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## Introduction

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Pakistan came to be founded somewhat abruptly during the tumultuous years witnessed by the subcontinent before and after the Second World War of 1939 to 1945. Marked by the uprooting and dispossession of millions of men, women and children, and the carnage of scores of thousands of innocents, the partition of India in 1947 left bitter memories and feelings of hatred among the simple non-political masses who had mostly lived in amity and harmony before.

In view of the apprehension that Muslims would become a political minority in a united subcontinent free of European rule, the new country was to provide a homeland which would protect their cultural distinctiveness. But millions of non-Muslims remained in Pakistan, which also inherited the great river which had given the subcontinent its traditional Hellenistic name, together with many of the monuments and achievements of ancient Indian civilization. Scores of millions of Muslims, including many of the most eminent and prominent, chose to remain in the new India which took the Sanskrit name of 'Bharat' and which contained most of the monuments and achievements of the great Islamic civilization that symbolized a cultural and political intercourse



with India of more than a thousand years. A new nation-state had been attempted to be formed with two constituent parts separated by over one thousand miles of another new nation-state, all of which had together comprised until the night before the same economic and political union. Pakistan was to fail to endure in its original form with the secession of East Pakistan, creating in 1971 yet a third new nation-state with the Bengali name of 'Bangladesh'. And, of course, the problem of a divided and disputed Kashmir continues to this day, symbolizing the multiple crises over national identities on the subcontinent, and lending itself to imitation elsewhere. After so much bloodshed and military spending on all sides, it has become almost impossible to remember that a little more than a generation or two ago, while there were many grave problems on the subcontinent, Kashmir was not one of them.

The purpose of the present volume is to contribute to a reasonable discussion of the political economy of contemporary Pakistan. This is a purpose important to the citizens, friends and neighbours of Pakistan alike. There is also a companion volume on the political economy of India, and together these two volumes may provide a more comprehensive picture of some of the major problems facing the subcontinent.

In late 1986, the editors of these volumes identified certain subjects as being of possible medium- and long-term interest to the peoples of the subcontinent, independent of short-term changes in government or policy. The idea of the project was generously funded by a joint committee of the East-West Center and the University of Hawaii as part of the emphasis placed on the continent of Asia by both institutions. After a process of intensive consultation and extensive research throughout 1987 and 1988, it was decided to treat Pakistan and India distinctly but in tandem, and a small number of authors were commissioned with individual subjects for each country. Each essay has been refereed by at least one and more often two independent readers, and also reviewed and discussed at a meeting of all the authors at the East-West Center in Honolulu, in June 1989 in the case of Pakistan and the month before in the case of India. It should be made explicit that while it is hoped that this volume may contribute to a reasonable discussion of modern Pakistan's agenda in the 1990s, the coverage offered is far from comprehensive. Neither editor is Pakistani, one being motivated as a student and friend of Pakistan and regional

cooperation in South Asia, the other as someone concerned with enlarging the scope of common understanding as the only key to long-term mass economic development on the subcontinent.

In what follows we shall first give a short survey of the contents of the volume. Part I contains essays by Francis Robinson, Akbar Ahmed, Shirin Tahir-Kheli, Robert LaPorte and Shahid Javed Burki, and will be discussed in the next section of this chapter. These essays are concerned with the historical origins of Pakistan, its internal and external politics, and the role of its administration, and are of interest both in themselves and because they set the stage for the economic discussions which follow. Part II of the volume has to do with the economy of Pakistan and contains essays by Mohsin Khan, Naved Hamid, Mahmood Hasan Khan, John Adams and Shahrukh Rafi Khan. These essays will be discussed in the following section.

Based on recent research in history, economics and philosophy, the final section offers a hypothesis which might help unravel the paradox of Kashmir. It is almost 50 years now since the British departed from the subcontinent and the Kashmir problem began. Half a century is a long time in politics or in a person's life, but it is not so long in the history of the subcontinent where there has been a continuous Islamic presence and influence for over a millenium, a continuous Hindu and Buddhist presence and influence for several millenia, and a continuous aboriginal presence and influence for even longer. The whole British period and its modern sequel will be seen in the long run as one like many others. But what happened in 1947 and the way it happened set up a situation which nobody wanted, and which led to a vast killing and the spread of hatred and bitterness where there was mostly amity before. The core of the continuing dispute between Pakistan and India has been Kashmir, where vast resources have been drained from the budgets of both countries by two large armies facing one another for decades over a disputed boundary. Like all bloody, complicated and perennial problems, the problem of Kashmir may have become trapped in hackneyed definitions and misdefinitions. A possible key to resolving the matter may lie in redefining the questions of the 1930s and 1940s in a fresh way, recognizing at the same time that there is a certain paradox in the situation, and then explaining how that paradox might be resolved. The theory we put forward—brief and highly speculative though it



may be— might help to throw some new light on what is perhaps the single most significant obstacle which has held back mass economic development in both countries so far.

Here it must be said that the individual authors or editors of this volume must not be assumed to be in agreement with one another in any way whatsoever on matters of substance, interpretation or judgement. The principal responsibility for the substance and accuracy of what is said in each chapter rests with its author. The responsibility for the choice of subjects and the choice of authors, and for the interpretations and theoretical judgements contained in this Introduction rest with the editors. Given the complexity of the problems of Pakistan and the subcontinent as a whole, it is necessary to make one's approach with an open mind and in a democratic spirit. This volume will have fulfilled its purpose if the essays contained in it are able to engage the reader to reflect upon and discuss the nature of Pakistan's agenda as the twentieth century comes to an end.

The opening essay of the volume is by Francis Robinson, who develops three propositions on the origins of Pakistan. First, the quest for a Muslim political identity during the period of European rule in the subcontinent was mainly a phenomenon of the United Provinces, where Muslims were in a numerical minority and were apprehensive of the political domination of a Hindu culture. Secondly, the prominence of the Muslim League at the centre of Indian politics in the years 1937 to 1947 had little to do with the political leanings of Muslims in the Muslim-majority provinces. Thirdly, in none of the Muslim-majority provinces that were eventually to form the original Pakistan had there been a solid base of political support for the creation of such a state. In spite of the Muslim League's electoral victory of 1945-46 and the events that led to Partition in 1947, there were no established political institutions capable of sustaining a Pakistani identity in the Muslim-majority provinces which came to comprise Pakistan. The Pakistan that was established was achieved in the main by the Muslim elites who had originated from the Muslim-minority provinces of undivided India.

In Bengal, the Bengali Muslim League's overwhelming strength in the 1946 vote also had little to do with the desire to create an Islamic nation. Rather, voters among the poor were responding to promises of increased economic opportunity, while those in the

middle classes were sympathetic to the idea of an independent Bengal. The hopes of Bengalis for both economic improvement and political independence were dashed by the outcome of the Partition. Robinson concludes by observing that Pakistan began with neither a widely accepted political identity nor a deep-rooted and trusted political organization.

Turning to contemporary Pakistan, Akbar Ahmed's analysis indicates some of the main social and political trends within the country today, identifying the perceptions and values that each of four different social and ethnic groups brings to the national arena. First there are the tribal societies of the Baluchis and Pakhtoons, with traditional values such as clan loyalty, respect for martial skills, and fierce assertion of self-reliance. These societies are changing as modern values and technology intrude through schools, electricity and markets. Next there is the peasant-based agricultural society, comprising the 60 million people of West Punjab, and characterized by hard work, moderation and political conservatism, and success in government service and the armed forces. These values have spread beyond Punjab to other agricultural regions, including Sind. Then there is urban society, illustrated by the explosive growth since 1947 of Karachi from being a middling township to a metropolis filled with refugees and migrants whose roots are elsewhere. The emerging middle class of professionals, entrepreneurs and wealthy farmers are seen to characterize Lahore, while in Karachi, the centre of industry and trade, one finds a volatile and complex mix, with ethnic and religious differences resulting in sporadic violence and constant tension. Then there is muhajir society, deriving from the seven million refugees who flowed from across the border at Partition, and who settled mainly in Karachi and other towns turning them into cities. They came with ambitious expectations, and from among them have emerged leading industrialists, politicians and civil servants. The refugees of Partition had the most intense identification with the Muslim League and the demand for an independent Pakistan. Their political influence has been far out of proportion to their numbers in the population. More recent refugees have been the Biharis after 1971 and Afghans after 1979; they, too, have settled in urban areas. Refugees have figured prominently in the formation and growth of political parties and movements including the Muhajir Quami Mahaz and fundamentalist parties like Jamaat-i-Islami.



The modern industry and consumerism of Lahore and Karachi now contrasts dramatically with the tribal life of Baluchistan and the Frontier. While the official ideology has tended to ignore or even deny the existence of ethnic diversity and conflict within Islam, Ahmed's chapter suggests instead the acceptance of pluralism as a principle, and open debate and discussion of issues.

From internal politics we move to external politics with Shirin Tahir-Kheli's examination of Pakistan's foreign policy. The geographic position close to American and European interests in the Persian Gulf, plus competitive superpower interests during the Cold War, were utilized by Pakistan's foreign policy-makers to ensure survival, economic prosperity and regional influence. Notable are the friendly relations with the Islamic countries to the west, and the alliances with the United States and China. At the same time, the continued adversarial relationship with India has been the greatest of disappointments.

Robert LaPorte Jr. examines the role and structure of the bureaucracy. The civil service bureaucracy has dominated policy-making since the founding of Pakistan. The strong and independent civil service was an inheritance from the British; indeed, some British members of the service were initially retained to assist the new state. The relative lack of representative institutions and frequent changes at the head of government allowed the elite civil service to consolidate its power. Its central role in setting the parameters of economic, political and foreign policy has remained a constant.

Shahid Javed Burki then provides the bridge between the discussion of politics and society and the discussion of economic questions. Burki sees the bureaucracy as having successfully coped with the sequence of crises faced by Pakistan since 1947. In overcoming short-term crises, however, structural deficiencies have accumulated which cannot be addressed without broad political consensus. These include a fiscal system with an inelastic revenue base and without effective control over expenditures; a restrictive system of trade controls ineffective in promoting exports; an excessive dependence on external financing arising from inadequate domestic savings relative to investment; and severe deficiencies in the provision and distribution of basic public goods and services. Agreement among citizens regarding solutions to structural problems can only be built through a political process.

In the first essay of Part II of the volume, Mohsin Khan gives an overview of Pakistan's macroeconomic policy and performance in recent years. Growth has averaged more than 5 per cent in real terms, the price level has been reasonably stable, and although the deficit on current account has been large, Pakistan has not experienced financing difficulties like many other countries. The focus of macroeconomic management has been on the balance of payments. Periodic adjustments in monetary, fiscal, and exchange rate policies made to overcome short-term crises resulting from internal and external shocks have had an adverse impact on the payments position. While these policies have been effective in responding to crises and short-term problems, other economic policies have not been consistent with longer-term objectives. Trade and industrial policies have been inward-oriented, with much state control and intervention. Exchange controls, and tariff and non-tariff barriers have been widely used to promote industry. The import-substitution strategy, rather than increasing the economy's strength and sustainability, placed it in a precarious situation.

In the next essay, Mahmood Hasan Khan examines policies related to agriculture and the transformation of peasant and subsistence agriculture into commercial agriculture. A mixture of pricing, tax and expenditure policies have been employed to support commercial agriculture, with some success in terms of production growth. However, efforts to modify institutions in a manner favourable to small farmers, tenants and landless workers have had little impact. Concentration of economic and political power in rural communities has increased and inequality in ownership and distribution of land has remained high. Commercialization and mechanization have tended to drive marginal peasants into the rural labour market as landless workers. Rapid population growth in rural areas and ineffective intensification strategies in agriculture underlie the adverse trend. Rural labour has consequently moved to urban areas or overseas to seek jobs. Subsequently, overseas remittances have had a substantial impact since the 1970s in reducing rural poverty. Government interventions in agricultural pricing have largely offset the negative impacts of import substitution policies in the industrial sector on the intersectoral terms of trade. However, such interventions have mainly benefited large commercial farmers and have serious budgetary impacts. Since investment in infrastructure, research and development and raising



farmers' capabilities have been neglected, productivity in terms of yields has not improved at a satisfactory rate. Moving away from subsidies (and removing the tax-exempt status of agricultural income) in order to improve the institutional and technological basis for agriculture are thus on the future agenda. The use of indirect taxes to transfer the agricultural surplus to other sectors has been inefficient and inequitable. These policies have weakened incentives to respond effectively to new markets, technologies and crops. By placing emphasis on market forces and direct taxes, agricultural producers can be returned the benefits of a portion of the investible resources for their own well-being.

Naved Hamid surveys the changes in industrial policy in Pakistan. Investment and import licensing had been chosen over more transparent, price-based tariff measures. The controls necessitated by an overvalued rupee and the subsequent excess demand for imports had unintended and severe effects on exports. The evolution to a more neutral trade regime was disrupted by wars and by internal change. From 1972 to 1977, industrial policy towards private large- and medium-scale industry was recast from active promotion to heavy restriction through state ownership via nationalization and other controls. Private investment fell. The recent recovery of industrial growth has had the beneficial effect of raising employment and encouraging the Government to further deregulate the existing controls. Efforts to stimulate industrial progress are turning away from reliance on interventions and controls towards emphasis on markets, competition and the private sector. Though privatization of state-owned enterprises encountered opposition from various groups, it has now begun to gain momentum. If this new direction is followed, industrial growth in the 1990s could help move the country to higher economic growth.

An important factor in the achievement of higher per capita income in Pakistan will be investment in human resources and demographic trends. John Adams observes that population growth has a momentum that cannot be slowed without effort on several fronts, especially the status of Pakistani women. Past neglect of social welfare and human resource investment are reflected in high birth rates and labour force growth. Low attainment in female health, literacy, social status and participation rates along with high infant mortality reinforce a bleak demographic outlook. Rapid population growth and uneven distribution of opportunities by

geographical region and between urban and rural communities create stresses and tensions in Pakistani society. Labour markets face downward pressures on real wages and heightened competition for employment between groups. The existing pressures on rural resources are worsened by concentration of landholdings, limited access to irrigation water, credit and other input markets. Land redistribution, though highly desirable from the standpoint of an equitable distribution of society's resources, is constrained by political realities. The limited availability of land and the mounting numbers of rural landless make the redistribution of land an infeasible strategy for the eradication of poverty. Only if employment opportunities in non-agricultural and agricultural sectors are expanded and population growth (and future labour force expansion) slows can the quality of life be raised substantially for those without wealth. The status of Pakistani women in the future will depend on choices made today with regard to women's rights, education and access to public services. Only by bringing infant care, preventive health services and educational attainment more into line with achievements in agricultural and industrial production will Pakistan realize its potential.

For most people on the subcontinent, investment in human capital through learning and education is the main exit strategy from a life of poverty. Shahrukh Rafi Khan observes that in Pakistan, not more than one-quarter of the adult population is literate. Enrollment rates in schools have risen over time but remain the lowest in the subcontinent. Enrollment rates of girls in primary and secondary schools are extremely low. Inadequate resources have been allocated to education: and those that are, are often misdirected. Tertiary institutions catering to more prosperous groups have received a disproportionate amount of Government funding with virtually no cost recovery. Moreover, conditions and facilities at all levels of public education are grossly inadequate. There is abundant evidence that social returns to primary and secondary education are high, and clear policy implications can be derived. Overcoming cultural impediments to higher enrollment of girls at these levels, especially in rural areas, may require added commitment of resources and effort. Without such an approach, meaningful progress may not be possible on a large number of social, economic and political issues critical to the future of the country. This highlights the incongruity of apparent economic



growth and modernization without much improvement in the condition of life for many people.

While it is hoped that the range and depth of these essays will contribute substantially to the discussion of the agenda of modern Pakistan, we reiterate that our coverage is far from complete. There are many other issues and problems in Pakistan which warrant serious study and inquiry by Pakistan's citizens, scholars and friends, such as new configurations in internal politics, the development of democracy and its relationship with the military, the scope and application of Islamic law in the modern world, especially in the economy and banking, the treatment of women's questions, and also the problems of narcotics and crime.

### THE PARADOX OF KASHMIR

When the project, of which this volume is a part, was initiated in 1986, Pakistan was under military rule. Since then, there has been a restoration of constitutional democracy and civilian rule with successive elections. Keeping a long-term and practical perspective in view, the authors of this volume were instructed to focus on matters of a structural nature. The practical purpose of the volume is to stimulate debate and discussion in order to identify possible solutions to the problems posed in the various essays in it.

In the past few years, social, political, and economic changes in Pakistan have been occurring at varying rates. The democratic political process has facilitated broader discussion and awareness of economic and social ills. Slowing of economic growth, enlargement of the public debt, the unfeasibility of subsidizing government enterprise and paying the bill for essential social and physical infrastructure have become painfully apparent. If the long-term purpose of the volume has been vindicated by the resurgence of civilian rule and democracy, the practical purpose has been vindicated by the vigorous public debate over fundamental economic questions concerning foreign exchange, fiscal matters and ownership. Indeed, recent policy pronouncements in the economic realm are almost wholly consonant with the arguments put forward by various authors in the volume, particularly Mohsin Khan, Javed Burki, Naved Hamid, and Hasan Khan. The practical success of economic reform over the long term will be measured largely by the progress made in social development. The sustainability of democracy itself may be in the balance.

While it would be presumptuous for the editors to venture any further on their own on these matters, it is to be hoped that others will take up these and other questions in the future. It may not be inappropriate, however, to make reference to one important set of questions with which this volume has not dealt, namely, those having to do with the modern meaning and political significance of secular or religious identities in the subcontinent today. In doing so, the editors remind the reader that the interpretations and views set out in this section are in no way attributable to the individual authors included in the book. Questions of the legal custody of the few square miles of Srinagar Valley may ultimately be superficial derivatives of these larger questions. Yet these questions of identity are related to the nature of the post-War configuration of sovereign states that appeared on the subcontinent, and the intractability of the one has affected the intractability of the other. In the aftermath of the Second World War, a certain set of decisions and definitions were hurriedly made in the subcontinent, especially by the departing British, and a certain set of events took place. It has been assumed as obvious by the elites that the people of the subcontinent must remain prisoners of those definitions and contingencies forever. For over 40 years the international context was such as to constrain or prevent any real thought to challenge the post-War definitions and contingencies, and there was little incentive for the opposing elites in Islamabad or Delhi to find room for reasoning or cooperation with one another, instead of collaboration with their corresponding elites in the superpower capitals. But the last few years have seen sudden changes take place in the world political order, and it is in such a changed context that the problems of the subcontinent have to be redefined and re-examined, and a search made for reasonable solutions. The rest of the world may be expected to remain conspicuously without concern for these problems, leaving it to the peoples of the subcontinent to make the search for such solutions themselves.

Everyone knows how bitter and complicated the present situation has become; everyone has a hero to praise and a villain to blame; and everyone has a painful memory of Partition and its aftermath or knows somebody who does. In practical terms, it is the problem of Kashmir which has been at the centre of the difficulties of the last five decades. It is because of a divided and disputed boundary in Kashmir that we have had two large armies facing one another in anger, referring to each other as 'dushman'. And it is clear to the



naked eye that the resulting arms-race and elite-rivalry has greatly impoverished the general budgets of both Pakistan and India. If it has benefited important sections of the political and military elites of both countries, it has done so only at the expense of the general welfare of the masses. So long as the arms-race continues, the economies of both countries are likely to remain severely distorted, and there may be little genuine prospect of improvement in mass welfare or the large-scale economic development of either country.

The hypothesis we outline here to try and unravel the paradox of Kashmir draws from three separate sources of contemporary research in history, economics and philosophy. The historical source is the outstanding recent work of the Pakistani historian, Dr. Ayesha Jalal.<sup>1</sup> The source in modern economics is the simple 'theory of games', from where it is known that rational players acting in a situation of conflict of interest between them may act individually in such a way as to produce joint outcomes which are collectively detrimental to all players. And from contemporary philosophical research we take the idea that paradoxes and seemingly irreconcilable problems are often the result of being trapped in hackneyed definitions and misdefinitions, and which might be resolved once the problems are redefined in a fresh way. In particular, when there seem to be irreconcilable differences, 'it is a heuristic maxim that the truth lies not in one of the two disputed views but in some third possibility which has not yet been thought of, which we can only discover by rejecting something assumed as obvious by both the disputants'.<sup>2</sup>

The paradox of Kashmir may be stated simply as follows: how is it that in all the debates, bargaining and negotiations in the decades which preceded 1947, nobody on any side predicted that it was going to be Kashmir, of all things, which would become the cardinal problem in the future of the peoples of the subcontinent? There seem to have been discussions about everything else: about this majority and that minority, about undivided Punjab and united Bengal, about joint electorates and protected electorates, about Centre-province relations, about this Constituent Assembly or that, about a weak Centre and a strong Centre, and so on and so forth. But nobody seemed to have talked about Kashmir. How is it that in all those discussions none of the founding fathers of Pakistan or India even once predicted what was really going to become the crucial problem? Were they so lacking in foresight that none could

anticipate that within a matter of months, it would be Kashmir that was going to be the basic, interminable and pivotal problem facing the subcontinent for the next five decades? That it would be Kashmir which would lead to large standing armies facing one another in anger, causing the economic impoverishment of the entire subcontinent? Or, to put it differently, is it not extremely strange that, there were all our famous statesmen debating for years about the welfare and future of these scores of millions of people, then, all of a sudden, there is 1947 and Partition, and what happens is that all those debates seemed to stop, and instead Kashmir, which nobody had been talking about at all before, becomes and remains for the next 50 years the single most intransigent problem? With the benefit of hindsight at least, would that not strike a reasonable observer today as something which is odd and paradoxical, or which at least deserves an explanation?

The explanation of the paradox may be hidden in the fact that there was a relatively neglected topic in the bargaining game which was being played between Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah, the British, and the Indian National Congress: this was of course the issue of what were called the Princely States. For the most part, the Princes were in the implicit background, behind the British on whose tutelage they depended. But their presence in the game was being given different degrees of importance by the principal players. Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah and the Congress were each giving the Princes different weights, and this did not become explicit enough to both players, and furthermore seemed almost deliberately obscured by the British acting in the middle. This might be a key to a better understanding of the construction of the bargaining game being played through the 1930s and 1940s. No single player understood fully the whole game at the time or the strategies of the other players or even his own strategy. The result was a collective outcome which none of the players wanted or found desirable, and which led to the mass killing of innocents and the conceptual confusion on the subcontinent which has continued to this day.

What has been shown quite definitively by Ayesha Jalal is that the result at Partition was far from what Jinnah had wanted, indeed that Jinnah had fundamentally not seemed to want the Partition of India at all. Dr. Jalal has restored the image of the Quaid-i-Azam as a chain-smoking lawyer, a Muslim statesman for the modern world, and someone who had been essentially a secular-minded nationalist. Jinnah's aim had been to get the best deal



possible for Indian Muslims; in particular, that they be in an undominated political situation once the British had left. This required him to refer to Muslims as a different nation united behind his sole leadership, a strategy which was in constant danger of failure given that the real basis of his support lay not in the Muslim-majority provinces but in the Muslim-minority provinces. The larger Muslim-majority provinces of Punjab and Bengal seemed not only intent on pursuing their own futures as autonomously as possible, but showed relatively thin real support for the Muslim League.

But Jinnah's strategy of maximizing the benefits for his constituents was not properly understood by the other players or even perhaps by himself at the time. Eventually the Congress leadership was led to believe that the awful choices they faced were either the British continuing to stay on, or the Partition of Punjab and Bengal and the division of the country's assets. The first alternative could have meant the failure of the nationalist movement and the collapse of the Congress. Thus Partition was chosen on the assumption that it was the only way to obtain Jinnah's agreement for the British to go immediately. But when this happened, it also meant that the Quaid-i-Azam's strategy had failed to achieve an undominated political position for Muslims in an otherwise undivided India. Jinnah was playing boldly in a game with high stakes, though his cards were relatively weak. If his aim of having Muslims treated with real weight was to be achieved, then he needed the British, who held the power, to believe or find it in their interest to believe that his cards were strong. At the same time he also needed the Congress leadership to believe that his cards were stronger than they were, but not so strong that the Congress would actually accept the idea of Partition. The British, for their own reasons which had to do with the prosecution of their war against Japan without difficulty from the Congress, found it convenient to say they believed Jinnah's cards were strong. And Congress which wanted the British out of India more quickly than may have been prudent, accordingly misread Jinnah's strategy. When Congress eventually accepted what Jinnah seemed to be saying he wanted, they precipitated a situation which gave him something far from what he really wanted.

The Congress leaders looked around them at the scores of petty monarchs under British tutelage, and wondered how on earth a

single nation-state was to be forged out of them, especially in the context of massive economic problems superimposed by the Depression and the World War. For it was the forging of a single nation-state on the subcontinent which comprised their fundamental objective. While this question of integration and nation-building was dominating the subconscious Congress mind, there was Jinnah in the foreground, having for so long been such a stalwart secular nationalist, now pressing on relentlessly about the Muslims being a different nation who must be concerned with Hindu assimilationism or domination. Why could Jinnah simply not see that the real problem was getting the British out and integrating all those petty monarchs into a new country which could then take its proper place in the world? In his turn, the Quaid-i-Azam must have felt that the Congress leaders were simply refusing to see his point of view! Jinnah may have been genuinely concerned about India's territorial integrity and religious amity, even as he pressed for the strongest deal he could get for his constituents. There he was engaged, as he saw it, in normal political activity on behalf of what was the most important single coalition—demanding, posturing, bluffing and conceding—but he seemed to be getting absolutely nowhere.

The rival political mythologies in Pakistan and India today depict the heroes of one side as being the villains of the other. Yet in fact each side could well have thought itself to be secular, perceiving the other side as being communalist. The Quaid-i-Azam's speech to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan is as secular a manifesto as any, yet he has passed in the political mythology of India as the master of intolerance. Jawaharlal Nehru was the personal embodiment of secularism, while Mahatma Gandhi's eldest son converted to Islam, yet the Congress movement and its leadership, including its own great Muslim leaders, have become branded in the political mythology of Pakistan as communalists. Indeed, it was around such a strong secular middle that the legitimate political interests of more conservative Muslims and more conservative Hindus might have come to be identified.

Here was a monumental miscommunication and failure of political dialogue if ever there was one, with vast consequences upon the lives of scores of millions of men, women and children for a period of nearly five decades. The principal players may have been—subtly but nevertheless completely—at cross-purposes,



without having a shared understanding of what the precise questions were supposed to be nor the vision to cut through the impasse which resulted. The game climaxed in the terrible events of 1947, an outcome which no player wanted but which every player got, thanks to the subjective perceptions the players had of one another's motives and abilities.

The bargaining game from the Quaid-i-Azam's point of view had been to achieve an undominated political position for Muslims in a united India, and he did not believe this could be done within Congress. The game from the Congress leaders' point of view stressed the unity of the subcontinent in history, geography, language, the arts and music, and feared the opening of the question of communalism: their aim was to disprove the pessimism of the Conservative Party, as represented by Winston Churchill, regarding the prospects of an independent India. The basis of British imperialism was the division of India, and the Congress leadership saw Jinnah's strategy as playing into their hands. Finally, from the British point of view, the game was mainly what it always had been since the time the East India Company arrived on the shores of India—the protection and promotion of British political and commercial interests. A shift of international economic and political power had been taking place since the middle of the First World War from Europe across the Atlantic to America. All things considered, by the end of the Second World War, Britain could no longer afford her imperial presence in India. So long as British commercial interests could be safeguarded as well as possible, and so long as Britain's imperial self-image was preserved as much as possible in the form of the Commonwealth, the British wanted to make as hasty an exit from India as their sense of pomp and circumstance would permit.

Thus a possible explanation of the paradox of Kashmir, and hence the root of the problem on the subcontinent today, could be the fact that while both Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah and the Congress leadership claimed for themselves the mantle of secularism, and while neither may have really wanted Partition, each misread the character, aims and strategies of the other, and precipitated a collective outcome which neither had truly sought. Kashmir became a problem precisely because it had not been on the agenda of the main players, and came to symbolize the failure of their political dialogue. It was not on the agenda of the players because each

player had a different agenda, hidden or open, which had not been communicated to, or at least was being misread by, the other player. High on the Congress agenda was the integration of the petty monarchs and the creation of one secular nation-state. Prime on Jinnah's agenda was the achievement of an undominated political position for the Muslims of India. If politics could be conducted in a vacuum then, perhaps, in the course of time, the same agenda could have been defined and the same questions could have been answered. But politics were not being conducted in a vacuum, and the factors of international politics all contributed to creating the outcome in 1947 and its perpetuation to this day.

Kashmir has become the serious, pivotal and interminable problem it has precisely because it symbolized the failure of the political dialogue between the Quaid-i-Azam and the Congress leadership. The claims of both Pakistan and India to Kashmir may be inconsistent. The inconsistency of Pakistan's claim to Kashmir on the basis of majority religion is ultimately rooted in the deeper inconsistency of the Quaid-i-Azam himself—the secular nationalist, democrat and Indian Muslim for the modern world. The inconsistency of India's claim to Kashmir is ultimately rooted in the ambiguous political place of Muslims in the rump of India that was left after the sudden amputation of Pakistan. The proof of a historical theory, like the proof of a scientific theory, rests in its ability to explain the facts better than a rival theory, and readers, will have to judge for themselves whether either of the rival mythologies is better than the brief, speculative and, of course, highly simplified theory which is given here. But two critical facts may be considered as tests: the secession of Bangladesh from Pakistan, and the growth of Sikh and Hindu communalism inside India. The former contradicted the myth that Pakistan could be defined solely by religious identity. The latter has contradicted the Bharat myth that secularism is just a matter of papering over religious and cultural differences with a few nice slogans. What is possible instead is that the Quaid-i-Azam and the Congress leadership were both actually committed to secularism and the unity of the subcontinent, but the situation collapsed into chaos because of the complexity of the game being played in a larger random environment.

As things stand today, Kashmir, in the opinion of the editors, must be demilitarized and unified by both countries sooner or later, and it must be done without force. There has been enough



needless bloodshed on the subcontinent over the past 40 years. Modern Pakistanis and Indians are free peoples who can voluntarily agree in their own interests to alter the terms set hurriedly by Attlee or Mountbatten in the Indian Independence Act 1947. Nobody but we ourselves keeps us prisoners of superficial definitions of who we are or might be.

The subcontinent could evolve its political identity over a period of time on the pattern of Western Europe, with open borders and tariffs to the outside world, with the free movement of people, capital, ideas and culture. Large armed forces could be reduced and transformed in a manner that would enhance the security of each nation. The real and peaceful economic revolution of the masses of the subcontinent would then be able to begin.<sup>3</sup>

## **PART I**

### **Politics and Society**