

native *Arbeitsleute* in fighting for their interests. The "labouring poor" could easily withdraw from colonial claims to power as long as human resources were scarce and in demand by various indigenous and European powers in Madras and its hinterland. Moreover, commercialization and colonial wars enhanced physical mobility. Under these circumstances the establishment of English authority in the hinterland served as an instrument for controlling the labour market. Like the political landscape, labour relations were complex under English rule in the period reviewed (chap. 5). Traditionally the continuum of relations included slavery, various forms of dependent labour and the initial stages of free wage earning. The colonial elite could adapt these labour relations, but it could not change them at the core. Consequently, the free wage earner was not the rule during the fifty years under examination – neither in the city of Madras nor in its hinterland. For the colonial elite this was not even desirable, as is clearly demonstrated by the English policy towards the poor in Madras (chap. 6). This was not characterized by the liberal minded idea of the free wage earner as a partner in a labour agreement, but by traditional conceptions of charity and paternalistic master-and-servant thinking both in jurisdiction and daily life.

Ravi Ahuja shows the complicated interplay of indigenous and colonial conceptions to solve the problem of labour in Madras during the second half of the 18th century. Yet he also demonstrates that for all the differences the European conceptions were no less traditional than the indigenous. It was not the liberal minded idea of a free labour market – as was propagated in contemporary England – that formed the basis of colonial labour policy, but rather the model of master-and-servant of early modern Europe. Various forms of hard labour played an important part in colonial Madras. This conclusion of Ravi Ahuja's study is certainly not much of a surprise. As a rule colonialism was indeed a system of domination which usually solved the problem of labour in a traditional, pre-industrial manner.

Ravi Ahuja's study is founded on a solid basis of mainly original European sources. The glossary, index and an appendix of prices and wages in Madras are very helpful. Five summarizing theses and an English summary conclude this study which is an important and stimulating contribution to the social history of the city of Madras in particular and of colonial cities in general.

Franz-Joseph Post

JOYCE J.M. PETTIGREW, *The Sikhs of the Punjab. Unheard Voices of State and Guerrilla Violence*. (Politics in Contemporary Asia Series). London/New Jersey: Zed Books, 1995. xi, 212 pages, 1 map, US\$ 25.00 (Pb.). ISBN 1-85649-356-3.

PETER MARSDEN, *The Taliban. War, Religion and the New Order in Afghanistan*. (Politics in Contemporary Asia Series). London/New Jersey: Zed Books & Karachi/Lahore: Oxford University Press, 1998. vii, 162 pages, 4 maps. US\$ 19.95/£ 12.95. ISBN-1-85649-522-1 (Pb.). US\$ 55.00/36.95. ISBN 1-85649-521-3 (Hb.)

Numerous studies have appeared in recent years on two of the major zones of conflict and violence in South and Southwest Asia – Punjab and Afghanistan. Most of

these publications have been authored by political scientists, journalists, and in a few instances, by historians. It is hence very refreshing to read studies on these conflicts written by authors who have actually lived in these regions for several years, getting to intimately know a range of local individuals and families, villages and towns, rather than just a handful of 'key' informants and a mass of official documents. Indeed, both studies reviewed here adopt what may be called a 'socio-cultural' perspective, in that while integrating the historical, economic and political dimensions involved, they try to understand the conflicts in a broader, holistic framework.

Joyce Pettigrew is no stranger to students of the Punjab, nor did her first acquaintance with the Sikhs begin in 1984 – the year this book takes as a starting point. Based on her anthropological fieldwork, she has written numerous articles and a major book on the Punjab. The present study is divided into two parts – "The Sikhs of Punjab: Place and People since 1984" and "Children of Waheguru". In a brief introduction Pettigrew first discusses the background to the violence – the agrarian situation, the Indian state's military recruitment policies, the storming and desecration by Indian state authorities of the Golden Temple followed by the systematic rounding up of male rural youth by the army, Indira Gandhi's subsequent assassination and the massacre of more than 4,000 Sikhs, notably in Delhi. The rest of the chapters in Part I deal with the organisation, contents and ideology of resistance to state terror. Quotations from numerous interviews with participants in this resistance and/or their families provide the reader with profound insights into both the workings of the Indian state and those of an entire community of resistance. These chapters set forth vividly the complexities of guerrilla warfare, the relationship between various guerrilla organisations – each '... competing for control of the Punjab' (p. 103) – their Pakistani training, the extortionist methods employed by both guerrilla and state agencies, the extreme corruption of the Indian security forces (including the army) and the manipulation and use of criminals by the state for purposes of counter-insurgency, much in the manner of what is now being done in Kashmir, and the impact of all this on the non-armed rural population, whose sympathies were, however, thought to lie with the guerrillas (p. 103), and who were systematically persecuted by the state. Here too, interviews with police officers and militants provide the bulk of the data. A chronology of major events placed as a reference at the beginning or end of the book would have been helpful and, since several villages are referred to, a couple of more detailed maps would also have been useful. It is also surprising that while apparently referring to a great deal of information first printed in one of the earliest non-government Indian publications – the banned 1985 *Report to the Nation* published by Citizens for Democracy, at the time a major Indian Human Rights organisation – the author does not cite it.

Part II consists basically of nine interviews conducted between December 1989 and April 1991 with Khalistan Commando Force men via contact persons. All those interviewed were very young and had been subjected to severe torture; all except two have since been killed. The book ends with a discussion of the materials presented, and brief musings upon what the near future could or may bring in a setting

where an entire generation has grown up targeted as members of a specific community, where social and political trust have been destroyed by violence and counter-violence and society itself has been largely atomised.

As an anthropologist, the author analyses some of her data in the light of cultural norms and values specific to the region and community concerned – notably elements of Jat family structure, and the Sikh ideals and heritage of sharing, of equality and of standing up to oppression. However, proceeding precisely from an anthropological perspective, one misses the discussion of numerous relevant factors. For example, although Pettigrew mentions that, understandably, kin networks were of great importance both for recruitment of guerrillas as well as for the application of state terror, nowhere does she explore specific case studies; discussing Sikh ideals, she does not, surprisingly, touch upon the concept of *miri-piri* either in its positive image for the guerrillas, nor in its negative underpinnings for the state. While she refers to songs and poems that grew out of the movement, she never draws on their contents for her analysis; she could perhaps have drawn valuable comparisons between these and the *var* poetry of resistance discussed by other scholars. Finally, though Pettigrew enables us to hear many ‘unheard voices’, she too has left one entire group of voices unheard – those of women raped by the security forces, widowed by the guns of all parties, living in constant fear for their brothers, sons, husbands and fathers. The guerrilla movement was distinctly patriarchal, with purely male values of martyrdom; this is in blatant contradiction of Sikh ideals as reflected even in the *ardas* (the daily prayer), which specifically mentions the martyrdom in history of both men and women. One wonders why Pettigrew did not touch upon the role and status of women in the given context. Indeed, a brief consideration of the underlying conflict between the modernisation of Sikh society (notably through the diaspora), economic modernisation and Sikh ideals should have been included either in the introduction or the conclusion.

In spite of these shortcomings Joyce Pettigrew’s study is a must for all interested in South Asia, and in people’s movements everywhere. It is also the only scholarly work on the Sikh movement in this period to be written with a rare and subtle combination of factual neutrality and human sympathy.

Peter Marsden worked for a number of years in West Asia and is well acquainted with the practice of Islam; before writing this book he lived for eight years in Afghanistan, working as Information Coordinator of the British Agencies Afghanistan Group. In the opening line of his introduction he himself states, ‘This book is about relationships: between the West and the Islamic world, between the various movements in the Islamic world and within Afghanistan, and between the people of Afghanistan ...’. Marsden is well aware of the complexity of the task he has set himself, and it is this complexity above all, which strikes the reader of this book.

The study is divided into twelve chapters, of which Chapter 2 ‘The Nature of Afghanistan’ and Chapter 7 ‘The Afghan Islamic Tradition’ are good introductions to specific aspects of this country. Chapter 6 is an equally competent introduction to

“Earlier Islamic Movements”, which have had an impact on the Taliban in some form. Chapter 3 “The Mujahidin” provides a clear sketch of the seven major groups which fought the Soviet occupation; all of these groups were Sunni dominated, and all but one were also predominantly Pashtun – two major factors of relevance for the rise and development of the Taliban discussed in Chapters 4, 5 and 8. The last three chapters consider the Taliban in a broader international context, with specific reference to humanitarian agencies working in Afghanistan, and the relationship between the Taliban, the USA, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and some Central Asian states, etc.

The greatest merits of this study lie in its demonstrating that the Taliban – like every other complex political phenomenon – do not represent a homogeneous group, and, secondly, in its implicit advocacy of coming to terms with their political presence rather than continuing to treat them as political untouchables. However, Marsden could and should have gone much further in his analysis of the complexity of the Taliban. He hints at ‘a possible struggle’ within the movement ‘between hardliners and relative moderates’ (p. 45); he also briefly touches upon the traditional ‘tension between Pushtunwali and Islam’ (p. 86), represented by the tribal leaders and the Ulema respectively. But he does not discuss either point further. Although often referring to Pashtun vs. non-Pashtun tensions, he does not enter into details about the historical and ethnic complexities that obtain within the Taliban, nor about the clan/tribal and regional affiliations of the various competing power groups and factions.

All in all, *The Taliban* is an interesting and well written introduction to this little known movement that has impacts not only on Afghanistan, but also on Pakistan, Central Asia, Iran, India – and Western policies towards a large part of Asia. It deserves to be read by all interested in the politics of a large part of South, West and Central Asia.

Aparna Rao

ANIL BHATTI, JOHANNES H. VOIGT (eds.), *Jewish Exile in India 1933–1945*. New Delhi: Manohar in association with Max Mueller Bhavan, 1999, 195 pages, Rs 300,– ISBN 81-7304-237-3

That British India was a chosen destination for many German and Central European Jews in search of refuge from the atrocities of Nazism, is scarcely known. The newly published anthology *Jewish Exile in India 1933-1945* shows how Indian and British-Indian authorities hesitated to give them asylum: during the 12 years of Nazi rule only about 1000 refugees were accepted. The book introduces the reader to the manifold aspects of this field of research. It contains contributions from the fields of history, social sciences and literary criticism which scholars from India, Germany and Israel first presented in 1995 at a symposium organized by the Jawaharlal Nehru University and the Max Mueller Bhavan, New Delhi.

In order to structure the vast subject the anthology has been divided into three sections, the first of which outlines British-Indian and Indian policies and Jewish and Indian responses to the emigration. The second comprises essays on four Jewish