

the importance of justice provision, should push initiatives to address such issues further up the policy agenda.

Weigand's book is a wonderful and entertaining read, which offers important insights into the nature of authority and legitimacy in (post-)conflict states. It provides a model of how to study these amorphous concepts in such contexts and makes an important contribution to empirical research on the topic. Non-Afghan specialists will learn much about the country from this book and derive useful insights for their own contexts.

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**Hindutva and violence: V. D. Savarkar and the politics of history.** By **Vinayak Chaturvedi**. Albany, NY: SUNY Press. 2022. 479pp. £69.35. ISBN 978 1 43848 877 6. Available as e-book.

*Hindutva and violence* charts the intellectual arc of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, the founder of Hindu nationalism from which India's contemporary Hindu chauvinists draw their mission to transform the nation into an authoritarian Hindu state. Throughout his lifetime, Savarkar promoted a two-pronged programme, to 'Hinduize' Indian politics and to militarize Hindus in the pursuit of a 'permanent war against Christians and Muslims' (p. 3). In the book, Vinayak Chaturvedi engages Savarkar's principal conception: 'a history in full' through which he linked 'Hindutva to Being' (p. 11). Chaturvedi's analysis is organized into four chronological sections, dividing several key texts that Savarkar published according to particular locations and time periods: London (1906); Port Blair and Pune (1911–23); Ratnagiri (1924–37); and Bombay (1937–63).

Accordingly, the first chapter focuses on two of Savarkar's earliest essays, published in London: *Joseph Mazzini* (1907) and *The Indian war of independence of 1857* (1909). Savarkar employed the revolutionary principles of the Italian Mazzini in his 'history in full', and he translated Mazzini's works into Marathi. Savarkar found several aspects of Mazzini's ideas appealing, namely the revolutionary's assertion that religion and politics were synonymous and that it is 'a religious duty to establish politics in religion' (p. 61). Savarkar deployed Mazzini's revolutionary arguments in his own account of the first war of Indian independence in order to 'liberat[e] the enslaved history of India' (pp. 91–3). He blamed Indians for "the plague of slavery" ... [because they] had lost their ability to "defend religion" (p. 94). In his 1909 publication on the 1857 war of independence, Savarkar depicted Hindus and Muslims as partners freeing India from the British. At the time, he detailed his loathing for effeminate men who 'should be annihilated and suffer super-savage cruelty' (p. 112). However, Savarkar's hatred for Muslims would only appear later in his life, perhaps as a consequence of his encounters with Muslim jailers at Port Blair in India.

The second part analyses Savarkar's *Essentials of Hindutva* (1923). In 1910, he was arrested and sentenced to two life sentences, which he served first in Port Blair and subsequently in Pune. While many viewed Savarkar as an anti-imperialist,

Chaturvedi maintains that he ‘argued precisely for the centrality of empire’ for all Hindus who ‘had once participated in the violent colonization of land’ that culminated in a Hindu nation, and subsequently a Hindu empire (p. 121). Crucially, Savarkar attributed the loss of this empire to the feminization of Hindu men, and he pointed to the Maratha’s ‘last great Hindu empire’ to promulgate the violent recolonization of ‘Hindustan’ through a forever war against Muslims and Christians. Moreover, he saw diasporan Hindus as potentially instrumental for religious warfare and state-building abroad (p. 123).

Then, part three evaluates Savarkar’s approaches to writing a history in full after his transfer from Port Blair to Pune (p. 211). This section draws upon *Hindu Pad-Padshahi* (1925), in which Savarkar asserted the need for accounts of pan-Hindu unity, while claiming that Marathi history is coterminous with Hindu history (p. 223). Using the Marathas’ ‘deadly struggle with the Muhammadan powers’, he posited an existential conflict between Hindus and Muslims and urged ‘Hindus (as slaves) to unify in the struggle to defeat Muslims (as masters) through violence, cruelty, and vengeance’ (p. 226). By this time, Savarkar was known as anti-British and anti-Muslim (p. 213). The book also sheds light on several autobiographical essays, which describe Savarkar as living his life in accordance with Hindutva.

The final section examines Savarkar’s writings after his release from prison in 1937. That year, he became the President of the Akhil Bharatiya Hindu Mahasabha—the most prominent organization promoting Hindutva. During this time, Savarkar aimed to find a political platform for his ideas, but the 1947 partition of British India and the 1948 assassination of M. K. Gandhi pre-empted his plans. Savarkar was one of nine people arrested for Gandhi’s murder. Despite being acquitted, his public life was over after the arrest. Before passing away in 1966, he published his final work, *Bhartiya Ithisatil Saha Soneri Pane* (1963), which was translated into English eight years later as *Six glorious epochs of Indian history* (New Delhi: Bal Savarkar, 1971).

Chaturvedi concludes the book with a personal reflection on the apparent success of contemporary Hindu nationalists in forging a Hindu nation that largely follows Savarkar’s prescriptions. For those seeking to understand India’s turn to authoritarian Hindu nationalism, and its concomitant violence, this book is essential—if challenging—reading.

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## East Asia and Pacific

**Australia’s security in China’s shadow.** By Euan Graham. Abingdon and New York: Routledge. 2023. Pb.: 232pp. £26.99. ISBN 978 1 03254 660 5. Available as e-book.

For more than three decades, Australia’s strategy towards China amounted to little more than what Euan Graham characterizes as an ‘open-ended economic engagement’ (p. 26). This approach had advantages. It allowed Australia to position itself