OXFORD RESEARCH IN SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY

ABSTRACTS OF THESES IN SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY
FOR WHICH HIGHER DEGREES WERE AWARDED
BY THE UNIVERSITY QF OXFORD IN 1988

1. Krystyna CECH

The Social and Religious Identity of the Tibetan Bonpos, with
Special Reference to a North-West Himalayan Settlement. D.Phil.
(D/84910/89)

This study is largely based on fieldwork carried out in the Tibetan
refugee settlement of Dolanji in the state of Himachel Pradesh,
north-west India. The Tibetans now resident outside Tibet, mostly
in India, number approximately 100,000. They were forced to seek
religious and political asylum after the Chinese takeover of Tibet
in 1959. The settlement of Dolanji was established in 1967. Its
inhabitants, unlike the majority of Tibetans who practise Buddhism,
are followers of the Bon Po religion and are known as Bonpos. The
total number of avowed Bonpos outside Tibet is in the region of
1000 and about half of them are settled in Dolanji.

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here are those for which higher degrees were awarded by the Univer-
sity of Oxford in the calendar year 1988. The text of each abstract
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course.

The thesis examines how Bonpos make sense of their position in Tibetan society. Because they are refugees, the perspective is necessarily diachronic in order to take account of their position in Tibet before 1959 and their present position in India. Accordingly, the thesis is in two parts: Part One, based on interviews with first-generation refugees and Tibetan textual sources, examines aspects of the Bon tradition in Tibet, and Part Two, an ethnographic study of Dolanji, deals with the period of their exile in India.

Part One thus provides the wider historical and cultural background to the discussion in Part Two of Bonpo identification with religious, regional and national aims. An appraisal in Part One of how the Bonpos view the chronological development and geographical extent of their tradition helps to explain why the Buddhist majority was reluctant to recognize the Bonpo contribution to the Tibetan cultural and religious heritage. This hindered the reconstruction of the Bon tradition in India, a matter dealt with in Part Two. A survey of the lay Bonpo communities in Tibet and a description of the head Bonpo monastery there underlines the many similarities between Bon and Buddhism, and this helps to explain the sense of injustice felt by the Bonpos as a result of their exclusion from the main Tibetan tradition. The remainder of Part Two documents the Bonpo struggle for legitimacy and the situation in Dolanji today. It is seen how, as a community, the Bonpos have succeeded in achieving a high degree of cohesion while, at the same time, allowing for the free expression of their differences in social and religious background.

2. David CLEARY

An Anatomy of a Gold Rush: *Garimpagem* in the Brazilian Amazon. D.Phil.

In 1979 the price of gold on the international market soared, and this touched off a gold rush in all of the South American countries which are part of the Amazon basin. However, it was only in Brazil that the Amazon gold rush reached a level comparable to the great nineteenth-century gold rushes: hundreds of thousands of people in the Brazilian Amazon depend upon *garimpagem*, small-scale informal sector mining, for all or part of their livelihoods. They mine about 90% of Brazil's gold, worth over a billion dollars in 1986. This thesis is an examination of that gold rush, looking at its historical roots, its present structure, and its consequences and implications for Amazonian society, mining companies, and the Brazilian state.

Garimpagem in the Brazilian Amazon is seen as essentially an informal economic system, but one which in terms of scale, value of

product and level of investment can stand comparison with major formal sector industries. The ethnographic core of the thesis, based on fieldwork in *garimpos* - gold-mining camps - looks in detail at technologies of gold-mining and social structure and social relations in the gold rush. This is used as a basis for a general examination of the implications and consequences of the gold rush.

The conclusions arrived at are that the gold rush, contrary to its image as the last resort of the desperate, is a valuable option for the most disadvantaged sectors of Amazonian society, rural smallholders and the urban poor. Unlike other Amazonian extractive activities, the gold rush offers those who enter it considerable freedom, autonomy and reasonable prospects of upward mobility, and it can easily be combined with other occupations. While there are reservations about the implications of the gold rush for the Amazonian environment and Indian groups, the real victims of the gold rush are mining companies, not *garimpeiros*.

3.   Sara COHEN

Society and Culture in the Making of Rock Music in Merseyside.
D.Phil.   (D84915/89)

In Merseyside alone there exist somewhere between one and two thousand rock bands. Yet despite the large number of such bands, the ubiquity of the musical styles they produce and the enormity of the record industry that promotes such styles, the study of rock music has been slow to emerge in Britain. The literature that is available is particularly lacking in microsociological analysis and omits analysis of·the grassroots of that industry - those countless, as yet unknown bands struggling for success - and the actual process of music-making by bands. Anthropological literature has rarely analysed music or popular culture whilst both ethnomusicology and musicology have tended to avoid forms of popular culture such as rock.

This thesis is about the interrelationships between art and society. More specifically, it attempts to explore the relation-ship between creativity and commerce through description and analysis of the processes of musical production, promotion and per-formance by rock bands in Liverpool, and to examine the way in which this relationship was conceptualized through the music-making of two particular bands focused upon for analytical and presenta-tional purposes. In doing so it considers the ways in which both bands were affected by the commercial environment within which they operated, as well as by the socio-economic nature of Liverpool it-self, and demonstrates the way in which both perceived commerce and women to be a threat to their creativity and solidarity and indeed their very existence. It argues that in response to this, those

bands expressed notions of purity and impurity in the production, performance and marketing of their music, emphasising in that distinction certain ideals such as those of masculinity, democracy, egalitarianism, honesty, naturalness and cleanliness.

The thesis is divided into eight chapters. The first presents some background material on Liverpool and the rock music 'scene' within it, whilst the second introduces the two bands used as case-studies throughout the thesis and outlines what is involved with the organization and running of such bands. Chapter Three presents description and analysis of public performances by these bands in order to highlight one of the most important attractions and experiences that their music-making offered. Chapter Four examines the social factors involved with the band, while Chapter Five considers the bands' ambition to 'make it' and achieve success on a national level. Chapters Six and Seven focus upon the making of music itself and the band members' underlying aesthetics and conceptualization of music. Chapter Eight considers the relation of women to these bands and their music-making, and focuses upon tensions and contradictions within the band, whilst the conclusion discusses the nature of music-making and analyses the construction and meaning of the purity/impurity dichotomy highlighted and discussed throughout the previous chapters.

4.   Alexander DE WAAL

Understandings of Famine: The Case of Darfur, Sudan 1984-5. D.Phil.

This thesis is an attempt to revise our understanding of the nature of famine, by analysing the famine that struck Darfur, Sudan, during 1984-5. It is argued that the English notion of 'famine' is inappropriate. Since the Malthusian debate, mass starvation unto death has been a conceptual pre-requisite for the definition of 'famine'. This differs from concepts of 'famine' held by those who suffer them. These concepts spring from the experience of famines and an appreciation of how they relate to the normal workings of society. For Darfur, such an analysis involves looking at the operation of the ideals of community and livelihood, and constructing an oral history of famines. The understandings of drought and desertification are analysed. Local explanations for these phenomena are cast in a mixture of moral and empirical idioms. Communities have transformed themselves in the face of these threats. The famine of 1984-5 itself is analysed around the trinity of hunger, destitution and death. Famine victims were concerned primarily to retain the basis of their future livelihood, rather than to minimize the possibility of death. People were not spending available money on available grain; instead they underwent immense planned hardship in order to cultivate and preserve livestock. Even among the most destitute in a famine camp, the long-term aim of re-creat-

ing a functioning social order was followed. Patterns of mortality are shown to be unrelated to socio-economic variables such as wealth. Instead they were related to public-health factors, such as access to clean water. Indigenous and official relief followed several ideologies. Food aid was regarded as a bonus, and had a marginal effect on preventing destitution, and probably no effect on reducing mortality. Two peripheral areas of Darfur suffered famines with important differences which only partly fit the over-all pattern, thereby illustrating the limits of the explanatory model.

5. Roger GOODMAN

A Study of the *Kikokushijo* Phenomenon: Returnee Schoolchildren in Contemporary Japan. D.Phil. (D/85439/89)

This thesis is an examination of the way in which Japanese school-children - who, because of one of their parents' work, spent some time overseas - have been treated on their return to Japan. These children are known in Japanese as *kikokushijo* or 'returnee children' and they have been the subject of great interest during the last decade. Part I of the thesis shows the many ways through which this interest is expressed. Perhaps this is most significantly shown through government investment in Japanese schools overseas, in a system of reception schools (*ukeirekō*) for accepting the chil-dren on their return to Japan, and a special quota system (*tokubet-su waku*) for entry into many of the top high schools and universi-ties in the country. The rationale behind these actions is that the experience of *kikokushijo* in Japan is generally perceived as 'problematic'. In particular, they are thought to face both edu-cational and cultural barriers on their return, and *ukeirekō* and *tokubetsu waku* provide a system to 'help' overcome these barriers. This thesis examines many of the assumptions behind these general perceptions of *kikokushijo* experience, and compares the paradigm they form with a genre of popular literature in Japan known as *Nihonjinron*, or 'Theories of Japaneseness'. The major theme of this paradigm is that it is inevitable that the *kikokushijo* will have problems because of the 'special nature' of Japanese society, which is historically and socially conditioned to be exclusivist toward outside influences.

Part II of the thesis is essentially a deconstruction of this paradigm on several levels. It attacks the argument of historical conditioning by showing how Japanese society has moved through many different phases of xenophobia and xenophilia in its history. It also shows how one particular attitude has never completely pre-vailed in the society at any one time, and that there has always been a range of options towards the outside world. It then moves on to a microanalysis of one particular *ukeirekō* where fieldwork was carried out and shows how, within this context too, there is a

plurality of views concerning the significance of *kikokushijo*.
Moreover, the thesis suggests that the significance of *ukeirekô*
can only be understood in the context of the general education
system in Japan. Although the academic education they offer differs
little from that of mainstream schools in Japan, through the use of
special features (ceremonies, dress, language etc.), *ukeirekô* have
become a significantly separate system and the returnees within
them have been given a special status. In a broader comparative
chapter, it is shown how this process has taken place throughout
Japan, and shows also that the way returnees are treated in other
societies may be an indicator of significant cultural processes.
In the penultimate chapter, the significance of the way *kikokushijo*
are perceived in Japan is examined in more detail, in particular in
relation to an important shift in the national political rhetoric
from modernization (*kindaika*) to internationalization (*kokusaika*).
It is proposed that due to this political shift, and due to the
powerful social position of the parents of *kikokushijo*, the latter
may be becoming a new 'élite' in Japanese society. Among other im-
plications of this study is the need for a fundamental rethinking
of the definition of minority groups and marginality not only in
Japan, but also in a wider context.

6.   Linda HITCHCOX

Vietnamese Refugees in Transit: Process and Change. D.Phil.

This study is largely based upon fieldwork carried out in the
refugee camps in Thailand, Hong Kong and the Philippines. There
are approximately 35,000 Vietnamese remaining in the camps of
Southeast Asia. They were forced to seek asylum after Saigon, the
capital of South Vietnam, fell to the communist forces of North
Vietnam in April 1975. The camps were established in response to
agreements reached in the Geneva Convention, July 1979, whereby
the countries of first asylum in Southeast Asia offered temporary
protection to refugees until places of permanent resettlement
could be found.
   More than 600,000 Vietnamese have been resettled in other
countries, particularly the United States, Canada, Australia and
France. The majority of the refugees have stayed in camps for
periods which range from a few months to several years, an experi-
ence which was observed to influence the way in which a refugee
copes with resettlement. The study examines the processes of admin-
istration which redefine the Vietnamese as refugees and finds these
definitions to be at variance with the Vietnamese interpretation of
themselves as refugees. Because of the implications of this dis-
crepancy, the Vietnamese experience increasing depression and an-
xiety, despite their involvement in a constant process of strateg-
ical manoeuvring and negotiation.

The camp episode is part of a process of change which in this study is explored through the stages of movement from Vietnam to departure to a country of final resettlement. In Chapters One and Two, an appraisal of the cultural and historical background of Vietnam helps to explain the reasons why some Vietnamese have become refugees and demonstrates that escape is achieved by an active process of choice and decision-making. This activity is contrasted first with the experiences of Vietnamese living under the camp institutions, and secondly, with the processes which attempt to re-orientate refugees to a cultural construction of their future country of permanent resettlement.

7.   Tamara KOHN

Seasonality and Identity in a Changing Hebridean Community. D.Phil. (*'Restricted' until 26th January 1994*)

This is a social anthropological study of a small Inner Hebridean island in Scotland, based on resident fieldwork carried out from 1984 to 1987. After an introduction to the physical, social, economic and political landscape of the community, the historical material is reviewed, which shows how many economic innovations of the past have entailed the local incorporation of newcomers into the island fabric. The descendants of some of these incomers have become established in a social and practical sense as 'islanders' today.
   Tourism is the latest manifestation of this process, and one which, like many other aspects of island life, has a marked seasonal dimension. In the winter, a sense of belonging is inextricably linked with shared residence status for island 'locals'. When winter turns to summer, the presence of a large contingent of regular summer visitors affects men's and women's public lives differently. This, it is argued, is due to the community's acceptance and constant incorporation of incomers and even seasonal visitors, and because of the nature of the different spaces which men and women inhabit for their public events.
   Thus identity not only changes through time, but the change of season provides different social and cultural landscapes for the expression of this identity. Visitors of all sorts are included in a continuum of belonging, which suggests that their relations with the host community need not remain static on an individual level, but may alter as some return year after year or move permanently to the island. The processes of seasonal and temporal change described are considered relevant for the study of other small rural communities.

8.   Roland LITTLEWOOD

Pathology and Identity: The Genesis of a Millennial Community in
North-East Trinidad.   D.Phil. (D/86572/89)

Whilst both psychiatry and comparative sociology have frequently
followed the popular denigration of religious innovation as patho-
logical, they have been reluctant to consider how a separately de-
fined domain of severe psychopathology may on occasion generate a
model for social organization and belief.   The situations in which
this may occur are considered, together with the nature of such a
'pathomimesis'.   Sabbatai Svi, the historical leader of a Jewish
millennial movement is, considered separately in an Appendix, whilst
the body of the thesis considers Mother Earth, the contemporary
founder of the Trinidadian Earth People.

   The personal history of Mother Earth is placed in the context of
Afro-Caribbean society.   The development of her group and the local
response to it are outlined.   Popular conceptualizations of sick-
ness and insanity occur within a framework provided by personal
identity with *respectable,* White middle-class values, or with their
complement, *reputation,* located most clearly in the working-class
Black male.   Mother Earth's experiences are evaluated according to
the criteria of descriptive psychiatry, and sources for her teaching
are found in Shouter Baptism, the Shango cult and Ras Tafari. There
are parallels with radical Puritanism and the 'Counterculture',
particularly in relation to concepts of women and Nature, divine
leadership, nudity and antinomianism.   Her teaching on generation
is related to certain West African themes but primarily to continu-
ing relations between the sexes in the Caribbean as refracted
through her own experience of childbirth and childbearing.   The
intellectual innovations suggested by her cosmology and its inver-
sion of dominant values are considered, together with the recruit-
ment, organization and daily life of the Earth People in Hell
Valley.

   Individual experiences may be converted into a shared public
culture by the manipulation of a previously accepted symbolic set;
a simple inversion of dominant values in some area may enable a
more complex conceptualization to be obtained.   In particular,
antinomian acts rooted in psychopathology may generate more univer-
sal dispensations out of systems of dual classification.

9. Julie MAKRIS

Agnatic Groups and Spiritual Kinship in a Cretan Village Community.
D.Phil. (*'Restricted' until 26th January 1994*)

This thesis is based on fieldwork carried out over a period of
twenty months in 1977-78 and 1979-80 in a village in south-western
Crete. It is the study of the social organization and religious
life of a community of shepherds and farmers. Emphasis is placed
on the values and institutions of kinship and godparenthood and
their bearing on the relation between religious beliefs and social
structure. Material gathered through participant observation was
supplemented with oral tradition, published sources, unpublished
manuscripts, local newspapers and administrative records, and
records of the Agricultural Bank of Greece.
   The community's kinship structure, based on corporate groups of
agnatically related families, contrasts with ethnographic material
presented for Greece and Europe, and is shown to present concomit-
ant consequences in aspects of social life including factions, con-
flict and the bonds of marriage and spiritual kinship. The position
of women is awarded prominence throughout the thesis.
   Recent changes in the economy are shown to have influenced
villagers' livelihood, marriage patterns and inheritance system,
all of which are in a state of transition. Demographic factors,
notably depopulation resulting from emigration overseas and migra-
tion to urban centres, are shown to have contributed to these
changes and to be creating new forms of co-operation between family
members and urban and rural areas.
   The factors that account for the absence of patronage relations
that have often been reported with respect to spiritual kinship in
Greece and other parts of the world are discussed. The sanctions
created through baptismal sponsorship are analysed in relation to
marriage, and are shown to constitute an important element in social
control. While changes in certain aspects of spiritual kinship re-
flect general changes the community is undergoing, villagers' con-
tinuing observance of local baptismal rites, their choice of spon-
sors and devotion to local saints indicate the strong spiritual
basis of the relationship remains unchanged and that it continues
to provide a strong link to the village for those living outside it.

10. Karen MIDDLETON

Marriages and Funerals: Some Aspects of Karembola Political Symbol-
ism (South Madagascar). D.Phil. (D/77429/89)

The thesis is an enquiry into political symbolism among the Karem-
bola of southern Madagascar. It is based on twenty-two months'

(Nov. 1981 - Sept. 1983) anthropological fieldwork carried out in the region between Menaranda and Manambovo rivers, south of Beloha. Following a general ethnographic introduction, the first section describes two political values: that of sacred efficacy (*asy*) and that of honour (*heñatse*). These are shown to correspond to different types of relationship: those which lie to the 'inside' and those which lie to 'outside', and between persons of same or other substance. Karembola values are predominantly agnatic, and, corresponding to this, the political category *ondevo* (vassal, slave) is represented as the condition of the uxorilocal male. This uxorilocality is, however, often more symbolic than real, and in sections two and three I show how it is created between groups through marriages and funerals. Above all, Karembola society is based upon an opposition between two types of marriage: father's brother's daughter marriage, which is the ideal and represents marriage to the inside or with same substance; and matrilateral cross-cousin marriage, which is the ideal inverted or 'turned the other way'. The first is associated with relationships of identity and equality, and the second with those of hierarchy and difference. The first chapter in section two shows how Karembola kinship terminology oscillates between these two ideas of marriage and expresses the political values associated with each. The next explores the values of father's brother's daughter marriage more closely, while the third chapter in this section examines how matrilateral cross-cousin marriage interrelates groups in symbolic asymmetry. A tension is shown to exist between the ideas that wife-givers 'give life' to their wife-takers and that, in giving the wife, they 'shame' and 'enslave' them. Wife-takers, in turn, are of two kinds: those who maintain their autonomy with displays of wealth and those who acknowledge their indebtedness in becoming funerary priests. In the last section, the efficacy of the funerary priest is shown to be a parody of the uxorilocal condition, while being, nonetheless, essential to the maintenance of the social order. The conclusion is that this is a society in which the institutions of father's brother's daughter marriage and the sister's son/wife-taker as funerary priest exist as structural contraries.

11. Felix PADEL

British Rule and the Konds of Orissa: A Study of Tribal Administration and its Legitimating Discourse. D.Phil.

The topic of this thesis is British imposition on a tribal people of Eastern Central India known to anthropology as the Konds. The basic purpose is to study the imposition of an administrative system on a tribe, by contrast to studying 'social change' or 'reaction to conquest', in which the focus would be on the Konds. I did not do fieldwork in the usual sense, and apart from a small

amount of travelling in Orissa, the main 'field' I researched
consists of the archives of the first thirty years of British
rule, as well as published texts.

As a prelude to studying the administration, Chapter II presents
a detailed historical account of these years (1835 to the 1860s):
the fighting and public executions that took place in two concen-
trated periods (1835-7, 1846-8), and the operations that British
administrators organized to abolish human sacrifice, infanticide
and feuding, in the process of which Konds were forced to accept
British rule.

The third chapter is a study of the administration in various
aspects: the conceptual opposition its members made between Kond
warfare and the war they were engaged in to enforce peace: the use
of punishments and rewards to divide the local population and gain
control over them; the intermediary position of non-tribal
Indians, the local élite as well as Indians in regular British
service; and the way they characterized harsh imposition of author-
ity in terms of Christian benevolence through the concepts of sac-
rifice and saving.

The fourth chapter is a detailed study of human sacrifice: what
it meant to Konds, and to the Hindu élite whom Konds recognized as
their rajas; but also, what it meant to the Britons who set about
stamping it out. The administrators' concepts of saving, sacri-
ficing, and punishment emerge as closely related to their imposing
of British rule on a tribal population.

Chapter V is a study of the Baptist missionaries who went to the
Konds after the Government officials had 'pacified' the Konds.
After a survey of the history of their Mission that extends up to
the period of greatest activity in the 1920s-1960s, we shall anal-
yse the way missionaries and Government officials complemented each
others' activities; missionaries' dualistic conceptual structure
and the key place of the concepts of sin and salvation; and the
authority system which they set up through schools as well as
churches of converts.

Chapter VI is a study of the purpose served for the administra-
tion by anthropological writings, from which we will turn towards
an anthropological study of some of the key values, concepts, and
ways of relating to people implicit in anthropology as it was
practised on the Konds and other Indian tribes in the late nine-
teenth century. Finally, we shall look at how present-day anthro-
pological writing about the Konds and neighbouring tribes relates
to the older British discourse, in particular, how its implicit
evolutionism serves to legitimate changes imposed by administrat-
ors.

12. Manuchehr SANADJIAN

The Articulation of Luri Society and Economy with the Outside
World: A Growing Paradox in a South-Western Province of Iran.
D.Phil. (*'Restricted' until 1st January 1993*)

The *ilat* and *'ashayiri* groups, of whom the Lurs of Kuhgilueh are
generally regarded a part, are usally seen by outsiders as pastoral
nomads. However, this popular definition of the term tends to mask
their political significance, which varies over time. It is indeed
such significance that renders any such definition of these terms
very hazardous. Instead it is argued that the relationships of
these groups, both among themselves and with outsiders, can be
fruitfully understood when they are seen as occupying a changeable
position in the wider context backed by their fearsome image.
    The Luri *'ashayir*'s position has derived its strength from a
distance from the outside world which has bestowed on this position
permanent exclusion. The continued, distinct existence of the Luri
'ashayir has been geared, historically speaking, to their maintain-
ing a sufficient distance from the outside power with whom they
have otherwise tried to forge a corporate interest. Such a seces-
sion, constantly sought, from within a unity which has been persist-
ently forged, has generated a political dynamism which has relent-
lessly leant its weight on Luri social and economic life. To fort-
ify their negotiable position *vis-à-vis* the outside world, the Lurs
have found themselves compelled to reproduce their material exist-
ence sufficiently far from it in order to perpetuate their external
position. As an alien power they were able to wield some force in
the wider context.
    However, factors which contributed to this exclusion, a non-
fixed relationship with land as their means of production and low
geographical accessibility (geo-political distance), have become
eroded as the Lurs' participation in the wider context has
increased. They increasingly experience this weakness as their
historical image is presently propagated far more than in the past.
Hence the powerlessness of the young Lurs, who join outsiders in
challenging the authority of their traditional leaders, who could
materialize this image most immediately. The young Lurs' power-
lessness against the eroding political and economic forces can even
more strikingly be shown when they use a more economic means, wage-
labouring in the nearby cities, to maintain their increasingly less
viable situation.

13.   Steven Allen VERTOVEC

Hinduism and Social Change in Village Trinidad.   D.Phil.

Outside of India, Hinduism plays a central role in organizing and
orienting communities of Indian migrants and their descendants.
The study of Hinduism overseas must take account of a number of
factors which have affected this role, and which may even have
affected the nature of the religion itself.   These variables in-
clude the cultural and socio-economic backgrounds of the migrants,
their mode of migration, and the structural position, ethnic rela-
tions and government policies in the migrants' new context. Kinship
structures and the caste system are two Indian institutions which
have been radically modified by such variables.
      An examination of change within Hinduism in Trinidad, historic-
ally and in recent years, can contribute to comparative studies of
Indian communities overseas, as well as to more general studies of
migration, ethnicity and religion.   Over 143,000 Indians came to
Trinidad between 1845 and 1917 as indentured labourers for colonial
plantations; since the original influx of migrants to the island,
Indians have come to number over 400,000 (or over 40% of the current
population, alongside people of African, European, Chinese and
racially mixed descent).   The practices of Indians in Trinidad have
been subject to various processes of change: a homogenization of
cultural and linguistic forms (from a diverse array of types from
across North India to a single, generalized corpus), an institut-
ionalization of social forms (whereby interpersonal networks were
forged and routinized, culminating in national organizations and a
major political party), and a consolidation of the community (such
that collective interests are advanced).
      These aspects of change have influenced Hinduism since it was
introduced to Trinidad.   A congregational, casteless yet Brahman-
led religion prevails with many Christian-like forms.   In the 1970s,
a radical economic shift substantially modified village life, when
Trinidad experienced the benefits of an oil boom.   Yet rather than
spelling the secularization and demise of Hinduism - as some obser-
vers predicted - the boom served to stimulate Hinduism by facilit-
ating the creation of new forms of socio-religious activity and
organization.   Even with an economic collapse commencing in 1982,
a revitalized Hinduism has continued to flourish in villages of
Trinidad.