

## How Pakistan Abandoned Jinnah's Ideals

By Abbas Nasir

The portrait of Muhammad Ali Jinnah is displayed at the India-Pakistan border in Wagah as a Pakistani Ranger unfurls the flag during a ceremony to celebrate Pakistan's Independence on Monday. Credit: Narinder Nanu/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

On Sept. 11, 1948, barely a year after the birth of Pakistan, a flight from the mountainous town of Quetta bordering Iran and Afghanistan landed at an Air Force base on the outskirts of Karachi, then the Pakistani capital. The plane carried Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founding father of Pakistan, who was suffering from advanced tuberculosis.

An ambulance set out with Jinnah to his residence in downtown Karachi, 30 minutes away. Halfway to its destination, the ambulance broke down. There was no backup. Jinnah had to wait for two hours on a stretcher for a replacement ambulance in the oppressive, humid autumn heat of the city by the Arabian Sea. He died later that evening.

The doctors treating Jinnah's tuberculosis — exacerbated by his heavy smoking — had sent him to mountainous Quetta hoping the dry weather would help. When his condition didn't improve, they moved him back to Karachi, alternately hoping the humid sea-level air might revive his lungs.

Jinnah had led the struggle for a separate homeland for the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent from 1937 to 1947. After World War II weakened the empire, Britain was forced to accept the demand for Indian independence. Pakistan came into being on Aug. 14, 1947. Jinnah led the new republic as its first governor general.

On Aug. 11, 1947, Jinnah had left no room for confusion about his idea of Pakistan in his address to the constituent assembly of Pakistan. "You are free, free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other places of worship in this state of Pakistan," he said. "You may belong to any religion or caste or creed — that has nothing to do with the business of the state." Jinnah continually emphasized equal citizenship for all Pakistanis irrespective of their religion or ethnicity.

The wavering of his doctors and the failure to have a backup ambulance on his last journey home is a good metaphor for how his successors treated Jinnah's vision for Pakistan. They abandoned it, added immense confusion and ambiguity to what he stood for, and rewrote history so many times, in so many different ways, that its real history became unrecognizable.

A mere six months after Jinnah's death, Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan, who had been Jinnah's deputy, presented a set of principles, known as the Objectives Resolution, that established a framework for drafting the Constitution of Pakistan, which was adopted in 1956.

All non-Muslim members of the constituent assembly opposed the resolution, which they saw as flying in the face of Jinnah's stated views and laying the foundations of a theocracy. Mian Iftikharuddin, the founder of Progressive Papers Limited, a publishing group, which produced several progressive newspapers, was the solitary Muslim member of the assembly who opposed Khan's resolution. On March 12, 1949, after a mere five days of debate, Jinnah's liberal vision for Pakistan had been scrapped.

Prime Minister Khan's resolution led to changing the name of the country from the Republic of Pakistan to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and Islam became the religion of the state. Khan had faced some pressure from the religious right but also naïvely thought that invoking Islam would work as a glue to hold the young country together and provide its leaders room to create a Western-style democracy.

Along with the idea of equal citizenship, Jinnah had a clear idea of the relationship that should exist between the civilian government and the armed forces of Pakistan. On June 14, 1948, he addressed a gathering of army officers at their training academy in Quetta. "I want you to remember," he said, that the "executive authority flows from the head of the government of Pakistan, who is the governor-general, and therefore, any command or orders that may come to you cannot come without the sanction of the executive head."

Jinnah's dream of civilian supremacy in Pakistan was snuffed out with the imposition of military rule by the army chief Ayub Khan in 1958. The United States supported Field Marshal Khan's dictatorship for a decade, during which Pakistan hosted American U-2 spy planes at a base in the northwestern frontier town of Peshawar. America's cold warriors sucked Pakistan in, and it joined the Seato and Cento pacts against the Soviet Union.

Field Marshal Khan stepped down in 1969 after popular protests, but Jinnah's idea of civilian supremacy over the military was not restored. Pakistan's generals, empowered by the Cold War in part, proceeded to kill whatever was left of Jinnah's ideas of equal citizenship and civilian rule.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the leader of the Awami League party, based in East Pakistan, won the national elections in 1970. Gen. Yahya Khan outdid the existing discrimination against the ethnically Bengali East Pakistan and denied Rahman his rightful place as the prime minister of Pakistan. A civil war followed. With Indian support and military intervention, East Pakistan separated, and Bangladesh was born after a humiliating defeat for Pakistan.

Barely six years after the follies of the generals helped dismember Pakistan, an apparently docile and obsequious army chief, Gen. Mohammad Zia ul-Haq, cited the nonexistent threat of civil war and toppled the populist and charismatic Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's government in a coup. General Zia arranged to have Bhutto hanged after wrongfully accusing him of murder.

Even Bhutto, a progressive politician, had deviated from Jinnah's vision and pandered to religious conservatives when he passed a law declaring the Ahmadi minority Muslim sect to be non-Muslims. Jinnah, the founding father, was an eminent lawyer and stood for the rule of law, but Pakistan's judiciary shamed itself by endorsing General Zia and every other dictator.

General Zia's star rose when the Soviet Union occupied Afghanistan in 1979. General Zia's intelligence service worked with the C.I.A. and the Saudi security agency to develop the "mujahedeen" model to fight the "godless" Soviets.

The intolerant and bigoted worldview nurtured by General Zia and the fallout of his jihad is still bleeding Pakistan. Speeches of Jinnah preaching secular values were banished from the media and their recordings purged from official archives, mostly during General Zia's tenure. Draconian laws such as the blasphemy law and several misogynistic laws were enacted. Textbooks and history were rewritten.

These distortions have pushed Pakistan to the point where even sectarian jihadist groups such as Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan, notorious for instigating violence against minority Shiites, claim that they represent Jinnah's legacy. There is no backup today, either.