

Book Review

SARFRAZ HUSSAIN MIRZA. *The Punjab Muslim Students Federation 1937-1947*. Islamabad: National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research, 1991. Price Rs. 250/- HB

The book under review comes as a climax of a series of studies completed by Dr Mirza ever since he began his research career in 1967. In 1978, appeared his *Punjab Muslim Students Federation Documents (1937-1947)*. This collection of documents is the starting point of his extensive research in the role of Muslim students in shaping the political destiny of the Muslims of the Punjab. This was followed by *Punjab Mein Muslim Students Federation – Tahrīk-i-Pākistān Mein Talabā' kā Kirdār (1986)*. In this work he appraised the role and contribution of the Punjab Muslim Students Federation in the larger framework of the Subcontinental Muslim politics. A careful study of this book dispels the general impression that the Muslims of the majority provinces, especially those of the Punjab, made no substantial efforts and sacrifices for the attainment of Pakistan. In 1987, was published his *Tahrīk-i-Pākistān: Nawā'-i-Waqt kay Idāriyōn kī Raushani Mein*. *Nawā'-i-Waqt* was the outspoken organ not only of the Muslim Students Federation but also of the All-India Muslim League. Hameed Nizami, a fearless journalist of sterling integrity, articulated the views of Muslim *avant-garde*. The editing of these editorials broadened Dr Sarfraz Hussain Mirza's vision and later enabled him to deal with the subject under review with commendable clarity. His protracted study of the documents of Muslim Students Federation finally in 1988-89 took the shape of a three volume collection entitled *Muslim Students and Pakistan Movement: Selected*

Documents. Of his twelve published works, ten are directly relevant to the theme under reference. Having scanned a large mass of archival material, Dr Mirza is eminently suited for the task he has so successfully undertaken. He has not been content with material obtainable from the Archives of the Freedom Movement, and the Quaid-i-Azam Papers, but extended his search to Private Papers and consulted the Police Abstracts of Intelligence, and the Punjab Governor's Fortnightly Reports and the Weekly Report on Meetings prepared by the Punjab Special Branch.

The book comprises five chapters in which he has analysed the formation, growth and expansion of the Muslim Students Federation and then framed its role in the struggle for Pakistan. The district-wise details are a treasure-house of information. He has discussed the internal pressures and tensions in which some personalities shine with greater brilliance. The bold stand of Hameed Nizami challenging the proposal regarding Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan's election as the secretary-general of the All-India Muslim League reveals the degree of freedom of expression and democratic spirit fostered by the great Quaid among the students. Undoubtedly the Quaid relied upon students as his source of power and they served him as his eyes and ears as well. The students were loud in their expression of dissatisfaction against the Unionist Ministry in the Punjab. The dominant feudal element saturated in loyalty to the British, was highly repugnant to the youthful idealists and activists of the Muslim Students Federation. Under the Quaid-i-Azam's leadership they emerged as a counterpoise to the Unionist hegemony and finally worked as a potent factor in the anti-Khizr movement. This book has a lot to recommend by way of an authentic work and good reading.

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