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### Title

PASSAGE FROM INDIA - ASIAN INDIAN IMMIGRANTS IN NORTH-AMERICA - JENSEN, JM

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Review

Reviewed Work(s): *Passage from India: Asian Indian Immigrants in North America* by Joan M. Jensen

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mentions the recent intrusion of Anglo-American land developers into the region.

Land conflicts, as this book so aptly analyzes, are at the heart of chronic Spanish-American unrest in rural northern New Mexico from the 1840s to the present. This collection of excellent studies casts light upon the causes of this unrest that, from time to time, has convulsed northern New Mexico. It is an excellent contribution to the growing land grant literature and to Spanish-American and New Mexican studies. I would, however, like to protest the intrusion of the amorphous term "Hispanic" into Spanish-American studies. As it includes all those from a Spanish-speaking background, such as Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Argentines, and other Latin American groups, it introduces an aura of ambiguity into Mexican-American and Spanish-American studies.

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*Passage From India: Asian Indian Immigrants in North America.* By Joan M. Jensen. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988, 350 pp.

Joan Jensen has amassed materials for many years on the early Asian Indian immigrants to North America. Because of her focus on the political refugees and activists among them, she extended her research to cover British, British Indian, Canadian, United States, and German policy. One consequence of this is that she presents a great deal of information about the policies and actions of these governments regarding Asian Indians in North America; another consequence is that the subtitle is quite misleading. Admitting that she initially found her mass of materials unruly, she has tried to place her materials in a framework that makes "the actions of both the Indians and the governments explicable" (p. x).

The book is sometimes difficult to read. There are organizational problems as she interweaves her two major themes: the experiences of South Asian migratory workers and political revolutionaries in North America and the formulation of public policy by Canada and the United States. In the opening pages, the chronology and geographic focus jump about unpredictably. Paragraph by paragraph, we move from Asian immigrants and American nativists in the 1920s and 1930s to Indian political activities in 1914 to the 1857 revolt in India to early twentieth-century Japan to turn of the century China and then back to late-nineteenth century British India (pp. 2–3). Similar problems plague the rest of the prologue and the epilogue (which, despite its title, "The Pioneers," returns to the public policy theme and includes material on the post-1965 immigrants).

As Jensen moves into the body of the book, however, we get solid chapters on migration and work experiences, expulsions from the West Coast and exclusion from Canada, and increasingly restrictive U.S. immigration policies and challenges to them. She has a wealth of detailed material on South Asian political activists and Canadian and U.S. surveillance of them; the Ghadar party, the German connection, and the 1918 "Hindu conspiracy" trial in San Francisco get very full coverage. The final chapters take us up to the mid-1920s, through the U.S. deportation of political prisoners and the loss of the battle for naturalization. The gloomy conclusion is that "Indians now formed a small band of people set apart from Americans by what truly must have seemed a great white wall" (p. 269).

The book is an indictment of Euro-American policy toward Asian Indians, an attempt to explain the discrimination against them. Jensen documents that discrimination thoroughly, utilizing sources ranging from archival holdings and court cases to personal interviews. The explanation is still unruly, as she talks of hostility based on culture, ethnicity, race, economic competition and political opposition in various combinations.

Readers of *Agricultural History* will be interested in the material on Asian Indian participation in California agriculture. But her treatment here is cursory, not comparable to Sucheng Chan's work on the Chinese in California agriculture. Indeed, Jensen states simply in several places that the Japanese replaced the Chinese as agricultural laborers, and so on, ending with Asian exclusion leading to the admission of Mexican immigrants to solve labor needs. But Jensen's interest is in the political, not the economic or social, aspect of the immigrant experience. Here lies another difference between her work and that of Chan, for Jensen focuses on the urban-based political activists and the Canadian and U.S. makers of public policy, not on the rural majority of Asian Indian agriculturalists.

References were sometimes a problem. I suppose it was to save space that Jensen puts several citations into a single footnote at the end of a lengthy, fact-filled paragraph (or paragraphs), making it hard for the reader to connect the various facts and statements with the sources listed. On the other hand, some of her generalizations require evidence or elaboration. I was interested to read that some Indians "joined Mexican-American or black communities (p. 40)," but there is no citation.

I fault the Press for some careless proofreading and editing. I was not looking for such errors, but Nand Kaur Singh appears as Nahn Kaur Singh in the bibliography and as Nahn Kahr Singh in footnote citations; Leona Bagai is cited as Leona Gagai in bibliography and footnotes. Use of the phrase "California Indians" for the Asian Indian immigrant population is surely confusing, and the verses from Ghadar protest songs used to open chapters are not always apt. An editor should have helped reorganize the

introductory section to launch readers more quickly into the substantive chapters.

Putting such quibbles aside, Joan Jensen has made a substantial contribution to our knowledge of Asian Indian immigration to North America and the controversies and policies it produced. Scholars will gratefully rely upon her work as they study other aspects of the Asian Indian experience in North America.

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*Private Interests, Public Policy, and American Agriculture.* By William P. Browne. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1988, 294 pp.

Browne, a political scientist at Central Michigan University, has written or co-authored several books that deal with a range of farm and food policy issues as well as numerous articles that focus on farm interest group activity. His latest book is a provocative summation of several issues involving interest groups and agriculture that he has touched on previously. His central question is an old one, but an important one nonetheless. In his words: "Does interest representation have an observable impact on agricultural policy?" (p. 10). More often this question is phrased as: how powerful is the "agricultural lobby"?

The role of interest groups has infatuated political scientists for years. Pluralists have posited that interest groups are essential to the preservation of democracy because they link rulers to the ruled. Others have focused on the extent to which, since the depression, the agricultural lobby has been able to secure favorable legislation for itself. In fact, farm policy was the model case of institutionalized power in the form of a political subsystem (composed of farm groups, executive agencies, and pertinent congressional committees). More recently, questions have arisen again about the power of the agriculture lobby in consideration of huge federal expenditures for agricultural programs.

By contrast, Browne finds that: "There is no evidence . . . that these organized interests have ever had the influence, individually or collectively, to set the policy agenda within agriculture or to adjust it" (p. 240). Although they play a role in structuring the policy process, agricultural groups are only one part of the process. Furthermore, Brown argues that despite increases in the number of farm and associated nonfarm groups, the agriculture subsystem has been weakened and the policy-making process decentralized as the agriculture policy agenda has broadened.