

Abstracts

Gandhi, his "Soulmate" Kallenbach, and the "Experimental Field" in South Africa.

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Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948) spent almost 21 years in South Africa. There he developed decisive elements of his thinking and his principles through 'experiments with the truth', which were later to be of importance for his political work in India. The influence of the Jewish architect Hermann Kallenbach (1879-1945), who was born in what was then Russia and trained in Germany, should not be underestimated. The lecture will deal with the role of Kallenbach in the development of Gandhi's thinking.

History set in Stone: The Archaeological Survey of India as a Producer of Historical Discourse in Post-Independence India.

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A government organisation in charge of conserving monuments of national importance and of archaeological excavations, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) endorsed the unofficial role of arbitrator of historical controversies. Well before the Babri Masjid-Ram Janmabhoomi controversy, I examine how, in post-independence India, ASI bureaucrats turned into producers of a government-sanctioned discourse about the past. Based upon archival records for the period 1947-72, I analyse the drafting process of 'historical notice boards' at monument sites, where historical information is literally set in stone, and the Survey's role in arbitrating controversies in Parliament Question sessions.



History, Nature, and Influence of Eid Milad-un-Nabi Processions in Punjab. A Transformation from Religious Piety to Symbol of Power.

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The present study would explore the origin of Eid Milad-un-Nabi (EMN) processions in Punjab in the pages of history. By doing this, it would discuss how an occasion which was previously associated with religious piety converted into a show of power. This event is traced to a historical city of Punjab named Rawalpindi. The city housed a mixture of many communities i.e. Sikhs, Muslims, Hindus and Christians. Before the partition of India, Rawalpindi witnessed bloodshed in the form of communal riots, these riots were the first incidents of violence within the Pothwar region. In 1896 the construction of the famous Jamia Masjid became a bone of contention between Sikhs and Muslims. After just a couple of years, the chosen locality and surrounding areas witnessed a massacre which took the lives of hundreds of innocent people.

In the memory of that massacre, Muslims started the procession of Eid Milad-un-Nabi in 1926 for the very first time and thousands of Muslims participated in this procession. It is also observed as a deviation from mere religious piety to a show of power. This research would also explore how the EMN procession presently serves socio political purposes and its conversion into a method to satisfy intrinsic political interests.