

Book Review

Mir Jafar Khan Jamali, by Ali Hussain Jamali, published by Neo Saj Publications, Karachi 1997, pp.109, Rs.100.00.

For most of the past five decades, Pakistani historiography on the freedom movement has concentrated on, if not confined itself to, a macro approach. The focus has been for the most part on developments at the all-India level, or on the Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah. Even prominent members of the All India Muslim League's central leadership has not received that attention which they deserve in terms of research studies. For one thing, except for Chaudhry Khaliqzaman and M.A.H. Ispahani, no one has left a memoir. For another, most leaders have been extremely reluctant even to make over their papers to the National Archives or to some depository. Imagine the Western educated, enlightened and progressive Daulatana, who must, understandably, have been imbued with a sense of history, disclaiming possession of any documents relating to the freedom movement.

Of late, however, some notable micro/regional studies have been attempted. The first to focus on the regional scenario in the four Muslim majority provinces was Ayesha Jalal in *The Sole Spokesman*, although in her overweening penchant for validating her pre-determined thesis by resort to selective evidence, she had clearly gone in for a procrustean-bed approach, in a forced attempt to show that Jinnah did not call the shots, that his leadership during the crucial 1937-47 decade was sustained by sheer default by circumstances and developments

The present work on Mir Jafar Khan Jamali seeks to carry forward the Urdu tradition in biographical literature. Mir Jafar Khan Jamali was a leader of considerable influence in Sindh and Balochistan. He was associated with Jinnah since the early 1930s, and the latter pursued free of charge his appeal to the Privy Council regarding the proprietorship of certain lands. During the 1940s, he helped in organising the League in certain parts of Sindh and Balochistan; he also played host to Jinnah, Raja of Mahmudabad and others. Later he had a role in influencing the Shahi Jirga in Balochistan to opt for Pakistan, and, still later, Kalat to accede to Pakistan. He was elected to the Sindh Assembly twice, and also to the West Pakistan Assembly. He opposed the imposition of One Unit, and, like Suhrawardy, contested the charge-sheet framed by the Ayub regime against him. He stood for unadulterated democracy, and for the parliamentary system. No wonder, he had to undergo several disabilities for his opposition to Ayub. He inducted his family members into public life, the best known among them being his nephew, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, who has been active in Balochistan and Muslim League politics during the last decade.

This slim volume by Ali Husain Jamali throws considerable light on the politics in Pakistan as a whole during the 1950s and 1960s, besides detailing the services of Mir Jafar Khan Jamali. In compiling it, the author has consulted some more notable works on Baluchistan, and his writing is characterised by sincerity, passion, and deference to facts, although like most Pakistani writings it is riddled by hyperbolism at places, and faulted by the author's lack of acquaintance with the techniques and modalities of historical and biographical writing. It also features two rare photographs in which the Quaid is the central figure. On the whole, it represents a commendable effort.

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