



ISA INTERNATIONAL GUEST LECTURE

The 'discourse' of Baluchi nationalism and its relations to the idea of a Baluchi identity

Ugo Fabietti

Wednesday, 3 June 2009, 16:00

Centre for Studies in Asian Cultures and Social Anthropology, Seminar room
A-1040 Vienna, Prinz-Eugen-Straße 8–10, 1st floor

This lecture deals with the 'discourse' of Baluchi nationalism as it developed in Pakistan during the second half of the 20th century. As a political movement, Baluchi nationalism raised and acquired widespread authority among one of the most populous 'stateless nations' of South-Central Asia as a consequence of the intrusion into the area by various local and western powers. But, as a 'discourse' supporting a political movement, Baluchi nationalism developed through the conflux of texts and ideas produced by western intellectuals and scientists on the one hand, and as a result of local representations of Baluchi society, history and identity (which were reshaped accordingly) on the other.

Drawing, among others, on the notions of 'invention of tradition' (Hobsbawm and Ranger), 'geocultural imagination' (Hannerz), and 'discourse' (Foucault), this lecture focuses on a number of themes such as: the popular idea, cultivated and developed by the Baluchi people themselves, of their own past history; local representations of the ethnogenesis of the Baluch; the territorial question and the religious factor. The aim of the lecture is to present Baluchi nationalism as an example of those 'configurations' of identity which, in the present world, bring together (as in a bricolage) different issues in order to obtain from them a new meaningful object of discourse.

Ugo Fabietti (*1950) is Professor of Cultural Anthropology at the University of Milano Bicocca. He read Philosophy in Milan and Pavia, and subsequently Social Anthropology at the E.H.E.S.S. in Paris. Before being appointed to the University of Milano Bicocca, he taught at the Universities of Turin, Pavia, Florence and, as Visiting Professor, at the E.H.E.S.S.

Ugo Fabietti carried out field work among the Bedouin of Northern Saudi Arabia (1978–1980) and the Baluchi peasants of South-Western Pakistan (1986–1994, intermittent).

He is the author of many books and articles dealing with pastoral nomadism, ethnographic methodology, ethnicity, epistemology and history of anthropology, several of which have been published in English, French, German, Spanish and Greek.

At the University of Milano Bicocca, he instituted an M.A. degree course in Anthropology and a PhD. Doctorate degree course in 'Anthropology of the Contemporary'. He has been Chair of the Department of Human Sciences in that University for six years.

He is the Editor of 'Annuario di Antropologia' (Rome).