

*Bureaucracy and Political Parties in
Pakistan, 1947-58*
A Case Of Differing Perceptions and Ideals

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You have to do your duty as servants, you are not concerned with this political or that political party, that is not your business...It is a business of politicians to fight out their case under the present constitution or the future constitution that may be framed. You therefore, have nothing to do with this or that party. You are civil servants.¹

(Quaid-i Azam)

The two global wars not only shook the foundations of Europe but also brought an end to the colonial rule. A sense of community feeling and the growth of national consciousness led to the emergence of nationalist movements. Modern nation-states surfaced mainly as a response to colonial hegemony and largely owing to the nationalist movements that were led and guided by political parties. These parties that were in fact, mass movements with a pronounced nationalist outlook organised opposition forces against colonialism and employed mobilisation and agitation of masses as key tools for the fulfilment of their purpose. However, as freedom dawned, they proved to be inexperienced but also ill-prepared for the task of administration of the new states.

The political leadership which had mobilized the Muslim masses for a separate homeland failed to retain its position after the death of its founder, Quaid-i Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah. The Muslim League was

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1. Jamil-ud-din Ahmed, *Speeches and Writings of Mr. Jinnah* Vol.11, (Lahore: Publishers, United Limited, 1964), 502.

essentially more a movement than a regular political party.² To be more precise, it was a charismatic movement that had come to mobilize various groups and social forces rallied around the demand for Pakistan under the leadership of its Quaid. It never matured into a well-knit, disciplined political party.³ It was only the leadership of Jinnah that had the Muslim masses brought on to one platform to achieve common goal. Once the goal Pakistan — was achieved and the Quaid-i Azam was gone, the Muslim League rapidly degenerated in character and disintegrated in essence. Its leadership was assumed by predominantly western educated land owning classes who had neither much political experience nor any clear-cut political goal to pursue in the post-independence period. They had little idea of the things they were supposed to pursue in a newly born country.

The result was that the Muslim League failed to transform itself into a national party working for stability and prosperity of their country. The leaders lacked the will and commitment to develop a system that was best suited to the interests of a free nation where its people could lead their lives according to their own ideals, values and preferences instead of hanging on the old colonial system of government.⁴ As Inam-ur-Rehman states:

Brought up and bred in British parliamentary tradition in undivided India, the Muslim League leadership knew of no better system on which to model the political system of the new state of Pakistan.⁵

The model, the League had seen functioning in pre-independence India was that of bureaucratic rule un-hindered by any political control.⁶

Pakistan faced gigantic problems on its creation. Perhaps only few states started their journey with such grave handicaps, as Pakistan did.⁷ Keith Callard argues that until 1940 the Muslims had not anticipated the possibility of British rule reaching its end. The system of government for

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2. Khalid Bin Sayeed, *The Political System of Pakistan*, (Karachi: Pakistan Publishing House, 1967), 83.
 3. Huma Naz, *Bureaucratic Elites and Political Developments in Pakistan*, (Islamabad: National Institute of Pakistan Studies, 1990), 67.
 4. Khalid Bin Sayeed, *Politics in Pakistan: The Nature and Direction of Change*, (New York: Praeger, 1980), 32.
 5. Quoted in Huma, *Bureaucratic Elites*, 92.
 6. Sayeed, *The Political System*, 62
 7. *Ibid.*, 60.

