

The context and consequences of migration: Jullundur and Mirpur compared

Migration and its sources

Migration is a subject about which it is easy to take a myopic view. It is tempting for outsiders to regard migrant populations as more homogeneous than they really are, and also to focus on the proximate end of the migratory flow, so ignoring its geographically distant source. This is certainly true of most conventional understandings of Britain's non-European minorities. All too often, 'Asian' and 'West Indian' are uncritically assumed to be meaningful social categories, thus obscuring the heterogeneity of migrants' origins; emigration is not set in its historical context, so there is little understanding that people from those areas have moved to a wide range of different destinations besides Britain; and there has been so much debate about the effect of migration on Britain's economy and society that its impact on the migrants' own homelands has virtually been ignored. This article is an attempt to redress the balance, and to examine what has happened in two areas in the sub-continent – Jullundur in India and Mirpur in Pakistan – which have sent large numbers of migrants to Britain.¹ In consequence my focus here is very much on sub-continental issues; Britain lies well on the periphery of the discussion. Yet as we shall see, events in Britain have many implications for India and Pakistan, and by the same token developments in the sub-continent may yet have an impact here. Migration is altogether more complex in both its context and its consequences than many commentators have yet recognised.

Although precise figures are not available, well over half of all British South Asians originate from a single region – the Punjab – and within this most stem from two very restricted areas (see map). In Indian Punjab, the overwhelming majority of migrants come from the Jullundur Doab, a triangle of land lying just beneath the outer foothills of the Himalayas, and bounded to the west and south by the rivers Beas and Sutlej; on the Pakistani side of the border a scatter of migrants have arrived from right across the broad area from Sialkot to Lyallpur and beyond, but the heaviest flow has come from areas rather further to the north. Half – and perhaps more – of all Pakistani migrants in Britain stem either from Mirpur District or the neighbouring part of Rawalpindi District.

Given that Mirpur lies in staunchly Muslim Pakistan, while Jullundur is a Sikh stronghold, and also that a bloody civil war was fought across the Indo-Pakistan border only 35 years ago, it is tempting to conclude that there will be few similarities between the two areas. This is, however, misleading. Geographically they are only 170 miles apart, and the cultural continuities between them are much stronger than is often supposed. In both the everyday language is Punjabi (though in differing dialects), while styles of dress, food preparation, family and household organisation, as well as modes of house building, agriculture and so forth are very similar. Jullundur may be dominated by the Sikhs, while virtually all Mirpuris may be Muslim, but before Partition in 1947 both areas were much more mixed in sectarian terms.

Yet despite these continuities, Jullundur and Mirpur Districts themselves, as well as Jullundur and Mirpuris in Britain, differ quite strikingly in the amount of economic success that they have achieved. The Jullundur Doab is



The Punjab

now in a state of boom. Agricultural productivity is high and increasing, towns are growing rapidly, and industrial production is rising explosively. Mirpur presents a sharp contrast to all this. Although the area does not lack money – for almost every village has a bank where overseas migrants have left vast sums on deposit – its economy is stagnating. Considerable areas of land lie uncultivated, and even that which is sown is not well looked after. There are few roads and little agricultural machinery, and industry is virtually non-existent. The economy of the whole area is now largely dependent on the continued flow of migrant remittances, and without them extreme poverty would soon follow. Like Mirpur, Jullundur has also witnessed large-scale migration, but in its case economic growth, rather than debilitating dependency, has ensued.

There are similar, though less dramatic differences between Jullunduri and Mirpuri settlers in Britain. Many Jullunduris are skilled craftsmen, and a significant proportion have started small businesses of one kind or another: and while it is far from unknown for Mirpuris to have moved off in these directions, many fewer have moved beyond semi-skilled industrial occupations, from which they are currently being made redundant in large numbers.

Given this situation, my broad purpose here is to compare and contrast the economic, social and political developments that have taken place in the two neighbouring Districts of Jullundur and Mirpur. In doing so I hope to destroy the stereotyped vision of 'the Asian background' as being some uniform state of poverty, and instead to highlight its dynamic variety. Even more importantly, I want to pose the question as to why economic processes in these two areas should differ so dramatically in their outcomes, and what the wider consequences of these differences might be.

Agriculture in Jullundur

The land around Jullundur is some of the most fertile in the world. It is a flat, loamy plain, on which it has always been possible to raise two crops a year (wheat in winter, rice or maize in summer). Irrigation increases yields dramatically, and in the past was achieved either by canal, or by raising water from wells using bullock-driven Persian wheels; but it was only possible to irrigate a small proportion of the land by these methods. Today, however, almost every farmer has installed a diesel or electric-driven tube well (water is rarely more than 20 feet down); these have not only greatly increased the yields of the main crops, but have allowed careful farmers to sow up to two additional catch crops of vegetables as well. The widespread use of irrigation, together with the use of new varieties of seed, fertilisers and pesticides, has dramatically increased levels of productivity. Jullundur, like the rest of the Indian Punjab, now produces a massive surplus of foodgrains, which is exported to the rest of India.

All this has precipitated a sharp improvement in local standards of living. Most houses are brick-built, village streets are paved, tarmac roads run everywhere, and a wide range of consumer goods – from bicycles and sewing machines to televisions and washing machines – are becoming commonplace. Agriculture is also becoming increasingly mechanised; in addition to tube wells, tractors, grain threshers and sugar-cane crushers are all in common use. Producing them has become the principal source of rapidly increasing urban wealth. Indeed, the value of Punjab's industrial production has now outstripped that of agriculture.

Although Punjab has now become India's most prosperous province, it was not always so. A century ago the peasant cultivators of the region produced little more than was necessary to meet their subsistence needs. Though not poverty stricken in an absolute sense, for famine in this fertile province was virtually unknown, the surplus they produced was small, and much of that was appropriated by the State as taxation. Houses were for the most, part built of sun dried mud bricks, streets were unpaved, and machinery was both limited and simple. It was in this context that overseas migration began.

Emigration from Jullundur

Following the Mutiny of 1857, the British authorities decided to change their recruitment policies, and to replace the rebellious Bengal Army with one which they considered more 'loyal'. Since the Punjab had a military tradition, and the region had not supported the mutineers, it was selected as a prime area for recruitment for the new Army. Those who joined up were for the most part members of poorer peasant farmer families – and especially those with a surplus of labour due to the presence of several adult sons. Amongst those most frequently recruited were Jat Sikhs, especially from Jullundur District, which was then, as now, one of the most densely populated in the Punjab.²

By the 1880s, soldiers of the Indian Army began to be posted abroad to help maintain order in Britain's still expanding Empire in the Far East. Very soon afterwards, Sikh ex-soldiers began to take jobs as night-watchmen and police

men. and also to establish small businesses in Singapore, Hong Kong and Shanghai, so establishing what was to prove to be a tradition of working overseas. By the turn of the century Sikh pioneers were working as lumberjacks in British Columbia and as agricultural labourers in California. When competing peasant migrants from Europe managed to force the passage of immigration laws which excluded 'Asiatics' from these frontier regions, they simply turned elsewhere: to Burma, for instance, to the Philippines and to East Africa, where they helped to construct the railways in the 1930s. When British industry ran acutely short of labour during the years of the post-war boom the focus of emigration' moved to Southall, Birmingham and Bradford: and, when excluded once again by discriminatory legislation, migrants took jobs in Germany, Holland and Denmark, at least for as long as the boom lasted. Now that the greater part of the industrialised world is in the midst of deep recession, large numbers of Jullundurians have gone to work on construction sites in Libya, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Over a lengthy period they have become highly skilled at searching out opportunities to earn good money overseas: travel agents in every town in the Jullundur Doab can provide up-to-date information on the state of the labour market in all parts of the world, and can, at a price, offer the intending migrant all the necessary documentation to get him to wherever labour is currently in demand.

Migration from Jullundur is thus in no sense a recent phenomenon: it has a long and varied history. Over the whole period since the imposition of British rule, however, the impetus behind migration has remained much the same. Adventurous young men from poorer (though not the poorest) families have been helped by other members of the group to invest in a ticket abroad. Their object in working overseas has been to accumulate substantial savings, which could then be used to launch both themselves and their families into a position of higher social and economic status.³

Such entrepreneurial migration was quite clearly not precipitated by grinding poverty, not least because the poorest families could not afford the investment to send a son abroad. Instead the urge towards migration was primarily a product of local status competition. The majority of early migrants belonged to peasant farmer families whose members felt they had slipped behind their immediate kinsmen in status. Given the egalitarian but deeply competitive ethos which is so characteristic of Punjabi peasants-and particularly amongst members of the Jat caste-this was a galling situation in which to be, but one to which migration offered a remedy. Wealthy returnees could turn the tables on their rivals.

It was as a consequence of all this that migration began to develop a dynamic of its own. Members of better-off families began, in their turn, to feel put down by returning migrants. Not only did their new-found wealth allow them to buy land and to build fine houses, but returnees also brought with them the fruits of their contacts with a much more affluent world. In recent years these have included such things as cars and video-cassette recorders. Even those with substantial landholdings could not match that kind of wealth – so they, too, began to consider sending at least one young man abroad. At the same time the growing affluence of the whole area means that even those with little or no property are now able to raise the funds necessary to finance migration. In 1982, a visa and accompanying documentation, together with an air ticket to Saudi Arabia, costs about Rs. 6,000 (about £400), a sum which even labourers could manage to raise. Consequently, the social range from which migrants have been drawn has widened considerably in recent years.

Migration and economic growth

Migration – or rather the remittances which migrants send back home – has brought major benefits to those families which have sent members overseas. Given also that the economy of Jullundur has grown explosively in recent years, it is tempting to conclude that the two are necessarily and causally linked

- and hence that large-scale migration will always precipitate rapid economic growth. But the fact that migration has not precipitated growth in Mirpur should warn us that things are not necessarily nearly so straightforward.

Care must be taken to distinguish between the impact of remittances on individual households and their effect on the aggregate economy of the region as a whole. It is also important to avoid assuming that migrant remittances are the only variable that matters, and they are necessarily directly and causally linked to economic growth. In the case of Jullundur (and, indeed, the rest of the Punjab) growth has emerged primarily from a close, and increasingly successful symbiosis between developments in agricultural and industrial productivity. This is a story which it is worth setting out at some length, above all because its details are little known.

Industrialisation in Jullundur

Prior to the imposition of British rule the Punjab was in no sense industrialised, but craft skills in the working of iron and steel were comparatively well developed. Swords and cannon were locally produced, and craftsmen in every village were capable of making ploughs, sickles and the mechanically complex Persian Wheel. British rule brought much more direct access to world markets, and especially to goods being manufactured in Europe. Chaff-cutters and sewing machines were amongst the most attractive and useful products for Punjabi farmers, and from the turn of the century they became increasingly commonplace.

When such machines went wrong, farmers would take them to the family blacksmith⁴ for repair, and he in turn would buy the necessary spare parts from the bazaar. But these spares were imported, and consequently very expensive – and many blacksmiths soon decided that they could make the simpler parts themselves at a much lower price. By adapting and developing their traditional skills, blacksmiths gradually learned to manufacture a wider and wider range of spares, until they were eventually able to produce the whole machine indigenously. The methods they used at the outset were often crude and labour-intensive, but their product was invariably cheap: if quality suffered it did not matter too much. Local farmers were eager to buy, especially if the price was low.

By the 1930s local craftsmen were producing complete chaff-cutters and sewing machines, and since then they have moved on to reproduce an ever-widening range of goods, as well as the machine tools which are used to produce them. These goods now include bicycles, pumps, diesel engines, grain threshers and a wide range of spare parts for tractors, cars and trucks: and since competition between rival manufacturers has become ever more intense in recent years, prices have remained low, but quality has improved dramatically.

Initially, the craftsmen who become manufacturers were virtually all village-based, and it was there that they started their factories. But as the scale of production has increased, so they have gradually moved into the towns, where access to raw materials and so forth is much easier. As a result Punjabi towns, and especially those along the Grand Trunk Road, are increasingly becoming hives of industry packed with innumerable small workshops. Each town also tends to specialise in a particular line: Jullundur in sports equipment: Phagwara in diesel engines and motor parts: Goraya in chaff-cutters, threshers and truck axles, Ludhiana in machine tools, bicycles and woollen textiles: Gobindgarh in steel re-rolling: and so forth.

The significance of this dramatic industrial revolution is, first, that it has avoided the trap of dependency by relying on indigenous skills and resources. There has been no need to spend scarce foreign exchange to buy in technical skills and know-how: having one item to copy has been sufficient. Second, the fact that simple technology has been used means that production has been

labour-intensive, so creating substantial employment opportunities. Third, and perhaps most crucially, industrial growth has directly paralleled agricultural growth. Cheap machinery has found a ready market amongst farmers, and has allowed them to improve their productivity quite dramatically. This has in turn enhanced their purchasing power, and generated a demand for yet more manufactured goods.

This complementary expansion of agricultural and industrial production still has far to run. Indeed, there is no reason why explosive growth of the kind that has taken place in Japan, Korea and Taiwan in the last three decades should not occur in the Punjab. Punjabi products are already exported in large quantities to all parts of India, and an increasing quantity of manufactured goods, such as bicycles and motor spares, are now being sent abroad.

The context of economic growth in Jullundur

No single factor has been responsible for this process of rapid economic growth, but a number of important components to its development can be identified. In the first place one can point to the relatively egalitarian agrarian structure of the area.⁵ Where most farmers are owner-cultivators, as they are in the Punjab, they have a direct incentive to increase productivity, for they reap all the benefits; tenant farmers and labourers invariably see the lion's share of such increases go to their landlords. Secondly, one can point to the existence – and then the development – of local craft skills. It is upon indigenous skills, whether of farmers or craftsmen, that progress has been built. Thirdly, one can point to the close symbiosis between agricultural and industrial development – each has helped to finance the other. A fourth important point – though its significance will only be fully apparent when we turn to consider the Pakistani economy – is that ever since Independence the Government of India has put tight controls on the import of manufactured goods. Given the shelter which these controls provided from overseas competition, Punjabi craftsmen have been able to move ahead very, rapidly, especially since 1947. Import controls still remain tight today, but for basic manufactured goods protection is less and less necessary. Indian-made goods are increasingly competitively priced in world markets.

Once these wider processes have been taken into account, the significance of migrant remittances can be put into perspective. While remittances have undoubtedly brought new-found wealth to individual families, they have not been primarily responsible for the process of growth itself. Two additional pieces of evidence can be advanced to support this view. On the one hand, the scale of economic growth – in both the agricultural and manufacturing sectors – has not been much less in Ludhiana than in Jullundur District, despite the fact that the former has sent many fewer migrants abroad.⁶ On the other hand, in Jullundur itself only a small proportion of the most prosperous farmers and industrialists are ex-migrants. By and large their working capital has been locally generated.

None of this is to suggest that migrant remittances have hindered economic growth, or that migrant's contacts with a wider world in which they learned new skills and ideas have not been a basis for local initiatives, but it must be stressed that the central driving force in local economic growth has not come from this source. What has been most crucial has been local entrepreneurial activity in agriculture, industry and commerce, and the growth of a flourishing symbiosis between these three sectors. Migrant remittances may have added gilt to the gingerbread-but they have not produced the gingerbread itself.

Social change in Jullundur

Before going on to consider the very different part which migration and migrant remittances play in the economy of Mirpur, and beyond that in the political economy of Pakistan as a whole, we must pay brief attention to the very considerable social changes which have taken place in Jullundur as a result of rapid economic growth. It is perhaps more important to emphasise that

everyone has benefited from this process. Standards of living have improved dramatically over the past few decades. Everyone is better off than they used to be-so much so that the Punjab itself has now attracted substantial numbers of immigrants, most of them drawn from the much poorer areas in the eastern part of Northern India.

The fact that prosperity has come to the Punjab does not mean that the benefits of economic growth have been equally shared. Those with property, whether in land, machinery or a business, have done very much better than those with nothing to sell but their labour. Farmers with fair-sized holdings- say 15 acres or above – are now becoming wealthy men, though with classic peasant frugality they have not necessarily altered their lifestyles dramatically. What is more obvious in Jullundur District, as in the rest of Punjab, is the existence of a burgeoning middle class, whose members live in increasing opulence in spacious residential colonies now being laid out on the outskirts of most towns.

Meanwhile village life has been transformed. The traditional inter-caste reciprocities, where members of different castes provided specialist services for one another in return for payments in kind, have almost entirely broken down. Such transactions are now virtually all short-term, closely bargained, and accounts are rendered in cash. Beyond this, the whole agrarian structure is being re-ordered. Peasant farmers with relatively small holdings (which today is beginning to include all those with less than ten acres) are finding it increasingly difficult to make a good living from agriculture. They simply do not have the resources to farm profitably, now that agriculture has become increasingly mechanised and capital-intensive.

Even so there are various opportunities open to such families. Migration has long been an option, but it is one which is becoming less attractive. Wages in the Middle East (the only place where jobs are currently available on any scale) are dropping, and are well below the levels of those which used to be available in Britain. Moreover, the conditions under which migrants have to work in the Gulf and Saudi Arabia are known to be appalling. As an alternative to migration, however, a range of local alternatives is now available, of which three are worth mentioning. Firstly, there is the possibility of selling up completely and buying new land away to the east in Uttar Pradesh, where land of identical quality costs only a tenth of the price of that in Jullundur. Secondly, there is the possibility of moving into agro-business, such as intensive chicken farming or milk production. Failing either of these, ex-farmers are increasingly turning towards the towns, either to work for wages, or (preferably) to start a business of one kind or another.

Even more dramatic changes have begun to emerge at the lower end of the caste and status hierarchy. Approximately 30 per cent of the rural population traditionally worked as landless labourers, and most were of the Chamar or Leatherworker caste. Such labourers have long resented their exploitation, and most, especially the patronising treatment they received from their Jat Sikh landlords; whatever Guru Nanak may have taught about the meaninglessness of the concept of caste, Jats have always treated Chamars (and, indeed, all non-Jats) as their inferiors. As agricultural prosperity increased in Punjab, so Chamars (or Ad-dharmis, as they now call themselves) began to bargain up their wages, but in recent years they have begun to move completely away from their traditional occupation. The great majority now make their living in the towns, and particularly in the new factories which have grown up so rapidly; and given this access to much higher urban wages, a considerable number have invested in tickets to the Gulf, most usually with the aim of establishing their own workshop with their accumulated savings on their return.

But as the Ad-dharmis have moved out of agriculture, so a new group has replaced them. In recent years large numbers of immigrant workers have arrived in Jullundur and, indeed, in all parts of the Punjab. Known collectively as *bhaiya*, the great majority of these immigrants come from peasant families in much less prosperous parts of north India, and especially from eastern

UP and Bihar. They have sought work in Punjab for just the same reasons as did the Jullundurites overseas: but because their villages are so much less developed than the Punjab, and because the market for migrants has become so much more competitive, buying a railway ticket to Jullundur is the most that they can afford.

It is illuminating to consider the parallels between immigration to the Punjab and immigration to Britain. Just as acute shortages of labour drew Punjabis to Britain, so *bhaiyas* have been drawn to the Punjab. These shortages can be traced in part to overseas migration itself, but more significantly to the determined most of Ad-dharmis out of agriculture, together with increasing demands for labour precipitated by booming agricultural output. But agricultural work is very poorly paid. With the exception of harvest time (when rates can double or even treble) labourers receive Rs. 10 per day or Rs. 300 (about £20) per month. Skilled industrial workers can currently make Rs. 600 per month (the figures here refer to 1982), a fact which only reinforces the Ad-dharmis' determination to get off the land.

But *bhaiya* migrants are, of course, interested in industrial jobs for just the same reason, and a considerable number have now forced their way in – in the face of considerable Ad-dharmi resistance. That section of Punjab's proletariat which has indigenous roots is becoming increasingly hostile towards the *bhaiyas*. They feel that the local labour market is now becoming flooded by immigrants, whose presence tends to undermine their own bargaining position. In a final paradox, the despised *bhaiyas* are mostly peasant farmers by origin. They therefore have a higher formal caste status than do the Ad-dharmis.' Nevertheless, both are looked down on as being social inferiors by the Jats and Ramgarhias, who are themselves treated in much the same way when they migrate to Britain.⁷

Mirpur and its economy

How does all this compare and contrast with Mirpur? In the first place it must be stressed that Mirpur is rather less well situated environmentally than is Jullundur. While Jullundur lies astride the Grand Trunk Road, which always was, and still remains, the major channel of communication for the whole of Northern India, Mirpur lies a few miles to the north of it, and is connected only by a single spur. Moreover, the District lies within the outer ranges of the Himalayan foothills: because it is not absolutely flat, like Jullundur, comprehensive irrigation is much more difficult to achieve. On the other hand, rainfall is a good deal higher, making irrigation less absolutely necessary, while hills and rivers offer all sorts of opportunities for dam construction.

Much of Mirpur District consists of substantial areas of reasonably flat plateau, split up by occasional rocky outcrops and precipitous ravines. This seems to have made the whole area into something of a haven. Throughout known history invaders have swept into India through the plains of the Punjab, so villages in Jullundur have always been exposed to marauders. Mirpur's terrain offered a considerable degree of shelter, which may explain why the area has always been comparatively densely populated, and certainly a consequence of that high population density has been that over the last century or so large numbers of Mirpuris have sought work outside their own District.

As has already been suggested, however, nothing like the economic development which is so characteristic of Jullundur has taken place in Mirpur. Industry is virtually non-existent, and agriculture – both in terms of the area ploughed, and of yield – is in decline. While migrant remittances have helped to boost an already expanding economy in Jullundur, a very similar flow of resources has actually precipitated economic decline in Mirpur, for the whole area is becoming ever more dependent on migrant remittances. Without a constant flow of funds from overseas,

Mirpur – and, indeed, Pakistan itself – would be bankrupt. The remainder of this article will be devoted to examining just how and why migrant remittances have come to play such a very different kind of role in two neighbouring, and originally very similar areas.

Emigration in Mirpur

The earliest significant movement of migrants away from Mirpur seems to have begun just before the turn of the century, as men sought jobs on the dockside in Bombay. As every year passed the port became busier, and soon Mirpuris began to seek work afloat. Within a few years they began to establish a niche for themselves as engine-room stokers. This was one of the hardest and most uncomfortable jobs available. Not only was it extremely dirty, but in tropical conditions engine-room temperatures could easily reach 140°F. Yet from a Mirpuri perspective the job offered good money, and so there were plenty of takers. The most usual pattern of recruitment was for a *serang* (the engine-room foreman) to return to his village to recruit the men he needed from amongst his neighbours' and kinsmen's families. Those villages with several *serangs* soon gained (and still retain) a reputation for wealth.

Mirpuris began to take jobs as stokers just before the beginning of the First World War, and this was the trade in which they specialised until the end of the second one. During this period very few took jobs ashore anywhere overseas. But the Second World War and its aftermath changed all this. During the war itself a huge demand developed for tough male labour, especially in the munitions factories in the Midlands and North of England. Mirpuri seamen – many of whom had had their ships torpedoed beneath them – began to be drafted towards these jobs, the more so since they were both able and willing to take on hot and heavy foundry work.⁸

In the immediate post-war period Mirpuri migration to Britain began to increase, for reasons which have as much to do with developments in the subcontinent as they do with Britain. On the one hand, the availability of seaborne jobs began to dry up. Not only were coal-fired ships being phased out very rapidly, so lessening the demand for stokers, but the partition of Pakistan from India in 1947 meant that Mirpuris now had to cross a disputed international frontier before they could reach Bombay. Meanwhile the accelerating post-war boom soon began to generate an increasing demand for labour in Britain. Not only did ex-seamen come to join their compatriots who had settled in Britain during the war, but within a few years they began to send back word to their kinsmen, instructing them how to get to Britain to take advantage of the new opportunities that were opening up.

Just as in Jullundur, the migratory connection soon developed its own dynamic, once pioneering links had been established. But in the Mirpuri case two additional factors are worth mentioning. The first was the building of the Mangla Dam across the River Jhelum on the southern part of the District during the early 1960s. This resulted in the flooding of some of the area's best agricultural land, and although compensation was paid by the Government, many regarded what they received as grossly inadequate. Worse still, it was extremely difficult for farmers to buy new land to replace that which they had lost. Although relatively few people had emigrated from the area which disappeared under the lake, everyone knew about the opportunities available in Britain, for migrants from more remote villages passed through that area on their way out of the District. Faced with the loss of their land, many Mirpuris whose villages were submerged took advantage of the short-lived voucher system to enter Britain between 1962 and 1966. They rapidly found employment, particularly in heavy engineering and the textile industry.

Since 1966 it has become progressively more difficult for adult males from the sub-continent to enter Britain, thanks to increasingly stringent immigration

legislation. But in the Mirpur case the pressure to migrate has remained intense, above all because there are so few local opportunities to make money. In sharp contrast to Jullundur, the rural economy is moving backwards, not forwards, in terms of both yields and productivity. Largely because of unmechanised agricultural methods, a farmer's life is still one of back-breaking toil. So that even those with substantial landholdings see work abroad as offering better prospects than staying back home. On the other hand, the geographical target for migration has changed in the last few years. Visitors back on holiday from Britain can be found everywhere, and as a result it is now well known that unemployment is widespread, that jobs are virtually impossible to find, and that racist abuse is commonplace. So ambitious young men now set their sights on a visa which will allow them to work in Libya, Saudi Arabia or the United Arab Emirates. These visas (invariably purchased through the agents of labour contractors) now cost Rs. 15,000 or more. whereas wages for a labourer in the Middle East are rarely much more than Rs. 2,500 per month, so that migration now no longer represents a means of gaining access to instant wealth.⁹ In the absence of any better opportunities, however, there is now a steady flow of Mirpuris – and, indeed, of people from many other parts of Pakistan – to the Middle East.

Migrant remittances

Even though Mirpuris tend to be far more strongly committed to emigration than are Jullunduris, if only because local economic opportunities are so much more limited, they tend to keep in closer touch with their homeland. There are two main reasons why this should be so: first, they have tended to delay reuniting their families overseas for rather longer than did the Jullunduris;⁹ and second, those of their kin who have remained at home have become increasingly dependent on regular remittances to maintain their living standards. Sometimes this reflects a real lack of local resources; more usually land is available. but it is simply not being cultivated as profitably as it might be, very often because no one but women, children and the elderly can be found at home.

The impact of large-scale migrant remittances is clearly visible throughout the District. New brick houses are being built, new shop units are being constructed, and large numbers of Ford Transits- most of which have been driven out overland from Britain – ply for hire as mini-buses along the roads. But most striking of all is the number of banks. They are to be found everywhere, even in the smallest villages, and virtually all their deposits come from overseas. Thus far it might seem that there are parallels with Jullundur: but where Mirpur differs is that there has been an almost total lack of productive investment in either agriculture or manufacturing. A substantial proportion of migrant remittances simply lies in deposit accounts in the bank, and real economic activity is confined almost entirely to the service sector, which in turn needs a constant flow of remittances to keep it in business.

The land is, of course, the District's major asset, but not only is it far less intensively cultivated than that in Jullundur, but large areas of excellent land have simply been abandoned. When all the males of a family have gone overseas, the most use made of such land is to graze a few goats over it. Beyond this there is a marked absence of agricultural machinery. Tractors are hardly to be seen, there are no tube wells or small-scale dam irrigation schemes, and hardly any chaff-cutters. Agricultural methods are still of the traditional labour intensive kind, and rely primarily on human and animal muscle power.

Alongside all this, there has been very little investment of a kind which could boost women's domestic productivity – and make their lives a good deal easier. For example, women in virtually all villages still have to spend a great deal of time fetching water by hand from the nearest well or stream. Despite sparkling new houses, and banks which are bursting with cash, simple hand-pumps – which have been commonplace in Jullundur for many years – are hardly ever to be seen.

As a consequence of its low levels of agricultural productivity. Mirpur District is no longer self-sufficient even in food grains: large quantities of wheat are imported from elsewhere in Pakistan. All this makes for a great deal of activity in the towns and smaller rural bazaars, but what is most striking is that the whole economy is predicated around the continued flow of migrant remittances. Virtually nothing is exported, but a huge range of goods – from cloth and cement to steel reinforcing bars and motor cycles – are imported. A huge service economy has grown up around this trade. Wood is brought into the towns in vast quantities every day, for cooking and brick making. Roads are few, so there are a multiplicity of camel and mule drivers redistributing goods to the interior and, of course, all these animals have to be fed. Many farmers are being drawn into the urban cash economy, selling half-mature crops as fodder, or taking time off to fetch wood from the higher mountains.

However superficially lively this market-based economy may be, it has already run into problems of over-capacity. Every bazaar contains long lines of shop units built speculatively for rent, but very often less than half of them are actually occupied, and business in those that are is very desultory. Similarly, there are by now far more mini-buses plying for hire than there are passengers available to fill them. What soon emerges is that Mirpur has an excess of entrepreneurs as compared with opportunities to make money, most especially in the rural areas from which the overseas migrants come.

Mirpur and Jullundur contrasted

A comparison of Mirpur with Jullundur soon makes it clear that migrant remittances alone cannot precipitate real economic growth. On the contrary. Unless the local economy is in a very sound condition, a huge flow of cash resources tends to stifle rather than stimulate such growth. The reasons are not hard to identify. A migrant returning to Jullundur looking for a profitable way of utilising his savings has innumerable role models to follow. He can farm – or go into intensive egg production. He can start a small engineering workshop or open a shop, or perhaps set up in the transport business; but whatever his decision he is likely to take advice and assistance from a kinsman or friend who is already established in that line. Such returnees are not pioneering entrepreneurs, at least in the first instance, in their activities back home. They follow others, and join in an already established process. This is not the case in Mirpur. Such local activity as exists is almost entirely run and financed by returnees; and since it is concentrated overwhelmingly in the service sector rather than in directly productive industry and agriculture, the whole system is increasingly dependent on remittances from overseas.

The low level of agricultural and industrial activity also has very significant effect on the everyday behaviour of Mirpur returnees, and most especially the men. While women are expected to participate fully in the domestic economy, men seek to avoid any kind of contact with agriculture, regarding it as far below their dignity. Instead, having supervised the building of a house which they hope will be the envy of their neighbours, most men aim simply to lounge around in style. Apart from drinking endless cups of tea, one of their most passionate activities is the training of fighting cocks, and then betting on the outcome of their battles. If they do get involved in activities which might result in real profit, their preference is to avoid physical work. If returnees have any long-term aims, it is to be successful rentiers.

Such success is, however, difficult to achieve; fighting cocks, shop units and mini-buses rarely bring a significant income. Thus, returnees tend to live like princes until their money runs out, whereupon they have little alternative but to return to the treadmill overseas to try to earn some more. Those returning to the Middle East do at least have a chance of getting work, however low-paid, but some of the saddest cases to be met are young men who have come back for an extended holiday, having been made redundant in Britain. Life in a small town, or in a remote village in the interior of Mirpur soon begins to pall, for

there is so little to do—at least as they see it. Many commented that their most positive possession was a British passport, which would at least enable them to go back and claim the dole.

Some parallels to all of this can, of course, be found in Jullundur. Returning migrants everywhere usually find that the cost of living back home is greater than they remembered, particularly when all one's kinsmen have been given the gifts they feel they deserve. Similarly, the easiest way to demonstrate that one has become a man of some status is to refuse to get one's hands dirty. Yet returning Jullundurians do not generally keep themselves so elaborately distanced from farm work as do Mirpuris. Partly this is a consequence of the level of technology involved – there is much less resistance to driving a tractor than a pair of bullocks – and partly a matter of the inherent profitability of the activity. Farmer is a thoroughly respectable title to have in Jullundur: it is not in Mirpur.

What I am suggesting is that migrant remittances set off a spiral of activities, and that this spiral may either go upwards or downwards. Where the local economy remains in good shape. As in Jullundur, the spiral is in an upward direction. But where the local economy is stagnating (and this stagnation may itself be precipitated by the absence of large numbers of men abroad) precisely the opposite process occurs. People do less and less.

Faced with clear signs of inactivity, it is easy to conclude that it must arise from some kind of cultural backwardness. Indeed, this explanation of the causes of Mirpuri 'backwardness' is very popular amongst non-Mirpuris, and especially amongst Government officers who administrate the area. Mirpuris, they helpfully explain to visitors and to each other, are backward, ill-educated and lazy, and they have been spoiled by too much money. But plausible though this may seem at first sight – for instance, as one watches the audience for a cock-fight gather – closer scrutiny soon reveals its absurdity. Mirpuris were after all, employed as seamen precisely because of their ability, and their willingness, to perform arduous tasks in extremely adverse conditions. Mirpuris in Britain have continued to do just that. There is no lack of money in Mirpur District itself: there can be few other places in the third world which are so capital rich. Yet development stubbornly refuses to take place. The reasons for this must be sought, I would suggest, not in the psychology of Mirpuris or the 'traditionalism' of their culture, but in the structural context in which they find themselves.

Mirpur as a dependent periphery

In political and economic terms Mirpur has a long history of dependency. During the days of the British *Raj*, Mirpur did not lie in British-administered territory, as did Jullundur, but formed the southern boundary of the Maharaja of Kashmir's territories. Since it was so peripheral to the kingdom, however, it was largely left undeveloped. A single road led up through the District to the interior, local administration was both exploitative and inefficient, and public services, such as education, were virtually non-existent. At Independence in 1947 the Hindu Maharaja chose to affiliate his predominantly Muslim kingdom to India, and a civil war which was at least as bitter as that waged in Punjab broke out. In Mirpur most of the merchants and shopkeepers had been Sikhs: they were all either killed or expelled. Meanwhile the District itself formed a part of the narrow strip of territory which eventually fell to Pakistan, and which is now known as Azad (free) Kashmir. But the boundary just to the north is still only a cease-fire line. Pakistan still claims that the remainder of Kashmir should not form part of India, while India claims Kashmir for itself.

Greatly to the Government of Pakistan's embarrassment, however, a strong anti-Pakistan movement now flourishes in Azad Kashmir, and this is particularly well supported in Mirpur District. The movement demands that the whole of Kashmir be made truly Azad, not just from India, but from Pakistan as well – and goes on to cast Pakistan in the role of exploiter. Pakistan, the movement's supporters suggest, receives many benefits from Mirpur. As a result of the

construction of the Mangla Dam it gets huge supplies of water for irrigation, as well as hydro-electricity. It gets timber from the District's forests but most of the saw-mills are in the plains. Above all it gets the benefits of the many crores of rupees earned by Mirpuris overseas, which are deposited by Pakistani banks. In return, they argue, Mirpur gets virtually nothing. Not only has the best agricultural land in the District, as well as its two major towns. Mirpur and Dadial, been drowned beneath the rising waters of the lake, but the compensation which was paid was pitifully small. Both Mirpur and Dadial have been rebuilt anew on higher ground, but the capital for their construction has overwhelmingly come from overseas, and both have lost a good deal of their spirit in the process. Most serious of all, the whole infrastructure of communications, which was destroyed by the rising waters, has only been replaced at a snail's pace. The whole District has only a single hard top road, which winds its way lengthily around the lake, but that was only completed in the mid-1970s, a decade after the construction of the dam. Most strikingly of all, the bridge over the River Poonch to Tehsil Dadial- which has sent a higher proportion of migrants overseas than any other- was only completed in 1980. As Dadialis bitterly point out, electricity from Mangla reached Karachi, 2,000 miles to the south, long before it reached their own area, and there is still no progress towards building a bridge across the Jhelum to give them direct access to the plains. However great the benefits that Mangla may have brought to Pakistan, Mirpur has experienced it only as a handicap.

With this in mind, the stagnation of the Mirpuri economy can be seen in a very different light. Though the area has long been capital-rich as a consequence of migrant remittances, it has nevertheless been systematically under-developed as a consequence of policy decisions taken by Governments located elsewhere, to whom the interests of the local population have been of little importance.

Prior to Independence, Mirpur was on the periphery of Kashmir State. Far distant from Srinagar and Jammu, it was given little in the way of roads, schools and other public services. Today Mirpur remains on the periphery, this time of Pakistan; and its economy is still being manipulated to the advantage of outsiders. Mangla Dam required massive public funding, but the benefits of that investment have gone elsewhere. The costs have been born in Mirpur. Even more important, the remittances sent back by Mirpuri workers overseas have come to play a vital role in the Pakistani economy, while at the same time debilitating the local economy of Mirpur. A fuller understanding of just how that has occurred can only be achieved by broadening our focus still further, to considering the major features of Pakistan's economy, and the role which migration and migrant remittances play within it.

The wider context of the Pakistani economy

Over the years Pakistan's economy has gradually become increasingly dependent on migrant remittances, so much so that 70 per cent of the country's foreign exchange earnings now come from this source. The only other significant exports are cotton, rice, and carpets, which are currently dropping in terms of both volume and value. The scale of emigration from Pakistan is dramatically large. Some two million Pakistanis, nearly 10 per cent of the country's adult male manpower, now work overseas. This development is generally welcomed by the Government, whose spokesmen suggest that remittances can play a vital role in fostering economic development in a country which is rich in manpower but very short of other resources. As a consequence, Pakistan now has a policy of encouraging as much emigration as possible.¹⁰ In view of what has already been said about the impact of migration on the economy of Mirpur the claim that emigration will necessarily have a beneficial effect on the sending society needs to be treated with considerable scepticism. But before pursuing this further it is worth taking a brief look at Pakistan's economic history, most particularly to make a comparison with what has gone on in India.

As has already been stressed, India has had a long-standing commitment to economic self-reliance. Strict controls, which virtually amount to an embargo, have been placed on the import of consumer goods. It was behind this protective barrier that small-scale industrialisation in Indian Punjab has developed. In Pakistan no such protective embargo has been established. Manufactured goods can be imported quite freely, provided that import duties are paid-and such duties are now the largest single source of revenue available to the Government. The result of all this is that one's initial impression of Pakistan – and particularly urban Pakistan – is that it is a much more affluent country than India. The streets are full of comfortable Japanese cars, while colour televisions are freely available in the bazaar. But closer inspection very soon reveals the thinness of the veneer. Such imported goods are only available to a tiny urban elite, whose members have a higher standard of living than many of their Indian counterparts. But not only is this elite much smaller in proportional terms, but the inequality between this group and the urban proletariat, and still more the mass of the rural population, is much wider in Pakistan than it is in India.

A single example will have to suffice here. In India bicycles have now become a commonplace, and most particularly so in Punjab. At a cost of Rs. 400 (about £25) they are within virtually everyone's reach, and possession of a bike (as with a car in more affluent countries) dramatically enhances personal mobility. In Pakistan, however, bicycles are rarely seen. Locally-made ones cost twice¹¹ as much as their Indian counterparts, and their quality is very poor: they tend to fall apart. Thus, if young men in Pakistan set their sights anywhere it is on buying an imported Yamaha-and to find the money to do so they will almost certainly have to go and work overseas.

The availability of imported goods, albeit at high prices, has put tremendous pressure on Pakistan's fledgling industries. Unable to compete, many manufacturing industries have gone into decline in recent years. Where they have not been nationalised, their owners have switched from producing to importing. Even more importantly, rural industrialisation of the kind described for Jullundur has not taken off. The potential was certainly there, for Muslim craftsmen have long had a reputation for excellence, and in the immediate post-Partition period they began to move in the same direction as their Jullundur compatriots. But development has been stifled, partly because of the absence of protective tariffs, and even more importantly because the demand for cheap manufactured goods from the rural areas has been much more limited.¹²

It is not only in Mirpur that agriculture is under-developed: the same is true of virtually the whole of Pakistan. It is particularly instructive to compare the level and quality of agricultural activity in villages on opposite sides of the border in the plains proper, where the underlying environmental conditions are essentially identical. What soon becomes clear is that Pakistan is far behind India in the provision of a basic infrastructure in rural areas. Thus, immediately one crosses to Pakistani Punjab¹³ roads become much poorer, electricity connections fewer, and in many villages fertility is declining rapidly because of excessive water logging. The answer to the latter problem is well known. Drains need to be constructed. Those on the Indian side of the border are deep and well-built, but those in Pakistan are fewer in number, and very often too shallow, wrongly sited or silted up. Beyond this machinery is much more scarce. Tractors and tube wells are rarely seen, and are very much more expensive to buy. Without the facilities which are now commonplace on the Indian side of the border Pakistani farmers cannot produce a substantial surplus, and thus they do not generate a significant demand on the manufacturing sector. The symbiotic interdependence between the industrial and agricultural sectors which lies at the heart of Jullundur's growing wealth cannot take off in these conditions.

Stagnation, migration and the elite

Though rural stagnation is widespread in Pakistan, it should not be thought that the country's economy is inactive. Far from it: but as was stressed earlier, the economy is run largely for the benefit of the urban elite. This immediately becomes apparent when we consider; just how it is that the import of manufactured goods is actually paid for. In the period immediately after Independence, Bengali jute was Pakistan's most important source of foreign exchange. The fact that this money was very largely used to finance imports into the politically dominant Western wing of the country was one of the principal reasons why Bangladesh seceded from Pakistan in the early 1970s. But just as this occurred, so remittances from Mirpuri migrants in Britain began to reach their peak. Thus Pakistan's imports could still be paid for, despite the loss of its main source of hard currency. With the onset of recession in Britain, together with the reuniting of migrant families, the volume of remittances from Britain to Pakistan has also declined considerably in recent years. At the same time, however, a new source of income has providentially emerged, for over 80 per cent of migrant remittances to Pakistan now arrive from the Middle East.

Yet the whole policy of depending on an ever increasing flow of migrant remittances to sustain an import-based economy is becoming increasingly precarious. Even before the recent fall in both the price and production of oil, the demand for unskilled labour in the Middle East had passed its peak. If the Arab oil producers were to be forced to cut back on construction projects in the same way as Nigeria, the consequences for Pakistan's economy, let alone for individual migrants, would be severe indeed. Moreover, there is little sign of a new demand for unskilled labour developing anywhere else in the world, for newly-emergent industries are rarely labour intensive. As a source of foreign exchange, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf may be the end of the road.

Short-sighted though all this may be, the strategy is not without its beneficiaries and supporters. Thus far, Pakistan's elite – senior officers in the armed forces and the civil service, together with the largest merchants and landowners – have done well out of it. Large flows of cash from overseas mean that they have easy access to imported goods, and that foreign travel (and overseas investment) poses few problems. Pakistan's basic policy of free trade, along with its encouragement of the free movement of labour, also finds favour with both the World Bank and the United States. But one does not have to look far to find its adverse effects. The development potential in migrant remittances has largely been expended on consumer goods, leaving little or nothing over to invest in a sounder rural infrastructure. In its absence no significant growth in either agricultural or industrial activity can be expected.

Mirpur's under-development is therefore best understood not so much as the outcome of the innate backwardness of Mirpuri culture, but rather as a consequence of the broader structural conditions in which Mirpuris find themselves enmeshed. As their history shows, they have been at least as entrepreneurially minded as have Jullunduris: it is the local contexts within which they have been operating that have differed.

Yet, as in most other structures of inequality, those destined to be losers do gain some short-term benefits as individuals from their situation. Migrants acquire cash savings to which they would otherwise not have access. But in the absence of profitable investment opportunities at home, those savings soon run out, and then there is little alternative to another spell of labouring overseas. And at what cost? Nowhere are migrant workers well treated, and those last in the line have to be content with the least pickings. As many Pakistanis are now ruefully aware, migrant labourers have far fewer legal and civic rights in the Arab world than they do even in Britain. More galling still is the fact that in the former case the agents of their situation are fellow Muslims.

Just how much longer all this can be sustained is an open question. Although emigration is now a Pakistan-wide phenomenon, the system has been longest established in Mirpur, and it is here that the loudest rumblings of disquiet can be heard. Returning migrants have given an impetus to the demand that Kashmir be reunited and made truly Azad, but at the same time have focussed attention on a much wider range of social issues. Ever more pointed questions about who are the real beneficiaries of Pakistan's political and economic order are being asked. All this lay behind the large-scale disturbances which took place in Mirpur in the autumn of 1981. The demonstrations were put down by the police, but the issues remain very much alive, not least amongst the Mirpuri diaspora overseas.¹⁴

Jullundur and Mirpur from a British perspective

However similar social and cultural life in Jullundur and Mirpur may have been in the past, the wider processes in which the two Districts are caught up, and the differential nature of their incorporation into the global political economy, have produced extensive differences in outcomes. There is no space here even to begin to set out the full range of these differences, let alone to examine the details of their causes and consequences. But in the context of this journal, it is worth exploring, by way of a conclusion, the implications of these differences for Mirpuris and Jullunduris living in Britain.

Perhaps most important, it should be clear that, as a result of the economic and political processes at work at both ends of the migratory chain, Mirpuris are currently finding their options much more seriously limited than are Jullunduris. Let me draw some of the threads together. Largely as a result of Mirpur's peripheral position in both Kashmir and Pakistan, public services most especially in education – have been available on a much lesser scale than in Jullundur. Given the area's lack of economic progress, Mirpuris tend to have much less education, much less fluency in English, and many fewer marketable skills than do Jullunduris. Hence they are disproportionately concentrated in the least favoured sections of the British labour market, that is semi-skilled jobs in undercapitalised industries such as textiles and heavy engineering. Since it is precisely these industries that are being devastated in the current recession, Mirpuris are losing their jobs with even greater frequency than Jullunduris. There is, however, no need to turn to rely on theories of cultural 'backwardness' to explain Mirpuris' relative poverty either in Britain or the Punjab. Structural explanations are quite sufficient.

Even though Mirpuris are being more severely hit than most migrants, they are not, of course, the only people who are suffering, nor is this the only way in which the recession is putting pressure on Britain's minority population. Majority hostility towards the minorities is directed equally at all so-called 'immigrants', be they Jullunduri or Mirpuri, first or second generation, employed or unemployed. As 'immigrants', all are classified as outsiders who are not properly a part of British society. In the face of this even those who have sunk deep roots in Britain, such as the British-born children of immigrant parents, are beginning to consider the option of going back home with increasing seriousness.

In this context it is worth remembering that most migrants regard their home villages as their ultimate refuge. Many only saw migration overseas as a temporary move, and as a prelude to retiring to a comfortable old age with a newly-built house and a well-equipped farm back home – and during the first half of this century many migrants did return to both Mirpur and Jullundur to fulfil precisely this goal. The volume of return migration from Britain has been rather small so far, mainly because families have been reunited here, and people reaching retiring age have not wished to leave their children and grandchildren behind. But recession, and above all the rising impact of racial hostility, is beginning to add a new dimension to these calculations.

More and more people are concerned about their own physical safety, and deeply disturbed about the future prospects for their children. And while the younger generation may have much greater confidence, and so are much more willing to confront English hostility than their parents were, their job prospects in Britain are bleak in the extreme. Hence, people of all ages are beginning to examine the prospect of moving on far more seriously.

The prospects for returnees

Although all South Asians in Britain face similar problems, the resources and opportunities open to those who consider returning home differ enormously, depending on their precise area of origin. Jullunduris have an extremely wide range of opportunities available to them, provided that they can take back either a reasonable amount of capital, or marketable skills, or preferable both. It is worth remembering that, in sub-continental terms, a substantial proportion of migrants in Britain have access to considerable capital assets. For instance, a 'cheap' terraced house sold for £10,000 will raise nearly two lakhs of rupees – quite enough to start up a business back home. In Jullundur's thriving economy, moreover, it is not difficult to identify all sorts of positive business opportunities. Alongside this the scale of industrial growth means that there is an increasing demand for highly skilled engineers – in metal processing, ceramics, electronics and computing, for instance. Standards of living may still be much lower than they are in Britain, but they seem set to rise quite rapidly. As the differential between Britain and Punjab declines, so the prospect of returning is becoming increasingly attractive. Potential returnees are also realising that they need not return to their parents' villages. Those with professional qualifications can now hope to step directly into the world of the local elite should they go back home, and that sort of life, in a spacious modern flat where servants are taken as a matter of course, is by no means uncomfortable.

It would be quite wrong to suggest that large numbers of younger, professionally qualified people have yet returned to the sub-continent – but individual examples can certainly be cited. As growing numbers of British-born Jullunduris emerge from the universities, however, as jobs become more scarce, as racial hostility becomes more intense, and as India's economy expands, so the attractiveness of retracing their parents' steps will increase.

In all of this the crucial point is obviously the very positive state of the local economy in Jullundur. Going back is becoming increasingly attractive precisely because standards of living are rising rapidly, and because there is a multitude of opportunities in industry, agriculture, business and the professions. But little of this applies to Mirpur. As has already been suggested, Mirpuris are being harder hit by the British recession than are Jullunduris, so they have greater reason to consider going back. Indeed, the presence of temporary visitors sounding out local prospects is much more apparent in Mirpur than Jullundur, but as yet very few indeed have identified a viable way of making a decent living. The service sector is so crowded as to make new enterprises unprofitable, and those pitched elsewhere seem doomed to failure. Many Mirpuri migrants own a fair amount of land, but anyone planning to return as a farmer faces major difficulties. While it would be feasible to irrigate a good deal of the land, pumping sets are not available, and low-level dams in the ravines have yet to be built. Similarly, high-yielding seeds are not easily available, nor are tractors, transport, fertilisers and so forth. Jullunduri farmers can take the availability of all these for granted, and returning migrants can take advice from neighbours about the most profitable modes of cultivation. Mirpuris trying to do the same would have to start from scratch, and it is hardly surprising that few have even attempted to do so.

One significant initiative which should be mentioned is the Government of Pakistan's attempt to establish an Industrial Estate on the outskirts of Mirpur town. The aim is to encourage overseas Pakistanis to return to their country of birth, bringing their accumulated savings with them. Special incentives are

available, such as tax holidays, loan facilities, and the right to import machinery free of duty. Despite this, none of the enterprises so far established have been at all successful. Returnees constantly complain that official sponsorship is rarely as helpful as it might be, not least because officers generally expect 'presents' before they issue the necessary permits, documentation and so forth. (Manufacturers in Jullundur make similar complaints about government officials, and for that reason tend to keep clear of officially-aided schemes.) Even more deterring, however, is the lack of any real market either in raw materials, or labour, or for the finished goods themselves. The lesson to be learned here is that while returning migrants can join in with, and so further stimulate, an already thriving local economy, their prospects in an economy which has grown moribund through dependency are very poor indeed.

Thus, Mirpuri migrants are victims of a double squeeze. Not only are they particularly exposed to the consequences of recession in Britain, but their prospects for economic success back home are much more limited than those of Jullundur. This should not, however, lead us to conclude that conditions in Jullundur are anywhere near ideal. There, as elsewhere in the sub-continent, social inequality is still considerable, corruption widespread, and law and order most uncertain. It is not paradise. In terms of economic vitality, however, Jullundur emerges very positively in comparison with Mirpur: it has real prospects in the immediate future. If Jullundur has a better climate for growth, this can be attributed to two main factors. First, there is India's long-standing commitment to self-sufficiency, to *swadesh*, as the Mahatma put it: without this, development could not have taken place. Secondly, India has managed to sustain a degree of democracy, and though not without considerable flaws, this does mean that there have been some checks on the predatory tendencies of the urban elite. But in Pakistan these have largely been absent. Democracy has never taken hold, and the country's increasingly inegalitarian social order has been held firmly in place by the Army.

Yet my argument here suggests that the whole structure of Pakistani society is becoming increasingly precarious. Given falling oil prices and a further decline in the demand for Pakistani labour overseas, leading to a swift drop in remittances, the consequences for the country's economy could be very severe indeed.¹⁵

Conclusion: migration in a global context

Migration is always a process. Migrants as individuals move from one place to another, and however distant these may be migrants and their families remain involved in both. Hence, analyses which limit their attention solely to what is going on at one end of the process are necessarily inadequate. My hope in writing this article is that it will help to repair inadequacies in current understandings of the significance of the South Asian presence in Britain. In doing so I hope I have shown not only that their 'background' is far more complex and varied than is commonly assumed, but that events there have a dynamic of their own within which migrants, and through them events in Britain, may play a significant part. In other words, processes at opposite ends of migratory chains should not be seen as independent of each other.

This connection arises partly at an individual level, for most economic migrants, and many of their children, seek to keep their feet in both worlds. They are prepared to move themselves and their capital resources around in response to whatever they see as being their best interests. Over and above this, however, there is an interconnection at a structural level. Emigration from Mirpur and Jullundur – which, as we have seen, is long established and has involved moves to all five continents - is but a tiny segment of the world-wide flows of people in search of new and better opportunities. These enormous flows have been determined largely by developments in the global economic order. They began in the colonial period, produced a large movement into the metropolitan heartlands until technological changes halted the post-war

industrial boom in its tracks, and are now kept going by the demand for labour in the capital-rich but population-poor oil states. Just what will happen next is hard to predict, except that recent technological changes mean that, whatever enterprise one may have in mind, it will no longer be *necessary* to hire large amounts of labour to achieve one's goals. Could the history of mass migration be coming to an end?

Migrant workforces are generally exploited but, as this article has shown, that exploitation can have many dimensions. With respect the current situation in Pakistan, European imperialism is not without its significance, but it is no longer necessarily the central axis of inequality. Migrant labour forces also suffer from the disadvantage of being external proletariats. Thus, Pakistani migrants in the Arab world are exploited, and relatively rightless, both where they work and where they live; but because of their dual externality they have great difficulty in organising in either direction. And yet members of external proletariats can often produce radical changes, at either end of the chain. Mahatma Gandhi himself cut his political teeth in South Africa, before going on to lead his country to independence. Ghadr began in California,¹⁶ and the first Pan-African Congress was held in Manchester. Who knows what political movements may emerge from the contemporary Mirpuri and Jullunduri diasporas?

The issues here are simultaneously economic and political, local and global. If the Jullunduri economy really does take off, large numbers of Jullundurites could well be drawn back home, bringing with them substantial economic, intellectual and professional resources. If this occurs Britain's loss will be India's gain, and the movement will be another item to add to the list in the current shift in the balance of power from West to East. If nothing else this should remind us of the importance of stepping back occasionally from our narrow British concerns. Migrants and their children rightly take a more global perspective, and so may be much more aware of the changing world than many of the natives amongst whom they have settled.

Notes

1. This article is based mainly on information which I gathered during fieldwork in Jullundur and Mirpur carried out between December 1981 and March 1982.
2. Details of the earlier history of Sikh migration can be found in Johnson (1979), Morris (1968) and Khushwant Singh (1963).
3. An excellent account of the logic of migration, as well as an analysis of just who departed and when can be found in Kessinger (1975).
4. Virtually all occupations in Punjab are normatively hereditary, and linked with specific castes. In rural Jullundur the farmers are by far the largest such group, making up roughly 50 per cent of the population: virtually all farmers belong to the Jat caste. The Blacksmiths, Lohar, are closely associated with the Carpenters. Tarkhan, and today they form a single endogamous caste. The Ramgarhias, as they are known, are overwhelmingly Sikh, and make up about 7 per cent of the population.
5. There is considerable literature on the social structure of Punjabi villages: cf. Kessinger (1975), Hershman (1981) and Pettigrew (1976).
6. This is mainly, it would seem, because the pressure of population on the land is much less in Ludhiana than Jullundur. It is also worth noting that a fair number of Muslims from Ludhiana have come to Britain: but since the families fled at Partition, most now describe themselves as Pakistanis.
7. The relative status of many castes has changed dramatically as a result of the developments described here. So, however good a Jat farmer may feel now that he drives a tractor, he is in no position to patronise a 'low caste' Ramgarhia industrialist who now drives a car. Class divisions have also opened up within castes: but the fact that caste and occupation remain closely linked, mutual assistance between caste fellows in the pursuit and defence of scarce resources is regarded as normal, and endogamy remains tight, means that the caste system has been transformed, rather than undermined by recent social and political changes.

8. It is not without significance that 'visas' (as work permits are colloquially described) cost nearly twice as much in Pakistan as compared with India: excessive demand drives up the price. This also means that middlemen who sell 'visas' to the highest bidders make much larger profits in Pakistan than India.
9. See Ballard and Ballard (1977), Saifullah Khan (1979) and Dahya (1971). For a whole variety of reasons Mirpuri men have been more reluctant to uproot their families and resettle them in Britain. During the past decade large numbers of Mirpuris have reunited their families, despite considerable harassment from the British Immigration Service. But in the Gulf there is generally no question of reuniting families, women and children have no alternative but to stay at home.
10. The Government of Pakistan has been encouraged to adopt such a policy by the World Bank, its new President, Tom Clausen, has made a whole series of speeches suggesting that migrant remittances as well as Free Trade can play a major part in stimulating economic growth.
11. An accurate comparison of prices in two different economies is always difficult to make. Officially the Pakistani rupee has been maintained at a slightly higher value than its Indian counterpart, but when the price of basic goods and services are compared, there is a strong case for suggesting that the Pakistani rupee is overvalued, perhaps by as much as 100 percent. To the extent that this is true migrants lose out because they are short-changed when they convert their earnings into rupees. Meanwhile, imported goods in Pakistan are made cheaper, than they might otherwise be. Moreover, the massive flow of remittances offer opportunities for the wealthier members of the elite to export their accumulated savings into safer havens overseas.
12. There are some parallels to the processes described in Jullundur to be found in Pakistan. Thus, Gujrat has become a centre for the manufacture of electrical goods (especially fans) and Sialkot of surgical instruments. But the scale is nothing like so large, nor is there a link-up with the agricultural sector.
13. The comparison I am drawing here is not so much between Jullundur or Mirpur, but between villages lying only a few miles apart on opposite sides of the border just south of Lahore and Amritsar. Comparison across this short geographical span is permissible: but if one tries to do so for both countries as wholes it must be borne in mind that there are dramatic differences in wealth between different geographical areas.
14. These events have been extensively reported, and commented upon, in Britain's Urdu press
15. Since this article was completed in October 1982, there have been a number of significant developments in the Middle East and most especially in India and Pakistan.
16. A very active resistance movement emerged in Sindh, which the Pakistani authorities are repressing with some vigour. Sindhi grievances are similar to those of the Kashmiris, but to these must be added an overt hostility to the United States, which is perceived as backing the martial law regime. Pakistan has also increased its exports of military manpower. At least 50,000 members of the Pakistani armed forces are serving overseas, by far the largest number in Saudi Arabia, where they provide a crucial element in the royal security forces. Not only do they contribute substantially to the flow of migrant remittances to Pakistan, but their presence helps to explain why there should be such a close alliance between the governments in Washington, Riyadh and Islamabad.
17. There has also been considerable unrest in Indian Punjab. In part this is the outcome of local demands for greater autonomy from Central Government control. But since the Sikhs, and especially the Jat Sikhs, are making the running in pressing these demands, the latent tensions between rural Sikh farmers and urban Hindu businessmen have been greatly exacerbated. Considerable violence has ensued, but this does not seem to have seriously hindered economic growth. Sikhs overseas have taken a close interest in these events. **Most** are enthusiastic supporters of the Sikh cause, and in Canada a good deal of backing has been given to the idea of forming an independent Sikh state.
18. See Johnston (1979), reviewed in *New Community*, Vol. IX, No. 3.

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