'Mughal Mania' under Zia ul-Haq
Dedebant, C.

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As the first nation created as a religious asylum, Pak-istan has a short but torturous history of fifty-four years, half of which was controlled by a military regime. Founded in the name of ‘Islam in danger’ by Muhammad Ali Jinnah (1876-1948), Pakistan officially elected Islam as the religion of the state in 1973, during the tenure of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (1928-1979), the first popularly elected Prime minister of the coun-try. Bhutto was arrested and hanged by general Zia ul-Haq (1928-1988). While the Islamization rhetoric of Bhutto was characterized by its mixture of socialism, nationalism and populism, the discourse of Zia ul-Haq appeared to be of a much more straightforward military-Islamist type. In opposition to his rule, a counter-discourse developed in which Mughal her-itage was revived.

Without going deep into the details of the selective-brand of Islamization the state promot-ed, let us say that the regime was above all a dictatorship: eleven years of military rule (1977-1988) that ended only with Zia ul-Haq’s death. Zia’s Islamisation programme was mainly twofold. Firstly, it comprised a deliberate attempt at reforming selective as-pcts of the penal code inherited from the British through the Hudood Ordinances (1976), the Law of Evidence (1984) and the Blasphemy Law (1986). It was then a kind of juridical bricolage that tended to harm above all women and religious minorities. Secondly, it used propaganda through the media (television, radio, and schoolbooks) in favour of religious education, Arabization (Zia ul-Haq himself put on an Arabic accent when he was speaking in Urdu), sanctity of the mosque, canonical Islam, and women’s modesty (wearing veils, restriction of the image of women in commercials and cinema). During the 1980s, Pakistan’s national television was notorious for John Wayne movies: a ho-mosocial universe where, except for the sa-loons, women were virtually absent.

Pakistani society responded to the state Islamization process at different levels. Some – extremely vocal – women’s groups, intellectuals and journalists spoke out against the policies, but among them were also other groups:อนown painters, music bands, fashion designers, etc. The latter is a universe which, as a mat-ter of fact, cannot do much without women or the image of women. It was in the 1980s, at the zenith of Zia’s dictatorship, that the trope of the Mughal Empire, or rather a spe-cific reflection of the lost Mughal splendour, became a kind of passage obligé for a certain section of the media. It should be noted here that the Timurid dynasty, widely known as the ‘Mughal’ dy-nasty, founded by Babur in the mid-16th-century, became a kind of processional icon Ð not, of course, that Timurid art (which marked the Sepoy Mutiny). But by the second half of the 19th-century, effective Mughal power was no more than a memory. What is now considered Pakistan was then at the periphery of Mughal India, the heart of which was Delhi, Fatehpur Sikri and Agra (located in present-day India). The flamboy-ant exception was Lahore, which for 13 years (1558-1570) was the main seat of Mughal rule. The most prestigious art school in Pak-is-tan (located in present-day India). The flamboy-ant exception was Lahore, which for 13 years (1558-1570) was the main seat of Mughal power. (The most prestigious art school in Pak-is-tan (located in present-day India). The flamboy-ant exception was Lahore, which for 13 years (1558-1570) was the main seat of Mughal rule. The most prestigious art school in Pak-is-tan (located in present-day India). The flamboy-ant exception was Lahore, which for 13 years (1558-1570) was the main seat of Mughal rule. The most prestigious art school in Pak-is-tan (located in present-day India). The flamboy-ant exception was Lahore, which for 13 years (1558-1570) was the main seat of Mughal rule. 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