

# The Evolution of Pakistan

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PAKISTAN is a recently created "cross-road" state between the Asiatic Middle East and Southeast Asia, and is united for mutual defense in the Central Treaty Organization with Iran and Turkey.

Pakistan was created as a self-governing nation in 1947. She has a population of 83 million people located in two geographical regions separated by 1,700 kilometers of Indian territory. This distance between the Pakistani of the two regions, their different origins, customs, and languages complicated the forming of a single nation. The country was a prey to political factions and crisis followed upon crisis. Black market, contraband, and corruption prevailed everywhere: there was a large deficit. Disillusionment was great among the masses.

It was not surprising that a military *coup d'état* took place in October 1958 without bloodshed which was endorsed immediately by the great majority of the population. The principal instigators of the coup were the President of the Republic, General Iskander Mirza, and the Commander in Chief of the Army, General Ayub Khan, both highly respected. When the revolution was over, Mirza transmitted all his powers to Ayub in order to avoid the impression of dual control.

The new regime can be judged by its accomplishments. Agrarian reform, which previously had been blocked by the great landholder interests, has been carried out, particularly in the eastern part of Pakistan where the land suffered under an almost feudal regime imposed by Lord Cornwallis in 1793. More than 50 percent of the farmland in the Punjab region, somewhat less than half in the northwestern province, and more than 90 percent in the Sind region was in the hands of landown-

ers who did not work their own land. It was rented to tenants who could be thrown off without notice. Another class of landholder, the jagirdars, owned tax-exempt land and had the right to collect tax levies from their tenants.

In the future no landowner can own more than 400 hectares of nonirrigated or 200 hectares of irrigated land. Thus more than one million hectares have become available, and have been redistributed. The farmers have been granted government loans, repayable over a 25-year period, with which to pay for their land. The landowners are being compensated by the state. The rights of the jagirdars have been abolished without compensation, and over 300,000 hectares in their possession have been redistributed. Two million farmers have benefited from this act. As a result, increased production eventually should bring an end to the food shortage.

The refugee problem also is being solved. Unfortunate millions, who left their possessions behind in India when they moved to the new country, had led a pitiable existence in temporary villages around Karachi. The former government had promised to compensate them from the proceeds of the sales of property of those Hindus who had been repatriated to India, but this was never done. Today, most of these cases have been settled to the satisfaction of the refugees.

The new regime has concerned itself with the housing shortage and, within five months, the town of Koradji was constructed near Karachi to provide shelter for 15,000 families. Other satellite towns have appeared throughout the country.

The government recently transferred its seat from Karachi to Rawalpindi in the north of the Punjab region which will be-

come the new capital in a marvelous setting at the foot of the Himalayas. This transfer was intended to move the administrative machine away from the financial and trade circles of Karachi which exerted so much influence under the preceding regime.

A great hydroelectric dam has been constructed by Canadian engineers at Warzak on the Afghan border with funds from the Colombo Plan. Starting this year it will bring the waters from the Kabul River to 50,000 hectares of desert in the northwest part of the country and will double the electric power resources of western Pakistan.

The average Pakistani feels that he has an honest regime. Confidence is reviving, industrial production increasing, the fiscal returns are satisfactory, and the austerity policy has raised the foreign currency reserves by 50 percent. Corruption has decreased greatly, and prompt military justice has succeeded in inspiring respect for the law.

General Ayub's aim is to restore a democracy that the Pakistani can understand and apply. Through an ordinance issued in October 1959 he provided for a municipal council system on different levels with two provincial advisory counselors at the head of the pyramid who will be chiefly concerned with economic development. These local government organs will be given extensive powers on all municipal questions and will even collect taxes.

In the field of foreign affairs the most noteworthy event of the past months has been closer relations with India. The recent manifestation of Communist Chinese imperialism is doubtlessly at the base of

this easing of tension. It could not have come about, however, without the establishment of a strong, stable, and popular regime in Pakistan, capable of negotiating with the necessary authority on questions that have for too long been subjected to blind and chauvinistic passions.

Much remains to be done before complete confidence will be established. The problems of Kashmir and the division of the waters of the Indus basin and its five tributaries have strained the relations between the two countries; the efforts of the United Nations have been in vain. Last, Pakistan too, has border problems with Red China. The Communist forces have been very active on the border between Sinkiang and the northwest of Kashmir occupied by Pakistani. This is another border that has not been defined.

In any event, Pakistan remains vigilant and solidly established in the Western camp. Being a member of the Central Treaty Organization and the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization, she has received military equipment from the United States. The value of her army should not be underestimated. It has proved its worth at the side of Great Britain on most battlefields of both World Wars. What Pakistan has lacked is internal stability, and in this respect Ayub's success can but strengthen her resistance against world communism at a moment when this is particularly necessary in the Far East.

Thus it can be seen that Pakistan's main problems are in the area of foreign politics and security, and in the field of economics. The exceptional qualities of the peoples vouch for success in overcoming these difficulties, thereby increasing the defensive forces of the West and effectively contributing to continued peace.