

# Bulletin

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## Contents

<b>Annual Conference in Lancaster, April 2002</b>	2
List of papers presented	
Abstracts of Papers	3
Delegate e-mails	8
<b>First Drafts: The North-East and the North-West Frontier</b>	9
The State, Tradition And Conflict In The North-Eastern States Of India	9
John Harriss	
Securing the Empire 'Muslim Fanatics' and the Revolt of 1863	
Graham Chapman	12
<b>Annual Conference: Oxford April 2003,</b>	
First Notice	14
Political Studies Association Conference, April 2003	14

**CULTURE** 14  
Sri Lankan Film Festival in London

15

**JOBS** 16

FCO Analyst in London

The Rabindranath Tagore Professorship in Indian Cultures and Civilization, Directorship of the India Studies Program, Indiana University

Date and Agenda of next **Executive Committee** Meeting 15

#### IMPORTANT NOTICE

As part of a policy of reducing costs, keeping your subscription down and speeding circulation, your Committee has agreed to distribute the Bulletin as far as possible by e-mail w.e.f. the next issue. If you wish to continue to receive your Bulletin as hard-copy by post, please e-mail [j.bland2@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:j.bland2@lancaster.ac.uk) **now**.

Please send any items for the next Bulletin, due in September/October to Bobby Sayyid.

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#### **Report: Annual Conference, Lancaster 2002**

Delegates to the annual conference in Lancaster were treated to a very full and varied programme, in which we just managed to avoid going into parallel sessions. The Indian restaurant on Campus gave us an excellent first night dinner, and the second night we had The Folly Restaurant by the Castle all to ourselves. A few stayed on for the all-day trip round the Lake District, when we were treated to a short display of all possible weathers. Very Ruskin and Turner.

The full list of papers presented is given here, grouped by panel: the abstracts for most ( but not all) of the papers follow.

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### **South Asian Development Geography**

Environment, Development and Governance in the East Calcutta Wetlands.

David Treloar Staffordshire

Bengal's Millennium flood

*Graham Chapman, Lancaster:*

Eco-tourism Development in India

Kevin Hannam , Sunderland

Rising Waters, sinking land? Environmental change and development in Bangladesh

Robert W Bradnock (King's London) and Pat Saunders

Participation, poverty and power: poor people's engagement with India's Employment Assurance Scheme

Glyn Williams (Keele University)

### **The Condition of Democracy in South Asia**

Paths towards democracy in South Asia

Andrew Wyatt, Dept. of Politics, University of Bristol, Katharine Adeney, Balliol College, University of Oxford

Civil Conflict in Sri Lanka - the problems of consolidation.

*Alan Bullion, Research Associate, The Open University*

### **Economies I**

Village Economy and the Market: Experience from Village Sri Lanka

Dr J.A. Karunaratne Miss Yun Lihong University of Karlstad, Sweden

Governance and Backwardness: Bastar region of Chhattisgarh

Priti Biswas, Lancaster University

### **Security**

September 11 and Islamic Fundamentalism: Myth or Reality.

A.Z.Hilali, Hull

State murder in Curzonian India

Michael Carrington, Coventry

### **India's Decade of Reforms**

India: Economic reforms and Export Performance in India

*Dr. Rajendra Vaidya, Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, Mumbai,*

Reconsidering India's Economic Nationalism

*Dr. Andrew Wyatt, University of Bristol:*

Agricultural price policy in India: Some issues in the context of trade liberalisation

*Dr. A. Ganesh Kumar, Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, Mumbai, India and University of East Anglia:*

Some structural problems in financing development: Issues relating to India

*Dr. Santanu Basu, South Bank University,*

### **South Asian Migration**

Migration in Policy and Practice in South Asia

*Francis Watkins, Edinburgh,*

The embodied work and well-being of seasonal migrant labourers' lives in Maharashtra

Lou Waite, U. East Anglia

The World is my Oyster: The emergent working self of the globe-trotting Indian Soft-ware professional

Meera Warriar, U East Anglia

The Changing Meanings of Seasonal Migration in Eastern India

Ben Rogaly and Daniel Coppard - East Anglia

### **Local Culture and Modernity**

The civilisational obsessions of Abdul Jilani Barque

Markus Daechsel. SOAS

Persian Education and an Urdu Curriculum: Transforming and Secularizing Maktab Education in Colonial North-West India.

Jeffrey M. Diamond. SOAS

Christian Missionaries and the British Indian State: 19th century voluntarism and Indian secularism'

Nandini Chatterjee, St Catharine's College, Cambridge

The Tension between Muslim and Western Societies: Political rather than Civilisational

SM Ali Taghavi, Lincoln

### **Diaspora**

Elements to the comprehension of Hindu Diaspora: the Portuguese experience

Nuno Dias, Lisbon

Social exclusion and young South Asians in Britain'

Sutapa Haldar , Luton

Communit Perception and Forced Marriage in S.Asian communities in the United Kingdom

Yunas Samad , Bradford

Aspects of Jati and Gender in Early Sikh Migration to Britain

*Kanta Rhodes, Oxford,*

## **Economies II**

India's Economic Liberalisation and the Manufacturing Sector

Dr Vidya Mahabare, Research Fellow, Cardiff Business School

Economics of the Asian Refugee Problem

Dr Sadat Deger. Director Institute for Asian Studies, Birmingham University

## **ABSTRACTS**

## **DEVELOPMENT GEOGRAPHY**

### **Environment, development and governance in the east Calcutta wetlands waste recycling region.**

**David Treloar - Staffordshire University**

The East Calcutta Wetlands, to the east of Calcutta, India, contain an indigenous, environmentally sustainable, economically productive waste recycling system that has been operative for over a century. Solid and liquid wastes are regarded as resources, not pollutants, the only ingredients being sunlight and cheap labour (poverty). Over 50,000 people are employed in this system, producing fish, rice and vegetables. It also serves seven million people in Calcutta with free garbage and wastewater treatment and acts as a major sink for storm water during the monsoon season, preventing flooding and associated health problems within Calcutta. With the rapid urban growth of Calcutta there is great development pressure on the Waste Recycling Region because of its proximity to the centre of Calcutta and its natural beauty. Developers and speculators are very active in the area. On the periphery of this area a new town, Rajarhat, to the north, and a large industrial complex, Karaidanga, to the east, are being developed by the West Bengal Government. Within five years at least two million people will live or work in these new urban areas. Wetlands are protected from development by legislation, and the 12,500 hectares of the Waste Recycling Region are protected by a 1992 judgement of the Calcutta High Court. Development whilst curtailed at present constantly threatens the region. This paper will describe the environmental importance of the region, its importance for speculative development and critically examine the governance structures that will ultimately decide its fate.

## **Ecotourism Development In India**

**Dr. Kevin Hannam**

This paper reviews the current tourism development policies of the Government of India. However, it is argued that there are major conflicts between the policies and practices of the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Environment & Forests. As a result, the ecotourism development strategies that have been attempted thus far have been extremely fragmented. The paper explores the resulting conflicts at a specific national park - Kanha in Madhya Pradesh. Firstly, it examines the conflicts between the protection of specific species such as the tiger and the promotion of tourism development. Secondly, it examines the conflicts that arise between the management of a national park and the local villagers that are often displaced. Thirdly, it examines the conflicts that exist between domestic and foreign tourists. It is argued that specific animal species such as tigers are an important part of both conservation and ecotourism strategies and that the latter need to become an integral part of park management and planning.

### **Participation, poverty and power: poor people's engagement with India's Employment Assurance Scheme**

**Glyn Williams (Keele University)**

'Participation' has recently become an essential part of good developmental practice. It is propounded by governments in the global South, as well as by NGOs and international agencies. In this paper we reflect critically on the importance of this shift in practice by investigating how a 'participatory' development programme – India's Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) – intersects with poor people's existing social networks and their patterns of access to power brokers. By placing the formalised process of participation in the EAS within the context of these varied and uneven village-level relationships, we raise a number of important issues for participatory development practice. Our analysis not only highlights the heterogeneity of 'grassroots' (dis)empowerment within individual villages, it also challenges existing models of poor people's agency and the transfer of power model that is implicit within the participatory development literature.

### **Bengal's Millennium Flood**

**Graham Chapman and Kalyan Rudra**

In September 2000 parts of the state of West Bengal in India suffered a sudden and catastrophic flood, in which upwards of 17 million people suffered massive economic losses, and perhaps as many as 5,000 people may have died. This is an area of dense settlement and intense poverty, in which development has stagnated for decades and in which capital accumulation is painfully slow.

This paper describes the flood, its most likely immediate causes, the survival strategies of the afflicted, and the nature of recovery and rehabilitation so far. It seeks to find out what lessons can be learned to mitigate a future calamity. But we also seek to re-open a debate about other causes which are remoter in time and larger in scale – namely the question of what constitutes appropriate and sustainable development in the Bengal delta.

### **Geopolitics, water and development in South Asia: cooperative development on the Ganges-Brahmaputra and the prospects for a Farakka-Paksi-Mawa Complex**

**R W Bradnock, , King's College. London**

In the light of the new cooperative water development agreements in South Asia since 1996, and in particular the 1996 Ganges Waters Treaty between India and Bangladesh, this paper explores the geopolitical obstacles to co-operation between states in the joint development of large-scale river systems and current opportunities for successful development. The general problems of cooperation faced by the riparian states which share successive rivers are examined with reference to the geopolitical obstacles to co-operation in the Bengal delta since India and Pakistan gained Independence in 1947. Against the background of repeated attempts to resolve water sharing issues between India and East Pakistan and its successor state, Bangladesh, this paper concludes that for cooperation to succeed contemporary large-scale river development has to meet a wide range of criteria which go beyond conventional engineering or economic cost-benefit analyses to geopolitical criteria which range from global scale environmental concerns to micro-scale issues of mutual regional benefit. This paper proposes a major new development on the Brahmaputra and Ganges which it argues could break the log-jam of a zero-sum game approach to

surface water development in the Bengal delta. Unlike most large-scale dam-building proposals the barrage construction outlined would cause negligible population displacement, and making maximum use of existing river channels would minimise the environmental impacts associated with the large canal or dam construction envisaged in earlier Brahmaputra schemes. It is argued that if implemented it could bring economic, environmental and political advantages to all users in the basin.

## **THE CONDITION OF DEMOCRACY**

### **Paths towards democracy in South Asia**

**Andrew Wyatt and Katharine Adeney**

The uneven democratic career of the states of South Asia can be explained by recourse to two theoretical approaches to democratization. Transition theory focuses on the contribution of political elites to transitions to democracy: their actions having a decisive and largely intentional impact on democratic outcomes. The structuralist approach concentrates on the structural conditions that favour democracy and authoritarianism. The role of elites is not discussed at length and instead attention is drawn to the influence of slowly changing social structures, specifically the class structures. We propose an alternative approach that recognises the relevance of both structure and agency and takes into account the concept of path dependence. Path dependence draws our attention to the importance of history in the study of democracy. In particular it confirms that we should look closely at periods of 'critical juncture' as periods when institutional structures are malleable and individuals, or individuals acting collectively, are able to reshape structures. We will argue that recognition of the relationship between structure and agency provides an innovative way of accounting for the vicissitudes in South Asia's democratic experience.

### **Civil Conflict in Sri Lanka - the problems of consolidation.**

**Alan Bullion**

This paper will examine the costs and consequences of the conflict in Sri Lanka and how this continues to impede the process of democratic consolidation, according to criteria developed by Adrian Leftwich. It will be argued that although Sri Lanka achieved the trappings and institutionalisation of parliamentary democracy soon after independence in 1948, the subsequent adoption of majoritarian policies has prevented consolidation. The outcome and ramifications of the December 2001 election will be explored in this respect.

## **ECONOMIES I**

### **Governance and Backwardness: Bastar region of Chhatisgarh**

**Priti Biswas**

The Indian developmental state has changed radically in the last decade. The top-down centralised development strategy with expanded role of public sector has given way to greater reliance on markets and the private sector. Furthermore, there has been increasing devolution of power and responsibility downwards to state and district levels. The creation of new States, however, represent much more than mere satisfaction of local demands for separate identity based on linguistic criterion and greater political representation at the centre. It reflects an underlying feeling of relative neglect caused by low levels of development or 'backwardness' which give rise to such regional movements in the first place.

Bastar is a hilly tract of the Deccan which contains the largest expanse of tropical moist deciduous forest surviving in India, and it is also extremely rich in mineral resources. Historically, this region has been settled by tribal peoples, mainly Gonds, who have eked out a simple living by a combination of subsistence agriculture and collection of forest produce. Bangladesh's war of independence and subsequent influx of refugees into India had important repercussions for Bastar following the governments' decision to settle them as a part of the Dandakaranya Project. Immigrants brought with them outside influences and changes in the social and political structures slowly took place leading to a gradual erosion of tribal influence and dominance in the mainstream of socio-political culture of Bastar.

The thesis will undertake a systematic analysis of the development of Bastar region with particular reference to the tribal people. It will do so by examining the process of government devolution in interaction with local social and political power structures.

## **SECURITY**

### **State murder in Curzonian India**

**Michael Carrington**

Towards the latter half of the nineteenth century questions began to be asked in Britain concerning the treatment that Indians received at the hands of military personnel. In the House of Commons, inquiries were usually dismissed with the notion that collisions occurred infrequently and that they were “not very numerous”. At the commencement of his Viceroyalty, Lord Curzon seemed a little unsure about the frequency of assaults or the sheer scale of judicial injustice that was taking place. However, after only a short time he confided that the “question of outrages committed in India upon Natives [had] for some time been occupying [his] attention.. The Viceroy confessed that these incidents ‘ate into his very soul’ and indicated that, if they reflected “a deliberate temper [he would] take steps to interfere”. He believed that not only should these sorts of outrages not occur in a country under British rule, but the fact that “everybody, commanding officers, officials, juries [and] departments should conspire to screen the guilty” was in his judgement, “a blot on the British name”.

### **September 11 (2001) and Muslim Fundamentalism: Myth or Reality**

**Z A Hilali**

The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon on September 11 (2001) have changed the international environment. The United States and the Western democratic countries no longer feel secure because terrorist organisations have developed unanticipated capabilities and they have a well organised network in the world. Osama bin Laden and the Taliban of Afghanistan introduced a narrow and violent version of Islam and exploited jihad without understanding the real concept. They wanted the United States out of the Persian Gulf and particularly out of the holy land of Saudi Arabia. The extremists claim that the US keep Muslim people in poverty, illiterate and backward. They also complain that the US is responsible for the continued suffering of the people of Iraq and for the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and the rest of the world.

Before September 11, the US neither treated Muslim freedom organisations including Al-Quada, Hamas and Jaish-e-Muhammad or the Taliban as a threat to the West, nor did they show any serious concerns with their activities and its training, techniques and tactics, but the situation changed when Bin Laden targeted the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 and later attacked the United States’ power symbols. Thus, the US appears determined to go after these groups in the hope of eliminating the terrorist network, training camps and bases in Afghanistan which is one of the biggest sources of terror in recent times.

The September 11 event damaged the Muslim prestige and the religion of Islam and Muslims in various parts of the world are being held responsible for the trials the world was facing. This so-called Muslim-Christian crusade put the Muslims in a defensive position and their voice seems to be less effective. Muslim separatist or freedom movements in various parts of the world have lost their external support because of the US pressure to contain terrorist movements in the world. In the circumstances, the majority of Muslims are trying to convince the West that Islamic doctrine and culture are not hostile to the Western values: thus, they should oppose the extremist Muslims but not blame all Islam. Nevertheless, Islam is a religion of peace and tolerance. Terrorism has no religion and belief and it is to be condemned. However, terrorism can only be eliminated if the world looks for the root causes and addresses and tackles the issues fairly and honourably, then the world will be more peaceful and prosperous.

## **INDIA’S DECADE OF REFORMS**

### **India’s Export Competitiveness**

**A. Ganesh-Kumar, Kunal Sen and Rajendra R. Vaidya**

India has in the past used exchange rate depreciation as an export promotion tool and this has had its share of success in boosting export growth in the 1980s and early 1990s. With reforms taking the country from an “administered” exchange rate regime to a more “market-determined” exchange rate regime, continuous depreciation has not taken place in the mid-1990s and in fact some amount of appreciation has occurred in real terms. This is possibly a reason for the recent slow down in export growth. The real exchange rate appreciation in recent times is basically a short-run problem affecting India’s export competitiveness. Though the exchange rate is by and large “market determined” the Reserve Bank of India (RBI ) does watch it and sometimes actively intervenes. For example, to prevent India from the contagion of the East Asian meltdown, the RBI increased in January 1998 (1) the Bank rate by 2 percentage points from 9% to 11%, and (2)

the cash reserve ratio from 10% to 10.5%.

While the exchange rate policy is important for exports, from a long-run perspective, a country's export competitiveness has to be rooted in micro level competitiveness, in terms of productivity growth and technological upgradation. One can examine the competitiveness of Indian industries by looking at their comparative advantage as revealed by their export performance. If a commodity's export shares in the total global exports of that commodity grows faster than the country's overall export share in the total global exports, then one can say that the commodity is gaining competitiveness. The picture that one finds at the sectoral level is rather bleak with India being just not competitive in a large number of sectors and losing competitiveness in some. Only in about 46 commodities out of a total of 404 commodities (Standard International Trade Classification, SITC, 4-digit level of classification), is India gaining competitiveness.

Following the reforms of 1991, India's exports, in US Dollar terms, grew on average at 19.6% per year over the period 1993-94 to 1995-96. Unfortunately, export growth has fallen to 5.6% and 2.1% in 1996-96 and 1997-97, respectively, and is expected to be negative (-5.1% - Economic Survey, 1998-99) in the current year. These developments seem to suggest that we may be heading towards another balance of payments crisis, though perhaps not of the same magnitude as the one faced in 1991.

## **Reconsidering India's Economic Nationalism**

**Andrew Wyatt**

The process of economic liberalisation and reform that began in 1991 signaled a de facto rejection of India's inward oriented economic nationalism. The BJP's particular use of the term 'swadeshi' and performance in government since 1998 could be seen as further evidence that economic nationalism has ceased to provide the rationale behind India's economic strategy. This paper will argue that by taking a closer look at the realist logic behind the neomercantilist approach to international political economy we can understand how economic nationalism continues to inform policy in changing circumstances. The paper will identify a longstanding nexus between India's development strategy and foreign policy that remains relevant. The paper will argue that this realist logic still holds considerable influence over policymakers though such an approach may be less than optimal.

## **Agricultural Price Policy In India: Some Issues In The Context Of Trade Liberalisation**

**A. Ganesh-Kumar**

In recent times, the Indian government has been increasing the procurement price for important food crops such as wheat and rice way above even international prices, resulting in massive food stocks amidst widespread poverty and deprivation. This paper argues that the current practice of setting procurement prices on a cost-plus basis leads to diversion of resources towards building food stocks to maintain prices, resulting in a loss of both growth and welfare. Moreover, such a price policy is also not compatible with the ongoing liberalisation of India's agricultural trade as per her commitments under the WTO Agreement on Agriculture (WTO-AoA), the aim of which is to align domestic prices with international prices. Against this background this paper argues in favour of reforms to the way procurement prices are set. A liberal trade regime can expose the country to a high degree of price volatility and hence a reformed agricultural price policy should aim to achieve food price stability to protect both domestic producer and consumer interests and maintaining national level food security. Price stability can be maintained by a combination of a liberal trade regime and an appropriate buffer stock / price support policy. The paper then proposes one plausible rule for setting domestic support price based on world market price, which is compatible with the provisions of the WTO-AoA.

## **MIGRATION**

### **The embodied work and well-being of seasonal migrant labourers' lives in Maharashtra**

**Lou Waite**

This paper will explore the embodied work and well-being of seasonal migrant labourers' lives in Maharashtra, with a particular focus on the inscription of working practices on their bodies. It is generally assumed rather than established that work unequivocally leads to well-being enhancement. Work has been seen to be pivotal to many understandings of poverty reduction and well-being enhancement as exemplified in both the New Poverty Agenda and many Women in Development policies which emphasise labour-intensive growth and greater participation by women in employment (World Bank 1990, UNDP 1995). Gender analysts in particular have, however, questioned the pathways through which work leads to well-being, for example, through 'time-famine' experienced by poor women due to long working

days, cultural disapproval of women in employment, and gender conflict within households. This paper explores the extent to which there is a new discursive space in the work to well-being nexus for a novel exploration of issues around embodiment to better understand work/well-being linkages within labour-intensive livelihoods. Research on embodiment in the west has tended to focus on 'abnormal' bodies, such as the anorexic, and on sexualities. However, using a concept of embodiment seems useful when approaching poverty analysis as it attends in new and subtle ways to the endowment which poor seasonal migrant labourers rely on more than any other - their bodies. In the context of their energy-intensive work, this paper will focus on the inscription of working practices on the bodies of these labourers, and the extent to which this links to concepts of well-being. Migration in Policy and Practice in South Asia

## **‘They Used to Go to Eat, Now They Go to Earn’: The Changing Meanings of Seasonal Migration from Puruliya District in West Bengal, India**

**Ben Rogaly and Daniel Coppard,**

This article uses migrant workers’ testimonies to analyse whether and how much the act of migrating seasonally for wage work has contributed to changing social relations. We investigate changes in the meaning of this kind of migration to workers involved in it over their working lives. The emergence of peasant capitalism in West Bengal from the 1970s resulted in more days work and higher wages for migrant workers. This made it possible for wage workers to view migration as a way of earning and accumulating a useful lump sum, rather than simply surviving through food payments during the period of work, as had taken place in the past. However, there has no general move away from the compulsion to earn a wage through hard manual labour. Through the testimonies we explore the ambivalence of migrant workers towards changes in the relations of production at home and at the destination workplace.

## **Migration in Policy and Practice in South Asia**

**Francis Watkins**

The paper is based on research funded by the Department for International Development, in which I examined national and regional policy on international migration from South Asia in order to understand the impact of government interventions on migration flows. In this paper I will first look at changing migration flows over the last thirty years, and will then go on to look at the ways in which policy affects migrants from sending and to receiving countries.

International migration flows from South Asia have changed significantly over the last three decades, in terms of numbers of migrants, their places of origin and the range of destinations. The numbers of migrants from all the countries of South Asia have grown considerably, particularly in the last ten years. Migration flows are becoming more complex, in response to a greater range of demands for labour of all types, from highly skilled to domestic and unskilled, and for both legal and illegal workers, and from an increasing range of countries.

To understand how policies affect migrants, I consider two sets of examples. First, in looking at the policies on emigration from South Asia, I will contrast Sri Lanka, where there has been a growing proportion of female emigrants, with Nepal and Bangladesh, where there are concerns about the trafficking of women and children. Second, to examine some aspects of immigration policies, I compare Europe, where efforts are concentrated on controlling entry of migrants, with the Gulf states, where policies are aimed at developing a sense of insecurity amongst migrants and aim to discourage long-term settlement.

## **LOCAL CULTURE AND MODERNITY**

The Tension between Muslim and Western Societies: Political rather than Civilisational

SM Ali Taghavi

Since the terrorist attacks of September the 11<sup>th</sup>, Samuel Huntington’s theory of “clash of civilisations” is gaining ground. According to a journalistic version of the theory, Osama bin Laden and its supporters are bad guys waging a war against the western way of life and freedoms enjoyed by prosperous inhabitants of western societies. Interestingly, the other side of the story, that is, Bin Laden and

supporters of the overthrown regime of Taleban, use a similar terminology, and describe the present war as a fight between Islam and the infidels, which another version of the fight between good and evil. The theory of clash of civilisations helps both sides to recruit more people of their own side to their ranks. However, it is of paramount importance to avoid a sort of terminology that might explain some, but not all, the facts. Such a theory might be misleading. Values of freedom and democracy are as much understandable for non-western societies as values of community and spirituality are for western societies. The difference is that they rank these values differently. Political problems, on the other hand, are relatively easier to solve, and in the case of the Middle East and South East Asia, the West can help resolving problems which itself has helped their creation. Claiming that the roots of conflict are political, I am not trying to give any credit to the way that the conflict is fought.

## **Christian Missionaries and the British Indian state: 19<sup>th</sup> century Voluntarism and Indian Secularism**

**Nandini**

**Chatterjee**

A paper that tries to disentangle the two aspects of the concept of secularism: that of secularisation of the social mind and that of the relationship between the Church and State. The argument is that it was the second aspect, with its implications for the religious liberty to profess and preach any religion without civil disability and the (il)legitimacy of state patronage of a particular religious system that agitated politics in Britain in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with little thought to secularisation. This historical struggle in the metropolis for religious liberty and voluntarism in religion had important and unpredictable contributions to make to the Indian political system and its relation to religion.

The Liberal party in Britain supported the removal of civil disabilities of the non-Anglicans in Britain in the pre-Reform period (pre-1860's), and argued for the extension of the right to preach Christianity in India (against the fears of the Conservative India hands) on the same religious liberty plank. As for state patronage of a particular religion, the Liberals could not agree with the Nonconformist demand for disestablishment of the Anglican church in England and Wales, the argument being the religious rights of the majority: the state should provide religious ministrations to the masses. But, the Liberal and the Nonconformist arguments went through important changes in India: Liberals fought the Conservatives to "disestablish" the Hindu and Muslim religious institutions, and to "establish" the Anglican Church as a state department in India (along with Nonconformist state-paid chaplains), all with the support of the Nonconformists. On the one hand, the immensity of heathendom seemed to encourage institutionalized ecumenism within Christendom to an astonishing extent. On the other hand both the Nonconformist/Liberal religious liberty argument, as well as the ingrained Indian official fear of interfering with the religions of Indians made non-coercive preaching an axiom in India.

The right to preach seemed to become an uncontested right in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, with competitive preaching by Hindus and Muslims only underlining this right. The question came to be reopened formally not by the sporadic violence against missionaries, but in the early twentieth century, with Gandhi's ethical questioning of the conversion of lower castes. In the stand-off with Ambedkar, Gandhi delegitimized conversion spiritually and repudiated the right to convert politically, saying that in the spiritual realm there were no rights. But it is notable the Ambedkar's view came to be enshrined in the Indian constitution, probably less as the result of Liberal ideology, and more the power of Dalit politics in India.

The state patronage question became a major political issue in the early twentieth century not so much over the established Church of England in India, which separated (and was thus disestablished) from the Church of England in 1929 as a result of the internal efforts of Indian Christians to take control of their own Church. But sectarian religious instruction the government funded schools became a general concern. Private (including missionary) educational institutions which enjoyed government grants according to the 1854 Wood's Despatch, were required by a conscience clause to restrict their religious instruction to particular parts of the day, and make them voluntary. Ironically, but not surprisingly, the Nonconformist British missionaries opposed both these measures: while in Britain they had fought vehemently for them.

The point here is to defetishize the "Westernity" of secularism as a political principle, and, studying it through a historical process of making in the political continuum from India to Britain, and see how a political ideology of the correct state relationship with religion came to be meaningful to large numbers of political actors in India, often for reasons very different from the site of genesis of the ideology.

## **DIASPORA**

### **Elements to the comprehension of Hindu Diaspora: the Portuguese experience**

**Nuno Dias**

In this paper what we aim it is to trace the course of the Hindu dispersion and to identify the elements that characterize it and simultaneously allow us to distinguish it of the other migrating groups in established in Portugal with origin in the Indian sub-continent (fore say Muslims, Ismailis and Goese). At the same time, we invoke the academic discussion around the elected concepts. For that we found necessary, previously to the references to the dispersion, an allusive observation to the cast phenomenon, that, following the specialists' advices in the matter (vd. Fuller, 1992, Perez, 1994, Rudner, 1994, *inter alia*), we believed to be an important contribution for the proposed reflection. Next we propose a return to the past, theoretically backgrounding the a) the relationship of the Indians with Eastern Africa and the beginning of its dispersion en route for the rest of the World, analysing, obviously, b) the Mozambique territory with particular accuracy and c) the exodus from the African colonies and its arrival to Europe in a general way, particularizing the expression of this movement, in its arrival to Portugal, a diffused in time entrance. Subsequently the concept of Diaspora assumes the spotlight in our reflection, opening with the classic texts that introduced the notion to Social Sciences, to the contemporary works that centralize its problematization around what considers to be the approach adapted to the Diaspora concept. Concomitantly will be made an approach to the circumstances in which the Hindu Diaspora emerges from an Indian Diaspora and their interrelation. In the final section of this paper we will try to present a succession of "photographs" with the purpose of visualizing the consolidation of the associative expression in Portugal, anchoring our reflection in testimonies of individuals' directly involved in the creative process of such associations. The fundamental idea is the characterization of the Hindu Diaspora, increasing or decreasing our microscope lens as we converge ourselves in the developments of the same in a general way, or in its intersection with the Portuguese history.

## **Dynamics of jati and gender in early Sikh migration to Britain**

**Kanta Kaur Rhodes**

My research explores aspects of the South Asian diaspora by focusing on the historical experiences of a particular community that migrated to Britain in the early twentieth century, namely, the Bhatra Sikhs. This community presents an interesting case study of the ways in which processes of migration and re-settlement affected ethnic and gender identities. More specifically, I explore the problematic of jati and gender. Although Sikhi emerged as a radical challenge to Brahmanic oppression based on notions of gender and jati, such categories continued to exist in the Punjabi community within which Sikhi was enmeshed. Jati was a highly significant factor in social dynamics among Sikhs, not least in the ways in which it influenced patterns of migratory flows abroad. (Darshan Singh Tatla, *The Sikh diaspora* (1999)). The role of women migrants was also critical, particularly in the reproduction of ethnic identity. Taking the case of the early migrant Bhat Sikh women, I explore the ways in which ethnicity and its internal categories of jati and gender are reproduced. Tracing the socio-economic conditions and cultural notions of Sikh women in Punjab, we can discern the ways in which these norms are transformed by those that migrate and settle in Britain, and the process through which they are transmitted to second and subsequent generations.

## **Social exclusion and young South Asians in Britain'**

**Sutapa Haldar , Luton**

The government is determined that Britain should be a more successful multicultural country. There are challenges for diverse societies in also being inclusive. The government recognises that more needs to be accomplished and is willing to take some steps to promote race equality. The Social Exclusion Unit and Policy Action Team's report (2000) also put forward additional action to tackle minority ethnic social exclusion. I am interested to identify the perceived origins, nature, impact and sense of social exclusion among young South Asians from a South Asian perspective

The 1991 Census showed that out of the ethnic minority population of just over three million, almost half (2.7 per cent of the total population) was of South Asian origin. In spite of being a large population, South Asians are disproportionately excluded by racial discrimination, inadequate recognition of their diversities, inappropriate service provision, language, religion, and cultural differences (Social Exclusion Unit 2000). Significantly 50 per cent of the South Asian population of Britain is between 16 and 24 years of age compared with 31 per cent of the White population (Labour Force Survey 1999).

The research methodology of this study has got three main elements: First, secondary analysis of statistics of social exclusion in order to establish indicators of social exclusion for young South Asians, which is done mainly from available government data and background information. Second, professional and adult perspectives on 'social exclusion and South Asian youth' in local context is collected through interviewing relevant professionals and adults in Luton. Third, a diverse sample of young men and women of South Asian background between 13 and 19 years are interviewed to explore their experiences and perceptions of social exclusion. Interviews with young people revealing their experiences, concerns and perceptions of social exclusion; existing indicators of their exclusion; difference in extent and nature of concern about exclusion between young Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Kashmiris, and Indians. Next stage of the research will be to pay particular attention to analyse the concept of social exclusion and work of Social Exclusion Unit from a South Asian perspective.

## ECONOMIES II

India's Economic Liberalisation and the Manufacturing Sector

This paper assesses the impact of India's economic reforms initiated in 1991 on methods of financing investment and productive efficiency of the major industries in India's manufacturing sector. The 'sunrise' industries such as software and pharmaceuticals seem to have benefited from access to imported technology and the distortion free competitive environment. In general, however, the post-reform period appears to be one of turbulence and disequilibrium with most manufacturing industries recording a decline in total factor productivity growth.

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## **FIRST DRAFTS**

### **“Frontiers”**

BASAS Chairman John Harriss has been in Assam recently on an ESRC research project on governance. The paper that follows is a draft of some of his first thoughts. That has prompted BASAS Secretary to submit something on the North-West Frontier. Graham Chapman is just finishing a revised 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of *The Geopolitics of South Asia*, due out in January in paperback (Ashgate). He has included a new chapter “Securing the Empire”, on the North-West Frontier. The abstract here is from one section of that chapter on a Muslim fundamentalist uprising in the late C19th.

#### **The State, Tradition And Conflict In The North Eastern States Of India**

**John Harriss**

## Preface

This short paper outlines some of the background to the work which is being carried on with the Crisis States Programme (based in the Development Studies Institute at the London School of Economics) in North East India, by Professors Apurba Baruah and Manorama Sharma of the North Eastern Hill University, Shillong, Meghalaya. It draws on the visit that I made to Shillong in March 2002, and on the text of a *Consultation Paper* on 'Empowering and Strengthening of Panchayati Raj Institutions/Autonomous District Councils/ Traditional Tribal Governing Institutions in North East India' submitted to the National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution in December 2001. I shall refer to this henceforward as the 'Consultation Paper'. Professor Baruah was one of the main contributors to the writing of the Paper. I have also benefited from discussion at the Symposium on 'Conflicts in South Asia' held by the South Asia Research Group in the School of Development Studies at the University of East Anglia in June 2002.

## Introduction

The North East of India is little known and relatively little studied, within India as well as outside. It is the region of the so-called 'seven sisters', of which Assam is by far and away the most populous, joined by Meghalaya, Mizoram, Tripura, Manipur, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh. All of these states, with the exception (I believe) of the last are marked in some way by insurgency movements. The Consultation Paper about the states, submitted to the National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution, begins as follows: "The North East of India, home to numerous diverse communities and located strategically with borders with Bhutan, Tibet/China, Myanmar and Bangladesh, has seen much violence and bloodshed over the past few decades. These include insurgencies in the States of Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur, Tripura and Assam and the growth of militant groups in Meghalaya. In addition there are conflicts and confrontations over land use and control as well as issues of language, identity formation, demographic change and minority-majoritarian relations". In general conflict in the North East arises from the sense of alienation from the Indian state of many people whose aspirations lead them to assert their independent identities, and the commitment to India, on the other hand, of those social groups that have benefited from the high levels of subsidies paid out by the Indian government (and that are presumably reflected in part in the relatively low level of poverty in these states, at least according to official figures, and their relatively high levels of educational performance. These latter, however, also reflect the activities of Christian missionaries which probably account, in the main, for the fact that Mizoram has the highest levels of literacy in the country). It is likely, too, that both some politicians and some insurgents stand to benefit from the persistence of conflict, which draws the central government in to spend substantial resources in the region. Tensions are also influenced by majority/minority and insider/outsider conflicts, as in Assam, cut across as they are by language issues.

Let me start with two anecdotes. On Easter Saturday I travelled from Shillong in Meghalaya down into Assam and the Brahmaputra Valley with a young PhD student in history from Mizoram. As we drove he talked to me about his family, and as he did so he started to recount first his father's experiences as a police officer, and then his own, witnessing the heavy-handed actions of Indian army jawans as they sought to control actual or supposed insurgents. It was evident from the way in which the young man described these experiences that he had been profoundly alienated from India through his perception of these actions. Then later in our talk he happened to mention that for his research he would need to visit an archive in Rangoon. It would be simple he said. He'd take a horse from his village, ride to the border, cross the river and then just travel down to Rangoon. Nobody would stop him, he said, because nobody would know that he was not Burmese, given the continuities of language and ethnicity between Mizoram and other parts of the North East with northern Burma. Then he surprised me by saying that, if there were a different, and more democratic regime in Burma, then he and he thought most people in Mizoram, Manipur and Meghalaya, at least, would rather be part of Burma than of India. It is perhaps only because Burma is not quite like Pakistan that the nationalities issues of the North Eastern states have not become quite so explosive as those of Kashmir. The slogan of some people in the Khasi Hills of Meghalaya is "Khasi by blood, Indian by accident". It is some of these people, I had learnt a day or so earlier, who were responsible for 'seeing off' the Chinese restaurateur from Calcutta who had run what had been considered to have been the best place to eat in Shillong.

The second anecdote involves an account of a little bit of 'research tourism':

*March 29 2002:* (both Good Friday and Holi). Visit to Nongkynrih Raid, about an hour's drive from Shillong, set in hilly country with potato and vegetable cultivation especially on the slopes and paddy rice in the valley bottoms. Pig rearing also important. Meet the Rongbah Shnong (headman) of one of the seven Durbar Shnongs within the Raid. His Durbar has 180 households. Only males are allowed to participate in the Durbar; outsiders if any there be, are excluded. He was 'elected' three years ago and expects to go on for as long as he is able. Not an open election but rather a process of establishing consensus. There is also a Secretary and nine executive members of the Durbar. They are all members of the Durbar Raid, which is headed by a Lyngdoh (which is a particular clan that customarily supplies the mentris [ministers] to the Syiem ['King']... and the people can only get the Lyngdoh changed by appealing to the head of Lyngdoh clan). There are a number of Raids within the Hima, of Tribal Kingdom (this is Hima Khyriem, under an hereditary Syiem. I understand that under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India, which deals with these parts of the country, the Syiem should be appointed by the Dt Council, but the Rongbah Shnong says that the Syiem has to be acceptable to the people in the first instance; and it seems possible that the role of the District Council is much less in this Hima than is legislated for under Sixth Schedule.

For example they access the forests around here by paying a tax to the Syiem, not to the District Council, which is what should be the case according to the legislation. [This may well be very significant, given the importance of access to timber in the politics of the North Eastern states. Timber is a major source of rents, and revenues from logging fuel much of the politics of the region<sup>[1]</sup>]. There are differences, perhaps, between Himas in the extent of the powers of the District Council. Here the only things that they get from the District Council, it is said, is what comes as a result of the MLA's grant, spent, for example, on water supply and footpaths. We talked in the small secondary school. This was built by the Raid, in response to requests from the people; and the Raid appoints and pays the 4 teachers there; there is a sub-committee which supervises the School; students take their school leaving exams as independent candidates. This is an instance, perhaps, of the benefits of 'participation' albeit in a context which denies democratic principles.

## 6

### **Traditional' Political Institutions**

This second of my anecdotes sets up the more specific problems that I want to address. Here apparently 'traditional' tribal political institutions remain highly significant in people's lives. As my fieldnotes show, in the Khasi Hills of Meghalaya the traditional polity, which "was regulated under a three tier system, with the Durbar Shnong i.e Village Council presided over by the Rongbah Shnong (headman) at the bottom, and the Durba Hima, i.e., State assembly presided over by the Syiem or equivalent of a king at the apex (and) in between the Durbar Raid, presided over by an elected headman known as Basra or Lyngdoh, or Sirdar " (Consultation Paper p 104) remains in place, alongside 'modern' institutions of government such as the District Council and the State Legislative Assembly.. The Rongbah Shnong is, as my notes suggest, in some sense 'elected' to the office by all inhabitants of the village irrespective of their clan affiliation; while representation at the Raid and Hima level is more rigid, for instance "the Syiem can only be elected from the Syiem's family or its legitimate branch. The electoral council, besides mentris also comprise of other heads of clans. This electoral council used to elect and appoint the Syiem" (Consultation Paper p 104). The Durbar Shnongs have a range of developmental, judicial and cultural functions (as I saw in Nongkynrih), and they are commonly approached to implement government programmes (such as Adult Literacy and Non-Formal Education); but they are said to have only "limited funds which are generally self-generated" (Consultation Paper). One of the objectives of our research is to find out more about how Durbars raise revenues and spend them, and relatedly about the legitimacy of these institutions. It is claimed by some, and assumed, perhaps, by others, that the Durbars are held by tribal people, if not by non-tribals, to exercise legitimate authority. Whether this is indeed so is being investigated by Professor Baruah. It is a matter of no little importance given the demands which are being made by representatives of the traditional institutions for Constitutional recognition. One memorandum which they have submitted states, for example, that "The inclusion of the Khasi states within the framework of the Indian Union was glaringly violative of the true and underlying spirit of the Instrument of Accession ... (and) A remedy of this Constitutional anomaly can be found by giving due recognition and protection of the traditional institutions under the Constitution of India" (Consultation Paper p 107). Correspondingly, the major political parties in Meghalaya all argue that the panchayat system, legislated for under the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> mendements to the Constitution of India, is not necessary for the state.

These claims for them notwithstanding, the traditional political institutions are not democratic, though they are also instruments of at least a certain kind or degree of local participation, and they may be effective means of resolving local problems of collective action. They exclude outsiders; and we have some evidence from the studies that are now in process that outsiders are treated differently before the law than are tribal insiders, and can be scape-goated whilst tribal insiders are in effect protected from the police. Women are excluded altogether from the rural Durbar that I visited in Nongkynrih, and in the urban Durbar in Shillong that I also went to the Chairman, a former Education Department official, was frank that though women are now also considered as members, they are not eligible for election to the executive. The notion of 'election', too, probably does not at all accurately reflect the process whereby the leadership emerges. It will be surprising if the research that Professor Baruah is now conducting does not show that Rongbah Shnongs and executive members are all men from high status families, who decide upon the leadership amongst themselves. Though money maybe lies with the regular government bodies, authority lies with the Durbars; and it seems that anyone wishing to pursue a political career in Meghalaya probably needs a secure base in the Durbars. In other words we seem to have to do with a kind of local association which is effective, powerful and also not at all democratic, and which is the basis of tribal identity and separateness, and may therefore augment the forces of separatism – and of conflict. Separatist sentiments re fostered for example by youth organisations in Meghalaya, with the Non-Tribal Youth Union pitted against Khasi (tribal) groups. .There are important connections, it seems, between the Durbars and the powerful Khasi Students Union and with the Federation of Khasi and Jaintia Peoples (the goals of each of which are 'modern' though the methods they deploy involve calls upon tradition and ethnicity), and with the Hynniewtrep National Liberation Council which is described as "not quite a secessionist movement", but which is armed and uses the slogan "Khasi by blood, Indian by accident".

In some ways the tribal durbars of Meghalaya (and elsewhere in the North East) strike me as being comparable with the many other kinds of parallel structures that exist or that have arisen in different parts of the world and that represent a kind of 'bifurcation', standing as alternatives to the institutions of modern states. Another example, though of a different kind, is the institution in different African states of gangs of something very like vigilantes encouraged, as in Tanzania, to function in the place of the police and even the judiciary.

## Conflicts of Authority

The problems that are posed for a modern, democratic state by the strength of these tribal institutions was recognised by the authors of the Constitution of India, who aimed at accommodation of tribal aspirations and identities within the democratic framework through 'tribal self-rule'. The Fifth Schedule of the Constitution, applying to the tribals of Central India was frankly paternalistic, but the Sixth Schedule (mentioned above) envisaged instruments of tribal self-rule for the North East (then all part of greater Assam) and set up special Autonomous District Councils, which were sometimes exempted from national laws and the influence of parliament. In Meghalaya ADCs were set up for each of the three tribal regions, the Khasi, Jaintia and Garo Hills, which had somewhat distinct traditional ruling systems headed by Syiems in the Khasi Hills, the Dolois of Jaintia and the Nokmas of the Garos. The Syiems of the Khasis are most influential and organised and it is said in the Consultation Paper that "the Syiems are a clan based political system more in line of a feudal and monarchical political authority than [what are often supposed to be] tribal democratic traditions. *The limited political participation available to the common tribal under the traditional system need not necessarily fulfil the political aspirations of newly-emerging, forward-looking tribal elites*" (emphasis added, JH). The functions of the Autonomous District Councils, and of the state legislatures came to overlap in the North Eastern states covered by the Sixth Schedule, while the Syiems (or their equivalents) and their Durbars remained excluded in principle whilst retaining significant powers in practice (though more in some regions, like the Khasi Hills of Meghalaya, than in some others). Thus, it is said in the Consultation Paper that "It could be cogently argued that in Meghalaya there are ... three competing systems of authority, each of which is seeking to 'serve' or represent the same constituency. The result has been confusion and confrontation especially at the local level on a number of issues". Confrontation was expressed quite recently when elections could not be held to the Shillong Municipality because of the pressure from some political parties, student organisations and other non-government groups (in spite of a Supreme Court ruling ordering the elections). And in the Khasi Hills, in particular, non-tribals have rarely contested or won elections, and there are charges that non-tribals are not encouraged to vote in elections and that their names are often deleted from the rolls.

In 2001 it was being argued again in the Consultation Paper for the Constitutional Review Committee that "Trends towards militancy ... can be discouraged through measures leading to self-governance. For this to happen the traditional systems of governance will have to be included and given specific roles and opportunities, instead of being marginalised as they have been for decades". This recalls the intentions behind the Sixth Schedule, and is a response, as I understand it, to the facts that I have just recounted about the overlaps of authority and responsibility and resulting confrontations. What is being proposed now, in the context of the general intention to establish decentralised government enshrined in the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> amendments is to set up a three-tier system, with the First Tier being "representative of existing village councils and traditional systems ... where such institutions are strong and functional. This may be called the Durbar in the Khasi Hills and by the local nomenclature elsewhere and may comprise elected members of each village from the community/traditional systems". This tier is expected to deal with such matters as village roads, births and deaths registry, marriages, property alienation, water bodies, forests, education, agriculture (etc) - all of which seems like quite a tall order. Larger issues and subjects go the Second Tier, amended District Councils, under the overall supervision of the State Legislature as the Third Tier, that delegates powers, as under the 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment, to local governing bodies.

But the argument that "Careful steps should be taken to devolve political powers through the intermediate and local-level traditional political organisations", as will be clear probably from the short accounts that I have given of the Durbars I visited, still poses a serious dilemma. This is pointed up in the later statement in the same paragraph of the Consultation Paper, when it says that powers should be devolved through the traditional political institutions " *provided their traditional practices carried out in a modern world do not deny legitimate democratic rights to/of any section in their contemporary society*" (emphasis added, JH). It can surely be asked whether those who drew up the consultation paper (who included the leading politician from Meghalaya and sometime Speaker of the Lok Sabha, P A Sangma) weren't suggesting the combination of opposites. The rhetoric of the Paper only seems to underline the point. It goes on: "The details of state-wise steps to devolve such powers will have to be carefully considered in a proper representative meeting of traditional leaders of each community ...". Yet "The system of in-built safeguards, such as the Sixth Schedule, should be maintained and strengthened for the minority groups while empowering them with greater responsibilities and opportunities", and while "traditional forms of governance must be associated with self-governance because of the political failure of local elites ... positive elements like gender justice and adult franchise should be built into these institutions to make them broader based and capable of dealing with a changing world where globalisation is critical ...". The practical steps that are proposed to secure gender justice and adult franchise are the usual ones of setting aside reserved seats and constituencies. The question is whether the circle (of working through traditional institutions whilst making them correspond with the standards of a modern civil society) really can be squared in this way.

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from **The Geopolitics of South Asia: 2<sup>nd</sup> Edn. (January 2003)**

### Chapter 5: Securing the Empire

#### Section 5.7 'Muslim Fanatics' and the Rebellion of 1863

**Graham Chapman, Lancaster**

In the late C18th a reformed brigand Zamin Shah from Buner ( also spelt Bonair) established himself as a recluse at a place called Sittana on the southern flanks of the Mahaban (Great Forest) Mountain west of the Indus near Amb. Two of his grandsons became lieutenants of the Muslim Crescentader[2] Sayyid Ahmad[3], known at the time as the Prophet, who had united some of the Pathan tribes against Ranjit Singh,

Maharaja of Punjab, in 1824 and had taken Peshawar by 1826. There he struck coins with the legend 'Ahmad the Just, Defender of the Faith; the glitter of whose scimitar scatters destruction among the Infidels' (Hunter, 1871). Sayyid Ahmad was finally killed by the Sikh army in 1831, but the two brothers escaped back to Sittana with some of the remnants of Ahmad's forces. One remained there, the other was enthroned as the King of Swat (who died in 1857).

The surviving brother, Sayyid Umar Shah, continued with the crescentade that Sayyid Ahmad had begun. Now, Sayyid Ahmad himself had been born in Bareilly District of modern Uttar Pradesh, on the Ganges Plains. He had been on the pilgrimage to Mecca, where he had attracted the authorities for his fundamentalist pro-Wahhabi leanings. On his return to India he preached across the country with passion, became convinced of his own mission, and set up a religious foundation at Patna, run by his appointed Caliphs. They taxed the local faithful, so that the institution was permanently funded, and it spawned other local centres from Bengal across northern India supported by dedicated preachers. Sayyid Umar Shah used the chain to find recruits, money and supplies, from right under the noses of the British.

Until 1849 Sayyid Umar Shah's forces descended from the hills in sporadic attacks on Ranjit Singh's Punjab – so it appeared to be no great matter to the British anyway. However, in that year the Punjab was annexed, and the northern border did become of interest to the British, who were disquietened by the raiding and hostage-taking, which continually increased. The general approach to controlling them was to exert pressure on the local tribes, by threatening their villages or by fining them, so that they in turn would control the crescentaders in the hills. Between 1850 and 1857 sixteen expeditions totalling 33,000 regular troops were committed to these exercises. In 1857 the crescentaders sensed they could form a coalition with the tribes to attack the British while the Mutiny threatened Delhi. General Sir Sidney Cotton commanded 5,000 troops in an expedition which:

'burned the villages of the rebel allies, razed or blew up the two most important forts, and destroyed the Traitor Settlement at Sittana.' (Hunter, 1871:24).

The next sentence continues

'The fanatics, however, merely fell back into the fastnesses of the Mahaban mountain; and so little was their power shaken, that a new Settlement at Mulka was immediately granted them by a neighbouring tribe.'

By 1861 they were back in Sittana.

'So long as we left it alone, it steadily sent forth bands to kidnap and murder our allies: when we tried to extirpate it by our arms, it baffled our leaders, inflicted severe losses on our troops, and for a time defied the whole Frontier Force of British India.' (28).

In 1863 a major British Force of 7,000 men with 4,000 pack animals under General Sir Neville Chamberlain, and supplies were sent across the Indus, beyond Amb, and into the Ambela Pass (La simply means 'pass'). The idea was to go round the Mahaban mountain so the rebels could not escape north, but would be driven east and south towards the Indus and other British forces. Reports had suggested the tribes would not be hostile. On the 19<sup>th</sup> of October the first troops reached the narrow wooded defiles at the head of the pass, and were immediately attacked. Though the top of the pass was successfully occupied, further passage proved impossible. Seeing the British in difficulties, more and more of the local tribes sided with the rebels, until some 60,000 were pitched against Chamberlain's army. Fighting to take, to hold, to repulse, to re-take the ridges of the mountain crests raged night and day for weeks, while cold and sickness also took its toll. Word spread southwest into the Pathan areas of Afghanistan, where further insurrections threatened. By late November disaster clearly threatened. Then the tide turned, when the Commissioner from Peshawar managed to buy-off some of the Buner clans, backing up the carrot with some violence in which Ambela village was destroyed and 200 clansmen left dead or wounded. Other tribes began to defect, the British forced the pass, and succeeded in destroying the settlement at Mulka, hunted down the fanatics, and returned to the plains by the end of December. Some peace and stability was brought to the area for some years, but at a high price: British losses had been heavy.

It is the aftermath that proves so interesting. Hunter's book was written while the trials of the conspirators were still being conducted in India. His book begins as follows:

## Chapter 1

### The Rebel Camp on our Frontier

The Bengal Muhammadans are again in a strange state. For years a Rebel Colony has threatened our Frontier; from time to time sending forth fanatic swarms, who have attacked our camps, murdered our subjects, and involved our troops in three costly Wars. Month by month, this hostile Settlement across the border has systematically recruited from the heart of Bengal. Successive State trials prove that a network of conspiracy has spread itself over our Provinces, and that the bleak mountains which rise beyond the Panjab are united by an unbroken chain of treason-depots with the tropical swamps through which the Ganges merges into the sea. They disclose an organisation which systematically levies money and men in the Delta, and forwards them by regular stages along our high-roads to the rebel camp two thousand miles off. Men of keen intelligence and ample fortune have embarked in the plot, and a skilful system of remittances has reduced one of the most perilous enterprises of treason to a safe banking operation.' (9).

How the power of Empire could long be resisted was a question needing to be addressed.

It is easy to understand how a Settlement of traitors and refugees, backed by the seditious and fanatical masses within our Empire, could, in an excess of bigoted hatred, throw down the gauntlet. But it is difficult to comprehend how they could, even for a time, withstand the combined strategy and weight of a civilised army.' (28).

The allure of the extremists was felt in all sections of Muslim society.

‘While the more fanatical of the Musalmans have thus engaged in overt sedition, the whole Muhammadan community has been openly deliberating on their obligation to rebel.’(10)

‘Somehow or other, every Musalman seems to have found himself called upon to declare his faith; to state, in the face of his co-religionists, whether he will or will not contribute to the Traitor’s Camp on our Frontier; and to elect, once and for all, whether he shall play the part of a devoted follower of Islam or of a peaceable subject of the Queen.’ (10)

Hunter’s book has the delightful title: *Our Indian Musalmans: are they bound in conscience to rebel against the Queen?* Victoria had only been proclaimed Queen in 1858, after the Mutiny, and why many, if any, Muslims should feel loyalty to a distant, absent woman, is unclear. But his point was real enough. He knew that such a wide-spread treason could only have worked if there had been sufficient numbers of people sufficiently grieved, and he took Muslim grievances seriously. They had lost power and office under the British and had not adopted as well as Hindus to the new education on offer. Hunter discusses in great detail the exact question of his title. In Islamic law there are two kinds of political states: Dar-ul-Islam, countries of submission (to the faith), and Dar-ul-Harb, countries of the enemies. There are definitions given for these terms. If a Muslim is in Dar-ul-Harb, he should rebel (it is lawful to make jihad), or leave for Dar-ul-Islam. The Muslim lawyers of Northern India, the three most senior lawyers in Mecca, and the Calcutta Muhammadan Society were all asked to rule on the matter of whether India under Christian British rule was or was not Dar-ul-Harb. In all three case the ruling (fatwah) was that because the British afforded protection and because they permitted Islamic worship to continue, India was not Dar-ul-Harb, and for these reasons and the further reason that there was no realistic probability of overthrowing them by force, jihad was not lawful.

In case, which I very much doubt, the reader has missed the parallels: for Wahhabi read Taleban, for Sayyid Ahmad read Osama Bin Laden, for Sittana read Tora Bora; for Sayyid Umar Shah read Mullah Omar; for Treason-depot read terrorist cell; for banking operation - well, read banking operations. In June 2002 during the same month as the jubilee celebrations in Britain for the fifty-year reign of the Queen, *The Guardian* newspaper ran a series of articles on the role of moderate Muslims in Britain, and asked whether or not they could be both Muslim and English or British. In India it is all too easy in times of tension with Pakistan for *agents provocateurs* to suggest the disloyalty of Indian Muslims, so that non-Moslems turn on them.

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### Conference Notices

**Annual Conference: Oxford, Monday April 7<sup>th</sup> till Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> 2003**

**The BASAS annual conference is being organised in Oxford by Katharine Adeney. If any member wishes to volunteer to convene a panel, or has any other proposal for the conference, please contact Katharine at: [katharine.adeney@balliol.ox.ac.uk](mailto:katharine.adeney@balliol.ox.ac.uk)**

**Political Studies Association Annual Conference, Leicester University**

The South Asia Group is chaired by Katharine Adeney 15th-17th April 2003

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### **CULTURE**

**We realise this will reach BASAS readers too late to entice them to attend, but we thought that knowledge of the event and contents important enough to include anyway.**

**SRI LANKA AT THE CINEMA 22-25 July 2002, ICA, The Mall, London SW1 [www.ica.org.uk](http://www.ica.org.uk)**

*An exploration of the lyrical and politically astute film tradition of a country long divided by civil war and cinematically overshadowed by the might of the Indian film industry.*

As a part of the UK-wide ImagineAsia celebrations, the ICA presents a selection of the finest cinema that Sri Lanka has to offer, opening this fascinating and often-neglected tradition up for international delectation.

The programme includes appearances by key Sri Lankan industry figures who will be available for interview in advance by phone or during the film season in person.

The range of material is comprehensive, starting with the seminal *The Song of Ceylon*, shot in the thirties. Originally sponsored by the Ceylon Tea Board, this piece is a fascinating cultural relic, displaying both revolutionary technology for its time as well as a surprisingly penetrating and objective view of a complex cultural situation. This screening will be followed by a discussion about the history and future of Sri Lankan cinema, led by curator Priyath Liyanage, who will be joined by actress Yasodha Wimaladharmasiri and director Prasanna Vithanage.

Vithanage's film *Walls Within* will also be shown, with the director introducing the screenings. This film follows the plight of seamstress Violet as she grapples with the meaning of love and what exactly constitutes insanity. *Fire and Water* stars Yasodha Wimaladharmasiri, who will also introduce screenings of the film. This groundbreaking work is the first Sri Lankan film to use digital sound and non-linear editing, and is period piece revolving around an attack on the king, with Yasodha's character acting as a deadly catalyst to the events around her. Other films include debut feature *Compensation* which deals with the ravages of guilt while introducing its audience to the breathtaking splendour of the Sri Lankan landscape and *Saroja* which insightfully probes the Tamil Tiger situation, refusing to settle for obvious conclusions. The lush cinematography and the inextricably linked emotional and political insights of the characters make these films both a pleasurable as well as deeply moving watch.

## **SRI LANKA AT THE CINEMA: COMPLETE PROGRAMME**

### **Pilgrimage (Teertha Yaatra)**

A film which goes in search of roots, director Vasantha Obeysekere's research for a documentary on adoption led to the dramatisation of this story in which a young woman is faced with the problem of finding out about her biological parents. The film is dominated by the incredible performance of Yasodha Wimaladharmasiri as Menaka, alongside the character of her lover Kusal (Channa Perera). Also starring Joe Abeywickrema, Ravindra Randeniya and Veena Jayakody. Cinematography by Jayanath Gunawardena.

**Dir Vasantha Obeysekera, Sinhala with English subtitles**

### **Compensation (Aswesuma)**

The debut feature from Sri Lankan filmmaker, Bennet Rathnayake, this film tells the story of a widower who can only reveal the crimes of his past after his wife's death. We flash back over fifty years as Guneris recounts his deeds to the police in his attempts to bring peace to his final days. Most of the film's scenes are set deep in the jungles of Sri Lanka giving a glimpse of natural splendour rarely seen in the West. The award-winning Aswesuma has appeared in numerous film festivals to great critical acclaim. With Joe Abeywickrama, Jackson Anthony, Ravindra Randeniya and Sangeetha Weeraratna

**Dir Benette Ratnayake, Sri Lanka Sinhala English subtitles**

### **The Song of Ceylon**

Sponsored by the Ceylon Tea Board, but characteristic of the British Documentary Movement's ability to subvert their material beyond the purely promotional, Wright's seminal documentary is a film of great lyricism and complexity. One of the most formally experimental of 1930s documentaries, the film was also revolutionary in its use of post-synchronised sound. Wright radically declines to either romanticise Ceylon's pre-colonial past or to celebrate the so-called 'progress' brought by British imperialism. (Dir Basil Wright, UK 1935, 40 mins, b&w).

**Dir Prasanna Vithanage and actress Yasodha Wimaladharm.**

### **Walls within (Pavuru Walalu)**

With the money she earns making clothes on a battered sewing machine, Violet scrapes a living for herself and her two daughters in their small home inside the old fortress of the southern port city of Galle. Tormented by her estranged husband, Violet sees her daughter's drift into marriage and then encounters the shocking return of her own first true love who has been away at sea for many years. Embarking on her own voyage of self-discovery leads Violet to a place that some see as insanity. From the director of *Death on a Full Moon Day*, a passionate drama starring Tony Ranasinghe, Nita Fernando, Sangeetha Weeraratne, Damayanthi Fonseka, Mahendra Perera and Roger Seneviratne.

**Dir Prasanna Vithanage, Sinhala with English subtitles**

### **Saroja**

A hugely popular story from the civil war, in which a Tamil forced to join the Tiger rebels and his young daughter are sheltered by a Sinhalese family who eventually pay an enormous price for their offer of humanitarian aid. A superb dramatisation of a complex and deep-seated conflict, which employs children's lack of prejudice and history and their natural optimism as a benchmark for progress. The fabulous cinematography is by Suminda Weerasinghe.

**Dir Somaratne Dissanayake, Sinhala with English subtitles**

### **Fire and Water (Agni Daahaya)**

The first Sri Lankan movie to use digital sound and non-linear editing is a period film set in the seventeenth century and focusing on a revolt against the king. The political situation is the backdrop for the film's exploration of interpersonal relationships, human values and resources, rediscovering their contemporary significance. Yasodha Wimaladharm gives a wonderful performance as the woman pursued for her beauty, who brings chaos to those around her. Also starring Jackson Anthony, Kamal Addararachchi and Buddhadasa Witanachchi.

**Dir Jayantha Chandrasiri, Sinhala with English subtitles**

**Three-year fixed term contract Reference: B6606**

We wish to appoint an analyst on a three-year fixed term contract, to provide research and analysis mainly on India, but also on other South Asian Countries as required. You will follow closely the politics of India and other countries and provide analysis and background on key internal developments. India-Pakistan relations, including developments in Kashmir, will be a significant focus as will other major developments in relations between the countries of the region and further afield. You should have extensive knowledge of South Asian current affairs, a sound appreciation of relevant historical and geographical factors, and ideally have a track record of specialisation in the politics or international relations of the region. All posts require good research and analytical skills. You will be expected to have a good honours degree in a relevant subject, and most likely, a post-graduate qualification. You will be expected to produce sound analysis, even when faced with large amounts of data, and often to short deadlines. You should be able to communicate effectively in writing and orally. You should be a good teamworker, flexible, and familiar with IT. You will normally have opportunities to visit your area or relevant institutions. Subject to official approval, you may be able to publish on your area. Further information about Research Analysts is available on the FCO website: [www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk)

*You must be a British citizen, have been a British citizen for at least five years, and have been resident in the United Kingdom for at least five years prior to the date of application ignoring any temporary periods overseas for work, study or travel. The FCO is an equal opportunities employer and aims to reflect the diversity of British society. We welcome applications from all suitably*

*qualified individuals irrespective of race, gender or disability.*

For further particulars about the above posts and an application form (to be returned by 1 August 2002), please contact Capita RAS, Innovation Court, New Street, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 7JB, or telephone 01325 745170 (24 hours), or fax 01256 383787, or internet: [www.capitaras.co.uk](http://www.capitaras.co.uk) Please quote the appropriate reference number.

## **The Rabindranath Tagore Professorship in Indian Cultures and Civilization**

And the Directorship of the India Studies Program

**Indiana University**

Indiana University, Bloomington, announces a national/international search to fill the Rabindranath Tagore Professorship in Indian Cultures and Civilization and the Directorship of the India Studies Program, effective July 1, 2003. Nominations and applications are invited from senior scholars in any discipline of the humanities and social sciences, including such fields as anthropology, art history, cultural studies, economics, folklore, geography, history, literature, music, philosophy, political science, and religious studies. Applicants should have an established and outstanding record of research and publication as well as considerable administrative experience, since the Tagore Professor will be tasked with grant-writing and fund-raising as well as directing the India Studies Program. The interdisciplinary India Studies Program offers an undergraduate minor, a certificate program, an undergraduate major, and a Ph.D. minor in India Studies; it has an affiliated faculty of eighteen members. The Program has a substantial endowment. The Director of India Studies reports directly to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. The Tagore Professor also works closely with the Dean of International Programs and interacts extensively with the Indian community throughout Indiana. Applicants should send a letter of interest and a curriculum vitae to Professor Henry Glassie, Tagore Search Committee Chair, c/o Dean Kumble R. Subbaswamy, College of Arts and Sciences, Kirkwood Hall 104, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, 47405. Review of applications begins October 15, 2002 and will continue until the position is filled. Indiana University is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer, encouraging applications from women and members of minorities.

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## NEXT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Friday September 27<sup>th</sup> in Oxford, c/o Katharine Adeney ([katharine.adeney@balliol.ox.ac.uk](mailto:katharine.adeney@balliol.ox.ac.uk))

The main item will be planning for the April 2003 Conference in Oxford. Any other items for the committee, please send to Graham Chapman ( [g.chapman@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:g.chapman@lancaster.ac.uk) )

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### END NOTES

[1] I owe this point in part to Professor Piers Blaikie of the University of East Anglia

[2] This term is currently unusual, but was used by the British to express the Muslim equivalent of a Crusader. Much of this account is based on Hunter (1871) who used the term throughout his book.

[3] Sayyid Ahmad's supporters circulated a manifesto across north India which goes as follows:

'The Sikh nation have long held sway in Lahore and other places. Their oppressions have exceeded all bounds. Thousands of Muhammadans have they unjustly killed, and on thousands they have heaped disgrace. No longer do they allow the call to prayer from the mosques, and the killing of cows they have entirely prohibited. When at last their insulting tyranny could no longer be endured, Hazrat Sayyid Ahmad (may his fortunes and blessings ever abide), having for his single object the protection of the faith, took with a few Musalmans, and, going in the direction of Cabul and Peshawar, succeeded in rousing Muhammadans from their slumber of indifference, and nerving their courage for action. Praise be to God, some thousands of believers became ready at his call to tread the path of God's service; and on the 21<sup>st</sup> December 1826 (in the original: 20<sup>th</sup> Tamadi-ul-Sani, 1242 Hijra) the Jihad against the Infidel Sikhs begins.