

abandoned women) and at times a detailed discussion of subsistence conditions is presented, but the writer assumes intrinsically that nationalism is the chief generative force and class obviously becomes somewhat externalized in the text. For example, the discussion of abandoned women includes a subchapter concerning their distress and economic situation (p. 115), but no attention is paid to the structuring of the "free worker"—the abandoning husband/boyfriend. This subchapter is also among the first to provide an authentic look at everyday economic life, sources of income and means of subsistence. Class thus appears to be a present-but-absent category, perhaps precisely because it is so obvious to the author.

Second, although the text interweaves several categories—ethnic, geographic and the like—and covers them extensively, the author has selected the gender prism as her point of departure. This strategy leaves a fertile field for research adopting other prisms. Thus, the social history of Tel Aviv during the pre-state period remains a significant focus for future studies.

In conclusion, this book concerns the gender margins of the Jewish nation as reflected in Mandate Tel Aviv, informing us about the shaping of social norms and boundaries, the pre-state Jewish community mainstream and a variety of marginal characters. Despite the high theoretical awareness evident throughout the book, Prof. Bernstein appears to be celebrating her liberation from the fetters of sociology, enabling her to address complex issues and rescue the stories of the excluded women she studied.

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Shirin M. Rai, *Gender and the Political Economy of Development: Essays in Hope and Despair* (Polity Press, Oxford, 2002), 264 pp.

The book largely focuses on areas relating to themes on the gendered politics of development in postcolonial states through an engagement with feminist theory and politics. Rai examines the role of global institutions, nation-states and NGOs by looking at the gender implications of structural mechanisms of change. The author divides the book into two parts. The first part, presented in the first five chapters, focuses on the gendered politics of development in the postcolonial era, while the second part (Chapters 6–8) addresses how the governance of global regimes fundamentally affects the ways in which inequalities are reproduced between north and south, men and women, and among women themselves. In these latter three chapters, Rai emphasizes the gender networks that are creating new solidarities across borders of difference.

In Chapter 1, Rai emphasizes the idea of nationalism and traces the debate on the meanings attributed to development. She addresses the failure of nationalist movements to guarantee women political participation, even though women did participate in the first phase of nationalist struggles against colonialism, allowing

them to further organize as feminist groups. "The story of nationalism is thus not an entirely happy one for women," she argues (p. 38). As a result, women's groups and female scholars criticized the nationalist project and saw it as incompatible with feminism.

The case of Gujarati Indian women street traders and their struggle and negotiations with the postcolonial state—namely the Supreme Court of India—is the focus of Rai's second chapter. She explains the space these women occupy within the Indian political context and the new group identity they formed during their struggle. She points out that the relationship between these women and the Indian state is a fraught one. Here she contrasts the role of the Indian state and most of the Third World countries towards women to that of the European liberal welfare states, arguing that the former failed to provide the kind of safety network that the latter did with their welfare provision.

With regard to the work of feminist scholars on democratization at the theoretical level, Rai addresses this issue in the third chapter by examining the nature of women's participation in politics, especially their participation in women's movements that emphasize the idea of equal representation in political life. She also addresses the role of institutions and the necessity of deepening democracy within the home by pointing to how women have challenged the authoritarian regimes in public.

"Can state institutions promote women's interests" or be effective in advancing the interests of women?, Rai asks in Chapter 4. Apparently, Rai believes that women's engagement with the policy-making machinery of a state committed to the gender equality agenda would institutionalize women's gains and would allow women "to consider mainstreaming gender through and within the state seriously, and critically" (p. 74). However, in making the gap between men and women in political institutions visible, Rai, along with three other female contributors, maintains in Chapter 5 that quotas should be the answer, since they proved to be a significant strategy to guarantee the numerical presence of women in politics and public life where their interests are better represented (p. 90). The authors conclude that while quotas play a significant role, they do not necessarily guarantee the equal redistribution of resources between men and women. Therefore, "to fulfill their potential for addressing women's exclusion from political life, women's struggles need to focus on the issue of redistribution of resources if power relations in society are to be fundamentally changed" (p. 112).

In the sixth chapter, Rai points out that feminist discourse and the interventions of feminists in the areas of knowledge creation, recognition and institutionalization have made an important contribution in shaping agendas and insights on governance. Their intervention has embedded neoliberal discourses of globalization and governance, such as in the debate on the state and democracy, and the critiques of market "as inefficient and distorted mechanisms that build upon unequal gendered social relations" (p. 136). Rai argues in this chapter that feminist insights should be developed through everyday struggles at local, state and global levels.

Chapter 7, co-authored with Sharmishta Barwa, contends that TRIPS (Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights) has failed to recognize women's knowledge and that the technological worlds of women and men differ according to existing social, economic, cultural and sexual relationships between them. TRIPS has institutionalized the "concentration of privilege—male and Northern—by operating according to a winner-takes-all market concept" (p. 155) and reduced the space for women to reap the benefits of their efforts. Therefore, the authors urge readers to acknowledge women's contributions to many inventions, and to refrain from stereotyping their inventions as "domestic," related mainly to children, in order to recognize their participation in the marketplace.

With regard to the challenges of globalization for women's mobilization across national borders, Rai claims in Chapter 8 that the common wrongs produced by globalization have brought unprecedented collaboration among women's organizations. Based on her personal experience as a "participant observer" in establishing the foundation of the South Asia Research Network (SARN), Rai indicates that the networking and conversation across borders in the region (SARN) has allowed women's groups to develop new methodologies of agenda-setting for research and activities that are not predominantly led by the international funders. She argues that the strength drawn from these regional networks and collaborations represents an acknowledgement of the common history of the region, as well as a form of resistance to state-regulated border-crossing. These networks should also be understood as a denunciation of the wrongs of globalization.

Overall, the strength of Rai's book lies in its important contribution to the study of women and the politics of development, especially in terms of understanding feminist activism in the context of globalization. It is an ambitious and well researched book with a rich bibliography that focuses on the lives of men and women in regions where both class and north-south divides maintain dreadful inequalities. Her comprehensive research is valuable to recent feminist debates on the issues of development, democratization, globalization and women's cross-border networks. With regard to the writing style, Rai provides a comprehensive analysis by clarifying her arguments at the beginning and end of each chapter. However, her book suffers from redundancy as her central arguments tend to get lost in the lengthy passages that go on for pages in each chapter.

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Lyla Mehta, *Displaced by Development: Confronting Marginalization and Gender Injustice* (Sage, New Delhi, 2009), 309 pp.

In the mode of the liberal market, "development" has all too often taken place without the consent of the community and involved displacement, which it claims to be "for the good" of those involved. This edited book explores the impact of

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