Indian Historical Research Since Independence

Ed. Tarasankar Banerjee

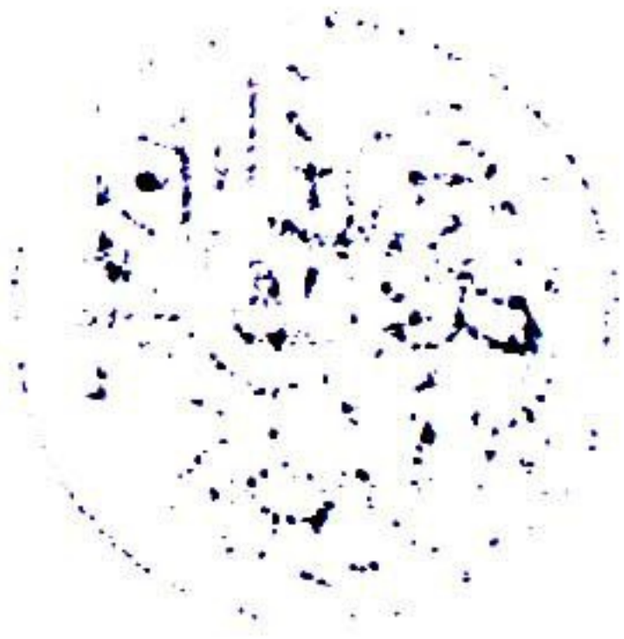
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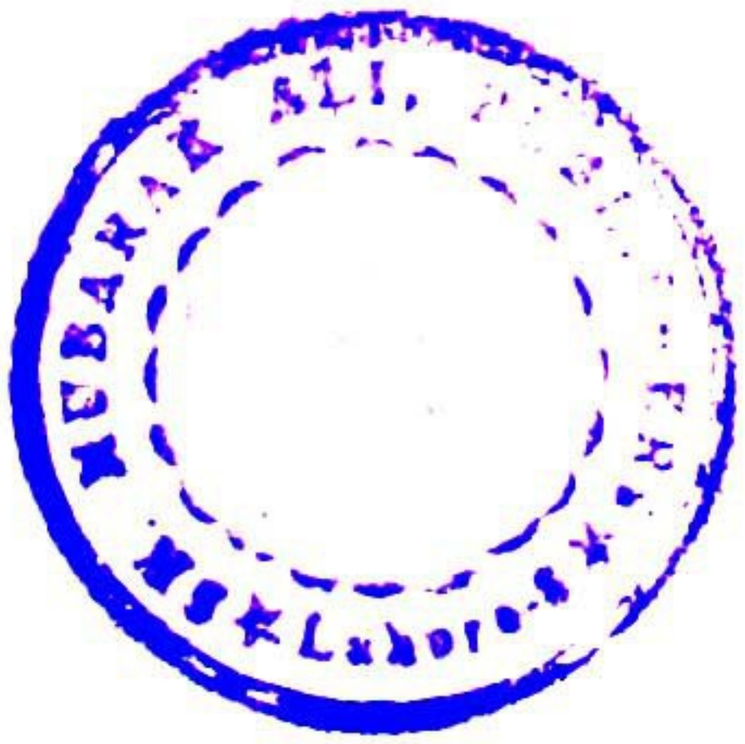


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INDIAN HISTORICAL RESEARCH SINCE INDEPENDENCE

Ed. **TARASANKAR BANERJEE**





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To the Participants

of the Silver Jubilee Conference of

The Institute of Historical Studies

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FOREWORD

It is indeed very heartening that the Department of History is bringing out a special Commemorative Volume entitled 'Indian Historical Research since Independence' on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee Conference of the Institute of Historical Studies to be held at Santiniketan, 25th-27th October, 1986. The freedom of the country from the colonial rule ushered in a new era of a vigorous mental ferment in almost every sphere, and historical research in India received a strong boost from that development. Much has been written about historical research in India till 1947. But we are yet to properly study the new trends of historical research since Independence. The changing pattern of research in our country has been reflected in the present volume which will benefit both the students and the scholars of Indian history. Divided into two parts, the volume will be a ready reference, so to say, for all concerned.

It is not possible to make a particular reference to any single write-up. All of them have been ably written with proper care and attention. The Department of History, particularly the editor of the volume, deserves appreciation for the imagination and insight in picking up the theme for indepth study.

Santiniketan
5th October, 1986

Nemai Sadhan Bose

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PREFACE

Indian historical research stood on the cross-roads in 1947 when the country won freedom from the colonial rule of Great Britain. It is well-known that Indian historical research flourished under the tutelage of British scholars at the initial state. In the pre-Independence period the British mind very naturally loomed large in historical research on India. When the country became free, perhaps the greatest single need in Indian historical studies was to overcome the British legacy. India's independence brought in its wake a definite but slow change in the perspective as well as in approach to historical research. The early Indian writers could, no doubt, Indianise Indian history to some extent but a definite, qualitative change was possible only after 1947. Modernisation of the writing of Indian historical past was the intellectual response to a new political process which was initiated almost unperceived in the post-independence period. The change was at first slow ; but as decades rolled on, it gathered momentum and placed historical research on a new footing. The result was that historical research flowed into new directions and dimensions with a marked change in the quality and character of research by the new generations. One can easily find that historical researches in the present decade signify to a great extent a departure from the tradition which we inherited in 1947.

Much has been written on Indian historiography in the 19th and early 20th centuries. But not many serious efforts have been made in a connected way to examine the character and trend of historical researches since Independence. Perhaps, we were too near the scene to make a dispassionate study during the first three decades after Independence. Time has now come when we can attempt a stock taking and qualitative analysis of historical research in our country. Fortunately, the Silver Jubilee Conference of the Institute of Historical Studies at Santiniketan provides an opportunity to look back and reflect upon our historical researches during the last four decades. During this period one can see a rapid growth of historical research in most of the States in India, particularly after the 'Reorganisation of States'. With a gradual change in the pattern and direction of research, new areas of research, other than the traditional ones, were developing, as well as a qualitative

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change in the old areas of research like the nationalist movement. As a result, we can claim today that Indian historical research is firmly set on the course of modernisation of the writing of Indian history.

The present Volume has come in the shape of a Commemoration Volume on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of the Institute of Historical Studies ; but it has consciously avoided the stereotyped format of a Commemoration stuff to make it more remunerating and meaningful to the scholars of Indian history. The Volume has, therefore, been divided into two parts : Part-I deals with researches in States and Part-II tackles a few select themes in which new researches are blooming. There are altogether fifteen articles written by competent scholars who are specialists in their own respective areas.

We feel sorry that all the major States in India could not be studied in this Volume. This was not because we did not want to but because of the faltering and uncertain response of some of the scholars who were requested to contribute papers on historical researches in their respective States. Requests had been sent in March-April last when the holding of the Conference at Santiniketan was finally settled. Some had backed out quite late, and no alternative arrangement could be made ; and a few did not send their papers ultimately. If we had waited indefinitely, the Volume would not have come at all. So we rely on the dictum that 'it is better to have half a loaf rather than no bread'. Nevertheless, we sincerely regret this lacunae ; but the situation was beyond our control.

We are thankful to all those scholars who had to burn many a midnight candle to write the papers included in this Volume. Their solid contributions have elevated our effort to a great height. We are grateful to Visva-Bharati, particularly to our beloved Upacharya, Professor Nemai Sadhan Bose, for the financial support and encouragement to our project. Lastly, Messrs Naya Prokash has earned our deep gratitude by agreeing to publish the Volume on a small subsidy only.

Department of History
Santiniketan
2 October, 1986

Tarasankar Banerjee
Professor and the Head
Department of History

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PART—I

RESEARCHES IN STATES

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1

Historical Research in North-East India : Trends and Directions

MANORAMA SHARMA
J. B. BHATTACHARJEE

The removal of British colonial rule in 1947 brought about a spate of developments in various spheres of the socioeconomic life in the Indian heartland. Academic and intellectual activities, which cannot be alienated from the general pattern of socio-economic growth, therefore, saw an equally rapid advancement. But in the northeastern region of India, 1947 did not change much the state of affairs and the colonial tensions, though from a different quarter no doubt, still continued to colour deve-lopments in the region. As a result, socioeconomic developments were not taking place at the desired pace, and as the region remained backward in comparison to many other parts of the country, so also the academic and intellectual activities felt the effects of this general backwardness. The trend of historical research also fell victim to this and thus the developments in the field of study of the history of the region, particularly, in interpretative and analytical studies leave much to be desired.

There is, of course, no doubt the fact that the scholars and students of history have been constantly trying to gather the scattered facts about the history of the region. This process had begun in the pre-1947 period and the first name that must be mentioned in this context is that of Sir Edward Gait.[1]

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His book on the history of Assam is the first attempt at a comprehensive history of the ancient dynasties of Assam, the Ahom rule and finally, the British colonisation of Assam, although his work is sketchy in parts and it has been doubted whether he ever consulted the non-official documents of the period.[2] Despite his many shortcomings, it must be granted that he set the ball rolling for the development of an empirical historiography of the region. After him came the period which can be said to have been dominated by Dr. S. K. Bhuyan who not only collected data on early relations of the East India Company with Assam[3] but also made available to researchers many *buranjis* by translating, editing, and bringing to light many of these Ahom chronicles which form one of the most important source materials for analysing and understanding the six hundred years of Ahom rule in Assam. During this period Raisaheb Kanaklal Baruah and Mahamahopadhyay Padmanath Bhattacharyya Vidyavinode made important contributions in the history of ancient Assam. Baruah's *Early History of Kamarupa* and Vidyavinode's *Kamarupa Sasanavali* are still considered as outstanding work. Similarly, the work of A. C. Choudhury and Kailash Chandra Sinha on Surma Valley and Tripura, respectively, made liberal use of ancient texts and mediaeval chronicles. A. C. Banerjee's *Eastern Frontier of British India* is a pioneering work in modern history of the region. Though not a historian by discipline, Raj Mohan Nath's *The Background of Assamese Culture* must also be mentioned here as a work which was an attempt at interpreting the social and cultural backgrounds of the people of the north-eastern region. With the exception of this work which is a slight deviation from the empirical work of the others mentioned, the main trend of historical research in the pre-1947 period and the years that closely followed was one which was heavily influenced by Western liberal ideas of empiricism and documentation, with very little attempt at critical interpretative analysis. Into this genre of historiography falls also the work of scholars like Banikanta Kakati, Birinchi Kumar Baruah, R. M. Lahiri, P. C. Choudhury and B. C. Chakravarty. Their work are, however, valuable because they have opened the

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field for further research and brought into light many hitherto unknown and undelved into source materials.

In the post-1947 period, the climate for historical research was made more favourable by the growth of institutions which patronised the study of the history of the region. Organisation like Kamarupa Anusandhan Samiti, established in 1920s, played a very active role in the spread and study of historical knowledge of the region. The Assam Sahitya Sabha (estd. 1917) too, in the post-1947 period, realised the importance of historical research and started encouraging the study of history by even including a special session on history amongst its literary deliberations in the annual conferences of the Sabha. Even more recently the establishment of the North-East India History Association in 1979, has given a new impetus to the development of historical research in this region. In the words of its founder General Secretary, "The purpose of this organisation is to coordinate these researches and to undertake collective/group research, by serving as a forum to exchange notes and by guiding the young researchers in scientific and secular lines. Besides serving the universal content of historical knowledge, there is a need to look into the specific problems of the region historically. We emphasise research in such fields that are socially meaningful and relevant in creating an awareness in the historical basis of the problems confronting the region, the experiments in social and economic development, and the response and reaction of the masses towards development schemes."[4] The Association holds its sessions annually, and the proceedings are published regularly. Besides the professional historians and scholars from other social science disciplines, its three hundred and odd number of members include history teachers from the universities, colleges and schools. Among the more than two hundred papers presented and discussed in its six annual sessions held so far, quite a few are commendable experiments in inter-disciplinary approaches and in interpretative scientific analysis. This organisation undoubtedly holds out great promise in promoting historical research fundamentally as the premier forum of the historians in the region. Besides, the growth of four universities

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in this region which have separate departments devoted to the study of history and the institutionalisation of historical research, have done much to set a pace in the development of historiography of the region. Even though much has been achieved by these organisations and institutions, yet, the trend of historiography has not by and large seen much change from that of the pre-1947 period.

The one historian who can be mentioned here as having set the norms of historical research from the 1950s onwards is Dr. H. K. Barpujari who dominated historical research in Assam in the decades after 1950 not only by his own writings but also by guiding numerous research scholars in their quest for historical knowledge of the region. Through his books[5] Professor Barpujari began a new enquiry into the history of the region, particularly in the colonial period, and incorporated in his work many social and economic factors also, which had not been mentioned hitherto. He set the trend of writing history which was not mere documentation of facts but also had some interpretative elements. This interpretation was, no doubt, done from the liberal ideological point of view. This liberal ideological interpretative trend began to hold sway not only because of the contributions of Professor Barpujari himself and the initiatives that he took, but also because till the mid-1960s no other historiographical trend had developed in Assam. Thus, under the influence of this traditional empiricist and liberal interpretative trend a number of scholars began to take up historical research of various problems of this region. Mention can be made of Dr. Hamlet Bareh, who worked on the Khasis ; Dr. Milton S. Sangma and his writings on the Garos ; Alemchibs Ao, Dr. S. K. Barpujari and Dr. H. Horam in Nagaland ; J. Roy and Gangmumei Kabui in Manipur ; Dr. N. R. Roychoudhury and Dr. J. Ganchoudhury in Tripura ; Dr. Suhas Chatterjee and Dr. Lalrimawia in Mizoram ; L. N. Chakravarty, J. N. Chowdhury and Dr. M. L. Bose in Arunachal Pradesh ; and Dr. J. B. Bhattacharjee, Dr. N. N. Acharyya, Dr. J. N. Phukan, Dr. S. L. Baruah, Dr. Shrutidev Goswami, Dr. S. C. Dutta, Dr. S. Dutta to name a very few in Assam.

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From the end of the 1960s a new trend in the development of historiography of the region came to be noticed in the writings of Professor Amalendu Guha and Professor Hiren Gohain (who though not a historian by discipline, has yet contributed tremendously to the understanding of various aspects of historical development in Assam). These scholars attempted to a more comprehensive understanding of the various phases of historical development of the region by analysing these phases from historical materialist point of view. This trend is a departure from the liberal ideological standpoint.

The liberal ideological standpoint of historical analysis tends to look at history from above and it does not go beyond the values at a superstructural level of analysis. Further, analysis from this standpoint becomes descriptive mainly because it seems to accept the dichotomy between the facts and values, which in turn saddles it firmly in the lines of positivist social science and the historical analysis which emanates from this. "The positivists, anxious to stake out their claim for history as a science, contributed the weight of their influence to this (the) cult of facts. First ascertain the facts, said the positivists, then draw your conclusions from them."[6] Lord Acton, who was very much a part of this positivist school, for whom science meant a positivist science, had in fact written that, "Our aim is the encouragement of the true scientific spirit and the disinterested love of truth."[7] In North-East India, this view of history that the task of the historian was merely to show how it really fitted in with the empiricist tradition which was the dominant strain from Edward Gait, through S. K. Bhuyan down to H. K. Barpujari. This empirical tradition presupposed a complete separation between subject and object, and "the belief in a hard core of historical facts existing objectively and independently of the interpretation of the historians"[8] is a fallacy, but the positivists fail to see this point. The historical analysis which emanated from this tradition, therefore, remained at the superstructural level.

It is in this context that the contribution of Amalendu Guha and Hiren Gohain become important. They have initiated a

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trend which is a break away from the positivist trend and they are trying to understand historical developments in North-East India through a class analysis. Though Guha has been trying to do this, but even he sometimes falls into the empiricist line and there are many parts of his book *Planters Raj to Swaraj*, which have very little of class analysis in it. Despite the occasional deviation, the trend set by Guha and Gohain is attracting many young scholars who are realising that to understand the history of a society it is not enough to ask merely how and what, but also to know why, and that the answer to that 'why' must be sought not in facts alone or in the superstructure but at the base of the society, the people, who are the moving forces of history. This historiographical trend has weaned away some scholars from their earlier standpoint, who with maturity, have begun to ask what actually is history. Among such historians one can mention Professor J. B. Bhattacharjee whose recent work on the tribal societies and state formation processes in North-East India are very different in perspective and analysis from his earlier work on Cachar and the Garos. A number of doctoral and pre-doctoral dissertations that have been completed under his supervision are mostly analytical in nature, and these are good examples of the growing popularity of scientific historiography in the region. In fact, many more younger scholars would have begun work on these lines of a comprehensive socioeconomic analysis of historical developments, if the older generation of historians of this region could have given them the guidance to popularise the trend of an objective-scientific historical enquiry. But for highly pro-establishment organisations and institutions it is difficult to popularise a line of historical analysis which would disturb the status-quo. This is exactly the reason why the course contents in history syllabi in most of the universities in the region are continued to be traditional, although it is accepted that serious researches cannot be expected from the young scholars unless as students they are properly introduced to the processes and concepts in history at the honours and post-graduate levels. It is only the History Department of the North-Eastern Hill University which is taking steps towards introducing the students

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of history to a more progressive study of history by designing the courses on these lines. Historiography is one of the compulsory courses in NEHU at the post-graduate level, and there are advanced courses in social and economic developments including peasants and workers movements, middle class studies, intellectual history, etc. The impact of such appropriate orientation is reflected in the research programme of the department. Some of the M. Phil. and Ph.D. dissertations either completed or in progress are on as serious themes as colonialism, feudalism, peasant movements, social and state formations, middle class, etc. The History Department of the North-Eastern Hill University is also a pioneer in yet another field of historical enquiry—that is, the recording of oral history. This is a very significant field in the context of northeast. There are certain areas of this region where there are no written official or other records of certain phases of historical development. In such regions one very useful source could be the taping of the oral history of the people. This tradition of oral history is a very essential source of historical data for a region like North-East India, and it should be a good news to the historians of this region that the History Department of NEHU has taken the first step in introducing that tradition.

The historiography that develops in a region must necessarily be one which would aim at understanding the various phases of development and problems of the region. But, as Professor H. L. Gupta pointed out in his presidential address to the North-East India History Association's 6th Annual Conference, in 1985, at Agartala, that there was always the possibility of being emotionally carried away by regional patriotism in analysing historical data. This danger is, of course, there for all historians, especially those who look at history from above. But this danger can be minimised and an objective analysis arrived at if history is studied from below and a class analysis of societies is arrived at. For such a trend of historiography to develop, it will be futile to look to the institutionalised departments to set the trend, if the like minded historians of the region do not first get together to popularise the trend amongst research scholars, students, and the reading public. When such a line of thinking

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begins to hold sway, as the earlier conventional empiricist line had done, then automatically a new trend in history writing will be able to establish itself. For such a historiography to develop in this region, the historians and other social scientists who hold the historical-materialist perspective of historical analysis would have to strengthen their own order by regular publications and discussions, and show that the history of this region could have a different and more meaningful analysis than what has been presented till now. With such organisation and interaction it is possible that a scientific, objective and unconventional historiography of a high order will gradually emerge in this region, and the constant interaction between the positivist historiography based on class analysis which we hope will emerge, will contribute a very healthy trend to the development of historiography in North-East India.

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Growth and Pattern of Historical Research in Bihar Since Independence

SOMNATH ROY

(A) Research in Universities and Colleges

Nineteen fortyseven—although a highly significant date in the history of our country—does not form a landmark in the history of historical research in Bihar. While in that memorable year, the province of Bihar, along with the rest of India crossed the threshold of a new era, it took some years to change, if not completely abandon the system of higher education that was prevalent in the fag end of the colonial period. The University of Patna, founded in 1917, had its jurisdiction over the entire province and its nerve-centre was the Patna College, the 'Oxford of Bihar with no Cambridge to compete with'.[1] Whether or not the comparison was apt, there is no denying that the Patna College in those days was one of the best known educational institutions in the country, famous for its standard of teaching and discipline among students. However, it is doubtful whether the college authorities evinced much interest in original research. The teachers, who were quite few in number in different departments, were overburdened with extracurricular and unacademic administrative duties, besides engaging a large number of classes from I to VI year, there being no separate department for postgraduate teaching in

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those days.[2] The worldwide economic depression in the early thirties and the devastating global war in early forties complicated the life of the people, and a teacher had neither enough time nor enough resources to research in such a complex and turbulant situation. One cannot but admire the Triumvirate of the History Department of the Patna College—Dr. K. K. Datta (1905-82), Prof. S. H. Askari (1901—) and Dr. J. N. Sarkar (1907—) whose passion for research continued unabated in all these years of trials and tribulations. Equally creditable was the performance of Dr. B. B. Majumder (1899-1969) of B. N. College, Patna ; Dr. B. B. Mishra of Siwan College, Siwan ; and Prof. K. K. Basu of T. N. J. College*, Bhagalpur, who together with the Triumvirate did not allow the flame of research to be extinguished that had been kindled earlier by Jadunath Sarkar, C. J. Hamilton, J. N. Samaddar[3] and others.

Things began to change after independence. A second university (the University of Bihar) was created north of the Ganges in 1952 with headquarters at Muzaffarpur. In the subsequent years, some more Universities were established at Ranchi, Bhagalpur, Bodh-Gaya (Magadh University) and Darbhanga (L. N. Mithila University). A very significant change in the sphere of higher education was the bifurcation of the postgraduate and undergraduate departments in all these Universities. It was expected that a teacher would devote considerable time to research in addition to his teaching job. Another significant development was the formation of the Department of Ancient Indian History and Archaeology in the University of Patna a few years after independence. Indological studies in Bihar thus got a new lease of life. The Department started well under its first chairman Dr. A. S. Altekar. He was succeeded by Dr. B. P. Sinha, the author of *The Decline of the Kingdom of Magadha.* The Department under Dr. Sinha carried on some excavation work in different areas including the mound at Chirand.[4] Dr. K. K. Datta, as the founder Vice-Chancellor of the Magadh University (1962-1965), was instrumental in opening the Department of Ancient Indian and Asian

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* Presently T. N. B. College.

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Studies there. In view of the importance of Bodh-Gaya, this Department was expected to be a centre of Buddhistic studies. The first Head of the Department was Dr. Yogendra Mishra (*History of Vaishali* ; *History of Videha*) who was succeeded by Dr. Upendra Thakur (*History of Mithila* ; *Hunas in India*). Regular inflow of yellow-robed scholars from S. E. Asia to Magadh University makes one feel as if the spirit of ancient Nalanda has been revived.

The towering personality among the historians of modern Bihar was Dr. K. K. Datta under whose guidance and inspiration a band of young scholars started exploring virgin fields and in course of time established themselves on strong footing in the academic world. It is interesting to note that Dr. Datta tops the list of Bihari scholars in so far as the number of publications is concerned. No other historian in Bihar has been able to produce even half the number of Dr. Datta's research publications. In course of half a century's painstaking research he touched upon different facets of history—local, regional and national. His *Santal Insurrection* (Calcutta, 1940) unfolded a new chapter in historical research in Bihar, probably in India. No other historian before him cared to deal with primary resistance movements to British rule initiated by tribals. Dr. Datta analysed how the introduction of the Indo-British administrative system in the interior of the country led to the exploitation of the innocent Santals who helplessly reacted against the mightiest of the colonial powers. Curiously enough, the *Santal Insurrection* remained almost unnoticed for about two decades. Suddenly in 1950s, scholars, essayists, novelists, playwrights and politicians began to take keen interest in this small but brilliant work. Following the footsteps of Dr. Datta three of his pupils, Dr. J. C. Jha (*The Kol Insurrection of Chotonagpur*, 1964), Dr. S. P. Sinha (*Life and Times of Birsa Bhagwan*, 1964) and Dr. Suresh Singh (*The Dust Storm and the Hanging Mist : A Study of Birsa Munda and his Movement in Chotonagpur*, 1874-1901,1966) published valuable monographs on similar movements in other areas of Bihar[5]. Dr. Datta deals with Bihar as a whole in the *Life and Thought of the People of Bihar* (Calcutta, 1957), *Gandhiji in*

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Bihar (Patna, 1970) and *Biography of Kunwar Singh and Amar Singh* (Patna, 1957)[6]. Formerly the historians were interested in studying ancient or medieval Bihar—the land of Buddha, Ashoka, Sher Shah and Vidyapati. Owing largely to Dr. Datta's efforts, the scholars are now taking increasing interest in the history of modern Bihar.

Dr. Datta widens his canvas in *Dawn of Renascent India* (1950, 1964), *Renaissance, Nationalism and Social Change in Modern India* (1963), *Survey of India's Social Life and Economic Condition in the Eighteenth Century* (1961), *Reflections on the 'Mutiny'* (1966) and *A Social History of Modern India* (1975). Dr. Datta transcends national barriers in *Modern India and World Fellowship* (1970). In this work he makes an exhaustive study of India's cultural contact with different countries of the world since the late eighteenth century.

Some years back this writer pointed out that Dr. Datta created a new school of historians in Bihar.[7] This view has been challenged by only one scholar so far ; but Prof. S. H. Askari seems to agree with this writer when he says, "what I want to emphasise upon are two things—his pioneering work in making Bihar research minded and his capacity to conceive schemes and organize archival institutions to promote the cause of research···if there is a single person through whom men like me have been infused with a spirit of enquiry and investigation and who created an atmosphere of research in our state it is he."[8] Another historian who does not belong to Bihar and thus can be expected to give his opinion with a detached and unbiased mind, observes, "One may say that a new school of historical research that emerged in Bihar—the K. K. Datta school—was the single great achievement of the departed historian".[9]

Some of the finest products of the Datta School of historians are H. R. Ghosal (*Economic Transition in Bengal Presidency*, 1950, 1966) ; Shyambehari Singh (*European Agency Houses in Bengal*, 1964) ; Bimal Prasad (*Origin of India's Foreign Policy*, 1960) ; V. A. Narain (*Social History of Modern India : Nineteenth Century*, 1972 ; *Jonathon Duncan of Varanasi* 1961) ; J. C. Jha (*Kol Insurrection*) ; Qeyamuddin Ahmed (*The Wahabi*

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Movement in India, 1966) ; Rajiv Nain Prasad (*Raja Mansingh of Amber*) ; Arun Coomer Bose (*Indian Revolutionaries Abroad*) and Surendra Gopal (*Patna in the Nineteenth Century*, 1982).

Of Dr. Datta's generation, the other outstanding historians are Dr. B. B. Majumdar, Dr. B. B. Mishra, Prof. S. H. Askari and Dr. Jagadish Narayan Sarkar. Majumdar (B. N. College, Patna) and Mishra (Siwan College, Siwan) have shown that with superhuman will and devotion to research one can attain international fame even while working in undergraduate colleges. (Fortunately college and university teachers in those days had not sold their conscience to different political parties). Dr. Majumdar was a versatile genius—a historian, a political scientist and a great scholar of medieval Vaishnav literature. He obtained the Ph. D. Degree of the Calcutta University for his *Chaitanya Chariter Upadan* (Sources for the Study of Sri Chaitanya, 1939) and one of the examiners of this thesis was Rabindranath Tagore. Dr. Majumdar's *Political Thought from Rammohan to Dayananda* (1934, 1967), *Militant Nationalism in India* (1966) and *Indian Political Associations* are too well-known to need any detailed discussion here.[10] With his worthy son, Dr. Bhakat Prasad Majumdar, he published *Congress and Congressmen in the pre-Gandhian Era* (1967) which is a valuable contribution to the literature on our freedom struggle. In his *Socio-Economic History of Northern India* (1960), Dr. Bhakat Prasad Majumdar has made a critical study of a transition period of Indian history. Dr. B. B. Mishra received both bouquet and brickbats as soon as his controversial book, *The Indian Middle Classes* (1961) was published. Dr. Mishra is, however, our foremost authority on Indian administrative history (*The Central Administration of the East India Company*, 1959 ; *The Judicial Administration of the East India Company*, 1961 ; *The Administrative History of India*, 1970). Besides contributing scores of original papers to standard journals, Professor S. H. Askari has edited with erudition the *Shahnama* (1980), *Iqbalnama* (1983) and *Tabaqat-i-Baburi*. For years Dr. Jagadish Narayan Sarkar has examined various currents and cross-currents of the medieval period of our history. *The Life of Mir Jumla* (1951) ; *The Mughal Polity*

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(1984) ; *Islam in Bengal* (1972) ; *Glimpses of Medieval Bihar Economy* (1978) ; *Hindu-Muslim Relations in Medieval Bengal* (1985) ; *Ideas of History in Medieval India* (1965) ; *History of History Writing in Medieval India* (1977) ; *A Study of Eighteenth Century India* (1976)—all those work bear the stamp of his genius.

Influence of Ranke, Mommsen and Jadunath Sarkar is writ large on the work of these historians. To ascertain the real facts, they would make an exhaustive study of the original sources. Dr. Datta once told this writer that theorization was possible only when one has got a thorough command over facts. He pointed out that Magna Carta has been differently interpreted by different British historians. Some felt it was essentially a a feudal document. Some were of the opinion that it was democratic in nature. As Dr. Datta said, "Before you pass any judgement on Magna Carta, you have to read the document itself". Dr. B. B. Majumdar also once told this writer, "one ounce of fact was more important than one hundred tons of theory".

In 1960's Dr. Ram Sharan Sharma of Patna University electrified the Indian historical world by publishing one after another highly thought-provoking work, such as, *Indian Feudalism* (1965, 1980, 1985), *Aspects of Political Ideas and Institutions in Ancient India* (1968), *Social Changes in Early Medieval India* (1969) and *Material Culture and Social Formation in Ancient India*. With a Marxian approach, Dr. Sharma added a new dimension to the art of scientific research in history. All his work have generated debates and discussions which have not yet died out. Probably after K. P. Jayswal, he is the most controversial historian of Bihar. Dr. Sharma has been criticixed, appreciated, debunked or extolled sometimes with logic, sometimes without. Nevertheless Dr. Sharma stands—colossus like—with his head high among the intellectuals of modern India.

In the seventies and eighties some valuable monographs have been published on various aspects by new generation of scholars, such as, Pabitra Bhaskar Sinha (*Development of the Mineral Industries of Bihar*, 1975) ; R. B. Chaudhary (*The British*

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Agrarian Policy in Eastern India, 1980) ; Aparna Bhattacharjee (*Religious Movements of Bengal*, 1981) ; Upendranarayan Singh (*Some Aspects of Rural Life in Bihar*, 1980) ; Sumanta Neogi (*India in British Parliament : Henry Fawcett's Struggle Against British Colonisation in India*, 1986) ; Yuvaraj Dev Prasad (*The Indian Muslims and World War I*, 1985) ; C. P. N. Sinha (*Mithila Under the Karnatas*, 1979) ; Ved Prakash (*Sikhs in Bihar*, 1981) ; Nihar Nandan Singh (*British Historiography on British Rule in India*, 1986) ; M. Sahu (*The Kolhan Under the Rule*, 1985) ; N. P. Varma (*India's Problem in Progressive Russian Social Thought*, 1986) and Vijay Kumar Thakur (*Historiography of Indian Feudalism*, 1986).

(B) Research Institutes

Serene environment of a research institute may provide greater incentive and better opportunity to researchers than the hurly-burlies of present day universities and colleges of India. Some of the institutes in Bihar have developed themselves into important centres for research, drawing scholars from far and near. Khudabox Public Library and Bihar and Orissa Research Society (now called Bihar Research Society) were founded long before independence—the former in 1891, the latter in 1915.[11] While Khudabox Library is a rich repository of rare Persian and Arabic manuscripts.[12] Bihar Research Society has in its possession invaluable materials for study and research in Indology including Tibetan manuscripts donated by Pandit Rahul Sankrityan. The Society has published many of these manuscripts with English rendering.

In the years after independence, a number of research institutes were founded in different districts of Bihar. These were mostly autonomous bodies, although the State Government took their financial responsibility. K. P. Jayswal Research Institute was established at Patna in 1951 "with the object, inter alia, to promote Historical Reseach, Archaeological excavation and investigation and publication of work of permanent value to scholars".[13] Besides the K. P. Jayswal Research Institute, a few more were also founded "to give incentive to research and advancement of knowledge".[14] These are the Nalanda Pali

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Research Institute at Nalanda, Mithila Institute of Research in Sanskrit at Darbhanga, Vaishali Institute for Research in Jainism and Prakrit, the Institute for Research in Arabic and Persian Learning at Patna, Bihar Tribal Research Institute at Ranchi. From time to time these institutes have published valuable monographs and treatises which have enriched the world of scholarship and learning.

Bihar State Archives was established in 1954 with Dr. B. B. Mishra as its first Director. After his departure for Delhi, Dr. K. K. Datta became its honorary Director for some years. It is a storehouse of source materials collected from various quarters for scientific study of modern history of Bihar. As Philip C. Brooks aptly said, "Records are the means by which public officials in a democracy are accountable to the people. They are tools of administration, the memory of an organization, the embodiment of experience, protectors of legal rights and sources of many kinds of information".[15] In course of last thirty years, the State Archives has published important documents to the great benefit of researchers, such as, *Selection from Unpublished Correspondence of the Judge-Magistrate and the Judge of Patna, 1790-1857* (1954) ; *Unrest Against British Rule in Bihar* (1957) ; *Some Firmans, Sanads and Parwanas, 1578-1802* (1962) ; *Selections from the Judicial Records of the Bhagalpur District Office, 1792-1805* (1968)—all edited by Dr K. K. Datta. The National Archives of India and the Nehru Memorial Museum have collected the private papers of Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Loknayak Jayprakash Narayan, respectively. The Bihar State Archives should take appropriate steps to collect and preserve the private papers of other important Bihari leaders. Dr. Sacchidananda Sinha's correspondence with Sri Tej Bahadur Sapru is kept in the National Library of India.

After the death of Anugrah Narayan Sinha, Jayprakash Narayan took the initiative in founding the A. N. Sinha Institute of Social Studies where historians work in collaboration with other social scientists. For sometime, Dr. Jagadish Narayan Sarkar was its Deputy Director and afterward Dr. Sacchidananda (now the Vice-Chancellor of Ranchi University), an

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authority on tribal society, culture and history, became its Director.

(C) Government Encouragement

Bihar was fortunate in having Dr. Srikrishna Sinha as its first Chief Minister who was a great patron of learning.[16] His government commissioned Dr. K. K. Datta to write the *History of the Freedom Movement in Bihar* in three volumes which were published during 1957-58. No encroachment was made upon the intellectual freedom of the author. As Dr. Datta writes, "I submitted to the Chief Minister, Dr. S. K. Sinha, that I should be permitted to prepare this work as a student of history, according to the scientific methods of historical research. With his intellectual attitude, Dr. Sinha very kindly gave me this freedom, needed so much for a historical work".[17] In his foreword to the book, Dr. Rajendra Prasad observed, "It is a record which not only the people of this state but others may also study with profit. I am sure similar accounts prepared about the part played by other states in the freedom movement would be equally instructive."[18]

District Gazetteers in course of time become important source materials for historical research. Gazetteers relating to the districts of Bihar, edited by British civilians, had been published 30 or 40 years ago when Bihar was a part of Bengal Presidency. After independence, the Government of Bihar felt the necessity of updating them. Sri P. C. Roy Choudhury was entrusted with the task which he did with considerable ability. After his retirement from service, the work was carried on by Sri N. Kumar. The Government of Bihar also published *1857 in Bihar* by P. C. Roy Choudhury in 1959 which is based on records available in the offices of District Records.

Dr. B. B. Mishra edited *Selected Documents on Mahatma Gandhi's Movement in Champaran, 1917-18* which was published by the Government of Bihar in 1963. Dr. Mishra significantly observes, "The papers connected with the Champaran movement, the Agrarian Committee's Minutes and report, the Agrarian Bill, the proceedings of Government and the comments of leading public men, including Mahatma Gandhi, together

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form excellent material for the construction of Bihar's economic history in the present century."[19]

Dr. K. K. Datta edited volume I of the *Fort William—India House Correspondence, 1740-1756* which was published by the National Archives of India in 1958. This volume "gives an insight into the Company's activities in all its aspects and enables to form a clear idea of the history of the time."[20] The Government of India published the biography of Rajendra Prasad by Dr. K. K. Datta and of Mazharul Haq by Dr. Q. Ahmad and Dr. J. S. Jha.

(D) Collective Research

To collect articles from different scholars and publish them in a single volume after proper editing is an uphill task, especially in our country. Many scholars who initially agree to contribute, would all on a sudden express their inability to do so after an interval of 2 or 3 years, placing the general editor in an embarrassing position. Re-allocation of chapters becomes a difficult task for him with no definite guarantee that the newly selected contributor would not follow the example of his predecessor. Notwithstanding these difficulties, Sri R. R. Diwakar who came to Bihar as Governor in 1952, decided to bring out a book which would depict the life and culture of the people of Bihar from ancient to modern times. The result was the *Bihar Through the Ages*, edited by Diwakar himself, in which more than thirty scholars—some of whom from outside the state—contributed. In the opinion of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, "Such book, giving a broad survey of the State of Bihar from various points of view, can be of very considerable help".[21]

It was, however, felt that justice could not be done in a single volume to Bihar with its rich heritage and glorious past. The authorities of the K. P. Jayswal Research Institute, therefore, decided to make a detailed survey of the history of Bihar in three volumes with Professor Anantalal Thakur as the General Editor. Dr. B. P. Sinha, Professor S. H. Askari and Dr. K. K. Datta were requested to edit Volume I (ancient period), Volume II (medieval period) and Volume III (modern period), respectively, of this *Comprehensive History of Bihar.*

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The first volume came out in 1974 and third volume in 1976, but the second volume has not been published as yet. Eminent scholars—belonging to various disciplines—have contributed learned chapters to these volumes dealing with political, social, economic, administrative, literary and cultural developments in Bihar.

In 1978 appeared *The Heritage of India : L. N. Mishra Commemoration Volume* which was edited by Dr. Upendra Thakur and Dr. Y. K. Mishra of Ancient Indian and Asian Studies Department of the Magadh University. The volume contains more than seventy articles on history, archaeology, Indian economy, international relations and philosophy.

(E) Journals and Periodicals

Journals and periodicals play a vital role in the prosecution of historical studies. By publishing the latest findings of the scholars, especially the younger ones, the editorial board gives incentive for more and more hard work. One basic problem with Indian academic journals is that most of them are published very irregularly, thanks to load-shedding which has become endemic in the eastern states of India, particularly in Bihar. In spite of these handicaps, some standard historical journals are almost regularly published by different institutions and autonomous bodies. Of these, the most prestigious is the *Journal of Bihar Research Society*. This internationally acclaimed quarterly has completed more than seventy years of its useful existence. In the *Patna University Journal* and in the *Current Studies* of the Patna College, valuable research articles are frequently published by the postgraduate and undergraduate history teachers. The Bihar Puravid Parishad, founded a few years ago, has its own journal which is now considered to be a healthy competitor of the JBRS.

No postgraduate department of history in Bihar has an organ of its own except the Department of History of the Ranchi University. Its bi-annual journal, the *Journal of Historical Research* has made a mark as one of the leading historical magazines in the state. Its standard could be raised further

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had the editorial board adopted a less liberal attitude in selecting articles for publication. The A. N. Sinha Institute of Social Studies has its own journal which is quite useful to researchers in social and economic history of Bihar.

Conclusion

The brief survey made above clearly indicates that Bihar's contribution to historical research since independence is quite substantial and praiseworthy. Among the general Presidents of the Indian History Congress, three were from Bihar, and the number of sectional Presidents from Bihar was not less than ten. Another illustrious historian of Bihar, Dr. Bhakat Prasad Majumder, has been invited to preside over the Silver Jubilee Session of the Institute of Historical Studies to be held at Santiniketan in October; 1986. Bihari historians have participated in international seminars on several occasions. For all these achievements every Bihari can legitimately be proud.

Certain tendencies in recent years, however, made us nervous. Bronze or stone sculptures of exquisite beauty are regularly stolen from different parts of Bihar and smuggled out of the country. Many of the stone images of Avalokitesvara have disappeared from the main Stupa of Nalanda. The persons who are involved in this racket are highly connected and have direct access to corridors of power. Nobody can dare touch them. In vain, some of the faithful nightguards of museum have sacrificed their lives while trying to save priceless national wealth. The famous Barabar Caves (Marabar of E. M. Forster), where Tagore could not reach in 1914, have become dens of anti-social elements and highway men. It is alleged that a bureaucrat has taken away various pieces of art and sculpture to his home-state after retirement. In the name of beautification this pseudo-scholar has permanently damaged the famous granary (*Golghar*) at Patna. The intellectuals of Patna do not protest.

Rapid decline in the standard of research since 1970s is another depressing phenomenon. This is largely due to the general deterioration that has overtaken the educational institutions in the state. Some men without integrity have joined the

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teaching profession. They would leave no stone unturned for obtaining a doctoral degree. Plagiarism thus becomes the easiest way to reach the goal[22]. With such scholars becoming in course of time research-guide themselves, a new technique is added to research methodology.

To be fair to Bihar, one should admit that more or less similar pattern is discernible in some other states of India as well.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. *The Journal of the Bihar Puravid Parishad*, Vols. IV & V, January-December, 1980-81, p. 55.
2. Life in Patna College in pre-independence era has been vividly described by Dr. Jagadish Narayan Sarkar in *Phele Asa Dinguli* in the Bengali quarterly, *Alekhya*, Vol. XV, No. 4 & Vol. XVI, No. I. For life in B. N. College during the same period one may see Harimohan Jha, *Jivan Yatra* in Maithili (Patna, 1984), pp. 97 ff.
3. Some years back the citizens of Patna celebrated the birth-centenary of J. N. Samaddar but it seems the people of West Bengal have completely forgotten the author of the *Samasamayik Bharat*.
4. The Department of Ancient Indian History & Archaeology owes its existence to Dr. Srikrishna Sinha, the then Chief Minister of Bihar and Dr. R. C. Majumdar. Dr. Majumdar was on a visit to Patna and was staying with Dr. K. K. Datta. Dr. Sinha invited them to tea at his residence. There Dr. Majumdar suggested to the Chief Minister that the Patna University located in the ancient city of Pataliputra should have a separate department for study and research in ancient Indian history and culture. This set the ball rolling, and two or three days later, Sir C. P. N. Singh, the Vice-Chancellor, informed Dr. Datta that the State Government was taking steps to open a new department for this purpose. (Source : This author's personal conversation with the late Dr. K. K. Datta). One is tempted to ask—how many Chief Ministers these days invite scholars at their residence to have a chit-chat with them ?
5. The Bengali novelist, Ms. Mahashveta Devi based her novel, *Aranyer Adhikar* for which she won the Sahitya Akademi award on K. S. Singh's monograph. Singh has recently (1983) published a revised edition of his book under the title, *Birsa Munda and his Movements*, 1874-1901 : *A Study of a Millenarian Movement in Chotonagpur*. It is gratifying to note that in this revised edition Singh has deleted the uncharitable words he used against S. P. Sinha in the earlier edition of the book. A sign of improvement no doubt.

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6. In 1985 a reprint of the *Biography of Kunwar Singh and Amar Singh* was published but the name of Dr. Datta as author was completely erased from it. Instead, the names of two of his former students appeared as joint authors. This created a storm in the Bihar Legislature. Dr. Diwakar Pd. Singh in the Upper House and Sri Parmanand Singh in the Lower House took the government to task for this serious omission. Ultimately the Government of Bihar stopped its circulation. The whole episode is unfortunate and deplorable.

   The Bengali actor, Mr. Utpal Dutt, writes a short play *Kuthar* (The Axe), based on the life of Kunwar Singh, in *Sharadiya Dainik Basumati*, 1388 B. S. (Dainik Basumati, Puja Number, 1981) but he does not care to acknowledge his indebtedness to Dr. Datta's book.

7. Somnath Roy, *Recent Historical Studies About Modern Bihar* (Calcutta, 1978), p. 2.

8. S. H. Askari, 'Kali Babu My Friend—Reminiscenses', JBRS, Vol. LIX, Parts I-IV, Jan.-Dec. 1973, p. XXVI.

9. Tarasankar Banerjee, 'Dr. Kalikinkar Datta', *Indo British Review*, Vol. X, No. 2, 1983, p. 24.

10. Dr. Majumdar once told this author that soon after the publication of his *Political Thought... Dayananda*, a Police official came to B. N. College and enquired from the Principal whether the author was involved in seditious activities. Thus even the devotees of Clio were not trusted by the Police in the last days of the Raj. Has the character of the Indian Police changed for the better in the last fifty years ?

11. The first meeting of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society was held in January, 1915 at Ranchi Government House under the Chairmanship of the Lieutenant Governor, C. S. Bayley. Among those present were Jadunath Sarkar, Ramavatar Sharma, Saratchandra Roy, Raja of Gidhaur, and Raja of Kanika. Roy became its first secretary. (Govt. of Bihar Educ. Dept., Arch. Branch, B. Progs, July 1915, Nos. 2-5).

12. The English version of Tagore *Ja dekhechhi, Ja peyechhi, tulana tar nai* in the poet's own handwriting, is also carefully preserved in the Khudabox Library.

13. A. L. Thakur (ed.), *The Comprehensive History of Bihar*, Vol. III, Pt. I, p. iii.

14. Ibid.

15. Quoted by K. K. Datta in his Foreword to T. S. Sinha, *Care and Preservation of Records in the Bihar State Archives as Source Materials for the Study of Modern Indian History* (Patna, 1977).

16. As a school boy when this author visited the Kamala Book Store, the leading bookseller at Patna in those days, to buy juvenile books, he saw on many occasions, Chief Minister S. K. Sinha there, selecting books for his personal library. Sri Rabindranath Bose, the proprietor of the Kamala Book Store, catered for years to the needs of Patna's intellectuals, teachers, students and children.

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17. K. K. Datta, *History of Freedom Movement in Bihar*, *I* (Patna, 1957), pp. iii-iv.

18. Ibid. p. ii.

19. B. B. Mishra, *Select Documents on Mahatma Gandhi's Movement in Champaran*, 1917-18, p. 15. Interested readers may also consult Rajendra Prasad's *Gandhiji in Champaran* (1928) and P. C. Roy Choudhury's *Gandhiji's First Struggle in India* (1955).

20. B. K. Sinha, 'Dr. K. K. Datta and his Writings', JBRS, Vol. LIX, Parts I-IV, 1973, p. vii.

21. Foreword by Jawaharlal Nehru in *Bihar Through the Ages* (Calcutta, 1959), p. ix.

22. The reader is advised to see the Preface to Jatashankar Jha's *Early Revolutionary Movement in Bihar* (1977). The late R. K. Chaudhary told this author a few months before his death that once he received a Ph. D. thesis for evaluation in which he found to his dismay that the candidate had copied page after page from his books and articles.

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Trends of Historical Research in Orissa

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Orissa was virtually a *terra incognita* to the historians of the nineteenth century. British military commanders and civil servants were the first to study the history of Orissa. Andrew Stirling, an official administrator, published his paper *An Account of Orissa or Cuttack Proper* in 1846. He was followed by John Beams in 1861, W. W. Hunter in 1872 and George Toynbee in 1873, all civilian scholars of the mid-nineteenth century Orissa. John Beam's work dealt with his experience in Orissa and Toynbee's book covered the John Company's administration in Orissa from 1803 to 1823. Only Sir William Wilson Hunter made a systematic attempt to write the history of Orissa from ancient times to 1872. All the civilian historians for administrative reasons traced the genesis and development of political and economic institutions of Orissa from the Muslim period since the sixteenth century. But pioneers in the field of historical scholarship of Orissa as they were, they had to depend on historical tradition and anecdotes for writing the history. They engaged pundits (scholars) to translate Sanskrit and Oriya treatises. Unfamiliar with scientific methodology of research, they had the aim to bring out a historical perspective of the Orissa people, their customs and heritage, their belief, system for the future generation of British administrators to

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make them conversant with the politico-social institutions of the people in the land they were assigned to rule. Their writings, however, suffer from whiteman's superiority complex but nevertheless form the basic literature on the historiography of the land. Military commanders like Captain S. C. Macpherson in 1842 and Major General Campbell in 1864 left accounts of their military operations in the Khondmals (lands) of western Garhjat Orissa. As a secondary object they explored the then socio-economic conditions of the ruled. Christian missionaries like J. J. Peggs and W. F. B. Lawrie had written their treatise attacking the superstitious belief of the people. As their work revolved round preaching and distributing sacred Christian pamphlets to civilize the people they ruled, their work throw side light on the socio-religious life of the contemporary Orissa.

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The first Indian to write the history of Orissa was Pyari Mohan Acharya in the second half of the nineteenth century as a textbook for the school children. R. L. Mitra, M. M. Chakravorti and R. D. Banerjee also compiled their work on history of Orissa stressing on the glory of the Hindu rulers of the ancient and Maratha periods. They collected different categories of epigraphic, literary and archival source materials, classified them with precision and laid down the foundation for modern historical research on the political and socioeconomic history of Orissa. But recent trends of research have revealed beyond doubt the gaps in their historical probings and the mistakes they inadvertently committed. These difficulties in their work is only due to their inability to tap all possible sources of information owing to the non-availability of historical data at that particular period of their studies. Many of the early Indian historians of Orissa were Bengalee settlers and government servants in Orissa. They witnessed the famines and agony of the destitutes of Orissa, mostly under privation level, while these Bengalee intellectuals were proud to search out their identity and cultural roots from a glorious past. The result was a detestation for the culture of the Oriya people. In their writings they wanted to prove that Orissa had no separate

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identity and had no culture of their own other than the Bengali language, culture and heritage. As a consequence Bengalee teachers like Rajendralal Mitra and Kanti Chandra Bhattacharya, Headmaster of Balasore School, made every possible efforts to eliminate the Oriya language in favour of making Bengali as the official language to be taught in schools. Rajendralal even pointed out that the well-wishers of Orissa were those who would like to eliminate the Oriya for the prosperity of Orissa and that the Bengalees had the solemn duty to civilize the superstitious people of Orissa. Kanti Chandra wrote a book called *Odiya ek Swatantra Bhasa nahe* where he tried to prove that Oriya was a distorted dialect of Bengali. The nationalist historians of Bengal began to claim that the personalities like Jaydeva, Sri Chaitanya and the cultural heritage of Orissa as the contributions of Bengal. Recent researches in Orissa had proved beyond doubt that like Bihar, in Orissa also Buddhism flourished. The Buddhist Siddhacharyas from Orissa frequented the Bengal monasteries through the trade route of the Ganges. *Gita Govinda* of Jaydeva originated in Orissa and had regular dance recitals in the Nata Mandapas of the Orissa temples and not in those of Bengal. Kenduli in Birbhum of West Bengal was in fact, a tantric pilgrim site which had nothing to do with Jaydeva except preserving some anecdotes about Jaydeva. Sri Chaitanya and his ancestors, in fact, migrated from Orissa and not from Sylhet as it was claimed by the Bengalee historians with full of detestation about the Oriya culture. The anti-Brahminical movement in the wet rice economy of the south and coastal land of Orissa leading to the upward mobility of tribal castes and classes, emergence of a class of jharva brahmins like Panda, Munds and Parichchas at the top of social hierarchy, in fact, led to the migratory movements of the Oriya brahmins like Mishras and Acharyas from Orissa to the fertile Gangetic delta of West Bengal and the Jungle Mahals leading in search of lands, jobs and career to the state formations in the Bhum tracts.

This migratory movements rather continued from south of Karnata to the Andhra region and from there through Orissa to the fertile rice valley of the Ganges in West Bengal and gave

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rise to the Karnata myth for tracing the origin of the brahmins. Many vaisnava poets, in fact, claimed themselves as Dakhinātya Vaidik brahmins but in reality they migrated from Orissa due to anti-brahminical social condition.

Thus the vaisnava centres of Bengal became the centres of Bengal-Orissa cultural synthesis, a point which was overlooked by the early Bengalee historians about Orissa. But the result of this Bengalee chauvinism in Orissa was the vernacular agitation which was characterized by the attempt to replace Oriya by the Bengali vernacular and the resultant resistance to retain Oriya as the official language. The sense of nostalgia created by Radhanath Roy by writing classical epics to discover the golden past and to identify them as the inheritor of an once prosperous race provided no less enthusiasm for the vernacular agitation. The Bengalee residents of Orissa, placed at the top of the society, due to their huge landed property, status and higher education were more Oriyas in character than the then native Oriya common men because of their long residence in Orissa for generations together. Thus it would be wrong to analyse that the vernacular agitation and the resultant academic climate of detestation for a cultural identity of Orissa was a fight between the Oriya and Bengalee elite groups. On the other hand, this was a battle between the Bengalee residents who came to Orissa since the beginning of the eighteenth century and the Bengalee immigrants of the mid-nineteenth century who came to Orissa with the advent of Company's rule as civil servants and teachers. The claim of the Bengalee immigrants that the Oriya was not a separate language from Bengali and that in Orissa only the Bengalee culture had manifested itself was brushed aside by the untiring efforts of John Beams and Ravenshaw. In the initial stages the courses of studies in the history books were not translated from the Bengali to the Oriya rather from the English to the Oriya, the Christian missionaries being pioneers in this efforts. No doubt, the agitation had its premature death but it laid down the future trend of historical research in Orissa in the twentieth century.

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II

The historical research got its financial support from the native rulers of Mayurbhanj, Bamra, Kanika and other states of Orissa as museums developed in Baripada, Cuttack and Bhubaneswar. By the untiring efforts of three personalities, like Paramanand Acharya, K. C. Panigrahi and S. N. Rajguru, the trend of nationalist historiography in Orissa was laid down. Acharya presented numerous papers in Historical Records Commission, Asiatic Society and in other learned gatherings and he was actively attached with the writings of the history of Mayurbhanj by R. P. Chanda. He had to retire as the Superintendent of the Orissa Museum but he was possibly the pioneer in the historical writings of Orissa. Panigrahi and Rajguru concentrated themselves in exploring the ancient heritage of Orissa not from the legends, anecdotes and the questionable accuracy of *Madla Panji*, temple chronicles in the Jagannath Temple, but from the hard facts of archaeological and epigraphic evidences strewn over the whole of Orissa, Bhubaneswar in particular. Professor Panigrahi in his *Chronology of the Bhaumakaras and the Somavansis of Orissa* (Bhopal, 1961) and *Archaeological Remains at Bhubaneswar* (Calcutta, 1961) tried to unearth the scientific data for writing an authentic history of the Hindu dynasties of Orissa, a longing in a learned mind to explore the golden past. S. N. Rajguru, on the other hand, without any financial help from anybody produced his *magnum opus* : *Inscriptions of Orissa* in more than four volumes (Bhubaneswar, 1960) and the *History of the Gangas* (1968). Following in their footsteps, Nabin Kumar Sahu researched on the ancient heritage of Orissa by writing several comprehensive history of ancient Orissa in English and Oriya vernacular languages. But the difficulty with Sahu and his band of scholars is that like their Bengalee counterparts they claimed Orissa to be the epitome of culture in the rice economy of eastern India. He tried to neutralize the tall claims of the Bengalee historians with regard to the genesis of Buddhist Mahajana and Sahajajana variants in eastern India by locating the contributions of Orissa in this medieval cultural synthesis,

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In his later life Nabin Kumar concentrated his efforts in exploring the freedom struggle in western Orissa, particularly the role played by Surendra Sai and the native rulers of western Orissa. As the departmental head of Sambalpur University he founded the museum and record room in the History Department which is now a great research centre in western Orissa. His students like late S. C. Behera, J. K. Sahu concentrated on the forgotten dynastic history of ancient Orissa, particularly of western Orissa, exploring their historical data from epigraphic and archaeological evidences.

III

In the post-independent Orissa, Cuttack and Bhubaneswar developed to great centres of historical writings owing to the pioneering efforts of Hare Krishna Mahtab. A freedom fighter and a staunch nationalist, Mahtab wanted to discover the golden past of Orissa by bridging many gaps in the historical writings of Rakhaldas Banerjee. Even today Mahtab's *History of Orissa* in three volumes forms the basic literature for the history students in Orissa. But within a very short time these historical figures emerged in the Ravenshaw College and later on in the Utkal University, Vani Vihar to lay down the modern trend of historical research in Orissa. While Professor M. N. Das was a great researcher to explore the new trends of Oriya nationalism in tune with the developments of Indian nationalism, Professor Bhabani Charan Roy mainly concentrated in exploring the history of Muslim and Maratha rule in Orissa and Professor Prabhat Mukherjee studied the Gajapati rule in Orissa as well as the genesis and development of Vaisnavism in Orissa. In his later life he studied the cult of Jagannath Temple (1977) and contributed to the modern *History of Orissa* (1964) published from the Utkal University.

In the early years of post-independent Orissa, mainly three trends are discernible. One, the historians are deeply interested in the temples and archaeological remains of Orissa, particularly centering round Puri and Cuttack districts. Conversant with Sanskrit and Oriya languages as they were, these scholars like Panigrahi, Rajguru, Acharya, Sahu and later on

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K. S. Behera showed remarkable historical insight in exploring archaeological, epigraphic and numismatic evidences and they unearthed palm-leaf manuscripts to be preserved in the Orissa State Museum. K. S. Behera traced the origin and decline of the Konark Temple in Orissa which is yet to be published. Following this trend his research students have studied the archaeological remains round Bhubaneswar and Puri. This led, on the one hand, to study the dynastic history of Orissa, they also studied the obscure dynasties of the Marathas, Saravapuriyas, Dattas and Bhanjas of Kichchinga Kotta. Side by side with D. N. Das's *Early History of Kalinga* (Calcutta, 1977), D. K. Ganguly's *Historical Geography and Dynastic History of Orissa* (1975) a Calcutta book publisher brought out unpublished dissertations of S. C. Behera on the *Sailodbhavas of Kangoda Mandala*, U. K. Subuddhi *The Bhaumakaras of Orissa* (1978) and S. R. Nema *Somabamsi Kings of South Kosala and Orissa* (1978). These books are the enlarged and authentic studies and as such improved versions on the earlier work of V. Mishra, Mukherjee, Sahu and Rajguru. The dissertations on the obscure dynastics are based on archaeological and epigraphic evidences and the universities are yet to publish these work. The second trend was to study the cult of Jagannath and Mahima Dharma of Bhima Bhoi. The South Asian Institute of Hiedelberg University financed the project on the study of the religious life of Orissa. Annachorloth Eschmann and Hermann Kulke are the pioneers in this field of studies and some of the publications of the Orissa scholars like D. Panda (*Mahima Dharma Darshan*, 1972), Chitta Ranjan Das (*Orissa Mahima Dharma*, 1952), P. Mukherjee (*History of Medieval Vaisnavism in Orissa*, 1955), Nilamani Senapati (*Satya Mahima Dharma*, 1975) came out as a consequence of their probings. The third trend was to write the revenue and administrative history of British Orissa. As mentioned earlier Prabhat Mukherjee wrote the *History of Orissa* four volumes which was followed by B. C. Roy's *Maratha Rule in Orissa* (1960) and *Foundation of British Orissa* (1960). Sushil Chandra De, the then Superintendent of State Record Room in Cuttack and then in Bhubaneswar when the Record Room was

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shifted, brought out several volumes of selections from the records of the State Archives. In quick succession three dissertations came out on the early British rule in Orissa, by K. M. Patra (1971), K. C. Jena (1978) and J. R. Samal (1978). Patra's book is the result of painstaking labour of marshalling archival sources from Orissa and Bengal while K. C. Jena and J. K. Samal relied mainly on printed government documents and summarised the archival sources as truthful narrators of facts rather than as analysts of historical forces.

While the historians and scholars concentrated on the revenue and administrative history of nineteenth century Orissa, the nationalist movement of the present century was not forgotten. The achievements of freedom fighters and nationalist leaders like Gopabandhu Das, Madhusudan Das down to Mahtab became the subject of studies of the Orissa historians like P. K. Mishra, Nivedita Mohanty and S. C. Patra. While P. K. Mishra traced the origin and development of nationalist movement in Orissa, Nivedita Mohanty in the Hiedelberg University probed the history of Orissa political movement for a separate province and the accumulated effects are to be found in S. C. Patra's dissertation on the nationalist movement in Orissa. Recently some edited books on different aspects of freedom movement in Orissa have come out. The biographical sketches of freedom fighters, history of political associations in Orissa, role of Gandhi in the freedom movement and the role of legislature in the creation of separate province of Orissa have become the subject matters of studies under the guidance of K. M. Patra in Utkal and P. K. Mishra in the Sambalpur Universities.

In today's research studies the scholars are not only confined to history, they are studying other subjects like anthropology, sociology and economics to trace the continuity and changes in the socio-political institutions of Orissa. On folklore studies some major work were published by Sitakanta Mahapatra, Kunja Bihari Das and Chakradhar Mahapatra while on Brahmo movement Shankar Rao published his work on the spread of Brahmo movement in Orissa (1978). The study of epigraphy

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and archaeology ultimately gave way to the study of the History of the Oriya language and literature. The nineteenth century Oriya literature embodying the work of Brajanath Badajena, Fakir Mohan Senapati, Kuntala Kumari Sabat, Radhanath Roy and Gangadhar Meher were published and serious discussions were made on the history of Oriya literature to trace the social history of Orissa. The work of Mayadhar Mansingh, Natabar Samantarai, Gopal Chandra Mishra and Bansidhar Mohanty are helpful to study the social history of modern Orissa. A. B. Mohanty's translation of *Madla Panji* was brought under an analytical scrutiny of the literary scholars and legal history of Orissa by Sraddhakar Supakar and Srikanta Mishra added new dimension to the historical research in Orissa. Two major trends of historical research in modern Orissa would be found in the economic history of Orissa and socio-anthropological studies in the grass root level in Orissa villages. While B. S. Das started the trend of writing of economic of Orissa (1978), his research scholars like Nabin Kumar Jit (1980), Fakir Charan Rana (1981), T. S. Panigrahi (1978) dealt with the economic life of nineteenth century Orissa and Frontier Bengal. Financed by projects from ICSSR, UGC and ICHR extensively, the peasant economy of Orissa was studied to explain the crisis in the capitalist economy in Orissa in the twentieth century and the scholars like R. N. Chakravorty, S. C. Maikap and B. B. Panda traced the decline of the peasant economy since the sixteenth century with the advent of Muslim rule in Orissa. The scholars like L. K. Mahapatra and Sitakanta Mahapatra contributed greatly in developing socio-anthropological studies in Orissa. The literateurs like Gopinath Mohanty and Kulamani Mahapatra carried on extensive field work on the peasantised tribal economy of Orissa. The result was that now we could have a clear panoramic view of the dual processes of peasantisation of the tribals and depeasantisation of the primary cultivators with the emergence of capitalist economy in Orissa. The study of peasant economy in villages is to be found in F. G. Bailey's pioneering studies on the Orissa villages and some micro studies were also made by Sitakanta Mahapatra, an IAS officer and the national poet of Orissa. Economic

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interpretation of history or the analysis of political economy of Orissa under the Marxist view point was also to be found in the writings of a band of young scholars trained in the Calcutta and Delhi academic institutions. But the studies of these young scholars are still in their infancy to warrant special mention in this small article. In the two universities of Orissa recently another trend is also to be found, i. e., writing of the district level history. While the attempt is no doubt very sincere to bridge the gaps in the general historical developments through these micro studies, very often the scholars find it impossible to explore new sources of information hitherto unknown to the historical world and consequently, they have to depend on the already used archival sources, printed government reports, vernacular newspaper sources and literary evidences of contemporary writers and thus the laudable idea of exploring district level political and revenue history tends to be repetitive and of little advantage to the future generation of scholars.

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4

Historical Researches in Uttar Pradesh : A Study of Growth

S. N. QANUNGO

It just might be a sign of the time that a genuine researcher in historical studies in U.P. wants to change his 'clothes' and 'clothing the past' in the mid-1980s, keeping in view of Clio and the changing fashions in current historiography. Before Independence he appeared as a 'recording angel', examining the scientific credentials of historians. Today he resembles a surgeon using the scalpel of analysis. So appears Prof. B. N. Puri in his latest work entitled—*The Changing Horizon*. Through his surgeon's gown, however, peep the wings of the recording angel.

The 'general mood' of historical researchers is very much altered from what it was at the end of the 1940s. This change is to be understood against a background of contemporary culture and problems. The qualitative part of research work has been substituted by a quantitative approach for obvious reasons. If one of my esteemed colleagues in early forties can produce Ph. Ds exceeding the number of Emperor Shah Alam II's children, no wonder Prof. Hari Shankar Srivastava's printed bio-data shows that he has examined more than one hundred and twentyfive Ph. D. and D. Litt. theses in history of different universities.

The contours of historical thought and scholarship in U.P. during the past twenty years have been strikingly

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different from those of the decades 1920-40. The giants of twenties and thirties are falling out of fashion. There is a growing feeling that they have said their say and left a lot unsaid. But it is difficult not to conclude that they created masterpieces on their own lines, brought a new seriousness to the subject and that their achievements were great in the general perspective of historical research. Their impulse was very real and genuine and the effect was irresistible at that time. As Michael Kammen says, "Clio may change her clothes, but those quaint people in the family photograph album cannot change theirs. By allowing them to retain their special identity, we are more likely to discover our own—and, in the bargain, our destinies as well." The rebels of eighties, who are trying to drive their predecessors from the light and assuming a definite audience in a definite kind of society, cannot be treated in their inland isolation.

The pattern and growth of historical researches in U. P. after Independence is too vast a subject to be dealt with adequately within the scope of this article. No simplification is likely to be fair in all its details. It would be impossible as well as tedious to deal with historical researches attempted since 1947. But the essential meaning of the aim of the researchers as a whole may be made abundantly clear. The essential point on which a genuine researcher insists today that instead of enquiring how closely a historian approaches to the 'truth', he must ask what assumptions are in the historian's mind. This is not really a new phenomenon, but it is new in its dimensions. The pattern of historical researches in Uttar Pradesh is formed by innumerable strands, often the researcher is unconscious of many of them.

Prof. B. N. Puri has made attempt to understand the changing horizon and concept of historical studies. His tour d'horizon pursues a zig-zag course, jettisoning much of the ballast of ideas. It promises something exceptional, then the promise seems to be disappointed. One is left at the end with the shapeless congestion of his impressions of the votaries of Clio, including his teachers. Qualified critics also may not accept his highly ego-centric view that his is the first attempt

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ever made in the direction of Indian historical thinking. In Prof. Puri's seminar paper entitled *Studies in Ancient Indian History in Uttar Pradesh—Progress and Prospects*, unanswered queries about the growth are many.

The universities of Uttar Pradesh, though not in equal proportion, may form a convenient focus of the general tendencies of historical studies. In my university, Butler's 'Oxford of the East', Prof. Radhakumud Mookherji was appointed the first Professor of Indian History in 1921. His contributions are too well-known to require recapitulation. But what was his impact on historical research in the University of Lucknow ? Prof. Puri tells us that at Lucknow a long period of two decades since its inception not one research scholar was able to secure his doctorate degree. The reasons behind this 'masterly inactivity' might be personal as also environmental. But it is equally significant that Prof. Puri did succeed in writing a book on India as described by early Greek writers at the age of 20, and this book was first published in 1938. Radhakumud's resounding reputation, however, enabled Lucknow University to emerge on the academic horizon as 'nascent school' for the study of Ancient Indian History. Prof. V. S. Agarwala and B. C. Law secured their D. Litt. Degree of the Lucknow University in the 1940s. Prof. C. D. Chatterjee had striking qualities as a fastidious scholar and he had to his credit several papers of great importance like *Numismatic Data from Pali Literature*, *Queen Edicts* and *Early Life of Chandragupta Maurya from the Jain Sources*. After Independence, different facets of ancient Indian history like studies on the Mahabharata, the Puranas, the Sanskrit Buddhist literature, social history, political, military and administrative history (the Chandelas, the Gurjara Pratiharas, the Kushanas, India in the seventh century A. D., Yosavarman, Northern India in the 10th century A. D., the Chalukyas of Badami, evolution of taxation and fiscal administration, ancient Indian republics, ancient Indian warfare), the study of seals and sealings, greater India, the study of Indian art and inscriptions, engaged the attention of scholars like Prof. R.K. Dikshit, Prof. B.N. Puri, Prof. B. N.

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Srivastava, Prof. K. K. Thaplyal, Prof. S.N. Misra, Prof. R.A. Awasthi, Dr. A.B.L. Awasthi, Dr. Angne Lal, Dr. K.S. Saxena, Dr. Y. B. Singh, Dr. A. Srivastava, Dr. Shailendra Kumar, Dr. D. P. Dikshit. All the scholars are of different capacities, the work of Prof. B. N. Puri and Prof. K. K. Thaplyal have engaged wider and well-deserved popularity. In medieval and modern Indian history, Dr. S. K. Banerjee, Dr. K. R. Qanungo and Dr. N. L. Chatterjee were well-known for their historical scholarship, and they continued to be actively engaged in research even in the twilight of their life. The changing pattern in historiography is evident in the second edition of Qanungo's *Sher Shah*. Dr. Chatterjee wrote *Mir Qasim* from the viewpoint of a colonial historian, but his writings after 1947 are understandably based on an entirely different pattern. Dr. Chatterjee and Dr. R. N. Nagoar gave excellent information on Oudh loans and revenue administration of the north-western provinces in their research papers. Dr. Brij Kishore and Dr. G. D. Bhatnagar produced thoroughly acceptable work on Tara Bai and Wajid Ali Shah. Dr. M. Yasin's specific approach in his studies of social history, historiography and cultural history of medieval India provided the groundwork for discussion and controversies. Different facets of 'regional history', socioeconomic and political history of medieval and modern India have drawn the attention of scholars engaged in research work in the University of Lucknow. In 1968, the Department of Western History came into existence as a separate entity and has since been conducting research in colonial history and the history of Western Countries and their imperialism in Asia, Latin America and Africa. Dr. S. N. Das Gupta, Dr. G. S. Misra, Dr. K. C. Srivastava and Dr. R. N. Mehra have done valuable work in this area.

Benaras Hindu University made remarkable contribution to Indological studies and researches in ancient Indian history—thanks to eminent scholars Like Rakhaldas Banerji, A. S. Altekar, V. S. Agarwal, A. K. Narain, R. S. Tripathi and Lallanji Gopal. We are indebted to them for deeper insight into many problems. In medieval Indian history, Dr. A. B. Pandey's work on the First Afghan Empire was

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based on new and original investigations. Dr. J. Chaube successfully worked in a field little studied except by the local scholars. In modern Indian history, Dr. Bhupen Qanungo's research paper on Canning catches new shades of thought. *The Reconstruction of the Administration of Lord Lansdowne* has been done tellingly by Dr. J. P. Mishra. The threads of historical narrative have been carefully interwoven in Dr. K. S. Santha's *Begums of Awadh*. The differences in shading and emphasis are so striking in the work of Prof. Amales Tripathi and Prof. J. N. Bajpai on the Extremist Challenge in India. It is happy to note that research scholars in Benaras Hindu University are trying to bring their subject matter into line with the latest historical research.

Dr. R. B. Singh and Dr. V. S. Pathak went from Benaras to Gorakhpur, while Dr. H. L. Singh came from Gorakhpur to Benaras during the period under review. Dr. R. B. Singh's *The History of the Chahmanas* and Dr. Pathak's *History of Kosala* are valuable and original contributions to the subject. Dr. H. L. Singh's *Problems and Policies of the British in India, 1885-1893*, epitomizes the many sidedness of specific problems and contains significant original reflections. The University of Gorakhpur has not lagged behind in its contribution to historical studies. Dr. Hari Shankar Srivastava's work on *Famines in India* is notable for intrinsic coverage. Dr. K. P. Mishra's book on Benaras is a neat, compact and scholarly work. Dr. Ashoke Srivastava's numerous work on the Sultanate period incorporate the results of recent research. Dr. Lal Bahadur Verma's book on Anglo-Indian Community in the Nineteenth Century is a perceptive study. Dr. T. P. Chand's work on The Administrative History of Awadh brings to light many details, while Dr. S. D. Dwivedi's book on Relations of Rajputs with Delhi Sultans is characterised by fresh approach towards interpretation. The unpublished theses of some research scholars of Gorakhpur University are based on original investigations.

It is only right and proper to mention some noted scholars in other universities of Uttar Pradesh besides Allahabad and Aligarh. The scholars of Agra University like Dr. A. L.

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Srivastava, Dr. A. P. Mathur, Dr. Pratima Asthana, Dr. S. R. Tyagi, Dr. V. P. S. Raghuvanshi, Dr. R. C. Sharma, Dr. Lal Bahadur, Dr. P. N. Chopra, Dr. M. S. Jain, Dr. Dharam Bhanu and others brought out a vast amount of information with a certainty of touch in their work. The Agra-based scholars believed in academic rectitude and they tried to present difficult matters on different themes in an easy and simple style. Prof. L. P. Pandey of Himachal Pradesh University, who joined Kashi Vidyapith recently, is still carrying on his research in the midst of pandemonium of expressions in the campus. His predecessor, Dr. G. C. Dwivedi was an erudite scholar. His field of specialisation was the History of the Jats. In Kanpur, Prof. K. S. Bhatnagar encouraged creative research work. Dr. Ramesh Chandra Srivastava's thesis gives us new insight into judicial administration under the East India Company. Dr. S. S. Awasthi is at present engaged in the study of urban politics in this area. Rohilkhand University, Awadh University and Gurukul Kangri University are slowly emerging on the academic horizon. Kumaun University is lucky to have two genuine and talented researchers. Dr. C. S. Pathak has written thought-provoking papers on Bonded Labour in Kumaun. Dr. Ajay S. Rawat is a pioneer in the field of the history of Garhwal Himalaya. He has also worked on the Environmental History in the Central Himalayan Region. There is much activity in Meerut under the able guidance of Prof. K. K. Sharma who wants to experiment with new techniques of research. Dr. S. K. Mittal's work on Indigo Planters and Dr. Kapil Kumar's research papers on Peasant Movements have pointed the way to further work and received the attention of scholars. In Bundelkhand University, Dr. Bhagwan Das Gupta is an indefatigable lone worker.

The output of the Allahabad School was immense, thanks to an array of imposing historians like Sir Shajat Ahmad Khan, Dr. Tara Chand, Dr. Iswari Prasad, Dr. Beni Prasad, Dr. Bishweshwar Prasad and Dr. B. P. Saksena. All their best historical work were written before 1947. The Allahabad School had followers everywhere in U. P., and it was due to its

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work that history was fully professionalised. The students of the Allahabad School constructed schools of followers around them throughout India. Prof. O. P. Bhatnagar and Prof. C. B. Tripathi upheld the tradition of the Allahabad School with their profound concern for historical research. The succeeding generations of historians in Allahabad represented by Prof. Radhey Shyam, Dr. Rekha Joshi, Dr. Ansari, Dr. Chandra Pant, Dr. G. D. Tripathi and other promising scholars like Sushil Srivastava and Vandita Verma have remained sensitive to the great tradition of the Allahabad School. The superb performances of the Old Masters hang over Allahabad like a shadow. The range of historical research, however, has expanded even beyond what had been thought possible before. It is unfortunate that Prof. Ravinder Kumar and Prof. Gyanendra Pandey did not stay at Allahabad for a longer period. It appears that they had a different purpose and they needed a wider range. The loss in momentum in historical research in 1960s was made up by the breadth of vision of Prof. G. R. Sharma. The advanced centre of the study of Ancient Indian History at Allahabad is his enduring movement and it has inspired a number of admirably learned scholars. Prof. Sharma's archaeological excavations advanced the historical discipline in its technical aspects. The work of Prof. G. C. Pande, Prof. Negi and Prof. B. N. S. Yadava are brilliantly written. Prof. Pande's *Vedantic Origin of Buddhism* shows his abiding passion for philosophy. Prof. Yadav's study of social protest has widened the horizon of ancient Indian history.

The Aligarh School of History has rightly been the cynosure of attention in the context of the study of medieval Indian history. It is so markedly different from the Aligarh Movement. This school was headed by Professor M. Habib, who was the precursor of Marxian ideology and interpretations of medieval Indian history, hit hard at old values of historians who belonged to the 'bourgeosie culture group'. Characteristically, he dedicated the second edition of *Mahmud of Ghazni* to Mao tse-tung and Chou en-lai. It is unfortunate that there is sneeking suspicion about the historically *avant-garde* endeavour

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of the galaxies of the Aligarh School (like Prof. Nurul Hasan, Prof. Satish Chandra, Prof. K. A. Nizami, Prof. Irfan Habib and Prof. Athar Ali) who elucidate the best characteristics of historical enterprise. Prof. Nurul Hasan's thirst for original sources remains the great model, and his study of Agrarian History contributed an exciting dimension. In many ways Prof. Nurul Hasan did the historical profession a signal service. The discipline of history underwent a marked development under his able guidance. Prof. Nizami's scholarship with all the application of Marxian principles is individual and personal—the 'divine' has not really vanished from his historical writings. Prof. Irfan Habib began magnificently and his voyage of discovery is not over. At present he represents the most authentic voice of the Aligarh School. Prof. Irfan Habib's esteemed colleagues (from Prof. Iqtedar Alam Khan, Dr. Zahuruddin Malik, Dr. Zameeruddin Siddiqi, Dr. R. K. Trivedi to Dr. Safi Ahmed) stand shoulders above many by virtue of their sheer creative originality. Their interpretations may dizzy the reader, and they may appear as rash, premature or biased historical synthesis. But it cannot be denied that they have shown that the age of amateur in medieval Indian history is over. The hands of researchers of Aligarh are covered with the dust of original manuscripts. Historiography in Aligarh is modern in tone, though it may not be the final work.

It is easy to point out the fallacy of a pattern in historiography. Like composite culture of U. P., its variegated mosaic is an assortment of historical outlooks. One still finds the old nostalgia that the overall pattern is fast eroding. It is true that the practice of historical scholarship is changing. The telescope is going way to microscope. Economic History no longer means to Prof. Benoy Chowdhury what it meant to Prof. Radhakamal Mukherjee. After 1947, however, even Radhakamal had begun to think otherwise. His 'Historiography' looks like Alauddin Khilji's unfinished Alai Minar. One final thought on new direction. The use of Marxist phrases by the 'Leaning Tower' historians is romantic and unreal, and all their attempts are not achievements. Where is the process of writing history 'from the bottom up' or Karl Manheim's

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approach to History ? Interpretative history in U. P., on the whole, has not been able to create its own voice. It has just begun to come into its own, by borrowing shamelessly yet effectively from the conceptual cupboards of various disciplines. History is no longer a pastime of stray amateurs or intellectual nomads. There are indications of some understanding of social mobility and regional variations, and by and large it is in the right direction. The sense of history with pressures from below is to be nurtured in U. P. to understand the penumbra of mystery in the historical process as a social medium. One may ask like Prospero in the Tempest—"What seest thou else in the dark backward and abysm of time ?" Let us wait for sometime for our proper answer, instead of scanning the horizon of the future, or drawing up a horoscope of historiography in U. P.

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5

Growth and Trends in Historical Research in Gujarat

R. N. Mehta
Rasesh Jamindar

History is, in the last analysis, a narration of the past events on the basis of available remains of the evidences—oral, literary and archaeological—of the action of man at any given place. The narration is invariably associated with the view point of the narrator and its application depends upon the social ethos of the time. Change in social ethos leads to the changing pattern of historical writings and it provides interesting data for historiography.

From modern viewpoint, 1947 is a watershed that divides the Indian history under British Raj. Interestingly, the history of British Raj suggests a good chronological analysis. The British traders got permission from Jahangir, when he was in Gujarat, with an intention to promote trade. This vision of the successor of Akbar proved correct at least up to A.D. 1707, when the English, who proclaimed the policy of free trade, tried to restrict the entry of the Indian goods in England by an act of the Parliament, but the finished products of India kept their hold over India and Europe for a few decades. Unfortunately, the change in political condition led to an internal struggle for reorganisation, and the French and the British saw a good opportunity to intervene. The interference started at the fringe in the southeastern part of India in the family dispute of the

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Nawabs of Karnataka. Jahangir's vision thus could see to the future for at least 122 years, i.e., for about one and a quarter o n century. From 1740 onwards this political interference went on increasing till 1848 when the Shikhs were defeated. Thus the first Indian resistance continued for 108 years. The European powers tried to interfere in many aspects of Indian culture including language and education with an aim to turning Indians into brown Europeans at least from A.D. 1832.

The Indian resistance of 108 years soon found itself provoked and it made an unsuccessful attempt in 1857 to remove the British Raj ; but it could not succeed.

The economic exploitation, and alround degradation of Indian things and emergence of 19th century European values through various means and bureaucratic actions with the main aim to perpetuate the British Raj were vigorously persued in the areas of British domination.

However, the alert Indian opinion alongwith sensitive European opinion started a movement in 1885 with the birth of Indian National Congress. The struggle was phased from the mild request of giving jobs to the educated to stronger forms that developed into the movements of *Swaraj* and *Swadeshi* which gave the clarion call that '*Swaraj* is our birth right'.

In the other stage, Mahatma Gandhi took the leadership and the movement that started taking heavier momentum from 1919 onwards reached to enormous proportions that forced the British to leave India. Fortunately, for this struggle international situation was also favourable. So, from 1947 India became independent and in 1950 proclaimed its Republic constitution. Thus what English achieved with the struggle of 108 years, Indians reacted and asserted themselves once more within a span of 62 years.

With political independence, cultural emancipation, economic independence and freedom as well as development of international relationships and other activities of a free nation began in our country. History is no exception to this general trend.

It is found that with this change in viewpoint historical research also started changing its attitude and made an effort to search the roots of our present day independence, long

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cultural traditions and the spirit of freedom, India's role in world affairs, etc.

Along with it the contemporary thinking on history and historiography in different parts of the world also started influencing the Indian thought. This thinking led to divergencies of viewpoint that had a powerful impact on historical writings after 1947. In this general Indian trend Gujarat was no exception.[1]

One of the most important functions of history is to enlighten the people on what happened in the past from an angle. From 1947 this angle of Indian viewpoint became more pronounced and, therefore, the history written from Anglocentric or Eurocentric viewpoint started changing. This change led to the establishment of new institutions for conducting research in Indian history and culture as well as strengthening the old institutions. They were also shifting their views for research in Indian history. The new institutions that began growing were the Department of Archaeology and Ancient History and the Department of History in the M.S. University of Baroda. The development of the departments of history were organised in the Gujarat University, Saurashtra University, South Gujarat University and the Sardar Patel University ; whereas the Department of History and Culture was organised by the Gujarat Vidyapith founded by Mahatma Gandhi.

The L. D. Institute of Indology, the B. J. Institute of Learning & Research, the Chunilal Gandhi Vidya Bhavan and Dwarkadhish Academy also started functioning in important sphere of historical research. The older institutions like the Oriental Institute at Baroda, the Baroda Museum and Picture Gallery, Hemachandra Jnanabhandar also continued their activities on new lines and they established their own journals.[2]

The establishment of the Gujarat Itihas Parishad in 1960 was a significant institutional growth that helped the development of studies in history.

With the establishment of the separate Gujarat state the older record offices were merged and a new Department of Archives was established for collecting numerous records.[3]

With the establishment of these institutions the climate of research in history started changing. Prior to 1947, research

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in historical fields was very limited. It started expanding by leaps and bounds. The initiative in historical research was undertaken by Dr. Herman Goetz, Dr. U.P. Shah, Prof. R. N. Mehta, Prof. M.R. Majumdar and others.[4] The investigations of the material remains in and around Baroda started changing the ideas of historical studies.[5] A definite step was taken towards the consideration of material relics for historical studies.

Meanwhile the Deccan College of Pune and the Department of Archaeology of Baroda state were advancing on this line. Fortunately, the beginnings made by Pandit Bhagwanlal Indraji, Diskalkar and others were being advanced on new lines.

This work, mainly published in English, conclusively proved that Gujarat had its own art heritage, it had far flung international contacts and contributions of pan-Indic nature. The role of Gujarat region in the trade and commerce and other activities was better emphasised.

Another important aspect of historical scholarship was the rapid growth of explorations specially in the pre-historic and and proto-historic periods. The loss of Harappa, Mahenjodaro and such important Indus Valley sites had led to a vigorous search of the relics of this period in Gujarat.[6] This line of research proved rewarding and a number or rural and urban settlements of this period were discovered and new chapters in history of this period were and are being written.

This writing, mostly in English, has projected the historical aspects of cultures of Gujarat to the world of scholars. However, the new institutions and the old ones started their activites of teaching and research in Gujarati language and that had some repercussions in the field of history.

In Gujarat, as in other states of our country, Gujarati has become a medium of instruction as well as learning along with the English language. It is found that the majority of the students, who opt for the subject like history, prefer Gujarati medium. This tendency has led to the development of writing of history books in Gujarati for college students.

In this field the books are produced by private booksellers as well as the University Book Production Board.[7] The private publishers patronise local writers. These writers are usually

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the teachers in the college where history is taught. Sometimes for wider circulation a group of teachers unite for writing and a publisher publishes their joint work. The resultant effort sometimes brings out better production vis-a-vis a single author. However, the syllabus for these work is decided by the Boards of Studies of different universities in the state.

It is heartening to find much discussion for the advancement of the subject by upgrading the teaching and reading materials taking place. It becomes an instrument of some change. A comparison of older syllabi with strong emphasis on learning of British history has definitely changed and broader outlook is the rule of the day.[8]

History of Asia, Africa, America and countries like Russia, Japan, China and others are studied and the change is reflected on the availability of textbooks on these topics. The other noticeable change is an emphasis on Indian history proper and, therefore, a number of topics and papers on various phases of Indian history are published. Even though this is highly encouraging, it is often found that there is a great amount of resistance to change. The main resistance develops due to the vested interest of the older writers and their publishers. This aspect develops because in many of the Boards of Study, the writers of the old books act as members and they plan different strategies to thwart change. Under these conditions same trends of history writing become discernible.

Usually when a new subject gets introduced at undergraduate level, translations of books either from English or Hindi are produced to meet the demand. Being text books they are syllabus oriented and information centred. Historical thinking is usually not found in such work. They serve their purpose of supplying examination oriented literature to the students. Specially these features are more prominent in the work of the private publishers. They take two forms : (1) textbooks and (2) guide books.

The common character of both these types is their main aim to serve the examination centred clientele. The textbooks operate by developing the syllabus in essay-type writing with chapters, paragraphs with or without subheadings arranged in

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chronological perspective and giving information on different topics. Sometimes the text is appended with a list of reading material which in actual practice is decorative feature and is hardly utilized by the students. Interestingly, sometimes the authors are also ignorant of the subject matter of these reference materials.

The picture of the University Book Production Board is a little better than the private ones. Here authors are invited to produce books which cater for the need of more than one university in the state. Therefore, the scope of writing is large, more topics are discussed and being a production supported by the Central Government well printed books at cheaper rates are available. The text is whetted prior to its publication and, therefore, it comes up to a fairly good standard. When the writer is a good authority supported by a competent reviewer then the publication stands favourably both for production as well as the material content of the work. However, this good trend also gets upset at the present day marketing condition. Often these work are not sold in the mofussil areas where the private authors and publishers consortium acts as a brake. The students are advised against the purchase of these books and the books of private publishers are recommended. Under this condition it is a frustrating experience to record large unsold stock of books produced by the University Book Production Board.

The condition of history seems to have improved considerably at the postgraduate and research levels. The postgraduate courses have noted considerable change in the syllabus and that has helped in the production of books.[9] However, the most noticeable change occurs at research level. At this level a perusal of the research articles indicate a marked difference in the use of original sources and an emphasis that with secondary sources good research is not possible. Under this condition the sessions of the *Gujarat Itihas Parishad* mark this change. Slowly, beginning from the collections of anecdotes in the name of history, more and more workers now use the primary sources and try to critically evaluate them for historical understanding.

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Though this is a very useful trend, it is offset many a time by the lack of competence in handling the primary sources due to inadequate training in the languages as well as handling of archaeological data. This inadequacy has developed a tendency to use only the materials from about 18th/19th centuries A.D.

This restrictive tendency is even reflected in the research work which do not reach a time earlier than 18th century A.D. Very few papers dealing with the earlier period are presented. The discussion in these papers is of a fairly good standard and in many cases papers could be compared to those produced in any part of the country. This is a healthy trend which tries to study individual problems often in great depth.

These micro studies often discuss some events and situations, socio-religious reforms, etc. The other trend of discussions about settlements, minor antiquities like images also is a healthy advance in historical studies. Often small discoveries are projected through small papers, newspaper reports and other mass media communications. These tendencies indicate some growing consciousness of history at certain levels.[10]

However, the projection of history by mass media is often confused and rely on outmoded thoughts that have been replaced by advanced research. Thus, a distinct gap seems to exist between the front line field of research and the communication of history in the society. When larger historical work produced by the research scholars and university professors as well as research institutes are examined, they show a wide variety of subjects.

Usually the emphasis on political history is reduced and, therefore, work on dynasties, rulers and such topics have been diminished on one side ; while on the other, plathora of studies of the struggle for independence in modern period has increased. One finds the publication of these studies as articles, booklets, dissertations and larger volumes.[11] In this field larger projects have also been organised.[12]

Different *Satyagrahas* in the state as well as outside the state attract a lot of attention. The other aspect that attracts the attention of historians is the social change. Here the changing pattern of social behaviour as revealed in the documents

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of the 19th century and the present day conditions find an interesting series of writings. In these work, changes in caste relationship, caste structure, position of women, their condition, their participation in public life find a good place. In this line of thinking the practices like *Sati* and infanticides are also emphasised.[13]

Interestingly, the monochronic studies in sociology, tribal studies and such other spheres are now slowly turning towards bichronic and polychronic studies. This change leads to an expansion of historical discipline in these spheres. The historical studies indicate various aspects of the migration of people and their present stage. Such studies of the potters have led to an understanding of highly mobile society at the village level.[14] These studies suggest that the static model of Indian society calls for intensive studies at other places and develop the dynamic model for the study of Indian society in different parts of our country.

In this changing pattern of society some administrative changes in land revenue systems are also being undertaken. Sometimes these studies are taken up by the students of history and sometimes the students of sociology are also seen to be operating in these fields.

The trade and commerce, the banking as well as commercial and financial systems are also being examined and it is felt that this is a new line of historical scholarship. In this effort the evidences from different commercial houses, European companies, government records, etc., are utilized with good effects. The role of indigenous commercial houses and entrepreneur are being brought in good focus.[15]

Usually most of these studies concentrate on the last two-three centuries and do not go much further in time. This tendency has to be corrected by future workers.

The historical scholarship seems to become interdisciplinary on two fronts : (1) the historians take the help of other disciplines like literature, religion, sociology, folklore as well as physics, chemictry, geology, etc., depending upon the requirement ; (2) many disciplines are taking recourse to historical methods specially in tracing their respective past. This is done

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by the scholars in many academic subjects. They search the old documents and indulge in historical scholarship sometimes by themselves and often in close association with historians. Both these trends have proved useful in cross fertilization of ideas and refining the methods.[16]

The other noticeable change is a shift in historical narration. It is a discussion on urbanisation and urban problems. For this purpose sometimes a period of urbanisation is taken up for study or sometime a centre is examined for its urbanisation. Usually, available written documents are examined from certain concepts about urbanisation, while some studies of certain centres indicate a different viewpoint.[17] These studies usually concentrate on a centre and take a wholistic attitude in understanding the historical phenomenon of that centre. In this study the origin, development, retardation, regeneration and other aspects of the habitations are studied.[18] In this class of study the field studies of centres are undertaken and its archaeological potentials are examined, all literary evidences as well as the toponyms of the centres are also collected and analysed.[19] This tripartite system of the study of the living as well as dead urban centres have been proved to be very effective in understanding the historical phenomenon of locality. These biographical urban studies are proving highly valuable in laying the foundations for generalisations of urban situation prevailing in this part of the country. Often, seminars are organised on this topic.

The other line of advance is seen in the close examination of a single text for analysing its historico-cultural data. For this purpose important texts like the *Ramayana*, the *Vishnu Purana*, etc., are carefully collected in published ; so that they can serve as authentic texts developed on the principles of manuscriptology and advance research in textual criticism. Besides the work noted above, some work pertaining to books in Prakrit, Gujarati and some time in Persian are also being undertaken. Besides making an effort to produce standard textbooks, a number of books like *Naishadhiya charita*, *Matsya Purana*, *Bharat Natyashastra*, *Kalki Purana* and others are critically examined for their historico-cultural analysis. In this effort, a system of

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Pauranic archaeology has been effectively developed and used to understand the settlements of *Khambhat*, *Vadnagar*, *Delmal*, *Shrimal* and other towns. It is also observed that this method has great potential in the application of folklore studies. Some of the prevalent folklores that were considered to be serious history were examined by this method and in certain cases their historicity was confirmed but in some cases it was found that they had very little historical base. These lines of study indicate that they would be useful in future work. In this particular sphere the archaeological methods proved very successful, specially in dealing with dead township where good remains were fortunately preserved as in the case of *Champaner*, *Chandravati*, etc. Investigations of these relics indicate that proper explorations are effective tools in understanding the dead cities. Moreover, salvage archaeology has also been proved to be an effective line of investigation in urban centres of *Khambhat*, *Vadodara*, *Ahmadabad*, *Surat*, etc. These studies, demonstrated in some of the seminars, are the effective contributions in understanding the townscape of the locality.

Along with the divergencies in various fields of research some efforts of collecting the known materials were also undertaken. These efforts develop the series of *Gujaratno Rajkyia Ane Samskritik Itihas* as well as some work like *Puranoman Gujarat*, *Jaina Agama Sahityaman Gujarat*, etc. These are good compilations that act as ready reference material.

In the same line of compilation Gujarat Itihas Parishad had published the bibliography of Gujarat history in several booklets. So far it has published nine volumes in this series. These are good research tools for a student of history. Interestingly, such compilations of literary history by Gujarati Sahitya Sabha also may be mentioned.

The *Chronology of Gujarat* was planned by the M.S. University on a large scale, but only one good volume has been published. Likewise, the *Twentieth Century India in Historical Perspective* was planned too by the Gujarat Vidyapith in several volumes, but just one part has come out.

This is an useful activity of stock-taking in the field of history. But, for further development, planning ahead in the

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field of history is essential. Such planning takes the form of organisation of seminars and publication of their reports. In this effort the report on the *Concept of Indology* has already been published by the Gujarat Vidyapith and the report of the Seminar on the 'Philosophy of History in the Context of New Developments in Social Sciences' is already in the press.[20] These efforts raised fundamental problems of philosophy of history and its relevance to the present. Under this very important branch very little work has been done. Work like *Itihasani Vibhavana* (Prof. R.N. Mehta), *Itihas-Samshodhan* (Prof. Rasesh Jamindar), *Itihas-Swarupa Ane Paddhati* (Prof. R.C. Parikh), *Puravastuvidyani Vibhavana* (Prof. R.N.Mehta) are published. These work not only asked questions about the nature and scope of history but also handled the problems of historical methods and interpretations.

Thus it could be seen that from 1947 till this day one finds various facts of the growth of historical research and the popularity of the subject in this part of the country. Many government and semi-government institutes seriously collect the basic materials like manuscripts, documents, archival material, coins and other archaeological materials and take up their study from a variety of angles. These trends indicate a strong inclination of historical scholarship but the erosion of its base would require strong efforts to overcome it.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. In 1947 the area of the present day Gujarat was divided into the states of Saurashtra, Baroda and others as well as the parts of the then Bombay Presidency. By stages these areas became the integral parts of the present Gujarat in 1960.

2. Both the Gujarat Vidyapith at Ahmedabad and the Oriental Institute at Baroda has started publishing research journals from 1963, viz., *Vidyapith* a fortnighty bilingual Gujarati journal and *Swadhyay* —a quarterly Gujarati journal, respectively. *Sambodhi*, a quaterly research journal of the L. D. Institute of Indology, started in 1972, publishes articles in English, Gujarati and Hindi as well as sometimes in Sanskrit. *Samipya*, a quarterly Gujarati journal of the B. J. Institute of Learning and Research, got published from 1984. In 1961

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Sardapith Pradeep from Dwarka and *Pathik* from Ahmedabad started to publish their issues. *Vidya*, the journal of the Gujarat University, *Vak*, the journal of the Saurashtra University, *Vallabh Vidyanagar Samshodhan Patrika* of the S. P. University and the journal of the M. S. University are the university journals of which the *Vak* & *V. V. S. Patrika* are now extinct. Older journals like *Bulletin of the Baroda Museum* (Vadodara), *Journal of the Chunilal Gandhi Vidhya Bhavan* (Surat), *Journal of the Oriental Institute* also publish research articles on historical writings.

3. Recently the State Archives Department has commenced publishing a half-yearly bulletin in Gujarati, viz., *Raj Daftar* and its first issue is already out in April 1986 covering many papers on archival studies that were read in the one day seminar organised by the Northern Circle of the State Archives on 5.12.1985.

4. Contributions of these authors would require a bibliography and their work are too well-known to be enumerated here.

5. These are published in a series of volumes of the M. S. University Archaeology Series.

6. Most of these reports are published in the issues of the *Indian Archaeology—A Review* and independent work by Dr. S. R. Rao, Dr. Poschell and others.

7. About 50 books by this Board are published. Such textbook writing project was carried on by the Oriental Institute of Baroda and it produced some work. Similarly Gujarat University of Ahmedabad also has actively published a series of books on the subject. S. P. University of Vallabh Vidyanagar has undertaken a project of *Jnangangotri* in which some work on the subject have been published.

8. This would be clear by comparing the syllabi of different universities of the state of Gujarat. Even specialisation of certain studies is discernible here, e.g., the History Department of the M. S. University started giving emphasis on agrarian movement and trade in India since 16th century, the History Department of the Gujarat University looks after socioeconomic history and enterpreneur history while the Department of History and Culture of the Gujarat Vidyapith concentrates on freedom history of India and archival studies. Gujarat Vidyapith now offers varied courses and training in Archival Science since 1982.

9. This has been mentioned in foot-note 8.

10. This can be clearly seen from the *Gujarat Itihas Sandarbhsuchi* vol. 8 published by the Gujarat Itihas Parishad in 1984 and compiled by Professor Rasesh Jamindar in which more than a thousand Gujarati articles with annotations have been included.

11. Some mentions are only possible : (1) "Ranchhodlal Chhotalal and the Ahmadabad Cotton Textile Industry—A study in Entrepreneurial History," Ph. D. thesis of Professor M.J. Mehta ; (2) "Bardoli Satyagraha

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—a Case Study of Peasant Movement and its Inter-relationship with National Movement." Ph. D. thesis of Dr. Shirin M. Mehta ; (3) "Social Norms and Ethical Values as Prescribed by Shree Swaminarayan in Gujarat" by Professor Rasesh Jamindar—an article published in *Studies in Religion and Change* (ed. Medhu Sen, 1981) ; (4) "Vadodara Rajya Prajamandal". Ph. D. thesis of Dr. Pankaj T. Desai ; (5) Theses on Arzi Hakumat by Dr. S.V. Jani and Jayasukhbhai Sodhha ; (6) "Freedom Struggle and Sabarkantha". Ph. D. thesis by Dr. Mahesh Pandya.

12. The Navijivan Publishing House has published 'Collected Work of Gandhiji' in several volumes in English, Hindi and Gujarati. The Information Department of the State Government has also brought out popular booklets on *Satyagrahas*. Surat Sangram Samiti has published many volumes on freedom history. Gujarat Vidyapith's Department of History and Culture also gives more emphasis on the studies of freedom struggle. The Department of History of the Gujarat University and the State Department of Archives have undertaken the project of oral history in which they interview and tape the talks of the prominent figures in all walks of life, specially of freedom fighters.

13. This can be clearly found from the list of the theses of the M. Phil. and Ph. D. degrees of the universities of Gujarat.

14. The Tribal Research and Training Centre of the Gujarat Vidyapith is doing a yeomen's service in this field and has published many work of which some have historical approach. The centre has a good museum for study.

15. The History Departments of the Gujarat University and the M. S. University actively concentrate on these topics. The Department of History and Culture of the Gujarat Vidyapith had organised an all India seminar in 1979 on the "Social and Economic History of the Western India in the Last Four Centuries After Christ."

16. Viewing this interdisciplinary approach the History & Culture Department of the Gujarat Vidyapith has organised an all India seminar in October 1985 on the "Philosophy of History in the Context of the New Developmets in Social Sciences." Its report is in the press.

17. The Gujarat University History Department held an all India seminar in 1985 on the "Urban Growth and Urbanisation in Western India". Its proceedings are ready for the press.

18. The Archaeology Department of the M. S. University of Baroda has published such studies ; e.g., *Baroda Through the Ages*, *Champaner Ek Adhyayan*, as well as many excavation reports on Shamalaji, Nagara, Chandravati, etc., such as, *Khambhatno Samskrutik Itihas* by Narmada Shankar Bhatt, *Surat Sonani Murat* by Iswarlal Ichharam Desai.

19. The History & Culture Department of the Gujarat Vidyapith under Professor R. N. Mehta and Professor Rasesh Jamindar has undertaken

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an indepth study project of Ahmedabad on this line and have finished studies of toponyms and archaeology of Ahmedabad.

20. The history departments of the universities of Gujarat had organised and are organising seminars on different subjects which definitely show the candid growth and trend in historical research in Gujarat. They are : (1) Saurashtra University of Rajkot has organised a seminar on 'History Teaching & Research at All Levels' in 1985 ; (2) the M. S. University of Baroda hosted a workshop in 1974 on 'Gujarat History" on the line of the report of U.G.C. recommendations on perspectives of history teaching and research ; (3) Nalini and Arvind Arts College of Vallabh Vidyanagar had arranged a seminar on "History Sources' in 1980 ; (4) Anand Arts College of Anand had organised a workshop in 1983 on 'Freedom History of India' ; (5) Centre for Social Studies at Surat had hosted a seminar on 'Literature and Changing Social Consciousness' in 1985 and (6) the History Department of the M. S. University has organised a seminar on 'Society, Literature and History'.

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6

Post-Independence Historical Research in Maharashtra

NARAYAN H. KULKARNEE

I

Political independence in 1947 brought to historical research in Maharashtra, as perhaps in other regions, certain different dimensions, and gave new orientations to the trends already in existence. There was a century-old vigorous tradition of historical research in Maharashtra with British rule acting as a catalytic agent. In the early days of the British rule in Maharashtra since 1818, Maharashtrians were not expected to do any historical research at all. The doors of the Bombay branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, the only organisation in the Bombay Presidency pursuing historical researches, were closed to all 'natives' who could not become its members. Even then we find a person like Balshastri Jambhekar (whom his biographer calls the Father of Historical Research in India) contributing to the Society's *Journal* (1842-46) papers on Indian inscriptions through the Society's European Secretary. Gradually the Society relented enough to admit Indians and when Dr. Bhan Daji Lal became its member in 1852 mainly on the basis of his merit as an indologist, he started a new trend. The typically Maharashtrian tradition of historical research started with N. J. Kirtane, a young student of the Deccan College rending

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his critique of Grant Duff's *Maratha History*, later published in the newspaper *Indu Prakash* (1867). We need not survey here the patterns of pre-Independence historical research in Maharashtra save mentioning that it was characterised by a highly nationalistic spirit, which may find a parallel in other parts and languages of India as well.

With Independence the natural compulsions for justifying and glorifying the past should have slackened. But as we shall presently see, they did not. The reasons were political. Independence was not meaningful enough for Maharashtrians till they could secure a unilingual state of Maharashtra which came to be set up only in 1960 after a great deal of agitation, constitutional and violent. Consequently historical researches were carried on in an even more nationalistic spirit bordering on chauvinism, justification for the unilingual state provides an excellent but true excuse for this trend.

Independence added another dimension to this spirit. From the presidential chair of the Indian History Congress in 1950, Dr. Rajendra Prasad announced that time had now arrived for historians to tell the story of our freedom struggle. Since the Chairman was also the President of India this was immediately translated into an active programme of first collecting sources for such a history. The Bombay Government also set up its own Board for the purpose and todate has published 8 volumes of such sources covering the period up to 1935 but also including a volume on Goa liberation, called mostly from the Bombay Archives. But it must be stressed that this is not an exhaustive documentation. These publications have not even touched the fringe of still-secret files of the Special Branch of the Home Department, though these are now open to scholars on special request. By concentrating upon the publication of the sources and learning the story-telling and interpretation to historians the Bombay Government has followed a right policy (Some of the other States have brought out their own freedom histories which sometimes belie the very documents they have printed !). However, on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee year of its formation (1985) the Maharashtra Government also fell a prey to this temptation of sponsoring a freedom history in

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Marathi. One can judge its quality when it tells us seriously that Stalin inspired our freedom movement, that the lion's share is the Nehru dynasty's. Y. B. Chavan looms larger than life on its pages. Better results could not be expected when it was entrusted to a left-wing journalist instead of a professional historian.

When the State Board for Literature and Culture (*Sahitya-Samskriti Mandal*) was set up by the Govenment of Maharashtra through its Resolution dated 19 November 1960, the State was expected to enter into the field of historical research in a large way as its 10 clauses repeatedly mentioned history and historical research. No sooner than it was set up, it announced its grand project of a five-volume comprehensive history of Maharashtra, each volume comprising 500 pages to be based on documentary sources available up to date, and entrusted the work to 5 editors whom it considered eminent. In its brochure updated up to October 1973 only (no later brochures are available to the public !) it has been mentioned that Mss of Vols. I, III and IV were ready, but in the past 10 years thereafter no volume has seen the light of the day as yet. As it was the appointment of writer-editors itself had left something to be desired, at least three of them had done no original research work for the periods allotted to them (Prof. N. R. Phatak, Vol. III, 1627-1707 ; Dr. V. G. Khobrekar, Vol. IV, 1707-1818 and Prof. G. D. Parikh, Vol. V, 1808-1920) and as of today three of them are no more (Prof. Phatak, Prof. Parikh and Prof. G. H. Khare). Nor can the Board take credit for publishing any original work based on historical research in the past 25 years save S. V. Avalaskar's tale of Raigad—the formidable fortress—capital of Shivaji which went through many vicissitudes of fortune. The other publication which could have been a good aid to research, viz., Dr. Khobrekar's monograph on archives in Maharashtra is so faulty in method and content that the less said about it the better.

The Board's record for publication of source materials and translations into Marathi of meritorious histories bearing on the Marathas is definitely better. Two volumes of sources in Portuguese, a descriptive catalogue of stone and copper-plate

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inscriptions bearing on Goa and Maharashtra (Dr. S. B. Deo), Damodar Chopekar's autobiography, the letters of Pandita Ramabai in English and the collected work of Mahatma Phule in Marathi are excellent aids for research. The translations of wellknown work of Sir Jadunath Sarkar, Surendra Nath Sen, M. G. Ranade's classic *Rise of Maratha Power*, A. S. Mishra's *Nanasaheb Peshwa*, B. K. Apte's work on Maratha navy and Prof. Pissurlencar's work on Portuguese-Maratha relations have been excellent choices. The Board could have been a little more discerning if it had left untranslated Manucci's *Storio do Mogor* and the correspondence of Briancoun Consul at the tiny French factory at Surat. Neither threw much light on the Marathas.

Even better has been the Board's scheme for extending substantial subsidies even to the extent of bearing the entire cost of publication of work which find favour with them. Work of merit based on laborious research which do not find commercial publishers easily can certainly look forward to financial assistance from the Board. S.M. Garge's *History of Kolhapur*, Dr. Kamal Gokhale's *Sambhaji*, Dr. V. V. Mirashi's *Shilahars*, S. N. Athavale's *Philosophies of History* are notable examples of subsidised publications. So far monetary grants-in-aid have been given to more than 30 work, either processed histories, sources or translations. Many of them have been carried off by the Bharat Itihasa Samshodhak Mandal. If many enterprising historians are not coming forward to avail of the Board's offer (which has come down to aid for just one piece of work annually) the fault is not the Board's.

The Board has been helpful to historical research also in undertaking the compilation and publication of dictionaries and directories. *Prachin Charitra Kosh* and *Prachin Sthal Kosh* (dictionaries of biographies and places of ancient India) compiled by M.M. Siddheshwar Shastri Chitrav are excellent reference work for indologists and these have been financed by the Board. For many years the Board was responsible for Marathi *Vishwa-Kosha* (encyclopaedia). Of the projected 18 volumes 12 have been published so far. These contain many entries relating to history in which the contributors and editors

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are expected to carry out research at least among secondary work.

Yet, another way, however small, in which the government encourages historical research by awarding an annual prize to the best published history book in Marathi. Here historical work have to compete with those in social sciences. But this is compensated by the fact that a separate prize is available for biographies, autobiographies and memoirs which in their own way constitute the stuff of history. Strangely enough the concerned committee of the government does not appear to be concerned at all whether any historical research has gone into the making of the book. For example, Dr. Munje's biography (Balshastri Hardas), a prize-winner of 1969 makes no use of either his private papers (in the National Library) or the government archives. Many other examples can be cited but are not necessary. The Sahitya Akademi also makes a more substantial award to the best Marathi book of the year where history books have to take their chance with all other categories, fiction and non-fiction. Between 1955 and 1979 only five work which can be classified under history or its sources won the award : *Vaidik Samskriticha Itihasa* (Laxman Shastri Joshi, 1955), biographies of Dr. S. V. Ketkar (D. N. Gokhale, 1961) and G. K. Gokhale (N. R. Phatala, 1970), *Shiva-Chhatrapati* (T.S. Shejualkar, 1966) and Godavari Parulekar's *Memoir at the Warli Revolt* (1972). It has to be noted that Shejualkar's is only a plan for a Shivaji biography, however laudable, while Phatak's biography is a poor example at historical research compounding its 'crimes' with blind prejudice against Lokamanya Tilak.

Apart from the Central and State Governments there are ten other organisations which together give 19 awards annually. Admittedly the prizes in today's prices are not sizeable and all sorts of categories are there, yet a good piece of historical research stands a fair chance at getting a prize. The major hurdle, on the contrary, is the extremely limited choice. Excluding biographies, most of which are not historical, between 15 and 30 books, which can be broadly categorised as history, have been published annually between 1969 and 1985, and most of them do not appear to consider that research or evidence

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of it in the form of notes and references are necessary in the composition of these books ! Occasionally a sketchy bibliography is appended as a sort of concession to readers and researchers. If one were to go by published Marathi history books in recent years the state of historical research is not very encouraging, worthy exceptions apart. For instance in 1985 was published an account of the freedom struggle in Surapur (misspelt in the Marathi books as Zorapur). The present author has earned his doctorate on British-Surapur relations and can confidently state that the Marathi book is a figment of the author's imagination. Another lecturer went so far as to concoct evidence and forge documents in his attempt to thrust greatness upon the wife of Mahatma Phule !

This brief and somewhat sketchy survey of government sponsored historical research may be concluded with a look at archival publications from the Government Archives. There have been the British Government's record office at Bombay, the Alienation Office at Pune where the Maratha period papers are preserved, the repository at Nagpur which conserves the records of the British rule in Berar, a substantial archives at the former princely state of Kolhapur, a smaller one at Aundh and a recently opened record office at Aurangabad. These were extremely limited in their services to researchers before 1947. Independence made them adopt more liberal policies and Maharashtra Archives has been even more liberal than others if requests to see closed files are backed by right influence. Against all archival principles it showed secret files on Gandhi murder to the foreign authors of *Freedom at Midnight* ! It must also be mentioned that it was the only state which made police records readily available at the very first request for the *Towards Freedom* projects. The pre-Independence trend in archival publications was to provide with *Selections* or even *in extenso* materials for scholars at a distance. The rapidly growing accrual of government papers and the economics of book-production have changed this out of necessity. But the Maharashtra Archives has not changed. In the 38 years since independence a publication has been brought out every year. A large number of them are *Selections* and *in extenso* sources.

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A few are on archival practices. A couple of them, one on Aurangabad and another on hot springs, are very odd indeed. Almost all these publications have a bearing on medieval Maratha history or early British rule. The G. S. Khaparde collection is housed in the National Archives but the Maharashtra Archives on its own undertook to publish it. A publication that may be of interest to all history students is Sir Jadunath's letters to Dr. Raghubir Singh though the propriety of Maharashtra Archives taking it up is doubtful. Another on the modern period concerns Shivaji memorials.

II

Although with Independence and particularly after Maharashtra state came into being the government's role in historical research increased, the field really belongs to the universities and learned institutions. Before Independence, there were only two universities (Bombay and Nagpur). The SNDT Women's University and the Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, set up during the non-cooperation movement (1921), had no government recognition. Neither of these have properly constituted history departments even today although the former has brought out a very useful compilation on widow-marriage and the latter on the status of women in Maratha pericd, both adding fuel to the fire of the feminist movement. Soon after Independence the demand for a separate university for Maharashtra was conceded and located at Pune to be known as Poona University. But since the older Deccan College had a History Department, the Poona University was not allowed to have one till 1968. Thereafter, it was suddenly discovered that the Deccan College had not done enough work in this department which was ordered to be amalgamated with the Poona University department. But matters are hanging in fire in a court of law and meanwhile historical research has suffered. The Deccan College has tried to justify its existence by a badly edited volume on the battle of Kharda (1795) while the Poona University has done somewhat better by publishing N. C. Kelkar lecture series notable examples of which are *Portuguese-Maratha Relations* (Prof. Pissurlencar), *Administration and Social History*

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of the Marathas (S. N. Joshi), *Ancient Maharashtra* (Prof. D. B. Diksalkar) and *James Grant Duff* (A.R.Kulkarni). It is another matter that todate it has published only the first volume of its projected 5-volume *History of the Marathas*, or that it has not published any papers of Maratha history seminars organised by it or hardly any translations under the ICHR scheme.

The university which has a proud record is the Shivaji University at Kolhapur presumably because it was headed by a historian, Dr. A. G. Pawar, in its early years. Eight volumes of source materials on Kolhapur history and the papers of a Maratha history seminar well-edited by S. R. Tikekar have been published. Pawar later headed the Shahu Research Institute under the auspices of that University and brought out a volume of *Shahu Papers*. The series have been happily continued by Drs. Vilas Sangave and B. D. Khane which will be a valuable tool for research on Shahu Chhatrapati. The Bombay University has shown that it is not dormant by publishing Dr. V. G. Hatalikar's post-doctoral work on Franco-Maratha relations. A history of that university itself was published by S. R. Dongakery, on the occasion of its centenary in 1957 and a briefer but different version by Dr. Aroon Tikekar when the University became 125 years old.

III

The private organisations in the state have a much better record of research and publication in the historical field. With the demise of Shankar Shrikrishna Dev before Independence his institution at Dhule which had done voluminous work not only on Ramdas and his sect but in other areas as well (nearly 50 publications) have become moribund. But the Bharat Itihas Samshodhak Mandal at Pune set up by V. K. Rajwade and Tatyasaheb Mahendale in 1910 has vigorously pursued in the post-independence period their research and publication programmes quite often with government aid, even after the passing away of its eminent chief Prof. G. H. Khare last year. In the past 38 years the Mandal has published 3 more volumes of Persian sources of India history, 5 more volumes of records of the Shivaji period, 2 more volumes of the sources on medieval Deccan and

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10 more volumes of miscellaneous sources of Indian history. Its quarterly journal which runs fairly regularly contains useful articles on all aspects and periods of Indian history. Then there are 16 volumes of miscellaneous articles. It has not occurred to the Mandal that these volumes as well as the quarterly need an index for easy consultation. The Mandal had started an excellent series on urban history of Pune which has ceased after the IVth volume in 1952 but needs to be revived. Selections from the records of the families of Angres, Pethes, Dabhades, of those during the Sambhaji period have been well-edited and a 3rd volume of Hingane family papers is forthcoming. There have been a couple of catalogues of manuscripts and paintings in the Mandal's custody. Dr. M. G. Dikshit's work on inscriptions from Maharashtra have also been published. Dr. R. D. Choksey supplemented B. D. Basu's *Story of Satara* with a monograph on Pratapsinha. Prof. G. H. Khare's detailed chronology of Maratha history is a basic tool. The Mandal made a happy beginning by publishing socioeconomic letters of the Peshwa period (R.V. Oturkar). Recently Dr. V. D. Divekar has brought out a brief catalogue in English on the same subject but covering the whole of India, of materials in Marathi. If one is interested in discerning a trend in historical research in Maharashtra one can do so by considering the activities of the Mandal. The concentration is at the study of and publications relating to the medieval period of Indian history and more specifically the Maratha period, the records for which are housed in the Mandal. Recently, however, the Mandal organised seminars on modern Maratha history, a happy augury. But the Mandal is not merely a research institute. It has its obligations as a vast repository of original source materials which influences its publication programmes. It suffers from serious constraints of finance and personnel. Nevertheless what is most important is that it has kept alive the traditional type of dedicated historical research in Maharashtra.

The local history of Berar and Nagpur is the primary concern of the Vidarbha Samshodhak Mandal. On this subject it has brought out a series of articles in bookform by its venerable chief M. M. V. V. Mirashi and his indefatigable lieutenant D. G.

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Landge (both of them are no more). Mirashi's work on the Silaharas and the Vakatakas have been published under this Institute's auspices. The Mandal celebrated its golden jubilee last year by publishing the *Chronicle of Bhavani Pandit*, an important official of the Nagpur Bhonslas. Some years ago it published a fragment of the autobiography of K.B. Bhavalkar, a valuable addition to the recently growing Maratha renaissance literature. A special feature of this Mandal is that it prints the talks arranged under its various sponsored lecture series. Since the choice of the subject is left to the speaker these sometimes bear upon other aspects of Maratha history than Berar. Prof. Khare's lectures on Muslim rule in Maharashtra are very useful. (My own talks on 19th century Maharashtra are awaiting publication). Yet another special feature of both this and the Pune Mandal is that they are also interested in literary, sociological and other studies. The Pune Mandal used to carry out even excavations ! Since there are separate and fairly well-established organisations for this purpose they would do well to confine themselves to historical research.

Among the other active private organisations, the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute is a world-renowned body for indological research. The monumental task of editing textually the 18 *parvas* of Mahabharat including *Harivamsha* started before independence was completed two decades ago. Similarly the archaeology and other departments of the Deccan College are well-known for their work. For want of space we cannot say more. Moreover the methods of historiography and archaeology are not the same and it would not be advisable to combine the two. Among other private institutions the Rajwade Samshodhan Mandal (Dhule) runs a regular quarterly research journal and occasionally brings out a publication such as the one purporting to be Shivaji's letters. The Pandharpur Samshodhan Mandal (which late D. V. Potdar helped to set up in 1950) and the Godateer Itihasa Samshodhan Mandal(Nanded) are examples of local history societies. They are more engaged in collecting sources in their respective regions than in research publications. The latter houses valuable sources for the history and literature of the Marathi-speaking region under the former state of

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Hyderabad. The Heras Institute of Indian History and Culture (set up in 1926) is Bombay's contribution to Maharashtra. Father H. Heras, well-known for his work on Aravidu dynasty of Vijayanagar, was its founder and published a volume on Mahenjodaro under its auspices. The talks arranged by the Institute are published from time to time and cover a variety of topics of Indian history. A notable publication has been John Farber's lectures on early Bombay. The Forbes Gujarati Sabha (set up in 1865) at Bombay with its 73 publications, all in Gujarati, cannot be accommodated in this account. But since parts of Gujarat and Maharashtra were under joint regime till 1960 it would be interesting to investigate the interaction of two cultures through the Sabha's publications. The Itihasa Samshodhan Mandal at Bombay set up to give scope to the veteran historians of the old school V. S. Bendre, through which he published his works on Maloji, etc., a regular quarterly journal and some essays is orphaned with his recent death. Bendre's most significant work is on Tukaram and not Sambhaji. The Marathi Samshodhan Mandal in Bombay, though basically devoted to literary studies, has brought out very useful brochures for the study of renascent Maharashtra, particularly under Dr. S. G. Malse. While one may not find any particular pattern in their work, the private institutions are sustained mostly by public subscriptions and donations and the dedicated involvement of their workers have rendered most valuable services to historical research in Maharashtra.

IV

From institutions to individuals. It is obviously not expected to catalogue individual publications. Sporadic and isolated titles in English do not indicate any trend or pattern whatsoever, though there have been very significant contributions in Maratha history in particular and Indian history in general. In the field of Marathi historiography two individuals in the past 40 years have worked with a definite view in mind. One is late Shahaji Chhatrapati of Kolhapur, next only to Dr. Raghubir Singh of Sitamau, in his keen interest in historical studies. Unlike the latter he did not write histories himself but engaged

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scholars to do so and sponsored publications dealing with Dewas, his parent state and Kolhapur, his adoptive state. His sound approach can be seen from the fact that although *Karveer Riyasat* sponsored by him had won a government award, he decided to have it revised when told that sources in the National Archives had not been used. The present author was responsible for arranging the typescripts of nearly 5000 files on the subject and a revised edition was brought out recently utilising these new sources. He adroitly avoided all modern controversies by getting his history confined to 1883. The *Chhatrapatis of Kolhapur* and the *Puars of Dhar* are made eminently readable by novelist-historian Manohar Mulgaonkar. Apart from two histories at Dewas and Kolhapur in Marathi, he sponsored the publication of a dozen volumes of sources on Kolhapur and its dependent *jagirs* and officials. One volume is on Kolhapur-Goa relations reprinting Portuguese sources. The other individual is Dr. Y. D. Phadke who has undertaken singlehanded a project on modern Maharashtra with special reference to the non-Brahman movement. He began with essays on Tilak-Agarkar relationship and the Satyashadhaks and has so far published full-scale work on Lokamanya Tilak, V. D. Savarkar, Shahu Chhatrapati, Senapati Bapat and Keshavrao Jedhe. He has also edited work of the lesser-known Satyashadhaks, published his doctoral work on the movement for Samyukta (united) Maharashtra and was commissioned to write on R. D. Karve, pioneer of family planning in India. Initially he used to rely on newspapers, journals and private papers. Gradually he has come to realise the value of official archives as well. His work reflect a high degree of historical scholarship and an objective, balanced view of events and personalities in the past. Most important is his approach at not indulging in hero worship or copying of other's views but examining afresh all possible evidences. He cites his sources even in articles meant for popular journals. His work is a good model for all Marathi scholars of the future to follow.

But in work of most other scholars and writers no trends of historical research as such can be discerned. The basic requirement of a publication based on research, *viz.*, utilising

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as many contemporary private and official sources as possible and citing such evidences for their statements and interpretations, is absent in majority of them. Among the minority a few consult only secondary sources. A few rely upon such risky evidence as memoirs of old men and women who cannot be expected to be accurate or fulsome. Even there the proper method in oral history, of getting signed statements or approval in the speaker's voice if tape-recorded, is not followed. For example, Dhananjay Keer in his biography of Shahu Chhatrapati of Kolhapur cited Shahaji Maharaj at Kolhapur as having told him that Abasaheb Kagalkar, the later Regent was securing astrological assurances about his son Shahu's future. When the present author questioned the Chhatrapati about how he could personally know of an event before his birth, the Maharaj said that he had only drawn Keer's attention to the 3rd volume of published sources on Kolhapur which Keer had not cared to see at all and this from an author who has published a decade of voluminous biographies in English and Marathi and always citing secondary sources ! A majority of authors rely upon plagiarism, their own imagination, unacknowledged borrowing from secondary sources worsening it with their own perversions. Under the circumstances all one can do is to indicate not any trend of research but subjects popular with historical writers and cite a few examples of the foregoing observations.

The most popular subject in Maharashtra continues to be Shivaji who has been practically deified and on that account renders the task of a properly researched and balanced biography most difficult : V. K. Bhave (1955) gives some references but makes it a panegyric. B. M. Purandare (1st edition, 1958) whose work has undergone several reprints makes it an old fashioned *bakhar* (chronicle). Balshastri Hardas (1960) quotes passages from secondary work when he feels like and is overflowing with a plan, however excellent, and not a biography proper. D. V. Kale's (1960) modest biography is one of the best, but he never quotes any authority while V. S. Bendre's (1972), on the other hand, is a compendium of sources instead of processed material. S. M. Pagdi (1971) gave great promise in his *Shivaji-Charitra-Ek-Abhyas* wherein he propounded the view that

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Shivaji was fighting for political independence and not for rescuing the Hindus from Muslim oppression. But in his English biography (1974) he detracted from the merits of his hero by speculating that Aurangzeb could have won over Shivaji by offering him an appropriate *mansab*. Incidentally this speculation is further perverted in N.C.E.R.T. textbook by making Shivaji go to Agra to seek a *mansab*. M.M.D.V. Potdar whom the Government of Maharashtra commissioned to write, could never sit down to do so. Only his views, neither systematic nor too sound, are available in a posthumous publication (1980) by Dr. Kamal Gokhale. The present author tried to relate Shivaji to modern times by his *Chhatrapati Shivaji, Architect of Freedom*. Anil Samarth followed this trend (1975) and B. L. Ahluwalia has copied the articles in his compilation (1983). This trend is also evident in some of the articles in the special number of *Lokarajya* (April 1985). All said and done, nothing has happened so far to happily contradict the present author's view expressed as long ago as 1976 that a standard, detailed and properly *historical* biography of Shivaji still remains a desideratum.

Two other deities of post-independence Maharashtra are Lokamanya Tilak and V. D. Savarkar. Most of the Marathi work on Tilak are not worthy of consideration at all as they are only derived and worsened versions of N. C. Kelkar's monumental work published nearly 60 years ago. The only exceptions are S. L. Karandikar's *Tilak-Bharat* and N. R. Phatak's *Lokamanya*. The former, in his English biography (of which the Marathi one is a translation) laments the loss of some sources. But really speaking this is compensated somewhat by the liberal policies of archival repositories in recent years, the publication of Tilak's letters to B. Vidwans (his nephew), and even more important the *Collected Work of Tilak* in 7 volumes, however, badly edited. Karandikar has not taken the trouble of consulting enough archival documents and prejudges issues by taking sides. The partisan spirit imbibed from early youth cannot die an easy death. Phatak has compensated for his vicious attack on Tilak in his Gokhale's biography by waxing eloquent on what he considered admirable in Tilak. Even then he presents

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only prejudiced accounts of Tilak *vis-a-vis* national education, swadeshi, social reforms. Somehow one gets the impression that Phatak cannot, in the heart of his hearts, stand Tilak's popularity but has to swallow it somehow ! Apart from that, not much historical research or its citation is evident in the work. Two valuable additions to Tilak literature are Y. D. Phadke's essays on Tilak-Agarkar relations and a full-scale work on his relations with the revolutionaries (written about in the pre-independence period by A. J. Karandikar without authentication). But in his latest book on Tilak-Shahu relations there is more of Shahu and much less of Tilak. On the occasion of Tilak's birth centenary in 1961, the All India Congress Committee announced a prize of Rs. 10,000 to the best biography in English. Books were hastily produced taking no time for diligent research. Even the prize-winning one by A. K. Bhagwat and G. P. Pradhan can make no claim to historical research. The state of Tilak biographies, particularly in Marathi, underlines the fact that even eminent scholars do not consider it necessary to cite evidence for their interpretations. Dhananjay Keer does so but relies only on secondary sources. Moreover Keer has no firm views on any subject. Since he has written on a number of persons opposed to each other, one can understand his dilemma. A balanced biography of Tilak based on all sources not available to Kelkar is yet another desideratum.

The situation is not very different in respect of V. D. Savarkar. S. L. Karandikar wrote a voluminous one in 1943 but it was proscribed immediately ! Only with independence could it be released to the public. It had the advantage of being approved by the hero himself. But since Savarkar died only in 1966, it has to be only used as a source. Balarao Savarkar has supplied source materials for the period 1924-47 including those not donated to the Nehru Memorial Library. Mukund Sonpatki has recounted Savarkar's years in London with the help of records in the India-Office Library. Y. D. Phadke has given the results of his research on secret files in Bombay Archives. Keer's English biography translated into Marathi too relies on newspapers and published books. The *Collected Work of Savarkar* (8 volumes, 1965) are useful. Savarkar added to them by

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dictating *Shatruchya Shibirat* purporting to give an account of his activities in London but not doing so fully. Like quite a few other revolutionaries Savarkar used to be very secretive and one has to rely on police reports which he used to decry. D. N. Gokhale has done well in writing a biography of Babarao Savarkar who was fully involved in his younger brother's activities, which is really a memoir. The amazing thing is that nothing very different is available in government records, so precise was the memory of this comparatively obscure hero. The same cannot be said of the biographies of the other revolutionaries by V. S. Joshi which are based on private research but not among government archives.

Yet another personality acquiring the dimensions and characteristics of a deity mainly because of political reasons is Chhatrapati Shahu of Kolhapur (1876-1922). The process of deification was severely handicapped because of Shahu's enmity with Tilak (another deity), collaboration with the British in suppressing the freedom struggle and alleged loose character. Probably this obscured Diwan Bahadur A. B. Latthe's two-volume memoir (1924). But with the acquisition of political power by the non-Brahman community who needed a father figure of their own, Shahu's stock rose suddenly. Of course there were his full support to Ambedkar and the uplift of the *dalits* and the downtroddens, his efforts to spread education and many other admirable achievements to boost it up. The ball was set rolling by Keer's biography first in English (1976) and then the enlarged Marathi version (1979). The birth centenary volume brought out by the Maharashtra Government could not be expected to be critical. But even G. R. Bhide who knew his subject and told this author that many things about Shahu could best be published did a somersault and whitewashed him. Gangadhar Pantawane (1982) is carried away by emotion while K.G. Suryavanshi (1984) is restrained in his adulation. We have already referred to Phadke's work whose chief merit is that it is based on painstaking research in archives, and among relevant newspapers, journals, private papers as well as memoirs. Shahu's collected speeches have already been published and voluminous documentation in several instalments is going on which should

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help future scholars. Yet another subject on the way to deification is Dr. B. R. Ambedkar on whom a lot is being written more out of sentiment but not based enough on research.

We may end this review of historical research in Maharashtra by cursorily mentioning some other popular subjects. On the bi-centenary of the 3rd battle of Panipat in 1961 Maharashtrian scholars vied with each other in reprinting some sources and T. S. Shejualkar brought out his enlarged Marathi version not very different from his English original. The post-Independence period is marked by a number of Maratha renaissance studies mainly biographical. Few authors have put in historical research, notable exceptions being G. G. Jambhekar (Balshastri Jambhekar), A. K. Priyolkar (Dadoba Pandurang, L. Lokahitawadi, Bhau Daji Lal, R. B. Jayakar) and P. B. Kulkarni (Jagannath Shankarsho, Javaji Dadaji, Mama Paramanand). A peculiar feature of the Marathi historiography is compilation of descriptive geneologies of specific families. A lot of unmethodical research goes into it. Nearly a hundred such family chronicles have been so far published, half of them in post-Independence period. Fresh editions of Marathi chronicles (*bakhars*) known for their style are brought out by literature teachers. Consequently their historic content is ignored or misunderstood. We have also to take note of the work in religious history. Ever since Justice Ranade propounded the view that the saint poets prepared the ground for the rise of Shivaji and V. K. Rajwade countered it by saying that only Ramdas did so, controversies have abounded and not abated till the present day. In the post-Independence period fresh interpretations have been made of all the major saints and particularly of Ramdas, all by literature people not following the historical method. V. R. Phatak alleges to provide socio-economic background and G. D. Pendse tries to prove, not very successfully, that the saints' teachings were positive. More remarkable are several work of R. C. Dhere who quite often gives notes and references. His work of the identification of Chakradhar, the founder of Mahanubhav sect is a brilliant piece of inductive logic while his UGC-financed study of the evolution of Vitthala, the most popular deity of Maharashtra shows

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unbiased sociological research. His work on Muslim saint poets is also significant and would help the current craze for national integration. We have taken into consideration religious history because in medieval India it gets entangled with social and even political history. Asiatic mode of production is certainly not the only key to the understanding of medieval India.

Finally we may mention a trend most unhealthy for historical research in Maharashtra. In pre-Independence days historical facts were perverted through novels, dramas, short stories and poems. But these never bore the label of historical research. The post-Independence trend of writing what are called fictionalised biographies and autobiographies does damage to historical research by appending lengthy bibliographies to work of pure fiction and imagination to which are added introductions, boasting of research. It is such writers who create myths and legends which future historians will find it difficult to demolish and show the past for what it is. The disadvantage of the harm to historical research far outweighs the advantage of popularisation of history which post-independent fiction is doing. The novel in English on Kanhoji Angrey by Manohar Mulgaonkar, translated by P. L. Deshpande most recently (1985), both eminent writers, is an example of such perverted history. Readers prefer myths and fiction to research work and the main spirit behind historical research is damaged, sometimes beyond repair. This is somewhat compensated by the fact that a large number of memoiis, biographies and autobiographies of participants in the freedom struggle and other areas, too numerous to be mentioned but made possible only by independence, are getting published. These are strengthening the stock of raw materials for future historical research.

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7

Growth and Trends of Historical Research in Karnataka 1947-1985*

K. G. VASANTHAMADHAVA

I Introduction

Although Karnataka—the region between the Godavari and the Kaveri in the north and south, respectively,—has history of two thousand of years, it came into the web of historical research in the last decade of the nineteenth century. The political fragmentation of Karnataka into twenty administrative units was mainly responsible for the slow growth of historical research. It was in this context, the European and indigenous scholars namely Fleet, Rice, Sewell, R. G. Bhandarkar, R. Narasimahaachar and others set themselves determinedly to the laborious task of collecting and editing epigraphical source materials which lay scattered in various parts of Karnataka and even outside its present political boundaries. Since the publications of *Dynastic History of Canarese District* by Fleet and *Early History of the Deccan* by R. G. Bhandarkar in the year 1896, new era started in Karnatakas historical research. The collections of source materials mainly epigraphs and to certain extent literary work and their citations in historical writings were done

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* Historical trends discussed here exclude unpublished theses articles and editorial work.

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in research work. Political history of different ruling dynasties of Karnataka, particularly ancient and medieval periods, was the field of research work. In other words the trend of historical research was political history. Similarly, the glorification of political achievements of Karnataka rulers was reflected in historical writings. In the second decade of the twentieth century, historical research trend in Karnataka turned towards intensive study of certain regions in Karnataka, namely the coastal and Malnad regions. The theme of research of regional history was mainly political. Side by side with historical writings, researches were carried on in the cultural fields like language, literature, religion, art and architecture. As a result the scope of historical research gradually widened. This has been clearly reflected in the historical research work since 1930.

In the 3rd decade, B. A. Saletore opened new avenue in the Karnataka historical research by stressing social, political and religious conditions of Karnataka. His historical research work namely, *Social and Political Conditions* of *Vijayanagara Empire* (in two volumes, 1934, Madras), *Ancient Karnataka* (vol I, Poona, 1936) and *Medieval Jainism* with reference to the Vijayanagara Empire (Bombay, 1938) discuss different aspects of cultural features of Karnataka to the fall of the Vijayanagara Empire. The sources utilised by Saletore in reconstructing the above topics were varied. He was the first to utilise Tulu Paddanas (folk songs) for the reconstruction of cultural activities of the Tuluva which was depicted in his book *Ancient Karnataka*. Masti Venkatesa Iyengar,[2] P. B. Desai[3] and R. S. Mugali[4] attempted to depict the cultural history of Karnataka. In 1940, S. Srikanta Shastri had shown the way how to write cultural history of Karnataka in his book *Sources of Karnataka History*. Although it is a source history, its introduction deals with interesting information on Karnataka history such as the geography of Karnataka, political history from the earliest times to the fall of the Yadavas, the growth of literatures in Karnataka, the evolutions of fine arts, religious and economic conditions and distinct features of Karnataka culture. The views expressed by Shastri on these points are enlightening and thought provoking.

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Another significant event in historical research in Karnakata history in the 4th decade was the publication of entire political history of Karnataka. It was entitled *Kannada nadina Kathegalu* (K) written by Naryana Sharma and published by Karnataka Ithihasa Samsodhana Mandala.[5] Similarly inscriptions of Bombay Karnataka were published in three two volumes under the title *Karnataka Inscriptions*. These were edited by R. S. Panchamukhi. On the basis of epigraphical evidence, N. Lakshminarayana Rao and R. S. Panchamukhi wrote *Karnataka Arasumanethana* (1946).

Thus on the eve of 1947 historical research in Karnataka had taken its shape. Its trend was political and the research scholars glorified the greatness of Karnataka. Since discoveries had not yet reached the final stage, the historical writings found to be antiquated, inadequate and imperfect.[6]

II Historical Research Trends Between 1947 and 1956

Between the years 1947 and 1956, themes of Karnataka history researches were on the dynastic history of Ancient Karnataka[7], Vijayanagara Empire[8], Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan[9] and some interesting events of freedom movement.[10] Desire to achieve the unification of Karnataka haunted some research scholars. The most striking point in research trend was the availability of non-Kannada sources which were quoted in the following books, *Haidar Ali* (1949), *A New History of the Marathas* (by G. S. Sardesai) and *Tipu Sultan*. With the help of these sources, Kannadigas cleared many misconceptions on Haidar and Tipu and came to know much information of Maratha activities in north Karnataka.

Nilakanta Shastri's *History of South India* from pre-historical times to the fall of Vijayanagara in 1955[11] marked new trend in historical research as its study implies Karnataka rulers' connections with other South Indian rulers. Kannada scholars namely, Srikanta Shastri, B. A. Saletore, P. B. Desai and others critically reviewed the statements on Karnataka rulers made by Shastri. On the eve of the formation of Maha-Mysore State, B. A. Saletore introduced another new research theme in the Karnataka history—sea-faring activities of Kannadigas.

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His book *Karnataka's Trans-Oceanic Contacts* (1956) narrates Kannadigas relations with China and Indo-China, secondary and primary points of affinity between the ancient Kannadigas and Babylonia. All these were explained in such a way that readers' curiosity was roused. This is the last work of B. A. Saletore on Karnataka history.

III Karnataka Historical Research Work and Trends Between 1956 and 1958

Karnataka research marked a turning point with the formation of Maha-Mysore State. Thanks to State Government's encouragement and for the facilities for research provided by the universities in Karnataka, the scholars took interest in different aspects of Karnataka history. Although research on political history continued, chapters on socioeconomic aspect, religious and art and architecture were included. In due course of years the research trend shifted from dynastic history to cultural aspects. Epigraphic work appeared in considerable number. Moreover, the scholars consulted other sources such as literary work, foreign sources and indigenous records along with epigraphs. The themes of research in the period under study were dynastic history, freedom movement, administration, diplomatic history, religious, cultural and socioeconomic aspects, art and architecture and regional history. In the field of dynastic history, the *Nayakas of Ikkeri* by K. D. Swaminathan (1957), R. S. Panchamukhi's *Karnatakada Ithihasa* vol. I (1970), the *Seunas of Devagiri* by A.V. Narasimha Murthi and Ritti, 1971 and 1974 (respectively), *History of Bijapur* by D. C. Varma (1973), *Kalyana Chalukyas* by Krishna Murari (1977), *Vijayanagar Empire* in two volumes by M. H. Rama Sharma *ed.* by M. H. Gopal (1978, 1980), *Kalyana Chalukyas* by B. R. Gopal (1981), *Pre-British State System of South India*, 1761-1799 by Nikhilesh Guha (1985). are worthy to be considered from research point of view. In all these books, chapters on non-political aspects were incorporated. For example, Murthi in his book *Seunas* has rightly drawn our attention to the role of Chakradhara, the founder of Mahanubhava (pp. 186-8). He has stressed on one important point, i.e., "this was an age of

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transition from old to new" (p 189). Along with the political achievements, Murthi emphasised on religious conditions under the Seunas. This is a distinct trend of research. Chapters on administration, religion and education are included in his book.

Ritti, another scholar on the same topic, tackled the problems of the Seunas by evaluating the survey of sources namely, inscriptions, literary and numismatic and by discussing the original home of the Seunas, their genealogical and chronological problems. His conclusions on these problems are based on original sources. His book, the *Seunas* contains authentic information on administration and finance, trade, society, and literature. Throughout the book Ritti has shown admirable competence and objectivity in handling historical materials on the subject.

The *Kalyana Chalukyas*, by B. R. Gopal, contains interesting chapters on social and cultural progress under those rulers in addition to the political achievements. All the problems discussed in this book are more systematically done than Krishna Murari.

Verma's *History of Bijapur* (1973) is mainly concerned with the political and administrative achievements of Bijapur Sultans. The author has tried to give us a picture as vivid as source materials in Persian, Marathi, Portuguese and Russian, can be made to yield. The inclusion of administration along with political achievements of the Bijapur Sultans is one of the distinct features of research trend.

Pre-British State System of South India makes an indepth study of administrative history of Mysore under Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan. Good attention is being paid to financial aspect. The striking point to be noticed in this book is that Guha has reappraised the earlier works and presented new facts and ideas. His study is based on a wide range of archival and published materials in English including translations of Persian records.[12]

The first volume of *History of Freedom Movement ed.* by M. V. Krishna Rao and G. S. Halappa (1962) narrates the heroic resistance of Haidar and Tipu and armed resistance, big and small, on the basis hetherto unknown source materials

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such as microfilm copies of the records in India Office Library, Scotish records, National Archives, Central Record Office, ballads and literary work in Kannada translated into English. The utilisation of these varied records for the narration of the subject by these scholars made a distinct trend in historical research. The significance of the second volume of the same work, from research point of view, is that its author. G. S., Halappa emphasised on events and not personalities in the freedom movement.[13]

While writing comprehensive history of Karnataka, cultural aspects were given importance. This has been done in the work of S. U. Kamath and Basavaraja in *Concise History of Karnataka* (1981) and *History and culture of Karnataka* (1984), respectively.

Research work on administrative history appeared between 1964 and 1985 were *Local Self Government in Mediaeval Karnataka* by G. S. Dikshit (1964), *Local Self Government in Vijayanagara Empire* by A. V. Venkatratnam (1972), the *Keladi Polity* by K. N. Chitnis and *Administration Under the Chalukyas of Kalyani* by Basavaraja (1983). In all these work the sources were channelled through the main point, administration. For instance, G. S. Dikshit's book is a complete piece of work on the local governmental institutions of the Kannada area between the tenth and fourteenth centuries. The stress is on local government. The different types of village assembly are convincingly described and explained in four chapters (III to VI) with the wealth of illustrations from original sources in the main part of work. The conclusions on the topic are based on thorough and critical study of sources. Stressing on local government is a historical trend in the work of Dikshit.

In *Keladi Polity*, Chitnis has done his best to collect and study all available sources and pointed out that these sources give us plenty of details about the sowing capacity of land, its yield, the original rent of land, the various cesses levied on original rent, remissions of land tax and numerous other types of information connected with revenue matters. The author's some observations and his findings in the subject "will be found worthy of careful consideration by students of research in the subject."[14]

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In the historical research, the *Keladi Polity* opened a new line of approach as it throws light on a few aspects of economic conditions of the Keladi kingdom along with administration. Therefore, one of the scholars hailed it as "useful both as administrative as well as economic history."[15]

Another interesting development in historical research is the publication of a few diplomatic history. In this field Sheik Ali has shown the way by consulting and interpreting sources and by presenting correct perspectives of the personalities like Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan in his books *British Relations with Haidar Ali* (1963) and *Tipu Sultan, A Study in Diplomacy and Confrontation* (1985). The same trend is seen in the following work ; the *Mysore Maratha Relations in the Seventeenth Century* by Muddachari (1969), *The External Relations of Bijapur Kingdom* by Nayeem (1974) and *Mysore-Kerala Relations in the Eighteenth Century* by Ibrahim Kunju (1975). Whereas, while tracing diplomatic relations of Karnataka rulers with the Portuguese, B. S. Shastry has established a new approach by highlighting commercial and trade contacts along with diplomatic contacts. He has also highlighted the importance of Portuguese sources. His conclusions on Karnataka and Portuguese diplomatic relations narrated in his books, *Keladiya Arasaru Hagu Portugeejaru* (K) (1972) and studies in *Indo-Portuguese History* (1982) showed a new light as these are the results of the study of original Portuguese sources.

Chidananda Murthi introduced a few changes in the conception of cultural history. He has included religion, war technique, administration, self immolation, economic and social conditions and art and architecture in the cultural aspect. All these are discussed on the basis of the study of inscriptions in his book *Kannada Sasanagala Samskritka Adhyana* (K) (1966). It deals with the cultural aspects from A. D. 450 to A. D. 1150. In the study of religious history, the research trend was that the studies were made from a non-religious point of view. We notice this trend in the following work : *Jainism in South India* and *Some Jaina Epigraphs* and *Basavesvara and His Times* by P. B. Desai, 1957 and 1968, respectively ; *Traces of Buddhism in South India* by Aparna Banerjee, 1970 ; *A Religious Institution and Cult in*

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the Deccan by R. N. Nandi, 1973 ; *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka* by Ram Bhusan Prasad Singh, 1975 and *Karnataka Temples* by Ismail, 1984. In some of these books religious developments are explained in the background of social and political conditions. For instance, P. B. Desai traced political and social conditions of Karnataka on the eve of the advent of Basava. The latter's impact on cultural activities of Karnataka is found in his book *Basavesvara and His Time* (chapter XXVI), Systematic analysis of different styles of architecture in the historical background and their appreciation are striking features in the study of Karnataka architecture. For example, *Karnataka Paintings* by Shivarama Karnatha (1977) gives critical appreciation of art and paintings from pre-historic time to the modern time. Similarly, Soundarajan's book *Temples Architecture in Karnataka and its Ramifications* (1969) contains an excellent analysis of the temple forms, their distinct features. Settar introduces the Hoysala sculpture and architecture in a detailed manner. The first chapter of the *Hoysala Sculpture in National Museum* Copenhagen (1975) describes the history of Hoysala and their building activities and the last chapter analyses the iconographic peculiarities of these pieces by dividing them into architectural units enshrined and outer wall images and miscellaneous work of art. The book is hailed as a "delightful reading and it will be valuable guide to all students of Indian Art".[16] Rajasekhara's book *Master Pieces of Vijayanagara Art* (1983) also analyses the Vijayanagara monuments as religious, secular memorial stones on social aspects.

In the 6th decade, research trend of Karnataka history was shifted towards socioeconomic aspects. *Economic Life in Bombay Karnataka* 1818-1939 by R. D. Choksey (1963), *Tipu Sultan's Mysore : An Economic Study* by M. H. Gopal (1971), *Some Aspects of Economic and Social Life in Karnataka* by Gururaja Achar (1974), *Economic Conditions in Karnataka* A. D. 973-1336 by Kuppuswami (1975), *Social Life in Medieval Karnataka* by Jyotsna Kamath (1980) and *The Agrarian System of Karnataka*, A. D. 1336-1761 by K. S. Shivanna (1983), were prominent research work on socioeconomic history of Karnataka. Each book, one way or other, enlightens some unknown

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aspects of socioeconomic features. For instance, Choksey's book discusses every aspect of the economic life of the people in the region, giving an idea of the prices, the part played by cotton in transforming the life of the peasant, domestic commerce, the ruin of agriculture, the decay of the handicrafts, the introduction of railways, the rise of modern industry, etc. The significance of this book is that it shows the possibilities for further development in future.[17]

Similarly, M. H. Gopal investigated the connected facts of economic life, namely, probable revenue of the kindgom, commercial policy, military expenditure, financial administration, overall financial position, land revenue and other heads of Mysore under Tipu Sultan. All these topics that from parts of the book, *Tipu Sultan's Mysore : An Economic Study* are well documented and they together are placed in the perspective of economic life in the kingdom. The book is a significant contribution to historical literature on Tipu Sultan and students of economic history of South India will certainly find in it useful information. The book is a "threadbare analysis of an aspect of the material life, with sprinkling of interesting side light of social, political and religious background of the period."[18]

Gururaja Achar's thesis is mainly on economic history but it gives interesting information on educational system and the position of women in society. His approach to the problems is quite commendable as he used source materials judiciously.

Whereas Kuppuswami's work is an economic history of Karnataka from the tenth to the beginning of fourteenth centuries. The significance of research trend in this work is that the author has given special stress on rural and urban economic features. He has investigated tax structure. Finally, Kuppuswami has found historical root to the agrarian problems such as subdivision and fragmentation of land holdings. *Social Life in Medieval Karnataka* is a well-documented faithful picture of social history of Medieval Karnataka, A.D. 1000-1400. Jyotsna Kamath, the authoress of this book, has highlighted people's food, drink, bath, make up, hair style, dress, ornaments, women's accomplishments—all these are ignored by other scholars. The style of the narration is simple and direct.

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In the agrarian system of Karnataka, Shivanna has taken special interest to depict life and conditions of peasants and village community. He has drawn the readers' attention to occasional peasant unrests caused by oppressive collection of taxes and rents by the government officers and land controlling units.[19]

Historical research on certain regions of Karnataka, namely, coastal and Maland gained prominence in the period under study. The striking point in the regional research is that it stressed on the integrity of Karnataka. The prominent regional historical research work are *History of Christianity* in two volumes by Silva (1956-1961), *Chittakula-Karwar—A History* by M.A. Desai (1969), *History of South Kanara* by K. V. Ramesh (1970), *Studies in Tuluva History and Culture* by Late P. Gururaja Bhatt (1974), *Kodagina Ithihasa* by Krishnayya (1974), *Banavasi Kadambas* by B. R. Gopal (K) (1983), *Sringeri Dharma Samastha* by A. K. Shastry (1983) and *Religions in Coastal Karnataka*, A. D. 1500-1763 by K. G. Vasantha Madhava (1985). Besides, a few pages of *Keladiya Arasaru Hagu Portugeejaru*, and *Studies in Indo-Portuguese History* by B. S. Shastry, *Uttara Kannada Gazetteer*, *ed.* S. U. Kamath (1986) and more than a dozen unpublished theses[20] deal with different aspects of regional history. The scholars, who worked on regional history, discovered consulted original source materials and gave new interpretations on the existing facts and brought to light new information. For instance, K. V. Ramesh, Late P. Gururaja Bhatt, B. S. Shastry and A. K. Shastry discovered many original archaeological sources, unpublished Portuguese sources and *Kadatas* (cotton cloth documents which concerned with financial accounts, title deeds and land transactions, respectively, interpreted them in such a way that their work revolutionised regional history. Similarly, K. K. N. Kurup, on the basis of records, interpreted the Kayur unrest of 1943 (Kayur is Kasargod district, formerly it was in south Kanara district) as militant agrarian national movement in his book *Kayur Riot* (1978). The chapter III of this book gives historical accounts of peasantry in Kasargod.

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IV Conclusions

Historical research trend in the beginning was dynastic history, mainly concerned with their political achievements. From 1957, the historical research trend turned to administrative, socioeconomic, religious, cultural, etc. The most important feature of historical research is that it is source oriented and not attached to any ideology.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Between 1900 and 1947 the following regional work appeared N. A. Seenappa Heggade, *Dakshina Kannada Jelleyo Charitre Bhutalo Pandya Rayana Aliya Kattu* (Mangalore 1919).

   Aigal M. G., *Dakshina Kannada Jelleya Prachina Ithihasa* (Mangalore, 1923).

   Ibid, *Manjesvara* (Mangalore, 1924).

   Puttanna, *Chittradurga Paleyagararu*, (Bangalore 1924) ; Moraes, *Mangalore A Historical sketches* (Mangalore, 1927); Puttanna, *Ikkeri Samsathana* (1931) ; Lokanatha Shastri, *Mudubidreya Charitre* (1935) ; Saletore B. A., *Ancient Karnataka, A History of Tuluvas* (Poona, 1936) ; Lokanatha Shastri, *Venurina Gatha Vaibhava* (Sholapur 1939).

2. *Popular Culture in Karnataka* (Bangalore, 1937). This work includes movements of Virasaivism, Haridasas and folk songs.

3. *Kannadanadina Charitre* (K) (Bangalore, 1949), part II.

4. *Heritage of Karnataka* (Bangalore, 1946).

5. See for its review *Quarterly Journal of Mythic Society* (Bangalore), XV p 256-67, cited hereafter *QJMS* XXXI, pp. 506-7.

6. See Desai P. B., *A History of Karnataka* (Dharwar, 1970), p. xii.

7. Coehlo William, *The Hoysala Vamsa* (Bombay, 1951) ; Derret, *The Hoysalas* (Oxford, 1954) ; Dinkar Desai, *The Mahamandalesvara under the Chalukyas of Kalyan* (Bombay, 1951) ; Desai P. B., *Karnataka Kalachuris* (1951).

8. Ramachandrayya O., *Studies on Krishnadevaraya* (1953).

9. Sinha N. K., *Haidar Ali* (Calcutta, 1949, Second Ed). Mohibbul Hasan Khan, *History of Tipu Sultan* (Calcutta, 1951).

10. Diwakar R. R., *Kharanirakaranneya Vira Kathegalu* (1955).

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11. The preface to the first edition was dated 10th August, 1947.

12. Review of this book by S. V. Desikachar, *QJMS* LXXVI No. 3-4, pp. 412-5.

13. See Sen S. P. (Ed), *Studies in Modern Indian History : A Regional Survey* (Calcutta, 1969), p. 150.

14. *Keladi Polity*, Foreward by P.B Desai.

15. Sen S. P. (Ed), Op. cit. p. 151.

16. Review by Ravindran T. K., in the *Journal of Indian History* (1977), p. 377 (Trivandrum).

17. Sen S. P., Op. cit., p 151.

18. *Journal of Indi .n History* (1973), pp., 237-8.

19. *The Agrarian System in Karnataka*, pp. 28. 131.

20. These unpublished theses were submitted to Bombay or Karnataka Universities. Among these, the followings are worthy to be noticed from research point of view : Kamath S. U., *Tuluvas in Vijayanagara Times* (Bombay, 1965) ; Shastry B. S., The *Portuguese in Kanara* 1498-1763 (Bombay, 1969) ; R. N. Gurav, *Kadambas of Goa and their Inscriptions* (Karnataka 1969).

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8

A Survey of Historical Research and Trends in Kerala

K. K. N. KURUP

This study is an attempt to make a brief survey of historical research in Kerala since reorganisation of the state. It has not included the historical work appeared in Malayalam language and also research work on Kerala undertaken by several universities in other parts of India and abroad. Further research work in allied disciplines are also excluded from the scope of this survey for the sake of convenience. In brief, this study is intended strictly to make an historiographical survey of major writings and trends in Kerala over a period of last thirty years. An effort in this direction has its own limitations as it has to deal with the scholars of contemporary generation.

Work Before Independence

As part of the growing national movement and academic research programme of several universities, historical research in India prior to Independence has achieved some significance and reputation.[1] When the Empire perpetuated with its economic- and cultural dominance, it was found that the duty of a nationalist historian was to analyse the economic drain of the country and trace the cultural roots of Indian heritage. This particular circumstance led him to unearth economic, cultural and social developments of Indian society with a motivation for counter acting imperialism and imperialist historical writings. None

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of these trends of the 20th century has an impact on Kerala. The main reason was that the historical scholarship in this region was still in its infancy. The manual writers and court historians did not imbibe the spirit of nationalism or develop an Indian perspective in their writings. Further, Kerala did not exist as a political entity at that time. It was divided into the princely states of Travancore and Cochin and the British territories of Malabar and Kasargod. The manuals and gazetteers and the legendary accounts occupied the major part of historical literature on Kerala.[2] An exception to this situation was the *History of Kerala*. (4 volumes, Ernakulam, 1924, 29, 33 and 37) by K.P. Padmanabha Menon.[3] Although it was in the form of notes on the letters written by Canter Visscher, it slightly deviated from the political history to stress some aspects of social and cultural history. But he was his own limitations as pointed out by a recent historian :

> In this case, he conceived the projects of producing a history of Cochin and a history of Kerala long before the ground was prepared. In the absence of linguistic, sociological, epigraphic and archaeological analysis and the evolution of a reliable chronological order, any such scheme was bound to be overambitious and therefore somewhat ridiculous in consequence.[4]

While these volumes appeared, some academic studies were also undertaken on Kerala by K. M. Panikkar, a trained historian. It marked a clear-cut change in the historical writings on Kerala. He dealt with the European expansion in Kerala for which he consulted the archival materials in Lisbon and the Hague. Influenced by the national sentiments he even questioned the concept of 'Portuguese Empire' in India. His monographs on the European relations with Kerala, *Malabar and the Portuguese* (1929), *Malabar and the Dutch* (1931) were later combined together under the title, *A History of Kerala* (Annamalai University, 1959). It traces the political history till the ascendancy of the British in 1801 with some analysis.

Later, Panikkar turned to national and international horizons of history.[5] Thus the trends inaugurated by him were not further carried out by other scholars in Kerala during this period. In

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1938, K. V. Krishna Iyyer brought out *The Zamorins of Calicut*, following the old tradition of political and dynastic history. His loyalty to the Zamorins has made him a court historian on several occasions in this work. The same trends further continued in the forties in the volumes of *Travancore State Manual* (4 volumes) by T. K. Velupillai. The political and the administrative aspects were given emphasis in these volumes.

A major handicap in the field of historical research at this time was the absence of a university or other academic institutions in this region for coordinating and promoting historical research. Although the Travancore University came to exist in 1937, there was no faculty of history. However, some organised efforts had been made in this direction to promote research in history and Malayalam literature by Rama Varma Research Institute, Trichur, constituted in 1925 and funded by the Cochin Government. In 1928, individuals like W. E. Cotton promoted the Kerala Society in Trivandrum. The bulletins and papers of these organisations did considerable service to historical research in Kerala by unearthing epigraphic and other primary sources. These activities were mainly centred in ancient and medieval history relating to rulers and dynasties. Scholars like Anujan Achan, V. K. R. Menon, A. G. Warrier, K. R. Pisharodi, Dr. Achuta Menon and Ulloor S. Parameshwaraiyyer made pioneering studies in that direction. Most of them dealt with some aspects of ancient history and culture and that also was not in a chronological or systematic way. Further, late medieval and modern period was completely neglected by them. But their studies provided valuable materials for future generations. The epigraphic sources published by T. A. Gopinatha Rao and others in the form of *Travancore Archaeological Sources* since 1910, demanded a scientific approach to ancient and medieval history of Kerala.

All these attempts which had taken place prior to independence reveal the truth that except a few historical work, manuals, chronicles, etc., the history of Kerala remained unwritten and unexploited. In such a situation national themes were also not pursued in this region. 'The sons of the soil' or the native scholars as described by William Logan had now prepared the way for

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future-historians. However, most of the areas of historical development in Kerala remained in darkness. Therefore, the historians in this region have to shoulder the responsibility of highlighting them with scientific approach and objectivity. Once they were burdened with a task like this, most of them had to utilise their talents for the development of regional studies. This weakness, an inheritance of the past, in general, had adversely affected the cumulative growth of historical literature in Kerala at a national level.[6]

Studies Since Reorganisation of the State

Even after Independence, atleast for a period of two decades the situation continued as it was without any major change. No substantial work of historial scholarship had appeared during this period in Kerala. The popular governments had not given any consideration for bringing out a comprehensive volume on freedom struggle of Kerala. As such, the history of popular movements was consciously neglected. The Communist Party which had earlier caused some studies on movements and historical developments of Kerala with class approach and economic analysis (writings of K. Damodaran, E. M. S. Namboodiripad and others) came to political power in Kerala in 1957. Even they did not encourage the historical writings in this region. Only in the sixties the government decided under a programme of the Government of India to revise and make up-to-date the district gazetteers. Further, an official body, the Regional Records Survey Committee, was also appointed to write the history of freedom struggle in Kerala. However, the two volumes, *The History of Freedom Movement in Kerala* (Trivandrum, 1972) prepared under the scheme by P. K. K. Menon, trace the struggle only up to 1938. The popular movements and mass struggles have not been given proper attention in this work. The last phase of the struggle still remains an unfinished work in this programme.

New Soundings

Although there was no encouragement or patronage by the government or the university to promote historical research and scholarship in Kerala, there was still some light in the

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darkness. The efforts of an individual with a lifetime dedication for research on Kerala proved to be the new soundings of Clio, the muse of history, in this region. Prof. Elamkulam P. N. Kunhan Pillai, basically was not a trained historian, but his contributions laid the foundation of chronology of the Cheras of Mahodayapuram and solved some of the major problems in this regard faced by former scholars. His commentaries on medieval literary work highlighted the evolution of Kerala society. In his subsequent studies, such literary work were utilised as sources. Further, he pointed out the significance of Tamil Sangam literature as sources for the history of chieftains in the earliest period in this region. He made the correct identification of Ezhimala, Puzhimadu, etc., which were wrongly identified by the Tamil scholars. He initiated all these studies for teaching the history of Kerala in the post-graduate department in Malayalam. He correlated epigraphy and literature in these studies. As these studies had appeared in Malayalam, their significance was not immediately noted by scholars outside Kerala.[7] His major findings were incorporated by Prof. A. Sreedhara Menon, in the revised district gazetteers like *Trivandrum, Ernakulam, Calicut and Cannanore*.

Although Prof. Kunhan Pillai solved some of the major problems of political history, his analysis on economic and social aspects inaugurated a new approach. His analysis on the evolution of landlordism with all its defects and limitations highlighted the feudal formation of Kerala society and its close relationship with Brahmin theocracy. He did not apply the Marxian tool of economic interpretation in a systematic form for analysing the feudal society and agrarian relations in this study. But he subscribed to the new trends of analysis put forward by some of the Marxist writers on Kerala society like K. Damodaran and E. M. S. Namboodiripad during the forties and fifties. Thus he looked at the traditional institutions of Kerala in a different way and not as a legacy of a glorious past.

Studies in Colonial and Social History

In the sixties, a few scholars took history as a major discipline of their interest and profession and pursued research in Kerala.

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The contemporary historical research in Kerala is a product of those senior academic scholars and their students. Further, the University of Travancore, then renamed as University of Kerala, started departments for history at Trivandrum and Calicut. The Calicut centre later developed into a full fledged department in the University of Calicut. The dedicated service of the senior researchers in these departments and their able guidance have considerably changed the scene of historical research in quality.[9]

These academic scholars have their training from advanced universities in India and abroad. They have taken up different areas for research regarding colonial and social history, an area of much neglect. Prof. T. K. Ravindran has made some analytical and descriptive studies in the early Indo-British administrative system in Malabar. (See his *Malabar under Bombay Presidency* ; *Towards A Liberal Policy* and *Cornwallis System in Malabar*, 1969). Studies in this direction have been pursued by scholars like Prof. N. Rajendran (*British Power in Malabar*), R. N. Yesudas (*British Policy in Travancore*, and *Col. John Munro in Travancore*), K.K.N. Kurup (*History of Tellicherry Factory*, 1985) and K. S. Menon (*Cochin and the British*). These studies highlighted the British affairs in Kerala and the policy pursued by them for establishing their authority in this region. The early revolts against the British had been pursued by T. P. Sankarankutty Nair in his *A Tragic Decade in Kerala History*. After consulting the primary sources in the archives of Paris, Prof. M. P. Sreedharan made some reassessment on the role of Dupleix and also the relations between the French and Tipu.

Scholars like Prof. Ravindran further turned to study some aspects of social history of Travancore. His *Asan and Social Revolution in Kerala* (Trivandrum, 1972) and *Vaikkam Satyagraha and Gandhi* (Trichur, 1975) belong to this classification. The early social institutions like *Marumakkathayam* was analysed by P. V. Balakrishnan. The circumstance leading to the abolition of slavery in Travancore was traced by K. K. Kusuman in his *Slavery in Travancore* (Trivandrum, 1973). Adoor K. K. Ramachandran Nair has traced some documents on the existence of slavery in Malabar in his *Slavery in Kerala* (Delhi,

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1986). These studies have not followed any conceptual framework on the evolution of slavery and development of the institutions like Marumakkathayam. Further, no distinction between slavery and serfdom is made in those studies.

The cultural aspects of Kerala have been briefly described by Prof. A. Sreedhara Menon in his *Cultural Heritage of Kerala : An Introduction* (Cochin, 1978). But no analytical studies have been made so far in this field. The social and cultural aspects of the Muslims in Malabar have been studied by S. M. Mohammed Koya in his *Mappilas of Malabar* (1983). An attempt has been made earlier by this author to trade the social and cultural significance of the Teyyam cult and social organisations like Ramavilliam Kazhakam (*The Cult of Teyyam and Hero Worship in Kerala*, Calcutta, 1973) and (*Aryan and Dravidian Elements in Malabar Folklore*, (Trivandrum, 1976). The religious movements like the Bhakti Cult have been studied by M.G.S. Narayanan and Kesavan Veluthat. They have given a new interpretation that the movement is a product of the feudal society (See "The Bhakti Movement in South India" in S. C. Malik ed. *Indian Movements : Some Aspects of Dissent, Protest and Reform).* Such analytical and interpretative studies are to be further undertaken on different social movements and cultural aspects of this region.

Political History

Although some studies have appeared in this branch on different periods like ancient, medieval and modern still it has not properly developed on account of various reasons. The enigmas of the history of ancient political institutions are yet to be studied by scholars. The skill in archaeology, epigraphy, astronomy and knowledge of Sanskrit and Tamil are some of the essential requirements for a scholar to pursue such studies. Prof. M. G. S. Narayanan with all such specialised skills has made an outstanding study on the political, social and economic life of the Cheras of Mahodayapuram ("The Political and Social Conditions of Kerala under the Kulasekhara Empire" unpublished Ph. D dissertation, Kerala, 1972). He has refuted the concepts like the 'Chera Empire' and 'the Hundred Years'

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War' put forward by scholars formerly and improved the chronology of the Cheras by discovering fresh epigraphic sources and making reinterpretations. His investigation has taken him to new interpretations of some of the institutions in South Indian history (see his *Cultural Symbiosis in Kerala*, 1972 ; *Aspects of Aryanization in Kerala*, 1973, and the *Re-Interpretations in South Indian History*, 1977). While reconstructing the political history of the Mushakas, Cheras and the others, he has given due importance to social and economic aspects. He makes a class-approach to historical institutions and follows the analysis of economic interpretation and determinism. The evolution of state power during this period has been traced by Rajan Gurukkal in some of his recent research papers. An account of the early centres of Brahmin migration has been given by Veluthat Kesavan in *Brahmin Settlements of Kerala* (Calicut, 1978).

Although no proper studies have been undertaken on medieval period some studies have been made by Prof. A. P. Ibrahim Kunju and C. K. Kareem on the late medieval period. The emergence of Travancore as a powerful state has been traced by Prof. Ibrahim Kunju in his *Rise of Travancore* (Trivandrum, 1976). He has further studied the *Mysore-Kerala Relations in the Eighteenth Century* (1975) and highlighted the political affairs of the Mysorean period. His papers on Islam, Kunhali Marakkars, etc., are some pioneering efforts in this field (see also his *Studies in Medieval Kerala History*, 1976). The Mysorean interlude in the history of Kerala has been studied by C. K. Kareem in his *Kerala under Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan* (1973). The author with his strong anti-imperialist sentiments and admiration for these rulers often loses the objectivity, the essential characteristic of a scientific historian. Even the very title is inaccurate as those rulers had no control over entire Kerala, but only on Malabar. The present author has attempted a study of the royal house of Arakkal in *The Ali Rajas of Cannanore* (Trivandrum, 1976). This Mappila house of rulers and traders have a significant role in the medieval history of Malabar. The studies on medieval period with an analytical approach are yet to be strengthened.

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Among the senior academic researchers Prof. M. P. Sreekumaran Nayar concentrates on national movement and allied developments. He has studied the role of constitutional development in the freedom struggle and made some reappraisals (see *Re-Appraisals : Studies on Indian National Movement*, 1972 and *Values in conflict*). His study on "Historical Biography in Malayalam—an Analytical Survey" is a pioneering work on the significance of political biographies as source materials for freedom struggle. Under his guidance, scholars like P. K. Jose and M. Gangadharan have studied some aspects of freedom struggle including the Mappila Rebellion of 1921.

Attempts have been made by scholars to study the constitutional development in Travancore and Cochin in the 20th century. M. J. Koshy has pursued his research in this direction (see *Constitutionalism in Travancore and Cochin ; Genesis of Political Consciousness in Kerala*, 1972 and *Last Days of Monarchy in Kerala*, 1973). However, such studies have not analysed the historical forces unleashed by the mass agitations and the demands made by the mass agitations and the demands made by the emerging new middle class. Some of these aspirations are studied by K.K. Kusuman in *The Abstention Movement* (1976) in Travancore region. Some aspects of the left movement mainly communist movement in the early phase have been studied by him in his *The Extremist Movement in Kerala* (1977). But the communist movement as such has been studied and analysed in a better way by politicians like E. M. S. Namboodiripad. His *Kerala—Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* (1969 edn.) under the revised title, *Kerala Politics and Society* gives an analytical study of national movement also. As he is committed to a particular party and ideology, the objectivity is lost sometime in favour of propagandist ideas. A comprehensive political history of Kerala has not appeared so far.[10]

Economic History

The most neglected branch of historical studies in Kerala is the economic history. The sub-sections of this branch particularly labour, trade and agrarian history have not been given proper emphasis. However, some studies have appeared with

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an emphasis on economic aspects. As early as 1943 E.M.S. Namboodiripad has traced the peasant involvement in the Mappila rebellion in his *A Short History of the Peasant Movement in Kerala*. Some significant studies on tea plantations and peasant migrations have been made by Michael Tarakan (see "Dimensions and Characteristics of the Migration of Farmers from Travancore to Malabar"). He has also analysed some aspects of the agrarian reforms in Kerala. The present writer has discussed the conditions of the peasantry and the formation of their class organisation in Malabar and Kasargod in his research monograph *The Kayyur Riot* (Calicut, 1978). Further, he has also analysed the 19th century agrarian relations in Malabar under the colonial system in *William Logan, A Study in the Agrarian Relations of Malabar* (1981). This has also dealt with the land tenures of this region. Some aspects of the agrarian relations and social change have been traced by him in "Agrarian Reforms and Social Change in South India" (South Indian History Congress, Presidential Address in Social and Economic Section, Hyderabad, 1986). Although the history of trade is a neglected topic, A study on the "History of Trade in Travancore" is completed by K. K. Kusuman. The tenancy problems in Malabar and legislations have been analysed by a recent researcher, V. V. Kunhikrishnan, at Ph. D. level in his "Tenancy Legislations in Malabar : A Historical Analysis" (1985). Some aspects of the working class movement and the economic aspirations of those groups have been pursued by K. Gopalankutty.[11] The research studies on economic aspects of joint families of Tarawads and the houses of chieftains are to be pursued and analysed for a better understanding of capital accumulation, rural indebtedness, etc. Further, some source materials for such studies are to be edited and published by research institutions. The *Calicut University Historical Series* have initiated three volumes in this direction. Among them *The Vanheri Papers* edited by M. G. S. Narayanan and the *Kavalappara Papers* (1984) edited by the present author have brought out significant materials on economic and social history for the late medieval period. They highlight the feudalistic tendencies of Kerala society.

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Emerging Communal Trends in History

Kerala is an active theatre of communal politics and party organisations. This situation has its impact on historical writings also. But these trends are very strong among the non-academic scholars of journalism, literature, etc., who write in Malayalam language. They write with a definite purpose and motivation and want to distort history for establishing superiority of a particular caste or religion. Such propagandist and popular work are created by each group. Sometimes they even drag academic scholars also into their trap. Some associations even get funds from government and write history dividing it into the history of Nayar, Muslim, Ezhavas, Jews and Christians. Some academic scholars who want to project their caste identity also join this programme. Often a particular caste institutes an award and gives away the prize for a particular book written for their group. Deliberately such a group invites a Vice-Chancellor of their caste to preside over and makes an academic appearance of the function. This unhealthy situation and the desire for cheap popularity destroy the growth of scientific historiography.

Conclusion

In brief, the historical research in Kerala is not in an advanced stage when compared with the develpoments in other parts of India. There are several reasons for this backwardness. The very first fact is that the modern academic research was started in Kerala only during the sixties. The major trends in the Indian historiography are reflected in the historical writings from Kerala also. However, a considerable number of studies incorporating such new trends of class approach and similar approaches has not appeared in each period or in each branch of historical studies for want of funds and dedicated and trained scholars. The attitude of the academic bureaucracy is always negative in the promotion of research and publications. Many academic research work of substantial standard remain unpublished for want of publication facilities. A major part of the publications listed in this survey has been brought out by the associations of scholars themselves through the Kerala

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Historical Society (Trivandrum) and the Sandhya Publications (Calicut). The academic bureaucracy has penalising attitude towards such efforts. Thanks to the scholars of this generation who have withstood all these adversities and contributed some significant research work and promoted qualitative research in this region. An independent and research oriented institute with necessary funds and a group of dedicated and trained scholars is a desideratum in leading and promoting historical research at an advanced level in this region and integrating it with national and international standard of scholarship.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. A detailed account of recent trends in historical research in India is given in *Survey of Research in Economic and Social History of India, ed.* R. S. Sharma (Delhi, 1986).
2. See Nagam Aiya, *Travancore State Manual*, Vols. I, II and III (Trivandrum, 1906) and C. Achuta Menon, *Cochin State Manual* (Ernakulam, 1911).
3. His volumes were completed by 1910. But they were published posthumously by T.K. Raman Menon.
4. M. G. S. Narayanan, "K. P. Padmanabha Menon" in *Historians and Historiography in Modern India, ed.* S. N. Sen, Tarasankar Banerjee, (Calcutta, 1973), p. 380.
5. For an historiographical study, see, *Sardar K. M. Panikkar : The Profile of a Historian* (1977).
6. Even the micro-regional studies were not in progress in the forties. Only one substantial work appeared in this period on the Dutch colonial expansion in Kerala by T. I. Poonen, *A Survey of the Rise of the Dutch Power* 1603-1678 (Trichinopoly, 1948).
7. A translation of his important research papers later appeared as *Studies in Kerala History* (Trivandrum, 1970).
8. See "The Jenmi System in Kerala", *Ibid.* An assessment of his contribution is made by M.G.S. Narayanan, "The Ancient and Medieval History of Kerala" in *Journal of Kerala Studies*, II-III, 1976.
9. Some of the historical research papers published in the *Journal of Kerala Studies* (Trivandrum) are the outcome of this new academic situation.
10. An effort is made in this direction by the Faculty of History, Calicut University. It has been published by the Government of Kerala. See *Kerala Through the Ages* (1976).
11. Some important studies are undertaken in the branch of economic history of Malabar by Prof. K. M. Panikkar in Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

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Changing Pattern of Ancient Indian History in West Bengal

D. K. GANGULY

Amongst the Indians in modern times the middle class Bengali intelligentsia[1] of the nineteenth century[2] stands as the pioneers in the realm of historical enquiries into ancient India. The interest in historical studies, ramified, if not generated, under the impact of Western education and ideas, has swelled in volume in course of years with the steady widening and development of its nature and scope in tune with the progress of history since then.

The condition that prevailed in India under British paramountcy has undergone a radical change with the withdrawal of alien domination. Political emancipation has paved the way for an unprecedented awareness amongst the people of their position and role in society. Consequently, society has emerged in historical researches as the focal point of attention, and the 'great men' and their biographies,[3] battles and treatises, glorified in earlier years, have all receded to the background with a corresponding fillip in the study of the social organism in all its facets.

But this nascent outlook about history, envisaging the importance of society as the focal point of attention, proved to be slow to assert itself in Bengal where historical studies continued to revolve mainly around the beaten track of political and administrative history, at least for the early years of Independence. R. C. Majumdar, D. C. Sircar and D. C. Ganguly contributed several chapters on political history to the volumes of *History*

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and Culture of the Indian People, published under the auspices of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, besides independently composing learned work and articles. To the same category of the political historians belong H. C. Raychaudhuri, R. K. Mookerji, and B. C. Sen whose painstaking researches have illuminated many a dark chapter of early Indian political history. Another scholar who has made singular contribution to the study of the political history of ancient India is S. Chattopadhyaya whose work, *Early History of North India* and *From Bimbisara to Ashoka*, studied in unison, provide the reader with a coherent narrative of the political history of North India for a millennium up to c. A.D. 650.

Of the older generation of the political historians mention may further be made of A. K. Majumdar, S. K. Mitra and P. Pal who have made special studies of the history of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Bengal, respectively, the first named scholar further contributing a learned treatise that broadly deals with the political vicissitudes of the subcontinent from pre-historic times to the establishment of Muslim hegemony.

As mentioned earlier, the interest in the study of political history is on the wane among the present generation of scholars in Bengal. B. Lahiri has instituted an enquiry into the history of post-Maurya India, N. C. Bose has explored the political history of Madhya Pradesh, B. N. Mukherji and B. Chatterji have delved into the troubled waters of Kushana politics and D. K. Ganguly has conducted an investigation into the political history of early Orissa.

Political researches, conducted in Bengal during this period by the earlier and present generations of scholars, generally follow a uniform pattern.[4] Relevant facts are first compiled from literature, both indigenous and foreign, and archaeology, comprising inscriptions, coins, seals and other excavated materials, their authenticity is evaluated by a critical analysis, and then the authentic facts are 'objectively' and 'scientifically' analysed and interpreted in a chronological sequence. But this four-fold task of collection, assessment, interpretation and chronological arrangement is by no means are easy proposition. Mastery over some ancient languages, proficiency in

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palaeography, acumen and a sound knowledge of chronology are pre-requisites for compiling a standard work of this kind. This has appropriated almost the whole energy of the researchers, and no worthwhile attempt has been made, except on rare occasions, to enquire into the motive forces that shaped a given political phenomenon or to fit a specific event in the broad spectrum of the contemporary political process. Consequently, these researches have not unoften resulted in the compilation of mere 'dry-as-dust chronicles' of persons and events, rather than the history of thought.

Administrative history had been a popular topic of historical enquiry in the earlier days when the older generation of scholars like R. C. Majumdar, R. G. Basak, B. C. Sen, D. C. Sircar and U.N. Ghosal were enthusiastically engaged in the study of the issue, the last named scholar being further credited with a highly learned work on the evolution of ancient Indian political thought.

In recent times there has been a sharp decline of interest in the study of administrative history which has engaged the attention of only a handful of scholars, including B. N. Mukherji, B. Chatterji and D. K. Ganguly, the last named scholar contributing an independent treatise on polity, entitled *Aspects of Ancient Indian Administration*.[5]

The scholars, conducting investigations into administrative history, are faced with the multifarious problems of the chronology of sources, collection and verification of data, applicability of data to a given period or region, interpretation of technical terms, employed in original documents and piecing together the data into a composite whole. But the dearth of materials and intrinsic complexities of these problems do not generally allow their researches to rise above encyclopaedic work on kings and officials, that do not take adequate cognizance of the formation, variation and evolution of the institutions like kingship, council of ministers, village *Panchayat*, etc., against the backdrop of contemporary thought and demand from above and below. A deeper investigation into the motive forces behind the operation of administrative institutions is likely to shed interesting sidelights into their intimate relations with state and its different

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limbs, and the role they played in the formation, legitimization, consolidation and disintegration of states.

Unlike political and administrative history, the study of economic history has been increasingly popular with the historians in recent years. Of the earlier generation of scholars, especially engaged in investigating early Indian economics, the names of U. N. Ghosal and A. N. Bose stand out prominently. While the former belongs, more or less, to the so-called empiricist school, the latter has adopted a more materialistic approach in his study of the problem. A. N. Bose's remarkable competence in handling source-materials,strict adherence to the accuracy of data, pragmatic vision of the socioeconomic forces of the contemporary period, and, above all, a true 'objective' and 'scientific' mind have all combined to add a new dimension to his work. A general survey of the economic history of ancient India, northern as well as southern, has been presented by A.K. Majumdar in the second volume of his *Concise History of Ancient India*. The same scholar has further traced the economic background of the 'epic society' in another independent treatise on economics. B. C. Sen has, likewise, contributed a learned monograph on ancient Indian economic history, based primarily on the *Kautiliya Arthashastra*.

H. P. Chakraborty, P. Neogi, S. K. Maity, N. N. Kher and D. R. Das have published in recent years learned monographs on different facets of ancient Indian economic life on broader spatial planes, all betraying an empiricist approach which is labelled by its critics as being outmoded for its pronounced disinterestedness in viewing the economic structure of society as the reflex of dialectical materialism.

The post-Independence period has witnessed a spate of research activities in the realm of social history, though these, in the generality of cases, conform to the traditional pattern of delimiting historical enquiry into the textual analysis of such general issues as caste systems, slavery, women and marriage institution, and making plain deductions from data, usually literary and occasionally archaeological, without taking any cognizance of the bearings of ancillary subjects like anthropology, sociology and geography upon the problems, investigated. Society is

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an organism which is subject to changes with variations in terms of time and space, and Indian society, notwithstanding Marx's[6] assertion to the contrary, has not been an exception to this trend. But scant attention has been paid to bring into prominent relief the dynamics which had been in operation in society in different epochs and regions or to trace the factors lying at the base of social stratification and mobility.

Of the scholars, contributing learned treatises on different facets of early Indian society, mention may be made of N. R. Ray, N. K. Bose, S. Chattopadhyaya, T. N. Chakraborty, H. N. Chatterji, P. Neogi, K. N. Chatterji and S. Mookherjee. The first two scholars have betrayed a deeper understanding of the social problems in their respective work in Bengali *Vangalir Itihas* and *Hindu Samajer Dadan* where conventional interpretation has been supplemented by the perspectives of anthropology, sociology and economics.

Researches in the field of religious history are by no means less copious. J. N. Banerjea, D. C. Sircar, P. C. Bagchi, N. N. Das Gupta, S. Chattopadhyaya, N. N. Bhattacharyya, A. K. Chatterji, P. Jash and S. Bagchi are some of the names of the earlier and present generations of scholars, credited with learned publications on ancient Indian religious systems. But the main attention of these scholars has usually been focussed upon textual interpretation and analysis rather than an examination of the functional and organisational aspects of the systems in the context of the whole contemporary milieu. Enquiries have seldom been instituted in a multi-disciplinary format into such basic problems as tripartite relations between religion, the material condition and spiritual motivation and the social mosaic of different cults and sects. A fresh air permeats through the writings of N. N. Bhattacharyya where one unmistakably discerns a conscious effort to explain religious institutions and practices in terms of the means of production and productive relations.

J. N. Banerjea, N. R. Ray, S. K. Saraswati, N. K. Bose, O. C. Ganguly and K. K. Ganguly have conducted serious investigations into ancient Indian art, contributing learned treatises and articles on one or more of its aspects like architecture,

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sculpture, iconography and painting. The first two scholars were regular contributors to the volumes on Indian history and culture, published under the auspices of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavana, Bombay, and the Indian History Congress. Of the present generation of scholars, actively engaged in conducting investigations into different facets of Indian art mention may be made of Amita Ray, K. K. Das Gupta, A. Sen, P. Pal, D. R. Das, A. K. Bhattacharyya, D. C. Bhattacharyya, K. Chakraborty, J. Chakraborty, M. Mukherji and H. R. Sanyal. But the main effort in these researches on Indian art, usually stemming from sound scholarship and hard labour, has been restricted to the exploration and analysis of textual materials, chronology of paintings, monuments, icons and other art objects, spatial distribution of the objects, found techniques employed by painters, masons and artists, identification of images, descriptive survey of folk art, and typology, regional variation and evolution of architecture, sculpture and paintings, and attention has seldom been directed to interpret the functional aspect of art in the broader canvas of the contemporary social, religious and economic motivations.

The history of the neighbouring countries in South-East Asia with special reference to their political and cultural relations with the Indian subcontinent formed a popular topic of investigation in the pre-Independence period. R. C. Majumdar, R. K. Mookerji, B. R. Chatterji and Kalidas Nag were all seriously engaged in researches in this field. The bulk of their researches was conducted in pre-Independent India which badly required an ideological tool for the freedom struggle but today theses work, that project South-East Asia as a part of 'Greater' India, are alleged by critics to have been coloured by the theories of invasion and colonization as explanations for cultural change, and marred by the strain of nationalist chauvinism.

A handful of the present generation of scholars in Bengal, including H. B. Sarkar, A. Chakraborty and K. Sarkar[7] are at present engaged in pursuing historical enquiries into this field of research. Difficulties in handling primary sources, written in alien languages, inadequate knowledge of Sanskrit and lack of facilities for field work are some of the major constraints

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that have deterred the progress of historical research in this branch of enquiry. P. C. Bagchi laudably initiated historical enquiries into Sino-Indian cultural relations at Santiniketan but with the death of the celebrated Sinologist this noble venture has painfully languished.

Epigraphy and numismatics provide raw materials which the historian judiciously utilise for compiling history. In the case of ancient India where, as opposed to ancient Greece, Rome and China, regular historical chronicles are conspicuous by their absence, epigraphy and numismatics assume far greater importance. R. C. Majumdar, R. G. Basak, N. P. Chakraborty, N. G. Majumdar and A. Ghosh betrayed sound scholarship in editing inscriptions. Incomparably the greatest scholar in the field of epigraphical study was D. C. Sircar whose *Select Inscriptions* in two volumes are justifiably reckoned as a classic in the subject. With the passing away of D. C. Sircar Bengal has been practically orphaned in the field of epigraphy, especially in the study of the inscriptions in Brahmi and its derivatives. C. C. Das Gupta's *Origin and Development of the Kharosthi Script* and B. N. Mukherji's *Corpus of Aramaic Inscriptions* are two work that have supplemented our knowledge of Indian epigraphy.

Numismatics has been enriched by the researches of the earlier generation of scholars like J. N. Banerjea, D. C. Sircar, N. K. Bhattasali and S. K. Chakraborty and is still being pursued as the theme of serious research by scholars like A. N. Lahiri, B. Lahiri, B. N. Mukherji, K. K. Das Gupta and B. Chatterji. But the attention of scholars is, in the main, focussed upon the typology of coins, problems of indentification and attribution, reading and interpretation of legends, depiction of devices and metrology and notice is seldom taken to study numismatic data against the background of the contemporary socioeconomic milieu or to interpret them in the light of the principles of economics.

In the post-independence period there has been considerable progress in the field work and researches in archaeology[8], entailing exploration and excavation of new sites, pre-historic, proto-historic and historic, and analysis and interpretation of

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data with the application of multi-disciplinary approach. The older aids and techniques of exploration and excavation have been improved upon, and supplemented by newer ones, stimulated by the advancement of science and technology, sophisticated tools and methods are employed in processing and analysing artifacts, and sites like Mahisadal, Birbhanpur, Pandurajardhibi, Chandraketugarh, Rajbadidanga and Ballaldhibi, besides others, have been brought into prominent relief of the archaeological map of India. In archaeological research the conventional trend of documentation has been discarded in favour of an ever increasing concern for scientifically and objectively unravelling the physical and cultural evolution of man. Of the archaeological work published in recent years mention may especially be made of those of S. R. Das, P. C. Das Gupta and N. C. Ghosh which seek to explain and analyse, with the help of the excavated materials, human responses *vis-a-vis* the challenges of the environ in the three diverse topographical settings of Rajbadidanga in Murshidabad district, Pandurajardhibi in Burdwan district and Satanikota on the river Tungabhadra in Kurnool district, Andhra Pradesh.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The most prominent of them was R. L. Mitra (1822-91), an employee of the Asiatic Society, Calcutta. Nilmani Basak's *Bharatvarsher Itihas* (1957) seems to be the earliest work on Indian history, in general, ever written by an indigenous scholar in Bengal.

2. The beginnings of historical researches in modern India go back to the later years of the eighteenth century. The Asiatic Society was founded in 1784. The first volume of the research journal *Asiatic Researches* came to be published in 1788. In those days historical researches were mainly conducted by the Western scholars.

3. The true biography of the 'great' men, however, cannot be devoid of social interest ; it delves into the heart and essence of the age which find their manifestations in him.

4. This group of the political historians in Bengal was profoundly impressed by the Rankean ideal of '*Wie es eigentlich gewesen*' (how it really was). They have laid stress on the accuracy of data and their 'objective' and 'scientific' interpretations and are opposed to the acceptance of a preconceived notion as the basis of any historical enquiry. According

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to some the idea of writing 'objective' history sounds presumptious for it is pointed out that in compiling history, the historian consciously or unconsciously, interacts with his data in his own way and his writings are necessarily conditioned by his interest and vision. Further, what is supposed as a historical fact or datum is strictly speaking preselected and pre-determined, being refracted through the mind of the recorder E. H. Carr, *What Is History* (London, 1961), p.16.

5. The other work, published in recent times on ancient Indian polity is Bharati Mukherji's *Kautilya's Concept of Diplomacy : A New Interpretation.*

6. It is sometime claimed that Marx has subsequently discarded the concept of the Asiatic Mode of Production. But this is doubtful.

7. To this category of researches may be included B. N. Mukherjee's *Central And South Asian Documents on the Old Saka Era.*

8. I record with gratitude the help rendered by Professor N. C. Ghosh in compiling the section on archaeology.

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10

A Note on the Changing Pattern of Historical Research on Modern India in West Bengal

TARASANKAR BANERJEE

This paper deals with a theme which is so well-known but which remains to be clearly delineated in a connected manner. It is not a kind of a mere bibliographical exercise, because that is not the intention of the project. It is taken for granted that the scholars are well conversant with the major work which have been published in the last three decades. In this paper, therefore, an attempt has been made to analyse the trend of historical research since Independence and highlight the changing pattern reflected therein.

Indian historical research stood at the cross-roads in 1947 when the country became free from the colonial rule. It took a number of years for Indian historians to overcome the British legacy which was the greatest single need in modern Indian historiography. It is well-known that modern Indian historiography grew out of the British tradition of writing on India's history since the 19th century. Historical studies in India flourished under the tutelage of British scholars at the initial stage. Towards the end of the 19th century, a team of older generation of Indian historians took their queue from their English counterparts and developed the study further. Notwithstanding their greatness and devoted service to the cause

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of Clio, they could not fully overcome the British pattern of writing India's history that was well suited to the demands of the imperial rule. The early Indian writers could Indianise Indian history to some extent but a definite qualitative change came only after 1947. There is much truth in the statement that Indian India was seldom presented in the early British work on Indian history. Indian historiography stood on the threshold of a mighty efflorescence in 1947 when Indians became the masters of their own destiny. The year did not simply signify a great political divide. Independence is primarily a political and constitutional concept ; but its impact on the Indian mind and thinking was perhaps more important than the mere political change. It symbolised the removal of that block which impeded the free egress of the fountain of national thinking and efforts. The change in political regime is often followed by an urge to rewrite the history of the country that suffered under colonial domination. In the case of India also there came a vigorous natural desire to explore anew the country's historical past that did not always have a fair deal during the imperialist rule. It should be borne in mind in this context that since the Second World War, history discipline itself was undergoing fast and significant changes which cut across the 19th century concept of history writing. In the age of the emerging 'Total History School', nothing can be regarded as of 'peripheral interest' to a historian which attempts to present a comprehensive history of the people.

In the post-independence period we find a growing awareness in West Bengal about the evils of neglecting the history of the people. The interest of 'Pax Britannica' was no longer there. The nation had found its own identity. In West Bengal, the academic atmosphere began to change quickly and the narrow view of the subject was soon to be discarded. Moreover, since independence human, geographical and technological factors in West Bengal were creating varied tensions in the society which started getting reflected on the evolution of historiography directly or indirectly. Historiography is not simply an apriori intellectual exercise unrelated to the life and conditions in the society where the historian finds himself face to face with a

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new hunger for historical knowledge. In West Bengal, independence brought in its wake a definite but initially slow change in the perspective as well as approach in the realm of historical research. Modernization of the writing of the country's history was the intellectual response to the new political process that was initiated almost unperceived in the post-independence period. The desire for rewriting India's historical past expressed itself in multi-dimensional, multi-directional and multi-conceptual forms. The country as a whole also became suddenly aware of its place, identity and role in a bigger context. Shortly after independence, a massive Pan-Asian Conference was held in Delhi which was attended by many leading personalities of Asia at that time.. The Conference was inaugurated by Gandhiji and presided over by Sarojini Naidu and the theme was "that of the need of an emotional ideology of the homogenousness and solidarity of the peoples of Asia as against the colonial and imperial aggression of the West".[1] This assertion signified the new intellectual environment in which the post-independence historians in West Bengal found themselves.

When India won freedom, the historical world in West Bengal was dominated by Sarkar-Sen-Majumdar School of writing history. Jadunath Sarkar, Surendra Nath Sen and Ramesh Chandra Majumdar School was perhaps the best example of a generation that existed as a connecting link between the British Indian historical tradition of the 19th century and the post-independence ideas of historical research. At the philosophical level the older generation primarily believed in the ideas of Ranke. Majumdar had no hesitation to declare, "I have preferred to follow the footsteps of Ranke".[2] There was a group of scholars in our country who did not agree with Ranke. Susobhan Chandra Sarkar went a step further to ridicule that "Indian historical scholarship is still obsessed with the ghost of Ranke".[3] Ranke viewed the aim of history as "merely to show what actually occurred". This spirit guided the historical research in West Bengal in the first decade after independence. This is why we find insistence on empirical research during that decade. Moreover, the objective of historical research during the Sarkar-Sen-Majumdar era was to discover the historical truth. Both

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Majumdar and Sarkar were 'seekers of truth' in their own way. Time and again Majumdar asserted that "truth, nothing but truth, and as far as possible the whole truth, should form the steel frame of history, on which you may build a structure according to different plots, rhythms, plans or patterns in which you believe according to your philosophy of history".[4] Elsewhere, Majumdar had summed up the philosophy of his life in the following words : "The truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth—that's what should be the religion of a historian".[5] Janunath Sarkar punched his quest for historical truth with his historical beliefs to make the proposition more difficult. Prior to independence, in a historical Conference in Bengal, Jadunath Sarkar declared : "I would not care whether truth is pleasant or unpleasant, and in consonance with or opposed to current views. I would not mind in the least whether truth is or is not a blow to the glory of my country...But I still shall seek truth, understand truth, and accept truth. This should be the firm resolve of a historian".[6] The historical beliefs of Sarkar as expressed mainly in the *Full of the Mughal Empire* and *Aurangzib* may be unacceptable to present day scholars ; but nevertheless, they marked a significant feature of his historical thinking. Today there will be not many who can share some of the ideas of Sarkar like belief in 'predetermination', 'nemesis', 'divine justice', 'retribution' or in 'divine mercy'. Very few today can agree with the idea of Jadunath expressed in his *Aurangzib* that "History when rightly read is a justification of Provindence, the revelation of a great purpose fulfilled in time". The ideas of Sarkar-Sen-Majumdar School actually reflected the historical mood in West Bengal till the mid-fifties so to say.

The passage from Rankean ideals to Namier's concepts and thence to Marxist approach marked the changing pattern of research in West Bengal over the last four decades. In point of time the year 1950 may be said to have registered a silent break in the pattern of research. In that year came out the IV volume of the *Fall of the Mughal Empire* which may be regarded as the traditional approach to Indian historical research. New trends in Indian historical writing, however, did not appear

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overnight, although signs had appeared testifying that the traditional approach to historical research was slowly withering away. The forties of the present century may be termed as a period of shaking off of the British Indian traditions, the hall mark of which was political history, primarily in a narrative form. One modern Indian historian noted with concern that in India "development in historical studies has been rather lopsided, political history almost monopolising the field".[7] In the Calcutta session of the Indian History Congress (1955), Sardar K. M. Panikkar rightly pointed out in his Presidential Address that "the history of India has therefore to be a history of social growth and development and not primarily a political history". He also emphasised : "Nor can the history of any country be considered as grand procession of great men or a majestic stream of progress broadening with every age, and from precedent to precedent. But the history of a country has little value unless it deals with the conscious effort of a people to achieve a civilization, to reach better standards, and to have a happier and nobler life".

The rousing call of Panikkar echoed the mood of the younger researchers in West Bengal who were grouping for a new direction in historical research on modern India. The run-off-the-mill research tradition in the shape of a connected narrative of any political event could no longer satisfy scholars in the fifties of the present century. It cannot be, however, asserted that even after the fifties political history lost its grip over the successive batches of researchers ; neither it is intended to discard the utility of political history altogether. Even today's scholars are aware of the argument that "unless political history is fully reconstructed, studies on other aspects cannot be made in the proper perspective".[8] The new awareness about the analysis of the political past led to challenging interpretations of political history particularly of the modern period. In this connection it may be pointed out that research on ancient and modern India had been a strong point of historiography in the post-independence period. Research on medieval India in West Bengal after 1947 did not flourish much except in the case of a few scholars like Jagadish Narayan Sarkar, Atul Roy,

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Anjali Chatterjee, M. L. Roy Choudhury and Sushil Choudhury. In other words, a new dimension of research in political history opened up after independence. As an example of challenging interpretation we may refer to the recent work on the so-called 'Sepoy Mutiny'. The research of Rudrangshu Mukherjee and others proved that the 'Mutiny' could no longer be regarded as an act of some disgruntled Sepoys alone. Researches have explored the basic economic maladies in the shape of defective agrarian policies of the *Raj* which agitated the people of particular areas like Oudh and which compelled them to make a common cause with the Sepoys. R. C. Majumdar and Surendra Nath Sen wrote broad spectrum work on the Mutiny which had their own value. But incisive analysis came much later in the changing pattern of research in West Bengal. The 'Indigo Rebellion' as well as the 'Santhal Rebellion' have been studied from the point of view of the people in recent years. Suchibrata Sen's work on *The Santals of Jungle Mahals : An Agrarian History* (1984) has brought out the essential connection between the problem of depeasantisation in south West Bengal and the above mentioned rebellions.

Since the early fifties, there has been almost an explosion of research in the area of nationalism and freedom movement. Here again, the change in the pattern is quite obvious. Whatever was done earlier belonged to the category of narratives or historical memoirs. The best example of the traditional pattern of writing the history of the freedom movement may be found in the three volume series of R. C. Majumdar which lays emphasis on information rather than new interpretation. From descriptive to analytical or interpretative work—this became the change in the pattern of research on nationalism which may be considered as a distinct branch of political history. Amalesh Tripathi's *The Extremist Challenge* (1969), Sumit Sarkar's *The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal* (1973), Amalendu De's *Roots of Separation in Nineteenth Century Bengal* (1974), *Fazlul Haque O Pakistan Prastab* (in Bengali), Amalendu Guha's *From Planter Raj to Swaraj* (1977), Rajat Ray's *The Urban Roots of Indian Nationalism* (1979), N. S. Bose's *Racism, Struggle for Equality and India Nationalism*, etc., are some of the new analytical

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work on Indian nationalism which reflect the changed pattern of research over the last three decades.

Perhaps the greatest significant change in the pattern of historiography in West Bengal since 1947 was the development and growth of socioeconomic history. Economic history practically captured the imagination of scholars since the mid-fifties with N. K. Sinha leading the team of a dedicated band of workers. N. K. Sinha's magnum opus was *The Economic History of Bengal* in three volumes which might be said to have been a trend setter in Bengal. Since the mid-forties he developed a keen interest in economic history which became his first love so to say since the early fifties. He initiated a band of dedicated researchers who later produced valuable work in trade and commerce as well as revenue and industry. Tarasankar Banerjee's *Internal Market of India* (1966), Ashin Das Gupta's *Malabar in Asian Trade* (1967), Benoy Chaudhuri's *Growth of Commercial Agriculture in Bengal* (1964), Nilmani Mukherjee's *The Ryotwari System in Madras* (1962), S. K. Sen's *Studies in the Economic and Development of India* (1966) are some of the well-known work of the early generation of disciples of N. K. Sinha. Since the late sixties and the early seventies a wind of change began to blow in the realm of research in economic history in Bengal. Side by side more analytical work appeared. Amalesh Tripathi's *Trade and Finance in the Bengal Presidency* (1956), A. K. Bagchi's *Private Investment in India* (1972), R. K. Ray's *Industrialization in India* (1979) are some of the new types of research in economic history of the modern period. From the late sixties research in economic history has undergone a radical change in character. Economic history is no longer the exclusive domain of historians. A group of economists entered the field with altogether different idea about research in this field. The Sinha School of economic history is definitely fading out and a sort of generation gap may be discerned in this field. It is true that the generation of N. K. Sinha was more involved emotionally in the subject of their study while the present generation of economic historians has taken a surgeon's approach to the subject. Persons like Amiya Kumar Bagchi adopted a very hard attitude to empirical studies of the Sinha School. He commented : "Empiricist historio-

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graphy which prides itself simply on facts really boils down to acquiescing in a neo-imperialist framework for understanding the economic and social history of India under British rule. Because this is the favourite ploy of the British rulers to look at each case on its own without emphasising that each case, in fact, is involved in a particular social context under constraint imposed by the whole imperialist framework".[9] Without fully accepting the opinion of Bagchi in regard to the value of empirical studies, it can, however, be said for sure that the Sinha approach to economic history is gradually receding in the background, and economic history is becoming more and more an intellectual exercise in economic theories in a historical perspective. Perhaps this has become a general phenomenon ; but this is quite contrary to what the N. K. Sinha School wanted to do. It is interesting that Sinha advised his research students not to get lost in the "jungle of theories"[10]. Sinha urged : "We should not be estranged from historical reality and we should try as far as possible to recover the old milieu of the past".[11] In the Preface to the 1st volume of *Economic History of Bengal*, Sinha wrote : "I have been unconstrained by doctrines and have sought to form some idea of the human realities behind formalised written documents." Again in the Preface to Vol. III he made it clear : "This history lacks the basis of theory or counterfactual conditional analysis". Sinha was very hard in hitting at the new pattern of research in economic history when he said in his Presidential Address at the Benares session of the Indian History Congress : "The recent tendency towards over sophistication reveals an inclination to conceptualise the event before having studied it". N. K. Sinha has been extensively dealt with, because he symbolised the older pattern of economic history which was quite different from the new emerging pattern propagated by those who believe in conceptualisation as a necessary condition for a remunerating study. There cannot be any meeting point of the two patterns and one has to subscribe to one or the other point of view. But it is true that younger researchers during the last one decade have found in the study of economic models in the historical perspective a new meaning for intellectual pursuits.

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In the process of growth of modern Indian historiography in West Bengal, research in regional history or rather Bengal received a fresh base of time. Research on various facets of the history of Bengal reflected a new pattern since the mid-fifties. Earlier, research in regional history topics was looked with disfavour. Senior scholars preferred to go for a topic with either an all India thrust or with an emphasis on other areas with rich historical past. Hence, one may find work on the Sikhs, the Rajputs, the Mysore rulers and the like. In the new wave of research on Bengal, 'Renaissance' and socio-economic studies dominated the field, while political history of Bengal during the later period of British rule had been treated marginally. In the renaissance-study, Bipin Chandra Pal Birth Centenary Commemoration Volume entitled *Studies in the Bengal Renaissance*, edited by Atul Gupta (1958) was a trend setter. A host of scholars took the queue and brought out individual work on Bengal renaissance in the sixties and the seventies of this century. It is interesting to find that renaissance-study is gradually waning of late. Sushil Chandra Gupta's *Unabingsha Shatabdite Banglar Nabajagaran* (in Bengali, 1959), Nemai Sadhan Bose's *The Indian Awakening and Bengal* (1960), *Renaissance in Bengal* (1977) by Arabinda Poddar, *Renascent Bengal* edited by R. C. Majumdar and published by the Asiatic Society in 1972 are some of the well-known work on the subject. The omnibus work entitled *The History of Bengal* (1957-1905) edited by N. K. Sinha and published by the University of Calcutta in 1967, appeared as a complementary work to the *History of Bengal*, Vol. I & II, published by the Dacca University. The change in the pattern of research in social history is also clearly visible over the years from R. C. Majumdar to Ratnalekha Roy. From barely descriptive to analytical—that was the transition. R. C. Majumdar's *Glimpses of Bengal in the Nineteenth Century* (1960), which earned a critical reputation for its unusual 'dedication', was the signal for other younger scholars to devote more attention to social history. Pradip Sinha's *Nineteenth Century Bengal : Aspects of Social History* (1965) was certainly a departure from the traditional pattern of research. It was a study

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in some new pressures on society and a peep into the relationship between tradition and change. Close in the heels came *Reform and Regeneration in Bengal*, 1774-1823 by Amitabha Mukherjee and published in 1968. It was actually a study of the seed time of the renaissance in Bengal. Chittabrata Palit's *Tensions in Bengal Rural Society* (1975) broke a new ground as it sought to examine the role of British rule in general and of the planters in particular as triggers of agrarian change prompted by landlord opposition, thereby causing tension in Bengal rural society. While Palit had tackled the crucial period between 1830 and 1860, Ratnalekha Roy chose the period from 1760 to 1850 for a critical study in her *Change in Bengal Agrarian Society*. Tarasankar Banerjee's *Various Bengal : Aspects of Modern History*, published in 1985 is the latest work on the card which has a broad sweep and orientation. Family histories opened a new horizon in the seventies and widened the scope of the social history that was emerging in the last two decades. Nilmani Mukherjee's *Bengal Zamindar, Jayakrishna Mukherjee of Uttarpara and His Times* (1975) and Somendra Chandra Nandy's *Life and Times of Canto Baboo*, Vol. I (1978) have given a new direction to the future generation of scholars.

In the changing patterns of research in West Bengal two other new fields have attracted the serious attention of scholars. The first is the emergence of 'historiography' as a special area of critical investigation. While European scholars took to the study of the art of writing history, Indian scholars, particularly those in Bengal, were quite late in entering this virgin field. In 1977, Jagadish Narayan Sarkar brought out *History of History-Writing in Medieval India* and in the same year *Sardar K. M. Panikkar : The Profile of a Historian* (*A Study in Modern Indian Historiography*) was produced by Tarasankar Banerjee. They had actually followed the footsteps of R. C. Majumdar who wrote *Historiography in Modern India* in 1970. Historiography is still a weak force in West Bengal and is understated by many. Even then, Subodh Kumar Mukhopadhyay's *Evolution of Historiography in Modern India* : 1900-1960 (1981) and Jagadish Narayan Sarkar's *Romance of Historiography* (1982) prove that the new pattern is gradually gaining ground in West Bengal.

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The other new field relates to the study of 'Urban History'. This may be said to be the latest love in West Bengal as far as historical research is concerned. Long ago, in the first decade of the present century two important studies appeared on Calcutta. In 1902, *A Short History of Calcutta : Towns and Suburbs* by A. K. Ray was published. Close on its heels came *The Early History and Growth of Calcutta* in 1905 by Raja Benoy Krishna Deb. For some unknown reasons this branch of research went into oblivion only to reappear in the seventies. N. K. Sinha in his Presidential Address in the Benares History Congress (1969) lamented : "Urban history and social history in general have been practically ignored so long. Every great city has a history of a very complex growth. This complexity, in all its features, has to be analysed. Calcutta will perhaps have such a history before long in which the city's two towns, the English town and the Indian town, the commercial community, the great bazaars, the daily life of the people will for the first time be adequately described from a historical perspective". It is a happy thing that Dr. Sinha's pleadings did not go in vain. In 1977, S. N. Mukherjee wrote *Calcutta : Myths and History*. A more serious work entitled *Calcutta in Urban History* was brought out by Pradip Sinha in 1978. Ranabir Ray Choudhury's *Glimpses of Old Calcutta* (1978), though a popular and light work, is worth mentioning. In the eighties more serious attention has been given to the history of Calcutta, in particular, and concerted efforts are being made, through the formation of societies, to give a fair deal to the history of the metropolis. It is hoped that during the next decade a number of studies will come out on urban history.

It remains to be said at the end that the changing pattern of research in West Bengal is a sign of growth and advancement in historical insight. The new trends are actually happy signs of progress. When today becomes tomorrow, we are bound to think in a different way in the society which has to keep pace with intellectual progress. One should not be apprehensive of the post-independence departures from the traditional research patterns. We have to embrace this process as an inevitable conflict, though a healthy one, between traditions and modernity

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in the realm of historical research. The creative pangs of the new intellectual efflorescence will surely pave the way for a brighter future for the writing of India's historical past.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. See address of Nihar Ranjan Ray at the "All India Oriental Conference" held at Santiniketan, 1-3 November, 1980.
2. R. C. Majumdar *Historiography in Modern India*, p. 54.
3. See 'Views on 1857' by S. C. Sarkar in *Bengal Renaissance and other Essays*, p. 126.
4. *Historiography in Modern India*, p. 40.
5. Quoted in *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 12 February, 1980.
6. Quoted in *Sardar K.M. Panikkar : The Profile of a Historian by* Tarasankar Banerjee, p. 83.
7. S. P. Sen (ed.), *Studies in Modern Indian History : A Regional Survey*, Introduction, XX.
8. Ibid.
9. *The Hindu*, 29 October 1979. See 'State of Historical Research in India'.
10. See *Journal of Indian History*, Diamond Jubilee Volume. Article on Dr. N. K. Sinha by Tarasankar Banerjee (foot note).
11. Ibid.

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PART—II

SELECT THEMES

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11

Trends in the Recent Studies in the Agrarian History of Colonial India

B. B. CHAUDHURY

This essay has a limited scope. It is not a review of the recent writings on the agrarian society in colonial India. Its focus is primarily on the alternative interpretations of the 'imperial impact' on rural India. It is the lines of reasoning that matter, and we have deliberately refrained from pointing out individual contributions to the reasoning.

Historians rarely disagree that certain notable developments occurred during British rule, such as the political unification and the emergence of a stable administrative system ; new arrangements made by the colonial state for the collection of land revenue, the most important source of its income ; population growth ; growth of cultivation (with its rate considerably slowing down by about the beginning of the twentieth century) :[1] the increasing commercialisation of agriculture, the widening of the economic transactions of the village and the increasing monetisation of the economy, the growing influence of traders in agricultural produces and rural creditors in the rural society, the decline of old industries (crafts), and the rise of modern industries ; and the increasing complexities in India's international economy.

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The point of disagreement is the manner in which these developments had affected the agrarian society. Did the agrarian sector of the economy grow ? Did these developments appreciably impinge on the earlier modes of peasant production ? Did the agrarian social structure change at all ? If it did, what were the forms of the change ? Did such changes have much to do with the general behaviour of the peasant economy ?

Such are the questions that bother historians. It is notable that professional historians have not, in general, adequately handled the question of measuring growth or decline in the economy. They have been content with identifying the relatively spectacular changes in its behaviour. In fact, their major emphasis has mostly been on the nature of rural relationships.[2]

I

The alternative interpretations are too complex to be presented in the form of simple propositions. However, they have their distinctive *tendencies*. One interpretation tends to stress the 'disintegrative' influence of the innovations during British rule on the agrarian social structure. The rival interpretation rejects the emphasis.

It would be imprecise, though not entirely misleading, to call the first interpretation 'nationalist'. The reason is partly that the early nationalists had initiated the debate. This interpretation was part of their critique and indictment of British rule. Later historians, broadly sympathetic to the viewpoint, presented it in a much more sophisticated way and some of their premises (for instance, those, derived from the Marxian notion of social change) were altogether new. We would still call them 'nationalists,', since they too had been largely critical of British rule. The second interpretion, we would simply call 'revisionist'. This characterisation is equally open to the charge of being simplistic.

II

We trace, first, the refinement over the years of the position of the early nationalists. They mostly dealt with the *direct* and *immediate* effects of British policies and changes during

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British rule on the agrarian society. Later 'nationalist' historians did not wholly accept this method. We take a simple illustration—the effect of the British land revenue policy—to which we again return later. The early nationalists attributed the rural impoverishment a basic assumption of theirs partly to the excessiveness of the British land revenue demand, arguing that it had severely checked capital accumulation in the peasant economy. Later historians, while not disputing the burdensomeness of the revenue demand, would argue that the mechanism through which the revenue demand drained off the peasant surplus, was far more complex than the nationalists assumed. The mechanism often involved the mediation of peasants' relationship with other dominant groups in the village economy, such as traders in agricultural produces and moneylenders.

Romesh Dutt's *Economic History*[3] is perhaps the most consistently argued nationalist critique of British rule. The critique did not stem from a mere intellectual curiosity. The devastating famine of 1896/97 had just occurred. Dutt's primary concern was to expailn the proneness of the rural economy to recurring famines. His argument is as follows :

Reduced availability of food resulting from crop failures did not cause the famines. Normally, enough food was still available in the neighbourhood. People could not tap this source, because they lacked the means to pay for the imports. Dutt did not measure the extent of the decline in people's purchasing power. His was an impressionistic judgement and an inference. People's resourcelessness was partly due to the rigorous collection of an extortionate revenue demand, normally payable in cash. Increase of the demand from time to time, mostly based on increased cultivation and rising agricultural prices, further reduced the peasant surplus. On the other hand, only a negligible portion of the income from land revenue was ploughed back into agriculture. In fact the country's wealth was continually being drained off. The resultant shrinkage in the level of money circulation constrained economic exchanges of all sorts. The consequences of the process were all the worse since it was happening in the context of a continuing shrinkage of non-agricultural employment opportunities, because of the

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ruin of India's traditional industries. People's purchasing power inevitably declined.

While British rule had thus caused rural impoverishment Dutt had not ever suggested that left to itself the Indian economy would have been *growing*. Evidently, he did not think in terms of modern notions of economic growth. He did not look at the question of economic organisation from the point of view of capital accumulation. To him people's welfare was the norm and a stable economic system could well have ensured this welfare. Strikingly, Dutt disapproved of large-scale industrialisation, a blueprint for economic growth nearly everywhere at the time. He feared it would have lowered the quality of Indian life.

His central assumption seems to have been that, colonial rule had forced India into a way of life which she otherwise would not have taken. What looked like progress or prosperity seemed to Dutt to be a source of instability in the economy and consequently of insecurity of livelihood of a large number of the people. For instance, he believed, the increasing cultivation of cash crops make for recurring food-scarcities. He would abhor the cultivation of crops like tea and indigo, since European planters had sustained it wholly through coercions. He wanted the enormous investment in railways diverted to construction of canals. While canals would contribute to stability of agriculture, railways, transporting imported British goods to the remotest corners of India cheaply and quickly would, hasten the ruin of the surviving Indian industries.

III

Later 'nationalist' historians substantially refined the critique. This will be clear from their treatment of the questions in which Dutt was directly interested or which he tended to overlook. We choose four questions : origins of famines ; origins of the increasing commercialisation of agriculture and its implications for the economy ; implications of canal irrigation for the local agriculture, and most importantly, the nature of the changes in the agrarian social structure.

The questions chosen are far from mutually exclusive. Analysis of them, therefore, occasionally overlap.

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As illustrations of the later explanations of the specific phenomenon of recurring famines we may choose Bhatia, Tapan Ray Chaudhuri and Amartya Kumar Sen.

IV

Bhatia,[4] mainly concerned with the famines since about the middle of the 19th century, tended to stress the role of the compulsions of India's international economy. The 'Commercial Revolution', a crucial development in the second half of the 19th century, should normally have vitalised the rural economy. Paradoxically, he argues, it undermined its strength and resourcefulness. The Revolution created conditions for the widening of the internal and international markets of India's products and also of the Indian market for British manufactured goods. A striking feature of India's international economy at the time was the inability of India to pay for the increasing imports of British goods by her own industrial products because of the fast decline of India's industrial production. India was thus obliged to send away an increasing quantity of food-grains. The consequent pressure on the grain-supply in the domestic market inevitably pushed up grain prices. The rising prices tempted peasants to part with their usual stores of grain. The old practice of the village community to store grain against bad times was thus nearly abandoned, so that peasants were left to fend for themselves in a pitiless market system whenever crops failed. In fact, the prices of even inferior grains, normally circulating in an extremely narrow market, also considerably rose. This severely hit the numerous community of marginal peasants, who even in normal years had to buy food for a considerable part of the year. Since wages seldom increased proportionately to the rising grain-prices, landless peasants as also marginal peasants, whose livelihood mostly depended on the wages of their labour, suffered the worst. It was such groups that famines hit most.

Tapan Raychaudhuri[5] did not directly deal with the question of famines in British India. However, an interesting point he makes in regard to pre-colonial India, bears on his explanation

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of British Indian famines. The phenomenon of underdevelopment in colonial India, he argues, was far from a mere continuation of the traditional economic order in pre-colonial India. The pre-colonial Indian economy in its normal functioning did not generate large groups of half-starving people. This was at least true of particular regions of India, such as Greater Bengal, Malwa in Central India and Awadh. The peasant economy there was characterised by 'affluent subsistence'.[6] He has thus defined the concept : 'an economy geared to production for purposes of consumption rather than exchange, but having high levels of output and consumption attained with relative case and rather small inputs of labour, permitting a fair measure of slack which could be taken up as and when the economy responded to market incentives. In areas characterised by such abundance of food supply...inadequacy of food and clothing was unlikely to have been the lot of large numbers, whatever the pattern of income distribution. The possibility of such shortages affecting sections of the population cannot, however, be precluded for less fortunate regions...' The phenomenon of 'mass poverty' appeared mostly in colonial India. Ray Chaudhuri traces its roots 'to the new institutional framework of agriculture introduced after 1813, which deprived small holders, both tenants and proprietors, of nearly all their surplus, if it did not actually reduce them to landlessness'.

Ray Chaudhuri suggests that certain economic groups particularly suffered during famines. So did Bhatia. Amartya K. Sen, a professional economist, contributes to our understanding of famines by explaining why these groups so suffered.[7] Sen revives Dutt's idea that famines are only partly attributable to decline in food availability. The decline was general, but all groups did not equally suffer. Subsuming all the famine-affected groups under the category 'poor' also seems to him misleading. A small peasant and a landless labourer may both be poor, but their fortunes are not tied together. He does not accept either the income-based view of Dutt, which states that famines occurred because people did not have enough income to buy food. The view Sen points out does not explain why people did not have income.

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Sen attributes famines to 'failure of exchange entitlements'. Entitlement means right through ownership. 'The set of all the alternative bundles of commodities' that a person can acquire in exchange of what he owns is called the 'exchange entitlement' of what he owns. The failure of this exchange entitlement explains why a person's income abruptly diminished during famines. For instance, the bundle of goods that the labour of an agricultural labour would buy during a famine was much less than during normal times. The sudden rise in the commodity prices sharply diminished the size of this 'bundle'.

V

Dutt's adverse verdict on the increasing commercialisation of agriculture during British rule remains more or less undisputed in the later 'nationalist' critique of British rule.[8] However, this critique argues from somewhat different premises, partly because the origins of the commercialisation have been explained differently.

In regard to origins, there has been a steady shift from the earlier emphasis on the compulsions of India's international economy[9] to that on peasants' relations with dominant groups in the village.

In general, it has been argued, peasants' choice of cash crops was not an instance of a 'normal' process of commercialisation,[10] resulting from their response to market stimulus. The normal process would mean marketing of an increasing amount of *surplus* product. The physical form of the surplus could be either a subsistence crop or a cash crop. Whatever this from the 'main feature of such a normal process of commercialization lies in the fact that the increased volume of marketed agricultural produce results from increased production over self-consumption requirements by the peasants'.[11]

The implications of such an exchange are two-fold : it improves the peasant's resources, and also enables him to have access to a wider range of goods.

The kind of commercialisation that occurred in India was mostly different ; it has been called 'a forced commercialization'. The peasant's involvement in it was not voluntary. Commercialisation occurred because 'peasants are forced to sell a high

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proportion of their output to meet immediate cash requirements'. This forced them to buy again from the market, and precluded their access to a wider range of goods.

How did the cash requirements that forced peasants to market a sizeable portion of their output, in fact often their subsistence crops, originate ? Gadgil and the Thorners[12] would relate them to the pressing obligations of peasants in connection with the payment of land revenue, usually payable in cash. They did not clearly explain why peasants could not raise this cash by selling a portion of their subsistence crops. Shahid Amin attempts to do that[13] with particular reference to an eastern U. P. district, Gorakhpur. In explaining the growth of sugarcane cultivation in the district he argues that the distribution of the peasant's rent dues over the year (which was mostly determined by the timings of the revenue demand fixed by the Government) was not in keeping with the peasant's harvest calendar, more or less ecologically determined and, therefore, normally unalterable. One of the heaviest of the revenue *kists* (instalments) fell due on 15 November. The corresponding rent *kist* was due about four weeks earlier—by about the middle of October. The late winter rice (*aghani*), the most important of the peasant's food crops, was not harvested till the end of November. The early kharif crop, including broadcast rice and inferior grains, was normally kept by peasants for consumption. They, therefore, raised loans on the security of their sugarcane crop, which used to ripe by mid-November or early December. 'Caught up between the imperatives of their harvest calendar and the pressing demand for prompt payment of rental...the small peasants fell back upon the cash-raising potential of their sugarcane'.

Amit Bhaduri differently explained the compulsions that made peasants grow cash crops, particularly in Bengal. He attributed them to a new development during British rule : commercialisation of undertenures, i.e., zamindars leasing out, in perpetuity or for short periods, portions of their estates at a rental much in excess of their revenue dues to the Government. The lessees themselves repeated the practice.

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The proliferation of undertenures often resulted in increasing the peasant's rent burden. This adversely affected him in another way. It now paid nobody to invest in agriculture, particularly because of the absence of any mechanism of cost distribution. Agricultural output could not, therefore, rise fast enough to absorb the increasing rent demand. Peasant's consumption level had consequently 'to be forced down to generate the necessary surplus'. In fact, peasants could not do without borrowing in order to maintain the 'bare minimum level of consumption'. Increasing indebtedness necessitated distress sales of their crops. The depletion of their necessary food stock obliged them to buy food from the market in the lean months of the year. 'This is the familiar cycle of distress buying and selling by small peasants, usually under the compulsions of debt'. This was a peculiar sort of commercialisation, since this tended to blur the usual distinction between a subsistence crop and a commercial crop.

Dutt, we may recall, considered increasing commercialisation a change for the worse on two grounds : this tended to reduce food availability and the cultivation of some crops, e.g., indigo and tea, were based on coercions. The later discourses on the question did not seriously consider the first ground. The size of cash crop cultivation, it was probably presumed, was in general not big enough to reduce food availability to a point where it could significantly affect the level of food prices. The second ground has been considerably modified. The line of reasoning is that cash crop cultivation harmed the peasant economy not just because cultivation of such crops involved overt coercions.

The stress in this respect is mainly on the implications of the new economic relations of peasants growing cash crops, particularly relations with moneylenders and traders.[14] These peasants could rarely do without credit. The Thorners have even concluded that while in pre-British India peasants borrowed only casually, mostly in times of severe distress, increasing cash crop cultivation during British rule tended to make the dependence on moneylenders general and almost irreversible. However, historians in general think that the Thorners have

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exaggerated the resourcefulness of peasants in pre-colonial India.

Borrowing in itself, it is argued, need not necessarily have hurt the peasant's interest. What made the difference was the use that the peasant normally made of the credit and the kind of control that creditor came to acquire over him.

Most peasants used the moneylender's loans toward meeting immediate subsistence needs and making compulsory payments, such as rent and even the prior debts. Amin's illustration of the point has already been cited. A similar argument in regard to jute cultivation in Bengal is as follows : 'The biggest attraction of jute for peasants was the availability of advances at the time of the year when their food-stock from the previous rice harvest had almost come to an end. Whatever cash was obtained after the jute harvest went to pay off rents and interest on loans'. As a result, jute 'only helped keep the peasants at subsistence level'.[15] The credit hardly ever contributed to an increase in the agricultural output. On the other hand, the creditors had no role either in organising cultivation more efficiently. Their major role was in the sphere of marketing of crops, and it was the credit system (or the system of advances) that ensured to the creditors the control over the marketing system. To them, peasants pledged their crop. Tied to the credit system they had, therefore, only a restricted access to the market or no access at all in some cases so that the usual 'profits from trade' nearly wholly went to the creditors. Creditors' control over the marketing was all the greater in certain cases, such as sugarcane. Sugarcane growers also made *gur* (molasses) and *raab* (more refined semi-solid substance used for manufacturing sugar). Particularly, raab-making made peasants unavoidably dependent on creditors, sugar-refiners (*khandsaris*) in this case, because of the expensiveness of the sugar-refining process. It so happened that gur-makers were generally more well off than raab-makers. Gur-producers, however, remained a small community. 'The integration of the *khandsari* with the agrarian economy', Amin observes, ' was such that only a minority of cane-growers, zamindars unconnected with sugar-refining, and substantial peasants, who did not take advances, prepared gur'.

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The quantum of creditors' appropriations partly depended on their composition. Ravinder Kumar has shown that the sudden 'cotton boom' in Maharashtra (1861-1865), in conjunction with the recent legal change facilitating debt realisation, brought into the credit scene persons previously mostly unconnected with moneylending. It was such newcomers who proved far more extortionate in their dealings with peasants when the boom burst.

In fact, creditors gradually consolidated their position, partly with the help of British laws committing the law courts to enforcing the debt bonds, whatever their origins. With the rising land values the form, in which this control was exercised, changed. Grabbing peasants' lands, and not just their crops, increasingly interested them.

The jute-growers' case had a distinctive feature. Relations with their creditors, mostly jute traders, did restrict their access to the market. However, the movement of the raw jute prices did not depend on the creditors alone. A major determinant of the level of jute prices was the quantity of the raw jute consumed in the local jute mills. As long as the individual jute mills worked at cross purposes, their consumption could hardly determine the movement of raw jute prices. This became possible when the mills combined. The organised jutemill owners' community could then devise means toward artificially restricting purchases from the open market. This would inevitably depress the raw jute prices, which would further reduce the jutegrowers' earnings.[16]

Amit Bhaduri points to a significant implication for the economy of a characteristic feature of the forced process of commercialisation : distress selling and buying of food-grains. The peculiar nature of the exchange, primarily exchange of paddy for paddy, prevented the peasant's access to a wider range of goods. The mutual dependence between agriculture and industry from the demand side could not thus develop. An exchange of agricultural commodities for manufactured goods would have broadened and stabilised the home market for industrial goods and a sound industrial system would have stimulated demand for food-grains and other agricultural raw materials.

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VI

Increasing cultivation of cash crops was just one of the several innovations during British rule which, according to Dutt, had no positive effects on the economy. He was particularly critical of railways, and concluded that public investment in canal irrigation would have been far more worthwhile. The role of artificial irrigation in the security of agriculture has long been regarded almost as a truism.

This conclusion has recently been questioned. Whitcombe[17] argues, with reference to the United Provinces, that the way canals had been constructed often adversely affected the local peasant economy.

Her observation on canal irrigation, admittedly an innovation in the region, was part of her broader generalisation on the implications of most other innovations during British rule : 'every innovation made demands on existing institutions far out of proportion to their capacity'.[18] She, thus, concludes with regard to the implications of the new irrigation system for the peasant society : 'Whatever ecological revolution the canals brought or helped to bring about, most farmers' techniques were not adapted to deal with such sudden and radical changes. Nor did the canals provide them with a greater degree of control over the means by which they continued to cultivate : local power was paramount as the double status of *maliks* (landlords) as canal officials so clearly showed'.

Not that the canals had not benefited cultivation at all. The benefits, she argues, were mostly limited to valuable crops. Food crops had only a marginal share. Of the kharif crops, the real beneficiaries were cotton, tobacco, vegetables and indigo. Of the rabi crops wheat benefited most. However, wheat was not the 'food of the masses'. Indeed, the new irrigation system tended to reduce the food availability, since easy access to canal water led in some places to the substitution of more valuable crops for coarse cereals. 'Generally speaking canal irrigation did or could do little to decrease the ravages of scarcity by expanding the sources of staple food supply : indeed, its effect tended to be the reverse—to contract them'.

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The canals adversely affected the economy in other ways too. Availability of canal water tempted cultivators 'to load the land with an unrelieved burden of crop year after year'. The consequent neglect of the fallowing practice exhausted the soil. The soils hardened, and fertile lands increasingly turned *ushar* (incapable of producing crops). Decreasing pasturage due to indiscriminate reclamation of all cultivable wastes caused a considerable decline in the cattle population. Peasant income from dairying fell. The major source of cheap manure supply was also gradually lost. All these severely hit the considerable community of pastoralists, such as Guzars. They were obliged to take to settled cultivation. The new occupation for the Guzars was not without its hazards. Most of their settlements were in low-lying river valleys, so that the threat of innundation made any kind of cultivation a risky venture. Obstruction of the natural drainage line by canal embankments increased the dangers from seasonal flooding. The swamps which this obstruction had also created became the breeding grounds of mosquitoes. The recurrence of malarial outbreaks made these places notoriously unhealthy. On the whole, Whitcombe argues, the cost of the canals far outweighed their benefits.[19]

VII

It was Dutt's explanation of rural impoverishment and the increasing vulnerability of the rural economy that later 'nationalist' discourses have most improved and refined.

For Dutt, recurring famines constituted the chief index to this impoverishment. The later discourses argue differently : non-occurrence of famines do not necessarily imply non-existence of chronic impoverishment. Increasing poverty has other indicators and measures. The chief measure, e.g., estimating variations in the national income over the years, was unknown to Dutt. (He has not drawn any inference for sustaining his argument from Naoroji's estimate, the only one that he presumably knew.) Identifying secular trends in agricultural output is also a device for understanding the state and nature of the agrarian economy. For instance, Thorner's idea of a 'stagnating' peasant economy was based on Blyn's study[20] of such trends for the period 1891-1947.[21]

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A strikingly new thing in the later explanations of rural impoverishment was the emphasis on the evolving rural agrarian structure, a variable Dutt largely ignored. He blames the rural poverty on the immediate British policies, mainly stressing peasants' relations with the super landlord—the Government —and the way certain broad developments, such as the drain of wealth and the shrinking industrial production, had impinged on the rural economy. Preoccupation with the question of land revenue demand has sometimes misled him. The case of the permanently settled provinces of Bengal and Bihar weakens his argument that fixity of land revenue demand would inevitably strengthen the peasant economy. The region remained as prone to famines as others where the demand was periodically revised.

Two things are, however, notable about this trend in the historical writings after Dutt. First, while carefully analysing the rural agrarian structure they have scarcely neglected to point out the implications of the land revenue question for the rural economy[22]. Rothermund's phrase 'parasitic symbiosis' best expresses the situation in which extraction of peasant surplus in the form of revenue and other forms of imperialist extraction continued for long without damaging the organism to a degree where the mechanism of the exploitation would cease to function. How the excessiveness of the land revenue demand, particularly during early British rule, tended to depress the rural economy, and the commodity market in general has been adequately stressed.[23] On the other hand, the evolving agrarian social structure was hardly ever analysed in isolation from the wider economic context, including the operation of the British land revenue policies. One of Dutt's major insights, e.g., the rapid decline in the employment opportunities in the traditional industries steadily undermining the strength of the rural economy, was considerably developed in the later writings. They do admit that new industries developed and new sources of income and employment appeared. But, they contend, these could not stimulate the economy as a whole and actually devitalised it. The following citation formulates the argument : 'The most striking feature of colonial economic development is the dichotomy between the traditional and modern—as also between

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the subsistence and non-subsistence sectors of the economy. The pre-modern subsistence sector accounts for the stagnation of skill, technology, social organization and attitudes'.[24] Notions used in such writings, such as 'aborted modernization' and 'semi-feudalism' suggest a belief that but for the colonial domination 'modernization' of the Indian economy would have taken place. Whether potentialities of growth of a modern economy existed in pre-British India remains a debatable point.[25]

How did the evolving agrarian social structure impinge on the rural economy ? The Thorners have presented a more or less representative formulation : 'The net effect of British rule, was to change drastically the social fabric of Indian agriculture but to leave virtually unaffected the basic process of production and the level of technique. The upper strata of the new agrarian society benefited handsomely. The postion of the cultivator deteriorated. Capital needed for the development of agriculture was siphoned off, and the level of total output tended towards stagnation'.[26]

The agrarian social structure that had evolved was called by the Thorners 'built-in' depressor, i.e., something within the agrarian system itself tending to depress the rural economy. How did it come about ?

We would only briefly review the changes that had, allegedly, led to this. The reason is partly that the explanation is fairly known. Parts of this would be repeated anyway in connection with our statement of the revisionist thesis. We intend to present it at much greater length since it is perhaps yet not as well-known.

VIII

The composition of what Thorners called 'the upper strata of the agrarian society' changed notably in some regions. This had much to do with the way the government wanted the land revenue collected. The government chose certain individuals or groups rather than others also with an eye to the security of the imperial control over India. It need not have relied on altogether new people. Pre-existing groups were taken in if this suited the government's purpose. On the other hand, if

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the circumstances that determined the initial choices changed, the government made new choices.

Some illustrations are cited. In Bengal, the government mostly retained the old zamindari families at the time of making the 'Permanent Settlement' (1793). However, it wanted the vast zamindari estates cut to size, distrusting big families on political grounds. Talukdars of the United Provinces, favourites till about 1822, gradually fell from the imperial grace, and came to be regarded in the 1840s as a 'host of unproductives'. In the Punjab, the government distrusted the Sikh sardars and jagirdars from the very beginning. John Lawrence, who looked after the 'revenue settlement' of the province after its annexation (1949), thus justified their exclusion : 'Politically these people will never support us, and to the country they are a perfect incubus'.

Whatever the groups on which the government decided to rely for the collection of revenue, their choice amounted to a considerable redistribution of power in the rural society. 'Whatever class obtained the settlement was in effect master of the land, able to reduce all others to virtual dependence upon its generosity.'[27]

The composition of the upper levels of the tenurial hierarchy more spectacularly changed as a result of another device of the government toward securing its revenue : distress sales at public auction of the defaulters' estates. The government mostly ignored their pleas that the burden of the revenue demand was much too pressing for them to bear and tended the blame the sales on their incompetence in managing their estates. The logic of the auction sales was that substitution of more energetic 'settlement-holders' for the slothful ones might preclude the sales. The government wanted the sales to be open, expecting resourceful people to bid at the auction.

The auction sales, though not as open as the government wanted,[28] were a significant change in the agrarian society. Such sales did occur also before. Their number, however, was much less and the access of outsiders to this land market was much more limited. Whatever the constraints on the market during British rule, distress sales of estates made possible entry

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into the relatively closed agrarian community of wealthy outsiders and occasionally also of local groups, mostly unconnected with landed possessions in the village.

How was the admission of newcomers to the landed society significant ? Some historians tend to regard it mainly as a social phenomenon : the ruin of very many of the old landed families, the gradual erosion of their social role and influence, the contest for local power that ensured between them and the newcomers, the different life-style and cultural values of some outsiders, such as the urban rich and the gradual breakdown of the patriarchal relationship between the traditional landed families and the rural society.

Other historians emphasise on the economic implications for the peasantry of the changing composition of the landed society. A certain redefinition of rent relationships, it is argued, gradually resulted from this. This often happened, at least initially, where outsiders had replaced the old landed families. The usual explanation suggested for this is the opulent outsiders regarded purchases at the auction as the best means under the circumstances of making the most of their cash resources, particularly where the purchases involved a transfer of the resources from alternative uses, for instance, mercantile activities.

Redefinition of the peasant's rent relations did not just mean occasional rent increases. It involved more fundamental issues. The most crucial one was the nature of the peasant's land rights. Very many landlords increasingly denied that peasants had any rights whatsoever, independent of their will or wishes. They believed, a stable peasant right was incompatible with their rights deriving from the possession of landed property. The attitude of the government regarding the rent question only reinforced this claim. Freezing the rent rate, when agricultural resources had been increasing, seemed to the government inconsistent with the moral and natural right of landlords to share in the increase. A later shift in the argument consisted in the argument that restrictions on rent increase would eventually hurt the economy since these would discourage investment in agriculture by wealthy landlords. The government did devise some checks on indiscriminate rent increases ;

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but the landlords flouted the law. Even the legal sanctions in their favour gradually became superfluous ; they could do without asking for the law court's intervention. Their firmly entrenched domination in the village was a source of vast coercive powers. They could make even obdurate peasants bow to their will by threats of evictions. In general, tribal cultivators suffered far worse.[29]

Historians, blaming much of all this on British rule, have seldom suggested that peasants in pre-colonial times had idyllic relations with 'zamindars' (or rent-receivers).. They only contend that custom considerably checked the latter's wilfulness. Such constraints largely disappeared during British rule.[30] On the other hand, zamindars could now confidently rely on the easily accessible legal machinery provided by the government, and consolidate their domination. The increasing scarcity of land and the negligible availability of other means of livelihood inevitably facilitated an arbitrary exercise of their powers.

VIII·1

Economic and institutional changes, it was argued, created conditions favourable to the emergence of other dominant groups in the peasant society. The nationalist critique has usually concentrated on rural moneylenders, denouncing them as the bane of the peasant society, as having caused the ruin of small peasants.

Two major shifts in the critique in this regard are notable. Peasant indebtedness to moneylenders is not any longer believed to have been a distinctively British-Indian phenomenon. The existence of largescale credit transactions in pre-colonial times has been firmly established. It is not assumed either that a distinct group of professional moneylenders alone provided the credit. A common assumption now is the complexity of the social composition of rural creditors and the diversity of their economic roles in the peasant society. A powerful group of rural creditors, it is now held, was part of the peasant society itself. The old image of wily moneylenders as aliens and disrupting the peasant society from without has been largely abandoned. A major modification of the orthodox critique is the

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notion of the rise of rich peasantry at the cost of small owners. It has even been argued that the growing influence of the rural rich, composed mainly of affluent peasants combining several economic role, had been steadily eroding the old omnipotence of zamindars.

However, the recent researches do reassert the major hypothesis of this critique that powers of moneylenders had vastly increased during British rule. In fact, even the revisionist interpretation admits it. It only contends, as we see later, that the increase was not of a kind that could cause a decisive shift in the balance of rural power in favour of moneylenders.

Widespread as peasant indebtedness was in pre-British India, moneylenders had several constraints to face in exercising their powers. The usual descriptions of the constraints suggest some notable features of the rural credit system. Contrary to a common supposition[31], credit was far from casual or occasional aids in times of unusual distress. As in the colonial times, peasants mostly borrowed in order to make obligatory payments, such as revenue. This was at least the case in Maharashtra and Punjab. Moneylenders seem to have been a small community. In Maharashtra at least they formed a distinct ethnic group of migrants from other places, remaining culturally more or less 'outsiders'. The restrictions on their powers mostly related to debt realisation. Darling writes of 'communal' control limiting moneylenders' powers. He does not tell us how the control was actually exercised. It seems that in Maharashtra the smallness of their number put moneylenders at a disadvantage, particularly when they had to deal with the village community as a whole. Rarely did they settle terms with individual cultivators. When it came to the question of settlement of disputes over interest charges and related issues, they were at a greater disadvantage. The State scarcely helped them enforcing their claims. A formal legal machinery did not exist. It was, therefore, left to the village *panchayets* to arbitrate. Decisions there rarely went against the village community. The village headman and the leading peasants, who were among the members of panchayets, saw to that.

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What happened if the frustration of moneylenders over the decisions led them to reduce lending to a point where it hurt the local economy as also the collection of revenue ? Was the State still hesitant to take sides ? We do not really know. On the other hand, panchayet decisions could not do much toward reducing peasants' dependence on moneylenders. What happened if peasants deeply resented the continuing domination of moneylenders despite their usual services ? Did it lead to any overt conflict ? Ravinder Kumar has a curious answer to offer. He does admit that as a result of this domination 'most of the surplus produce' of peasants (*kunbis*) 'became the property of the *vanis* (moneylenders) even before the crop was harvested'. Yet he would conclude—'Despite all this... to portray the relationship between the kunbi and the vani as a relationship of tension and strife would be untrue to the social temper of the time'.[32]

Moneylenders increasingly consolidated their domination during British rule, at least partly because of the disappearance of the earlier contraints on their powers. 'Communal control' did not any longer limit moneylenders' choices in regard to dealing with individual cultivators. With the government making individual peasants accountable for payment of revenue, they had individually to settle terms with creditors whenever they needed credit. On the other hand, the old institutions of the village community fast decayed. Establishment of new law courts, going by a formal process of law, made the village panchayets redundant.

To the increasing powers of moneylenders several other developments contributed. The demand for credit increased. So did the resourcefulness of moneylenders. Far more reassuring to them was the abandonment by the government of its neutrality in regard to debt realisation.

Historians have, in general, stressed the role of increased revenue demand in the rising demand for credit. Revisions of land revenue assessments on grounds of increased cultivation and rising agricultural prices, the argument goes, continually drained off the peasant surplus. Far worse were the effects where the government misjudged the nature of the price-movement,

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ignored the tendency of the prices to fluctuate widely from time to time, and inflated the revenue demand on the basis of unstable price-trends.[33] The increasing cultivation of cash crops greatly added to the peasant demand for credit.[34]

Darling differently explains the rising demand for credit in Punjab. It had not much to do with the level of revenue demand, since compared to the Sikh days it was moderate. He contends peasants borrowed more because they were more creditworthy, since increasing land values added to the worth of land as security. What did peasants do with the credit ? Darling does not clearly answer the question. Part of it, he seems to argue, was invested in purchase of land and its improvement. However, he concludes prosperity encouraged improvidence. Creditors did not mind lending since they were convinced of the ability of their clients to repay.

Creditors could meet the increased demand for credit partly because of their command now over larger resources. In Maharashtra this had much to do, at least initially, with the increasing eagerness of urban-based *sowkars* to divert part of their capital to the rural credit market. This they had been reluctant to do as long as moneylenders' powers continued to be constrained under the old regime. The *sowkars*, without securing rural roots or links, were still wary of dealing with isolated individual cultivators and preferred to rely on the rural *vanis* as intermediaries. The capital of *vanis* thus considerably expanded. The new laws committing the law courts to enforcing the debt bonds also made possible employment of considerable rural savings as credit. Diversion of capital of this sort from one occupation to another alone did not account for the increased availability of credit. Creditors could now transfer part of the newly created wealth of their own to loan transactions, particularly where they also traded in agricultural produces. Dungen[35] has shown how in Punjab the Hindu trading castes gradually improved their position as grain traders since about the beginning of British rule. Now, it was not any longer necessary for them to depend on village headmen or village officials for the supply of grain. They could get it directly from the large number of small producers 'now obliged to pay

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a fixed amount of money (revenue) annually'. The mode of purchase and sale of grain ensured an increased income. Grains purchased at harvest prices were sold later at considerably higher prices. Apart from this, the 'general stimulation of trade' during British rule helped small traders grow. 'Some of the smaller men, who started life as petty traders or small village shopkeepers or carriers became comparatively wealthy money-lenders and grain-merchants'.

Historians, including those disagreeing with the nationalist critique, generally noted the crucial role of British laws and institutions in the consolidation of moneylenders' powers. The government now completely abandoned its earlier neutrality. Helping moneylenders realise debt was now considered as an essential administrative responsibility. In fact, the new laws were heavily biased in their favour. For instance, the law courts continued for long to enforce the debt bonds as they found them, without questioning their origins.[36]

The bias was partly a product of pragmatic considerations. Interference with the activities of moneylenders, the government feared, would immediately affect punctual collection of revenue, since revenue payment invariably necessitated borrowing. To try to limit interest rates, the government argued, would be just a good jesture, since it would be futile to look for a uniformly fair interest rate in an essentially imperfect credit market. The officialdom also argued from a consistent economic philosophy. Trying to control moneylenders would amount to interference with the laws of the market. The notion of a free market, borrowed from the contemporary industrialised economy of Britain, was applied to an altogether inappropriate context. For instance, the decision of the government to abolish ceilings on interest rates in 1855 was merely a repetition of an argument in England at the time that legal restrictions on interest rates would impede mobilisation of industrial capital. The credit market in rural India was scarcely comparable to the money market of an industrial economy. Moneylenders, it was also assumed, had a 'progressive' role to play in the rural economy, where the rate of growth of savings was just insignificant. It was the moneylenders who mobilised the scarce resources and

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made them available to small producers, though at a price. The price was far from heavy, since the usual interest rates were more or less proportionate to the risks involved in dealing with mostly improvident cultivators.

Given this pro-moneylenders stance of the government the inevitable happened. The rapid increase in the number of law suits related to debt showed the eagerness of moneylenders to get the law courts to intervene for a prompt realisation of debt. The vast increase in the number of mortgages indicated how fast moneylenders were tightening their stranglehold over the peasant society. The eventual sales of mortaged holdings completed the ruin of small peasants, and reinforced the moneylenders' domination over the peasant society. Owner peasants sank into the position of landless labourers.

IX

Treatment of the question of growth of agricultural labour may be taken as an illustration of the considerable revision of the early nationalist critique of British rule by the later 'nationalist' analysis of the changing agrarian social structure.

Early nationalists did occasionally note the phenomenon of peasants losing lands to their creditors. Two aspects of their understanding of the question are, however, notable. First, in general they did not conclude that the magnitude of the loss had ever been impressive enough to cause a profound social change. The attitude of nationalists like Ranade to the question of this loss also indicates a value judgement : preservation of small peasant property would not necessarily promote the well-being of peasants, and the ruin of small peasants need not be regarded as a cause of a progressive weakening of the peasant economy. The point to consider, they thought, was whether some more enterprising and resourceful people had replaced impecunious cultivators.[37] In general, they regarded moneylenders as a secondary evil, originating from the primary evil : the British land system.[38] Secondly, they did not explain the implications of the loss of peasant lands in terms of a transformation of any traditional 'self-working, self-possessing and self-sufficient type of a peasant community'.

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The myth of a perverse foreign rule undermining such a peasant community appeared later. The way the myth developed into a kind of 'conventional wisdom', an orthodoxy, has yet to be traced. We are concerned with the myth itself[39] which is as follows :

The economic organisation of a village in pre-British India, characterised by combination of self-sufficient peasant economy and rural industry, did not necessarily ensure 'economic progress and growth'. Indeed, certain aspects of it did hinder the growth. However, the village community was able to maintain 'a sort of standard of living'. As a result, 'most members of the village community were gainfully employed, and were not usually compelled to seek employment elsewhere, except during periods of severe famines and natural calamities'. Three circumstances mainly accounted for the negligible size of the group 'without any gainful employment in the agricultural sector of the economy' : non-existence of private property right in the land ; communal control over the utilisation of the existing stock of land, both the exploited area and the cultivable waste and the small scale of commodity production. In the context of a plentiful land' any member of the village community could easily become a self-possessing and self-working peasant'. Peasants could freely move to waste lands, reclaim a portion and earn a living, since the capital necessary to procure other means of production 'could not have been very large in this art of primitive production system'. Ban by the village community on land alienations to outsiders helped to preserve the basis of the self-possessing peasant community. On the other hand, in the absence of a private property structure of landholding and of a sizeable peasant production for the market, land continued to be used as source of peasant subsistence and not as a source of profit. Profit might have motivated resourceful people to add to their stock of land at the cost of small producers.

X

The recent 'nationalist' historiography has nearly abandoned this orthodoxy. (The 'revisionist' argument has been presented later in this essay.) In general, it has been found simplistic and inconsistent with firm empirical evidence.

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It has, at the same time, been asserted that British rule did vitally bear on the origins and functions of agricultural labour. The formal existence of landless agricultural labour in pre-British India did not necessarily preclude its different origins later. The persistence of the traces of the old system need not be taken as evidence that the labour forms of utilisation remained identical.

Agricultural labourers at about the beginning of British rule were mostly attached domestic servants, recruited from the lowest castes. Their status as agricultural labourers originated mostly from their chronic indebtedness and only to a marginal extent, from loss of lands. On the other hand, the role of loss of land, of gradual diminution of *per capita* holdings, and of impoverishment of a section of small peasants in the origins of agricultural labour during British rule is generally admitted. The social basis of the group was thus considerably broadened. While a chronically indebted cultivator of pre-British days mostly remained tied to his creditor, rendering him a wide range of unspecified services, a 'dwarf-holder' or a cultivator losing part of his land to his creditor could later still choose the way he would hire out his labour. He could continue to cultivate his lost land as a sharecropper, or he could supplement his income in other ways, not involving 'attachment'. The system of attached labour had, in fact, been breaking down in most places, except where hapless cultivators, in the absence of alternative employment opportunities, could not break away from 'agrestic serfdom'.

The traditional system of agricultural labour did formally continue in many places, but the forms of labour utilisation considerably changed. In south Gujarat, as Breman's study shows,[40] the lack of specificity in the labour of the *Dublahs* (a community of attached labourers) for their Brahmin masters continued, but with the rapid growth of labour-intensive sugarcane cultivation there the Dublah labour tended to be increasingly involved in this cultivation.

A significant change in the system of agricultural labour in British India is the new forms of conflict, which is a structural attribute of any relationship of dominant and subordinate groups.

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The gradual transformation of the traditional *sepidari* system[41] in Punjab during British rule may be taken as an illustration.

'Reciprocity' seldom characterised the relations of dominant landowners and subordinate sepidars in the pre-colonial times. It was essentially a relationship of antagonism. During British rule, this latent conflict increasingly surfaced[42] in the context of the economic changes, such as the rising agricultural prices, the widening of the economic linkages of the village and the availability of new employment opportunities. Rising agricultural prices induced landowners to deviate from the customary payment in kind, i.e., a share of the harvest, and to change over to cash payment, often adjusting payments to the specific services provided by the sepidars (*kamins*). 'The landowners' respect for tradition and custom was tempered by their concern for increased income'. Landowners, however, could not have it all their own way. The *kamins* increasingly resisted their interference with tradition and custom, since this curtailed their income and restricted their old privileges. The growing demand for their labour outside the market strengthened their will to frustrate their wayward masters. As a result, 'relations became more strained and conflicts more common', even in the late nineteenth century. 'By the beginning of the twentieth century conflict between kamins and landowning cultivators frequently developed into confrontation'.[43]

XI

If we may recall, the nationalist critique of British rule, after the early nationalists had initiated the debate stressed the changing composition of the 'upper strata of the agrarian society' and the new forms of their domination over the peasant society by way of explaining the process of rural impoverishment. The Thorners called the new agrarian social structure a 'built-in depressor'. They concluded as follows. The peasant economy stagnated and even declined primarily because of its weak capital base. 'The decisive factor in Indian agriculture during the twentieth century and probably in the last quarter of the nineteenth as well, has been the chronic extreme shortage of capital of the great bulk of the cultivating peasantry'.[44] Not

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that the system of peasant production was incapable of generating a surplus. The peasant surplus was continually being drained off as a result of its appropriation by the 'upper strata of the agrarian society'. Matters worsened since such resourceful 'upper strata' seldom invested their income in agriculture. 'The rarest figure in the modern countryside has been a genuine capitalist producer—that is, a producer who invests capital in agriculture and strives to secure a maximum profit primarily from the efficiency with which he handles his labour force and his land in the productive process'. The reason is that 'The Indian landowners have found rent and usury, as opposed to capitalistic profit, easier, safer, more congenial and more lucrative'.[45] This was, of course, true of landlords and moneylenders who traditionally had no direct role in the production process. This applied as well to the rising class of affluent peasantry.[46]

Some of the later writings did note ecology, the state of agricultural technology and the existing market structure in explaining long term trends in agricultural output.[47] However, in general, the emphasis on the evolving agrarian structure remains.

XII

The 'revisionist' version of the imperial impact on the rural society has its variants, as does the nationalist. However, its point of departure is more or less common : a sharp disagreement with the assumptions and conclusions of the nationalist school.[48] Some of its arguments are traceable in the imperialist apologia ; but it would be distorting the revisionist position if it is regarded as a mere repetition of the apologia.

It may be proper here to indicate the basic revisionist arguments, which we intend to elaborate later. First, British rule did bring about changes in the agrarian society. However, they were not of a sort as to bring about a structural transformation. A central assumption is that the changes not leading to such a transformation are not 'decisive', 'profound'. The changes appeared to the 'nationalists' as sharp discontinuities, partly because of an imperfect understanding of the pre-colonial agrarian social structure and partly of a faulty assessment of the changes in British India. The changes, the revisionist arguments

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assert, did not break up the peasant society, but 'stabilized' it. Secondly, British rule did not impoverish rural India. What looked like signs of impoverishment were not really so. Where the signs were not deceptive, the rot need not be blamed on the new British institutions.[49]

XIII

Before we proceed to elaborate the revisionist position we intend briefly to refer to a recent argument, which is of some relevance to the debate we are reviewing. The argument, presented by Frank Perlin,[50] does not relate to British India at all. It bears on our debate since it questions the alleged 'autonomy' of India's economy before British rule. It disputes the notion of British rule integrating for the first time India's economy into the wider international economy and transforming it in other ways. Crucial changes generally associated with British rule started to occur much earlier. The rapid weakening of the central authority of the Mughals did not make much difference to the process.

Perlin disagrees with a certain 'dualist assumption' that India 'must have possessed economies of a different order from those in which capitalism was generated'. It was this notion of *separateness* of the Mughal economy that 'endowed' colonialism 'with the status of a *deux et machina*, the source of a radical break' with the 'static' past. India, like Europe, was in fact 'affected by profound and rapid changes in the character of its societies, economies and state forms from at least the sixteenth century'. A crucial aspect of the development was the rise of commercial capitalism 'independently of that in Europe, but within a common international theatre of societal and commercial changes'. He would connect it with the 'growth of international commerce in monetary media', involving a considerable flow of silver and gold into India. Not that the bullion movement broke upon an irreversibly static economy in India. The flow 'constituted a number of nodes in a larger, increasingly elaborate pattern of burgeoning money-use and supply in this period'.

Other historians too have written of a growing commercial capitalism in Mughal India. Perlin would not accept their

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interpretations of its origins. For instance, he does not agree with Irfan Habib's characterisation of this commercial capitalism as a 'parasitical' system, 'emerging and declining with the Mughal empire'.[51] He would dispute an implicit assumption of Habib's that the Mughal state 'dominates, generates and subdues its economy, that private activities are dominated by it, and that "Mughal" and "economy" are coincident categories'.

Perlin seeks to revise, on the same ground, a widespread impression that the failing strength of the Mughal political system in the 18th century had inevitably caused a decline in the economy of the time. It is improper, he concludes, to view economic development as dependent functions of the political strength of governments.[52]

XIV

The two major revisionist postulates have been indicated above. Before we take them up in turn we briefly refer to the argument relating to a specific issue : origins of recurring famines.

In terms of analytical rigour the argument hardly improves upon the official point of view. The government persistently denied having any responsibility for the famines, blaming them on inordinate population growth, improvidence and lack of foresight of cultivators, and finally, 'acts of God', i.e., natural hazards sharply reducing agricultural output.[53]

Neil Charlesworth and M.B. McAlpin may be cited as instances of the revisionist argument. Pointing to the pervasiveness of the disaster caused by the famines of the late 1890s in the Bombay Presidency, Charlesworth concludes : 'The simple realities of famines need reassertion. The massive outbreaks during the nineteenth century did not occur in just the poorest areas or even those where population pressure had become most intense...Alternatively, neither was famine inexorably linked with the progress of commercialization. ...Famine, at root, in the nineteenth-century western India was caused because the rains failed on an extensive scale'.[54] McAlpin, also dealing with the Bombay Presidency, similarly described the famines there as the 'fault of the seasons' and linked them

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'with a period of extraordinary dryness'. The alleged increase in the tenancy, resulting from loss of land, had scarcely caused the famines. The ryotwari system did affect the powers of the old corporate groups. However, 'there is no evidence that the system alone, or in conjunction with market forces, produced any general impoverishment of these old landholders'.[55]

XV

We now return to the general revisionist argument. One line of reasoning, that of D. A. Washbrook, we intend to treat apart, since it substantially differs from the arguments that follow :[56]

The traditional order of the peasant society, Washbrook argues, did not break up during British rule, largely because the rulers wanted the small peasant production preserved. Other historians tend to explain the nature of social change independently of this element of conscious choice on the part of the government.

Washbrook's interest in the rural agrarian structure derives from his major concern : understanding the roots of underdevelopment of the agrarian economy. He relates it to the continuing predominance of small peasant property. The Raj had a role in it to the extent that its policy helped petty peasant production consolidate itself. Agrarian capitalism developed only marginally, since the intervention of the State in the form of tenancy laws and debt laws in order to preserve the social basis of the petty peasant production tended to frustrate 'free market mechanism' and 'kept landlord and mercantile capital at a remove from the productive base'. Not that the colonial State had throughout opposed in principle promotion of a free market. Its own interest necessitated the promotion. However, it did not consistently follow such a policy. The government 'was not bent on creating a free market economy, sustained by the rule of law'. Its attitude 'towards a hypothetical capitalistic transformation of agriculture was notoriously ambiguous'. Two consequences followed from this. Indian agriculture, normally grossly undercapitalised, continued to be so, despite the plentiful availability of capital, since the persistence of the

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'archaic system of petty peasant production' upheld by the law discouraged transfer of capital to agriculture. On the other hand, the usual modes of employment of this capital—rentierism, usury, commodity speculation, etc.—further weakened peasant farming.

Why was the Government keen on preserving the 'archaic' social structure ? The motivation, Washbrook thinks, was primarily political in nature. The Raj feared that letting the small peasant property be exposed to the normal free market mechanism, for which conditions were ripening, particularly in the second half of the 19th century, would severely dislocate the rural society and might consequently threaten the stability of the Raj.

XVI

The typical revisionist argument is somewhat different. It has two major variants. First, British rule could not decisively transform the existing agrarian social structure because it was not intrinsically potent enough to do that. Secondly, as a result of their interaction with the pre-colonial social order, the original potency of the new British institutions had diminished to a point where they could not produce 'decisive' changes.

This alleged 'powerlessness' of British rule is by now 'a wearisome orthodoxy', as Neil Charlesworth calls it. It was a refreshingly new idea at the time (1965) R. E. Frykenberg coherently formulated it in connection with his analysis of the encounters of the 'central authority', i.e., the new British power, with 'local influence' in the Guntur district.[57]

His point of enquiry was 'how local leadership was able to meet the leviathan of English power, and how policies essential for the growth of strong government could be balanced against concessions of local aspirations'. As a result, 'while the British were outwardly supreme their power was silently challenged from within'. He gives the following analogy to show how local influence slowly and steadily eroded the might of the omnipotent : 'The white ant is a tiny creature of tremendous energy and silence which, combining its efforts with

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countless other tiny brothers, can make a hollow shell of empty crust out of the stoutest wooden structure'.[58] The Raj had thus to make compromises with traditional power groups. This happened also in the area included in the ryotwari system.[59] The system could scarcely ignore the traditional social institutions, such as caste. Some power groups, initially overthrown, were gradually restored. As a result 'Altogether it appears that the ryotwari system during its early years from 1792 to 1827, did not greatly change the social fabric'.[60]

Frykenberg's primary concern was 'local influence' deriving from the elaborate apparatus of 'land control'. Other historians have looked at the question of the 'powerlessness' of British rule from a much wider angle. Their interests include the pre-existing structure of political authority and social and economic organisations.

Baker[61] and Bayly[62] may be taken as illustrations. It is the methodological issues that concern us here. The corroborative evidence is only occasionally cited.

Baker's point of departure is his disagreement with historians whose primary emphasis is on the extent 'to which western-oriented trade, assisted by imperial or neo-imperial systems, has moulded the societies of non-western world'. He would argue : 'We must add another dimension : the extent to which local society helped to shape the colonial state and to channel the colonial economy.[63] The persisting vitality of the indigenous order prevented the imperial impact from being what it would otherwise have been.

Bayly's conclusion is more or less identical. He starts from 'the proposition that the pace of expansion and the form of the colonial relationship was determined mainly by the form of the society penetrated in the years before the full force of industrialization was brought to bear on the non-European world'. He distinguishes between the British Raj as an instance of a 'conquistadore imperialism' and the Raj as a 'potential harbinger of western capitalist organization'. Rhoads Murphy in his book *The Outsiders* makes a distinction between China and India in regard to Western impact on the economy and society there. Unlike in the case of India, Murphy argues, 'European

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economic impetus was broken by the sophistication and impermeability of the Chinese economy'. Bayly does not accept this distinction. India's case, he thinks, was similar to China's. He thus concludes : 'Contemporary observers and historians have always sought for signs that western capitalism was on the point of transforming India. What happened, however, was that Indian business methods and the political context in which they were set, transformed and frustrated the feeble European impulse. Regardless of the steamboat, the agency house and the Joint Stock Bank, Indian commercial society proved almost as impenetrable to the westerners as its Chinese counterpart, and was much more costly to come to grips with'.[64] He does not accept either Boeke's notion of 'dual economy' as an explanation of the problems which Europeans and the export cash sector faced in dealing with the indigenous commercial institutions of India. According to this notion, 'commercial dealings in underdeveloped economies stagnate because a modern rational and capitalistic commerce is imperfectly linked to an indigenous sector, bound by custom and non-capitalistic values'. Bayly disagrees : 'One might argue that it was the very efficiency and responsiveness of local merchant society to prices and opportunity which frustrated outsiders' attempts to predict prices and supply money'.

The pre-colonial 'local society' could help 'to shape the colonial state and to channel the colonial economy' because of its vigour and dynamism. This society in South India, Baker asserts, had been far from static. It was 'a picture of a rather breathless history of political and social change...In the three to five hundred years which preceded the colonial intrusion, South India developed in a special way'. The old order had continued, and features of the agrarian society and economy during British rule were scarcely innovations.

Baker finds evidence of the emergence of a powerful state in the region, primarily as a result of constant warfare. War finance necessitated taxation and the creation of a new bureaucracy for collecting the taxes. Internal and external trade flourished. The state encouraged it in its own interest.

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This structure of the pre-colonial political authority—a military power interested in 'fiscal extraction' and overseas commerce—largely determined the shape of the colonial polity, whose aim, too, was a stable revenue, a steady supply of food and articles of trade. On the other hand, the considerable expansion of trade under British rule did not lead to any change in the organisation of production. 'The system of social organization which had been forged as part of the post-medieval state system was easily adapted to production for the overseas market... the leaders of the local societies used established patterns of hierarchy and clientage, supplemented wherever necessary by cash or by force, to realise the produce demanded in the market'.[65]

The behaviour of agriculture was primarily ecologically determined and British policies had nothing to do with the later agricultural decline. Even the Depression of the 1930s, Baker thinks, only marginally affected the overall structure of the local economy. It only revealed the 'brittleness of the financial institutions' which had grown up in the past half century. The only difference it made, according to him, was that while previously wealth accumulated in agricultural commerce was locally hoarded or reinvested in the local economy, during the Depression the larger portion of such wealth was siphoned off to the region's urban economy. The transition did not mean much of a jerk. The mercantile groups, which had for long mediated between the export houses and the villages now moved towards small-scale industrial enterprises.

Central, too, to Bayly's argument is his hypothesis that the British in northern India had not inherited a fluid and chaotic system. Contrary to a general impression the later pre-colonial period of India's history was not marked by political instability and economic decline. What looked like chaos was 'decentralization' of power within the Mughal polity. New centres of power and stability emerged, making possible 'redeployment of merchant capital'. As a result, 'groups of intermediaries between State and the agrarian society' emerged and consolidated their position, such as the trading community and the service gentry.

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Thus the order, sophistication and strength of the indigenous system, created conditions for a close collaboration between European enterprise and the local communities. Bayly finds useful Ronald Robinson's idea of collaboration in a colonial society : 'The central mechanisms of imperialism may be found in the system of collaboration in pre-industrial societies which succeeded or failed in meshing the incoming processes of European expansion into indigenous social politics and evolving a balance between the two'.

However, while European merchants could not help depending on the indigenous system of trade and finance, and the organisation of production for the market, this dependence, Bayly argues, also tended to frustrate them. Bayly thus explains the outcome[66] : 'The Europeans did well enough out of India, but not as well as they intended...The peasant family farm and the merchant family were sophisticated institutions which responded to the possibility of profit. But the perception of the meaning of profit was determined by the context of institutions, within which they were set and dominated by considerations of security. They were too well-adapted to be swept aside by European business methods...In a sense it was the very sophistication of the internal market and market institutions which sealed the British out of the Indian agrarian societies.' Bayly does not systematically show how this 'sophistication' became incompatible with European enterprise. He tends to blame it mainly on inadequate money supply and the imperfect commodity and labour market.

On the other hand, growth of European commerce and the widening of the market for India's products only marginally affected the local agrarian society. The foreign merchants were little more than 'final purchasers'. 'They simply used their heavier capitalization to suck the commodity out of petty local markets, and continued to rest on the networks of Indian brokers and financiers'.

Even the major fluctuations in the regional economy, Bayly argues, had little to do with the imperial impact. He traces them to distinctly indigenous roots, though he admitted the role of some British policies in aggravating them. He concentrates

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on the first major crisis in the North Indian economy—the crisis of 1829-35, which was associated with widespread commercial failures, disruption of the local credit network, a sharp fall in the level of commodity circulation and a depression in the grain and land market. He thus explains it : 'It was first and foremost a crisis in the political economy...it resulted from a disturbance of the links between the state, commerce and agrarian society which had been established after 1740'. This disturbance, he thinks, resulted mainly from the 'disruption of elite consumption', including a considerable amount of expenditure on luxuries. Contrary to a general impression, luxuries did not at all mean waste of scarce resources. Indeed, 'Luxury production and consumption were the life blood of the pre-colonial order'. For various reasons the 'elite consumption' sharply fell after 1825, creating in the process the conditions of the Depression of the 1830s. Bayly, however, did admit the role of the Company's monetary and commercial policies in worsening of the 'crisis'.

XVIII

The emphasis of Frykenberg, Baker and Bayly is thus on how the pre-colonial order tended to determine the polity and economy under British rule. Other historians do not take this deterministic position. They evaluate the changes during British rule in order to decide whether 'the role of modernity' was really 'disintegrative'. Eric Stokes, for instance, sets out to examine the view that British rule in northern India subjected 'the immemorially stable and backward agrarian base to the disintegrative influences of modern legal relationships, usury capitalism and commercial agriculture'. Other historians have answered the question in their own ways. We try to indicate how they argue their case.

They have normally preferred to deal separately with the major components of the agrarian society : the landed groups, the community of rural moneylenders and the peasantry, which has not necessarily been taken as an undifferentiated group. They try to understand how the distress sales of estates at the public auction, the increasingly complex rural credit relationship,

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commercialisation of agriculture on a considerable scale, growth of tenancy and the rise of an affluent peasantry had affected these component groups.

As regards the landed society, they have mainly concentrated on two questions : (1) How did the obligatory auctions sales of estates affects this community ? Is it a valid argument that the sales tended to 'disjoint the whole frame of the village societies, to deprive multitudes of rights of property which their families had held for ages and to reduce a high-spirited class of men from the pride of independence to the situation of labourers on their paternal fields' ?[67] (2) Did landlords, old or new, acquire during British rule such powers as enable them to dominate the peasant society ?

We briefly indicate the answer to the first, since it seems to be well-known. The sales did not involve a sharp breach with the past. They did occur on a considerable scale even in Mughal India.[68] Such sales admittedly increased during British rule, but 'new men' and outsiders, particularly the mercantile and banking groups, seldom dominated the land market. This was partly because they were not always keen on the purchases. The excessiveness of the land revenue demand, while agricultural resources were imperfectly developed and the level of agricultural prices low, discouraged transfers of traders' savings to land purchases. Incentives for outsiders in this regard gradually increased, particularly after the Mutiny. Till then, as Stokes argues, their primary interest lay in the income from high interest charges and in the control over the disposal of peasants' crops. After the Mutiny, Robinson concludes, 'moneylenders pursued property with vigour. The reduction in the revenue demand, the growth of irrigation, the development of communications, the expansion of trade, the rise in prices, and the more efficient enforcement of law—all helped to make land worth having'. Opposition of the local agrarian society continued for long to frustrate outsiders, where they decided to compete at the sales. 'The main breakwater against change', Stokes argues with reference to Uttar Pradesh, 'was agrarian society itself'. The newcomers were mostly baffled where the villages were held by extended lineages in clan communities. 'The supra-village

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organization of the clan area helped to keep outside encroachment at bay, and also provided a powerful political weapon for joint action among the village communities'. This accounted for the limited number of land transfers in the Jat areas. These were the reasons why land mostly internally circulated among the established elite groups, including powerful zamindars themselves.

Even loss of estates at the auction sales, argues Bernard Cohn with reference to Benares, did not necessarily mean an end of the social and economic power of the 'dispossessed'.[69] The implications of the loss would vary from society to society. Cohn's formulation is worth quoting : 'In discussions of social mobility and social change, we often tend to think, consciously or unconsciously, in terms of closed systems. This model may be adequate for the study of isolated primitive societies, but not for India in the early nineteenth century, or for the Benares region as a case in point. Hence, unlike in a hydraulic pump, the change in part of the system, that is, the rise of one group or class, did not necessarily mean the concomitant fall of another'.[70]

The dispossessed Benares zamindars could retain, in some cases, much of their social power. This power 'was closely related to the number and internal organization of the corporately organized Rajput lineages'. Where internal conflict had not already weakened their solidarity, the auction-purchaser could scarcely undermine the social power of the dispossessed. Their economic power too was far from utterly ruined, particularly where they owned sizeable rent-free holdings, which auction-purchases did not normally affect. With agricultural prices rising and cultivation of remunerative cash crops, such as sugarcane, growing, the holdings became a source of considerable income to the owners.

The second question has been answered in the negative. The argument has two variants. One relates to the specific case of 'new men' replacing the old landed magnates. The change, goes the argument, did not bring about any decisive redistribution of rural power in favour of the 'new men', in so far as the power derived from control over village land. Zamindari, it is said, was not ever a unit of production, but merely

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'tribute-collecting structure over the village'. Land was controlled by other groups. Auction sales merely meant that the 'tribute-collecting right' had passed from one person to another, leaving unaffected the nature of land control at the village level.[71]

The second variant relates to the constraints that landlords in general had to face in exercising their powers. We take Musgrave's study[72] of the Oudh talukdars as an instance, partly because they have usually been regarded as typical of the species of arbitrary landlords.

The talukdars of Oudh, Musgrave contends, looked omnipotent, but were not really so. He seeks to amend 'the idea of the estate as an efficient and effective power structure, with power located at the submit and percolating through its hierarchy'. He concludes : 'Far from being a tightly organized and closely structured social fact the estate begins to look like a rather loose and vague clump of relationships, in part political rather than economic and social, or in a sense, like a super-connection, dependent on the cooperation of the lower levels'. The estate was an 'essentially diffused organization, with no level, even the lowest, entirely lacking in power...the landlord...was dependent for his position in society, for his ability to collect rents, on the consent of the important men within his estate', and he was 'powerless...when faced with the withdrawal of that consent'.

An important qualification that Musgrave makes reduces the force of this generalisation : 'at all levels of society men found it useful within their social, political and social context to have good relationships with the estate, its bureaucracy and in particular the whole series of resources possessed by them which would be brought to bear in the struggles and rivalries of the little community'. When a real power developed, as Musgrave admits, 'as in all political systems, the summit was never entirely without resources, the landlord never at the mercy of his subordinates'. The landlord then sought to frustrate his enemies by forming counter-alliances loyal to him. In Oudh, for instance, he, in order to baffle his recusant Rajput clansmen, even preferred an alliance with the *kurmis*, despite their inferiority to the Rajput in regard to ritual ranking. He also brought

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in cultivators from outside his estate, since they would be directly dependent on him.

Musgrave had later made a bolder generalisation.[73] British rule, he argues, had not created conditions for the predominance of certain classes and the consequent intensification of antagonism between the dominant and the subordinate. He concludes, with reference to the rural society of Uttar Pradesh during the period 1860-1920 : 'What was occurring was not the rise and fall of clasSes or categories,...but rather a rebalancing of a complex structure in which power, social, economic and political, was diffused amongst a whole range of men, all of whom dependent to a greater or lesser extent upon the support or acquiescence of other men'. The 19th century, he believes, cannot be regarded as one of 'the growing dominance of the rich peasant, or the moneylender, or any other level in society'.

His explanation of the process only marginally relates to the rich peasant and the moneylender, and mostly applies to the landlord. The alleged 'rebalancing' of power he attributed to 'the shifting pattern of resources and in particular of external resources', to the 'increasing openness of society, to the expansion of ranges of outside opportunities available to all levels of society'. He pointed out, for instance, how the 'major expansion in the number and range of the external influences' tended to reduce the old authority of the landlords in the rural society. During the 18th century, landlords had ample opportunities to dominate the rural society, partly because the near collapse of the Mughal authority gave them increased 'jurisdictional and fiscal freedom'. Apart from other things, 'since the ability to cultivate land may have rested on the ability of the landlord to organize military protection, the control of land may have been more completely in the hands of the military landlord'. Things quickly changed in the 19th century with the government effectively reasserting its powers. The area of its intervention in the rural society greatly widened. The 'most spectacular form of this' was the state-controlled canal irrigation system. This 'brought not merely a whole new resource on a spectacularly large scale into the locality, but also a wider-ranging and powerful new bureaucracy into the structure'. Expansion of

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the law courts was another form of this intervention. The tenancy laws in the late 19th century 'reduced the importance of the resources which the landlord could offer'. The expansion of trade and commerce that the growth of railways brought about in the later 19th century also gradually 'introduced new forms of influence and power to be placated and used'. The 'balance of external resource' was thus 'shifting and becoming more complex'.

The North Indian society in the later 19th century must, therefore, be 'seen as a complex and mutually qualifying series of centres of influences and potential leadership rather than as a society with clear-cut power relationships and distinctions and change can, in consequence, be seen not as the simple decline of centres of power and the rise of new ones but rather as a continuous and continuing shift in the balance between a galaxy of centres in the society'.

XIX

In regard to moneylenders the revisionist argument does admit the fact of growth in their economic and legal powers, but denies that this resulted in their domination over the rural economy and society. The rural economy, it concludes, was not any worse off for this growth, and the alarm over this growth was unfounded or overstated.

Borrowing by peasants was not particularly an Indian phenomenon, argues Neil Charlesworth. He takes a functionalist view of rural credit. Borrowing was 'substantially a product of limitations of capital availability and of peasant sources of security...Massive indebtedness was a consequence of shortage of capital'.[74]

Moneylenders had a positive role to play in the peasant economy in the context of this shortage. Clive Dewey thus assesses the role : 'the moneylender's capital was a reserve on which peasant families drew in time of individual or collective distress...Pooling the community's savings in this way was economic rationing : except in time of universal catastrophe it was possible to achieve an equal level of security for the participants with a far smaller amount of capital, by rotating the

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moneylender's capital among the casualties who need it most... The moneylender also provided working capital'.[75]

Creditors 'arguably, provided it cheaply,' suggests Dewey. The usual interest rates were 'not excessive, considering the risk of loss and the trouble of collection'. Charlesworth has explained how this 'risk of loss' inevitably affected the so-called interest rates : 'For the creditor, arithmetically high interest rates and the consequent build-up of a large monetary volume of debt afforded the only means of protection for his investment. It was not...that the recorded debt would normally simply be 'paid back', but at least it symbolised the scale of financial obligation of the peasant debtor'.

Even then, Charlesworth argues, with reference to the Bombay Deccan, that rural credit agencies were far too many for individual creditors to impose 'monopolist terms' on borrowers. Creditors' exactions did cause occasional violence ; but such cases were rare and had not ever led to any general breakdown of the normal credit system. The violence, mostly affecting 'a small minority of personally unpopular moneylenders, did not necessarily denote any general malaise in the credit system ...Indeed, amidst so massive and complex a system, periodic violence against individuals might be seen as a safety valve for the inevitable tensions. In the end the village community could show through force that it was bigger and stronger than the errant moneylender who offended its rules ; and, in turn, this realization was a source of stability for the system'.[76]

The scare that activities of wily moneylenders were disruptive of small peasant production, goes the revisionist argument, derived from a wrong assumption that normally they exercised the whole of their legal and economic powers. Musgrave tries to show, with reference to the United Provinces in the period 1860 to 1920, how moneylenders had several constraints to face in this regard.[77]

The constraints were social and economic in origins. Going as far as the law permitted could sometimes be self-defeating for the moneylender where credit formed a vital base of his social power. 'Credit and the supply of credit do not lie outside society ; indeed, in a society organized into vertical connections,

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into groups of leaders and followers, as we must surely see nineteenth century north Indian agrarian society, the supply of credit could and did provide an important form of linkage between leaders and followers. Particularly in a situation like that of late nineteenth century north India, where quite a large proportion of credit came from the natural leaders of society, the landlords and rich peasants, this social aspect of credit must play an important role in the investment decision'. Since 'a man's importance and status were determined as much by the number of his followers and dependents as it was by his wealth or ritual status, credit was obviously one of the most useful ways of establishing and maintaining a connection'.

Such considerations were paramount in certain areas and situations, in particular among the tightly-knit clan groups like the Rajputs and Jats. 'Here there was a tradition of keeping debts within the community, of preventing the intrusion of outsiders'.

Enforcing his claims, where the moneylender was keen on it, was also a difficult process. The law was all on his side, but it could not by itself ensure his success. He had eventually to depend to a great extent on the local village power. The difficulties were not great if he happened to belong to 'the charmed circle of the village'. They were often insurmountable where he was merely the village *bania*, or 'even more, where he was a complete outsider'.

A decisive economic constraint appeared where the money-lender's capital was essentially apart of his trading capital. Foreclosing a mortgage and acquiring his client's land was not then to his best interest. 'While the trading capital of the bania was so closely tied up with liquidity, his actual investment capital was frequently tied up with that most illiquid of all securities, land...Foreclosure implied the failure of the debtor and hence, a cessation of income ; it also implied a greater fixing of capital, a kind of self-inflicted progressive ossification'.

Charlesworth[78] analyses the background to the Deccan 'riots' of 1875 and questions the usual interpretation of them as the product of a decisive shift in the balance of social power in favour of moneylenders in the recent years. Transfers of

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peasant lands on a considerable scale might have caused such a shift. Nothing of the kind actually happened.[79] Moneylenders did not rigorously enforce the court-decrees either. The number of imprisoned debtors on this score remained negligible.

Creditors had not evidently sought to 'take undue advantage of the law to tighten their grip on peasants'. They merely wanted 'to maintain their position' in the context of new threats to it. One was the agricultural depression following the abrupt end of the 'cotton boom'. This sharply diminished the security of their loans. Another was the mushroom growth of numerous credit agencies in the recent years, particularly during the cotton boom. They increasingly trenched on the preserve of the established *vanis*. There were cases where cultivators disowned their debt obligations. Such cases recurred following recent official enquiries into peasant indebtedness, which they construed as evidence of a decisive retreat from the official commitment to stand by moneylenders. The recent fall in the agricultural prices, and declining wages had of course much to do with such acts of faithlessness, which they normally would have abhorred as unethical.

The *vanis* now struck back. Their most potent weapon was to stop lending. This set off the explosion. Cultivators could not do without credit in meeting their overriding obligation : payment of land revenue. They now risked losing their lands, and interpreted the decision of the vanis as a calculated move to ruin them. They rose up in a body to make the vanis retrace their step.

The aims of the rebels, Charlesworth argues, were modest. They were scarcely keen on any 'structural issues'. Elimination of vanis would have been self-defeating. Violence was limited. The rebels resisted execution of debt bonds, seizing and destroying them as far as possible. Social boycott was regarded as another device for making erring vanis behave. Most sufferers were aliens. The Deccan riots, Charlesworth concludes, 'do not reveal, in the still relatively uncommercialised economy and area in which they occurred, any firm evidence of a shifting balance of economic power'. They 'show an economy whose fundamental problem was shortage of capital and credit'.[80]

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Charlesworth does admit a much greater frequency of land transfers in the last quarter of the 19th century and later. So do other historians. However, peasant dispossession, it is argued, was far less general than it was once supposed, and transfers did not invariably adversely affect the local peasant economy.

In Punjab, for instance, as Dungen points out, certain caste groups, such as the Rajputs and some semi-nomadic communities recently involved in settled agriculture, particularly suffered. Dungen repeats one of Malcolm Darling's stereotypes that the Rajputs were 'ideologically worse-equipped than Jats to adapt to the economic changes of the time'.[81] The semi-pastoralists had gone to the wall since 'they had only begun to adjust themselves to the conditions of settled agricultural life, and were therefore in no position to adjust themselves to the vast increase in credit which accompanied the increase in the value of land'.[82]

'Moneylenders might not make improving landlords, but there were certainly men in the district whose acquisition of land was a public blessing'. The basis of this argument was an assumption that a considerable amount of land had passed from the 'weak' to 'strong' agriculturists, such as the Jats and the 'market-gardening castes'. The Punjab Land Alienation Act (1900) banning alienations to professional moneylenders stimulated the process of land transfers from 'inefficient' and marginal farmers to more resourceful and enterprising ones.[83]

XX

This revision of the usual characterisation of the moneylender's role in the peasant society is in a fact part of a broader revisionist argument. It is as follows : It rejects 'the stratification thesis', which describes the imperial impact on the peasant society in terms of the emergence of sharply stratified groups in the rural society, having distinctive economic roles. It is by way of 'reassertion of the stability of the peasant mass', as Charlesworth calls it. It does not argue that the pre-colonial order merely continued itself. It does admit the appearance of new complexities in this order during British rule, but denies that the complexities had produced a clearly stratified social structure.

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Eric Stokes provides some of the seminal ideas in this regard. His pupils at Cambridge, particularly Neil Charlesworth, have developed them.

By way of explaining the absence of an 'articulated class structure' Stokes writes of 'diffusion of economic roles and the obstinate refusal of the social and economic order to evolve on clear, determinate lines of class differentiation'.[84] Capitalist agriculture, whether at the peasant or superior level, had not developed. Nor was the 'class stratification of rural society by legal revolution into landlord and tenant...properly consummated'. Dispossessed peasants were seldom evicted, and continued to cultivate their lands as sharecroppers. New owners were rarely keen on directly participating in the cultivation process with an eye to a more efficient farming system. 'Urban capitalists were more interested in rent-receiving or in controlling the disposal of peasant-grown cash crops than in directly engaging in agriculture'. The 'peasant petite culture' was left 'intact' as a result. Stokes described at times 'this diffusion of economic roles', as a sort of 'return to the Indian norm',[85] i.e., certain cultural values determining the economic behaviour of dominant groups. The agrarian society was thus 'not blown apart by market forces'. Instead 'it was taken hold of and stretched out elastically from either extremity'. He borrowed a phrase from Geertz to describe the change that occurred in this society : 'the advance towards vagueness'.

Stokes has evidently been heavily influenced by Boeke and Geertz. He frequently cited them. He has described in terms of their concepts ('static expansion' of Boeke and 'agricultural involution', 'this peculiar pattern of changeless change' of Geertz) the changes in the 'traditional sector' of India's economy. This change, Stokes concludes, 'was not progressive but represents an adjustive capacity in traditional society to absorb external forces without structural alteration'.[86] A seminal idea of Stokes that the agrarian society in colonial India was 'stretched out elastically from either extremity' is evidently based on Geertz's characterisation of the changes in the Indonesian village during the colonial days : 'The peculiarly passive social change experience which...rural society has been obliged to endure seems

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to have induced in it an indeterminateness which did not so much transform traditional patterns as elasticise them. Such flaccid indeterminateness is highly functional to a society which is allowed to evade, absorb, and adapt but not really allowed to change'.[87]

Charlesworth elaborates the central argument of Stokes : absorption of external influences without any structural alternation occurring in the traditional rural society. He has a general explanation for the phenomenon called 'agricultural involution' : 'In a sense involution is the end of all agricultural development, unless the sector is transformed by exogenous events'.[88] All agricultural expansion is a 'once and for all' process. Eventually 'it presses on the finite resource of land'. The process cannot be arrested unless the redundant labour force is drawn off agriculture. This cannot happen without a simultaneous industrial growth. Unless this happens, everyone has to be provided 'with some niche, however small, in the overall system'. This is how agricultural involution occurs.

He is more interested in explaining the non-occurrence of 'structural alteration', mainly in the form of emergence of a sharply stratified peasant society. He attributes it to the nature of the changes that this society had experienced. He believes they were not potent enough to effect a structural transformation. The proponents of the counter-argument, he thinks, misjudge the changes.

He examines some of the major changes, which are generally taken as indicators of 'social stratification'.[89]

(A) Nearly everywhere in the Bombay Presidency there were signs of 'growing expenditure on land, houses and agricultural facilities'. The phenomenon has been usually associated with the rise of a rich peasantry. Charlesworth disagrees. This kind of expenditure was not necessarily evidence of an 'elite control over such resources'. This pointed to 'diffusion of wealth', 'a general rise in the income levels throughout agrarian society in the 1880's and early 1890's'.

(B) The number of land transfers did increase considerably after 1875. Yet the rate of transfers was still too small to lead to stratification. Moreover, there were only limited cases of

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'complete physical ousting of debtors from the land by ambitious agriculturists'. Debt obligation were merely 'translated into a more formalised payment of rent'.

(C) An increase in tenancy did occur. This, Charlesworth argues, did not necessarily mean decline of the old peasant proprietor. Tenancy was evidence 'not of peasant decline, but of greater tenurial flexibility in a more commercialized economy, faced at the same time with a serious problem of land availability ...In this situation peasants seeking to expand operations might often need to rent land, and tenancy, then, would become a natural response to economic stimuli'. Tenancy was not thus an indicator of stratification, but of stabilisation of peasant society.

(D) Increasing commercialisation of agriculture, admittedly a development of crucial significance, was to a considerable extent associated with the changes noted above, though by itself it had not generated them. Commercialisation did create certain conditions apparently favourable to stratification. However, Charlesworth argues, it also created a counter-mechanism.[90] The benefits from commercialisation did not go wholly to the dominant village groups, such as the rich peasantry and money-lenders, but tended to be diffused. 'Extensive labour requirements for cash-crop cultivation forced up some labourers' wages and in the villages which produced widely for external markets opportunities for emigration and supplementing incomes outside agriculture became more known and utilized'. As a result, the initial process of stratification could not go far enough to bring about what Marx called 'agrarian transition', i.e., the complementary formation of a class of rising rural capitalists and a landless proletariat. 'The rule may be, then, that extensive agricultural commercialization tempers social stratification'.[91] The opportunities created by commercialisation thus helped the peasant society stabilise itself. 'The forces of commodity production were here not destroying the peasants but being successfully ridden by them to maintain the social status quo... In western India, in sum, it was commodity production which came to terms with the village structure, not vice versa'.[92]

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XXI

Thus Charlesworth, like Stokes, admits the rise of a rich peasantry, but denies that the group represented one extremity of a polarised peasant society.

Unlike Stokes, Charlesworth seeks to analyse the long-term trends in the peasant economy of the region he deals with. It would be in order here to indicate how he sees the implications of the growth of an affluent peasantry for the behaviour of the economy in general. Two major conclusions of his are as follows: Firstly, it would be misleading to call the affluent peasantry a parasitic class. Secondly, the limitations of its role in the regeneration of the economy are largely explicable in terms of developments outside the specific agricultural sector of the economy.

He did not see much difference between the 'rural elite' in Bombay and the enterprising Meiji landlords in Japan. 'Widespread credit supply by the Bombay pacemakers may explain phenomenon like the general expansion in better houses in the late 19th century. Again there is no evidence that the Bombay elite were content to bask in their success rather than invest in developing enterprise'.

Yet, if the rural elite in Bombay, unlike the Meiji landlords, had not much entrepreneurial activity to boast, it could not be wholly blamed for this. 'The real distinction, perhaps, from the Japanese situation lies in external stimulii. If the Bombay rich peasants had enjoyed the advantages of their Japanese counterparts—the consistency of high international demand for a crop such as Japanese silk enjoyed, a government energetically developing and publicising technical improvement in agriculture, and, above all, connections with and opportunities to invest in buoyant rural handicraft sector—they, too, might have played a publicised role in wider processes of economic development'.[93] Charlesworth regards the absence of a buoyant handicraft sector as being crucial in limiting the enterprise of the rural elite in the Bombay Presidency.[94]

XXII

Central to the 'reassertion of the stability of the peasant mass' in the revisionist argument is an assumption that British

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rule did not see any growth in the size of landless labour. How then to account for the existence of a fairly numerous community of agricultural labourers ? The community did exist in pre-colonial India, goes the argument, and it was this old system that continued itself. The argument rejects the point of view that the pre-British peasant society was composed wholly of 'self-possessing and self-working' cultivators.

The existence of landless proletariat was linked with the caste-based social organisation of the pre-British Indian village. It was an extremely inegalitarian society ; the so-called 'village solidarity', 'communal solidarity', it is argued, is a myth. 'The village in India is only an architectural and demographic entity ...it is caste that is sociologically real'. The lower castes did not have any sense of loyalty to the village. They were clients of powerful patrons. 'Obligations of clientship' forced them to act in ways 'which are misrepresented as arising out of village solidarity'.[95]

Dharma Kumar made the first systematic statement of the argument relating the origins of agricultural labour in pre-British days to the institution of caste.[96] Demand for labour arose since caste ban prevented Brahmin landowners from touching the plough. Owners of large holdings, whether Bramins or not, could not also do without hired labour since their families could not provide all the necessary labour. The supply of the required labour became possible against because of the caste ban on ownership of land by some inferior castes. Dharma Kumar estimates that at about the beginning of British rule about 15 per cent of the total population of the Madras Presidency were agricultural labourers.

Saradamoni[97] has a novel argument to propound in regard to the Pulayas of Kerala, a community of agrestic serfs. The Pulayas, once owner-cultivators, gradually sank into the status of attached labourers largely because of the successive waves of Brahmin intrusions into their villages as colonisers. The process presumably involved use of force. Caste sanctions only formalised this dispossession. Caste rules were primarily designed to prevent any substantial improvement in the material conditions of the Pulayas and thus to keep them tied to their position

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as serfs. Ironically enough, it was caste system again that tended to split the Pulaya community into rival groups. Rigid caste rules, made by the Pulayas themselves, separated one subcaste from another subcaste of the Pulayas.[98] The Brahmin hegemony could thus consolidate itself.

Kessinger's study of a Punjab village[99] does not say much about the origins of agricultural labour, but shows how caste system helped the dominant landowning family effectively control the lowcaste *kamins*[100], and thus reinforced the latter's economic dependence on the landed families (the Sahotas). 'In the context of the Sikh administration of rural tracts the dominant caste's hegemony of village politics and dispute solutions was a virtual monopoly'. Any non-Sahota group intending to settle in the village must accept the 'political and jural power' of the Sahotas. Things were far worse for agricultural labourers of inferior castes. 'The chamar's time was at the disposal of the Sahotas'. Agricultural wages were regulated by custom and enforced by the Sahotas 'through their ability to use sanctions, ranging from physical violence to an arbitrary change of wages'.

How to account for the nearly universal form of 'attached' labour at the time ? Explanations vary. Credit relations have often been cited as a cause. In some parts of Uttar Pradesh, as Buchanan observes 'enslaving workmen by means of loans was deliberate policy practised by landholders', in the context of limited mobility of labour and in some cases, of limited supply of labour.[101] Srinivas is also inclined to this view.[102]

Jan Breman, dealing with the farm servants (*halis*) of South Gujarat, offers a more comprehensive analysis. He too links the phenomenon of 'agrestic serfdom' with the caste system. The relationship of landowners and halis was not just an economic relationship of two specific local groups.[103] It is to be judged 'in the light of a much more general pattern of relationship which prevailed among the various castes in the traditional society'.[104]

Breman stresses this social dimension of the relationship particularly in explaining why the landowners (*Anavil Brahmins*) required *hali* labour. The demand for labour had of course something to do with the extreme pressure on the labour supply

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during the peak agricultural seasons. 'The permanent servitude' of the *halis* solved this problem of labour supply.

However, there was more to it than this. Caste ban on the direct involvement of the 'ritually pure' (*anavil*) Brahmins in cultivation partly accounted for the demand for *hali* labour. This was not all, argues Bremen. 'The *Anavil* landowner's need of the services of a farm servant was in part ritually and in part socially determined'.[105]

Breman explains this 'social fact' in terms of the heterogeneity of the dominant caste. This community was split into competing factions. A consequence was the continuing struggle for local power. This necessitated control over men, since control over land alone was not enough. To bind others and be assured of their dependence gratified the patron's self-esteem, but at the same time he could not dispense with it if he wished to be recognised as a prominent member of his caste and enjoy the attendant privileges. The size of his dependants was the measure of the social position of an *Anavil* Brahmin. 'The question facing the *Anavil* landowner was not how many servants he needed, but how many he could provide for. A massive following not only was a standard for conferring esteem upon the patron, but also increased his power'.

Why did the *halis* agree to remain permanently bound to their masters ? It certainly was not due to coercions. The 'bondage' had evidently its benefits for the 'bonded'. Involvement in cultivation, which was rapidly increasing under the intiative of a section of the *Anavils*, provided to the *halis* a more secure subsistence than their earlier occupations as hunters or shifting cultivators did. Even this agriculture was not enough to keep them employed throughout the year. Bondage saved them from worries on this score. 'In fact servitude was sought rather than avoided' by the *halis*. Their patron also stood by them in times of their difficulties and protected them in their disputes and clashes with other groups in the locality.[106]

How did British rule affect this system of agricultural labour ? The revisionist argument has two major features.

First, British policies had not ever produced a landless proletariat. If the number of agricultural labourers had increased

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at all, the reason was rapid population growth, so much so that there was not enough land to go round. A certain number of cultivators had inevitably slid into landlessness. There was nothing that British rule could do about it. We have cited above the argument that the nature of transfers of peasant holdings was not of the kind to create a sizeable group of landless peasants.

Secondly, British rule did create conditions which tended to weaken caste-based agrestic serfdom. Of the conditions the crucial ones were the widening of the economic exchanges of the village and more importantly, the increasing availability of employment opportunities outside the traditional village economy. The 'attached' labourers could thus break away from their master's domination. Not that they had not ever before resisted this domination. However, this merely meant switching of allegiance from one master to another, often with the rival master initiating the intrigue. Expansion of employment opportunities outside the village, often in places remote from it, made it feasible for the first time for the attached labourers to defy their master and leave the village altogether. Kessinger shows how the prospects of gainful occupations outside the village gradually undermined the traditional form of dependent relationship between the *sahotas* and the *sepidars*. The change in the attitude of the local administration towards the 'flight' of labourers contributed to the process. The administration had for long backed the *sahotas* in their attempts to prevent the *sepidars* from leaving the village against their will. Local courts now firmly intervened against the *Sahotas*. The steady emigration of labour from the village could scarcely be contained. The *sepidari* system thus gradually broke down. The break-down of the *hali* system in South Gujarat had more complex reasons. Here too, as in Vilyatpur, the inducements for the *halis* to leave the village came from outside, such as the environs of the rapidly growing city of Bombay, prospering cities like Surat and smaller towns along the railroad developing into industrial centres of consequence. Breman relates the break-down of the *hali* system also to the declining demand for hali labour, mainly as a consequence of the declining cultivation of sugarcane, a highly labour-intensive crop, after the First

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World War. The depression further reduced the demand for labour, because of the general contraction of economic activities it had caused. The weakening of agrestic serfdom in Kerala had much more to do with the conscious social and cultural movement designed to rouse the collective conscience of the untouchable *Pulayas* against grossly inequitous social and economic system. Caste and the economic system here reinforced each other. The *Pulaya* movement against the caste system was inseparable from their movement against the economic domination of the Brahmin landholders. It was a collective assertion of a will to fight ignominy.

XXIII

How consistent is the phenomenon called 'the rise of the rich peasantry' with the notion of 'the stability of the peasant mass' ? Much has been written on 'the rise'. However, the empirical basis of the formulation in this regard still seems infirm. We indicate only some major trends in the recent writings on the theme.

Two things are notable in this connection. First, the revisionist argument has not yet been precisely established. For instance, one variant of the argument denies that the group had ever been in a position to dominate the rural economy. Another variant asserts this predominant role. Secondly, the alternative point of view is not invariably sharply distinguishable from this.

Ravinder Kumar's study of the phenomenon in Maharashtra may be taken as an instance of this alternative version. The inegalitarian agrarian structure there before British rule, Kumar argues, did admit of the existence of 'dominant ryots', but the 'dominance was social rather than economic'.[107] The affluent peasantry as a distinct economic category appeared during British rule. He dated the process from the introduction of the ryotwari system. The system ended the old collective responsibility of the village in regard to revenue payment, and there by created conditions in which enterprising peasants, free from communal obligations, could more vigorously pursue

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individual gains. Under the old system the 'dominant' ryot, who was none other than the village headman responsible for paying the due revenue from the village, had to make good any deficiency from his own resources. No doubt the experiment of Pringle, a convinced utilitarian applying the 'net produce' criterion in fixing the revenue demand, told on the fortunes of the dominant ryot. But the failure of the experiment and rejection by Goldsmid and Wingate of Pringle's method somewhat lightened the burden of revenue for him. Far more reassuring to him was the unalterability of the revenue demand for a period of thirty years. While considering the new administrative system as the decisive factor in the rise of the rich peasant, Kumar had not altogether ignored the role of significant economic changes of the time,[108] such as 'absence of chronically unsettled conditions, the improvement in communications, the growth of markets, the general extension of commercial horizons.'

Noting as he did, the 'widening gulf' between this new class and the common ryots and also the 'impoverishment' of the mass of peasants, Kumar did not consider this class as parasitic. He pointed to two major indicators of the growth of this class : the increased size of capital formation increased number of wells, bullocks and bullock carts and the increased cultivation.[109]

Dietmar Rothermund also stressed the role of administrative policies, and tends to identify the rich peasantry with the 'strata of peasantry' 'protected' by a series of legislation. He, however, denies that there was a 'master plan' behind the law-making.[110]

Stokes, a proponent of the revisionist argument, admits the reality of the 'rise of the rich peasant', but denies, as noted above, that this resulted in a distinct process of social stratification.[111] When and how did the class begin to rise ? He argues, with special reference to 'northern India', that 'there was scarcely a time for a rich peasant to separate itself out before the great explosion of 1857, although the later 1840s and early 1850s saw a great expansion of cultivation and other signs of an agricultural boom'.[112] The 'rise' had much to do with the post-Mutiny legislative intervention to control rent rates and to ensure 'fixity of tenure'. 'Everywhere in India the more thrusting peasant benefited from stricter provision against

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differential land assessments on the more industrious agricultural castes'. He also noted how 'railway communications or irrigation had lent an impulse to cash-croping'. Their prosperity did not continue. Disturbing signs began to appear from about the later 1890s. And 'the first world war and its aftermath vastly accentuated these tendencies'.[113]

Charlesworth develops the revisionist argument. However, a significant shift in his argument over the years is noticeable. He concludes in an essay published in 1978 : 'Maharashtrian agrarian society, by the early twentieth century, had become stratified into clear divisions of some rich and many poor peasants, but the rich peasants were not all self-confident and proud traditional elites'.[114] In 1985 he seems to be more inclined to an argument that what resulted from the changes between 1850 and 1900 was not 'social stratification', but 'social stability'.[115]

His explanation of the origins of the rich peasantry remains unchanged. A distinctive feature of the composition of the class was their relative freedom from indebtedness. This, Charlesworth contends, was the crucial initial advantage, on which they could build later where more favourable conditions were appearing.

The ryotwari system had not much to do with the growth of this class. Unlike Harnetty he does not date the beginning of the process from the cotton boom of 1860-65. He would consider the famine-free period, 1879-1896, as decisive, not because of good harvests alone. Far more important was the rapid growth of the railway network, and the increasing commercialisation of agriculture due to this and other circumstances. The central argument of Charlesworth is that the benefits from all these were unevenly distributed. Even the progress of commercialisation was uneven. The 'differential commercialization'[117] was determined by ecological conditions, availability of irrigation and the 'geography of railway construction'. The advantage from price-increase, which was not unlike before, an abrupt short lived spurt, also lay with the cash crop producers. Both the 'output and price of cash crops were superior to their food-grain equivalent'. The new railway communication helped on

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rich peasants consolidate their position in other ways. Control over cart ownership was a notable one. Railways immensely stimulated the traditional grain trade and thereby reinforced the use of carts. In fact, an improved variety of carts, designed to facilitate quick grain-movement over longer distances, came into existence. The advantage clearly lay with the resourceful rich peasants who could invest in the technology of the new carts. Charlesworth thus explains the growth of the rich peasantry in terms of the 'differential diffusion' of the benefits from the economic changes during the last two decades of the 19th century.

In his earlier version (1978) Charlesworth was evidently thinking in terms of a control over the rural economy which all these differential advantages of a certain section of the peasantry eventually led to. In 1985 he tends to argue that this control over vital nodes of the rural economic activities did not necessarily generate conditions for social stratification.

Fukazawa too explains in similar terms the rise of a rich peasantry in western India : 'The growth of markets was uneven, and the ability of peasants to profit from new opportunities unequal. Markets in the cash crops were naturally the best organized...But in out-of-the-way places and for food crops, including rice, there were few organized markets, selling was piecemeal, and the peasant got lower prices than he might have obtained in an organized market'. But he was sceptical as to whether the rise of the rich peasantry was a typical phenomenon everywhere. 'It is certainly true that some peasants grew much richer and that others lost their lands. But what is not at all clear is how widespread and permanent the process of stratification was'.[117]

S.C.Misra questions a basic assumption of Charlesworth's, and contradicts the earlier conclusion of his (1978) that Maharashtrian peasant society had become a sharply stratified one. An implication of Charlesworth's earlier study was that 'the penetration of market forces in the rural economy benefited the rich peasant more than the *Vani*, with the consequence that the latter was effectively displaced by the former in a short span of seventeen years'.[118] Misra refutes this and concludes

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from this that 'preconditions for the displacement of merchant capital by a rising class of commercial rich peasantry were absent'. As a result, 'the Bombay rural economy was an example of commercialization without progressive stratification'.

Washbrook has most forcefully argued, with reference to the 'dry' farming zone of the Madras Presidency, that rich peasants completely dominated the activities of their poor brethren. 'The most distinctive feature of the agrarian society' in this farming zone 'was the economic dependence of the mass of rural population on a tiny elite of rich peasants'.[119] In fact, the dependant peasants could not on their own make any economic decisions. 'Through a variety of informal economic relationships the large resident landholder, with a considerable surplus above his own subsistence needs, had at his disposal means which he could use to direct the agricultural production of his poorer neighbours. His will could determine the economic decisions made by many separate family households'.[120]

The rich peasant's domination primarily derived from his command over the most scarce resource-land. The numerous community of the dwarf-holders (about 75 per cent of the peasants) had to depend for subsistence on the employment provided by the rich peasant. Inevitably he also controlled rural credit. His position here was all the more secure because of the near absence of non-local credit agencies. The rarity of alien creditors was explicable in terms of the economy of the dry zone. The economy, because of its insecurity and fragile base, could not sustain a trade large enough to induce resourceful outsiders to invest their capital in the local economy.

Washbrook has not clearly indicated if this 'tiny elite' of rich peasants had appeared during British rule. He seems to suggest that the wide disparities in the size of holdings of rich and poor peasants characterised the pre-British peasant society too. Rajat Ray and Ratnalekha Ray have also argued that such a dominant peasant elite existed in Bengal prior to British rule.[121]

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Since this essay is intended mainly as a review of some major trends in the recent historiography of agrarian changes in colonial India we did not attempt to judge the worth or validity of the arguments of the two alternative versions presented here of the imperial impact on the agrarian society. We have made only occasional observations on some aspects of the argument.

We feel it may be worthwhile repeating an observation in respect of the revisionist argument. The major emphasis here has been on the refutation of the notion that British rule had a 'disintegrative' influence on the agrarian society. A structural change had not presumably occurred. However, the changes that had significantly affected the various components of this structure need to be more carefully identified and assessed. Preoccupation with the notion of a structural change, mostly based on an understanding of specific historical societies different from Indian rural society, has sometimes tricked historians into making misleading premises.

One more observation we need to make. The study of the peasant society of colonial India solely in the context of the 'imperial impact' has its imperfections, and perhaps, its pitfalls. Changes which cannot be directly linked with the imperial impact tend to be ignored or insufficiently stressed. We get as a result an altogether wrong perspective.

David Ludden has persuasively made this point in a recent study on the South Indian peasant society : 'Putting our picture of peasant society into motion at the birth of British rule implies that initiatives by colonial elites caused all change thereafter...a narrative strategy that divides 'old' and 'new' regimes reduces peasants as social actors ; by doing so it also muddles any account of historical cause and effect. Data that might be understood to record local change caused by creative peasant decisions, conceived and executed in terms consistent with peasant culture, appear instead to reflect village responses to colonial initiative. Peasant action becomes by definition reactive, so that whatever peasants do, however actively, is necessarily an effect, not a cause, of change'.[122]

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NOTES AND REFERENCE

1. George Blyn, *Agricultural Trends in India*, 1891-1947 : *Output, Availability and Productivity* (Philadelphia, 1966).
2. The culturally determined relationships have been excluded from this discussion, unless they bear on the kind of agrarian social relations with which historians of agrarian changes have normally been concerned.
3. *The Economic History of India during Early British Rule*, 1757-1837 ; *The Economic History of India in the Victorian Age*, 1837-1901.
4. B. M. Bhatia, *Famines in India*, 1860-1965 : *A Study in Some Aspects of the Economic History of India*, 2nd edition, 1967, Chs. 1 & 2.
5. Tapan Raychaudhuri, 'Historical Roots of Mass Poverty in South Asia : A Hypothesis', *Economic and Political Weekly*, May 4, 1985.
6. A notion developed in the recent years in regard to the pre-colonial economic organisation in Africa and in some other parts of the world.
7. A. K. Sen, *Poverty and Famines* (Clarendon Press, University of Oxford).
8. The point has been repeatedly made in a recent collection of essays, K.N.Raj, et. al. (ed.), *Essays on the Commercialization of Indian Agriculture* (Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1985). Amit Bhaduri, on the assumption that commercialisation in India was generally a case of forced commercialisation, concludes : 'It is plausible to argue that in such a situation considerable economic stagnation would result because the sustenance of forced commercial relations necessarily requires a perpetuation of the poverty of the small direct producers —which forces them to continuing indebtedness' (p. 310). Krishna Bharadwaj discusses a significant methodological issue : 'The transition in agriculture cannot be discussed in isolation from developments in industry and in the overall macro-economy. The formation of capitalist markets in agriculture is connected indissolubly with the advance of industry, which acts as a pull force' (p. 345). The view that commercialisation of agriculture had been a negative trend in the Indian economy has been more sharply stated by Mridula Mukherjee : 'In India, in the Mughal period, there was an increase in the commercialization of agriculture without this leading to any fundamental change in the production relations ; and in the colonial period widespread commercialization of the economy, including its integration with the world market, resulted in the underdevelopment of the entire economy and the development of what have been called semi-feudal and semi-colonial production relations in agriculture' (p. 51).

   The case of the impact of commercial agriculture has sometimes been differently argued in some writings which share many of the nationalist orthodoxy. See, for instance, Sunil Sen, *Agrarian Relations in India*, 1793-1947 (PH, New Delhi, 1979). 'Extension of commercial agriculture in many regions of the country' he finds 'particularly noteworthy in agricultural development under British rule'. Particularly the cultivation of cotton and sugarcane, he thought, constituted a

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positive change in the economy. He noted the 'entrepreneurial' role of rich peasants taking to the cultivation of American cotton. They 'pioneered...most of the improvements in farming methods'. As a result, 'Commercial agriculture laid the basis of a new mode of production, and the age-old stagnation of Indian agriculture was being undermined. There was the beginning of the transformation of technique. Primitive agricultural implements were being replaced by improved implements' (p. 90). In the case of sugarcane cultivation too, he stressed the crucial role of rich peasants, a role often ignored in the studies emphasising the involuntary nature of common peasants' involvement in commercialisation : 'The behaviour pattern of this category should be remembered in order to comprehend the remarkable extension of sugarcane cultivation in the United Provinces, Madras and Bihar' (p. 97).

9. Asok Sen similarly explains the growth of jute cultivation in Bengal. See his essay 'Agrarian Structure and Tenancy Laws in Bengal, 1850-1900' in *Three Studies in the Agrarian Structure in Bengal*, 1850-1947 (Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1982), pp. 55-58. Bhatia concentrates on foodgrains. According to Sen, compulsory exports from India in order to pay for the increasing imports of British manufactured goods, mainly cotton textiles, also included raw materials, including jute.

10. A. Bhaduri, 'Class Relations and Commercialisation in Indian Agriculture : A Study in the Post-Independence Agrarian Reforms of Uttar Pradesh', in K. N. Raj et. al. (ed.), op. cit. p. 308. For earlier contributions by Bhaduri on the theme see 'Agricultural Backwardness under Semi-feudalism', in *Economic Journal*, March, 1973 ; 'Towards a Theory of Pre-capitalist Exchange, in A. Mitra (ed.), *Economic Theory and Planning*, 1974.

11. Bhaduri, 'Class Relations and Commercialization...' etc., p. 308.

12. Daniel and Alice Thorner, *Land and Labour in India* (London, 1962), chs. 5 & 7. D. R. Gadgil, *Industrial Evolution in India in the Recent Times* (First Edition, London, 1924).

13. Amin thus explains the context of peasants' choice of cash crops, sugarcane in this case : 'The exchange and production relations which appear at first sight to emanate from the demands of a particular crop assume their full significance only in the context of their role and place within the overall production process, and the economic condition of the peasantry in a given area'. His essay, 'Small Peasant Commodity Production and Rural Indebtedness : the Culture of Sugarcane in Eastern U. P. c. 1880-1920' in R. Guha (ed.), *Subaltern Studies*, I, p. 52 (Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1982). See also Ch. 3 of this book *Sugarcane and Sugar in Gorakhpur : An Enquiry into Peasant Production for Capitalist Enterprise in Colonial India* (O. U. P., Delhi, 1984).

14. I refer only to a few of the many titles on the theme : Thorner, op. cit. ; Gadgil, op. cit. ; S. Amin, op. cit. ; Asok Sen and Partha Chatterjee, in *Three Studies*, etc. ; Ravinder Kumar, *Western India in the Nineteenth*

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Century, Ch. 5 ; Dietmar Rothermund, *Government, Landlord and Peasant in India, Agrarian Relations under British Rule*, 1865-1935 (Weisbaden, 1978), ch. 5 ; E. Whitcombe, *Agrarian Conditions in Northern India*, Vol. 1, ch. 4 ; Rajat K. Ray, 'The Dynamics of Continuity in Rural Bengal under the British Imperium', IESHR, May 1973 ; Partha Chatterjee, *Bengal* 1920-1947 : *The Land Question* (Calcutta, 1984). section 12.

15. Partha Chatterjee, in *Three Studies*, etc., p. 115.

16. Rajat K. Ray, op. cit. (reference No. 14).

17. E. Whitcombe, op. cit. pp. 29-31 & 64-91.

18. Ibid. p. 274

19. For a counter-argument see Ian Stone, 'Canal Irrigation and Agricultural Change : The Experience of the Ganges Canal Tract, Muzaffarnagar District, 1840-1900', in K. N. Chaudhuri and C. Deway (ed.), *Economy and Society : Essays in Indian Economic and Social History* (O.U.P., Delhi, 1979). Stone takes a 'more favourable view of the canal's impact, and of peasant adaptability', p. 109.

20. G. Blyn, op. cit. Blyn's data relating to 'Greater Bengal' have been corrected and revised by M. M. Islam, *Bengal Agriculture*, 1920-1946 : *A Quantative Sutdy* (Cambridge University Press).

21. The trends have thus been summed up by the Thorners : 'since the 1890's total output of all crops has risen, but unimpressively ; total output of food crops has fallen off ; and per capita output of both food crops and all crops has declined impressively. The trend in agricultural output over the last sixty years may be characterized as stagnation'. Alice and Daniel Thorner, op. cit. p. 105.

22. Rothermund thus explains the notion : 'When the British gained territorial control over a part of India in the 18th century a parasitical symbiosis was established between an advanced trading nation and a vast agrarian state. In such a symbiosis the parasite derives sustenance from the metabolism of the host without damaging the basis of the host's existence, though it might have a stunting effect on its growth. The sustenance which the British received was in terms of gains from trade and from the extraction of land revenue', *The Indian Economy under British Rule* (New Delhi 1983), p. 1. Amit Bhaduri has thus cautioned social scientists about using such concepts of biological sciences as symbiosis : 'Analogies are never exact and should not be carried beyond a point. One misleading aspect of biological analogies in economics is that two biological species associate in a structural manner, without any conscious calculations of self-interest. Production relations are different from the biological 'niche' in so far as the nature of interdependence is not only structural but also conscious'. A. Bhaduri's essay in *Essays on the Commercialization*, etc., p. 310.

23. Professor N. K. Sinha's *The Economic History of Bengal : from Plassey to the Permanent Settlement*, Vol. 2 (Calcutta, 1962), perhaps the best-documented account of the economic decline in the Bengal villages

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during early British rule, stresses the cruciality of the role of an abruptly increased revenue demand in the process of this decline. The revenue demand alone had not caused it. Sinha shows how the relentless search for means of maximising the collection of revenue nearly deranged the 'social framework' of agriculture. The traditional zamindari families were to a considerable extent replaced by fortune-seeking outsiders, who, not being of sure of staying on for long, fleeced the peasantry, and in some cases ruined themselves in the gamble. The government gradually restored the zamindars after 1778, but made no change whatsoever in the revenue demand.

In Assam, as Amalendu Guha shows, the imposition of a large revenue demand severely strained the marginally monetised economy of the region, forcing very many peasants to desert their villages. The ryotwari tract of the Madras Presidency similarly suffered from the extortionate revenue demand of the Company. Nilmani Mukherjee (*The Ryotwari System in Madras*, 1792-1827, Calcutta 1962) concludes : 'The high assessments caused great sufferings to the ryots. There was a marked shrinkage in the volume of agricultural output. So far as formation of capital was concerned, conditions continued to be dull and featureless. There was no rise in the wages of labour... Another notable feature was the near-absence of the land market, excepting in a few places' (p. 313).

Sumit Guha's explanation (*The Agrarian Economy of the Bombay Deccan*, 1818-1941, O.U.P., Delhi, 1985) of the long spell of depression in the Bombay Deccan for over a quarter of a century from 1821 stresses the role of what C. A. Bayly calls 'disruption of elite consumption'. He notes how 'the displacement of the old ruling elite disrupted trade and crafts'. The displacement resulted in the 'income transfer' of a considerable magnitude : 'A significant proportion of the agrarian surplus was appropriated by the new elite, and thus diverted from the old channels of circulation' (p. 24). However, he admits that the effects of the low prices were 'aggravated by heavy taxation'. Sarada Raju also noted the reduced elite consumption as one of the factors in the still longer depression in the Madras Presidency, 1807/08 to 1850/51. She, however, explains, 'marked decline' in cultivation in several places in terms of these excessive revenue demand (chs. 3 & 15). Ravinder Kumar (op. cit.) describes how hard the new utilitarian experiments hit the peasants of Maharashtra. A. Siddiqui has also a similar story to tell (*Agrarian Change in a Northern Indian State : Uttar Pradesh*, 1819-1833, (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1973), chs. 3& 4.

24. Tapan Raychaudhuri, 'A Reinterpretation of the Nineteenth Century Economic History', in M. D. Morris et. al. (ed.), *Indian Economy in the 19th Century : A Symposium*, Delhi, 1969.

25. A notable view is that of Irfan Habib. He argues that the potentialities of capitalist development in Mughal India were limited, despite the existence of a highly developed commercialised sector in the economy. This was so largely because 'the entire commercial structure of the

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Mughal Indian economy was largely parasitical, depending upon a system of direct agrarian exploitation by a small ruling class'. As a result 'when a crisis developed within the agrarian system it was bound to extend to the entire structure of Indian economy. In so far as capital, confined practically to the sphere of commerce, had failed to develop any independent basis for itself, its fortunes would lie with the Mughal ruling class, and after its collapse, with such other classes as imitated or inherited the methods and institutions of the class. Denied, during the 18th century the target market that it had been provided with by the Mughal empire, merchant capital had no choice but to atrophy', ('Potentialities of Capitalistic Development in the Economy of Mughal India' in *Enquiry*, Winter, New Delhi, 1971), pp. 55-56.

26. Daniel and Alice Thorner, op. cit. p. 111.

27. Thomas R. Metcalf, *The Aftermath of Revolt*, 1857-1870 (Princeton University Press, 1964), p. 37.

28. Opposition of the existing zamindars and manipulation of auction sales by persons connected with the zamindari and official bureaucracies often frustrated wealthy outsiders, particularly during early British rule.

29. A significant trend in the recent historiography of agrarian changes in British India is the increasing interest in the tribal societies. Tribal societies had for long been primarily the anthropologists' concern. Excepting a few, such as S. C. Roy, they mainly concentrated on 'culture', usually subsuming under it the tribal social and economic organisations. Studies in the change in the tribal life over the long period of British rule are even rarer. The recent interest of historians in the tribal economy and society is also mostly in connection with their descriptions of tribal revolts. Several studies in the complex changes in the tribal economy and agrarian structure are in progress. K.S. Singh's excellent study *Tribal Society in India* (New Delhi, 1985), presents a succint account of the changes particularly in middle India.

30. For a recent illustration of this line of reasoning see, Rudrangshu Mukherjee, *Awadh in Revolt*, 1857-1858 : *A Study of Popular Resistance* (O.U.P., Delhi, 1984). 'It is important not to romanticize the talukdar-peasant relationship. The situation was not idyllic, nor the relationship egalitarian...Dominance of the talukdar was a singular fact of the rural world. Such dominance was, however, circumscribed by custom and mediated by various forms of paternalistic 'beneficence'. In the rural world of Awadh there was a continuous interplay between the talukdars' right and the peasants' obligation of allegiance, respect and duty ; this entailed a certain complimentarity in their relationship. This was fortified by...mutual cooperation. Such cooperation, together with the prescription of custom, the proximate nature of the surplus appropriation through crop-sharing and the norms of honour and loyalty which bound together the talukdar and the peasant, provided the relationship with a human and agreeable dimension' (pp. 24-25).

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31. Daniel and Alice Thorner, op. cit. : 'Although in pre-British times the local moneylender extended casual credit to meet occasional needs of the villagers, he occupied a subordinate place in the economy of the countryside'. In British India 'the demand for his services became an inseparable part of the peasant's life' (p. 55).

32. R. Kumar, op. cit. p. 25.

33. In Maharashtra, for instance, the government, while increasing the revenue assessment in the middle of the 1860s, went by the price-trends of the two preceding decades, and completely ignored the agricultural depression that followed the end of the cotton boom (1860-1864). R. Kumar, op. cit. pp. 161-70.

34. This happened particularly when peasants had to change over to cash crops rather abruptly. In Maharashtra, it was mostly borrowed capital that enabled peasants to respond to the cotton boom.

35. Dungen, 'Status and Occupation in Nineteenth Century Punjab', in D. A. Low (ed.), *Soundings in Modern South Asian History* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1968), pp. 80-81.

36. In Maharashtra, a change in this regard occurred as late as in 1879, when the Deccan Agriculturists Relief Act was passed. The government did not do it out of compassion. The 1875 Peasant Uprising evidently accounted for this retreat from the traditional policy. Dietmar Rothermund's *Government, Landlord and Peasant in India : Agrarian Relations under British Rule*, 1865-1935 (Weisbaden, 1978), provides the best account of the gradual change in the official attitude regard rural indebtendness. Chapter 5 : 'The Relief of Debtors'.

37. Ranade argued : 'A complete divorce from land of those who cultivate it is a national evil, and no less an evil is it to find one dead level of small farmers all over the land'. Ranade's Essays on Indian Economics (1878) quoted in Bipan Chandra, *The Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India* (New Delhi, 1966), p. 488.

38. B. Chandra, op. cit. concludes : 'The Indian national leaders generally adopted somewhat complex, many-sided, ambivalent and sometimes divergent attitudes towards the problem of rural indebtedness'. They 'believed that the moneylender was a secondary and not a primary cause of the peasant's poverty or his indebtedness'. Rather surprisingly, they did not quite favour the new laws prohibiting sales of peasant lands to non-agriculturist moneylenders, and had even opposed them in some cases, pp. 466-7, 477-8.

39. For the statement of the orthodox position, Surendra J. Patel, *Agricultural Labourers in Modern India and Pakistan* (Bombay, 1952) ; Ramkrishna Mukherjee, *The Dynamics of a Rural Society* (Berlin, 1957). What follows is based on Kamal Kumar Ghosh, *Agricultural Labourers in India* (Calcutta, 1969), ch. 1.

40. Jan Breman, *Patronage and Exploitation : Changing Agrarian Relations in South Gujarat* (New Delhi, 1979), ch. 4.

41. Himadri Banerjee, *Agrarian Society of the Punjab*, 1849-1901 (New Delhi, 1982), provides an excellent account of the sepidari system.

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ch. 7 : 'The Kamins'. Also see Tom G. Kessinger, *Vilyatpur*, 1848-1948, pp. 56-65.

The word 'sepidar' is derived from 'sep', payments to the group called *kamins*, defined as 'those village servants, the blacksmiths, carpenters, potters, etc., with whom there is a sort of prescriptive contract to do the work of their respective trades for agriculturist, who pays them a certain fixed portion of the produce of his field' (H. Banerjee, op. cit. p. 175). Belonging to various caste groups most kamins supplemented their income from the traditional caste occupations by working as agricultural labourers.

42. Neeladri Bhattacharya, 'Agricultural Labour and Production : Central and South-East Punjab, 1870-1940', in K. N. Raj et. al. (ed.), *Essays on the Commercialization*, etc.

43. Ibid. p. 118. For the gradual change over from kind payment to cash payment, also see Himadri Banerjee, op. cit. pp. 186-92.

44. Daniel and Alice Thorner, op. cit. p. 107.

45. Ibid. p. 111.

46. To the question of the rich peasantry we return later.

47. George Blyn, op. cit. and Dharam Narain, *Impact of Price Movements on Areas under Selected Crops in India*, 1900-1939 (Cambridge, 1965) entirely ignore the social framework of agriculture. While not altogether ignoring this framework in his study of the behaviour of the agrarian economy of the Bombay Deccan, Sumit Guha concludes : 'indebtedness or the tenurial systems did not present insuperable barriers to agricultural investment, without which the cultivated area could not have grown...So the transformation from land-reclaiming landlord to rack-renting landlord may be seen as a consequence of the declining land-man ratio...This is not to deny that tenurial arrangements or indebtedness might not cause investment to cease sooner than it might otherwise have done, but rather to point out that the overall trajectory of the regional rural economics may be viewed in terms of a transition from a land-abundant to a land-scarce situation, with the availability of land substitutes, such as irrigation, as a mitigating factor' *The Agrarian Economy of the Bombay Deccan*, 1818-1941, pp. 199-200.

48. A consistent revisionist historiography seems to have evolved after Independence.

49. For a statement of the official point of view, B. Chandra, op. cit. ch. 1 : 'The Poverty of India'. As an instance of serious academic research upholding this point of view we may cite Vera Anstey, *Economic Development of India* (London, 1949), 3rd edition.

50. Frank Perlin, 'Proto-Industrialization and Pre-colonial South Asia', *Past and Present*, number 98.

51. See footnote No. 25 above, for Habib's argument in this regard.

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52. As noted later, C. A. Bayly develops this insight in his book, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars : North India Society in the Age of British Expansion*' (Cambridge, 1983), ch. 1. The usual characterisation of the 18th century as a period of economic decline he calls 'the black legend of the 18th century'.

53. B. Chandra, op. cit. ch. 1.

54. Neil Charlesworth, *Peasants and Imperial Rule : Agriculture and Agrarian Society in the Bombay Presidency* 1850-1935 (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 158-9.

55. M. B. AcAlpin, *Subject to Famine : Food Crisis and Economic Changes in Western India*, 1860-1920 (Princeton University Press, 1983).

56. D. A. Washbrook, 'Law, State and Society in Colonial India' in C. Baker et. al. (ed.),. *Power, Profit and Politics : Essays on Imperialism, Nationalism and Change in Twentieth Century India* (Cambridge, 1981).

57. R. E. Frykenberg, *Guntur District*, 1788-1848 : *A History of Local Influence and Central Authority in South India* (Oxford, 1965).

58. Ibid. ch. XVI.

59. The district of Guntur was a 'zamindari' tract.

60. Nilmani Mukherjee and R. E. Frykenberg, 'The Ryotwari System and Social Organization in the Madras Presidency', in R. E. Frykenberg (ed.), *Land Control and Social Structure in Indian History* (The University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), ch. IX, p. 224. The authors observe : 'The local elite groups continued, although perhaps less directly and openly than before, to set the pace for thought and action in almost every aspect of rural life. Traditional institutions could not be dispensed with by the Company. Indeed, attempts were made to moderate the disruptive aspects of social changes which had been provoked by the initial introduction of the ryotwari system and, with the revised system, to preserve the existing social structure—at least in so far as it did not conflict with the basic assumptions and requirements of the Company' p. 225.

61. C. J. Baker, *An Indian Rural Economy*, 1880-1955 : *The Tamilnad Countryside* (O.U.P., Delhi, 1984), 'Introduction' & 'Conclusion'.

62. Bayly, op. cit. ch. 1 and 'Conclusions'.

63. Baker, op. cit. p. 520.

64. Bayly, op. cit. p. 229.

65. Baker, op. cit. p. 522.

66. Bayly, op. cit. p. 464.

67. Memorandum of Holt Mackenzie, Secretary to the Government of India, Revenue Department, 1 July, 1819. Quoted in Eric Stokes, *The Peasant and the Raj : Studies in the Agrarian Society and Peasant Rebellion in Colonial India* (Cambridge, 1978), p. 65.

68. Ibid. p. 35. Eric Stokes observes : 'It is evident that the century before Plassey was as much a period of rapid change in landholding

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as the period that followed. Not only is there strong evidence of men from commercial and literate castes during the Mughal period making their way into landholding via official office, mortgage and purchase...but it is clear that on their displacement by men of similar origin under British rule the process was in considerable measure repeated'. Also see Sirajul Islam, *The Permanent Settlement in Bengal* (Dacca, 1979).

69. Bernard S. Cohn, 'Structural Change in Indian Rural Society' in R. E. Frykenberg, *Land Control and Social Structure in Indian History* (The University of Wisconsin Press, 1969).

70. Ibid. pp. 113-4.

71. Rajat and Ratnalekha Ray, 'Zamindars and Jotedars : A Study of Rural Politics in Bengal', *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 9, Issue 1, 1975 ; Ratnalekha Ray, *Change in Bengal Agrarian Society* (New Delhi, 1979), pp. 6-8, 21-23, 52-72 & ch. 10.

72. P. J. Musgrave, 'Landlords and Lords of the Land : Estate Management and Social Control in Uttar Pradesh, 1860-1920', in *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 6, Issue No. 3, 1972. Thomas R. Metcalf, while agreeing with Musgrave that the landlord was 'hardly the lord of the land', argues : 'Yet one cannot jump straightaway to the conclusion that the landlord had no way of enforcing his will upon the subordinate estate staff'. *Land, Landlords, and the British Raj : Northern India in the Nineteenth Century* (University of California, 1979), p. 270.

73. P. J. Musgrave, 'Social Power and Social Change in the United Provinces, 1860-1920' in K. N. Chaudhuri and Clive Dewey (ed.), *Economy and Society : Essays in Indian Economic and Social History* (O.U.P., Delhi, 1979).

74. Neil Charlesworth, *Peasants and Imperial Rule : Agriculture and Agrarian Society in the Bombay Presidency*, 1850-1935 (Cambridge, 1985), p. 94.

75. Clive Dewey's 'Introduction' to Malcolm Darling, *The Punjab in Prosperity and Debt* (New Delhi, 1977, Reprint), pp. 21-22.

76. Neil Charlesworth, op. cit. p. 99. Charlesworth also resorts to a reductionist argument that absence of overt class conflict denotes a kind of agrarian society where conditions for such a conflict were necessarily non-existent. 'In India it is hard to correlate the complexion of peasant political behaviour with, say, the argument for the creation of a large new class of landless labourers. Rural campaigns became a vital adjunct to nationalist activity after Gandhi's rise, but they hardly suggested cross-currents and tensions based on violent economic differentiation' p. 6. This was more or less based on Shanin's line of reasoning in regard to the political behaviour of the Russian peasantry. T. Shanin, *The Awkward Class* (Oxford, 1972). Charlesworth specifically refers to Shanin's argument.

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77. P. J. Musgrave, 'Rural Credit and Rural Society in the United Provinces, 1860-1920,' in C. Dewey and A. Hopkins (ed.), *Imperial Impact* (University of London, 1978).

78. N. Charlesworth, op. cit. ch. 4.

79. Catanach holds a similar view. He admits that 'land transfer from agriculturist to non-agriculturist classes was occurring and probably occurring increasingly in the twenty or thirty years preceding the Deccan riots...But this is not to say that the Deccan Riots were necessarily a result mainly of inreasing land transfer'. I. J. Catanach, *Rural Credit in Western India : Rural Credit and the Cooperative Movement in the Bombay Presidency*, 1875-1930 (Barkeley, 1970), p. 20. In general he believes the increased moneylending activities in the region made possible 'the great extension of cultivation which took place in the Deccan in the forty or so years preceding the riots of 1875' p. 16.

80. N. Charlesworth, op. cit. p. 115.

81. M. Darling, op. cit. p. 33. Darling noted how a considerable part of the savings of the Rajputs was normally unproductively spent. 'Conspicuous consumption was an integral attribute of the Rajput life-style, essential if a man's neighbours were to accept his claim to Rajput status'. Caste ban on the labour of the 'perfect' Rajput women in the cultivation process necessitated dependence on hired labour, and to that extent made cultivation more expensive than where this dependence was avoidable.

82. Dungen's paper cited above, p. 76.

83. Darling noted the positive role of moneylenders in south-western Punjab. There 'the moneylender was the only agricultural enterpreneur, responsible for whatever economic progress had taken place'. Himadri Banerjee shows that this role in agricultural improvement was not confined to south-west Punjab. 'A Study on Some Aspects of the Effects of Transfers of Land on Agriculture in the Punjab during the Second Half of the 19th century' in *Calcutta Historical Review*, July-December, 1978, pp. 92-103.

84. Stokes, op. cit. p. 262. Willem van Schendel in his study of the phenomenon of social mobility in some villages in eastern Bengal, partly in the post-colonial period, looks at the question from an altogether different angle. Following T. Shanin's method of analysing social mobility, Schendel does not take an economic class as the unit, but individual households, and traces how different households moved from one economic position to another between two points of time. Schendel does admit that 'the overall process was one of downward aggregate shifting of the peasantry as a whole' (p. 287). However, he notes 'the objective vagueness of class in rural Bangladesh, the lack of clearcut collectivities standing in common relationships to the means of production. Not only is the relationship of many households to the means of production complicated...but there is a very gradual transition between haves and have-nots in the village. This gradualness makes it difficult to define clearly who belongs to one's class and who

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does not.' *Peasant Mobility : The Odds of Life in Rural Bangladesh* (New Delhi, 1982 edition), p. 293.

85. Stokes was here writing of the economic role of the *malguzars* of the Narmada Valley. 'There attachment to a traditional life-style was not to be shaken. Lordship and its attendant display was still dear to their heart'. Stokes, op. cit. p. 262. Even as late as the end of the 1920s a Narsinghpur *malguzar*, who had recently worked his way to the landlord status, 'was still fond of purchasing an elephant to mark his wealth and social ascendancy'.

86. Stokes, op. cit. p. 38.

87. C. Geertz, *Agricultural Involution* (Berkeley, 1963). The passage is quoted in Stokes, op. cit. p .38.

88. Neil Charlesworth, op. cit. p. 297. Willem van Schendel (op. cit.) develops this idea with particular reference to Bangladesh. Industrial growth remained negligible, and a home market ill-developed. Agriculture 'remains trapped in an involuntary spiral leading to marginalization and what Geertz called 'post traditional' adaptation. In the absence of an industrial sector in which the increasing population can be absorbed, agriculture falls victim to this very long-term and unrelenting process, with little hope of reanimation.', p. 287-8.

89. Charlesworth, Ibid. ch. 6.

90. Ibid. ch. 10.

91. Ibid. p. 294.

92. Ibid. pp. 294-5.

93. Ibid. p. 203.

94. 'What seems conspicuous in the Japanese rural economy is the buoyancy of the local handicraft sector and its linkages with rich peasant enterprise and resources. Whilst Indian handicrafts were...by no means the simple overwhelmed victims of Western Capitalism, the sector in India may crucially have been deprived of a major role as a source of growth and development. Capital, therefore, generated in India by agricultural improvement may have lost the institutional opportunity for diversification into industrial investment, which an expanding handicraft sector might present, remaining tied up within agriculture and rural moneylending.', p. 298.

95. This is the view of Louis Dumont and David Pocock. Srinivas questions the view. His conclusion is as follows : 'The village was doubt stratified along the lines of caste and land, but the productive process made it an interlocking community'. For the debate see Beattie and Lienhardt (ed.), *Studies in Social Anthropology* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1975). Srinivas sums up the debate in his essay included in this collection : 'The Indian Village : Myth and Reality', pp. 60-84.

96. Dharma Kumar, *Land and Caste in South India* (Cambridge, 1965).

97. K. Saradamoni, *Emergence of a Slave Caste : The Pulayas of Kerala* (P.P.H., New Delhi, 1980).

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98. Saradamoni quotes an observation of Francis Buchanan : 'Even among these wretched creatures the pride of caste has full influence'. F. Buchanan, *A Journey from Madras through the Countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar* (London, 1807).

99. Tom Kessinger, *Vilyatpur*, 1848-1968 : *Social and Economic Change in a North Indian Village* (University of California Press, 1974).

100. For the meaning of 'kamins', see footnote no. 41.

101. Francis Buchanan's observation on the system of agricultural labour in Gorakhpur, (which Buchanan visited in the first decade of the 19th century). Quoted in A. Siddiqi, *Agrarian Change in a Northern Indian State : Uttar Pradesh*, 1819-1833 (Oxford, 1973), p. 54.

102. For reference, see footnote no. 95.

103. Jan Breman, *Patronage and Exploitation—Changing Agrarian Relations in South Gujarat, India* (New Delhi, 1979 edition).

104. Ibid. p. 12.

105. Ibid. p. 54.

106. It is notable that Breman regards the system of agrestic serfdom as part of the Hindu Jajmani system, which anthropologists dealing with the institution before had never done. Unlike Wiser, who thought that exchange of goods as services between the parton and the client was based on equality and reciprocity, Breman would argue that the institution had an unmistakable component of exploitation. Breman thus accepts Beidelman's version of the Jajmani system. He concludes that the exploitative system had in it elements of partonage. Breman, op. cit. pp. 13-23.

107. R. Kumar, 'The Rise of the Rich Peasants in Western India', in D. A. Low (ed.), *Soundings in Modern South Asian History*, especially pp. 46-55. Also see his *Western India in the Nineteenth Century*, ch. IX.

108. R. Kumar, *Western India...*, p. 299.

109. Ibid. pp. 299-303.

110. D. Rothermund, *Government, Landlord and Peasant in India...*, 'Preface'.

111. Stokes has reiterated his position in his contribution to *Cambridge Economic History of India*, Vol. 2 1983. 'Greater economic and social differentiation would appear to have been rather the result of the relative stability of the larger cultivating holdings and the morcellation of the smaller holdings. The social gap widened more because of the slow impoverishment of the mass than the enrichment of the few.' p. 65.

112. Stokes, *The Peasant and the Raj...*, p. 272.

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113. Ibid. pp. 276-7, for the reasons.

114. Neil Charlesworth, 'Rich Peasants and Poor Peasants in Late Nineteenth Century Maharashtra', in Dewey and Hopkins (ed.), op. cit. p. 113.

115. Ch. 6 of his book *Peasants and Imperial Rule*...is entitled : 'The Bombay Peasantry, 1850-1900 : Social Stability or Social Stratification'.

116. Ibid. The argument is developed in the concluding chapter.

117. *Cambridge Economic History of India*, II, p. 200.

118. S. C. Misra, 'Commercialization, Peasant Differentiation and Merchant Capital in late Nineteenth Century Bombay and Punjab', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, October, 1982, p. 5.

119. D. Washbrook, *The Emergence of Provincial Politics : Madras Presidency*, 1870-1920 (Cambridge, 1976), p. 68.

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12

Emergence of New Social History

BASUDEB CHATTOPADHYAY

At the very outset, a few words about the relevance of social history may be in order. Social history, as we all know, is a burgeoning subdiscipline, and the steady expansion of its reach has successfully pushed orthodox political history to the periphery. The classic connotation of the term predictably comes from George Macaulay Trevelyan. The scope of social history was stated to be "the daily life of the inhabitants of the land in past ages." This includes the human as well as economic relation of different classes to one another, the character of family and household life, the condition of labour and of leisure, the attitude of man to nature, the culture of each age as it arose out of these general conditions of life, and took ever-changing forms in religion, literature and music, architecture, learning and thought.

This is an intangibly broad description, drawing within its ambit almost all history with politics not quite left out. Professor Tapan Raychaudhuri, in the first edition of his justly celebrated book *Bengal under Akbar and Jahangir—An Introductory Study in Social History* had enthusiastically accepted the Trevelyan position. Looking back, about twenty years later, he found Trevelyan position palpably incorrect. In a sense this is symptomatic of the stricter redefinition of the subject matter of social history in the intervening period. "If the

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scope of social history is as wide as the activity of man in society —and that without any clarity of focus—then there is hardly any point in using the qualifying adjective." But the alternative definition that Professor Raychaudhuri accepts— "investigation of historical communities by methods of social anthropology or sociology"—does not seem to be a satisfactory substitute either. It will arguably run the risk of rendering social history overtly technical, highly rigorous and unnecessarily jargon loaded. Further, it might well mark the farewell to trained commonsense which has informed much of social history in recent times. While welcoming interdisciplinary approach, it is all too well to remember that priorities of other disciplines are understandably different from those of history ; hence all attempts to look at Cleo with borrowed pair of spectacles will not necessarily provide greater insight. In fact, Trevelyan's approach may be juxtaposed by a refreshingly different one adopted, for example, by Lucien Fabvre and Le Roy Ladourie of the Annales School or Peter Burke in his *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*.

For the present, we shall be content to proceed on the basis of a working assumption. In the absence of any clearly articulated consensus about the scope of the subject, this is suggested to be a home-spun alternative. Social history, as we understand it, is connected with the interfaces of political and economic history as seen from the point of view of groups, communities, castes, ethnic identities, religions and even ruling class itself. It does not necessarily have any rigorously defined central problem. But it is concerned with the vectors of interactions between different variables mentioned above. Some fuzziness remains concerning what subject matter belongs to this field. If recent researches in India and abroad are taken as indicators, it would appear though that its domain is ever increasing.

In India, social history as an identifiable subdiscipline came rather late. Apart from a few notable exceptions like K. M. Ashraf, historians of an earlier generation preferred to relegate it to the periphery, assigning one or two chapters to discussions of society and culture of a given period. Even then, the emphasis was on social structure rather than the specifics of social life.

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Tapan Raychaudhuri's *Bengal under Akbar and Jahangir* broke new grounds. By imaginative combination of official and literary sources he reconstructed the social history of Bengal in a way which was refreshingly different from the one followed by the historians so far. Thereafter, a relatively younger band of historians have contributed a great deal to our understanding of the dynamics of the Mughal society. Many of our earlier notions, derived *inter alia* from W. H. Moreland, a pioneer in Mughal social history, now stand revised. On the modern period of Indian history many regional studies that have come up in recent years, throw a great deal of light on such aspects as caste and caste conflicts, social groups and social relations, the traditional professions and their adjustment or lack of it with the priorities of the new order, the differential impact of the British rule on different regions and on different groups within a region and a host of new subjects.

One significant area where the changing concern of the social historians has yielded intellectually satisfying results is what has come to be called 'the new social history' and 'history from below.' The principal concern of this variant of social history, known as 'history from below' is to make emotive contact with the submerged sections of population, to identify their faces out of shadowy silhouettes and thereby to resusciate them from collective historical oblivion. The emphasis is no longer on the unfolding of events. Although in India, historians have only recently turned to this genre of social history, elsewhere it has a fairly long pedigree. The historians who had gathered round the journal *Past and Present*—and that included a fine band of social historians like R. H. Hilton, E. P. Thompson, E. J. Hobsbawm and others—championed a view of history as the development of society. In France, a spirited reaction to the history as event (l'histoire evenementiells) ultimately produced a new version of social history, namely, 'total history'. The association of man like Lucien Fabvre, Fernand Braudel, C. E. Labrousse and Le Roy Ladourie gave the Annales School a new aura. "By 1970, social history seemed to turn round the Past and Present—Annales axis and to be sweeping everything before it."

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The reason we say all this is that in India, a growing band of historians have started asking questions remarkably similar to those that were raised by new social historians in Western Europe. A new approach to the source materials is being adopted and hitherto unexplored areas are being tapped with the result that the dimensions of social history are constantly being expanded. Even conventional areas like famine studies, labour history and women studies are lending themselves to new interpretations. We do not intend to make an exhaustive list of all the work of this genre that have been undertaken so far. We seek to concentrate instead on some selected areas where new approach to social history has yielded satisfying results.

History of crime and criminality deserves special mention in this connection.* Ever since E. J. Hobsbawm has produced his pioneering work on *Primitive Rebels*, historians in the West have devoted particular attention on crime and its social setting. There is now a burgeoning literature on crime in England, France, Italy and several other countries. In India, the historians of an earlier generation had implicitly accepted the colonial historical perspective and were more or less content to look upon crime as an aberration and treat it primarily as a "law and order" problem. Little did one realise that crime was also a social phenomenon and many of its manifestations were intimately linked up with the dislocations in Indian society and economy brought about by the colonial rule. It is now being admitted that the colonial rules frequently enclosed new pastures for their own exclusive use, the means employed being the promulgation of new offences. They could occasionally invoke the authority of law to legitimise a patently discriminatory economic behaviour. They often used the law to legitimise their palpably discriminatory policy of market control. Many of these who were displaced as a result were treated harshly by the rules. I have argued elsewhere that the origins of "smuggling" as a form of crime in early colonial Bengal, for example, could be causally related to the Company's policy of arrogating to itself some specific economic activities.[2] Those among the native merchants who refused to accept the Company's regulations or quit their vocations, were thereby thrown into

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the borderline and branded as "smugglers". David Arnold in some of his perceptive studies[3] on dacoity has shown how the incidence of dacoity was inextricably linked up with the government's economic policy in this regard. It is hard for an historian now to subscribe to what some of the British administrators-cum-historians had branded as the ethnic origins of crime and criminality in India.

Likewise the rebellion of forest dwellers and hillmen—commonly considered as law and order problems for the Raj—have come to be interpreted in a new light. It is very clear where the inspiration comes from. E. P. Thompson's provocative study of the forest conflicts in Hanoverian England,[4] Eric Hobsbawm's survey of the tragic impact of post-unification Italian forest laws on the marginal small proprietors and peasant millenarianism helped to produce in Tuscany[5], and Eugene Weber's portrayal of the erosion of peasant communal rights over woodland in 19th century France, helped social historians to formulate their own terms of reference. Thus Sumit Sarkar's study of forest satyagraha[6] shows how the poor peasants and tribals reasserted their traditional customary rights over forests "reserved" by the colonial state. David Arnold's analysis of the fituris (risings) of hillmen of the Eastern Ghats[7] highlights the hillmen's protests against an intrusive state and its collaborators. However, the protest of the hillmen contained a strong religious element (often characterised as milleniarism or messianism) consisting of a wide variety of fears and expectations couched in religious terms. This was also to be noticed in the forest satyagrahas. "The religious idiom gave the hillmen a framework within which to conceptualize their predicament and to seek solutions to it."[8] Secondly, Arnold finds in the fituris "crime as protest element", which approximates to what Hobsbawm has called social banditry, but which includes a greater range of supposedly criminal activities than banditry. An interesting point that emerges out of these studies is the fluidity in the relationship between crime and protest. Hobsbawm has argued that it is possible to distinguish between those bandits who are regarded by peasants and lords alike as mere criminals and those who, though criminals in the eyes of the lord and

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the state, are to the peasants heroes, champions, avengers and freedom fighters. David Arnold suggested that the distinction is attractive in the abstract, but elusive in reality. He prefers instead a term such as 'ambivalence' or 'ambiguity'. Many of these and other related problems have been explicated with wealth of detoil and remarkable clarity by Ranajit Guha in his *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India.*

While social violence and subaltern insurgency have already emerged as new areas of research in social history, the history of crime and policing has been almost entirely neglected by social historians. Some tentative attempts have recently been made to peep into these unexplored areas and we may have to wait for a few more years for the output to come out. Christopher Kenna and David Arnold's researches on banditry, dacoity and like other offences, Anand A. Yang's work on violence in Bihar countryside,[9] some recent work on rural Bengal in the 19th century[10] already provide us with some vignettes. One only hopes that others will eventually turn to this rewarding area of enquiry.

Social historians, now a days, are not only breaking new grounds ; they are also covering some of the older grounds with a refreshingly new look. Two such grounds may be mentioned by way of illustration. One is the history of famine, the disease and the mortality. Paul Greenough's study of the Famine of 1943-44[11] breaks out of the stereotyped confines of the famine studies and leads us to a perceptive discussion of the erosion and collapse of traditional social bonds. Greenough raises the question why the Famine of 1943-44 did not produce any widespread violence and public disturbances. His explanation is that violence turned inwards, took a private form and its ambit was the family. Grown up men took hold of family foodstocks at the expense of the older members of the household, the young wives and children. Thus family (*paribar*) as a social unit made up of persons related by ties of kinship began to disintegrate as a result. He emphasises on two specific areas where dislocation was most visible : the banishment or abandonment of wives by husbands, and the sale of children by parents. Many of those women who were so deserted soon

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turned to or were cajoled into prostitution. Also widespread was the practice of selling children. The dominant motive seemed to have been for parents to obtain cash with which to purchase food. A secondary motive for parents was to relieve themselves of the intolerable clamouring of their children for food ; that is, a kind of exasperation or mental exhaustion led parents to sell or otherwise do away with their children. In short, the abandonment or exclusion of familial dependants constituted the greatest social cost of famine, excepting famine deaths. It exposed women and children to exploitation at best and starvation at worst. Extensive interviews with famine victims provided some idea of the social impact of the cataclysm. All these indicate a marked shift from orthodox famine history.

A comprehensive history of disease is still to be written by a social historian. But the little that is in progress hold promise for the future. David Arnold's interesting paper on the episode of the Indian plague (1896-1900)[12] shows how plague highlighted the importance of the body—that is to say, the body of the colonised—as a site of conflict between colonial state power and indigenous politics. When the colonial state sought to apply Western medicines to plague victims and plague suspects, it encountered tough opposition. The human body —and the clothes, bedding and habitations associated with it—being considered as the principal vectors of contagion, anti-plague measures concentrated upon the interception, examination and confinement of the body. "In a fashion unparalled except perhaps in the case of soldiers' prostitutes and there on a far more restricted scale, this entailed direct medical intervention that swept aside the rival or preferential claims over the body of relatives, hakims and vaids, caste and religious authorities." This treatment of the body as an individual entity liable to be isolated from its social and cultural context, and segregation and hospitalisation that followed from the earlier premise, aroused opposition of Indians of virtually every class. When racism was added to it, the result was a near disaster.

Some of the recent writings on early labour consciousness exhibit a healthy tendency to draw on social history. Instead of presenting a rather straightforward narrative on the early

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labour organisations, some of the new labour historians have attempted to probe the innermost recesses of the minds of the mill-hands. Dipesh Chakrabarti's writings on Calcutta jute-mill riots[13] clearly indicate this new shift of focus. A similar exploration of the mind and the physical habitat of the Bombay mill-hands is to be found in the work of Raj Chandravarkar.[14] Unlike many other labour historians, neither Chakrabarti nor Chandravarkar has concentrated on the organised trade unions as the best approach to the world of the labourers. In fact, it is quite obvious from their accounts that neither in Calcutta nor in Bombay was the trade union central to the world of the labourers. On the other hand, what was important in the lives of the labourers were (a) religious, communal and local cultural ties and (b) the role of informal leaderships of the *sardars* in Calcutta and the *dadas* in Bombay. It were these *sardars* and *dadas* and not the trade union leadership who really guided the labourers. They also show that while economic issues were indeed important, cultural, religious and communal concerns were no less so. Chakrabarti clearly shows the importance of the Islamic identity among the Muslim mill-hands, evidenced for instance, in the contact being established by 1896 between some Muslim jute-mill workers of Rishra through the local *imam* with a prominent Muslim merchant of Calcutta with pan-Islamic affiliation. It emerges by contrast from Chandra-varkar's account that the world of the Maharashtrian mill-hands in Bombay was more homogeneous. Such social studies go a long way in explaining the differential growth of trade union movement in Calcutta and Bombay.

It may be relevant to mention in this context that some of the recent writings on the growth of separatism in India are informed with the rich complexities of social history. David Lelyveld's *Aligarh's First Generation* : *Muslim Solidarity in British India* and Rafiuddin Ahmed's *Bengal Muslims* : *A Search for Identity* deserve to be particularly noted. While Lelyveld, as the title of his book suggests, has explored the epos of the anglicised Muslims of Aligarh, Ahmed has focussed on the society of the Bengali Muslims. His explanation goes a long way in revising the traditional explanation namely, the theory

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of impoverishment of the Bengali Muslims as the backdrop of communal politics. He shows, *inter alia*, that even in the first half of the 19th century Bengali rural society was a relatively composite one. Religious and economic differences were indeed there ; but the former did not disturb the tenor of life and the economic hiatus between the Hindu rent-receivers and the Muslim raiyats was less real than the Urdu-speaking sharif Muslims of Calcutta and Dacca and the Bengali-speaking poor Muslims of the countryside. The needs of electoral politics, from the 1870s, persuaded the sharif to try to mobilise the poor Muslims. Drawing on the hitherto unexplored but extremely rich *punthi* literature, Ahmed has shown how the itinerant mullahs and maulavis, through *bahas* meetings and other means, helped to spread communal ideas among the Muslim poor. In the atmosphere so created, economic exploitation was likely to partake communal colour. More recently Partha Chatterjee has argued[15] that in the districts of northern and eastern Bengal, the proportion of Muslims among the rent-receivers was by no means insignificant. "As far as agrarian relations in eastern Bengal were concerned,...the crucial element which deflected peasant agitations into anti-Hindu movements was not that most zamindars were Hindu...but the fact that Muslim rent receivers, where they did exist, were considered part of the peasant community whereas Hindu zamindars and taluqdars were not." This is an agrarian extension of the theory of community consciousness that had been applied to labour history by Chakrabarti.

Women studies in India is still in its infancy. The one important work that has already come out in this field is by Meredith Borthwick on the *bhadramahilas* of 19th-century Bengal. Western ideas and Western education had created in course of the 19th century a new ideal of womanhood. Out of these ideas the Brahmos, in particular, helped to form the new Bengali *bhadramahila*. It emerges from her account that this was not the outcome of an autonomous women's movement. It was the educated men's need for companions rather than merely housewives that seemed to have been the driving force in this regard. She shows how the older women of the

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Hindu household differed from this new type, how the organisation of the household changed as a result of the emergence of this new type.

Space does not permit exhaustive references to all the different kinds of work pertaining to new social history. All that we have modestly attempted so far is to indicate some major trends. It is already clear that the last few years have witnessed a significant reorientation of research interests in social history. Some of the spurious certainties of the earlier years are fast becoming untenable. It is true that some significant areas of social history still remain virtually untouched. The grey world of the prostitutes still awaits its historian. Marriage, conjugal and extramarital relationships have not yet figured in any research agenda. Although a new leisured class was created in course of the 19th century (e.g., the Bengali zamindars in the years following, the Permanent Settlement or the Oudh Taluqdars after 1858), we do not yet have any well documented historical work depicting how the leisure was spent or the social cost it entailed. Despite all this, it seems legitimate to hope that in the coming years social history will turn out to be a fascinating area of enquiry.

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13

Nationalism on the Indian Subcontinent : A Review

RAJAT KANTA ROY

During the violent encounter, in which Western imperialism established its ascendancy over the politically weaker Eastern societies, Asia knew no nation state. The ancient civilisations of China, India and Islam had nothing, in terms of political organisation, which could match the power and aggrandisement of the European system of sovereign national states. With the exception of Japan, where the first shock of the encounter suddenly created a nation state capable of meeting the challenge, the Asian societies were overwhelmed one by one.

The process of nation formation began in these colonised societies as a response to European hegemony and economic exploitation ; yet nothing revealed the pervasive character of the hegemony more than the artificial adoption of the forms of European political organisation by the emerging nations of Asia and Africa. The sovereign nation state did not develop among these people in course of an organic social process as it had in Europe. It was something of an alien imposition, and has remained so to this day—a source of oppression to small, localised, selfsufficient communities subjected to an increasingly thorough and harsh agglomeration, at first by contending imperialisms, then by successor nationalisms.

South Asia provides the classic instance to the point. Fragmented now into four sovereign national states—India, Pakistan,

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Sri Lanka and Bangladesh—the territories formerly ruled by the British are bedevilled by the frustrations of still smaller ethnic or cultural identities, ranging from the tribal parlticularisms of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (the Chakmas), the northeastern hill states (the Nagas, Mizos, et al.) and the North-Western Frontier (the Pathan and Baluch tribes) to the unfulfilled Khalistani, Kashmiri and Sindhi visions in the North-West, the tangled aspirations of the Assamese and the Bengali Muslims in the North-East, and the crushed minority demands of the Biharis in Bangladesh and the Tamils in Sri Lanka. Such instances can be multiplied. The tribes of Black Africa, the ethnic groups of South-East Asia, and the castes, communities and linguistic groups of the Indian subcontinent were forced into the political system of sovereign national states at a stage when the social formation did not fit into it organically. Nationalism, the anti-thesis of imperialism, retained within itself the older imperial contradiction between state and society, albeit in a transmuted form.

Indian seers with a strong sense of the past were aware of this, and some of them were of the view that the sovereign nation state was not the best form of emancipation for the people of the subcontinent. For both Rabindranath Tagore and Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, the essence of the older Indian civilisation lay in the self regulating character of society, which was possible because of the peripheral role of the state so far as the inner life of the community was concerned. Hindu caste society retained its autonomous character under Muslim rule. So did the various other communities inhabiting the subcontinent—the Sikhs, the Parsees, the Jains, the Muslim artisan castes, the hill and forest tribes. It remained for the colonial British state to break into concerns regulated within the village and the community. As Tagore and Gandhi saw, the self-regulating units of society were pressed into dependence on the alien government.

Despite the despotic, extractive and alien character of the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Empire, the various communities and the villages had lived without fear of interference as long as the heavy dues of the rulers were paid. For centuries,

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they had lived in their demarcated spheres, secure in the autonomy of their local and communal concerns. But once the British made state power central to the life of the people, the balance between the various groups which constituted Indian society was profoundly disturbed.[1] The accommodative character of Indian society, the autonomy of the groups it comprised, the harmony between them, in short the unity in diversity of Indian civilisation, were threatened by the new set of political conditions. The menace became even greater as the process of transfer of power from the British to the successor governments brought home the danger that one or other of the groups constituting the composite society would capture state power and use it to subordinate the others.

No such danger existed in the older scheme of things : state power was then too peripheral for the autonomous communities and villages to entertain the anxieties bred later by the establishment of the colonial state and the subsequent process of decolonisation that led to the emergence of sovereign national states. Over the centuries, Indian civilisation had absorbed and accommodated many diverse races, tribes, languages, creeds and communities, and its caste society had assigned to each new group its own place in the hierarchy, free to regulate its own concerns.[2] The state was then an over-arching umbrella over society, not an intrusive instrument of regulation in the daily life of the community. But the sovereign national state, in a sense the other ego of the British colonial state, could not be expected to brook such autonomous regulation of society. The expansion of the power of the state was thus an enormously oppressive process, especially for minorities and small communities for whom it was full of anxiety.

Tagore's concept of 'Atmashakti', and Gandhi's notion of 'Swaraj', were both anti-state in tendency, one stressing the autonomy of the community, and the other the self-sufficiency of the village. None of these prophets of Indian regeneration gave primacy of place to the political movement. Tagore's doctrine of selfhelp and reconstruction of society, eschewing dependence on the British government, had no place in it for political agitation, while for Gandhi constructive work was

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no less important than civil disobedience. The aim of both was to make society self-sufficient again, and thus to render the state irrelevant to the life of the community.[3] It must be remembered that in their childhood and youth, there was no prospect of the capture of state power by Indians. Hence the vision of bypassing the state and of restoring to society the autonomy it had lost but recently came naturally. But that was not the course history took.

For the next generation, the prospect of power was a reality. Nehru and Patel aimed at caputer the apparatus of the colonial state, Jinnah to divide it and capturing a portion. The sovereign national state became the goal in either case, not the construction of a stateless society. The two national states that emerged in South Asia after the Second World War, India and Pakistan, possessed enormously powerful centres bent on integration of the various communities by annihilating their autonomies. Politics was the real victor in this process, and the real victim was the vision of the self-regulating society. Nationalism, that great instrument of politics, thus changed the lives of millions, for better or for worse.

But how did this come about ? The heat of politics generated many instant historical theories. There was no dearth of historians who professed to discover in Indian civilisation an underlying unity that imparted to the inhabitants of the land, the character of a single people many centuries ago. Still others claimed that there had always been two nations on the subcontinent since the coming of Islam. No doubt there were certain deeper cultural unities that the diverse population of India had shared for thousands of years, and important religious concerns that the various Muslim groups of the subcontinent had in common since the very beginning of Islam in India.[4] But political nations, in the specific modern sense of the term, were posterior to the institutional changes introduced by the British.

As Rabindranath Tagore pointed out in 1891, 'The very word nation is missing in our language, and is not to be found in our country. We have learnt recently to give an excessive importance to national greatness under the influence of Western education. Nation formation has no primacy either in our history, or in

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our divine law, or in our social and household construction'.[5] In entitling his autobiography *A Nation in Making*, Surendranath Banerjea, too, expressed a similar idea : there was no clearly formed nation on the Indian subcontinent before his time.[6] He might have added that it was not certain as to what shape the emerging nation (or nations) would take after him.

Indeed, as late as the departure of Wavell and the arrival of Mountbatten, there was no telling which way the political destinies of the subcontinent would turn. The British had at least three contingency plans, and were willing to give each of them a try : to transfer power to the duly constituted government of a united India, to devolve authority to the two successor governments in Hindustan and Pakistan, or to proceed under 'Plan Balkan' to hand over power to a separate government in each province. While Gandhi was pleading for a united India and Jinnah was laying a stake to Pakistan, there were quite a few takers for bits of Plan Balkan, too : Suhrawardy and Sarat Bose staked out a claim for united independent Bengal and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan pleaded that if the country was to be divided after all, then the North-West Frontier Province be allowed to go to its own free and separate way as Pathanistan.[7] Given the trend towards the creation of sovereign national states all over Asia and Africa after the Second World War, it was perhaps inevitable that the Indian subcontinent would be pressed into the form of one or more of these. But for one brief and tentalising moment in 1946, the Cabinet Mission Plan held out the prospective of an alternative in the shape of a multi-national confederation. The essence of the plan was to 'group' the Hindu and Muslim provinces into two or perhaps three confederate nations—Hindustan, Pakistan (consisting of the Muslim majority provinces of the north-west) and perhaps United Bengal—each with an autonomous centre of its own with a say at a confederate centre whose powers would be confined to the barest minimum functions consisting of defence and foreign affairs.

The arrangement would rather be like the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary, where, too, the Crown-Prince Franz Ferdinand had proposed before his assassination in July 1914 the

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creation of a triadic empire by giving the Slavs an autonomous kingdom within the Habsburg Empire as the Germans and the Magyars had already obtained. The multinational Habsburg Empire had been an eminently suitable form of political organisation for southeastern Europe on account of the mixture of peoples in the Balkans, the wisdom of which was revealed only in hindsight after its break-up. Four decades after the partition of the Indian subcontinent, and especially after the bloody birth of Bangladesh and the bloody stirrings of Khalistan and Pakhtunistan, no inhabitant of the troubled subcontinent can look back to the multinational confederation of the Cabinet Mission Plan without a sense of nostalgia.

Jinnah, it now appears from Ayesha Jalal's study of the emergence of Pakistan,[8] would have been willing to accept the confederation proposed by the Cabinet Mission, especially as partition would leave the Muslims in Hindustan in the lurch. But Patel and Nehru had objections to a weak centre[9]—they preferred a sovereign national state with sufficient powers to integrate the country and to restructure society. In sharp contrast, the Cabinet Mission Plan was attractive to the Muslim majority provinces. It offered them a multinational state with an autonomous centre for each 'group' and each province, and with no overarching confederate centre strong enough to threaten the autonomy of the various communities and regions.

In the clash of contending claims this interesting possibility did not materialise. But the fact remains that things could have gone in any one of several directions as late as 1947. There was nothing preordained about the emergence of two sovereign national states—India and Pakistan—on the subcontinent. Nor was the sovereign national state even the natural form of political organisation there, given the mixture of its peoples, the self regulating character of its society and the long-cherished autonomy of its innumerable localities and various communities. We are back at the persistent question how did it happen ?

In examining this broad question, historians have found it useful to break it down into a series of more specific questions. What are the characteristics that distinguished the modern

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political movements led by the Congress and the Muslim League from the earlier clashes accompanying the establishment and consolidation of British rule ? What is the role of these earlier struggles in the development of modern nationalism on the subcontinent ? How did the inchoate aspirations of the lower orders of society and of the marginal groups differ from the aims and goals of the formally organised groups playing an articulate role in modern politics ? How did these articulate political groups work their way into the structure of power, and what was the development of class forces that enabled them to play this expanding role ? How were political unities forged in so diverse a social universe, and what were the fissures in political movements ? What were the levels of cultural consciousness—and the mentalities—that shaped these political processes ?

To begin with, there is a growing realisation among historians that nationalism was profoundly influenced by the plural society of the Indian subcontinent. Each region had its own language, history and social structure, and within each region there was a multiplicity of castes, communities and creeds. The introduction of English education and the job opportunities that went with it quickened the rivalries between the regions, communities and castes. At the same time, as Anil Seal points out, there arose new English-educated elites in the Presidency towns of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras who could speak a common language (i.e., English) and who shared a common political vocabulary (i.e., the modern language of nationalism).[10] Thus, while an English-educated, Congress-led nationalism emerged in the later 19th century, it was threatened by subnationalism from below of all sorts—non-Brahmans who coalesced in the Justice Party in Madras, Punjabi Muslims who hated the Hindu moneylending castes that dominated the Punjab Congress, Bihari politicians in the old Bengal Presidency who resented the immigrant Bengalis, and so on.

As several regional political studies from the United States have stressed, Congress-led patriotism was only one among many political stirrings in British India.[11] The Indian National Congress claimed to speak for the entire nation, but as John

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McLane has shown, it was initially dominated by English-speaking professional high caste groups based on Bombay, Poona, Madras and Calcutta.[12] As time went on, other political or quasi-political organisations came to represent smaller sections of the public. To name only a few, the various Gaurakshini and Sanatan Dharma Sabhas in the upper Gangetic valley, the Singh Sabhas in the land of the Punjab, the Parsee Panchayat in Bombay, the various Muslim anjumans in Bengal, the Justice Party and its non-Brahman predecessors in the south, at a more general plane the All-India Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha, all reflected the divergent political aspirations on the subcontinent.

The new political unities and rivalries of the later 19th century resulted from the process of administrative integration and political representation that the British initiated after the Mutiny. The increasing British administrative presence in the localities, the expansion of the functions of government, the integration of the various levels of government, the new system of local self government, the expansion of the legislative councils, and various other constitutional and administrative reforms created a uniform and flat political surface, assisting the emergence of a politically active all-India public for the first time. Because of the larger presence of government in the lives of the people in every locality, there was now no alternative but to play a part in the wider political arena thus created. Local and communal concerns could no longer be self-regulated and, as the Cambridge School points out, it was increasingly necessary to assert demands in a modern political fashion in the wider public arena. The emergence of this new arena was a factor that encouraged the growth of a unified nation ; but equally it provided a platform on which various castes, communities and regions could assert more particularist and conflicting demands.[13]

Such was the stuff of modern politics. It would not have been possible before British administrative and constitutional measures defined an arena of public political activity. Before the British created the new framework of governance, and thus gave rise to a 'public' as distinct from 'government', society

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was compartmentalised in localities, and was hierarchically organised in each locality. The basis of the earlier resistance movements to the British ascendancy was thus radically different. They were local armed uprisings in which princes and peasants, linked together by vertical ties of mutual dependence characteristic of a hierarchical society, alike participated. Of these attempts at violent overthrow of alien rule, the Mutiny was the greatest though by no means the last.[14] After its equally violent suppression by the British, however, it was clear that the older means of resistance would no longer work. It was then that the new poltics. which manipulated the rules of the bureaucratic-constitutional structure of the British Raj to gain positions of advantage within the system, came to the fore. As the chance of successful violence receded, the emphasis shifted to accommodation, negotiation and the characteristic Congress tactic of 'Pressure-Compromise-Pressure'[15] (a tactic which characterised other political parties as well, including the Muslim League).

These new tactics were efficacious because the increasing bureaucratisation of British rule after the Mutiny, complemented by the steady building up of a constitutional-representative structure which came slightly later, made the framework of British governance in India essentially a system that operated by rules. As this realisation dawned, there sprang up a new breed of leaders and politicians who understood the mechanics of these rules, and could manipulate them successfully, forcing the British to give way, inch by inch, inside the system they had themselves built.[16]

It was then that 'associations' gained ground. Even before the Mutiny, there had been public political associations in the three Presidency towns, notably the British Association of Calcutta, the Bombay Association, and the Madras Native Association. After the Mutiny came the Indian Association of Calcutta, the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha, the Bombay Presidency Association and the Madras Mahajana Sabha, and it was these assertive 'middle class' associations which federated in 1885 to form the Indian National Congress.[17] The associations represented a new principle in Indian society : the voluntary

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association of individuals for a specific public objective. The older resistance movements had been organised on the basis of castes, communities and hierarchic ties between princes, landlords and people. Unlike these hereditary ascriptive ties, the public political association represented a voluntary tie between individual members of the public to gain political rights, either for the entire nation or for more specific groups. A gradual displacement of the British within their own system, rather than the violent overthrow of that system, was the ruling spirit of modern politics in India. By a natural extension of the combined principles of pressure and compromise, the new political strategy incorporated under Gandhi's inspiration, the tactics of non-cooperation and civil disobedience.[18]

But what was the significance of the older resistance movements in the long term perspective of modern Indian political history ? Did they simply die out and give way to the new strategy without leaving a trace on the emerging nation ? At the factual level, it is well-known that tribal insurrections, religious crusades, sectarian uprisings and low caste and peasant rebellions continued to create serious local crisis for the British at various places long after the Mutiny and well into the 20th century.[19] At a theoretical level, it has been suggested by Eric Stokes that these traditional resistance movements continued to reflect inchoate popular aspirations that could find no vent in the modern constitutional politics of the English-educated groups organised in public associations. But in the long run, these two distinct levels in politics—elite and popular —did link up. As Stokes formulates it, a groundswell of millenial popular aspirations linked up, after the First World War, with the downward spiral of elite competition to give the Congress its mass character under Gandhian leadership.[20]

Even after this link-up, however, the politics of the lower orders of the population remained in many essential respects different from the politics of the modern and articulate political parties. Militant popular and peasant movements, as Ranajit Guha has shown, aimed typically at 'inverting', or turning upside down, the symbols of the existing order and authority ; but they could not move beyond 'inversion' into a brave new world.

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Confined within the narrow horizons of the older mentality, the peasant insurrections never coalesced into a revolution inspired by a new ideology and a vision of a new world order. All too often, peasants selected limited targets—such as moneylenders' books or landlords' cutcheries—to vent their wrath.[21] They could not intellectually and mentally conceive of sweeping away the old order and substituting for it a new and revolutionary social order. Primordial ties of caste and community remained critical organisational factors in the peasant movements and spatially they tended to be confined to particular localities. 'Subaltern' militancy, because of its local roots, never grew into a "revolutionary all-India political force."

Consequently, the role of modern organisations such as the Gandhian Congress or the Muslim League of Jinnah was crucial in organising popular movements on the scale of the subcontinent as a whole. Only such continental political organisations were capable of linking together dispersed popular movements in cut-off localities into a coherent mass movement, such as the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930-1934 or the Pakistan Movement of 1940-1947. Since the consciousness of the masses was still rooted in older cultural, religious and social constructs, Congress, League and other bodies with essentially modern political objectives had to evoke visions of Ram Raj and Khilafat, to manipulate caste and community ties, and to utilise the services of itinerant sadhus like Baba Ramchandra and the ulama, in order to mobilise popular support for their objectives. But a hiatus remained between these modern political organisations and the conceptions and aspirations of the masses, a hiatus which only men of charismatic appeal like Gandhi could bridge, and that, too, fitfully. Gandhi's strategy of building a popular movement by mobilising the existing units of traditional society had, as Ravinder Kumar has pointed out, fissiparous implications. Undoubtedly his popular movements brought the masses into the national mainstream, but at the same time it accentuated the older solidarities of caste and community.[22]

One crucial decision with long term implications was Gandhi's alliance with the Khilafat leaders in 1920. As a result of this

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alliance, the ulama brought the Muslim masses into the Non-cooperation-Khilafat Movement of 1920-22, and Congress obtained unprecedented Muslim support in these years. But the Khilafat movement also strengthened the Islamic consciousness of the Muslim masses, mobilised the dispersed Muslim communities in various parts of India under the common religious symbols of the Kaaba and the Khilafat, and forged new bonds of political solidarity among them.[23] Later on, substantial sections of the ulama supported the Muslim League's Pakistan Resolution of 1940 and mobilised the Muslim masses behind the Pakistan movement, bringing Jinnah essential popular support without which he could never have negotiated effectively with the Raj and the Congress.

The local and communal bases of popular aspirations thus dictated in a very real sense the particular process of nation formation on the Indian subcontinent. Socially speaking, a locality, a caste or a community is like a pyramid, with a few people at the top, many more in the middle, and the great mass at the bottom, The Congress under Gandhi and the Muslim League under Jinnah mobilised these strongly hierarchical units of traditional society, which could no longer afford to stay aloof from politics in view of the expanded power of the state and the increasing importance of constitutional representation. Necessarily, both the Congress and the League were continental alliances between many different groups, and their political strategies were based on accommodation of various classes, communities and regions. The emphasis was on consensus, and polarisation in so far as it took place was between the various hierarchical pyramids, and not between the various class strata that constituted each pyramid. There was no revolution here on Mao's model.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The profound impact of the centralising British state power on the political conditions in South Asia forms the most important theme in the analysis of the 'Cambridge School', of which more later.

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14

Emergence of Intellectual History of Modern India

SUKUMAR BHATTACHARYYA

The paper seeks to trace in broad outline the emergence, since 1947, of intellectual history of modern India as an integral part of the general theme of the present volume. Quite naturally such a project restricts the scope of treatment of the subtheme. It is an inherent limitation to which the present paper can hardly afford to be an exception. It can hardly aspire to a comprehensive or an adequate discussion of the subjectmatter. Even within this naturally restricted purview of discussion it may not be out of place to treat the subject in the perspective of developments in the realm of intellectual history in the modern West. Needless to add, the evolution of Indian historiography in the 20th century appears to have been marked by "almost all those characteristic features which formed the basis of European historiography in its most developed stage". In commenting upon the development of historiography in modern India, R. C. Majumdar observes : "As a matter of fact, it would be hardly an exaggeration to say that the Indian historiography imbibed the highest ideals and the best traditions of European historiography, though the actual performance might not have reached the highest, or always maintained the average, standard in Europe".[1]

The present century may be stated to have witnessed "revolutionary progress" in the way of expansion of the scope of the

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historians' interests, as well reflected in the proliferation of various 'sub-histories' dealing with aspects of human activity which had been earlier largely neglected by historians interested in 'past politics'. In a sense this proliferation of various 'sub-histories', indicating the broadening perspective and interests of the historians in contemporary times, may be regarded as an obvious reaction to or rather a development from the *staaten-geschichte* of the 19th century.[2] In explaining this phenomenon of progress in the field of historical study in the 20th century, H. E. Barnes has very well observed : "This has probably been due to the remarkable cultural changes of the period, to the advances made in the natural and social sciences, and to the greater independence and liberty of scholars, which have allowed able and original historians to execute their ambitions and to express their conceptions with relative freedom".[3]

One of the early endeavours to break away from the narrow tradition sustaining what may be called 'political concentration of history' as also to take interest in the evolution of human culture related to the line of specialisation in "intellectual history", or history of ideas or of thought. The intellectual historian reviews the "transformations of ideas, beliefs and opinions held by the intellectual classes". His business is not merely to summarise or synthesise such material as having bearing to philosophy, religion, literature, arts and science, but as a 'cartographer of ideas' he is to trace and understand the impact of the ideas upon a given society. As observed in the *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (ed. D. L. Sills), "At its narrowest, intellectual history attempts to tell who produced what intellectual or cultural achievement when and how ; at its broadest, it can come close to being a kind of retrospective sociology of knowledge, even a retrospective general sociology".[4] Intellectual history, which in its widest sense may be interpreted to have as its subjectmatter whatever record is left of the activities of the human mind, commonly seeks to explain not only the dissemination of ideas in a given society but also the relation between the ideas representing the work of cultural leaders on the one hand and on the other, 'drives', 'interests' and non-

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intellectual factors generally involved in both individual and group psychology.

To clearly distinguish between intellectual history and, for example, the history of literature, the history of philosophy, the history of science and other branches of culture is, however, a problem. To say that intellectual history, "the all-inclusive history of all these", hardly offers a proper answer. In explanation of the basic difference between the historian of ideas and the historian of a special intellectual discipline it may well be said that the historian of philosophy, for example, concerns himself primarily with explaining or interpreting the philosophical ideas. He may analyse and criticise the ideas of other philosophers or may attempt to find some explanation of such ideas in a given philosopher's personal history and in his total environment. He may likewise treat ideas "as breeding ideas in a vacuum —or in a mind". On the other hand, the intellectual historian, when concerned with identical philosophical ideas, may "do some of what the historian of philosophy does", but the former is expected to be mainly concerned with "what happens to these ideas among ordinary educated people and even among ordinary uneducated people". A true historian of ideas may be interested in examining the 'intrinsic relationship' among the different branches of human culture and their impact upon one another. "It is through the proper study of the intellectual history that we can join the wisdom of Solomon to the counsel of Socrates".

It may appear to be strange that new historical studies in the Western World in the early years of the present century in the wake of the attack on the 'old history' "should simultaneously try to face in two different directions : in the direction of economics and in the direction of ideas". In this connection Arthur Marwick observes : "Some would argue that these are opposite directions ; that the very heart of human activity is dominated by an oscillation between two opposites, the *idea* and the *economic imperative*. However, this turning in different directions was all part of the same internal revolution within historical studies : the bad old men of the dying generation had ignored both economic and intellectual factors, so the brave young men of the present must explore one or other or both".[5] Incidentally it

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may be stated that some component of intellectual history can be traced in the historical writings of the ancient Greeks. Though with the enlightenment of the 18th century intellectual history, still unnamed, came to assume some place in western historiography if only as a 'philosophy teaching by example', its actual designation and general acceptance as a variety of historical writing may be said to have dated from the late 19th century and the organisation of professional academic history.[6]

Karl Lamprecht (1856-1915), a critic of Ranko, was the first historian of his day to devote systematic attention to this sphere of historical study. This distinguished champion of *Kultur-geschichte* in the very home of *Staatengeschichte* was influenced by Auguste Comte's philosophy of history. The former's disciple Kurt Breysig came to devote his latest endeavours to a study of the influence of ideas upon the course of history. The wide criticism of Lamprecht's rather rigid, subjective and artificial approach in the field led to the development of a "more pragmatic and flexible method" with its emphasis upon a study of the actual nature of and changes in the prevailing opinions and intellectual attitudes in society without any commitment to a specific line of explanation or any rigid preconceived scheme of thought. James Harvey Robinson (1863-1936) most actively contributed to the development of this newer and rather more pragmatic approach to intellectual history. Robinson and Arthur Loveday largely contributed to the popularisation of the term 'intellectual history' or 'history of ideas' in the United States.[7]

In his 'crusade' for a 'new' history Robinson found 'allies' among contemporary historians. C. A. Beard, one of those responsible for impressing upon Robinson the importance of social and economic factors in historical development, in his turn came to respond to the latter's new historical appeal. Beard "rapidly grew from a protege to a partner of the older man". In the 1930's he became more particularly concerned with the philosophic foundations of historical knowledge. Among others Lynn Thorndike and Carl Becker belonged to the so-called Robinson School, otherwise known as the Columbian School of new historians. Becker's abiding interest was

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in political ideas. Robinson and the 'new' historians were of course adopting a kind of 'relativist' position. Lovejoy, while opposing the fragmentation of the historical study of ideas into the histories of philosophy, literature, science, etc., favoured an interdisciplinary approach with its emphasis upon individual concepts. His approach ran the risk of personifying ideas. Some of his successors, using the term 'intellectual history', have placed more emphasis on thinking men.[8]

"While it is to Professor Robinson and his followers that we owe the demarcation and cultivation of intellectual history as one of the most promising fields of historical study, there have been many notable contributions to the subject by those who have, in many cases, not been aware of the formal existence of such a line of historical activity. They have been led on by an interest in some phase or period of the history of thought." —so observes H. E. Barnes. In Germany Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911) was in many ways "a precursor of modern intellectual historians", and Max Weber (1864-1920), a noted sociologist, may also be said to have set the mould for "much work in the field". Friedrich Meinecke (1862-1954) attempted to "fuse" in a kind of intellectual history the teachings of two "great masters" in the field of historical study, Ranke who had extolled the might of the political state, and Burckhardt who turned to the development of human civilisation and its creative artifacts. Ranke's pull was clearly stronger, and Meinecke became essentially interested in the history of *political* ideas.

However, among the first few generations of professional historians throughout the Western World there was "considerable resistance" to the formal study of intellectual history as being not 'scientific' enough. The reluctance to write intellectual history, at least under that name, was more marked among the professional historians in Great Britain and France. Notwithstanding the prolonged persistence of such initial resistance to intellectual history, the subject has now "attained academic respectability". Indeed in the United States it has become fashionable. As Richard Hofstadter observes, "For many of us an interest in studying the formation and development of ideologies

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was a natural intellectual response to the conflict raging around us".[9]

In France, historians interested in synthesis, such as Henri Berr and Lucien Febvre, have contributed to the field while shaping the development of a genuinely new and wider approach to history amidst "the splendid productivity of traditional historians". The *Annales*, jointly launched by Febvre and Marc Bloch who, in a manner typical of many 20th-century intellectuals, shared an interest in group or collective psychology, was intended to be the great vehicle for the "deepened and broadened history" as conceived by them. In writing about their programme of historical synthesis, Berr observed : "...the history of ideas depends in large part upon individual men, and has also, perhaps, some special characteristics... The study of historical categories must lead to the psychology of great men of thought and action, of ethnic groups, and of historical crises. And it is an important and delicate psychological problem to arrive at a clear picture of the role of the intellectual element in history".[10]

British historians like J. B. Bury, R. H. Tawney and Christopher Dawson have also paid fuller attention to the intellectual element in history. While altogether turning away from economics, Christopher Hill's *Intellectual Origins of the English Revolution* is motivated by "a positive conception of the place of ideas in the historical process". While warning both against the Namier method with its "to-ready assumption" of ideas in terms of "hypocrisy, rationalisations, or irrelevancies" and against the "ball-of-string" school of intellectual history, he comes to observe : "Ideas were all-important for the individuals whom they impelled into action ; but the historian must attach equal importance to the circumstances which gave these ideas their chance. ...It seems to me that any body of thought which plays a major part in history...'takes on' because it meets the needs of significant groups in the society in which it comes into prominence...Men...do not break lightly with the past : if they are to challenge conventionally accepted standards they must have an alternative body of ideas to support them".[11]

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As representative instances of the primary contribution of literary men to intellectual history Leslie Stephen and Paul Hazard may be named. The contributions of H. T. Buckle, R. G. Collingwood and Arnold J. Toynbee to the development of philosophy of history were not unrelated to the internal revolution within historical studies partly revealed in the distinct emergence of intellectual history as a 'sub-history' in the Western World in the present century. Croce, the philosopher-historian setting the pattern for a whole generation of historians in Italy, wrote like an intellectual historian. With Croce, Collingwood came to believe that 'all history is the history of thought', and in this respect he was thus "in key with the new emphasis on intellectual history developing in the twenties and thirties" of the present century. Among those "labours which have enriched the content of intellectual history" Merz's admirable account of European thought in the 19th century, J. H. Randall's comprehensive treatment of modern intellectual history, the histories of social thought by such writers as Stein, Becker, Barnes and Sorokin, and the histories of national thought by Stephen, Croce, Parrington, Curti and others may be mentioned.

To trace the emergence of intellectual history of modern India in the aforesaid background of the surge of interest in the history of ideas that has taken place in the contemporary West, particularly in the United States, one finds at the very outset that before 1947, i.e., prior to India's emancipation from British colonial rule, modern Indian historiography, largely built up on the foundations laid by British historians within the colonial strait-jacket, was marked by an over-emphasis on political and administrative history. In this connection a modern Indian historian, while delivering his *Presidential Address* (Section III) at the Indian History Congress (Bhagalpur Session) in 1968, aptly observed : "...we had been too much engrossed in the political, constitutional, administrative and military problems of the higher ups in the Government". British Indian historians, whether belonging to the official school or not, were quite naturally more interested in the political and administrative achievements of the British. And their range of interest in modern Indian

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history was also conditioned by the fact that the area of state activity under the colonial regime was limited to such essential functions as law and order, military defence, collection of revenue, administration of justice, and construction of public works. Indian historians, trained in the English school, likewise tended to regard the history of the country mainly in political terms. In short, the Freemanesque conception of the adequacy of history as 'past politics' continued to dominate the Indian scene. Notwithstanding the fact that during this period the economic, social and cultural aspects of Indian history did receive some worthy attention at the hands of writers like W. W. Hunter, W. Digby, Dadabhai Naoroji, M. G. Ranade, R. C. Dutt, B. H. Baden-Powell, L. Knowles, Vera Anstey, J. C. Sinha, A. Loveday, D. R. Gadgil, P. P. Pillai, L. S. S. O'Malley, John Morrison, J. N. Farquhar, James G. Cousins, C. F. Andrews, K. K. Dutta, A. Yusuf Ali and others, the modern Indian historiography in pre-independence era may be said to have been slanted and thus to have suffered from an imbalance.

Since the achievement of independence in 1947 there have been changes in the Indian scene "requiring a re-interpretation of the facts". There have also been changes in the attitudes of historians about the essential elements of Indian history. To these has been added the "normal" fact of fresh information in the form of revelations caused by the opening of new archives or the release of private papers. The evolution of modern Indian historiography in the post-independence era may be partly but quite significantly observed in the perspective of the interaction between the aforesaid legacy of 'political' historiography of 'colonial' India and the newer ideas and prevailing trends in the field of historical study in the contemporary West. Incidentally it may be stated that the production of histories of India has been much more frequent in recent times than before. A fairly large number of competent studies on her economic history have appeared. It is also gratifying to note that scholars have been paying more and more attention to the reconstruction of social history of the country. Social and economic histories have indeed become prestigious branches of historical study. The striking influence of the Marxian

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conception of history on the study of the social and economic affairs of modern Indian history can hardly be ignored. The study of modern Indian history has also made some good progress in several other directions as in respect of socioreligious reform movements, cultural development, growth of nationalism and so on. The recent nationalist historians of India led by K. M. Panikkar have come to put emphasis upon the transformation of Indian society through the activities of its own people. The newer trend of 'subaltern studies' to combat the 'elitism', which has long dominated the historiography of Indian nationalism whether in the 'colonialist' or 'bourgeois-nationalist' form, involves an endeavour to study closely or re-examine events and themes in a somewhat 'more rounded perspective' encompassing attitudes, ideologies and belief systems. The wide range of 'subaltern studies' reflects interdisciplinary interaction involving history and such other disciplines as politics, economics and sociology. Notwithstanding such gradual but marked broadening of the perspective and interests of the historians writing on modern India in the post-independence period, which is partly linked to the newer developments in the Western historical world in this age of growing contact and interaction, the legacy of over-emphasis upon political and administrative history as handed down from the pre-independence era has proved to be a strong impediment in the way of the desired expansion of the scope of modern Indian historical interests in the post-independence period in keeping pace with the development of historical studies in the West in contemporary times.

The said deficiency in our historical study of modern India may be well observed in the field of intellectual history, in which the scholars have been taking some real interest only recently. In the early sixties, C. H. Philips came to observe : "...to a remarkable degree the modern study of the history of the sub-continent of India has developed within a two-dimensional framework, preoccupied with men and events and neglectful of intellectual history and of the influence of ideas".[12] By thus long neglecting the field of intellectual history of modern India we have, as a modern Indian historian justly regrets, "done less than justice to our philosophers, artists, writers,

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scientists, thinkers and reformers". One may have been like him surprised to see that "India, the home of thought, the land of philosophy and the cradle of higher intellect, has not yet been able to produce a single philosopher of history worthy to be ranked with any from the West".[13] It is true that we "have yet to look forward to a Buckle, a Collingwood, a Toynbee, a Comte, a Croce and a Spengler in our midst". Yet the recent trends are quite encouraging, indicating the scholars taking more and more active interest in the role of ideas in modern Indian history as also in the demarcation and cultivation of intellectual history of modern India.

Quite naturally, British policy in India was remarkably influenced by the social and political ideas of thinkers and politicians. Britain represented "a complex society composed of individuals and groups" with "varied backgrounds, experience, interests, and intellectual capacity". British reactions to India did not obviously centre on one attitude but came to represent a variety of conflicting attitudes. In recent times several scholars, in devoting themselves to the study of British policy in India, have dealt with this complex aspect of ideological background of Britain's impact on India, involving various British aspirations and interests associated with changing ideas and social conditions in Britain. Eric Stokes' *The English Utilitarians and India* (1959) is intended to serve as "a study of the English mind in the nineteenth century as it was found to be at work in the administration of India". While viewing British rule in India not as "a disconnected and meaningless fragment of English history but reflective of English character and mind", the author has, through an examination of the Utilitarian influence on India, sought to counter "the prevalent tendency to be interested in the Utilitarians solely as abstract moral and political theorists" in disregard of their "practical aims and influence". He shows that the nature of the practical aims "was deduced logically from their abstract theory" and that the "completeness" of the system "is more obvious in Indian than in English history". In the concluding chapter Stokes deals with "the paradox in utilitarianism between the principle of liberty and the principle of authority" as "most clearly exposed" in India as also Fitzjames

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Stephen's support of authoritarian liberalism as opposed to the intellectual basis of J. S. Mill's political doctrine. He also deals, though briefly, with the other broad intellectual movement "prompted by the historical and comparative method of Sir Henry Maine". He also indicates that this current of ideas "found practical expression in a school of Indian policy". The imperialist attitudes with which Stokes has thus concerned himself are also explored in Raghavan Iyer's 'Utilitarianism and All That : The Political Theory of British Imperialism in India', *St. Antony's Papers*, No. 8, London, 1960.

In his *British Attitudes Towards India*, 1784-1885 (1961) George D. Bearce also aims at an inquiry into the somewhat neglected aspect of British Indian history—the 'intellectual basis' and 'ideological atmosphere' underlying British rule in India. It is not "a chronological account of wars, Governors-General, legislation, and political events". Nor does it treat of British policy in India except where this policy was the product of, or represented important attitudes. It deals with "a complex body of thought and opinion relating to India and derived from individuals, groups, and the British public at large". It throws light on the quality of British thought and opinion about India, the degree of ignorance, self-interest, and knowledge appearing in Britain's understanding. In making this study of various intellectual tendencies, conservatism, imperialism, liberalism, romanticism, as affected British views about India, the author gives attention to the political and military aspects as and when it is necessary to explain British attitudes towards India. He not only deals with the role of these attitudes in British policy and the administration of India but also examines the effect of these attitudes, so far as they were incorporated in British policy and the Indian outlook, upon the people, culture and development of India. Though he made an extensive study of the vast amount of available material in his endeavour to "capture the essence of the British mind in its consideration of India", he "have had to be" prudently selective in his use of the vast material in the final writing. He has been careful in his use of the vast material in the final writing. He has been careful in his judgement while making generalisations. As

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he himself hoped, "What the British thought about India then, together with a critical appraisal of the breadth or narrowness of their attitudes, may help shed light on the present day western approach to India, and to Asia generally". Indeed, the present Western World "needs and is seeking a greater understanding of the people and nations of Asia".

The appearance of the above two work of Eric Stokes and George D. Bearce has helped to provide the "missing thread" for the understanding of the earlier period of British-Indian history. Yet there have remained large gaps in the study of the intellectual basis and ideological framework of British rule in India. The illumination of the complex ideological background of Britain's impact upon India needs further attention from scholars. R. J. Moore's *Liberalism and Indian Politics*, 1872-1922, which came out in 1966, was written with an eye to the serious gap in the study of "the influence of liberal thought upon practical politics during that period of perhaps half a century when India was the proudly and firmly held centre of the Empire". It belongs to the 'Foundations of Modern History' series of short historical studies, the publication of which has been organised under the general editorship of A. Goodwin. In this scholarly survey of Anglo-Indian affairs between 1872 and 1922 R. J. Moore makes a study of the influence of liberal ideas on the official attitudes and policies of British rulers of India in age of administrative reform and competitive imperialism. Precisely speaking, the *leit-motiv* of this survey is the 'persistent influence' of the Whig tradition of statesmanship upon the shaping of Indian political destinies. The work treats of the growth of intellectual liberalism expounded by Maine and Stephen after they 'returned from service'. Moore also deals with the influence of liberal ideas upon the rise and development of the nationalist movement. In his *Sir Charles Wood's Indian Policy*, 1853-66 (1966) R. J. Moore considers the thought and influence of a prominent Whig.

Thomas R. Metcalf's *The Aftermath of Revolt : India*, 1857-1870 came out in 1965. It is no doubt a study of the 'Revolt of 1857 and of the mark which the 'Mutiny' left on India. It deals with such matters as social reform, education, land

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settlement policy, relations with Indian princes, the structure of government and the growth of racial feeling. Those who are interested in the study of the complex ideological atmosphere underlying British rule in India will find that in this volume an attempt has been made to "place the India of 1860's in the broader context of Victorian Liberalism which was undergoing a slow but profound transformation". Reference may also be made to S. Gopal's *British Policy in India*, 1858-1905 (1965). This study of the first phase of British rule in India under the Crown is primarily concerned, as the title clearly indicates, with British policy and not with Indian attitudes and reactions. In following the main strands of British policy and studying their evolution the author in this volume seeks to explain the ideas and aspirations of British 'parties and statesmen along with their ways and methods of implementing them and the consequences of these efforts. N. S. Bose's pioneering work on the racial aspect of British colonialism in India and its impact also deserves mention. In this recent work entitled *Racism, Struggle for Equality and Indian Nationalism* (1981) the author has highlighted the 'unique importance' of racial discrimination. He has shown how it not only affected the course of political agitation but also the ideas and outlook of the people.

Francis G. Hutchins' *The Illusion of Permanence : British Imperialism in India* (1967) is a quite refreshing historical study. "If a democratic republic subdues a nation to govern them as subjects, it exposes its own liberty". With this epigram from Montesquieu, the author opens for inspection the intellectual atmosphere of British imperialism in India in the 19th century. As the author finds it, the Indian empire provided for most Englishmen the attractions of material enrichment and social advancement, for the missionaries the opportunity of proselyting the Hindus and the Muslims. Both—the Victorian administrator and the 'idealistic' missionary—tried "to rationalize the British position in the context of higher principles". Hutchins notes that the 'partisan hope' entertained by each 'group' in the early 19th century that Englishmen "could one day go home leaving a neatly self-governing India behind", gave way, as the century advanced, to "the obsessive and defensive notion of

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the permanence of British rule in India". The author points out that the illusion of permanence began to take shape some years before the upheaval of 1857, but it was the 'Mutiny' that "made the subsequent imperialistic attitude rigid". In producing this interesting study he draws on different types of materials such as the writings of travellers, diarists, civil servants, soldiers and retired officials, literary work, essays, letters, newspaper articles, and the records of the Parliamentary hearings after the Mutiny. By combining the techniques of intellectual history and social psychology, Hutchins has written a study which provides a "new perspective" for an understanding of British and Indian history as also a "new source" for those who may be interested in the formation of an ideology. In this volume he provides us with many illuminating insights.

The study of British imperial ideology has also been attempted in terms of its relevance to the political and constitutional developments in India in the era of nationalist struggle. In his *India under Morley and Minto : Politics behind Revolution, Repression and Reforms* (1964) M. N. Das reviews the distinctive marks of the Morley-Minto era in the evolution of modern India. In doing so he analyses the relationship between the two dignitaries not only in terms of characters and personalities but also the perspective of their ideological differences. In the chapter entitled 'Politics in England' he deals with the interaction between the prevailing imperial attitudes and political ideologies as also their impact upon India. Stanley Wolpert's *Morley and India*, 1906-10 (1967) also belongs to this category of historical studies of British policy in India. One interested in ideological interaction in the final phase of British rule in India may appreciate the volume *The Partition of India : Policies and Perspectives*, 1937-1947 (1970), edited by C. H. Philips and M. D. Wainwright, which deals with the more important aspects of the events and processes leading to the partition. As the papers included in this volume indicate the interpretation of the same "tends to vary with the preconceptions and present-day outlook of the contributors".

Such recent discerning studies of British policy in India as mentioned above have thus contributed in some way to the

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enrichment of the content of the intellectual history of modern India by throwing light on the intellectual basis or ideological background of British rule in, or Britain's impact on India. This represents only one aspect of the emerging intellectual history of modern India. Of late there has been remarkable progress in other directions. There has been a "tremendous" upsurge of interest in Indian life and thought in recent years, which is very well reflected in the field of historical study. Though we, so far as the development of intellectual history both in scope and extent is concerned, are still much behind the contemporary West, we have now a "solid foundation" of our own to build upon it a towering superstructure. In India the 19th century was a marvellous creative age in the domain of knowledge, with varied currents of thought and culture, causing a remarkable transformation in our ideas and outlook. This 'renaissance' has been receiving an increasing attention from the scholars to produce eventually that kind of intellectual history which will match our gift in the domain of pure speculative philosophy. Copious records exist pertaining to the activities of the Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj, the Prarthana Samaj, the Ramakrishna Mission, the Servants of India Society, the Aligarh movement, the growth of nationalism, the activities of the representative thinkers and leaders of the society, the activities of the Christian missionaries, the Gandhian thought and so on. They have been receiving more and more attention for the evaluation of these movements in order to know what happened to those ideas among ordinary educated and uneducated people. Scholars have been more and more devoting themselves to trace in an objective manner how those ideas permeated down the masses, how and to what extent they were mutually linked, how one influenced the other, what action or reaction followed in their train. We are becoming increasingly interested not only in the evolution of political and social ideas but also in the development of economic ideas in modern India. Though all this is rather a more recent phenomenon, the insemination may be traced back to the pre-independence days.

A prolific writer with a keen interest in the study of Indian nationalism as also in socioreligious and cultural affairs, Biman

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Behari Majumdar is rightly regarded as "a trendsetter among modern Indian historians in the field of history of ideas".[14] As conversant with the recent trends in historical studies in the contemporary West, he well realised the need "to lay emphasis on the evolution of ideas which motivate social and cultural movements rather than on mere narration of facts and events".[15] His *History of Political Thought from Rammohun to Dayananda*, Vol. I, first appeared in 1934. The work in 1932 entitled him to the Premchand Raichand Scholarship, one of the highest academic distinctions offered by the University of Calcutta. The volume was later revised into *History of Social and Political Ideas : From Rammohun to Dayananda* (1967). Though in this book he has dealt with Western India, South India and Dayananda, his main concern was Bengal as clearly stated in the Preface. To quote him, "In this volume I have made an attempt to discover the original contribution of the Bengali thinkers to the political thought of the world. I have shown how even before Austin, Raja Rammohun made a reconciliation between the historical and analytical schools of jurisprudence and distinguished Law from Morality, how Akshay Kumar Dutta preached the Organic Theory of State before Herbert Spencer, and how he formulated the theory of state socialism in the fifties of the last century, and how Bankim Chandra presented a new theory of nationalism". His primary interest in the 'discovery' of "the original contribution of the Bengali thinkers" does not, however, betray any chauvinism in his outlook and approach. His *Militant Nationalism in India and its Socio-Religious Background* (1897-1917), published in 1966, incorporates the lectures delivered by him on the social and political ideas of Swami Vivekananda (in the University of Calcutta in 1965 as the Sister Nivedita Lecturer of 1964). "Biman Behari Majumdar's work form some sort of a bridge between old conventional researches and the emerging analytical studies since the early sixties of the present century. In a sense he symbolised a transition in modern Indian historiography in which bare political narrative gave way to more sophisticated critical work. He stood on the doorstep of the new history school in India, which is maturing from the mid sixties".[16]

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In 1935, the German-French philosopher and humanist Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965) wrote *Indian Thought and its Development*. In stating the purpose of writing this 'short account' he observed : "To gain an insight into Indian thought and to analyse it and discuss our differences must necessarily make European thought clearer and richer". The work contains a chapter on 'Modern Indian Thought'. Mention may be made of James H. Cousins' *The Renaissance in India.* This short study came out in 1918. In his *The Making of Modern India*(1924) Nicol Macnicol has sought to "provide some material" for estimating the "character of the new forces" that were "making the new India" and the "direction" in which these forces were "carrying her". He observes that the "ancient forms of thought and of belief" which modern influences were "modifying but by no means eliminating" were "some of the most powerful" of these forces which included political, social and religious ones. In Part IV of this small volume he has dealt with the thoughts and contributions of the outstanding personalities like Rammohun and Debendranath, some notable Indian Christians and Indian women poets, who were Indian in "the texture of their minds and souls" and found to lead "their people" into the "unknown land of tomorrow". In the first three Parts he has successively dealt with 'Political Progress', 'Social and Religious Unrest' and 'Ideas'. In Part V, i.e., the concluding chapter, captioned 'Unchanging India', he has written about 'Two cults of popular Hinduism' and 'The Diversions of an Indian villager'.

In the pre-independence period there were many notable contributions to the study of Gandhian thought. Those who, prior to 1947, thus led the way to the study of this aspect of the evolution of modern Indian thought, included M. Ruthnaswamy, Nripendra Chandra Bandyopadhyaya, C. F. Andrews, G. L. Mehta, M. A. Buch, P. Spratt, A. R. Desai, M. N. Roy, D. G. Tendulkar, Muriel Lester, G. N. Dhawan, J. B. Kripalani, Bhupendra Kumar Datta and Y. G. Krishamurti. The thoughts of some other leading modern Indian figures who may be said to have greatly moulded Indian consciousness also came to be studied in some form or other during this period. For example,

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Taraknath Das wrote about Rabindranath Tagore. Incidentally, it may be stated that during this period M. A. Buch paid attention to the study of contemporary Indian political thought. A student of modern Indian intellectual history may be reasonably interested in Ernest Barker's *The Ideas and Ideals of the British Empire*, published in 1941, which is, however concerned, as the title makes it clear, with the empire as a whole. In estimating the study of modern Indian thought in the pre-independence era, it may be fairly said that one finds the real deficiency of well-documented objective studies written in true historical perspectives.

All who are interested in modern Indian thought will appreciate the recent contribution of V. S. Naravane to the subject. In his *Modern Indian Thought : A Philosophical Survey*, published in 1964, he has attempted to present the fundamental ideas of some of the outstanding modern Indian thinkers who greatly "moulded the Indian consciousness since the beginning of the nineteenth century". After discussing the background and characteristics of modern Indian thought, he has in separate chapters dealt with the outstanding thinkers, namely, Rammohun (and his followers), Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore, Gandhi, Aurobinda, Radhakrishnan, Coomaraswamy and Iqbal. One may wish he had included Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and Maulana Azad, for they represent trends which many of the conventional histories of philosophy tend to ignore. The author has indeed approached the subject from a philosophical rather than a social or political point of view. But he has attempted to present the ideas and personalities of the thinkers in the context of their social surroundings. The emphasis has been on the total range, sweep and significance of ideas rather than their strictly technical philosophical implications. He has discussed different intellectual questions not in terms of highly specialised theories but in the larger context of Indian life and culture. That is why he has used the word *Thought* instead of *Philosophy* in the title of the book. He has tried to focuss attention on ideas that are not only philosophically significant but also have "influenced the minds and hearts of countless people". His object has been to "evoke the philosophical

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personalities of the great thinkers of modern India, and to weave the story of Indian thought around all that is abiding and vital in their teachings". Reference may also be made to K. M. Panikkar's *Foundations of New India* (1963). In this work the author has written about 'India's Inheritance', 'The Intellectual Setting' and 'The Mahatma and Marx' in addition to other topics.

A dispassionate survey of Indian history reveals that the Indian heritage consists of the composite culture that has been evolving largely through the fusion of Hinduism and Islam. The failure to understand this fact has repeatedly "queered the pitch for the study of modern Indian thought". The mutual attraction between men of opposite temperaments is not rarely stronger than that between individuals who differ only slightly from each other. The same can be true of intellectual and spiritual attitudes. The contrast between Hinduism and Islam is one of the most striking phenomena in the history of human thought and culture. In such books as Amir Ali's *Spirit of Islam* and Humayun Kabir's *Science, Democracy and Islam*, some interesting aspects of this contrast have been brought out. Incidentally, reference may be made to B. G. Gokhale's *Indian Thought Through the Ages* (1961) in which one sees the "tragic results" which can follow from a "fanatical" rejection of the great contribution that Islam has made to Indian thought and culture.

In his *The Indian Muslim* (1967), M. Mujeeb deals with certain aspects of Indian Muslim thought and life. In this work of wide scope, he treats of Muslim religious thought not only in the 'early' and 'middle' periods but also in the modern period. Aziz Ahmad's *Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment* came out in 1964. In his *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan*, 1875-1964 (1967) he has dealt with the growth of modernist and conservative religio-political thought in 'Indo-Pakistani' Islam and compared it with similar movements in Islamic thinking elsewhere. His *An Intellectual History of Islamic India* was published in 1969. Mention may also be made of *Islamic Revival in British India : Deoband*, 1860-1900 (1982), written by Barbara Daly Metcalfe. In a short monograph entitled *Partners in Freedom and True Muslims* (1970), Peter Hardy seeks

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to analyse the political thought of some Muslim scholars (ulemas) and tries to trace them to earlier Islamic tradition. The author has based his analysis mainly on the ideas propounded by Maulana Azad and the Jamayyat-ul-ulema-i-Hind. In his *Islam in India's Transition to Modernity* (1968), M. A. Karandikar exhaustively analyses the essential elements of Islam from the earliest times, tracing the elements of the sectarian groups which have been the agencies of Islamic influence in India. The author sets out to explore the doctrinal and historical basis of Muslim separatism as also the new, as yet weak, tendencies towards a change in the Muslim outlook to enable the community "to become an integral part of the emerging composite national society". The volume *Communal and Pan-Islamic Trends in Colonial India* (ed. by Mushirul Hasan, 1981), a collection of papers by "diverse hands", deals with different aspects of the subject. The work will be valued by those interested in the dynamics of communalism in British India. Amalendu De's *Roots of Separatism in Nineteenth Century Bengal* and *Islam in Modern India* also throw some light on Muslim outlook and attitude in modern India. Reference may also be made to A. M. Zaidi's *Evolution of Muslim Political Thought* : volume one, *From Syed to the Emergence of Jinnah* (1975), a documentary study in which the extensive material gathered, along with the Editor's Introduction, covers the period 1857-1916. The Volume Two of the same work with the subtitle *Sectarian Nationalism and Khilafat* covers the period 1916-1925, and as claimed by the editor, contains "complete" records of the Muslim League, the All Parties' Conference, the Unity Conferences, the Khilafat Conference and the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind.

Generally speaking, the work dealing with the Aligarh movement, the Khilafat movement and the making of Pakistan throw some light on the ideas involved in, or the ideological aspects of, such developments pertaining to the growth of Muslim "sub-nationalism" in the context of the Indian struggle for freedom. The same is also considerably true of the historical writings about the main stream of the Indian nationalist movement, occasionally illuminating the thought-processes involved in the movement ; and such writings may be about some phase

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or period, or may be of wider scope. Incidentally, reference may made to Amales Tripathi's *The Extremist Challenge : India between* 1890 *and* 1910 (1967). In this brilliant scholarly work the author, while studying the various aspects of the then Indian nationalist movement, seeks to analyse interpenetration of religious and political ideas among a generation of Indian leaders between 1890 and 1910. To quote the author himself, "This is the story of an idea, at once religious and political, which gripped the mind of a generation of Indian leaders in the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth. The interpenetration of religion and politics, confusing enough, was further confounded by the play of economic factors...I have followed the idea where it led". The author shows how the resurgent love for Indian religious and historical tradition prompted preference for a militant Hindu nationalism. There emerged terrorism out of the passions roused in course of the great passive resistance movement for Swaraj. The British responded by encouraging Muslim separatism and 'rallying' moderate opinion through reforms. The author stresses the emergence of many new political ideas, symbols and techniques which would have an abiding influence upon the Gandhian phase. He makes an objective analysis of thought, interest and motive that came to 'mould as well as to mar' the massive movement.

In his *The Congress Ideology and Programme*, 1920-1947 (1964) P. D. Kaushik has dealt with the ideological foundations of Indian nationalism during the Gandhian era. In this connection the work of Shankar Ghose also deserve mention. In his *Political Ideas and Movements in India* (1975) this perceptive writer, while seeking to present a connected and integrated story of the growth and developments of political ideas and movements in modern India, seeks to trace these ideas and movements to their historical roots as also in their economic perspective. He has dealt with the different trends in political thinking in modern India, covering the ideas of the constitutionalists like Dadabhai, Surendranath and Gokhale, of the militant nationalists like Tilak, Pal, Lajpat and Aurobinda, of the 'revolutionary terrorists', of Gandhi, Vinobha and others, and of Subhas and Jawaharlal as also the approaches towards Marxism and Maoism.

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He has treated of the development and ascendancy of the secular, composite national spirit—the 'multireligious', 'multilingual' and 'multiracial' nationalism—in modern India notwithstanding the recurrent opposition from diverse sectarian, regional, linguistic and parochial forces. He has not been unaware of the difficulties in the way of a dispassionate presentation of the ideas of the leaders of the democratic, socialist and communist movements with their many-sided complexity. In his *The Western Impact on Indian Politics*, 1985-1919 (1967), a well-documented study, he examines the various strands of Indian political thought while dealing with the political movements of the period. In another work *The Renaissance to Militant Nationalism in India* (1969), also written by him, the reader will find fresh insights. He breaks some new ground when he examines the political ideas of the outstanding personalities like Bankim and Vivekananda, Tilak and Aurobinda, Gokhale and Gandhi. He has written an illuminating study of the Renaissance as also of constitutionalism, liberalism and militant nationalism. Though he is primarily concerned with Indian political ideas and movements from the birth of the 'Renaissance' to the emergence of Gandhi, he gives a fascinating view of the ideas of the cultural leaders of modern India such as Rammohun, Debendranath, Keshab, Dayananda, Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, Syed Ahmad, Iqbal and Coomaraswamy. His *Socialism, Democracy and Nationalism in India* (1973) also deserves mention.

Nihar Ranjan Ray's *Nationalism in India* (1973) is not any analytical narrative of the origin of the socio-political phenomenon of nationalism in modern India. One having an interest in the intellectual history of modern India will appreciate this eminent Indian writer's illuminating insights, as he seeks to examine the nature and character of Indian nationalism and present the respective historical backgrounds of its "stresses and strains" as seen and understood by him. Three papers, D. Argov's 'Moderates and Extremists : Two Attitudes Towards British Rule in India', D. Dalton's 'The Idea of Freedom in the Political Thoughts of Vivekananda and Aurobindo' and D. Rothermund's 'Nehru and Early Indian Socialism', published in *St. Antony's Papers* No. 18 (South Asian Affairs No. 2) edited

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by S. N. Mukherjee (1966), deserve attention. In his *The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal*, 1903-1901 (1973) Sumit Sarkar, while making an intensive study of the multidimensional movement as a significant stage in the history of Indian nationalism, gives attention to its ideological aspect. He refuses to be "in agreement with some of the methodological assumptions made by present-day theorists of the bhadralok", which seek to reduce nationalism to "individual material interests virtually divorced from ideological dimensions". In this connection it may be pointed out that in his *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism* (1968) Anil Seal observes that with the emergence of the Indian National Congress "a conceptual system based on elites, rather than on classes, would seem more promising". He also views 'Extremism' to be "less an ideology than a technique". One may, however, observe that the work, "notwithstanding its marking a departure from the traditional approach, hardly provides new answers to questions relating to the rise of nationalism in the nineteenth century". In analysing Bengal politics, particularly the politics of the legislature, in his book *Elite Conflict in a Plural Society* (1912-1927), J. H. Broomfield treats of the role of the *bhadralok* leaders partly in the context of their ideas and attitudes.

Two recent work, Lal Bahadur's *Indian Freedom Movement and Thoughts* (1919-29) and R. C. Gupta's *Indian Freedom and Thought* (1930-47), both edited by J. C. Johari, respectively, deal with the role and ideology of the Swaraj Party and the ideas and role of Nehru, a "critical but thoroughly loyal disciple" of Mahatma Gandhi, contributing to what has been called "soft leftism". Mention may also be made of V. P. S. Raghuvanshi's *Indian Nationalist Movement and Thought* (1950).

Incidentally, reference may be made to Sunil Sen's *Peasant Movements in India : Mid-Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (1982). This 'full length' account of the Indian peasant movements from the mid-19th century to the 'collapse' of the Naxalite 'insurgency' in the 1970's is not a detailed narrative but an interpretative study. The author does justice to the subject by seeking to analyse the nationalist ideas on the agrarian question without "idealizing the reality". The *Subaltern Studies*

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series, edited by Ranajit Guha, also deserves our attention. Such studies, as noted earlier, are intended to deal with or re-examine events and themes in a "more rounded perspective". The first of the series, *Subaltern Studies I : Writings on South Asian History and Society* (1982), includes essays on 'Agrarian Relations and Communalism' and 'Peasant Revolt and Indian Nationalism'. Ranajit Guha's *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India* (1983) covers the period from 1783 to 1900. In departing from the colonialist approach to the problem of peasant insurgeny, Guha "adopts" the peasant's viewpoint and seeks to study the "peasant rebel's awareness of his own world and his will to change it". This significant contribution to the existing literature on the subject aims at identifying some of the 'common forms' or 'general ideas' in 'rebel consciousness' over the said 'stretch of Indian history'.

As one may well point out, renaissance and nationalism are so intimately related in India that it appears to be often difficult to distinguish one from the other. In this connection, David Kopf aptly observes : "If a study of the Bengal renaissance should tell us about the continuing problem of tradition versus modernity in India, it should also reveal to us something equally significant about the origins of nationalism there". Needless to add, Bengal, the first to absorb the new light emanating from the West during the early phase of the East-West interaction in the wake of the establishment of the British imperial administration, found herself in the role of a trendsetter in the Indian transformation. Calcutta, the then capital of Bengal as also of India, became the leading centre of the cultural renaissance. It was "the earliest and the more significant focus" in the setting of modern Indian nationalism—the place where "the quest for self-identity had its origin and early growth". The exploration of the complex, multi-faceted world of the Bengal renaissance with its decisive impact on the ferment of the Indian mind has been receiving increasing attention at the hands of scholars. Reference may be made to some of the illuminating studies in the Bengal renaissance, that have come out in the post-independence era. The writings of historians like R. C. Majumdar, K. K. Datta and N. S. Bose offer a rather general historical

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treatment of the awakening, notwithstanding their illuminating insights into the cultural and intellectual changes of the time. The collection of essays in the volume *Studies in the Bengal Renaissance* (1958), edited by A. C. Gupta, of course deal with the different main aspects of the theme. Some of the papers separately throw light on the ideas and outlook of the outstanding personalities who came to greatly mould the historic awakening. It includes papers on the growth of political consciousness and the evolution of Swadeshi thought. David Kopf's *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance : The Dynamics of Indian Modernization*, 1773-1835 came out in 1969. Apart from the influence of the cultural anthropologists and the comparativists among the historians at Chicago upon the author who also came to imbibe the ideas of cultural relativity, others like Edward Shils and Daniel Borstòn in "the stimulating Chicago atmosphere" led him to the notion that intellectual history "is not a study of the intrinsic evolution of ideas but of the sociology of knowledge". His work is an account not only of the social and cultural but also of the psychological and intellectual changes that were, in the words of the author himself, "brought about in the Indian region of Bengal as a result of contact between British officials and missionaries on the one hand and the Hindu intelligentsia on the other". In tracing the East-West interaction in the context of British cultural policy, he takes note of "the unique patterns and universal processes of cultural change" that resulted from the institutional innovations in the wake of the interaction. Such an analysis of the data on cross-cultural influences provides useful insights concerning the interaction of tradition and modernity under British colonialism. He emphasises upon a multi-dimensional approach to the cultural 'encounter' in Bengal during the period 1772-1830 which has been termed by him as the 'era of British Orientalism'. Another work written by him, *The Brahmo Samaj and the Shaping of the Modern Indian Mind* (1979), is the frrst intensive study of the Brahmo Samaj from what may be called the non-sectarian point of view. He also seeks to correlate the Brahmo movement with the contemporary society. The expression 'The Shaping of the Modern Indian Mind' in the title of the work may appear to be rather

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elusive in view of the enigmatic nature of that mind. However, one must appreciate David Kopf's endeavour, as evident in his writings, to find out the conflicts, contradictions and motivations of groups and individuals and to highlight in the process their views of life, idealisms and false assumptions. Geraldine H. Forbes' *Positivism in Bengal : A Case Study in the Transmission and Assimilation of an Ideology* (1975) is an attempt, within the broad area of intellectual history, to look at the East-West interaction that had occurred in the 19th-century India when Western ideas were brought into the colonial setting. The authoress has felt the value of looking closely at the Indian response to the new ideas coming from the West as the better method of understanding the interaction. The work is a detailed study of the impact of Auguste Comte's Positive Philosophy upon a number of noted intellectuals of Bengal like Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Gurudas Chatterjee and Jogendra Chandra Ghosh, who "utilized it in ways that conformed to their psychological needs and the milieu within which they operated". The Positive Philosophy appealed to different men for different reasons. But the way of adoption and modification of the philosophy "was not simply related to the needs and aspirations of individual men, it was also a function of the times". The study also involves an exploration of exactly what version of Positivism was imported, and of the role of the English men who acted as Positivist "missionaries".

Arabinda Poddar's *Renaissance in Bengal : Quests and Confrontations*, 1800-1860 (1970) is an attempt at an evaluation of 'Bengal's renaissance' in terms of "the promises it held out and the fulfilment it achieved" during the first six decades of the 19th century. It is not intended to be "a systematic historical account of the intellectual movement". It does not seek to analyse the contribution of "each and every participant in the ferment". It aims at the study of the contributions of "only those considered to be representatives of the epoch" like Rammohun Roy, Radha Kanta Dev, Derozio and the Derozians, Akshay Kumar Dutt, Vidyasagar and Madhusudan. Besides giving an analysis of the historical background of the 'renaissance', the author has dealt with such items as 'Education and Social Mobility', 'Growth

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of Scientific Studies' and 'The Urban Elite and Bengal's Renaissance'. The author has thus taken into notice the "major rays of the spectrum", leaving out the "minor" or "secondary" ones. His subsequent work on the subject, *Renaissance in Bengal : Search for Identity* (1977), covers a period of five decades, the last four of the 19th century and the first decade of the 20th. "Its focus is on the clash of ideas and ideologies, on the rather bewildered response of the colonial intellectuals to the challenge of flowing reality, on the metamorphosis of Anglo-philism, the ambivalence of intellectuals, on the hectic search for a satisfactory model for social regeneration, etc". It is, however, not an exhaustive study of the second phase of Bengal's renaissance. The "superstructure", not the "base", has "claimed" the author's attention. Besides separately treating of the contribution of the 'representatives of the epoch', he has written chapters on 'Literary Search for Identity', 'Scholars, Educationists, Journalists and Administrators' and 'Identity : Consciousness and the Bengal School of Art'.

Mention may also be made of Amal Kumar Mukhopadhyay's (ed.) *The Bengali Intellectual Tradition : From Rammohun Ray to Dhirendranath Sen* (1979). This 'collective study', sponsored by the Council for Political Studies, Calcutta, tries to give a glimpse of a hundred and fifty years of 'Bengali social and political ideas'. Beginning with Rammohun, the prophet of modern India, it ends with Dhirendranath Sen, a Marxist political scientist of Bengal. To help a better understanding of the phenomenon of 'Bengal renaissance', the work includes a study of some 'important' Bengali thinkers who "are now almost forgotten". Incidentally reference may be made to K. K. Chatterjee's *English Education in India : Issues and Opinions* (1976) which may be carefully read by those interested in the intellectual aspects of the 19th-century Bengal 'renaissance'. With all its shortcomings including a few repititions, this study of a 'compilation' nature is, so far as the treatment of the subject is concerned, a distinct improvement upon B. K. Boman Behram's *Educational Controversies in India* (1943).

As indicated above, scholars have been showing a greater interest in the study of modern Indian political thought.

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Needless to add, the study of the vast subject of modern Indian political thought is a growing and developing one. In his *Modern Indian Political Thought* (1961) V. P. Varma seeks to give a systematic picture of modern Indian political ideas. In this comprehensive scholarly and well-documented work the author seeks to analyse and expound the various phases, aspects and schools of modern Indian political thought. He has systematically discussed the 'explicit' and 'implicit' political ideas of various political and social leaders and thinkers of modern India. He has studied not only the philosophical and sociological foundations of modern Indian political thinking but also the economic implications of the developments in this sphere. In tracing the development of political thought in India during the last two hundred years he has occasionally compared the thinkers of modern India with those of the West. In showing how the evolution of modern Indian thought has been influenced by the prevailing social, political and economic climate, the author has been partly concerned to trace the influence of the dominant problems of Indian nationalism upon the evolution of political thought. Reference may also be made to Naresh Chandra Roy's *Main Currents of Political Thinking in India* (1965) with its Chapter Three dealing with modern Indian political thought, K. P. Karunakaran's (ed.) *Modern Indian Political Tradition* (1962), D. Muckenzie Brown's *The White Umbrella : Indian Political Thought from Manu to Gandhi* (1953) and *Indian Political Thought from Ranade to Bhave* (1961), and O. P. Goyal's *Studies in Modern Indian Political Thought : the Moderates and the Extremists, Studies in Modern Indian Political Thought : Gandhian Interpretation* (1964) and *Contemporary Indian Political Thought* (1965). In his *Indian Political Thinking in the Twentieth Century from Naoroji to Nehru : An Introductory Survey* (1971) A. Appadorai surveys the history of Indian political thought from the assumption of direct rule over India by the British Crown to the death of Jawaharlal Nehru, free India's first Prime Minister. In this integrated survey based upon original documents the author discusses such topics as a dependant people's conception of imperial rule, the Indian thinkers' conception of nation, democracy and socialism, the relation between religion and politics,

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Satyagraha and other political methods and Indian leaders' ideas about internationalism and universalism. He also discusses the relevance of political thinking in India to contemporary social and political issues. Mention may be made of his *Documents on Political Thought in Modern India*, Vol. I (1973) and Vol. II (1976), covering the period from 1857 to 1964. The extracts presented are gathered from a rich variety of sources. Kiran Saxena's *Modern Indian Political Thought : Gandhism and Roy's New Humanism* came out in 1978. It is a comparative and critical study of the Gandhian Thought and M. N. Roy's New Humanism.

It is also gratifying to note that in recent times a fairly large number of competent individual studies dealing with leaders and representative thinkers of modern India, sometimes in a biographical form, have appeared. Reference has already been made to some of the notable contributors to the study of Gandhian thought. Among other important contributors may be mentioned of Alexander Horace, B. S. Sharma, Nirmal Kumar Bose, D. M. Datta, U. N. Dhebar, R. R. Diwakar, E. Stanley Jones, Pyarelal, V. Tandon and V. P. Varma. Despite the vast and fast accumulating literature about the great leader, scant justice has been paid to the solid conceptual foundations of his thought. Quite aware of this deficiency, Raghavan N. Iyer has produced his authoritative work *The Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi* (1973) which seeks to elucidate the central concepts in the moral and political thought of the great Indian leader with special attention to the connection between his presuppositions and precepts. This brilliant study of Gandhian thought involves a detailed examination of the ramifications of Gandhi's concepts of truth and non-violence, freedom and obligation, his view of the relation between means and ends in politics, Gandhi's indictment of modern civilisation and his plea for purification of politics. It is a significant contribution to contemporary thinking about the relevance of normal values to political actions. Reference may also be made to the writings about other outstanding personalities of modern India. Sachin Sen's *The Political Thought of Tagore* came out in 1947. In this work the author has sought to present Rabindranath's political and social ideologies in the

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context of world thought. This book is a fully revised version of his earlier work, *The Political Philosophy of Rabindranath* (1929) ; the later work, however, incorporates the material of the earlier one. Sasadhar Sinha's *Social Thinking of Rabindranath Tagore* was published in 1962. In his *The Political Philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru* (1961) M. N. Das has attempted to coordinate the ideas of Nehru in his many-sided role as a 'philosopher-politician'. He has also traced the external influences upon Nehru's thought and outlook, including those of Gandhi and Marx. The author has sought to present in an objective way the ideas of the man in the light of his own words as available from a wide range of material. S. Gopal's (ed.) *Jawaharlal Nehru : An Anthology* (1980) comprises 314 extracts from Nehru's writings and speeches in English. The selection of the extracts is so made as to trace the course of Nehru's thought as also to illuminate the many facets of the man. Similar references can be made to the writings about other thinkers, reformers and leaders like Rammohun, Vidyasagar, Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, Dayananda, Ranade, Tilak, Aurobinda, Lajpat Rai, C. R. Das and Subhas Bose, but it is hardly possible to do so here for obvious reasons.

Some competent writings about the evolution of Indian economic thought have also come out. In his *Development of Economic Ideas in India* (1800-1950) (1958) P. K. Gopalakrishnan, while surveying certain aspects of the subject, traces the socio-economic background of early economic ideas in India. He deals with certain important stages in the evolution of economic ideas represented by the most well-known economic thinkers. He feels that a historical treatment of Indian economic ideas bears a contemporary interpretation involving certain value judgements. In 1973 the Indian Economic Association decided to sponsor the preparation of a two-volume study of Indian contributions to economic thinking and analysis, the first volume covering the 19th century and the second dealing with the first half of the present century. The purpose is obviously to meet the demand of standard work on the history and development of Indian economic thought. The first volume written by B. N. Ganguli under the title *Indian Economic Thought* :

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Nineteenth Century Prespectives (1977) records the response of Indian intellectuals to the challenge of new ideas generated by the 'revolutionary' events and consequent political and economic upheavals in the period between 1757 and the early 19th century. It traces the emergence of a 'strange mixture of humanistic idealism and economic realism' in the ideas of modernists like Rammohun and Ranade, great liberals like Dadabhai Naoroji and proponents of Swadeshi like Gokhale and Gandhi. The volume starts with Raja Rammohun Roy and has devoted its major attention to the other pioneers in economic thinking in the 19th-century India like M. G. Ranade and R. C. Dutt. The author has also explored and evaluated the ideas of Satish Chandra Mukherjee, G. S. Iyer, G. V. Joshi and G. K. Gokhale. He ends with a chapter on the political economy in the world of Gandhi and Nehru. Though the second volume *Indian Economic Thought : Twentieth Century Perspectives*, 1900-1950 (1978), written by Bhabatosh Datta, is meant to "maintain a basic continuity" with its predecessor volume, the method followed by B. N. Ganguli has been changed by Datta while determining the plan of his approach. It has been done so in view of the fact that the 20th century "presented a different picture". The second volume may be called "an encyclopaedic work by an encyclopeadic mind". Without following a purely chronological approach, the author has historically analysed "the whole matrix of interrelated ideas that emerged during the period covered, with emphasis on the positive contributions of Indian economists".

Historical writing, like other forms of culture, is genuinely "a historical product" and has to be "considered against the background of the civilisation out of which it grew". Hence a history of historical writing, in the words of H. E. Barnes, "must necessarily be, to a large degree, a phase in the intellectual history of mankind". The post-independence era has witnessed some progress in the field of modern Indian historiography, as evident from the production of historiographical work since 1947. As representative of the endeavours made in the field of modern Indian historiography may be mentioned the following works : (i) *Historians of India ,Pakistan and Ceylon*

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(ed. by C. H. Phillips, 1961), (ii) R. C. Majumdar, *Historiography in Modern India* (1970), (iii) J. S. Grewal, *Muslim Rule in India : The Assessment of British Historians* (1970), (iv) *Historians and Historiography in Modern India* (ed. by S. P. Sen, 1973 ; the present writer is a contributor to this volume—his paper is on 'James Tod'), (v) N. Subrahmanian, *Historiography* (1973), (vi) Tarasankar Banerjee, *Sardar K. M. Panikkar : The Profile of a Historian* (1977), (vii) B. Sheik Ali, *History : Its Theory and Method* (1978) and (viii) Subodh Kumar Mukhopadhyay, *Evolution of Historiography in Modern India* : 1900-1960 (1981).

The foregoing discussion thus gives us an idea of the gradual but marked emergence of the intellectual history of modern India since 1947, of its background and dimensional growth. In this connection it may be pointed out that the task of the intellectual historian is difficult. He has to exert himself to collect source materials for the opinions and attitudes of at least a 'sampling' of those strata in a given society that he considers are touched by the ideas he discusses. The intellectual historian who seeks to judge the nature of the impact of an idea or cluster of ideas on human events is confronted with the 'old' problem of value judgements. Yet the role of the intellectual historian in the study of human affairs can hardly be underestimated. The history of ideas may be viewed as that of "a constant struggle to interpret human problems in the light of condition that continue to change".[17] What the physical atmosphere is to our bodies, the ideas are to our mind. Our ideas are embodied in our ways of thinking, our forms of explanation, our symbols and analogies. Without them we are to lose the attributes of the human being. They give us the necessary philosophic explanations of a situation or development. They provide us with "a way of finding meaning in our environment and experiences". The thinkers are the 'sensitive antennae' of society. As such they are the first to sense keenly the attitudes of an emerging age and to ably express them in a period when "a changing society finds the hitherto predominant sentiments, formerly satisfactory, becoming less convincing". Individual interpretation of the weight of the ideas no doubt varies according to the predisposition of a person. Yet social forces, social

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action and human institutions are "inconceivable without ideas". Ideas are the "threads which hold men together". They are the "concentrated reflections of the other social forces". One may be inclined to doubt if the idea is usually "the most basic factor" in any great historical movement ; yet, "equally obviously", it can hardly be omitted from any discussion of such a development.

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15

Trends in Early Indian Art-History Since 1947

GAUTAM SENGUPTA

I

Re-discovery of Indian art resulted out of British attempt at comprehending the colonial situation. Since the 18th century English officials started reporting Indian antiquities. The foundation of the Asiatic Society at Calcutta in 1784 and of Archaeological Survey in 1862 contributed much towards this direction. Indian sculptures, paintings and handicrafts were acquired by the museums abroad. Henry Cole's *Catalogue of Objects of Indian Art Exhibited in the South Kensington Museum* published in 1874, gave the Western World 'the very first history of Indian Art'.[1]

Most of Cole's formulations are irrelevant by present standard of scholarship, but it embodies notions that aptly reflects prevalent perception on Indian art. From Cole to Vincent Smith, British attitude to Indian art wavers between outright condemnation and mild patronage. Vincent Smith's *A History of Fine Arts in India and Ceylon* (1911) draws upon the findings of Burgess, Fergusson and Cunningham. Smith systematised a host of scattered evidence and worked out a cohesive account with the premise that qualities of Indian art had to be judged in terms of the classical standards. By 1927, however, the study of Indian art underwent a major change with the publication of *History*

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of Indian and Indonesian Art by Ananda K. Coomaraswamy. Along with E. B. Havell Coomaraswamy advocated for the appreciation of Indian art on its own terms. Through a lifetime of devoted work, Coomaraswamy built up the basic structure of Indian art-history. He surveyed the entire range of Indian visual arts, identified major styles and schools and ascertained their chronological position. Far more important, however, was his concern with the textual and spiritual basis of Indian art. In other words, Coomaraswamy pleaded for the autonomy of Indian approach. Contribution of Coomaraswamy in the realm of art-historical studies can hardly be overstated. Prior to him, the scene was dominated by archaeologists like Cunningham,[1] Burgess and Fergusson[2] on the one hand and Birdwood and Smith on the other. The essence of archaeological method was detailed description, measurement and classification often in terms of Western system. Coomaraswamy's writings influenced generations of art-historians. P. K. Acharya, A. K. Maitreya, O. C. Gangoly among others initiated a new phase of art-historical studies in India.

Without going into an assessment of Coomaraswamy and his illustrious contemporaries, it may be useful to evaluate their impact on the writings since 1947. It must be emphasised that 1947 is, by no means, a watershed in Indian art-history. St. Kramrisch's *Hindu Temple* (1946), F. D. K. Bosch's *Golden Gem* (1948) and H. Zimmer's *Art of Indian Asia* (1961) are three outstanding examples. In sharp contrast to the prevalent archaeological method, Kramrisch attempted to unravel the personality of Indian temple by turning towards textual sources. Kramrisch's attempt to explain structural elements on the basis of textual data and to integrate them into an unifying concept, breaks a new ground. Bosch's work, appropriately dedicated to Coomaraswamy, takes up the problem of certain motifs ; their meaning and representation in Indian art. To what extent Coomaraswamy's approach had shaped Bosch's method can be illustrated. Writing about a particular image type, viz., *Ekapadamurti* of Siva, Bosch observed : "With this singular image before us, after taking into account the features falling within the art-historians purview, such as its origin, style, school,

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date and so on, it would be difficult to deny that there yet remains in the image something unidentified. And we must ask ourselves again whether this 'Something' might not be very important, and whether on closer investigation it might not turn out to be the most essential part of the image, viz., its meaning as a symbol, disclosing "**something higher than what is merely percieved by senses**".[3] Admittedly, one can also identify traces of Panofsky's formulation on the various stages of identification in this statement. Zimmer, more than anyone else, remained true to Coomaraswamy's approach. His basic preoccupation was Indian mythology and its transformation in Indian art. Almost echoing Coomaraswamy, Zimmer wrote : "...Indian art had beginnings totally different from that of the Western developments and this explains the failure of the categories (so called basic principles) of our system of Art-History to meet and comprehend the Indian facts. It is certain that anyone permanently condemned to our classical point of view will never contemplete there pictures with any real pleasure. For all that we can do with such principles if we insist on retaining them, is to apply them tentatively—after we have viewed the Indian work frankly and naively, without any preconception, in an honest effort to comprehend their special traits."[4] But when it comes to appreciating specific work of art, Zimmer moves away from formal/visual consideration and adopts an essentially subjective position crouched in metaphysical language, "From the fifth to sixth century...the tangible idol or fetish in stone, the archaic free standing image, became transfigured into a luminous manifestation, while the forms in the relief were sublimated into the subtle matter of the apparitions of an inner visions. Thus the art work became themselves the *avataras* in the sphere of *Maya* of a divine spark".[5] I have quoted Zimmer at some length because his writings, along with some of his contemporaries, mark an welcome shift from Eurocentrism but their philosophical preoccupations adopt a language which is somewhat beyond the realm of art-history. Alice Boner's *Symbolic Aspect of Form* (1946)[6] is an important examples of this genre of writing.

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Motifs and symbols remain a major concern in Indian art-historical studies : U. P. Shah's writings on motifs and symbols associated with Jainism,[7] V. S. Agarwala's detailed treatment of Vedic symbolism,[8] Sergiu-A-George and Amion Rosu's lengthy paper on Purnaghata[9] and A. Sen's book on Animal Motifs[10] reflect, in various degrees, the growing interest in this area. Not only textual sources and religious implications have been studied, evolutionary sequence of motifs have been meaningfully utilised for various purposes including dating Indian temples.[11]

II

The tradition of grand survey's established by Vincent Smith and Ananda Coomaraswamy continued even in the period under discussion. Between 1954 and 1957, a number of general accounts of Indian art have been published. Most of them reiterate the basic formulations of Coomaraswamy. Benjamin Rowland, for example, provides a very competent survey on Indian art and relates forms to the Indian conceptual categories.[12] H. Goetz's fascinating survey adopts an essentially Euro-centrist way of looking at Indian art. Frequent use of Western terminologies, viz., classic renaissance, Baroque and Rococo, characterise this work. For Goetz varied traditions of Gandhara and Mathura represent the classic art, on two occasions the term renaissance has been used in the context of South India and the art of early medieval Bengal is labelled 'a sort of heiratic Gupta Baroque and Rococo.'[13] More important is Goetz's attempt to overemphasise the political events vis-a-vis artistic development. Each dynasty is believed to have its own art, this leads to identifying categories like Ikshaku style, Haihaya art and Chahamana art. Goetz, however, tries to synchronise regional and dynastic classifications, thus he writes about Pallava-Pandya painting at Sittanavasal, Kashmir style and Chandella art. The following statement aptly reflects Goetz's ideas about the interrelationship of art and political development; "with the decline of the Gupta Empire this serenity disappeared. The sculptures of the 6th century are charged with nervous tensions —heavy bodies, with stark light and shadow contrasts, but full

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of restlessness and a visionary mysticism behind the outward display of superhuman energy".[14]

A significant development that made an overview of Indian art possible was the publication of multi-volume *History and Culture of Indian People* edited by R. C. Majumdar. Here is some of the early volumes, viz., *Age of Imperial Unity* (1951), *Classical Age* (1954) and *Struggle for Empire* (1957). Nihar Ranjan Ray and Sarasi Kumar Saraswati worked out a cohesive account of early Indian art and architecture with its regional variations. The method adopted by them is basically empirical. A keen sense of chronology coupled with standardisation of terminologies make these chapters *terra firma* of early Indian art-history. Nihar Ranjan Ray, however, tried to relate formal elements to the social developments. His famous thesis on medieval factors in Indian art[15] or interrelationship between the ornate Sanskrit literature and Bengal sculpture of the 11th-12th century A. D.[16] are some of the notable examples. Ray and Saraswati, however, remained loyal to the overall empirical frame of the volumes, notwithstanding occasional concern with sociological questions. The most recent work along this line is *Art of Ancient India* by Susan L. Huntington (1985). In author's own words it attempts to give a 'synthetic overview'.[17] Enriched by recent advancement in researches on Indian art and archaeology, this work combines sectarian classification (its subtitle *Buddhist, Hindu, Jain*, reminds us of Rowland's book) and dynastic/regional classification. Terminologies like Art of the Rajput clan (Part Four, Section 20) are reminiscent of Herman Goetz's articulations.

III

The main thrust of researches on Indian art is directed towards the region. In using this term, I am aware of the inadequacy of cogent formulations on the region in Indian art historical context. Two factors have contributed towards growing interest in the regional studies. Since 1930's Indian political arena has been dominated by an increasing consciousness about linguistic, ethnic or cultural identity of a given area ; heroes were identified, vernacular literature was patronised and artistic

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traditions of the area were viewed as something distinctive. Current emphasis on micro-regions in Social Sciences have also shaped the attitude of historians of Indian art who have started looking at Indian art in terms of region, subregion and centres. Publication of regional histories since 1937 gave fillip to this trend. S. K. Saraswati wrote on *Early Sculpture of Bengal* (1937), Kalyan Kumar Gangopadhyay attempted a synoptic account of Bengal sculpture (1947), B. P. Sinha highlighted the contribution of Bihar to the Indian art (1958). In Western India, M. R. Majumdar took up the art heritage of Gujarat. These studies opened up the possibilities of more thorough and intensive work on a given region. Authors' biases, however, surface in an oblique manner, either in the title of a book or in over-emphasising the impact of a king or a dynasty. For Bengali historians Shashanka, the King of Gauda, is a symbol of emergence of Bengali identity.[17a] It needs to be emphasised that work of this genre continued to retain the basic methodological and terminological traditions laid down by the earlier art-historians. Chronology and styles, for examples, are worked out in terms of ruling dynasties—frequent use of terms like Gupta, post-Gupta, pre-Pala and Pala to designate stylistic phases underscore authors' inbuilt faith in dynastic approach. Inspite of occasional debates on the efficiency of dynastic labelling in the context of Indian art-history,[18] this practice has not lost its ground. There is another dimension to the regional studies on Indian art. Concept of a region is never clearly spelt out whether a geographical region coincides with an artistic region, how geography shapes the artistic development of a region are some of the vexed but unresolved issues.

The concept of region has often been extended beyond a linguistically or ethnically homogenous area—emphasis being laid in this context to historical or cultural regions. G. Yazdani's volume on *Fine Arts* in the *History of Deccan* (vol. 1, Pt. VIII, 1952) tacitly recognises this perspective. Early Indian art-history is reconciled to broader, if not homogenous, regional classification. C. Sivaramamurti's *South Indian Broznes* (1963), *South Indian Paintings* (1965), Journal of Indian Society of Oriental Art's Special Volume on *Western Indian Art* (1965), Madanjeet

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Singh's *Himalayan Art* (1968), S. K. Mitra (ed.) *East Indian Bronzes* (1981), Frederick Asher's *Art of Eastern India* (1982) are some of the important studies pursued along this line. In dealing with the artistic development of a broader region, scholars often tend to view the stylistic affiliations in isolation. Sivaramamurti, for example, argued that Ajanta Paintings bear no trace of 'Gupta' influence.[18a] On certain occasions, attempts have been made to establish the historicity of a regional school on the basis of literary evidence. U. P. Shah's repeated utterances about the 'Western School' are based on the doubtful testimony of *Taranatha*. As pointed out earlier, dynastic labels continue to be in use. Frederick Asher's recent attempt to synthesise dynastic and regional classification leads to a curious position.[19]

Another important aspect of regional studies is a growing interest in the monuments of a particular site. Beginning with R. L. Mitra, B. M. Barua and Ananda Coomaraswamy in the early decades of the century, this trend has gathered momentum. Scope of this kind of work is immense and a vast corpus of writing is already in existence. Most of the writings, however, adopt the standard archaeological method of description, a measurement and iconographic identification. U. P. Shah's detailed discussion of *Akota Bronzes* (1959) and *Sculptures of Samlaji and Roda* (1960), Debala Mitra's thorough studies on Jhewari Bronzes[20] and *Bronzes from Achutrajpur, Orissa* (1978) are in the best tradition of historical archaeology. Stylistic considerations are given greater importance in Douglas Barret's *Amaravati Sculptures in the British Museum* (1954) and Amita Ray's *Aurangabad Sculptures* (1966). Walter. M. Spinks's methods involve a combined study of political forces, architectural forms and iconographical features as illustrated in 'Bagh'[21] and 'Elephanta'.[22] Shiela L. Weiner, follows the essentials of Spinks's methods. She suggests that changing doctrinaire of Buddhism as well as of its monastic order explain much of the architectural, sculptural and pictorial innovations at Ajanta.[23] E. Zannes' exhaustive work on 'Khajuraho' (1960) throws much light on the monuments and their styles, but much of her discussion on the development of machinery of

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government, administration and society remains unrelated to the artistic developments.

IV

Dynasties, as opposed to the region, remain a basis for classification of artistic traditions. The basis of dynastic classification is not very clear in the context of Indian art. Evidence of patronage from ruling houses is extremely limited in scope. But it is assumed that dynasties provided some form of ideology which was translated in the artistic endeavours of a period. It is also suggested that dynasties contributed towards the stability of the society and this, in its turn, encourages art-activities. V. S. Agarwala's *Gupta Art* (1957) views the artistic traditions of the period as a homogenous entity and turns to the literature to explain motifs and smybols. J. E. Van Lohuizen De Lea in her *The Scythian Period* (1949) combines historical, artistic, epigraphical and paleographical evidences, she proposed a new set of dates on the basis of 'omitted hundred' years theory. John M. Rosenfield takes up certain categories of art objects ; and the choice justifies the title of his work.[24] S. R. Balasubramanian's *Early Chola Art* (1966) and Douglas Barrets *Early Chola Architecture and Sculptures* (1974) go to the extent of designating stylistic phases after the member of the royal family.[25] J. C. Harle's *Gupta Sculpture* (1974), inspite of a dynastic label, views the art-activities in terms of regions and centres and admits of the regional variations within a broad stylistic framework. Joanna Williams[26] pleads for an alternative point of view in the understanding of Gupta sculpture. She contradicts the dominant concept of primacy of Somnath in the formation of Gupta style and assigns Mathura a very prominent position. Susan Huntington's *The Pala-Sena Schools of Sculpture* (1984) regognises the limitation of dynastic labelling. Huntington writes : "Thus, although in this volume, the term 'Pala-Sena period art' is often used generically to refer to the sculpture schools under consideration, it should be noted that neither a direct reference to Pala or Sena patronage is necessarily implied, nor is the role of other families and dynasties in art production and history being denied" (p.7). Huntington tries to identify

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a number of schools in Bihar and Bengal and identifies their interrelationship and independence. The work discussed so far have one thing in common, none of them has taken dynastic affiliation for granted—dynastic label for them is more of a cultural concept. Unfortunately, a large number of recent work, mostly authored by Indians, use the term with utter carelessness. Even at the risk of being unpleasant, I would cite an example. Writing about the *Art and Architecture of the Kalachuris* (1980) the author observes, "It is quite obvious that the Kalachuris espoused art and culture but a closer examination reveals that their works were essentially a continuation of the rich art traditions of Central India".[27] One must be very careful about terminologies and their implications.

V

In 1927, Coomaraswamy made a categorical assertion against the sectarian approach to Indian art.[28] From time to time, voices have been raised against this trend. S. K. Saraswati questioned the validity of sectarian approach and illustrated how a particular religious motif is universalised in Indian tradition.[29] Admittedly, sectarian classification is almost out of use, but at times it is used in most respectable circles. A. Ghosh edited three sumptuously illustrated volumes on *Jaina Art and Architecture* (1975). What these volumes achieved is a thorough and systematic study of monuments associated with Jainism, and the method employed by most of the contributors is descriptive and iconographical. A recent study of the *Development of Early Saiva Art and Architecture with Special Reference to Andhra-Desa* (1982) by I. K. Sharma, is indicative of the absurdity associated with this approach. Irrespective of the religious affiliation, artists had to tackle certain common technical and compositional problems. These, to a very great extent, determined the 'nature of a work of art'. Ratan Parimoo has shown how compositional necessities determined the lay-out of *asta-mahapratiharya* stelaei.[30] Studies on Indian art with a pronounced emphasis on formal and compositional elements are few and far between. Philip Rowson made an intensive analysis of the form and structure of Indian sculptures in a

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paper entitled 'The Methods of Indian Sculpture'.[31] P. Stern and M. Benisti studied the evolution of Amaravati style mainly on the formal terms.[32] The problem of relationship between the perspective and compositional structure of the Bharhut sculptures and Gandhara art was systematically considered by M. Mariottini Spagnoli.[33] M. Bussagle's paper on 'The Frontal Representation of the Divine Chariot' addresses to the compositional problems.[34] Philosophical categories are inter-woven into the compositional problems in a study on the rock-cut reliefs of Ellora, Badami and Mahabalipuram by Alice Boner.[35] According to Boner, each work has a 'space division' with a 'time division' superimposed on it. Boner further suggests that her ideas on the 'geometrical structure' of the figures suggests are based on *Silpa Prakasa*—an 11th century A. D. Orissan Silpa text. Though highly suggestive, this work overlook the simple fact that all composition conform to certain basic scheme of spatial organisation which is determined according to the availability of space and thematic requirements.

VI

Any attempt to understand the compositional aspects must take into consideration the artists' point of view the challenge posed by the space, problem of tackling the materials and artists' innovations. Unfortunately, there had been very little concern with these questions. S. K. Saraswati's spirited appeal for the interpretation of Indian art from the artists' point of view has not created desirable impact,[36] but in recent times, some scholars have tried to rescue the artists from the anonymity. There are scattered evidences, largely fragmentary in nature, on the identity, social status and crafts organisations of the artists-craftsmen (a distinction rightly disapproved by Coomaraswamy) in early India. And limitations of the recent attempt to understand this phenomenon must be viewed in this perspective. S. Settar takes up a particular monument, viz., Gommata Suttalaya and identifies its builder mainly on the basis of inscriptional data.[37] His recent attempt to systematic available evidence of the artists of Memorial Stones in Karnataka brings out much

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new materials.[38] R. N. Misra combines scanty archaeological evidence with textual data in an attempt to explain the artists and art activities in ancient India.[32]

Little attempt, however, has been made to understand Indian art as a social process. Earlier scholars like R. P. Chanda and Sir John Marshall were certainly aware of this dimension but they were too much preoccupied with the concept of Race.[40] But many other questions of more serious nature are involved in this approach.

The scope and limitations of sociological approach to art have been discussed at some length by Arnold Houser who asserts that 'art forms are not only forms that have been experienced and defined visually and acoustically, but they are also forms of expression of a certain world view, determined by the social environment'.[41] In the Indian context, explorations on these lines are extremely rare with certain notable exceptions like the writings of Nihar Ranjan Ray. Nurtured in Coomaraswamy-Kramrisch tradition Ray, however, made a bold departure by bringing in ideological elements and social components in the study of Indian art. His *Maurya and Suriga Art* originally published in 1945 and subsequently revised and enlarged as *Maurya and Post-Maurya Art* : a study in social and formal contrasts (1975) examines among other things interrelationship between the formal-thematic aspects of art and prevalent social and ideological situations. What distinguishes Ray's work, however, is a judicious discussion on the formal qualities and a proper integration of formal and social dimensions. In *Idea and Image in Indian Art* (1973) Ray turned a new leaf. He identifies three basic image types, viz., Sarnath Buddha in *Dharmachakramudra*, Elephanta *Mahesamurti* and South Indian *Nataraja*, and illustrates how these images embody subtle intellectual categories like *bodhi* (supreme enlightenment), matter of life and flux. But, even in this work, Ray does not loose sight of the socioreligious basis of art forms and points out the linkage between newly emergent Brahmanical system and representation of Hindu myths and icons on the rock-cut shrines of Central and Western India from around the 5th-6th century A. D.[42] *An Approach to Indian Art* (1974) sums up Ray's

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favourite thesis on the relevance of *Kavya* and *Alamkara* literature for the understanding of Indian art, but here also Ray argues for the exploration of social and ethnic issues.[43] From *Bangalir Itihasa* (Adi Parva) (1949) to *An Approach to Indian Art* Nihar Ranjan Ray opened up newer and newer possibilities towards a proper appreciation of the social basis of Indian art. There had been some studies following Ray's approach with different degrees of success. A recent study by S. Settar ably discussed how a particular variety of monuments had come into being as part of the death-ritual of the Jainas.[44] It must, however, be conceded that sociological approach to Indian art sometimes tends to oversimplify issues and opts for terminologies and parallels in total disregard to distinctive Indian situations. The following extract will illustrate this point. "The function of art in feudal society was to impress and dazzle the audience or the onlooker and to proclaim the glory, might and riches of opulent patrons. Though apparently in the service of religion, it was actually the means of gratifying their aspiration for fame and glory. Art succeded in the function of glorification and, therefore, failed in conveying higher qualities, feeling and value".[45] Co-relation between the artistic development and socioeconomic formations is a complex, intricate and often confusing area and as Hauser puts it "The translation of economic conditions into ideologies remain a process that can never be completely clarified".[46] Hauser explains this problem at some length : "Complicated, full of interruption and contradictions the way may be that leads from certain social conditions to the creation of spiritual values, as for instance from Dutch middle-class capitalism to the works of Rembrandt, still in the end one has to decide whether or not such conditions are relevant."[47] Sociological approach to Indian art has to evolve sophisticated theoretical apparatus.

VII

So far our attention has been centred primarily on sculpture, and with a few exceptions, studies on early Indian paintings conform to the patterns identified in the earlier sections. One significant development relates to the study of *Silpasastra*'s

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or technical treatises. Admittedly, the trend was laid down by A. K. Maitreya, Coomaraswamy, Kramrisch, V. Raghavan and many others. This trend has been continued. Publication of texts like *Aparajitapriccha*,[48] *Samararigana Sutradhara*,[49] *Visnudharmottara Purana*,[50] *Chitra-Laksmana*[51] and *Chitra Sutra*,[52] paved the way towards clarification and corrections of terminologies, themes and techniques. Some scholars have made use of the rich crop of textual materials in an attempt to reconstruct the technical aspects of early Indian paintings. Siri Gunessingha's *Technique de la peinture Indienne, d'apres les texts du Silpa* (1957) and Ashok K. Bhattacharya's *Technique of Indian Painting* (1974) are two important attempts along this direction. Bhattacharya collects a host of textual data, relates them to the extant murals and painted manuscripts and systematically work out basic technical problems like preparation of colour, ground, carrier, etc. K. M. Varma's *The Indian Technique of Clay Modelling* (1970) is a perceptive study in which textual evidence, mostly South Indian Agamic, refers to the practises prevalent among the traditional image-makers. Varma clarifies and improves upon our understanding of many of the terms and techniques relating to painting and clay-modelling.[53] Moti Chandra's *Studies in Early Indian Paintings* (1974), D. Barret and B. Gray's *Paintings of India* (1963) and K. Khandalvala's *Development of Style in Indian Painting* (1972) are in the nature of generalised survey, providing immense material arranged in a more or less conventional framework. C. Sivaramamurti's *South Indian Paintings* (1965), as pointed out earlier, has a distinct regional overtone. All the major schools have been identified in relation to the dynasties, thus creating a curious position. Hoysala paintings illustrated by him cannot but be viewed as an extension of Western Indian style.[54] Moti Chandra's *Jain Miniature Paintings from Western India* (1949) and S. K. Saraswati's *Pala Yuger Chitrakala* (1978) are two important work on the regional schools of paintings.

Of the numerous studies on paintings from a particular site, mention may be made of Mukul Dey's somewhat personal statements on Bagh and Ajanta,[55] Madanjeet Singh's profusely illustrated volume on Ajanta,[56] A. Ghosh (ed.) *Ajanta Mural*

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(1967), and B. Rowland's *Ajanta Caves : early Buddhist paintings from India* (1963). G. Yazdani's multivolume work on Ajanta was completed by 1955.[57] These work to a very great extent follow the archaeological method of careful documentation, description and identification with occasional discussion on style. Rowland and Ingril Aall, however, discuss problems of style in a very meaningful manner. Much have been written on the Ajanta themes, their identification and related issues.[58] J. Auboyer's composition and perspectives at Ajanta provides new insights. Similarly Ashok K. Bhattacharya's approach to the comparative study of painting,[60] opens up a new possibilities for discussion on the treatment of perspective in Ajanta. Paintings from some other sites have also been discussed in a number of papers, most of which are by and large, descriptive in nature. A few may be cited ; H. Goetz wrote on Aihole Mural,[61] T. N. Ramachandran on Sittanavasal paintings,[62] C. Sivaramamurti on Badami paintings[63] and V. Mishra on Junnar.[64] The main bulk of writing on Indian painting is concerned with medieval miniature, an area beyond the purview of this essay.

VIII

The main thrust of architectural studies is towards identification of regional/subregional styles and evolving terminologies. Textual sources are frequently used. Publication of N. V. Mallaya's *Studies in Sanskrit Texts on Temple Architecture* (1947) and T. P. Bhattacharya's *The Canons of Indian Architecture* (1947), reflect the growing concern with the textual basis of Indian architecture. While Mallaya based his work on *Tantara-Samuccaya*, Bhattacharya made use of a host of textual material, but arranged them in a most uncritical chronological scheme which spoils the usefulness of the work to a considerable extent.[65] N. K. Bose's work on Orissan tradition (published in 1932)[66] and Prabha Shankar O Somapura's, himself a competent sthapati, treaties on Western Indian tradition bring into focus the architect's point of view. Recently, A. Boner and her associates have published an Orissan text, claimed to have been in use during the construction of Sun Temple at

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Konarak.[68] But the authenticity of this text is not beyond doubt. The limitation of texts in explaining the actual practises must be taken into consideration. Writings on early Indian architecture, are primarily concerned with religious structures. Amita Rays' *Town, Village and Secular Buildings in Ancient India* (1971) studies the dwelling and house-types on the basis of narrative reliefs carved at Bharhut, Sanchi and related sites. Vidya Dehajia's *Early Buddhist Rock Temples* (1972) is a restatement on earlier views. Based on a reconsideration of palaeographic evidence, this work concerns itself with chronological position of the monuments. Despite methodological sophistication, it hardly improves upon our understanding on this area. By far the most systematic and cohesive account of the early Buddhist architecture is by H. Sarkar. The scope of this work is restricted to the pre-Gupta Period. S. K. Saraswati's historical-stylistic study of the Indian architecture in *Age of Imperial Unity* (1951), *Classical Age* (1954) and *Struggle for Empire* (1957) provided the very basis for detailed chronological and regional studies. An attempt to present an overview with the help of traditional texts and usages marks K. V. Soundara Rajan's recent work.[69] It brings to surface the problem of terminologies in Indian context.

The establishment of Architectural Survey of Temples Project in 1955 by the Archaeological Survey of India 'for a systematic comprehensive study of the architecture of ancient temples'[70] was a recognition of knowledge gap in this branch of study. It was announced that 'as a preliminary to field work the officers engaged themselves in compiling a standard list of technical architectural terms on the basis of the ancient texts on architecture, inscription, and the living traditional sthapatis and silpis'.[71]

Since then, important projects have been undertaken and findings published. Krishna Deva's paper on Khajuraho temples[72] combines inscriptional evidence with consideration of the evolution of component arts of a temple and affords a relatively wider chronology for the temples. Similarly, K. R. Srinivasan's *Cave Temple of the Pallavas* (1964) belongs to the historical-textual tradition of architectural study. This tradition has been continued in the subsequent volumes on Deccan Cave Temples[73]

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and Kerala Temples.[74] One of the earliest work on the structural architecture of Deccan was by A. V. Naik.[75]

The attempt to identify and interpret the regional traditions of Indian architecture in terms of known and unpublished texts has assumed great importance in the writings of M. A. Dhaky. Along with J. N. Nanavati, Dhaky started surveying the temples associated with Maitraka and Saindhava dynasties of early medieval Western India, the result of which is elaborated in a very detailed well-documented volume.[76] Dhaky also wrote on the component parts of temples.[77] But his textual orientation is illustrated in an elaborate paper on a particular variety of temples of Western India.[78] Here Dhaky made use of published and unpublished texts in order to evolve a regional terminology.[79] Admittedly, this is a promising area, but overdependence on the textual terms often restricts the scope of understanding and this problem comes into surface in his recent work where he tries to synthesise textual, inscription and structural evidence.[80] Krishna Deva has meaningfully utilised textual evidence in identifying a particular type of temples as Bhumija.[81] Joanna Williams studies the vexed problem of the wooden origin of the Gupta Temple.[82] P. K. Agarwala presents a systematic study of the Gupta Temples.[83] D. R. Das focuses upon the subregional characteristics of a group of Western Orissan temples.[84] The problem of symbolism of structure and their component parts have started attracting the interest of a number of scholars. Michael M. Meister's recent papers are directed towards this problem.[85] *Encyclopedia of Indian Temple Architecture*, South India,[86] Lower Dravida Desa 200 B.C.-A.D. 1324 reflects on the nature of contemporary scholarship on Indian architecture. Edited by an American scholar, this volume contains the writings of some of India's most well-known authorities on this area. The material is organised first with reference to region and then by period. Styles are identified by region and then by dynasty. If this system of classification is to be accepted, then there has to be hundreds of styles beyond the Vindhyas. The use of terminologies also pose certain problems. Regional terminologies are certainly relevant, but use of terms like Karrali, Upagriva,

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Ostha hardly adds to our understanding. Standardisation of terminologies along with the use of regional ones is a priority for architectural studies.

IX

In the foregoing pages, an attempt has been made to indicate the main trends and tendencies in the study of early Indian art-history. Admittedly, scope of this paper is fragmentary in the sense that our choice was restricted mainly to the materials published in English language. Work in other European and Indian languages have to be kept out of its purview. Writings on early Indian art-history since 1947 have touched upon many important areas, but there is no denying the fact that it has not made any breakthrough in the realm of analysis or methodology. 'Style', for example, is still a vaguely defined category in Indian context. Again, the basis of periodisation and nomenclature remains uncertain. Identificaiion of region in the context of art-history is yet to evolve a definitive scheme. Indian art-history has enlarged the area of enquiry, but, by and large it has moved along the route charted by earlier scholars.

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