Chapter III

New Strategies of Survival

Crafting a Majoritarian Platform

Introduction:

The Hindu nationalist stream which depended principally on the Bharatiya Jana Sangh in the '60s and '70s to carry forward its agenda, had to urgently devise new strategies to retain relevance in a context dominated by Indira Gandhi's efforts to consolidate popular support for the Congress party on the basis of radical promises of a rapid onslaught on poverty, imaginatively encapsulated in the slogan of 'Garibi Hatao'. That Indira Gandhi was perceived as continually setting the terms of the national discourse, after having emerged the winner in a major split in the Congress organisation\(^1\), was in no small measure due to her effective rallying of support for her political and economic programmes, by repeatedly stressing the importance of "national unity". Thus

\(^1\) Myron Weiner's study of the 1971 parliamentary elections noted that Congress was restored to the dominant position that had been eroded in the 1967 elections, which had reflected a disillusionment with the Congress government after two years of drought and the unpopular decision to devalue the rupee. The 1971 election saw the Congress (R) headed by Indira Gandhi decisively trounce a Congress(O), Swatantra, Jana Sangh coalition, sweeping up 43.05 per cent of the votes as against the Congress (O)'s 10.48 percent. (Weiner, "The 1971 Elections and the Indian Party System", Asian Survey, Vol. 11, No. 12, December 1971). Another detailed analysis of the 1971 election can be found in W.H Morris Jones' paper "India Elects for Change--And Stability", Asian Survey, Vol. 11, No. 8 (August 1971).
until the Emergency in 1975, Indira Gandhi managed to retain the progressive aura of her father Jawaharlal Nehru, as a modernising democrat committed to India's fast growth as a major developing power. The 1971 crisis over Bangladesh which culminated in Pakistan declaring war on India in December, that year, which was seen as having been deftly handled by her, also strengthened the dominance of the Congress party in the political arena. The massive political backing that accrued to Indira Gandhi in the context of the war with Pakistan over the Bangladesh issue, which involved the summoning of sentiments of nationalism, forced the Jana Sangh and its leader Atal Behari Vajpayee to join the chorus of voices endorsing her policy stand. This showed that the Jana Sangh which was making efforts to carve out a niche for itself in the political arena, by keeping alive sentiments of Hindu cultural nationalism in its suggestions that the debate over nationhood had not quite been settled with Pakistan factor still remaining an active destabilising element, could not make a dent in the public discourse.

The Jana Sangh's strategic approach in the '60s included a policy position that incorporated traditional Hindu nationalist antagonism towards Pakistan. It was also evident that the Jana Sangh understood that maintaining a posture of hostility towards Pakistan helped to sustain pressure on the policy course of the Congress Governments. This political course enabled the Jana Sangh to link the Pakistan factor to Muslims, keeping the Hindu nationhood discourse alive by suggesting that the Muslim community was a permanent fifth column in India. But indicating the enduring hold of the secular nationalist vision and the appeal of the promises of rapid economic development, the two wars with Pakistan and the best efforts by the Jana Sangh, the RSS and the virtually defunct Hindu Mahasabha to utilise the tensions with Pakistan to re-launch the campaign for a Hindu nation, did not make any headway.
This chapter argues that the secular consensus withstood these pressures precisely because it was now part and parcel of a larger national outlook that emphasised the need for unity, transcending communal, linguistic and caste divisions in order to harness the collective energies to implement goals of rapid economic development. Another crucial dimension that ensured that issues like orientation of national identity had very little resonance in a public arena reflecting a different array of concerns, was that the high ground as regards the direction of economic policy, had been seized by Indira Gandhi, with her claims of a prioritisation of the addressing of poverty alleviation issues. Indira Gandhi's assertion, which had clear mass appeal, that socialist transformation was a high-priority goal, matched by radical strategies like bank nationalisation was intertwined with projections of the Jana Sangh as standing in for the forces of social conservatism and right reaction, blocking India's economic progress. This subtle identification of the Jana Sangh with upper-class and landed interests restricted the expansion of the party's social base. Therefore it is argued in this chapter that the Jana Sangh and its allies, adopting new policies and strategies to confront the secular realities converted the original platform of cultural nationalism into a more pragmatic programme of majoritarianism, intended to operate within the ambit of the existing political framework. Yet the principal instrument of mobilisation that the Jana Sangh covertly, and the RSS more openly, relied upon was the continual stigmatisation of Muslims by suggesting they had sympathies for the 'national enemy'—Pakistan.

One notable campaign by the Jana Sangh in the '60s and early '70s was for 'Indianisation', a camouflaged attack on Muslims, suggesting that they had not sufficiently 'Indianised' themselves, or 'Hinduised' themselves enough to qualify as Indian. This campaign by the Jana Sangh which sought to tap Hindu sentiment, using as a peg the issue of an electoral alliance by Indira Gandhi's Congress with the Muslim League in Kerala, was designed to counter the
expanding influence of the Congress, which had appeared to be gaining ground since its dismal showing in 1967. Indira Gandhi's Congress party overcoming as it did, the internal organisational challenges from the Nijalingappa-led old guard, was clearly capturing the high ground of the Indian political arena.

The construction of this majoritarian narrative of 'Indianisation' also relied on the projection of the stereotype of the 'disloyal' and 'untrustworthy' Muslim, a potential fifth columnist who would not hesitate to work with Pakistan to break up the Indian Union. But since the Jana Sangh and its allies were at this point in time seen as only fringe players in the system, this open challenge to the credentials of the Muslim community did not make any headway in spite of the circumstances of the strains with Pakistan. This was particularly because of the strong campaigns by the Congress and other secular formations for national unity to face wartime challenges. It was notable that the majoritarian campaign spearheaded by the Jana Sangh, with the backing of the RSS, appeared unable to pick up steam even in times of war with Pakistan, which should have provided politically propitious moments for the Hindu majoritarianists to pitch their case. That this did not happen was principally because the concept of secularism was not viewed merely as the obverse of communal conflict. If that were so, secularism as a public policy ought to have come under heavy pressure during these times of war. This showed that the secular ethic was seen as having far greater weight and relevance, as a crucial component of India's democratic project, that its value was not diminished even in these times of war.

The vision of Indian nationalism as propounded by Nehru, as an engine harnessing the collective energies of the Indian people to address huge social and economic challenges, held good in the early part of the Indira Gandhi era, with every challenge by the Jana Sangh such as the 'Indianisation' campaign being warded off by public denunciations of these as instances of obstructive
tactics by the Opposition parties to Indira's socialist economic policies. But while the Jana Sangh's strategy was clearly a defensive one in the light of the prevailing political circumstances, ground was also being laid in the transformation of the cultural nationalist campaign into a majoritarian platform that would have as its main focus, the idea that the Congress view of nationalism was camouflaged appeasement of the Muslim minority, fuelling its inherent separatist instincts. From this basic stereotype was fleshed out the imagery of the 'anti-social' and 'riot-prone' Muslim which became the prototype of a more incendiary portrayal in the later decades of the '80s and the '90s, of the Muslim community as having strong leanings to terrorism.

Developing New Critiques

The main vehicle of Hindu cultural nationalist-majoritarian aspirations after the decline of the Hindu Mahasabha was the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, formally born on October 21, 1951, with the blessings of the RSS. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee, unhappy with the Liaquat Ali-Jawaharlal Nehru pact and his perception that the Nehru-led Government was too soft on Pakistan, was the obvious choice to lead the new party of Hindu majoritarianism. Mookerjee, free from the burdens of being in the Nehru Cabinet, apparently in one of his first

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2 Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement*, op.cit, notes that there was a strong current of pressure especially from young RSS pracharaks for a political party to represent Hindu nationalist aspirations after the banning of the RSS in 1948-49. Jaffrelot also quotes KR Malkani in December 1949 as arguing for the Sangh to come into active politics. "Sangh must take part in politics not only to protect itself against the greedy designs of politicians but to stop the un-Bharatiya and anti-Bharatiya policies of the Government...Sangh must continue as it is, an 'ashram' for the national cultural education of the entire citizenry but it must develop a political wing for the more effective and early achievement of its ideals." (p. 116).
interventions as president of the Jana Sangh struck a distinctly majoritarian note, even while formally throwing the doors of the new party open to all Indians.³

The rationale of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh was explicitly linked to the criticism of Nehru's policies as regards Pakistan. Explaining the compulsions driving the formation of a new party, meant to offer an alternative approach to that of the Congress party, Balraj Madhok, one of its co-founders asserted in an account of its formation, that "the appeasement policy that Pandit Nehru began to pursue towards Pakistan from its very inception was in keeping with the appeasement policy that the Congress had been pursuing towards the Muslim League before freedom and which had directly led to the partition of the country" was "galling to all nationalist Indians". The Nehru-Liaquat Ali pact, Madhok further argued, "put India and Pakistan on the same pedestal, even though the Muslims in India were being given more than a fair deal by the Indian Government" and that pact came as "the last straw for Dr Mookerji" impelling him to resign from the Nehru Government.⁴

Thus, staying faithful to its genesis in its expressed alienation from Nehru's foreign policy, the Bharatiya Jana Sangh made it a point to caricature the policy approach towards Pakistan by Nehru and his successors, as "appeasement" of Pakistan. The protection of the special status of Kashmir, under Article 370, was criticised as an instance of "separatism" between Kashmir and India⁵, and its abrogation was sought in every meeting since its inception. The Jana Sangh's attitude to Pakistan carried all the visceral antipathy to the formation of Pakistan, inherited from its Hindu nationalist predecessors.

³ Craig Baxter, in his study, The Jana Sangh: A Biography of A Political Party, (Oxford University Press, 1971) quotes Mookerjee as stipulating in his presidential address to the first meeting of the Sangh on October 21, 1951, that "the people must be united by a bond of fellowship and understanding inspired by deep devotion to the spirit of a common motherland...it is obviously for the vast majority of Bharat's population to assure all classes of people who are truly loyal to their motherland, that they will be entitled to full protection under the law and to complete equality of treatment in all matters, social, economic and political..."  
⁴ Balraj Madhok, Why Jana Sangh?, New Delhi, (NMML) 
In the Vijayawada plenary session in January 1965, which adopted a document on the principles and policy of the Jana Sangh asserted nearly 20 years after Pakistan's birth that "The people of Pakistan are basically part of the Indian nation. By falling prey to the machinations of separatist political forces, these people have now been cut off from the rest of India." Claiming that "the creation of Pakistan" had only brought "distress and misery" to its people, the Jana Sangh declared that "by continuously fomenting anti-India feeling, the rulers of Pakistan seek only to strengthen their own political position." The punch in the Jana Sangh’s political attack was however reserved for the internal enemy--the Congress party. "As such, India’s policy of appeasement is their (the rulers of Pakistan) biggest prop."6

The Jana Sangh kept up the pressure on the Government as regards Pakistan, even staging massive demonstrations against the Rann of Kutch Agreement on June 30, 1965 which brought to an end tensions between the two armed forces along the border. Vajpayee and Deendayal Upadhyaya, the Jana Sangh's general secretary, were among those arrested for protesting.7 Predictably the Sangh also expressed unhappiness over the Tashkent Agreement between Lal Bahadur Shastri and Ayub Khan which ended the 1965 war between India and Pakistan, describing the Tashkent Declaration as "detrimental to the national interest and derogatory to national honour."8

It was evident that as the forces of Hindu nationalism, represented by the Jana Sangh in the political arena were beginning to feel upstaged by the new agenda prioritising issues of economic development, particularly poverty alleviation, with the Indira Gandhi regime recognising that the Nehruvian emphasis on national unity would have to be retained. Thus Indira Gandhi made it a point, in 1967, well before she was at the peak of her power, to assert at a

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press conference that there was "far greater consciousness of unity in India today than in the past." She also maintained that despite the passing of Nehru and other leading figures of the Congress party, India had "come of age" through the process of democratic working. It was clear that she had in mind not only the overcoming of the communal challenge, but the challenge of regionalism as well. At that same venue, she underlined her commitment to cooperation with the States, praised the Madras Chief Minister and his party, the DMK for relinquishing their plank of secessionism and also made clear that she was in favour of upholding linguistic pluralism.

That the national agenda had new preoccupations, including among these, the challenges of language and regional issues, forced the Hindu nationalists to bring in new lines of attack that would sharpen the edges of the original framework. The basic postulates were carefully retained—particularly its three-pronged emphasis on its claimed prior antiquity, numerical preponderance and sacred geography. These arguments lay at the base of a political campaign launched by the Jana Sangh and its ideologues in the '60s and continuing into the '70s, demanding that Muslims abandon their "separatist mentality" and "Indianise" themselves. As can be imagined, the "Indianisation" demand in one stroke put the Muslim community on the defensive, placing a perennial onus on the community to continually prove its "loyalty to the motherland".

Deendayal Upadhyaya, one of the Jana Sangh's foremost ideologues since its inception in 1951, picked up the threads from Hedgewar and Golwalkar, in his re-articulation of the main assertion of the cultural nationalists. Upadhyaya's re-articulation of Hindu cultural nationalist philosophy, boiled down to what he called "Integral Humanism", adopted by the Jana Sangh as part of its policy platform. Upadhyaya's musings virtually invoked Herder and Fichte. One of

his assertions was that there had been "a thousand year old alien rule" that led the people to struggle to "wrest independence from the aliens" and that "the current of our national life was not interrupted but has gone on ceaselessly." More assertive was his restating of the Hindu cultural nationalist claim that "from the national standpoint we shall have to consider our culture because that is our very nature...if culture does not form the basis of independence then the political movement for independence would be reduced simply to a scramble by selfish and power-seeking persons. Independence can be meaningful only if it becomes an instrument for the expression of our culture."

And it was quickly clear that by "our culture" he meant Hindu culture which was now after Independence, labelled as "Bharatiya" culture, as opposed to what was seen as the more Anglicised, secularised label of "Indian". In Upadhyaya's words-- "Therefore, both from the national as well as human standpoint, it has become essential that we think of the principles of the Bharatiya culture." As was to be expected, the main target of Upadhyaya's attack was civic and territorial nationalism. "The source of national feeling is not in staying on a particular piece of land but is in something else." Making clear that he was speaking only of Hindus, he outlined his view of a nation as having a 'Chitt' (soul) which was "fundamental and is central to the nation from its very beginning...it determines the direction in which the nation is to advance culturally." In what was a clear dig at the secular nationalist assertion that Indian culture was a composite one, Upadhyaya said that while "national culture is continuously modified and enlarged by the historical reasons and circumstances"

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12 Hansen, The Saffron Wave, op.cit., has observed that the use of the term 'Bharatiya' signified an adaptation to the political realities of official secularism, which had made explicit references to "Hindu" impossible and illegitimate outside the religious field (p.85).
13 Upadhyaya, op.cit., p.24.
and did "include all those things which, by the association, endeavours and the history of the society, have come to be held as good and commendable", these "are not added on to Chiti." In other words, he was asserting that the nation's original national soul, which was Hindu, could not be said to have been modified by other cultural associations. 14

The assertions of prior antiquity and sacred geography lay at the base of the political campaign launched by Balraj Madhok and other Jana Sangh ideologues in the same period. Madhok like Upadhyaya drew his arguments from the Hindu cultural nationalist doctrines. In his pamphlet, pointedly titled "Indianisation? What, Why and How", Madhok reiterated the classic Hindu nationalist position staking a claim on the basis of sacred geography. "This Bharat, India or Hindustan with mountains like Himalaya, Vindhyā and Nilgiris, rivers like Sindhu, Brahmāputra, Ganga and Cauvery and famous holy cities like Mathura, Maya, (Haridwara), Kashi and Kanchi is the homeland of one people who are distinguishable from the people of the rest of the world." There was also the Herderian declaration that "they not only belong to one country which serves as the physical body of the Indian nation but have also a common soul, a common culture, history and tradition which has put life into that physical body and made it a distinct and living entity." And should there be any doubt as to which group of people he was referring to, Madhok observed that "the first thing to be understood in this connection is that India has a basic substratum on which its social and cultural fabric has been built." That substratum, Madhok claimed, was provided by "the Vedic Aryans" on "which India's national identity, its culture and tradition has grown." 16

The Bharatiya Jana Sangh incorporated these views into a formal position, which was strongly cultural nationalist in orientation, even if carefully

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16 Ibid, p.4 - 6
eschewing explicit references to the Hindu religious identity. Following Upadhyaya and Madhok, the Jana Sangh repudiated the civic and territorial basis of India’s nationhood. “Jana Sangh holds that territorial unity alone cannot be the basis of nationalism. For being a nation, a people require the unifying bonds of culture. Indian nationalism is ancient. The national consciousness has been nurtured and strengthened by the one and all pervading culture of the country…”  

This theme continued to be at the base of the Jana Sangh’s platform even in the ’60s, as also the rejection of the idea of a composite Indian culture. The Vijayawada party conclave in January 1965 reaffirmed this point that there should be only one culture, that of “Bharatiya Samskriti”. Adopted as part of party policy was the statement that --

With this country as its home, the Indian people have developed and lived a culture which is one and the same from the Himalayas to the seas. For a vast land like ours, it was but natural that somewhat different patterns of life should have grown in different areas and sections. But all of them stand integrally united in Bharatiya Samskriti which has never been tied to the strings of any particular dogma or creed. All the creeds that form the commonwealth of Bharatiya Rashtra have their share in the stream of Bharatiya culture which has flown down since the Vedas in unbroken continuity, absorbing and assimilating contributions made by different people, creeds and cultures that came in contact with it in the course of history, in such a way as to make them indistinguishable part and parcel of the main current. The Bharatiya culture is thus, like Bharatvarsh, one and indivisible. Any talk of composite culture, therefore, is not only untrue but also dangerous for it tends to weaken national unity and encourage fissiparous tendencies.  

17 All India Session of the Jana Sangh, December 30, 1956, Delhi, _Bharatiya Jana Sangh, Party Documents, 1951-72, Volume 4, Resolutions on Internal Affairs_ (Bharatiya Jana Sangh Central Office, New Delhi, First Edn, 1973), pp. 44-45.  
The insistence on the need to acknowledge that there was only “one country, one culture, one people” and the use of the euphemistic description “Bharatiya” for 'Hindu' indicated that the Hindu nationalists both in the Jana Sangh and in the RSS had understood that this ‘Bharatiya’ plank would be the most effective basis on which a sustained campaign could be launched against the non-Hindu minorities, particularly the Muslim community. It was in a sense an attempt to bring cultural nationalism into the political arena once again but through the backdoor. By enshrining the “Hindu majority” view of culture as the mainstream culture in Indian life, even within the secular democratic framework, the Hindu majoritarianists were ensuring that they were not seen as rocking the boat even while managing to thrust a new agenda of Hindu majoritarianism into the public discourse. The renewed assertion of Hindu cultural antiquity and numerical preponderance was basically making the old claim in a new garb—that India belonged to the Hindus just as Pakistan had been created for Muslims.

The Jana Sangh officially consecrated the Madhok thesis that minorities, mainly Muslims would have to “Indianise” themselves. There was no ambiguity as to what was meant by the Jana Sangh’s demand for “Indianisation”, repeatedly made in its declarations since its inception. For instance, in one of its earliest resolutions, the Jana Sangh, in one part titled “Indianisation for Unity and Nationalism”, explained that while the “diversities in our national life” and “different modes of worship” should be maintained, “for the promotion of unity and nationalism, feeling for one culture should be imbibed.” It then set out the terms by which that was to be achieved. Both society and government were to ensure that education was “based on national culture.” And of course that national culture was Hindu culture. “The children of the land should be provided the rich and life-giving spiritual food which abounds in the form of gems of Indian literature like Ramayana, Gita, Upanishads, Mahabharata and
other nation-building literature of modern Indian languages," was one suggestion. The revival of the “study of Sanskrit” as an “essential ingredient of scholarliness” and the adoption of the Devanagari script for all languages were the other two suggestions. More indicative of the party’s motivation was another suggestion in the same resolution that the government and society must ensure too that “Indian history be rewritten so that it be the history of the Indian people and not that of invaders.”

The Jana Sangh’s views closely mirrored those of the RSS and the now defunct Hindu Mahasabha. Throughout the ’60s, undeniably in a script written for it by Madhok and Upadhyaya, it held firm to its majoritarian stance which insisted that Hindu culture was primordial and all other cultural groups would have to be absorbed in the Hindu mainstream.

The Demand for “Indianisation” And its Uses

Given Balraj Madhok’s leading position in the Jana Sangh, his diatribe against Muslims contained in his pamphlet on “Indianisation?” amounted to an official statement from that party. The Jana Sangh was in effect publicly committing itself to a stance of deep suspicion of the Muslim community and open hostility to Pakistan. It did not take too deep a reading of Madhok’s pamphlet to see that the entire thesis of “Indianisation” was directed entirely at Muslims, who were singled out, as had happened in the past, as being the only minority seen at odds with the majority.

The key elements of the new prototype of Hindu majoritarianism could be seen in Madhok’s tract. He argued “It is wrong to think that any one who is born in India irrespective of his emotional loyalty and attitude towards the

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country, ipso facto became an Indian in the true sense.” It was evident that he was referring to Muslims in India, especially those in the Hindi heartland who were said to have voted for Partition, and who were now the principal target of Hindu nationalist ire. “It is not the birth in India but the Indianness of a man which makes him an Indian.” 20 Elaborating on his assertion, Madhok said:

This Indianness of a man is not determined by one’s colour, caste, language, way of worship or political party. It is determined by the mental attitude towards India and all that is distinctive about her as a nation. This is reflected in one’s behaviour and conduct, both individual and collective, which in turn is determined by one’s thoughts, motivations and attachments, both intellectual and emotional... 21

For fear that such a wide-ranging definition of Indianness be understood to include Muslims, especially because of the reference to “way of worship”, Madhok was quick to dispel such notions. In the very same paragraph, he went on to claim that “people like Mrs Annie Besant, Sister Nivedita and Mr Stokes became better Indians and did more for India in our own times than most of those born in India did. On the other hand men like Mr Jinnah, Liaquat Ali Khan and Kasim Rizvi though born and brought up in India turned out to be India’s worst enemies.” Jinnah in fact, “got so much de-Indianised and de-nationalised...that he went to the extent of demanding and securing the vivisection of the Motherland.” 22 This reasoning was clearly a precursor to the real thrust of the argument that Muslims who were in Madhok’s eyes, torn between loyalty to Pakistan as an Islamic state and India where they were now, would have to urgently “Indianise” themselves. Therefore the “creation of this feeling of Indian-ness in a man through education and through conscious social

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20 Madhok, op.cit, pp. 16-18.
21 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
and political efforts and policies which might instill in him a sense of identification with India and impel him to place his loyalty to the nation group above loyalty to every other group, religious, social, linguistic or political, to which he may belong is Indianisation."

He further argued that Indianisation "does not mean that a Muslim should cease to be a Muslim or a Bengali should cease to be a Bengali. It only means that if there is a clash between the interests of a State or a Province and India as a whole or between the interests of a religious community and the country as a whole one should be prepared to sacrifice the interests of his community or province for the sake of national interests. As such Indianisation is another name for creating a strong sense of nationalism."

Madhok's 'Indianisation' demand hinged upon the political point that more than 90 per cent of the Muslims who remained after Partition in India, had voted for Pakistan and hence required "Indianisation". Explaining the rationale of this campaign, in an interview for this thesis, Madhok who was expelled from the Jana Sangh in 1973 because of differences with Vajpayee and Advani, said that he believed that the issue of "Indianisation" of Muslims remained as valid today. The "logical corollary of Partition was exchange of population as Dr Ambedkar had suggested", Madhok said, "we exchanged our soldiers, civil servants, even prisoners on the basis of religion." The population should have been exchanged, but that did not happen therefore "the other alternative was to Indianise them, because mentally, they were all committed to Pakistan... their minds had to be disabused of the two-nation theory and look upon this country as their own."

Ibid. Madhok maintained in an interview on May 11, 2006 conducted for this study, that his main focus in his tract on Indianisation was the Muslim community. He expanded on this point in the interview that "the alternative for Muslims who stayed back after Partition was to Indianise themselves, but mentally they were all committed to Pakistan... it was essential that they should be Indianised and their minds disabused of the two-nation theory and look upon this country as their own."
as their country...their first loyalty should be to India and not to Pakistan or Arabia."24

Apart from its political uses, the 'Indianisation' campaign was also intended to open up space for the reassertion of the hegemony of Hindu cultural nationalism in the cultural arena. This was in the form of demanding that Muslims pay obeisance to historical and mythical figures of significance to the Hindu nationalist version of Indian history, as for instance those rulers seen as triumphing over Muslim rulers. In an interview for this study, J.P Mathur, a long-time Sangh activist, formerly vice-president of the BJP, explained what the Indianisation demand meant in cultural terms. "When you say 'Indianisation', it means that Muslims should not alienate themselves from the history and culture of India, even thousands of years ago. Psychologically a Muslim would not recognise Shivaji or Rana Pratap as heroes. That is the difficulty, the moment one changes his religion and becomes a Muslim, he alienates himself from the past history." Mathur went on to assert that the "total alignment" of Muslims "with Indian culture and history is not as complete as it should be."25

The "Indianisation" theme became a favourite refrain for all the leading ideologues of the Jana Sangh, including Atal Behari Vajpayee who echoed these arguments as president of the Sangh in his address to the party's 16th session in Patna. Expanding on the meaning of the Jana Sangh campaign for "Indianisation" Vajpayee said that the Sangh did not mean that Muslims or Christians would have to renounce their way of worship and start worshipping Hindu gods and goddesses. "The meaning is simple and straightforward, namely

25 J.P Mathur, former all India vice president, BJP, interview by author, tape-recording, New Delhi, May 12, 2006.
that the first and foremost loyalty of all citizens should be to India. With change of religion, one's culture does not change, nor does one's history."\textsuperscript{26}

Starting from this majoritarian standpoint, Vajpayee then went on to declare that "from every citizen of India, however we do expect one thing that he would place national interest above everything else—his religion, language, province and community," Vajpayee said, making his observation Muslim-specific by adding that “If the word Indianisation has been used more often in the context of the Muslim community, it is because of the peculiar historical background of Pakistan in which Muslims as a community had come under the influence of Jinnah’s two-nation theory. In their case, therefore an even more conscious effort is called for to wean them away from this emotional background. A true Indian can never shout or even acquiesce in the shouting of slogans like Pakistan Zindabad.”\textsuperscript{27}

The renewal of the pre-Partition pressure on Muslims and the reopening of the debate on Muslim loyalty were the implications of the ‘Indianisation’ demand. In other words, Indian Muslims were once again being held to account for the formation of Pakistan. The Hindu nationalists were in effect suggesting that the Muslim community in India would have to pay the price for Partition and the birth of Pakistan. According to the Hindu nationalist reasoning, the Muslim community should be made to feel guilty about the act of Partition and that guilt would have to be further compounded by the fact that they were inheritors of a legacy of conquest and brutalization, thrust by Muslim invaders upon the suffering Hindus who were the natural inheritors of this country. It was this narrative that the Hindu majoritarianists sought to resurrect.

Drawing a pointed contrast with the Christians and the Parsis whom he claimed had become “one with the Indian society while preserving their distinct

\textsuperscript{26} Atal Behari Vajpayee, \textit{Presidential Address, Bharatiya Jana Sangh}, 16\textsuperscript{th} All India Session, Chanakya Nagar, Patna, December 28-30, 1969, (NMML).
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid.
forms of worship and religious beliefs,” Madhok blamed what he saw as Islam’s intolerance for other forms of worship as the cause for Muslim intransigence.

The very character of Islam, said Madhok, was “the antithesis of Indian thinking and attitude in regard to religion.” Unlike the numerous forms of worship that coexisted in India at that time, “it stood for a monolithic uniformity and conformism.” Islam, Madhok said, “not only aimed at converting all the Indians to Islam on the point of the sword if necessary but also expected such converts to reject their pre-Islamic past and ancestors.” The “Muslim invaders looked upon the people of this country as kafirs or heretics...and it is the duty of every Muslim to launch jehad against kafirs.”

Noting that “communalists” place loyalty to their religious group above everything else, Madhok said “most notorious and dangerous of such communalists is that section of the Muslim community which fought for the partition of the Motherland before 1947 and which continues to look towards Pakistan for guidance and inspiration even twenty two years after freedom.” Again Islam was held responsible for the “wayward behaviour and extraterritorial loyalties of this section of Muslims” because its stress on “renouncing and rejecting non-Muslim ancestors and heritage after a man is converted to Islam and its antipathy to the concept of territorial nationalism in which respect for past heroes and heritage plays a significant part” in the lack of national loyalty on the part of Indian Muslims.

The measure of the isolation of the Jana Sangh in its attempt to rekindle the dying embers of cultural nationalism was evident in the vigorous denunciations of this 'Indianisation' campaign, from not just Indira Gandhi's Congress party but all other parties which expressed outrage at these attempts to sabotage communal harmony. Addressing a convocation in Varanasi in January 1970, Indira Gandhi noted that the ideology of discrimination on the basis of

28 Madhok, op.cit, pp.32-34.
29 Ibid, pp.50-51.
caste and community had done great disservice to the country in the past. She also reminded her audience and indirectly, the country at large, that Indians did not represent any particular community but a combination of different races and religions. More importantly, she affirmed, as her father Jawaharlal Nehru had done earlier, that it was "the sacred duty of the majority community to safeguard the interests of the minorities." Two months later, a discussion in Parliament on the Indianisation slogan, saw numerous members demanding that the Jana Sangh give up this slogan. In the Rajya Sabha, V.C Shukla, Minister of State for Home Affairs appealed to the Sangh to give up this slogan as it was "not conducive to communal harmony and achieving national integration."

Interestingly a chorus of members backed his call. Bhupesh Gupta of the CPI and M.C Chagla, jurist and nominated member, asserted that every citizen in this country was an Indian and there was no need to Indianise him. B.D Sharma of the Congress (O), the rival faction to Indira's Congress (R), observed that if even after 23 years of independence, it was argued that a particular community had to be Indianised, it did "not speak well of the leaders." The angry outcry put the Jana Sangh member, Bhai Mahavir on the defensive. Responding to the volley of criticism, Mahavir tried to dilute the divisive import of this slogan by claiming a wider ambit for its intent. It was aimed at all the people who owed their allegiance either to Pakistan, Russia or China, he said. It was an interesting indication of the increasing untenability of the adoption of such a communal stance in public, that the Jana Sangh was forced to deny the real import of its Indianisation slogan.

The strong message sent out by the Centre under Indira Gandhi's stewardship that national unity was a prerequisite for the success of socialist

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transformation and anti-poverty measures, served as a powerful defuser of communal tensions. A heated exchange between Indira and Vajpayee who had initiated a discussion in the Lok Sabha on the Bhiwandi riots of May 1970, served to illustrate this point. Vajpayee made several observations that were scathing about the Muslim community and the Congress party. Echoing the themes of his 1969 presidential address at the Jana Sangh conclave at Patna, Vajpayee quoted a Home Ministry report to say that out of 23 cases of communal incidents, 22 were started by Muslims. He went on to make the contentious assertion that Muslims had come to the conclusion that there was no future for them in India and that it would therefore be better to die fighting. Some Muslims started riots to help Pakistan malign India, he said. Indira Gandhi's response was comprehensive and hard-hitting, showing the full contours of the Congress party's engagement with the concept and practice of secularism. She laid the blame on the RSS and the Jana Sangh for making provocative speeches and launching campaigns for 'Indianisation'. It "was found from experience" that soon after RSS workers visited certain areas, riots followed, Indira observed. Describing Vajpayee's speech as containing "naked fascism", the then Prime Minister called upon all parties to make a concerted effort to fight communalism, going from village to village, "mohalla to mohalla" to create good feeling between neighbouring communities. That would alone ensure necessary protection to minorities, she said.  

It must be noted that a major reason for the successful containment of the majoritarian communal impulses by the Indira Gandhi administration in the pre-Emergency phase of the '70s was the linking of this aspect to a larger perspective which focused on goals of socialist transformation. It enabled Indira Gandhi to mobilise mass sentiment against the Jana Sangh and other communal

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32 Report "PM hits out at Jan Sangh: Call for All-Party Effort to Restore Communal Amity", New Delhi, The Hindu, May 15, 1970.
organisations, by arguing that in the launching of such divisive campaigns against minorities, the Jana Sangh and other parties were allying with the forces of social conservatism, reflecting the interests of the feudal and upper classes, seeking to block the anti-poverty measures. Her various speeches at different points in time highlighted this theme. For instance, facing a hostile reception at a public meeting in Surat in January 1971, Indira claimed that the communal policies of the Jana Sangh were meant to block her pro-poor policies. Campaigning for the Congress in State elections in Bihar, in February 1972, Indira noted that if India had followed the Jana Sangh's policies, the country would have disintegrated by then, as had happened with the splintering of Pakistan with the birth of Bangladesh. Comparing the Jana Sangh to the Pakistani leadership, she said both believed in "religious bigotry", both were "intolerant of minorities, whether religious or linguistic, and wanted to assign an inferior status to them". But the most important point of comparison designed to underline the Jana Sangh's elitist status, was that both were "friends of the privileged classes" which were "opposed to measures that would reduce socioeconomic disparities." Buoyed in confidence by the success in the war with Pakistan over Bangladesh, Indira Gandhi became more trenchant in her public criticism of the Jana Sangh's policies. Speaking at election meetings in Madhya Pradesh, in March 1972, she likened the Jana Sangh to Hitler's Nazi party and said that she was equally opposed to the RSS, Shiv Sena and other such organisations because their "ideologies carried the seeds of India's ruination". Once again projecting the Sangh and its ilk as obstacles in the path of socialist transformation, she expressed the hope that the "Indian voter would remember that the Jana Sangh was really a friend of the rich and the privileged sections." She reminded her audiences that the Jana Sangh had opposed the


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abolition of privy purses and other "progressive measures" in Parliament. A party like this "should have no place in a country like India" where the majority of the people were poor, she argued.35

As can be seen, the vigorous and sustained campaigns of the Congress party and other secular political forces ensured that the Jana Sangh-led movement for the revival of Hindu cultural nationalism did not acquire the momentum that it required, to maintain a credible presence in the political arena. While one aspect of its strategy was the pressure on Muslims, placing them on the defensive and requiring them to continually affirm their national loyalty, the other aspect was the focus on Pakistan, and the construction of a picture that Pakistan was actively working with Indian Muslims to destabilise the Indian Union. Here below is described the Jana Sangh-led Hindu nationalist approach to Pakistan and its utilisation of the Pakistan factor in the pressure campaign vis-à-vis Muslims.

Utilising tensions with Pakistan

The Hindu nationalists calculated that by suggesting that Indian Muslims placed little premium on territorial nationalism and that they were inheritors of the legacy of Islamic conquest in India, they would be able to project the Muslim community as inherently "separatist" and therefore reluctant participants in the Indian national project. Pakistan was inevitably held up as the natural magnet of Muslim affections. The Jana Sangh minced no words in this regard. A resolution was adopted at its party conclave in Vijayawada in January 1965, stating that "so long as Pakistan subsists as a separate Islamic state, hostile to India, the position of Indian Muslims will remain delicate." The Government

35 "PM Asks People to Beware of War Danger", Report from Ujjain, The Hindu, March 5, 1972.
would “have to make a conscious effort to change the historical thought processes which have given birth to the Pakistani mentality and to ensure that no reasons remain which Pakistan could possibly exploit to subvert the loyalty of Indian citizens.” With large-scale war looming on the horizon between India and Pakistan in August 1965, the fighting having already started in April in the Rann of Kutch and spreading to Kashmir and Punjab, the Jana Sangh’s rhetoric sharpened. “Our Pakistan policy should be firm. By surrendering to Pak bullying and appeasing it, we only embolden it to pursue its mischievous designs. The day Pakistan realises that its dreams of reestablishing a Mughal Sultanat in India are not going to be realised and that India was determined to follow a tit-for-tat policy against it, it will be compelled to do some introspection. The rulers and people of Pakistan would then be able to appreciate the folly of partition.” In the same resolution adopted by its General Council meeting in New Delhi in August 1965, the Jana Sangh indicated that it considered the loyalties of Indian Muslims suspect in the context of the strains with Pakistan. “There should be no bargaining with Indian Muslims. They must be guaranteed all constitutional rights due to them in this secular State. But all separatist tendencies and attitudes betraying a pro-Pak bias must be curbed and such outlook and atmosphere must be Indianised.” In the Jana Sangh’s view, there was an unbreakable connection between Indian Muslims and Pakistan, with the ability to handle the former being critically dependent on the Indian state’s capacity to handle the latter. “Muslim masses can become nationally oriented only after both Pakistan as well as the separatist and communal Muslim organisations in India are given a political dressing down. Indian tradition and nationalism are not hostile to any form of

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36 Principles and Policy, January 1965, op.cit, pp. 16-17.
37 BJS Party Documents, op.cit, August 17, 1965, (p78).
38 Ibid.
worship. And modern Islam need not be an impediment in the building up of national integration. The real trouble has been separatist politics...” 39

In the ‘60s and early ‘70s, especially in the context of tensions with Pakistan, the Hindu nationalist strategy appeared to be largely focused on highlighting this alleged emotional bond of Indian Muslims with Pakistan40, repeatedly trying to underscore the tenuousness of their ties with the Indian Union. In a front-page column in the Independence Day issue of Organiser, in 1964, one of India’s leading military officers, General K.M Cariappa, who had strong Hindu nationalist leanings, representing a departure from the obligatory neutrality of a serving officer of Armed Forces of a secular republic, accused Indian Muslims of “having their feet in two boats—India and Pakistan.” Worse still, “their loyalty seems to be primarily to Pakistan.” This was “a crime unpardonable.” 41 Cariappa went on to demand that Muslims come out in the open and declare whether their loyalty was to India or to Pakistan. “If to Pakistan, they must pack up lock stock and barrel from India and go to Pakistan at once.” Such people, he said “have no right to have any claim on even one square inch of our sacred soil.” The second part of Cariappa’s column had a more pointed message for Indian Muslims that was intimidatory in tenor, reflecting his strong Hindu majoritarian views. If on the other hand, some Muslims had loyalty to India, he said, “they must expose disloyal elements in their community with all speed and get them to quit India”. In echoes of Nazi Germany, Cariappa asserted that if Muslims loyal to India did do that—expose persons of their community whom they thought had Pakistani sympathies—

39 Ibid.
40 Paul R Brass observes that the Hindu nationalist project of “historical rectification” included a “demonisation of Muslims as a separate people, a foreign body implanted in the heart of Hindu India, perpetually ‘warlike’...the memory of the partition and the violence associated with it is ingrained in the minds of most Hindus and is kept alive by the constant tension in the relations between India and Pakistan.” (The Production of Hindu-Muslim Violence in Contemporary India, University of Washington Press, Seattle, 2003, pp.34-37.
“here then will be convincing evidence that they are Indians and so would be accepted unreservedly by the majority class.” Indicating that as a classic majoritarianist, Cariappa placed the onus of preserving communal harmony on the Muslim minority when he went on to argue that “Muslims loyal to India must realise that their co-religionist citizens of India whose loyalty is in doubt and so is giving room to communal disharmony—are doing them greater harm than the alleged harm done by the majority class.”

The sting lay in his concluding observation that as a result of this doubt over the loyalty of Muslims, it would be difficult for those in authority to give Muslims equal opportunity in employment.

Similarly in the early ’70s, as tensions arose again with Pakistan over the rebellion in its eastern part, Hindu nationalists stepped up their rhetoric once again thrusting Indian Muslim “loyalties” into the spotlight by accusing them of being “separatist” as a result of the influence of Pakistan. In his pamphlet on Indianisation, Madhok charged: “The role of Pakistan as friend, philosopher and guide of the Muslim Indians had added new dimensions to the problem.”

Pakistan “was built on hatred for India and Hindus and is sustained by it…” The rulers of Pakistan were “clear in their minds that partition can last only so long as India and Pakistan remain at loggerheads.” Therefore it was “the cardinal policy of Pakistan since its inception to keep up tension with India and also to keep working up trouble within India.”

Indicating the strategic purpose of the evocation of ire against Pakistan and Indian Muslims, Madhok went on to allege that “Pakistan has a good number of its agents and supporters in India” and that it was Pakistan’s “constant effort to keep the two-nation theory on the basis of which Pakistan was created, alive and to see that Indian Muslims do not get integrated with the rest of Indian society. *Pakistan acts through all these Muslim*

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42 Ibid.
44 Ibid, pp. 54-55.
organisations directly or indirectly.” 45 (emphasis added). The ‘fifth columnist’ thesis was taking shape, enabling the Hindu majoritarian discourse to unveil a new assault on the national credentials of the Muslim community three decades after Independence.

During this period, Hindu nationalists also returned to the theme of Islamic jihad. Typical of these Hindu nationalist narratives were the pictures they painted of Indian Muslims as inheritors of a thousand-year jihad on hapless Hindus. Pakistan was of course viewed as the latest instrument of the Islamic compulsion to wage war on infidels and India and its long-suffering Hindus, the natural Indians, were the targets. “The number of the Hindus in Bharat started decreasing since the invasion of Mohammed Bin Kasim in 711 AD,” complained Hindu nationalist leader Nitya Narayan Banerjee, “and the process is continuing up to this day...the process of political and cultural aggression to weaken the Hindus and reduce their number in Bharat itself...is still on.” 46 Banerjee’s remarks to the Hindu Mahasabha, although only a pale shadow of its former self, in the early ’70s contain the essence of the Hindu majoritarian position as it was evolving then. Banerjee’s perspective sought to project imagery of Muslims as inheritors of a legacy of a rampaging jihad, who consequently saw Pakistan as a natural partner in the quest for hegemony in India. This perspective also contained the Hindu nationalist preoccupation with the issue of the treatment of Hindus in Pakistan, with its implication that Muslims in India deserved similar treatment, harking back to the early days of Partition and Independence when Hindu nationalists raised the demand for an “exchange of population.” Here below is an extract from these observations, reflecting this perspective --

45 Ibid.
46 Nitya Narayan Banerjee, Presidential Address to the 54th Session of the Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabha, at Hyderabad on December 31, 1971 and January 2, 1972, (Nehru Memorial Museum and Library)
...The creation of Pakistan and its continuous atrocities on its Hindu citizens happen to be only fresh evidence of the incredible attitude of Muslim intolerance. In 1971, young Hindus or kaffirs have been killed; the old and children i.e who cannot produce but consume food have been turned out to India to create an economic load on Hindusthan and thousands of young Hindu women have been snatched away from their families, detained and distributed as chattels amongst the Muslim citizens and soldiers. The same old method of multiplication and striking the kaffirs conveniently to grab more land is continuing in India since 1193 AD when Mohammed Ghori first defeated Prithviraj...

...If good sense does not yet dawn on the leaders of present Pakistan they should be prepared to take six crores of Indian Muslims in their territory on the basis of the land area allotted to them at the time of partition in the ratio of the total population in undivided India. A vast majority of the Muslims now in India voted for the creation of Pakistan and they have a right to enjoy its benefits if any. 47

The Jana Sangh’s Vajpayee articulated the same logic. In his presidential address to the Jana Sangh’s Pratinidhi Sabha in Chandigarh, in July 1970, referring to the situation of the Hindus of East Bengal, he alleged: “This latest onslaught on East Bengal Hindus is proof—if proof is at all necessary—that Pakistan rulers have violated the very basis of partition. The basic agreement which marked partition was that Pakistan would safeguard the interests of non-Muslims in Pakistan while the Government of India would look after the interests of non-Hindus in India. India has fully honoured this commitment...”48

47 Ibid.
This theme that Indian Muslims had to bear responsibility for the Partition became a core underpinning of the Hindu nationalist argument. The second charge levelled against Muslims which became a central element of the majoritarian platform was that they had separatist tendencies unlike other minorities who had integrated with the mainstream, a point that had been raised earlier by General Cariappa and others. The Organiser warned in an editorial in 1967 that “we hope our Muslim brethren realise that we have not forgotten Partition and that we cannot forget it. It was, as Hindus see it, a body blow at Bharat Mata. The independence and integrity of Hindustan are constantly menaced by Pakistan which is indeed a dagger planted in the body of India. And it was the Indian-area Muslims more than the Pakistan-area Muslims who planted the dagger there.” Alleging that “twenty years after Independence, too many Indian Muslims still feel closer to Pakistan than to India”, the editorial stated that “they identify themselves with Ghaznavi, the invader, and not with Prithviraj the defender; with Aurangzeb the tyrant, not with Shivaji the liberator; with Jinnah the partitioner and not with Gandhi the unifier.” 49 The editorial’s message was explicit. “We hope the Muslim appreciates the Hindu point of view. He cannot comfortably coexist with the Hindu unless he understands the Hindu. He must live down his past by sincerity of thought, word and deed if he is to have a happier future..” 50

The pre-Independence Hindu nationalist gambit—to loop together the security of the minority Muslims in India and the minority Hindus in Pakistan, translating into a suggestion that both populations should be viewed as hostages, vulnerable to the vagaries and compulsions of a tit-for-tat policy between India and Pakistan, resurfaced in the arguments of the Hindu majoritarianists even though Partition and Independence were events fast receding into history. This

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50 Ibid.
was a preoccupation that Maulana Azad had anticipated and dreaded as early as April 1946, when he had expressed apprehension that “two states confronting one another offer no solution of the problem of one another’s minorities, but only lead to retribution and reprisals by introducing a system of mutual hostages.”  

If the extremist and increasingly politically marginalised Hindu Mahasabha were to persist in demanding an exchange of population in its election manifesto of October 1966, the Jana Sangh was not too far behind. Discussing the problem of the exodus of Hindus from East Bengal in July 1970, the Jana Sangh strongly hinted that the rough treatment of Hindus in Pakistan represented an unfulfilled bargain between the two countries that both minorities would be well treated. The Jana Sangh’s statement of course represented extremist opinion that was not really taken seriously in the public discourse at the time, nonetheless it bears reproducing as it offers a flavour of the Hindu majoritarian stance as it was evolving then. The statement also referred to the rate of growth of population of the two minorities in both countries, suggesting that the rate of growth of Muslims in India was higher than that of the Hindus in Pakistan, rekindling the contentious Hindu nationalist demand that in the context of the changing demographic ratios, more territory must be returned to India. The raising of such issues by the Hindu nationalists was more in the nature of building points of pressure rather than making real demands. The statement adopted by the Jana Sangh’s Pratinidhi Sabha session in Chandigarh in July 1970 on the issue of the exodus of Hindus from East Bengal, reproduced below highlighted these arguments:

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52 Election Manifesto of the Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabha, (Published by Brojnarayan Brojesh, General Secretary, HMS, New Delhi, October 1966). The manifesto declared “The Hindu Mahasabha is...of the opinion that the only method of saving the life and honour of the Hindu minorities in Pakistan is to bring about an exchange of population between the Hindu minorities in Pakistan and Muslims in Hindustan.”
The partition of India in 1947 left sizeable Muslim minority in truncated India and Hindu minority in Pakistan. Mr Jinnah and Dr Ambedkar had suggested that logic of partition demanded exchange of this Hindu and Muslim population left back in India and Pakistan. But later it was decided by the Congress and Muslim League successors of the British in the two new Dominions that they should guarantee protection and equal rights to Hindus and Muslims that had been left back instead of undertaking exchange of population. That in fact was an essential part of the partition agreement and both sides publicly accepted the responsibility to allay the genuine and understandable fears and anxiety of the Hindu and Muslim minorities in Pakistan and truncated India...

....It is a matter of pride for India that it has given full protection and equal treatment to its Muslim minority as is clearly proved by the rapid increase of the Muslim population in India. It rose to 50 million in 1961 and is estimated to have gone up to 60 million by now.

The rate of growth of population in Pakistan has been about the same in India. If Pakistan had also honoured the commitment to give equal protection to its Hindu minority, its population should have arisen to about 25 million in 1961. But actually the numbers of Hindus in Pakistan was reduced to 9 million according to Pakistan’s census of 1961 and has been further reduced since then.

This has been mainly due to the planned policy of squeezing out or converting the Hindus through a reign of terror pursued by the rulers of Pakistan.53

In effect, the Jana Sangh statement was predicating the treatment of Muslims in India on the treatment of Hindus in Pakistan. Having made the issue of Hindus in Pakistan one of their main campaign themes, the Hindu

nationalists saw a fresh opportunity to reopen the old debate over exchange of population and territory when war loomed again on the horizon between India and Pakistan in 1971, in the wake of the East Pakistan crisis that spilled over into this country in terms of fresh inflows of refugees. Vajpayee for instance demanded that Prime Minister Indira Gandhi should invite Pakistan’s President Yahya Khan for talks on this issue. India should “make it clear”, Vajpayee said, “that if Pakistan does not stop this brutal Operation Squeeze against Hindus, the Government would have to think of suitable remedial measures—from demanding land and compensation for rehabilitation of these displaced persons, to breaking off diplomatic ties with Pakistan.”

What was significant in the raising of such issues, long erased from public memory was the fact that the Hindu majoritarianists were raising these long forgotten demands precisely to seize what they saw as the opportune political moment—a time when tensions with Pakistan were particularly high. Critical to the evolving majoritarian blueprint was the need to project a visible link between Pakistan and Indian Muslims. If a vibrant secular national culture was continuing to seek to bury the bitter divisions of India’s pre-Independence past, the Hindu majoritarianists were clearly attempting to remind the Indian public of those long forgotten differences. By raising anew the demand that Indian Muslims, blamed typically by Hindu nationalists for Pakistan’s creation, ought to be sent to Pakistan in exchange for the exodus of Hindu refugees, the Hindu nationalists were in one stroke making two assertions. The first was that India was the natural land of the Hindus and it was in the order of things that refugees from Pakistan of Hindu origin could be allowed here, even at the expense of the Muslim population who had lived in India for decades since Partition. The second assertion, of greater political consequence, was that Muslims were not natural Indians and the majority of them had not wanted to be part of India,

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therefore they could not be construed as having equal stakes in India’s nationhood. It is not difficult to imagine where that logic leads to—if the Muslims had no stake in India’s nationhood, it stood to reason that they would not be particularly committed to its national integrity, thereby representing a threat to India’s national security.

Clearly, the lynchpin that they required to breathe life into their enervated campaign was the stereotype of Indian Muslims as essentially separatists, endangering Indian nationhood with their emotional ties to Pakistan. This was a crucial ingredient in the project to establish Hindu hegemony of the Indian national project. Below are the details as to how that stereotype was constructed, even as a fear psychosis was sought to be created vis-à-vis Pakistan, suggesting that it was bent on breaking up the Indian Union, with the help of its agents in India—the Muslim community.

The ‘Separatist’ Muslim: The Stereotype Takes Shape

One strand of the Hindu nationalist project with its emphasis on Hindu cultural hegemony was to constantly characterise the Muslim community’s moves to preserve its cultural autonomy in terms of protecting its language and its educational institutions as reflecting a strong tendency to “separatism”. On one level, this was a response typical of all majoritarian political projects which demand cultural homogenisation i.e assimilation into the majority culture. Yet

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55 Gyanendra Pandey notes as regards the Hindu majoritarian project, that what follows “is a profound anxiety about the Muslim and the call to disarm him—by disenfranchisement and deculturisation. Muslims must adopt “our” names, “our” language, “our” dress. What follows is the demand that if the Muslims wish to stay in India, they should learn to live like “us”—the invisible mainstream that does not need to be identified.” (Ranite Violence, Fragments, Histories, Permanent Black, Delhi, 2006, p.36).
in this case the intensity of the Hindu nationalist focus on the "problem of Muslim separatism" had another import. It became strategically useful to claim that these Muslim cultural articulations represented "separatist tendencies" that camouflaged their real intentions to expand the influence of their "mentor" Pakistan in India, to the extent of triggering a few more Partitions, and having more and more Muslim-dominated pockets in India merge with the Islamic state. The Urdu language, a critical part of the cultural identity of the Muslim community, was a particular focus of Hindu nationalist political ire even as the Aligarh Muslim University became a favourite bete noire. 56

The Hindu nationalists began to focus their attention on Muslim cultural and intellectual activity, declaring such activity to be encouraging a "separatist mindset." These Hindu nationalist ideologues seemed to have recognised that by describing Muslim cultural proclivities as inherently separatist, they could resurrect the memory of the Muslim League, suggesting that the separatist urge had not quite vanished with the birth of Pakistan. In the '50s, the Jana Sangh had laid the ground for this line of attack by criticising the promotion of "Muslim culture" as responsible for this "separatist" mindset. In its resolution calling for Indianisation, cited earlier in this chapter, the Jana Sangh made clear that in its view, cultures other than Hindu which had taken root in India were "foreign". "When foreign rulers of this country...for their selfish ends, thrust cultures foreign to the genius of Indian life and when foreign values of life began to be respected, our nationalism was endangered. The success of the Two-nation theory and the consequent vivisection of the Motherland are their

56 Bruce D Graham, Hindu Nationalism and Indian Politics, The Origin and Development of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, (Cambridge University Press, 1990) pp. 119-120. Graham notes that both these issues were utilised by Hindu nationalists to substantiate their allegation that there was continuing Muslim separatism. He quotes Deendayal Upadhyaya as complaining in an article in Organiser in May 1958 that "Urdu in spite of its recognition in the Constitution and its birth in India has been a vehicle of Muslim separatism...It has no grass-roots and therefore people who claim to speak Urdu have no roots in the soil. For this reason alone it had become a symbol of separate Muslim Nationhood which the Muslim League advocated." Likewise, the Aligarh Muslim University was a target of Jana Sangh ire.
results. Even then, again a supposedly separate Muslim culture is being promoted and protected resulting in the continuance of the Two-nation theory mentality... and the increasing activities of Pak Fifth Columnists are natural corollaries of that mentality...”

Balraj Madhok and his Jana Sangh colleagues kept up the pressure on Aligarh Muslim University and other perceived centres of Muslim intellectual activity. Madhok alleged in his tract on Indianisation that “…Instead of creating respect for the Indian inheritance and bringing Muslims into the national mainstream, systematic efforts are made in Aligarh and elsewhere to completely insulate the Muslim mind from Indian life and thought, cultural tradition and other influences that could remove the canker of two-nation theory from their minds.”

The Hindu majoritarianists were watchful too about Muslim political activity. Studies have shown how the emergence of Muslim political pressure groups such as the Majlis-e-Mushawarat, formed in 1964 to consolidate Muslim opinion, initially in favour of Hindu-Muslim unity and what it saw as “true national integration”, but later transformed itself into a front to press for Muslim cultural demands—were instantly stigmatised as attempts to revive Jinnah’s Muslim League. The Hindu nationalists were quick to brand the Majlis’ founding leaders, AJ Faridi and the theologian Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi as attempting to revive the separatist movement among Muslims. In a strong attack on the Majlis in September 1966, the Organiser charged that “in the shape of the Majlis Mushawarat, the spirit of Mohammed Ali Jinnah is coming alive,” with

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57 BJS Party Documents, Dec 30, 1956, op.cit.
58 Madhok, op.cit., pp. 51, 53.
59 Paul R. Brass, Language, Religion and Politics in North India, (Cambridge University Press, 1974). Brass notes that there were different views of the MMM from within. Some viewed it primarily as a vehicle “by which the Muslims of India could express their love for their Indian homeland and their devotion to Muslim unity” while there were others such as AJ Faridi, MMM’s main founder who saw it “primarily a vehicle for political action, to press home the demands of Muslims.” (p.250).
60 Mushirul Hasan notes in his study, Legacy of a Divided Nation, (Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1997) that the “Majlis leaders believed in an undifferentiated ‘Muslim vote’ waiting to be consolidated and harnessed to create an exclusive Muslim front” but...consequently, the Majlis was stigmatised as a sinister, incipient revival of Jinnah’s Muslim League...” (p.272)
the Majlis launching “its political campaign of separatist revivalism” all over the country. “The campaign is based on a call to unite Muslim voters all over the country to pressurise political parties...to accept the basic thesis that there is a Muslim movement and problem in the country which could be satisfactorily met by the implementation of a nine point programme recalling the fourteen points of Mr Jinnah which ultimately led to the partition of this country.”61 The “inspiring ideologist of the new separatist movement is Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Mian, head of the Nadwa College at Lucknow who is reported to have wide contacts in the Muslim world...” noted the report in Organiser. Ali Nadwi was quoted by the same report as speaking of “the grievances of the Muslims of India” and as saying that he did not want to live in a country where Muslim rights were not preserved. Muslims, Nadwi was quoted as asserting, “could not allow (themselves) to be taken for granted.”62

Organisations like the Majlis-e-Mushawarat and its counterpart in Hyderabad – the Majlis Ittihad ul Muslimeen--were undeniably creating a communal mindset much like the Hindu majoritarianists that represented an impediment to the forging of a common civic identity. As it happened, the Congress party did manage to get the better of these communal fronts and Muslims tended to move away from these groups, voting instead for the Congress in the first three general elections.63 Thus the alarmist suggestions of the Hindu nationalists that all Muslims were essentially separatists were sharply at odds with the ground reality that these communal Muslim fronts did not

61 “In the Shape of Majlis Mushawarat, Mr Jinnah is Coming Back to Life”, report by Lucknow Correspondent, Organiser, Vol XX No 4., September 4, 1966.
62 Ibid.
63 Hasan, op.cit, notes that for Muslims, “the critical issue was not the fate of the Shariat...it was to establish for their own survival and progress, enduring relationships with fellow citizens and established political parties. They had to find new forms of expression within a secularised idiom and explore fresh avenues to articulate their aspirations, anxieties and misgivings.” In the first three general elections, Muslims were “indissolubly tied to the Congress”. Where the “Congress was not electable or its candidate had a dubious secular record” Muslims searched for “secular-oriented parties”. (pp.215-217)
command much support from the Muslim community, just as the Hindu
majoritarianists did not represent mainstream opinion in a strongly secular
environment.

But finding that it might be tactically useful in the exercise to enlarge their
own political space, the Hindu nationalists began to raise the pitch in their
rhetorical attacks on these Muslim communal organisations. An issue of
Organiser in September 1966 quoted a memorandum to the Andhra Pradesh
Chief Minister demanding a ban on the Majlis Ittihad-Ul-Muslimeen stating that
"the Indian Muslims, day in and day out, are instigated to revolt against their
country and the still up and kicking Muslim League and its counterpart in
Andhra Pradesh, the Majlis-Ittihad-Ul Muslimeen, are utilised as an easy handle
in this nefarious task. Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Madras to an extent, have
earned notoriety as areas providing a fertile ground for such activity..." Further,
the memorandum alleged, "this treatment of a privileged class conferred on
Muslims as a consequence of the agitation carried on by Muslims in the
Congress and communal organisations like the Majlis, has given rise to the
feeling in them that by cutting themselves adrift from the main national current
they stand to gain. This feeling is carefully nurtured through the communal
Muslim press, platforms and other instruments of propaganda. The mosques
and Masjid Committees and the Deeni classes today constitute breeding centres
for the spread of this venom." 64

The second aspect of the majoritarian strategy was to project a scary
scenario of more Partitions looming on the horizon, suggesting a splintering
national frame. From the 1965 Indo-Pakistan War onwards, Hindu nationalists
held up Assam as a possible "Kashmir in the making" and expressed fears that a
"Moplastan" was being created by the Muslim League in Kerala. The description

64 "The Shadow of Razakars is still over Hyderabad: What Pak-minded Muslims Are Doing in
carried in the *Organiser* in November 1968 by its Calicut correspondent indicates the fear psychosis that was sought to be created by conjuring up the prospect of more and more states or areas seceding from India to join with Pakistan. The Malabar coast was regarded by Hindu nationalists as particularly vulnerable to Pakistani designs. “...Muslim League wants first to carve out a Muslim-majority district. Later it would like to have it converted into a sub-state *a la* the Hill State of Assam. Later still it could demand full statehood for Malappuram. And Allah willing, they would like this coastal state to secede from India and accede to Pakistan—as Junagadh tried to do in 1947. This is not fantasy; this is the plan enunciated by the Leaguers themselves over the years...” 65 This piece also thrust forward a scenario typical of Hindu nationalist propaganda that Indian Muslims and their political representatives were acting according to an original design laid out by the pre-Partition Muslim League and the founders of the Pakistan movement that all the Muslim-majority areas of the subcontinent would accede to Pakistan. In other words, there was still an “unfinished agenda” which Pakistan and the Indian Muslims were secretly working on together. Recalling Chaudhary Rahmat Ali, the Cambridge student who was one of the earliest proponents of Pakistan before Partition and who had actually coined the name “Pakistan”, the same *Organiser* piece noted gloomily that “Chaudhary Rahmat Ali was perhaps the first man to spell out sinister Muslim plans for India. In his pamphlet ‘The Menace of Indianism’, he wrote that India should be converted into *Dinia*, a land of religious states. He not only wanted a West Pakistan and an East Pakistan, he also wanted Muslim States wherever either the prince was a Muslim or the people were Muslims in large numbers. And so he wanted Usmanistan in Hyderabad, Siddiquistan in Bhopal, Faruqistan in Rampur and

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also a Moministan, a Moplastan, a Safistan and a Nasinistan! All these Muslim States were then to confederate in a Pak Commonwealth or Pakasia!!” 66

Assam was another particular concern, especially in the ‘60s, with the Hindu nationalists expressing the fear that it would be transformed into a Muslim-majority state as a prelude to a merger with East Pakistan. Assam remained high on the Hindu majoritarian agenda even after the formation of Bangladesh, with the Jana Sangh and other Hindu nationalist organisations voicing their apprehensions about Muslim refugee influx into Assam altering the demographic ratio between Hindus and Muslims. As is well known, this issue continued to be at the top of the Hindu nationalist agenda in the ‘80s and the ‘90s, with similar concerns being loudly articulated about the impact of Bangladeshi infiltration on national security. In June 1965, in the context of increasing tensions between India and Pakistan, the Hindu nationalists pointed to Assam as a possible danger zone. Thus an article in *Organiser* of June 1965 titled “Another Kashmir in the Making” with the subtitle “Pakistani Muslim Invasion of Assam” noted that 13 Muslim members of the Assam Legislative Assembly belonging to the Congress party had threatened to resign if the Government did not take steps to stop the “harassment of Indian Muslims” by the police while deporting illegal Pakistani immigrants. “The threat by these gentlemen”, the article observed, “has come at a time when the Pakistani armed build-up along the Assam-East Pakistan border is going on in full swing.” The article’s conclusion was that “there is nothing to be surprised at in this development.” It was, the article said, “the logical sequel to what has been going on in this part of India for the last 18 years.” This “open move by the MLAs” was “a disturbing pointer not only to the Pakistani link of some of the Indian Moslems even in the party of power, but also to a deep laid conspiracy to get Assam annexed to Pakistan.” The “grim reality” was that “another Kashmir is in

66 Ibid.
the making in eastern India.” For a long time, “Pakistan has been injecting into
Assam and Tripura a formidable number of Pakistani Moslems…” The article
noted the analysis of a former Finance Minister of Assam that said “if the flow
of Pakistani Moslems infiltration continues unchecked, Assam will be a Moslem
majority State within the next ten years. Already in some Brahmaputra valley
districts of Assam where originally Moslems were hardly 10 per cent they are
now almost on par with the Hindu population…They will then invoke the
sacred principle of self-determination of the UN Charter and demand secession
of Assam from India.”

It was a preoccupation that continued into the '70s and sharpened in the
context of the India-Pakistan war over Bangladesh, with Hindu nationalists once
again raising the spectre of the “unfinished agenda” of Partition, suggesting that
Pakistan’s plan was to create two Muslim majority states in Assam and West
Bengal and annex these to Pakistan. The Hindu majoritarian argument also
relied on building a perception that apart from the claimed infiltrations of
Pakistani Muslims, the demographic ratio between Hindus and others,
particularly Muslims and Christians was dangerously tilting in favour of the
latter, as a result of religious conversions, leading to doomsday predictions of
dire decline for the Hindus and further Partitions. Thus the Hindu Mahasabha
ideologue Indra Prakash in an essay titled “They Count their Gains—We
Calculate our Losses” in 1979, expressed his fears that "in no distant future, say
within 50 years hence, this sacred motherland would again be subjected to
partition and this time there will be two co-sharers, the Muslims and the
Christians. So another Pakistan and Christianistan are the future destiny of the
country, if God forbid, the Government remains in the hands of these

67 BC Nag, “Another Kashmir in the Making: Pakistani Muslim Invasion of Assam”, Organiser, Vol
XVIII, No 46, June 27, 1965.
68 Banerjee, Speech at All India Hindu Convention on Bangla Desh, October 30-31, 1970, New Delhi,
(NMML).
Secularists...” He argued that the Government ought to understand that “change of religion connotes change of nationality and once any community forming a majority in a particular state puts forward a claim for the right of self-determination, it would be difficult to deny them the right in view of the present politics of the rulers and the past history... Muslims are still carrying on their movement of converting the Hindus into Islam throughout the country...”69

It was on fears such as these that the Hindu majoritarian campaign played upon. The Jana Sangh drew a parallel between the Congress’ vain attempts to “placate” the Muslim League before Independence and the Government’s “appeasing” of Pakistan after Independence.70 It was on one level an attempt to revive the old conceptual battle over nationhood, a battle that the cultural nationalists had lost. On another level, it was laying out a basis for a new strategic course—linking Pakistan with Indian Muslims, thereby setting in motion a new challenge to a settled definition of nationhood. Contending that India had been trying hard to win Pakistan’s friendship by “sacrificing its own interests”, the Jana Sangh, in its August 1965 resolution, regretted that “Pakistan’s bellicosity has been growing day by day.” The Jana Sangh then went on to allege that “while on the one hand” Pakistan had "been preparing to launch on India an invasion from without, it has been using its fifth-column inside India to foment Muslim communalism and to plan large-scale riots and subversion.” The next part of its observation was significant. “A section of Muslims in India experiences an emotional tie-up with Pakistan. In fact both derive strength from each other.”71 The RSS and the Hindu Mahasabha were more explicit in asserting that Indian Muslims were actively assisting Pakistan in making military inroads into India. Commenting on the 1965 Indo-Pakistani

69 Indra Prakash, “They Count Their Gains—We Calculate Our Losses”, Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabha, Delhi, 1979, (NMML).
70 BJS Party Documents, August 17, 1965, op.cit.
71 Ibid.
War which had first manifested in hostilities on the Gujarat-Rajasthan border, the Organiser alleged later that year—"We need not shut our eyes to the fact that Pakistan has succeeded in building up a large pro-Pak population in Barmer. It also maintains a very active fifth column operating from Barmer. As Organiser has repeatedly reported in the past, most of the fifth columnists wear khadi caps, pose as active Congressites, and some of them are even Panchas and Sarpanchas! Indeed it was the active help of this fifth column which enabled Pakistan to make deep and dangerous thrusts into our area…"  

The tensions with Pakistan provided an opportunity that was irresistible to Hindu nationalists who lost no time in blaming Muslims for "collaborating with the enemy". Thus when the 1971 war was on, Banerjee, seeking to put Muslims on the defensive in that particular war context, recalled the 1965 war with Pakistan to say that "In the 1965 war with Pakistan, we have seen the plight of innocent Muslims in India; we have seen treacherous activities of the pro-Pak Muslims here; we experienced the difficulty in our defence affairs due to elements of doubtful character." He also demanded that the country take "serious note of the attitude of a large section of the Muslim population in India on the Bangla Desh issue and to take effective steps in defence preparation vis-à-vis the doubtful elements having dual allegiance." In effect, Banerjee was urging the Government to pre-emptively arrest Muslims on grounds of mere suspicion, in complete violation of their fundamental rights as Indian citizens.

Despite the fact that their accusations against Muslims did not seem to have any resonance in the public arena with no other political party or public organisation showing any interest in this theme, the Hindu nationalists were determined to invest considerable political energy in this issue. Their campaigns
during this period often focused mainly on the theme that the loyalties of Muslims belonged to Pakistan and India remained in danger from that unhealthy 'nexus'. The Organiser commented in April 1968:

The causes of Hindu-Muslim tensions lie deep in history and we are sorry to say that nothing has been done to get at them and to cure them.

The Hindu looks upon Muslims as apostates who renounced their ancestral faith and joined hands—with the foreign invader. Time is a great healer. But pouring salt on wounds is not the best way of healing them. As late as 1947, it was the Muslims in India who pressed for partition even more than the Muslims in Pakistan. The Hindu finds it difficult that on the night of August 15, 1947, every pro-Pakistani in India became an honest pro-Indian.

The Indian Muslim who was chiefly responsible for the partition of India, supports the Islamic state in Pakistan but insists on a secular state in India. He wants more and more in India but has not a word of condemnation for Pakistan which has liquidated all Hindus in the western wing and reduced them to the status of serfs in the eastern wing. The Hindu gets the feeling that the Muslim is not a very reasonable fellow.

Restaurant after Muslim restaurant blares the Pakistan radio. The Hindu gets the feeling that such Muslims have their heart in Pakistan. They wonder if they would not be more at home in Pakistan... 75

In this passage cited above, the central message that was sought to be delivered was that the Indian Muslim "who was responsible for Partition" really had no business being here. He belonged with Pakistan but thanks to Indian secularism, he was allowed to have full rights here. He was also held responsible for Pakistan's treatment of Hindus, thus reviving the "mutual hostages"

doctrine. In essence, a majoritarian perspective was being developed, which would underline that Indian-ness meant Hindu-ness and all non-Hindus were foreigners without rights in India’s national framework.

Building a Narrative of “Riot-Prone” Muslims

One of the main objectives of this thesis is to explore the evolution of the stereotype developed by the majoritarian discourse of the Muslim as an unstable element in the Indian national project, with a strong propensity to riots and terrorism. Critical to this stereotype is also the link that was sought to be established between the subversive Muslim and Pakistan. This was an essential link for the majoritarian argument because without that link, the mere suggestion that Muslims were terrorists or rioters, would at best lead to the conclusion that they were anti-social. But more important for the project of Hindu cultural nationalism was to demonstrate that Muslims were not just anti-social but dangerously anti-national. That would be possible only by suggesting that among all the minority groups in India, Muslims alone had strong historical connections with Pakistan which was seen as a principal enemy of the Indian nation-state, at least in the Hindu majoritarian perspective. As has been detailed above, the majoritarianists repeatedly argued that those Muslims resident in India had voted for Partition, signalling their allegiance to an Islamic State. Secondly was the argument, derived from the Hindu nationalist understanding of Islamic theology, that Islam demanded of its followers greater allegiance and adherence to its creed, giving lower priority to national loyalty. The third important point that was sought to be made was that by establishing a secular state, the Congress party had allowed the Muslims to “have their cake and eat it too,” in other words enjoy all the rights of citizenship in India, a country which
belonged naturally to the Hindus, because Pakistan now represented the homeland of all Muslims.

Balraj Madhok’s tract on ‘Indianisation’ offers a sample of this perspective which construed the three ‘evils’—Pakistan, the Indian Muslims and the Congress and other secular parties being at the root of this dire state of affairs, heading towards a break-up of India. But Madhok placed a large share of blame for this situation on the Congress party. According to his analysis, the activities of the Congress had “revived the communal aggressiveness of a section of the Muslim leadership reminiscent of the pre-1947 days.” The “encouragement they have received from the ruling Congress party and the Communist parties together with the growing influence of Pakistani agents working through Muslim League, Jamaat-i-Islami and Ittihad-ul-Muslimeen which were in the forefront of the fight for Pakistan has added to their communal chauvinism.” The next part of Madhok’s analysis contained the link between the communal riots, which he saw as a product of Muslim communal chauvinism, and Pakistani designs to pull more areas out of India and annex these, by causing another Partition. Madhok’s argument was that the "spate of communal riots …which have been invariably initiated by such elements among Muslims, as has been conclusively proved by the survey of the Ministry of Home Affairs" coupled with "the new demands for another partition of India on communal lines put forth by Pakistani leaders like Mr. Bhutto…and suggestions about creating Muslim majority zones or States in India put forth by a section of the Muslim press have created a situation which demands serious and urgent consideration by all nationalist Indians."  

The Jana Sangh which was then very much under Madhok’s tutelage reflected the same line of thinking. In its resolution of June 1968 at Gauhati, in a section on communalism, subtitled ‘Foreign Inspired Riots’, the party noted that

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76 Madhok, op.cit, pp.40-41,
“within a brief period of time riots should occur in as far-flung places as Srinagar and Karimganj, Allahabad and Aurangabad, show that there are forces in the country actively conspiring to create disorder and anarchy by fomenting communalism.” Further, “the possibility cannot be ruled out that these rioters have been receiving arms and money from some foreign powers.” And who that foreign power the resolution was referring to, became clear in its next part. “Shouting of slogans like ‘Pakistan Zindabad’ and parading of Pak flags during the riots lend strength to the suspicion that there is a foreign hand behind the riots. The surprisingly prompt reports about riots broadcast by Radio Pakistan provide another sinister pointer…”

Another report prepared by the Jana Sangh on the communal riots of the ‘60s which it said reflected the assessment of its party sub-committees which had enquired into the various communal disturbances set out a list of incidents in which it saw the Pakistani hand instigating these rioters, invariably Muslims, to acts of violence. Listed briefly below are the incidents in which the Sangh alleged a Pakistani hand, as highlighted in its report of October 1968:

**September 17, 1967, Sholapur (Maharashtra)**

…The riots that took place here on September 17, 1967, were deliberately started to cover the anti-national and dangerous activities of a Muslim trader by name Maniar who was found in illegal possession of hundreds of detonators and large quantities of potassium cyanide. Ample proof is available that these riots were pre-planned. The Muslims decided upon retaliation against the police for their steps in the Maniar affair and started by stoning the Ganesh procession while it was passing a mosque. The procession was stoned in the midst of slogans like ‘Pakistan Zindabad’. While the riot

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77 BJS Party Documents, June 14, 1968, op.cit.
78 Recent Communal Riots, A Report (Bharatiya Jana Sangh, October 15, 1968.)
took place on the night of September 17, 1967, it was reported by Radio Pakistan the very next morning.\textsuperscript{79}

March 15, 1958, Bidar (Mysore)

On March 15, 1968, a Hindu procession in celebration of Holi was peacefully passing through the city when some goondas belonging to the Muslim community tried to disturb it by pelting stones. When this did not provoke the Hindus, another attack on the procession was made. Goondas started stoning the peaceful procession and shouted slogans like ‘\textit{Pakistan Zindabad}’ and ‘Kashmir is part of Pakistan’…

March 16, 1968, Allahabad (UP)

On March 16 1968, when some children threw colour on a certain individual, he not only belaboured the children but took out a pistol to frighten residents of the locality. At the same time a Holi procession was stoned from a mosque…This led to the riot in which heavy losses were sustained…

At noon of March 16, Radio Pakistan reported the riots in Allahabad and said that all mosques in Allahabad had been burnt down. It is true that some mosques were damaged but this happened only after the report of the Pakistan Radio…\textsuperscript{80}

From the foregoing, it is evident that a picture of the Muslim as the initiator of riots, mostly to mask his sinister activities which included the acquisition of arms and ammunition, acting with Pakistan’s encouragement, was being projected by the Jana Sangh, the RSS and other Hindu nationalist groups. In an editorial in April 1968, the \textit{Organiser} asserted it was the Muslim who was the more aggressive participant in communal conflict. “During the last few

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid.
months there have been many Hindu-Muslim riots—in Ranchi, in Sursand, in Gorakhpur, in Meerut and now in Prayag and elsewhere... Though newspaper reports crudely camouflage the identity of the actors in these sorry dramas, it is generally clear that trouble begins with some overt act by some Muslims. While Hindu goondas ply the knife, Muslim goondas use the knife, the gun and the torch..."81 The editorial pinned on to this peg a critique of the Congress Government's secular policies. "..These eruptions of violence are...continuing proofs of the failure of Government's Muslim and/or Pakistan policy..."82 It was evident that the Hindu majoritarian campaign recognised it was important to invest considerable political energy in the construction of the imagery of the "riot-prone" Muslim to place this at the centre of a discourse that had as its goal the reopening of the issue of nationhood.

As has been detailed in an earlier section of this chapter, the Jana Sangh and the RSS's attempts to consolidate a majoritarian consciousness among Hindus were strongly countered by the Congress campaigns for national unity and the constant reminders to the people not to fall prey to communalism and other forms of sectarianism, in order not to endanger the goals of rapid economic transformation. The Bangladesh crisis and the 1971 war with Pakistan ensured the further marginalisation of the cultural nationalist movement as the Jana Sangh and its allies were forced to suspend their strategies of communal mobilisation in the context of the perception that there were more serious external threats to the nation's security.

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81 Editorial, April 7, 1968, Organiser, op.cit.
82 Ibid.

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The Unbreakable Consensus for National Unity

It was clear that while Jawaharlal Nehru's and Indira Gandhi's roles might have been critical ingredients in the process of establishing India's secular national identity and instituting an acknowledgment that India's national legacy was a composite one, the establishment of a secular national ethos was not tied to the philosophy of individual leaders, however towering their personalities were. The consensus that India would have to be a democracy run on modern lines, anchored to principles like secularism and pluralism was much more deep rooted, drawing from the recognition of the diverse linguistic, regional and cultural identities of the stakeholders in India's nationhood. Secularism was seen more as a component of the democratic project. It was precisely this point that the concept of secularism in India was not viewed as the mere antithesis or obverse of communal conflict which ensured that its value as a governing principle was not weakened during times of war despite the fact that these were times when communal harmony would be inevitably tested.

The strong secular consensus that prevailed in the '60s and '70s ensured that Hindu nationalist parties were isolated in their attempts to put pressure on Muslims in the context of the two wars. Leading Congress and Communist party spokesmen took it upon themselves to shield the Muslim community from possible targeting or harassment. One instance was a clearly thoughtful intervention by the veteran CPI parliamentarian Hirendra Nath Mukerjee. Speaking in the Lok Sabha on September 24, 1965, during the height of the war

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83 A recent study of Indian secularism done in a comparative perspective by Gary Jeffrey Jacobsohn reads further into the significance of the concept of secularism in the Indian political context. He argues that Indian secularism is "ameliorative secularism". The Indian Constitution is committed to a vision of social reconstruction, particularly with respect to caste inequalities. Therefore "this vision of national unity relied primarily on social reconstruction to create one nation out of a multiplicity of peoples. For the experiment to succeed, popular religion had to be downplayed, constituting as it did the principal impediment in the path of integrating different classes and people into a modern nation-state." (The Wheel of Law: India's Secularism in Comparative Constitutional Context, Oxford University Press, 2003, pp.92-93).
with Pakistan, Mukerjee urged the Government to avoid deviations from what he saw as a "solid democratic policy" that it had been following. "Occasionally there have been deviations... in West Bengal, I have heard of some indiscriminate arrests of Muslims and that sort of thing. Suspicion is always a very uncertain quantity and I do hope that on account of mere suspicion Muslims are not made to feel as if they are unwanted. They have shown by their conduct, by and large, that they stand by the country, as much as anybody else." Ansar Harvani, a Congressman and a Muslim was especially strong in his denunciation of Pakistan, reflecting the strong faith that the majority of Indian Muslims had in the secular Indian nation-state. "I have often pointed out on the floor of this House that in spite of 18 years of freedom, Pakistan has not achieved nationhood...Pakistan's nationalism, its leadership, its history, its culture etc is nothing but hatred for India...We have to meet the danger we are facing from Pakistan...Pakistan calculated that there would be communal trouble in both the countries. But what did we actually find? The Hindus, the Muslims, the Sikhs, the Parsis and all the communities in this country stood like a rock for the defence of this country. Probably the mad rulers of Pakistan forgot that this country of ours is as much of Muslims as it is of Hindus...Therefore if Pakistan thought that the Muslims, Christians and the other minorities would not stand by this country, they were falsified in their infiltrations...I want to warn the rulers of Pakistan and tell them that every Indian Muslim man, woman and child is prepared to lay down his or her life for the defence of this ancient country of ours..."  

Likewise, Indira Gandhi's internal policies whereby she repeatedly demonstrated the political will to counter the forces of Hindu communalism,  

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85 Ansar Harvani, ibid, pp. 7470-74.
taking them on publicly and ensuring their isolation by projecting these as allies of feudalism and upper class interests, ensured that the Muslim community was solidly behind her, as she confronted Pakistan over Bangladesh. Recognising the importance of communal harmony in this testing time, as the crisis built up as regards the Bangladesh issue, with refugees pouring in, she took the precaution of preparing the country for the eventuality of war by stressing the need for unity and discipline, urging them to resist every incitement to communalism, and sink all differences of party and religion.\(^{86}\) Her appeal to maintain unity in defence of the nation had a powerful unifying impact with the entire country rallying behind her. When Pakistan launched a full-scale war on December 3, 1971 against India, Indira Gandhi received overwhelming backing from all parties including the Jana Sangh whose leader Vajpayee declared in the Lok Sabha, during a discussion on the proclamation of national emergency, that the entire country "was one party now" and that under Indira Gandhi's leadership, the nation would "give a fitting reply to the aggressor." Vajpayee's gesture of support drew cheers from the entire House.\(^{87}\)

As had been the case in the 1965 war, the Muslim community made clear that it had no hesitation in offering unstinted support to the Government in the war against Pakistan, thereby exposing the hollowness of the claims of the Jana Sangh and other Hindu extremist ideologues that the national loyalties of Muslims would always be in question during a conflict with Pakistan. In the Lok Sabha on December 4, 1971, in the course of the discussion on the Pakistani aggression, Ebrahim Sulaiman Sait of the Muslim League drew repeated cheers from the entire House when he asserted that "the defence of this country is an article of faith with the Musalmans of this country" and further declared that "the Musalmans of this country are prepared to make maximum sacrifices and

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\(^{87}\) "Nation is behind Govt. in repelling aggression: MPs", Report from New Delhi, \textit{The Hindu}, December 5, 1971.
stand shoulder to shoulder with their brother countrymen for the security, honour and integrity of the motherland." Another important intervention in this discussion was that of a Kashmiri MP, Shamim Ahmed Shamim who noted that Pakistan Radio broadcasts were now replete with appeals to Indian Muslims in the name of Islam. He noted that Pakistan was casting a "covetous eye" on his home state, Kashmir and that it would "spare no effort to foment communal tension in India in this hour of threat to this country's integrity." The loyalty of Muslims to India was beyond question, he said, as also their readiness to shed blood for the defence of the motherland as had been demonstrated in the earlier conflict with Pakistan. 88

The 1971 confrontation with Pakistan over Bangladesh had consolidated strong political and popular support behind the Government, forcing the Jana Sangh and its president, Vajpayee, even before the outbreak of war, to offer their "unreserved support in maintaining unity in the country and keeping high the morale of the people in view of the menacing attitude of Pakistan." 89 This ensured that the Hindu majoritarian view of the internal situation was kept in abeyance during the crisis period. It was noteworthy that during the two wars with Pakistan, the Hindu nationalist campaign, targeting Muslims as having dual loyalties, made no headway, indicating the enduring nature of the secular consensus in the public arena.

It was clear that reinforcing the secular environment and dissipating the public interest in issues of nationhood and national identity, was the strong sense that economic development was the priority, with the strategies aimed at poverty alleviation seizing the popular imagination. It was also evident that the careful deference by the Centre to regional political sensibilities as for instance of the DMK in Tamil Nadu, ensured that secularism and the stress on national

88 Ibid.
89 "Vajpayee's Assurance to PM", New Delhi, The Hindu, October 23, 1971.
unity were seen as part and parcel of a larger commitment to national integration. The attempt of the Jana Sangh to acquire momentum as a political force was sharply restricted by the Congress party depictions of it as an ally of upper class and landed interests likely to resist social and economic progress. By ensuring that the Jana Sangh and its Hindu nationalist allies remained isolated in the Indian political field, the Congress party led by Indira Gandhi effected the marginalisation of cultural nationalism in this period.

It has been argued in this chapter that as a result of the sense of the inevitability of the secular consensus, the Hindu nationalists were forced to modify their strategic course, emphasising in their discourse a majoritarian platform rather than a campaign for Hindu nationhood. The difference between the two positions, far from being notional, is critical, and explains the ability of the Hindu nationalist movement to make inroads in the later decades. By withdrawing from an open articulation of the demand for Hindu nationhood or a Hindu national identity and instead focusing on the highlighting of demands that were more cultural than political, for a greater representation of the Hindu majority perspective in the public arena, the scope for the advance of Hindu cultural nationalism was made easier.

One steady undercurrent of the Hindu majoritarian discourse was the highlighting of what was perceived as “appeasement” of the minorities, particularly Muslims by the Congress party and other secular parties. The utility of that theme to the larger purpose of the majoritarian campaign aiming at the dilution of Muslim stakes in Indian nationhood is obvious. Suggesting that secularism and the other underpinnings of the larger context of civic nationalism were nothing more than the political practices or ideology of particular parties would in effect distort the context in which secularism became a cardinal governing principle for Indian democracy. This would also dilute its significance to the success of the democratic project. The campaigners for Hindu cultural
nationalism recognised that the biggest obstacle to its trajectory of growth was the Constitution itself. It was therefore an important strategic requirement for the Hindu majoritarian project to continually devalue the emphasis placed on secularism and civic identity by taking these concepts out of the original context of their being derivatives of the Constitutional commitment to civic nationalism. Once the idea of secularism was treated only as a matter of party ideology, it became easier to suggest this could be challenged in the public arena and the settled issue of India’s nationhood be reopened for fresh debate.

Another factor that aided the reentry of Hindu cultural nationalism in the political arena was the abandoning by Indira Gandhi in 1975 of the basic democratic principles in the sudden declaration of an Emergency. It was ironic that if in the early ’70s, her policies had served to strengthen and consolidate the secular national ethos, the authoritarian tilt that was manifest in her decision to impose an Emergency in June 1975, resulting in the suspension of the democratic process, provided the space for the re-entry of the forces of Hindu cultural nationalism. Thus if the discourse might not have made significant headway in this period, the context for its reemergence was provided by two developments in regard to the RSS and the Jana Sangh, during the Emergency and its aftermath. The RSS which was banned along with other extremist groups a month after the Emergency was proclaimed and the Jana Sangh had hundreds of their activists arrested under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA), thereby enabling a return of their party to the political arena, as part of the resistance to authoritarianism. The second major event that conferred political respectability on the Jana Sangh was its being invited by the elder statesman, Jayaprakash Narayan, or 'JP' as he was called, to be part of the Janata party coalition that was formed to defeat the authoritarian regime of Indira Gandhi, in the elections that had been called in early 1977.
The Emergency provided a platform for the opposition forces to regroup and mount a political resistance to the suspension of democracy. The strong sense of alarm that the democracy project was in grave danger, relegated other concerns to the background. Thus, asserting that 19 months of tyranny and terror had to be ended, 'JP' appealed to voters in the minority community to remember that "fundamental rights and a free and open society are even more important for them than for the majority". As it so happened, the Janata Party which included the Bharatiya Jana Sangh swept to power in 1977, defeating Indira Gandhi and the Congress party.

It was evident that the political space that had been yielded for the reemergence of the forces of Hindu nationalism, in the larger context of the resistance to authoritarianism, helped them to surmount the isolation of the '60s and the early '70s, and gain respectability of sorts as an alternative to the Congress. It was also clear that the Congress by its perceived ruthlessness in its programmes implemented during the Emergency, including the excesses in the family planning programmes which were said to have targeted Muslims, had begun to lose some of its sheen as a defender of secular and liberal values. The re-entry of the Jana Sangh as a constituent of the Janata Party, its later appropriation of the 'Janata' label with all its Gandhian connotations when it was reborn as the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) allowed it to retain its halo of a crusader against authoritarianism. It also brought Hindu nationalism back into the political arena by the backdoor.

The next chapter examines the inroads made by the BJP and its allies in the secular consensus in the late '80s and '90s. While continuing to invest heavily

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91 Vajpayee, president of the newly formed BJP and his colleagues clearly downplayed the Hindu nationalist antecedents of the new party while highlighting the recent association with the anti-authoritarian aspect of the Janata party experiment. The party "would seek to work for the ideals of J.P Narayan" and would accept the election manifesto of the now defunct Janata party which had, according to Vajpayee, "failed due to its political behaviour and not because of its ideology.", Report from New Delhi, The Hindu, April 7, 1980.
in the stigmatisation of Muslims, the revivalist campaign demanding the "restoration" of sacred Hindu sites such as Ayodhya infused new life into the agenda of cultural nationalism. The Hindu nationalist discourse which began to concentrate on a sustained attack on the fundamental concepts of secularism and minority rights, played a crucial role in the legitimation of Hindu cultural nationalism or Hindutva, in the '80s and the '90s.