

The Separation of Sind from the Bombay Presidency

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The separation of Sind from the Bombay Presidency was the most significant event in the historical process that led to the creation of Pakistan. If there had been no autonomous Sind with its 75% Muslim population, the case for partition would have been considerably weaker. Punjab and Bengal had bare Muslim majorities, Baluchistan was not autonomous and the politics of the North West Frontier were ambiguous. From 1938 to 1946 the mainstay of the Pakistan demand was the existence of autonomous Sind.

In Sind itself the demand for autonomy was long standing. In the early years of 20th century Ghulam Muhammad Bhurgri and Harchandrai Vishindas representing both Muslim and Hindu opinion had demanded separation. Sir Edwin Montagu, the Secretary of State for India, an outstanding British statesman, had been favourably impressed by their arguments and with regard to the vexed question of financial viability he noted that there was no doubt "that Sind gives more to Bombay than Bombay gives to Sind".

The separation question simmered through the twenties but gathered strength and momentum when from 1928 onward the Muslims of Sind themselves took up the question with vigour and presented the case before the Simon Commission and later took it to the Round Table Conferences. The achievement of autonomy in the reforms of 1935 was a *tour de force* of the Sind Muslims who were far less educated and less politically organised than the Hindus of Sind. They were

able to prove to the satisfaction of the highly exacting British bureaucracy that Sind could exist and prosper as an autonomous province.

The struggle for separation had two aspects, on the one hand bureaucratic arguments for and against, that went on from the 19th century, (in fact from the time of Sir Bartle Frere, Commissioner in Sind 1849-1856 right down to the 1930s) and on the other hand the struggle carried on by the Sindhis against the extreme Hindu opposition and the bureaucratic opposition.

We intend to publish the most important historical documents of the separation in the forthcoming issues of *Grassroots*. In the present issue Dr. Mateke's article covers the All India governmental and political attitudes to the separation question. Subsequent issues will carry Sind's role in the struggle for separation. [Editor]

Introduction

Sind was conquered by the British in 1843 and a few years later annexed to the Bombay Presidency. From time to time suggestions were made by the British officials in India that Sind should be separated from Bombay and joined to the Punjab on political and military grounds. In 1903 Curzon as the Viceroy of India refused to transfer Sind to Punjab. In the 1920's and 1930's the Indian Muslims demanded that Sind should be constituted as a separate Province. The Indian National Congress in order to appease the Muslim sentiments accepted the principle of Sind separation. The Indian National Congress thought that acceding to such a Muslim demand would promote Hindu-Muslim unity so that a constitutional formula acceptable to both communities could be achieved. The British Government realising the strength of the demand for Sind separation had no alternative but to grant it.

So far no detailed study of the subject has been made. Primary sources on it are scattered. Some are in the India Office Library, others are in the Karachi Provincial Archives and the rest in the National Archives in Delhi. This essay is based on the material

collected from Government Publications and the India Office records. The main discussion deals with the arguments for and against the separation of Sind as expressed by the critics and exponents of the scheme. The discussion mainly rivets around the period 1928-1933 because of the availability of the primary sources on this period.

The idea of the separation of Sind had been first mooted in 1850's as a consequence of problems of frontier administration and reorganization of provincial boundaries. During the latter half of the 19th century and in the early years of the 20th century it was again and again debated and discussed by officials, but as with other issues, the plan had been shelved. It was not until the 1920's and early 1930's that the issue of Sind separation was taken up not by the Government but became an issue of discussion and debate for the politically minded elite in Sind and outside that province. Apparently it was a communal issue, but it cannot be divorced from administrative and particularly constitutional discussion going on at the time.

Sind which was conquered in 1843 had been joined with Bombay. It is quite possible as Lord Dalhousie pointed out in 1852 that had the Punjab been conquered earlier, Sind would have been joined to the Punjab and not with Bombay. It was in 1902 after a lapse of about fifty years that Lord Curzon and his officials took up the question of the reorganization of provincial boundaries in connection with the future of Berar. The plan for the redistribution of provinces had several considerations, for instance, the size of provinces, administrative homogeneity, geographical, ethnological and linguistic affinities, financial viability, prospects of material development, accessibility to a port, the avoidance of excessive administrative burdens.¹

Sind's future had been discussed since 1850's mainly in terms of a union with the Punjab so as to improve the frontier administration. The Union of the Punjab and Sind was also considered desirable because the two areas had similar canal administration and that both should have rail links between them. The amalgamation of the two areas would give Punjab a direct outlet to the sea since Karachi would be the port of the enlarged province.²

In 1883, Hewett, when he was the Under-Secretary of the Home Department, Government of India had recommended the transfer of Sind to Punjab so as to have a strong frontier administration. But later he reversed his former decision on the ground that the creation of the North-West Province had made Sind's transfer from Bombay unnecessary. He also argued that Bombay would object to the loss of Sind because of the diminution in its jurisdiction. Probably it would also be fair to suggest that the transfer of Sind would have curtailed the prospects of Bombay Government servants.

The Officials while discussing the issue were not immune of provincial prejudices and prospects of their future advancement. By 1903 Ibbetson who had expectation to the Lieutenant-Governorship of the Punjab strongly supported the idea of transferring Sind to the Punjab and suggested that Bombay would be given Berar as compensation. Curzon however did not entertain this careful balancing of compensation. He said that what was important before any decision could be arrived at with regard to the carving of provincial boundaries was that the welfare of the people to be transferred and of the areas into which they were to be incorporated should be the prime test and consideration. He therefore laid it down that "in the readjustment of boundaries and territories upon which we are about to embark, the less we disturb rooted relations the better and the more we abstain from the dangerous plea of compensation, the sooner shall we reach our goal. Any man who starts with a perhaps unexpressed desire to add to one province at the expense of another finds himself unconsciously in favour of compensating the latter by giving it something else."²

The file on the plan went round and round and Ibbetson reinforced his earlier recommendation on the basis of rail links between Karachi and the Punjab and the prospects of Karachi serving a large province. He also wrote that Sind would get greater attention and more sympathetic attention of her special needs. But he had selfish motives in making these recommendations as he himself remarked... "the Lieutenant-Governorship of the Punjab has been reduced from... the premier Lieutenant-Governorship in India, the most interesting and important change open to an Indian civilian, to what it is now, the least interesting and least important of all the Lieutenant-Governorships."⁴

Ibbetson's aspirations provoked Curzon who wrote... "the World being largely governed by sentiment there is the faintest chance of withdrawing Sind from Bombay..."⁵ Curzon gave more consideration to the historical connexion of Bombay and Sind than to physical proximity of Sind and the Punjab. He said that the historical continuity of their associations could not be broken without violence to the ties and bonds between them.⁶ Curzon said that Bombay had taken an interest in the affairs and development of Sind and had not treated it as the 'cinderella of the presidency'. However he argued that the Punjab which needed money for her own development could not spare funds for Sind. This lack of adequate finance by the Punjab could retard the development of Karachi. Karachi was so vital that it would be improper to give such a port to a province which had no experience in maritime trade. After all, Curzon argued, Punjab was a big enough province for administrative purposes because she had reasonable size and population. A too large province would be unwieldy and too large for a Lieutenant-Governor.⁷ Dr. S. Z. H. Zaidi says that "Moreover, even Curzon, who had reprimanded Ibbetson for his plea of compensation and had directed his officials to argue the case on its own merits could not overlook the loss of prestige which Sind's transfer would bring to Bombay, nor the injury to its services if the members of the Bombay commission lost commissionship of Sind which stood next in dignity to membership of the Viceroy's Council."⁸ Nevertheless, the Secretary of State, Hamilton, did not agree with Curzon over Sind. He was of the opinion that Sind and Bombay did not have much in common and he therefore recommended Sind's transfer to the Punjab. "To compensate Bombay, he suggested that the northern districts of the Central Provinces might be given to Bombay and the Central Provinces compensated by the inclusion of Berar and the addition of Chota Nagpur from Bengal."⁹ In spite of this recommendation Curzon disregarded the suggestion. He did not see any convincing reason to separate Sind from Bombay.

It seems that the proposal did not evoke public controversy at the time. However, in 1913 Harchandrai Vishwadas, a Sindhi Hindu Congress leader, in his address as Chairman of the Congress Reception Committee at Karachi referred to the question of Sind's

separation. He opposed any suggestion for the separation of Sind possibly as a warning to the powers that be especially when the controversy of provincial autonomy was engaging the attention of the Indian leaders as well as that of the government of India under Lord Hardinge. Vishindas said that time was not yet ripe for Sind to be separated from Bombay: "Still the province possesses several geographical and ethnological characteristics which give her the hallmark of a self-contained territorial unit. The Punjab has been long casting very covetous eyes upon this province and urging her claims to an annexation, which became most insistent after the announcement of territorial changes by His Majesty, the King Emperor at the last Delhi Durbar. But Sind has set her face resolutely against all such blandishments and prefers to continue a part of the Bombay Presidency until such time as destiny permits her, to her own advantage, to attain to Provincial autonomy."¹⁰

In 1917, when Edwin Montagu, the Secretary of State for India visited Karachi, the Sind branch of the Central Mohamedan Association raised the question of the Separation of Sind. In 1918, the Fifth Sind Provincial Conference appointed a Sub-Committee of five Hindus and one Parsi to consider the question of Sind's separation. The Sub-Committee reported thus "All the objections that are raised against the autonomy of Sind are, in the opinion of the Sub-Committee, unsatisfactory and unconvincing and the Committee has no hesitation in recommending that Sind should be constituted an autonomous province with its own legislature and executive."¹¹ The educated Muslims and Hindus in Sind during this period put forth the demand for the separation of Sind possibly hoping that if Sind was raised to a Governor's Province they would reap the advantages like more access and influence in a Sind Legislative Council. It would be a fair assumption that one of the fundamental motives which made the Sindhis resist the plan of joining Sind to the Punjab was that such a scheme would not bring the educated Sindhis political benefits.

From 1924 onwards the separation of Sind from Bombay Presidency became a major issue. It became one of the fundamental demands of the All-India Muslim League. In the seventeenth session of the All-India Muslim League held at Aligarh in December 1925,

the League passed a resolution demanding an immediate separation of Sind from Bombay:

"Whereas there is no ground, ethnological, geographical or otherwise, for the inclusion of Sindh within the Presidency of Bombay and whereas past experience has shown that such inclusion is in the highest degree detrimental to the best interests of the people of Sindh and to the development of that part of India, the All-India Muslim League is of opinion that Sind should be separated from Bombay and constituted into a separate province."¹² What had hitherto been a mild and local issue was turned into a major controversial matter involving not only the Sindhi leaders but also leaders from outside the province.

In order to understand the motives behind the demand for the separation of Sind by the All-India Muslim League one has to briefly discuss other Muslim demands at the time. On the 20th March 1927 there were put forward the Delhi Muslim Proposals by the Muslim Conference. Jinnah, the Chairman of this conference, and one of the most outstanding politicians in India at the time, persuaded the Muslims to give up the system of Separate Electorates in order to achieve a compromise with the Hindus on the question of the future constitutional set up of India. After a protracted discussion, the Muslim conference agreed to the institution of joint electorates under certain conditions. It was unanimously resolved that the Mohammedans should accept a settlement on the basis of the following proposals, so far as representation in the various legislatures in any future scheme of constitution was concerned:

(1) Sind should be separated from the Bombay Presidency and constituted into a separate province, (2) Reforms should be introduced in the North-West Frontier Province and in Baluchistan on the same footing as in any other province in India. "If this is agreed to, Mohammedans are prepared to accept joint electorate in all provinces so constituted, and are further willing to make to Hindu minorities, in Sind, Baluchistan and the North-West Frontier Province the same concessions that Hindu majorities in other provinces are prepared to make to Mohammedan minorities. In the Punjab and Bengal, the proportion of representation should be in

accordance with the population."¹³ It would appear that the prime objective of the Muslim proposals was to carve as many provinces with a Mohammedan majority as possible out of the existing arrangement. The All-India Congress Committee at Bombay in May 1927, while accepting the Muslim proposals in substance, made one change in the original proposals, viz., "Sind should not be separated on communal grounds but on general grounds to all provinces."¹⁴

It was at the annual session of the Congress at Madras in December 1927 that a concrete step was taken in asking other organisations to join hands with the Indian National Congress in framing a Swaraj constitution. The All-India Muslim League responded to this call. The result was an All-Parties Conference which held its first meeting at Delhi on February 12, 1928, and intermittently continued its deliberations till the middle of March. The Conference made a conscious effort to retain or abolish communal electorates, the extension of reforms to the North-West Frontier Province and the separation of Sind from Bombay. The All-Parties conference appointed a small Committee for "viewing the communal problem as a whole and its relation to the constitution."¹⁵

This committee consisted of the following members:—

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| (1) Pandit Motilal Nehru | Chairman. |
| (2) Sir Ali Imam | Muslim. |
| (3) Mr. Shuaib Qureshi | Muslim. |
| (4) Mr. M. S. Aney | Hindu Mahasabha. |
| (5) Mr. M. R. Jayakar | Hindu Mahasabha. |
| (6) Mr. G. R. Pradhan | Non-Brahmin. |
| (7) Sardar Mangal Singh | Sikh League. |
| (8) Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru | Liberal. |
| (9) Mr. N. M. Joshi | Labour. |

The committee was expected to report to the All-Parties Conference towards the end of July 1928. The Separation of Sind was one of the problems dealt with in considerable detail. The committee

said "Sind has, by a strange succession of events, become a major problem in our politics."¹⁴ Before 1924 both the Hindus and Muslims wanted separation of Sind. But by the middle of 1928 some of the Hindus were strongly opposing the scheme. To this the committee remarked "It is strange that those who were opposed to it, and those who were against separation then now vehemently desire it."¹⁷ It suspected that the opposition was based on communalism. It said "this sudden and somewhat inexplicable change of opinion demonstrates how communal considerations warp and twist better judgment... We feel that in the conflict of communal allegations and counter-allegations the only safe course is to try to ignore them and consider the problem as dispassionately as possible. But unhappily it has become a part of the sentiment of the people and sentiment cannot be ignored."¹⁸

The committee realised that the demand for the separation of Sind was communal in nature because about 74 percent of the total population of Sind were Muslims. As a matter of practical politics the committee accepted the demand. It said, "... the manner of putting it forward does not necessarily weaken the merits of a proposal ... We have to recognize facts as they are ... Sind happens to contain a large majority of Muslims. Whether a new Province is created or not Sind must remain a predominantly Muslim area. And if the wishes of this large majority are not acceded to, it would not only be doing violence to the principle of self-determination but would necessarily result in antagonising that majority population."¹⁹ As a matter of fact the communal demand was equated with a demand for self-determination and Muslims had therefore to be allowed to enjoy their cultural autonomy so that India could progress peacefully and harmoniously. The committee defending the Muslim demand said "To say from the larger viewpoint of nationalism that no communal province should be created is, in a way, equivalent to saying from the still wider international viewpoint that there should be no separate nations. Both these statements have a measure of truth in them. But the staunchest internationalist recognises that without the fullest national autonomy it is extraordinarily difficult to create the international state. So also without the fullest cultural autonomy, and communalism in its

better aspect is culture, it will be difficult to create a harmonious nation."²⁰ The committee suspected that the main cause of opposition by the Hindus was that based on economic considerations; that if Sind was separated and a Muslim government took the charge of the affairs of the province then Hindus' economic position would be affected. This fear was dismissed as baseless and that the Hindus in a separated Sind would continue prospering as before and that "the powers of a provincial government are limited and there is the central government which has power in all important departments."²¹ It was hoped that the two communities in Sind would live harmoniously without communal conflicts.

The Nehru committee in considering the general redistribution of provinces said that a province demanding separation had to be a geographical and linguistic unit. Another consideration was that such a province should have a strong economy and that the wishes of the people concerned were equally important.²² Other considerations like administrative convenience were dismissed; "administrative convenience is often a matter of arrangement and must as a rule bow to the wishes of the people."²³ As a matter of fact Sind had most of the Nehru committee's requirements and it was of the opinion that since 74 per cent of Sind was Muslim "We may therefore safely presume that the great majority of the population desire separation."²⁴

Financially Sind was a poor area. From this consideration Sind would not be able to stand on her own feet. The Nehru committee however said that retrenchment by the people of Sind would make ends meet and hoped that "additional sources of revenue from fresh cultivation or otherwise will increase its income considerably."²⁵ In fact Sind seemed to be economically less handicapped. The Nehru committee on this financial potentialities of Sind said "Prima Facie Sind is capable of great development. Karachi is likely to become a great harbour and there are large tracts which are either uncultivated or not sufficiently developed. It is not an unlikely presumption therefore that Sind will become in the course of time a self-sufficient and prosperous province."²⁶ Financial considerations, it was suggested did not override other major com-

siderations. Self-determination had to be granted to Sind so as to promote opportunities for development of that province. "A denial of the right to self-determination on purely financial grounds and there are no other that we think valid, is bound to lead to great dissatisfaction and is bound to impede the progress of Sind. All the energy that should go to building up the life and work of the province would be spent in profitless agitation. If however this right is granted, subject to the people of Sind shouldering their own financial burden, a strong impetus will be given to the new province to work hard and compete with the more advanced provinces."²⁷ Sympathising with the argument and case for the separation of Sind the Nehru Report concluded "we would say therefore that unless some insurmountable difficulties supervene, and we are for the present unable to imagine any such insurmountable difficulties, Sind should be separated."²⁸

Subsequently however, at the All-Parties Conference which was held at Lucknow in August 1926, to consider the Report, the original recommendation on Sind was modified probably because of Hindu opposition. The All-Parties Conference recommended the setting up of a financial committee to find out whether a separated Sind would stand on her own feet. It suggested that if Sind was unable to raise the necessary finances a majority of the inhabitants had to show that they would be able to shoulder the financial responsibility of their province. Another condition was that the non-Muslim minority in Sind should be given the same treatment and privileges in the matter of representation in the provincial and central Legislatures as the Muslim minorities were given under the Nehru Committee's report in areas where they were in a minority.²⁹

The Nehru Committee was not the only body which discussed the question of the separation of Sind. The statutory commission, commonly known as the Simon Commission was appointed by the British Government in 1927 to review the constitutional advance of India. This commission discussed the question of Sind in 1929. The commission like the Nehru Report observed that Sind in terms of geography and communal composition was different from the Bombay Presidency proper. It said that the vastly different character

of the country and its people were quite different from Bombay. In reference to Sind the commission said "In its life and civilization Sind is more closely allied to Iraq or Arabia than to India."²⁰

The differences between Sind and Bombay were further reflected in the administrative set up of Sind. The Commissioner in Sind enjoyed more status and authority than the commissioners of other three divisions of Bombay Presidency and was in charge of revenue administration and departments like the Police and Excise which in other Provinces had their own departmental heads. Even in judicial administration Sind was independent of the High Court of Bombay. "The court of the Judicial commissioner of Sind is the highest court in Sind Province, with appeal direct to the Privy Council, and it is proposed, as soon as finances permit, to convert the Judicial commissioner's court into a chief court."²¹ Thus on administrative considerations the commission preferred the Separation of Sind.

The Simon Commission like the Nehru Report observed that the demand for the Separation of Sind was communal in nature. It said "...this demand has gathered strength not so much in the houses of the people, or among the Muhammadan cultivators of Sind, as among leaders of Muhammadan thought all over India, to whom the idea of a new Moslem Province, contiguous to the predominantly Moslem areas of Baluchistan, the North-West Frontier Province and the Punjab, naturally appeals as offering a stronghold against the fear of the Hindu domination."²²

The Bombay Government in their memorandum to the statutory commission in 1929 objected to the separation of Sind. It was argued that Sind was too small to exist as a Governor's province (area 47,000 square miles) and that moreover 10,000 square miles of Sind were a desert. The Bombay Government claimed that a separated Sind would not provide sufficient work for a Governor and three Ministers and that she would not be able to get expert advice given for instance, by Inspector General of Police, Chief Engineer and Inspector General of Registration. The Bombay Government further argued that Sind was a deficit province and that if separated would remain so for quite a considerable length of time. "A Separated Sind... must suffer the initial heavy handicap of a deficit, which,

based on figures of the years 1921-25, cannot well be less than 50 lakhs, and based on more recent figures, is expected to be as large as 80 to 90 lakhs ... Sind has no greater prospect in the immediate future of additional revenue ..."³³ Loss of Sind by Bombay meant a loss of prestige and jurisdiction by the latter and this seems to have been the main reason of Bombay government's opposition to scheme.

B. R. Ambedkar, the leader of the untouchables in his report to the Statutory commission in 1929 dismissed the Muslim demand for Separation of Sind. He claimed that Sind's connection with Bombay was beneficial to the former and that the special administrative arrangements of Sind with a powerful commissioner preserved the dignity and independence of Sind.³⁴ It was argued that "Seldom has she been subjected to any new law passed for the Presidency proper unless the same was deemed to be specially conducive to her benefit. Her tribunals are entirely independent of the tribunals of the Presidency ..."³⁵ Ambedkar who seemed to be secular in reasoning dismissed Sind's demand which he asserted was communally motivated.

On the question of Sind Separation the All India Muslim League was not ready to give in. Since the demand was one of the prominent demands of the Muslims and part and parcel of a large scheme, the Muslim League insisted that Sind had to be separated without any condition at all. Muhammad Iqbal in his Presidential address at the League session at Allahabad on 29th and 30th December 1930 went so far as to say that "without the fullest cultural autonomy and communalism in its better aspect is culture, it will be difficult to create a harmonious nation."³⁶ He went on to assert that "... Nor can the Muslims of India agree to any such changes which fail to create at least Sind as a separate Province and treat the North-West Frontier Province as a Province of inferior political status. I see no reason why Sind should not be united with Baluchistan and turned into a separate province. It has nothing in common with Bombay Presidency. In point of life and civilization, the Royal Commissioners find it more akin to Mesopotamia and Arabia ... She has her back towards India and her face towards central Asia. Considering further the nature of her agricultural

problems, which can invoke no sympathy from the Bombay government, and her infinite commercial possibilities, dependent on the inevitable growth of Karachi into a second metropolis in India, it is unwise to keep her attracted to a presidency which though friendly today, is likely to become a rival at no distant period."³⁷ From such assertions one is led to believe that probably Iqbal had in mind a grand scheme of a Muslim state in the North West of India, though at this particular moment in the history of India Muslims and Hindus did not have partition of India in mind.

The Muslims wanted a federal constitution so that the provinces could be given sufficient powers to ward off central government's encroachment on provincial subjects. Iqbal thought a separated Sind would enlarge a Muslim State he had in mind. He had already elaborated this idea in 1928 when he said: "The Muslim demand for the creation of a Muslim India within India is, therefore, perfectly justified... I would like to see the Punjab, the North-West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan amalgamated into a single state. Self-Government within the British Empire or without the British Empire, the formation of a consolidated North-West Indian Muslim state appears to me to be the final destiny of the Muslims, or at least of North-West India."³⁸ It would appear that the idea of separating Sind from Bombay was a small fraction of a major project which eventually came in the form of Pakistan. At any rate the Sind Muslims and the Indian Muslims in general wanted to see an autonomous Muslim Province of Sind.

The issue of Sind's separation was so fundamental that the British Government could not afford to ignore it. In January 1931, the British government appointed the Indian Round Table Conference, Sind sub-committee.³⁹ This committee reaffirmed "that the racial and linguistic differences between the inhabitants of Sind and those of the Presidency proper, the geographical isolation of Sind from Bombay, the difficulties of communication between the two, and the insistency with which separation has been advocated, provide an impressive case for the division from the Bombay Presidency and the creation of a Separate Provincial government there."⁴⁰

Sir Hidayatullah, a Sind Muslim and a member of the Bombay Legislative Assembly at the time said that one commissioner in Sind

was known to have said "The work is more and more being done through a government which, however friendly it situated several hundred miles away, and correspondence on education, engineering and the other subjects, takes a very long time before it is finally disposed of."⁴¹

Hidayatullah suggested that since Bombay was a deficit province, it would be a relief to her if she renounced 'sovereignty' over Sind: "It has a deficit budget of 1½ crores this year. Why should we have another deficit province added to Bombay? If Sind is a deficit province and is of no benefit to Bombay, why should Bombay want to have it? ... the sooner they get rid of it, the better it will be for them. Instead of opposing separation, they should welcome it..."⁴²

The Sind committee with two dissentients (Dr. Moonje and Raja Narendra Nath) were impressed by the strength of argument in favour of separation, and they concluded that the principle of separation should be accepted.⁴³

At this juncture it would be appropriate to discuss the claims and arguments of the Sind Muslims and Hindus before examining the important factors which guided the British Government to separate Sind from Bombay in late December 1932. From 1932 onwards the Sind Muslims took up the issue of Sind's separation very seriously and vigorously. They were probably influenced by the Delhi Muslim proposals of 1927 and also by the fact that separation of Sind which was figuring prominently in Indian politics was to their advantage. They possibly hoped that if Sind was separated they would have a major say in the political affairs of their province and that in any case the educated Sind Muslims would have a majority of seats in the Sind Legislature and Executive. The main Sind Muslim exponents of the separation of Sind were educated people like Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah, Sir S. N. Bhutto, and M. A. Khuhro.

The Sind Muslims felt that Sind's connection with Bombay was unnatural and militated against the development of Sind. They argued that if Sind was separated then they (Sind Muslims) would develop their province without Bombay's interference. They accused

the Government of Bombay of having treated Sind in a step-motherly fashion. In their Memorandum presented by M. A. Khuhro to the Joint Committee on Indian constitutional Reform, July 1933, the Muslims claimed "Our ninety years experience of Sind's connection with Bombay has shown us that the latter has neglected our economic and social development and has checked the growth of Karachi Port which possesses vast potentialities for development, being the nearest Port to the West. Our roads and communications are in an extremely undeveloped condition. Our nation-building departments are starving. Education is at its lowest ebb."⁴⁴

Khuhro accused Bombay Ministers of having neglected the development of Sind either because of their lack of knowledge of Sind's problems or through sheer neglect. "We have Ministers who have been in office for three years and have never seen Sind once..."⁴⁵ The members of the Bombay Legislative Council did not take an interest in the development of Sind because "...they are absolutely ignorant of the conditions. They do not know about the land conditions; they do not know anything about the other administrative conditions at all."⁴⁶

The politically active Sind Muslims were convinced that once Sind was constituted a separate province then the province would not face severe economic setbacks. They in particular pinned their hopes on the potentialities of the Sukkur Barrage Scheme which they thought would "increase the area of cultivation,"⁴⁷ and that within ten years of its operation, of the total cultivable area of 6,529,703 acres covered by the Barrage, 50 per cent would be under cultivation; after twenty years 65 per cent and after thirty years 81 per cent. Cotton was expected to be produced on a very large scale as a result of Sukkur Barrage scheme.⁴⁸ Increase in agricultural production as a result of irrigation would mean an increase in the revenue of Sind.

Karachi Port offered tremendous economic hopes to the Sindhi Muslim exponents of the plan. Improvement of Karachi would increase the economic security of Sind in various ways, for instance, drawing of five-sixths of the whole Muslim pilgrim tariff; arrangement for the direct arrival of the English mail; the capture of the trade

of the whole central India including U. P. and C. P. by opening a direct fast train service.⁴⁹

In 1928 the All-Parties Conference had suggested that if the people of Sind showed a willingness to shoulder the financial responsibility of a separated Sind then Sind should be made a separate province. The Sind Muslims in early 1930's made it clear that they were ready to tighten their belts so that Sind would not be a deficit province. They suggested that they would cut down some expenditure and impose new taxes so as to increase provincial income. Taxes on tobacco, Excise duty on cotton, licensing of medical practitioners, veterinary surgeons, money-lenders, domestic servants, legal practitioners, sea fishery, guns, pistols and swords were suggested. They hoped this would produce a round figure of about Rs. 20 lakhs. It was even suggested that salaries would be lowered and that the government of India would be giving aid to Sind.

While the Sind Muslims were agitating for the separation of Sind, the Sind Hindus were strongly opposing the scheme. The Hindus were a majority in the whole of the Bombay Presidency but a minority in Sind. In Sind the percentage of the Hindus was about 24. As part of Bombay, the Sind Hindus lived without fear of the Muslim majority. When the demand for the separation of Sind came forth, the Sind Hindus thought that under a Muslim government in Sind their security would be very doubtful. So several objections were advanced which the Hindus thought did not warrant constituting Sind a separate Province.

The Sind Hindus argued that separation of Sind would retard the economic development of Sind. It was claimed that after all the demand came at a time when economic development was being accelerated in Sind by the government of Bombay: "... And just at the time when the people of Sind were looking forward to a more rapid economic progress owing to the Sukkur Barrage and the heavy programme for construction of roads, feeder railways, a new Barrage at Kotri to which the Bombay government had committed itself, an apple of discord was thrown among the people of Sind by outside politicians who dragged Sind as a pawn in the Chessboard of all

India Communal politics and demanded for the so-called 'balance of power' between Hindus and Muslims in India, the separation of Sind from the Bombay Presidency and its constitution as a separate province."⁵⁰

Similarly the Sind Hindu Sabha in 1933 claimed that after all the Muslim separatists had no case to make on cultural grounds since Sind was already a cultural unit and that the Bombay government recognized this fact. Sindhi was the medium of instruction in primary and secondary schools and the language of official business and of law courts. Thus the culture of the people of Sind was not encroached upon by the Bombay government.⁵¹ Nevertheless, it could be said that the cultural autonomy without more political influence by the Sind Muslims was politically meaningless.

There was considerable fear by the Sind Hindus that separation of Sind would result in increased taxation. They asserted that "...this heavy taxation will be imposed in a province whose total receipts from taxation, including land-revenue and water-rate amounted to only 158 lakhs in 1929-30 and about 145 lakhs in 1931-32, at a time of unprecedented trade depression and an exceptionally severe fall in the prices of agricultural produce, and on the people who are already complaining bitterly of the sudden and steep rise in the rates of land-revenue assessment in the Sukkur Barrage zone, which covers $\frac{1}{3}$ ths of its area."⁵²

The argument about the financial viability of Sind as a separate unit though forcefully put forward by all the antagonists of the plan could hardly be regarded convincing. This had been the traditional argument of the bureaucracy whenever a scheme for redistribution of provincial boundaries was put forward. In 1903-1905, the same argument had been advanced by certain civilians and other critics of the plan for partition of Bengal, conversion of Assam into a chief commissioner's province. But the backwardness of a province like Sind as in the case of Eastern Bengal districts was not because of the paucity of funds but because of the fact that some of these areas had been treated as the 'agricultural hinterland' for the industrially developed regions of India. One could however argue that what made Sind a deficit province was because its interests had

been disregarded by a far-off Government of Bombay; hence separation was necessary for the very reasons the critics said it was not possible.

Nevertheless, the Sind Hindus were certain that the Sukkur Barrage offered no financial security for a separated Sind. Before constituting Sind a separate province certain unforeseen factors would have to be taken into account. It was insisted that "To ignore the stern realities of the existing agricultural depression particularly in cereal producing areas and to stake the welfare of the people of Sind on a gamble on the future course of land value and prices of agricultural produce grown in Sind would be the height of unwisdom and nothing short of a leap in the dark. And the responsibility of this serious plunge into the deep dark, it must be repeated, rests on the British government and the British government alone, for they are effecting this separation of Sind, not only against the considered judgment of the Bombay government and the Bombay Legislative committees and in the teeth of opposition of a million of loyal Hindus who constitute an overwhelming majority of the literate and educated community in Sind but also in direct contravention of the provisions of the existing government of India Act and the express conditions laid down by the Sind Sub-committee of the Round Table Conference."⁵³

The Sind Hindus held a Conference in mid-June 1932 to oppose the Sind separation. The Conference was held in Hyderabad Sind. Conference members like Mukhi Gobindram Pritamdas and Philip J. Ryan accused the Muslims for failing to understand the rationale of the issue especially on financial considerations. They said "...Politicians seem to imagine that finances are merely a matter of book-adjustment, partly between the provincial governments on the one hand, and the central government on the other. It is not the creation of new, bankrupt provincial governments that will solve India's economic difficulties, it is rather the financial stabilisation of the existing ones."⁵⁴ It was further insisted that "What the country needs is not the multiplication of Governors and Ministers but a vigorous campaign of economy in all departments of its national life."⁵⁵ Thus the Sind Hindus opposed a multiplication of small, undeveloped provinces because such provinces would not be

able to raise sufficient finances for the normal running of a government.

The Hindus in view of the weak economic prospects of a separate Sind realised that they would have to pay higher taxes since they were the richest community in Sind. They were the most prosperous businessmen. Thus their opposition was based on the assumption that once Sind was separated then the Hindu businessmen would be taxed heavily. They were of the opinion "The proposals for taxation made by the Moslem members of the Sind Conference reveal clearly their perverse mentality. Among the new taxes proposed, the only tax the burden of which is likely to fall partly on the shoulders of the Sind Moslems is the suggestion that there should be an increase of one anna in the Rupee over the revenue both in the barrage zone and outside over and above whatever be the rates fixed by government for the Barrage zone."¹⁶ The basis of Hindu opposition was explicitly brought out in their letter sent to the Viceroy of India in 1932. They pleaded their case by saying "We need hardly emphasize before your Excellency the position which the Hindus of Sind occupy in the economic, political and social life of Sind... We supplied for generations the bulk of administrative staff and professional talent; we have been the pioneers in the field of education, social reform and local government; we sowed the seeds of public life in Sind; we did not only stimulate its internal trade but went abroad to bring it indigenous banking system of the country and connected it with the trading centres of India and the world outside."¹⁷ It is thus clearly expressed by the Sind Hindus that they wanted to maintain their economic, social and political domination in Sind. It was felt with a certain amount of fear that separation of Sind would strike the balance as far as the Hindu dominance and Muslim political and economic inferiority was concerned. The Sind Hindus were even vehemently opposed to the widening of the franchise for the legislature since this would mean touching their 'sacred' preserve in political terms. They reaffirmed this by saying "anything that is likely to affect this essential basis of modern civilisation is a matter of life and death."¹⁸

By 1933 the British Government had already made a decision to separate Sind from Bombay and this made the Hindus of Sind

demand safeguards and legal protection. They wanted their property rights to be properly protected since this was the main basis of their livelihood. To this effect they said "As a matter of fact, we own 27 per cent of the land, a figure corresponding to our population ratio, but we held about 13 per cent more land as lessees and mortgagees in possession, so we pay almost the entire Income Tax, we pay an overwhelming part of the Excise as it is almost wholly paid by the cities wherein we are in a majority. We form a majority in all the urban areas of Sind. The number of literates among us is three times as large as the number of literates in the Muslim community; that of the English educated people, we have eight times the number Muslims have: of votes today we have about the same number as the majority community."⁴⁸ They feared that communal riots and outbursts would liquidate or grossly interfere with their main source of livelihood. They tried to justify their fears by saying "In the rural areas of Sind during the last ten years there have been occasional outbursts of communal rioting and communal dacoities and pretty frequent cases of kidnapping of women and children of the minority communities which have naturally raised considerable alarm."⁴⁹

Furthermore, the Sind Hindus feared that the Muslim Zamindars in Sind would capture a bulk of the seats on the Sind council. Since in rural areas land was the locus of power it was probably feared that the Zamindars would influence the voting behaviour of the tenants, thus influencing Sind politics. The Hindus therefore demanded the minority rights to be sufficiently safeguarded. "... all that we ask for is that no member of our community should be discriminated against, on the ground that he is born a Hindu. Whether it is a question of buying and selling land in the open market, or a question of admission to the services or to educational institutions, we want an open door... Above all, we want some methods open to us, in case of misgovernment, turning out a government that misbehaves."⁵⁰

Separation of Sind was one of the most outstanding issues facing the British government in India. The All-India Muslim League seemed to be very uncompromising on this issue. In order to appease Muslim sentiments and feelings the Nehru Report as

examined above recommended to the All Parties Conference of late 1928 that Sind should be separated from Bombay. Between 1932 and 1933 the British government too found it politically expedient to accept the separation of Sind. The British government probably felt that by giving in to some of the Muslim demands, they would win cooperation of Muslims in connection with the constitutional reforms which culminated in the Government of India Act of 1935. On 14th December 1932 the Secretary of State for India for the first time since separation of Sind became a major issue in Indian politics disclosed that it was the government's intention that Sind should be separated from the Bombay Presidency. He said "For the last two years we have discussed the question of certain new provinces. We have discussed the question of Sind from the very opening of our deliberations two years ago. Last year we discussed in detail for the first time the question of Orissa. Since those discussions we have had expert enquiries into both questions. Basing our views upon the Report of those enquiries, basing our views still more on what appears to be a very general agreement both in India and in Great Britain, we have come definitely to the conclusion that Sind and Orissa should be separate Provinces."⁶² He further confirmed this policy by saying that "... it is the definite intention of the Government that in any all India Federation both those great territories should enter as distinct provinces."⁶³

The Joint Committee on Indian Constitutional Reform (1933-34) brushed aside the Hindu fears as baseless and unimpressive. They observed that the Hindu fears and opposition were not strong enough to override the consistent and genuine demand for the constitution of Sind as a separate province. They were of the opinion that the Hindu opposition was mainly self-motivated. The Hindus as already examined above wanted a *status quo* whereby they could continue dominating the economic and political life of Sind. The committee remarked that "though they (Hindus) only form about 27% of the population and economically powerful under the present provincial franchise actually form a majority of the voters."⁶⁴ The Committee emphasised that the continuance of Bombay's sovereignty over Sind would not ease the communal conflicts. The aim of the Committee in solving the Sind question was therefore to harmonize the relation-

ship between the Muslims and the Hindus in and mainly all over India. On this communal consideration the Committee observed that "... apart from other considerations, the communal difficulties that would arise from attempting to administer Sind from Bombay would be no less great than those which may face a separate Sind administration."⁶⁵

Furthermore, it was argued that in a separate Sind the Hindus would be allotted considerable seats in the Legislature and that they would enjoy the protection of special safeguards similar to those enjoyed by Muslims in a similar situation in other Indian Provinces where the Hindus outnumbered the Muslims. As a matter of fact it was again remarked that "On a review of all the factors in the problem, we have reached the conclusion that the constitution of Sind as a separate governor's province is the best solution possible in present circumstances."⁶⁶

A close examination of some of the arguments between the Secretary of State and the government of India makes it clear that after all the critics of Sind separation did not have a very strong case. The Government of India was of the opinion that the opposition based on the fact that Sind was a deficit province was exaggerated. As a matter of course a separate Sind would be as financially handicapped or well off as any other governor's Province in India. Moreover the government of India was of the opinion that the people of Sind had the ability and determined will to reduce Sind's deficit by practising economies and retrenchments. It was hoped that fresh taxation, land revenue cess and the tobacco licenses would bring in Rs. 12 lakhs and that this would cover the costs involved in the separation of Sind.⁶⁷ The financial aspects of the separation of Sind were related more directly to the additional cost involved in separation than to the total current deficit on Sind. Whether Sind was separated or not the financial weakness of the province would not make any difference. "Whether Sind continues to be a part of the Bombay Presidency or whether it is set up as a separate province, the deficit on its administration remains. As Bombay (including Sind) is itself in deficit, it might be regarded as financially a matter of comparatively little importance whether the central government makes up the deficit to Bombay by giving to the local

government existing central sources of taxation under an obligation to subsidise Sind or whether they themselves subsidize directly and give less to Bombay."⁶⁸

The Government of India revealed for the first time that the Bombay government which insistently opposed separation of Sind mainly on financial considerations had failed to balance her own budget. "It is true that Bombay has an unusually high standard of expenditure per head as compared with other provinces, but they have recently been making special efforts to cut this down to some extent, and it is probable that if no financial relief were given to Bombay through Separation of Sind, some other form of assistance would have to be given. Bombay suffered, like Bengal, from the effects of the Messon settlement which was more favourable to agriculturist than to industrialist provinces and, like Bengal, will most feel the inevitable delay in the distribution of part of the income tax to the provinces under the new constitution."⁶⁹

The Government of India tried to justify her policy towards Sind that on financial grounds "... the separation of Sind will involve comparatively little additional cost, and since there are proposals for covering such additional cost by new taxation, separation does not materially add to the formidable difficulties, in the present state of public finance, of the general problem created by the deficit province. Sind is part of that general problem."⁷⁰

In March 1933 the Secretary of State for India was of the opinion that in order to minimise future communal conflicts, Sind had to be separated in spite of tough opposition from different corners. Financial argument as examined above could not dictate the government policy. Other considerations had to be given top priority. The Secretary of State with reference to this financial opposition said "On the financial side it would undoubtedly be a relief to the centre at the cost of Bombay to avoid separation or to postpone it, but the consideration is not so important as to outweigh the other arguments."⁷¹ It seems that the major consideration was the role communalism was playing in the politics of India at the time. The Secretary of State continued to argue by saying "If it be asked whether granting the ultimate desirability of Separation,

it would not be wiser to postpone it for some years till finances are easier, the answer is that on purely financial grounds possibly this might be so though, ... Bombay would probably have to be partially met in some other ways financially, but that any indefinite delay would enormously increase the communal difficulties.⁷² So long as the issue of Sind remained unsettled this would lead to a continual communal battle. To avoid this possible unhappy situation of communal relations Sind had to be separated from Bombay.

It was decided by the British Government that Sind should be separated from the Bombay Presidency after the passing of what Professor Percival Spear has described as 'the last major constructive achievement of the British in India' - the Government of India Act of 1935. Sind became a Governor's Province on the 1st April 1936.

CONCLUSION

The demand for the constitution of Sind as a separate Province was strongly advanced by the All India Muslim League in an attempt to increase Muslim provinces in India. The issue was taken up by the Sind Muslims who expected a larger share of political and economic benefits from a separate province. Though the scheme was strongly opposed mostly by the Sind Hindus the British Government found it practical politics to separate Sind from Bombay mainly because Muslim cooperation was necessary to formulate a Swaraj constitution of India and partly because it was thought that separation of Sind would minimise further communal strifes. Separation of Sind left the Sind Hindus very bitter because they thought that their economic and political interests would be at stake in a government dominated by the Muslims.

Footnotes

1. Zaidi, S.Z.H., "The Partition of Bengal and its Anguishment—a Survey of the Schemes of Territorial Redistribution of Bengal 1902-1911" Ph.D Thesis, University of London, 1964, p. 52.
2. Ibid., p. 53.
3. Ibid., p. 55.
4. Ibid., p. 60.
5. Ibid., p. 60.
6. Ibid., p. 60.
7. Ibid., p. 61.
8. Ibid., p. 61.
9. Ibid., p. 62.
10. *Report of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Eighth Indian National Congress held at Karachi on the 26th - 28th December, 1913*, p. 22.
11. *Quoted In Indian Constitutional Reform*, Vol. II, (Session 1932-33), London 1934, p. 2137.
12. Pirzada, S. S., *Foundations of Pakistan*, Vol. II, 1924-1947, Karachi, 1970, p. 73.
13. Pirzada, *op. cit.*, pp. 118-119.
14. *All Parties Conference, Report of the Committee appointed by the Conference to determine the Principles of the Constitution for India*, Allahabad, 1928, p. 19, hereafter referred to as Nehru Report.
15. Ibid., p. 23.
16. Ibid., p. 31.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid., p. 32.
20. Ibid., p. 32.
21. Ibid., p. 32.
22. Ibid., p. 32.
23. Ibid., p. 63.
24. Ibid., p. 63.
25. Ibid., p. 67.
26. Ibid., p. 67.
27. Ibid., p. 67.

28. Ibid., p. 68.
29. Ibid., p. 162.
30. *Report of the Indian Statutory Commission, Vol. 1-2, cmd. 3569* (1930), p. 58.
31. Ibid., p. 59.
32. Ibid., p. 59.
33. *A note on the financial aspects of the proposed Separation of Sind by Mr. G. W. Wilks, Secretary to the Government of Bombay, 15th October, 1928, Public and Judicial Department (c) File 522, cmd. 3572, 1930. Indian Statutory Commission, Vol. III, p. 89.*
34. Ibid., p. 89.
35. Pirzada, *op. cit.*, p. 158.
36. Ibid., p. 167.
37. Shanood (Compiler): *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal*, Lahore, 1945, p. 12.
38. The Committee consisted of the following:- Earl Russell (Chairman); Marquess of Zetland, Marquess of Reading, H. H. the Aga Khan, M. A. Jinnah, Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto, Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah, Sir Abdul Qaiyum, Sir Muhammad Shafi, Dr. Shafaat Ahmad Khan, Sardar Sampuran Singh, Dr. B. S. Moonje, M. R. Jayakar, Raja Narendra Nath, C. Y. Chintamani, B. V. Jadhav, Sir Phiroze Settna, H. P. Mody and Sir Hubert Carr.
39. *cmd. 3778, 1931. Indian Round Table Conference, First Session, November 12, 1930-January 1931, Proceedings of subcommittees, London 1931, p. 464.*
40. Ibid., p. 429.
41. Ibid., p. 434.
42. Ibid., p. 464.
43. *Indian Constitutional Reform, op. cit.*, p. 2136.
44. Ibid., p. 2136.
45. Ibid., p. 2163.
46. Ibid., p. 2142.
47. Ibid., pp. 2143-4.
48. Ibid., pp. 2142-3.
49. A letter to the Viceroy and Governor-General of India by representatives of Minorities in Sind against separation of Sind. N. D., Public and Judicial Department (c) File 522.

51. † Indian Constitutional Reform, *op. cit.*, p. 2083.
52. † Ibid., p. 2086.
53. Ibid., pp. 2088 - 2089.
54. *Indian Empire Review*, Calcutta, Jan. 1934, vol. 3. No. 1, p. 27.
55. Ibid., p. 27.
56. *Anti-Sind Separation Conference*, 18th and 19th June 1932. Public and Judicial Department (c) File 2057.
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58. Ibid.
59. Indian Constitutional Reform, *op. cit.*, p. 2101.
60. Ibid., p. 2101.
61. Ibid., p. 2101.
62. Extract from Secretary of State's closing speech at the Round Table Conference, 14th Dec. 1932, Public and Judicial Department (c) File 522.
63. Ibid.
64. *Joint Committee on Indian Constitutional Report Session 1933 - 34*, Vol. I, Part I, London 1934, p. 34.
65. Ibid., p. 34.
66. Ibid., p. 34.
67. Deputy Secretary to the Government of India to Secretary of State, 5th Oct. 1932, Public and Judicial Dept. (c) File 2288.
68. Ibid.
69. Note of Points for the Secretary of State, 13th March 1933, Templewood Collections. MSS. Eur. E 240, vol. 64.
70. Deputy Secretary to the Government of India to Secretary of State for India, *op. cit.*
71. Templewood Collections, *op. cit.*
72. Ibid.

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