**A history of political splits in Pakistan**

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The Islamic Republic Of Pakistan has a history of ‘political splits’ which must be understood to fully comprehend the current power show within Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). Like Bhutto’s Pakistan People’s Party (PPP), PTI is a genuine political entity conceived and then built by the ideologues. The only difference is that PPP won the elections and then came into power with ‘comrades’ while PTI came into power without them.

In the last few years of his rule, Bhutto drifted towards the ‘electables’ whom he had earlier defeated in the 1970 elections. In the end he had to pay a heavy price for this flirtation. Unfortunately, Prime Minister Imran Khan has not been able to deliver on his election promises mainly because of the tried and failed ‘electables’ that surround him.

Electables do not build parties, they wreck them for personal self interests with businessmen being the worst of them all, as they never lose an opportunity to multiply their wealth. Businessmen have to be kept out of politics. If they decide to enter the arena, they should declare their assets at the point of entry and then exit. All gains during this period of influence should be forfeited and returned back to the state where they rightfully belong. George Bush Sr, after being elected President of the United States, put all his business in a secret trust to insulate any possible benefits of power. In the land of the pure, power is an opportunity to make money.

[Govt to increase restrictions if Covid-19 SOPs not followed: Asad Umar](https://nation.com.pk/21-Apr-2021/govt-to-increase-restrictions-if-covid-19-sops-not-followed-asad-umar)

As a Muslim League child, I had the unique opportunity of meeting many stalwarts of the All-India Muslim League (AIML). Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah was the undisputed leader of the Muslims of India, after him the splits started in Pakistan Muslim League (PML) that emerged after August 14, 1947.

My father joined the Muslim Students Federation in the decade of the thirties while studying at the Government College Ludhiana. After graduating he joined the AIML and took part in the freedom movement, in acknowledgement of which he was awarded the prestigious Tehreek-e-Pakistan Gold Medal on August 14, 1991 at Lahore. His political mentor and guide was a prominent businessman of the city by the name of Mehboob Ahmed Qureshi who rose to be the Joint Secretary of AIML and then an Executive Committee Member (EC) of PML. Sardar Shaukat Hayat Khan used to contest elections from Ludhiana, which was funded by Qureshi Sahib and my father’s family.

Initially the people of the city were made to understand that they will not have to relocate but then the riots started after the faulty division of Punjab. In the prime of his youth, my father had to fight a gun battle to save his community for which he was convicted to be hanged with head money of Rs 5000. Fortunately, he escaped to start life all over again in Lahore.

[China’s Xi to attend Biden’s climate change summit](https://nation.com.pk/21-Apr-2021/china-s-xi-to-attend-biden-s-climate-change-summit)

Qureshi Sahib devoted his life to Pakistan and was unable to re-establish his business in the new land. A man of integrity, he never sought personal favours. He lived a simple life in a flat on McLeod Road and perished there in the seventies as an unsung warrior. My father was very fond of him and we visited his house regularly. He shared his political journey with me including the party splits and intrigues that took place.

According to Qureshi Sahib, who was also known as the ‘Budi Cheel’ (Old Eagle) in the league for his frank and hawkish ideas, the first target was to take control of the league mainly by the leaders who did not have their constituencies in the new land. Jinnah had prepared a constitution for the new party but wanted to continue as President till the new set-up was established.

Some members of the EC insisted that individuals should not hold government and party positions concurrently. Jinnah sensed the mind of the members and asked for nominations to replace him. On hearing Fatima Jinnah’s nomination, he got upset and walked out of the meeting severing all links with his party. In other words Jinnah had nothing to do with PML as President of AIML he did chair the initial meetings but later on he walked out when his proposals were not accepted. Later on, Chaudhry Khaliq-uz-Zaman was elected President who then ordered reorganisation of the party.

[European Super League already showing cracks](https://nation.com.pk/21-Apr-2021/european-super-league-already-showing-cracks)

As a member of the reorganisation team, Qureshi Sahib travelled all over the country. Many prominent second, third tier leaders complained that they were being deliberately kept out. The father of the nation’s health deteriorated and he went to Ziarat. He refused to meet any PML leader who called on him. Finally, Abdul Sattar Pirzada was sent to bring back the Quaid. Upon his refusal for audience, he tendered his resignation as Cabinet Member urging the Governor General to accept it. Finally, he met the Quaid and convinced him to return to the capital. The rest is history—the father of the nation breathed his last upon arrival.

Then the season of splits started but they were mostly ideological in nature. Mian Ifthikaruddin as President Punjab Muslim League desired massive land reforms which were opposed by the feudal who had managed to seize control of the party. Due to his progressive outlook, he voted against the Objectives Resolution. In 1951, he was expelled from PML, forcing him to form the Azad Pakistan Party which then led to the formation of a left of centre political outfit by the name of National Awami Party.

[PM to perform groundbreaking of low-cost housing project in Nowshera today](https://nation.com.pk/21-Apr-2021/pm-to-perform-groundbreaking-of-low-cost-housing-project-in-nowshera-today)

Huseyn Shaheed Suharwardy was the President of Bengal Provincial Muslim League (BPML) that won 113 out of 119 seats in the united Bengal legislature. At the time of partition, he was the Chief Minister of one of the largest provinces of India. He was an outstanding lawyer, orator and statesman who was deliberately denied his due position, forcing him to part ways with PML to form his own party called the Awami League which then became the founding party of Bangladesh under an ordinary worker of his, Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rehman.

In 1975, Ghulam Mustafa Khar also revolted against Bhutto when he was denied the seat vacated by Muhammad Hanif Ramay. Khar Sahib decided to contest as an independent but lost the by-elections. After his removal from the coveted position of Chief Minister Punjab, Ramay Sahib and Khar both briefly joined PML (Functional) but eventually returned to their parent party. In 1986, Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi also parted ways with PPP to form the National People’s Party. He was blamed for misleading the party which resulted in the boycott of the 1985 partyless elections. Since then, PPP has never left the field open for its opponents.

[Punjab govt resumes Metro bus service in Lahore](https://nation.com.pk/21-Apr-2021/punjab-govt-resumes-metro-bus-service-in-lahore)

Then the very disciplined Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) also had to face a massive split when one of the founders Maulana Amin Ahsan Islahi decided to part ways with Maulana Abul Ala Maudidi, the founder Amir of the Jamaat. Maulana Islahi believed in reforming the society instead of fighting political battles and then compromising to get into power. He kept his scholarly activities going and produced brilliant disciples like Dr Israr Ahmed and Javed Ghamdi to name a few.

JI could never manage to gain political power on its own. It formed all kinds of unholy alliances to remain relevant in the political arena. Today, the party under Siraj ul Haq is fighting a battle for survival as its membership continues to dwindle. As a political entity, it failed in achieving its objectives. Even the family of the founder decided to keep away from the party. Perhaps Maulana Islahi stands vindicated in his principled stance of improving the quality of human beings rather than seeking political power.

Ideological political splits have always been popular, but in our times personal interest and greed prevails. Most politicians try to cover their corruption by claiming political victimisation. Instead of coming clean, they indulge in shows of strength and propaganda.

Electables and businessmen have proven to be a menace in politics. The endless saga of political corruption started after the partlyless elections of 1985, which is a direct consequence of Zia’s doctrine of ‘positive results’ which have proven to be very negative for the country and its struggling democracy. Under Imran Khan, Pakistan is on its way to a massive clean-up, the evil forces have all ganged up. For them it is a battle for survival; splits, protests, sit-ins, defence by expensive lawyers—every trick in the book is being tried. In the end Pakistan will come out victorious.