Problems in Development of Nationalism in India

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1. R. I. Cashman, *The Myth of the Lokamanya* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975) 1.

IN TODAY'S WORLD, political leaders often face the task of unifying and building nations. Fostering national unity requires action along several lines: creating a broadly based sense of common cultural heritage, strengthening agreement on shared, national goals, and increasing national, as opposed to regional, loyalty. These tasks require rigorous leadership and commitment, as well as the curbing of divisive elements in structure and other areas. Some of these elements are of long standing and may reflect basic features of the societies in question. Divisive tendencies in fact serve to increase the primacy of effective measures to forge unity. Historically, myths have been used to achieve this. In this context, the word *myth* is used, as R. I. Cashman puts it,

> *in the anthropological sense . . . it may be defined as the 'large, controlling image'. . . founded in man's experience, and which forms an essential element of a group state of mind or consciousness. A myth reflects the manner in which a community . . . defines itself vis-a-vis the present, its past history, and future prospects. . . . It is a powerful construct because it represents the sum of what a group wants to believe about itself.*[1]

In this sense, myths may serve to draw on favorable societal traits and to mobilize the public around requisite symbols, uniting the public—or at least major strata thereof—in support of stated goals.[2]

Nationalism may also be viewed as a movement of collective behavior that becomes, in a given society, overtly important in a particular milieu and at a certain point in time. That raises for the social historian the analytical question, ". . . why do collective episodes occur *where* they do, *when* they do, and in the *ways* they do?" N. J. Smelser, who posed this question, seeks to answer it in his *Theory of Collective Behavior.*[3]

Nationalism is by no means a recent phenomenon, dating back as it does at least to the American and French Revolutions. The past fifty

years have been host—or hostage—to a proliferation of the movements of collective behavior we label "nationalism." Since the end of World War II, we have witnessed many such movements—frequently traumatic at least in their inception—in a variety of new nations. Despite the evident importance of these movements, the level of analysis to which they have normally been subjected remains at best inadequate. A survey of extant literature on nationalism in the non-Western world suggests the sway of idiosyncratic and anecdotal accounts, too often subjective in character or couched in elusive phrases, that imply that collective behavior "flows from sources beyond empirical evaluation."[4]

It is not my intention to deny the rich and variegated complexity of the social process or of the social milieu in which the collective movement we call "nationalism" unfolds. Nor do I suggest that all or most nationalist movements originate from the same materials or the same social experiences. Each unfolds within a discrete and in some ways unique historical setting. Each reflects the past circumstances and distinctive history of the society that has produced it. At the same time, such movements are not "spontaneous," nor are they predominantly idiosyncratic. Collective movements *reflect* the social process that spawns and shapes them. Changes in the external environment, in relevant structural characteristics, in the stresses and pressures to which the group is subjected, or in the kinds of "repression" the movement faces, all help to shape the development of the movement from stage to stage. The process, though complex, is by no means whimsical. Since major problems in the contemporary international scene clearly involve nationalist movements in present or potential conflict, it is important to grasp their antecedents, their characters, and their implications for interstate relations. It is also necessary to come to grips with their dynamics.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO, in 1885, the Indian National Congress, progenitor of Indian nationalism, was founded. The first annual session of the National Congress took place in Bombay—India's second largest city—during the final week of the year. Seventy-two delegates from all parts of the Indian Empire assembled to proclaim their nationalist creed, to enunciate their grievances, and to demand redress. Born in a colony, under the autocratic and unrepresentative rule of a foreign power, the Congress expressed anticolonial grievances amid declarations of national unity and of a fervent desire for national progress and well-being.[5]

Concerning the growth of anticolonial nationalism in Asia and Africa, H. Brasted observes that

> *Elie Kedourie and other political analysts have argued that as nationalism was "conceived" and elaborated in Europe, the seed of self-determination was transplanted in India through a movement anti-pathetic to Empire. Hence, Indians disappointed and disillusioned with British rule were enabled to embrace an ideology that restored their self-esteem and which legitimized and channelled their disaffection.[6]*

2. On politicization and political mobilization processes, see R. I. Crane, ed., *Aspects of Political Mobilization in South Asia* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University: South Asia Program, 1976). See also Karl Deutsch, "Social Mobilization and Political Development," *American Political Science Review* 55 (1961): 493–514. Deutsch brought the modern study of processes of social and political mobilization to a new level of effectiveness.

3. N. J. Smelser, *Theory of Collective Behavior* (New York: Free Press, 1962) 1.

4. Smelser, *Collective Behavior.* See in particular chapters one, nine, and ten.

5. For discussion and evaluation of the origins and growth of Indian nationalism in the period prior to World War I, see P. C. Ghosh, *The Development of the Indian National Congress, 1892–1909,* 2nd ed. (Calcutta: K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1985); Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India, 1885–1947* (Bombay: Macmillan India, Ltd., 1985); J. T. McLane, *Indian Nationalism and the Early Congress* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977); R. N. Aggarwala, *National Movement and Constitutional Development of India* (Delhi: Metropolitan Book Company, 1956); R. C. Majumdar, *History of the Freedom Movement in India* (Calcutta: K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1962), vol. 1; K. K. Datta, *Renaissance, Nationalism and Social Change in Modern India* (Calcutta: Bookland Ltd., 1965); A. Parel, "Hume, Dufferin and the Origins of the Indian National Congress," *Journal of Indian History* 42, pt. III, no. 126 (December 1964): 707–15; R. I. Crane, "The Leadership of the Congress Party," in *Leadership and Political Institutions in India,* ed. R. L. Park and I. Tinker (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), 169–87; R. I. Crane, "Problems of Writing Indian History," in *Problems of Historical Writing in India,* ed. S. Gopal (New Delhi: India International Centre, 1963), 35–49.

6. H. Brasted, "Indian Nationalist Development," *Modern Asian Studies* 14, no. 1 (1980): 38. Brasted also argues that Ireland's nationalism and anti-British commitment played a major role in implanting similar sentiments in the minds of receptive educated Indians. He remarks that "Ireland consistently did most to advertise the nationalist idea and to demonstrate the means of political mobilization . . ." (ibid.). Without denying the importance of European ideas and models, it is necessary to emphasize the local molding of imported concepts to fit local conditions. This essay seeks to do that.

7. For more on the role and effects of higher Western education among Indians in the nineteenth century, and on its effect on the growth of nationalism, see R. I. Crane, "The Transfer of Western Education to India," in *The Transfer of Institutions*, ed. W. B. Hamilton (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1964), 108–38. See also B. T. McCully, *English Education and the Origins of Indian Nationalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940); B. M. Bhatia, *History and Social Development* (Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1974), vol. 1, *Elites in Modern India*; Barbara W. Flynn, "Indian Nationalist Organization and Ideology, 1883–1902: the Imperial Government versus the Western-educated Indians," (M.A. thesis, Duke University, Durham, N.C., 1969); S. R. Mehrotra, *Emergence of the Indian National Congress* (London: Vikas Publishers, 1971); V. P. Raghuvanshi, *Indian National Movement and Thought* (Agra: L. Agarwal, 1951).

Brasted's argument gains force from the fact that the founders and leaders of the Indian National Congress were drawn almost entirely from the ranks of the Westernized intelligentsia, products of the system of higher education brought into India by their British rulers. In 1857, the English East India Company, governing India under parliamentary supervision, established the new universities of Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras, modelled on the University of London. These universities hastened the creation of the new, Western-educated class that formulated and propagated Indian nationalism.[7]

It was, actually, the colonial system and regime in British India that created the basis for Indian nationalism, producing the grievances and the disillusionment that fed nationalism, and calling into being—for its own purposes—the educated "middle class" among whom anti-colonial nationalism spread. For at least thirty years after its birth in 1885, India's nationalist movement was led by men who rose to positions of some prominence and relative affluence—via Western education—under British rule. A number of them were barristers or solicitors, some were medical doctors, and some, subordinate officials serving under British administrators. A sprinkling of businessmen also took part, many of whom had gained some wealth and status under British colonial rule yet were, for various reasons, dissatisfied with certain aspects of colonial rule or with their prospects in a colonial economy. Educators and journalists from India's rapidly expanding indigenous press were also among the movement's leaders.[8] In fact, the press played a vital role in the articulation and diffusion of nationalist ideas and programs. The literate, Western-educated professional men—the Moderates as they were then called—who led the Congress prior to World War I were adept in use of press and platform to express their nationalist convictions and their proposals for reform. The annual sessions of the National Congress were geared to press coverage and to the exposition of Congress members' views on the leading public issues of the day.[9] The meetings of the Congress were extensively reported in the Indian-owned press, along with allied topics of political concern. As noted, the vernacular press diffused outward, in indigenous languages and local idiom, the major nationalist themes expressed in English during the annual Congress sessions. This spread the "message" among a wider, popular following and also translated it into the local symbols and idioms of more parochial audiences, unfamiliar, for the most part, with English language and culture. This was very important if the elite, English-educated leaders of the movement were to secure popular support for their cause. It was, in fact, vital to the growth of nationalism in India that the wide gap between the English-educated leaders and the rank-and-file Indian be bridged. Yet this problem continued to confront the Congress until at least the end of World War I and the rise to ascendancy after 1920 of Mohandas K. Gandhi. He transformed Indian nationalism into a popular, mass-based movement.

The Moderates who founded the Congress asked for gradual reform of the Indian administration through the increased participation of educated Indians in its upper levels and through an enlargement of the "representative" Indian element in the nascent legislative councils. They

also sought by petition to win a voice in the budget and an increase in the very limited powers of the legislative councils (whose members were largely nominated by the government).

IN ADDITION TO these basic goals, the Moderate leaders sought piecemeal reform on a varied list of constitutional issues (including an extension of the right of trial by jury to all Indians and a separation of the executive and judicial powers of the Indian Civil Service) and on certain administrative issues. They hoped such "boons" from the Supreme Government would ameliorate the conditions in British India that they found objectionable.

The Moderate leaders—men like Pherozeshah Mehta, G. K. Gokhale, or Mahadev Govind Ranade—were uniformly constitutionalists, committed to step-by-step reform. Many prominent Moderates, including K. T. Telang, argued that Indian society had to be reformed to enable an "enlightened" public to qualify—at some future date—for political responsibility. The Moderate-led Congress was, in fact, an exemplar of the "norm-oriented" collective protest movement as defined by Neil Smelser.[10]

In the theory of collective protest movements, the *norm-oriented movement* is characterized by an abiding commitment to the detailed, gradual reform of existing institutions through constitutional means. Such a movement exhibits no interest in a basic transformation of existing institutions. There are, in this theoretical construct, several distinct *types* of collective movement, each with its own antecedents, values, goals, and traits, and each arising and being fostered by a particular context. This construct presupposes that collective protest movements are multi-causal, and identifies a variety of causal factors drawn from complex social experience. The richness of this multi-causal theory is particularly useful in dealing with a nationalist movement that—almost by definition—had to endeavor to be "all things to all men."

The theory posits that for a collective movement to arise, the interaction of certain conditions, functioning within what is called a *value-added process,* is crucial. A value-added process is a process of development and change in which each stage in the growth of a movement of collective behavior acts as a necessary precondition for the next stage. In a value-added process one moves from more general delimiting features and conditions toward more specific ones. Each step in the process eliminates certain alternatives and creates more specific constraints for the remaining viable alternatives. Because each step in a value-added process serves as a necessary precondition for the next, analysing an actual social movement in this way enables us to ascertain its most likely outcomes and to grasp the factors that facilitated its course of development.

A variety of conditions (among them, strain, conduciveness, social control mechanisms, and techniques and modes of communication) are crucial in determining the thrust and shape of a movement of collective behavior. Of these, the presence of *strain,* or stress, in the soci-

8. The number, circulation, and influence of indigenous newspapers grew rapidly in British India after 1875. Most of the vernacular papers and some of the English language ones were owned and edited by educated Indians. A majority espoused nationalist grievances and objectives, while some actively supported the National Congress or other nationalist organizations. See R. I. Crane, "The Press and Local Associations as Manifestations of Change in Late Nineteenth Century Calcutta," in *Urban India,* ed. G. R. Gupta (New Delhi: Vikas Publishers, 1983), 193–221. See also Government of Bengal, "Particulars of Newspapers Published in the Lower Provinces and Assam in the Year 1886," (Confidential) National Archives of India; and W. H. Morris Jones, *The Government and Politics of India,* 3rd ed. (New York: Hillary, 1971).

9. Syracuse University's Bird Library holds on microfilm the complete, printed proceedings of the annual meetings of the Indian National Congress, 1885–1906. The annual proceedings, including all resolutions adopted, were uniformly in English. Most resolutions addressed specific reform proposals for the administration of British India.

10. Smelser, *Collective Behavior,* 270–312. A *norm-oriented movement* is defined as a political movement dedicated to the peaceful, piecemeal reform of existing institutions in a desirable direction.

ety is viewed as fundamental. Strain alone, however, does not necessarily lead to growth of a movement of collective behavior. Nor does strain lead to a particular *type* of collective behavior. Other relevant conditions, in a given context, lead the movement toward one or another specific outcome. Conditions of *conduciveness,* (for example, structural features) predispose the course of a movement's development along one path or another. Therefore, in studying a movement of collective behavior, it is necessary to investigate both the kinds of strains that have called the movement into being and the character of the structural features that shape the conduciveness exhibited by the social context within which the value-added process has to function.

The presence of other facilities can also help determine a movement's particular path of development. Extant facilities for political mobilization constitute an important conditioning factor in shaping collective movements. These facilities include the kinds of media available for diffusing ideas or prescriptions for action. In the study of collective movements, basic issues arise regarding the "mix" of elements of strain, types of conduciveness, the character of the facilities at hand, and the nature of the social and political controls faced by the movement.

THE THEORY OF COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOR, including its central analytical concept of the value-added process, holds that a particular "mix" of conditioning factors will transform a norm-oriented movement into a *value-oriented* one, fundamentally altering its course. If, for example, the socially accepted agencies of control suppress a norm-oriented movement, that suppression—if vigorous enough—materially facilitates transformation of the norm-oriented movement into a value-oriented movement. The latter, quite unlike a norm-oriented movement, is committed to a total overthrow of the existing regime, a deposition of existing dominant values in favor of new ones.

When a norm-oriented collective movement changes into a value-oriented movement the transformation is fundamental. The norm-oriented movement devotes its energies to diagnosing shortcomings in the existing system so as to *reform* the system in ways believed to be desirable. The value-oriented movement abandons interest in reform and leapfrogs past improvement to the creation of a new order. The "new" order, of course, may be the revival or reassertion of a vanished order, now reconstituted as the "ideal" way to order things.[11]

The issues posed by collective movement theory illuminate our understanding of the development of nationalism in India. The stresses underlying many Indians' dissatisfaction and disillusionment reflected the increasingly obvious disparity between colonial rhetoric and actual practice, as well as an increase in the weight of colonial domination. Moreover, colonial rule called into question basic traditional values and beliefs of Indian society. Western education, in particular, alienated its recipients, to some extent at least, from traditional norms and values. This caused or encouraged, among other things, a loss of self-esteem,

11. Smelser, *Collective Behavior,* 313–18, 326–29, 365–67. On such movements for total transformation, see M. Barkun, *Crucible of the Millenium* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1986) for a most insightful study of one major variety of the value-oriented movement that seeks to *transform* and radically change the existing system. Noteworthy strains of this variety of collective movement were expounded by some of the prominent leaders of the Extremist wing of Indian nationalists during the early years of this century, especially Sri Aurobindo.

a decline of confidence in long-established values, and the diminution or loss of group solidarity. These strains threatened basic social organization and equilibrium. Nationalism, it is posited, offered a "solution" for these strains, because nationalism reasserted and proclaimed the virtue—if not the rightful superiority—of the group under foreign domination.

Colonial rule created a framework of laws, codes, procedures, and opportunities for Indians. The conditions imposed by British rule within the political and administrative realm, as well as on the Indian economy, were crucial to the growth of Indian nationalism. Colonialism shaped the *arena* for politics and also many of the goals and expectations of the National Congress. The Moderates, of course, sought reform and progress along lines derived from British political thought and practice. They had no desire to change the system itself, asking instead for a larger and more effective voice for educated Indians in the governing institutions of British India. "Indianization" of the superior services (the Indian Civil Service, recruited in London) and of the nascent legislative bodies were prime desiderata for them.

DURING THE LAST THREE DECADES of the nineteenth century, imperial and colonial rivalries in the world at large increased perceptibly. These rivalries were aggravated by growing competition among major industrial powers for markets and for assured sources of essential raw materials. Great Britain's previously unchallenged industrial and maritime supremacy was undermined. As a consequence, Britain's own economic dependence upon a favored exploitative position in the Indian economy—and especially in trade—grew. The amount of British capital invested in India—largely through British Managing Agency Houses—also increased, and intensifying imperial rivalries in Africa and Asia enhanced the significance of the Indian Army for imperial defense. All these things raised Britain's stake in her control of India.

The growing sense of the importance of "empire" and of the need for resolute defense of British imperial interests—so vital a factor in the Second Afghan War—was accompanied by an increase in the number of British nonofficials in India. Noticeable, in this context, was the substantial rise in the number and proportion of British wives and their minor children resident in India. As numerous memoirs make clear, the growing number of wives in India had, in its own way, a negative effect on relations between the British and their Indian subjects, a fact painfully apparent in the Anglo-Indian uproar over the ill-fated Ilbert Bill (a proposed amendment to the code of criminal procedure that would have allowed an Indian magistrate to judge a criminal case involving a European).[12]

For a variety of reasons related to an enhanced sense of imperial mission (signalled by Queen Victoria's assumption of the title of Empress of India), intensification of British imperial control over India was accompanied by the growth of racial discrimination against Indians. A

12. The Ilbert Bill controversy of 1883 clearly showed Indians the strength of British intentions to keep them "in their place." The storm over the bill demonstrated not only the fear and dislike of British residents for the Indians they ruled but also the extent to which British administrators, including senior members of the Indian Civil Service, were prepared to overtly oppose equality and justice for Indians. Overt discrimination against educated Indians was further displayed when Lord Salisbury lowered the maximum age of candidates sitting for the civil service examinations in London, a measure flagrantly aimed at minimizing the chances of success in the examinations for Indian candidates. Such official acts, which also included Lord Lytton's discriminatory Arms Act and Vernacular Press Act, laid bare British opposition to measures meant to give Indians equality before the law and equal opportunity as subjects of the Crown. The pages of the vernacular press give ample evidence of the growing bitterness among literate Indians over these British government policies.

corollary of increased exploitation, this discrimination was exacerbated by growing friction between the Western-educated Indians and their British rulers. The collegiate curriculum in British India was, of course, based upon the curriculum of British universities, and inculcated core British values. Imbued with these ideas, Western-educated Indians began to assert their "rights" as British subjects, calling for equal treatment in employment and promotion and equality before the law. As Rajat Ray points out in his *Social Conflict and Political Unrest in Bengal, 1875–1927*, instances of overt racism in the High Court of Justice were particularly offensive to Indians. The vernacular press is rife with reports of European assaults upon Indians and of miscarriages of justice in magistrates' courts. As Ray makes clear, the European commercial community relied on the magistrates' courts to rule in their favor in any dispute with the natives. The Indian press complained of this bitterly. Overt racism led to Indian countermeasures, and conflict fed the fires of militancy in nationalist ranks.[13]

The assertion of Indian "rights" offended and alarmed many Europeans and increased the frequency of racial brawls. It was, however, the discrimination in employment, stifling their opportunities and frustrating their expectations, that most upset Indians.[14]

Earlier in the century it had appeared that doors were opening and opportunities mounting for Indians. After about 1875, however, it became painfully apparent that the increasing numbers of Western-educated Indians were competing for fewer and fewer opportunities. Professional and/or entrepreneurial elites ran into growing blockages and tightening limitations upon their career advancement. Dwindling opportunities and increased competition for the openings that were available heightened frustration and resentment in an environment of growing racial animosity. There were, of course, still collaborators among the Indians, those who benefitted from their engagement as agents of the British. Similarly, among the professional classes—called into being by British rule and Western education—there were the successful men whose status and emoluments depended largely upon British favor. There were also the Indian princes, notables, and great landlords (Zamindars or Talukdars) whose status and interests virtually dictated dependence on British rule and British law. These segments of Indian society profited from British rule and clung to it. Political and economic trends after about 1875, however, severely limited the number of Indians who could become "collaborators," except as clerks or subordinate office assistants. The rise from humble origins to rich and powerful positions that had not been uncommon before the Indian Mutiny came to be a rarity after 1875.

IN ADDITION TO THE overt changes in conditions and environment that faced Indians (especially Western-educated ones) after 1875, a related series of changes took place in the economic position of India and in Indian economic relations with Great Britain and the world economy. These shifts in secular economic trends began about

13. For a keen and insightful discussion of this growing racism and of the link between racism and colonial exploitation, see Rajat K. Ray, *Social Conflict and Political Unrest in Bengal, 1875–1927* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1984), 17–19, 21–29, 49–50, 95–105.

14. For a discussion of declining opportunities, increasing discrimination, and the growth in the ranks of the Western educated that sought those dwindling opportunities, see R. I. Crane, "The Transfer of Western Education to India," in *The Transfer of Institutions,* ed. W. B. Hamilton (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1964), 108–38. See also R. I. Crane, "Divergent Developments in Indian Nationalism, 1895–1905," in *Studies on Asia, 1962,* ed. R. Sakai (Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 1962), 1–15. The *Report* of the Government of India, Sedition Committee, 1918, Annexure 2, gives figures on "persons convicted of revolutionary crimes or killed in the commission of such crimes, 1907–1917." The great majority of such persons were *below* 30 years of age; almost 90 percent came from the *bhadralok* (higher castes), and almost all were students, clerks, unemployed, or holders of "white collar" posts. In Bengal, the bhadralok at that time comprised about .05 percent of the population. The *Report* makes it apparent that at least the most militant section of the Extremist movement was drawn heavily from among the lower *economic* echelon of the respectable bhadralok. The "passport" of Western education had given this group neither rank nor influence in the modern sector of the colonial society. Inflation cut into its members' very meager salaries.

1873 and affected not only India's economic relations with the rest of the British Empire, but also its domestic economy. In both areas, the changes for India and its people were for the worse. The hardening of British colonial policy vis-a-vis India–summarized briefly above– was closely linked to these secular trends as well as to enhanced imperial rivalries among the industrial powers.

For reasons that had very little if anything to do with India, a major change in the international economic order took place after 1873. In that year, the world market price of silver began a significant decline. The value of the Indian silver rupee therefore *fell* vis-a-vis £ sterling. In 1880, the rupee was worth 20.3/8d.; by 1892, it was worth only 14.5/8d, and soon thereafter, it fell as low as 12.5/8d. This depreciation of the rupee had significant–at times traumatic–effects on the Indian economy and especially on its vital import-export trade. The cost of manufactured goods imported into India (largely from the United Kingdom) increased. The Indian consumer had to pay more rupees for manufactured goods. At the same time, the *value* in the world market of Indian exports of raw materials fell, earning less foreign exchange. Intensifying the negative effects of the depreciation of the silver rupee were the uncertainty and instability caused by the *fluctuations* in the value of silver. This uncertainty had particularly strong effects on import-export trade. At times the short-run fluctuations and government efforts to prevent the continuing decline in the value of the rupee virtually paralyzed India's trade.

These changes hurt India in other important ways, too. The Government of India had large sterling liabilities in London. These sterling obligations included the "Home Charges" of the Government of India (G.O.I.). In 1872–73, these Home Charges cost the G.O.I. Rs. 16.6 *crores*. In 1894–95, the Home Charges cost the G.O.I. Rs. 28.9 crores.[15] This great increase in these payments put the Indian treasury and the Indian taxpayer at a distinct disadvantage. Not only could the burden of Home Charges not be reduced, it actually increased because the G.O.I. bowed to the pressure of the Indian Civil Service and granted its members an Exchange Compensation Allowance that artificially raised the sterling value of their rupees to protect their pensions and allowances. The fall in the value of the rupee and the fluctuations in value so reduced receipts from Indian exports that the government had only a limited ability to meet its sterling obligations. In addition, the fall in the value of the rupee retarded British investment in India, causing India to pay a higher price for imported British capital.[16]

In 1893, under pressure from the Secretary of State for India, the government of India decided on official action to stem the fall in the value of the rupee and to fix an arbitrary rate of exchange. The official ratio was fixed at 16d. to Rs.1, though the market price was then 14d. This was a radical change in currency policy. It eased the burden of the Home Charges on the Indian treasury and improved the situation of the Indian Civil Service. However, the new official rate of exchange required changes in the money supply. The government mints were closed and the amount of rupee currency in circulation was reduced. The resulting monetary "stringency" caused the Indian bank rate to

15. A *crore* equals 10 million rupees.

16. The adverse effects of the fall in the value of the rupee for Indians and the Indian economy are discussed in P. L. Malhotra, *Administration of Lord Elgin in India, 1894–99* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishers, 1979), 1–32, and Amiya K. Bagchi, *Private Investment in India, 1900–1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972). N. K. Sinha, in his *Economic History of Bengal* (Calcutta: K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1962), provides a valuable account of major trends and developments. The vernacular press became increasingly bitter toward British economic policies and the actions of the government of India that harmed Indian interests for imperial purposes. See also B. G. Gokhale, "Maharashtriyan Responses to the British Presence," in *British Imperial Policy in India and Sri Lanka, 1858–1912*, ed. R. Crane and N. G. Barrier (Columbia, Mo.: South Asia Books, 1981), 164–79.

shoot up from 3 percent in 1893 to 9 percent in 1896, while domestic prices rose and people on fixed incomes suffered.

In the same period, the government also greatly increased its military expenditures, beginning in 1878 with the vastly expensive Second Afghan War, widely denounced by Indians as a wasteful and counterproductive enterprise foisted upon the people. This was followed in 1886 by a costly war to annex Upper Burma, also paid for by Indian taxpayers and fought by the Indian Army for imperial purposes. In 1893–94, the government spent large sums in what was officially called the "pacification" of the northwest frontier. New, large-scale frontier expeditions were launched in 1897, once again demanding heavy expenditures. The latter cost the Indian taxpayer Rs. 5 crores.

The great increase in military expenditure in a period of falling rupee values (and attendant disruption of export-import trade, monetary stringency, and rising cost of living) coincided with three severe famines, the third being by far the worst. Government famine policy was circumscribed by the official obsession with *laissez-faire*, crippling any efforts to ameliorate the tragedy. The doctrinaire unwillingness of the government to import food or intervene in the market to inhibit soaring prices caused untold, needless suffering. Moreover, the government's famine relief operations were niggardly and tardy, and its famine relief workers were themselves paid substandard "wages." The pathetic conditions prevailing in large areas during each famine and the tardy, limited nature of government relief efforts threw into glaring relief the gap between daily reality and British professions of the beneficent nature of their rule. Government shortcomings, bureaucratic rigidities, and meanness in applying relief provisions convinced many Indians of the government's callous indifference to starvation and destitution and confirmed their belief that foreign rule was harmful.[17]

Nor was this all. During the same difficult years acrimonious debates erupted between London and Calcutta over the imposition of duties and excises on cotton goods.[18] This unseemly controversy was provoked by Britain's demand that the Indian government eliminate *all* duties on British cotton goods imported into India—the official justification being, of course, free trade. The real reason for the demand was that Parliament and the secretary of state for India were under pressure from the powerful cotton manufacturing interests of Britain's midlands, including Lancashire and the city of Manchester. When the government of India, desperately in need of revenues due to the fall in the value of silver, tried to resist London's demand, it was curtly and flatly overruled by the secretary of state. Desperate, the government then applied a nominal 3½ percent duty and was ordered by London to fix a countervailing 3½ percent excise on all cotton goods manufactured in India so there could be no possibility of any "protection" for Indian goods. This blatant sacrifice of Indian economic interests served to convince even doubting Indians that justice or equity could not be expected from the British. Even senior figures in the government criticized this sacrifice of Indian interests as impolitic, unfair, and unwise. Again, the vernacular press criticized the policy of the government severely, voicing rising disillusionment with foreign rule.

17. For a discussion of the famine of 1896–97, see Malhotra, *Administration of Lord Elgin*, 106–44. For an exhaustive study, see B. M. Bhatia, *Famines in India* (Bombay: Asia Publishers, 1963). It must be noted that government handling of the famines conformed to no monolithic official pattern, except for the obsession with a free market. Local governments, not to mention individual civil servants, varied in the efficiency and scope of their efforts. The results were relatively uneven, though in practice government frequently erred on the side of "too little too late." The vernacular press *severely* criticized government management of the famines, particularly in the light of substantial increases in military expenditures. Large numbers of famine deaths, widely reported by the vernacular press, shook faith in government and increased a growing sense of indignation. There seems little doubt that these grave strains propelled nationalism toward a value-oriented movement favoring the rise of Extremism.

18. See Malhotra, *Administration of Lord Elgin*, 33–67, for a sound discussion of the cotton duties issue. He makes very explicit the role of Manchester in demanding abolition of all duties and the imposition of countervailing excises on Indian cloth or yarn over the objections of the governor-general. The injustice was so obvious that it gave Indians a major weapon in their attack upon the hostile attitude of the British.

The final straw, however, may well have been the government's response to outbreaks of bubonic plague in 1897 in Bombay and Poona. Drastic steps were taken to minimize the threat, including the segregation of suspected plague victims in special camps and house-to-house searches to identify and remove apparent victims. Troops were used in these plague operations and in many cases their behavior in house searches and in the removal of suspected victims violated all Indian norms of acceptable behavior. The detention camps also violated social traditions of considerable antiquity. In fact, all the measures were needlessly heavy-handed and arbitrary. Leaders of the Indian community who could have allayed a public indignation that bordered on outrage were largely ignored or brusquely set aside by the plague authorities. As a result, substantial numbers of influential Indians were deeply offended by actions that violated deep-rooted customs. Two young Brahmin men, who were members of a society for the protection of *dharma* (Hindu religious-cum-social duty), assassinated two prominent plague officials in Bombay. This event touched off further racist outbursts by the European community and their press, culminating in the trial and conviction for "sedition" of the Poona editor and nationalist leader, Bal G. Tilak.[19]

The cumulative effect of the conditions and circumstances sketched above was to create a context in which nationalism could develop. Indians, and in particular the educated strata, became increasingly alienated from and bitter about British rule. And as the vernacular press of the time clearly reflects, this disillusionment with the Raj began to spread well beyond the Westernized intelligentsia. These mounting anti-British feelings undermined the position, program, and leadership of the staunch Moderates. To a growing number of nationalists, especially the younger generation who had all too little to gain under British rule and very little to lose, the "mendicancy" of the Moderates seemed foolish and counterproductive. Crumbs from the British table could not compensate for the cuffs that—all too often—accompanied any crumbs. Emulation of the British increasingly seemed irrelevant if not pernicious. The optimism and faith in British rhetoric that played so prominent a role in the outlook of the Moderates was increasingly replaced by disillusioned bitterness.

The vernacular press served as a faithful mirror of this change, articulating and diffusing this new "message" to a broader audience, including people of modest educational attainment not normally in a position to associate directly with nationalist or Congress leaders. The vernacular press, moreover, had a growing circulation in *mufassal* towns—those in rural areas, away from the major cities that monopolized Congress activities—where nationalist politicization grew apace, even if unevenly.[20]

AS NATIONALIST IDEAS and convictions gained wider currency, the audience for them became increasingly receptive, not only because the respectable strata found conditions of life

19. For the murder of Rand and Ayerst by the Chapekars and the subsequent trial of Bal G. Tilak for "sedition," see Richard Cashman, *The Myth of the Lokamanya* (Berkeley, Cal.: University of California Press, 1975). Cashman gives a detailed account of the pioneer efforts of Tilak in the politicization and mobilization of popular religious festivals, mingling political and religious symbols.

20. For the growth of the press in India, see R. I. Crane, "The Development of Nationalism in India in the late Nineteenth Century: the Bengal Press and Associations in the Diffusion of Nationalism," in *Region and Nation in India*, ed. P. Wallace (New Delhi: Oxford and IBH Publishing Company, 1985), 85–110; P. S. Khare, *Growth of Press and Public Opinion in India, 1857–1918*, (Allahabad: Piyush Prakashan, 1964.); N. S. Bose, *The Indian Awakening and Bengal* (Calcutta: K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1969); S. Banerjee, *National Awakening and the "Bangabasi"* (Calcutta: Amitava-Kalyan Publishers, 1968); and S. P. Sen, ed., *The Indian Press* (Calcutta: Institute of Historical Studies, 1967). The chapter by Tarasankar Banerjee, "The Growth of the Press in Bengal vis-a-vis the Rise of Indian Nationalism (1858–1905)," in Sen, *The Indian Press*, 38–52, is particularly valuable for analysis of the close relationship between press and nationalism. Annual reports on native papers were prepared in each province by the government, giving valuable summaries and details regarding the newspapers, their editors, and circulation and editorial policies. They are available in the National Archives of India.

deteriorating but also because the threat to traditional symbols of group identity was becoming more obvious. As less cosmopolitan segments of the population were drawn within the ambit of the nationalist movement, the appeal of traditional values waxed and the influence of Western values waned. This process, crucial to the growth of militancy, requires much more study. Basic questions must be asked about the meaning and significance of India's Extremist movement. Why did Extremism emerge as an important political movement in India? What light does the growth of Extremism after 1893 shed on the development of the National Congress?

It is here suggested that frustration and disillusionment eroded belief in the legitimacy of foreign rule. Faith in the "promise" of British rule was undermined. This loss of faith was particularly marked among the segments of the Western-educated public that gained the *least* from their involvement with alien values. The Moderates, men who had adopted Western ways successfully and thrived under British rule, pinned their hopes on reforms that would make Indians partners of the British. But the Moderates were now challenged vociferously by the militants, for whom foreign rule was iniquitous and illegitimate. The change taking place can be seen in microcosm in the career of a prominent Extremist leader, Bipin Chandra Pal. Pal began his political career as an enthusiastic Moderate. In his maiden speeches at the second session of the Congress in 1886, Pal voiced typical Moderate belief in the blessings of British rule.[21] By 1900, however, events had transformed Pal into a prominent apostle of the "new" nationalism, fully committed to winning freedom for India. Pal and his Extremist associates rejected out of hand basic Moderate strategy and tactics. In the Extremist view not only was Moderate "mendicancy" futile, but it meant the abasement of Indians. Militancy reflected the need to reassert pride in Indian culture and traditions and confidence in Indian ability to guide the country to a better future, as well as the conviction that "petitioning" was useless. The determination of Extremists to avoid dependance on foreign ways and forge their own future was part of the core of their movement. None of these ideas was new. From the days of "Young Bengal" and the controversy then raised between the orthodox and the Westernized innovators, these conflicting values had been part of the scene. A new stage in confrontation had, however, been reached by the 1880s. The context discussed above fed the new militancy and paved the way for the rupture between Moderates and Extremists.

The ideas expressed by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Sri Aurobindo Ghose, and Bal G. Tilak reflected the rise of Extremism. In 1881, Bankim Chandra published his nationalist novel, *Ananda Math*. It inspired Aurobindo, who drew upon it in his passionate *Bhawani Mandir*, and also inspired the ideology of the 1905 swadeshi campaign. (*Swadeshi*, meaning "one's own country," was a key element of the campaign opposing the partition of Bengal. It signified use of Indian-made goods only and the boycott of imported British goods.) Aurobindo made use of the *mantram* (a verse from sacred Hindu texts), "Bande Mataram" (meaning "Hail to the Mother[land]"), from Bankim Chandra's novel,

21. See A. P. Mookerjee, *Social and Political Ideas of Bipin Chandra Pal* (Calcutta: Minerva Publications, 1974), 49–58.

in his impassioned call to Extremism through the newspaper he edited, the *Bande Mataram*. Both Aurobindo and Bal Tilak, at the same time, drew upon the *Bhagavad Gita,* a major Hindu "scripture," as a primary source for their exposition of Extremist ideology.[22] Whether drawing upon Bankim Chandra's *Ananda Math,* or upon the *Gita,* the two leaders stressed the themes of Extremism: militancy, self-reliance, and the doctrine of action to remove obstacles. These themes, expressed in terms redolent of Indian tradition, stimulated pride and self-esteem. The marriage between militant political nationalism and Indian Hindu tradition that was characteristic of the Extremist movement was bolstered by the ideas and tactics of leaders like Bal Tilak and Sri Aurobindo. Objective developments in the political scene also reinforced this bond, however; Pansy C. Ghosh has summarized these circumstances nicely:

> From 1892 to the introduction of the Morley-Minto reforms in 1909, was a period of storm and unrest, in the process of which the Congress itself underwent a metamorphosis . . . .during it, the Congress was faced with various questions, social, religious and economic and with problems of governmental policy. . . . Congress was also confronted with a crisis in its development, which nearly brought an end to it.[23]

The developments in question revolved partly around the highly controversial subject of social reform in Indian society. The orthodox, or conservative, portion of Indian society bitterly opposed social reforms that threatened established religion or religiously sanctioned customs. Much of the flammable opposition to such reform arose from a basic belief that the foreign government had no right to "interfere" in Indian traditional customs and in particular those backed by religion. The Queen's Proclamation of 1858 had assured Indians that government would not tamper with religion. That assurance reinforced the orthodox view that government had no right to intervene via legislation or regulation. Some prominent Moderate leaders were, nonetheless, ardent social reformers. These Moderate leaders, pushing for social reforms they thought beneficial, on occasion sought or welcomed government support and even legislation to further their goals. This posture opened a *major* rift within the National Congress, between these Moderates and those who opposed their reform projects. The rift erupted in 1891 during heated controversy over the Age of Consent Bill. This bill raised the legal minimum age for consummation of marriage (or lawful sexual intercourse) for females from ten to twelve years of age. Passage of the bill was urged by some prominent Moderates and this enraged orthodox nationalists. "As a protest, Tilak organized public meetings in different places. . .articles in the *Bangabasi,* a weekly vernacular newspaper of Calcutta, against the Bill, led to the prosecution of its proprietor, editor, manager and printer for sedition."[24] Passage of the bill into law only increased the anger and widened the rift. And for Tilak and the orthodox group, the fact that the day after the Congress adjourned, the National Social Conference (sponsoring social reform) held its annual meeting in the same *pandal* used by the National Congress added insult to injury. By 1895 the acrimonious controversy over government involvement in social reform had forced Tilak to resign his Congress post. The split was exacerbated by ideological strife

22. On these important ideological developments within Extremism, see: H. and U. Mukherjee, *Sri Aurobindo and the New Thought in Indian Politics* (Calcutta: K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1964); M. A. Buch, *Rise and Growth of Indian Militant Nationalism* (Baroda: Atmaram Press, 1940); D. V. Tahmankar, *Lokamanya Tilak, Father of Indian Unrest* (London: J. Murray, 1956); S. Mitra, *The Liberator, Sri Aurobindo* (Bombay: Jaico Publishers, 1954); H. and U. Mukherjee, *Bipin Chandra Pal and India's Struggle for Swaraj* (Calcutta: University of Calcutta Press, 1958); United Kingdom, Parliament, H.C., *Religious Disturbances,* vol. 63, no. 538 (1893); Sankar Ghose, *The Renaissance to Militant Nationalism in India* (Bombay: Asia Publishers, 1969); V. C. Joshi, ed., *Sri Aurobindo, An Interpretation* (Delhi: Vikas Publishers, 1973); Cashman, *Lokamanya*; R. I. Crane, "Calcutta in the Nineteenth Century," *Bengal Past and Present,* pt. 2, no. 189 (Calcutta, July-December 1980): 105–30. The India Office Library has a substantial number of tracts and pamphlets printed in English and in several vernaculars. Many of these were issued by Extremist groups and individuals to diffuse Extremist ideas and are a valuable source for the study of ideology. The I.O.L. also has, as does the National Archives, copies of most issues of Aurobindo's Extremist newspaper, *Bande Mataram,* an invaluable source.

23. P. C. Ghosh, *The Development of the Indian National Congress, 1892–1909* (Calcutta: Firma K.L.M., 1970), 1.

24. Ibid., 66.

over other issues. In 1893, Tilak transformed the annual Ganpati festival among Hindus from a household event into a public religious festival and occasion for community worship. This created an important vehicle for nationalist agitation and mass politicization, using reigious symbols. As P. C. Ghosh has so aptly commented:

> *The introduction of Ganapati festivals was an expression of Hindu revivalism with a political aim. . . . He [Tilak] became the pioneer in organizing a similar [to the Muslim Muharram festival] Hindu festival and together with his followers, set up five public Ganapati statues in Poona. . . . It has been suggested that in doing so, Tilak had two aims . . . that it would be of good use for anti-British propaganda and secondly, he hoped that the annual observance of such a festival would help to organize the Hindu community.*[25]

MEANWHILE, DURING THE SAME YEARS in various parts of India, a movement that came to be known as the "Anti-cow-killing movement" had emerged among Hindus, especially those from the less-educated strata with very limited exposure to Western values. The controversy over this spreading movement for protection of the cow as sacred intensified the rift within the Congress, as the Moderates in no way supported or approved the movement.[26]

The anti-cow-killing movement demands close and serious study. It was an important ideological and political development both because it materially sharpened animosity, at times provoking riots between Hindus and Muslims, and because it drove a serious wedge between Moderates who deprecated the movement and its ideas and members of the orthodox camp who supported the goals of the anti-cow-killing campaign. The campaign also deserves study because it appeared to have a broad, mass appeal among various classes of Hindus and could serve as a mechanism for both social and political mobilization. Why and how did this movement arise and spread so widely, attracting broad Hindu support? Also, to what extent did the movement become a positive symbol of group identity and loyalty? Did apprehension about the "threat" to traditional Hindu values give the cow protection movement an important role as a "defensive mechanism"? Finally, did the support for the anti-cow-killing movement contribute to the growth of Extremism as a viable popular movement? If so, in what ways?

By the outbreak of the first World War, or perhaps even sooner, the fires of Extremism had died down. The peak years for the movement were 1905–09, during the vehement popular protests over the Partition of Bengal.[27] The ideals of Extremism, especially staunch opposition to government policy and the vital theme of self-reliance and self-help, were epitomized by the *swadeshi* campaign (the boycott movement) and the development of "national education" to free Indians from the denationalizing consequences of a British curriculum. With the reunification of Bengal in 1911, the movement was robbed of its most *visible* and potent issue.

As a result, extremism and vociferous nationalism waned.[28] In the years between 1893 and 1909, however—at the least—the militant, or

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25. Ibid., 71.

26. Ibid., 71–73. See also Bimal Prased, "The Congress Split at Surat," in *Studies in Modern Indian History, Number One,* ed. B. R. Nanda and V. C. Joshi (Bombay: Orient Longmans, 1972), 144–76, for an excellent account of the ideas crucial to major disagreements between Moderates and Extremists. These differences were in no way idiosyncratic; they reflect the effects of *changes* in the socio-economic milieu that surround the process of national development.

27. The government of India decided to partition the great province of Bengal in 1905, despite widespread and bitter opposition, and popular demonstrations by masses of Bengalis. Major nationalist and extremist political leaders, including Surendranath Banerjea, B. C. Pal, and Aurobindo Ghose, played prominent roles in mass agitation and protest. The partition was seen not only as a contemptuous affront to Indian public opinion by an arbitrary and unresponsive bureaucracy, but also as a deliberate application of official "divide and rule" policy. This was seen to be true in two senses: the partition split Bengal into two halves, thus separating nationalists in western Bengal from nationalists in eastern Bengal and weakening both groups, and it also divided Hindu-majority western Bengal from Muslim-majority eastern Bengal (now Bangladesh), pitting the political leaders of the two communities against each other. A dramatic increase in religious and political tensions and conflict followed. For a careful and detailed study of the partition and its consequences, see R. Cronin, *British Policy and Administration in Bengal, 1905–1912,* (Calcutta: Firma K.L.M. 1977). (Dr. Cronin received his Ph.D. in history from Syracuse University. The dissertation was published soon after in Calcutta.) The partition itself spurred the growth of militant and even terrorist organization and protest as no other event up to that time had done. In that sense, it can be called a boon to the militant nationalists, those most adamant in their opposition to British rule

Extremist, wing of Indian nationalism (accompanied by incidents of terrorism directed against British officials in India) rose to prominence in the political scene. Between 1905 and 1907, the Extremists tried to capture the Congress Party from the Moderates. That challenge failed and the Moderates were able to retain their control of the Congress machinery for the time being. Significantly, the Extremists exhibited all the hallmarks of a true value-oriented political movement in overt contrast to the norm-oriented Moderates. Speaking in the name of Hindu traditions and values, Extremist leaders demanded the *expulsion* of alien rule and alien values from Indian soil. They clearly sought to transform the political scene and discourse of India in an Indian idiom. In so doing, they reasserted traditional Hindu values and denounced foreign ways of thinking and doing. They did not seek to reform the system, rather to transform it. In their own way they anticipated the dynamic role of fundamentalist Islam in countries like Iran today.

28. Severe measures of repression by the government of India, including detention without trial, quartering of troops in "Extremist" strongholds, summary expulsion of students from colleges, hanging, and deportation, as well as rigorous imprisonment for those convicted of "sedition" or "disaffection," and police firings, helped to suppress Extremism. By 1909 the underground secret societies were badgered, relatively isolated, and infiltrated by police informers. Terrorism was not eliminated but draconian measures greatly reduced its sway. In 1909, the government also made concessions to long-standing Moderate demands, thus reinforcing the Moderates and tending to rob the Extremists of some of their ammunition. These measures helped to reestablish, to some extent, the credibility of the Moderates. Had the conciliation of the Moderate leaders been more wholehearted and far-reaching, they might have been able to reassert their norm-oriented policies in a commanding fashion. Instead, the concessions were, de facto, "too little and too late."