

self-governing unit the sub-continent has ever seen. The real 'surprise' at the end of the long saga was the other 'reality', of applying the logic of Partition at every scale. Pakistan got its much sought-after sovereignty, for a rather moth-eaten territory, at the price of the vivisection of Punjab and Bengal, and the creation of a bifurcated state whose two wings were separated by a thousand miles of Indian territory, and also separated by language and script, economically unrelated to each other, and linked only by Islam.

## Chapter 10

# From Two to Three: The Birth of Bangladesh

### 10.1 Introduction

Both India and Pakistan have had to struggle with the problems of regionalism and separatism since independence. In India this has frequently meant the realignment and redefinition of constituent states. In the case of Pakistan it has meant a variety of experiments with the redefinition of, and even the abolition of, provinces. It has even meant the loss of East Pakistan, which has become the sovereign state of Bangladesh. In trying to write about all of these I have experimented with keeping all of these events in one chapter, treating the case of the independence of Bangladesh simply as a special case of the problems of accommodating regional forces. In the end, for clarity and convenience I treat it in this chapter as a special case on its own. In making the story a separate chapter I have also had to decide whether it should come before or after the other stories about regionalism: I have decided it should come first, as the most traumatic event in Pakistan since 1947.

The story of the birth of a nation, in this case Bangladesh, is usually treated as a singular story – a linear narrative of that territory which achieves its sovereignty – and that would indeed be a simpler way of explaining the emergence of the new state. But, Bangladesh is just one of the many regions of South Asia, and the main reason to single out its story as opposed to that of Maharashtra or Sindh or Tamil Nadu is that it has become something which they have not, an independent sovereignty, although there is no a priori argument why it should have a stronger claim to such a status than the other provinces/states just named. Why it happened is a result of the sequential order of specific events. In 1947 East Bengal sought self-determination and independence from Hindu over-lordship. It joined the Pakistan movement and 'got' Pakistan, but only by failing to get the former – independence – as, within Pakistan, East Bengal was always the junior and dominated partner. So the next step logically would be to arrogate from Pakistan its share of the sovereignty that had been granted in 1947, something it achieved by embroiling the whole of Bengal, and therefore India too, in strife in 1971.

### 10.2 Unequal Development in Pakistan

In 1947 India acquired 81% of the Indian Empire's population, but only 72% of its area. This indicates that Pakistan in aggregate was less densely settled, but the aggregate masked the huge inequality between East and West. The East had in fact

the majority of the population – 57%, but only 14% of the area. Its population density was 777 persons per square mile, compared with the West's 222 (and India's 276). Pakistan was less urban than India, but West Pakistan was three times more urban than East, which had less than 6% of its population in urban areas. In 1951 83% of the workforce of East Pakistan was in agriculture, 65% of the West's workforce was in the same sector. In the East few Bengalis had been recruited by the British into the Indian Army; but in the West there were many who had been recruited and who had become the nucleus of the new Pakistani Army.

These figures also reflect the infrastructure: in 1960, 66% of the villages of the West were within 5 miles of a pukka (metalled) road – whereas in the East only 25% were. In the East water transport was more important – but only 17% of the villages were within 5 miles of a 'steamer' (regular power boat) landing. The literacy

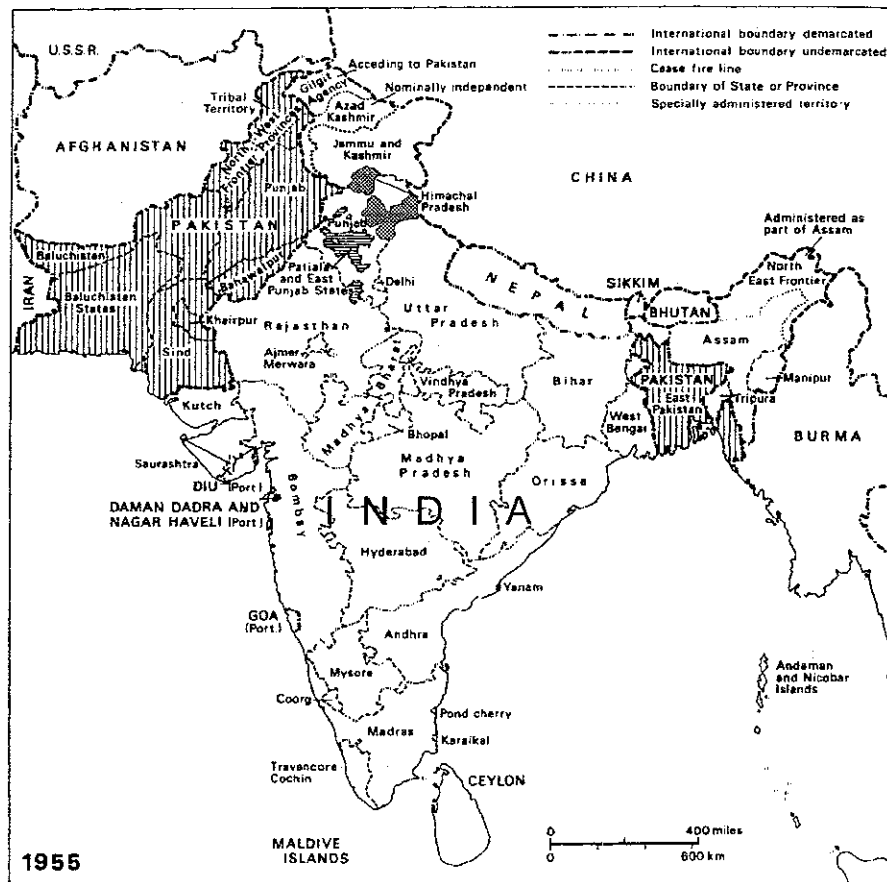


Figure 10.1 Territorial Division and the Successor States, c. 1955

Source: Schwartzberg (1992)

rate in the West was much higher too. This of course was reflected in government service figures; in 1960 of the 2,779 1st class gazetted officers of the Government, 87% were of Western (or Western Mohajir) origin. In short, the East, shorn of Calcutta, was indeed a rural backwater, as Jinnah had feared.

Overwhelmingly, the skilled immigrants from India had gone to Karachi, which was the new seat of Government for Pakistan (until 1956 when the plans were announced for the new capital city of Islamabad, also in West Pakistan near Rawalpindi in Punjab). In 1960 70% of the professions, 72% of the managers, and 64% of the skilled workers of Karachi had their origins in India.

Pakistani economic policy could have been to maintain the parity of the Pakistani rupee with the Indian, and to continue to trade as before. But this is an unrealistic view of the workings of political sovereignty, which would soon see policies that were divergent from India's, in order to foster industrial development and economic independence. In Pakistan's case it was evident that it exported one major crop to the rest of the world, the proceeds from which could be used to raise the first revenue for an industrialisation programme. This crop was the jute of East Bengal. It was a crop for which demand was presumed to be fairly inelastic – that is to say falling prices would not increase world consumption, and East Bengal was overwhelmingly the world's largest producer in 1947. And, if capital were raised from that sector, where should it be invested? From the point of view of a country struggling to maximise its growth rate from inauspicious beginnings, it would be foolish not to place it where it would have the highest incremental growth impact; that is to say where the infrastructure would best support it, where skills might be highest, and where perhaps the internal market might be strongest.

In pursuing such a logic the government would, of course, also guide and protect its infant industries, and use such fiscal and monetary policies as thought appropriate to induce such changes. These in turn meant the creation of a bureaucracy and the necessary licences and permits, which inevitably if unintentionally favoured those with best access to the information and personnel necessary to 'play' the new system. In other words, Karachi in the West became the new industrial growth pole.

Coupland in 1943 had already sketched out the beginning of such a story by considering the jute industry in a divided future India. Under the Act of 1945 export revenues on jute were appropriated by the Central Government, but 62.5% of the revenues were re-assigned to the Provinces generating them.

'Most of the jute is grown in Eastern Bengal, and North-Eastern India, without Calcutta, would be able to levy duty on raw jute exported from Chittagong, but its diversion thither within the existing system of communications would not be easy. Moreover, three fifths of the duty in 1938-39 were levied on jute manufactures, and this industry is located in Calcutta. For North-East India to levy export-duty on raw jute crossing the frontier to Calcutta would be dangerous for two reasons. First the Hindu State would probably levy an export-duty on its manufactures and, since the price in world markets would have to compete with substitutes, this second charge would inevitably reduce the cultivator's profits almost, if not quite, to nil. Secondly,

a duty on raw jute would be a direct invitation to the Hindu State to extend its own area of jute cultivation and so threaten North-East India with the loss of its nearest and largest market' (Coupland Pt III, 1943:97)

An independent North-East India (Bang-i-Islam) might have heeded the caution, but Karachi did not. Shortly after independence Pakistan placed an export duty on jute. India responded by banning the import of jute, and restricting coal exports to East Bengal as well Chittagong, with an annual capacity to handle 0.5 million bales of jute only, became overloaded, and most of the crop of 5 million bales was stored in inadequate places. India began to expand her own jute production, which had doubled by 1960.

In 1949 the U.K. pound Sterling was devalued against the U.S. dollar, by a significant 30%. (This was in the post-war period of fixed exchange rates.) The whole of the Sterling area (the majority of the Commonwealth/Empire at the time), including India, devalued in step, principally, in India's case because of the sterling balances held in London. The whole area followed Britain with one exception – Pakistan, which felt that the market for jute was inelastic and that demand would not increase with lower prices, merely it would be paid less. But the effect was to make Pakistani exports to India 30% more expensive, and simultaneously to reduce the relative value of Indian exports to Pakistan. India was stung by the move; partly her political pride was piqued by the independence which Pakistan had shown, but also this was a significant change for the economy of West Bengal. The result was that the trade war which had already started now became a complete trade embargo. There is no doubt which of the two regions of Pakistan suffered most; East Bengal entered a period of economic difficulty which provoked serious unrest.

There was also a second effect on the relations between East and West Pakistan which starts at this period and which became exacerbated over the next two decades. This is an effect which derives from the over-valuation of the currency generally with regard to overseas trade, and not one which relates simply to India (with which trade had virtually ceased anyway). Let us suppose that a true international value for the rupee might have been Pk Rs 7 = US \$ 1. The official exchange rate for exporters in the early 1950s was PK RS 3 = US \$ 1. Let us further suppose that the dollar price represents the true international value of goods exported. Then a Pakistani exporter selling \$1 of jute would receive only Rs 3 instead of the Rs 7 which he would have expected if the exchange rate was free. In effect the exporter lost, or was taxed, more than half his true export earnings.

If the same man who exported \$1 worth of exports was then able at the same exchange rate to ask for foreign currency to buy imports, he would have been able to buy \$1 for Rs 3 and not Rs 7, thereby saving on imports what he had lost on exports, and so would have ended up equal. But the problem was that the exporters and the importers were not the same, either as people, or as regions.

Because an overvalued exchange rate makes imports artificially cheap, there is excess demand. To control this excess demand tariff and quota barriers are used to protect domestic producers supplying goods to the domestic market. The benefit of

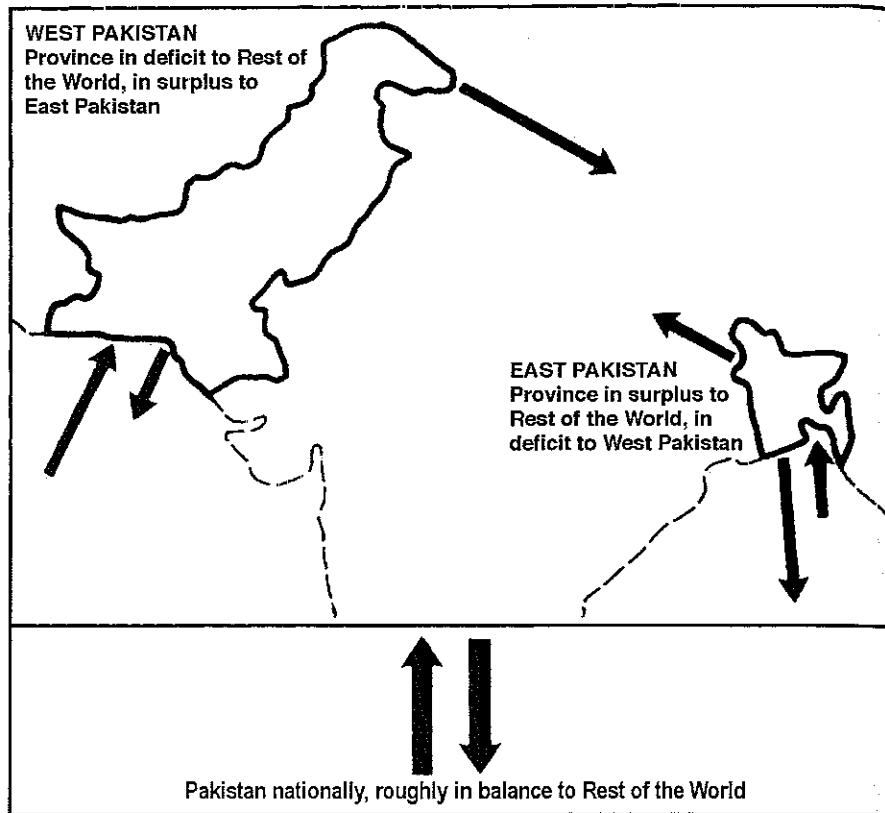
low import prices for imports is directed at capital goods for new industries, and to their raw and semi-finished materials, by selective tariff barriers. The industrialists and new entrepreneurs were in Karachi; partly because that was where the talent mostly lay, partly because it was the largest port of Pakistan, and partly because with any complex bureaucratic system quick access to the central government was essential.

In these circumstances of controlled imports of consumer goods (even basic ones), and of a major export crop of jute in the East wing, the trading pattern for the two wings (see Figure 10.2) that emerged was one in which the East was in surplus with the Rest of the World, whereas the West wing was in deficit. The surplus of the East and the deficit of the West were then matched by the surplus internal movement of consumer goods from the West wing to the East. The total effect of this system was that, on average, the East was systematically being deprived of much of the true value of its external exports, while the West was systematically underpaying for the true value of its imports. This represented an undisclosed and unaccounted drain from the East, the poorer part, to the West, the richer part.

Such transfers in developing countries are common, from agriculture, seen as the only source of capital, to new industries, seen as a hope for economic and job growth. Sometimes, as in the case of North East Brazil in relation to the South East, there are strong regional components to the inter-sectoral shift of resources. But in Pakistan the regional component was more clearly demonstrated than ever before. And to add to the grievances of the East, the prices they now paid for the goods imported from the West were higher than they would have paid internationally, and the quality was lower.

Much of this account would be denied by West Pakistanis; they would point to projects undertaken in the East, and to the fact that the East too had a captive market in the West – for example in tea from Sylhet which dominated Pakistan's internal market. It is also said that in the 1950s the terms of trade world-wide turned against agriculture and that, therefore, there would have been non-policy causes for such resource transfers. It is true that the gross figure is much more complex, but the net effect was as I have described it. It is also said that by 1970 the West was the major exporter, in cotton manufactures and new engineering goods; but given the investment that the West received it would have been a major indictment if the relative positions of the two wings had not changed.

In nearly every other way the inequality was exacerbated. The first two-five year plans (1955-65) allocated more money to the West than to the East – and this was even without including the mammoth Indus Basin Project (dealt with below). The argument was in a sense sound, in a Thatcherite kind of way. Invest money where it would show the highest rate of return: wealth generation must come before wealth distribution. The income levels in the West were 30% higher than in the East, and rising relatively. Here in the West was therefore the greater internal market too. The West was urbanising faster round its new factory towns: the market was more accessible. The Planners acknowledged dissent in the East, and in the Third Plan of 1965 a public statement was made of the intent to reduce regional disparity and to



**Figure 10.2 Trade Flows between West and East Pakistan and the Rest of the World**

put more resources into the East. Even by the wildly optimistic statements of that Plan, however, the timescale set for the elimination of the disparities was 20 years; and any normal cynic would have known that if it were to happen at all it would take much longer than that. The final twist in respect to the regional imbalance was the inability of the Easterners to migrate to the growth centres of the West. There were no formal internal barriers to equilibrating migration; but separated by a minimum 10 day sea journey and by language, a poor Easterner would have to save at least a year's income just to voyage West in the hope that he might then get a job. By Independence in 1972 there were just 0.5 million Bengalis in the West, out of a population in Bengal of about 70 million.

### 10.3 Language and Representation

In 1948 the Constituent Assembly ordained that Urdu, together with English, would

**Table 10.1 West and East Pakistan: Inequality in Per Caput Gross Regional Product 1949-70 (\$ 1959-60 prices)**

	West	East	Ratio
1949-50	345	287	1.20
1959-60	355	269	1.32
1969-70	504	314	1.61

Source: Ahmad, 1972, p.34

be the lingua franca of Pakistan and would be used in the national assembly. Bengali was excluded as a language from the daily tokens of national identity – the coins, currency notes, postage stamps, of the new Pakistan. In 1952 Prime Minister Khwaja Nazimuddin (a Bengali) proclaimed while in Dacca that Urdu would be the only national language. In the riots that followed the announcement several Bengali students were shot dead by the police. Now in independent Bangladesh one frequently sees throughout the country replicas of an abstract sculpture, looking something like three gallows, which is the national monument at the site in Dacca where the students were killed, the first martyrs of the independence struggle. Language was the first issue to seriously threaten the integrity of the new state.

During the 1954 Provincial elections in Bengal several opposition parties formed the coalition United Front, who campaigned on regional issues. Their demands for regional autonomy seriously threatened the Central Government. It was a repeat of the earlier demands which the Muslim League had once made against Congress: for a federation that gave full provincial autonomy preserving only defence, foreign affairs, and currency for the Centre. It also demanded recognition of Bengali as a national language. Given that more Pakistanis spoke Bengali than any other language (such as Punjabi or Sindhi), this was not unreasonable at face value. To the Central government these demands must have seemed as something like a stab in the back, while it was pre-occupied with issues deemed of national importance, but in reality concerning the West wing, over Kashmir and the Indus Rivers. The Muslim League still had the organisation to campaign in Bengal, pleading for the consolidation of Pakistan. But the verdict of the people was clear. The United Front won 97% of the vote.

After forming his ministry, the new leader of Bengal Fazlul Huq then went to India, to West Bengal, and joined in talks aimed at some sort of re-emergent understanding with India, a move which unnerved the Central Government. Within weeks the Central Government dismissed the Provincial government for taking an anti-national attitude. It could not completely ignore Bengali sentiment, however, and under the 1956 Islamic Constitution, when East Bengal was officially named East Pakistan for the first time, the regional nature of Pakistan was recognised in a slightly backhanded manner. The constitution recognised that the central government should reflect the regional division, but did so by awarding an equal 155 seats to both

wings, despite the fact that the East was the more populous part. It also recognised Bengali as a national language.

#### 10.4 The Military Cost of Pakistan

The confrontation with India over Kashmir immediately after independence persuaded the Pakistani government that defence must have the highest priority. Despite the poverty and urgent development needs of the new country, by 1950 as much as 80% of public expenditure went to defence – and even in the 1960s and 70s it was rarely less than 40%. This meant that the military were being built into Pakistan's political power structure. The armed forces became big enough to be not just the recipient of funds allocated, but to be a determinant of how much they should have in the first place. Throughout the period of union, 80% of Pakistan's armed forces were in the West, with the benefits too for the Western economy of their expenditure. The defence of the East, the Westerners argued, lay in the deterrence provided by the West's ability to march on Delhi; it was claimed that it would only take a few days for Pakistan's tanks to be parked outside the Red Fort.

The 1965 war with India which Ayub Khan had engineered was viewed askance from East Pakistan. In the Thar Desert in March tanks were engaged, with Pakistan possibly making small gains. Emboldened by this apparent success, in September Ayub launched a war against Indian forces in Kashmir, which then spilt over to fighting in the Punjab too. East Pakistan was technically at war with India too, but was essentially left defenceless. But the war in the Punjab, if anything, went India's way, and the deterrent threat against Delhi was exposed as a myth. What saved the East was India's astute perception that it was not fighting the whole of Pakistan, but merely the Western military clique, although there are also claims that China threatened intervention if Bengal were touched.

The next year the Awami (People's) League under the leadership of Sheikh Mujib-ur Rahman, became openly more vociferous in its demands for regional autonomy. His six-point programme was an open demand for secession in all but name. He wanted a completely independent economy and currency, with co-operation between the wings based on their self-interest and not on central government dictates and, even although defence was still to be a central matter, the separate wings would have been able to raise independently their own militia for defence purposes; again therefore placing the central government's role in defence more on the lines of a defence pact. To cap it all one of the demands insisted that representation in the central government would be on the basis of population-which would ensure the East's domination. Given that the power behind the existing military government was Western, the response was inevitable. In 1968 Mujib was imprisoned on trumped-up charges, becoming something of a Bengali national martyr/hero.

After Ayub's fall and the installation of a caretaker government under Yahya Khan, Mujib was released from prison to participate in the subsequent elections of late 1970, which were free and democratic. His Awami League won 158 out of

160 seats in East Bengal, endorsing his claims for regional autonomy, the Six Points which almost amounted to secession. His Awami League became the biggest single group in Pakistani politics. In the West wing, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto led his populist Pakistan People's Party to a dominant victory. It thus became the task of these two men to negotiate the new constitution.

Bhutto and Mujib set out to negotiate the terms of a new constitution; but given the obduracy of the former and the proven political strength of the latter, a breakdown was inevitable. On March 1st, in response to the crisis, Yahya announced the postponement of the meeting of the National Assembly. In Bengal, Mujib called for non-violent non-co-operation and a general strike. What happened next is a matter of dispute; but there is no doubt that some extremely nasty incidents occurred as Awami League supporters set upon factories owned by West Pakistanis and their unfortunate workers. Non-Bengalis were murdered in their thousands, and so too were Bengalis suspected of pro-Pakistan sympathies. Mujib proclaimed the Province under his control, and the Awami League started collecting taxes instead of the Government. The West Pakistani government started the difficult task of building up its forces in the East (difficult since India had suspended over-flights after a highly publicised high-jacking incident) and Yahya nominated a new hard-man as commander in the East, General Tikka Khan. On March 25th the army came out of its barracks to re-impose order, by force. On March 26th a clandestine radio station in Bengal announced the secession of the independent state of Bangladesh. That date has since been taken by Bangladesh to be the date of its independence, although the worst of the killing was yet to come.

In all the years of Pakistani union, the demands made by East Pakistanis were for some kind of recognition as equals in the new homeland. Having lost many of their own Bengali administrators and businessmen to India in 1947, the Eastern wing had become almost like a colony to the West Pakistanis. It was above all Punjabi administrators and officers who ran the province, and West Pakistani businessmen who set up the new jute mills. Their attitude towards their Bengali compatriots was patronising, often arrogant, being insufficiently aware of why the province was the way that it was. It was not simply because Bengalis were inherently ignorant country bumpkins. The Bengalis for their part had something of which they could be deeply proud; their cultural heritage, their poets and orators. Not much of this was immediately accessible to Urdu-speaking civil servants, serving time in this backwater. It was easy to remain detached and above such provincialism – to become in fact a replica of the expatriate administration that once the British had run. The recognition which the Bengalis finally received was the systematic genocide of Bengalis, their intellectuals in particular, by the Pakistani army. Mass executions and mass graves became something of a commonplace. Not a few outside observers mourned the passing of the ideal of Pakistan, but what kind of ideal did this action represent?

### 10.5 The South Asian Roots of Bangladesh

Since 1947 there has been a continual outflux of non-Muslims from East Bengal, the subject of intermittent harassment during times of tension. In 1947 East Bengal was 30% non-Muslim; in 1961 20%; by 1968 10%. Attempts were made by India to control the scale and speed of migration, which did of course cause problems in West Bengal and Assam, the principal receiving areas. (Although many of the Bengalis in Assam are actually Muslims in search of land to till.)

The disorder in East Pakistan in 1971 was of a different order of magnitude, and inevitably it could not be contained within East Pakistan alone. Great streams of refugees trekked into India, and with the refugees went those young men determined to train and fight as guerrillas. India assisted in the setting up of the training camps for the Mukti Bahini (freedom fighters), while it also struggled to attend to the refugee problem. By India's account the final total was 10 million, by the account of others perhaps as few as 1 million – but even that doubtfully small figure still represents a huge influx of refugees for any country to handle, and particularly when they arrive in one of the most densely settled and poorest parts of the country.

In the beginning of December 1971 full-scale war erupted between India and Pakistan, and for the first time it was fought both in the East and the West. In the West, Pakistan again faced defeat. In the East the Indian forces and the Mukti Bahini (Bangladesh guerrillas) routed the Pakistanis in Bengal in two weeks. On January 10th 1972 Sheikh Mujib returned from imprisonment and exile to claim leadership of the sovereign state of Bangladesh, and, remarkably quickly, by March 12th, Indian forces had retired back within their own borders.

Inevitably the hostilities were part of a wider international picture – the Americans, Russians, Chinese, and even the British being involved in the international diplomatic manoeuvring around it. (These are matters touched on in Chapter 13.) For their part, the Pakistanis believed the international community had let them down, and that India had shown its true colours – and that it had dismembered Pakistan as but one part of its long-term policy of undoing the partition of 1947. Almost certainly Bangladesh would have been born, even without Indian direct intervention, although it might have been a much longer and bloodier business. At the least, indirect intervention by India was inevitable, given the refugee problem thrust upon it – in the same way that, later, Pakistan could never have been uninvolved at all in the Afghan war in the 1980s, or the fate of the Taliban in 2001-2002. The result has been to create a State in Bengal which is to some extent overshadowed by India. The overwhelming size and wealth of India compared with Bangladesh, and its position upstream on the delta rivers, are enough to ensure that – but India has shown no inclination to pursue a policy which would directly lead to re-integration. For the time being, there are indeed three independent sovereign States that have emerged from the legacy of the Raj.

### 10.6 Concluding Remarks

The forces of regionalism that caused the secession of Bangladesh are not greatly different from those with which India has itself struggled since 1947 – with the delineation of new internal states and boundaries to satisfy Tamil or Gujarati demands etc. These are demands for self-determination, even if within some federating system. The irony of history is that the forces of self-determination which were heightened in the Independence struggle of the early 20th Century should have been so easily hijacked by the Pakistan movement in the 1940s. Muslim Bengal's dislike of Hindu Bengali domination was always and simply just that: it was not that Muslim Bengal's love for Muslim Punjab and Sindh led to the rejection of Hindu Bengal. From this perspective Curzon's partition of 1905 can be seen in a different light. It had been popular with the Muslim East Bengal, but deeply unpopular with Hindus in West Bengal who felt their dominion threatened and who were instrumental in its reversal. 1947 represented a chance to repeat 1905, but this time the East Bengalis knew they could only succeed with allies: their allies needed only to be temporary, partners in a marriage of convenience.

The price paid was horrifically high. After the year of civil war and genocide from March 1971, when as many as ten million people fled their homes, when villages were laid waste and fields left unfarmed, a major famine was predicted. It did not happen. Subsequent calculations indicate that the reason it did not occur was because the shortfall in food had already been met by the premature violent deaths of at least 1 million people. The Bangladesh flag, originally a red map of Bangladesh on a field of green, is now a red circle on a field of green: red for the blood of 1971 on the green of the paddy fields and the green of Islam.

## Raj and Swaraj: Regionalism and Integration in the Successor States

### 11.1 Introduction

The two (later three) sovereign states of India and Pakistan had been born – the struggles of the last century (from the Mutiny/First War of Independence to Independence itself) had been resolved at the grand political level, but the new states had yet to show themselves capable of their own cohesive integration and survival while simultaneously functioning through representative democratic constitutions. If they could achieve this, then this would be something entirely new in the history of South Asia, and the Partition of 1947, accepted at the last moment as the only means of achieving this goal, would possibly have been a price worth paying. In India, Nehru and the Central Government took over a well-functioning system of bureaucracy, and Nehru's national following and pre-eminence over any other Congress politician – whose bases were more often regional than national – was some sort of guarantee of national integrity in the short term at least – much as the personal standing of Tito (an ally of Nehru) ensured Yugoslavia's survival for some decades after World War II. India also had development strategies and plans, a result of debates about economic management that had been conducted in Congress for some time before independence. Pakistan had fragmented bits of administration and services – the severed ends of many tentacles – which had to be linked together. It also had to find out what its purposes and strategies were. After all, the aim of the Pakistan movement within the Muslim League had now been achieved. The idea of Pakistan had attracted atheists, communists, poets and soldiers as much as the Muslim clergy. Now, it was necessary to decide if it was to be theocratic or secular, socialist or capitalist.

Both India and Pakistan had to contend with the problem of the integration of the Princely States – most of which had had no internal experience of representative government. India was in a stronger and more favourable position with respect to the rulers than was Pakistan – which in 1946 and the first half of 1947 had been a 'dream state' from which acceding Princes could extract much more favourable treaty terms than they would have done from India. Both India and Pakistan had also to contend with the problem of regional languages – so important to the identity of regional communities; but in India this was a problem with so many regional components that it was difficult to see a single major national split on the issue (though perhaps

the Indo-European/Dravidian divide between North and South could conceivably cause a split if very poorly handled). In Pakistan the regional divide between West and East (the Indus Valley versus the Bengal delta) was not only the most significant divide within the new polity, it coincided exactly with a linguistic divide, exacerbated by the use of the Persian/Arabic script in the West and Bengali's own script (related to Hindi's Devanagari in part) in the East. This new Pakistan in two 'wings' a thousand miles apart was described as 'the Camel and the Ox in one yoke' (Tayyeb, 1966): though perhaps the better image might be the Camel and the Water Buffalo. The last chapter detailed how the yoke was finally broken.

The situation for Pakistan thus started as much more difficult, and soon became almost impossible. Mohammed Ali Jinnah, popularly known as the Qaid-i-Azam ('mighty-ruler'), had the same sort of standing amongst his new compatriots as Nehru did with his. His vision, now forgotten or twisted by modern commentators, was for a secular state. What he wanted to defend was not Islam, but Indian Muslim cultures. But he died of tuberculosis in 1948 less than a year after Independence, and his successor, the most significant and able of his close followers, Liaquat Ali Khan, was assassinated in 1950. It was left to a succession of weaker politicians to define what Pakistan was for.

### 11.2 The Integration of the Princely States

#### *11.2.1 India*

In the Partition, India had lost 365,000 square miles of British Indian territory, and 81.5 million people. By absorbing the Princely States, it gained 500,000 square miles, and 86.5 million people. The new Dominion (soon to be a Republic) of India had an area as great as British India, despite the loss of most of Punjab, most of Bengal, of Sind, and much else. Thus it was much more compact and coherent geographically, provided that the system of government was similar throughout the territory so formed. In India's case the process of integrating the Princely States ran fairly smoothly, because Congress had existed for longer as a political force than the Muslim League, had inherited the greater part of old India and its central seats of power, and, importantly, because it had a clearer idea of where it was going. It would have no truck with Princes who wished to retain autocratic internal rule, and the various deeds of accession all provided for the adoption of representative government in some form or other. Concessions were indeed given to the Princes, most of whom retained their titles and were given a privy purse, something which stuck in the throats of a socialist government, but which accorded, as Gandhi had insisted, with honouring the treaties drawn up. Some of the very smallest states were simply absorbed into adjacent Provinces. Some were grouped together in new Unions, such as in Saurashtra (the Kathiawar peninsula in Gujarat). Some retained their identity as separate geographical entities, such as Kashmir, Hyderabad and Mysore. In the Unions the Princes elected a Rajpramukh, one of their number who

effectively became the State Governor, holding an office in which he exercised power only on the advice of the cabinet, now composed of elected representatives. In the large single states the ex-ruler also became a Rajpramukh. But the Constitution of 1950, which listed the former British Provinces as Group A States, and the former Princely States and the larger State Unions as Group B States, gave the Indian President the same powers of dismissal of Governors in Group A as of Rajpramukhs in Group B. The distinction had become something of a sop to history, and to local sentiment, which could not be completely ignored. The majority of Princes simply retired from public life, with their purses and their other privileges intact (such as preferential access to import-restricted goods). But there was still a last twist to the tail. In 1967 Congress announced it would abolish the privy purses. The resulting legal battles precipitated a general election in 1971 in which Mrs Gandhi had to seek a sufficient majority to make an amendment to the Constitution. She succeeded, and the Princes passed officially into history. But, as in Republican France the Count of Paris still uses his title and some of the public still respond, so in India some of the Maharajas are known still as that, and still have residual wealth and status in society.

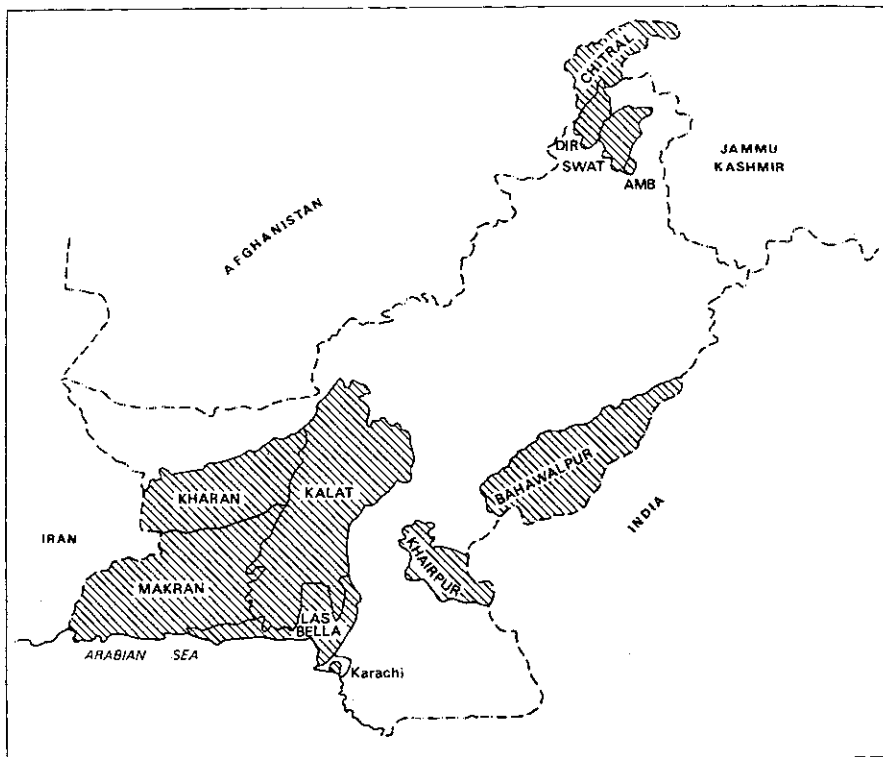


Figure 11.1 Princely States in Pakistan c. 1950

Source: Wilcox (1963)

### 11.2.2 Pakistan

In Pakistan it was not quite so simple. Jinnah had, in a sense, threatened Congress before Independence by wooing the Princes with better terms than India was prepared to offer: in effect by promising them the same relationship as they had had with British India. The wilier Princes responded by playing him at his own game: Bahawalpur (See Figure 11.2) toyed with the idea of acceding to India, and actually for pertinent reasons. It was dependent on the irrigation water of the Sutlej projects, and feared the worst (as seen in Chapter 12, the ruling Nawab had some reason) if it were separated politically from the headworks. The mountain States of Dir, Chitral and Swat were also wooed by Congress, and indeed had no great affection for the plainsmen of Punjab.

In the event Khairpur acceded on terms which were relatively favourable to Pakistan, mostly because the ruler was declared mentally unfit and a compliant cabinet acted during the ensuing Regency. But Bahawalpur's Amir<sup>1</sup> did manage to force a deed of accession on Pakistan which preserved his full autocratic powers, and indeed did replicate the relationship he had had with British India. One Article even went so far as to specify that no alteration of the accession deeds could be legislated without his signature.

In 1947 Pakistan was of course born in every sense into crisis, with 6 million refugees, Lahore in flames, irrigation water turned off (see Chapter 12), and neither an established seat of power nor an adequately staffed and well run-in administration. Then came war in Kashmir, and an economic war which was particularly unpleasant in Bengal. In such circumstances Jinnah did not have the energy or inclination to steam-roller a Princely State, whose internal administration remained fairly well intact after 1947. But, to some extent fortuitously, the convulsions of Punjab inevitably swept into Bahawalpur, into which Punjabi settlers had followed the waters of the Sutlej irrigation schemes. The riots which ensued proved more than the State could handle, and in appealing to Pakistan for help, the latter forced the first concessions from the Amir, who had to place all his forces except his own bodyguard under Pakistani control, and who had now to pay a levy for defence. Then there followed a major confrontation over smuggling. The Pakistani government was trying to control food prices and availability, while in India prices were rising faster. The 300-mile frontier between Bahawalpur and India became extremely leaky, with the connivance, it was alleged in the Pakistani Press, of the State Administration. Another agreement varying the Accession was signed: this time the Amir assigned more power to his Chief-minister and he himself adopted a more constitutional role as Head of State. In 1949 the Amir sanctioned direct elections to a small Majlis (parliament), though effectively reserving veto powers to himself (via the Chief Administrator), and elections were held in 1951 for the first time. Another Constitution in 1952 gave more power to the Majlis, and the Amir became in

<sup>1</sup> This is an unusual title. Until paramountcy lapsed in 1947 he was a Nawab. But at Independence, much to the annoyance of the Pakistan Government, he awarded himself the title of Amir.



effect a Provincial Governor, able to disband the Majlis and proclaim Amir's Rule during emergencies only, and this time also only with the agreement of the central government. His role by then was getting close to that of the Rajpramukhs in India, except that his post was still hereditary, and he himself could not be dismissed by the Central Government.

In Baluchistan the Pakistani Government managed to push the princely states together into the Baluchistan States Union (BSU), but the move failed to forge any common identity between the tribes, who in any event remained mostly beyond and untouched by administrative changes between the BSU and the Federal Government. Internally it was still tribal law in a backward and poverty-stricken region. Under the new Constitution of 1956 (see below) the assemblies of the States, States Unions, and Provinces of Punjab and Sind were replaced by a single assembly for the whole of West Pakistan ('One Unit') and this required amending further the accession of the princely states, effectively ending their individual survival as private fiefs, although not re-defining their borders. In 1958 the Khan of Kalat, most powerful of the former rulers, denounced Pakistan, unilaterally abrogated his accession, and, it is said, raised his own flag in revolt. Minor bloodshed led to accommodation. But during Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's incumbency the area became involved in a much longer and bloodier insurgency against the central government.

In the north-west mountain states of Dir, Swat and Chitral, the rulers' internal autonomy also remained strong for a long period. Partly there was little alternative: even in the North-West Frontier Province itself after One Unit, law and order and administration at lower levels was mostly conducted through traditional tribal councils – 'jirgas'. (In the case of Dir and Chitral the two even managed to wage a short war with each other in 1948 over a bride disputed between two rival royal claimants.) The system of Special Areas which the British had forged essentially remained unchanged, until they were absorbed into Pakistan in the 1960s.

### 11.3 Territorial Redefinition in India and the Emergence of Linguistic States

Writing in prison in 1942 Nehru said:

'Sometimes as I reached a gathering, a great roar of welcome would greet me: *Bharat Mata ki Jai* – 'Victory to Mother India'. I would ask them unexpectedly what they meant by that cry, who was this *Bharat Mata*, Mother India, whose victory they wanted? My question would amuse them and surprise them. At last a vigorous Jat, wedded to the soil from immemorial generations, would say that it was the *dharti*, the good earth of India, that they meant. What earth? Their particular patch, or all the patches in the district or province, or in the whole of India? And so question and answer went on, till they would ask me impatiently to tell them all about it. I would endeavour to do so and explain that India was all this that they had thought, but it was much more... what counted ultimately were the people of India. *Bharat Mata* was essentially these millions of people, and victory to her meant victory to these people. You are part of this *Bharat Mata*, I told them, you are in a manner yourselves *Bharat*

*Mata*, and as this idea slowly soaked into their brains, their eyes would light up as if they had made a great discovery' (Nehru, 1961:62)

Perhaps Nehru believed too much in his own idealistic propaganda. What if, for each group of people, *Bharat Mata* could only mean *their* patch of earth?

Effectively by 1950 India had a new constitution, modelled to a large extent on the 1935 Act, a functioning Federal democratic system of government based on the Westminster Parliamentary system, representative governments in all Provincial Assemblies, a coherent national party organisation in the Congress, in power in the Centre and in the States, and a new foreign policy initiative to pursue in the Non-Aligned-Movement. The Princely States had been absorbed, and a more or less uniform system of government and representation established through the country.

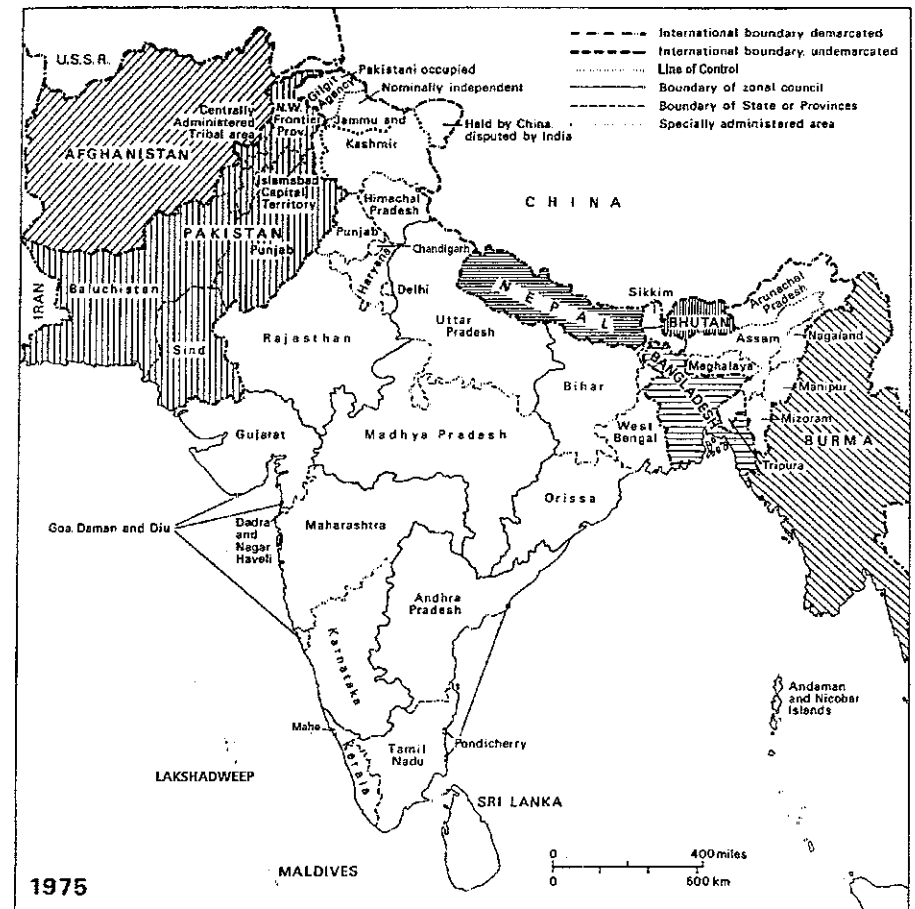
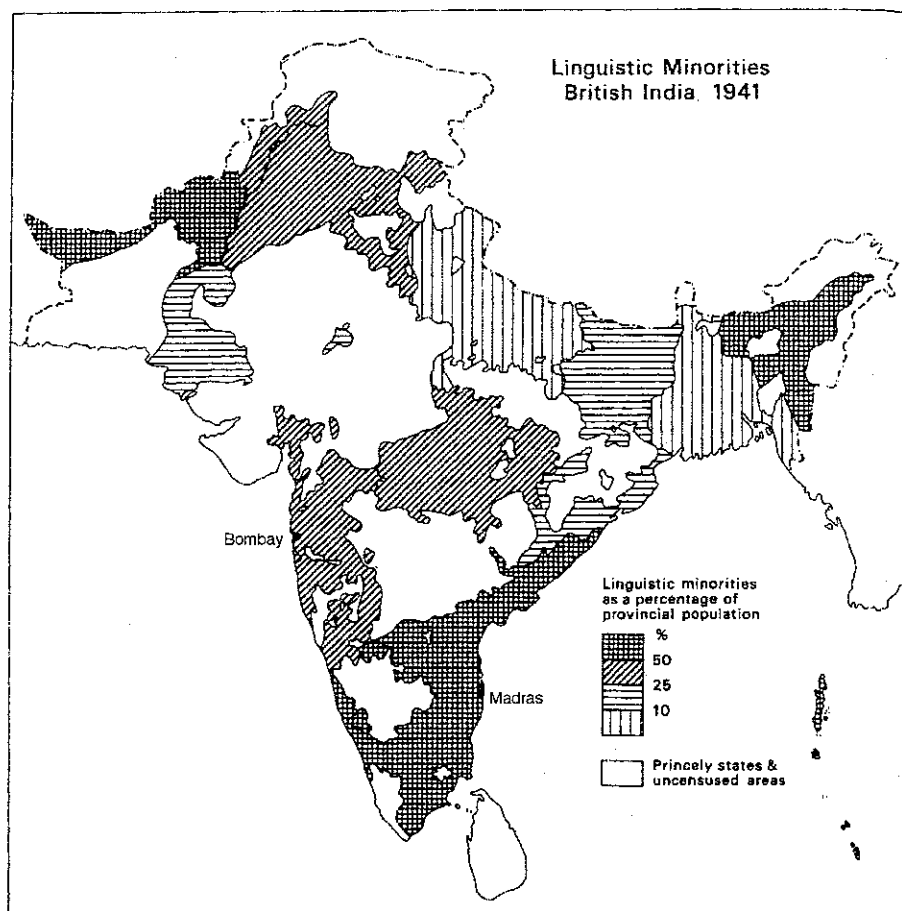


Figure 11.2 Territorial Division and the Successor States, c. 1975

Source: Schwartzberg (1992)

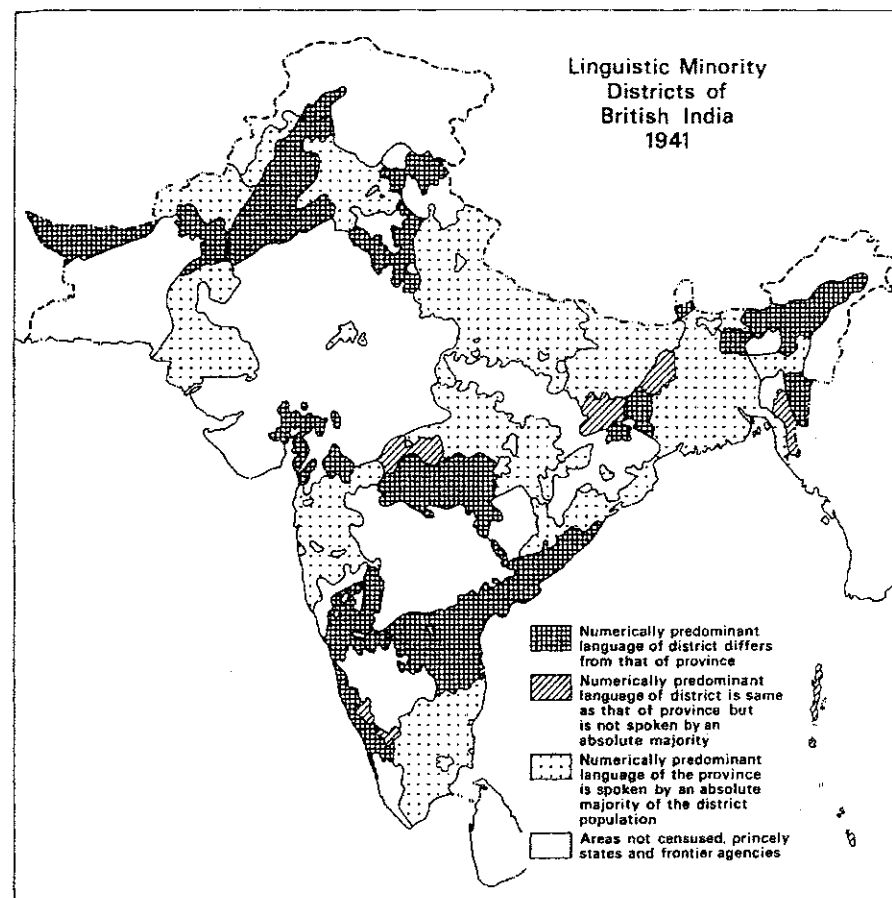


**Figure 11.3 Linguistic Minorities in British Provinces of India, 1941**

Source: Schwartzberg (1985)

(except for some centrally administered areas). The expectations of the populace were also high, for 'self-determination' and social and economic advancement.

Although since the 1920s Congress had called for the establishment of linguistic states, the Dar Commission which looked at the issue afresh in the light of Independence, reported to the government in 1948 that linguistic states would probably be the basis for sub-national movements, i.e. those which could ultimately lead to secession. Thus faced with a challenge to the policies till then pursued by Congress, Nehru, Patel and Sitaramayya formed a committee to further investigate the issue, and they came back with the same answer, except that they conceded that there might be a case for separating Andhra from Madras State. Pandora's box had been opened.



**Figure 11.4 Linguistic Minority Districts of India in 1941**

Source: Schwartzberg (1985)

If one looks at Figure 11.3 Madras and Bombay appear as central nodal cities in the arc of hinterland that had grown round them. Figure 11.5 shows how they are now eccentric cities, near borders which divide states. What Nehru described as 'tribalism and provincialism' has clearly won the political battle. Language is clearly an emotive issue – as any Belgian or Welsh nationalist knows – but for good reasons. In any State where there is a large linguistic minority, it is likely to find itself dealing with an administration conducted primarily in the language of the majority, of timetables printed in the language of the majority, and of schools giving education in the language of the majority, and of political debate taking place often in the language of the majority. To establish equal opportunity it ultimately suggests that there should be equal access to all these things in the language of the minority.

Although Nehru believed that the States were just there to serve the purposes of administration, even that 'just' actually mattered. In 1953 agitation in Andhra escalated into widespread rioting, and a prominent leader began to fast unto death. The administration began to collapse, and that was why the issue was conceded and Andhra was born.

A States Reorganisation Commission was then established to look into the whole question yet again; but by then other communities were also demanding their linguistic region. When the report was accepted in Parliament in 1956, it represented something of a volte-face. By then Nehru had realised that forces that were not accommodated within the constitution, that were not ephemeral, could well break the nation. Fourteen new states of more uniform language were defined, along with six union territories. Demands for a separate state of Jharkhand for the tribal people of south Bihar and north Orissa were not conceded, nor demands for a state in the northeast for the Nagas. Bombay was however not split, neither was the new East Punjab. In the former case the argument was that although Bombay was a majority Marathi-speaking city in a Marathi region, it was dominated by Gujarati wealth. The same problems with which Radcliffe had struggled in the Punjab and Bengal were mirrored here. The result was the instantaneous growth of antagonistic Marathi and Gujarati political fronts, and large-scale rioting. The Congress vote in Maharashtra collapsed, much like the Muslim League's vote had collapsed in Pakistan in the 1950s. In 1960, the Government conceded, and Bombay was split into Maharashtra and Gujarat.

The effect (and the cause?) of this process is graphically displayed in the maps and diagrams by Schwartzberg, Figures 11.3-11.7. At the State level the dominance of the major language groups has been continually increased, and in general this has been welcomed as increasing the legitimacy and transparency of government and bureaucracy. At the federal level plurality cannot have increased – after all we are dealing with the same population, and broadly similar constituencies of the Lok Sabha. But there is now a sharper definition of the self-identity of states, and there has been a growth of the representation of regional parties in the Lok Sabha. Increasingly, national parties have been unable to form Central Government without coalitions with some of the 'regional' politicians.

In the case of Punjab the Sikhs had been pressing for their separate State. But the case for resisting here was slightly different. The Hindus and the Sikhs of Punjab both spoke mutually comprehensible dialects of Punjabi, a language which is but little removed from Hindi. The two groups did however use different scripts. The Hindus mostly used Devanagari. The Sikhs, who in practice mostly used the Persian-Arabic script, argued for the adoption of their liturgical script, Gurmukhi, which is closely modelled on Devanagari. Because the pressure was from a religious group, the central Government resisted. It seemed, after all, a re-run of the arguments of the Muslim League, which had been refuted (though not overcome) by Congress, which had always insisted on the creation of a secular state. But Hindu pressure also grew for separation, and in 1966 the demand was finally conceded with the creation of Haryana in the eastern part of Punjab. Finally, the Sikhs had a state territory in

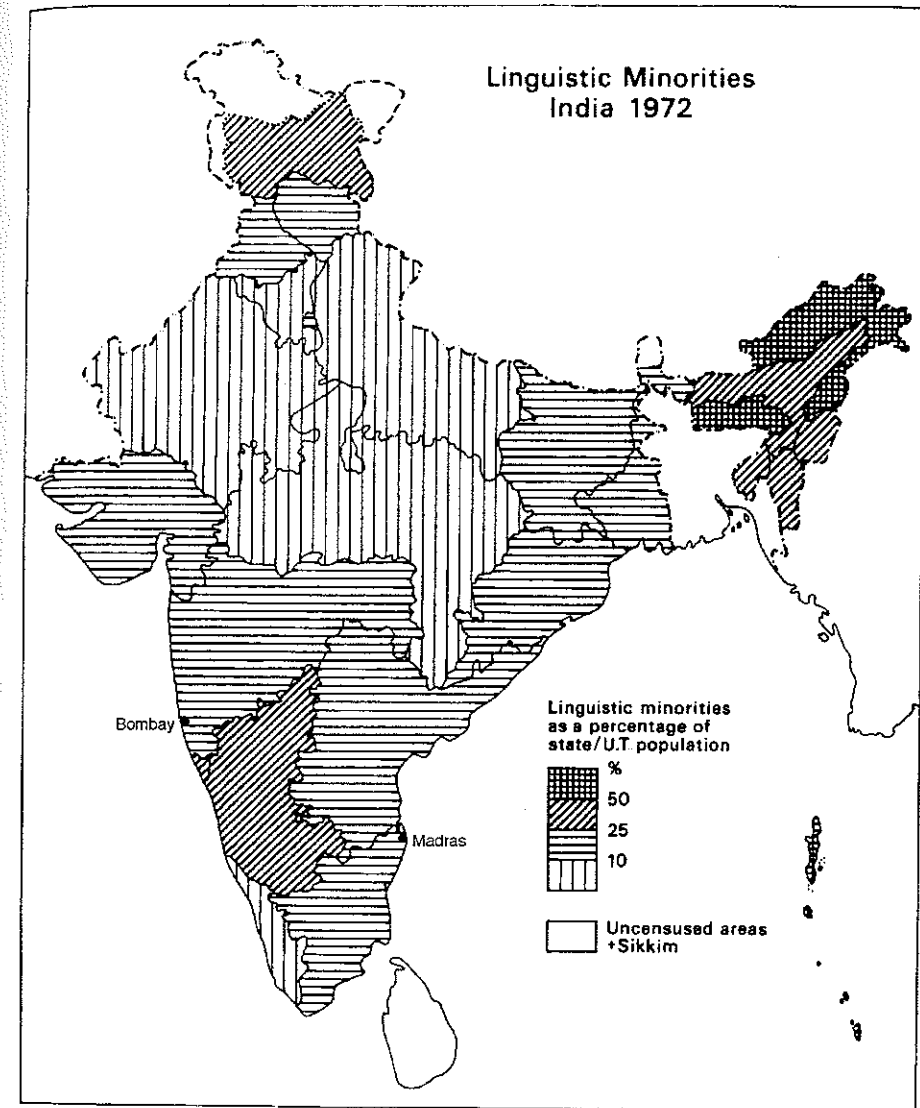
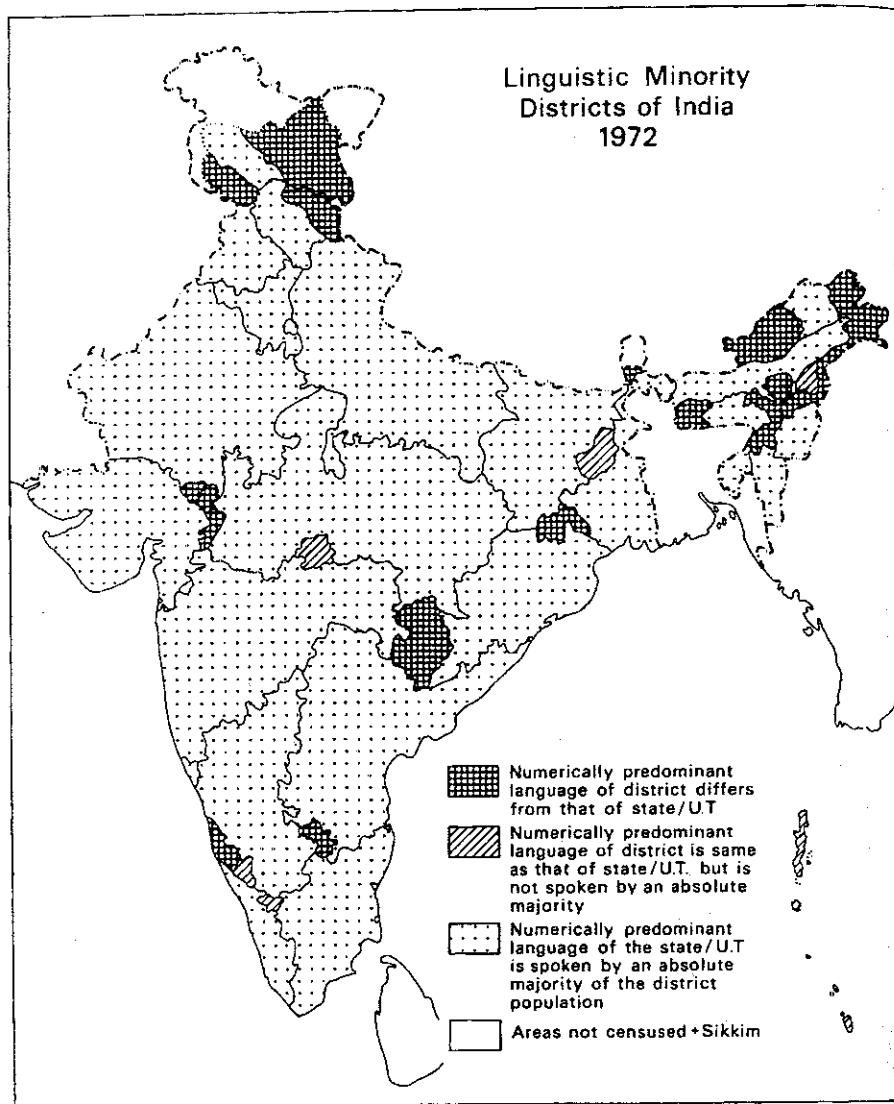


Figure 11.5 Linguistic Minorities in States of India in 1972

Source: Schwartzberg (1985)



**Figure 11.6 Linguistic Minority Districts of India in 1972**

Source: Schwartzberg (1985)

which they were in a majority, although only a small part of the original Punjab of the British Raj. It was not, however, the end of their demands: there is an interesting aftermath to the story. After the partition of 1947, Indian Punjab had lost the capital of Lahore and so built itself a new capital at Chandigarh. This now fell astride the new dividing line between Haryana and latest Punjab. Both sides claimed it, but in an act of even-handed justice, neither got it. It became instead a Union Territory, and capital for both states, and thereby a bone of contention for Sikh demands in the future. We cannot go into detail here, but in other new states the building of new state capitals has had a major impact on the urban map of India, and has also cost the tax payer considerable sums of money.

The divisions made so far are not necessarily the end of the process. In the mid-1990s the hill districts of India's largest state, Uttar Pradesh, demanded their own statehood as Uttarakhand or Uttaranchal – and given the differences between the mountains and the plains, it does sometimes seem curious that the districts remain incorporated, even if on their own they would be a rather small and poor state a little like Himachal Pradesh. The demand for Jharkhand has waxed and waned over the years. The tribal people here do not form a cohesive group linguistically, speaking a variety of Austro-Asiatic, Dravidian and other languages. Their coherence is in a similarity of life-style and non-Hindu culture. Their movement has also suffered because it has mostly been rural: the new industrial towns of the area are overwhelmingly Bihari, Bengali, and Oriya, and now represent in some districts a majority of the population. The south-eastern areas of Madhya Pradesh had similar problems. It was and is backward, heavily forested, and in rural areas dominated by tribal populations with very low levels of literacy and education. But it also includes India's largest iron-ore mine, and new urban populations. Nevertheless, in 2001 statehood was granted to all three aspirant areas: Uttaranchal, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh.

The north-east region is a different case. The tribal peoples of the former North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA) may also have been divided linguistically, but most were on a sensitive border area with China, and far removed from Indian mainstream life. They have been granted statehood as Arunachal Pradesh – though this has not meant the end of insurgencies. Similarly with Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram, their sensitive border territory (where the Japanese invasion via Burma was halted in the Second World War) has put them at an advantage in making demands on the Central Government. The long war between Naga separatists and India has proven the need for political accommodation, and it has been granted. Nagaland was separated from Assam and became a full state in 1963, and the former princely states of Manipur and Tripura became Union Territories, then States in 1972. Mizoram became a full state in 1985 – a tiny state of less than 1 million people. Armed insurgency still continues in much of the North-East, even if sporadically. This area was rarely if ever fully incorporated into Indian Empires of the Ganges plains, until finally the British incorporated the area. Missionaries then gave it a partly Christian orientation. The cultural isolation is accentuated by the geographical isolation caused by the Partition of Bengal in 1947, which cut the main communication lines to Calcutta, and which left India connected to it only by a narrow neck of land.

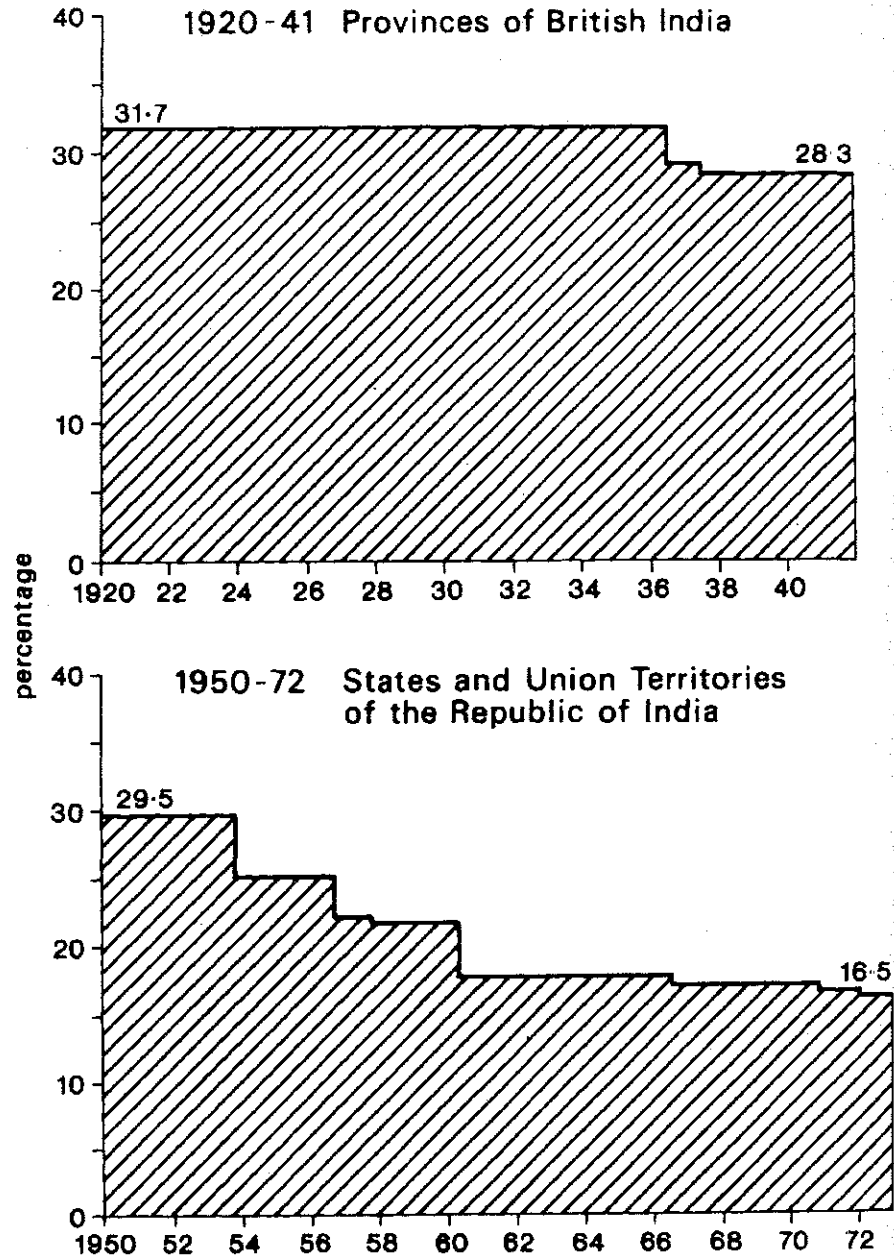


Figure 11.7 Percentage of Linguistic Minorities in Provinces/States over Time

Source: Schwartzberg (1985)

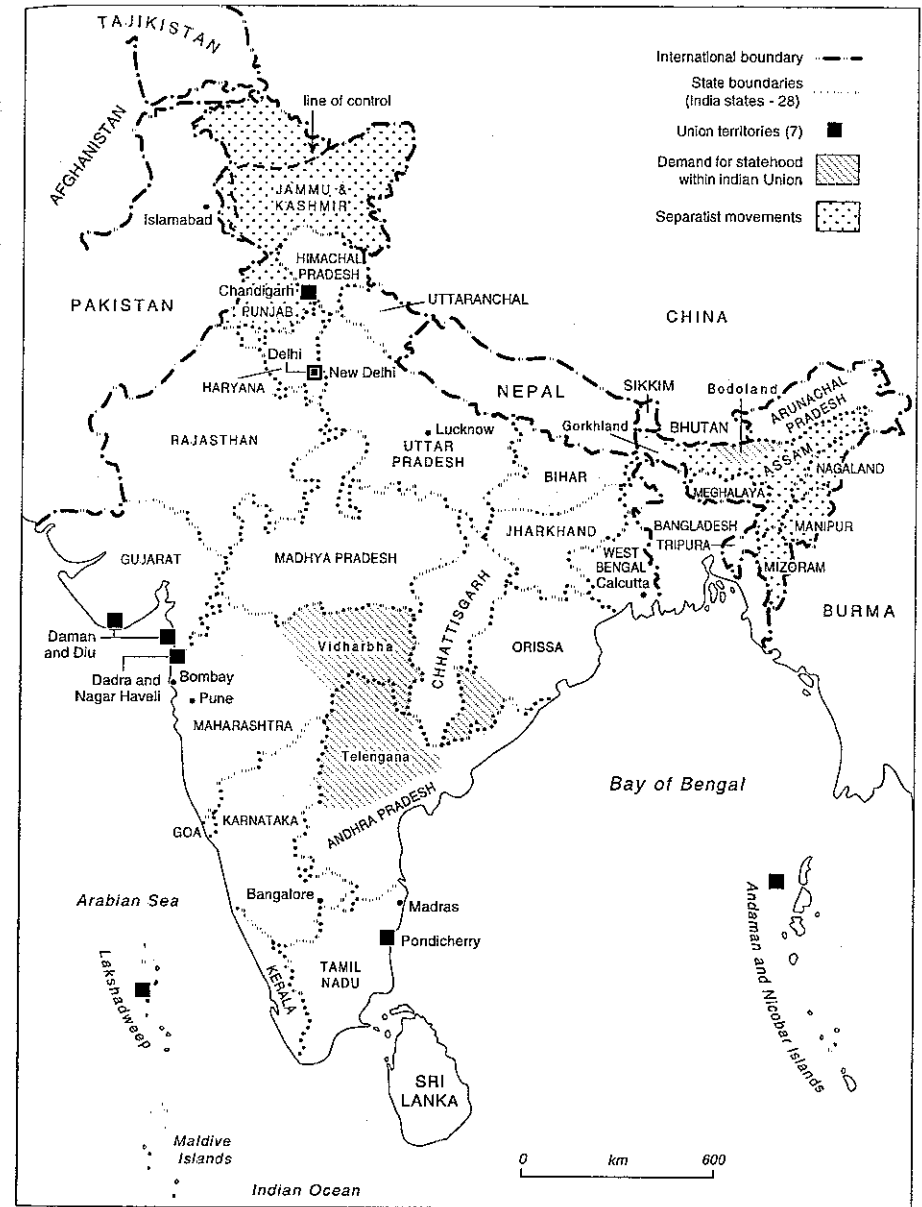


Figure 11.8 Statehood in 2002

Source: Based on Singh (2000)

Linguistic tension has also existed between the states over other issues. Article 343 of the 1950 Constitution specifically named Hindi using the Devanagari script as India's official language, although at the time of the adoption of the Constitution English was also to be used for fifteen years. India of course straddles a major linguistic divide: between the Indo-Aryan languages of the North derived from Sanskrit, and the Dravidian languages of the south. Since the use of English was strong in the educated classes, in inter-state commerce, in higher education, in the courts, and in administration and even parliament, and in many ways it was stronger in the south than in the north, if English ceased to be an official language it would mean that the south had to learn the North's tongue, but not vice-versa. Unease in the South broke out into outright rebellion when on Republic Day 1965 Hindi became the sole national language. The South found incomprehensible Hindi timetables posted, which caused railway officials considerable difficulty. Protest against this 'Hindi imperialism' went far beyond ripping down Hindi posters and burning Hindi books: rioting resulted in police firings in Tamil Nadu and between 80 and 300 deaths, and several suicides by self-immolation. The central government gave way: Hindi remains the official national language of India, but English may also be used for the 'time being' – a time period which is very precisely not defined. In schools, in theory, those in the north learn Hindi, English and another Indian language (but in fact rarely do), those in non-Hindi-speaking states learn their own language, Hindi and English. But many southerners still learn little Hindi.

The reorganisation of the states has meant that the use of English as a lingua franca within each state is no longer so important; so its use has declined in, for example, secondary and tertiary education in state institutions. However, English still has a remarkably strong hold particularly in newspapers and book publishing, and with increasingly internationalised media and the advent of satellite TV, for a metropolitan élite it is growing again.

#### 11.4 The Centre-Province Balance and Pakistan's Search for a Constitution

The Independence Act of 1947 provided for the creation of a Constituent Assembly in both of the new Dominions of Pakistan and India, which would draw up new constitutions, in the meantime also acting as the nations' parliaments. Until the new constitutions were provided, the Government of India Act of 1935 remained the basis for the framework of Government. The Independence Act did however vary, obviously, some of the provisions and practices of the 1935 Act, under which the Governor-General (Vice-roy) had held considerable power. The role of the Governor-General after independence was one of constitutional head acting on the advice of his prime minister and cabinet, in the model of the British Monarchy and the Governor-Generals elsewhere in the Commonwealth.

Mountbatten had hoped to be Governor-General to both new Dominions, but although India was happy with his appointment (and used his experience and knowledge profitably), Jinnah turned him down, and took the position for himself.

In India, therefore, the long process of the devolution of power from the head of the executive to the head of the legislature was complete.

As Governor-General of Pakistan, and while acting under the terms of the 1935 and 1947 Acts, Jinnah could dismiss a Provincial Government with the concurrence of the Provincial Governor. Shortly after independence, perhaps because of the crisis he knew Pakistan would face forging its new national identity, he brought a new section 92A to the Statute book through a compliant Assembly, providing the Governor-General with the power to *direct* a Governor to dismiss a provincial assembly and assume all the powers otherwise invested in the representative institutions. The process of the devolution of power to democratic institutions was thereby in Pakistan's case reversed, back towards something of the model of the Viceroy and the Raj, and if I am mischievous, perhaps dimly back before that too, to the Moguls.

Jinnah, the Qaid-i-Azam, was also leader of the Muslim League. From his vantage point of powerful head of state and political leader it was he and not the Prime Minister who dominated the political agenda, and it was the latter who acted on the advice and consent of the former. Although, after Jinnah's death, Liaquat Ali Khan tried to reassert the power of the Prime Minister, he himself did not survive long, assassinated by a dissident Pathan in October 1951. He was succeeded by Khwaja Nazimuddin, a Bengali, who stepped down from the office of Governor-General. A West Pakistani, Ghulam Muhammad, was appointed Governor-General in his stead.

By 1952 it was already obvious that riots in Bengal against the imposition of Urdu as the sole national language (considered in more detail in Chapter 9) had seriously weakened if not destroyed the status of the Muslim League in the eastern wing and, therefore the prospect was already looming of Bengali demands dominating any assembly elected on a population basis. In April 1953, Ghulam Muhammad used the government's inability to handle law and order in both West and East Pakistan to summarily dismiss Khwaja Nazimuddin, and to install his own nominee (then the Ambassador to the United States) to office. The Constituent Assembly could, and should, have contested this abuse of its prerogative, but it failed to do so, having spent much of its energy on quarrelling over representation in the new constitution. The pattern of 'strong' government from the centre in the Jinnah mould was now well established, as was also the disregard for constitutional nicety.

Given the fact that the divisions between the provinces of West Pakistan weakened the West wing in relation to the East wing, several Punjabis became champions of the idea of One Unit, or the merging of West Pakistan into a single province. The idea chimed with the supporters of strong central executive government. Standing between this emerging 'elitist' force and their goal was the fact that the Constituent Assembly had been charged with devising a new constitution, and that it was still actively if acrimoniously trying to do so.

In October 1953 the politicians reached an agreement under the Mohammad Ali formula, which proposed for the Central Government an upper house, the House of Units, based on representation of the federating units, and a lower people's house

based on direct representation by population. Five Units were proposed for the Upper House: Bengal; Punjab; Baluchistan States Union together with Baluchistan Province, Bahawalpur and Karachi; Sind together with Khairpur; and North-West Frontier Province, with the mountain tribal states as well. The Unit which inter-alia linked Baluchistan with Bahawalpur was to say the least of it, strange, and it provoked a lot of hostile criticism, particularly from the Princely States. By 1954 a revised scheme was accepted, which conceded a status for Bahawalpur and Khairpur equal to other Provinces. By September 1954 the Assembly passed a resolution making cabinet advice binding on the Governor-General, and began the task of finalising the Constitution on the lines of the agreed principles. It began to look as if the power of the Governor-General might again be curbed.

In October Gulam Mohammad replied: he suspended the Assembly (while it was in recess) and formed a new Cabinet without parliamentary responsibility. The Amir of Bahawalpur was instructed to dismiss his assembly, and a new Chief Minister, chosen by Ghulam Muhammad, assumed all of the Amir's powers and responsibilities. The steam-rolling of the 'strong central executive' had begun in earnest. Sind objected to integration into One Unit, and its provincial assembly was dismissed. The Federal Court also fell into line, dismissing an appeal against Muhammad's action in dismissing the Assembly, but preventing the framing of a new constitution until a new constituent assembly had met. A new assembly was duly elected, again by indirect means from the existing provinces and states, and in 1955 the outlines of the new Constitution wanted by the Governor-General were confirmed: in particular, West Pakistan (except for some of the frontier tribal states) would be a single unit. However, Muhammad was now an ill man, and forced into retirement, but the centralised power he had accumulated remained intact, bequeathed to one of his strong supporters, General Iskander Mirza.

The new constitution for the Islamic Republic of Pakistan was adopted, and became effective in March 1956. General Mirza became first President, and the scene was now set for a conflict between two equal and obdurate antagonists, West and East Pakistan (as East Bengal had been officially renamed.) East Bengali sentiment would now have to fight against an unaccommodating Central Government structure. In an attempt to placate and control Bengali opinion, Mirza chose H.S. Suhrawardy, the veteran Bengali politician and leader of the largest group in the assembly (the Awami League) as the Prime Minister. Inevitably his policies aimed at parity in economic as well as political matters, raised the ire of Western politicians. By provoking instability on the floor of the house, Mirza then engineered Suhrawardy's dismissal.

The first elections under the new constitution were scheduled for March 1958, but before they had taken place the old pattern of conflict between President and Prime Minister that had re-emerged enabled Mirza to proclaim an Emergency. He asked the Chief of Staff, General Ayub Khan to administer Martial Law, which he did more amply than perhaps Mirza had hoped for. Ayub engineered a military coup in October 1958, and suspended all political activity. Thus began what was effectively 12 years of military dictatorship, but not without some attempt at yet further constitution-making.

In framing the next constitution (adopted 1962) Ayub needed of course to legitimate his power, and to consolidate central control over the regionally divisive body politic. This he did by abolishing party political activity, and abolishing direct representation (which had only ever theoretically occurred anyway) in the National Assembly, instituting what was termed Basic Democracies instead. These were 80,000 units (local boards) into which Pakistan was divided, which were controlled for local government purposes only by elected representatives in conjunction with important local officials such as the District Officer, and which then elected the representatives for the national assembly. An analogy would be for the Monarch in the UK to abolish parliament, and to allow elected Parish Boards both to run local affairs, and to elect representatives (not standing on party tickets) to a new parliament. But there is an even better analogy than that. The process of winding history back, of eliminating all that the British had conceded, had gone yet one step further than the re-invention of the Viceroy. It was in town boards that the British had first invested some local electoral responsibility, and now effectively it was at this scale only that democratic rights were still preserved. Ayub had done merely what Mirza had once hoped someone would do. In 1954 Mirza had said:

'You cannot have the old British system of administration and at the same time allow the politicians to meddle with the civil services. In the British system the District Magistrate was the king pin of administration. His authority was unquestioned. We have to restore that' (Mirza in the newspaper *Dawn*, Oct 31 1954, cited in Inayatullah, 1964:28)

But history was to show Pakistan, as it had shown the British, that it is not possible to pretend that political aspirations do not exist merely by inventing structures in which they cannot be expressed. Repression can give an air of stability for just so much time, depending on how hot the fire that builds the pressure, depending on how strong the boiler is.

In 1965 Ayub's popularity at home was low and his grip on power weak. He did what military dictators are prone to do at such time – stoke up a foreign campaign that will unite the nation – just as for example Galtieri of Argentina would do 17 years later in the Falklands/Malvinas. Pakistan provoked a war with India over border disputes in the desert in the Rann of Kutch, and shortly afterwards in Kashmir. The war in Kashmir was not a military success for Pakistan, and this diversion reduced rather than enhanced the status of the military government. Subsequent public disorder and rioting led to the downfall of Ayub in 1969. He handed power over to another general, Yahya Khan, who promised elections for a new constituent assembly and a return to civilian rule. The elections were duly held in December 1970. East Bengal, or East Pakistan as it had officially been renamed, wanted no more of the strong Pakistani Central Government. Its war to achieve independence as Bangladesh was outlined in the last chapter.

### 11.5 Regionalism Post-1972 in the Residual Pakistan

With the two wings of Pakistan now irrevocably split, civilian power in the west fell on Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, leader of the Pakistan People's Party. The position he faced was almost as bad as that faced by Pakistan in 1947. It was now militarily weak, and its administration tattered by the years of riot and turmoil. In the next constitution of 1972 the Provinces of Punjab (now incorporating Bahawalpur) and of Sind (now incorporating Khairpur) were reinstated, and Baluchistan and the North-West Frontier also re-established. Bhutto was following in Nehru's footsteps in recognising the reality of regionalism, not simply trying to suppress it. But clearly now was an opportune moment for other latent secessionist demands to strike: and almost immediately Afghanistan started to foment trouble in North-West Frontier by openly renewing support for Pathan demands for a separate Pashtunistan (a demand quietly supported by India and the USSR), and in Baluchistan the smouldering insurrection blazed again, aided by arms flown from Iraq. The suppression of these two movements was violent but successful (for the time being), but involved the assassination of many officials and politicians.

Economic stress, caused partly by Bhutto's interventionist policies and nationalisation programme, but also by such misfortunes as the first OPEC oil shock of 1973 and disastrous floods in much of the Indus Valley in 1975, compounded the difficulties. When Bhutto called an election in March 1977, the ostensible result was an overwhelming victory for his Pakistan Peoples' Party but this was denounced immediately by the opposition who alleged vote-rigging and intimidation on a large scale. The opposition took to the streets, and provoked a return to Martial Law. This provided the opportunity for the Chief of Staff General Zia-ul-Haq to launch a coup, and to assume full powers as Chief Martial Law Administrator in July. So, again Pakistan returned to military dictatorship under a strong central government headed by a new Mughal. Bhutto was executed, after a rather dubious trial in which he was found guilty of ordering the murder of a political foe. (In 1999 there was a curious sense of *déjà vu*: the elected Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was ousted by General Musharraf and put on trial, although not executed.)

Zia lasted in power from 1977 to 1988, when he died in an air crash presumed to have been sabotage. He followed almost the same tracks as Ayub had done, calling for elections to a National Assembly with very limited powers, with candidates standing on a non-party basis. For a short while he devolved some power to a civilian administration under Prime Minister Junejo, but dismissed it in 1988 at the first signs of independent actions by the Government. Zia also had to contend with increasing regional hostility in Sind, and above all the effects of the Russian invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, and the subsequent wave of Pathan refugees into Pakistan. To some extent the Afghan War proved Zia's salvation, since he became the bulwark through which aid from the USA was conducted to the Mujahadeen in Afghanistan. But the long-term effect has been to introduce weapons to Pakistan on a plentiful scale, to produce what is known as the Kalashnikov culture, so that any dissident

group in Sind, Baluchistan, the North-West Frontier and even in Punjab now has an armed wing.

Zia also played one other card very strongly, though it is yet to be seen whether with permanent effect. Given the regional dissent and the political instability from which Pakistan has suffered, Zia sought in Islam, the original reason for founding the State, a new force for national identity and cohesion, and also legitimacy for party-less politics. By further pushing the adoption of Sharia law and Islamic economic concepts, he hoped to unite the people and the Mullahs with him. Although the West sees in public floggings and amputations a barbaric past, these have not been wide-spread practices, nor as prominent in their impact in Pakistan as the attempt to push women back towards an inferior status and into *purdah*. In 1988 female demonstrators against his programme were beaten by the police in public view. Although the Qaid-i-Azam's (Jinnah's) great dream for Pakistan is often used in public appeals, his conception of Pakistan as a secular state seems for the moment to have been quietly forgotten. In 1991 a Supreme Court ruling made the Koran the official supreme source of law and thereby took Islamicisation a further step along the road.

Political power from 1988 to 1999 was resumed by elected governments, though none of the four governments has completed its term in office. Both the two governments of Benazir Bhutto (1988-90 and 1993-96), Zulfikar Bhutto's daughter, and the two governments of Nawaz Sharif (1990-93 and 1997-99) were dismissed on the grounds of corruption. Nawaz Sharif's fall from power in 1999 occurred after he reined in the power of the President (with applause from Benazir Bhutto), and meddled in the Supreme Court. Although it is possible to put a left-right interpretation on the two leaders – Bhutto leading the Pakistan People's Party that her father founded, and Sharif delivering more right wing policies through his coalition government – there is also a strong regional component to the alignments – Bhutto representing traditional Sindhi power, and Sharif that of the Punjab. This simple regionalism is however violently disturbed by the growing resentment of the Mohajirs, the original and subsequent generations of the migrants from India to Pakistan in 1947 (and since.) The 9 million, mostly settled in and around Karachi, want more autonomy for Karachi, and a greater share in power in Sindh itself. The movement has turned into a guerrilla campaign, which in 1995 left more than 2,500 dead in street fighting in Karachi – the most violent episode in Pakistani politics since the independence of Bangladesh in 1971-72. Jinnah was a Mohajir, and it is the frustration of his dream of the assimilation of all Mohajirs within a greater Islamic culture that has bred this latest *bubo* within Pakistan's search for stable representative government. Instability, lawlessness, economic incompetence and corruption were the reasons given by the chief of staff, General Pervez Musharraf, who seized power in a coup in 1999. It is another repetition of Pakistan's horrendous struggle since 1947 to build representative political institutions congruent with a national purpose and identity.



### 11.6 Concluding Remarks

Nehru's anxiety that the concession of linguistic states would promote sub-nationalism has to some extent been justified. With Chief Ministers each head of their own parochial pond there is acute awareness of the difference and rivalry between the states, and competition for the allocation of central resources. There are also sometimes very divergent policies on, for example, land-law and agriculture. But one must remember that most of India's states have populations much bigger than those of Europe's Common Market, and no-one need be reminded of the rivalry and jealously guarded sovereignty there. The view from the centre cannot afford to be relaxed, but the long term effects of the concessions made to regional demands may well be to encourage a strong sense of the benefits of voluntary federation. It takes time for a people's identity and loyalty to develop: and in 1947 it was mostly not national, no matter how Gandhi was revered throughout All-India. Such loyalties are also hierarchical: to family, to village, to town perhaps, to region/state, and lastly to India. The local loyalty need not reduce the national loyalty. To many outside observers the sense of All-India is growing in the ordinary population. It was felt in the China War, in the Pakistan wars, and when Mrs Gandhi and her son Rajiv Gandhi were assassinated in 1984 and 1991 respectively.

Outside observers also agree that the continued integration of India is not guaranteed. Separatist movements in the South have had strong following: prominent amongst these was the DK or Dravidian Federalist party of Tamil Nadu (and later other southern states) which openly advocated independence as much as the Scottish nationalists have in Britain. They have taken power at the State Government level, and even formed small blocs in the Lok Sabha in Delhi. Interestingly, the more power they have achieved, the less extreme their demands. It seems as if forces which can, in the end, have some effect within the Constitution are less likely to try to operate outside it.

The problem of Kashmir remains, and it symbolises still the original reasons for the founding of the two homelands. It is the only Muslim majority state in India, and therefore a symbol of secular India and the invalidity of the two-nation theory.<sup>2</sup> Though Congress has remained avowedly secular, it has gradually seen its grip on power lost, and its stand against secularism weakened. In 1992 Hindu fundamentalists finally managed to demolish a mosque at Ayodhya, which had been built on the ruins of a Hindu temple said to be safeguarding the site of Lord Ram's birth. This presaged a new outburst of Hindu-Muslim rioting, at its worst in Bombay. The Hindu nationalist party, the Bharatiya Janata Party, has grown in both appeal and moderation, and in 1997 replaced Congress as the party of central Government, the third time Congress had lost power in New Delhi since Independence.<sup>3</sup> There is no doubt that this represents a shift in India's understanding of itself, and in the

<sup>2</sup> Indian Punjab now has a Sikh majority, and some of the small states of north-east India have Christian majorities

<sup>3</sup> For two-and-a-quarter years after Mrs Gandhi's emergency of 1975-1977 Congress was ousted by a coalition known as the Janata Dal.

way in which it is integrated, even if the BJP is mostly a party of the north, which relies on a myriad of coalition partners. I will say more about this in the concluding chapter. Here I wish to stress that India should be celebrated as a success. It has survived as the world's largest and most complex democracy, and the military have remained subordinate to the civil power throughout. Its representative system of government has been under strain, but it has also shown the capacity to evolve. It has built a national sense of identity, of being Indian – even if that identity has shifted (hopefully not dangerously far) from a wholly secular ideal.

Pakistan's political history is a complete contrast. Crudely it has been summed up as the three A's – Allah, the Army and America. The first has demonstrated no desire to accommodate democracy, the second has shown itself generally antithetical to democracy, and the third has frequently subordinated democracy to other foreign policy objectives during the Cold War and the war against al-Qaida. Would things have been different if at the beginning in 1947 three successor states had been formed? This is an exercise in counter-factual history, so perhaps the question has to be re-phrased; what impact did the tensions between East and West Pakistan have on the search for a constitution? The answer is clearly, enormous. There then remains the supplementary question: would West Pakistan, without the Bengal problem, have followed a smoother path of constitutional evolution? Let us suppose that the problems with the Kashmir would have been the same, with the Princely States would have been the same, Indian pressure the same, Afghani and Iraqi opportunism the same, and Sindhi and Baluchi resentment the same, Mohajir promotion and exclusion the same, then the history of the last decades suggests that the problem of Bangladesh may have made things much worse, but the problems would have been bad anyway. Pakistan has an urbanising and industrialising economy, which should further the utilitarian integration of the state, but the tortuous history of the search for a balance between the Centre and the regions suggests that stability may not be assured.