

Notes from Yapp's presentation.

Commented that historians are not so obsessed with "tribe" and its definition, as anthropologists appear to be. Nor are historians so involved with "conceptual" issues, broad generalisations.. This seems in part to have been a response to the discussion which followed van Bruinessan's presentation. Yapp also placed himself squarely within the tradition of British descriptive history concerned with flow of events, chronology(?) Surprisingly empiricist?

Said historians differentiate the State (comprising institutions and individuals) much more carefully than the anthropologists.

That is a bit strong I think.... I guess he is commenting on the historian's use of such sources as diaries etc... Surely at least several anthropologists utilize in depth diplomatic documents etc... and enquire into the functioning of state apparatus and the individuals involved.... seems to have a rather functionalist view of anthropology??

His paper is involved with a period of three or four years... elaborates on 4 layers of government.

1. London : 2. Calcutta : 3. Kabul : 4. Mackeson.

with different institutions at each level.

The personality of individuals interests the historian. Their interests, ambitions, personal problems, their prejudices, likes dislikes etc..

Do institutions have objectives.

The formula did not work on the Khaiber. (Presumably he means the administration got fouled up.) The experience of government officers affected their perception of the Tribes. (this would appear to be rather trite... plenty of information from consular service that government officers varied widely in their response to consular duties with the tribes - c.f. the great difference between type of experience of the Bakhtiari in Ahwaz and Isfhan consulates. Also some officers hated other rather passionately loved the tribes (Noel, Chick, Preece, Lorimer).)

Act on information received - this level can not be got at by historian e.g. when and how did Mackeson interpret his information? This info. then refracted through his perception.

Thus information flow is a basic problem.

Also self image incorporating how they hold other image(?) How people think about themselves and how other people should think of them and behave towards them.

Finished with some discussion of tribe - two meanings. .. paradox

That the destruction of tribes can only follow on their creation by the State.

(political creations... if tribe is politicised through interaction with wider more centralised political form, then "tribe" is a myth in the political minds of the government.?)

Seems there has been quite a carry on up the Kayber!!

Gellner's response to Yapp

Suggested a title for the book of the conference...
TRIBAL SOCIETY AND ITS ENEMIES

- enemies of the concept "tribe"??

- ((States of Mind - or- The Mind of the State; Out of their Minds.
- (Tribal society- not minding the State)
- (Out of sight out of mind - Absence makes the Tribe grow fonder.
- (Never mind the State, feel the Tribe.
- (Absent Tribes - the myth of the Middle East State.)

Gellner is pro-tribe.

Typology - now mostly unfashionable. 3 sources of onslaught.

1. Geertzian heresy plus several others equally independent minded.

Based on several arguments

Certain stress on the socially creative; on the opportunist; on the manipulative.

Segmentary theory stresses groups, constraints etc.. Overstated and caricatured argument...usually wit.

2. Subjectivism; culturalism. i.e. a reaction to the positivists.

Often fused with 1. above.... Reality is made up of a tissue of meaning meanings. miasma.. Larry Rosen is the most (?) game of meanings. Can not make out my writing but he was being amusingly rude about Rosen. I guess he would include Eickelman here. In this approach there is no objective reality at all. Shades of Bishop Berkeley)

Essentially, Gellner says, tribalism is a double rejection of the division of labour - the political division of labour.

Basically are a cluster of institutions which create order. Eccentric situation.

The monopolization of the means of violence is very atypical

Territorial and qualitative repudiation... tribes are multi-centric; diff use responsibility of order-maintenance. For example feuding is legitimate ; legitimate violence - no specialization.

Order maintenance ; social units; econ. units; local order-maintenance units which perform many functions (nesting).

Nomads favour this - neither necessary nor sufficient conditions.

Said tribes tend to follow segmentary not genealogy.

(I am not sure I follow my own notes (typical) but he seems to have been stressing again the de-centralised div. of political labour - i.e. rejecting specialised div. of labour politically. This must be his double repudiation mentioned on top of page. No or little specialisation of economic or political roles. Also specialised religious roles, like economic specialists are outside the tribal structure.

Is he here pointing out therefore that it is the State which produces a specialised div. of labour - thus religious figures are high status outsiders (part of Formal Islamic structure) and economic specialists like traders, artisans, smiths etc are low status members of State structure. (econ and polit.) They are thus outside the multicentric system of power of the tribes. Sheikhs thus act as mediators - facilitating interaction. Econ. specialists act as service groups 'preventing' interaction or transformation of economic forms. Both blocked from participation in tribal politics? Does not seem quite true this. Gellner's view of mediating Sheikhs has been suggested not to be accurate since the Shaikhs seem to precipitate conflict as much as mediate it?)

2. Marxists Who is the author of "Marxian Algeria"?

Here he suggests the Marxists say that "tribalism" is the opium of the people. (Surely Marx said 'opiate' anyway!) This is not explanatory. Their only descriptive.

The Marxist claim of economics being priority is typically criticised by Gellner - based as it is on the assumption of separation of political and economic, which Gellner has always insisted is an invalid assumption. The political can not be separated from the economic the way the Marxists insist, nor can the legal be separated like this. e.g. Ownership and defense are deeply fused and fused with the political.

Marx is too Adam Smithian - State minimal. Both thought that the political and economic could be separated. This is bad sociology.

Basically tribal societies are solving political problems in the absence of, or rather without any centralizing agency.

Both 1. and 2. tend to be encouraged by the modern world.

3. Modern conditions are not favourable to tribes. e.g. modern armies.

People go on talking tribal - unaccompanied by any reality, or at least a changed reality. But Gellner adds it is not always a myth (I agree with this latter point - c.f. what is happening in Iran, particularly Kurdistan - who have been beaten by Iranian army but not defeated - guerrilla warfare now).

Safety first policy - patronage replaces tribalism (familiar Gellner argument)

3. Nationalists of countries involved regard tribes as backward and dangerous.

In spite of the resilience of tribal structure (system) Tribalism is doomed. Modern conditions - the modern econ. div. of labour does not have to defend as well. Have specialist institutions for defence - (Police, armies, secret police etc)

(Tribal org. has to defend/and attack - c.f. Chb bazi again!!)

Between the neolithic and industrial ridges, why did tribalism persist in the central plateau in Middle East? Why is the basic question. Why were some groups tribal and others not?

Monopoly of effective violence - rarely centralized.
Urban based state or politico-military self help units (Nomads)