



Book Reviews

Waheed Ahmad (ed.): *Quaid-i-Azam, Muhammad Ali Jinnah: The Nation's Voice; Towards Consolidation*. Karachi: Quaid-i-Azam Academy, 1992, 941 p., Price: Rs. 750/-.

The volume under review, contains statements and speeches of Quaid-i-Azam, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, which he delivered between March 1935 and March 1940 on various important occasions. These speeches amply reflect various strands of the Muslim struggle for political survival in the Subcontinent. The contents of these speeches reveal that the Quaid had succeeded in organizing the Muslim League from the grass roots and had mobilized support for it. People feel at a loss to understand how the Muslim League could attain such unprecedented popularity, in so short a span. Again, it is rather enigmatic to rationalize how the League could gather sufficient strength to speak to the Congress and the Government not only on a level of equality but also from a point of strength.

Dr Waheed Ahmad, in his scholarly introduction, throws light on some moves of the Quaid. He says that Jinnah had left India in 1930 primarily to help resolve



the Indian question at the Indian Round Table Conference in London in the convening of which he had played an important role. In the Conference, much to his dismay, Jinnah's ambition to secure for India any major political advancement was frustrated. This was due to the difficulty of Hindu-Muslim question. In sheer desperation, he dropped the idea of returning to India, and decided to settle down in London. It was, however, at the end of 1934 that he was persuaded to come back to India. People respected him and as a token of their attachment with him, they elected him in absentia to the Indian Legislative Assembly unopposed from his Bombay Urban Mohammedan Constituency in the autumn of 1934. He resumed his seat in Delhi in January 1935.

On his return home, Jinnah saw that there was a general state of helplessness among Muslims all over India. At this, Jinnah took upon himself the challenging task of welding together the divided, disorganized and ill-equipped Muslim community. In addition to this most formidable task, he had to face two very powerful adversaries: the British Imperial power and the Indian National Congress. He was so convinced in the righteousness of his cause that it did not take him long to realize that he could beat his avowed enemies on their own grounds only if he could win unstinted support of his own people. His sincerity of purpose and his total commitment to the Muslim cause helped him in accomplishing his major objective of uniting Muslims under the banner of All-India Muslim League. The Muslims were now firmly resolved to achieve their goal. Now, they were a force to be reckoned with; neither the Congress nor the government could dare ignore them.

Jinnah evolved a very intelligent strategy to expose his adversaries. By virtue of his cold logic, he brought all sensitive issues into sharper focus and



highlighted instances of injustice. He hinted at the implications of his adversaries' cunning machinations. Interestingly, he himself did not offer any solution. Instead, he called upon the Muslim community to mobilize its resources for a common cause and strengthen the Muslim League. He was confident that in unity lay the salvation of the Indian Muslims. Interestingly enough, it was less than a year before the 1940 Lahore Session of the League that he used the word 'NATION' in relation to Indian Muslims. It seems, he had realized that once Muslim solidarity was achieved, Muslims would be able to specify their goal on their own, enabling him to work for the achievement of that goal. Exactly a month before the Lahore Session (1940) of the League, he proclaimed that he would give the Muslims "marching orders" only when he was convinced of their readiness for it. That situation, quite obviously, had been reached when on 22 March 1940, he proclaimed that since 'Musalmans are a nation', they must have their own homeland, territory and state.

With passage of time, Muslim League continued gaining strength. The Congress, however, could not reconcile itself to the popularity of the League and it made persistent efforts in the non-Congress majority provinces to prevent the League from forming a government. It also took upon itself the task of de-stabilizing the governments which were not purely Congress. In the provinces where Congress governments had been formed, Congress ruled with stern authority and arrogance. A Congress Parliamentary Board had been set up as the Congress ministries' watchdog. Unlike the state of affairs prevailing in the Muslim League, the discipline exercised by the Congress high command over the Congress governments and parliamentarians was almost total. No



one could ignore the Central verdict without risking one's political future.

The real designs of Congress were gradually unfolded. The hoisting of the Congress flag at official functions and the introduction of the Hindi language and script in schools together with the singing of the *Bande Mataram*, almost sealed any scope of reconciliation. The interference of the Congress in the Princely states, especially where rulers were Muslim or sympathizers of their Muslim subjects, aggravated the situation. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan had cautioned the Indian Muslims fifty years ago against the inherent dangers of the parliamentary democracy. Now his apprehensions were coming true. Instance of misrule cited in the Shareef and Pirpur Reports served as eye-opener for the Muslims and put them on their guard. Jinnah, too, was fully alerted. By now, he had come to possess enough experience and close knowledge of people and events since the beginning of the century and needed no briefing as how to plan and handle the situation. Henceforth, he presented before the masses his anti-Congress arguments and incisive analyses of the prevailing events with telling effect. The tempo of his activities increased, his following multiplied and the results began to appear in the by-elections in the Muslim constituencies. It was not long before he demanded that the Congress should recognize the Muslim League as the sole representative body of Indian Muslims to negotiate with it.

To conclude, *The Nation's Voice* comprises details of the Muslim struggle during the crucial period between 1935-40. The book is not confined at reproducing Quaid's speeches, but is, in fact, a history of the Muslim struggle for their political survival in the Subcontinent. The editor has aptly added extensive footnotes to assist the reader to comprehend the full meaning of the text. Biographical



notes of personalities have also been inserted in the index against their names. These and many more innovations have been made to facilitate the job of the researcher. An extremely useful compendium on the Quaid, indeed!

Ghulam Sarwar

Sailesh Kumar Bandopadhyaya: *Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the Creation of Pakistan*. (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1991). Price: Not mentioned.

This book has been written by a devoted follower of Gandhi who, in addition to so many other services to the Indian struggle for freedom, was jailed during the Quit India movement. It opens with a confession: "Gandhi has been my beacon-light since my youth. And yet I have ventured to undertake this study of Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, his political adversary. I, therefore, owe an explanation to my readers for this seeming "contradiction" of mine." After extolling Gandhi's quest for seeking the truth, the author embarks upon a description of his political career where he found Jinnah as an "out-and-out communal", who was acting in accordance with the dictates of the British imperialists. "In fact", he writes, "in 1942, when I participated in the Quit India movement in my humble way, I used to consider Jinnah to be a traitor on account of the attitude of the Muslim League towards the movement". According to him, these charges of treason and communalism stood proved and he



continued to consider Jinnah "as the villain of the piece" until the mid-fifties. It was then that the author happened to read the inaugural speech of Jinnah that he had delivered in the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan on 11 August, 1947 in which Jinnah had categorically stated that in Pakistan the people would be free to go to their temples or the mosques or any other house of worship and that with the passage of time the Hindus would cease to be Hindus and the Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense but in the political sense as the citizens of the State. This speech and the remarks in Abul Kalam Azad's *India Wins Freedom* that the responsibility for India's partition lay on the Congress and Nehru especially during the period following the elections of 1937 when Nehru did not honour his previous commitments with the League, formed the basis of the present study on the founder of Pakistan.

While one cannot dispute the intentions of the author in the wake of the post-independence experience of India and its present predicament, yet after going through the book, it appears that either the old follower of Gandhi has dominated the curious and "objective" researcher or the present study was never intended to be more than what it presents — rehashed material, conventional rhetoric and familiar apologies for a united India.

Jinnah is liberal, progressive, courageous, and patriotic so long as he talks about the Muslim problem within the framework of a united India and the author, not even for a moment finds him working for the British. On the contrary, when Jinnah crosses swords with Lord Minto on the question of the treatment of Indians in South Africa, Bandopadhyaya says: "It needed extreme courage and immense spirit reflecting national self-respect to exchange swords in public with the representative of the King Emperor at that distant age" (p.21)



Similarly Jinnah's role as the "Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity", his fight over the Rowalatt Bill, and his opposition of Gandhi's non-cooperation movement during the post-First World War period are highlighted as high watermarks of his political farsightedness. Jinnah continues receiving credit for his policies even in opposing the Nehru Report where the author concedes that "the bulk of the Muslim opinion was against it" (p.65). He blames the Congress for changing their policies towards the question of Muslim representation (p.109), accuses Nehru of Fascist tendencies and intolerance and contempt for the weak (p.122), and points out the fact that during the Congress ministries "the rich, including the landed-gentry exercised great influence" on the Congress leadership, which was instrumental in denying the Muslim League its due share in power (p.131). Quoting an eyewitness to this power-game between the Congress and the League, he says, "The Congress got an absolute majority in the polls, along with that the selfishness of the Congress escalated. Jawaharlal was also swept away in that current or I may say that the Congress ego reached its zenith in him. the Muslims were ignored then on account of this. Naturally it had a grave consequence. The fundamental reason for birth of Pakistan lies here. For long I hold that the main responsibility of the birth of Pakistan lies with us — the Hindu community. That is of the Congress also" (p.132).

After this analysis of the policies of the Congress and its leadership the author still feels that there was no need for Jinnah to demand Pakistan. Actually, he is puzzled and calls the demand for Pakistan as the adoption of a militant role all of a sudden by a person who had been a nationalist and the ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity. It may be pointed out that neither this was a sudden development, nor Jinnah ever became



militant. The author, however, feels that it is important to answer what he calls change in Jinnah's character.

This transformation was caused, in the author's view, by a simple fact that being a politician Jinnah knew that he could not share power with the Hindu majority, therefore, he advocated the cause for Pakistan. The author is mindful of the fact that all politicians strive for political power. However, he is reluctant to apply the same parameter to his guru Gandhi. About Gandhi, he says, "that even though Providence forced Gandhi to jump into the political fray, essentially his personality was not of a political leader. His mission, as he said, was to spiritualise politics. Therefore, Jinnah could be compared in this regard only with the other political luminaries of India and abroad, who, though desirous of leading the people, ultimately are reduced to the status of demagogues playing to the gallery because of their urge for cultivating the people as a prelude to gaining power with popular support" (p.344). This assessment is too obvious to deserve any comment, yet one has to underline the usual regard by the Hindu authors that they accord to Gandhi and India. Politics, no matter of what nature is admissible only if it is played within the framework of a united India and under the umbrella of the "spiritual politician" Gandhi. What is conveniently ignored is the role of Gandhi in the mundane politics where in addition to his saintliness one is reminded of numerous remarks of his contemporaries about his cunningness. In the words of a contemporary, "Gandhi is as cunning as a cartload of monkeys". There are even harsher judgements about his role and character in shaping the political culture of India to the tune of Hindu revivalism.

One of the chief drawbacks in any biography of the Quaid-i-Azam is that he is judged in the light of a



framework of India which is imperialistic and Hindu not only in outlook but also in substance. So long as Jinnah's politics was confined to the frontiers demarcated by these theories, his political career remains distinguished and unblemished but the moment he starts pointing out the stark realities of Indian politics and visualizes different means to seek solution, he immediately loses all respect in the eyes of the British imperial historians and the Indian apologists of a United Indian.

Another striking feature of this book is that not only Jinnah but the whole Muslim nation is presented as militant and aggressive. Hindu-Muslim riots are portrayed as planned attempts aimed at extermination of the Hindu population. We hardly read any account where Hindu community shares the responsibility of Hindu-Muslim riots. It is with this view in mind that the author, when treats Tabligh and Tanzim as Muslim revivalist movements, shows a strange silence towards the activities of the Shuddhi and Sanghtan. One wonders how long would it take for the Indian intellectuals to face the facts and accept their full share in the ugly events that led to such a tremendous loss of life and property. The day this realization dawns on more objective and sensitive minds, the intellectual climate of South Asia will become more conducive to understand the deep and unmistakable contours of Indian society which have given birth to the historical events rather than the activities or the temperament of a few individuals.

M. Aslam Syed
