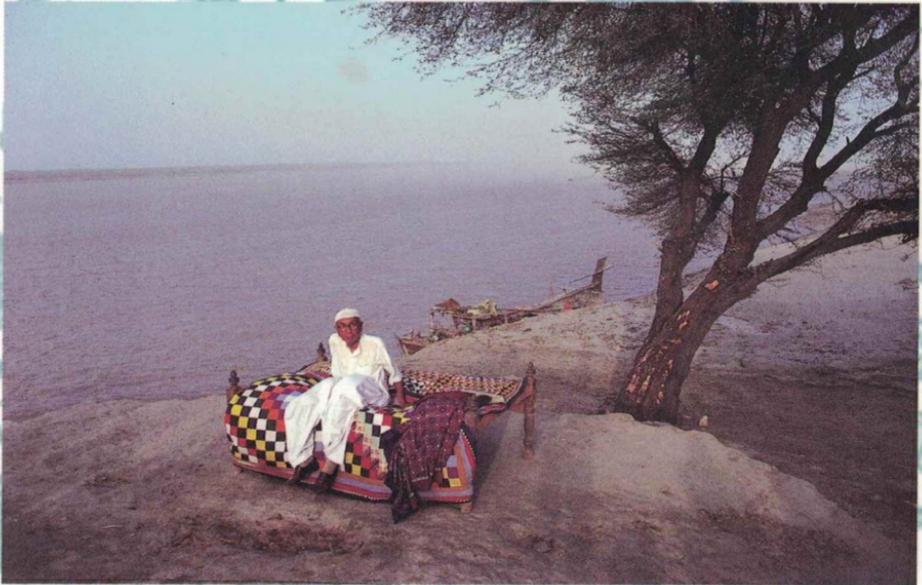


# G. M. SYED

An Analysis of his Political Perspectives



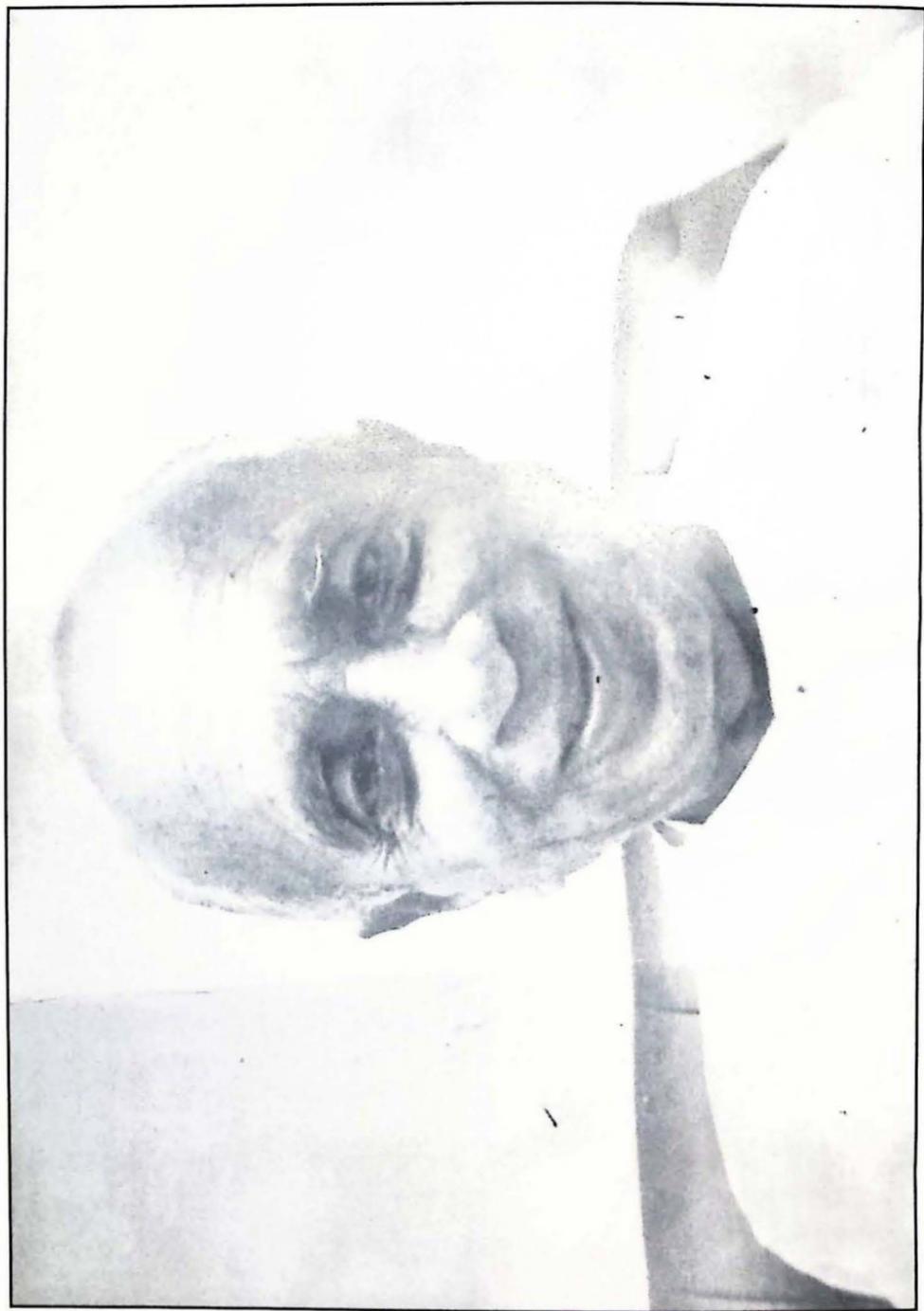
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Publication

**M. S. Korejo**

**OXFORD**

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*Dedicated to my parents  
who introduced me to a world of  
ideas—a debt which  
I could not repay in their lifetime.*

## A PRAYER

Oh my Lord, my Master,  
For ever bless Sindh,  
And make it,  
The land of plenty and abundance.

Oh my Beloved, my Friend sincere,  
Lavish upon the human race,  
Your bounty unbounded,  
And generosity galore.

*Shah Latif*

## A TRIBUTE TO G. M. SYED

Some people  
Possess the spark  
To light the candle

But my heart is captivated  
By that rare individual  
Who shed his radiance  
To brighten the world  
Unmindful  
Of his personal anguish

*Shaikh Ayaz*

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## FOREWORD

G.M. Syed was at one time the most reviled man in Pakistan and at the same time a demigod to his followers. Yet neither could his detractors clearly pinpoint their principal cause of revulsion for the man, nor could his supporters elucidate the precise clarity of his thought and vision. The press and political commentators ignored him to the point of disbelief of his very existence. It was almost as if this mover of history was arbitrarily adjudged, convicted, and relegated to the footnotes on the back pages of history without the benefit of fair proceedings, and the contradictions attributed to him by others were considered by the political establishment too tiring an effort to verify, or if found untrue to be rebutted.

G.M. Syed took to politics by joining the Indian National Congress, as was the practice of most Muslim stalwarts of his era. He soon thereafter decided to join the Muslim League under the able leadership of Abdoola Haroon and till his dying day considered him to be his leader. He often stated publicly that his moving the Pakistan Resolution in the Sindh Assembly after his leader's death was his way of paying respect to his departed leader's political will and legacy. Yet within a few years he decided to enjoin battle with Mohammad Ali Jinnah on what Syed considered his arbitrariness and high handed non-recognition and dismissal of Sindh's legitimate rights, demands and aspirations. In an age of sycophancy the disagreement with the founder of the nation by a co-founder was not viewed in political hues but was instead seen as 'anti-state' activity. Syed was derided and expelled from the provincial chapter of his party, most keenly by those who expected to replace him in his high office in the party much in the same way that the Nawab of Mamdot was replaced through subterfuge in the Punjab.

Syed, unlike Mamdot, fought against overwhelming odds. One after another he took up causes that his far-reaching vision could see as damaging to his beloved state. He resisted vehemently the separation of Karachi from Sindh, the dispersal of evacuee properties, the creation of one unit, the allotment of barrage lands to non-Sindhis, the relegation of Sindhi language to irrelevancy in the education/official system and the erosion of provincial autonomy. Retrospectively, his vision has not proved to be incorrect and the causes he espoused may have been then brushed under the carpet by a lack of political will but if these matters had been addressed and resolved then, would we have remained as a nation at the crossroads for over 52 years?

Syed's personality was multidimensional. He was a respected politician yet deep down he was an intellectual who knew no limit to his thirst for knowledge and he would spend sleepless nights in this pursuit. This was a major contradiction according to the political establishment then who were busy sowing the seed of 'yes men' politicians to ably guide the establishment and the ship of state into the predictably planned bureaucratic future. Intellect and a thinking politician was not to be tolerated as it would not fit into the game plan. Furthermore Syed had inherited his ancestors' intoxication with Sufism and mysticism, and these dimensions added to his enormous understanding specifically of Sindh. His respect for the great sage Shah Abdul Latif and his ancestor Bulri Shah Karim created within him disdain for the current feudal leadership of Sindh and he attributed his reverses to the time-servers of this special interest. He tried endlessly to integrate urban Sindh with the mainstream of the province and in his later years was initially godfather to the Mohajir Movement headed by Altaf Hussain. But the callous indifference of the majority province Punjab to the smaller provinces, and its perceived indifference to the federal charter of the constitution, as well as its complete domination of the socio-economic-political structures in Pakistan became the bane of his life and struggle. But despite his disappointments, he considered these frustrations temporary and his faith in the ultimate destiny of Sindh remained unwavering.

The author has ventured into this oft-misunderstood politician's philosophy, his life and work and has tried to rationalize Syed's ideas and practices as he perceived them and, as they were perceived by the common man in Sindh. He also sheds light on how they were contorted by history. He tries to convey the feelings, frustration and anger of Syed, how he vented his anger, whether it was justified or indeed practical and whether Syed could have been accommodated in the larger national interest. He explains how Syed remained a believer in non-violent democracy and whether this was compatible with his rigid principles and refusal to compromise.

The author has further attempted to dilate, in his own fashion, on the current ethnic divide. The author holds forth on politics of bloody confrontation, the socio-economic collapse of Sindh and the subsequent federal intervention that has brought Sindh to its knees to be governed by policies of containment through a neighbouring province's culture and federalism, which is neither understood nor accepted by and large in Sindh. These observations may provoke a controversy which will invite others to participate in an exchange of ideas that may spell a new direction and hope for the forlorn multitudes in an embattled province.

Yusuf A. Haroon  
Karachi, June 1999

## PREFACE

In 1993 the publisher of my earlier book *The Frontier Gandhi* wished to know what my next book would be. I replied that while I had no plans to write again, if ever I changed my mind, my next subject would be G.M. Syed. She took me seriously and announced my plan on the dust cover flap of *The Frontier Gandhi*.

By then, Syed had already completed ninety years of his life and seventy-four years of his political journey. Any author venturing to probe his career must dig into the vast printed material of the greater part of the century, including the proceedings of the Sindh Assembly from 1937 till 1947, and interview a large number of persons who knew him intimately.

Soon thereafter, my health broke down and my condition deteriorated in the polluted environment of Karachi. Despite this handicap, I began to assemble reading material and write notes. I prepared a list of celebrities with whom I intended to meet in order to seek their guidance for updating my findings and clarifying my thoughts. My frequent hospitalization and my doctor's advice confined me to my home, and much to my regret, I was compelled to abandon my plans.

In the meantime, G.M. Syed breathed his last. My last hope was Syed's talented daughter, Professor Dr Durre Shahwar Syed, Head of the Shah Latif Chair at the University of Karachi, whom I approached through a family friend, and who graciously agreed to assist me as much as possible. To my deep sorrow, she too died soon thereafter. That seemed to be the end of my attempt to write anything on the subject.

During my recent trip to the United States for a medical check-up and to meet my son and his family, I was literally cornered by my wife Sajedah, my son Ayaz, and my physician Juzar Ali, to carry on with my plan of writing the book; they

were convinced that it would be a part of my therapy. Encouraged by their persuasion and 'professional' advice, I resumed writing by picking up the pieces one by one. My wife had taken care to preserve my notes and clippings and carried them to the United States. My grandson Murad volunteered to type the manuscript. At the young age of fourteen, he gave me many constructive suggestions for rearranging the manuscript in order to improve the presentation. My son's library collection on Sindh was of great help. As I proceeded with the project, I became aware of the many shortcomings that could not be avoided due to the handicaps mentioned earlier. However, I hope that other writers will undertake in-depth studies on Syed and improve upon my work. There is a definite need for a comprehensive and balanced biography of Syed if people are to understand the genesis of Sindh's past and present turmoil.

Syed's was a life of confrontation which took many shapes and forms. In this book, I have discussed most of the controversies surrounding his personality. The opinions expressed in these chapters reflect his views and those of his followers, which may be unpalatable to some. This is natural, especially in a province which has seen so much bitterness, intolerance, and confrontation. But free expression and differences of opinion are an integral part of democracy, which is finally beginning to take root in the country.

To examine Syed's life as a whole, including his political struggle, cultural activities, literary pursuits, and his overall philosophy of life, is beyond the scope of this book. While I have primarily chosen the political dimension of his life as my subject, I invite other historians and researchers to study various other aspects of this great man's multi-faceted life. He was not only a politician and a writer, but also a thinker, a visionary, a mystic, and a literary critic. The few topics chosen by me from his political life have been analyzed by myself in my own humble way, depending partly on published materials and partly on my observations and recollections of over fifty years. Some of my observations will displease his admirers, while others will annoy his detractors. But readers of all persuasions will

agree that Syed had an enigmatic and complex personality, and his political mission and objectives were by no means easy to accomplish. There is no dearth of his vociferous critics, inside and outside Sindh, and even within his own Jiye Sindh camp. But despite these controversies, the fact remains that his impact on Sindh, its people, and its history for over half a century has been powerful. Even today, his message carries an enormous emotional and political appeal for all Sindhis, particularly the younger ones, and even for those Sindhis who have disagreed with him at one time or another.

This is not a narrative in the style of a biography, but an exposition of the major political issues that have cropped up and agitated the minds of Sindhis before and after Pakistan's independence in 1947. Each major issue is dealt with in a separate chapter. In doing so, it was not possible to follow the sequence of events as they occurred. I have had to go back and forth in time to deal with each issue from different perspectives. These issues, though separate and independent, are also interrelated and interdependent, and for this reason some degree of repetition could not be avoided.

On a personal note, let me confess that since my heart is in Sindh and my mind is in Pakistan, I see no contradiction in my dual loyalty. I expect my Sindhi and Mohajir readers to formulate their opinions and base their responses on logical facts and objective reality rather than emotionally-charged sentiments and provocation. I have used the term 'Mohajir' liberally in my book, much to the annoyance of my numerous Mohajir friends who hate to be called Mohajir. To them I owe an apology and an explanation. The use of this word makes me resentful. But the fact remains that Sindh is a Mohajir province. More than ninety per cent of those who call themselves Sindhis have been Mohajirs through successive centuries. If they are Sindhis, then everyone else is a Sindhi too, including those who came after independence, irrespective of how the label of Mohajir has come to be applied to them. I have used this term in my book because it has been used in every book, magazine, newspaper, speech, statement, seminar, and symposium on the

subject, and above all, because it has been politicized by the representative political arm of this community. Lately, Mohajirs are also known as 'Urdu-speaking Sindhis' or even 'New Sindhis', and the major component of MQM is now called the Muttahida Qaumi Movement, but it will still take time for these new terms to come into standard usage.

I could not have completed this book without the help and encouragement of my family, my friends and well-wishers.

My wife Sajideh, my son Ayaz and my physician Juzar Ali literally pushed me to resume the writing which I had abandoned for five years due to failing health. My grandson Murad typed the manuscript and my son did the editing and chose the title. Munawwar Memon procured the photocopies of the Sindh Assembly proceedings from 1937 to 1947. Nisar Hassanally Effendi lent the services of his computer specialists, Altaf Hussain and Pervaiz Akhter. Yasmin Qureshi did a remarkable job of final editing. Photographs were borrowed from Syed's family by Shirin Farooqi. Syed's picture with the President, the Prime Minister, Pir Pagaro and other dignitaries came from Jamote Collection. I am deeply grateful to all of them.

M. S. KOREJO

## INTRODUCTION

I had the benefit of a personal encounter with G.M. Syed in January 1946, a few weeks before the elections of the Provincial Assembly, which were to decide the fate of Pakistan. He had just broken his links with the All-India Muslim League over the issue of the nomination of candidates for the Assembly. These elections were a hot issue in Sindh due to their impact on the All-India Hindu-Muslim issue, while Syed had taken a narrow stand on the basis of a provincial matter. The Sindhi Muslim student community, upset by this needless controversy at a critical time in the history of Muslim India's struggle for a separate homeland, also got sucked into the election campaign. It seemed odd to us that Syed, as president of the Sindh Muslim League, who had quit Congress in 1938 because he thought it was anti-Muslim, who had mobilized the entire Sindhi Muslim opinion in favour of the Muslim League, and who had dedicated his life to the struggle for Pakistan, had now turned against the League itself and had severed his links with its national leader and high command on the petty issue of party tickets.

We formed a student delegation consisting of myself, Nisar Effendi, Aziz Baloch, Zafar Choudhry, Manzur Baloch, and Khalid Bukhari, and called on him at his camp in Sakrand. The meeting began after sunset and ended sometime after midnight. We avoided getting into the merits or demerits of the candidates. Our emphasis was on party discipline, at that point of time when unity within the ranks, at any cost, was the paramount need. We cited the example of unity within the Congress ranks, who were our adversaries. In reply, he spoke of the need for autonomy within the party and complained against interference by the high command. He said that his nominees were superior while those of the opponent faction were feudals with no interest in the welfare of Sindh. We replied that the candidates of both

factions were feudals, and added that their qualifications at this stage were less important than their chance to get elected. What mattered most at that time was the candidates' support for the Muslim demand for Pakistan then being negotiated at the all-India level, and not their individual provincial standing. We found him totally inflexible on this issue, with no chance of him changing his mind, notwithstanding the consequences. We could see that the entire problem arose from the dispute among the Sindh League leaders, each group vying for supremacy over the other. The dispute was referred to the party's high command under the leadership of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, which favoured the anti-Syed group. Despite efforts, Syed had defied Jinnah and the party high command. While party unity called for his submission to the struggle of Indian Muslims, including those from Sindh, Syed refused to back down. As a final attempt, we appealed to him to field his candidates as independents, and in case they won, they could then join the League. Even to this compromise, he did not agree. Not knowing enough of politics, we tried to convince Syed that he was fighting a hopeless battle, because he had fielded candidates in only twelve of the thirty-four Muslim seats. Utterly disappointed in our efforts to persuade him to be flexible and reasonable, we finally bade him good-bye.<sup>1</sup>

After our meeting, we began to foresee another likely scenario. After all, if this was a family quarrel within the League then why had the quarrel escalated into a battle? We began to visualize the possibility that even if Syed won only eight out of the twelve contested Muslim seats, he would be able to form a coalition government with the Congress and the independents in a house of a total of sixty members. For all practical purposes, even with Syed as its head, this would be a Congress government whose first act would be to rescind the pro-Pakistan Resolution passed by the Assembly in 1943. Since Syed would be the author of both these resolutions, the impression would be that Pakistan was being thrust on an unwilling Sindh. Syed had given a clear indication of his intentions when he appeared before the Cabinet Mission in Delhi in 1946<sup>2</sup> and demanded unqualified

and unrestricted right of self-determination for every province. Sindh had already exercised its option in 1943 by demanding Pakistan. Now he opposed the Cabinet Mission's proposal to form confederal groups of provinces, thereby attempting to satisfy Muslim demands for autonomy short of Partition. Thus, it was clear that after his break with the Muslim League, Syed had moved away from the 1943 resolution passed by the Sindh Assembly at his behest. Now, his aim was to repeal that resolution, but his move was frustrated by the dissolution of the Assembly in 1946. The situation in the Punjab, where the Unionists were in power, was already precarious for the League.

What we had foreseen almost came true. Syed won four Muslim seats, added three Muslim independents, and then united with twenty-one Hindu Congress members to form a coalition. However, instead of forming the government, Syed preferred to sit in opposition as a tactical move. In September 1946, this opposition coalition nearly defeated the Muslim League government, but this was averted due to the dissolution of the Assembly following a constitutional deadlock. Thus in 1946, Syed came close to changing the course of history.

Syed was convinced that his stand against the Muslim League in 1946 was vindicated by subsequent political events that took place before and after the creation of Pakistan. In Syed's view, the Pakistani establishment has systematically denied and eroded Sindh's political, economic, and cultural rights, resources, and freedom. In his view, the following series of events prove his point:

In the repeat elections held in late 1946, Syed's defeat was engineered by rigging the polls.<sup>3</sup> In 1948, Karachi was separated from Sindh by Pakistan's government against the wishes of Sindhis. There has been a non-stop refugee influx into Sindh, which threatens to turn Sindhis into a minority in their historic homeland. Rural evacuee properties were allotted to Mohajirs while native Sindhis, who had prior claims to these properties, were excluded and deprived. Despite the passage of fifty years, the Mohajirs have by and large, refused to integrate with the Sindhis, causing ethnic unrest. In 1954, the provincial status of Sindh was abolished, and

during the ensuing One-Unit period, Sindhi agricultural lands were colonized by non-Sindhis. President Ayub Khan downgraded the educational and governmental status of the Sindhi language. After the secession of East Pakistan in 1971, the issue of autonomy had lost all practical meaning. Throughout the post-Partition period, Sindh has been denied the fruit of its economic resources, which have been exploited by non-Sindhis. Even the 1973 Constitution engineered by a Sindhi President denied Sindh's autonomy. The cumulative effect of all these events led to Syed's epoch-making and shocking demand for an independent SindhuDesh in 1972.

These events turned Syed's political journey into a roller-coaster ride. Anyone attempting to write about him has to go back into history and join him in this ride to be able to see his ups and down in perspective, and feel the frustration and pressures that were generated *en route*. Before independence, he clashed with both the Indian National Congress, as well as the All-India Muslim League. To the Congress, he had complained against the negative attitude of Sindh's Hindu Congress members towards the problems of rural Sindhi Muslims. Maulana Azad and Sardar Patel came to look into the matter, but Syed rejected their findings and quit the Congress. He then joined the League, and Jinnah rewarded him by elevating him to the highest position in the provincial League. However, Jinnah declined to accept his nominees for the 1946 elections. It was ironical that both the rival high commands found Syed out of step with them, or vice versa. Both the Congress and League leaderships had their own priorities, namely their all-India interests. Syed had his own compulsion, namely the interests of Sindh. Which position should have prevailed in either situation was a matter of priority, decided by the respective national leaderships of the parties. When the two foremost Muslim leaders of the subcontinent, representing the two opposite political philosophies, disagreed with Syed, in support of their respective positions, then surely there must be a serious flaw in Syed's stand, notwithstanding his love for Sindh. The end result of these disagreements with the leadership and philosophies of both parties was that Syed quit the Congress in

1938 and the League in 1946. The question is this: if Syed took these decisive actions and severed his links with both these divergent political parties representing the entire political spectrum of India just for the sake of Sindhi Muslims, then how does one explain the lack of mass electoral support for his Jiye Sindh Movement and his goal of SindhuDesh from the same Sindhi Muslims?

An attempt has been made to answer this and many other questions which have haunted the minds of the new generation of Sindhis and their compatriots in the rest of Pakistan. Sindhis have to draw up a balance sheet of Syed's entire political career of seventy-six years to see what he gained and what he lost, and what Sindh gained and lost. Syed himself once admitted in an interview that he had made many mistakes during his political career. He did not pinpoint his mistakes but left it to others to judge him. Most Sindhi politicians have changed their loyalties and compromised their stands for the sake of gaining political power. But Syed belonged to a rare breed. He had the courage to admit his mistakes. He quit parties neither to gain power nor to glorify himself, but to advance the cause of Sindh as he perceived it.<sup>4</sup>

Sindhi politicians have always been divided over the strategy for attaining the rights of Sindhis. One school, which is in the majority, believes that nothing can be achieved through open confrontation with the establishment, and that the only feasible course is to fight from within. This group has included leaders like Shahnawaz Bhutto, Allah Bux Soomro, Ghulam Husain Hidayatullah, Muhammad Ayub Khuhro, Pir Illahi Bakhsh, Abdus Sattar Pirzada, and others. It also included the later generations of politicians like Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Mumtaz Ali Bhutto, Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, Abdul Hafeez Pirzada, Muhammad Khan Junejo, and now Benazir Bhutto, among others. They plunged into the political battle, winning some rounds, losing others, but remaining within the process. As a result, they gained new insights, acquired experience in dealing with adversaries, and left many lessons for posterity to learn from. They were capable leaders exhibiting superior political,

administrative, and intellectual skills. Had they not collaborated with the establishment, lesser politicians would have been hand-picked to take their place, and consequently, Sindh would have lost much more by default. Each left their mark in some measure on the political landscape. Khuhro took a firm stand against Jinnah on the question of the separation of Karachi, and faced dismissal. Sattar Pirzada took a stand against One-Unit, and he too was dismissed. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto rose like a meteor, becoming Pakistan's first mass political leader by giving a voice to the oppressed, and in the process leaving indelible marks on Sindh and Pakistani politics during and after his lifetime. Mumtaz Ali Bhutto as the Chief Minister of Sindh took a stand on the language issue and was consequently dismissed from his office. Jatoi restored ethnic harmony better than any chief minister had done, either before or after him. Hafeez Pirzada authored the 1973 Constitution, which even today has the distinction of being the permanent constitutional framework. The Sindhi team selected by Bhutto for his government during 1971-7, was highly 'talented', and comparable to the very best in the other provinces. The feat of strength performed by Junejo as General Ziaul Haq's 'weak' Prime Minister has few parallels, giving the latter ultimately no choice but to dismiss him. Benazir Bhutto's enormous courage in the aftermath of her father's tragic end won her tremendous loyalty and support, catapulting her twice to power. Sadly however, each time she failed to come up to the people's expectations and was summarily dismissed.

The other group of Sindhi politicians is best epitomized by Syed, often a lonely voice in the wilderness. Syed believed that those who collaborated with the establishment were either cowards or power-hungry or both, and they sold their conscience for power and personal gain. In his judgement, had the Sindhi politicians united in opposition to all the injustices against their land, used their talent and resources in the protest movement, and refused to collaborate with the establishment, then Sindh would have been able to achieve its due rights.

There is a basic difference in the perception and approach of these two groups. Should the victims of injustice join the

establishment and fight from within, only to meet with failure and disgrace in the end? Or like Syed, should they reject the establishment, stand up in protest even if alone, and refuse to be a party to the perpetuation of injustice? A wrong is always a wrong and it is compounded if the victims of the wrong join the tyrant. This was the course chosen by Syed, who opposed every regime in Pakistan as tyrannical towards Sindh. For his consistent opposition, Syed paid a heavy personal price. However, he was one of those rare politicians who preferred detention as an opposition leader to the benefits of a government minister. In his view, Sindhi politicians who collaborated with the establishment were traitors to the long-term cause of Sindh.

Nevertheless, as long as East Pakistan stayed in the federation, Syed saw a flicker of hope in the struggle from within. He fought a democratic battle against One-Unit, and was crucial in dismantling it in 1970. He supported the legislative restoration of the position of the Sindhi language in 1972. He approached Wali Khan and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to preserve Pakistan if Sindh and other provinces were ensured genuine autonomy. However, after the civil war in East Pakistan, which resulted in the creation of Bangladesh, he lost all hope and moved to an extreme position. As an extremist, he discarded all restraint and gave a call for the independence of Sindh as SindhuDesh.

Syed's approach to politics was that of a mystic, an idealist, and a dreamer. Once he dreamt of a united India ensuring communal harmony. Then he dreamt of an Islamic Pakistan with genuine provincial autonomy. These dreams were guided mainly by his emotional impulses rather than logical reasoning. He became reactive rather than calculative. He was in no position to launch a revolution. Sindh had created too many mystics, poets, and divines, who made Sindhis inert, contented fatalists and 'grave worshippers'. In a competitive society, where only the fittest survive, Sindh needed scientists, economists, mathematicians, traders, industrialists, warriors, adventurers, explorers, and diplomats. Mystics and holy men and their devotees made Sindh an easy target for the invaders who possessed superior knowledge of warfare, armaments, mobility,

and strategy. Sindhi Hindus were a talented and enterprising people, among whose ranks were businessmen, traders, scientists, mathematicians, industrialists, teachers, philanthropists, and social workers. However, they could not coexist with Muslims after the latter opted to join Pakistan, which was to become an Islamic state. Thus, Sindhi Muslims led by Syed became a party to the exodus of Hindus from Sindh. The resulting vacuum was filled by the influx of Mohajirs from India. When the influx turned into a flood, it created an alarm, but by then it was too late to cry foul. When Sindhis felt that Mohajirs were dominating Sindh numerically, culturally, economically, and politically, the situation turned into an issue.

Sindh is not alone in facing an ethnic problem. Ethnic problems are a worldwide phenomenon and many hard and pragmatic lessons can be learned from the experiences of others. Sindhi and Mohajir intellectuals must step forward and make a bold contribution. They must join together and widen the channels of communication between rural and urban Sindhis, and open their minds which have been locked by ethnic separatists. This is an essential prerequisite to initiating a dialogue for Sindhi-Mohajir integration. The most notable step in this direction was taken by a hundred Mohajir and Sindhi intellectuals, who, calling themselves the Committee for Amity and Peace in Sindh, issued a signed appeal under the title 'A Plea For Peace and Amity in Sindh', which was published in the *Dawn* of 13 March 1993.<sup>5</sup>

The appeal makes some constructive suggestions but most of them could only be put into effect through constitutional amendments by the Parliament. To be able to make any progress in that direction, a strong lobby needs to be created at the provincial and federal levels. Lawmakers in Sindh of either community failed to take serious note of this appeal. Political parties in Sindh must rise above narrow ethnic considerations and debate these issues. Unless a strong public opinion is generated through a sustained public debate in the print media, and through inter-ethnic seminars and discussion groups, political parties will continue their useless posturings, and

neglect to notice these suggestions. Currently, the main political parties are not even on talking terms, much less in the mood for the give and take of constructive negotiations. Only strong public opinion can bring them around to set aside their mutual prejudices for the common good of Sindh.

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1. The meeting took place in January 1946 at the town of Sakrand in Moro—Sakrand provincial constituency. The contest for the Muslim League ticket was between Ghulam Rasool Jatoi and Hassan Bux Shah. The ticket was finally given to Jatoi; Hassan Bux contested the election on behalf of Syed's Progressive League.
2. G.M. Syed, *Struggle for New Sindh*, Sain Publishers, Sehwan Sharif, 1949, pp. 210-11.
3. G.M. Syed, *The Case of Sindh*. pp. 248-50 quoting *Sindh Government Gazette* of 4 February 1949, notifying the judgement of the Election Commission, restoring the membership of Syed and disqualifying Qazi Mohammed Akbar and Pir Illahi Bux from membership and voting for six years, on account of the use of corrupt practices in the election.
4. *Herald*, Karachi, August 1989, pp. 168-83, Syed interviewed by Zafar Abbas.
5. The full text of the appeal has been reproduced in Appendix I.

# 1

## G.M. SYED—THE MAN

Syed Ghulam Murtaza Shah, known to everyone as G.M. Syed, was born on 17 January 1904 in his ancestral village of Sann, on the right bank of the Indus river. He received a semi-formal education, considered essential by his elders, who were grooming him to become the *Sajjada Nashin* of his forefather Syed Haider Shah Kazmi, a renowned saint and spiritual guide with a widespread following of *murids* and devotees in the surrounding area and beyond. In Sindh, a Syed, tracing his lineage to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and occupying an exalted position, had a built-in social status and political constituency. Besides, such a hereditary position was a source of income through tributes, cash offerings, and landed property. To be able to carry out these responsibilities successfully, one did not need any formal education. Religious training was imparted by local *mullahs* and *maulvis*. Worldly wisdom was to be acquired through extensive contacts with people of all levels who would come from far and wide to pay homage.

G.M. Syed rejected these attractive opportunities and lucrative assets and plunged into politics, which eventually became the central part of his life and mission for the next seventy-six years. He had a choice between the two modes of life: one was a bed of roses, and the other was a bed of thorns. He chose the latter course deliberately due to his ingrained passion for politics, a phenomenon that gripped him at the tender age of fourteen. In 1919, he participated in the Khilafat Conference at Larkana, which turned him into a Pan-Islamist and a staunch soldier of the Khilafat Movement. Soon thereafter, he hosted another Khilafat Conference at Sann, which was presided over by Hakim

Fateh Muhammad Sehwanī, a prominent Khilafat leader, and attended by personalities like Sheikh Abdul Majid Sindhi, Dr Sheikh Noor Muhammad, Sheikh Abdul Aziz, Maulvi Muhammad Sulaiman, and others.

Syed's political activities are described in detail through the entire book. As part of his prolific literary activity, he mastered many subjects including history, philosophy, Islamic religion, ancient faiths, sufism, biographies, and Sindhi poetry. He himself became a prolific writer, and critic, and authored about sixty books, mostly in Sindhi, but also in Urdu and English, on a variety of subjects ranging from politics, sufism, interpretation of Shah Latif's poetry, culture, biographies, and critical appraisal of current affairs. No Sindhi has ever had such a remarkable flair to write so profusely, on so many subjects, and in so many languages, in addition to actively participating in political life, as well as contributing to social welfare, village development and educational programmes. During his early legislative career, he was the most vocal member on the floor of Sindh Assembly. And even in his old age, when most of his earlier contemporaries were long gone, he conducted mass-contact campaigns for his causes. He wrote an interesting book *The Nine Jewels of Modern Politics* in Sindhi and Urdu, giving a critical analysis of the disparate political careers of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Mahatma Gandhi, Allama Muhammad Iqbal, Pundit Jawahar Lal Nehru, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, and many others. Among Muslim thinkers only he had the courage to denounce Iqbal's political theory. Life sketches authored by him of his contemporaries in Sindh's literary, political, and social fields, not only give us insight into his circle of friends and their contributions to the enrichment of the heritage of Sindh, but also exhibit his perceptive mind. As a government minister, he laid the ground work of Sindh University, which later became the University of Karachi. He established the Sindh Literary Advisory Board, which later developed into the Sindh Adabi Board. In 1954, he became the chairman of this institution which has been responsible for publishing hundreds of books, and publications on scores of subjects, and also brings out a

literary periodical called *Mehran*. While his book on SindhuDesh is essentially devoted to explaining his political theory of SindhuDesh, he has inadvertently downgraded his political message by raising such controversial issues about religion that are not relevant to his subject matter.

By faith, Syed was a liberal Muslim, having moved away from the orthodox version of Islam and adopted sufism as his creed. He incorporated certain elements of Buddhism and Jainism into his personal faith. He was also influenced by the doctrine of *ahimsa*, preached by Mahatma Gandhi and his disciple Abdul Ghaffar Khan. He expressed his controversial and radical opinions on religion while living in a highly traditional society.

Politically, he evolved and travelled from Pan-Islamism to Indian nationalism, and then from Pakistani nationalism to, finally, Sindhi nationalism. These four phases were distinct from each other, signifying the sweeping changes in the political landscape, and the gradual evolution of thinking on the basis of his experiences. Once he took a stance, there were no moderating or compromising influences in his politics, notwithstanding the odds he had to encounter. In a career spanning seventy-six years, no dynamic politician would have stuck to one creed. Syed, however, reached a radically extreme position in the final phase of his politics from where he would not turn back, regardless of the price he had to pay.

Syed's comments on various political issues were considered highly controversial and objectionable, and he was often accused of being against the integrity of Pakistan. On this account, he was invariably arrested, detained, and confined to his home, by both authoritarian and democratic regimes, a punishment which lasted till his death in 1995. In all, his frequent detentions totalled about thirty years, which would perhaps be one of the longest in the history of political detentions. He was prosecuted for sedition, but the trial was never undertaken because the government would not offer him such a platform for martyrdom.

He is survived by two sons and two daughters. One daughter, Professor Dr Durre Shahwar Syed, head of the Shah Latif Chair

of the University of Karachi, has since passed away. His elder son, Syed Amir Haider Shah is a politician, and supports the Jiye Sindh Movement. His younger son Imdad Muhammad Shah, also a politician, follows the same political line. One grandson, Syed Jalal Mahmood Shah, is currently the Deputy Speaker of Sindh Assembly. Another grandson, Zain Shah, is the coordinator of the Jiye Sindh Qaumi Tehrik, formed by merging the various Jiye Sindh factions after Syed's demise.

What is Syed's place in history? Did he live a life of achievement and fulfillment? Do Sindhis and other Pakistanis correctly understand and interpret his message? Can his achievements be measured in terms of success or failure in elections? An attempt has been made in these pages to answer these and other questions. But more relevant than his achievements is the fact that to him, his faith itself become a battle and the battle became his faith. He entered this battle courageously, sincerely, and without self-interest. He led a life of suffering and self-denial for his faith, his faith being the rights and freedom of the land and people of Sindh.

Syed re-kindled the flame of political courage, and political defiance, revived the Sindhi spirit, and Sindhi traditions of patriotism, humanism and universalism—preached by Sindhi mystics like Shah Latif, Shah Inayat, Sachal Sarmast, Bedil, Bekas, Sami and others. He re-emphasized the timelessness of the message of these illustrious sons of Sindh. He will be remembered as a living symbol of Sindhi heritage.

For a detailed life sketch, an article by Sheikh Aziz, published in the *Dawn* of 26 April 1995, has been reproduced in Appendix II.

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## 2

### SYED'S DREAM OF PAKISTAN

Sindh was conquered by the British in 1843, when they defeated the Talpur *amirs* in the battles of Miani, and Dabo near Hyderabad. It began its journey as a part of the British Indian empire a hundred years after the British had already conquered most of the Indian territories. Historically, Sindh and Hind were separate entities with little in common between the two. During certain periods, the rulers of Sindh paid tributes to the rulers in Delhi as an acknowledgment of the latter's superior power. But at another time, Sindh also paid tributes to Kandahar for the same reasons. The fall of Delhi did not result in the fall of Sindh. The British conquest of Sindh was planned and executed by the British as part of their geo-political push into Afghanistan. Until then, and for a long time thereafter, no significant political links existed between Sindh and the rest of India.

Within a decade of Sindh's annexation, the Indian revolt shook the empire. The areas affected were limited to Meerut, Delhi, Kanpur, Jhansi, Allahabad, Fatehganj, and Oudh. The areas which did not participate included the territory south of the river Nirbada where Marathas put up a poor show. Central and East Bengal were quiet, Sindhia and Holkar remained loyal to the British, and so did the Nizam of Hyderabad. Sindh, Punjab, and Rajputana remained unaffected. Gurkhas and Sikhs in the British army remained peaceful.<sup>1</sup>

Some recent historians of Sindh have observed that the feudal domination of Sindhi society, which was encouraged by the British to consolidate their rule of Sindh, was responsible for Sindhis remaining aloof during the War of Independence in 1857.<sup>2</sup> Such observations ignore the fact that peasant revolts

were unheard of in the mid-nineteenth century. In the first place, the revolt was confined to Delhi, and areas now included in the Uttar Pradesh (UP). And even there, farmers and peasants did not play an active role since no appeal was directed at them, although other groups in society were approached. Neither did wealthy Indians come forward to finance the rebellion activities. Although Hindus and Muslims faced a common enemy, each had their own axe to grind. The resistance offered by the Mughal King, Nana Saheb and the Rani of Jhansi, could not turn the tide against the British.<sup>3</sup> Historically, the Hindus had entertained grievances against the Muslim domination of India and they had collaborated with the British to liquidate them. Marathas had conspired against Tipu Sultan in Mysore. They also conspired against the Nizam in Deccan and vice versa. Muslims were also often betrayed by fellow Muslims at the behest of the British. Thus, Mir Jaffar had conspired against his Muslim ruler Sirajuddaulah in Bengal, and Mir Sadiq had conspired against Tipu Sultan in Mysore. These deep divisions between Hindus and Muslims, and the presence of traitors among Muslims, had facilitated British conquests for a whole century, right up to 1857. With such divisions among Indians, the rebellion, confined as it was within a limited area, was easily suppressed by the British. The rebels had inspired political and military leadership in the persons of the Rani of Jhansi, Hazrat Mahal, Mohan Lal and Mir Madan to guide and unite them. However, they lacked weapons reinforcements commensurate to their British opponents and their vast imperial resources. Mutual rivalry between rebel leaders like Mirza Mughal and Bakht Khan weakened both of them. To make matters worse, other leaders like Mirza Illahi Bux and Raja Ali were also spying for the British.<sup>4</sup> Thus, when the revolt was crushed without causing any major ripples, except in a narrow strip of land in northern India, its impact on Sindh, which had little common history or trade and communication links with Oudh and Delhi, was quite negligible. The truth is, that this victory in what British historians consider a mutiny was really the victory of a modern

and industrialized European colonial power over a divided and decadent Eastern society.<sup>5</sup>

Sindhis, under British Raj, as part of the Empire of India, now learnt to rub shoulders with their more advanced brothers from Bombay, UP, and other provinces. When Syed Ahmad Khan began his campaign for educating Muslims, he inspired the entire Muslim community of India. His Sindhi counterpart was Hassanally Effendi (b. 1830 – d. 1895), who pioneered the Sindhi Muslim educational campaign and founded the Sindh Madressah in Karachi in 1885. Gradually, Karachi established socio-cultural, economic, and political links with Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta, and Lahore. These linkages created opportunities for social interaction, education, and employment. The British connection made Indians belonging to various creeds aware of the need to emerge from their regional isolation, and operate on an all-India plane. The Aligarh Muslim University brought the Indian Muslim youth on the same political platform as other Indians. Wealthy Sindhis went to Aligarh and London for studies, and, on their return, they worked with an all-India outlook. This process was encouraged by the functioning of legislative and judicial systems in Bombay, Delhi, and elsewhere. Thus, a young Muhammad Ali Jinnah preferred Bombay to his native Karachi for his legal practice, which was a stepping stone for his all-India fame. Karachi-born Sir Sultan Muhammad Aga Khan led a delegation of Indian Muslims to the Viceroy in 1905. The Khilafat movement (1919-24), shook Sindh as much as it did the rest of India. The trial of the firebrand Ali Brothers in the Khaliqdina Hall of Karachi (1921), touched deep chords among Sindhis. Sindh produced Congress leaders of all-India fame, like Acharya Kirpalani, Jairamdas Daulatram, and others. Congress leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Azad, and Ghaffar Khan toured Sindhi towns and villages for the Congress mass-contact campaign. Syed, as the Sindh Provincial Muslim League chief, shared an exalted position with Jinnah in the mile-long procession of the All-India Muslim League in Karachi, in December 1943. If Sindhi Hindus occupied high positions in

the Congress high command, Sindhi Muslims did the same in the Muslim League. The Sindh Muslim League demanded partition of India in 1938, much before any other Muslim majority province demanded it. Sindhi Muslims participated in passing the famous Lahore Resolution in 1940, demanding what later became Pakistan.

Sindh had never been an inward looking province, and Sindhi hearts and minds were always in unison with Indian hearts and minds. Sindhis never saw their problems in isolation, but as a part of the whole all-India problem. Separation of Sindh from Bombay was basically a Sindhi demand, but it was taken up vigorously at an all-India level by the Muslim League as an all-India concern, proving thereby that Hindu minds and Muslim minds had ultimately no meeting point.<sup>6</sup> Just as any other province, Sindh got involved into the orbit of all-India Muslim politics. A common religion and values, history and the colonial experience politics, as well as, political leaders, suffering and problems, education and intellectual ideas, hopes and aspirations, and above all else, the common fear of domination by a revanchist Hindu majority, created a common awareness and demand for a common goal. Sindhi Hindus looked up to the Congress, while Sindhi Muslims looked up to the Muslim League. This is the history of the independence movement in Sindh, which was undertaken by Sindhi politicians, who were inspired and guided by the powerful political personalities of all-India fame.

Within the ranks of Sindhi Muslim leadership, differences existed throughout the period of political activity from 1937, when the first elections were held, till 1947, when Sindh became part of Pakistan. Differences of opinion are part of democracy, but in a feudal-dominated legislative assembly like that of Sindh, pursuit of power, instead of serving as a means to an end, had become the end in itself. Turncoats had reduced ministerial chairs into musical chairs. To organize a viable and dependable party and government in such a situation was no easy task. Jinnah concentrated his attention on Sindh, and he got together such disparate leaders like Sheikh Abdul Majid Sindhi,

Sir Abdullah Haroon, Syed, Khuhro, and others, who had been upset by the attitude of the Congress members of the Assembly towards the problems of rural Sindh, and persuaded them to form the Muslim League Assembly Party. In October 1938, they passed a resolution, which condemned the Congress policies of establishing Hindu Raj in some provinces and suppressing Muslim culture and Urdu language. The resolution recommended that the Muslim League should work for a constitution under which Muslims should have total independence.<sup>7</sup>

For the next five years, Syed got deeply involved in the organization of the Sindh Muslim League. He came in close contact with League leaders from other provinces. He also received a positive response from the interior of Sindh, in addition to total support from urban Sindh. When he was finally convinced that there was no possible compromise between Hindus and Muslims, he decided to get a formal commitment from the elected Assembly to the demand for a Muslim homeland. Accordingly, he introduced the Pakistan Resolution in the Sindh Assembly on 3 March 1943. In the resolution, he emphasized the Two-Nation theory and demanded independent national states carved out in the zones where Muslims were in a majority. This resolution warned that subjecting Muslims to a single central government dominated by Hindus was bound to result in a civil war.<sup>8</sup>

In his speech supporting the resolution, Syed pointed out that India was never a single geographical unit, that Hindus and Muslims differed in every aspect like social customs, dress, food, literature, economic concepts, etc. He found no meeting ground between them. His speech was interrupted by a Hindu member Dr Hemandas Wadhvani who objected that Syed was attacking the Hindu religion. Whereupon, the speaker advised Syed to avoid attacks on religion. Syed retorted that he could not avoid the attack, because he wanted to show how Hindus and Muslims differed in concepts and ideologies. He attacked Hindu 'money-lending and money-worshipping, gambling, speculation, and usury'. Syed felt that Hindus and Muslims could

never grow together, as the growth of one precluded the growth of the other. How could the two live together, he went on, when the heroes of one were considered the tyrants of the other, and when a historic victory of one was the shameful defeat of the other?<sup>9</sup>

On the basis of his tireless performance for five years, and after a highly spirited presentation of the case for Pakistan, Syed was unanimously elected to the high office of the provincial president of the League in June 1943, in the presence of Jinnah himself. This was soon followed by preparations for the annual session of the All-India Muslim League, which was held in Karachi on 14 December 1943. Syed's performance during this event, in his capacity as the chairman of the reception committee, surpassed all his previous achievements, as well as the achievements of his fellow party presidents of the other provinces. To the delight of Sindhis, he wore the uniform of Muslim League's National Guard in gray battlefield colour, while sitting next to the Quaid-i-Azam on the camel cart platform during the mile-long procession. During the evening session, he welcomed the guests with a short speech, which captured the hearts of the audience, particularly his non-Sindhi guests. He told them that they had come to the land of Sindhu, the land situated on the Indus and its tributaries, which included Kashmir, North-West Frontier Province, Balochistan, Punjab, and Sindh, whose new name would be Pakistan, which was, therefore synonymous with Sindhuland. He invited Indian Muslims to pool their money and expertise to develop this land, and assured them that Sindhis would facilitate their investment.<sup>10</sup>

Two years later, as the struggle for Pakistan's creation was in full swing, initial cracks began to appear within the Sindh Muslim League. In 1945, the nomination of candidates for the provincial elections brought to surface the differences between Syed and his rivals over the choice of these candidates. Each group tried to exert supremacy over the other by appealing to Jinnah and the high command, which could not bring about a compromise. Although Syed stood firm on his nominees, his rival group was able to carry the day. Syed refused to submit to

the authority of the high command, and he was finally expelled by Jinnah.

Syed's position was that the rival group had nominated feudals and unqualified candidates. This stand was not accepted by Jinnah and his rivals because his own candidates were feudals as well. In any case, raising such an issue at that late stage was counter-productive, as almost all the candidates were feudals. The crucial issue was their chance to get elected, so other issues could wait. The question of autonomy of the provincial League was also premature at that stage. If Sindh was dominated by feudals, then what were the choices before the high command? Syed's expulsion at that stage seemed to be the only logical course available to Jinnah.

While the Sindh Congress Party stood united and disciplined to face its adversaries, namely the British and the Muslim League, the Muslim League presented a pathetic scene of internal turmoil, indiscipline, and tug of war between the rival factions at a crucial moment in the history of the Indo-Muslim community, which was confronting powerful adversaries like the Indian National Congress and the British government. Syed was the President and it was his job to maintain unity within the party ranks through give and take. If the party comprised of feudal elements, he had to lead them to the goal as they were. He insisted on judging candidates by the yardstick of his ideals, but the objective reality of the Sindhi Muslim society at that stage was far removed from his ideals. Muslim League high command was bombarded with complaints and counter-complaints from Syed, Khuhro, Hidayatullah, Gazdar, Kazi Akbar, and others. The high command could not satisfy everyone. They went by the majority view, which was against Syed.

Seen in retrospect, it was a bad decision, as it alienated a sincere Leaguer like Syed for ever; it encouraged his opponents to rig the election and use corrupt means to defeat him in the election, and it promoted the evil of floor-crossing within the Assembly. Had the high command supported Syed, the League would still have swept the polls in 1946. By expelling him they

drove him into a corner. He retaliated by defeating the League ministry—a defeat which was averted by the British Governor.

Be that as it may, it is no longer in doubt that the Sindhi Muslim leaders, who happened to be mostly feudals then, as even now, were a party to the Partition of India, in the shape it took, and that Sindh cast its lot with Pakistan with open eyes. History does not move on a chartered course. The British, the Congress, and the League had all lost control of events in the final pre-Partition years, which followed one after another, full of surprises, shocks, and tragedies. Could independence be won in an orderly manner, in a civilized way? Perhaps not. Jinnah worked for a painless birth for Pakistan, but perhaps he was over-optimistic. After all, there is no birth without the inevitable birth pangs. It is fair to say that all the pain and suffering caused by the birth of Pakistan came as part of the total package, which had to be accepted as events had reached a point from where there could be no going back.

History is witness to the fact that Sindhis opened their arms to receive Mohajirs who were forced to leave their homes in India as a result of communal disturbances and Hindu intolerance. Hundreds of examples of hospitality and active help for their rehabilitation, on an individual and collective basis, can be cited to support this claim. Only one example will suffice here. The daily *Al-Wahid*, a Sindhi newspaper, in its issue of 8 January 1947 reported:

Today, the first meeting of the Bihar Relief Committee was held under the chairmanship of M.A. Khuhro, chief minister. Among those present was Maulana Abdul Qudus Bihari. The meeting considered ways and means of rehabilitating the Mohajirs arriving in Sindh as a result of tyranny and bloodshed of riots in Bihar. It was decided to take all the necessary steps to rehabilitate the Biharis in Sindh by providing employment, housing, etc. District-wise quota of rehabilitation was assigned. Each minister was assigned a district. They were to complete the job within two weeks after consulting local zamindars and Muslim League office leaders, and submit a compliance report to the provincial Muslim League.<sup>11</sup>

This and other subsequent steps, which are too numerous to be counted, were taken before the creation of Pakistan, when the government of Pakistan did not even exist. It was only when the influx turned into a flood, after the creation of Pakistan, and the flood did not stop even after the Liaquat-Nehru Pact, that the situation created panic among Sindhis.

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# 3

## STRUGGLE FOR AUTONOMY

The quest for autonomy began with the demand for the separation of Sindh from Bombay. After the achievement of this goal in 1936, general elections were held in 1937. Jinnah, who had strongly supported the cause of separation, tried to win over Sindh for the Muslim League. But prominent Sindhi leaders like Sir Abdullah Haroon and Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto formed the Sindh United Party in their bid to concentrate on the problems of Sindh, which was a backward province; they avoided getting involved in the all-India politics of the Congress and the Muslim League. By contrast, Hindus had already established the Sindh Congress Party and had contested elections on that basis. Election results showed that out of the total sixty seats the Sindh United Party won twenty-four seats. Congress seven, Muslim Party of Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah three, Azad Party of Sheikh Abdul Majid Sindhi three, and independents twenty-three. However, despite their party's success, both Haroon and Bhutto were defeated by Allah Bux Gabol and Sheikh Abdul Majid Sindhi, respectively.

The government called upon Hidayatullah to form the government, which he did with the support of independents and others. He failed to enact any laws for the welfare of the farming community, which had lost the bulk of their farmlands to money-lenders. Nor was any relief provided to the tenants. Accordingly, the Sindh United Party defeated Hidayatullah in a no-confidence motion, and formed its own government under the leadership of Allah Bux Soomro, with the help of the Congress party. Thus, the Congress had not only contested the elections but had also entered the corridors of power, while the Muslim League did

not even exist inside or outside the government. But the stigma attached to the Congress party was that it had not supported the separation of Sindh, and that its vote bank and elected membership was confined only to Hindus. This was a challenge as well as an opportunity to Jinnah, who had championed the cause of Sindh all along.

Soomro's government failed to deliver the goods also, and brought even greater disappointment, mainly because his Congress partners refused to support the passage of any laws which benefited the backward farming community. At this stage, Syed, who had so far remained in the background, sprang into action. For him, if Hidayatullah's ministry was impotent, Soomro's ministry was both a disaster and a challenge. He had joined the Congress earlier, but he had neither contested the election on Congress tickets nor sat on the Congress benches. Shocked by the conduct of Congress in the Assembly he protested to the President of the Sindh Provincial Congress, Dr Chotihram, and took up the issue with the Congress high command. The Congress assigned its top leaders like Maulana Azad and Sardar Valabh Bhai Patel to visit Sindh and investigate the complaint. However, they failed to redress the grievances of the Sindhi Muslims, on the plea that Congress could not annoy the money-lending class, which formed the bulk of its vote bank.<sup>1</sup> This incident exposed the real face of the Congress, and compelled Syed to readjust his political perceptions, reassess his position, and correct his course. This transformation took place early in his political career in 1938. He now became a Muslim Leaguer, due to his own evolutionary convictions, and by his own choice. He began to see the logic of separate electorates as an antidote to the threat of communal suppression of the Indian Muslims at the hands of Hindus. While Jinnah had worked with the Congress for thirty long years of his political career before making up his mind to part company with it, Syed's disgust with the Congress was so rapid, so spontaneous, and so decisive that he closed all his doors to the idea of Hindu-Muslim unity. Such a superficial unity, he thought, was sucking the blood out of Sindhi Muslims, who must revolt and demolish

the fragile structure of such concord. The year 1938 marked a watershed in Syed's political career.

In October 1938, a conference of Sindh's Muslim League was presided over by Jinnah, which resolved that the British scheme for an all-India federation was not acceptable to Muslims who should have total independence. During and after the conference, Jinnah and the Premier of the Punjab and Bengal persuaded the Sindhi members to form a Muslim League party in the Sindh Assembly. Soomro, Hidayatullah, Pir Illahi Bux, Mir Bunde Ali Talpur, Sheikh Abdul Majid Sindhi, and Syed signed an agreement to hold a meeting for this purpose on 12 October. When the meeting was held, Soomro refused to join the party when he failed to get the assurance that he would be elected the leader of the Muslim League Assembly party, and would continue as the Premier.<sup>2</sup> Ultimately, twenty-seven members agreed to form the Muslim League Assembly party, and elected Hidayatullah as the leader and Talpur as the deputy leader.

When the Muslim League tried to dislodge Soomro, he offered ministries to both Hidayatullah and Talpur, who then became turncoats and joined him along with their supporters, thereby reducing the strength of the party from twenty-seven to seven. Unable to defeat Soomro on the floor of the house, the Leaguers shifted the venue of the battle to Sukkur, where a communal storm was brewing over the status of Manzilgah. Muslims claimed it to be a mosque while Hindus opposed the Muslim claim on the plea that if the place was controlled by Muslims, it would violate the privacy of the female Hindu devotees visiting the nearby Hindu temple. True to his style, Syed led the movement and took possession of the site by force, which was resisted by the government. Syed was arrested and jailed. As the tension mounted and bloody riots followed, one incident led to another. Pir Bharchundi's son was assaulted in Sukkur, and also Bhagat Kanwar Ram was assassinated. Leaders of both Hindus and Muslims failed to rise to the occasion by defusing tensions; cooling down passions, beginning a dialogue, and resorting to legal adjudication. It was incumbent upon the

Muslim majority to observe restraint, display maturity, and refrain from giving a political colour to a non-political issue. Syed's involvement in the communal frenzy was disapproved by Allama I.I. Kazi, a great Sindhi Muslim scholar.<sup>3</sup>

During Jinnah's 1938 visit, the Sindh Muslim League was organized with Abdullah Haroon as president, Khuhro and Syed as vice-presidents, Abdul Majid Sindhi as general secretary, and Pir Ali Muhammad Rashdi and Agha Ghulam Nabi Pathan as joint secretaries. In 1941, Syed was also elevated to the working committee of the All-India Muslim League. In 1942, Haroon died and Khuhro became the acting president. Syed became the president in 1943. During his tenure as president of the Sindh Muslim League, two important developments took place which determined the future course of history for Sindh and for India. Firstly, he organized the annual session of the All-India Muslim League in Karachi, which was a resounding success, mobilizing Sindhi Muslim opinion emphatically in favour of Pakistan, and in which Syed, as Chairman of the Reception Committee, committed Sindh to Pakistan unconditionally, wholeheartedly, and without any reservation.<sup>4</sup> Earlier, in the same year, Syed had introduced the Pakistan Resolution in the Sindh Assembly on the pattern of the Lahore Resolution in 1940. This resolution bound Sindh to the All-India Muslim League and its goal, on the basis of a common perception and a common cause. Future course of action to pursue the goal was to be left to the Muslim League high command, on which Sindh was fully represented. All differences or disagreements having a bearing on the commitments had to be settled at the high command level. If an individual or a group revolted later, the individual or group could be replaced, but the commitment stood intact.

During the ten year of his pre-Partition parliamentary career, Syed changed his political label three times. In 1937, he was a Congressman. In the period 1938-45 he was a Muslim Leaguer. During 1946-7, he formed the Progressive Sindh Muslim League. He did not change his affiliation for personal gain or political power. He differed on issues and actually rejected

opportunities to gain power. This was an unusual phenomenon in a province full of political turncoats. He may have miscalculated his strategy, chosen wrong timings for his rebellion, or he may simply have been stubborn, but his integrity and sincerity were beyond doubt. Perhaps he had lost faith in Sindh getting a fair deal in a new Pakistan; and in his judgement, any revolt after the achievement of Pakistan would have been too late.

As a Leaguer, Syed was an unsparing critic of Soornro. Later, he became a great admirer. Soomro was a budding politician who rose to prominence within a short time. In 1938, while he was Premier, he was invited to join the Muslim League. He would have accepted the offer had he been allowed to continue as Premier. Thereafter, he leaned towards the Congress. During his short tenure, he faced grave crises such as the Masjid Manzilgah riots; the Hur rebellion; and threat of dismissal on his insistence on renouncing the British titles conferred upon him, in sympathy with the Quit-India Movement started by Congress. He dealt with each crisis with courage, and refused to be intimidated by the situation created by the communal riots which were escalated by Syed to bring him down. He enacted harsh laws to crush the Hur fighters whose activities were militant rather than political. He chose to quit premiership instead of courting it with British titles. His political career, which was full of promise, was cut short by his assassination in 1942. His murder remained a mystery. In 1995, H.T. Lambrick published his book *The Terrorist* in which a revelation was made by Sain Rakhio Hur that Allah Bux was murdered by the Hurs to avenge his anti-Hur policies.<sup>5</sup>

Syed was highly impressed by the Soomro's views on Pakistan:

Our difficulties will begin after Pakistan comes into being. ... At present the Hindu trader's and money-lender's plunder is worrying you but later you will have to face the Punjabi bureaucracy and soldiery and the mind of UP ... You live in a dream world about the 1940 Resolution. ... In practical politics there is little room for

resolutions. ... Pakistan will pose a threat to Sindh's independence, Indian unity, and the peace and progress of other Asian nations.<sup>6</sup>

This is a gist of Soomro's views in 1940. But it is presented by Syed only as a monologue. Actually, it was a dialogue but Syed has not recorded his own response, which can only be guessed. This is because in 1940, Syed was so infatuated with the Lahore Resolution, which he incorporated in the Sindh Assembly Resolution of 1943, that he would have dismissed Soomro's thesis without even a second thought. Seen in perspective, the Lahore Resolution represented a phase and a strategy in the negotiations. Prior to this, the League stood for a loose federation in a united India, Muslim weightage at the centre, and full autonomy for the provinces. Even after the Lahore Resolution, Jinnah had accepted the Cabinet Mission Plan of 1946 for a zonal federation within a united India. Maulana Azad, the Congress president who was deeply involved in the negotiations, became convinced that the Lahore Resolution was being used by the League as a bargaining chip. He was equally convinced that Pakistan was thrust on Jinnah by the Congress because he insisted on autonomy for the Muslim majority provinces at the expense of a weak centre.<sup>7</sup>

Reverting to Sindh, which was Soomro's main concern, he knew better than others that Sindhi Muslims had set a pattern for autonomy and secular politics. He contested the 1937 elections under the label of Sindh United Party, which also included some liberal Hindus. The party was formed to concentrate on issues concerning Sindh only, which had remained backward under the Bombay presidency. But the Congress-inspired Hindus broke this pattern, and involved Sindh in the all-India issues under centralized Congress control, contested elections on Congress tickets, and made no effort to put up any Muslim candidates. Due to their party affiliation, their emphasis shifted from Sindh's problems to all-India problems. They declined to support any legislation for the welfare of Sindh's rural and farming communities, as that would have enraged the Hindu money-lenders and traders. Complaints

to the All-India Congress party were disregarded on communal grounds. For all practical purposes, the Congress became a cheap edition of the Hindu Mahasabha.

Sindhi Muslim political heavy-weights like Syed and Soomro, subscribed to the Congress philosophy but preferred not to contest elections on Congress tickets, nor sit on Congress benches in the Assembly. With this background, it was only natural for Sindhi Muslim members to respond to Jinnah's call and join the Muslim League. Syed did not think twice before joining it. Soomro missed the bus not on a matter of principle but because he was not given the driving seat.

Syed had great regard for Syed Sibghatullah Shah II, the Pir of Pagaro, whose Hur followers were spread far and wide in Sindh and Rajasthan. He thought that if the Pir could be persuaded to join the Muslim League, it would boost the strength of the party. Besides, the enormous energy of the Hurs, which was being dissipated in unlawful activities, could be harnessed into constructive pursuits. Accordingly, Syed called on the Pir before the latter was arrested in 1942 and invited him to join the League. The Pir declined the offer and expressed his disdain for the League. He warned Syed of his ultimate failure. Irrespective of the merits of the Pir's advice, Syed remained unaware that the Pir had his own political agenda, and that he was about to join the Congress party along with his followers, if the revelations attributed to Sain Rakhio in Lambrick's book are to be believed.<sup>8</sup> Such a step was frustrated by the Pir's exile to Deccan in 1941.

In 1942, a number of grave incidents took place in India which shook the British government. Firstly, the Indian National Congress launched the Quit-India Movement which affected the entire country. Secondly, the famous Hur rebellion came upon Sindh like a bombshell. Thirdly, the Japanese invading forces, which had already occupied the entire Far East, had advanced towards India along the Burma Front. They had alarmed British India by dropping bombs on Chittagong. Fourthly, a large number of Indian soldiers and POWs had defected to the Japanese side and formed the Indian National Army, or the

INA. Headed by Subhas Chandra Bose, a former president of the Congress party, the INA joined the Japanese in their invasion of India. Powerful radio broadcasts from Berlin, Tokyo, and Saigon were beamed towards India and were listened to by the Indians, including the Hurs of Sindh, who believed that the British rule was on the verge of collapse, India was going to be freed by the Japanese, and Sindh would fall into the lap of the Pir.<sup>9</sup>

The British authorities saw unmistakable signs of coordination among all these actors and their activities, including sabotage, murders, kidnappings, plunder, robberies, and widespread rumours about the imminent collapse of the British Indian empire. They encountered each antagonist on its own turf. The Japanese and their INA allies were defeated on the battlefield. The Quit India Movement was neutralized by arresting the Congress leaders throughout India. In Sindh, the Hur rebellion was treated as a series of criminal misadventures, and was brutally crushed by the strong arm of martial law. Furthermore, the Pir of Pagaro was tried for treason and found guilty; he was executed in 1942.

It seems that there was no dearth of wise men during the pre-independence era in Sindh. Their wisdom and foresight would have changed the political face of Sindh, if only Sindhis had acted on their advice. But the tragedy was that even Syed rejected their advice. In addition to Soomro and Pir Pagaro, the third and last piece of advice to Syed was given by Pir Ali Muhammad Rashdi in 1943, sometime after Syed had become the president of Sindh Muslim League. This advice was given in writing and Syed later published the letter, which reads:

... these thieves have appointed you the so-called President of their party... a petty price to pay to buy off your conscience... you may die heart broken one day.

The epitaph on your grave will read:

Here lies a man who tried,  
who wanted good out of evil.

He started off as a revolutionary,

but ended up as a ... reactionary.  
And whose struggles created confusion,  
rather than improvement.<sup>10</sup>

Once Syed had called Rashdi a philosopher, who was his friend and mentor. True, he had disregarded his advice and regretted doing so for the rest of his life, but Syed was not the sole recipient of Rashdi's advice. Other beneficiaries included chief minister, prime ministers, and presidents of Pakistan. Notable among them were Khuhro, Ayub Khan, and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. For Chief Minister Khuhro, he hatched a plan under which the Sindh Assembly could vote in favour of One Unit in 1954 without undergoing too much pain or discomfort. A sample of this painless treatment was displayed by giving a free *ladoo* camel ride to the provincial assembly speaker, Mir Ghulam Ali Talpur, through the Thar desert beyond Mithi.<sup>11</sup> Earlier, Chief Minister Abdus Sattar Pirzada had already failed to perform this feat, and hence, was dismissed to make way for the Khuhro-Rashdi duo. Once the Sindh Assembly members had been manipulated to cast a positive vote, Sindh lost its identity as a separate political entity. Syed had to move mountains to build an anti-One Unit lobby, and get the toothless West Pakistan Assembly in Lahore to pass a resolution in 1957 to dismember One Unit.

In 1960 and 1961, President Ayub Khan received a proposal from Ambassador Rashdi advising him to declare himself King of Pakistan in order to 'save' it from collapse.<sup>12</sup> What advice did Zulfikar Ali Bhutto receive from Rashdi has not yet been revealed, but it would be available in the official files and private collections of both, since Rashdi remained Bhutto's political adviser for a long time.

The irony is that although Syed admired the wisdom and foresight of each of the three respected Sindhi personalities, this was only in retrospect, because he declined to follow their advice when it counted. Soomro and Pir Pagaro were both inspired by the Indian National Congress, but each saw the Congress in a different perspective. In any case, their individual perceptions

led to tragic consequences for both, resulting in the assassination of one and the execution of the other. Similarly, Pir Pagaro and Rashdi, though cousins, represented two divergent ambitions that were poles apart. Only a philosopher of Syed's calibre could have detected a common streak of Sindhi nationalism among these three personalities of diverse political views. Other than these three, Syed found no other politicians of his generation with the calibre and ability to rally Sindh public opinion around his concept of Sindhi nationalism.

Syed's Progressive Muslim League, which he formed in 1946 after parting with the Muslim League, had a preponderance of Syeds, hence it was nick-named the Syed party. Almost all of them were feudals. When their loyalty was finally put to the test at the time of voting for One Unit in 1954, all except Ghulam Mustafa Bhurgri had deserted Syed and voted for ending the provincial status of Sindh. Rashdi, who had engineered the yes vote, was on top of the positive voters.

Syed mobilized all sections of the Sindhi society against One Unit, including politicians, poets, writers, intellectuals, feudals, and people from the middle class. Even Khuhro, who had been instrumental in the creation of One Unit on the basis of certain guarantees, which were all soon ignored, joined this anti-One Unit campaign. The venue of the debate was shifted from the floors of the Sindh Assembly to the towns and villages of rural Sindh. The movement, though highly emotional in appeal, remained peaceful and non-violent. It was confined to debates, discussions, meetings, and personal contacts. The Sindhi press played an exemplary role in projecting these activities. Patriotic poems were composed by Sheikh Ayaz (born 1923, died 1997), Abdul Karim Gadai, Sarvech Sujawali, and many others, which were sung by the youth in their schools, colleges, and university campuses. Conspicuously, Mohajirs remained aloof, and unmoved by this passionate and widespread movement. Even though, their aloofness could not ultimately save One Unit, it emphasized the bitter divide between Sindhis and Mohajirs on this and other important issues. It had now become evident to Sindhis that Mohajirs entertained a separate political agenda

from the very inception of Pakistan. Needless to say, this indifference on the part of the most educated and enlightened section of the population of Sindh, whose destiny was intertwined with the land and people of Sindh served to further widen the gulf between Sindhis and Mohajirs. The One Unit period of 1954-70 was a terrible time for Sindh and its people, reminiscent of the time when the British colonial masters ruled Sindh from Bombay in the 1937 period. At such a time, Sindhis expected Mohajirs to take this up as a common cause. But Mohajirs failed to come up to this expectation. When the identity of Sindh was finally re-established in 1970 under the unrelenting pressure of Sindhis, Balochis, and Pathans, the dream of a unitary state promoted by Punjabis and supported by Mohajirs was shattered.<sup>13</sup> The entire One Unit episode revealed the bitter truth that the autonomy of Sindh, which was an article of faith and the very essence of the freedom struggle for Sindhis, was considered by Mohajirs a political poison and cultural death. These were the seeds of discord and hatred planted by senior Mohajir leaders, who had migrated from India on the basis of their ideological commitment, but had neglected to forge a relationship with the native land and the people of their new home. This deliberate act of neglect and lack of gratitude on the part of influential Mohajirs caused Sindhis to resent them as looters and plunderers of their land. In the aftermath of One Unit's demise, these embittered and divided communities faced each other directly on the political stage. Autonomy, though limited under the new dispensations before and after the promulgation of the 1973 Constitution, brought new problems and new tragedies. The language riots of 1973 led Sindhi-Mohajir divisions into a more dangerous and violent new phase. Several events eventually introduced neo-fascism into the politics of Sindh that included: the electoral crisis of 1977, which resulted in the overthrow of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the re-imposition of a non-representative unitary state by General Ziaul Haq. The demise of the limited autonomy, and the emergence of an ethnic party of Mohajirs (MQM) under Altaf Hussain, who denounced the Pakistan ideology and burned the Pakistani

flag. In concrete terms, the thrust of MQM was to re-interpret the demand for autonomy to mean that Sindh's autonomy should now be split into Sindhi autonomy and Mohajir autonomy, the two being distinct, separate, and mutually exclusive. Whether this goal has changed after the renaming of MQM as the Muttahida Qaumi Movement, only time will tell.<sup>14</sup>

In summary, Syed was a lone fighter for Sindh's autonomy before and after independence. Other Sindhi leaders, preoccupied with their quest for personal power and glory, failed to consolidate even the limited form of autonomy granted either before or after the One Unit period. When he lost all hope for reviving the spirit of autonomy among his contemporary Sindhi politicians, Syed directed his efforts towards the new generation of middle class Sindhis, who were not encumbered by the demands of the feudal power game, and were eager listeners and followers of his message. In 1972 and 1973, it was to them that he introduced the concept of an independent SindhuDesh.

## NOTES

1. All-India Congress Committee File No. 1, 1939-1940, p. 18 and File No. 20, p. 657, quote by Anita Inder Singh in her book, *The Origins of the Partition of India (1936-1937)*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, p. 40. The author comments that the Congress in Sindh was a cheap edition of Hindu Maha Sabha.
2. Suhail Zahur Lari, *A History of Sindh*, Oxford University Press, Karachi, 1994. p. 184.
3. G.M. Syed, *Case of Sindh* Naeen Sindh Academy, Karachi. 1995 p. 29.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 177.
5. H.T. Lambrick, *The Terrorist*, Oxford University Press, Karachi. pp. 178-9.
6. G.M. Syed, *The Case of Sindh*, Naeen Sindh Academy, Karachi. 1995. pp. 45, 46.
7. Abul Kalam Azad, *India Wins Freedom*.
8. H.T. Lambrick, pp. 40, 43, 44.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 47, 48, 173, 223.
10. G.M. Syed, *The Case of Sindh*, pp. 48, 49, the quotation begins with the words 'these thieves' which are used to describe Jinnah, who personally

chose Syed as President of Sindh Muslim League. Syed discarded 'these thieves' in 1946. After 1947, Rashdi joined them.

11. After this rough ride on an untrained camel, Sindh Assembly speaker, Mir Ghulam Ali, who had refused to rig the voting, and who was a heart patient, never regained normal health.
12. Rashdi was Pakistan's Ambassador to the Philippines. Full text of his letter was published by Altaf Gohar in *Dawn*, Karachi, 23 December 1983. Earlier Rashdi himself had revealed his proposal in *Jang* in 1982.
13. A resolution introduced by Syed's protégè, Ghulam Rasul Bhurgri in the West Pakistan Assembly was unanimously passed in 1957, demanding the dismemberment of One Unit and the restoration of the original four provinces. The deed was finally done by President General Yahya Khan in 1970, under the aegis of Martial Law.
14. Shahid Kamrani, *Sindh Ka Manzarnama* (Urdu), Maktaba Fikr-o-Danish, Karachi. 1988, p. 84. Altaf Hussain burnt the flag of Pakistan at the tomb of Quaid-i-Azam, and declared Mohajirs to be a separate nationality.

# 4

## THE DILEMMA OF SINDHI-MOHAJIR ASSIMILATION I

The Nationalists feel that when a people are rooted deep in the soil, they become inseparable from their land. The two become a part of each other as a single entity. The land gives them sustenance; in return they enrich it with their blood and sweat while they live, and with their mortal remains when they die. This eternal bond explains the Sindhi concept of patriotism. By contrast, transient people have a transient approach. Uprooted from their land, whether by force or by choice, their bond and loyalty to their new home is tenuous at best. They seek their emotional enrichment and security not from their roots, which mean little to them, but from abstract concepts, ideologies, and beliefs, which are subject to change. When their ideology changes, their goals and priorities also change, and consequently, their loyalties. This phenomenon, gives rise to a transient culture and community, as opposed to a permanent, rooted culture. Sindhis and Mohajirs, who have shared the same piece of land known as Sindh, for half a century, represent these two divergent trends and two opposite approaches in their social, cultural, and political behaviour.

Mohajirs still suffer from the *hijra* syndrome, that they had fought for their ideology at the cost of their land. In the process, they established a state on a piece of land which they neither owned nor loved. People who live and die for an ideology do not have to fight their battle on the land they live on. They may migrate anywhere and continue to agitate. They agitated in India. They agitate in Sindh. They have agitated in London, New York,

and Geneva. These are the migratory trends of a migratory people, who practice a migratory form of politics and call it ideology. This trend encourages mobility and absorption of new ideas and new techniques. Mohajirs may have won the battle but they lost their land, while Sindhis may have lost the battle but will always remain glued to their land. Hence, the two communities, representing the two opposite philosophies, find little common ground. Every now and then they feel the urge to meet and negotiate, yet they seldom agree with each other.

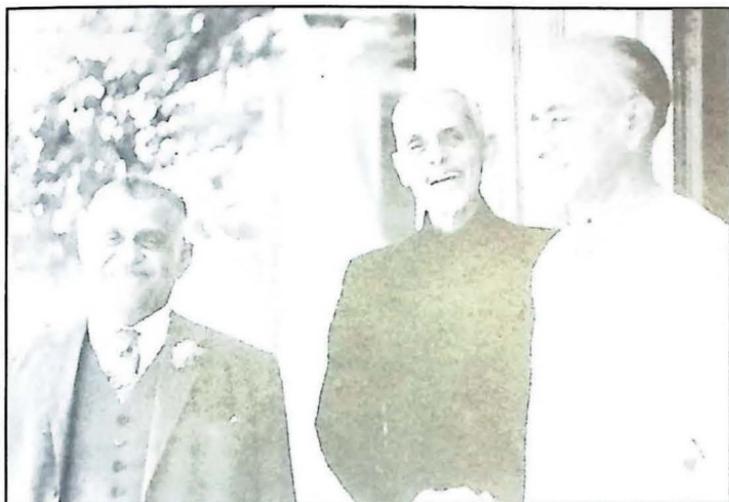
When a home is built, it means different things to different people. To its owner it is an abode, and to a guest it is simply a temporary shelter. To an architect it is a symbol of his talent, and to the builder it is a source of his earning. A Sindhi merges in his homeland physically and spiritually so that his roots become timeless. His eternal bond with Sindh has survived for thousands of years. He has indigenized every ideology and Sindhuized every faith. He has moved from Hinduism and Buddhism to Islam, but has kept his essential Sindhi identity intact, unchanged, and unmolested.

To Mohajirs the concept of an eternal abode is meaningless. They abandoned their beautiful land, flourishing farms, and smiling orchards just because India became Hindustan—the land of Hindus, where they, the founders of Pakistan, had no place. In Sindh, they had to convert the native population to their ideological point of view, in order to create a conducive environment where they could feel at ease. This called for brain washing the natives, and re-educating them in order to re-orient their ideological perspective to create a single unified culture. State power was used to relegate the Sindhi language to a rural status and to superimpose Urdu as the elitist language of Sindh.

Mohajir supremacy was sought to be imposed on Sindh with a justification based on certain illusions and fantasies. For example, Sindh's contribution in the struggle for Pakistan was utterly ignored. Sindhi youth was made to believe that Mohajirs were the pioneers of the Pakistan movement, that only they sacrificed their possessions to achieve their ideological goal, and that they personified the heart and soul of the Indian Muslim

culture and civilization—which flourished, flowered, and matured at the great centres of Muslim power and glory in Delhi, Lucknow, and Hyderabad.

A well-orchestrated campaign of re-education began in the Mohajir press and Mohajir-inspired history books to emphasize that even during the pre-British and British periods, it was the Mohajirs and their descendants who built and nourished the cultural edifice of Sindh.<sup>1</sup> This galaxy of Mohajirs included: Shah Abdul Latif, Shah Inayat, Mirza Qaleech Beg, Sachal Sarmast, and others. This implied that Sindhis consisted only of the left-over Dravidians, namely, the Bagris, the Bhils, the Ods, the Menghwars, the Machhis, the gypsies, the nomads, and others. While Sindhis proudly own and embrace these depressed communities of pre-Muslim and pre-Aryan origin, they repudiate the insinuation that their shining stars like Shah Latif, Shah Inayat, Mirza Qaleech Beg, and others were Mohajirs. The Mohajir phenomenon dates back to the Aryan invasions, and it goes on even today. Those who buried their Mohajirism deep in the soil of Sindh and received nourishment from the soil and water of Sindh rose to stardom. The message of Shah Latif, the peasant revolution of Shah Inayat, and the literary genius of Mirza Qaleech Beg are entirely indigenous, inspired mainly by their Sindhi cultural environment. Their descendants, now spread throughout Sindh, reject the thesis of Mohajirism and deplore the label of Mohajir planted on those towering personalities, who constitute the pillars of Sindhi history and heritage. By contrast, those Mohajirs who stood aloof and resisted assimilation, like the post-independence immigrants, have had a negative impact on Sindhi society and culture. Thus, while the pre-independence Mohajirs of Sindh were neither different, nor distinct in their language, dress, culture, behaviour, customs, and traditions, and considered the label of Mohajir derogatory to Sindhi pride and Sindhi heritage—the post-independence Mohajirs are distinct and separate in all respects, out of their own deliberate choice, which they have imposed upon themselves as a part of their political agenda.



1. With veteran Sindhi politicians. L-R: Mohammad Ayub Khuhro, Shaikh Abdul Majid Sindhi and Syed.



2. Syed with Barrister Azizullah Sheikh.



3. Syed with politicians from East Pakistan including Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Syed was part of track two diplomatic efforts to keep the two wings of the country united.



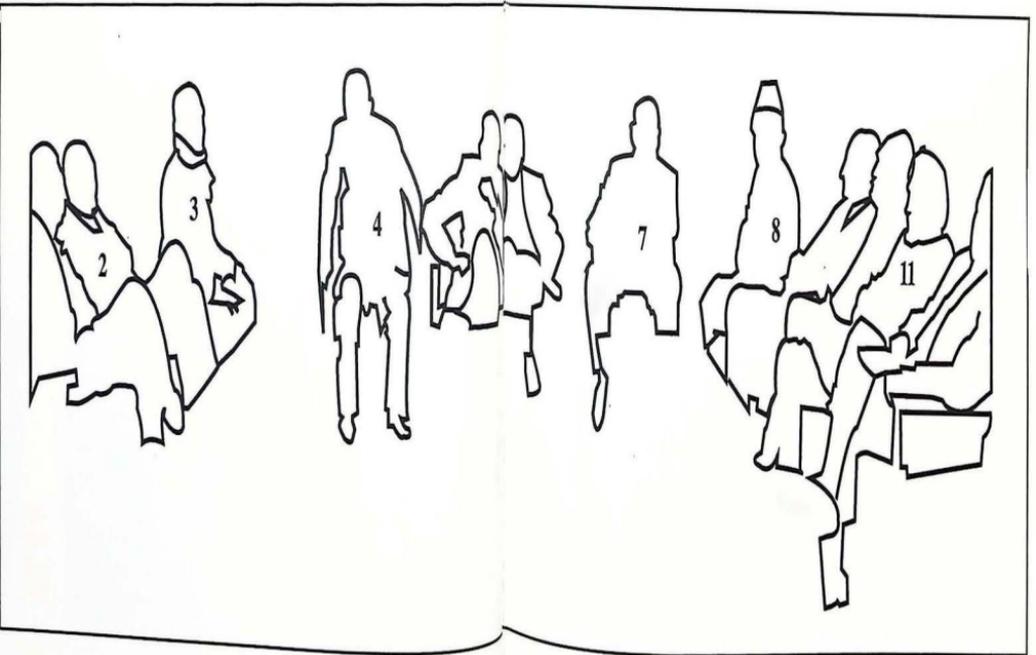
4. Syed with politicians Ataullah Mengal, Sherbaz Khan Mazari and Yusuf Haroon at a conference in Syed's hometown, Sann.



5. At a meeting with nationalists in the 1950s.  
Front row, L-R: Syed, Shaikh Abdul Majid Sindhi and far right  
Abdus Samad Achakzai, leader of the Pakhtunkhwah Milli Party.



6. Syed with Yusuf Haroon, a long-standing friend and admirer.



7. A meeting of the Sindh Mutahida Mahaz committee held at Syed's residence. The numbers in the line drawings identify the names: 2: Abdul Sattar Pirzada, former chief-minister of Sindh. 3: G.M. Syed, 4: Shaikh Abdul Majid Sindh Muhammad Ayub Khuro, 8: Pir Ali Mohammad Rashid, politician and diplomat, 11: Jam Sadiq Ali.



8. Syed presenting his book *Paigham-e-Latif* to Ghualm Mustafa Bhurgri – a veteran politician of Sindh and a supporter of Syed's politics.



9. Discussing matters of import with Pir Pagaro, politician and chief of the Pakistan Muslim League (Functional).



10. Syed with Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.



11. At a social gathering at Pirzada Abdul Sattar's house. Syed in conversation with the hostess.



12. Sharing a meal with (from L-R) Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah (PPP) Nawab Yusuf Talpur (PPP) and Iqbal Tareen of the Sindhi Association of North America.



13. Celebrating his birthday with his family. On his left is his daughter the late Professor Dr Dur-e-Shahwar Syed.



14. Celebrating his birthday with his party members. On his right is Gul Muhammad Jakhriani, on his left stands his elder son Amir Haider Shah. The folk singer Alan Fakir ( holding an axe ) and Bashir Qureshi can be seen in the background.



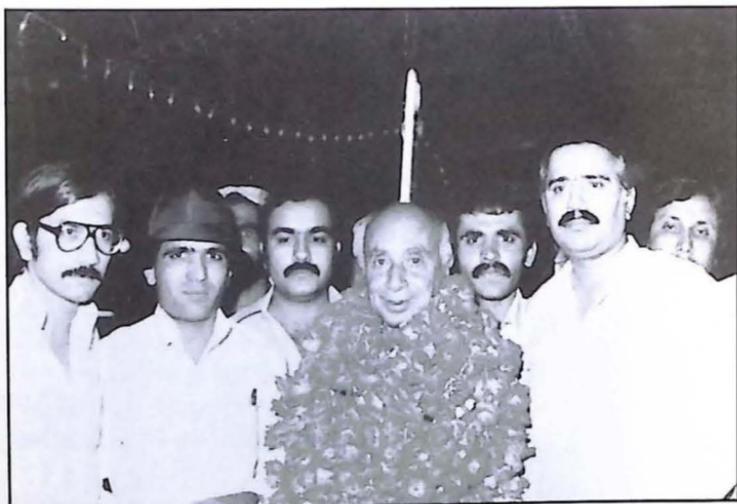
15. Felicitated by Muslim League leader, Syed Zulfiqar Ali Shah Jamote.



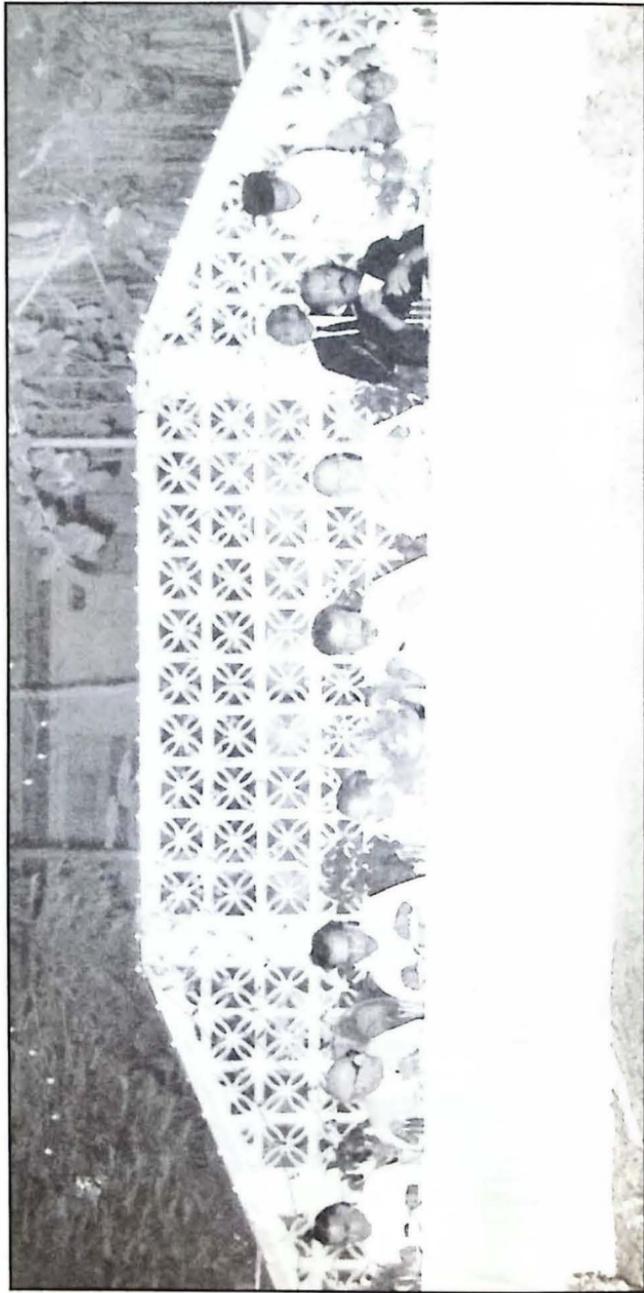
16. G. M. Syed flanked by Abdullah Shah (PPP) on his right, and Yar Mohammed Shah on his left.



17. Sharing an idea with the Sindhi scholar, late Pir Hissamuddin Rashdi, while his friend the late Karim Bux Nazamani looks on.



18. Syed, garlanded by his admirers. On his left is PPP leader Makhdoom Amin Fahim, on his right stands Ghulam Abbas Leghari.



19. G.M. Syed seen with some prominent political leaders at a wedding reception in 1986. Also seen in the picture (from L to R) (Late) Justice Abdul Hayee Qureshi, Chief Justice Sindh High Court, Syed Ghous Ali Shah, Chief Minister Sindh, Ghulam Ishaq Khan, Chairman, Senate, (Late) Mohammed Khan Junejo, Prime Minister, Pakistan, Gen. Muhammad Ziaul Haq, President of Pakistan, Pir Pagaro, Gen. Jehandad Khan, Governor of Sindh, Senator S. Zulfiqar Ali Shah Jamote, (Host), (Late) G.M. Syed.

Mohajir intellectuals are distressed at the militant and aggressive posture adopted by the non-integrationist schools of the post-independence Mohajirs, who have dominated the Mohajir political platform on the basis of their ethnic identity. Speaking at a Sindhi-Urdu symposium held on 6 November 1993 at the residence of Justice Salahuddin Mirza of the Sindh High Court, Karachi, under the auspices of the Mehran Writers Cultural Guild, Mohajir intellectual Shanul Haq Haqqi said:

Local language must dominate everywhere. Language of the immigrants, no matter what its status, can never dominate. Urdu was a medium of expression and communication at the state and literary levels. It was not spoken in every home, even in UP, leave alone the rest of India, where other languages were spoken, both at homes and outside.<sup>2</sup>

At the same symposium, Allama Abbas Haider Abedi, a renowned Mohajir scholar, made a strong plea to Mohajirs to merge themselves in the soil of Sindh. He said:

The soil that gave us refuge and sustenance has certain rights, certain claims, and certain obligations on us. We should never be ungrateful to such a hospitable soil. We must live up to our grain. We must establish our link with this soil and strike our roots. When a person or a group of persons migrates from an old to a new land, he should belong to the latter, own it, be a part of it, physically and culturally. He can not transplant his old culture onto his new home, and live like an alien. The onus of change is on him. We have anglicized Urdu and we are not ashamed of it. Then why are we ashamed of adopting Sindhi? Languages are dynamic. Upto a certain time, English was not developed and attempts to translate the Bible into English were resisted. Before it was translated into English, it was translated into German.

Addressing the symposium, Dr Sulaiman Shaikh said:

Urdu is no stranger to Sindh. A branch of Anjuman Taraqqi-i-Urdu was set-up in Sindh in 1922. Mirza Qaleech Beg, a Sindhi scholar, wrote three hundred and fifty books, and promoted Urdu in Sindh.

When Mohajirs migrated to Sindh in 1947, there was not a single clash, even though they were strangers. Then why is there clash now when every Sindhi speaks Urdu, regardless of whether Mohajirs speak Sindhi or not.

The then Chief Minister of Sindh Abdullah Shah also addressed the symposium and said:

Urdu is not the heritage of UP or any other province of India. It was created by Sindhi scholars Abul Fazl and Mullah Faizi in the court of Emperor Akbar. Urdu poetry of Sachal Sarmast, Bedil, and Bekas is much older than the famous poets of UP and India.

Sindhis are influenced by sufism which teaches them love and universalism, and which embraces all faiths, cultures, languages, and shuns confrontation and hatred against others. Mohajirs must understand this basic truth and imbibe the same spirit.

You can change your religion but you cannot change your language. Sindhis became Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, and Muslims over the centuries, but they remained Sindhis through the ages. The bond of language is stronger than religion. Mohajirs have to promote this bond with Sindh and must understand the significance of this bond.

Sindhi is the first foreign language in which the holy Koran was translated. Urdu scholars know all this and they acknowledge all this, but they must translate their faith into concrete action to bridge the gap that divides Sindhis and Urdu-speaking people.

Neither can Sindhis eliminate Mohajirs nor vice versa. They have no choice but to live together by mutual accommodation. Nations are based not on linguistic and cultural homogeneity but on common interests. Sindhis and Mohajirs have common interests in Sindh. Then Sindh, Balochistan, Punjab, and Frontier are bound together by common interests which are inseparable. They are interdependent in respect of water, power, gas, and an outlet to the sea. These binding interests are crucial to the survival of the nation of Pakistan, which has many cultural and linguistic diversities. Let us find unity in diversity rather than use diversity as a tool of friction and disharmony.

Sindhis have preserved Dravidian languages and dialects spoken by Sindhi communities like Bagris, Bhils, Menghwars, and Kolhis as Sindh's heritage. In villages, even illiterate Sindhis try to speak broken Urdu to communicate with Mohajirs. That is their love, tolerance, and their spirit of accommodation for diverse cultures. In homes people speak Sindhi, Urdu, Gujrati, Seraiki, Balochi, Brahvi, Kachhi, etc. and the Sindhis society has been enriched by this diversity. So what is the cause of the clash?

During his address, Abdullah Shah related two incidents of Mohajir intolerance, isolationism, and resistance to integration:

When I was Speaker of Sindh Assembly (1988-1990) the MQM members demanded simultaneous translation of Sindhi speeches made by Sindhi members into Urdu. I rejected it as absurd, as no Sindhi member had demanded simultaneous translation of Urdu speeches of the MQM members, even though the latter were expected to speak in the language of the province, namely Sindhi. While Sindhi members, as citizens of Pakistan, had learned Urdu as a national language, the MQM members refused to learn the language of their own province.

As a Senator, I lived in the government hostel in Islamabad. Once an MQM member of the National Assembly walked into my room by mistake and remarked, 'How come you are dressed in kurta pajama?' I remarked, 'Please come in and, if you don't want to meet me, at least meet the pajama'.<sup>5</sup>

What was said in the above mentioned symposium was already well-known to the Mohajir elite, who chose a separate identity as a part of their political agenda, which has been the cause of distress and dejection to Mohajir thinkers and scholars. Dr Saifur Rehman has emphasized the subtle but crucial difference between the culture of the people and the culture of the land. He thinks the culture of the people may change from time to time but the culture of the land is permanent. There is no harm in taking pride in the culture of the people but feeling ashamed of the culture of the land is a disease, which strikes not

only individuals, but also the society at large. Because you cannot have good citizens unless they are culturally aware and proud of their heritage. People must have their feet on the soil that they are standing on. Where would they be if they negate their own roots?<sup>6</sup>

Some Mohajir intellectuals have indeed rendered remarkable service in promoting Sindhi-Mohajir integration and have stood their ground despite hurdles. Mazhar Yusuf, an immigrant from Meerut, is one of them. He established the Sindhi Kitab Ghar in 1972, which has reprinted the classic work of Wattan Mal Lalwani on Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai, originally published in 1897. He also published works on Shah's life, poetry and sufistic thought by H.T. Sorley and by Dr. Tanvir Abbasi. Besides, he has published *Shah Ji Boli* in Sindhi, authored by Aftab Abro.

Mazhar Yusuf established the Shah Abdul Latif Cultural Society in 1972 in collaboration with Sindhi scholar Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah. Late Dr. Mahmood Hussain, a prominent educationist and a former federal Minister had graced and promoted the activities of this society as its Vice-Chairman. Yusuf also edited *Sindhological Studies*, the periodical journal of the Institute of Sindhology for nearly fifteen years. He has a passion for Sindh's ancient culture, history and language. His deep involvement in the campaign to stimulate intellectual integration between the Sindhis and Mohajirs exposed him to "vitriolic criticism from a section of Urdu-speaking intellectuals". Also his collaboration with Ghulam Mustafa Shah, whose utterances about the culture of the Mohajirs which at times have been derogatory and provocative, has been condemned by other Urdu-speaking intellectuals. However, Yusuf refuses to be discouraged by such minor irritants on both sides. He sincerely believes that a close integration between the languages and cultures of the indigenous and neo-Sindhis can only strengthen Sindh's identity as the centre of one of the world's most ancient civilizations.<sup>7</sup>

Mazhar Yusuf was not alone in his mission of Sindhi-Mohajir integration. There were thousands of enlightened and motivated Mohajirs who had developed intimate bonds with Sindhis on an individual and collective basis. But powerful forces came into

play to suppress them, silence them, or direct them from the Sindhi mainstream to a separate Mohajir stream.

Advising the new generation of Mohajirs, Dr Jamil Jalibi, former vice chancellor of the University of Karachi, warned them as follows:

Mohajirs entertained notions of cultural superiority, and in over-enthusiasm, forgot that this can create a negative reaction among the local population. No local community can accept the superiority of an immigrant community, irrespective of its cultural level. As a reaction, this sentiment led to hatred. Mohajirs erred in failing to understand the local culture and local problems. They were blinded by the complex of their superior culture, so much so that they lost respect for the locals. Consequently, the local population soon stopped welcoming the Mohajirs' immigration. Immigrants forgot that *hijrat* meant change. Also cultural institutions have to readjust to the new environment so that they may meet new demands. Immigrant society cannot even remotely comprehend the idea of reviving or rehabilitating the cultural environment left behind in India.<sup>8</sup>

Dr Jalibi's warning, shared by the senior and mature Mohajir scholars, stood rejected by the new generation of Mohajirs, whose thinking was moulded by their young and frustrated leadership, leading them to extremism, fascism, and negativism. Indeed the gap between Mohajir scholars and the Mohajir rank and file kept widening over the decades. Emphasis has shifted from national integration, a goal pursued during the first decade of Pakistan without much success, to the consolidation of the non-Sindhi constituency with a nebulous Mohajir-Punjabi-Pathan front during the two subsequent decades, again without success, and finally to a purely narrow-based Mohajir constituency during the last two decades, which has met with phenomenal success in the shape of the Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM). Nothing succeeds like success, and the emergence of MQM as the sole, legitimate voice of Mohajirs has belied all the high sounding and scholarly discourses of senior Mohajir leaders, who have either faded away from the

political scene or are on the fringes. In view of the overwhelming support enjoyed by MQM, most Mohajirs now directly or indirectly endorse MQM politics. Businessman and industrialists, willingly or under compulsion, now finance MQM as the sole representative of urban Sindh.<sup>9</sup>

The very idea of forming an ethnic party by Mohajirs, who take pride in claiming to be the progeny of the founders of Pakistan repudiated the Two-Nation theory, frustrated the aims and objects of the creation of Pakistan, and planted the seeds of its breakup. If militant Bengali nationalism broke Pakistan up in 1971, how would militant Mohajirism act differently? Formation of such a party by the immigrants cannot be justified on any count. If the Sindhis formed a Sindh-based party, that was their right established over the centuries, and the scope of such a party is wide enough to include all the ethnic groups and religious communities in the rural and urban Sindh. Any Sindhi party has to be multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and plural in its structure.

Many factors have led to the success of MQM. Foremost has been the ever-expanding size of the Mohajir constituency. Thousands of new faces were added from nowhere each year, and no non-MQM source, not even the government, could keep track of them. During the Zia regime (1977-88), thousands came from India on visits, but only a few returned, leaving behind thousands who disappeared in the sprawling city of Karachi. The new arrivals were kept insulated in the Mohajir ghettos, given incentives to live and work with relatives and community-owned business, initially sheltered from the mainstream legal and official machinery, but eventually provided with Pakistani identification cards and other facilities, and made potently visible in millions during political protests, public meetings, and election activities.

The racket of illegal immigration from India has been going on since the creation of Pakistan. It intensified during the first decade, and subsequently, under the rule of military dictators, whose preoccupation was to stay in power by hook or by crook. During the civilian regimes, illegal immigration was

camouflaged by creating smoke screens and chaos under various strategies; language riots, ethnic unrest, terrorism, political confrontation, strikes and demonstrations. Disclosures were made in the National Assembly about massive illegal immigration from India. In October 1992, a massive racket was unearthed in Karachi, whereby, national identity cards were issued on a large scale, with active involvement of politicians, elected representatives, and bureaucrats.<sup>10</sup>

Karachi began to burst at the seams with the bulging concentrations of newly arriving Mohajirs in the huge urban settlements. Civic life and municipal facilities like water supply, sewage, electricity, roads, housing, and telephones, unable to cope with this undercover urbanization, became paralyzed. While the country was being ruled by generals, political parties were unable to comprehend the magnitude of this illegal influx, or its resulting social upheaval, economic distress, and negative political fall-out. For example, the Mohajir problems of Karachi, created by Mohajirs for other Mohajirs, could only be understood by Mohajirs themselves. For any non-Mohajir group or party, these sprawling Mohajir settlements became the 'no-go areas'. The emergence of MQM on the scene appeared to be a logical development. The rule of General Ziaul Haq provided the much-needed umbrella, which excluded the interference of any other political party in general, and of the Pakistan People's Party in particular.

To uproot PPP from Sindh, General Zia divided Sindhi politics into two separate compartments, namely, urban and rural. Altaf Hussain moved in to take possession of the urban turf. G.M. Syed was expected to mobilize rural Sindh to banish Bhuttoism, which had survived the execution of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and the physical pounding received by the PPP at the hands of General Zia. Syed's new strategy abandoned his earlier demand for Sindhi-Mohajir assimilation, a task which was no longer considered possible owing to the inflated size of the Mohajir concentration in Sindh, and the emergence of MQM as a dynamic, united, disciplined, and well-organized political force, with its own distinct Mohajir agenda. Accordingly, Syed

settled for a Sindhi-Mohajir alliance, based on common interests and common goals, within the framework of the province of Sindh.

The dialogue between Syed and Hussain made an impressive beginning and raised expectations of a major breakthrough among the rank and file of Sindhis and Mohajirs. Every time Hussain met with Syed, he appeared to have come under Syed's spell. He gave statements opposing the Kalabagh Dam, condemned the construction of the Panoakil cantonment, repudiated Pakistani ideology, burned the Pakistani flag, raised slogans of *Sindhi-Mohajir bhai bhai*, and asked Punjabis and Pathans to leave Sindh alone, as Sindh was a Sindhi-Mohajir commonwealth.<sup>11</sup>

These developments were too good to be true. Zia was surely upset by the anti-Punjabi posture adopted by this emerging Sindhi-Mohajir compact, but he also must have rejoiced at the fact that both MQM and Syed's Jiye Sindh Mahaz (JSM) ignored the 1983 agitation of the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD) in Sindh, which shook the Zia regime.<sup>12</sup> He must have patted himself on the back when neither MQM nor JSM condemned him for crushing the rebellion mounted by rural Sindh with army tanks, guns, and bombs. But Zia was in a hurry to test the popularity of MQM and JSM in the elections, which he held in 1985. The elections were held 'without party labels to camouflage the faces of political parties. Despite PPP's boycott, neither JSM nor MQM registered any presence. It seemed that these parties needed more time to organize and translate their popularity into votes. Besides, in a non-party election, any candidate is as good or as bad as any other candidate. Party labels pose challenges, raise issues, and project manifestos which make elections a worthwhile exercise. The result of the non-party election was that both MQM and JSM forgot about the Sindhi-Mohajir alliance and concentrated on their political homework separately, each within its own domain, which is what precisely suited the Zia regime. Zia directly or indirectly encouraged the rise of ethnic politics in Sindh and used it to crush the mainstream political party, namely PPP, he

thereby destroyed all the available opportunities for Sindhi-Mohajir assimilation. By destroying these chances, he destroyed the integrity of Sindh and indeed weakened the foundations of Pakistan. That a 'pious' general with Islamic pretensions undertook such a task is also a poor reflection on the religious elite who collaborated with him while he ruled Pakistan.

Mohajirs living in the interior of Sindh, in villages and small towns, breathed fresh air, drank clean water, had an assured source of income and better opportunities for assimilation. But they faced the 'danger' of integration with Sindhis. Their children went to Sindhi schools which was, they considered, an encroachment upon their superior Indian Muslim language and culture. This 'danger' of integration was averted by the language riots of 1973, triggered in urban Sindh by the fear that Urdu was being replaced by Sindhi. The riots led to the transfer of Mohajir population from rural Sindh's small towns and villages to the urban ghettos of Karachi and Hyderabad, where Mohajir culture was intact. In this manner, the rural *wadera* was deprived of the Mohajir vote, while the Mohajir vote bank in urban Sindh was enlarged and strengthened, apart from reinforcing Mohajir street power, which was now more often used to paralyze the city of Karachi with wheel-jam strikes, business shut-downs, industrial chaos, economic ruin, and bloody encounters with non-Mohajirs and law-enforcing agencies. The climax of this ruthless use of Mohajir street power was reached in 1992, when Mohajirs themselves sat in the driving seat of power as part of the ruling coalition in Karachi and Islamabad. Such a callous display of abuse of power has no parallel in contemporary history. Civilian rulers were contemptuously reduced to impotent bystanders. The army walked in to restore order out of chaos and to control street terror. MQM got out of the driving seat and went underground. It became obvious that only power could deal with power, and the only power that was able to match the high pitch of Mohajir street power was the military power of Pakistan. Sindhis had no place in this power equation and therefore had to retreat into the background, until the dust raised

by this battle of terror versus terror settled down, and the situation visibly improved.<sup>13</sup>

At the end of a half century of living together, Sindhis and Mohajirs are farther apart than ever before—socially, culturally, and politically. All efforts made by Sindhis, irrespective of their political labels, whether nationalists, PPP leaders, Muslim Leaguers, religious leaders, secularists, socialists, or feudals, to bridge the gap, or narrow the gulf, have met with total failure. Seeing no solution in sight, Sindhis have left it to the forces of history to evolve and resolve the situation.<sup>14</sup>

## NOTES

1. Suhail Zahur Lari, *A History of Sindh*, Oxford University Press, Karachi, 1994. pp. 155-76.
2. Author's personal notes at the Sindhi-Urdu Symposium held at Karachi on 6 November 1993, under the chairmanship of Justice Salahuddin Mirza, and patronage of Nisar Effendi, Ashfaq Memon, Ali Ahmad Brohi, A. Hafiz Bahaumand, and S.W.H. Kazmi.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Dr Saifur Rahman Dar, *Herald* Karachi, April 1998, pp. 96-7.
7. *Dawn* 23.11.1998. A write-up by 'Karachian.'
8. Dr Jamil Jalibi, *Pakistan Culture*. p. 119.
9. Businessmen and Industrialists began to pay Rs. 20,000 per year as protection money ten years ago. The rate went up to rupees two hundred thousand per establishment. Today, it is two million. Any one failing to pay runs the risk which may vary from partial to total destruction of his establishment.
10. *The News*, Karachi, *The Nation*, Islamabad, and *Jang*, Karachi, of 28-10-1992 reported that FIA Immigration had unearthed a racket in Karachi District East Registration Office, issuing National Identity Cards to illegal immigrants from India and Bangladesh. Documents were seized and arrests were made. Bureaucrats, politicians and elected representatives were involved. A clerk Muhammad Naeem, was arrested. NID Cards, applications of illegal immigrants and stamps were seized from his possession.  
*Jang*, Karachi of 30-10-1992 disclosed that Naeem was interrogated in custody. More documents were found. Within a short period of three

months, eight thousand NID Cards were issued to Indian Nationals, on payment of Rs 2,000 per card.

11. Shahid Kamrani, *Sindh Ka Manzarnama* (The Sindh Scenario) in Urdu, Maktaba-Fikr-o-Danish, Karachi, 1986, p. 86.
12. *Dawn*, Karachi, 21-07-1998. Also see page 199 of *Syed's Case of Sindh*.
13. The game of MQM street power versus state power has been played repeatedly in 1990, 1992, 1995 and 1998 with tragic consequences. Loss of life runs into thousands, which includes terrorists, innocent civilians government functionaries, judges, industrialists, journalists, educationists, intellectuals and even philanthropists.
14. MQM leader Farooq Sattar in his interview with *Herald*, Karachi, on April 1998, has predicted a solution on the pattern of East Pakistan. He did not define the pattern but reference to the tragedy of 1971 was obvious.

# 5

## THE DILEMMA OF SINDHI-MOHAJIR ASSIMILATION II

Mohajirs came to Pakistan from East Punjab (Agreed Area) and the rest of India (Non-agreed Areas).<sup>1</sup> Those from East Punjab remained mostly in Punjab, some of them settled in Sindh. Within the first decade, they merged among the locals, socially, economically, and politically, and the trauma of their migration, which was most painful and devastating, became a part of history. Mohajirs from the rest of India, namely Delhi, UP, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Hyderabad, Rajasthan, and elsewhere, chose Sindh as their future home province. They were Mohajirs in 1947, and they are Mohajirs even today after half a century. There is some controversy as to who called them Mohajirs first and why they continue to be called by that title. They blame Sindhis for calling them by the name in a derogatory sense, to prevent their assimilation, to set them apart as an unwanted and undesirable group of people, to deny them jobs and economic opportunities, and to treat them as aliens. On the other hand Sindhis argue that Mohajirs chose this exalted status deliberately to equate themselves with the first band of Mohajirs, who migrated from Makkah to Madina in the exalted company of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), and that they use the title of Mohajir as a symbol of their cultural superiority and as a justification for their non-assimilation with the native Sindhis. Besides, and most importantly, the Mohajir symbol was designed to keep the doors of immigration open for ever. Every new stream of immigrants found shelter inside and within the existing Mohajir localities, with no chance of mixing with any locals. This

immigration was encouraged by the Mohajir leaders, in concert with their relations in India, and justified on the basis of the Two-Nation theory, whereby Pakistan was demanded, fought for, and achieved as a homeland for the Muslim nation of India. The Mohajir community has been under perpetual expansion. From a few hundred thousand in 1947, they claim to be more than twenty million now, a number that is mind-boggling, and which has changed the demographic picture of Sindh beyond recognition, creating social, economic, and political upheavals that no government has been able to cope with. This Mohajir phenomenon in Sindh has destabilized Sindh.<sup>2</sup>

Assuming that the term Mohajir was adopted to acquire the sanctity and the historical association with the sacred institution of *hijra*, a comparison of the role of the *Ansars* and the Mohajirs will be in order. In this case, the Sindhis (*Ansars*) fulfilled their part of the pledge in letter and spirit, and without any hesitation in keeping with the glorious tradition established by the *Ansars* of Medina. This truth is beyond any shadow of doubt, and it is fully verifiable from official sources. It has been authenticated by individuals enjoying the highest degree of credibility. Some of them have been quoted in these pages. Yet how did Mohajirs fulfil their part of the pledge? They grabbed political power and economic clout in the name of ideology. When power slipped from their hands, they cast aside the ideology and burned the flag of Pakistan. Their notions of superiority prevented their assimilation with the *Ansars*. They suppressed the *Ansar* culture and language. They did not come together with the *Ansars* to face their common dangers. They hobnobbed with adversaries to deprive and alienate the *Ansars*. They used *hijra* as a licence to set up a permanent stream of immigration to multiply their numbers. Instead of standing by their *Ansar* brethren to face common problems and perils, they turned their guns upon them. When the Mohajir-*Ansar* gulf widened beyond repair, they put a price for their integration. After half a century, what began as a sacred tradition has degenerated into confrontation and bloody encounters, culminating in the demand to divide the *Ansar* homeland by carving out a separate Mohajir homeland. The

institution of *hijra* has thus been given an entirely new interpretation, which has nothing in common with the historical *hijra* that was sanctified by the Prophet (PBUH) to mark a new era of peace and universal brotherhood. This brand of aggressive Mohajirism, which is flourishing in Sindh today, poses a challenge to the concept of Pakistan.

The Mohajir community thinks that it is now in a position to claim the status of a nationality at par with Sindhis, Balochis, Pathans, and Punjabis, if such claims are recognized under the Constitution.<sup>3</sup> Failing that, they welcome a unitary form of government on the lines of One Unit which functioned during 1954-70. Such a dispensation would be welcomed by Mohajirs who have many assets to their credit. They have the accumulated wisdom of ruling India for eight hundred years. They succeeded in organizing themselves socially, culturally, and politically, as well as establishing their distinct identity during the two centuries of British rule. They spearheaded the movement for Pakistan and gave a solid platform to the All-India Muslim League at a time when Muslim leadership in the Muslim majority provinces was backward, divided, and confused. After the creation of Pakistan, they rendered sacrifices in blood and tears, left their hearths and homes, and exposed themselves to unknown dangers in a new country. They provided capable, patriotic, and non-feudal leadership to the new state through Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan. They promoted the Urdu language as a symbol of national unity and integrity. They provided competent manpower for statecraft, finance, banking, commerce, industry, science, and technology.

Mohajirs maintain that a community built on such rich traditions, and a successful national struggle, culminating in the creation of a new country on the world map—enriched by experience and unmatched in intellectual achievements, could not merge with the native culture of Sindhi society: which had been kept in chains by self-seeking *waderas*, *mirs*, *pirs*, and *sardars*, who had been political turncoats ever since 1937. There was a virtual absence of a Sindhi middle class that could speak to the leaders of the Mohajir middle class on an equal footing.

The emerging middle class Sindhis, were still at the mercy of the feudals for petty favours like jobs and admissions. They had not yet been able to assert themselves politically.

Mohajir reluctance to assimilate into Sindhi society, on the plea that the latter was dominated by the feudals, with which it found no common ground, as it would have found with the Sindhi middle class, is not supported by historical realities. If Sindh were ruled by a middle class in 1947, it is uncertain as to whether it would have opted for Pakistan without preconditions. This issue has not yet been carefully examined and analyzed by scholars and political analysts, presumably because at this stage it is purely a hypothetical issue. But it would be relevant to consider that if a Sindhi middle class had existed, it would have most probably formed a common ground, a working relationship, and a modicum of harmony with the Hindu Sindhi educated middle class on the basis of a common cultural heritage and secular orientation. Consider for a while the parallel case of the Bengali Muslim elite headed by H.S. Suhrawardy and the Bengali Hindus elite headed by Sarat Chandar Bose, who agreed in 1947 to keep Bengal out of both Pakistan and India in order to save Bengali nationalism. Such ideas were the powerful pull of ethnic nationalism, to which even Jinnah nodded his approval at the last stage of the Partition.<sup>4</sup>

Middle class leaders are tough bargainers. Sheikh Mujibur-Rahman refused to budge from his Six Points, even though, his refusal meant the break up of Pakistan. The same is true of MQM leaders, who have seldom surrendered their demands during their negotiations with PPP and PML (N) since 1988. They have even threatened to break up Sindh. Bengalis and Mohajirs have tested each others' toughness and tenacity during the Civil War in 1971, and later, on the question of Biharis or stranded Pakistanis in Bangladesh. It is doubtful that the Sindhi middle class, had they ever been in power, would have behaved very differently from Mohajirs and Bengalis to compromise the vital interests of Sindh in order to accommodate Mohajirs. They would never have allowed more than a few hundred thousand

refugees from India, restricted to the selected categories of experts just to fill in the gaps, in case there were any gaps at all.

Mohajirs and Punjabis should thank the Sindhi feudals for compromising the interests of Sindh, for collaborating with them on issues like the unhindered influx of refugees from India, the separation of Karachi, the formation of One Unit, the acceptance of the supremacy of the Urdu language even in the provincial sphere: the allotment of rural and urban properties to refugees, and the allotment of the Kotri and Guddu Barrage lands to non-Sindhis.

Sindhi feudals collaborated with Pakistan's rulers in keeping with their feudal tradition. Rulers showered favours, plots, permits, and licences to enable them to consolidate their power and maintain their hold on the peasantry. This surrender of the rights of Sindhis by the feudals was manipulated to appear as a voluntary and broad-minded gesture on the part of Sindh in welcoming the Mohajirs with open arms, to facilitate the administration and development of the resources of Sindh. In actual fact, the bulk of the Sindhi population remained in the dark about the consequences that were to follow the creation of Pakistan.

Had the Mohajirs been pragmatic and far-sighted, they could have easily found common ground with the Sindhi power brokers and the feudals while the going was good and the ground was even. They could have been in the driving seat of power if they had only conducted the affairs of Sindh as Sindhis, and not as Mohajirs. If they failed to respond to the gestures of hospitality and broad-minded characteristics of the feudal class, they have only themselves to blame. For if and when the Sindhi middle class and the Sindhi youth, fired up and propelled by the thoughts of Syed, enter the political arena—a clash with the MQM-dominated Mohajir youth, whose militant and fascist methods are well-known, may become inevitable and may even escalate into a civil war, which has been avoided by the compromising feudals who have ruled rural Sindh during the last half of the century.

The problem is that Mohajirs want to occupy the driving seat as Mohajirs and not as Sindhis. This posture was not adopted while dictators ruled Sindh under a unitary system which helped Mohajirs to multiply their numerical strength and consolidate their economic and political clout. But it came to the surface only after limited autonomy was granted again, following the death of Ziaul Haq, during the Sindhi-Mohajir dialogue that began in 1988 and which has since never concluded. In 1995, MQM's chief negotiator, Ajmal Dehlvi made an unusual disclosure that Mohajirs would be happy to integrate with Sindhis only if their economic and political rights are respected. As an example, he complained that a Mohajir was not accepted as an Acting Chief Minister by Jam Sadiq Ali in 1992.<sup>5</sup> This disclosure indeed revealed the working of the Mohajir mind. Having consolidated their gains through their isolation for over half a century, they are now ready to integrate—provided their pre-conditions are met. This is the language spoken by an occupation army. Immigrants have to assimilate without pre-conditions. Power will accrue to them automatically.

The rights of Sindh cannot be split into Mohajir rights and Sindhi rights. Both groups are permanent residents of Sindh. If Sindh is deprived, every Sindhi is deprived, including the Mohajirs and non-Mohajirs, both urban and rural. Sindh is facing critical problems, which are multiplying from year to year. Firstly, it is over-populated due to unchecked migration. Secondly, the bulk of the taxes is generated from Sindh but the share of Sindh in it is meagre. Thirdly, it is suffering from water shortage due to unfair distribution. Fourthly, it is paralyzed by urban terrorism. Lastly, it has been denied autonomy, which was promised in the Lahore Resolution (1940). Even the limited autonomy allowed in the 1973 Constitution has been eroded.<sup>6</sup> MQM never got together with Sindhis to agitate for the restoration of democracy or autonomy. Mr Dehlvi's demand for economic and political rights as a precondition for integration with Sindhis, amounts to putting the cart before the horse.

Non-assimilated Mohajirs are considered aliens throughout the world, and, therefore, can never qualify to become rulers.

Assimilated Mohajir, Nawaz Sharif rose to become the Prime Minister of Pakistan. Assimilated Mohajirs have risen to become federal ministers and governors of Sindh since the inception of Pakistan. Across the border, assimilated Sindhi Hindus rose to top positions. Acharya Kirpalani became the President of the ruling Congress Party. Jairamdas Daulat Ram became Governor, L.K. Advani is the President of the ruling Janata Party. Assimilated Sindhis are Union Ministers in India even today.

There is no reason why assimilated Mohajirs of Sindh cannot occupy positions of Prime Minister of Pakistan and Chief Minister of Sindh. But if they confine their goal to the acting Chief Ministership, that will be a sad reflection on a community which is full of talented people, whose rise to top positions has been suppressed by an ethnic party with a limited vision.

Such an aggressive posture has been denounced by Mohajir intellectuals many of whom occupy positions of honour and respect throughout Sindh, both urban and rural. Among them, is Professor Karrar Hussain, who migrated from Meerat, India, where he was a lecturer in the English language. Since the day he arrived in Pakistan, he has been offered teaching positions, initially in Karachi, and thereafter in rural Sindh. On retirement he was appointed as Vice-Chancellor of Balochistan University. If he had put pre-conditions, he would have remained isolated and would eventually have joined the ranks of MQM, indulging in a never-ending dialogue and in agitational politics. His prescription to Mohajirs is:

Either the immigrants spread into the body politic of the host country ... as yeast in the dough, so the society is enriched by this new addition, or you can build a wall and enclose yourself within. Your life will then become a stagnant pool. They have done such great harm to themselves. Once this community was the most highly educated, today, it is the Sindhis who are gaining ground, and thank God for that. In the daughters of Sindh, you see reflected Sindh's renaissance.<sup>7</sup>

Unfortunately, the rank and file of the Mohajirs have paid no heed to the words of wisdom conveyed to them by their thoughtful and

mature community members. They have rallied round a newly emerged leadership that is aggressive, uncompromising, and fascist in outlook, which is hustling them towards destruction.

Half a century of non-assimilation has done permanent harm to Sindh. It has created openings for Punjab to play one against the other, act as an honest broker and get deeply entrenched in Sindh, economically and politically. Intra-Mohajir split followed logically. MQM broke up into two factions in 1992 and three factions in 1998. If the Altaf Hussain faction captured the political constituency, the rival faction tried to beat it through street power, and terrorism: by organizing wheel-jam strikes, trade and industry shut-downs, causing losses worth billions of rupees and shattering the economy of Sindh. Fresh investments have dried up. Development is at a stand-still. A rich province has become poor. Sindh's misfortune can be directly traced to Mohajir-Sindhi non-assimilation.

## NOTES

1. The terms Agreed and Non-agreed Areas were coined by the government to differentiate between the areas from which the refugee influx became unavoidable due to the partition of the Punjab as well as the areas from which the refugee influx was uncalled for, as for example, UP, CP, Bihar, Rajasthan, Bombay, Gujarat, etc.
2. MQM leadership has consistently claimed that the Mohajir population of Sindh exceeds 22 million. The 1998 census has rejected this claim. The census figures have also been disputed by the Sindhis. The census shows that Sindh's total population is 29.9911 million, out of which 51.1 per cent is rural and 48.9 per cent is urban. While the rural population is entirely Sindhi, the urban population consists of Mohajirs, Sindhis, Punjabis, Pathans, Baloch and others. Thus in the overall urban population, the Mohajirs may not exceed 50 per cent which would mean that they do not exceed 7 million. Since they dispute the census results, as do the Sindhis, the correct picture may never be known. If they had been assimilated, this figure would have become irrelevant.
3. MQM stands for Mohajir Qaumi (National) Movement which signified that Mohajirs are a nationality. It has been recently announced that MQM will henceforth stand for Mutahida Qaumi Movement (United National

Movement). This is a positive change but one has to wait and see MQM operating outside of urban Sindh, among the non-Mohajirs.

4. See *The Frontier Gandhi* by Korejo, quoting Dawn 22 January 1991.
5. *Dawn* 14 April 1995, Ajmal Dehlvi's interview with Maisoon Hussain.
6. In 1988, Senator Javed Jabbar, Professor Khurshid Ahmad, Mohammad Tariq Choudhry, Akhundzada Bahrawar Saeed, Qazi Abdul Latif, Aijaz Jatoi, and Ahmad Mian Soomro moved a motion in the Senate to discuss the problems of Sindh. The Chairman of the Senate appointed a Committee under the Chairmanship of Ahmad Mian Soomro to examine the problems and submit a report. The Committee added Senator Kazi Abdul Majid as a member. The report was submitted in 1989. The problems identified by the Committee are more or less the same as discussed in these chapters.
7. *Dawn* 14 April 1995, an extract from Professor Karrar Hussain's interview with Maisoon Hussain has been published.

# 6

## G.M. SYED AND SINDHI FEUDALISM

The role of feudalism in Sindh has been studied by contemporary historians, socio-economic experts, political analysts, and intellectuals. Each has approached the subject from his own perspective and drawn his own conclusions. The subject is important today, more than ever before, as it has a direct bearing on the socio-economic and political landscape of Sindh. This institution existed before the British rule, during the British rule, and has survived for half a century in Pakistan. There is little chance of its abolition through a revolution. Over the decades, it has seen many ups and downs and has learnt the art of survival through a process of readjustment. In its present form, whether it should still be called feudalism, as it is known to history, or a mere institution of private ownership of farmland regulated by the laws of the land, is debatable. The urban Sindhis prefer to call it feudalism, which keeps the peasants in bondage and in private jails, and which prevents the growth of a Sindhi middle class; while many rural Sindhis do not share this view, which they think is based on superficial observation. They call it land ownership, diluted into a partnership between the *zamindar* and the *hari* regulated by the tenancy laws, shorn of all the trappings of traditional feudalism, as practised by their forefathers. An attempt is made here to lay bare the facts and fiction surrounding this institution for the benefit of the reader.

Sindhi feudals have existed in many shapes and forms, bearing titles like *zamindars*, *waderas*, *mirs*, *pirs*, *nawabs*, *jams*, *jamots*, *syeds* and *chaudhrys*. Sindh, being a plural society, exhibits this pluralism even in the feudal fraternity which includes Sindhi, Baloch, Punjabi, and Pathan feudals. The

Mohajirs chose not to join this fraternity, although they had the privilege to join the club by virtue of having been favoured with the allotment of vast tracts of lands, which were declared evacuee property, against their verified claims. But that would have meant integration with the natives, which was not acceptable. So they sold their farms to the locals and migrated to urban Sindh to join the Mohajir fraternity. Each group retains the nomenclature of its ethnic origin. But irrespective of its ethnic nomenclature, feudalism does not change its basic characteristics. *Wadera shahi*, (Sindhi way of dubbing feudalism), has its roots in land ownership. Land creates an area of influence upon those who till the land, as well as upon those who are indirectly associated with the profession of farming, namely, the carpenter, the blacksmith, the potter, the grocer, the butcher, the cobbler, and the barber. This integrated village community must have a *mullah* to manage the village mosque, a teacher who runs the school, and a midwife who delivers babies. These traditional components have undergone changes over the decades due to the civilizing influences of roads, mechanized transport, modern farm implements, facilities for higher education, electricity, telephones, and television, which have narrowed the gap between rural and urban Sindh. The influence of the *wadera* has diminished proportionately.

The influence of the *wadera* is overlapped, and often surpassed, by the spiritual following of the *pir*, who may be either the descendant of a famous saint or a holy man. The descendant becomes the *Sajjada-Nashin* of the original saint.<sup>1</sup> Even the caretaker of the saint's shrine can become a *pir* and wield a spiritual following.<sup>2</sup> When the spiritual following and land ownership are combined, which is usually the case, the *pir's* influence spreads far and wide.<sup>3</sup> This influence is used to gain, consolidate, and retain political power at the local, provincial, and national levels. This class, through the ages has exercised its control over the rural population, guided the political leanings of the people, tried to resist any change in the *status quo*, and used all the means at its disposal to perpetuate itself. Pre-British Muslim rulers themselves paid homage to

famous *pirs* and this tradition was followed by the feudals. The popularity and spiritual following of the *pirs* also filtered down to the masses, which encouraged the proliferation of *pirs* of all categories, including the lesser *pirs* and the fake *pirs*. Syed was not a *pir* but a *Sajjada-Nashin* of a famous saint's shrine. This, together with his feudal background, gave him a headstart in politics and led to his success in the 1937 elections. His Progressive Party in 1946 comprised a group of feudals. He condemned feudals for harming the interest of Sindh and frustrating his struggle. But in his Working Committee, he included some feudals. Thus, he had a love-hate relationship with feudalism.

To a non-Sindhi, a Sindhi feudal is the uncrowned king of rural Sindh, a ruthless tyrant, an exploiter, a keeper of bonded peasants in private jails, a harbinger of criminals, dacoits, and kidnappers, a power-hungry politician, and a seeker of plots and permits as political favours. He sells his plots and permits, then buys Pajeros and Land Cruisers, guns, ammunition, and dogs. He hires personal guards and maintains harems for his wives and concubines. This image of the Sindhi feudal has also contributed to the gulf between Sindhis and Mohajirs.<sup>4</sup> The two communities operate on different wavelengths. Sindhi politics has become synonymous with *waderaism* while Mohajir politics is equated with civilized, middle class politics of the people, geared to secure the rights of workers and other deprived sections of society. To an outsider, the images of rural feudalism and urban Mohajirism represent two antagonistic concepts, poles apart and mutually exclusive.

The Sindhi feudals' extravagance also played a part in creating a negative image. For example, they indulged in extravagance, spent huge amounts on hospitality and entertainment, invited British officers to hunting, wining, and dining parties, and in return, they received titles, *jagirs*, status, and other favours for their loyalty. After independence, they kept up the tradition and invited presidents, prime ministers, army generals, chief ministers, commissioners, police chiefs, and lesser bureaucrats. Before independence, they took loans from Hindu money-

lenders to keep up their extravagance. These loans often remained unpaid and then the mortgaged lands passed into the hands of the money-lenders. After independence, they took loans from banks, defaulted on payment, and then used political power to get them written off.

Proceeding on this premise, outsiders see the Sindhi feudals as offensive creatures who have fouled up the socio-political climate of Sindh, while they find the Mohajirs on the defensive, trying to salvage the Indian Muslim culture and preserve the ideology of Pakistan. Feudals also resist any change in their privileged status and political leverage, which they have acquired and maintained through state patronage. This tendency of self-preservation has been more pronounced after the creation of a class of urban feudals since the regime of Ayub Khan. These industrial tycoons, which numbered only twenty-two families during the Ayub era, have now proliferated into thousands. Most of them came into being under state patronage on the basis of bank loans at the expense of taxpayers. They defaulted on these loans, got them written off, evaded tax payments, stole electric power and indulged in hoarding and black marketing. Their ranks were joined by smugglers, drug barons, and gun-runners who were encouraged by Zia's Afghan policy. The power of wealth acquired by this class was used to influence government policies, and eventually to capture political power through election rigging and urban terrorism.<sup>5</sup> All these illegitimate activities are planned and executed by the black economy, which surpasses the legal economy both in its size and scope. On the basis of the existing tax structure, Pakistan's economy has the potential of six hundred billion rupees in tax revenues, while the actual collection is a mere one hundred ninety-five billion rupees. Tax evaders have held Pakistan's economy hostage and pushed it to near bankruptcy. By comparison, the rule of the much maligned Sindhi *wadera*, who pays limited taxes, does not hoard or black market food or raw materials, and pursues his political and economic activity openly, and with some sense of responsibility, is somewhat worthy of emulation by his urban counterpart. His greatest service to urban Sindh has been the

struggle for an adequate share in the Indus waters so that the megapolis of Karachi, which takes the lion's share of water, is well supplied, even in times of shortage.<sup>6</sup>

Traditionally, the *wadera* was the kingpin of the rural administration. Nothing moved without his knowledge. The petty bureaucrat, the policeman, the *tapedar*, the *abdar*, the *daroga*, the school-teacher, the linesman, and the *beldar* operated either through him or with his cooperation. Crime was limited to cattle-lifting and petty thefts, which was kept under check because people feared or respected the *wadera* whose influence helped in crime detection and settlement of disputes.

When Syed turned into a revolutionary in 1937, his constituency still voted for him on the basis of his pre-revolutionary feudal position. The feudal system suited him because it enabled him to move from his village to the floors of assemblies in Karachi and Lahore. Subsequent land reforms under Ayub and Bhutto curtailed and fragmented the *wadera* power base, and also enlightened *haris* of their political, economic, and social rights. During Bhutto's regime both *waderas* and *haris* also became aware of the power of democracy. If there was any doubt on this score, it was removed during the 1983 (MRD) Movement for Restoration of Democracy, when rural Sindh rose for the first time in history and confronted Zia's martial law regime. The movement brought feudals and common Sindhis onto the same platform, and although both endured Zia's punishment, they also shook Zia into action. He ordered elections on non-Party basis in 1985 and appointed another Sindhi feudal, Muhammad Khan Junejo, as prime minister. Zia found this soft-spoken but determined feudal a bitter pill to swallow, and dismissed him in 1988.

The ruthless suppression of the MRD had broken the backs of the *waderas* who were disgraced and imprisoned. By crushing this institution, Zia created a power vacuum. While the Zia regime watched in amazement and disbelief, petty criminals who had been restrained on a leash by the *waderas*, came out of their little dens, collected a few friends, acquired guns, and transformed themselves from petty cattle-lifters to kidnappers.

The *patharidar* of yesteryear, who used to arrange the return of stolen cattle against the payment of *bhung*, now became the middleman to arrange the return of kidnapped men against the payment of ransom, which ran into lakhs and millions, depending upon the status of the victim and the financial capacity of his family. The success of the trade, which was introduced unwittingly by the Zia regime, led to its spread into urban Sindh, where the possibilities of its proliferation were unlimited. During the last five years of Zia's life, kidnapping became a flourishing trade and crores of rupees were paid as ransom.

Who were the victims of this new crime-wave which followed the feudal-bashing of 1983? In rural Sindh, the victims included the Sindhi middle class, small businessmen, teachers, doctors, professionals, small land owners, and of course, the much maligned petty feudals. If Zia and his cronies were the unwitting instigators of this unprecedented crime-wave in Sindh, then his political collaborators in urban Sindh are equally accountable. When the people of urban Sindh stood aside while Zia was butchering rural Sindh in 1983, they failed to realize that urban and rural Sindh were the two sides of the same coin. The MQM supporters were cracked down in 1992 in the same manner as Sindhis were mowed down in 1983.

There is one aspect of Sindhi feudalism which has not yet been recognized but needs to be brought out clearly. When the *wadera* had his day, he not only kept the criminals on a leash, but he also kept the *mullah* under his grip. The rural *mullah* was free to preach religion in the mosque and teach Islamic jurisprudence in the local *madressah*. But unlike the Karachi *mullah*, who spits political fire and spreads sectarian poison, his rural Sindhi counterpart was not permitted to destroy the social fabric or pollute the political climate. Rural politics was the *wadera's* concern, and now, to some extent, the newly emerging middle class of small businessman, artisans, craftsmen, teachers, and others. Politically, the *wadera* is secular. The emerging middle class, thanks to the spreading influence of Syed and other thinkers, is also secular. The *wadera*, as well as this middle

class, keeps the *mullah* out of politics. They know the havoc played by the *mullah* in urban Sindh and elsewhere. Thanks to this awakening, rural Sindh is free from fanaticism, ethnic terrorism, and sectarian flare-ups. Relatively speaking, politics in rural Sindh is peaceful, non-violent, issue-oriented, and outward-looking. What is more, the voters of rural Sindh do not feel beholden to a particular *wadera*, or a candidate, or a political party forever. If they feel let down, they express their disapproval at the polls, irrespective of whether the candidate is a Syed, a Pathan, a Baloch, or anyone else. From time to time, they have managed to defeat the most powerful *waderas*, *pirs*, *mirs*, *nawabs*, *sardars*, and *syeds* in successive elections held in 1970, 1977, 1988, 1990, 1993, and 1997. Sindhi politicians settle their political scores in political forums and not in the streets, not with guns, and not in torture cells. Rural Sindhis love to see their motherland prosper. They have heard Syed and Zulfikar Bhutto in the past, and now they hear Benazir Bhutto, Mumtaz Bhutto, Rasool Bux Palijo, Abdul Waheed Aresar, Qadir Magsi, Hafeez Qureshi, Dodo Mehri, and anybody else who speaks to them, but when it comes to voting, they are not swayed by their oratory, nor by any ethnic sentiments, but by their own affiliation and conscience. If this is what the Sindhi *waderas* have done within their sphere of influence since the first democratic elections were held in 1970, then they need to be recognized as a socially constructive, politically pragmatic, ethnically broad-minded, and religiously tolerant class of individuals.

That a class of people, basically feudal in structure, should possess these positive attributes may surprise the urban Mohajirs. But to an average Sindhi, this phenomenon emerging out of the Sindhi feudal class is no surprise. This class has drawn upon a rich heritage, which includes the organized socio-economic and politico-religious structure of the Indus Valley civilization. It has the wisdom of its Buddhist and Hindu progenitors as its foundation. It has the Islamic universalism as its super structure which demolishes the demon of ethnicity. It has the mystic teachings of Shah Latif and Sachal Sarmast to guide it. It has

the benefit of the message of peace and love from Syed and Sheikh Ayaz. And it has been inspired by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

When Sindhi *waderas* and *haris* voted for Pakistan without any reservation, it was expected that Pakistan would respond and pay attention to the uplift of the Sindhi peasantry. Instead of improving the plight of an oppressed community by restoring to tillers, the farmlands left behind by Hindus at the time of independence, the authorities of Pakistan allotted these lands to the refugees who had come from India. The bulk of these lands were originally owned by Muslim *waderas* anyway, who had mortgaged them to their Hindu money-lenders, and then had subsequently lost their ownership due to non-payment. A similar situation had prevailed in Punjab, but a law was passed there whereby a person who was not a professional farmer could not buy farmland from a farmer. Such a law could not be passed in Sindh while it was part of Bombay. After Sindh's separation from Bombay, such a bill could not be passed in the Sindh Assembly because the Hindu minority of twenty-five per cent had been given a weightage of forty per cent, and by dividing the Muslims, they shot down the bill. The bill was finally passed in 1947 but it could not become a law due to the central government's interference.

Historian Suhail Lari claims that these lands were grabbed by Sindhi *zamindars* by threatening and depriving the tenants.<sup>7</sup> The actual case is that all the rural and urban properties including farmlands left behind by Hindus, were declared evacuee properties and it was against the law to take possession of such properties, which were administered by a separate Ministry of Refugee Rehabilitation under the federal government. Sindh government had no jurisdiction over the disposal of such lands and no Sindhi could take their possession, legally or illegally. The new allottees took possession of these lands, enjoyed ownership for some time, disposed them off to the highest bidder, and then reinvested the proceeds in urban properties. This was an indication that most of the allottees were either not associated with farming or they did not want to integrate themselves with the natives. Barring a few instances, most of

these allottees displayed no interest in the farming profession. Allotment of farmlands to these people defeated the very object of refugee rehabilitation. In some cases it also encouraged false and fictitious claims, which had actually become a flourishing trade in those days. The worst sufferers of these proceedings were the Sindhi *haris* who had tilled these lands for generations and who were deprived of their rights on the resources of Sindh.

The number of Hindus leaving Sindh did not exceed one and three tenths million. The allotment of Sindh's resources to non-Sindhis initiated the Sindhi-Mohajir problem. The problem could have been contained if the refugee influx had stopped, or at least slowed down. But rather than slowing down, the influx was transformed into a torrent, straining existing resources, upsetting the demographic balance, and threatening the established cultural and linguistic pattern. The issue was no longer confined to rehabilitation. It had become a flash point, a tug of war, aimed at grabbing political power. This threat was not directed at any particular class of Sindhis. All classes of Sindhis were subjected to the same upheaval caused by this unexpected phenomenon of unprecedented proportions, which was not even remotely visualized in the partition scheme, and which had targeted a small province with limited resources. Sindhis began to close ranks in order to face the common danger. Sindhi peasants, middle classes, and feudals became natural allies to defend Sindhi rights, Sindhi culture, Sindhi resources, and Sindhi heritage. Sindhis and Mohajirs began to live in separate compartments. If there was any chance of a peasant uprising against the feudal system in Sindh, it was put off by this new development. Sindhi politics took a new turn, where by the Sindhi *wadera*, the traditional exploiter of the peasant, became his spokesman. The emphasis shifted from class conflict to the Sindhi-Mohajir and the Sindhi-Punjabi conflict over the issue of controlling their resources. Mohajirs and Punjabis were therefore instrumental in consolidating feudalism in Sindh.

Does this mean that the Sindhi feudal will use the Mohajir-Punjabi card to perpetuate his hold on his peasants, refurbish his political power, and perpetuate suffering of the peasants into

the twenty-first century? The Sindhi peasant cannot be held hostage to the Mohajir-Punjabi fear of domination. He joined hands with the feudals against the Zia regime during the 1983 MRD uprising. The regime moved to weaken the power of the feudals. A weakened feudal lost control over the situation. Criminal elements moved in to fill the power vacuum. A dissatisfied peasantry has no better way to react. For five years, from 1983 to 1988, Sindh was virtually ruled by thugs, dacoits, and kidnapers. People who had given their blood for the restoration of democracy were subjected to a reign of terror, which was eventually controlled by the army. In the 1988 elections, the feudals reoccupied the corridors of power while peasants were ignored.

The lesson to be learned is that feudalism has to be reformed and its negative elements phased out and replaced by a pragmatic system—which treats farming as an industry and a profession geared towards increasing production comparable to the very best in the world, instead of promoting personal and class interests. One of the remedies suggested by economic experts is to deprive the feudals of land ownership and distribute their land among the peasants, which would ensure social equality, economic justice, and increased production. These experts also believe that the concentration of land ownership in the feudal class is the main impediment to the participation of peasants in agricultural progress. Once a class of peasant proprietors is created, it will have a stake in the land, which will provide an incentive to produce more. But such a stake will lead to class conflict and destabilize the system, which is already undergoing a positive change in an evolutionary manner. What needs to be done is to enact laws and provide an environment that will help to accelerate this evolutionary process. Increased production depends on many factors, besides land ownership. These include education, healthcare, tenancy rights, access roads, rural credit, input, technology, mechanization, marketing mechanism, law and order, rural peace, which depend upon rural-urban balance, crop insurance, integration with agro-based industry, and an adequate water supply—which is now arranged by the *wadera*

by using his local influence and his political clout at the provincial and federal levels, individually and collectively. Given these incentives, larger farms can produce better yields than peasant proprietors. An alternative is cooperative farming which failed in Sindh and failed in countries where it was tried.

If private enterprise is encouraged in trade and industry, then its elimination from the farming sector must be justified on legal and economic grounds. Rather than relying on the hypothetical benefits of abolishing land ownership and creating disharmony within rural Sindh, and dichotomy between the industrial and farming sectors. The solution must be found in encouraging farming to become an industry that pays income tax. Feudalism cannot be abolished by law but it can be phased out through economic policies. Nor will the elimination of the rural *wadera* alone help. His urban counterpart, who holds the key to the country's economy, and who operates more underground than above the ground, must be made fully accountable as the first step. If urban Sindh reforms itself, rural Sindh will follow. The two are inseparable.

## NOTES

1. G.M. Syed was the descendent of a famous saint of Sindh, Syed Haider Shah Kazmi, of whose mausoleum he was the *Sajjada Nashin*.
2. The shrine of Saint Osman Marvandi, popularly known as Lal Shahbaz Qalandar, had two categories of caretakers: one had the privilege of possessing the key to unlock the door of the shrine, while the other had the privilege of the upkeep of the premises. Both privileges became hereditary, each had its own devotees and followers.
3. The followers of Pir Pagaro number hundreds of thousands. Similar is the case of the Makhdoom of Hala. The following of the Pirs of Ranipur, Gambat, Bharchundri, Luwari Sharif, Sirhindi, Jhando, and others is considerable, but not so widespread as that of the first two.
4. Read Dr Salim Hyder's book, in Urdu, whose title can be translated to *Now Sindh Should Be Divided*.
5. General elections in 1992 were rigged, as was admitted by the serving Prime Minister and Chief of Army Staff.

6. MQM has never agitated for water rights, although its centres of influence use the bulk of the available water. They assume that Sindhis will agitate and Mohajirs will consume.
7. Suhail Z. Lari, *A History of Sindh*. OUP, Karachi. p. 205.

# 7

## THE LANGUAGE CONTROVERSY

Urdu is Pakistan's national language and its status at the national level remains unchallenged. Since Pakistan is a federation of autonomous units, the provinces are free to promote the provincial languages and decide their status within their jurisdictions. This was emphasized by Quaid-i-Azam on 28 March 1948 during his radio broadcast at Dhaka, in which he said: 'What should be the official language of this province is for your representatives to decide.'<sup>1</sup>

G.M. Syed, in his book *The Case of Sindh* states that:

After the birth of Pakistan, it had been our demand that Sindhi should be given the status of a national language and made the sole official language of Sindh.<sup>2</sup> In 1848, the Governor of Bombay had made Sindhi the official language of Sindh. In 1857, the Commissioner of Sindh made Sindhi the court language of Sindh. This was the state of affairs till 1947.<sup>3</sup>

The issue of a single national language was not taken up by Sindhis only but it also caused violent agitation by Bengalis in 1948. This demand of East Pakistan was finally satisfied by Ayub Khan, who declared Bengali as a national language at par with Urdu. Rather than granting a similar status to the Sindhi language, Ayub Khan downgraded the status of Sindhi within the Sindh province. He replaced Sindhi with Urdu after the sixth grade in schools. Against this decree, which was issued at a time when Sindh's provincial status had been abolished and Pakistan was run practically as a unitary state, the entire Sindhi population rose in protest. A joint protest was issued by the

following leaders: Makhdoom Muhammad Zaman Talibul Maula, Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, Pir Ghulam Rasool Shah, Ghulam Muhammad Wassan, Sheikh Abdul Majid Sindhi, Mahmoodul Haq Usmani, Muhammad Hashim Gazdar, Mir Rasool Bux Talpur, Muhammad Ayub Khuhro, Kazi Fazlullah, Maula Bux Soomro, Agha Ghulam Nabi Pathan, Nawab Khair Bux Marri, Sher Muhammad Marri, Mahmood Ali, Major Afsaruddin, and Masihur Rahman. The protest statement said:

Sindhi has been the medium of instruction and examination up to the secondary level for two hundred fifty years and up to the college and university levels for ninety years. The commission's decision to downgrade Sindhi is a grave injustice. We demand immediate withdrawal of the decision and restoration of the position of Sindhi.<sup>4</sup>

Among the signatories were also Bengali, Baloch, and Mohajir political leaders. The decision was also opposed by intellectuals like A.K. Brohi, Sheikh Ayaz, and Sardar Ali Shah.<sup>5</sup>

The commission's recommendation and Ayub Khan's decision seem to have been motivated by their desire to phase out provincial languages other than Bengali, and to give Urdu the status that was enjoyed by the English language in England, Canada, the United States, and Australia, so that at least West Pakistan could be integrated into a truly unitary state using a common language as a binding cement. Ayub Khan wanted to be remembered as the saviour of Pakistan. This philosophy was not only condemned by the Sindhi intelligentsia, but its fallacy was exposed even by the intellectuals and thinkers of Punjab. Here is the verdict of one of the foremost Punjabi thinkers:

... Those who stress the need of a common language know only one kind of nationalism. That is linguistic nationalism in which language is the most vital factor. It is based on the concept of 'one nation one language.' This pattern is common in European countries. Germany, France, and England are separate nations as they have separate distinct languages. However, in the case of England and the United States, this common language (English) does not make them one nation. The same is the case with many

Arab states. Egypt, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan are separate nations in spite of a common language. It is not necessary therefore, that a common language would make one nation.

Is common language an essential part of a nationality? Several nations have no common language. Examples: Switzerland (four languages), Canada (two), Belgium (two), Finland (two), Lebanon (two), the Philippines (two), Union South Africa (two), Ceylon (two), Afghanistan (two), Russia and India (over a dozen main languages). Such nations are known as multi-lingual nations ...

It is evident that our problem is not ideological in nature, but of a functional type. We have to solve the difficulty of understanding each other when people of different areas meet. But let us not forget that all the Punjabis are not going to meet Sindhis or Balochis; only a very small number is supposed to meet the other for the purposes of trade, commerce, and industry. Likewise, in government offices, this number will be still more limited. All that poses a problem of very limited nature. ... So many states in the world are running the administration in several languages. We can learn from their experience.

If we lack the confidence to face the problem squarely as suggested above, we may continue with Urdu as a link language for some time until communication starts moving in the natural way between the various groups. The link language may be taught in the schools as a subject only. ... In due course, the local languages would be established as adequate means of communication between people of different regions and the link language may not be needed. By this formula, all persons from various regions will have equal chance in the central government. There will be no bickering and jealousy resulting from one group dominating over the others. Employment opportunities will be open to all equally.

To conclude, the idea of one common language for the whole country is irrational and impossible. For our cultural nationalism, this idea is fatal and fit to be forbidden by law. We should discard the use of the term 'national languages of Pakistan.' This obviously would imply also the discarding of the term 'regional language,' which stands in contrast to the concept of one national language.

Henceforth, all languages of Pakistan will be known as the languages of the nation.

When all languages become official, the provincial administrations, educational institutions, and all other social, cultural, and intellectual activities of the provinces will be run in their languages. It would bring about a cultural revolution, reviving arts and learning. Millions of people whose personality is suppressed because of the imposition of a strange language would become intellectually alive, regaining self-confidence and self-respect.

Each region will teach its children languages of other regions and there will then be better understanding and better communication between the various linguistic groups, which will strengthen the unity of Pakistan.<sup>6</sup>

The above suggestion presented by Masud Khadar Posh, a great Punjabi thinker and intellectual, was rejected by the Urdu lobby of Karachi and Lahore, which had persuaded Ayub Khan to replace Sindhi, a better developed language, with Urdu, a less developed language. This was not an isolated act of dictatorial encroachment on the autonomous status of Sindh by the usurpers of power. It was a link in the chain of events that took place since the abolition of the provinces. Ayub Khan was a soldier, and he had no concept of history. His team of advisers, being Urdu-lovers, also suppressed history. British rulers had introduced Urdu in the Punjab, Frontier, and Balochistan, where it was welcomed. But they refrained from doing so in Sindh, since they knew that Sindhis would protest against suppression of their well-developed language and culture.

The injustice done to the Sindhi language in 1962 was sought to be corrected by legislative means in 1972. The Sindhi Language Bill, restoring the status of Sindhi within the province, was introduced and passed by the Sindh Assembly by fifty-one votes out of a total of sixty. The bill also aimed at inter-ethnic integration to promote ethnic harmony, just as Urdu was to promote national integration. It also provided an opportunity to the post-Partition immigrants to raise a new generation in a

tolerant society, integrated fully in the Sindhi society without losing their identity like the pre-Partition immigrants. Their schools in English, Gujrati, Marathi, and other languages flourished without any interference, and they spoke their respective languages freely.<sup>7</sup> But what distinguished them from the post-Partition Mohajirs was that they did not impose their languages on Sindhis, they did not attempt to encroach upon the position occupied by Sindhi, and they did not isolate themselves from the mainstream of the Sindhi society. Socially and politically, they did not oppose Sindhi as the official language of Sindh. Instead they learnt Sindhi to understand Sindhi people and to integrate themselves with them.

The Language Bill of 1972 was presented in this spirit. But what was the response among Mohajirs? The Urdu press incited the public through provocative slogans which claimed the bill to be the "funeral of Urdu language." Although the bill represented a lawful remedy sought in a democratic manner on the floor of the Sindh Assembly, violent street mobs indulged in unrestrained rioting to nullify the law. These riots spread into the towns of interior Sindh, and the blood of both Sindhis and Mohajirs was spilled to even the score. Sindhis fled from Mohajir townships and vice versa. To pacify the Mohajirs, the matter was taken up at the federal level. Prime Minister Bhutto toned down the bill to satisfy the agitating Mohajirs. The revised bill made Sindh a bilingual province. Chief Minister Mumtaz Ali Bhutto, who had tried to repair the damage done to the Sindhi language by Ayub Khan, was replaced by Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, who was acceptable to Mohajirs.

While trying to sort out the language issue in the backdrop of riots in Sindh, the Prime Minister summoned prominent Mohajir and Sindhi leaders to meet him in Islamabad. Syed, being a Sindhi language scholar and a senior politician, was also invited but he refused to attend the meeting because he anticipated that the meeting was called to amend the bill.<sup>8</sup> Syed was opposed to the decision of amending the bill passed by an elected assembly under the pressure exerted by streets mobs. Syed accused Bhutto of surrendering to Mohajir street mobs, who could use a similar

strategy when it suited them to separate Karachi from Sindh.<sup>9</sup> Since the surrender of the language bill, the gulf between Sindhis and Mohajirs has widened. A conflict has been created between a national language and a provincial language. The Mohajir mindset has always been in favour of a unitary Pakistan.<sup>10</sup> They do not consider themselves as having migrated to Sindh.<sup>11</sup> Such a mindset is a negative factor in the process of national integration. Even if Urdu-speaking people had not migrated to Pakistan, the link language of Pakistan would still have been Urdu for the simple reason that Urdu was the only link language among the provinces. In fact, the attitude displayed by Mohajirs has actually impeded the growth and popularity of Urdu. Firstly, the language riots in Dhaka during 1948 were a set-back for Urdu because they created a permanent gulf between Bengalis and Biharis, who had migrated to East Pakistan from the adjacent provinces of India. Secondly, the language riots throughout Sindh in 1972 made Urdu unpopular among Sindhis, who had until then displayed a keen interest in learning and disseminating it. The Sindhi-Mohajir confrontation has hurt Sindhi readership of Urdu newspapers, periodicals, and books, and consequently, the Sindhi press has proliferated. Today Urdu is loaded with Persian, Arabic, and English words and phrases. The reason for this over-indulgence in persianizing, arabizing, and anglicizing Urdu is the paucity of appropriate words in the Urdu vocabulary itself, and the inferiority complex of Urdu-speaking people in relation to these foreign languages. It is the same complex that prevents them from borrowing the necessary words from indigenous languages such as Sindhi, Seraiki, Punjabi, Pushto, Balochi, and Brauhvi, some of which have a richer vocabulary. Besides, such a step would have definitely contributed to national integration by promoting Urdu as a truly national language, something that did not suit Mohajir politicians and linguists.

Today, it is fashionable to speak English in homes, shops, offices, social gatherings, business establishments, and during telephone conversations. Almost all the higher educational institutions and universities in Karachi use English as the

medium of instruction. Shops display their signs in English. Hotels, restaurants, and fast-food services print their menus, bills, cheques, and cash memos in English. Urdu newspapers write English phrases in Urdu script and call it the Urdu language.

This shows that Urdu has failed to occupy the place it was promised when it was declared a national language. Whether this failure can be laid at the doorstep of the federal government or the Urdu-speaking community is worth investigating, but one thing remains certain: Urdu has lost its place both at the federal level and more crucially, at the people's level. If this is the case, then one wonders why so much blood was spilled in the streets of Dhaka and Karachi in the euphoria of protecting the national language. If Urdu has to regain its lost ground, it must focus its energies on the people, instead of undermining other languages. The Sindhis welcomed the Urdu language even before they were confronted on this issue by the Mohajirs. The Sindhi intellectuals Abul Fazl and Mullah Faizi did not contribute to the promotion of Urdu under duress. Sachal Sarmast did not compose Urdu poetry under Mohajir pressure. When the Sindhi ruler Mian Sarfraz Khan Kalhoro composed Urdu poetry, he did so for the love of the language. Sheikh Ayaz, the greatest Sindhi poet of the twentieth century, did not translate *Shah-jo-Risalo*, the eternal message of Sindh, in versified Urdu, under any compulsion. Mirza Ghalib recited Urdu *ghazals* in the Mughal court and to the elites of Delhi while, Sachal Sarmast sang Urdu *kafis* to the rural Sindhi folks making Urdu an integral part of Sindh's folk culture. The flame of Urdu kindled by these Sindhi heroes was extinguished by the intolerance of extremist Mohajirs. The edifice of Sindhi-Urdu kinship, built by great Sindhi minds over the centuries, was demolished instantly by the Urdu-speaking agitators.

When passions run high, the issues become blurred. Since Karachi had acquired an extremist image in relation to Urdu, Multan, the home of the Seraiki belt, took the lead and hosted the World Urdu Conference in 1992 to deliberate upon the fate of Urdu in Pakistan vis-a-vis the challenge of the twenty-first

century. Having known that despite the national status given to Urdu in India, it had no concrete future there, and moved by too much noise and very little constructive action in Pakistan, Dr Gophichand Narang, a prominent Indian intellectual and Urdu writer, lamented that:

Even though Urdu was spoken by the majority of Pakistanis, it was facing an uphill task in Pakistan. The basic truth is that today, language is a commodity, depending on supply and demand, as the demand from science, technology, business, industry, mass-communication, legal and medical professions, law-makers, and administrators are very exciting and highly specialized, while Urdu's inventory of vocabulary, terminology, diction, adaptability to modern gadgets, and the storehouse of research and publications, both original and acquired, was poor. The lesson that Urdu lovers must learn is to concentrate on language development along scientific lines with patience.<sup>12</sup>

Development of Urdu is not the exclusive preserve of the Urdu-speaking Mohajirs. It should be the collective concern of all Pakistanis, including Sindhis, which is possible only when Sindhis do not feel suppressed. The emotional attachment of Mohajirs with their mother tongue is quite understandable, but this emotion does not entitle them to assume the role of being the sole guardians of Urdu.

If Urdu had a legitimate case for being the sole national language, then that case was lost when Bengali was given the same status as Urdu in 1962. Other provincial languages should have automatically been raised to the same national status. But Ayub Khan was misled by the Urdu lobby. Then came the dismemberment of Pakistan in 1971. Thereafter, the imperatives of national integration demanded that all languages be treated equally.<sup>13</sup> But the irony is that, while in India, where Sindhi does not have a home base, it enjoys the status of a national language in Pakistan, at par with other major languages, it has lost its pre-independence status, in its home base.

## NOTES

1. Letter to *Dawn* from 7 May 1992 by Mukhtar Zaman, quoting Jamiluddin Ahmad in Volume II, p. 513-14.
2. G.M. Syed, *The Case of Sindh*. Naeen Sindh Academy, Karachi. 1995, p. 189.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 190.
4. Mahmood Mirza, *Aj Ka Sindh* in Urdu, *Sindh Today* in English. Progressive Publishers, Ichhra Lahore, 1986. p. 15.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
6. Masud M. Khadhar Posh, "Do We Need A Common Language?" *Dawn* 24 February 1984.
7. Marjorie Hussain, "Glimpses of the Century Past." *Dawn* 19 November 1993.
8. G.M. Syed, *The Case of Sindh*. Naeen Sindh Academy, Karachi. 1995, p. 190.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 193.
10. The unitary mindset was manifested in the Mohajir support for military leaders Ayub Khan and Ziaul Haq, who ran Pakistan as a unitary state.
11. During the launching ceremony of Dr Salim Hyder's book in Urdu *Now Sindh Should Be Divided*, all the speakers emphasized that they migrated to Pakistan and not to Sindh and therefore, Sindh as an entity had no meaning to them.
12. *Dawn* 24 April 1992.
13. A.K. Brohi, read his paper in the International seminar, edited by Hamida Khuhro, *Sindh Through the Centuries*. Dept. of Culture, Sindh. Oxford University Press Karachi. 1975.

# 8

## ANATOMY OF SINDHUDESH

The Partition of India also carried the seeds of secession movements in the subcontinent. The diverse and plural Indian societies were held together as a single political entity by the ingenuity of the British Raj. When the British umbrella was removed in 1947, the centrifugal forces came into play, both in India and Pakistan. India used the carrot and stick approach to subdue and pacify the separatists among the Tamils in the South, the Nagas and Mizos in the East, and the Sikhs in the North-West. With the exception of Kashmir, this recipe has worked well in India and ensured a wider participation of the dissident elements in the affairs of the state, both at the state and federal levels, including the development of a democratic culture and tolerance of dissent.

In contrast, the prolonged rule of dictators in Pakistan, both civilian and military, has stifled political aspirations and encouraged and nourished dissident tendencies. To begin with, the Pakhtunistan Movement, launched by the veteran Pathan leader Abdul Ghaffar Khan, came as a birthday gift to Pakistan. The movement was countered successfully by the Pathans themselves, who rose to occupy positions of power and prestige in Pakistan's civil and military establishments. Pathans found economic opportunities throughout Pakistan, thus neutralizing the secessionists among them. In the post-Zia years, the heirs of the secessionists found it beneficial to forge political alliances with the Punjab-based Pakistan Muslim League (N), which they once considered a reactionary British stooge. They reaped a bumper harvest from a strong centre, enabling them to migrate to Sindh and capture the job market.<sup>1</sup>

The movement for the eventual secession of East Pakistan had its early roots in the Lahore Resolution of 1940, which promised autonomy and sovereignty to the federating 'states.' This provided the basis for Suhrawardy's unfulfilled dream of an undivided and independent Bengal at the time of independence, which was even agreed to by Jinnah, but frustrated by Nehru.<sup>2</sup> Pakistan's constitutional crisis, which lingered on from 1947 to 1954, was sought to be resolved by Suhrawardy who agreed to surrender East Pakistan's majority status and accept parity with West Pakistan as the last attempt to save the unity of the country. For this purpose, One Unit was formed in West Pakistan by merging its four provinces. But the fire of secession was rekindled by Ayub Khan's constitution in 1962, which replaced the parliamentary system of government with a presidential system, hence alienating Bengalis from the power structure.<sup>3</sup> Bengali faith in the federation was totally shaken in the 1965 Indo-Pakistan War, when East Pakistan was left defenceless at the mercy of India. That India chose not to occupy it created a strong and widespread pro-India lobby there. The Agartala Conspiracy, which followed soon thereafter, allegedly designed to separate East Pakistan, was a natural consequence.<sup>4</sup> The crisis resurfaced with renewed vigour after the 1970 elections, which were contested on Mujib's Six Points. When the negotiations on Mujib's Six Points broke down, military action followed, culminating into a civil war. This led to India's interference and invasion, and finally, the secession of East Pakistan in 1971 to form the independent state of Bangladesh.

Another major secessionist movement was triggered by the dismissal of Balochistan's first elected government, which was headed by Chief Minister Sardar Ataullah Mengal, by Prime Minister Bhutto in 1973. It led to an insurgency, followed by military action, and finally the self-exile of Balochi leaders Ataullah Mengal and Khair Bux Marri. The movement subsided only after Bhutto's overthrow by General Ziaul Haq in 1977, who then conveniently switched his stance from strong military

action and suppressing the insurgency to one of appeasing Bhutto's opponents.

The movement for the establishment of SindhuDesh differed from the previous secessionist movements in that it was neither an insurgency nor a conspiracy. It was strictly a political movement, carried out in public meetings and forums, debated in the media, and put before the electorate in the form of a party manifesto. An attempt has been made in this chapter to study the genesis of the concept of SindhuDesh as conceived by G.M. Syed. In order to examine the origin and purpose of this movement, and the ways and means proposed to achieve its goal, the reader must refer to Syed's role as the founder of the Jiye Sindh Tehrik.<sup>5</sup> He believed that Pakistan had been gradually altered to become an appendage of a greater Punjab, and that Sindh must be liberated to achieve its political independence and regain its national status, which it had previously enjoyed for centuries. He argued that Sindh had its own culture, language, and way of life, distinct from all the other provinces. To the objection that the presence of Mohajirs could be an obstruction in the way of SindhuDesh, he replied that the existence of immigrants constituted no obstacle, that immigration was not a new phenomenon, that Sindh has always received immigrants from far and wide and assimilated them as Sindhis with the passage of time, and that a common history, spanning over thousands of years, had moulded the diverse people of Sindh into a single nation.<sup>6</sup>

For Sindhis, love for the soil forms the basis of their individual and national life. That is why Sindhi Muslims were unhappy when Sindh was included in and administered from Bombay by the British, resulting in the movement for its separation. Seen in this context, their demand for Pakistan in 1938, reinforced in 1943 by the Sindh Assembly resolution, clearly signified that they wanted to establish a distinct provincial identity within the framework of Pakistan. Because Hindus in Sindh opposed this separation, Muslims left the Hindu-dominated Congress and joined the Muslim League. This decision, made by Sindhi Muslims, to join Pakistan had deep

and unforeseen consequences—the massive transfer of population wherein hundreds of thousands of Sindhi Hindus left their homeland for India, only to be replaced by millions of non-Sindhi Muslims from all over India.

Sindh was gradually recovering from this change in its historic and deep-rooted identity when another major development occurred that changed Sindh for ever. The entire province of Sindh was shaken when Karachi, the heart and soul of Sindh, was separated from the rest of the province and taken over by the federal government in May of 1948. This was opposed by the Sindh Assembly, the Sindh Muslim League, the Sindh Hari Committee, all of Sindh's municipalities and local district boards, the entire Sindhi press, Sindhi journalists, writers, lawyers, teachers, and students, and all the Sindhi members of the Constituent Assembly.<sup>7</sup> Chief Minister Khuhro, who protested against this decision, was dismissed and Pir Illahi Bux was appointed as his replacement to facilitate Karachi's separation. A prominent Sindhi writer and intellectual, Maulana Din Muhammad Wafai, who had helped mobilize Sindhi public opinion in favour of Pakistan through his writings, was so thoroughly taken aback by Jinnah's decision to separate Karachi from Sindh, that he announced that the only course open to Sindhis for defending their interests was to declare their independence. He saw little chance for a reversal of the decision as long as Jinnah headed the Muslim League. He said that if Sindh had also exercised its autonomy as the Punjabis did, under the Unionists who had disobeyed Jinnah before Partition, Karachi would never have been separated from Sindh.<sup>8</sup> This was the first bitter pill prescribed by Pakistan, which the Sindhis refused to swallow, but was rammed down their throats anyway. The separation of Karachi from Sindh, coupled with the incentive provided by the allotment of hundreds of thousands of urban and rural properties to Mohajirs on the basis of their claims in India, further opened the floodgates for the refugees pouring in from various parts of India.<sup>9</sup> Even though, Karachi was finally returned to Sindh by President Yahya Khan in 1970, federal control had completely altered the shape of the city after

twenty-two long years of separation. From a Sindhi city of 400000 people, it had now been transformed into a non-Sindhi city of six million people. Needless to say, this massive population increase has ultimately changed Sindh's ethnic, cultural, economic, and political situation. If it remains unchecked, Sindhis will become a minority within their own province, and lose control over their own destiny.

In addition to the population threat towards Sindhis, Syed believed that there was an economic threat also. He believed that the Punjabi version of Islam resembles that of the Arab imperialists who ruled Sindh: both exploited Sindh in the name of Islam.<sup>10</sup> In this manner, millions of acres of Sindhi farmland and industry were grabbed by non-Sindhis, mainly Punjabis. This deprived Sindhi peasants and workers of their sources of livelihood, resulting in an annual flight of fifteen hundred crores of rupees from Sindh.<sup>11</sup> Immigration into Sindh in the name of Islam had increased the immigrant population from five to twenty million. And although the taxes collected from Sindh accounted for sixteen hundred crore rupees, Sindh only got less than a five per cent share. While eighty per cent of the centre's budget was generated in Sindh, Sindhis only got one per cent representation in the central services.<sup>12</sup>

Syed also complains that the virtual unitary state under various civilian and military regimes that ruled Pakistan till 1971, encouraged the massive immigration from both within and outside Pakistan that led to a helpless Sindh. Syed also found fault with Bhutto's 1973 Constitution because it failed to provide the status of nationality and adequate autonomy to Sindh, thus perpetuating its helplessness against this uncontrolled immigration. The pressure of this burgeoning population created tremendous social, economic, linguistic, transportation, and housing problems, resulting in frequent ethnic violence, rioting, and terrorism.<sup>13</sup> Syed declared this situation of Sindh to be a deliberate Punjabi plan to enslave Sindhis. Under these circumstances, the only solution for Sindh was to secede and declare itself an independent SindhuDesh.<sup>14</sup>

Syed visualized SindhuDesh as a secular, multi-ethnic republic, which would repudiate the Two-Nation theory and Iqbal's interpretation of Islamic political theory. Those who subscribed to this concept of Sindh would be Sindhi citizens irrespective of when they migrated to Sindh and where they came from.<sup>15</sup> He prescribed socio-economic remedies, similar to the Soviet-style systems then prevailing in the Soviet's Union's Central Asian satellites, for the removal of social injustice and to ensure Islamic *mussawat*, which is the Islamic ideology later disregarded by the Arabs.<sup>16</sup> Aware that socialism could not be enforced through democracy, he warned Sindhis against the 'evils of democracy' and the 'rule of the majority,' used by Punjab to rule Sindh.<sup>17</sup> He warned Mohajirs against falling into Punjab's trap in the name of Islam and the Urdu language, and exhorted them to join in a common cause with Sindhis to put an end to Punjabi domination.<sup>18</sup> He condemned Sindhi feudals, including the *pirs*, *mirs*, *waderas*, *khans*, and *sardars* for collaborating with Punjab and predicted the end of feudalism through socialism.

Syed passionately projected Raja Dahir as a hero of the Sindhi people and praised his 'acts of valour,' his faith in universalism, and his open door policy towards all beliefs, including Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism, and Islam. Syed claims that Dahir welcomed the message of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), and even invited the Prophet's grandson Imam Hussain to take shelter in Sindh and thus escape persecution at the hands of Yazid. However, according to Syed, the Imam was intercepted at Kufa on his way to Sindh, where he met his tragic martyrdom. Syed also credits Dahir with giving protection to Muhammad Bin Alafi, a follower of Imam Hussain, and refusing to return Alafi to the Governor of Baghdad. Alafi, along with his Arab followers, joined Dahir's Sindhi army, causing Alafi's name to be engraved on the back of Dahir's coins, being minted at that time in recognition of his services to Sindh.<sup>19</sup> He quotes the example of King Cyrus and Firdousi as the heroes of a Muslim Iran, Kamal Atatürk showing pride in Genghis Khan and Halaku Khan, and Gamal Abdur Nasser's

declaration that Egyptians are the proud descendants of the Pharaohs, all in support of his claim that Dahir was a genuine hero of Sindh.<sup>20</sup>

Syed's flattering portrait of Raja Dahir and his condemnation of the Arab invaders is not shared by many Sindhis. Raja Dahir's elevation to a high pedestal is a recent phenomenon. Before the days of independence, history books even by Hindu authors never projected Dahir as a hero. The Arab conquest was described as any other conquest in history, although Muslims did take immense pride in it, notwithstanding the disgrace meted out to Muhammad Bin Qasim in Damascus. A.K. Brohi has taken exception to the way the Arab conquest has been condemned:

There are men in our midst who are not ashamed of describing Muhammad Bin Qasim as some kind of a desperado who turned up and wrought havoc upon a wonderful kind of world in which the people of Sindh then lived. All of this is false history, a sort of pernicious propaganda, aimed at destroying the contribution that Islam has made to the soul of Sindh. ... This aggressive and militant approach to a crude type of nationalism with no other content than the territorial nexus with which to weld the people of Sindh together in a feeling of belonging leads to the slogan of Jiye Sindh, which I understand is somehow becoming fashionable and gaining currency. ... We all want Sindh to live, flourish, and prosper only because it can then make a real contribution to Pakistan's political solidarity, its glory, and its greatness as a nation. ... This sort of subversive slogan-mongering is being indulged in merely as a reaction to the injustices that have been inflicted on the people of various regions by a dominant province after the establishment of One Unit. ... Let us fight these injustices on their own plane. Any one who submits without a protest to an injustice is a coward and has no right to call himself a Muslim. ... Let us by all means defend the value and importance of our Sindhi, Punjabi, Pushto, and Balochi languages, however we need not take up false positions which may jeopardize the territorial integrity of Pakistan.<sup>21</sup>

Brohi, a prominent Sindhi lawyer, intellectual, and thinker, condemned slogans which called into question the integrity of

Pakistan. He attributed such subversive slogans to the reaction of the smaller provinces against injustices inflicted upon them by the dominant province (Punjab) after the establishment of One Unit. Brohi favoured fighting these injustices. In his judgment, any submission to injustice without protest was a sign of cowardice, and a coward had no right to call himself a Muslim. Syed's rationale was that he was driven to an extremist position only as a last resort, because the injustices inflicted on Sindh during the preceding two decades were then being compounded by the emergence of new factors which were further suffocating Sindhis, and gravely threatening the identity of Sindh. Syed explained that those politicians who claimed to fight these injustices within the framework of a united Pakistan were carried away only by the charm of personal power, and thus played into the hands of Punjab. Brohi's remedy of fighting from within fizzled out when he decided to become a politician and contested the 1970 elections as a nominee of Jamaat-i-Islami, an orthodox religious party. Both he and the party lost the election to Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP). However, the party still managed to enter the corridors of power through the back door after Bhutto's elected government was overthrown in 1977. This induction of Jamaat ministers into the martial law regime of General Ziaul Haq had only one objective, namely to divert attention from the ensuing political crisis by introducing Islamization of the legal and economic systems in the country. The regime used Islam to perpetuate itself. They introduced Islamic reforms, notably abolishing interest and replacing it with a mark-up system, which was actually higher than the interest rates, and therefore more exploitative. They amended the criminal laws and introduced the punishment of chopping off hands for theft. They also made changes in the Muslim personal law, which discriminated against women in a number of ways, resulting in vehement protests from human rights groups which continue even today.

If the case for an independent Sindh, enunciated by Syed, is valid today, then it would have been equally valid before the creation of Pakistan. But the case, in this shape and form, was

never presented then. As a matter of fact, the demand for an independent Sindh did not even exist in anyone's mind. When Syed parted company with Jinnah and the Muslim League, the issue was autonomy within the party. From 1947 till 1971, Sindh's grievances were discussed by Syed and others primarily to push for political, economic, and cultural autonomy within the framework of the federation. The final crunch came with the separation of East Pakistan, which upset the balance among the remaining federating units. The 1973 Constitution, a compromise fathered by Bhutto, failed to correct this imbalance, which tilted heavily in favour of Punjab. The Senate, which was created to restore some balance on the basis of equal representation, proved to be an ineffective body, no better than a dignified debating society. The Council of Common Interests, created to safeguard the needs of the federating units, failed to make any impact. Frequent constitutional amendments during the five years of Bhutto's term, and Bhutto's highly centralized style of governing, made the centre stronger and the provinces weaker than ever before. Syed's meetings with Sheikh Mujib and Wali Khan in 1971 made him aware that each province must fight its own battle for survival. Sheikh Mujib chose secession while Wali Khan chose autonomy under the 1973 Constitution. But what about Sindh? Sindh voted for Bhutto, who was a Sindhi but whose main constituency lay in Punjab. Punjab's interests and Bhutto's ambitions to rule Pakistan coincided to strengthen the centre and enabled it to counter any secessionist tendencies which might have taken root following the secession of East Pakistan. Syed tried to convert Bhutto to his perspective, and sought concessions that would have mitigated the wrongs done to Sindh since independence. On being rebuffed, he was totally disappointed. He therefore activated the Jiye Sindh front and launched the movement for an independent SindhuDesh.<sup>22</sup>

The launching of the SindhuDesh Movement by Syed was based on his calculation that the separation of East Pakistan through prolonged political crisis, civil war, external war, and the defeat and surrender that resulted in Bangladesh had melted away the binding glue of the federation. Syed believed that

Pakistan's unity was extremely vulnerable, and that all it needed now was a jolt to trigger a chain reaction and break up what was left of it. He felt that now it was Sindh's turn, the most aggrieved province, to break away. However, his wishful assumptions overlooked and simplified some vital factors—chief among them, the personality and politics of Bhutto. During the 1970 election campaign, the first in Pakistan based on universal adult suffrage, Bhutto stimulated Sindhi towns and villages with his speeches promising *roti, kapra, aur makan*. The same election wiped out Syed, Brohi, Pir Mardan Shah of Pagaro, and many other prominent leaders. Upon assuming power in December 1971, Bhutto moved quickly to 'pick up the pieces' of Pakistan. He restored the army's morale, repaired relations with India and Bangladesh, negotiated the return of POWs and occupied territories, mobilized public opinion, carried out far-reaching economic and social reforms, and lost no time in formulating a federal constitution based on consensus among all the elected parties of the provinces. During Bhutto's tenure of 1972-7, the idea of SindhuDesh remained subdued and confined to small pockets of pro-Syed groups, while mainstream Sindhis became busy in taking advantage of many opportunities opened up for them for the first time by Bhutto.

The mere declaration of an intent did not amount to the launching of a movement. Syed had the example of Bhutto's PPP in 1967-70, and he was aware of what it took to launch a new party and a new movement. His greatest weakness lay in the fact that the more he projected Sindhi nationalism, the more this was neutralized by Bhutto's popularity and programmes. Syed blamed Punjab for boosting up a mainstream party headed by a Sindhi as an antidote to possible secession. Herein lay the cause of the deep-rooted animosity between Syed and Bhutto. To Syed, Bhutto was a symbol of Punjab's domination which he perpetuated for the sake of his personal power. To Bhutto, Syed did not pose any danger but was only a minor irritant, which he could have lived with except when his extremist speeches caused ripples in the Punjabi and Mohajir lobbies who demanded detention (which could be relaxed when the storm

subsided). The Sindhi youth, its student politicians, and certain educated elites entertained sympathy for Sindhi nationalists, but they too were busy enjoying the benefits of Bhutto's rule, which provided them economic, political, social, educational, and cultural opportunities. For the first time in history, a Sindhi was the absolute ruler in Pakistan, and Sindhis had their presence felt in Islamabad. Thus, as long as Bhutto ruled, Sindhis stayed away from Syed's message, and they gave little support to his Jiye Sindh Movement.

The fall of Bhutto and the rise of Ziaul Haq in 1977 created a political vacuum in Sindh. Zia's plan was to eliminate Bhutto and the PPP, and clear the decks for alternative parties and leaders in Sindh. During this interlude, Syed made several endeavours to formulate a common cause with Mohajirs, who had been shifting political alliances since they had been eased out of their positions of power by the emerging Punjabi leadership in 1950. During the heyday of Ayub Khan, Mohajirs had congregated towards the orthodox parties like the Jamaat-i-Islami and the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Pakistan. The Mohajir religious elites had played a leading role in the display of street power against Bhutto and his eventual fall. Thereafter, Mohajirs formulated a common cause with the Pathan and Punjabi immigrants of urban Sindh and established the Mohajir-Punjabi-Pakhtun front to safeguard the interests of these three immigrant communities and consolidate their political and economic clout. In this process, Mohajirs found that the Punjabis and the Pakhtuns (Pathans), who had monopolized certain sectors of Sindh's economy, were using the numerical strength of the Mohajirs for consolidating their own power. Sensing this, Mohajirs embarked on their own separate agenda and established their own party called the Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM).

During Zia's long rule (1977-88), the MQM rose to occupy centre stage in urban Sindh, while Syed enjoyed a free reign in rural Sindh. However, these developments were taking place in Sindh on the surface only, without touching the hearts and minds of Sindhis and without striking any roots in the soil of Sindh. This was proven during the MRD agitation in 1983, which

assumed the dimension of a rebellion or a small civil war. Many writers and journalists described this uprising in eloquent terms. Syed, who stood aloof during the movement, describe it by saying:

Strict Martial Law was imposed, many people were arrested, some were beaten to death in torture cells, some were maimed. No consideration was given to age or sex. All this was done to crush the will of the people and smash the Independent SindhuDesh Movement. But when the will of the national workers and young people refused to give in, rangers, frontier constabulary, and police were deployed onto roads and universities and indiscriminate firing was often resorted to in which villagers and our workers were martyred. State terrorism was seen at its worst when the short-sided leadership of MRD brought villagers to the streets. People reading the holy Quran were treaded under trucks, air raids were carried out, whole villages were put to the torch, even women's processions were fired upon. ... The MRD massacre did not assuage the ruler's thirst for blood. ... Sindh lay in fetters. ... Imprisonment, lashes, bullets, gallows, and all other means of torture had become our fate. ... I wrote to the United Nations, Amnesty International, and to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, who expressed her concern for the Sindh situation in the Indian parliament.<sup>23</sup>

Thousands of men and women who faced Zia's bullets and whose near and dear ones perished during the MRD Movement lost faith in Pakistan, which had become synonymous with the brutalities of the martial law regime. By this time, many observers expected Syed's constituency to have gained a firm foothold, awaiting him to occupy the centre stage of Sindhi politics. Many writers, political analysts, and intellectuals were galvanized into action. They visited many places in the interior of Sindh and interviewed many Sindhi politicians, thinkers, and opinion-makers to gain firsthand knowledge of the situation and to probe the Sindhi mind. Some authors noted with surprise that whereas Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who had total public and electoral support in 1970, had refrained from demanding or declaring independence till the very end, Syed had openly

preached sedition at Sann on his birthday. And yet, while Mujib was arrested and put on trial under martial law, the Zia regime remained a passive spectator to Syed's call for the secession of Sindh. They also observed that all the Sindhi bureaucrats were SindhuDeshis at heart and that is why the restrictions placed on Syed were mere paper restrictions.<sup>24</sup>

In 1983, Mahmood Mirza and Professor Hasanat called on Syed at Sann to assess the repercussions of the violent uprising of Sindhis during the MRD and to find out if Syed would use this to promote Sindhi nationalism. They found him pitted against the restoration of democracy and rejecting the MRD as an obstacle against SindhuDesh. Ruling out democracy as a means of achieving SindhuDesh, he said:

When the Third World War breaks out, or when there is any regional conflict, in which the Pakistani army is fully involved, then I will cut off supplies of water, food, gas, etc. to the cities where non-Sindhis live. In this way SindhuDesh will come into being on the terms of rural Sindh. I am not bothered about the human tragedy involved in the process.<sup>25</sup>

In his interview to the daily *Nawa-i-Waqt* in 1985, Syed gave his detailed assessment of the situation in the Sindh and indicated the pathway to SindhuDesh:

There are two forces in Punjab; first, the army and the civil service; and second, the democratic group. I consider the democratic group comprising traders, zamindars, and industrialists more damaging to Sindh. Their interest is to grab lands, establish factories, and control trade, and enslave the people of Sindh. Their target is to control all the resources. Bhutto represented them. They want restoration of democracy. We are not interested in democracy, because democracy is another name for Punjab's control. Such democracy is a poison for Sindh. Under military dictatorship there can be mutual accommodation through constitutional amendments which are not possible from sixty-six per cent majority. The army does not represent exploitative forces. Among them only a few have grabbed lands. But collectively, they are more interested in their jobs and in

the country's defence and security. The army consists of intelligent and educated people. In my view, Pakistan cannot survive until there is accommodation with smaller provinces. The army can be expected to reach such an accommodation for the security and integrity of Pakistan and adopt a posture of accommodation with India.<sup>26</sup>

It was apparent that Syed had been greatly influenced and manipulated by General Ziaul Haq, his disdain for democracy, and his cricket diplomacy with India.<sup>27</sup> By 1985, he had ruled Pakistan for eight years and in Syed's estimation, he was expected to be around for another decade or two, which would have been a period long enough to grant political concessions to Sindh. Working on that hypothesis, Syed collected all the Jiye Sindh groups and unified them on a single platform of SindhuDesh. In April 1985, a working committee was set up with Dr Hameeda Khuhro as its chairperson. Abdul Waheed Aresar opposed her selection due to her feudal background, but his objection was overruled in order to avoid a class war at a time when the unity of all classes, including the feudals, workers, and peasants, was considered a paramount necessity. To Syed and his supporters, it looked as though SindhuDesh was no longer a distant dream.<sup>28</sup>

In August 1989 journalist Zafar Abbas asked Syed whether he envisaged that some foreign power would help in the establishment of SindhuDesh. He replied:

We are seeking foreign help for our independence. So far we have failed. I went to Mr Rajiv Gandhi, he did not give me any support. We tried the Russians, but we did not get any help. We even tried to get some sympathy from Afghanistan and from the Americans, but neither helped us. At present we stand alone. But anything is possible. For instance, by one act of God, a powerful man like Zia disappeared in a few minutes.<sup>29</sup>

God helps those who help themselves. The future of Sindh remains the business of the people of Sindh, both Sindhis and Mohajirs. If independence is not a part of their common

agenda—and there is little chance that it will be, then any move in that direction is doomed to fail. Apparently, Syed did not have any mandate even from the Sindhis to approach foreign powers, which interfere not out of mercy or charity but only to promote their own interests. Soviet interference in Afghanistan brought an end to the Soviet Union itself. Afghanistan was too weak to help even Pathans of Pakistan. India had skeletons in her own cupboard. What price was Syed prepared to offer to the Americans?

Syed's assessment of the army dictatorship was highly naive and grossly miscalculated. No army general could be expected to accommodate any province on the issue of autonomy, let alone independence. The three generals who have ruled Pakistan, namely Ayub Khan, Yahya Khan, and Ziaul Haq, all ruled as if they were heading a unitary state. These generals, fought for and lost half the country but still never conceded any meaningful autonomy.<sup>30</sup> If Yahya Khan broke One Unit, he merely restored the status which the provinces had enjoyed previously and which had been demanded unanimously by the West Pakistan Assembly in 1957. And why would any army general bestow any special favour on Sindh when other provinces may have moved away from the demand for autonomy and actually favoured a strong centre?<sup>31</sup>

Syed's high expectations of the army presupposed that Pakistan would always, or nearly always, be ruled by the army. While army regimes had become a pattern during Zia's rule, the pattern need not be repeated in the future if the generals had learned any lessons from the collapse of Ayub Khan, Yahya Khan, and Ziaul Haq. If Yahya Khan presided over the dismemberment of Pakistan, Zia's collapse led to the dawn of democracy. Thus, the history of army rule moved in diametrically opposite directions. To base the future of Sindh on such accidents of history was not sound politics but a pure gamble on G.M. Syed's part.

Syed's gamble reached a climax when he threatened to cut off the water, gas, and food supply of urban Sindh where non-Sindhis live, and then dictate his terms for the establishment of

SindhuDesh in the event of a war. If a world war or a regional war does not break out, the gamble is lost. And waiting for a war to break out is like chasing a shadow. And if a world war or a regional war does break out, the spoils will go to the victors and not to mere observers. But chances are that future wars will only produce losers and no victors. As to the likelihood of the Pakistani army getting sucked into a conflict, Syed perhaps counted on such a war breaking out over Kashmir, leading to similar results as those of 1971. This type of non-serious thought process on Syed's part defies all logic. How would Indian aggression in Kashmir, should it ever happen, lead to the independence of Sindh? In an international war, which may not be limited to conventional weapons, the only consequences that can be predicted is total devastation and not the liberation of any territory. Syed's prediction needs to be dismissed totally. Equally monstrous is his threat of cutting off food, water, and gas to urban Sindh. Non-Sindhis live in Karachi, Hyderabad, Mirpurkhas, Nawabshah, Tando Adam, and Sukkur. If these cities are starved, where will SindhuDesh be located? If only Karachi is starved, other cities will move in to frustrate the sabotage. Starvation threats are recipes for the division of Sindh, which would be the end of Syed's SindhuDesh dream. Realistically, Sindhis are in no position to carry out such a threat as Sindh does not produce water, but gets it from the Indus, which is not an exclusive Sindhi river. If Punjab threatens to divert the Indus, what will be the reaction from Sindhis? Lastly, rural Sindhis are not so politically bankrupt as to allow such senseless adventure against their motherland. This was a brainwave, typical of this brand of mystics and votaries of nonviolence: in the past, Gandhi threatened to wage war against Pakistan<sup>32</sup> and Abdul Ghaffar Khan had instigated attacks by tribes and by the Kabul government against Pakistan.<sup>33</sup>

Dr. Hameeda Khuhro, a former Sindhi nationalist, had similar expectations from the army generals. She met Gen. Ziaul Haq when she wanted a seat out of reserved seats for women in the 1985 Majlis-e-Shura, but her papers were rejected. 'He (Zia) said you will never be a member of the National Assembly,

now or ever.’<sup>34</sup> She was the chairperson of the Working Committee of the Sindh National Alliance, in charge of the campaign for SindhuDesh. Her views on the achievement of the goal did not agree with those of Syed:

I do not think he had thought about what SindhuDesh was about. He was doing what Jinnah did in 1947. Demand more so that you get your rights. But it was the students who were mostly following him. But the educated middle class were all working. The peasantry was indifferent or looking for Bhutto’s *Roti-Kapra-aur-Makan*. So I told him you may or may not get Sindh, but till that time let’s work for the rights of Sindh. I know that was not the best way forward. We were labelled anti-Pakistan in an organization absolutely riddled with paid agents, and one could hardly move without being completely monitored. I was criticised by the people there. They thought here is Hameeda Khuhro. She will set herself up as the heir apparent (of Syed).”<sup>35</sup>

Like Syed, Hameeda also accused Bhutto of sacrificing the autonomy of Sindh to please the Punjab. So she joined Sindhi Nationalists to fight for the rights of Sindh. The nationalists found themselves surrounded by a powerful adversary in the shape of PPP. In Bhutto’s removal from the scene in 1977 they saw an opportunity to capture Sindh. But they miscalculated the mood of Sindh, both rural and urban, as well as, the intentions of Gen. Ziaul Haq:

...Sindh National Alliance was formed in 1988... This was also the start of the really dreadful politics of MQM, encouraged by Zia. SNA went on doing very well but it was over taken by events. It worked as long as Punjab was the enemy and Zia was sitting there. But Zia died in August (1988) and the enemy disappeared. Benazir turned up and all the work of the nationalists went in her favour. So G.M. Syed held up his *jholi* and said, ‘Vote for my candidate – Vote for Hameeda,’ and despite huge meetings no body voted. Nusrat Bhutto got 90,000 and I got 4,000. I was surprised. I thought there should be some feeling. By the time of the next elections in 1990 and 1993 (also in 1997) again the nationalists did not get any votes. At that time I decided that is not the politics the Sindhis

want. What they want is jobs, favours, court cases. So if I have any political role to play it must be at the Pakistan level, and I can not join PPP because it goes against my grain.<sup>36</sup>

Hameeda's farewell to Sindhi Nationalism took away the intellectual input from the Jiye Sindh Movement, already split into factions. Hameeda's father, M.A. Khuhro was a pragmatic politician of a high calibre but unlike Benazir, she did not move to take his place. In the nationalist camp she relied upon the ground work done by Jiye Sindh and the popularity of G.M. Syed. But both these factors failed to create a vote bank for reasons explained by her and by the author elsewhere. She over-estimated Syed's capacity to grab the political turf from PPP in rural Sindh. If the winds of change could not be foreseen by the Sindhi nationalists, they were poor judges of the working of Sindhi minds. Through the hardwork and selfless service rendered by them the nationalists were able to create an effective lobby, a hard core of followers among the Sindhi youth and a feeling of sympathy and understanding, but these achievements could not be translated into a vote bank.

Once Ziaul Haq was removed from the scene in 1988, party-based elections were held and Pakistan People's Party, (now led by Bhutto's daughter) came back on the scene to rule Islamabad and Karachi, despite the suppression it had suffered for eleven long years. Many powerful feudals, *mirs*, *pirs*, and *sardars* who had betrayed PPP in the past faced ignominious defeat. So did the leaders who supported Sindhi nationalism. Most political analysts attributed the PPP success to the sympathy vote for Bhutto. Few commentators attempted to probe deep into the Sindhi mind. Sindhis had been moved by the philosophy of Syed but they also knew that the immediate danger to Sindh was posed by the rise of militant Mohajirism, personified by MQM, a political party which adopted fascism and terrorism openly during its violent encounters with Sindhis. Pathans, Punjabis at various times.<sup>37</sup> They knew that Syed was not in a position to counter MQM owing to the limits imposed upon him by his faith in mysticism, non-violence, peace, and love. They

also realized that his demand for SindhuDesh would create a Mohajir backlash, hastening the breakup of Sindh by creating a Mohajir province. In their view, the MQM phenomenon could only be countered at the all-Pakistan level by throwing open the Mohajir militancy to a country-wide debate, a feat which could only be performed by a mainstream party. Once the MQM problem becomes an all-Pakistan problem, it would be diluted by similar ethnic issues in the Punjab, the Frontier, and Balochistan. If Pakistan can live with the Punjabi-Seraiki issue, the Baloch-Pakhtun issue, and the Pakhtoon-Hindko issue, it can also live with the Sindhi-Mohajir issue. If any ethnic group disregards the democratic path and resorts to terrorism, as was done by MQM in 1992, 1995 and 1998, only the centre will be able to deal with it as it did in 1992, 1995 and 1998-99.

Election results in 1988, 1990, 1993, and 1997 have shown that within Sindh, the only reasonable challenge to the PPP hold forged by Bhutto came from the Muslim League, another mainstream party, and not from Syed's Jiye Sindh groups. This trend is not new and it has persisted since 1970. The rise of MQM during the Zia regime further strengthened this trend. As long as this trend is going to last, there is little chance of the SindhuDesh constituency expanding its influence and electoral appeal, despite the heart-warming slogans of its proponents.

The Jiye Sindh rank and file has done enormous groundwork for more than twenty years now. In the rural interior, in the remote villages, in the deserts, and in the hills, there is a great fund of goodwill for them. The best service to Sindh which they can do is to concentrate on ameliorating the condition among the peasants. Their role in emancipating the bonded peasant workers and liquidating the private jails run by some unscrupulous feudals has been lauded by the human rights organizations and given wide publicity by the press. They must follow the shining examples of Hyder Bux Jatoi and Kazi Faiz Muhammad, the great *hari* leaders, who sacrificed lucrative careers and devoted their lives to the welfare of Sindhi peasants. The potential for improving the social and economic situation in rural Sindh is unlimited. Sindhis must learn not to depend on

government action, which has been slow and feudal-oriented. Mere condemnation of the feudals is not going to help the peasants. An enlightened and awakened peasantry can transform the attitudes of the feudals, elected representatives, and lawmakers. The Jiye Sindh groups must build on the goodwill they have already earned among *haris* and the working class.

When MQM changed its name from the Mohajir Qaumi Movement to Muttahida Qaumi Movement, it did so after realizing that its initial aim of consolidating its ethnic power base had been fully achieved, and that the time had now come to change tactics and convert to an all-Pakistan agenda. The ethnic card has been overplayed, and it has led to terrorism, inter-ethnic bitterness, and military crack-downs. It has also created splits within the Mohajir ranks, and the emergence of rival groups which have posed serious threats to their ethnic unity. Whatever its long-term strategy may be, for the time being this move is in keeping with the demand of the country's mainstream politics. Do the Jiye Sindh groups have any lessons to learn? They cannot match MQM in their organization, discipline, and unity. They cannot match their financial resources, their tenacity, their resilience, their street power, or their stamina, nor can they match their election strategy. In rural Sindh, they have not been able to match the resources of the feudals. The only course open to them is to change their strategy, learn the art of electoral politics, introduce flexibility in their goals, and join hands with other Sindhi groups working for constitutional changes on the lines of a confederal system. If they care to read the fine print in Syed's theory of SindhuDesh, they will find unmistakable hints of confederation.

Ordinary Sindhi folk are unable to comprehend the change of name from Sindh to SindhuDesh coined by Syed. The name Sindh describes the identity of Sindh equally well, or even better, because Sindh has been called Sindh for ages. SindhuDesh may have been used in ancient times but the present name has evolved over many centuries. Sindh is an indigenous name and not an acquired or borrowed or imposed name. Besides, the

ancient SindhuDesh extended from the Indian ocean to the Himalayas and its use at present will be grossly inappropriate.<sup>38</sup>

## NOTES

1. Read G.M. Syed's interview in *Herald*, Karachi of August 1989, quoting Wali Khan as the champion of a strong centre. Also see p. 177 of Syed's *The Case of Sindh* alleging Pathan-Punjabi collusion to exploit Sindh.
2. See Korejo's *The Frontier Gandhi* pp. 110-11 quoting a letter from Syed Izharul Haq in *Dawn* 22 January 1991.
3. Under the parliamentary system, a Bengali had a chance to become either the Prime Minister or the President, thereby maintaining a power balance between the two wings of Pakistan.
4. Agartala, situated in the neighbouring Indian state of Tripura, is the place where the conspiracy for the secession of East Pakistan was allegedly hatched. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his associates were put on trial which was withdrawn. Sheikh was released in 1969 under pressure from West Pakistan's leaders, enabling him to participate in the Round Table Conference called to resolve the political crisis.
5. Jiye Sindh Tehrik literally means long live the Sindh movement.
6. G.M. Syed, *SindhuDesh – A Study in its Separate Identity through the Ages*. G.M. Syed Academy, Haider Manzil, Soldier Bazaar, Karachi. p. 21.
7. Ahmad Salim, *Sulagata Hua Sindh* (Urdu) – Sindh In Flames. Jang Publishers, 1990. p. 99.
8. Mahmood Mirza, *Today's Sindh: The Problems with Pakistan's National Integration* (Urdu), quoting from the monthly Sindhi magazine, *Tawhid*, of January 1948.
9. No such allotments were given to refugees in East Pakistan.
10. G.M. Syed, *SindhuDesh*. p. 23.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 27, 28.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 39-40.
16. Long before Syed's demise, all or most of these countries had switched from socialism to market economy.
17. G.M. Syed, *SindhuDesh*. A study in its separate identity through the ages. G.M. Syed Academy, Karachi. op. 92-93.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 95.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 106, 107.
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 109-10.

21. A.K. Brohi, *Sindh Through the Centuries*. ed Hameeda Khuhro, Department of Culture, Sindh. Oxford University Press Karachi. 1975.
22. G.M. Syed, *The Case of Sindh*, Naeen Sindh Academy, Karachi. 1995, p. 197.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 199.
24. Shahid Kamrani, *Sindh Ka Manzar Nama* (Urdu), Maktaba-i-Fikr-o-Danish, Karachi. 1988, p. 60, 65.
25. Mahmood Mirza, *Aj Ka Sindh* or *Sind Today* (Urdu), Progressive Publishers, Lahore, 1986, p. 72.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 73. Here Syed is hinting towards confederation, otherwise how can the General concede total independence.
27. Ziaul Haq had impressed the Indians with his visit to witness a cricket match in India.
28. Mahmood Mirza, *Aj Ka Sindh*. (Urdu), Progressive Publishers, Lahore, 1986, p. 73.
29. *Herald*, Karachi, August 1989, pp. 169-83. Syed interviewed by Zafar Abbas.
30. Yahya Khan lost East Pakistan but refused to concede to Mujib's Six Points.
31. Syed himself observed this change in Wali Khan during 1971 when the latter opposed financial autonomy.
32. See Korejo's *The Frontier Gandhi*, pp. 117, 180.
33. *Ibid.*, pp. 209, 221-23.
34. *Dawn – The Review* 15-21 October 1998, giving a profile on Hameeda Khuhro p. 23.
35. *Ibid.*
36. *Ibid.*
37. MQM militancy has since expanded in scope to target fellow Mohajirs and the police. For evidence read *Dawn*: Amina Jilani's column 8.11.98, Eqbal Ahmad's column 10.11.98, staff reporter 11.11.98, M.H. Askari's column 18.11.98, PM's televised interview 28.10.98, Irfan Hussain's column 7.11.98, Editorials of 25.11.98, 1.11.98, and 21.11.98, *Herald* of Sept. 1998 pp. 113-115.  
The most frank and forthright comment on MQM terrorism was made by Gen. (R) Mirza Aslam Beg, former COAS in his interview with Ihteshamul Haque, published in *Herald* of October 1998 at pp. 46-47:  
'The army does not forget such insults. In 1991, an army major and others were kidnapped by the MQM and tortured. This prompted me to take action and Altaf Hussain was forced to publicly handover the culprits to the authorities. The MQM workers who tortured the army major were sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for 20 to 25 years.'
38. In his address to the All-India Muslim League session in Karachi, and in the ancient maps reproduced by him, SindhuDesh includes the present territories of Pakistan.

# 9

## SYED—A MULTI DIMENSIONAL PERSONALITY

The year was 1943. The occasion was the annual session of the All-India Muslim League held in Karachi. There were many reasons for selecting Karachi to host this event. The movement for Pakistan, which had begun at the all-India level, had to be given a focus. Since there could not be a Pakistan without Sindh joining it, Sindh had to move and occupy the centre stage. Groundwork had already been done when the Sindh Assembly decided to pass the Pakistan Resolution. The resolution had been introduced by G.M. Syed, whose eloquence as a speaker, devotion as a believer, and ability to counter the opposition as a debater were unmatched. The year 1943 represented the high watermark in his career as a Muslim Leaguer. In the same year he had become the president of Sindh Muslim League. His performance during the session in general, and his speech as chairman of the reception committee in particular, warmed the hearts of both the leaders and the audience, which numbered more than a hundred thousand. He emphasized the grouping of the provinces located on the Indus by quoting from the ancient history of Sindh. The high tide of Syed's honeymoon lasted till 1945. From then onwards differences within the Sindh Muslim League leadership surfaced and intensified, leading to the formation of factions. His faction separated from the mainstream.

By all accounts, Syed has had a tumultuous political career consisting of many abrupt and drastic changes. For example, he quit the Indian National Congress in 1938 due to his disgust

with the Sindhi Hindu Congress members, who refused to support legislation providing relief to farmers whose lands were mortgaged to Hindu money-lenders. He then joined the All-India Muslim League, only to break up with it in 1945-6 over the issue of autonomy. During the first decade of Pakistan's existence, he struggled against the separation of Karachi from Sindh, and then the abolition of Sindh's provincial status. While Ayub Khan ruled from 1958 to 1969, he struggled against the One Unit and the downgrading of the Sindhi language. While Yahya Khan ruled, he tried to persuade Wali Khan to support Sheikh Mujib's Six Points and save the integrity of the Pakistani federation. Disappointed with Wali Khan's attitude, he then tried to persuade Sheikh Mujib to prevent the break up of Pakistan, yet failed to accomplish this task. During Bhutto's rule, Syed tried to persuade him to provide Sindh with genuine autonomy, but again failed to do so. Finally, he launched his SindhuDesh Movement in 1972, and activated the Jiye Sindh front. The movement has been described and analysed in the previous chapter. In 1995, at the age of ninety-two, Syed breathed his last. A conventional analysis of his long political career of seven decades reveals no success, triumph, or victory, but defeat, loss, and failure. He himself repudiated his successful Muslim League career during 1938-45, and his successful movement against One Unit was also simply the reversal of a previous failure. In order to find a silver lining in Syed's political legacy, one must look beyond any electoral, legislative, or political achievements.

The best part of his political career, which was thirty years to be exact, was spent in jail or in detention. If detention is the criterion for political success, then Syed's years as a political prisoner would rate him higher than any other political leader in the world. Even Nelson Mandela spent less time in jail—twenty-seven years. But Mandela's confinement was harsh, inhuman, crude, cruel, and highly uncivilized, and it shook the world's conscience. By contrast, although Syed had been declared a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International, there wasn't much in common between the two situations. Syed's tormentors were clever and acted in a relatively civilized way, keeping a

close eye on the public's reactions to his detention. The Punjabi and Mohajir reaction to his detention was a mixture of relief, unconcern, and non-involvement. The majority of Sindhis ignored it. No protest was made in the Sindh Assembly or the National Assembly by any Sindhi member. The concern displayed by the Jiye Sindh groups was largely ignored by the print media. As a result, Pakistan's rulers could easily take the risk of detaining him for short durations, treating him with consideration, and allowing him all types of facilities, including detention in his own home, eating his own food, and meeting his family and friends. His speeches and statements received press coverage. To most people, the detention of Syed was a non-event, which was understandable, because urban Sindh, consisting of Mohajirs, Punjabis, and Pathans, and most of rural Sindh, supporting a mainstream political party, did not subscribe to Syed's political agenda. For Sindhis, this was a tit-for-tat situation. Syed did not involve himself in the Sindhi rebellion of 1983 against Zia's brutal rule, which spilled Sindhi blood and killed Sindhi men, women, and children mercilessly. His plea was that he did not subscribe to the MRD philosophy. How could Sindhis sympathize with his cause, or agitate against his detention, which, in any case, was not harsh or seriously agitated against even by his own followers?

Be that as it may, how does one explain the G.M. Syed phenomenon? Was his political career, spread over the best part of the twentieth century, a total waste? Could he not make a rational judgement, revise his political strategy, move along with the current, join the crowd, and fight the battle as an insider, as Khuhro and Bhutto had done. Unlike them, he was guided by his faith and his inner voice. There was no room for compromise in his creed. The best chance for him was to compromise and collaborate with Jinnah, but he chose not to. He belonged to a rare breed of individuals who prefer to perish rather than surrender if their faith is at stake. During the twentieth century, two more individuals of this breed rose on the soil of the subcontinent. One was Gandhi and the other was Ghaffar Khan. During the Indian independence movement, the pragmatic

Congress leaders and the idealist Gandhi often pulled in different directions, but a split was avoided because of the calibre of the Indian leaders. After independence, Gandhi and the Indian government began pulling in opposite directions right up to the day of his assassination. The same was true for Ghaffar Khan, who did not budge from his faith in Pakhtun nationalism till the end of his life. There was no meeting point between him and any government in Pakistan. Syed's life is a reflection of these two personalities almost in every respect. The three of them had a message they wished to share with their people, the message being essentially similar. Like his two spiritual progenitors, Syed's message had a goal but neither was the goal subservient to political vicissitudes nor was its success determined by victories or defeats in elections. After all, Sindh was not a virgin land devoid of ideas and ideologies. Sindh was a plural society with competing interests and conflicting ambitions. It was a melting pot of cultures and a battleground of rival claims. To project a new idea and to propound a new theory in this confusion was like preaching a new religion in a land overcrowded with prophets and gods. Only a man of abiding faith would have entered this fray, oblivious of the consequences. Knowing the limitations of the contemporary generation of Sindhis, Syed did not expect them to respond to him, nor was he deterred by the obstacles in his path. But he knew that his message had sunk in the deep recesses of Sindhi minds, which would transmit it to future generations. Syed died in 1995 but the spirit of his message has become immortal and timeless, even though its substance may fade away.

Those Sindhis who judged him as a politician and a party leader were sorely disappointed by his political miscalculations bordering on political bankruptcy. He failed to make his party strong enough to challenge the Muslim League in 1946 and was driven out of the arena by foul means.<sup>1</sup> His effort to launch the movement for SindhuDesh in 1972 made little impact on Sindhis, who had rallied around Bhutto's economic and political slogans. The time he chose to launch his movement was inappropriate and ill-chosen. His faith in the army generals was

misplaced, so much so that he played into the hands of Ziaul Haq. He stayed aloof from the only genuine Sindhi rebellion of 1983 under MRD, and failed to use the strong Sindhi sentiment within the movement to his advantage. His party and its supporters exhibited a poor showing in the elections of 1988, 1990, 1993, and 1997. Some of his supporters even joined hands with Jam Sadiq Ali's ignominious rule from 1990 to 1992.

Some of these acts of omission and commission were deliberate on Syed's part and were justified by him on the basis that he did not believe in democracy. This explanation had a built-in contradiction, but he felt that no other course was open to him after the generals withdrew from politics in 1988. This was a dilemma which Syed could not resolve, and which brought about splits and divisions among his followers. Sindhi nationalists were upset by his autocratic methods, his tactlessness, and his inflexibility. They were infuriated by his playing into the hands of the likes of Ziaul Haq and Jam Sadiq Ali. Thus Sindhi nationalism lay in disarray with no plan and no strategy. But Syed did not claim to have a plan anyway. The only plan he ever revealed was in an interview when he spoke of a third world war and a regional war, which was in fact not a plan but an exercise in absurdity.

What Sindhis should have learnt was to stop considering Syed a political leader or a political activist. He was a political manipulator for the first four or five years of his parliamentary career from 1937 to 1941, when he broke and patched up the ministries of Sindh.<sup>2</sup> Once he came under the grip of Jinnah, the latter tried to control his ministry-breaking instinct. However, Syed managed to break loose from Jinnah's restraints in 1945-6. This renegade of the pre-independence years later on matured into the strongest advocate of Sindhi rights and an ardent exponent of Sindhi culture, a political thinker, and a mystic. In the last decade of his life, his bearings were changed by the realities of the political system that had come to stay. The generals had disappeared from the scene, and he did not believe in democracy. He fixed his gaze on a distant horizon, but his faith was unshaken and his goal remained unchanged.

Syed possessed the attributes of a mystic, and he believed in the essential unity of all religions. He joined the Theosophical Society in the early thirties. In 1966, he founded the Sufi Society of Sindh as a forum for the dissemination of the philosophy of mysticism. In his writings, he not only gave examples of the revealed religions, namely Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, but also showed that he had absorbed the wisdom and rituals of the ancient Indian and Iranian religions.<sup>3</sup>

Syed was deeply moved by the philosophical poetry of Shah Latif, which has imbibed the essence of all religions. He found the echo of Buddha's teachings in Sur Ramkali of *Shah-jo-Risalo* and quoted verses from that chapter for support.<sup>4</sup> Besides, Sur Rip, Sur Khahori, Sur Brawo Sindhi, Sur Poorab, and Sur Pirthati of the *Risalo* also exude the spirit of Buddhism. Other mystic poets like Shah Inayat and Sachal Sarmast have also been influenced by the teachings of Buddha. In his view, Sindhis, even after conversion to Islam, retained some influence of Buddhism as seen in their mild tempers, non-violent behaviour, religious tolerance, and their faith in universalism.<sup>5</sup> Syed also perceived streaks of Jainism in the collective psyche of Sindhis. Jain shrines located in Hinglaj (Lasbella), Gernar (Kachh), Ganjo Takkar (Hyderabad), and Makli (Thatta) were visited by Shah Latif who imbibed the spirit of Mahavir's teachings through meditation at these shrines. He made liberal use of Jain terminology like Yogi, Sanyasi, Godria, Nanga, Kankut, Kapri, Khahori, Adhuti, Sami, Bekhari, Langotia, and Kaput in his *Risalo*. Syed quoted verses from Sur Khahori, Sur Poorab, and Sur Ramkali to show the influence of Jainism. He also saw Jain influence in the teachings of Shah Inayat and Rohal Fakir.<sup>6</sup>

Syed drew a distinction between personal salvation of the individual human spirit and collective salvation of humanity. In Semitic religions, the personal spirit and the system of reward and punishment have been given prominence. Similarly, Aryan religions have also given importance to individual spirits and deeds, and *karma* (fate) has been considered as the measure of progress or deterioration of the soul. All these faiths, whether

Semitic or Aryan, were based on the concept that spirits are individually created and therefore personal salvation depended on individual performance, prayers, fasting, purification of body and soul, and abstention from sins. Syed contrasts these religions with Buddhism, which, in his perspective, has risen above all in this particular aspect and has given prominence to the collective salvation of humanity.<sup>7</sup>

Elaborating on the origin of the concept of God, Syed has said that faith began with animist and non-animist things being considered the possessors of supernatural powers, worthy of worship and able to grant their blessings. Later, this supernatural power began to be called by many names which changed with time and place. Such names are Ishwar, Brahma, Jahwa, God, Khuda, and Allah. He goes on to say that the concept of God began with plurality, then came the Trinity, then duality, and finally Unity. Thus, in the process of evolution, at one point in time every supernatural being was referred to as god and when Muhammad (PBUH) came, he brought with him the concept of *Tawhid*.<sup>8</sup> On belief in the Hereafter he says:

The Muslims believe in Qiamat or the Day of Judgment. Then he asks: The future of whom? The future of creation? The future of the physical world? Or the future of the spirit? Or the future of an individual? Or the future of humanity? In his understanding, the future of everything is intertwined. Two powers are working simultaneously, one towards progress and the other towards annihilation. One towards good and the other towards evil. One towards light and the other towards darkness. The first leads to evolution, righteousness, and knowledge; the other towards death and wrong.<sup>9</sup>

Syed was a staunch believer in secular parties and opposed the theory of Islam and politics being inseparable. In his perspective, this concept did not exist initially in Islam, which is a natural religion. He believed that a state based on religion would encourage sectarianism. Each sect would seek the enforcement of its own laws of *Sharia*. If the majority sect seeks to adopt the laws of the majority sect, then the minorities

would feel alienated. If separate laws govern each community, there will be chaos, leading to fragmentation, bloodshed, and civil war.<sup>10</sup> In a state based on religion, religious elite like *mullahs*, *kazis*, *muftis*, *pundits*, and the clergy have the upper hand in preparing and enforcing codes and laws. This complicates the judicial system, as each religion and each sect within each religion attempts to have a separate code. The result is sectarian intolerance, terrorism, and anarchy. In a state based on religion, democracy can never strike deep roots.<sup>11</sup> He traces the roots of sectarian turmoil to four major events: a) basing the creation of Pakistan on the Two-Nation theory, b) suppression of Jinnah's speech made in the Constituent Assembly on 11 August 1947, declaring secularism to be the guiding principle of Pakistan's constitution, c) the introduction of the Objectives Resolution by Liaquat Ali Khan, and d) the declaration of Pakistan as an Islamic state by Bhutto under pressure from *mullahs*.

Syed's concept of nationalism repudiates Iqbal's concept of Islamic nationalism, which is explained by Javaid Iqbal:

The basis of nationhood in Pakistan was Islam, which acted as a nation-building force before the establishment of Pakistan. Muslims gradually developed a national consciousness in the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent. They collectively struggled for the right of self-determination and the establishment of an independent homeland to be carved out from those territories where they constituted majorities. They eventually secured what they wanted. Hence the historical fact which cannot be denied is that the formation of a Muslim nation preceded the demand of a homeland. Pakistan by herself did not give birth to any nation. On the contrary, the Muslim nation struggled for and brought Pakistan into being. Thus Pakistan is not the cause but the result of the struggle... The same can be said about patriotism. Muslims do not have a notion of Pakistan as fatherland or motherland... They are not prepared to lay down their lives merely for Pakistan's dust, trees, deserts, mountains, or rivers. This form of patriotism is idolatrous. Muslims are prepared to lay down their lives for their religious and cultural principles on which the state of Pakistan was founded.<sup>12</sup>

Iqbal's theory, which was eloquently defended by Syed in 1943, was thoroughly rejected by him in 1972, after seeing and experiencing the practical application of the theory in the context of Sindh. As he explained in his speeches and writings, this theory meant total enslavement of Sindhis by Punjabis and Mohajirs.

Javaid Iqbal elaborates on this theme and says that an Islamic state is an ideal secular state which seeks to promote the material advancement of all its citizens, without distinction. He endorses Jinnah's speech of 11 August 1947 as being the basis of a secular and federal Pakistan with full provincial autonomy. But Syed saw that the promises of Islamic secularism, genuine federalism, and provincial autonomy were all consistently trampled upon by every regime, whether civilian, military, or directly elected. Javaid Iqbal was himself a witness to this anticlimax which occurred immediately after the creation of Pakistan. He observed:

After Pakistan's establishment, the then ideologically committed intellectuals were absorbed by the government in the early stages and got involved in the power struggle. Result: anti-ideological forces raised their heads, gained strength, and changed the course of history of Pakistan.<sup>13</sup>

What Javaid Iqbal has said is precisely the case enunciated by Syed. The tragedy of Pakistan began when the reins of power were handed over to the ideologically-inspired intellectuals, who had migrated from India. To them Pakistan meant grabbing of power, evacuee properties, wealth, and economic and political clout. These ideologues turned out to be opportunists, engaging in the constant struggles for power. In walked those who had at one time opposed the creation of Pakistan, but once they were in, they changed the course of Pakistan. The rest is history. Syed did not need any further endorsement of his thesis after a scholar like Javaid Iqbal, who is acknowledged as the spiritual heir to his illustrious father, Allama Iqbal, expressed his dismay at the conduct of the ideologically inspired rulers of Pakistan

during the formative years. In Syed's interpretation, a province that had fallen victim to this brand of ideology had every justification to stand up, repudiate the ideology, and demand an independent status.

Iqbal's political philosophy has been interpreted by many other authors. Parveen Feroze Hassan believes that according to Iqbal:

The separation of religion from politics is a monstrous perversion in human affairs. It debases human nature and represents a source of greed and cruelty. Its vicious effects destroy peace and order. By uniting religion and politics, Iqbal is not advocating theocracy. He aims to provide a spiritual basis so that man can kill the demon of power which arises when politics are not guarded by the protective force of religion.<sup>14</sup>

The debate on Pakistan's ideology began in 1940 and it is still a hot topic. It continues to fill the pages of newspapers, books, and magazines, and the debate will perhaps go on for as long as the spiritual heirs of the ideologically committed leaders remain active in the field. Some of these later ideologues have actually surpassed the first generation ideologues in the plunder of Pakistan. General Ziaul Haq made ideology a convenient tool to hoodwink the ideological parties and prolong his despotic rule. Today, even the speech of the Quaid-i-Azam delivered in the Constituent Assembly on 11 August 1947 has been subjected to more than one interpretation. Some interpret it in favour of a secular state, others in favour of an Islamic state, and yet others claim that it combines Islam and secularism. Javaid Iqbal considers that an Islamic state is in reality a secular state. Whatever the interpretation, one thing is certain, that Jinnah's speech was an eloquent testimony to his democratic moorings rather than any ideological inspiration received from Allama Iqbal.

In his own domain, Syed is also carried away by ideology. His proposed republic of SindhuDesh was to be a secular state, based on socialist ideology. He would not go by the Soviet

model, which has since collapsed. He would not go by the Chinese model either. He planned to go by a Sindhi model of socialism, whatever it meant to him. Since Syed did not believe in democracy, and in any case a purely ideological state cannot have the luxury of democracy, the proposed state was to be a one-party state, in which the opposition had no role to play. Such a state could come into existence only through war, or at least be rule by a despot like Ziaul Haq for the achievement of SindhuDesh.

While on the subject of ideology, the author came across a well-reasoned article by Iqbal Akhund, formerly, Pakistan's permanent representative in the United Nations, which was published in March of 1993. For the reader's benefit, the article has been presented in Appendix III.

## NOTES

1. Syed was defeated in the Provincial Assembly elections in 1946. This was achieved by rigging the elections, which were set aside in 1949 when his membership was restored.
2. Sohail Lari, *A History of Sindh*, p. 185. He quotes Syed's speech made on 10 January 1939 on the floor of the Sindh Assembly as follows: 'I have blind faith in change. I do not care for the result. ... I have never thought about the future, nor will I ever think about it. ... I say that I do not care for the making or breaking of ministries. I do not mind breaking ministries after every month if it is for the betterment of the country.'
3. G.M. Syed, *SindhuDesh—A Study In Its Separate Identity Through The Ages*, G.M. Syed Academy, Haider Manzil, Karachi. pp. 69, 70, 137, 140.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 150. Also see "Sur" in glossary.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 153.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 156-64.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 225.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 220.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 221.
10. The sectarian terrorism in Punjab and urban Sindh illustrates the point.
11. G.M. Syed, *SindhuDesh*, pp. 265, 267.
12. Javaid Iqbal, *Ideology of Pakistan*, Ferozesons Ltd., pp. 2, 3.
13. *Ibid.*, Prologue.

14. Parveen Feroze Hassan, *The Political Philosophy of Iqbal*, Publishers United Ltd., 176 Anarkali, Lahore, p. 347.

# 10

## SEDITION TRIALS GALORE

The federation of Pakistan has had to face conspiracies, attempted *coups*, and successful *coups* from its very inception. The seeds of this brand of political change were planted by the military, beginning with the Rawalpindi Conspiracy under the leadership of Major General Akbar Khan in 1951, followed by Major General Iskandar Mirza, General (later Field Marshal) Ayub Khan, General Yahya Khan, and General Ziaul Haq. There were some minor conspiracies like the one by Brigadier F.B. Ali (Attock Conspiracy) and another by Major General Tajammul. Successful conspiracies were called revolutions, like the revolution of Ayub Khan and the Islamic revolution of Ziaul Haq. The unsuccessful conspirators, like General Akbar, however, were tried for treason and punished.

These generals, whether conspirators or revolutionaries, remained on the political scene, directly or indirectly, till the demise of Ziaul Haq in 1988. Except for the uneasy decade 1947-57 and the democratic interlude of 1972-7, during which they pulled strings from behind the curtain, generals have ruled Pakistan under their tight grasp using the guise of saving its ideology and maintaining its integrity. However, at the end of the day, they failed to save either the ideology or the integrity. But they succeeded in taming the judiciary, dividing the people, and acquiring immunity from treason trials. Today, they are called heroes and patriots by some and usurpers by others. Their role in the history of Pakistan remains controversial.

The chapter of sedition, opened by these generals, has been used by quite a few civilians as well. But these civilians had their own style. They did not operate from behind the scenes or

strike at midnight. They preached openly, without fear and with a sense of commitment. The first leader to set the pattern was Abdul Ghaffar Khan, who was arrested and tried for sedition in 1956, and sentenced to imprisonment till 1957. The short duration of the imprisonment indicated the government's reluctance to deal harshly with the rebel leader. Thereafter, political remedies were applied to neutralize his rebel activities and soften their impact.<sup>1</sup>

The next rebel was the Bengali leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who was first put on trial for the Agartala Conspiracy by Ayub Khan in 1967.<sup>2</sup> The trial fizzled out under political pressure from both East and West Pakistan for Mujib's unconditional release and withdrawal of the conspiracy case. Political unrest had shaken the resolve of Ayub Khan, who was eventually compelled to leave the scene. Four years later, in March 1971 Sheikh Mujib was arrested again by General Yahya Khan under the charge of waging war against Pakistan. The proposed trial was overthrown by momentous events, whereby after a bloody civil war and the Indian invasion, East Pakistan became the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Bhutto, who replaced Yahya Khan soon after the debacle, released Mujib soon thereafter.

The rebellion in Balochistan, which took place in 1973, had deeper roots. It started with the declaration of independence by the Khan of Kalat in the formative years of Pakistan and the subsequent rebellion by Prince Abdul Karim.<sup>3</sup> Subsequently, Ayub Khan ordered the military to subdue certain tribes. In 1973, Bhutto's dismissal of the Mengal ministry triggered a violent Baloch reaction which was put down by harsh military reprisals. The rebel leaders went into exile—Sardar Khair Bux Marri went to Kabul and then to Moscow, while Sardar Ataullah Mengal went to London. The insurgency ended when Bhutto was overthrown by Zia in 1977.

In 1975, the National Awami Party was banned and its leaders, including its Chief, Abdul Wali Khan, were arrested and put on trial for sedition by a special tribunal in the

Hyderabad central prison. Again, the case was withdrawn after the overthrow of Bhutto by Zia in 1977.

This history of rebellions would be incomplete if Sindh is left out. The list of Sindhi grievances had piled up since 1947, the latest being the threatened change in the demographic picture due to the unchecked flood of immigrants from India and from other provinces of Pakistan. G.M. Syed, the Sindhi nationalist leader, launched his Jiye Sindh Movement to agitate for the restoration of Sindhi rights. He was disappointed with Bhutto for compromising on the Sindhi Language Bill and conceding little autonomy to the provinces. He came to the conclusion that when an elected Sindhi Prime Minister could not restore provincial autonomy, then Sindhis could no longer have any faith in the federation. Syed toured the interior of Sindh to propagate the concept of SindhuDesh. He was warned through a letter addressed to him by J.A. Rahim, Bhutto's senior minister, advising him not to repudiate the Two-Nation theory and refrain from preaching the confederation concept or indulging in guerrilla warfare to achieve his goal.<sup>4</sup>

Bhutto was embarrassed by the irony that while one Sindhi was ruling Pakistan as the Prime Minister and trying to pick up the pieces scattered by the separation of East Pakistan, a fellow Sindhi was indulging in propaganda for breaking the country. But Bhutto tried to deal with him by using discretion. He invited Syed to join the delegation to India that was to negotiate the Simla Treaty following the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971. He tried to send Syed as the head of an unofficial delegation on a goodwill mission to India, following a private meeting with him in 1972. These diversions did not last long. In August of 1972, Syed was detained on the charge of creating hatred between Sindhis and Mohajirs, inciting Sindhis to launch an armed struggle, and endangering the security of Pakistan.<sup>5</sup>

In May 1973, Syed was detained once again on the charge of propagating the establishment of an independent SindhuDesh, attacking the Two-Nation theory, accusing Mohajirs and Punjabis of usurping the rights of Sindhis, creating hatred between old Sindhis and new Sindhis, and thereby endangering

the security of Pakistan. Bhutto did not consider it worthwhile to put Syed on trial for sedition as that would have boosted Syed's popularity at Bhutto's expense, and affected the vote bank of PPP which was the only mainstream party that was popular in Sindh. Bhutto was able to walk this tightrope with relative ease because of the support he got from Sindhi feudals, *haris*, and the newly emerging middle class. Under a calculated risk, Syed's detention periods were kept short, he was treated with respect, and no steps were taken to stop his friends, followers, and admirers from meeting him.

After Bhutto's overthrow in 1977, Zia changed this strategy to suit his own agenda, which was to eliminate Bhutto and his party. He, along with his military and civilian collaborators, including anti-Bhutto Sindhis, Punjabis, Mohajirs, and the religious elites, turned Sindh upside down during his reign. Zia had visualized 'Bhuttoism' as a simple phenomenon which would fade away from the political scene soon after Bhutto was physically eliminated. He sought to fill the vacuum, in Sindh at least, by patronizing ethnic nationalism, represented in rural Sindh by Syed and his Jiye Sindh Movement, and in urban Sindh by Altaf Hussain and his MQM. In Zia's calculation, this step posed no danger to Pakistan; once the, monster of 'Bhuttoism' was demolished, the rural part of Sindh would be swallowed by Syed and the urban part by Altaf Hussain. If need be, Zia could then move to crush both of them using his military muscle if they failed to cancel each other out. Punjab remained a silent spectator to this ethnic split which was planned, engineered, and executed under the Zia regime for eleven years. Altaf Hussain succeeded in weaning the Mohajirs away from rural Sindh. Rural Sindh revolted violently in 1983 under the MRD leadership against this diabolical plot to divide Sindh. The movement, which spread far and wide, was suppressed brutally and mercilessly by the army. The Punjabi reaction was rather tame. Mohajirs stood aside as Zia had anticipated they would. Syed was disappointed that rural Sindh rose to a rebellion of this magnitude but not for his cause. This rural Sindhi rebellion for the restoration of democracy reduced the

significance of Syed's struggle for SindhuDesh to a game of hide and seek.

Viewed against this background, Syed's subsequent treason trial falls into perspective. Following Zia's demise in 1988, the PPP contested the general elections and returned to power in both Islamabad and Karachi. By now, Syed had become a desperate man because of this new and unexpected turn of events. He embarked upon a tour of Sindh to renew his campaign for SindhuDesh. During his arrival in Sukkur, his angry followers raised anti-Pakistan slogans and burned the national flag. At that time, the PPP government of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto was being hamstrung by a rebellious Nawaz Sharif, then Chief Minister of the Punjab, on the one hand, and bullied by its coalition partner in Sindh, the MQM, on the other hand. The flag-burning incident was therefore timed to create further problems for an already beleaguered government. The incident was played up to a fevered pitch by the Lahore and Karachi press. Earlier, a flag-burning incident involving Altaf Hussain and the MQM had raised only mild criticism. Critics accused the PPP government of encouraging the secessionist movement in Sindh. Backed into a corner by an army leadership that had only recently surrendered power to civilians, Benazir Bhutto ordered Syed's arrest.

Syed's imprisonment came to an end in September 1990, immediately after the dismissal of the PPP government. A caretaker government was installed under Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi at Islamabad and under Jam Sadiq Ali at Karachi. Following his release, Syed demanded an amendment in the constitution to rename the provinces as states, which should have equal representation in the Senate; the Senate to have fiscal powers; and the centre to have only three subjects, namely, defence, foreign affairs, and monetary policy.<sup>6</sup>

Syed's release came about as a gesture of goodwill by the caretaker regime to pacify the octogenarian Sindhi nationalist leader in the hope that he would soften his stand on the independent SindhuDesh. Indeed, Syed did oblige them by asking for an amendment in the constitution to create a loose

federation or a confederation of 'states'. As for the prosecution for the desecration of the national flag, the case against him was not withdrawn, as clarified by the Home Department of the Sindh government.<sup>7</sup>

Syed's statement after his release from detention was a clear departure from his proclaimed demand of total independence. Did this represent a change of strategy or a mere tactic to pacify the political environment and save the obliging caretakers from embarrassment? During his detention, and after his release, he received Mumtaz Bhutto, who may have caused this change in him. Syed also spoke of a 'Commonwealth of the Indus Valley', consisting of Sindhis, Punjabis, Pathans and Balochis, after getting rid of the exploitative hold of the Mohajir-Punjabi axis. Later, this Commonwealth could be expanded to include India and Bangladesh.<sup>8</sup>

In 1990, PPP government was dismissed and fresh elections held, for which purpose the military Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) engineered an anti-PPP alliance called the Islami Jamhuri Ittehad (IJI). The highly controversial elections produced Nawaz Sharif as Prime Minister and Jam Sadiq Ali as Sindh's Chief Minister, supported by the Mohajir Qaumi Movement. The crafty and ruthless manner in which Jam had manoeuvred to capture power by reducing the PPP majority into a minority, cast a magic spell on the rulers of Islamabad, and endeared him to his coalition partners in Karachi.

During his term as Chief Minister of Sindh during 1990-92, Jam came to be known as the miracle man. His last miracle was taming Syed and his political followers. He proceeded to play up to Syed, showering respect on the senior politician. In return, Syed held a reception in honour of Jam and his cabinet colleagues in January 1992. Nothing is known as far as the purpose or content of the meeting is concerned, especially since there was nothing that either one could offer the other. Syed could not surrender his SindhuDesh Movement, and Jam could not surrender his office. Both had invested their life's endeavour into their respective positions. Both sized up each other's capacity for endurance, exchanged normal courtesies, and parted

as friends. Syed could not have omitted to invite Jam to attend his birthday gathering at Nishtar Park, located in front of Syed's home, a few days later on 17 January. Jam would have foreseen the nationalist fervour the meeting would arouse, and the ripples it would create in urban Sindh, the Punjab, and Islamabad, and would have planned the recipe he would employ to make everything appear to be a storm in a tea cup. If Jam could manipulate his rise to unfettered power in Sindh purely on the strength of his wits without any political following, he could surely manipulate anything within Sindh while he was the chief minister.

The meeting began with the hoisting of SindhuDesh flag and singing of SindhuDesh national anthem, which was sung in chorus. Syed's speech was read by Bashir Khan Qureshi, a senior Jiye Sindh party official. This speech was not fully reported in the Karachi press, because Syed had used the meeting only to re-launch his SindhuDesh Movement. In the full text of his speech, a reference to this issue appears as follows:

In South Asia, there are certain nations like Sindh, Balochistan, Seraiki Desh, and Pakhtunistan which should be given complete freedom... The people of Sindh should pledge themselves fully and totally to the struggle for making their land free and themselves an independent nation.<sup>9</sup>

The demand for SindhuDesh was diluted at the meeting by Syed himself, by linking it with the demands of Balochis, Seraikis, and Pakhtuns, who may not accept his advice. This linkage of Sindhis with others meant that Syed was recommending a confederation.<sup>10</sup> The meeting exposed cracks within the association of the tainted Sindhi nationalist movement, and the fragile unity of their organization. Furthermore, Jam eroded the authenticity and purity of the struggle. Jam was a Sindhi Machiavelli, one with the talent and capacity to first create a monster, then make him dance to his tune, and finally demolish him at will. The result of his brief but profitable encounter with Syed would have pleased

Islamabad on the one hand, and devastated the rank and file of Sindhi nationalists on the other. If the Nishtar Park meeting is seen in this perspective, everything falls into place. If he could reach the pinnacle of his power without a party label by betraying PPP, rehabilitate his loyalty to his spiritual mentor, the Pir of Pagaro, whom he had betrayed earlier on to join PPP, get his murder trial washed out, refurbish his dwindling fortune, deny the PPP majority the fruits of power, and deal with MQM using extraordinary skill and finesse, he could undoubtedly be trusted to handle Syed with delicate care and keep the SindhuDesh Movement in suspended animation during his tenure.<sup>11</sup>

The Nishtar Park meeting was attended by Jam's special assistant Ghazi Salahuddin as his representative. Among the politicians present were Hussain Bakhsh Narejo, representing the Awami Tehrik led by provincial minister Ismail Rahu, and Mairaj Muhammad Khan, representing Qaumi Mahaz-i-Azadi. Dr Qadir Magsi, chief of the Jiye Sindh Tehrik Progressive Party (JSTPP), had issued an appeal from his detention cell to boycott the meeting. Dr Mir Alam Marri, president of the Jiye Sindh Students Federation, had also appealed for a boycott. So had all of Abdul Waheed Aresar's faction of the Jiye Sindh Tehrik (JST), except for Syed Ghulam Shah, who supported G.M. Syed. Gul Muhammad Jakhrani's faction of JST also supported Syed, however many units of Jakhrani's faction boycotted the meeting. The reason for boycotting the meeting was that once again, Syed had compromised his movement by cavorting with an unscrupulous tyrant who had crushed democratic Sindhi aspirations. In this instance, instead of Zia, it was Jam, who along with other anti-Sindhi and anti-PPP forces such as the Islami Jamhoori Ittehad, headed by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, were bent upon turning Sindh into a colony of Punjab and destroying the Sindhi nationalist movement. Conspicuous by their absence also were Hameeda Khuhro, who had been a front ranking Sindhi nationalist in the past, and Awami Tehrik chief Rasul Bux Palijo, signifying their disapproval of Syed's manipulation. Khuhro later joined Nawaz's faction of the Pakistan Muslim League.

Two days after the Nishtar Park meeting, on 19 January 1992, Syed was arrested and put on trial for sedition. This was an anti-climax to the Jam strategy of handling the determined Syed, who did not budge from his extremist position, despite Jam's gentle persuasions. The ailing Jam must have lost his nerve on receiving angry signals from Islamabad, strong reactions from MQM, and panicky reports from his ministers and intelligence sleuths. He ordered Syed's arrest and trial for sedition.

This was a unique trial in the history of Pakistan in that the government would not proceed with its case, while the accused pressed for a hearing in order to achieve maximum political mileage, promote his philosophy of SindhuDesh, unite and enlarge his following, and perpetuate his role as the martyr of Sindhi nationalism. Many methods were employed to postpone the case but the one that worked well was to get the trial judge to become sick on the day of the hearing without any advance notice. Finally, Syed decided that he would submit himself to a trial at the bar of public opinion, and published his defence in the shape of a book entitled *The Case of Sindh – G. M. Syed's Deposition for the Court*. The contents of his book, which runs over three hundred pages, must have been anticipated by the trial judge, who wisely opted not to proceed with the case and write a judgement. It was a unique case indeed, where the accused finally submitted himself to the people's court after chasing the prosecutor and the judge.

In Syed's book, his defence is hardly a defence as he pleads guilty without any reservation, which could have been stated in one sentence. The book takes the reader through G.M. Syed's political journey prior to independence, his attempts to unite Hindus and Muslims, the exploitation of Sindhi Muslims by Hindu money-lenders, his disappointment with the Congress party, his disappointment with Sindhi feudals and political turncoats, his joining the Muslim League, his demand for the partition of India, his battles with the Muslim League leadership over the issue of provincial autonomy and party tickets, his expulsion from the Muslim League, his defeat at the general elections in 1946 through rigging, his attempts to work within

the federation of Pakistan, his approaches to Wali Khan and the latter's rebuff, his attempt to save the federation in 1971, his attempt to influence Bhutto's policies, his initiative with Altaf Hussain to forge a Sindhi-Mohajir alliance, and his final disappointment with Pakistan culminating in his demand for SindhuDesh. There is also a lot of superfluous and irrelevant material which he has included as a matter of record in this book, which is his final testament.

Jam passed away soon thereafter in 1992. His successors let events drift and follow their own course. Syed's health also deteriorated; he was not satisfied with the treatment he was receiving while in detention. This stalemate continued till he died on 25 April 1995 in a government hospital, which served as a jail for him. He had been in coma for thirty-nine days. Crowds of young Sindhi students squatted in and around the hospital, round the clock, praying for his health. Four days before his death, he was offered to be released on bail so that he may get the medical attention of his choice. However, the offer was rejected. Hence Syed Ghulam Murtaza Shah, known to everyone as G.M. Syed, at the age of ninety-two, remained confined in jail while in a coma and died in prison under trial for sedition. He had joined the ranks of those Pathan, Balochi, and Bengali nationalists who had faced similar trials before him, the only difference being that while their trials were washed away by political earthquakes that swallowed up the rulers, Syed's trial was left to the mercy of God.

Syed's death has created a gap in the political, social, and spiritual life of Sindh. This loss was mourned by Sindh in general, and by the Sindhi nationalists in particular. From among his contemporaries, no one was alive to pay homage to the departed leader. Yusuf Haroon the eldest son of Abdullah Haroon, had become an active politician after his father's demise in 1942. He had developed a close working relationship with Syed for a while, and even after parting way with him in 1946, he remained a keen and perceptive observer of Syed's political struggles. Among the many eulogies written for Syed on his demise, Yusuf Haroon's is the best, which has been reproduced in Appendix IV.

## NOTES

1. Cross-border trade (smuggling) was unofficially relaxed. *Bara* markets in smuggled goods flourished in the tribal areas and in Peshawar, Rawalpindi, Quetta, Karachi, and other places. Pathans were inducted into high-level civil and military jobs. Zia's Afghan policy encouraged drug smuggling and gun running. Millions of Pathans were encouraged to migrate to Sindh and fill the gap between transport businesses and jobs in industry and trade. Per capita, the Pathans may be the richest people in Pakistan.
2. The conspiracy to secede from Pakistan was allegedly hatched in 1967.
3. For details read *The Frontier Gandhi* by Korejo. pp. 203, 204.
4. G.M. Syed, *The Case of Sindh*, p. 184. Gives full text of J.A. Rahim's letter.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 294-300. Also see Khan, Sultan M, *Memoirs and Reflections*. London Centre for Pakistan Studies, 1977, pp. 411-12. The author asserts that Bhutto never really meant to send Syed on a mission to India and used the play to neutralize his nationalist stance.
6. *Dawn*, Karachi, 21-09-1990.
7. *Ibid.*
8. M.H. Askari, 'G.M. Syed's Post-release posture', *Dawn* 30-09-1990.
9. G.M. Syed, *The Case of Sindh*, p. 204.
10. Wali Khan was no longer an advocate of independence. Also Syed stepped down to confederation. *See, Dawn*, Karachi, 21-09-1990.
11. The Jam was one of the accused in the case of murder of a group of Hurs near Sanghar town during the first PPP rule (1972-77). The murder estranged his relations with Pir Pagaro. His rise to power washed out the case and re-established his image with the Pir.

## EPILOGUE

In a book that is devoted to projecting the struggle of G.M. Syed, any reference to a constitutional proposal which was not forcefully presented by him at any time during his life, is not called for. But a reference to this subject becomes relevant in the context of his struggle for the rights of Sindhis. The rights of Sindhis can be secured in more ways than one. Independence is one of the ways. However, a blueprint for securing such an independence was neither indicated by the proponent of SindhuDesh, nor was it possible for him to do so. Independence of a territory like Sindh cannot be achieved through any other means except war, and Syed knew as much as anyone else that war was completely out of the question. He had hinted at many possibilities in his interviews, all of which were vague, impractical, and over-optimistic. Therefore, it was not surprising that the movement for the achievement of his goal did not get off the ground. It impressed a lot of students as long as they remained in their colleges and universities. However, most of them discarded the idea after entering practical life. A section of educated Sindhis continued to support the movement but such support could not be translated into any concrete shape. There is no evidence of any assessment, analysis, or accountability carried out within the movement to pinpoint the causes of its failure. On the contrary, there is ample evidence that the movement broke up into factions during the lifetime of its founder. After his demise, attempts were made to unite the various factions. Yet, there has been no visible progress except occasional statements, which have no practical value.

A fair conclusion based on the performance of the Jiye Sindh Movement would be that the people of interior Sindh do not consider SindhuDesh a viable option. Such a conclusion is supported by the voting pattern of rural Sindhis. That being the

case, the leaders of the movement ought to consider other options for the restoration of the rights of Sindhis. One option is to agitate for a confederal status of Pakistan. This option formed the heart and soul of the Lahore Resolution of 1940. It also formed the core of the 1943 Resolution, introduced by Syed and passed by the Sindh Assembly, without which there would have been no Pakistan. The provision of autonomous and sovereign units was omitted by the Muslim League's Delhi Convention of 1946 without any mandate to do so.<sup>1</sup> A struggle for confederation is entirely constitutional in nature and qualifies for support from a larger section of Sindhi leadership.

The confederal scheme was originally floated by Mumtaz Ali Bhutto in 1984 and 1985, in an outline issued on behalf of his Sindhi-Baloch-Pushtoon front. Later the front failed to muster enough support from outside Sindh, and its founder converted it into the Sindh National Front. This front has been in the political field for a decade, yet it has not made even a solitary dent in the popularity of federalist parties like PPP or PML (N). Currently, the front is represented by one member in the provincial assembly. While there are many reasons for its lack of appeal, Sindhis have traditionally supported only the mainstream federal parties and once the pattern is set, it is not easy to change. Mainstream federal parties have the advantage of long-established constituencies. When in power, they used the state apparatus and electronic media to consolidate themselves. Lately, money has played a vital role in electing a favoured party. The 1992 general elections were rigged by the establishment to defeat PPP, and bring its rival, the IJI coalition, into power. Some politicians have become multi-millionaires at taxpayers' expense and their electability has been assured on that basis. Illegal money, acquired through smuggling, tax-evasion, black marketing, kickbacks, and corruption, is now freely used to make or break parties and governments. These new tactics have overtaken issue-oriented politics.

In such a situation, parties like Sindh National Front and Jiye Sindh Tehrik have no chance of attaining success, at least in the near future. But this era of money-corrupted politics cannot be a

permanent pattern. It must run its course and consume itself out. Money can purchase electoral success but it cannot purchase people's conscience. Besides, PPP is now facing a difficult challenge from PML (N) and the greater the challenge, the greater the chance that a third party can steal the show. At present there is no single third party but many small parties, which cancel each other out in the electoral race. A third party can only be built on the basis of a viable option. In this context, a confederation, as presented by Mumtaz Ali Bhutto, definitely qualifies as a viable option. It is a goal whose achievement is within the realm of possibility and is worth struggling for. It is justified on historical grounds. It is worth fighting for in a democratic manner within the framework available under the constitution. It can be debated on the floors of assemblies and at some point, in judicial forums.

If the confederation idea gains popularity in Sindh, its popularity can also spread to Balochistan and the Frontier province. Once that stage is completed, Punjab will have to agree to cooperate in amending the constitution. The drawback of the proposal is that it is still stuck in the ground in Sindh where it is needed most. Can the Jiye Sindh leadership see the logic of the confederation idea and reformulate their strategy? They owe it to Sindh to see the problems of Sindh in perspective. They have to weigh the pros and cons and face the reality. They must banish sentimentalism and idealism and obtain a realistic grip on the problem, as it exists today, with all its manifestations, inside and outside Sindh. They have lost twenty-five precious years in chasing shadows which do not exist. How can they become future statesmen if they for ever persist in their folly?

Jiye Sindh leaders acknowledge Mumtaz Bhutto's role in passing the Sindhi Language Bill in the Sindh Assembly while he was the Chief Minister in 1972. They are also aware that Mumtaz Bhutto lost his office on account of this controversial bill. The author was seated near Syed in the visitor's gallery during the National Assembly debate on the language issue at the time when Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was delivering his historic speech defending the bill. Syed praised the speech

during one of his private conversations with Bhutto. At that time, Sindhis had declared Mumtaz Bhutto a hero. Where are those Sindhis today?

When Mumtaz Bhutto announced his confederation proposal in 1984, the logical course for him would have been to get Syed's support beforehand, or at least initiate a dialogue with him on the basis that Syed himself had preached confederation in 1972.<sup>2</sup> It is possible that Syed had changed his position since then, but it would have definitely satisfied his ego and impressed his Jiye Sindh followers. It is also possible that Mumtaz was prevented by his own ego to initiate a dialogue with the Jiye Sindh leadership. Much of the suffering of Sindhis can be traced to the ego of their leaders. In any case, while General Ziaul Haq ruled, Syed was in a strange frame of mind. He was optimistic that the longer the generals ruled, the sooner would SindhuDesh materialize.<sup>3</sup> Secondly, Syed had developed a hatred for any politician who had been closely associated with Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. The author is convinced that Syed's soul would now endorse a merger between Jiye Sindh Tehrik and Sindh National Front on the platform of confederation.

Sindhi nationalists have suffered more on account of their internal brawls than at the hands of their political foes. As long as such internecine quarrels occur, they will never be able to achieve their goals. They have always lacked strong, decisive leadership with democratic roots. Syed was basically a mystic and it was beyond his creed to enforce order and discipline. As a united Sindhi nationalist movement, they must begin to organize, expand, and strike firm democratic roots. They have no other options. Under a federation they have suffered irreparably while independence is out of the question. There is no alternative but confederation.<sup>4</sup>

Will Mohajirs cooperate and support the demand? Most likely they will not. But their lack of support need not cause dismay. Whereas, SindhuDesh is an anathema to the vast majority of Sindhis and the entire Mohajir community, confederation will at least qualify for negotiation. A section of Mohajirs, which has been receptive to Sindhis, and who also feel suppressed by

the Punjabi establishment, will open their minds to this idea, provided Sindhis can unite and negotiate with them. Coexistence between Sindhis and Mohajirs is inevitable. It is a compulsion of history. They must find a common basis for it within Sindh, because living under a federation for fifty years has not helped. Conflict between Sindhis and Mohajirs cannot be resolved by a weak, powerless, and impoverished provincial government. A fully autonomous government of Sindh will have the resources to address itself to their common and individual problems.

A close scrutiny of Mohajir politics under MQM reveals that Mohajirs do not possess the faintest idea of what is happening to the rural Sindh. Mohajirs have been busy counting their votes in Karachi, Hyderabad, Mirpurkhas, Nawabshah, Tando Adam, Sukkur, and elsewhere. This vote counting syndrome dates back to the formative years of Pakistan when their leaders like Liaquat Ali Khan, Chaudhry Khaliqz Zaman, Z.H. Lari, I. I. Chundrigar, M. A. H. Ispahani, and many others, had high political calibre but no constituency. Due to the non-assimilation of the Mohajirs with the Sindhis, they could not create any constituency in Sindh. So they kept on postponing the elections, running the country without a mandate, and, in the meanwhile, creating conditions like Karachi's separation and encouragement for massive immigration to build up separate Mohajir constituencies. Now that Mohajirs have achieved that goal to their satisfaction, and gained their political clout, they have to change their attitude and join Sindhis in facing the problems of Sindh, which concern both Mohajirs and Sindhis.

Rural Sindh is experiencing a major shortage of water needed for crops and yet urban Sindh has been receiving an uninterrupted supply for drinking, cooking, washing, bathing, and even irrigating home gardens, public gardens, and roadside plantations. The rural-urban bond has existed since time immemorial and it has been kept intact irrespective of who dominates urban Sindh. This bond must be strengthened and reciprocated by uniting urban Sindh and rural Sindh in their demand for a constitutional dispensation which makes Sindh self-reliant, and establishes meaningful local government in

urban and rural areas with viable institutions responsive to public needs.

Long ago, Syed had foreseen the adverse consequences of Sindhi-Mohajir strife. He made approaches to Altaf Hussain during the Zia regime (1977-88) to forge a common stand to secure the rights of Sindh. But Altaf saw Mohajir rights in isolation from Sindhi rights and pursued his separatist agenda through a separatist party. He saw everything through a Mohajir perspective and believed that Mohajir rights had been usurped by Sindhis. It took him two decades of futile agitation and political terrorism to realize that both Mohajirs and Sindhis are common victims of exploitation and that both must unite to confront the usurper. This turning point in his perception was brought about by the result of the 1998 census, which, in his view, had been rigged to show a smaller Mohajir population than the actual figure.

Since the main plank of MQM politics has been the numerical strength achieved through unchecked immigration, the census result posed a challenge and shook Altaf into action. He made approaches to the Jiye Sindh leadership and offered his support. Under his telephonic instructions from London, MQM leaders Anis Qaimkhani, Anis Advocate, Dr Farooq Sattar and Shoaib Bukhari, held a meeting on 16 July 1998 at Haider Manzil with Jiye Sindh leaders, Imdad Muhammad Shah, Bashir Khan Qureshi, Abdul Waheed Aresar, Jalal Mahmood Shah and Shafiq Muhammad.<sup>5</sup> Following the MQM-Jiye Sindh meeting, a joint committee, consisting of four members from each party, was set up to formulate a common strategy for a joint action on major issues, namely, the Kalabagh Dam, share of Sindh in the National Finance Commission, and the 1998 census. In his telephone call to Jalal Mahmood Shah, Altaf Hussain recalled his Sindhi-Mohajir unity call made on 8 August 1986 at the Nishtar Park meeting and added that his call was not liked by the establishment (meaning Ziaul Haq) which wanted to divide the people of Sindh.<sup>6</sup>

This sudden and unexpected initiative made in the reverse direction (previous initiatives were invariably made by Sindhis)

aimed at rapprochement between MQM and Jiye Sindh Tehrik raised many eyebrows and many expectations; what prompted MQM to make this approach to Jiye Sindh in 1998 when it had spurned similar approaches by Syed in the past? Altaf has an effective presence in the elected forums. So have Sindhis in the mainstream parties, one of which, namely PML (N) is ruling the country and the province in coalition with MQM at present. Why ignore them and approach a party with marginal presence in the electoral forums? Altaf's initiative has been the subject of press comments. A sample of such comments is reproduced here:<sup>7</sup>

### Marriage of convenience

It is indeed a happy augury that two diametrically opposed parties of Sindh representing the Urdu- and Sindhi-speaking people which had been at daggers drawn for almost twelve years, have finally joined hands to wage a joint struggle for the rights of Sindh.

The rapprochement between the Jiye Sindh Qaumi Mahaz (JSQM) and the Muttahida Qaumi Movement is a good sign although it has come as a rude shock to a large number of Urdu- and Sindhi-speaking people.

It appears that so far the Muttahida and JSQM have entered into an agreement to fight against the construction of Kalabagh Dam, national census results, and National Finance Award but there must be more to it which has not been made public so far. There are many 'ifs and buts' which need to be answered and quite a few people from both sides are extremely sceptical about the success of the agreement. The questions being asked here are that is the JSQM the sole representative of the Sindhi-speaking people and does it enjoy enough support to impalement the agreement. It will be pertinent to point out here that there are more than half a dozen parties and splinter groups among the Sindhi people who do not see eye to eye with the JSQM and some of these parties are no less powerful than the JSQM. To quote an instance, the Sindh Taraqi Pasand Party, headed by Dr Qadir Magsi, and Awami Tehrik, led by Rasool Bux Paliyo, are equally popular among the Sindhi masses. Sindh National Front, led by former Sindh Chief Minister Mumtaz

Ali Khan Bhutto, also has strong pockets in upper Sindh where it holds complete sway. Then there are Jiye Sindh Mahaz, led by Abdul Khaliq Junejo, Sindh Democratic Party of Yousuf Leghari and Abrar Qazi, Jiye Sindh Qaumparast Party, Jiye Sindh Inqalabi Party, Sindh Sagar Party, Jamiati-i-Ulema-i-Sindh, and some other groups.

It will be interesting to note that JSQM has not cared to join any alliance and has been operating solo. The other party which has refused to formally announce support for any alliance is the Sindh National Front. Dr G.M. Bhurgari and Dr Qadir Magasi have already constituted an anti-Kalabagh Dam Action Committee with all the other groups as its members. The other front comprises PPP, ANP, Awami Tehrik and Sindh Democratic Party. Individually or jointly all these parties and groups are struggling against the Kalabagh Dam, national census results, and National Finance Award. However, JSQM is loath to join any alliance or front and has not cared to take any other nationalist party into confidence before entering into a covenant with the Muttahida.

Thus it is quite obvious that although the objectives are the same but no other nationalist party will support the JSQM as they still have their reservations about the sincerity of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement. As far as the latter is concerned, it can be said without any fear of contradiction that it represents the overwhelming majority of Urdu-speaking people. However, it cannot be claimed that it represents all the Urdu-speaking people and cracks are further likely to develop following the agreement between the Muttahida and the JSQM. In fact the Urdu-speaking people cannot reconcile to the ideology of the JSQM which is committed to the creation of an independent sovereign SindhuDesh. It is a foregone conclusion that any Urdu-speaking person cannot and will not support this ideology.

It is not only SindhuDesh but there are other controversial matters on which the two parties do not see eye to eye with each other. For instance, the Muttahida has always stood for the repatriation of stranded Pakistanis in Bangladesh whom the JSQM sarcastically calls 'Biharis'.

Furthermore the JSQM has repeatedly declared in unequivocal terms that all those who have migrated to Sindh after 1954, will have to leave Sindh. Altaf Hussain cannot afford to agree to this proposal. The Muttahida has also lost considerable ground by supporting the

extension of the quota system by another twenty years, which is an anathema to the majority of the Urdu-speaking people.

By changing its nomenclature into Muttahida Qaumi Movement, this party at least on paper also claims to represent the other communities—Punjabis, Pathans, Balochs, and Seraikis and has also set up offices in all the provinces of the country. The question is: has the Muttahida taken the other communities into confidence before entering into an agreement with the JSQM? The general consensus is that it is only a 'marriage of convenience' and one can only hope and pray for its success.

However, no covenant can bear fruit without the consent and participation of Pakistan People's Party, which is the real force, and other nationalist groups.

If MQM had heeded the calls made by Syed, Sindh could have been in a stronger position to prevent or at least minimize the damage inflicted by these issues which are now under MQM-JSQM debate. At any rate, if the agreement had to be signed, it should have concentrated on the core issue of the restoration of autonomy, without which such issues will keep coming up time and again, as has been the case during the last half century.

Agreements signed by MQM have a chequered history. The MQM-PPP agreement of 1988 fizzled out within a few months. The MQM-IJI agreement of 1990 went up in flames with the army crackdown in 1992. The MQM-PML (N) agreement of 1997 has been under severe strains amid allegations and counter-allegations. All these agreements were signed with ruling parties, hence the goal was pursuit of power. The MQM-JSQM has no such goal, as JSQM has nothing to offer except an understanding at people's level, something which MQM has been avoiding for a long time. If this can create some understanding between Mohajirs and Sindhis, it should be considered a positive step.

Once the rural-urban hurdle is overcome, Sindhis in the mainstream parties like PPP and PML (N) are most likely to support the demand for a confederation, or at least genuine autonomy, without having to leave their parties. Mustering support from Balochistan and the Frontier will not be a problem then. If Pakhtun leader Wali Khan was lured by the lucrative

windfall of the federation in 1971, he has surely seen the other side by now.<sup>8</sup> Once the idea catches on, MQM's opposition will be diluted and may even be overcome. If this feat can be achieved, Punjab will then have little justification to oppose such a constitutional change. But, as an initial step, nationalist Sindhis must find a modicum of coexistence with the confederates, which will enable them to fight for the rights of Sindh from within. Besides, a confederation is the only hope for improving the life of rural Sindhis, whose problems cannot be addressed seriously by a Sindhi government perennially preoccupied with inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic disputes, and rendered helpless by over-centralization, which has eroded the limited autonomy granted under the federal constitution. The record of Sindhi governments in the realm of rural development has been dismal during the last half century. The reasons for this can be traced to misguided priorities, incorrect use of funds, and weakened provincial authority.

Under the federal system, powers have only trickled down to the provinces. This trickle stops at the provincial level and ceases to filter down to the local authorities who in any case are not elected. That explains why local governments have been powerless to the extent of being non-existent. Democracy that does not begin at the grassroots cannot flourish and prosper with strong roots. Even Karachi's Metropolitan Corporation, which could have evolved into a viable city government, cannot function effectively because of its powerlessness. This stalemate has persisted for fifty years. The solution lies in the redistribution of powers between the central government and provincial governments, under a confederal system, so that the provinces can delegate adequate powers to the local governments.

As explained earlier, Mumtaz Bhutto's confederal plan has remained dormant for over a decade. There is a need for a greater effort by this party to educate and galvanize the people on its merits and enlist the support of the press and intelligentsia through public meetings, press conferences, seminars, discussions, and symposia held in all the cities and towns of Sindh. Above all, it calls for reaching a consensus within and

outside Sindh. It is a sound formula which deserves an overwhelming endorsement in the interest of preserving and consolidating the unity of Pakistan, while providing a meaningful outlet for its diverse ethnic, linguistic, and geographical races, nationalities, and sub-national groups.

Mumtaz thinks that other parties and groups have vague ideas about autonomy. He outlined a 7-point formula for forging a single platform, namely; Pakistan comprises autonomous and sovereign units; each unit should be called a state; all states should have equal representation; power should flow from the states to the centre. A high powered commission should work out details of the formula; an independent accountability commission should be set-up. Accountability law should be amended to disqualify guilty politicians.<sup>9</sup> (*Dawn* 1.9.1998)

Sindhi nationalists have seldom agreed on a common approach, and for this reason neither have they made any significant political impact, nor received enough credit for their good work in their limited spheres. Their disunity was amply demonstrated at the Nishtar Park meeting in January 1992. In December 1993, JSM's Aresar complained that Magsi's JSTPP had changed its demand from total independence to confederation after Magsi's release from jail, even though the majority within JSTPP still favoured secession. Aresar claimed that even though JSM was a member of the United National Alliance, which stood for confederation, it believed that autonomy should be achieved first before JSM can decide to join the centre in confederation. He added that Syed sought confederation for Sindh within the entire subcontinent, namely India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. He reiterated Syed's faith in achieving his goal through non-violence and peaceful non-cooperation.<sup>10</sup>

Attempts have been made to repair the cracks within the Sindhi nationalist camp after Syed's death. On the occasion of his *chehlum*, attended by thousands of his admirers at Sann, Syed's elder son Syed Amir Haider Shah announced the merger of all the Jiye Sindh factions into a new party called Jiye Sindh Qaumi Tehrik, which would comprise JM, JST, and JSIT. The

new party was to be headed by Abdul Wahid Aresar, with Bashir Qureshi as deputy convener, Zain Shah, Syed's grandson, as coordinator, and Syed Ghulam Shah, Gul Muhammad Jakhrani, Niaz Kalani, Dr Mir Alam Marri, Shafi Karnani, Abdul Qayyum Manghi, and Shafi Burfat as members. The new party convener pledged to continue Syed's mission. Some dissidents raised slogans against the merger, which was otherwise welcomed by the leaders of other nationalist parties and groups, particularly by Pakistan Seraiki Party's (PSP) Taj Muhammad Langah.<sup>11</sup>

The unity displayed by the Jiye Sindh factions at Sann was still a far cry from the stated goal which was not only vague and uncertain, but had been further confounded by the explanation that Syed's goal was a confederation of the entire subcontinent, a goal which reduced the JSM to an exercise in futility. It was a sheer waste of the energies of Sindhi youth, who had been misguided for twenty-five years. Such futile exercises were indulged in owing to the leadership vacuum within the Jiye Sindh fraternity, and its inability to enunciate an achievable goal through constitutional means.

Sindhis have displayed unity only when the goal before them is presented in a clear-cut manner, touching their emotional chords, and posing an open challenge to their territorial existence. For example, such unity was displayed during the sudden eruption of the Mohajir threat to divide Sindh by creating a Mohajir province, variously called Jinnahpur and Mohajir land. On 29 September 1994, leaders of seven nationalist parties from across the country met for the first time at the convention of United National Alliance in Karachi. The convener was Mumtaz Bhutto, who told the one thousand nationalists gathered at the convention that all the nationalist parties and groups in and outside Sindh must resist the attempts to divide Sindh by putting a fight till death. Pledges were made by Magsi (JSTPP), Jakhrani (JST), Azizullah Boiyo (Sindh Sagar Party), and Maulana Obaidullah Bhutto (Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i-Sind). Support was pledged by Langah (Pakistan Seraiki Party) and Kamil Bangish (Mazdur Kisaan Party). Mumtaz Bhutto promised to follow it up with public meetings, starting with Larkana.<sup>12</sup> The Karachi

convention was a positive move, it was endorsed by the serious and intellectual groups among Mohajirs as well as like-minded leaders from the rest of the country. This convention and its follow-up made it abundantly clear that rural Sindhis must choose a leader who is not only a man of conviction, but a man with an analytical mind and a sound political background, a man with the ability to guide the emotions of Sindhi youth into right channels and to convince contemporary leaders in other provinces, someone who has the capacity to initiate a dialogue with Mohajirs at people's level. Mumtaz Bhutto could undertake this task provided Sindhi nationalist groups learn from their past failures, abandon their quest for impossible goals, and strengthen the ranks of United National Alliance.

In June 1998 Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif announced that Kalabagh Dam was going to be built. The entire province rose in protest, leaders of various small and big parties warned of dire consequences if the construction of dam went ahead. Mumtaz Bhutto and Rasool Bux Palijo swore that they would declare independent SindhuDesh if the construction started. Benazir Bhutto announced a protest march from Sukkur to the Sindh-Punjab border. Others threatened to cut off road and rail links with Punjab. JSQM was among the front ranks in mobilizing public opinion. Sindhi Thinkers' Forum, headed by Jalal Mahmood Shah, held a seminar in Karachi on 2 August 1998 to explain the dangers posed by the dam. The seminar was attended by representatives of all provinces, federal government, and all parties in Sindh. It was addressed by engineers, technocrats, intellectuals, and politicians belonging to diverse groups. The press played an active role.

What Sindhis and Mohajirs have to realize is that they do not have to wait for a shock to jump into action. They must deliberate upon the root cause of these occasional shocks. Rather than doing home work on the basic issue of autonomy, they are only reacting. Reactions are often too late, and can easily be dismissed as being impulsive and emotional. The longer they ignore the basic issue, the more frequent will be such shocks.

The reason Sindhi politicians tend to run into a quagmire and fail to carry the people with them may lie in the peculiar political landscape of Sindh. Almost every politician has carried a dual image of intense love and deep suspicion: Zulfikar Ali Bhutto carried this image, so did Syed, and so do Altaf Hussain and Mumtaz Bhutto. This dual image seems to be deeply ingrained in the Sindhi society. Induction of external influences through invasions, conquests, immigration, and occupation by outsiders may also have distorted people's thinking.

The tragedy of Sindh is that its problems are sought to be viewed through political prism. Since politics has become confrontational, solutions have become elusive. After independence, rural Sindh has not produced a single non-controversial person who has risen purely on humanitarian credentials, provided a healing touch, preached peace and love, and set a practical example of inter-ethnic integration. But urban Sindh has the distinction of producing Abdus Sattar Edhi and Javed Jabbar. Inspired by his own initiative Edhi has established a vast network of humanitarian service which depends mainly on private donations. Sindhis have chosen to neglect the welfare service rendered by this great man. Similarly, Javed Jabbar's *Banh Beli* project of rural welfare located in the remotest and the most inaccessible region in the Thar Desert of Sindh, is unique in its concept and scope. It could only have been conceived and undertaken by a human being who is fully devoted to the cause of human welfare. In the last half of the century, no Sindhi has ever even dreamt of such a unique project. Yet among some Sindhi *waderas*, his work has aroused jealousy and fears of encroachment by Mohajirism. Rural Sindhis have to change their perception and promote concepts represented by persons like Edhi, Jabbar, and others who provide sound and durable basis for rural-urban integration.

Last but not the least, both Sindhis and Mohajirs have the shining example of Hakim Muhammad Said who sacrificed his life in the service of humanity.<sup>13</sup> An extra-ordinary man of peace and love, a great philanthropist, humanist, educationist and an intellectual of high calibre, Hakim Said spoke fearlessly and

dedicated his mission to Sindhi-Mohajir assimilation. Only one example will suffice to show his deep commitment to this cause. On 13 January 1994, he hosted a seminar in Karachi under the auspices of Hamdard Foundation, on the subject of "Welcome to Sindh — A Glimpse of 1947". The invitation to a seminar carried a heart-warming message:

History is a witness that the land of Sindh has been the abode of saints, mystics, spiritually inspired fakirs, dervishes, learned men, intellectuals, writers, poets, thinkers, artists, and genuine people, who, for centuries, have taught lessons in love, humanism, brotherhood, peace and unity. After the creation of Pakistan, the scenes of spontaneous and affectionate welcome displayed on the soil of Sindh were reminiscent of the warm welcome given by the Ansar of Madina at the time of Hijra of the Prophet (ﷺ). This historic event elevated Sindh to the status of Madina of Second Hijra. Unfortunately, this land was struck by evil eyes. Hatred began to seep in the foundations of the edifice. The sweet melodies of Sachal Sarmast, Shah Latif and Shahbaz Qalandar were overtaken by the deafening sound of guns. The crackling of Kalashnikovs silenced the sound of soul-stirring music of the al-ghoza and shahnai. We owe it to civilization and culture to stop this sheer madness, demolish the walls of hatred and rebuild the abode of mutual love and understanding. Let us wake-up, shake our conscience, regain our sense of values, get together, recapture the spirit of mutual love, and fly the flag of peace and progress.<sup>14</sup>

The invitation ended with the famous prayer of Shah Latif, which carries his message of universal brotherhood and welfare of humanity.<sup>15</sup>

Hakim Said represented the finest human material among the Mohajirs, possessing the highest ideals for building a civilized society. He had a vision of Sindh for whose fulfilment he made a contribution which has few parallels. His voice was silenced by terrorists but message mingled with the message of Shah Latif, was heard by the Mohajirs and the Sindhis alike. Will they respond? Will they come forward to fulfill his mission?

## NOTES

1. Lahore Resolution of the All-India Muslim League (1940) demanded 'independent states in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign'. Sindh Assembly Resolution of 1943 demanded 'independent national states'. Muslim League Legislators Convention at Delhi in 1946 demanded 'a sovereign independent state.' While Lahore Resolution and Sindh Assembly Resolution were passed by competent and authorized bodies with a mandate, the Delhi Resolution was passed by a convention which had no such mandate and no authority to change the Resolutions passed by a general body and an autonomous assembly. Nor was the Delhi Resolution ratified by the two competent bodies.
2. See J.A. Rahim's 'Minister of Presidential Affairs' letter of 5 February 1972, addressed to Syed, accusing the latter of preaching confederation.
3. Mahmood Mirza, *Aj Ka Sindh* (Urdu), Sindh Today p. 73.
4. Mumtaz Ali Bhutto, *Confederation* which was a pamphlet issued on 1 January 1984, and *A Confederal Constitution for Pakistan—An Outline by the Sindhi Baloch Pushtoon Front*. August, 1985.
5. *Dawn*, Karachi 16 July 1998 and 17 July 1998.
6. *Dawn*, Karachi 21 July 1998.
7. Aziz Malik, *A Marriage of Convenience*, *Dawn*, 21 July 1998. MQM-PML alliance broke up in October 1998.
8. Wali Khan's Awami National Party quit the coalition partnership with PML (N) in 1998 when the latter opposed the renaming of NWFP as Pakhtoonkhwa.
9. *Dawn*, 1 September 1998.
10. Nafisa Hoodbhoy's article in *Dawn*, 15 December 1993.
11. Nafisa Hoodbhoy, article in *Dawn*, 27 May 1995.
12. *Dawn* Staff Report from 30 September 1994.
13. He was murdered on 17 October 1998 by a politically inspired terrorist.
14. Original invitation was in Urdu.
15. English translation of the poem containing Shah Latif's prayer is given at the beginning of the book.

# Appendix I

## A PLEA FOR PEACE AND AMITY IN SINDH

The Committee for Amity and Peace in Sindh met in Karachi on Friday and released a declaration entitled 'A Plea for Amity and Peace in Sindh'. The committee appealed to the intelligentsia and various political parties to give its contents serious thought. The following is the text of the declaration:

### Introduction

Divisive politics and defective policies sponsored and pursued by powerful interests and successive un-representative and anti-people governments, have brought Sindh to the brink of political, social, and economic disaster. The process of national integration and economic progress has been sacrificed at the altar of short sightedness and greed. In the ensuing chaos Sindh has bled profusely as its misguided children have battled among themselves, consequently drifting away from each other.

More than anything else, conflicts of understandable nature between the major cultural communities of Sindh have been blown out of proportion and imaginary causes of conflict have been added to the growing list of complaints and grievances so that:

Many Sindhi-speaking Sindhis have come to believe that:

- The Urdu-speaking Sindhis do not support them on issues that should be the concern of all Sindhis and tend to support those who act against the larger interests of Sindh.
- The Urdu-speaking Sindhis exhibit an attitude of cultural superiority that includes downgrading the Sindhi language and even its exclusion from schools in urban areas.

- There is an effort being promoted among the Urdu-speaking Sindhis at dividing Sindh on ethnic lines.

On the other hand many Urdu-speaking Sindhis have come to believe that:

- They have not been accepted as sons of the soil.
- The quota system for services and in educational institutions is an instrument of discrimination against them.
- There has been no effort to solve the civic problems of the urban areas in Sindh, which affect them exclusively.
- Since there is no visible effort at the political or intellectual level to remove the grievances and to restore normalcy in the province, it becomes the duty of every citizen to raise his or her voice against the divisive forces and to restore amity among its people.

We, the undersigned claim no more status or authority for ourselves than that of concerned citizens, who refuse to be silent observers of circumstances of which we have been prisoners for far too long.

Through a process of dialogue among persons belonging to various groups and committees of Sindh (the Sindhi- and Urdu-speaking Sindhis in particular), we have been able to formulate proposals for resolving the problems of Sindh. We offer them for the consideration of our people and their chosen representatives.

### **Provincial Autonomy/1940 Resolution**

The real crisis in Sindh can be directly traced to the violation of the Pakistan Resolution and exploitation of the concepts of Two-Nation theory, Pakistan ideology, and even of Islam, by vested interests to create an over-centralized state.

The Pakistan Resolution needs special mention because it epitomizes the human reason and political realism of those who led the struggle for independence. Recognizing that India was a multinational state cobbled into a country by imperial tactics, they enshrined the words 'Autonomy and Sovereignty' of the constituent units as the basic and cardinal principle of the Resolution to safeguard against the hegemony of majorities.

What we have seen after the creation of Pakistan is complete negation of the terms of the Union and the Resolution with the centre increasingly usurping the powers of the provinces. The people of

Sindh, because of their heterogeneous composition, have had to bear, as a result, the greatest burden of the negation of promises and disregard of the constitution.

It has been easier to set off one faction against the other in order to succeed to govern by proxy, leading yet to further sharpening of divisions among them. The question of provincial autonomy is, therefore, of paramount importance in the context of ensuring political control by the people of Sindh over matters which are, and should be, the concern of persons elected to administer the province.

We, therefore, propose that:

- The federal government should have no authority to remove provincial governments, or to dissolve provincial legislatures through an executive order, as at present. Such an action if unavoidable, should be resorted to by a resolution of the Senate passed with two-third majority.

- In order to ensure a free hand to the provinces in their lawful spheres, all federal ministries dealing with provincial subjects should be abolished. For the purpose of coordination between various provinces and the federal authorities, there should only be one ministry.

- Provincial administration, at all levels, should be run by the employees of the provincial government, and the practice of earmarking posts in the provincial governments for the officers of the central cadre should be discontinued. Further, those employees of the provincial governments who belong to any other province should be repatriated to their home province or be absorbed by the federal government.

- The appointments to the high courts, the Supreme Court, Election Commission, and of the governors, should be made with the prior approval of the Senate.

- The federal and concurrent legislative lists in the constitution should be revised to exclude such subjects which should be the concern of the provincial legislatures, specifying the federal subjects in consonance with the letter and spirit of the Pakistan Resolution.

### **Demographic Stability**

The greatest threat to the people of Sindh is the persistent influx from other provinces and other countries, jeopardizing the demographic

stability of Sindh. It is an inalienable right of the Sindhi people to remain a stable majority in their own province. It is a universally recognized principle of democracy that no cultural minority anywhere, so also in Sindh, can countenance to aspire to convert itself into a majority. We are also aware that too much damage has been caused to Sindh because of circular debates and the lack of a clear policy about migration from across the borders and from other provinces. As the policy makers have dithered, Pakistan has acquired the reputation of being one of the most open-bordered countries; according to a recent Senate discussion, there are, in Karachi alone, officially confirmed 2.5 million aliens.

In addition, there are others who have obtained national identity cards and other documents fraudulently, and are now lost in the human jungle of Karachi.

This influx into Sindh is a very serious strain on its economy and a threat to the social and political fabric of the province. We therefore, demand that the following steps be taken:

- The open borders of the country should be sealed forthwith and laws of immigration implemented strictly.

- Aliens residing in Sindh illegally should be apprehended and deported. They are not only a strain on the scarce provincial resources but are also a serious threat to the security of the country.

- The laws and rules relating to the issues of domicile certificate, national identity card, etc. should be made more meaningful.

- There should be a national consolidated and computerized Citizens' Register of all Pakistani nationals, which should record their provinces and district of permanent residence. The Citizens' Register should form the basis for:

- Issue of national identity card.

- Issue of passport.

- Issue of domicile certificate.

- Issue of permanent residence certificate.

- Voters' list for national and local elections.

Registration with Provincial Employment Exchange for issuing work permits to all those seeking employment, including self-employment.

- A statutory authority should be created in Sindh for monitoring immigration dangers and ensuring the demographic stability in Sindh, and to administer its Provincial Employment Exchange.

## **Constitutional Amendments**

Article 15 of the Constitution be amended to read as follows:

Every citizen shall have the right to remain in, and, subject to any reasonable restriction imposed by law in the public interest, enter and move freely throughout Pakistan, and to reside and settle in any part thereof, provided that the rules in regard to domicile, permanent residence, work permit, imposed by the province concerned shall be strictly applicable in the case of a citizen who intends to reside in a province other than his province of original domicile.

In order to exclude jurisdiction of the federal legislature in respect of migration from or into, or settlement in a province, Item 5 of the federal legislature list, Part I, be amended to read as follows: 'Migration from or into, or settlement in, the federal capital.'

The Constitution should provide that:

'Citizens shall cast their votes in the elections in their district of permanent residence where their names are enrolled in the voters' list.'

## **Legal Amendment**

- No resident in Sindh, except one who is born in Sindh or one or both of whose parents were born in Sindh, shall be entitled to vote, unless he or she has lived in Sindh for a period of not less than fifteen years, after the grant of domicile in their province.

- In amending the rules in respect of domicile/permanent residence certificate, appropriate provisions shall be made to secure the economic right of the people of each province by requiring that:

All those seeking employment must register themselves with the Provincial Employment Exchange of one province but if desirous of seeking employment in another province, shall apply for and obtain a Work Permit in that province, prior to obtaining employment or engaging in self-employment.

## **Neutrality of Armed Forces**

Neutrality of Armed Forces in provincial matters has often been questioned. On many occasions, armed forces have been used to

subvert provincial autonomy in the name of national integrity, disregarding the fact that such use of armed forces, or the image of armed force as representing only one or two of the federating units, is by itself a danger to national integrity. In order to invest the armed forces with a truly national character, two measures are proposed:

- The provincial quota applicable in the case of other federal services should be made applicable to armed forces as well. Till such time as all the provinces have attained representation according to the quota, there should be no recruitment from those provinces which have representation in excess of that quota.
- On the pattern of Frontier Constabulary and Balochistan Levies, there should be a similar armed force for Sindh, to be recruited from the province for dealing with extraordinary situations including anti-smuggling operations and checking illegal immigrants.

### **Induction of Representative Bodies**

Many a grievance and the feeling of neglect have been caused by the bureaucratic stranglehold at the grass roots level. There is no sense in governance through bureaucracy at central level; the remedy lies in provincial autonomy. It is time to transfer power to the people by devolution to local levels, and to let them manage their affairs through their representatives.

We, therefore, propose that divisions, districts, and tehsils, should be administered by elected bodies just as Local Governments are administered everywhere else in democratic countries, and pyramidal commissariats and their command system be abolished, giving democracy a fair opportunity to prosper and flourish as fully as possible.

### **Conclusion**

For the present, of course, we know that the areas of grievance among the people in Sindh form a sizeable carryover, but it was time that serious effort was set afoot to reduce and reverse the drift.

Communal forces who relish separation have to be challenged to a halt and be overcome. Despite everything, we are, on aggregate,

sensible people, and can, and must, call off dissonance and arrive at a national understanding through national politics.

The human values by which we swear and the culturally felicitous land and soil to which we all belong are bound to induce greater love and reinforce trust amongst us, which alone are the basis of good and peaceable society. Let the beginning of such a peaceful living in Pakistan be made from Sindh, where at this time it is most needed.

It is our earnest desire that all poor children must have unhindered access to education and endeavour in life (jobs, business, opportunities, etc.) on merit, albeit those amongst us who are disadvantaged may look for and avail a firm right to assurance and protection. May our children also learn both Sindhi and Urdu freely, and let these be their common languages and find in due course their historically valid place in offices and curricula of the province.

In these matters again it is the national political parties who can come together and find fair and just arrangements viable, practicable and enforceable.

But we also know, and this would again affirm with all emphasis at our command, that any good and peaceable human living in society is never possible through communal politics based in exclusivist platforms of ethnicity, sect, or even religion, much less on any fancied level of 'Mohajirism' or 'Ansarism.' Religion, ethnicity, and selective groups of all sorts invoke the most fervent and even wild emotions in their proponents and opponents, more often than not, they pose non-negotiable warrior postures and hence stand self-rejected as propositions in modern democracy for any viable dialogue or peaceful settlement. It is, therefore, absolutely impermissible that these may get politicized anywhere in the world, in any civilized society, today.

It would be in the fitness of things, therefore, that parties and organizations of communal and sectarian ilk change their names and style of work, and adopt national politics as their credo. We must begin working, for once, on specific manifestoes for socio-economic betterment of the people, together with enforcement of the rule of law, equality of justice, equality of rights of citizens, and observance of human rights including national electorate covering all sectors of society, specially the disadvantaged.

These are the proposals that we recommend, and these are the pleas we earnestly make, to our people. We do not have the authority to implement what we have suggested. This is the duty of the powers and responsibilities of political parties. But we do believe that we have the authority of truth and strength of conviction.

Hence we appeal to our national political parties, in power and in the opposition, the leaders, intellectuals, makers of public opinion, and indeed, to every citizen, to support our effort and to create an environment where truth, justice, and tolerance will prevail.

*Signed by 100 intellectuals—Sindhis and Mohajirs  
Dawn, 13 March 1993*

## Appendix II

### G.M. SYED—MAN OF CONVICTION

The death of G.M. Syed, the veteran political leader and founder of the Jiye Sindh Movement, brings to an end a significant chapter in the history of the country, particularly that of Sindh. Leaving aside the political philosophy the nationalist leader preached and practised, he exerted on his times an impact not many politicians of the subcontinent could equal.

The life of Syed Ghulam Murtaza Shah had many factors. On the one hand he was a politician who held fast to his convictions regardless of the hardship and suffering this entailed. On the other hand he was a prolific writer with a deep sense of dedication to the art of writing. But the intensity of his political commitment easily overshadowed his creativity as a writer and finally he came to be identified as a politician rather than a writer or historian.

Like most Syed families, G.M. Syed's forefathers migrated to Sindh in the early fifteenth century during the days of the Samma dynasty (1351-1520) and settled in Matiari. Later, for suppressing an uprising, Samma rulers awarded them the *jagir* of Sann in the present day district of Dadu.

Born on January 17, 1904 at Sann, Syed was brought up in a traditional family where learning was the only occupation the family was known for. He was only sixteen months old when his father Syed Haider Shah was murdered by some unknown people and he was brought up by the other elders of the family.

Schooled at a *mullah maktab* (theology school) in Sann, he continued his studies in religion, logic, literature, and history under Akhund Mian Saman, then a noted scholar of the region. Later, he studied at Sann High School where Naraindas and Maulvi Allah Bakhsh taught him English and Arabic. He showed interest in music, drama, and other fine arts even at this early stage of life. The man who introduced him to politics was Hamid Ali Hallai under whose guidance

Syed began studying contemporary politics, especially the condition of Muslims at that time.

This was a period when the Muslims of undivided India had begun a political struggle for their rights. In Sindh, newspapers like *Al-Amin*, *Al-Haq*, and *Al-Wahid* were raising their voice for Muslim rights. The Khilafat Movement was also attracting the Muslims' attention. Syed began his political life in 1919 at the age of sixteen. At the Khilafat Conference in Larkana in February of 1920, he met Maulana Azad, Maulana Abdul Bari Farangimehli, Maulana Shaukat Ali, and other Khilafat leaders. He also formally joined the Sindh Khilafat Committee and began playing a leading part in its activities in Sindh.

In 1919, he founded Al-Muslimeen, an organization aimed at creating awakening among Muslims of Sindh, introducing social reforms and calling upon them to take part in trading activities. In 1924, under the leadership of Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola he convened an educational conference at Hyderabad which was also attended by advocate Noor Mohammed, founder of Noor Mohammed High School, Syed Miran Mohammed Shah, and Sir Shahnawaz Bhutto.

In 1925, he formed an organization of farmers to protect the rights of the growers of the Karachi district. In 1926 he founded an organization for promoting the interests of the growers of Mahal Kohistan, an arid zone and neglected area of Dadu district. These activities extended to the founding of the Lower Sindh Cooperative Bank in 1930.

In 1929, he was actively involved in founding the Karachi Rural Women Association with Ms Himmie Mehta and Ms Rukmani Adwani.

By that time the peasant movement had started gaining popularity and a new element was entering the politics of Sindh. Syed convened the Sindh Hari Conference in Mirpurkhas in 1930 which was presided over by Jamshed Nusserwanji Mehta. Thus was laid the foundation of the peasant movement in Sindh, later joined by bureaucrat turned peasant leader Haider Bakhsh Jatoi.

Despite being preoccupied with political affairs Syed continued social work in the early thirties and remained associated with a number of organizations including the Young Men's Muslim Association, Theosophical Society, Anjuman Taraqi-i-Urdu Library, the Fisherman's Society, the Sindhi Sahat Society, Sindh Historical Society, Karachi Garden Committee, Natural History Society, and Muslim Provident Fund.

Although his political life began at quite an early age, his political thinking crystallized during his association with the Khilafat Tehrik. In 1925 he was elected to the Local Board of Manjhand, followed by his election as vice president of the District Local Board in Karachi. His association began with his entry in its Youth League in 1930.

The movement of the separation of Sindh from Bombay presidency was gaining momentum. He took an active part in it. The three conferences held in 1928 at Karachi and Hyderabad led by Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah, Allama Yousuf Ali, and Sheikh Abdul Majid Sindhi, in fact marked a new chapter in this movement.

In 1933 Syed decided to contest provincial elections from the platform of some political party. This led to an understanding with Sir Shahnawaz Bhutto, and they formed the People's Party. But as Mr Bhutto was elected to the Bombay Presidency Council, the party could not endure. In 1936 Syed joined Haji Abdullah Haroon in founding the Ittehad Party, which later, with one faction calling itself the Muslim Political Party, was led by Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah. Syed contested the 1936 election from the platform of the Ittehad Party and won. Later, along with his friends, he joined the Muslim league. With his friends like Mohammad Hashim Gazdar and Mohammed Ayub Khuhro, Syed worked hard to establish the Muslim League in Sindh, and his success was evident from the 1938 session of the Sindh Muslim League held in Karachi. During the communal violence on the issue of Masjid Manzilgah, he agitated against government politics and fought for Muslim rights, for which he was imprisoned for two months.

For some time he worked as a minister in the Sindh government but in 1939 he quit and took up organization work in Sindh. Earning a place on the All-India Muslim League Working Committee in 1942, he was elected President of Sindh Muslim League. On March 3, 1943, he moved the historic Pakistan Resolution in the Sindh Assembly and delivered a forceful speech. Finally, the Sindh Assembly passed the resolution, thus Sindh became the first province in the subcontinent to demand partition. In the meantime, differences developed between Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah and Allah Bakhsh Soomro over the issue of ministries. This led G.M. Syed to make an alliance with the Congress.

After the creation of Pakistan, Syed formed another political party to fight for the cause of Sindhis during the early days of Pakistan. Syed was also involved in social and literary work. In 1948, when steps were planned to transfer Karachi to the federal government,

Syed opposed the move strongly which resulted in his confinement for three months, dismissal of the Khuhro government, and appointment of Pir Illahi Bux as Chief Minister. Finally, Karachi was handed over to the federal government.

The first post-independence elections were held in 1953 which Syed contested from the platform of a new political party he had formed, Sindh Muttahida Mahaz. Seven of his fellow party members were returned to the assembly, and sat in opposition.

He was elected a member of the then West Pakistan Assembly in 1954 where he continued his efforts to undo the One Unit and acted as the leader of the opposition.

In his efforts against the One Unit, Syed mobilized the masses of Sindh to wage a struggle against it and formed the Anti-One Unit Front in 1955. This drew all parties opposing One Unit on to one platform. Headed by Syed, Front became a major force in no time. Finally, when a resolution for the dissolution of the One Unit was tabled in the then West Pakistan Assembly, adopted by 310 members, it created panic in the ruling Republican Party.

As the new elections were about to be held, and were to be fought on the issue of One Unit, General Iskandar Mirza imposed martial law. Syed saw it as a design to protect One Unit and as such opposed it. He was implicated in many criminal cases and was confined to jail till 1966.

During the period of his detention in the fifties, Syed had kept writing on a number of subjects, especially contemporary history. During a brief release from detention, he formed Bazm-i-Soofia-i-Sindh and held a number of literary conferences in the province. This organization was the forerunner to another anti-One Unit forum, now joined by Mohammed Ayub Khuhro and other leaders also. The movement against One Unit was gathering momentum among the masses. Poets like Sheikh Ayaz, Abdul Karim Gadai, Serwech Sujawali, and others composed poems ventilating the demand of the people for the restoration of Sindh. A poem by Haider Bux Jatoi, *Jiye-Sindh*, became the watchword of the movement and so Syed named his new campaign the Jiye Sindh Movement. He was jailed for another two years.

One Unit was dissolved in 1970, but after the formation of a People's Party government in 1971 Syed was again detained and the ordeal continued with short intervals till his last breath.

G.M. Syed has written fifteen books which are: *Mahal Manjhandan je Muslmanan ji Tanzeem* (Sindhi, 1937); *Need for the Separation of Executive from Judiciary* (English, 1937); *Pakistan* (Sindhi, 1941); *Naeen Sindh Laey Jido Jahad* (Sindhi and translated in English, 1947, proscribed in 1959); *Paigham-i-Latif* (Sindhi, 1951, Urdu translation 1993); *Maujoodah Siyasi Masaila* (Sindhi, 1954, proscribed in 1959); *Rehan* (Collection of letters, 1959); *Bazm-i-Soofiaey Sindh ja Khutba* (Sindhi, 1967); *Jadeed Siyasat ja Nawan Ratan* (Sindhi, 1967, proscribed in 1968); *Janab Guzariyam jan Seen* (two volumes, Sindhi, 1967); *Shah Latif joon Vayoon aeen Kafyoon* (Sindhi, 1968); *Sahar ja Singar* (Sindhi, 1969); *Jeean Ditho aa Moon* (Sindhi, 1969), *Bambayee ji Sindhi khan Azadi* (Sindhi, 1968); *Meri Kahani; Meri Zubani* (Urdu, 1993).

Sheikh Aziz

Dawn, 26 April 1995

## Appendix III

# IDEOLOGY AND THE STATE

As the twentieth century approaches its close, two ideas that held powerful sway over the minds of political thinkers though most of it are losing their hold. One is the notion of ideology, and the other a belief in the efficacy of a highly centralized state machinery in achieving the state's aims—economic development, social justice, national integration. The repudiation of the Soviet Community Party and the break up of the Soviet state were the definitive manifestation of this trend. It is interesting to review against this background and the state of the debate on the subject of Pakistan.

Our political rhetoric is replete with references to the country's ideology and its ideological frontiers. But Pakistan is a democracy, and democracy is only a framework for choosing rulers and policies in freedom. It does not sit well with notion of ideology, which is a predetermined blueprint for regulating human society. The ideological state must be authoritarian and most have, in fact, been actual dictatorships. Is there then an inner contradiction in Pakistan's body-politic between the impulse towards freedom and the urge to follow a prescribed path?

Certainly Pakistan did not start off as an ideological state. The Quaid-i-Azam expressly declined to define what kind of state—leftist, rightist, or Islamist—it was going to be. He did say, however, that it was not to be a theocratic state, i.e., it would not be ruled by priests. This is something that goes without saying in Islam, wherein there is no priesthood, established church, or infallible Pope. The struggle between the secular and the ecclesiastical took place in Christendom; in Islam, religion not being an institution, the idea of a conflict between religion and state does not have the same meaning.

The debate in Pakistan is not between religion and secularism but over two views of the relationship between state and religion and the role of religion in society. On the one hand is the Islam of tolerance,

enlightenment, and progress, and on the other Islam as enforced dogma and ritual. The contradiction is between the sort of system implicit in the principles of equality, brotherhood, and justice and a state governed by an undefined Islamic ideology—a complete and immutable (*ijtehad* being banned) code of life to be interpreted by a handful of officially appointed guardians of religious truth. The former view, embodied in the constitution, proclaims that the state should ‘enable’ the Muslims of Pakistan to order their lives according to the tenets of Islam. For the orthodox this is not good enough; they would use state power to impose behaviour and thinking that corresponds to their own concept of Islam.

Their ideology is a revivalist movement, fearful of change and rooted in narrow conservatism. On most issues of dogma and religious practice, which is their proper province, the ulema are driven by bitter schisms and ‘Islamization’ has only served to exacerbate sectarian strife to medieval levels of bigotry. The Islamist parties have little to say on questions of social justice and human rights or about the urgent and critical problems facing the people—the population explosion, drug addiction, illiteracy, and so on. During Ziaul Haq’s eleven years—the heyday of Islamization—no one came up with any specifically Islamic solutions for such problems. Most of the Islamization that took place was of a cosmetic or semantic nature—putting the *Kalima* on official letterheads using the term ‘mark-up’ instead of interest, adopting Arabic names for investment bank and leasing companies, etc. The Shariat Court’s ruling on interest, if upheld by the Supreme Court, will pose an insoluble dilemma for the nation’s economy, for no workable alternative system has yet been evolved for running an interest-free economy.

Few of the so-called Islamic measures were the result of a democratic process or public demand and were imposed, on the contrary, by ordinance or executive order. The Islamist parties have never managed to get more than a negligible fraction of the popular vote and look to sympathizers entrenched in the power structure of the country to further their aims in indirect ways. There has been a tendency in our politics to fudge ‘Islamic’ issues and to pretend that everyone is talking about the same thing when they talk about Islam. Motivated by expediency, various governments made one concession or another to parties repeatedly rejected by the electorate, often to the detriment of the principle of equality of citizenship, the rule of law and human rights. The most far-reaching of these is the power granted

by Zia's fiat to the Federal Shariat Court to strike down any law that the court holds to be un-Islamic. The bottom line is that a handful of mortal men, appointed by one man holding office at his pleasure, can lay down the law in the name of God, overriding and vetoing decisions taken by the country's elected representatives. Given Pakistan's history, one can well imagine the author of some future *coup* seeking the court's verdict that, for instance, the idea of majority rule is un-Islamic.

We have an authoritarian political tradition and a highly centralized administration. The constant in Pakistan, whatever the complexion of the regime at a given juncture, is the heavy hand of officialdom. Measures such as the Hudood Ordinance have only enlarged the scope for official arbitrariness. Privatization and deregulation are steps in the right direction for putting things right in the economic field, with the caveat that these measures are not a panacea. The counterpart in the political field should be decentralization, i.e., genuine autonomy for the provinces and, beyond that, devolution of power at the local level. The 1973 Constitution provides a fair degree of provincial autonomy but it has to operate under the Damocles' sword of the centre's power to dismiss provincial governments and assemblies—a power that has always been exercised for ulterior motives. Its removal would reduce the scope for back door politics and eventually lead to greater stability.

The district commissioner was the satrap of the raj, and now performs the same function for military rulers or, during periods of democratic rule, for the ruling party. The devolution of power to the local level is not a panacea either, but will be a step towards modernizing our society and giving meaning to democracy beyond the periodic exercise of the vote. It should also help assuage the ethnic, sectarian, and linguistic tensions that exist in various parts of the country by allowing self-expression and self-rule at the level where these things matter most.

Iqbal Akhund  
*Newsline*, March 1993

## Appendix IV

### SYED—THE GREAT MAN OF SINDH

Ghulam Murtaza Shah, the Syed of Sann, the great political doyen lives no more amid us. The man, the humanist, and the last of a generation that shaped our history, now sleeps in the eternal world where peace reigns. It may be easy to paint him as a man with a fixation and as one possessed of chronic stubbornness, yet, the fact remains that he was a man of deep convictions, an honest politician devoted to high objectives and a humanist, who spent his life in the struggle for realizing his vision—the vision of an exploitation-free and autonomous Sindh as envisaged in the Pakistan Resolution.

What the late Syed was and what role he played *vis-a-vis* Sindh and Pakistan has been debated throughout his life and will continue to be a subject of intensive research; but to humble observers like me, he was a great man who remained true to his convictions and did not mind the price he had to pay for them. All his energies and resources were pressed into the service of his commitment to his people and land. His every move and every political affiliation proceeded from that commitment. No consideration on earth could make Syed abandon his chosen path.

Although he came from a conservative orthodox Syed family owning a barren stretch of land on the bank of the Indus river and had a feudal background, Syed bore a quite different nature, and his ways were incompatible with the norms of the system he was born into. His instinct led him to struggle throughout his life for improving the lot of the people. In my early days, I clearly recall seeing Syed as a dynamic man possessing a great enthusiasm to work for the general uplift of the people and in this regard he proved true to his profession.

The Muslim League had little or no following in Sindh in 1920 through 1930 and some minor political parties and groups with a local standing represented the people. They were mostly landlords and moneyed businessmen; a very small fraction of the educated elite

were engaged. The Khilafat Tehrik appeared on the scene in post-World War I era. This led to the holding of three Khilafat conferences in 1920. Syed, considering it a platform for achieving freedom, was swayed by the movement, and despite his tender age he participated in it and became a driving force for it in Sindh.

His association with the Congress was not an accidental one. He had a clear vision backed by reasoning. He thought that Sindh could achieve freedom along with the Indian subcontinent, something that would finally lead to Sindhi emancipation. For many reasons he had a firm belief that his dreams would come true, but when he saw that the Congress was not sincere in treating Sindh at par with the other provinces, he decided to part ways with it.

Syed's dissociation with the Congress was due to the differences over the bills, which he had presented before the Sindh Assembly in 1938 after separation from the Bombay Presidency. These bills were transfers of lands, tenancy act, writing off the agricultural loans, condoning interest, and abolition of the nomination system in local bodies. In fact, these issues had been a constant source of exploitation of Sindhi Muslims who formed the majority of the population. Syed did not only author these bills but had generated enough support from among the members. Allah Bux Soomro, the then Chief Minister, who ruled with the support of Hindus and independent members, did not want to annoy the Hindu population and tried hard that Syed should withdraw the bills but he remained unmoved.

This created a stir in the high command of the Congress of which Syed was a member. To persuade him, two top leaders, Sardar Valabh Bhai Patel and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, visited Karachi on August 3, 1938. Syed stood by his commitments without bothering about the consequences. He quit the Congress a month later.

Sensing what Syed felt about the miseries of the Sindhi Muslims, the Quaid-i-Azam called upon Syed to join the Muslim League and it was at the residence of my father, Abdullah Haroon, that Syed joined the Muslim League.

Syed's joining the Muslim League may not have appeared a very significant step to many at that time, but it proved to be a turning point for the party, as he was assigned the task of popularizing the party in Sindh. I remember, everything in this regard was discussed—the funds, the man power, and the logistics. I knew Syed had the potential. The job was time-consuming and laborious and required sources but the manner Syed undertook was a remarkable feat.

Then came the incident of Masjid Manzilgah, which occurred due to the indecisiveness of the Soomro government, and could have been avoided with a little statesmanship. Due to this, the politician from Sann was jailed for two months for taking possession of the mosque site, only because the Hindus, due to their influence in the bureaucracy and the business community, had lent support to the government. But despite being in the government, Syed registered his opposition and bore the punishment for a righteous cause.

His association with the Muslim League and by virtue of it with the Quaid-i-Azam is a part of history. I know how worried Syed was about the miseries that hounded the people of Sindh. To know them, he would go to every place, meet the people, and try to understand their problems. Illiteracy, poverty, disease, and exploitation would make Syed very sad; and when back home he would make every effort to bring some kind of relief. And that would place him in confrontation with the ruling party or with those who represented the interests of the exploiters. The conflict with Allah Bux Soomro on the issues of agricultural loans, interest, and tenancy act was the main cause that led to his resignation from the Congress and the Soomro government.

His joining the Muslim League was also aimed at advancing his cause. He hoped that after the Muslim League took power it would mitigate the sufferings of the people of Sindh, especially the Muslims who suffered at the hands of landlords—both Hindus and Muslims. The Hindus' attitude was a calculated one. Through the mechanism of money-lending they would buy up the small land holdings of Muslims and finally grow into bigger landlords. Syed's struggle from the newly joined platform, the Muslim League, continued, but soon it was overtaken by other political issues, foremost among them the independence movement that was drawing to a close. The Lahore Resolution of 1940 was a positive statement of the constitutional aim of the Muslims. The resolution talked of autonomous and independent states. This was the perception Syed had about Sindh's future. He thought that it would lead Sindh to a sovereign status along with the other Muslim states in undivided India. After due consultations with his colleagues and meeting some stiff resistance from the Congress and extremist Hindu members, he tabled the Pakistan Resolution in the Sindh Assembly on March 3, 1943, the first ever demand made by any province in undivided India, solely spearheaded by Syed.

The resolution read:

This house recommends the government to convey to His Majesty's government through his excellency the Viceroy, the sentiments, and the wishes of the Muslims of this province who have religion, philosophy, social customs, literature, traditions, and political and economic theories of their own, quite different from those of the Hindus. They are justly entitled to the right, as a single separate nation, to have national states of their own carved out in the zones where they are in majority in the subcontinent of India.

Wherefore, they emphatically declared that no constitution shall be acceptable to them that will place the Muslims under central government dominated by another nation as in order to play their part freely on their own distinct lines in the order of the things to come, it is necessary for them to have an independent national status 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 and unhappy consequences.

Considering glorious services for the Muslims of Sindh and for the cause of freedom, one wonders why Syed parted ways with the Muslim League in the crucial stage of the 1946 elections. To me, this has a very simple explanation. The Quaid's personality bore an immense influence over his colleagues and the Working Committee. Occasionally, his wishes and desires were taken as party decisions. The award of party tickets during the 1946 elections that was to become a verdict on the creation of Pakistan became the main issue. Syed was not awarded party candidacy and instead, those were awarded tickets that had made little contribution in providing a firm footing to the Muslim League in Sindh. Against this, Syed revolted, made representation, and tried changing the decision by presenting his credentials, but the Quaid did not alter his decision. A defiant Syed quit the party informally, and defying the party decision, contested the election against the Muslim League candidate and lost—a decision still disputed on the allegations of ballot rigging.

The formation of Pakistan was not less joyous for all along with Syed, but he resisted the resolution of the Muslim League Working Committee of new Delhi, which had changed the contents of the demand made in the Lahore Resolution wherein the demand of creating independent national states was replaced by the demand of an independent Muslim state. Syed thought that this was a deviation from a major decision by a selected few.

And thus began his long struggle for an independent Sindh that continued till his last.

From the federalization of Karachi in 1948 to the refusal to grant evacuee property to the Sindhi Muslims and from colonization of Sindh's lands and resources to the elimination of poverty and exploitation, Syed fought for almost every moment of his life. He resisted the unilateral decision of Ayub Khuhro, and suffered the tyrannical rule of Ayub Khan and his more stubborn Governor Nawab Kalabagh and the ruthlessness of an equally unkind Yahya Khan. He withstood the harsh treatment meted out to him by Z.A. Bhutto and finally at the hands of the present government. Perhaps, he is the first leader of Sindh to have died in captivity and without even being heard by a court in which he was prosecuted for sedition.

I had long spells of discussions and short exchanges with him at various occasions during almost every period. I remember him meeting people from all parts of Sindh and from all walks of life. I still recall the kindness and sympathy with which he would deal with them and help them resolve the issues. No one who visited his place would leave without having enjoyed his hospitality. He was generous, helpful, kind, and humane, yet being a man of deep convictions.

Sindh was his life. He lived for it, preached for it, and died for it.

Yusuf Haroon

*Dawn*, 26 April 1995



# GLOSSARY

<i>Aabdar</i>	petty bureaucrat in charge of canal water
<i>Abul Kalam</i>	father of speculative theology
<i>Ahimsa</i>	one of the doctrines of Hinduism which means respect for life, both plant and animal; enjoins vegetarianism; belief in unity of all life; keystone of Indian ethics; non-violence
<i>Al-ghoza</i>	A pair of musical pipes, blow through one and breathe through the other
<i>Amirs</i>	rulers
<i>Anjuman</i>	organization; society
<i>Azad</i>	free
<i>Banh Beli</i>	helping hand to a friend in need
<i>Beldar</i>	caretaker of a small stretch of road, canal, etc.
<i>Sindhi-Mohajir</i>	
<i>bhai bhai</i>	A slogan expressing brotherhood between Sindhis and Mohajirs
<i>Bhagat</i>	Hindu holy man.
<i>Bharchundi</i>	name of a town where the seat of a hereditary saint is located
<i>Bhung</i>	an intoxicant, marijuana extract.
<i>Chaudhry</i>	the Punjabi equivalent of <i>wadera</i>
<i>Chehlum</i>	observance of fortieth day after death with prayers for the departed soul by family members, friends, and admirers
<i>CP</i>	A province in India, Central Provinces, now renamed as Madhya Pradesh
<i>Crore</i>	ten million
<i>Daroga</i>	one step over Beldar on irrigation channel, road, etc.
<i>Gaddi</i>	seat
<i>Gambat</i>	name of a town where the seat of a hereditary saint is located
<i>Hari</i>	Peasant; tenant of farm; tiller of the soil
<i>Hijra, Hijrat</i>	migration, immigration

<i>Hur</i>	Literally a free man; the devotees of Pir Pagaro are called Hurs
<i>IJI</i>	Islami Jamhoori Ittehad or Islamic Democratic Front, a temporary alliance of political parties formed to contest elections against PPP in the year 1990.
<i>Ijtehad Imam</i>	Consensus on religious issues by innovation Literally one who stands in front or leads; religious leader of the community; designation of one of the twelve successors of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) according to Shi'ite faith
<i>Jagir</i>	The right of collecting farm tax over a territory, awarded to selected feudals who paid tributes and supplied soldiers at the time of war: a common practice during the rule of Talpurs
<i>Jam</i>	Chief of an ethnic Sindhi clan
<i>Jamaat-i-Islami</i>	Islamic party
<i>Jamiat-ul-Ulema -e-Islam</i>	Party of Islamic scholars
<i>Jamiat-ul-Ulema -e-Pakistan</i>	Party of Islamic scholars
<i>Jamote</i>	Chief, used by some families and clans
<i>Jholi</i>	Lap, begging bowl
<i>Jiye Sindh</i>	Literally Long Live Sindh; name of a political party
<i>JSM</i>	Jiye Sindh Mahaz
<i>JSIT</i>	Jiye Sindh Inqilabi Tehrik (Revolutionary Movement)
<i>JSQT</i>	Jiye Sindh Qaumi Tehrik
<i>JST</i>	Jiye Sindh Tehrik
<i>JSTPP</i>	Jiye Sindh Taraqi Pasand Party
<i>Karma</i>	Fate
<i>Kazi</i>	Judge
<i>Khan</i>	Chief of a clan; commonly used for Pathan, Baloch, and even some Sindhi feudals
<i>Khan Bahadur</i>	A title conferred by the British to loyal aristocrats
<i>Kurta pajama</i>	A loose shirt and trouser worn as an informal or casual wear or even as a sleeping suit
<i>Ladoo</i>	Untrained camel; used exclusively for haulage of goods in the countryside where vehicular transport is not available

<i>Lakh</i>	A hundred thousand
<i>Luwari</i>	Name of a town where the seat of a hereditary saint is located
<i>Madressah</i>	A place of learning, an educational institution
<i>Majlis-e-Shura</i>	National Assembly
<i>Mantra</i>	hymn
<i>Manzilgah</i>	Camping ground
<i>Masjid</i>	Mosque
<i>Maulana</i>	Muslim religious scholar of Islamic sciences
<i>Maulvi</i>	Muslim religious scholar of Islamic sciences
<i>Mehran</i>	Another name for the Indus river
<i>Mir</i>	Chief, generally used by some Baloch clans in Sindh, and some families and clans
<i>Mohajir</i>	Refugee; immigrant
<i>MQM</i>	Mohajir Qaumi Movement, translated as Immigrant National Movement; a political party; after about five years of existence, the party split, the break away faction called itself MQM Haqiqi (The Real MQM) while the main party remained as MQM (Altaf Group); recently the latter has renamed itself as Muttahida Qaumi Movement, translated as United National Movement
<i>MRD</i>	Movement for Restoration of Democracy
<i>Mufti</i>	A person with authority to interpret Islamic law
<i>Murid</i>	Devotee; follower
<i>Mussawat</i>	Equality; social justice
<i>OBE</i>	Order of the British Empire; a title given to very prominent and loyal Indians
<i>Pagaro</i>	The Pir who wears the turban as a symbol of being the sole authority to guide the devotees
<i>Patharidar</i>	Literally keeper of the hut and hostages; patron of thieves, cattle-lifters, and kidnappers, who arranges the return of stolen property and hostages on payment of ransom; hostage negotiator
<i>Pir</i>	A saint; a person possessing spiritual attributes to show followers the right path; an institution most common in Sindh; it became hereditary and degenerated into a source of exploitation, land-ownership, and political power; also used as a surname or family name by the descendants of a

	saint or the caretakers of his grave
<i>Pirzada</i>	Literally descendant of pir; used as a surname or family name
<i>PPP</i>	Pakistan People's Party
<i>Pundit</i>	Hindu religious authority; has become a hereditary surname
<i>Pushto</i>	Language spoken by Pathans
<i>Qaumi</i>	
<i>Mahaz-i-Azadi</i>	National Front for Freedom
<i>Ranipur</i>	Name of a town where the seat of a hereditary saint is located
<i>Roti-Kapra-Makan</i>	Food, Clothing and Shelter. A slogan popularized by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto
<i>Sajjada Nashin</i>	Inheritor of the prestigious seat vacated by the death of a saint; the position is hereditary
<i>Sardar</i>	Chief of a tribe, usually Baloch; also a prefix used by Sikhs
<i>Sarhad</i>	Urdu name for the Northwest Frontier Province which many Pathans call Pakhtunkhwa now
<i>Shah</i>	Literally a king; used as a suffix by Syeds
<i>Shah-jo-Risalo</i>	Complete works of Shah Latif of Bhit
<i>Shahnai</i>	A musical pipe
<i>SindhuDesh</i>	The land of the Indus; the land mass around the Indus and its tributaries which corresponds to present Pakistan, as defined by Syed in 1943; in 1972, he restricted its territory to the province of Sindh
<i>Sirhandi</i>	A dynasty of Saints
<i>SNA</i>	Sindh National Alliance
<i>Sufi, Sufism</i>	Mystic; mysticism
<i>Sur</i>	Literally melody; Rag; Raga
<i>Syed, Saiyid,</i> <i>Sayed, Sayyid</i>	Arabic word; means 'mister'; in Sindh it means descendant of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ)
<i>Tapedar</i>	Petty bureaucrat in charge of lowest revenue unit
<i>Taraqi-i-Urdu</i>	Development of Urdu
<i>UP</i>	A province in Northern India; United Provinces; renamed as Uttar Pradesh
<i>Wadera</i>	Head man; a village elder
<i>Wadera Shahi</i>	Waderaism; the rule of the wadera
<i>Zamindar</i>	Land owner

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# G. M. Syed

## An Analysis of his Political Perspectives

*M. S. Korejo*

G.M. Syed is an anomaly among politicians. His reputation has survived miscalculations that would have annihilated most political leaders. What made him so resilient? An answer to this question could shed interesting light on the psychology of the leader-follower relationship.

A staunch supporter of the Pakistan Movement, Syed broke up with the Muslim League in 1945-6, just as it was poised for its tremendous victory. Timing like this could level most peaks of political ambition. But G. M. Syed lived to make other ill-conceived moves. When in 1983, under Zia, Sindhi blood was being spilled mercilessly, he stood aloof because he 'did not subscribe to the MRD philosophy'—a point of view unlikely to be understood by a little-educated electorate who had found themselves caught in the clutches of a brutal present.

But in spite of his various miscalculations, his reputation was formidable enough to stay the hands of governments who would no doubt have loved to smother his uncooperative voice. They incarcerated him but made his confinement comfortable. They did not stop him from meeting his friends and followers. Even a man like Jam Sadiq took the route of flattering him rather than put him down.

G. M. Syed's name is held in respect and he enjoys much goodwill among an electorate that has, however, never voted him into power. Does the explanation for this strange phenomenon lie in the fact of his uncompromising integrity and his habit of never exchanging his principles for expediency, though he willingly changed his position in the light of new perceptions, courting the danger of being considered unreliable? A politicians' handbook would disapprove of his moves. But his followers sensed that like the mystics, their leader followed his heart and his instincts, and while he did not lead them to immediate victories perhaps he pointed in the direction of a dimly perceived universal good.

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