

In 1990, Deyell published his book *Living Without Silver*,<sup>3</sup> which has become the definitive work on the monetary history of early medieval north India. In this new book, he has stretched back in time by a couple of centuries and has produced what is destined to become the definitive work on the coinage of that period. <[ptandon@bu.edu](mailto:ptandon@bu.edu)>

PANKAJ TANDON  
Boston University

MUSLIMS AGAINST THE MUSLIM LEAGUE: CRITIQUES OF THE IDEA OF PAKISTAN. Edited by ALI USMAN QASMI and MEGAN EATON ROBB. pp. vii, 408. Delhi, Cambridge University Press, 2017.  
doi:[10.1017/S1356186318000329](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1356186318000329)

One of the great developments of the last ten years of British rule in India was the transformation of the position of the All-India Muslim League. In the 1937 elections it won just five per cent of the Muslim vote; it could not be regarded as a serious political player. Yet, in the elections of 1945–46 it won about 75 per cent of the Muslim vote, winning 453 out of 524 seats in the central and provincial legislatures, a result which meant that the British and the Indian National Congress had to take seriously the League's demand for the creation of Pakistan at independence, a demand which it had formally voiced in March 1940.

With the creation of Pakistan in 1947, which was also the formation of the most populous Muslim nation in the world at the time, the narrative of how some Muslims, mainly from the old Mughal service class of northern India, began a movement for the reassertion and protection of their interests in the nineteenth century which ended up as the foundation of a separate Muslim state in the twentieth century, was the dominant Muslim story of British India. However, there were other Muslim interests, other Muslim political visions, and other Muslim identities. It is the purpose of this volume, which began at a conference which Megan Robb and Ai Usman Qasmi held at Oxford in 2014, to identify these alternative voices and to allow them to speak. Some, though not all, were to speak powerfully in the subsequent history of Pakistan.

The editors frame the collection of essays with a useful introduction which sets up the issue of the progress of the Muslim League juggernaut and the presence of differing and dissenting voices. An element of nuance is added with a discussion of the ways in which ideas such as 'nation', 'state' and 'homeland' were translated into vernacular languages and used in the debates of the time. Pertinent is the way in which *qaum* was used to describe the Muslim community, either within South Asia or in the world in the nineteenth century but increasingly in the twentieth century comes to mean nation. "... with the resolution of March 1940 [at Lahore] Muslims were no longer simply a minority seeking political rights and safeguards in India but a nation with sovereign claims seeking independence".

The fourteen contributions fall into several categories. Two place forms of composite, and geographically-based, nationalism against the claims of the League. So, Barbara Metcalf analyses the nationalist positions of Husain Ahmad Madani, the leader of Deoband, and the Jamiyat ul-Ulama-I Hind. She demonstrates in particular his emphasis on the fact that Muslims are buried in the soil of

<sup>3</sup>John S. Deyell, *Living Without Silver*, (New Delhi, 1990).

India which gives it a sacred quality for them, while they dealt with their lack of political power to enforce the *shari'a* in an independent India by saying that now it would become an internal moral imperative. Neilesh Bose finds that the Bengali Muslim Congress leader, Rezaul Karim, adopted a composite Indian nationalist view point, which was strongly supported by his deep roots in Bengali literature. Other opponents of the Muslim League had very different political visions. Markus Daechsel analyses the Khaksar Tehrik and its leader, Inayatullah Khan Mashriqi, who looked forward to revolution dissolving the old order and paving the way for a new one. Safoora Arbab shows how Abdul Ghaffar Khan and his Khuda'i Khidmatgars rejected the League's policies, which maintained the political ideas which supported the colonial state, in favour of non-violence and a "politics of friendship", which was in itself a form of decolonisation. Ammar Ali Jan, through the life of the Muslim communist Shaukat Usmani, considers "Islam and communism as political projects in the making within the specific histories of anti-colonialism, rather than as stemming from unrelated and even opposed, textual traditions".

Several articles deal with individuals who are concerned to defend specific provincial political requirements against the over-arching demands of the All-India Muslim League. Sarah Ansari shows how Allah Baksh Soomro worked until his assassination in 1943 to keep Jinnah out of Sindh. Newal Osman explores the difficulties experienced by the Punjabi Unionist leader, Sikandar Hayat Khan, as he struggled to prevent the Muslim League undermining his position in the Punjab. Abdul Majeed studies the attempt of Baluch Sardars in a *Shahi Jirga* to resist the incorporation of the Baluchi state of Kalat into Pakistan. In transcripts from the occasion, translated from Urdu, the Baluchi Sardars make clear that, while they are proud of the achievement of Pakistan, they do not wish to be part of it for they belong to an independent Baluchistan. This is an issue which has troubled Pakistan ever since. Then, there were other powerful identities. Rais ur-Rahman introduces us to Muslims from the *qasbahs* of the UP who chose not to migrate to Pakistan. For them their identification with their *qasbati* world, with its powerful memories of Muslim cultural achievement, was stronger than any identification with a Muslim homeland. Justin Jones takes us through the paradox of the Shia who, from Jinnah downwards, produced much of the leadership of the League. Yet, the League was strongly opposed by the Shia clerical class who saw Pakistan as a 'Sunnistan'. This view was sharpened by the strengthening of the Shia identity in the century before independence which Jones has done much to reveal. In practice this view had some justification as some Shias came to suffer discrimination in the new state.

Finally, four chapters deal with individuals of distinctive and different political visions. In the first, Tahir Kamran addresses the political imagination of Chaudhri Rahmat Ali, who as a Cambridge student first produced the vision for Pakistan. Using Rahmat Ali materials, hidden away in the Foster Papers in the Cambridge Centre for South Asian Studies he demonstrates how Rahmat Ali's political vision for a Muslim future in South Asia progressed from Pakistan in 1933 to the Continent of Diniya in the 1940s, which unlike his Pakistan scheme created a homeland for most Muslims in India. In the second, Ali Usman Qasmi examines Maulana Maududi's intellectual objections to the idea of Pakistan, which he found too close to the Western idea of the nation-state. In the third, Ali Raza shows how Mian Iftikharuddin, a former President of the Punjab Congress who joined the Muslim League, did so because he saw the League, as the Introduction tells us "as a progressive movement that paradoxically was going to ensure the unity and harmony of India". The maelstrom of politics in the 1930s and 1940s, with its various leftist strands, harboured some extraordinary political visions! In the fourth, Megan Robb shows how Ashraf Ali Thanawi, Deobandi and leading Sufi scholar of the time, developed a relationship with the Muslim League with the aim of guiding it. Like Iftikharuddin he was distanced from political reality and overestimated his political influence, although his disciple, Shabbir

Ahmed Usmani, did play a role in the passing of the 1949 Objectives Resolution, which eventually created the opening for Pakistan to move in the direction of an Islamic state.

This is a strong set of essays which those teaching the emergence of Pakistan should find a useful counterweight to the widely-accepted version of the Muslim League triumph. This said, we should note that all the voices are north Indian; no one speaks from Bombay, Hyderabad, Tamilnad or Kerala. There are points at which one may differ from the authors: Ammar Ali Jan is not using language with care when he refers to the Muslim League as ‘political Islam’ which is a term scholars have reserved for the holistic political visions of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Jama’at-e Islami; Rais ur-Rahman is stretching a point to call Maulana Abdul Bari a nationalist – he was only interested in the Congress in so far as he could make it work for Muslim interests, moreover, he is plain wrong to make Abdul Majid Daryabadi a Farangi Mahalli – he was a Qidwai; while Safoor Arbab’s potentially interesting insights into the politics of Abdul Ghaffar Khan and the Khuda’i Khidmatgars are blighted by jargon – in places unreadable. These few reservations should not deter readers from making use of this important book. <F.Robinson@rhul.ac.uk>

FRANCIS ROBINSON  
*Royal Holloway, University of London*

WESTERN IMAGININGS: THE INTELLECTUAL CONTEST TO DEFINE WAHABISM. By ROHAN DAVIS. pp. 224. Cairo, American University in Cairo Press, 2018.  
doi:[10.1017/S1356186318000354](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1356186318000354)

It should be clear from the start that this is not a book about Wahhabism. It is about how Western scholars and intellectuals since 9/11 have constructed representations of Wahhabism, and done so while remaining profoundly influenced by their own ideological, religious and political concerns. There is nothing in it to be learned about the ideas of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab and those who, since the nineteenth century, have claimed to work in his tradition. There is a great deal about the sociology of knowledge, the influence of intellectuals, in particular two groupings (the Liberals and the Neo-conservatives) and their relationships with government and society.

The book begins by reviewing some of the scholarship on Wahhabism, addresses problems of translation, and the way in which the author considers scholars have constructed ‘Imagined communities’ and ‘Imagined geographies’. He goes on to explore the role of intellectuals in society, the claims they make in representing Wahhabism and “the key role prejudice plays in influencing how we make sense of the social world”. Then, after setting out the main theories which have influenced him in making sense of liberal and neo-conservative representations of Wahhabism, he analyses, first, the representations of Wahhabism by liberal intellectuals and the metaphors and themes that have influenced them, and, second, goes through the same process for the neo-conservative intellectuals. He concludes by considering the significance of his findings for those involved in policy-making in general and the development of the ongoing Israel-Palestine conflict in particular.

The book is based for the most part on US scholarship and the public pronouncements of US intellectuals. For the author’s particular purpose this may be enough. But the problem he is tackling is not entirely new. From the beginning of the nineteenth century the British in India and their subjects were engaged in constructing ideas of Wahhabis and Wahhabism. Indeed, Wahhabi was a term which the