

Comment

Pakistan at 61: Neither a Nation nor a State

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While the controversy whether Pakistan was meant to be an Islamic state or a Muslim people's state is far from resolved, there is a large measure of agreement among students of politics that Pakistan was supposed to be and has always been considered a nation-state. However, over the years the character of the nation in the Pakistan state has progressively become less and less clear.

The use of the term 'nation-state' for Pakistan does not help because the expression has been used both for states established by well-formed nations and states created by people in different stages of their journey towards nationhood. In the West, many communities completed the process of becoming nations and states simultaneously while in post-colonial Asia and Africa the process of nation-making began in most cases after states had been created.

Quaid-i-Azam, in his oft-quoted address to the Constituent Assembly on 11 August 1947, indicated that Pakistan fell in the second category, that is, a new nation was to be created in the state of Pakistan. This view has been challenged by large and powerful political groups who have claimed relying on their interpretation of Islam and history that the nation constituting Pakistan was in existence before the state came into being and that its character is not subject to laws of change.

The Quaid apparently belonged to the school of thought that confers the status of nationhood on a community or group of people only when they can be identified by their national sentiment, a qualification acquired through a history of living together and pursuing common aspirations. The dissenters argue that the nation forming the state of Pakistan had been in existence for ages, since the advent of Islam,

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according to some, and since Mohammad bin Qasim's arrival in the subcontinent, according to some others.

In the pre-partition India various groups had multiple identities. During the early phases of their history in India, the Muslims not only identified themselves by their belief but also their race (Turk, Iranian, Afghan) till the Mughals started calling themselves Indian Muslims (*Hindi Musalman*). Over time they learnt to distinguish themselves from fellow Muslims in other parts of the world by their territory, their language and their culture, and began to be identified as Punjabis, Sindhis, Pakhtuns, Baloch, etc. All these entities were identified in Urdu by a single word – *quom*. Thus not only each caste (in both Hindu and Muslims), such as Brahamans, Rajputs, Shaikhs, Sayyeds, Mughals and Pathans were called *quom*, the word *quom* was used for Muslims, Hindus, all Indians and for the various European states, and its English equivalent usually was 'nation'. The 19th century historians could describe the Hindus and Muslims of India as nations.

The seeds of communalism had been sown in India during the decades of the Mughal power's decline. The uprising of 1857 and the East India Company's campaign to completely demolish all vestiges of the kingdom of Delhi widened the gulf between the Muslims and Hindus. When the scheme of representative bodies came the Muslims' fear of losing out to the majority community was greatly heightened. They concluded that in a democratic set-up they would always be in a minority. Accordingly they started seeking safeguards. When the British government obliged them by accepting separate electorates they were convinced of the soundness of this political approach.

What was meant by safeguards? Considerable light is thrown on the subject by the resolution Mr. Jinnah moved at the Muslim League session in 1926. The resolution called for a revision of the Government of India Act of 1919, appointment of a commission and preparation of a constitutional scheme for progress towards full responsible government in India. It was necessary that this scheme secured five fundamental principles: (i) adequate representation of the minorities in every province without damaging their position in provinces where they were in a minority; (ii) separate electorates to continue unless abandoned by any community; (iii) no territorial readjustment to affect Muslim majority in Punjab, Bengal and NWFP; iv) full freedom of belief to be guaranteed to all communities; and, (v) no bill or resolution to be adopted by an elected body if opposed by 3/4th of the members of any community in the body.

That the demand for safeguards was subject to revision was proved when the Muslim Conference held at Delhi in March 1927, at the invitation, and under the presidency of Mr. Jinnah agreed to give up

separate electorates, which were once considered as the most basic safeguard for the Muslim minority. The conditions that were required to be met were: Sindhi's separation from Bombay and the grant of provincial status to Sindh and NWFP, representation of Muslims in Punjab and Bengal assemblies in proportion to their population, and assurances that Muslims would have at least 1/3rd of the seats in the central legislature even after joint electorate had been introduced. (This decision was opposed by H. S. Suhrawardy and Zafar Ali Khan, among others, on the ground that it was premature).

At the 1937 session the Muslim League adopted a resolution moved by Maulana Hasrat Mohani that called for the adoption of full independence of India as the League objective. This independence had to be 'in the form of a federation of free democratic states in which the rights and interests of the Musalmans and the other minorities are adequately and effectively safeguarded in the constitution'.

The 1938 session of the Muslim League, after rejecting the Act of 1935, authorized its president to 'adopt such a course as may be necessary with a view to exploring the possibility of a suitable alternative which should safeguard the interests of the Muslims and other minorities in India'.

The final phase of the British-Indian constitutional dialogue corresponded to the period 1935-46 when the Indian Muslim elite transformed itself from a minority to a nation. In this phase the Quaid-i-Azam, too, began by demanding safeguards for the Muslim minority.

Speaking in the central legislature on the report of the joint parliamentary committee on the constitutional reform proposals (which formed the basis of the Government of India Act of 1935) in 1935, the Quaid clarified that personally he was not satisfied with the Communal Award but he accepted it because otherwise no scheme of constitution was possible. However he added:

I entirely reciprocate every sentiment which the Honorable the Leader of the Opposition expressed, and I agree with him that religion should not be allowed to come into politics, that race should not be allowed to come into politics. Language does not matter so much, I agree with him, if taken singly one by one. Religion is merely a matter between man and God, I agree with him there entirely, but I ask him to consider this: -is this a question of religion purely? Is this a question of language purely? No, Sir, this is a question of minorities and it is a political issue. Have we not got in other countries the question of the minorities? Have not those problems been faced and solved? - And this problem must also be faced and solved. Now, what

are the minorities? Minorities mean a combination of things. It may be that a minority has a different religion from the other citizens of a country. Their language may be different, their race may be different, their culture may be different and the combination of all these various elements – religion, culture, race, language, arts, music and so forth makes the minority a separate entity in the State, and that separate entity wants safeguards.¹

Subsequently we find the Quaid declaring in July 1937: ‘The All India Muslim League certainly and definitely stands to safeguard the rights and interest of the Muasalmans and other minorities effectively. This is its basic and cardinal principle’.²

He then refers to the Muslims of India as ‘the Muslim community’³ (1938) and as ‘Muslim India’⁴ (1938). In his address to the Muslim League session in December 1938 he regrets that the Muslims ‘have yet to develop a national self and national individuality’ and then goes on to say that the ‘Muslims and the Muslim League have only one ally that ally is the Muslim nation’⁵. A year later he argues that if Germany and Soviet Union, ‘two nations which were the bitterest of enemies’, could have a pact, nobody could say when ‘two communities’ (Hindus and Muslims) could unite.⁶ In 1939 he again uses the expression ‘Muslim India’⁷. However the same year he argues that the Muslims ‘are often wrongly described as a minority in the ordinary sense as understood in the West’. The description was wrong because the Muslims were in a majority in the northwest and in the Bengal. The Muslims in these parts were double the population of Britain and more than ten times its area.⁸

At the beginning of 1940, Mr. Jinnah concedes that the religion can define a nation. In a letter to Mr. Gandhi, he writes:

‘...Let me say again that India is not a nation, nor a country. It is a subcontinent composed of nationalities, Hindus and Muslims being two major nations. Today you deny that religion can be a main factor in determining a nation, but you yourself, when

¹ Jamiluddin Ahmad, *Speeches and Writings of Mr. Jinnah* (Lahore: Sheikh Mohammad Ashraf, 1968), p.5.

² *Ibid.*, pp.33-4.

³ *Ibid.*, p.43.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.73.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.83.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p.92.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p.195.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p.196.

asked what your motives in life was, the thing that leads us to do what we do, whether it was religion, or social, or political, said: 'Purely religious'.

'This was the question', he asked the late Mr. Montague when he accompanied a deputation which was purely political, 'How you, a social reformer,' he exclaimed 'have found your way into this crowd?' Jinnah said:

My reply was that it was only an extension of my social activity. I could not be leading a religious life unless I identified myself with the whole of mankind, and that I could not do unless I took part in politics, the gamut of man's activities today constitutes an indivisible whole. You cannot divide social, economic, political and purely religious work into watertight compartments. I do not know any religion apart from human activity. It provides a moral basis to all other activities which they would otherwise lack, reducing life to a maze of sound and fury signifying nothing.⁹

Around this time the Quaid started entertaining the idea that the Muslims of India could be considered a nation in the political sense. He observed the report of the joint select committee on Indian constitutional reforms had noted that the difference between the Hindus and Muslims of India 'is not only of religion in the stricter sense but also of law and culture. They may be said indeed to represent two and distinctly separate civilizations'.¹⁰ He then asked the British to realize 'that Hinduism and Islam represent two distinct and separate civilizations and moreover are as distinct from one another in origin, tradition and manner or life as are nations of Europe' and that 'there are in India a major and a minor nation'.¹¹

However, even in January 1940 he called for a constitution 'that recognizes there are in India two nations who both must share the governance of their common motherland. In evolving such a constitution, the Muslims are ready to cooperate with the British government, the Congress or any party so that the present enmities may cease and India may take its place amongst the great nations of the world'.¹² Here the word nation is used for the Hindus and Muslims separately and also for the whole of India.

A month later, while briefing the Muslim League Council on his conversations with the Viceroy, he recapitulated the party's five

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.133.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.123.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.124.

¹² *Ibid.*, p.131.

demands: i) the Indian troops should not be used against any Muslim power or country outside India; ii) the Government of India Act of 1935 should be scrapped and the whole scheme constitutional reform should be examined de novo; iii) the Muslim would not accept any constitution unless their consent had been obtained in advance; iv) the Palestine issue should be resolved to the satisfaction of the Arabs; and v) the Muslim complaint against the Congress government (in provinces) needed to be probed by a Royal Commission.¹³

On the 6 March 1947 Mr. Jinnah gave a new explanation of the Muslims' status as a minority. He stated that ever since the Minto-Morley reforms most people have assumed that Muslims were a minority and as such needed safeguards for the protection of the rights; but 'when we used this term we meant it in an entirely different sense. What we meant was that the Muslims were a political entity that must be preserved at all costs.... We were of the view that we must have real power in certain areas where we were in majority...one thing is now obvious – that we are by no means a minority but a solid and distinct nation by ourselves with a destiny of our own'.¹⁴

It was at the Muslim League session of 1940 that Mr Jinnah discarded the status of a minority and declared that the Muslims were a nation. 'It has always been taken for granted mistakenly,' he said, 'that the Muslims are a minority, and of course we have got used to it for such a long time that these settled notions sometimes are very difficult to remove. The Musalmans are not a minority. The Musalmans are a nation by any definition'. The only reason he gave to support his view was that the Muslims were in majority in Bengal, Punjab, NWFP, Sindh and Balochistan.¹⁵

Later in the same address, after asking Britain to 'allow the major nations separate homelands, by dividing India into autonomous national states,' he gave a fuller definition of the Muslim nation and it was on this premise that the Muslim League demanded:

... that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted, with such territorial adjustments as may be necessary, that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority, as in North-Western and Eastern zones of India, should be grouped to constitute independent states in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp.142-43.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.145-46.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.339.

At this session he also enunciated what has come to be described as the two nations theory:

The Hindus and Muslims belong to two different religious philosophies, social customs, literatures. They neither intermarry nor interdine together and, indeed, they belong to two different civilizations which are based mainly on conflicting ideas and conceptions. Their aspects on life and of life are different. It is quit clear that Hindus and Musalmans derive their inspiration from different sources of history. They have different epics, different heroes, and different episodes. Very often the hero of one is a foe of the other and, likewise, their victories and defeats overlap. To yoke together two such nations under a single state, one as numerical minority and the other as a majority, must lead to growing discontent and final destruction of any fabric that may be so built up for the government of such a state.

Musalms are not a minority as it is commonly known and understood. One has only got to look round. Even today, according to the British map of India, 4 out of 11 provinces, where the Muslims dominate more or less, are functioning notwithstanding the decision of the Hindu Congress High Command to non-cooperate and prepare for civil disobedience. Musalmans are a nation according to any definition of a nation, and they must have their homelands, their territory and their state.¹⁶

However, the problem that the entire Muslim population of India did not live in a single compact bloc soon started engaging Mr. Jinnah's attention. Explaining the Lahore resolution shortly after it, which had been adopted in March 1940, he said:

The Muslim minorities are wrongly made to believe that they would be worse off and be left in the lurch in any scheme of partition or division of India. I may explain that the Musalmans, wherever they are in a minority, cannot improve their position under a united India or under one central government. Whatever happens, they would remain a minority. They can rightly demand all the safeguards that are known to any civilized government to the utmost extent. But by coming in the way of the division of India they do not and can not improve their own position. On the other hand, they can, by their attitude of obstruction, bring the Muslim homeland and 60,000,000 of the Musalmans under one government, where they would remain no more than a minority in perpetuity.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.169-71.

It was because of the realization of this fact that the Musalman minorities in Hindu India readily supported the Lahore resolution. The question for the Muslim minorities in Hindu majority raj or whether the entire Muslim India of 90,000,000 should be subjected to a Hindu majority should have their homeland and thereby have an opportunity to develop their spiritual, cultural, economic, and political life in accordance with their own genius and shape their own future destiny, at the same time allowing Hindus and others to do so like-wise. Similar will be the position of the Hindus and other minorities in the Muslim homelands.¹⁷

At the Madras session in 1941, Mr. Jinnah reverts to the terms ‘Muslim India’ and ‘Hindus India’ and once describes ‘Muslims India’ as an ‘independent nationality’.¹⁸ While addressing the Muslim League Council in November 1942 he asserts ‘that Muslims are a nation’ and ‘as a national group in their homelands in the northwest and eastern zones they are no less than 70 millions in number’.¹⁹

That the size of the Muslim population in India was an important argument in support of their claim to nationhood was again clear from the Quaid’s observation in his address at the Aligarh University in November 1942: ‘nowhere in the world would 100 millions of people be regarded as a minority’. He added that it was an ‘inherent birthright of Musalmans to self-determination as national group inhabiting this subcontinent to establish their own states in those zones where they are in a minority’.²⁰

Finally, in this address to the students at Jalundhar in November 1942, Mr. Jinnah divided the Indian Muslims into two categories – they were national groups in Muslim majority provinces, who were entitled to form a state, and a sub-national group in the rest of the land, and they could ask for nothing more than safeguards every minority community was entitled to.²¹

The definition of the Indian Muslims as a nation offered by Mr. Jinnah in his letter to Mr. Gandhi of 17 September 1944 is quite significant. He said:

We maintain and hold that Muslims and Hindus are two major nations by any definition or test of a nation. We are a nation of a hundred million and, what is more, we are a nation with our own distinctive culture and civilization, language and literature, art

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.174-75.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.265.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.441.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.459.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp.467-68.

and architecture, names and nomenclature, sense of value and proportion, legal laws and moral codes, customs and calendar, history and traditions, aptitudes and ambitions, in short we have our own distinctive outlook on life and of life. By all canons of international law we are a nation.²²

This definition is significant because belief is not the sole or the decisive proof of Indian Muslims' being a nation. Here Mr. Jinnah is talking of ambitions which are born of a people's view of their identity. It indirectly accepts the fact that a people become a nation when they become conscious of their shared identity and acquire a common goal.

Perhaps the League leadership considered this definition of the Muslim nation as the most powerful argument for Pakistan and therefore inscribed it on 14 feet by 24 feet banner at the legislators' convention in Delhi in April 1946 when the Lahore Resolution was amended and the creation of one state instead of two was adopted as the party's goal.

Reference to religion did not always form an essential part of the Quaid's elaboration of the demand for India's partition. At a press conference in Lahore in 1942 he said: 'if you find there is a national group living in a large portion of territory where they are in a majority and if they want to have their separate independent state then that territory has to be carved out as an independent state'.²³

That the concept of nationhood and the demand for a separate state were the Muslim League's answer to the danger of Muslims' losing their political rights not only in provinces where they were in a minority but also where they were in a majority is confirmed by a simple reading of the Delhi Resolution of League legislatures of 1946. Indian Muslim community's accession to the status of a nation has been summed up by Dr. Mubarak Ali in these words: 'the use of the term nation as an expression of the Indian Muslims' political identity was evolved only in the last phase of their dialogue with the British colonial authority'. Dr. Mubarak Ali argues that 'their religious identity was transformed from a passive state to an activist one according to the changing priorities of the ruling classes', and concludes, 'the concept of a Muslim political identity was a product of British rule when the electoral process, the so-called democratic institutions and traditions were introduced. That created a minority complex amongst Indian Muslims and thereby a consciousness of Muslim political identity. After passing through a series of upheavals, the Muslim community shed its minority complex and declared it a

²² K. Sarwar Hasan, *The Transfer of Power* (Karachi: Pakistan Institute of International Affairs, 1966), pp.71-2.

²³ Jamiluddin Ahmad, *op. cit.*, p.475.

nation, asserting its separateness'.²⁴

The Muslim League agreement in support of the two nation theory was problematic on two points: First it ignored what the Muslims of India had in common with other denominational communities in the country. Second, and more important, it overlooked the differences in history, culture, dress, language and ambitions within the component units of the Indian Muslim community. The latter problem formed the premise of challenges to the theory from several politicians including Maulana Abul Kalam Azad who could not be accused of ignorance of Muslims' history or their culture. Mr. Gandhi questioned the League theory in his letter to Mr. Jinnah of 15 September 1944 when he queried whether the Bengalis, Oriyas, Andhras, Tamilians, Maharashtrians, Gujratis, etc, would cease to have their special characteristics if all of them embraced Islam. He came close to hitting the bull's eye when he posed the question whether the words 'Muslim' in the Lahore Resolution meant the Muslims of the India of geography or of the Pakistan to be.²⁵

The views of Azad and Gandhi may not carry weight with Pakistanis with closed minds, in view of their association with the Indian Congress, but Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi, who was not a Congressite, had pointed out intra-Muslim divisions as early as 1924. When he drafted his manifesto for the democratic parties of greater India, he wrote:

Many attempts have been made to resolve the Hindu-Muslim differences. None of them has succeeded because attention is not paid to the essence and significance of the problem. An analysis in depth will reveal that there is difference in not only these two factions (*firqon*) but there are national (*quomi*) and social (*maashrati*) divisions within each faction (*har firqe mein*). A national issue (*quomi sawal*) exists within the Muslims. If there exists among them the national question (*quomi*) of Punjabi and Sindhi, Hindustani and Pathan, Kashmiri and Balochi, we find the problem of Bengali, Bihari, Madrasi and Marhati, Gujrati and Marwari among Hindus. Even religious solidarity cannot extinguish these national differences.²⁶

²⁴ Mubarak Ali, 'Consciousness of Muslim Identity in South Asia before 1947,' in S.M. Naseem and Khalid Nadvi (eds.), *The Post-colonial State and Social Transformation in India and Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2002), p.330.

²⁵ K. Sarwar Hasan, *op. cit.*, pp.68-9.

²⁶ Mohammad Sarwar, *Maulana Obaidullah Sindhi* (Lahore: Sindh Sagar Academy, 1976), pp.446-47.

This discussion also shows that the size of the Muslim population in India and their occupation of large chunks of territory were more decisive factors in firming up their claim to nationhood than their religion. Belief alone could not have made them a nation, and an Indian nation entitled to form its own state if numbers and territory did not support their claim.

The Muslim League claim to represent a nation became problematic when it started a discourse with its critics on the basis of western concepts of a nation. The western concepts of nation evolved from its being equated with ethnic group, that is, a people of common descent. But as Ernest Barker has pointed out 'the self consciousness of nations is a product of the 19th century. This is a matter of the first importance. Nations were already there, they had indeed been there for centuries. But it is not the things that are simply 'there' that matter in human life. What really and finally matters is the thing which is apprehended as an idea, and, as an idea is vested with emotion until it becomes a cause and a spring of action. In the world of action apprehended ideas are alone electrical, and a nation must be an idea as well as a fact before it can become a dynamic force'.²⁷ The only thing missing in League's definition was Muslim's consciousness of being a nation and their will to assert their rights as such, without which a group could not claim nationhood. But this had been done vide the Lahore Resolution of 1940, as pointed out by Professor Manzooruddin Ahmad in his paper on the two nation theory, Dr. Ambedkar was one of the first political thinkers to notice this will to live as a nation as he noted in his book on Pakistan:

For nationality to flame into nationalism two conditions must exist. First, there must arise the 'will to live as a nation.' Nationalism is the dynamic expression of that desire. Secondly, there must be a territory which nationalism could occupy and make it a state, as well as a cultural home of nation.... The Muslims have developed a 'will to live as a nation'. For them nature has found a territory which they can occupy and make it a state as well as cultural home... for the new-born Muslim nation.²⁸

It may be useful to look at Rupert Emerson's definition of

²⁷ Ernest Barker, *National Character and the Factors in its Formation* London, 1927, quoted by Sumantra Bose, *States, Nations, Sovereignty* (Delhi: Sage, 1994), p.24.

²⁸ B. R. Ambedkar, *Pakistan or the Partition of India* (Lahore: Book Traders, 1976, Pakistani edn., 1st edn. 1940), p.21.

nation:

The simplest statement that can be made about a nation is that they are a body of people who feel that they are a nation; and it may be that when all the fine-spun analysis is concluded this will be the ultimate statement as well. To advance beyond it, it is necessary to take the nation apart and to isolate for separate examination the forces and elements which appear to have been the most influential in bringing about the sense of common identity which lies at its roots, the sense of a singularly important national 'we' which is distinguished from all others who make up an alien 'they'.²⁹

During the period nationhood was being discussed in India, Stalin's definition of nation was widely accepted – that nation was:

A historically evolved, stable community of language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture. ...it must be emphasized that none of the above characteristics is by itself sufficient to define a nation. On the other hand, it is sufficient for a single one of these characteristics to be absent and the nation ceases to be a nation. ...it is only when all these characteristics are present that we have a nation....

Both Jinnah and Gandhi show traces of their awareness of this definition of nation.

Hamza Alavi views a people's fusion into a single community as a vital condition of nationhood and endorses Benedict Anderson's concept of the 'imagined community which is 'conceived as a deep horizontal comradeship' that cuts across boundaries and social groups and 'penetrates with varying degrees of consciousness, a great variety of social terrains'.³⁰

The willingness of Indian Muslims to rise above their multiple identities and agree on the demands for Pakistan can justify the claim that the Muslim people of Pakistan became a nation on the eve of the creation of the new state. It is also possible to appreciate that out of the many markers of their identity they chose one marker – of belief – as the dominant determinant of their identity. But the moment Pakistan came into being this religious marker lost its pre-eminence, especially as the Pakistan state failed to keep the trust of the communities many, including

²⁹ Cf. Rupert Emerson, in Sumantra Bose, *op. cit.*, p.18.

³⁰ Hamza Alavi, 'Nationhood and the Nationalities in Pakistan', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 8 July 1989, p.1527.

Hamza Alavi, describe as ‘sub-national groups’³¹ (and I might venture to call them developed nationalities if not nations, even by Quaid-i-Azam’s definition.).

According to Hamza Alavi, the sub-national groups (the people of less populous federating units) believe they have been placed outside the Pakistan nation. In the eyes of these sub-national groups, says Hamza Alavi:

Members of the under-privileged regions have tended to see themselves as subject peoples who have not been given their rightful place in the nation. In their eyes, with a subtle inflection of meaning, the ‘nation’ is transmuted into ‘country’. They exist within its boundaries and are subject to its laws and institutions. But the concept of ‘country’ is not evocative like that of the nation. It does not draw upon a deeply embedded sense of identification; it does not have the same emotive and legitimizing charge. It does not give quite the same sense of belonging and commitment as that of the nation. The people of Pakistan have not yet fused into a single community. The story of the Bengali movement, culminating in the liberation of Bangladesh, is a manifest example of this.³²

The alienation of Pakistan’s sub-national groups from the nation that emerged in 1947 meant that the latter part of Stalin’s definition of nation came into play. Besides, the consciousness of being a nation started evaporating. Bangladesh broke away and the sub-national groups in the post-1971 Pakistan have been feeling excluded from the larger collective.³³

As Sumantra Bose has pointed out in his study of the self-determination question in Sri Lanka, Lenin relates the matter to state oppression. He clearly recognized that:

The quest for national self-determination, far from being rooted in ‘cultural’ givens and objective similarities and differences, arises, above all, as a social response to state oppression. He commented that ‘from their daily experiences the masses know perfectly well the value of geographical and economic ties and the advantages of a big market and big states. They will, therefore, opt for secession only when national oppression and national friction make joint life absolutely intolerable.’³⁴

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Sumantra Bose, *op. cit.*, p.18.

In view of all this it is almost impossible to say that the people held together by the state of Pakistan constitute a nation because many people prefer other cultural markers of their identity and the shared ambitions are gone. Ask any group of people how they identify themselves; many will say that are Muslim or Punjabi or Pakhtun. To be members of Pakistan nation the answers have to be such as 'I am a Pakistani Muslim, Pakistani Punjabis / Pakhtun' which is based on an admission that there are Muslims, Punjabis and Pakhtuns outside Pakistan and the respondent is different from them.

As regards Pakistan's status as a state, the state created in 1947 has been changing over the decades in more ways than one. The state of Pakistan began as a 'minor image of the colonial stage', as Asad Sayeed put it and added: 'An elaborate and centralized bureaucratic network, where there was little room for democratic governance, formed the substance of the post-colonial state in Pakistan'.³⁵

This colonial model lasted till 1958 when all pretensions to democracy were given up and the Pakistan became an authoritarian garrison state. This state collapsed in 1969; Pakistan returned to the pattern described by Asad Sayeed. The state's 1971 defeat in its war with the major part of the population ended in the destruction of the 1947 state in physical terms also. Since then it has been moving towards an autonomous state, a state that is independent of the interests of communities and classes inhabiting its territory. It has been moving towards an autonomous state, a state that is independent of the interests of communities and classes inhabiting its territory. It has become a salariat state, in a complete vindication of Hamza Alavi's thesis. Nobody who analyses the situation in contemporary Pakistan can fail to realize the maturity of Hamza Alavi's thought and its capacity to stand the test of time. Feroze Ahmed noted the salient features of this autonomous state many years ago when he said:

The Pakistan state can be seen as a neocolonial state, linked as an appendage to the global capitalist economy and politically subservient to the United States. Within this abridged sovereignty the state, while perpetuating the existing relations of production and distribution, enjoys relative autonomy. The military and bureaucracy not only command the instruments of state power, but pursue their own interests almost independently

³⁵ Asad Sayeed, 'State, Society, Conjunctures and Disconjunctures: Pakistan's Manufacturing Performance', in S.M. Naseem and Khalid Nadvi (eds.), *op.cit.*, p. 214.

of the dominant capitalist and landlord classes.³⁶

This autonomous state has become more oppressive with the result that its writ has begun to be challenged in several parts of the country – in Balochistan and FATA in particular. Thus Pakistan no longer qualifies as a state as defined in Westphalian papers because it does not have monopoly of power to enforce law and order throughout its territory. Apart from the insurgents here and there its monopoly of power is challenged by the intelligence agencies and for all I know there may be some no-go areas in Karachi where the state has been superseded by one mafia or another.

Along with the squeezing out of the democratic element from the polity, the Pakistan state has been undermined by its adoption, for all practical purposes, of the concept of two sovereignties – a lower-status sovereignty of the people and a higher-status, indeed real, sovereignty of God.

The roots of this deviation from a democratic ideal also can be traced in our colonial history. During the days of the Khilafat movement Maulana Azad and the Ali Brothers chose imprisonment for following the call of religion in defying the British made laws. Malik Barkat Ali defended Abdul Qayyum in the Lahore High Court in the 1930s on the ground that he was not guilty of Nathuramal Sharma's murder as his act was justifiable by the law of the Quran.

But it was through the Objectives Resolution of 1949 that Pakistan formally launched the two-sovereignty theory. The 1956 constitution established the Islamic Republic in which no law repugnant to Quran and Sunnah could be made and all existing laws were to be brought into conformity with the Quran and Sunnah. The 1973 constitution made Islam as the state religion of Pakistan and in 1974 the state assumed the authority to define who was a Muslim and who was not. But hitherto the right to make laws belonged to parliament, as the custodian of the people's sovereign rights. General Zia transferred this right to the Federal Shariat Court and the Supreme Court's Shariat Appellate Bench. General Zia also facilitated the rise of armed militants who have assumed the right to impose what they describe as Islamic rule through *jihad*.³⁷ Across large areas in FATA and Frontier province these *jihadis* have replaced the Pakistan state. Thus Pakistan today is not only not the state was established in 1947 it does not qualify as a state.

³⁶ Feroze Ahmed, 'Ethnicity, State and National Integration', in S.M. Naseem and Khalid Nadvi (eds.), *op. cit.*, p.330.

³⁷ Ayesha Jalal, *Partisans of Allah Jihad in South Asia* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel, 2008), pp. 27-29.

One of the problems that should not have been ignored by the builders of the Pakistan state, specially those coming after the Quaid, was the complexity of their task. Hamza Alavi threw light on this as well:

The movement that ultimately resulted in the creation of Pakistan was comprised of diverse groups, both regionally and socially. Their unity in the political arena was a precarious one. Jinnah's political genius lay precisely in his ability to orchestrate a loose, volatile and unpredictable coalition of forces. He is generally pictured as a man with a firm and total grip over the groups that he was leading. But that is a myth, made plausible by his powerful and commanding personality. In reality his hold over the various groups was quite tenuous and he had to take them on their own terms. He merely stood at the centre of the political process around which diverse regional groups revolved, over whom he had little control.³⁸

The Quaid's successors tripped while trying to suppress by force the diverse groups he had tried to accommodate in the Pakistan plan. I am conscious of the risk I am running by questioning Pakistan status as a state and appearing to choose absolute terms. I could have put a question mark to the title of this paper or taken refuge in this country's definition as an untenable state devised by Dr. Mubashir Hasan and his associates.³⁹ I can easily be challenged by an illegally detained person in the Karachi jail who is a victim of state oppression. For him the state is very much there. I seek your indulgence to submit that human collectives in pre-state stages, countries in the quote from Hamza Alavi, often display the attributes of states, especially in terms of exercising authority over people who may happen to be living in their territory. May be wiser are the people who wish to wait for some more time before realizing that we are no longer the nation we were in 1947 and that we could never create the state we had set out to establish. My only objective at the moment is to alert all those who wish to preserve the concept of Pakistan as a nation and as a state – and I do not wish to go into merits of this proportion – that if they do not start laying the foundations of their nation-state today, tomorrow it may be too late.

³⁸ See also, Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel, 1985).

³⁹ Mubashir Hasan (ed.), *Economic Planning in Pakistan, Basic Questions* (Lahore: Independent Planning Commission of Pakistan, 1985).