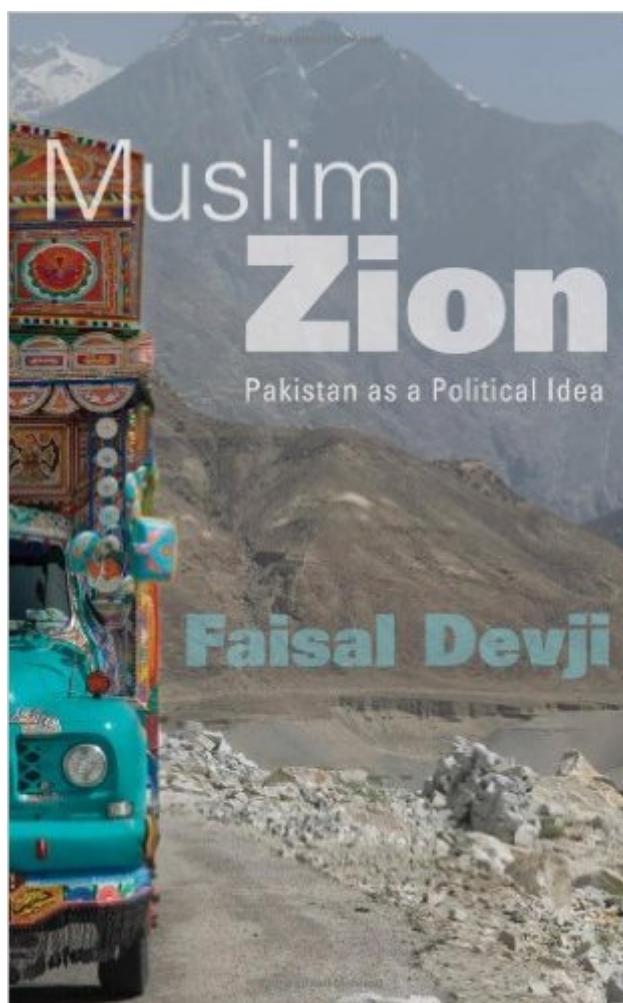


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Muslim Zion: Pakistan As A Political Idea



Synopsis

Pakistan, founded less than a decade after a homeland for India's Muslims was proposed, is both the embodiment of national ambitions fulfilled and, in the eyes of many observers, a failed state. Muslim Zion cuts to the core of the geopolitical paradoxes entangling Pakistan to argue that India's rival has never been a nation-state in the conventional sense. Pakistan is instead a distinct type of political geography, ungrounded in the historic connections of lands and peoples, whose context is provided by the settler states of the New World but whose closest ideological parallel is the state of Israel. A year before the 1948 establishment of Israel, Pakistan was founded on a philosophy that accords with Zionism in surprising ways. Faisal Devji understands Zion as a political form rather than a holy land, one that rejects hereditary linkages between ethnicity and soil in favor of membership based on nothing but an idea of belonging. Like Israel, Pakistan came into being through the migration of a minority population, inhabiting a vast subcontinent, who abandoned old lands in which they feared persecution to settle in a new homeland. Just as Israel is the world's sole Jewish state, Pakistan is the only country to be established in the name of Islam. Revealing how Pakistan's troubled present continues to be shaped by its past, Muslim Zion is a penetrating critique of what comes of founding a country on an unresolved desire both to join and reject the world of modern nation-states.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I enjoyed Mr. Devji's book very much, although I had to concentrate hard. Muslim Zion is a complex and intellectual assessment of Pakistan and her foundation as a nation. A foundation which has

much in common with that of Israel, hence the title. This is a very interesting and fascinating analysis and I was impressed with the author's conclusions. Pakistan is a complex and contradictory nation and certainly one which was a product of its time in the immediate post-War world. If you want to know about Pakistan then you should invest in Muslim Zion. According to the author, Pakistan is a paradox; a country which rejects history and territory in favour of a 'homeland'. Yet this homeland itself is a nation state with historical roots in Punjab, Baluchistan, Sindh and also Kashmir. Pakistan is a nation established on the sole basis of religion (just like Israel). Because of this, Pakistan rejects the more traditional nation state concepts such as 'blood and soil', which tended to characterise traditional forms of nationalism in Europe. Indeed, Devji makes many parallels between this Muslim Nationalism and Zionism, claiming that there is significant similarity in the aims of both. Initially, the concept of a Muslim homeland developed out of the ideas of the Muslim philosopher Mohammed Iqbal. Iqbal was concerned for the fate of India's Muslims and was in favour of recognition of a Muslim province in any future independent Indian nation. These ideas fermented and were taken up by the secular Muslim politician Mohammed Ali Jinnah. Jinnah and his Indian Muslim League were to ultimately advance these ideas and declare at the 1940 Lahore Convention the desired aim of a separate Muslim nation. Mr. Devji makes a good case for Pakistan as a political idea.

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