

## Book Reviews

Stanley WOLPERT, *Jinnah of Pakistan*. Published by Oxford University Press, 1984. \$24.95. PP 421.

Sharif-AL-MUJAHID, *Jinnah—Studies in Interpretation*. Published by Quaid-i-Azam Academy, Karachi 1981. \$20.00. PP 806.

*Reviewed by: Abu Faisal\**

Few individuals significantly altered the course of history. Fewer still modified the map of the world. Hardly anyone can be credited with creating a nation—State. Mohammad Ali Jinnah did all three. It is indeed surprising that a leader of such stature and achievement should have received such scant attention from the historians and biographers. Both Gandhi and Jinnah were contemporary leaders of the Indian Sub-Continent and while hosts of books have been written on Gandhi, even movies have been made (“*9 hours to Rama*” and “*Gandhi*”), there has been very little literature on Jinnah, the creator of Pakistan. Although there have been a few attempts at sketching a biography of Quaid-i-Azam—as Jinnah is called by his grateful nation—by some Indian and Pakistani writers, there has been hardly any authoritative or sustained study on Jinnah, his role in the Pakistan Movement and how it affected the political future and geography of the entire Sub-Continent. Hector Bolitho was commissioned by the Government of Pakistan in the early 1950s to write a biography of the Quaid—“*Jinnah, creator of Pakistan*”, but it failed to evoke any excitement or even meet the standards of a biography. It is exactly after 30 years after Hector Bolitho’s publication that an attempt has been made by Stanley Wolpert, a professor of history at UCLA to reconstruct a chronicle of this pivotal figure in the Indian politics during the turbulent decades that led to the creation of Pakistan.

Wolpert is an old and respected expert on South Asia and has written extensively on the politics of the Sub-Continent. He brings this intimate knowledge and insight of the region to bear upon this excellent

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biography of the Quaid. The book not only fills the vacuum that has existed in the accurate and dispassionate portrayal of Jinnah, but his meticulous research and scholarship adds new dimensions to our understanding of Jinnah and the momentous events in which he was involved. The deification of Gandhi and the distortion of historical facts and perspectives through the film "Gandhi" has made it essential, particularly for the Western public, to get a more balanced view of his adversary—Jinnah, and the motivation and inspiration that guided his struggle for an independent Muslim nation on the Sub-Continent. The image of Jinnah as "one of history's most remarkable, tenacious enigmatic figures", which emerges in Wolpert's book contrasts sharply with the generally held biased view of him as a stubborn and unreasonable leader bent on the partition of India. Wolpert deserves credit for projection of the personality of the Quaid and the whole Muslim League Movement in the correct perspective of the Muslim self-determination and tumultuous politics of the Sub-Continent.

*JINNAH-STUDIES IN INTERPRETATION* is an earlier attempt by Prof. Sharif-al-Mujahid, a noted Pakistani historian. However, Sharif-al-Mujahid does not attempt a biography of the Quaid in a conventional sense but offers interpretations of his role in the Indian National Congress, his espousal of the two nation theory, his aversion to the style and substance of the Gandhian politics, and his stress on the ideological basis of Pakistan. The eight essays contained in this volume deal with Jinnah's statesmanship and politics in this context. The 800 page book has the singular merit of some 200 pages of the basic documents covering the period 1910 to 1947 and another 80 pages of biographical notes on the personalities that have been referred to in the text. These notes add enormously to the understanding of the political scene and would be a useful tool for any subsequent research. Sharif-al-Mujahid maintains that the Pakistan Movement was in the tradition of Shah Wali Ullah who represented the Indo-Muslim resistance to the concentration of power in the non-Muslim hands. The Movement, however, gained momentum because of Jinnah's "pragmatic, tactful, resolute, confident and self-reliant leadership". One has often heard the criticism that any historical research or analysis of politics of the sub-continent by a Pakistani scholar is *ipso facto* tainted by subjectivity. Mujahid's book largely escapes such a criticism. Indeed, he has offered some interesting and bold analyses and interpretations of Jinnah's address to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan on 11 August, 1947, which have not been received very kindly by the official guardians of Pakistan ideology.