

only 11 percent in 1998. Russia rose to become the world's third largest wheat exporter behind the United States and Canada, although a drought in 2010 depressed output of wheat and other grains.

Russia's agricultural rebound doesn't have everyone applauding. Moscow's "boorish international economic behavior," including politically motivated embargoes on French poultry in 2006, Indian rice in 2007, and Georgian wine in 2008, has made many countries wary. Even though Russia is not yet a leading global food producer, the world does not want a new Iron Curtain to snap down around the country's verdant heartland.

OTHER NATIONS

Pakistani Pop

THE SOURCE: "Pop Idols" by Kamila Shamsie, in *Granta*, Autumn 2010.

WHEN NOVELIST KAMILA SHAMSIE left Pakistan for America in the early 1990s, she expected that some of the pop stars of her youth would "fade away." But instead they've transformed themselves, and in ways that "reflect Pakistan's shifting religio-political landscape."

When she was growing up in Pakistan, in the mid-1980s, one thing was obvious, Shamsie reflects: "Youth culture was For-

eign. The privileged among us could visit it, but none of us could live there." But in 1987, a distinctive Pakistani youth culture emerged with the video hit "Dil Dil Pakistan" ("Heart Heart Pakistan"), by the band Vital Signs from Rawalpindi. "Millions of Pakistanis, including my 14-year-old self, fell over in rapture," Shamsie remembers.

As Pakistan's youth culture entered a new era, so did the young country's politics. Over the preceding decade, under the rule of military dictator Mohammad Zia ul-Haq, Islamization had spread throughout Pakistan. Zia's alliance with the United States had brought guns, Shamsie says, and his alliance with the Saudis had brought Wahhabism, a strain of Islam at odds with the deeply personal Sufism that was traditional in Pakistan. In 1986, however, Zia's more secular-minded rival Benazir Bhutto returned to Pakistan after eight years in exile, and a million people flooded the streets of Lahore to welcome her. That same year, Lahore's Al-Hamra

auditorium hosted its first battle of the bands. In December 1988 Bhutto was sworn in as prime minister. "Elation was in the air, and it had a soundtrack"—"Dil Dil Pakistan."

But Bhutto's election did not presage the bright future many had hoped for. One reason was that Islamization had taken hold. For example, one alumnus of Vital Signs, Junaid Jamshed, became a "fundo," a derogatory term for a fundamentalist. He joined a proselytizing movement that advocates following Muhammad in the most literal ways: the length of one's beard, the style of one's dress, even how one speaks—such as adopting an Arab inflection. Another Vital Signs member, Salman Ahmad, got deeply into Sufism and pioneered Sufi rock. A Vital Signs spinoff band, Junoon, produced rock star Ali Azmat, who has used his fame to fight against Zionism. Together, these paths illustrate the "polarity and discordance" that animate Pakistan today.

"It's a strange business, growing up," Shamsie remarks. "Your teen idols grow up too, and you realize that the vast gulf of years which separated you from them is actually just a narrow ravine, and that you are all roughly part of the same generation. In the particular case of the Pakistani pop pioneers, you also realize that your nation is growing up with you too."



Vital Signs' rock hit "Dil Dil Pakistan" captured the hearts of young Pakistanis in 1987.