural centres of Pushtun culture,⁶⁵ for while other Muslims might view them as a threat to their religious and material interests, as far as Pushtuns were concerned it was inconceivable that they might be ruled by non-Muslims.

The philosophy of Pushtun nationalism was articulated by Abdul Ghaffar Khan in the monthly Pushto journal, the *Pakhtun*, which he launched in May 1928. The following year he embodied these ideals in a new grassroots party called the Afghan Jirga. This was rapidly overshadowed by a parallel organisation, the Khudai Khidmatgars, which was established in November 1929 on quasi-military lines. Its members wore uniforms dyed with red brick dust since their ordinary white clothing showed the dirt too easily. The British thereafter dubbed them the 'Red Shirts'. Just as in Sindh, the politicisation of ethnic consciousness was linked with hostility towards the Punjabi 'other.' In November 1931, Abdul Ghaffar Khan outraged non-Pushtun audiences in Hazara by denigrating the Punjabi language and Punjabi culture and declaring: 'When we have self-government we will have everything in Pashto.'⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Pushtun politics revolved around factional rivalry among landholders – *parajamba*. Its most vital aspect was competition among patrilineal cousins, '*taburwali*' (*tabur* in Pushtu means first cousin). *Taburs* organised factions (*gundis*) consisting of their lineage segment and clients in their struggle for political prominence or land.

⁶⁵ Three-quarters of all non-Muslims lived in urban areas. The Hindus and Sikhs together accounted for a third of the Frontier's town dwellers.

⁶⁶ S. Rittenburg, 'The Independence Movement in India's North-West Frontier Province, 1901-1947', unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, Columbia University, p. 176.

Abdul Ghaffar Khan toured the Frontier to enrol Khudai Khidmatgars. He called on the people to reform their social and religious condition, and articulated the poorer classes' grievances against the pro-British large Khans. The alliance between Abdul Ghaffar Khan's organisations and the Congress was cemented by the 1930 Civil Disobedience campaign. The April riots in Peshawar created the martyrs and myths of the Khudai Khidmatgar movement which were to sustain it until the eve of independence. The Congress national leaders eagerly sought the Pushtuns' support because it strengthened their organisation's claim to be secular and cross-communal. For his part, Abdul Ghaffar Khan allied with them in the freedom struggle and the quest for Hindu-Muslim unity, but specifically Pushtun interests remained his first priority.

The Frontier Muslim League

The Frontier Muslim League had experienced a chequered existence since its formation in 1912. Its support was limited to urban lawyers and to the non-Pushtun Muslims residing in the Hazara region. The 1937 provincial elections starkly revealed the League's marginality. The only two elected members, P.R. Bakhsh and Malik Khuda Bakhsh, had actually stood as Azad Party candidates. The League's fortunes were ironically revived during the course of the Congress ministry of Dr Khan Sahib (September 1937-November 1939). Such measures as the abolition of the honorary magistrate and *zaildar* system and of rights to revenue remission in return for government service struck directly at the interests of the large Khans. Finally, the Government encouraged tenants in their refusal to pay rent. This drove most of the large Khans into the Muslim League's arms. Just as in neighbouring Punjab, tensions arose between long-time urban activists and the new rural entrants. The Khans were no more assiduous in organising the League than the Unionist landlords of 1938-9. Indeed, opponents termed it a 'drawing-room' and 'Motor League' as the main task of the leaders seemed to be 'travelling by car to the places where the meetings are convened, taking tea, and returning to their houses.'⁶⁷

The Frontier Muslim League profited sufficiently from the imprisonment of many of the Congress MLAs to form its first government in May 1943. Aurangzeb Khan's ministry, however, undermined rather than enhanced the League's fortunes. In order to scrape together a majority, the Muslim League had secured the support of a number of independent Assembly members. Their new found allegiance rested on the prospect of rich pickings, not on any loyalty to the party's ideals.

⁶⁷ Cited in Sayed Wiqar Ali Shah, 'Muslim Politics in the North-West Frontier province' p. 124.

'The whole Khanite class flocked into the Muslim League like vultures over a corpse', a local worker wrote despairingly to Jinnah, 'The Ministers got salaries and bribes, and members of the League Party got permits [while] the masses groaned under war conditions.'⁶⁸ Another Leaguer lamented that the ministry 'had dragged the name of the Frontier [branch] in the dust' in the way it handled 'contracts, permits and membership of syndicates for the distribution of wheat'.⁶⁹ The loyal *Khyber Mail* bluntly protested: 'Corruption with a capital C is writ large on the face of the Frontier administration and almost everybody who has anything to do with the administrative machinery there bothers about just one thing – how best to feather his own nest.'⁷⁰

Clashes between the organisational and ministerial wings of the Frontier League compounded these problems. As in Sindh such rivalry was rooted partly in ideological considerations and in the inevitable resentment the 'outs' felt towards the political 'ins'. The personal enmity between the Premier and former League President Saadullah Khan however gave it an especially bitter twist.⁷¹ The hostilities reached a climax at the Frontier League Council meeting of 25 March 1945 when the well-armed rival groups of supporters attempted to shout each other down.⁷² The All-India leadership responded to the developing crisis by instituting an enquiry led by the Committee of Action.⁷³ It uncovered widespread corruption and infighting and gloomily concluded that there was 'no organisation worth the name in the Frontier'.⁷⁴

It was however much easier to diagnose the problems than treat them. Qazi Isa, a Pushtun from Balochistan, was entrusted with the arduous task of overhauling the League organisation. The attempts at reorganisation through a series of *ad hoc* committees only intensified factionalism. Jinnah was bombarded by complaints from activists that these committees were being captured by the ministerialists who discouraged genuine workers 'whose only interest was to make the Muslim League strong for the attainment of Pakistan' because they saw the

⁶⁸ Asadul Haq to Jinnah, 20 December 1945, SHC, NWFP 1:90.

⁶⁹ Saadullah Khan to Jinnah, 1 September 1945, SHC, NWFP 1:59.

⁷⁰ *Khyber Mail*, 21 April 1944.

⁷¹ The rivalry had taken on the form of a vendetta after Aurangzeb Khan had arranged for criminal proceedings to be brought against his rival and had him subjected to the dishonour of having his house searched for allegedly hoarding unlicensed weapons.

⁷² Abdur Rahman to Liaquat Ali Khan, 28 March 1944, FMA vol. 344.

⁷³ This important standing committee of the All-India Muslim League had been appointed in December 1943 with the powers to suspend, dissolve or disaffiliate any provincial Muslim League.

⁷⁴ Proceedings of the visit of the Committee of Action to the North-West Frontier Province, FMA vol. 343, NWFP ML Part III, 1944.

death of their vested interests in 'such mass work'.⁷⁵ Another writer asserted that Qazi Isa was misleading the Quaid-e-Azam about the League's standing in the Frontier and had hardly stirred from the luxury of Deans Hotel in Peshawar when he was supposed to be organising the League.⁷⁶ The desperation of the situation was underlined by the suggestion that the Frontier League should be given over to the neighbouring Punjab branch and 'enthusiastic workers like Shaukat Hayat and Maulana Zafar Ali Khan'.⁷⁷ The All-India leadership was in such circumstances relieved to postpone further reorganisation in the summer of 1945 in order to concentrate its energies on the forthcoming provincial elections.

The Frontier Muslim League approached the polls poorly organised and internally divided. The Finance and Election Boards failed to co-ordinate their activities.⁷⁸ The allocation of tickets caused so much dissension in Peshawar that the local activists ceased campaigning.⁷⁹ There was similar disquiet elsewhere at the number of tickets given to Aurangzeb Khan's followers. Asadul Haq, a League leader from Abbotabad, complained that this demonstrated absolute disregard for elementary principles of justice and fair play. 'People ask, is this the type of Pakistan that is come to?', he lamented to Jinnah, 'and we in shame have no answer to give.'⁸⁰

When Jinnah toured the Frontier late in November 1945 he attempted to transcend such squabbles by an appeal to the wider aims of the freedom struggle. He summed this up by declaring: 'Every vote in favour of the Muslim League candidates means Pakistan. Every vote against the Muslim League candidates means Hindu Raj.'⁸¹ The rural Pakhtun voters however did not fear Hindu domination. Nor were they convinced that the Khudai Khidmatgar movement was against Islam and a tool of the Hindus. Its anti-British propaganda and attacks on the privileges of the large Khans still carried weight. The Congress emerged from the elections not only as the major party, but with a majority (19) of the 36 seats reserved for Muslims. The Muslim League had barely broken out of its urban stronghold and the non-Pushtun base of the Hazara district.

⁷⁵ Asadul Haq to Jinnah, 20 October 1945, SHC NWFP 1:90.

⁷⁶ Ghulam Rab Khan to Jinnah, 29 August 1945, SHC NWFP 1:58.

⁷⁷ Akhter to Liaquat Ali Khan, 3 April 1945, FMA vol. 344.

⁷⁸ M. Ziauddin to Liaquat Ali Khan, 2 November 1945, FMA vol. 344.

⁷⁹ A.B. Yusufi to Jinnah, 19 December 1945, SHC NWFP 1:89.

⁸⁰ Asadul Haq to Jinnah, 20 October 1945, SHC NWFP 1:90.

⁸¹ *Dawn* (Delhi), 29 November 1945.

We have seen elsewhere the reasons for the transformation in the Muslim League's fortunes in the period between the elections and the June 1947 referendum.⁸² It is important to grasp that while there was a genuine mass mobilisation during the League's civil disobedience campaign in the spring of 1947, this period also saw the raising of the slogan for an autonomous Pushtun state. This was the logical conclusion to the Congress's earlier championing of Pushtun interests and culture. It contained within it the powerful Pushtun fear of Punjabi domination 'in the name of religion.'⁸³ Three weeks before the referendum was due to be held, Abdul Ghaffar Khan declared in a public meeting at Bannu that the Congress would boycott it and continue to work peacefully for its Pakhtunistan demand; his attempts to do so in post-independence Pakistan cost him lengthy periods of imprisonment. His son Wali Khan nevertheless continued to press for Pushtun interests which were further institutionalised in the National Awami Party (NAP) in 1957. It called for the dissolution of the One Unit Scheme⁸⁴ and demanded federal reorganisation which would give greater regional autonomy. The NAP's successful passage of a bill through the West Pakistan Assembly which provided for the dissolution of the One Unit precipitated Pakistan's headlong descent to military takeover and the abrogation of the 1956 Constitution.

It is also important to note another colonial inheritance, namely the factionalised nature of the Frontier Muslim League. There was a further reorganisation of the League during the second half of 1946. This was given new impetus by a series of Pakistan Conferences organised by Pir Manki. It was further assisted by the almost daily influx of former Congress leaders including its former Frontier President Ghulam Muhammad Khan and Arbab Abdul Ghaffar, one of the Afghan *Jirga's* main organisers in Peshawar.⁸⁵ Nevertheless, the All-India leadership left nothing to chance and ensured that two of the three organisers of the referendum campaign, namely the Punjabi Leaguer Firoz Khan Noon and I.I. Chundrigar, the Commerce Minister in the Interim Government, were aloof from any provincial factional groupings.⁸⁶ Such caution was well-advised for factional infighting re-emerged once success in the referendum had been assured. It was thus hardly surprising that within a year of independence the Frontier League had split amid recriminations

⁸² See I. Talbot, *Freedom's Cry*, esp. Chapter 1; *Provincial Politics and the Pakistan Movement*, Chapter 1.

⁸³ *Tribune* (Ambala), 15 May 1947.

⁸⁴ This involved a merging of the West Pakistan provinces.

⁸⁵ Talbot, *Provincial Politics and the Pakistan Movement*, p. 24.

⁸⁶ The trio was completed by Abdul Qaiyum, the leader of the Frontier Muslim League Assembly Party.

between Pir Manki and Abdul Qaiyum. The latter, armed with the coercive administrative powers bequeathed by the Raj, clamped his authority so tightly over the Frontier League that Pir Manki had to voice his opposition outside of its ranks.

Bengal

At the time of Partition, one in three Indian Muslims (33 million) lived within Bengal's borders. Although the province's distinctive cultural and linguistic traditions marked it off from the Muslim areas of north-west India, historically it had been closely connected with the cause of Muslim separatism. Indeed, the AIML had been inaugurated in Dhaka in 1906.

The freedom struggle in Bengal shared some of the features already examined, such as clashes between the ministers and party organisers and intrigues between factional rivals in the scramble for power and patronage. Khwaja Nazimuddin's ministry from March 1943 onwards was no more adept at dealing with the acute problems brought by the war than was Aurangzeb Khan's in the Frontier or Ghulam Hussain's in Sindh. Before focusing on Pakistan's political inheritance from this era, it is necessary to point out the significant differences between the Muslim League's position in Bengal and the other majority provinces.

The Muslim League's performance in the 1937 Bengal elections was markedly superior to that in any other of the 'Pakistan' areas. It captured 39 of the 82 seats contested and emerged with three more victories than its main Muslim rival, the KPP, although it polled fewer votes.⁸⁷ The Bengal League shared power in a coalition government headed by Fazlul Haq from the 1937 elections until December 1941. During this period it greatly consolidated its power at the expense of the Premier and his KPP.⁸⁸ Thus even before the period of Abul Hashim's dynamic secretaryship of the League organisation, it was a much more influential force than elsewhere in Muslim India.

Abul Hashim became the Secretary of the Bengal Muslim League in November 1943. He aimed to build it up as a broad democratic institution, based on 'clarity of purpose' capable of 'fighting for liberation from all forms of oppression'.⁸⁹ In addition to extensively touring the *mofussil*, he employed full-time workers who received training and ac-

⁸⁷ It secured 27 per cent of the Muslim vote compared with the KPP's 31 per cent.

⁸⁸ For details see Harun-or-Rashid, *The Foreshadowing of Bangladesh*, Chapter 3. See also H. Momen, *Muslim Politics in Bengal: A Study of the Krishak Praja Party and the Elections of 1937* (Dhaka, 1972).

⁸⁹ Harun-or-Rashid, *The Foreshadowing of Bangladesh*, p. 164.

commodation at party houses. Among those based at the Calcutta centre was Sheikh Mujibur Rahman the later chief of the Awami League and architect of Bangladesh. These activities brought a rapid increase in membership in the districts of Tippera, Barisal and Dhaka during 1944. Enthusiasts hailed this rising tide of support as 'revolutionary' and rejoiced in the fact that the League had become a 'really mass movement'.⁹⁰ The League old guard of the Nawab of Dhaka's family (Khwaja faction)⁹¹ looked askance at these activities, which threatened its traditional domination. What was especially damaging to its interests was the League Secretary's insistence on elections at all levels of the organisation and his reduction of the President's powers of nomination to the League Council and Working Committee. Hashim and his supporters were dubbed as communists in such papers as *Azad* (Free) which were controlled by the Khwaja group. Unlike in Sindh, the 'progressive' organisational wing of the Muslim League triumphed over the ministerialists to such an extent that Khwaja Nazimuddin, the former Premier (March 1943-March 1945), did not stand for election in 1946. Power was passed over to the Calcutta-based politician Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy⁹² who was Hashim's patron. By the eve of the 1946 elections, the Bengal League boasted the largest grassroots support of any provincial branch of the AIML with a membership of over 1 million.⁹³ Over a decade and a half later, Ayub Khan was to turn to Abul Hashim's organising genius to establish the Convention Muslim League in East Pakistan. The efforts of the 1940s could not however be reproduced in a much more politically hostile environment and with an increasingly frail Abul Hashim deputing the work to Shamsul Huda.⁹⁴

The mass support for the Bengal Muslim League was demonstrated in its sweeping election successes in 1946. It polled so heavily that three-quarters of its opponents forfeited their deposits. The League had entrenched itself so strongly in the rural areas by 1946 that it captured 104 out of 111 seats. The popular enthusiasm its campaign generated

⁹⁰ Raghieb Ahsan to Jinnah, 15 November 1944, SHC Bengal 1:43.

⁹¹ Ten members of the family had been elected in the 1937 elections.

⁹² Suhrawardy had first come to prominence during the Khilafat movement. He then went on to organise trade unions in Calcutta. It was also during this period that he built up his notorious links with the Calcutta underworld. For a sanitised version of the Suhrawardy family's history see Begum Shaista Ikramullah, *From Purdah to Parliament* (London, 1963).

⁹³ Harun-or-Rashid, *The Foreshadowing of Bangladesh*, p. 194.

⁹⁴ Hashim optimistically claimed in October 1963 that the Convention Muslim League was organised in 3,500-4,000 unions in the East Pakistan province. American Consul Dacca to Department of State 7, October 1963. Central Foreign Political Files, 1963, Pol 6-14. National Archives, College Park.

amongst the seven out of eight Muslims ineligible to vote was evidenced by the massive crowds at its meetings and the active part played by the poor. Visiting a village, a volunteer wrote:

It was a new experience for me that the poor peasants and day labourers of the village engaged themselves in building up the League. [...] While selling treacle, Khowaz Bepari, one of the village headmen, used to realise subscriptions from the customers at the rate of two *pies* per (*maund*) of treacle. [...] Mamtaz (a very poor League worker) and his friends collected Rs. 2/- from the Muslim shopkeepers and customers in the village bazaar at the rate of one *pie* to four *annas* and deposited it in the League fund.⁹⁵

Such accounts completely contradict the generalisations of Hamza Alavi, Ashok Kapur and others concerning the Muslim League's elitism. Even remote villages in Bengal possessed primary Muslim League branches. Its rapid decline after independence should not be allowed to blind us to this reality. The later demise, as we shall see in Chapter 4, was rooted partly in the inability to meet the revolution of rising expectations for social and economic reform which the freedom struggle had generated. The partition cut away the ground from the West Bengal leadership of the Hashim-Suhrawardy group and allowed the Khawaja old guard to make a comeback. Nazimuddin became Chief Minister although he had no mass base of support. 50,000 supporters of Suhrawardy and Hashim were expelled along with their leaders from the party.⁹⁶ This situation underlined the political and cultural tensions between the Bengali- and Urdu-speaking Muslim worlds which were rooted in the freedom struggle. Significantly, Harun-or-Rashid's excellently researched study of the pre-partition decade is entitled *The Foreshadowing of Bangladesh*.

Rashid maintains that Abul Hashim's activists fought for the ideal of a sovereign East Pakistan state. Indeed Hashim prophetically warned that a united Pakistan would result in the imposition both of Urdu and an alien bureaucracy and reduce East Bengal to a stagnant backwater.⁹⁷ The vision of a sovereign Bengal was based both on the reference of the 1940 Lahore Resolution to Muslim states⁹⁸ and on the distinctiveness of Bengali cultural identity. The United Bengal scheme raised by Suhrawardy in April 1947 which was supported by the Congressmen

⁹⁵ Harun-or-Rashid, *The Foreshadowing of Bangladesh*, p. 215.

⁹⁶ Y. Samad, *A Nation in Turmoil: Nationalism and Ethnicity in Pakistan, 1937-58* (New Delhi, 1995), p. 107.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

⁹⁸ Harun-or-Rashid, *The Foreshadowing of Bangladesh*, pp. 177ff.

Surat Bose and Kiran Shankar Roy should thus be viewed not as a belated response to the threat of the province's partition, but as emerging from these long-held ideals. Rashid, unlike Joya Chatterji,⁹⁹ sees the hostility of the Congress High Command as being the primary cause of the United Bengal scheme's failure.

Crucial to future developments in East Bengal however, was the incipient conflict between the Urdu- and Bengali-speaking elites and the marginalisation of Bengali interests in the councils of the AIML. The Urdu-speaking business classes of Calcutta along with the Khwajas of Dhaka remained loyal to Jinnah's conception of an East Pakistan zone within a single Pakistan state. They also subscribed to the belief expressed as early as July 1933 by the All-Bengal Urdu Association that 'Bengali is a Hinduised and Sanskritised language' and that 'in the interests of the Muslims themselves it is necessary that they should try to have one language which cannot be but Urdu.'¹⁰⁰ This was of course firmly in step with the AIML's official two nation theory ideology. Diametrically opposed to this were the views of Bengali-speaking Muslim League members active in the East Pakistan Renaissance Society, formed in 1942 to articulate intellectually and culturally the 'ideal of Pakistan in general and Eastern Pakistan in particular'. In his May 1944 Presidential address the Muslim League journalist-cum-politician, Abul Mansur Ahmed, maintained that Bengali Muslims were not only different from Hindus, but from Muslims of other provinces. 'Religion and culture are not the same thing,' he maintained; 'religion transgresses the geographical boundary but *tamaddum* (culture) cannot go beyond the geographical boundary. [...] Here only lies the differences between *Purba* (Eastern) Pakistan and Pakistan. For this reason the people of *Purba* Pakistan are a different nation from the people of other provinces of India and from the "religious brothers" of Pakistan.'¹⁰¹

It was however the Urdu speaking elite which had a direct line to Jinnah in Bombay and New Delhi. The Quaid-e-Azam never nominated Abul Hashim or Suhrawardy to the AIML Working Committee despite their tremendous organisational achievements. He preferred to deal with such trusted lieutenants as Hasan and Ahmed Ispahani¹⁰² who knew little of Bengal outside of Calcutta, or with the Dhaka Nawab family

⁹⁹ J. Chatterji, *Bengal Divided: Hindu Communalism and Partition, 1932-1947* (Cambridge, 1994). Chatterji devotes more attention to the communalisation of the Bengal Congress's *bhadralok* supporters in the wake of the political and economic challenges to their former supremacy from the 1930s onwards.

¹⁰⁰ Harun-or-Rashid, *The Foreshadowing of Bangladesh*, p. 45.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

¹⁰² The Ispahani family originated in Persia. It moved to Calcutta from its earlier Madras and Bombay trading centres at the turn of the twentieth century.

which was bitterly opposed to the Muslim League roots being put down in the countryside by the Hashim-Suhrawardy group. Both the language issue and the marginalisation of Bengali political influence were to subsequently dominate East-West Pakistan relations and contribute to the Bangladesh breakaway of 1971. An indication of the disregard for the Bengali Muslims' interests which awaited in a future Pakistan state was provided by the AIML's decision in October 1946 to fill the province's quota on the Interim Government with a scheduled caste representative, Jogendra Nath Mondal.

The All-India Muslim League and Pakistan's future political development

The achievement of Pakistan just a decade after the trouncing of the AIML in the 1937 provincial elections remains one of the major reversals of political fortune in the modern era. Without Jinnah's adroit leadership, history would have taken a very different course. The centralisation of power in the hands of the Quaid-i-Azam and his allies on the AIML Working Committee nevertheless set a dangerous precedent. The more 'representative' institutions of the Muslim League, the Council of the AIML and the provincial branches were increasingly subject to the authority of bodies nominated by the President, such as the Working Committee and, from December 1943, the Committee of Action. It could be argued that the tightening of the organisation was necessary in view of the factional intrigues in the provinces. Moreover, Jinnah always maintained that his authority was not dictatorial but rested on the AIML Constitution. Nevertheless, the Working Committee always rubber-stamped his behest and the centralising powers conferred by the AIML Constitution provided a model for Pakistan's future political development. A tradition of looking to a great leader was also established which could have dangerous consequences in the hands of less honest leaders than Jinnah.

Future centre-province problems were presaged by the fact that the Muslim majority areas (especially Bengal) which were to form Pakistan counted for little in the AIML's counsels. Bengal with its 33 million population possessed just ten more members on the AIML Council than UP with its 7 million Muslims. This reflected the historical role of UP and Aligarh in the foundation of Muslim separatism in India. For most of its existence the focal point of the Muslim League had lain not in the future Pakistan areas but in the Muslim minority centres of population. The dominance of politicians from Bombay and UP even after the introduction of the new constitution in February 1938¹⁰³ on

¹⁰³ This increased Punjabi and Bengali membership of the AIML Council to 90 and

such powerful Muslim League bodies as the Council and the Working Committee not only gave the Muslim League organisation a top heavy look, but meant that many of Pakistan's future leaders would lack a popular power base. The future Premier Liaquat Ali Khan was a good case in point. He was eventually nominated a place in the Constituent Assembly from an East Bengal constituency. As Yunas Samad has perceptively pointed out, 'the establishment of a strong centre was a lifeline' for many *mohajir* politicians who lacked electoral support in the country.¹⁰⁴ The historical role which politicians from UP had played in both the emergence of Muslim separatism and in the subsequent counsels of the AIML, was by the 1980s feeding directly into the rhetoric of the MQM. The claim that the *mohajir* community from UP represented the true Pakistanis and had made the most sacrifices for the achievement of the state has formed an important component of *mohajir* political identity.¹⁰⁵

The freedom struggle also saw the glimmerings of Pakistan's post-independence political culture of intolerance. In order to justify its claim to be the sole representative of the Indian Muslims, the AIML had adopted a strident approach in which its Muslim Nationalist, Unionist or Red Shirt rivals were denounced as both traitors to Islam and the Indian Muslim community. The Congress, because it was not making such exclusivist claims, could afford to be more tolerant. Significantly, while the Congress in the early years of India's independence sought to accommodate and absorb opposition under its umbrella, the Muslim League retained its rigidity. At its December 1947 Karachi Council meeting, for example, Suhrawardy unsuccessfully attempted to open its membership to all communities. This would have enabled the large Hindu minority in East Bengal to have entered mainstream politics. But ideology took precedence over the task of nation-building. Such a move 'would finish the League', Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar explained; 'I say if the League exists, Islam exists, Musalmans exist.'¹⁰⁶

While the Congress integrated diverse groupings into an Indian participant democracy, the Muslim League crushed those who contested its hegemonic claims. It set about this task through such legislation as the PRODA of 1949 and the later Security of Pakistan Act (1952).

¹⁰⁰ members respectively. They still only had 40 per cent of the votes however. UP had 70 members and Bombay 30.

¹⁰⁴ Yunas Samad, *A Nation in Turmoil*, p. 127.

¹⁰⁵ For further details see Julian Richards, 'Mohajir Subnationalism and the Mohajir Qaumi Movement in Sindh Province, Pakistan', unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge 1993, pp. 199ff.

¹⁰⁶ H. Zaheer, *The Separation of East Pakistan*, p. 18.

In addition the central government intervened in provincial affairs. The recourse to such measures was not simply a response to Pakistan's pressing problems. This attitude to dissent had also been conditioned by the freedom struggle itself. Thereafter, it was all too easy to identify the national interest with that of the Muslim League and to regard opposition as illegitimate. Symptomatic of this attitude was the bald statement by Liaquat Ali Khan in October 1950 that 'the formation of new political parties in opposition to the Muslim League is against the interest of Pakistan.'¹⁰⁷

Four important inheritances from the freedom struggle can be identified as exerting a profound influence on post-colonial political developments. The first was the poor institutionalisation of the Muslim League with the exception of a few districts in Bengal. Many branches existed only on paper or were weakened by factional infighting. The pyramid of branches stretching from the localities to the All-India level which was the hallmark of the Congress was noticeably absent. The League was thus far less able to form a democratic pillar of the post-colonial state than its Congress counterpart. Institutional weakness was compounded by the centralisation of power within the AIML and its exclusivist claims. Together all these features militated against the establishment of a participant democracy.

A second important inheritance was the incipient clash between regional and 'Pakistani' identities. Within Bengal for example the Muslim League's popular base of support rested on regional interests and identities which were difficult to harmonise with Jinnah's All-India understanding of the Pakistan demand. Similar difficulties were present in Sindh, Punjab and the Frontier. In these circumstances it was hardly surprising that provincialism as it was termed became a barrier to nation building almost immediately after independence.

The third legacy was the low level of political culture in the Muslim majority areas. Even at the height of the Pakistan struggle, many landlords had revealed that their primary occupation was the cynical pursuit of power. Factionalism, corruption and violence formed part of the League's everyday experience. Its more highminded activists had to live with this, for they had no alternative but to accommodate themselves with the realities of rural power, as they sought to expand the Muslim League's influence from the traditional narrow urban confines. Of equal concern was the inexperience of its provincial League leaderships – many of the most able Muslim politicians in the majority areas had favoured its rivals.

¹⁰⁷ *The Statesman* (Calcutta), 28 October 1950.

Finally, the freedom struggle had gained its popular support by being deliberately vague about the nature of a future Pakistan state. Was Islamisation to be the goal, or as Jinnah seemed to indicate in his speech of 11 August 1947, a plural secular society? Ambiguity concerning future national aims rested in part in the fact that the Pakistan movement was simultaneously a 'movement of Islam' and of Muslims. Later generations of Pakistani leaders have however ignored the complexities and ambiguities of the freedom struggle. For instance the acting Prime Minister Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi declared early in October 1990 that 'it was imperative to constantly keep an eye on the objective behind the creation of Pakistan which was *nothing but seeking the glory of Islam*'¹⁰⁸ (emphasis added).

Given the exigencies which faced the All-India leadership in the early 1940s, it could hardly be blamed for attempting to be all things to all men. But by presenting Pakistan as a panacea for all social and personal ills, the seeds were sown for the disenchantment which has been so palpable in the post-colonial era. It could be argued that none of this was unique to Pakistan's situation. European decolonisation usually brought in its wake the problems of transforming nationalist movements into political parties and meeting the demands of a revolution of rising expectations. However the tendencies towards authoritarianism were stronger in Pakistan than in some new states because of the inherited tradition of the British security state and the myriad problems which faced Pakistan in the chaotic aftermath of partition. It is to these and the governmental strategies for their management that we now turn.

¹⁰⁸ Dawn, 5 October 1990.

PICKING UP THE PIECES:

PAKISTAN, 1947-49

Pakistan's birth was a difficult one which involved the immense suffering of thousands of its citizens. Its British midwife had abandoned it to a chaotic environment in which an elder Indian sibling looked on with scarcely disguised hostility. In such circumstances, historians appear slightly perverse in directing more attention to how Pakistan was conceived, rather than to why it was not stillborn. Furthermore the question arises whether the medicine administered to the fledgling state carried long-term side-effects which stunted its democratic development.¹ Before addressing these questions it is necessary both to delineate the features of the new-born state and to describe the traumas which surrounded its arrival into the world.

The economic and geographical inheritance

From a political standpoint, the most significant features of Pakistan's geography in 1947 were its relatively small share of the Indian sub-continent and the contrasts and distance both within and between its western and eastern wings. Pakistan was by no means a small country, with a combined area almost four times that of the United Kingdom, or equal to that of Texas and Arizona in the United States, but it was dwarfed by its Indian neighbour. It had in fact inherited 23 per cent of the landmass of undivided India and 18 per cent of the population.² The disputes over Kashmir, the division of assets and water at the time of Partition, increased anxieties about Pakistan's precarious geopolitical situation in relation to its much larger neighbour.³ Furthermore, the Pakistani sense of inferiority and insecurity was

¹ A. Jalal, *Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia*, p. 23.

² *Ibid.*

³ Indian force levels not only outstrip those of Pakistan, but they are backed up by an indigenous arms-manufacturing capability which Pakistan lacks. The country's topography and main lines of communication further increase its vulnerability to Indian attack.

psychologically rooted in the country's status as a seceding state rather than inheritor of the Raj. Membership of international organisations such as the United Nations had devolved upon India, whereas Pakistan had to go cap-in-hand to apply for membership.

Diplomatic and defence policies have been decisively influenced by the need to counteract this Indian regional preponderance. As we shall see in later chapters, external alliances with the United States⁴ in the CENTO (1955) and SEATO Pacts (1954) and friendship with China⁵ were successively called into play to help offset a strategic imbalance which worsened dramatically following the secession of East Pakistan. The emphasis on building an effective army and bureaucracy rather than representative institutions in the early years after independence was also rooted in this geopolitical situation. Wayne Wilcox and Stephen Cohen have linked the military's central role in the political decision-making process with Pakistan's unfavourable security environment, which has seen domestic policy much more influenced by defence and foreign policy than is usual.⁶

The Dominion of Pakistan started life not only with a strategic deficit, but also with an industrial one. At its outset it had an overwhelmingly agrarian society in which new definitions of land rights and the needs of imperial rule had strengthened the existing powers of elite groups. Capitalist farming had been unevenly limited to the irrigated areas in Punjab, Sindh and the Peshawar Valley of the Frontier. Elsewhere age-old nomadism and subsistence farming remained unaltered.

North-west India's status as what has been termed an 'agrarian appendix' to the subcontinent is revealed in the low rate of urbanisation and industrialisation. The 1931 Frontier Census for example enumerated the urban population at just 16 per cent, a figure which was itself inflated by the listing of large agricultural villages as towns.⁷ Sindh recorded an urban population just 2 per cent higher⁸ and even the

⁴ Before joining SEATO and CENTO, Pakistan signed a mutual defence assistance pact with the United States in 1954.

⁵ Close ties with China date back to the early 1960s. They were symbolically cemented with the opening of the Karakoram highway linking the two countries in 1982. Four years later the countries signed an agreement for cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

⁶ W. Wilcox, 'Political Role of the Army in Pakistan: Some Reflections' in S. P. Varma and V. Narain (eds), *Pakistan Political System in Crisis: Emergence of Bangladesh* (Jaipur, 1972), p. 35; S. Cohen, 'Pakistan' in E. A. Kolodziej and R. E. Harkavy (eds), *Security Policies of Developing Countries* (Lexington, MA, 1982), pp. 93-118.

⁷ *Census of India 1931*, vol. XV, part 1, pp. 40-1.

⁸ *Census of India 1941*, vol. XII, p. 2.

more developed Punjab province remained essentially rural in character.⁹

Colonial industrial development had clustered around Bombay, Ahmedabad, Calcutta and the West Bengal/Bihar coal belt. These areas all formed part of the new Indian dominion leaving Pakistan with just 10 per cent of the subcontinent's industrial base. Significantly, in the areas which went to Pakistan in 1947, there was no equivalent of the giant TATA steelworks at Jamshedpur or of the concentrated industrial belts to the west of Calcutta. Indeed on the eve of partition just one of the top fifty-seven Indian companies was owned by a Muslim.¹⁰ Hindus in fact owned the majority of the industrial enterprises which were in existence in the Muslim majority regions. This, together with the traditional Hindu domination of trade and the professions, explains the disproportionately high non-Muslim urban populations¹¹ in the future Pakistan areas. The urban imbalance of the Hindus and Sikhs was especially pronounced in the southern towns of the Frontier and in the Thar Parkar and Hyderabad districts of Sindh. Karachi, which was the second largest urban centre in the future West Pakistan with a population just under 400,000, possessed a substantial Hindu population of over 130,000.¹² Cities such as Lahore and Peshawar had always been inhabited by substantial non-Muslim populations, but British rule enhanced the differences between them and their rural hinterland by creating administrative and professional opportunities for employment in addition to the traditional commercial and trading pursuits. Non-Muslims eagerly seized them because of their greater proficiency in English. The impact on Muslim separatism of this educational and socio-economic 'gap' is explored in a later chapter. *Mohajirs* mainly took over the running of Hindu-owned shops and businesses after 1947, although in some instances, former artisan employees or local entrepreneurs stepped into the gap.

Partition not only left most industrial development in India, but separated Pakistani raw materials from their markets. The main cotton producing areas of what became West Pakistan for example had supplied the raw materials to mills in Bombay and Ahmedabad. Just fourteen of the subcontinent's 394 cotton mills were located in Pakistan at the

⁹ In 1921 60.5 per cent of the population was directly dependent on agriculture. *Census of India 1921*, vol. XV, p. 9.

¹⁰ Claude Markovits, *Indian Business and Nationalist Politics, 1931-1939: The Indigenous Capitalist Class and the Rise of the Congress Party* (Cambridge, 1985), Appendix 1.

¹¹ In the Frontier, 74.5 per cent of the Hindus and 71.5 per cent of the Sikhs lived in urban areas in 1941. *Census of India 1941*, vol. X, p. 20. In Sindh, there were 129 Hindus to every 100 Muslims living in urban areas, although they were outnumbered by 4:1 in the countryside. *Census of India 1931*, vol. VIII, part 1, Ch. 11, Statement 24, p. 51.

¹² This population largely comprised Gujarati-speakers from the Bombay region.

time of partition.¹³ It also emphasised the uneven capitalist development between the western and eastern wings of Pakistan. Punjab possessed two-thirds of all the organised industrial units situated in the Pakistan areas.¹⁴ East Pakistan, which produced the bulk of the world's raw jute supply, did not in fact boast a single mill since all the crop was sent in undivided India to Calcutta where it was made into hessian and exported. As British officials acknowledged before the partition of Bengal, East Bengal without Calcutta would be reduced to a 'rural slum'. During the 1950s and '60s East Pakistan was unable to overcome its relative backwardness at the time of Partition – with increasingly dangerous political consequences.

From this low starting base Pakistan's industrial development as a whole has been impressive,¹⁵ as has been the exploitation of power potential, which was very limited at independence.¹⁶ Despite the advance of both Karachi and Hyderabad, the greatest provincial concentration of manufacturing is today firmly established in Punjab. Within the province, Lahore and Faisalabad (formerly Lyallpur) retain their position as the major industrial locations, although there has been considerable growth in Multan (cotton ginning) and Gujranwala (metal engineering, electrical goods and textiles). There are still a large number of bazaar workshops, but the size of unit has increased. Manufacturing has also diversified from the colonial era, in which it was largely agro-related with the exception of the Sialkot sports goods industry, the Lyallpur textile industry and foundries like the Ittefaq concern which was jointly established by Nawaz Sharif's father in 1940. Nevertheless the shortage in electricity generation remains a major infrastructural weakness. While the poor economic inheritance at the time of Partition did not inhibit Pakistan's subsequent industrial development, the democratic deficit resulting from the legacy of a large feudal agrarian sector has proved more difficult to overcome.

Furthermore, Pakistan received but a meagre share of the Raj's material inheritance. In principle it was entitled to 17.5 per cent of the assets of undivided India, but the growing mistrust between the two governments prevented a smooth division of the spoils. It was not until December 1947 that an agreement was reached on Pakistan's share of the cash balances. The bulk of these (Rs.550 million) were held back by the Government of India as a result

¹³ Muhammad Ali, *The Emergence of Pakistan* (New York, 1967), p. 334.

¹⁴ A. Weiss, *Culture, Class and Development in Pakistan*, p. 33.

¹⁵ As a result of an industrial growth-rate of 10 per cent per annum throughout much of the 1950s and '60s the industrial sector today contributes around 18 per cent of the GDP.

¹⁶ Natural gas was discovered at Sui in Sindh in 1955 and has become a major source of power.

of the hostilities in Kashmir, and only paid on 15 January 1948 following Gandhi's intervention and fasting. Pakistan's military equipment was also delivered tardily by the Indians. Just over 23,000 of the 160,000 tons of ordnance stores allotted to Pakistan by the Joint Defence Council were actually delivered.¹⁷ Most of the defence-production facilities and military stores in fact remained on the Indian side of the border.

Strategic and institutional inheritances

Strategically and institutionally Pakistan faced harsh challenges from its inception. Its eastern wing was separated from West Pakistan by 1,000 miles of Indian territory. This bred not only a sense of isolation from the centres of power but reinforced the existence of different world outlooks in the two wings with West Pakistan turning its face to the Middle East, East Pakistan to South-east Asia.¹⁸

Pakistan's north-western borders not only contained potentially troublesome tribal populations but were vulnerable to incursions from an unfriendly Afghan neighbour. The government in Kabul refused to accept nineteenth-century Anglo-Afghan treaties¹⁹ which now demarcated its country's boundaries with Pakistan. It also expressed support for the Khudai-Khidmatgars' Pakhtunistan demands and voted against Pakistan's admission to the United Nations. Armed tribal incursions from Afghanistan into Pakistan's border areas began with the transfer of power and became a continual irritant. Afghan-Pakistan relations were to reach their nadir in 1955 when diplomatic relations were severed following the ransacking of the Pakistan embassy in Kabul, and again in 1961 when the Pakistan Army had to repel major Afghan incursions at Bajaur. By then the army had been greatly expanded, but at the time of partition it was too weak simultaneously to face an Indian and Afghan threat. This reality was immediately brought home by the necessity of employing almost 500 British officers because of the shortfall of qualified Pakistanis in the technical branches and at senior army rank. In the bifurcation of the Indian Army, Pakistan received just six armoured regiments to India's forty, and eight artillery and infantry regiments to India's forty and twenty-one

¹⁷ R. LaPorte, *Power and Privilege: Influence and Decision-making in Pakistan* (Berkeley, CA, 1975), p. 36.

¹⁸ A. McGrath, *The Destruction of Pakistan's Democracy* (Karachi, 1996), p. 4.

¹⁹ The most important of these followed the November 1893 negotiations between Sir Mortimer Durand and Amir Abdurrahman, and established what became known as the Durand Line boundary between British India and Afghanistan.

respectively.²⁰ The Pakistan Army was greatly expanded from its modest beginnings, but only at the cost of dependency on foreign aid and by siphoning funds from development activities.

The organisational atrophy of the Muslim League outside Bengal, as we have already noted, was a major feature of the freedom struggle. This institutional weakness contrasted with the pyramidal Congress organisation which stretched from New Delhi down to the villages. It was thus better placed to articulate local aspirations and implement policies than its Pakistani counterpart. Most importantly of all, as Ayesha Jalal has pointed out, the League's weakness meant that Pakistani politicians had to concede much 'greater autonomy to the administrative bureaucracy' to consolidate state authority than did their Indian counterparts.²¹

India had inherited both the colonial state's central apparatus in the former imperial capital New Delhi and the Bengal provincial secretariat in Calcutta. Pakistan on the other hand had to improvise its federal government in the provisional capital at Karachi. The Constituent Assembly was housed in the Sindh Assembly building. Far more important than locating officials to Karachi and finding space to house them however, was the shaping of a new federal structure and coordinating the administration of the provinces and princely states. A new provincial government also had to be created at Dhaka in East Pakistan. This task was especially difficult as the majority of the officials were Hindus and had opted for service in India. Indeed, of the 133 Muslim Indian Civil Service (ICS) and Indian Political Service (IPS) officials who opted for Pakistan at the time of partition, just one came from Bengal.²² Muslims from other areas of Pakistan were despatched to East Pakistan, although this remedy was to evoke later claims of internal colonisation.

At the same time as establishing a system of government literally from scratch, with ministers using wooden boxes as their tables,²³ the Pakistan authorities were faced with the serious refugee problem which accompanied the partition of Punjab. The two-way mass migrations of August-November 1947 occurred against a background of horrific massacres, administrative chaos and mounting conflict between the two dominions over the division of assets, water ownership and water use and the political future of the northern princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. Most of these problems remained unresolved at the time when

²⁰ S.P. Cohen, *The Pakistan Army*, p. 7.

²¹ Jalal, *Democracy and Authoritarianism*, p. 22.

²² R. Braibanti, *Research on the Bureaucracy of Pakistan* (Durham, NC, 1966), p. 49.

²³ K.B. Sayeed, *Pakistan The Formative Phase 1857-1948* (London, 1968), p. 261.

Pakistan received the shattering blow of the death of its architect Muhammad Ali Jinnah in September 1948. Indeed as late as May 1960 the joint Indo-Pakistan Punjab Partition Implementation Committee was still grinding its way through various financial disputes, relating to government revenues, pensions of the victims of the 1947 disturbances, third party claims and public investments.²⁴

Massacres and migrations

The magnitude of the refugee problem is brought home by the stark fact that Pakistan's 1951 Census enumerated one in ten of the population, some 7 million people, as of refugee origin.²⁵ While most refugees went to West Pakistan, the influx into the eastern wing should not be overlooked. At the time of the 1951 Census some 700,000 refugees were reported as residing in East Bengal.²⁶ Two-thirds of these had originated in West Bengal and Assam, while the remainder were Urdu-speaking migrants from Bihar and UP. Most refugees²⁷ had arrived between August and November 1947; at the same time, an almost equal number of Hindus and Sikhs had departed for India.

In the three and a half months which followed independence, 4.6 million Muslims were evacuated from the East Punjab alone.²⁸ The migrations were accompanied by horrific massacres which at the most conservative estimate claimed 200,000 lives.²⁹ The worst violence occurred in Punjab which had been partitioned along a line passing between Lahore and Amritsar. The other disturbed areas were the Punjab princely

²⁴ American Consul Lahore to Department of State, 25 May 1960. 790D.00(W)6-162-790D 1/2-1060, National Archives at College Park.

²⁵ Cited in K.R. Sipe, 'Karachi's Refugee Crisis: The Political, Economic and Social Consequences of Partition-Related Migration', unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, Duke University, 1976, p. 73.

²⁶ T. P. Wright, 'Indian Muslim Refugees in the Politics of Pakistan', *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* XII, (1975), p. 194.

²⁷ The 1951 Census defined a refugee as a 'person who had moved into Pakistan as a result of partition or for fear of disturbances connected therewith.' The term *muhajir* is narrower in meaning and can only be understood in the Islamic context of religious flight (*hijra*). Such flight is central to Islam and indeed the Muslim calendar is dated from the Prophet's flight from Mecca to Medina in AD 622. The term *muhajir* was applied to the faithful who followed him. It has since been applied to Muslims who have fled to preserve their faith and is encouraged by the Quran, Surah 4, Women, 'He who emigrates in the path of God will find frequent refuge and abundance.'

²⁸ The exact figure given by Brigadier F.H. Stevens, commander of the Pakistan Military Evacuation Organisation, was 4,680,000. Quoted in *Eastern Times* (Lahore), 25 Dec. 1947.

²⁹ Sir Penderel Moon cited this figure in his work *Divide and Quit* (London, 1961). The controversy concerning it has recently been reopened in A. Roberts, *Eminent Churchillians* (London, 1994), pp. 128-9.

states and western UP. Bengal remained largely peaceful despite the 'great Calcutta killings' and subsequent rural Noakhali violence and the uncertainties created by its own partition. Even such a prominent Muslim League politician as Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy continued to reside in Calcutta until 1949. Large minority populations remained in both East and West Bengal. The existence of a considerable Hindu minority in East Pakistan was another factor giving its politics a different flavour from that of West Pakistan. A further important legacy for East Pakistan of the Partition era was the presence of refugees from Bihar and UP who had fled the communal violence in their Indian homeland. Their attachment to North Indian culture led to increasing conflict with the indigenous Bengali elite. Those who were able, embarked on the second migration of their life in 1971. Many remained 'stranded' in refugee camps and the issue of their repatriation emerged as a major demand of the *mohajir* movement in Sindh in the late 1980s. Indeed the MQM-PPP Accord collapsed over the repatriation issue in October 1989 with dramatic consequences for both national and provincial politics.

The new Pakistan government was totally unprepared for the mass migrations and had not anticipated the violence which precipitated the flood of refugees. The demand for a separate Muslim homeland had not been linked with a call for movements of population. This was discouraged by the uncertainties over the exact boundary demarcation. Moreover, the so-called 'hostage' theory propounded the benefits of large minority populations in both India and Pakistan as a guarantee of communal stability. The only anticipatory migration which Jinnah had encouraged was the establishment of some 'nation-building' enterprises in the Pakistan areas. The future problems might however have been foreseen from the stockpiling of weapons in Punjab and its surrounding princely states from the spring of 1947 onwards. Private Sikh armies³⁰ had sprung up often under the leadership of ex-INA (Indian National Army) soldiers in the wake of the attacks on the scattered Sikh communities of north-west Punjab in March 1947.³¹ During the final days before the publication of the Radcliffe Boundary Award, Sikh raiding parties launched heavy attacks on Muslim villages in disputed 'border' areas of Punjab.³² Shortly before independence, 5,000 Muslim refugees reached Lahore from the disturbed Amritsar district.

³⁰ Such as the Akal Fauj and *shahidi jathas*.

³¹ See I. Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj*, p. 228. 40,000 Sikhs had taken refuge in hurriedly established camps before being transported to the safety of Amritsar following the disturbances in the Mianwali, Jhelum, Attock and Rawalpindi districts.

³² Punjab FR, 30 July 1947, 13 August 1947. L/P&J/5/250, IOR.

They arrived in a city already abandoned by its Hindu and Sikh inhabitants following weeks of communal disturbances.

The causes of the Partition-related violence are complex and have evoked considerable controversy. Authors have debated whether Mountbatten should be held at least partly responsible because of his bringing forward the British departure from June 1948 to August 1947 and making inadequate security arrangements in the Punjab border areas.³³ The West Punjab Government apportioned the blame to the Sikhs,³⁴ while non-Muslims pointed accusingly at the role of the Muslim National Guards.³⁵

Boundary demarcation certainly played a part in Sikh violence as did the need for revenge following the earlier assaults in West Punjab. The publication of the Boundary Award added desperation to this desire for it involved the loss to Pakistan of the rich Sikh farmlands of Lyallpur³⁶ and the shrine of Nankana Sahib.³⁷ Indeed, shortly before the British departure the Akali leader, Master Tara Singh, called for funds 'for the forthcoming struggle'. He particularly emphasised that territory full of Sikh religious places and properties should not be included in Pakistan at any cost and that Sikhs should enlist in *shahidi jathas* (martyrs' military detachments).³⁸ They not only attacked Muslim villages in the Jullundur and Amritsar districts, but also the packed refugee trains heading for Pakistan. Many of the *jathas* operated from the safety of the neighbouring Sikh princely states. The situation became so chaotic following the collapse of the civil administration in the East Punjab³⁹ that Master Tara Singh was forced to admit to India's first Chief of General Staff that he could not guarantee Muslim refugees safe passage through Amritsar.⁴⁰ Reports of atrocities such as when Sita Ram, the

³³ For a trenchant criticism of Mountbatten's role see A. Roberts, *Eminent Churchillians* (London, 1994), pp. 80ff.

³⁴ See such publications as *The Sikhs in Action* and *The Sikh Plan* which were both published from Lahore in 1948.

³⁵ See G.S. Talib, *Muslim League Attack on Sikhs and Hindus in the Punjab 1947* (Allahabad, 1950).

³⁶ Sikhs had acquired lands in the Canal Colonies which they had helped develop. On 13 September 1947, a convoy of 40,000 Sikhs left the Lyallpur Colony taking with them all they could load on bullock carts. *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore), 19 September 1947.

³⁷ This was the birthplace of the founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanak. The village of Nankana Sahib lies some 40 miles west-south-west of Lahore.

³⁸ *The Sikh Plan*, pp. 26-7.

³⁹ The British Governor of West Punjab wrote to Jinnah on 23 September 1947, 'that the East Punjab Government has ceased to exist as a Government.' In such districts as Jullundur power subsequently lay not with the Deputy Commissioner, but with Sikh Committees of Action. Mudie to Jinnah, 23 September 1947, Mudie Papers Mss.Eur.F 164/15, IOR.

Deputy Superintendent of Police, Ambala, supervised an assault on a refugee train on 1 September which claimed 1,000 lives⁴¹ created a cycle of revenge killings.

Punjabi Muslims launched reprisals against Hindu and Sikhs residents and also attacked those who were travelling to India. The worst violence was in Sheikhpura⁴² where looting, killing and burning lasted twenty-four hours on 25-26 August. Two wells in the Namdhari Gurdwara were filled with the bodies of Hindu and Sikh women who had committed suicide to save themselves from assault.⁴³ Elsewhere in the district, Sangla Hill and Sharakpur suffered much loss of life and physical destruction. Refugee trains passing through Wazirabad, Narowal and Raiwind were frequently attacked. Indeed, the railway track between Sialkot and Amritsar was strewn with Sikh corpses.⁴⁴ The mounting disturbances sparked a massive exodus across the new international boundaries in the Punjab region. Within just ten days of Pakistan's creation, an estimated 25,000 Muslims were streaming over from East Punjab each day.⁴⁵ On 5 September alone, 50,000 Muslim refugees arrived in Kasur on foot from the Ferozepore district and the neighbouring Sikh states.⁴⁶ Three weeks later, 80,000 Muslims reached the Wagah border safely from Amritsar.⁴⁷ Caravans were visible from miles away because of the clouds of dust thrown up by the thousands of bullock carts. In the evenings their camp fires pierced the darkness. They were thus easily recognisable targets. Eye-witness accounts recall the bodies heaped on either side of the road from Amritsar to Lahore, converting the whole area into a massive graveyard.

In such cities as Delhi and Karachi the arrival of refugees sparked off disturbances against the local minority population. Riots in Karachi in January 1948 led to a belated departure of over 11,000 Hindus from the city. Events followed a similar course, though on a much larger scale, in Delhi where trouble began in and around the city early in

40 H.V. Hodson, *The Great Divide: Britain-India-Pakistan* (London, 1969), p. 411.

41 *The Sikhs in Action*, p. 29.

42 Non-Muslims formed around a third of the population of the Sheikhpura district. The Sikhs had played an important role in its agricultural development and the district of course contained the Nankana Sahib birthplace of Guru Nanak. The resistance put up by the Hindu and Sikh villagers of Bhullair has been commemorated in folk songs and stories. M. S. Randhawa, *Out of The Ashes - an Account of the Rehabilitation of Refugees from West Pakistan in Rural Areas of East Punjab* (Chandigarh, 1954), p. 15.

43 G. S. Talib, *Muslim League Attacks on Sikhs and Hindus in the Punjab 1947*, p. 170.

44 *Ibid.*, p. 191.

45 *Eastern Times* (Lahore), 26 August 1947.

46 *Ibid.*, 9 September 1947.

47 *Ibid.*, 2 October 1947.

September soon after the advent of the first fugitives from Pakistan. They instigated attacks on Muslim localities and in some instances forcibly seized property. As the native progressive novelist Shahid Ahmad, a wealthy native of Delhi, recalls in his autobiography *Dilhi ki Bipta* (The Sad Tale of Delhi), Muslim houses in such suburbs as Karol Bagh were marked so that they could be identified by assailants. He also details the defence systems of gates on streets, guard groups and coloured lights - red if riots threatened, green as an all-clear signal - which the Muslims designed for their protection. When they had been evacuated, Muslims were herded into camps in places like Purana Qila and Humayan's Tomb. The latter camp was bulging with over 30,000 refugees by December 1947.⁴⁸ Shahid Ahmad provides graphic details of the squalid conditions there.

The migration from Delhi and UP was, however, by no means the final chapter in Muslim refugee history. The Indian 'police action' in the princely state of Hyderabad in September 1948 led to a further influx of refugees to Pakistan. According to the 1951 Census there were 95,000 Hyderabad refugees.⁴⁹ Muslims have in fact continued to leave India at times of communal tension, as for instance after the January 1964 Calcutta riots⁵⁰ and particularly in the wake of the wars of 1965 and 1971. Bouts of communal violence in East Pakistan caused a similar Hindu exodus. Violence in the Noakhali district in July 1962 was prompted by the arrival of Muslims expelled by the Indian authorities from Tripura state.⁵¹

The poor physical state of many of the migrants added to the Pakistan Government's problems of resettlement. In the confusion, families had been split up, their womenfolk kidnapped and disgraced. Many refugees had been robbed of all their possessions by the East Punjab police. The Sub-Inspector of Police at Sarhali, for example, extorted Rs.10,000 from the villagers of Kot Muhammad Khan as the price for a military escort.⁵² The police looted trains to such an extent that the East Punjab Governor,

48 Report of A.S. Bhatnagar, Secretary to the Chief Commissioner, Delhi, 4 December 1947. MBI/D276 Mountbatten Papers, University of Southampton.

49 Sipe, *Karachi's Refugee Crisis*, pp. 109ff.

50 Communal tensions were high in the subcontinent at this time over the Hazratbal episode. The violence in Calcutta had been preceded by conflict in Khulna and Jessore in East Pakistan. Within a few days of the violence in Calcutta, 20,000 Muslims had crossed into East Pakistan. American Embassy Karachi to Department of State 17 January 1964, Central Foreign Policy Files 1964-6 Political and Defence Pol 27-2, National Archives at College Park.

51 American Consul Dacca to Department of State 12 July 1962, 790D/007/-1162, National Archives at College Park.

52 *The Sikhs in Action*, pp. 31-2.

Sir Chandulal Trivedi, exclaimed at a conference on 17 September that he would 'not be sorry if the army shot...those [police]...including their officers.'⁵³

The squalid conditions in the refugee transit camps resulted in the spread of cholera and other diseases. The smell emanating from one of the biggest of these just outside Ludhiana was so bad 'that it continued for almost a mile down the road'.⁵⁴ According to K.C. Neogy, the Indian Minister for Relief and Rehabilitation, there were between 100 and 250 deaths from cholera in one Muslim foot convoy from Rohtak alone, besides another 200 serious cases.⁵⁵ When the Pakistan Government complained about the lack of sanitation and low rations in such camps, Nehru was forced to concede privately that these criticisms were justified.⁵⁶

The dramatic displacement of population in north west India and the tensions generated by the Kashmir dispute should not be allowed to obscure the much slower but continuous migration in the north-east. A close reading of the British Deputy High Commissioner's reports for East Bengal during 1948 immediately dispels the view that problems were non-existent in this region. In addition to surges of Hindu migration despite repeated reassurances to the minorities, there were serious tensions between the West Bengal and East Bengal governments. Sporadic armed clashes erupted in the riverine area between Rajshahi and Murshidabad throughout October and November 1948,⁵⁷ and the Pakistan border with Tripura was another flashpoint area.⁵⁸

The political inheritance from the refugee situation

The influx of refugees during the partition period was to possess long-term political consequences for Pakistan. The *mohajir*-Sindhi conflict in such cities as Karachi and Hyderabad forms the focus of later chapters, as does the transition from a *mohajir*-Punjabi-run state to what has been termed by the minorities 'Punjabistan'. It is necessary

⁵³ Report of Colonel Sher Khan, Administrative Headquarters, Military Evacuation Organisation Amritsar, 24 September 1947, Mudie Papers Eur.F 164/15, IOR.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Extract, Minutes 27th Meeting Emergency Cabinet Committee, MB1/D276, Mountbatten Papers, University of Southampton.

⁵⁶ Indian High Commissioner to Commonwealth Relations Office Cypher, 27 October 1947. East Punjab Affairs 1947-8, Weekly Reports-G 2275/14 Do. 35 3159, Dominions and Commonwealth Relations Office, PRO.

⁵⁷ Deputy High Commissioner's Report for East Bengal for the Period Ending 31 October 1948; 20 November 1948; 27 November 1948, L?P&J/5/323, IOR.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

to note here three immediate consequences of the refugee situation: namely the politicisation of the resettlement issue caused by the need for refugee politicians to establish a vote bank in Pakistan; the tension between the Sindh and central authorities; and the differing experiences of *mohajirs* from Punjab and UP.

Refugee politicians from East Punjab were allowed to take up their seats in the new West Punjab Assembly but they needed to reassemble their former vote banks in order to survive in the long term. From July 1948 onwards Chaudhri Muhammad Hasan led them in a vociferous campaign for district-wise resettlement. The East Punjab MLA Rao Khurshid Ali took matters into his own hands and collected 50,000 of his followers in Montgomery from as far afield as Sindh and Bahawalpur.⁵⁹ The British Governor of the West Punjab sternly warned of the unthinkable consequences of making refugees who had only just settled move all over again. But the refugee Premier the Nawab of Mamdot, supported by his Education Minister Sheikh Karamat Ali, vacillated on the issue of district-wise settlement. Two important consequences stemmed from this. First the earlier spontaneous clashes between refugees and officials became more overtly political. In August 1948 for example police had to *lathi-charge* 500 refugees who had blocked the road near the Police Superintendent's residence in Multan and had raised anti-Pakistan slogans in a procession carrying effigies of the Deputy Commissioner and Camp Commander.⁶⁰ In another incident in Lahore 2,000 irate refugees had marched to the Municipal Office and smashed cars parked outside it before vandalising the office itself.⁶¹ Second, these disturbances, along with the problems in Sindh, led Jinnah in one of his last actions to authorise the declaration of a state of emergency regarding the rehabilitation of refugees. This was issued under Section 102 of the 1935 Government of India Act which served as Pakistan's constitution. The centre had previously shied away from what was a provincial responsibility, and this summary action was to be one of a number of occasions early in Pakistan's history when a precedent was established for overriding provincial politicians.

The situation facing UP refugee politicians was of course even more difficult than that of their East Punjab counterparts. They had dominated the central organs of the All-India Muslim League but had no Pakistani base, or large numbers of tenants and labourers who could be relocated so as to provide them with one. In such circumstances they were reluctant

⁵⁹ Mudie to Jinnah, 5 August 1948, Mudie Papers Eur. F 164/15, IOR.

⁶⁰ Mudie to Jinnah, 20 August 1948, Mudie Papers Eur. F 164/15, IOR.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

to hold elections which would pitch them into obscurity. This in part explains the delay in holding national elections which would have revamped the Constituent Assembly. This delay, which was also rooted in the tensions between West and East Pakistan, was to provide an opening for the establishment of a non-elected bureaucratic authority.

The uneasy relations between the Sindh government and the central authorities were another consequence of the refugee situation. The province's Premier, Muhammad Ayub Khuhro strongly opposed the demand that Sindh should accept those refugees who could not be absorbed in West Punjab. By December 1947 Sindh had only resettled 244,000 displaced persons, while West Punjab had resettled over 4 million.⁶² Its government that month agreed to take another 500,000 refugees provided that they were relocated in the Sukkur, Shikarpur and Mirpurkhas districts as Karachi was 'super-saturated'. Within a month Khuhro had reneged on this promise, declaring that Sindh would be unable to rehabilitate more than 150,000 refugees during the first half of 1948. This 'uncooperative' attitude was criticised by the West Punjab Governor. In a letter to Jinnah early in 1948 he cited census figures to demonstrate that Sindh had a net loss of 600,000 Hindu and Sikh agriculturalists and therefore should have no difficulty in meeting its responsibilities.⁶³

Khuhro was severely upbraided by Raja Ghazanfar Ali, the Pakistan Minister for Refugees and Rehabilitation, at a sub-committee meeting of the Pakistan Muslim League Council held on 23 February 1948. His defence that the local populace was suffering from the burdens imposed by the refugee influx was dismissed by Ghazanfar Ali as raising 'the virus of provincialism'. 'This is not only against the teachings of Islam and in direct contravention to the principle on which we fought for the achievement of Pakistan,' Ghazanfar Ali added, 'but is a deadly weapon which if allowed to operate unchecked will destroy the foundations of our newly-born state.'⁶⁴ Khuhro's stance on the refugee issue was a contributory factor in his eventual downfall. It was to exert a much wider negative impact on Pakistani politics, for it not only strengthened Sindhi sentiment against the centre, but also encouraged the precedent of executive action against elected representatives. This boded ill for the future.

The differing experiences of *mohajirs* from UP to those from East Punjab and Gujarat is of crucial importance to an understanding of post-independence political developments. Linked with this is their self-

⁶² *Dawn*, 12 December 1947.

⁶³ Mudie to Jinnah 4 February 1948, Mudie Papers Eur. F 164/15, IOR.

⁶⁴ *The Statesman* (Calcutta), 25 February 1948.

image that they had sacrificed for Pakistan and were engaged on a true *hijrat* rather than being 'acute' migrants. The *mohajirs* from UP were in fact just a minority of the refugees who had left India at the time of partition. Three quarters of all the *mohajirs* were Punjabis (4.7 million). They were able to settle quickly in Pakistan and rapidly abandoned the *mohajir* label. They did not have to make the linguistic and social adjustments which usually face refugees because they spoke the Punjabi language of the indigenous West Punjab population and entered an environment which was both climatically and culturally similar to that of their natal East Punjab villages. They settled on land vacated by the Sikh Jats and were thus enabled to continue their traditional agricultural pursuits.

Similarly Khoja and Memon migrants from Bombay entered a familiar environment. Karachi had formed part of the Gujarati-speaking coastal belt as a result of its administrative attachment to the Bombay Presidency. Some of the migrants had previously established business and family links. Even when this was not the case, they were able to step into the shoes of the former Hindu business class. Many Karachi enterprises which had been run by Gujarati-speaking Hindus before partition, were controlled by Gujarati-speaking Muslim migrants afterwards.

Mohajirs from UP did not share the advantages of Punjabis and Gujaratis. There was no cultural region in the Pakistan areas similar to their North Indian home. Around 60 per cent of the 464,000 *mohajirs* from UP⁶⁵ resettled in Sindh. The greatest concentration was in Karachi and Hyderabad, but a small proportion were dispersed in the towns of the interior. Some stayed in Karachi simply because they had been routed there by rail. On a less mundane note, Karachi was seen as an attractive destination because it was Pakistan's leading commercial centre and the initial headquarters of the Pakistan Government. It thus afforded better employment prospects for the mainly middle class North Indian *mohajirs* than the rural West Punjab. Finally, it is possible that the *mohajirs* were discouraged from settling in Punjabi cities like Lahore and Multan because of their domination by the traditional landed elites, although this did not discourage settlement by refugees from East Punjab areas such as Jullundur and Amritsar. Whatever their motives, the North Indian refugees who came to settle in Sindh almost four decades ago have impacted dramatically on the 'local' culture, whilst retaining their own strong cultural distinctions. Intizar Hussain's short stories reveal the melancholy attachment to a lost UP world which is felt by *mohajir* intellectuals. Emphasis on Urdu and its protection has remained a strong political element in community identity. The transformation of the dominant urban centres into Urdu-speaking enclaves within Sindh has

⁶⁵ Sipe, *Karachi's Refugee Crisis*, p. 75.

created acute tensions. By the time of the 1951 Census, *mohajirs* accounted for 58 per cent of the population of Karachi, 66 per cent of Hyderabad, 54 per cent of Sukkur, 68 per cent of Mirpurkhas and 35 per cent of Larkana.⁶⁶ The continued historical links with the role of UP in the freedom struggle are seen in the veneration accorded to Liaquat Ali Khan by some *mohajir* groups. The 1988 MQM-sponsored biography of Altaf Hussain quotes him as saying that 'Every Government which came to power after Liaquat Ali Khan discriminated against the *mohajirs*.'⁶⁷ The *mohajir* leader has also claimed that he and his supporters are the 'heirs' of the 'two million' minority province Muslims who sacrificed their lives: 'We have a right to Pakistan, and it is a right of blood, we gave blood for it.'⁶⁸ Rather than abandoning their *mohajir* status, the Urdu-speaking refugees have adopted it as a source of ethnic political allegiance with wide-ranging implications. The cultural dissonance lying behind the politics of the MQM is starkly revealed by the depiction of its red, green and white tricolour in the shape of a *patang* (kite) – a reminder of a common north Indian pastime which is alien to Sindh.⁶⁹

Five additional points regarding the legacy of migration need to be made. The first is that concern with the *mohajir* Karachi crisis should not be allowed to obscure the importance of East Punjabi migrants in shaping the political development of the Pakistan state. As Muhammad Waseem has pointed out, the 5 million migrants have both provided a major support for Islamist parties and shaped the Punjab province's strong anti-Indian and pro-Kashmiri leanings. Support for centralist martial law regimes has also come from this quarter. The politics of Punjabi cities like Lahore, Sialkot, Multan and Gujranwala, of whose population around half were enumerated as migrants at the time of the 1951 Census, cannot be understood without reference to the refugee dimension. Delhi's politics have been similarly influenced by the presence of a large Punjabi Hindu migrant population.

The rising Punjabi industrial elite of the 1980s came largely from the migrant trading communities which had originated from Ambala, Batala, Jullundur, and Hoshiarpur. They prospered during the Zia era and provided an urban support base for Nawaz Sharif's Muslim League. 'Himself belonging to a Kashmiri migrant family', Muhammad Waseem

⁶⁶ T. Rahman, 'Language and Politics in a Pakistan Province: The Sindhi Language Movement', *Asian Survey* 35, no. 11 (November 1995), p. 1008.

⁶⁷ F. Haq, 'Rise of the MQM in Pakistan: Politics of Ethnic Mobilisation', *Asian Survey* 35, no. 11 (November 1995), p. 997.

⁶⁸ A. Jalal, 'Conjuring Pakistan', p. 83.

⁶⁹ Julian Richards, 'Mohajir Subnationalism and the Mohajir Qaumi Movement in Sindh Province, Pakistan', p. 414.

has declared, 'Nawaz Sharif reflected a migrant ethos [and] his natural constituency lay with migrants from East Punjab and Kashmir.'⁷⁰

The second point is that in the realm of comparative politics little attention has been drawn to Pakistan's emergence as a settler/refugee-dominated state. Surprisingly little has been made of this characteristic, although parallels are there to be drawn for example with the state of Israel.

Thirdly it should be noted that although Punjab as a whole did not suffer ethnic conflicts arising from refugee resettlement, where cultural differences coincided with economic resentment concerning the migrants, as in the south-western Siraiki-speaking areas, a similar political pattern emerged as in Sindh.

The fourth point concerns the migration experience and the establishment of a tradition of bureaucratic as opposed to parliamentary rule. Muhammad Waseem has maintained that the undercutting of parliament resulted both from the *mohajir* presence in the civil service and the loss of its political base. 'Recourse to elections', he states, 'was considered suicidal by the migrant-led government at Karachi because there was no way it could win elections and return to power in the centre. Elections were considered dysfunctional for the political system of Pakistan in the immediate post-independence period.'⁷¹

Finally, concerns with the uneven economic inheritances at the All-India level and their political consequences should not be allowed to obscure the regional dimension. Within the Punjab region, Hindus and Sikhs left behind not only more urban property than their Muslim refugee counterparts, but some 2 million acres of excess cultivable land. The East Punjab Government thus adopted a sliding-scale formula for allocating land to refugees.⁷² Shinder Thandi has argued forcefully that this encouraged new forms of risk-taking and more progressive farming methods as well as strengthening the political economy of owner-cultivation which has lain behind the greater agricultural productivity of Indian Punjab. As we have already noted, the legacy of the partition for the structure of land ownership in West Punjab was to sustain an agrarian system in which land was 'perceived to be a political rather than a commercial commodity.'⁷³

⁷⁰ M. Waseem, *The 1993 Elections in Pakistan*, p. 163.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

⁷² See M. Randhawa, *Out of the Ashes*, p. 99.

⁷³ S. S. Thandi, 'The Unidentical Punjab Twins: Some Explanations of Comparative Agricultural Performance Since Partition', *International Journal of Punjab Studies*, 4, 1 (Jan.-June 1997), p. 72.

The crisis in Indo-Pakistan relations

The refugee situation formed part of a wider deterioration in Indo-Pakistan relations. Indeed, it played an important role – many Pakistani officials were convinced that the Indians were intent on making things impossible for them by pushing as many Muslims out of their country as possible. Certainly, Pakistani attitudes towards the increasingly serious situation in the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir were influenced by the migration issue. Before turning to Kashmir we must refer to another area of Indo-Pakistan conflict, the Indus Waters dispute.

The dispute over water management and water-sharing between the two dominions reveals both the insecurity of Pakistan and the importance of administrative as opposed to political initiatives in solving its post-Partition problems. The British had never anticipated that it would be necessary to disentangle the intensive network of canals which drew water from Punjab's famous five rivers (Sutlej, Beas, Ravi, Chenab, Jhelum) and also from the Indus. The massive irrigation schemes which they had constructed from the end of the nineteenth century had transformed the desert of the West Punjab into one of the most prosperous farming regions in Asia. Pakistan's economic survival depended on the continued availability of water from these irrigation systems.

The Punjab Partition Council which met in Lahore from the end of June 1947 agreed that the existing apportionment of water resources from the canal systems should be maintained intact after independence. However, the Radcliffe Boundary Award which was not announced until 17 August placed the Madhopur and Ferozepur control points of the Upper Bari Doab canals, the Pipalpur canal and the Eastern Grey canal – all vital for Pakistan – on the Indian side of the border. Andrew Roberts has recently reopened the controversy concerning Mountbatten's role in the award of the Muslim majority tehsils of Ferozepur and Zira to India with the consequent control of the Sutlej river canal headworks.⁷⁴

On 1 April 1948⁷⁵ the East Punjab Government shut off water supplies to the Dipalpur canal from the Ferozepur headworks. This not only deprived Lahore of its main water supply, but put at risk 5.5 per cent of the sown area of West Pakistan at a crucial time in the agricultural year – the sowing of the *kharif* (autumn harvest crop).⁷⁶ The Indian

⁷⁴ Andrew Roberts, *Eminent Churchillians*, pp. 93ff.

⁷⁵ Although the apportionment of water supplies had not been referred to the Inter-Dominion Arbitral Tribunal, it was no coincidence that the water dispute began the day after it had been wound up.

⁷⁶ S.S. Thandi, 'The Unidentical Punjab Twins: Some Explanations of Comparative Agricultural Performance Since Partition', pp. 63-85.

action was based on the claim that Pakistan had no right to the waters and would have to pay a seigniorage charge if the canals were to be reopened. Direct negotiations between the two dominions in May 1948 led to the restoration of the flow of water to the Dipalpur but not to the Bahawalpur canals. Supplies to Pakistan's canals were increasingly reduced by Indian construction of new canals and the raising of the capacity of the Bhakra dam.⁷⁷ Moreover, it proved impossible to resolve the impasse created by the contention that proprietary rights in the waters of the East Punjab rivers were vested wholly in the East Punjab Government. India refused Pakistan's offer to refer the legal dispute to the International Court of Justice.⁷⁸

The tension between India and Pakistan over the Kashmir issue prevented a political breakthrough over the legal arguments concerning water ownership. The initiative thus fell to administrators such as Muhammad Ali⁷⁹ and S.S. Kirmani⁸⁰ to find a technical solution to provide insurance against the cessation of supplies from India. This both proved to be costly and marked a further shift towards Pakistan's transformation into an 'administrative state'. The Balloki-Suleimanki, Bambanwali-Ravi-Bedian and Marala-Ravi link canals were sanctioned as was the Mangla Dam on which preliminary access work began in 1959. By the time of its completion it was the longest (11,000 feet) earth-filled dam in the world.

The Indus Waters dispute was only finally resolved in September 1960 partly as a result of the initiative taken by the World Bank. The Indus Waters Treaty created a permanent Indus Waters Commission and assigned the waters of the Indus, Jhelum and Chenab to Pakistan. Internationally-financed link canals nearly 400 miles long transferred water from the above three rivers to areas previously irrigated by the water supplied from India by the eastern Ravi, Sutlej and Beas rivers. The scheme included in addition the construction of the Mangla and Tarbella dams.

The Kashmir conflict

Indo-Pakistan relations during the fifty years since independence have been dominated by the dispute over Kashmir. This has provoked two

⁷⁷ For details see Michel, cited above.

⁷⁸ The Indian government made the counter offer in September 1950 of submitting the issues to a court of two Indian and two Pakistani judges.

⁷⁹ For an insight into Muhammad Ali's role and approach see Ali, *The Emergence of Pakistan*, Chapter 15.

⁸⁰ Kirmani was Director of Central Designs in the West Punjab Irrigation Department. For his role see Michel, *The Indus Rivers*, pp. 284ff.

wars (1948 and 1965), threatened war in 1987 and led to sporadic fighting from 1984 onwards on the Siachen glacier in northern Kashmir. The danger of nuclear conflict as a result of an escalation of hostilities over Kashmir has existed throughout the 1990s. Almost as damaging to the Indian subcontinent's future is the threat to its material well-being arising from the dispute. The distrust this has generated continues to fuel a regional arms race which diverts scarce resources from infrastructural investment and human development. Furthermore the hindrance it provides to Indo-Pakistan economic cooperation seems likely to marginalise the region in a world dominated by trading blocs.

Vital strategic interests were at stake in Kashmir in 1947. Moreover, their continued presence helps in part to explain the conflict's bitterness and longevity. The headwaters of the Indus, Jhelum and Chenab rivers which were crucial to West Pakistan's agriculture were all situated in Kashmir. Its borders met with Tibet and China and were only a few miles distant from the Soviet Union. Control of Kashmir was thus of exceptional economic and military importance.

In addition the fate of Kashmir in 1947 was (and indeed remains) symbolically significant for both Pakistan and India. Kashmir formed the 'K' in the term 'Pakistan' which was first coined by Chaudhri Rahmat Ali in 1933. As a Muslim majority princely state it was expected, in keeping with the two-nation theory, to form part of Pakistan on the lapse of British paramountcy. Indeed its non-inclusion was a threat to the ideological basis of Pakistan's existence. However, the decision concerning accession in 1947 lay with the ruler and not the subjects of a princely state although, as Pakistanis noted, this did not seem to be the case in circumstances where Indian interests were threatened, as in the Kathiawar state of Junagadh.⁸¹

For Nehru, whose family originally hailed from Kashmir, and for the Indian National Congress the accession of Kashmir was of course symbolically important as a guarantor of the ideals of a 'secular' composite Indian nationalism. The self-identity of both India and Pakistan thus became linked with Kashmir. In such circumstances, conciliation and compromise have been almost impossible. It is indeed very difficult for the 'outsider' to appreciate the emotions aroused in Pakistan by the Kashmiri cause. As we shall see, the new phase in the conflict which unfolded in the 1980s strengthened rather than diminished its salience in the internal politics of both countries.

⁸¹ In what was the opposite situation to Kashmir, Junagadh was a Hindu majority state with a Muslim ruler. He acceded to Pakistan, but a rebellion led to the intervention of the Indian Army. Shortly afterwards a plebiscite recorded a 90 per cent vote in favour of accession to India. This verdict ensured Junagadh's annexation, despite Pakistan's protests to the UN Security Council.

The Kashmir conflict remains the most maleficent inheritance from the climacteric of the British departure from the subcontinent. Beyond this fact, its origins are clouded in controversy. Pakistani writers claim that the Muslim majority⁸² princely state's accession to India on 26 October 1947 was 'fraudulent' and indeed had been planned by Nehru and Mountbatten.⁸³ The debate indeed continues over whether or not the Instrument of Accession had been signed before Indian troops were sent to Jammu and Kashmir.⁸⁴ While the legality of the Instrument of Accession in particular continues to exercise historians, the former Foreign Secretary of the Government of India, J.N. Dixit, expressed the *realpolitik* of the situation to the British author Victoria Schofield in April 1994 when he declared: 'Everybody who has a sense of history knows that legality only has a relevance up to the threshold of transcending political realities. And especially in inter-state relations... so to quibble about points of law and hope that by proving a legal point you can reverse the process of history is living in a somewhat contrived utopia. It won't work.'⁸⁵

The traditional Indian riposte to claims of a 'fraudulent' accession has been that the invasion of Pakhtun tribesmen in mid-October which precipitated the Hindu Maharajah Hari Singh's accession to India was encouraged and aided by the Pakistan Government.⁸⁶ Less well known is the impact of the arrival of Sikh evacuees on communal relations in Jammu province from March 1947 onwards.⁸⁷ Indian authors are generally reticent concerning both the indigenous roots of the revolt

⁸² At the time of the 1941 Census, Muslims comprised 78 per cent of the 4 million population. They held a clear majority in all three of its provinces, including Jammu province (60 per cent), which was the ancestral home of the Dogra rulers.

⁸³ Subsequent events in Kashmir encouraged Pakistanis to regard with suspicion the award to India of the Muslim majority district of Gurdaspur in Punjab by the Radcliffe Boundary Commission. This district was contiguous to Jammu and Kashmir and without it the Indian Union would not have possessed a viable access route.

⁸⁴ The issue can be followed in V. Schofield, *Kashmir in the Crossfire* (London, 1996), pp. 146ff.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 291.

⁸⁶ The balance of evidence seems to indicate that the Pakistan Government did not instigate the tribal incursion which was a spontaneous *jihad*. Nevertheless, provincial officials and politicians in NWFP and West Punjab sympathised with the action and on occasion assisted the transit of the tribesmen. British officials' testimonies tend to support the 'official' Pakistani line that attempts to halt the tribesmen would have resulted in widespread violence. See Diary of Sir George Cunningham, Governor NWFP, Mss. Eur.D 670/6, IOR.

⁸⁷ This influx followed the Muslim League civil disobedience campaigns in Punjab and NWFP. The Sikh evacuees were joined by armed groups from Patiala, Faridkot and Nabha States. The period from 1946 onwards witnessed a dramatic rise in RSS support and activity in Kashmir.

of the Muslim inhabitants of Poonch⁸⁸ in August 1947⁸⁹ and the orgy of communal violence in Jammu province which was orchestrated by the state police and Dogra armed forces.⁹⁰

The September 1947 communal massacres in Jammu province created a flood of over 80,000 Muslim refugees to neighbouring Sialkot in West Punjab. Their miserable conditions undoubtedly encouraged support for the subsequent Pakhtun incursion among some Pakistani officials. They saw the *jihad* as not only avenging the Muslim victims, but as the best means of preventing further mass migrations into Pakistan. They quite rightly saw that the killings were not random but formed a policy of 'ethnic cleansing'. The Pakhtun invaders' indiscriminate plunder and violence not only alienated many Kashmiri Muslims but also led the Maharajah to accede to India in return for the airlifting of troops to Srinagar. The regular Indian forces drove the tribesmen back up the valley to Uri.

Mountbatten, who as Governor-General of India had officially accepted the accession of Kashmir, had promised that this action by the Maharajah would be confirmed by a referendum. The 1948-9 Indo-Pakistan war, India's failed attempt to indict Pakistan before the United Nations Security Council for violating her sovereignty and the continued Pakistani military occupation of Azad Kashmir (AK) led Nehru to conclude that the circumstances were not right for a plebiscite to be held, despite the passage of a United Nations resolution calling for a plebiscite to be conducted by its nominee administrator. Following the 1954 vote by the Kashmiri Constituent Assembly in favour of the accession of Jammu and Kashmir to the Indian Union, New Delhi has seen no need for a plebiscite. The Pakistan Government however has attempted to secure international support for its conduct in the name of Kashmiri self-determination. Significantly, it followed the line of the original United Nations resolution in limiting the choice in any referendum to accession either to India or itself. This restriction as we shall see

⁸⁸ Poonch was ruled indirectly as a *jagir* of the Dogras by a Hindu Raja. The poverty of the barren and mountainous western districts of Poonch was partly alleviated by large-scale recruitment into the Indian Army.

⁸⁹ The revolt began in August as a 'no-tax' campaign. This was prompted by the introduction of a number of unpopular taxes following the assumption of direct rule by Hari Singh in the wake of the dispossession during the Second World War of the Raja. The unpopularity of the new dispensation was compounded by the billeting of Dogra troops in Poonch to enforce tax collection.

⁹⁰ The attacks on Muslim villages in Jammu province began in the middle of October. Thousands of Muslims were killed at the hands of the Dogra troops, members of the RSS and Sikh *jathas*. The Pakistan Government's slant on these massacres can be found in Government of Pakistan, *Kashmir Before Accession* (Lahore, 1948), pp. 34ff.

was increasingly called into question with the rise of Kashmiri separatist feelings in the 1980s.

The uprising in Poonch which had initiated the crisis saw no quarter given by either side, but the large number of Muslim ex-servicemen⁹¹ in the region tipped the balance firmly against the Kashmir state army. Poonch was thereafter to become the first base of the Pakistan-controlled AK Government. By the time that the United Nations brokered ceasefire came into operation in January 1949, the AK boundary had been extended into parts of western Jammu province and covered an area of over 30,000 square kilometres of rugged terrain with the exception of the more cultivable Mirpur district. Aside from this, the only other prosperous area was Muzaffarabad which had been an important pre-1947 point of entry into the Kashmir Valley. To the south and east, the Kashmir Valley and most of Jammu province now formed the territory of the Indian Union. Both states have continued to claim the territory held by their rivals. India refers to the Pakistan-administered area as 'Pakistan-occupied Kashmir' or POK.

The other regions of the former Kashmir princely state which are administered by Pakistan but are not fully integrated in it are the so-called Northern Areas. These comprise Gilgit and its related territories. The rebellion in the far-flung western Kashmiri suzerainty of Gilgit by a platoon of the Gilgit Scouts commanded by a British officer remains as contentious as anything else concerning Kashmir. Indian writers regard it as a coup;⁹² Pakistani commentators portray it as a popularly-backed rebellion. Since the 'revolution' night of 31 October 1947, Gilgit along with Baltistan, Hunza and Nagar have formed the Northern Areas. This area with a population of around a million is not fully integrated with Pakistan, nor, despite a 1993 ruling of the High Court of Azad Jammu and Kashmir which was quashed by the Supreme Court, is it integrated with that authority.⁹³ Pakistan's official stand on the UN resolutions precludes the Northern Areas' full integration, while their strategic access to China obstructs the so-called 'third option' of independence for the entire Kashmir state as it existed in 1947.

The administrative framework for the Northern Areas with political agents in Gilgit and Baltistan reporting to residents situated initially in Rawalpindi and a mix of tribal sub-agencies (*chilas*), political sub-divisions (Gilgit, Astor), districts (Punial, Gupis, Yasin, Ishkuman)

⁹¹ Over 60,000 Muslims served from Poonch and Mirpur during the Second World War. Cited in Schofield, *Kashmir in the Crossfire*, p. 133.

⁹² See for example, B.L. Kak, *The Fall of Gilgit: The Untold Story of Indo-Pak Affairs from Jinnah to Bhutto* (New Delhi, 1977).

⁹³ Schofield, *Kashmir in the Crossfire*, p. 275.

and states (Hunza, Nagir) was based on the British system. The Political Agent in Gilgit also handled the relations of the semi-autonomous states of Hunza and Nagir with the Pakistan Government. Aside from the relatively fertile Puniyal district, the Northern Areas were food-deficit regions which had to be supplied during the winter months in the 1960s by airlifts employing C-47 Dakotas which made 2-3 sorties every day in good weather.⁹⁴ Little has been written either about the Northern Areas or about AK,⁹⁵ whose status has never been defined in international law: it is neither a province of Pakistan nor a sovereign state, but is rather a 'local authority' with responsibility for administering the territory held by Pakistan under the 1949 cease-fire agreement. During the period 1950-71, under the 'rules of business of the Azad Kashmir Government', full executive powers were vested in the 'Supreme Head of State' (i.e. leadership of the Muslim Conference), but supervision and the ultimate source of authority in fact lay with the Pakistan government's Ministry of Kashmir Affairs Joint Secretary (after 1958 'Chief Adviser'). Even after the introduction of an elective principle with Ayub Khan's Basic Democracy system, the Chairman of the AK Council (and *ex-officio* President) was to be nominated by the Chief Adviser.⁹⁶

Events in Kashmir in 1947-9 provided a defining moment both in Indo-Pakistan relations and for Pakistan's domestic priorities. Any lingering hopes of the two dominions' economic or military interdependence were snuffed out in Jammu's killing fields. Although the military conflict between the two dominions was confined to Kashmir, it brought home the strategic dangers facing Pakistan, the weaker of the protagonists. The priority of building up the armed forces was spelled out by Liaquat Ali Khan in a broadcast to the nation on 8 October 1948: 'The defence of the State is our foremost consideration ... and has dominated all other governmental activities. We will not grudge any amount on the defence of our country.'⁹⁷

Pakistan thus embarked on the establishment of a 'political economy of defence'. The years 1947-50 saw up to 70 per cent of the national budget being allocated for defence.⁹⁸ This sum could only be made

⁹⁴ Muree Office American Consul to Department of State 7 June 1961, 790D.00/5-461, National Archives at College Park.

⁹⁵ The material in this paragraph has been taken from the one exception to this: Leo E. Rose, 'The Politics of Azad Kashmir' in Raju, G. C. Thomas (ed), *Perspectives on Kashmir: The Roots of Conflict in South Asia* (Boulder, 1992), pp. 235-53.

⁹⁶ The Council was to be elected indirectly from local bodies and to comprise 12 members elected by AK Basic Democrats and 12 by Kashmiri refugees in Pakistan. *Ibid.*, p. 239.

⁹⁷ Ali, *Emergence of Pakistan*, p. 376.

⁹⁸ Samad, *A Nation in Turmoil*, p. 128.

available by diverting resources from 'nation-building' activities and expanding the state's administrative machinery to ensure the centre's control over the provinces' finances. The long-term repercussions were a strengthening of the unelected institutions of the state – the bureaucracy and the Army – at the expense of political accountability. This process contributed incalculably to the sense of alienation in East Pakistan, where priorities were of a different order and did not involve sacrificing democratic politics on the altar of the Kashmiri Muslim cause. Moreover, the Army increasingly acquired an almost insatiable appetite for new technology, and which became ever more expensive. By 1958 an American intelligence report attested that the 'Pakistani army had developed as a pressure group' and would 'continue to have priority over economic development for appropriations', irrespective of the Indian factor.⁹⁹

However much Pakistan skewed its economy and politics to meet its strategic defence requirements,¹⁰⁰ it could not match unaided the resources of its Indian neighbour. This fact was recognised from the outset. Indeed as early as October 1947 Pakistan unsuccessfully requested a \$2 billion loan from the United States.¹⁰¹ Britain lacked the financial resources to provide major assistance and also needed to appear even-handed in its dealings with the Indians and Pakistanis. The Americans thus appeared a better bet especially in the light of their requirement for regional Cold War allies as part of their policy of containment towards the Soviet Union and China. When external US military and economic assistance eventually arrived in 1954, it inevitably came with the strings of membership of SEATO and the Baghdad Pact attached. In the wake of the Kashmir conflict, the Pakistan authorities thus eschewed ties with the Muslim world which would have commanded popular support¹⁰² and became increasingly locked into a dependent relationship with the United States. It provided the bureaucrats and their military allies at the centre with both the motives – the exclusion of political interference on foreign policy issues and increasing resources – to tilt the balance of power away from representative parties and politicians. A full five years before the military takeover of October 1958, the Governor-General

⁹⁹ A. Jalal, *The State of Martial Rule*, p. 238.

¹⁰⁰ In 1953 the Economic Appraisal Committee conceded that Pakistan's annual expenditure on defence and civil administration was wholly out of line with available resources. *Ibid.*, p. 237.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

¹⁰² Liaquat Ali Khan was toying with alternatives to a pro-Western foreign policy shortly before his assassination on 16 October 1951. Popular opposition to the pro-Western stance of the establishment was especially evident during the July 1956 Suez crisis.

had appointed a political nonentity, Muhammad Ali Bogra, as Prime Minister because of his pro-American stance.¹⁰³

The survival of Pakistan

How did Pakistan survive the social turmoil, economic dislocation and hostility with India which accompanied its birth? The answer lies as much in the courage and resilience of the ordinary people as in government initiatives. Standard 'top-down' accounts of Pakistan's politics have ignored this dimension, as have subsequent prognostications concerning the collapse of the Pakistan state. In an earlier study¹⁰⁴ the present author discussed the way in which many of the refugees regarded their journey to Pakistan as a true *hijrat*, an opportunity for a renewal of their faith. Individual acts of heroism and sacrifice amid the sadism and inhumanity of the Partition-related massacres have also been pointed out.

Some politicians and officials got rich on the pickings of evacuee property or through the exploitation of refugees themselves. Amir Abdullah Khan Rokri in his autobiographical account even recalls one incident in the main Muslim transit camp in Pathankot in which Muslim officers in connivance with local Muslim and Hindu businessmen sold on to the black market rationed goods which had been provided by the Indians for the refugees.¹⁰⁵ But many ordinary Muslims acted as true *ansars*, feeding and clothing the *mohajirs* and taking them into their own homes. They acted in this way, as Rokri records for the Mianwali district, 'because they knew that these people were being driven out of India simply because they were Muslims'.¹⁰⁶ The author moved his entire family to one small room to accommodate refugees and paid for their needs out of his own pocket. A similar idealism was displayed by the women who came out of *purdah* to work for the Red Crescent or who pawned their jewellery for the emergency loan raised to cover Pakistan's 'missing' share of the cash balances.

Those who have grown cynical over the passage of time in Pakistan will be surprised by the widespread manifestations of social solidarity and improvisation, reminiscent of Britain during the Blitz in the Second World War, which marked the early days of the state's existence. Auxiliary nurses worked in the hospitals, and bank clerks were trained in evening classes to fill the gaps left by the Hindu clerks and accountants. In

¹⁰³ Bogra had previously been Pakistan's Ambassador in Washington.

¹⁰⁴ Talbot, *Freedom's Cry*.

¹⁰⁵ A. A. K. Rokri, *Mai aur mera Pakistan* (Me and my Pakistan), 2nd edn (Lahore, 1989), p. 76.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

the countryside, cooperative societies provided the credit formerly supplied by the departed moneylenders. They also opened stores, handled the distribution of essential commodities, and ran abandoned cotton-ginning mills. The cooperative banks initially replaced the joint stock banks and acted as treasuries for the Government.¹⁰⁷

Further evidence of the people helping themselves can be seen in the establishment of small-scale manufacturing units in the Sialkot sports goods industry by the Muslim craftsmen who had formerly sold their products to Hindu and Sikh middlemen. By 1951 the export of tennis racquets, hockey sticks and footballs was worth Rs.7 million annually.¹⁰⁸ This was not however the usual pattern for recovery from the economic dislocation brought by Partition, which mainly took the form of refugees reacting to the business opportunities created by the departure of the Hindus and Sikhs. The process was most marked in the cities of Sindh, where *mohajirs* filled the shoes of the non-Muslim commercial elite as the native Sindhis lacked the skills or capital to compete with them. But even in Punjab many industrial enterprises were run by refugees from India.¹⁰⁹

While *mohajirs* from UP and Bombay stepped into the shoes of the commercial castes, refugees from East Punjab¹¹⁰ occupied land in the West Punjab Canal Colonies which had been vacated by Sikh landowners. The Lyallpur district's population rose by over 40 per cent, Multan's, Montgomery's and Sheikhupura's by 20 per cent.¹¹¹ In the Jaranwala tehsil of the Lyallpur district the ratio of refugees to former landholders was 3:1.¹¹² The first arrivals found the fields almost ready for harvesting; millet and rice crops provided them with food, while cotton could be sold for cash.

Not all refugees were so fortunate. Many could not fend for themselves but had to rely on government efforts for resettlement and rehabilitation. As with the Indus Waters dispute, technical and executive solutions were preferred to political initiatives with the similar consequence of underscoring the bureaucracy's influence in comparison with democratic processes. Mian Iftikharuddin,¹¹³ the Minister of Refugees and Rehabilita-

¹⁰⁷ R. Symonds, *The Making of Pakistan* (Islamabad, 1976) p. 135.

¹⁰⁸ Anita M. Weiss, *Culture, Class and Development in Pakistan*, p. 124.

¹⁰⁹ Anita Weiss provides evidence of this process at work, for example in Lahore's pharmaceutical and steel re-rolling industries. *Ibid.*, pp. 58-90, pp. 98-107.

¹¹⁰ Around three quarters of all *mohajirs* were Punjabis (4.7 million), of whom two-thirds were agriculturalists. K. Sipe, 'Karachi's Refugee Crisis', p. 86.

¹¹¹ Summary of the Migrations of 1947-8, n.d., Mudie Papers Mss.Eur.F. 164/47, IOR.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ Mian Iftikharuddin (1907-62) came from the wealthy Arain Mian family of Bagh-

tion in the West Punjab Cabinet, in fact pressed for the kind of policies of tenancy reform and redistribution of land which were to be pursued in the resettlement programme in East Punjab. This was only to be expected from a former President of the Punjab Congress who had also been associated at one stage with the Congress Socialist Party. But Iftikharuddin was no maverick. He represented a radical tradition within the Muslim League which was displayed in the November 1944 manifesto of its Punjab branch,¹¹⁴ in Abul Hashim's rural radicalism in Bengal and in the socialistic slant of the 1945 draft plan of the AIML Planning Committee.¹¹⁵

Iftikharuddin called for a 50-acre ceiling on landholdings, the nationalisation of basic industries, the provision of Rs.5 a month for the unemployed and the exchange of refugee property through officially appointed trustees.¹¹⁶ When the Punjab Premier the Nawab of Mamdot, himself a refugee from East Punjab, refused to countenance these demands, Iftikharuddin sensationally quit his post. His departure brought the organisational and ministerial wings of the Punjab Muslim League virtually to blows.

In the absence of a political lead, the British Governor of the West Punjab, Sir Francis Mudie, left the responsibility for the settlement of refugees on the land with the overworked deputy commissioners and *tehsildars* who acted as Assistant Rehabilitation Commissioners for the areas under their jurisdiction. The deputy commissioners were also responsible for furnishing each refugee camp within their jurisdiction with medical, food and sanitary requirements.¹¹⁷ Agriculturalist Muslim refugees were rehabilitated on Crown Land in the West Punjab Canal Colonies as well as on land vacated by Hindus and Sikhs.¹¹⁸

banpura, Lahore. He founded Progressive Papers Ltd, which published the *Pakistan Times*. Following his expulsion from the Muslim League in 1951, he founded the Pakistan National Party which was later merged into the National Awami Party.

¹¹⁴ D. Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam*, p. 196-7.

¹¹⁵ See I. Talbot, 'Planning for Pakistan: The Planning Committee of the All-India Muslim League 1943-46,' *Modern Asian Studies*, 28, no. 4 (1994), pp. 875-89.

¹¹⁶ *Eastern Times* (Lahore), 29 September 1947.

¹¹⁷ In reality administrative oversight lay with the District Refugee and Evacuee Officer. Each camp possessed its own commandant who was ordered to keep a strict account of numbers, *purdah* considerations notwithstanding.

¹¹⁸ The governments of East and West Punjab initially agreed on a common response to the problem of abandoned property early in September 1947. They refused to recognise the illegal seizure of property and appointed custodians to oversee evacuees' possessions. They reversed this approach however when it became apparent that the massive transfer of population was permanent. Both governments then introduced ordinances to limit the evacuees' rights to transfer or repossess their property in order to ease the task of rehabilitating the refugees.

Iftikharuddin's radical views were reflected in the June 1949 Report of the Agrarian Committee of the Pakistan Muslim League. This took its cue from a speech by Muhammad Ali Jinnah to the All-India Planning Committee in November 1944 in which he linked the redistribution of wealth with the Islamic concept of justice.¹¹⁹ The committee urged a ceiling on landownership of 450 acres for unirrigated land and 150 acres for irrigated land as a step towards the 'elimination from our economy of landlordism and all superior but idle interests in land above the actual cultivator'.¹²⁰ Such recommendations were naturally regarded as unacceptable by the dominant landholding interests, and the Report was quietly shelved after its acceptance by the Pakistan Muslim League Council.¹²¹ Four and a half decades later, the landholding interests are still able to block the call which the Report made for agricultural income tax.

The failure to introduce tenancy and land reforms in the period 1947-9 ensured that West Punjab followed a vastly different socio-economic and political trajectory than its Indian neighbour. Indeed the unsettled conditions in the aftermath of partition enabled landlords to tighten their grip in Pakistan Punjab. They acquired additional land which they either purchased at rock bottom prices from fleeing Hindus and Sikhs or by 'unlawfully' possessing state evacuee property. In many areas they also replaced the *bantias* as the main source of agricultural credit. The important implications for public policy and agricultural performance arising from the continued domination of landlordism in West Punjab is considered in later chapters.

An important key to understanding both the survival of the infant Pakistan state and its democratic growing pains can be found in its early months of existence. On the face of it, those members of the Indian National Congress who expected Pakistan to be still-born had good cause. Few states have sprung into existence with as many material disadvantages, institutional weaknesses and uncertain national loyalty. The refugee problem alone could have suffocated Pakistan at birth. This fate was avoided

¹¹⁹ Talbot, 'Planning for Pakistan', p. 881.

¹²⁰ Muhammad Hasan Khan, *Underdevelopment and Agrarian Structure in Pakistan* (Boulder, 1981), p. 139.

¹²¹ It is true that in 1950 and 1952 the Punjab government passed legislation which met the Agrarian Committee's call for greater security for tenants and uncompensated abolition of *jagirs*. But these measures had only a limited scope as, for example, military and religious revenue free grants were exempted in the 1952 Act. Moreover, landlords were able to exploit loopholes in the Punjab Protection and Restoration of Tenancy Rights Act to evict tenants.

thanks to both the resilience of innumerable ordinary men and women and to the organisational capabilities of the civil bureaucracy. Herein however lay the seeds of future problems.

If Pakistan meant anything at all to the masses during the freedom struggle, it had been understood in terms of social and economic transformation and a diffusion of political power. In order for the state to survive its painful delivery its rulers had to draw on another tradition inherited from the colonial era. This emphasised bureaucratic control and the maintenance of the local elites' power, which was seen most clearly in the great missed opportunity for land reform at the time of refugee rehabilitation in West Punjab, an episode which has, remarkably, been overlooked in most standard histories.

The immediate post-Partition era also provides an important key to the future course of Indo-Pakistan relations and the subcontinent's international links. Negative stereotypes of Muslim 'fanaticism' and Hindu 'chauvinism' which developed during the freedom struggle appeared to be borne out to Pakistani and Indian elites during the traumas of 1947-8. The refugee crisis and disputes over the division of assets and the Indus Waters confirmed the view soon to be expressed by Liaquat Ali Khan that the Government of India had never 'wholeheartedly accepted the Partition scheme' and 'was out to destroy' the Pakistan state.¹²²

The Kashmir conflict and war with India in 1948-9 provided the defining moment. The armed conflict coming in the wake of Indian military intervention in Junagadh (later confirmed by intervention in Hyderabad and Goa) established an apprehension of an Indian security threat to the Pakistan state which subsequently coloured not only its foreign but domestic policy. Pakistan sought to counterbalance India's greater material resources first by calling on British and later American assistance. But the latter possessed its own agenda for intervention in the South Asia region, leading to eventual strains in its relationship with Pakistan.

Domestically, Pakistan's suspicions of India supported the need for a strong central authority even if this flew in the face of the loose federal structure envisaged by the Lahore Resolution. This in itself took the country further away from the direction of democracy, given the likely effects of centralisation on an ethnically plural society. Moreover, Pakistan was set on the course of dependence on foreign aid and of the diversion of scarce resources to military expenditure in order to overcome its strategic weakness. The growing ascendancy of the civil bureaucracy and the Army over the elected representatives during the 1950s which accompanied this course of action is addressed in the next chapter.

¹²² R. Sisson and Leo E. Rose, *War and Secession: Pakistan, India, and the Creation of Bangladesh* (Berkeley, CA, 1990), p. 44.

Part II

THE DESTRUCTION OF PAKISTAN'S DEMOCRACY AND UNITY

5

THE DESTRUCTION OF DEMOCRACY IN PAKISTAN

Why did democracy fail in Pakistan during the period 1947-58? Was it because of the poor institutionalisation of the Muslim League? Did the state's inherited political culture, with its class, regional and gender-related inequalities, present an insuperable barrier to the establishment of a participatory political process? How significant were the country's geopolitical weaknesses in encouraging authoritarianism? These questions have preoccupied all who have studied Pakistan's politics during its turbulent early years.

This chapter attempts to address these complex issues through holding in creative tension the knowledge that the colonial legacy is crucial for understanding Pakistani politics with the belief, as Eduardo Galeano put it, that history 'is each morning born anew.'¹ Before addressing the interplay between both colonial inheritances and post-independence transformations, and national and provincial political frameworks, we should first be aware of the course of events which led to the breakdown of democracy and their various scholarly interpretations.

¹ E. Galeano, *Days and Nights of Love and War*, trans. by Judith Brister (New York, 1983), p. 113.