



ORF ISSUE BRIEF

OCTOBER 2007

ISSUE BRIEF # 12

Islamisation in Pakistan: A Case Study of Punjab

By Kalim Bahadur*

Islam had reached Punjab along with the invasion of Muhammad Bin Qasim in the 8th Century. It spread in the province through the efforts of an array of Sufi saints who arrived in the province in the centuries that followed. Naturally, that meant that Islam in Punjab was deeply influenced by Sufi traditions.

Today, both sides of the divided province are dotted with Sufi shrines or dargahs. The Sufi saints of Punjab have been venerated through the centuries by Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs of the province. Some of the well-known shrines of Sufi saints are Data Ganj Bakhsh, Mian Mir, Shah Hussain, Bahauddin Zakaria of Multan, Baba Ganj Shakar of Pakpattan, and other saints who had contributed to the composite culture of Punjab. However, at the other extreme there were some other Sufi saints like Sheikh Ahmad Sarhindi Mujaddid Alif Sani (1562-1624) who had opposed this trend and supported the reaction towards orthodoxy which culminated in the policies pursued by Aurangzeb.

DEOBANDI INFLUENCE

Almost 60 per cent of the population of Pakistan lives in Punjab out of which 99 per cent are Muslims. Among the Muslims in the province, the majority of them are Sunnis and belong to the Barelvi school. However, the Deobandi following in the province has been increasing. This is reflected by the fact that in Punjab a total of 4,50,000 pupils are studying in Deobandi madrassas whereas only 2,00,000 pupils are

in the Barelvi madrassas. In Punjab, the largest number of madrassas is in Bahawalpur and Lahore comes next.¹ The biradari (kinship) relationship has been the dominant form determining politics. Feudal families have dominated the social life of the province.² The Unionist Party of Punjab came into existence in the early Twenties and comprised the leading political landlord families comprising Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs.³ The Muslim League in Punjab in the Thirties, though led by Sir Mohammad Iqbal, was weak. In the 1937 election to the Punjab Provincial Assembly, the Muslim League won only one seat out of 86 Muslim seats.⁴ The Sikander-Jinnah Pact (1937) allowed the Muslim members of the Unionist Party to function as members of the Muslim League.⁵ The dominance of the landlords in the politics of Punjab led to the depoliticisation of the bulk of the peasantry. The peasantry, therefore, fell prey to local *pirs* and *Mashaikhs*.⁶ The influence of the feudal gentry in the structure of power prevented any land reforms from being carried out even after Pakistan came into being. In the 1945 election to the Punjab Provincial Assembly, it was the Unionist Party and not the Muslim League which formed the government. The Muslim League launched a movement to unseat the Khizar Hayat government in early 1947.

RADICAL BASE

Today, the radical Islamic parties do not have a large electoral base in Punjab as reflected by the fact that the MMA

Observer Research Foundation is a public policy think-tank that aims to influence formulation of policies for building a strong and prosperous India. ORF pursues these goals by providing informed and productive inputs, in-depth research and stimulating discussions. The Foundation is supported in its mission by a cross-section of India's leading public figures, academics and business leaders.

won only three seats from Punjab in the 2002 poll. However Punjab, being the largest province of Pakistan and Punjabi being dominant in the ruling establishment, it has the central offices of almost all religious parties, mainly in Lahore. The locality of Mansoorah in Lahore is known for the central office of the Jama'at-i-Islami of Pakistan, Raiwind is the centre of the Tablighi Jama'at and the Muridke is known for the large campus of the Dawa wal Irshad and its affiliated institutions, including the notorious Lashkar-e-Taiba. Numerous little known off-shoots of the religious parties also function from various cities in Punjab. Islamic ideology was invoked in Punjab not by the Muslim League but by the Majlise Ahrar and the Jama'at-i-Islami. The Jama'at-i-Islami founder, Maulana Abul Ala Mawdudi, had set up the Jama'at in 1941 in Pathankot in undivided Punjab. Mawdudi had claimed that the famous poet and Islamic philosopher, Muhammad Iqbal, had invited him to Punjab to set up his Islamic institution which later evolved into the Jama'at-i-Islami. The religious parties did not have any significant influence in Punjab till the Partition, though the Majlise Ahrar, the Jamiatul Ulama Hind and the Jama'at-i-Islami had been functioning in the province for some years. The Jama'at-i-Islami and Ahrar had been virulently condemning the Muslim League and Jinnah. They were the only two parties which used Islam to oppose the creation of Pakistan.

POLITICS OF RELIGION

The Jama'at-i-Islami's founder, Maulana Mawdudi, had opposed the creation of Pakistan in spite of his firm belief in a separate nationhood of Muslims. Being a Muslim, he declared that he was not at all interested that Muslim governments are formed in areas where Muslims are in a majority. For him, the most important question was whether in Pakistan the system of government would be based on the sovereignty of God or on popular sovereignty. In the case of the former it would be Pakistan or otherwise it would be "naPakistan."⁷ The Jama'at-i-Islami was not a mass party but a cadre-based organization with restricted membership. Mawdudi had developed systematic and cogent arguments for the Islamic state if one was to accept the basic premise. Over the years the Jama'at-i-Islami has not been able to develop a large electoral base but it has been able to mobilize formidable street power. An important role in this has been played by its students' wing, the Islami Jamiat Tulaba. (IJT). This group uses

violence against its opponents, particularly against rival students groups in the universities in Punjab. Recently, it forced Shia students of the Punjab University in Lahore to offer their prayers outside the campus while Sunni students continue to offer prayers inside the campus. The IJT has almost taken over the University, dictating it to conform to its view of Islamic higher education. Sometime ago, they opposed the setting up of the department of musicology, claiming that Islam was against music. The Zia regime had used the IJT to suppress the activities of the anti-government youth organizations of the PPP and other parties. Ironically, in 1984 the Zia government banned all the students unions and the students' organizations, including the IJT, in all the universities in Pakistan. The IJT then was also suppressed brutally by the military regime.⁸ Quite a large number of the present

leaders of the Jama'at began their political career in the IJT. It has also supplied large number of recruits for the jihad in Afghanistan and Kashmir.

AFTER PARTITION

The Partition of India witnessed widespread communal bloodshed and killings and Mawdudi, in line with his opposition to it, called it "the bloody birth pangs of Pakistan, as predicting the birth of a monster and not a human being."⁹ The main base of the Ahrar in Punjab comprised the urban lower middle class which had been ignored by the feudal Unionist Party government and which was an ally of the Muslim League.¹⁰ Pakistan came into being in 1947 and created an ideological confusion for the religious parties. Most of them, particularly the three named above, had opposed Pakistan on political and religious grounds. The Jamiatul Ulama had argued that nationhood is determined by geographical boundaries rather than by religion. The Jama'at-i-Islami argued that nationalism was against Islam, and the Ahrar had opposed Pakistan because the leadership of the Muslim League comprised of westernised leaders and, hence, they could not be expected to build Pakistan as an Islamic state.

lary the three named above, had opposed Pakistan on political and religious grounds. The Jamiatul Ulama had argued that nationhood is determined by geographical boundaries rather than by religion. The Jama'at-i-Islami argued that nationalism was against Islam, and the Ahrar had opposed Pakistan because the leadership of the Muslim League comprised of westernised leaders and, hence, they could not be expected to build Pakistan as an Islamic state.

The Muslim League leaders had never spelt out the details of the political system of Pakistan and had done no home work about it. Jinnah had been throughout ambivalent and vague on the political system of Pakistan. However, he delivered a bombshell when he held out the contours of almost a secular Pakistan in his inaugural address at the first session of the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan on August 11,

The Jama'at-i-Islami and Majlise Ahrar had been virulently condemning the Muslim League and its leader Jinnah. They were the only two parties which used Islam to oppose the creation of Pakistan.

1947. The new leaders of Pakistan used religion to silence the regional demands and as a tool for nation building and national integration. Initially, the religious parties which had opposed Pakistan were out of favour with the public. However, the Jama'at-i-Islami started a public campaign for the creation of an Islamic State. It participated in the first election held in early 1951 to the Punjab Legislative Assembly. It had fielded 53 candidates of which only one was elected and the Jama'at in total had polled 200,000 votes.¹¹ Their main election argument, apart from some social and economic issues, was that Pakistan had been demanded and won in the name of Islam and now that it was there it should be made an Islamic state. The plan was that since most Muslims would not be able to oppose the demand, it would be put on the national agenda.

SECTARIAN STRIFE

By 1951-1952, the religious parties got hold of a popular cause to fight in the name of Islam in Punjab. It was the demand that the followers of Mirza Ghulam Ahmed, who had claimed to be a prophet, and his followers (called Ahmadi) be declared non-Muslims. This issue had been the cause of much bitter controversy ever since the last quarter of the 19th Century. The Ahrars and the Jama'at-i-Islami and other Ulama parties took up this highly explosive issue which snowballed into large-scale violence against the Ahmadis in various parts of Punjab. About 2,000 people, mainly belonging to the Ahmadi community, were killed in the attacks. The disturbances did not spread to other parts of the country as the Ahmadi population was mainly concentrated in Punjab. Before Partition, the Ahmadi religious centre was in Qadian, a town in East Punjab. In Pakistan, they had been allowed to set up their religious centre in a town near Sargodha called Rabwa in Punjab where the Ahmadi population is in a majority. Apart from the fundamental belief of the mainstream Muslims that the prophet-hood had come to an end with Prophet Muhammad, the landlords in Punjab were also keen to see that the Ahmadis were declared non-Muslims as then any Muslim who would convert to the Ahmadi religion would not inherit the parental property. This would discourage others from conversion and block the spread of the Ahmadi religion. The outbreak of violence against the Ahmadis forced the government to declare Martial Law in Punjab. Lal Masjid in 2007 was not

Lal Masjid in 2007 was not the first time when radicals took refuge in a mosque; this had happened earlier when the military had to force the anti-Ahmadi militants from their sanctuary in the Wazir Khan Mosque in Lahore.

the first time when the radicals took refuge in a mosque; this had happened earlier when the military had to force the anti-Ahmadi militants from their sanctuary in the Wazir Khan Mosque in Lahore. This episode marked the origin of radical Islam in Pakistan.

The Government appointed a commission, headed by Justice Muhammad Munir and Justice Kayani, to go into the causes of the Punjab disturbances and identify the persons and parties responsible. The Munir Commission, apart from going into the reasons for the outbreak of violence and fixing responsibility, went into the basic questions of Pakistan's polity and role of Islam in the new country. It invited the leaders and Ulama of all the sects and schools of Islam and asked them two pertinent questions. First: to define who is a Muslim? Second: what rights a non-Muslim would have in

an Islamic state. The Commission was clear that it was not its function to decide who is a Muslim and who is not but since Ulama were demanding that the Ahmadi be declared non-Muslims, they should identify who is a Muslim and who is not. Not surprisingly, almost all the Ulama gave a different definition of a Muslim. According to the Commission, keeping in view the several definitions given by the Ulama and that no two Ulama agreed on this fundamental question, to attempt their own definition, and if that definition were to differ from that given by all others, then they would "go out of Islam".¹² Similarly all the Ulama were almost unanimous that non-Muslims would not have equal rights with Muslims in an Islamic state.¹³ The anti-Ahmadi movement

did not succeed in 1953 but the Ulama parties were able to wash away the stigma of their opposition to Pakistan in the pre-Partition days.

ZIA'S JIHAD

When General Ziaul Haq usurped power in 1977 he had no legitimacy whatsoever, and he made Islam the plank for his legitimacy. To his good fortune, his assumption of power was followed by the revolution in Iran the following year and, later, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. General Zia made Pakistan the frontline state in the western effort to defeat the Soviet misadventure. At home he declared Islamisation as the main objective of his regime. Several Islamic measures were introduced including the Hudood Ordinance, Zakat and Ushr, and Shariat benches were set up.¹⁴ These

measures provoked sectarian controversies, the Shias particularly objected to the compulsory deduction of the Zakat. Faced with strong Shia protests, General Zia withdrew the Zakat payment from the community. This created the strange situation where one sect alone was forced to pay the Zakat to the government. These controversies added fuel to fire, particularly in some districts of Punjab where Shia-Sunni relations were rather sensitive. There was a barely concealed attempt by the government to promote one sect and one particular school.

Religious parties were promoted, madrassas proliferated, all kinds of radical groups were allowed to carry on their Jihadi propaganda and recruit young men for Jihad. Militant groups in Afghanistan were trained, armed with US weapons and Saudi funds to fight the Soviet army. For Zia, the state always came second. Political forces were squashed whilst those brandishing guns (whether pseudo religious, ethnic, sectarian or tribal) were encouraged. This was without precedent; division and extremism is anathema to any state, government or authority. Extremism from the earliest times has plagued Muslim societies, but in Pakistan's case the rulers themselves fed and encouraged it.¹⁵

It was during this period that Punjab became the centre of radical Islam. The social and economic situation in the province was conducive to the growth of radical groups though they did not have the street power in Punjab as they had in other provinces.¹⁶ In the rural areas, the influence of the Sufi and Barelvi School was strong but extremism was creeping into Southern Punjab from Jhang to Dera Ghazi Khan which has the highest growth of madraasas in Punjab. It is not surprising that it has been the stronghold of the Sipha Sahaba and Lashkare Jhangvi. Jhang district is the well known centre of sectarian extremism. The landlords in the district are Shias and Sunni pirs while most of the population, including migrants from East Punjab, is Sunni and non-Syed. It could be said that class division in the district runs along the sectarian divide.¹⁷ It was at the height of the agitation against the Zakat Ordinance that the hardline militant Sunni group Sipah Sahaba was formed in 1985, led by one Sunni leader of the Jamiatul Ulama-i-Islam (JUI), Haq Nawaz Jhangvi. Around the same time, the Shia militant organization, Tehrike Nifaze Fiqh Jafariya (TNFJ), was founded in Multan. This development reflected the fact that mem-

bers of most of the religious parties who were Sunnis were promoting sectarian conflict. Haq Nawaz Jhangvi wanted to refute the Iranian claim that the Iranian revolution was an Islamic revolution and that it had no relevance to Pakistan and Islam.¹⁸ Jhangvi's anti-Shia campaign assumed the form of persecution of the Shia population, preventing them from performing their religious rituals in Jhang.¹⁹ In 1996, some of the militant elements within the SSP formed another organisation called the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LJ) name after Haq Nawaz Jhangvi who had been assassinated in 1990. However, it is believed that the LJ is not a separate group but only the armed wing of the SSP. The SSP cadres received military training from the Harkatul Mujahideen (HuM) and at some Taliban camps in Afghanistan. The SSP also has close connections with Jaishe Mohammad. It was said that Azim Tariq,

the slain SSP leader, was a close friend of Maulana Masood Azhar. The Sipah Sahaba could not spread among the rural people of Punjab where the Sufi influence was strong. However, the newly emerging Sunni merchants, shopkeepers and traders in the other districts of Punjab have made SSP the strongest organization in the province. After Jhang, the SSP concentrated on Multan which also has a large Shia population (40 %) and has been known as the city which has the largest number of shrines, mazars (mausoleums) and mosques in the world. The Deobandi madrassas have also proliferated in Punjab. The Wafaqul Madaris, the Deobandi madrasa Union is located in Multan. The Jamiatal Mujahideen Alami, which was suspected to have made an attempt on the

life of General Musharraf in 2004, has links with a Deobandi madrasa. Madrassas of the other religious parties have also made their appearance in the southern part of Punjab

The most prominent Shia organization, the Tehrik-i-Nifazi-Fiqh-i-Jafariya (TNFJ), was founded in Bhakkar in Punjab in 1979, in the background of the Iranian revolution and the increasing Sunni aggressive posture during General Zia's rule. The founder was Allama Syed Jafar Hussain Mujtahid. The TNFJ aimed at asserting the separate identity of the Shias and protecting their religious rights in the face of the imposition of Sunni interpretation of Shariah that did not conform to their *fiqh Jafariya*.²⁰ The militant wing of the TNFJ soon appeared thereafter, called the Sipah-i-Muhammad. Another offshoot of the TNFJ was the Imamiya Student Organisation. The TNFJ had launched the movement against the Za-

It was at the height of the agitation against the Zakat Ordinance that the hardline militant Sunni group Sipah Sahaba was formed in 1985, led by one Sunni leader of the Jamiatul Ulama-i-Islam (JUI), Haq Nawaz Jhangvi.

kat and the Ushr Ordinance issued by the Zia regime in July 1980. The Shia *fiqh* did not accept the Sunni interpretation that Zakat had to be paid compulsorily to the state. The military regime gave in and the Shias were exempted from paying the Zakat. The TNFJ became a political party in 1987. It changed its name to Tehrike Jafariya Pakistan (TJP) in 1989. It was alleged that the TNFJ was receiving financial, moral and political help from Iran. The Sipah Muhammad (SMP) was alleged to be involved in criminal activities, such as gun running. It had an ambiguous relationship with the TJP. The SMP also accused the TJP of failure to protect the Shias from the SSP.²¹ The TNFJ, like its Sunni counterparts, has also been raked by dissensions. Some of its activists had been dissatisfied with the leadership of Allama Sajid Naqvi during the Nineties. They formed another organization called the Shurai Whadat. The leaders of the new group denied that they had formed a parallel party and claimed that it was rather a federation of all the Shia groups and that even the TNFJ was a part of it.²² The TNFJ, now called the Islami Tehrik Pakistan (ITP) under the leadership of Allama Sajid Naqvi had joined the Muttahida Majlise Amal (MMA) in 2002, the united front of the six religious parties, now the ruling party in the NWFP and a coalition partner in the provincial government in Balochistan. Apart from the Jamiatul Ulama-i-Pakistan, the Bareilvi party, in the MMA, all the other four parties are Deobandi and hostile to the Shias. It was not surprising therefore, when Allama Sajid Naqvi, a Shia leader of one of the components of the MMA, was barred from entering NWFP in 2004. If that was not enough, the MMA did not nominate Allama Sajid Naqvi from NWFP for the seat to the Senate and was, instead, given the nomination from Punjab where the MMA did not have the required number of votes to ensure his election.²³

ORIGINS OF LASHKAR-E-TAIBA

The Ahle Hadith is not a centralized organization like the Jama'at-i-Islami. It is a kind of loose confederation of 17 organisations of Ahle Hadith. Every organization is built around a seminary. Out of the 17 organisations, six actually take part in politics. Three are in fact militant groups active in Afghanistan and in the Kashmir jihad. Their ideology is puritan Wahabi and they oppose Sufi practices and saints' intercessions. Ahle Hadith Islam is closer to that of Saudis

and they also receive funds from Saudi citizens.²⁴ There are differences of rituals and also of political strategy which lead to mutual bickering and conflict among the different Ahle Hadith organizations though there is a central executive committee which is supposed to lead the various groups of the Ahle Hadith. Two of the well known organisations of Ahle Hadith are the Markazi Ahle Hadith led by Allama Sajid Mir and Jama'at wal Dawa led by Hafiz Saeed. The Markazi Ahle Hadith was formed in Bihar, India in 1906 and after Partition two centres were set up in Lahore and Faisalabad. It was transformed into a political party which aligned itself with the Muslim League. One of the important assets of the Jamiat Ahle Hadith is the central Wafaq al-Madaris which looks after the Wahabi seminaries all over in Pakistan. It has a network of offices across Punjab. It has a youth branch called the Youth Force which is used in confrontations with the Shias. This is also linked to Sipah Sahaba. Another less known Ahle Hadith organization is Tehrik al Mujahideen. It is led by one Sheikh Jamilur Rahman. He is also the head of Pakistan's Muttahida Jihad Council, the apex organization of all militias fighting in Kashmir.

The most important of the Ahle Hadith factions is the one which had set up a major centre for their propaganda and Jihadi activities in the outskirts of Lahore in Punjab. It is called the Markaz Dawa wal Irshad. The Markaz came up in 1987 in Muridke outside Lahore and was set up by three university professors, Zafar Iqbal, Hafiz Mohmmad Saeed and Abdullah Azam. Abdullah Azam was assassinated in 1989. The

stated objective of the institution was the preaching of Islam and Jihad. Its military wing, known as the Lashkar-e-Taiba, is much more known as one of the largest terrorist groups active in Jammu and Kashmir. The Markaz owes its huge setup to the munificence of Saudi and Gulf donors. It runs 30 schools which, apart from imparting education in secular subjects, are also geared to produce Mujahideen ready to wage Jihad.²⁵ Most LeT recruits come from Punjab and Kashmir. Three districts of Punjab, Lahore, Gujranwala and Multan are known to be the strongholds of the LeT.²⁶ The LeT does not disclose the number of militants it has sent into Kashmir. The entire institution of Dawa wal Irshad, including the LeT, is deeply involved with Pakistan's agencies. Nobody attempts to probe deeply in its affairs for fear of the state.²⁷ The Dawa wal Irshad holds its annual gathering at

The Markaz owes its huge setup to the munificence of Saudi and Gulf donors. It runs 30 schools which, apart from imparting education in secular subjects, are also geared to produce Mujahideen ready to wage Jihad.

Muridke which is comparable to that of the Tablighi Jama'at. The objective of the congregation is to spread the need for Jihad. Top leaders of the religious parties like the Jama'at-i-Islami, including Qazi Hussain Ahmed, Sardar Abdul Qayyum from PoK and others attend the gatherings. Lashkar leaders categorically reject any possibility of a negotiated solution of the Kashmir dispute and reject the system of constitutional democracy. It was members ascribing to the LeT ideology who set up a state within the state of Pakistan, inside the Lal Masjid, two months ago in Islamabad and began the Jihad within the country itself.²⁸

TABLIGHI JAMA'AT

Punjab is the province where Tablighi Jama'at has set up its centre in Raiwind where it holds its mammoth annual gatherings which sometimes draw two million people. The Tablighi Jama'at is reputed to be the mother of all radical Islamic groups in the sense that people trained in the Jama'at are found in various groups across Pakistan. It is a known fact that the last civilian President of Pakistan, Mohammad Rafiq Tarar, father of the last elected Prime Minister Mian Nawaz Sharif, Mian Muhammad Sharif, one of the most notorious heads of the ISI, General Javed Nasir, were all associated with the Tablighi Jama'at. It is no less surprising that very little is known about its ideology or interpretation of Islam, mainly because it published very little about itself and very little has been written about it by others.²⁹ During the last few years, however, considerable published material by the Tablighi Jama'at has become available. In comparison, the Jama'at-i-Islami has since its inception had a very well organized machinery of propaganda and publicity in almost all the languages of the Indian subcontinent.

The Tablighi Jama'at subscribes to the Deoband school of thought. The founders of the Deoband madrasa aimed at reviving the life and the days of the Prophet and his companions through their preaching and issuing of fatwas. They are strict adherents of the Hanafi Islamic law.³⁰ The objective of the founder of the Tablighi Jama'at, Maulana Ilyas, was not the conversion of non-Muslims to Islam but to make Muslims better Muslims. The movement originated in the Mewat area of the present day Haryana state in India. This should be seen in the context of the Twenties of the 20th century when in the aftermath of failure of the Khilafat Movement, Muslims had started the Tanzim movement to counter the

Shuddhi movement of the Arya Samaj. The methodology adopted for spreading the message of the Jama'at was through roving groups of preachers who were to abide by strict rules and regulations, which included paying one's own expenses and staying normally in mosques while on preaching missions.³¹ The subject of the talks given by the preachers was built around six principles which were considered key principles of Islamic faith. The ideology and programme of the Tablighi Jama'at has been attacked by most other religious parties like the Jama'at-i-Islami, the Jamiatul Ulama-i-Islam and Ahle Hadith. The organisational structure of the Tablighi Jama'at is rather simple. Its international headquarters are located in India with regional offices in states, normally located in the mosques.³² The Tablighi Jama'at, as compared to other religious parties, strictly keeps itself out of politics despite

the fact its annual mammoth gatherings in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh are attended by politicians of most Muslim parties. There have been numerous allegations of Tablighi Jama'at's involvement in politics. For example it was reported that Hizbul Mujahideen (HuM) and Harkatul Jihadul Islami (HUJI) were allowed by the Tablighi Jama'at to use its infra structure in Raiwind in Punjab for training their militants.³³ Al Qaeda evaded law enforcement agencies by sheltering its operatives behind Tablighi Jama'at's generally benign religious activities.

In Pakistan, the Tablighi Jama'at set up its headquarters in Raiwind, Punjab. Since the Tablighi Jama'at has successfully

It was members ascribing to the Lashkar-e-Taiba ideology who set up a state within the state of Pakistan, inside the Lal Masjid, two months ago in Islamabad and began the Jihad within the country itself.

spread the belief that it is not in politics it was able to mobilise many in the armed forces, government service and other professions in its activities.³⁴ The Tablighi Jama'at's involvement in the failed military coup in 1995 in Pakistan seriously compromised its claims to be apolitical. In September-October 1995, 36 military officers and 20 civilians led by Maj. Gen. Zaheerul Islam Abbasi³⁵ were arrested for plotting to overthrow the government and they planned to declare the establishment of an Islamic state in Pakistan. They were part of the 10 Corps which was commanded by Lt Gen Ghulam Mohammad Malik who was a sympathiser of the Tablighi Jama'at. Gen Ghulam Mohammad Malik. Maj. Gen. Abbasi and Brig Mustansar Billah were the members of the Tablighi Jama'at in Taxila which was headed by Sufi Iqbal. Most of the military personnel involved were the followers of Sufi Iqbal. Gen Malik often invited Sufi Iqbal for lectures to his units. Almost all the members of the group were Punjabis and were

in contact with the Tablighi Jama'at and other radical Ulama. While most of the military personnel were charged in the case, one Maulana Akram Awan, the leader of the Tanzimul Ikhwan, was released without being charged.³⁶

JAISHE MOHAMMAD

One of the most militant radical groups based in Punjab and whose reach extends all over Pakistan, and large parts of India, is the Jaishe Mohammad led by Maulana Masood Azhar. Born in Bahawalpur in Punjab, he was educated at the famous madrassa Binori in Karachi. His baptism in jihad was in Afghanistan; he later shifted to Kashmir as an operative of the Hizbul Mujahideen. He was arrested in Kashmir and spent four years in prison and was released after the ISI sponsored hijacking of the Indian Airline Flight 814 in 1999. The entire climax of the hijacking at Kandahar highlighted the importance of Maulana Masood Azhar in the terrorist war launched by the ISI against India. On his return from Kandahar, Masood Azhar jettisoned the Hizbul Mujahideen and literally hijacked HuM's offices and properties to set up his own group called the Jaishe Mohammad.³⁷ It soon became the most active group fighting in Kashmir. The Jaish was linked to Al Qaida and was funded by Osama bin Laden. Azhar was also in contact with Mullah Umar, the Taliban leader. Jaishe Mohammad's close connection with the Pakistani establishment is attested by the fact that even when it was banned, its offices continued to function normally and its bank account was also active.³⁸ Its office is located in Islamabad but its operational office is in Bahawalpur.

Jaishe Mohammad could show off its formidable organization by terrorist attacks on the Indian Parliament on December 13, 2001 and earlier in October the same year on

the Kashmir Legislative Assembly. The attack on the Indian Parliament led to an almost eyeball to eyeball confrontation between India and Pakistan. It was only after one year that the relations between the two countries could be brought back to "normal". It is also to be noted that the Jaishe Mohammad was also responsible for the two attacks on General Musharraf. Even before Musharraf banned the Jaish in January 2002, it had changed its name to Jama'at-e-Furqa and later to Khudamul Islam. Later, the Jaish intensified its activities within Pakistan, attacking Churches and Shia mosques. It has close links with the Sipah Sahaba. It is said that their memberships overlap.³⁹ The Jaishe Mohammad had wide contacts among the lower ranks of the military. It had a good popular base in Punjab. This was the result of the involvement of several military agencies with the terrorist groups.

TALIBANISATION

Recent events have shown that Talibanisation is knocking on the door of Punjab. The foregoing account of the spread of radical Islam in Punjab shows the progress that Jihadi elements have made in capturing religious institutions in the province. The next step is the proliferation of the Lal Masjids in Punjab. It is clear that some of the settled districts of the NWFP which are adjacent to Punjab are already Talibanised. In some of the districts of Punjab, like Gujranwala, Jhang, Multan Sargodha, the Taliban already call the shots. The Lal Masjid episode shows that a section of the Pakistani state actively supports the Taliban and radical Islam. The spread of the Talibanisation in Punjab will pose a serious threat to the stability of the state which is already facing a critical systemic crisis.

-
1. Daily Times; (Lahore); 9 February 2006
 2. Ian Talbot; Pakistan, A Modern History; 1998; New Delhi; Oxford University Press; p. 30
 3. For the role of the Muslim landlord families in the politics of Punjab see Syed Nur Ahmad; From Marital to Martial Law, Politics in the Punjab, 1919-1958; 1985; Boulder; Westview Press; p. 53
 4. Khalid Bin Sayeed; Pakistan, the Formative Phase : 1857-1948; 1968; Karachi; Oxford University Press; p. 83
 5. Syed Nur Ahmad; n. no.3; pp. 145-148
 6. Khalid Bin Sayeed; n. no. 4; p.203
 7. Abul Ala Mawdudi; Musalman Aur Maujuda Siyasi Kashmakash; Vol. 3 1942; Pathankot; Jama'at-i-Islami Publications; pp. 86-87
 8. Frederic Grare; Political Islam in the Indian Subcontinent, the Jama'at-i-Islami; 2001; New Delhi; Manohar; p. 40.
 9. Tarjuman al Quran; vol. 31; no.2; pp. 59-50
 10. Hamza Alavi; " Social forces and ideology in the making of Pakistan."; The Friday Times; (Lahore); 6 December 2002
 11. Abul Afaq; Saiyyad Abul Ala Mawdudi; Savaneh, Afkar, Tehrik; Vol. 1; 1971; Lahore; p. 372.
 12. Muhammad Munir ; From JINNAH to ZIA; 1980; Lahore; Vanguard Books; p. 69
 13. Ibid; pp. 58-60.
 14. Anwar.H.Syed; "The Sunni-Shia Conflict in Pakistan;" in Hafeez Malik (ed.); Pakistan: Founder's Aspirations and Today's Realities; 2001; Delhi; Oxford University Press; p. 253
 15. Qazi Faez Isa; "Tracing the roots of the malaise"; Dawn; Karachi; 6 August 2007
 16. Daily Times; 30 July 2007
 17. Afak Haydar; "The Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan;" in Hafiz Malik; n. no. 5; p. 267
 18. Ibid; p .268
 19. International Crisis Group; "The State of Sectarianism in Pakistan;" Asia Report No 95-18 April 005; p. 14
 20. Mumtaz Ahmed; "Revivalism, Islamization, Sectarianism, and Violence in Pakistan"; in Craig Baxter & Charles Kennedy, (Eds.); Pakistan 1997; 1998; New Delhi; HarperCollins Publishers India; p. 112

21. www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/publications/index_ehtml?cid=O&DOCID=152& Accessed on 8.8.2007
22. Herald; (Karachi); September 1998; p.48
23. The Friday Times; 28 April 2003
24. Khaled Ahmed; "The power of the Ahle Hadith;" The Friday Times; 10 July 2002
25. Herald Annual; January 1998; p.125
26. Zahid Hussain; Frontline Pakistan, The Struggle With Militant Islam; 2007; New Delhi; Penguin/Viking; p. 56
27. The Friday Times; n. no. 23
28. Herald Annual; 1998; p.130
29. Yoginder Sikand; The Origins and Development of the Tablighi Jama'at (1920-2000); 2002; New Delhi; Orient Longman Private Limited; p. 10
30. Ibid; p.66
31. www.ssrc.org/sept11/essays/metcalfe.htm Accessed on 10. 7.2007
32. Sikand; n. no. 29; p. 81
33. www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast_Asia/DJ15-O3.html Accessed on 1.8.2007
34. www.meforum.org/article/686 Accessed on 1.8.2007
35. Maj.Gen. Zaheerul Islam Abbasi while he was a military attaché in New Delhi had been detained by the security agencies for spying. He claimed innocence at that time but after he was caught and imprisoned by Pakistan authorities for his failed coup he bragged about the service he had rendered to Pakistan in New Delhi.
36. For more about Mauling Akram Awan see Daily Times, 22 May 2002
37. Amir Mir; The True Face of Jihadis; Inside Pakistan's Network of Terror; 2006; New Delhi; Roli Books; p. 48
38. www.rediff.com/news/2002/jan/29flip.htm
39. Zahid Hussain; n. no. 26

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Professor Kalim Bahadur retired as Professor of South Asian studies from the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. His publications include *Jama'at-i-Islami of Pakistan: Political Thought and Political Action*; 1977; New Delhi; Chetna Publishers and *Democracy in Pakistan: Crises and Conflicts*; 1998, New Delhi; Har-Anand Publications Pvt Ltd.

ORF publications:

- A Nation in Transition: Understanding the Indian Economy, by Jayshree Sengupta; (ORF-Academic Foundation 2007)
- The Politics of Power Sector Reform in India, by Niranjana Sahoo; (ORF-Pentagon Press 2007)
- The New Asian Power Dynamic, by Maharajkrishna Rasgotra; (ORF-Sage 2007)
- Sri Lanka : Peace without process, Ed by B Raman , N.Sathiyamoorthy , Kalpana Chittaranjan, (ORF-Sanskriti 2006)
- Revolution and Creativity: A survey of Iranian literature, films and art in the post revolutionary era, by Azarmi Dukht Safawi & AW Azhar Dehlvi, (ORF-Rupa, 2006)
- The Second Bush Presidency: Global perspectives, Ed by Amit Gupta & Cherian Samuel, (ORF-Pearson-Longman, 2006)
- Pakistan's Nuclear Disorder: Weapons, proliferation and safety, Garima Singh, (ORF-Lancer, 2006)
- Documenting Reforms: Case studies from India, Ed by S Narayan, (ORF-Macmillan, 2006)
- Defence Planning: Problems and prospects, Gen VP Malik, Brig Vinod Anand, (ORF-Manas, 2006)
- ORF Occasional Paper - The Dynamics of LTTE's Commercial Maritime Infrastructure, Vijay Sakhuja, (April 2006)



20, Rouse Avenue, New Delhi-110 002
 Phone: +91-11-43520020
 Fax: +91-11-43520003
 www.orfonline.org
 email: orf@orfonline.org