

Editorial

The French Revolution marks a veritable epoch in World History. A number of scholars prefer dating the advent of the Modern Age to the French Revolution, rather than the Renaissance, for its slogan *egalite, fraternite et liberte* which resulted in King Louis XVI losing his head. Let us also remember that it was the French Revolution that threw up the word “terror”. Pakistan’s relations with France came under a strain because of the blasphemous caricatures of the Prophet of Islam (*Sal Allah-u-‘alaihi wa sallam*), with the leaders of the European Union united in preserving the freedom of speech.

The matter has been amicably resolved through commercial and diplomatic channels, assuring Pakistan that GST+ concession shall continue. However, for historians the incidence has this aspect that France has made a religious anathema a condition for trade. Secure in the knowledge that Muslims believe in the Immaculate Conception, they are unaware that if the role of Pantheos from the Talmud is broadcast, it shall have an equally unsettling effect on European Civilization.

Meanwhile in Pakistan, architectural history is being made when built up and occupied townships and towers are being demolished on the basis that the land in question was acquired illegally. It would have been more humane to adjudicate before third party interests developed, and before people had invested their life’s savings in widely advertised housing schemes. Legislation shall not be a remedy, so we can only urge upon the authorities to pay compensation to victims just as victims of natural disasters are compensated.

This issue actually opens with a paper on Architecture. “Misconceptions about Islamic Architecture: the Role of Richard Francis Burton” Sir Richard Burton made sweeping remarks on the insignificance of Islamic Architecture, calling it a plagiarized version of Byzantine Architecture. The Dome of the Rock, it is true bears resemblance to the Church of St. Vitale, Ravenna as the first such venture outside of Arabia proper; but the church was taken down before the Grand Mosque of Damascus was built. This was the first mosque to have its disparate parts integrated aesthetically. Burton’s critique has been successfully challenged, and the reader is bound to find both, a brilliant overview of Orientalism and the evolution of Islamic Architecture.

The second paper “Conversion or Reversion? A Review of Medieval India’s Islamic Transformation” is concerned with the conversion of Indians to Islam and the role therein played by the mystics in spreading Islam among the common folk. There has been an intermingling of Hindu and Muslim cultures, it is true, mostly in the domain of Music, but there is no evidence that the Sufis compromised cardinal Islamic precepts to make Islam appealing to the Masses

We partly return to the theme with a paper “Archaeological Reconnaissance in Akora Khattak,” which gives defined features of the architecture in the region bordering Afghanistan. The fourth paper “Pukhtun Resistance against the Mughuls during 1670’s” is also closely related and while it represents Pukhtun resistance against Aurangzeb, the message seems clear that the first capital of the Mughuls had been Kabul and it is difficult to depict them as aliens. However the social side of the paper is its most illuminating aspect.

The last paper of this issue “Re-emergence and Rise of Bengali Nationalism in East Pakistan 1954-1958” must be seen in a historic context coinciding as it does with the Fiftieth Anniversary of the liberation of Bangladesh. According to Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and H. V. Hodson the A-IML leadership had given its assent to the creation of a United and Sovereign State of Bengal. But then Bengal’s quest for freedom had been thwarted by Jawaharlal Nehru, who, in a variant of the Two – Nation Theory stated: “There was no chance of Hindus there agreeing to put themselves under permanent Muslim domination” *Transfer of Power* Vol. X, London, 1981, 1013. A few days later Nehru said that “East Bengal is going to be a source of embarrassment for Pakistan.” *Ibid* Vol. IX, 03. This paper exemplifies best what could have been avoided, had Nehru not denied Bengal its independence in 1947.

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