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Wit and Humour

in Colonial North India

Mushirul Hasan

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The *Avadh Punch* was once described by the famous Urdu poet, Akbar Ilahabadi as the treasure-house of wit and humour—*Gauhar makhzan-i zirafat*

A *vadh Punch*, a weekly from Lucknow was published from 16 January 1877 till its closure in 1936. Virtually the first Indian newspaper to publish cartoons as we know them today, it provided a platform for some of the greatest comic writers in Urdu literature and laid the foundation of the Urdu short story and of literary journalism.

By the end of the 19th century, seventy ‘Punch’ papers/magazines had appeared across the nation. Each of them reflected mainly on British rule from the experiences of Indians who were subjugated by force of arms and by commercial and diplomatic duplicity.

A thought-provoking tome, *Wit and Humour in Colonial North India* also presents a selection of Wilayat Ali Bambooque’s writings, and Archibald Constable’s commentary on some of the illustrations that appeared in the *Avadh Punch*.



Mushirul Hasan is an internationally known historian, author and ex-Vice-Chancellor of Jamia Millia Islamia University, Delhi. He has written extensively on the Partition of India, on communalism, and on the histories of Islam in South-Asia. In 2007, he was awarded the Padma Shri by the Government of India and the Ordre des Palmes Académiques by the French Government in 2010. He is currently the Director-General of the National Archives of India.

