

## EVENTS, INQUIRIES, NEWS, NOTICES, REPORTS

A number of Urdu writers and patrons left us since *AUS* #13. Among them: (1998) Jamal Ihsani, Dilawar Figar, Qaiyum Khizr, Mir Ghulam Rasul Nazuki, Syed Qaisar Qalandar, Zaigham Hameedi, Nazir Shahjahanpuri, Ihsan Darbhangvi, Aabroo Nizami, Husain Nawaz, Muhammad Salman Abbasi, Hameed Nasim, Ataullah Palvi, Wamiq Jaunpuri, Ibadat Barelvi, Agha Jani Kashmiri (Syed Wajid Husain Rizvi), Akhtar Bastvi (Muhammad Akhtar Ali Siddiqi), Syed Shahab Dasnavi, Syed Shah Ataur Rahman Kakvi, Umar Shafaq, M. Habib Khan, Masih Anjum, Mumtaz Ahmad, Hakim Muhammad Saeed, Ubaidullah Aleem, Syed Shabihul Hasan Naunehravi, Agha Babar, Sa'ima Khairi, Safdar Mir (Zeno), Salahuddin Mahmood, Rabia Fakhri, Syed Ali Abbas Jalalpuri, Raj Narain Raz, Iqbal Qadiri, and Vaqar Khalil, (1999) Abid Pishawari, Khumar Barabankvi, Nadir Agha, Bedar Malik, and Razi Akhtar Shauq.

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Hayatullah Ansari, who died on 26 January 1999 at the age of 88, was an important short story writer of the generation of Ali Abbas Husaini, Sudarshan, etc., who followed Premchand. Late in his life he also published a six-part novel, *Labū kē Pbhūl*, about the freedom struggle. He was better known for editing the nationalist Urdu newspaper, *Qaumī Āvāz*, which was started in the 1940s by the Congress under Nehru's direction, and for leading the fight for Urdu's rights in India. He and his wife Sultana Hayat were in the forefront of all the campaigns. Prior to his death he had received a major award from Haryana Urdu Academy.

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Noted feminist writer Hijab Imtiaz Ali died of a heart attack in Lahore on Thursday, 18 March 1999, at the age of 96. The younger daughter of Nawab Sir Mohammad Ismail and a niece of Nawab Zain Yar Jang, Hijab published her first short story, "Mērī Nākām Muḥabbat," at the age of 11. She continued to write short stories and novels for the next 80 years. Her plays were broadcast on radio and at least one stage play, "Čāčā Bḥatijiyān," was staged at Alhamra, Lahore. She married Syed Imtiaz Ali Taj, the author of the famous drama "Anārkalī." She also qualified as the first licensed pilot of the British empire in 1936. Earlier, in 1950, she had suffered a nervous breakdown but recovered from it. On April 19, 1970 she and her husband were brutally attacked at their home, which left Syed Imtiaz Ali Taj dead.

Hijab Imtiaz Ali was awarded the "Tamgha-i-Imtiaz" by the Government of Pakistan for her services to literature. She was the founder of the literary circle

“Man-o-Salvā,” which remained active until late 1997 when she suffered a mild stroke. She wrote her last short story in 1997. Many of her works have been translated into English, Japanese, and other languages. Her last novel, *Pāgal-Khāna*, in which she grapples with the realities of a world riddled with nuclear weapons, was the recipient of the Adamji Prize for literature.

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The University of Karachi conferred an Honorary Ph.D. on Jamiluddin Aali, noted poet and Secretary of Anjuman-e Taraqqī-e Urdū, Pakistan.

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Famous novelist Abdullah Hussein, the English translation of whose Urdu novel *Udās Naslēn* was published as *The Weary Generations* by Peter Owen (London) early this year, was the recipient of the Khwaja Ashkar Husain Award for 1998 in a special ceremony held at Toronto in June 1998.

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The Bharatiya Bhasha Parishad Prize for 1998 was given to the short story writer Abdus Samad.

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Poet and famous Iqbal scholar Jagan Nath Azad was the recipient of the Mir Taqi Mir Award, which was presented to him by the Madhya Pradesh Urdu Academy.

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Majlis-e Farogh-e Adab, Doha, the literary organization of the Gulf Emirates, recognized fiction writers Intizar Husain (Pakistan) and Jilani Bano (India) for their lifetime contributions to Urdu literature by offering them its 1998 awards. The 1999 awards were given to Ghalib scholar Kalidas Gupta “Riza” (India) and Mukhtar Masood (Pakistan).

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Bashir Badr (poet) and Javed Akhtar (poet; film writer) were awarded Padma Shri by the Government of India in 1998.

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Modernist poet Irfan Siddiqi and well-known short story writer Bisheswar Pradeep each received a cash prize of Rs. 51,000 from the U.P. Urdu Academy.

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Famous poet Nida Fazli received the Sahitya Akademi Award for his book, *Kʰōyā Huvā sā Kučʰ*.

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Distinguished poet Majruh Sultanpuri received the Wali Dakni National Award from the Maharashtra Urdu Academy.

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The 1998 Sahitya Akademi Translation Award went to poet Parkash Fikri for rendering Amrit Lal Nagar’s Hindi novel *Vish Amrit* into Urdu.

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Distinguished research scholar Rashid Hasan Khan received the Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Award for 1997. This is the highest award offered by the Uttar Pradesh Urdu Academy.

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Well-known poet Shaharyar received the Firaq Samman Award for 1998 as well as the Bahadur Shah Zafar Award; the latter is the highest award offered by the Urdu Academy, Delhi.

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Sajid Rashid's short story was the winner of a 1998 Katha Award. The story appears in Geeta Dharmarajan, ed. *Katha Prize Stories* 8.

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The Ramkrishan J. Dayal Harmony Award for 1997 was given to Shahid Ali Khan, General Manager, Maktaba-e Jamia, New Delhi.

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Fiction writers Shaukat Siddiqi and A. Hameed and poet and essayist Shahzad Ahmad were recognized by the Government of Pakistan for their services to Urdu literature; they each received the Presidential Award.

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The Prime Minister Literary Awards for 1997 (Pakistan) went to poet, short story writer and journalist Ahmed Nadim Qasimi, journalist Altaf Gohar, critic Dr. Aftab Ahmad, novelists Mustansir Husain Tarar and Ashraf Shaad, researcher and critic Tahsin Firaqi, poets Mansura Ahmad and Saud Usmani, and short story writer and columnist Asif Farrukhi. The panel of judges included Ahmad Nadim Qasimi, Mushfiq Khwaja, Mushtaq Ahmad Yusufi, Intizar Husain and Shaukat Siddiqi.

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In March, 1998, the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan conferred a number of awards on individuals who had excelled, in the Government's opinion, in different departments of national life. In the field of literature, Jamiluddin Aali received the Hilal-e Imtiaz; Zafar Ishaq Ansari, Ataul Haq Qasimi, Munir Niazi, and Amjad Islam Amjad, the Sitara-e Imtiaz; Masrur Anwar, Shahzad Qaisar, and Nisar Aziz Butt, the Pride of Performance; and Masud Hasan Tabish Dehlavi, Akhtar Hoshiarpuri, Nasim Durrani, Muhammad Afzal Raza, and Athar Tahir, the Tamgha-e Imtiaz.

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The Ghalib Institute, Delhi, gave out the 1997 and 1998 Ghalib Awards to Khaliq Anjum, Shakeel-ur-Rehman, Wamiq Jaunpuri, Zahida Zaidi, Raj Bahadur Gaur, Mazhar Imam, Muzaffar Hanfi, Mehmood Ilahi, A.R. Kardar, and Shyam Lal Kalra.

## II

The following is an inventory of scholars and the papers they presented at conferences, seminars, and symposia:

Agha Shahid Ali (University of Massachusetts-Amherst): "The Didactic: A Continuous Challenge in Translating from Urdu," 27th Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 16 October 1998. Earlier, on 15 October, he spoke to a group of University of Wisconsin, Madison, students on "Resisting the Urge to Speak for Everyone" and discussed his poetry.

Thomas de Bruijn (Leiden University): "Indian Islamic Literature: A Literary Field," 15th European Conference on Modern South Asian Studies, Charles University, Prague, 8–12 September 1998.

Griffith A. Chaussée (University of Virginia, Charlottesville): "The Appropriation of Modernity in Urdu Literary Culture: *Ab-e Hayat* (1880) and Muhammad Husain Azad," Columbia University Seminar on Indology, 26 February 1998; also at Guest Seminar, Center for South Asian Studies, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, 11 September 1998.

Alain Désoulières (Maître de Conférences Ourdou, Asie du Sud, Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales, Paris): "Urdu and Mixed Languages" and "Narratives of Marginality in Urdu Cinema and Television Drama," 15th European Conference on Modern South Asian Studies, Charles University, Prague, 8–12 September 1998.

Faisal Devji (Institute of Ismaili Studies, London): "Apologetic Modernity," 50th Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, Washington, D.C., 26–29 March 1998.

Shamsur Rahman Faruqi gave the 26th Nizam Lecture on "The Dastan: Oral Narrative, Narrator, and Audience" at the Department of Urdu, Delhi University, Delhi, on 26 February 1998.

Kathryn Hansen (Columbia University): "Women's Parts: Female Impersonators in the Parsi Theatre," 27th Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 16 October 1998.

David Lelyveld (Cornell University): "Fathers and Sons: Sir Syed and Syed Mahmood," 50th Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, Washington, D.C., 26–29 March 1998.

Jan Mark (Charles University, Prague): "Khwaja Moinuddin, Founder of Modern Urdu Drama in Pakistan," 15th European Conference on Modern South Asian Studies, Charles University, Prague, 8–12 September 1998.

Ali Mir, (Purdue University): "Gandhi ho ke Ghalib ho: Urdu Poetry at

National Crossroads,” 27th Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 17 October 1998.

Raza Mir (University of Massachusetts): “Willed Losses of Memory: The Urdu Novel and the Decline of Social Values,” 27th Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 17 October 1998.

Aamer Rashid Mufti (Michigan University): “This Self Which Is Not One: Lyric and Partition in Faiz Ahmed Faiz,” South Asia Seminar, the University of Chicago, 24 April 1998.

Christina Oesterheld (University of Heidelberg): “Nazir Ahmad and the Early Urdu Novel,” 15th European Conference on Modern South Asian Studies, Charles University, Prague, 8–12 September 1998.

Carla Petievich (Montclair State University): “Rekhti: The ‘Lesbian’ Voice in Urdu Poetry,” at the conference “Queering the Middle Ages,” held at the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies, the City University of New York, November 1998. She was also discussant for the panel, “Sex, Anxiety and Censorship in 20th-Century India,” at the 27th Annual Conference on South Asia, Madison, Wisconsin, October 1998.

Ralph Russell spoke about the problems in translating Urdu poetry into English in a meeting organized in his honor at the Department of Urdu, Zakir College, New Delhi (10 March 1998).

Tahsin Siddiqi (Michigan University): “Language and Humor: A Study of [Mushraq Ahmad] Yusufi’s Writings,” 27th Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 17 October 1998.

Ulrike Stark (University of Heidelberg): “Inside the 19th Century Publishing House: The Newal Kishore Press in Lucknow as a New Kind of Literary and Cultural Centre,” 15th European Conference on Modern South Asian Studies, Charles University, Prague, 8–12 September 1998.

Vamsi Vakulabharanam (University of Massachusetts): “Breaking the Secular Mold: Urdu and Telugu in Hyderabad,” 27th Annual Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 17 October 1998.

Steven Poulos (Center for South Asia Studies, University of California, Berkeley) was the keynote speaker at the June (1998) *Mahfil* of the Southern California cultural group *Urdu Markaz*, held in Los Angeles.

## III

Ralph Russell sent us the following account of his “Two Months in India and Pakistan, February–March 1998”:

When I was in Delhi last February (1997) Mushirul Hasan, the then officiating Vice-Chancellor of Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, had suggested that I accept a visiting professorship there for a year. I said I didn’t want to come for a year. He said, “Then come for two months on a visiting fellowship.” I said, “Give me half a fellowship and I’ll come for a month.” And in July 1997 I received an official invitation to accept a one month’s fellowship at an honorarium of 5,000 rupees. I accepted this offer, and decided to stay on another two weeks after the fellowship ended and then go for a fortnight to Lahore.

I wrote to Jamia Millia in good time to say that I would be arriving at Delhi Airport on 31 January at 5:15 by Royal Jordanian Airlines and would take up my fellowship the week commencing 1 February. No one met me at the airport. I got to my host Sajjad Ali’s house at 6:45. Our friendship dates back to 1950, and I always stay with him. (Similarly in Lahore I stayed, as I always do, with Ibadat Bareilvi [now deceased —*Ed.*], who, like Sajjad Sahib, has been my friend since 1950.) After resting for a couple of hours I went with Sajjad Sahib to the Registrar. He had taken up his post that day and his predecessor had, it seems, not told him anything about any visiting fellowship. I booked an appointment with the Vice-Chancellor (who later welcomed me very affably) and then went off to the Urdu Department. The Head of Department had not been told anything about when I would be arriving. However, he made me welcome, allotted me a room to work in and said that he would arrange for a better room in the university library. He did, but for some reason the Librarian was not able to arrange this for some days. (It involved only putting an extra desk and chair in a room already allotted to Shamsur Rahman Faruqi and a retired librarian. Neither of these ever appeared on any of the occasions I was in the room.) Meanwhile I told the Head of Department that I would be glad to meet as many as possible of such of the teachers and students of the Department as would like to meet me, and he posted two notices (one for staff and one for students) telling them this and saying they could ring me on Sajjad Sahib’s number. No one ever did. On the first morning four teachers came to see me, on the second two, and thereafter none. A reception for me was held on 10 February, planned (inappropriately as I thought) as a joint reception for me and Ali Sardar Jafari, who, however, sent a message that he was tired and couldn’t come. Gopi Chand Narang presided. Lots of speeches, some of which, to my surprise, showed that the speakers had some acquaintance with my writings. I was especially pleased that Khaja Hasan Sani Nizami was there and spoke. He is the *sajjada-nashin* of his famous father, whose Urdu prose I so greatly admire. I first met him years ago at the Nizamuddin, and have been from the start in a very warm and friendly relationship with him, helped by the fact that he had been a “class-fellow,” as the South Asian idiom has it, of Sajjad Sahib’s

wife. (He was then Abu Talib, later became Hasan Abu Talib, and only in recent years began to style himself Khaja Hasan Sani Nizami.) He always embraces me when we meet, and is not in the least solemn or pretentious.

His speech praised both me and the English in general, and when eventually it was my turn to respond I said that I had been praised more than necessary and my nation *much* more than necessary, and proceeded to explain why I thought so. During tea and snacks afterward he maintained his stand, laughing at my disagreement with him. I was then approached by a gentleman with a tape-recorder who was disappointed when I declined to be interviewed on the spot and by another who handed me a card bearing the words “Farooq Argali, Secretary, Alami Urdu Conference”—i.e., World Urdu Conference. I said “I haven’t heard of this. Has your conference already happened or is it still to come?” Khaja Hasan Sani Nizami, who was standing nearby, said “It’s not a conference; it’s the name of an organization.” (No comment!) Later I gave two lectures in the Urdu Department—on Iqbal on 23rd and on the Urdu *ghazal* on 24th. (Contents as in *The Pursuit of Urdu Literature*.) Both were aimed at stimulating controversy, and both did. But I wasn’t satisfied with the first, for which I hadn’t thought it necessary to prepare any notes. I should have done, and if I had, the result would have been more coherent. The second was much better, partly because the audience had now learnt to respond to my informal style, and this produced a few good questions and some discussion. That about concluded all contacts with the Department and there were only two of its staff of whom I saw anything much during the rest of my stay. These two were Abdur Rashid and Shamim Hanafi, of whom more below.

On 28th I wrote to the Registrar, thanking, through him, Jamia Millia, saying that, as he knew, the term of my fellowship was now concluded and that I would wish the honorarium of 5,000 rupees (ref. your such and such) to be paid to Sajjad Ali, whom I hereby authorized to receive it on my behalf. To my (not very great) surprise this was not considered adequate. Sajjad Sahib has been in Jamia since the middle ’40s, and both the Registrar and the Head of the Urdu Department know him personally, so there could be no question of any imposter arriving and claiming to be him; so what more did they want than my letter? Well, they wanted, first a separate signed statement by me authorizing payment to him, and beneath that, his signature and my signed attestation that this was his signature. Secondly, they wanted a formal letter from the Head of the Urdu Department. Sajjad Sahib had to run around to get all these things done—and it was not until 11 March that payment was made.

However, I was showered with requests to lecture, grant interviews, etc., here there and everywhere. I accepted as many of these requests as I felt able to, and was quite pleased with the results. As far as possible I asked for provision to be made for questions and discussion, but this was not always possible.

On three occasions I had to be content with simply lecturing—first on 26 February, when I gave the inaugural speech at a seminar at the Jawaharlal Nehru University (hereafter JNU) on the contribution of Urdu and Hindi literature to the freedom movement, then on 26th at Ghalib's tomb in Nizamuddin, and finally on 11 March at the Ghalib Institute, where I arrived to find that my speech was to be the Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad [former President of India] Memorial Lecture. S.M.H. Burney, of whom more later, presided. Seated with us facing the audience was Kamal Ahmad Siddiqi, whose job it was to introduce me briefly. I was pleased that, before this august gathering, he spoke of our going together in 1950 to a Conference of the Progressive Writers' Association. After the meeting I was shown round the Ghalib Museum—small but excellent. The Aiwan-e Ghalib is a big, impressive building, built in, I think Burney said, the early seventies, but I had never been there before. I was much impressed by what I saw of it, and next time I come shall certainly allot adequate time to taking a really good look at it.

My lecture was on my response to Ghalib and his poetry and concluded with a brief account of the work I had done on Ghalib, mostly in collaboration with Khurshidul Islam but sometimes on my own.

This was a lecture which I gave several times, and it pleased me very much that on three occasions the organizers had agreed to my request to allow time for questions and discussion. One such occasion was at the extremely impressive Hamdard University, attended, I guess, by about 50 of its staff, and another was at Zakir Husain College, as the historic Delhi College, to my regret, is now called, where I spoke to a mixed audience of about 100 staff and students, and a particularly long and lively exchange of views followed. Tanvir Ali presided, interrupted me once to correct my pronunciation (for which I said I was grateful, as I genuinely was), and made a very good speech, including ridicule of Ghalib's explanation of "*kāghazī pairahan*" in the first couplet of his Urdu *divān*, and of Hali's *Muqqadima* and his poetry. I was very pleased to meet Sharif Ahmad there—an old friend of Khurshidul Islam—and me—and author of an excellent book on Abdul Halim Sharar. The Principal was at the meeting. He is an economics man, and I was delighted to learn that he had been a student of my old communist friend Vir Bahadur Singh, who, until his death at quite an early age, had lectured in economics at Lucknow.

On another occasion I lectured on Iqbal for the Iqbal Academy at Nizamuddin. This was a repeat of the lecture I had given in Jamia's Urdu Department, but much more satisfactory because much more carefully prepared. Here too there was time allowed for questions and discussion, but, perhaps because of the relatively formal atmosphere, nothing of much consequence was said. S.M.H. Burney presided on this occasion, and with him on the stage were Khaja Hasan Sani Nizami and Nisar Ahmad Faruqi (who has done excellent work on Mir, including an Urdu translation of *Zikr-e Mir*), both of whom I was very pleased to meet again. The meeting began with a

woman singer, Safia Anjum, with a lovely voice, singing one of Iqbal's poems. I hope the recording of the proceedings which I've been given will include her singing. Among others present was Matin Amrohavi, whom Khaja Hasan Sani Nizami, laughingly and in his presence, described as "the instant poet." True to this description he produced a couplet in my praise, which, translated, reads "Eastern color and fragrance in a western flower: you are a flower of that garden and of this garden too" (!).

Surprisingly, one of the most enjoyable of these meetings was one which I addressed during a less-than-twenty-four-hours flying visit to Bhopal—the only time I left Delhi during my six weeks in India. There too I spoke on Ghalib, and the questions and discussion were long and lively. I had not expected this because of the relative formality of the session and the size of the audience. The hall held 400 and was full. But questions were both abundant and sensible. People seemed very satisfied with my replies. At one point I raised a laugh when someone, who I learnt later was a Minister in the Madhya Pradesh government, asked a question in English and I said, "You have asked a question in English, so I shall reply in English." And so I did, but going over to Urdu after the first couple of sentences. Another reply was greeted with applause all over the hall. I had been asked to say what had attracted me to Urdu, and I concluded my reply by saying, "I have always been interested not only in Urdu but in all the people who speak it." At my request I was given a cassette recording of the proceedings. The usual throngs of people after the meeting—girls asking for my autograph, they and others wanting to be photographed in my company, poets anxious to present me with their works, etc.

A very different, and very enjoyable, question-and-answer session took place in Jamia Millia's Faculty of Education, with about 40–50 students of Hindi mother tongue (about 99% of them young women) who are being taught Urdu (excellently) by Shakil Akhtar Faruqi. Shakil briefly introduced me and then invited them to ask me questions, which they very uninhibitedly did. On another occasion I spent an hour and half with Shakil watching part of a film he had made of his teaching to this class.

Next to these question-and-answer sessions I enjoyed the quite numerous interviews I agreed to give. In Delhi I gave one to a student from JNU and, in Lahore, one to one Akhtar Mirza. More formal ones were given to the Urdu service at Delhi Radio and to the daily *Jang* in Lahore. And a video'd conversation with Sadiqur Rahman Qidvai was made at Jamia's Mass Communications Research Centre. The Delhi Radio interview was followed immediately by a three-way conversation on Ghalib between me, Shamim Hanafi, and Pavan Varma, the author of the good Penguin, India, book, *Ghalib, The Man, The Times* (1989). It was Shamim Hanafi who guided the discussion throughout, and he did so very skillfully. Before this visit, I regret to say, I had never even heard of him, but now whenever I encountered him I was very

favorably impressed. He had spoken at the reception given for me on 10 February, again at the JNU seminar on 26 February, and again at the function at Ghalib's tomb on 28 February.

Abdur Rashid was the other Jamia lecturer who impressed me. He has published a book on Hindi words in Persian, and now proposes to work on the Delhi *karkhandāri* dialect spoken by the Muslim craftsmen and workshop-owners of Old Delhi. He himself lives in Old Delhi—I lunched there with him and his family one day in between a two-part conducted tour of part of the old city—and belongs to the *karkhandāri* community.

In Lahore too I did a similar radio interview, in two parts: (1) radio people asking me about my work and (2) discussion with Agha Suhail and Ibadat Bareilvi—similar to the Delhi one but much less well-structured.

Some of my time in Delhi and Lahore was spent in talking to publishers. I have always hoped, but never expected, to see the day that has now dawned. When in the '50s I began to write about Urdu literature, I did so on the calculation that however remote the prospects of publication might be, the one certain way of ensuring that I would never be published was never to write anything. So I wrote, inspired by the thought which, many years later, I found had been expressed by the Sanskrit poet Bhavabhuti, which reads in John Brough's excellent translation (to which I have made one small amendment):

One day someone shall live to share my thought  
For time is endless and the world is wide.

(The amendment is the substitution of "someone" for "a man.")

And now for several years publishers have been asking me to write for them. *Zahē naṣīb!*

OUP Delhi had already republished *Three Mughal Poets* and *Ghalib: Life and Letters* (both reprinted more than once), and has now republished the collection of essays *Ghalib, the Poet and his Age* which I edited. It also cooperated with Zed Press in publishing *The Pursuit of Urdu Literature*. It is now going to publish a collection of my essays, provisionally entitled *How Not to Write the History of Urdu Literature and Other Essays on Urdu and Islam*, which is expected to be out by the end of 1998.

Penguin India published *Hidden in the Lute* shortly after Carcanet had published it in Britain. In December 1997 the Pakistan Writers' Cooperative Society, in collaboration with the Anjuman-e Taraqqī-e Urdū, Pakistan, published *Selections from the Persian Ghazals of Ghalib*, with translations into English by me and Urdu by Iftikhar Ahmad Adani, and Roli Books, Delhi is interested in doing an Indian edition of it. Meanwhile Roli is about to publish a selection of my translations of Ghalib's Urdu verse—just over 200 couplets—with English text facing the original Urdu and a Devanagari transliteration of it.

It amuses me that I am treated as such a VIP here. The function at Ghalib's tomb at which I spoke was presided over by S.M.H. Burney, formerly Governor of Haryana, Manipur, Nagaland, and Tripura, and he again presided at the Iqbal Academy meeting and at the Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad Memorial Lecture. At Bhopal the Governor of Madhya Pradesh presided (and I was his guest for the night). In Lahore on 14 March an impressive meeting was arranged to launch the Persian *ghazals* book, and the Governor of Punjab was to have presided. In the event he couldn't because of an unexpected visit to Lahore that day of both the President and the Prime Minister of Pakistan. But his speech, a very nice one, was read out at the meeting—and Adani and I were invited (along with, I guess, about 50 others!) to lunch with him the following day. The meeting, which for some not very obvious reason started forty-five minutes late, was quite a success. There were speeches by Moin Nizami, Khurshid Rizvi, and Ahmad Nadim Qasmi—all good. Then a presentation of selected *ghazals*/couplets. A young woman read out the Persian one couplet at a time. After each couplet Adani read out his Urdu translation and I read out my English translations. All went well, and there was good press coverage (with photo) the next day.

As I was leaving Nizamuddin after the function at Ghalib's tomb on 28th, I noticed in a minuscule bookshop a book entitled *Adab-e Mubāsharat* (The Etiquette of [Sexual] Intercourse), with the subtitle "The Islamic way of sexual relations between husband and wife"—price 15 rupees. I read it and was pleasantly surprised by its openness and general soundness. For example it approves of all sorts of kissing, feeling, stroking, and sucking, and of other positions besides the missionary position (which, however, it recommends above all others), stresses the importance of helping the wife to orgasm, and, even more surprisingly, is emphatic that the ancient custom of looking for blood on the sheets after the first night is to be condemned, and that absence of blood is no ground for thinking that the bride was not a virgin.

However, the main reading in between all the meetings, lectures and interviews has been Begam Anis Qidwai's book *Āzādī kī Ā'ā'ōn Mēñ* (In the Shadow of Freedom) which I quickly read from cover to cover and then started translating (40 pp of English handwritten MS so far). It's a wonderful book—an account of her constant, unceasing efforts to help all the people—Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and everyone else—who suffered so terribly in the riots of 1947 and the days that followed. Her deep human sympathy is evident throughout, and at the same time she whitewashes no-one—a thing that in my experience is rare in Urdu writing about these things. I promised Urvashi Butalia, of Kali Press for Women, that I would translate it for her as soon as I could get round to it, and I think, with any luck, that I shall be able to deliver the complete translation by this time next year.

On 10 March I spent the greater part of the morning at Urdū- Ghar, the several-storied building owned by the Anjuman-e Taraqqī-e Urdū. Some of the

stories are let out (one, or part of one, to the Canara Bank) and the rent finances all the Anjuman's activities. I talked mainly with its secretary, Khaliq Anjum, whom I've known for years. He'll publish the results in its paper *Hamāri Zabān*, and has promised to send me, by surface mail, a substantial number of the Anjuman's publications, including his edition of Ghalib's letters and his Urdu translation of some of Ghalib's Persian letters not included in his published works. He had sent his colleague (and full-time employee) Saqib Siddiqi to fetch me by taxi. I learnt from him that he (Saqib) has an excellent command of Hindi and has published *Divān-e Ghālib* in Devanagari script, providing glosses of words unfamiliar to Hindi readers. He gave me two copies—one for me and one for Roli Books.

**Some miscellanea:**

I've spent some of my time vetting the English of articles written by Urdu-speaking friends—not less than 100 pp of typescript in all, I would guess! They are, of course, very welcome to this help.

On 3 March Shamsur Rahman Faruqi gave a talk at the English Department in Jamia Millia on Shakespeare's twentieth sonnet, and phoned me up to invite me to attend. I'd never met him before, though we had on occasion spoken on the phone and exchanged letters, and I was very glad to be able to meet him now. He was most cordial and friendly, although he and I differ profoundly on many things. He sat me beside him at his lecture and in the course of it made friendly, joking references to me, laying his hand on my knee as he did so. I spoke and expressed disagreements with what he had said, but was unable to stay on and hear his reply to discussion. He wanted me to go dine with him, but we couldn't find a mutually convenient time.

A very pleasant experience was renewing contact with Amina Ahmad Ahuja—Ahuja because she married a non-Muslim who until his retirement was in the foreign service and has been in the Indian embassies in east European countries, among others. Amina is the daughter of an English mother and an Indian, Urdu-speaking father, Nurud Din, who some years ago was mayor of Delhi. She is completely bilingual in English and Urdu and has a remarkable facility for learning languages. I first met her in London in 1952 or 1953 when she came to London University to read for a B.A. General degree in Urdu, Persian and Russian. To my regret, this degree, in which one could read three subjects of equal status, no longer exists. She was not the only Urdu-speaker who took Urdu to make it easier to do well in the other two subjects. She was formally, and to some extent really, my student. Really, because she could teach me expressions in colloquial Urdu which at that stage I did not know, and I could teach her some of the more literary words which at that stage *she* did not know. (She'd learnt most of her Urdu in childhood from her father's Urdu-speaking servants. We are today both more advanced

in both these fields than we were then.) We read *Umrā'o Jān Adā* together, each contributing knowledge which the other did not possess. I lost touch with her after that until one day to my astonishment I saw a film of Kruschev and Bulganin's visit to India—and there was Amina interpreting for them. She has for years now been a well-known artist and calligrapher. She is a wonderful mimic and has a wonderful sense of humor. We met several times, and I shall now take care not to lose touch with her again.

Most of you who are reading this probably don't need to be told that all my lectures, interviews, meetings and conversations have been in Urdu. In Sajjad Sahib's home in Delhi and in Ibadat's in Lahore we speak only Urdu. As always, I learn more words and expressions, some of which aren't to be found in Platts or, where they are, are defined in senses other than those I have learnt.

As always when I come here, I have been greeted by numerous people who remember me from 1950, or 1958, or 1965, or ... One (Sadiqur Rahman Qidvai) who is now past retiring age—he was born in 1943—was still a schoolboy when he was first introduced to me by his teacher. Others were students at Aligarh and elsewhere. (One of them told me that in those days he used to lurk about hoping to catch a glimpse of me!) And, as always, I have been presented with literally scores of books, most of which will follow me to London by surface mail, and which I have not the remotest hope of being able to accommodate in my small London flat. I shall give most of them to what used to be the India Office Library and is now part of the British Library.

Being in Delhi, and also in Lahore, gives me the very welcome opportunity of spending time with many old friends. I feel some satisfaction at being able to tell people that of my three oldest Indian friends (besides Khurshidul Islam), all of whom I have known since 1950, one, Sajjad Sahib, is a Muslim, one, Som Anand (an author and a working journalist), is a Hindu, and one, Jogindar Shamsheer (a poet and writer who now lives in Canada), is a Sikh. So life there is not *all* lectures and interviews.

#### **Chit-chat omitted from the main account:**

Bhopal, 7–8 March '98

I traveled to Bhopal—a seven and three-quarter hour journey—on the Shatabdi train—departure from New Delhi station at 6:15. Shatabdi means “century.” Why these express trains bear that name I've no idea.

The not quite 24 hours in Bhopal were good. Afaq Ahmad, Secretary of the Madhya Pradesh Urdu Academy, had been in Jamia only a few days after my arrival there and so had got in early with an invitation to me to visit Bhopal. Lured partly by a desire to see the place—I had never been before—and partly by the generosity of his offer, I promised I would accept it provided that I had

recovered in time from a very troublesome cough. (After 10 days of treatment I did recover.) The Shatabdi Express was on this occasion (and, I am told, *very* unusually) not much of an express at all, and engine failure made us two hours late. However, people were there to receive me, and I was whisked off to Raj Bhavan, the residence of Muhammad Shafi Quraishi, Governor of Madhya Pradesh, whose guest I was to be, and installed in an impressive suite of rooms. (Included in an array of toothpaste, hair oil, shampoos, and other things was a cellophane packet containing a “Ladies’ Scented Comb” and a thing I had never seen or heard of before—a metal U-shaped thing about 10 cm. from the end of one side to the apex, and curled round at each end, presumably to make it easier to hold. I asked the servant what it was and he said it was for cleaning your tongue and was called a *Dipi*.) At five o’clock, tea with the Governor, to which the leading lights of the Urdu Academy (including, believe it or not, a local leader of the BJP) had also been invited. Some pleasant chat with the Governor, who was clearly very knowledgeable about Ghalib, and then a brief rest before the meeting at 7 p.m., at which, to my pleasant surprise I was the only speaker to have been allotted forty minutes as against the twos, threes, and (maximum) ten allotted to the others. The hall holds about 400, and was full, and it was a very responsive audience. Again to my pleasant surprise, the chairman invited questions. (But Afaq Ahmad told me afterwards that this is always done at Urdu Academy meetings.) [Rest of the meeting described elsewhere.]

Then, in the words of the outline program written out for me by Afaq Ahmad, “food and rest.” At the guesthouse the table was laid for three, and the chief of the servants asked me to wait, as the Governor was to be one of the three. He didn’t know who the third was to be, and neither did I. Anyway, no one else turned up, and at 9:15 I ate alone and then went early to bed. (The next day I learned from Afaq Sahib that he was to have been the third. He had excused himself after bringing me back to the guest-house after the meeting, but it hadn’t been clear that he had been one of the proposed three at the table. He told me also that the Governor had had to depart for Delhi immediately after the meeting.)

The morning of the 8th was taken up by a tour of Bhopal with Afaq Ahmad, in the course of which we visited 86-year-old Mirza Fahim Beg, chairman of the Iqbal Adabi Markaz.

Back at the guesthouse we were visited by Munohar Keshar, Vice-Chairman of the Urdu Academy, who had been unwell and therefore unable to come to last night’s meeting. He talked almost continuously (but interestingly), and often in English, from 12:30 to 1:15. He comes from a mixed Sikh and Hindu family and claims to be unreligious and secular, but considerably underplays the Hindu chauvinism of the BJP. Before leaving I was astounded at being presented with a fee of 3,000 rupees. I had not expected to be paid any fees anywhere, and often wasn’t, but I’d been paid a fee of 200 rupees by JNU and another 200 rupees at the function at Ghalib’s tomb. This one was

out of all proportion. I left Bhopal on the 2:30 Shatabdi and it arrived at New Delhi a few minutes early, at 10:20.

11 March 98

Today, at 11:30, Bela Butalia, of Roli Books, sent her car to take me to Roli. I was there at 12:00, and before a late-ish lunch had gone through and corrected the proofs of the long article on Ghalib's poetry and the English translations of 200-plus couplets from his Urdu *divān*. Before I left I signed the contract, which had been amended in accordance with my wishes, and went through, and made corrections to, the proofs of *On Translating Ghalib*. Then, at 3:30, to the Ghalib Academy. Got there at 4:15. I'd had it in my diary that I was to be there at 5:00, and was now told that the meeting was to start at 5:30. Until 5:15 nobody thought to tell me that it was to be not here, but at Aevān Ghālib. I was whisked there by three-wheeler and arrived at 5:40. (In Indian terms, of course, that degree of lateness doesn't signify much.)

#### IV

The following report by Dr. Kathryn Hansen, Institute for Research on Women, Rutgers University, of her Fulbright project on Parsi Theatre History is gratefully reproduced from *Pakistan Studies News: Newsletter of the American Institute of Pakistan Studies*, No. 2 (Fall 1998), p. 10:

From February to May 1998, I carried out research in Lahore under a Middle East, North Africa and South Asia Regional Research Grant from the USIA Fulbright Scholar Program. Earlier I had briefly visited Pakistan on a number of occasions; this time I had the leisure to settle in, get to know the city, and explore academic networks.

My project on the history of the Parsi theatre logically extended to Pakistan, in that most of the dramas commissioned by the Parsi theatrical companies between 1870 and 1915 were written by Urdu playwrights, and Urdu scholars in both Pakistan and India have studied this extensive dramatic literature. When these dramas were first published, many of them initially appeared in the Gujarati script from Bombay publishers, probably with a clientele of Parsis, Bohras, Memons, and Khojas in mind, who were native speakers of Gujarati and were literate in that script.

In the 1960s, Syed Imtiaz Ali Taj himself a noted playwright, set out to edit and transliterate the corpus of early Urdu dramas, and during his lifetime he was able to see to publication the first six volumes of his ambitious project, entitled *Urdū ke Klāsīkī Dṛāmē*, which are still available from the Majlis-e Taraqqī-e Adab in Lahore. Subsequently, Prof. Said Viqar Azeem took over, adding eight more volumes to the series. In total, the series encompasses the full texts of forty-two Urdu dramas written for the Parsi stage. My first task was to visit the Majlis's publications office and purchase these volumes, and

during the remainder of my time in Lahore, I studied Taj's helpful prefaces, along with the texts and notes to the plays. Lahore is still a theatrical city, with popular plays presented nightly in the Alhamra Center, while more thoughtful productions are performed by groups such as the Ajoka Theatre Company and Lok Rahas. Amateur theatre continues to be a significant activity in the colleges and schools as well. One gets the impression that theatre has come through Pakistan's culture wars better than some of the other urban arts.

The entire range of performance styles, including classical music and dance and the regional forms such as Kafi singing and Dhamar drumming, were also a source of interest to me, and I attended any and all concerts avidly. Performance traditions in Pakistan, despite their contested status, thrive in their own way but are much overlooked in scholarship. Both in terms of their inherent richness as well as their interest as sites of ideological struggle, the old, regional, and classical arts of Pakistan invite further study. For further information about possible contacts and research affiliation for performing arts projects in Pakistan, please contact me at: kghansen@aol.com

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Carla Petievich (Montclair State University) has sent the following inventory of her scholarly activities for 1997–98:

I went to Pakistan on a Fulbright fellowship to study "The Expanding World of Urdu Culture." This is one facet of my long-term diaspora project, in which I am looking at Urdu as a transnational language and Urdu literature as a transnational cultural entity. (I have also done research on Urdu in Britain and North America.) While in Pakistan I was drawn also into an inquiry of classical Indo-Muslim arts, especially the impact of Islamic nationalism on their patronage and performance.

There will be two relevant publications: (1) "Intertwining Religion and Ethnicity," in my edited volume *The Expanding Landscape: South Asians and the Diaspora* (forthcoming from Manohar this year). All the essays in this volume were presented at a conference by the same name which took place at Columbia University in 1993. Contributors include Dorothy Anggell, Parminder Bhachu, Kathryn Hansen, Karen Leonard, Johanna Lessinger, Usha Sanyal, Estelle Strizhak, Joanne Punzo Waghorne, Linda Walbridge and Fatima Haneef. (2) "Pakistani Literature and the 'Problem' of History," a work in progress. Currently I am organizing a workshop on "Translating Faiz" which will take place on 29 May 1999 at Columbia University (please contact me for more information on this at Petievich@aol.com).

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Shantanu Phukan has been appointed lecturer in Hindi-Urdu at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

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Peter Hook and Tahsin Siddiqi have been awarded a Mellon Grant to produce multimedia materials for Hindi instruction. The project is for four years (1998–2001).

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Kathryn G. Hansen received an NEH Fellowship (1999) to research on “A History of the Parsi Theatre.” She spent February 1999 in India in connection with this project, “which has now branched out to texts and sources in Gujarati and Hindi as well as Urdu.”

## V

Jamiluddin Aali was appointed Chairman, and Sahar Ansari the Chief Editor, of the Urdu Dictionary Board, Karachi.

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Abdullah Hussein, whose English novel, *Émigré Journeys*, will be published in the summer of 1999 by Serpent’s Tail, London, was the guest of the Writers Forum, Toronto, in June 1998 for a two-day workshop which discussed his fictional art. Shanul Haq Haqqee, Muhammad Umar Memon, and Pervaiz Parvazi spoke on different aspects of Mr. Hussein’s fiction

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Umber Khairi, who writes regularly for the *Literary Review* (UK) and *The News on Sunday* (Pakistan) and is also a freelance radio producer, was invited to talk about Abdullah Hussein’s *The Weary Generations* on the BBC World Service Radio show Meridien Books.

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Hajira Majid is the producer of a videocassette, IFTI, a documentary on the life of the Pakistani gay poet Iftikhar Nasim. The video premiered on 20 March 1998 as part of the Opening Night of the Women in the Director’s Chair Film Festival at Chicago. Three main themes flow throughout the video: Iftikhar Nasim’s life as a car salesman, what it means to be openly gay in a Muslim community, and his efforts to reshape centuries of poetic tradition.

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Natalia I. Prigarina’s book on Ghalib, originally written in Russian, has been translated into Urdu by Muhammad Usama Faruqi and published by Danial Publishers, Karachi.

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Poet-critic Muhammad Salim-ur-Rahman has several recent projects: revision of the Urdu version of the *Oxford Elementary English Dictionary*, translation into Urdu of entries from letters “T” to “Z” of the *Oxford Concise Dictionary*, and preparation of an Urdu-English dictionary commissioned by the Muqtadira Qaumī Zubān (National Language Authority), Islamabad.

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Zhang Xi Xuan, a Chinese poet who writes under the pen name of “Intikhāb ‘Ālam,” has recently published *Gulbāng-e Vafā*, a collection of his Urdu poetry.

Mr. Xuan, or Intikhab Alam, was the recipient, in 1993, of “Tamgha-e Pākistān,” an award conferred by the Government of Pakistan.

## VI

“Thursday 18 March 1999. First private Urdu Channel. HYDERABAD: It is the first private Urdu channel in India and the second such in the world after Pakistan TV (PTV). It will officially go on the air from April 12, beaming programmes of the infotainment variety for the 20 per cent Urdu-speaking population in India and many others speaking this language in 135 countries.

“Announcing this here on Wednesday, Syed Taruj, managing director of Falak Television and Broadcasting Ltd, made it clear that the channel aimed at a niche audience, is meant to ‘propagate Urdu and not Islam.’ The channel, which began beaming its promos last Thursday, is meant to fill a vacuum felt for wholesome family entertainment in Urdu, Mr Taruj said.

“The emphasis will be on promoting the language, social and ethical values, moral obligations and decent wholesome entertainment,’ he said. Mr Taruj claimed that the promos had brought in a flood of ‘emotional reviews’ from large parts of the country, including Srinagar, Lucknow, Ahmedabad, parts of Maharashtra and Guwahati.

“Mr Taruj was categorical that films would only form 7–10 per cent of the channel’s contents. He promised a basket of programmes, including news (which will come later), soaps, sitcoms and talk shows, all of which would focus on ‘Hindustani culture.’

“The channel will begin its morning broadcast—initially for eight hours that will become 24 hours in two months—with religious programmes. While Mr Taruj has plans to produce his own software, initially the channel will beam dubbed programmes.

“Asked if he would source Urdu programmes from PTV, which was banned in Hyderabad about two years ago, Mr Taruj said: ‘We want no connection with Pakistan.’

“However, he said that when the channel begins to beam news, it would concentrate on ‘bare fact.’ He implied that the coverage of issues like the Srikrishna Commission and the Shah Bano controversy in the media, had left much to be desired, as far as the Urdu-speaking audience was concerned and his channel would cater to filling such gaps.

“Falak TV is being beamed from THAICOM-III and will go digital in 45 days. Mr Taruj said that Falak TV, being promoted by the Hyderabad-based private industry, would cost Rs 48 crore in the first year and Rs 122 crore at the end of three years.”

(Courtesy C.M. NAIM)

## VII

Charles University, Prague, held the 15th European Conference on Modern South Asian Studies, 8–12 September 1998, as part of the celebrations of the 650th anniversary of its founding. The conference was organized by the Institute of Indian Studies, Charles University, with the assistance of the European Association of South Asian Studies, and in cooperation with the Oriental Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences. Papers relevant to Urdu and their presenters appear elsewhere in this section.

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The Sahitya Akademi, jointly with the Urdu Academy, held an international seminar, “Ghalib’s Worlds, Times, Ideas, and Contemporaries,” at Delhi, 13–15 December 1998, to celebrate the bicentenary of the birth of poet Mirza Ghalib. Foreign scholars, who read papers, included Alain Désoulières (France), Natalia Prigarina (Russia), So Yamane (Japan), Intizar Husain (Pakistan), Jan Marek (Czech Republic), and Helmut Nespital (Germany).

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A similar international seminar on Ghalib was held at Delhi, 11–14 December 1998, by the Ghalib Institute.

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The Aligarh Alumni Association of North America, in conjunction with the American Federation of Muslims from India, celebrated the centenary of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan by holding their annual convention (17–18 October 1998, Washington, D.C.) on the theme of “Indian Muslims: Challenges in the New Millennium.” Mr. Yazdani Siddiqui, Dr. Qamruzzaman, Dr. Abul Hasan Ansari, Dr. Ishrat Husain, Dr. Najma Sultana, Mr. Wajahat Mirza, Mr. Ahmad Raza, Mr. Saiyid Hamid, the Honorable Mr. Roshan Baig, and the Honorable Wasim Ahmed spoke at the occasion. The New York chapter of the AAA celebrated the anniversary of Sir Syed on 5 November 1998, featuring a panel of scholars, among them Dr. Hafeez Malik, Dr. Abdulaziz Sachedina, Dr. David Lelyveld, and Dr. Abidullah Ghazi.

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The Urdu Markaz International (California) held a Mushaira on 6 November 1998 at Sequoia Athletic Club, Buena Park, California. Jameel Jalibi, the well-known Urdu scholar, was the chief guest at this occasion and guest poets included Ahmed Nadeem Qasmi, Peerzada Qasim, Irfan Siddiqui, Nawaz Deobandi, Mansoor Ahmed, Mansoor Usmani, Ashfaq Hussain, Iftikhar Naseem, Zareen Yasin, and Zafar Rizvi.

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The Iqbal Foundation, Ghent, Belgium, held a two-day seminar on “Iqbal and the Modern Age,” 18–19 October 1997. It was organized jointly by the Pakistan Embassy, Brussels, and the Catholic University, Leuven. Annmerie Schimmel (Germany), J.Christoph Bürgel (Switzerland), Natalia Prigarina (Russia), Jan Marek (Czech Republic), Sabri Tabrizi (Azerbaijan), Vito Salierno (Italy), De

Smet (Belgium), and Syed Akhtar Durrani (U.K.) presented papers. The Pakistani delegation to the event included: Suhail Umar, Rafiuddin Hashmi, Tahsin Firaqi, Ikram Chughtai, and Khalid Ahmed.

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**N O T E :** If you have read a paper or published an item or know of a piece of information of interest to Urdu-wallahs, please do not hesitate to send it to us for inclusion in the next issue of the *AUS*. —*Ed.*