

## Book Reviews

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**Riaz Ahmad**, *The Works of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah*, 1893-1912, Volume I, Islamabad: National Institute of Pakistan Studies, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, 1996, Lii+468 pp., Price Pak Rs. 450/-, US\$ 25/-

This volume is the first in what is projected to be a forty volume series, containing all the documents, correspondence, and notes attributed to Mohammad Ali Jinnah from his days as a young man seeking admission to Lincoln's Inn, to the mid 1930s when he reassumed responsibility for guiding the Muslim League in the struggle to create Pakistan. This first volume represents 248 separate entries, drawn from a variety of sources that include private papers collections, official reports, debates and proceedings from institutions such as the Bombay High Court and Indian Law Reports, the Council of the governor-general of India and Parliamentary Papers. Numerous monographs, newspapers and journals have likewise been examined and sifted and items have been extracted that tell as complete a story of the Quaid-i-Azam's maturation as a statesman of singular bearing in the Asian subcontinent as any to date.

This monumental task is the labour of one solitary scholar, Riaz Ahmad, the first and current chair on Quaid-i-Azam and the Freedom Movement at Quaid-i-Azam University in Islamabad. So vast an undertaking cannot be managed without the total dedication and perseverance of the researcher, and Dr. Ahmad has demonstrated a determination that is awesome as well as inspiring. A devoted follower of the Quaid, Riaz Ahmad has centred his efforts on filling in the period not covered by Z.H. Zaidi, chief editor of the Jinnah Papers Project, whose exhaustive efforts are directed at compiling the full record of Jinnah's work with the Muslim League prior to and following independence. It is important to note that these programmes

of Riaz Ahmad and that of Z.H. Zaidi, complement one another, and that neither duplicates the work of the other. Together, however, their joint toils will provide future generations of Pakistani scholars with the basic source material that is indispensable to the telling of the full story of Mohammad Ali Jinnah and Pakistan.

This first volume by Riaz Ahmad establishes the format for all the others which will follow. This volume opens with an introduction by the editor that leads the reader through many of the key documents in the book. Dr. Ahmad holds to a descriptive account, allowing the reader/researcher to draw whatever judgements and conclusions he believes important. In this first collection of documents Dr. Ahmad provides personal insight as to Jinnah's personality as a young man, his strength of character, and his commitment to modernity and the liberal constitutional tradition that surfaced in Great Britain in the nineteenth century. Jinnah proved to be a prodigious student of the law, and his role as a young advocate focused his energy and framed his life experience. Dr. Ahmad contrasts Jinnah's early development with that of his counterpart, and later arch antagonist, Mohandas K. Gandhi. Indeed, using documents drawn from a variety of archives, Riaz Ahmad shows how much more committed Jinnah was than Gandhi when it came to professionalizing his legal training.

Jinnah's devotion to the rule of law compelled him to follow a constitutional path throughout his lifetime. Jinnah was fully cognizant of the subcontinent's vast human diversity. He deeply sensed the rhythm of change that the Europeans had brought to South Asia and having enjoyed a sojourn of study in England where he first hand came to understand the forces that were changing his world, he committed himself to the task of bridging cultural divides, and in so doing, demonstrating that harmony of interest was possible even if ritual and ceremonial differences persisted. Jinnah laboured to perfect the legal system that the British brought to the subcontinent, not because he was enamoured of the colonial system, but because he recognised that the dramatic changes set in train by the European intrusion necessitated a more concerted effort by British India's new indigenous leaders to harmonise their programs and objective with one another.

Jinnah was convinced that India's minority communities could only be protected within a framework of constitutional order rooted in justice and tolerance. Riaz Ahmad reveals how Jinnah wedded himself to the rule of law and in so doing even agreed to defend B.G. Tilak, a

leader of the Hindu extreme, whose political rights had been seriously constrained by the British colonial government. Jinnah's defence of Tilak's rights, and his success in winning his case, is brought out in this volume. So too are a number of other high profile cases that examine Jinnah's concern with voting rights and the process of elections, as well as his defence of free expression.

Riaz Ahmad examines Jinnah's early development in protecting the rights of all the subjects of the Crown, and in so doing, established his position as an advocate of Muslim-Hindu amity. This latter purpose Jinnah brought with him when he joined the Indian National Congress and the early years reveal again and again the Quaid's strenuous activity in promoting working relationships between the communities and disparate cultures. Although this first volume does not address Jinnah's political role, this initial collection of documents and readings defines the principles and the demeanour of the man the Muslims of the subcontinent were to call Quaid-i-Azam.

Riaz Ahmad has launched himself upon a great and important mission and this opening volume is testimony to the depth of his personal commitment and dedication. The reader/researcher will await the unfolding of the series, and the many documents that will frame our perception of the Quaid-i-Azam well into the twenty-first century.

*Lawrence Ziring*