

Islamization and Sectarian Violence in Pakistan

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Abstract: *Shī'ah-Sunnī violence has assumed alarming proportions² in Pakistan during the recent years. While there is a long history of discord and occasional violence between the two groups, a number of factors have precipitated the violence, and kept it going on. The nature of the Islamization process during the Zia regime, with its emphasis on legalistic aspects of Islam (Shar'atization), rather than the broader objectives (maqāṣid) of Shar'ah, was one of them. This created a feeling of being marginalized in the minorities. During this period the socioeconomic deprivation of a large section of the masses, suspension of political institutions, collapse of administrative machinery, and use of sectarian and ethnic discord for short-term political gains, created an atmosphere conducive to violence, including sectarian violence.*

After witnessing a powerful upsurge of religious revivalism and "Islamization" in the 1980s, Pakistan has come into the grip of intense sectarian violence on the eve of its fiftieth anniversary in 1997. The wave of Shī'ah-Sunnī violence, which has left many religious leaders dead on both sides, is being continually fuelled and exacerbated by highly inflammatory speeches from the pulpits by the activists of the militant Sunnī organization, *Sipāh-i-Sahābah* ("Soldiers of the Companions of the Prophet") and the equally militant Shī'ah organization, *Sipāh-i-Muhammad* ("Soldiers of Prophet Muhammad"). Pamphlets, posters and handbills produced by extremist 'ulamā'

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(religious scholars) from both sides daily incite their followers to "rise, take up arms and seek paradise by eliminating the enemies of Islam."¹ While sectarian violence is not a new phenomenon for Pakistan,² the frequency of its occurrence and the numbers of its victims, particularly in Punjab, have assumed alarming proportions in recent years. Is this the way in which, after a decade of state-sponsored "Islamization," religious revivalism is being expressed in Pakistan at the popular level? What has been the nature of the Islamic upsurge and "Islamization" in Pakistan? Is there a relationship between the processes of religious revival and Islamization on the one hand, and the re-awakening of a sectarian consciousness, on the other? What has been the role of external forces and developments—also related to the world-wide upsurge of Islamic activism—in fostering sectarian divide and conflict in Pakistan? Are there factors external to religious consciousness and identity—political, administrative, economic, social—that one can identify in explaining the frequency and intensity of sectarian violence in today's Pakistan? And, finally, has the sectarian hatred, hostility and violence penetrated society at the grass-roots level, or has it been confined only to a few well-armed, militant groups, such as Sipāh-i-Şahābah and Sipāh-i-Muḥammad? This essay will attempt to answer these and related questions in the context of the recent history of the interaction between religion and politics in Pakistan.

The case of Pakistan is so unique, in so far as its relationship with Islam is concerned, that it is rather difficult to compare it with other Muslim countries. It came into being in the name of Islam and defined its very *raison d'être* with reference to Islam. The leaders of the Pakistan movement demanded a separate homeland for the Muslims of India so that they could practice Islam—both in their individual as well as their collective lives—undisturbed by the Hindu majority in pre-partition India.

Much of Pakistan's history has been, in one way or another, influenced by Islam. Islam has played a very important role in the country's constitutional debates, political disputes and socioeconomic conflicts.³ Both in terms of rhetoric as well as policies, Islam has been projected as *the* state ideology, and in the future also, in one form or another, it is likely to remain a salient feature in Pakistan's political development.

Among the major factors which have contributed enormously towards the continuous relevance of Islam as a dynamic, independent

political force in Pakistan have been the autonomy of traditional religious institutions and the existence of well-organized Islamic political groups and parties. The network of religious institutions—mosques and madrasas—operate outside the controlling apparatus of the state and retain considerable autonomy so as to be able to provide a critical Islamic perspective on various government policies. Similarly, religiously-based political groups such as the Jamā'at-i-Islami (JI), Jamī'at 'Ulamā'-i-Islam (JUI), Jamī'at 'Ulamā'-i-Pakistan (JUP), Jamī'at 'Ulamā'-i-Ahle Ḥadīth (JUAH) and Tahrik-e-Nifaz-e-Fiqh-e-Ja'fariyah (TNFJ), with their dedicated corps of workers and effectively employed politico-ideological resources, have acted as a constant reminder of the Islamic basis of Pakistan's statehood and have been at the forefront of movements calling for an Islamic constitution and Sharī'ah-based laws in the country.

The rulers, on the other hand, have only paid lip-service to Islam and have not done much to incorporate the teachings of the Qur'ān and Sunnah into public policies. When President Zia-ul-Haq came into power in July 1977, as a result of a military coup, and proclaimed that the establishment of a social order based on *Nizām-i-Mustafā* (the system of Prophet Muhammad) would be the corner-stone of his policies, he was hailed as a welcome change by the Islamic political parties. The Jamā'at-i-Islami and other Islamic components of the Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) extended their fullest cooperation to the military regime of Zia-ul-Haq, and even joined his cabinet for about a year. Here was a good, honest, practicing Muslim, they reasoned to themselves, who wanted to enforce the Sharī'ah and therefore deserved their support and cooperation. It was this realization of the mutuality of goals which led the Islamic political groups to form an alliance with the military regime.

The acceptance of the Islamic credentials of the military rulers and the Islamic groups' decision to support them may be understood in terms of the former's general view about the process of Islamization. Most of the Islamic political groups take the process of Islamization to be a transfer of political power from the secular-minded corrupt elite to the *sālehīn* (pious Muslims) who, by appropriating authoritative positions in the various institutions of the state, would create conditions conducive for the establishment of the complete *dīn* (religion). It is no wonder that General Zia, who was well-known for his personal piety and observance of Islamic practices, came to be seen by the Jamā'at-i-Islāmī and the 'ulamā' as an embodiment of their concept of a true Islamic ruler and their only hope to Islamize

Pakistani society.

What the Jamā'at-i-Islāmī and the 'ulamā' did not realize, however, was that it was not the person of General Zia-ul-Haq that mattered in the realms of power in Pakistan's political system. The real political channels continued to be controlled by an oligarchy dominated by the military and civil bureaucracy. It was, therefore, quite naive on the part of the Islamic parties to assume that General Zia could initiate fundamental Islamic reforms in society without taking into consideration the corporate interests of the ruling oligarchy. Zia, himself a part of this oligarchy, was, of course, willing to go along with the peripheral Islamic demands presented to him by the Islamic parties, knowing full well that these reforms would not undermine the socioeconomic structural bases of his political power. The Islamic parties, and especially the Jamā'at-i-Islāmī, failed to realize that whatever degree of genuine religious enthusiasm and missionary zeal one might have been able to identify in General Zia, it was certainly inextricably linked with the use of popular Islamic symbols to legitimize the continued grip of the civilian-military oligarchy on political power and to safeguard the interests of the social forces which constituted the support base of this oligarchy.

It is no wonder, then, that among the Islamic measures introduced by General Zia—the Islamic penal code, Zakāt and 'Ushr, some interest-free counters in banks, Shar'ah courts, an Islamic university, prayer breaks during working hours, the wearing of *chadors* by female newscasters on television, adding a few more pages on Islam in school textbooks, holding marathon Islamic conferences and patronizing popular religious festivals—there is hardly anything that threatened the political and economic *status quo*. The existing structures of social deprivation, economic exploitation and political domination remained completely unaffected.

The irony is that the Jamā'at-i-Islāmī, which had always claimed to represent Islam as "a complete way of life," was the first one to fall into this trap of Islamic triviality in the name of Islamization and to provide Islamic credentials to the military rulers by joining them formally in the cabinet and by accepting these inconsequential measures as true and genuine Islamic reforms. Little did the Jamā'at and other religious parties realize that they were being used by the rulers in their attempt to fulfil their needs for legitimacy and popular support. The package of "Islamic demands" as presented by the Jamā'at and the 'ulamā' was such that it could be easily incorporated

into the existing socioeconomic formations and political structures. Collection of Zakāt and °Ushr or opening a few interest-free counters in banks, for example, could not affect in any way the power and privileges of the dominant economic classes. As a matter of fact, some of these measures were, ideologically as well as functionally, necessary for the perpetuation and strengthening of the power position of the rulers and their support groups. Zakāt and °Ushr were used to ward off the welfare and distributive demands on the state, on the one hand, and to legitimize the inequitable economic relations in society, on the other; interest-free deposits were used to generate savings in a faltering economy, to provide investment funds for the highly mismanaged public sector, and to give billions of rupees of interest-free loans to political supporters. Rhetoric about an Islamic political system was a convenient cover to impose press censorship, detain political opponents and postpone free, democratic elections indefinitely.

The trivialization of the Islamization process in Pakistan could also be seen in the functions of the Sharī'ah courts which were explicitly debarred from hearing cases involving all major socioeconomic and political matters. The 274-member nominated Federal Council which was named *Shūrā* in an attempt to authenticate it as a genuine Islamic institution was only a debating forum and had no legislative powers whatsoever. The local government institutions established in 1979, with considerable fanfare, as true representatives of Islamic democracy in effect remained under the controlling authority of local bureaucrats who could annul their elections, invalidate their decisions and, in fact, abrogate their very existence whenever they deemed fit.

Much of what went by the name of Islamization during General Zia's regime can also be attributed to the Islamic groups and their perceptions of what is important and what is peripheral for Islamic reform in Pakistan.

The Jamā'at-i-Islāmī, for example, mobilized a considerable amount of resources to stop a women's hockey team from participating in the Asian Games but launched no such protest movement when press censorship was imposed or when the constitution was amended to restrict the powers of the judiciary. The 'ulamā' leadership speaks loud and clear whenever some insignificant musical concert is held in a girls' school but shows no such intensity of interest in issues of tax evasion, land reform, police brutality, persecution of women and minorities, environmental decay, bureaucratic controls and corruption,

illiteracy, and many other similar socioeconomic problems, the solution of which is vitally linked with the establishment of a true Islamic social order. Similarly, the Islami Jamī'at-e-Talabah, the student wing of the Jamā'at-i-Islāmī, seems to be much more concerned with the need for a separate university for women than with the broader and more fundamental questions pertaining to the democratization of educational opportunities in society. The priority structure of the major Islamic political groups in relation to the process of Islamization can also be seen from the contents of their official publications during the period corresponding to General Zia's reign. Among the articles and write-ups on current affairs in the seven publications sponsored by the Jamā'at-i-Islāmī, JUI, JUP and JUAH during October 1984 to November 1987, thirty-three percent were on issues pertaining to personal morality (mostly on drinking, gambling, sexual laxity on the part of women, music, dance parties, etc.) and only three percent on problems of socioeconomic injustices in Pakistani society. The only bills moved by the 'ulamā' members of General Zia's nominated *Shūrā* (Assembly) were meant to introduce further punitive measures for minor religious infractions.

The 'ulamā'-based religious organizations were, naturally, quite satisfied with the Islamic measures introduced by the martial law regime of Zia-ul-Haq. The 'ulamā' in the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent have long accepted an effective separation between what they consider as "religious" and "secular." Their concept of Islamization essentially stands for "Sharī'atization," by which they only mean the enforcement of the *hudūd* (Islamic penal law) and application of Muslim personal law. As far as they are concerned, any regime which introduces these two elements of Sharī'ah has passed the litmus test of Islam. Some of them, especially those belonging to the more popular and folk-oriented JUP of Maulana Shah Ahmad Noorani, would be content with even less than that if the government patronizes certain religious festivals, spends some money on the shrines of *pīrs* (saints) and allows more time on radio and television for *qawwālī* (a form of devotional-mystical song).

But perhaps much more important than all of these was the process through which the state, dominated by the military and civilian bureaucracy, tried to gradually undermine the autonomy of religious institutions in order to stifle potential sources of protest and opposition. Through the introduction of certain Islamic measures, the state appropriated religious functions which were previously performed by the community, independent of state control. It was this

autonomy which had afforded the *'ulamā'* and other religious groups the freedom to criticize the government whenever it was perceived as going against the teachings of Islam.

The appropriation of religion by secular politico-administrative authorities was started by the late President Ayub Khan in the early 1960's when he took over the management of *auqāf* (religious endowments). During the Zia regime this process was renewed in the name of Islamization which involved the creation of certain new institutions in the fields of law, education, communication, politics and economy. These institutions were used for two related objectives: first, to co-opt the *'ulamā'* and those associated with traditional religious institutions into state structures; and second, to ensure that the ultimate decision-making powers in these newly-created "religious" institutions remained exclusively in the hands of the military-bureaucratic elite. A prime example of this strategy was the Zakāt administration. By establishing more than 18,000 local Zakāt Committees around the country (each with seven members) the government was able to co-opt about 126,000 local mosque *imāms* (prayer leaders), *khatibs* (preachers) and other religious leaders into a structure which was primarily controlled by the officials of the former Civil Service of Pakistan, a direct descendant of the British Indian Civil Service. Similarly, through the *Maktab* Scheme, under which village mosques were used as elementary schools, the government recruited at least three thousand village *'ulamā'* as part-time school teachers. Needless to say, the *'ulamā'* in the *Maktab* Scheme worked under the officials of the education department.

The Federal Sharī'ah Court, the *Majlis-i-Shūrā* and other Islamic institutions established under the ministries of religious affairs, education, information and law were similarly controlled by senior military and civilian officials and *'ulamā'* were only there in consultative capacities. The *'ulamā'* were, of course, paid good salaries in these institutions. By offering them positions in Zakāt and °Ushr committees, government-controlled mosques, madrasas and *maktabs*, banks and investment houses, and in many other newly-created religio-political establishments, the government effectively depoliticized a large segment of the *'ulamā'*, making them either regular employees of the state or members of various state-sponsored committees, commissions and councils as "religious advisors."

It is therefore obvious from the above analysis that a process begun with the professed goals of relinking Pakistan with its original

ideology and establishing an Islamic order under the auspices of the military, ultimately came full circle. The demand by the Islamic political parties for Islamization of the state in effect resulted in the subordination of religious institutions by the state in a political system characterized by an oligarchic rule of a well-entrenched, centrally organized, and highly self-conscious and authoritarian military-bureaucratic complex. This process was facilitated by the fact that the "religious demands" of the Islamic groups were of such nature that they could be easily incorporated and adjusted into the existing social and political relations. The state in Pakistan thus became an equal, if not dominant, participant in the running of traditional as well as newly-created "religious" institutions. These institutions, in turn, created a large number of lucrative and prestigious official positions for potential aspirants among the 'ulamā' to which they were tempted; they were thus integrated into the authoritative institutions of the state. In the meantime, the military regime developed its own religio-political ideology emphasizing the need for a continued and effective political role for the military, limited franchise, a controlled press, a hand-picked *Shūrā*, and a lot of Islamic rhetoric.

It is not clear whether the religious leadership within the Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) was fully aware of the consequences of the military take-over in July 1977, especially with respect to their programme of Islamization. Most probably, they were not expecting the military to throw its weight in favour of their Islamization programme. They were possibly aware of General Zia's personal commitment to Islam but it is difficult to assume that they were counting too much on the overall ideological ethos of the military top brass. The only thing they wanted the military to do on their behalf was to remove Zulfikar Ali Bhutto from the political scene and make room for them. They were also entertaining a rather naive notion that, because of the recent mass upsurge for democracy and in view of the East Pakistan experience, it would not be possible for the military to rule independently for long. However, once the military took over, the religious parties, by giving almost unconditional support to the policies of the military regime and, subsequently, by joining the martial law cabinet, confirmed its Islamic credentials and, as a result, helped stabilize its power at a critical time.

It is obvious from the above analysis that what is described in the literature on Pakistan as "Islamic resurgence" did not come about *à la* Iran—as a result of a socio-religious and political revolution. It came in the wake of a military coup which later sponsored certain selected

legal and institutional changes in the name of "Islamization." These developments were also accompanied by the political activism of certain religious groups whose religious agenda conveniently coincided with the political and ideological needs of the state. In other words, the religio-political mobilization of certain groups during the *Nizām-i-Mustafā* movement and the subsequent "Islamization" measures introduced by the military regime of General Zia did not necessarily mean an increased Islamic consciousness or reawakened religiosity on the part of the Muslim masses. While a degree of correlation can be seen between religious practice and participation in religio-political activist movements, these two dimensions of behaviour need to be clearly distinguished. As a collective experience, Islamic "revival" in Pakistan was primarily confined to certain external apparatuses of religion: religiously-oriented political groups became more assertive and the state assumed a more affirmative and directive role in introducing and enforcing the orthodox practices and traditional rituals of Islam as public policies. Similarly, the proliferation of state-sponsored or voluntary associations with explicit religious goals and the increasing and more frequent use of religious texts and traditions as primary referents in socio-cultural and political discourse can be viewed as useful guides to determine the public role of religion, irrespective of whether one regards them as products of genuine religious inspiration or political expediencies. In short, it was the politicized, ideologized and non-pious activist form of Islam and the increasing use of Islamic symbolism and legitimation at the level of political action that defined the upsurge of Islamic "revivalism" in the 1980s.

Sociologists of religion have noted certain similarities in the social correlates of religious revival in the mainstream denominations and in the emergence and development of sects.⁴ While the "church-sect" dichotomy may not be relevant in the Islamic context of sects, the Islamic resurgence has certainly been paralleled by a resurgence of sectarian consciousness and sectarian organizations, controversies and conflicts. This development may have been caused by a reawakening of religious consciousness in a way which strengthens the sectarian identities of people and makes them more sensitive to their distinct doctrinal positions.

Islamization and Sectarianism

In the case of Pakistan, religious revival became associated with increasing sectarianism because "Islamization" became synonymous

with "sharī'atization," since its primary emphasis was on the enforcement of sharī'ah laws rather than on the implementation of the cardinal Islamic principles of democracy, freedom, equality, tolerance and social justice. A legalistic approach to Islamization was bound to raise the question as to which, and whose, interpretation of Islamic law should form the basis for public policy. Any attempt on the part of the government to enforce sharī'ah laws was certain to bring to the surface the old juristic and doctrinal differences not only between the Shī'as and Sunnīs but also among the four Sunnī schools.

The most serious conflict over "Islamization" measures introduced by General Zia was between the Sunnīs and Shī'as. The Shī'ah member of the Council of Islamic Ideology, Muftī Ja'far Hussain Mujtahid, resigned from his position to protest those Sunnī-oriented measures which disregarded the beliefs and practices of the Shī'ah community. Indeed, the Shī'as were never enthusiastic about the Islamization drive in the first place. They had generally supported the secularly-oriented Pakistan People's Party (PPP) in the 1977 elections, fearing that the rising tide of militant orthodoxy might turn against them, as it had against the Ahmadis in 1974. As a matter of fact, even before the announcement of the Islamic penal code and Zakāt and °Ushr rules, some leaders of the JUI and JUP had created a tense sectarian atmosphere in Karachi and Punjab by delivering inflammatory speeches and adopting an aggressive stance toward the Shī'as. Maulana Shah Ahmad Noorani of the JUP and his followers in the Brelvī madrasas increasingly assumed a belligerent posture in Karachi and in urban Sind. The most aggressive stance toward the Shī'as was, however, taken by the Deobandī organizations and publications associated with the JUI of Mufti Mahmud. Deobandī journals, especially *al-Haq* (Akora Khatak), *al-Balāgh* (Karachi), *al-Bayyanāt* (Karachi), *Tarjumān-i-Islam* (Lahore), and *Khuddāmuddīn* (Lahore) were publishing highly inflammatory writings against the Shī'as and were, in fact, demanding a separate quota of electoral seats and administrative positions for them as they had earlier demanded in the case of the Ahmadis. Much of this resentment was the result of the Shī'ah demand, which was subsequently accepted by the government of Mr. Bhutto, that there should be separate Islamic Studies syllabi and textbooks for Shī'ah students in government schools. The Sunnī 'ulamā' were also resentful of the Shī'ah community's support for the People's Party. The general tone of the anti-Shī'ah rhetoric on the part of the JUI religious leadership can be gauged from the following editorial that appeared in the prominent

Deobani monthly *al-Haq* only three months before General Zia's announcement of "Islamization" measures:

The Shī'as are controlling the entire Sunnī *auqāf* (religious endowments). There are five Shī'ah cabinet ministers in the (central) government and they happen to control the most important portfolios. The Shī'as are also controlling the key positions in the (civil and military) services and are in majority (in these services). This is despite the fact that they are hardly two percent of the total population of Pakistan... We must also remember that the Shī'as consider it their religious duty to harm and eliminate the *Ahl-e-Sunnah*... The Shī'as have always conspired to convert Pakistan into a Shī'ah state since the very inception of this country. They have been trying very hard toward that end and have been conspiring with our foreign enemies and with the Jews. It was through such conspiracies that the Shī'as masterminded the separation of East Pakistan and thus satiated their thirst for the blood of the Sunnīs.⁵

Besides the mutually exclusive particularism that makes both the Shī'ah and Sunnī religious leadership suspicious of each other for historical reasons and the residual pockets of fanaticism and extremism which exist in some towns of Punjab (Jhang, Sargodha, Muzaffargarh, Multan, Bahawalnagar and Chakwal) and in northern areas of the Frontier Province, much of the sectarian conflict and violence can be directly attributed to the unintended consequences of the government's "Islamization" measures, since different sects demanded to project their particular brand of Islam and Islamic *fiqh* (law).⁶ The controversy among the Shī'ah and Sunnī leaders on the divergent interpretation of Shari'ah was bound to filter down to the popular level, causing frequent violent incidents, especially in those areas of Punjab (e.g. Jhang) which already had a history of Shī'ah-Sunnī conflict since the 1970s. But before we go into the details of how this conflict erupted and led to violence, let us first briefly identify the main actors involved in the recent controversy and waves of violence.

On the Sunnī side, much of the anti-Shī'ah rhetoric has come from the Deobandī-oriented religio-political organization JUI and its dozens of affiliated associations and clandestine groups. Consisting of ultra-conservative and orthodox '*ulamā*' who proclaim religious allegiance to the traditions of the seminary in Deoband (India), the JUI represents the core of Islamic orthodoxy and insists on strict following of the rules of the Shari'ah as interpreted by the founders of the four schools of Islamic law. Being followers of Hanafī law, they insist that only Hanafī law should be enforced by the government since the

majority of Pakistani Muslims subscribe to this *fiqh*. In politics, their programme consists of the enforcement of Sharī'ah under the strict guidance of the "righteous 'ulamā'" who will have the ultimate authority to determine whether or not a law passed by the parliament is in conformity with the Sharī'ah.

The hostility of the JUI 'ulamā' toward the Shī'as goes back to their Deoband education and training. It is reported that the Deoband seminary had issued a *fatwā* (religious decree) as far back as the 1940s declaring the *Ithnā' Asharī* (Twelver) Shī'as as *kāfir* (non-Muslims). This *fatwā* was endorsed by all important 'ulamā' of Dārul Uloom Deoband, including Muftī Mohammad Shafī who was later appointed member of the Board of Ta'limāt-i-Islamīyah, a body affiliated with the first Constituent Assembly of Pakistan. Several other Deobandī 'ulamā' who later founded the JUI as a political party in Pakistan in the 1960s also endorsed this *fatwā*.

As long as Maulana Muftī Mahmūd was the head of the JUI, he was able to contain the anti-Shī'ah streak in the overall ethos of his organization. However, when the JUI split into a Fazlur Rhaman (Muftī Mahmūd's son) group and a Sami-ul-Haq group, both factions started vying with each other over which group was more aggressively anti-Shī'ah. Anjuman Sipāh-i-Sahābāh (SS), which came into being in 1984 as an off-shoot of the JUI, was initially a local organization dedicated to fighting against the militancy of Shī'ah landed interests in the Jhang district in Punjab. Maulana Haq Nawaz Jhangvi, the founder of the SS who was later assassinated by his Shī'ah adversaries, was probably the most vociferous critic of the Shī'as and was the first one to demand publicly that Shī'as be declared a non-Muslim minority. It was under his leadership that the militant SS came to be organized in almost all major cities and towns of Punjab. Although Maulana Salimullah and Maulana Asfandyar of Karachi had already launched a madrasah-based anti-Shī'ah movement in Karachi during the early 1980s, and had engaged in several street fights there with Shī'ah militant organizations, it was Maulana Haq Nawaz Jhangvi and his SS which took the Shī'ah-Sunnī conflict to new heights by recruiting hundreds of madrasah students, giving them training in terrorist activity, and by using sophisticated automatic weapons and bombs in their fight against their Shī'ah adversaries. Maulana Zaheer Faruqi, who succeeded Maulana Haq Nawaz Jahngvi, was also killed in a bomb blast in front of the Lahore High Court while he was still in police custody. The current head of the SS, Maulana Azam Tariq, who was a member of the National Assembly representing

Jhang—having defeated the veteran Shī'ah politician Abida Hussain—is a true heir to the legacy of Maulana Jhangvi: militant, combative, pugnacious, and uncompromisingly anti-Shī'ah.

It should also be mentioned here that Sipāh-i-Sahābah is not the only outfit the JUI and other Deobandī '*ulamā*' are using to pursue their anti-Shī'ah activities; Sawād-i-A'zam Ahle Sunnat of Karachi, Sunnī Tehrīk of Sind and Punjab, Sunnī Council, Sunnī Jamī'at-i-Talabāh, Pakistan Sunnī Itteḥād, Tahaffuzz-i-Khatm-i-Nabuwat, and dozens of other organizations are also engaged in providing support services for the violent activities of Sipāh-i-Sahābah. This network has been successfully used in recent years to incorporate thousands of sympathetic mosque *imāms* and preachers into several front-line voluntary associations, ostensibly organized for "religious" purposes but serving, in fact, as the political wing of Sipāh-i-Sahābah.

Another group which was initially the most militant and aggressive in its opposition to Shī'ah demands was the Jamī'at 'Ulamā'-i-Ahle Hadīth (The Society of the 'Ulamā' of "the People of Hadīth"), heir to the extreme right-wing theocratic particularism of the Wahābī movement which originated in Saudi Arabia in the 18th century. The party preaches uncompromising monotheism, rejects all notions of intercession by one's spiritual mentors, and condemns visitation of Ṣūfī shrines as polytheism. In politics, it rejects modern democracy as un-Islamic and advocates autocratic rule by a "pious ruler" under the guidance of Sharī'ah. The JUAH considers Shī'as as non-Muslims and several of its '*ulamā*' have demanded that the government declare them as a non-Muslim minority like the Ahmadis. The JUAH '*ulamā*', in fact, were the first to launch the anti-Shī'ah movement in Punjab after the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979, denouncing the revolution and Khomeini as enemies of Islam. The chief of JUAH, Allama Ihsān Ilāhī Zaheer, who died in a bomb blast—allegedly perpetrated by a Shī'ah organization—along with several of his followers during a public rally in Lahore in 1985, wrote a devastating critique of Shī'ah doctrine in 1980.⁸ The book was translated into Arabic and English and was widely distributed by the Saudi government throughout the Islamic world. The book, which became the most widely circulated publication on Shī'aism in recent history, not only denounces Shī'ah doctrine as heresy but also raises doubts about the Shī'as' loyalty to Pakistan and accuses them of working as agents of Zionism in Islamic countries. Because of JUAH's close association with the Saudi government and the frequent reports in the press that its leaders have received millions of Rupees from Saudi authorities for their madrasas

and other "religious" projects, including vast amount of funds for their Afghan jihād-related activities in the 1980s, their anti-Iran and anti-Shī'ah activities have assumed a dimension which has drawn the attention of foreign governments to Pakistan's domestic politics. It is important to note, however, that while the initial anti-Shī'ah movement was launched by JUAH, it soon withdrew to the background and handed over the leadership of the violent campaign to the activists of the JUI and Sipāh-i-Sahābah. The obvious reason is that the Ahle Hadīth group constitutes only a tiny fraction of the Sunnī population and, therefore, could not have taken up arms against the larger Shī'ah community by itself. Even then, their publications—*Muḥaddith* (Lahore), *Tarjumān-ul-Hadīth* (Faisalabad), *Sahīfah Ahle Hadīth* (Karachi), *al-Aitasam* (Lahore), *Ahle Hadīth* (Lahore) and *al-Badr* (Sahiwal)—continue to lead all of Pakistan's religious press in their anti-Shī'ah and anti-Iran writings. Their militant wing, the Ahle Hadīth Youth Force, also remains active in organizing anti-Shī'ah rallies in several cities of Punjab.

The third Sunnī group which also became active in opposing Shī'as during the late 1970s and early 1980s is the Brelvī-oriented Jamī'at 'Ulamā'-i-Pakistan (JUP), which is led by Maulana Shah Ahmad Noorani of Karachi and Maulana Abdussattar Niazi of Punjab. The JUP enjoys a considerable following in the Urdu-speaking areas of urban Sind and in the rural areas and small towns of Punjab where the intellectual and doctrinal influence of Islamic orthodoxy has not penetrated very deeply. The JUP's religious ideology is based on folk Islam with an emphasis on Sūfism, veneration of saints, idolization of the Prophet, and popular and festive display of syncretic religious rituals. Although the JUP 'ulamā' have consistently opposed Shī'ah demands for a separate educational curriculum and exemption from paying *Zakāt* to the government, they have never endorsed the Ahle Hadīth and Deobandī position that Shī'as are outside the pale of Islam and, therefore, should be declared a non-Muslim minority. In fact, some Brelvī 'ulamā' of the JUP offered to mediate between warring Shī'ah and Sunnī groups. A JUP-affiliated publication presented a "peace plan" which called for a legal ban on all extremist religious organizations.

On the Shī'ah side, the most prominent organizations are the Tehrīk-i-Nifāz-i-Fiqh-i-Ja'farīyah (TNFJ) and its militant off-shoots, Sipāh-i-Muhammad and Imāmīyah Students Organization. The TNFJ was founded in 1979 at a convention of Shī'ah Muslims in Bhakkar (Punjab) on the initiative of Allama Syed Ja'far Hussain Mujtahid.

Both inspired by the Islamic revolution in neighboring (and fellow-Shī'ah) Iran under the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini, and threatened by General Zia's Sunnī-biased Islamic legislation, the Shī'ah religious leadership decided to launch a religio-political movement of their own to assert their separate identity, to protect their religious rights, and to prevent the Sunnī majority and the government from imposing on them an interpretation of *shar'ah* that does not conform with their own *Fiqh Ja'farīyah*. The TNFJ first tested its strength by challenging both the Sunnī hierarchy and the military regime of General Zia in July 1980 when it launched a movement to resist the compulsory collection of Zakāt from Shī'as. Faced with a siege of the capital city of Islamabad by thousands of Shī'ah youth who had gathered from all over Pakistan, the government agreed to the TNFJ demand and amended the Zakāt legislation, exempting Shī'as from paying Zakāt. Encouraged by the success of its first political move and emboldened by the moral, political (and financial?) support from the neighboring Iran, the TNFJ transformed itself into a political party in July 1987 under the leadership of Allama Syed Arif Hussain al-Hussaini with a programme to "struggle for Shī'ah rights, promote pan-Islamism and support Islamic revolution."

The TNFJ has since emerged as the sole spokesman for the political interests and religious concerns of the Shī'ah minority in Pakistan. The TNFJ has maintained close relations with Iranian authorities and has generally taken the cue from Iran in all matters of foreign policy such as the Iran-Iraq war, the Persian Gulf War, the Middle-East Peace Process, and developments in Afghanistan. The political programme of the TNFJ includes the introduction of Shī'ah Ja'farīyah law for Shī'as, autonomy for the Shī'ah religious endowments, complete freedom for the public observance of Shī'ah religious rites, close relations with Iran and "an end to the American influence on Pakistan's foreign policy." During the 1988 parliamentary elections, the TNFJ decided to put up candidates with its own party tickets but failed to win even a single seat. Since there are few electoral constituencies in the country with a solid Shī'ah majority, it is unlikely that TNFJ can win any seat in parliament on its own platform. It is also the case that the majority of Shī'as consider it politically more advisable to work within mainstream progressive, secular and nationalist parties like the PPP, Muslim League, National Awami Party and Tehrīk-i-Istiqlāl.¹³

While the TNFJ operated as an umbrella Shī'ah religio-political organization, Imāmīyah Students Organization and Sipāh-i-Muhammad

emerged as the militant wings of Shī'ah political activism. As the Shī'ah counterpart of the Sunnī Sipāh-i-Sahābah, the Sipāh-i-Muhammad believes in "*Khoon ka badla khoon*" (blood for blood) and exhorts its activists to seek martyrdom by "eliminating the *dushmanān-i-Hussain*" (the enemies of Hussain). Well-armed with sophisticated automatic weapons and remote controlled bomb arsenal, Sipāh-i-Muhammad militants are swift to settle accounts with the militants of Sipāh-i-Ṣahābah. A bomb in a Shī'ah mosque means that a bomb in a Sunnī mosque is not far away. An assassination of a Shī'ah leader is soon reciprocated by an assassination of a Sunnī religious leader.

The swords have thus been drawn. Hardly a day passes in Pakistan without news headlines about violence involving Sipāh-i-Ṣahābah and Sipāh-i-Muhammad. Several efforts were made by the government to bring the Shī'ah-Sunnī religious leadership to the negotiation table and to resolve their differences peacefully. However, both parties tend to distrust the government and believe that it is secretly favouring the other group.

In 1988, when Pir Karam Shah, a moderate Brelvī scholar from Sargodha, convened a meeting of religious scholars belonging to different schools of thought in order to foster "unity, tolerance and harmony" among the different sects, he was reprimanded by a fellow-Brelvī publication *Razā-i-Mustafā* in its November 1988 editorial:

There is a tradition (*hadith*) of the Prophet (peace be upon him) which says that my ummah (nation) will become divided into seventy-three sects. Pir Karam Shah's efforts to unite different Islamic sects is thus a direct violation of what our Prophet has said. There can be no formula for unity which can succeed against the Prophet's prediction!

In 1994, Qazi Hussain Ahmad, head of the Jamā'at-i-Islāmī, convened a meeting of prominent leaders of all the major religious parties in Lahore to form the *Millī Yakjehtī Council* (National Unity Council). The Council delegates, consisting of both Shī'ah and Sunnī leaders, denounced the use of violence to resolve religious differences and pledged to work toward promoting "unity and harmony among all sects of Islam."¹⁴ The optimism and euphoria generated by the Lahore convention dissipated soon, however, when the spokesmen for both Sipāh-i-Sahābah and Sipāh-i-Muhammad announced that the delegates representing their respective organizations in the Unity Council had no official authority to do so. A few weeks after the Unity Council

meeting and its "Declaration of Religious Harmony," a bomb in Karachi killed seven Shī'ah worshippers and, two days after that, a sniper shot and killed two Sipāh-i-Ṣahābah activists in Punjab.

The only redeeming feature in this tragic series of violent incidents is that the hatred, hostility and violence between Sipāh-i-Ṣahābah and Sipāh-i-Muhammad has not trickled down to the popular level. At the local and neighborhood levels, the relationships between the Shī'ah and Sunnī communities remain largely unaffected by what transpires between the militants who claim to represent them. Apart from one incident in Kurram Agency in the Northwest Frontier Province in 1987, there has not been a single incident in which Shī'as and Sunnīs clashed with each other on streets or in neighborhoods. Shī'ah-Sunnī conflict in Pakistan has thus never assumed the proportion of what is known in India as "Hindu-Muslim riots" (*à la* Bombay and Muradabad) in which entire neighborhoods are pitted against each other and mobs of Muslims and Hindus are involved in mass violence. Despite vehement efforts by the militants of Sipāh-i-Sahābah and Sipāh-i-Muhammad, the insanity of sectarian hatred between the Shī'as and Sunnīs has not penetrated at the grass-roots level of Pakistani society. Given the "normal" relationships that exist between the Sunnīs and Shī'as at popular level, it is difficult to maintain that these two extremist groups represent the larger religious communities in whose names they inflict violence on the other. It is also not possible to maintain that any particular instance of violence by these groups has any correspondence to the interests and needs of their respective communities. On the contrary, there is evidence to suggest that this violence is not approved of by their respective communities and that the majority of Shī'ah and Sunnī Muslims tend to support strong, repressive measures against the perpetrators of violence from both groups.

While Shī'ah-Sunnī sectarian conflict and violence is primarily a "home grown" phenomenon, the role of foreign governments in exacerbating the already tense situation is also critical. We have already shown how the extremist elements within the Sunnī establishment, especially the Ahle Ḥadīth group, were connected to, and funded by, Saudi authorities throughout the 1980s. Maulana Shah Ahmad Noorani of the Brelvī-oriented JUP and Maulana Asfandiyar and Maulana Salimullah of the Deobani-oriented JUI also reportedly received millions of rupees from the Iraqi government to fight against Iranian and Shī'ah influence in Pakistan.¹⁷ The emergence of pro-Iranian militant Shī'ah organizations also helped bring the Gulf and

Middle Eastern rivalries—along with their potential for violence—into Pakistan.¹⁸ In 1986, Mr. Aslam Khattak, the then Interior Minister of Pakistan, publicly accused the TNFJ of receiving foreign funds "to foment sectarian trouble" in Pakistan and to sabotage Pakistan's friendly relations with certain Arab countries.¹⁹ The TNFJ, of course, never hides its hostility toward Iran's enemies, especially the United States, Saudi Arabia and Iraq. Similarly, the Ahle Ḥadīth and JUI 'ulamā' never miss an opportunity to criticize Iran, even describing it (and Shī'as in general) as "agents of Israel and Zionism" who are "bent upon destroying the solidarity of the Muslim Ummah."²⁰

It is an open secret in Pakistan that foreign sponsors fund militant sectarian groups' recruiting hired activists from the streets and from madrasas. The jihād in Afghanistan during the 1980s provided religious organizations in Pakistan with an excellent alibi to receive vast amounts of funds from Middle Eastern Muslim countries in the name of Afghan relief and jihād projects, and to then use these funds, or part of them, for their sectarian activities. Similarly, weapons originally acquired to fight the Soviets in Afghanistan are now being used in both sectarian violence on the streets of Pakistan and factional violence in Afghanistan. While the JUI of Maulana Fazlur Rahman and Maulana Sami-ul-Haq, who are both Pashtūn, has become the main sponsor of the fundamentalist Talibān, the TNFJ has been active in mustering political support for an Iranian-backed Shī'ah group, Wahdat-i-Islami, of Afghanistan.

It is obvious that in the mosques, madrasas and streets of Pakistan both Iran and Saudi Arabia are engaged in a proxy war for religio-political influence and clout in Pakistan, Afghanistan and in the newly-independent Muslim republics of Central Asia. It would be quite naive to assume, as is contended by the Sipāh-i-Sahābah, that Iranian authorities want to export their model of Islamic revolution to Pakistan in order to convert it into a Shī'ah state. Similarly, the Saudis are also not likely to believe that Pakistan could become a Wahābī state. The battle lines between the two Middle Eastern giants are drawn on political and strategic grounds, not on religious considerations.

While discussing the role of external forces in Pakistan's sectarian violence, "the hidden hand of the Indian intelligence agencies"²¹ cannot be ruled out. The pattern of violence, especially the indiscriminate throwing of bombs in mosques while the faithful are busy praying, is indicative of random terrorism intended to create a sense of general insecurity and fear, rather than to inflict violence on

specific targets. There is a popular view, known as "A Bomb in Delhi, A Bomb in Lahore," among South Asian scholars in the United States which describes the ethnic and sectarian violence in the subcontinent as "the fourth India-Pakistan War." This war is being fought not on the borders and not by their regular armies, but in their urban centers and by their intelligence agencies—the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan is busy in Indian-occupied Kashmir and East Punjab, while the Indian Research and Intelligence Wing (RAW) is busy in Karachi and Lahore.

Religiously sanctioned violence, as Mark Juergensmeyer has pointed out, is not always easy to understand and is even more difficult to deal with. While this essay has focused only on the Shī'ah-Sunnī conflict, even within Sunnī Islam, the antagonism between the Brelvīs, Deobandīs and Ahle Ḥadīth has reached new heights in recent years in Pakistan.

Most writers on Islamic revivalism have taken the Islamic religious establishment to be an undifferentiated, internally cohesive entity and have tended to ignore the question of sectarian differences within the orthodox religious sector. To many outside observers, these doctrinal or *fiqhī* (legal) differences appear minor and insignificant. It is true that the disputes dividing the Brelvī, Deobandī, Ahle Ḥadīth, and even Shī'ah *'ulama'* and their followers are not over fundamental doctrinal principles of Islam but on minute points of interpretation.²² The point, however, is that, as Mendelson has observed in the Buddhist context, "the matter of a quarrel is often less important than the fact that there is a quarrel."²³

But religious differences, or a heightened sense of sectarian identity by itself may not necessarily be related to violence; its entanglement with force and violence becomes possible only in conditions under which it experiences a real or perceived threat from the "other." As David Little has noted, religious militancy can, in fact, take different forms; some militants will resort to violence while others may not do so, despite their frequent use of "the language of militancy, that is, the language of warfare and combativeness."²⁴ It is, therefore, important that in our effort to explain the recent sectarian violence in Pakistan we should go beyond the mutually exclusive particularism of Shī'as and Sunnis and try to identify factors external to religious consciousness and identity.

Several explanations can be offered for the recent upsurge of sectarian violence in Pakistan. The familiar explanation, of course, is

the historical legacy of religious discord, theological disputes, and occasional violence that has marred the history of Shī'ah-Sunnī relations in the subcontinent and elsewhere in the Muslim World. We have already discussed in detail the proximate contribution of factors such as the "Islamization" drive during the Zia regime, which tended to threaten the religious integrity of Shī'as, and the active intervention of foreign forces which tended to aggravate the already tense sectarian situation.

The political explanations of Shī'ah-Sunnī violence can be presented at several levels. First, the prolonged absence of channels for political participation during the eight years of the martial law regime seemed to have created a situation in which political discontent was expressed in ethnic and sectarian protests and demands. The restrictions on national political parties and the suspension of the normal political process created a vacuum that was filled by the emergence of ethnic, sectarian and *birādarī* (kinship) organizations with their own particularistic demands and agenda. This explanation is corroborated by the fact that Shī'ah-Sunnī conflict has mainly erupted in those areas of the country which have a history of political activism.

The second political explanation can be derived from what the Rudolphs have described as the "modernity of tradition" and the political mobilization of certain traditional, primordial groups in modern associational-type organizations in order to compete for economic resources and political opportunities opened up by the processes of modernization.²⁵ One can argue, therefore, that there is no qualitative difference between caste violence in India and Shī'ah-Sunnī violence in Pakistan: in both cases, "identity politics" becomes a surrogate for political empowerment and material gain. The process, however, does not need to be violent in all cases; violence occurs only when legal-political institutional structures are either non-existent or too weak to respond to the demands of disenfranchised groups.

The third political explanation has to do with what Jack Snyder has described as "the institutional collapse" of the state,²⁶ or what Mohammad Ayoob has referred to as "the lack of effective statehood."²⁷ Snyder has argued with respect to the rise of militant ethno-national movements, that such movements tend to arise in situations of institutional collapse, "when existing institutions fail to respond to new demands," and when "satisfactory alternative structures are not readily available."²⁸

Although Snyder's formulation may not provide a complete

explanation for the current upsurge of sectarianism in Pakistan, it does offer an important dimension that needs to be looked into while discussing the response of state authorities to the on-going sectarian violence in the country. The almost total collapse of the administrative machinery of law and order in Karachi and Punjab, especially criminal investigation and the intelligence network, has created a situation of complete freedom of action for any determined criminal and terrorist. The endemic corruption in the police and other law enforcement agencies, the politicization of civilian intelligence agencies and the near paralysis of policy-making institutions, both at the federal and provincial levels, have all contributed to the breakdown of law and order in society. The militant sectarian organizations—and common criminals—are fully aware of the vulnerability of the law enforcement agencies and are taking full advantage of their institutional ineffectiveness and decrepit state.

The fourth political explanation is related to the cynical use of sectarian discord and conflict for short-term political gain by successive governments in Pakistan. In the early 1980s, sectarian strife between Shī'as and Sunnīs in Karachi was used by the martial law government as a cathartic measure and as a means of sowing disunity among its political opponents in a politically-sensitive region. Furthermore, in the conflict between Shī'as and Sunnīs over the correct interpretation of Shari'ah law, the military government assumed the role of mediator, which helped establish the authenticity of its Islamic credentials in the eyes of both parties. Sectarianism also evoked Sunnī feelings of solidarity with the regime while, at the same time, fostering Shī'ah dependency on the state in the wake of Sunnī militancy. The Shī'ah-Sunnī conflict was also seen by the Zia regime as a convenient development that could divert people's attention from the PPP-led political agitation against the martial law government. Then, in the middle and late 1980s, it was used to create divisions within the ranks of the Muhājir Qaumī Movement (MQM) in Karachi. Benazir Bhutto's government, which had formed a parliamentary alliance with Maulana Fazlur Rahman's JUI, provided a field day for the militant Sipāh-i-Ṣaḥābah to pursue its sectarian activities. She even appointed Maulana Fazlur Rahman as Chairman of the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee. Since Maulana Azam Tariq, the leader of Sipah-i-Sahābah and member of the National Assembly representing Jhang, was an archenemy of Begum Abida Hussain, a veteran Shī'ah leader despised by Benazir Bhutto, he enjoyed complete immunity from law enforcement agencies during the Bhutto government, despite

his blatant complicity in anti-Shī'ah violence.

Another political explanation of the upsurge of sectarianism has to do with the political disempowerment of the second-and-third-tier of leadership within the 'ulamā' establishment as a result of the Islamization drive during the Zia regime. As pointed out earlier in this essay, the "sharī'atic" and institutional Islamization of General Zia created opportunities for the top leadership among the 'ulamā' to assume positions of social influence, political power and religious authority under the auspices of the state. Most of the first-tier leaders of religious and religio-political organizations were co-opted by the state as cabinet ministers, advisors, federal Sharī'ah Court Judges, members of the Islamic Ideology Council, Zakāt and 'Ushr Administration officials, members of the *Shūrā* and the Senate, and religious advisors to dozens of public sector enterprises and standing commissions on Islamic reforms.

While the top leadership of the 'ulamā' organizations had found its "calling" and was comfortably settled in prestigious and well-paying positions, the second-and-third-tier leadership, particularly at the district and *tehsil* levels, felt abandoned and betrayed. This sector of the 'ulamā' leadership consisted of recent madrasah graduates who were mobilized in the religio-political struggle of *Nizām-i-Mustafā* against the Bhutto regime during the mid-1970s. While their leaders had reaped the benefits of the victory of Islamization with the help of the military in the form of lucrative positions, they were now being asked to "disarm" themselves and go back to their "barracks," (i.e., the mosques and madrasas) and to resume their low-paid work as *imāms*, *khatībs* and madrasah teachers. My argument here is that this second-and third-tier leadership of the 'ulamā', who had been cut off from the socioeconomic and political rewards doled out to their top leaders in the process of Islamization, refused to be "disarmed" and depoliticized—as was demanded by the government and by their own leaders—and used sectarian issues in order to remain in the "business." In the absence of larger issues of state, politics and Islamization, sectarianism for these 'ulamā' was the only handy issue they could use to reassert their social relevance and mobilize a following of their own, i.e., independent of their leaders. It is in this sense that one can describe the rise of sectarianism as a revolt of the lumpen 'ulamā' in order to reclaim their socio-religious relevance and influence in society.

And, finally, the socioeconomic explanation would maintain that

sectarian violence erupts in conditions under which socioeconomic deprivations tend to be translated into a cultural worldview involving feelings of hostility towards the "other." It is no wonder then that the most serious Shī'ah-Sunnī conflicts have taken place in the poorer neighborhoods of Karachi (Liaquatabad, Gujarnala and Golimar) where the majority of both Shī'as and Sunnīs belong to the working class, poorer sector of society.

Three groups have been most active in sectarian violence in Pakistan in recent years: the bāzār merchants, the madrasah students, and the semi-educated, unemployed youth of the urban centers of Punjab. The bāzāris, whose Islamic religiosity is integrally linked with their intense commitment to sectarian-based rituals, provide the financial wherewithal to sustain sectarian movements, protests, and leaders. The strong socio-religious bonds that link the bāzār with the traditional religious establishment have been now well-documented in the case of both Iran and Pakistan.

Madrasah students provide the manpower (or "muscle power") and act as vanguard in sectarian clashes. The management of madrasas with strong sectarian orientations, especially in Jhang, Sargodha, Multan and Chakwal, is capable of mobilizing thousands of students on any religious issue, whether it is jihād against the Soviet Union or against another Muslim sect. The majority of madrasas in Pakistan are organized on sectarian lines and many of them include in their regular curricula programmes for preparing their students for sectarian polemics and controversies. Several Sunnī madrasas teach Shī'ism as part of a broader programme called "false religions" (*bātil madhāhib*). Almost all sectarian organizations, including Sipāh-i-Sahābah and Sipāh-i-Muḥammad, originated in—and draw their strength from—madrasas.

The unemployed youth of Pakistan's urban centers, who constitute roughly a quarter of Pakistan's labor force, also become easy prey to religious demagogues and are readily available on hire as agents of violence.²⁹ A majority of them have little idea of the religious issues involved in the current sectarian conflict and, unlike the madrasah students, have no permanent stakes in how the *coup-de grâce* comes about.

There is also another social class explanation which is specific to Jhang (Punjab), the birthplace of the Sipāh-i-Sahābah and the hotbed of sectarian violence in recent years. The Jhang district, as a whole, has a sizeable Shī'ah population and has a long history of economic

and political domination by a few feudal families who all happen to be Shī'as.³⁰ Irrespective of which political party was in power in Punjab, or at the federal level, the prominent Shī'ah landlord families of Begum Abida Hussain, Amanullah Siyal, Sardarzada Zafar Iqbal and Faisal Saleh Hayat dominated the political scene. The emergence of the Sipāh-i-Sahābah in 1984 in Jhang was both a religious move to counter the sectarian militancy of local Shī'ah organizations as well as a political and economic revolt against the (Shī'ah) landed aristocracy. Using both sectarian slogans and economic grievances against the Shī'ah landlords, the Sipāh-i-Sahābah was able to mobilize Sunnī peasants in the rural areas and the Sunnī merchants in the district town for its own religio-political gain. During the 1988, 1990 and 1993 general elections, for example, the lines between sectarian strife, political conflict and class hostility were completely blurred in Jhang.

Conclusion

A few general observations are in order to conclude this essay: "Islamization" measures introduced in Pakistan during the Zia regime became associated with the increasing sectarian tensions because of their emphasis on sharī'ah laws and *fiqhī* hair-splitting, rather than on *maqāsid al-sharī'ah* (objectives of the Sharī'ah). This legalistic approach to "Islamization" naturally raised the question as to which interpretation of Islamic law is more Islamically authentic and should, therefore, be incorporated in public policy. Islamic revival has thus created dissension among various Islamic sects more than it has unified different social strata of Pakistan society. A different Islamic agenda, signifying freedom, tolerance and concern for the Islamic principles of social equality and economic justice would certainly have received a much more enthusiastic popular response and would have enhanced social harmony and national integration.

Notes

1. *Jāgo, Jāgo, Sunnī Jāgo* ("Wake Up, Sunnīs"), an Urdu pamphlet distributed by the activists of *Sipāh-i-Sahābah* outside a Sunnī mosque in Rawalpindi in 1995; no author, no publisher.
2. The earliest, and probably the most serious, sectarian violence that took place in Pakistan was caused by the 'ulamā'-led agitation against the Ahmadis (also known as Qāadianis) in 1953 in Punjab. The popular feelings against the Ahmadis were stirred up by the 'ulamā' to such a high pitch that Punjab, and especially its capital city Lahore, became the scene of a "vast heresy hunt"

in which "thousands of citizens rioted murderously, in almost pogrom-like fashion" against the Ahmadis. Violence spread so quickly throughout the province and assumed such alarming proportions that the civil authority totally collapsed and, in order to control the situation, martial law had to be imposed in Lahore. For a detailed account and analysis of the 1953 anti-Ahmadi sectarian violence see: *Report of the Court of Inquiry Constituted Under Punjab Act II of 1954 to Enquire into the Punjab Disturbances of 1953* (Lahore: Government Printing, 1954).

3. For a review of the history of the interaction between religion and politics in Pakistan see: Leonard Binder, *Religion and Politics in Pakistan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962); Keith Callard, *Pakistan: A Political Study* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1957); Aziz Ahmad, "Activism of the Ulama in Pakistan," in *Scholars, Saints, and Sufis*, ed. Nikki R. Keddie (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972); Freeland Abbott, *Islam and Pakistan* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1968); and Mumtaz Ahmad, "Class, Religion and Power: Some Aspects of Islamic Revivalism in Pakistan" (Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of Chicago, 1990).

4. See, for example, Benton Johnson, "A Critical Appraisal of the Church-Sect Typology," *American Sociological Review* 22 (1959): 88-92, and Bryan A. Wilson, "An Analysis of Sect Development," *American Sociological Review*, 24 (1959): 3-15.

5. Monthly *al-Haq* (Akora Khatak), 14, (December 1978), 26-27. Maulana Samiul-Haq, who was twice elected as JUI Senator in the Pakistan Senate, writes in a recent publication: "The Shī'as are conspiring to destroy the Islamic Republic of Pakistan as their forefathers had conspired to destroy the great Abbasid Caliphate with the help of Helagu Khan." See his *Islam aur 'Asr-i-Hāzir* [Islam and Modern Times], Peshawar, no publisher, n.d.), 586.

6. *The Muslim* (Islamabad), 15 April 1979.

7. M. Munir, *From Jinnah to Zia* (Lahore: Vanguard, n.d.), 46.

8. Allama Ihsān Ilāhī Zaheer, *Shias and Shiism* (Lahore, 1980).

9. When the JUAH leader Allama Ihsān Ilāhī Zaheer was seriously injured in a Lahore bomb blast, the Saudi government made immediate arrangements for him to be air-lifted to The King Faisal Hospital in Saudi Arabia as a special guest of the Saudi king.

10. Monthly *Noor-ul-Habib* (Basirpur), July 1993. Not all JUP 'ulamā' are that moderate, however. When Dr. Tahir-ul-Qadri, a fellow Brelvī "freelance" scholar paid tribute to Ayatollah Khomeini on his death in 1989, the monthly *Razā-i-Mustafā* (July 1989), wrote in its editorial: "How can anyone claim to be a Sunnī if he prays for a Shī'ah leader?"

11. *The Herald* (Karachi), September 1988, p. 33.

12. *Manifesto of Tahrik-i-Nifaz-i-Fiqh-i-Jaafriya* (Lahore, n.d.), p. 11.

13. *The Herald* (Karachi), September 1988, p. 34.
14. The author was in Pakistan during the inaugural meeting of the *Milli Yakjehti Council* in Lahore and talked to several of the participants who expressed considerable enthusiasm for the Council's goals and objectives.
15. A Pakistan Institute of Public Opinion (PIPO) survey of a national sample in 1987 showed that sectarian topics dominated the themes of Friday prayer sermons in mosques, especially in urban Punjab and Sind. See, Pakistan Institute of Public Opinion, *Friday Prayers: An Empirical Study* (Islamabad: PIPO, 1987), 3-11.
16. This is evident from the "Letters to the Editor" columns of national newspapers in Pakistan as well as from the popular support given to the recent legislation providing summary trials for those involved in terrorist activities.
17. In March 1983 when Maulana Salimullah and Maulana Asfandyar of *Swād-i-A'zam Ahle Sunnat-wal-Jamā'at* were leading anti-Shī'ah protests in Karachi, they admitted in a press conference that they had received "funds for (their) madrasas" from the Iraqi government. See *Aghāz* (Karachi) 26 March 1983.
18. Husain Haqqani, "Khomeini's Cat's Paw," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 6 August 1987, p. 30.
19. *Razākār* (Lahore) 24 December 1986. *Razākār*, a Shī'ah publication, refers to Mr. Khattak's statement in its editorial and, of course, denies that TNFJ receives any funds from foreign governments.
20. See *Bayyanāt* (Karachi), October 1987; *al-Balāgh* (Karachi), November 1987; and *Khuddamuddīn* (Lahore) 30 October 1987.
21. See the statement of Pakistan's Interior Minister, Shujahat Hussain on 13 July 1997 as reported in *Jang* (Rawalpindi), 14 July 1997.
22. For example, the Brelvī and Deobandī 'ulamā' have long been fighting on issues such as whether it is obligatory or not to stand up while saying a prayer for the Prophet.
23. Michael Mendelson, "Buddhism and the Business Establishment," *Archives De Sociologie Des Religions* 17 (1964): 87.
24. David Little, "Religious Militancy" in Chester A. Crocker and Fen Osler Hampson, eds., *Managing Global Chaos* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1996), 81.
25. Lloyd I. Rudolph and Suzanne H. Rudolph, *The Modernity of Tradition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967).
26. Jack Snyder, "Nationalism and the Crisis of the Post-Soviet State," *Survival* 35, (Spring 1993) 1:12.
27. Mohammad Ayoob, "State Making, State Breaking, and State Failure,"

in Crocker and Hampson, eds., *Managing Global Chaos*, 46.

28. Snyder, "Nationalism and the Crisis of the Post-Soviet State," 12.

29. Most of those who have been arrested for acts of sectarian violence in Punjab fall in this category. Many of them come from small towns, from a poor, artisan or peasant family background, with little education and no steady employment. They are recruited by activists of Sipāh-i-Sahābah and Sipāh-i-Muhammad as "paid workers" to act as bodyguards for the leaders and as "muscle men" for political rallies.

30. Khurshid Ahmad Nadeem, "Shī'ah-Sunnī Tanāza'," *Tazkīr* (Lahore), March, 1991.