CHAPTER 9

Organized Hinduisms: From Vedic Truth to Hindu Nation

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Prologue

The town of Ayodhya in the eastern Gangetic plain is known to pious Hindus as the birthplace of King Ram, the human incarnation of Lord Vishnu and the prime exemplar of orthodox Hindu virtues. Home to ascetics and visited by devotees from all over India, Ayodhya has nevertheless managed to escape the chaotic excitement and hucksterism that comes with the worst excesses of the pilgrim trade. To the jaded researcher of traditional Hindu life, it can seem an unusually peaceful place, with visitors and residents calmly following their customary pursuits in the shops and temples throughout the town. Only once during my several sojourns there in 1980 and 1981 was an attempt made to draw me into a charged religious situation—and this by no traditional pilgrim's guide.

Ram was born, they say, on a hill inside the town, which the Hindus refer to as "Ram's birthplace." But this same hill is also the site of a mosque said to have been established by Babur, the first Mogul emperor of India, during a sojourn to Ayodhya in 1528.[1] To Muslims, then, the site is known as *Bābrī masjid,* "Babur's mosque." In 1949, two years after India became independent as a Hindu-majority but officially secular state, an image of Ram appeared in the building at the site—by the agency of god, say pious Hindus; by the agency of Hindu activists, say cynical Muslims. Following the clashes between Hindus and Muslims that ensued, the building was closed and the district magistrate was ordered to remove the image. This, however, he refused to do, citing concerns about renewed communal violence. But the magistrate's refusal to act had further consequences. Because Hindus expect their images to receive regular worship, they have been permitted to enter the building once a year on the anniversary of the image's appearance; a program of devotional singing, moreover,

has been instituted in front of the building. The issue of Ram's birthplace/Babur's mosque has since prompted several Hindu and Muslim groups to initiate litigation, but no suit seems likely ever to reach satisfactory resolution.[2]

The case has become a cause more important for religious activists from outside the area than for the local population. Eventually large sectors of the Hindu public would be roused with a highly effective image depicting Ram in jail.[3] During the time of my visit, both sides were maintaining a presence at the site. Approaching a booth well stocked with literature presenting the Hindu point of view, I was assured by a fiery-eyed young man that the present building had originally been an important temple; Babur had then wrongfully turned it into a mosque to commemorate his victory over the Hindus. Besides, my interlocutor reasoned, there was only one birthplace of Ram, and it was in the sacred Hindu soil of Ayodhya. Even if Babur had built the mosque himself, he was just a marauder from outside. The young man looked down and murmured: If the Muslims want someplace special to worship, let them go to Pakistan. Then he continued with more energy, didn't I want to sign my name on their list and give a financial offering to their cause?

This was not the traditional Hinduism of temple priests and ritual but an organized defense of perceived Hindu rights, and it was encountering similarly organized Muslim forces. Relations between the two sides were tense, but they were not yet murderous. They were, however, to become so. In 1986, as the result of a legal petition, a local court allowed the building to open for Hindu worship. While not making a final ruling on the case, the judge saw no legal reason for the building to be closed; moreover, he had been assured by the Ayodhya police that opening the building would lead to no violence in the area. Instead, violent rioting soon broke out in six other towns scattered through the north Indian plains. Shops were burned and a bomb set off; at least twenty people died.[4]

By 1989, the confrontation at Babur's mosque had turned into a major political issue. At a convention of Hindu activists held that February, a decision was made to build a new temple at the site. The project was conceived as an event that would involve Hindus across the nation and from all strata of society. Small donations were sought from common people, and bricks for the temple's construction were consecrated in villages all over north India to be carried to the site. Vigorous organizational efforts in the summer and autumn led to increased unrest, with riots flaring up between Hindus and Muslims throughout the northern regions.[5] Tensions heightened in November, when both the laying of the temple's foundation stone and the Indian general elections were scheduled to take place. Although Rajiv Gandhi's government had been trying to mediate the escalating dispute, its attempts were unsuccessful and managed to alienate both Hindu and Muslim activists, contributing to Gandhi's defeat at the polls.[6] In the north, where reverberations from the temple dispute were most severe, Gandhi's party lost most of its seats in parliament, and an unexpectedly large number of them passed to candidates from the Hindu right. Through skillful organization, legal ploys, and political maneuvering, Hindu activists had, for the moment, gained unprecedented influence on the national government.

The Arya Samaj and RSS as Movements of Organized Hinduism

With their petitions, provocative placards, and populist militancy, the defenders of Ram's birthplace offer a version of Hinduism that diverges greatly from the ritual and devotion of most of the pious Hindus who come to pray in the temples of Ayodhya. Yet this politicized, activist Hinduism, although taken up only by a minority, has considerable precedent. Movements of organized Hinduism arose in British India from the first two decades of the nineteenth century, alongside parallel movements of Muslims and Sikhs. As movements of collective solidarity, all these groups recognized a number of collective competitors, with whom they interacted and from whom they learned. The Indian groups then, as now, faced off against one another—both beyond their broad religious communities and within them. All, moreover, also confronted Christian missionaries, whom they understood to be in league with the British colonial power. This perceived threat from the West was in its origins more pressing than the challenge of other Indian groups and in its results more revolutionary. For in reacting to threats understood as modern and Western, all the Indian groups end up having to adapt Western organizational models.

In the Hindu case especially, the adaptation of Western models entails some drastic transformations of the structures of traditional religion. The importance of caste membership may be outweighed by that of committee membership. Where once people found religious authority in their family priest or a lineage of gurus, they may now find it in a formalized organizational hierarchy. Together with these structural innovations, moreover, come changes in ideas about Hindu community itself: questions arise about both its external boundaries and the traditional socioreligious divisions within it. Indeed, many think that even if it has to entail drastic reforms in tradition, a new socioreligious order among Hindus is nevertheless necessary, crucial for the vitality, if not the very survival, of Hinduism in the modern world. To effect these internal reforms within and to ward off external threats, Hindus must organize. If fundamentalist religion implies a resolute religious reaction to forces of modernity, then fundamentalist Hinduism is necessarily organized Hinduism.

Arising in various regions and catering to different constituencies, movements of organized Hinduism have sometimes cooperated with one another and just as often not. Nevertheless, the major politically active groups reveal a line of development traceable from the last quarter of the nineteenth century. To present a sense of the direction of organized Hindu reaction, I will deal with two groups: the Arya Samaj, vital at the beginning of the period, and the Rashtriya Svayamsevak Sangh, commonly abbreviated RSS, still very important today. The Arya Samaj was in its origins a nineteenth-century movement of religious reform that served in part as an organ of Hindu nationalism during the political tensions of the early twentieth century. This was the era when the RSS emerged, the creation of an individual political activist with a vision of Hindu cultural renewal through personal discipline. Phenomenologically, the Arya Samaj and the RSS present contrasting assertions of Hindu identity in a secular, pluralistic world: the first grounded in specifically religious reforms of doc-

trine and practice, the second in cultural and national loyalties. Historically, they reveal a development from a narrowly based sectarian organization to a movement reaching out to encompass a wider segment of the Hindu population.

Established in Bombay in 1875, the Arya Samaj found its greatest strength among the educated classes of the Punjab and the north Indian plains. From the end of the nineteenth century through the first decades of twentieth, its growth was steady and robust: from 39,952 in 1891, to 243,000 in 1911, to 990,233 in 1931, the last year in which the Indian census counted its members separately. By Indian independence in 1947 total membership in the Arya Samaj worldwide has been estimated at more than one and a half million.[7] Although the Arya Samaj is known to Hindus of north India through its network of schools and colleges, it has not been a significant presence in the south, where it has intervened at times during specific crises but has never had a vital membership base.

In Hindu India the term *Arya* carries complex connotations. It refers first of all to the early Indo-Aryans who settled in the subcontinent in the second millennium B.C.E., bringing with them the early Vedic scriptures still revered by all Hindus. In modern Hindi, the term also means "cultured" or "refined," a meaning highlighted by important leaders of the RSS as well as the Arya Samaj.[8] Thus the Arya Samaj, literally, the "Society of Aryas," suggests an association of cultured Hindus following the pristine tradition of the ancient Vedas. For as educated reformers, members of the Arya Samaj adhere to what they perceive to be the core tradition of Vedic texts and dismiss much of later Hindu tradition as degenerate practice that is best forgotten. In its attempts to build directly on the Vedic corpus—the earliest of Hindu scriptures—the Arya Samaj presents one of the closest parallels to Western fundamentalism of all the Indian groups. And like most Western fundamentalists, members of the Arya Samaj usually see themselves as belonging to a specific movement within a world religious community: a definite religious group with its own leaders, guiding texts, and sacraments.

Prominent members of the RSS, by contrast, often describe their group publicly not as a religious institution within Hinduism but as a Hindu cultural organization—a characterization that seems most apt when culture is understood in its most broadly inclusive sense, informing religious, economic, and political life. The vast majority of members of the RSS remain conventional Hindus by most people's standards, putting faith in the accumulated wisdom of tradition and following most (but not all) traditional practices. They may say they have joined the RSS to "build character," as a favorite RSS expression goes—both their own character and that of the nation. The full name of the RSS—which translates as the "National Union of Volunteers"—thus reflects an ethos of patriotic service.

Its top leadership long dominated by Maharashtrian Brahmans, the RSS continues to maintain its national headquarters in Nagpur, Maharashtra, where western India meets the cultural north. From there the movement has spread deep into the Hindi-speaking northern heartland, where it is particularly vital among the urban middle classes. In recent years, the RSS has also become a visible presence in some areas of

the south, particularly Kerala. Although its active membership has fluctuated since Indian independence, it grew rapidly through the eighties: from estimates of about 200,000 on the eve of independence in 1947, to 1,000,000 in 1979, to 1,800,000 in 1989.[9] With a disciplined core of workers, a widespread following, and a network of affiliated organizations, the RSS works both publicly and behind the scenes to promote a vision of Hindu cultural ideals that is often at odds with the policies of the secular Indian state. Thus, at the initial confrontation between Hindus and Muslims at Ayodhya in 1949, the district magistrate who resolutely refused orders to remove Ram's image and so consolidated Hindu gains was known as an RSS supporter; he was, however, eventually forced into early retirement, his activist role being unacceptable to the ruling powers.[10]

Sociorelligious Contexts

From the point of view of the secular nationalists who have governed independent India, then, the aims sometimes espoused by the Arya Samaj and usually articulated by the RSS can appear intolerably rooted in communalism—a concept of group self-interest that normally has negative connotations in the mainstream Indian press.[11] There the term is used in reference to struggles for local power among regional Hindu caste groups as well as to rivalries between members of India's broad religious divisions. The former struggles seem to have been long endemic to traditional India, but the latter conflicts entail an idea of religiously defined community originally shaped by British colonial policy.

Hindus—with their many castes and subcastes living in various distinctive regions of the subcontinent—have historically been aware of themselves, not as a single religious group, but as many discrete communities living together in various states of domination, cooperation, and distanced alienation. The advent of Islam, Christianity, and a distinct Sikh identity complicated matters, but the Hindu perspective of separate communities could still contain these large traditions in all their varieties. With the establishment of British colonial rule in the nineteenth century, however, the perspectives of the native Indian communities on both themselves and one another began to change.

In all the Indian communities, traditional elites had to come to terms with the idea of a new dominant class as well as the reality of a new social and economic order. To many Indian thinkers, the ease with which their people had been brought to submission by much smaller numbers of Europeans meant that there were serious problems in the contemporary state of Indian society. Reform movements emerged that looked to models from both the contemporary West and different idealized Indian pasts. At the same time, the British regime created fresh cadres of clerks and administrators at middle ranks and higher. New, city-based Indian elites emerged—both bureaucratic and commercial. Although these were never as exalted as the British overlords, they were often wealthier and more powerful than the descendants of the old landed gentry. Crucial to advancement within the new elites was a knowledge of Western ways, for which an English education was usually seen as a valued prerequisite. But an

education alone was not enough to secure a good administrative appointment, many of the best of which were reserved for Europeans. The competition for positions at all levels was strong, and its terms were defined by the British.

The form of competition that developed in urban India by the end of the nineteenth century emerged from a Western model that was adapted to the exigencies of the colonial situation. Certainly the spirit of competition between relative equals that was imported by the British from capitalist, increasingly democratic Europe was essentially alien to the traditional Hindu ethos, which features hierarchy and synergy among separate communities. Although the communities that made up the traditional Hindu socioreligious hierarchy were often able to compete over their relative positions within it, they joined in the assumption that the hierarchy itself should be the basis for an organic whole, whose elements would naturally cooperate. The British recognized the composite nature of traditional Indian society but distinguished larger communities that, from their point of view at least, were indeed relative equals. Thus, the leaders of the religiously neutral colonial government formally defined the major socioreligious components of their realm in terms of the broad traditions that they understood as religious from their Western perspective: Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh.

British administrators then used these broad communal divisions as a basis for governing their realms. From early encounters with particular segments of wide-ranging communities, the British were liable to form stereotypes of the communities as wholes (e.g., Hindus appeared docile but were cunning; Muslims were warlike and could be fanatical). They then tried to favor groups that seemed loyal to them and keep a balance among the rest, while trying to employ the perceived nature of each to their own best advantage. Thus, in the administration, a tacit system of quotas took communal membership as an important criterion for military and civilian employment: Sikhs, for example, typed as both loyal and martial, were given preferential treatment in the army. In the communities themselves, leaders by the turn of the century found that the government would listen to them if they could show that their voice was somehow collective, representative of a larger whole. For the colonial rulers, then, the Western idea of a religious community as something broad and homogeneous was a factor in apportioning limited resources and making political decisions.[3]

This new idea of religious community was further inculcated among the Indian elite by both the general example of the British and some of their particular administrative policies. European Christians—dispersed all over India—certainly did not display complex socioreligious distinctions among themselves of the sort recognized by caste Hindus. Meanwhile, Christian missionaries effectively preached a religion that was egalitarian in spirit if not always in colonial practice, and it was their concept of religion that became the one taught in Western curricula. When taken to Indian religious traditions by liberal, Western-educated teachers, moreover, this concept was often colored by an Orientalist vision of a glorious past that students could take as a simplified, uniform model of what their religion should be. Of more practical import were two instruments of British policy. The decennial census, introduced in 1871, formally defined Indians according to religion and made them aware of the relative sizes and rates of growth of their communities. Separate electorates, introduced with

the expansion of democratic institutions in 1909, assured representation by members of all religions. Based on the census data, a certain number of constituencies were reserved for the Muslims of each province; similar arrangements were made for Christians in Madras and Sikhs in the Punjab. The political power of separate religious communities was thus made explicit, and its potential became cast in clearly quantified terms.

It eventually became evident to the new elites that the adoption of Western-style religious institutions alongside social and political ones would be necessary for success in the colonial order, and Western-educated members of all communities began organizing themselves along broader religious lines. For the Hindus especially, this meant delineating a broad-based communal identity beyond caste that had not been emphasized strongly before. Movements of organized Hinduism thus give expression to problems of pluralism long familiar to India, but which have become transformed and exacerbated in modern contexts of colonialism, nationhood, and democracy. For at the same time that Hindus organized against British political and cultural imperialism, organized groups of educated Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs competed against each other for a privileged position in colonial society. With the British gone it is the tensions between these large religious communities that have become most visible.

Historical Continuities

Although always found predominantly among literate city dwellers, organized Hinduism as it has developed has become increasingly less elite and more compatible with the fabric of everyday Hindu life. As a movement of Hindu reform, the Arya Samaj had a precursor in the Brahmo Samaj, which emerged among the Calcutta aristocracy in the middle of the nineteenth century to offer a religion that appeared compatible with Western rational thought.[13] A radical departure from orthodox Hinduism, the Brahmo Samaj nevertheless offered culturally alienated Bengalis renewed access to their own traditions. With the Arya Samaj, organized Hinduism became solidly established among the upper-middle classes—bourgeois professionals and tradespeople. Although offering its members a distinct religious identity, it was compatible enough with common practice that most did not have to break family ties. The RSS, finally, has its greatest strength among lower-middle-class clerks and shop owners, who see their RSS activities as an enrichment and enhancement of conventional Hindu life.

As religious movements, versions of organized Hinduism have been sharply informed by the visions of their founders. But these lived during different moments of a widespread religious, cultural, and political reaction against non-Hindu influence. Moreover, they drew on the traditions of distinct Indian cultural areas and found initial success within different social and regional populations.

Swami Dayananda Sarasvati, the founder of the Arya Samaj, was born in 1824 to well-to-do parents from rural Gujarat, on the west coast of India. Although Dayananda has never revealed his family name, he did state that his family was Brahman, from the hereditary priestly class.[14] Even as a boy, he tells us, he had begun to question the validity of his ritual heritage, and in his autobiography Dayananda relates an incident from his youth to illustrate the point. His family—devotees of Shiva—took

the deity's annual festival seriously, celebrating it with the traditional fasts and vigils. When he was fourteen, Dayananda went with his father and other devotees to participate in an all-night vigil in Shiva's temple. But Dayananda was the only one who managed to stay awake that night, and, alone in his vigil, saw a mouse come out from its hole, climb all over the image of Shiva, and even eat up the food offered by the devotees. Troubled by what seemed to him to be a casual desecration of the deity, he woke up his father. He felt it was impossible, he said, "to reconcile the idea of an omnipotent, living god with this idol which allows the mice to run over his body and thus suffers his image to be polluted without the slightest protest."[15] The iconoclastic, rational religious sensibilities that Dayananda experienced then would continue to underlie his message as religious teacher until the end of his days.

When he was twenty-one, Dayananda left home to lead the life of a holy man—a general socioreligious option for Hindus of all castes and backgrounds. A year later, in 1847, he was able to convince a member of an old and revered religious lineage to give him formal vows of renunciation, which entitled him to be addressed by the honorific "Swami."[16] For thirteen years Dayananda wandered about India as holy men do, until he finally met a preceptor whose somewhat idiosyncratic teachings he developed into a rational doctrine. According to Dayananda, the gods and goddesses of developed Hinduism were just figments of the human imagination; the true divinity was the invisible one known to the seers of old, who adored it in the Vedic hymns and worshiped it through pristine ritual whose secret Dayananda thought he had rediscovered. After three years with his teacher, Dayananda wandered around India again, now preaching his distinctive message, but without particular success. During a stay in Calcutta in 1873 he became acquainted with the person and work of Keshub Chandra Sen, an extraordinary leader of the Brahmo Samaj.[17] From this encounter Dayananda learned that the urban educated classes might be more receptive to his message than the rural population with whom he had been working. He was thus led to follow some practical advice from Keshub: the Gujarati-speaking, Sanskrit-educated Swami would cease preaching in Sanskrit to traditional pandits and instead start to convey his message in Hindi, a widely understood vernacular.[18] Two more years of itinerant preaching took the Swami back to western India, his native area, where his organization would first take shape.[19]

Although the Arya Samaj was established in Bombay by a Swami from Gujarat, it did not begin to flourish until Swami Dayananda visited the Punjab two years later in 1877. This was no accident. The northwesternmost area of the Indian subcontinent, the Punjab is geographically the bridge to the Islamic world, with a large population of Muslims and later of Sikhs. Hindus have long been aware of themselves as one of many communities—often a minority—in the Punjab, which has been and still is a place of marked communal tensions.

Moreover, educated Punjabi Hindus would have been familiar with the idea of a reform organization from contacts with imported Bengali Brahmos. The Punjab was one of the last areas of India to be annexed into the British administration, which had already developed a trained professional class in Calcutta that was ready to serve throughout the subcontinent. The Brahmos appeared in Punjab as urbane, well-

placed outsiders. The model of a new socioreligious organization was there to be seen, but the Brahmo Samaj remained essentially cosmopolitan, Bengali religion. In this context the Arya Samaj emerged as a nativist reform movement, with a more distinctly Hindu identity grounded in a specific vision of the fundamentals of Vedic tradition.

By the first decade of the twentieth century, some Punjabi members of the Arya Samaj became seriously engaged in political action. Their increased activism was due in large part to the socioeconomic effects of British colonial policy, which had begun to take their toll. With the supply of potential government functionaries far outstripping the demand, large numbers of educated young men, now disdainful of menial employment, grew alienated from both their own traditions and the British regime. And those who had the coveted salaried jobs were squeezed by the decade's high rate of inflation, which particularly affected lower-level clerks.[20] Meanwhile, the decennial census had since its inception shown a decreasing percentage of Hindus in the Punjab population. The official loss of Hindu numbers was due in part to conversion and increased reproductive rates among other groups, but it also derived from conventions in counting that themselves became issues of sectarian dispute: Sikh groups had successfully objected to the practice of counting Sikhs as Hindus that was followed in the first census in 1861, and now Muslims were objecting to the inclusion of outcastes in the Hindu population.[21] Hindus became anxious: certainly they had reason to fear for their community's political strength—and, some thought, even for its very survival.

In 1909, prominent Punjabi leaders of the Arya Samaj were instrumental in founding the first politically oriented Hindu communal group: the Punjab Provincial Hindu Sabha (council).[22] This group was reorganized into the Sarvadeshik (pan-regional) Hindu Sabha in 1915, and in 1921 was renamed the All-India Hindu Mahasabha (great council)—under which title it would become one of the best known institutions of Hindu reaction. Through the twenties and thirties the Hindu Mahasabha would continue to find influential leaders among Aryas;[23] at the same time it actively nurtured the early growth of the RSS, which some of its leaders then saw as a potential youth wing.[24] Through the Hindu Mahasabha, then, the Arya Samaj and the RSS find a line of historical continuity as Hindu communal movements.

By the early twenties—the decade during which the Hindu Mahasabha became vital and the RSS was founded—outbreaks of violence between Hindus and Muslims were sweeping across the nation. To face the communal challenge, some said, Hindus should not only organize but also adopt military virtues. To this end a number of Maharashtrian leaders looked to the cultural traditions of their own native region. In its seventeenth-century glory, Maharashtra was a land of Hindu warriors, offering a new surge of Hindu military power that contributed to the collapse of the Mogul empire. Geographically the southernmost of the Indo-Aryan speaking areas of northern India, Maharashtra in its caste structure also culturally resembles the Dravidian south, with relatively few occupational castes mediating between Brahmans at the top of the hierarchy and the bulk of peasant, farming groups below. Although the great military heroes of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries came largely from peasant castes, many of their councillors were Brahmans, who often served as de facto rulers,

amassed great power, and sometimes even ventured into battle. Entering into business pursuits too in ways not typical in Northern regions, Brahmans in Maharashtra had reason to be proud of their temporal power as well as their traditional sacred learning.[25] From the Maharashtrian Brahman community would come V. D. Savarkar, an early revolutionary and leading intellectual on the Hindu right who served as president of the Hindu Mahasabha from 1937 to 1942, and K. B. Hedgewar, the founder of the RSS.

In both education and outlook the founder of the RSS presents a sharp contrast to that of the Arya Samaj. Hedgewar received an English-language education and trained to be a physician. During his medical instruction in Calcutta he became involved in revolutionary activities, which he continued on his return to Maharashtra in 1916—even serving a year in prison.[26] But Hedgewar eventually grew dissatisfied with the nationalist stance and nonviolent methods espoused by Gandhi's Congress Party. When rioting between Hindus and Muslims came to Nagpur in 1923, Hedgewar became active in forming the local unit of the Hindu Mahasabha, whose confrontational tactics against Muslims and British aroused great popular Hindu support. Hindus could be strong, he saw, when they came together and acted cohesively as a community. Although Hedgewar's thought was strongly influenced by Savarkar's ideas, he resisted the increasingly politicized direction in which Savarkar would take the Hindu Mahasabha. For by the 1930s the Mahasabha had developed into an organization actively advocating communal interests in the political arena—a Hindu counterpart to the Muslim League in opposition to the secular nationalism of the Congress. Like Swami Dayananda, Hedgewar had a more inward vision. What the Hindus needed, according to Hedgewar, was not a political party of their own but communal discipline and revitalization.

As communal organizations that were nurtured during the period of nationalist struggle, both the Arya Samaj and the RSS suffered traumas at India's independence in 1947. The Aryas of India lost their main center at Lahore, which was included in West Pakistan. Thousands of well-to-do Punjabi Aryas became refugees. When shortly after independence Gandhi was assassinated by a Maharashtrian Brahman extremist, suspicion immediately fell on the RSS. The organization was officially banned for a year and a half, and its head at the time, M. S. Golwalkar, was arrested and detained for six months. Although the assassin had previously been a member of the RSS and at the time was editor of a pro-Hindu Mahasabha newspaper, no evidence could be found that he was acting under orders from the leadership of either group, who some suspected of trying to take over the government.[27] Nevertheless, the connection between the RSS, Maharashtrian Hindu extremism, and the assassination of Gandhi remains alive in the minds of many Indians.

Although the RSS was seriously shaken by the ban, it soon recovered its numbers and over the next decade reestablished itself and developed in new directions. The ban had led to the arrest of volunteers all over the country, and many of those who had joined in the heat of communal tensions in the forties were frightened away. Of the approximately two hundred thousand active members in February 1948, when the ban was imposed, only a core of about one hundred thousand remained in the

RSS when it was lifted in July of the following year.[28] The reconstruction of the RSS entailed some new orientations. A number of the middle-level activists, left to their own devices when top RSS leadership was imprisoned during the ban, began to chafe under the reimposition of conservative reins. New subsidiary associations were organized as channels for their energy and initiative: a student association, a labor union, a political party.[29] The period of reconsolidation—from the fifties to the early sixties—was framed by foreign crises unleashing patriotic sentiment on which RSS leaders were able to capitalize. The year-long conflict with Pakistan over Kashmir beginning two months after partition in August 1947 was followed in early 1950 by a mass exodus of Hindus from Pakistani East Bengal—whose resettlement gave the RSS a chance to demonstrate its value as a public-spirited organization.[30] The Sino-Indian war of 1962 finally unleashed enough nationalistic fervor to let the government allow the RSS to march in the next January's Republic Day parade, conferring on it an official legitimacy it had never had before.[31]

Through the sixties and early seventies the network of RSS organizations begun in the fifties expanded, but the RSS itself—still not quite respectable in the eyes of many—continued to keep a low profile. Then in 1975, Indira Gandhi, faced with an imminent threat to her rule, enacted sweeping emergency laws. The RSS was again banned, but this time it paradoxically gained increased visibility and new stature. With important RSS volunteers now imprisoned alongside other political and communal activists of all sorts, the organization could appear as an element of the popular opposition. Waxing in strength through the eighties, by the end of the decade it appeared as an increasingly open and aggressive actor in Indian political life.

For the Arya Samaj, by contrast, the damage suffered through the permanent loss of important Punjabi centers at partition could not be restored. During the fifties and sixties, much of the Aryas' energy was devoted to rebuilding their wealth and institutions,[32] while the world around them was changing. In its heyday at the beginning of the century, the Arya Samaj had combined a concern for active social reform essential to success in the colonial milieu with an emphasis on religious revival and communal identity. By the time it reestablished itself, many of the social causes for which it had worked either seemed less pressing or were taken over by other organizations. While continuing to maintain its educational institutions and provide a routinized personal religion for old Arya stalwarts and their families, the Samaj has directed its newer surges of vitality more exclusively toward sectarian revival and Hindu communalist ends. In the late twentieth century, then, radical Aryas join forces with militant members of the RSS—who both see themselves as fulfilling the vision of the fundamentals laid down by their movements' founders.

Creating Hindu Identities: Fundamentals, Ideologies, Communities

In locating authoritative grounds for the new Hindu communities they envisioned, both Dayananda and Hedgewar looked to past Hindu tradition. Their heritage presented them with a wide range of choices of what are thought of as religious funda-

mentals: scriptural canons, codes of law, and philosophical doctrines. Yet in their diversity, none was as practically crucial to cumulative tradition as their correlates seized on by Western fundamentalists, none concrete enough to bear alone the weight of a religious movement. This contrast in the role of fundamentals in tradition stems in good part from the very *abundance* of scriptures, laws, and philosophies in Hinduism. It becomes very difficult to single out any one specific item of tradition as basic. Religious specialists in Hinduism have tended to treat them all with a creative nonchalance, choosing and interpreting them freely to fit the needs of particular situations.

This diffuse nature of the Hindu heritage was a fact understood by both Dayananda and Hedgewar. Both recognized Hinduism as an evolving religiocultural tradition that encompasses many dimensions of life. But they also made their own judgments: of the many different elements emphasized at times during Hinduism's long evolution, some were more valuable than others. Each then looked back to what he saw as the most glorious Hindu epoch and tried to codify a framework for Hindu community that would reunite Hindus around the values foregrounded there.

Dayananda turned to the era of the Vedas—the ancient period of scriptural compilation that scholars usually locate at the end of the second millennium B.C.E., but which Dayananda understood to be much earlier. Since it was the eternal truths embodied in the Vedas themselves that made this era so great, a revitalization of the modern Hindu community should be rooted in a revitalization of the Vedic texts. Thus, crucial to the foundations of the Arya Samaj is the idea of a definite scriptural canon, a very ancient canon that deserves to be taken to a visibly modern world.

Hedgewar, by contrast, looked not to Vedic scripture but to the legends of Shivaji, the seventeenth-century Maharashtrian hero who led a successful revolt against the Mogul empire. The son of a military officer of peasant origins, Shivaji was able to mount a successful challenge to Aurangzeb, the last of the great Moguls and the sternly orthodox heir to five hundred years of Islamic political dominance in the subcontinent. Shivaji's success is usually understood by nationalist writers to derive from both spiritual and practical virtues: on the one hand, martial valor and support for Brahmanical institutions; on the other, worldly wisdom and an organizational talent that gave him the ability to forge an effective fighting force out of soldiers from diverse peasant castes.[33] Loyalty, discipline, reverence for one's heritage, and skill in effectively rousing ordinary people: these were the virtues Hedgewar admired. Around quasi-military ideals and a philosophy of Hindu Nation, then, he attempted to shape an organization that would have broad popular support.

Fundamentals and their Implications

Vedic Authority in the Arya Samaj

In highlighting Vedic authority, Swami Dayananda certainly looks to a widely acknowledged basis of Hindu traditions. Indeed, a recognition of Vedic authority is one of the very few convictions that the many diverse people who think of themselves as Hindus share.[34] However, the idea of Vedic authority known to traditional Hindus is much more diffuse and abstract than the idea of a closed biblical canon known to the

West. Christians, for example, variously interpret a revealed text to which most people have access and of which they can make some literal sense. For Hindus, by contrast, a reverence for scriptural authority can often mean simply that they think that what they do somehow comes from the Vedas, texts which in their antiquity are very rarely used or understood anymore. The complex rituals at which these texts were used long ago ceased to be vital, and the old Vedic hymns no longer have much referential meaning for most Hindus. They exist now primarily as words of power incorporated in newer rites. The ancient scriptures that continue to have referential meaning are the Upanishads, speculative works appended to the end of the ritual texts and also taken as revealed—Veda in an extended sense. Speaking with no one voice, and highly abstract as well, the Upanishads are capable of generating any number of philosophical meanings. Thus, Hindu tradition has acknowledged all sorts of ritual as coming from the Vedas and almost any imaginable type of religious philosophy as grounded in the Upanishads.

To provide some foundation for his Hindu revival, Dayananda wanted to move from scriptural authority to scriptural canon. Moreover, he put particular emphasis on the old Vedic hymns themselves, giving a lesser role to the more easily accessible Upanishads. In this he differed from his precursors in organized Hinduism, the leaders of the Brahmo Samaj.

The Brahmo Samaj, "the Society of Brahma," emerged in the 1830s within the highest strata of Hindu society in Calcutta, then the seat of British power in India. Its founder, Rammohan Roy, was influenced by Christian Unitarian thought and saw in the Upanishads a kindred rational truth at the root of Hinduism. Through the Brahmo Samaj, Bengalis attracted by Western ways who had been converting to Christianity could break with some of the more onerous practices of their tradition and still find a religious source in pristine Hindu monism. Yet as the sole fixture of tradition, Upanishadic thought—diverse, speculative, and subject to wide-ranging interpretation—did not provide the Brahmo Samaj with much stability. Very soon it split into a number of rival groups, with radical social reformers abandoning social conservatives proud of traditional Hindu ways, and fervent followers of a charismatic leader breaking with sober men of affairs.

Clearly, whatever their virtues for Calcutta folk trying to come to terms with the West, the Upanishads alone did not have the substance for the type of widespread Hindu revival Dayananda had in mind. More than a flexible vehicle for philosophical speculation, the Vedas as propounded by Dayananda were rooted in a firm theistic vision and offered a modicum of ritual practice. Gaining exposure to organized Hinduism from the Brahmo Samaj and learning from its leaders, Dayananda would nevertheless break with them over the issue of Vedic authority.[35] For the Swami had previously had an encounter with a religious teacher he had respected much more than the Brahmo leaders, one who had already shaped his basic ideas about the Vedas and their glorious era.

After a stormy break with his family and years of wandering around north India, Swami Dayananda eventually met a guru, Swami Virjananda, then eighty-one years old. Blind and cantankerous, "with acute stomach trouble,"[36] Swami Virjananda was

a renowned Sanskrit scholar with his own ideas about Hindu tradition that he continued to propagate actively through the final years of his life.[37] Virjananda took very seriously the Hindu precept that the cataclysmic war described in the epic Mahabharata marked the beginning of the age of Kali, the current dark age of mankind. Any work written after the age of the Mahabharata—traditionally understood to have been about five thousand years ago—was thus hopelessly corrupt. According to Virjananda, then, the scriptures commonly revered by Hindus could be divided into two classes: those composed before the legendary war, which were *ārṣ*, (of the rishis), the old Vedic seers, and those composed after it which were *anārṣ*, (not of the rishis). The first works were worth preserving and reviving; the second were unfortunate error and had led people astray.

From his guru Swami Dayananda not only learned Sanskrit but also accepted this fundamental bifurcation of Hindu tradition. But while Virjananda, old and blind, made written entreaties to government officials and princes to propagate his doctrine,[38] his younger disciple Dayananda would find his mission in preaching that doctrine vigorously to a wide constituency. It was, in fact, a radical teaching. Encouraging people to observe only those parts of the cumulative Hindu tradition that were "of the rishis" meant exhorting them to discard other large portions of it, including the ceremonial worship of images that was central to the religious lives of most Hindus. Thus, in Dayananda's most basic work, *Satyārth Prakāś*, "The Light of Truth," the Swami gives a long list of traditional Hindu writings that should *not* be read, "condemned by the author in his scheme of studies."[39]

Although Dayananda parted from his guru with the idea that only the genuine core of Hindu tradition was valid, it took him several years to arrive at a clear concept of just what this meant. Crucial to his understanding of the Vedic foundations of Hinduism were three ways of thinking about religion current in the intellectually progressive circles of nineteenth-century India. Of these, the most directly influenced by Western models was Dayananda's understanding of a highly specific scriptural canon—an idea with little precedent in Hindu thought. He developed this concept in accordance with two intellectual strains that do have roots in Indian tradition, but which could appear particularly enlightened in the nineteenth century: a rational theism congruent with beliefs found in Western Protestantism, and a scientific literal-mindedness.

Dayananda seems to have come to his doctrine of the Vedas after his experience with the Brahmo thinkers. Drawn from an elite class exposed to the Persian high cultural legacy of the Moguls as well as to the new Western ideas of the British, the Brahmos had long been struggling with the idea of revelation proposed by Islam and Christianity, "religions of the book." Where most of these had reached conciliatory—if sometimes eclectic—conclusions, agreeing that all the great scriptures held revelation, Dayananda outdid even the most Hinduizing of the Brahmo thinkers. The revelation of the ancient Hindus was not only the highest ever received by humankind, but it also contained all knowledge, a claim not made in such assertive terms even by Western scripturalists.

Although traditional Hindus sometimes speak of the Vedas as containing all knowledge, it can be reasonably assumed that they do not usually mean this in any specific way but more abstractly to imply that the Vedas contain the essence of all knowledge, or the seeds of it. Dayananda, however, took this traditional dictum in a very rational, literalist sense. Thus, Dayananda understood the Vedic sacrifices to have an intelligible basis that could be comprehended in terms of a materialist science: when butter and other substances are consumed in the Vedic fire, they "purify the air, rain, and water [and] thereby promote happiness on this earth."[40] Since the knowledge of the Vedas is of general applicability, all references to kings and battles are in fact political or military directives. Moreover, since the Vedas are of universal scope, all specific geographical and botanical references are explained away.[41] "All the knowledge that is extant in the world originated in Aryavarta."[42]

Thus ancient Aryavarta—the Swami's term for India between the Himalayas and the Vindhyas—was truly a wondrous place. It was "called the Golden Land as it produces gold and precious stones." Its kings ruled over all the earth and taught the wisdom of the country to all. Through their great knowledge, the ancient Indians were able to produce the extraordinary weapons of war described in the epics. There were iron balls filled with substances that catch fire when exposed to the sun or air; there were also defenses for these weapons: a kind of smoke bomb that turned into rain to extinguish the fire. After the great war described in the Mahabharata, however, all this knowledge was lost. Ignorant priestcraft swept through the land.[43] The Swami's mission was to restore Aryavarta to its ancient glory.

Aware of himself as the propagator of unconventional doctrines and institutions, Dayananda several times during his career would affirm codified outlines of ritual and belief that could serve as a foundation for a new Hindu community. The elements of the reformed ritual traditions were described in a work called *Saṃskār Vidhi*, in which Dayananda presented the sixteen traditional life-cycle rites—called *saṃskāras*—in a simple form that he thought was authentic and suitable for performance by his contemporaries.[44] The marriage rite in particular was to be less elaborate and expensive, pointing to a problem that still remains in contemporary Hindu life. For those who wanted them, Dayananda also offered a simplification and revival of the old Vedic celebratory rites. Prescribing options in personal religion rather than practice necessary for community membership, these strictly ritual enunciations of Dayananda did not prove controversial in tradition. The doctrinal ones, however, did.

The doctrinal points affirmed by Dayananda were of two types: those that were presented as tenets to be held by all Aryas and those in which he believed personally himself. Of the first, the most definitive is a list of ten rules prepared by a committee of Lahore Aryas and approved by Dayananda in 1877.[45] The first three of these assert that God the creator is the source of all knowledge and that the Vedas are the books of all knowledge, which all Aryas should read. The rest are fairly conventional moral injunctions. Catholic in their outlook, these ten rules aim to open up the Arya Samaj widely to all Hindus. In a tract published at the end of *Satyārth Prakāś*, however, Dayananda himself lists fifty-two articles of belief that are more restrictive. These

defined his scriptural canon more precisely, gave a more complete delineation of his theistic doctrines of creation, and offered rational redefinitions of many traditional Hindu terms.[46]

The combination of the Swami's catholicity of general approach and explicit specificity of personal views in fact proved to be destabilizing to Arya Samaj tradition. What most Aryas shared was a conviction that Hinduism needed reform to be able to fare successfully in the modern world; but they differed about how drastic that reform should be and what should be its primary direction: personal, political, or social. Doctrinally this meant that they could argue about whether it was enough for good Aryas to follow the ten rules and go about their business of social reform or political agitation, or whether they should respect more carefully the Swami's personal beliefs and pious example. The potential for disagreement over which tenets were truly fundamental to tradition thus added impetus to already latent divisions, and within a decade after Dayananda's death, the Arya Samaj suffered a major split.

RSS and the Ideology of Hindu Nation

The RSS finds its intellectual foundations for a new Hindu community not in codified doctrines that might provide reasons for discord but in a few basic nationalistic concepts more ideologically attractive than analytically precise. In this treatment of ideational foundations the RSS appears closer to the intellectual moorings of Hindu tradition than does the Arya Samaj. For the beliefs that Hindus have traditionally held in common have not been neatly formulated creeds but broad ideological understandings: ideas about hierarchy, pollution, and transmigration with obvious relevance to the socioreligious order. Within this general ideational context, great latitude was given to particular doctrines, which multiplied in the philosophical schools of classical India.

The role of these doctrines in defining Hindu identity was limited. Although scholastic philosophers could be totally convinced of the rightness of their own particular views, they generally condemned other views as simply inadequate, not heretical. Those were lesser truths, for the more simple-minded, who might one day see the light—if not in this birth, then in another. One could believe just about anything and still be considered a good Hindu. In building on nationalistic concepts adapted from Western political thought instead of codified scriptures and doctrines inspired by Western religious models, the RSS has found a way to harness the cohesive powers of Hindu tradition.

Savarkar's Ideology. Keshavrao Baliram Hedgewar, the founder of the RSS, was an organizer, not an intellectual. His achievement lay in conceiving and nurturing a cohesive, disciplined, and loyal body of workers who would have a broad influence on many areas of Hindu national life. Unlike Dayananda, he neither wrote prolifically nor enunciated new doctrines himself. Like others on the Hindu right, he was deeply impressed by the early writings of V. D. Savarkar known as *Veer*, the national "hero," a brilliant radical whose active revolutionary career was cut short in 1910 through his imprisonment by the British. In prison Savarkar managed to compose *Hindutva*,

a short book that when smuggled out of prison in 1923 was to give some concrete shape to nascent ideas of Hindu community.[47]

Two catch phrases are highlighted in Savarkar's work: Hindu Nation *(hindū rāṣṭra)* and Hindu-ness *(hindutva)*. The idea of Hindu Nation stands in contrast to the idea of a composite, territorially defined political entity that developed among the secular nationalists and would be enshrined in the Indian constitution. The modern Western idea of nation, according to Savarkar, does not do justice to the ancient glory of the Hindu people, the indigenous and numerically dominant population of the subcontinent. The people whose culture grew up and developed in greater India—from the Himalayas to the southern seas, by some accounts from Iran to Singapore—this, for Savarkar, was the Hindu Nation.[48] The subcontinent is their motherland, and Hinduness is the quality of their national culture.

One of the characteristics of Hinduness is that it has nurtured many religions. Indeed, in addition to the religion of orthodox Brahmans, it has given birth to the religions of Jains, Sikhs, and Indian Buddhists—who are thus all in this sense Hindu. Savarkar's idea of Hinduness, then, explicitly distinguishes the Hindu Nation from the orthodox Hindu religion that acknowledges the authority of the Vedas. At the same time it distinguishes followers of Indic religions from those of non-Indic religions. For Savarkar, the Muslims and Christians in India are foreign elements in the Indian subcontinent, which rightfully belongs to Hindus. Hindus should actively reject any alien dominance: they have done so in the past and should renew their struggle valiantly whenever necessary.

Savarkar thus tried to inspire Hindus through historical writings, identifying the alien element differently according to the major threats he saw on the horizon at the times he wrote. Before he went to prison he wrote a highly provocative history of the 1857 uprising of the Indians against the British.[49] In this early work Hindus and Muslims fight together against European tyranny. In 1925, as communal tensions mounted between Hindus and Muslims, he wrote a book subtitled "A Review of the Hindu Empire of Maharashtra," which focuses on the development of the empire after the death of its great founder, Shivaji.[50] Although Savarkar explains to his "Muhammadan countrymen" that the blunt words to be used against the Mogul rulers are necessary and justifiable,[51] the Moguls here serve primarily as a testing ground for Hindu glory. Savarkar's final work, an interpretive history of India first published in 1963, portrayed the Muslims as the most important in a long string of foreign invaders against whom the Hindus had been successful.[52] With the section on the Muslims comprising about two-thirds of the whole, the history of India finally appears here, as it does in the eyes of many Hindu communalists, to be an incessant string of confrontations between the two communities.

Symbol and Ritual in the RSS. To this vision of the embattled Hindu Nation the RSS gives symbolic and corporate form, drawing on concepts deeply rooted in Hindu religious tradition. Imagery of the Divine Mother was taken both to the Hindu Nation itself and to the land which it inhabited.[53] The latter had in the past been desecrated by foreigners and would be "raped" by partition. The former was a "living

God" who should be served through selfless, active devotion.[54] The RSS would then offer itself as a field for heroic service to the nation. A strong RSS would foster a strong Hindu Nation.

The corporate body of the RSS is in fact strengthened by regular group life. The daily neighborhood meetings with which the movement began in the mid-twenties continue to play a vital role, instilling discipline and personal loyalties in individual members. The expansion of the movement in the thirties led to the institution of larger group meetings, which today include a cycle of six RSS festivals. Revealing the power of symbolic expression in the RSS, these festivals usually coincide with those of traditional Hindu festivals but reinterpret them in a nationalistic vein. The most elaborate observance of the RSS cycle, for example—drawing disciples from all over a geographic area—is Dashehra, an autumn celebration. Commemorating the victory of Lord Ram, the embodiment of Hindu virtue, over his demon enemy, Dashehra, is observed all over north India through elaborate folk enactments: Ram's praises are given melodramatic recital; an effigy of the demon is burned. The RSS celebration, by contrast, takes a distinct martial tone, with the demonstration of military exercises and the worship of weapons associated with Shivaji. Shivaji's coronation day itself then becomes the occasion for a festival of "Hindu Victory." The most solemn festival of the year is the traditional day of guru worship. During this festival monetary offerings are presented and worship is offered to the saffron-orange RSS banner. The banner itself is recognized as the guru, the image of the divine that RSS members are encouraged to worship. Thus, although pictures of Hindu heroes—including Hedgewar and his successor, Golwalkar—flank the banner, it is to the organization itself that primary loyalty is pledged.[55]

Since the development of ritual tradition in the RSS builds on familiar customs, it appears less obviously radical than that of the Arya Samaj, but it is in many ways more revolutionary. The reformed rituals of Dayananda remained novel versions of the individual rites long performed by traditional Hindus. They might make a statement of socioreligious protest and mark group membership, but they did not seem to have an obviously different psychological effect from the rituals they replaced. The ritual festivals of the RSS, by contrast, seem designed actively to affect its members' psyches. As a long-standing member recognizes, they "signify the attempt to awaken a national consciousness,"[56] instilling Hindu identity and forging ties within the group. Indeed, the character-building exercises of the RSS are themselves spoken of as *Saṃskārs*—the life-cycle rites thought by pious Hindus to inform personality and recodified by Swami Dayananda for Aryas in *Saṃskār Vidhi*. While Swami Dayananda attempted to present the traditional rites in their pristine simplicity, the RSS gives them a radically new meaning.

Hindu Unity: Establishing the Bounds, Attenuating Divisions

In order for Hindus to reclaim the glory of their homeland, they had somehow to unite. The Hindu drive toward strength through unity is sometimes referred to as *saṃgaṭhan,* which became an important rallying cry within Hindu nationalist circles of the 1920s.[57] In the face of both the diffuse external bounds of the Hindu commu-

nity and its marked internal divisions, Hindu *saṃgaṭhan* has proven very difficult to accomplish. Activist groups that attempted to organize Hindus faced problems on two fronts. First, they had to know just who to organize: to define the limits of their group. This entailed arriving at a concept of a broad Hindu community and an understanding of their own relationship to it. Second, they had to overcome the importance of traditional Hindu caste divisions, which remain crucial to the self-understandings of most Hindus. The problem of self-definition, largely conceptual, was addressed with ingenuity. The problem of caste, however, rooted in centuries of tradition and sentiment, has not yet been successfully resolved.

Definitions: The Large Community and the Small

The most succinct definition of the concept "Hindu" on the religious right was formulated by Savarkar in *Hindutva*. Translating a Sanskrit verse of his own composition, he declared that "a Hindu means a person who regards this land of Bharatvarsha from the Indus to the Seas, as his Fatherland as well as his Holyland."[58] A nationalist definition of the "cultural Hindu," this statement is at the same time geographical (referring to "Bharatvarsha," i.e., India), genealogical (referring to a "Fatherland"), and religious (referring to a "Holyland"). It is meant to include all Indian followers of Indic religions, encompassing Sikhs, Jains, and South Asian Buddhists, as well as orthodox Hindus. But by requiring recognition of India as *both* fatherland *and* holy land, it excludes (1) East Asian Buddhists and Western devotees of Indian religions, for whom India is not a fatherland[59] and, more pointedly, (2) Indian Muslims and Christians, for whom India is not a holy land. From the viewpoint of Hindu cultural nationalism, Savarkar's formulation effectively isolates the perceived other.

Both explicitly and implicitly, the notion of the cultural, national Hindu articulated in Savarkar's definition corresponded to a concept that was vital to Hindu fundamentalists of all persuasions. Bhai Parmanand, an Arya activist and leader of the Hindu Mahasabha, espoused the definition in print soon after it was published in 1923, fourteen years before Savarkar himself ascended to the Mahasabha's presidency.[60] And although officially endorsed by neither the RSS nor the Arya Samaj, the definition encapsulates important attitudes found in both movements. For the RSS, the idea of Hinduism as a national culture explains the logic of its calling itself a Hindu cultural organization while in fact promoting the culture of the Hindu Nation. Moreover, when the inclusive dimensions of the concept are emphasized, the idea of the cultural Hindu lets the RSS keep its own explicit criteria for membership hazy, which can help it counter accusations of narrow communalism: cannot any Indian whose first loyalty is to his national culture be considered a cultural Hindu?[61] In most cases Aryas too have been ready to see themselves as Hindus in Savarkar's broad national sense—but sometimes only in that sense.

The attitude of the Arya Samaj toward the larger Hindu community has always been ambivalent. On the one hand, Aryas see themselves as the true followers of the Vedic dharma and thus practitioners of the aspect of Hindu tradition professed by most orthodox Hindus to be most essential. On the other hand, they reject in principle the majority of the practices that are in fact most crucial for ordinary Hindu life.

Depending on the circumstances, either of these attitudes could be paramount for both the larger Arya community and particular Arya individuals.

Driven by the tide of historical events and the internal development of tradition, the general stance of the Aryas has undergone some broad oscillations. As late nineteenth-century reformers, the Aryas began with a radical break from established Hinduism, but as they reached out to work within the larger Hindu community, they increasingly identified with it, particularly during the communalist conflicts of the twenties and thirties. Then after they lost many of their important Punjabi centers with the creation of Pakistan in 1947, the Aryas had to focus on reestablishing their separate institutional and religious identity. Secure again by the beginning of the seventies, they have increasingly appeared as champions of the Hindu side when communal tensions arise.

On an individual level, the ambivalence of the Aryas toward the larger Hindu community is presented by the diverse writings of Lala Lajpat Rai, an Arya active in both communal causes and the independence movement. Maintaining the distinction between religion and culture seen in Savarkar's formulation, Lajpat Rai seems to have transferred his allegiance from his Arya religion to his Hindu national culture as his involvement with the saṃgaṭhan movement increased in the twenties. In 1914, when he was forty-nine and already a well-known figure, he was still able to put a positive slant on the ambivalent Arya attitude toward Hinduism. Clarifying his position to an Arya youth group, he asserted that the Arya Samaj "has a double mission."[62] On the one hand, it is a world religion with a truth for all humanity: it "believes that the Vedic religion affords the best solution to the world's difficulties" (1:188) and "it preaches . . . to mankind in general without distinction of creed, colour or climate" (1:187). On the other hand, it has a special obligation to the Hindus, "the people who have from times immemorial believed in the teachings of the Vedas. . . . In this sense the mission of the Arya Samaj is national" (1:188). By 1919, Lajpat Rai was expressing strong concerns for communal Hindu unity. Writing in a public newspaper, like a good Arya he still considered the Vedas to be ideally definitive for Hindus but for the sake of unity was ready to expand the scope of the Hindu community: for those "who cannot accept the authority of the Vedas" it is enough if they "maintain the distinguishing features of Hindu culture in their thought and life."[63] By 1924 his enthusiasm for the Arya Samaj had clearly diminished. Now writing as a strong proponent of the saṃgaṭhan movement, Lajpat Rai expressed both detachment from and disgust with the Samaj: at one time he "was an active member of the Arya Samaj" which "signally failed to realize [the goal of saṃgaṭhan] as it went on developing its sectarian proclivities. . . . In the case of Sangathan, the Arya Samaj and the Sanatan Dharam Sabha [an orthodox Hindu group] will not allow it to flourish and succeed."[64] For Lajpat Rai at that time, the Arya Samaj, as a potentially universal but doctrinally exclusive religion, seemed less attractive than the Hindu unity he saw as practically necessary for Indian independence.

In independent India, Aryas have found themselves members of a movement whose vital glory has passed, its sectarian dimensions appearing less dangerous than they had to Lajpat Rai, but perhaps less attractive, too. By the time the Aryas had

reestablished themselves at the end of the sixties, many could find congenial the Hindu Nationalist sentiments expressed in a long series of writings by Balraj Madhok, a politician of Arya background who was also a member of the RSS: India, says Madhok, is not merely a congery "of castes and communities with no element of cohesion"; like Savarkar, he understands it instead to have a defining national character, and adopting the latter's term declares that "it is the Hinduness of a man that makes him a national of India."[65] But despite the Hindu Nationalist ideals that many Aryas share with Savarkar and RSS volunteers, practical reasons can lead them to use the distinction between community and religion to assert their own particularity as members of a universal religion. Indeed, they might even use the distinction to invoke the government protections for minority religions that Hindu Nationalists do *not* generally favor. Article 30 of the Indian constitution provides protections against government interference in schools run by religious minorities—protections that are not granted to other schools.[66] Aryas, with their many educational institutions, can understandably want to have themselves classed as a distinct religious minority for these governmental purposes. Thus, in a book published in 1983 in the midst of ongoing legal proceedings on the matter, D. Vable, a contemporary Arya, describes Hinduism as the traditional Puranic religion that the Aryas do *not* follow. Citing Savarkar's definition (pp. 53–54), he asserts that the Aryas constitute a distinct religion, even though they are still Hindus by community (p. 62).

The idea, then, of a broad-based Hindu community—rooted in the national culture of the subcontinent and incorporating in spirit all Indic religions—seems to be a concept on which Hindu fundamentalists of many different persuasions can draw for their own diverse ends. All, moreover, agree that one of the major problems facing this community are its entrenched internal divisions, products of the complex institution of caste.

The Intransigency of Caste

Caste institutions have proved so intransigent to Hindu reformers and nationalists because they are so basic to Hindu tradition. Being a good Hindu does not depend very much on what individuals think or what scriptures they revere, but it does depend on what they do, and proper interaction with both human and divine beings is governed in good part by concerns of caste. Individuals are born into groups understood to be distinct by nature, and each group has its role in the economy of the universe. It was precisely through its divisions, well-ordered and well-defined, that Hindu society recognized itself as an organic whole. Yet this society, so coherent in its own terms, could not easily present itself as a cohesive force against outside communal interests. Deeply ingrained concepts of organic completeness were thus at odds with twentieth-century political imperatives of Hindu unity. Paradoxically, what may in fact be the most fundamental aspect of traditional Hindu society runs counter to one of the modern fundamentalists' most explicit goals.

The Arya Samaj: Purification without Assimilation. The solutions to caste divisions proposed by the Aryas were dramatic. In *Satyārth Prakāś,* Swami Dayananda put

forward a revolutionary program to reform caste institutions. Like many Hindu reformers, he saw some value in the old Hindu division of society into four hierarchical orders: the ideals of priests, warriors, merchants, and servants, according to Dayananda, did indeed represent a natural order in society. But like other reformers, Swami Dayananda also thought that one's status in this hierarchy should not be determined by birth. The problem they all faced, then, was how to know who fits naturally into which caste. Dayananda's approach, although divorced from the affectional realities of his aspiring middle-class constituents, nevertheless reflected the competitive, egalitarian spirit that they learned from their colonial milieu. Dayananda proposed that young people, after completing their education, take comprehensive competitive examinations to determine their rank. "By adopting this system all will advance," argued Dayananda. "The higher classes will be in constant fear of their children being degraded [and] . . . the same fear will also make the children acquire knowledge and culture."[67] The motivations for education among the classes he addressed, Dayananda recognized, were the desire for socioeconomic status and the fear of its loss. Adapting the rational spirit of the age, he would harness natural self-interest to the creation of the ideal Aryan society.

Aryas after Dayananda attempted to ameliorate the worst aspects of caste society through ritual means. Ancient rites of purification revived by Aryas in the 1880s to reclaim Indians lost to Islam or Christianity were later used to purify the status of low-caste Hindu groups. Mass ceremonies were performed on large groups of outcastes and aboriginals. Beginning in the Punjab in 1900, by the second decade of the twentieth century these mass purification rituals spread into Kashmir and the Gangetic plain.[68] The rituals were simple, often comprising a bath, shaving the head, and initiation into simple ritual formulas. Nevertheless, their grandiose scale could make them seem impressive to those who witnessed them. Arya Samaj preachers were thus often successful when they exhorted villagers to accept the efficacy of the rites and receive the newly purified as people whose touch no longer polluted. Accordingly, the ceremony might be concluded with a caste Hindu taking food from the hand of a former untouchable, or with a newly purified person drawing water from the village well. Neither of these acts would have been tolerated before.[69]

These two strategies of caste reform, however, had little lasting effect in integrating Hindu society. Despite the efforts of a few utopian radicals, Swami Dayananda's program of examinations was never put into practice. And while mass purification rites were sometimes exciting events, they had little practical value in bringing Hindus of different castes together. For the traditional villagers among whom the newly purified would still live, the Aryas' rites were powerful enough to cleanse only the higher of the ritually impure castes, not those who actually did dirty work like tanning and scavenging. Moreover, when successful, a group conversion meant only that a marginally untouchable caste came to be seen as marginally touchable; there was still no reason for high-caste village Hindus to have much to do with them. For the educated urban Aryas who might want consciously to integrate the newly purified, there were genuine social obstacles: they simply had little in common with the former outcastes, who were mostly rural and illiterate. Ritual purification proved no quick path to social integration.

Recognizing the failure of the Samaj to transform caste structures even within its own ranks, idealistic Aryas have twice attempted radical reform. In 1895 a small group of radicals formed the Arya Bhratri Sabha. Since fear of censure from caste fellows (collectively known as *bhrātri* in Sanskrit) was one of the principal reasons why most Aryas would not put reformist ideals into practice, these radicals would form a caste of their own. They would practice the rites codified by Dayananda in *Saṃskar Vidhi* and interdine and intermarry with one another regardless of birth caste. The plan, however, was never realized, in part because the members could not agree over the matter of vegetarianism—the problem of what to eat, not with whom.[70] In 1922, a new group was formed along different lines: the Jat Pat Todak Mandal, the "Circle to Destroy Caste Differences."[71] This was a society that would work to undermine caste distinctions throughout the Hindu community, publishing pamphlets, holding conferences, and sponsoring intercaste dinners and marriages. Although it was begun as part of the Arya Samaj, it extended its membership to all who would pledge to work against distinctions in their personal practice, preferably through the very radical step of intercaste marriages. Indeed, in promoting their society's goals, members went so far as to deny the classical theory of four ideal social orders that even Dayananda retained in revised form: too many Aryas were using the theory as a pretext for continuing traditional caste practices. Recognizing the enormity of its task, the Jat Pat Todak Mandal was able to take pride in its very modest successes, but it did not succeed in visibly altering the Arya Samaj, let alone the greater Hindu world.[71]

Thus, for most Aryas, Swami Dayananda's radical ideas about caste led to few radical reforms. For the majority, there were only two practical results. First, born Brahmans had no monopoly on ritual functions in the Arya Samaj, although Brahmans, being educated, often did serve as ritual specialists. Second, orthodox restrictions on intermarriage and interdining among members of Arya Samaj families might be relaxed somewhat—as they might among members of many Hindu sectarian groups—but radical departures would risk the opprobrium of caste elders, a risk that only the most principled would take.

In their reconciliation to most traditional Hindu caste restrictions, the Arya Samaj majority is able to invoke the example of the mature Dayananda. Whatever he might have believed in principle, the Swami during his later years avoided actions that would alienate him from orthodox Hindus. He wanted to be a leaven in Hindu society, he would say, not an outcaste from it.[72] The leaders of the RSS seem to have understood these lessons experienced by the Arya Samaj and its founder. Instead of suggesting radical alternative models that were difficult to attain, they are content to transform caste society slowly from within.

RSS: Attenuation and Equalization. The Hindu Nation envisioned by the RSS would live in the subcontinent as an ordered organic whole. This vision is in many ways consistent with traditional views of caste hierarchy, where different castes serve complementary functions; but as is often the case in moderate Hindu reform, the RSS ideal of caste is revised to emphasize all functions as *equal* in the sense of being necessary for the social organism.[73] The RSS preaches against caste pride but does not try actively to abolish caste institutions at large. M. S. Golwalkar, the second head of

the RSS, affirmed that the Sangh "simply does not recognize" untouchability.[74] At summer training camps people say they don't know and don't care what the caste of their fellows is. Work is assigned regardless of birth caste.[75]

Yet however sincere in-group feelings of solidarity and disregard for ritual pollution may be, to outsiders the RSS can easily appear to represent forces of caste privilege. If, as Golwalkar asserts,[76] working actively to address past social injustices can promote caste separatism, with oppressed groups singling themselves out for privileges, failure to do so in fact upholds the status quo. Like American conservatives against quotas, Golwalkar stresses the need for individual discipline "for building up a homogeneous unified . . . people."[77] At the same time, in Maharashtra and Madras traditional frictions between a Brahman elite and a large non-Brahman peasant population have influenced the actual caste composition of the RSS: in those regions, a preponderance of Brahmans in *any* organization may lead non-Brahmans to shun it, which has caused the RSS branches there to evolve as largely Brahman groups perceived as serving Brahman interests.[78] Moreover, since many of the RSS's senior elder statesmen have come from the Maharashtrian Brahman community in which it first emerged, the RSS is sometimes seen at the national level too as an instrument of a Brahman elite. In its current north Indian strongholds, however, the RSS is not predominantly Brahman. RSS supporters there come mainly from middle castes of clerks and shopkeepers; upwardly mobile members of lower castes join too, although they remain poorly represented in leadership positions.[79] Perhaps more marked in the profile of the usual volunteer than any type of caste is that he belongs to a middle to lower-middle economic *class*.

Although neither the Arya Samaj nor the RSS has radically altered traditional caste customs, they may have been able to alter caste attitudes, some more, some less, conscious. With the daring public innovations of the Arya Samaj, powerful symbolic meaning could be conveyed to Hindus at large. Swami Dayananda, in declaring the Vedas to be fundamental to the strength of the Hindu community, opened up the sacred scriptures to all castes. He taught that all Hindus should be allowed to hear and study the Vedas, no longer just the well-born; whatever caste they remained, all Hindus, in this very basic religious sense, would become equal. Moreover, well-publicized mass "purifications" of low-caste groups suggest the possibility that the status of a particular caste need not be static, but can be improved—a principle developed in practice by modern caste associations. The group dynamics of the RSS, by contrast, can powerfully affect the caste consciousness of those within its own ranks, who in fact often come from the groups that most need their caste consciousness transformed. Distinctions of caste within the group seem less important as loyalties strengthen over long periods of time. Discussing the value of regular group meetings, an RSS enthusiast asserted that if a volunteer "believes in the distinctions of caste, mixing with different people broadens his outlook and he rises above [these] petty distinctions."[80]

Certainly RSS members like to believe this is the case. Balasaheb Deoras, the third and current RSS head, tells a story to illustrate how the formal integration of RSS programs can lead even a fastidious high-caste Hindu at least temporarily to abandon

ritual restrictions and thus to question their validity. Thus, the subtle wisdom of institutions is said to have brought the young Bachharaj Vyas, a notable conserv politician from an orthodox Brahman family, to rethink Brahmanical restrictior intercommensality. Bachharaj, it seems, was so orthodox that he wouldn't even e Deoras's house, let alone at the common mess at training camps; Deoras tool problem to Dr. Hedgewar, the RSS founder, who "did not quote any rule . . prevent Shri Bachharaj from attending the camp. He was certain that the de: reformation would definitely take place in him. . . . He told me 'Let him come tc camp. We shall give him the utensils and the rations, let him cook his own food.'' went on for the first year. Next year, Shri Bachharaj himself said to [Hedgewa shall take meals with the rest'!"[81] Thus, more important than rational argumen changing peoples' attitudes toward caste is participation in RSS activities: "With consciously discussing equality, egalitarianism becomes a part of the ethos of volunteers."[82]

Organization: Hierarchies and Egalitarianisms

The organizational patterns of the two groups were shaped in good part by the r they recognized for themselves in the larger Hindu community. The Arya Samaj v created and remained a *samāj,* a "society," in the sense of a voluntary organizatior group of individuals joined in a common cause. Swami Dayananda did not intend establish a new sect with himself as guru but instead tried to set up local groups responsible people who were to work cooperatively to foster Vedic ideals. Author was diffused both spatially, scattered among local *samājes,* and functionally, inves in committees that could not always agree. Thus, although Swami Dayananda p vided an inspiring example for generations of Aryas, he was guarded in the dir guidance he gave to those of his own time. One of the most conspicuous characte tics of the RSS, by contrast, has always been its strong hierarchical organization, w an apex in charismatic leaders who have by and large maintained practical contr Like its vision of the ideal Indian society, the RSS would consistently appear a coherent, organic body, with a recognized head guiding firm limbs. Through dis plined action on themselves and others, members of the RSS would strengthen Hindu Nation.

The Network of Arya Samaj Associations

While the RSS appears to have adapted some ideas of Western military discipline, Arya Samaj seems to have learned much from the British about the administrati of charitable institutions. In the more than one hundred years of its existence, Arya Samaj has developed an extensive but loose amalgamation of associations t have allowed individual groups and their leaders to pursue their own particular en educational, social, political, and religious. The local groups of urban Punjabis w whom the Arya Samaj emerged in the last quarter of the nineteenth century had the century's end inaugurated a lasting network of educational establishments. Duri

the first two decades of the twentieth century, Aryas would further attempt to strengthen the Hindu community in the colonial environment by diversifying their socioreligious directions. Now spread throughout north India and venturing on missions abroad, they initiated associations, large and small, with aims ranging from social reform among all Hindus to aggressive sectarian missionizing. The general deterioration of relationships between Hindus and Muslims in the twenties and thirties led to increasing militancy among Aryas too, as they brought their organizational resources and initiative to the Hindu communal cause. Although the partition of India in 1947 seriously diminished the scope of Arya institutions, it did not diminish the communal spirit and religious fervor of many individual Aryas. While maintaining the educational establishment they have inherited, Aryas in the last decades of the twentieth century have given new vitality to those of their institutions that propagate Arya sectarian teachings and promote broader Hindu identity.

The complexity of organization that would develop in the Arya Samaj could not have been foreseen by Swami Dayananda. Before his death in 1883, he had set up the Paropkarini Sabha, a "Benevolent Society"—a body of twenty-three respected individuals that would be his legal heir.[83] The Paropkarini Sabha was entrusted with the Swami's wealth—including his presses and publications—and charged with continuing his religious legacy in three ways: "disseminat[ing] the Vedas . . . and . . . promoting . . . [their] teachings"; "organizing a body of teachers and lecturers to work in India and other countries"; and "protecting . . . the orphans and destitutes of India."[84] But this appointive committee did not inherit the Swami's charisma. Indeed, containing a large minority of non-Arya members—many named during the latter part of the Swami's life, when he was interested in propagating his message among Hindus at large—the Paropkarini Sabha was nowhere given formal authority over the many local Arya Samaj "societies." With no mechanism in place for coordinating their activities, the local groups were initially left free unto themselves. Eventually Pratinidhi Sabhas, "representative councils," were organized—along provincial lines beginning in the Punjab in 1886 and on a nationwide basis in 1909.[85] By 1940, the provincial councils together could count more than two thousand affiliated local units.[86] In addition to coordinating the activities of the local samājes and the various charitable institutions attached to them, the councils also launched some larger socioreligious organizations of their own. The activist religious legacy entrusted by Dayananda to a single appointed committee was thus vigorously implemented through groups that were often locally based and beholden to little central authority. Impressive in scope but loose in its internal organization, this network of Arya Samaj institutions found its greatest coherence during times of crisis.

The first major coordinated effort among the local samājes of the Punjab, sparked by the crisis of Dayananda's death, turned out to be a resounding success: in the Swami's memory, a college was to be built at Lahore. Proposed publicly with great initial enthusiasm in the year that the Swami died, the institution eventually opened on a small scale three years later, in 1886, after a long fund-raising campaign.[87] Flourishing as the "Dayanand Anglo-Vedic" college, it was the first, and long the most important, of a broad complex of schools and colleges throughout north India that

bring together Vedic knowledge and worldly wisdom played a vital and continuing role in the Aryas' activist program.

Additional Arya institutions arose to address specific socio-religious problems. Some of these problems, like the plight of Hindu widows, had earlier been identified by Hindu reformers; others were newly tackled by Aryas themselves. In both cases, the strength and wide spread of Arya organization aided the effectiveness of the Aryas' work. Thus, in a new Arya initiative to raise the status of low castes, at least twelve associations were dedicated to "the uplift of the oppressed" between 1903 and 1930.[97] Toward the cause of Hindu unity, these associations proceeded to purify untouchables ritually, inculcate Sanskritic customs among them, and increase their literacy.[98] During the twenties, as communal tensions grew, the mass purification techniques pioneered by the Aryas were increasingly adopted by more traditional Hindus for the "reconversion" of Muslims. The twenties and thirties thus saw the development of several large "purification associations," in which Aryas and non-Aryas worked in differing degrees of exclusivity and cooperation.[99]

In 1927, at a large Arya Samaj conference specifically called out of concerns about the continuing communal violence,[100] the Arya Vir Dal was organized. Its name translating as the "Troop of Arya Heroes," the Arya Vir Dal introduced an overtly militant element into the complex of Samaj associations. The Arya hero was enjoined to cultivate the virtues of the *kṣatriya*—the traditional Hindu warrior—which included fearlessness, a good physique, and, explicitly, proficiency in the use of weapons.[101] His foremost duty was to protect the culture and rights of his nation,[102] which in practice could mean participation in some of the more overt political exercises of the Aryas that began with the Hyderabad demonstrations of 1938–39.[103] Like the RSS, with which it sometimes found itself in competition,[104] the Arya Vir Dal was one of a number of organizations cultivating Hindu strength through military ideals that developed during the height of the saṃgaṭhan movement in the twenties.[105] Linked to the larger Arya network, it was particularly active in Arya causes. Although even during its heyday its numbers were not large—with about four hundred members listed in the Punjab in 1931 and five hundred in the United Provinces[106]—it has endured, an established Arya institution ready for revitalization in the communal tensions of late-twentieth-century India.

At the same time that the Arya Samaj was active during the first decades of the century as one of a number of Hindu communal organizations in India, it was alone among major organization in serving the Hindu diaspora. From the 1830s, Hindus had emigrated to other parts of the British empire, first as indentured laborers, later as traders. By the time of the first Arya missionary work abroad at the turn of the century, Hindus could be found living in isolated pockets of Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific. In 1902 a Bengali soldier, before leaving Mauritius with his regiment, left copies of *Satyārth Prakāś* and *Saṃskār Vidhi* with some local Hindu reformers—an incident remembered as the launching of the oldest Arya community abroad.[107] Later, in 1904 and 1905, prominent Arya leaders would visit Kenya and South Africa. By the twenties, the Aryas were established in Fiji, and by the thirties in the Caribbean and the Guyanas.

The Arya missions to Indian communities abroad were remarkably successful. Maintaining a Hindu identity, but growing distant from Hindu ways, these communities were often eager for the religious fundamentals and community organization that the Aryas offered them. Indeed, as visible minorities, these Hindus existed in circumstances akin to those in the Punjab, where the Arya Samaj first emerged in strength. Moreover, they often included large percentages of low, laboring castes like those served by Arya associations for the "uplift of the oppressed" in India, castes that could similarly benefit from the techniques to promote community solidarity and education cultivated by the Aryas. By the twenties and thirties, local samājes abroad were organizing along regional lines and affiliating as provincial bodies with the central committee in India, which thus grew to have an international scope. Serving important educational and cultural roles in their home areas, branches of the Arya Samaj outside India have more often than not continued to thrive with their local Hindu communities, although they often also suffered internal rifts as serious as those of Aryas in India. And while the Indian Aryas suffered serious institutional ruptures when India was partitioned in 1947, those abroad have been able to maintain vital institutional continuities. In South Africa, Mauritius, and Fiji, among other countries, schools, publications, and youth organizations have continued to expand and flourish through the fifties and sixties and still do today.[108] Thus, when the Arya Samaj celebrated its centennial anniversary in Delhi in 1975, members of the international branches were among the most enthusiastic participants.

The Expanding RSS Core

While the expansion of the Arya Samaj was spurred by individual initiative at the local level, that of the RSS has been guided by a central leadership and has consequently been more measured and coherent. For the first six or seven years after founding the RSS in 1925, Hedgewar apparently made little effort to recruit volunteers outside his home district of Nagpur. But he trained these diligently, by all accounts practicing himself what he preached. Although by 1932 there were probably no more than five hundred volunteers, these would be able to serve as the disciplined core of the wider RSS organization.[109] In that year Hedgewar decided to expand: first in Maharashstra, in north India five years later, and into the south at the end of the decade. By 1940, the RSS would claim one hundred thousand volunteers.[110] The forties provided fertile conditions for RSS growth. With much of the Congress leadership in jail for the duration of World War II, and with communalist Muslims increasingly vocal about the creation of Pakistan, the RSS provided a ready focus for pro-Hindu loyalties. Before its banning in 1948, membership has been reckoned at figures ranging between a core of two hundred thousand to a much larger circle of five million, depending on what range of sympathizers, youthful associate members, registered members, and active participants are counted.[111]

Throughout its growth, the RSS has continued to appear as a cohesive movement. Although there were some large-scale personnel changes during the reorganization of the RSS in the early fifties,[112] on the whole it has been free of major public rifts of the sort experienced by the Aryas from the early stages of their movement. Early disaf-

fected leaders unable to resolve differences behind the scenes have simply dropped away.[113] Harnessing the enthusiasms and frustrations of the Hindu middle classes, the RSS manages successfully to combine modern populist ideals with some traditional Hindu patterns of spiritual hierarchy.

While authority in the RSS has regularly emanated out from the center, the vital strength of the organization has always stemmed up from the bottom: from what are called *śākhās*, "branches." The number of these in 1989 was estimated at about twenty-five thousand in more than eighteen thousand cities and villages across India.[114] The śākhās are neighborhood organizations of Hindu men and boys, divided according to age groups. Observers in both the early fifties and the late seventies report that the majority of participants at śākhā appear under 25,[115] and particular attention has been paid to the youth organization, which consists of boys aged twelve to fifteen. Ideally, the volunteers meet once a day for an hour of games, training in Indian martial arts, and maybe some songs and a lecture, finishing with a prayer to the motherland.[116] Weekly and monthly śākhās are also held for members who cannot come regularly in the morning or evening.[117]

The ethos of the śākhā has changed little since the days of Hedgewar's neighborhood groups of the twenties. The activities at śākhā are referred to as *sādhana*, a term commonly employed for a personal religious practice like worship or meditation, and are understood to shape the volunteers' character. In practice, most of the games involve cooperation as a team, and some seem specifically chosen to demonstrate the power of organization and solidarity. In one game, for example, called "nine into one," nine volunteers try to lift another up from the ground using one finger each.[118] For those who stay with śākhā, it can offer a lasting sense of being part of a larger whole. "Those who attend śākhā are one," a volunteer writes, "and the remaining are divided by caste and class."[119] Realized amid symbols of Hindu nationalism, moreover, the sense of community engendered at śākhā can be extended to both the larger RSS body and the Hindu Nation itself.[120] Only after a period of regular śākhā attendance is the oath administered that accompanies full membership in the RSS.[121] A solemn pledge, it invokes both god and the ancestors and is supposed to be binding for life.[122]

The formal leadership hierarchy of the RSS begins at the sub-śākhā level. Group leaders are responsible for age-graded troops of volunteers of about twenty or less, who usually live in a particular locality. As moral exemplars for those in their charge, group leaders are expected to provide models of service and enthusiasm.[123] They may even personally make a daily round early in the morning to wake up the volunteers in their area to come to śākhā—this daily round having become a recognized duty dignified by the title "collecting the people."[124] At the same time, the group leaders maintain links to the larger communities in their areas, inviting people to the regular cycle of RSS celebrations as well as to the special functions it sponsors. A separate individual, known as an instructor, is responsible for program in the individual groups: games, exercises, and discussion. At the śākhā level there are two corresponding offices: the secretary, the nominal head; and the chief instructor, who wields much of the practical authority.[125] Beyond the śākhā leaders are city chairmen—often

prominent persons with little experience in RSS but who give it prestige—state chairmen, and a national headquarters in Maharashtra.[126]

Complementing the formal hierarchy is a network of professional organizers,[127] who provide the RSS with much of its coherence and dynamism. Of these, there may be "a few thousands spread over the country."[128] The institution of organizers in the RSS is modeled after that of renunciates in Hindu society: dedicated to a higher goal, organizers are supposed to abandon family ties and material wealth.[129] Generally young, unmarried men in their twenties, the organizers wear Indian-style dress and are expected to lead a fairly ascetic existence. Although the calling of the organizer, like that of the renunciate, is theoretically for life, many expect to return to family life after some years of service. Organizers officially serve without salary, but they get they what they need to live and function effectively, which often includes a motor scooter for getting around the city.[130]

The organizers provide much of the circulation within the larger RSS body. In touch with one another during deliberations at city, state, and national levels, they also meet two or three times a month with group leaders and instructors at sub-śākhā levels. At these meetings they discuss RSS policy on specific social and political problems, as well as practical matters of attendance, program, and administration.[131] Organizers also participate in the many social and political associations that the RSS supports, providing some coherence in a broad network of Hindu nationalist affairs. In all of their activities the organizers maintain a low profile, paying deference to the official officeholders, while in fact often wielding considerable influence.[132] Keeping in the background, they implement policy throughout the RSS and provide much of the practical leadership.[133]

At all levels, the quality of leaders is highly valued. Local leaders can inspire deep personal loyalty. Even a disaffected RSS member recalls the "demonic energy for work" of his chief instructor: "Not a little of my attachment to the RSS was the result of my deep attachment to him."[134] The ranks of middle-level organizers are carefully chosen from among the many young men selected for leadership potential and trained in camps that meet for several weeks during the year. Top leaders, finally, have been seen as spiritually gifted individuals whose judgment should be trusted. They in turn adopt an Indian ascetic style, working hard and living fairly modestly. Although they do not encourage democratic ideals, they have been legendarily accessible to disciples: even while bedridden during his final illness, we are told, Dr. Hedgewar regularly took tea with those who came to call.[135]

Membership and Leadership: Some Contrasts

The activities of the RSS and the Arya Samaj have made consistently different demands on their members. Many RSS volunteers have been initially attracted by the activities held during śākhā: games, stories, and the opportunity to attend camps.[136] Since these activities themselves are seen to build character, importance is given to regularity of attendance. Attrition remains high, and sustained absence may result in a home visit from a group leader. Value has thus been given to qualities that enhance the interpersonal dynamics of the group: loyalty, energy, and good social skills. Group

life has obviously been less crucial, however, in shaping the character of Aryas. The virtues of the early Arya reformers included courage in conviction and daring to break with convention. These gave them the initiative to start new projects in the larger Hindu world, but also an independence of spirit that could make cooperation among themselves difficult. The decades around the turn of the century, when Arya institutional accomplishments were at their most vital, also resounded with dissension among individuals.[137] Indeed, one internal critic of the period attributed the Aryas' lack of progress in effecting major socioreligious reform in the larger Hindu world to the lack of community among ordinary members: "Beyond *namaste* [a polite greeting] and meeting together for an hour or so on Sundays there is hardly any living connection between us."[138] Today, too, Aryas are likely to display both the virtues and shortcomings of an independent spirit. If their social causes now seem less radical, many remain active Aryas because they are attracted to Dayananda's radical religious teaching. Although some may find comfort in formal gatherings and informal company with one another, as voluntary members of an unorthodox, missionizing religious group Aryas are still often strong individuals, outspoken in a minority view.[139] The different virtues cultivated in members of the Arya Samaj and RSS find their complement in different styles of leadership. In the RSS, the several levels of hierarchy continue to encourage the social skills of the company man. In addition to energy and initiative, a professional organizer has to know how to "get along with others."[140] Arya spokesmen, however steadfast in their doctrines, have long been known for their abrasiveness to those outside. H. D. Griswold, a turn-of-the-century missionary and Orientalist who had himself been held up to polemic in an Arya newspaper, notes "the violence displayed [by Aryas] in controversy, especially when the Dayanandi method of interpreting the Vedas is criticized."[141] Within Arya circles, moreover, separate institutional bases with their own memberships have given local leaders the freedom *not* to cooperate with one another. The biggest difference between leadership ideals in the two groups, however, may be at the highest ranks, where both have adapted models of the traditional Hindu guru.

Swami Dayananda, although unconventional in his ideas, was nevertheless an ordained *sannyāsī*, formally a renunciate who was liable to be revered as a traditional guru. While he clearly did want to be heeded as a teacher, he discouraged the worshipful adulation of his person—an attitude toward the guru frequently taken by Hindu devotees. This seems to have suited the majority of sober citizens with whom Dayananda worked during his life. They were attracted to his general message of Hindu national revival and reform, not to all the visionary specifics of his "Vedic" program. For these people, the basis of the college Arya constituency, Dayananda after his death remained an inspiration, not a model. For the more radical Aryas who started the gurukul, the Swami's specific doctrines and personal practices grew more crucial.[142] Like followers of a traditional Indian sect, they began to see the master as an extraordinary being whose every word and deed had meaning. The difference between these understandings of Dayananda as teacher seem to have been more pronounced at the turn of the century than they are today, as the two groups have converged in both practical attitudes and religious perceptions. For the radicals, Dayananda has become more distant, for the moderates, more ideal. Citizens and educa-

tors, most Aryas today understand themselves to profess a reforming message f enunciated by a lofty figure of the past.[143]

A converse of this situation is seen in the way the role of the traditional guru adapted in the RSS. Here the top leaders have always been lay people and as su were able to serve as role models for ordinary volunteers. At the same time, they h been revered by most members as gurus, in the sense of wise men who should obeyed. The first two RSS heads in particular struck imposing figures and were co sistently, like gurus, referred to by honorifics: Dr. Hedgewar (1925–40), a lar mustachioed man, was called Doctorji; Golwalkar (1940–73), long-haired like ascetic, was called Guruji. Like traditional gurus, the heads of the RSS have serv for life and have in fact appointed their own successors. With no bitter public succ sion struggles, the top post in the RSS has remained sacrosanct. Whatever rivalr go on within the upper RSS echelons, ordinary volunteers have a leader they can tru

As Hindu religious institutions, the Arya Samaj and the RSS both differ struct ally from traditional Hindu sectarian lineages, which still continue to find an echo the salvational movements found around many popular Indian gurus. What are u ally referred to as the Hindu sects are continuations of the legacy of a spiritual s who has attracted a group of disciples. Perhaps there is an initial universalizing bu at the beginning of lineages, when they want to admit everyone. But when sects l they usually find a place as a group in the Hindu caste hierarchy and are careful their purity. Group identity is preserved through particularistic rituals and scriptu that are taken to be the legacy of the guru. Hindu religious tradition in this w becomes highly fissiparous.

The Hindu fundamentalist movements have sought consciously to preserve t universalistic moment normal at the formative stages of Hindu sect formation, atter ating and collapsing distinctions among diverse groups. Around a charismatic h man, this universalistic moment ideally features spontaneous enthusiasm, but its pr ervation in a fundamentalist movement demands an emphasis on formal organi tional structures that can be a basis for social change. In many ways, the idea of t guru as a manifestation of the divine has served as a key fundamental in the creati of new Hindu sectarian traditions: the guru's word and presence are what in f command ultimate authority. Nevertheless, the guru alone is rarely able to sust lasting social innovation. The Arya Samaj, born in an early phase of modern Hin interaction with the West, brought ideas of traditional gurus and Western bureaucr into an uneasy and unstable amalgamation. The RSS, a later movement, revises t ditional ideas of guruhood and weds it to a larger leadership organization that l acquired a sanctity of its own. This has given the RSS the potential to be both m socially effective than the Arya Samaj and politically more dangerous.

The Movements as Social Phenomena: Organizing and Opposing

Certainly the RSS is often perceived as dangerous by some people outside it. though many Hindus approve of its character- and nation-building activities, m are suspicious of it, remembering its association with the assassination of Gand

Liberals may see it as a fascist organization that wants to take over the country and demote all non-Hindus to second-class citizens at best. Many Muslims understandably hate it.[144] About the Arya Samaj today, opinions are less pronounced and generally more benevolent. This has not, however, always been the case. By the turn of the century, Aryas in the Punjab had managed to incite a reaction among Sikhs (see chap. 10), and by the 1920s had become involved in violent confrontations with Muslims. Aryas were then visibly at the forefront of communal agitation, and as the drive toward Indian independence continued in a fitful progression through the first half of the twentieth century, Hindus and Muslims of many persuasions joined forces and split into bitterly opposing camps with unhappy regularity.[145]

Relations with Non-Hindus

Aryas: Penetration by Purification

North Indian Hindus had been on the defensive since the end of the nineteenth century. As the decennial census introduced by the British made the different communities aware of themselves in terms of their simple numerical strength, the Hindus seemed to be losing ground. Without drastic action, it appeared, the decline could be irreversible. Christianity, Sikhism, and Islam were all proselytizing religions, with active mechanisms for conversion; Hinduism was not. As things stood, the traffic in conversion was one-way, and those lost to Hinduism were gone forever. To meet this challenge, the Aryas revived an ancient rite of purification that readmitted to proper caste status Hindus who had been defiled by association with impure outsiders. Purification rituals, as we have seen, were eventually taken to low-caste Hindus to keep them within the Hindu fold. First, however, the rituals had been performed on non-Hindu Indians, beginning with individuals and later in groups. The initial group work was among castes recently converted to Sikhism or Islam, or less visibly, to Christianity.

Although it was among low-caste Hindus that purification in fact had its greatest success—leading to the difficult problem of their assimilation into caste society—it was the conversion of non-Hindus that led to the greatest conflict. Attempts at proselytization elicited protest from organized groups in other communities. The first reaction was from the Sikhs. In 1900 a group of Rahtias, recognized as low-caste members of the Sikh community, underwent purification at the hands of the Aryas. Sikh leaders had tried to intervene, but could not in fact promise the Rahtias the improvement in ritual status they desired. The purification rites themselves then enraged Sikh spectators, whose sensibilities were particularly violated when the converts—who had previously remained unshorn in Sikh fashion—had their heads ritually shaved.[146] The incident led to protest meetings by educated Sikhs and fueled already simmering controversies on the problem of Sikh separatism: in what ways were Punjabi Sikhs radically different from Punjabi Hindus?[147] Conversion of Muslims in the midst of the communal conflicts of the twenties, however, led to widespread violence.

In 1923, Swami Shraddhananda, a dynamic Arya leader and long-standing head of the gurukul at Kangri, founded the Bharatiya Hindu Shuddhi Sabha, the "Indian

Hindu Purification Council."[148] This committee would coordinate the purification efforts of Arya and more orthodox Hindu groups. Their immediate goal was to reclaim to Hinduism the Malkana Rajputs, a group of recognized high-caste origin that had become Islamized over the centuries. Muslim proselytizing groups organized in response, competing in converts, cash, and acerbity of argument.[149] Contributing to the tension were incendiary pamphlets produced by both sides. Muslim and Hindu communalists employed their verbal skills in ways that seemed intentionally designed to infuriate each other.

The tone of the debate had already been set by Swami Dayananda. In *Satyārth Prakāś,* Dayananda presents an apology for Hinduism against other religions, treating the latter very specifically. Buddhism and Jainism were really just offshoots of Hinduism. Trinitarianism in Christianity was the same kind of anthropomorphic confusion found in traditional Hindu image worship. The sharpest treatment is saved for the last chapter, on Islam, where traditional images of heaven are mocked and no quarter is given to the prophet. Later Aryas followed suit, with sarcastic tracts like *Rangīlā Rasūl,* "The Merry Prophet," which gave particular references to Muhammad's sexual exploits. Muslims responded in kind, with bitter treatments of Arya practices.[150] Things had to come to a head, and in 1926 Swami Shraddhananda was murdered by an Indian Muslim posing as a prospective convert.

In the decades since Indian independence, Aryas have continued to make converts from non-Hindu groups, although changes in their approach make the process generally less controversial now than then. The exterior and ritual nature of the process of mass conversion in its heyday was noted by Christian observers, who decried the lack of spiritual preparation and inner conviction that is supposed to accompany genuine conversion to Christianity.[151] Much like the social role of conversion in Indian Islam, purification was instead a formal rite of allegiance to, and acceptance by, a traditional religious community. Thus, when the Muslim Mappila community of Kerala rose against the British in 1921, they reacted against the Hindus they saw to be in league with the oppressors by forcing them to swear allegiance to the prophet and wear a Muslim-style hat; these forced converts, however, could be reconverted by ritually consuming the products of the cow and wearing Hindu dress.[152] Today, the rite is more often performed for individuals—and at a higher cost in evident sincerity, moral uprightness, and time for preparation.

No longer a mass ritual performed largely for north Indian villagers, contemporary Arya purification has become a sedate ceremony occasionally enacted for personally motivated members of the urban middle classes all over India. At a rite performed in 1970 for an Indian Catholic in Bangalore, south India, the Arya preacher stressed the inner meanings of purification—"the purity of the heart": "Above all, remember the threefold purity and pray: Let God purify my speech, my actions, my whole life."[153] But despite the present emphasis on purification's inward aspects, conversion is still often undertaken largely out of social concerns, particularly, as in this case, for marriage with a Hindu.[154] And especially to cover such cases, the Arya Samaj has extended the practical meaning of purification from a resanctification of Indians of other religions, who were by birthright Hindu, to the outright "conversion" of Europeans.

RSS: Religion, Culture, and Assimilation

The Aryas' confrontations with the Muslims in British India straightforwardly employed the religious tools developed by Dayananda: formal ritual process together with rational, if literal-minded and sarcastic, argument. The approach of the RSS toward minorities is more subtle—some would say insidious—giving a new turn to Savarkar's distinction between Hindu religion and Hindu national culture. Since religion is a personal matter, RSS members may say, all individuals should be able to have whatever religion suits them: Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, whatever. Nevertheless, Muslims and Christians should not remain culturally apart from the body of the nation. They should instead become fully integrated into the national culture, which is in fact Hindu.

This development of Savarkar's teachings has taken a few decades to work out, and has not always worn such a benign face—which indeed sometimes does seem to be a façade. In *Hindutva,* Savarkar clearly identified Muslims and Christians as the "other." Their alien presence in the subcontinent was understood to be a problem for the Hindu Nation, but no suggestions were offered about how this problem was to be resolved. Over his career, however, M. S. Golwalkar, the second head of the RSS, has presented some solutions of more and less drastic sorts. Writing before and after Indian Independence, his ideas show a clear continuity in substance but differ radically in tone and expression.

The solution offered by Golwalkar in *We* (1939) falls short of a "final solution" of the sort that was simultaneously being proposed in Germany, but not by much: "There are only two courses open to the foreign elements, either to merge themselves in the national race and adopt its culture, or to live . . . [in] the country at the sweet will of the national race . . . the foreign races . . . must lose their separate existence . . . or may stay in the country, wholly subordinated to the Hindu Nation, claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, far less any preferential treatment—not even citizen's rights."[155] Indeed, Golwarkar was impressed by the example of European Fascism: "Germany shocked the world by her purging the country of the semitic Races—the Jews. Race pride at its highest has been manifested here. Germany has also shown how well-nigh impossible it is for Races and cultures, having differences going to the root, to be assimilated into one united whole, a good lesson for us in Hindusthan to learn and profit by."[156]

Writing before the full horror of Nazi persecution would become known, Golwarkar did not later flaunt this aspect of his intellectual lineage, and the RSS has tried to suppress it. *We,* Golwalkar's only deliberate composition, is no longer in print—despite the repeated publication of haphazard collections of Golwalkar's interviews and addresses of the fifties and sixties.[157] In those later works, Golwalkar's tone toward non-Hindus in India is more paternalistic. The only realistic option he seems to be able to see in independent India is: "the merging of non-Hindus into the main [i.e., Hindu] national stream. . . . They should experience the same "sense of belonging" as the Hindus do to this country, its people, its culture. . . . If, after fulfilling all these anybody says that he studied the Koran or the Bible and that that way of worship strikes a sympathetic chord in his heart, he is welcome to follow it."[158]

When religion really is separated from culture, "Hinduness" can tolerate even more religions than the Indic ones Savarkar originally had in mind. Thus, Golwalkar can speak of "Hindu Muslims,"[159] presumably Hindu by culture and Muslim by religion. This expression, moreover, does seem to reflect a partial truth, particularly in respect to popular Indian Islam on the ground, which is itself often decried by orthodox Muslims as corrupt and "Indianized." Yet Golwalkar's tolerance remains limited, not extending beyond a narrow sphere of personal piety. A Muslim "has a choice in a portion of his individual life. For the rest he must be one with the national current."[160]

Merged in "the national current," members of minority groups should not seek special treatment. Although the idea that all should be absolutely equal under the law may strike Western democrats as just, its practice within the corporate pluralism of India can also be seen to retain power in the hands of high-caste Hindus and to discriminate against particular groups. Traditionally oppressed Hindu castes would get no special compensatory evaluation of civil service and university entrance examinations. Muslims, for whom traditional law is an integral part of their religion, would not be able to obey it in their own interpersonal relationships—an issue that exploded in the eighties with the case of Shah Bano, an elderly Muslim woman whose traditional Islamic divorce settlement was challenged in Indian civil court.[161] For most Muslims, then, restricting religious identity to a narrow sphere of personal piety, as Golwalkar would do, is not enough; being religiously Muslim in India is also likely to demand acting socially and culturally Muslim.

Many RSS members, one suspects, realize this. Is not their Hindu religion intimately bound up with their culture and society? A good part of the socioeconomic dynamics behind this largely middle-class, high- and middle-caste movement seems to derive from the accurate perception that separate minority groups will *not* easily merge away, and that present political arrangements do offer them special, apparently advantageous, treatment. Class interests come together with religiocultural vision. Like the fascist youth groups of the thirties with which it bears a more than passing resemblance, the RSS wants the majority group to *rule*.

Roles in Hindu Society

RSS: the Attractive Nucleus

Members of the RSS would realize their vision of a Hindu Nation by serving as an active nucleus for it. The character-building exercises practiced in its wide network of śākhās would instill Hindu cultural values on a wide scale, while its dedicated core of organizers would spread out to work energetically in many directions. The RSS itself tries to maintain a lofty status as a religiocultural organization and still have an active influence on national life by maintaining unofficial links with particular labor unions, student groups, and other organizations. It maintains these links in large part by supplying the institutions it favors with its trained, professional organizers. The organizers, working temporarily in different places, will readily admit that their primary loyalty is to the RSS, but they are also quick to add that the RSS does not dictate policy to them.[162]

All the groups supported by the RSS say they have a particular Indian approach to their activity. The labor movement, for example—echoing ideas of natural aptitudes found in idealizations of the caste system—says that work should be tailored to the needs of each individual. Workers with similar aptitudes should be grouped together into occupational families, with the families themselves determining working conditions. Ideals like this do not obviously support the interests of industrial barons or the landed aristocracy, and there is in fact a strong element of populism running through RSS ideas and programs, which tend to favor the small farmer and entrepreneur. Neither communism nor capitalism is right for India, which must find its own way along the lines of the Hindu organic model of society. And whatever individual RSS members might have in mind for minorities, the reformed Hindu social ideals they advocate also run counter to Western fascisms. The latter generally imply a monolithic nation under a powerful leader, not the nation composed of individual communities in organic cooperation envisioned by Hindu reformers from Dayananda on. Alongside a strident communal stance, then, runs a nativist economic progressivism and Hindu egalitarianism.[163]

Accordingly, the Jana Sangh, the erstwhile political affiliate of the RSS, cultivated a program that was reactionary more in a communal than an economic sense. As early as 1954, its working committee advocated labor-oriented approaches in both industrial and agricultural sectors: for factory workers, profit sharing and participation in management; for farmers, the absolute abolition of landlordism, in most cases without compensation. The same year, the committee proposed a maximum ratio of one to twenty for incomes in the country—a figure repeated RSS writings. All this did not please the party's conservative, pro-business wing, who finally bolted, claiming that the party had been taken over completely by the RSS.[164] Taking the "common man's approach to political problems,"[165] Jana Sangh workers were able to advocate the party's well-known pro-Hindi stance by arguing that an English education is not only un-Indian but also elitist and expensive.[166]

The experience of building a solid core for an egalitarian Hindu Nation may be psychologically reinforced through the bonding experience at śākhā, which seems to be one of the RSS's lasting attractions. Long-time RSS members idealize the sense of community cultivated in śākhā "inter-personal relationships develop over the years into unbreakable friendships . . . the personal relations developed in the śākhās are the perennial source of power in reserve" for the Sangh.[167] Although the majority of active participants in śākhā are between eighteen and twenty-five years of age, children can come as early as six or seven,[168] so for some, ties to the group can take root very early.

The bonding experience offered by the RSS is one between males. Women are not permitted membership in the organization, although they have a separate, much smaller group, joined informally to the RSS by family links. In Hedgewar's judgment, the admission of women into the Sangh would not be appropriate; and the mixing of the sexes—particularly in the situation of physical contact at śākhā—would in fact run counter to Hindu norms.[169]

Indeed, part of the reason for the wide spread of the RSS is that it offers a vital, moderately egalitarian vision of Hindu life without radically departing from conven-

tional Hindu beliefs and practices. It does not try to argue against tradition but instead tries to play to sentiments, traditional and otherwise. "Rational arguments separate people from us," volunteers have been told at training camp: volunteers should instead appeal to people's hearts and "attract society with a sweet tongue."[170] Thus, RSS workers are known for their polite and conciliatory manner. The polish of the RSS workers and the openness of the organization to all Hindus has made it attractive to members of lower castes, for whom it may boost social status.

Arya Samaj at the Forefront

The strategy of the Aryas for shaping Hindu society presents a sharp contrast to that of the RSS volunteers. The Arya Samaj appears not as a cohesive, broad-based nucleus of a nation but as an exceptional vanguard of national reform. In this role it can even affirm its separateness from traditional Hinduism, feeling the need to keep its own particular base firm in order to change the greater whole. Moreover, whatever its stance toward the Hindu community, the Arya Samaj relates to the public not through sweet words and affective ties but through argument—both rational and dogmatic—and educational institutions.

Although upwardly mobile Hindus have long sent their children to Arya Samaj schools, many have been uncomfortable with Arya Samaj belief and practice. To traditional Hindus, the Aryas' reforming ways seemed unorthodox at best, if not blasphemous and polluting: Vedic sacrifices might be a fine thing now and then, but not at the cost of disdainfully dismissing image worship; and the idea of eating with newly converted untouchables was beyond what many could bear. Yet some of the Aryas' reforms became accepted by the larger community. Early on, setting trends found in modern urban society, the Aryas gave full membership to women: how could society advance if the men adopted new attitudes and the women carried on the old customs in the home? The Aryas pioneered the practice of Hindu conversion; orthodox Hindu groups followed their lead—particularly after the forced conversion of Hindus to Islam by the Mappilas in 1921, which made even the most orthodox see the necessity for the practice.

Because of their religious differences, the Aryas sometimes found it hard to work with other Hindu communal groups. Why should a devout Arya help purify people from the defilement of Islam just so they could take up false Hindu image worship? Orthodox Hindus, to be sure, had corresponding qualms.[171] Outspoken, educated, and willing to be innovative, Aryas have found themselves more on the forefront of communal affairs than in the middle of them.

Political Roles: Agitation or Representation?

Although the communal agitation to which both the Arya Samaj and RSS have lent support frequently aim to influence specific government policies, they do not in themselves represent sustained attempts to share in political power. Nevertheless, many members of both groups, wanting to create an ideal Hindu order in the subcontinent, have been attracted to direct political action, through legal or illegal activities during

the British Raj or through the electoral process in independent India. The organizations themselves, however, have remained ambivalent. In the Arya Samaj the ambivalence about politics has been due to conflicts at the religious root of tradition: what was the real import of Dayananda's message? In the RSS the ambivalence seems more pragmatic, hinging on the most effective role for the organization in the practical circumstances it faced. Although through most of the 1980s both groups seemed to find active agitation in Hindu communalist causes a more productive use of their energies than direct participation in electoral politics, by the end of the decade these two dimensions of activism had combined into a surprisingly powerful political force.

Arya Agitation in British India

The message of Swami Dayananda—essentially one of religious revival and reform—was liable to two major political interpretations. The golden age of the Vedas, according to the Swami, was one in which Indian kings had subdued the world;[171] thus, if the glory of that age were to be renewed, the inheritors of the Veda would again certainly rule in their own homeland. On this much most Aryas could agree. They differed, however, on whether they understood Vedic religious renewal or Hindu political rule to be the most appropriate immediate goal. At the initial split in the movement at the end of the nineteenth century, the gurukula Aryas generally opted for the first choice, seeking to build a bastion of Vedic community away from the world. Some prominent college Aryas, on the other hand, became active in nationalist politics, cooperating with other Indians against British rule.

The attitude of the British to the two groups thus differed. They were most concerned about the college Aryas—established people with an influence on urban youth that might be tapped for political ends. Moreover, one of the college Aryas, Lala Lajpat Rai, had become a major nationalist leader who in 1907 would be sent into exile. But the gurukul party, too, could seem suspicious. Wasn't the gurukula itself supposed to produce preachers of the Arya message for the larger Hindu community? Who knows what the teachings on self-reliance and Vedic glory of these well-trained zealots might forbode?[173] British power still reigned mightily in India during the first decade of the twentieth century, and as government suspicions against the Aryas increased following the deportation of Lala Lajpat Rai, both groups hastily issued proclamations affirming their nonpolitical roles.[174]

The Aryas still continued in communal causes, however, which toward the end of British rule found overt political expression. In the winter of 1938–39 the Aryas, together with the Hindu Mahasabha, began to organize mass demonstrations in the large south Indian state of Hyderabad, which was ruled by a wealthy Muslim monarch known as the Nizam. Out of sheer bigotry, claimed the Aryas, the Nizam and his government were violating the rights of his Hindu subjects. In July 1939, after eight thousand Hindus had been jailed, the government announced political reforms, and the Aryas could headily claim victory.[175] The success of this broadly communal initiative later encouraged the Aryas to take political actions toward their own sectarian goals. In 1943, Muslim leaders who objected to the portrayal of Islam in the last chapter of *Satyārth Prakāś* were pressing for its ban in Sind—a Muslim-majority area

in present-day Pakistan. The Arya Samaj responded with threats of mass action. Over the next few years the government wavered, declared a ban it did not enforce, and tried to reach accommodations with the Aryas. But the Aryas stood firm and enlisted the support of other Hindu groups. Finally, in 1947, protesters were called in from other provinces to join in mass demonstrations.[176] Thus, sixty years after Dayananda's death, the book expressing his vision of a renascent nation grounded in Vedic truth would provide a rallying point for Hindus able to foresee an independent India.

This movement toward renewed popularization of fundamentalist politics, which the RSS would continue to foster, seems consistent with the larger lines of development of fundamentalism in Hinduism as it moves its center of gravity from higher to lower socioeconomic strata, becoming increasingly more indigenous. The fundamentalist impetus takes hold among Hindus as the Aryas become impressed with a new idea of religion: aggressive, nationalistic, and advocating social change. Its focal symbol, the Vedas, had wide authority among Hindus but was associated with a Brahmanic elite and practically divorced from most peoples' experience, pointing to a golden age in a very distant past. Moreover, despite eventual orthodox acceptance of several Arya innovations, the immediate result of the radical programs espoused—if not practiced—by most Aryas was often divisive within the Hindu community, leading to doctrinal quarrels and the threat of social ostracism. With the RSS, the symbols are drawn from a more immediate past and have a more effective emotional impact. Avoiding divisive religious issues and keeping social reforms low-key, it penetrates a broader socioreligious sphere. From a principal self-identification as an embattled, aggressive sectarian minority, Hindu fundamentalists began to see themselves more defiantly as righteous representatives of a threatened majority. Forging themselves into a disciplined corporate body, they would mobilize the Hindu Nation.

The RSS and Party Politics

Although the RSS can easily appear as a potent political force, it has consistently stayed officially aloof from electoral politics. This was particularly true in its early days, before the RSS had developed its network of affiliated organizations. Indeed, a possible overt political role for the RSS became a point of tension between Hedgewar and Savarkar, who sought the active support of the RSS for the Hindu Mahasabha when he led it during the late thirties and early forties. Even though the two were ideological allies, Hedgewar refused in principle to align the RSS formally with any political party. This stance led Savarkar to make a pointed comment on the ineffectiveness of the RSS: "The epitaph on a Sangha Svayamsevak [RSS volunteer] will be: 'He was born; he joined RSS; he died.'"[177] RSS leaders, of course, see it differently. Perhaps they would prefer to play the role of institutional guru to the nation, keeping their own sanctity as an institution pure and unstained by the tough and sometimes dirty business that electoral politics in India often entails.[178] Of the many tales of the military hero Shivaji narrated at śākhā, one of the favorites, they say, is the story of Shivaji offering his rule to his own guru Ramdas—with the emphasis on the figure of the guru himself.[179]

Thus, whether or not the RSS itself should be considered a political organization

depends in good part on one's definition of politics. By its own narrow definition of fielding candidates in elections, the RSS is clearly not a political group. But with its wide network of affiliates, it does obviously try to influence national life. A well-disciplined organization working behind the scenes, the RSS is open to widespread suspicions. To its supporters, frequent, and sometimes ill-founded, accusations against the RSS can make it appear as a "whipping boy for all."[180] Formal ties to the RSS may then prove to be an embarrassment for contemporary politicians, certainly a more problematic association than the Arya roots of some early nationalist leaders. While membership in the Arya Samaj could be viewed by most Hindus as an idiosyncrasy—a personal belief that did not bind them to any policy—membership in the RSS may be taken as allegiance to another, quasi-political authority.

Moreover, despite its claims to be nonpolitical, the RSS has counted among its affiliates two political parties: the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, usually referred to simply as the Jana Sangh; and its de facto successor, the Bharatiya Janata Party, commonly abbreviated as the BJP. The names of both groups have much the same meaning, variants of "The Indian People's Party." Founded in 1951 with the support of the RSS leadership, the Jana Sangh began as the political vehicle of S. P. Mukerji, a nationally known member of parliament from the Hindu Mahasabha who disagreed with its policies on restricting membership to Hindus.[181] Through the Indian general elections of 1952, 1957, and 1962, the Jana Sangh established a political base, but was nowhere a significant force against Nehru's Congress. By the elections of 1967, however, the political situation had changed: Nehru had died, the economy was in recession, and there was visible dissension within the ruling party.[182] The Congress under the newly installed Indira Gandhi was returned to power by only a small majority. Many of the Congress losses in fact proved to be gains for the Jana Sangh—now the second party after Congress in total number of votes cast and state assembly seats.[183] In the 1971 elections, called by Indira Gandhi after she had established her authority, the Jana Sangh saw its strength erode, but then became an important partner in the Janata coalition that displaced her regime in 1977. The BJP emerged in early 1980 with the disintegration of that coalition, but did not become a viable political force until the elections of 1989.

As it did with its other affiliated groups, the RSS supported these political parties in good part by lending them its professional organizers. A dedicated core of like-minded people who value cooperation is a precious asset to any organization, not least in the fractious world of Indian politics. Indeed, to other elements of the Janata Coalition of the late 1970s, the cohesiveness of the Jana Sangh group could appear as a threat, prompting a public call for all Janata members to renounce RSS affiliation—an issue that figured in the government's collapse.[184] But it was not so much the formal RSS link that gave coherence to the Jana Sangh and BJP cadres as it was their organizational skills and their common political goals. While changing according to practical circumstances, these goals have usually included a strong defense, entailing a nuclear arsenal,[185] Indian control of industry,[186] and as we have heard from Golwalkar, the removal of preferential quotas for depressed castes as a step toward ending "casteism" in general.[187]

Although the political objectives espoused by the Jana Sangh and the BJP are consistent with an RSS perspective, they are not articulated in the rhetoric of Hindu culture found in the works of Golwalkar. Instead they are put forward with slogans highlighting Indian national development and distinctive Indian ways of life—"Self-Reliance,"[188] "Indianization,"[189] and an "Integral Humanism" taken "in direct contrast with with the compartmentalized thinking of the West."[190] Indeed—unlike the Hindu Mahasabha, a political party explicitly of and for Hindus—the Jana Sangh and BJP have aimed for a national scope and emphasize that they admit non-Hindus, occasionally fielding Muslim and Christian candidates.[191] Moreover, some leaders of these parties have emerged as prominent national figures. L. K. Advani and A. B. Vajpayee have both risen from RSS organizers, to ministers in the Janata coalition government, to president of the BJP: Vajpayee from 1980 to 1985; Advani from 1986 into the 1990s. Moreover, Vajpayee, as Janata foreign minister, maintained a nonsectarian national stature, visiting Pakistan, eating with Muslims, and giving addresses in cultured Urdu.[192] Thus, during times when there is a modicum of discontent with the government in power, the Jana Sangh and the BJP have been able to appear as significant parties of opposition.

Despite the continuities in the leadership of the Jana Sangh and the BJP, the two parties have cultivated differences in political image. The Jana Sangh had developed its strength within much the same circumscribed constituency in which the RSS expanded in the fifties and sixties: middle-class Hindus of the Hindi-speaking north Indian plains.[193] The symbols of the party came clearly out of Hindu tradition. Its banner, like that of the RSS, was saffron—a color associated with Hindu asceticism; its emblem was the Hindu prayer lamp. With the creation of the Janata Party in 1977, the Jana Sangh lost its formal identity. When the the old Jana Sangh leaders established a new political party after the Janata's collapse, they attempted to preserve something of the broader base of support they had known when in power. Forming the Bharatiya (Indian) Janata Party, they now presented themselves as the true inheritors of the Janata coalition and a genuine national alternative to the Congress. Several delegates not affiliated with the old Jana Sangh were on the party's first working committee, and a Muslim, Sikhandar Bakht, was one of its general secretaries. To the saffron of the Jana Sangh's banner, that of the BJP added green, a color associated with Islam, and which, together with saffron and white, is featured in the Indian flag. The symbol of the new party, the lotus, had connotations that were more Indian than distinctly Hindu. "Gandhian Socialism" replaced "Integral Humanism" as the party's articulated first principle, although at its first plenary session BJP president Vajpayee was careful to explain away inconsistencies between the two ideological positions.[194]

Certainly, marrying the organizational power of the Jana Sangh's RSS workers with the political breadth of the Janata's following was a creative idea, but it did not soon bear substantial fruit. In the early 1980s the BJP enjoyed a few initial successes, but then it suffered a disillusioning string of electoral losses. The new party did not in fact prove particularly attractive to the general Indian public, who had recently opted in overwhelming numbers for Indira Gandhi's proven, authoritative style. Nor did it broadly inspire RSS activists, still wounded by their experience of electoral

alliances. Moreover, after the 1984 assassination of Mrs. Gandhi in the cause of Sikh independence, her son Rajiv represented a fresh ray of hope, and support for the Congress seemed a realistic strategy for achieving the national unity valued on the Hindu right. The BJP thus lost much of its potential clientele.[195]

Disenchanted with the political process, RSS organizers turned their attention to Hindu revival. The mid-eighties saw the dramatic expansion of the RSS's religiously oriented affiliate, the Vishva Hindu Parishad, the "World Hindu Society." The incident sparking the emergence of the VHP, as it is known, is familiar from the early part of the century: the conversion in 1981 of a small group of low-caste Hindus in Minakshipuram, south India, to Islam. The incident has, moreover, evoked responses similar to the Arya Samaj's early social programs: extending services to low castes to keep them in the fold and promoting Hindu unity. But the latter effort has entailed offering rallying points more visible and all-encompassing than those earlier held out by the Aryas. Elaborate "unity processions" across the country featured a portrait of Mother India in the form of a goddess and large urns containing water from the holy river Ganges.[196] And the VHP became active in the agitation at Ayodhya: a celebration of Ram's birthday it organized at Ayodhya in April 1986 brought together large numbers of devotees and religious dignitaries to plan strategies for the liberation of Ram's birthplace.[197]

By 1989 the VHP was very effectively promoting the building of a new temple at Ram's birthplace as a force for Hindu unity both across regions and within castes. In villages all over north India the VHP organized ceremonies called *Rām Śilā Pūjā:* "the worship of Ram's foundation stones," which in this case are ordinary bricks. Like icons of Vishnu's incarnations that are put in cradles and carried to the river to be bathed on particular holidays, these bricks are also put in cradles and worshiped with flowers and incense, together with a picture of Ram. But as one informant explained, while most Vaishnava icons are not taken into low-caste neighborhoods, these were carried throughout the village, thus symbolically equalizing castes in the Hindu community; after their worship, the bricks were taken to district headquarters, regional headquarters, and thence to Ayodhya. Through careful and widespread organization, then, the VHP has been able to involve a diverse Hindu population in its cause.

Whatever the value of such VHP work for promoting feelings of Hindu unity, it also added to the communal tension that by the late 1980s had helped transform the Indian political climate. Contributing to the growing politics of communalism was a growing dearth of political charisma in the central government. Almost inevitably, Rajiv Gandhi did not live up to people's high expectations of him. Widely referred to as "Mr. Clean" when he came into office in 1984, within two years he began to fall from public grace, becoming perceived as jealous of power and, by the end of decade, subject to corruption. And as Hindu Nationalist ideals became attractive to a broader Indian public, the BJP grew closer to its RSS roots. In 1986, the party presidency was assumed by L. K. Advani, who was more outspoken than his predecessor in his ties to the RSS, which was then seeking greater respectability and more widespread support.[198] Thus, toward the Sikhs both the RSS and the BJP continued to pursue policies that, compared to those of other Hindu-oriented groups, can appear concil-

iatory.[199] Unlike Punjabi Aryas, who are likely to view Sikhs as both economic rivals and doctrinal opponents, the RSS and its political affiliates have taken them as an integral element of a broadly conceived "Hindu nation." For many members of both groups, then, accommodating a Sikh-oriented Punjab within the Indian union is in principal preferable to alienating Sikh separatists. Advani has thus repeatedly referred to the help that BJP workers rendered to Sikhs during the 1984 Delhi riots following Mrs. Gandhi's assassination—and what it has at times cost them in terms of the electoral support of more extremist Hindu elements.[200] By the elections of 1989, however, a broadened BJP base together with growing communal sentiment and dissatisfaction with Rajiv Gandhi's Congress led to surprisingly large BJP gains. From two seats in the previous parliament, the BJP's representation rose to as many as eighty-eight.[201] The party was able to draw support not only from Hindu communalists confronting their Muslim counterparts but also from Delhi Sikhs who saw the Congress government as their principal foe. As a crucial ally of a minority government, the BJP had overnight turned into a significant political force.

The Persistence of Colonial Experience: Organized Hinduism and Mob Violence Today

Although contemporary Hindu fundamentalism has found growing political expression, the actual political imperatives behind it seem less pressing now than in the colonial situation within which it emerged. Certainly Hindu fundamentalism can no longer be seen simply as a religious response to social and economic problems deriving from foreign rule. Why, then, does it continue to flourish in modern India, an increasingly growing force in cultural as well as political life? What socioreligious continuities span the pre- and post-independence periods to perpetuate fundamentalist religion among Hindus? Indeed, if the Indian subcontinent provides an apt illustration of the impact of colonialism in the rise of fundamentalist movements, their persistence there may also reveal some broader dimensions of the colonial situation. On the one hand, the experience of *feeling* colonized—whatever the actual historical circumstances—can lead to religious sentiments that may be an element in fundamentalist movements as transcivilizational religious phenomena. On the other hand, an important historical residue of Western colonialism—at least in India—is the urban bureaucratic environment in which fundamentalism there flourishes. Even though the large urban areas established by the British are now largely under Hindu control, they still provide little scope for practicing traditional Hinduism. How then do the new masters react?

Feeling Colonized as a Religious Sensibility

In many ways, the nationalistically oriented, socially reformist Hindu movements treated as fundamentalist here seem polar opposites to the doctrinally conservative, traditionalist movements characteristic of Western Protestant fundamentalism. Among the most striking of the attributes they both *do* have in common, how-

ever, are those that underscore collective religious identity: group self-assertiveness, defiance, and proclivities to sporadic violence. These sensibilities of active self-righteousness are just the sort of human qualities that are likely to arise within a situation of political and cultural domination. Historically manifest in the Indian situation, this situation is also evident experientially in the West. Western fundamentalisms too derive in part from a feeling that one's world is being colonized, taken over by an alien power that is secular and perhaps demonic. In both cases, righteous religious actors must stand firm to regain their own. More than do many other religious movements, then, fundamentalists define themselves against a powerful other: the *We* of Golwarkar's notorious RSS treatise necessarily implies a "they." For Hindu fundamentalists the "theys" have always been many but after independence have increasingly included a secular government favoring religious pluralism. As among their Western counterparts, temporal power is understood to be in the hands of others, but is not thought to be so rightfully. In both Hindu India and Protestant America, the fundamentalist group is likely to see itself as the genuine representative of the majority, fighting for the majority's true interests. The paradox for both is that within their own larger traditions they are in fact distinct minorities, attempting to shape the majority to their own ideals.

The Paradox of the Defensive Majority

In Hindu tradition, the diverging loyalties brought together in this paradox of the minority as the majority is illustrated in the current state of the Arya Samaj. Before Indian independence, the Aryas maintained a full spectrum of organizations through which they could practically promote their various visions of the ideal Indian society. Whatever their different senses were of themselves as Aryas in a Hindu environment—and these were many and ambivalent—activist Aryas could find a channel for their energies. What was left of this network after Independence were largely educational establishments catering to mainstream Hindus. Through combining Western learning and Indian values, the DAV schools still attempt to inculcate Arya goals in a general way, but they do not provide much scope for activist visionaries. These then move to two opposite extremes: on the one hand, missionizing on behalf of the Arya sectarian minority; on the other hand, organizing for Hindu-majority communalism. Thus, some are fervent proselytizers of the Arya way, attempting to propagate Dayananda's iconoclastic Vedic ideals within the Hindu community and the world at large. Others are equally fervent Hindu communalists, likely to espouse the right of Hindus to worship at Ram's birthplace despite the condemnation of traditional ritual in *Satyārth Prakāś*. And many Arya activists no doubt comprehend both sectarian and communalist sensibilities, showing different sides in different situations.

Fundamentalisms in other South Asian traditions show us more clearly the other side of the paradox: that of the majority as the minority.[202] Although appearing as minorities in the subcontinent as a whole, Buddhists, Sikhs, and Muslims do have areas in which they constitute majorities: Buddhists in Sri Lanka, Sikhs in modern Indian Punjab, and Muslims in British west Punjab, now Pakistan. And it is precisely

in their majority areas that fundamentalist versions of these minority South Asian religions have emerged. Variously seeing their religiocultural identity—as well as their economic well-being—threatened by Hindus with a vast nearby population base, they challenge their governments to action: to a more overtly Islamic cultural stance in Pakistan, to the establishment of the Punjab as a Sikh political entity, to the curtailment of perceived advantages given to Hindus by the secular government of Sri Lanka. Hindu fundamentalists in India, feeling their position in their own country to be eroded by government concessions to minority groups, seek similar goals of religiocultural authority and political power. Feeling threatened by hostile forces outside their own larger traditions, and sometimes even within them, fundamentalists anywhere can see themselves as righteous representatives of a majority who must act like an embattled minority. In standing firm as the majority on the defensive, fundamentalists usually develop two resources: new weapons, which they will readily adapt from their enemies, and some vivid emblems of their own.

Learning to Use Contemporary Weapons

One of the greatest enemies perceived by fundamentalists among both Hindus and Christians has been Western secular culture: pluralist, bureaucratic, and technical. Yet in experiencing its impact, fundamentalists have also assimilated much of it and recognize important sources of its strength. These they have not hesitated to use for their own ends, adapting not only the technologies and institutions of the secular West but also its symbols. Indeed, the ways that fundamentalist movements are shaped by the contemporary forces they confront are perhaps what most mark them as modern phenomena: whatever experience of colonization that fundamentalists suffer, it is largely of the late-industrial, Western variety.

Just as fundamentalisms have been selective in the elements they retrieve from their own traditions, they have also been selective in those they adapt from the secular culture they oppose. Nevertheless, science—as a symbol of that culture's power—is something that is difficult to ignore, particularly for groups that highlight fundamentals of *doctrine*. These usually must either flatly deny the authority of science or assimilate it with apparent strain: through creationist theology, say, or the Aryas' evocation of the ancient Indian science of the Vedas. Other symbols of Western power have seemed more important to the RSS, with its martial, nondoctrinal stance. The organized drills of the RSS recall Western military practice, and as Ashis Nandy ironically notes, the khaki shorts donned by volunteers during their drills are modeled on the uniform of the British Indian police: to build the Hindu Nation, they would mimic British lackeys.[203] The practical dimensions of secular culture adapted by fundamentalists vary greatly among groups. Certainly, Protestant televangelists have made dramatic use of contemporary communications technology, often in loosely structured family-oriented organizations. Aryas, also with a doctrinal message to propagate, in the first decades of the twentieth century used imported print technology enthusiastically in newspapers and tracts. The RSS, however, historically keeping a low profile, has until very recently eschewed media technology, combining a disciplined organization with a direct, interpersonal approach to recruitment.[204] More

central to all Hindu fundamentalisms are new organizational structures adapted from Western models. It was through being organized in more effective, integral ways, activist leaders thought, that Hindus could build their own characters, restructure their larger community, and make changes in the world.

Religious Fundamentals as Emblems of Embattled Tribes

Although new forms of organization have been a necessary attribute of fundamentalist groups among Hindus, they have not in themselves been a distinguishing attribute. The Brahmo Samaj, the best-known precursor to the Aryas as an organized Hindu group, is not a fundamentalist movement but one of reform. Other late nineteenth- and twentieth-century groups—most notably the Ramakrishna mission—have looked to Western organizational models as they attempt social work within India and propagate an inward spirituality to non-Hindus abroad.[205] The stances of these groups toward the colonialists' religion was more open and generous than those of either the Arya Samaj or the RSS. Since they understood the ultimate truths they professed to be at the root of all religious traditions, they did not present their own objects of faith in a highly proprietary way: the Brahmos' Upanishads taught a monism similar to the Unitarians'; Ramakrishna, although first of all a devotee of the Hindu mother goddess, had experienced all the traditions of Hinduism, and Islam and Christianity too. The defensive stance of the Arya Samaj and RSS, by contrast, has led them to present the religious bases of their movements in defiant opposition to those of other groups. In doing this they not only delineate these bases more sharply as fundamentals but also identify with them more aggressively and particularistically. Thus, if for Ramakrishna, the mother goddess was a divine being who took many forms and was available to all, in the RSS, mother symbolism was used to refer to the holy Indian subcontinent, which was for those born into the Hindu Nation. Similarly, in the Arya Samaj, the Vedas were a sign of the temporal as well as spiritual supremacy of the ancient Aryans, which should now be revived. As fundamentals, these religious standards heralded by the RSS and Aryas thus serve as concentrated emblems of religious identity.

The South Asian context, then, can present a curiously Durkheimian perspective on religious fundamentals: they appear as totems of the group, symbols of collective identity.[206] In order to defend their larger communities in the modern world, most fundamentalists have thought it necessary to disrupt the patterns of smaller socioreligious loyalties traditional in Indian life; the religious fundamentals they offer then provide new foci for allegiance. With cries of "Aryavarta for the Aryans" and "Hindu Nation," Hindus over the years have faced similarly embattled communities in the subcontinent, their configurations varying according to cultural region and political circumstance. In the eighties, the ancient Indian Christian community in the southern state of Kerala has joined the confrontation, alongside Muslims and Sikhs in other parts of India.[207] Indeed, the dramatic growth of the RSS in Kerala in the late twentieth century—rising to three thousand śākhās in 1989—recalls that of the Arya Samaj in the Punjab a century earlier.[208] In neither case did Hindus appear as a large majority, and in both they faced two other substantial communities that were orga-

nizing as well: in the Punjab, Muslims, and Sikhs; in Kerala, Muslims and Christians. Now, as then, Hindu fundamentalism finds strength when Hindus see their community facing genuine competition.

Historically, the attitudes of Hindu fundamentalists toward Sikhs, Muslims, and Christians have differed. Only in the Punjab have Sikhs formed a community substantial enough to compete with Hindus, and the turn of the century saw confrontations between Sikhs and Punjabi Aryas embroiled in doctrinal conflicts and local politics. But the dominant tone of Hindu cultural nationalists toward Sikhs throughout the century has tended to be conciliatory and inclusive. Savarkar, with reason, saw Sikhs as a Hindu reformist tradition, which can thus constitute a rightful part in the Hindu Nation, whatever the Sikhs' sense of themselves as a religious community. And during the traumatic division of the subcontinent into Hindu- and Muslim-majority states in 1947, Sikhs and Hindus found themselves clearly on the same side of the fence. Certainly the claim of Hindu fundamentalists that Sikhs are essentially Hindu has inflamed their Sikh counterparts, who are proud of their own religious identity.[209] But it also means that the rise of Hindu fundamentalist animosity against Sikhs in the 1980s derived not from a sense of a deep-rooted social and cultural divide but from the accurate perception that some radical Sikhs were violently attempting political secession, threatening the geographic integrity of the Hindu Nation, together with Hindu lives. The cultural gap has always been wider between Hindus and Muslims, who have consistently appeared to Hindu fundamentalists as an alien presence on the subcontinent, a population apart from the Hindu Nation. Communal tensions between Hindus and Muslims increased through the twenties and thirties, peaked at partition in 1947, and have simmered at different degrees of intensity ever since. In Hindus' confrontations with both Sikhs and Muslims, violence committed on all sides has left wounds that are difficult to heal. Nevertheless, even though the political situation of the eighties has highlighted organized Hindu response to Sikh separatism, the continuing presence of Muslims in India is likely to appear as a more genuine problem to Hindu Nationalists—and may indeed prove to be one that is more lasting.[210]

The attitudes of Hindu fundamentalists toward the Christians of India have differed markedly from their attitudes toward Muslims and Sikhs. Outside Kerala, Christian communities had not presented the same sort of economic and political competition as the other two groups. In north India, Christians have appeared largely either as members of the ruling elite or as recent low-caste converts. Although for early Aryas the low-caste converts seemed to threaten Hindu numerical strength, they did not directly challenge their middle-class social or economic status. Christianity itself—as the religion of the ignorant, if powerful, West—was an object of diatribe by Dayananda, but Aryas through the first two decades of the twentieth century were guarded in their dealings with the Christian colonial power, trying to allay suspicions of sedition. As the independence movement gathered momentum through the twenties and thirties, it lead to a widespread politicization of Hinduism and increasingly attracted the attention of fundamentalist Hindus. When independence finally came, Hindu cultural nationalists could feel feel triumphant over the Western power. Yet together with their victory came defeat: the partition of the subcontinent was felt as

a severe loss, and one for which Muslim communal pressure was to blame. Perhaps at least in the new Indian state the Hindus would finally be able to prevail!

The New Colonialists?

Postcolonial Hindu fundamentalism can thus appear as a new colonialism of the victors. In representing an emergence of Indic group consciousness in new forms shaped by the colonial experience, it can easily lead to a tyranny of the majority. For it keeps the Western idea of religious community as an ideally homogeneous group, but abandons the ideas of equality among communities and protections for minorities introduced with the secular British administration: a flourishing, united Hindu Nation should need no legal protection for any special group. Even in independent India's present imperfect political situation, many fundamentalists think, shouldn't the Hindus as an 82 percent majority be allowed to benefit collectively from the policies of the state? In the words of a VHP official and former state director-general of police "We feel that what we are doing is for the good of the country. After all, what is good for 82 percent of the country is good for the rest of the country, isn't it?"[211] Since this statement refers to the VHP agitation for the restoration of Ram's birthplace—a patently sectarian goal—its faulty logic should be easily apparent to Indian Muslims.

Moreover, although the the spirit of competitiveness between communities introduced by the colonial experience may remain, Hindus have less reason now to feel economically threatened by minorities. This is particularly so with respect to the Muslims: although many individual Muslims flourish in modern India, as a group they lag behind Hindus in education and, relative to their population, are underrepresented in government jobs.[212] Indeed, the total number of Muslim communal institutions is less than the combined total of the VHP and Arya Samaj alone.[213] Less obviously a response to cultural threats from Western imperialism or to competing communal rivals of equal strength, the resurgence of fundamentalism today may be nurtured by more specifically religious factors.

Urban Religion, Collective Identity, and Violence

As characteristically modern forms of Indian religion, fundamentalist groups are marked by their urban, middle-class members—people with an experience of imported bureaucracy, if not always an English education. But fundamentalism is not the only new religious phenomenon that has emerged in Indian cities. Gurus, yogic centers, and devotional movements all also flourish—all, moreover, appearing as adaptations of Hindu tradition to an urban environment. Certainly it can be difficult to live the full ritual life of traditional Hinduism while carrying on business in a contemporary city; at the same time, the effectiveness and value of such a life with its distant metaphysical orientation can easily be questioned by a modern, scientifically inclined consciousness. The new phenomena offer alternative ways of being religious that are more practicable in an urban environment. Devotional movements give intense, temporary experiences in which caste distinctions can lose significance. Gurus and yogic centers present the same type of unorthodox inward religion in Indian cities as they do in Western ones.[214] As religious traditions, Hindu fundamentalisms offer another

alternative, one demanding no devotional enthusiasm or yogic inwardness. Hindu fundamentalisms appeal instead to what may be urban Hindus' lowest common religious denominator: a Hindu identity. If personal religion entails among other things the identification of the individual with some larger whole, then the Hindu Nation may appear as a whole more immediately visible and attainable than the ritual cosmos of traditional Hinduism. For some urban Hindus, fundamentalist groups may offer the most viable personal religion available.

Potentially attractive to many, Hindu fundamentalist groups flourished through the eighties. Between 1979 and 1989, membership in the RSS had grown by 80 percent,[215] and smaller groups with names like "The Great Hindu Assembly," "National Defense Committee," and "The Forum for Hindu Awakening" have become increasingly visible, engaging in activities of local and national scale.[216] Many of these groups maintaining links with the RSS-affiliated VHP, have formed around particular leaders, flourish in different areas, and may devote themselves to their own projects. Especially active in the Ayodhya controversy, for example, is the Bajrang Dal, the "Troops of Hanuman"—the strong monkey deity worshiped as Ram's faithful servant, a traditional patron of wrestlers. The national leader of the Bajrang Dal has declared that the group is "committed to the cause of the temple."And in July of 1989 the Bajrang Dal youth pledged to lay down their lives for this cause.[217] The recent popularity of militant Hindu groups has altered the character of older organizations, not only encouraging militant strands in the Arya Samaj, but substantially transforming the Maharashtrian based Shiv Sena, the "Army of Siva." Founded in 1966, the Shiv Sena began as a Maharashtrian nativist political party protesting the professional rise of (typically Hindu) south Indians in the Maharashtrian metropolis of Bombay.[218] But with the rise of pan-Hindu nationalism in the 1980s, the charismatic founder and longtime leader of the Shiv Sena, journalist Bal Thackeray, has broadened the group's allegiances and extended its geographical scope. The Shiv Sena has now become a conspicuous vehicle of Hindu militancy throughout north India, and Thackeray himself has been referred to as a "symbol of Hindu chauvinism and revivalism."[219] Retaining its political base in Maharashtra, the Shiv Sena was well positioned to participate in the renewed politicization of the Hindu right at the end of the decade. In the 1989 polls it formed an electoral alliance in Maharashtra with the BJP and participated in the latter's unexpected success. Certainly a positive Hindu identity can bring a healthy pride: as Yadvrao Joshi—joint general secretary of the RSS—notes, "Hindus are no longer shy of calling themselves Hindus."[220] The RSS accordingly became more open about its activities in the late 1980s, acknowledging a dominant hand in some of its affiliated organizations.[221] With the celebration of the birth centenary of its founder in 1989, it has sought public respectability, giving wide distribution to leaflets that describe its social projects across the nation.[222] But the new openness of the RSS about its own and Hindu identity can also lead to a more frank assertiveness in its tone. In a 1989 interview, K. C. Sudarshan, an important RSS ideologue, presents a position on minorities in a Hindu state that in fact does not differ substantially from Golwalkar's pronouncements of the fifties and sixties but is couched in considerably less guarded terms: "It should have been made clear at the

alternative, one demanding no devotional enthusiasm or yogic inwardness. Hindu fundamentalisms appeal instead to what may be urban Hindus' lowest common religious denominator: a Hindu identity. If personal religion entails among other things the identification of the individual with some larger whole, then the Hindu Nation may appear as a whole more immediately visible and attainable than the ritual cosmos of traditional Hinduism. For some urban Hindus, fundamentalist groups may offer the most viable personal religion available.

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start that they were free only to worship differently, but they have to kowtow on other issues. If they want to stay citizens of this country, the minorities must give up all their special privileges." Although "peaceful co-existence" with Muslims is an ideal, according to Sudarshan, it should not come "by appeasement." He recognizes moreover, that it is fruitless to give rational religious justifications for communal issues like the conflict at Ayodhya. The temple there, he says, "is a symbol. . . . Will the court decide . . . that Ram was born there? Beliefs and traditions cannot be logical. The dispute has been created. We will worry no more about any disorder." If there is bloodshed, "this is nothing. There will be more. We are not scared."[223]

When leaders of organized Hinduism recognize the irrational forces with which they deal and even anticipate bloody reverberations from them, it seems difficult to absolve them from any responsibility for outbreaks of communal violence. Certainly the links between larger organized groups and individual violent acts at times appear only indirect. Nevertheless, such indirect links are frequently presumed and justifiably or not have been used to warrant government action. In a letter written in 1948, Sardar Patel, then home minister, rationalized the continued banning of the RSS to Golwalkar, its leader at the time. The virulent opposition of RSS volunteers to the governing Congress party, he said: "created a kind of unrest in the people. All their speeches were full of communal poison. It was not necessary to spread poison in order to enthuse the Hindus and organize for their protection. As a final result of the poison, the country had to suffer the sacrifice of the invaluable life of Gandhiji."[224]

More direct relationships between organized Hinduism and mob violence become apparent when communalist leaders authorize demonstrations in already tense situations, as they have historically done.[225] Following the opening of Ram's birthplace to Hindu worship in 1986, for example, the triumphant VHP started to lead six ceremonial processions of images to Ayodhya. Rioting erupted when the procession halted for the night at a small town of mixed population through which a vanload of Muslims going to hear one of their own leaders also passed.[226] Even if we generously assume that leaders on both sides would have liked to avoid violent confrontations, they were also no doubt aware of the risks, and like K. C. Sudarshan could not "worry . . . about any disorder" when asserting their communal identities.

As a religious phenomenon, communalism in all its manifestations derives strength from the irrational forces of religious identity, which are magnified in India through individuals' traditional awareness of themselves as members of larger groups. Organized Hinduism, in attempting to consolidate and give power to a larger Hindu group, tries to channel these forces and control them. Its leaders, however, know that they cannot always exert full control, and—one fears—may sometimes judge it to be to their strategic advantage to let these forces run amok.

The religious forces at work in forging together the Hindu Nation thus differ substantially from those of traditional Hinduism. The Hinduism of ritual and law displays an extreme preoccupation with the play of cosmic order on earth, a concern for following codes of behavior deemed divinely ordained and morally proper. Building the Hindu Nation, by contrast, demands staunch identification with the group, an evocation of group loyalty and assertiveness that need not inherently respect tra-

ditional codes—thus belying the professed broad aims of the Hindu demonstrators at Ayodhya. The demonstrators talk about the restoration of Ram Rajya: the legendary rule of Ram, where a perfect monarch upheld Hindu law on earth. But while Hindu fundamentalists espouse Hindu virtues, the religious force behind much of what they do presses first of all for Hindu rule.

Notes

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1. Sushil Srivastava, "The Ayodhya Controversy: A Third Dimension," *Probe India* (January 1988), p. 32; the story of the temple is also given in Peter van der Veer, *Gods on Earth: The Management of Religious Experience and Identity in a North Indian Pilgrimage Centre*, London School of Economics Monographs on Social Anthropology, no. 59, ed. Michael Sallnow (London and Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Athlone Press, 1988), pp. 19–21.

2. See Ainslie T. Embree, "Religion and Politics," in Marshall M. Bouton, ed., *India Briefing, 1987* (Boulder Colo.: Westview, 1987), p. 62; for the history of Hindu-Muslim relationships in Ayodhya, see van der Veer, *Gods on Earth*, pp. 37–43.

3. Inderjit Badhwar, Prabhu Chawla, and Farzand Ahmed, "Hindus: Militant Revivalism," *India Today*, 11 May 1986, p. 78.

4. Ajay Kumar, S. Premi, and Ghulam Nabi Khayal, "The Muslims: Anger and Hurt," *India Today*, 15 March 1986, pp. 41–42.

5. Inderjit Badhwar, et al., "Communalism: Dangerous Dimensions," *India Today*, 31 October 1989, pp. 14–22.

6. See Uli Schmetzer, "Temple Dispute Doomed Gandhi," *Chicago Tribune*, 3 December 1989.

7. Kenneth W. Jones, "The Arya Samaj in British India, 1875–1947," in Robert D. Baird, ed., *Religion in Modern India* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1981), pp. 36–39.

8. The founder of the Arya Samaj treats the term Arya in two of his fifty-two tenets of personal belief: the word Arya means virtuous man . . . (tenet 29); this country is called Aryavarta because it has been the abode of Aryas from the dawn of creation . . . (tenet 30) (Swami Dayananda Saraswati, *Autobiography*, K. C. Yadav, ed. [Delhi: Manohar, 1976], p. 61). Emphasizing the amalgamation of Dravidian and Aryan peoples in a single Hindu India, M. S. Golwalkar, an important RSS leader, says: "In Bharat [India] the word Arya has always been a measure of culture, and not the name of a race." Madhavrao Sadashiv Golwalkar, *Spotlights: Guruji Answers* (Bangalore: Sahtiya Sindhu, 1974), p. 14.

9. Membership figures of the RSS are not public information. The 1947 number is an estimate of those who regularly engaged in daily RSS activities given by J. A. Curran, Jr., *Militant Hinduism in Indian Politics: A Study of the R.S.S.* (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1951), p. 43. The figures for 1979 and 1989 are plausible estimates of those who attend daily meetings, given in a popular Indian newsmagazine: Pankaj Pachauri, "RSS: Open Offensive," *India Today*, 30 June 1989, p. 41.

10. Peter van der Veer, "'God must be Liberated!': A Hindu Liberation Movement in Ayodhya," *Modern Asian Studies* 21 (1987): 290.

11. For an inclusive discussion of the meaning of communalism in India, see Bipan Chandra, *Communalism in Modern India* (Delhi: Vikas, 1984), chap. 1.

12. Insightful analyses of the colonial situation are given by Surjit Mansingh, "The

Political Uses of Religious Identity in South Asia," in *Fundamentalism, Revivalists, and Violence in South Asia*, James Warner Bjørkman, ed. (Riverdale, Md.: Riverdale, 1988), pp. 177–79; and by G. R. Thursby, *Hindu-Muslim Relations in British India: A Study of Controversy, Conflict, and Communal Movements in Northern India 1923–1928* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975), pp. 173–80.

13. The most complete source on the Brahmo Samaj is David Kopf, *The Brahmo Samaj and the Shaping of the Modern Indian Mind* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979).

14. Dayananda, *Autobiography*, p. 11.

15. Ibid., p. 15.

16. Swami literally means "master." Through his initiation, Dayananda can trace a spiritual lineage back to the great philosopher and reformer Shankarach arya. See his *Autobiography*, p. 26 and J. T. F. Jordens, *Dayananda Sarasvati: His Life and Ideas* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 20–21.

17. Dayananda, *Autobiography*, p. 75.

18. Lala Lajpat Rai, *The Arya Samaj: An Account of its Origin, Doctrines, and Activities, with a Biographical Sketch of the Founder* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1915), p. 51.

19. While traveling in his home region of Gujarat, Dayananda started two societies in Rajkot and Ahmedabad under the name of the Arya Samaj, both of which quickly disintegrated: see Kenneth W. Jones, *Arya Dharm: Hindu Consciousness in Nineteenth-Century Punjab* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976), p. 35; and James Reid Graham, "The Arya Samaj as a Reformation in Hinduism with Special Reference to Caste," (Ph. D. diss., Yale University, 1943), pp. 155–60. In his *Autobiography*, p. 51, Dayananda states that he established the Arya Samaj in Bombay.

20. Valentine Chirol, *Indian Unrest* (London: Macmillan, 1910), p. 2.

21. Jones, *Arya Dharm*, pp. 305–6.

22. Indra Prakash, *Hindu Mahasabha: Its Contribution to India's Politics* (New Delhi: Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabaha, 1966), p. 11.

23. Three prominent Aryas are found in the annual list of Mahasabha presidents given in Indra Prakash, *Hindu Mahasabha*, pp. 183–84. Of these, Swami Shraddhananda (1922) and Lala Lajpat Rai (1925) were well-known leaders active in many causes who were not closely identified with the Sabha for long periods of time; Bhai Parmananda, however, president in 1933, remained active and would be influential in guiding the Sabha toward its militant communalist direction in the thirties (Jones, "Arya Samaj in British India," pp. 461–65). On the development of the Hindu Mahasabha, see Kenneth W. Jones, "Politicized Hinduism: The Ideology and Program of the Hindu Mahasabha," in Robert D. Baird, ed., *Religion in Modern India* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1981), pp. 447–80; and Richard Gordon, "Hindu Mahasabha and the Indian National Congress, 1915–1926," *Modern Asian Studies* 9 (1975): 145–203.

24. Walter K. Andersen and Shridhar D. Damle, *The Brotherhood in Saffron: The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and Hindu Revivalism*, Westview Special Studies on South and Southeast Asia (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1987), pp. 39–40. Most of my material on the RSS comes from this excellently researched volume.

25. On Maharashtrian Brahmans and their role in modern India, see D. D. Karve, ed., *The New Brahmans: Five Maharashtrian Families* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963).

26. From August 1921 to July 1922, Hedgewar served time in prison for defying a ban on political meetings. Andersen and Damle, *Brotherhood in Saffron*, p. 32.

27. Andersen and Damle, *Brotherhood in Saffron*, pp. 50–53. For a detailed journalistic account of the assassination plot, see Manohar Malgonkar, *The Men Who Killed Gandhi* (Delhi: Macmillan, 1978).

28. Curran, *Militant Hinduism*, p. 43.

29. Andersen and Damle, *Brotherhood in Saffron*, pp. 110–14.

30. Ibid., p. 111.

65. Balrāj Madhok, *Indian Nationalism* (New Delhi: Bharati Sahitya Sadan, 1969), pp. 93, 95; this 1969 edition is the second revision of a work that was originally written in 1946 and revised again in 1955; see also Madhok's *Rationale of Hindu State* (Delhi: Indian Book Gallery, 1982). Madhok was born in an Arya Samaj family (Bal Raj Madhok, *R.S.S. and Politics* [New Delhi: Hindu World Publications, 1986], p. 23) and has taught at DAV colleges in Ambala (ibid., p. 45) and Srinagar (Manga Ram Varshney, *Jana Sangh, R.S.S., and Balraj Madhok* [Aligarh: Manga Ram Varshney, n.d.], p. 3). J. F. Seunarine refers to him as an "active Arya Samajist" (*Reconversion to Hinduism through Shuddhi* [Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1977], p. 69). At the same time, Madhok has been an energetic RSS organizer, having come to the group as a college student in 1938 (Madhok, *R.S.S. and Politics*, p. 23). His autobiographical reflections show the attraction of the RSS for some people of Arya backgrounds in the late thirties and forties—not only in his own case, but in that of others too (ibid., pp. 23–25, 47). Madhok is best known as a rightist politician, a cofounder and past president of the Jana Sangh, an RSS-affiliated party. He broke with both for political reasons in 1972 (see Andersen and Damle, *Brotherhood in Saffron*, pp. 186–87).

66. D. Vable, *The Arya Samaj: Hindu Without Hinduism* (Delhi: Vikas, 1983), p. 197. Thanks to Jack Llewellyn for pointing out the context of Vable's remarks.

67. Dayananda, *Satyārth Prakāś*, p. 103.

68. Graham, "Arya Samaj," pp. 493–500.

69. Ibid, pp. 499–504.

70. On the Arya Bhratri Sabha, see ibid., 475–87, and Jones, *Arya Dharm*, pp. 204–5.

71. On the Jat Pat Todak Mandal, see Graham, *Arya Samaj*, pp. 538–44.

72. Jordens, *Dayananda Sarasvati*, pp. 204, 285.

73. For Gandhi's version of this revision of caste, see Joan V. Bondurant, *Conquest of Violence: The Gandhian Philosophy of Conflict*, rev. ed. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971), pp. 167–72.

74. Golwalkar, *Spotlights*, p. 183.

75. Andersen and Damle, *Brotherhood in Saffron*, p. 95.

76. Golwalkar, *Spotlights*, pp. 183–84.

77. Ibid., p.183.

78. See Curran, *Militant Hinduism*, p. 48.

79. See Andersen and Damle, *Brotherhood in Saffron*, p. 105.

80. Mishra, *RSS: Myth and Reality*, p. 56. On caste associations, see Lloyd I. Rudolph and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, *The Modernity of Tradition: Political Development in India* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1967), pp. 29–36.

81. Quoted in Malkani, *RSS Story*, p. 170.

82. Mishra, *RSS: Myth and Reality*, p. 53; Mishra writes the Hindi *swayamsevaka* for volunteers.

83. Graham, "Arya Samaj," pp. 221–23.

84. Dayananda, *Autobiography*, p. 92; a translation of the full will is given as appendix 4, pp. 90–95.

85. Jones, "Arya Samaj in British India," pp. 32, 37.

86. From the Arya Directory of 1941, cited in ibid., p. 39.

87. Graham, "Arya Samaj," p. 395; on the origins of the Arya college, see Jones, *Arya Dharm*, pp. 67–93.

88. In Hindi words of Sanskritic origin, final short *a*'s are usually not pronounced and frequently not written in Anglicized form: thus the conventional spelling of the Swami's name in the college's title.

89. Graham, "Arya Samaj," p. 406.

90. Jones, *Arya Dharm*, p. 225.

91. Ibid., pp. 228–29.

92. Jones, "Arya Samaj in British India," p. 39.

93. Radhey Shyam Pareek, *Contribution of Arya Samaj in the Making of Modern India 1875–1947*, Arya Samaj Foundation Centenary Publications (New Delhi: Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, 1973), pp. 200–201. On the early history of the gurukul at Kangri, see J. T. F. Jordens, *Swami Shraddhananda: His Life and Causes* (Delhi: Ox-

ford University Press, 1981), pp. 66–102; for a study of the continuing gurukul movement, see Saraswati S. Pandit, *A Critical Study of the Contribution of the Arya Samaj to Indian Education,* Arya Samaj Foundation Centenary Publications (Delhi: Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, 1974).

94. Pareek, *Contribution,* p. 204.

95. Jones, "Arya Samaj in British India," p. 39.

96. Pareek, *Contribution,* p. 206.

97. Ibid., p. 138.

98. Ibid., pp. 138–46.

99. Ibid., pp. 155–64.

100. Jones, "Arya Samaj in British India," p. 44.

101. Pareek, *Contribution,* p. 325.

102. Ibid., p. 326.

103. Jones, "Arya Samaj in British India," p. 45. On the Hyderabad demonstrations, see the section below on political roles.

104. Jones, "Arya Samaj in British India," p. 54, fn. 56.

105. On these early Hindu paramilitary organizations, see Thursby, *Hindu-Muslim Relations,* pp. 168–69.

106. Pareek, *Contribution,* p. 326.

107. Pandit Nardev Vedalankar and Manohar Somera, *Arya Samaj and Indians Abroad,* Arya Samaj Centenary Publications (Delhi: Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, 1975), pp. 35, 103. This book, sponsored by the South African Samaj for the Aryas' centenary celebrations, surveys the history of the Aryas abroad; for a concise overview see Jones, "Arya Samaj in British India," p. 38.

108. Vedalankar and Somera, *Arya Samaj and Indians Abroad,* pp. 76–77 (on South Africa); 113–20 (on Mauritius); 126–27 (on Fiji).

109. Curran, *Militant Hinduism,* pp. 12–13.

110. Ibid., p. 13.

111. Ibid., p. 43.

112. Andersen and Damle, *Brotherhood in Saffron,* pp. 110–11.

113. Cf. ibid., p. 37.

114. Pankaj Pachauri, "RSS: Op fensive," *India Today,* 30 June 1989

115. Curran, *Militant Hinduism,* Andersen and Damle, *Brotherhood in* p. 104.

116. Ibid., pp. 89–91.

117. Ibid., p. 84.

118. Mishra, *RSS: Myth and* p. 54.

119. This is a fragment from a vol diary of lecture notes kept during training camp: Andersen and Damle *erhood in Saffron,* p. 96.

120. See discussion in ibid., p. 84

121. Ibid., p. 98; Curran, *Milita duism,* p. 49. Andersen and Damle's the seventies and eighties sugges stringent requirements for taking t than Curran's data of the early fifties

122. Changes were introduced pledge after independence and the rary ban on the RSS. The origina reads: "In the name of God and m tors, I hereby become a member Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangha in free Hindu Rashtra by safeguardi Hindu Dharma [religion], Hindu [culture] and Hindu Samaj [society do Sangha work selflessly and duti to the best of my ability all BHARAT MATA KI JAI [Victory to India!]." The changes introduced first, the realization of political dence—the volunteer pledges to b member "for the all-round progress ratavarsha [India] by strengthening Hindu Dharma," and second, a slig ening in the terms of allegiance: th teer pledges to "do Sangha work [his] heart to he best of [his] ability kani, *RSS Story,* p. 200).

123. Andersen and Damle, *Broth Saffron,* p. 85.

124. Mishra, *RSS: Myth and* pp. 55–56.

125. The Hindi terms used for t local offices are, in order treated: *gr śikṣak, kāryavāh,* and *mukhya śikṣak.*

126. Andersen and Damle, *Brotherhood in Saffron,* p. 86; Curran, *Militant Hinduism,* p. 461.

127. *Pracārak* in Hindi.

128. Mishra, *RSS: Myth and Reality,* p. 64; the author writes in 1980.

129. Curran, *Militant Hinduism,* p. 55.

130. Andersen and Damle, *Brotherhood in Saffron,* p. 88.

131. Ibid., p. 84.

132. Ibid., p. 87.

133. Curran, *Militant Hinduism,* p. 55.

134. Andersen and Damle, *Brotherhood in Saffron,* p. 86.

135. Narayan Hari Palkar, *Dr. Hedgewar: Charitra* (Prayag, India: Dr. Surendranath Mital, 2019 Vikram era [1962 C.E.]), pp. 423–24 (in Hindi).

136. Andersen and Damle, *Brotherhood in Saffron,* p. 85.

137. See Graham, "Arya Samaj," pp. 403–12; and Jordens's description in *Swami Shraddhananda.*

138. *Arya Patrika,* 16 January 1897, p. 6; quoted in Graham, "Arya Samaj, " p. 477.

139. Thanks to Jack Llewellyn for sharing some impressions gained from field research among contemporary Aryas.

140. Andersen and Damle, *Brotherhood in Saffron,* p. 87.

141. H. D. Griswold, "The Problem of the Arya Samaj," *Indian Evangelical Review,* 1 January 1892, reprinted in Lahore as a separate tract, p. 6; see also Graham, "Arya Samaj," pp. 401–3.

142. Graham states that the spiritual status of Dayananda was "the basic point at issue between the two parties" ("Arya Samaj," p. 405).

143. On problems of understanding the guru in modern Indian traditions, see Daniel Gold, *The Lord as Guru: Hindi Sants in North Indian Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), chap. 6.

144. See the discussion in Curran, *Militant Hinduism,* p. 5.

145. Kenneth W. Jones, "Socio-Religious Movements in British India," *The New Cambridge History of India* 3:1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 184, notes the cyclical oscillation between communal violence and enthusiasm for secular nationalism, which peaked in 1905–7, 1919–22, 1930–34, and 1942.

146. Jones, *Arya Dharm,* pp. 207–9.

147. See chap. 10.

148. Shraddhanda and his times are treated in Jordens's excellent biography, *Swami Shraddhananda.*

149. Thursby, *Hindu-Muslim Relations,* pp. 146–58.

150. Ibid., pp. 36–72.

151. Graham, "Arya Samaj," pp. 514–15.

152. Ibid, pp. 509–11; on the Mappilas, see Stephen Frederic Dale, *Islamic Society on the South Asian Frontier: The Mappilas of Malabar 1498–1922* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980).

153. See J. F. Seunarine, *Reconversion to Hinduism through Shuddhi* (Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1977), p. 99.

154. A full description of the case referred to is given in ibid., pp. 41–57.

155. M. S. Golwalkar, *We or Our Nationhood Defined* (Nagpur: Bharat, 1939), pp. 47–48.

156. Ibid., p. 35; Italy is glorified, too: "Look at Italy, the old Roman Race consciousness of conquering the whole territory round the Mediterranean Sea, so long dormant, has roused itself, and shaped the Racial-National aspirations accordingly," p. 32.

157. M. S. Golwalkar, *Bunch of Thoughts,* and *Spotlights.*

158. Golwalkar, *Spotlights,* p. 48.

159. Ibid., p. 51.

160. Ibid., p. 48.

161. The case, which began in 1978, was eventually heard by the Supreme Court of India. In 1985, Chief Justice Chandrachud, a Hindu, cited the Qur'an in support of the civil law and explicitly suggested that it was time for all Indians to live under one civil code. Given the modesty of the traditional settlement, the Justice's ruling was lauded by many liberals and feminists as well as by the Hindu right. Muslims of all classes, how-

the apostle Thomas in A.D. 52. On the basic patterns of communalism in Kerala, see P. M. Mammen, *Communalism vs Communism: A Study of the Socio-religious Communities and Political Parties in Kerala, 1892–1970* (Calcutta: Minerva Associates, 1981).

208. Ramesh Menon and Guha Prasad, "The South: Spreading Saffron," *India Today,* 30 June 1989, pp. 42–43.

209. See Madhu Limaye, "Sikhs: An Alien People?" in Abida Samiuddin, ed., *The Punjab Crisis: Challenge and Response* (Delhi: Mittal Publications, 1985), pp. 551–52.

210. See Embree's judgment in "Religion and Politics."

211. Ajay Kumar, S. Premi, and Ghulam Nabi Khayal, "The Muslims: Anger and Hurt," *India Today,* 15 March 1986, p. 43.

212. Inderjit Badhwar, "Social Status: Questions of Parity," *India Today,* 15 March 1986, pp. 42–43.

213. Badhwar et al., "Militant Revivalism," p. 85.

214. Lawrence A. Babb, *Redemptive Encounters: Three Modern Styles in the Hindu Tradition,* Comparative Studies in Religion and Society, no 1, ed. Mark Juergensmeyer (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1986) presents some other forms of modern Hinduism. The roles these have played in the West are discussed in Daniel Gold, *Comprehending the Guru: Towards a Grammar of Religious Perception,* American Academy of Religions Academy Series 57, ed. Carl Raschke (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), pp. 105–123.

215. Pachauri, "RSS: Open Offensive," p. 41.

216. Badhwar et al., "Militant Revivalism," p. 85; Madhok, *R.S.S. and Politics,* p. 88. These names translate, respectively, *Virāt Hindū Sammelan, Rastriya Surakṣā Samiti,* and *Hindū Jāgaraṇ Manc.*

217. Badhwar et al., "Communalism: Dangerous Dimensions," p. 17.

218. On the role of the *Shiv Sena* as a Maharashtrian nativist group, see Mary Fainsod Katzenstein, *Ethnicity and Equality: The Shiv Sena Party and Preferential Policies in Bombay* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979).

219. Badhwar et al., "Communalism: Dangerous Dimensions," p. 21.

220. Badhwar et al., "Militant Revivalism," p. 80.

221. Pachauri, "RSS: Open Offensive," p. 40.

222. Ibid., p. 43.

223. Pankaj Pachauri, "K. C. Sudarshan: 'There Will Be Bloodshed'," *India Today,* 30 June 1989, p. 41.

224. Letter dated 11 September 1948, cited from Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar, *Justice on Trial: A Collection of Historic Letters between Sri Guruji and the Government (1948–49),* 5th ed. (Bangalore: Prakashan Vibhag, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, Karnatak, 1969), p. 27.

225. See Thursby, *Hindu-Muslim Relations.*

226. Kumar, Premi, and Khayal, "The Muslims: Anger and Hurt," p. 42.

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