

tisch-kulturelle Hindunationalismus mehr und mehr den Hinduismus insgesamt absorbiert, findet bei Katju zu wenig Beachtung. Doch weist sie immer wieder darauf hin, dass die einzig überzeugende ideologische Gegenposition zum Hindunationalismus der in der indischen Verfassung verankerte Säkularismus ist. Allerdings scheint dieser in dem Maße an Attraktivität und Akzeptanz zu verlieren, wie die politische Wahrnehmung auch vieler Gebildeter mit geprägt ist von Inferioritätsgefühlen, religiösem Ressentiment und dem Bedürfnis nach Abgrenzung.

Wie politisch relevant die Analysen von Eckert und Katju sind, wurde aller Welt vor Augen geführt, als die beiden Bücher bereits im Druck waren. Die traurige Lehre von Gujarat im Jahre 2002 ist, dass sich Pogrome gegen eine Minderheit parteipolitisch auszahlen können. Sollte diese Lehre Schule machen, könnte Indien zu einem Land werden, dessen reiche und vielfältige Traditionen von Toleranz, Pluralismus und liberalen Werten in Vergessenheit geraten.

Helmut Reifeld

DAVID LUDDEN (ed.), *Reading Subaltern Studies. Critical History, Contested Meaning and the Globalization of South Asia*. London: Anthem Press, 2002. X, 442 pages, including 2 appendixes. £ 18.95, ISBN 1-84331-059-7 (Pb) / £ 39.95, ISBN 1-84331-058-9 (Hb)

When Edward Said's *Orientalism* was published in 1978, it met, world-wide, with massive and, in many respects, more polemic criticism than Said had ever envisaged. Particularly social science scholars reacted vehemently to the "assault" because the "Orient" seemed a peaceful academic area which had hitherto remained unmolested and uncontested. Characterized by stereotypes of despotic regimes, static societies, rural backwardness and traditionalism, the "Orient" had become *the* contrast to the democratic regimes, dynamic societies, urban liveliness and modernity of the "West" from the middle of the eighteenth century onwards. This overall discourse on the "Orient" was, according to Said, led not only by academics, but also by literary men and people of political influence, which is why the "orientalist" discourse turned into a tool of power and hegemony. Dealing with the "Orient" was, therefore, not at all peaceful, but violent and destructive. The "colonised" East still felt mentally subjugated by the West even after physical independence. For that reason, *Orientalism* had a decisive and lasting influence on the academic world of non-Western, post-colonial historians and social anthropologists, especially in South Asia where it caused a fundamental shift in historiography.

The so-called Subaltern School, dominated by Ranajit Guha and from the very beginning supplied with articles from a small group of Indian as well as British historians, aimed at precisely that substantial shift in the parameters of conventional historiography. Rejecting liberal and bourgeois history written for

its exclusively "upper class" clientele to legitimise her role in history and society, the scholars of the Subaltern School initially pursued themes which are commonly known as "history from below", and, therefore, concentrated exclusively on "grass root movements". Topics like resistance against the colonial regime were quite popular, yet critiques soon argued that this kind of historiography would definitely get stuck in a dead end because it limited itself to popular reactions against colonial rule instead of showing the long-term trends and the continuities of resistance movements. Moreover, the new approach would divide society into an elite and a subaltern sphere, leaving hardly any space for societal dynamics.

In the middle of the 1980s, a revival of the Subaltern School took place with a swing from plain subaltern politics towards cultural history, critical theory and the representations of subaltern subjectivity through the incorporation of new scholars and new themes such as the role of language in the discursive process. Simultaneously, the Subaltern School was, for the first time, able to shape and formulate its intellectual identity. With this new approach, the field of subaltern research expanded into the transnational study of colonialism, placing its research in an increasingly global context while, at the same time, representing the fragmentation of a nation. Themes like vernacular resistance, bureaucracy, police, labour, communalism, prisons, medicine and science became the new and innovative subjects of the writers of this school. Methodologically, they dropped the historiography determined by the predominant colonial archive of knowledge and by parameters of modernity and picked up the tools of oral history as well as the techniques of ethnography, also developing the critical reading of colonial texts. Thus, post-colonial South Asian historiography turned into a substantial critique of Western categories of Enlightenment and modernity, promoting, instead, non-linear, oral, symbolic, vernacular and dramatic sources for the writing of history. Recent writings document a high level of self-reflection, the general relevance of subaltern studies and the decline of the subaltern in the School of Subaltern Studies. This very vivid debate emphasises, again, the importance of the Subaltern School as part of a world historiography.

From its inception in 1982 (*Subaltern Studies*, vol. 1, ed. by Ranajit Guha), a vast number of articles and books has appeared on the academic market, within and without the School's organ. Several compilations of *Subaltern Studies'* articles have been published in the meantime, starting with an edition of *Selected Subaltern Studies* in 1988. More recently, a compilation arranged by Vinak Chaturvedi, *Mapping Subaltern Studies and the Postcolonial*, was published in 2000. Some of the articles reprinted in that volume without any mention of where they were previously published now reappear in the volume arranged and edited by David Ludden. However, Ludden orders the articles systematically, documenting the Subaltern School's historic development in three stages as outlined in the above paragraphs. Although the editor's introduction is rather a *tour de force* through British and South Asian subaltern history, careful



or even double reading will enable the newcomer to get a good overview of the Subaltern School's projects. The sensible compilation demonstrates why Said's *Orientalism* and the *Subaltern Studies*' writings had and still have a far-reaching influence on all kinds of post-colonial historiography. Self-perception and self-awareness of the colonised is being reshaped according to this basic shift in the parameters of the humanities as testified in Ludden's *Reading Subaltern Studies*.

Reprinting the Indian edition, which came out with Permanent Black in Delhi in 2001, was a worthwhile undertaking professionally executed by Anthem Press. Without doubt, the book is a must for every academic institution as well as for anyone interested in South Asia's post-colonial history and historiography. Furthermore, the book will also be useful to historians of any traditional liberal historiography which, for some unknown reason, still dominates the "historic guild" in most countries of the post-colonial, globalizing world. Writing history without Said's impetus and the Subaltern School's impact is hardly possible when "Orientalism" and "Subalternity" have become an integrative part and an internalised moment of a critical and responsible reappraisal of history.

Michael Mann

NANDINI GOOPTU, *The Politics of the Urban Poor in Early Twentieth-Century India*. (Cambridge Studies in Indian History and Society 8). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. XXIII, 464 pages, £ 55.00. ISBN 0-521-44366-0

In the late 1930s, a word went the rounds in the poor neighbourhoods of the North Indian town of Kanpur: *netashahi*, 'the reign of leaders'. The Congress government of the United Provinces, so this term of political abuse suggested, was a government of self-interested leaders and not of the people. The historiography of the interwar period is, to a large extent, still *netashahi* history: The firm leadership of M. K. Gandhi and a few other personalities is celebrated for keeping the 'teeming masses' on the track of non-violent nationalism and setting limits to their propensity to riots and religious strife. Yet a growing number of historians have pointed out for some time now the legitimacy of autonomous 'subaltern' agency, plebeian appropriations of nationalism and the plurality of social movements that contributed to the upsurge of popular politics after World War I.

Gooptu's monograph is a valuable contribution to this debate. Drawing on a considerable corpus of studies on interwar North India, one of its achievements consists in synthesising results of usually unconnected strands of historical research on topics like urbanisation, industrialisation, popular culture and religious movements. Setting out to explore the 'politics of the poor' in the four major towns of the United Provinces (today's state of Uttar Pradesh), the au-