



A Fractured Sub-continent

by John Côté*

A geographically divided nation needs to unite mentally. For Pakistan a focal point for this unity is frequently the question of Kashmir—to whom does it belong?

Pakistanis with whom I talked on this issue nearly always seemed to think sharply in black and white: Pakistan is right, India is wrong, and it is the duty of other nations to restore to Pakistan what is obviously hers. My usual Canadian reply—What does Pakistan actually expect of the other nations?—rarely produced any concrete suggestions.

None of those spoken to actually advocated the employment of force by other nations on Pakistan's behalf to force India to give up Kashmir, although some seemed eager that Pakistan herself should go to war with India. They were convinced that nothing the United Nations had to offer was likely to prove effective, yet somehow the feeling lingered on that the other nations were failing in some duty to Pakistan.

Through a fortunate combination of circumstances, Canada has no one all-pervading sentiment, no one overpowering sense of grievance. The Canadian mind does not revolve around one particular issue, associating everything to this issue. This, however, may well reflect merely the fortunate history of English Canadians rather than a difference in psychological make-up.

Anti-Indian Sentiment

News reports in Pakistani media reflect an all-pervasive anti-Indian sentiment. Almost every newspaper had some negative reference to arms aid to India. There is widespread resentment towards the United States and United Kingdom for aiding India in her recent dispute with China, and several persons suggested that India, not China, had initiated the border disputes.

Many of the WUS delegates felt that most Pakistanis see all foreign relations through one set of spectacles, that to them the whole world revolves around their relations with India. During the seminar, these spectacles showed Canada in a more kindly light that she perhaps deserved, by Pakistani standards. When Canada was unable to provide India with the type of arms she needed, Pakistanis concluded that Canada was taking the side of justice in refusing to help India.

There is great difficulty in determining whether the news media are more influenced by the feelings of the people, or the people by the news media. Whatever the cause, genuine hatred of India seemed to result.

The conflict between the two nations of the sub-continent has a counterpart in a religious dispute. Here again, which is cause and which effect is hard to say. One student explained that there had been a progression from the original Hebrew religion through the Christian to the Muslim faith, justifying a tolerance among these three faiths. However, this tolerance seems not to extend to the Hindu religion, which predominates in India, and which many Pakistanis felt to be of a much lower order than the three religions "of the Book."

Many Pakistanis, especially those in the Karachi area, are bitter toward the Hindus, for they remember the massacres of 1947, in which Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims participated, and which forced many to move from India to the newly-created Islamic state of Pakistan. They reject the outsider's attempts at conciliation: "It's fine for you to talk," they will say, "but we know the Hindus."

One might have thought that this preoccupation with India was simply the result of the fact that India has four times the population of Pakistan, so that the Indian government and people would tend to be a good deal less preoccupied with Pakistan. It was therefore surprising to find that the principal and often sole topic of the weekly news bulletins of the Indian High Commission in Ottawa was Pakistan, and the impression of Pakistan conveyed by them was fully as derogatory as the view of India found in the Pakistani press.

The Indian newsletter (called the Indigram) devoted considerable space to showing the unsatisfactory internal state of Pakistan, and still more to its frontier difficulties.

Much prominence was given to Afghan demands that the tribes of Northwestern Pakistan be given autonomy (the demand for a separate Pakhtunistan), although this was a claim which Pakistani students dismissed as non-existent.

The Indian news bulletin also

stressed how long-suffering the Indian government had been in permitting very large numbers of refugees from East Pakistan to enter Assam and other parts of eastern India, supposedly fleeing from bad economic conditions in Pakistan to a more prosperous India. Other items were designed to show a North American audience now perfidious Pakistan's foreign policy was, that it would switch from Western alliances to an entente with Communist China.

On the other hand, one may ask oneself whether this careful enunciation of the Indian government's foreign policy—itsself very much based on a view of the world through the wrong end of a telescope—represents the views of people in India.

Pro-China Sentiment

Bentley Le Baron and I did not go into India, but other members of the party who did reported that they encountered little attention paid to Pakistan by Indians, except of course in the Indian-held part of Kashmir.

What then is the significance of the Pakistani government's new shift in foreign policy? No Canadian can say he knows, but one may well guess that Pakistan has no intention of cutting herself off from the "Western world," and still less of depending upon Red China for all her foreign aid and defence requirements. Rather, she seems to be seeking a more independent position, something like that which Tito and Nehru have followed in the past, gaining the benefits of the East and the West.

Certainly recent Pakistani government commendations of the Peace Corps have not supported earlier sensational attacks on it in the Pakistani yellow press, and soon after student demonstrations were held in front of the American embassy in Karachi further activity was prevented by a ban on public meetings for several months.

Why has Pakistan made this partial switch in foreign policy? Is it that she feels she can gain more from playing both sides of the cold war in the way of material aid? Is it that she is now convinced that the West will not aid her against India? Or is it that she no longer feels enough danger from India that she needs Western defensive alliances so badly as before? We can only guess.

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH,
MOST GRACIOUS, MOST MERCIFUL

... rouse the Believers
To the fight. If there are
Twenty amongst you, patient
And persevering, they will
Vanquish two hundred: if a hundred
They will vanquish a thousand
Of the unbelievers; for these
Are a people without understanding . . .

—from the Holy Qur'an
A Yusef Ali translation



PAKISTANI GROOM—As he is led to the platform in front of his assembled guests (male), the flowers hang as a veil over his face.

*Supported and prodded by Janis Kostash