

Since the 1980s, however, most historians reinterpreted Marxist paradigm of history-writing. This has happened primarily because of the massive research which appeared in the subsequent decades; in the light of which it became difficult to sustain the simplistic Marxist interpretation of history.

From the early 1980s, when Sarkar wrote *MI*, history-writing has undergone a paradigm shift in India. In the early 1980s, history was a slogan, a revolutionary programme of action, or a narrative filled with excessive pride. With some element of nationalism in it, *MI* was, and has been, called an exercise in the 'Marxist' historiography; no other description will suit it. On the contrary, *MT* will defy any reductionist label; it cannot be identified with any school. The old rivalries between schools and historians have become redundant. History-writing in India has entered into a new phase, whose nature is yet beyond our understanding.

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Vikas Pathak, *Contesting Nationalism: Hinduism, Secularism and Untouchability in Colonial Punjab 1880-1930*, Delhi: PRIMUS BOOKS, 2018, pp. xx + 266, Rs. 1,495/-, ISBN: 9789386552792 (hardbound).

The book seeks to elaborate on the multiple and contending discourse of Indian nationalism, specifically regarding four issues in the context of late nineteenth century and early twentieth century Punjab; covering roughly the period up to 1930. These are: (a) Composite Nationalism (b) Religious Nationalism specifically Hindu Nationalism (c) Secular, Citizenship-based Nationalism and (d) Dalit Nationalism. However, as a caution the writer argues: 'these visions present themselves not as watertight compartments, but as fluid entities engaged in constant dialogue with one another for appropriating the nationalist space in favour of their respective brands of nationalism' (p.2). Perhaps this overlapping nature of the discourses makes him comment: 'This rule of thumb makes me argue that the four visions discussed in this work are nationalist and not merely subnational, communitarian ideas. For all were engaged in a battle for hegemony over the cultural cast of the Indian nation'. (Preface, p. xi)

The book is divided into seven chapters: (1) 'Introduction: Exploring Multiple Discourses on Nationalism in India', (2) 'Cultural Contents and Syncretism in Colonial Punjab' (3) 'Composite Moorings of the Nation' (4) 'Regimenting

the Community: Mapping Initial Glimmers of Hindu Nationalism' (5) 'Hindu Nationalism, The Community as Nation' (6) 'Beyond the Community, Towards a Secular Nationalism' (7) 'Glimmers of a 'Dalit' Vision of Nationalism' and (8) Conclusion. While the overall thrust is to conceptualise and clarify the content and emergence of Indian Nationalism, the author tries to keep a keen eye on the consequences of this very significant socio-political articulation given that it played a significant role in enthusing and sustaining the national independence movement.

In the introduction chapter 'Exploring Multiple Discourses on Nationalism in India', the author explains the four discourses in general. Here he makes a distinction between 'Nationalism' and 'Freedom Struggle', defines 'What is Communalism' and finally reviews the existing literature regarding the four conceptions of Nationalism. The second chapter is a discussion on cultural contests and syncretism in colonial Punjab. The reconciliation of different principles, practices of religions, cultures, or schools of thought in a specific socio-political milieu can be a difficult task. The coalescing of Punjab and India could possibly tend to suggest generalisations which could come with limitations and handicaps; to illustrate, while Lajpat Rai is unencumbered to conjecture both for Punjab and India, Gandhi is restricted to India.

In the third chapter titled 'Composite Moorings of the Nation', the author places both Gandhi as well as Lajpat Rai within the notion of composite nationalism albeit with a difference; while Gandhi for the author is supposed to imagine composite nationalism in religious ways, Rai apparently remains in favour of 'secular governance' derived from 'Enlightenment modernity'. However, by 'religion' Gandhi did not mean Hinduism, Islam or the Zoroastrian religion, but 'that religion which underlies all religions.' What remains unclear is that if religion is vast enough to incorporate every opinion then 'how does it differ from being composite?' The author argues that there were two 'parallel discourses' of nationalism as constructed by the Punjab Press in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: (a) composite nationalism and the other (b) religious nationalism. The former stressed on Hindu-Muslim unity not only in the contemporary period but also constructed the theme of Hindu-Muslim harmony in pre-colonial times. The later discourse highlighted the Hindu-Muslim hostility and traced this even in the Indian past thus echoing the colonial historiography. The author in this regard critiques scholars like Kenneth Jones and J.T.F. Jordens who he feels mainly focussed on the discourse of 'community strife' (p. 48). Perhaps the author's focus on the discourse of composite nationalism as constructed in the Punjab Press, restricts his appreciation of the potential

of emerging cleavages such as 'communal strife', and so on. This becomes clear when while placing Lajpat Rai within the composite nationalism, he makes a distinction between the younger Lajpat Rai and later leader; with the former being closer to Hindu nationalism and the later a composite one. Discussing Lajpat Rai's idea of history as it is represented in his works: *Shivaji the Great Patriot* (1896), *A Study of Hindu Nationalism*, (1902), *Young India* (1917), *The Teaching of Patriotism* (1919), 'The Indian Problem' (1924), and *The Hindu-Muslim Problem* (1924), the author argues that the last three works clearly show that Lajpat Rai provides a 'composite alternative to the colonialist reading of Indian history' (p.60). In this respect Lajpat Rai had argued that the Hindu-Muslim communities were not in strife in the past but it is the colonial state that had created, fostered and nourished 'a communal consciousness' and therefore there is tension among these communities in contemporary Punjab. Perhaps he overlooks the past hegemonic position of the Muslim rulers and the hegemonic repercussion of such hegemony. This comes out clearly when the author argues that though Lajpat Rai played an active role in Hindu Mahasabha, he believed that the Sabha's role must only be confined to 'balancing of community interests for the construction of a composite nation' (p.68). His espousal of 'secular governance' was based on 'upholding the principle of fairness as bedrock of community negotiations' (pp.68-69). Though Lajpat Rai acknowledged the 'legitimacy of communitarian interests' but he believed that 'such interests should be balanced and harmonized' in the broader interests of national unity. Here he differed from other important leaders of Hindu Mahasabha like Bhai Parmanand who 'wished to make the Mahasabha a platform for Hindu-centric politics', while Lajpat Rai stood for confining the role of Sabha to the 'balancing of community interests'. This temporal polemics can leave conceptual detritus which can surface latter; we can see some of this today. The next chapter illustrates this particularly when one is governed by the press for analysis.

The fourth chapter titled 'Regimenting the Community: Mapping Initial Glimmers of Hindu Nationalism' the author examines how the discourse of Hindu community identity was constructed by the Punjab Press and the writings of Lal Chand, leading thereby to the process of development of Hindu Nationalism. The questions of riots, access to government jobs, Hindu-Muslim strife in the past as well as in contemporary period, cow-slaughter, Hindi-Urdu controversy, Lekh Ram's murder, fear of Islam, were raised by the Punjab Press to generate a discourse of community power and it played a significant role in creating a not only local or regional but also pan-Indian Hindu community. Lal Chand's *Self-Abnegation in Politics* further created an ideology of Hindu Nationalism. In this text Lal

Chand raises various questions: 'preferential treatment' to Muslims on the part of the Congress at the cost of Hindu interests; the discourse of unjust and unfair treatment of the Hindu in terms of representation, critique of separate electorates, Land Alienation Act, the language controversy, etc. Lal Chand uses 'Hindu' as a synonym for 'national'. All these issues fostered a Hindu-centric vision of nationalism.

The fifth chapter titled 'Hindu Nationalism, The Community as Nation' deals with the views of three ideologues of Hindu nationalism: Bhai Parmanand, Swami Shraddhanand, and Lala Har Dayal. According to the writer, Shraddhanand envisioned nationalism, 'not on political activity, but on a reconstruction of society by drawing upon what he saw as the cultural and spiritual reserves of the nation' (p.139). Towards this he envisioned the 'Gurukul' system as ideal for imparting education; the aim of which is to build the character of students on Vedic ideals and engender 'Aryan' greatness. Shraddhanand was opposed to the Congress till 1919 since he imagined that Congress was following the policy of Muslim appeasement. Although he joined the anti-colonial struggle during the Rowlatt Satyagraha and the non-cooperation movement, his approach to politics remained premised on 'Hindu' religio-cultural ethos (p.141). He reverted, according to Pathak, to Hindu nationalism because he perceived 'pan-Islamist tendencies' in the Khilafat movement (p.142).

Shraddhanand's *Hindu Sangthan: Saviour of the Dying Race* published in 1926 provides us an insight into his conception of Hindu nationalism. He believed that the 'Hindu nation' has fallen from the golden age of Vedas as a result of the onslaught of Islam and Christianity. Therefore, he envisioned a national education policy based on Vedas as the only retrieval system for Hindus. His stress was on 'Shuddhi and consolidation of all Hindus regardless of differences of sect and creed' (p.146). He therefore proposed setting up of a 'Hindu Rashtra Mandir' as the first step towards Hindu reorganization (p.147). The author argues that, 'Shradhanand's proposed 'Hindu Rashtra Mandir' is, thus, a broad platform for the articulation of Hindu nationalism. It has all the characteristics of Hindu nationalism: the metaphor of the temple, aggression in the form of akharas, the cow as a symbol of Hindu consolidation, and the nation imagined as a goddess' (p.148).

Bhai Parmanand was another ideologue of Hindu nationalism in Punjab. According to Pathak, Bhai Parmanand's view that Hindus and Muslims were of 'two divergent races' and incapable of evolving into an Indian nation, provides us with a 'hint of two-nation theory' (p. 150). For him, Hindu consolidation, reconversion, cow protection and masculinity were crucial issues.

The last intellectual that the author takes up in this chapter is Har Dayal. Though the author admits that Har

Dayal was the most complex personality and it is not easy to put him into any category, yet he tries to club him into the category of 'Hindu nationalist'. But at the same time the author argues that after 1909 'Har Dayal's view began to change' (p.167). But the argument provided by the author regarding pre-1909 views of Har Dayal which puts him into the category of Hindu nationalist, does not seem to be convincing. Perhaps this is the reason why he continues to discuss Har Dayal in his next chapter titled 'Beyond the Community, Towards a Secular Nationalism' wherein the Ghadar movement under Har Dayal 'was not just an anti-colonial, all-community movement, but showed distinct signs of a rational-secular discourse of the nation that tried to move beyond the religious community as a category and attempted critiques of religion itself' (p.167). In this chapter the author has taken up the Ghadar movement for discussion.

Another exponent of secular nationalism that the author dwells at length is the life, ideas and activities of Bhagat Singh. Bhagat Singh not only moved away from communitarian aspect embedded within the earlier visions of nationalism, but also provided a rational-secular critique of religion as an institution. Bhagat Singh and his associates adhered to secularism, scientific temper and reorganization of society on a socialist worldview.

In the last chapter titled 'Glimmers of a 'Dalit' Vision of Nationalism' the author deliberates upon the process of formation of political consciousness among the Dalits. Jotiba Phule's writings *Gulamgiri* (Slavery) by inverting the colonial discourse of Aryan invasion did play a significant role in fostering a critical consciousness among the Dalits of India. Phule's another work *Tritaya Netra* (third eye) not of course mentioned by the scholar, did create a sense of feeling among the Dalits that they can liberate themselves from their low status by means of education. Besides, Phule the anti-brahmanical movement in South India also create a political consciousness among the Dalits of Punjab. Another factor that provided a sense of power to the Dalits was what Sudipta Kaviraj terms as 'enumerative identity' derived from decennial census. The politics of mass mobilization and representative institutions further added a sense of power among the Dalits. In the context of Punjab the vision of Dalit nationalism was articulated through Ad Dharm movement in the 1920's. The leaders of this movement were disappointed with 'composite' as well as with the 'religious' nationalists and were in quest of autonomous and alternative communitarian identity. The early leaders of the Ad Dharm movement were Mangoo Ram, Swami Shudranand, Vasant Raj and Thakur Chand and all of them belonged to Chamar community of Punjab. They were somewhat more 'privileged' within their caste because of financial security derived from leather business

and education received from schools run by Arya Samaj. The movement celebrated Ravi Das as Bhakti saint as their guru since he belonged to Chamar caste. Some of the leaders of Ad Dharm in Punjab did not approve of Mangoo Ram's extreme line and they recognized the liberal aspects of Arya Samaj. Therefore, 'a part of movement' says the author of this book 'broke up to rejoin the Arya Samaj on the plea that the Aryas were accommodative Hindus and, later, it petered out to merge with Ambedkar's Scheduled Caste Federation, with many Ad Dharmis even joining the Congress'.

Overall the book enlarges the frontiers of our knowledge of the complexities of an ancient people trying to emerge in the garb of a new community - modern Punjab. It is worth reading.

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Anushka Singh, *Sedition in Liberal Democracies*, Oxford University Press, 2018, pp. 406, Rs. 995/-, ISBN: 9780199481699.

Scholars have made persistent efforts to understand the meaning and concept of freedom of speech in the domains of liberal democracy and the context of law of sedition. This history of western liberal democracy predominantly traces its genealogy in the edifice of enlightenment and debates around western modernity. In this context, the recent book written by Anushka Singh, provides us an interesting window through her empirically grounded research and theoretically nuanced terrain to understand the discursive meaning of freedom of expression and how free expression of colonial subjects as well as right bearing citizens became a site of democratic resistance and also pathways of laws of sedition in western as well as non-western societies. Singh's book is an interesting and innovative addition to the existing body of knowledge in the domains of social sciences and specifically in the domains of juridical and political understanding of pedantic laws including sedition and extra-ordinary laws in a comparative framework. Liberalism is a political theory of modernity and democracy and it offers an interesting terrain to map the nuances of sedition in the liberal democracies. In this particular book Singh has established the normative universality of freedom of expression and how it has unfolded over the centuries and became a site of competing claims as also site of contestations by liberal democratic citizenry on the one hand and neo-liberal authoritarian state on the