

Ravinder Kaur, *Since 1947. Partition Narratives among Punjabi Migrants of Delhi*, (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007) vii + 277 pp. (hb) Rs.910. ISBN-13: 978-0-19-568377-6 and ISBN10:0195683773.

Born of Punjabi parents who migrated from Lahore and Rawalpindi in 1947 and then from Delhi in the 1960s, I have grown up hearing stories of how my family lived through Partition and built their future in the period that followed it. These are the types of stories that Ravinder Kaur sets out to elucidate in her book, *Since 1947*. Her ethnographic investigation looks at the interaction between the Indian state and Punjabi refugees in Delhi until 1965, the year the Ministry of Rehabilitation was finally shut. The book sets out to question the master narrative of Partition. This master narrative is not, as might be expected, simply the official public memory constructed and reinforced by the state. Rather, it is the most popular and enduring narrative of Partition rehabilitation, a narrative which actually diminishes the agency of the state in the whole account. It is the story of the hardworking and enterprising Punjabis who arrived in Delhi, fresh from the trauma of Partition, and energetically set about transforming their uprooted and dilapidated position to one of economic success. They seemingly lifted themselves out of homelessness and economic hardship through their shared Punjabi traits of strength and tenacity. There are many variations of this narrative including the equally popular disgust at the 'Punjabification' of Delhi aired amid the chattering classes of the capital, but as a narrative of the rehabilitation of refugees it is widely held and unquestioned.

Kaur's work challenges this narrative, using government records of the rehabilitation process and a number of unstructured interviews of people who experienced it first hand. In her view this methodology is vital to ensure that many of the blind spots within the master narrative, hitherto neglected by historians and social commentators alike, are exposed. She posits her challenge not only through the voices of groups marginal to the master narrative, such as widows inhabiting a widow's colony in post-Partition Delhi and the hard-to-find life stories of *dalit* families who had travelled across the border and settled in the capital, but also from the experiences of high caste and elite refugees. Of the elites, she finds that they were not suddenly displaced but planned their move in advance. They were thus able to rescue their businesses, property and valuables and secure their new homes and livelihoods before the huge caravans of the displaced arrived in Delhi. Indeed many of this class travelled by air, an image that sits awkwardly with how Partition is remembered.

Of those in the caravans, she further uncovers the uncomfortable fact that her correspondents rarely alluded to the fact that they received government help, in the form of land, loans or job reservation even though they patently did. She also relates how many of her interviewees would not call themselves refugees unless the identity accrued some sort of economic benefit.

Ravinder Kaur's work opens up a number of questions that cry out to be explored. How was the new Indian state defining citizenship during these years? It became the owner of a number of evacuee properties and arbitrarily decided how and to whom these resources were allocated. What was the basis for these

decisions? What was the social role of the state? Her investigation shows how refugee widows were housed in a separate colony, protected by barbed wire and vigilant security, allowed no male visitors and encouraged to work and share their childcare. These deliberate measures illustrate the extent and reach of the new state. Her analysis draws parallels between the social role adopted by the state and Hindu norms which cast widows outside the pale of society. As traditional family structures could not provide refuge for their widows during Partition, the state stepped in, took over and maintained social norms. When it came to different caste groups, she describes how her initial attempts to extract information from dalit refugees ended in frustration. This, for her, testifies to the dominance of the master narrative maintained by dalits and Brahmins alike. As Kaur shows, this paucity of information in itself reveals a huge gap in any history of the post-Partition resettlement.

Kaur goes on to describe the process through which these refugees became locals in Delhi, or how Delhi, for them, became home. She points to the differences between the experience of those who migrated to Karachi and those who ended up in Delhi in 1947. Sixty years after Partition, the Karachi settlers are still seen as outsiders and a separate political entity. However, in Kaur's opinion, Punjabi refugees did not identify themselves as a separate political group of outsiders but actively got involved in local and national politics from early on, as member of Congress or the Jan Sangh alike. Their adoption of refugee identity was, according to Kaur, strategic, taken up when useful and dropped when not.

Because of the agency she gives the refugee, and her work to address the complicated role of the state, she delivers a nuanced account of Delhi and the experience of its inhabitants, old and new, in this period. The picture of the refugees that emerges is far removed from the familiar one of hapless victims who built their future through struggle and strife. That story was only partially true, crucially neglecting the experiences of many others, some of whom had benefited from the state, and others who had shown traits of 'corruption, nepotism and irregularities' (p.63), to achieve effective rehabilitation.

This work, hopefully the first of many publications that challenge notions of how the refugees of West Punjab became citizens of India, how the new Indian state dealt with different groups and how certain narratives acquired dominance in the historiography of Partition, is vital. It has opened up a series of enquiries on the place of the Punjabi refugee in Delhi, crucial to any understanding of the recent history of North India.

Shalini Sharma

University of Keele

Tahir Kamran, *Democracy and Governance in Pakistan* (Lahore: South Asia Partnership Pakistan, 2008), 216 pp, no ISBN (hb) Rs 300.

The sixtieth anniversary of Pakistan was an appropriate time to write a history of the state. Tahir Kamran has done a good job by writing *Democracy and Governance in Pakistan*. The usual study of Pakistan always begins with a linear progression from the creation of Pakistan to the foundation of the Muslim

League in 1906, or in many cases, to the separatist politics of Syed Ahmad Khan in the late nineteenth century that led to the demand for a separate state for the majority Muslim areas of the Indian subcontinent. *Democracy and Governance in Pakistan* extends the focus into the post-independence period with a discussion of the ascendancy of civil-military bureaucracy as a power-centre in the governance of Pakistan.

Kamran has tried to address the important question of why democratic institutions could not flourish in Pakistan while they could do so in India. Prior to independence, areas of what is now Pakistan were the recruiting ground of the British army, and the landed gentry of Punjab was at the forefront supplying Punjabi soldiers for the world wars. So there was already a nexus between the military and the landed elite before the creation of Pakistan. This link not only continued in the post-1947 period but got strengthened after the assassination of Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan in 1951. Another interesting point raised by the author concerns the Muslim League leadership's reluctance to go for the general elections. Most of the politicians of the party were from the United Provinces (UP) or those parts of the subcontinent that became part of India. The result was that after independence the central Muslim League leadership found itself totally deprived of its electoral base. Pakistan, unlike its neighbour India, did not hold its first general election, based on adult franchise, until nearly 25 years after the state had been created.

The second chapter, which is entitled 'The Era of Praetorianism 1958-71', pays particular attention to the 'centripetal forces' that shaped this key period. This crucial chapter covers familiar ground with a discussion of the rise of civil-military bureaucracy as a power-centre which culminated in the Ayub coup in 1958. In particular, Kamran argues, the people of Pakistan were 'virtually sick and tired of the ineptness of the politicians...Therefore people heaved a sigh of relief when Martial law was enforced' (p.63). The third chapter of the book, 'The Era of Populism Zulfikar Bhutto', examines a range of the PPP Government's policies and performances from 1971-1977. The author sees Zulfikar Bhutto's period as authoritarian rule, similar to his military predecessors'. Bhutto 'loathed dissent like any other autocrat of the third world countries'. Such a power-obsessed attitude, Kamran pinpoints, was 'the main cause' for Bhutto's 'exit from power and eventual tumbling out of this world in 1979' (p.97). In the next fascinating chapter, entitled 'Third Man on Horseback Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq', the author argues how, after 'popular unrest', Zia took over the control of the country on 5 July 1977 in a military coup. Here, once again, the familiar forces of Praetorians resurfaced with a bang that lasted for no less than eleven years. A recurrent theme throughout the book is the important role of the 'establishment' in the political affairs of Pakistan.

Although President Zia introduced the Islamization programme for self-perpetuation, in many ways his international standing greatly rose after the declaration of jihad against the Soviet Union invaders in Afghanistan in 1979. Chapter five of the book, 'The Rule of Troika in the Name of Democracy 1988-1999', discusses the main events and aspects of both Benazir Bhutto's and Nawaz Sharif's successive governments. The final chapter, 'The Bonapartism Re-Visited: Musharraf Ruling the Roots', points to the salient features of the

Musharraf regime from 1999-2007. Kamran argues the army ruler 'was the kingpin in the system' and legislative bodies were merely a 'plaything in his authoritarian hands' (p.205). President Musharraf sided with the war on terror against the Taliban government in Afghanistan after 'an ultimatum' and 'threats' from the US.

Democracy and Governance in Pakistan is a significant contribution to the understanding of the political economy with its discussion of the complicated issues and relations of civil bureaucracy, the landed elite and the army. It gives brief biographies of the leading figures and then describes the main socio-economic and political development which occurred in Pakistan from 1947-2007. The crux of Kamran's work lies in his unreservedly adopted black and white approach to Pakistan's ruling elites. For a historian, it relies too heavily on secondary sources; however it does utilise an extensive range of sources and shows that the author has a very good command of the existing literature on the subject. Kamran aptly builds upon the work of other scholars; the theme of the book is clear throughout and it is well-written, although the use of pretentious jargon is frequent. There are minor cavils; most unfortunately on page 184 where 60 years of Pakistan's history is rendered 53 years; instead *Democracy and Governance in Pakistan* was published much more recently, in 2008.

The book is a laudable piece of work on Pakistan's post-independence developments and is sure to enlighten and entertain a general readership in Pakistan. One of the book's strengths is indeed Kamran's ability to converge Pakistan's more recent volatile history with the predominance of the bureaucracy and the military in the governance of Pakistan. However, fresh sources could have been deployed to enhance the existing analysis. There is still no equivalent for Pakistan's political history by Professor Ian Talbot, *Pakistan: A Modern History* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005) which still remains the concise but authoritative study on the subject. Nevertheless, Kamran's book is a useful piece of work, which contains much valuable information and offers important observations about Pakistan's post-independence politics which will be of interest to students of Pakistan studies and comparative politics.

Ilyas Chattha

University of Southampton

Yasmin Khan, *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007) xxv + 251 pp. ISBN: 978030012078-3, £19.99.

More than six decades after it happened, the Partition of India in August 1947 into the sovereign states of India and Pakistan continues to fascinate historians. The division of territory was accompanied by an incredible displacement of people. For a long time the popular historiography of the Partition was dominated by accounts of the high level decision making in 1947, concentrating on why it happened and who was primarily responsible. Recently, the new interest in Partition has been more sensitive to the aftermath and the human dimension of

the divide rather than the political history of the closing years of the colonial era. Published to coincide with the sixtieth anniversary of Partition, *The Great Partition* provides an insightful analysis of the endgame of the empire between 1945 and 1947 and elucidates the horror witnessed by millions in 1947 in the making of India and Pakistan. Drawing upon a range of oral sources, archival records and newspaper extracts, Yasmin Khan has painstakingly produced a valuable reappraisal of the great Partition, conflating the differential experience of individuals with the history of nations and their high politics.

Khan begins by attempting to situate the shadow of World War Two in a larger political context before leading us into the story of Partition. She highlights there was nothing 'inevitable' or pre-planned about Partition and nobody really imagined at the end of World War Two 'half a million people or more' were going to die. She draws attention to the 'regional variations' of events in 1947 and argues that 'Each riot had its own causes and could be written about individually'. The violence in 1947 was not the logical outcome of previous conflict. She notes the differences between Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs and how they took 'a very long jump from a sense of difference or lack of social cohesion, to mass slaughter and rape'. Khan has painstakingly attempted to focus on a broader canvas rather than judging the limit of Partition in the worst-afflicted centres of Punjab and Bengal. In part it seems this is because she feels that, 'Partition went far beyond the pinpointed zones of Punjab and Bengal and caught up people in hundreds or thousands of towns and villages in numerous ways'.

Khan states that all the major players failed to foresee the far-reaching consequences linked with the Partition. She notes that the 3 June Partition Plan exacerbated the uncertainty and at the end went 'catastrophically wrong'. Furthermore, she condemns how the British policy-makers executed the Partition Plan in a 'shoddy' manner and shifted the responsibility for dousing disturbances to the nascent dominions. The belief in dividing intensified the communal split and accelerated the preparation for war. Just as territory was being partitioned along religious lines, so too were troops, policemen, railwaymen and communities. The Partition-related violence was different from earlier episodes in both intensity and causes. As Khan writes, 'By August all the ingredients were in place for ethnic cleansing in Punjab'. The violence was politically rather than culturally and religiously rooted. There was a host of culpable people involved, ranging from the fundamentalists on both sides, to unscrupulous politicians, officials, soldiers and policemen. The violence was designed to eliminate and drive out the opposing ethnic group while forging a new moral community. She equally blames Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs for the 1947 'ethnic cleansing in Punjab' and highlights that the committed nationalists became the principal perpetrators.

The Great Partition also provides an incisive analysis of the differing experiences of elite and subaltern classes that were entangled in Partition's miseries. The tragic aspects of individual refugee experience were linked with the great national cause and presented with single-dimensional rendering of the past. In the Indian case, the suffering of refugees was viewed as a 'manifestation of Partition's callousness', which was conflated with the creation of Pakistan,

whereas in the Pakistani case, the refugees were represented as ‘sacrificial martyrs’ to the cost of Pakistan’s freedom.

Khan takes the 1947 Partition as a ‘living history’ rather than a historical event located in the past. Its repercussions continue to resound today. It crops up repeatedly in a torrent of published memories, cinematic and fictional accounts. It is preserved inside family homes by women and men, many of whom live alongside memories of terrible trauma, which are retold and passed on to descendants. Such memories and histories of Partition continue to reinforce and have a direct bearing on how each neighbour perceives the other. Khan asserts that, ‘In the end Partition solved nothing’. She sees August 1947 as too early a cut off date to understand the importance and impact of Partition. ‘Partition is both ever-present in South Asia’s public, political realm and continually evaded’, as she maintains. In particular, the war of 1971 and the secession of Bangladesh from Pakistan exacerbated the human crisis producing a refugee population of around six million. Khan asserts, ‘Violence must sit at the core of any history of Partition’ and concludes with a ‘loud reminder’ that Partition is a lasting lesson of both the dangers of imperial hubris and the reactions of extreme nationalism.

The Great Partition is an important contribution to available studies concerning the 1947 Partition of India and its legacy. The volume will interest researchers and scholars in history, sociology and politics. The interested lay reader too will find it engaging. Khan should be praised lavishly for producing this thorough and accomplished volume of scholarship. However, she should also be mildly censured for the book’s analytical slimness in comparison to recent studies of Partition and its aftermath that highlight the more localised differential patterns of violence and the lived experience of migrants, integrating ‘history from beneath’ with the broader national historical narrative.

Ilyas Chattha

Southampton University

Sheema Majeed (ed.), *Coming Back Home: Selected Articles, Editorials, and Interviews of Faiz Ahmed Faiz*, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2008) xi + 156 pp. ISBN 978-0-19-574380-3 (hb) Rs. 295.

Faiz Ahmed Faiz (1911-84) was unquestionably the greatest poet to have been born in the Punjab in the twentieth century. In both its intrinsic quality and its continuing huge reputation, his Urdu poetry far surpasses the work of all the other poets from the region who were writing at the time, whatever the language in which they chose to express themselves. English readers have recently been given the chance to get a good idea of Faiz’s poetry through the generous bilingual anthology edited by Khalid Hasan as *O City of Lights*, published by OUP Karachi in 2006.

Exceptional interest is also added to this poetic achievement by the remarkable circumstances of his life: the early attachment to the ideals of the Progressive Writers’ Association, the war service in the British Indian army in which he rose to become Lieutenant-Colonel, the romantic marriage to an Englishwoman, the outspokenly left-wing editorship of *The Pakistan Times* in

the early years of Pakistan, the arrest and imprisonment for alleged involvement in the Rawalpindi Conspiracy Case in the 1950s, the award of the Lenin Peace Prize in 1962, the role as cultural adviser to the Bhutto government in the 1970s, then the self-exile in Beirut following Zia ul Haq's coup before his final 'coming back home' to Pakistan and his death in Lahore.

Sheema Majeed's anthology assembles a variety of documents which illustrate different aspects of this life under four headings. The first part consists of twenty-one of Faiz's editorials written in English. Mostly from *The Pakistan Times*, these are sometimes very dated but they do convey the passion of Faiz's earlier years. Then there are five interviews from different later periods of his life, in which admirers record the views of the great poet, whose persona is by now well established. The third part consists of two longer memoirs by two writers who knew Faiz well, Khalid Hasan and I. A. Rehman. In both these parts of the book there is some overlap with the pieces included in Khalid Hasan's *O City of Lights*. The most moving piece in the book is saved until the end. This is an interview with Faiz's widow Alys first published in 1991. Entitled 'You can't behave like an Englishwoman when you're married to Faiz', this provides the most vivid and memorable picture of its subject, informed by a great affection and a remarkable honesty.

Since the general outlines of Faiz's life are familiar to most of the numerous aficionados of his poetry, they should find much to interest them here, although those with less prior background may sometimes be misled by the lack of much editorial guidance. Brief notes could have helped remind many readers of just which now obscure Pakistani political figure of around 1950 was being written about; the provenance of some of the pieces is not always very clearly indicated, and the dates of publication which are given are sometimes quite obviously impossible from the internal evidence of the piece itself. All in all, though, this is an interesting addition to the growing literature in English on Faiz, which we must hope will before too long include the full-length critical study which he so richly deserves.

Christopher Shackle

University of London

Baba Gurdit Singh, *Voyage of Komagata Maru: Or India's Slavery Abroad*, edited and introduced by Darshan Singh Tatla (Chandigarh: Unistar Books., 2007), 241 pp. ISBN 81-89899-33-3 (hb) Rs 475.

Baba Gurdit Singh, *Zulmi Katha*, edited and introduced by Darshan Singh Tatla (Published in Gurmukhi, Chandigarh: Unistar Books, 2007), ix + 241 pp. ISBN 81-8989-35-X (hb) Rs 200.

Report of the Komagatu Maru Committee of Inquiry and Some Further Documents, edited and introduced by Darshan Singh Tatla (Chandigarh: Unistar Books, 2007), vii + 198 pp. ISBN 81-890899-34-1 (hb) Rs.395.

Darshan Singh Tatla with Mandeep K Tatla, *Sardar Gurdit Singh 'Komagata*

Maru': A Short Biography (Chandigarh: Unistar Books, 2007), 52 pp. ISBN 81-89899-36-8 (pb) Rs. 75.

We have here three volumes of a reprint series on the Punjabi Diaspora and a booklet in a biographical series on overseas Punjabis, produced by Darshan Singh Tatla. The subject is the *Komagata Maru*, a 90-year-old incident that still resonates among Punjabis at home and abroad. In the past year, following campaigning by Punjabi-Canadians, the British Columbia provincial legislature and the Canadian Prime Minister apologized to the descendents of the 376 passengers of the *Komagata Maru* for the treatment they received in the port of Vancouver in 1914. The incident has not been forgotten because it is a symbol of the racism of past Canadian policy, and of the massive inequities of the British imperial system. It properly has a place in the history of the freedom movement in India and the struggle of emigrants from India for respect and equality abroad. It is a story that ended bitterly at Budge Budge in Bengal with the deaths of twenty passengers in an encounter with police and troops, and with the arrest and detention of most of the others. What we know has come down to us from opposing sides, officials and emigrants, without an objective neutral view. That presents a challenge in explaining what happened. The best answer, as Darshan Singh advocates, is to dig as deeply as possible into the surviving record and to subject everything uncovered to close scrutiny.

Two of the reprints, one in English and one in Punjabi, are by the man who led the adventure of the *Komagata Maru*, Baba Gurdit Singh. He was an individual of great experience, growing up in rural Punjab and living much of his life as an emigrant in Malaya and Singapore, making a lot of money in a variety of commercial ventures. His business activity gave him familiarity with civil courts in a British colonial setting, which explains his readiness to challenge Canadian law even though he had never before been in North America. Moreover, his prominence as a community leader put him on easy speaking terms with British officials in Singapore and Malaya and made him confident about representing his countrymen in a British dominion like Canada. As a leader in the small Sikh community in Singapore and Malaya, he had met many emigrant Sikhs passing through, and he heard from them what they faced in trying to enter North America or Australia. He was also close to the Punjab scene because he regularly went home to the Amritsar district and he had spent several years there immediately prior to the *Komagata Maru*.

He was drawn into the *Komagata Maru* venture by would-be emigrants at the Hong Kong gurdwara when he was there to prosecute a legal case against a business partner. He had the business experience and the prestige among his countrymen to put together a major venture like this. He never presented himself as an emigrant, but as a businessman developing a passenger trade between Asia and the Americas. Once in Canada, he argued for special treatment for himself because he was a merchant, not an immigrant. In conversation with the Hong Kong Colonial Secretary before his departure, he disclaimed any political motives. That did not stop officials in India from making an extremely negative assessment—that he knew from the beginning that the passengers would not be allowed to land in Canada, yet still sought to make money out of them, while

posing among them as a revolutionary leader.

In his publications, Gurdit Singh answered the charges against him set out in the *Report of the Komagata Maru Committee of Inquiry*, a document produced under the auspices of the British regime in India. Because he refers to it often, the *Report* is a logical companion to Gurdit Singh's books. It is also a very different document:—one completed three months after the return of the *Komagata Maru* by officials who had examined 201 witnesses in Calcutta, Budge Budge and Punjab and assembled 1,000 pages of evidence, none of which was made public. The *Report* summarizes the whole epic story, but devotes most of its attention to what had happened at Budge Budge. It is severely critical of Gurdit Singh and generally exonerates police and officials in Canada and India.

Gurdit Singh assembled his rebuttal with difficulty and after a lot of time. He had been keeping a record on the ship, but lost his papers at Budge Budge where they fell into the hands of the police. For the next seven years he was underground, but before he eventually surrendered to police, he published a serialized account in Punjabi papers which became *Zulmi Katha*. Seven years later, having spent five of those years in prison, he privately published an account in English. For this he had three main sources: his own *Zulmi Katha*, and the official *Report of the Komagata Maru Committee of Inquiry*, and the correspondence of his legal representative in Vancouver during the summer of 1914. His book contains a vigorous personal narrative from the moment the ship arrives at Budge Budge, but a much looser history, told mostly through the correspondence of the Vancouver lawyers, for much of what happened earlier. One wonders what the book would have looked like if Gurdit Singh had not been deprived of what he had written during the voyage.

Each reprint begins with an introductory essay by Darshan Singh. These essays contain duplicate material, but also explore separate themes. Together they offer an informed, thoughtful and balanced account. Darshan Singh is generally sympathetic to Gurdit Singh but also able to look at the affair objectively. He has interesting things to say about differences between *Zulmi Katha* and *Voyage of Komagata Maru*—finding Gurdit Singh more effective telling his story in Punjabi than in English, in which his idiom, rhetoric and style can let him down. Darshan Singh says that even when Gurdit Singh makes “outlandish arguments” they seem more cogent in Punjabi than in English. In other words, he fairly warns us that some of what Gurdit Singh says is not convincing.

The editing needs comment. It has been minimal and limited to cleaning up and slightly clarifying the text; and the result is that these editions are easier to read than the originals. Given Gurdit Singh's limitations in English and his problems with printers, his text in English was full of errors. Darshan Singh and his editorial assistants have generally made the changes that one would expect of a good copy editor. But they have missed some of Gurdit Singh's mistakes, and they have inadvertently added a few of their own. And, in seeking to clarify the text, they have added headings that in at least a couple of cases accidentally reverse the authorship and destination of a letter, or give a problematic identification. None of the changes or additions are highlighted so they are impossible to catch except by comparison with the original.

The same is true with other documents in these volumes, including an incidental file of Canadian immigration correspondence, the judgments of five justices of the British Columbia Court of Appeal in the *Komagata Maru* case, and an earlier, unrelated judgment in the British Columbia Supreme Court. There are slips in the transcription of these documents, which is understandable because the versions that Darshan Singh obtained from the City Archives in Vancouver are carbon copies that have thickened impressions that can be hard to read. Darshan Singh does not identify the archival homes of his documents, although that would help those who want to see the originals. Also, these documents would be more useful with explanation and analysis. In one of his introductory essays, Darshan Singh discusses the lawfulness of Gurdit Singh's venture. But he makes no comment about what the BC Court of Appeal justices actually say, although he has reproduced their judgments and they run to 38 printed pages and that is a lot to assimilate without some guidance.

Darshan Singh includes a guide to sources on the *Komagata Maru*, and a bibliography of published and unpublished sources that researchers will appreciate. His notable omission is Record Group 76, the Canadian immigration department files, in the National Archives of Canada, the most important source on the Canadian side. He might also have mentioned the India Office Confidential Files in the British Library, and the Canada Series in the Colonial Office Files in the Public Record Office, London. In these collections one finds much information collected by police and immigration agents, as well as the official reports, directives and daily communications related to the *Komagata Maru*, all valuable for explaining this still relevant story.

The booklet, *Sardar Gurdit Singh 'Komagata Maru'* is a rearrangement, recombination and expansion of material from the introductions to the reprint volumes. It is based in information from secondary works and from Gurdit Singh's own writing and provides a useful sketch that covers more ground than Jaswant Singh Jas's entry in *The Encyclopedia of Sikhism*, although without as much authority. There are slips that a pre-publication reviewer might have caught, like a reference to the works of Fred Taylor, a famous ice-hockey player and a Canadian immigration agent but not an author; or an explanation of the Canadian legal issues that describes executive orders (orders-in-council) as an Act of Parliament and thereby confuses the essence of the case. But the booklet pulls a lot together and will be valued by anyone looking for a starting place in understanding what the *Komagata Maru* meant to its passengers and to all who witnessed what happened to them, including those who supported them as friends or met them as adversaries.

Hugh Johnston

Simon Fraser University

Meeto (Kamaljit Bhasin-Malik), Introduction by Kumkum Sangari, *In the Making: Identity Formation in South Asia* (Haryana: Three Essays Collective, 2007), 137 pp. ISBN: 8188789496 (hb) US\$18.

The aptly named *In the Making* is a posthumously published piece of work. It

was part of Meeto's doctoral research at Balliol College, in which she sought to examine identity formation in an increasingly complex society. The book begins with an introduction by Kumkum Sangari, described as 'one of Meeto's many masis', and reflects upon the journey that Meeto started in which she attempted to examine the blurred boundaries and composite identities that have shaped people and communities in South Asia. The book represents that uncompleted journey which was tragically cut short with Meeto's death in 2006.

The essays presented here are an attempt to challenge historical fixations with incidents and processes of conflict, conquest, iconoclasm and instead Meeto has attempted to examine the co-existence and peaceful interactions at the grassroots which have also contributed to identity formation in South Asia. Case studies from colonial Punjab, Ceylon, and the Ahmadi community all provide ample material for analysis. Meeto's examination of the composite culture in colonial Punjab and the census material represents work in its more advanced stages, while work on the Ahmadi community was work in progress. The book begins with a historiography of Hindu-Muslim relationship in the subcontinent. Historians and political scientists have provided various theories, seeking to explain the communal problem in India. However, the preoccupation with conflict led Meeto to examine the other side, 'It seems as if coexistence and peaceful interactions make poor historical record, but it is crucial that they become part of the historical record, if one is to have a holistic picture of the past' (p. 13).

The chapters on Punjab detail the preoccupation of the colonial power with the classification of people and thereby embedding notions of fixed identities. Meeto has attempted to highlight the fluidity of identity in colonial Punjab, for example the worship of Sufi *pirs* or cultural festivals such as Holi and Baisakhi (pp. 27-30). Colonial Punjab was replete with shrines that were shared by communities and contributed to the syncretic nature of the people. An examination of the census data collected by the colonial power highlight the fluidity with which identities functioned; the response to the census is pragmatic and functional and is often malleable according to the required needs of the time. However, this process of documenting people and their religious identity increasingly gives rise to notions of fixed religious identities and politicising communal identities. The census reports on the Punjab were gathered in the late nineteenth century and the reports were written by people like Ibbetson, Maclagan and Rose. They were rich in ethnographic material and provide not only glimpses into colonial Punjabi but also into the colonial mind. The methodology used in gathering this information was designed to fulfil the colonial agenda and therefore the reliability of the data has to be questioned. The census data collected failed to capture and reflect the complexity of shared sacred space and the nuances that made up Punjabi society. Instead communal and caste competition intensified, motivated by material concerns and colonial patronage.

The census in colonial Ceylon, like the Punjab, also reveals the problems and challenges of making convenient labels fit ambiguous identities, 'but the Census could not accommodate the mixed and hybrid nature of these communities and they were therefore pushed into either the 'Sinhalese' or the 'Tamil' column in the table on race.' (p. 90) Indeed the Census, which was introduced by the

colonial power, was often responsible for more than just counting numbers. The root of contemporary conflicts such as the separatist demands of the Tamils and the creation of the 'Indian Muslim' has its origins in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The 1911 Census in Ceylon for example, 'made a distinction between Ceylon Tamils and Indian Tamils. This had important political implications, because suddenly the Tamils who had seen themselves as a dominant community felt they were reduced to a minority.' (pp. 82-83) The census thus had the impact of cementing these otherwise amorphous identities.

In the Making is an unfinished piece of research, marking a tragic loss to the academic community because it represented so much promise. Due to its incomplete form, it only provides glimpses into what would otherwise have been a challenging and provocative piece of work. Meeto wanted to examine those communities that did not fit the easy labels of 'Hindu' and 'Muslim', she wanted to explore the communities that occupied the blurry and grey spaces in between those convenient labels. Meeto attempted to provide a historical analysis of themes that are relevant today and would greatly benefit from some historical contextualisation. In multicultural societies, plural and fluid personal identities are increasingly under threat from essentialised and politicised identities. However, Meeto's ambition was to learn from these syncretic communities and understand how they coexisted in sacred communal spaces.

Pippa Virdee

De Montfort University

Nidar Singh Nihang and Parmjit Singh, *In the Master's Presence: The Sikhs of Hazoor Sahib volume 1: History* (London: Kashi House, 2008), xiv + 330 pp. ISBN 978-0-9560168-0-5 (hb) £30.00.

In 1984 Khushwant Singh and Raghu Rai published their oversized picture book, *The Sikhs* (Calcutta: Rupa and Company, 1984). Since the majority of images here presented were of Nihang Sikhs, amongst the most colourful of those practitioners of *gurmat* (i.e. Sikhism), this book portrayed a rather skewed view of the Sikh world in which Nihangs comprise a miniscule percentage. Since that time we have seen the appearance of a number of similar coffee-table books attempting to capture Sikh images worldwide interspersed with narratives drawn flawlessly from a Sikh tradition standardised by the Sikh 'reform' movement, the Singh Sabha-Tat Khalsa in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Patwant Singh's *The Golden Temple* (New Delhi: Times Book International, 1988) springs to mind as does his *Gurdwaras, in India and Around the World* (New Delhi: Himalayan Books, 1992) to name but two: pleasant to view, but not particularly academic or informative to students of Sikh history and tradition. When I initially saw the first volume of Nidar Singh Nihang and Parmjit Singh's *In the Master's Presence: The Sikhs of Hazoor Sahib* last November newly displayed in Bazaar Mai Seva in Amritsar, my first impression was to pass it by as merely another in a growing number of extra-large and often overpriced picture books showcasing the 'colourful Sikhs.'

Luckily I ignored the inclination and discovered to my utter delight that this is

no mere addition to the coffee-table genre but is rather a very serious book, tirelessly researched, and broaching a subject long neglected in Sikh historical studies: the history of *Hazūr Sāhib* (literally, 'The Master's Presence'), one of the five famed *takhts* or 'thrones' of the Sikhs. These *takhts*, each manned by a *jathedār* and his entourage, are built around spots considered sacred in Sikh tradition. Generally understood to represent the Sikh concern with the secular/temporal world and thus interpreted to architecturally manifest the concern of the Sikh Gurus with revering and respecting the universe as a creation of Akal Purakh (God) rather than rejecting it as *māiā* or the cosmic delusion so often the subject of classical Hindu philosophers, *takhts* were and continue to be the centres at which Sikhs traditionally gather to make important collective decisions regarding the Sikh people and their religious tradition in the modern world.

The academic neglect of so important a site, believed to mark the very spot where the tenth Guru achieved his *joti jot samaunā* (death) may stem from the fact that the town in which it is situated, Nander, is in southern India and thus quite some distance from the traditional haunts of Sikh and Diaspora Sikh Studies, the Punjab and its surrounding areas. As we have noted in monographs such as Kristina Myrvold's delightful *Inside the Guru's Gate: Ritual Uses of Texts Among the Sikhs of Varanasi* (Lund, Sweden: Department of History and Anthropology of Religions, 2007) and Himadri Bannerjee's equally agreeable *The Other Sikhs: A View from Eastern India* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2003), distance from the Punjab heartland usually implies that the Sikhisms practiced in these outlying regions differ markedly from the more normative variety observed within the land of the five rivers. This situates *In the Master's Presence* clearly within this genre of academic literature as well, a fact which seems to have precipitated the cold reception given it by certain segments of the Sikh community in London (a response captured on YouTube¹) during the early February book launch gala.

Including a preface and introduction this book, the first of two volumes, is divided into thirteen beautifully illustrated chapters, all copiously documented. These illustrations are indeed impressive, many appearing in print for the first time. Equally striking is the historical narrative that binds them all together. In the process of presenting us with the history of Hazur Sahib and its Sikh community from the time of Guru Gobind Singh to the present day the authors skillfully reveal aspects of the Sikh past and Sikh tradition, of 'Sikhness,' that was at one time hidden away from the scholarly world as the many wonderful illustrations which permeate the book. Indeed, although the Preface and Introduction do draw heavily upon Sikh tradition, this book is no mere retelling of the dominant Sikh narrative as we here find expressions of Sikhness which go well beyond the Tat Khalsa-inspired texts which populate Sikh bookshelves today: a multitextured retelling of Sikh history populated with a cast of multiple identities, contemporary images of which are included, all of which were understood to be Sikh during the time of Guru Gobind Singh and a century afterwards. This dynamic Sikh diversity within an inclusivist Sikh history (that is nevertheless drawn from both traditional materials such as Santokh Singh's *Sūraj Prakāś*, Ratan Singh Bhangu's *Srī Gur-panth Prakāś*, and Gian Singh's *Tavārīkh Gurū Khālsā* as well as the testimony of present-day Hazuri Sikhs) is

often noted by the numerous hyphenated Sikh terms which regularly appear throughout, so many that at times it is somewhat difficult to keep track: we have Akali Sikhs, Akali-Nihang Sikhs, Nihang Sikhs, Bhujangi Nihangs, Sewapanthis, Udasis, Gulabdasiyas, and amongst still others Hazuri Sikhs; at one point, moreover, we find the term ‘Hindu Sikh martyrs’ (p. 10, n. 2). All of these hyphenated identities are reminiscent of the categorisation discovered within the early British census of the Punjab. Particularly insightful are the descriptions of the diversity within the tenth Guru’s Khalsa (pp. 15-42), a topic often explored in the work of J.S. Grewal. Both authors make clear that the Khalsa as understood by Guru Gobind Singh included more than just Sikhs who chose to don what would gradually evolve into the symbols of corporate Khalsa Sikh identity, the Five Ks. This was a diverse Khalsa, with shorn Sikh men, which reflected the type of Khalsa Sikhness about which we read in the eighteenth-century rahit-nama literature as well as within the *Prem Sumārg* recently translated into English by Hew McLeod, a Khalsa in which the veneration of weapons and the goddess Chandi are literally at centre stage (see illustration on p. 123); and a Khalsa which, moreover, acknowledged as Guru not only the Adi Granth but both the Dasam Granth and the little-known *Sarab-loh Granth* (The All-Steel Book) attributed to the tenth Master.

This beautifully diverse composition of the Sikh Panth whose symbolic universe included many texts today deemed Hindu (see p. 198 for example) is very much brought out in the figure of the virtually unknown Chandu Lal, the principal force behind at least five of the book’s thirteen chapters. As the most able administrator in the employ of the Nawab of Hyderabad, Chandu Lal wielded tremendous authority within the Nawab’s domain. As a *sahaj-dhārī* or *Nānak-panthī* Sikh, who was a *murīd* or disciple of the Udasi Sikh Baba Priyatam Das (an image of whom appears in the painting on page 76), Chandu Lal was able to shower his favour upon the small shrine at Nander, ultimately setting in motion its transformation into the ornate complex noted in nineteenth-century accounts. He was also in a position to favour the small group of Sikhs descended from those Punjabis who either travelled to the Deccan with Guru Gobind Singh or gradually made their way to Nander during the eighteenth century. These Sikhs ultimately formed Chandu Lal’s bodyguard which was transmogrified under the British into the Jawan Sikh Force (pp. 248-9). Many of these Sikhs also arrived in the early eighteenth century, sent to Nander by Maharaja Ranjit Singh who both sought the advice of Chandu Lal in his dealings with the Farangis and also patronised the shrine at Nander. The exchange presented here between these two men is, as far as I know, its first ever appearance and sheds light on certain aspects of the maharaja’s backdoor dealings with the British, challenging long-held interpretations of Ranjit Singh’s attitude towards both the British and the Nihangs, long considered the maharaja’s best troops.

The episodes with the Lion of the Punjab seem to suggest that it was inevitable that the concerns of Punjabi Sikhs would eventually reach far-off Nander. As we see today, Punjabi Sikhs steeped in the values of the normative Singh Sabha-Tat Khalsa understanding of Sikhism have often presented strong critiques of certain practices at Nander, particularly rituals involving staining sacred weapons with blood (usually the blood of goats). Such critiques of

prevailing customs always seems disingenuous and force one to question the agenda of apparently aggrieved parties. The same appears to have held true in the nineteenth century when events in the Punjab were utilised in an attempt to resolve local disputes over what ultimately amounted to gurdwara control (pp. 220-28).

This is truly an excellent text. There are elements which are, however, problematic. One finds, for example, the occasional Orientalist description of Muslims, the same tired understandings of the emperor Aurangzeb and too uncritical interpretations of the Anglo-Sikh wars rooted within Sikh tradition itself. The last chapter, moreover, is out of place, indeed it is the least academic of all as it very emotionally documents how the 300th anniversary celebrations of both the Guru's death, and those of the nomination of the scripture as the Guru by the last human Master, led to the modernisation (read destruction) of significant portions of the Hazur Sahib complex. But these are very minor issues indeed and notwithstanding these *In the Master's Presence* is a book that belongs on the shelf of everyone in the world interested in Sikh Studies and the regional histories of northern and southern India.

1. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2YotRSiLNgg>.

Louis E. Fenech

University of Northern Iowa

M.Y. Effendi, *Punjab Cavalry: Evolution, Role, Organisation and Tactical Doctrine, 11th Cavalry (Frontier Force)*, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2007) 324pp. ISBN 9-780195-472035 (hb) \$55.

In an age when admiration and respect appear to be reserved for malefactors of great wealth (as President Teddy Roosevelt had it), or for inane dummies who kick footballs, it is stimulating to read a tale of honour and courage on the part of so many officers and soldiers who served their regiment and their country without fanfare and sometimes without public recognition of their loyalty and self-sacrifice.

The stories of most regiments are marked by the dedication of those who served in them, but throughout its existence 11 Cavalry seems to have been blessed with an eclectic blend of all ranks whose exploits deserve this detailed and well-presented history. The author has brought objectivity to what obviously has been a labour of love, and some of his observations on people and events are refreshingly candid. Colonel M.Y. Effendi held many appointments (although his command appointment, unfortunately for him, was that of 12 Cavalry (Sam Browne's) rather than the unit in which he served for so long, and he has recorded a stirring tale of a thoroughly professional military family.

He takes us from foundation in 1849 through the rest of the nineteenth century at a canter, which is probably appropriate for a cavalryman, and the descriptions of fighting in Afghanistan are intriguingly, even eerily, comparable with contemporary events. The actions of 1 and 3 Punjab Cavalry (for 11 Cavalry is descended from both, and from 21 and 23 Cavalry) are recorded with modest

pride. The cavalry, indeed, were the most effective weapons of their day, and when in 1880 1st Punjab and the 19th Bengal Lancers charged a superior force some 200 Afghans were killed in what was described as “the most brilliant cavalry action of the war,” which it certainly was – and in terms of tactics it was a classic example of concentration of force against an enemy rendered incapable of countering it.

1 Punjab “marched home in triumph” but its brother unit joined in avenging the disaster at Maiwand, and 3 Punjab was in the brigade that relieved the garrison in Kandahar, marked thereafter by the regimental crest, the Kandahar Star. After the Second Afghan war and minor engagements in the Frontier the regiment’s lineal predecessors fought in Mesopotamia in the First World War and on return to the sub-continent took part in the Third Afghan War of 1919 and were again involved in the frontier region where “Afridi outlaw gangs” (among others) were perennial threats to the settled areas. But then came what the author accurately refers to as “a period of transition” during which the regiment was constituted in 1922 as 11 Prince Albert Victor’s Own Cavalry (Frontier Force), with squadrons of Sikhs, Dogras and “Punjabi Mussulmans”, the last having a section of Pushtuns, Khattaks from Kohat.

In the Second World War 11 Cavalry distinguished itself in North Africa and Burma (and the author makes use of many compelling eyewitness accounts), then fought in Kashmir and in the 1965 and 1971 wars when the unit was fortunate enough to be commanded by outstanding officers. And it is here I must declare an interest, because three of the officers whom I most admire commanded 11 Cavalry: Sahabzada Yaqub Khan, General KM Arif, and Major General Wajahat Husain, the last being one of my oldest Pakistani friends. There were many other outstanding commandants, of course, not least Khurshid Ali Khan in 1971, whose account of the war is acute and penetrating (as is the author’s first-hand description of the Phillaurah battle), but most people have favourites, and the Sahabzada, K.M. Arif and Wajahat are mine. It was Wajahat’s arrival in September 1965 to command, stimulate and grip a hard-hit and motley group of units that was decisive in assisting to counter the Indian army’s major assault at Chawinda.

One of the many absorbing vignettes is Colonel Effendi’s description of Bengalis, who were 5 per cent of the strength in armoured units before 1971. They were treated “as inferior beings” by many of the junior ranks – just as “natives” in the old Indian Army had been so regarded by some vulgar and insensitive British officers – but the author staunchly defends them, recording that none of them deserted even when their loyalty must have been stretched almost unbearably. But my favourite anecdotes are those dealing with the many ‘characters’ who graced (and some disgraced, but in the nicest possible way) the regiment’s rolls. Of course soldiering is a serious business, but there should always be room for the eccentric officer whose style and zest can compensate for driving his seniors to fury about his off-duty conduct. 11 Cavalry certainly had its share, as it did of outstanding high-grade officers and soldiers of all ranks, and perhaps the most appropriate encomium noted is that of Lord Ismay who, as a subaltern of 11 Cavalry, asked his Colonel what made his unit so remarkable. The astute veteran of many campaigns replied that “To get the best out of any group

you've got to make them feel like a family. That is what we are and always have been in this regiment."

Colonel Effendi's book describes the story of 11 Cavalry (FF) exceptionally well and is of considerable value to students of Punjab's history. And there is no doubt his Regiment, that exceptional military family, will continue to make its mark in the story of Pakistan.

Brian Cloughley

University of Bradford

Michael H. Fisher, Shompa Lahiri and Shinder Thandi, *A South-Asian History of Britain* (Oxford/Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood World Publishing, 2007), 259 pp. ISBN 10: 184645008X ISBN-13: 978-1846450082 (hb) £19.95.

Most histories of South-Asians in Britain tell us about the post-war migration of Indians and Pakistanis in search of opportunities in the booming economy of Britain. Few have attempted to tell us about the 400 year long relationship between the people of Britain and the Indian subcontinent. *A South-Asian History of Britain* attempts to cover that vast history and the ways in which that relationship evolved. What we have is three scholars bringing their expertise that cover the 400 years. Fisher is an expert in the early encounters between Indians and the colonial power; Lahiri focuses on Anglo-Indian encounters during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; and Thandi has written about the Punjabi migration and brings his knowledge of the contemporary South Asian diaspora to this volume.

Early migrations to Britain started with the establishment of the East India Company in India. In 1600 the Company was given the royal charter to trade and thus began this long relationship, although Fisher does mention the presence of some 'Asians' beforehand who may well have found their way to Britain via the Portuguese connection. The largest groups were working class men and women: lascars constituted a large segment and others included *ayahs* and students. One of the first encounters took place between Hawkins, an ambassador for the Company and King James, and Mariam, an orphaned Armenian Christian. Hawkins married Mariam and brought her back to England but he died *enroute*; Mariam then met Towerson, an English merchant, and married him. They reached London in 1614 and led a colourful life which ultimately ended in divorce. However, what is fascinating about this early period is that though these were 'inter-racial' marriages, Fisher could not identify any adverse comment from the people at the time. This sentiment is also prevalent in the early encounters of the Company officials who remained in Bengal. It is fascinating to discover that contrary to what may be the perception, these early encounters were rather more fruitful and amicable leading to marriage in some cases. Of course there is a reversal of such cordial relations, especially with the onset of the Victorian age.

Lahiri explores the period from 1857 to 1947 which is also when the Crown assumes direct control of India. Furthermore, the events of 1857 radically changed the relationship between the colonial power and its subjects and created an atmosphere of suspicion and fear. This inevitably had an impact on the

Indians living in Britain at the time. It is through these encounters that we see the formation of early nationalism developing in the minds of the Indians. Those who were fortunate enough to afford an education in England were exposed to powerful ideas of nationalism, freedom and liberty. Dadabhai Naoroji and W. C. Bonnerjee, who were both elected as Members of Parliament, often entertained and had gatherings for expatriate Indians. One can imagine these gatherings were sowing the seeds of early nationalist activity in India.

By 1901 there was a greater diversity in the people who had taken residency in Britain. In general South-Asian women who travelled to Britain consisted of wives, domestic servants (ayahs), female royalty, students, and teachers among others. The most unconventional occupations at the time were flying instructors, auctioneers, animal caretakers, sculptors and authors and even around ten people came to work in the British film industry. It is stories like these which bring life to the history of South-Asians in Britain (p. 148). Though comparatively their numbers were still small, they were nonetheless a visible community, from begging in the streets to serving and meeting the queen and addressing Parliament. "The lives of these 'brown' Victorians, both 'heathen' and Christian, straddled both poverty and affluence, and were played out in both public and private spheres" (p. 125).

In some ways we can see parallels with the changing relationship between the British and Indians in both India and Britain. The move towards a more aggressive and interventionist approach in India did lead to greater tension between the colonial power and its subjects. At the same time we can see that South Asians living in Britain at the time were not free from racial prejudices and this becomes more prominent with the radicalisation of nationalism in India and the two world wars. There is a wonderful example of that superior colonial mindset when the hospital officials were concerned about deploying white female nurses to treat Indian soldiers. There was a fear of inter-racial sexual encounters and, even though they were in hospital, the Indian soldiers were still seen as potential sexual predators. The social segregation which was so prevalent in colonial India was also present here in Britain.

The final two chapters are by Thandi and focus on 1947 onwards. It is of course this period which has seen a complete transformation in the relationship between South Asians and Britain. The post-war migration to Britain was necessary to meet the labour shortages of the 1950s and 1960s; and the Commonwealth countries were easily able to fill that demand for cheap labour. What started as predominantly young single men, working as labourers, transformed into small communities in the late 1960s. The expulsion of the Ugandan Asians in 1972 added to that growing community. Thandi explores the relationship between decolonisation and migration to the 'mother country'. This period also represents a shift in power between the two, from being colonial subjects to being free subjects. However, the achievement of that in reality has been much more problematic and the post-war period is characterised by demands by ethnic minorities for equal rights and acceptance as legitimate citizens of Britain. In the final chapter, Thandi explores the dilemmas of a South-Asian community which is much more confident of its own identity but at the same time the challenges of dealing with more fragmented identities are much

more prevalent.

Pippa Virdee

De Montfort University

Autar S. Dhesi and Gurmail Singh (eds), *Rural Development in Punjab: A Success Story Going Astray*, (London, New York, New Delhi: Routledge, 2008) 533 pp. ISBN 978-0-415-45681-4 (hb) Rs. 795.

The choice of papers by the editors testifies to their scholarship and deep understanding of the Punjab model of development. The book, organized into six sections (rural development, agriculture, water resources, agro-industry, human resources and the overseas Punjabis) contains 27 articles besides an appropriate introduction by the editors. The success story of rural development in Punjab seems to have gone astray. Hence, the title of the book is most appropriate.

In his paper on Rural Development, Autar S. Dhesi has very aptly demonstrated that non-translation of gains in agricultural development into developing a modern industrial economy has been one of the most serious limitations of the Punjab model of development. The lack of suitable institutional back-up and neglect of social sectors have been the most significant reasons behind it.

The three papers by G.S. Kalkat; Ramesh Chand; and Sidhu, Joshi and Bhullar put a serious question mark on the economic and ecological sustainability of the wheat-paddy cropping pattern in Punjab. The solution lies in crop-diversification, conservation of natural resources and development of allied agricultural activities. Ramesh Chand suggests bold policy initiatives for Research and Development (hereafter R&D) and infrastructural support.

Sukhpal Singh highlights the fact that the contracting firms do not share the incremental profits, coming out of value addition, with the farmers as there is no participation of farmers in the agro-industrial development. This has been one of the serious limitations of contract farming in Punjab.

Gurmail Singh reveals that though modernization of agriculture has transformed the rural economy and society, yet, there remains a wide rural-urban socio-economic divide. In another paper, he highlights the fact that the revamping of agricultural R&D and the vertical integration of agricultural produce with industry are imperative for the success of agro-based industrialization.

Prasoon Mathur and his co-authors advocate a paradigm shift in publicly funded R&D by strengthening the public-private partnership. Vikram Chadha, on the other hand, strongly favours publicly funded R&D.

The papers by G.S. Hira and Lakhwinder Singh reveal, since the advent of the green revolution, the land use change and cropping pattern have resulted in depletion of the water table. The solution, according to them, lies in suitable water management policy.

Rachpal Singh and Kashmir Singh, as also Upendra Nath Roy, found that the watershed development projects improved the economic conditions of the direct as well as the indirect beneficiaries, in the *Kandi* areas. Nevertheless, there is a need to make the official agencies more sensitised so as to reap the full

benefits.

Piare Lal advocates the integrated development of agro-forestry and wood based industries in Punjab as there is enormous potential and comparative advantage for such an integral development. However, he feels that government must take suitable policy measures. P.K. Gupta and co-authors argue that production of bio-fuel has great potential in view of the huge quantity of biomass available in Punjab.

S.S. Johl provides a powerful rationale for equity and access to education and to the health delivery system for the marginalized rural and urban people. In his view, it is the only way to inclusive development.

Jaswinder Singh Brar indicates that Punjab ranks 16 among the 17 major states of India in terms of share of expenditure on education in the state budget. Sukhwinder Singh and Sucha Singh Gill reveal that the rural public health infrastructure and delivery mechanism have largely become non-functional. Sawaran Singh finds that Punjab, with its much higher per capita income, lies behind Kerala in terms of demographic indicators. According to all the three papers, the government's withdrawal and poor governance are the main reasons for this.

Manjit Singh reveals that the targeted sections of population, under various government sponsored schemes, have been benefited but only to a limited extent. The inadequacy and misuse of funds, the lack of professional skill and the unnecessary political interference have been the major reasons for the partial success.

Balbir Singh and Janak Raj Gupta show that the government-sponsored self employment programmes, through self-help groups, have been quite successful in raising the living standard of the beneficiaries.

Autar S. Dhesi reveals that, though the foreign remittances and the philanthropic activities by the overseas Punjabis have played a significant role in the Doaba region of Punjab, yet the potentialities are grossly underutilized. Darshan Tatla suggests that the Punjabi diaspora has facilitated the impact of modernization and globalization on Punjabi society.

Shinder S. Thandi raises doubts about the continuation of diaspora remittances by the second and third generation Punjabis settled abroad. Thandi strongly feels that impeccable trust, transparency and accountability in diaspora-homeland relations are the *sine qua non* for remittances and for the involvement of overseas Punjabis in the future development of Punjab.

The papers by Raghbir S. Bassi and Gurdev S. Gill argue that the provision of modern amenities – sanitation and hygiene – in the villages can be made possible by the joint efforts of the government, village community, NGOs and overseas Punjabis. Bassi has presented the success story of village Kharaudi (district Hoshiarpur) in support of his argument.

The book offers significant revelations about the success and failure of the rural development model in Punjab. It provides significant policy recommendations and makes a rich addition to literature on the Punjab economy. However, there are certain significant gaps which, if addressed, would have resulted in additional utility.

The significant gaps are: the obsession of political leaders with competitive

political populism and privatization of the social services; the systematic decline in development expenditure (both social and economic) and increase in non-development expenditure in the state budget; blurred political and democratic vision; lack of political will; the apathetic attitude of the successive governments towards the development of rural areas; 'freebies', in the form of electricity to the farm and weaker sections, as a solution; and the connivance of civil bureaucracy and policy makers with the political leadership.

In fact, over time, Punjab has witnessed serious distortions in political and public life – in the form of corruption, and a myopic view of the development agenda. This, in turn, has adversely affected the governance and credibility of the State. As a consequence, the capacity of the State for public policy intervention got weakened. And that is the main reason behind the success story going astray.

The public education and health delivery system in the rural area suffered serious neglect, to the peril of the villagers, particularly the marginalized sections. The share of rural students in the liberal and professional higher education is only around 4 per cent (recent survey by Punjabi University, Patiala, Punjab, India). The rural population in general, and marginalized sections in particular, are beleaguered in the vicious circle of their helplessness and in the apathetic attitude of the state.

Agricultural diversification alone cannot develop the rural economy. To address the crisis of rural Punjab, there is an urgent need to go in for diversification of the entire rural economy. That would be possible only by making rural education and health delivery system equitable and accessible and by developing the rural non-agricultural sectors. The overseas Punjabis can only supplement the efforts.

The state badly needs statesmanship of the highest order if we want the development agenda, with people at centre-stage, to be put on the rails. The prerequisite for all this is responsible, transparent and efficient governance.

The fundamental question is how to sensitise the political leadership, civil bureaucracy and policy makers towards the societal issues. If this question is not tackled in a given time frame, then the people of Punjab will have to recall the famous couplet: '*shah muhmada ik sarkar bajhaon, fauzan jit ke ant nu harian ne*' (The army got defeated in the absence of government).

Ranjit S. Ghuman

Punjabi University, Patiala

H. Malik and Y. V. Gankovsky (eds), *The Encyclopaedia of Pakistan*, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2006), x + 432 pp. ISBN 0-91-597735-1 (hb) Rs.995.

The Encyclopaedia of Pakistan contains more than 1,000 entries concerning Pakistan's history, people, places, culture, arts, politics and economy, supplemented by 15 feature essays and an interesting photographic centrepiece. I found it a comprehensive and user-friendly volume. In this short review I will try to give a flavour of some of the complex messages conveyed about Pakistan in this wide-ranging text.

The Encyclopaedia of Pakistan itself has a fascinating history. The entries in the present edition were compiled by some seventy Russian, twenty Pakistani and a handful of British and North American scholars. In the intriguing introduction, Malik expresses hopes that the *Encyclopaedia* will contribute to fostering better relations with Russia, whose relationship with Pakistan has oscillated from indifference to estrangement and even hostility. The project was conceived in a park in Moscow in 1981 by the Editor-in-Chief, historian and political scientist Hafeez Malik, and his colleague historian Yuri Gankovsky, who was then head of the Pakistan Studies Centre at the Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies. A Russian edition of the *Encyclopaedia* was written according to the requirements of Soviet publishing (i.e. all historical developments analysed within the framework of Marxist-Leninism) and finally published in 2000. Malik then spent five years between 2000 and 2005 editing the *Encyclopaedia* to eliminate the ‘Soviet approach’ and revise it for Oxford University Press. However, I found no Soviet traces in the entries I consulted, which were remarkably restrained given the contentious material they had to work with. Ian Talbot’s feature essay ‘Historical preview pre-1947’ offers a concise account of the emergence of Muslim separatism from the last decades of the nineteenth century, following disputes and cooperation between Congress, the Muslim League, Khalifat movement, Khudai Khidmatgar and Krishak Praja Party, emphasising the differentiation of ethno-religious identities between the parties’ respective supporters and their respective relations with British rule. Akmal Hussain’s ‘Economic policy, growth and poverty in historical perspective’ strongly condemns the Zia regime as contrary to Pakistan’s inherent “cultural diversity, democratic aspirations and religious perspective rooted in tolerance and humanism” (p.348) and pointedly draws out the complex evolution of Pakistan’s political-fiscal dependence on the USA, but without dogmatically following any particular line of historical analysis.

For scholars of Punjab, the interesting question raised by an encyclopaedia on Pakistan is how it will treat the pre-Partition history and legacy. Contemporary West Punjab is appropriately conspicuous among the entries but in my assessment pre-Partition Punjab is lacking. There are relatively few entries bearing witness to the momentous Sikh and Hindu histories that unfolded in the geographic terrain of modern-day Pakistan. Rather, the entries bolster the idea of Pakistan as a natural homeland for Indian Muslims, dwelling on its autochthonous Mughal, Sufi and Islamic reformist histories but without situating the material within a broader and syncretic multi-communal history of Punjab. This feels like an omission, as scholarship has encouraged us to see precolonial Punjab as a crucible in which exchanges between Hinduism, Islam and nascent Sikhism nurtured distinctly local articulations of the religions through emulation and deliberate reversals (Uberoi 1999). The relative invisibility of East Pakistan again suggests an implicit majoritarian nationalism.

The inclusion of popular/folk culture in the *Encyclopaedia* conveys other intriguing messages. Malik states that the prominent feature essays on dance, puppetry, visual arts, jewellery were intended to broaden the compendium to topics rarely touched upon or researched in Pakistan, that are “indigenous topics otherwise thought to be alien to Pakistan” (dustcover). Indeed, in prefiguring

decorative and figurative arts the *Encyclopaedia* might be seen as a pointed intervention in Pakistan's multiphrenic public culture in which the Zia regime created a precedent for state sponsorship of calligraphy and a legacy of official antipathy towards figurative art; which, as recent scholarship has shown, is continually resisted through the irrepressible and efflorescent celebration of the human figure in folk/popular culture (Batool 2004). The photographic centrepiece portrays regional textiles and jewellery and is reminiscent of the Log Virsa museum collection in Islamabad. Unfortunately, however, the material culture of these fascinating and exquisite objects is inaccessible; the social uses and meanings of the textiles and jewellery, and the identities that are objectified through them are all left to the reader's imagination. As in museums, the caption says it all, and the captions here are sadly lacking. Furthermore, the centrepiece aims to depict "bright, colourful and detailed photographs of various monuments and architectures of Pakistan" (dustcover). Early Muslim tombs in Sindh, the Lahore fort, the shrine of Rukn-i-Alam in Multan, British era public buildings, Jinnah's Ziarat Residency, Minar-e-Pakistan and Faisal masjid in Islamabad are shown in a familiar nationalist historical narrative. The reader is encouraged to marvel at the Northern Areas and lake Saif-ul-Maluk as beautiful, scenic and romantic places that are popular with local and international tourists. Self-consciously what is on display is "the beauty and magnificence of Pakistan" (dustcover). In the centrepieces the *Encyclopaedia* projects a nostalgic and somewhat folkloric version of the national culture that seems oriented towards overseas Pakistanis or foreigners, and contradicts somewhat the more complex historical negotiations contained in the other entries.

Comparing the *Encyclopaedia* with similar resources to which scholars of Punjab could turn, I recommend it as a valuable reference work. I was informed by the scholarly accounts I consulted and liked the prominence of Pakistan's popular/folk cultures through entries on the provinces and everyday practices such as languages, clothing and food genres.

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Kaveri Harris

University of Sussex

Gautam Malkani, *Londonstani*, (London: Harper Perennial, 2007) 342 pp. (pb) no price given ISBN 0-00-723176-8 and 978-0-00723176-8.

This is not an easy book to get into in that its language, mixing colourful urban street-talk with text message truncations, presents its own demands: like learning

a new patois. Many unfamiliar words are obviously part of what has been called 'Hinglish' (see Baljinder K. J. Maha's *The Queen's Hinglish: How to speak pukka*, HarperCollins, 2006) – such as *Desi* (authentically South Asian), *Gora* (White British), *shaadi* (wedding) and *thapparh* (slap). Other words belong to urban street-culture - a world of bling, voice-mails and mobile fones (sic) - such as *Beema* (a BMW), *garms* (designer clothes) and *yard* (house). And, of course, the ubiquitous 'innit'.

The narrator is a young man called Jas who is doing his resit A levels at Hounslow College; Heathrow airport provides a backdrop to the unfolding drama. A shy, self-effacing person, he nevertheless takes up with a small group of Sikh/Hindu *Desis* led by six-pack bodied Hardjit (note the development from Harjit). Physical violence, frustration and anger are never far away and take many forms. The novel opens with a young English boy being beaten up for make a supposedly racist remark and the first part of the book – there are three in all: 'Paki', 'Sher' and 'Desi' – features a set-piece fight between Hardjit and a Muslim youth from a nearby area. And then there are the families which bring with them both humour and tragedy. Humour in the form of the juxtaposition between the 'hard' image of the group to which Jas belongs and the demands and courtesies of family life – such as Hardjit, Jas and friends coasting round Hounslow in a lilac-coloured Beema only to receive a mobile phone call from one of their mothers requesting shopping from Boots. Tragedy in the build-up to a marriage on which the neurotic future groom's mother feels that she is being shown constant disrespect by her future daughter-in-law's family, leading to the apparent suicide through overdose of her son. Tragedy, too, in the way that Jas's love of fast cars and the high life draws him ever deeper into a world of real crime and family disloyalty.

This is a cleverly-written novel that undoubtedly reveals something of the world-view, tensions and dilemmas of many third or fourth generation British Asians. There is much that is entertaining but, beneath the shallow posturing and all-consuming demand for respect from peers, there is something darker and more worrying: a social group which is at odds with the older generation for whom – according to this writer, at least – cultural and religious conventions are equally shallow and all-consuming.

And then, of course, there is the identity of Jas – whose brief liaison with a Muslim girl forms an important thread in the novel - and his family. But you will have to read the book yourself in order to enjoy the final, delicious irony that the author serves up.

Bill Gent

University of Warwick