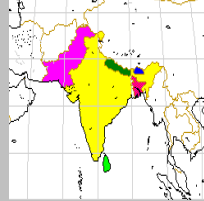


B.A.S.A.S.

British Association for South Asian Studies



BASAS Bulletin

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DIPLOMATS GREET NEW DEGREE

On 5th November South Asia's four biggest countries sent senior diplomats to Bradford, West Yorkshire to celebrate [the launch of a unique new degree course](#). The High Commissioners of Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, together with Sri Lanka's Deputy High Commissioner, were guests of the University of Bradford.

The University has developed a new degree programme in the social sciences, a BSc in South Asian Area Studies, which calls on academic expertise across several departments. Students on the course are taught by a team of historians, archaeologists, sociologists and political scientists, as well as studying one of the subcontinent's major languages.

Bradford, a city where each of the South Asian heritage communities is strongly represented in the population, aims to become the centre for cross-disciplinary South Asian Studies in the UK. Representatives of local Pakistani, Indian, Bangladeshi and Sri Lankan groups attended the University's launch reception, which included a celebratory lunch and a cultural programme of music and dance.

University staff, prominent citizens, and the first group of students to enrol for the new degree greeted the London-based diplomats who travelled North especially for the official launch.

The Bangladeshi High Commissioner, His Excellency A.H. Mahmood Ali, gave a short address on his country's commitment to regional economic co-operation and peaceful co-existence. His Indian counterpart, H.E. Dr L.M. Singhvi, himself a former university lecturer, told the audience of his belief in the value of academic knowledge as the basis for mutual understanding between countries and cultures.

Pakistan's High Commissioner, H.E. Mian Riaz Samee, congratulated the University on reaching out to the South Asian ethnic communities on its doorstep. Ms. C. Wagiswara, Deputy High Commissioner for Sri Lanka, joined each of her fellow diplomats in remarking

on the auspicious timing of the new degree programme.

Its first year of teaching coincides not just with the golden jubilee of Indian and Pakistani independence, the 25th birthday of Bangladesh and the silver jubilee of Sri Lanka's republic, but also with Bradford's own centenary as a City.

Yunas Samad

University of Bradford

FIFTY YEARS ON

The cycle of South Asia anniversaries trundles on. In the wake of fifty years of partition and independence for India and Pakistan in 1997, 1998 brings us Gandhi's assassination (in January), the independence of Sri Lanka (February) and the death of Jinnah (September). Of these, perhaps the most poignant and pregnant with possibilities for reflection and reinterpretation is the assassination of Gandhi. But the paradox of his life and legacy - the man of peace and non-violence felled by an assassin's bullet, the proponent of Hindu-Muslim unity slain by an emissary of the Hindu right, the prophet who aspired to lead the peasants of India but who has become perhaps more enduringly a patron saint of middle classes in the West - is still in many respects too close to us adequately to assess. We can only speculate on what more a Gandhi spared might have contributed to the political and social evolution of South Asia. The historian Sumit Sarkar may not be alone in believing that the 'Mahatma's finest hour' came not in 1920, when he gained effective leadership over the Congress, or even in 1930-31, when he led the Salt Satyagraha and negotiated single-handedly with the Viceroy of India, but in 1946-47 when he toured the riot-torn villages of Bengal and Bihar. 'Gandhi's unique personal qualities and true greatness', Sarkar comments, 'were never more evident than in the last months of his life'. If his life had been longer, would Gandhi have been able to do more than he had already done

Recent coverage of the fifty years of Indian and Pakistani independence, at least as reflected in the British media, seems to have been particularly drawn to the violent and the apocalyptic - massacres at Kanpur in 1857 seemingly anticipating communal riots and the bloodbath of partition a century later; the Raj dissolving ingloriously in the man-made Bengal famine of 1943-44. But there was another India of the 1940s that seems nowhere to receive a mention and yet which marks the fifty years that have elapsed since 1948 no less eloquently. Despite the dark cloud of partition, despite the light that went out with Gandhi's death, the mid-1940s saw a remarkable surge of creative and purposeful energy, not least among the members of India's scientific community, men (and all too rarely women) whose vision of India was far removed from Gandhi's own. By 1947 India was not only one of the world's ten leading industrial powers; it also had what was surely the largest and most internationally renowned scientific community outside of Europe and North America. Frustrated by colonial niggardliness towards scientific education and funding, sickened by the lingering odour of racial discrimination, not least in the scientific services, men like Meghnad Saha and S. S. Bhatnagar saw independence as a great moment of emancipation for India's science, medicine and technology. They were filled with a confidence, which we (in these more disillusioned and sceptical days) might find hard to believe, in the capacity of science to transform greatly for the better the lives of the great majority of the Indian people. Inspired by Roosevelt's New Deal as much as by Soviet-style state planning, Saha, for instance, believed that eastern India could be rid of malaria and floods and raised to a new prosperity by bringing the lessons of the Tennessee valley scheme to the banks of the Damodar. An empire ushered in with the steam age, looked hopelessly antiquated to a generation that eagerly anticipated the benefits of hydro-electricity and nuclear power. New drugs and new means of controlling insect vectors seemed to promise the rapid eradication

of India's most deadly and debilitating diseases: even Gandhi could be persuaded of the benefits of DDT and penicillin. Nehru's optimism about the new nation might have been grounded in many things, but it was seemingly securely underpinned by the belief of India's scientific and technological elite in their capacity to put science and technology to work in the service of the nation.

Fifty years is a long time. That amazing optimism and confidence has all but evaporated as we have come to see DDT as deadly rather than lifesaving, and big dams less as the temples of a new scientific age and rather more as sources of human hardship and environmental degradation. Hindsight can teach us many things, but it is surely worth setting the optimism of that age, however flawed a vision it may have been, against the bleak scenes of human misery and communal violence that so often become the archetypes of South Asia.

David Arnold

School of Oriental and African Studies

INDIA: END OF THE FIRST REPUBLIC?

Forty seven years ago on 26 January 1950, India became a sovereign democratic republic. The Constituent Assembly elected on a limited franchise in 1946 had framed the constitution of India, one of the longest documents of its kind. It was a constitution which embodied the salient contents of the Government of India Act, 1935 - in itself one of the longest pieces of legislation deliberated upon by the British Parliament - but also added innovative elements; universal adult franchise, a chapter on fundamental rights and another on directive principles of state policy.

The Constitution gave India a federal structure albeit with a strong centralist bias. Unlike some other federations (Australia for instance), individual units of the federation (states, union territories) have no prior and autonomous existence. Their boundaries can be altered by legislation passed in the union legislature with a simple majority. There have been many such changes and they continue to be proposed. There are, at any time, live controversies surrounding the demands of some group or another that they be given a separate state.

Sometimes such demands have put intolerable strains on the Indian polity as in the case of Khalistan; other contentious cases raise the issue of whether the territories in question are a part of the union at all - areas in the north east (Nagaland) and Kashmir are examples of this. That said, the major achievement of the last fifty years since Independence has been the preservation of territorial integrity of India in a period during which many of the decolonized countries have been unable to do so. India has avoided a damaging civil war and managed to contain local dissidence, albeit at the cost of some formidable deployment of violence by the government.

Another and equally significant achievement has been the maintenance of parliamentary democracy built on universal adult franchise. Today, after the end of the Cold War, there seems to be a universal celebration of democracy, but it was not ever thus, not even in the so-called free world. In choosing to have a parliamentary democracy based on universal adult franchise, India became one of the pioneers of parliamentary democracy. France granted women franchise only in 1945. India became a democracy and has been one since about the same time as Germany and Italy, and longer than Spain, Portugal and Greece. It is one of the older democracies in the modern world. It is also one of the toughest and most complex.

Despite these twin successes - preservation of territorial integrity and the practice of

parliamentary democracy - there are considerable strains on the polity. I shall omit an important source of this strain and that is the inability of India to grow economically, sufficiently fast so as to relieve mass poverty. I have written extensively on this and do not wish to repeat it here beyond the broad cliché that the economic and the political are intertwined. But, I wish to concentrate on the political today.

The strains are visible in many ways;

(a) Increased Political Volatility: Elections are more frequent now than before and governments change much more often. In the first 25 years of the republic there were five general elections; in the next 22 years there have been six. In the first 25 years there were three prime ministers in the next 21 years, nine (plus one who straddles both periods).

(b) Increased Political Fragmentation: The Indian constitution was patterned on the Westminster model with an idealistic two party system in mind. Though there have always been many parties, parliamentary success has been the reward of only a small number. In the last two decades regional parties, as well as parties based on caste affiliations have multiplied. One indication of this is the present United Front government, is a coalition of thirteen parties none of which could claim to be an all-India party.

The Westminster model, with a first past the post (FPP) electoral system has the propensity for disproportionality. It also gives the majority party nearly absolute powers. In India, one party dominance during the first four decades benefited from this disproportionality. During the first twenty years or so, this arbitrary power was not grotesquely misused. During the 1970's, Mrs Gandhi did use it so and suffered defeat in 1977. Upon return in 1980, she resumed her practices.

Since 1989, when Congress dominance ended, there has not been a single party majority government. Formation of government in such a situation is not easily guided by Westminster conventions. Indeed, India now has a Westminster constitution, but Italian style politics where the head of state begins to play an active part in the formation of a majority coalition. There is much scope for learning as well as for quarrel here.

I should, however, note that increased fragmentation has brought the Indian electoral outcome closer to proportional representation although it is still conducted on a FPP basis. Measuring disproportionality by the sum of the absolute differences in percentage of votes polled and percentage of seats in the Lok Sabha, I find that the disproportionality drops from 8.44 to 2.19 in 1996. Though there are fluctuations along the way (a dip in 1987 and 1977, and an upsurge in 1984), the trend is clearly downward.

(c) Increased Federal Tensions: The Indian Constitution deliberately builds in a powerful centre and weak states. The leaders of independent India feared a balkanisation of the country more than anything else and the partition of India confirmed their fears. Thus the centre is given powers of unparalleled extent in a federal constitution. Not only can the states be dismembered by boundary changes unilaterally and without their formal legislative consent by the central parliament, but the popularly elected government of a state can be removed and president's rule can be imposed by the central government. Since the President acts strictly on the advice of the Prime Minister, there is a scope here for party political interference into the state by the centre.

The use of president's rule has also become more frequent in the second half of the life of the republic than it was in the first half. In Uttar Pradesh, this has led to considerable tension when it was felt that the central government was imposing president's rule, even after fresh elections, only to keep the BJP out of power.

The States have reacted "endogenously" as it were, by proliferating state level parties which win seats in the Lok Sabha. In a virtual PR system which requires majority commanding coalitions, this has given these parties - with their slivers of seats - a great deal of leverage. But having no national focus, these parties are also notoriously liable to shift loyalties and render governments unstable.

These strains have meant that political, as well as daily life in India is becoming volatile, violent and precarious. Tensions between religious communities - Hindus and Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs, Hindus and Neo Buddhists (Dalits) - as well as within the Hindu population between upper and lower castes are on the increase and often take violent forms. Communal riots between Hindus and Muslims which were infrequent in the 1950's (60 per year on average for 1954 - 59) and claimed few casualties (25 annually) but by 1987-92 had increased to 1,000 riots a year with casualties also at 1000 per annum. The social movements - Dalit, women, tribals, backward castes - have also frequently come in conflict with the police as well as members of the elite who can also be quite violent. There are also complaints about the sinister nexus between politics and crime as well as of "black" money. Politicians are portrayed in the films, which is the popular medium, invariably as wicked and corrupt

These strains are well known. The political volatility and fragmentation as well as the tensions in the federation can be seen dialectically. On the one hand, they are a decline from the stable days of the Nehru decade when parliamentary democracy functioned along the prescribed constitutional grooves. They can also be seen positively as evidence of democracy becoming more inclusive with the leadership no longer monopolised by the upper caste, wealthy or university educated elite. There is an explosion of political democratic activity in India. People may dislike politicians but they have faith in politics.

Yet there is evidence that people are beginning to question whether these trends will render the Indian state dysfunctional. Even discounting the particular difficulties of the present fragile coalition in power, the inaction and instability at the centre has been worrisome. Thus the former speaker of the Lok Sabha, Mr Shivraj Patil MP, wrote recently:

The union scenario was stable and promising. But, now, it also has become very fragile and disturbing. If the state governments, district taluka and local governments do not work, the union government can help in the matter, if not fully, at least partially. However, if the union government does not work, there is no provision in the constitution which can provide a solution to cope up with the situation correctly and effectively. As the situation at the union level has become more dismal and likely to be still more dismal in the years to come, it is causing real concern to all those who can realise what it is not to have a working and stable national government

Patil goes on to explore various constitutional changes that could alleviate the situation. Taking a coalition government to be the norm in the future rather than an exception, he explores large changes, such as adapting the French Fifth Republic presidency as well as smaller changes such as rules for no confidence motions which at present require a simple majority of those present. He also explores shifting to a proportional representation system.

One answer is to say that there is no problem. As soon as a single-party majority government comes back, no change is necessary. But, I wish to go beyond the issue of coalition governments versus majority party ones. I want to argue that the golden jubilee of India's Independence this year and the forthcoming golden jubilee of the Indian republic in 2000 provide an opportunity to think more fundamentally about the issue of the governance of India.

The constitution of India was framed between 1946 and 1949 by a constituent assembly

elected on a restricted (though for the time the widest yet) franchise. The founding fathers (alas all men), were laden with the Government of India Act 1935, as well as a fear of the balkanisation of India if the constitution was not quickly drafted. They preferred a strong centre and weak provinces. They thought politics in India would be like British politics, a model of liberal democracy for them. Some of the leaders had revolutionary aims and others feared change. They made a constitution which has at once provided an iron frame to hold India together but it is also suffocating the processes of growth which they did not anticipate. Ambedkar did warn of the tension between the assumptions of liberal democracy (equality before the law, fundamental rights) and the society for which it was meant. Luckily for India, the contradictions have played themselves out despite growing violence within the constitutional framework of a democratic system.

But the democratic system itself has grown to be much more pluralistic, much more participative than either the founding fathers could have hoped. For an electorate of about 550 million people and a turn out of 60% to 65%, with scores of parties at the local, state and national level, with growing though by no means proportionate numbers of women, Dalit and tribal candidates, India represents a unique democracy. But the constitution has been built on a suspicion of action at the periphery or the lowest level and treats it as something destabilising, something to be nipped - smacking of the old powers of paramountcy, pre-1947, under which the viceroy could remove the ruler of a native state. The innovative chapters on fundamental rights and the directive principles of state policy are, on the other hand, based on an egalitarian democratic logic which has been allowed to flower superbly in a series of actual rights and liberties by the judiciary over the last fifty years.

The constitution is also paradoxically very easy to amend, unilaterally by the union legislature. This weapon of easy amendment has been used frequently by elected governments either to cancel a judicial decision which it did not like or to abridge some right which came in its way. The constitution has been amended over 70 times. In the early 1970's the Supreme Court had to state explicitly that there was a "core" to the constitution - the secular, democratic character of India - which was not amendable. But even in matters of secularism, the ultimate crisis of the Indian secular state - the demolition of Babri Masjid - demonstrated that political practice determines the content of secularism more than adjudication. So, keeping democracy and secularism intact, can we change the constitution? Of course, countries do not change constitutions in peaceful times; a major crisis - defeat in war, revolution, decolonisation - is needed to make countries change constitutions. There is no likelihood of any such major event in India. All the same, schemes of constitutional change must be discussed. India's first republic, already 47 years old, is becoming problematic. A solution must be found. In what follows, I proceed to propose the changes I would like to see:

(1) All states of the union to be original members of the federation and any change in their boundaries to be made subject to their legislative consent. This will of course also affect the ability of the centre to impose president's rule. The conditions for doing so will be more stringent. The states can also, inter alia, be given greater sources of revenue and be made fiscally responsible for servicing their debts.

(2) Constitution to be amended only by the consent of a majority of all states and the union. The majority can be defined in the same manner as is currently used for election of the president or in the way the United States constitution does.

(3) Proportional representation for elections to the Lok Sabha with a relatively low threshold say 2.5% (this will allow regional parties to have legitimate representation). By this calculation in the 1996 elections, four parties (or party groups) holding 24 seats would have been barred. Recall that the disproportionality co-efficient was already very low - 2.18

in 1996.

These three amendments are the only ones necessary, in my view, to overcome the major defects. A Westminster constitution gives the party in power enormous and arbitrary powers to run the country. In India, these powers are exponentially larger because of the asymmetric situation of the centre *vis-a-vis* the state as well as the ease of amending the constitution. If politics is to be more democratic and more participative, this asymmetry has to be reversed. The first proposal above restricts the power of the centre to alter the state's boundaries and to dismiss a state's elected government. There is no doubt that there is much bad government and even more politicians at the state level. But a system must recognise rules which are independent of personalities. Duly elected governments cannot and should not be removed. The set of reasons currently used smacks of the old powers of paramountcy under which the viceroy could remove the ruler of a native state. Citizens of India have a vibrant political life at the state level where very often their primary identity lies. Indeed, states in India are enormous enough to constitute nations and India is, in this sense, a multinational polity. After 50 years, the fears of balkanisation can be laid to rest. State autonomy will be a positive thing.

The second major amendment will make it difficult for the union government to amend the constitution with ease. These powers have often been used arbitrarily and populist ways have been utilised by governments, in part to encroach upon the neutral space which should be occupied by the judiciary, the civil service and the police. Indeed, the army is the only institution which has not been interfered with by the politicians. It is the arbitrary power of an elected majority government at the centre to abridge constitutional rights which is at the core of the debate about secularism and communalism.

The third amendment is a simple change in electoral rule. It recognises *de jure* what has already happened *de facto*. It will make single party majority governments difficult if not impossible. But given how single party majority governments have often behaved in the past or are likely to behave if they come to power (here again the fears of a BJP government come to mind), a coalition government would be more democratic and less arbitrary. It is less likely to encroach upon the neutral space of the judiciary, the civil service and the police.

These proposals if adopted will mean the end of the First Republic and the *de facto* inauguration of the Second Republic. As republics go, 47 years is a long age. Of the five French Republics, only one - the Third - managed a longer life. The Weimar Republic was short lived as was the Third Reich. The Franco regime did not enjoy this length of life, nor did the republic inaugurated in Austria after the collapse of the Hapsburgs. If India can manage a smooth transition from the First to the Second Republic, it will have registered another landmark in world history.

Meghnad Desai, The London School of Economics

(Caparo Lecture; Hull October 3 1997; Gresham Lecture; 10 November 1997, a version was published by the *Times Higher Education Supplement*, 21 November 1997)

PRASADA

PRASADA (Practice, Research and Advancement in South Asian Design and Architecture), at De Montfort University, Leicester, is an institute devoted to the understanding and revitalisation of the traditional architectures, settlement forms, arts and crafts of South Asia. It brings together study of the art and built environment of the subcontinent with issues

relating to cultural expression in the contemporary South Asian diaspora.

A central objective of PRASADA is the integration of academic study with creative practice. Research, teaching and live design projects support and develop one another. Current research, in addition to PhD programmes, includes a study of vernacular architecture in Orissa and a study of the Shekhari mode of Nagara temple in medieval western India. Architectural projects include new Hindu temples, a multi-faith prayer room and proposals for a themed 'Balti area' in Birmingham.

The PRASADA MA course combines theory, research and creativity in architecture, planning, painting, sculpture and other related arts and crafts, and students are drawn from diverse backgrounds in order to encourage the interaction of these varied disciplines.

For further details, please contact: Dr Adam Hardy, Director, PRASADA, School of the Built Environment, De Montfort University, The Gateway, Leicester, LE1 9BH. E-mail: ahardy@dmu.ac.uk

PAKISTANI HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGNER: PROFILE OF ANSAR BURNEY

Advocate:

In 1980 Ansar Burney set up the "Ansar Burney Welfare Trust International" (ABWT), "Prisoners Aid Society", "Bureau of Missing and Kidnapped Persons" and "Commission against Terrorism" in Karachi, Pakistan. The Trust is also registered in Washington, D.C in United States of America as an non-governmental, non-political and non-profitable human rights organisation. His main objective was to struggle for the release of innocent people who were kept in prisons or mental asylums without any justification and in some cases even without court orders. As a result, Ansar Burney has so far been able to get release of more than 100,000 innocent prisoners who were illegally imprisoned in Pakistan as well as in other countries.

The Trust has also arranged the release of approximately 5,000 persons from lunatic asylums and mental wards of prisons, traced out more than twenty thousand children and young girls and returned them to their families. These include children who were set free from Kharkar camps and young girls who had been sold.

Collated the data of Pakistani prisoners in foreign jails due to various misunderstandings and got them released, and repatriated back to Pakistan. Similarly the Trust was able get the release of a number of foreign nationals from Pakistani jails and sent them to their respective home countries on the Trust's expenses.

The ABWT always raises its voice against terrorism and injustice on innocent human beings. The Trust does not believe in discrimination between human beings on the basis of their cast, colour, creed, religion, etc.

The ABWT publish human rights reports and issues monthly and distribute its publications world-wide.

The contact address of Ansar Burney, Advocate is: "Ansar Burney Welfare Trust International, (Human Rights and Peace Keeping Organisation), 6 - Hassan Manzil, Arambagh Road, Karachi, Pakistan. E-mail: humanrights@usa.net

INDIA 50: IDENTITIES, NATION STATE AND GLOBAL CULTURE

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX, 24-27 SEPTEMBER 1997

Several British universities and academic institutions, BASAS among them, responded to the 50th anniversary of South Asia's independence by organising special workshops and seminars, although not with the same lack of discrimination that seemed to characterise some of the media attention. The largest such event was the conference organised by Vinita Damodaran, Maya Unnithan and their colleagues from the University of Sussex, entitled 'India 50: Identities, Nation State and Global Culture' (announced in BASAS Bulletin, 2:3). Even if not all the high-profile invitees from India could make it in the end, many of them did, and contributed to a lively four days. The programme succeeded in using some of the more urgent themes of today's academic debate as away of focusing on questions covering most aspects of the last half-century. About a hundred delegates took part in some or all of the sessions.

The conference opened with two public lectures on the evening of 24 September, by Meghnad Desai and Shyam Benegal, in which there were overviews of the general themes of the conference. Memories of partition, of partition violence and of the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi were the focus of the first working session the following day, with a lively debate in particular following Urvashi Butalia's paper on the recovery of 'abducted' women. A panel on civil society and democracy elicited papers on Gandhi and Kumarappa (Zachariah), bureaucratic reform (Robinson), political parties (Jenkins) and the state and democracy (Jayal). Basic questions were raised about how far democratic institutions were capable of agenda setting, who was included and excluded by the present political process, and whether Indian political parties were hostile to the growth of civil society. The relationship between artistic traditions and national identity was the subject of a third set of papers on art, architecture, film and museums.

Two sessions on the third day were devoted to economic themes, with strikingly different perspectives on topics such as policies to achieve poverty reduction (Lipton) and the assessment of recent economic policy changes since 1991 (Das Gupta). As in other sessions there were several papers which offered carefully crafted studies of special topics, for example of how rich and poor speak about and understand 'food' in Gujarat (Mukta). Economics was followed by social questions; on the one hand feminism and nationhood, and on the other grassroots environmental movements. The first set of papers embraced historical studies of sexuality and community identity (O'Hanlon), the ideology of motherhood in contemporary India (Palriwala), communalism and women (Butalia), and Muslim women's lives in Hyderabad (Searle-Chatterjee). The second set examined issues related to environmental degradation, and how it might be alleviated or reversed. The role of the local community and the conditions under which collective action might be expected were brought into sharp focus.

The final day took up the question of 'challenges to the nation state'. T. V. Sathyamurthy returned to some of the themes of the first day with a paper on divided identities in postcolonial India and the declining legitimacy of the nation-state, while Chris Fuller discussed the quiet growth of Hindu nationalism in what might have been seen as the unpromising area of Tamil Nadu. Bela Bhatia looked at the Naxalites in Bihar and the reasons people support them. The next session covered the writing of national allegories and political fictions, with papers which covered both colonial and postcolonial themes. The final session looked at the diaspora in the age of globalisation, with the help of material drawn from the UK and Canada.

The conference was notable for the range of activities outside the working sessions. Thus, Shyam Benegal spoke on his experience as a film-maker in India as well as introducing one of his most enduring films, *Bhumika*. Sudeep Sen and Debjani Chatterjee read their poems, and on the third night Ian Duncan, recently mayor of Brighton as well as specialist on Indian politics, organised a reception at the local museum, and the chance of a preview of an exhibition of Indian material. On the way back, we had a sudden and unexpected glimpse of the Brighton Pavilion, illuminated like the Mysore palace at Dassehra, still sending out its ambiguous message about South Asian studies in Britain.

David Taylor

School of Oriental and African Studies

COMMUNALISM AND MIGRATION: SOUTH ASIANS IN DIASPORA

This conference, held in Edinburgh on June 19th and 20th 1997, formed a part of Edinburgh University's contribution towards celebrating the 50th anniversary of Indian independence. A great many of the delegates attending came from abroad, including five who flew in from various universities in the United States, three delegates from Japan, one from the Netherlands, half a dozen from the Indian subcontinent, a total of approximately fifteen delegates from various UK universities, plus Mr. Goyal, the Indian Consul-General from Glasgow, and of course a large number of interested postgraduates and staff from the University of Edinburgh itself.

By addressing comparative issues from an original and wider perspective, the papers all contributed to and progressed current debates concerning the history of South Asian diasporas, as well as questions of identity and ethnic conflict as they have affected displaced and migrant communities. A consistent conclusion noticed in the work of many contributors was the apparent adaptability of migrant communities and the ease with which their identities were often integrated or otherwise transformed to meet the pressures of different circumstances - a possibly optimistic outcome in an era where identities, particularly religious identities, are increasingly regarded as primordial, intransigent, and irreconcilable with one another. Several who were not able to attend for one reason or another have offered to contribute articles to the proposed publications that are to ensue, of which there are now likely to be two edited volumes, representing the wide range of contemporary and historical themes which the conference addressed. Several publishers have expressed interest in the volumes, but one at least will probably appear in the Leicester University Press series 'New Historical Perspectives on Migration' (edited by Crispin Bates and Marina Carter).

Participants either presenting papers or acting as discussants included Suranjan Das, Subho Basu, Paul Greenhough, Nira Wickramasinghe, Jonathan Spencer, Sumita Chatterjee, Arjan de Haan, Karen Leonard, Mohammad Waseem, Prabhu Mohapatra, John G. Kelly, Amarjit Kaur, Ari Nave, Marina Carter, Michael Twaddle, Darshini de Zoysa, Roger Jeffery, Ravi Thiara, Furrukh Khan and Ronald Skeldon.

Any further enquiries should be addressed to the conference organiser: Dr. Crispin Bates, Dept. of History, University of Edinburgh; e-mail: Crispin.Bates@ed.ac.uk

TIMELINES AND BORDERLINES: THE 1947

PARTITION OF BENGAL

The golden jubilee of independence from colonial rule in South Asia has been observed rather mutedly in Bangladesh. A few scattered personal accounts in the newspapers failed to address its relevance for contemporary Bangladesh, wrested as it was out of the territories assigned to Pakistan in 1947. Indeed, a myopic view of history has tended to ignore the Pakistan period as well as other historical continuities such as the ideological encounters that have shaped contemporary minds and the apparent contradictions in the demand for Pakistan as against the experiences that led to the creation of Bangladesh in 1971. Scholars have yet to confront the past and give it meaning without re-inventing it in support of current nationalist ideological agendas.

The Conference entitled 'Timelines and Borderlines: the 1947 Partition of Bengal' organized by the Social Science Research Council in New York and the American Friends of Learned Societies, held in Rajendrapur, Bangladesh was timely in this regard. Among the key players of the conference were Prof Shelley Feldman of Cornell University and Itty Abraham of the SSRC. Thirteen invited participants were locked away for three days, away from the din and bustle of Dhaka, in the leafy suburbs to ponder over questions such as the meaning of the partition, its significance in relation to the plight of Bihari minorities, differences in the experience of dislocation among migrants to East and West Bengal, the contextualised meaning of home, the treatment of partition in Bengali literature, borderlines in the mind, and those created through passports, visas and legislation etc. The discussions were stimulating and at times heated in true South Asian fashion with plenty of personal anecdotes. It is hoped that a volume will emerge out of it and will go into press sometime in August 1998 for a 1999 publication. One can look forward to plenty of fresh research and thinking about the significance of partition for East Bengal/Bangladesh.

Among the participants were Prof Rafiuddin Ahmad, Prof Niaz Zaman, Prof Jyanabrata Bhattacharya, Dr Meghna Guhathakurta, Prof Anisuzzaman, Dr Tazeen Murshid, Prof Rehman Sobhan, Prof Willem van Schendel, Dr Dina Siddiqui, Prof B. K. Jahangir, Prof Harun-or Rashid, and Prof Akanda .

Tazeen M. Murshid

School of Oriental and African Studies & The University of North London

BASAS LOGO COMPETITION

Entries are invited for a competition to design a logo for BASAS. Entries to be submitted by 30th August 1998 to: Yunas Samad, Secretary, BASAS, University of Bradford, Department of Social and Economic Studies, Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD7 1DP, UK

THE 13TH PAKISTAN WORKSHOP

Rook How, Lake District, 3rd to 5th July 1998

Social Movement, Change and Continuity in South Asia

Workshop organiser: Dr Pnina Werbner, Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, Keele University, Keele, Staffs., ST5 5BG, UK

The 13th Pakistan workshop will take place at Rook How in the Lake District on 3rd to 5th

July 1998. At the last meeting in June 1997 everybody present agreed that our topic would concern: Social Movement, Change and Continuity in South Asia. As usual the choice of a theme is meant to stimulate discussion and is not binding, therefore we welcome papers on any theme and on areas of your current research. The main aim of the workshop is to provide an opportunity to present and discuss current work in progress on Muslims in South Asia and the Diaspora.

We intend to use the main hall at Rook How in the Lake District for our workshop meetings throughout the three day period. The accommodation at the Rook How Quaker Field Centre is of youth hostel standard. For people wanting more comfort in bed-and-breakfast accommodation is available nearby. However, you will need to let us know well in advance so we can arrange to book a place for you. Accommodation at Rook How is approximately £6 per night per person and a bed-and-breakfast approximately £20 per night per person (this includes breakfast).

The whole workshop should cost approximately £45 for those staying at Rook How. Included in this is the registration fee of £20. Meals will be eaten at local pubs along with a specially prepared Asian haute cuisine meal at the Field Centre. The surroundings at the centre are very pleasant and inviting for relaxing walks.

We like to keep the workshop small and intimate and allow a lot of time for discussion so it is essential to book early. If you are coming from South Asia and need a special invitation in order to apply for British Council funding, do let us know. Could you please let us know of any visiting scholars or research students who might also be interested in attending the workshop. As we would like to build up an E-mail address list, it would be for your and especially our advantage if you could mail your E-mail address to Inger-Lise Lien in Oslo, who is the convenor of the Pakistan Workshop 1998. You can also register by using the E-mail: inger-lise.lien@nibr.no.

Please confirm by Fax or E-mail that you have received the invitation, whether or not you plan to come, as we are trying to update our address list.

Registration fee £20 for the Pakistan Workshop 1998 should be paid to NIBR's account in the following Norwegian bank: Kredittkassen: 6039 15 16897

Remember to register «Pakistan Workshop» and your name when you pay. Please send registration form to: Dr Inger-Lise Lien, Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research, PO Box 44 Blindern, N-0313 Oslo, Norway, Tel: +47 22 95 88 00, Telefax: +47 22 60 77 74

15th EUROPEAN CONFERENCE on MODERN SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES

8-12 September 1998 | Charles University, Prague

We would like to invite you to the 15th European Conference on Modern South Asian Studies which will be held at Charles University in Prague under the auspices of the Rector of the University as part of the celebrations of the 650th anniversary of the University.

The Conference is organised by the Institute of Indian Studies, Charles University in co-operation with

- the Oriental Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences

- the Institute of International Relations
- the Náprestek Museum of Asian, African and American Cultures
- and other institutions

The Conference will be inaugurated on Tuesday, 8th September 1998 at 7 pm, the sessions will start on Wednesday, 9th September. The final plenary session will take place on Saturday, 12th September 9.00 am to 12.00 noon.

Further details can be obtained from: Institute of Indian Studies, Charles University, Celetná 20, 11642 Praha 1, Czech Republic. E-mail: southasia@cuni.cz

BASAS PRIZE

Announcing the establishment of the British Association of South Asian Studies (BASAS) prize for the outstanding paper given by a young scholar at the 1998 BASAS Annual Conference

The BASAS prize will consist of a monetary award of £100.00

The BASAS prize is intended to encourage young scholars, either studying for a degree in an institution of higher learning and/or be no older than 35 at the time of the 1998 BASAS Annual Conference. The author need not be a member of BASAS.

The submission, 7-8,000 words may be in any field related to South Asia or South Asians, not previously published or presented elsewhere, to be submitted in advance to the secretary of BASAS by 15 March 1998 and be presented at the BASAS Annual Conference to be held 17-19 April at the University of Manchester, UK. Note that the deadline for submission of abstracts for the conference is the 20 February 1998.

The judging panel will consist of members of the BASAS Executive Committee and the panel reserves the right not to present the award and will not enter into correspondence concerning its final judgement.

Secretary BASAS, Dr Yunas Samad, Department of Social and Economic Studies, University of Bradford, West Yorkshire BD7 1DP, UK. Tel: +44-(0)1274-384804 Fax: +44(0)1274-385295 Email a.y.samad@bradford.ac.uk

Editorial team: **Yunas Samad**, Department of Social and Economic Studies, University of Bradford, Bradford, BD7 1DP, Tel 01274 384804, Fax: 01274 385295, e.mail: a.y.samad@bradford.ac.uk. **Tazeen Murshid**, University of North London and SOAS, University of London, Tel 0171-637-2388, tm14@soas.ac.uk

Contributions for the next issue have to be received before the end of April for inclusion in the May issue. BASAS Homepage is: <http://www.brad.ac.uk/acad/ses/basas1.html>

The CSA-BASAS Prize for young scholars

Announcing the establishment of a joint prize by *Contemporary South Asia* (CSA) and the British Association of South Asian Studies (BASAS) for the outstanding paper given by a young scholar at the 1998 BASAS Annual Conference. The CSA-BASAS Prize will consist of a monetary award of £100.00 and publication in *Contemporary South Asia*.

As the CSA-BASAS Prize is intended to encourage the submission of work by young

scholars, the author of any paper submitted must be studying for a degree in an institution of higher learning and/or be no older than 35 at the time of the 1998 BASAS Annual Conference. The author need not be a member of BASAS.

To be eligible, a paper should focus on the theoretical and/or practical means by which our understanding of the present problems of co-operation and confrontation in South Asia, its constituent states of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, or the South Asian diaspora can be enhanced. Papers may address issues relevant to the arts, humanities or social sciences.

In addition, papers must: (a) not have been presented elsewhere or published previously; (b) conform to the length and style described in CSA's 'Notes for Contributors' and/or available separately from its Managing Editor; (c) be submitted in advance to CSA's Managing Editor to arrive no later than 15 March 1998; and (d) be presented at the BASAS Annual Conference to be held 17-19 April 1998 at the University of Manchester, UK.

The judging panel will consist of an equal number of selected editors of CSA and executive board members of BASAS. The panel reserves the right not to present the award and will not enter into correspondence concerning its final judgement. At the discretion of the judging panel, papers entered for the prize and failing to win but deemed of sufficient merit also may be published in Contemporary South Asia.

Contacts for further details:

Dr Apurba Kundu, Managing Editor, Contemporary South Asia, Department of Social and Economic Studies, University of Bradford, Bradford BD7 1DP, UK. Tel: +44-(0)1274-385-046 | Fax: +44-(0)1274-385-295 | Email: a.kundu@bradford.ac.uk

Dr Yunas Samad, BASAS Secretary, Department of Social and Economic Studies, University of Bradford, Bradford BD7 1DP, UK. Tel: +44-(0)1274-384-804 | Fax: +44-(0)1274-385-295 | Email: a.y.samad@bradford.ac.uk

Dr Bobby Sayyid, 1998 BASAS Annual Conference organiser, Department of Sociology, University of Manchester, Manchester M13 9PL, UK. Tel: +44-(0)161-275-2461 | Fax: +44-(0)161-275-2514 | Email: bobby.sayyid@man.ac.uk

CSA <http://www.carfax.co.uk/csa-ad.htm> | BASAS <http://basas.homepage.com/>

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- Inter Cultural Dialogue Colloquium II, The Self and the Other, 27, 28 February, 1 March 1998, Lucknow. Details available from Dr Rajesh Mishra, Organising Secretary, Reader in Sociology, Lucknow University, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India (telephone: 91 522 329468, fax: 91 522 371056) or international correspondence to Aditya Chauhan, telephone 91 11 6133994, fax: 91 11 6269962; email: sovon@jnuniv.ernet.in
- Maison Francaise, Oxford University, 21 March 1998. A workshop entitled 'Inside and outside the Mosque: Anthropology of Muslim prayer across the Indian Ocean' ('Dans le mosquée, hors du mosquée. Anthropologie de la prière musulmane à travers l'océan indienne'). Convenors: Professor David Parkin, Director, Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, and Fellow of All Souls' College, Oxford: Dr Stephen C. Headley, Institut de Recherche sur le Sud-Est Asiatique, CNRS/Universite de Provence, Information from The Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology (Mrs Gina Burrows), 51 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 6PE

- International Convention of Asia Scholars, 25-28 June 1998 Noorwijkerhout, The Netherlands. For information contact Shelley Feldman, Department of Sociology, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853 7801, USA. Fax: 607 254 5000. Email: rf12@cornell.edu OR Dirk Kolff, Kern Institute, PO Box 9515, 2300 RA Leiden, The Netherlands. Fax +3171 527 2939. Email: kolff@rullet.leidenuniv.nl
- Colours of the Indus, Victoria and Albert Museum (until 29 March 1998). Colours of the Indus is the first exhibition ever held on the textiles and costumes of Pakistan, with over 150 pieces dating from the mid-nineteenth century to the present day. This exhibition is part of a series of events celebrating the 50th anniversary of the creation of Pakistan, and provides an insight into life across the four provinces: Sindh, Baluchistan, Punjab and the North West Frontier. Further details from the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington, London SW7 2RL. Telephone 0171 939 8500/Recorded Information 0171 938 8349

SEMINARS AND LECTURES ON SOUTH ASIAN TOPICS

SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES, University of London, South Asia History Seminar, Spring Term, Tuesdays, 5 pm, Room G3. Convenor: Professor David Arnold, Enquiries to History Department, 0171 323 6146

- Jan 13 Indira Chowdhury (Jadavpur University) *Handcuffed to history: Rushdie's Midnight's Children*
- Jan 20 Anandhi, S. (Madras University) 'Ideal and Other Women' in nationalist discourse in colonial Tamilnadu
- Jan 27 Vinayak Chaturvedi (Cambridge University) *Political communication and popular politics in the Gujarti countryside, 1890*
- Feb 17 Clare Anderson (Leicester University) *The most desperate characters in all India: The transportation of Indian convicts to Mauritius, 1815-37*
- Feb 24 Emma Alexander (Cambridge University) *Reformatory/factory/family: The institutionalisation of child labour in the Bombay presidency, 1860-1900*
- March 3 Lizzie Collingham (Warwick University) *From nabob to sahib: The transformation of the British body in India, c. 1800-1914*
- March 10 Prathama Banerjee (SOAS) *The act and the event: 'Primitive' rebellion in colonial Bengal*

SEMINARS, WEDNESDAYS 5PM, ROOM G52, SOAS

- Jan 14 Dr Polly O'Hanlon (Cambridge) *Warriors, gentlemen and eunuchs: Some meanings of maleness in late medieval north India*
- Jan 21 Dr Klaus Klostermaier (Manitoba/Oxford) *The Aryan invasion theory: Revising ancient Indian history*
- Jan 26 Room UG 10, 30 Russell Square (Monday 3pm) Professor Peter Anderson (Copenhagen) *Printed literature, ethnicity and implicit modernity among the Santals in India*
- Jan 28 Dr John Smith (Cambridge) *Texts and machines: an electronic Mahabharata*
- Feb 4 Dr Mushtaq Khan (SOAS) *Title to be arranged*
- Feb 18 Dr Anandhi (SOAS, Charles Wallace Fellow) *Colonial and contemporary discourses on reproduction and sexuality*
- Feb 25 Dr Sunil Khilnani (Birkbeck College) *Political Uses of English: Gandhi and Nehru*
- March 4 Dr Graham Shaw (India Office Library) *Early print culture in South Asia*
- March 18 Dr Helen Lambert (London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine)

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

South Asian History Seminar, Tuesdays, 2.15pm, Library Wing Seminar Room, Queen Elizabeth House, 21 St Giles, Oxford

Convenors: Dr Nandini Gooptu and Professor Judith Brown. Enquiries to Chloe Dobree, Centre for Indian Studies, St Antony's College, Oxford OX2 6JF (telephone/fax: 01865 274559, email: asian@sant.ox.ac.uk)

- Jan 20 Professor Hew Macleod (Otago University, New Zealand, Visiting Fellow, Balliol 1998) *Different kinds of Sikhs*
- Jan 27 Dr Partha Mitter (Sussex University) *The collection and display of Indian art at the Victoria and Albert Museum and Raj ideology*
- Feb 3 Dr G. Farrell (City University, London) *Perceptions and representations of indian music in the West*
- Feb 10 Dr Marcus Banks (Oxford University) *Contemporary Jain pilgrimage paintings and other 'Jain art'*
- Feb 17 Dr Richard Widess (SOAS) *The history of musical style in North India: the case of dhrupad*
- Feb 24 Dr Norbert Peabody (Cambridge University) *The king is dead, long live the king!: or karmic kin(g)ship in Kota*
- March 3 Jabal Patel (Trinity College) *Kheda, Gujarat: Tracing the decline of the Congress* and Carly Ackermann (Wolfson College) *Mother India*
- March 10 S. Chaturvedi (St Antony's College) *Ashraf Muslim consciousness* and R. Dasgupta (Queen's College) *Politics of Bengal*

QUEEN ELIZABETH HOUSE

International Development Centre, University of Oxford, 21 St Giles, Oxford, OX1 3LA

SEMINAR IN CONTEMPORARY SOUTH ASIA

Hilary Term 1998. The Seminar will meet at 2.00 pm on Thursdays at the Blackhall Seminar Room, Queen Elizabeth House, 21 St Giles, Oxford. Convenors: Dr Barbara Harriss-White and Dr Nandini Gooptu. (telephone: 01865 273600, fax: 01865 273607, email: savsp@qeh.ox.ac.uk, Direct Line: 01865 273617)

- Jan 22 Mark Robinson (Institute of Development Studies, Sussex) *The Politics of Civil Service Reform*
- Jan 29 Hiranya Mukhopadhyay (National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, and Visiting Fellow, QEH) *India: Economic reforms of the 1990s, macroeconomic dimensions and ramifications*
- Feb 5 Sudipta Bhattacharyya (Vidyasagar University, and Visiting Fellow, QEH) *Class differentiation and agricultural credit: a study of West Bengal*
- Feb 12 Rob Jenkins (Birkbeck College) *Elections and the Politics of Social Reform*
- Extraordinary Lecture - 18 February only Alok Bhargava (Harvard University) *Family Planning, gender differences and child mortality: evidence from UP* This lecture will take place at 2.00 pm in the Library Wing Seminar Room Queen Elizabeth House, 21 St Giles Oxford
- Feb 19 Joanna Pfaff (Wolfson College, Oxford) *Reactions and Responses in Ethnic*

Politics: The Nepalese Minorities in the Public Space

- Feb 26 Ben Zacharia (University of Cambridge) *The social context of 'economic development' in India c. 1930-1950*
 - March 3 K.T. Rammohan (Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum, and Visiting Fellow, QEH) *Commodity chain in a microeconomy: observations based on field work in three Kerala villages*
 - March 12 Relha Chowdhary (University of Jammu, and Commonwealth fellow, QEH) *Understanding the Kashmir Issue: The dynamics of ethnicity*
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THE SOCIETY FOR SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES

THE BRITISH ACADEMY, 20-21 CORNWALL TERRACE, LONDON, NW1 4QP

MEETINGS FOR 1997-98

- February 16 Dr Neil Howard, *Military Architecture in the Himalayas of India and Nepal*
 - April 20 Dr Adam Hardy (De Montfort University), *The Shekhari Mode of Nagara Temples. A study of temple evolution in Gujarat*
 - June 15 Mr James Howell (Society for South Asian Studies), Paithan: *The Satavahana Capital of Western India*
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BASAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

17-19 APRIL 1998 THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

NARRATING SOUTH ASIA: HISTORIES, NATIONS AND DIASPORAS

The aim of this conference is to draw together scholars from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds to focus on two main issues confronting South Asia(ns) and South Asian Studies: The process of globalization (in its various manifestations) seems to create a number of tensions for political formations based around the centrality of the nation state. This has political, economic, and cultural effects on the continuity of current ideas about South Asia. The critique of orientalism and Indology have created a space for debate about the epistemological concerns arising from the study of South Asia and South Asians both in their contemporary and historical forms.

CALL FOR PANELS AND PAPERS

Panels Organised so far:

- *Indology and its Discontents*
- *Representing South Asia*
- *Travelworlds and Traveller's Tales*
- *"Mother India": Gender and South Asia*
- *Home and Away: The South Asian Diaspora*
- *De-Forming the Nation-State?*
- *Globalization and South Asia*

There are a limited number of bursaries available on a first come first served basis. The

conditions are that the applicants should (a) be a postgraduate student; (b) be presenting a paper at the conference and (c) that their abstract is accepted by the panel.

Please consult our web site for further details. For information regarding the submission of abstracts contact CGEM Administrator. The deadline for the submission of paper abstracts is 20 February 1998.

Centre for the Study of Globalisation, Marginality and Euro-centrism, Department of Sociology, University of Manchester, Coupland Street, Manchester, M13 9PL, United Kingdom. Tel: +44 (0)161 2754794/2516 Fax: +44 (0161) 2752462. E-mail Bobby Sayyid@man.ac.uk. Web Site: <http://les.mcc.ac.uk/CGEM/>

THE SOCIETY FOR SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES

THE BRITISH ACADEMY, 20-21 CORNWALL TERRACE, LONDON, NW1 4QP

The Society is one of the Schools and Institutes founded and grant-aided by the British Academy. Its aims are to promote study and research into the humanities and social sciences of Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh.

Membership Members support the work of the Society and are entitled to attend all lecture meetings, colloquia etc. organised by the Society, and receive a copy of the Annual Report. Full members receive the Society's journal South Asian Studies. Full membership rates (with journal) £25 or US \$40 - (£20 if paid by UK Bankers Order or before January 1st each year). Membership without journal £5. Student/junior membership £15.

Lectures and Publications The Society organises a regular programme of meetings in London each year. Its journal South Asian Studies is published annually. Details of the separate cost of volumes of the journal and its predecessor Afghan Studies are available from the Assistant Secretary.

Grants The Society offers annually a number of small personal research grants and travel grants.

Small Personal Research Grants are awarded towards the cost of research and fieldwork in South Asia. These grants are available for work at post doctoral level or its equivalent. Awards will not be made to support courses or research leading to academic qualifications, or for research directly related to the topic of a current thesis. Applicants must normally be resident in the UK, applications for maintenance in the UK will not be considered.

Travel Grants A limited number of travel grants of up to £600 each will be awarded to scholars in connection with work at post doctoral level and to younger qualified students who wish to take part in excavations or participate in projects intended to introduce them to organised fieldwork in South Asia.

Applications for both types of grant must be made on the proscribed forms and submitted before the closing dates of 15th May and 15th October each year.

For further information about the work of the Society, membership, grant application forms etc. contact: The Assistant Secretary, The Main Wing, Elsworth Manor, Elsworth, Cambs CB3 8HY.

BASAS Information Provider/Webmaster: Apurba Kundu. Email: a.kundu@bradford.ac.uk

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