chapter five

Early Nationalism: Discontent and Dissension

5.1. THE MODERATES AND ECONOMIC NATIONALISM

Congress politics during the first twenty years of its history is roughly referred to as moderate politics. Congress at that time was hardly a full-fledged political party; it was more in the nature of an annual conference, which deliberated and adopted resolutions during the "three day *tamashas"* and then dispersed. Its members were mostly part-rime politicians, who were successful professionals in their personal lives-a thoroughly Anglicised upper class who had very little time and commitment for full-time politics. There had been some distinct phases in moderate politics, but on the whole, there was an overall uniformity in their objectives and methods of agitation. The moderates were primarily influenced by Utilitarian theories, as Edmund Burke, John Stuart Mill and john Morley had left a mark on their thoughts and actions. The government should be guided by expediency, they believed, and not by any moral or ethical laws. And the constitution was to be considered inviolable and hence repeatedly they appealed to the British parliament complaining about the Government of India subverting the constitution. They did not demand equality, which seemed to be a rather abstract idea; they equated liberty with class privilege and wanted gradual or piecemeal reforms. British rule to most of them seemed to be an act of providence destined to bring in modernisation. Indians needed some time to prepare themselves for self-government; in the meanwhile, absolute faith could be placed in British parliament and the people. Their complaint was only against "un-British rule" in India perpetrated by the viceroy, his executive council and the Anglo-Indian bureaucracy-an imperfection that could be reformed or rectified through gentle persuasion. Their politics, in other words, was very limited in terms of goals and methods. They were secular in their attitudes, though not always forthright enough to rise above their sectarian interests. They were conscious of the exploitative nature of British

rule, but wanted its reform, not expulsion. As Dadabhai Naoroji, one of the early stalwarts of this politics, put it in 1871: "In my belief a greater calamity would not befall India than for England to go away and leave her to herself." [1]

Therefore, within the constitutional field, the moderate politicians never visualised a clinical separation from the British empire; what they wanted was only limited self-government within the imperial framework. They wanted first of all the abolition of the India Council which prevented the secretary of state from initiating liberal policies in India. They also wanted to broaden Indian participation in legislatures through an expansion of the central and provincial legislatures by introducing 50 per cent elected representation from local bodies, chambers of commerce, universities etc. They also wanted new councils for North-Western Provinces and Punjab and two Indian members in the Viceroy's Executive Council and one such member in each of the executive councils of Bombay and Madras. The budget should be referred to the legislature, which should have the right to discuss and vote on it and also the right of interpellation. There should also be a right to appeal to the Standing Committee of the House of Commons against the Government of India. Thus their immediate demand was not for full self-government or democracy; they demanded democratic rights only for the educated members of the Indian society who would substitute for the masses.

The expectation of the moderate politicians was that full political freedom would come gradually and India would be ultimately given the self-governing right like those enjoyed by the other colonies as Canada or Australia. With an intrinsic faith in the providential nature of British rule in India, they hoped that one day they would be recognised as partners and not subordinates in the affairs of the empire and be given the rights of full British citizenship. What they received in return, however, was Lord Cross's Act or the Indian Councils Amendment Act of 1892, which only provided for marginal expansion of the legislative councils both at the centre and the provinces. These councils were actually to be constituted through selection rather than election: the local bodies would send their nominees from among whom the viceroy at the centre and the governors at the provinces would select the members of the legislative councils. The budget was to be discussed in the legislatures, but not to be voted on. The opposition could not bring in any resolution, nor demand a vote on any resolution proposed by the government. The Government of India was given the power to legislate without

even referring to the legislatures, whose functions would be at best recommendatory and not mandatory. Very few of the constitutional demands of the moderates, it seems, were fulfilled by this act.[2]

So far as the reformation of the administrative system was concerned, the first demand of the moderates was for the Indianisation of the services. An Indianised civil service would be more responsive to the Indian needs, they argued. It would stop the drainage of money, which was annually expatriated through the payment of salary and pension of the European officers. More significantly, this reform was being advocated as a measure against racism. What they demanded actually were simultaneous civil service examination both in India and London and the raising of the age limit for appearing in such examinations from nineteen to twenty-three. But Charles Wood, the president of the Board of Control, opposed it on the ground that there was no institution in India, which could train the boys for the examination. The Public Service Commission, appointed under Charles Aitchison, recommended the raising of the maximum age, but not simultaneous examination. In 1892-93 under the initiative of William Gladstone, the House of Commons passed a resolution for simultaneous examination, though the secretary of state was still opposed to it. But at the same time the maximum age for examination was further lowered to the disadvantage of the Indians. Soon Gladstone was replaced by Lord Salisbury and the whole matter was buried there (see chapter 2.3 for more details).

Another sore point in this area was the military expenditure. The British Indian army was being used in imperial wars in all parts of the world, particularly in Africa and Asia. These and the Indian frontier wars of the 1890s put a very heavy burden on the Indian finances. The moderates demanded that this military expenditure should be evenly shared by the British government; Indians should be taken into the army as volunteers; and more and more of them should be appointed in higher ranks. AJl of these demands were however rejected. Commander-in-chief Roberts abhorred the idea of volunteer service, as he feared that the Maratha and Bengali volunteers, disaffected and untrustworthy as they were because of their association with nationalism, would surely find their way into the army and subvert its integrity. Similarly, the demand for appointing Indians in commissioned ranks was rejected, as no European officer would cherish the thought of being ordered by an Indian commander. The British government agreed to share only a small fraction of the military expenditure, less than £1 million in all. The higher exchange rates reduced the amount even further, and so the

burden on the Indian finances remained the same. The other administrative demands of the moderates included the extension of trial by jury, repeal of the arms act, complaint against over-assessment of land revenue and demand for the extension of the Permanent Settlement, demand for the abolition of salt tax and a campaign against the exploitation of the indentured labour at the Assam tea gardens. All these demands represented a plea for racial equality and a concern for civil rights and also perhaps reflected a concern for the lower orders, though of a very limited nature. But it is needless to mention that none of the demands were even considered by the colonial administration.

However, despite all these setbacks, the most significant historical contribution of the moderates was that they offered an economic critique of colonialism. This economic nationalism, [3] as it is often referred to, became a major theme that developed further during the subsequent period of the nationalist movement and to a large extent influenced the economic policies of the Congress government in independent India. Three names arc important to remember in this respect: Dadabhai Naoroji, a successful businessman, justice M.G. Ranade and R.C. Dutt, a retired JCS officer, who published *The Economic History of India* in two volumes (1901–3). The main thrust of this economic nationalism was on Indian poverty created by the application of the classical economic theory of free trade. Their main argument was that British colonialism had transformed itself in the nineteenth century by jettisoning the older and direct modes of extraction through plunder, tribute and mercantilism, in favour of more sophisticated and less visible methods of exploitation through free trade and foreign capital investment. This turned India into a supplier of agricultural raw materials and foodstuffs to and a consumer of manufactured goods from the mother country. India was thus reduced to the status of a dependent agrarian economy and a field for British capital investment. The key to India's development was industrialisation with Indian capital, while investment of foreign capital meant drainage of wealth through expatriation of profit. This "drain theory" was in fact the key theme of this economic nationalism. It was argued that direct drainage of wealth took place through the payment of home charges, military charges, and guaranteed interest payment on railway investments. The burden became heavier because of the falling exchange rates of rupee in the 1890s and was compounded by budget deficits, higher taxes, and military expenditure. In Naoroji's calculation this huge drainage amounted to about £12 million per year, while William Digby calculated it to

be £30 million. In average, this amounted to at least half of the total revenue income of the British Indian government. This directly impoverished India and stultified the process of capital formation. High land revenue demands led to land alienation and impoverishment of the peasantry, while absence of protective tariff in the interest of the British manufacturers hindered Indian industrialisation and destroyed the handicraft industry. This led to overburdening of agriculture and further impoverishment; the cycle was completed in this way. Naoroji calculated the per capita income of the Indians to be Rs. 20, while Digby's calculation was Rs. 18 for 1899. The government did not accept this calculation: in 1882 Ripon's finance secretary calculated it to be Rs. 27, while Lord Curzon in 1901 calculated it to be Rs. 30. The famines and epidemics of this period however told a different story. To quote Dadabhai Naoroji again, "materially" British rule caused only "impoverishment"; it was like "the knife of sugar. That is to say there is no oppression, it is all smooth and sweet, but it is the knife, notwithstanding. "[4]

So, to rectify this situation what the moderates wanted was a change in economic policies. Their recommendations included reduction of expenditure and taxes, a reallocation of military charges, a protectionist policy to protect Indian industries, reduction of land revenue assessment, extension of Permanent Settlement to ryotwari and mahalwari areas, and encouragement of cottage industries and handicrafts. But none of these demands were fulfilled. Income tax, abolished in the 1870s, was reimposed in 1886; the salt tax was raised from Rs. 2 to Rs. 2.5; a customs duty was imposed, but it was matched by a countervailing excise duty on Indian cotton yarn in 1894, which was reduced to *3.5* per cent in 1896. The Fowler Commission artificially fixed the exchange rate of rupee at a high rate of 1 shilling and 4 pence. There was no fundamental change in the agricultural sector either, as colonial experts like Alfred Lyall believed that Indian agriculture had already passed through its stationary stage and had entered the modem stage of growth and hence there were more signs of progress than recession. The moderate economic agenda, like its constitutional or administrative agenda, thus remained largely unrealised.

This nationalist economic theory may appear to be a contentious issue for economic historians (see chapter 2.5), but construction of this economic critique of colonialism at this historical juncture had its own political and ethical significance. This economic theory by linking Indian poverty to colonialism was trying to corrode the moral authority of colonial rule, and also perhaps by implication

challenging the whole concept of paternalistic imperialism or British benevolence. In this way the moderate politicians generated anger against British rule, though because of their own weaknesses, they themselves could not convert it into an effective agitation for its overthrow. The moderate politicians could not or did not organise an agitation against British rule, because most of them still shared an intrinsic faith in the English democratic liberal political tradition. So their appeal was to the liberal political opinion in England; their method was to send prayers and petitions, to make speeches and publish articles. By using these tools of colonial modern public life they tried to prepare a convincing "logical case" aimed at persuading the liberal political opinion in England in favour of granting self-government to India, But this political strategy, which the more extremist elements in the Congress later described as the strategy of mendicancy, failed to achieve its goals. The failure of moderate politics was quite palpable by the end of the nineteenth century and their future was doomed as the less sympathetic Tories returned to power in Britain at the tum of the century. Nevertheless, the moderates created a political context within which such an agitation was to develop later on.

There were also other contradictions in moderate politics, which made it more limited and alienated from the greater mass of the Indian population. This was related to the social background of the moderate politicians who mostly belonged to the propertied classes. The first conference of the Indian National Congress in 1885 was attended by seventy-two non-official Indian representatives who included people belonging, as it was claimed, to "most classes", such as lawyers, merchants and bankers, landowners, medical men, journalists, educationists, religious teachers and reformers. [5] But despite the preponderance of the new professionals, the British Indian Association of the landowners maintained a cordial relationship with the Congress for the first few initial years and remained its major source of finance. About 18.99 per cent of the delegates who attended the Congress sessions between 1892 and 1909 were landlords; the rest were lawyers (39.32 per cent), traders (15.10 per cent), journalists (3.18 per cent), doctors (2.94 per cent), teachers (3.16 per cent) and other professionals (17.31 per cent). Among the lawyers again many were related to landlord families or had landed interests.' The Congress, therefore, could not dispense with landed aristocrats and could not consequently take a logical stand on peasant questions. They demanded extension of the Permanent Settlement only in the interest of the zamindars and opposed cadastral survey in 1893-94,

though it was meant to protect the peasants horn the manipulations of the zamindars and their intriguing amlas. The small pro-tenant lobby within the Congress led by R.C. Dutt was soon outmanoeuvred, as their opposition in 1898 to the pro-zamindar amendment to the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885 put them in a difficult situation. Opposition to the Punjab Land Alienation Bill in 1899 also betrayed their pro-landlord sympathies. Representation of the commercial classes among its members also prevented Congress horn taking a pro-working class position. They were opposed to factory reforms like the Mining Bill, which proposed to improve the living condition of women and children and restrict their employment under certain age. They also opposed similar labour reforms in Bombay on the plea that they were prompted by Lancashire interests. However, they supported labour reforms for Assam tea gardens, as capitalist interest involved there was of foreign origin," happily forgetting that the Indian mill owners in Bombay exploited their labourers in no less flagrant ways. Finally, their advocacy of indigenous capitalism as a panacea for Indian poverty revealed their true colours. It was the pro-landlord and pro-bourgeois policies of the early Congress politicians that allowed the colonial government to project itself as the real protector of the poor.

These early moderate politicians were also mainly Hindus, barring the notable exception of the Bombay politician, Badruddin Tyabji. Between 1892 and 1909, nearly 90 per cent of the delegates who attended the Congress sessions were Hindus and only 6.5 per cent were Muslims and among the Hindus again nearly 40 per cent were Brahmans and the rest were upper-caste Hindus.[8] This social composition inevitably resulted in social orthodoxy, as social questions were not to be raised in the Congress sessions rill 1907. More crucial however was the question of mobilising the Muslims, as the Congress demand for elected councils was not liked by prominent Muslim leaders like Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan, who feared that this would mean Hindu majority rule-the dominance of the frail-bodied Bengalees-to the disadvantage of the Muslim minority.[9] In response to this, in its 1888 session, Congress passed a rule that no resolution would be accepted if an overwhelming majority of Hindu or Muslim delegates objected to it. In 1889 in its resolution demanding reform of legislatures, a clause was added recommending proportional representation of the minorities." But these symbolic gestures did not remove the apprehension of the Muslims, while the crucial silence of the Congress during the cow-killing riots of 1893 added further to such misgivings. Congress was not directly involved

in the cow-protection movement, nor did it sympathise with this cause; but by speaking against it, they felt, they might lose the support of the Hindu constituency. Its silence was misinterpreted-for legitimate reasons-as concurrence; and as john Mclane has shown, Muslim participation in Congress essions began to decline rather dramatically after 1893.11 Yet there was no major Congress endeavour to bring the Muslims back into its fold. The Congress politicians suffered from a sense of complacency as no rival Muslim political organisation worth its name developed until 1906.

The moderate politics thus remained quite limited in nature, in terms of its goals, programmes, achievements and participation. Lord Dufferin, therefore, could easily get away with his remark at the St. Andrew's Day dinner at Calcutta in November 1888 that Congress represented only a "microscopic minority" of the Indian people. Yet, despite this limited representation, the historical significance of the early Congress lay in the fact that by providing an economic critique of colonialism and by linking Indian poverty to it, the moderate politicians had constructed a discursive field within which the sub equent nationalist attack on colonialism could be conceptualised. It was because of the failures of the moderate politics that an extremist reaction was soon to develop in Congress politics to lead to what is often referred to as the notorious Surat Split of 1907. The reunification of the Congress and the expansion of the political nation had to wait for the arrival of Gandhi and World War One.

5.2 HTNDU REVIVALISM AND POLITICS

Political extremism in the second half of the nineteenth century was not ju t a reaction to moderate failures; it drew its inspiration and ideology from a cultural and intellectual movement that developed simultaneously with and parallel to moderate politics of the Indian National Congress. The movement is vaguely referred to as "Hindu revivalism", which generally meant, despite the existence of various strands and contradictory tendencies, an attempt to define Indian nation primarily in terms of Hindu religious symbols, myths and history. Religion was never totally detached from politics in India, nor was it ever exclusively confined to private space. But so far as public discourses on religion were concerned, one has to make a distinction between two different trends within it, i.e., between reform and revival. The reform movements, in which a number of moderate politicians were involved, essentially attempted to bring changes in Hindu social organisation and practices from within to bring them into conformity with the new rationalist ideas of the West. The

creation of the National Social Conference as an adjunct body to the National Congress in 1887 is an indication of this mentality. Although religion was kept deliberately out of its agenda, the issues it discussed and reforms it recommended to various provincial organisations had strong religious implications. These movements were both influenced by Western post-Enlightenment rationalist ideas and were also responses to the challenge of Westernising forces and their critiques of Hindu civilisation. Ir was chis second aspect of reformism that eventually led to revivalism. For, to many Indians, reform-which was often backed by the colonial government-appeared to be an inadequate response or indeed a surrender to Western critics and imported rationalist ideas. Nationalism and reformism seemed to be contradictory ideas, as Charles Heimsath (1964) has argued, and this led to the growth of anti-reformism, based on a sense of pride in everything Indian. This is what is often referred to as revivalism, marked as it was by a conceptualisation of a glorious Hindu past, believed to have been degenerated under Muslim rule and threatened by the British. This glorification of Hindu civilisation over Islamic or Western often boiled down to attempts to exalt and rationalise Hindu institutions and practices, sometimes even to the point of offering articulate resistance to urgent social reforms. The late nineteenth century witnessed the gradual weakening of the reformist trend and the strengthening of such revivalist forces. But this revivalism was not just obscurantism, as it had a strong political overtone, dictated by the historical need of sculpting a modern Indian nation.

Among the reformist organisations the Brahmo Samaj in Bengal, which was more modernist in its approach, was weakened after the 1870s by internal dissent and divisions. This was followed by the emergence of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement in the 1880s. While Brahmo Sarnaj's appeal was to intellect, that of Ramakrishna Paramahansa, the Brahman sage at Dakshineswar near Calcutta, was to the mind and emotions. Completely untouched by Western rationalist education, he offered simple interpretations of Hinduism, which became immensely popular among the Western-educated Bengalees, tormented by their subjection to the drudgery of clerical jobs in foreign mercantile or government offices. Ramakrishna's teachings offered the possibility of an escape into an inner world of bhakti, despite the binding disciplines of alien jobs. Thus, although in his teachings there is hardly any direct reference to colonial rule, there is however an open rejection of the values imposed by Western education and the routine life of a time-bound job or

chakri.[12] The educated middle class in the nineteenth century often found the domain of reason to be oppressive, as it implied the historical necessity of the "civilising" colonial rule. Therefore, in the teachings of this uneducated saint at Dakshineswar, this subordinated middle class found the formulation of a new religion, which-to use Partha Chatterjee's phrases—"appropriated", "sanitized" and "classicized" the popular traditions into a national religious discourse.[13]

Ramakrishna was not a revivalist per se, for he inculcated a form of religious eclecticism, which did not however involve the preaching of an open and fluid syncretism. There are various ways to achieve god, he argued; but one must stick to one's own path in a world of fairly rigid divisions. Ramakrishna's catholicity therefore soon came to be projected as an essence of Hinduism and became for his disciple, Vivekananda, a ground for claiming the superiority of Hinduism over all other religions." It was Vivekananda who infused into this discourse a missionary zeal. He condemned the other reform movements as elitist and invoked the ideal of social service. The best way to serve god, he emphasised, was to serve the poor people. He founded therefore the Ramakrishna Mission in 1897 as a philanthropic organisation. To describe him as a revivalist is to ignore the "universalistic" aspects of his teachings.'! Nevertheless, the fact that he drew inspiration from the Vedantic tradition, followed some of the orthodox Hindu rituals, exhibited an intrinsic faith in the glories of Hindu civilisation and nurtured a belief that it had degenerated in recent times, made it possible for the revivalists to appropriate him. His evocation of Hindu glory mixed with patriotism, which sought to restore the masculinity of the Indian nation denied to them by their colonial masters, had a tremendous impact on the popular mind. His message was therefore misused and misinterpreted to give a revivalist slant to nationalism in Bengal. His evocation of the glories of a Hindu past was popularised, while his trenchant condemnation of the evils of Hinduism was conveniently forgotten. His philanthropic activities were hardly ever emulated; his criticism of the Brahmanical and gender oppression was scarcely ever taken seriously. But he became the "patron prophet" for a whole generation of extremist leaders and militant revolutionaries, dreaming the resurrection of a glorious Hindu India.

Gradually an intellectual tendency developed in Bengal that sought to legitimise any defence of Hindu traditions as a respectable and acceptable response to the challenge of Western civilisational critiques. At a more obscurantist level, Sasadhar Tarkachudarnoni began to invent precedents in ancient India for every modern

scientific discovery of the West. Not that he was out there to reject or discredit modern science, but tried to show that everything the modern West claimed to have invented was already known to Indians long ago. This he believed was the only way to evoke respect for Hinduism among a Western-educated middle class devoted to the goddess of reason. The whole campaign took the form of an "aggressive propaganda" through a number of regional journals and organisations like Bharatvarshiya Arya Dharma Procharini Sabha, committed to the idea of reviving the Aryan religion, as expounded in the *Vedas, Tantras* and *Puranas*.[16] On the other hand, there was the more sophisticated intellectual tradition of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, portraying the mythical figure Krishna as the modern politician and a nation builder. It was in his *novelAnandamath,* published in 1882, that he invented an icon for the nation, the Mother Goddess, identified with the motherland. And the song *Bande Mataram* (Hail mother) which he composed in exaltation of this once beautiful mother, became the anthem of nationalist movement in India. But the way he imagined this icon shows that although taken from the repertoire of Hinduism, it was nonetheless highly unorthodox.[17] Without a revival of the religion of the nation there was no good possible for India, he believed. But this was not the orthodox ritualistic Hinduism he was talking about, but a "reconstituted Hinduism", the more rationalistic dharma, that was regenerative and not obscurantist. In him, therefore, we find quite an "unprincipled use of Hinduism", a recognition of its elasticity, and its immense internal diversity, which made it possible to stretch its resources to accomplish a task that it was never asked to achieve, i.e., to imagine a history that would unite a nation against foreign domination.[18]

In Maharashtra, the Ranade-Telang school of reform and their Prarthana Sarnaj had been following a cautious policy of social reform along the lines of "least resistance". But by the 1890s they came to be assailed both by the radicals and the orthodox elements. Behramji Malabari's 1884 "Note" on child marriage leading to enforced widowhood, led to a countrywide debate on the prohibition of child marriage. This social institution had by then become an issue of public debate as a result of a court case in 1884--88, in which Rukhmabai, a twenty-two year old Hindu woman belonging to the carpenter caste, was taken to Bombay High Court by her husband Dadaji, because she refused to recognise his conjugal rights. She was married as an infant and after eleven years of separate living, she argued, that unconsummated marriage was no longer binding on her

as an adult. She lost the case, which dragged on for four years, and was threatened with imprisonment, which she avoided through a compromise. Dadaji was, however, a mere pawn in this case, through which the Hindu onhodoxy strived to assert the rights of patriarchy and preserve their preferred way of life. On the other hand, important reformists formed the Rukhmabai Defence Committee, of which Malabari was an important member." Intellectual reformist opinion now exerted a moral pressure on the British to pass the Age of Consent Bill in 1891 to prevent early consummation of marriage *(garbhadhan)*. The first act against child marriage had been passed in 18 60 and it prohibited consummation of marriage for a Hindu girl below ten years of age; the new act only proposed to raise that age of consent from ten to twelve. The earlier act had been passed without much opposition, but the new one provoked a powerful orthodox Hindu backlash, which had a much wider mass base than the reformist movement. Conservative and obscurantist sentiments now converged with the nationalist argument that foreign rulers had no right to interfere with the religious and social customs of the Indians. However, just government intervention was not the issue, as during the same period, Hindu orthodox opinion seldom hesitated to accept government legislation against cow slaughter. And just then in the Rukhmabai case it was the British legal system, which the Hindu orthodoxy was using to assert its rights. This proposed intervention, as it has been argued, sought to invade that sacred inner space, the family and the household, which the Hindu society had always regarded as impenetrable or inviolate, a sovereign space that could not be colonised. But now the Hindu males were about to lose even this last "solitary sphere of autonomy", and therefore, "a new chronology of resistance" was to begin from hcre.[20] The response to this reform was intense and violent.

In Maharashtra the movement was led by Bal Gangadhar Tilak and his Poona Sarvajanik Sabha, in alliance with the Poona revivalists, who frequently invoked Hindu, Brahman and Maratha glory. *As* early as January 1885 Tilak had been organising meetings to oppose government intervention in marriage customs and now he proposed that education rather than legislation was the most legitimate method of eradicating the evil. The debate however reached furious proportions towards the end of 1890, after the reported death of an eleven-year-old girl Phulmoni from sexual abuse by her husband twenty-nine years older than her. As the reformist pressure increased for a legislation, the orthodox Marathi journals *Kesari* and *Mabratta* strongly upheld the conservative view about the garbhadhan cere-

mony, which required the Hindu girls to be married before reaching puberty, but consummation had to await puberty. Any interference with this custom would put Hinduism in danger-that was the essence of all opposition arguments.[21] And this propaganda spread as far as Bengal, where despite the disapproval of people like Banlcim Chandra or Vivekananda, the orthodox elements like Sasadhar Tarkachudamoni and others raised a furore in the pages of *Bangabasi*.[22]

This cacophony of obscurantist propaganda tended to drown the reformist voices like that of Professor R.G. Bhandarkar of the Poona Deccan College. Following the Orientalist cognitive tradition of textualising Indian culture, he showed through meticulous research on the *dharmashastras* that marriages after puberty were allowable and not opposed to Hindu religious laws. We should remember, however, that men like Tilak in their personal lives were hardly ever obscurantists, as his own eldest daughter remained single till the age of thirteen.[23] But in this debate they found a powerful self-confident rhetoric against foreign rule. As Tanika Sarkar argues, the "Hindu woman's body" became the "site of a struggle that for the first rime declare[d] war on the very fundamentals of an alien power-knowledge system." However, in this protest against Western reformism and rationalism, the pain and tears of the child wives were completely forgotten.[24] There is one interesting point to note here: all the divergent positions on the Consent debate-like the previous social reform debates of the early nineteenth century-converged at one point. The reformers, their detractors, as well as the colonial state-all agreed that the question of child marriage and its consummation belonged to the realm of religion, which, as Mrinalini Sinha has argued, had long been recognised as an autonomous space for "native masculinity". Indeed, the masculinist anxieties in England generated support for the opponents of the reform; yet the government in India decided to take a pro-reform interventionist position because of the specific political imperatives of the rime.[25] Therefore, despite all opposition, the Age of Consent Bill was passed on 19 March 1891, though, as both the reformers and their opponents soon realised, it had little more than "educative effect". But this debate set an interesting trend. While on the one hand, reformism had become a part of the nationalist discourse, the anti-reformists and orthodox elements also received immense publicity.[26] And what is more significant, Hinduism now became a useful rhetoric for organising a more articulate and sometime even militant opposition to foreign rule.

The use of orthodox Hindu religious symbols for political mobilisation took a more militant form in north India through the Arya Samaj and the cow-protection movement, which led to widespread communal violence in 1893. Arya Samaj was established in 1875 by Dayanand Saraswati. Gradually, it found a fertile ground in Punjab and the North-Western Provinces. It offered a sharp criticism of the existing Hindu practices, like idolatry, polytheism, child marriage, widow celibacy, foreign travel, dominance of Brahmans and caste-system. Indeed, what it inculcated was an aggressive assertion of the superiority of ancient Indian religion, based on the *Vedas* over all other faiths. Because of this element, the movement was later absorbed into the dominant pan-Hindu revivalist framework. As Peter Van der Veer argues, the reformist Arya Samaj and their orthodox critics found a common ground in their "defense of the Hindu nation".[27] This happened after Dayanand's death in 1883, under his disciples. Kenneth Jones (1976) has shown that aggressiveness increased as a result of Christian missionary activities, which introduced religious competitiveness into the social atmosphere of Punjab. They began to preach the supremacy of the Arya *dharam* (religion), Arya *bbasha* (language) and the *Aryavarta* (land) and their propaganda was mainly directed against the Muslims and the Christians. As a direct response to Christian proselytising activities, the Arya Samaj developed the concept of suddhi, which aimed at reconversion from Christianity, Islam and Sikhism. The moderate group within the Samaj was gradually marginalised by 1893, and the militant group became dominant. They came closer to other orthodox groups and were involved in violent confrontations with the Muslims. The tension reached its peak on the issue of cow protection.

The importance of cow was always recognised in Indian society, as the economy moved from pastoral to agricultural orientation. But in ancient time cow was not regarded as sacred or inviolable; veneration for cow increased during the medieval period when the rate of cow slaughter increased phenomenally. The Muslim practice of cow sacrifice at the Bakr-Id festival further increased Hindu veneration of cow as a sacred symbol.[28] But it was never a cause of communal conflict in earlier rimes, not even in early colonial period. The earlier religious disturbances arose on local issues and subsided quickly. It was only in the late nineteenth century that the communities began to define their boundaries more closely and began to display more communal aggressiveness. The Hindus clearly lacked organisational integration and therefore Hindu mobilisation took place around the symbol of cow, which communicated a variety of cosrno-

logical constructs relevant to both the Brahmanical and devotional traditions of Hinduism." Cow, in other words, was a generally acceptable symbol across regional, linguistic and denominational barriers. It was first the Kukas, a reformist sect among the Sikhs, who took up the cow-protection issue in 1871 in order to galvanise their movement and win more support. They were involved in some violent incidents trying to stop cattle slaughter by the Muslims and invited in the process ruthless repression from the govemmenr.P In the 1870s however the cow protectionist sentiments rapidly spread in Punjab, North-Western Provinces, Awadh and Rohilkhand. The Arya Samaj converted this sentiment into an organised all-India movement. The mobilisation took place through the establishment of the Gaurakshini Sabhas (cow protection societies), which became most strong in the Hindu dominated areas like Bihar, Banaras division, Awadh, eastern Allahabad, and later on in Bengal, Bombay, Madras, Sind, Rajputana, and the Central Provinces.[31]

During Dayanand's time the cow-protection movement was not overtly anti-Muslim and by providing economic and nationalist arguments he also tried to rationalise the movement and gave it a certain amount of respectability. But gradually it became an issue of communal rivalry as the debate over the legal ban on cow slaughter arose. For the Muslims, a cow was cheaper than a sheep or goat for sacrificial purposes. Cow slaughter also had a political meaning for them; it meant a symbolic assertion of freedom from Hindu supremacy. The issue was fought at the modern insriturional level of municipalities, legislatures, press and political meetings. By the middle of 1893 the provocations and counter provocations reached its peak, leading to the outbreak of the first riot in Mau in Azamgarh district over the rival interpretations of a legal ban on cow slaughter. The riots rapidly spread over a wide region; thirty-one riots took place in six months in Bihar and the North-Western Provinces. These were led by the zamindars and religious preachers and followed by the peasants. The mass participation was sometimes the result of social coercion; but sometimes it was also spontaneous. Market networks were used to ensure participarion.[32] The series of violent incidents culminated in a riot in Bombay involving the working classes. And although outwardly against the Muslims, the spirit of discontent, as the government suspected, was definitely anti-British; the cow-question was merely a war cry to arouse the lethargic Hindus. [33]

John Mc1ane thinks that the riots showed an "expanded sense of community membership" breaking down class and geographical barriers." Immediately after 1893, communal tension subsided. The

cow-protection movement also lost its momentum, although it continued in some areas for some more time. This shows that cow itself was perhaps not important; it was being used as a symbol for community mobilisation. There was an increasing need for such mobilisation along community lines, as constitutional questions were now being discussed, new competitive institutions were being created. In such an environment of competition, there was need for both the communities to mobilise along communal lines in order to register their collective presence in the new public space, and the cow served as a handy symbol. Gyanendra Pandey (1983) has shown that the cow-protection movement did not yet indicate a complete communal polarisation of Indian society. The construction and articulation of the communal category was entirely in the interest of the elites, while various other groups participated with various other motives. The zamindars by leading the gaurakshini sabhas tried to reassert their social power that had been slipping away from their hands because of the various changes instituted by colonial rule. The peasant participants came mainly from the Ahir community, who had been socially mobile and, therefore, had to legitimise their new status by projecting their Hinduness. This did not mean that the barriers of class had been dismantled or permanently effaced. On other occasions they fought against their Hindu zamindars along with other Muslim peasants. And apart from that, there were many regions, which were not at all affected by the cow-protection sentiment. But the movement put an unmistakable Hindu stamp on the nationalist agitation. Congress, though not directly involved, remained silent and even patronising. After the Nagpur session of the Congress in 1891, the gaurakshini sabha held a large meeting within the Congress pavilion, attended by Congress delegates and visitors. Prominent cow protectionist leaders like Sriman Swami attended the Allahabad Congress in 1893,[35] while other well known Congress leaders like Tilak were closely associated with the local gaurakshini sabhas.[36] This alienated the Muslims from Congress politics, as Muslim representation in Congress sessions declined drastically after 1893.[37]

If cow protection drew the lines between the two religious communities in north India, these lines were further reinforced by skilful manipulation of other available cultural symbols, such as language.[38] The Hindi-Urdu controversy began in the North-Western Provinces and Awadh sometime in the 1860s, but it was revived with great enthusiasm in 1882 when it also spread to other Hindi-speaking regions of north India, such as Punjab and the Central Provinces.

The movement acquired greater intensity in the 1890s with the foundation of the Nagri Pracharani Sabha in 1893 in the holy city of Banaras. Truly speaking, Hindi and Urdu, spoken by a great majority of people in north India, were the same language written in two scripts; Hindi was written in Devanagri script and therefore had a greater sprinkling of Sanskrit words, while Urdu was written in Persian script and thus had more Persian and Arabic words in it. At the more colloquial level, however, the two languages were mutually intelligible. But since Urdu was officially recognised, there was a concerted campaign to get Nagri recognised for all official purposes as well and the movement proceeded through a literary campaign, memorialising the government and editorialising in the local language press. Leading literary figures like Bharatendu Harischandra, by upholding the classical Sanskrit heritage of the Hindi language emphasised its high status and antiquity, but in the process purged it of its local and popular traditions.[39] But most significantly, in course of this cultural campaign, Hindi came to be identified with the Hindus and Urdu with the Muslims, although many Hindus like the well-established Kayasthas were still in favour of using Urdu as an official language. The association of leaders like Madan Mohan Malaviya with this campaign gave it an obvious political colour. In April 1900, a Resolution of the Government of North-Western Province and Awadh gave Nagri an equal official status with Urdu, and this, as Christopher King argues, stirred up the protagonists of Urdu to offer an emotional defence of their language.[40] They now formed the Anjuman Taraqqi-e-Urdu (Society for the progress of Urdu), as some of them believed that this official measure would eventually lead to the complete extinction of their language. Although this euphoria over the controversy subsided after some time, language henceforth became an important component of the cultural project of nationalism in India.

In the wake of the cow-protection riots, there were also other more overt attempts to use Hindu religious and historical symbols for the purpose of political mobilisation. In Maharashtra, Tilak's next project, to borrow a phrase, was "the political recruitment of God Ganapati".[41] Ever since the days of the peshwas, the Hindu deity of Ganapati or Ganesh used to enjoy official patronage in this region. It was a deity that was equally respected both by the Chitpavan Brahmans and the non-Brahman lower castes; but Ganapati puja was always a domestic or family affair. In 1893, however, following the Bombay riots generated by the cow-protection movement, Tilak and other Chirpavan Brahmans of Poona decided to

organise it as an annual public festival and to imbue politics in it, as a means to bridge the gap between the Brahman-dominated Congress and the non-Brahman masses. Alleging government partiality for the Muslims, he urged the Hindus of Poona to boycott their Muharram festival and participate in a public celebration of the puja of Lord Ganapati. In 1894 to further consolidate the group aspect of the festival, he introduced certain innovations, like the installation of large public images of the god and an introduction of the *me/a* movement in which singing parties, comprising twenty to several hundred singers at times, sang political songs to communicate the message of nationalism to wider masses. As a result, the Hindus who previously participated in the Muharram festivals in previous years, now largely boycotted it and flocked to the Ganapati festival. And then from 1895 the festival began to spread from Poona to every other part of Deccan; by 1905 seventy-two towns outside Poona celebrated Ganapati festival.

Celebration of Hindu mythical or historical symbols and opposition to reformism now became an accepted practice in Poona politics. Ranade's National Social Conference, which used to meet every year at the Congress session, was finally driven out at the Poona session in 1895 by the rival faction led by Tilak. In 1896, Tilak introduced another festival, called Shivaji festival, to commemorate the coronation of Shivaji Maharaj, who "upheld our self respect as Hindus, and who gave particular direction to our religion".[42] Although the Bombay government did not immediately view these festivals as a direct threat to British rule, it did inspire a number of revolutionaries. The Chapekar brothers, for example, who killed Rand, the hated Superintendent of the Plague Commission, were associated with the Poona Ganapati festival and with Tilak.[43] Two other revolutionaries, Ganesh and Vinayak Savarkar, also wrote inflammatory songs for the Ganapati festival at Nasik. Thus, although the Ganapari festivals were not directly connected with the revolutionary movement, they acted as important vehicles for disseminating such ideas and training a cadre for such groups. From 1900 onwards, these festivals became overtly political, and it was because of this militant tone that the government virtually suppressed them by 1910. But to what extent the festivals had been able to disseminate the political message is open to question. On the non-Brahmans the political content of the Ganapati festival had very little impact, while the Muslims were directly alienated by it.[44] And the Shivaji cult was to be put to an entirely different political use by the non-Brahman leaders like Jotirao Phule to construct a separate identity of their own (see chapter 7.2).

But despite its limitations, Hindu revivalism became by now an established political force, more closely associated with the extremist reaction against the reformist moderate Congress politicians. Madras was no exception either, as here Hindu reaction to missionary activities and conversion arose in the 1820s in the form of Vibhuti Sangam (Sacred Ashes Society) which preached reconversion of the radicalised Shanar Christians. Then in the 1840s came the Dharma Sabha, mainly patronised by the Brahmans and high-caste Hindus. The two organisations stood for conservative resistance to change, rigid adherence to *uamasbramadharma* and caste exclusiveness.[45] With the establishment of the Theosophical Society in 1882, Hindu revivalism gained strength in Madras, as it stimulated the interest of the educated Indians in the history and culture of their country. It was further reinforced after the arrival of Annie Besant, who also formed the linkage with nationalism and Congress politics.

Nationalism in this way came to be associated with Hindu religious revivalist ideas in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. But there are certain problems involved in its history, as this modern idea of "Syndicated Hinduism" was to a large extent the construction of nineteenth-century Western hermeneutics.[4'] The term "Hinduism" was used historically to convey a wide variety of meanings: in a general sense, it meant anything "native" or "Indian"; in a narrower sense it indicated the high culture or religion of India, especially those of Aryan, Brahmanical or Vedic origin.[47] When in the late nineteenth century, Indians were asked to identify their religious status in the census returns, Hinduism in popular perception was still not recognisable as a religion with definable boundaries. In 1881, in the column for 'religion', instead of 'Hindu', many of them mentioned their sect or caste; such problem of definition continued to haunt the census authorities at least until 1901.[41] This Hinduism, therefore, appears to be a colonial construct, not bound by any specific doctrinal definition or not historically attached to any community identity. The idea of a homogenised Hinduism was constructed, as Ashis Nandy has argued, by the "cultural arrogance of post-Enlightenment Europe, which sought to define not only the 'true' West but also the 'true' East".[49] The colonial ethnographic studies and census reports gave a concrete definable shape to this concept of religion as community (see discussion in 5.4), and a section of the westernised Indians internalised it into their collective consciousness and developed it into a self-definition. In emulation of their martial rulers and their religion, they sought to revive an emaciated

Hinduism as an effective antidote against alien cultural intervention that continually stereotyped the colonised society as effeminate.[50] The term revivalism itself remained problematic, as it did not mean resurrecting a forgotten and obsolete past, but reconstituting the past in the service of the present. Many of the social practices and symbols that were being "revived" or defended, were already continuing or were in existence in collective memory." And not all social customs of the past were being revived either; there was only a selective absorption of specific aspects of the past and adapting them to the present-day needs of nation building." Some of these so-called revivalist leaders and intellectuals were actually caught between the mythical past and a rationalist present and their "unhappy consciousness" sought to resolve this dilemma by taking shelter in an "imaginary history"."

Partha Chatterjee has called this phenomenon the central problematic of early Indian nationalism. In conceiving nationalism, the Indian nationalists were obviously influenced by ideas from European bourgeois experience; but Indian nationalism did not develop only because of Western modular influences. As we have already seen (chapter 4), the Indian nationalists felt compelled to talk in terms of an opposing paradigm; they invoked the past as an alternative to colonial rule. This provided for a "viable cultural foundation of narionhood't." But this particular mode of conceptualisation, we must point out, had also some inherent contradictions and consequent dangers. First of all, as it has been pointed out, this very construction of cultural nationalism was prompted by Orientalist cognition that located Hinduism in a high textual tradition. The tendency here was "to turn Hinduism into an organized religion" based, like Christianity, on a recognised text-Vedas for Dayanand and *Bhagavadgita* for Vivekananda-thus marginalising the more liberal and open ended folk traditions." And when this reconstituted Hinduism became the foundational idea for imagining a nation, that "Hindu nationalism", as Christophe Jaffrelot has convincingly argued, "largely reflect[ed] the Brahminical view of the high caste reformers".[51] This particular cultural discourse of nationalism therefore failed to appeal to the non-Brahman and lower caste masses of India (more on this in chapter 7.2). It also used the past very selectively and readily accepted, often uncriticaJly, the Orientalist stereotype of "medieval Muslim tyranny and decline" as against "ancient Hindu glory"." This inevitably led to the unhappy consequence of alienating the Muslims who became suspicious of Hindu majority rule. This nationalism, which grew in strength in the late

nineteenth century, was thus beset with contradictions from the very beginning.

Not only were the Muslims alienated by this militant brand of Hinduism, it has been argued by Richard Fox that the articulation of a distinctive Sikh identity through an organised Singh Sabha movement in the late nineteenth century was directly the result of the Arya Samaj campaign in Punjab, particularly of its attacks on Guru Nanak.[58] It is perhaps simplistic to argue that the Singh Sabhas came up only in response to the challenge of the Arya Samaj, but it will be pertinent here to have a brief discussion on this movement as it belonged to the same cultural politics of identity formation in the late nineteenth-century India. There were in fact many reasons behind the rise of this movement, such as the emergence of a small Sikh elite in the nineteenth century and their indignation about relative exclusion of the Sikhs from education and employment in Punjab, the influence of the Brahmo Samaj and Anjuman-i-Punjab, the proselytising activities of the Christian missionaries, the colonial stereotyping of the Sikh identity and their "decline", official control of the Sikh holy places and so on. The first Singh Sabha was started in Amritsar in 1873 and another in Lahore six years later. Between 1880 and 1900, 115 Singh Sabhas were founded mostly in Punjab, but some also in ocher parts of India and abroad. The main theme of this movement, as in the case of Hindu revivalism, was the perceived notion of decline of the Sikhs and the necessity to retrieve the image of Tat Khalsa or pure Sikhs, as it was prevalent in the eighteenth century during the heyday of Sikhism. The cultural movement involved a purification of Sikhism by purging all popular elements and impurities such as the influence of polytheism and idolatry, often openly visible in the holy shrines. It also emphasised the maintenance of the 5 k's or the external symbols of Sikh identity, performing the authentic Sikh life-cycle rituals as enjoined in the Sikh manual of conduct or the *Rahit-nama,* refraining from participation in all popular religious festivals and pilgrimages, reclaiming the sacred space ~y establishing control over the holy shrines and purging them of all signs of idolatry, and finally, making the Gurmukhi script and the Punjabi language the most authentic symbols of Sikh identity. Not all Sikhs agreed with this universalised version of Sikh identity; but this very claim that the Sikhs were a distinct and homogeneous community—separate from both the Hindus and Muslims-had significant implications for imagining the Indian nation at the beginning of the twentieth cenrury.[59]

5.3. THE RISE OF EXTREMISM AND THE SWADESHI MOVEMENT

When the failure of moderate politics became quite apparent by the end of the nineteenth century, a reaction set in from within the Congress circles and this new trend is referred to as the "Extremist" trend. The moderates were criticised for being too cautious and their politics was stereotyped as the politics of mendicancy. This extremism developed in three main regions and under the leadership of three important individuals, Bepin Chandra Pal in Bengal, Bal Gangadhar Tilak in Maharashtra and Lala Lajpar Rai in Punjab; in other areas extremism was less powerful if not totally absent.

Many causes are cited to explain the rise of extremism. Factionalism, according to some historians, is one of them, as at the turn of the century we observe a good deal of faction fighting at almost every level of organised public life in India. In Bengal there was division within the Brahmo Samaj and bitter journalistic rivalry between the two newspaper groups, the *Bengalee,* edited by moderate leader Surendranath Banerjea and the *Amrita Bazar Patrika,* edited by the more radical Morilal Ghosh. There was also faction fighting between Aurobindo Ghosh on the one hand and Bepin Chandra Pal and Brahmabandhab Upadhyay on the other, over the editorship of *Bande Mataram.* In Maharashtra there was competition between Gokhale and Tilak for controlling the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha. The contest came to the surface when in 1895 Tilak captured the organisation and the following year Gokhale starred his rival organisation, the Deccan Sabha. In Madras three factions, the Mylapur clique, the Egmore clique and the suburban elites fought among each other. In Punjab, the Arya Samaj was divided after the death of Dayanand Saraswati, between the more moderate College group and the radical revivalist group. One could argue therefore, that the division in Congress between the moderates and the extremists was just faction fightings? that plagued organised public life everywhere in India around this time. But the rise of extremism cannot be explained in terms of factionalism alone.

Frustration with moderate politics was definitely the major reason behind the rise of extremist reaction. The Congress under moderate leadership was being governed by an undemocratic constitution. Although after repeated attempts by Tilak a new constitution was drafted and ratified in 1899, it was never given a proper trial. The Congress was also financially broke, as the capitalists did not contribute and the patronage of a few rajas and landed magnates was never sufficient. The social reformism of the moderates, inspired by Western liberalism, also went against popular orthodoxy. This came

to the surface at the Poona Congress of 1895, when the moderates proposed to have a national social conference running at tandem with the regular sessions of the Congress. More orthodox leaders like Tilak argued that the social conference would split the Congress and the proposal was ultimately dropped. But more significantly, moderate politics had reached a dead end, as most of their demands remained unfulfilled and this was certainly a major reason behind the rise of extremism. This increased the anger against colonial rule and this anger was generated by the moderates themselves, through their economic critique of colonialism.

The Curzonian administration magnified this nationalist angst further. Lord Curzon (1899-1905), a true believer in British righteousness, had the courage to chastise an elite British regiment for its racial arrogance against native Indians.[61] But he was also the last champion of that self-confident despotic imperialism of which Fitzjames Stephen and Lytton Strachey were the ideologues. He initiated a number of unpopular legislative and administrative measures, which hurt the susceptibilities of the educated Indians. The reconstitution of the Calcutta Corporation through the Calcutta Municipal Amendment Act of 1899 reduced the number of elected representatives in it; the Indian Universities Act of 1904 placed Calcutta University under the most complete governmental control; and the Indian Official Secrets Amendment Act of 1904 further restricted press freedom. Then, *his* Calcutta University convocation address, in which be described the highest ideal of truth as essentially a Western concept, most surely hurt the pride of the educated Indians. The last in the series was the partition of Bengal in 1905, designed to weaken the Bengali nationalists who allegedly controlled the Congress. But instead of weakening the Congress, the Curzonian measures acted as a magic potion to revitalise it, as the extremist leaders now tried to take over Congress, in order to commit it to a path of more direct and belligerent confrontation with colonial rule.

The goal of the extremists was *swaraj,* which different leaders interpreted differently. For Tilak it meant Indian control over the administration, but not a total severance of relations with Great Britain. Bepin Pal believed that no self-government was possible under British paramountcy; so for him swaraj was complete autonomy, absolutely free of British control. Aurobindo Ghosh in Bengal also visualised swaraj as absolute political independence. However, for most others swaraj still meant self-rule within the parametres of British imperial structure. The radicalisation was actually visible in

the method of agitation, as from the old methods of prayer and petition they moved to that of passive resistance. This meant opposition to colonial rule through violation of its unjust laws, boycott of British goods and institutions, and development of their indigenous alternatives, i.e., *su/adeshi* and national education. The ideological inspiration for this new politics came from the new regional literature, which provided a discursive field for defining the Indian nation in terms of its distinct cultural heritage or civilisation. This was no doubt a revivalist discourse, informed by Orientalism, as it sought to invoke an imagined golden past and used symbols from a retrospectively reconstructed history to arouse nationalist passions. This was also a response to the gendered discourse of colonialism that had established a teleological connection between masculinity and political domination, stereotyping the colonised society as "effeminate" and therefore unfit to rule. This created a psychological compulsion for the latter to try to recover their virility in Kshatriyahood in an imagined Aryan past, in order to establish the legitimacy of their right to rule.[62] Historical figures who had demonstrated valour and prowess were now projected as national heroes. Tilak started the Shivaji festival in Maharashtra in April 1896 and soon these ideas became popular in Bengal, where a craze for national hero worship began. The Marathas, Rajpurs and Sikhs-stereotyped in colonial ethnography as 'martial races'-were now placed in an Aryan tradition and appropriated as national heroes. Ranjit Singh, Shivaji and the heroes culled from local history like Pratapadirya and Sitaram, even Siraj-ud-daula, were idolised as champions of national glory or martyrs for freedom. Vivekananda made a distinct intervention in this ideological discourse by introducing the idea of an "alternative manliness", which combined Western concepts of masculinity with the Brahmanic tradition of spiritual celibate ascetism. A physical culture movement started with great enthusiasm with gymnasiums coming up in various parts of Bengal to reclaim physical prowess; but the emphasis remained on spiritual power and self-discipline that claimed superiority over body that was privileged in the Western idea of masculinity.[63] The Indian political leaders also looked back to ancient Indo-Aryan political traditions as alternatives to Anglo-Saxon political systems. The Indian tradition was described as more democratic with strong emphasis on village self-government. The concept of dharma, it was argued, restricted the arbitrary powers of the king and the republican traditions of the Yaudheyas and Lichchhavis indicated that the Indian people already had a strong tradition of self-rule.[64] This was directly to counter the colonial logic

and moderate argument that British rule was an act of providence to prepare Indians for self-government.

Indeed, at this stage, this was the central problematic of Indian nationalism. The moderates had wanted the Indian nation to develop through a modernistic course; but modernism being a Western concept, this meant an advocacy of the continuation of colonial rule. The extremists, on the other hand, sought to oppose colonial rule and therefore had to talk in terms of a non-Western paradigm.v They tried to define the Indian nation in terms of distinctly Indian cultural idioms, which led them to religious revivalism invoking a glorious past-sometimes even unquestioned acceptance and glorification of that past. But their Hinduism was only a political construct, not defined by any definite religious attributes. As the nineteenth-century Englishmen claimed ancient Greece as their classical heritage, the English-educated Indians also felt proud of the achievements of the Vedic civilisation." This was essentially an "imaginary history„[67] with a specific historical purpose of instilling a sense of pride in the minds of a selected group of Indians involved in the process of imagining their nation. Some of the leaders, like Tilak or Aurobindo, also believed that this use of Hindu mythology and history was the best means to reach the masses and mobilise them in support of their politics. The veteran moderate politicians refused to accommodate these new trends within the Congress policies and programmes, and this led to the split in the Congress in its Surat session in 1907.

But before going into the bizarre story of the Surat split in the Congress (1907), we may look into the history of the Swadeshi movement in Bengal (1905–11), which may be described as the best expression of extremist politics. The movement began as an agitation against the partition of Bengal in 1905, which Lord Curzon had designed as a means of destroying political opposition in this province. The Bengal Presidency as an administrative unit was increasing in size with the accretion of territories through conquest and annexation. As a result, its frontiers at one point extended to Sutlej in the northwest, Assam on the northeast and Arakan on the southeast. The presidency was indeed of an unwieldy size and therefore the necessity to partition Bengal was being discussed since the time of the Orissa famine of 1866. In 1874 Assam was actually separated with 3 million people, while three Bengali-speaking areas, i.e., Sylhet, Goalpara and Cachar, were also added to it. Safeguarding the interests of Assam, rather than weakening Bengal, seemed to have been the more important consideration behind the policy decision at

narrowing opporrumnes for the educated Bengalees, the rising prices fuelled by consecutive bad harvests in the early rwentieth century made life miserable for the middle classes. At this juncture the partition instead of dividing the Bengali society, brought into existence a "swadeshi coalition" by further consolidating the political alliance berween the Calcutta leaders and their east Bengali followers, which according to Rajat Ray, was "nothing less than a revolution in the political structure of Bengal society"." The agitation against the partition had started in 1903, but became stronger and more organised after the scheme was finally announced and implemented in 1905. The initial aim was to secure the annulment of partition, but it soon enlarged into a more broad-based movement, known as the Swadeshi movement, touching upon wider political and social issues. Sumit Sarkar (1973) has identified four major trends in Bengal Swadeshi, namely, the moderate trend, constructive swadeshi, political extremism and revolutionary terrorism. Periodisation of these trends, he argues, is not possible as all the trends were present more or less simultaneously throughout the period.

To summarise Sarkar's exposition here, the moderates began to criticise the partition scheme ever since it was announced in 1903. Assuming that the British would be amenable to arguments, through prayers, petitions and public meetings they sought to revise the scheme in its formative stage. But when they failed to do so and the partition was announced in 1905, they took the first initiative to transform the narrow agitation into a wider swadeshi movement. For the first time they went beyond their conventional political methods and Surendranath Banerjea at a meeting in Calcutta on 17 July 1905 gave a call for the boycott of British goods and institutions. At another mass meeting at Calcutta Town Hall on 7 August a formal boycott resolution was passed, which marked the beginning of the swadeshi movement. This was also the first rime that the moderates tried to mobilise other than the literate section of the population; some of them participated in the national education movement; some of them even got involved in labour strikes. But their political philosophy remained the same, as they only sought to pressurise British parliament to secure an annulment of partition and could not conceptualise boycott as a step towards the regeneration of national economy or start a full-scale passive resistance. As a reaction, a new trend developed with emphasis on self-reliance, village level organisation and constructive programmes to develop indigenous or swadeshi alternatives for foreign goods and institutions. By 1905, as Sarkar demonstrates, rwo main currents were visible in this extremist

minus of course his insistence on non-violence. This political programme obviously required mass mobilisation and religion was looked at by leaders like Aurobindo Ghosh as a means re reach the masses. Religious revivalism therefore was a main feature of this new politics. *Bhagavadgita* became a source of spiritual inspiration for the swadeshi volunteers and Hindu religious symbols, usually *sakta* imageries, were frequently used to mobilise the masses. But, as Barbara Southard (1980) has shown, this also alienated the Muslims and failed to attract the lower caste peasants, many of whom were *Yaishnauites.*

The other method of mass mobilisation was to organise *samitis.* Prior to the banning of the five principal sarnitis in 1909 they were engaged in various forms of mobilising efforts, such as moral and physical training, philanthropic work, propagation of the swadeshi message, organisation of the swadeshi craft, education, arbitration courts etc. But these mass mobilisation efforts ultimately failed as the membership of the samitis did not extend much beyond the ranks of educated bhadralok and this high caste Hindu gentry leadership alienated the lower caste peasantry by often using their coercive power. And not just physical coercion that was used; the Swadeshi leaders rampantly deployed the tool of social coercion or social boycott+exerted through caste associations, professional bodies and nationalist organisations-to punish collaborators or to produce consent among the reluctant parricipants.[74] The latter's reluctance was often because of the divergence of interests with those of the leaders who claimed to represent them. Swadeshi alternatives were often more expensive than British goods; national schools were not adequate in number. Moreover, some of the lower-caste peasants, like the Rajbansis in north Bengal or the Namasudras in the east, had developed around this time aspirations for social mobility and self-respect, which the Swadeshi movement, devoid of any social programme, failed to accommodate or even recognise.[75] The other method of mass mobilisation of the swadeshis was to organise labour strikes, primarily in the foreign owned companies. But here too the nationalists could penetrate only into the ranks of white-collar workers, while the vast body of Hindustani labour force as well as the plantation labour remained untouched by such nationalist efforts." It was primarily because of this failure of mass mobilisation that the boycott movement failed to affect British imports into India.*n* By 1908 political extremism had definitely declined, giving way to revolutionary terrorism. But certainly another contributory factor behind this decline was the Surat Split of 1907.

army with help from Germany or Japan began to appear. Rash Behari Bose operating from Lahore tried to organise an army revolt throughout north India, but failed to evoke any response from the sepoys and ultimately fled to Japan. In Bengal, the revolutionaries united under the leadership of jatin Mukherjee tried to smuggle in arms from Germany, but the amateurish attempt ultimately ended in an uneven battle with the British police at Balasore in Orissa. The unbound repression of the government at this period, freely using the new wartime Defence of India Act (1915), made terrorist attacks more and more infrequent.[89] But the spectre of revolutionary violence did not disappear at all and it made the Sedition Committee to draft in 1918 the draconian Rowlatt bills, which inflamed Mahatma Gandhi into action and to initiate a new phase in Indian politics, where the central focus would shift from violence to non-violence, from elite action to mass agitation.

5.4. MUSLIM POLITICS AND THE FOUNDATION OF THE MUSLIM LEAGUE

The mainstream Indian nationalism, which was growing under the aegis of the Indian National Congress-and which, as we have seen previously, failed to maintain its separation from the blooming Hindu nationalism—was first contested by the Muslims. However, in the late nineteenth century, the Muslims were by no means a homogeneous community with a discernible political opinion. In the whole of India, including the princely states, they constituted 19.7 per cent of the population in 1881; but there were significant regional variations in their distribution. In the United Provinces the Muslims constituted a minority, being slightly more than 13 per cent of the population; but in Punjab, on the other hand, they were a majority, accounting for slightly more than 51 per cent of the population;[90] in Bengal, the census of 1872 revealed to everybody's surprise that the Muslims represented nearly half of the population (49.2 per cent).[91] Apart from such dissimilarities in demographic characteristics, there were also other important differences in the position and composition of the Muslim community spread over the subcontinent, such as, most significantly, sectarian differences (Shia-Sunni), linguistic barriers and economic disparities. The colonial authorities while defining the indigenous society for administrative management ignored such demographic incongruities and diversity of status. So also the finer distinctions in regional philosophical orientations of south Asian Islam were ignored and an image of a homogeneous "religiopolitical community" was conjured up. A section of

the Muslim population, writes Mushirul Hasan, also "began to see themselves in the colonial image of being unified, cohesive, and segregated from the Hindus". They Started homogenising such myths to construct a Muslim community identity that was later enlarged into Muslim nationhood.[92]

The evolution of a politicised Muslim communitarian identity in the late nineteenth century, it is true, was not entirely in response to initiatives from above. But we should nevertheless keep in mind the new institutionalised knowledge of social taxonomy that colonial rule offered and the new public space it created in setting a context for such cultural constructions, which could later be so easily connected to wider political projects. The major premise of colonial cognition of Indian society was the theme of "differentiation",[93] which was traced, mapped and enumerated through various official ethnographic studies and finally, since 1872, through decennial census reports. The Indian colonial census, unlike its British predecessor, made religion its fundamental ethnographic category for ordering and classifying demographic and developmental data. Each census report sought to give concrete and recognisable shape to the religious communities, by discussing the numerical size of such groups, their percentage to the whole population, relative or absolute decline and geographic distribution, indicating their majority or minority status in each region and in the country as a whole. The break-up of literacy and occupational statistics according to religion provided an apparently objective picture of the relative or comparative material and social conditions of each religious community. The result of this census taxonomy was the new concept of "religion as a community". Religion did no longer mean just a set of ideas, but came to be identified with "an aggregate of individuals united by formal official definition", sharing supposedly the same characteristics, and conscious of their comparative demographic as well as socio-economic position vis-a-vis other communiries.[94] It was this universalised knowledge which made a difference between pre-colonial localised relations between religious groups and colonial competition and conflict among subcontinental religious communities. For, this colonial knowledge of a redefined religion was incorporated into every structure that the state created, every opportunity that it offered to the colonial subjects—from educational facilities, public employment, representation in local self-governing bodies to entry into the expanded legislative councils. However much the government trumpeted the secular character of this public space, and confine religion to the private, the boundaries remained highly permeable and it was within this context that the relationship

between religious groups were reconstituted in the late nineteenth century. As Hindu mobilisation made progress, it also simultaneously sculpted and vilified its 'Other', the Muslims. The latter too began to discover their community identity, informed by their common religion and an invented shared past. How an aggressive Arya Samaj movement contributed to the counter-mobilisation of the Muslims in urban Punjab, we have already seen earlier. In the countryside too Islam penetrated rural politics in the nineteenth century through such intermediaries as the *sajjad nishins, pirs* and the *ulama.* ss However, so far as the aJl-India Muslim politics was concerned, its leadership and main impetus in the late nineteenth century came primarily from the United Provinces (previously North-Western Provinces and Awadh), and to a lesser extent from Bengal; so it is on these two areas that we will focus more intensively in this section.

So far as the Bengal Muslims were concerned, as it has been shown in some recent studies,[96] they were a highly fragmented group, vaguely united by a common allegiance to the essentials of the Islamic faith. There were considerable economic differences within the community, with a minority of large landed magnates at the top and a majority of poor peasants at the bottom. This also coincided with the significant cultural differentiation between the *ashraf* and the *ajlaf* (or *atrap)* sections within the community. The former were divided into two segments: the urban Urdu-speaking elites and the rural Urdu-Bengali speaking mofussil landlords. At the other end was the Bengali speaking peasantry known as the ajlaf. The two segments represented two distinct cultures. The elites represented a foreign culture: they spoke in Urdu and Hindustani, boasted of foreign racial origin and tried to preserve Delhi or Lucknow court culture. They were averse to manual labour in the same way as the Hindu bhadralok were, and looked at the indigenous Muslims with unabashed contempt. The lesser ashraf or the rural Muslim gentry were, however, closer to the Bengali-speaking peasantry in their language, manners and customs; yet there was very little social interaction between the two groups. The atrap or the ajlaf, on the other hand, were the common mass of peasantry, mainly residing in the swampy low-lying areas of cast Bengal. How Islam could spread among the masses of Bengal is a question that has now two plausible historical answers, as opposed to the previous, now rejected, social emancipation theory of conversion of the low caste Hindus. Richard Eaton argues that as the frontiers of cultivation expanded between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries in eastern Bengal-away

from the core of Brahmanic civilisation-Islam also spread as the "religion of the plough", bringing local people gradually into its fold. This Islamisation did not take place at one stroke, but as a gradual process slowly absorbing the colonisers of the land, who were not yet touched or only just slightly touched by Hinduism. The creation of a Muslim peasantry in Bengal was therefore not the result of any large-scale "conversion", but of gradual incorporation of people residing at the periphery of Brahmanical civilisation.[97] Asim Roy (1983), on the other hand, has argued that under the leadership of a group of "cultural mediators", consisting of a section of Bengali-speaking Muslim literati and religious preachers (pirs), Islam in Bengal in the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries acquired a syncretistic face by borrowing generously from local religious and cultural traditions. This reconstructed Islamic great tradition was more acceptable to the masses, as it resolved the problem of dualism between the Persianised and Arabic Islamic high culture of the ashraf and the Bengali culture of the ajlaf peasants.

Coming to the more modern period, the Muslim community in Bengal, unlike the Hindus, clearly lacked a sizeable educated professional intermediary group, which could close the hiatus between the two sections of their population in the newly instituted colonial public space. This was because of their backward position in educational status both in absolute numbers as well as in relative terms vis-a-vis the Hindus. In 1874-75, the Muslims constituted only 29 per cent of the school-going population in Bengal as against 70.1 per cent Hindus. They had even lesser share at the higher levels of education: in 1875 the Muslims represented 5.4 per cent of the college students, as against 93.9 per cent Hindus; and only 1.50 per cent of the Muslim literates were English-knowing, compared with 4.40 per cent among the Hindus. And this poor representation in education was reflected also in the employment situation: in 1871 the Muslims constituted only 5.9 per cent of the government officials in Bengal proper, while the Hindus accounted for 41 per cent.[98] Many reasons have been offered to explain this Muslim backwardness, such as the vanity of the ashraf as a humiliated ruling class, their economic decline following the Permanent Settlement, supersession of Persian by English as the official language in 1837, their religious aversion to an un-Islamic education etc. But we cannot explain this phenomenon by only looking at the ashraf segment that constituted only a tiny minority within the community. The majority were the poor cultivators who shared the general apathy towards education and whenever they sent their children to school, they preferred the

indigenous, less expensive traditional institutions, like the *maktabs* and *madrassahs*. This explains to a large extent the underrepresentation of the Muslims in Western education. This also indicates that the problems of the Muslim peasantry were different: they constituted a disadvantaged majority in the eastern parts of Bengal where land holding was largely monopolised by the Hindus. The "backwardness" of the two segments of Muslim population had thus been of two different nature; it was only the colonial stereotyping, propounded through books like W.W. Hunter's *The Indian Mussa/mans* (1871), which mistakenly presented the image of a homogeneous community, suffering from "backwardness" in education and employment. The interests of the ashraf section were thus presented as the interests of the entire community and it was on this stereotype that Muslim politics was eventually to construct itself.

The situation in north India was slightly different. As it was the centre of Mughal rule, the Muslim elites here constituted a privileged minority, which was gradually losing ground to the Hindus during the British period. There were some large landed magnates, like the Awadh taluqdars, who controlled one-fifth of the land in the United Provinces. Not many of them were however in business, which was largely dominated by the Hindus. But the Muslims were well represented in high administrative jobs since the Mughal days and this predominance continued into the early British period. As late as 1882, the Muslims held as many as 35 per cent of government jobs in UP, with a fair share of high and influential positions as well. But as under British rule English came to replace Persian as the official language, the Muslims began to lose their position of power and influence to the Hindus, who could adapt to the new official environment more quickly. Their position in the subordinate executive and judicial services declined from 63.9 per cent in 1857 to 45.1 per cent in 1886–87 and to 34.7 per cent in 1913, whereas the Hindus improved their representation in these services from 24.1 per cent to 50.3 per cent to 60 per cent during the same time span.[99] In other words, in course of a little more than half a century, the relative position of the two communities in the public services had just been reversed. These north Indian Muslim elites, representing the heritage of Mughal aristocratic culture, were also separated from the Muslim masses, and unlike their Bengali counterparts, they were at odds with the ulama, who exercised considerable influence over the peasantry. The traditional theocratic order was in conflict with the British rule, which had threatened the traditional system and their own predominance. The elites on the other hand had accepted

subordination and were trying to adjust to the new social realities of British rule. The Muslims of north India were thus divided along many lines. Francis Robinson has depicted the UP Muslims as "more a multiplicity of interests than a cornmunity't.P? David Lelyveld has argued that this was a legacy of the Mughal social structure of asymmetrical hierarchical kinshiplike alliances, linked separately to the imperial dynasty, but rarely experiencing any horizontal solidarity across ethnic, racial or family identities.!" It was this segmented society which in the late nineteenth century gradually evolved a common identity or a sense of belonging to a *qaum,* with a manifest destiny. In all the regions the Muslims suffered from a sense of relative deprivation in comparison with the Hindus, although this feeling was shared differently by the richer and poorer sections of the community. Gradually, however, when the political mobilisation of the Muslims began, the interests of the peasants came to be subordinated to the interests of the elites, which were projected as the interests of the entire community.

Among the Bengal Muslims a distinct Muslim identity had been developing at a mass level from the early nineteenth century through various Islamic reform movements. These movements rejected the earlier syncretism and sought to lslamise and Arabicise the culture, language and daily habits of the Muslim peasants by purging whatever they thought to be of un-Islamic origin. This gave the lower orders or ajlaf a sense of social mobility. They could think of their mythical foreign or Arabic origin and could feel a sense of identity with the upper-class sharif Muslims. This was developed through various agencies, such as the itinerant *mullahs,* the *bahas* (or religious) meetings and the *anjumans* or local associations. No initiative of the elites was directly involved in the growth of this Muslim consciousness among the masses, but this certainly helped them in political mobilisation and in strengthening their argument about separate Muslim interests.P! The elite leaders soon linked this new sentiment to their relative backward condition and the need to organise themselves as a political pressure group to demand their just share of the institutional opportunities created by colonial rule. The first Muslim organisation in Bengal was the Mohammedan Association or the Anjuman-i-Islami, established in 1855 with two-fold objective of promoting the interests of the community and preaching loyalty to the British. In a petition to the Lieutenant Governor it demanded "no exclusive privilege, but a fair field" to compete on equal terms with the Hindus. To ensure this it advocated special measure to spread education, expressed loyalty to the Raj and condemned the revolt of 1857.[103]

The essentials of Muslim politics had thus taken shape in Bengal even before the more well known Sayyid Ahmed Khan's movement was started in UP. It soon took the form of a modernisation campaign started around the middle of the nineteenth century. It gathered more momentum in the 1860s and developed two distinct strands. Abdul Latif Khan and his Mohammedan Literary Society (1863) stood for Western education within the traditional Islamic education system, retaining full emphasis on Arabic and Persian learning. Sayyid Amir Ali and his Central National Mohammedan Association (1877-78), on the other band, advocated a total reorganisation of Muslim education on Western and secular model or total Anglicisation of Muslim education. And although initially the Bengali Muslim elites had demanded a "fair field" and not exclusive privileges, they gradually changed their position and in this they were encouraged by the colonial bureaucracy. Hunter's book in 1871 had put forth the thesis that it was the exclusion of the Muslims from the government-sponsored education system and civil employment that was mainly responsible for greater popular appeal of the anti-British Wahabi and Faraizi movements. A faulty thesis though it was, he advocated on its basis a policy of special government favour for the Muslims in matters of education and employment. The Government of India Resolution of 7 August set the trend by providing increased state assistance for Muslim educational institutions. The policy was further reaffirmed in Lord Northbrook's Resolution of 13 June 1875 and finally endorsed by the Education Commission, which provided for special provision for Muslim education as a matter of justice. The Central National Mohammedan Association (CNMA) in a number of memoranda in 1882 and 1888 also demanded special favour and not just fair justice in matters of employment in government services. The government also endorsed this policy for the political exigency of rallying the Muslims as a counterpoise against the rising tide of Indian nationalism, which was predominantly Hindu in participation. This policy of providing protection to the Muslims to ensure their proper representation in government services was first initiated in a Resolution of July 1885. It received a concrete shape in the circular of 1897, which provided that two-thirds of vacancies in Subordinate Executive Services were to be filled up by nomination to secure a balance between the communities. The policy was finally institutionalised in the partition of Bengal, which created a new province in the Muslim dominated eastern Bengal to ensure for them a greater share of power.P'

in no time the anti-partition agitation appeared in Muslim consciousness as an anti-Muslim campaign. Only the professional and commercial people among them who were centred at Calcutta and whose interests were directly affected by the partition remained the supporters of the movement. The rest of the Bengali Muslim society, both the elites and their peasant followers, had begun to pull in a different direction.

If the anjumans prepared the Bengali Muslims for activities in the colonial public space, in north India in the late nineteenth century a variety of locally instituted bodies, such as anjumans, neighbourhood akhras, festival committees and so on got involved in popular cultural activities that gradually constructed the cultural identities based on a symbolic religious vocabulary that demarcated the boundaries between communities. Contestation over sacred public space or ceremonies led to communal riots between Hindus and Muslims, and there was no dearth of them-in Bareilly in the 1870s, in Agra in the 1880s and finally the cow-protection riots in the 1890s. Such expressions of "relational community"-bound by shared values and symbolic idioms-in a localised public arena, argues Sandria Freitag, could later be enlarged into broader and more abstract "ideological community" that became operational in institutional politics at a subcontinental level.[106] And if such popular cultural activities provided for a behavioral text of identity formation, there were also some other implements of colonial modernity, which provided for the construction of a literary discursive field for the formation of a communitarian ideology or "identity as culture". In north India in the late nineteenth century, as Ayesha Jalal points out, a vibrant regional press and a flourishing Urdu popular poetry were contributing towards the crafting of what she calls a "religiously informed cultural identity" for the Muslims of United Provinces and Punjab. And since poetry was also read in public recitals or *mushairas,* it had the potential to bridge the hiatus between elites and the masses.!" Such a reconstituted cultural identity-or an "ideological community"-based on imaginatively shared values and interests, could later be deployed in the institutional politics of identity. But so far as the north Indian Muslims were concerned, central to this transformatory process were Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan and his Aligarh movement.

Sir Sayyid started a modernisation movement among the Muslims and founded for this purpose the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College in Aligarh in 1875. As David Lclyveld has shown, his political philosophy revolved round the idea that Indian society was

stand. This particular trend in Muslim politics was patronised by the British bureaucracy. Particularly significant was the role of Theodore Beck, the European principal of the Aligarh College, who formed in 1888 the Indian Patriotic Association to oppose Congress and to plead for government patronage for the Muslims. In 1893 the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental Defence Association was formed, once again with Beck's encouragement, to check the growing popularity of the Congress and to organise Muslim public opinion against it. So Aligarh movement under Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan and his Aligarh College developed in opposition to Congress-led nationalism and in loyalty to the British Raj, which was conceived as a legitimate successor to the Mughal empire.

However, Sir Sayyid's leadership was never universally accepted in the north Indian Muslim community. The ulama certainly did not like his thrust towards westernisation, which seemed to threaten their pre-eminence in Muslim society. As opposed to his modernism and rationality, they invoked Islamic universalism and exdusivism. There were men like Jamaluddin al-Afghani who were rabid anricolonialist and did not like Sir Sayyid's loyalism. He was ridiculed for his imitative Western ways and unabashed championing of specific class interests. By the late 1880s many Muslims in north India were tilting towards the Congress, while in 1887 Badruddin Tyabji of Bombay had become its first Muslim president. By the late 1890s, many of the Urdu newspapers in Punjab were asserting that the Aligarh School "did not represent the Indian Muhammadans".[110] After Sir Sayyid's death in 1898, even the younger generation at Aligarh became restless, as they began to feel that they were losing out because they were not properly organised and hence could not voice their demands effectively. As a result, they gradually began to deviate from the existing tradition of Aligarh politics. For example, the earlier politicians of Sir Sayyid's generation had kept the ulama at arm's length in favour of the Western-educated intelligentsia. The politics of this period was confined to what Lelyveld has called "kachari-linked family groups" who deployed their Muslim identity only in self-defence.'!' But by contrast, the younger leaders like Muhammad Ali and Shaukat Ali, were profoundly influenced by the ulama, like Maulana Abdul Bari, and through their influence they rediscovered the inspiration of Islam as a mobilising force. This resulted in what may be called a gradual Islamisation of Muslim politics. The younger leaders also started deviating from the loyalist stand of Sayyid Ahmed and partly responsible for this was Lieutenant Governor Macdonnell's unsympathetic policies towards the

United Provinces Muslims. He preferred the Hindus to the Muslims, it was alleged, and this preference was reflected in the Nagri Resolution of 18 April 1900, which recognised the Nagri script, along with Persian, for official use in the courts. This sparked off, as mentioned earlier, what is often referred to as the Hindi-Urdu controversy, as language now became a trope for community honour and a focus for mobilisation. And soon to this campaign was added a demand for an all-India Muslim University as a cultural centre of pan-Indian Islam. But the leaders of the older generation, like Mohsin-ul-Mulk, soon backed out of this agitation, as Macdonnell threatened to cut off grants for the AJigarh College. So the younger generation was left alone to protest against discriminatory government policies and in no rime they realised the inadequacies of Sayyid Ahmed's loyalist politics; some of them even threatened to join the Congress. So the older leaders and the colonial bureaucracy now felt the urgent need for a political organisation for the Muslims in order to mobilise the community against the Congress and also to offer an independent political platform, as many of the Bengal Punjab and Bombay Muslim leaders were not prepared to accept AJigarh's leadership.

The Bengali Muslims had been coming closer to their north Indian co-religionists since 1899, when the annual Mohammedan Educational Conference was held at Calcutta. But the events of 1906 brought them even closer, though not entirely on cordial terms. In eastern Bengal the resignation of Lt. Governor Bampfylde Fuller, known for his pro-partition and pro-Muslim sympathies, and the possibility of partition itself being rescinded, made the Bengal Muslim leadership panicky. And then the Secretary of State Morley's budget speech of 1906 indicated that representative government was going to be introduced in India. This alarmed Muslim leaders across the board, as they thought that in the new self-governing bodies they would be swayed by the Hindu majority who were now well organised under the Congress. This provided the context for the Simla deputation of 1 October 1906 to the Governor General Lord Minto. For a long time the prevalent theory was that it was a "command performance", entirely stage-managed by the British, through the European principal of the Aligarh College, W.A.J. Archbald. But recent analyses show that the initiative had come from the AJigarh veterans, like Mohsin-ul-Mulk, the secretary of the Aligarh College, who wanted to assuage the feelings of younger Muslims; and it was hoped that the Bengal Muslims would also join any such deputation. But in the end the grievances of the Bengal Muslims were bypassed for being too sensitive or divisive and no Bengali joined the

deputation to Simla. The petition, which the Aligarh leaders drafted, represented only their interests. It depicted the Muslims as a separate community with political interests different from those of the Hindus and therefore having legitimate claim to minority rights to proportional representation in the representative bodies and public employment. The deputation was given a patient hearing by the viceroy, and he also assured the east Bengalees that their rights would not be jeopardised. [112]

The success of the deputation was a tremendous morale booster to Muslim politics; yet mere verbal assurances were hardly expected to satisfy the younger Muslims. They had long been feeling the need for a separate political organisation for themselves; a religious orientation of the movement was also on their agenda, as there has now been, as Lelyveld (1978) describes it, a clear shift of emphasis from qaum (community based on common descent) to *ummah* (community based on allegiance to a common faith). The thirty-five delegates at Simla therefore decided to organise the community for independent political action to secure for themselves a recognition from the government as "a nation within a nation", to use the words of Aga Khan, the leader of the delegation.[113] The next annual Mohammedan Educational Conference was scheduled to be held in December 1906 in Dacca, the capital of the new province of Eastern Bengal and Assam. So it was decided that this opportunity would be taken to launch a new Muslim party. The situation in Dacca was already volatile. The nationalist agitation against the partition of Bengal had gained an unexpected momentum and there was widespread fear among the Bengali Muslims that the government might succumb to the nationalist pressure and annul the partition to the disadvantage of the Muslims. There was already a proposal from Nawab Salimullah of Dacca, the leader of the east Bengali Muslims, about the formation of a political party for the Muslims and this could be an excellent starting point for further discussion. So it was in this Dacca Educational Conference on 30 December 1906 that a new party was launched and it was called the All India Muslim League. Its professed goals were to safeguard the political rights and interests of the Muslims, to preach loyalty to the British and to further the cause of inter-communal amity. The Muslim supporters of the Congress immediately tried to counteract this move, but in vain; the majority of the educated Muslims had already decided to tread along a different path.

Until about 1910 for all practical purposes the AJJ India Muslim League maintained its existence only as an adjunct of the

Muslim identity from minority status to nationhood took a long and tortuous trajectory and in the meanwhile the relationship between the League and the Indian National Congress remained on shaky grounds. Between 1920 and 1924 they launched a joint agitation over the issue of Khilafat, but since then their ways progressively drifted apart. We will trace that story further in the subsequent chapters.

NOTES

1. de Barry 1958.Il: 115.
2. For more details sec Chandra et al. 1989: 115-16.
3. For details see Chandra 1966; and Chandra ct aJ. 1989: 91–101.
4. de Barry 1958.11: 116.
5. Mehrotra 1971: 412.
6. Ghosh 1960: 11.
7. Mclane 1977.
8. Ghosh 1960: 11.
9. Lelyveld 1978: 305-8.
10. Chandra et al. 1989: 75.
11. Mclane 1977: 325.
12. Sarkar 1992.
13. Partha Chattcrjee 1992.
14. Sarkar 1992.
15. Raychaudhuri 1999: 121.
16. A.P. Sen 1993.
17. Raychaudhuri 1989.
18. Kaviraj 1995.
19. For details on this case, see Chandra 1998.
20. Sarkar 2001: 197, 222.
21. Hcimsath 1964.
22. A.P. Sen 1993; Sarkar 2001.
23. Wolpert 1962.
24. Sarkar: 2001: 225.
25. Sinha 1995.
26. Heimsath 1964: 173.
27. Van dcr Veer 1994: 66.
28. Mclane 1977: 276-79.
29. Van der Veer 1994: 86-94.
30. Mclane 1977: 280-81; for more on Kuka Sikhs, see Obcroi 1994: 194-201.
31. Robb 1992.
32. Yang 1980.
33. Robb 1992.
34. McLane 1977: 322.
35. Robb 1992: 134.

36. Wolpert 1962: 43.
37. Mclane 1977: 325.
38. Brass 1974.
39. See Dalmia 1997 for more details.
40. King 1999: 156 and passim.
41. Cashman 1970.
42. Quoted in Wolpert 1962: 80.
43. Ibid.
44. Cashman 1970.
45. Frykenberg 1997.
46. Thapar 1997.
47. Frykenberg 1997.
48. Zavos 2000: 74-75.
49. Nandy 1998: 74.
50. Ibid: 24-25, 28, 103.
51. Raychaudhuri 1989.
52. A.P. Sen 1993: 8-12.
53. Kaviraj 1995.
54. Chatterjee 1986: 75 and passim.
55. Nandy 1998: 24-25.
56. Jaffrelot 1996: 13.
57. Sarkar 1997: 20.
58. Fox 1985: 168-71.
59. See Oberoi 1994 for more details.
60. Ray 1984: 165-70.
61. Goradia 1993: 167–70.
62. Nandy 1998: 24-25.
63. See Chowdhury 1998 for more details.
64. Tripathi 1967: 75 and passim.
65. Partha Chatterjee 1986.
66. Chatterjee 1995.
67. Kaviraj 1995.
68. Neogy 1987.
69. Sarkar 1973: 12–14.
70. Curzon quotations from Sarkar 1973: 15-20; Tripathi 1967: 95-98.
71. Cronin 1977.
72. For details, see Sarkar 1973: 9-20.
73. Ray 1984: 142, 150.
74. Guha 1992: 76-103.
75. Bandyopadhyay 1987: 88.
76. Sumit Sarkar 1984.
77. Tripathi 1967: 139-40.
78. Ooradia 1993: 249.
79. Catanach 1984.
80. Ray 1984: 170.

81. Ibid: 173.
82. Hardiman 1993: 52- 53.
83. Wolpert 1962.
84. See Chowdhury 1998.
85. Details in Sarkar 1973.
86. Heehs 1993.
87. For this argument, see Chakrabarri 1992.
88. Neogy 1987.
89. Chakrabarti 1992.
90. Seal 1968: 26.
91. Ahmed 1996: 1–2.
92. Hasan 1996: 193 and passim.
93. Cohn 1986: 284 and passim.
94. Jones 1981: 84 and passim.
05. Gilmartin 1988: 39-72.
96. Ahmed 1996; Roy 1983.
97. Eaton 1993: 306-11.
98. Ahmed 1996: 134-35,153.
99. Robinson 1974: 23, 46 and passim.
100. Ibid: 28.
101. Lelyveld 1978: 20-26, 344.
102. For details, see Ahmed 1996.
103. Maitra 1984: 78-82.
104. For details, see Maitra 1984.
105. For more see Ahmed 1996.
106. Freitag 1989.
107. jalal 2000: 44-48 and passim.
108. Lelyveld 1978: 311-12, 343-45.
109. Ibid: 317.
110. Jalal 2000: 68, 73, 77, 93-94.
111. Lelyveld 1978: 342.
112. Robinson 1974: 143-47.
113. Quoted in Maitra 1984: 272.
114. Mairra 1984: 279-81.
115. Lelyveld 1978: 338.
116. Robinson 1974: 149-52.