

(b)

Syed Mujawar Hussain Shah, *Religion and Politics in Pakistan (1972-88)*, Islamabad, Quaid-i-Azam Chair, National Institute of Pakistan Studies, Quaid-i-Azam University, 1996, xi+368 pp. Price: Rs.325. (H.B.).

It has been a permanent feature of Pakistani politics that traditional as well as secular leadership, to strengthen their bastions, draw legitimacy from religion. The roots of this psyche are embedded, in the fact that religion has always been the most powerful motivating symbol for the masses of subcontinent. The creation of Pakistan itself was the manifestation of this phenomenon. In post-partition era the legacy continued, whether it was ulema's traditional philosophy or Bhutto's socialism, each took refuge with the symbol of religion.

The author of the study under review has been a keen observer of political history of Pakistan; previously he has produced an excellent book on Federalism in Pakistan. The present study covers the period from 1972 to 1988, one of the most important periods of the political history of Pakistan. He has attempted to evaluate the use of religion by the politicians as a symbol for achieving political objectives. The study opens with a very interesting and informative introduction, in which author attempts to appreciate the major religio-political schools, which are significant in their ideologies as well as their street power. He includes in this discussion, Neo-Traditionalists, Traditionalists, Modernists, Secularists and the Pirs. He skillfully identifies the differences at the

ideological level between these groups and their behavior in the politics.

The first chapter of the book deals with the historical background. The chapter gives a comprehensive narrative from pre-partition till the period under study. The author traces the roots from Pakistan Movement. Rise of Jinnah as the sole leader of the Muslims of subcontinent and the opposition he faced from the orthodox ulema. The journey continues in the post-partition period, the early efforts to incorporate Islamic provisions in the constitutions of 1956 and 1962. The role played by the ulema and the religious parties during this period has also been duly stated. The anti-Ahmadiya movement when the masses were mobilised for the first time by using the symbol of religion. The politics entangled in religion! Author is successful in portraying the scenario to extend his argument.

After an insightful introduction and historical background comes the second chapter, "First General Elections." Here he critically examines the election manifestoes, strategies employed and the outcome of the most crucial episode of Pakistan's Political History. Author evaluates the dynamics of the political campaigns where both so called secular and Islamic parties harped on different religious symbols for the effective mobilisation of the masses. Though secular parties were able to out wit the Islamists in the elections, but could not reconcile with each other to form a government. The situation deteriorated into the debacle of 1971. The author rightly concludes, "Islam worked as a bogey of the ultra-orthodox as well as the secularists but failed to storm the tide of Bengali Nationalism." (p.120).

The trauma of 1971 shook the masses as well as the leadership of Pakistan. The third chapter analyses the different dimensions of the crisis of which the most grave was the "Identity Crisis" and the "Constitutional Vacuum." After painting the background, he evaluates the efforts by Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto to steer through the crisis. Bhutto adopted the policy of appeasement towards

ulema; recognising them as the most effective pressure group. The manoeuvring of religious parties forced Bhutto not only to amend Ahmadis out of Islam but also to undertake other measures to appease them such as establishing a Ministry for Religious Affairs. Interestingly author sees the appointment of Zia-ul-Haq as COAS in the same context. Such measures, indirectly helped ulema as these "injected a powerful Islamic overtone to Pakistani society," and above all gave the religious parties a realization of their strength that resulted in the staging of a powerful agitation movement to oust Bhutto in 1977.

The years old Pakistani dream to play a leading role in the Muslim World materialised for the first time under Bhutto. That is the theme of the next chapter which deals with the role played by Bhutto in the re-orientation of Pakistan in the Muslim World. Religion was used to explore Islam-oriented avenues in foreign affairs. The Islamic summit of 1974, was the culmination point in these efforts. Bhutto was successful in drawing legitimacy from the Muslim World for going Nuclear under the banner of "Islamic Bomb." These new avenues explored by Bhutto, views the author, were not only to benefit in the foreign affairs arena but also to "safeguard him against the onslaught of the religious scholars." (p. 195)

All the efforts by Bhutto to appease the religious section of society ended in smoke. The author in the next chapter probes through the general elections of 1977. Religion was again the sole support for both the ulema and the secular. PPP's electoral victory in elections of 1977 resulted in a mass movement of PNA accusing massive rigging by the ruling party. The ulema again invoked the religious symbols against Bhutto, baptising their movement as a bid for "Nizam-i-Mustafa." Ironically It was Bhutto who had for the first time attempted to translate Islam practically in government's policy decisions both at home and the international fora. The citadel of

democracy was demolished in a blink of eye by the Charriots of Army led by Zia-ul-Haq in 1977.

The chapter six is a detailed treatment of the process of Islamisation by Zia, appropriately titled "politics of Islam." Author has critically evaluated the reforms by Zia, in every sphere bringing out the real essence perched behind the reform package. It was just an effort to legitimize his tyrannical rule. Author seems justified in concluding that the ultimate failure of Zia proved that "...in Pakistan no other [sic.] system other than democracy would survive."(p.296)

After portraying a comprehensive picture of the inter play of religion and politics in Pakistan, author sums up and concludes his argument in the last chapter. Islam has only been used by the politicians and ulema as a political symbol to draw legitimacy from the masses. Author rightly comments "...no attempt was made to provide the corresponding strength and revitalization to the principles of Islam as a radical and revolutionary message transforming the socio-political aspects of the society". (p.322) His conclusion firstly recommends a reformation at socio-economic level that would save Islam from the symbol-mongers. Secondly, he suggests restructuring of education system through a synthesis of Islam and contemporary requirements.

The book, a commendable work is a welcome addition to the existing material on the topic. The author must be congratulated upon producing such a well researched and insightful study.

Ahmad Ali