

# Nations, Nation-State and Politics of Muslim Identity in South Asia

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In February 2002, Gujarat, a prosperous western state of India, saw the beginning of carnage that continued for more than a month. In retaliation for the killing of fifty-eight Hindu activists, at least 2,000 Muslims were murdered, hundreds of women raped, thousands made homeless, and millions of dollars of property destroyed. Media reports suggest the state government and almost all law enforcement agencies were complicit in these heinous crimes. At times, the chief minister inflamed the situation with comments directed against the Muslim community. The situation reminded everyone of December 1992 when the Rashtriya Sangh (RSS), the fountainhead of the Hindu 'nationalist' party Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its various wings, demolished a sixteenth-century mosque in Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh and unleashed a reign of terror and a series of bloodbaths in various cities. Has the "secular Indian nation-state," headed by the Hindu nationalists, reached the point where the "minority community" in general and particularly Muslims are destined to be the perennial victims of state supported violence? Does the nation-state want to efface the difference and distinctiveness of the 'minorities'? The questions need to be posed in such fashion because these events were very much consistent with the dominant discourse of Indian politics. Without undermining the significance of the particularity, the questions needed to be put in general terms because another "minority community" in another South Asian country has been facing the identical questions since October 2001. Following the general elections of October 2001, the Hindus in Bangladesh have been subjected to severe persecution. The difference, if any, was of degree, not of kind. The alliance that came to power through the elections has as its partner, among others, an Islamist party with a checkered past. There too, the state machinery was blamed for complicity and the ruling regime for incitement. Without exonerating the individuals or groups for these dreadful acts, the nation-states in South Asia, the political processes that brought them to life, and the discourses that rationalize their existence need to be examined. The nation-states in South Asia have not emerged as a culmination of a political process, but rather from a failure to negotiate and accommodate the multiple identities of the Indian population within a single nation-state. Unwillingness to address the identity question at its core resulted in the creation of Pakistan in 1947, and hence Bangladesh in 1971. India, at one point seemed, to have escaped through its "secular" constitution and "democratic" political structure, but it is now obvious that the unresolved issue has come back to haunt the nation in full force since 1990s. The process leading up to the partition of India in 1947 had accepted religion not only as the social demarcator of identity, but also as the basis upon which the statecraft had to be built, whereas, this is a marker that any 'nation-state'

should be fighting against. What we saw in 1947 was not only the emergence of two states, but also, and perhaps more importantly, religious identities essentialized over others in a manner that in some form or other attempts to justify a certain interpretation of two-nation theory. Probing analysis of the events and processes leading up to the partition of India shows that the articulation of this theory was independent of the very statehood with which it has later been associated. Indeed the Muslim community in India aspired to be recognized as a "nation," but neither the Muslim community of India nor the "Father of the Pakistan Nation" wanted Pakistan to become a separate state.<sup>1</sup> Studies in Indian historiography that explain colonial India with the dichotomous division of secularism and communalism and/or secular nationalism and religious communalism abound, but it has also been aptly challenged and laid bare on many occasions during the last decade. However, the nuances and the complexities of multiple identities and their implications for contemporary South Asia are yet to be understood. That is why it has remained one of the most gnawing and lingering problems of the subcontinent. This paper attempts to examine this issue within the contemporary context of the subcontinent. However, one must accept that the issue of a crisis (or crises) of identity on the subcontinent cannot be addressed without delving into the history. I am aware of the fact that historicizing the issue has several pitfalls; the risk of being burdened by the past is one of them. Yet, my position is that the current situation has originated largely in the choices made (or not made) at certain junctures of the history. The contours of the current politics and the structure of each of the states (as well as societies) bear the marks of these choices, and the nation-states of the subcontinent are faced with same questions today.

## **Quest for a Muslim Identity**

The question of identity as a distinct issue appeared at the cusp of the nineteenth century in India as a sector of the Muslim community began to lament the disintegration of the Mughal empire and to endeavor to locate their position within the changing political structure. Both Shah Waliullah (1703-1762) and Syed Ahmed Bareilvi (1786-1831) can be seen as representatives of that endeavor, though they approached the issue from diametrically opposite directions. For them, however, the question was rather simple: how to regain the "lost glory of Islam"? This question privileged religion in general and particularly Islam as identifier and social demarcator of identity. Such differentiation had, in fact, already found its place in the colonial ruler's approach towards the Indian subjects. In 1772, for example, Warren Hastings and William Jones, had decided to apply "the laws of Koran with respect to Mohammedans and that of the Shaster with respect to Hindus."<sup>2</sup> Jones's effort to stratify society along religious lines

may have its origin in the intention to divide and rule or have grown out of a “civilizational perspective,”<sup>3</sup> but obviously has had its unintended consequences: Muslims soon saw a vindication of their difference.

By the time Syed Ahmed Khan (1817-1898), Altaf Husain Hali (1837-1914) and Muhammad Iqbal (1878-1938) engaged in a passionate quest for the causes of the moral decay and political decline of the Muslim community, the tone and tenor of the debate had shifted. So had the sociopolitical environment. By then the Mutiny of 1857 had ended in disarray, and North Indian Muslims had plunged into despondency. In Bengal, the story was different, however. The 1858 proclamation of non-interference by the Queen was primarily a doctrine, but also in part a practice.<sup>4</sup> In any case, it was beneficial to Muslims. In subsequent years this favorable environment enabled Muslims to emphasize their distinctive religious identity. Discourses within the Muslim community took a varied tone. Different intellectual strands emerged<sup>5</sup> as did regional variations.<sup>6</sup> Members of different social strata took distinctly different stances. Different voices were raised and diverse concerns expressed. These divergent voices evidently reflected the various trends within the Muslim community. Although there was a struggle for nationhood, the discourse was not monolithic in any sense. The tensions within the Muslim national identity discourse have varied contours and contents<sup>7</sup>. However, the underlying assertion of difference was present striving to find its place within the paradigm of “inclusionary secular nationalist” politics articulated by the Indian congress.

For the colonial power the project was somewhat different. It had already discovered, legitimized and entrenched the difference within the legal system; it was time to politicize it. The Indian Councils Act of 1892, which allowed “communal” nomination to government councils, initiated the policy of “separate representation.” The partition of Bengal in 1905, indeed, provided an impetus to the Muslim claim to separate political representation. But the Morley-Minto reforms of 1909, which allowed separate electorates in representative bodies at all levels of electoral systems, further institutionalized the division. This was a watershed in the history of Indian Muslims. On the one hand, it “gave birth to a sense of Muslims being a religio-political entity in the colonial image—of being unified, cohesive and segregated from Hindus”<sup>8</sup>; while on the other hand, “it effectively consigned [them] to being a perpetual minority in any scheme of constitutional reform.”<sup>9</sup> Subsequent political developments, namely the Lucknow Pact of 1916, Nehru report of 1928, the Communal Act of 1932 and the Government of India Act of 1935, exposed the inherent contradictions of the politics of difference. The rising Hindu communalists didn’t spare the opportunity to take advantage of it.<sup>10</sup> The political agenda of the Muslims at that point was two-fold: “to defend their gains and privileges in areas where Muslims were strong and powerful, and to secure ‘safeguards’ and concessions in provinces where they were weak in numbers and economically vulnerable.”<sup>11</sup> This duality of majoritarianism and minoritarianism may have helped the Muslim community in the short-run, but it also contributed to the construction of their “communalist” image.

By the mid-1930s, articulation of the Muslim difference and distinctive identity lost its way in the corridors of power

politics. The Indian congress, by then, began moving away from the agenda of an inclusive secular nationalist politics. The policy of majoritarianism triumphed within the congress because they perceived it as an antidote to the rising influence of Muslim identity politics. The congress saw a tactical benefit in portraying Muslims as “religious communalists,” which in turn would establish the congress as the sole representative of “secular nationalism.” This binary mode of identification was also intended to denigrate the quest of Muslims and rob their efforts of legitimacy.

The tables were finally turned in March 1940, during the Muslim League Conference in Lahore. What Mohammed Ali Jinnah did was “an implicit coup against this dominant binary mode.”<sup>12</sup> Jinnah’s proclamation was of a nation coming to age, not in any way a declaration establishing an independent state. Over the following seven years, however, political squabbling over power sharing, personal hubris and narrowness of outlook partitioned India and hence divided the Muslim nation. It is not because “a demand for Pakistan” had been made, but because the congress preferred India’s partition to sharing power with the Muslim League in a united India.<sup>13</sup>

#### **Paradoxes of Undivided Pakistan and Nehruvian<sup>14</sup> India**

The partition carved out a nation-state called Pakistan—a state that is neither an Islamic State, nor a Muslim State. What the Indian Muslims asked for was an affirmation of their difference and recognition of their nationhood; what they got was a geographical partition of India and a division of their own “nation.” More Muslims remained in India than chose to become citizens of Pakistan. The quest for identity got entangled with power politics and political mobilization and finally led down a blind alley. The central question for colonial India was how to build a nation-state after the departure of the British Raj accommodating the various nations within it. The question was never answered. Both Pakistan and India inherited the question lock, stock, and barrel.

Islam as a mobilizational tool outlived its purpose as soon as Pakistan was created. The first generation of Pakistani leaders, namely Jinnah and Liaquat Ali, understood that in earnest. Their emphasis on the secular nature of the state faced resistance from the same forces (e.g., Jaamat-i-Islami) that opposed the Muslim nationalist movement in India. For them the secular charade of Muslim League leaders is no longer necessary because there is no one with whom to compromise. The pretense must be discarded and a theocratic state built. They saw the establishment of Pakistan as their prize. In the early days of Pakistan, Islam was invoked nominally to hold the precarious balance between various segments of this loose coalition. On the other hand, Indian congressional leaders confronted the same tirade from the rabid communalists as well as Hindu nationalists. For them it was both a majoritarian and an ideological argument that India should be a Hindu state. Hindu Mahasabha and others were up in arms because their project of partition was intended to reinvigorate the “Hindutva.”

In Pakistan, Islam was then elevated to the pedestal of “national identity” by the ruling regimes, especially after 1954, primarily to contend with the assertion of regional and linguistic ethnic identities by Bengalis, Sindhis, Pathans, and Baluchs. What should have been an open discourse on na-

tional identity, and an effort to accommodate the regionally differentiated, economically disparate, and culturally different nations was wrecked by the Punjabi-dominated state machinery's insistence that "Islam" was the *raison d'être* of Pakistan. The majoritarian arguments of the congress in last days of colonial India were not readily available to Pakistani military-bureaucratic oligarchy because the Bengalis were the majority. It is the Muslim minority in Bengal that voted for Pakistan, yet their patriotism was questioned almost every day, and their discourses of difference were perceived as a lack of loyalty to a national identity. Accentuated by economic oppression and political exclusion, Bengalis looked for a "mobilizational tool" to galvanize their movement against the Punjabi-dominated Pakistani state. Bengali nationalism, articulated by the emerging middle class of then-East Pakistan in 1960s, provided what "Islam" once provided the Muslim League.<sup>15</sup> This resulted in the nationalist movement in late 1960s and the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the leader of the Bengali nationalist movement, like Jinnah in 1940s, did not ask for a nation-state, though that is what he got at the end. Bangladesh came into being in 1971.

While Bengali Muslims were under the scrutiny of the Pakistani state and the Bengali nation was subjected to exclusionary politics, Indian Muslims were going through a much harder time. The tirade of Hindu communalists was only one part of the story; the taunt of disloyalty came from Muslim members of Congress as well. Ranking members of the government in late-1940s and early 1950s repeatedly reminded that a mere declaration of loyalty was not enough; real proofs were required of Muslims.<sup>16</sup> The constitutional provisions were made in later days to address the minority issues. In doing so, the clock was, in one sense, turned back to pre-1947: Muslims were burdened forever with the identity of minority. Over the next forty years, the economically impoverished, regionally differentiated, and politically marginalized Muslims remained the "vote bank" of the only national party: Indian Congress. Any assertion of their difference and distinctiveness was seen and shown as their parochial and communal mentality. The discourse of Indian nationalism produced and reproduced by official and unofficial outlets was problematic. The nationalist discourse, destined to create a singular narrative, silenced all other voices, except those that could appropriate majoritarianist garb. Unfortunate though it may have been, the unresolved question of accommodating pluralism began to come to the fore, and there were no answers readily available within the dominant national identity. The inherent weaknesses of secular Indian nationalism both as principle and as the basis of state actions gradually came to light. The demise of Congress as the national party of India was the last road sign of the end of the Nehruvian era<sup>17</sup>. Indian state ideology faced a crisis of legitimacy.<sup>18</sup> The void was soon filled by the Hindu cultural identity propounded by militant organizations like Jana Sangh, BJP, RSS, VHP and so on (commonly referred to as Sangh Parivar).

### **Crisis of Legitimacy, Islam and Identity**

Bangladeshi and Pakistani military rulers, who came to power in 1975 and 1977 respectively, faced a crisis of legitimacy and reinvented Islam as their savior. Following the coup d'état of 1975 in Bangladesh, the new regime made constitutional amendments to change the national identity from 'Bengali' to 'Bangladeshi'. The change was not semantic,

as it may appear, but an effort to incorporate religion into the national identity. The Bengali nationalism was a vindication of the secular tradition of the country, while the newly invented nationalism emphasized the Muslim lineage of the nation. The word "secularism" appearing in the Preamble and Article 8 as one of the four fundamental principles of the constitution was substituted with "absolute trust and faith in the Almighty Allah"; and a new clause (1A) was inserted to emphasize that "absolute trust and faith in almighty Allah" should be "the basis of all actions." Article 12, which defined secularism was omitted, and above the Preamble the words "Bismillah-ar-Rahman-ar-Rahim" (In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful) were inserted to give the constitution an Islamic color. The principle of socialism was given a new meaning—"economic and social justice" (Preamble and Article 8). Taken together, a new ideological terrain was created by the regime to legitimize their rule. Religion, territoriality of identity and national security constituted the core of this new ideology. Going further down the same line, in 1988, another military ruler declared Islam the state religion. What is important to note is that the declaration of the state religion has accorded religion a definite space in the political discourse of Bangladesh. Since then, the so-called secularist political parties have been forced to use the idioms and icons of religion. By 1991, the main Islamist party, Jaamat'-i-Islami, emerged as the king maker and finally became a partner of the ruling coalition in 2001. This discursive practice led to a situation where minorities in general and particularly Hindus were seen as the scapegoat of ills and hence the majoritarian target of abuse, murder, rape and other forms of violence. The post-election atrocities were the reflections of this trend.

General Ziaul Huq of Pakistan came to power exercising the power of Army but turned to religious rhetoric to legitimize his rule. The "Islamization" of Pakistan by Zia was to placate the growing Islamist forces within the country and justify his role in Afghanistan. It was also intended to silence the religious minority communities including various sects of Islam and decenter the discourses of regional ethnic identities. Islam was a tool, instead of an ideology, in the hands of Zia and his civilian successors. However, the use of that tool didn't bring the intended consequences. The introduction of the Shari'a Laws in 1998 by the Nawaz Sharif regime, for example, failed to provide the moral legitimacy to rule the country. Efforts of the various regimes of Pakistan during the last twenty years to strengthen a national identity based on Islam only highlighted the strengths of ethnic nationalism and the pluralist nature of the society. Lack of democracy only exacerbated the situation. The military regime of Pervez Musharraf, under the pressure of the U.S. following September 11, has embarked on a policy of containing the religious extremism, but it may be too little too late. And at worst, there may be more backlash from this effort than success. The regime's lack of legitimacy, and the strengths of the puritanical groups and their militias, make it impossible for him to succeed without accepting and accommodating the reality of the multi-ethnic composition of Pakistan.<sup>19</sup> Such a move would have had prevented the break-up of Pakistan in 1971.

### **Ayodhya, Gujarat and Indian Muslims**

The demolition of Babri Mosque in December 1992 by the Sangh Parivar was neither an isolated event nor a sponta-

neous act, but something that was in the making for long time. Privileging majoritarian arguments in political discourse, succumbing to political expediency by the so-called secular parties, demonization of Muslim difference, and peripheralization of the Muslim voices all came together to create the pickaxes that demolished the sixteenth-century mosque. The Sangh Parivar's planned attack on the Mosque and the riot in Bombay in December and in the following month were conducted with the complicity of the state machinery.<sup>20</sup> These events jolted the Indian Muslim community and such words as "harassed, humiliated and preyed upon"<sup>21</sup> convey the mental state of most of the Muslims. The Saffron Brigade's marching song did not end in Ayodhya, the electoral politics delivered the central power to BJP twice since, and Indian Muslims once again became the victims in Gujarat in 2002.

More important are the reactions of the Muslim community in the aftermath of the Ayodhya. The Muslim religious leaders (i.e., ulamas, the Imam of Delhi Juma Mosque, the Babri Masjid Action Committee, the Muslim Personal Law Board etc) remained silent or, at best, expressed subdued reactions. Beside these muted responses of the traditional religious leaders, two distinctly different strands of views emerged since then. Their modes of articulation are also markedly different. The secularists, mostly drawn from the educated middle class, underscored the need for soul-searching, politics of inter-communal harmony and hoped that "this cataclysmic event can still yield something positive." Translating these high ideals into political activism in a turbulent period and at a time when difference is being demonized is something yet to be done. While another strand has emerged from the Muslim subaltern classes. They have allied themselves with the other marginalized segments of the society and articulated their dissatisfaction through a political strategy of supporting other communal and regional parties. In the state elections of 1993 in Uttar Pradesh, where Ayodhya is situated, the Muslims formed an undeclared electoral alliance with the Hindu lower caste Dalits and successfully defeated the BJP.<sup>22</sup> The strategy goes beyond electoral solidarity. In a recent study Yoginder Sikand shows that the "Dalit voice"<sup>23</sup> has become a vehicle for expressing the dissent of the marginalized Muslim community. Sikand writes,

...increasing numbers of Muslims, particularly from long-marginalised 'low' caste groups who form the vast majority of the India Muslim population, are demanding that their voices be heard, thereby seeking to challenge the established Muslim leadership as spokesmen of Islam and representatives of the community. Their growing voices of protest are directed both internally, at the 'ulama' and ashraf elite, as well as externally, at upper caste Hindus, both of whom are seen as complicit in the oppression of Muslim masses.<sup>23</sup>

The limitations of these writings notwithstanding, there seems to be a new articulation of Muslim identity in India. This articulation underscores the need for distinctiveness but solidarity with other marginalized segments of the society, claims a definite space within the body politic but free from the trappings of so-called 'communalism,' and advances the theology of liberation. The question remains, however, whether this growing voice can be accommodated within the Indian nationalist discourse—secularist or not. If the demolition of the Babri Mosque had emphasized the need for a new

mode of articulating dissent, the violence in Gujarat may well have strengthened it. One point, however, needs to be remembered here that there cannot be one single voice of the Muslims of India, neither can there be one mode of articulation. Regional differentiation, linguistic variations, social and economic positions require that the voices be diverse. That does not necessarily invalidate the underlying emphasis on the difference and dissension among the Muslims in India.

### Conclusion

The question of Muslim identity has dominated the political scene of South Asia for more than a century. During this period the geopolitical map of the subcontinent has changed at least twice. As this paper has shown, however, it has remained an unresolved issue. Creation of nation-states failed to resolve it; rather, it has complicated the issue further. All three nation-states in the subcontinent have attempted to assert a single narrative and insisted that identities of various nations must be accommodated within the discourse of national identity and the political structure it entails. In colonial India a tendency in majoritarian arguments to divide the political terrain with a binary differentiation between secular nationalism and religious communalism and a proclivity towards the centralized state structure suspended the debate and resulted in partition. In postcolonial Nehruvian India the nationalist discourse, destined to create a singular narrative, silenced all other voices, except those that could appropriate majoritarianist garb. Peripheralization of the Muslim voices led to the rise of the Hindu communalist party to power. Indian Muslims, however, are in search of new ways to articulate their differences. The experience of undivided as well as divided Pakistan shows that a common Muslim identity cannot deny ethnic and cultural differences and is not an alternative to pluralism. As the country is undergoing another democratization process, perhaps another opportunity has arrived to address this issue.

### NOTES

An earlier version of this paper was presented at the International and Global Studies Seminar at the Illinois State University. I would like to express my warmest thanks to the audience for their illuminating comments.

<sup>1</sup>Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

<sup>2</sup>In 1772, Hastings ordered that, "in all suits regarding inheritance, marriage, caste and other religious usages and institutions, the laws of the Koran with respect to the Mohammedans and those of the shaster with respect to the Gentoos (Hindus) shall be invariably adhered to; on all such occasions the Moulvies or Brahmins shall respectively attend to expound the law, and they shall sign the report and assist in passing the decree" (Proceedings of the Committee of Circuit at Kasimbazaar, 15 August 1772, quoted Susanne Hoeber Rudolph and Lloyd I Rudolph, "Living with Difference in India: Legal Pluralism and Legal Universalism in Historical Context," in *Religion and Personal Law in Secular India: A Call for Judgment*, ed. Gerald James Larson, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001, 390. This was initially known as Bengal Regulation Law 1772. In 1793, it was amended to Mohammedan Law and Hindu Law.

<sup>3</sup>Rudolph and Rudolph argued that Hastings and Jones “treated Sanskrit and Persian civilizations as equivalent to those of Greece and Rome. Their sense of being local rulers led them to do what they thought local rulers did, rely on the laws of the peoples under their authority to administer justice.” Susanne Hoeber Rudolph and Lloyd I Rudolph, “Living with Difference in India: Legal Pluralism and Legal Universalism in Historical Context,” in *Religion and Personal Law in Secular India: A Call for Judgment*, ed. Gerald James Larson (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 39.

<sup>4</sup>The changes in Muslim education initiated by Mayo and continued by Northbrook in 1871 demonstrate that the Raj was trying to reach out to Muslims. On 23 October 1882, the secretary of state told the viceroy, “if there be any real special grievances which affect the Muslim population which can be fairly remove by all means let it be done.”

<sup>5</sup>One example of such differences is the positions taken by Syed Ahmed Khan and Syed Akbar Husain Illhabadi (1846-1921) with respect to cooperation with the British Raj and participation in congressional politics. Syed Ahmed Khan also faced the wrath of coreligionists when he emphasized *ijtihad*, independent reasoning, as opposed to *taqlid*, adherence to the four authoritative schools of Islamic jurisprudence.

<sup>6</sup>The variation was more pronounced between the mostly North Indian articulation of Muslim identity and the syncretistic expression in Bengal. This variation is often described, in my judgment inaccurately, as the difference between *ashraf*, higher class, and *ailif/ atraf*, lower class, interpretations of Islam.

<sup>7</sup>The differences remained in subsequent years, even as late as 1940. Various drafts of the Lahore Resolution of 1940 also reflected these differences. The first draft of the resolution by the Premier of Punjab Sikandar Hayat Khan mentioned the presence of a Center to accommodate the two different entities. However, the later version omitted the reference. For two versions of the resolution, see Syed Sharfuddin Pirzada, *Evolution of Pakistan* (Karachi: Royal Book Co, 1995).

<sup>8</sup>Mushirul Hasan, *Legacy of a Divided Nation: India's Muslim Since Independence* (London: Hurst & Company, 1997) 35.

<sup>9</sup>Ayesha Jalal, “Exploding Communalism: The Politics of Muslim Identity in South Asia,” in *Nationalism, Democracy and Development: State and Politics in India*, ed. Suagata Basu and Ayesha Jalal (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999).

<sup>10</sup>These developments should be juxtaposed with the rise of Hindu Mahasabha and the RSS, two Hindu nationalist organizations in the 1920s. RSS mentor V. D. Savkar, propounded “two-nation” theory in his essay “Hindutva” in 1923, and Hindu Mahasabha leader Lala Rajpat Rai professed for the “partition of India into a Muslim India and a non-Muslim India” in 1924 (A.G. Noorani, “The Partition of India”, *The Frontline*, 18, no 26 (2002): 18.

<sup>11</sup>Mushirul Hasan, “Minority Identity and Its Discontents, Ayodhya and Its Aftermath,” *South Asia Bulletin* 14, no. 2 (1994): 26.

<sup>12</sup>Ayesha Jalal, Exploding Communalism: The Politics of Muslim Identity in South Asia, in *Nationalism, Democracy and Development: State and Politics in India*, eds. Suagata Basu and Ayesha Jalal (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999).

<sup>13</sup>The political developments leading to the partition are well documented: the opposition by the congress to the Government of India Act 1935 and its outright rejection of the Cabinet Mission's Plan of 16 May 1946 resulted in the partition of India. The congressional leadership's project to have a centralized state based in Delhi ran counter to acknowledging Muslims as a nation and according them a place in power sharing. Jinnah, on the other hand, miscalculated the end game of the Raj and failed to contain the ‘secessionist’ trend within his own party. Descriptions of these events abound, but for a revisionist history see Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), Mushirul Hasan, *Legacy of a Divided Nation: India's Muslim Since Independence* (London: Hurst & Company, 1997), and K.K. Aziz, *The Murder of History in Pakistan*, (Lahore: Vanguard, 1993).

<sup>14</sup>By Nehruvian India, I am referring to a period from 1947 to the 1980s. The beginning marks the ascendancy of Nehru as the policy maker of postcolonial India and ends when the congress lost its stature as a national party and was ousted from power. The policies pursued by the congress for almost four decades reflected the vision of Jawaharlal Nehru enunciated in the early days of independent India.

<sup>15</sup>For a detailed analysis of the Bangladesh movement see Ali Riaz, *State, Class and Military Rule: Political Economy of Military Rule in Bangladesh* (Dhaka: Nadi New Press, 1994).

<sup>16</sup>Vallabhbhai Patel's comments on 6 January 1948; *For a United India: Speeches of Sardar Patel, 1947-1950* (Delhi: Publications Division of Government of India, 1989), 64-9. Patel was the first home minister of India.

<sup>17</sup>The statist economy, a hallmark of Nehruvian policy, also had to be discarded in 1991, under pressure from IMF and the World Bank and as a consequence of the shift in the domestic political arena.

<sup>18</sup>The challenges to the legitimacy of the Nehruvian vision came both from within the congress during the Indira Gandhi era and without from various Hindu communalist parties. This did not go unnoticed by the Muslims in India. While the Indian congress was maneuvering to return to power on the religion card, Hindu militants popularized their call for a reassertion of Hindu identity. Muslims became victims of repeated riots, organized and engineered by Hindu militant activists in cooperation with law enforcement agencies.

<sup>19</sup>Even neorealist policy analysts like Stephen Cohen and fervent supporters of the military regime are acknowledging the need of such a transformation of Pakistan. Stephen Philip Cohen, “The Nation and the State of Pakistan,” *The Washington Quarterly* (Summer 2002): 109-122.

<sup>20</sup>Kamal A Mitra Chenoy, “Citizen's Inquiry Reports on Ayodhya and Its Aftermath,” *South Asia Bulletin* 14, no. 2 (1994): 1-9.

<sup>21</sup>Mohd. Zeyalul Haque, “The Muslim Psyche in a Twilight Terrain,” *The Nation and the World* 8, quoted in Mushirul Hasan, “Minority Identity and Its Discontents, Ayodhya and Its Aftermath,” *South Asia Bulletin* 14, no. 2 (1994): 29.

<sup>22</sup>Among Uttar Pradesh voters, Harijans were about twenty-one percent, Yadavs were about seventeen percent, and Muslims about nineteen percent. In 1991, a split among

these voters allowed the BJP to secure 211 out of 425 seats in the state house and form the government. But in 1993, the undeclared electoral alliance against the BJP brought their number of seats to 177. An alliance of Samajbadi Party (SP) and Bahujan Samajbadi Party (BSP) won 176 seats, as opposed to forty-two in 1991, and subsequently formed the government.