Pakistan Essay, Research Paper

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan was established under traumatic circumstances. Pakistan (Land of the Pure) was carved from British India, first by partition in 1947 and later by war with India in 1971. Pakistan is one of the world’s major Islamic nations. It is the only remaining trace of the Mughal Empire of Islamic rulers from whom the British extracted control in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Allama Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938), one of the several leaders and thinkers, having insight into the Hindu-Muslim question was the first to propose the separation of Muslim India. The most clear description of the inner feeling of the Muslim community was given by Allama Muhammad Iqbal in his Presidential Address at the All-India Muslim League Session at Allahabad in 1930. He suggested that for the healthy development of Islam in South-Asia, it was essential to have a separate Muslim state at least in the Muslim majority regions of the northwest. Later on, in correspondence with Mohammad Ali Jinnah, he included the Muslim majority areas in the north-east also in his proposed Muslim state. Very few even among the Muslim welcomed the idea at the time. It was took a decade for the Muslims to embrace the demand for a separate Muslim state.

Three Round Table Conferences were convened in London during 1930-32, to resolve the Indian constitutional problem. The Hindu and Muslim leaders, who were invited to the conferences, could not draw up an agreed formula and the British Government had to announce a “Communal Award” which was incorporated in the Government of India Act of 1935. Before the elections under this Act, the All-India Muslim League, which remained dormant for some time, was reorganized by Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, who had returned to India in 1934, after being gone about five years in England.

Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah was a strong force in South-Asia representing the Muslims. The All-India Muslim League, under his gifted leadership, gradually and skillfully started organizing the Muslims on one platform, towards a Separate Muslim Homeland. During the 1930s, more awareness grew among the Muslims of their separate identity and their anxiety to preserve it within separate territorial boundaries. An important element that brought this simmering Muslim nationalism in the open was the character of the Congress rule in the Muslim minority provinces during 1937-39. The Congress policies in these provinces hurt the Muslim way of life. They were calculated aims to obliterate the Muslims as a separate cultural unit. The Muslims now stopped thinking in terms of defense and began to consider seriously the demand for a separate Muslim state. During 1937-39, several Muslim leaders and thinkers, inspired by Allama Iqbal’s ideas, started presenting elaborate schemes for partitioning the subcontinent. In 1940, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, called Qa’id-e-Azam (Great Leader), demanded a separate Islamic state, and when the British departed in1947, Pakistan came into existence as a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations. Karachi was made the administrative capital and Dhaka in East Pakistan later became the legislative capital. Jinnah ruled as governor-general until his death in 1948.

When the British left millions of Hindus fled to India, and millions of Muslims poured into Pakistan. This left Pakistan with a shortage of skilled workers, because Hindus held most of the skilled jobs in both business and in the professions. Religious riots broke out in both countries, and an undeclared war was fought over Kashmir. Pakistan gained control over the Northwestern parts-Gilgit, Balistan, and Azad (Free) Kashmir. India kept the remaining of Kashmir.

In 1956, Pakistan adopted a constitution under which it became the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. In 1958, General Muhammad Ayub Khan came to power in a bloodless revolution. He was elected president in 1960, and he established a new constitution in 1962. Pakistan’s administrative capital was moved from Karachi to Rawalpindi in 1959.

The city of Islamabad was built in the 1960’s to be the new capital of Pakistan. Its name means “City of Islam” and was chosen to reflect the country’s religious idealogy. Islamabad’s site was chosen by a commission in 1959 after Karachi was found unsuitable as the capital. Construction began in 1961. Plans called for traditional Islamic architecture to be blended with modern patterns and requirements. The capital of Pakistan was moved to Islamabad in 1967. In 1960, Pakistan and India agreed to share the waters of the Indus River system for irrigation. The Kashmir quarrel burst out again in 1965 but was ended by a United Nations truce in 1966. In 1968, strikes and political violence swept Pakistan. The threat of economic and political chaos led president Ayub Khan to resign in 1969. He turned over control to a military regime headed by General Agha Mohammad Yahya Khan, who suspended the constitution, declared martial law, and promised to make reforms.

Pakistan was originally made up of two distinct and geographically unconnected parts, West and East Pakistan. West Pakistan was made up of a number of races including the Punjabis (the most numerous), Sindhis,

Pathans, Balochis, Mohajirs (Muslim refugees from India), and others. East Pakistan, on the other hand, had an overwhelming Bengali-speaking population. In 1971, after a brief civil war and invasion by India, East Pakistan split away and became Bangladesh.

Also in 1971, President Yahya Khan resigned, and Zulfakir Ali Bhutto, the deputy premier and foreign minister, became president of Pakistan. In 1972, Bhutto nationalize some major industries and withdrew Pakistan from the Commonwealth, when some member states recognized Bangladesh.