

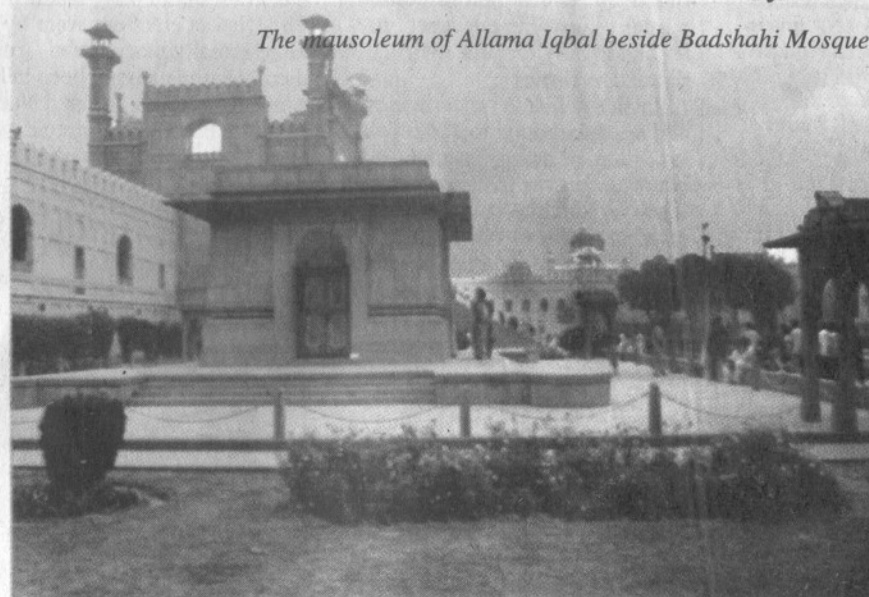
SAJID ABBAS visits the tomb of Allama Iqbal and points out reasons attributed to the delay in its construction

Lahore is the real historic city of Pakistan. History seems to ooze out of every brick and stone of the city and its suburbs, nevertheless, the north west corner of the Walled City seems to have a special place in its history. One may not normally realise, the place has seen the history of Lahore written here many times over. The place is reputed to have been the spot where the City had its origins and from where it started growing. The foundation was said to have been laid there by the mythical Loh, a figure of antique and hazy memory. The Centre of Power was located there till about a century and a half ago. Besides, the green patch in the quadrangle between the Citadel and the Badshahi Masjid witnessed the public reception of ambassadors and visiting dignitaries and the pomp and show of the Rulers when they were alive or on their last rites and funerals when they were on their way to the next world. It has seen tragedy and intrigue too, for just outside the quadrangle a Ruler left to meet his

'The soaring eagle in a

Lahore - 24.02 Nation

The mausoleum of Allama Iqbal beside Badshahi Mosque



Maker when part of the gateway through which he was passing, gave way or was, perhaps, made to collapse.

The spot has seen the struggle for power, too. In the Civil War in the early eighteen forties, the attacking forces of Sher Singh succeeded in knocking the gate of the citadel down killing twenty-seven of the twenty-nine defending gunners manning two ordnance pieces inside the gate, but lost scores of his men when the two survivors managed to fire in reply the two guns already loaded with grape — not the juicy ones but those made of lead, perforating the bodies of the attackers and making mince of them.

A little beyond is the spot where people

of the country gathered, a little over sixty-two years ago, to pass the Lahore Resolution, demanding independence for their homeland. Finally, the quadrangle transformed into a serene place of tranquillity for two illustrious sons of the land.

Along the western boundary of the quadrangle, known popularly as the Hazoori Bagh, next to the wall of the Badshahi Mosque on the left and right of its steps rest Sir Muhammad Iqbal and Sir Sikandar Hayat. Allama Iqbal in a mausoleum built in red sand stone and Sir Sikandar in a tomb open to the sky. Both having the majestic Mosque as a backdrop. Iqbal passed away exactly sixty-four years

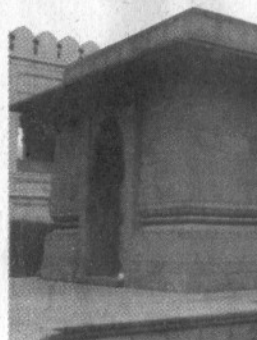
ago this day, on the twenty first of April 1938 and Sir Sikandar some four and a half years later. Nevertheless, it was thirteen years later before the mausoleum of Iqbal took shape as one finds it today, with the exception of the posts for guards at the four corners of the mausoleum, the posts were completed by the time of the Allama's birth centenary.

The mausoleum has been made in red sandstone procured from a place near Jaipur in Rajputana it is similar in colour and quality to that used in the Badshahi Mosque. The *Taaweez* or Tablet is of marble inlaid with lapis lazuli of a very simple and plain design. The headstone is again of marble but of a comparatively rare and translucent variety. Both the lapis lazuli and the headstone were the gift of the Government of Afghanistan.

The mausoleum is not vast, obviously kept of modest dimensions out of reverence for the Mosque, it has been kept lower than the plinth of the latter, the veneer of sandstone was selected to blend with the colour, quality and

texture of the Mosque in the background and to avoid the mausoleum standing out in contrast and arrogance, unlike the Samadh of Ranjeet Singh, which lies to the north of

Mazar-e-Iqbal



pigeon's coop'

the Hazoree Bagh.

The architecture of the mausoleum is a departure from the usual style of the Moghuls or of their later generations, it is more in line with the architecture of the mausoleums of the Sufi saints which abound in and around Multan. It is possible that the designer, Nawab Zain Yar Jung Bahadur, Chief Architect to His Highness the Nizam of Hyderabad, may have taken a cue from the architecture of the tombs and mausoleums of the Sufi saints, for, Iqbal was a Sufi at heart. The influence of Rumi on his work is quite evident.

This scribe had discussed the architecture of the mausoleum, on a previous occasion, with Dr. Ajaz Anwar, Professor of History of Art at the National College of Arts, Lahore, who was of the opinion that the lines of the mausoleum of Iqbal seem to

mirror some sort of relationship with those of the tomb of Shah Yusuf Gardezee, a structure in Multan, dating back to 1147, being one of the earliest examples of Islamic monuments in the Sub-Continent. So the design could be a befitting tribute

design. None of the proposals met approval of the Mausoleum Committee in the beginning. This scribe remembers an interesting remark of the late Chaudhri Muuhammad Hussain that he made on a certain occasion when the plans were under preparation. The late Chaudhri Muuhammad Hussain, Khan Bahadur, was the Superintendent of the Press Branch of the Government of the Punjab and the executor of Iqbal's will and administrator of his estate. Besides he was the President of the Mausoleum Committee. Chaudhri Muuhammad Hussain was a family friend, too. Once when the Khan Bahadur returned from Mausoleum Committee meeting he was visibly exhausted and disturbed. Upon enquiry he wearily exclaimed "men kia karoon, yeh architect hazraat meri baat nahin samajhtey, woh to shaheen ko kabootar ki kaabuk men bund karna chahatey hain". (what should I do, these architects want to confine the soaring Eagle in a pigeon's coop). That day he had been impressing upon the architects the spirit behind the design that was expected, which unfortunately they had failed to grasp and interpret, so far.

Apart from that there were other factors. By the time plans were finalised, the country was involved in the Second World War, forcing a change in priorities. When the work restarted after the War, it was interrupted again at the time of Independence, when supply of sandstone from Jaipur was disrupted. It was in only in 1951 when the mausoleum took shape and finally in 1977 when it received its finishing touches on the occasion of the birth centenary of the Poet of the East. ■

to the memory of a sufi.

The mausoleum took an un-necessarily long time to complete. One of the factors for delay was the absence of a suitable

