



The Genesis of Baloch Nationalism: Politics and Ethnicity in Pakistan, 1947–1977

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BOOK REVIEW



The Genesis of Baloch Nationalism: Politics and Ethnicity in Pakistan, 1947–1977, by S. R. Sheikh, London: Taylor & Francis Group, 268 pp., £29.59. ISBN: 9781351020701. [E-Book] 9780367734893. [Paperback] Publication date: December 18, 2018

The book is organized into five chapters and an introduction about the case of Balochistan: a self-fulfilling prophecy which is followed by the ideological, political and military interventions and concluded by the changing dimensions of the Baloch national movement since 1977. We can overcome the problems of the past only by understanding it and in order to understand the issue properly the author Salman Rafi Sheikh has tried to explore the issues in this book. He mentions this as the “least understood political problem of Pakistan.” He had tried to analyze and investigate the problem by comparing the issues with the official narration of the state and has debunked the infamous two myths i.e., India and other powers are behind this issue and the blaming of a few nationalist leaders of Balochistan.

The book introduces the case of Balochistan and then explores the ideological, political and military interventions of Pakistan in Balochistan and also traces the genesis of the current secessionist movement. The book digs deeper into the question of Balochistan’s integration into Pakistan in 1947 and analyzes the ideological, political and militant character of the movement until 1977. The book shows how the Balochs and other minority groups were denied the right to identify themselves as an ethnic group and the forced Pakistani nationalism systematically excluded the other sub-national groups from the positions in government. The book also traces the evolution of resistance movements within Balochistan which currently is in the shape of militant insurgency.

The introduction starts with a law and order case presented to the Supreme Court of Pakistan, which at first draws a parallel between the similarities of East Pakistan (before becoming Bangladesh) and Balochistan by comparing the famous six points which turned out to be stepping stones for creation of Bangladesh. The Supreme Court had even indirectly emphasized that the repeated incidents of missing persons and targeted killings have eroded the confidence of Baloch people in the state institutions. This report also added that it had a pile of pending cases popping up related to recovery of missing people and it even added a shocking fact that the majority of the missing happened to be educated