

Kin, Clan, Raja and Rule: State-Hinterland Relations in Pre-Industrial India.



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regions but would require considerable revision in others. A chapter touching on demography, economic structures and language divides the geographical and historical sections. The latter contains some interesting points on the contemporary use of the past, and the historical account itself is clearly and vigorously written. At the same time the historical themes seem chosen rather as an aid to our understanding of the present than as a subject of study in their own right. Here the anthropologist has clearly overcome the historian. The contemporary section ranges over urbanisation, education, social structure, social change, caste, the joint family and the Indian village. The individual interests of the author make perhaps for a certain lack of balance. There is a great deal about Untouchables, among whom he has worked, but little on the significance of the Brahmans; half of the chapter on the village deals with the city; there is nothing on *panchayat raj* (possibly deservedly), and little on religion. The concluding chapter hazards some speculations as to the future of India.

This book is not a work of original research in any one field of study, but rather attempts a general view of Indian civilisation based on a synthesis of the work of recent scholars in different fields. As such, its relevance is likely to be rapidly overtaken by fresh research and shifts of interest. In the meantime it provides an excellent introduction to India written in a clear and lively manner. The absence of an index and the many misprints are regrettable.

I am still puzzled by the title. In what sense is this 'the social anthropology of a civilisation'?

AUDREY HAYLEY

FOX, RICHARD G. *Kin, clan, raja and rule: state-hinterland relations in pre-industrial India*. xiv, 187 pp., maps, diags, bibliogr. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: Univ. of California Press, 1971. £3.80

Mr Fox has a considerable methodological problem. Like many others he is dissatisfied with e-historical community studies. He therefore decides to abandon all the ingredients of traditional anthropology. Instead of doing fieldwork he spent three months in libraries in London; instead of studying *all* aspects of a delimited group of people, he took the general problem of how State and local community have been related throughout Indian history, particularly in northern India. The best chapter in the book discusses change in Rajput lineages over the centuries, attempting to apply to this a 'developmental cycle' model. There are also some interesting observations in a comparison between the Rajput state and feudal societies in Ireland, among the Aztecs, Incas and elsewhere. Yet the general level of

the book is disappointing. To the non-specialist it is likely to be unreadable. The discussion is at a very generalised level; we move in a timeless, faceless, void, with nothing concrete on which to hold. The jargon is prolific and used to cover up inadequacies which the author himself discusses thus—'the hypotheses in this study are highly speculative; the historical materials often scant' (p. 172).

Yet the materials are not as scant as Fox makes out. Use of the voluminous records described by Kessinger in the *Indian economic and social history review*, Dec. 1970, would have given the study some depth. They would have supplemented the somewhat meagre and ambiguous 'revenue and ethnographic reports of nineteenth century British civil servants' on which Fox totally depends (p. 6). The author rightly rejects community studies on their own; what he will have to do, however, is adopt the approach which social historians are coming to employ. They now tend to combine a community study with more general sources, thus combining specific examples and statistics with supra-community problems. For general sources are just as biased as local records. Fieldwork combined with examination of local records, combined with the secondary material which Fox uses can alone help anthropologists to break away from e-historicism.

ALAN MACFARLANE

STRIZOWER, SCHIFRA. *The children of Israel: the Bene Israel of Bombay* (Pavilion Series, Social Anthropology). xiv, 176 pp., bibliogr. Oxford: Blackwell, 1971. £2.25 (cloth), £1.25 (paper)

If there is a dominant theme in this book it is Dr Strizower's concern with the question: why are Bene Israel puzzling to other Jews but not to other Indians? She answers the question by describing their idiosyncratic features against the background of those which they have in common with other Jews and those which are common to many other Indians; and by placing these people in the context of world Jewry as well as in the context of Indian society, with its complex of castes and other forms of association and division. The result is a notable contribution to the sociology of the Jews, which also helps to dispel a number of erroneous or partly erroneous beliefs which some Jews have of others; it is, presumably—and this reviewer pretends to no expertise on the nature of Indian society—also a contribution to Indian sociology in that it shows, once again, how those who appear to be outside the caste system are nevertheless, at least in part, embraced by it.

The Bene Israel claim—and they are not altogether alone in making this claim—to be