



## REVIEWS

### **The Asian Gang: Ethnicity, Identity, Masculinity**

Claire E. Alexander

Berg Publishers, Oxford and New York, 2000

Hbk: ISBN 185973314X £45.00 US\$65.00

Pbk: ISBN 1859733190 £14.99 US\$19.50

pp. 262 (includes: index and bibliography)

Alexander's book is perhaps an even more timely study now than when it was initially published. In the wake of 9/11 and the suspicion that has subsequently fallen upon Muslims, studies of identity construction that encourage an appreciation of the complex nature of this process and that highlight the misunderstanding that certain groups suffer from are to be welcomed.

Alexander explores some of the negative, essentialising stereotypes that surround Asian youth. While Muslims have recently been demonised as part of a cultural clash with Western values, the 'Asian Gang' is the new 'folk devil' threatening to destabilise society in the United Kingdom. Arguing that the perception of Asians in the UK has undergone a transformation whereby they are no longer understood as a homogeneous group, she contends that there is a dualist split between categorising Asians as either Muslim or non-Muslim. It appears to be Muslim groupings such as Pakistanis and Bengalis who have suffered from this classification. They have been subject to the overtones of dominant representations of Muslims as aggressive, fundamentalist and threatening.

Her focus for the project is an all male youth group in South East London who class themselves as Bengali and Muslim in origin although not necessarily as practising members of Islam. Alexander charts how these young men engage with the representations that impact upon their identity, their struggle with the imposition of labels that they feel do not 'fit'.

The perception of young men roaming around estates as part of violent criminal gangs is one such negative characterisation. The author examines how this group of young men were cast as a 'gang' through a series of interviews with them and her own observations. Her thesis is not to assert that the youths she studied are innocent and blameless but rather to examine why they should be portrayed as they were. The activities of the young men are chronicled through their relationships with each other, their peers in school and with their reactions to their youth workers. Tales of violent, sometimes seemingly vindictive outbursts by the young men are told, often relating to their rivalries with other groups.

Although Alexander intends this study to have wider implications beyond its narrow focus, it is often difficult to make these connections. The main subjects of the study are a handful of teenage boys almost all of whom live on one housing estate. This was clearly a very personal project for Claire Alexander and she became closely involved with the youth group as a volunteer worker, gaining the confidence of the young men and making close friends with some of her co-workers. It seems that it was not only a personal but a life changing experience for Alexander, who has an Indian birth mother but white adoptive parents and had always felt a sense of dislocation from an Asian community she had not grown up as part of. My criticism is not that this level of personal involvement stunted Alexander's capacity to be objective, but rather that it contributed to the difficulty in understanding the thread of her narrative.

At her own admission, despite her desire to involve the young men closely in the project in order to make the narrative dialogic rather than monologic, the presentation of the

material is undoubtedly authored and therefore controlled by Alexander. Although some of her co-workers in the youth group read the manuscript and suggested alternative interpretations to events from Alexander, it is of course impossible to include all these views in one text. She acknowledges that the book was 'authored' to a greater degree than expected. In this case the noble aim of involving the subjects and objects of study in what she calls a 'fiction' appears to have contributed to confusion over the construction of the narrative.

I think this book could have been more successful if it had been presented to the reader in a more coherent form because although some of the complexity and subtlety that Alexander manages to capture may have been lost, we may have been able to learn from the study more easily. And surely that should be the main point of a study such as this. We hope to learn theoretically as academics and perhaps to learn morally as individuals who are part of the wider society that might stereotype these young men and other groups who suffer misunderstanding as a result of the wayward imagination of those around them.

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### **Indigenous Peoples and Ethnic Minorities of Pakistan: Constitutional and Legal Perspectives**

Series: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, Vol. 84

Shaheen Sardar Ali and Javaid Rehman

Curzon, 2001

Hbk: ISBN: 0700711597 £50.00

pp. vii + 184 (including: index, appendices, select bibliography and chapter notes & references)

Pakistan means the 'land of the pure' in Urdu. Partially its name functions as an acronym where letters stand for the state's regions: P for Punjab and Baluchistan (as the sounds /p/ and /b/ are allophones of the same phoneme in Urdu), A for Azad Jammu, K for Kashmir, S for Sindh, and N for the North-West Frontier Province. The Persian morpheme 'stan' denotes a country. In face of Jinnah's 1940 drive for carving a Muslim state out of British India, Gandhi seems to have all too easily resigned from the ideal of recreating the whole colony as a civic nation-state. The result, the 1947 partition, has been the single most formative event for the social, political and economic shape of Pakistan and India. Ten to fifteen million people crossed the newly established border and one million died in this process. This tragedy's magnitude cannot be compared with anything else but the flight and expulsion of Germans from postwar Poland and Czechoslovakia. The scar, together with the 1971 secession of East Pakistan (Bangladesh), has determined the whole history of Pakistan and its relations with its neighbors. This provides the backdrop against which the issue of minorities in Pakistan is explored by Ali and Rehman.

The book's authors divide their professional life between the UK and Pakistan. Tellingly, this work was possible thanks to the World Bank and the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies. None of the under financed Pakistani universities would have an interest in commissioning such a study. Pakistan's checkered history of democracy and dictatorship also deters the scholar from engaging in research that may touch upon issues of political significance. This factor also accounts for Ali and Rehman's decision not to acknowledge their sources of information for the fear of their informants' safety (p. 4).

Contrary to its title, this is not so much a book on the indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities of Pakistan, but on the legal, administrative, governance and international



problems Islamabad has faced as it has been pressured to conform to international democratic norms.

In chapter one, the authors probe into the semantic overlapping and ambiguity of the terms 'indigenous peoples' and 'ethnic minorities' before analyzing, in the next chapter, the constitutional provisions that affect these groups in Pakistan. The overview of Pakistan's institutional arrangements for the protection of 'ethnic minorities' and 'indigenous peoples' is presented in chapter three. The authors argue that grounding the founding of Pakistan in religion led to the neglect of ethnic and regional differences. They also point out that the imposition of Urdu as the national language caused the secession of Bengali-speaking Bangladesh from Pakistan. This insensitive language policy still contributes to the rise and continued existence of separatist movements of non-Urdu-speaking Pakhtuns in the North-West Frontier Province, Baluchs in Baluchistan, and Sindh in Sindh.

Chapter four is devoted to the federally (FATA) and provincially (PATA) administered tribal areas. Numbering twenty-two they spread along Pakistan's mountainous border with Afghanistan. This administrative-cum-legal arrangement dates back to British rule in the region, when London granted Pakhtun clans with wide-ranging self-government in return for the protection of roads and mountain passes. The regular law legislated by the Pakistani Parliament does not apply to these areas. A similar situation obtains in the multiethnic Federally Administered Northern Areas (FANA) (chapter ten). To add another complication, FANA is claimed by India, and the Pakistani Constitution is not clear if this region is part of Pakistan's territory or not (p. 138).

Islamabad is unwilling to accept the significance of ethnicity as it would clash with the religious ideological basis of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and would grant a modicum of recognition to separatist movements. There is the fear that this would open the way for the establishing of the nation-states of the Baluchs (chapter five) and the Sindh (chapter six) as well as for predominantly Pukhtun Afghanistan's annexation of the bulk of the North-West Frontier Province inhabited by Pukhtuns (chapter eight). Interestingly, as of 1974, the Azad (i.e. 'free [from India]') state of Jammu and Kashmir was granted a kind of national status complete with its own national flag and anthem (p. 121). But this is mainly due to Pakistan's squabble with India over this divided and predominantly Muslim land. Through offering so much to the Kashmiris Islamabad keeps alive opposition against Delhi in India's section of Jammu and Kashmir.

Pakistan's post-1973 flirtation with federalism has been half-hearted. Islamabad's influence in the provinces is larger than that of the provincially elected assemblies. Perhaps this is due to the fact that the 1956 reorganization of India on the basis of states coordinated with majority language communities backfired with the increase in demands of national independence for this state's various regions. Pakistan did not wish to repeat this mistake. The continued overrepresentation of Punjabis in the federal administration and the army, however, breeds discontent and does not diminish separatism (chapter seven).

Pakistan's current Constitution of 1973 provides only for the protection of religious minorities (p. 21). Minorities, however, are interpreted as those belonging to monotheistic religions. The Kalsh, pejoratively dubbed as 'kaffirs' (non-believers) by their Muslim neighbors, are neglected, even oppressed by the state. Chapter eleven is devoted to the plight of this tiny group of 3,000.

Pakistan has lived through periods of democracy and dictatorship. The book concludes with several documents issued in 1999 when democracy was terminated once again. This allowed the authors to update the reader on the legal situation of Pakistan's minorities up

to February 2001 (p. vii). The authors conclude that there should be a balance struck between one's own ethnocentrism and respect for other ethnic groups. This may not be possible without achieving dynamic economic growth and widespread literacy. On the other hand, further neglect of ethnic differences and minorities may deepen continuing repression of certain groups of the 130-million-strong population and also contribute to separatism.

I recommend this clearly written little book as an introduction to modern Pakistan. Due to its wide aspirations it is not so much a book on Pakistan's indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities but on the variegated problems Islamabad has faced and has to stand up to now, when its US ally presses Pakistan for the reintroduction of democracy. Having said that, it is hard to overlook the work's impressionistic composition when information on certain issues is dispersed in various places. The curious obsolete usage of 'race' for an ethnic group (cf. p. 88) surprises as well as the lack of a map of Pakistan in the profusion of the fourteen maps of provinces and ethnic territories.

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### **Racist Murder and Pressure Group Politics: The Macpherson Report and the Police**

Norman Dennis, George Erdos, Ahmed Al-Shahi

CIVITAS, London 2000.

PBK: ISBN 1903386063 £6.00

pp. 178, (including: notes & index)

### **Institutional Racism and the Police: Fact or Fiction?**

David Green (ed.),

CIVITAS, London 2000.

PBK: ISBN 1903386063 £4.00

pp. 178, (including: appendix & notes)

The 1999 Macpherson Report of the Inquiry into the murder of Stephen Lawrence has become a landmark in British race relations policy. The Report has influenced not only the policy of the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), that it set out to investigate, but all subsequent race relations policies in all areas of public life. The two books reviewed here represent a bold swipe at the self-congratulatory Blairite multiculturalism that subsequently pervades much of race relations policy in Britain today.

The first of these, *Racist Murder*, described by CIVITAS' David Green as a 'major study' into the Macpherson Inquiry sets out to make an intellectually robust rebuttal of the Inquiry and the thinking behind it. The tone of *Racist Murder* is initially that of common sense. For example, the authors appeal to the reader's sense of fair play when they point-out that 'inconsistent with findings of Police Racism, Macpherson refers to the 'good intentions' of the officers involved in family liaison with the Lawrences' (p. 2). Apparent contradictions are thus highlighted and much hinges on Macpherson's finding that there was no evidence of MPS policies that were overtly racist. In the words of the Macpherson Report: "'No such evidence is before us, indeed the contrary is true'" (p. 2, *Stephen Lawrence Inquiry*, p. 24). If there is no overt racism or overtly racist policies, the argument goes, then how can you possibly make the charge of institutional racism stick?

Soon, however, with little else to ground its arguments on, the sober façade of *Racist Murder* dissolves and origins of CIVITAS in the Thatcherite *Institute of Economic Affairs* becomes evident. Without being clear whether it is as individuals or as an institution, the



Police are portrayed alternatively as victims of a Stalinist Show Trial, and as unwilling participants in an over elaborate, chaotic and costly politically-correct pantomime. After benefiting from some initial expressions of sympathy - *noblesse oblige* - the Lawrences are finally dismissed as the puppets of fanatical anti-racists and their *Commissar* solicitors.

As the counter arguments become more ridiculous the high standards of academic rigour that *Racist Murder* expects of the Inquiry cease to apply. For example, take the books' examination of the interactions between the MPS and the traumatised Duwayne Brooks, Stephen Lawrence's companion on the night of his murder. Brooks' initial behaviour is measured against a mythical standard of British behaviour, boldly 'deduced' as follows:

There is a passage in John Buchan's *The Thirty Nine Steps*, first published in 1915, in which a group of suspects is made to say "we want to assist the law, like all Englishmen". The perennial popularity of the book... suggests that this pro-police attitude struck a chord of approval among English people at the time and subsequently (p. 126).

After a section that meanders through what must be taken to be a Thatcherite re-discovery of the existence of society and a lesson in liberal pop-sociology we are told that the actions of the Acourt gang, suspects in the murder, are not to be explained by racism, but by Durkheimian *Anomie*. Due to the break down of the traditional family, religious and other institutions traditional British values have been eroded.

*Racist Murder* then follows a rather confused attempt to unpick all aspects of the inquiry and its methods from myriad angles. The authors conduct a blustering, rather than a blistering attack on the bogeymen of 1980s Thatcherism; anti-racists, Marxists of every hue, black nationalists etc... The authors perceive these 'radical revolutionaries' to be part of the Blairite establishment. In these pages the term 'structural' is said to belong to the 'radical-revolutionary stable', while the words 'Negro' and 'coloured' are unfashionable only in radical-chic circles.

*Racist Murder* rejects all analysis of race, boasting instead its 'colour blindness'. A boast which is contradicted by wholehearted endorsement of the use of racial profiling by police forces. The reader is left in no doubt as to who is to blame for racial tension and the general breakdown of law and order in Britain today; the same bogeymen the book bundles together under the term anti-racist.

If *Racist Murder* heads the disordered rearguard reaction from the new right to Macpherson, its companion publication, *Institutional Racism and the Police; Fact or Fiction?*, a collection of essays from disparate points of view brought together '[i]n the hope of encouraging a more enlightened public debate' (p. ix), showcases one or two interesting examples of contemporary thinking on Macpherson and racism. A range of viewpoints from the new right, through classical liberalism, to the Metropolitan Police and the Blairite centre left, are represented in the pamphlet.

Lord Skidelsky's piece, while conceding that unwitting racism *can* exist, complains about the insertion of 'slippery' concepts like 'Institutional racism' and 'unwitting racism' into public discourse. But he at least makes his complaints without debasing his arguments by making unsavoury references to the Lawrences and to Duwayne Brooks. The effect of castigating unwitting racism, according to Skidelsky, is to damage race relations, for 'without some tolerance of these [unwitting] "mistakes" it is hard to know how any relationships between members of different ethnic groups can be made at all' (pp. 5-6). A compelling argument, but for the fact that Skidelsky casts the Macpherson inquiry in the role of a criminal trial. The fact is that in Macpherson's scheme, "transgressors",

where they are individuals rather than institutions, are not punished but, at the very most, challenged. Skidelsky also raises the valid point that there is a strong case for examining social class as an explanatory factor in the MPS's handling of the murder investigation, but neglects to forward a theoretical framework for looking at race and class (p. 4).

The piece by Metropolitan Police Service Deputy Assistant Commissioner John Grieve and his colleague Julie French wholeheartedly accepts the concept of institutional racism, which, they say 'is more than an academic construct. It is a real experience in the lives of countless Londoners' (p. 9). They welcome Macpherson's definition for providing 'the clarity that we had sought' (p. 14), and interestingly makes the only mention in either publication of a theoretical definition of race in terms of relations of power. Michael Ignatieff cries out for 'a dose of liberal realism' proclaiming that the 'black community' is a fiction 'because to suppose otherwise is to believe that skin trumps all other identities' (p. 21). Mike O'Brien's piece unsurprisingly, given his position as a Labour MP working in the Home Office, reflects Blairite orthodoxy in welcoming Macpherson as a 'watershed' in British race relations, citing some examples of societal racism that needs to be tackled. It also makes the familiar 'Vindaloo and Reggae' re-casting of Britishness as multi-cultural. The editor David Green's final piece bemoans the loss of 'colour-blind' policing, criticises positive discrimination and ends with the liberal cliché: 'we have come a long way from live-and-let-live values under which people are free to speak their minds, even if it is hurtful to someone else' (p. 42).

As a contribution to the race debate these two publications have only limited value because they resolutely fail to address the central issue of how to theorise race. Except in the briefest mention in one article, no mention is made anywhere of arguments either for or against seeing race in terms of relations of power or of history. Some of the fault for this must lie with the Macpherson report itself for propagating a de-historicised and de-contextualised definition of race. With a sleight of hand, CIVITAS has gained the maximum advantage in this pseudo-debate between the new right and New Labour. What a different story it would have been if, in the first place, MacPherson had challenged the consensual liberal assumptions which enable the right to control the race debate. For that is where the real debate lies.

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### **Image and Reality of the Israel-Palestine Conflict**

Norman G. Finkelstein

Verso, 2001

PBK: ISBN: 1859843395 £15.00 \$20.00

pp. 224 (including: notes, index)

Like *The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering* (2000), which examined the ways in which the ideological representation of the holocaust has been politically and financially abused by various Jewish collectivities, often at the expense of poor survivors such as the author's own parents, this book by Finkelstein is highly polemic too.

It is not preposterous to assume that all of Finkelstein's work, including this book, emanates from being a son of Shoah survivors. In this book, which deals with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, he again uses textual analysis techniques, perfected already in *The Nation on Trial: The Goldhagen Thesis and Historical Truth* (1998). This time he uses them to examine the narratives, constructed by successive generations of Zionist



politicians and historians, of Zionism as a military politics for Jewish survival, albeit seen by Israelis as a 'no-choice' politics, imposed by external (Arab) aggression. Each chapter focuses on the arguments constructed by eminent Israeli authors such as Benny Morris, Anita Shapira, Abba Eban, Shabtai Teveth and others.

Chapter one, a re-reading of Yosef Gorny's *Zionism and the Arabs, 1882-1948: A Study of Ideology*, argues that the early Zionists had always intended to have a Jewish majority in the whole of Palestine. Strategically, Zionists never sought consensus with the Palestinians, and they always relied on a super power (first Turkey, then Britain) to achieve their aims, as they now rely on the USA, the only superpower left. In chapter two, Finkelstein analyses Joan Peters's *From Time Immemorial*, in which she claims that the 'so-called Palestinians' were but 700,000 Arabs who migrated into Palestine from neighbouring countries during the British Mandate because of the economic opportunities presented by the Zionists. Finkelstein takes apart Peters's methodology by comparing her claims with British documents, to reveal her self-contradictory and implausible thesis, which, nevertheless, became a cornerstone of Israeli propaganda, centring on the 'land without people for a people without land' maxim, despite subsequent studies which established firmly the origins of the Palestinian nation.

Other chapters deal with Anita Shapira's argument about the defensive ethos of the Zionist movement, an ethos which gave birth to the 'purity of arms' adage; and with the background to the 1967 and 1973 wars. However, for me the strongest is chapter 3, in which Finkelstein examines the pioneering work of the Israeli 'new historian' Benny Morris, who, in the 1980s, studied Zionist archives to show that the Palestinian refugee problem was a product of the 1948 Zionist military action and less so of deliberate expulsion orders by Zionist leaders. Finkelstein argues that the ground-breaking, yet controversial Morris, despite ample evidence to the contrary, substitutes the Zionist myth of the Palestinians fleeing of their own accord and at the behest of their leaders, despite the Israelis imploring them to stay, with a new myth, namely that of the dispossession of Palestinian refugees as an 'inevitable' consequence of the 1948 war. Morris's own evidence of expulsions, massacres, rapes and the demolition of whole villages disavows his conclusion. Finkelstein documents these contradictions systematically and persuasively.

The trouble with writing about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is that the moment you send a finished work to the publishers, things change, many times over. This is my only criticism of this otherwise captivating book, first published in 1995 and re-issued in 2001 during the second Intifada. While arguing against Benny Morris was powerful when the book first appeared, Morris has himself since denied the claims made in his name, thus confirming Finkelstein's argument.

In a recent speech in Germany, Finkelstein – again speaking as a son of survivors – reminded his listeners that the challenge is to both defend the memory of the Nazi holocaust and condemn its abuse by American Jewish elites; both defend Jews from malice and condemn their overwhelmingly blind support for Israel's brutal occupation. This book demonstrates yet again how myths of a no-choice war were, and are, constructed while the erstwhile victims are today's victimisers.

### **References**

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**Immigration and European Integration: Towards fortress Europe?**

Andrew Geddes

Manchester University Press, 2000

European Policy Research Unit Series

Hbk: ISBN: 0719056888 £40.00

Pbk: ISBN: 0719056896 £14.99

pp. 196 (including: list of abbreviations, figures, bibliography &amp; index)

*Immigration and European integration* constitutes Geddes' contribution to the research series promoted by the European Policy Research Unit of the University of Manchester. The series examines different aspects of European Integration through comparative analyses of national policies and politics on specific issues. Geddes sets out to examine the question as to whether European integration threatens or provides opportunities for an open and inclusive citizenship, specifically in relation to third country nationals (TCNs; individuals who are resident in the European Union [EU] but are citizens of a nation-state outside the EU).

European integration has led to the free movement of goods and services between EU member states. As part of the process of economic integration the movement of labour within the EU has been liberalised. Since 1968 citizens of EU member states have an automatic right to travel to and work in any other member state. These rights, however, only extend to citizens. Pro-immigration activists characterise the EU as 'Fortress Europe' and argue that as the internal borders have become more porous the external ramparts have been strengthened. In addition to greater restrictions on immigration into the EU, they argue, a two-tier social Europe is becoming more evident. The distinction between citizen and non-citizen is becoming more significant.

Geddes agrees with pro-immigration activists that the recent control and securitization of specific forms of immigration have dominated the European agenda to the disadvantage of specific groups such as asylum seekers and refugees. However, he argues that much of the literature about 'Fortress Europe' has failed, so far, to acknowledge the potential aperture for inclusion that the supranationalisation of migration policies may offer. The transfer of competencies to the supranational level, he argues, creates new spaces in which a pro-immigration lobby can operate.

Although Geddes focuses on a specific question of the EU's capacity for inclusion, his research comprises a wider scope of analysis. The main body of the book outlines and analyses the provisions of the main treaties that have established the EU: the 1957 Treaty of Rome (chapter 2), the 1986 Single European Act (chapter 3), the 1992 Maastricht Treaty (chapter 4) and the 1997 Amsterdam Treaty (chapter 5). In particular, he focuses on the issues of migration, immigration, asylum and citizenship. He places the policy towards TCNs in relation to wider economic, political and ideological considerations (e.g., the way in which wider debates about the relative merits of an intergovernmental versus a federal future for the EU have had an impact on, and have been played out through the discussion of immigration).

Geddes argues that nation-states are not the sole actors in the EU. European integration has also meant a proliferation of non-state and non-national agents across levels of government. He argues that the process by which immigration policies are developed demonstrates that the distinction between 'high' and 'low' politics is difficult to sustain in practice. He dedicates an entire chapter (chapter 6) to pro-immigration political mobilization and non-state transnational contribution. This constitutes by far the most interesting and challenging part of Geddes's analysis as it adds a new dimension to the





debate and presents an innovative and more optimistic view on European capacity for inclusion. Geddes points to pro-immigration umbrella groups such as the European Research Centre on Migration and Ethnic Relations, Amnesty International and Caritas as the mediating institutions that represent the interests of the migrant groups. These organisations offer a unique political opportunity for migrant groups to lobby directly with the Commission. Geddes points to a paradox in the lobbyists' strategy when he says that: 'although these groups advance a critique of EU migration policy as currently constituted, the answer to the problem tends to be more not less "Europe"' (p. 134). We might expect that those who criticise the exclusionary tendencies in EU migration policy would also criticise the lack of accountability of the European Commission. This is not the case, however, for a number of reasons. There is a perception that national governments, and hence the Council of Ministers, are populist on the issue of immigration and asylum, while the Commission, as an unelected body, is insulated from these populist pressures. The Commission, as the most federalist of the EU institutions, has the greatest interest in eroding the nation-state; and thereby creating a more transnational environment for migration. The small size of the Commission makes it reliant on the expertise of other bodies in the process of formulating policy; and thus provides an opening for lobby groups to exert their influence. The input of pressure groups also helps to legitimise the decisions taken by the Commission.

Despite his optimism Geddes is very careful to remind the reader of the limited space and political opportunity that such cooperation may open, as he is aware of the unresolved dilemmas of the representative deficit of the Commission and the precarious nature of this mutual legitimation. As he points out, 'pro-migrant Commission activity need not arise because the Commission has a positive view about the rights of migrants (it may or may not), but because it has a positive view about the role of the Commission (it certainly does)' (pp. 139-40).

Geddes's contribution to the European debate over immigration is therefore a long-overdue account of the motivations, alliance-building strategies and calculations of EU agents. The scope of his analysis is very comprehensive and provides the reader with an exhaustive panorama of EU efforts towards integration over immigration issues. This constitutes, however, just the starting point of the ensuing discussion, as Geddes himself recognizes that there is an urgent need to open the debate towards a more dynamic exchange of perspectives and positions.

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### **Reinventing Japan**

Demetrios G. Papademetriou and Kimberly A. Hamilton  
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2000  
PBK: ISBN: 0-87003-182-1 \$12.00  
pp. 75 (including: notes)

This monograph is full of interesting information on the state of immigration in Japan, presenting an unusual picture of a 'multi-ethnic' society, which is normally viewed as a homogeneous society both by the Japanese themselves and by outsiders. The authors point out that immigrant workers are the back-bone of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) because the Japanese themselves will not work for the poor wages offered by them. They are also the primary support for a rapidly aging population, and ready labour in a country with an exceptionally low fertility rate. A recent UN study estimates that in the period 1995-2050 Japan will need 17 million immigrants to keep the

population from declining and 33.5 million to keep its working-age population (United Nations Population Division 2000).

At present there are 1.8 million foreigners in Japan, with Koreans, Chinese and Brazilians being the largest groups. In 2000 there were 251,697 unauthorised foreign workers, mainly from Korea, China, the Philippines, Malaysia, Iran and Thailand. The Japanese mafia or *yakuza* are known to be particularly prominent in the trafficking of illegal immigrants for the entertainment industry, and many SME owners feel that they have no choice but to employ illegal immigrants or go under. The authors point out the difficulty in obtaining naturalisation in Japan because of the *ius sanguinis* clause in the 1950 nationality law (p. 44). Likewise, the granting of citizenship is arbitrary and the process of permanent residency is not clearly defined. Ethnic Koreans in Japan are permanent residents but they have no right to vote, and while some local governments are coming round to a policy of accepting them into public service jobs, this is not yet the attitude of national government where the migration-relevant ministries tend still to view immigration overall as a 'necessary evil' (p. 47). The authors believe that while some Japanese ministries are making the right noises in relation to preparing the Japanese for welcoming more immigrants, the reality is that they do not carry them through. This is partly because Japanese attitudes to immigrants are shaped by the negative historical Japanese relationship with the Korean population in Japan.

The desire of the authors is to see Japan open up to 'increasingly permanent immigration' (p. 2). Japan will need to incorporate immigrant labour if it is to address labour market anomalies. In their epilogue, the authors suggest seven immigration policy 'rules' for Japan to achieve these goals successfully. A number of issues need to be squarely faced, they argue, including the removal of Japan's 'ideological blinders' (p. 65).

The problem with these proposals is that their successful development is premised by the authors upon an illusion, namely that Japan's social and political institutions managed change well in the Meiji period and again after World War II and that they can once again adapt successfully to the challenge of massive immigration in the next 20 years. We are not only asked to believe that the Japanese handled such change well, but also that they will be able to repeat the exercise.

Many scholars have doubts as to whether the social and political institutions in Japan ever proved equal to managing the challenges of Meiji and World War II (see, e.g., Hendry 1995; Stockwin 1999; Van Wolferen 1989). After Meiji and the many rebellions against Meiji changes, a hierarchical society still remained in place that led to an oligarchy that soon fell into the hands of the militarists. After World War II and the occupation, many of the proposed reforms either never saw the light of day or were withdrawn soon after their introduction. Consequently, it could be argued that Japanese growth and prosperity, however impressive, has been at a price to the society as a whole.

The authors themselves acknowledge this illusion, though often only in their footnotes. On page 2, footnote 1 acknowledges that Japan is the world's highest debtor, while footnote 2 recognises the problem of 'bureaucratic inertia', and later the authors speak of the 'plodding bureaucratic culture' (p. 59). They also speak of the 'inefficient' (p. 12) purchasing and distribution systems, the weakening of the lifetime employment system (p. 13), 'undisciplined lending practices' (p. 13), 'corruption in the public sector' (p. 13) and the problem of 'overvalued assets' (p. 13). The authors also accept other illusions, for example, that Japan is one of 'the most homogeneous... global actors' (p. 2), yet they later note that its homogeneity is 'carefully tailored' (p. 49). Elsewhere they note that Japan has a 'significant Korean minority' (p. 6) numbering almost 700,000, which faces



'large-scale prejudice and discrimination' (p. 44). And they accept that Japan is already a 'multi-ethnic society' (p. 62).

The real challenge for the Japanese is to accept that they are bound to become reliant on outsiders for 'attending to the needs of its affluent and aged population, keeping retirement and public health systems afloat, and, in many cases, keeping production systems humming' (p. 20). To do this, maybe they need to re-imagine themselves. So, much of the groundwork needs to be done now on the level of attitudes. Change will be piecemeal and will occur only when and as the Japanese desire it. It will require them to look honestly at their illusions about themselves and the lies about themselves and others that these are based upon. Maybe the way forward for the Japanese is to imagine that they can lead the way in the development of the world's most truly multi-cultural society which might be an easier illusion for its citizens to work at in a rapidly changing environment than the idea that they are the land of unparalleled growth and prosperity. On the way, they might reflect upon the fact that the current perception of social cohesion in Japan is based on myth.

As with all advanced industrial countries, Japan faces a social and cultural exceptionalism. Suspicion of outsiders is based on illusions about the unity of the self or uniqueness of society, and fear of dilution. In this context, people of all such countries need to examine and deal with the basis for the perpetuation of their fears of others. This is the stuff of politics.

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### Communal Politics: Facts versus Myths

Ram Puniyani

Sage Publications, New Delhi, 2003

ISBN: PBK: 0761996672 £14.99\$49.95

pp. 309 (including: index, references).

Indian politics and society have witnessed an unchecked rise to dominance of communal politics over the past decade. One primary tactic of Hindu communalists is to incite raw passions among majority Hindus through the fabrication and propagation of myths about minorities and a glorious Hindu past. This has often led to violent persecution of minority Muslims and Christians in the country. Puniyani argues that this 'myth-making is designed to demonise the minority community and play on the fears and insecurities of the people' (p. 12). And that these myths are so all-pervasive that they have become the 'social common sense' and hence 'cannot be seen as a mere aberration' (p. 12).

Puniyani presents each of these myths and confronts them with what he calls facts. Each myth clearly stated in a few lines is followed by fact. The collection of Hindu communal myths and (secular) facts is extensive and gives a good glimpse of the (non-)issues that make up the secularism-communalism contention in India. Facts are supported through an eclectic reference to works of secular historians and writers.

Starting with myths about history, he points out, through reference to the historian Romila Thapar, how the myth that 'Aryans were the original inhabitants of this land' is disproved by the best available archeological evidence (p. 31). He refutes the Hindutva claim that Vedic society is the foundation of Indian civilization and points out that 'a very different Indus civilization precedes it' (p. 35). And that, '[i]n fact, the Indus civilization is more advanced than the subsequent vedic civilization' (p. 35).

Another frequent communal myth is Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb's supposed destruction of the famous Viswanath Temple of Benaras as an anti-Hindu act. The fact, however, is that since a princess was dishonoured near the sanctum sanctorum and the sacred precincts despoiled, the temple had to be razed and a new one built. While destruction of temples and places of worship did take place during invasions, 'there is nothing to justify the belief that the Muslim kings destroyed Hindu temples to convert Hindus to Islam' (p. 52).

The myth of Hindutva's 'central and major role in the freedom struggle and nation-building' (p. 75) is exposed by reference to Hindutva ideologue, Golwalkar's lamentation that 'being anti-British was equated with patriotism and nationalism' (p. 78). The Hindu communalists' defamation of Gandhi as responsible for the partition of the country is exposed by showing that partition was 'a logical culmination of communal politics to which everyone – the Muslim League, the Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha – contributed equally' (p. 99). Contrary to what his critics claim, 'Gandhi believed in secular principles and treating Muslims on a par' (p. 98).

Another communal myth is that Muslims will soon outnumber Hindus in the country. After presenting population data to the contrary, Punyani writes that 'one has to "compliment" the Goebbelsian methods of the Hindu right' (p. 149).

Hindu communalist attempts to change the very secular democratic foundations of the Indian polity are nourished by myths that 'ours is a Constitution based on western values. What we need is a Hindu Constitution' (p. 234). Punyani responds that the communal elites have a morbid fear of our Constitution since it is based on 'modern values of formal equality, and give us the space to strive to achieve real equality through democratic struggles' (p. 234).

Despite its often incisive challenges to Hinduvata myths, the work is however marked by a deep tension. For if the communal myths have become the social common sense of the people, how can communalism itself be treated as an aberration, a deviation from what is presented as the real India, which is supposed to be secular and democratic? In practice, therefore, India has hardly been really secular or democratic. Punyani hints towards this but does not base his arguments on this point. Instead he contrasts the communal position to what he calls the nationalist position, which is supposed to be secular and democratic (pp. 42, 66).

This is a very tenuous position for at least two reasons. One, the same premodern elite classes of landlords and upper castes 'that wanted to sustain the declining pre-modern structural hierarchies' have always been strong and have formed the basis for the nationalists Punyani is trying to defend vis-à-vis the communalists (p. 287). Second, as he himself points out, since the Congress party, which ruled India for so long, had 'many leaders in important positions who were influenced by Hindu communal ideology... communalism remained dormant but never died' (p. 186). To paraphrase the writer Arundhati Roy, the Congress did by night what the Hindu communalists of late do by day.

There is therefore no sustained engagement with the practice of secularism in the country. Instead, the ideals of secularism and democracy in the abstract are



counterpoised by communalism. This gives the impression of communalism being just a malignant protuberance rather than a product of the very dynamic and off-spin of the unresolved tensions and contradictions in Indian society and polity. The writer is not ignorant of these facts but for lack of any other credible political force in the country today he, not always comfortably, identifies himself with the semi-bourgeois, semi-feudal nationalist project which forms the social base for communalism as well.

Thus he would rather include even radical social movements in this secular nationalist project than go beyond secularism in order to break the hold of traditional feudal classes in Indian society. He rightly points out that workers, women and dalits are all affected by Hindutva (p. 289). And he also sees that 'the left-of-centre groups are intensely fragmented' and they should unite. But he can conceive of these groups going no further than 'the struggle for a secular society' (p. 290). He is reflective enough to ask, if we can continue with our old ways, but the hold of the abstract secularist position is so strong that the failure of the Nehruvian and left-secularist positions does not register with him.

That the semi-fascist rise to dominance of the Hindu right is precisely the fallout of the long term decomposition of the secular-left and social-democratic hegemony in the country is yet to dawn on the so-called civil society in India. This book testifies to this; and hence, as a statement of the pure secularist position, the book is reliable.

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### **Democracy and National Pluralism**

Ferran Requejo (ed.)

Routledge, 2001

HBK: ISBN: 0415255775 £55.00

pp. 182 (including: index, notes, references & tables)

This is a modestly sized but useful addition to the by now voluminous literature exploring the place of minority group rights in liberal theory and practice. The contributors stand with those who argue that democratic liberalism can and must accommodate these rights. They focus on a particular group right claim challenging many contemporary liberal democracies: that to national recognition and self-government. The collection addresses itself simultaneously to the largely philosophical matter of revising democratic liberalism to accommodate national pluralism and the mainly practical matter of accommodating national pluralism in democratic polities. Though doing so incurred the risk of weakening the book's coherence, the collection does succeed in showing the utility (even necessity) of combining normative and institutional-historical approaches to the subject. Importantly for the success of the book, the connection between normative and practical-historical considerations is made not only by the editor Ferran Requejo, in his ably written framing commentaries, but also by individual contributors in their separate chapters.

The tone of the book is on balance optimistic about the possibility of achieving a liberal-democratic form of national pluralism. According to Will Kymlicka's survey of the philosophical debate thus far, liberals increasingly recognise that the justice of difference-blind institutions and rules is contestable and that the burden of proof has now fallen upon those still wishing to defend them against demands for institutionalised group recognition. Michael Keating hails the emergence among the Quebecois, Scots, Catalans, Basques and others of a new kind of 'stateless' minority nationalism that has adapted itself to the altered (in effect reduced) role of the nation-state in a globalised era. Carlos Closa shows how the process of European Union integration has contributed to the

recognition of minority nations by, for example, setting up a Committee of the Regions and eroding the absolutist notions of national sovereignty that have until now precluded recognition of non-state minority nationalist claims. The implication of these three chapters is that theories, movements and governments are all moving in the same, largely satisfactory, direction: towards a liberal-democratic embrace of national pluralism and minority group rights.

There are more pessimistic contributions. Ricard Zapata is, with good reason, unimpressed by the efforts of the European Union so far to develop a concept of citizenship that is democratically inclusive of resident foreigners. Constituent nation-states have, he shows, thwarted moves towards a form of European citizenship that might accord to immigrants and other outsiders ('Euro-foreigners', as Zapata terms them) fuller and more uniform rights. Another chapter, by Enric Fossas, discloses the many points of tension between notions of equal citizenship and the logic of 'plurinational' federalism. These arise especially from the fact that nationalist demands for special ('asymmetric') powers for their own regions generate resentment among citizens living in other regions.

Even the more optimistic contributors voice anxieties and concerns. Kymlicka notes a new challenge to national pluralism, coming from those who argue that multinationalism undermines the civic virtue, trust and solidarity necessary for democratic citizenship. Keating encounters, in the anti-immigrant Vlaams Blok, a challenge to his generally benign portrayal of Western European and Canadian regional nationalism. Wayne Norman's optimism that a constitutionalised secession clause might actually strengthen the legitimacy of multinational states is counterbalanced by a recognition that demands for statehood are far from having gone away, and that such a clause may be necessary also to civilise the usually wrenching process of state fission. Closa, finally, counsels against overstating the EU's contribution to what he calls 'post-national citizenship': for all that the EU legitimates calls for regional self-government its main direct contribution to the cause of stateless nations in the foreseeable future is to protect individuals and minorities against the discriminatory practices of member states. It is to leaders of their own states that European minority nations will have to look – or with whom they will have to struggle – for any more positive assistance in realising their goals. And, of course, it is precisely at this level that so much still has to be worked out, as ongoing controversies in Canada, Belgium and Spain remind us.

The project to which this book adds a voice is worthy. If there are philosophical affinities between democratic liberalism and national rights then thoughtful people ought to seek them out. After all, democratic liberalism is these days recognised to be a good thing by people across a wide ideological spectrum, from socialist through to libertarian; and national demands are, for their part, an established and persistent part of the global political scene. But as the tone of this formulation perhaps betrays, I have my doubts about the heralded coming-together. I consider there to be a darker side to nationalism that collides with democratic liberalism and, if I have a problem with this collection, it is that the contributing authors fail to explore it. They are (in short) too sanguine about nationality and its demands. It is not only liberalism that needs revising in the light of national pluralism; so too must the more destructive nationalisms and nationalist tendencies be challenged in the name of democratic liberalism. It is not as if the destructive side of nationalism has recently been invisible, even in liberal democracies (think of Northern Ireland, the Basque country, Flanders or Corsica). The process of accommodation between liberalism and minority nationalism has to be worked at from both ends. I'm not sure the authors give sufficient recognition to this.

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### **Structural Flaws in the Middle East Peace Process: Historical Contexts**

J. W. Wright, Jr. (ed.)

Palgrave, 2002

HBK: ISBN: 0333738500 £52.50

pp. 228 (including: notes & index)

A collection such as this, examining the political economy of the Arab-Israeli peace process, is timely in the face of the current concerns of the international system with the apparent political and poorly-disguised economic agendas of the conflict with Iraq as well as the concerns about the clear failure of the now-discredited Arab-Israeli peace process itself. Moreover, as the epilogue makes clear, there are few analyses of the economic factors underlying the Arab-Israeli conflict in either the mainstream diplomatic and/or economic literature on the Middle East. For both of these reasons, this collection is a most welcome addition to the largely political analyses of this very significant conflict.

The collection contains 12 chapters, with a prologue and epilogue by Wright, and is divided into two parts. The first three chapters provide historical overviews of the Arab-Israeli conflict and have been written by analysts who have been involved in the Middle East policy process for many years, Paul Findlay, George Wilson and Fadle Naquib. The other chapters emerge from contemporary research into the political economy of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and draw on the theme of the 'betweenness' of the Palestinian situation. The Palestinians are said to be 'between' in the sense that both the nation and the Palestinian Authority are located outside of key policy processes and structures. This marginalisation limits the autonomy of the Palestinian Authority and has created weaknesses in the conflict resolution process. The chapters by Diwan and Walton, Colton, and Wright examine Middle East trade and labour issues in which the Palestinians find themselves the weaker partner. Rouyer examines the issue of water rights, where again Palestinians living in Gaza and the West Bank find themselves at a serious disadvantage in comparison to Israel. The chapters by Glasser and Sullivan explore more or less directly the problems and limited opportunities for the Palestinians created by foreign aid. Glasser examines the impact of aid to Egypt and Jordan, while Sullivan assesses the use and misuse of aid funds by the Palestinian Authority. In a complementary chapter, Roy explains the increasing Palestinian dependency on Islamic social and economic organisations as formal foreign aid funding to the Palestinian Authority either dries up or is diverted, and informal aid flows in from external Islamic sources. Finally, the chapters by Bichler and Zunes analyse the influences on Israeli and US government policies, Bichler arguing that discontent among key business and labour coalitions leads to changes in the government in Israel and resulting changes in the policies towards the Palestinians, while Zunes contends that, in the United States, arms spending and the efforts of the pro-Israel lobby present significant impediments to a more equitable peace.

There are, however, a number of key issues which the book fails to address, including the definition of the concept of structure, the role of Turkey and Iran in the Arab-Israeli conflict, the significance of gender-based analyses, and the impact of the events of September 11. The concept of structure is a central theme that runs throughout the book, and is used to explain why conflict and instability in Arab-Israeli relations continues. Since this is the case, it is unfortunate that the concept is left undefined. Definitions do exist, and structuralist analysts, both Marxist and non-Marxist, define structures as sets of internally (necessarily as opposed to contingently) related objects or practices (Sayer 1984: 84). Without a definition, those things defined as a structure in this case include trade policies, water supplies, labour flows, remittance flows and foreign aid policies. Clearly, the Palestinians have been marginalized in relation to all of these

concerns. What needs to be specifically addressed, however, is the nature of the global political and economic power structures that continue to perpetuate international inequality generally and poverty and political marginalisation specifically for the Palestinians.

A second issue that requires redress is the failure to provide serious consideration of the roles of Turkey and Iran as major political and economic powers in the Middle East. Though neither are Arab states, their influences are significant in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Turkey has on the one hand cooperated with US military policy in relation to Israel, while on the other hand it is an important trade partner of Arab states including Iraq, Kuwait, and Syria. Iran's foreign aid policy has been designed to by-pass the Palestinian Authority and has targeted radical groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah. The distinctive feature of this aid policy has been that it involves recipients at the grass-roots level and produced upward pressure against both the state of Israel and the Palestinian Authority itself. Furthermore, Iran, and to a lesser extent sympathetic Turkish businesspersons, also provide banking networks for radical Islamic movements in the Palestinian territories.

Gender is a third issue that surprisingly receives no attention. Over the last few years, gender-based analyses have been considered central to both analyses of conflict and of the impact of aid policies. Gender-based analyses of war emphasise the disproportionate effect of military conflict on women and children. In relation to aid policies, bilateral foreign aid does not normally encourage accountability, economic reform, and political liberalisation. Moreover, aid programmes in emerging economies are frequently associated with an increased restriction on the economic participation of women as these programmes generally attempt to create employment for men on the assumption that they are the heads of households and the main subsistence providers.

Finally, the book fails to mention the impact of the events of September 11 on the Arab-Israeli conflict. While the reluctance of publishers to change manuscripts is well understood, no mention of these events appears to be made at all, even in the prologue and epilogue. There is a cryptic reference in the Findlay chapter to 'the current tragic events', but in the context of a discussion of commercial, trade and aid policies this seems to refer to some other, earlier set of events, and not to the September 11 events at all. This gives the book a somewhat dated flavour, in that while the arguments made in most chapters are relevant even after September 11, the underlying assumption that the Oslo peace process can be re-invigorated must now surely be discarded permanently.

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