

that requires a partial reduction in sovereign rights. It is also suggested in the article that this practice can be viewed as the roadmap for Serbia on its path to Brussels.

An example of the traumas caused by the processes of integration with international society and by nationalism, two experiences that have been seen from the 1990s to the present, is examined in the article “The Fear that Replaced Nationalism: Untamed Capitalism”, prepared by Renata Salecl. In the study by John B. Allcock, it is questioned whether or not academics are capable of scrutinizing the Yugoslavia model and its practice without their identities and prejudices. In this context, the meaning of the war correspondents’ phrase that “Truth is the first casualty of war” is questioned in connection with the aca-

demical life. The problems seen in the neutral examination of the theory and the practice Yugoslavia state are also covered.

After Yugoslavia is, despite its shortcomings, an important work. The book primarily serves the purpose of drawing attention to Balkan geography. In its current scope, the book seems to lack a sense of entirety, and fails to capture all of the ethnicity and identity problems in the region. A disorganization of the approaches and analyses of numerous authors, some which occasionally drift towards subjectivity, is in fact inevitable in most studies that involves editorship. At this point, one should see the glass half-full, instead of half-empty, and acknowledge that the book has been both a means and a pioneer for future original studies that will be undertaken in this field.

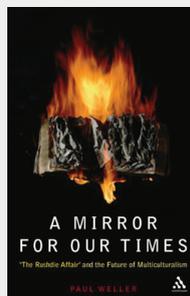
A Mirror for Our Times: “The Rushdie Affair” and the Future of Multiculturalism

By Paul Weller

New York, London: Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd., 2009, 277 pages, ISBN 9780826451200, £19.99.

Reviewed by Tahir Abbas

“THE RUSHDIE AFFAIR” that began in 1989 with the publication of Salman Rushdie’s novel *The Satanic Verses*, the “Book Burning in Bradford” that came soon afterwards, and the now infamous fatwa declared by the late Ayatollah Khomeini still have important implications for discussions of religion, culture, identity, faith and the nature of diverse societies today as it did then. Such is the legacy of this episode of British multicultural history that debates focusing on how to deal with the challenges



of diversity, inter-faith dialogue, tolerance and co-existence remain as important as ever. In response to such a cultural and intellectual challenge Professor Paul Weller has written this book to reflect on this “mirror for our times”. The book is an important and timely contribution to a set of issues that remain topical in relation to a whole host of spheres, not least in social science studies of Muslim minorities, but also in relation to policy-level questions on how to manage diverse societies.

There is no doubt that the 1989 publication of Rushdie's now infamous novel has had profound implications for the ways in which questions in relation to the positions and experiences of Muslim minorities in Britain and in the West would be seen for the foreseeable future; and, it seems, given the events of the 2006 Cartoons Affair, the lingering impacts continue. Largely invisible to the "host community", the Rushdie book catapulted the presence of Muslims in Britain; however, it did so in a fundamentally negative and reductive way. As much as there was and is huge diversity among the Muslims of the West, the dominant media and political discourse invariably characterized this group in essentialized and homogenized terms. While the 1990s raged on, with global conflicts often involving Muslim nations and peoples, and with the events of 9/11 in the USA and 7/7 in Britain that came in the new millennium, much remains the same. Polarizations between those who regard religion as a negative force while often promulgating a secular, liberal and democrat process have sometimes defined themselves as the very same "Muslimness" which in reality is the experience of minority groups vying for recognition, acceptability, equality and fairness. The "war on terror" and its lingering impacts in relation to the dichotomy presented between a Muslim East and a Christian West has only added to the reification of a globalized dynamic that impacts people directly in their homes due to the forces of liberalized broadcasting markets and through the internet. There seems to be little to challenge the rhetoric that is dominant at present, and while a whole host of organizations continue to work towards improving dialogue and coexistence, such as the Dialogue Society in London to which this book is co-dedicated to for example, and that continue to make every effort, it seems the challenges outweigh the opportunities. It re-

mains incumbent on the good of the many to outweigh the bad of the few, but while power rests in fewer hands and social divisions widen, the work of civil society organizations is far from complete.

Weller has been working on the experiences of Muslims in Britain since the 1980s and so he is well versed in the finer discussions that have impacted debates relating to questions of religion in society, diversity, tolerance and inter-faith relations. The book starts with a close reading of the events around the publication of the book itself and how they unfolded utilizing a whole host of significant secondary news sources. The ways in which various informed opinion communicated with the book's publisher, in relation to the potential problems of the book and to the nature of how various people were tragically killed in different parts of the world where the book was translated or being published is presented in detail in this opening section of the book, "The Contours of the Controversy". Such is the quality of the writing and the immense details that are contained within this section that the reader feels as if they are physically there in time as the moment-by-moment events are superbly described. In particular, the fatwa issued by the late Ayatollah Khomeini is usefully explained and contextualized, and the ways in which a local event such as the February 14, 1989 "book burning in Bradford" and the proclamations emerging out of theocratic Iran turned the issues emanating from this single novel into a global crisis are well described.

The following section, "Actions and Reactions in the Controversy", explores how different faith groups, especially Muslim, Christian and Jewish groups, responded to the issues presented by the crisis. The chapter focuses on theological and spiritual concerns raised

in relation to inter-faith dialogue matters, and addresses the oft-fraught dilemma of how to improve trust, confidence and engagement, particularly at such times. Here, the implications for questions relating to “multiculturalism” are analyzed, arguing that these are profound matters in the context of widening polarities in society as a whole. Important here also is the nature of diversity within groups, and how this is sometimes forgotten when a holistic debate on the nature of society as a whole is taken to the fore by certain interest groups. Ethno-religious diversity from below is far more complex and nuanced than is often given credit by various circles of debate and discussion. Law, religion in society and the political process are given a particular focus in the following chapter entitled, “Through the Looking Glass”. Engagement with party political machineries is discussed in the light of the historically special relationship British Muslims have had with the Labour Party. In establishing various community fora from 1997 onwards, New Labour made significant steps to formalize this engagement process; however, this has not been without its controversy in relation to question of representativeness, access, transparency and effectiveness. This has ongoing implications for the modern day when a Conservative–Liberal Democrat coalition struggles to deal with the challenges of diversity, and in particular in the post-“war on terror” experience that has seemingly defined the current reality. In the concluding section, “Echoes, Reverberations and ‘Social Policy Shock’”, the current concerns in problematizing multiculturalism while ignoring the fact that it is still an idea very much in progress and the issues that have emerged in the light of the tragic events of 7/7 and the subsequent “securitisation of integration” are analyzed. In many ways, the post-9/11 responses of the dominant Western powers, along with the UK as part of the “coalition of

the willing”, have reversed many significant advances in how a diverse society is able to learn to live in peace and harmony with itself at the level of the nation-state. It has potentially curtailed an open-thinking logic to these discussions and given dominance to more immediate political interests which have taken the “Muslimness” of what are often dispossessed, marginalized and violent minority groups and highlighted them as the sole problem, absolving the role of the state and the majority society from taking part in the predicament and its solutions. Terrorism, extremism and the polarized differences between Muslims are projected as the *bête noire* in society. In many ways there are no conclusions to the book itself to be had as many of these discussions are lively and topical in the present climate, but what Weller is able to do is to present the key challenges and solutions to some of the issues and implications emanating from the original “Rushdie Affair”. To that extent, the book remains a significant contribution to our thinking as social scientists, activity, politicians and policy-makers.

This book is a detailed account of the events in relation to the publication of Rushdie’s book and its ongoing impact, and it is wonderfully written and eloquent in its presentational. The discussion involves perspectives for a whole host of interest groups, including the publishers themselves, political actors, and the liberal intelligentsia. There is also ample discussion on perspectives in Islam and the sociological experiences of Muslims in Britain that will help the less-informed reader glean some of the context of the lived experiences of these groups. This book is arguably the definitive account of the “Rushdie Affair” and its impact on the realities faced today in discussions of identity politics, freedom of speech, “freedom to offend” and in relation to the nature of Western Muslim-non-Muslim relations in

the current period. The book is an invaluable resource on a significant debate that will be of considerable interest to an assorted body of readers. Weller has produced an outstanding

piece of work. His book will remain the definitive account of the “Rushdie Affair” and its implications in the second decade of the new millennium for many years to come.

REVIEW ARTICLE Reviewed by Kılıç Buğra Kanat

That Used to Be Us: How America Fell Behind in the World It Invented and How We Can Come Back

By Thomas L. Friedman *and* Michael Mandelbaum

New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2011, 400 pages; ISBN 0374288909.

Zero-Sum Future: American Power in an Age of Anxiety

By Gideon Rachman

New York: Simon and Schuster, 2011, 352 pages; ISBN 1439176620.

The Short American Century: A Postmortem

By Andrew J. Bacevich

Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012, 296 pages; ISBN 0674064453.

THE SUBJECT of American decline and the new global order has been on the agenda of political scientists and international observers for more than two decades. Even before the end of the Cold War, in 1989 Paul Kennedy in his seminal book on *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers* pointed to “imperial overstretch” and the national debt caused by increasing military expenditures as the major causes of the US’s decline in the coming decade.¹ The US victory in the Cold War and the fall of communism in the world somewhat postponed these

concerns and Kennedy’s predictions were overshadowed by the moment of unipolarity in world politics, in which the United States enjoyed unchallengeable military and political dominance. However, starting from the late 1990s, concerns grew about the future of the United States’ dominance in world politics as the Chinese economy’s growth accelerated.

With the political and economic developments in the first few years of new millennium the debate about the US’s decline and its possible consequences on the international order started to be studied more systematically. In its initial phase, the debate on the American decline revolved around the major questions that arose from the US military conundrums in Iraq and Afghanistan and the economic crisis and recession. Later different responds and contributions to this debate created several schools of thought whose approaches in this debate differ fundamentally from one another. These differences ranged from divergence of opinions about the existence of a decline, its diagnosis, the solutions as well as the domestic and global consequences of this decline. In recent years, proponents of each viewpoint have contributed to this debate by publishing important studies supporting their arguments. In the remaining part of this paper, the major works that were written in the last couple of years will be analyzed and discussed.

What Happened to the US?

One of the major parts of the debate on American decline is regarding the diagnosis of the downward spiral that is taking place.