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Mujeeb Ahmad, *Jamiyyat-i-Ulama-i-Pakistan 1948 – 1979*, National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research, Islamabad, 1993, pp.264. Price Pakistan Rs. 150/-, SAARC countries Rs. 250/-, other countries US \$22.00.

Mujeeb Ahmad's work on *Jamiyyat-i-Ulama-i-Pakistan* is the first serious study of a religio-political organisation. In this book, he has given us a candid and forthright account of the party since its inception in 1948. It was primarily formed to counter the influence of *Jamiyyat-i-Ulama-i-Islam* that had been dominated by the Ulama of the Deoband School.

The author brings out that the decline in Muslim power in South Asia had coincided with challenges to the religion from different directions. Both the "modernists" and "apologists" interpreted Islam in a way that ran counter to the religious susceptibilities of most Indian Muslims. As these new interpretations of the fundamentals of Islam did not go well with the beliefs of the majority, the Sunni Ulama, voicing the religious sentiments of the majority, opposed them, especially those propagated by the Wahhabi Movement.

After the establishment of Pakistan, the Sunni Ulama had hoped that the new state would assume an Islamic character as was promised by the Leader of the All India Muslim League during the Pakistan Movement. But they met with deep frustration when they saw that AIML was reluctant to translate its election promises into a practical reality. At this, the religio-political parties working outside the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, started increasing their pressure for the immediate replacement of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) and other statutes, by Islamic laws.

The Sunni ulama felt concerned on another count as well. They were dismayed by the close relationship between the Pakistan Muslim League and the *Jamiyyat-i-Ulama-i-Islam*. The AIML had selected Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Usmani (1885-1949), President of the JUI, as one of the members of the

Constituent Assembly of Pakistan and the League circles had given him the title of Sheikh-ul-Islam. This had outraged the Sunni Ulama. Although, they too, were not ignored, yet they felt that they had not been given the recognition that was their due. They felt greatly concerned at the recognition given to Maulana Shabbir Ahmed Usmani.

In order to make their presence felt, the Sunni Ulama formally established the Markazi Jamiyyat-i-Ulama-i-Pakistan (MJUP) on March 28, 1948.

The manifesto of the JUP, gives an outline of an Islamic society for the country. According to it, the *Qurān*, "Sunnah" and "Fiqh-i-Hanafi" would form the basis of the Constitution. The head of the state would always be a male Muslim of right beliefs. The government would not be dictatorial, and the head of the state would run it in consultation with the elected representatives of the people and other functionaries of the government. Any agency authorised to elect the president would also have the right to depose him by a majority vote. The president would not be above law and would have equal rights with other Muslim citizens. The party strongly opposed capitalism, socialism, communism and all other "isms" and announced that it would ban all political parties which stood for secularism. It also stated that the JUP would repeal all laws repugnant to Islamic values.

According to the manifesto, the judiciary would be made completely independent, and Islamic economic system would be introduced. Interest would be abolished and banking system would be run on partnership; religious and national interests would guide the formulation of foreign policy; educational system will be based on Islamic values and God-fearing teachers would be appointed in the educational institutions to infuse Islamic spirit in the young generation. Freedom of press would be ensured.

It will be seen from the above that the manifesto of JUP offers some very useful suggestions for bringing about a true Islamic Order but regrettably, the manifesto at places displays lack of tolerance for people of other sects and beliefs. Also, it is too simplistic in its approach as it is too naive to eradicate all social evils in one go and wean away Muslims from Western

culture. It sounds ridiculous to demand separate seats for the Ulama in the Provincial and National Assemblies.

The manifesto is in contradiction in terms on another account as well. On the one hand, it aims at working for Pan-Islamism and the unity of Muslim Ummah, but, on the other hand, it sets out to safeguard the interests of JUP alone. Narrow-mindedness of this leadership becomes rather too glaring when the Sunni Ulama feel agitated on conferment of the title of *Sheikh-ul-Islam* on Maulana Shabbir Ahmed Usmani. The whole approach of this religio-political party seems to lack tolerance and accommodation.

In sum, Mujeeb Ahmad has produced a well-researched and properly documented book which will considerably facilitate the job of research scholars. Although no philosophical interpretation of the political stance of Jamiyyat has been offered, yet all important facts have been collated in a logical order, which indeed, is a great service. The author surely deserves compliments for his painstaking efforts.

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