

Book Review

Hyderabad: After the Fall

by Omar Khalidi; Wichita, Kansas: Hyderabad Historical Society, 1988.

This is a collection of 13 essays by a group of experts on the society and politics of Deccani Muslims after Indian independence in 1947. The readings brought nostalgic memories of men and events I knew or experienced. "The Five Day War," by Mir Laiq Ali, is a sad commentary on the plight of Hyderabad forces resisting the Indian offensive that began September 13, 1948.

The Hyderabad case in the U.N. Security Council is described by Clyde Egleton, who records the sympathetic response Nizam's representatives received from most members of the U.N. Council. If Sardar Patel had not ordered the military occupation of Hyderabad, it is possible that a settlement could have been reached between Nizam and Nehru. Prof. Zubaida Yazdani recounts Hyderabad's transformation from Nizam's Dominion into a state within India and its breakup on linguistic principle in 1956. Just as innocent Hindus suffered at the hands of Rizakars during 1947-48, so did innocent Muslims at the hands of the Indian army after Hyderabad troops surrendered on September 18, 1948.

Prof. Wilfred C. Smith, a keen observer of the Indian religious scene for the last five decades, has provided a succinct background upon which other scholars have built detailed accounts. Dr. Theodore P. Wright, Jr. has made a fascinating study of minority group politics and concludes that separatist politics in Hyderabad is more likely to harm the Muslim minority than potentially benefit it.

Ratna Naidu's research into the Muslims of Bidar, Karnataka, a part of the old Hyderabad state, provides rare insight into the condition of the Muslim community in a semi-rural setting. The loss of privileges is studied by Rashiduddin Khan and flawlessly woven into a fascinating narrative by Akbar S. Ahmad, a sociologist, and Usama Khalidi, a journalist. Zahir Ahmad, an administrator who worked for both the Hyderabad and Indian governments, rightly observes that Indian administrators have an imperfect understanding of problems faced by the toiling masses, as most administrators come from elitist backgrounds.

Finally, Omar Khalidi has combed through various books and journals

to produce an excellent bibliographic essay on post-1948 Muslim society in Hyderabad, which will be indispensable to anyone working on a major center of Indian Muslims.

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