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'Alternative' Politics:
Pakistan in its Formative
Decades 1940s - 1969

Abstract:
For the most part Pakistan is studied through the prism of a crisis discourse which has obscured the nuances and dynamism of its political and social history. Instead of focusing on crisis as something to be explained, it can also be taken as a starting point to study the way crisis is negotiated and experienced in different spheres of life in Pakistan. The crisis of nationalism in Pakistan, for example, can tell us something about the existence of alternate visions for society and the nation. Alongside the emerging official nationalism, ‘alternative’ forces such as Leftist literary movements, labour movements, student politics, and pan-Islamic political visions all contributed to the debates on defining the Pakistani nation. The paper aims to highlight aspects of these alternative politics and visions for society in the post-independence early decades of Pakistan’s history.

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