
Book Review

History in the Making: Political Essays on America, Israel, Afghanistan.
By Suren Khirwadkar. APK Publishers, Pune, 2022. 340 pp., Rs.500/-, ISBN-978-93-92830-13-6.

Arijit Nag

Assistant Professor, Department of History, Panchmura Mahavidyalaya, Panchmura, Bankura, West Bengal, India.

Email: nagarijit1986@gmail.com

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The book *History in the Making: Political Essays on America, Israel, Afghanistan* is a bold and thought-provoking collection of essays by Suren Khirwadkar. These essays investigate the political circumstances of the United States, Israel, and Afghanistan. In this book, Khirwadkar aims to explore the historical, socio-economic, and political causes shaping these nations, therefore providing an understanding of the complexity of their internal and external issues.

The book is divided into three parts, and they address the history and politics of the three focal nations. They provide a better understanding of world events from a general political perspective. In this book, all the author's arguments are presented in a logical and understandable way. His wide-ranging understanding of global issues lets him comment on the domestic politics of the United States, the dispute between Israel and Palestine, and the war in Afghanistan.

In the first section of the book, titled '*Storm the US Capitol - The Decline and Fall of America*', Khirwadkar offers a critical examination of the ongoing domestic political struggles in the United States. The essay centres around storming the U.S. Capitol building by a mob of supporters of Donald Trump (then outgoing President of the U.S.) on 6 January 2021. The author starts the essay by comparing this incident with the fall of the Bastille on 14 July 1789 and considers the Capitol riot as a critical moment for democracy in America. The author gives a detailed account of this incident and criticises Donald Trump's anti-democratic actions and ideology. He probes into the characters of Trump's supporters and comprehensively analyses the ongoing political and constitutional crisis in the U.S. due to the Trump movement. The author also sheds light on the historical background and the problems of the Electoral College system in the U.S. He ends the essay by addressing some major issues, including the politicisation of the U.S. Supreme Court, climate change and immigration. In conclusion, he underlines the idea of American secession and expresses his concern about the waning of American democracy.

The second section of the book, titled '*Israel's Quest for a Safe and Peaceful Homeland*', focuses on Israel. This country has long been at the heart of political discussions because of its troubled relationship with its Arab neighbours and the

Palestinian people. Khirwadkar starts the essay by exploring the history of the Jewish people from the Roman conquest of Judea and the siege of Jerusalem in 70 AD. He briefly accounts for the suffering of the Jewish people, their pain of expulsion from the homeland, Christians' hatred towards them, and their persecution at various times. After that, Khirwadkar delves into the historical roots of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He probes into the creation of Israel in 1948 and its consequences, which resulted in subsequent wars with Arab states. He provides a fair viewpoint on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and highlights the modern problems still aggravating the area. He discusses Israel's security concerns and its struggle to establish the national identity in Middle Eastern geopolitics. Khirwadkar also provides a comprehensive analysis of the role of the United States in Israeli politics, particularly the unyielding support Israel receives from American governments. He ends the essay by referring to the importance of Jerusalem to Judaism, Christianity and Islam, along with the Jewish People's, especially in Israel, hope for rebuilding their Temple in Jerusalem a third time.

The final section of the book, titled '*Afghanistan: Its Past has Buried Its Future*', is perhaps the most poignant. In this essay, Khirwadkar has attempted to explore Afghanistan's tumultuous political history from ancient times to the U.S. invasion and the subsequent withdrawal in the 21st century. Khirwadkar starts the essay with a remark that "Afghanistan is a poor country with a rich history". At first, he explores the history of Afghanistan by highlighting the cultural heritage of the region in the ancient period. He briefly narrates the history of the Mongol invasion, the Mughals' dominance over the area, the establishment of the Durrani empire and its hostile relations with the Sikh empire and the British. Next, he turns his attention to the politico-economic issues which made the country a geopolitical battleground for much of the 20th and 21st centuries. Khirwadkar investigates the early history of Afghanistan's political problems, which began during the Soviet invasion and the rise of the Taliban in the 1980s. He examines the U.S. involvement in Afghanistan since 2001, following the 9/11 attacks and gives an account of their impacts.

The essay discusses the major role that foreign powers have played in affecting the history of Afghanistan. In this essay, Khirwadkar points out that both the Soviets and Americans faced similar challenges because they failed to appreciate the resilience of the Afghan resistance and the cultural complexities of the region. He also explores how the neighbouring country, Pakistan, has fuelled the war and complicated any viable conclusion. He exposes the corruption of the Afghan government during the period of U.S. intervention in Afghanistan and explicitly criticises the U.S. policy of funding an enormous amount of money in the name of reconstructing Afghanistan between 2002 and 2021, as it filled up the pockets of many Americans and Europeans along with the corrupt Karzai government of Afghanistan. Khirwadkar also pays attention to the opium problem during the war, as opium has been an important part of the Afghan economy.

Khirkwadkar ends the essay by discussing the outcome of the war and the post-war situation in Afghanistan after the withdrawal of the U.S. military. He also touches on the most poignant aspects of war, the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. He offers a depressing description of how war affects regular Afghans, especially women and children, and stresses the need to address the humanitarian aspects of the conflict. Although Khirkwadkar is not afraid to criticise the shortcomings of the U.S. involvement, he also recognises the challenge of discovering a long-term remedy for Afghanistan's problems in light of the profound splits inside the nation and the region. In the conclusion, he alludes to a Peace Plan for Afghanistan.

Khirkwadkar's writing is clear and enlightening, which illustrates his broad knowledge of global issues. The author incorporates historical records and current political observations as part of his discussions in each essay. The essays in the book allow readers to focus on three different countries, and the thematic linkages between them become obvious as the essays progress. The book is impressive because the author integrates history into his discussion of politics. Khirkwadkar is able to draw parallels between the political struggles in America, Israel, and Afghanistan, and this becomes one of the key strengths of the book. Although the book is well-researched, it has some limitations. Firstly, the author fails to offer a proper introduction that emphasizes how the essays are interconnected. Secondly, sometimes the essays in the book lack a detailed discussion of certain events. For instance, in the first essay, the author only refers to the idea of America's secession and has not provided any historical reference to the secession movements in America (Osborne, 2012). He has not spent words on the U.S. constitutional stance on this matter (Sunstein, 1991). He also did not share his thoughts on whether the renewal of federalism would be preferable to secession in America (Buckley, 2020). And lastly, although the author mentions sources while writing the essays, he does not include a bibliography in the book. Curious readers would have benefited if the author had provided a bibliography. The book would also have been enriched if the author had spent a few words on the issue of Palestinian refugees who have been victims of the long-standing Israel-Palestine conflict, and offered an in-depth discussion on U.S.-Taliban relations. Nevertheless, the book is still a valuable read. The book manages to address the political realities of the three countries without becoming harsh or too straightforward. In addition, the essays in the book are not too academic; therefore, the book can be read by a wide audience.

History in the Making: Political Essays on America, Israel, Afghanistan is a good and compelling read for anyone who has an interest in understanding the intricacies of global political history. In this book, one can find a fine blend of the author's scholarship and storytelling proficiency. Here, the author has successfully provided readers with an easy understanding of global political dynamics. Although the book may not provide all the answers to the pressing questions surrounding these nations, it

does a good job of exerting them and urging readers to think critically about the future of world politics.

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