

To conclude, I would like to say I think the book admirably met its aim. Views of childhood might differ in these countries but there is a commitment to the importance of the experiences in the early years of life. The book would make interesting and useful reading for teachers, and others, involved in the education of young children. Although the topic is very specific the book is of sufficient interest and easy to read and can be recommended as general reading for anyone with an interest in multicultural perspective.

**Berenice Arkinson, Illawarra Children's Services Action Group,  
N.S.W., Australia**

---

**MATERIALIST ORIENTALISM: MARX, "ASIATIC" MODE OF PRODUCTION AND INDIA**  
by Dr. Bula Bhadra (Punthi Pustak Publisher)

Dr. Bula Bhadra has driven a tank through Marx's construction of an Asiatic Mode of Production, at least insofar as he applied it to the case of India (in the 19th century Western idiom: Hindoostan")

The author does not take up the question as to whether "the mode" is, or was, applicable to China or the string of Eastern communities and states extending westwards to Casablanca, (the latter being a bit further West than Dublin).

We soon come up against the medieval idea of Europe versus the Orient in Bula Bhadra's criticism of Hegel's rather florid generalisations on the Oriental Spirit which were couched in a way that many must find insulting. Whereas Hegel is fair game, the criticism becomes more serious when a strong echo of Hegel's ideas are found in the Marx of 1853. Admirers of Marx will have to face up to the flaws detected in this book.

Plunging into matters of fact, she feels that Marx's claim as to the primitive communist nature of the Indian village, the basic cell of the A.M.P., and the absence of strong personal property in land, seems untenable, or at least greatly stretched.

What comes out is something strongly resembling the municipal communities which lingered or in Celtic by-ways of Britain until 1855, and in some Spanish communities until the 1960s.

That is, family farms—nuclear or extended—were based on strong personal property rights around the farmsite and arable lands, while communal rights existed in regard to grazing (often in the hills) and use of wasteland. The Crown held ultimate rights, which in practice were not enforced except in relatively light taxes.

Substitute the Rajahs for the Crown, and the result is much the same. It may well have been that the "ownership" of the Indian sovereigns was expressed in ancient scrolls in strong language, but one gathers from the author that the act of giving of his lands was usually no more than the handing over of rights to extract a tax,