



Empire and Islam: Punjab and the Making of Pakistan (Comparative Studies on Muslim Societies)

David Gilmartin

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Emerging from the partition of India in 1947, Pakistan was a product of the first and perhaps the most successful of those twentieth-century movements which sought to bring about an Islamic transformation of the post-colonial state. But the evolution of Islam's role in the Pakistan movement has long been debated. This book examines the problem through a detailed study of Muslim politics in the Punjab—Pakistan's largest and most important province—in the decades leading up to India's partition. Gilmartin argues that an understanding of Muslim politics in this period depends on an understanding of the close interaction between the ideology and structure of the British colonial empire on the one hand, and the structure of Islamic organization and ideas on the other.

The British imperial state rejected religion as a foundation for its central authority, yet its structure encouraged the development of forms of rural Islam adapted to local organization and to the hierarchical and mediatory ideology of the imperial state. At the same time, alien colonial domination encouraged the growth of "communalism" and eventually of Muslim "nationalism," particularly in Punjab's cities—thus posing new ideological challenges to the British Raj.

The tensions inherent in the structure and ideology of colonial organization thus provide the backdrop for the study. Gilmartin's extensive use of private papers, biographies, and autobiographies of prominent as well as less prominent political leaders helps give this study a balanced viewpoint. He also draws on a range of popular and private Urdu materials that lend the book an authentic voice.

This study will be welcomed by students of colonial empire and by those interested in Islam's role in the modern world.

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