

CHAPTER 6

The Reshaping of Muslim Political Power

In early 1940, the national leaderships of the central political organisations were largely irrelevant to Sindh politics. However, less than one year later, the leaders of the Congress and the All-India Muslim League were locked in the struggle to determine who would govern the province. The communalisation of politics, manifest in the Congress-League conflict at the centre, had come to dominate local politics to the extent that Sindhis were forced to conform to agendas set by the national leaderships. The politics of Sind, isolated from the mainstream of Indian politics until only the last few decades, were being subsumed in a mirroring of conflict that had its centre in Delhi. Through the inability of its leaders to manage communal conflict, Sind was to become a key player in the unfolding drama of decolonisation.

The demand for the partition of the sub-continent along religious lines in March 1940 (which came to be known as the Pakistan demand) dramatically altered Sind's status in national politics. As was the case in most of the Muslim-majority provinces, the Pakistan movement was not immediately embraced by Sind's Muslims as the panacea for restoring their political power. However, the context of the Pakistan movement and its reshaping of Muslim politics in Sind has not been clearly understood by historians. In particular, the initial hesitancy of Sind's Muslims to embrace the idea of Pakistan has either been ignored, or, if recognised, not adequately explained. That is, the movement for Pakistan in Sind can only be fully understood by understanding all the main pieces of the puzzle;

what the Muslims of Sind understood, or wanted, Pakistan to be are important pieces of that puzzle. By comparing the early Pakistan movement in Sind (1940-42) with the later (1943-45) a clearer picture emerges of what ingredient in the local Pakistan movement effectively mobilised Muslims. The purpose of this chapter is to explore the initial years of the Pakistan movement in Sind and locate its role in the reshaping of Muslim politics in the province. The later phases of the Pakistan movement are addressed in subsequent chapters.

I

The Sind Muslim League and the Lahore Resolution

The demand for the partition of India did not initially find a warm reception among the Sind League. This appears surprising given the insistence at the Sind Provincial Conference in 1938 for the creation of independent Muslim states. The reasons lay in the desire of the Sindhis to determine their own destiny rather than follow the All-India Muslim League's line. Under the leadership of Abdullah Haroon, the Pakistan movement was to be affected by the question as of how suitable the All-India Muslim League's perception of Pakistan would be to the Sindhis.

Khuhro, Majid and Syed, all office-bearers of the Sind Provincial Muslim League, joined the Hindu Mahasabha-backed Hindu Party to form Sind's third ministry in March 1940. Despite the assertion of Muslim power in the Manzilgah campaign and subsequent riots, the Muslims in the Assembly remained divided, and so the provincial League was forced to accept the Hindu Party's conditions if it was to govern. The first concession it made was to disband the League's Assembly Party. This move prevented a formal nexus occurring between the Muslim League and the Government, and so robbed the League of much of the kudos Haroon had hoped to reap from the Manzilgah 'victory'. The Hindu Party

ensured that the Leaguers operated independently of the All-India Muslim League and locked them into providing written guarantees of their adherence to the Hindu Panchayat's 21 demands.¹ Not the least of these was the introduction of the scheme for joint electorates in municipal councils.²

That Khuhro, Syed and Majid were responsible for enacting legislation to implement joint electorates mortified Jinnah, since the stance of single communal electorates had been one of the All-India Muslim League's most sacred principles. Jinnah directed that there should be no coalition with the Hindu Party because this would jeopardise the future of the Muslim League in Sind.³ Haroon later attempted to force the League ministers to rescind the legislation, but with their positions in the ministry dependent upon their appeasement of the Hindus, not the central League, they tended to ignore his directives.⁴

The clash between the Sind Muslim League and the All-India Muslim League revealed the bankruptcy of the relationship between the local elites and the central League authority. Even with the support of men of the stature of Haroon in the province, Jinnah was clearly in a position where the All-India Muslim League still had no real authority over provincial political elites. The relationship between the provincial elites and the central League continually floundered because it was one built on political expediency rather than a maturing commonality. There was an inherent tension between the provincial and the national leaderships because their respective political visions were fixed on different horizons. For Jinnah, the role of the Sindhi League was to organise Muslims behind his national leadership, since the greater the support the Muslim

¹ *BC*, 17 February 1940.

² Telegram of Bande Ali Khan (Sind Chief Minister), to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (Congress President), 27 March 1940, quoted in *BC*, 8 October 1940.

³ Telegram from Jinnah to Sind Muslim League Assembly Party, n.d., cited in *BC*, 16 February 1940.

⁴ Haroon repeatedly tried to have the Sind Provincial Muslim League Council force the Ministers to support the central League, but the Council steadfastly backed the Ministers. SFR Second Half of June, 11 July 1940, L/P&J/5/255, OIOC.

League could command in a province the greater influence the All-India Muslim League could command at the centre. However, the provincial Sindhi Muslim elites did not see their role as that of serving the interests of Jinnah and his minority-province *nawabs*. As Khuhro's daughter has observed:

The important fact to remember is that for [the] most serious and even idealistic [Sindhi] politician all-India issues were never the first importance, they were primarily working for provincial objectives - some for the improvement of the condition of the people of the province, some fighting local battles against Hindus and bureaucracy, and some interested in power and its trappings, but all at the provincial level.⁵

A meaningful link between the central and Sindhi Leagues had still not been established. Both organisations sought to curb the influence of Hindus and to extend their political power, but such commonality was still not sufficient for the Sindhis to acknowledge a centralised Muslim authority. Despite the level of communalisation of politics, the Sindhi Muslims were not willing to submit to a greater Muslim political identity. The communalising of politics was serving to reinforce a specifically Sindhi Muslim identity, rather than foster a pan-Indian Islamic identity that would override provincial interests. Until the All-India Muslim League had something concrete to offer, the Sindhis saw no reason to change.

At the same time that the core leadership of the Sindhi Muslim League rejected the All-India Muslim League, Jinnah launched what soon became known as the 'Pakistan movement' at the Twenty-Seventh Session of the All-India Muslim League in Lahore (March 1940). The most important feature of the session was the passing of a resolution that demanded the partition of India between the Hindu-majority areas of India and those where the Muslims were in the majority. The resolution stated:

⁵ H. Khuhro, 'Muslim Political Organisations in Sind, 1843-1938,' in Khuhro, *Sind Centuries*, p. 178.

that it is the considered view of this Session of the All-India Muslim League that no constitutional plan would be workable in this country or acceptable to the Muslims unless it is designed on the following basic principles, viz., that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted, with such territorial adjustments as may be necessary, that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority as in the North Western and Eastern zones of India, should be grouped to constitute Independent States in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign.⁶

The resolution embodied two main notions. To date, the first notion, to divide India on the basis of religious identity, has almost exclusively been the focus of scholars. However, the magnitude of that notion has overwhelmed the second: that the constituent units of the new independent Muslim zones be autonomous and sovereign. In order for Jinnah to illustrate that Hindus and Muslims had to be divided, he had to unify Muslims behind his leadership and show that Hindus and Muslims could not politically co-exist. However, the Lahore resolution was not ultimately understood by Sindhis to be about the territorial unification of Indian Muslims, and this theme will become more evident as the Pakistan movement garnered support in the Muslim-majority provinces.

While much has been written on what lay behind Jinnah's adoption of the resolution, it is clear that the Sindhis had played a leading hand in giving it concrete shape. Chapter 4 of this thesis has explained that at the Sind Provincial Muslim League Conference in October 1938, Majid presented a draft resolution that contained the essentials of the later Lahore resolution. The emphasis of that resolution was the notion of the creation of autonomous Muslim states. The Sind Conference had highlighted to Jinnah the importance of provincial independence to the Sindhis. The Conference had shown that the key to involving the Muslim-majority provinces in the All-India Muslim League's push for greater power was to encourage their autonomy. Jalal contends that in the provision of the resolution

⁶ Resolution One, 23 March 1940, Twenty Seventh Session of the All-India Muslim League, Lahore, 22-24 March 1940, quoted in Pirzada, *Foundations of Pakistan*, p. 341.

that 'even inside the Independent States', the units would be 'autonomous and sovereign', the intention was clearly to appease the politicians of Sind and the NWFP.⁷ Moreover, following the Sind Conference, it is evident that the All-India Muslim League had begun to consider the partition of India as the solution to the problem of restoring political power to Muslims. It had been no coincidence that two months after the Sind Conference the issue of Pakistan was first tabled in the All-India Muslim League Council⁸ and the following March Liaquat Ali Khan told a conference of the Meerut Muslim League that if Hindus and Muslims could not live together, then India would have to be divided on a religious and cultural basis.⁹

The influence of Sindhis in the writing of the Lahore Resolution is strongly evident. Haroon presided over the All-India Muslim League Foreign Committee to investigate the feasibility of partitioning India. The Committee considered 9 Pakistan proposals and drafted the resolution that was agreed to by the delegates at Lahore.¹⁰ Co-operating with Haroon on the Foreign Committee was Pir Ali Mohammed Rashdi, a cousin of Syed and the General Secretary of the Sind Provincial Muslim League.

The most poignant impacts of the Lahore Resolution in India were not immediate, but they were profound. Firstly, the resolution redefined the relationship between the Muslim League and the Congress. Hitherto, the role of the League in national politics was that of an organisation claiming to represent the Muslim minority. During the course of the development of representative government the League had sought to protect the rights of the Muslims as a minority. Its focus had been on ensuring that the number of Muslim representatives in government was made on a basis which maximised any advantages offered in the negotiations

⁷ Jalal, *Sole Spokesman*, p. 58.

⁸ *BC*, 3 December 1938.

⁹ Presidential address of Liaquat Ali Khan to the Meerut Divisional Muslim League Conference, 25 March 1939, cited in *BC*, 27 March 1939.

¹⁰ *BC*, 3 February 1940.

through the proportional representation system.¹¹ However, the Lahore resolution argued a different case. In contending that Muslims were a nation, the Muslim League was trying to raise its status to that of an equal negotiating partner as India's communal problems were transformed from disputes simply between members of different religions, to that of a dispute between two distinct 'nations.'

Secondly, the League's propaganda about the two-nation theory affected the conduct of politics between Hindu and Muslim groups. Despite the protestations by Congress to the contrary, the League's gradually effective portrayal of the two organisations as being representative of two nations contributed to an escalation in the communalisation of politics. The ability of Jinnah to alter the predominant political discourse from an inter-party dispute between Congress and the League into a clash between nations was reflected in a withdrawing of co-operation between Hindus and Muslims from each other and an increase in the level of communal bitterness and violence.

Thirdly, the Pakistan demand produced an alteration to the balance in the relationship and power bases of the provincial Muslim leaderships. In articulating their role as leaders of the 'Muslim nation' the central League leadership challenged the claims to political legitimacy of Muslim leaders who opposed the League. The concrete expression of the two-nation theory, the Pakistan movement, became the benchmark upon which to contrast between those Muslims who advocated Muslim political power and those provincial Muslim elites who tried to remain aloof from the League authority. The Pakistan movement was a challenge to non-League Muslims just as much as it was to non-Muslim nationalists.

¹¹ For example, the Lucknow Pact of 1916 gave Muslims higher proportions of representation in the legislative bodies of the minority provinces and the centre than their actual percentages of the populations.

Fourthly, the Lahore Resolution dramatically altered Sind's status in the stakes of national politics. It was no longer peripheral to events at the centre because it became, with Bengal, the Punjab and the NWFP, a critical player in determining whether the Congress nationalists or the separatist Muslim League would hold the key to India's future. This meant that Jinnah and the Congress High Command could no longer afford to be isolated from influencing the course of Sind's politics.

II

The Lahore Resolution raised the issue of whether or not the Sind Provincial League could legitimately support partition as the only solution to the communal problem when its ministers were governing the province in co-operation with representatives of the Hindu Sabha. The course of the ministry revealed the answer that lasting communal co-operation was, in the communalised environment in Sind, not likely to occur.

The lessons of the Sind League in coalition Government

The League's experience in coalition Government was to have a profound impact on the future directions of the province. The introduction of the Leaguers to Government had produced considerable consternation amongst Hindus in the larger towns, for they saw the leaders of the Manzilgah Restoration Committee extending their activities against Hindus now that they were in the Government, which supposedly had the role of protecting them and their property. These fears prompted Hindus of northern Sind to take measures to protect themselves. Reports surfaced that Hindus were being brought into Larkana and Shikarpur from outside of the province in order to increase physically Hindu strength.¹² There were further increases in the number of militant Hindu corps, village *bantias*

¹² Graham to Linlithgow, 22 May 1940, L.P&J/5/255, OIOC.

severing their ties with the Muslim *zamindars*, and agitation by numerous Hindu groups for increased police protection.¹³

The fears of rural Hindu groups had been realised by the summer of 1940 when Muslims began seemingly indiscriminate killings of outlying Hindu villages in Sind's north. In July, a state of hysteria erupted when Pamani, the sitting member for Sukkur East General Rural constituency, was murdered.¹⁴ Rumours spread rapidly amongst the uneducated rural Hindu groups that Muslims believed now that the killing of one Hindu was equivalent to seven *hajjs* to Mecca.¹⁵ In hamlets and villages across Sind, Hindus fled firstly to the larger towns for safety, but as these too became unsettled, they left the province completely for Rajputana state, Hardwar and the Bombay Presidency.¹⁶ Hindu sources claimed that as many as 15,000 left within a week of Pamani's murder, and the British authorities admitted that there was an exodus of Hindu families from places such as Shikarpur and Thatta.¹⁷

The violence and lawlessness in rural Sind were reducing the *mofussil* to a state of anarchy. *Banias* stopped loans to *zamindars*, and the departure of Hindu mercantile families for safer provinces brought the economic activity of northern Sind to a virtual standstill. Trade in the affected districts was reduced to such an extent that the Karachi Cotton Association temporarily closed the cotton markets.¹⁸ The results were that the continued functioning of the political economy of the province was under threat and the coalition Government began to

¹³ SFR First Half of June, 21 June 1940, L/P&J/5/255, OIOC.

¹⁴ At the Weston Inquiry into the Sukkur riots, Pamani had been a key witness for the Hindus. He contended that Pir Bharchundi and the Muslim League were responsible for instigating the riots. *BC*, 15 May 1940.

¹⁵ Malkani, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

¹⁶ SFR Second Half of July, 5 August 1940, L/P&J/5/256, OIOC.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Graham to Linlithgow, 13 July 1940, L/P&J/5/255, OIOC, and *BC*, 19 July 1940.

crumble.¹⁹

The breaking down of government in Sind had two influential impacts. Firstly, it provided the opportunity for the Congress High Command to re-establish a role in determining what groups would form the Government. Secondly, it demonstrated to the Sind Leaguers that the communalisation of politics had reached the stage where communal co-operation was untenable. The lesson was clear to the Sind League. Four years of struggling to assert their power as Muslims in the Assembly had achieved little. The Muslims in Government were still subject to the conditions and agendas of the Hindu minority. The return of the Congress High Command and the inability of the League to govern in its own right was to stimulate the All-India Muslim League to establish a leading place in Sind's affairs. The introduction of the Pakistan demand meant that Sind was simply a pawn that neither Congress nor Jinnah could afford to lose to the other.

The Azad Pact

Maulana Azad saw the breaking down of ministerial government as an invaluable opportunity to extend the influence of the Congress in Sind at the cost of the League. In early November 1940, he arrived in Karachi to fortify Allah Bakhsh and close out the Muslim League from any further influence in Government. When Azad was able to secure the promise of a resignation from the ministry of Bande Ali Talpur (to be replaced by Bakhsh), and an agreement that the remaining coalition members would allow him to select the entire personnel of the ministry, it seemed that Azad had succeeded where Jinnah had failed in October 1938.²⁰ The agreement, known as the 'Azad Pact,' restored the role of the Congress High

¹⁹ Graham described Vazirani as 'pro-Hindu', Khuhro as 'shameless in his attempts to secure promotion for Muslims in the Public Works department and discouragement of every form for Hindus', and Majid as 'a Muslim fanatic'. Graham to Linlithgow, 29 July 1940, Linlithgow Mss.Eur.F.125/96, Doc. 77, OIOC, and Graham to Linlithgow, 9 October 1940. L/P&J/5/256, OIOC, in which he describes the ministry as 'intensely communal'.

²⁰ Graham to Linlithgow, 20 November 1940, Linlithgow Mss., Eur.F.125/96, Doc. 100, OIOC.

Command in Sindhi elite politics. Azad nationally received credit for striking the rapprochement amongst the warring Sindhi politicians. He was praised in Sind for 'his tactful handling of the various elements [and] has evolved a measure of unity, understanding and goodwill amongst them for which the people of this Province are deeply beholden to him.'²¹ Azad's dealings in pushing through the Pact demonstrated the importance of Sind in the chess game of national politics since he was willing to bend Congress rules (such as the High Command's directive that provincial Congress bodies must refrain from involvement in ministries) in order to shut out opportunities for the Muslim League to access political power.

Yet the Pact had a different importance for the central and local Leaguers because it threatened to undermine the claims of both to authority in Sind. The Pact forced Jinnah to renew his attempts to influence the politics of Sindhi Muslims, even if that achieved nothing else than undoing Azad's work. His most important success was to break Bande Ali's pledge to Azad and persuade him to join the Muslim League as Syed's replacement in the ministry. Jinnah was also able to have the League ministers defer implementing the Azad Pact, and, moreover, introduced a condition to the coalition which he knew the Hindus would never accept: that the Chief Minister must be a Muslim Leaguer.²²

Jinnah's undermining of the Azad Pact served to show that it was he, not Azad, who now mattered in Sindhi Muslim politics. How had Jinnah come to secure the Chief Minister's pledge of loyalty, and did his joining the Muslim League represent any real change in status or fortune for the League in Sind? Firstly, the reason Bande Ali joined the League is yet another example of how the processes of communalisation of politics were driving local politicians into the

²¹ *Sind Observer*, quoted in *BC*, 25 November 1940.

²² Resolution of the Sind Provincial Muslim League Council, 22 December 1940, in *BC*, 23 December 1940. The demand was a direct challenge to the authority of the Hindu Party, which had earlier stipulated as a condition of the ministry's formation that no Muslim Leaguer could be the premier. Graham to Linlithgow, 29 July 1940, Linlithgow Papers, Eur.F.125/96, Doc. 77a, OIOC.

folds of national level political parties. Ali stated that he had joined the League simply because it was too 'difficult for an individual to exist without aligning himself to a well organised political party'.²³ His reasoning represents the identifying, by an elite Muslim leader, of their need for an organisation of the status of the All-India Muslim League in their local struggles. In Bande Ali's statement there was no mention of a commitment to the party's principles, policies or platform; he simply needed the All-India Muslim League to counter the machinations of the Congress High Command.

The visit of Azad to Sind restored the involvement of the central organisations in Sindhi politics. It consolidated Congress as the hub of opposition to the League as both Bakhsh and the Hindu Party fell in behind its leadership. Clearly, the earlier political antagonisms among Hindus (between Congress and the Hindu Party) had been forced to dissolve to the extent that the two organisations were driven into partnerships based exclusively upon a defence of their religious identity. A similar process was occurring amongst the Muslims as more of the leaders (though still not all) began to coalesce behind the League in order to counter Hindu opposition and retain their own political viability.

Despite Jinnah's success, the failure of the Pact was a more powerful motivation for non-Muslims to unite than it was for the Muslims, because it was the non-Muslims who still held the upper hand in Sind's politics. As long as Muslim leaders such as Bakhsh stood aloof from the League and sided with Hindus, the power of the Muslims was divided and it was the Congress-Hindu Party coalition that determined who would stay and who would leave the ministry, something which Jinnah was still unable to achieve.

²³ Bande Ali Talpur's comments to United Press, 16 January 1941, quoted in *BC*, 18 January 1941.

One of the most important points which escaped few of the Sindhi politicians was the position of the province in national politics now that Pakistan had become an issue. The Azad Pact revealed how important a prize Sind had become for both the Congress High Command and the All-India Muslim League. Jinnah needed the support of the majority-province Sindhis in order to press for greater Muslim power at the centre, whereas the Congress sought to unravel the Pakistan demand and undermine Jinnah's position by demonstrating that the province's Muslim leaders rejected the League. The experiences of the Sindhi Muslim League and the revelation of the weakness of their position in the drama of the Azad Pact triggered a restoring of unity to the Sind League as it demonstrated the growing importance of the connection with Jinnah and the All-India Muslim League.

III

The early Pakistan Movement in Sind (1940-42)

In March 1941, a new ministry was formed when the Congress, Hindu Party, and Allah Bakhsh united as an 'anti-League ministry'. However, rather than being a fatal blow to the prestige of the Muslim League, the departure of the League ministers from provincial government provided the opportunity for the Sindhi branch to make its first serious approach to organising the Muslim populace in a disciplined and coherent structure. Importantly, the Sindhi League leadership, now free of the Hindu alliance, could actively promote Pakistan as a political objective. Not since the Sind separation movement had such a long-term and concrete point of focus been identified. The League's previous sole discourse of merely decrying Hindu power had been a negative focus in that it articulated what it did not want. Now Sindhi Muslims were offered something positive for Muslims to identify with: Pakistan. The question remained as to what form Pakistan would take and what this might mean for Sind.

The Pakistan movement in Sind had three important phases. Although the Lahore Resolution had been launched in 1940, the preoccupation of the Sind League with the ministerial alliance and its dependence upon meeting the Hindu Party's conditions allowed little serious promotional activity to occur. It was not until the Azad Pact forced the Sind League leadership to turn to Jinnah that it irrevocably turned to articulating the central League's objective. The eighteen months following the League ministry's dismissal from Government constituted the first phase, in which three key developments occurred that moved the Pakistan campaign further ahead in Sind than in the other north-western majority provinces. The three developments: Syed's organisation of the League in the districts; the prominence which anti-League organisations gave to Pakistan; and the increasing inability of Bakhsh to improve the conditions of Muslims, will be explained in terms of their impact on the Pakistan movement.²⁴

G.M. Syed's organisation of the League in the *mofussil*

The first significant development that followed the departure of the Muslim Leaguers from the ministry was the involvement of Syed in organising the League in the *mofussil*. The preoccupation of the Sind Provincial League president, Abdullah Haroon, with the League's all-India affairs, and the exclusive focus of the League ministers on Assembly politics, produced a void in the League's structure as to who would lead the League at the ground level. Whereas Khuhro and Majid maintained their focus on the Assembly, Syed had realised that until the Sindhi Muslim leaders had an organisation which involved the masses and presented a clear platform that contained a concrete programme to address their needs, the League's politics would remain disconnected and a channelled, controlled use of the potential of Muslim power would continue to elude them.

²⁴ The subsequent phases of the Pakistan movement are addressed in later Chapters of this thesis.

The task of making the League an organisation of the masses in Sind was a monumental one, and Syed approached it with an energy unparalleled in the history of the Sind League. His first priority was to build a base for the League among the cultivating classes. Once out of the ministry, Syed actively responded to the All-India Muslim League Council's call for greater public awareness of the Pakistan movement.²⁵ Through organising activities such as the observance of 'Pakistan Day' and the establishment of a quarterly 'Muslim League Week' during which the policy and programme of the League would be explained to the masses, Syed was deliberately attempting to draw in the whole Muslim populace, not just the local power-brokers. He endeavoured to take the League out of the drawing rooms of Karachi and into the districts, villages, and estates.

Syed did more than anyone else to establish the platform for a popular League in Sind. The focus in his public speeches, particularly in early 1941, replicate the central League's discourse against Congress and Hindus, and he relentlessly attacked their position in Sind's economic and political life. In doing so, he hoped the League could feed off the ensuing communal tension. His rationale was exemplified at a public meeting in Karachi's Khalkadina Hall (held after the dumping of the League ministers), in which he told the large crowd that there could be no settlement with the Sindh Hindu leaders because they were opposed to the welfare of the Muslim people.²⁶ Syed contended that the Sindhi Hindus held the same place as Jews did in Germany, and provocatively warned them that a similar fate awaited them.²⁷ The panacea for Muslims, he told them, was Pakistan. Syed appealed to Muslims to take to trade and business in an attempt to replace the Hindus in their pivotal role in the economy of the province.²⁸ It is evident that under Syed's hand the propaganda of the League promoted Pakistan to a considerably

²⁵ Resolutions of the Council of the All-India Muslim League, 23 February 1941, cited in *BC*, 24 February 1941.

²⁶ Syed, 7 March 1941, quoted in *BC*, 8 March 1941.

²⁷ SFR First Half of March, 21 March 1941, L/P&J/5/257, OIOC.

²⁸ SFR First Half of May, 19 May 1941, L/P&J/5/257, OIOC.

greater extent than it had when the League was in Government. Its attack on Hindus was sharp, and Sind's strengthened links with the All-India Muslim League served to remind Hindus that they were geographically surrounded by Muslims who were now finding a political platform that was directly aimed at breaking the disproportionate power of Hindus.

A significant factor in explaining why the League organisation had earlier failed to blossom in Sind was the confining of its leadership to a handful of the Assembly members and a small group of urban professional classes. The Karachi merchants and lawyers had little standing amongst Sind's rural Muslims, and the willingness of *zamindars* to promote the League was usually restricted to the boundaries of their estates. Syed realised that the League needed to involve a much broader class of mediating elites, and the obvious target of the recruitment was the *pirs*.

Syed drew on his familial *pir* connections, and under his unofficial leadership *pirs* responded to the League and soon became important in establishing district branches.²⁹ Sarah Ansari has shown that from early 1941 (when Syed assumed the organising role), *pirs* became prominent in the League's district leaderships. For example, in May 1941 at the Sukkur District League conference, Makhdum Murid Hussain Qureshi of Multan, who 'exercised a great deal of influence over local Suhrawardi *pirs* and had many *murids* in Sind' presided, and Pir Rasul Bakhsh Shah of Ghotki chaired the Reception Committee.³⁰ Both attacked the Congress and urged Muslims to look upon the League flag as 'the flag of the prophet of Islam.'³¹ Syed's clever targeting of *pirs* in

²⁹ Syed was a member of the *sajjada nishin* family of the shrine of Pir Haider Shah, Sann, Dadu district. Ansari, *Sufi Saints*, p. 112.

³⁰ *Moslem Voice* (Karachi), 31 May 1941, cited in *ibid.*, p. 120.

³¹ *Ibid.*

his task of establishing local branches resulted in an embedding of the place of *pirs* in the League's structure and hierarchy.³²

Pirs rapidly came to dominate most of the local branches: a clear example being that of Khiarvi Sharif, Nawabshah, in which all office-holders were *pirs* of the local Naqshbandi *sajjada nishin* family.³³ The League's use of *pirs* soon reached such an extent that it provoked jealousies within the *pir* fraternity. In April 1941, Pir Bharchundi, who had been instrumental in the Manzilgah agitation, became hostile to the League because of its use of rival *pirs* and *mullahs* after his imprisonment for his role in the Sukkur riots.³⁴ Using the techniques of the *pirs'* power to mobilise support, Syed organised the establishment of 35 primary League branches in Dadu district alone by June 1941.³⁵

While Syed was a *zamin-dar* of small land holdings, his connections to the *pir* fraternity enabled him to straddle both groups, and so he did not share the same qualms as some of the larger *zamindars* and *jagirdars* had about recruiting *pirs* into the League hierarchy. Gilmartin's work has shown that it was the *pirs* in the Punjab who were largely the mediating linkages between the masses and the elites in any political discourses about the role of Islam or Muslim identity.³⁶ In Sind, the position of *pirs* was as embedded solidly into the structure of traditional power as in the Punjab. Despite the control that *zamindars* exercised over the temporal component of their tenants' lives, their authority did not ultimately rest on Islamic principles. It was Islam that defined the key component of the sense of identity of the *zamindars'* tenants. Events such as the Khilafat movement and the Manzilgah campaign had shown that *zamindars* did not possess the power to

³² Ansari, *Sufi Saints*, p. 121.

³³ *Al-Wahid*, 9 January 1942, cited in *ibid.*, p. 120.

³⁴ Dow to Linlithgow, 19 April 1941, Linlithgow Mss., Eur.F.125/97, Doc. 18, OIOC.

³⁵ *BC*, 14 June 1941.

³⁶ Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam*, and 'Religious Leadership and the Pakistan Movement in the Punjab', *op. cit.*

mobilise the Muslim masses to respond to issues of Islamic identity; that ability resided with the *pirs*. Only when the *pirs* had begun to realise that Government power and patronage were being consolidated into the hands of Hindu and pro-Congress forces did they begin to review their position and their stake in the structure of the state.³⁷ Through his experiences in the ministry, Syed was able to illustrate to the *pirs* that Muslims could not count on a Muslim Government in Sind to further their interests. Unless Muslims organised under the League, the likely result would be a Government with less sympathy for the role of *pirs* in the system of authority.

The importance of anti-Pakistan propaganda

The start of the involvement of the *pirs* in the League expanded the second development of the first phase of the Pakistan movement: namely, the role that the importance which Hindus attached to Pakistan had in arousing the interest of Muslims. The spread of the Muslim League as an organised political organisation in the districts alarmed Hindus. Syed's tirade against them had reached the point where he formulated a Pakistan which gave no place whatsoever to the minority communities in the sphere of politics. It was a version that was of far more liking to the Sind Muslims than the other schemes floating about, including Jinnah's which spoke of safeguards for the minorities.³⁸ Under Syed's aegis the Sind League openly stated that, contrary to its position when in the ministry, it now outrightly opposed the notion of communal unity on the grounds that it would weaken the Pakistan movement.³⁹ Syed's articulation of the impossibility of the Muslims and the Hindus reconciling their differences led Dow to give consideration to placing him under restraint, for he was now viewed by the British authorities as being 'a dangerous combination of fanaticism, shrewdness, and courage'.⁴⁰

³⁷ According to Ansari, the *pirs* began to shift their allegiance from local representatives of British authority to the Muslim League organisation from early 1941. Ansari, *Sufi Saints*, p. 120.

³⁸ Khuhro to Jinnah, 24 September 1941, Jinnah Mss., IOR.POS. 10777, File. 365, f. 30, OIOC.

³⁹ SFR First Half of June, 5 July 1941, L/P&J/5/257, OIOC.

⁴⁰ Dow to Linlithgow, 23 July 1941, L/P&J/5/257, OIOC.

The implications of the Lahore resolution were deeply disturbing for Sind's Hindus since it threatened to disconnect them from the Hindu-majority and political organisations of India. The Sindhi Hindus saw that their survival was dependent upon the Pakistan demand failing, and to this end they constantly disparaged the scheme and tried to undermine it. The local Congress had regularly denounced the partition scheme as 'fantastic, absurd, and impractical', and organised a number of well-publicised 'anti-Pakistan' rallies across the province.⁴¹ Similarly, the Sind Hindu Sabha viewed the Lahore resolution as such a threat that it advocated the union of the Congress and Mahasabha in order to establish an 'Hindu raj' to smother the rise of Muslim separatism.⁴² The Sind Hindu Sabha also played a prominent role in the All-India Hindu Mahasabha's Conference for North-West Minorities (March 1941) which warned that as the majority in India, Hindus would only offer Muslims equal rights of citizenship on the sole condition that 'they identify themselves without reservation with India and do not claim a separate identity of their own.'⁴³ The Conference moved to give form to this view when it reactivated the demand for the immediate reversion of Sind's attachment to Bombay province. Even the Sikhs in Sind convened an All-Sind Akali Conference (presided over by Master Tara Singh of the Punjab) in Karachi to oppose the League's demand.⁴⁴

The League's Muslim opponents in Sind were also important in publicising Pakistan. Hidayatullah consistently attacked the two-nation theory by arguing that if the League's claim was allowed to develop there would be a 'five-nation' theory tomorrow, and so he urged 'every Indian of whatever caste or creed to combat this

⁴¹ For example, SFR First Half of May, 16 May 1940, L/P&J/5/255, OIOC.

⁴² *Qurbani*, 19 April 1940, exemplified the pressure to mesh Hindu communal movements and the Congress. cited in SFR Second Half of April, 6 May 1940, L/P&J/5/255, OIOC.

⁴³ Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee, 1 March 1941, presiding the All-India Mahasabha Conference for North-Western Minorities, quoted in *BC*, 2 and 3 March 1941.

⁴⁴ *BC*, 4 and 14 April 1941.

move, realising that India was the motherland of Hindus and Muslims alike, and work for one nation.⁴⁵ However, these sentiments were not shared by a growing number of Muslims in Sind, as the expanding membership of the Muslim League and the spiralling outbursts of violence began graphically to illustrate.

The evidence shows that a significant factor in drawing the attention of the Sindhi Muslims in 1940-41 to the Pakistan demand was the publicity and importance given to it by the League's Hindu opponents. The resentment amongst the Hindu Sabha and Congress which the Pakistan demand generated added considerable appeal to the Pakistan demand in Sind amongst the Muslims, for it clearly agitated and threatened Hindu groups. It became apparent that any issue which Hindus objected to found favour amongst the Muslims simply because it provoked Hindus. Even the Governor observed that Syed's push for Pakistan was alarming Hindus,⁴⁶ and that supporters of the Muslim League in Sind were not advocates of Jinnah but rather opponents of the Sind Congress.⁴⁷

The strengthening display of Hindu political power

The third important development to occur in the first phase of the Pakistan movement in Sind was the gradual influence that Allah Bakhsh, the non-League Muslim premier, had on driving Muslims into the League fold through his inability to stand aloof from Congress dictats. Bakhsh's reliance on Hindu support and his failure to advance the interests of Muslims was agitating Muslims of all classes.⁴⁸ The incidents, in which Bakhsh chose to follow a Congress policy that was detrimental in advancing the cause of Muslims (especially the political elites), became more frequent and prominent. It was observed in late 1941 that the Muslim *zamindars* were keen to support the Allied war effort, but the Congress

⁴⁵ Hidayatullah's address to a public meeting, Karachi, 12 July 1941, quoted in *BC*, 12 May 1941.

⁴⁶ Dow to Linlithgow, 23 July 1941, L/P&J/5/257, OIOC.

⁴⁷ Dow to Linlithgow, 12 December 1941, L/P&J/5/257, OIOC.

⁴⁸ It was observed that Bakhsh was seriously underrating the extent which he was 'disgusting his rank and file supporters.' Dow to Linlithgow, 22 December 1941, L/P&J/5/257, OIOC.

pressure on Bakhsh to refuse to co-ordinate the war effort prevented their greater involvement.⁴⁹ Moreover, the Muslim *zamindars* had earlier been able to have the ministry's agreement to revive the holding of *darbars* (abolished in 1937), but Bakhsh now refused to move on the matter as Congress opposed *darbars* on the grounds that they reinforced the status of the traditional Muslim landowners and *sirdars* in the imperial system of control. The status one held (*izzat*) in the highly symbol ritual of the *darbar*, and the opportunity to display status, were vitally important mechanisms in Muslim Sindhi politics and their removal struck at the landowners' and *pirs'* sense of honour.⁵⁰ Such actions by Bakhsh seriously undermined his capacity to reward his followers, and by late 1941 desertions from his supporters to the Muslim League started to occur.⁵¹

The poorer sections of Muslim society were also becoming noticeably restless with Bakhsh. In the winter of 1941, the Government was blamed for failing to keep control of the price of basic foods in the face of war-time inflation. In the districts, prices were high because the ministers, as *zamindars*, were trying to avoid imposing a price control on the prices of crops until they had disposed of their produce, and the *baniyas* (through the Hindu Panchayat) refused to have price controls introduced after they had bought the crops at market prices from the *zamindars*.⁵² The situation inflated the already high market prices for foodstuffs, and left the Muslim populace with the view that their interests were being sacrificed to the *baniyas* by the Muslim premier.

⁴⁹ It was a national policy of the Congress not to directly support the Allied war effort until a promise of independence was given by the British. Although Bakhsh promised a budget of Rs. 30,000 for the Allies' war propaganda, it became known that Bakhsh was unwilling to put the proposal before the Assembly since he feared a Congress rejection, so he allocated the amount from the communal unity funds. Dow to Linlithgow, 12 and 22 December 1941, L/P&J/5/257, OIOC.

⁵⁰ For the role of *izzat* in underpinning the hierarchical framework of traditional Muslim power in Sind, see Ansari, *Sufi Saints*.

⁵¹ Dow to Linlithgow, 22 December 1941, L/P&J/5/257, OIOC.

⁵² Dow to Linlithgow, 29 January 1942, L/P&J/5/253, OIOC.

There was also trouble brewing for the rural poor because of the failure to implement properly the tenancy reform legislation. The issue had its roots in the communal bias of the ministers. In the previous year, the Assembly had passed legislation limiting the land revenue paid by *zamindars* to *jagirdars* as the amount equivalent to that which they would have to pay to the Government if it were the collector. In the passing of the legislation, it was understood that as there were numerous disputes between the *zamindars* and the *jagirdars* that had to be resolved before the legislation could operate, a phasing in period of three years was incorporated into the legislation.⁵³ Since the *jagirdars* were all Muslims, Vazirani, the Revenue minister, provoked trouble amongst the Muslim landowners by enforcing an immediate introduction of the legislation.⁵⁴ Again the *haris*, cultivators, and tenants were disadvantaged as *zamindars* and *jagirdars*, squabbling over when the land revenue was to be extracted, refused to allow the *haris* their share of the crop until the matter was resolved.⁵⁵ In the Tando division of Hyderabad district, the tension between cultivators and landowners reached a dangerous level and violence seemed imminent.⁵⁶

Azad recognised in early 1942 that Bakhsh's standing amongst the Muslims of Sind was fast declining. Bakhsh was crucial to the Congress strategy for he held the key to the anti-League forces in Sind; he was the only Muslim opposed to the League who could hold a ministry together and was sufficiently trusted by the majority of the Congress High Command. However, Azad contributed to enhancing the League's status amongst Sind's Muslims through his determination to prevent the province from falling into Jinnah's hands. When he had arranged for Bakhsh's return to the ministry in November 1940, he had initiated an informal 'Council of Sixteen' to guard against any defeats of the ministry on the floor of the Assembly.

⁵³ Dow to Linlithgow, 7 January 1942, L/P & J/5/258. OIOC.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

The Council consisted of six ministers and ten other MLAs representing sections of the Assembly, but excluded the Muslim League.⁵⁷ The objective of the Council was to vet all proposed legislation and to determine policies for the Government. These were to be agreed upon by the Council prior to their submission to the Assembly, thereby ensuring that no matters would go before the Assembly on which the Government could be out-voted.⁵⁸ The Council effectively meant that Bakhsh's position was secure in the coalition as long as he provided a more attractive alternative to the Hindus than the Muslim League.

By March 1942, the 'Council of Sixteen' had expanded to 18 members, but only six were Muslims. The effect of the reduction in the ratio of Muslims demonstrated that it hardly reflected the communal composition of the Assembly. The Council's vetoing of policies that it disapproved of enabled the Congress to function as if it were the Government. This aspect became more onerous to Muslims when the Council failed to endorse any programmes to improve the conditions of Muslims, and moreover, when it extended its scope to include any Government business it chose, including directing parliamentary secretaries to appear before it and explain themselves.⁵⁹

The concentration of power into the unofficial Hindu-dominated Council gave Vazirani sufficient confidence to boast that he was 'virtually the Prime Minister in any matter' and could 'make the Premier put his initials on any proposal that he chose to bring forward.'⁶⁰ Nor was Sidhwa, the Congress leader, to be outdone, for he bragged that all recent Government measures had been due to his forcing them through the Council. He took credit, for example, for pressuring Bakhsh to allow a liberal grant of firearms licenses in order to please rural

⁵⁷ The Azad Pact had given the League a place in the Council, but with the demise of the Pact, the Leaguers' were replaced by Hindus.

⁵⁸ Dow to Linlithgow, 7 March 1942, L/P&J/5/258, OIOC.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Dow to Linlithgow, 21 March 1942, L/P&J/5/258, OIOC.

Hindus.⁶¹ Reginald Coupland, a contemporary British academic specialising in constitutional history and a member of the Cripps' mission of March 1942, described the Council as a 'junta', and 'clearly a perversion of constitutional government'.⁶² He contended that it was hardly surprising if the Council was regarded as 'conclusive proof that the Government of Sind was virtually a Congress Government.'⁶³ In the circumstances, Muslims needed little further convincing that Bakhsh was hardly an asset to their cause.

IV

The picture of the Pakistan movement in Sind by mid-1942 was one of uncertainty. Syed's expansion of district branches, the recruitment of *pirs*, and the desertions from Bakhsh's Party suggested that as an organisation the League was clearly strengthening. It had made steady progress since March 1941 as it drew members from across the province, but its rise had reached a plateau in 1942 when the platform of Pakistan attracted closer scrutiny from Muslims as they assessed where supporting the League would take them. The answer was far from clear.

The cause of the difficulty lay in the uncertainty within the Sindhi League over where it was heading and, more specifically, what Pakistan would mean. When the League was dumped from the Government in March 1941, it had nowhere to turn except to Jinnah. The Sindhi Leaguers had exhausted all means, from conferences to communal riots, to break the dependence of Muslims upon Hindus in order to govern. The League could no longer afford to ignore the parent body, and Khuhro repeatedly wrote to Jinnah for guidance. In March 1941, he warned Jinnah that unless he visited Sind at that critical stage to set its future path,

⁶¹ Dow to Linlithgow, 11 April 1942, Linlithgow Mss., Eur.F.125/98, Doc. 32, OIOC.

⁶² Coupland, *Indian Politics*, *op. cit.*, p. 73

⁶³ *Ibid.*

the province 'shall have gone down the ditch at last, for a long time.'⁶⁴ The role of Jinnah, and, more importantly the concept of Pakistan, were now intrinsic in establishing a course for the Snd Muslims to reassert Muslim power. The Sindhi Leaguers returned to the discipline of the All-India Muslim League because they needed Jinnah to provide a solid focus for their political activities through his ability to stand up to the Congress at the centre.

Despite the factors contributing to the growth of interest in Pakistan in Sind and its commitment to the All-India Muslim League, the Assembly Party's leadership failed to chalk out a concrete programme that would appeal to Muslims. Even as Bakhsh's supporters faltered in mid-1942, the Party was unable to take advantage of the opportunity and win over his remaining adherents by bothering to draft an alternate programme. The responsibility rested largely with the provincial League president, Abdullah Ha'oon, whose sights were firmly on Delhi and the All-India Muslim League.⁶⁵ He was the only representative from Sind in the early 1940s on the All-India Muslim League's Executive Council (of 21), but his leadership skills in the local environment were found wanting as he struggled to assert an authoritative leadership. Indicative of this was his failure to win a seat in the 1937 general elections, and a characteristic of Muslim politics in 1940-41 had been the constant ignoring by the League ministers of his presidential directives. As a projected leader of Sind's Muslims, he lacked an ability to tap into what was important for Sindhis. His pro-unity' stance and his communal harmony conferences of 1940 received poor responses.⁶⁶ The reason was partly because he was out of step with Muslim public opinion, and partly because of the apparent contradiction of advocating both community unity and partition as the solutions to Sind's communal problems.

⁶⁴ Khuhro to Jinnah, 19 March 1941, Jinnah Mss., IOR.POS. 10777, File 365, f.15, OIOC.

⁶⁵ Most of the other office-bearers were Members of the Legislative Assembly whose foci were fixated on events in that forum (Syed was not yet an office-holder in the League).

⁶⁶ BC, 23 October 1940.

Beyond the establishment of a 'Muslim raj', the Pakistan scheme was short on detail. On the one hand, this was an advantage for the All-India Muslim League as it did not impose a boundary around any specific definition. The League needed to cast its net as widely as possible to include all Muslims. On the other hand, the failure to define Pakistan was generating uncertainty in the minds of Sindhi Muslims. What was the vision that Jinnah had in mind? The effect of the lack of an authoritative clarification of the implications of Pakistan was compounded by the various unofficial interpretations, including Haroon's, of what Pakistan would mean.⁶⁷

Until Syed took the leading role in the Pakistan movement, Haroon was the sole publicist and it is in his version of Pakistan that a reason for the Sind Muslims' reticence can be found. When he was not in Delhi, Haroon carried on 'very strongly his propaganda for the Pakistan programme', but his vision of Pakistan had made little impression amongst the Muslims of Sind.⁶⁸ Haroon's Pakistan incorporated Sind into a larger Muslim state. It was a Pakistan that challenged, not liberated, Sindhi provincialism. During the 1930s he had advocated the Aga Khan's proposal for a single north-western Muslim bloc, and as president of the All-India Muslim League's Foreign Committee in 1940, Haroon submitted a draft resolution to the central Executive that did not appreciate the Sindhis' perspective of independence. Instead he argued for Indian Muslims to have 'a separate national home in the shape of an autonomous State'.⁶⁹ The result was that under Haroon's leadership,

⁶⁷ There were a number of schemes for Pakistan that emphasised different aspects designed to appeal to Muslim interest groups. For example, the 'Industan' scheme advocated a north-western Muslim State that would serve as a basis for an 'Islamic world revolution'; the Aligarh scheme centred upon the role that Hindu and Muslim minorities would play as hostages in their respective new states; the Latif scheme promoted unions of cultural zones; and Sikander Hyat Khan's scheme consisted of regionalised blocs based on existing provinces. See *BC*, 10 and 11 December 1940.

⁶⁸ Graham to Linlithgow, 10 May 1940, *J/P&J/5/2:55*, OIOC.

⁶⁹ The resolution spoke of a Muslim homeland in a singular form. See resolution of the joint meeting of the Foreign Committee of the All-India Muslim League and the authors of various Pakistan proposals, cited in *BC*, 3 February 1940.

the Pakistan movement in Sind aroused little enthusiasm.⁷⁰ The problem was that Haroon had not made the Pakistan demand a movement for Sind. He either failed to appreciate, or chose to ignore, that Sindhi Muslims, particularly at that time, had 'no regard at all for Jinnah and the League's extra-Sind affiliations.'⁷¹

It is contended that the versions of Haroon and other Muslim League intellectuals confused, rather than enticed, Sindhi Muslims. Pakistan could be all things to all Muslims, but the Sindhis needed more substance. Their experience with provincial autonomy, with its failed promise of a return to Muslim power in the separation of Sind from Bombay, left the Sindhi Muslims sceptical about any promises associated with an undefined Muslim separatism. The notions of Pakistan circulating in 1940-1942 lacked sufficient substance to galvanise the Sindhis. The promise of Muslim power was important to Muslims, vitally important to the Muslim land-owners, *pirs*, and middle-class elites. With the exception of the granting of provincial status, Muslim power had failed to materialise despite its being on the Sindhis' agenda from the early 1920s. The Pakistan movement needed something that would not merely attract the interests of Muslims, but would mobilise active support in its promise to achieve results. In Sind, the demand for Pakistan lacked a component to motivate Muslims to demand it as their political objective. Neither Jinnah nor Haroon provided a tangible answer to the question of what Pakistan would mean for the Sindhi Muslims in 1940-42.

V

Two landmark events, however, that were both quite unexpected and beyond the control of the Sind Leaguers, served dramatically to resuscitate the Sind Muslim League and the Pakistan movement. These events led to the

⁷⁰ Graham to Linlithgow, 9 October 1940, L/P&J/5/256, OIOC.

⁷¹ Graham to Linlithgow, 12 December 1941, L/P&J/5/257, OIOC.

redefining of the course of Muslim political power in Sind through the opportunities they provided for the League to access the position of Government, and to define Pakistan in terms that would galvanise Muslims.

The first event was the death of Abdullah Haroon in April 1942. Haroon was described by Jinnah 'as one of the pillars of the Muslim League,'⁷² and his death robbed the central League of the only Muslim Leaguer [in Sind] who took an interest in the All-India aspect.⁷³ The consequence of Haroon's demise was that it broke an important connection between the central and provincial Muslim Leagues. Although Haroon had had little success in effecting a discipline on the Sind League, his was the only presence in Sind committed to the All-India Muslim League perspective and he had faithfully tried to keep it before the eyes of Sindhis.

The course of the Sind Provincial Muslim League was to alter dramatically under Haroon's replacement as president: G.M Syed.⁷⁴ The relationship between Haroon and Syed had not been comfortable as their perspectives were fixed on different horizons, and Syed's elevation to official leadership of the League heralded the emphatic abandonment in Sind of Haroon's advocacy of Pakistan as constituting a single state. Syed's provincialism and his focus on benefiting the cultivating and lower classes were to provide the firm, tangible direction that the Pakistan Movement in Sind had lacked

The second event was the departure of the Congress members of the Assembly as they followed Gandhi's directive in the 'Quit India' campaign to resign or be imprisoned. In late summer, Gandhi had initiated and spearheaded the Congress High Command to undertake non-co-operation across India in order to

⁷² Jinnah, 27 April 1942, quoted in *BC*, 28 April 1942.

⁷³ Dow to Linlithgow, 6 May 1942, L/P&. /5/258, OIOC.

⁷⁴ Initially Khuhro succeeded Haroon as president of the provincial League, but he relinquished the post after several months due to his preoccupation with events in the Assembly.

force the British to withdraw immediately. Open, non-violent rebellion by the Congress was preached. The British reacted quickly and imprisoned any Congress leader, national and provincial, who supported the movement. However, the ramifications of the campaign in Sind were far from what the Congress High Command had been working to achieve. The imprisoning of the Congress MLAs effectively removed the most important bloc of support for Allah Bakhsh. Without the Congress, Bakhsh and the Hindu party did not have sufficient supporters to challenge the majority of Muslims who had by that time drifted into the Muslim League.⁷⁵

One of the more important defections to the League was Hidayatullah. Sind's foremost political opportunist, Hidayatullah had a sudden change of heart about the prospects of communal unity when Bakhsh's ministry was dismissed. He now championed the two-nation theory and promised Jinnah that he was, after all, a true Leaguer.⁷⁶ Notwithstanding concerns raised about Hidayatullah's sincerity, his return sufficiently boosted the League's numbers in the Assembly to allow the Muslim League finally to break the Muslim's dependence upon Hindus in the formation of governments. The position of the revitalised League shattered the Hindu Party as it irreparably split over whether to oppose the League or concede to its conditions in return for a junior place in the ministry.

Conclusion

In 1940, the Lahore resolution had been given a lower promotion in Sind than the All-India Muslim League leadership might have reasonably hoped for. The main policy of the Sind League at that time had not been the promotion of Pakistan, but

⁷⁵ In order to keep the support of Congress in the Assembly and to avoid losing a 'no-confidence' motion to the Muslim majority, Bakhsh followed the Congress directive to reject his British honours.

Consequently he was dismissed in October 1942 by the Governor on the grounds that he had lost his confidence in him. *BC*, 12 October 1942.

⁷⁶ Hidayatullah to Jinnah, 14 November 1942, Jinnah Mss., IOR.POS. 10725, File 286, f.1, OIOC.

instead to express faith in the communal coalition ministry.⁷⁷ The lack of an effective organiser (such as Syed) had also meant that the idea of Pakistan was only promoted forcefully at those local meetings which Haroon could squeeze in between his duties on the All-India Muslim League Working Committee (the correspondence of British officials during 1940 consistently report what little impact Pakistan was having on the Muslims of Sind).

The situation changed markedly when the Sind Muslim League Government was driven into the arms of Jinnah on the demise of its coalition Government. Despite the non-eventful first year of the Pakistan movement, the League had begun to make inroads into the countryside and amongst the *pirs* when Syed took over the district organisational work. The agitation Pakistan provoked amongst Hindus aroused Muslim interest, and the reaction to the failure of Bakhsh to represent the needs of Muslims illustrated that politics was narrowing into a straight contest between the Congress and the Muslim League.

What was Pakistan? To remove Hindus from the equation was not in itself a goal. Freedom from Hindu competition and dominance was a process to reach a desired state, but as yet, the desired state was still unclear. The Pakistan movement in Sind lacked a positive goal, a picture that Muslims could see and define, and categorically decide whether they wanted to be a part of or not. However, with a League ministry fully in control as the Government (with effective Hindu opposition removed), and the loss of Haroon's linkage to the agenda of the All-India Muslim League, the question was about to be addressed from a Sindhi perspective. The notion of a 'Muslim raj' was too simplistic to produce an all encompassing commitment. The question was not about whether to have a Muslim raj, but rather, what sort of a Muslim raj in Sind would it be?

⁷⁷ SFR Second Half of May, 7 June 1940, L/P&J/5/255, OIOC.

PART THREE

Majority Rule and the Redefining of Provincial Politics

It is your [Muslim League] organisation. It is not the property of this man or that man. It is your organisation, and you can make it as you like and what you like.

Jinnah's message to the Muslims of Sind, Karachi, 16 February 1943.¹

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

Majid addressing the Sind Legislative Assembly.²

Sind for Sindhis.

No non-Sindhis should get any land or job in the Sind province.

Objective 3 of the official SPML Programme 1945-46.³

¹ BC, 18 February 1943.

² 20 July 1944, *Legislative Assembly Debates - Sind Legislative Assembly*, V/9/3294, OIOC.

³ *Dawn*, 9 June 1945.

CHAPTER 7

The Sindhi Definition of Pakistan

The establishment of Government under the Sind Muslim League in November 1942 brought Muslim authority to the state arena. The sequence of the lawlessness that had devastated much of Sind and the Muslim League's coming to power produced a seminal change in the balance of the communal struggle as Muslims demonstrated a rising dominance in both public and state arenas. The recent panic of rural Hindus had, according to a senior British official, 'opened the eyes of the Muslims to their own power whenever they choose to exert it, of which they had only been semi-conscious before.'¹ Once the League ministry was in place, the potential existed where Muslims could, through legislation and policy, begin to curb Hindu power and exert themselves.

The relationship between the Sind and central League strengthened considerably once the Sind League gained control of the Government. Previously, an event such as assuming Government would have seen the Sindhis disregard the All-India Muslim League. However, a new basis for the relationship had been forged, and the linking of the control of the Government with the promise of Pakistan had been the catalyst. Importantly, at this juncture in early 1943 the All-India Muslim League did not attempt to be a controlling body. Jalal has wrongly interpreted this as indicating an actual lack of control by the central League over the Sindhis, and this point reinforces her argument that Jinnah's influence

¹ SFR Second Half of March, 5 April 1940. L/P&J/5/255, OIOC.

amongst Muslims was more illusionary than real.² Complications between Jinnah and a faction of the Sind League did become a key determinant in Sindhi politics later, but not for reasons of irrelevance. Rather, the fact that a split between Jinnah and a scion of the Sindhis later became so important an issue in Sindhi politics demonstrates that the opposite was true. The important distinction must be made between the relevance of Jinnah (and the issue of Pakistan) and the amount of control the All-India Muslim League attempted to exert in 1943. A weakness in Jalal's portrayal of Sindhi politics is that she affords no recognition to the element of change in the relationship between Jinnah and the Sindhis.

At every point in history there are competing avenues of identities, cultures, and philosophies for people to explain their pasts and presents, and anticipate their futures. The Pakistan movement was one of the most important opportunities in twentieth-century India for the varying competing forces to consolidate their positions. The challenge for Jinnah was to harness these forces within the constructs of Muslim nationalism. However, what was presented by Jinnah and what was understood by the Muslim masses were not always the same. Provincial League leaders, especially in outlying provinces, were the translators and interpreters of the Pakistan philosophy. It is through their eyes, not Jinnah's, that the strengths and weaknesses of the Pakistan movement can be understood. The pivotal question this chapter seeks to address is what the Sindhis Muslims had understood Pakistan to mean.

The chapter also explains what the Muslim political leaders wanted Pakistan to be, and what Pakistan was presented to the Muslim populace as being. Pakistan was not just about the disunity of Hindus and Muslims, or simply an assertion of Muslim power. What form that power took, and who wielded it, were equally crucial ingredients. That this has not been sufficiently recognised by

² Jalal, *Sole Spokesman*, p.109.

scholars is because of the mistaken assumption that the Sindhis' perception of Pakistan was very much in line with the dominant discourse of the Muslim-minority provinces. The key to understanding the Pakistan movement in Sind is to appreciate that despite a certain reluctance to embrace it in the initial years, it was accepted by the overwhelming number of Muslim leaders by March 1943. Pakistan was accepted by them because it was uniformly understood to mean the creation of a sovereign Sindhi state.

I

The revitalised Sind Provincial Muslim League

At the collapse of the Bakhsh ministry, Hidayatullah, a foremost political opportunist, immediately applied to join the Muslim League as it ascended into Government. In joining the League, Hidayatullah stressed that he did so 'in the interests of my own community.'³ His joining of the League, for whatever motive, is another instance illustrating that Jinnah was not irrelevant in Sindhi politics, particularly at a time when options for Muslim participants outside of the Muslim League in the state arena were evaporating.

The fears of the genuine Sindhi Leaguers about Hidayatullah's return were partially allayed when his first action in the League Government was to foreshadow a legislative package designed to curtail Hindu influence on the predominantly agricultural population. The distribution of Hindus and Muslims was largely on an urban-rural basis, and so the simplest measure to curb the influence of Hindus over Muslims was to legislate on a basis that restricted the economic position of Hindus in the rural sphere. Four bills were soon prepared by the League ministry that sought to: control the activities of money-lenders; prevent the sale of agricultural lands to non-agriculturalists; scale down the amounts owing on

³ Hidayatullah, quoted in *BC*, 23 October 1942.

agriculturalists' debts; and postpone the execution of decrees against agriculturalists. While the latter bill was given assent by Dow (the Governor), the other three were deemed to be 'too extreme in their communal bias.'⁴ Hidayatullah was also effective in meeting his promise to the League to advance the position of Muslims by immediately increasing their proportion in the Government Service. For example, in January 1939, the Muslims had held 13.6 percent of senior posts in the Sind Government Service, but by July 1943 the percentage had risen to 19.2 percent.⁵

Sind's agricultural prosperity

The changes in the local environment of the Muslim landowners also provide an important backdrop to the development in their attitude towards the Pakistan demand. An important component was the dramatic improvements in Sind's rural economy. The timing of the establishment of the League in Government coincided with substantial surpluses in agricultural produce. The rural economy was starting to recover from the near-anarchy traumas of 1940-41, and *zamindars* were reaping substantial benefits. The immediate effect of the shift in economic fortunes was an increase in the level of the Muslim leaders' confidence. The increases in their incomes and a co-operative Muslim League Government in place produced enthusiastic responses from the *zamindars* to British appeals for financial assistance for the Allies' war effort. Moreover, the Muslim leaders were now in a position to accept the revised revenue assessment rates (which had been such a contentious issue for the Bakhsh ministries).

The increased confidence of the Muslim landowners reflected a strengthening belief in the capacity of Sind to financially support itself. The curtailment of Hindu political power, and their own financial betterment, led the

⁴ Dow to Linlithgow, 22 February 1943, Linlithgow Mss.Eur.F.125/99, OIOC.

⁵ *Sind Civil Lists*, January 1939 and July 1943, V/13/982, OIOC.

Muslim leadership to ponder Sind's future. Once Muslim authority in the legislature was established, as it was with the League Ministry after six years of dependence upon Hindu coalitions, the Muslim landowners entered a new phase of political development in Sind.

The coming to power of a Muslim League ministry that enjoyed the majority support of the Muslim MLAs and did not rely upon meeting any Hindu conditions to stay in power clearly formed a turning point in Sind's political history. The League ministry, without being forced to conform to conditions set by Hindus, formed the focus for the development of Sindhi Muslim political aspirations. In February 1943, Jinnah visited Karachi, and in what was to prove to be a landmark speech, openly encouraged the Sindhis to consider what they wanted their future to be. He tantalised them with visions of extending their newly found power in the Government by cleverly linking the idea of the fulfilment of their ambitions with the Pakistan objective. Jinnah told the Muslims of Sind in a rally in Karachi that the Muslim League 'was their organisation. It was not the property of this man or that man. It is your organisation, and you can make it as you like and what you like.'⁶

II

Pakistan and the objective of a sovereign Sind

The Sindhi Muslim elites did not need long to identify and agree on what shape the League, and its objective of Pakistan, would take. In fact, less than three weeks after Jinnah invited them to 'make the League what they liked,' Syed led the Muslims of the Sind Legislative Assembly to pass a resolution officially endorsing Pakistan as its political objective.

⁶ Jinnah quoted in *BC*, 18 February 1943.

The resolution on Pakistan was the first of its kind to be passed in any provincial legislature in the sub-continent, and its passage clearly demonstrated the commitment of the majority of the Muslim MLAs to the belief in a Pakistan. Jalal has argued that since not all of the Assembly voted on the resolution (the Congress members were in goal), it could hardly have been recognised as representative of the Assembly,⁷ but whether the Congress members were present or not, the outcome would have been the same. Only three votes, all cast by Hindu members, were recorded against it. Those votes, and those of the Congress members if they had voted would still have fallen short of the total Muslim vote for the Pakistan resolution.

To focus on who was not in the Assembly to vote is to miss the importance of the passing of the resolution by those who were there. Jalal contends that a rising competitiveness within the Sind Muslim League totally dominated the political rationale of the Muslim leaders, and issues such as Pakistan were irrelevant.⁸ That interpretation is also reflected in the writings of Talbot, who has ignored the passing of the resolution in his history of the Pakistan movement in Sind.⁹ However, a deeper understanding of the resolution and its context in Sind is needed. As one of the more illuminating publicly presented objectives, it clearly reveals under what conditions Pakistan would be accepted by the Sindhi Muslim leaders. The fact is that the resolution provides nothing less than the key to understanding the Pakistan movement in Sind.

The resolution provided the rationale that immediately won the support of virtually all Muslim leaders. The text of the resolution and supporting speeches are suggestive of what the Sindhis had in mind when they committed themselves to Pakistan. The resolution stated that Muslims were entitled:

⁷ Jalal, *Sole Spokesman*, p. 110.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Talbot, *Provincial Politics*.

to have independent national States of their own carved out in the zones where they are in a majority in the sub-continent of India. Wherefore, they emphatically declare that no constitution shall be acceptable to them that will place the Muslims under a Central Government dominated by another nation, as, in order to be able to play their part freely on their own distinct lines in the order of things to come, it is necessary for them to have independent national States of their own and hence any attempt to subject the Muslims of India under one Central Government is bound to result in civil war with grave, unhappy consequences.¹⁰

The resolution clearly demonstrated the belief in the separate interests among the Indian Muslims. It was an extension of the resolution that the Sindhis had put to Jinnah at the 1938 Sind Provincial Muslim League Conference, and the crux lay in the demand that the Muslim provinces had the right to carve out of the Muslim majority regions *independent states of their own* which would not be dominated by a central Government of another nation. Pakistan had come to represent for the Sindhis a federation of sovereign Muslim states, and Sind was to be one of those sovereign states.

The debate that occurred in the passage of the resolution sheds further light on the separatist vision of the Muslim leaders. The fear of a Pakistan that would encompass a single state amongst the Sindhi Muslims was very apparent. For example, Usman Soomro (of Karachi district) argued that:

there is no question of Hindu and Muslim [having different opinions], everybody would be eager to see the independence of Sind. That independence does not mean that our Sind province should be combined with Baluchistan, Punjab, or Pakistan with other provinces. By doing so Sind would be put in the dark, because the majority would be theirs. The population of the Punjab and Baluchistan is greater and if Sind is combined with them, it would suffer. The Sind province has got

¹⁰ Resolution of G.M. Syed, 3 March 1943. *Legislative Assembly Debates - Proceedings of the Sind Legislative Assembly*, 24 February - 12 July 1943, V/9/3268, OIOC.

its own sufficient income and therefore it would be beneficial if it remains separate.¹¹

The Pakistan idea represented to the Sindhi Muslim elites more than just freedom from Hindu domination, since it was to be the opportunity to be free of all controlling influences: Hindu and non-Sindhi. Khuhro captured the potential of the Pakistan demand for Sind's Muslims in his speech supporting the resolution when he surmised that Sindhi Muslims wanted 'complete independence of the Central Government, complete freedom under the new dispensation of things to come.'¹²

Considerable stimuli had been given to the development of the belief in a fragmentation of the north-western Muslim provinces. By April 1941, the All-India Muslim League's constitution had changed to incorporate Pakistan as the official objective. The new constitution embodied the demand that:

the Muslim-majority provinces shall be grouped together to constitute Independent States as Muslim Free National Homelands in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign.¹³

The new constitution made it explicit that the constituent units (i.e. the Muslim-majority provinces) would be sovereign, but collectively they would form a loose federation of Muslim homelands. Similarly, the British Government had also thrown open the possibility of sovereignty for provinces in the Cripps proposal of a year later.¹⁴ Part of the proposal had provided for any province which was not

¹¹ Usman Soomro, 3 March 1943, Sind Legislative Assembly, *ibid.*

¹² M.A. Khuhro, 3 March 1943, Sind Legislative Assembly. *ibid.*

¹³ Resolution II, paragraph (i), Twenty-Eighth Session of the All-India Muslim League, Madras, 12-15 April 1941, Pirzada, *Foundations of Pakistan*, p. 372.

¹⁴ In response to international criticisms that the British Government was not making sufficient progress in resolving India's constitutional problems, Churchill sent Sir Stafford Cripps to India in early 1942 with a proposal which, if agreed to by the All-India Muslim League and the Congress, would grant India Dominion status following the war. The proposal contained the clause that any province of British India that 'is not prepared to accept the new Constitution has the right to retain its present constitutional position [with] provision being made for its subsequent accession if it so decides.' For details of the Cripps proposal, see the Draft Declaration, 30 March 1942, Cmd. 6350, in N. Mansergh (ed.), *Documents and Speeches on British Commonwealth Affairs 1931-1952*, [hereafter *Documents and Speeches*] Vol. II (London, O.U.P., 1953), p. 616.

prepared to accept the new constitution to retain its present constitutional position with the provision for its subsequent accession if it so desired.¹⁵ In effect, this told the Sindhi Muslims that Britain would be willing to let provinces secede from the Union if they chose. The fact that Jinnah had initially accepted the offer (and then retracted his acceptance because the Congress rejected it) was illustrative to the Sindhis that provincial sovereignty was the goal of the Pakistan movement. In the Assembly's debate on the Pakistan resolution in March 1943, Majid reiterated that Syed's resolution 'is similar to the proposal of Sir Stafford Cripps.'¹⁶

The refusal of the leadership of the All-India Muslim League to define Pakistan gave further encouragement to the Sindhis' notion of provincial sovereignty. In numerous speeches, Jinnah implied that the Muslim-majority provinces could well become individual sovereign states. For example, in June 1942, he explained to the world that 'true independence can only come by Pakistan with separate Muslim State or States.'¹⁷ Moreover, the Sind resolution of 1943 was never disputed by Jinnah or the All-India Muslim League. Since the Sindhis' notion of Pakistan did not conflict with the Lahore resolution, such definitions of Pakistan that tapped into issues beyond 'Muslim identity' were critical in adding to Jinnah's momentum. Sindhi sovereignty held the promise of freedom from Hindu and non-Sindhi Muslim competition. It was the ingredient that injected the Pakistan idea with a magnetic attraction for the leadership of the Muslim Sindhis.

Articles by Muslim contributors to *Dawn*, the mouthpiece of the Muslim League, illustrate that the Sindhis' definition of Pakistan was not out of step with contemporaneous views. For example, coinciding with the establishment of the League ministry in Sind was the view that 'Pakistan is nothing so much as the

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ S.A Lari, *op.cit.*, p. 190.

¹⁷ Jinnah's interview with International News Service of America, quoted in *BC*, 18 June 1942.

desire on the part of the Muslims to have political power and control of affairs in provinces where they command a majority.¹⁸ In his presidential speech at the Thirtieth Session of the All-India Muslim League in Delhi, in April 1943, one month after the Sindhi resolution, Jinnah seemed actively to encourage the Sindhi definition as he argued that:

when there is a central government and provincial governments, they [the centre] will go on tightening, tightening, tightening until you are pulverised with regard to your power as units.¹⁹

At the conclusion of that session Jinnah announced that the All-India Muslim League was committed not to any scheme of Pakistan, but only to the Lahore resolution.²⁰

It was fundamental to Jinnah's argument concerning the Lahore resolution that the Muslim-majority provinces were solidly behind the League. In Jinnah's argument with the British and the Congress, the details of the Sindhis' definition of Pakistan was not important. What was important, however they defined it, was that the Sindhi Muslims articulated support for Pakistan and the Muslim League. Moreover, the Pakistan movements in the NWFP and the Punjab were failing to receive appreciable support. In Bengal, too, although the League returned to Government in March 1943, its activities to promulgate the Pakistan demand stalled as the province reeled under the worst famine in a century. Thus, the Sind Assembly's resolution had demonstrated at a critical time for Jinnah that Pakistan was indeed desired by at least some of the Muslim-majority provinces' Muslims.

¹⁸ C.I Husain, 'What is Pakistan?', *Dawn*, 15 November 1942.

¹⁹ Jinnah, 24 April 1943, Thirtieth-Session of the All-India Muslim League, Delhi, April 24-26 1943, quoted in Pirzada, *Foundations of Pakistan*, p. 427.

²⁰ Jinnah, 27 April 1943, quoted in *BC*, 28 April 1943.

It is contended that the Sindhis' pre-occupation with affairs in their own province had historically been the defining factor in their relationship with the All-India Muslim League. Now a League Government in power enabled the Pakistan demand to provide the opportunity to complete the process that had begun with the province's separation from Bombay. In moving the Pakistan resolution in the Assembly, Syed was neither inventing Sindhi separatism nor presenting a marginal view. Rather, he was articulating a discourse embryonic in the earlier movement to separate the province from Bombay, but which had had little opportunity to develop prior to the Muslims assuming control of the Assembly. Since the Sind separation movement and until the Pakistan resolution in the Assembly, the pre-occupation with Sindhi affairs had never been more evident than it was under the League's coalition ministry of 1940 (which contained Khuhro, Majid and Syed, all of whom had been prominent leaders in the separation movement a decade earlier). For example, as a minister in the League ministry of 1940, Syed's pro-Sind bias was evident when his first actions were to cut education grants initially to the Marathi and Gujarati schools, and then extend the withdrawal of the grants to all non-Sindhi schools.²¹ The actions prompted allegations of 'provincialism with a vengeance',²² and that he was trying to convert the province into a separate water-tight unit. However, pro-Sindhism was by no means confined to Syed, as evidenced by Graham's lamentation to the Viceroy that his entire cabinet consisted of 'fanatically pro-Sindhi ministers'.²³

The escalation of Sindhi provincialism had also been evident in the aftermath of the Sukkur riots as there was a backlash of popular sentiment against the Punjabi immigrants. It was a common belief in the province that the deterioration in Hindu-Muslim relations had been the result of the influx of Punjabi

²¹ Telegram of K.M. Munshi (former Home Minister of the Bombay Government) to Bande Ali Talpur, 23 July 1940, quoted in *BC*, 24 July 1940.

²² K.M. Munshi to R.K. Sidhwa, quoted in *BC*, 18 October 1940.

²³ Graham to Linlithgow, 6 June 1940, Lir lithgow Mss., Eur.F.125/96, Doc. 63, OIOC.

'canal-colony' farmers.²⁴ It was even noted that the member for the Labour seat, Narayana Bechar, lost popularity in the early 1940s amongst his constituents in the factories and docks because his origins were Gujerati, not Sindhi.²⁵ One of the more telling instances in the rise of hostility against the non-Sindhīs was the visit to Sind of Professor Inayatullah, the president of the *Majlis-i-Millia Pakistan*, who in his propagation of the Pakistan demand pleaded for the end to 'the distinction between Sindhīs and non-Sindhīs,' and went so far as to accuse the Sindhīs of an 'un-Islamic' attitude.²⁶

III

The impact of the Sind League's definition of Pakistan is revealed in its recruitment figures for 1943-44. The League's coming to power considerably altered the status of the Pakistan movement, and the twin thrusts of the campaign, Sindhistan and socialism, were vital ingredients which tapped deep into issues that were meaningful for Sindhi Muslims and went well beyond a belief in the need to curb the power of Hindus. The Sindhi definition of Pakistan gave the League a momentum which increased as more local Muslim leaders joined its ranks. In 1944, the Sind branch claimed nearly 180,000 members (20% of the adult Muslim male population). The figures have been used to show that 'the League still had much work to do in reaching the bulk of the rural population,'²⁷ but the percentage of the population enrolled as paid members of a political organisation does not necessarily portray the extent of support that existed amongst the Muslim population for the Muslim League. Not everyone who supported the Pakistan movement was a member of the League, just as not all Congress supporters were

²⁴ SFR Second Half of March, 5 April 1940, L/P&J/5/255, OIOC; Graham to Linlithgow, 9 April 1940, L/P&J/5/255, OIOC; and report of the *Mansar Samachar* claiming communalism was linked to the immigration of Punjabis, cited in SFR Second Half of June, 10 July 1940, L/P&J/5/255, OIOC.

²⁵ Graham to Linlithgow, 25 July 1940, L/P&J/5/256, OIOC.

²⁶ SFR Second Half of September, 7 October 1940, L/P&J/5/256, OIOC.

²⁷ Talbot, *Provincial Politics*, p. 46. The figures have been quoted from the 'Annual Report of the Sind Provincial Muslim League for 1943-1944', Shamsul Hasan Collection, Karachi, Sind 1:24, quoted in *ibid.*

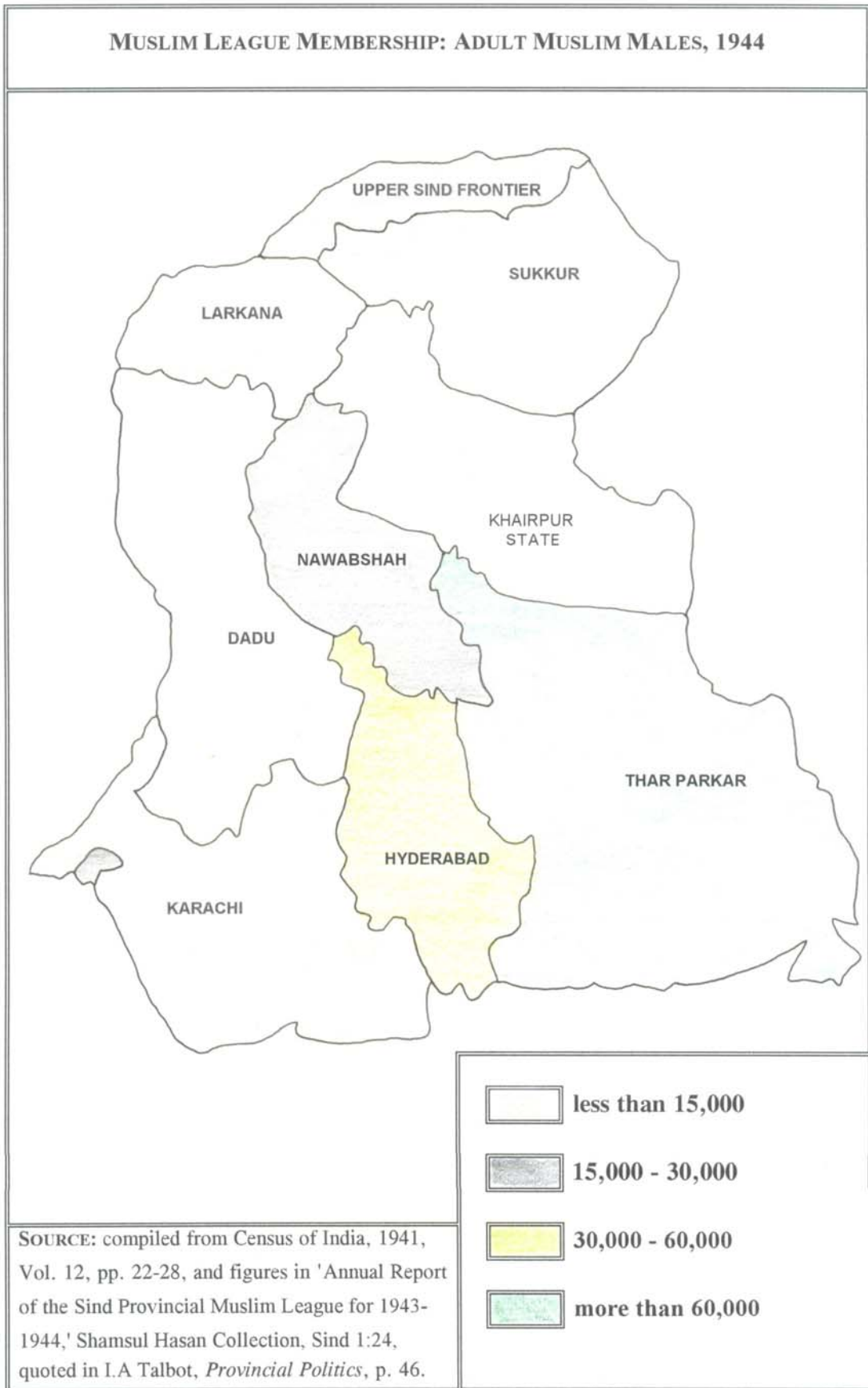
official members of the Congress. Nonetheless the recruitment figures can shed important light on explaining the Pakistan movement.

Membership of the Sind Provincial Muslim League (1943-1944)

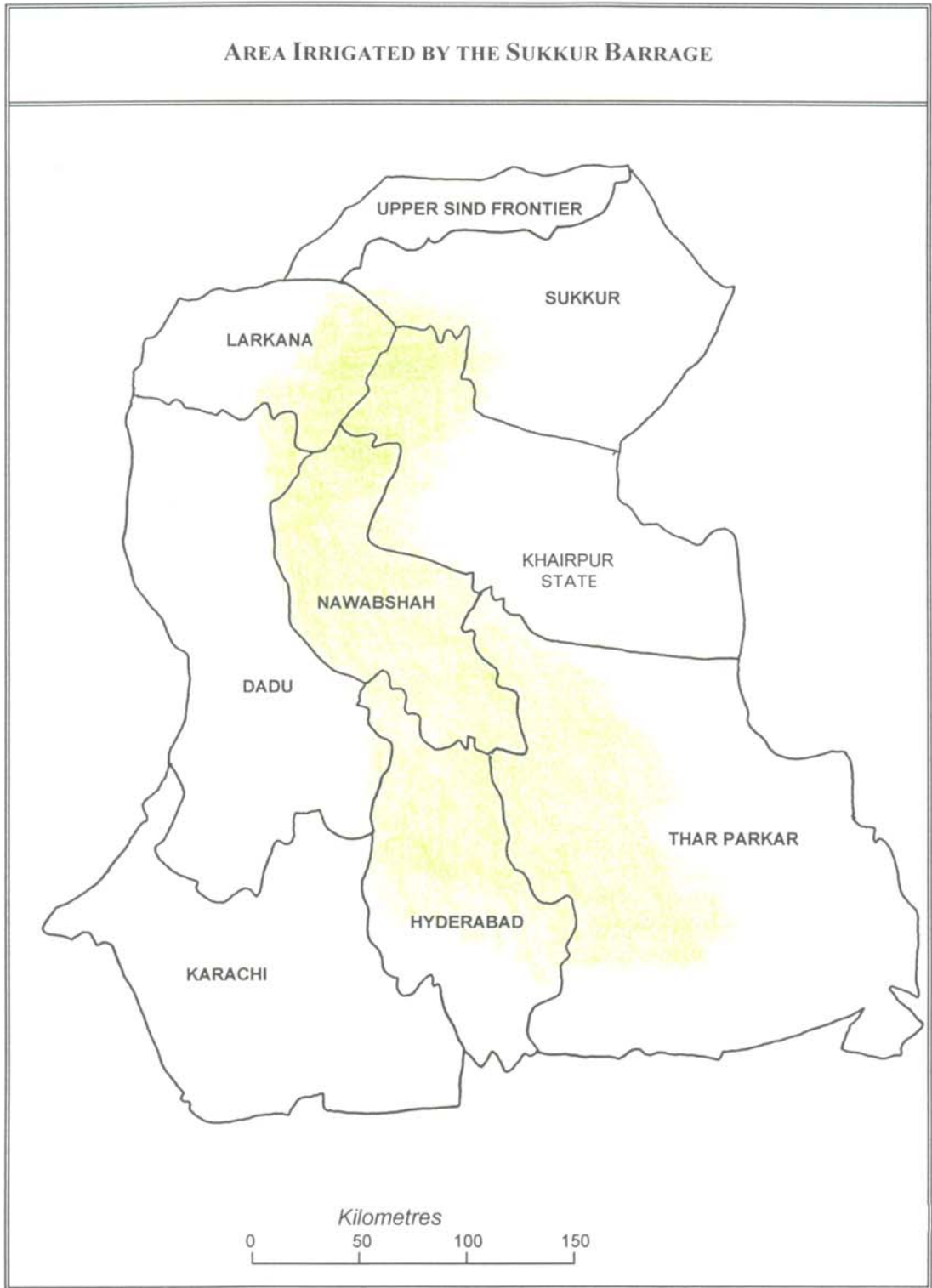
The importance of understanding the Pakistan movement in Sind does not lie simply in the total number of League members. What is more suggestive is the distribution of those members, and an indication of which districts responded to the provincial League's definition of Pakistan. There are several key patterns evident in an analysis of the distribution of League membership. Firstly, as Map 6 illustrates, those districts in which the Muslim-majority were weakest were where the greatest proportion of adult male membership occurred. In the south-eastern districts of Hyderabad and Thar Parkar, where Muslims constituted less than 60 percent of the population, the League's membership was 47 percent of adult Muslim males. By comparison, in the province's north-west, where Muslims constituted 85 percent of the population, the League averaged a membership of less than five percent of adult Muslim males.

The simple correlation between Hindu population and Muslim League membership figures is not, however, the full picture. The areas of the League's greatest membership figures also correspond with those areas most affected by the Sukkur Barrage (Map 7). The Barrage areas were experiencing the greatest economic and demographic changes in the province as the opening of more than one million acres to the Barrage's irrigation canals in the early 1930s brought dramatic shifts in the province's population distribution. The Barrage lands had been the primary reason for Sind's substantial agricultural prosperity, the lands being watered by a guaranteed supply and the crop-yields having been consistently excellent since its opening.

MUSLIM LEAGUE MEMBERSHIP: ADULT MUSLIM MALES, 1944



SOURCE: compiled from Census of India, 1941, Vol. 12, pp. 22-28, and figures in 'Annual Report of the Sind Provincial Muslim League for 1943-1944,' Shamsul Hasan Collection, Sind 1:24, quoted in I.A Talbot, *Provincial Politics*, p. 46.



SOURCE: M.B Pithawalla, *An Introduction to Sind: Its Wealth and Welfare* (Karachi, Sind Observer Press, 1951), section 2, page G.

An important consequence of the prosperity of the Barrage lands was that they attracted peoples from the north and west of Sind, as well as from other regions of India. All *talukas* affected by the Barrage system experienced substantial increases in population as people moved in to take advantages of the opportunities. Table 11 shows, as an example, the 8 *talukas* in Sind that experienced the most dramatic increases in their populations for the period 1931-1941 (these *talukas* recorded increases of more than 33%). The *talukas* were in the areas most affected by the agricultural prosperity brought by the Barrage's irrigation system. The Table shows that not only were there spectacular increases in population numbers, but that the increases were occurring at the cost of the Sindhi Muslims. In all but one *taluka*, the proportion of Muslims to non-Muslims declined.

TABLE 11: SUKKUR BARRAGE TALUKAS WITH A POPULATION INCREASE GREATER THAN 33%, 1931-1941

Taluka	District	Increase in total pop. 1931-1941	Variation in Muslim pop. to total pop. 1931-1941
Dero Mobhat	Hyderabad	62%	- 5.4%
Umarkot	Thar Parkar	55%	-1.2%
Tando Allahyar	Hyderabad	50%	- 9.6%
Mirpurkhaus	Thar Parkar	45%	- 7.9%
Digri	Thar Parkar	38%	- 3.5%
Nawabshah	Nawabshah	35%	- 3.2%
Diplo	Thar Parkar	35%	6.1%
Jamesbad	Thar Parkar	34%	- 8.4%

Source: Calculated from *Census of India 1931*, Vol.8, pt.2, pp. 478-484, and *Census of India 1941*, Vol.12, pp. 50-56.

People who moved into the Barrage lands originated from several locations. Many Hindus came from Sind's north-west and Karachi districts. In the

decade 1931-1941, Hindus from the outlying areas of the province (Dadu, Upper Sind Frontier, and the extreme south) were drawn into the heart of the Barrage lands and effected a substantial change in the balance between Hindus and Muslims in many *talukas* (refer to Map 8). The districts of Larkana, Nawabshah, Hyderabad, and Thar Parkar experienced considerable gains in Hindu populations.²⁸ For the *taluka* of Tando Allahyar in the Hyderabad district, the Hindu population increased from one-quarter of the total population to more than one-third, while in Mirpurkhas (Thar Parkar district) Hindus went from being a minority of 46.8 percent of the population to a majority of 54 percent.

The second important pattern to emerge from the League's membership figures is that its strongest support was located in those areas where recent immigration from outside the province was greatest. Hindus from the Rajput states and Gujerat, and Sikh farmers from the Punjab, migrated to the new estates in the Barrage lands. The immigration of non-Muslim non-Sindhis was having a substantial impact on the composition of the population of the Barrage lands. The largest percentage of non-Sindhi speaking peoples were found in Karachi and the Barrage districts, which were the two most prosperous parts of the province. The changing basis of the demography in Sind's richest lands was sorely felt by the Sindhi Muslims.²⁹ In February 1944, the Governor reported that while Sind's agricultural development was very good, the cries of 'Sind for Sindhis' threatened its continued stability.³⁰ In the Barrage areas, non-Sindhis had come to own and work many of the new estates and a particular source of growing antagonism amongst the Sindhi cultivators was the establishment of 'canal colonies.'





²⁸ The population changes in Upper Sind Frontier and western Sukkur districts suggest that the Sukkur riots and subsequent lawlessness may have contributed to a migration of Hindus from those areas to the Barrage estates. See *Census of India, 1941*, Vol. 12, p. 45.

²⁹ Baluchis have been excluded, for while they were not native Sindhi-speakers, they were local to the region and generally not considered by Sindhis to be 'outsiders'. The main non-Sindhis were Gujerati, Punjabi, Rajathasani, and Urdu-speakers, *ibid.*, pp. 76-77.

³⁰ Dow quoted in *Dawn*, 12 February 1944.

**SIND: VARIATION IN POPULATION OF NON-MUSLIMS,
1931-1941, BY TALUKA**



-  decrease of 10 - 5.1%
-  decrease of 5.0 - 0%
-  increase of 0 - 5.0%
-  increase of 5.1% or more

SOURCE: Calculated from the *Census of India 1931*, Vol. 8, pt. 2, pp. 478-484, and *Census of India, 1941*, Vol. 12, pp. 50-56.

The canal colonies were stocked with Punjabi soldiers returning from the war, and their settlement in Sind had become an important plank in the raj's use of Punjabi manpower as the available acreages in the Punjab diminished.³¹ However, it was no coincidence that the anti-Punjabi feeling had risen dramatically under the Sind Muslim League Government. Coinciding with the expansive recruitment campaigns by the League in the Barrage areas were the attempts by the League ministry to exclude Punjabi settlers from moving into the extensive tracts of the Mankhi Dhand forest that were being opened for agriculture.³² Even in the cities, anti-migrant feeling was evident amongst the Muslim middle-classes. It was noted by British officials that as 'south Indians had captured the occupation of journalism, and commerce was in the hands of Gujeratis,' Sindhis were not unnaturally chaffing at the restricted middle-class opportunities in their own province.³³

The League's recruitment figures show that in the 12 months following the formal definition of Pakistan as meaning a sovereign Sind state (March 1943), the percentages of adult Muslim males enrolled as members increased by 44 percent. The districts with the highest percentages of non-Sindhis (Karachi 34.7%, Thar 21.4%, and Hyderabad 12.6%) correspond with those districts that had in 1944 the highest increases in new memberships for the Muslim League in comparison with 1943.³⁴ In Karachi, the membership figure for 1944 increased 76 percent over the 1943 membership, while Hyderabad (70%) and Thar (51%) also reflected the appeal of the 'Sindhistan' definition of Pakistan.

³¹ For the importance that land allocation to war veterans played in Punjabi politics in the 1940s, see Talbot, 'Growth of the Muslim League in the Punjab 1937-1946', *op. cit.*, p. 18.

³² The forest had been the headquarters of the Hur bandits, and its conversion to cultivable land was to serve the purpose of breaking the Hurs' banditry and to further increase Sind's agricultural output. Dow to Wavell, 4 November 1944, L/P&J/5/260, OIOC.

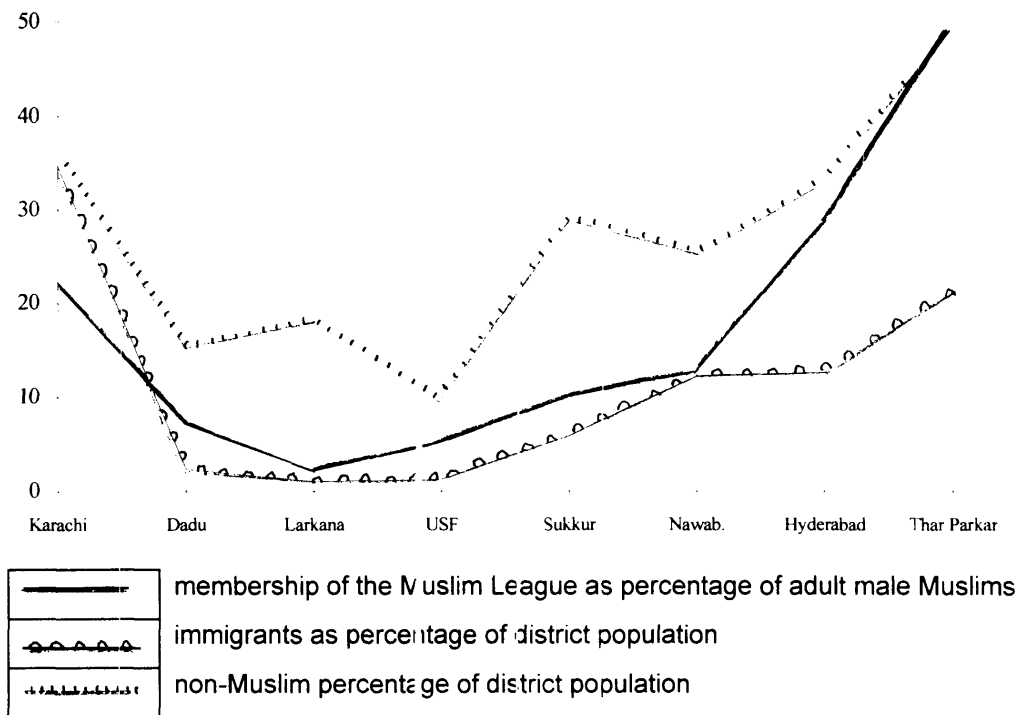
³³ Dow to Linlithgow, 18 May 1943, Linlithgow. Mss., Eur.F.125/99, OIOC.

³⁴ Calculated from the figures provided in the 'Annual Report of the Sind Provincial Muslim League for 1943-44', in Talbot, *Provincial Politics* p. 46.

The impact on the Barrage areas of the non-Sindhi immigration, and the support given to the Sindhi definition of Pakistan, illustrate that the Pakistan movement was an issue that went beyond communalised political identity. The correlation of the census data and the League's recruitment records serve as poignant indicators of important specific regional factors affecting Sind's Muslim society. Correlation of the percentages of non-Muslims, non-Sindhis, and memberships of the League for each district reveals that both communal competition and Sindhi ethnocentrism were factors influencing membership of the League. Graph 1 suggests that there was indeed a close correlation between the success of the League's recruitment campaigns and the level of immigration in a given district.

GRAPH 1: CORRELATION OF PERCENTAGES OF NON-MUSLIMS, NON-SINDHIS, AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE MUSLIM LEAGUE, 1944.

Percentage of district population



Sources: Calculated from the figures provided in the 'Annual Report of the Sind Provincial Muslim League for 1943-44', in Talbot, *Provincial Politics*, p. 46.

The Graph illustrates that the Barrage districts were clearly the province's main support base for the Muslim League. No doubt there were instances where branch membership figures may have been exaggerated (Talbot cites one example in Thar Parkar), but to exaggerate membership numbers only further serves to illustrate the competitiveness and importance attached in those districts to belonging to the League structure.

In terms of an organisation for the masses, the Barrage lands were the heartland of the Muslim League in Sind. It held nearly 70 percent of the province's members, and it was here that the issues of Muslim power and defence of Sindhi ethnicity were most relevant. It was in the Barrage lands that the key lay in deciding the issue of who would control Sind in the post-colonial sub-continent.

The analysis of the League's membership figures for 1944 suggests that there was more to the Muslim League in Sind than a mere facade to mask the personal ambitions of the Muslim political leaderships.³⁵ The communalised nature of Sindhi politics had, by the early 1940s, evolved to the extent that the prime discourse of political language and behaviours was firmly rooted in the frameworks of protecting or extending the interests of religious groups against the perceived threats from the 'other', whether Hindu or Muslim. However, the coalescence of Muslim political leaders under the League umbrella in late 1942 and the fracturing of Hindu political power in the state arena of the Sind Assembly allowed the Sind Muslim leadership to draw on aspects other than communalism as they sought to define what the end result of their religious communalism would be. It has been shown that the focus of the League's attention was concentrated on the Barrage areas, where the position of Sindhi Muslims was most threatened,

³⁵ The contention that the League lacked substance had been made by Jalal, *Sole Spokesman*, p. 110.

not just from increasing numbers of Hindus, but also from an influx of non-Sindhi migrants.

IV

Yet there were more unanswered questions as to what Pakistan would mean for Sind. Could Syed marry the desires of the Muslim landowning and capitalist classes with the needs of the rural poor? The Sindhi definition of Pakistan and the successful enrolments of nearly two *lakhs* of Muslims had set the stage for the struggle to control the future of the 'Sindhistan' Pakistan. The defining of the goal of a sovereign state of Sind posed further and deeper questions. What would be the basis of that state, and in whose hands would control of that state rest? Those were questions that cut at the heart of local power in Sind, and had the potential to invoke more answers than a tenuous alliance of competing landlords, *pirs*, and *sirdars* could accommodate.

Rarely do symbols or rhetoric of nationalism conform to historic realities, and the Pakistan movement was no exception. The combination of class conflict and the Sindhi definition of Pakistan was to illustrate how dangerous the all-encompassing net of Pakistan was to prove for Jinnah. Ironically, his intention had, of course, been to unify Muslims, but Jinnah's encouragement to Muslims to make of Pakistan what they wanted risked producing such divergent definitions that the organisation would fracture into a multitude of competing interest groups. The stronger the League grew in Sind, the less the competing class interests within it could be contained. In mid-1944, the Sind Muslim League's membership numbers and domination over its opponents had never been stronger, yet by following Jinnah's charter it was faced with disintegration: a paradoxical effect of the strategy to unify Muslims. Was the Pakistan movement proving to be a bubble on the verge of bursting?

Pakistan and the objective of a socialistic Sind

Under Syed's leadership, the Pakistan movement in Sind was to be characterised by two defining platforms. The first, that of a sovereign Sind state, had easily won over the Muslim political leaders. The second plank sought to establish the framework for the envisaged new Sindhi state. At its heart lay the plan for the economic improvement of the rural poor. Again, the architect of that plan was Syed. His left-wing orientations had been evident since his days as a minister in the League's coalition ministry through his speeches and attempts to steer the local League leaderships to be more relevant to the masses. Only when components beyond that solely of Muslim identity were incorporated into the Pakistan demand did the movement begin to achieve mass appeal.

Recent history had shown Syed that economic grievances were paramount issues for the rural masses. The previous seven years of provincial government had been peppered with instances where agrarian unrest threatened to erupt as *haris* repeatedly demanded an improvement in their living conditions. As a minister in the coalition ministry of 1940, Syed had been warned by the Governor that 'no doubt there will be trouble in Sind if tenancy legislation is not undertaken.'³⁶ Graham had told Linlithgow that at least two of the ministers, Syed and Majid, realised the danger³⁷ There had also been repeated urgings by the fledgling *hari* organisations for tenancy legislation,³⁸ and by late 1942 bloodshed seemed imminent as *haris* threatened 'to take matters in their own hands.'³⁹

³⁶ Graham to Linlithgow, 9 April 1940, L/P&J/5/255, OIOC.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ For example, see resolutions of the Sind Hari Committee, 18 July 1940, in SFR Second Half of July, 5 August 1940, L/P&J/5/256, and report on the Sind Provincial Hari Committee, SFR First Half of April, 21 April 1941, L/P&J/5/256, OIOC.

³⁹ Dow to Linlithgow, 7 January 1942, L/P&J/5/257, OIOC.

One of the most important facts surrounding the course of Syed's making the League a vehicle for improving the economic conditions of the poor was Jinnah's urging and sanctioning provincial leaders to adopt a socialist programme. At the All-India Muslim League Conference held in Madras (1941), Jinnah initiated the re-orientation of the League towards the masses when he challenged delegates to devise a five-year programme to improve the economic position of the Muslim masses.⁴⁰ In speeches marking the anniversary of the Lahore resolution, Jinnah spoke out against those who were suppressing the Muslim masses and he made it clear that the Hindu commercial interests were not solely responsible. He attacked the system of capitalism and warned that the existing landowning system was 'vicious and wicked', and advised those involved 'to adjust themselves to the new, modern conditions of life.'⁴¹ The new conditions, Jinnah impressed, would be found in a Pakistan that 'will be neither communistic nor capitalistic but truly socialistic.'⁴²

Jinnah directly participated in establishing socialism as the basis of the Sind League's platform. Following the election of Syed to the post of president of the Sind Provincial Muslim League in June 1943, Jinnah directed Syed to draw up a programme to create the necessary political consciousness amongst the Muslim masses and 'to relieve the abject poverty of the rural people in Sind.'⁴³ Jinnah also realised that a socialist orientation would not sit comfortably with the landed elites. At the annual general meeting of the Sind Provincial Muslim League shortly after Syed's inauguration as president, Jinnah warned that within the Sindhi League

⁴⁰ Jinnah's presidential address at the Twenty-Eighth Session of the All-India Muslim-League, Madras, 14 March 1941 quoted in Pirzada, *Foundations of Pakistan*, pp. 360-362.

⁴¹ K.N. Chaudhuri, 'Economic Problems and Indian Independence,' in C.H. Philips and M.D. Wainwright (eds.), *The Partition of India: Policies and Perspectives 1935-1947* (London, Allen and Unwin, 1970), p. 306, quoted in I.A. Talbot, 'Planning for Pakistan: The Planning Committee of the All-India Muslim League 1943-46, *Modern Asian Studies* Vol. 28, no. 4 (1994), p. 881.

⁴² Jinnah, (n.d.) quoted in Jamil-ud-Din Ahmad, (ed.), *Quaid-i-Azam As Seen By His Contemporaries*, (publishing details not recorded), p. 42, cited in A. Iqbal, *Islamisation of Pakistan* (Delhi, Idarah-I Adabiyat-i Delhi, 1984), p. 33.

⁴³ Jinnah's address at the annual election of office-bearers of the Sind Provincial Muslim League, 13 June 1943, quoted in *BC*, 14 June 1943.

there were 'some trying to improve the economic and social conditions of the Muslim masses, while others were interested in keeping [the] power of *zamindars* and *jagirdars* intact.'⁴⁴ He made it patently clear where his views lay as he explicitly directed that 'no capitalism, as conceived by Westerners, could prosper in any Muslim country.'⁴⁵ The League, he directed, 'existed for the masses, and it was the bounden duty of the organisation and every Muslim Leaguer to improve the economic conditions of every member.'⁴⁶ In order to assist Syed to carry out his programme, Jinnah arranged for him to hand-pick the members of the Working Committee of the Provincial Muslim League.⁴⁷

The All-India Muslim League Conference, Karachi (December 1943)

The course of 1943-44 saw the Sind League under Syed's leadership fit squarely into Jinnah's discourse of the role that Pakistan would have in ameliorating the troubles of the poor. A major impetus to both the standing of the League in Sind, and to a consolidating the socialist credentials of the local and central Leagues came with the Thirty-First Session of the All-India Muslim League at Karachi in December 1943. The over-arching theme to emerge from the Karachi Conference was the emphatic targeting of the economic development of the lower Muslim classes. Thus, at the Karachi Conference more resolutions concerning the masses were passed than in the League's previous 37 years. The most important resolution authorised Jinnah to appoint a committee for preparing:

a comprehensive scheme for a five-year programme for economic and social uplift; State industrialisation in the Pakistan zones; the introduction of free primary basic education; reform of the land system; stabilisation of rent; security of tenure; improvement in the condition of

⁴⁴ Jinnah's address to the annual general meeting of the Sind Provincial Muslim League, 14 June 1943, quoted in *BC*, 18 June 1943.

⁴⁵ *BC*, 14 June 1943.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

labour and agriculture and control of money-lending.⁴⁸

The charter of the Committee (the All-India Economic Planning Committee) provides a crucial insight into the role that socialist reform performed in the League's drive to mobilise the masses. It was made clear by Z.H. Lari, the resolution's initiator, that the emphatic purpose of the Committee was not to 'gratify the political aspirations of a few individuals, but to improve the social, education, and economic condition of the proletariat.'⁴⁹

Importantly, the identification of land-reform had been specifically pinpointed and illustrates how far the All-India Muslim League had come in championing the cause of the tenants against the landowners. 'The need of the hour', articulated Lari, 'was to abolish the class of big *zamindars* and protect the rights of the *kisans*.'⁵⁰ The supporters of the resolution contended that the Muslim League 'must show to the people that it was an organisation, not of landlords, *zamindars*, and *jagirdars*, but a body devoted to the cause of labourers and peasants.'⁵¹

The Conference stimulated Syed to ensure that the League truly represented the masses. He had understood that the creation of a state without changing the distribution of political power would leave the Muslim masses at the mercy of those who replaced the Hindu and Parsi business and industrial classes. Those replacing them would, according to the current structure of Sind's political hierarchy, be the *zamindars*. Therefore, while Pakistan would consist of states that

⁴⁸ Khalid Shamsul Hasan, *Quaid-i-Azam's Unrealized Dream* (Karachi, 1991), p. 17, quoted in Talbot, 'Planning for Pakistan: The Planning Committee of the All-India Muslim League, 1943-1946', *op. cit.*, p. 887.

⁴⁹ Z.H Lari moving Resolution II, 25 December 1943, Thirty-First Session of the All-India Muslim League, Karachi, 24-26 December 1943, quoted in Pirzada, *Foundations of Pakistan*, p. 468.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Hamid Nizami, supporting the resolution, 25 December 1943, *ibid.*, p. 469.

were free from non-Muslim domination, it would still mean that the Muslim masses were open to exploitation.

V

The challenge to the large land-owning interests

After finally being in a position to advance the causes of Muslim landowners, the *zamindars* were not about to sacrifice their new wealth or power for the impoverished *haris*. In 1944, the *zamindars* were continuing to experience 'a period of unexampled prosperity' as the agricultural surpluses of Sind were, with the exception of the Punjab, uncharacteristic of the rest of India.⁵² By far the most important reason lay in the substantial agricultural surpluses that the *zamindars* sold to the starving eastern provinces (valued in 1943 to be in excess of two-and-an-half crore rupees).⁵³

Syed posted his challenge to the *zamindari* and *jagirdari* system in his presidential speech for 1944 when he promised that he would 'try to work out the League programme in accordance with his own socialistic leanings.'⁵⁴ It is clear that from that point Syed was intent on becoming a more aggressive leader of the Muslim League in Sind to confront directly those who threatened the leftist direction he had been authorised by Jinnah to follow. He threw down the challenge to *zamindars* when he announced that:

I hold definite economic views for the welfare of the community and for the people of the province. While electing me as president, I know that the people expect me to see that, during my time, I endeavour to give the utmost full exposure to my views and beliefs. I can count on the full

⁵² Dow to Wavell, 5 February 1944, L/P&J/5/260, OIOC.

⁵³ Bengal was devastated and Bombay, Orissa, and the southern peninsula were particularly hard hit.

⁵⁴ Syed quoted in *Dawn*, 21 May 1944.

sympathy and co-operation of the Muslims of Sind for the preparation of the environment for socialistic conditions.⁵⁵

However, the formalising of a socialist agenda as the provincial League's manifesto for 1944-45 was hardly likely to find favour with the League ministry. The Muslim *zamindars*, *jagirdars*, and capitalists were attempting to cleave Sind's political hierarchy by politically emasculating the Hindus and, in doing so, appropriate their economic dominance and political position. Syed's challenge to the Muslim *zamindars* threatened to drive a wedge between the large landowning classes and their Muslim tenants and labourers. His challenge to the *mirs'* position opened a rift within the Sind Muslim League which came to impact adversely on the strength and effectiveness of the pro-Sindhi leadership.

By July, the majority of the Sind Provincial Muslim League Working Committee concluded that the ministry had not been inspired by a zeal for the lower classes but deliberately suppressed them in order to further their own interests. The Committee was further angered by the Government's stalled tenancy legislation, its failure to modify the Jagirdari Act to benefit the smaller cultivators, its inability to manage the food grains policy effectively, and its implementing of land revenue assessments to the detriment of the cultivators.⁵⁶ The Committee emphasised the definition of Pakistan that meant not just an unfettering of Muslim power, but the appropriate use of Muslim power for the whole of Muslim society. It was the definition that lay at the heart of Jinnah's Pakistan. Consequently, in July 1944 the Sind Provincial Muslim League's Working Committee directed the Muslim League Government to resign.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

VI

Jinnah's refusal to support the reformists

The conflict between the *mirs* and the reformists exemplified an inner tension that Pakistan was never to escape from; the contradiction between ideology and pragmatism. The ideology of the Pakistan movement was articulated by its adherents as an expression of collective Muslim values, but the key to the realisation of those values rested with men whose values did not necessarily extend beyond those of their own interest groups. Of course, Jinnah knew this, but he could not afford to disrupt the advancement of the League in Sind, and notwithstanding pleas to Muslim national identity, Jinnah ensured that the existing power-brokers in Sind remained firmly in control.

Jinnah's immediate need to have the public image of a 'loyal' Muslim premier supporting him was more pressing, and his decision to support the *mirs* set in train important consequences for Sind. His actions seemed to discard his previous and public position on making the Pakistan provinces a better place for the *haris* and poorer classes because his reaction against the reformists reinforced the control of the large land-owning classes in the Government. It was another indication that the realities of provincial Muslim politics could not be ignored, no matter how universal the appeal to Muslim solidarity was presented.

In deciding to back the *mirs*, Jinnah was dealing with an immediate problem, but in so doing created a longer term one. Jinnah's support for the *mirs* established a pattern that had profound results for the Muslim League in Sind. The pattern consisted of an hardening of responses by Jinnah to any actions by the reformist wing to bring the *mirs'* ministry into line with the All-India Muslim League's strategy for Pakistan. The pattern is important for it illustrates how far Jinnah was forced to sacrifice the type of Pakistan he wanted in order to get a

Pakistan at all. The pattern produced an outcome that had dramatic results for the province as it led the reformists to question their loyalty to the All-India Muslim League. The problem such *realpolitik* posed for the later Pakistan state was the expectation that the movement was raising amongst Muslims who would become its citizens. It is an irony of the Pakistan movement that the Sind League sustained a campaign against its own ministry because that ministry was failing to follow the charter laid down by the central League. Jinnah's inability to address the underlying cause of the conflict resulted in the fracturing of the Muslim League, and a local emphasising of a definition of Pakistan that would not prove sustainable as a feature of an all-embracing Muslim nationalism.

By maintaining the landed aristocracy in the pre-eminent political positions, Jinnah was bringing much of the traditional leadership of Muslim society with him and ensuring that the future Pakistan state would maintain the essential structures of existing provincial power. Pakistan would remove the Hindu factor, but it was not shaping up to be the promised peasant utopia as Muslim political power would remain the property of the landed elites. The Pakistan movement was clearly promising outcomes for the poor which it would be in no position to deliver.

The effect of the High Command's failure to address the concerns of the reformists was to produce a situation that shook Jinnah's claim for exclusive leadership of Indian Muslims. The catalyst was Syed's reaction to another rejection by the High Command over its actions to bring the ministry into line. Jinnah's frustration over the conflict caused him to direct the reformists to 'either support the ministry or get out.'⁵⁷ However, the directive prompted Syed to force the issue with the *mirs* by bringing down their ministry through a no-confidence motion in the Assembly. Syed had seen no alternative if he was to effect a change in the Muslim lower classes' standards of living.

⁵⁷ Dow to Wavell, 23 February 1945, L/P&J/5/261, OIOC.

The defeat of the ministry infuriated Jinnah, for it threatened the loss of another Muslim-majority province for the League. Yet Jinnah again avoided the issue of why the League in Sind was in turmoil and simply chose to effect a moral superiority over Syed as he accused him of ignoring:

the Committee of Action, the Central Parliamentary Committee of the League machinery, constitution, rules and regulations, [and] wrongly resorting to methods which are calculated to undermine the basic structure of the League organisation, its aims and objectives. It is futile to give you advice and instructions anymore.⁵⁸

However, Syed believed that by removing the *mir*s he was strengthening the Muslim League, a view supported by Dow, who admitted to liking Hidayatullah and disliking Syed. He correctly summed up the situation when he described Syed's group as 'the really keen Leaguers, whereas Sir Ghulam's group have always been Laodiceans' [cynics].⁵⁹

VII

The implications for 'Muslim nationalism'

Jinnah's discourse to broaden the Pakistan movement beyond Muslim identity had given him hold of a tiger by the tail. His push to address the economic woes of the masses and the tacit approval of provincialism illustrates that the national leadership had recognised that an over-arching appeal to Muslim identity alone was insufficient to unify Indian Muslims. Jinnah's deliberate avoidance of defining Pakistan, his failure to comment on or correct provincial Muslim League organisations that categorically defined Pakistan as meaning the individual sovereignty (rather than unity) of the Muslim-majority provinces, and the emphasis

⁵⁸ Jinnah to Syed, 28 February 1945, quoted in *Dawn*, 1 March 1945.

⁵⁹ Dow to Wavell, 17 March 1945, L/P&J 5/261, OIOC.

given to the portrayal of the League as the champion of the rural poor, demonstrated that Jinnah needed to draw deeply upon the appeal of platforms other than 'Muslim nationalism' to convince the disparate Muslim groups and classes that Pakistan offered a good deal more than they already had. The example of Sind highlights the inner contradiction of the two-nation theory as appeals to ethnicity could not be ignored and had become an inseparable component in the construction of a nationalism that was packaged by Jinnah as religious identity.

The assumption by many scholars that Jinnah's Pakistan movement was centred solely on Muslim identity has masked the realities of the Pakistan movement. Such an assumption is certainly plausible enough, for the most vocal debate in the 1940s surrounding Indian independence and partition was located firmly within the constructions of politicised religious identities. However, it was not the only aspect of the Pakistan movement. Locating the Pakistan movement exclusively within the framework of communal politics does not provide sufficient depth to explain adequately its history in Sind. Perhaps historians have too readily accepted that the issue of Pakistan could be explained within the framework of conflicts between two broad-based religious identities alone. Aspects such as ethnicity and class conflict have tended not to figure in histories of Jinnah's leadership because they do not comfortably fit the logic of a Pakistan movement that is defined solely in terms of a Muslim religious identity. On the occasions when aspects such as class conflict have been incorporated into histories of the transfer of power, they have been used to explain rising communal tension between Muslim class interests and non-Muslim (usually Hindu) interests.⁶⁰ The fomenting of class conflict within the Muslim League has not been explored

⁶⁰ Hamza Alavi exemplifies the perspective when he writes of the '*salarial*' (urban middle class) driving the Pakistan movement in their competition with Hindus for employment in the state. See 'Pakistan and Islam: Ethnicity and Ideology', in Halliday and Alavi, *op. cit.*; and 'Nationhood and Communal Violence in Pakistan', *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, Vol. 21, no. 2 (1991).

because it has not conformed to the common understanding of the Pakistan movement that centres the heart of conflict on the sub-continent as lying between, not within, respective religious identities. Moreover, it was an assumption that Jinnah assiduously worked to create.

Conclusion

The evidence highlighted in this chapter serves to demonstrate that the Pakistan movement, as far as the Sindhi Muslim leadership was concerned, was centred on more than just Muslim communalism. It was about their ethnocentrism and desire to disengage Sindhi affairs from the rest of India. In the Pakistan movement, the Muslim landowners and capitalists sought to protect themselves from being cast into a state where they were forced to share Sind's growing financial viability with neighbouring states such as the Punjab. For the Muslim masses, they were responding to the League's portrayal of the need to take action to safeguard Sindhi Muslim interests. It was not merely the platforms of the League that drew in supporters. The clever targeting of the *pirs* by Syed ensured that the link between Pakistan and Islamic identity was strengthened with each new recruit. How could a communalised movement that was sharing the articulation of its most concrete expression in terms of regional ethnicity be termed Muslim nationalism?

The Pakistan movement has largely been portrayed as a struggle among Muslims to decide one question: did they want a state for Muslims or not? However, in Sind the reality was not so simple. Having decided that Pakistan would mean for Sind a sovereign state for Sind, the Muslim leaderships moved to address the questions of detail that Jinnah was so carefully trying to avoid. The Pakistan movement as it developed in Sind was a mosaic of communal fears, ethnocentric aspirations, and competing class identities. It was clearly not an example of an exclusive, all-encompassing Muslim nationalism. It has been demonstrated that communalism was forcing Hindus and Muslims apart, but

would communalism be sufficient a force to keep Muslims together? Clearly, communalism and Muslim nationalism were not the same thing.

Jinnah's attempts to portray Pakistan as everyone's economic paradise had resulted in splitting the Sind League. It would seem that the only force that had been consistent in unifying the Muslim leaderships for any duration was a shared belief in maximising Sindhi independence. In the 1920s and 1930s it was the Sind separation movement. In the mid-1940s, it was the Pakistan movement. Both movements were constructions of the desire among the Sindhi Muslim political elites to control their province and to ensure that it was free from external influences.