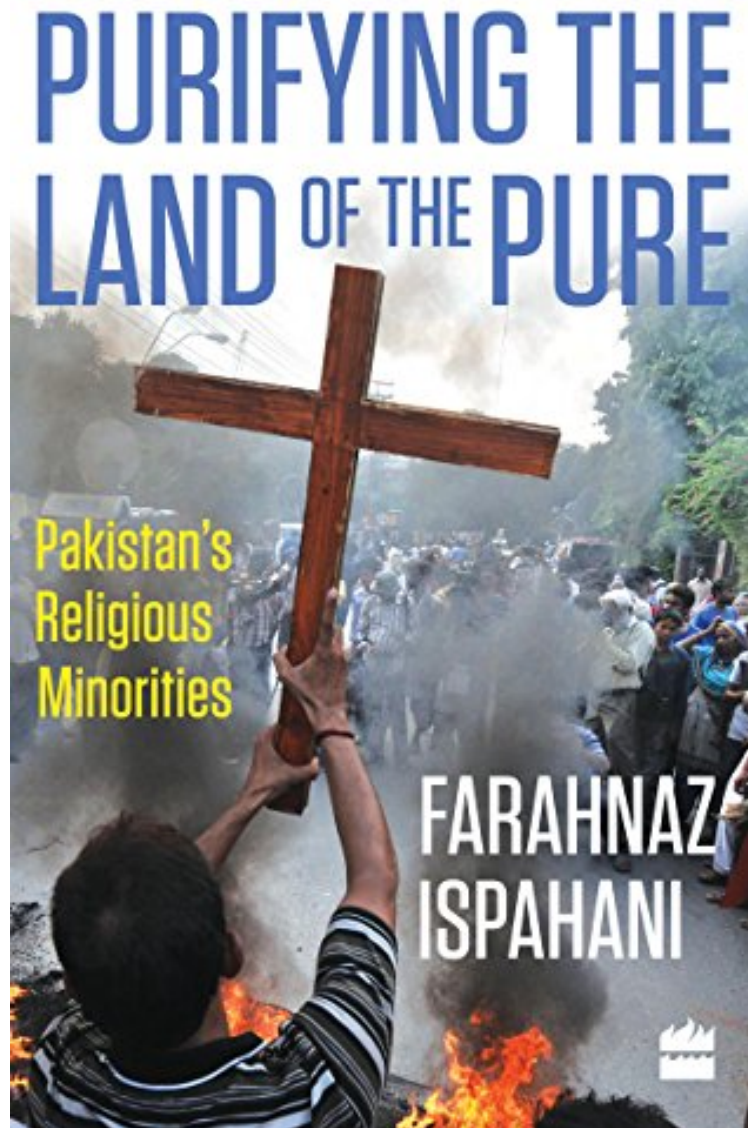


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Purifying the Land of the Pure: Pakistan's Religious Minorities

Farahnaz Ispahani

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Headline statement: 'An unnerving tale of how politics empowered bigotry in Pakistan': Asma Jahangir About the book: '[Y]ou will find that in course of time Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the State.' - Muhammad Ali Jinnah Pakistan was carved out in 1947 to protect the subcontinent's largest religious minority. It was conceived as a Muslim-majority, albeit secular, State that would set an example for India on how to treat its minorities. But soon after Independence, even as Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah lay dying, political, religious and social leaders proclaimed it an Islamic State, drumming up a national narrative of Islamic victimhood. The result is an ever-intensifying prejudice against religious minorities in an effort to make Pakistan 'purer' in 'Islamic' terms. Purifying the Land of the Pure is an analysis of the country's policies towards its religious minority populations, as well as an attempt to set the record straight about why Pakistan was created and where it moved away from Jinnah's modern pluralist vision to that of a purely Sunni Islamic nation. Farahnaz Ispahani brings to the subject an uncommon combination: the rigour of a scholar and the ground-level experience of a parliamentarian. A crucial addition to the literature on Pakistan.

About the Author Farahnaz Ispahani has been a leading voice for women and religious minorities in Pakistan for the past twenty-five years, first as a journalist, then as a member of Pakistan's National Assembly, and most recently as a scholar based in the United States. An advocate of Pakistan's return to democracy during the military regime of Pervez Musharraf, she served as a spokesperson and international media coordinator for the Pakistan People's Party, working alongside the late Benazir Bhutto. During her tenure in parliament (2008-2012), she was a member of the Foreign Affairs and Human Rights Committees and of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus. In 2013-2014, she served as a Public Policy Scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. In 2012, she was listed among Foreign Policy magazine's Top 100 Global Thinkers, as well as Newsweek Pakistan's Top 100 Women Who Matter.