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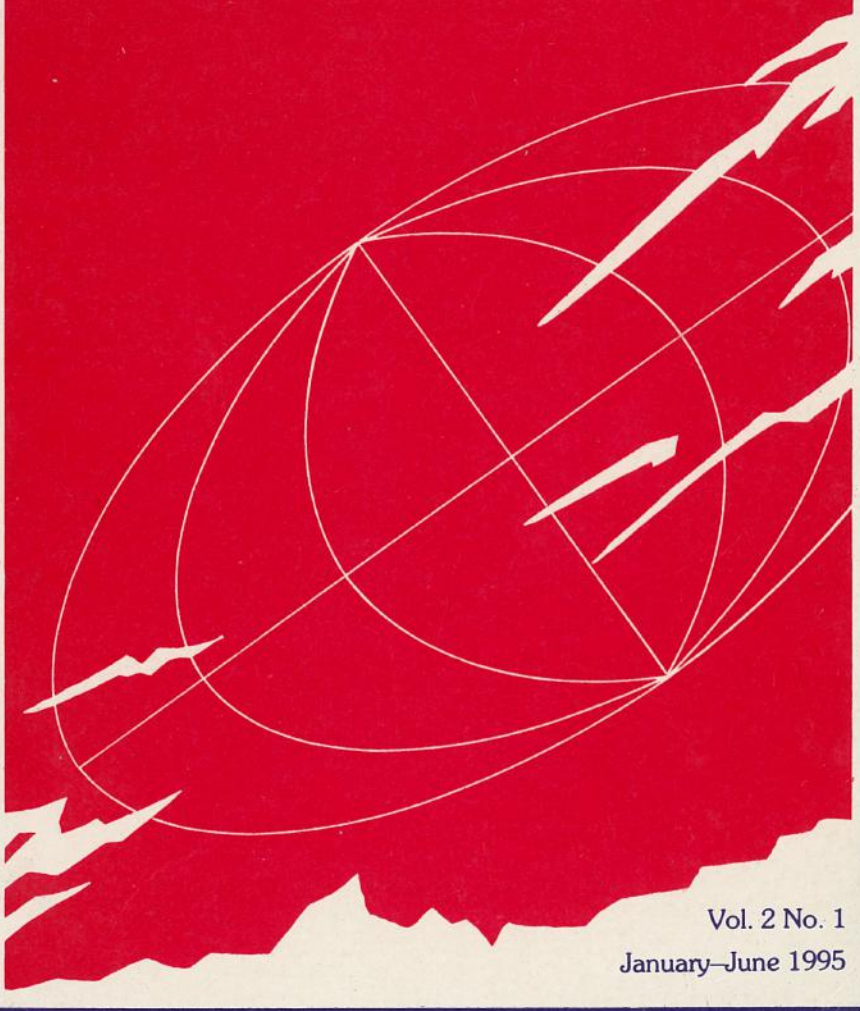

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Punjabis in Sind—Identity and Power

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This article explores the development of identity among Punjabis who have settled in the Pakistani province of Sind. It reveals that their settlement lower down the Indus Valley has been a long drawn out process. It argues that since 1947, their presence has been complicated by a growing Sindhi sense of alienation from what they perceive to be a Punjabi dominated Pakistan state.

Pakistan, like many other newly-created modern states, has faced the on-going problem of how to define and sustain its national identity. Religious, communal, ethnic and provincial identities, and hence loyalties, have seemed as important, if not at times more important, as those relating to the state. The idea of Pakistan as a 'nation', for all the political and religious mobilising which went on before and after Independence, is still not clearly defined or completely accepted.

Identity however is only partly a spontaneous feeling, and it is likewise partly imposed on people from outside their own group. Politics in the broadest sense enters into the equation as it is often the state which classified people according to ethnic group, nationality and race. This classification may or may not be accepted by the people concerned, but it usually leads to dual or multiple identities, especially when a historic 'national' identity is overlaid with a contemporary political status such as citizenship or with a new 'national' identification derived from the state. Pakistan is far from alone in having to reconcile the existence of 'dual identities'—in many of the world's states, national identity is not a straightforward exclusive concept, with dual identities combining two national identities, or more correctly one ethnonational identity, and one state identity.[1]

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Compared with the other provincial groupings which make up today's Pakistan, the Punjabi 'identity' seems to be a fairly hard one to pin down. In comparison, Sindhi, Baluchi and Pathan identity all seem relatively straightforward to define. The Punjabi identity, in contrast, could refer to a territory (the Punjab), a language (Punjabi), and an ethnic group, but there are problems with all of these categories. Any serious thought of an 'ethnic Punjabi unit', for instance, has been permanently shelved as a result of the partitioning of the Punjab in 1947 between India and Pakistan. Similarly, many 'Punjabis' may not speak Punjabi—large numbers of them now speak Urdu, the national language of Pakistan, as their first language—while others, although clearly Punjabi, attach great significance to their supposed non-Punjabi origins. The dispersal of Punjabis to different parts of Pakistan means that many are not actually living, or perhaps have never themselves lived, in the Punjab. And still they remain 'Punjabis', both in their own eyes and the eyes of their non-Punjabi neighbours. The Punjabi identity, as a political marker, has emerged, as proof of this, in more recent years to challenge the other 'ethnic' groups which now jostle for advantage in Pakistan's highly charged political battleground. Somewhere, such as the city of Karachi, located far from the Punjab proper, seems now, ethnically speaking, to be almost as Punjabi as anything else, and this has been reflected in local support for political organisations which emphasise their Punjabi credentials.

Yet, more than any other ethnic group, with the exception of migrants from India, the so-called *muhajirs*, Punjabis have come to be identified with the state of Pakistan. Thus, the resentment against Punjabi influence in Sind which has surfaced in recent years is in a large measure related to the resentment directed against the Pakistani state itself. As its prime representatives, perceived to be its primary beneficiaries, Punjabis in Sind symbolise something more than just the Punjab. They are equated with a state which is not regarded as properly representative of all the peoples living within it.[2]

There is no doubt that the settlement of people from the Punjab lower down the Indus Valley has been a long drawn out process. It was taking place well before the British control extended over the region as a whole, continued during the one hundred or so years of the British rule, and has accelerated in the years since 1947. This pattern of arrival has led to the formation of different kinds of identity among the 'Punjabi' population of the province. Some settlers are seen as being as 'Sindhi' as the next 'ethnic Sindhi', others have retained more of their distinctiveness although they have by and large merged into the demographic landscape. Finally, there are those whose 'Punjabi-ness' makes them stand apart from the other

inhabitants of Sind. The closer we look to the present day, the more complex the picture becomes as, in effect, different kinds of 'Punjabi' identity have come to co-exist within the region alongside different reactions to their presence. In particular, those who have arrived most recently retain a much crisper sense of separate identity than those who settled in the region in the past.

This, however, is not merely the result of an obvious lack of time within which to settle properly. The identities which Punjabis in Sind possess do not relate simply to how long they and their families have been living there, though this is a factor which cannot be ignored. Equally, this issue relates to the more complicated processes and patterns of migration and settling which have occurred in Sind since Independence. For from 1947 the arrival of Punjabis has been accompanied by an added dimension—that of power. It is this important shift in circumstances with its far-reaching political, economic, social and ideological implications which would seem to have had a profound impact on how many people from the Punjab settled permanently in Sind now see themselves, as well as, and just as importantly, how they are regarded by others among whom they live.

The politicisation of ethnic identity, thus, provides the context for this examination of factors which may have influenced the identity among people from the Punjab settling in Sind. Looking at the circumstances surrounding this process at particular stages during the modern period—e.g., what was happening when Punjabis arrived, the kind of reception which greeted them, the impact which this might have had on their relations with other local people—may provide more general insights on the relationship between the formation of group consciousness and power.

STAGE I: THE PRE-BRITISH PERIOD

Sind represents a classic example of what might have once been described as a melting pot society—for centuries the lower Indus valley has exerted a powerful magnetic pull on peoples from other regions. In earlier times, this was not particularly because of the attractions of a settled agrarian lifestyle—until the waters of the river were tamed with the introduction of increasingly sophisticated irrigation methods, agriculture remained too unpredictable compared with the more flexible nomadic pastoralism. All the same, the relative advantages of this stretch of the Indus valley meant that the waves of tribal peoples made their home here. In time, many of them put down settled roots as pastoralism made way for a mixture of agriculture, cattle-breeding and the sedentary peasant way of life.[3]

A large proportion of these tribal groups came from regions further to

the north and north-west. Many had Baluchi origins although the history of their progress eastward from what is now Baluchistan meant that many of them actually arrived in Sind from the direction of the Punjab. Tribes with Baluchi origins were making their presence felt well before the end of the fifteenth century, but in the eighteenth century Sind's Kalhora rulers officially encouraged their immigration on account of the Baluchis' usefulness as soldiers. Indeed, Sind's next set of rulers, the Talpurs, had this Baluchi tribal background. Their coming to power stimulated even greater numbers of Baluchis to arrive, not necessarily from Baluchistan but much more often from the Punjab where they had settled at an earlier stage and from where they had picked up the Siraikhi language.[4] On top of these arrivals, there were also groups who were no Baluchi but belonged to the neighbouring regions of the north and east who migrated to Sind. The most numerous of these were Punjabi Jats, again often Siraikhi-speaking. Indeed, Sindhis applied the generic term 'Sirai' to both sets of newcomers, a description which at first meant simply 'a man from the north', but which acquired honorific value through the association of these 'northerners' with the Kalhora dynasty. The kinds of northern tribes who arrived included the Joyos, the Khuhawars, even the Bhuttas/Bhuttos—names whose present-day owners would argue endowed them with good 'Sindhi' pedigrees!

In many ways, there was a little to separate the Jats who arrived from the north from local Sammat groups long established in Sind.[5] Tribes which possessed the same Rajput name could be classified as 'Jat' north of the border, and 'Sammat' to the south of it. The term 'Jat' in south-west Punjab, anyway, has an occupational significance linked to agriculture. During this period it gradually came to acquire considerable prestige to the extent that it overtook 'Rajput', with its non-Muslim connotations, in the scale of things. In contrast, in Sind, incoming Baluchis tended to call rather dismissively any settled groups they encountered as 'Jat'. As Baluchis ascended the ladder to become the military aristocracy of the region, and eventually its rulers too, the 'Jat' label developed contemptuous undertones (in the sense of 'peasant' or 'yokel') which meant that many Jat/Sammat tribes in Sind sought eventually to be classed as Baluchis or at least offer this as their preferred explanation as to their origins.[6]

This degradation of the name 'Jat' suggests that any subsequent 'new' Jat people arriving in Sind may have been faced with a local population that regarded them negatively and were prepared, if not necessarily able to, to assign to them a social standing that fell considerably short of the self-image that these groups already possessed. Thus, local Sindhis, albeit including a large Baluchi element, may well have been affected during

this period in their views of the people coming from further north, just as these same 'northerners' were influenced considerably by local conditions in the way that they labelled themselves in terms of their supposed 'ethnic origins'.

STAGE II: THE BRITISH PERIOD

The extension of the British power to Sind towards the end of the first half of the nineteenth century ushered in a period which eventually witnessed the arrival of growing numbers of settlers from the Punjab. Changes to the socio-economic framework of Sind which followed the consolidation of British control over the region sharpened the issue of ethnic identity now drawn up along provincial lines. British rule had a far-reaching impact on Sind as it did elsewhere in the subcontinent. New revenue laws, civil laws and government education policies all helped to change the complexion of Sindhi society.[7] It could be argued that the British policy in Sind had two main objectives: the consolidation of British rule; and the creation in Sind of a market for British goods and a source of raw materials. Thus, Sind, from the British point of view, was useful—first, as the route to the heartland of northern India,—and second, as a region with huge economic potential—once the right kind of infrastructure and facilities had been set in place.

The conquest of the Punjab in 1849, which followed not long after Sind's own annexation by the British, affected the importance of Sind in British eyes. One consequence was that officials raised the suggestion that Sind be absorbed into the Punjab, rather than continue its recently established administrative relationship with the Bombay Presidency.[8] Sind, sharing the Indus Valley with the Punjab, was regarded as the latter's natural outlet and as a result its significance to the internal security of the empire increased. In February 1856, Dalhousie proposed elevating Punjab from a 'Chief Commissionership' to the status of a province with its own Lieutenant Governor and Sind included within his jurisdiction. There was opposition to this from London on financial grounds, but the events of 1857 delayed any decision and, although the proposal was revived in 1858 with the idea of producing a fourth Presidency, it failed to materialise.[9] The problems between Sind and the rest of Bombay Presidency, however, continued to surface from time to time—in particular, Sind's relative isolation from the centre of provincial power meant that it became neglected in comparison with other parts of the Presidency. And so again periodically the possibility of linking Sind to the Punjab was raised. In the 1880s, it was rejected, not so much out of any desire to protect the Sindhi

interests, but because Sind provided an excellent 'training ground' for Bombay officials before being transferred elsewhere.[10] In passing, mention was also made of the fact that the Sindhis themselves—zamindars and amils, that is both Muslims and Hindus—would dislike being annexed by the Punjab which was the way that they would see it themselves.[11] When the debate resurfaced before the First World War, feelings in Sind were strongly opposed to any transfer to the Punjab.[12] Thus, by the early years of the twentieth century, Sindhi perceptions of the Punjab were being clouded by a growing sense of antagonism and resentment, something which officials had not failed to notice.

A large part of the reason for this feeling was related to the second of those two British priorities mentioned earlier: profit. British profitability in the region largely depended on Sind undergoing important structural changes to bring its largely agricultural economy in line with the British requirements, and this set in motion a sequence of developments which directly encouraged growing numbers of people from the Punjab to settle in Sind. Sind was steadily drawn over the second half of the nineteenth century into producing cash crops destined for the marketplace. This shift in emphasis was facilitated by the introduction of new irrigation schemes which regulated more precisely the enormous potential of the Indus. In many ways, the British set about taming the river at the same time as they tamed the inhabitants along its banks. Prior to British annexation, there had existed in Sind a very useful system of canals—the Mughals and their successors, in particular the Kalhoras, had initiated for their times, ambitious irrigation schemes which, in protecting agriculture against the river flooding as much as providing water for crops, had far-reaching implications for the changing nature of local society.[13] Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the British abandoned their initial policy of improving the existing system rather than introducing completely new canals. Instead, they embarked on a period of extending the canal network, opening new, very lengthy canals, especially on the east bank of the Indus.

By the 1890s, there were 5,942 miles of main and branch canals, producing a very profitable return to the government of at least 10 per cent! Calculations estimated that any future official investment in extending the system would pay for itself within 12 years, leaving the government with a cost-free, revenue-raising property. It was precisely figures such as these which persuaded the government to begin the Jamrao project in 1895, a scheme which had been under consideration for about 20 years but which had been deferred on account of the size of the undertaking.[14] In fact, the canal was opened, though not fully complete, in 1900 ahead of schedule and against earlier expectations. Businessmen rubbed their

hands in gleeful anticipation of the extra wheat and cotton that would be exported through Karachi and a corresponding increase in import business that was also likely to be generated by Sind's growing economic vitality.

But the scheme had to be profitable—and the authorities wanted to be sure that the agriculturalists who were working the land were going to make the most out of the extra acres released by it. Local British officials tended to have a rather low opinion of the quality and reliability of Sindhi agriculturalists. Sindhi zamindars and haris, for all their eagerness to make the most of the new opportunities that irrigation offered them, were often seen as 'lazy' in comparison with their more hard-working, skilled northern counterparts.[15] Hence the British readiness to 'import' Punjabis to carry out this work. In addition, the 1890s had been a relatively turbulent decade, characterised by considerable rural unrest. The Punjabis with their military connections offered the authorities a means of introducing a more 'stable, reliable element' into the local population.

The increase in people with a Punjabi background can be gleaned from the Census records of the period. Between 1891 and 1901, Sind's rural population rose by over 850,000 from 1,061,788 to 1,912,233. While some of this increase can be put down to about 300,000 having been incorrectly classified in the 1891 Census, a large part of it was related to the development of irrigation resources during this decade, and the arrival of people from the north.[16] Judging from later Census reports, which gave details about birthplaces and languages spoken, a large proportion of people whose birthplaces lay outside Sind hailed from the Punjab, and their proportion grew over the decades from the 1920s onwards.[17]

Extending the irrigation system did not stop with the Jamrao Canal. Hardly had it been all but completed, that in 1903 the first whisper was heard about putting a weir across the Indus at Sukkur, in other words a suggestion which led in time to the construction of the Sukkur Barrage.[18] Ninety per cent of Sind's cultivation was now possible only by irrigation but this system still depended on inundation, which is not the most reliable of methods. Developments further north in the Punjab stimulated considerations of a scheme to protect Sindhi interests, felt to be at risk as a result of canals being opened in the Punjab. In 1912 the scheme was put forward for sanction but it took another 10 years before work on the Barrage and the high-level canal at nearby Rohri actually started. Some of the delay was caused by the First World War but there was much scepticism among officials that the scheme was too risky and that it would not be productive enough. When eventually the authorities had been persuaded of the need to take the risk and construction began in the early 1920s, the project was enormous.[19] It was completed in 1932, at the cost

of £16 million (Rs. 20 crore), and it had an immediate and profound effect on Sindhi agriculture. Wheat and cotton acreages rose from 400,000 to 700,000 and from 280,000 to 550,000 respectively. But the Barrage also brought with it severe financial headaches for the government which agonized about how to ensure its profitability. It concluded that economic viability depended on a sizeable influx of more industrious and skilled cultivators from further north. As the Barrage moved slowly towards completion, officials noticed increasing apprehension among Sindhi landholders of an 'invasion' of Punjabi peasant proprietors. They acknowledged that the former would be sure to stir up agitation against the various measures of the state to secure adequate financial return for its investment. In other words, the political effect of the Barrage was going to cause considerable trouble, Sindhis were not going to like the great influx of population from the Punjab, but this was 'inevitable if the Barrage [was] to be paid for'.[20]

The issue of the Barrage and its future management figured prominently in official discussions concerning the viability of separating Sind from Bombay Presidency—for many, it was a question of living with Sind becoming a deficit province versus the continuing accepted inefficiency of the Bombay government's administration of the region. Once it had been accepted that Sind would exist separately, much official sweat was then generated by the challenge of how to raise Sind's financial viability and how to ensure that it was able to pay for the huge expense that had been incurred in constructing and administering the Barrage. Officials also began to remark on the growing popularity of the campaign slogan—'Sind for Sindhis'—which was a by-product of the Sindhi (largely Muslim, but some Hindu) politicians' desire to secure a separate province. They recognised the dangers involved in such a slogan for their own plans for Sind's financial future, in particular the risk that the policy of 'Sind for Sindhis' would lead to the exclusion of immigrant cultivators from the Punjab arriving to take up new lands, and so further add to the burden of government and even possibly render the whole Barrage scheme unproductive.[21]

This resentment did not just extend to agricultural workers—by the early 1930s, Sindhi concern at growing unemployment in the region translated itself into calls for recruitment to government service, from 'a peon upwards' to be barred to 'outsiders' who were apparently flocking to Sind, including from the Punjab. In the words of one 'pro-Sindh' correspondent, 'the remedy [lay] in the hands of employers, Government departments and private firms, who [were] morally bound to employ Sindhis and Sindhis alone, be they Moslems or Hindus'.[22]

The new Sind Assembly, which was created after the province eventually separated from Bombay Presidency in 1936, was dominated by landed interests. During the decade which preceded Independence, the assembly was often taken up with discussion on the employment of non-Sindhis. Some politicians maintained that the suggestion of a qualifying criteria of three years residence in Sind as eligibility for government service was insufficient—instead they insisted on a prospective employee being someone who was born and resided permanently in the province. Such a restriction would not only prevent outsiders from coming in but, in the short term, very often also prevent the children of such people from doing so.[23]

Initially, these calls for restricting the opportunity for outsiders to work in Sind were applied widely to people from other parts of Bombay Presidency, including the present-day Gujarat and Maharashtra, as well as from places further away such as Madras. However, as time passed, it emerged that the Punjab was the main focus for this kind of sentiment. Obviously this had much to do with the fact that political developments indicated that in future political arrangements Sind was likely to be included in the same state as the Punjab. So, for example, when in the 1940s, a breakaway group of the Muslim League, led by G.M. Syed, began to play up its Sindhi nationalist credentials, it made it very clear that its primary objection was to the province having anything to do with the Punjab. According to one of Syed's colleagues, Sindhi's would never 'buckle down' under Punjabi dominance.[24] It should be said that this growing 'nationalist' sentiment, while still very much restricted on the political level, was fuelled by the continuing influx of Punjabi settlers who kept on arriving during this period.[25]

Thus, before Independence, some groups of Sindhis had begun to demonstrate their dissatisfaction with the presence of the growing numbers of Punjabis in what they perceived to be 'their' province, won only after a prolonged tussle with the British authorities. To many of the Punjabis who had settled in Sind from the 1890s onwards, such talk was alienating and threatening. They considered that they or at least their families were responsible in large part for the 'progress' made within Sind over the course of the first half of the twentieth century—any thought of handing over the hard-won fruits of their labour, so to speak, was out of question. Their feeling was that they had settled in the province and had buckled down to the task of making the most of what it had to offer. While perhaps they did not see themselves as Sindhis, they saw their future intimately bound up with the province and were not prepared to countenance being made to sever this connection involuntarily. They frequently

lived alongside Sindhis and gradually began to build more personal connections with the occasional marriage crossing the ethnic divide. Moreover, with Sindhi the official language of the province, many had recognised the need to learn and communicate in it. Their names might continue to distinguish them, but, in many ways, the rhythm of life in the Sindhi countryside began to absorb them as much as they were able to contribute towards the changing of it.

STAGE III: AFTER INDEPENDENCE

The early years following Independence were marked by an apparent hardening of identities. The continued migration of Punjabi-speakers to different parts of the province caused grave misgivings for growing numbers of other people in Sind. Power—the apparent growing possession of it by Punjabis and the perceived shortage of it, in particular by the Sindhis—seems, during this period, to have prevented any meaningful blurring of identities to produce a working composite alternative. Instead, the reality was increasingly one in which Sindhi and Punjabi identities appear incompatible within the immediate political framework of the province of Sind and the wider Pakistani one.

Sind, at and after Independence, received large quantities of refugees produced by the political upheaval of partition. A large proportion were from northern and western India—the groups, particularly the former Urdu-speaking one, which came to be known as muhajirs. On the whole urban, skilled artisans, professionals, government servants and business-oriented, they tended to slot into the vacancies left by departing Hindus. In time, their relations with local Sindhis deteriorated and the two communities finally emerged as one pair of combatants in the highly charged political atmosphere of the 1980s characterised by ethnic tension and violence. The emphasis on muhajir–Sindhi relations, however, has overshadowed the changing Sindhi–Punjabi relations as a result of the demographic and power shifts which accompanied partition. For, in addition to muhajirs, hundreds of thousands of Punjabis also arrived in Sind from 1947 onwards. The first wave of settlers were refugees fleeing from the partition related violence in Indian Punjab. They were later followed by economic migrants from Pakistan's west Punjab province.

The impact of this process had become very apparent by the 1960s. This was the decade, according to one commentator,

> when it became clear that the effects of the Green revolution in the Punjab would alter the economic, demographic and political scenario

in Pakistan [and in Sind] substantially. As capitalism developed deep inroads into the Punjabi economy reorganising social and economic relations of production, the future leaders of [the] country began to emerge more forcefully, both as an economic entity and as a political force. Not only was the new dynamic entrepreneur born, but as education took hold of those now migrating to cities, government jobs also became more competitive and scarce. The mohajirs from India who had an edge in the earlier days were now threatened. Not only was this threat evident in the government sector—at all levels in the hierarchy—but as the Punjabi peasant had been displaced from his land and was mobile, he travelled to the cities of Sindh which had been exclusively mohajir controlled, and successfully competed for jobs. Furthermore in the Ayub Khan era a large number of (mainly Punjabi) civil servants and military officers were made substantial land grants in Sindh which worsened the situation especially since these new landlords imported labour from the Punjab...mohajir supremacy and exclusivity was challenged as capitalism developed and as the Punjab, which had the most advanced economy, took control of the entire country.

Sindh was no longer the domain of the mohajirs: the Punjabis began to dominate industry, land, services and also displaced local labour in both the rural and urban areas of the province.[26]

However, the developments outlined here were really only the confirmation of the more long-term trends in Sindhi–Punjabi relations which were making themselves very obvious in the changed circumstances of the 1950s. The political decisions taken then reinforced suspicions about the Punjab—Sind's loss of Karachi in 1948, the introduction of one unit in 1955, martial law in 1958, all appeared in many Sindhi eyes to be the proof of the extent of Punjabi, outsider, ambitions to control their province. Soon after the partition, the arrival of Punjabi refugees shunted on from west Punjab inflamed the latent provincial jealousy resulting in reports of serious tension between local Sindhis and the refugees.[27] The catalogue of grievances steadily grew, ranging from the Sindhi tendency to attribute what few incidents of communal violence that took place in Sind during that period to the presence of Punjabis,[28] to understandable resentment at Sind being saddled with a Punjabi governor from time to time,[29] to the 'usual tolerant contempt' which they perceived the Punjabis exhibited towards them whenever issues connected with Sind arose.[30] At an official level, there were complaints that Sind was being unfairly treated by the central government, for example in the allocation of loans for development

projects compared with other provinces especially the Punjab.[31] Sindhi politicians called on 'new Sindhis' (as settlers in Sind, Punjabis very much included, were often known) to assimilate themselves as quickly as possible into the rest of the population of the province 'for they could not expect discrimination in their favour against 'old Sindhis'.'[32] Increasingly, there was a perception that the Punjab was trying to infiltrate 'its people' with the aim of controlling Sind from within, and hence settlers from the Punjab, be they well-established families or newly arrived migrants, represented something of a fifth column at work in the province.

As in the years leading up to Independence, much concerning the state of Sindhi–Punjabi relations could be gauged from reactions to what was happening to the land released for use by the continued development of irrigation.[33] A large chunk of the 1950s was taken up with the construction of the Ghulam Muhammad Barrage near Hyderabad. Progress was generally regarded as being very slow—by 1958, work on the barrage, smaller than that at Sukkur, had been proceeding for eight years and had still not managed to equal what had been accomplished at Sukkur in half the time, despite the advantages of more machinery and 20 to 25 years of improved technology.[34] Land allocation was a delicate matter. In 1955, the central government had reportedly ordered the Sind government not to allocate the land commanded by the new barrage but to leave it for the new West Pakistani government to settle. This instruction was interpreted by some to be a measure to protect the interests of small cultivators against the great landowners who still dominated the Sindhi rural scene. Equally, however, it was also seen as 'the first step towards the Punjabisation of Sind under the cover of the One Unit scheme'.[35] Allocation of land, however, had been taking place in anticipation of the barrage's completion and did gradually pick up speed towards the end of the 1950s.[36] Even so by 1958 only a small proportion of the government-owned land potentially available was ready for distribution. However, the government's approach to disposing of what was ready highlighted its lack of any comprehensive policy which meant that *ad hoc* arrangements were made.[37] Aware of the problems bound up in this, the authorities (after the imposition of martial law) set about trying to devise a more thought-through plan. Discussions in the Ghulam Muhammad Barrage Utilisation Committee reflected this more-determined approach to developing the Barrage more fully. One of its publicaly aired concerns was what it regarded as the insufficient population in Sind to develop the new Barrage and the likely need to import people from other provinces. It was the first time that a government body had openly confronted the problem posed by seeking to restrict the bulk of the barrage allocations to the natives of Sind—a policy ' fostered

and maintained by local Sindhi politicians who had made Sindhi regionalism and emotional fears of invasion from the Punjab a major rallying point'.[38]

Under the military-led regime of Ayub, the allocation of lands to non-Sindhis and Punjabis in particular accelerated. Both military and civilians benefitted. A telling indication of the decisive overall swing in power to Punjabis was the reaction of muhajirs in Sind. They, like Sindhis, demonstrated their fears of a Punjabi takeover, for example, when they criticised the Government of West Pakistan's plan in 1959 to allocate agricultural land in Sind to retired civil servants—perhaps the occupation most closely associated with the *muhajirs* themselves. The opposition of pro-*muhajir* newspapers in Karachi, such as the *Star* (owned by the *Dawn*), suggested that they believed that the plan's enactment was engineered by the increasingly dominant Punjabi group in the West Pakistan civil service whose economic position in the province would be greatly strengthened by its provisions.[39]

Punjabis did not just come to work the lands in Sind in the years which witnessed the releasing of new acreages for cultivation. Many of them were drawn to the towns and in particular the cities of the province where they quickly took advantage of the various economic and job-opportunities available to them—Punjabi industrialists, Punjabi civil servants, Punjabi soldiers, Punjabi bus and taxi drivers, Punjabi policemen. They had all become permanent fixtures before martial law seemed to propel their star further into the ascendant. However, Sind, at the end of the 1950s, was a divided place. Loyalties remained highly particularised with an emphasis on the family group first, then on people from the same area or province. Under these circumstances, building common bonds was far more difficult than erecting barriers against other (ethnic) communities. It was obviously not a two-way split—as suggested earlier, the cracks which fractured Sindhi, in the widest sense, society were a complex web of breaks. It seems that the various communities which co-existed in Sind all operated on the basis of mutual suspicions with some groups perhaps more justified in their fears than others. There was a hardening of attitudes brought on by the growing power of the Punjabis. Their increasing presence in Karachi's police force symbolised for *muhajirs* the steady loss of influence by refugee interests.[40] Whilst Sindhi engineers in Upper Sind interpreted the more rational use of irrigation machinery which involved sending extra tractors to the Punjab, to mean that Punjabi's were again 'stealing our equipment'.[41] Muhajir and Sindhi alike were disquieted by the burgeoning Punjabi dominance in both national and provincial politics. It would be surprising if this gear change was not accompanied

on the part of Punjabis—settled and settling in Sind—by an increased self-confidence, on the one hand, but, on the other hand, by a heightened sensitivity to any suspicion that their presence there was being questioned or challenged.[42]

STAGE IV: SIND IN THE START OF THE 1990s

By the 1990s, ethnicity had emerged as one of the dominant political issues in Sind. The increasingly assertive stand taken by Sindhi nationalists, the emergence of the Muhajir Qaumi Mahaz or MQM, and the concomitant arrival onto the political scene of groups representing Punjabi and Pathan interests all underline the extent to which 'ethnic' politics had taken grip of the province during the 1980s. While the ethnic tension of Karachi and other parts of lower Sind at this time seems to have been characterised by a Sindhi–*muhajir* split, in Upper Sind the case was different. Here Sindhi–Punjabi ill-feeling was much more apparent: 'In cities such as Sukkur, Khairpur and Shikarpur, the simmering tension [appeared] to be between the local Sindhi population and the large number of Punjabi settlers and immigrants in these areas'.[43] It would not be surprising if, accompanying this marked deterioration in relations, issues of ethnic identity assumed a greater prominence, impinging more forcefully on the consciousness of ordinary Punjabis and Sindhis living in this part of Sind.[44]

One of the main functions of towns in Upper Sind is to serve as markets for purchasing and distributing agricultural commodities. They also provide services to the agricultural sector—repairing and renting out tractors, providing seeds and fertilisers. According to press reports, by the end of the 1980s almost all of those involved in these commercial activities were migrants from outside Sind, with the overwhelming majority coming from the Punjab. Some muhajirs were active but they tended to be more concerned with the retail trade. The same kind of conclusions could be drawn about local industries which were either muhajir or, more often than not, Punjabi-owned, and very likely staffed, in terms of skilled and unskilled labour, by imported workers. The reasons for this dominance were linked to the fact that, over the past couple of decades or so (that is since the 1960s when the commonly accepted development boom in the Punjab took off), the local social structure in this part of Sind did not possess the right kind or size of indigenous middle class vital to the development of these economic sectors. The result was that the incoming Punjabis were able, relatively effortlessly and without too much opposition, to take the initiative. However, changes in more recent years meant

that, instead of the former tendency to let the outsiders get on with the job, local people had increasingly come to resent 'the hold of 'outsiders' on the non-agricultural activities in Sind'.[45]

One likely cause for this change in outlook on the part of Sindhis—something which suggests the development of a higher level of consciousness about ethnic identity and its political repercussions—was the proliferation of educational institutions in the province during the late 1970s and 1980s. In Upper Sind alone, 13 degree colleges were created for men in the Larkana division and 15 in the Sukkur division. In other words, higher education became much more accessible to the local population. This expansion rested on a similar growth in primary and secondary education as more students from Sind appeared for matriculation and intermediate examinations. The problem was that this increased flow of more educated young people was not met with a parallel increase in the job opportunities available to them with the resulting high rates of unemployment among relatively well-educated Sindhis. This would have been a serious problem in itself. What made it more serious by the start of the 1990s was the highly politicised nature of the unemployed in Sind, many of whom had been drawn towards nationalist politics. Among those who were still in education, estimates placed more than half the male students in Sind as supporters or active members of nationalist organisations such as the Jiye Sindh Students Federation (JSSF) and Sindh Shagird Tehrik (SST)—student wings of the Jiye Sindh Movement—and Paleejo's Sindhi Awami.

This emerging middle class in Sind directed its resentment primarily against Punjabis. On the one hand, there was a common, if not completely substantiated, perception that discrimination against Sindhis in the much-prized public sector had taken place during the martial law years, while, on the other hand, in the private sector, Punjabi entrepreneurs' expertise, experience and capital seemed to allow little space for their Sindhi counterparts to exploit. In addition to these problems, changes in the countryside looked set to add to the destabilising impact of unemployment and frustrated opportunities in this part of Sind, with the threat of growing unemployment among the unskilled. 'A combination of mechanisation, a tendency towards smaller landholdings...increasing population pressures, erosion of cultivable land through waterlogging and salinity, and the declining profitability of agricultural produce' meant that there had been a steady drift of labour away from rural areas to towns and cities in search of full-time or part-time employment, reflected in the growth of *katchi abadis* around places such as Sukkur, Shikarpur and Larkana. In the words of one observer, 'unless measures [were] taken to absorb this proletariat,

there [would] be another class of people, whose conditions [would] drive them to toe the nationalist line of their educated counterparts'.[46]

The scenario in Upper Sind in 1990, thus, reflected a classic example of the process of uneven development underway for a long period of time, compounded by an almost complete lack of planning on the governmental level which allowed major impediments to, for example, industrialisation in the region to continue unchecked. Only time would tell whether the government was prepared to undertake the developmental initiatives to prevent simmering anti-Punjabi sentiment from boiling over into even more ugly episodes of ethnic tension. With ethnicity so central to the economic life of the region, the identity of Punjabis settled and working here remained very much a issue for interpretation by the different local communities involved in the 'debate'.

The central thrust of the suggestion contained here, as outlined at the beginning, is that there have been important shifts over time in the kind of identity, self-ascribed and ascribed by others, which Punjabis living in Sind have possessed. A significant 'gear change' appears to have taken place from the time of Independence, once the power within the new Pakistani state became closely associated with all-things Punjabi. Group identity which was to some extent important before Independence became much more significant afterwards. This does not mean that before 1947 Punjabis in Sind and Sindhis themselves lacked awareness of themselves as distinct groups—one only has to look at political circumstances in Sind in the 1930s and early 1940s, influenced by the deep structural changes of the British period, to see that this was definitely not the case as far as the latter were concerned. Rather, developments since 1947 have encouraged the emergence of group identities as what tended previously to be an awareness of group identity has hardened into a much stronger sense of group consciousness.

The distinction between group awareness and group consciousness is a subtle but important one. 'Awareness' involves recognising the unique attributes or 'markers' which distinguish the group but not regarding them as meaningful basis for interaction with others. 'Consciousness', on the other hand, implies acknowledgement of these traits as the unifying basis for mobilizing members of the group. However, whether we are taking about individuals or groups, it is worth pointing out that neither are 'simply...robots whose behaviour is wholly determined by external or internal forces of which they remain unaware or over which they exercise no control'. Based on their perceptions, both individuals and groups evaluate situations and decide how to act, and choices and behaviour are

decidedly influenced by what they consider to be beneficial to themselves.[47]

Hence, a key question to ask is what precipitates the movement from 'awareness' to 'consciousness'. On the whole, it is changing circumstances and the arrival of particular situations which trigger the change. In particular, the threat to identity or group interests produces this kind of response or awakening. Crises—produced by power contests, development factors, encounters that bring groups into contact with each other—all enhance the development of group consciousness, leading to new forms of group mobilisation, competition and interaction.[48]

Much of the discussion of the formation of group consciousness hinges on the recognition of a threat to the identity of the group concerned. It could be argued that Punjabis in independent Pakistan have had little to fear—as the dominant political and ethnic grouping, in terms of power before 1971 and numerically afterwards, what danger have minorities such as the relatively powerless Sindhis posed to their position nationwide? Could it be argued that Punjabi identity, in the form of Punjabi culture, values, language, way of life, has been threatened, or perhaps that Punjabi interests, such as resources, power, privileges, and opportunities, are being put at risk in some way? Obviously, any resistance to Punjabi dominance may be interpreted as a challenge, but the degree of that challenge needs to be fed into the equation to produce an accurate reading of the situation. Maybe it could be argued that a heightened sense of 'Punjabi-ness' has simply followed on from the development of ethnic politics in Sind—underlined by the emergence of Sindhi nationalism as a broadly shared sentiment and an albeit more narrowly supported political vehicle for pursuing increased rights and advantages for the 'native' people of the province, and likewise with ethnicity now a prominent feature of recent muhajir politics.

Analyses of dominant–subordinate group situations often tend to regard the subordinate group in any political power relationship more or less as a 'pawn' that responds or reacts passively or automatically to dominant group actions. This case suggests that the reverse may also be the case. It could be that Sindhi group consciousness has set the agenda for the more dominant—on a national level—Punjabi group. For just as the political map of the region was redrawn after 1947 and to a more limited extent again after 1971, so the local 'cognitive map'—the means by which individuals and groups perceive and understand the world and their particular place within it—also required alteration and amendment. It may be this 'cartographical updating' carried out by non-Punjabis and Punjabi alike which in effect has produced the increasingly well-defined

sense of Punjabi identity in Sind, a province where they have come increasingly to be designated as 'outsiders' and to see themselves as such despite their settling there in significant numbers over a very long period of them.[49]

Notes

1. James G. Kellas, *The Politics of Nationalism and Ethnicity* (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, 1991), pp. 15–16. See also Paul Brass, *Language, Religion and Politics in North India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974) for a discussion of similar developments in India.
2. In talking about the issue of a 'Punjabi identity' in Sind, we should not lose sight of the irony that differences between the Punjab and Sind are not at all clear cut. For all the increasing provincial polarisation of recent decades, as earlier communal antagonisms have made way on the whole for so-called 'ethnic' ones, the Punjab and Sind have much in common with each other. It is possible to argue that southern Punjab has much more in common with Sind than it does with its northern half—in terms of its economic framework, social structure, religious character and cultural life. Linguistically, for instance, the two are linked by the Siraikhi language. Indeed, the presence of large numbers of Siraikhi speakers who straddle the Punjab–Sind border has for a long time complicated the question of where Sind stops and the Punjab begins. Siraikhi itself is becoming a symbol of a 'new group identity' which is producing a degree of polarisation in the politicised atmospheres of places such as Multan University. This attempted emergence of a distinct Siraikhi identity is of relevance because, to a large extent, Siraikhi-speakers living in Sind represent some of the earliest 'Punjabi' people to settle in the lower Indus Valley—groups who until relatively recently had little difficulty in seeing themselves and being seen as 'true Sindhis' but who are now substituting an alternative if not necessarily contradictory interpretation of their identity.
3. Sarah Ansari, *Sufi Saints and State Power: The Pirs of Sind, 1843–1947* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 26–27.
4. H.T. Lambrick, *Sind: A General Introduction* (Sindhi Adabi Board: Hyderabad, Sind, 1964), pp. 212–13.
5. 'Sammat is the Arabic plural of Samma and is used to cover all the Sindhi agricultural tribes deriving from those of the old (pre-Muslim) (Samma) Hindu kingdom'. See Lambrick, *Sind*, p. 221.
6. It is interesting to note that while by now Jats had developed a relatively strongly settled agrarian lifestyle, 'Jat' in Sind came to be associated with being 'a camel man'. This was because of the close similarity between the word in the Punjab for race or class, and the word there for 'camel man' which probably caused Baluchis who had difficulties distinguishing between the two to opt for the latter version and hence pronounce the first form of 'Jat' according to its second meaning. See Lambrick, *Sind*, p. 214.
7. H. Khuhro, 'The Separation of Sind and the Working of an Autonomous Province: An Analysis of Muslim Political Organisation in Sind', *Sindhological Studies*, Summer 1982, p. 44.
8. 'Four years after being annexed in 1843, Sind lost its independent status and was made

part of the Bombay Presidency, primarily for reasons of British convenience as it was thought that Sind could be more effectively governed by an administratively more efficient, economically more developed and politically more sophisticated Bombay'. Sarah Ansari, 'Political Legacies of Pre-1947 Sind' in D.A. Low, ed., *The Political Inheritance of Pakistan* (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, 1991), p. 184.

9. Sahib Khan Channo, 'The Movement for the Separation of Sind from the Bombay Presidency, 1847–1937, Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Sind, 1983, p. 34.
10. Letter No. 70, 30 March 1888, MSS EUR E 243/51, IOL.
11. Letter No. 72, 12 April 1888, MSS EUR E 243/51, IOL.
12. Chano, 'Movement for the Separation of Sind from the Bombay Presidency, 1847–1937, p. 34.
13. For more details about the impact which irrigation schemes had on the demographic restructuring of the region, see Ansari, *Sufi Saints and State Power*, Chapter 1.
14. The estimated cost of the project was just over Rs. 7,200,000. It was to be 117 miles long, with a branch 65 miles long and 374 miles of tributaries. It was expected to irrigate 260,000 acres of land partly in Hyderabad and partly in Tharparkar, and was expected to be completed within seven years, see Herbert Feldman, *Karachi Through a Hundred Years* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1960), p.85-86.
15. Feldman, *Karachi Through a Hundred Years*, p. 85.
16. By way of comparison, the total population of Sind during this period rose by 'only' 12 per cent (from 2,867,000 to 3,211, 000), see Bombay Revenue (Lands), P/6474. 1902, IOL.
17. See 1921 Census, Vol. II, for examples.
18. Feldman, *Karachi Through a Hundred Years*, p. 109.
19. The total length of the main canals, branches and distributaries was 6116 miles in addition to which there were 305 miles of existing canals to be remodelled and utilized. Feldman, *Karachi Through a Hundred Years*, p. 164.
20. Sir Leslie Wilson to Lord Birkenhead, 11 February 1925, MSS EUR D 703/14, p. 17-18, IOL.
21. Letter 14 Jan. 1931, MSS EUR F 150/3, p. 7, IOL.
22. *Daily Gazette* (Karachi), 30 August 1932.
23. See *Official Reports of the Sind Legislative Assembly Debates*, Vol. II, no. 8 (Karachi, 1937), pp. 3, 14-17; Vol. II, no. 11 (Karachi, 1942), pp. 10, 12-13, Vol XVI, no. 5 (Karachi, 1942), pp. 21, 30.
24. Pir Ali Muhammad Rashdi, 7 June 1946, *Nawa-i Waqt* (Karachi), quoted in Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, The Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 219.
25. The Parallels between the 1940s and the 1890s are quite close. In the 1890s, the British sought to do two things at once—settle productive workers on the newly irrigated lands of the Jamrao canal tract and counteract the lawlessness of the region recently highlighted by the so-called Hur uprising by introducing a more reliable element into the countryside. In the 1940s, the same Hurs (followers of a powerful local religious leader, the Pir Pagaro) embarked on an anti-British revolt, and again the British sought to counter this by encouraging the Punjabis to settle in the affected districts, the same districts which now fell within the Barrage area. Hence, the appearance of the Punjab Government press notices, which called for applications for the allotment of land in

Sind, precisely in areas renowned for their Hur connections, see *Muslim Voice* (Karachi), 24 March 1945, p. 1.

26. S. Akbar Zaidi, 'Sindhi vs Mohajir? Contradiction, Conflict, Compromise', a revised version of a paper presented at the Democracy and Development in South Asia Conference, Tufts University, 20-22 April 1990, p. 4.
27. UK High Commission Opdom 88, 29 October–4 November 1948, L/WS/1/1599, IOL.
28. See UK High Commission Opdom, 5-21 January 1948, L/WS1/1599, IOL; likewise UK High Commission, Telegram 607, 9 May 1950, FO 371/84241, PRO.
29. When the Governor of Sind, Khan Iftikar Hussain Khan of Mamdot, made his first visit to Hyderabad in September 1954, he took great pains to describe himself as a Sindhi and an advocate of the cause of Sind. Not surprisingly, hearing the Governor, for long a leading politician in the Punjab, speak in this way caused 'considerable resentment', see Review 19, 9-22 September 1954, p. 6, DO 35/5322, PRO.
30. Lahore Fortnightly Report, 14 December 1954, p. 3, DO 35/5410, PRO.
31. For example, by the end of the 1950s no power stations had still been built in Sind since partition, despite considerable talk of new stations at Sukker and Hyderabad. This was in contrast to the 300 per cent increase in supplies for the Punjab and the North West Frontier Province over the same period. 'Impressions from a Trip to Sind and Multan', Despatch no. 873, 30 March 1959, 790D.00/3-3059, USNA.
32. Review No. 5, 26 February—11 March 1954, DO 3515300, PRO.
33. *Dawn* (Karachi), 23 January 1948, p. 4.
34. One of the problems contributing to this lack of satisfactory progress was labour shortage in Sind. 'Sindhis, it seems are naturally lazy and when confronted with a choice of doing nothing or digging ditches for Rs 2/8 a day in blazing sun prefer the former choice...reliance must be placed on labour from other parts of West Pakistan'. See Despatch no. 228, 8 September 1958, 890D.16/9-859, USNA.
35. Review No. 7, 21 April-4 May 1955, DO 35/5300, PRO; and UK High Commissioner, 26 March 1955, DO 35/5322, f. 69, PRO.
36. In 1953, the Sind government had placed 170,000 acres of land at the disposal of the army authorities for the resettlement of ex-servicemen but the General HQ was still anxious at that point to obtain 500,000 acres more in areas to be irrigated by the Lower Sind Barrage, Review No. 12, 3-16 June 1953, DO 3515300, PRO. In 1958, the authorities anticipated making a grant of 4000 acres to the defence forces for colonies of servicemen. This grant was smaller than one given the previous year. These and other similar allotments had aroused opposition in Sind because most of the military people involved originated from other provinces, a large proportion from the Punjab, see Despatch no 228, 8 September 1958, 890D.16/9-858, USNA.
37. The clash of conflicting interest groups seeking to gain the major share of the new lands—Sindhi landlords, Punjabi landlords, refugee claimants, military, and landless peasants—was apparently one of the main contributing factors to this policy failure on the part of the authorities, 'Water and Land Development in West Pakistan', Despatch no. 1124, 6 June 1958, 890D.16/6-658, USNA.
38. Despatch no. 420, 5 November 1958, 890D.16/11-558, USNA.
39. Despatch no. 245, 14 September 1959, 890D.16/9-1459, USNA.
40. 'Police Law and Order Drive in Karachi', Despatch no. 1206, 27 June 1958, 790D.00/6-2758, USNA.

41. 'Martial Law and District Administration in the Upper Sind Frontier' Despatch no. 414, 4 November 1959, 790D.00/11-459, USNA.
42. 'Impressions from a Trip to Sind and Multan', Despatch no. 873, 30 March 1959, 790D.00/3-3059, USNA.
43. Asad Sayeed, 'The Other Sindh', *The Herald* (Karachi), April 1990, p. 88. This article provides much of the material on which this section has drawn.
44. The late 1980s were characterised by growing tension in Upper Sind. The Zia ul-Haq government was thought, by many Sindhis, to be systematically acting to curb nationalist activity by stationing military troops in growing numbers along the Indus north of Sukkur in the direction of Pano Aqil. There had also been incidents of trains from the Punjab being derailed as they entered northern Sind, this the work of disaffected Sindhis to some extent fired by nationalist, anti-government, anti-Punjab sentiment.
45. Ibid.
46. Ibid.
47. Donald G. Baker, *Race, Ethnicity and Power: A Comparative Study* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983), pp. 4, 11-12.
48. 'Three types of situation are particularly significant in precipitating group consciousness. They are: (a) group power contests, where threats to group interests or identity awaken or heighten group consciousness; (b) development situations where industrialisation, urbanisation and related forces alter circumstances, create changes in the relative power capabilities of groups and, by so doing, generate new group power contests; and (c) crises, prompted by wars, depressions or major cultural changes which generate fears and prod groups into preserving or seeking changes in their position or status, thereby precipitating new group power contests', ibid., p. 14.
49. See Theodore P. Wright, 'Centre-Periphery Relations and Ethnic Conflict in Pakistan: Sindhis, Muhajirs and Punjabis', *Comparative Politics*, April 1991, pp. 299-312, for further discussion of this crucial relationship between the centre and the provinces in political conflict in Pakistan.

Pakistan or Punjabistan: Crisis of National Identity

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Political instability and ethnic conflicts have been the leitmotif of Pakistan's brief history. The minority nationalities in Pakistan lay the responsibilities for these failures and disasters on the state. This paper argues that the Punjabi hegemony of the state has perpetuated a reductionist view that Punjab's and Pakistan's interests are synonymous. This Punjabi perspective of Pakistan—Punjabistan—treats political opposition by minorities as anti-state opposition, which leaves little room for accommodation and negotiation. The paper examines how, historically, nationalism and ethnicity actually came to co-exist in the first place and then considers the process that reactivated ethnic identification at the expense of nationalism. The role of state power and domination, specifically how Punjabi hegemony over the state was established and sustained, is considered central to understanding the frictions, tensions and conflicts between the state and the regional identifications. The paper, finally, reflects on whether all Punjabis participated in this process of domination.

Official nationalism attempted to locate, fix and objectify an essentialised notion of Muslim identity and traced its evolution from the late nineteenth century, or even earlier, and its transformation into full-blown Pakistani nationalism in the twentieth century. This triumphalist approach saw Muslim nationalism as the desirable and natural political development of a reified homogenous notion of Islam. These essentialised notions of Islam have led to the articulation of a monological perspective of Pakistan nationalism; a perspective that cannot tolerate hybridity and diversity, and celebrates Islamic authenticity as the only basis for participating in this project of national endeavour. The political processes, however, have been bedevilled by the attempts to elaborate a homogenous official nationalism premised on essentialised notions of Islam. What kind of Islam? What was the relationship between the state and confessional faith? And where does ethnicity fit in, if at all?

These were issues that were never clarified and this confusion and

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mistaken to see Muslim identity as a reified category. Rather, it contained ambiguities, variations, subtleties, and overlapped. I want to present an alternative perspective on the relationship between Muslim nationalism and ethnicity, arguing that they were deeply intertwined in a dynamic relationship and perhaps, in some cases, not separable at all. Identities, whether national, ethnic, class, or other loyalties were considered to be heterogeneous and contested categories with shifting boundaries: frontiers that at times were ambiguous, indistinct and semi-permeable, harden into clearly defined, impenetrable barriers that turn small differences into a vast chasm.

The Janus-faced quality of nationalism which allowed it to present an Islamic or regional face depending on the situational context was an important characteristic of Pakistan nationalism. In the 1940s, the Muslim League brought together many strands of Muslim nationalism. These different hues reflected the different conceptions of nationalism being popularised. They mirrored the contradictory interests of Muslims from different parts of India that were superficially aggregated together because of a common perceived fear and distrust of the Congress. The Congress's ascendancy during the inter-war years confirmed the fears of middle and upper class Muslims that the constitutional safeguards were inadequate. These concerns engaged the minds of intellectuals and politicians and a number of schemes and proposals were promoted. Out of this debate the acronym Pakistan emerged but it only gained popularity when appropriated by the Muslim League.[2]

Three strands ran through Muslim nationalist discourse at the time. Thematically, they represented separatist, federal and confederal perspectives. Chaudhary Rahmat Ali, an imaginative and ardent separatist, invented the acronym 'Pakistan'. During the late 1930s his ideas, propagated by the Pakistan National Movement, became common currency among Muslim intellectuals, particularly in the Punjab and within the League leadership of Sindh and the North West Frontier Province (NWFP).[3] The credit for popularising the acronym Pakistan in the Punjab went to Rahmat and his supporters. The term Pakistan was strongly resisted by Jinnah, mainly due to personal differences with Rahmat Ali. Outside the Punjab, Dr. Qadri and Professor Sayed Zafrul Hasan elaborated the Aligarh scheme that was concerned with the interests of the Muslim-minority provinces. In Bengal, Fazlul Huq was not simply thinking in terms of one separate homeland for Muslims but two when he proposed the Lahore Resolution. He wanted Bengal to be independent from both India and what is today Pakistan.[4]

The activities of the Pakistan National Movement provoked a debate,

which involved Sikander Hayat, Sayed Abdul Latif, Nawab of Mamdot and Mian Kifayat Ali. The first two proposed a federal solution, while the latter two suggested confederal alternatives. All of these schemes were designed to avoid partition and the transfer of population that was implied in Rahmat's separatist vision.[5] Mamdot and Kifayat Ali believed that federalism left too strong a centre and its powers needed to be further reduced. Sayed Abdul Latif's plan had a cultural premise and this was used to justify the interest of the state of Hyderabad.[6] The fact that the majority of the schemes were proposed by Punjab is not a coincidence. It was the most active on this issue as the province had been the major benefactor of provincial autonomy and most concerned that these powers would be curtailed by a centre dominated by the Congress. It was also feared that ultimately such a centre would break Punjab's monopoly over the army.[7]

By the time of partition the Muslim League was able to establish its hegemony over all the regional parties except in Kashmir and Baluchistan. Sheikh Abdullah remained loyal to the Congress and in the case of Baluchistan most of the Baluch tribes were outside British Baluchistan and hence had no say in the final outcome. States such as Kalat were in touch with Jinnah only because they were interested in independence. Pakistan nationalism was expanding not by displacing old regional, tribal, linguistic, sectarian and familial loyalties but by subsuming them largely intact and by trying to establish new correlations between the local and subcontinental levels. There was also an ambivalence and a number of ambiguities emerging from the overlapping between ethnicity and nationalism in the Muslim-majority provinces. It seems that only the Cabinet Mission satisfied these subtleties in difference and that was why the provincial bosses had approved it.

Sikander Hayat's federal proposition could not really be considered to be an example of Muslim nationalist thought. He was extremely hostile to the idea of Pakistan and his scheme explicitly retained non-Muslims minorities so that it was not a Muslim state. In fact it was a perspective that was rooted in Punjabi regionalism and not Muslim Nationalism. In Bengal, regionalism was also moulding nationalism in its own image. The East Pakistan Renaissance Society rejected Muslim nationalism in favour of Bengali identification and inspired Raghib Ahsan's Greater Bengal scheme. Suhrawardy and Abul Hashim popularised these ideas and turned the Bengal Muslim League into a mass party. With partition looming, Suhrawardy disowned openly the two-nation theory, preferring the idea of an independent Bengal outside of Pakistan. This ideological cleavage was the basis for the friction between Punjab and Bengal that plagued the united Pakistan.[8]

Sindhi politicians G.M. Sayed, Ghulam Husain, Hidayatullah, Abdullah Haroon represented the general sentiment in the Sind Muslim League that was unanimously opposed to any centre—League's or Congress—from interfering in Sindhi affairs. Also, it was clear that Sind was against being amalgamated with the Punjab in a north western block. The ambivalence between nationalism and ethnicity was epitomised by the political career of G.M. Sayed. He built up the Muslim League in the province and was expelled from the party as partition loomed. Outside the party he reverted to an explicitly Sindhi perspective, focusing on anti-Punjabi and anti-Bihari issues.[9]

In the North West Frontier, the League and its supporters did not articulate any clear expression of Muslim nationalism. The party remained a marginal force until the referendum of 1947 when it wrested control of the province from the pro-Congress Khan brothers. The Khudai Khidmatgars was an explicit vehicle of Pakhtun ethnicity, which had strong anti-centre characteristics.[10] Dr. Khan wanted autonomy for Sarhad as well as restricted powers for the centre, and refused to concede differences between Hindus and Muslims. When the issue of a referendum was advanced, the Khan brothers raised the Pakhtunistan slogan, mainly as a bargaining counter, but were unable to stop the tide against them. These strong regional identifications in Bengal, Sind and NWFP were major obstacles for the expansion and consolidation of Muslim nationalism and combined with other issues in Pakistan into anti-centre hostility.[11]

THE STATE AND THE POLITICISATION OF IDENTITIES

Historically it was shown that nationalism and ethnicity were not distinct and separate essentialised categories simply juxtaposed to each other. Nationalism formed an amalgam with ethnicity and a complex relationship was created where influences of both the Islamic and Indic elements were active. There was a need for these issues to be handled sensitively in Pakistan. Instead, this relationship quickly unravelled with ethnicity asserting itself as a competitor to nationalism. Ethnicity was an enduring resource that in the highly factionalised social and political structure facilitated the politics of 'ins' and 'outs'. These shifts in identifications were not only due to agency but a response to alterations in state power and domination. It was not only a question whether one could or wanted to assert Sindhi or Muhajir identity but also whether structures prevented or greatly limited the participation of Pakistani identity. The primary reason for these shifts in identities was due to the role of the state. The proposition suggested is that groups who were excluded from state power

politicised ethnicity in order to legitimise resistance. In doing so they become the 'other', thus justifying their suppression by the state. Conversely, as groups were co-opted by the centre they depressed their ethnicity and emphasised Pakistani nationalism. This simple linear hypothesis is complicated by the class characteristics of the dominant groups. The fact that landlords dominate the establishment made it easier to co-opt ethnic representatives from similar backgrounds.[12]

Since 1947, the military–bureaucratic oligarchy has been the major player in Pakistan politics. It has ruled Pakistan directly and indirectly for over 30 years. The legitimation for this interventionist role has been that it was the true and only guardian of nationalism in Pakistan and that all those that oppose it were allies of the great 'other' India. The state was not ethnically neutral and the dominant linguistic group were the Punjabis. Approximately 80 per cent[13] of the army and 55 per cent[14] of the federal bureaucracy were from the Punjab. This preponderance was most clearly apparent at the highest level of the establishment. With defence being the largest item of the budget, roughly about a third,[15] the implications were clear. Political intervention ensured that the Punjabi-dominated military–bureaucratic combine was guaranteed that it received the main slice of the cake.

This core group in the establishment co-opted allies but its options were limited by the size of the cake. Thus a group's co-option by the centre was at the expense of another group. It was their proximity to the centre that ultimately determined political identity. Exclusion resulted in the politicisation of ethnic identity and the recurrent issues underpinning these mobilisations were demands for increased autonomy, greater representation at the centre, encouragement of cultural diversity and socio-economic concerns.

It was in the early 1950s that the ethnicisation of the state took place. The Punjabis aligned with Muhajirs, Urdu-speaking migrants from India, against Bengalis. The Muhajirs, 3.5 per cent of the population, had 21 per cent of the jobs in the Pakistan Civil Service and this reflected the historic advantages that this group had.[16] Thus in the debates at the time, Punjabis and Muhajirs were the most vocal advocates for the construction of a strong centralised state and were prepared to go to any means to achieve this goal. However the Bengali representatives resisted this move and wanted a more decentralised central government, even if it meant decreasing tension with India and thus negating the call for a larger army. Simultaneously they attempted to use the political processes to translate their political majority into institutional predominance as well. The crucial turning point in this struggle was the humiliating dismisal of the Bengali

Prime Minister Nazimuddin by the military–bureaucratic oligarchy. The exclusion of Bengalis from the centre, the tightening grip of Karachi over East Pakistan, the insensitive handling of the language issue and the economic exploitation of the region pushed East Pakistan along the road of separatism.[17] The resistance went underground during Ayub Khan's military rule and resurfaced with venom in the general upsurge for democracy a decade later. The essential demands of the Awami League, decentralisation, greater representation in the army and respect for a majority decision in the assembly, if accepted, would have undercut the foundation of the Punjabi-dominated military–bureaucratic oligarchy.[18] The class difference between landed elites of West Pakistan and the middle-class opposition made the gulf between the two, a chasm that the military believed could only be dealt with by the mailed fist. The fact that East Pakistan was separated by 1,200 miles of Indian territory made this exercise of brute force a futile affair.

Defeated on the battlefield by India the establishment was forced to accept a civilian government led by Zulfikar Bhutto. This was a major interregnum in the military–bureaucratic combine's domination of Pakistan. Despite the fact he was a Sindhi, Bhutto was very much the centre's man. A hawk on India, and a strong centrist, he initially was quite acceptable to the army. His rise to power defused the tensions building up in rural Sind as the PPP (Pakistan Peoples' Party) government at the centre provided political access for Sindhis. The recognition of the Sindhi language by the provincial government in 1972 and the quota imposed on Muhajirs entering the Pakistan Civil Service[19] led to a deflation of Sindhi nationalism and the enhancement of their Pakistani identity.

Zulfikar Bhutto's regime came down harshly on the opposition that was primarily located in the North West Frontier Province and Baluchistan. The toppling of the National Awami Party–Jamat-i-Ulama-Islam coalition in Frontier and the incarceration of Wali Khan on trumped up charges alienated Pakhtuns. Their exclusion intensified the calls for greater autonomy. However, the dismissal of Ataullah Mengal's government in Baluchistan precipitated a rebellion by the Baluchi tribes. Over 9,000 lives were lost in the conflict between 1973–77 that involved the deployment of four army divisions (approximately 80,000 men) including combined operations by the Pakistan and Iranian air forces. The struggle for an independent Baluchistan was led by tribal leaders such as Ataullah Mengal and Khair Bux Marri, some of whom were of Marxist persuasion. It was an unequal struggle that forced the Baluchi combatants to retreat into Afghanistan. The heavy-handed approach politicised Baluchis and intensified separatist feelings.[20]

Zulfikar Bhutto's autocratic behaviour also antagonised the military–bureaucratic oligarchy. The creation of the Federal Security Force displacing the army's role in internal security and lateral entry of political nominees into the bureaucracy antagonised the oligarchy. Thus when the Pakistan National Movement mobilised urban groups against electoral malpractices by the PPP in the 1977 general elections, it provided the opportunity for General Zia-ul-Huq to take over. The exclusion of the PPP from the political process, the execution of Bhutto and the deployment of the army in 1983, and again in 1986 in rural Sind to suppress opposition, alienated many Sindhis. The perception grew that the province was colonised by the Punjab, accelerating the momentum in ethnic assertion. The expulsion of the PPP, the main political force in Sind, from the central arenas resulted in the flourishing of different forms of Sindhi nationalism. Two currents emerged: one calling for a Sindhu Desh (independent Sindh), and the other calling for a Sindhi–Baluch federation in a confederal Pakistan.[21]

This development was accompanied by a realignment of political forces both in the centre and with the centre's relations with other minorities. The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan increased the significance of the western provinces. Sensitive to the possibility that the opposition forces in Baluchistan might become surrogates for Soviet–Afghan plans for the destabilisation of Pakistan, Zia made a serious attempt to woo them. Baluchi suspicions were not so easily allayed, but it did have the effect of making them neutral to the regime. In the Frontier, the establishment found its task easier as Pakhtun refugees from Afghanistan swung public opinion in favour of the centre's strategy against the Kabul regime. As the west's conduit of weapons and resources for the Afghan guerrillas were mainly channelled through the province, the Punjabi-dominated army incorporated Pakhtuns into the ruling clique. The fact that Pakhtuns were prominent in the Army made this task easier, and Pakhtun generals and bureaucrats played a significant role in the regime.[22]

This inclusion, however, was at the expense of Muhajirs. The shift against them had been initiated during Bhutto's government by the imposition of an upper ceiling on their recruitment into the civil service. The displacement expanded into other areas during Zia's time. Mainly Punjabi, but also Pakhtun, influence increased in Karachi at the expense of the Muhajirs. They were still influential in the federal government and in the administration in urban Sind, but their position was being eroded. This process of exclusion, ultimately resulted in a shift in identifications. Muhajirs had been the solid supporters of the Islamic parties as Islam was the justification for their presence in Pakistan. A younger generation of

Muhajir led by Altaf Hussain, however, realised that ethnicity was the only game on the table and they invented Muhajir ethnicity and MQM (Muhajir Qaumi Mahaz) was the political manifestation of this phenomenon. For a while it seemed that MQM and Sindhi groups would work together, but when the PPP–MQM accord under Benazir Bhutto's government broke down in October 1989, it resulted in a bitter ethnic conflict. A brutal feature of the 1990 violence was a deliberate policy, by the antagonists, of ethnic cleansing in order to create linguistically homogenous shanty towns. The military had a hand in this ethnic polarisation by using the MQM to undermine Bhutto's government and install its favoured candidate Nawaz Sharif as the Prime Minister. However the spiralling ethnic conflict unleashed in the province combined with the general lawlessness due to the 'Kalashnikov culture' eventually forced the army to act against the MQM. This decision along with others, which adversely affected their protégé, was taken by the Army unilaterally.[23] It set the stage for Nawaz's unsuccessful attempt to assert his authority by challenging the President. His attempt to remove Ghulam Ishaq Khan resulted in deadlock, paving the way for the return of Benazir in October 1993.

In Sindh, the Army was determined to clip MQM's wings under the guise of restoring law and order. A dual strategy was employed against MQM. On one hand its leadership and militants were arrested and a campaign was unleashed to discredit the organisation in the eyes of its supporters. On the other, the Army encouraged a revolt against Altaf Hussain's leadership. However whatever gains that were made by exposing MQM's torture cells to public scrutiny were lost by the perceived partiality of the operation, which targeted only Muhajirs, ignoring the armed militants of the Sindhi and Punjabi organisations operating in the province. Consequently, the Haqiqi faction of the MQM lost all credibility by accepting support from the army, and within a year Altaf Hussain reasserted his authority over MQM and the Muhajir 'community'. He then relaunched the party as the Muthahida Qaumi Mahaz. The new MQM has attempted to expand outside of Sind by attempting to make inroads in the Multan district of the Punjab, which has the largest concentration of Muhajirs in the province.[24]

PUNJAB'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ARMY

The argument elaborated above has been contested by those who argue that state intervention was an institutional response to the problems of Pakistan—problems that were due to a highly factionalised and fluid political and social process rather than the endproduct of ethnic domina-

tion. To further clarify my argument—whether the issue was of ethnic or institutional domination—I want to reflect on the relationship between the military and Punjabi society.

Pakistan Punjab was not a homogenous entity and three different cultural linguistic strands were discernible. Some would argue that these differences were dialectical variations and do not amount to separate languages or cultures. In the east around Lahore lies the densely populated heartland that was the traditional home of the 'yeoman farmer' that was so dear to the colonial administrators. This region was a natural extension of the small farmers' landholding pattern that was found in the Indian Punjab. Only a small part of the heartland of old, undivided Punjab lies within Pakistan. But it asserted its dominance as it contains the provincial capital Lahore—the political hub of the region and the most industrialised area in the province. A significant proportion of this population migrated from eastern Punjab at the time of partition and they have a close affinity with the original Muslim population in that they all speak standard or Majhi Punjabi.[25]

To the north and north west—Jehlum and Rawalpindi districts—is what can be broadly characterised as the Potohari speaking region, which extends into Hazara in NWFP and Azad Kashmir. This was *barani* land hence poorer and sparsely populated and was the principal recruiting ground of the Pakistan Army. The martial castes of the Greater Punjab were always closely associated with the state. The military lobby was always able to maintain close relations with successive empires (Mughals, Sikhs and British) and, now the Pakistani state. The interlude between the Second Afghan War and the First World War saw the dramatic increase in recruitment from the Punjab with the majority coming from a narrow range of martial castes, representing less than 1 per cent of the subcontinent's population. The local economy was revolutionised by the multiplier effect of military expenditure. Besides the direct impact of pay and pensions, the demand for commercial agriculture and domestic handicraft expanded. These inaccessible areas were incorporated into the world economy by the construction of strategic roads, railways, cantonments and even some industrialisation. Legislation was also brought in defending the interest of the martial castes. The Punjab Land Alienation along with other pieces of Unionist legislation restricted the expropriation of agricultural land by predatory moneylenders.[26]

In Pakistan these patterns persist. The present recruiting policy remains narrow and 75 per cent of the Pakistan Army comes from three districts of the Punjab: Rawalpindi, Jhelum and Campbellpur and from two districts of Sarhad: Mardan and Kohat. The army remains the biggest

employer with about 500,000 men, which represents 9 per cent of the male labour force in the country.[27] It absorbs surplus sons from the poor and hilly agricultural lands that are dependent on rainfall for irrigation: While farmers from irrigated lands were in need of labour, the *barani* areas had a surplus that could be easily absorbed by the army. The army was also an honourable profession for the martial castes with Rajput pretensions. The influx of pay and pensions improved the lifestyles and was a source of economic satisfaction and the army continues to act as a development agency. It has encouraged strategic industries, and defence contractors once mastering the techniques, apply their skill in the civilian sector. The agricultural economy received continuous stimulation from the demands of the cantonments and produces of the Military Farms Department. The army also generated a relatively sophisticated pool of labour: it trained a large number of drivers, mechanics, engineers who then applied their skills in the civilian economy when discharged. The road transport sector has a significant presence of those who learned their skills in the armed forces.[28]

The army was also socially linked to the Punjabi society through the officer corps. The social composition of the Pakistan Army officer corps has been changing since the 1960s when it consisted primarily of scions of the landed gentry and urban professionals. With changes in career opportunities attracting elites to the private sector and the professions, their place was replaced by officers drawn from the urban and rural lower middle class. Since the 1970s many of the junior officers were drawn not from the prosperous central region of the Punjab but from the northern impoverished districts. These later entrants were less westernised and prone to the religious rhetoric that was the hallmark of Zia-ul-Huq's regime—a development reinforced by the infiltration of the officer corps by student cadres of the Jamat-i-Islami. Its penetration was assisted by the practice introduced by General Zia of sending combat officers to the universities—the stamping ground of the Jamat—introduction of Islamic teaching and training at the Pakistan Military Academy, and at the Command and Staff College, as well as other initiatives by Zia to inculcate Islamic perspectives and values into the officer corps.[29]

Officer loyalty was also carefully nursed by Zia-ul-Huq to a much greater degree than any of his predecessors. Under Ayub Khan's rule, the military handed power over to the civil service within a short period of 21 months. Ayub was careful not to offend the bureaucracy as the latter were responsible for the day-to-day running of the country. General Zia, instead, asserted the authority of the military over the civil administration by nominating military personnel to the top positions in the federal and provincial bureaucracy. This was done in a low-key but persistent manner

that effectively reduced the civil service to a subordinate position in the running of the country. Besides placing officers into top civilian jobs, Zia kept the 'boys' happy and loyal by organising the rotation of highly lucrative training assignments in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states. It was estimated that 30,000 soldiers were seconded to the Middle East and that one out of every six or seven men in uniform benefited from this arrangement.[30]

Landlords were politically the most powerful and well-organised class in Pakistan and the Punjab and have a significant presence in the army and bureaucracy, though this seems to be declining. They gained from the economic activity generated by the military but benefited most by their willingness to serve in any government. This group's success in politics was founded on the premises that they were entirely flexible in their political allegiance and willing to change loyalty when it was profitable. They have overshadowed the Punjab's political landscape through various political organisations. A handful of families dominate Punjab politics. The Hayats of Wah, the Noons and Tiwanas of Sargodha, and the Daultanas of Mailsi in Multan district, were probably the most prominent. Others that were also politically significant include the Legaris, Pirachas, Kalabagh, Gilani, Multan Qureshis, and Dastis. From the three leading families came the leadership of the Unionist Party, and then the Muslim League.[31] Even though Ayub Khan tried, he could not keep them out of politics and Bhutto's PPP and General Zia continued the pattern. The latter's efforts to inject the Majlis-i-Shura with new blood only resulted in the landlord lobby emerging in a commanding position in the new assembly. These tendencies persist in the present government of Benazir Bhutto, with Ghulam Mustafa Khar and Farooq Leghari being the most prominent from the Punjab.

Despite the support of the landed class, the army wanted a countervailing political force. The economic benefits had already converged the interests of the middle class and the army. Winning over and sustaining the support of the Punjabi middle classes was crucial for the army if it was to successfully blunt any opposition to Martial Law. The fact that they did so, perhaps, explains why the Movement for the Restoration for Democracy (MRD) was not so significant in the Punjab or that workers and peasants have remained quiet since the 1970s. The military cultivated the emerging industrial bourgeoisie of the Punjab to its side. This became more compelling with the announcement of elections after Zia's death. The Islami Jamhoori Ittehad (IJI) was formed by General Hamid Gul, Director General of the Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI), on the explicit orders of General Beg. The IJI, a nine party alliance, consisting of both factions of the Muslim League and the Jamat-i-Islami, did not have a clear political

programme other than broad support for the Islamisation programme. Out of the various contenders for the leadership, the Chief Minister of Punjab, Nawaz Sharif, was supported by the army at the expense of the former Prime Minister, Junejo, and the former Premier of the Interim Government, Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi. This was not surprising as Nawaz Sharif, who had an enduring animosity for the PPP for nationalising his family industries, was, along with other young aspiring politicians, groomed by General Ghulam Jilani when the latter had been the Governor of the Punjab. He was noticed by General Zia when he made significant financial contributions to Zia's December 1984 referendum campaign. In 1981 Nawaz Sharif was invited to become Finance and Sports Minister of the province, and after the 1985 provincial elections, Zia appointed him Chief Minister of the Punjab. Once the military–bureaucratic oligarchy installed their man at the head of the Islamic coalition, they used the intelligence agencies to assist his election campaign. Brigadier Imitaz, Additional Director General of Internal Security of the ISI, played a crucial role in Sharif's campaign, especially in the Punjab.[32] The fact that Benazir Bhutto won the 1988 elections only demonstrated that the ISI miscalculated the strength of the opposition and the degree of public hostility to all those associated with the old order.

On the debit side, the military lost support of some groups during Zia's rule. Women were considered a soft target and Zia introduced the Hudood Ordinance in 1979. The Ordinance provided for severe punishment, including amputation and public floggings, for certain crimes. The aspects concerning women were the provisions concerning *zina* (adultery) and *zina-bil-jabr* (rape). The maximum provision for these crimes that the Ordinance provided, irrespective of gender, was stoning to death or a hundred lashes. Guilt of suspects could be established by self-confession or by the testimony of four Muslims males of known moral repute. A women's witness on its own could not convict a man. The ordinance did not deal with the question of raped unmarried women becoming pregnant. The consequence was that victims of rape were being sentenced for adultery. The Ordinance, in effect, gave legal sanction to the sexual harassment of women. The case of Safia Bibi illustrated the point. A blind domestic was raped by her employer and his son. She was charged with adultery and awarded three years' imprisonment and fifteen lashes while the father and son got away unpunished.

This, along with other cases, mobilised women into opposing the Islamisation process. In 1981 the middle class and upper class women formed Women's Action Forum (WAF) in Karachi and it spread to the key urban areas (Lahore, Islamabad, Peshawar, Bahawalpur, Fasilabad,

and Quetta), and crucially it had struck roots in the Punjab. The All-Pakistan Women's Association (APWA) and other women's organisations supported this development. In attempting to formulate a strategy, the WAF decided to fight the legislation by arguing within an Islamic context. It enlisted sympathetic *ulama* and adopted Islamic idioms and metaphors in mobilising support. This was vigorously opposed by the Islamic parties, and the Jamat-i-Islami formed Majlis-i-Khawatin Pakistan to block WAF's campaign.[33] WAF in 1994 changed tack and proclaimed that it was now a secular organisation and also was contemplating declaring itself a feminist organisation.[34] WAF activities, however, were part of a much wider phenomena. Women workers from the PPP and the Awami National Party (ANP) and the largest women organisation, Sindhianai Tehrik, played a significant role in opposing these discriminatory laws.[35] The opposition was not able to do more than check the Islamisation process, but their activities politicised important sections of women and created new oppositions to the regime. The irony was that Islamisation was intended to weld the nation around Islam, but instead it alienated Punjabi women.

The other repercussion of the Islamisation process was the rise in religious sectarianism. One of the major issues confronting the Punjab was the rise of sectarian splinter groups that were heavily armed and dangerous. Each group was local, but their collective influence spaned a crescent stretching from Sialkot to Fasilabad, covering Gujranwala, Sargodha and Jhang. Some of the organisations, such as the Sipah-i-Sahba Pakistan (SSP), were a breakaway from Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i-Islam (J-U-I), a Deobandi organisation. The SSP founded as a sub-organisation of J-U-I in 1984, broke away allegedly over ideological grounds from the parent body. While the parent body advocated a generic concept of the Islamic state, the SSP adhered to a much narrower view that demanded all other sects be declared non-Muslim. On gaining its independence it became involved in a protracted and bloody struggle against Shiahs. Violence was not restricted to opponents; there were fierce leadership conflicts within the organisation. Its founder, Maulana Haq Nawaz Jhangvi, was killed and so was his successor. A number of splinter organisations emerged from the SSP—the Harkat-ul-Ansar and the Tanzeem-i- Dawa being the largest of the nine groups that broke away. Most of these organisations were no more than a cover for criminal networks patronised by influential landlords, led by local *maulvis*. A vast amount of sectarian literature, valued in millions of rupees, was circulated by these organisations. This literature targets Shiahs, Ahmadiyyas and Christians. Both the Harkat-ul-Ansar and the Tanzeem-i-Dawa have Arab nationals trained by Afghan Mujahideen,

and Harkat was believed to be led by an Egyptian cleric living in Karachi. The Shiahs were organised around the Therik-i-Jafria-i-Pakistan, the local chapter of the Khomeni revolution. It came to prominence when it led the Shiah protest against the introduction of *Zakat*. Originally it was confined to the NWFP but it has made major inroads into the Punjab and aggressively challenged the SSP's anti-Shiah campaign. The third major sectarian organisation was the Sunni Therik, a product of the Brelvi Madrases movement–Ziaul Quran, which has grown dramatically in Fasilabad and Jhang. This organisation has been in the vanguard of the anti-Christian movement. While most of these organisations' energies are focused on those who were or perceived to be non-Muslims, the violence has flowed into intra-Sunni rivalry. The murder of a local Deobandi *hakim* by a mob egged on by a rival Brelvi *mullah* was indicative of the dangers of Zia's Islamic pigeons coming home to roost.[36]

The Siraiki-speaking areas, principally in the south west Punjab around Multan and Bahawalpur, have made a conscious and explicit attempt to distance themselves from dominant groups in the Punjab. In the 1930s the first conscious effort was made to revive the language that Khwaja Ghulam Farid rendered in his mystical hymns. The search for authenticity was impacted by the migratory waves unleashed by partition. Approximately half of the population in Multan was originally refugees from east Punjab and these refugees dominated the city's industrial and commercial sectors. Their presence downplayed the efforts of the Siraiki-speakers to establish the city as a cultural centre for Siraiki—for the refugees, Lahore was their cultural centre. This sense of deprivation fuelled the initial development of the Siraiki movement in the 1960s. This was institutionalised in a variety of cultural and literary organisations and journals. They were unable, however, to assert their demands for a Siraiki Suba, despite the more relaxed political environment following the downfall of Yayha Khan. This failure meant that their effort remained concentrated on cultural matters, which varied from persuading Radio Multan to increase transmission time in Siraiki, to the activities organised by the Siraiki Academy.[37] It was unclear how, but there has been, recently, shifts back to politics with two organisations becoming active in the Pakistan Siraiki Party and the Siraiki Qaumi Movement. With MQM attempting to make inroads, the indications were that this would polarise the region.[38]

The other area of dissent comes from Azad Kashmir. Administratively the area Azad Kashmir was notionally autonomous. In practice, all decisions were cleared or were taken by Islamabad. Even though culturally and linguistically Azad Kashmir was part of the Punjabi heartland, it has

been treated as peripheral despite the significant contribution it has made to the country as a whole. Unlike other areas of the Potohar, Mirpuri villagers were not, generally, recruited by the British Indian Army. Instead, Mirpuris established a niche in the engine rooms of the British merchant navy. Opportunities did not arise until the acute labour shortage during the Second World War, and Mirpuri ex-seamen enthusiastically filled in these gaps. These pioneers provided the bridgehead for chain-migration that took place in the post-War era. Substantial numbers of Mirpuris left their ships and called their families and clansmen to join in a great wave of migration. A third of a million settled in Britain, which was half the population of Mirpur's villages. The region was not evenly represented and the majority of the emigration was from Mirpur district or from the southern part of Kotli district. In many villages over the half of the population were resident abroad, resulting in significant flows of remittances back to the villages of origin. The paradoxical consequence of this has been that while capital-rich, thus producing short-term increase in the standard of living, there has not been sustained economic growth.

The Pakistanis have not merely overlooked the Mirpuris, but exploited their hard-earned financial and environmental resources. The Mirpuris deeply resented that their considerable financial contribution was not being deployed to stimulate the economic and infrastructural development of Mirpur or Azad Kashmir. Neither had Mangla generated any benefits for the local population. While electricity was being supplied downstream as far as Karachi, the neighbouring villages were connected much later. This frustration boiled over in the short-lived Dadiali rebellion that served as a reminder to the discontent among Azad Kashmiris.

Even though the boundaries between Mirpuris and Potoharis were largely artificial in cultural terms, there were few, if any, linguistic or cultural differences between those living on either side of the Jhelum. However, Mirpuris assert that they were Kashmiri and hence not Pakistani or Punjabi. This sense of Kashmiri nationalism has emerged not only against Islamabad but it also mixed up with parochial sentiment that makes Muzffarbad equally undesirable. The result has been enthusiasm by Mirpuris for Kashmiri nationalism, a desire for real freedom epitomised in the slogan 'Kashmir Zindabad! Pakistan Murdabad![39]

CONCLUSION

Muslim nationalism was not a homogenous phenomenon. It consisted of several strands that ranged from separatist, federal and confederal perspective. Besides these variations in the nationalist discourse there were an

array of regional tendencies—Bengali, Sindhi, Pakhtun and Punjabi—that were partially subsumed by the Pakistan movement. The Muslim League was imperfectly able to bring together these diverse perspectives under the ambiguous Lahore Resolution of 1940. Regional, linguistic, sectarian and tribal affiliations remained largely intact and this created a number of ambiguities and ambivalence and points of tension between nationalism and ethnicity which were later to become the historical basis for the opposition to the centre. These antagonisms were to become the enduring resource that was amplified by the highly fluid political environment in the struggles of 'ins' and 'outs'.

The ambiguities and ambivalences between nationalism and ethnicity were episodically hardened into ethnic fault lines due to the insensitive handling and short-sighted priorities of the State. The *casus belli* was the insistence of the Punjabi-dominated military–bureaucratic oligarchy, which has, directly or indirectly, ruled Pakistan for roughly 30 years, of pursing polices that had little support outside the state institutions. Both of these key institutions were quantitatively and qualitatively the preserve of the Punjabis and their allies. Punjabis and Muhajirs initially advocated and then defended vigorously the necessity for a highly centralised state. This was strongly resisted by the Bengali political leadership, and the Punjabi-dominated military–bureaucratic oligarchy retaliated by imposing military rule. Ayub Khan's regime compounded the exclusion of Bengalis with economic exploitation of East Pakistan. The result was that it diverted the political opposition on to the road of separation. The break-up of Pakistan and the rise to power of Zulfikar Bhutto led to a reformulation of the power relations at the centre. Sindhis were co-opted at the centre at the expense of Muhajirs and his regime's harsh response to legitimate opposition in Baluchistan and the North West Frontier Province exacerbated pre-existing grievances. Baluchis resisted the establishment and the rebellion was crushed with a significant loss of life. Bhutto's downfall led to a further reformation of the ethnic composition of the centre. Zia- ul-Haq's exclusion of Sindhis confronted him with a serious revolt in that province and a dramatic increase in separatist sentiments. However, Pakhtuns and Baluch, primarily due to the sensitivity of the western border regions after the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, were accommodated by the new regime. The Zia regime neutralised the Baluchis' hostility to the centre by its attempts to compensate them for past injuries. Pakhtuns did much better, with members of the establishment being elevated to senior and sensitive positions. However this was at the expense of Muhajirs who faced increased exclusion. They formed the MQM and mobilised around ethnicity. The army, fearing that

they would work collectively with Sindhis, lured them away into forming a coalition with their preferred nominee, Nawaz Sharif. The Army's role was a major contribution to the collapse in law and order in Sind. Realising that they were losing control of the situation, the Army clamped down on its former allies and attempted to discredit and incarcerate the leadership, but had little success.

Punjab, however, was not a homogenous entity and not all Punjabis benefited equally from the fruits of power. In terms of the rural population, the Army's recruiting policy benefited directly and indirectly the population of Rawalpindi, Jhelum and Campbellpur as well as the two neighbouring districts in the NWFP. The officer corps increasingly belonged to the urban middle classes, which always benefited materially from military rule. This policy was developed to a fine art under Zia's rule with officers nominated to senior positions in the civil administration and sent on lucrative contracts to the Middle East. The landed gentry was a declining element in the officer corps, but was a very influential group associated with their counterparts in the bureaucracy and political parties, in which the landlords were dominant. If this was not enough, the army cultivated the support of the industrial bourgeoisie in order to deepen its link with the Punjab. Nawaz Sharif was groomed for leadership and for the IJI, which he was to lead, by the military in a desperate attempt to keep Benazir Bhutto out of power.

However, Zia's regime alienated significant sections of the Punjabi society. The introduction of Islamic law, which particularly affected women, politicised them. It resulted in the emergence of a women's movement, which struck deep roots in the Punjabi towns. Though the opposition had little impact on the regime, it politicised a dormant section of society. The other repercussion of the Islamisation process was the increase in sectarian violence. A number of violent splinter groups emerged in the small towns of the Punjab. Their principal victims were Shiahs, Ahmadiyyas and Christians. They have been involved in bloody internal power struggles and were increasingly involved in intra-Sunni conflicts.

The Siraiki-speaking areas were increasingly opposed to the dominant groups in the Punjab. This opposition emerged from a variety of Siraiki cultural organisations and recently was expressed by the emergence of the Siraiki Qaumi Movement and the Pakistan Siraiki Party. The other significant opposition in the rural areas came from the Mirpur population of Azad Kashmir. Despite their significant contribution to the Pakistan economy, primarily through remittances, the area has remained underdeveloped economically and infrastructural progress remains marginal. This frustration with the establishment in Islamabad had led Mirpuris to

associates themselves with the resurgence of Kashmiri identity in India. Thus, like those Kashmiris from the valley, they want to establish an independent state separate from Pakistan or India.

Finally, ironically the Punjabi domination of Pakistan has not benfited all Punjabis: it has been underpinned largely by Punjabi elites (bureaucrats and landlords) and co-opted sections of the peasantry. This domination has been the primary cause for the ethnic conflicts that convulsed the nation's brief history and has forced minorities to challenge Punjab's hegemony by propagating alternatives to Pakistan—alternatives that have been rooted in the historic ambiguities and ambivalences of Pakistani nationalism.

Notes

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Letters Home, 1915–16: Punjabi Soldiers Reflect on War and Life in Europe and their Meanings for Home and Self

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In commenting on social and cultural conditions in Britain and France during the First World War, soldiers collectively reassessed institutions and conditions back home in Punjab. Using situations in Europe as a sounding board, they discussed many of the elements of the Punjabi milieu which informed their own identities. In frank and vivid language, their letters display a range of responses to contacts with the British and the French. We see self-criticism and self-affirmation as well as a range of complex and ambivalent responses to living in Europe. The war-time setting also evoked commentary on moral and religious duty and family honour.

Among the peoples of South Asia who shed blood, sweat and tears for the causes of British armies, none were so involved as the people of the Punjab. In the First World War, Britain and the other primary combatants faced many grave challenges. For Germany and Britain especially, these challenges included threats to their valuable and extensive colonial empires. Britain's own desperate commitment to its national and imperial integrity and the nature of its defence arrangements dictated that India, its most important colony, would be called on to provide critical manpower.[1] For a host of reasons, including geographical location and social and economic interests, Punjabis assumed that role in profoundly disproportionate numbers.

When Britain entered the war in 1914, the Army of India was equipped mainly, but not exclusively, for providing local security, and for campaigning on the north west frontier wherever and whenever necessary. By Continental standards the British Army, per se, was a small and underequipped force whose subsidiary army in India was, likewise, inferior.

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One result of this deficiency, exposed as it was at the start of a terrible international disaster, was that the Government of India officials, especially those in the army, clamoured for the services of the most reliable native troops available.[2] Those deemed most reliable in 1914 were those displaying two key traits.

The first, martial fitness, was perceived as a finessed ferocity stemming largely from a culturally inspired devotion to the aggressive defense of home, family and community. This was then transformed into a ruthless offence against enemies. By the early twentieth century, Punjabi servicemen regarded themselves as a military elite and viewed their service to the *sircar* as an honour and a testament to their superior fighting credentials. A history of invasion from the north and west, and all the phenotypic, cultural and economic influences the ensuing struggles entailed, had incrementally informed the character of the Punjab.[3] This had long since produced a home-grown ethic of military readiness. Its elements included physical and moral courage, commitment to family integrity and honour, and conspicuous manliness.

The second trait, which was not acknowledged as often in the rhetoric of war, was availability in a critical mass. Once again, and in a critical instance, the burden fell to the people of the north and north west, where extensive military establishments and infrastructure already existed. This region coincided largely with the historical Punjab, particularly the area under British administrative control. Many Pathans and other smaller corporate groups also resided there, and their men helped fill the ranks of the Indian Army.[4]

It was this kind of mix—Pathans, Dogras, but mostly Punjabi Sikhs and Punjabi Muslims—who found themselves on the French front in 1915 and 1916.[5] The first Indian soldiers arrived in Marseilles on 26 September 1914, and although most of them were withdrawn from France in stages during 1915 and dispatched to the Middle East, a significant presence remained in France, including a high proportion of cavalry.[6] This paper is a tentative examination of only part of a valuable resource housed in the India Office Library and Records in London.[7] What I plan to explore here is just part of a weighty compilation of letters, written mostly by Indian personnel stationed at the front, or else by their friends, relatives, or associates from different locales.[8] In commenting on the social and cultural conditions in Britain and France, soldiers collectively reassessed institutions and traditions at home in Punjab. Using situations in Europe as a sounding board, soldiers commented on elements of the Punjabi milieu that constituted their own identity.[9] Their letters display a great range of responses to contacts with Britain and France. We see self-

criticism and firm self-affirmations, as well as a number of more complex and ambivalent responses to these soldiers' European experiences.[10]

So what was on the minds of these men? For my purposes, the most interesting of the letters describe reactions to the European milieu, expressed in tandem with a clear sense of home and self. Many different topics produced this discourse. In particular, war, women and society at large—its colors, its styles and its more inane conventions—inspired the most expressive commentary.

The fact of war itself loomed large, and the performance of duty, couched in terms that place it apart from more earthly loyalties, emerged as a prevalent theme. 'Sometimes, it involved an element of calculated manipulation, as in the case of a British commanding officer goading a soldier into a fatal action. Writing from the Brighton hospital to a friend in India, one sepoy of the 47th Sikhs recounts: "Chur Singh has suffered martyrdom in the war. The 47th Sikhs were charging—Sahib said, 'Chur Singh you are not a Sikh of Guru Gobind Singh, who sits in fear inside the trench!" Chur Singh was very angry. He gave order to his company to charge. He drew his sword and went forward:[11] Another soldier, Rissaldar Hoshiar Singh of the 16th Cavalry, Expeditionary Force D, writes to Jamadar Harbant Singh of the Hodson's Horse:

> I was pleased to hear of your welfare, but much concerned to hear that the Colonel was displeased with you. You pay very little attention to what I tell you repeatedly Remember that the work you do now will gain for you a good name or a bad name which will last you the rest of your life...You must always bear in mind your own honour and the honour of your family. There is nothing else in life better than honour.[12]

Some of the letters were infused with a spirit of patriotism for the Allied cause. Daffedar Durga Prasad of the 16th Cavalry in Mesopotamia mused pensively about the course of the war. To Jamadar Gobind Singh, who was toiling in France with the 20th Deccan Horse, he writes, '...Uncle, my constant wish is that God will put a stop to this bloody war, and bring back the days of peace. What evil spirit has possessed the German nation? May God speedily and utterly destroy them'.[13] Another commentator links his overall loyalty to the Empire's cause with a healthy self-interest. After regaling his brother on the many virtues of France, a Pathan from the 36th Jacob's Horse finishes by saying, 'Pray that our king and the British Empire may be victorious so that we people in safety and renown may return to our dear country'.[14] A preoccupation with religious faith or duty imbued more than half of the letters that invoked the directives of honour and obligation. Discourse in virtually any language will feature references

to the cosmic power, and one needs to distinguish the casual and colloquial usages imbedded in everyday expression from those bearing a more conscious and deliberate weight. This is a difficult distinction to make, but perhaps it is the suggestion of crisis and desperation and the plea for deliverance from these evils which marks the excerpts which follow. One soldier writes, to a friend but also to the heavens, and perhaps most of all to himself, 'Please God I will not return till the war is over. It is not the way of real men to return till such a time'.[15] Another wonders at the destruction all around him. He tells an associate:

> I want you to find out from some venerable authority what he thinks on this subject. Have we got to endure the calamities that God is sending upon the world or is it not possible that by means of prayer and sacrifice He may be induced to remove them? Terrible troubles are falling upon us now and the matter is beyond our understanding.[16]

Several correspondents conjure vivid dreamlike imagery through which they express their anxieties: 'May the Guruji project you in soul and body just as when he gave you that vision two or three months ago of good Sikhs in the heavens. The Guru made them plainly visible'.[17] Another describes a crucial incident with a joyous religious flavor. He recalls the 'big fight', rife with hand-to-hand combat, in luminous detail:

> Shells and bullets were falling like rain and one's body trembled to see what was going on. But when the order came to advance and take the enemy's trench, it was wonderful how we all forgot the danger and were filled with extraordinary resolution. We went over like men walking in a procession at a fair, and shouting, we seized the trench and took the enemy prisoner. I did not think of our safety but felt that the Guru Maharaj was fighting in me. He is great and it is thanks to Him that I was able to do all I did...The bravery which we showed that day won the admiration of the British soldiers. After the fight they asked me how it was that I was so utterly regardless of danger.[18]

Still, only a small minority of soldiers could report such triumphs of all-fulfilling faith. A rare Punjabi Hindu among the ranks praised the blessings of France, which nevertheless could not fufil the heart. Seemingly near despair, Pokhar Das asks a loved one for understanding:

> Consider how long we have been here. Our hearts are disturbed. Let us see what is acceptable to God, and what He does. You are indeed fortunate in that you have reached home. There is no doubt that Fairyland is here, and there are many to console us, still our hearts are

disturbed. From your dear brother who is solitary and alone in Fairyland.[19]

Many of the letters in this sample disclose a principled commitment to duty—but duty in whose service? The many references to God, King, Government and family do not yield a collective common denominator—nor should we expect that they would. Beyond the class of letters—we have just seen, lay another group. This group considers, mostly but not exclusively so, the practical implications of honourable and untroubled military service, and displays several different perspectives. Among the letters, differences in literary approach express the writers' personalities and developmental histories more than they present evidence of an all-inclusive cosmology. The differences are evident and worth studying.

The news of a mutiny by the 15th Lancers in Mesopotamia evoked this saddened reply from one Punjabi Muslim soldier in France:

> When I read about the behavior of the regiment, I was overwhelmed with grief...this is the time to show loyalty and give help to the Government and not to be false to one's salt. It was to work for government and not for disobedience that they girded their loins and left their nearest and dearest...I feel sure that you will remember your *hereditary services* [emphasis mine] and show yourself worthy of your family traditions...Remember our duty is loyalty and bravery...I again say I am deeply grieved and hurt by the behaviour of our people.[20]

Two cavalrymen in Jalandhar write jointly to a friend, 'You should always confer distinction on the names of your ancestors. *Don't act as the 15th Lancers did.* The wise men say, "You should not do things of which you will be ashamed afterwards' ".[21]

The notion of *izzat* embraces worldly as well as spiritual attributes. Very much like prestige, it connotes a place of distinction in the eyes and minds of peers. In the excerpt which follows we see that aspects of izzat could be attained through methodical temporal accomplishments. A Daffedar instructs his father to procure recruits from specific areas:

> Show me favour and enlist 15 or 20 men from the Mianwali or Bannu District, and hand them over to Captain Nixon at the regimental depot at Amballa. After you have done so, get a letter of recommendation from him and send it to the CO here. Get recommendations from the Deputy Commissioner and others, to the effect that you and your family have rendered services to the Government, and that you and I have attained such and such a rank in Government service, and that you have

> disturbed. From your dear brother who is solitary and alone in Fairyland.[19]

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now helped to raise recruits, and asking that your son be promoted to Jamadar.

The writer reminds his father, 'If I become an officer it will increase your izzat and I will also benefit'. He said another Daffedar in his regiment became a Jamadar in this very way.[22] One proud Hindu Jat expressed a less immediate self-interest and more of a supra-communal loyalty to his caste. He was anxious to see Jat enlistment extended. In his appeal to a Jat Sikh friend, Tek Chand refers to the largesse on offer to successful recruiters:

> They [Jats] are serving the Government well and faithfully, and high officers say so...if you continue to help in this way (i.e., recruiting) you will reap much benefit. Nowadays the officers and men who go to England hear praise of the Jats from the lips of great men, and it is our duty to show that we are worthy of the praise.[23]

Such appeals reflected the largesse which was on offer to successful recruiters.

The negative side of group competition in recruitment also produced an impact upon serving men. Although vigourous recruitment from a group might place a feather in its collective cap, the converse was also true. Failure to maintain the ever-increasing rate of 'sacrifice' demanded by authorities (particularly those of the Punjab Government) resulted in one soldier's vivid personal anxiety, if not in the overt censure of his group. As he tells another soldier posted in Sialkot:

> I hope that you will continue to show the same enthusiasm about recruiting that you have shown hitherto. It is a most urgent matter for we are far away and it is your duty to get recruits. If you can prevent our caste being reproached for failing to supply recruits this in itself will be a great help. This is the first consideration nowadays.[24]

In another letter, we see the fusion of a soldier's own desires with his weary commitment to seeing the job done well. His sentimental locus was his regiment. As Hazur Singh of the 6th Cavalry explains to his brother in Ludhiana:

> I am not likely to get leave, nor do I wish to go, even if I could succeed in obtaining permission, till the war is finished. Because if I were to go on leave, it would be very hard to return. When I used to go on leave before, I used to be very disinclined to return to the cantonment—how much more disinclined then would I be to return to the war! When I return I will tell you all about the war. It is impossible to write about

> it. The war will not be finished for a very long time. It will certainly not be finished before 1918. My regiment will certainly not return. The Guru Maharaj has kept me alive for two and a half years—is it at all likely that he will not keep me alive for another two years? I have pledged myself not to return (on leave or ill) until I return with the entire regiment.[25]

So far, we have seen soldiers invoke love of God, Kind, Government, Empire, family and regiment—often poetically. Still, others frankly manipulated their situations or instructed their confidantes how to do so. What role did the reality of censorship play in this dichotomy? We need to acknowledge that at least some of the soldiers must have known that their letters were inspected and that inspectors might note who said what to whom. Could this have influenced their self-expression and prompted some active self-censorship?[26] We would surmise that in any setting, at least some personalities might be intimidated by the prospect of censorship. In the cases of some individuals—and we cannot know how many—this might conceivably have lead to pliant, inane, and even obsequious prose. Still, others continued to list their strategies for beating the censorship process, and even baldly referred to it as such even as these very dispatches were being combed by the censors for subversive content. One soldier tells his expressive wife, 'Never write again such things in your letters as before. If you have any need of anything, money or the like, write and say so. For our letters are read before they reach us, and if such things are written in a man's letters, it is not well for him'.[27]

Another husband was distressed by his wife's frankness. But in this case her expressiveness embraced a different set of problems; she had been airing embarrassing family grievances. An exasperated Niaz Hussein replies: 'For God's sake control your pen, and write only after due consideration. Our letters are read ten times before they reach us. Either do not write at all, or if you write, simply say how you are'.[28] One man castigates his friend for writing indiscreetly—and then goes on to describe their caper in full detail:

> You say in your letter that the postmaster of Adampur had removed some opium—what was the necessity of your telling him about it? You should not have said a word on the subject and should not have mentioned it in your letter. When you send opium you should mention it but say that you are sending a preparation for the beard and should send it off secretly. You have made a great mistake.

Although the letter was passed on for mailing, the censors deleted this

portion with tell-tale black ink and presumably alerted the man's Commanding Officer.[29] In any case, Army Headquarters was apprised of the doings, and may have known generally that soldiers were trying to breach the inspection process. At the end of 1916, a Chief Censor reported to Headquarters that:

> No. 1 [presumably one of the inspectors] tells us of the reduction of one Chattar Singh, a Veterinary Assistant attached to 9th Hodson's Horse. For months not a day elapsed without at least one letter and frequently two passing through this office from Frenchwomen addressed to this man and as we never saw any of his replies it was clear that he was evading the censorship by posting letters in the French Post Office.[30]

Yet however restrained or cagey certain soldiers might have been in the face of military inspection, others waxed exuberantly in their accounts of life abroad. Herein, we see more candid and earthy accounts of the soldiers' life in Europe. To the horror and distress of European-bred examiners, these included ample accounts of sexual contacts with European women. In one case, a woman herself writes revealingly to an Indian friend: 'At present the troops here are Irish but they have not the same sympathy with us as you used to show'.[31] Still, most evidence of these liaisons came from the men themselves. In the throes of delicious anticipation, one Punjabi Muslim regales a friend with his plans for the 'Great Day'—that is, his New Year's celebration:

> I cannot imagine what limit there will be to the revels, when even in war such a pitch is reached. In every village there are four or five hotels, and each of these today is an ample realisation of the paradise of which we have read in books and heard from Mullahs...I send you a picture of a girl. When you see it, you will understand what beauty there is in France, and the fidelity is equal to the beauty and so happy are they. Every man is a king in his own home.[32]

A Pathan soldier tells his brother that:

> If I come home, I shall return to France. For these people keep friendship in the most excellent way. Into whatsoever house you go, it is your home...Remion, Marguerite, and Nini Nidemon send their greetings. I am lying on a bed in their house, and I have learnt French very well. May God show my friends the county of France without a war![33]

Despite the giddiness of these letters and their sex-tinged bonhomie,

they reveal a genuine appreciation of French hospitality and warmth—a theme evident in other, more sober letters we will consider later. An incoming letter, which made its way to a soldier of the 3rd Skinner's Horse, in France, responds to the frank admiration soldiers often voiced after imbibing some of the freedoms of being away from home—whether in England or France, or somewhere in that nebulous category called 'the West'. The writer of this letter, a friend from home, gently reminds Har Narinder Singh of his limits, and hopes that experiencing France will not shake his faith in his traditions:

> You write that you are able to obtain your desires in France forthwith. I doubt whether you will be able to do so without marriage; but marriage is possible only on these conditions that the French lady adopts the religion and customs and dress of the Sikhs.[34]

But in one case, it was not the text of a letter itself, but rather the censor's accompanying note, which was so suggestive. After plainly describing the climate and the cold of France, a Lance-Daffedar of the 6th Cavalry, Sialkot Division, penned a cryptic passage to a soldier friend back in Malakand: 'In this place the hands are hot from wearing gloves. The hare's body is soft, so if possible, send some black pepper, as there is sore need of it. There is nothing else for it'. The censor took the unusual step of adding his own commentary to the official record. It read as follows:

> It is suggested that the meaning of the paragraph underlined is 'fighting is going on. The white troops are soft and want stiffening with Indian troops of whom there is a great need'. But it is more likely that it refers to the complaisance of French women and the opportunity afforded to the Indian soldiery.[35]

The censor's note reveals more about British or European anxieties than it does the exact meaning of the daffedar's remark. Although we are mainly concerned with the Punjabi soldier's sense of self, and his assessment of his own prowess, including the martial and the sexual, the interpretations made by censors may refract if not always mirror a palpable reality. Traditionally, male soldiers have enjoyed their contacts with women wherever and whenever available, and none of the letters here spell out any claims to a unique, ethnicity-based sex appeal. Although certain legends have since emerged, placing 'western' women under the sexual thrall of 'eastern' men, they hardly affected the bulk of cross-cultural social intercourse, at least during the earlier years of the war. Concern with the men's own *izzat* in the face of temptations abroad were certainly matched by fears over the women back home. Although the sample used

here has not produced specific examples, correspondence elsewhere describes the anxieties of many non-Punjabi Muslim Rajput soldiers and Pathans from North West Frontier Province (NWFP). Allusions to wayward wives and 'rampant women' reveal an excruciating fear of the loss of izzat, in which event even the most courageous military service would profit the men nothing. This was one area in which the men's morale remained fragile and probably became even more so as the war dragged on, and as earlier optimism about a timely resolution started to flag.

Many of the soldiers' contacts with European women produced commentary of a different and more thoughtful sort. A Punjabi Muslim of the Secunderabad Cavalry Brigade wrote home to Jhelum about a French woman—he had been billeted in her home. All three of her sons had gone to war. One had been killed, one lay in a hospital and the other was fighting in the trenches. This soldier writes, 'There are miles of difference between the women of India and the women of this country. During the whole three months, I never once saw this old lady sitting idle, although she belonged to a high family'.

He went on to say that, 'When we had to leave that village the old lady wept on my shoulder. Strange that I had never seen her weeping for her dead son and yet she should weep for me!'[36] This sincere admiration for the women of France informs the waxings of Gandha Singh, who instructs a friend:

> Tell the women to be brave like men. I am astonished to see the women of France, beautiful as they are, they brace themselves up and show greater pluck even than men. They are even ready to arm themselves and take part in the fighting. My mother and wives ought to show courage like this.[37]

Two categories of letters intersect. These are those concerned with 'women' (as opposed to 'sex') and 'education'. Ranji Lal of Rohtak writes:

> Grandfather dear, I understand these things perfectly well though they are still hidden from my revered elders. I know well that a woman in our country is of no more value than a pair of shoes and this is the reason why the people of India are low in the scale. You educated Ramdas and got him a situation but you never thought of educating any of the girls. You said to yourself, 'Ramdas will be able to help me in my old age but the girls will get married and leave the house and will not be able to do anything for me'. I should like to write to my wife but she would have to get the letters read by somebody else and all the home secrets would come out. When I look at Europe I bewail the lot of India. In

> Europe everyone, man and woman, boys and girls, are educated. The men are at the war and the women are doing the work. They write to their husbands and get their answers. You ought to educate your girls as well as your boys and our posterity will be the better for it.[38]

Teja Singh of the 9th Hodson's Horse in France tells a friend in Ludhiana that:

> In each village there are 'hotels' and liquor shops, but the people here do not get blind drunk as they do in India. In the smallest villages there are schools in which boys and girls are taught...Women work in just the same way as men. For instance, one may be a 'stationmaster', another a schoolmaster—the difference is simply this, that God made them women.[39]

Although women and their formal education captured the lion's share of attention, the general topic of formal education drew several responses. Sowar Teja Singh told a friend in Sargodha:

> I am delighted that you have made such progress and I hope that you will keep on with your studies in this way. Look at me, had I not left school, would I have had to go through such trouble? In the whole world there is no work more degrading than mine. At home the sweeper is no better off than I am.[40]

One soldier decried what he thought the lack of universal education had wrought in India. He felt that France enjoyed an advantage in civilization because of the practice:

> The custom in this country is that when a child is five years old he is sent to school...These (the French) people appear to be superior to us solely because of education. Learning is a great benefit. Moreover the custom with us of having servants to do our menial work is profitless. These people themselves do their menial work with their own hands. They are not in the least ashamed of working. Our people are steeped to death in shame. If we would do all our work ourselves we would reap much benefit both for ourselves and also for our Sircar.[41]

Still, the topic of women and their well-being informs another theme to which we must return because it proceeds toward a significant conclusion—that life in Europe had much to offer. One category of these letters describes virtuous and nurturing women. A Pathan tells his brother:

> Married ladies, and young unmarried women, attend to our wants and tidy our beds, and eat at the same table as we do. They are thoughtful

pensioned Daffedar in Jhelum bemoaned the manner of things back home. As Ali writes to Lance-Daffedar Rahimdad Khan:

> I tell you plainly that our old rights of *lumbardar*-ship have not been given us. The reason is that Indians preside in the law courts and bribery is in full swing and this is a very serious thing for Government. For the last 80 years the British rule has been just but now bribery, undue influence, and the vapourings of pleaders are damaging Government. The regimental officers understand their duties and do them, but the Tehsildar and Thanadar can do nothing without the pleaders. Are they not paid to do their work? Can they not understand their cases without pleaders? Every pleader takes Rs. 100 from his client and then after the case has been gone through, some man of influence says some word of recommendation to the Court who decides accordingly and the poor man who ought to have won his case goes weeping home, and this all tends toward prejudice of Government.[49]

Jagindra Singh of the 56 Rifles writes that he meant to stay in England after the war: 'Do not let it worry you at all, but, my friend, I really do not want to leave this place and come back to India, because this country of our king is a very beautiful one and all the people are learned'.[50] In a letter to a friend, Sowar Natha Singh makes this confession or declaration:

> We [the regiment?] mean to live and die in this country...We have no intention of returning to India. It is our very good fortune that our lives should be spent for the government—No, my dear Sirdar, even if the war lasts ten years, I do not mean to die or be depressed. When the victory comes I intend to live in this country. I never even dream of India. My heart is quite estranged from it.[51]

Shortly thereafter, in writing to a friend in Lyallpur, Natha Singh explains:

> The country is exceedingly pleasant. In it India is forgotten. I do not wish the war to end soon. I should like to die in this country and I have no intention of returning to India. If you want anything, write to me. May the Holy Guru save me from India. I am in great comfort as I am always away from the squadron. Tell Basant Kaur from me to look carefully after the children and have them well schooled, fed, and clothed. There is no need to think of the cost, she can spend as much as she likes on them. But I have no hope of seeing them again—nor do I wish to see them. For I have found a good opportunity of sacrificing my life, and I hope to repay my debt with loyalty.[52]

In his loquaciousness, which was paired with a great solemnity, Natha

Singh resembles another letter writer, a Maratha Brahmin, who portrayed Indians in Europe as moralistic hypocrites. He alleged that Sikh soldiers who had smoked secretly in India were now smoking openly in Europe.[53] Perhaps Natha Singh had his own agenda, and needed to justify his choice to never go home to India, if he could help it. But in speculating on his personal motivations for making such a case, we are occupying the slippery slope of psycho-history, and therefore treading at our own risk.

For certain men, the prospect of emigration weighed heavily upon their hearts. Not nearly as blithe as Natha Singh, one explains his longing for a life in Europe, even if other factors rendered it unlikely:

> I should be very pleased indeed to take up my permanent abode in this country. You ask 'why?' Well, here there is neither thievery nor lying. Further, whatever one man wants, even if the value thereof be only two pice, he can buy it from another...Even though he be a rich man he will not decline to sell you the milk. Again, if a woman goes by herself into the jungle no man will molest her. Also the people live well and dress well. Alas, my affection for my parents and my brothers is very great, otherwise it would have been a 'first-class' arrangement. Well, if God grants me a continuance of life, I shall at any rate be able to think of this country after I return to India.[54]

Another says that 'my mind is satisfied within this country. The only thing which attracts the mind to India is the family, love, and nothing else. Otherwise India is not worth living in'.[55]

Overall, the sampling of letters we have seen here reveals that soldiers collectively, if inadvertently, raised a number of issues relevant to their lives at home. It certainly testifies to the effectiveness of British recruitment policies, which managed to tether regimental *esprit de corps* to the most sacred values of the Punjabi peasantry. In the case of the Sikhs, the call to arms and to regimental loyalty also echoed the requirements of Khalsa identity. In 1916, the morale of Punjabi soldiers fighting for the Army of India reflected a sense of reciprocal appreciation and loyalty. Army recruiters certainly tapped into Punjabis' most cherished values and in the shrewd ways of empire-builders, assembled a force whose own interests lay mainly at the hands of their government.

Still, what is especially interesting and troubling about this collection of letters is the magnitude of the sensitive issues of culture which they evoke. These men reflected on topics as diverse as the status of women and marriage customs, economic and physical environments, and manners and sensibilities. They also show a palpable sense of self—a self newly located in a foreign setting.

There were many positive assessments of the European milieu, and a number of the soldiers mused that life might be better in Europe, among the Europeans. Others suggested that some European customs might enhance people's lives back home. Still, we need to ask whether the war produced a hot-house atmosphere of mutual admiration, one which might not stand the test of time. But for better or worse, many Punjabis have settled in Britain. The results of this unintentional experiment in cultural transference are being recorded every moment, as life goes on for the newer as well as the not-so-new immigrants who regard Punjab as their most essential, their most sacred, or perhaps, as just a dearly remembered, or imagined, home.

Notes

1. At the outbreak of the war in 1914, the 160,000 fighting troops of the Indian Army (one-third of whom were British) constituted one-half of Britain's worldwide military strength. During the last half of the nineteenth century, the Indian Army's main function was to support imperial troops in such venues as East Africa, Egypt, the Sudan, Persia, Afghanistan, Burma and China. By the early 1900s, the Home Office had acknowledged that the nature of the warfare for which its men had been trained, and the limited expenditures made for this purpose, rendered the Indian Army unable to counter a major power. This worry applied specifically to Russia, from whom the British feared a possible land invasion by way of Afghanistan. In 1914, however, this deficiency in preparation was deemed wildly irrelevant. B.R. Tomlinson, *The Political Economy of the Raj, 1914-1947: The Economics of Decolonization in India* (London: Macmillan Press, 1979), p. 106.

2. Bureaucratic language has often been crafted to justify questionable practices. An official post-war analysis of the use of Indian troops outside the Indian subcontinent explains:

   > While India should provide for her own defence against local aggression and, *if necessary, against an attack on the British Empire by a great Power until reinforcements come from home*, she is not called upon to maintain troops for the specific purpose of placing them at the disposal of the Home government for wars outside the Indian sphere, *although—as has happened in the past—she may send such troops if they are otherwise unavailable* [emphases mine].

   'Memorandum on India's Contribution to the War in Men, Material, and Money, August 1914 to November 1918', January 1920, in Government of India, Department of Revenue and Agriculture Proceedings, General, 16 (127)B of February 1920, quoted in Tomlinson, *The Political Economy of the Raj*, 106. For a detailed account of the Army's deficiencies and the usefulness of the Punjab as its most thickly seeded recruiting ground see *The Army in India and Its Evolution Including an Account of the Establishment of the Royal Air Force in India* (Superintendent: Government Printing, Lahore, 1924), p. 34.

3. In *Political and Social Movements in Ancient Punjab* (Motilal Banarsidass, New Delhi, 1964), Buddha Prakash describes a Punjab coinciding with neither the contemporary

Punjab nor the Punjab of the British period. As explained by J.S. Grewal, this Punjab also included parts of Afghanistan and Sindh, and therefore captured a reality which was more socio-cultural than geographical or political. Grewal notes the two cultural processes which most influenced the Punjab as we might instinctively if indistinctly locate it today. The first was the interaction between the Aryans and the Indus people as reflected in vedic literature. The second saw newer tribes entering the area between 1000 and 500 B.C. and prodding many inhabitants to move further east. For the inheritors of this displaced vedic culture, these newer denizens were regarded as wholly outside their own ethos. Punjabi women drank alcohol and sang and danced with their men under its influence; Punjabis ate onion and garlic as well as chicken, sheep, donkey, pig, camel, and cow, and they traded in wool and horses. Grewal adds that the coming of Greeks, Parthians, Shakas and Kushanas accelerated the tempo of social change, and that the Kushana empire especially saw the introduction of Iranian, Chinese and Roman cultures. Responding to these influences, the people of the region, 'imbibing, assimilating, and synthesizing the various cultural trends of Asia...developed an elastic and resilient frame of mind'. J.S. Grewal, 'Punjabi Identity: A Historical Perspective', a paper delivered in Coventry, England, at the conference, 'Punjabi Identity: Continuity and Change' on 26 June 1994.

4. Although they embraced and were considered to possess a certain ethnic distinctiveness, such groups were often 'Punjabi' in terms of psychological as well as geographical location. Drawing stark distinctions among resident groups in terms of essential 'Punjabiness' has traditionally presented more problems than it solves.

5. At the start of the war, the Punjab supplied almost half of the Indian Army's soldiery. In 1914, cavalry squadrons that were wholly Punjabi constituted 62 per cent of total cavalry. For infantry companies, this figure was 39 per cent. These proportions would increase over the next two years. M.S. Leigh, *The Punjab and the War* (Superintendent: Government Printing, Punjab, 1922), p. 7.

6. DeWitt C. Ellinwood, 'The Indian Soldier, the Indian Army, and Change', in DeWitt C. Ellinwood and S.D. Pradhan (eds), *India and World War I*, (New Delhi: Manohar, 1978), pp. 84, 201–2. B.R. Tomlinson also notes that several days before the declaration of war in 1914 the Indian Army Council determined that India could afford to send two infantry divisions and one cavalry brigade for imperial service overseas. Later that autumn these troops went to France as an Expeditionary Force.

7. I wish to thank Professor Ellinwood for his genial assistance. He told me about these documents several years ago and encouraged me to study them.

8. These letters—translated by British army officers into English from their original languages—were 'censored', or rather inspected and occasionally censored, by officers at the English Channel port of Boulogne in France. The letters were compiled in four separate files located in the IOL (L/Mil/5/825-828, all entitled 'Censor of Indian Mails'). Preceding the text of each letter, the censors provided what they considered to be the most salient details about the writers, including their locations, their units, and often, what the officers took to be their primary or most motivating identity. (I have recorded these identity-summaries just as they appear in the records.) This study examines the second of these four files. The period covered, from late-1915 through late-1916, provides among the most sociologically and culturally interesting data to be found in this class of documents. This file, L/Mil/5/826, has nine bound volumes or 'parts', each containing varying numbers of what I call 'sections'. These sections comprise batches of letters compiled every several weeks by the Boulogne censors and

forwarded to the Military Department with brief commentary. In the interest of symmetry, and owing to the sheer volume of the material, I examined Parts One, Five, and Nine.

9. 'Identity' embraces questions of 'ethnic' and 'national' belonging. It also engages the problems of loyalty to the 'nation-state' or to a 'nationality' as well as to 'community' or 'family'. Of course, these terms are only partly helpful, as they bleed into each other and belie complex and sometimes paradoxical truths of how and where an individual places himself or herself in the world. In *Sikh Identity and National Integration* (New Delhi: Intellectual Publishing House, 1992), p. 4-5, author Rajinder Kaur cites D. Taylor, 'Political Identity in South Asia', in D. Taylor and M. Yapp, (eds), *Political Identity in South Asia* (London: Curzon Press, 1979), p. 255. Borrowing Taylor's definitions, Kaur posits that

'Identity is, first of all, a quality of the individual: its development is part of the general process of personal maturity and it must be viewed as such from the Psychological as also from the sociological perspective. In the psychological sense, it is an emotional group feeling which gets developed over periods of time. In its sociological sense, identity refers to 'the process by which we place ourselves in the network of social relationship'.

In Modernity and Self-Identity (Oxford: Polity Press, 1991), p. 224. Anthony Giddens calls self-identity 'the self as reflexively understood by the individual in terms of his or her biography'. I believe these distinctions neatly point out the personal and idiosyncratic nature of identity, as well as its corporate aspects. Because of the lack of a grand design or of agency in its construction, identity is more like a collage than a jigsaw puzzle. When viewed by outsiders, personalities within a specific group, such as the sample in this study, rarely produce a harmonious and cooperative whole. This lends delicacy to our undertaking and demands a speculative spirit as well as respect for those whose lives and thoughts we are excavating. Within the bounds of this study, I am trying to improve the search for identity's parameters while recognising that they are neither completely knowable or unknowable.

10. In preparing this study, I noted verbatim all of the letters containing descriptions of the soldiers' lives in Europe and the reactions they produced, either in the men themselves, or less often and less directly (because the soldier-subjects were interpreting them), in the Europeans they encountered. The office-censors either passed or withheld the letters, or else deleted certain passages before releasing them for mailing. (The deleted passages were accorded special attention in the compilations. Such evidence of potential disaffection among troops, or of subversively unflattering accounts of European society, constituted the *raison d'etre* of the inspection and censoring process. Although most of the letters earned no special comment from the censors, some of them prompted rejoinders which even more widely illuminate or 'contextualise' their overall social and cultural significance.

11. L/Mil/5/826, 12. Part One, Section One, Letter No. 13. From a Sepoy of the 47th Sikhs, Brighton Indian Hospital, Brighton, England, 14 December 1915, in Gurmukhi. Letter passed.

12. L/Mil/5/826, 27. Part One, Section One, No. 35. From Rissaldar Hoshiar Singh, Sikh, 16th Cavalry, Indian Expeditionary Force D, to Jamadar Harbant Singh, 9th Hodson's Horse, France, 10 November 1915, in Urdu. Letter passed.

13. L/Mil/5/826, 28. Part One, Section One, No. 36. From Daffedar Durga Prasad, 16th

Cavalry, Mesopotamia, to Jamadar Gobind Singh, 20th Deccan Horse, France, in Urdu. Letter passed.

14. L/Mil/5/826, 34. Part One, Section Two, No. 5. From a Pathan, 36th Jacob's Horse, to his brother. Letter passed.
15. L/Mil/5/826, 1372. Part Nine, Section One, No. 32. From Daffedar Mohammed Shaffi, 2nd Lancers, France, to Ram Pershad, Head Clerk, 8th Cavalry, Secunderabad, Deccan, 1 November 1916, in Urdu. Letter passed.
16. L/Mil/5/826, 1377. Part Nine, Section Two, No. 5. From Ghulam Mohammed Khan, 9th Hodson's Horse, France, to Hafiz Abdurrahman, Meerut, Punjab, 31 October 1916, in Urdu. Letter passed.
17. L/Mil/5/826, 1428. Part Nine, Section Three, No. 44. From Gurbachan Singh, Amritsar, Punjab, to Daffedar Gurdayal Singh, 6th Cavalry, France, 22 October 1916, in Urdu. Letter passed.
18. L/Mil/5/826, 1482. Part Nine, Section Six, No. 8. From Private Waryam Singh, C. Company, 9th Platoon, 38th Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force, France, to Wazir Singh, Kapurthala, Punjab, 23 November 1916, in Gurmukhi. Letter passed.
19. L/Mil/5/826, 1485. Part Nine, Section Six, No. 11. From Pokhar Das, Adjutant-General's Office, Rouen, France, to Ram Rang, Field Controller's Office, Poona, 5 December 1916, in Urdu.
20. L/Mil/5/826, 692. Part Five, Section One, No. 18. From Veterinary Assistant Kesu Shah, Punjabi Muslim, Rouen, France, to Rissaldar Abdul Rahim Khan, 15th Lancers, Mesopotamia, 22 May 1916, in Urdu. Letter passed.
21. L/Mil/5/826, 822. Part Five, Section Five, No. 18. From Daffedar Abdul Hafiz Khan and Lance-Daffedar Fateh Sher Khan, Jallandar, to Lance-Daffedar Pahlwan Khan, 36th Jacob's Horse, France, 30 May 1916, in Urdu. Letter passed.
22. L/Mil/5/826, 709. Part Five, Section Two [no record number]. From Daffedar Ulla, Derajat Muslim, 36th Jacob's Horse, France, to his father Mohammed Atta Ulla Khan, Sub-Judge, Karnal, Punjab, 26 May 1916, in Urdu.
23. L/Mil/5/826, 740. Part Five, Section 3, No. 12. From Lance-Daffedar Tek Chand, 6th Cavalry, France, to Jhanda Singh, Rohtak, Punjab, 6 June 1916, in Urdu.
24. L/Mil/5/826, 1365. Part Nine, Section One, No. 24. From Rissaldar Mirza Ahmed Yar Khan, 10th Lancers, France, to Kot-Daffedar Ghulam Mohammed Khan, Sialkot Depot, 18th Lancers, 5 November 1916, in Urdu.
25. L/Mil/5/826, 1456. Part Nine, Section Five, No. 5. From Hazur Singh, 6th Cavalry, France, to his brother in Ludhiana, Punjab, 30 November 1916.
26. Not all mail was inspected, but any letter could conceivably be singled out. In his note to Army Headquarters, a Chief Censor explained the selection and recording method used for the batch of extracts forwarded on 6 June 1916: 'Over 800 letters from India and the East (carefully selected from important cantonments all over India and frontier districts) were read with the result that only 10 extracts were made, none of which could be said to possess much of special interest'. L/Mil/5/826, 707. Prefatory notes from the India Mail Censor's Office, Boulogne, 6 June 1916. The criteria for selection seem to be fairly flexible, impressionistic and subject to either whim or intuition.
27. L/Mil/5/826, 40. Part One, Section Two, No. 17. From unnamed soldier, FPO 15 (29th Lancers or 36th Jacob's Horse), France, to his wife at home, 22 December 1915, in Gurmukhi. Letter passed.

28. L/Mil/5/826, 831. Part Nine, Section Six, No. 3. From Niaz Hussein, Mhow Cavalry Brigade, France, to his wife Altaf Hussein, Hansi, Punjab, 27 June 1916, in Urdu. Letter passed.
29. L/Mil/5/826, 1362. Part Nine, Section One, No. 19. From Kartan Singh, 6th Cavalry, France, to Sirdar Ram Rekha Singh, Jallandar, 6 November 1916, in Urdu. Letter passed, but with the advice about shipping opium deleted.
30. L/Mil/5/826, 1460. Part Nine, Section Five, No. 9. Chief Censor's note, accompanying batch of 20 December 1916.
31. L/Mil/5/826, 20. Part One, Section One, No. 26. From a French woman to an Indian clerk, Supply and Transport Corps, Amballa Cavalry Brigade, 15 December 1915, in French. Letter withheld.
32. L/Mil/5/826, 64. Part One, Section Three, No. 6. From Daffedar Fath Mohammed Khan, Punjabi Muslim, 6th Cavalry or 19th Lancers, France, to Ram Saran Das, Rohtak District, Punjab, 3 January 1916, in Urdu. Indecent photo destroyed, letter passed.
33. L/Mil/5/826, 33. Part One, Section Two, No. 4. From Nisar Mohammed Khan, Pathan, French Post Office (hereafter FPO) 39, to his brother in Peshawar, 27 December 1915, in Urdu. Letter destroyed.
34. L/Mil/5/826, 153. Part One, Section Four, No. 65. From Darbard Singh, Sikh, Chachrauli, Punjab, to Har Narinder Singh, 3rd Skinner's Horse, France, 19 December 1915, in Urdu. Letter passed.
35. L/Mil/5/826, 116. Part One, Section Four, No. 10. From Lance-Daffedar Sher Khan, Punjabi Muslim, 6th Cavalry, Sialkot Division, France, to Lance-Naik Mahazullah Khan, Artillery, Malakand, Punjab, 9 January 1916, in Urdu, and Boulogne censor's accompanying note. Letter withheld.
36. L/Mil/5/826, 115. Part One, Section Four, No. 9. From Sher Bahadur Khan, Punjabi Muslim, Secunderabad Cavalry Brigade, France, to Raja Gul Nawaz Khan, Jhelum, Punjab, 9 January 1916, in Urdu. Letter passed.
37. L/Mil/5/826, 1362. Part Nine, Section One, No. 20. From Gandha Singh, Field Post Office No. 18, to Inder Singh, Ludhiana, 6 November 1916, in Urdu. Letter passed.
38. L/Mil/5/826, 1458. Part Nine, Section Five, No. 7. From Daffedar Ranji Lal, 20th Deccan Horse, France, to his grandfather in Rohtak, Punjab, 26 November 1916, in Urdu. Letter passed.
39. L/Mil/5/826, 720. Part Five, Section Two, No. 20. From Lance-Daffedar Teja Singh, 9th Hodson's Horse, France, to Dandaut Singh, Ludhiana District, Punjab, 29 May 1916, in Urdu. Letter passed.
40. L/Mil/5/826, 12. Part One, Section One, No. 14. From Sowar Teja Singh, FPO 7, France, to Rawal Singh, Middle School, Bhagtanwala, Sargodha, Punjab, 20 December 1915, in Urdu. Passage deleted.
41. L/Mil/5/826, 1481. Part Nine, Section 6, No. 6. From Hajura Singh, 38th Central Indian Horse, France, to Sant Singh, Lahore District, Punjab, 5 December 1916, in Urdu.
42. L/Mil/5/826, 35. Part One, Section Two, No. 7. From Rissaldar Amjam-ud-din-Khan, Pathan, 38th Central India Horse, France, to Mohammed Suraj-ud-din-Khan, Agar-Malwa, Punjab, 20 December 1915, in Urdu. Letter passed.
43. L/Mil/5/826, 114. Part One, Section Four, No. 8. From Ibrahim Saddler, Punjabi Muslim, 15th Cavalry, Brighton, to Babu Rukan-ud-Din, Sialkot City, Punjab, 10 January 1916, in Urdu. Letter Passed.

44. L/Mil/5/826, 689. Part Five, Section One, No 14. From Wazir Khan, Punjabi Muslim, Kot-Daffedar, Meerut Cavalry Brigade, France, to his mother in Shahpur District, Punjab, 23 May 1916, in Urdu.
45. L/Mil/5/826, 117. Part One, Section Four, No. 11. From Pir Bakhsh, Punjabi Muslim, Indian Convalescent Home, Brighton, to Jamadar Farman Ali, 12th Baluchis, Quetta, 6 January 1916, in Urdu. Letter passed.
46. L/Mil/5/826, 130. Part One, Section Four, No. 32. From Lance-Naik Lehna Singh, Dogra, Kitchener Indian Hospital, Brighton, to Lala Kirpa Ram, Bilaspur State, Punjab, 4 January 1916, in Hindi. Letter passed.
47. L/Mil/5/826, 78. Part One, Section Four, No. 27. From Hoshiar Singh, 6th Cavalry, France, to Rissaldar Sarup Singh, Rohtak District, in Urdu. Letter passed.
48. L/Mil/5/826, 136. Part One, Section Four, No. 40. From Daffedar Niaz Mohammed, Sialkot Cavalry Brigade, France, to Pensioned Daffedar Rustam Khan Bijan, United Provinces, 8 January 1916, in Urdu.
49. L/Mil/5/826, 1444. Part Nine, Section Three [no record number]. Pensioned Kot-Daffedar Ali Bakhsh, Jhelum, Punjab, to Lance-Daffedar Rahimdad Khan, 39th IH, 30 October 1916, in Urdu. Letter passed.
50. L/Mil/5/826, 127. Part One, Section Four, No. 28. From Jagindra Singh, Sikh, 56th Rifles, Kitchener Indian Hospital, Brighton [to unidentified party], 11 January 1916.
51. L/Mil/5/826, 128. Part One, Section Four, No. 30. From Sowar Natha Singh, Sikh, FPO 19, France, to a friend, 17 December 1915, in Urdu. Letter passed.
52. L/Mil/5/826, 72. Part One, Section Three, No. 22. From Sowar Natha Singh, Sikh, FPO 19, France, to Sapuran Singh, Lyallpur, Punjab, 4 January 1916, in Urdu. Letter passed.
53. L/Mil/5/826, 45-46. Part One, Section Two, No. 24. From Jagu Godbole, Maratha Brahmin, SAS Brighton, to Sitaram Hari Godbole, Post Dapoli, Ratnagiri, 14 December 1915, in Marathi. Letter passed.
54. L/Mil/5/826, 719. Part Five, Section Two, No. 19. From Lance-Daffedar Teja Singh, 9th Hodson's Horse, France, to Dr. Kesar Singh, Lyallpur District, Punjab, 29 May 1916, in Urdu.
55. L/Mil/5/826, 788. Part Five, Section Four, No. 23. From H. Singh, Meerut Cavalry Brigade, to S. Jawan Singh, Amritsar, Punjab, 12 June 1916, in English.

John and Henry Lawrence and the Origins of Paternalist Rule in the Punjab, 1846–1858

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It has become commonplace to refer to the colonial Punjab administration as 'paternalist'. This is seen as being epitomised by the *ma-bap* relationship between officials and the rural population and in the policy of bolstering the interests of the landholders. Historians have frequently linked this paternalist rule with the need to secure stability in the 'sword-arm' of India. But the attitudes behind this approach to governance can be traced back to the early years of the Lawrence era. This 'pre-history' of paternalism forms the focus of this paper. While the emphasis here is on the British constituents of paternalism, it is acknowledged that administrative policy as elsewhere in India emerged out of the interaction between society and the colonial state. Moreover, the British desire to secure rural stability through alliances with the local elites, merely continued the traditions of the earlier Mughal and Sikh rulers.

Paternalism may be defined as a system of government which deals with its subjects in an authoritarian but benevolent manner. It prescribes what is best for a society and regulates its conduct to achieve the direction and goals imposed by the rulers. This tradition can be dated in the British Punjab to the period of Henry Lawrence's Residency (1846–49). Denzil Ibbetson, a later lieutenant-governor, described the Lawrence era as a time of 'righteous personal government'.[1]

Contemporary historians—among them Barrier, Van den Dungen, and Gilmartin[2]—divide the nineteenth century British rule in the Punjab in two periods. The first, from 1849 to the early 1860s, was described by Stokes as a blend of utilitarianism and paternalism that provided each unit of territory with a strong, simple rule devoted to the welfare of a society of sturdy peasant proprietors.[3] The second period, from the late 1860s to 1900, saw a movement away from the combined executive and judicial power of righteous personal government, and towards separate and

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enlarged executive and judicial branches. This second period also saw the enactment of an increasing number of statutes and a movement towards more conformity with the whole of the British India. However, the main thrust in the Punjab continued to be the preservation of the peasant proprietor and the village community, and the later period retains a strong paternalist underpinning. The establishment of the canal colonies and the Land Alienation Act of 1900 may both be seen as triumphs of paternalism.[4] Both of these policies had their roots in the Lawrentian period.

Paternalism, then, has been an early and continuing theme in the history of British rule in the Punjab and is fundamental to any attempt to define the aggregate set of characteristics that constitute the 'Punjab school' of administration. This paper focuses on the nature and development of paternalism in the first period of British rule in the Punjab. The thesis put forth is simply that the paternalism of the Punjab school did not emerge fully formed in 1846, or even in 1849. Rather, the competing constituents of paternalist rule in this early period—individualist, military and administrative—produced different varieties of paternalism during the three stages of rule by the Lawrences. It was not until the latter stages of John Lawrence's rule as Chief Commissioner that the paternalist model that we associate with the Punjab school emerged as the dominant mode for the administration of the province.

Consequently, a discrimination is made among 'paternalisms'—a phrase borrowed from the title of Lovejoy's essay entitled *on the Discriminations of Romanticisms*.[5] I would suggest three discriminations, or strands, as already cited above: the individualist, the militarist and the administrative. The individualist strand is centred on the district or provincial officer, and refers to the nature of his personality, the extent to which he chooses to exercise freedom of action within his area of authority, and the nature of the control he chooses or is allowed to wield over both his subordinates and the general population. The militarist strand refers to the influence on civil administration of military personalities, policies and requirements in a province in which there was, in the early days, a unique fusion of military and civil authority.[6] Finally, the administrative strand refers to the system of centralised control, the institutions, policies and legislation designed and implemented by a paternalist administrative regime.

These three strands co-exist and intermingle throughout the early colonial history of the Punjab, and beyond. Within any given period of the Lawrence years, each strand re-defines itself to some degree, and finds itself in a different relationship with the other strands. Their relative importance within a given period is thus a matter of emphasis and balance—a matter of which is dominant, which is recessive. None of the

strands disappears. The concept of the Punjab district officer as all-rounder is based on a balance of these three strands, and at the provincial level, the particular combination of these elements constitutes the paternalism of the moment, or, as I would call it, the prevailing paternalism. My concern in this paper is with the prevailing paternalisms that succeeded each other during the earliest period of the British rule.

It should be emphasised that the concept of prevailing paternalisms based on the three strands mentioned above is not intended primarily as a general theory of paternalism, but rather as an attempt to provide a vocabulary for analyzing aspects of paternalism in a particular place at a particular time, i.e., the Punjab under the Lawrences. My categories are based on a biographical approach to the rulers of the early Punjab, and on the general proposition that it is a good idea never to have more than three categories of anything. What follows in the main body of this paper is a brief account of the Lawrences in the Punjab, framed within this equally brief discussion of paternalism. The reign of the Lawrences comprises three periods: the predominantly individualist and militarist period of Henry Lawrence's Residency (1846–49); a transitional period of tension between competing individualist, militarist and administrative strands during the period of the Punjab Board (1849–53); and the triumph of the predominantly administrative school of John Lawrence during his tenure as Chief Commissioner (1853–58).

I

At the core of Henry Lawrence's personality lay the soul of a romantic adventurer.[7] He first came to India as a serving artillery officer, was invalided home with Arakan fever during the first Burmese War, then returned to India to become a surveyor in the North West Provinces. He found a position at Ferozepore when the First Afghan War broke out, performed with distinction as a political agent at Peshawar, talked his way onto the second expedition to Kabul, saw action in the Khyber Pass, and finally, in poor health again, served as Resident in Nepal before returning to the Punjab.

By 1844, having served several years in the Punjab, and currently the Resident in Nepal, Henry, in addition to his political career, was also pursuing a collaborative career with his wife Honoria as a writer. One of the works written at this time, 'Romance and Reality in Indian Life', written by Henry and his wife for the *Calcutta Review* in 1844, reveals an important source for his particular brand of paternalism.[8]

'Romance and Reality' begins with a list of books, not to be reviewed

but 'as the most convenient way of at once setting before our readers the authorities from whom we are about, chiefly, to draw our illustrations'.[9] A combination of travel literature, memoirs and history, the 12 works cited include Sir John Malcolm's *A Memoir of Central India* and *The History of Persia*, as well as Mounstuart Elphhinstone's *Account of the Kingdom of Caubul*.[10] The article demonstrates the strong influence of Malcolm on Lawrence's concept of the proper governance of the Punjab, and on his own conduct as Political Agent and Resident.

The form and content of the article are framed in the tension—and ultimately, the balance—between the concepts of romance and realism, as they are to be discovered in the British experience in India. The terms of the argument probably owe much to Sir Walter Scott, especially in his treatment of this theme in *Waverley*, the first of the series of novels by which Scott influenced profoundly the course of the English novel, and acquired unprecedented popularity among his middle-class readers, both at home and abroad.[11]

The Lawrences argue that the central fault of the British with regard to romance and reality is that they come to India with excessively romantic expectations, and, confronted with what can be the dreary reality of service in the country, abandon their eye for the romantic and picturesque. Henry and Honoria conclude that both perspectives are needed.

> Where the two faculties are duly blended, Reality purses a straight though rough path to a desirable and practicable result; while Romance beguiles the road by pointing out its beauties, by bestowing a deep and practical conviction that even in this dark and material existence, there may be found a joy with which a stranger intermeddleth not—a light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.[12]

In a key passage, Henry and Honoria affirm that

> we set little store by the dry utilitarians who can see only the dark features of the chronicles they unravel; whose hearts kindle not at tales of gallantry and devotion, however clouded by errors of faith; who have not a tear of sympathy for the brave man, dying in defence of his hearth, or the maiden, preferring death to dishonour; even though the scene of such heroism be in India; the actors in such tragedies heathens.[13]

Henry and Honoria argue that 'the quality variously designated romance or enthusiasm, poetry or ideality',[14] must co-exist with reality, and note Munro, Malcolm and Todd as 'excellent examples of our position, that it is the due admixture of romance and reality that best carries a man through life'.[15]

After a long orientalist discourse on female heroines who embody aspects romance and realism, the Lawrences arrive at a section on female rulers, prominent among whom is Alia Baee, whose life and governance is described by Malcolm in *A Memoir of Central India.* Quoting Malcolm, and adding his own italics, Henry notes that

> *Her first principle of government appears to have been moderate assessment,* and an almost sacred respect for the native rights of village officers and proprietors of lands. *She heard every complaint in person...She was always accessible...*The undisturbed internal tranquility of the country was even more remarkable than its exemption from foreign attack. This was equally produced by her manner of treating the peaceable, as well as the more turbulent and predatory classes; she was indulgent to the former, and although firm and severe, just and considerate towards the latter.[16]

In short, Malcolm wrote, 'she has become, by general suffrage, the model of good government in Malwa',[17] and 'a being exercising in the most active and able manner, despotic power, not merely with sincere humility, but under the severest moral restraint that a strict conscience could impose on human action'.[18] Moderate assessment, availability, sympathy and despotic power wielded with conscience and restraint became cornerstones of Lawrence's own conduct as Political Agent and Resident in the Punjab.

Henry believed that Malcolm 'saw and understood more of Asia and its nations than only one of the present day can hope to see or understand',[19] and believed that Malcolm's instructions to his assistants were 'a manual that should be in the hands of every Indian official, whether civil or military'.[20] Henry further noted that

> Wherever an arduous diplomatic duty was to be performed, thither was Malcolm summoned. He carried with him everywhere the freshness of feeling, the enthusiasm of character that enabled him to enter heartily into the feelings and peculiarities of the many interesting races with which he was brought into contact...in his heart he aimed at their welfare.[21]

At the least, Henry saw Malcolm as the ideal Political Agent, and it seems likely that Lawrence nourished a self-image of himself as another Malcolm.

Henry's own romantic nature was tempered by, and often at war with, the realities of duty, strong religious conviction, and a commitment to the civilising mission of his utilitarian contemporaries. He was a complicated,

egotistical, talented, generous and paradoxical individualist. However, his most satisfying moments appear to have been those of action and movement. 'He was', as Sir Richard Temple once remarked, 'inflamed with ardour to encounter grave emergencies'.[22]

In January of 1846, as the First Sikh War was reaching its conclusion, Henry was called from Nepal to become Agent for Affairs of the Punjab and the Northwest Frontier. He was at the battle of Sobraon at Lord Hardinge's side, and at the conclusion of hostilities, found the romance of his novel turned into reality by his appointment as Resident in Lahore, where a Council of Regency was established for the young Maharajah Dulip Singh.

In December of 1846, the Durbar, anxious for the moment to retain the presence of the British Army, acquiesced in the Treaty of Bhairowal, which gave Henry unique powers as Resident. In Article 5, the 54 members of the Durbar agreed that none of the 8 members of the Regency Council could be replaced without the consent of the Resident, who, in Article 6, 'shall have full authority to direct and control the duties of every department'.[23] As his most recent biographer has put it, Henry became, as British Resident at Lahore, 'the uncrowned King of the Punjab'.[24] Thus, although no direct British administrative system was imposed on the Punjab, the residency was yet more than a residency, becoming a seedtime for much that was to follow after annexation.

However, it was a kingship that could flourish only under the approbation of the Governor-General, Viscount Hardinge, the friend and admirer of Henry, whose own notions of the kind of rule necessary at this juncture for the Punjab were congruent with those of his choice as Resident. At the core of the prevailing paternalism of this first period of British involvement in the Punjab lay Hardinge's notion that 'our position is not that of active agents, but of friendly advisers, with the power, where necessary, of enforcing our advice...and of directly acting ourselves; but this must be the last resource'.[25] Although he had full authority in all matters, the Resident was required to 'pay attention to the feelings of the people; to preserve the national institutions and customs; and to maintain the just rights of all classes'.[26] It was, as Hardinge wrote to Henry, 'politic that the Resident should carry the Native Council with him'.[27] Hardinge emphasized the temperance with which Henry's power should be administrated, and congratulated him for his moderation and Judgment'.[28]

At the same time, noting that Henry had power in military affairs as unlimited as in the civil arena, Hardinge conceded that certain districts of the Punjab were of such political and military importance that 'they may be required to be managed by the more direct, and active, agency of British

officers',[29] and singled out Peshawar and Hazara, where it was considered essential to maintain large Sikh garrisons. Here, Hardinge wrote, the officers in charge, who already personally administered the revenue, police and judicial administration, did not need to employ 'the regular, and expensive system of administration in our own provinces'.[30] Rather, they were to use 'native Sikh agency'.

Hardinge cited two precedents for this irregular system of personal governance, the first that of Sir Richard Jenkins during the minority of the Rajah of Nagpore, and the second that of Sir Charles Metcalfe during his term as Resident at Hyderabad. Metcalfe, by employing British officers to make a revenue settlement, had, in Hardinge's view, given immediate relief to the villages, and thereby restored tranquility in a potentially volatile situation. But such direct intervention was intended to be the exception rather than the rule. 'It is preferable', Hardinge concluded, 'that the Resident should endeavour, as you are doing now, to maintain, as far as possible, native institutions, and forms of administration, with such improvements as they may admit of, so as to facilitate the restoration of the territory to the Maharajah, when that period shall have arrived'.[31]

Thus was it Henry's remit, within the context of Hardinge's directions, to balance intervention with restraint, to promote such administrative reforms as were practical through indirect methods wherever possible, and above all to maintain and nurture the precarious peace that now reigned in the Punjab. It was his best chance yet to make use of his considerable political skills and knowledge of the Punjab; to be, it would seem, another Malcolm.

Mindful always that 'the animus of unrest and insurrection slumbers, but is not yet dead in the Punjab',[32] Henry set out to carry the *durbar* with him. 'On the whole', he wrote in August of 1847, 'the Durbar, and the chiefs, give me as much support as I can reasonably expect. There has been a quiet struggle for mastery, but as, although I am polite to all, I allow nothing that appears to me wrong to pass unnoticed, the members of the Council are gradually falling into the proper train...and allow that they are only executive officers, to do as they are bid'.[33] Henry had difficulty teasing out 'authentic' information,[34] was 'much troubled' by family contentions between brother chiefs,[35] and spent much time dealing with the political intrigues of Rani Jind Kaur. In general, he seems to have enjoyed this aspect of his residency a great deal.

Henry pursued a policy of compromise with respect to revenue disputes and levies, and chose his moments to push the durbar into action. 'It seems to me', he wrote, 'that if we interfere on every occasion, we shall not only nullify the authority of the Durbar and its executive officers; but, by being

so constantly heard, our voices will cease to carry the influence they do now'.[36] To decide every case, to collect the revenue ourselves would cause chiefs and officials to be unable to administer the country 'when the term of occupancy expires'.[37] All orders should emanate from the durbar, and intervention should supersede restraint only when the durbar ceased to act. 'I am anxious to make no innovation that is not absolutely necessary', Henry wrote.[38]

Innovations he chose to press for were moderate revenue settlements, increased accountability by the durbar for its expenditures, new and simplied customs regulations, the placement of independent magistrates throughout the country, a crackdown on dacoity, infanticide and *sati*, and a program of road-building. In all of these matters, and others, Henry proceeded largely by inaction through the durbar, and was prepared to be tolerant of delay and evasion.

In the early months of his residency, Henry employed his civilian assistants largely on revenue and judicial matters, and dispatched his military officers on relatively short-term missions throughout the Punjab. In a letter of instruction to Lt. John Nicholson, who had then recently returned from Hazara and was deputed to the Sind Sagar Doab, Henry reveals his own priorities and his expectations from his staff. He begins his instruction by requesting Nicholson to 'cultivate the acquaintance' of the two Nazims and their deputies, and indeed of all the 'respectable' Kardars that he meets. 'Much may be done', he continues, 'by cordiality by supporting their just authority, attending to their moderate wishes, and even whims'.[39] Henry's second paragraph outlines overall policy: protection of the people from the Kardars, maintenance of discipline among the troops, safety of the high roads, speedy redress of grievances and non-interference by government agents in the ordinary affairs of the people. 'As long as they pay their revenue, and abstain from violence, the seldomer a Lahore official sets foot in their lands the better'.[40] Finally, and in the longest section of the instruction, Henry discusses the disposition and management of the army, 'your next most important care'.[41]

Before we turn to the period of the Punjab Board, it remains to touch briefly on the activities of John Lawrence during Henry's residency years.[42] John, with a temperament and training largely antithetical to romantic bravura, yet fully in accord with the military requirements of pacification, came in a supporting role to the Punjab as commissioner to the newly-annexed Jullunder Doab at the same time that Henry became Resident. Bitterly disappointed in his youth not to have followed Henry to Addiscombe and a military career, John was persuaded by Henry and his sister Letitia to take up an appointment at Haileybury. He sailed to

India with Henry on his brother's return after the Burmese war, served as district officer in the old Agra Presidency, was Collector and Magistrate of Delhi, and caught the approving eye of both Hardinge and Dalhousie by his management of the Trans-Sutlej States.

John was as strong-willed, ambitious and competitive as his brother, possessed even greater fixity and consistency of purpose, blessed with better health and stamina and was determined to make up for his disappointment over Addiscombe. Of the Trans-Sutlej he wrote, 'I want to put my stamp on it, that in after-times people may look back and recall my Raj with satisfaction'.[43] While Henry was sending his lieutenants into the sunset, John was instituting a simple but ordered civil administration based on the Rules of Procedure he had drawn up. He devised a law based on local customary practice, with recourse to Company Regulations or to himself when instructions were necessary. Owing primarily to Henry's ill-health, he spent 14 months as Acting Resident. Henry himself spent only 10 full-time months on the job.

John's priorities differed from Henry's. He chafed under the need to work through the durbar,[44] was even more concerned than Henry over the reform of revenue and finance administration, finished Henry's work on customs reform, pressed much more strongly for a curtailment of expenditure, and above all made his first priority a summary land revenue settlement. In a letter to his brother George Lawrence, John revealed the extent to which a fair and moderate settlement was from early times the foundation of his administrative policy in the Punjab. 'A country in which the land-tax is lightly and equally fixed, is a country pacified', he wrote to George Lawrence. 'Without it, every other remedy will prove fruitless; and with it, almost any other evil will be endured'.[45] John argued in similar vein to Lord Hardinge, noting that although 'as an officer bred up in the revenue department' he might overvalue the matter, he had seen the British provinces both before and after a good settlement. 'To benefit the people at large, and render the country truly flourishing, you must fix a moderate land-tax for the Government, and secure to the community that they shall enjoy, on paying that quota, the results of their own industry'.[46]

In March 1848, Sir Frederick Currie was appointed to take over the residency from John Lawrence, and in April of that year he set down his thoughts on the state of the Punjab for the Secretary to the Government of India. Currie had kept John in Lahore to allow him to continue his reforms in the province. While he praised John's accomplishment, he also sounded a note of disquiet. The effect of John's improved systems of administration in the revenue, judicial and police systems had been, Currie wrote, 'to transfer the administration of the country from the hands of the Durbar to

our own, to a much greater extent than was contemplated, when the introduction of the new arrangements was at first determined on; and the conduct of all details even the most minute, in all departments, except that of account, devolves, now, on the Resident and his subordinates'.[47] John's measures had completely eroded the policies of Hardinge and the paternalist style of Henry Lawrence. Thus was the stage set for the forthcoming clash of sibling rivalries and conflicting paternalisms on the Punjab Board after annexation, when direct British rule began.

II

A rebellion in Multan that escalated into the Second Sikh War, combined with the arrival of a Governor-General committed to an expansionist policy resulted in the annexation of the Punjab, carried out over the objections of Henry Lawrence.[48] James Ramsay, Lord Dalhousie, convinced of the need for an expanded and unified British Indian state, sought to create in the Punjab a non-Regulation system of administration that he believed would ensure a rapid, energetic and financially sound development, consistent with the progressive ideals to which he subscribed'.[49] He would use the system for later annexations and conquests, most notably in the Central Provinces and Awadh, but the Punjab remained his favourite. He watched over it, as Stokes has remarked, 'as over a favorite child'.[50] John Lawrence, who had already begun to sweep the Punjab with a new administrative broom, seemed the perfect lieutenant to carry out Dalhousie's designs.

Unfortunately for Dalhousie, the Punjab was not quite the political *tabula rasa* he had anticipated. Much to the new Governor-General's annoyance, he discovered immediately that during the period of the residency Henry Lawrence had made himself an institution in the province, and, on his return to the province in December of 1848, intended to continue to exercise a style of paternalist rule that Dalhousie took issue with from the very beginning. 'He is of course strongly biased in favour of everything as it was in the Punjab', Dalhousie wrote with distaste to Sir John Hobhouse (who had pressed for Henry's appointment), and is 'not unnaturally, biased in favour of these people. He is in short "plus *Sikh que les Sikhs*" '.[51] Dalhousie, on the other hand, endorsed the view he ascribed to John Lawrence that 'there is not a chief in the Punjab worth his salt...They neither can nor will do anything'.[52]

Henry, on convalescent leave in England when the war broke out, returned in early December of 1848, reached the province in the closing stages of the conflict, and prepared for Dalhousie's approval a proclama-

tion in which Henry presented himself as having returned to Lahore 'desirous of bringing peace to the Punjab'.[53] Offended by Henry's posture in the document, Dalhousie grumbled that 'this sort of thing would not do at all. I could not permit him', Dalhousie later wrote to Sir George Couper, 'to substitute himself for the Government, whose servant he was, or permit a word to be said or an act to be done, which should raise the notion that the policy of the Government depended in any degree on the Agent who represented it'.[54] Dalhousie also instructed Henry to see that his own subordinates toed the line. Commenting during the war on Herbert Edwardes' unauthorised disbanding of a Pathan regiment, Dalhousie reminded Henry that 'there are more Major Edwardes in the Residency who appear to consider themselves nowadays as Governor-General at least. The sooner you set about disenchanting their minds of this illusion the better for your comfort and their own'.[55]

However, when Dalhousie annexed the Punjab and terminated the residency, he was not able to dispense with the services of this irritating officer who 'naturally supposes himself a king of the Punjab'.[56] According to his own account, the Governor-General blunted his original administrative intentions by creating a Board. 'I was fettered', he explained later, 'by previous events...The place at the head of affairs in the Punjab was left open for him by the suggestion of the Government of India...I was tied to Sir Henry Lawrence'.[57] Dalhousie certainly recognized Henry's political and military abilities, but, as he wrote elsewhere, believed that 'he had neither the experience nor the qualifications which would have justified me in committing all the civil government to him alone'.[58]

The Punjab Board of 1849 was then a compromise. Henry as President took charge of political and military affairs, John as First Member was responsible for financial and fiscal affairs, including the land revenue settlement, and C.G. Mansell (later replaced by Robert Montgomery) oversaw judicial matters and the police. On questions involving important matters of policy in any of the three areas, each of the members had a vote, and the majority opinion was to prevail. The Governor-General, of course, was the ultimate authority in controversies the Board was unable to resolve. He also directed that the administrative staff should be half military, chosen by Henry to serve in the 'quasi-military' positions, and half civil, chosen by John Lawrence and Sir Henry Elliot, Dalhousie's Secretary of State. The Governor-General would have liked more civilians, but there were not sufficient numbers available at the level of quality demanded by both Dalhousie and John Lawrence. Most of those chosen came from Thomasen's North West Provinces, where both Lawrences had served. The total number of administrators reached 74, distributed as

Commissioners or Assistant Commissioners in the divisions, and as Deputy Commissioners, that is, district Officers, at district level. Henry's men already serving were kept in place.

The Board started off well, in Dalhousie's estimation, but he soon came to realize that Henry was 'disgusted, of course, with being a Board, and that Board under strict control'.[59] After being 'absolute' over the durbar, Dalhousie had written earlier, 'it was expected that he would not be satisfied, either with a divided authority or with being subject to direct control'. [60] John was also feeling restive, but found Dalhousie's yoke easier to bear because he and the Governor-General were at one in their view of kind of administration the Punjab required.

Whatever his troubles with Henry on other matters, John's control of the revenue administration of the Board in 1849 gave him the opportunity to institute his most cherished ambitions for the governance of the Punjab: a revenue administration and land settlement that would complete his efforts begun during the residency period, and allow him to leave his stamp on the entire province. In May of 1849, he implemented a pet project, which was to keep land disputes out of the courts as much as possible. The end of the Second Sikh War and annexation had brought about a deluge of land disputes and claims of dispossession. The Board ruled that 'disputes regarding rights on the soil can be satisfactorily disposed of in a new country in a settlement office only'.[61] Consequently, the Board disallowed any such claims to be heard in the civil courts until an order had been passed on such lands by a settlement office. This elevation of the settlement officer over district revenue courts and local officers brought an important new control over the disposition of land in the Punjab, enhanced John's personal control, and was intended to bring a new level of professionalism to the settlement office.

John's attempts to set high standards of professionalism are apparent in the Revenue Circulars. Boundary disputes could only be settled by a Covenanted or Unconvenanted officer 'on the spot and after careful inspection of the contested lands'.[62] Henceforward, all administrative proposals sent up to the Board regarding pensions, *jagirs* and public works were to be accompanied by 'complete information....[63] Nothing should be taken for granted'.[64] Forms were dispatched to facilitate the acquisition of information, and all printed works circulated by the Board were to be studied. For all of these above matters, John listed in detail the kind of information he required under each category.

Revenue circulars for 1849-50 reveal a burgeoning demand for information, which of course also constituted an increasing degree of accountability. In the disposal of rent-free tenures, monthly and quarterly returns

were instituted, showing the number of cases filed, decided and under investigation, and samples of the returns provided.[65] John was insistent that these investigations should be undertaken at once, and provided a suggestion for their implementation.

> A couple of intelligent Mootsudees will prepare several hundred in a month without occupying the attention and time of the European officer for more than half an hour a day; they can carry on the work in his presence while he is engaged on other matters...The actual decision of the cases may be postponed until he has leisure. But the preparation of the cases should, on no account be delayed.[66]

Returns showing receipts and expenditures, quarterly abstracts of local treasury balances, an abstract rent roll, and the salt revenue receipts were all required from district officers, and forms provided for their completion.[67]

As early as 1852, the Board was concerned with the transfer of agricultural lands from cultivators to moneylenders. In their final instructions regarding the right of pre-emption, the Board declared itself

> aware that no restriction on the conveyance of landed property is warranted by economic principles, but with reference to the existing state of tenures throughout the Punjab, to the constitution of society, and to the experience gained in our older provinces, they consider that, for social and political reasons, the village communities should be legally empowered to check the intrusion of strangers.[68]

Consequently, whenever a landowner wished to sell, he had to offer his land to the community at large or to individual co-partners, at a price fixed by the revenue authorities. If the offer was not taken up, the seller could then 'dispose of the property to a stranger in any manner he pleases'.[69]

Sir Charles Aitchison, an early competition-*wallah* posted to the Punjab and eventually appointed Lieutenant Governor, summed up the administrative system of the post-annexation Punjab as follows.[70] First, the districts were of central importance, and deputy commissioners were expected to put a premium on the acquisition of local knowledge. Second, every civil officer, from the highest to the lowest, was vested with judicial, fiscal and magisterial powers, in order to have a concentration of authority and undivided responsibility. Third, the laws and procedures introduced were of the simplest kind, and based as much as possible on native customs and institutions. Aitchison noted that 'responsibility was undivided, and the delegation of power went down in an unbroken chain of subordination, so that the influence of the central authority was directly felt by every officer and to the extremities of the province'.[71] Stokes has amplified this

point, noting that accountability on every level was obtained by a rigid system of recording and reporting, in addition to the personal check exercised through the almost military chain of command.[72] The district officer's judicial functions were controlled through the process of appeal, through the need to record his act, and to make a personal report on each case. Later, he would be obliged to follow the Punjab Code drafted during John Lawrence's chief commissionership.

Although the Punjab Board set in motion a diverse and impressive range of public works projects and new policies and procedures,[73] by late 1852 it was at the point of paralysis at the provincial level, and seemed set to follow the course of history's previous triumvirates. From the beginning, Henry, who was by nature spasmodic, unsystematic and unmethodical in despatching the Board's affairs, rubbed against John, who was impatient, obsessive in his work habits, terrified of administrative arrears and thinking, as he wrote of himself, 'nothing done if aught is left undone'.[74] Their differences in personality, their conflicting emotions of strong brotherly love and fierce sibling rivalry, and the mutual frustration of two strong-willed autocrats trapped together in the unhappy yoke of the Board, reduced them first to bickering, then to virtual estrangement, and, in John's case, to the verge of a nervous breakdown. 'My brother is from habit and ill health unequal to systematic exertion', John charged.[75] 'He would make me a clever diseased malingerer utterly unadapted for business', Henry retorted,[76] and so it went. In the end, the brothers each addressed their complaints to Montgomery, the third member of the triumvirate, who duly passed them on to the intended recipient.

In matters of policy, they disagreed in three areas: the collection of land revenue, the management of finances and the treatment of the feudal classes. John had instituted the collection of revenue in cash rather than in kind, partly because he believed a cash system generated fewer abuses. When prices began to fall, agriculturalists went to Henry to ask him to persuade John to take payment in kind. John agreed to reduce the cash settlement, but he would not alter his system. In finance, John insisted that progress be kept within the financial means of the province, while Henry preferred to press forward regardless of cost. 'He had an inner conviction', Temple wrote, 'that once a very desirable thing had been accomplished successfully, the difficulties on the score of expenses would either vanish or right themselves'.[77] Finally, their most well-known quarrel was over the treatment of the retainers of Ranjit Singh, who had been allotted the land revenue of certain territories in return for military service. John believed that those chiefs who no longer gave service to the new raj should not be supported further, especially when funds were needed to finance

the new British administration. Henry believed that the old grants should stand, even if no service was rendered, in order that the loyalty of these men should be retained.

Beneath these squabbles between the brothers lay a fundamental difference in perceptions of what should constitute righteous personal government in the Punjab. Henry still yearned for his early position as resident and uncrowned king of the Punjab, dispensing largesse to his retainers, who in turn would maintain a strong personal loyalty to him, and thereby to the state. John, backed strongly by the Governor-General, wished to create an administration of direct control and fiscal soundness that would gain the loyalty of the peasant–cultivator, reduce the power of local chieftains, and insure measured, methodical progress and prosperity. In fairness to Henry, it must be emphasized that he shared the broad utilitarian goals of his brother, and contributed to their establishment and direction. He may also have suffered excessively from Dalhousie's dislike insofar as it was based partly on the clash of two large and competitive egos. But it is also true that he was not able to adapt himself to the new regime of work now required at the provincial level. He caused great annoyance to both John and Dalhousie by insisting on touring the country for months at a time, holding court for his retainers rather in the style of Ranjit Singh.[78] He was often absent when important decisions had to be made, and infuriated John by intervening in administrative decisions without having looked at the paperwork. 'With our utterly different views of civil administration', John lamented, 'it is not possible that we can work together pleasantly to ourselves'.[79]

The end of the Board came when both brothers offered their resignations, allowing Dalhousie the long-awaited opportunity to appoint John as Chief Commissioner. To Henry he offered an appointment as political agent in Rajputana, and noted, to Henry's great anger, that he was retaining John because only a trained civil servant could control and mould the system so recently installed in the Punjab. Henry seems to have been surprised that his younger brother was chosen over him, and was certainly hurt and disappointed. His departure from Lahore was certainly worthy of a banished king. His loyal retainers, both English and Punjabi, followed Henry and Honoria almost as far as Amritsar, a procession that constituted the final flourish of the feudalism that engaged his imagination to the end. Stokes has characterized Malcolm, Elphinstone and Metcalfe as the romantic generation in India. Like them, Henry Lawrence saw an older India he loved passing away. He was one of the last great English romantics in India.

land revenue settlement process itself was not working well. 'When the circular above quoted was issued', Circular 2 of 1852 lamented, 'it was supposed that a regular settlement would be introduced generally throughout the Punjab, at a very early period. In this expectation the Board have been disappointed'.[90] In February of 1852, John called for a 'speedy revision of the assessment of villages....We should not wait until villages are ruined, and the cattle and ploughs of the people sold, before enquiry, and fair remissions are made'.[91] Commissioners and District Officers were given authority to make whatever reductions were necessary in over-assessed villages.[92]

Lawrence's misgivings are substantiated in the gazetteers, which report mixed results with both summary and regular settlements in the Punjab, and difficulties in some districts that lasted well beyond John Lawrence's time in office.

Compilers of the gazetteers found that paperwork on the early settlements was inadequate. In Jullundur, the 1884 Gazetteer noted that Sir Richard Temple's 1852 settlement, which formed the basis for the historical survey of the district, was representative of 'the meagre lines of the older settlement reports', and provided only 'very inadequate material for an account of the district'.[93] The same sentiments are expressed in the Sialkot Gazetteer in reference to E.A. Prinsep's report of 1863.[94] In Gurdaspur, Temple and Prinsep wrote no report at all of their portions of the first regular settlement in 1852.[95]

Summary settlements were inadequate in a number of cases. In Amritsar, the summary settlement carried out by Major Lake in 1849-50, and based, as was usual, on previous Sikh records, was 'on the whole unsatisfactory'.[96] Captain Tytler's summary settlement of Lahore in 1849 was 'heavy and burthensome', and caused 'great distress' in some parts of the district.[97] In Multan, two summary settlements broke down.[98] Nor did regular settlements always provide relief and stability. Difficulties in Amritsar continued with a first regular settlement (1852–54) that began a modern approach of assessment circles for estates and differentiation of soil fertility, but which was still too severe in its demand. A second settlement (1855) was also unsatisfactory, owing largely to problems of assessing irrigated lands, and it was not until 1893 that the third regular settlement established a workable method of assessing irrigation.[99] Karnal district suffered under a series of failed settlements which were variously inaccurate, slapdash or coercive in character, and which caused the district in 1859 to be described by the Punjab Financial Commissioner as 'a blot on our administration'.[100]

Individualist paternalism, then, was still an important strain during this

period. Some officers acted on John Lawrence's exhortations, and some did not. In Montgomery, Major Marsden was congratulated on his 'local knowledge obtained by inspecting personally nearly every estate' in 1852.[101] In Amritsar, on the other hand, E.A. Prinsep 'wrote no report on his operations and his inspection notes are generally based on statistical information and rarely on a personal visit to the estate concerned'.[102] In Gurdaspur, Sir J.B. Lyall's inspection notes in the village notebooks 'were full and complete, and, in most cases, continued to represent accurately, for decades together, the condition of the estates'.[103] In Kohat, Lt. Pollick made 'a sort of inquiry' into the revenue affairs of the Teri country, but the arrangements made 'hardly amounted even to a rough summary'.[104] In Karnal, in 1856, Capt Larkins, 'in his anxiety to get [the figures] off before his departure on leave, had them hurriedly prepared, and errors had thus crept in'.[105]

What emerges from these selections is not an indictment of the British settlement system, but rather a cautionary tale of human fallibility. In all the settlements that went wrong, remission of revenue was granted. This casts the frequency of remissions into sharper focus, and suggests that loyalty to the British in the Punjab may have been based more on the willingness of the rulers to make good their mistakes rather than to the smooth-functioning system of land revenue conjured up in nineteenth century memoirs.

The Great Revolt and its immediate aftermath brings us to the end of this survey of early paternalism in the Punjab. In 1857–58, John Lawrence proved himself the greatest of the Punjab all-rounders. He crushed the pockets of revolt in the Punjab ruthlessly, raised troop levies and provided impetus and logistic support for the siege of Delhi. Henry achieved posthumous glory by his death at Lucknow, and along with John ascended into the firmament of post-revolt luminaries. The loyalty of the Punjab during the revolt seemed to be the ultimate vindication of the Lawrences' administration in that province, and their achievements continued to be magnified by memoirs and biographies for the reminder of the century. In 1858, Dalhousie, with some justice, objected to the account of the Lawrence triumphs published in the Times in 1858. 'The article...gives Sir. H. Lawrence credit for much more than he did in the Punjab', he complained, 'and for much that was done by his brother John; and it gives to both credit for what was never originated by either of them, but by the Government over them'.[106]

Whatever the shortcomings of his officers, and whatever his debt to Dalhousie, and indeed to Henry, John left an enduring stamp on the Punjab. Based upon a closely controlled and accountable administrative

(London: Macmillan, 1890); and Sir Charles Aitchison, *Lord Lawrence* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1892). For John's work in Jullundur Doab, see R.R. Sethi, *John Lawrence as Commissioner of the Jullundur Doab, 1846-1849* (Punjab Government Record Office, 1930). For John in Lahore during his brother's residency, see *Lahore Political Diaries, 1847- 1848.*

43. Aitchison, *Lord Lawrence*, 49.
44. John Lawrence (hereafter JL) to GG, 13 Sept 1847, *PP*, 59; JL to GG, 28 Aug 1847, *PP*, 57.
45. HL to George Lawrence, 20 Sept 1847, *PP*, 62.
46. HL to Hardinge, 26 Sept 1847, *PP*, 69.
47. F. Currie to Secretary to Government of India, 6 April 1848, *PP*, 127.
48. Henry wanted to 'erect that great mystical Khalsa corporation of the Sikhs into an aristocratic state, at once leaning on and lending support to our empire on the side of the northwest'. Edwardes and Merivale, *Henry Lawrence*, 470. Cited also in Khushwant Singh, *History of the Sikhs*, 2, 86.
49. For James Ramsay, Lord Dalhousie, see W. Lee Warner, *Life of the Marquis of Dalhousei* (London: Macmillan, 1904); J.G.A. Baird, ed., *Private Letters of the Marquess of Dalhousie* (London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1911); Edwin Arnold, *The Marquis of Dalhousie's Administration of British India* (London: Saunders, Otley & Co, 1862-1865).
50. Stokes, *English Utilitarians*, 248.
51. Dalhousie to Hobhouse, 6 March 1849, in Birkrama Jit Hasrat, ed., *The Punjab Papers, 1836-1849* (Hoshiarpur: V.V. Research Institute, 1970) 220. Referred to hereafter as *PunP.*
52. Dalhousie to Hobhouse, 15 Aug 1848, *PunP*, 181.
53. Lawrence, *Lawrence of Lucknow*, 173.
54. Dalhousie to Sir George Couper, 5 March 1849. Cited in Lawrence, *Lawrence of Lucknow*, 173. See also Dalhousie to Hobhouse, 6 March 1849, *PunP*, 221.
55. Lawrence, *Lawrence of Lucknow*, 175.
56. Ibid., 174.
57. Lord Dalhousie to G. Hobhouse, 30 July 1849. Cited in Warner, *Life of Marquis Dalhousie*, 253.
58. Lord Dalhousie to President of Board of Control, 25 May 1849. Cited in Warner, *Life of Marquis Dalhousie*, 253. See also Dalhousie to Couper, 31 Jan 1853, in Baird, *The Private Letters*, 243.
59. Dalhousie to Couper, 9 June 1849, *PunP*, 240.
60. Dalhousie to Hobhouse, 25 May 1849, *PunP*, 239.
61. Circular Order 122, 30 May 1849, in *Circular Orders issued by the Board of Administration in the Revenue Department, 1849-1853* (Chronicle Press, 1853) 8. Hereafter referred to as *Orders.*
62. Ibid.
63. Cir 263, 25 June 1849, *Orders*, 9.
64. Ibid., 10.
65. Cir 5, 16 Jan 1850, *Orders*, 19-20.

66. Ibid., 25.
67. *Cir* 16, 21 March 1850, *Orders*, 30-33; *Cir* 54, 9 Sept 1850, *Orders*, 78-9; *Cir* 12, 5 April 1851, *Orders*, 102; *Cir* 29, 27 Sept 1851, *Orders*, 144.
68. *Cir* 28, 3 May 1852, 176.
69. Ibid.
70. Aitchison, *Lord Lawrence*, 59-61.
71. Ibid., 61.
72. Stokes, *Utilitarians in India*, 245.
73. See *General Report on the Administration of the Punjab for the years 1849-50 and 1850-51* (London: Government Printing, 1854). For succeeding years, see *Selections from the Records of the Government of India*; Nr. VI, General Report on the Administration of the Punjab Territories, 1851-52 and 1852-53 (Calcutta, 1854); Nr. XVIII, General Report on the Administration of the Punjab Territories from 1854-55 to 1855-56 Inclusive (Calcutta, 1856).
74. John Lawrence to Dalhousie, 20 Sept 1850. *John Lawrence Papers*, demi-Official Correspondence, Nr. Ia (Sept. 1850–Sept. 1853), India Office Library, MSS Eur. F. 90. Cited in Bosworth Smith, *Life of John Lawrence*, 357.
75. Ibid.
76. Lawrence, *Lawrence of Lucknow*, 201.
77. Temple, *Lord Lawrence*, 60.
78. In *Adventures of an Officer*, 31, one of the few things that Bellasis—and presumably Lawrence—admired about Ranjit Singh was his annual circuit of the country.
79. Edwardes and Merivale, *Henry Lawrence*, 1, 187.
80. In November of 1849, Dalhousie assured John that 'no one else should be preferred to him for the single Commissionership which, in the event of Sir Henry's departure, I intended to establish'. Warner, *Marquis of Dalhousie*, 257.
81. Temple, *Lord Lawrence*, 75.
82. Ibid.
83. Ibid., 77.
84. Bosworth Smith, *John Lawrence*, 1, 397.
85. Ibid., 356.
86. Ibid., 402, 405.
87. Ibid., 405.
88. Aitchison, *Lord Lawrence*, 60-61.
89. Ibid., 46-52.
90. Cir 2, 13 Jan 1852, *Orders*, 153-54.
91. Cir 9, 14 Feb 1852, *Orders*, 160.
92. Cir 2, 13 Jan 1852, *Orders*, 153-54; Cir 9, 14 Feb. 1852, 160.
93. *Jullunder District Gazetteer* (Chandigarh, 1980), i.
94. *Sialkot District Gazetteer* (Lahore, 1883-84), i.
95. *Gurdaspur District Gazetteer* (Chandigarh, 1979), 286.
96. *Amritsar District Gazetteer* (Chandigarh, 1976), 340-47.
97. *Lahore District Gazetteer* (Calcutta, 1883-84), 129.

98. *Multan District Gazetteer* (Lahore, 1883-84), 125-28.
99. *Amritsar, District Gazetteer*, 198-202.
100. *Karnal District Gazetteer* (Lahore, 1883-84), 214-15.
101. *Montgomery District Gazetteer* (Lahore, 1883-84), 157.
102. *Amritsar District Gazetteer*, 342.
103. *Gurdaspur District Gazetteer*, 288.
104. *Kohat District Gazetteer* (Calcutta, 1883-84), 163.
105. *Karnal District Gazetteer*, 214.
106. Dalhousie to Couper, 26 March 1858, in Baird, *Private Letters*, 411.
107. For a further discussion of the nature of the Punjab School, see Ian Talbot, 'British Rule in the Punjab, 1849-1947: Characteristics and Consequences', *Punjab Research Group Discussion Paper*, Nr. 37. As Andrew Major has pointed out, the post-revolt policy of retaining the loyalty of landowners gave Henry's policies a new and ironic legitimacy. Major also notes John Lawrence's further involvement in the Punjab as Viceroy. See Andrew J. Major, 'The Punjabi Chieftains and the Transition from Sikh to British Rule', in D.A. Low (ed.) *The Political Inheritance of Pakistan* (London: Macmillan, 1991), 76, 78. In Multan, the 1858 settlement was 'undoubtedly light' for political reasons. The loyalty of the people and the chieftains 'could hardly be rewarded by an enhancement of their assessment'. *Multan District Gazetteer*, 129.
108. C.A. Bayly, *Indian society and the Making of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 134.

Achieving a New Frontier: Rural Political Patterns and their Impact on the Sikh Independence Movement

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The paper explores the relevance of Peter Sahlins' distinction between boundary and frontierland for contemporary rural society in the East Punjab. It argues that political formations related to Punjab's frontierland position influenced the nature of the Khalistan movement and undermined the emerging ideas of Sikh nationality.

In the years before and after 1984, an idealistic movement for the creation of a state emerged among the Sikhs of the Punjab, capturing particularly the imagination of the young of rural background. This movement, centred around Sant Bhindranwale and the All India Sikh Student Federation (AISSF), sought to establish the primacy of Sikh values over the actual practices of the Sikhs, in the process, creating 'new' designs for living and hence emphasising borders. It was based on three interrelated principles at the heart of Sikhism: work, be in harmony with the universe and share the fruits of your labour. These were the foundation for the Declaration Document of Khalistan of 29 April 1986.[1] Typical of this idealism is a statement of Harminder Singh Sandhu, the then General Secretary of the AISSF that the 'entire ethos of *gurbani* [scripture] is a declaration of the intent to change socially and individually'.[2]

The intention to have a society run in accordance with their own values neither implied fundamentalist tendencies nor the spiritualisation of culture. It was merely a means of asserting Sikh tenets over the tradition of individual service to the state and the tradition characteristic of the Jats[3] of personal loyalties to a leader. The latter two traditions had the family and its networks as their core rather than the Sikh principle of the welfare of humanity as a whole.

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Massive state force deployed in the villages of the Punjab and ruthless counter-insurgency tactics defeated the armed struggle for independence during 1992–93. However, contributing to that defeat was the political culture of the rural areas and its forms of association. These could not 'carry' Sikh values, and indeed were of longer standing than those values. In saying so I am not taking any stance that primordial attachments are stronger than those of a comparatively new religion. Sikhism is as valued a component of Jat identity as is their State service and their own customary loyalties and enemities. Moreover, it provided a vision of a more perfect future. As Sandhu's statement implies, it was a future that had to be worked for individually and collectively.

I shall be hypothesising that Punjab's frontierland position indirectly affected political developments in the 1980s through the political formations its people have used to deal with chaos and disorder. These formations were as influential in unfolding political developments as Sikhism's notion of itself as a distinct and separate institutional practice and way of life. Based as they were on interest and reciprocity, they were easily infiltrated. Indeed they were strengthened and promoted by the State for that purpose, in the course of the guerrilla struggle, to stifle the effective organisation of emerging ideas of nationality. State control of violence, an aspect of 'the administrative unification of the state',[4] came about in direct consequence of the boundary created in 1947 between India and Pakistan. As Sahlins has suggested:

> States are defined by their exclusive jurisdiction over a delimited territory. Boundaries evoke a precise...division within a restrictive political context. A [frontier] connotes more zonal qualities and a broader social context.[5]

Formations relating to the pre-1947 historic frontierland position of the Sikhs are thus entangled with political processes in modern times.

Frontierland culture, because of its historically derived social context, was of longer standing. Although Sikhs as a people have been a consistent historical presence in the Punjab, they nevertheless, had never laid claim to a defined territorial space as their home. Their identity was tied to their values and way of life, not to territory. However, with the creation of an international boundary in 1947, between India and Pakistan, the logical culmination of a century of British policies in the Indian subcontinent, Sikhs found themselves located at the juncture of Hindu and Muslim civilisations. This was distinctly different to living in one society of which all were a part. Such a position on the border was to define their identity

come 'crossroads of interchange with other peoples'. They are always 'the object of incessant rivalry among their neighbours'.[8] Their destiny, he says is affected by outside forces. Punjab was certainly a very contested part of the world and the comings and goings of various peoples gave it little stability. Effective government was intermittent. It was in these circumstances that Sikhs secured the Punjab between the fall of Lahore in 1765 and the death of Ranjit Singh in 1839. Sikh society was militarised during this period of ascendancy. Ranjit Singh's administration was run by the army and, as Cunningham noted, the Maharajah endeavoured 'to prevent the Sikhs turning upon themselves and contending with one another [and] regularly engage[d] them in conquest and remote warfare'.[9]

The Sikhs were in fact as much involved in warfare and territorial capture as were the Central Asians who had over ran them repeatedly.[10] They were semi-nomadic out of necessity, cultivating their lands only during periods of peace. During these times of invasion, productive forces would be destroyed and whole villages as well as fighters would flee to the refuge of the mountains and the jungle. Life alternated precariously between that of warrior and cultivator. This appears to be borne out by a report by Skinner quoted in Keene who says:

> So reduced was the actual number of human beings and so utterly cowed their spirits that the few villages that did continue to exist, at great intervals had scarcely any communication with each other.[11]

Throughout this period, land was important only as a source of revenue. It was not significant as personal property; a fact which may have been reflected in and encouraged by semi-nomadic patterns of life. Banga[12] remarks that during Sikh rule tenants would be treated as proprietors so long as they could pay their share of the revenue. Sir Charles Aitchison remarking on the Punjab the British inherited said: 'In the Sikh times property in the land was never regarded. The matter was one of revenue'.[13] Thorburn quoting from the Administration Report for the two years preceding the Mutiny remarks that, 'each man owns and tills his own glebe upon which he pays the revenue and pockets all the profits'.[14]

Lack of effective government, semi-nomadic patterns of life, land as revenue rather than as property and high military enlistment, may be the reasons why a supposedly sedentarised people were little different in the manner of their political organisation from their nomadic neighbours. In an essay, '*Herdsmen Farmers and Urban Culture*', Lattimore makes the following comment:

> In the nomadic society, no matter where we set the dividing lines

between theoretical stages of pre-feudalism protofeudalism and feudalism, ideas of the military authority of the leader and loyalty owed by followers to a leader are always dominant.[15]

Present Jat Sikh society exhibited these two characteristics while being a sedentary society for over a century. The degree to which leader–follower relationships dominate their political life as well as guerrilla formations is very noticeable. Individuals describe themselves in terms of their loyalty to a leader. However, these relationships do not express personal dependence, as in European feudalism, but personal comradeship. Indeed it is when a leader endeavours to turn these comradely relations into relations of dependence and total control, that his power is challenged. There was no tradition of dependence let alone any bond of social subjugation. Service given could be withdrawn. Gupta's words quoted below are almost an exact description of the state of Punjab in 1992–93.

(i) If a Sikh, of however humble an origin he might be, possessed a daring spirit, ability to lead, quick perception, rapid decision and undaunted courage, he was sure to gather around himself a number of followers. The men of leading and independent spirit it would secede from their old groups and easily form their own bands.
(ii) The chiefs were forced on all occasions to be very careful in looking to the wants and wishes of their followers and in treating them with attention and conciliation. It was only in this way that they could retain them in their service. Otherwise a little indifference on their part was sufficient to cause their desertion and going over to another chief who was every ready to accord them a warm welcome.[16]

The loose associations of fighting men that offered protection to the inhabitants of the areas they conquered or ruled, resembled the bands of guerrillas that fought to control present-day Punjab both in their structure and *modus operandi*. However, that resemblance is due to persisting decentralisation.

PRESENT-DAY GUERRILLA FORMATIONS

In Wolf's terms[17] the fighters in the post-1984 Sikh insurgency in the Punjab were middle peasants. By far the largest number of recruits consisted of those who had been harassed by the police and tortured by them or whose relatives and friends had been so treated. Police practice created guerrillas or militants, as they were called. A small number of

committed people also remained part of all guerrilla organisations to the very end. However, the chaos brought about by police tactics in defeating the movement allowed criminals and opportunists to join all guerrilla organisations. Young people also joined 'for personal glory' so to speak, and for money and family rivalries. This sort of infiltration, simultaneously traditional and materialistic, was possible because of early police counter-insurgency. As early as 1986 the state had admitted employing criminals in its service in order to alienate villagers from the guerrillas. To discredit the militant movement, they would announce responsibility in the name of a militant organisation for a variety of criminal actions. Thus guerrilla bands, who in the early days had functioned in a protective fashion towards the population and who were protected by the populace, took on a predatory nature. They had always been mixed groupings. Some among them gave their primary loyalty to a set of ideas rather than to any individual. This ideological core was willing and capable of subordinating certain cultural practices to the overall needs of the movement. Others epitomised society's traditional values and acted in accordance with them rather than with the policy requirements of their organisation. Still others were insincere to all but themselves or undisciplined. When they were thrown out of one guerrilla organisation they simply joined another and traded all that they knew to the state. In respect of their membership the two main guerrilla organisations were alike, although they had different policies and tactics. Each was a mix of patriots, traditionalists, individualists and criminals.

A Sarbat Khalsa (convention of the Sikh people) resolution of 26 January 1986, had declared an independent and sovereign homeland to be a legitimate goal of the Sikhs. A five-member executive body or Panthic Committee was given the task of executing the resolution and organising the struggle. The Khalistan Commando Force (KCF) was its armed wing. Later in 1987, to further strengthen the movement, an International Wing, the Council of Khalistan, was announced. Between the Spring and Autumn of 1988, a combination of government subversion and individual opportunism among the guerrillas succeeded in splitting the movement. The government rehabilitated a guerrilla group, the Babbar Khalsa, that had left the Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) before it was stormed by the army and who were opposed to the Sarbat Khalsa and the Declaration of Khalistan. They became the driving force in an alliance of groups opposed to the KCF known as the *car jhujharu jathebande* (CJJ)—the four groups of freedom fighters. This guerrilla organisation enormously aided government efforts at pacification of village Punjab. They eliminated those who were successful, respected or popular in the political sphere and put

forward a set of policies focusing totally on personal morality that all too easily diverted people from the independence struggle since they were imposed with brutality.

Recently a Punjab Civil Service Report demanded a judicial commission to trace the rise and decline of militancy with special reference to the role of the police and suggested the collusion of the CJJ with the police in the following words: 'It was under the very nose of the police that many codes of social conduct were issued and forcibly implemented by the militants'.[18]

Within the KCF a command system had been introduced by its first two leaders who were policemen, and that had operated until the summer of 1988. It had been infiltrated easily as so few controlled the arms supply lines, that is the physical routes along which arms were supplied and picked up. The arms supply routes were cut and those carrying the weapons were cut off from those receiving them. Around 200 were killed at that time. Only those who functioned in isolated cells and were loosely affiliated to the KCF survived. The head of the parent KCF, the KCF Zaffarwal, attempted a reorganisation around these groups and their personnel who had been in the field for a long time. However, as the KCF's fortunes revived, the commanders of these groups also saw their chances grow. In the early months of 1990 the KCF lost many of them. Each was unprepared to remain just as one among many in an organisation. They wished to be individual leaders at the head of their own private bands. They would not submit to policy guidelines and so were expelled or deserted. One by one they went. The opposing guerrilla organisation wooed them with offers of arms in abundance.

DECENTRALISATION PAST AND PRESENT

The KCF (Zaffarwal) became decentralised to protect its cadre. However, the cell system experienced problems, in part because of how it was understood by its own members. The KCF had no control over the leaders of individual cells whose actions, very frequently, did not conform to official guidelines. Generally, the further away from the border a guerrilla cell was, the less authority the KCF as an organisation, had over it. After 1989 cells proliferated with a massive influx of arms from Pakistan. There were no authoritative figures who could control their formation and the KCF's name was used for actions which were not in accordance with its policy. The counter-insurgency units that were active in most districts capitalised on the anarchy that was a byproduct of traditional political organisation. According to one political worker, Malwinder Singh Malli,

who was a member of the Punjab Human Rights Organisation and a newspaper correspondent:

> The police had letter pads of all militant organisations. Additionally they had set up what were purely their own organisations. They would issue statements on behalf of the militants. They had set up their own area commanders throughout Punjab. They would give them prominence in the newspapers saying he's killed so many people. Thereby they would keep on increasing the reward on his life that they can claim.
>
> Whenever these people are killed there is never any informer. Police take their reward money. Frequently when these groups have been formed their alleged leaders have been in custody already.[19]

The KCF (Zaffarwal) emphasised its *dhancha* (organisational structure) over the individualist tendencies of its members. Hence it lost leaders who regarded the guerrilla movement as an enterprise in which they had to display personal success over others. This was perhaps not surprising in a society in which the adventurer and entrepreneur were always accorded importance. The organisation's policy demanded that all guerrillas subscribe to the authority of the Panthic Committee of January 1986. It also proscribed killing of the innocent, kidnapping or stealing for personal aggrandizement or involvement in personal vendettas. However, these rules were honoured more in the breach than in the observance. Particularly in the Malwa region, south of the Sutlej river, cells were heavily involved in intimidation.

When members of a guerrilla unit acted contrary to policy, they were disowned. This was a regular occurrence. Groups were disowned for extortion, kidnapping and hitting soft targets. Those expelled were sometimes bought over by arms. Rural society frequently experienced a violent fall-out from changes of allegiance. Civilian casualties occurred at times when groups, led by area commanders, or cells, were outside the umbrella of the two main guerrilla organisations. In order to survive, members of a group and of its various cells, became freelance criminals, throwing their loyalty into the marketplace. They might find employment as hitmen in family feuds in return for protection take to extorting or work for the police, paramilitaries and intelligence services. Ambition, egoism and the search for individual fame and glory caused the break-up of groups. Thus a one time member of the KCF, Balwinder Shahpur, who had become very popular left the organisation. Various attempts had been made to woo him and thinking that he could survive because he had adequate arms supplies to maintain a personal following, he deserted the guerrilla organisation.

Things did not work out as he planned and he allowed himself to be used by the intelligence services. They put pressure on him to capture the brother of the Deputy Chief of the KCF (Zaffarwal), Jarnail Singh Hoshiarpur, hoping that the latter's family might try to save the lives of both their sons by persuading Hoshiarpur to return from Pakistan. When his family did not succumb the brother was killed. Very frequently a guerrilla leader operating on his own, even when he has as many as thirty followers, as had Shahpur, became involved with local structures of power, using these as a temporary shield but also being used by them to kill off rivals. For example, when villagers with problems found that Shahpur had links with the police they would ask him to harass their opponents. Problems with the acceptance of authority, resulting in a group pursuing its own independent line and hence, for a period sustaining a separate power base, were also common. Political behaviour was characterised by a flexibility of allegiance extremely damaging to an ideological movement, yet nevertheless wholly in conformity with the political culture of the Punjab. The individual's desire for power, personal rivalries and loyalties governed the dynamics of the struggle.

Prominent writers on the history of the Jats have remarked on their decentralised manner of organising their political life. Sir John Malcolm[20] stressed the Sikhs achieved this through the value they place on equality. Other writers have remarked favourably on decentralised political patterns. However, the decentralisation of present times sustained by the traditional right and practice to withdraw ones allegiance, of which Malcolm spoke so favourably, has contributed to the state of anarchy in the province in the course of which the identity of police and guerrilla units have become blurred. Such blurring could not have occurred had ideological commitments, rather than personal loyalties and ambitions, been the basis of group allegiance and group formation and dissolution.

The decentralisation introduced by the KCF (Zaffarwal) into its organisation in 1990 was intended to prevent further losses among its fighters. However, the cell system, instead of being a measure contributing to the overall efficient functioning of the organisation gave each gurrilla unit the freedom to be its own master. As each individual guerrilla leader gained local fame and popularity and became a legend in his lifetime, he converted his popularity into a private local power base, i.e., into an anti-national gain. As each put themselves out on a limb for their own personal fame, they were indeed at the centre of interest, attracting the attention of his rivals and of the security forces. They were easily picked off by the paramilitary forces.

The KCF Zaffarwal's decentralised structure was interpreted

individual fighters as being for their own benefit. Many left once their own local area base was secure. There were some local area commanders who were heroes and who remained part of the organisation, while others who set up their own organisations at least did it no harm. The manner in which arms were supplied merely accentuated the organisation's tendency to fragment. Hence in this particular culture, the operation of the decentralised cell system meant uneven achievements for the movement as a whole. Groups were sustained through their independent access to arms and particularly in the border areas of Tarn Taran and Batala, cells developed their own cross-border routes. However, some did not, and in situations of arms scarcity it was easy for them to fall into prearranged traps. For example, young guerrillas who had carried out a few actions and become popular would not often realise that their route to Pakistan had been facilitated courtesy the Punjab police and the BSF. They then had to co-operate with them. It was death either way. Some group leaders, such as Shahpur, would use their arms, as mentioned, to build their own personal independent base.

KCF Zaffarwal's policy of merely disowning those who had committed wrong was misguided. It would have been better to eliminate those who deserted and who proceeded to kill and rob in its name as their activities greatly discredited the militant movement. Moreover, as the groups proliferated, rural instability increased. In such circumstances the KCF ceased to function as an association supplying protection. As a traditional manner of organising things politically and of dividing the spoils, decentralisation became one of the most important structural sources of police power.

CONCLUSION

In an area that has been a corridor for centuries, idioms other than those based on Sikh moral values survive. One of these is the State tradition whereby many families have been happy to serve outside governments. Yet another is based on the political practices of Sikhism's largest group, the Jats. Their flexibility of allegiance and their lack of cooperation with one another except for strategic considerations, are associated in their eyes with their personal freedom and independence. Decentralisation appears to be a distinctive political tradition in the rural areas. Why has this tradition remained stable? Putnam, Leonardi and Nanetti have argued with reference to another decentralised society—modern Italy—that 'regions characterised by civic involvement in the late 20th century are almost

precisely the same regions where co-operatives and...mutual aid societies were abundant in the 19th century'.[21]

Likewise, perhaps, we could say that a region such as the Punjab, characterised by instability, disorder and insecure property rights until the middle of the nineteenth century as well as non-cooperative responses to these, was one which, in the conditions of the mid-twentieth century, would be highly competitive economically, treating encroachment on valuable property interests, violently. Moreover, an additional feature from the mid-seventies onwards has been that large numbers of small and marginal farmers foresaw themselves becoming part of a rural proletariat, simultaneously as state power over surplus production and control of the means of production grew. This level of state control, in the light of events, seems to have been judged intolerable. Protectiveness of the small space of one's farm was the modern equivalent of the soldier on horse back who won for himself a stretch of territory and jealously guarded his rights of control.

Sikh culture is part of Punjabi culture. Until 1947 Sikhs inhabited its entire region along with other peoples. Stephens[22] and Toynbee[23] have noted the likenesses in their habits, customs and religion to people further west. In the Sikh rural areas, kinship rather than caste, structures social organisation, as in the west Punjab as described by Alavi.[24] Regions may have distinct social structures as Saberwal[25] suggests, but Sikh values within Punjabi social structure are somewhat different. They sit uncomfortably with the notion of religion as the basis for statehood. Moreover, at the basis of any present unhappiness over the creation of a boundary is an unhappiness with boundaries as such. Thus the creation of an international border in 1947 was alien, certainly, to the Sikh ethos. As entrepreneurs and great adventurers, borders were of little interest to them. It is certainly an irony that the 553 km Punjab part of the Indo-Pakistan border fortified by three lines of electric wire and floodlit at night, cuts them off from the lands across which they once roamed, in whose canals they had so much investment and where they bought and sold horses and ammunition in the heyday of their power. Additionally, for the ordinary Sikh villager, the real border is a rather different one. It lies in the daily experience of being a civilian without shield against the unlimited powers of the agents of Delhi's centralised rule in Punjab. It is these circumstances of terror, rather than specific interpretations of the past, that are at the centre of thoughts concerning an independent homeland. As I experienced it during the months of September and October 1992 and the first three months of 1993, any area in rural Punjab, at anytime, could be designated a forbidden zone 'an area that could be fired into at will'.[26] We often think of persons as being steeped in ambiguity. Areas have that characteristic

also. This indeed, is a feature which protects a composite culture. Only the very difficult human conditions in which Sikhs have lived since 1984 have provoked the creation of a boundary in the Punjab, in the way Sahlins uses the term.

Acknowledgements

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Notes

1. Some interesting lines in that document are as follows:
   The entire control of the government and administration shall vest in those who believe in the good of all and who earn their livelihood by the sweat of their labour....No individual will be allowed to exploit others, either economically or socially....Profiteering and black marketeering and all such like offences will not be tolerated. The principle behind all legislation will be the welfare of all....The segregation of humanity based on caste, birth, locality and colour will not be permitted and such divisions will be abolished by the use of political power. Likewise, such other cruel and distasteful practices stemming from inequality especially between Sikh males and Sikh females will be removed through the use of political power. Feudalism and capitalism will not be allowed to influence the government machinery and the consciousness of the people [but] no limitation will be imposed on any individual to prosper and flourish according to the best of his wisdom, labour and ability. In every activity and in all organisations we must ceaselessly fight for the hegemony of morality'.
   Translation taken from *Punjab Today*, G. Singh, (ed.) *Punjab Today* (New Delhi, International Publishing House, 1987), pp. 387-97.
2. As contained in documents given to me by his father.
3. The Jats form upwards of 50 per cent of the Sikh population. They were a tribe of Indo-Scythian extraction who settled on the plains of Punjab in two migrations. After the land settlements following the Indian mutiny they became owner occupiers. In this paper I am using the term Jat in a general sense to include all rural dwellers.
4. Anthony Giddens, *The Nation State and Violence* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1985), p. 212.
5. Peter Sahlins, *Boundaries. The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees* (Berkeley: University of California Press), 1989, pp. 3-4.
6. Edward Said, 'The Mind in Winter: Reflections on Life in Exile', *Harper's*, No. 269, September, 1984, pp. 49-65.
7. Lucien Febvre, 'Frontiere: The Word and the Concept 'in P. Burke (ed.) *A New Kind of History* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), pp. 208-18.
8. Andre Gunder Frank, *The Centrality of Central Asia.* (Amsterdam: VU Press Amsterdam, 1992), p. 17.

9. J.D. Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs* (New Delhi: S. Chand and Co., 1966. First printed in 1849), p. 151.
10. One still comes across objects reminding one of the time when Sikhs belonged to an undivided Punjab. In homes in Majhail villages (Majha is the region between the Ravi and Beas rivers) one sees pieces of beautiful porcelain, Russian in origin, captured long ago in raids in the frontier area.
11. H.G. Keene, *Hindustan under the Free Lances 1770-1820.* (London: Brown, Langham and Company, 1907), pp. 400-401.
12. Indu Banga, *the Agrarian System of the Sikhs* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1978).
13. Sir Charles Aitchison, *Lord Lawrence* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1905), p. 146.
14. S.S. Thorburn, *The Punjab in Peace and War* (Patiala: Languages Department, Patiala. First printed in 1883), p. 231.
15. Owen Lattimore, 'Herdsmen, Farmers and Urban Culture', in *Pastoral Production and Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 479-90.
16. H.R. Gupta, *A History of the Sikhs* (Lahore: Minerva Book Shop, 1952. Second revised edition). I quote from Vol. I, pp. 22-23 and 55.
17. Eric Wolf, *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century* (London: Faber, 1973).
18. Statement of General Secretary of Punjab Civil Service Association, Press Statement, 28 August, 1993, p. 2.
19. Interview, 25 February, 1993. Chandigarh.
20. Sir John Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs* (London: John Murry, 1812).
21. R.D. Putnam, R. Leonardi and R.Y. Nanetti, *Making Democracy Work* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 162.
22. Ian Stephens, *Pakistan* (London: Ernest Benn, 1967).
23. Arnold Toynbee, *East to West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958).
24. Hamza Alavi', Kinship in West Punjab Villages', *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 6, 1972, p. 1-27.
25. Satish Saberwal, 'Regions and their Social Structures', *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 5, 1971, pp. 82-98.
26. B.E. O'Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism* (London: Brassey's, 1990), p. 130.

Tradition and Sikh Identity in the Modern World

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Sikhs in the Punjab stood at a crossroads in the late nineteenth century. The political and social changes occuring in the recently annexed region raised questions about the nature of their religion, and in fact, whether Sikhism would survive with cultural boundaries and beliefs distinct from the practices of other Punjabis. Questions such as 'what does it mean to be a Sikh?', and how Sikhs should respond to challenges from Christians, Arya Samajis, and overall modernization of Punjab society were openly debated. The evolution of an assortment of Singh Sabhas, which increasingly provided focus and answers to such questions, helped pave the way for a fresh Sikh resurgence culminating in the Gurdwara Reform movement of the 1920s.

There have been two competing views of the role of the Singh Sabhas in the evolution of modern Sikhism. The long-accepted interpretation emphasises how a group of dedicated Sikhs initiated programmes and institutions that highlighted traditions either forgotten or ignored, in essence reclaiming an orthodoxy that had continually existed since the time of Guru Nanak almost four centuries earlier. The recent discovery and evaluation of rich caches of documents from the period, especially those in the libraries of Bhai Takht Singh and Mohan Singh Vaid, has fostered a different view, one that suggests a far more complex story and a self-conscious unsorting of competing traditions. On the basis of tract and newspaper accounts, for example, my early research tended to over-emphasise the role of specific Singh Sabhas and personalities in creating a somewhat new version of Sikhism.[1] Such a reinterpretation generated little interest at the time, but the intellectual and political crises culminating in Operation Blue Star, the assassination of Indira Gandhi, and the Delhi riots have changed all that. Many Sikhs now reassert the continuities

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of thought and action that link them with the period of the Gurus, and challenge any work, scholarly or polemic, that suggests otherwise.[2]

Harjot Oberoi's new book, *The Construction of Religious Boundaries*[3] takes a fresh scholarly look at the sources and the issues surrounding the early phase of the Singh Sabha movement prior to the creation of a centralizing Sikh organization, the Chief Khalsa Diwan (1902). The book could not have come at a better, or from another perspective a worse, time. On the one hand, Oberoi's decade of research on the pivotal period in recent Sikh history unsorts and illuminates many of the tangled problems inherent in the Sikh society undergoing substantial change. This review will highlight the strengths and occasional weaknesses of this major work. We now know much more about modern Sikhism because of Oberoi's study, and can move onward to understanding why and how the intellectual and rich institutional growth of the period led to the Akali supremacy in the 1920s. Such a straightforward academic exercise would suffice under normal circumstances, but these are extraordinary times. In a phase of sensitivity and activism reminiscent of the early Singh Sabha period, many Sikhs vocally and on occasion physically confront challenges that seem to threaten their traditions and accepted views. 'Sikhism in danger' and perceived dangers to the *panth*, the community, moves any discussion of controversial interpretations far beyond academic discourse. The concluding section of the review will therefore attempt to address some of the issues raised by Sikh scholars attacking Oberoi, and to suggest both the value and the limitations of the ongoing controversies surrounding his work.

Oberoi blends an impressive array of new source materials with fresh questions and theoretical constructs now influential in Western philosophy and social science literature. The author's attempt to place the Sikh experience within a broadened conceptual framework is provocative and forces the reader to struggle with a sometimes bewildering array of theories and ideas. Building a case on the ideas of Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu and Sherry Ortner, he explores the *episteme*, the totality of relationships and the discursive practices that framed the various stages of Sikh developments. In doing so, he challenges current Sikh historiography which from his perspective either ignores the complexity and diversity of early nineteenth century Punjab or attempts to portray Sikh reformers who 'were in line with traditional Sikh doctrines' and therefore opposed 'a large terrain of Sikh beliefs and practices' (p. 31). Especially important in such a reconstruction is the discovery and careful use of new documents. Oberoi mines the rich ethnographic literature produced by Punjab officials, especially the work of H.A. Rose and the group of scholar/bureaucrats who published regularly in *Punjab Notes and Queries*.

Moreover, he has analyzed literally hundreds of reports, tracts and newspaper accounts that even at first glance question any notion of a unified Singh Sabha movement. The myths, folk tales, legends, personal accounts and polemical material that Oberoi weaves into his narrative provide the factual base for a very convincing reassessment of nineteenth century Punjab and Sikhism.

The study makes at least three major contributions to understanding a pivotal phase in Sikh development. First, almost half of the detailed volume creates a long overdue benchmark for where Sikh society and identity stood prior to the 1870s. Although noting a central thread of ideas and religious doctrines connecting Sikhs with the period of the Gurus, he demonstrates a wide range of rituals, practices and beliefs found among Sikhs. The *khalsa* tradition associated with Guru Gobind Singh remained important among many who accepted the discipline of baptism and maintaining the five Ks, the visible symbols such as uncut hair, wearing a *kirpan* and bangle and so forth; however, others including those prominent in the lineages of the Gurus and controlling Sikh sacred spots and institutions were *sahajdhari*, primarily unconcerned with the five Ks and content with following accepted ideas of worship and social practice. There were no normative marriage and mortuary rituals, and opinion differed as to whether the writings of Guru Gobind Singh, the *Dasam Granth*, should be treated with as much respect as the *Adi Granth*, the holy Sikh scripture generally seen by Sikhs as the fundamental source of the Gurus' teachings and the 'living Guru' to be followed implicitly. A third identifiable group, the Sanatan Sikhs, saw Sikhism as part of a larger religious tradition that stretched back to the earliest time. They showed an interest in the *puranas*, worshipped images of the Gurus and others in local shrines, participated in Hindu festivals and worship of local saints. As one chapter head notes, Sikhs participated heavily in popular religion and culture, 'an enchanted universe'.

Professor Oberoi then proceeds to present the best available study of the struggles and opposing worldviews of Sikhs involved in the Singh Sabhas. He shows how the Sanatanist group, rallying around the descendent of the Gurus, Baba Khem Singh Bedi, formed the initial Singh Sabha in Amritsar, 1873, to deal with the challenges of missionaries and, in general, to facilitate Sikh progress in a rapidly changing world. The Sabha was especially interested in history, discovering and publishing texts, and codifying parts of the Sikh tradition. Publishing newspapers and tracts, they adopted a pluralistic approach to what constituted Sikhism. A variety of social relations, rituals and festivals were judged to be acceptable. An important group of Bhais, Sants and Babas (traditional teachers, religious

leaders) controlled key institutions and defended actively the idea that many facets of life did not require 'direct intervention by the Sikh sacred authorities' (p. 254). The old ways were acceptable and 'a radical transformation in Sikh consciousness was not on the agenda' (p. 257).

Opposition to such an approach already had surfaced dramatically in the form of the Nirankari and Namdhari sects, who by mid-century had called for more strict adherence to the *khalsa* tradition. The Namdharis, or Kukas as they came to be known, followed strict rituals, had taboos about intermarriage with non-Sikhs, and opposed popular religion. Also anti-modern, they rejected travel by train and abhored non-traditional means of communication such as the printing press. Anything foreign or British was to be boycotted.

Some of these themes, shorn of the anti-British message, became prominent in the writings and programmes of a third group, the 'Tat Khalsa' ('true Khalsa'), who organized a second Singh Sabha in Lahore, 1879, and actively competed with the Amritsar network. In less than three decades, the Tat Khalsa fostered a fundamental change in the imagination, feelings and experiences of Sikhs. They attacked diverse cultural and social networks, stressing instead the need for a uniform community. In order to separate Sikhs from what the leaders of the Sabha, such as Gurmukh Singh and Ditt Singh, saw as participation in 'the amorphous sea of Hinduism' (p. 345), the Tat Khala changed ideas about diet, calendar, language, dress, history and rituals so as to expand a sense of Sikh consciousness and boundaries.

Oberoi's most fascinating contribution involves his analysis of the incessant warfare among various factions and the process whereby the view of Tat Khalsa became dominant. The Sanatanists used social ostracism, the western legal system and manipulation of Sikh shrines over which they had great influence, to undermine the broadening Tat Khalsa programme. The tract warfare and major episodes in the ensuing encounters are well known. What is less understood is how the Tata Khalsa succeeded in expanding the supremacy of the khalsa tradition and with it, endowing Sikhs with a 'meaningful universe, separate and radically different' from others (p. 381). Oberoi highlights several critical elements underlying the Tat Khalsa domination of Sikh public life. First, he shows how British attitudes and specific policies relating to the army, the census, education and employment, reinforced the authenticity of khalsa traditions. In doing so, he corrects the argument by Richard Fox and others that the colonial state was a decisive force in the shaping of Sikh culture and institutions. The British had in fact a range of perspectives and tactics towards Sikhs, and as the Gurdwara Reforms in the 1920s were to

demonstrate, often sided with those of the opposing sanatan persuasion. More important was the ability of the Tat Khalsa to consolidate existing beliefs and to expand their base through hard work and compromise when necessary.

Their leaders fully appreciated the value of creating new institutions such as western-style schools, the Khalsa College, and a system of monthly and large annual meetings (*diwans*) to gather public support and generate funds. They quickly saw the importance of the new print culture for influencing Sikhs living in Punjab and beyond, and by the early 1900s had succeeded in creating an effective network of tract societies, journals and newspapers that dominated much of the discourse among Sikhs.[4] Although hitting the major points and providing a balanced assessment, Oberoi's treatment could be expanded appreciably, filling out the details of specific programme and initiatives. His overall conclusions about the Tat Khalsa victory will stand, but much of the detail warranted by the especially rich newspaper and organizational documents remains unexplored.

How could this pioneering study be improved? Specialists on nineteenth century Punjab and Sikh studies will question some of the conclusions about individuals and organizations, and find occasional mistakes. The original dissertation at Australian National University has been thoroughly revised and strengthened at almost every juncture. One significant omission is the social context for the Singh Sabha leadership, the personal relationships and marriage networks that often underpin Sikh public life. Also missing are perennial factors involved in Sikh institutions—factions based on personality, Malwa/Majha regional perceptions, caste and family connections, and incessant competition for leadership positions. Although carefully differentiating the major divisions within the Singh Sabha movement, Oberoi appreciates but does not analyze the variations and tensions existing within the broad linkages. In fact, Sikh institutional life was and continues to be a complicated story. To have tried to address such issues probably would have deflected the author from his main mission, as would have amplification of significant issues such as discussion about numerous *rahitnamas* and other quasi-historical documents by leading Sikh intellectuals. Nevertheless, these additions would have added to the value of an exceedingly important work, and more importantly, have forced opponents to provide more detailed objections to specific points.

Harjot Oberoi's research and publications already have earned him a substantial reputation among western scholars as an important interpreter of recent Sikh history. Even before the publication of this book, however, at least some Sikh public leaders and scholars had labelled him a danger

to the panth. Their perspectives and criticism raise some interesting questions about Oberoi's research and western scholarship in general, and probably even more to the point, shed light on the current intellectual and political crisis within the Sikh community.

Just as in the time of the Singh Sabha movement, Sikhs today are struggling with issues of boundaries, doctrine, history and practice in a time of crisis. The call for a separate Sikh state, Khalistan, pre-dated and indeed influenced the decision to launch Operation Blue Star against the militants in the Golden Temple complex, but since that event, the calls for a political orthodoxy, and with it, an assertion of a standardized view of Sikh tradition and history has become far more shrill and uncompromising. Often the Indian government and foreign scholars are portrayed in a loose conspiracy to destroy Sikh unity. W.H. McLeod's earlier work on the *janamsakhi* literature and Guru Nanak in a historical context, for example, evoked early criticism in the 1970s, but was nothing compared with the recent firestorm of innuendo and public blasts that dominate seminars and publications sponsored by activists in Chandigarh and the United States.[5] Similarly, the attacks on Pashaura Singh and his Toronto dissertation last year have sparked numerous articles, books and a flood of criticism and letters in the *World Sikh News*.[6]

The harsh criticism of Oberoi's work reflects important features of contemporary Sikh affairs. First, specific groups are vying with each other for control of resources, institutions and the right to be seen as legitimate political and intellectual leaders of the community. Sikh research institutes have sprung up in North America and in the Punjab, and each shares a mission of challenging opponents and producing a stream of articles and books on social, political and religious issues. The degree of pamphleteering and the wide circulation of scholarly or quasi-scholarly works mirrors the vitality and sense of urgency surrounding earlier Singh Sabha activities. Often the volumes represent seminar proceedings on a theme or particular scholar. These publications criticize academic institutions in India and North America alike, but particular emphasis is reserved for those seen as aligning with McLeod and other western scholars.[7] Linked to such activities is a shared mission. Sikhs are attempting to challenge any perceived threat to their sense of orthodoxy or traditions. Social criticism, references to caste, public airing of differences between sahajdharis (clean-shaven Sikhs) and *kesdharis* (Sikhs with beards, generally maintaining the five Ks), anything that seems to question the unity of the community—all are themes denounced incessantly. Also related is a search for central organizations and mechanisms to resolve current issues and to prevent future disputes. The assumption is that if Sikhs can agree

on a single code of conduct (the *rahit maryada* promulgated in the 1930s often is seen as such by many, but not accepted wholly by others) or if the *Akal Takht*, an important Sikh religious institution housed within the Golden Temple complex, can provide independent leadership, then public and embarrassing controversies can be avoided.[8]

Finally, the creation and operation of several Sikh Chairs tend to stimulate the most aggressive attacks on particular individuals and their ideas. Originally the Chairs were funded by donations from local Sikhs, supplemented by government or institutional resources. At the University of British Columbia, for example, the Sikh Chair received major funding from both the Sikhs and provincial authorities; at Toronto University, external contributions provided almost a decade of support until funds dried up due to controversy; at Columbia University, an ongoing campaign to raise contributions has led to the creation of a Sikh Chair, a similar process to that occurring earlier at the University of Michigan. Established to insure that Sikh religion, history and language instruction in Punjabi would be available in an academic setting, both to publicise Sikhism and to insure courses for younger generations of Sikhs, these posts increasingly are seen as sources of potential threat to the community. Each university maintains strict control over hiring, tenure and the content of courses, and while that was acceptable at an early stage, now at least some Sikhs are trying to influence what will be taught and by whom. The independence of the scholars filling the three existing chairs, Harjot Oberoi (U.B.C.), Pashaura Singh (Michigan) and Gurinder Singh Mann (Columbia) is troublesome, as are their research and teaching emphases. Also inherent in the attacks on the new generation of Sikh scholars is serious questioning as to whether a more satisfying treatment of history and religion might be provided by scholars trained in Punjab rather than western institutions. At the least their activities are seen as threats to perceived tradition and Sikh values, and at worst, they are presented as part of a Eurocentric conspiracy influenced by McLeod, and potentially Christian missionaries and the Government of India. Law suits, social ostracism, and even a demand that Oberoi and Pashaura Singh appear before the Akal Takht are prevalent, again reminiscent of the polemics and tactics of an earlier period.

Specific charges against Oberoi vary with each article or chapter, but they include his supposedly ignoring scholarship by Sikhs writing in the Punjab, misusing documents, placing too much emphasis upon the influence of Jat culture in the evolving Sikh social system, and throwing aspersions on the Gurus. In an article in *World Sikh News* (July 29, 1994), 'Oberoi Should Appear Before the Akal Takht', for example, Jasbir Singh claims that Guru Nanak established Sikhism with an independent identity

and doctrines, and that the U.B.C. Chair was set up to promote a clear and accurate understanding of that tradition in Canada. From his perspective, Oberoi has failed miserably and should be removed. The author and others challenged Oberoi to several debates, which transpired after he refused to participate. Oberoi is charged with applying principles from 'phenomenal based religions', such as Judaism and Christianity, to Sikhism, a meaningless and irrelevant practice since Sikhism 'is a revelatory religion with its scripture authenticated by the living prophet'. Oberoi supposedly is trying to 'dissolve Sikh identity and Sikh ideology'.. Another review by S.S. Sodhi and J.S. Mann (22 July, 1994) claims that Oberoi, McLeod and other 'Eurocentric Social Sikh historians' just pick out isolated material to create turmoil. 'What Freud was to the females, Jensen and Rushton to the Blacks, Oberoi is to the Sikhs'.

A somewhat more sympathetic review by I.J. Singh (*World Sikh News*, 22, 29, July 1994) highlights other broad points of contention. The NYU Professor, author of a recent book on Sikhism and a frequent commentator in Sikh journals, suggests that Sikhs were only lax in practice, and that the Singh Sabhas were primarily involved in trying to correct mistakes and bring true Sikhs back to 'the tried and true'. The Amritsar-based Sanatanists (the use of the term sanatan is offensive to Professor Singh and others because it suggests Hinduisation of Sikh teaching) were not central but rather mavericks outside the mainstream. He also notes that Oberoi has missed the basic difference between teachings and practice, especially since Sikhism is a relatively young religion. Concluding with some laudatory remarks that question Oberoi's methods but not his motives, I.J. Singh proceeds to reshape Oberoi's conclusions to support a thesis that the Singh Sabha period involved a perennial tussle between clear Sikh teaching and doctrines and a predominately Hindu society with Sikh allies who had become lax in practice. In short, despite using language that might be ill-advised or unclear, Oberoi has provided a detailed account that does not seriously threaten the community's view of continuities between Guru Nanak and the present.

Such reviews clearly indicate that a schism exists between prominent Sikhs, who tend to dominate the print media and some institutions, and scholars who may or may not be Sikh but are trained in western social and textual criticism. Sikhs call for a dialogue but primarily on their terms and with their assumptions—such as, Sikhism is a revealed religion, the Gurus' teachings cannot be analyzed in a historical environment, and despite some variation, the Sikh faith is ageless and has not changed. Leaving aside the fact that many of the criticisms of Oberoi are inaccurate, with ideas taken out of context, spurious attacks concerning motive and integrity, and an

unwillingness to address much of his primary arguments, they project several key ideas that well may preclude a meaningful discussion about differences at this juncture. First, scholars outside Sikhism either do not understand or show disrespect to Sikh traditions. The exceptions often cited are generalists who have done limited work on Sikhs and generally sympathize with their perspectives. Second, foreign scholars and their associates trained in western institutions adopt a methodology inappropriate for understanding Sikhism. Again and again, interpretations of Oberoi and others are judged inaccurate or irrelevant because they are not grounded in the bedrock of Sikh history and religion, the *Guru Granth Sahib*. During a panel at the American Academy of Religion in Los Angeles, for example, a Sikh arose from the audience and made fun of the panelists' use of ethnography, tracts and journalistic accounts to understand events in Sikh history. No matter what is written in contemporary accounts, the real test of Sikh tradition remains a correct understanding of scripture and the teaching of the Gurus.

These differences in approach and questions lead to a final point, the conflict between practice of a religion within a historical context and the true doctrinal nature of a sect or religious tradition. In fact, Harjot Oberoi is not trying to undermine Sikhism or to make judgements about what Sikh doctrine should be. Rather, he is trying to understand how a distinct khalsa tradition that emerged from the early 1700s came to be institutionalised and popularised almost two centuries later. The 'tried and true' referred to by I.J. Singh certainly existed, but the initial dominance of opponents and the major disputes over Tat Khalsa programme suggest that those trying to defend and promulgate a set of connected ideas and practices played a pivotal historical role in determining the nature of contemporary Sikhism.

Harjot Oberoi's research challenges scholars working in the period to reexamine data and assumptions, and either to build on or adjust his view of nineteenth century Sikhism. With regard to the contemporary Sikh community, he does not attack basic religious beliefs or attempts to damage a sense of identity. To the contrary, Oberoi's research suggests that the very issues facing Sikhs today, whether doctrinal or involving diverse approaches to social values and politics, have a historical dimension. That the Singh Sabha leaders were able to emerge from a troublesome period with a strength and sense of commitment to regain control peacefully of their sacred shrines highlights the ongoing vitality of the Sikh tradition. Lessons can be learned from history or, as I.J. Singh concludes, Harjot Oberoi 'makes us think about things that we haven't thought very often and in ways that are not always comfortable. And that is excellent'.

Notes

1. *The Sikhs and Their Literature* (Delhi: Manohar, 1970).
2. See, for example, the numerous articles in *World Sikh News* that question recent research on the Gurus, Ranjit Singh, or more recent developments. As will be noted, much of this literature has been generated by a newly formed research unit in Chandigarh and among American Sikhs, often working in close concert.
3. Harjot Oberoi, *The construction of Religious Boundaries: Culture, Identity and Diversity in the Sikh Tradition* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994).
4. Background in N.G. Barrier and Paul Wallace (eds), *The Punjab Press 1880-1905* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Asian Studies Center, 1970); Barrier, *Sikhs and Their Literature*.
5. See, for example, the following works: Trilochan Singh, *Ernest Trumpp and W.H. McLeod As Scholars of Sikh History Religion and Culture* (Chandigarh: International Centre of Sikh Studies, 1994); Bachittar Singh (ed.) *Planned Attack on Aad Sri Guru Granth Sahib Academics or Blasphemy* (Chandigarh: International Centre of Sikh Studies, 1994).
6. The following are representative of the criticism of Pashaura Singh and Harjot Oberoi, and will be cited for the remainder of this essay: Jasbir Singh Mann and Harbans Singh Saraon, *Advanced Studies in Sikhism* (Irvine: Sikh Community of North America), 1989; Jasbir Singh Mann and Kharak Singh, *Recent Researches in Sikhism* (Patiala: Punjabi University 1992); I.J. Singh's review of Oberoi volume, July 22, 29, 1994, *World Sikh News*; S.S. Sodhi, J.S. Mann's review of Oberoi volume, July 22, 1994, *World Sikh News*.
7. In the summer of 1994, for example, a California-based organization sponsored a series of travelling seminars that moved among Sikh centres in North America. Much of the focus was either on Pashaura Singh or Harjot Oberoi. The final manuscript is under preparation and should be released shortly. Some of the major arguments undoubtedly are already available in the articles by Gurdarshan Singh Dhillon in the volumes edited by Jasbir Singh Mann, *Recent Researches in Sikhism* and *Advanced Studies in Sikhism*.
8. See, for example, the articles on the Jathedar of the Akal Takht and his role in controversies within Gurdwaras and doctrines, the *World Sikh News*, Summer 1994.

The Feminine Principle in the Sikh Vision of the Transcendent, Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh (London: Cambridge University Press, 1993). Pages 318. $59.95. Hardback. ISBN 0-521-43287-1.

The writing of this book, according to Dr Singh—a young Sikh scholar trained in North America but thoroughly immersed in Punjabi culture—was a 'deeply personal act of self-discovery' resulting in the 'recovery of the rightful position of the feminine principle' in the Sikh tradition. In offering a detailed statement on this important issue, the author voices her expectations that the book will contribute in a fundamental manner to the study of Sikhism, and fill 'a major hiatus in the world of feminist writings'. These valid goals of academic research are laid out at the very outset.

The book is divided into eight chapters. The first four are constructed around an analysis of the Sikh literature created in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which includes the hymns present in the Sikh scripture, *Guru Granth Sahib*; the stories of the life and mission of Guru Nanak available in the *Janam-sakhi* literature, a literary tradition with its origin in the seventeenth century; and the compositions related to the Hindu goddess, Chandi/Durga in the *Dasam Granth* ('The Book of the Tenth Master'), another Sikh sacred text, which was compiled at the turn of the eighteenth century. The second half of the book focuses on the novels and poetry of Bhai Vir Singh, a prolific Sikh writer of modern times (1872–1957).

In the opening chapters, Dr Singh discusses Guru Nanak's experience of divine revelation and the resulting conception of God as formless and utterly unique. Departing from the existing scholarship in the field, she interprets this vision of the Divine as 'theological', and argues that this specific understanding of the Divine was translated into a commitment to justice and social change, manifested in assigning an equal status to women in the early Sikh community at Kartarpur (1521?–1539).

Dr Singh's discussion regarding the primacy of the feminine principle and the rejection of male-dominated images and symbols (p. 45) in Sikh literature begins with an analysis of two core concepts, both employing feminine nouns in Punjabi: the vehicle of Sikh revelation, *bani* ('utterance'), and the sacred text, *pothi* (literally, 'the book'). She expands this discussion and unravels a set of feminine symbols—*mata* ('wisdom'), *nadar* ('divine grace'), *quadrat* ('Divine power/nature') and *suhagan* ('bride') etc.—in this literature. Thus a case is made for 'a clear celebration of the

feminine aspects of the Divine' (p. 52). The image of Chandi and the ancillary metaphor of the sword in the *Chandi Charitr* ('The Exploits of Chandi') and the *Var Durga ki* ('The Ballad of Durga') recorded in the *Dasam Granth* are interpreted as presenting 'an unequivocal acknowledgement of woman's power in society' (p. 126). This analysis completes Dr Singh's reconstruction of the feminine dimension of the 'theological' vision.

Arguing that there was not much worthwhile literature produced by the Sikhs in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Dr Singh then concentrates on the writings of Bhai Vir Singh, which in her assessment represent 'the authentic renaissance of the spiritual legacy of the Sikh faith' (p. 154). Through a detailed discussion of the central character in Bhai Vir Singh's novel *Sundari*, the heroine of his epic *Rana Surat Singh*, and the central voice in his anthology of poems, *Mere Saian Jio* ('My Lord'), Dr Singh goes on to explain how the Sikh 'theological' vision discussed in the first half of the book manifests itself in these writings. The study concludes with the assertion that 'Sikh literature—sacred and secular—has at its centre the feminine'.

Before one engages Dr Singh's argument, which unfolds forcefully in the book, it is necessary to point out that this study suffers from a structural imbalance. The presence of four chapters, almost half the book, on the writings of Bhai Vir Singh confirms Dr Singh's fascination with his work, but barring that there is no justification for assigning him this degree of importance in the discussion.

Furthermore, a close examination of Dr Singh's handling of her sources in the first half of the book shows disconcerting results. One would have expected the opening discussion about the nature of God in Guru Nanak's thought to be based on his own writings. Instead, his writings are only one of the three basic sources blended together in this crucial discussion. The first chapter begins with an epigraph from the hymns of Guru Ramdas (1574–1581), the use of which in itself is fine; but the fact that its attribution is left unrecorded may mislead the reader into taking it as a quotation from Guru Nanak. This is indicative of a tendency on the author's part not to distinguish clearly between the hymns of Guru Nanak and those of the other Gurus, despite the fact that these distinctions are recorded painstakingly in the *Guru Granth Sahib* itself. For example, on page 44, there is no way to know that the texts which go with notes 93 and 96 do not belong to Guru Nanak, but are compositions of Guru Arjan and Guru Amardas respectively.

To the hymns of the Gurus, Dr Singh adds the *Janam-sakhi* stories, to weave her design of the feminine principle: the account available in the *Puratan Janam-sakhi* is in fact at the heart of her analysis of Guru Nanak's

experience of the Divine. Instead of focusing on the hymns of Guru Nanak, Dr Singh offers only a single reference from his own hymn on this particular theme (p. 28), and this without a proper citation. Lumping together the hymns of Guru Nanak, those of his successors, and the stories created by the Sikh devotees, under the overarching category of scriptural literature, limits the usefulness of the discussion presented in this chapter.

In addition, the employment of the *Janam-sakhi* images of Guru Nanak's direct experience of the Divine is far from exhaustive. For instance, in the *Miharban Janam-sakhi*, an important tradition of this literary corpus, Guru Nanak's visit to the divine court is described in graphic detail. Sitting in his court, God is a revered male figure, who has a white beard, wears red dress and sits on a golden bed with a large cushion. No reference to this significant variant is made in Dr Singh's book.

Similar methodological problems appear in Dr Singh's treatment of the symbol of Chandi in the *Dasam Granth*. In this analysis, she emphatically makes a case for the centrality of the feminine on the basis of her discussion of Chandi, but shows no interest in referring to relevant sections of the *Hikayatan* ('Stories') or to the longest composition recorded in the *Dasam Granth*, entitled the *Charitro Pakhayan* or *Tria Charitr* ('The Exploits of Women'). Thus Dr Singh makes her case about Chandi without touching the texts in the *Dasam Granth* itself that may stand in direct opposition to her neat scheme.

Although created with great labour, Dr Singh's picture of the Sikh vision with the feminine at its centre is constituted of rich glimpses, but falls short of a thorough discussion of the issue. She selects what suits her argument and is not even willing to register the presence of alternative views on this subject in the early Sikh literature. The same approach results, for example, in her complete dismissal of the *Rahit* ('the Khalsa code of conduct') literature created in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as not of much significance.

In the second half of the book, while enjoying Dr Singh's brilliant analysis of Bhai Vir Singh's writings, one wonders why the feminine principle at the centre of the Sikh vision of the transcendent—as she would have us believe—could only result in floating a few female characters in the writings of a male writer. Dr Singh's explanation that the Sikh patriarchal exegetes have reversed the meaning of Sikh symbols, and did not permit their actual impact on the community, sounds unrealistic. She uses the writings of these exegetes, and quite approvingly in fact.

One also needs to deal with Dr Singh's emphasis on *bani* and *pothi* being feminine nouns and consequently crucial instances of the feminine dimension of Sikh thinking. She brings forth a whole host of terms with

feminine gender to support this point. I for one do not find this argument convincing. What role the gender of religious terminology plays in the thinking of any given community is not an easy question to answer.

There is, however, a separate issue involved here. These terms have their provenance in Hindu or Islamic literature. How was the Sikh use of the words *bani* or *quadrat* different from their employment in Sanskrit and Arabic respectively? Unless Sikh usage of these terms is categorically established as unique, any argument based on their gender in the larger construction of the Sikh conception of the Divine is problematic.

The same is true of other key symbols. For instance, in a detailed discussion of the bride symbol, Dr Singh stresses the use of this symbol to mark the positive nature of the intimate relationship between the devotee and the Divine in Sikhism. Instead of presenting a detailed analysis of this symbol to challenge an already abandoned view that Guru Nanak was Kabir's follower (pp. 111–15), Dr Singh needed to show us the difference in the Sikh use of this symbol, say from Sufi poetry, that the Gurus were familiar with.

Dr Singh shows more enthusiasm in arguing for the unique Sikh vision of Divinity centred on the feminine than the wide variety of sources available in the Sikh tradition can permit. There is no doubt that the Sikh vision offers an improvement in its conception of woman and her social status, but it seems to remain well within the parameters of a patriarchal world view. Guru Nanak's support for the cause of women was part of his support for the downtrodden, a humanist's not a feminist's stance. Insofar as it is a home-oriented vision, women are given a special place in the Sikh scheme of things; but to argue for more than that is to overstate one's case.

The Sikh conception of God is centred around the essential understanding of his being the creator (*kartar*) and master (*patshah/sahib*) of this universe, who runs this world by his command (*hukam*). I have no objection to Dr Singh's change of 'Him' or 'It', or her visualisation of a 'mother figure', but her attempt to root these changes back in the early Sikh sources has not proved to be a convincing academic exercise. Her painstaking tracing of a single strand in an otherwise complex picture, which she then offers as representative, cannot be accepted as a fair assessment of the Sikh literature pertaining to the issue of the feminine.

The contribution of Dr Singh's book to the field of feminist studies is also at issue. It seems to me that perceptive feminist thinkers will be able to see through her analysis of the 'mother', bride', and other images in Sikh literature. These images, if taken in the right Sikh context, might just as well fit into the framework of mothers being valued for procreation only and brides' sole aim being to keep their husbands happy. Furthermore, Dr

Singh's argument that the Sikh feminist principle, which she is supposed to have 'rediscovered', is a great resource for uplifting woman's psyche (p. 14) has to be analysed in the context of how much it actually influenced the psyche of Sikh women historically.

A ground-breaking work on this theme was written in Punjabi some years ago: Harinder Kaur, *Panjabi Kavi Vich Nari* ('The Female in Punjabi Poetry'). Patiala: Kalam Mandir, 1988 (not cited by Dr Singh). Dr Singh has made an interesting beginning in English. Building on these books, scholars will need to subject Sikh literature to rigorous scrutiny in order to create a comprehensive understanding of the subject. A definitive statement on this significant theme will shed important light on how far a religious tradition originating in the sixteenth century was able to go towards accepting in principle and then striving to attain the ultimate goal of gender equality, to which we all deeply aspire.

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Indian Communities in Southeast Asia (eds), K S Sandhu and A Mani (Singapore: Times Academic Press and the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1993). Pages xxii and 983 p. S$ 120.00/US$ 86.00. Hardback. ISBN 981-210-017-2.

This volume of papers derives from a project initiated by the late Professor Kernial Singh Sandhu, the long-time Director of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore. Sandhu's own historical work, *(Indians in Malaya: Some Aspects of Their Immigration and Settlement [1786-1957]*, remains the most significant single source on Indian migration to Southeast Asia. This wide-ranging volume, however, is less interested in the migration process itself than in 'examin[ing] the degree of assimilation and integration of Indians alive in the present period' (p. xix). It thus covers some of the same ground, albeit with mostly different contributors, as two earlier collections, *Indians in Southeast Asia*, (ed.) I J Bahadur Singh (New Delhi: India International Centre, 1982) and *Pacific Indians*, Ahmed Ali et al (Suva, Fiji: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, 1981).

This volume was over a decade in the making and at one time involved more than 45 potential contributors. What appears here are 37 chapters on Indians in Brunei, Indochina, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar (Burma), Philippines, Singapore and Thailand written by 33 contributors of diverse

nationalities, disciplines and scholarly reputations. As one might imagine of a volume of this nature, contributions are uneven in style and quality of writing, in topical coverage, in timeliness (for many the ethnographic present is the late 1970s or early 1980s), and in originality (some contributors have recycled material published elsewhere). Nevertheless, taken collectively, there is much valuable information here to excite the reader interested in the place of those of Indian ancestry in the plural societies of Southeast Asia.

For the reader interested in specific information on diasporan Punjabis (or on any other South Asian sub-group, for that matter), the lack of an index and of a general bibliography or bibliographic essay is a considerable drawback, since information about Punjabis in various Southeast Asian countries is scattered throughout essays focused on Indians more generally. Essays by Ajit Singh Rye, K S Sandhu, A Mani, D S Ranjit Singh, and Judith Nagata devote more than passing attention to Punjabi Sikhs, Hindus, and/or Muslims, either because of the importance of Punjabis among the resident Indians under consideration and/or because of the specific research interests of the contributor. Rye's essay on the Indian community in the Philippines is noteworthy for its discussion of notions of *desh/pardesh* and of how this dualism has affected Punjabi ethnic identity and assimilation in the Philippines. Mani's articles on Indians in Indonesia, Singapore and Thailand are valuable for their discussion of relationships and internal differentiations among Punjabis of various types. And Nagata's contribution on Malaysia is a sophisticated analysis of the ways in which North Indian Muslims (including Punjabis) have played the politics of religious and ethnic identity in a Malay/Muslim-dominated society.

Most Punjabis in Southeast Asia trace their ancestry back to independent migrants who arrived during the colonial period (especially 1880–1920) or in the aftermath of partition (1947–52) to fill classic middleman minority positions (e.g., in security details or as traders) in the local political economy. (This contrasts, of course, with the experience of the regionally more numerous Indian Tamils, whose ancestors were brought as contract labourers to work the tropical plantations). But despite the similar Punjabi migration history and a common legacy of relative economic success throughout the region, it is clear from the information presented here that there has been no single Punjabi pattern of assimilation and integration in post-colonial Southeast Asia. Caste, religious and regional differences among the Punjabis involved and socio-political differences in the countries of Southeast Asia have ensured that the Punjabi experience has been a varied one and that the relationships built with one another and with non-Punjabis have been diverse.

Sikhs predominate among the Punjabi migrants, and that fact is reflected in the attention they receive from these articles. But even among Punjabi Sikhs in Southeast Asia, experiences vary over time and space. Punjabi Sikh, Punjabi Hindu and Sindhu merchants have maintained strong financial and social ties in many cities throughout the region, so much so that in some places (Jakarta, Manila, Chiang Mai) they collectively manage and maintain *gurdwaras*, often to the consternation of co-religionists elsewhere. Local competition among Jat Sikhs from Majha and Malwa, dating back to colonial recruitment into police and military service, continues to colour institutional politics in Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia. And Punjabi Sikhs, who constituted an interconnected community in colonial Malaya, have seen their political fortunes diverge radically in the face of different policies of ethnic management in post-colonial Singapore and Malaysia. In fact, what these ethnographic and historical vignettes remind us is that 'Indian' and 'Punjabi' and 'Sikh' are not primordial identities, but must be continually regenerated and renegotiated in new social and political contexts. And one of the subtexts running through these articles is an awareness of the fragility and the challenges entailed in sustaining such collective social identities over generations in the diaspora.

Despite the book's flaws—especially the dated nature of some of the material presented and the lack of an index to the volume this is still a substantive collection of articles of special value to those with interests either in the South Asian diaspora or in the plural societies of Southeast Asia. Those with narrower interests in the Punjabi diaspora will want to read more selectively and may choose to forego the purchase price for a trip instead to a local research library. But it is a volume that should be consulted, at least until such time as a collection focused specifically on Punjabi communities in Southeast Asia is available.

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Making Ethnic Choices: California's Punjabi Mexican Americans, Karen Isaksen Leonard (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992). Pages xii and 333. Paperback, ISBN 1- 56639-202-0.

The Punjabi Mexicans of this fascinating study are an extremely small group whose experience could easily slip unnoticed through the net of history. Recapturing it has required singular dedication, but the result has

been well worth the effort. The original Punjabi immigrants to the Pacific coast of Canada and the United States could not have numbered more than eight or nine thousand, even if we include all of the arrivals up to 1920. More than 99 per cent of these immigrants were men, and even in subsequent decades, few women followed. As late as 1940, Punjabi men outnumbered Punjabi women in California by fifteen to one. The absence of women helps to account for the tendency of most men to return permanently to Punjab after working in North America for a few years. Among those who stayed, most chose the bachelor life. In Canada, the number who married non-Punjabi women was minuscule—perhaps three or four over the course of several decades. In California, however, nearly 400 men married across ethnic and racial lines. Most of these men chose Mexican or Mexican–American wives, although nearly 50 married Anglos and a few married Blacks or Native Indians.

Karen Leonard's intensive research, pursued over the course of a decade beginning in 1981, gives us the collective history of these Punjabi–Mexican alliances and the children they produced. The Punjabi men who sought Mexican wives were employed in agriculture. They had moved quickly, after entering California, from the status of farm labourers to that of landowners or leaseholders. As farmers they were more highly motivated to find female partners and better able to maintain them than they would have been if they were working in industrial jobs. The contrasting behaviour of their compatriots, living in bunkhouses and working in the lumber mills of British Columbia, makes the point. The choice of Mexican women was imposed by local circumstances. For nearly half a century, beginning in 1910, the American immigration department pursued an exclusionist policy towards immigrants from India, so if these men had wanted to, they could not have brought wives from home. The Punjabi Mexican population, Leonard observes, was created by the economic opportunities of rural California combined with discriminatory government policies. Immigration was not the only area in which the lives of these people were shaped by negative policy or law. California's anti-miscegenation law—applied capriciously according to the sensibilities of county clerks who issued or refused marriage licenses—generally restricted Punjabi men to women of the same skin colouring as their own. And from 1923 to 1946, these men were denied citizenship and, under the Alien Land Law, the right to own land. They found ways to get around the land law, by recording their properties and leases under the names of friends or relatives or agents, and in doing so they had the active assistance of a good many whites who could be

prompted by money or gifts, if not by some higher motive. But their persistence in California depended on such strategies.

One might be tempted to describe these men and their wives and children as marginalised people, living on the fringes of mainstream American society or on the boundaries of Mexican and Punjabi culture. Very little sense of the culture of their fathers' homeland passed on to the children. Although the children usually described themselves as Hindu rather than Mexican, they understood the term only in its California context with little appreciation of the distinctions between Hindu, Sikh and Muslim that would have defined their families in Punjab. It was the economic success of their fathers in California that made them prize their 'Hindu' instead of their Mexican background. The cultural influence that their mothers claimed was to teach their fathers the ways of America, not their Mexican heritage. The children took pride in being Hindu. Yet, in the minds of the immigrants from India who started coming in large numbers after 1965, these Punjabi Mexicans were not real Punjabis or Indians or Hindus. Not surprisingly, the old Punjabi Mexican families and the new immigrants moved in separate worlds with few points of contact.

Leonard presents this evidence of the fragility of the Punjabi Mexican identity, but rejects the suggestions that these people were limited to a subculture or to a peripheral or marginal position. Instead, she finds them representative of the positive aspects of cultural pluralism in American life. The identities of the children were mutable—reinvented according to circumstances. The children drew on all three of the cultural worlds available to them, Punjabi, Mexican and American. And, weak or strong, she says, the identities they constructed served them well. They did not have to accept any imposition. In the rural California that they knew, American did not translate automatically as Anglo-American. Their consciousness of the multiplicity of backgrounds among the people around them—Mexican, Swiss, Japanese, Anglo, etc.—gave as much validity to their American identity as any other. Leonard uses the Punjabi Mexican example to defend ethnic pluralism against the pessimistic view that without assimilation we get class cleavages along ethnic lines. If her example speaks to most cases, then her point is well made.

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Guru Nanak Jivan O Darshan (in Oriya), Sarat Chandra Panigrahi (Cuttack: Santosh Publications, 1994), Pages 99, Rs 30. Hardback. ISBN n a.

A couple of years ago, while Professor Barrier was trying to identify the major centres of Sikh studies in India, he located West Bengal as the lone pocket outside Punjab, Haryana and Delhi where research on Sikhism formed a part of modern academic discipline. This exaggerated importance of Bengal may be partly due to the lack of information about what has been going on in Orissa in recent times. Had the Missouri-based scholar turned a little diagonally towards Orissa, he would certainly have added a few place names in the same study. Modern urban coastal centres like Balasore, Cuttack and Berhampur in Orissa have occasionally brought out monographs reviewing the life and mission of the Sikh Gurus in the language of the region. The historic Datan Sahib gurdwara being situated in Cuttack, Orissa generally figures in the map of Sikh pilgrimage. Here, reputed Oriya literary journals like the *Uktal Sahitya* and *Mukur* have often brought out significant essays and commentaries on the Sikh Panth in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The memory of the founder of Sikhism is therefore not an unknown tradition in this part of the subcontinent and the annually staged folk-drama, *Moghal Tamasa*, at Bhadrak provides a glimpse of it. In this sense that present study in Oriya outlining the life and philosophy of Guru Nanak may evoke no serious enthusiasm among scholars. It may apparently seem another accretion to the already existing Oriya literature on the Panth. But its real merit lies in the opportunity that it provides to understand the pattern of non-Sikh scholarship dealing with Sikh source materials in a regional language which have often missed the attention of academicians beyond the geographical limits of Orissa.

Unlike a few earlier writings in this field, it has been undertaken by a senior university faculty member of the Vani Vihar campus (Bhubaneswar) having access to printed sources on the subject. Besides, the author has taken up the study of Guru Nanak's philosophy which his predecessors like Dass (1940), Dash (1969) and Padi (1980) had generally ignored. Panigrahi's book has been subdivided into two parts: the first one highlights the life of the founder of Sikhism while the second revolves round the salient aspects of his philosophy and teachings.

It seems that the author broadly follows the Bala model printed *sakhi* sources for the reconstruction of the life of Guru Nanak without giving them any serious scrutiny; this is likely to arouse serious criticism in the Western academic world. Generally speaking, Panigrahi projects the

founder of the Panth in the style of hagiography and regards him as a religious reformer seeking an end to many of the contemporary maladies of Hindu society. The study brings out that Guru Nanak did not preach any new religion and he was fighting against meaningless rituals dominating Hinduism in the mid-fifteenth century. The author underlines how the Sikh Guru's firm commitment to the cause of humanity was widely appreciated in his different *udasis* within the country as well as outside it. It also offers an opportunity of analysing his itinerary. In this scheme of travel, the author however, arbitrarily selects and omits the names of some of the well-known places generally said to have been visited by the founders of Sikhism. Thus he hails the Sikh Guru's going to Haridwar, Gaya, Puri, Mecca and Baghdad, but set aside Kurukshetra, Damrup, Delhi, Ceylon and a few other places from his itinerary. The reasons for this are missing and these are likely to raise strong criticism from the ranks of the Sikh faithful.

Perhaps what particularly distinguishes the study is the author's attempts at formulating an outline of Guru Nanak's philosophy. It has recently been claimed by a group of Sikh scholars that with Guru Nanak Sikhism was to emerge as a distinct and separate faith in medieval times. Panigrahi makes no such serious claim in favour of the Sikh Panth. On the contrary, he views Sikhism as an offshoot of Hinduism and hence Guru Nanak's concept of God, His will (*hukam*), the position of Guru, etc., are all evolved out of various Hindu scriptural texts. The Oriya scholar finds that Guru Nanak preached a philosophy of humanism based on non-violence.

There is no doubt that the interactions between the early Sikh Gurus and Hinduism were many and diverse but, alongside, there were also other religious traditions and Panigrahi's study seems oblivious of these living currents in the Indian society. Panigrahi has also not done justice to institutions like *sangat, dharamsala, langar* and *pangat* or their contributions towards evolving a distinct Sikh lifestyle over the centuries. The author's effort brings to the fore a typical non-Sikh perception of Sikhism based on secondary sources of history and this represents a segment of a century-old tradition yet to attain a respectable status in the contemporary world. A fuller understanding in this respect is sure to widen the horizon of Sikh studies—this becomes all the more imperative when one realises the fact that over a third of the total Sikh population in India lives outside Punjab with the level and nature of their interaction with non-Sikhs growing every day.

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Punjabi: Cognitive-descriptive Grammar, Tej K. Bhatia (London: Routledge, 1993). Pages xxxiii and 423. Price £32.50. Hardback. ISBN 0-415-00320-2.

Language is an important component of ethnicity, and linguistic boundaries often play a political and cultural role to draw the lines among different cultures within less homogeneous societies. This is the case with the Punjabi language which has been divided by the official border between India and Pakistan since partition in 1947.

Most contemporary European orientalists and Indologists believe that the partition of India has now standardised the visible forms of national identities and national cultures in India and Pakistan. Both countries now have their own separate national languages: Hindi and Urdu. But politically orientated anti-centre ethnic groups in India and Pakistan hardly accept the official national languages of their countries and argue strongly in favour of local linguistic nationalisms.

The present study on the Punjabi language does not deal with the fashionable currency of nationalism and the ethnic problems of India and Pakistan. Rather, in many ways, it is an admirable book which explains the grammatical patterns of Punjabi—the Majhi dialect spoken in Lahore (Pakistan) and the Amritsar and Gurdaspur districts of the state of Punjab, India. The introductory chapter briefly discusses the development of the Punjabi language since 1812 when William Carey, a British missionary, published a book called *A Grammar of the Punjabee Language* (Serampore: Routledge, 1812). The missionary scholar used the term 'Sikh Punjabee' but the text was first and foremost the Punjabi language itself, represented in English grammatical formats. Since the publication of William Carey's book, a number of other studies have contributed to the Punjabi language and its several dialects have been studied in Europe as well as both the Punjabs. Reverend Canon W P Hares (1929), another missionary in Ludhiana, also confirmed the facts which he found while travelling to Punjabi villages.

It must be remembered that the Punjabi language varies in every district and certain words which are in common use, for example, in the Ludhiana district, are almost unknown in the Sialkot district (now Pakistani Punjab) and vice versa.

The case of 'standard Punjabi' is an interesting debate in the book. Like Bhatia, many other eminent grammarians and sociolinguists believe that the Majhi dialect is the standard Punjabi because over the last three hundred years the central tract of the Punjab, including the two main cities of Lahore and Amritsar, provided the literary publications and

intellegensia in the undivided Punjab. But my own view is that, since 1947, partition has created two different societies and two different publishing cultures in the two Punjabs. 'Standard Punjabi' in Lahore has declined in favour of Urdu, and the Punjabi intelligentsia prefer to be called patriot Pakistanis. The acceptance of Urdu in Pakistani Punjab has created a visible cultural gap between urban Punjabis and rural Punjabis. However, the Punjabi language has no social status and prestige among its indigenous speakers.

On the other side of the border, Punjabi has an official status, being a language of the province, and Gurmukhi script has had a religious privilege since the installation of the *Adi Granth* (1604). Pre-partition and after partition, Gurmukhi Punjabi has also been under pressure from Hindi and Urdu, but characteristically it has developed its own standard idiom and register in Amritsar and Gurdaspur. Yet it is hard to find any dialectical explanations for the 'standard Punjabi' of both cities in Bhatia's book. Although, in many places, the author has tried to explain the tonal variations and structural approach to Punjabi tones, his explanations are not clear enough to compare with the study of Baldev Raj Gupta (1990). Gupta's linguistic concept of dialect geography is clearly acceptable and brings more information for the student of this subject about the tones and speech of the Indian Punjabi towns of Amritsar and Gurdaspur. For instance he maintains that the tendency to use a low tone is so strong in the Gurdaspur district and the Dogri-speaking regions that almost each word has a predictable low tone as opposed to mid (or no) tone in other dialects. Such a tendency regarding tones has also extended to certain varieties of the Majhi dialect of Amritsar district.

Many other examples of the linguistic areas of the Indian Punjab can be found in the main chapters of the book. There are some examples of Western Lahnda (a dialect which was once considered a dialect but which has now got the full status of language: Siraiki in Pakistani Punjab).

The best part of the book is on morphology, and two hundred pages contain several examples of linguistic understanding characterised entirely by vocabulary differences: either by the use of particular words, or by the use of words in a particular sense. For example, see the debate on manner (p. 184) and gender (p. 216). Compared with all the other grammarians and Indologists who have studied the Punjabi language and who have written on Punjabi morphology, Bhatia's work has outstanding quality. However, the maps borrowed and adapted from Schwartzberg (1978: xxii–xxiii; Plate X B2: p. 101) could have better separated the linguistic distinctions of the different geographical regions and their dialects. These are small blemishes on an otherwise excellent work. I

thoroughly recommend this work as an excellent textbook for the students of this subject.

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Ghadar Movement: Ideology, Organisation, Strategy Harish K. Puri (Amritsar: Guru Nanak Dev University Press, 1993) Second Edition, 327 pp. Rs. 200. ISBN n a. *Insurrection to Agitation: The Naxalite Movement in Punjab*, Paramjit Singh Judge (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1992). 190 pp. Rs 200. ISBN 81-7154-527-0.

The left and nationalist movements hold an inevitable fascination for scholars of Punjab studies. The failure of violent nationalism before 1947 gave rise to the oldest regional communist movement in India and, after partition, left a legacy of revolt that has assumed a number of incarnations since. These two books are in many ways closely related. Whereas Puri's volume is an expanded edition of a work that was published in 1983, Judge's contribution provides a detailed analysis of the Naxalite movement in Punjab.

Although the Ghadar Party of North America attracted a sizeable scholarship, much of it has been of a pedestrian nature. Puri's effort, in contrast, is distinguished by its analytical treatment that thoroughly reviews the Ghadar Party's ideology, organisation and strategy. This edition is enlarged by the addition of a new section that takes the story of the Ghadar Party up to 1947. The change in the Ghadar Party—from ultra nationalist to communist—is systematically examined with a useful review of recent research. Overall, the result represents meticulous scholarship on a much misunderstood subject. Already in the teaching of Punjab history courses this volume has become an essential text and is unlikely to be surpassed in the near future.

The cultural legacy of the Ghadar Party is recognised by Judge in his examination of the Punjab Naxalites, though not in the context of what Jaswant Singh Kanwal would have called the 'trail of blood'. For Judge the emphasis is on the formal documentation and literature of the Naxalites. In fact, one-third of the book is devoted to the coverage of trite Naxalite formulations that had as much relevance to Punjabi society as the inner thought of the most crass New Delhi party intellectuals faithfully chanting the *mantras* of Mao. The result is poor narrative, pseudo-intellectualising and weak research. Had Judge looked more closely at the

cultural roots of Punjabi Naxalites, he would have had to explain why most of them joined the movement 'under the influence of Sikh history [and] did not understand communist ideology' (p. 77). In fact the most interesting sections of the book are when Judge does delve into social history, as for example, in his discussion of *Sadhs* who in his view functioned as 'village stallions'. It was precisely among the *deras* and social bandits that we need to situate Naxalites rather than portraying them as glorified intellectuals providing enlightenment to illiterate peasants.

Despite the limitations of Judge's work, it is the first serious study of Punjab's Naxalites. As such it will be appreciated, at least by ageing Naxalites themselves. It will take several decades of more serious scholarship, however, if the standards established by Puri on the Ghadar Party are to be reached by students of Punjab's Naxalites.

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Hailey: A Study of British Imperialism, 1872-1969, John W. Cell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). pages xv and 332 p. £32.50. Hardback. ISBN 0-521-4107-6.

Malcolm Hailey had a very long innings in public life. Entering the ICS and arriving in India in 1894, he started his career in the Punjab, eventually rising to be finance member and then home member in the Viceroy's Council, and then Governor of the Punjab (1924–28) and of the United Provinces (1928-34). Forty years in India wasn't enough. He went on to a second career, related mostly to Africa, directing the *African Survey* in both its first and second editions, advising the Colonial Office, and writing and speaking on African and Commonwealth affairs until nearly the end of his life at the age of 97. Punjab and the 'Punjab school' shaped him, particularly his five years (1901–1906) as founding colonisation officer for the Lower Jhelum canal colony; and he figured centrally in Punjab politics throughout the 1920s, including being involved in three of the most important/notorious episodes. He wrote the official Punjab government report on martial law and Jallianwala Bagh in 1919. He was the leading government figure in the last phase of the agitation for control of Sikh gurdwaras in 1924-25. In 1927-28, despite virulent communal conflicts between Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs in Punjab, he managed to secure their agreement to cooperate with the Simon Commission's forthcoming constitutional review. All this is analysed carefully in this book. If one

wants to know what one more conservative-minded person in the *raj* was thinking at this time, and what the Governor of the Punjab was doing, then this is an excellent source.

One of the main themes that runs through the India and Punjab part of the book relates to Hailey's ambiguous position on various political issues. His position on Indian nationalism exemplifies this. There is evidence that he saw clearly, probably as early as 1914, that Indian nationalism must ultimately drive the British out. Intellectually, he understood the potential of the nationalist movement, saw that the *raj* was in for what he accepted would have to be an orderly retreat ending eventually in departure. At the same time, however, he did not really accept this prognosis. He took a hard line on many of the nationalist demands that came before him. Also, he appears to have never really accepted Congress's claim to be the authentic embodiment of the nationalist movement; and he was busy at the end of his Indian career trying to build up a conservative landlord party in UP as a viable alternative to the Congress. His private analysis of both the salt march and the revolutionary potential of the no-rent campaign could easily have been written by Jawaharlal Nehru. Hailey's ambiguity also surfaces in relation to communalism. Part of him hated it, yet he was not averse to using it in Punjab, and even fanning it, in pursuit of his imperial objectives. In these and other examples the author draws attention repeatedly to the 'fundamental ambiguity of the man, which personified so well the contradictory nature of the empire he served and represented' (p. 213).

The book is a chronological 'study' of a public career within an evolving political context, not a biographical portrait of a personality. There is little here about Hailey's family life, almost nothing beyond brief speculation about the private personality behind the public persona. The main reason for this is simply that the few surviving members of Hailey's family declined to cooperate. The author therefore relied on the abundant Hailey papers—the Indian portion in the India Office Library, London, and the African material at Rhodes House, Oxford—together with other private collections and an impressive array of other primary and secondary sources. If this is not biography, neither is it in some sense a study which represents British imperialism, the people who ran it, what they did and what they thought. Hailey was much too exceptional to represent anything. Certainly he did not represent other ICS people, about whom the book says almost nothing. As for the mass of (mostly Indian) civil and military people lower down in the *raj* who did the dirty work of empire, they disappear altogether from view once Hailey leaves Lower Jhelum in 1906 for higher office. In consequence, the book is a curiously narrow study in British imperialism from which it would be dangerous to draw any general

conclusions. It does, however, give a convincing account of one eminent imperialist's thoughts and actions related to high imperial policy affecting the Punjab and India. Those interested in the politics of the Punjab in the early part of this century will find it a useful addition to the literature.

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Sikhs in Britain: An Annotated Bibliography, Darshan Singh Tatla and Eleanor M. Nesbitt, Bibliography in Ethnic Relations, No 13, (Coventry, Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations, University of Warwick, 1994). Pages 103. £8.50. Paperback. ISBN 0 948303 09 3, ISSN 0267-7458.

This welcome second edition of *Sikhs in Britain: An Annotated Bibliography* will provide a useful tool to both occasional and serious scholars of the Sikh presence in Britain. The publication has nine clearly defined sections, ranging from 'Migration and Settlement' to 'Language, Literature and the Arts'. Though sufficient attention is not paid to cross-referencing articles, this shortcoming is acknowledged by the authors. In fact, the author and place index offered in the last pages of the bibliography is sufficient to peruse a particular body of work. The introduction to the publication offers a brief history of the Sikhs in Britain, which would have been aided by an equally brief history of Sikhism in the subcontinent by way of an overview for those totally new to the field.

Perhaps the most significant feature of this second edition is the inclusion of literature and criticism written in the Punjabi language. This rich source of social, cultural and political history is one which is often ignored by academics when studying the South Asian presence in Britain. While the list presented is limited by the difficulty in obtaining older pieces of work, and further in actually tracing their publishing histories, it is nevertheless a crucial addition. The writings of many of the first generations of immigrants to Britain provide a vivid picture of life in a new country and are an essential part of any study of the Sikh presence. It is hoped that this inclusion will act as a blueprint for further bibliographies relating to other minority groups in Britain.

The annotated bibliography is often seen as the graft end of the academic production spectrum. While almost all of the publications mentioned in the bibliography have some sort of description attached,

these very widely in their scope. The best two annotated sections of the bibliography are the 'Migration and Settlement' and 'Education', which may be in part due to the authors' own interests. Of particular note is the section on religion, where it would be inferred from the title of the publication that this would be the most prominent section, in fact the number of publications annotated is relatively few. This is in part due to the large number of publications listed, though this is by no means exhaustive. There is almost no reference to the large number of publications that have been produced by multi-cultural units in local education authorities. The packs produced by Leicestershire County Council on Baisakhi and Guru Nanak immediately come to mind as valuable additions, which would also be readily available.

At the end of each section in *Sikhs In Britain* we are offered a list of audio-visual aids, compiled from television and radio. Once again these lists provide an invaluable aid for lecturing and teaching, though they are limited in the material they cover. To cite the Religions section once again, the two films by Channel Four (1992) on the life of Guru Nanak and the celebration of Baisakhi are not included. The necessarily ephemeral nature of data sources of this type calls into question the ability to create an accurate bibliography of these sources. Though the authors make the point that the audio-visual materials cited are only a selection, the role of these sources is of wider interest, especially in the light of the cultural studies approach, where cultural products of this type are central.

Sikhs in Britain: An Annotated Bibliography is an essential starting point for any scholar seriously interested in pursuing a project on the Sikh presence in Britain. The clear layout of the references, and the sections incorporated therein, make the bibliography—unlike many—fairly accessible. For those who wish to follow more serious research, the bibliography is still a useful starting point. The two important contributions that the bibliography makes are, first and most significantly, to acknowledge the writings by Punjabi writers and academics (there are references to work that has taken place in Punjab, India). This will hopefully open up the space and encourage more studies of this literature. Second, by incorporating some audio-visual material in their presentation, Tatla and Nesbitt have provided access to contemporary scholars of culture to the field of Sikh studies.

Virinder S Kalra
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Of related interest

States, Nations, Sovereignty
Sri Lanka, India and the Tamil Eelam Movement

Sumantra Bose

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A NATION IN TURMOIL

Nationalism and Ethnicity in Pakistan, 1937–1958

YUNAS SAMAD

Traditional accounts of the history of Pakistan focus either on the politics leading up to the emergence of Pakistan, or on the political development that took place once that country came into existence. In a refreshing departure, this study explores the tension between centripetal and centrifugal forces in subcontinental Muslim politics treating them as a continuity spanning the partition of the subcontinent in 1947. The thrust of the analysis is to provide an understanding of the historical determinants of present–day Pakistani politics and an insight into the political instability affecting that nation.

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