BOOK REVIEW


The book edited by Professor Sharif al-Mujahid, Director of the Qā'id-i A'zam Academy, Karachi and the author of *Indian Secularism* (1970), has been sponsored by the National Committee for Birth Centenary Celebrations of the Qā'id-i A'zam. It is divided into two parts. Part I gives the complete transcript of the Constituent Assembly debate (March 7-12, 1949) which was undoubtedly a “bold attempt on the part of Pakistan policy-makers to formulate and spell out the ideological orientation” of Pakistan. Part II comprises two speeches by Dr. Ishtiaq Husain Qureshi and four articles by the following scholars:


The preambles to all the three Constitutions (1956, 62, 73) have been appended at the end of the book to illustrate the fact that the Objectives Resolution has continued to be the basic driving force of the ideology of Pakistan, notwithstanding the intellectual, political and economic changes in the Pakistani society since 1949.

What is this Pakistani ideology—the sum-total of ideas, theories and aspirations? Part II has been captained: “Elucidation and Implication of Pakistan’s Ideological Orientation”—which seeks to delineate the ideology of Pakistan. The gist of Dr. Ishtiaq Hussain’s two addresses which he originally gave to All-Pakistan Political Science Conference, 1950, and 1951, is that the constitution of Pakistan shall be based on the progressive ideals and principles of Islam: the Muslims should obey God and His Prophet; they should cooperate in righteousness and justice, but never in unrighteousness and injustice; lastly, Muslims must solve their problems by mutual consultation (pp. 109-10). And that political sovereignty belongs to the people who elect and dismiss the legislatures and the government—people are “the vehicle of the authority delegated by God to the state of Pakistan” (p. 116).

A.K. Nazmul Karim discusses the basic features which characterize any state a true Islamic state, for example, that in an Islamic state economic life free from state control is not possible (p. 125). G.W. Choudhury analyses the relationship between the Constitution of 1962 and the Islamic Ideology (pp. 131-138).

Sharif al-Mujahid analyses in great detail the essential elements of the ideology of Pakistan (pp. 139-161). The range of his discussion is broad enough to cover all historical and contemporaneous aspects of this ideology. He also takes note of the exploitation of
Islamic Ideology by various regimes in Pakistan "to justify and sustain status quoism, impose authoritarian or semi-authoritarian rule, and even protect vested interests. This exploitation of Islam led to a growing disenchantment with the ideology itself, since it had allegedly failed to imbue the rulers with idealism, inform their policies with the highest ideals of righteousness and justice, discipline them to keep their personal ambitions within the bounds of overall national goals and general social welfare, and curb their personal greed and aggrandisement." (p. 157) "But, despite the progressive ineffectiveness of Islam as the basis for national integration", claims Professor Sharif al-Mujahid, "Islam continues to be a crucial factor with the masses... and it is instructive to note here that allegiance, whether in mere theory or in actual practice, to this Islamic ideal is the one constant landmark on the otherwise undulated political and social landscape of Pakistan since its inception". (Ibid). He concludes with an optimistic note: "To a distraught world which has lost the art of a balanced life, which no longer knows how to bring harmony between the spirit and the flesh, between true idealism and material needs, the Islamic principles, the Pakistanis fervently believe, are still capable of bringing solace to the individual and order in the Society." (pp. 160-61).

One would agree with the Professor and add that during the three decades of our national history all economic and cultural development has occurred on the social periphery—only the rich elites have benefitted, while the huge masses are still deprived of the basic necessities. The challenge for our planners, economists, and intellectuals was to relate ideology to material facts: ideologies are sustained by struggles for social solidarity, economic equality and popular political participation, and not by mere slogan-mongering.

The part on "Objectives Resolution" has not been edited, only Biographical Notes of the participants in the Debate are given at the end of the book. The Debate is replete with discussions on very important and fundamental political, constitutional and economic issues which the young Pakistani nation was facing at the time. Proper editing, collating and verification of many facts would have made the work appear more valuable.

The book is beautifully printed. A select bibliography will be of great help to the students who intend to embark upon the study of this subject. The work is indeed a welcome addition to the literature on Pakistani ideology.

Islamabad.

Ziaul Haque