

Book Review

**Prof. Dr. Riaz Ahmad, *The Works of Quaid-i-Azam
Mohammad Ali Jinnah, 1919-20, Vol.V,*
NIPS: Quaid-i-Azam Chair,
Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad,
2002, pages 557, Price: Rs.450/- (\$25)**

Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah was undoubtedly one of the most fascinating, striking and remarkable personalities of modern age. Possessed of excellent qualities of both heart and mind, he played a very significant role in changing the course of history and destinies of men in South Asia, acquiring towering place among the nation-builders of modern history.

The Quaid's rise to the heights of glory owes much to his continuous heroic struggle in life characterised by inherent qualities and talents such as hardworking, determination, perseverance, self-confidence, self-respect, above all, sterling patriotism, honesty of purpose and integrity of character which he fully demonstrated even during his formative phase of his public life as is quite evident from the volume under review edited by Dr. Riaz Ahmad.

The volume under review is, in fact, the fifth in what is projected to be a multi-volume series of the works of Mohammad Ali Jinnah. Covering the period from January 1919 to December 1920, this volume contains 115 documents relating to the Quaid's speeches and statements, negotiations and interviews, legal pleadings and evidences. Most of these documents are appearing for the first time. The materials contained therein have been painstakingly collected from different libraries and archives, both within and without the country.

The period with which this volume deals is the most crucial period in the history of modern British India. It witnessed hectic developments. The political consciousness among the Indian had reached a striking point. The demand for self rule had attained momentum though the Home Rule League organised for the purpose had declined rapidly. The constitutional process started immediately after the war of independence had adopted a definite shape and direction. The introduction of Montagu Chelmsford reforms, with all its inherent defects, was no less important breakthrough towards the achievement of self-rule in India. The period also witnessed some traumatic episodes. The notorious black laws — the Rowlett Act — which were meant to blindly curb the activities of the revolutionaries or the freedom fighters in India were enforced in this very period, which had surely devastating effects on Indian politics. The period also saw episodes or tragedies as that of Jallianwala Bagh, which has shaken the British rule in India to its foundation. The political activism was augmented in that period. It witnessed the launching of Khilafat, Hijrat and non-cooperation movements, which had definitely great impact on the contemporary and future history of India.

The role M.A. Jinnah played during that most hectic and crucial phase of Indian political history was really remarkable one. The way he advocated and advanced the Indian cause was definitely most appreciable. He acted boldly and gallantly, winning his name and fame as the hero of India. The construction of Jinnah Memorial Hall in Bombay was a glaring proof of his heroism. During those trying years, Jinnah showed utmost concern and anxiety for India in general for Muslim India in particular. The strains and stresses he underwent can be well visualised by his speeches and statements he made during the period under review. While referring to the notorious Rowlett Bill and the Allies' adverse treatment with Ottoman Turkey, how pathetically he spoke, saying, "first came the Rowlett Bill accompanied by the Punjab atrocities. Then came the spoliation of the Ottoman Empire and the Khilafat. One attacks our liberty, the other our soul". Precisely, the dynamic role M.A. Jinnah played and the strains and stresses he underwent during that trying period can be well visualised by the study of the volume under review.

The volume under review, in fact, reveals many new facts about M.A. Jinnah's formative public career. The volume is so comprehensive that every possible relevant detail has been incorporated in it. The modern view that each and every breath, thing and event is a part of the process of history is fully reflected from the entries of this volume. But while preparing such volumes, our scholars and historians must make difference between the historical and non-historical material, though it is a very difficult task.

Anyway, the volume, taken as a whole, makes a very informative, useful and revealing study on Jinnah's early public career as well as the contemporary political-cum-constitutional history of India. Its adequate planning of entries of documents, scholarly annotations at places, and above all, comprehensively and scholarly written introduction further enhances its value. Its study will surely be advantageous to general readers and researchers alike.

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