



Biblio deserves to be congratulated for the exclusive section devoted to North East India (Vol. XIII Nos.5&6), particularly for being able to locate a few books written in the vernacular which otherwise go unnoticed by the larger English-reading public in India and elsewhere. I speak here of the slim volume titled *Nellie 1983: A Postmortem* by Diganta Sharma, the Bangla translation of which I have read. Within the scope and space offered, Rajarshi Kalita's review of the book mentioned above (along with two others) is satisfactory. I only wish she

could have gone a little further in elaborating on the cause(s) and context(s) of the Assam Movement or clearing the still prevalent confusion regarding the identity of the tribe(s) (Tiwas or the Lalungs, though Sharma's book identifies the former) that committed the violence against alleged 'illegal', 'Bangladeshi' Muslims in Nellie in 1983. Also I am afraid Kalita, unlike Sharma, the author of the book, does not mention, except once (para II, p.31) the role of the All Assam Students' Union (AASU) in planning and executing the massacre. In fact, she says that the Nellie massacre took place in the "... *aftermath*" (emphasis mine) of the All Assam Students' Union's agitation against illegal migrants from Bangladesh". Kalita, like Sharma, absolves the 'Tiwas', but unlike the latter, holds the Hindu communal forces almost singularly responsible for the massacre. While it is true that Hindu right-wing organisations had a role to play, yet it is now fairly well established that it was the AASU that masterminded the gruesome killings of innocent Muslims in Nellie in 1983. As a student who has worked on the Assam Movement, Kalita would do well if she was able to, albeit briefly, historically and politically contextualise the AASU's agenda and its link with the Nellie massacre, and in that way not only extend Sharma's work beyond the

well-defined parameters of factual and investigative journalism and but also contribute towards the long pending responsibility of delivering justice to the dead as well as the survivors of Nellie.

The essay by Mayur Chetia (p.38) on Sujit Choudhury's book, *The Bodos: Emergence and Assertion of an Ethnic Minority* makes interesting reading. Chetia rightly says that the Bodo movement has not received the scholarly attention it deserves and in that light, Choudhury's book should have been able to fill that gap. The book, however, fails to do so, concludes Chetia. His review of the text appears to be fairly detailed and comprehensive, though he says all of it is "familiar historical narrative" and what Choudhury has done is only to "... add some more details to the already known facts and events". One wonders what and whose familiarity is he talking about and to what body of work (given the "long-standing vacuum") the details about the Bodos are being added. Chetia, or for that matter anyone, may have academic justifications to disagree with Choudhury's objectives and arguments, but I am not sure how a work on a community which in his own words has hardly received any academic attention in Assam and outside it can be seen as a mere addition, and that too, to what. Chetia also makes, I must say, extremely sweeping

comments about the methodology and conceptual categories employed by Choudhury. So, without sufficient theoretical engagement with Marxist methodology, he dismisses the work as one of "... the relics of a very outdated methodology..." or without citing evidence says that, "... Marxists themselves, who are generally blamed for such analytical rigidities, have long abandoned such explanatory frameworks". In fact, Chetia's essay reflects his own ambiguous understanding of both the Marxist methodology as well as Choudhury's use of it. The same also goes for the way he seeks answers (and happens provide the answers himself) about the concept of 'class', its Marxian and Weberian connotations and its terms of reference in the book. As said earlier, Chetia has every right to ask questions and disagree and reject "abandoned" frameworks and suggest new ones that deal with "ethnic imaginations" (ethnic demands are imagined or real) and "politics of disorder", but that it should be done with a little more care and caution and responsibility is all that this reader appeals.

NABANIPA BHATTACHARJEE
Dept. of Sociology
Sri Venkateswara College
University of Delhi
E-Mail: nabanipab@gmail.com

LATEST TITLES FROM NBT

Rebellion 1857

Edited by P C Joshi

Rs 100 (PB) Rs 350 (HB) 382pp

This volume on the Rebellion of 1857, brings together varied scholarship, that analyse the nature, causes, its impact on the national literature of India as well as the interest it generated abroad.

Medieval India: The Study of a Civilization

Irfan Habib

Rs 85 (PB) Rs 300 (HB) 293pp

Medieval India is a defining and eventful chapter in the cultural and political history of India. Drawing upon primary materials, archival records, historical narratives and account of travellers, the book is an authoritative introduction to the era.

An Annotated Rights Catalogue of the Works on and by Mahatma Gandhi

Rs 200 (PB) Rs 900 (HB) 168pp

This Annotated Rights Catalogue has nearly 700 entries of the works on and by Mahatma Gandhi published in India and abroad with their annotations, bibliographic details, copyright details, availability of translation and other rights with full contact details for Rights enquiries about each title. An ideal handbook for publishers, translators, editors, literacy agents, researchers, documentary makers and for anybody interested in Gandhian Studies.

Bridging Connections: An Anthology of Sri Lankan Short Stories

Edited and Compiled by Rajiva Wijesinha

Rs 85 (PB) Rs 250 (HB) 227pp

This short collection of twenty-five engaging stories from Sri Lanka's best-known storytellers brings out the distinctive flavour and rich diversity of Sri Lankan prose. The country's simmering ethnic and political violence provides the backdrop to many of these narratives.

Man Against Myth

Barrows Dunham

Rs 95 (PB) Rs 300 (HB) 298pp

The book demolishes a series of deeply entrenched social myths such as 'Rich are fit and the poor unfit'; 'You cannot be free and safe' and argues that the

perpetuation of such myths has been beneficial to the interests of a privileged few and has worked to justify inequality and impede human progress in society.

Candid Conversations With Towering Personalities

K K Bhanumathy

Rs 80 (PB) Rs 250 (HB) 245pp

This is a collection of interviews of major personalities of modern times. They include a galaxy of men and women ranging from national figures and international leaders to writers, thinkers, diplomats and Nobel laureates.

Angels, Devil & Science: A Collection of Articles on Scientific Temper

Pushpa M Bhargava &

Chandana Chakrabarti (Eds)

Rs 85 (PB) Rs 225 (HB) 284pp

Arguing for the urgent need to promote scientific temper as a social asset, the book discusses its importance and role in the country's socio-economic as well as scientific and technological advancement.

No Bread for Mandela: Memoirs of Ahmed Kathrada

Rs 135 423pp

Ahmed Kathrada, a veteran leader played an important role in South Africa's struggle for freedom and against apartheid. He served 26 years as political prisoner along with prominent political figures like Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu.

Right to Information Act: A Primer

Suchi Pande & Shekhar Singh

Rs 30 80pp

The Primer answers the queries of the laypersons seeking information on the Right to Information Act, its implementation, functions and uses.

Maharashtra

Arun Sadhu

Rs 100 276pp

Maharashtra, a leading industrialized state of India, historically stands at the cross-stands of the North and the South of the Indian sub-continent. This book gives deep insights into history, politics and economy of the state, as also its culture with its nuances, literature and characteristics of its people.

Please contact your local booksellers for books or write to us at the following addresses:



NATIONAL BOOK TRUST, INDIA

Plot No. 5, Institutional Area, Phase-II, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi-110070

Telefax: 24526169, 24526164, 24526174, 24507204 (Temporary); Email: nbtindia@ndb.vsnl.net.in Website: www.nbtindia.org.in

Mumbai: Telefax: 91-22-23720442; Email: nbtindiamumbai@yahoo.com

Bangalore: Telefax: 91-80-26711994; Email: nbtindiasro@vsnl.net

Kolkata: Telefax: 91-33-22413899; Email: nbtero@dataone.in

BECOME LIFE MEMBER OF NBT BOOK CLUB AND AVAIL 20% DISCOUNT