

Editorial

As the Covid-19 Pandemic sees its second upsurge, there is hope for mankind as vaccines have been tested and are being readied for sale and distribution across the globe. Here is a test for the Capitalist system. The contagious nature of Corona precludes it being supplied to only the rich and the privileged. Co-incidentally, *Foreign Affairs* January/February 2020 had carried four articles on the future of Capitalism.

A new President has been voted into the White House, with the 2015 Nuclear Treaty with Iran becoming the subject of renewed debate. Regardless of the parties or the merits, negotiations as an instrument of peace would become redundant were they to be signed between regimes and not states.

A very disquieting piece of information has come from Farhan Ahmed which affects both environment and energy; that Solar panels are an environmental hazard giving out lead, cadmium and other toxic even carcinogenic materials, exuding Nitrogen Tri-fluoride (NF₃). Our hope is that our scientists shall try remedial steps, rather than scrapping solar panels altogether. Hydro-power too needs enhancement and it is heartening that in Sindh small dams have come up, and the use of river resources are being rationalized. This is quite relevant as Human Civilization and hence History, began on river banks.

The first paper is on Acanthus motifs in Gandhara Art. Acanthus leaves are the most common motifs in Ancient Art taking roots in Greece and thereafter following the footsteps of Alexander. It thus made Gandhara Art a confluence of European and Asian art, which through Buddhism would extend from South to South-East Asia.

Indo-Muslim architecture can be studied profitably within many frameworks and a historical account of the mosques at Kalinjar where Sher Shah achieved his final victory but lost his life; have been traced from the Delhi Sultanate to the Mughul period giving us a valuable view of the evolution of mosque architecture in India.

One question is how were the British able to conquer a vast country like India? The answer often given is mastery over the seas and advanced strategic capabilities. This was understood by many Indian rulers notably Tipu Sultan, who however was precluded by Anglo-French

rivalry to derive benefits from European warfare strategies. Raja Ranjit Singh understood and succeeded. He inducted a number of European military officers who were both loyal and efficient and was able to absorb the Europeans in the environs of his empire. Ranjit Singh's sway extended to Afghanistan, and the next paper is on the role of Amir Abdul Rahman. This paper shows how the Afghans exercised prudence, how they harnessed their strength and took long term tactical decisions yet they were eventually mired in a vicious global conflict.

The last paper in this issue concerns the Anglo-Indian community and their dilemma in the face of the 1947 Partition. *Bhowani Junction* by John Masters is a historical novel now. This genre, has by and large been employed towards promoting fantasy and glorification, yet; there are some corners of history that can be brought to life only by fiction. If one compares a classic of History, Pieter Geyl's *Napoleon For and Against* with a classic of Literature Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace* we find we need to reconsider the meaning of historical truth. Thus John Master's *Bhowani Junction* was a fictional account of what, to his generation, was contemporary history. The cinema version employed another art medium in which exotic elements were allowed to push out artistic elements, making this paper an absorbing inquiry.

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