

Editorial Foreword

ANTHROPOLOGY AND POWER Power relations—of masters and servants, of chiefs and tribesmen—continue to provide anthropology with one of its richest terrains, recent notable examples in CSSH being Nicholas B. Dirks, “The Policing of Tradition: Colonialism and Anthropology in Southern India,” 39:182–212 (1997), and Lisa Weeden, “Acting ‘as if’: Symbolic Politics and Social Control in Syria,” 40:503–23 (1998). Two essays in this issue propose new ways of looking at them.

Ann Laura Stoler and **Karen Strassler** explore the fault lines of memory in Dutch households of colonial Indonesia. Servants’ memories are quite different from the romanticized memories of their Dutch masters, lovingly staged in family photo albums. But the ethnography of servants’ memories reveals no “colonial memories” as such. The accounts of servants “refused ‘the colonial’ as a discrete domain of social relations and politics, of experience and memory’.”

Philip Carl Salzman revisits Fredrik Barth’s *Nomads of South Persia*, a classic ethnography of the Basseri tribe. He examines Barth’s picture of the autocratic Basseri chief, and finds that the reality was somewhat less than autocratic; indeed, a chief ruled by consent, and if weak and ineffective could lose tribesmen who decided their interests would be better served by another. Chiefs and commoners nevertheless collaborated in producing the image of autocratic chiefly power that prevailed both within the tribe and in its chiefs’ dealings with the outside world. It was this image that Barth reported, and mistook for the substance of Basseri chiefship. (In a similar vein: Ørnulf Gulbrandsen, “The King is King by the Grace of the People: The Exercise and Control of Power in Subject-ruler Relations, 37:415–44 [1995], concerning the Tswana.)

THE VIEW FROM AFAR Two essays examine ways in which political ideas—in these cases Spencerian sociology and Italian fascism—have been consumed by distant countries. (Cf. David Walker Howe, “Why the Scottish Enlightenment was Useful to the Framers of the American Constitution,” 31:572–87 [1989].)

Douglas R. Howland shows how in Meiji period Japan the works of Herbert Spencer, especially the formulation of laws of progress from military to industrial forms of society, were foundational for Japanese intellectuals’ advocacy of people’s rights, the aspiration for civil freedoms, and the institution of a national assembly. But Spencerian sociology also served to reify and standardize the conception of society as an object of systematic study and reform, the new concept providing a scientific object that proved useful to partisans on both

sides of the popular rights movement. (For another treatment of the topic see also Germaine A. Hoston, “Conceptualizing Bourgeois Revolution: The Pre-war Japanese Left and the Meiji Restoration,” 33:539–87 [1991].)

Ido Oren recovers a lost history of favorable portrayals of fascism in American political science, focusing on the originary Italian fascism in the nineteen-twenties and thirties, and on Spanish (Franco), Portuguese (Salazar), Argentinian (Peron), and Brazilian (Vargas) varieties in the nineteen-sixties and seventies. Favorable American portrayals were of two kinds, one arguing that fascism is appropriate for backward countries but not for America, the other entertaining the possibility of “borrowing certain fascist institutions or methods for the purpose of alleviating the ailments they diagnosed in liberal America.” Corporatism was the main object of interest; lost community of purpose was the main problem to be fixed.

THE POLITICS OF INDIGENISM The indigenous peoples movement has native American roots and worldwide reach. It is, as our next essay reminds us, “a new kind of global political entity,” thinner and more fragile than nationalism but similar in kind. (There is a fine discussion and case study of nationalisms that depart from the dominant module in Andrew J. Shryock, “Popular Genealogical Nationalism: History Writing and Identity among the Balqa Tribes of Jordan,” 37:325–57 [1995].)

Ronald Niezen examines the new politics of indigenism through the unexpected success of Cree claims against their inclusion in a sovereign Quebec. The new “politics of embarrassment” in its struggle with established states came into being through international networks, a process which the author traces from abortive approaches to the British government (mid-nineteenth century) and the League of Nations (1922–1924), to a successful one with the United Nations. “Indigenous leaders have discovered the advantages of cutting across state interests under the gaze of the international community.”

Tania Murray Li observes that Indonesia had no indigenous people, officially, under Suharto. But the political idea of indigenism began to take root in spite of official policy. In the post-Suharto opening up of political life, the question is how indigenism will be envisioned and who will occupy the new identity. Two small social groups of central Sulawesi afford a comparative contrast, one of them effectively adopting the “tribal slot” and the politics of indigenism, the other not. The essay considers reasons for the difference.

EXPLAINING SECTARIAN VIOLENCE Illuminating the intersection of religion and the political order is an ongoing project for CSSH—see, for example, the essays on Hindus and Muslims in India by Gyan Pandey and David Lorenzen in the previous number (41:4). Sectarian conflict generates its own, mutually negating, explanations; the next essay sifts competing explanations for a case from Lebanon.

Ussama Makdisi addresses the causes of violence between Maronite Christian and Druze peoples of Lebanon under Ottoman rule in the nineteenth century. Sectarian conflict between the two groups, the author argues, is not a fall from a previous state of Christian-Muslim harmony (the Muslim nationalist view), nor is it the outpouring of a fanaticism that had been latent (the “Orientalist” view); it is the expression of a populist challenge to an established order and its elite.

LOBSTER PEACE This is, we believe, the first CSSH essay on lobsters—though oysters are already covered, by Rob Van Ginkel, “The Abundant Sea and her Fates: Texelian Oystermen and the Marine Commons, 1700 to 1932,” 38:218–42 [1996], a tragedy-of-the-commons story from the Netherlands. CSSH continues to be interested in essays on aspects of the human engagement with what Locke called “the common of nature.”

James M. Acheson and **Jack Knight** excavate a happy ending—the rare happy ending of a story about the human management of nature that somehow evades the tragedy of the commons. Wishing to discover how agreements to conserve resources emerge, they take as their case the Maine lobster fishery, in which agreement among contending interests was eventually achieved, one that resulted in a managed annual catch at a sustainable level—though not before the lobster canning industry, once a booming source of employment and the nemesis of catch limitations, went bust.