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Economy, Culture and Human Rights: Turbulence in Punjab, India and Beyond

by **Pritam Singh**

Why do people get moved to protest against some violations of human rights and not others? How can the culture of human rights be made inclusive? This book offers insights into these questions by tracing the dialectical connection between economic interests and human rights. It offers a unique understanding of the contestation over the application of human rights in the global context. Reflection on personal experience of violation is combined with extensive fieldwork in India and Punjab to offer an enriched theoretical understanding of what is at stake in human rights thinking and practice.

This is an important work for anyone interested in the subject of human rights. Pritam Singh, in one masterful chapter after another, marshals diverse theory and evidence drawn from economics, political science, moral philosophy, and history, as well as his own life to make the case for understanding human rights as intrinsically important rather than simply as a means to achieve a given set of economic or political goals. He provides a multi-layered historical account of colonialism, the impact of evolving nationalism in newly independent states, and religious bigotry, combined with keen analytical insights and a vivid personal narrative to help us understand how human rights can not only be shaped by economic and political interests, but also how they can profoundly influence those interests as well. ... it presents the topic in a way that makes clear the universality of the concerns and issues addressed and the relevance of the lessons learned to understanding the importance of human rights generally.

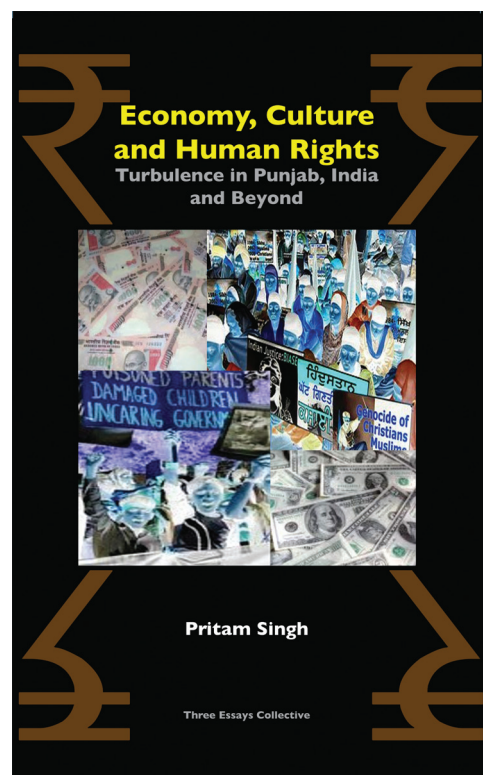
William Seltzer, Senior Research Scholar, Fordham University, Bronx, New York, Chair of the American Statistical Association's Committee on Scientific Freedom and Human Rights

This new book draws from Dr Singh's own traumatic experiences arising from the conflict concerning India and Punjab in the 1970s... He is therefore very well placed to analyse the fraught history of the region, from a strongly held position on human rights: by looking at human rights in their complex relation with economic interests and political culture, he argues for "an intrinsic-worth approach towards human rights to empower the reach of human rights in shaping political culture and overcoming the narrow goals of economic interests". The book will be of interest to all who wish better to understand India and Punjab, and to learn about a serious proposal for resolution of conflict.

Bill Bowring, Barrister, Professor of Law, Director of the LLM/MA in Human Rights, School of Law, Birkbeck College, University of London

CONTENTS: 1. Theoretical perspectives and personal experiences 2. The political economy of centralisation in India: Shaping the macro-environment for human rights 3. Economic interests, political culture and human rights in Indo-British relations 4. Historical conduits of the political culture of Punjab 5. Actions and reactions of 1984: State repression, militancy and human rights 6. Rural capitalism, religious revivalism and fractured resistance 7. Combating sectarianism and instrumentalism in the human rights praxis in Punjab 8. Conclusions. Appendix: Responses to the human rights situation in Punjab.

Pritam Singh teaches economics and is the Director of Postgraduate Programme in International Management and International Relations at Oxford Brookes University Business School, Oxford. He is the author of *Federalism, Nationalism and Development: India and the Punjab Economy* (Routledge, London, 2008) and co-editor with S Thandi of *Punjabi Identity in a Global Context* (Oxford University Press, 1999) and with M Pearl of *Equal Opportunities in the Curriculum* (Oxford Brookes University, 1999).



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