

Pakistan as a Nation State and Flag Bearer of Islam

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Abstract

The tragic events of September eleventh all of a sudden appear to have sucked radical Islam into the centre of the contemporary political discourse. Any attempt to make sense of radical Islam and its rise to global significance has perhaps to begin with two intricately linked cases: Afghanistan and Kashmir. Both have played a seminal role in defining the contours of global *jihad* and also one's in which Pakistan has been a central actor. This thesis sets out to examine the role of Islam in shaping the contours of Pakistan's foreign policy discourse by locating it in the political-historical matrix of the Indian Subcontinent in the 1920's, which opens up an unusual window of enquiry. Specifically, I address two questions: the first question concerns the possibility of indicating the crucial historical elements from whence Islam emerged as the primary trope for Pakistan's worldview. This entails looking at process of colonial knowledge formation coupled with the advent of mass politics that played a key role in the crystallization of identities often defined by religion. These process at work since the late nineteenth century eventually culminated in the bloody partition of 1947 and thus constitute a crucial vantage point for making sense of much of the contemporary political discourse of the region. Thus, much of Pakistan's quest for positioning itself as a champion of Islam stems from this particular historical matrix.

This serves as a crucial explanatory variable in answering my second question of what made Afghanistan and Kashmir into becoming definitive for global radical political Islam that lucidly illustrate Pakistan's commitment to promoting Pan-Islamism and also constitute South Asia and subsequently the world's defining experience with 'Islamic terror'.

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Introduction

The question of radical Islam has assumed compelling significance in the shadow of the horrific events of Nine Eleven. Samuel Huntington's grim pronouncement that a 'clash of civilizations' was imminent and unavoidable has acquired renewed vigour and popular currency. Any attempt to make sense of radical Islam and its rise to global significance has perhaps to begin with two intricately linked cases: Afghanistan and Kashmir. Both the cases played a seminal role in defining the contours of global *jihad*. They are part of the larger jigsaw of a globalised radical Islam, in which Pakistan has been something of a key player. But the deep and distressing irony concerns the well thought-out role played by the secular and very self-consciously Modern West, in the rise of extremist forces within Islam.

My attempt in the thesis would be not only to identify the play of Islam in shaping Pakistan's foreign policy discourse, but to also argue that it's meaning and implications are to be grasped in reference to its peculiar locus in the political-historical matrix of the Indian Subcontinent in the 1920's. Such an investigation, I like to believe, would open an unusual window to examine the vital ingredients of global Islamic *jihad* in the early moments of their formation. Specifically, I shall seek to address two questions.

The first question concerns the possibility of indicating the crucial historical elements from whence Islam emerged as the primary trope for Pakistan's worldview, and to clarify as to what imparts enduring vitality to certain historical developments. And that entails theoretical sifting from academic-literary discourses concerning shifts and direction of long-term historical impulses in late nineteenth-early twentieth century: namely, objectification-

fixation of identities set in motion by the Colonial census examined with such scholarly care by Arjun Appadurai¹ and Bernard Cohn². Mass mobilization by the Indian National Congress during the Non-cooperation-Khilafat movement (1920's) and during electoral campaigns (1930's), in the subsequent debate-mobilization around the issue of communal representation worked to make religion into a galvanising force. It culminated in the bloody partition of India (1947). Works of Urvashi Bhutalia³, Gyanendra Pandey⁴ and Begum Anis Kidwai⁵ provide a sensitive access to its meaning. Kidwai's account is a firsthand testimony of suffering and hope in the midst of freedom and partition. Pandey and Bhutalia posit the 'memory of partition' as the vantage point to understand contemporary political discourse and politics of identities, mimicking as it were the sub-continent of the 1920's.

The first question furnishes a crucial explanatory variable for addressing my second question: What made Afghanistan and Kashmir into becoming definitive for global radical political Islam? The primary focus of international relations discourse on partition memory - - Oliver Roy⁶, Aushotosh Varshney⁷ and John Esposito⁸ to name a few – has tended to be somewhat narrow, confined to a narrative of the political. For instance Esposito looks at the partition primarily in terms of a new constitutional- political arrangement. Varshney's

¹ Arjun Appadurai-Number in Colonial Imagination in *Carol A. Breckenridge and Peter Van der Veer (ed.)- Orientalism and the Post-Colonial Predicament*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994.

² Bernard S. Cohn- *An Anthropologist among the Historians and Other Essays*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1989.

³ Urvashi Bhutalia- *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India*, Penguin Books, New Delhi, 1998

⁴ Gyanendra Pandey- *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History in India*, Cambridge University Press, United Kingdom, 2001.

⁵ Begum Anis Kidwai- *Azadi Ki Chhaon Mein*.

⁶ Oliver Roy-Islam and the resistance in Afghanistan, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1986.

Oliver Roy- *Globalised Islam: The Search for a new Ummah*, Hurst and Company, London, 2004.

⁷ Aushotosh Varshney- India, Pakistan and Kashmir: Antinomies of Nationalism, *Asian Survey*, Vol. 31, No.11, November 1991.

argument though lucid and sound so far as it concerns the political-military quagmire in Kashmir, fails to clarify as to why political assertion acquired a definitive religious edge.

The question as to why political struggle in Kashmir acquired an Islamic edge is addressed by Mridu Rai⁹ in terms of a ‘century of misrule’ – virtual exclusion of Muslims from political-economic benefits -- by its Hindu Raja. Rai’s intervention, pointed and relevant, fails however like most other academic interventions to look at the counter-discourse of the Kashmiri Pundit community; a very small minority whose ancient presence in the valley has been systematically cleansed. In this context the work of Reeta C. Tremblay¹⁰ stands out. She looks at Kashmiri history from the vantage of the politically intimidated-marginalized Pundit community.

At the level of plain empirical details, my intent is to collate evidence pertaining to the role of the West in the emergence of radical Islam. Such evidence largely comprises journalistic reportage. Steve Coll’s work represents perhaps the most detailed and meticulous exercise in this genre: analytical collation of classified intelligence reports, interviews, and the author’s personal experience of the Afghan conflict.¹¹ Surprisingly this kind of enquiry has not been considered worthy of serious academic attention. A notable exception in this regard has been the work of Andrew Hartman, who in addition to declassified intelligence and media reportage, has used court testimonies to put together the varied details of the role played by

⁸ John L. Esposito- Islam and Politics, Syracuse University Press, 3rd edition, 1991.

⁹ Mridu Rai- Hindu Rulers, Muslim Subjects: Islam, Rights and the History of Kashmir, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 2004.

¹⁰ Reeta Chowdhari Tremblay- Nation, Identity and the Intervening Role of the State: A Study of the Secessionist Movement in Kashmir, *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 69, No.4, 1996-1997.

¹¹ Steve Coll- Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the C.I.A, Afghanistan and Bin Laden, From the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001, Penguin Books, London, 2004.

the U.S in fostering Islamic Radicalism.¹² Hartman's work unusual and insightful, does not however adequately attend to its deeper implications of radical Islam for South Asia in general, and Kashmir in particular.

A decisive turning point for the trajectory of Islamic fundamentalism was the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (1979) was. Unqualified support and moral endorsement of the West -- as part of its total ideological war against the evil Soviet Empire -- enabled Pakistan to groom an entire generation of *jihadi* fighters willing to kill and die for the cause of radical Islam. Pakistan, buoyed by the heady triumph of the *mujahidin* (1989) against the might of the Soviet Union and flush with money, munitions and men trained to kill and die, decided that the moment was opportune to launch what it saw as a struggle to liberate Muslims in Kashmir from the oppressive rule of *kafir* Hindus; and thus avenge its humiliating defeat in 1971. Strategists in Islamabad were confident that by riding on the Pan-Islamic wave, they would be able to install an Islamist client regime in Kabul. The calculation was that this would not only win sympathy in the Islamic world, but also secure Pakistan's strategic backyard against Pushtun ethnic-nationalist dreams of independence and merger with Afghanistan.¹³ The grand certainty was that it would provide Pakistan with strategic depth against Hindu India and a bridgehead to Muslims in Central Asia.

Two seminal time frames in shaping radical Islam shall be the focus of my paper. One, the war in Afghanistan (1979-1989) as the launch-site for global Islamic *jihad*. Two, the subsequent wave of 'Islamic terrorism' in Kashmir (beginning 1989, peaking mid 1990's) as

¹² Andrew Hartman- 'The Red Template': U.S Policy in Soviet Occupied Afghanistan, *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 23, No.3, 2002, Page 480.

¹³ Rubin R. Barnett- Afghanistan Under the Taliban, *Current History*, February 1999, Page 84.

the defining moment for global Islamic *jihad*. The definitive detail in this context is the fierce endorsement by Pakistan of Hizb-ul-Mujahidin and its advocacy of merger with Pakistan and other ‘Islamic’ causes against Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (J.K.L.F) which advocated independence¹⁴.

To address the questions outlined above, I seek to drawing upon a variety of source materials ranging from published academic works (books and journal articles) to journalistic dispatches, reports of human rights organisations. For Afghanistan, Helsinki Watch and Amnesty International comprise the only available reportage on the human rights situation. However, one has to use these two sources on Afghanistan with circumspection in view of the fact that the conception and execution of the entire reportage is from the vantage of the ‘West’ and in an intensely polarised ideological milieu. I like to believe the varied range of source material I have used would enable me to combine and contrast academic rigor against the common sense underscored in everyday popular discourses. That I do think would help to qualify and nuance and arguments as also to whittle away the notion that academic work has no choice but to ignore the seemingly banal and every day of subaltern life.

I also make use in a limited sense of certain declassified C.I.A intelligence reports. I am acutely aware that they have to be used with great circumspection given CIA’s deep involvement in the rise of irredentist radical Islam. Hence for instance, while providing intricate details on Pakistan’s role in nurturing Islamists forces the role of America and its allies including China is silently passed over. Journalistic dispatches and human rights

¹⁴ Suba Chandran - The Hizbul Mujahideen, *Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies*, New Delhi, 14 August, 2000, http://www.ipcs.org/Kashmir_articles2.jsp?action=showView&kValue=880&issue=1012&status=article&mod=a

reportage furnish in this regard a rare and valuable resource. Academic discourse seeks to fill the void but largely in a descriptive sense without getting into its larger implications. I would like to move towards that. Available primary source material is scarce. Apart from the limited range within which declassified intelligence reports are cast, the highly sensitive and implicated nature of this exercise makes every bit of it suspect.

I hope to address this problem in two ways. One, incorporate in my research interviews that I conducted in Bradford and London with Kashmiri separatist groups: Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (J.K.L.F) and pro-Pakistan political activists such as Lord Nazir Ahmed. Both constituencies are difficult to interact and engage with. Their voices are often part of reportage and political rhetoric but rarely find place in academic discourse. I believe these voices would allow me to draw on counter-discourses thereby impart a certain depth and nuance to my argument. I have taken the liberty of weaving excerpts from the interviews into the text, rather than putting them down in the standard question and answer format.

My intent is also to utilize my experience of working on certain related issues in Pakistan and Afghanistan. For me that experience remains an unusual window towards issues and discourses of this dissertation. Many ideas and impulses that have led me to the subject under discussion emerged during interaction and exchange with people I met in the business of everyday living.

The dissertation comprises three broad sections. **The first section** sets out the larger historical matrix amidst which identities in the sub-continent came to be forged and the basic

tone took shape for the emergence of the Pakistani as a 'nation-state' committed to the pursuit of a Pan-Islamic agenda. **The second section** focuses on Afghanistan (1979-1989) in order to clarify the relationship between Pakistan's Islamic pursuits and the inescapable play between regional and larger international power centres. **The third section** dwells on the contentious issue of Kashmir (primarily 1989 to mid 1990's) so as to bring into sharp focus the defining historical moment of global Islamic *Jihad*.

1. The Call of Past

“I call out to Warris Shah today, to speak out from the grave
 And open a fresh a new page from the book of love.
 A daughter of Punjab had wept once and he wrote a million dirges (pages).
 Today a million daughters weep and look up to Warris Shah
 So please do speak...”¹⁵

The above lines suffused with the sorrow and pain of partition of India (1947) in which nearly 15 million were forced to migrate, 12 million rendered homeless and a million¹⁶ were brutally done to death, are from a poem penned by the renowned Punjabi poetess Amrita Pritam. Statistics though important in giving a seemingly precise sense of scale for whatever happens, tend to conceal the prevalence of certain elements in culture and identity discourses that shape and nurture the way large complex social-political entities behave, organize, or disrupt and brutalize life.

The discourse on international relations tends for the most part to entirely overlook such enduring historical cultural elements. My attempt in this chapter would be to fill this gap a little by teasing out from historical accounts and cultural discourses of the period 1920 to 1947, the presence and meaning of such formative elements. The basic proposition I would seek to argue for is that the period 1920 to 1947 furnishes the critical key for understanding the nature and meaning of contemporary political divides, as also for making sense of self-perceptions of identities nurtured by them.

¹⁵ Amrita Pritam- Ode To Warris Shah

¹⁶ Radha Kumar- The Troubled History of Partition, *Foreign Affairs*, Volume 76, No.1, January/February 1997, Page 26.

Play between the Constitutional, Institutional and Communal

Certain political developments that began to unfold in the 1920's come to be definitive in shaping the politics of identity in the Indian sub-continent; in particular use of techniques of mass mobilisation by the Indian National Congress during the Non-Cooperation and Khilafat movements in the early 1920's, and during electoral campaigns in the 1930's. Organizationally, the Congress during this period had to cope with new kind of developments. A new stream of leadership comprising Baba Raghav Das, Swami Sahajanand Saraswati and Rahul Sankritiyan emerged. They invoked a religious idiom and came from a different kind of cultural milieu: religious schools and temple-shrines sponsored *akharas* (gymnasiums).

Religion became a crucial galvanizing force in the debate and mobilization around the issue of religion based communal representation. Muslim League, an organization established to protect Muslim interests, challenged the relevance and fairness of the principle of one-person one vote. Hence its campaign to secure enhanced representation for Muslims through separate religion based communal electorates. The attempt of the Indian National Congress to address this charged and sensitive issue through a committee and its Nehru Report (1928), seeking abolition of communal electorates and establishment of a secular state providing firm guarantees of equal rights for all, failed to bridge the rupture between Hindus and Muslims. Muslim League's argument was that Muslims being a minority would always remain outnumbered by the Hindu majority. And that meant a position of permanent subservience for the Muslims of India. The British cleverly played upon this sentiment and granted separate religion based electorates for Muslims; thereby helping crystallization of issues around

religion as a means to diffuse and contain the formidable nationalist challenge posed by the Indian National Congress.¹⁷

Certain modern modes of classification introduced by Colonial rule served to further complicate the situation. For instance, the Census operations as part of the larger Colonial project of consolidating useful instrumental knowledge worked to solidify, as Bernard Chin and Arjun Appadurai have meticulously demonstrated, identities by quantifying-categorizing people into neat categories. Bernard Cohn's study is most instructive for its comprehensive focus on the process of census taking and the ways in which that shaped identities and the social structure of India. Cohn opines that the census operations in grafting new colonial-modern categories of classification-enumeration also worked to objectify social-cultural discourses and harden social boundaries. 'Indian culture' thus came to be represented and seen as a collection-collation of certain measurable social facts and practices and hence also the unqualified acceptance of caste and religion as the essential basis of Indian society.¹⁸

Arjun Appadurai's work on enumeration signifies in this context an insightful intervention. He begins by formulating the basic crucial question concerning the meaning of numbers in the Colonial imagination. Numbers, according to Appadurai, came to play in the Colonial scheme of things a complex role, they served simultaneously to exoticise the Colonised and as a justificatory framework to discipline and manipulate. Numbers were used as an instrument to represent India as diverse, chaotic, and inherently unstable. And the only way to create some semblance of order was through aggregation and classification in numerical

¹⁷ David Page- *Prelude to Partition- The Indian Muslims and the Imperial System of Control 1920-1932*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1999, Page 260.

¹⁸ *Supra* Note 2, Page 248-250.

terms.¹⁹ Perhaps his most fundamental proposition in this context concerns the role of Orientalist scholarship in essentializing the Hindu-Muslim difference as irreconcilable opposition, subsequently institutionalised as separate political representation. Thus, numbers became the ground for imagining oneself in contradistinction to the ‘other’, forging in the process identities along lines of caste and religion: the crucial ingredient in the politics of mass mobilisation that commenced in the 1920’s. One large and critical shift all that entailed concerns the way *jati* (caste) connections henceforth came to be reoriented. Prior to the Colonial reordering, *jati* was firmly entrenched in local society and economy. Under Colonial rule, *jati* connections were shaken loose and recast as pan-Indian identities, often in opposition, in some basic sense, to the ‘other’²⁰

Nation States and Religion as a Marker of Identity

Communal sentiment and polarised political mobilization eventually culminated in the partition of India (1947). For millions, particularly women, partition was a most traumatic experience. Three works stand out in this context as deeply instructive. All three, significantly, arise from distinctly different traditions. Begum Anis Kidwai’s book provides a moving firsthand account of partition. Gayanendra Pandey, who belongs to the subaltern school of history, provides a scholarly analysis of partition and its remembrance. The work of Urvashi Bhutalia takes an impassioned look at the gendered history of Partition. Despite striking differences of method and approach, they demonstrate the subtle and deep internalisation communal categories in the aftermath of the partition. Invariably, the terms ‘Hindu’ and ‘Muslim’ began to be equated with India and Pakistan respectively.

¹⁹*Supra* Note 1, Page 319 and 335.

²⁰*Ibid*, Page 327-332

Anis Kidwai, in her ironically titled *Azadi Ki Chaoon Mein* (In the Shadow of Freedom), reports that Muslim refugees migrating to Pakistan and housed in camps at *Purana Qila* (Old Fort, Delhi) were treated as the responsibility of the Pakistani government.²¹

Gayanendra Pandey restates this point in terms of the larger political discourse in the sub-continent, and the newly acquired centrality of religion. He makes the significant point that as a result of partition religious identity -- Sikh, Muslim or Hindu -- came to be redefined not just in relation to the 'devious other', but all other lines of affiliation like caste, occupation, and language were subsumed under religion as the definitive overarching identity. Hence Pandey's severe castigation of historical literature, which, he points out, has for a long time treated partition merely in terms of certain political-constitutional arrangement that exercised little lasting impact on Indian society.²² The questions he raises are crucial for historical understanding. For instance: How does one place people's memories of partition -- suffering of innocents, in particular of women raped and abducted, families separated, of children unwanted -- within what Gayanendra Pandey calls the vexed question of memory and history.²³

Bhutalia seeks to grapple with this question by looking at all that happened during the recovery of abducted women undertaken by the states of Pakistan and India. The process of recovery was also coloured by a strong religious tinge. For Bhutalia, the most significant fact in this context is that abducted women were not given the right to choose and decide. Their

²¹ *Supra* Note 5

²² *Supra* Note 4, Page 16.

²³ *Ibid*

opinion simply did not matter. She points out that the rightful home for Hindu and Sikh women could only be India, and for Muslim women, Pakistan. Thus, abducted women were denied the right to choose their country of residence; the nation states of India and Pakistan on their behalf made the choice, on the basis their religious affiliation.²⁴

The argument I seek to formulate proceeds from the ground of partition memory sketched by the works referred above. My attempt is to show that the ‘memory’ of partition provides a meaningful vantage for understanding certain critical developments in the sub-continent. Specifically, it gives us access to the intricate way in which Pakistan’s foreign policy discourse is firmly anchored within the matrix of partition memory.

1.3 The Idea of Pakistan

Amidst the trauma and horror of disruption and violence unleashed by the partition, India and Pakistan chose to embark on two very different ways of life. India chose to build a nation state within a democratic and secular constitutional-political framework. Pakistan formally proclaimed itself to be an Islamic Republic (1956). One could say this formal declaration marks the continuation and restatement of a certain political discourse and sensibility that first came to the fore in 1920’s.

At this point certain clarifications seem necessary. Radical Islam as we know it today was simply not around in the early years of Pakistan. Nonetheless, hard-line Islamic groups such as the Jamat-i-Islami began to vociferously demand that the state of Pakistan be based upon

²⁴*Supra* Note 3, Page 179.

the *Shariat* and serve the cause of Islam. This detail acquires a telling ironic dimension in view of Jama'at's vehement opposition to the creation of Pakistan because nationalism and Islam were seen as antithetical. Quran, according to the Jama'at ideologues, did not permit creation of boundaries that would divide the *Ummah*, the indivisible community of believers²⁵. Long before Pakistan adopted its first constitution in 1956, Islamist groups were able to make their impact felt in the political realm. Consider for instance the Objective Resolution of 1949 adopted by the Constitutional Assembly. The preamble, which defines the identity of the Pakistani State unto this day, thus declares its theological basis: "Sovereignty over the entire universe belongs to the God Almighty alone, and the authority which he has delegated to the state of Pakistan, through its people for being exercised within the limits prescribed by Him is a sacred trust." ²⁶ Not surprisingly therefore, Islam also became the bedrock of Pakistan's foreign policy. According to article 40 of the constitution: "The state shall endeavour to preserve and strengthen fraternal relations among *Muslim countries based on Islamic unity*."²⁷[Emphasis added].

1.4 'Partition all over Again'

The crucial turning point in Pakistani politics happened however, in 1971. The 'loss of East Pakistan' inevitably touched innermost raw sensitivities. Many in India saw it as negation of the 'two nation theory' based on the belief that religion furnished the enduring basis of unity. In Pakistan it was seen not just as a shift in geo-political equations, but also as evidence of the lethal threat from 'Hindu' India determined to engineer the destruction of Pakistan. Thus commenced a steady shift towards radical pan-Islamic agendas. Nasir Islam's work offers in

²⁵ Nasir Islam - Islam and National Identity: The Case of Pakistan and Bangladesh, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol.13, No.1, February 1981, Page 59.

²⁶ Stephen Phillip Cohen- The Idea of Pakistan, Vanguard Publications, 2005, Lahore, Pakistan, Page 168.

²⁷ Foreign Office Yearbook 2004-05, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Pakistan, Page 8.

this regard a historically and empirically sound observation. He points out that the ‘loss’ of Bangladesh and defeat in the 1971 war dramatically altered the balance of power within the establishment in favour of the hard-line Islamists.²⁸

Ironically the shift towards hard line radical Islam began with the rise of Z.A Bhutto, very much a liberal in his personal life. But he realized that ‘political Islam’ could be a very potent political instrument. Bhutto’s Pakistan People’s Party rode to power on a wave of populism inspired by an alliance between socialism and Islam under the banner of Islamic Socialism in the aftermath of Pakistan Army’s surrender to India. Unwittingly perhaps, that set the stage for rabid Islamization subsequently unleashed by General Zia-ul-Haq. As part of his Islamist adventure Bhutto undertook a range of measures to demonstrate his commitment to Islam: prohibiting alcohol, declaring Friday as the weekly holiday, declaring the Ahmadi’s to be a non-Muslim sect and projecting Pakistan as the foremost promoter of the Organization of Islamic Conference (O.I.C).²⁹ These developments mark the replacement of the “Sandhurst trained, whisky drinking”³⁰ generals by Islamic enthusiasts. Islam became the supreme instrument to establish legitimacy in an ethnically, regionally and linguistically divided country.

1.5 Allah and the Army

Zia-ul-Haq, the obscure army general who seized power (1977) and sent Bhutto, the elected Prime Minister to the gallows, intensified with unparalleled zeal the process of Islamization

²⁸*Supra* Note 25, Page 59.

²⁹*Supra* Note 27, Page 170.

³⁰*Supra* Note 14.

begun by Bhutto. He forged an alliance with the right wing Jama'at -i-Islami³¹ and consolidated a rigid Islamic worldview for all aspects of personal and collective life.

General Zia's Islamic enterprise was informed by a grand strategic vision to make Pakistan the nerve centre and leader of a pan-Islamic consolidation. Pakistan's involvement, first in Afghanistan against the Soviets and later in Kashmir against India, starkly underlines Pakistan's determination to wield political Islam as an instrument of state policy. The lingering memory of partition was thus reinforced and as it were, redirected to demonise India as the clever conspirator bent on destroying Pakistan. The breakaway of East Pakistan and its emergence as Bangladesh was thus internalised in pervasive and deep ways within the trope of religion and inevitability of religious conflict: Bangladesh as the triumph of Indian-Hindu conspiracy against Pakistan-Islam.

This kind of disposition is starkly expressed in the story of the Indian pilot published in state sponsored textbooks. The story – “The Enemy Pilot” – is about a captured Indian pilot, ‘presumably a Hindu’. “He had been taught never to have pity on Muslims; always bother Muslims to forget freedom and Hindus to please their Kali by slaughtering innocent people of other faiths at her feet...India conspired with the Hindus of Bengal and succeeded in spreading hate among the Bengalis about West Pakistan and finally attacked East Pakistan in December 1971, thus causing the break-up of East and West Pakistan.”³²

Thus, education came to serve as one of the most vital instruments of state policy to create a new kind of citizen forged on the firm bedrock of Islam. General Zia's speech to the National

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² A.H Nayyar and Ahmad Salim (ed.) - The Subtle Subversion: The State Of Textbooks in Pakistan, 2002, Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Islamabad, Page 37.

Conference on Education (1977) merits in this context close reading: "Our curriculum must ensure that our children are brought up educated as good Pakistanis and good Muslims. They must imbibe the lofty principles of Islam." ³³ It underscores the idea of citizenship confined only to Muslims, reared upon the 'right' kind of Islamic values.

As the Cold war turned into an armed conflict in the Afghan theatre, Pakistan grasped it as an opportune moment to launch its grand strategy of positioning itself as the flag bearer of Islam in the Muslim world and gain thereby political, moral and strategic advantage over India. The Pashtun General Akhtar Abdur Rehman Khan is believed to have firmly convinced Zia of the perfect "convergence of religious, political and strategic gains"³⁴ if Pakistan were to don the mantle of Islam and fight the atheistic Communists in Afghanistan. For General Zia the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan came as something of a divine reprieve. Prior to the invasion, Zia's military regime felt acutely isolated in the midst of popular resentment aroused by the execution of Bhutto. Astutely aware of the high strategic significance the West assigned to defeating the Soviets in Afghanistan, General Zia and the Army establishment of Pakistan were quick to offer their services. America saw nothing wrong in financing and promoting religious fanaticism so long as it served to bleed and destroy the Soviet Union. Pakistan simply seized upon it as a rare chance to fulfil its grand dream of leadership of the Islamic world and settling in its favour the 'unfinished agenda' of partition for which Afghanistan was the ideal testing ground.

³³ *Ibid*, Page 19.

³⁴ Angelo Rasanayagam- Afghanistan: A Modern History, I.B Taurius, London, 2005, Page 102.

2. The Afghan *Jihad*

“We have a common task -- Afghanistan, the U.S.A and the civilised world -- to launch a joint struggle against fundamentalism. If fundamentalism comes to Afghanistan, the war will continue for many years. Afghanistan will turn into a centre of world smuggling for narcotic drugs. Afghanistan will be turned into a centre for terrorism.”³⁵

The above quoted poignant and prophetic lines are from a speech of the then President of Afghanistan Dr. Najibullah in March. They are also a reminder of the drastic changes in the Afghan political-social fabric set in motion by the Soviet invasion and the somewhat perverse response to it of the West. This chapter sets out to explore the nature of *jihad* (holy war) against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. The proposition I seek to argue is that the seed of Pan-Islamic radicalism was sown and nurtured on a scale and intensity unimaginable at any time in the past during the conflict in Afghanistan. Several factors made this possible. United States saw in it a rare opening to punish the Soviets and level scores for its defeat in Vietnam. Pakistan was keen to use it to as an opportunity to establish itself as the flag bearer of Islam; a position that would give it decided advantage over India. The congruence of clever calculation from very different perspectives was truly incredible. America and its allies would provide arms, training, money and diplomatic cover. Pakistan would provide the territory, fighters and the requisite emotional-ideological mobilisation under the banner of Islam. The Americans were immensely pleased that a decisive battle against the Soviets could be fought without the loss of American lives. Pakistan was happy that American might and money could be harnessed to the cause of Islam.

³⁵ Victoria Schofield- *Afghan Frontier: Feuding and Fighting in Central Asia*, Taurisparke Paperbacks, London, 2003, Page 322.

To demarcate the extraordinary fusion of clever calculation and huge temptations I rely in addition to a small body of academic writing, primarily on journalistic and human rights reportage. At this point one should perhaps ask the question as to what of the original calculus has come to endure and stay. True, the Soviet Union has been defeated, its very existence erased without loss of American lives. But the fear of the evil empire has been replaced by a new and no less lethal enemy: and a host of fundamentalist-extremist groups determined to kill and die in the name of Islam. The lasting result of American success, albeit entirely unintended, seems to be the creation of a new lethal brand of violent radicals.

2.1 Background

Islamic Radicalism as we see it today could be said to be an illegitimate offspring of cold war politics. Direct US involvement in Afghanistan began as covert support to the *mujahidin* fighting the pro-Soviet regime of Nur Muhammad Taraki. That induced in the words of Carter's National Security Advisor Brezenski 'a Soviet Military intervention' (25th Dec.1979) ³⁶and that opened the way for the rise of radical pan-Islamism. General Zia-ul-Haq of Pakistan seized it as the moment of destiny to position Islamabad as the custodian of Islam.

Zia's proclaimed: "We have earned the right to have [in Kabul] a power which is friendly towards us... we will not permit a return to the pre-war situation marked by Indian and Soviet influence and Afghan claims on our own territory. *The new power will really be Islamic, a part of the Islamic renaissance which, you will see, will someday extend itself to the Soviet*

³⁶ *Supra* Note12, Page 470.

Muslims.”³⁷[Emphasis added]. Ahmad Rashid’s observation is apposite. Zia whipped up the tempting dream of creating a ‘sacred Sunni space between a Christian Russia, Shia (and thus heretic) Iran and an infidel Hindustan’.³⁸ President Reagan, driven by very different kind of anxieties and temptations concerning the spread of the ‘red peril’ was more than pleased to provide 3.2 billion dollars, arms and diplomatic cover for the Afghan war, channelled through Islamabad. And thus Pakistan became the principal instrument and political-ideological resource for a new kind of warfare to be conducted by unaccountable non-state actors.

Strategists in Islamabad were confident that riding the Pan-Islamic wave they would manage to install a client regime in Kabul. The calculation was grand and sweeping: win sympathy of the Islamic world, secure a bridge to the five ‘Muslim’ Central Asian Republics, insulate Pakistan’s strategic backyard against Pushtun nationalist dreams of independence or merger with Afghanistan³⁹, and above all else provide strategic depth against India. The prospect of being hedged in by India and hostile Afghanistan supported by Soviet military might, caused nothing short of a nightmare for the Pakistani establishment.⁴⁰

Ironically, Pakistan’s drift towards fundamentalist political Islam began under the stewardship of modernist-liberal Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, in the shadow of the humiliating defeat and breakaway of East Pakistan (1971). He decided to play the Islamic card against Daoud’s nationalist regime in Kabul. Secret military camps were set up to train about 5000 Afghans recruited from among right wing Islamists, unhappy with Daoud’s social reform policies.

³⁷ *Supra* Note 11, Page 175.

³⁸ Ahmed Rashid- Taliban: Islam, Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia, I.B Taurius&Co. Ltd, New York, 2000, Page 195.

³⁹ *Supra* Note 13, Page 84.

⁴⁰ Dr. Rifaat Hussain- Pakistan’s Afghan Policy in *The Anatomy of a Conflict: Afghanistan and 9/11*, Roli Books, 2002, New Delhi, Page 183.

They were the first to be sent into action to carry out armed incursions in eastern Afghanistan around mid-1975.⁴¹ However it was the American covert operations against the Soviet invasion with the fervent support of oil rich Saudi Arabia and its fundamentalist clerics that propped up extremist Islamists on an unprecedented scale. The ferocious logic of the anti Soviet American undertaking is lucidly recorded in John G. Merriam's argument that for the 'free world' the supreme "need is greater than ever for maximizing Mujahideen effectiveness."⁴²

2.2 Sources of support for the Afghan Jihad

2.2.1 United States and its Allies

The Afghan war produced some peculiar alliances across ideological divides. China avidly joined the US in support of radical Islamists to defeat the Soviets. In fact they took the first step by opening political consultations with US on Afghanistan in the summer of 1978. A week after the Soviet invasion *Daily Telegraph* reported: "China is flying large supplies of arms and ammunition to the insurgents in Afghanistan...scores of Chinese instructors have arrived at Shola-e-Javed camps."⁴³ Around the same time a C.I.A functionary exulted: "buying bullets from the Chinese to shoot the Russians?"⁴⁴ The Sino-Soviet rift coupled and Islamists mobilisation provided a convenient setting for forging a powerful anti-Soviet nexus.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, Page 185

⁴² John G. Merriam- Arms Shipments to the Afghan Resistance, in *Grant M. Farr and John G. Merriam (ed.) - Afghan Resistance: The Politics of Survival, Westview Special Studies in International Relations*, Westview Press, London, 1984, Page 98.

⁴³ Raja Anwar- The Tragedy of Afghanistan: A first Hand Account, Vesro, London, 1988, Page 233-234.

⁴⁴ *Supra* Note 12, Page 66.

C.I.A (Central Intelligence Agency) was quick to take charge by extending financial patronage and arms training. Funds were regularly disbursed to the *mujahidin* – branded as terrorists after nine eleven -- by I.S.I (Inter Services Intelligence) of the Pakistani army. Its office in Islamabad functioned as the largest C.I.A outpost. Support for the *mujahidin* was generous and comprehensive: humanitarian aid, weapons training camps in North Western Frontier region of Pakistan. Arms and technology given to the *mujahidin* was of cutting edge quality: C-4 plastic explosives, wire guided anti-tank missiles, sniper rifles to carry out assassinations and the highly sophisticated stinger (U.S) and blowpipe (U.K) missiles. By 1987 the annual U.S military assistance to the *mujahidin* soared to \$700 million, most of it was allocated to the notorious *Hizb-i-Islami* headed by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, hailed by the C.I.A for inflicting on the Soviets maximum punishment on the battlefield.⁴⁵ He was also hugely favoured by the Pakistani ISI but for a very different reason. Hekmatyar belonged to a minor Pushtun clan and was therefore seen as easier to control⁴⁶. Funds were channelled through dedicated Swiss bank accounts⁴⁷: Bank of Credit and Commerce International headed by the Pakistani banker Aga Hassan Abedi⁴⁸. Another favoured channel of transferring funds was through *hawala*⁴⁹. C.I.A also provided funds to Osama Bin Laden for constructing the Khost tunnel complex for arms storage, medical and training refuge for the *mujahidin*.⁵⁰

Egypt, which had built up sizeable reserves of Soviet weapons, became a vital supply source; a fact publicly acknowledged by President Anwar Sadat, eager to raise his standing in the

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, Page 119-120.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, Page.

⁴⁷ *Supra* Note 38, Page 476-479.

⁴⁸ *Supra* Note 34, Page 142.

⁴⁹ Hawala is an informal banking system functioning primarily in the Middle East, Asia and Africa that allows instant delivery of cash to individuals miles away.

⁵⁰ *Supra* Note 38, Page 132.

Islamic world. In an interview to an American television channel (1981) Sadat proclaimed: “for the last twenty one months the United States has been buying arms from Egypt for the Afghan rebels”⁵¹. The incredible detail is that even Israel served as a channel of supply providing Soviet weaponry captured in the six days war with Syria and Palestinians in Lebanon.⁵² Thus the American covert operation in Afghanistan came to be supported by the strangest conglomeration of states: European NATO allies, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Egypt and China.

The role of American and Pakistani government agencies in promoting the *mujahidin* was reported with pride in the American and British press. The great liberal paper *International Herald Tribune*, proposed that Afghanistan’s U.N seat be awarded to the *mujahidin* resistance fighters.⁵³ The striking fact about American press coverage of the Afghan war is its unfailing righteous tone and near absence of any critical tone to religious fanaticism. And in the exceedingly rare instance of such notice – for example, December 1986 *New York Review of Books* - it is posited entirely as the consequence of Soviet misadventure. But the distressing ground detail reported in press reports were that both the Soviets and *mujahidin* indoctrinated-mobilised boys as young as nine years old. Even that frightful fact failed to elicit censure in the liberal press of the West.

Refugee camps in Peshawar run by the *Jami’at-ul-Ulema-e-Islam* functioned as popular recruiting grounds for not just the war in Afghanistan, but for whatever seemed to qualify as an Islamic cause. Under Saudi patronage the North-Western Frontier Province (NWFP) of

⁵¹ *Supra* Note 43, Page 235.

⁵² *Supra* Note 34, Page 105.

⁵³ Who Speaks for the Afghans- *International Herald Tribune*, 20th November, 1986.

Pakistan became home to over 25,000 *madarssahas* (Muslim religious seminaries) committed to *Wahabism*; purist radical Islam named after Abdul Wahhab (1703-92) of Saudi Arabia and revived with great fervour in the nineteenth century by the Deoband *madarsa* in India. Taliban and its leader Mullah Omar were reared on Saudi oil money, American arms and diplomatic benevolence, and Pakistani military-technical skills and hospitality.

2.2.2 Islamabad's Policy

The Islamist edge in Pakistan's foreign policy gained strength following the 1993 election of Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (P.P.P) in alliance with the hard-line Jamat Ulema-e-Islam (J.U.I). Many *madarsas* that came to dot North Western Frontier's landscape as a nursery for the Taliban were set up by the J.U.I. Maulana Fazlur Rehman; the J.U.I leader was appointed Chairman, Foreign Affairs Standing Committee of the National Assembly, a position that gave him considerable leverage over foreign policy.⁵⁴ Rehman soon emerged as the most vocal supporters of the Taliban cause in Western capitals and a facilitator of funds from the Middle East.⁵⁵ Benazir's regime set the ball rolling for rabid Islamists in Kabul. This detail underscores a cruel paradox. Najibullah had rendered generous personal help to the Bhutto family, especially Benazir's brother Murtaza Bhutto in their struggle against Zia's regime.⁵⁶

The instructive irony is that Benazir, who became a victim off Islamic radicalism, set up an Afghan cell under her 'favourite grand uncle', the Pushtun General Naseerullah Babar, to coordinate assistance to the Taliban. In the words of Rifaat Hussain the Pakistani establishment was convinced that the Taliban in being 'anti-secular' would 'by extension'

⁵⁴ *Supra* Note 39, Page 90.

⁵⁵ *Supra* Note 38, Page 144.

⁵⁶ *Supra* Note 42, Page 267.

also be ‘anti-Indian’ and thus help secure a sanctuary for training *Mujahidin* fighters against India to liberate the Muslims in Kashmir. Islamabad’s unabashed sense of triumph is starkly recorded in Benazir Bhutto’s characterisation of the capture of Kabul by the *mujahidin* as a “welcome development”.⁵⁷ Infact the Jalalabad *Shura* was regularly paid by Pakistan to host training camps for the Kashmiri *mujahidin*, Bin Laden sponsored similar camps at Khost and encouraged Arabs and Afghans to enlist with the puritanical Wahhabi *Harkat-ul-Ansar* and fight in Kashmir.⁵⁸ Mullah Omar confirmed (1998): “We support *jihad* in Kashmir. It is also true that some Afghans are fighting against Indian occupation forces in Kashmir”.⁵⁹

Classified C.I.A reports of 1998 indicate liaison of Colonel level Pakistani Intelligence Officers with Bin Laden in order to secure access to training camps for the *mujahidin* fighting the ‘Hindu dominated’ Indian army.⁶⁰ Hence when the American cruise missiles killed *Harkat-ul-Ansar* militants in camps in Khost as punishment for American Embassy bombings, their Pakistani patrons in Islamabad were enraged.⁶¹ Thus, what was till now a regional struggle between India and Pakistan was transformed to a global scale; trans-national linkages were consolidated and the justificatory rhetoric became ever more fanatic and fundamentalist.

The perverse truth is that Pakistan’s Taliban links were cemented under successive civilian regimes. Nawaz Sharif’s government extended diplomatic recognition to the Taliban (25th

⁵⁷ *Supra* Note 11, Page 192.

⁵⁸ *Supra* Note 43, Page 137 and 186.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Supra* Note 12, Page 440.

⁶¹ *Supra* Note 39, Page 196.

May 1997) and doled out 30 million dollars to the Taliban in Kabul.⁶² Domestically such policies were popular and helped pander the Islamist constituency within Pakistan. The colossal covert operations of the Afghan *Jihad* were funded primarily by the US and Saudi Arabia. An estimated 35,000 men from as many as forty countries were mobilised under the general supervision of ISI of Pakistan and CIA of America. The prevalent sentiment at the official level is best captured in the words of an American diplomat in Pakistan: “*during the jihad, everyone was welcome with open arms. If you were an armed anti-communist it didn’t matter if you were from Bosnia or Bahrain, you were welcome.*”⁶³ [Emphasis added].

It was this blind anti-communism that drove American policy and helped foster radical Islamists, sidelining in the process many traditional Afghan clerics who preferred tribal based parties such as *Harakat Inqalabi-Islami*. It is indeed significant that in their perception radical Islamists were seen as not being rooted in the Afghan cultural milieu and slavishly beholden to *Jamat-i-Islami* of Pakistan and the Muslim brotherhood of Egypt.⁶⁴ Given the ideological moorings of groups Washington chose to patronize, the eventual turn against ‘the West’ was just waiting to happen. Consider for instance Bin Laden’s comment in the midst of Afghan *jihad*: “I discovered it was not enough to fight in Afghanistan, but that we had to fight on all fronts, communist or western oppression.”⁶⁵ Oliver Roy’s remark that “the *jihadis* who had flocked into Afghanistan did not become anti-western after 1991, they had always been so”⁶⁶ holds true. Roy on the basis of his extensive personal encounters with Arab fighters in Afghanistan speaks of being ‘struck by their hostility’ (sometimes physically) towards

⁶² *Ibid*, Page 182.

⁶³ *Supra* Note 43, Page 480.

⁶⁴ *Supra* Note 7, Page 84-86.

⁶⁵ *Supra* Note 9, Page 132.

⁶⁶ Oliver Roy- *Globalised Islam: The Search for a New Ummah*, Hurst and Company, London, 2002 , Page 293.

westerners.⁶⁷ Short-sightedness combined with the obsessive temptation of being able to punish the Soviet Union and avenge the humiliation of Vietnam at virtually no cost blinded American policy.

Hartman on the basis of declassified intelligence reports, personal interviews, media coverage – including among others *International Herald Tribune Philadelphia Inquirer, New York Review of Books, Economist, and Weekend Guardian* -- and court testimonies draws up a stunning indictment of the role played by the West in consolidating the ‘holy nexus’ of *Jihad*. The complex details concerning America’s contribution in the fostering Islamic radicalism make incredible reading. For instance, the accused in the American Embassy bombings in Kenya confirmed in minute detail shipment by the US of sniper rifles for Bin Laden’s 1989 operations, a fact duly confirmed by the concerned rifle manufacturer.⁶⁸ Perhaps nothing is more conclusive as proof of the US and NATO involvement in the making of Islamic *Jihad* as the secret operation sanctioned by George H.W Bush and Bill Clinton to buy back roughly 2,500 Stinger missiles, creating thereby a vast and attractive arms bazaar with each missile costing between \$80,000-150,000.⁶⁹

Amnesty International’s 1995 report indicted the (former) Soviet Union, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, U.S.A and European NATO allies for precipitating a human rights catastrophe by providing arms to the *mujahidin* despite being fully aware of the gross excesses committed by them.⁷⁰ In September 1992 the Americans and the Russians signed an agreement to completely stop supply of arms to the various *mujahidin* factions by January 1992,⁷¹ but

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *Supra* Note 12, Page 480.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, Page 11.

⁷⁰ Amnesty International- Afghanistan: International Responsibility for Human Rights Disaster, November 1995, London, Page 20.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

never implemented it faithfully. Another detail of some consequence concerns the ostrich like Americans attitude to the one thing that has never failed to flourish in Afghanistan: opium drug trade, also a major financial resource for the *mujahidin*. Thus, one could speak of global Islamic *jihad* as the gift, albeit unintended, of American foreign policy.

Pakistan's calculations and temptations were premised on a somewhat different ground. Keen to firmly establish its credentials as the flag bearer of Islam, Pakistan sought-out and created for patronage and protection, the most radical of extremist groups like the Taliban. A striking similarity comes to light if one looks at the kinds of groups that Islamabad chose to patronize both in Afghanistan and Kashmir. In both cases it supported extremist Islamist outfits which had scant regard for local traditions and customs, causing embitterment so intense that many for instance on the streets of Kabul made no distinction between the government of Pakistan and its citizens. One of the first questions I invariably encountered on innumerable occasions on the streets of Kabul was: 'Are you from Hindustan or Pakistan?' To answer Pakistan, meant inviting unpleasantness and hostility. Indeed Pakistan's faith in its Sunni Muslim identity seems to have become so firm and blind that its leadership chose studied hostility towards folk and Sufi Islamic traditions in Afghanistan as also in the Kashmir valley.⁷²

2.3 The Economics of American Policy

Apart from the general anti-Soviet passion so characteristic of American policy, the economic dynamics unleashed by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan also played an important role in setting the American agenda. Soviet occupation of Afghanistan brought them in striking distance of the oil rich Middle East, arousing acute fears of disruption and economic breakdown of capitalist economies abjectly dependent on secure supply of cheap

⁷² Based on the everyday discourses that I encountered and engaged with during one month of my stay in Afghanistan during July-August, 2007.

oil. These fears reached something of a fever pitch after the triumph of Ayatollah Khomeini's Islamic Revolution in Iran (1979). Hence the eventual defeat of the Soviets in Afghanistan (1989) was also seen as ensuring the vital interests of Capital and Economy of the West. According to Hartman the security of the American people remained always a secondary consideration, a fact tragically dramatized by the events of September 11.⁷³

Hamza Alavi identifies oil as the critical economic resource upon which the sweeping political calculus of Washington has been built. Like Pakistan, the United States also sought to prop up a client Sunni regime in Kabul, which would be willing to help build and secure oil-gas pipelines from Central Asia to the Arabian Sea via Afghanistan and Pakistan.⁷⁴ Alavi's argument finds detailed corroboration in reports and plans of some major oil gas companies such as: Bidas Corporation based in the British virgin Atlantic islands, American owned Unocal Corporation, Delta Oil of Saudi Arabia. They were all firming up plans to invest in Afghanistan so as to bypass Iran.⁷⁵ So intense was the struggle to acquire a foothold in the region in pursuit of pipeline dreams, that Unocal and Bidas got locked in a difficult legal tangle, with Bidas accusing Unocal Corporation of stealing the pipeline idea. Ahmad Rashid recounts an unusual encounter with the Bidas Chairman Carlos Bulgheroni who was negotiating with both the Taliban and the Northern Alliance a proposal to build the pipeline through Afghanistan.⁷⁶ Iran responded by using its sectarian and financial clout and extended military and financial patronage to groups opposed to the Taliban, especially in the region of

⁷³ *Supra* Note 12, Page 469.

⁷⁴ Hamza Alavi - Pakistan between Afghanistan and India, *Middle East Report*, No.222, spring 2002, Page 25.

⁷⁵ Christopher Bellamy- Afghans may find peace in the Pipeline, *The Independent*, 14th March, 1997.

⁷⁶ *Supra* Note 38, Page 6.

Hazarajat, since it was convinced that Pakistani and Saudi support for the Talibs was in effect a covert attempt by the U.S to encircle Iran.⁷⁷

Iranians weren't entirely off the mark, especially in relation to America after September 11. Certain recent developments seem to signal fervent renewal and continuation of this policy. The Bush administration has been putting enormous pressure on its newfound ally New Delhi, to abandon the proposed pipeline from Iran to India via Pakistan. In its place America is determined to promote a pipeline from Turkmenistan to India via Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Andrew Hartman's argument in this context is apposite. Speaking from a broadly Marxian perspective he says that the driving force behind American foreign policy has been the supreme imperative of protecting private capital. Hence the primacy accorded to "economic considerations in shaping strategies of containment, to the exclusion of other considerations."⁷⁸ A view strongly reiterated by the eminent Cold War historian John Lewis Gaddis. True, economics has been and remains a powerful factor in the shaping of American foreign policy. Nonetheless, the significance of ideology remains crucial in certain contexts. Consider for instance the kind of groups – most notably the Taliban -- Pakistan chose to push to political prominence and power; supported by the financial and military muscle of Saudi Arabia, United States and its allies.

2.4 Implications of the support for *jihad*

Thus, one could argue that a policy driven by blind anti-Soviet sentiment and concern for protecting material interests certainly triumphed in 1989. But clearly that policy was devoid of any serious awareness concerning its long-term implications. The impact of wars and great

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, Page 85-87.

⁷⁸ *Supra* Note 11, Page 474

power intervention, coupled with religious mobilisation of a large kind invariably runs deep and in many unintended directions. In recasting politics and interest structures it also can and often does open up new fault lines. American involvement in the Afghan conflict clearly prepared a most fertile and secure sanctuary for a new breed of militant Islamic radicalism on a scale unthinkable at any time in the past. Oliver Roy points out that many of the men mobilized for the Afghan *jihad* went on to either establish radical Islamic movements in their home countries, such as Islamic Salvation Front (F.I.S) in Algeria, or provided an extremist radical twist to older movements, such as Ibn ul-Khattab, the youngest volunteer in the Afghan *jihad*. He is believed to have played a seminal role in triggering the second war with Russia in Chechnya as part of global *jihad*, while Abu Hamza al-Masri who was maimed in the Afghan battlefield, ended up as a fiery radical *imam* in a London mosque.⁷⁹

The earliest and most ferocious manifestation of this new radical fundamentalism is to be seen however, in the Indian administered Kashmir valley. Its fallout continues to haunt us down to this day. It all began of course with the conflict in Afghanistan, the crucial turning point from whence emerged a whole new breed of lethally armed and trained as also fanatically motivated *jihadist* fighters determined to kill or die until the final triumph. Large numbers became foot soldiers of the holy war. But at some point they refused to play entirely according to what their patrons in Islamabad or Washington scripted for them. Kashmir has emerged as the new and very fraught theatre of religious warfare. And it threatens to alter the very basics of the social, political and cultural landscape of the entire region, the subject of my next chapter.

⁷⁹ *Supra* Note 66, Page 298.

3. Kashmir: The First Theatre of Global *Jihad*

The war in Afghanistan groomed an entire generation of *jihadi* fighters committed to fighting unto death for Radical Islam. Pakistan, buoyed by the heady triumph of the *mujahidin* against the might of the Soviet Union and flush with money, munitions and men trained to kill and die, decided that the moment was uniquely opportune to launch what it saw as a struggle to liberate Muslim brethren in Kashmir from the oppressive control of the *kafir* Hindu; thus avenge its defeat in 1971 and firmly establish its position as a champion of Islam.

The year 1989 marks the beginning of insurgency in Kashmir. Pakistan chose to officially designate it the Kashmiri '*intifada*', or freedom struggle. *Mujahidin* intervention also marks the transformation of the vale of Kashmir, known as 'paradise on earth', into a 'living hell'. The plight of the ordinary Kashmiri, sandwiched between armed militants and the Indian army, is condemned to live life forever under the shadow of guns, is awful and tragic. Pakistan calls the conflict in Kashmir a 'freedom struggle' and has named the part of Kashmir under its control as 'Azad Kashmir' (Free Kashmir). Yet, the large ironical fact is that it doesn't allow for the slightest expression of political difference in relation to the Pakistani state. The extraordinary fact that stands out but has been paid scant attention is the sudden volte-face of the Kashmiri, who after fighting with the Indian army in 1947, 1965 and 1971 seems now determined to fight against it. Also, it is crucial that we examine the impact of the two decades long insurgency launched by Pakistan upon the social and cultural fabric of Kashmir.

This chapter argues that Pakistan's Kashmir policy designed to 'bleed India by a thousand cuts' and dressed up in the cloak of Islam, has been not much more than a expedient to firmly etch Pakistan's identity and claim as the flag bearer of Islam. This in turn is rooted, as the first chapter has shown, in the 1920's historical matrix of the sub-continent. The Afghan *jihad*, dwelt upon in the preceding chapter, was sponsored by the West and provided Pakistan with the necessary financial, political, logistical, and moral support to pursue its grand regional and ideological ambitions, most notably in Kashmir. Internally, within the Kashmir valley developments linked to certain Indian state polices worked as a crucial trigger to speed up the momentum and intensity of events. Thus, the situation in Kashmir cannot be grasped in isolation. It has to be seen in a larger historical context, which surprisingly the works of leading scholars like Sumit Ganguly⁸⁰ and Aushotosh Varshney⁸¹ fail to do.

This chapter attempts to answer the questions raised above by drawing upon academic discourses on the subject and interviews conducted with a cross section of voices from the geo-political spectrum of Pakistan, India and Kashmir. Given the sensitive nature of the subject at hand, efforts to access materials such as intelligence reports, relevant and important to the argument I seek to pursue have drawn a blank. Another and somewhat surprising aspect that stands out is the complete absence of what is proclaimed as 'Azad Kashmir' in not only academic writings but also in journalistic reportage. I shall endeavour to overcome this problem at least partially, by incorporating voices from 'Azad Kashmir' through interviews that I conducted in Bradford and London. Another stumbling block in my research was the lack of access to voices from the Pundit community of the valley. My construction of the

⁸⁰ Sumit Ganguly- Explaining the Kashmir Insurgency: Political Mobilization and Institutional Decay, *International Security*, Vol. 21, No.22, 1996. <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/sumit.htm> (Accessed 18/05/2008).

⁸¹ *Supra* Note 7.

Pundit community's discourse is based largely on secondary sources. I believe that while this may to an extent limit the reach of my work, it does not fundamentally alter the larger argument that I have sought to pursue in this chapter.

3.1 Jammu and Kashmir: A Background

Kashmir as the territorial unit we know is a creation of British rule. Diverse populations and territories were patched together with British endorsement, into a feudal kingdom by the Dogra Hindu Maharaja in 1846. For the British, the decisive calculation was the imperative need to create an effective buffer to serve as a check on Russian ambitions in Central Asia and Afghanistan.⁸²

Kashmir's predominantly Muslim population furnishes for Pakistan sufficient reason to claim the state as a part of its territory. The claim rests on an exclusive religious basis, which is also the foundational basis of the identity-nationhood of Pakistan. Situation on the ground however, is far more complex. Its Muslim inhabitants are far from homogenous. Distinctive ethnic and linguistic affiliations remain strong and powerful. Even religious practice is intensely coloured by the diversity of local Sufi traditions. Also, even in the overwhelmingly Muslim Kashmir valley a small ancient Hindu minority of Kashmiri Pundits remained and they had to be forced to flee in a brutal campaign of ethnic cleansing in early 1990's. This act of religious expulsion cut at the very heart of the syncretic cultural rhythm idealised in the concept of *Kashmiriyat*. In contrast to the valley, the region of Jammu comprises predominantly Punjabi speaking Dogra Hindus. Its inhabitants vehemently reject the idea of a union with Pakistan. The third regional constituent Ladakh comprises predominantly Balti speaking Tibetan Buddhists and Shia Muslims.

⁸²*Supra* Note 9, Page7-9.

The definitive fact on the ground is that the state of Jammu and Kashmir remains despite strident rhetoric and loud political projection, ethnically, linguistically, religiously and culturally diverse. By no stretch could it be regarded as a homogenous Muslim entity.

3.2 Forging of an Islamic Kashmir

Kashmir signifies modern India's defining experience with radical "Islamic terrorism".

Mujahidin have come to symbolize the brutal face of Islam, particularly for the Kashmiri Pundits⁸³. This section deals with attempts by Pakistan to Islamize the culture of Kashmir valley through three specific strategies. One, whip up communal rhetoric to fever pitch so as to cover and define all aspects of public and private life. Two, constantly invoke Islamic symbols and sense of Muslim hurt and direct that against the *Kafir* Hindu as the unrelated absolute other. Three, extend unqualified support to extremist organizations such as the Hizbul Mujahidin so as to marginalize and eliminate the relatively secular-nationalist challenge posed by organisations like the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (J.K.L.F).

The communal rhetoric that began to echo loud in the valley under the *mujahidin* shadow from 1990 onwards seemed to mimic and magnify communal politics that first began to loom large over much of North India in the 1920's. Many Kashmiri Pundit refugees recall loudspeakers from mosque pulpits screaming: "*Mussalman-Sikh bhai-bhai, Hindu quam kahan se aayi*" (Muslims and Sikhs are like brothers, where did these Hindus come from). Leading Urdu publications in the valley such *Al-Safa* stridently proclaimed: "Sikhs and Muslims are fighting for the same cause".⁸⁴ The Sikhs, feeling vulnerable and small in

⁸³ Kashmiri Pundits are Hindu by religion and prior to the arrival of Islam they formed majority of the population in the valley. Following the turmoil that gripped the valley, which in the initial stages acquired a religious overtone Pundits were systematically targeted. Around 1990 they numbered around 3, 50,000 however ever since their numbers have continued to dwindle.

⁸⁴ Al Umar in *Al-Safa*, 4th June, 1991. Available at <http://www.kashmirinformation.com/Miscellaneous/UrduPress.html>. (Accessed 16/05/2008).

numbers, were willing to abide by the Muslim majority and proclaimed themselves as *Kitabia* or ‘people of the book’, like the Muslims.

The politics of counting and numbers in its contemporary modern form was set in motion by the discourse of Orientalist knowledge formation, discussed in the first chapter. The Colonial Census sought to classify people into neat categories, and in this process numbers became crucial and definitive. The process and its experience left a deep impress in the self-imagination of communities; shaping in fact self-perception largely in opposition to the hostile ‘other’. Extremist Islamist propaganda flagrantly promoted from across the border triggered new communal alignments and realignments in particular between the Sikhs and Muslims in the valley and in the miniscule Sikh pockets of West Punjab⁸⁵. At another level this impulse was carefully nurtured through financial and logistical support extended by Pakistan to the extremist *Khalistan*⁸⁶ movement in East Punjab.

Certain extremist proclamations merit close reading for they lucidly demonstrate a commitment to promoting an Islamic agenda. For instance: “*Agar Kashmir mein rahna hoga, Allah Allah Kahna hoga*” (If you wish to continue living in Kashmir, you will have to pray to none other than Allah). Or: “*Allah-o-Akbar, Mussalmano jago, kafiro bhago, jihad aa raha hai*” (Arise and awake Muslims, throw out the infidels, jihad is approaching).⁸⁷ The significant and perverse element that stands out in this kind of communal rhetoric is the new

⁸⁵ Punjab witnessed some of the most gruesome communal conflagrations in 1947. It was partitioned into two, the Pakistani part known as West Punjab that is home to some of the holiest Sikh shrines.

⁸⁶ Led by Jarnail Singh Bhindarwala the Khalistan movement demanded a separate Sikh state in East Punjab by seceding from the Union of India. The movement and its subsequent quashing briefly brought about a sharp Hindu-Sikh communal polarization not seen before.

⁸⁷ Navnita Chaddha Behra- *Demystifying Kashmir*, Brookings Institution Press, Washington D.C, 2003, Page 125.

fierce edge of hatred and its systematic incorporation into an aggressive political agenda by Pakistan.

The establishment in Islamabad was quick to seize the opportunity and play the Islamic card in Kashmir. Apart from encouraging aggressive communal rhetoric-mobilisation, Islamabad's political elite was quick to invoke and deploy Islamic symbols this end. Nothing illustrates that better than a hysterical speech of Benazir Bhutto on Pakistan television: "Kashmiri's do not fear death *because they are Muslims, the blood of mujahids and Ghazi's flows in the veins of Kashmiri's and they are heirs of Rasool-Pak Salaleele Wale Walab...they are heirs of Hazrat Ali and Hazrat Qavar. And the brave women of Kashmir are heirs of Bibi Khadija Habibi Ayesha and Bibi Fatima.*"⁸⁸[Emphasis added]. Thus, Bhutto consciously used communal Islamic rhetoric and religious hatreds to whip up religious passions to silently efface the presence and memory of other communities and religions of Kashmir. The presence and legitimacy of even folk-*Rishi-Sufi* Islam was sought to be banished with ample help from the *mujahidin* with Kalashnikovs.

Mujahidin intervention brutally shattered the centuries old syncretic religious-cultural fabric of *Kashmiriyat*. Its highpoint in recent times is marked by the Sheikh Abdullah's twelve kilometre funeral procession, his body draped in the Indian tricolour and the crowds in Srinagar shouting: "*Sher-e- Kashmir ka kya irshad? Hindu, Muslim, Sikh Ittehad*" ("What was the message of the Lion of Kashmir? Friendship between Hindu, Muslim and Sikhs.")⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Benazir's Propaganda Speech broadcast on state run Pakistan Television in December 1989/January 1990. Available on http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eCRFWStxV_4&feature=related (Accessed 17/05/2008)

⁸⁹ *Supra* Note 7.

Mridu Rai explains the religious edge to the violence in Kashmir by placing it in the context of a century of misrule. She argues that ninety five per cent of the population in the Kashmir valley felt excluded from the political economy and social prestige under the rule of the Hindu Raja. Thus, political assertion acquired a religious tenor.⁹⁰ Rai's argument though important and persuasive, fails to account for shifts in the attitude of the Kashmiri populace: support for the Indian army till 1971, strong support for militancy initially, and in recent years, perceptible decline in support for militancy. Rai also does not take into account the tradition of powerful counter discourses in the valley selectively invoked in periods of turbulence, such as during the militant insurgency, to create and mobilise communal consolidations.

A pervasive counter discourse of religious persecution and oppression among the Pundit community in the Kashmir valley merits serious attention. It reflects the nature of social upheaval that the *mujahidin* intervention unleashed. In this context the work of Reeta Chowdhary Tremblay is particularly instructive. According to Tremblay, prior to the *mujahidin* intervention Pundits comprised 4% of the population. The first Muslim kingdom in the valley was established around 1320. Tremblay's rendering of the Pundit community discourse is nuanced and insightful. The texture of this discourse is intensely complex and shot through with deep ambiguities. One could also say it seems to change as it were, in response to the political salience of the age. Memory-discourse in the Pundit community moves and shifts, almost seamlessly, between fond remembrance of desperate stubborn insistence upon Brahmanical purity in the face of ridicule and threats of punishment from

⁹⁰ *Supra* Note 9, Page 286 and 294.

ruling Muslim elites and a celebration of shared syncretic culture-values: *Kashmiriyat*.⁹¹

Straight and categorical generalizations are therefore misleading.

The *Mujahidin* intervention, supported financially and ideologically by Islamabad, introduced a new kind of rupture that was utterly unlike anything before that in the seven-eight hundred years of Islam in Kashmir. The exodus of nearly 250,000 Kashmiri Pundits from the valley in 1990 was the result of a vicious campaign: houses were burnt, men were murdered and women were stripped, raped, and hung from trees. The intent was to rob the entire community of all sense of shame and honour. The intensity and scale of communal violence in Kashmir in 1989 mimicked the communal conflagrations during the bloody partition of 1947.

Perhaps one should at this point pose the question as to the elements that demarcate *mujahidin* violence and the deep ruptures it seems to unleash, from certain older forms of violence. To that one could in a narrower frame add another question: What distinguishes the *mujahidin* violence from partition violence? One could speak of pre-modern kind of violence as episodic. Some event or situation would trigger violence-brutality. But it would not swell into a general conflagration. Therefore, it would remain confined to specific causes, events, situations and locales. And that also meant a quiet but continual process of modulation in a shared existential space. Partition violence marks the first definitive break from the pre-modern pattern. It was part of an over-arching political design and therefore could not be modulated and contained in terms of specific causes and locales. But a break with the past, even when definitive, can never be full and complete. In partition violence the basic

⁹¹*Supra* Note 10, Page 488.

instrument of violence was the mob, inchoate and unstable. *Mujahidin* violence for the first time injected the ruthlessness and sense of grand purpose characteristic of an efficient modern organisation. Hence the care with which Pakistan's ISI chose its principal instruments of action.

The entire operation was well thought out and rigorously organized. In the early stages the *mujahidin* were controlled through two organizations: JKLF and the hard-line *Hizbul-Mujahidin* (Organization of Holy Warriors) affiliated with the *Jama'at-i-Islami* of Pakistan. The JKLF sought to be inclusive and tolerant of other faiths. *Hizbul* in sharp contrast comprised *Islam pasand* (lovers of Islam), strong believers committed to creating a pure Islamic order based on Sharia and a unified Muslim community. The Hizbul had extensive combat experience in the Afghan *Jihad* and wanted Kashmir's merger with Pakistan, which translated into expulsion of non-Muslim Kashmiris.⁹² Hizbul was thus ideologically and strategically fully at home with the grand strategic ambitions of the Pakistani state.

Groups like the Hizbul supported with gusto by the political elite and some religious circles closely to the military establishment began to systematically target the Pundits in Kashmir. This provided an ideological lever to the Indian state to tar the insurgency in Kashmir purely as an extremist Islamist movement sponsored by Islamabad; complete negation of the secular national ethos espoused by the Indian State. Most Kashmiris and J.K.L.F sympathisers seemed convinced that the Indian state through the then Governor Jagmohan -- whose role continues to be controversial and hotly contested -- cleverly used this as an opportunity to further New Delhi's larger strategy and discredit the movement in Kashmir and play upon the

⁹² *Supra* Note 7, Page 1016

fears of the Pundits'.⁹³ And thus Machiavellian tactics were flagrantly deployed to retain "India's grip on Kashmir"⁹⁴.

Bhikhu Parekh offers a somewhat different kind of assessment of the Kashmir situation in the late eighties-early nineties, and the role played by Jagmohan. During his second tenure in office Jagmohan was "identified by the Kashmiri people as someone who was insensitive, partly because he was authoritarian, and partly, his tactics were ham-handed. So rather than going after the terrorists he gave the military a free hand. He was also in many ways very biased towards the Pundits."⁹⁵ Navnita Behra echoes a similar line of thought and speaks of Jagmohan's strategy in the following words: "if you are a Muslim, you are pro-Pakistani and you have to be dealt with accordingly".⁹⁶ Thus for both Parekh and Behra, Jagmohan's policies far from securing Kashmir for India served to undermine the credibility of the Indian state. In fact Jagmohan exacerbated the situation and helped Pakistan to shatter the fabric of *Kashmiriyat* and put in its place a strong Islamist agenda. Full-blooded Islamization required the targeting of Pundits. Many perceived Jagmohan to have blurred the boundaries between the State and the boundary of personal religious identity.

The ideological commitment of the ruling military-political elite in Pakistan stands stark and clear in its open fervent support of *Hizbul* and its advocacy of Kashmir's merger with Pakistan as an 'Islamic cause'. In instructive contrast the J.K.L.F continued to speak of

⁹³ Interview conducted with Azmat A. Khan, former General Secretary and International spokesman for the J.K.L.F (Yasin Malik Faction), on 26th April, 2008, Bradford, United Kingdom.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*

⁹⁵ Excerpt from an Interview conducted with Lord (Professor) Bhikhu Parekh in Kingston upon Hull, United Kingdom, on 28th April, 2008.

⁹⁶ Navneeta Chaddha Behra- *State, Identity and Violence: Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh*, Manohar, 2000, Page 172.

independence⁹⁷. The *Hizbul* in fact is believed to be the creation of the ISI. to counter and contain the 'secular' J.K.L.F. The I.S.I also played a key role in weakening the J.K.L.F by engineering defections, blocking arms supplies and even killing J.K.L.F sympathisers. Through its *Hizb* channels I.S.I systematically leaked information about J.K.L.F hideouts to the Indian army.⁹⁸ A fact publicly proclaimed by the J.K.L.F Chief Amanullah Khan at a press conference in Islamabad in December 1991. He did not mince words and confirmed: "the pro-Pakistan *Hizbul-Mujahideen* was killing J.K.L.F workers".⁹⁹ Indeed the schism within the ranks of the J.K.L.F took place on the issue as to how far could Pakistan be allowed to dictate the agenda for Kashmir. Yasin Malik who had emerged as the most prominent figure of the organization in the valley proclaimed that he 'would not allow the organization to be remote controlled from Pakistan'.¹⁰⁰

In this context the role of the J.K.L.F merits close consideration. To begin with it was the key local actor in the Kashmir valley and most significantly it was by no stretch an Islamist organization. Yet it could not resist playing upon the Islamic card to score a political advantage. Consider for instance J.K.L.F manifesto of the early 1990's in which its declared goal was to establish an independent state of Jammu and Kashmir, which would be an *Islamic Democracy*, its economy to be based on *Islamic Socialism*, and the rights of minorities would be guaranteed in accordance with the *Holy Quran* and the *Sunnah*.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ *Supra* Note 14.

⁹⁸ Sumantara Bose- The JKLF and JKHM: The Kashmir Insurgents, in *Marianne Heiberg, Brenden o' Leary and John Tirman (ed.) - Terror, Insurgency and the State: Ending Protracted Conflicts*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2007, Page 239-240.

⁹⁹ Balraj Puri- Kashmir Towards Insurgency in *Tracts for The Times*, Sangam Books, London, 1993, Page 68.

¹⁰⁰ *Supra* Note 12, Page 190.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, Page 173.

Even Shabir Shah's People's League that invited the wrath of extremist Islamist organizations for its espousal of a relatively secularist ethos succumbed – something that one of its Office Bearer I met in London was at pains to emphasize -- to the easy temptation of waving the banner of Islam. For instance Shabir Shah proclaimed: "...the Kashmiri nation inspired and guided by Islam has woken up. The sun of Islamic revolution is rising. *Allah will be our guide, Quran is our constitution, jihad is our strategy and martyrdom our aspiration.*"¹⁰²[Emphasis added]. Not surprisingly therefore more hard-line inclined leaders like Mushtaq-ul-Islam quit the party to swell the ranks of the Pan-Islamic Hezbollah party.¹⁰³

Indeed JKLF members during discussions with me in London were candid enough to admit that when the insurgency in Kashmir was at its peak "*non-Muslims were not trusted...all the J.K.L.F cadres at that time were Muslims*, whether you like it or not that is the fact."¹⁰⁴[Emphasis added]. Nothing perhaps stands out in my mind to mark the Islamist tinge and the deep impress it has left on the organization than my recollection of a meeting I was taken to as an observer. The meeting concluded with a *maulvi* called upon to lead the prayer. And he prayed for the success of "*all Muslims fighting for freedom*".¹⁰⁵

True, J.K.L.F and the People's League (later rechristened as the Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party) do not share the ideological goals of extremist Islamist groups such as the *Hizbul Mujahidin* and *Jama'at-i-Islami*. But a sharp disjuncture runs deep and persistent between its secular rhetoric of *Kashmiriyat* and its unwillingness to reach out and

¹⁰² *Supra* Note 96, Page 180

¹⁰³ K.Santhanam, Sreedhar, Sudhir Saxena and Manish (ed.)- *Jihadi's in Jammu and Kashmir: A portrait Gallery*, Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis, Sage Publications, New Delhi, Page 25.

¹⁰⁴ *Supra* Note 93.

¹⁰⁵ The J.K.L.F holds regular private meetings where it raises issues that plague 'Azad Kashmir' such as Mangla dam, human rights situation et al but admit that publicly they are not capable of dealing with openly hostile India and Pakistan at the same time. However details of the meeting have been withheld at the request of the organizers.

take on board voices, hopes and anxieties of other non-Muslim sections of Kashmiri society: Kashmiri Pundits, Ladakhi Buddhists and Sikhs for instance. While there is a realization of the damage caused to Kashmir's tradition of tolerance, the dominant sentiment is about Muslims as being the primary victims. Hence for JKLF "the issue of pundits coming back is secondary" in relation to those (Muslims) whose children have died.¹⁰⁶

J.K.L.F leaders such as Yasin Malik have often invoked *Kashmiriyat* as the framework to resolve the issue of Kashmir. He has also made courageous symbolic gestures towards the Pundit community, such as visiting Pundit refugee camps in Jammu. However he has so far refrained from condemning or demanding that a 'compulsive killer' like Farroq Ahmed Dar, better known under his notorious alias Bitta Karate, is brought to justice. He has publicly admitted to killing of Kashmiri Pundits on the orders of the Area Commander Ishfaq Majid Wani who has also been a close associate of Yasin Malik¹⁰⁷ Gestures of reconciliation to acquire historic effectiveness have to be backed by a sense of truth, otherwise gestures no matter how dramatic and daring dissolve into mere political gimmickry.

The *mujahidin* intervention seems to have succeeded in dividing Kashmiris in terms of their religious identity; increasingly perceived as a natural indicator of political-national identity. The damage that Islamization has inflicted on the social-cultural fabric is far greater than what numerical statistics could possibly indicate.

3.3 The Ferment Within

¹⁰⁶ *Supra* Note 93

¹⁰⁷ Newstrack Interview of Bitta Karate downloaded from <http://radiokashmir.org/video/politics.html> . Also see <http://www.tribuneindia.com/2006/20061028/j&k.htm#1> (Accessed 20/05/2008).

The seeds of communal polarization in Kashmiri were in part nurtured by its internal political discourse. And that paved the way for militant insurgency and its Pan-Islamist agenda. This section looks at the two other key actors apart from Pakistan, who ironically helped further the Pakistani agenda: the Indian political establishment and the local Kashmiri separatist.

The Indian State by reducing the political-electoral process to a farce helped push many Kashmiris into the arms of extremists. Sumit Ganguly's work provides a sound theoretical frame of reference to explain the roots of insurgency in Kashmir. He argues that systematic institutional decay in the valley was accompanied by accelerated political mobilization facilitated by higher levels of literacy and media exposure. Also the tendency of New Delhi under Congress tutelage to whittle away the autonomy of states in India tended to increasingly centralize power, thereby pushing political opposition onto a violent trajectory.¹⁰⁸

Ganguly's work makes an important intervention, however it looks at Kashmir in isolation from the larger historical and international context. For instance he does not directly address the immediate context of 1989. In this respect Bhikhu Parekh makes the apt observation that 1989 in particular signifies a radical transformation of the Kashmiri political landscape: "on the one hand you see radicalization of Islam notably in Afghanistan amongst other places, when the centre of action shifts from Afghanistan the leadership in Pakistan was looking for diversionary tactics and Kashmir proved to be ideal target. And India was only too willing to oblige by making things messier than they otherwise should have been"¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸*Supra* Note 80.

¹⁰⁹*Supra* Note 95.

Ganguly also fails to explain as to why political assertion acquired a particular kind of religious dimension. And as Navnita Chaddha aptly remarks he also fails to account for the varied political responses to the same processes in Jammu and Ladakh regions. In this respect the elections of 1983 that set the tone for the communalisation of political discourse. Behra draws attention to Indira Gandhi's election campaign and its distinctly communal tone in a bid to woo Hindus of Jammu away from the Hindu leaning Bharitya Janta Party (B.J.P). Mrs Gandhi went so far as to incite Jammu Hindus against the Resettlement Act under which Muslims who migrated to Pakistan in 1947 were allowed to settle.¹¹⁰ At the other end of the spectrum the National Conference¹¹¹ gravitated towards Islamist parties and election results clearly mirror this polarization: National Conference won thirty eight seats in the Muslim majority valley, two in Jammu, and one in Ladakh; the Congress swept Jammu winning twenty three seats, and a mere two from the valley, and one from Ladakh.¹¹²

Several factors contributed towards the initial acceptance and success of militants and their Islamist propaganda in the Kashmir valley. Perhaps the foremost factor was the arrogance and callousness of the ruling Congress in New Delhi. A good case in point is the rigged elections to the state legislature (1987). Candidates of M.U.F (Muslim United Front), ideologically close to the *Jama'at*, were beaten up by Congress goons. In sheer disgust and

¹¹⁰ *Supra* Note 96, Page 15 and Page 150-151.

¹¹¹ The party was led by Sheikh Abdullah who initiated a movement in Kashmir to formally dismantle the monarchical set up under Raja Hari Singh. Initially known as the Muslim Conference, the Sheikh under the influence of Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru (who was independent India's first Prime Minister and hailed from the community of Kashmiri Pundits) it was rechristened as The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference and an attempt was made to broaden its social base. Following his death the baton passed onto to his son Farroq Abdullah. It has been a dominant political force in the valley though many in the valley by the early 1990's came to look upon the National Conference as a stooge for New Delhi and Farroq a traitor to the cause of Kashmir.

¹¹² *Supra* Note 110.

rage many youth crossed into Pakistani controlled Kashmir and joined the *mujahidin*.¹¹³ Of these two in particular are worthy of notice, Muhammad Shah Yusuf who contested the 1987 elections on a M.U.F ticket and his polling agent Yasin Malik. Amidst charges of blatant rigging he was declared defeated and subsequently tossed into prison. Upon his release in 1989 he crossed over to Pakistan (as did Malik) and formed the *Hizbul Mujahidin* and took the name Syed Salahuddin¹¹⁴, the legendary 12th century Muslim commander during the Crusades. In a conscious invocation of Islamic religious symbols he spoke of war in Kashmir as *al-jihad*, or holy war.

Perverse subversion of the political-electoral process in the valley by the Indian state paved the way for armed insurgency. Its damning details are well recorded in an open letter by Governor of Jammu and Kashmir Jagmohan to Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi (Times of India 21st April 1990): “Do you not remember what happened on the day of the Lok Sabha¹¹⁵ poll on 22nd November, 1990. In a tantalizing gesture, *TV sets were placed near some of the polling booths with placards reading: anyone who will cast his vote can take this as a gift. Near some other booths, coffins were placed with a cryptic note: anyone who will cast his vote will get this.* No one in the administration of Dr.Farooq Abdullah took any step to remove such symbols...*such was the commitment and standing of your leaders and collaborators in the state.*”¹¹⁶ [Emphasis added].

However Jagmohan’s own approach was decidedly heavy handed. Under him the state administration viewed the problem purely as a secessionist movement fermented by Pakistan.

¹¹³ *Supra* Note 10

¹¹⁴ *Supra* Note 14, Page 236-237.

¹¹⁵ Lok Sabha is the Lower house of parliament; its members are directly elected for a term of five years.

¹¹⁶ Jagmohan- *My Frozen Turbulence in Kashmir*, Allied Publishers Limited, New Delhi, 1991, Page 558.

The slightest suspicion of militant sympathy was dealt with an iron fist. Serious human rights abuses by the Indian paramilitary forces were decisive in turning popular opinion against India. This was something reinforced in course of my meeting with Ershad, a representative of Shabir Shah's J.K.D.F.P. He hails from Baramullah district of Kashmir where he worked as General Secretary Bar Association. He crossed over to Pakistan in 1990 and lived there for fourteen years. According to Ershad: 'The Indian army was responsible for his flight to Pakistan. Because of his political beliefs the army targeted his family and friends. His brother, nephew and a friend who were in no way politically involved were all picked up. Filled with deep anguish he recounted how army personnel branded his nephew with hot knives; a story subsequently carried by India Today, a leading Indian magazine. His brother, who worked as a government doctor, was made to languish in prison for nearly four months'. In the same breath he also acknowledges the tragic desperation of the situation that many in Kashmir found themselves trapped in; 'sandwiched between the army on the one hand and militants on the other who believed not in political activism and dialogue but in the language of the gun.'¹¹⁷ The Indian government in its blanket crackdown failed to distinguish between the gun wielding militants and their hapless victims, thus radicalising a large section of the populace, many of whom became sheer cannon fodder for Islamists.

As the Pakistani inspired "*intifada*" in Kashmir progressed several Islamist organizations took the field: *Lashkar-i-Toiba*, *Jaish-i-Mohammad* and *Harkat-ul-Ansar*. The I.S.I calculation seems to have been that the possibility of playing off one faction against the other was useful and necessary to retain control in a violent and volatile situation. All this was well known and accepted by America. According to a C.I.A report: "the Harkat-ul-Mujahidin (H.U.M), an Islamic extremist organization that Pakistan supports in its proxy war against

¹¹⁷ A translated excerpt from an interview Conducted with Ershad in London on 30th April, 2008.

Indian forces in Kashmir....is increasingly using terrorist tactics...to promote its pan-Islamic agenda.”¹¹⁸ Not surprisingly though the C.I.A reports conveniently glossed over Washington’s own role in nurturing extremist Islamists. In a few years it all spiralled out of control as they refused to abide by their scripted role and turned against their patrons: the United States and its Pakistan as an ally in the ‘war on terrorism’.

The point made above is well illustrated by yet another lethal Islamist group propped up by Islamabad: *Lashkar-i-Toiba*, always keen to flaunting its Pan-Islamist ambitions. Its pamphlet (why we are waging jihad?) states as its goal the “restoration of Islamic rule over all of India.”¹¹⁹ This declaration prefigures the symbolism of *Lashkar-i-Toiba*’s armed assault on Delhi’s Red Fort (2000), the seat of the medieval Mughal rulers and the principal site whence the Indian tri-colour is ceremonially raised on Independence Day. Yahya Mujahid, former Lashkar spokesmen, insists in public that *Lashkar*’s concerns are confined to Pakistan and all accusations of Pan-Islamic linkages are ‘Indian propaganda’¹²⁰. However *Lashkar*’s propaganda and rhetoric lends no support what so ever to such claims.

Several countries, notably Australia has designated *Lashkar* as unlawful. Iza-ul-Haq a medical student in Australia is serving a prison sentence for having trained for 20 days with the *Lashkar*. David Hicks, detained in Guantanamo Bay prison, is also charged with having trained with the *Lashkar* in Kashmir.¹²¹ The profile of many Lashkar recruits -- such as medical students in Australia and M.B.A graduates in Pakistan -- strongly reinforces Oliver

¹¹⁸ Harkat-ul-Ansar- Increasing threat to Western and Pakistani Interests, Page 2, *Declassified* C.I.A document, August 1996

¹¹⁹ Who are the Kashmir Militants?, 6 April, 2005, Available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4416771.stm

¹²⁰ Lashkar-e-Toiba- A Documentary by Journeyman Pictures. Available on <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5zFqLYNtQY4>. (Accessed on 20/05/2008).

¹²¹ *Ibid*

Roy's claim concerning the changing social profile of 'holy warriors'¹²². Clearly the comforting linkage between poverty-illiteracy and religious frenzy does not always hold.

Most security analysts are convinced that *Lashkar* and *Harkat-ul-Ansar* have systematically forged extensive links with the lethal *Al-Qaeda* of the notorious Islamic warrior Bin Laden. Instructive in this regard is the diversion of 200 soldiers from Taliban's elite 055 brigade in 1999 to help the Pakistani army capture in Kashmir the strategically vital heights of Kargil.¹²³ This brigade broadly comprised three groupings along geographic lines: Arabs, Central Asians and South/ South East Asians.¹²⁴

The brutal campaign for a pure Islamic order launched by armed Islamists led by *Hizbul* and *Lashkar* began with the driving out of the small Hindu minority and imposition of the veil and other restrictive codes for women. But in the long run some of these actions tended to diminish local support for 'Islamist' insurgency. Kashmir as the site of pan-Islamic *jihad* attracted *mujahidin* recruits from all over the Islamic world: Syria, Sudan, Libya, Egypt, Afghanistan, Pakistan and the Central Asian republics. However the Kashmiris I interviewed vehemently denied any "foreign" involvement. This denial I believe stems from the conviction that in order to establish the legitimacy of their movement as a spontaneous home-grown response to "Indian occupation" such denial was imperative. A Srinagar resident I interacted with in Bradford was more measured in his response. According to him, "while the presence of foreign mercenaries cannot be nullified, however they were more active in the periphery. The main cadre of the movement was made up of local boys."¹²⁵ While the roots

¹²² *Supra* Note 66, Page 315-316.

¹²³ *Supra* Note 103, Page 30.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ Excerpt from an Interview conducted with Dr. Irshad Ahmad Shah (Reader, Political Science Department, University of Kashmir), on 25th April, 2008, Bradford, United Kingdom.

of the movement are undoubtedly grounded in the local matrix, available evidence nonetheless does indicate a large and strong presence of foreign *mujahidin*.

Foreign *mujahidin*, however genuine and intense their Islam, care very little for local cultural sensibilities. Hence also the gradual decline in local support for militancy. An instructive instance in this context is the occupation by the *mujahidin* -- led by the Afghan militant with the alias Mast Gul -- of *Charar-i-Sharif*, the holiest Sufi shrine in the valley and revered alike by Hindus and Muslims ¹²⁶ as symbolic of *Kashmiriyat*. Islam in Kashmir has always had a distinct Sufi dimension and a large Shia following. The prospect of merger with Pakistan caused acute uncertainty and discomfort among shias given the sharp violent sectarian fault line that runs through Pakistan; this has also led many to argue for the constructive-liberal role that religion could play in Kashmir. ¹²⁷

3.4 The Fallout

The two decades of proxy war in Kashmir has consumed between 40,000 (official Indian estimate) to 80,000 lives (Huriyat Conference figures)¹²⁸. The Indian state has been bled militarily and economically on a large scale. People in Kashmir have been worn down psychologically, morally and physically. Local support for militancy is clearly on decline.

The proclaimed '*intifada*' in Kashmir, sponsored and supported by Pakistan, carries the prospect of a large 'domino effect' for the Indian polity and society. Two competing visions of 'nationalism' are locked in struggle. Internally within India, this struggle is being waged

¹²⁶ Ingolf Kiesow and Nicklas Norling- The Rise of India: Problems and Opportunities, Silk Road Papers, Central Asia- Caucasus Institute, Silk Road Studies Program, January 2007, Page 57.

¹²⁷ *Ibid*

¹²⁸ Sumantara Bose- Roots of Conflict: Paths to Peace, Harvard University Press, 2005, Page 4.

between the right wing politics of Hindu nationalism of BJP and ‘secularism’ officially espoused by the Indian National Congress and others. The ethnic and religious divide caused by religiously inspired militancy in Kashmir valley triggered the consolidation of Jammu as the bastion of right wing politics of B.J.P (Bharitya Janta Party). Other parties like the National Conference, Congress and People’s Democratic Party have got confined to the Kashmir valley. The kind of fears and anxieties this kind of polarization causes prefigures in a memorandum on behalf of the Muslim community in India to the United Nations, composed at a time when the memory of partition was still fresh and vivid (1951):

“...Our misguided brothers in Pakistan do not realize that if Muslims in Pakistan can wage a war against Hindus in Kashmir, why should Hindus not sooner or later, retaliate against Muslims in India? Does Pakistan seriously think it could give us any help if such an emergency situation arose? It is incapable of providing room and livelihood to the 40 million Muslims of India should they migrate to Pakistan. Yet its policy and action might well produce that result.”¹²⁹

The words of the memorandum cited above have proved to be in some respects prescient. Pakistan’s policies helped foster the rise of right wing Hindu nationalism, particularly in the Jammu region and among the Kashmiri Pundits. A good example of the same is the demand by prominent Kashmiri Pundit group Panun Kashmir for a separate homeland for Kashmiri Hindus in the valley, whom they describe as the “only symbol of Indianess left in the valley”.¹³⁰ Thus, Hinduness came to be equated with the Indian state; once again reflecting the psyche that had firmly entrenched itself in the popular mind by 1947, and now threatens *Kashmiriyat*.

As the West became a target of Islamic militancy and terror, strong pressure began to be mounted upon the Pakistani state to end its support to militant groups. Initially, Pakistan

¹²⁹ *Supra* Note 7, Page 1001.

¹³⁰ For a Kashmiri Pundit point of view see Why Homeland? Available at www.panunkashmir.org (Accessed on 19.05.2008).

responded in the aftermath of Nine Eleven by curbing militants against the West while leaving them free to operate as “freedom fighters” against India. But repeated and mounting evidence of fluid boundaries between militant organizations targeting the West and those targeting India resulted in renewed Western pressure to curb all militant outfits. Soon the Pakistani establishment found the Western pressure to curb radical Islamic militancy in all forms hard to resist. Withdrawal of support and increasing curbs on their activities along with selective arrests created a dangerous fracture between the Pakistani state and militant outfits it had nurtured. A C.I.A report on H.U.A, one of the most violent radical organizations, records some of the details of this support and the likely fallout once this support to be withdrawn:

“...I.S.I provides as much as \$30,000 and possibly as much as \$60,000 per month to the H.U.A. But Islamabad’s compliance with U.S and U.K demands to cease its support to the HUA...might prompt the HUA to retaliate. The group’s rhetoric and past action demonstrate hostility towards Islamabad that could be fuelled by a loss of Islamabad’s patronage.”¹³¹

It underscores both the intimate relationship between the Pakistani state and radical Islam, and the way that has now come to haunt Pakistan. Zia-ul-Haq and others who ruled Pakistan after him fostered Lal Masjid as a seminary of militant radical Islam. Nothing could be more telling of violence turned against Islamabad by its own creatures, than the recent crisis sparked by the defiant Maulana of *Lal Masjid* (Red Mosque) in the heart of Islamabad, barely a stone’s throw from the I.S.I. headquarters. Eventually its open defiance of state authority and vigilante actions which included beating-terrorizing those seen guilty of un-Islamic behaviour, kidnapping policemen and Chinese nationals forced Musharaf to order military action. Barely two hundred kilometres from Islamabad militant Islamists have captured towns in the Swat valley and paraded the severed heads of captured soldiers of the Pakistani army. What is worth noting is that from the pulpit of the Masjid, calls were regularly given for *jihad*

¹³¹ *Supra* Note 118, Page 3.

in Afghanistan, Kashmir and the West. For Pakistan the call was to enforce the *Shari at*. The Masjid's website underscores its unwavering commitment to the Islamic cause even after the Maulana was killed in a standoff with government forces, by proclaiming as its goal "*Shari' at ya shahdat*": either the rule of *Shari' at* or martyrdom. History seems to have come full circle for Islamabad. Its authority is being challenged and undermined. Proclamations from the Lal Masjid refer to the Shia as "a sect of prostitutes".¹³² The horrific quagmire that Pakistan finds itself in today is largely the product of its own parochial sectarian vision of Islamic consolidation and the expediency of violence.

However despite the ample light of massive evidence, what left me somewhat amused was the response of Lord Nazir Ahmed to a question about Pakistan's support to radical Islamist groups: "I can honestly say this is *complete nonsense* as far as *Pakistan's support for radical Islamic movements* [is concerned]...."¹³³ He blames the Pundit exodus on the Indian army. On Pakistan's ideological game plan in the region his response was staggering: "you are very much taking a *Hindu Indian fundamentalist* line."¹³⁴ Careful reading of his lines reveals that how for Lord Ahmed there is complete fusion of boundaries a between being Hindu and being Indian.

To reinforce his protestations concerning Pakistan's relative innocence, Lord Ahmed cites Pakistan's support to the secular J.K.L.F. However on being asked about its subsequent

¹³² Lal Masjid and Fazalullah, 27 October, 2007, http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2007%5C10%5C27%5Cstory_27-10-2007_pg3_1 (Accessed 21/05/2008).

¹³³ Excerpt from an interview Conducted with Lord Nazir Ahmed, member of the House of Lords, Labour Party, United Kingdom on 23rd April, 2008.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

marginalization he tended to be somewhat defensive and dismissed it as “allegation”.¹³⁵ He responded to recent reports by European members of Parliament and Human Rights Watch on Islamabad’s political gimmickry and the Human rights discourse within “Azad Kashmir” by forcefully asserting: “Emma Nicholson went once to Azad Kashmir and spoke to those people *who were nationalist and anti-Pakistan*, her briefing was done from London by the Indian lobby.”¹³⁶ Lord Ahmed appears to find it difficult to position himself as an independent spokesman for the Kashmiris and at the same time take good care of the sensitivities of the Pakistan government. , with a new bonhomie characterizing his relationship with the latter according to Many of the JKLF cadres I interacted with felt he was very close to the Pakistani establishment.

The words of the eminent Kashmiri writer and Political activist Prem Nath Baaz powerfully capture the driving reason behind persistent romanticism for Kashmir in political circles. Writing in 1967 he speaks of the “irony of history that by a combination of fortuitous circumstances such a tiny nation of Kashmiri’s has been placed in a position of great importance, where it can be instrumental in making or marring the future of so many.”¹³⁷ For India Kashmir as the only Muslim majority state of India constitutes the cornerstone of its secularist commitment. In polar contrast, for Pakistan Kashmir’s Muslimness makes its incorporation in Pakistan an imperative requirement for safeguarding its Muslim identity. Hence, President Musharraf declaration in a televised address to the nation, that Kashmir is Pakistan’s “jugular vein”¹³⁸.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ *Ibid*

¹³⁷ *Supra* Note 128, Page 15

¹³⁸ *Supra* Note 120.

Pakistan chose to ensure that its jugular vein is never severed, by thrusting the Kashmir issue into the arena of international power politics. However its attempt to pump through this vein its larger Islamist agenda seems to be turning against it.

Conclusion

Together we could speak of Afghanistan and the Kashmir valley as signifying South Asia, and through it, the world's defining experience with radical 'Islamic terrorism' and its confrontation with modernity and nationalism. Afghanistan and Kashmir valley could be said to signify the sites for the defining moment of Islamic radicalism, and the confrontation it posits with modernity and nationalism. Radical Islam seeks to embrace and represent all Muslims as indivisible, wherever they may be. And this indivisibility of the Muslim *Ummah* is constituted in unconditional literal conformity to the *Sharia* as the unalterable code of life.

One could speak of Afghanistan as the primal laboratory of Radical Islamic militancy; and of Kashmir, as the first theatre of global *jihad*. Several contingent and long-term historical factors worked to give life and ferocity to Islamic militancy. The foremost condition that paved the way for its emergence concerns the blinding temptation of final victory against the Soviet Union in American foreign policy. Pakistan anxious to find a way to over-shadow India seized it as its moment of destiny to establish its claim to be the flag bearer of Islam. Islamabad's¹³⁹ obsessive pursuit in what it envisioned as the cause of Islam stemmed from the peculiar historical milieu in which the idea of Pakistan took shape.

The argument of the dissertation is that the creation of Pakistan in 1947 reflects something much more basic than merely the making of a new territorial-constitutional arrangement. It marks the culmination of a process set in motion in the Indian sub-continent by Colonial rule

¹³⁹ Islamabad was established as the capital in the 1960's under orders from General Ayub Khan. The name of the city is significant symbolically; it means the 'abode of Islam'.

in the 19th century: as the processes of Colonial knowledge formation and as process and politics of neat identity formation. This is a critical though overlooked element to clarify the nature and salience of Pakistan's engagement in Afghanistan-Kashmir and with international power equations.

Mujahidin intervention in the Kashmir valley, as also the Afghan *jihad* and Taliban conquest of Afghanistan, is the outcome of a conscious well thought-out policy chosen by the Pakistani state. The severe and far reaching social-cultural rupture it has caused has invariably been subsumed in sweeping political categories. The kind of brutal communal-religious polarization enforced by *mujahidin* intervention is unlike at any time in the past. Its unprecedented ferocity and scale merits attention precisely because that has been seen and known as crucial to the ideological war unleashed in Afghanistan-Kashmir.

This stands out starkly in Islamabad's fervent support for the Taliban in Afghanistan and sustaining a policy of systematically targeting the Kashmiri Pundits, by propping up extremist Islamist organizations in the valley. *Mujahidin* have come to symbolize the brutal face of Islam, particularly for the Kashmiri Pundits. The *Mujahidin* intervention, supported financially and ideologically by Islamabad, introduced a new kind of rupture that was utterly unlike anything before that in the seven-eight hundred years of Islam in Kashmir. The exodus of nearly 250,000 Kashmiri Pundits from the valley in 1990 was the result of a vicious campaign: houses were burnt, men were murdered and women were stripped, raped, and hung from trees. The intent was to rob the entire community of all sense of shame and honour. The intensity and scale of communal violence in Kashmir in 1989 mimicked the communal conflagrations during the bloody partition of 1947.

The role of the West in fostering the rise of radical Islam – with Pakistan serving as the principal instrument – raises the important question of Modernity's relationship with radical Islam. Both, the Soviet Union and the United States have contributed in near equal measure to the emergence of radical Islam and the violence that has flowed from it. Such extremist forces would not have acquired the kind of scale and potency they now possess were it not for the active support of so many leading modern nation states. In recent years American policy in Afghanistan as also Pakistan's peace overtures on the vexed question of Kashmir are driven by an awful sense of anxiety about extremist Islamists nurtured in pursuit of grand designs violently turning against their creators.

The role of the 'modern', 'democratic' and 'secular' world in facilitating the rise of transnational passions and forces within Islam poses disturbing larger questions concerning the fraught and complex relationship between Islam, Religion and Modernity.

The unsettling grim fact seems to be that Modernity itself stands deeply implicated for nurturing and making possible the rise of hatred and intolerance in religion. Hence the grave definitive question that arises is whether violence is an essential constituent of Modernity. To speak of violence as mere aberration on the margins of modernity is manifestly misleading.

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