

Book Reviews

***The Punjab Muslim League 1906-1947: Secret Police Abstracts*, Riaz Ahmad (Ed.), pp.396, xxiv, price Rs. 500; *The Sindh Muslim League 1940-1947: Secret Police Abstracts*, pp. 322, xx, price Rs.400; *The Frontier Muslim League 1913-1947, Secret Police Abstracts*, pp. 379, xix, price Rs. 500; *The Baluchistan Muslim League 1939-1947: Secret Police Abstracts*, pp.142, xiiv, price Rs.200, National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research Centre, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, 2008.**

To students of Pakistan studies, Riaz Ahmad, the editor of these four volumes, should be rather well known. He has been in teaching and research for some thirty-five years. He served the Department of History at the Quaid-i-Azam University (QAU) in various capacities since 1976, and got elevated as professor to the Quaid-i-Azam Chair, National Institute of Pakistan Studies (NIPS) in 1993. Later, in 2001, he became Director of the NIHCR, retiring finally early in 2008. Midway in his career, he held the Pakistan Chair at Mohammad V University, Rabat, Morocco, where he taught during 1992-3. He has a large number of publications to his credit, most of them edited works, but his *Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah: The Formative Years 1892-1920* (1986) holds the field on Jinnah's early political life.

For now, a word about Police Abstracts. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's *Asbab-i-Baghawat-i-Hind* (1859) had attributed the 1857 Rebellion to the rulers' failure to craft policies to meet the problems and grievances of the general populace, which failure was, in turn, due to the rulers' gross ignorance of the ground realities in the sprawling British Empire across the vast subcontinent. Perhaps as a sequel to Sir Syed's constructive suggestion, the British authorities had set up a special branch of police to obtain information secretly about public activities across the subcontinent which would give the administration a more or less sure index as which way the wind was blowing. This special branch compiled an account of the activities of all political parties, public bodies, Anjumans and Sabhas, indeed all who mattered in public life, and

reported to the authorities on a weekly basis. It included even routine and minor activities, even changes in command, or the shift and differences in leadership. Although done from the official viewpoint and to meet official requirements, the Abstracts yet contain a mine of information and empirical data which represents the raw material for the history of the period covered by them.

In editing and publishing these volumes, Riaz Ahmad has done a singular service to historical research in Pakistan, if only because Pakistan has suffered a good deal due, primarily, to the non-availability of primary sources and the dearth of documentation on them. This critical factor has figured as the primary cause for Pakistani academicians' poor performance in the field in most of the presentations at various conferences, fora and symposiums held during the past four decades.

The material included in the present compilations is not available elsewhere, and represents a treasure trove, offering new perspectives on the topic and lending new significance to the developments of the period. Thus they have the potential to become source books for M. Phil and Ph.D thesis.

The editor has done an introduction to each one of the volumes, which seeks to trace the origin and growth of the Muslim League in that province. However, the one concerning the Punjab is more comprehensive and self-contained.

Interestingly, I was rather struck by the editor's modesty: 'The credit of [for] publishing this publication [on Sindh] [he says] goes to the National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research...' but for the editor's initiative, I feel, neither this nor any other volumes would have been embarked upon, in the first place, NIHCR withstanding. After all, an institution is the lengthened shadow of the person who heads it.

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Sharif al Mujahid

***The Long Partition* by Vazira Fazila – Yacoobali Zamindar, Karachi, Oxford University Press, 2008, pp.288, price Rs.495.**

The religious demography of British India permitted solutions that were only approximate. This was compounded by the unleashing of forces which upset even approximate arrangements at partition. Communal riots, displacement, and a history of limited and categorized systems of franchise, all attended independence. The division of two provinces and

the withholding of Pakistan's financial assets, did not serve the short-term purpose of causing the new state to collapse, but it had long-term effects by creating intractable problems for Pakistan.

The division of the provinces, Bengal and Punjab constricted the space for refugee rehabilitation; the exodus of Hindus and Sikhs created a situation where not only economic dislocation was experienced, but also accelerated the migration of Muslims to Pakistan, simultaneously pre-empting their rehabilitation in India. Lastly, the withholding of assets caused Pakistan to fall back on her capitalists, a severe ideological setback, for as far back as November 1944, when M.A. Jinnah was asked to define Pakistan, he had voiced his preference for nationalization of basic industries and services.

Partition literature is voluminous. India, Pakistan and Britain are not the only countries to produce them. However, most of the works focus on why partition took place; few focus on how it took place. In Urdu, at any rate there is a whole body of literature written equally by Hindu, Muslim and Sikh writers, who do not shrink from grisely details of what the riots meant in human terms, but only Riginder Singh Bedi's *Lajwants* is concerned with the after tremours. Thus Vazira Fazila – Yacooali Zamindar has given us a horizontal study of partition which deals with 'agreed' and 'non-agreed' areas for the cross-migration of survivors; evacuee properties, permits and passports. The leader briefly touched on are Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Patel; on Liaquat Ali Khan, the light lingers on longer.

Where the *Long Partition* is placed, among other studies, can be gathered from this observation made by the author, when she was deep into the treatise.

Any claim of 'discovery' is built upon some hierarchy of knowledge which structures silences. However, silences are produced not only by what is said, but also what we think is important to ask (p.79).

Her stated purpose is to 'clarify', with a focus of north Indian Muslim families, the post-partition of this political partition (p.3). In other words she studies the ideological constructs of the divided countries and the devices they framed to project them.

First the possessed and unpossessed. Because of the smaller extent of Pakistani territory, and the larger number of Muslim refugees put greater strain on the newer country. Vazira Zamindar states the problem in these words:

This book historically situates these debates on loyalty and citizenship through not just the border to make visible the power

of modern states to limit and produce bounded nations and the margins within them (p.11).

The basic factor is that while Muslim were willing, or were persuaded to return to India, Hindus and Sikhs were neither willing, nor were they persuaded to return to Pakistan. The Commonwealth Relations Office in London had gathered figures suggesting that 100,000 to 250,000 Muslim had returned, with 40,000 having returned to Delhi alone (p.86). Delhi was important, because some areas having a Muslim dominance were kept out of the reach of refugees coming to Pakistan. Mahatma Gandhi had called the returning Muslims 'our people' but this was a sentiment which caused strain and stress lower down the official hierarchy. Higher officials eyed the reserved Muslim houses to accommodate the streaming Hindu and Sikh refugees.

[A.P.] Jain presented the ways in which Muslim citizens were being discriminated against by the all-encompassing intending evacuee clause, but his argument that Muslims were 'our people' and deserved fair treatment was met with considerable resistance from Sardar Hukam Singh (p.132).

It is from such instances that Vazira Zamindar sheds light on the ideological constructs of both countries. Partition was achieved by votes cast by Muslims from all over British India, as a promised homeland for the Muslims. As the author shows, this stance was reflected in the rhetoric's Ministry of Pakistan had protested that the country's resources were already overstrained and the government 'cannot for sometime to come' could not take on more refugees without 'risk to the country's economy' (p.101).

On the other side of the divide leaders like Rajendra Prasad, the first President, and Sardar Patel the Deputy Prime Minister, were openly moving against the Muslims who were returning to India. It was to prevent this tide that the Government of India introduced the permit system to regulate the movement of the refugees.

This provided the Pakistani government with a technological solution outside political debate to control the movement of Muslims from India to Pakistan (p.102).

On the one side the Muslim League's promise to provide a homeland to Muslims was proving to be hollow, and on the other Congress claim to represent all Indians, despite the endeavours of Mahatma Gandhi, proved equally evanescent. This brings us to the centre of a debate raging in Pakistan, it has been asserted that since Liaquat Ali Khan was a migrant, he actively encouraged the settlement of migrants to build up a constituency that he supposedly lacked in the country he had himself helped to create, being the only Muslim League

office-bearer to oppose the Cabinet Mission Plan. In the first place Liaquat was as much a Punjabi as Jinnah was a Sindhi. At any rate, even if the State of Pakistan ideologically subscribes to the partition of the provinces, he at least hailed from what was officially termed as the Agreed Areas from which Muslim could migrate to Pakistan; East Punjab and Delhi. Even as he was discouraging migration to Pakistan, Liaquat Ali Khan was saying 'we have no right to close the doors of Pakistan on the refugees' (p.98).

The Indian government publicized Liaquat's position at the [Lahore, 5 October 1947] conference, that the government of Pakistan would not accept Muslim refugees from areas other than East Punjab – that 'even Muslims who have worked for establishing Pakistan, even if they want to go, their doors are closed' (p.42).

Vazira Zamindar also gives us a glimpse of how on 15 June 1951, Liaquat Ali saw off 1500 muhajirs at the railway station, who were made to return to India (p.169). Finally she mentions the Nehru-Liaquat Pact of 8 April 1950 (p.166). This pact is a testament to the exceptionality of the eastern wing. The permit system had not been introduced there, but when riots broke out, Liaquat went to Delhi to negotiate a pact with Nehru to guarantee the safety of minorities in both countries. Why this clause was not written into the Independence Act shall never be known. Why such a pact was not occasioned by the Punjab riots is also unclear.

What makes East Pakistan exceptional is that while it saw riots in 1946, it did not experience communal riots in 1947. It is put down to a one man peace commission in the shape of Mahatma Gandhi. His presence along with Huseyn Shahid Suhrawardy proved fruitful. Perhaps their presence underlines their common aspiration that Bengal be kept out of the partition of British India. Was this a factor in keeping communal peace in 1947? Zamindar has not touched upon this aspect. But what she explores has not been elaborated upon in this review. Her pursuit of survivors, and her treasure of oral accounts, which in turn led to adventurous archival research, it left for the reader to savour first hand.

***Beyond Honour: A Historical Materialist Explanation of Honour Related Violence*, by Tahira S. Khan, Karachi, Oxford University Press, 2006, pp.361, price Rs.495.**

The honour-related violence perpetrated against women has not only been widely exposed and condemned in our society over the years, but has also been subjected to critical examination and academic research. Consequently, there is no dearth of literature on the subject; numerous NGOs have recorded extremely useful data on the subject and a number of well-researched publications have also enlightened us on various dimensions and the extent of the issue. However, it would not be wrong to say that despite all activism as well as the literature produced around the issue, one finds very little literature with coherent theoretical underpinning, highlighting the historical and socio-political factors operating behind the subjugation of women in society in general and the honour-related violence against them in particular. Even if selected socio-cultural aspects of violence have been discussed in certain works, the emphasis is more on violence rather than on the very concept of honour. Dr Tahira S. Khan's work goes beyond mere narration of incidents of honour-killing, their immediate causes or even their wider socio-political context. She addresses the issue of honour itself and begins by laying it down that the idea of honour should be understood in its historical materialist background. She tries to locate the idea in the histories of religious, legal, social, and political evolution of societies from ancient times to the present. Not only this, she also tries to look into the issue in a comparative historical manner thereby bringing to the fore the diverse economic bases of the honour-related violence in different societies.

The author discusses the perception that the honour-related violence has been a problem of the Muslim societies in Asia and Africa or in some other backward communities in certain remote regions of the world. She delves into the histories of many modern and advanced countries of today's world and shows that in their past they also experienced the same problem.

The author holds that the feelings of honour are created at the level of a society and its values in the context of a given social formation which itself is the outcome of particular modes and relations of production. Thus a tribal, a feudal or a capitalist society would have different sets of social formations and consequently, different value systems. The presence and meaning of the idea of honour would also vary from one society to another. She goes to explain that given the fact

that most of the religious communities originated in the ancient and medieval times, their societies and values were shaped by the predominant modes and relations of production present in their times. Thus the prescriptions and the edicts about family, marriage, inheritance, etc. were influenced by the overall socioeconomic conditions of the time.

Focusing on the status of women in the major legal systems of the world, she concludes that historically law has helped legitimize the existing social roles and protect overall socioeconomic system.

As regards the political structure of the society, they have all sustained the existing system of sexual division of labour, and have at best provided a veneer of pleasant acceptance of the system by allowing selective political roles to women both in the past and in the present. These roles could not alter the overall imbalance in gender roles in the society. Dr Khan rightly concludes that economic and social realities determine the boundaries of women's roles in the society; the social values defend these boundaries; the legal system in fact protects the status quo; while the political system camouflages the distortions of the society and makes the system acceptable for all through superficial arrangements.

Building on this theoretical paradigm, the author critically analyses the viability of the solutions presented at the level of reformist, civil society organs, and a wide segment of feminists. She holds that most of the solutions presented by them try to address the issue through legislation, creation of awareness among women about their rights, increased political participation, etc. She holds that these lego-political remedies may not bring about a meaningful change and would not at all be able to bring an end to the existing idea and notion of honour. She very rightly says that violence against women and the motivating idea of honour is structural and cannot be done away with without bringing about a structural change in the society. In other words, the historical materialist paradigm suggests that what the women have bore over centuries in the name of men's honour can only be addressed in a changed historical materialist set-up and this is something which should be taken into account by the political activism geared around women's rights and their emancipation.

Dr Khan, who has to her credit a number of publications and research projects, mostly focusing the gender issues has, through her present work, added quite meaningfully to the corpus of feminist literature. She has based her research on primary as well as secondary sources and has made an excellent use of the data she gathered through her own interactions with far-off communities in Pakistan. She has also

interviewed leaders and representatives of different schools of thought in order to understand their positions on the various aspects of the issues being probed by her. The outcome of all this hard labour has been a book which may be regarded as one of the best works on gender discrimination, women's subjugation and in particular the honour-related violence in Pakistan. The book has rightly been awarded the Akhtar Hameed Khan Award given annually by the Council of Social Sciences Pakistan.

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Syed Jaffar Ahmed

***Democracy and Governance in Pakistan* by Tahir Kamran, Lahore, South Asia Partnership Pakistan, 2008, pp.216, price Rs.300.**

For decades now, social and political analysts have been pondering on the question as to why Pakistan has faced so much difficulty in taking to the route of democratic governance and statecraft. Numerous explanations have been put forward in this respect ranging from a focus on the circumstances of partition (Ayesha Jalal) and the legal modalities through which the new country was realized (Khalid Bin Sayeed), to the more systematically argued socioeconomic causes (Hamza Alavi, Hasan N. Gardezi, etc.). A holistic explanation covering historical as well as socioeconomic causes seems to be still awaited. In the absence of such an explanation, various authors, both in the past and at present, have endeavoured to either adopt a position pleaded by earlier writers or have tried to form one of their own but these, perhaps, have not yet proved to be as conclusive as one would have needed. Tahir Kamran seeks to understand the riddle of Pakistan's failure in evolving a democratic dispensation in the context of the overall and underlined dichotomy of civil and military institutions of the state. The imbalance of forces and a historically evolving shift towards the military wing of the state institutions have rendered the civilian and the political forces almost ineffective if not permanently redundant.

As his ultimate objective is to discuss the difficulties faced by Pakistan in evolving democratic institutions, he begins by examining the rationale of a federal and parliamentary democratic dispensation for the country. He holds that with its deep-seated pluralism and strong primordialist sentiments prevalent in the society Pakistan could hardly think of a system other than a one that is genuinely federal and parliamentary in character. However, the colonial legacy of civil-military

bureaucratic dominance continued to have sway in the post-colonial era with the result that right from the beginning the civil-military functionaries of the state took control of the state power. This power was authoritarian, overly centralized and hence anathema to the essential ingredients of the Pakistani society. After a detailed introduction, the author narrates how the post-colonial state evolved between 1947 and 2007. Though the coverage of six decades in five chapters of different lengths with the longest being of not more than thirty seven pages, did not allow the author a detailed treatment of all regimes, he has been contented with the reference to the major indicators corroborating his point of view.

Pakistan's first decade has been covered in the Introduction, while the second chapter discusses the military regimes of Ayub Khan and Yahya Khan. Most of the points raised in the chapters have been discussed in detail, and perhaps, more convincingly in other works. This chapter can be taken as a brief portrayal of Pakistan's first two military rulers' political and economic policies which proved counter-productive and culminated in the break-up of the country.

The third chapter on the era of populism of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (who the author addresses, perhaps following Stanley Wolport, as Zulfi Bhutto) is quite brief as some of the more debatable policies of the Bhutto regime demanded relatively detailed treatment which could not be condensed in fifteen pages as has been done. His critique of Bhutto's economic policies draws largely on Akbar Zaidi's observations. Here, one may argue that perhaps there still exists the need to discuss Bhutto's economic policies in a wider context of the crisis of the state rather than as the prescriptions of a political demagogue who did excel in projecting his unique charismatic leadership, yet who operated within the confines and dictates of a post-colonial state's exceptional conditions precipitated following the separation of East Pakistan. Endeavouring to do so, would, perhaps, suggest that a political leader operating in a post-colonial state does not hold an autonomous place no matter how powerful he appears to be.

The fourth and the fifth chapters of the book discuss the most dictatorial period of Pakistan's history, that is, the period of Genreal Zia-ul Haq and its aftermath. Zia in fact not only built upon the praetorian tradition of Pakistan but also saw to it that the society was totally depoliticized. He excessively made use of religion for the consolidation of his rule and also agreed to let Pakistan serve as a frontline state against Soviet Union. His Islmaization campaign, ostensibly carried out to legitimize his role, and his pliable role for the US, in fact had far-

reaching implications for the Pakistani society and the state. The engineering done by him in the political and constitutional domain affected the country's political culture and institutions even after his death in 1988. In the domain of governance, the most crucial legacy of Zia's engineering was the emergence of a troika which remained intact between 1988 and 1999. This authoritarian system did not let Benazir Bhutto's and Nawaz Sharif's regimes establish their ascendancy even though Nawaz Sharif in his second term did succeed in doing away with some of the anti-parliamentary clauses of the Eighth Constitutional Amendment enforced on Zia's behest.

The final chapter deals with General Pervaiz Musharraf's Bonapartism. It discusses Musharraf's policies and his political strategy with special emphasis on his devolution plan and the Seventeenth Constitutional Amendment. Musharraf's foreign policy, especially in the wake of 9/11, has also been discussed in detail showing how his regime complied with the US dictates in order to ensure its own survival.

The argument the author seeks to build seems to have been laid quite adequately and one does get convinced about the essentially authoritarian character of the post-colonial state in Pakistan but it would have been better had the author brought in some of his original ideas into the discourse. A concluding chapter would also have been helpful in the overall conclusions one can draw from diverse themes given space in the chapters of the book.

Here, a few words about the production would also not be out of order. It seems the book was produced in some haste as a lot of editing work appears to have remained undone. A number of names have been wrongly spelled. Iskander Mirza has been cited as Sikander Mirza throughout the book. Hamza Alavi is spelled as Alvi not only in the text but also in the references. Chaudhari Mohammad Ali has been mentioned as Ch. Muhammad Ali (p.10) and Chaudhry Muhammad Ali (p. 47). Ismail Ibrahim Chundrigar has been written as Ibrahim Ismael Chundrigar (p. 45). There are a number of typographical mistakes as well. One would expect that these mishaps would be corrected in the next edition of the book.

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Syed Jaffar Ahmed

***Pat Feeder Kisan Tehreek* by Mohammad Ramzan, Hyderabad, Bhindar Hari Sangat, 2009, pp.194, price, Rs.150.**

Though, there is no dearth of serious academic literature on the various aspects of Pakistan's political history, this literature can be generalized as being primarily falling in two major categories. First, there have been legal, institutional and formal studies, which are by no means less important as they help understand the structural aspects of our politics. Second, there have been analytical studies highlighting the correlation, and the balance/imbalance of institutions and the dynamics of political development. A lot of political literature is also journalistic but its importance can not be denied as it can help understand different perceptions and can be used as secondary source. But, despite all this academic and journalistic literature, one can not say that this literature has fully covered the entire or the major part of Pakistan's political landscape. There have been numerous aspects of politics, organizations, political figures, and movements which still wait becoming the focus of academic searchlight.

In the absence of serious literature on a number of neglected areas, if something worthwhile is produced on any one of them, it deserves to be welcomed. The book under review is also one such work produced by a political worker turned a social activist. The author has been associated with the movement of Baloch peasants who launched a movement in the second half of 1970s for the sake of their rights but whose uprising was quelled through brutal use of force.

The Pat Feeder region where the said movement was centered falls in the Naseerabad Division of Balochistan. The region is also known for the crucial Pat Feeder Canal, which takes water from River Indus to irrigate more than 0.65 million acres of land. In 1972, when the land reforms were introduced by the regime of President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, a large section of the Pat Feeder land was also taken over by the government and was distributed among the landless peasants. At the time of the introduction of land reforms, Pakistan was still governed under martial law and Bhutto was serving as the civilian martial law administrator apart from being the president of the country. Despite Bhutto's reliance on the authoritarian means to get his reforms through, these were tried to be undone by the landlords. After the removal of martial law in April 1972, and the adoption of the 1973 constitution in which the relevant martial law regulation was given protection, the landlords tried even harder to make the reforms a failure. In 1985, Shaikh Mohammad Rashid, a minister in Bhutto's cabinet and the Chairman of the Land Reforms Commission, told this writer in an interview in London, that the big landlords, especially in Balochistan, joined the ruling People's Party (PPP) as part of their strategy to undo

the reforms and prevent their lands. The big landlords of Naseerabad Division, the Jamalis, Magsis, Khosos, and Umrans, joined the PPP. Though they were able to save the major portion of their lands and surrendered only less useful portions to the government, they were keen to snatch them again if they got an opportunity to do so. This opportunity they got once Bhutto's government was overthrown by the military and martial law was imposed by General Zia-ul-Haq. The landlords of Naseerabad lost no time in dissociating themselves from the PPP and started moves to get their land back from the peasants to whom they were allotted by the previous government. The landlords were backed by the military regime.

It was in this background, that when the local landlords in the Pat Feeder area tried to re-capture their land through force, in the end of 1977 and the beginning of 1988, the peasants showed two types of reactions. Some of them were compelled to surrender their lands, and in this respect, the landlords employed the tactics of invoking the bonds of tribalism and appealed to tribal affinity. But, in certain cases, where the peasants were relatively more organized, they tried to resent and refused to succumb to the pressure of the landlords. In such cases, armed clashes took place and it was the series of these clashes which together have been taken by the author of the book under review as a movement, though, one may argue that in the absence of an organization, leadership, and a well thought-out plan and strategy, how these incidents could be portrayed as a movement. In the strict sense, these events may not be designated as a movement, but these facts can also not be disregarded that the landlords employed organized repression and the peasants demonstrated a great deal of unity among their ranks and also sacrificed their lives for their cause. Moreover, the violent incidents and clashes continued for weeks and involved more than one village. Also noteworthy was the solidarity among the villagers. These facts, do justify designating them as a movement, though in a loose sense.

The author especially focuses the incidents of the village Mir Gul Moosiani, where on 20 December 1977, the Jamali sardars, under the leadership of Mir Zafarullah Jamali, organized a *lashkar* (armed tribal troops) comprising three to four hundred men. They encircled the village in the night between 21 and 22 December, when armed fighting took place for whole night. The villagers from the adjacent villages also came to help the entrenched people of Mir Gul Moosiani but all the villagers together could not offer prolonged resistance as they ran out of ammunition. The author holds that according to the Baloch tribal traditions, the fight comes to an end as soon as one party becomes unarmed or de-capacitated, but the *lashkar* sent by the landlords

continued and targeted the un-armed villagers with the result that a number of them got killed. This is how the lands were taken back by the landlords.

The incidents of Pat Feeder in the late 1970s, raise a number of questions and highlight various issues. These demonstrate the social and political power of the feudal lords and shed light on how they manipulate to, first, keep their lands outside the ambit of land reforms, and second, in case of surrendering certain lands, get them back whenever they get an opportunity. The Pat Feeder incidents also exposed the role of the state which, time and again, demonstrated its lack of concern about millions of rural population, and at their cost, upheld the interests of the landed gentry. The land reforms introduced in Pakistan in 1958, 1972, and 1977, all had loopholes which helped landlords in securing the major portion of their properties. The martial law regime of General Ziaul Haq especially saw to it that the reforms introduced by Bhutto were nullified through different means, so much so that the Federal Shariat Court created by Zia, pronounced land reforms un-Islamic. Consequent to this, a number of landlords, including the general secretary of the Peoples Party, Farooq Leghari, also got his land back. Is it not an interesting and thoughtful coincidence that two big landlords named in this review, Zafarullah Jamali and Farooq Leghari, both joined the Peoples Party during those times but both deceived the Party subsequently. Jamali left the Party soon after the imposition of Ziaul Haq's martial law, joined his cabinet, and during the rule of another military dictator, General Pervaiz Musharraf, became the prime minister. Leghari remained in Peoples Party till 1993 when the Party nominated him for the post of the president of the country. He soon developed differences with Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, and on the backing of the establishment, ousted the government and dissolved the assembly. This also brings to light the political role of the feudal gentry which by and large lacks political commitment, and acts on the dictates of their self-interests. The effective and genuine land reforms in Pakistan are, therefore, necessary not only for correcting the social distortions prevalent in the country but also for reforming the political culture of Pakistan.

***Sajjad Zaheer: Shakhshiat Aur Fikr*, edited by Dr. Syed Jaffar Ahmed, published by Maktaba-i-Daniyal, Karachi, 2005, pp.264, price Rs.250.**

***Mughanni-i-Aatish Nafas: Sajjad Zaheer*, by Sibte Hasan, compiled and edited by Dr. Syed Jaffar Ahmed, published by Maktaba-i-Daniyal, Karachi, 2005, pp.112, price Rs.150.**

Syed Sajjad Zaheer's centenary celebrations were commemorated in a big way by Pakistan, India and the subcontinental communities in North America and Europe with the unprecedented vigour to suggest that we are equally good in sidelining an important personality when we choose and no less spirited in resurrecting the memory of a person when the time comes to make up for our neglect.

Sajjad Zaheer, one of the pioneers of the Progressive Movement in the subcontinent, was one such trend-setting person who along with his friends, Dr. Mulk Raj Anand, Dr. M.D. Taseer and Parmod Sen Gupta, founded the Progressive Writers Movement in London in 1935. In 1936 he translated his idea into the form of an association in Lucknow and persuaded Munshi Premchand to preside over the founding session.

Needless to say that the Urdu literature has not looked back since then. The Movement, as an organization, has had its ups and downs but it has stayed on as a powerful intellectual base. However, it is true that much of its collective voice of protest has found different platforms such as the Dalits, Feminism and the struggles for women and minorities' rights and land reforms etc. However, the fragmented approaches for the solution of specific agendas should not give any impression that the Movement has weakened or frittered away. In a way it has become hydra-headed.

Sajjad Zaheer was born on 5 November 1905 in Lucknow. His father Wazir Hasan, who served as the Chief Justice of Lucknow High Court hailed from Jaunpur (U.P.) Sajjad Zaheer got his formal education in Urdu, Persian and Arabic. He finished *Gulistan*, and *Bostan* at the age of 12. He also studied the Holy Quran though he could not remember it by heart. By the age of 12-13 years he had studied all the collected works of Urdu's classical poets. After passing his matriculation in 1922 he joined Christian College, Lucknow, and studied History, English and Persian.

The Non-Cooperation Movement was in its full throttle in those days and Sajjad Zaheer became an ardent volunteer of the freedom movement. He gave up eating mutton/beef and started sleeping on the floor. Born with a silver spoon in his mouth, he lost no time in de-classing him. His motto was 'One should live like a poor Indian villager'. He could not appear a villager but he remained a fervent believer in peasant emancipation.

While studying at college he turned his attention to non-conformist writers. Anatole France and Bertrand Russell were his favourite writers. When the Cownpur Conspiracy Case was the talk of the day in 1925 and the names of Marx, Hegel, Lenin and Stalin were on every freedom-loving Indian's lips, he read almost all the important books – for or against socialism.

He went to Oxford in March 1927. After a brief stop-over in Paris and Heidelberg he joined an Oxford college. Most of the Oxford dons in those days were conservative. Prof. Cole, his Economics professor, was close to him.

He contracted T.B. during his Oxford stay and had to rush to Switzerland for treatment and by the time he returned to Oxford he had become a Communist. He met the first Indian Communist MP of the British Parliament, Mr. Saklana, and also came close to Mehmood-uz-Zafar who later on married Dr. Rashid Jehan, and he became a live wire Indian nationalist. He received *lathi* wounds while protesting against Simon Commission in 1929.

He passed his B.A. from the Oxford College in 1932 and brought *Angarey*, a short story collection of 10 stories of which five were written by him and the others by Ahmed Ali, Dr. Rashid Jehan and Sahibzada Mehmood-uz-Zafar. This book came as a 'shocker' and there was a lot of hue and cry over its radicalism. He also wrote a novel *London Ki Ek Raat* in those days.

Sajjad Zaheer will be remembered as a writer who performed the role of a bridge between the writers of European Left (such as Louis Aragon, Bertold Brecht, Pablo Neruda, Maxim Gorky, Maya Kovsky) and progressive Indian writers. He introduced famous Turkish writer Nazim Hekmat to India as well.

Sajjad Zaheer was a very mature mind, well-steeped in Persian and Urdu classics, and a ferment scholar of Persian literature. He read with great interest Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's *Tarjumanul Quran*, all four Vedas, Upanishads and the classics of Bhakti Movement.

After having described his literary background, it is not surprising to believe that he imbibed all positive influences of the

heritage of mankind. A rare breed who did not believe in any particularism, he came to Pakistan in 1948 and worked in Pakistan's working class because he loved the common masses. His letter to a young friend from Mach Jail in 1952 seriously objected to some Mohajirs' impatience with the indigenous culture of the present day Pakistan. He thought that any one giving a serious thought to the cultural differences was not a right-thinking person.

Sajjad Zaheer brought out *Naya Zamana*, *Anjum* and *Sahar* in Pakistan besides two other magazines. In India he had worked for *Naya Hindustan* and *Qaumi Jang*.

After his four year Jail term (1951-1955) he was released from Mach Jail following which he went to India. He contributed to *Awami Daur* and then to *Hayat* during this time. Sajjad Zaheer is truly one who internationalized Urdu literature from the platform of Asian writers and Afro-Asian writers. The proceedings of the conferences attended by him and his travelogue of Vietnam were published in *Awami Daur* and *Hayat*.

He was a poet, a short story writer, a critic, a travelogue writer and his last program was the joint Conference of Pakistani, Indian and Bangladeshi writers in Alma Ata in 1973. And it was in Alma Ata (Kazakhstan) that he breathed his last on 13 September. Faiz Ahmed Faiz's elegy on Sajjad Zaheer included in the first book under review, captures the feelings of a friend who had played a great role in the building of his stature.

Dr. Syed Jaffar Ahmed's two compilations *Sajjad Zaheer: Shakhshiat Aur Fikr* and Sibte Hasan's *Mughanni-i-Aatish Nafas* are two important publications to be published by Maktaba-i-Daniyal, Karachi in the centenary year. Both books should be studied by all who are students of colonial India and Progressive Urdu literature. It would be a sheer error if the PWA is not reckoned as an extension of Sir Syed Movement. The wave of enlightenment which Sir Syed Movement had engendered bore its fruit, albeit in a different way, in the Progressive Movement. It lay in challenging the traditional moorings of our thinking in every possible field – socio-economic, political and even religious. Never before the fashion of 'Nature' and Natural (i.e. scientific) Laws was so spirited and enthusiastic. Sir Syed had ignored the feudal structure of the society as the main cause of the decay of Northern India's Muslim community. He had also ruled out rebellion against the British rule for obvious reasons. The tragedy of 1857 was not very far away in the 1860s and 1870s when the Aligarh Movement was in its heyday. Sir Syed did not want any new War of Panipat in the second half of the 19th century. The progressive leaders of the 1930s thought that the Freedom struggle

had entered the final phase in the years of Round Table Conferences and the Government of India Act of 1935.

Sajjad Zaheer: Shakhshiat Aur Fikr comprises five parts – Sajjad Zaheer's status as a writer, followed by critical evaluations of his literary work and then reminiscences of some of his close friends. The first part has contributions of Prof. Mumtaz Husain, Quddos Sehbai, Dr. Ali Ahmed Fatimi and Dr. Syed Jaffar Ahmed. The second portion has Atiq Ahmed, Zamir Niazi, Zebunnisa and Sahar Ansari and the third part begins with Mulk Raj Anand's 'Mere Haqiqi Bhai: Banne Bhai' and ends with Anwar Aleem Sanor. A part is also devoted to Sajjad Zaheer's own writings – reminiscences and the last part consists of tributes in verse by poets. Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Sardar Jafri, Majrooh Gorakhpuri and many other poets pay the tributes. In short, it is a valuable addition to Sajjad Zaheer.

The other book is Sibte Hasan's *Mughanni-i-Aatish Nafas: Sajjad Zaheer*. Dr. Syed Jaffar Ahmed is right when he says that it is no less a cause for readers' interest in this book that it brings under one cover Sibte Hasan's writings on Sajjad Zaheer. It includes one unpublished piece of writing which could be termed as a 'significant discovery' in Sajjad Zaheer's centenary year. It is 'Allahabad Se Ashkabad Tak'. Dr. Syed Jaffar Ahmed narrates his adventure of having found this piece in the scattered papers of Sibte Hasan. The leafs of the writing pads on which the long article was written had been torn from the pads and were scattered in different files, envelops etc; All this stuff also renamed moving from one place to another. A lot of this stuff also got spoilt from rain water during different monsoons. It was after a while that these papers were retrieved by Dr. Ahmed from Sibte Hasan's daughter's residence. The compiler was lucky enough in finding all the pages of the said article which were put together by him.

Sibte Hasan is a very important Urdu writer whose books have proved to be the best-sellers in Pakistan. He is truly a modern popularizer of the doctrinaire literature. Dr. Syed Jaffar Ahmed's compilation of Sibte Hasan's writings on Sajjad Zaheer is, perhaps, the most important book in Sajjad Zaheer's centenary year because it is a stalwart's contribution to a senior stalwart. No other book of this kind has appeared in 2005 and, perhaps, no other book from a stalwart could ever be produced in the near future.

Apart for 'Allahabad Se Ashkabad Tak' one comes across Sibte Hasan's 'Sajjad Zaheer', 'Roshnai: Ek Taaruf', 'Roshani: Ek Mukhtasar Tabsira', 'Ghazal Aur Hafiz Ke Difa Mein' and 'Sibte Hasan Ke Naam Do Khat'.

To conclude, a lot is being written on Sajjad Zaheer but these two books should rank among the essential readings on a man who was highly instrumental in changing India's literary scene as many Sajjad Zaheer Numbers in Hindi and other Indian languages purport to suggest. It is true that he worked not only for Urdu's Progressive Movement but for the development of some 15 Indo-Pakistan literatures on progressive lines. And hence the unique nature of the Sajjad Zaheer centenary celebrations we have witnessed.

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***Tehzeebi Nargasiyat*, by Mubarak Haider, Saanjh, Lahore, 2009, pp.139, price, Rs.150.**

The Pakistani society has proudly presented itself to the world as a bastion of Islam. The nation was supposed to be a defender of Islam which takes pride in martyrdom in the name of upholding its beliefs. This idea has been preserved here as the basic ideological force and guiding principle for the major social institutions: polity, economy, family and education. This very idea was instrumental in declaring the ideology of the state as the Islamic ideology. The history of Pakistan, since the day of independence, is described largely as a history of a conflict between two warring tribes of the traditionalists and the modernists. But it was not so simple a case; with the turn of the 21st century, Pakistan found itself totally immersed in religious extremism which was initially confined to the *madrassah* educated persons, but within two decades it became mainstreamed. This dominant paradigm, when became accepted by both the powerful minority and silent majority, created an environment in which pointing out any flaw in that paradigm, started sounding queer rather indecent. The emerging problems of the Pakistani society have an intimate connection with this new ideological environment. But the act of declaring them so, would be taken as offensive. This hegemonic character of this paradigm discourages even discussing its assumptions and the changes associated with it. Anyone who dares so is easily declared as blasphemous. It is the ultimate tool in the hands of bigots, who are bent upon eliminating all traces of opposition. The book under review is one such bold effort to point out the flaws in the dominant paradigm of the Pakistani society, and also to suggest few solutions to the prevalent ills, with the conviction that such solutions would work.

These ills, according to the author, Mubarak Haider, may be direct and logical outcome of the beliefs, policies, and actions, but the courage to challenge these old notions and the vested interests protected by such ideologies, is, no doubt, a unique quality. Mubarak Haider, hailing from Rawalpindi, himself has been a student activist, who dared challenging the politics of Mr. Bhutto as a colleague of a dictator, General Ayub. Later, as a political activist, he took part in trade union politics, and had to sacrifice his career as a lecturer in a college, as well. His bold and challenging viewpoints were well known in the intellectual circles of Lahore in the 1970s. True to his spirit and zeal to correct the balance, he expressed himself in poetry as well, a proof of which is his book *Talism*. Though relying on business for living, Haider never forsake his conviction or withdrew his support for the constructive forces that only can lead to peace and progress. The book under review is a testimony to his concern for his people. Moreover, it is a wake-up call for those who take every pill coated in religion as a blessing.

The book is written in the backdrop of the 9/11 incident. What appeared to be a distant rambling of this incident for Pakistan, very soon turned out to be very loud and clear call for her castigation. Had anyone thought on the day that the 'War on Terror', which was ensued to chastise the 9/11's criminals would be fought within the borders of Afghanistan and Pakistan. The chastisement of both the countries continued and the society in both the countries continued loosing in terms of moral, political and economic stability. It is the moral stability or more precisely the moral corruption which is main theme discussed by Mubarak Haider. But while justifying the title, '*Tehzeebi Nargasiyat*' (cultural narcissism), he explains it as 'one's attitude of looking at one's own self, and appreciating it and developing this habit up to an alarmingly damaging extent'. Such cultural narcissism, he holds, needs treatment as it has serious organizational and social implications. Its patients cause pain to the surrounding world and refuse to accept this state as a pathological one. Like the individual narcissism, the disease at collective, national and global levels, leads to high degree of tension, anxiety and confrontation, thus hampers development of the humanity at large. With this explanation, Haider expresses that this book is just an initial effort to invite further deliberations on the subject.

The book embodies a stream of thought expressed in 26 chapters, whose titles are self-explanatory. The preface itself explicitly gives the kernel of his thought. The main theme running throughout the book is the continued association of the Pakistani nation and state with the Afghan situation and its implications for the culture, religiosity,

tolerance, and a collective attitude which is gradually becoming pro-terrorism. This may not be truly a case of extremism in the case of common citizen. Anyhow one can see, growing insensitivity towards and dissociation from, the high ideals of Islam, which deal with morality, intercultural and inter-religious interaction, preaching, and pursuit of knowledge. Surveying the history of conflict between Islam and other civilizations, cultures and religions, Haider opines that the Muslim community has adopted a very strong attitude of self-righteousness and self appreciation, for which he suggests to use the term 'cultural narcissism' because this very attitude, deeply ingrained in the Muslim mind, leads them to believe that whatever is carried out in this world in the name of Islam is perfectly alright, but when the same is done by others, is declared condemnable.

The author explains that pathological narcissism has certain symptoms, which can be described as: 'Head or tail, I win'; fluidity of temperament; feeling of being oppressed; paranoia; and happy thinking *khushfehmi*. Rooted in such a narcissist attitude, he highlights the main pillars of the Islamist's edifice as being presented in the following beliefs: Islam being a complete code of life; Islamic dominance as must in the world; compulsive compliance to the *Sunnah* (model) of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), pride in achievements of the ancestors; individualistic actions believed to be disconnected from collective actions; revival of spirituality based in religious rituals to counter material accomplishments; and *jihad* in the name of God. Explaining the problematic nature of these convictions, he, in fact, tries to analyze the 'lived Islam', which is farcical and paradoxical if one compares it with the revealed Islam, since the today's practitioners of religion see and apply Islam after detaching it from its socio-historical context.

The present day hyper and distorted religiosity, which Haider calls 'cultural narcissism', may be taken as a reaction of the Islamophobia of the West, but Haider asserts that the US-centered hatred of the Muslims has no roots in their longing for national sovereignty, human solidarity, or justice. Rather it sprouts from their Islamic identity, which is now leading them towards a movement for domination of Islam at the global level. This movement draws its vigor from the paradigm, having its keystone in the conviction that, 'Islam is the only truth; anything else Islam must either adapt to Islam, or must be abolished by the Muslims according to the Divine order'. In other words, difference from the Islamic beliefs is regarded as ignorance and waywardness. Such an obligation, the author opines, not only invites hatred and mockery of the world but is also self-annihilating because of blocking the way of self-criticism and self-reforming, and nurturing pride in one's belief. Haider

finds that such beliefs are not only accepted by the Muslims in Afghanistan or northern parts of Pakistan, and are projected by the *madaris*, but these are invariably prevalent among majority of the Muslims at global level, regardless of their country of origin, residence or earning. All over the world Muslims are now striving to get engaged in ensuring dominance of Islam, therefore, they are becoming more and more intolerant. They can easily be infuriated in both Muslim and non-Muslim societies. On the other hand, such extremist elements emphatically call for presenting a 'civilized' face of Islam to the world, because the cardinal beliefs of Islam, according to their conviction, endorse their fundamentalism, extremism, and terrorism.

The author has explained the theoretical positions on the nature, stages, and remedies of this newly identified disease. He elaborates his concept of cultural narcissism which is reflected in general public or model personality of the society. His observation about Pakistan is that any individual revolting against the state in Pakistan indicates that the individual thinks himself/herself as being equal or larger than the state. Whereas the state is not allowing change as desired by the individuals, both the state and the individual citizens are showing an attitude of narcissism, resulting in the citizens holding certain other conceptions of collectivity in higher esteem than the state and the nation. This higher ideal is that of religious governance, which is inevitably linked with oppression and militarism, hence the national identity is fast losing its relevance.

Mubarak Haider also points out major flaws in teaching methodology of the *madaris*, which grooms a uniform stunted personality with no intellectual wit and scope for research or questioning their rote learned knowledge. The tribal social system, according to him, portrays the type of society a *madrassah* education can create and sustain. His observation about a very slow seminal change in the tribal society of Pakistan is related in the chapter named 'northern tribes and cultural narcissism'. Though these tribesmen can be seen using state of the art technology for communication or war, the history of the tribal community living in the FATA of Pakistan had shown no aversion as such to the modernization processes carried out by various regimes in Afghanistan or Pakistan. Haider asserts that a type of tribal narcissism overtakes the people while living in tribal environment and this attitude is transformed when these tribesmen assume another identity in the world out of their tribal world. Within the tribal world, though a collective psyche of dictatorship checks any effort of modernization, but, Haider holds that, tribal societies in the world have entered and

integrated into the modern social systems in a large number, except our tribal areas who are bent upon crusading against modernism. The paradox of their existence lies in their partial acceptance of modernism, but simultaneously resisting all new civilizations, as their history reveals. Haider opines that the present resistance of the tribes against US and its allies is due to the frustration caused by failure in their design to conquer the world and impose their own version of law.

The author has presented his assertions and arguments in a decent, scholarly style and his approach is that of inviting discussion, provoking thinking and challenging the stereotyping. He has expressed his philosophy and arguments in a beautiful literary style; for instance see the chapter on 'religion as spirituality'. He ends at the note that this cultural narcissism can be cured if the society becomes aware of and gets rid of the shrewd minority, which, mentored by global actors, has been cultivating hatred and aggression since many decades. Failing such a crucial and timely action, according to him, we are bound to be doomed.

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***My Country My Life* by L.K. Advani, Delhi, 2008, pp.986.**

This voluminous work by the well-known Indian politician belonging to a fundamentalist Hindu party, the BJP, is less explicit in terms of dealing with the subject ['my life']; he subjugates it to the larger canvas ['my country'] as he sees it. Thus the greater part of Advani's book deals with his country and far less with himself.

L.K. Advani, who was born in Karachi [1927] and remained here for 20 years till 1947, is an interesting subject of study. His later life in India seeking to revive Hindu fundamentalism is obscure apart from those events in which his participation brought him to public notice – the destruction of the Babari Masjid, his support for the massacre of Muslims in the aftermath, his approval of the destruction of Sikh holy places and their subsequent slaughter following Mrs. Gandhi's assassination, his hysteria over the Kargil war and the freedom struggle in Kashmir and his ardent defence of Narinder Modi, the architect of the pogrom in Gujrat resulting in thousands of Muslim fatalities. All these unfortunate events have one target, the Muslims, whether of Pakistan or India. Insofar as his hatred of Muslims is concerned, we must acknowledge that it is sincere – much in the same way as Hitler was sincere in his

opposition of the Jews – but with the difference that the people Advani openly hates, he also wants to suffocate in a deathly embrace that would choke the last gasps of life out of them. Rebuttal of his fallacies, phobias and falsehoods is not intended in this review. His desire to establish a Hindu *rashtra* [state] must be seen by him as a parallel reflection of the Muslim desire to establish an Islamic state in Pakistan – to be free from the likes of fanatics and psychopaths like him and his associates. The mindset of a fanatic masquerading as a ‘liberal’ as emerges from the book is a classic case for the textbooks of psychopathological disorders. One may liken him to Himmler. There is no doubt that Muslims in India have been generally oppressed by all Indian governments [see Yoginder Sikand, *Muslims in India since 1947*, reviewed by the present writer in *Pakistan Perspectives*, Vol. 10, No. 2, 2005]. However, this oppression has been transformed into genocide during the various tenures of the BJP governments.

According to the glib-tongued Advani, it was all milk-and-honey in Sindh between the Muslims and Hindus. If so, why had Sindh separated from Bombay Presidency in 1929 if all was going smoothly? The Karachi Resolution of 8-9 October 1938 when Advani was in India, the AIML accused the Hindus, inter alia, of:

- Intimidation and demoralisation of Muslims;
- Suppression of Muslim religious customs;
- Enforcing the Vidhya Mandir scheme;
- foisting *Bande Matram* on Muslims in callous disregard of the feelings of Muslims as not only idolatrous but it is in origin and conception a hymn of hate for all Muslims;
- To make Hindi with the Devanagiri script as the lingua franca of India;
- To inculcate Hindu religious ideas, philosophy and culture and establish dominance of Brahmanic culture in India;
- To close Urdu schools and discourage the teaching of Urdu;
- To interfere with the age-long religious privileges and usages of the Muslim community of the Muslim community.

Certain falsehoods such as his stating that he appealed to stop the demolition of the Babari Masjid along with the Rani of Gwalior [another BJP fanatic], is amply contradicted by William Dalrymple in his *Age of Kali* [Delhi, 2007] which states that both urged the rapid demolition of the mosque over microphones and were gleeful at its destruction. Lies come easily to Advani who cannot shrug off this habit of 80-odd years. He does not comment on

the broad-minded approach of the Pakistani government who asked him to restore two Hindu temples during his visit. The sharp contrast between this charitable act and the frenzy of hysterical goons is painfully obvious. Advani does not comment either on the remarkable story that two fanatic Hindus [who destroyed the main domes of the Babari Mosque] both accepted Islam within a year of the desecration.

No mention is made of the fact that the eminent Sindhi leader, Shaikh Abdul Majid Sindhi, was a convert from Hinduism and related to Acharya Kripalani. Shaikh Abdul Rahim Sindhi, the elder brother of Acharya Kripalani, was likewise a convert to Islam. So also Ubaydullah Sindhi – a convert from Sikhism.

The Quaid-i-Azam himself paid a visit to the Hindus concentrated in the Swamin Narayan temple opposite the Karachi Municipal Corporation (KMC) building to assure them of their safety and to stress the tolerance of Muslims going back to the times of the Holy Prophet [PBUH]. Acharya Kripalani had urged them [the Hindus] to leave for India not because they were unsafe but because this, he felt, would cause an economic collapse in Sindh [Syed Hashim Raza, *Hamari Manzil*, Karachi, 1990, pp. 95-97].

Perhaps the earlier comparison of Advani with Himmler was inexact; Goebbels would have been a better choice. Maybe the worst of both can be seen in him. Was not the Hindu swastika the flag of the Third Reich?

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Syed Munir Wasti

***Ahwal wa A'saar Mir Ghulamali Azad Bilgrami* by Dr. Syed Hasan Abbas, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran, 1384 [solar], pp.472.**

This is the doctoral dissertation of Syed Hasan Abbas presented to the University of Tehran for which the author was awarded the Ph.D. degree. The author is associated with the Department of Persian, Benares Hindu University, India. The thesis was considered to be of appropriate merit by a panel of scholars attached to the University of Tehran and was approved for publication in a series of learned works issued in memory of [late] Dr. Mahmud Afshar Yazdi - of which it is the twenty-second volume to appear.

The author, being Indian, has based his research on an Indian personality well-known in South Asia [shubeh qarih] for his great

Islamic scholarship. Syed Hasan Abbas has made extensive use of materials available in India and Pakistan for his research. According to the rules of Tehran University, all theses presented to it must be written in Persian. While the editorial board in Persian of Tehran University consists of noteworthy scholars, it is remarkable that of the 13 members only one is Pakistani [from Punjab University]; others include one Indian [from Aligarh University], six Iranians, one Japanese, one Chinese, one Turkmen, one Arab, one Briton [C.E. Bosworth] and one from Canada [Richard Frye]. One may protest at the exclusion of eminent Pakistani scholars, Dr Mazhar Mahmud Shirani and Dr Arid Naushahi. It is noteworthy that the author expresses his gratitude to fellow-Indian scholars of Persian [such as Dr Mukhtaruddin Arzu d. 2010], Dr Ziauddin Desai and from Pakistan he names Hakim Muhammad Said, Mushfiq Khwaja, Dr. Moinuddin Aqeel and Muhammad Iqbal Mujaddidi - all reputed for their scholarly works both in Persian and Urdu.

Mir Ghulamali 'Azad' Bilgrami [1704-1785] was a remarkable genius of extraordinary calibre and prolific production in the areas of Islamic religious literature writing with facility both in Arabic and Persian. In fact, according to Dr Zubayd Ahmad [in his 'Contribution of Hind-Pakistan to Arabic literature' 1st edition 1945], he was 'the most important poet of Arabic produced by the subcontinent'. He composed seven divans in Arabic apart from a great quantity of Islamic devotional literature winning him the title of 'Hissan al-Hind'. The book under review does not engage in a detailed discussion of Azad's Arabic works but treats him as a Persian poet-scholar. This has impaired the balance tilting it unfairly towards his Persian achievements.

The book under review is divided into 10 sections of unequal length. These are:

- i. the politico-religious and socio-intellectual background of 18th century India;
- ii. the biography of Azad;
- iii. Azad's relations with contemporary poets, nobles and scholars;
- iv. the pupils of Azad;
- v. Azad's Persian poetry, his notes on Persian poets and biographies of sufis;
- vi. Azad's literary stature in view of his achievements;
- vii. Azad's Arabic works [this is the shortest section having only 10 pp.];
- viii. works of doubtful authorship attributed to Azad;
- ix. the literary foes of Azad;
- x. Azad as referred to by later memorialists.

This is followed by a detailed bibliography and indices.

It is a remarkable fact that the author has not given a final summing-up of the totality of Azad's achievements and an all-round assessment of his abilities in diverse areas of scholarship. The advantage the author had was choosing a subject not sufficiently researched in Iran. He also had access to plentiful Urdu materials in tazkiras which were of prime assistance to him in research available from generous scholars both in Pakistan and India. This does not mean that we need to detract from the merits of the author's work. The chief value of this work is that it has gained an audience in Iran for a great literary figure prominent in Persian scholarship. More and more work is being produced in Iranian universities on Indo-Pakistani men-of-letters who used Persian as their first language without being Persian themselves.

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