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royal family and his activities in the Free Thai Movement should have strengthened his political position. Yet after the country returns to normal, Pibul comes out on top, and Pridi loses (again). Why? Chronology alone cannot explain or even clarify the issues that make the 1930s and 1940s such a critical turning point in modern Thai history.

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SYED NESAR AHMAD. *Origins of Muslim Consciousness In India: A World System Perspective*. Foreword by IMMANUEL WALLERSTEIN. (Contributions to the Study of World History, number 29.) New York: Greenwood. 1991. Pp. xv, 311. \$47.95.

Syed Nesar Ahmad's work is one of synthesis and analysis, reviewing a wide range of secondary works to explain "Muslim consciousness," conceptualized as a separate Muslim political consciousness. The book proceeds chronologically, with chapters on nineteenth-century Islamic revival movements in response to British rule; the rise of modernism in the context of the "great depression" of the late nineteenth century; the rise and decline of Hindu-Muslim unity through the course of World War I and into the 1920s; and, in a long final chapter, Muslim separatism during the Depression of the 1930s and World War II. Ahmad's approach has two valuable characteristics: first, to show identities as historically constituted in interaction with social, economic, and political contexts; and second, to show the critical importance of placing those contexts in a larger geographical setting than the boundaries of the nation-states that so often define our histories.

The motor to political action and indeed Muslim consciousness in Ahmad's analysis is elite material interests. Recalling studies by scholars like Paul Brass (for example, his *Language, Religion and Politics in North India* [1974]), Ahmad emphasizes competition among elites who then, as political grids change, deploy cultural symbols in order to mobilize the popular support needed to participate in those grids. Ahmad links class developments to broad patterns of economic change to show that, far from any single communal interest, it is the interests of powerful groups, interests potentially at odds with those of co-religionists, that are at stake. Thus, the *jotedars* of Bengal emerge as a powerful class of small landlords whose interests diverge from the powerful, largely Hindu, big landowners as well as from the Muslim lower peasantry who are, ultimately, persuaded to support them nonetheless on grounds of shared religion.

While suggestive of significant developments, Ahmad's analysis will seem to many readers too singular, particularly because of his neglect of the wholly new context of a public culture, created by new modalities

of communication, that transforms identities and public action. As Immanuel Wallerstein notes in his foreword (p. ix), "If one composed two lists of worldwide names of . . . 'groups,' one list say as of 1500 and one say as of 1950, some on the two lists . . . would be the same nominally. But would they be the same existentially, or sociologically?" Ahmad offers an implicit description of the contrast signaled in Wallerstein's statement, but one would wish for a richer sense of the transition. For that, the approaches of social and cultural history would come into play as they do not here and would be seen as integral to, not separate from, the economic and political structures emphasized throughout. "Hindu" and "Muslim" solidarities—let alone those denoted "fundamentalist," "orthodox," and "heterodox"—are often treated here as historically continuous categories and not as groupings that are in the process of construction.

The topic of this book, the creation of politicized ethnicity and community in the twentieth century, could not be more timely given today's world events. Ahmad was a young scholar tragically killed in an airplane hijacking in 1986. In this posthumously published work, he has raised important questions, and, in his emphasis on economic differentiation and competition, he has left us a significant legacy for further research.

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DOUGLAS E. HAYNES. *Rhetoric and Ritual in Colonial India: The Shaping of a Public Culture in Surat City, 1852–1928*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press. 1991. Pp. xi, 363. \$49.95.

Douglas E. Haynes has written a thoughtful book about ideology and nationalism in colonial India. He starts with the founding of Surat municipality in western India in 1852. His interest initially was political history; that this history was written in language familiar to him struck him as strange. He conceptualizes his task as explaining the development of political ideology along liberal democratic lines, looking at symbolic behavior—rhetoric and ritual—to show that Surat's public culture, while constrained by its development under colonial rule, was formulated by the elite through struggle and interaction with colonial officials and institutions.

Haynes sees himself as an ethnohistorian, interested in the construction of cultural meaning, and he puzzles over why the leaders of India's independence movement used the language of liberal, representative democracy when that language ill-served the interests of the "underclasses." In his conclusion, his concern with contemporary India is clear. He suggests that "the most important test of democracies that have grown out of colonial contexts rather than out of demands from deeper within society is whether

liberal political idioms will ever be able to articulate the interests of the underprivileged peoples" (p. 295). Will the underclasses, he asks, always be dependent on elite spokespersons and unable to really shape the political system?

The book is difficult to evaluate, since the argument is continually cast in terms of language, discourse, idioms, and so forth, but most of the rhetoric in the book comes from Haynes. He talks about the "public idiom and the idiom of community" (p. 106), the "idiom of empire" (p. 136), the "partially shared idiom" of Surti Hindus (p. 72), and the "bilingualism" of the elites (merchants, religious headmen, and Mughal notables, and, later, the English-educated politicians) who addressed both the alien rulers and the subordinate groups in Surat city. But we have no extended texts for analysis, no convincing comparisons of indigenous community discourse with public empire discourse. We also have only one (unconvincing) comparison between the language used to address earlier Mughal or East India Company officials and the British imperial rulers (pp. 92–93). But Haynes claims that the English-educated elite employed a political idiom distinct from that of the civic arena to reach the larger body of city dwellers, although "the precise contours of this second idiom are difficult to discern since it was so rarely recorded in documents" (p. 170). Haynes uses primarily English sources, but if his methodology were really grounded in linguistic anthropology or even ethnohistory, the need for textual analysis to strengthen his comparative arguments is obvious. There is no real evidence of how language reflected, distorted, or mystified the power relations at any one time.

A second problem arises when one tries to determine the social groupings implicit in his sociolinguistic arguments. Haynes lays out the actors over time, but his descriptions are curiously self-contained and it is difficult to see groups and actors moving through the book. Furthermore, he never adequately defines the "underclass." Early on, he describes the inner politics of the city and presents the religious and caste groups in the city, their residential and occupational patterns, the value placed on religious giving, and so forth. We learn about Jains and Hindus (both Brahman/Vaniya and Ghanacha-Goli clusters), Parsis, and Muslims ("immigrant" Mughal elites and local converts, the Patani and Daudi Bohras). Haynes argues that in Surat there was a continuity of the social order, that capitalism, colonialism, and the British legal order did not produce a transformation fundamental enough to form new classes and new forms of discourse. Rather, the notables and later the English-educated elites learned the colonial discourse and used it to accomplish their own ends, reinterpreting key words as they did so but nonetheless reinforcing colonial hegemony and their own subordination.

Worse still, by appropriating the colonial/alien discourse, the elites served as symbolic specialists to the

larger population or the underclasses, who were unable to capture "the nuances of expression key to participation in the civic arena" and "must have regarded civic politics as an esoteric cult—one to whose sacred incantations they were not privy." Thus, the "real underclasses" of the city (whom Haynes promises to define "in a moment" [p. 13]), who are also referred to as "more city dwellers" (p. 187) or "the population" (p. 197) or "subaltern groups" (p. 238), found the developing public culture inaccessible and unchallengeable. (When he does define the underclass as "women, laborers, artisans, and petty traders," the definition raises as many questions about the category as it answers [p. 260].) Only toward the end of the book, when the narrative takes up Gandhian politics after World War I, do we get a coherent sense of movement. The Gandhians did create a language rooted in Gujarati principles of morality that had strong appeal in Surat from 1919 to 1924. Haynes sees this as an underclass politics informed by precolonial idioms confronting the elite politics of constitutionalism. He credits one man, Mahatma Gandhi, with this development, and he locates the development outside of Surat (and India [pp. 203–04]). Haynes seems somewhat ambivalent here, for although this is a strong part of the book, the Gandhian rhetoric achieved "the decolonization of the language of Surti politics" by linking politics and religion in one discourse. The Gandhian anticolonialism "conspired with hegemonic processes associated with colonialism to produce two distinct religious consciousnesses, one Hindu, one Muslim" (p. 262). By 1925, the elites and their liberal democratic discourse were restored to power in Surat, but communalism had become a part of nationalist politics.

Haynes concludes that the "Anglo-Indian political order privileged and reinforced rhetorical efforts to develop appeals built around religious solidarity while discouraging attempts to create alternative languages that could challenge the assumptions of colonialism," thus "creating the illusion that local society had always been divided sharply along the lines of religion." And although he says that most Surtis became participants in public culture through religious collectivities, he also says that the urban underclasses had no voice in shaping the political world that would succeed British rule (pp. 282–83).

One can take issue with some of the arguments advanced in the conclusion and elsewhere, and there are a few minor problems with the production. But much work has gone into this book, and readers will appreciate the stimulating ways in which Haynes has turned to current political issues and social theory to make the material meaningful.

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