

EDITORIAL

The resurgence of Covid-19, especially its Delta variant has increased casualties, causing resumed lockdowns in many countries. If we survive, then perhaps a social history of the pandemic could be written, identifying which segments of society resisted vaccines and other preventive measures. Such resistance has been mounted by different people following different faiths, demonstrating that superstition exists regardless of which belief system is being followed.

The United States, in its turn withdraws from Afghanistan, and the pandemic having made the world a little less material, the Kashmir issue is at last receiving attention. Eric Margolis had remarked that Kashmir suffered from inattention. Now the situation has changed. In 1965, Malaysia was the one country with which Pakistan had severed its diplomatic relations due to its siding with India. Now Malaysia from 18 to 20 December 2019 itself hosted a Summit conference on Kashmir. Since then, American legislators have been vocal on the issue. Standing out is the stand taken by the United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. In a statement on 8 August 2019, he refused to treat the Simla agreement as an impediment and pointedly recalled that according to the Simla Agreement, the final status of Jammu and Kashmir is to be settled by peaceful means in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, therefore it should be settled in conformity with the relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions

On his re-election, Antonio Guterres spelled out on 30 January 2021 the need to “Fully respect Human Rights in the Indian occupied regions of Jammu and Kashmir. As recently as 29 June 2021 UNSG Guterres urged India to end the use of pellets against children. He deserves the tribute of all the countries supporting the struggle of the Kashmiris.

People have pointed to the country which created the Kashmir problem in the first place and as the first paper we have is “Muslim Nationalist Historiography in South Asia: An Apologetic Approach for Muslim Identity”. If we summarize, we find that on the whole British historians recovered the ancient past and maligned medieval era. The more remote the origin of a religion the more mythical the sources, the more historical criticism it invites, nevertheless as the contributor holds, the British were more hostile to minority.

The British discovered, edited, translated and catalogued historical material. Their bias, as our contributor brings out, was governed by the necessity of popularizing their rule in the eyes of the majority. However, bias cannot be avoided and we have perforce to cope with it. Take the example of Akbar, Abul Fazl's *Ā'in-i-Akbari* was laudatory, Abdul Qadir's *Muntakhab-ul –Tawārīkh* was critical and only Nizam-ud-Din Ahmed's *Tabaqāt-i-Akbari* was impartial. Today, we find it impossible retain only *Tabaqāt-i-Akbari* and dispense with the other two.

The next paper is on "The Popalzai Family: Its Role in various Religo-Political Movements in the North-West Frontier Province 1927 to 1940" the history of a family, not a dynasty brings one closer to ground level history. The paper also underscores how religion has been an inescapable factor in the politics of the fabled Frontier.

"The Politics of Sindh from 1936 to 1946: Rival Ideologues on Common Platform" is a most interesting and absorbing study. One only hoped that the contributor had given more details about the 1938 Sindh Muslim League Conference and its calling for two federations in India, a more momentous contribution to the Pakistan Movement than the 1943 Conference.

Sindh, despite the Masjid Manzilgah dispute enjoyed overall communal harmony. Karachi became the city where most Hindu and Sikh refugees arrived for onward sea travel to Bombay, as well as the city in which Muslims expelled from India gathered. How this city suddenly became the scene of inhuman violence against Hindus and Sikhs is described in a paper: *History of Riots during the Partition of India: A Study of Urdu Literature.*" We have been carrying in the few past issues papers, dealing with history on one side and fiction on the other, and in these papers the divergence of fiction from history has been remarked upon. In the present paper fiction does not controvert history rather it makes it more graphic enabling empathy.

The last paper on the Ghulam Rasool Building on the Mall Road of Lahore, is a timely reminder to the authorities on what dangers monuments face. The Ghulam Rasool Building belongs to the British Era which is fast receding in time. The British era, we should recall is also a part of history, and history should be preserved wherever possible.

Dr. Muhammad Reza Kazimi
m.reza.kazimi@gmail.com