

general hesitant when it comes to publishing edited volumes; it has done well to make an exception for this one. While many edited collections, particularly those that grow out of conferences, are at best of inconsistent quality and at worst entirely lacking in coherence, van der Veer and Lehmann's *Nation and Religion* is striking both for the high quality of each individual essay it contains and for the depth and force of the overall argument that emerges from the volume as a whole.

That argument is an important and provocative one: that modernity, contrary both to modernity's own depiction of itself and to much historiography of the modern period, is not characterized by the eradication of religion's relevance to politics. On the contrary, the varied chapters in this book show religion to be a near-ubiquitous feature of the political landscape and discourse of the so-called "First" and "Third" Worlds alike.

The volume is made up of ten chapters that together deal with the relationship between religion and politics in the Netherlands, Great Britain, India, and Japan. The fullest coverage is given to India, which is approached from different perspectives in four different chapters: van der Veer's "The Moral State: Religion, Nation, and Empire in Victorian Britain and British India", Susan Bayly's "Race in Britain and India", Partha Chatterjee's "On Religious and Linguistic Nationalisms: The Second Partition of Bengal", and Barbara Metcalf's "Nationalism, Modernity, and Muslim Identity in India before 1947". This particular focus on India is a reflection both of van der Veer's own specific interests and training and of the fact that India – both British imperial and modern national – lends itself particularly well to analysis concerned with the interplay between religion, politics, and modern nationalisms.

The British dimension of van der Veer and Bayly's chapters is expanded by Hugh McLeod in his contribution on "Protestantism and British National Identity, 1815-1945". The volume also includes two chapters on the Netherlands (Peter van Rooden's "History, the Nation, and Religion: The Transformations of the Dutch Religious Past", and Frans Groot's "Papists and Beggars: National Festivals and Nation Building in the Netherlands during the Nineteenth Century") and one on Japan (Harry Harootunian's "Memory, Mourning, and National Morality: Yasukuni Shrine and the Reunion of State and Religion in Postwar Japan").

Despite the diversity of time and place reflected in the volume, the essays read remarkably well together as a whole – the result of a clearly-conceived and carefully edited project. Additional coherence comes from the

volume's being framed by three general, theoretical essays: van der Veer and Lehmann's introduction, and closing chapters by Talal Asad and Benedict Anderson (respectively, "Religion, Nation-State, Secularism" and "The Goodness of Nations").

The introduction opens with the observation that, "Thanks to Benedict Anderson's influential book on the topic, it has become almost a cliché to suggest that the nation is an imagined community." Indeed, the work of Anderson, Ernest Gellner, and Eric Hobsbawm, among others, has paved the way for an academic climate that takes it as a given that nationalism and the nations to which it attaches itself are cultural constructs rather than objective or eternal entities. Even those few scholars who defend the nation-form (most recently and provocatively Gregory Jusdanis in his *The Necessary Nation*, also published by Princeton) subscribe to this view. And if "the nation" as eternal, objective entity has by now been thoroughly deconstructed, "religion" has been still more completely dissected, and its claims to primordial and authoritative status fully undercut and debunked. At least since the Enlightenment, the academy has undertaken to unmask religion, revealing it to be a cultural product rather than the very basis for culture.

Nevertheless, neither the force of religious belief nor of belief in the nation seems in actual human practice and experience to have been affected one whit. As van der Veer and Lehmann write, "[T]o analyze nation and religious community as cultural constructs, as products of the social imagination, does not detract from their efficacy in everyday life. In fact, it is hard to miss the social force of both religion and nationalism in many contemporary movements all over the world." Also undercut by this volume, then, is the widespread but wholly untenable position that maintains that "The West" is modern, secular, and enlightened; while "The East" remains backward, religious, and politically underdeveloped. Indeed, the essays taken together show how woefully inadequate – and misleading – monolithic notions of the West and of modernity are in the attempt to understand the mechanisms at work in the interplay of politics, religion, and nationalism in the modern period. This, perhaps, is the single most important argument of this book – that we cannot possibly begin properly to understand the relationship between religion and politics so long as we consistently force our analysis into the parameters of a model based (consciously or unconsciously) on western Christianity, and on western (and implicitly Christian) notions of secularism and religiosity.

This argument is made most forcefully by Harootunian, whose chapter deals with the Yasukuni Shrine in central Tokyo, at which the spirits of dead war heroes are worshiped as "national gods of the ancestral land." The chapter provides a case-study in the relationship between secular and religious nationalism, or, more aptly, demonstrates that the distinction between the two is, in many instances, misplaced and unhelpful. Van der Veer, Chatterjee, Groot, and Metcalf follow this same theme, although less explicitly.

A second major theme of the volume is that of the modern nationalization of religion. Here the essays by McLeod, Bayly, and van Rooden are particularly relevant. These chapters further the argument that religion has not been "secularized" in the modern period so much as it has been "nationalized." The elision between "secular" and "national," and the obfuscation of their distinct meanings, has contributed to the pervasive but misplaced view that western modernity is characterized by secularism. Van Rooden shows that Dutch protestantism was not, in the modern period, secularized; rather, he argues, it "acquired a national past." McLeod's essay shows how British religious self-perceptions were a vital part of the construction of an ideal modern British nation. Bayly's essay then shows how such self-perceptions were racialized and then used as a lens for understanding religious experience in colonial India.

While this whole volume will, for its theoretical insights, hold interest for any reader interested in questions of nationalism and religion, three essays in particular will have especial interest for scholars of Islam. Chatterjee, Metcalf, and Asad all use Islamic examples to make their points, and Asad, in particular, uses Islam as the starting point for wide-ranging theoretical argument. He asks, "Should Islamism Be Regarded as Nationalism?" In so doing, he points to the ways in which interpretations of Islamism as being basically nothing other than an offshoot of nationalism relegate it to an implicitly western and modern realm.

For their part, Chatterjee and Metcalf show how interpretively misplaced and ineffectual "Western" notions of the division between nation and religion are, by fleshing out the ways in which Muslim self-identification and Hindu and Muslim communalism in South Asia do not follow expected patterns of development and configuration. Metcalf points to the "aterritorialism" of the Tablighi Jama'at both as a "delegitimiz[ation of] nationalist claims that the nation is a natural and inalienable part of identity" and as a sign – in a global and transnational context – of "poten-

tiality rather than failure." In so doing she undercuts also the notion of nations – or at least quasi-national sentiment – as being inevitably bounded by geography and tied to a specific space. Chatterjee's contribution, a side-by-side reading of the Bengali partition of 1905 and that of 1947, shows that Indian nationalism could produce a narrative of Hindu-Muslim brotherhood just as easily as one of Hindu-Muslim conflict and resistance. The assumption of religious nationalism is undermined, and, along with it, so are many of the anti-religious implications of modern western secularism.

Nation and Religion is a rare example of an edited volume that makes a series of overarching and coherent arguments and that follows a traceable theoretical trajectory while at the same time being characterized by topical diversity. It also is an example of the fruitfulness of interdisciplinarity. An array of disciplines within the social sciences are represented here – political science, history, sociology, anthropology, comparative religion. Within this volume they are brought into meaningful and intelligent dialogue with one another. Van der Veer and Lehmann's new volume marks an important contribution to the growing revisionist scholarship on religion and nationalism, and is also a stellar example of just how useful – when done right – edited and interdisciplinary volumes can be.

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