CHAPTER VI

HINDU COMMUNAL MOBILIZATION

In the discipline of History, till recently, Hindu communal mobilization has gone, if not altogether unnoticed, at least without adequate attention from scholars. While admitting this, scholars have given different explanations for this. Gyanendra Pandey says that the reasons for inadequate attention on Hindu communalism were that Hindus had bigger numbers and they had a wider geographical presence in India. Hence, Hindus had a lesser need to present unity of co-religionists as compared to Muslims who were geographically concentrated in fewer pockets and whose population was numerically smaller.\(^1\) This argument goes against the grain of our findings, especially in the context of activities associated with Hindu Sangathan. Not being a revealed religion, Hinduism had an amorphous character and the followers of this religion had diverse beliefs. In addition to this diversity in the forms of worship, the caste system divided Hindus and the perception of community for such people meant the union of caste fellows in a small region. Hindu communalists wanted to unite people with diverse beliefs and caste affiliations. Building unity among the different sects and castes of Hindus was, however, not an easy task. Several Hindu communal organizations and individuals, nevertheless, thought that unity among Hindus was both necessary and possible. Hence, they were involved in Sangathan and Shuddhi, as we will narrate later in this chapter.

\(^1\) Gyanendra Pandey, The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India (New Delhi, Oxford University Press (OUP), 1990), p. 162.
Suranjan Das presents a slightly different argument for the inadequate attention to Hindu communal mobilization by scholars. Das believes that due to its majority character Hindu communalism was more subterranean and informal whereas Muslim communalism had a more open, defensive character.\(^2\) After a new perception embracing all sects and castes of Hindus began gaining currency through the efforts of the Arya Samaj, the Hindu Sabha or the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (R.S.S.), Hindu communalists were confronted by another stumbling block. The all-embracing perception of Hindus made them numerically preponderant, hence Hindu communalists could not argue (the way Muslim communalists did) that their co-religionists would be either culturally submerged or physically exterminated by a tyrannical majority. Therefore, Hindu communalists were left with motifs like 'cowardly vulnerable Hindus' or 'the dying race of Hindus' to arouse fears among co-religionists.\(^3\) Some Hindus who believed this propaganda became the earliest believers in Hindu communal ideology and they readily supported the organisations and activities of Hindu communalists. Hence, instigation by self-condemnation and self-flagellation was one typical ploy Hindu communalists, more than other communalists, employed to further advance their politics. Our evidence in Kanpur suggests that formal Hindu organizations came into existence quite early. However, the acquisition of a communal and anti-Muslim character by them did not start automatically from

\(^2\) Surajan Das, Communal Riots in Bengal, 1905-1947 (Delhi, OUP, 1993), p.15. For his period and region, Suranjan Das complained that material on Hindu communalism was scarce.

\(^3\) J.T.F. Jordens, Swami Shradhanand: His Life and Causes, (New Delhi, OUP, 1981), p. 135 and passim. One Colonel U.N. Mukherjee produced the image of 'the dying race of Hindus' after apparently examining the Census reports for different provinces. These reports were used by Mukherjee to project that Muslims and Christians would outnumber Hindus in 452 years. Swami Shradhanand is supposed to have been fired by this image of 'the dying race of Hindus' into both launching and justifying his Sangathan movement. Ibid.
the beginning; this came in stages. Hence, Hindu communalists were just as aggressive, if not more, as their Muslim counterparts and so were their supporters.

In Kanpur, we found that Hindu Communal organizations began their work towards the end of the 19th century. In fact, during the period of our study we noticed that though these organizations had not struck strong roots among the common people in Kanpur, they had succeeded in enlisting the support of rich and powerful people of the city. Hence, Kanpur became a favourite venue for sessions of the Hindu Mahasabha between 1919 and 1947. During this period the Hindu Mahasabha held 27 sessions (out of which 4 were special sessions) and seven out of these were held in U.P. Kanpur alone hosted nearly half of these seven, viz., the special session of 1925 which was presided by N.C. Kelkar; the annual session of 1935 presided by the Buddhist monk, Bhikshu Uttam; and the annual session of 1942 presided by V.D. Savarkar.4 Not only this, Bharatiya Jana Sangh, arguably the most powerful political outfit of Hindu communal politics after Independence till its dissolution in 1977, also held its first national session in the last week of December 1952 at Kanpur.5

5 This party was formed on October 21, 1951 at a Convention in Delhi. However, the first national session of this party was held at Kanpur. Bruce Graham, Hindu Nationalism and Indian Politics The Origins and Development of Bharatiya Jana Sangh (New Delhi, Foundation Books, 1993), pp. 28 & 38.
The holding of three Hindu Mahasabha sessions in Kanpur reflects not so much the communalization of the total Hindu population of Kanpur as it points to the fact that some well-known supporters and benefactors of Hindu Mahasabha resided in this city. Industrialists like Sir J.P. Srivastav⁶ and Rai Bahadur Vikramajit Singh had been traditional supporters of Hindu Mahasabha. Interestingly, even one-time Swadeshi capitalists like Padampat Singhania also developed a particular affection for the Mahasabha beginning with the intensification of Hindu communal propaganda during the Congress ministry period (1937-39), the severe labour strikes of 1938 and the communal riots of February 1939 in Kanpur. We shall discuss this trend later.

On Hindu communal mobilization, the three main findings of our study are as follows. Firstly, Hindu communal organizations were not wanting in the aspiration to unite Hindus politically, despite the differences of caste, class and sect among them. This finding is contrary to the assertion of Gyanendra Pandey, as discussed in the opening paragraph of this chapter. The considerable efforts put in by them for Sangathan and Shuddhi bear testimony to the fact that though Hindus were widely dispersed and numerically preponderant, Hindu communalists tried hard to unite them. Secondly, Hindu communal organizations and their leaders were not wanting in aggression in the pursuit of their ideology

---

⁶ Born in 1889, J.P. Srivastava was knighted in 1934. He was a landlord of Bansi in Basti district and an industrialist who owned New Victoria Mills and Indian Turpentine and Rosin Co. Ltd. He represented Upper India Chamber of Commerce in U.P. Legislative Council/Assembly from 1926-1942. He was Chairman of U.P. Committee of the Simon Commission in 1928; Honorary Chairman of Kanpur Improvement Trust from 1928-31; and Member of Viceroy's National Defence Council from 1942. The Indian Year Book 1942-3, Volume 29, Edited by Francis Low, (Bombay, Bennett, Colman & Co.), p.1105.
and varying programmes. This is contrary to the assertion (referred above) of scholars like Suranjan Das that Hindu communalism did not have a defensive (meaning violent) character just because Hindus were in a majority. In fact we found that while their ideology spurred them to unity with Buddhists and Jains, the actions of Hindu communalists lacked generosity. It is unlikely that the sectarian actions/exclusions of Hindu communalists vis-à-vis both Jains and Buddhists may have inspired any trust in the believers of these so-called other 'indigenous' faiths to maintain cordial relations with the Hindu Sabha.

Thirdly, despite being endorsed and supported by the rich and the powerful, Hindu communal organisations failed to inspire common Hindus. In the 1920s, after the withdrawal of the Non-Cooperation movement, the Hindu communalists had a prominent presence because Hindu Sabha retained the allegiance of some Congress leaders, including Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi in Kanpur. But after this support vanished, more due to the bloody riots of 1931 than due to the changes in the Constitution of the Congress in 1938, the Sabha's appeal declined enormously. This decline could not be stemmed even though the programme of Hindu Sabha became increasingly aggressive in the 1930s and the 1940s. Bereft of popular support, the Hindu communal organizations counted for little during most of the period of our study – the organisations were weak and faction-ridden, their activities insignificant and their membership negligible.
ORGANISATIONS AND THEIR ACTIVITIES

It is common knowledge that identity assertion begins with the intelligentsia. Hence, we find that much before the 1920s Hindu organizations were formed in Kanpur amongst educated Hindus for creating awareness about religious, social and moral problems among co-religionists. With this end in view, a few students of Christ Church College formed the Hindu Boys’ Association on February 27, 1898 and students of the same institution created Hindu Friends’ Association on March 24, 1900. Both of these were merged in 1902 to form Hindu Friends’ Religious Association that had the distinction of being the most regular society in Kanpur after Arya Samaj.  

The important thing to note about Hindu Friends’ Religious Association was that it was not anti-Muslim. The membership of this Association rose from six to ninety between 1898 and 1913. The reason for educated young men taking keen interest in this Association was stated to be their desire to counteract the anti-Hindu forces. But these anti-Hindu forces were not defined as exclusively Muslims. This can be illustrated by the following facts. Firstly, the Association published an English weekly called Hindu Dharma Shiksha. This weekly was proclaimed to be proto-type of Epiphany and it was this Christian journal, which was declared an “adversary”. Secondly, the Association utilized most of its donations (amounting to Rs. 3,000 till 1913) to build a library. This library had around two hundred books in Indian languages and on diverse subjects like

---

8 Ibid.
Religion, Political Philosophy and History. The rivalry between the protagonists of the two Indian languages of Hindi and Urdu was raging in this period, especially in U.P. But, yet, out of the books of Hindu Friends' Religious Association that were in Indian languages, around a quarter of the books were in Urdu. The Hindi-Urdu controversy got a fillip in 1893 with the founding of Nagri Pracharni Sabha in Benaras though the Kanpur branch of this Sabha came up as late as 1925. The reason for this also probably lay in the fact that the early Hindu organizations did not see Muslims exclusively as adversaries. Moreover, the Hindi-Urdu controversy was related to the pulls and pressures of middle class intelligentsia engaged in administration. Kanpur had its share of this intelligentsia but the place occupied by this class in the life of this industrial city was not prominent and the issues, which mattered to it most, therefore, could not occupy a central place in the politics of Kanpur.

All this changed in the 1920s. Preachers like Chand Karan Sharda from as far as Ajmer (Rajasthan) came to deliver lectures on Hindu Sanghathan, which were organised by the Hindu Sabha. Dr. Pandit Vishwamitra Kaushik of Bombay Hindu Sabha came and his lectures were to be organised (according to an advance notice in the press) by Kanpur's Hindu Sabha. At Ranjit Purwa (in Lachcho ka Bagicha), in January 1926, a meeting of Hindus decided to

---

9 Ibid.
10 Pratap, 24-8-1925, p.19. The author has translated passages from Pratap (which was published in Hindi) here and elsewhere.
11 Ibid., 15-9-1924, p.19. This meeting took place at Marwari School and not in a temple. It was presided over by Pandit Ayodhyanath Tripathi who replaced Babu Anand Swarup as President of the Hindu Sabha in April 1924. See Pratap, 21-4-1924, p. 16.
contribute practically to Hindu organisation by celebrating the anniversaries of
great men and gifted women.\textsuperscript{13} After the murder of Swami Shradhanand at the
hands of a fanatical Islamic extremist, Swami Satdeo addressed a meeting on
March 10, 1927 on the importance of Shuddhi and Sangathan. His pamphlet,
"Sangathan ka Bugle", costing 8 annas, was bought by 1,000 persons in the
meeting.\textsuperscript{14} During Tulsi Jayanti celebrations in 1927, speakers spoke about the
importance of Shuddhi and Sangathan. Jagdamba Prasad Hiteshi advised
Hindus to convert Muslim boys and women and also to guard against the attack
on Hindu women by Muslims.\textsuperscript{15} All these small interventions increased the
appeal of Hindu communalism in Kanpur.

A. 1. Sangathan

In the wake of the rising wave of communal animosity following the
withdrawal of the Non-Cooperation movement, some nationalist leaders who
happened to be Hindus withdrew from the national movement and they decided
to put their might into Shuddhi and Sangathan. Swami Shradhanand (1857-
1926), the earliest protagonist of these movements in the period of our study,
was released from jail in December 1922 for his participation in a morcha of Akali
Sikhs in Guru-ka-Bagh at Amritsar.\textsuperscript{16} After his short imprisonment and
'unexpected' release even before he had served one-third of his prison sentence,
Shradhanand declared that he had no interest left in politics. He said in January

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 8-2-1926, p.19.
\textsuperscript{14} PAI, 19-3-1927, pa. 231, p. 96.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 20-8-1927, pa. 757, p. 308.
\textsuperscript{16} Arrested on September 10, 1922 at Guru-ka-Bagh in Amritsar, he had been sentenced to
prison for a year. However, he was released 'unexpectedly' after 3 months and 26 days at
1923 that he would dedicate himself to a constructive social and religious programme, which would include removal of untouchability.\footnote{G.R. Thursby, Hindu-Muslim Relations in British India A Study of Controversy, Conflict and Communal Movements in Northern India, 1923-1928 (Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1975), p. 150. Incidentally, even Savarkar abjured politics and he also propagated communal issues after his long jail term got over in 1924.}

*Shuddhi and Sangathan* movements acquired wider reach in the 1920s and with this came a noticeable stridency. *Sangathan* meant the consolidation and solidarity of Hindus. Hindu *Sangathan* was already in existence before Swami Shradhanand defined it in 1926 through a tract. His tract was called *Hindu Sangathan, Saviour of the Dying Race*. Swami stated that the idea of *Sangathan* first originated with the foundation of Punjab Hindu Sabhas in 1908 and developed with the establishment of All-India Hindu Sabha in 1915. He, however, clearly distinguished between politics and *Sangathan* work. Hence, when All-India Hindu Mahasabha decided in March 1926 at Delhi to become politically active and allow its activists to contest elections, Swami Shradhanand broke ties with it.

The basic objective of Hindu *Sangathan*, according to Swami Shradhanand, was to stop the process of decline of Hindu population. This decline, he thought, had begun from seventh century A.D. For this the Swami laid down the priorities of Hindu *Sangathan* in his tract wherein he emphasized four points and discounted two ‘fads’. Firstly, he sought ‘lakhs of rupees and pure selfless men to make Bharatiya Hindu Shuddhi Sabha a living body and to
thereby bring back strayed brethren into the Hindu fold.' Secondly, he wanted to
revive the 'ancient Ashrama Dharma', raise the age of marriage and allow the
widowers of higher varnas to take only widows as their partners. Thirdly, he
wished to allow 'unconsummated child widows to remarry if they so desired'.
Fourthly, he wanted abolition of sub-castes and the elimination of untouchability
as a prelude to the eradication of the caste system and its replacement by the
ancient varnadharma.  

Swami Shradhanand also discounted the role of cow protection and
propagation of Hindi in reviving Hinduism. He believed that cow protection would
be a 'dream of impractical sentimentalists' unless the desertion of Hinduism by
the depressed classes and widows was stopped. He also thought that Hindi
could become the lingua franca but only after the disappearance of caste and
sectarian prejudices. In the opinion of Swami Shradhanand, sangathan was
closely connected to the uplift of untouchables, which he made 'the sole mission
of his remaining life' after 1923.  

In the 1930s Bhai Parmanand was the greatest votary of Hindu Sangathan
and his propagation of it had a distinct shrillness during the period of our study.
As compared to Swami Shradhanand, Bhai Parmanand was both a Hindu
Sangathanist and a proper political leader who was elected to the Imperial

---

18 J.T.F. Jordens, op. cit., pp. 135 and 153-4.;
19 J.T.F. Jordens, op. cit., p. 174. Dayanand Dalitoddhar Mandal was established by Sarvdeshik
Arya Pratinidhi Sabha after Ramchandra, an Arya preacher working for the uplift of low castes,
was beaten to death by a mob of Rajputs in Jammu on January 20, 1923. Swami Shradhanand
was chosen the President of this Dalitoddhar Mandal. Ibid., p. 131.
Legislative Assembly on a Hindu Mahasabha ticket from Lahore in November 1934. Parmanand believed that the Hindu Sabhas and Hindu Sewak Dals were necessary for enhancing the strength and organization of Hindus. For Sangathan, he also wanted to expand the programme of the Hindu Sabha to include propaganda for rearing cows instead of just talking about cow protection and popularising Hindi, protecting widows and orphans and of course, performing Shuddhi. Bhai Parmanand wanted to pursue Shuddhi so aggressively that he said ‘women belonging to another religion may be converted without scruples’ and that ‘according to Hindu Shastras women have no caste or religion except for that of her husband.’ So much for the ideologues of Hindu Sangathan, we can now turn to its practitioners in Kanpur.

Hindu Sangathan had two aspects on the ground, viz. unity with lower castes and unity with other ‘indigenous’ religions. Some prominent examples of these witnessed by us during the course of our study in Kanpur were as follows.

A.1. a Unity with lower castes
Hindu Sabha looked at the caste divisions among Hindus as a major weakness. Therefore, it started a small effort to ameliorate the condition of what were then called Achhuts or untouchables. In the 1920s, the motivation of the Hindu Mahasabha for the improvement in the life of untouchables was simple. To

---

20 "...For the sake of Sangathan the Hindu Sabhas are being established at various places. For the protection of Hindus Sewak Dals are being formed. It is your duty to join these. Sangathan is nothing else but joining these societies. To go and participate in a meeting is Sangathan..." Bhai Parmanand, Hindu Sangathan (Translated from Hindi by Prof. Lal Chand Dhawan, M.A.) (Lahore, The Central Hindu Yuvak Sabha, 1936), p. 232.

21 Ibid., pp. 223-5.
quote Pandit Madanmohan Malaviya, 'I would not force the Hindus to eat with untouchables or to intermarry with them but to improve their lot and to recognize them as one of their own and not let them fall prey to other religious zealots bent on converting them.'

Hence, the Hindu Sabha's programme to improve the condition of untouchables aimed at very little and what it really achieved was even more modest. The fear of losing untouchables to 'other religious zealots' prompted Hindu Sabhaiites in Kanpur to do some propaganda on the right of untouchables to enter temples and their right to listen to religious scriptures and also to the need for the spread of education among them.

In 1924, Ramjilal Hakim established the Hindu Sabha at village Palikalan, near Kanpur. Under the auspices of this Sabha untouchables were given the right to enter temples and the purpose of Hindu organization was explained to a barat (or marriage party) of 'Chamars' (or traditional skin flayers). At the Third U.P. Social Conference held on April 10, 1925 at Girls School resolutions were passed, among other things, for Achhutoddhar. In an advance notice to the press, 'Achhut Conference' was announced at Kanpur's Arya Samaj Hall on July 21 and 22, 1925 to be presided by Raja of Tirwa and to be attended by Raja Rampal Singh. The Hindu Sabha was to host this conference and present

---


23 Pratap, 23-6-1924, p. 16.

24 Ibid., 20-4-1925, p.16. Resolution passed for performing Shuddhi on converted Muslims, Prohibition, abolition of purdah (or the veil), widow re-marriage, establishing widow homes, increasing the age at marriage, regulating the management of temples and their property etc. Pratap, 20-4-1925, p.16.
welcome addresses to both the visiting dignitaries.\textsuperscript{25} A branch of the Hindu Sabha was established at 'Chamar' Basti (in village Jatan Purwa, across the East Indian Railway station) on March 4, 1926 by the efforts of Dr. Hazarilal Sharma of Nayaganj.\textsuperscript{26}

There remained a diversity of opinion among different sects of Hindus on the question of lower castes. The Arya Samjists and Sanatan Dharmists both thought of unity with lower castes. But whereas Aryas stood for a modicum of reforms, Santanists did not. This was most evident in their attitude to Dalits. Aryas thought that Dalits had a right to read Vedas whereas Sanatanists objected to this, which led to a heated discussion between the Aryas and Santanists. This matter was then referred to Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya for arbitration.\textsuperscript{27} Though a Sanatanist, Malaviya was a reformer. Mohandas Gandhi (hereafter Mahatma Gandhi or simply Gandhi) was also a Sanatanist but he was a more aggressive reformer and, hence, he had advocated the entry of untouchables in temples even against public opinion. Malaviya, on the other hand, was a Sanatanist reformer but a gradualist also. Hence, he called a meeting of pandits and devised the \textit{antyaj-oddhar-vidhi} (or the method to uplift the lowest strata) after prolonged negotiations. The ritualistic formalities began for this purpose, at Benaras in 1936, with a procession of Hindu scriptures, including the Vedas. Pandits led the procession on elephant backs and the

\begin{footnotes}
\item \textsuperscript{25} \textit{Ibid.}, 20-7-1925, p. 19.
\item \textsuperscript{26} Report by Tika Ram, President, Hindu Sabha, Chamar Basti. \textit{Vartman}, 7-3-1926, p.2. The author has translated passages from Vartman (which was published in Hindi) here and elsewhere.
\item \textsuperscript{27} \textit{PAI}, 2-5-1925, pa. 133, p. 183.
\end{footnotes}
untouchables followed on foot. After going through the city, the procession reached the banks of Ganga where untouchables were administered *mantradiksha* (or initiation through chanting of mantras). The right of Dalits to hear the recitation of Vedas was thereby established but the issue of their right to read Vedas remained unclear and was in fact confounded by the *antyaj-odharkvidhi*.

Arya Samajists and Sanatanists also held conflicting positions on the question of entry of temples by Dalits. Hence, when five temples in Kanpur were opened to Dalits and reformers took 100 sweepers to them, orthodox Hindus locked most of the temples on that day. Not just this, to prevent Dalits from entering temples, orthodox Hindus posted lathi-wielding guards on the gates of these temples. Nine years later, in 1933, when the Temple Entry Bill had been brought to the Imperial Legislative Council, Sanatanists took strong positions against these reforms. At the 24th annual function of Sanatan Dharma Mahamandal, Pandit Durgacharan Shukla criticized the Temple Entry Bill vehemently. This meeting was presided over by Babu Vikramajit Singh, the famous lawyer with industrial interests in Kanpur who was also a renowned Hindu Sabha leader. As against this, around the same time, Arya Samaj was

---

29 *PAI*, 4-10-1924, pa. 315, p. 325.
30 *Vartman*, 28-1-1933.
building a favorable climate for Dalit uplift by organising lectures on the “Religious approval of the present Achchutodhar movement”.  

In the study of Arya Samaj's involvement with Dalit uplift in Punjab, scholars have shown that Arya efforts did not lead to much improvement in the status of Dalits. Instead, the Arya involvement with Dalit uplift helped the Punjabi Hindu elite that leapfrogged to leadership positions in the religious and political sphere by retaining untouchables in the Hindu fold. We notice a similar thing happened in Kanpur in the context of Arya Samaj and the Hindu Sabha's involvement with Dalits. Christian missionaries were the first to work among lower caste Hindus through service projects in education and health. When Christian missionaries approached the Koeris, who were Shudras but not Dalits, in Bhanupurwa Mohalla, an alarm was raised. The local Arya Samajis immediately swung into action by alleging that Koeris had been bribed for conversions. It performed Shudhi on them, the sick Koeris were assured medical treatment and books were distributed free among Koeri children. A school was started for these children after a teacher was hired for them on Rs. 25 per month.

31 Ibid., 15-5-1933, p. 6.  
33 Pratap, 20-9-1920, p. 15.  
34 Ibid., 1-11-1920, p. 15.
Books continued to be distributed free to the children of untouchables as the Sadar Bazar's Hindu Sabha branch did in 1927. More organized efforts were also attempted by the formation of an Achchut Shiksha Committee (or Untouchables' Education Committee). Some individuals within the Hindu Sabha occasionally showed even greater enthusiasm. For instance, Pandit Raja Ram Sabir, General Secretary of the Hindu Sabha in Kanpur, decided to collect Rs. 1,000 by becoming a "Jatiye bhikhari" (or community beggar) for one month. The money so collected was to be used for keeping untouchables in the Hindu fold, Sabir claimed.

In the process of their involvement with Dalits, Hindu communal organisations not only retained untouchables in their fold but almost tripled their small mobilization capacity in the 1920s. Just 600 to 800 persons turned up to listen to the anti-Muslim tirades of Swami Satyadeo, the rabble-rouser of the Hindu Sabha. On the other hand, at one Hindu Sabha meeting held to condemn untouchability attendance was reported to be 2,000. This showed the interest Dalits had begun to show in the Hindu Sabha but they did so mostly on issues related with their own lives. However, dissensions between reformers and orthodox Hindus took its toll and whereas the Hindu Sabha simply bowed out of the arena for Dalit uplift, Arya Samaj just paid lip sympathy to this cause in the 1930s.

36 Ibid., 4-4-1926, p. 19.
37 Ibid., 7-9-1925, p. 19.
38 PAL, 8-8-1925, pa. 242, p. 320.
39 Ibid., 4-10-1924, pa.315, p. 325.
A. 1. b Unity with other ‘indigenous’ Religions

Even before Savarkar had ruled that those whose fatherland and holy land was in India were Hindus, there was a tradition of treating Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs as one with Hindus. By this definition, only Christians and Muslims were excluded from Hindudom. On the face of it, some efforts were made by Hindu communalists in the 1930s to woo Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs. But they succeeded in winning just the Sikhs to their side. The basic reason for this, at least in Kanpur, was that Hindu communalists swore by a strategically inclusive philosophy but did not match it with an equally generous behaviour towards Buddhists and Jains. We can demonstrate this with the following examples.

In April 1935, the Hindu Mahsabha held its 16th All-India session in Kanpur where it invited Reverend U. Ottama, a Buddhist monk from Burma, to preside over the session. Professor Radha Kumud Mukherji, employed in Lucknow University, attended this Conference. He called it ‘a success in every way’ because the ‘sense of Greater India was roused by the attendance of it by Burmese and Japanese Buddhists’ and also by the ‘presence of the Buddhist President which showed that Buddhists and Jains were all to be counted as one’.40 In this session, the Hindu Mahsabha tried to win over Jains by suggesting a Committee to remove differences over religious festivals between Hindus and

---

40 Radha Kumud Mukherji was also impressed by the presence of 5,000 persons at the Mahasabha's conference; by the fact that Hindus could speak in one voice and from one platform; and by the virtual demand for a Constituent Assembly by the ex-Congress President, C. Vijairaghavachariar, who claimed the right for constitution-making to India on the lines of those given by British colonialists to Australia and Canada. The Leader, 29-4-1935, p. 12.
Jains.\textsuperscript{41} Jain Samaj of Kanpur gave the Buddhist monk, Reverend Utama, a welcome address in its temple in Genralganj. Here he said that 'I leave it to Hindus to give the Mahabodhi temple to us when they really feel that it should be in the hands of Buddhists.'\textsuperscript{42} He said this with regret after Sanatanists led by Swami Lal Nath opposed a resolution on Bodh Gaya's temple. The proposed resolution only wanted to establish a sub-committee, chaired by a High Court judge, to consider an amicable settlement between Buddhists and the Mahants of Mahbodhi temple. Sanatanists said that even the consideration of this question by Hindu Mahsabha would give the impression that this body entertained doubts about the right of Sanatanist Mahants to manage the temple and that Hindu Mahsabha could consider this question only if Sanatanists asked it to do so.\textsuperscript{43}

In practice, sectarianism was the natural fall out of the ideology and activities of organizations like the Hindu Mahasabha whose theory of nationalism was based on exclusions. This was reflected eminently when, in 1935, the local committee of the Hindu Sabha of Kanpur opposed the demand for Jain Ayurvedic dispensary on Sarsaiyaghat.\textsuperscript{44} Traditionally, Jains along with Buddhists and Sikhs were included among Hindus. In fact, contemporary newspapers were

\textsuperscript{41} PAI, pa. 201, pp. 208-10.
\textsuperscript{42} The Leader, 1-5-1935, p. 15.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., 24-4-1935, p. 11.
\textsuperscript{44} Sarsaiyaghat was actually just one from among a cluster of 'ghats' on river Ganga in Kanpur. A ghat is an embankment on a river with steps upto the flowing water to help bathing, performance of rituals etc. Known after a tree called 'Sarsahi', Sarsaiyaghat became more famous than the others because it was prominently located near the Collectorate and other Government offices in Kanpur. The tramway also came up to this point from the Kanpur railway station and this made it convenient for visitors to come here. A mohalla came up near Sarsaiyaghat which had a dharamshala built by one Gokul Thatther. According to Government records the jajmani of Sarsaiyaghat was in the hands of 44 Gangaputras. Laxmikant Tripathi and Narayanprasad Arora, \textit{Kanpur ka Itihaas}, (Kanpur, Kanpur Itihaas Samiti, 1950), pp. 185-7.
reportedly not giving too much importance to the dispute regarding the Ayurvedic dispensary because in the opinion of some scribes, Jains were a part of Hindus and the policy of dividing Hindus should be opposed. Yet, it was the Hindu Sabha that opposed the proposal of Jains to build a charitable Ayurvedic dispensary on Sarsaiyaghat. It passed resolutions against the proposal. It even sent a deputation to protest against the allotment of space to Jain dispensary by the Municipal Board. The Hindu Sabha’s deputation met U.P.’s Local Self-Government minister who, ironically, happened to be a Muslim, viz. Sir Mohammand Yusuf.

The Hindu Sabha opposed the demand of Jains on two grounds. Firstly, it believed there was excessive congestion on Sarsaiyaghat as too many people turned up here on festivals for a holy dip in Ganga. The second objection was that the proposed Jain dispensary was to be constructed over a sewer and this was said to be against the (hygienic) principles of Ayurveda. To meet the first objection, on Lala Padampat Singania’s behest an agreement was worked out whereby the space allocated to Jains was reduced to almost one-third of that proposed, i.e. just 500 yards allocated instead of the 1,413 yards demanded by the patrons of the proposed Jain Ayurvedic dispensary. Even Muslim members of the Municipal Board accepted this agreement. But hard-liners of the Hindu

48 Ibid., 10-9-1935, p. 5.
49 Ibid., 9-8-1935, p. 6.
Sabha held that not 'an inch of space' would be given at Sarsaiyaghat. Though Municipal Board allocated five hundred yards of space for Jain dispensary, nine hundred Hindu Sabhaites sent a signed memorial to the Government against this allocation. For a small piece of land, even if on a prime place, Hindu communalists inflicted a grievance on those Jains who were sponsoring a Charitable Dispensary in Kanpur. One of the reasons why the Jains could not organize an equally strong defence and come into direct confrontation with the Hindu Sabhaites on this issue lay in fact that their numbers in Kanpur were woefully small. Till 1941, Jains constituted merely 0.23 percent of Kanpur's population.

This case shows that there was a wide gap between the precept and practice of Hindu communal organizations. The logic of their philosophy was to assimilate Buddhists and Jains at least because followers of these religious groups traditionally felt close to Hindu philosophy. But, as the aforementioned examples show, the practice of Hindu communalists was such that even Buddhists and Jains would have felt alienated from the Hindu community to which traditional Hindu philosophy admitted them and some leading Hindu activists invited them. Lala Padampat Singhania continued to appeal to Jains to consider themselves staunch Hindus till 1941. Speaking on March 5, 1941 at the opening ceremony of Mahavir Bharatri Sangha at Kanpur, Singhania called Jain architecture at Belgola and Palitana 'great'; he praised Jain philosophy for giving

---

50 Ibid., 11-8-1935, p. 6.
51 Ibid., 10-9-1935, p. 5.
us seven laws and formal syllogism whereas even Aristotle could list just three laws of thought (viz. the law of identity, law of non-contradiction and the law of the excluded middle); and he opined that whereas Buddhism could not survive in the land of its birth, Jainism held its ground for twenty five centuries because it used 'two swords', i.e. it used vernacular languages for propaganda and it maintained an high evangelical standard of efficiency. Requesting Jains to consider themselves staunch Hindus just as he considered himself a staunch Jain, Singhania added that there was no difference between Hindus and Jains. "If we are to suffer, we will suffer in common and if we are to enjoy our joy will be common. We sail in the same boat," Singhania declared. But these were sweet words that could not, as the proverb goes, butter the parsnips of denying Buddhists their temple in Gaya and the Jains 1,400 yards of land for a dispensary on Sarsaiyaghat in Kanpur.

Hindu communalists wooed Sikhs at Kanpur with a greater amount of success. Incidentally, even Madan Mohan Malaviya of Congress wanted the spirit of Sikhs to be infused into Hindus because he pitied his co-religionists to be the worst sufferers in riots. Occasionally, right in the 1920s, actions of some Muslim vandals annoyed Sikh believers. For instance, Guru Singh Sabha of Kanpur passed a resolution condemning the incident in which some miscreants

---

53 The Hindu Outlook, 1-4-1941, p. 3.
54 Jains, however, remained in the national mainstream. Their religious organization, Jain Mandal, celebrated Independence Day on August 15, 1947 with prayers at Digambar Jain temple. Jain Mandal hoisted the national flag and distributed sweets at Digambar Jain High School to celebrate Independence. This celebration was proposed by Dharmendra Jain, Secretary, Jain Mandal. The Digambar Jain High School was located at Badshahi Naka. Vartman, 14-8-1947, p. 4.
55 FR - 18/ 2/ 1940 for the month(s) of January and February 1940. Home Political, NAI.
got into a temple at Amethi (in Lucknow district) and burnt Guru Granth Sahib. It requested Muslim leaders of Lucknow and Kanpur to immediately identify the culprits and have them punished.\textsuperscript{56}

Projecting Muslims as aggressors in riots was a favourite pastime of the Hindu communal press. \textit{Vartaman}, the pro-Hindu Sabha daily newspaper of Kanpur, suggested that communalism would be violent wherever Muslims had a majority. Violent communalism reigned supreme in Punjab and was likely to spread to Bengal, this newspaper conjectured in 1936.\textsuperscript{57} Hence, if strategic alliances were necessary with those who opposed Muslims, Hindu communalists promoted these. With this understanding, some 100 communal Hindus endorsed the candidature of Sardar Inder Singh, a Sikh industrialist from Kanpur,\textsuperscript{58} form Ward number Ten during the Municipal elections of 1935. They did so for two reasons.

Firstly, it was thought that Ward number Ten was a complicated constituency because it was on the “border” of the area from where the pockets

\textsuperscript{56} Pratap, 8-9-1924, p. 16.
\textsuperscript{57} Vartman, 14-1-1936, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{58} Sardar Inder Singh (1890-1983) was a first generation entrepreneur with practically no formal education. Kanpur was already known for its textile and leather industry but Singh started the modern steel industry here. Born in Nagpur into a skilled worker’s family, he did apprenticeship at Kharagpur (Bengal) and at Jamshedpur and started his small workshop at Kanpur in 1918 which later grew into a corporation in association with the J.K. Singhania group. Singh first emerged as a leader of Sikhs by establishing the Sri Guru Singh Sabha in 1918 and laying the foundation of a Gurudwara at Chowk in Kanpur. In 1941, Singh played an important role in converting 25,000 Harijans to Sikhism at Aligarh and became the President of U.P. Sikh Conference in 1942. He joined Congress and was Secretary of the Reception Committee at the time of the Congress session at Kanpur in 1925. He was elected to the Municipal Board from 1930 to 1950 and in this period he seemed closer to Hindu communalists. He became the Chairman of Municipal Board in 1963-64 as a Congress candidate. See Mukti, \textit{Beesavin Sadi ke Kanpur ke Prasidh Purush evam Mahilayain} (Kanpur, Kanpur Itihaas Samiti, 2004), pp. 122-5.
of Muslim numerical preponderance began. Secondly, Mr. Singh was perceived to be an aggressive defender of Hinduism by his supporters.\(^{59}\) Inder Singh, though a Sikh, was viewed as some kind of a protector of Hindus in Kanpur in the 1930s and the 1940s. He became the Treasurer of Hindu Sangh when it was formed in February 1939.\(^{60}\) He called Gandhi’s non-violence to be a cowardly act in the face of a tyrant and contrasted it with the righteous sacrifice of one’s life in defence of a principle by Sikhs.\(^{61}\) Sardar Inder Singh was as much a Hindu communalist as anyone in his circumstances could be but in the 1940s he also hosted communal Sikh leaders, like Master Tara Singh.\(^{62}\)

On Guru Nanak’s birthday, in November 1939, a big procession was taken out in the streets of Kanpur. Padampat Singhania of Hindu Sanghanist party and Pandit Raghurab Dayal Bhatt, a Hindu Sabha-minded Congressman, headed this. Sardar Inder Singh led the 500 Akalis in uniform with swords. 300 Sikh women also accompanied the procession.\(^{63}\) In 1941, The Singh, a weekly published from Kanpur on “Sikh affairs”, quoted Inder Singh to say that Padampat Singhania would get his son to embrace Sikhism.\(^{64}\) Singhania reportedly also gave a donation of Rs. 2,500 to Sri Guru Singh Sabha of

\(^{59}\) Vartman, 3-12-1935, p. 6.
\(^{60}\) The Pioneer, 18-2-1939, p. 5.
\(^{61}\) FR – 18/ 6/ 1941 for the I half of June 1941. Speech delivered as Chairman of the Reception Committee of UP Sikh Conference at Aligarh.
\(^{63}\) The Pioneer, 26-11-1939, p. 5.
\(^{64}\) The Citizen, 9-8-1941, p. 2.
Kanpur. However, this cooperation among leaders did not prevent some Sikhs and Hindus from indulging in a riot against each other at Bombaywala Ahata in Kanpur city in January 1940. Hence, as this incident illustrates, the identity assertion of common Sikhs in Kanpur was not dependent on the strategic moves for Hindu-Sikh unity by their self-proclaimed leaders.

In the riots after the Punjab Day on March 30, 1947, Hindu communalists complained against Muslim police officers and also protested against the disarming of people. In much the same way, Shri Guru Singh Sabha of Kanpur appealed to the Government to restore peace in the city by restraining prejudiced Muslim officers and by returning the arms of Hindus living in Muslim localities so that they became fearless. But some Sikh youth also thought it was better for them to follow the Gandhian path of satyagraha to protest against police atrocities.

On its part, Hindu communalists thought it was their duty to rise in defence of Sikhs. Hence, in April 1947, Bhudev Vidyalankar, the Secretary of the Hindu Sangh, protested against the stabbing of a twenty-year-old Sikh youth near Mushtaq Ahmad Bhawan in the vicinity of Halim High School. Representatives of Sikh institutions joined Hindu communalists more closely

---

65 PAI, 13-6-1941, p. 86.
67 Vartman, 13-4-1947, p. 2.
68 The kirpan of Gurbaksh Singh was snatched by Mr. Zuberi, Thana in-charge of Sisamau. When Gurbaksh protested, the police beat him also. Consequently, the young Gurbaksh sat on a hunger strike against this maltreatment there and then. Vartman, 27-5-1947, p. 4.
69 The Secretary of the Hindu Sangh said that the peace of 10 days was shattered by this incident. Vartman, 22-4-1947, p. 4.
during this period. They condemned Muslim 'goondas' and demanded the lifting of censorship/ ban on pro-Hindu Sabha newspapers like Vartman.  

Like many nationalists, many Sikhs of Kanpur also condemned Partition but the Partition they condemned was the one of Punjab. They observed *hartal* against the division of Punjab, wore black badges and held a meeting at a Gurudwara on La Touche Road in Kanpur. Sikh communalism had a distinct regional form in Kanpur.

A. 1. c The Hindu Sangathan Committee

A short-lived Hindu Sanghathan Committee was also established in Kanpur in 1939. It was not very successful but a brief mention of it is necessary before we proceed to other aspects of Hindu communalism.

After the resignation of the Congress ministry in 1939, Hindu communal leaders of U.P. tried to make the best of the political vacuum and decided to re-group themselves 'to give Hindus one voice in matters of any importance at the present juncture.' U.P. Hindu Sangathan Committee was established at this Conference, which, the organisers claimed, had the approval of the Hindu Mahasabha President, V.D. Savarkar. The titles of the prominent leaders invited showed that most of them were closer to the Colonial power than to the

---

70 Representatives of Sikh institutions joined the Hindu Sangh, different bazaar committees and Hindu institutions in a meeting at Bihari Niwas under the president-ship of Dr. Brajendra Swarup. They wanted investigation into the activities of 'Muslim goondas'. *Vartman*, 8-5-1947, p. 4.

71 *Vartman*, 10-7-1947, p. 4.

72 *The Pioneer*, 14-12-1939, p. 4.
people. These leaders were Sir J.P. Srivastava, Raja Maheshwar Dayal Seth, Rai Bahadur Rameshwar Prasad Bagla, Rai Bahadur Vikramajit Singh, Rao Raja Dr. Shyam Behari Misra etc. The list of Hindu Sangathanist leaders also included Dr. Jaikaran Nath Misra and Lala Hari Ram Seth, who were not title-holders.\textsuperscript{73}

Individually, these leaders had pro-colonial sympathies. In October 1939, when not even Muslim League knew whether it could help the Colonialists, Rai Bahadur Vikramajit Singh, President, U.P. Chamber of Commerce, pleaded that various communities and classes should not 'allow their failure to obtain the immediate grant of privileges' to come in the way of 'whole-hearted and unconditional support' to Britain in the War. He added that this was 'patriotism, statesmanship, and service to oneself and to the motherland.'\textsuperscript{74} Four months later, Vikramajit Singh again said that it was the duty of India to help Britain.\textsuperscript{75}

The speeches as also resolutions passed at the Conference of the Hindu Sanghathanists, on December 17, 1939, showed that the organisers had no love lost for the nationalists, especially the Congress. J.P. Srivastava, one of the prime organisers of this Conference, said that the U.P. Hindu Sanghathan Committee was established because Hindu interests were not safe in the hands of the Congress. Two of the prominent resolutions passed at this Conference were that 'all Hindus of different caste, creed and political affiliation should unite under Hindu Mahasabha to protect their rights and interests' and that 'to espouse

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid. \textsuperscript{74} Ibid., 20-10-1939, p. 3. \textsuperscript{75} Ibid., 27-2-1940, p. 5.
Hindu interests an English and Hindi Daily should be started from Lucknow. The organisers tried to make this Committee as broad-based as possible by electing 50 members to the Executive Committee from among the 88 who turned up for the Conference at Kanpur on December 17, 1939. Lala Hari Ram Seth, Secretary of U.P. Sanghathan Committee declared that this Committee was not a revival of National Agriculturist Party and not a rival of the Hindu Sabha though a lot of the office-bearers of the U.P. Hindu Mahasabha were on the Executive body of the Hindu Sanghathan Committee. He declared that the Committee would only supplement and strengthen the Hindu Mahasabha.

The future activities and fate of this Committee are not clear from our sources. It seems this Committee transformed itself into a party which decided to contest local body elections in October 1944. The U.P. Hindu Sabha opposed it but Hindu Sanghathanist party found a supporter in V.D. Savarkar, the former President of Hindu Mahasabha. In October 1944, the U.P. Hindu Sabha’s Election Committee met and it decided to contest the ensuing Municipal Board elections. It also clarified that a Board formed in the name of the Hindu Sanghathanist party had nothing to do with it and it asserted that the Sanghathanist party had never been affiliated to the Hindu Sabha. However, Savarkar issued an appeal to Hindu voters to vote for the Hindu Sabha candidates but to support the Hindu Sanghathanist party candidates wherever

---

76 Ibid., 18-12-1939, p. 2.
77 Ibid., 28-12-1939, p. 2. One hundred and twenty five leaders were invited to the Conference and out of these 88 turned up whereas 20 sent their goodwill messages. Ibid.
78 Ibid., 16-10-1944, p. 7.
the official Hindu Sabha had not put up candidates in the forthcoming Municipal Board elections. "I exhort Hindu electorate to vote for Hindu Sanghathanist candidates only. Do not cast a single vote to Congressites or anti-Hindu candidates," urged Savarkar.\textsuperscript{79} Two days later, Savarkar repeated his appeal to Hindu voters with the promise "If we are able to capture sufficient seats in local bodies we shall be in a powerful position to redress atleast half the grievances of Hindus." He said Hindu Sanghathanists deserve support as they consisted of Sanatanists, Aryas, Sikhs and the Hindu Sabha\textsuperscript{ites}.\textsuperscript{80}

In all likelihood, like the U.P. Hindu Mahasabha, the U.P. Hindu Sanghathanist party was likely to have been unattractive to ordinary Hindus and patriotic people due to its lacklustre programme. Individual Satyagraha was formally started by Congress in October 1940 and it received the biggest support in U.P.\textsuperscript{81} The total number of Individual Satyagrahis from Kanpur was 1,799\textsuperscript{82} and this was high because there is evidence that the volunteer movement of Qaumi Sewa Dal had a head start here\textsuperscript{83} and it was in Kanpur (along with Allahabad) that the 'availability of volunteers was the greatest' till the final phase

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., 1-11-1944, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., 3-11-1944, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{83} By mid-September 1940, 94 Qaumi Sewa Dal (QSD) volunteers had been arrested in Kanpur and the Director of QSD Instructors' Training Camp had been arrested earlier. The National Herald, September 14, 1940, p. 3 and The Pioneer, September 2, 1940, p. 2 as quoted in Vishalakshi Menon, op. cit., p. 289 fn.
of the Individual Satyagraha Movement. Hence, both the 'Responsive Cooperation-minded' Hindu Mahasabha of 1940 and the U.P. Hindu Sanghathan Committee, which was a self-professed appendage to it, were not the best representatives of the spirit of the times or of patriotic fervour of the people living in them.

A. 2 Shuddhi

The literal meaning of Shuddhi is purification. In practice, however, Shuddhi was a process, which stood for the addition to the Hindu religious group through both 'Reclamation and Conversion'. Shuddhi was started by 'the Vedic Church of Arya Samaj,' asserted Lala Lajpat Rai, 'to reclaim the wandering sheep that had strayed from the Hindu fold and to convert anyone who was prepared to accept its religious teachings.'

It has been noted that there were two distinct phases in the growth of the Shuddhi movement. The earlier phase was markedly socio-cultural and it lasted from the 1880s to 1920 whereas the second phase that began from 1920 was distinctly political.

In the second phase of Shuddhi, the Bharatiya Hindu Shuddhi Sabha was established in a meeting at Agra on February 13, 1923. This meeting was

---

64 Vishalakshi Menon, op. cit., p. 303.
65 Lajpat Rai, A History of the Arya Samaj (An Account of its Origins, Doctrines, and Activities with a Biographical Sketch of the Founder) (Revised, expanded and edited by Sri Ram Sharma) (New Delhi, Orient Longmans, 1967), p. 120.
organised by the Kshatriya Upkarini Sabha – an organization formed by some Rajputs in 1922 to restore relations between Hindu Rajputs and their caste-fellows among Muslims called Malkanas. However, Kshatriya Upkarini Sabha had invited Swami Shradhanand and also called 'about eighty persons from Arya, Sanatanist Hindu, Sikh and Jain backgrounds.' Swami Shradhanand was elected its President and on his insistence, a public appeal was immediately issued to ‘Save the Dying Race’ of Aryas. This appeal praised the Aryas for being ‘individually second to no nation-in intellect and physique’ and endowed with a moral code ‘unapproachable by any other race of humanity.’ Yet, the appeal lamented, the ‘great Arya nation’ was turning into a ‘dying race' because ‘its numbers were dwindling’, it was ‘completely disorganized’ and it was ‘helpless on account of the divisions and selfishness’ of its constituents. To take back into the bosom of the Vedic Church the ‘lakhs obliged to profess Mohamedanism’ and the ‘thousands enticed away to Christianity’ Bharatiya Hindu Shuddhi Sabha was established, the appeal declared.87

Shuddhi had been going on under the auspices of the Arya Samaj much before the Hindu Sabhas were formed in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Shuddhi had been provided for in some ancient Hindu scriptures like Atharva Veda and Brahmanas that prescribed vratyastoma – a rite for re-admitting those fallen beyond he pale of Aryan society. Re-admission of those forcibly converted was also provided by Devalasmiti, a tract probably written after Arab incursions in the 7th Century A.D. Shuddhi had been used in the

nineteenth century by some orthodox people to cleanse, by rites of purification, all those Hindus who contacted polluted materials and persons by visiting foreign lands and crossing the sea, kala pani (or literally the black waters). Swami Dayanand, the founder of Arya Samaj, rejected the practice of Shuddhi on those visiting foreign lands but propagated the concept for preventing conversions to Christianity, especially in Punjab and less so in west U.P. (or North-West Provinces as United Provinces was then called.)

Scholars have, however, noted that due to the militant activism of Arya Samaj from 1923, Shuddhi gained 'special prominence leading to mass instead of individual conversion.' There were exceptions to this proposition that mass conversions through Shuddhi began only after 1923. One interesting exceptional case was that of Pandit Shanti Swarup (Queraishi), a resident of Hardoi district neighbouring Kanpur. He was converted to Hinduism before 1920 by the Arya preacher, Prayag Dutt Awasthi. Shanti Swaraup belonged to the Queraishi biradari of ajlaf (or lower) Muslims. Arya missionaries, however, thrust on Queraishi the title of “Pandit” (the highest caste among Hindus) because he inspired 100 Muslims to convert to Hinduism.

---

88 J.T.F. Jordens, Dayanand Sarasvati His Life and Ideas (Delhi, OUP, 1978), p. 169 ff.
90 Devi Prasad Awasthi “Munish”, Oral History Transcripts, NMML, pp. 17-19. Apart from Brajendra Swarup and Raghubar Dayal Bhatt, Shanti Swarup was one of the main organisers of the 16th session of All-India Hindu Mahasabha at Kanpur between 20th and 22nd April in 1935. PAL, 4-5-1935, pa. 201, p. 208. He then rose to become a Congress leader who won the South-east Hardoi (General-Rural) seat to the U.P. Legislative Assembly in 1937. See P.D. Reeves et. al. A Handbook to Elections in Uttar Pradesh (Delhi, Manohar, 1975), p. 385.
Our evidence from Kanpur also suggests that initially, as early as 1920, *Shuddhi* as reclamation of the lower caste Hindus (who had earlier converted to Christianity or Islam) was to meet the challenge posed by the activities of Christian missionaries as the following example illustrates. Christian missionaries were the first to work among lower caste Hindus through service projects in education and health. As pointed out earlier, when Christian missionaries approached the Koeris, who were Shudras but not Dalits, in Bhanaupurwa Mohalla, an alarm was raised. The local Arya Samajis immediately swung into action by alleging that Koeris had been bribed for conversions. They performed *Shudhi* on them, the sick Koeris were assured medical treatment and books were distributed free among Koeri children. A school was started for these children after a teacher was hired for them on Rs. 25 per month.

Two things happened in the course of the propagation and practice of *Shuddhi* at Kanpur in the 1920s. Firstly, in Kanpur (like elsewhere) Shuddhi was no longer propelled by the anxiety to checkmate the moves of Christian missionaries. In fact with the growth of Tabligh and Tanzim among Muslims (which have been discussed separately in the chapter on Muslim Communal Mobilisation), *Shuddhi* gradually turned in the 1920s from anxiety about the activities Christian missionaries into open hostility to Muslim Tablighi activists and vice versa. In 1923, Swami Shradhanand visited Kanpur for two days, viz., July 31 and August 1. Colonial intelligence reported that his visit did not cause

---

91 Pratap, 20-9-1920, p. 15.
92 Ibid., 1-11-1920, p. 15.
any excitement' (among Hindus, of course) but annoyed some Muslims who subsequently held several meetings to express their resentment at his visit. As if to prove that Tabligh and Shuddhi were actually fanning each other, Maulana Abdul Majid of Badaun reportedly arrived with a delegation in Kanpur on the same day as Swami Shraddhanand. The Maulana was a big Tabligh activist. The Maulana addressed meetings in Kanpur during the period of Swami Shraddhanand's two-day stay. This competitive communal politics of conversion might have further vitiated the atmosphere and added to the prevailing acrimony on contentious issues in Kanpur.

The basis for the resentment of Tabligh activists against Shraddhanand lay in the obsession of this Swami with, and his rather irresponsible utterances regarding, what he called the "Muslim threat". Even in what is otherwise a study "to do justice to Swami Shraddhanand," J.T.F. Jordens notes that from 1923 the Swami was regularly advocating measures to counter what he called the "Muslim threat". He advocated these measures both in print and from the platform. Shraddhanand considered that the Hindu-Muslim unity of the Non-Cooperation movement had turned into Hindu-Muslim enmity. Shraddhanand squarely blamed

---

93 PAI, 11-8-1923, pa. 572, p. 431.
94 Abdul Majid of Badaun (along with Nisar Ahmad) apparently signed posters wherein Tabligh urged the celebration of April 24 as Tabligh Day and asked each Muslim to vow to secure one convert to Islam on this day. PAI, 2-5-1925, pa. 133, p. 183.
95 The Leader, 3-8-1923, p. 6.
Muslims for Hindu-Muslim enmity. During his UP tour for Shuddhi in July 1923 he claimed that Muslims treat Hindus as if they exist 'only to be beaten' and added,

...The incidents of Malabar and Multan hurt the Hindus very much. Muslim leaders of the civil disobedience movement like Maulana Hasrat Mohani and Maulana Azad Sobhani declared that Moplahs were not guilty of any aggression. ...The present enmity is not due to Hindus. Its cause is the Muslims. Many of the Muslim religious leaders have said in their speeches that the snake and the mongoose can be friends, but there can be no unity between Hindu Kafirs and Muslims. ...(The only way) to remove this enmity is to organise the Hindus and make them the strongest.  

Swami Shradhanand wanted Hindus to stop visiting Muslim shrines, venerating Muslims pirs and participating in Muslim religious festivals. These, and other such exhortations, had their reverberations in Kanpur city also and we find that the most harmless of activities like lighting lamps on holy shrines assumed a communal colour in this period. For instance, one Heeralal Pandey wrote that on every Thursday at the shrine of a Saiyad in Ghumni Mohalla (of Kanpur) a Muslim woman lighted a lamp. He apprehended that Goondas also visited this shrine and the real intention of the Muslim woman was not to pray but to entice innocent Hindu women and then to lure them into crime.

---

98 Not just in 1923 but right after the Congress session in December 1921 at Ahmedabad, Shradhanand wrote to his son that Hindus should work for their own Sangathan (consolidation) because 'for Muslims Islam comes first and then the Motherland' and Hindus are separated from one another whereas 'Muslims and Sikhs are organised'. Ibid., p. 126.


100 J.T.F. Jordens (1981), op. cit., p. 141. Instead he wanted Hindus to be educated thoroughly in their own religion and to protect Hindu women, children and untouchables from being driven to Islam by despair.

101 PAI, 22-4-1928, p. 27.
The second major development was that Arya Samaj, the prime mover of *Shuddhi*, was able to increase its presence in U.P. as a whole. But, in Kanpur, Arya Samaj could hardly inflate its ranks through *Shuddhi*. The fact was that there was an actual decline of Arya population in Kanpur during the heyday of the Shuddhi movement, viz. between 1921 and 1931. Since its inception in 1923, Bharatiya Hindu Shuddhi Sabha converted 1.83 lakh persons up till March 1931. In March 1926, the Hindu Mahasabha decided to avoid socio-religious issues that divided its ranks. It resolved that missionary activities of Arya Samaj like Shuddhi should be conducted independently of the Hindu Mahasabha as this reclamation work had earlier alienated Sanatanist Hindus. The local unit of the Hindu Sabha in Kanpur was busy doing a lot of other work but occasionally it continued to do some reclamation work even after 1926. For instance, in the first month after Swami Shraddhanand’s death, viz. in January 1927, 5 *Shuddhis* were reported by the Hindu Sabha in Kanpur and in April and May 1927 the Hindu Sabha, Kanpur reported that it performed 8 *Shuddhis*. Bharatiya Katha Samiti also incidentally managed to convert one Muslim in its regular prayer meetings. Propaganda for *Shuddhi* was done during Tulsi Jayanti celebrations.

---

104 Ram Lal Wadhwa, op. cit., p. 25.
105 *Pratap*, 13-2-1927, p. 20. Raghubar Dayal Bhatt Vaid, Secretary, the Hindu Sabha reported that in January 1927 besides conducting 5 Shuddhis, employment was found for 7 boys, 18 absconding boys were restored to their parents, 11 boys were admitted to the Orphange, 8 women were admitted into the Vanita Ashrams and four unclaimed bodies were cremated. Ibid.
106 *Vartman*, 8-6-1927, p. 2. In its report for April and May 1927 the Hindu Sabha, Kanpur reported that it performed 8 Shuddhis besides helping 31 children by sending them to Orphanges and 4 women to Vanita Ashrams, restoring 16 lost children to their parents and saving 2 girls from being enticed into other religions and also helping one boy find a job. Ibid.
107 Established in 1927, Bharatiya Katha Samiti performed prayers and Karmayog in residential colonies of the poor like Chandreshwar ka Ahatha, Parade, Deputy ka padao, Colonelganj, Mishri
by aggressive Hindu communalists like Jagdamba Prasad Hiteshi who advised Hindus to convert Muslim boys and women and look out for attacks by Muslims on Hindu women.\(^{108}\) However, *Shuddhi* per se became the responsibility of the *Shuddhi* Sabha(s)\(^{109}\) and Arya Samaj.

Arya Samaj in Kanpur interested itself in *Shuddhi* immediately after the Shuddhi Sabha came into existence. The followers/ sympathisers of Arya Samaj were the biggest supporters of *Shuddhi*\(^{110}\) and the Arya Samaj Bhawan was the favourite venue for meetings for *Shuddhi* propaganda.\(^{111}\) Arya Samaj in Kanpur was able to generate considerable amount of funds for the *Shuddhi* of Malkanas within two months of the formation of the *Shuddhi* Sabha.\(^{112}\) In June 1924, at village Mimu of Tahsil Derapur (in Kanpur district) a Neo-Muslim Kshatriya underwent Shuddhi along with 16 members of his family.\(^{113}\) Certain reclamations to Hinduism were reported from Kanpur in December 1924.\(^{114}\) Meetings to

---

\(^{108}\) PAL, 20-8-1927, pa. 804, p. 320.

\(^{109}\) Apart from the Bharatiya Hindu Shuddhi Sabha, Akhil Bharatiya Shradhanand Shuddhi Sabha was established on April 29, 1934. This Sabha claimed in 1940 to have converted 6,553 persons since its inception. R.K. Ghai, *op. cit.*, p. 103 fn.

\(^{110}\) Even Sanatan Dharma Mahamandal of Kanpur held a meeting to support conversion of Malkana Rajputs but there was no noticeable interest in helping *Shuddhi* materially. *Shuddhi* Fund subscribed to the value of Rs. 450 by Arya Samajis within six weeks of the formation of Shuddhi Sabha. PAL, 21-4-1923, pa. 286, p. 233.

\(^{111}\) Swami Shradhanand spoke at Arya Samaj Bhawan on his visit for Shuddhi propaganda to Kanpur in July 1923. *Pratap*, 6-8-1923, p. 16.

\(^{112}\) The Arya Samaj was able to collect Rs. 450 for the *Shuddhi* Fund in Kanpur within two months of the formation of the Shuddhi Sabha. PAL, 14-4-1923, pa. 286, p. 233.

\(^{113}\) This was made possible by the efforts of Jangilal Mishra and Pandit Durga Prasad, wrote Ambika Prasad Tripathi. *Pratap*, 23-6-1924, p. 16.

\(^{114}\) PAL, 10-1-1925, pa. 3, p. 6.
propagate Shuddhi were attended by up to 5,000 persons in March 1927.\textsuperscript{115} In August 1927, at a small meeting, Arya Samajists were urged to bring members of criminal tribes into their fold.\textsuperscript{116} Arya Kumar Sabhas (or Young Men’s Arya Organisations) were also active occasionally performing Shuddhi.\textsuperscript{117} The population of the followers of Arya Samaj increased by more than half (or 54.7 percent) between 1921 and 1931 in United Provinces as a whole. But Kanpur (as also a few other districts) bucked the trend of increase in Arya population. The Arya population actually declined in Kanpur.\textsuperscript{118} Consequently, the Shuddhi movement remained much cry and no wool in Kanpur. Shuddhi propaganda, however, led to a bitter harvest of contentious issues that only aggravated the level of acrimony, more between Hindu-Muslim communalists than among common people.

It is believed that the Shuddhi movement was both caused and killed by communalism. Shuddhi became irrelevant because acute communal consciousness reinforced religious bigotry. Common Hindus and Muslims started proudly proclaiming their religious identity. Certain kinds of food, dress and get up got associated with the identity of being Hindu or Muslim. Occasionally, a mob

\textsuperscript{115} Meeting held on March 6, 1927 in which Hindus were urged to liberally donate to Shuddhi funds. \textit{PAI}, 12-5-1927, pa. 215, p. 88.

\textsuperscript{116} \textit{PAI}, 13-8-1927, pa. 757, p. 308. Arya Samajists were also told that their religion was in danger due to the partiality of the Government to the Muslims. \textit{Ibid}.

\textsuperscript{117} Shivratan Lal, Secretary, Arya Kumar Sabha, Musanagar reported the Shuddhi of one neo-Muslim by his organisation. \textit{Pratap}, 16-6-1929, p. 23.

\textsuperscript{118} The greatest increase of Arya population was in the western districts (Meerut, Muzaffarnagar, Bijnor and Saharanpur), Nainital (where Shilpkars or Doms adopted Aryaism in large numbers) and Fatehpur. The actual decline in Arya population was highest in Bulandshahr (- 13,607) followed by Etawah (- 1,500), Kanpur (- 1,400) and Mainpuri (- 900). \textit{Census of UP, 1931 Part I} (Allahabad, 1933), p. 499-500.
of Hindus beat a Hindu Sadhu because he was mistaken to be a Muslim amidst rumours that Muslims were out to kill Hindus. In this situation the thought of losing one's religious identity through conversion or expulsion became anathema. Hence, after some time, communal consciousness that once prompted Shuddhi, especially after 1930, stemmed the process of conversion. This did not prevent the continuance of existing Shuddhi organizations or even the formation of some new ones locally. Interestingly, after the famous textile strike of Kanpur in 1938, Hindu Dharam Rakshak Sangh was formed in the working class locality of Gwaltoli with the explicit purpose of protecting Hindus from conversion, encouraging others to convert and to advance the cause of Hindus generally.

The Shuddhi movement continued throughout the period of our study but it lost steam after 1930. As already mentioned, Bharatiya Hindu Shuddhi Sabha alone converted or reclaimed 1.83 lakh persons (at an average of almost 23,000 per annum) in the first eight years of its existence, viz. between its foundation in March 1923 and April 1931. The record of this organisation’s work thereafter was lacklustre. In thirteen years from 1934 to 1947, the Shuddhi Sabha performed 38,448 Shuddhis (at an average of less than 3,000 per annum) and was, therefore, able to meet just about 21 percent success as compared to its record

120 R.K. Ghai, op. cit., p. 119.
121 The identity of those who started this organization or inspired its formation is not known. But the fact that it came up in a working class locality after a massive strike in which Hindu and Muslim workers fought bravely shoulder to shoulder, makes the intentions and the motives of those behind this organisation suspect. The Pioneer, 20-10-1938, p. 13.
between 1923 and 1931. Akhil Bahriya Shraddhanand Shuddhi Sabha was formed on April 30, 1934 and in six years, it could perform Shuddhi of 6,553 persons all over India. This was less than the success rate of the original Shuddhi Sabha.\(^{122}\)

Stray cases of Shuddhi and shrill political appeals by Hindu Mahasabha leaders for Shuddhi, however, continued throughout the 1930s and 1940s. A woman left the Hindu fold but then was persuaded to re-join it in April 1938. The re-conversion of this woman called Shivrani was to be held at the Arya Samaj Temple in Kanpur. This caused a massive reaction among Muslim diehards who created a riot-like situation by gathering outside Arya Samaj temple at the scheduled time of re-conversion. The riot was averted by the timely intervention of the police. Hasan Asghari, in-charge of the Kotwali Police Station, ascertained from the lady whether she was reconverting out of her own wish and when she replied in the affirmative, he asked the assembled mob of Muslims to dispose off peacefully.\(^{123}\) Shuddhi activists encouraged a labourer of Kanpur Cotton Mills who happened to be a converted Muslim to re-convert to Hinduism in August 1941. But his decision created a furore wherein the labourer was attacked, brickbats were exchanged between Hindu and Muslim zealots in the working class and communal feeling was revived in Kanpur city.\(^{124}\)

\(^{122}\) R.K. Ghai, op. cit., pp. 103-4 & fn.
\(^{123}\) Vartman, 15-4-1938, p. 5.
\(^{124}\) PAI, 15-8-1941, p. 126.
Occasionally, the Hindu Mahasabha leaders issued appeals to support Shuddhi during what was the twilight of this movement. With characteristic clarity, V.D. Savarkar made an appeal in 1942 for Shuddhi because in the system of religion-based electorates it was a significant political movement since the numerical strength of communities had an important political implication. Savarkar said,

"Political power hinges more and more on the population strength of a community which in the case of Hindus must depend in the main on the proportion in which the Hindus succeed in stopping the dreadful conversion activities of alien faiths and in accelerating the reclamation of the alienated members back to the Hindu fold. In a country like India where a religious unit tends inevitably to grow into a cultural and national unit, the Shuddhi movement ceases to be merely theological or dogmatic, but assumes the wider significance of a political and national movement. If the Muslims increase in population, the centre of political power is bound to be shifted in their favour."

Occasionally, rival communalists threw invitations to each other to convert, more for the sake of propaganda. In 1946, Ghazanfar Ali reportedly asked Hindus to convert to Islam. In reply to this, N.B.Khare invited Ghazanfar Ali to embrace Hinduism along with his colleagues.

Hoping to boost its sagging activities in the chaos prevailing around Independence, the Bharatiya Hindu Shuddhi Sabha also issued appeals to fellow Hindus to help it with their time, money and might to "adopt the lost ones". The Secretary of this Sabha claimed that in Hindu-majority provinces a lot of lost Hindus wanted to return to the Hindu fold. He advised the general (Hindu) public

---

126 Pratap, 24-11-1946, p. 9.
to make an effort to embrace, establish commensality and inter-marry with the new converts without hesitation. He also advised the Hindu enthusiasts to contact him to work for *Shuddhi* on an honorary basis or even on a salary.¹²⁷

As already stated, enthusiasm for *Shuddhi* had begun waning since 1934 and the main reason for its decline was the spread of communalism. *Shuddhi* was an outgrowth of competitive communalism and *Shuddhi* Sabhas aped the Tablighi Jamaats in the 1920s and vice versa. But then, in the 1930s and in the 1940s, communal propaganda marginally succeeded in instigating common people to think that the religion into which they were born was the best. The logical corollary of this was the belief that one would not convert to the faith of the others, instead others should convert to one’s faith. By this, we can conclude that *Shuddhi* was fanned by communalism in the 1920s but extreme forms of communalism reduced the appeal of *Shuddhi* in the 1930s and the 1940s.

**B. The Hindu Sabha**

Hindu Mahasabha held its session alongside those of the Congress prior to 1922. It was only at its VI session in Gaya (December 30-31, 1922) that the Mahasabha asserted its independent identity by calling upon Hindus to form their own (separate) organizations in every qasba and village of the country.¹²⁸ The Hindu Sabhas had elements of the nationalist programme in politics and socially they made noises occasionally for the uplift of lower castes but they, curiously,

¹²⁷ Vartman, 9-6-1947, p. 2.
also emulated the methods of Muslim communalists during this period. Thursby notes that though started in 1911 the United Provinces Hindu Sabha was more firmly established by 1915. And it was only after the Haridwar session of All-India Hindu Mahasabha in 1921 that a coherent programme was evolved by this organisation. The distinctive features of its programme were: i) to evolve a united, self-governing nation; ii) to ameliorate the condition of all Hindus, including low castes; and iii) to start "Hindu fatwa" and "Jamiat-i-Panditan".\textsuperscript{129}

The Hindu Sabha did not move from strength to strength in political life during the period of our study. On the contrary, it had a relatively more imposing presence in the 1920s than at anytime later. Its meetings were well attended in Kanpur.\textsuperscript{130} In the 1920s, the Hindu Sabha at Kanpur had among its office bearers well-known nationalists like Ganesh Shanker Vidyarthi.\textsuperscript{131} The bad influence of this 'defensive communalism' was acknowledged by Congressmen themselves and some nationalists even accepted that their expectation to bring a large number of Hindu zealots into Congress fold was wrong.\textsuperscript{132} But it is not widely

\textsuperscript{129} G.R. Thursby, op. cit., pp. 160-1.

\textsuperscript{130} Provincial Hindu Sabha leaders visiting Kanpur to collect money for the organization got a sizable audience also. CID reports, however, said that the meetings were well attended but the audience was not particularly enthusiastic. PAI, 13-12-1924, pa. 384, p. 415.

\textsuperscript{131} Vidyarthi was the Vice President of Kanpur Hindu Sabha in 1926. Pratap, 9-5-1926, p. 19. He was in a Sub-Committee of The Hindu Sabha to collect funds for the Satyarahis at Patuakhali (Bengal) who were protesting against the Bengal Government's order banning music before mosques. Pratap, 19-12-1926, p. 19. He helped form branches of the Hindu Sabha like in Sisamau by delivering inspired speeches. Pratap, 15-5-1927, p. 24.

\textsuperscript{132} A prominent Congress leader, Dr. Murari Lal told the Congress Committee that he refused to remain on the The Hindu Sabha register after the Riots of 1931. According to him, he had joined the The Hindu Sabha 'not because we were enthusiastic about its objectives but because we wanted to capture it, bring it under Congress influence and bring a number of zealous Hindu Sabhaites into the Congress fold.' For Congress involvement in 'defensive communalism' in Kanpur in 1920s, see The Congress Enquiry Committee Report on Riots in Kanpur in 1931 published as N. Gerald Barrier, Roots of Communal Politics (Missouri, South Asia Books, n.d.), pp. 244-6. See Biographical Sketch of Dr. Murari Lal in Chapter II, p. 68, footnote 70, above.
known that even up-and-coming radical trade unionists like S.P. Awasthi\textsuperscript{133} and budding Leftist leaders like Arjun Arora\textsuperscript{134} were active in the Ward and Mohalla Committees of the Hindu Sabha or its affiliate organisations in the 1920s. Some like Radha Mohan Gokulji were providing intellectual and ideological help simultaneously to communalists and socialists.

Radha Mohan Gokulji claimed that he was a communist.\textsuperscript{135} Writing in \textit{Mazdur}, a weekly started in 1928 by Hariharnath Shastri from Kanpur,\textsuperscript{136} Gokulji said that religious bonds were manufactured to swindle the poor.\textsuperscript{137} Gokulji was a confirmed atheist.\textsuperscript{138} He was a social reformer who strove for equality between men and women as also between upper castes and untouchables.\textsuperscript{139} A prize was, therefore, instituted in his memory which was to be awarded once in two years to the author of a book on social reform.\textsuperscript{140}

Even such a self-proclaimed atheist, social reformer and leftist intellectual like Radha Mohan Gokulji had a prominent communal anti-Muslim streak in his personality. In the elections of 1926 to U.P. Legislative Council, along with

\textsuperscript{133} Surya Prasad Awasthi appealed for monetary help on behalf of Hindu Dharam Sewak Dal of Karnaliganj. \textit{Pratap}, 5-3-1926, p.2.
\textsuperscript{134} Arjun Arora (1912-1981) was elected Secretary of Patkapur Hindu Bal Sabha Vartman, 7-3-1927, p. 2. That he was active in this vibrant Sabha was proved by the fact that he reported about a lecture delivered on the pitiable condition of Hindus by another radical Radha Mohan Gokulji in August 1927. \textit{Ibid.}, 26-8-1927, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{135} A die-hard revolutionary like Shiv Verma, who accepted the important role played by Gokulji in popularizing communist principles, did not consider Gokulji a “100 percent Marxist”. Interview, Shiv Verma. 12-9-1984. \textit{Typescript} (Centre for Historical Studies, J.N.U., New Delhi), p. 61.
\textsuperscript{137} \textit{NNR}, No. 32 of 12-8-1933.
\textsuperscript{138} He had written two books on the need to ‘boycott God’ and relationship between ‘religion and superstition’. Shiv Verma, Interview, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 54.
\textsuperscript{139} Ramvilas Sharma, \textit{Bharat Mein Angrezi Raj aur Marxvad} (New Delhi, Rajkamal, 1982), p. 562.
\textsuperscript{140} Vartman, 20-4-1938, p. 6. This prize for authors was instituted because by the time of his death, at 72 in 1935, Gokulji had reportedly served ‘progressive Hindi Journalism’ for 25 years. \textit{Ibid.}, 12-9-1935, p. 5.
Satyabhakta (to whom is credited the founding of CPI), Gokulji supported the Hindu Sabha-ite Lala Chuni Lal Garg against Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, the Swarajist candidate. The help Gokulji gave to Lala Chuni Lal Garg was not just by canvassing for support but by editing a newspaper called Bharat for his election propaganda.\textsuperscript{141} Garg was attacking Vidyarthi by ridiculing the Congress policy of cooperation with Muslims.\textsuperscript{142} Radha Mohan Gokulji did not just help one communal leader in an occasional election; he participated in the activities of Hindu Sabha regularly.\textsuperscript{143} It is, therefore, not surprising that Gokulji incited a Hindu Sabha's meeting by publicly accusing some Muslims of Kanpur of Swami Shradhanand's murder.\textsuperscript{144} The fact, however, was that Swami Shradhanand was shot dead by a Muslim youth of Delhi, not Kanpur.\textsuperscript{145}

The presence of diverse elements in the Hindu Sabha sometimes led to internal quarrels over perceptions and policy matters. During the Congress session at Kanpur, All-India Hindu Mahasabha also held a special session in the Congress pandal over which Narsingh Chintamani Kelkar presided on December 29, 1925. Here Lala Lajpat Rai praised Aryas for giving many jatis (or national communities) to Europe, Asia and Africa and applauded them for producing

\textsuperscript{141} FR – 112-IV/1926 for the I half of July 1926. Home Political, NAI.
\textsuperscript{142} PAI, 21-8-1926, pa. 747, p. 449. Garg's rowdies broke up Swarajist meetings. \textit{Ibid.}, 27-11-1926, pa. 1052, p. 609. But despite sponsoring all this terror and fomenting communalism Garg lost the election to Vidyarthi. This support of Gokulji to Garg was embarrassing not only because the latter was communal but also because Lala Chuni Lai had allegedly distributed Rs. 2,500 among the city's bad characters to enlist their services to terrorize the opposition.
\textsuperscript{143} \textit{Ibid.}, 6-8-1927, pa. 741, p. 302. He believed that Hindus should unite as a community. Hence, he addressed meetings, like the one of Patkapur Hindu Bal Sabha, where he claimed that Hindu Sangathan (or Hindu organization) was of utmost importance.
\textsuperscript{144} \textit{Ibid.}, 26-2-1927, pa. 167, p. 69.
\textsuperscript{145} The name of the assassin was Abdul Rashid. See J.T.F. Jordens, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 166.
poets like Rabindranath Tagore, scientists like J.C. Bose and leaders like Gandhi. But, Lala Lajpat Rai added, he was pained to hear now that despite being 24 crores in strength Hindus got beaten here or killed there. Lajpat Rai felt that the reason for this was the lack of self-confidence among Hindus and, to overcome this, he suggested that Hindus needed an organization of their own. On this occasion, Madan Mohan Malaviya spoke about the need in every village of an akhara (more of a wrestling ground than a gymnasium), the Hindu Sabha and pathshala, recitation of Ramayana and Mahabharata and celebration of different festivals as national events. Sarojini Naidu, who was the General President of the Kanpur Congress session, however, warned that an organization in self-defence should not become an organization for the perpetration of atrocities on others. All Hindus should emulate the Hindu rulers of the past who protected all religions and other communities, she added.¹⁴⁶ This difference in outlook between nationalist leaders was also visible at the local level in Kanpur. The Hindu Sabha held a meeting on February 16, 1926 to discuss candidates for Legislative Council and other elections. Among others, Diwan Chand, Principal, D.A.V. College and Thakur Mahabir Singh, were most vocal in deprecating Congressmen for not retaliating to the attacks on Hinduism. Dr. Murari Lal and other Congressmen opposed them. There was a dispute between these groups about the impending elections also. Whereas one section wanted Hindu Sabha also to contest the elections, Dr. Murari Lal said that dissensions would intensify

¹⁴⁶ Pratap, 4-1-1926, p. 6.
among various sects of Hindus if every party were to put up its own candidates for elections.\footnote{147}

These differences, notwithstanding, there were some assorted activities in 1920s that Kanpur Hindu Sabha smoothly accomplished. This included collecting money for the organisation\footnote{148} and for the co-religionists accused in communal riots;\footnote{149} protesting against the Government for appointing Muslims as Judges\footnote{150} and condemning Muslims for trying to divide Hindus.\footnote{151}

There was a momentary upsurge in the fortunes of Hindu Sabha towards the beginning of 1927. More youth and children joined the Hindu Sabha in Kanpur after the assassination of Swami Shradhanand in December 1926. New branches of Hindu Bal Sabhas were formed and existing Bal Sabhas as also Yuvak Sabhas became active. Hindu Balsabha was formed at Sadar Bazar to commemorate which a flower bedecked photo of Swami Shradhanand was taken out in a procession through the main Mohallas of Kanpur.\footnote{152} Sri Hindu Sabha Bal Sewa Dal was established in Patkapur under the auspices of Patkapur's Hindu

\footnote{147} PAI, 27-2-1926, pa. 178, p. 110.  
\footnote{148} Ibid., 13-12-1924, pa. 384, p. 415. In December 1924 when a delegation of the Provincial Hindu Sabha leaders came to Kanpur to collect money, their meetings were well attended but there was 'no particular enthusiasm'. Ibid.  
\footnote{149} Ibid., 6-8-1927, pa. 751, p. 305. Members of the Hindu Sabha collected subscriptions to meet the expenses of the appeal against the judgement in the Faithfulganj communal riot case. Ibid.  
\footnote{150} Ibid., 21-11-1925, pa. 381, p. 482. Private meeting of the Hindu Sabha in November 1925 where resolutions were passed condemning the action of the Government for appointing a 'Muslim Home Member' and two 'Muslim Judges' to the Oudh Chief Court. Ibid.  
\footnote{151} Ibid., 10-10-1925, pa. 330, p. 423. The Hindu Sabha meeting on September 23, 1925 was attended by 500 persons and it condemned Muslims for trying to divide the Hindu community by differentiating between Aryas and Hindus. Ibid.  
\footnote{152} Vartman, 30-3-1927, p. 2.
Patkapur Hindu Bal Sabha held elections to its Executive Council in March 1927. Nawabganj Hindu Kumar Sabha condemned the Agra-based weekly Muslim Sevak which published a poem called "Shuddhi ki Haqiqat" allegedly abusive towards Hindus.

The elections in the Hindu Sabha in the 1920s were 'generally held on Ram Navmi'. It was around then that appeals were made by the Secretary to members to renew their membership and new recruits were sought for enrolment in the organization. Even in years when the communal situation was not particularly volatile, for example in 1926, the appeal of the Secretary amounted to sensation mongering. In 1926, the Secretary of the Hindu Sabha said that 'all Hindus should become members of the Hindu Sabha because the indifference of authorities to Hindu interests was becoming intolerable. The only way to stop atrocities on helpless women and orphaned suckling children was to join the Hindu Sabha.'

In the 1930s, the Hindu Sabha was bedevilled with such intense factionalism that it appeared to be divided down the middle. Occasionally, it made efforts to revive its organisational strength by raking up some communal or constitutional issue. In February 1933, Hindi leaflets were circulated in Kanpur, which condemned the atrocities of 'Muslim Goondas' in Alwar and Kashmir.

---

153 Those interested in joining it were asked to come for registration to Bihari Temple with an admission fee of Eight Annas by one Nand Kishore Vaishya. Vartman, 17-9-1927, p. 2.
154 Ibid., 7-3-1927, p. 2.
155 Ibid., 9-3-1927, p. 2.
156 Ibid., 20-3-1926, p. 2.
leaflets requested Hindus to collect funds and prepare volunteers to suppress Muslim Goondas and also to observe February 10 as All-India Alwar day. The response from the public, it seems, was lukewarm and, hence, there was no mention of any spectacular activity on Alwar Day in Kanpur by any of the newspapers we read for this study.

In March 1934, the Headquarters of the U.P. Hindu Sabha were shifted to Kanpur. The programme of U.P. Hindu Sabha included education for Hindus for which a Committee was set and Sri Ratan Shukla, a Congressman, was made its Secretary; it was decided to start physical education in the name of Lajpat Rai; it was also decided to ask all units of, and organisations affiliated to, Hindu Sabha to observe Buddha's 2,500th birth anniversary on Buddha Jayanti that year, etc. At its meeting in June that year, the Working Committee of the U.P. Hindu Sabha decided to invite All-India Hindu Sabha to hold its next session at Kanpur. The organization was weak and its leadership was suspect in the eyes of its own ranks. So, when the President of U.P. Hindu Mahasabha, Raja of Tirwa, tried to forge an alliance with Nawab of Chatari to protect the interests of zamindars, sections in his party were angry. The Provincial Hindu Mahasabha met and decided to unseat Raja of Tirwa from Presidentship of the organization for 'ganging up with Nawab of Chattari and doing injustice to Hindu interests'.

157 PAI, 18-2-1933, pa. 97, p. 83.
158 Ibid., 24-3-1934, pa. 172, p. 179. Raja Durg Narayan Singh of Tirwa was elected president, Pandit Jyoti Shankar Dixit was chosen Secretary and Lala Ram Ratan Gupta was elected Treasurer at a meeting in Kanpur. Ibid.
159 Vartman, 15-3-1934, p. 6.
160 PAI, 2-6-1934, pa. 309, p. 326.
Mobilization by the Hindu Sabha around Constitutional issues was minimal and the support it received from common Hindus on this score was negligible. Communal Award was one big issue in early 1930s. Madan Mohan Malaviya temporarily withdrew from Congress because it did not oppose this Award tooth and nail. Yet, when both the Hindu Sabha and Malaviya's Nationalist party jointly organised a meeting in February 1935 to protest against Communal Award attendance at it was dismal. Only 40 persons reportedly assembled at this meeting to condemn the Communal Award.\(^{162}\)

The local Hindu Sabha, like its All-India counterpart, had a fixation on the condition of Hindus in the Muslim-majority provinces like Punjab and Bengal, actually a lot more on Punjab than on the latter. But in Kanpur while in 1919 this concern occasionally expressed itself in support for nationalist causes,\(^ {163}\) by 1940s the sole focus of the Hindu Sabha had become communal mobilization. Punjab was the focus of mobilization by the Hindu Sabha after massive communal riots in Punjab in March 1947. It planned to observe Punjab Day on March 30, 1947 against which Muslim communalists made their own mobilization and what followed on Punjab Day was a riot in Kanpur.\(^ {164}\) The Kanpur branch of Hindu Sahayta (Relief) Committee that was run by Rashtriya Swayamsewak

\(^{162}\) PAI, 23-2-1935, pa. 85, p. 93.

\(^{163}\) After the atrocities by the colonial government in Punjab following the Jallianwala massacre in April 1919, the Hindu Sabha unit at Kanpur collected Rs. 3,000 for Punjab Relief by November in the same year and it expected that this amount would rise to Rs. 5,000. Pratap, 24-11-1919, p. 15.

\(^{164}\) Vartman, 1-4-1947, p. 1. On this ‘Punjab Day’ at Kanpur police fired thrice. Two people were killed and 70 were injured (including Additional District Magistrate, the Superintendent of Police and 22 constables). What followed were many days of assaults and counter attacks by communally charged Hindus and Muslims which left the city disturbed almost till Independence. Ibid.
Sangh (R.S.S.) also made a collection of Rs. 4,648 for the victims of Punjab carnage of March 1947. Interestingly, at this stage, R.S.S. had very little hold over Arya Samaj institutions because neither the Arya Samaj Mandir(s) nor D.A.V. College students/staff figure among the prominent donors to this Committee.\textsuperscript{165} And Tilak Nagar, which alone provided more than a quarter of the help received by the R.S.S., was once a centre of nationalist, not communal, mobilization in 1920s.\textsuperscript{166} In June 1947 the Hindu Relief Committee was renamed ‘Hindu Sahayak (or aid) Committee’ which formed a formal executive committee after elections. The interesting thing about this was that this was clearly a mercantile community (Manwaris and Khattris) dominated Committee with just a sprinkling of Brahmins.\textsuperscript{167}

\textsuperscript{165} \textit{Vartman}, 27-4-1947, p. 4. The amount was collected by this Committee in descending order was from Tilak Nagar/ Arya Nagar – Rs. 1,299; Civil Lines – Rs. 634; Generalganj and Lohai – Rs. 572; Ghumni Mohalla – Rs. 511; Sisamau – Rs. 379; Sadar Bazar – Rs. 324; Ganesh Nagar and Dhankutti both gave Rs. 226 each; Gaushala, Rail Bazar – Rs. 126; B.N.S.D. Hostel – Rs. 101; Kailash Mandir – Rs. 76; Lajpat Rai Park – Rs. 32; and Miscellaneous and others – Rs. 152. \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{166} Tilak Nagar was the site of the All-India Congress Committee’s annual session at Kanpur in 1925. Tilak Nagar hosted Arya Swarajya (or self-rule) Conference in December 1925 and the Chairperson of its Reception Committee was Dr. Jawaharlal Rohtagi, a prominent Congress leader. Through its resolutions this Swarajya Conference decided to build an organisation of young committed volunteers for national and human development and to remove untouchability there was a ‘sehbhoj’ (or joint feast) at which Khadwa’s ruler Rao Gopal Singh was also present. \textit{Pratap}, 4-1-1926, p. 19.

\textsuperscript{167} \textit{Vartman}, 27-4-1947, p. 4. The President of the Hindu Sahayak Committee was Lala Ramswarup Bharatiya; its Vice-President(s) were Mannilal Newatia, Babu Dwarka Prasad Singh (the current Chairman of the Municipal Board); Babu Manohar Lal Jain and Lala Gopikrishan Jaipuria; its General Secretary was Babu Kishorechandra Kapoor and Joint General Secretary was Pandit Babulal Mishra; its Secretaries were Babu Mohanal Arora, Sardar H.S. Birdi and Pandit Mathura Prasad Vajpayi; and its Treasure was Lala Mannilal Gupta. \textit{Ibid.}
B.1 Friends of the Colonial Power

The high point of cordiality between Colonial authorities and the Hindu Mahasabha was in 1940 and it coincided with the period of active opposition of the British by the Congress. The Congress had decided to make non-cooperation with the War efforts of the British its policy since December 1939, and it resigned from its Ministerial office in eight provinces of India. Around this time, to celebrate the resignation of Congress ministries some of the Hindu Mahasabha units decided, on the lines of Muslim League, to observe “Hindu Deliverance Day” on December 22, 1939. V.D. Savakar was the President of the Hindu Mahasabha then. He met Lord Linlithgow thrice in July 1940 and evolved a policy of ‘Responsive Cooperation’ with the colonial rulers. According to this policy, after some bargaining, the Hindu Mahasabha agreed to provide (whatever) legitimacy (it could) to the Colonial rulers by filling the vacancies that might accrue in the enlarged Executive Council of the Viceroy and also on the proposed War Advisory Committee. In August 1940, the Colonial authorities recognised the Hindu Mahasabha as a body representing the Hindus. This aroused the hope of Hindu communalists to play ‘a more effective role in the complex politics of the times.’

People in Kanpur, however, were not very enthused by the parlour games Hindu Sabha-ites were playing in the colonial chambers. This was evident

---

168 Ram Lal Wadhwa, Hindu Maha Sabha, 1928-1947 (New Delhi, Radha Publications, 1999), pp. 143-47. The Hindu Sabha-ites also tried unsuccessfully to reduce the Muslim League’s presence in the Government. Ibid.
when, around this time, Dr. B.S. Moonje, the militant Hindu Mahsabha leader, travelled in U.P. and got a smaller audience in Kanpur than in Benaras.\(^{169}\)

On October 11, 1940 the Congress declared Individual Satyagraha but since the Hindu Mahasabha was in ‘Responsive Cooperation’ mode then, agitation against the British colonialists did not have its approval. In an editorial comment, The Hindu Outlook warned that ‘Hindus will lose by the present Civil Disobedience movement of the Congress. The 1931 Civil Disobedience campaign bore its fruits in the form of the Communal Award and the present will result in the Pakistan scheme of Mr. Jinnah.’\(^{170}\)

**B.2 Anti-Congressism**

The inimical disposition of Hindu Communal leaders towards Congress in late 1930s was basically due to the fact that while they failed, Congress had successfully acquired a massive mass support among common Hindus. Savarkar at this time believed that ‘not bayonets but votes to Hindu Mahasabha would remove the ills of Hindus and protect their religion, culture, language and civil rights.’\(^{171}\) Stung by the question of one Awadh Kishore Saran (of Fyzabad) as to what had the Hindu Mahasabha done to solve the social, religious and economic problems of Hindus, Lala Ganpat Rai, Honorary Secretary of the Mahasabha replied, ‘Hindu Mahasabha and its leaders have never concealed that the

---

\(^{169}\) Moonje got an audience of 10,000 at Benaras and one of merely 2,500 at Kanpur. In his speeches, Moonje criticised the allegedly pro-Muslim policy of Congress and urged Hindu youth to prepare for military training. *PAI*, 4-5-1940, pa. 148, pp. 96-7.

\(^{170}\) *The Hindu Outlook*, 21-12-1940, p. 3.

Mahasbha has the aspiration to be a rival of Congress in politics and after that aspired goal of political power is reached, then and then alone, the various social, religious and economic problems can be effectively solved.' He added with a lament that 'stalwarts of Hindu Mahasabha like Shradhanand and Lala Lajpat Rai have died; Madan Mohan Malaviya, N.C. Kelkar and M.R. Jayakar have retired from active politics.' But, he declared hopefully, 'Parmanand, Moonje and Savarkar are trying their best to popularise Hindu Mahasabha.'

Usually the Hindu Mahsabha gave two reasons for its ideological animosity towards the Congress in late 1930s, viz. the ostensible appeasement of Muslims by the Congress and the apparent social radicalism of Congress. An editorial in The Hindu Outlook on the 'Programme of Hindu Mahasabha' rhetorically contrasted its policy with that of Congress in the following manner:

'Congress stands for the destruction of Hindus, Hindu Mahasabha wants to make them rulers of this country. Congress teaches Hindus to fear Muslims and to respect their communal demands; Hindu Mahasabha stands for "Hindu superiority".' On social radicalism the editorial added, 'Congress wants a communistic state and with class warfare it will disturb India’s peace and unity; Hindu Mahasabha will create a solid Hindu empire.'

---

173 Ibid., 21-6-1939, p. 4. This editorial also accused Congress of being anti-national and insenious about linguistic unity. It said, 'By accepting the Communal Award Congress has become an anti-national organisation whereas Hindu Mahasabha wants to bury communalism by throwing out the Communal Award.' 'Congress wants to take the non-existing Hindustani as the national lingua franca, Hindu Mahasabha wants the linguistic unity of India through Hindi.' Ibid.
The animosity to the Congress's secular orientation was revealed at the local level in the statements of Hindu communalists. Muslim League celebrated December 22, 1939 as the Day for "Deliverance" from Congress rule and Savarkar had asked Hindus to do the same. Rajendramani Shastri, the Kanpur-based Joint Secretary of U.P. Hindu Mahasabha, almost mimicked Savarkar in saying that Congress was responsible for the observance of 'Deliverance Day' by Muslim League and that Hindus could win Independence alone. Rajendramani Shastri was reported to have said that 'in its two and a half year rule in eight out of eleven Provinces Congress had been very generous to Muslims and Jinnah was now trying to misuse this generosity.' He added that Congress had been pacifying Muslims while being unjust to Hindus at many places but Hindus should unite to fight India's battle for Freedom single-handedly. Ironically, Hindu Mahasabha's policy of active cooperation with the Government and its consequent recognition by the British colonialists as 'the representatives of Hindus' started after the display of such passionate verbal nationalism.

Incidentally, it is a misnomer to think that the Hindu Mahasabha had any favourites among Congress leaders or other radicals. Speaking before a large

---

174 In his Presidential speech at Calcutta session of All-India Hindu Mahasabha in December 1939, Savarkar said rather satirically, "The 'Deliverance Day' of today is but the inevitable logical consequence of the Khilafat day so gaily observed by the Congress yesterday. It is you who have initiated the Muslims into the belief that the more they demand, the more you yield, the more they frown, the more you placate, the more you offer, the more thankless they grow, the more cheques! Why then get startled now that they begin to fill them up with whatever ransom they are pleased to demand?" Quoted in Ram Lal Wadhwia, op. cit., p. 140. Savarkar had, incidentally, also asked the Poona Hindu Sabha to celebrate "Hindu Deliverance Day" on December 22, 1939 because he thought that with the going of Congress went the belief that national freedom could not be won without the Muslims. Ibid.

175 The Pioneer, 22-12-1939, p. 5.
audience of 20,000 at Pune's Tilak Mandir on Tilak Jayanti in August 1939, Savarkar criticised Gandhi's beliefs along familiar lines. He criticised Gandhi's belief in non-violence ('not all force was violence, only aggressive force was violence') and in Charkha ('it has no use in the modern industrial age') and Gandhi's definition of Truth. But he also criticised Subhash Chandra Bose's Forward Block by saying that Bose did not differ from Gandhi except he went further to woo the Muslims. Savarkar said some aspects of M.N. Roy's economic programme were acceptable but even Roy was unacceptable because he went a step further to please Muslims.176

The animosity to the social radicalism of Congress was also revealed during elections to the Kanpur-cum-Jhansi constituency in February 1940. Sir J.P. Srivastava canvassed for Rai Bahadur Rameshwar Prasad Bagla. His attack on Congress was that it 'dispossessed propertied classes, imposed taxes after taxes on the middle classes and reduced the prestige and salaries of the Services.' In the context of the Tenancy Bill passed by Congress, Srivastava appealed to the voters of the U.P. Legislative Council (or the Upper House) to serve the country by "voting against the annihilation of propertied classes and the existing social order."177 Seth Padampat Singhania of the J.K. Group of Companies made the same appeal to voters after two days.178

176 The Leader, 8-8-1939, p. 16.
177 The Pioneer, 11-2-1940, p. 5. Sir J.P. Srivastava also said that the U.P. Legislative Council was "intended to apply the brakes on tyranny of he masses on the classes and minorities." Ibid.
178 Ibid., 13-2-1940, p. 5.
B. 3 Weak organization, self-centred leadership

These desperate attempts to calumnize Congress, villainize Muslim League and befriend the Colonial authorities did not make the Hindu Sabha any more popular with the people. Therefore, when the Hindu Sabha met for its Annual General meeting in May 1940 at Arya Samaj Hall at Kanpur the enthusiasm among those present was low. Though the existing President (viz. Lala Changamal) and Secretary (viz. Rameshwar Prasad Mishra) were re-elected, Lala Changamal said with regret that the Sabha had practically no programme and neither did the prominent local Hindus take much interest in the Sabha.179

U.P. was not represented on All-India Hindu Mahasbha Committee and Working Committee in 1939 because there were general complaints of irregularities and controversies against the existing office-bearers.180 All-India Hindu Mahasabha's Working Committee disaffiliated Agra and Oudh Provinces Hindu Sabha and all local/ district Sabhas affiliated to them due to the indiscipline and insubordination in conducting elections there.181 The need to reorganise Hindu Mahasabha in U.P. forced Indra Prakash and Prof. V.G. Deshpande, Secretaries of All-India Hindu Mahasabha, to camp in U.P. after opening Reorganisation offices in Lucknow and Kanpur. They appealed to Oudh

179 Lala Changamal, President, Hindu Sabha, Kanpur said that to be more useful and effective the Sabha must have a programme and he wished that the prominent local Hindus had taken more interest in the affairs of the Sabha. The Pioneer, 22-5-1940, p. 5.
180 The Hindu Outlook, 9-11-1940, p. 1.
181 Ibid., 30-11-1940, p. 12.
Provincial Hindu Sabha and U.P. Hindu Sangathan Committee to cooperate with their work.\textsuperscript{182}

Bereft of any programme or policy, the Hindu Sabha tried to organise a new militant volunteer corps called Ram Sena. In order to assign this corps an agenda, the Hindu Sabha asked the branches of Ram Sena to celebrate Dasehra with particular pomp and show in October 1940. It asked volunteers to collect their weapons and pray before them in the morning and to organize a religious procession in the evening.\textsuperscript{183}

At the Provincial level, till 1943, the Hindu Sabha remained weak and faction-ridden. There are two kinds of evidence to this effect from within the Hindu Mahasabha. Firstly, there were differences about the policy to be adopted vis-à-vis the colonial power. Bhide Guruji, Secretary to V.D. Savarkar, President of All-India Hindu Mahasabha, wrote to \textit{The Pioneer} in March 1943 regretting that Raja Maheshwar Dayal Seth and Dr. S.P. Mookherji harassed Sir J.P. Srivastava, Member of Viceroy's Executive Council to resign. But Sir Srivastava took the advice of the President of Hindu Mahasabha and Dr. Moonje and did not resign because he practiced 'responsive cooperation' with the Government, claimed Bhide. Bhide condemned Raja M.D. Seth for his pseudo-national mentality and claimed that Seth miserably exposed his soul and showed to the world that he could not ride on two horses. Bhide Guruji asked if these people

\textsuperscript{182} Ibid., 12-10-1940, p. 16.
\textsuperscript{183} PAI, 4-10-1940, pa. nil, p. nil.
could dare to demand the resignation (from Viceroy’s Executive Council) of Dr. Ambedkar or even Jogendra Singhji, let alone Muslim members? There was enough in this statement to prove acute factionalism in the Hindu Mahasabha. Secondly, this statement of Bhide Guruji proved that even in the imagination of the ideologues of Hindu communalism Scheduled Castes and their representative, Dr. Ambedkar, and the Sikhs and their representative, Sardar Jogendra Singh, were as distant as Muslim members of the Viceroy’s Executive Council. The claim on the loyalty and support of Scheduled Castes and Sikhs seemed more a matter of political strategy than of ideological conviction with Hindu Sabha-ites.

Secondly, factional differences were added to the confusion on policy matters. None other than Rajaram Sabir, General Secretary of Agra Provincial Hindu Sabha (who as Editor of Desh was based at Kanpur) called upon the luminaries of the Hindu Sabha (like Raja Maheshwar Dayal Seth, Seth Padampat Singhania and Lala Hari Ram Seth) to persuade all groups to sink their differences which were eating into the vitals of the Provincial organisation and were embarrassingly visible at the Kanpur session of All-India Hindu Mahasbha in December 1942. Sabir maintained that because the Agra and Oudh Hindu Sabhas have not produced a leader who can command the confidence of general public “the local Hindu Sabhas are pathetic examples of confusion, personal grudges and prejudices.” At the national level things were no different

---

184 The Pioneer, 10-3-1943, p. 4.
185 Ibid., 24-1-1943, p. 6.
till 1944 when before the Bilaspur session of All-India Hindu Mahasabha, The Hindu Outlook accepted that the organisation was "deeply infected by heterogeneous units and self-styled leadership."\(^{186}\) The extent of disunity in Hindu Sabha till 1947 can be gauged by the following. In mid-April 1947, Maharshi Digvijaynath, President U.P. Hindu Mahasabha, declared that though Rajendramani Shastri claimed to be the President of Kanpur Hindu Sabha, no body with this name was registered with his provincial outfit.\(^{187}\)

C. The Hindu Sangh

In February 1939, Congress was in Government in U.P. and Kanpur had undergone a serious riot then. The Hindu Sabha-ites claimed and Governor Haig endorsed, 'more Hindus than Muslims were killed' in these riots.\(^{188}\) Incidentally, in the previous riots of 1927 and 1931 the casualties among Muslims were usually higher than those among Hindus.\(^{189}\) The reversal of this trend alarmed Hindu communalists. Hence, apparently to consolidate Hindus, a new organisation was formed at a meeting of 100 prominent citizens of Kanpur, including businessmen from all markets. It was called the Hindu Sangh. The Bazaars were closed both

\(^{186}\) The Hindu Outlook, 26-12-1944, p. 3.
\(^{187}\) Vartman, 14-4-1947, p. 2.
\(^{188}\) Salil Misra, A Narrative of Communal Politics Uttar Pradesh, 1937-39 (New Delhi/ Thousand Oaks/ London, Sage, 2001), p. 306. In this riot 45 persons were killed, over 300 were injured and around 800 were arrested at Kanpur. Ibid.
\(^{189}\) In the first communal riots of 1927 in Kanpur, the number of the dead was one Hindu and one Muslim but among the injured there were 37 Muslims and 29 Hindus. The police arrested 90 Muslims and 40 Hindus for rioting, and it also arrested 100 Hindus and 40 Muslims for infringing prohibitory orders. The Pioneer, 7-9-1927, p. 4. The total deaths in the riots of 1931 were around 300. Out of these a religious group wise break up was difficult to ascertain. However, five days after these riots in 1931, the total number of corpses registered at Civil Hospital Kanpur in was 141 (42 Hindus and 99 Muslims); injured treated were 386 (219 Hindus and 167 Muslims. The total number of arrests was 300 and the religious group wise break-up of this was not furnished. Statement by J.C. Smith, Finance Member and in-charge Police Department, in U.P. Legislative Council on March 30, 1931. UPLCD, Vol. 50, p. 777.
in protest against the rioting and out of the fear of more looting. Hence, one of the first main resolutions of the Hindu businessmen was to abide by the decision of Hindu Sangh regarding the opening of the 'Hindu Bazaars'.

Locally, there was an apprehension that Hindu Sangh was formed to contest the forthcoming elections to the Municipal Board. The Working Committee of Hindu Sangh denied this and emphatically stated that the Sangh was formed to 'organize the Hindus of the city and to safeguard their social and civil rights.' And it was indeed true that Hindu Sangh did not ever contest elections though it survived longer than the Hindu Sangathan Committee (which has been described above in a Section of this Chapter). Hindu Sangh had a sizable support from Hindu businessmen as revealed by the lobbying done by it through the 1940s in Kanpur. It was called a 'Kamla Tower enterprise'. Kamla Tower was the head office of the J.K. Singhana group. Hence, contemporary commentators alleged that the organisation showed the efficiency of a business house and never lacked finances. It spent a total of Rs. 26,530 (or a little more than Rs. 1,000 per month) during the first two years of its existence. In 1941, in its publication *Origin and Work of Hindu Sangh*, the party claimed to have a

---

190 *The Pioneer*, 18-2-1939, p. 5. An Executive Committee of 21 prominent Hindus was formed and the Sangh also formed ten sub-Committees for Relief, Defence, Finance etc. The office-bearers of Hindu Sangh were Lala Padampat Singhania – President; Sir J.P. Srivastava, Rai Bahadur(s) Vikramajit Singh and Brajendra Swarup and Pandit Raghubar Dayal Bhatt – Vice-President(s); B.P. Srivastava (who was also the Chairman of Kanpur Municipal Board) – Secretary; Rai Bahadur Rameshwar Prasad Bagla and Lala Ramratan Gupta – Joint Secretaries; Bhudev Sharma and Pandit Rameshwar Prasad Misra Vaid – Assistant Secretaries; and Sardar Inder Singh – Treasurer. *Ibid*. In 1942, Ram Narain Garg replaced B.P. Srivastava as Secretary and Rai Bahadur R.P. Bagla replaced Sardar Inder Singh as Treasurer. *The Citizen*, 7-3-1942, p. 1.

191 *The Pioneer*, 2-3-1939, p. 5.
membership of 6,000, which probably made it the strongest Hindu communal organisation in Kanpur. 192

At its inception, one controversy, which dogged Hindu Sangh, was the presence of two prominent local Congressmen among its office bearers. Out of these two while Pandit Raghubar Dayal Bhatt was the Vice-President of Hindu Sangh, Lala Ramratan Gupta was its Joint Secretary while simultaneously being the Vice President of City Congress Committee. These two were made to resign from their positions in Hindu Sangh by their peers in Congress. 193 Incidentally, Hindu Sangh had appointed Lala Ramratan Gupta Convenor of the Volunteers and Finance sub-Committee. This Sangh had set the target of collecting Rs. 1,00,000 for relief work and owing to the resourcefulness of Gupta it managed to collect 15% of this target within a few days of its formation. 194

The resignation of the two prominent Congressmen from Hindu Sangh should have been a blow to the organizational capacity of this infant organisation. But the continued open support of Pandit Raghubar Dayal Bhatt and Lala Ram Ratan Gupta to Hindu communal propagandists perhaps softened the impact of this blow. Even after resigning from the Vice-President-ship of Hindu Sangh, Pandit Bhatt continued to address Hindu Sabha meetings 195 and to participate in

192 The Citizen, 7-3-1942, p. 1. The General Council of the Hindu Sangh had 100 members, its Executive Committee had 50 members and its Working Committee just 15. Ibid.
194 Ibid., 19-2-1939, p. 16.
195 This meeting was in protest against the restrictions of time imposed on Bharat Milap Procession and Pandit Bhatt addressed it at Arya Samaj Hall in the company of typical Hindu communalists like N.P. Nigam and Rajaram Sabir. The Pioneer, 9-11-1939, p. 4.
Committees of Hindu Sangh that protested against the imposition of Punitive Police Tax. Lala Ram Ratan Gupta was made Vice President of the Hindu Sangh in 1942 in the vacancy created by the death of Rai Bahadur Vikramajit Singh (1874-1942). The Hindu Sangh used Bihari Niwas, Gupta’s house, for its office for the first two years without paying any rent.

The four issues around which the Hindu Sangh tried to build up its support base after the riots in 1939 were to call over-zealous Muslim Leaguers the aggressors and to blame them for the riots, to propagate that the Congress Government had betrayed Hindus and it should abandon its ‘insensible Muslim mass contact programme’ while restoring afresh the respect for authority, to claim that the police and administration initially behaved like spectators during the riots and that the punitive tax on Hindus unjustly equated the victims and aggressors. Padampat Singhania, the President of the Hindu Sangh, wrote to

---

196 Hindu Sangh believed that Muslims were the aggressors in the riots and their victims, Hindus, were made to suffer more due to the Punitive Police Tax also. To protest against the imposition of Punitive Police Tax, Hindu Sangh made a Committee of 20 persons which apart from Pandit Bhatt included Padampat Singhania, Vikramajit Singh and Rameshwar Prasad Bagla. The Pioneer, 14-1-1940, p. 5.

197 The pamphlet Origin and Work of Hindu Sangh claimed that the Sangh owed its existence to Lala Ram Ratan Gupta who ‘has harnessed the Hindu sentiment to the chariot wheel of Kamla Tower.’ The Citizen, 7-3-1942, p. 1.

198 Lala Changamal, President of Kanpur Hindu Sabha said that the riots broke out owing to ‘the overzeal of Muslim Leaguers and lack of strict administrative measures in the beginning’. He also apologised for his inability ‘to be of any use to his compatriots during the riots due to his illness which lasted three months’. The Leader, 22-4-1939, p. 14.

199 Sir J.P. Srivastava praised Hindu Sangh for its excellent work after the riots in February 1939 and regretted that ‘the Hindu community was deserted by those it returned to power (meaning Congress)’. He said that the root causes of the riots were the ‘insensible Muslim mass contact programme of the Congress and the propaganda which subverted respect for authority’. The Pioneer, 11-3-1939, p. 4.

200 A deputation of Hindu Sangh led by Balkrishna Maheshwari and Bhudev Vidyaalnkar met the District Magistrate and told him that the Hindus had unnecessarily been hit by Punitive Police Tax when it was Khaksars who continued to move around with shovels despite prohibitory orders. The Leader, 6-9-1939, p. 6.
the Premier that Hindus were victims and yet they had been subjected to Punitive Police Tax. He argued that no crimes were committed in Hindu quarters (or they were of a very minor nature) whereas Hindu businessmen suffered losses as the bazaars were closed due to the riots. Padampat Singhania went on to say that Hindus were greater sufferers and yet they would be required to pay more Punitive Tax. Singhania, therefore, argued that the Premier should adjust the scheme of Punitive Police Tax so as to make it more equitable and just.\(^{201}\) The representation of Padampat Singhania, however, was obviously not true and Hindu businessmen were not always the victims of violence, sometimes, it was reported that they also incited it.\(^{202}\) It may be interesting to note that the Punitive Police Tax issue continued to hang fire till much later. It was reported in August 1940 that the Hindu Sangh proposed a *hartal* on this issue and the Muslim League joined it for this purpose.\(^{203}\) During the Hindu Mahasabha’s twenty-fourth session at Kanpur in December 1942, Lala Lakshmipat Singhania characterised collective fines as morally wrong and exhorted the Sabha to have the grievances of Hindus on this score redressed in some way.\(^{204}\)

\(^{201}\) *The Leader*, 10-9-1939, p. 6. Such sentiments were the stock argument of some educated Hindu communalists also. For instance, one Sheo Prasad Saxena, Vakil, Talaq Mohal, reported that only 5% of the persons in his neighbourhood were Hindus. These Hindus, Saxena alleged, were attacked and injured in attacks from 11th to 13th February and on 3rd March, 1939. They had to flee leaving their property behind. Yet, Saxena complained, despite assurances to the contrary by the Prime Minister, Hindus have been subjected to Punitive Police Tax by the District Magistrate as if Hindus were responsible for rioting. *The Leader*, 6-9-1939, p. 7.

\(^{202}\) In a court, some witnesses identified prominent Hindu shopkeepers, like Changamal, President of Hindu Sabha in Kanpur, Ramnath, Seth Jiwan Ram and Gauri Ganesh, as the attackers during the riots on February 11, 1939. These witnesses worked as shop attendants in a boot shop and a tin trunk dealers shop and happened to be Muslims. *The Leader*, 7-8-1939, p.5.

\(^{203}\) *The Pioneer*, 4-8-1940, p. 5.

\(^{204}\) Lala Lakshmipat Singhania was the Chairman of the Reception Committee of this session of Hindu Mahasabha. See Sobhag Mathur, *op. cit.*, p. 31.
In the 1940s the Hindu Sangh remained a pressure group that tried to influence colonial policy to benefit its sympathisers and supporters. Price controls during the World War were thought necessary to prevent speculation and to thereby remove the grievance of people about high prices of essential commodities. However, the Hindu Sangh complained to district authorities that common people (especially the poor and middle classes) were unable to get food grains (particularly wheat) due to shortages. On the other hand, the complaint went on, traders were unable to get food grains from anywhere and sell them at the Government prescribed prices due to price controls and their improper implementation.\textsuperscript{205} The implication of the complaint was that price controls should go. If accepted, this proposal might have obviously helped speculators/traders in grains and may have harmed the interests of consumers.

We have noticed that the Hindu Sangh remained a letter-head organisation but men of property continued to have high hopes of getting security from it. In 1947, the Hindu Sangh claimed to have spread a network of activists in Hindu minority areas where its volunteers were doing service and keeping a vigil.\textsuperscript{206} Yet, some 'servant of the beleaguered community' requested it to pay immediate attention to the problems of Hindus in Muslim majority areas. Ganga Prasad Gupta wanted the Hindu Sangh to open its branches in every circle and mohalla and endow them with men/material to provide total security to its

\textsuperscript{205} The Pioneer, 19-1-1943, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{206} Hindu Sangh volunteers were said to be on vigil on the railway station and were doing service in Mammanlal Street, Chandrasekhar ka Ahata, Mishri Bazar, Anwarganj, Karnailganj Hatia and Shiv Sahai Road as also other Hindu minority areas which were surrounded by Muslim localities. Vartman, 22-4-1947, p. 4.
residents; after establishing the branches, the Head Office of the Sangh should be in regular touch with them; and the Sangh should help those who have left their property, valuables, idols etc. to live in security elsewhere and also those who were being compelled to sell their property at throwaway prices.\textsuperscript{207}

It remains unclear if Hindu Sangh as a body had any affiliation to Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh.

\section*{D. The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (R.S.S.)}

It has been suggested that during the first two decades after its birth in 1925, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (R.S.S.) chose to keep away from publicity. The basic reason for this policy of voluntary anonymity, according to D.R. Goyal who had earlier worked in the R.S.S., was that its leaders were aware that they were 'diverting the nation's mind away from the path of anti-imperialist unity that Gandhi had charted.'\textsuperscript{208} Therefore, narratives about the public activities of this organisation, during the period of our study, are sketchy and tentative. The earliest reference to the R.S.S. in our sources was in April 1938. V.D. Savarkar (1883-1966) began his tour of U.P. from Kanpur on April 2, 1938. The first thing he did on arrival in Kanpur was to address R.S.S. workers in the morning.\textsuperscript{209} Eight years later, even the visit of the R.S.S. Supermo to Kanpur went largely unnoticed in the local press. Only the C.I.D. reported in mid-January 1946 that Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar (1906-1973), Sarsnghchalak of the R.S.S.,

\textsuperscript{207} Vartman, 9-5-1947, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{208} D.R. Goyal, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (Delhi, Radhakrishna Prakashan, 1979) (Second Edition: 2000), p. i.
\textsuperscript{209} The Hindu Outlook, 6-4-1938, p. 8.
addressed 1,000 students at Kanpur and he dilated on the ancient culture of Hindus.²¹⁰

The R.S.S. was also organising Hindus and it benefited by having a working relationship with the Hindu Mahasabha but this arrangement did not go beyond the 1930s. The R.S.S. used the Hindu Mahasabha to spread its wings in North India but organizationally, the two were not friendly to each other. Dr. Keshav Baliram Hedgewar (1889-1940) used to send the trained and disciplined cadre of the R.S.S. to various sessions of the Hindu Mahasabha to impress communal Hindu leaders. In 1932 at its Delhi session, the Hindu Mahasabha passed a resolution in which, besides commending the R.S.S., it asked for the urgent spread of this organization to the whole country. In the same year Bhai Parmanand invited Dr. Hedgewar for the Hindu Yuvak Parishad’s conference in Sindh and the Sarsanghchalak apparently made friends with prominent communal leaders in Punjab and Sindh during this visit. He used their zeal to promote the R.S.S. in their areas of influence.²¹¹ In 1936, Padma Raj Jain, General Secretary of Hindu Mahasabha helped Vasant Rao Oke to set up the general headquarters of R.S.S. at and encouraged him to start the first shakha in the central office of the Hindu Mahasabha in Delhi.²¹²

²¹⁰ PAI, 18-1-1946, p. 10.
²¹¹ Pralay Kanungo, RSS’s Tryst with Politics From Hedgewar to Sudershan (New Delhi, Mahohar, 2002), pp. 47-8.
²¹² Jain was a Marwari from Calcutta who was impressed by the ‘silent but highly important work’ R.S.S. was doing. He visited the Nagpur shakha in 1935 after attending the Hindu Mahasabha session at Pune earlier that year. Christophe Jaffrelot, The Hindu Nationalist Movement and Indian Politics 1925 to the 1990s (New Delhi, Penguin Books, 1999), p. 73.
Interestingly, even after all this help the Hindu Mahasabha was not able to win the gratitude of the R.S.S. Disappointed with the R.S.S. for not helping it in its campaign to emerge as a major political party, the Hindu Mahasabha established its own uniformed youth brigade called the Ram Sena in 1939. Yet, good will for the R.S.S. was not totally exhausted in this period and Savarkar asked the Hindu Mahasabha cadres to mourn the death of Hedgewar on June 30, 1940. However, the R.S.S. did not reciprocate the goodwill. It has been suggested by D.R. Goyal that Golwalkar was chosen by the founder of the R.S.S. to be his successor because Golwalkar was under no obligation to Savarkar, Moonje and Bhai Parmanand. Apparently, Hedgewar was 'sick of the pulls and pressures' put on him by Hindu Mahasabha leaders and he wanted his successor to keep the R.S.S. away from the 'endless bickering' between these leaders. By doing this, if not biting the hand which fed it, the R.S.S. was definitely kicking the ladder (meaning Hindu Mahasabha) which helped it to penetrate North India and which assisted it to spread its wings in Sindh, Punjab, Delhi and U.P.

Two reasons can be cited for the organisational distance the R.S.S. consciously kept from the Hindu Mahasabha. One reason was that it chose to avoid confrontation with colonial authorities and it remained focussed on its

---

213 Pralay Kanungo, op. cit., p. 48. Jaffrelot, however, believes that Hindu Mahasabha formed Ram Sena in 1940 because Golwalkar did not loan R.S.S. volunteers to keep order in Mahasabha sessions. The last time these volunteers performed these duties were at the Nagpur session of Hindu Mahasabha in 1938. Christophe Jaffrelot, op. cit., p. 74.
215 D.R. Goyal, op. cit., p. 79.
216 Pralay Kanungo, op. cit., p. 51.
divisive political agenda. Hindu Mahasabha, on the other hand, consisted of elements that had occasionally shown bravado against the Colonial rulers.

Dr. Keshav Baliram Hedgewar\textsuperscript{217} was the founder, Nagpur was the central headquarter and pracharks (or full-time officers who bind the Sangh) were sent from here for organizational expansion of the R.S.S. This organisation also formed a nucleus of pracharaks at three places in U.P., viz. Benaras Hindu University (where P.B. Dani was sent in 1928 and where M.S. Golwalkar became a Sangh member in 1931), Lucknow University (where Murlidhar Dattatraya Deoras alias Bhaurao Deoras was sent in 1937) and Sanatan Dharma College in Kanpur (where Umakant Apte alias Babasaheb Apte was sent in 1937).\textsuperscript{218}

The main factors for the spurt in R.S.S. membership were the lure of its paramilitary style and admiration by a pracharak-guru who offered means of self-improvement coupled with anti-Muslim attitudes and an anti-Congress disposition among some middle class Hindus.\textsuperscript{219} The R.S.S. grew mainly among the middle class, upper caste male youth in Kanpur. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya (1916-1968) was a student of Sanatan Dharma College then and he along with his classmate, Sunder Singh Bhandari – another leader who made his mark later in Bharatiya Jana Sangh, joined the R.S.S. at Kanpur in 1937.\textsuperscript{220} Atal Behari Vajpyee (1926-)

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{217} Rakesh Sinha, Dr. Keshav Baliram Hedgewar (New Delhi, Publications Division, 2003).
\item \textsuperscript{218} Christophe Jaffrelot, op. cit., pp. 65-68.
\item \textsuperscript{219} Ibid., pp. 68-72.
\item \textsuperscript{220} Sudhakar Raje (ed.), Pt. Deendayal Upadhyaya A Profile (New Delhi, Deendayal Upadhyaya Institute, 1972), p. 6.
\end{itemize}
joined the R.S.S. in 1939 at Gwalior; and he had completed the III OTC course in 1944 before he came to Kanpur for his Masters degree in Political Science. Here, it is reported by his biographer, he remained so absorbed in the Sangh’s work that he even ignored ‘the great political activity which was generating heat on a mass scale in those days’ (obviously meaning the anti-colonial nationalist movement).\(^{221}\) A poem, entitled Parichay (or Introduction), written by Vajpayee then showed where his commitments lay. Imbued with not-so-subtle anti-Muslim rhetoric, the poem was reportedly praised by Guruji of the R.S.S. and was also received very well by its cadres who re-named it ‘Hindu tan-man, Hindu Jiwan’ (or Hindu body and soul, Hindu life).\(^{222}\)

In Kanpur, the R.S.S. remained an implant by outsiders till 1945. Babasaheb Apte from Maharashtra, as we have seen, planted the seed of the R.S.S., and it was nurtured by birds of passage like Deen Dayal Upadhyaya who was from Mathura, Sunder Singh Bhandari who was from Udaipur in Rajasthan and Atal Bihari Vajpayee who was from Gwalior. However, in 1945, a local

\(^{221}\) Chandrika Prasad Sharma, Poet Politician Atal Bihari Vajpayee A Biography (Translated from Hindi by Jai Ratan) (Delhi, Vikas Paperbacks, 1998), pp. 69-70 and 75.

\(^{222}\) Ibid., pp. 36-7. This long poem has been quite shoddily translated by the person authorised to do so by Vajpayee’s biographer but its gist is:

‘On gaining Independence, did I ever give a call to enslave the world?
I have always taught to enslave one’s own mind.
When did I ever perpetrate oppression?
Did I ever show proselytising zeal for Hinduism?
Carry out raids from house to house?
The mosques did I demolish in Kabul?
To win people’s heart, demolishing is not the proper way.
My body, my soul is saturated with Hinduism,
Every drop of blood in my veins testifies to my Hinduism.’
lawyer, Narendrajit Singh, joined R.S.S. as a Sanghchalak.\footnote{Narendrajit Singh became \textit{Sanghchalak} for the whole province in 1948 and remained \textit{Prant Sanghchalak} till his death in 1993. Christophe Jaffrelot, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 73. Narendrajit Singh (1911-1973) after doing B.Sc. from Allahabad University in 1930, went to London for his degree in law. He returned in 1937 and started practicing law at Kanpur. On Rai Bahadur Vikramajit Singh’s death in 1942, he inherited his father’s legal practice as also the management of educational institutions run by him. He fought the elections to the Municipal Board in 1943 and was helped in it by the R.S.S. volunteers. He was the chief guest in the Makar Sankranti function of the Dayanand Evening \textit{Shakha} on January 14, 1944 and this marked the beginning of his long relationship with the R.S.S. He was jailed after the assassination of Gandhi due to the ban on the R.S.S. Sushila, his wife, was popularly known as ‘Bhuji’ and she helped him in the establishment and management of educational institutions based on Hindutva philosophy. Two of his sons, Dhirendra and Virendra, served as wholetime \textit{pracharks} for three years before settling down in life. Guruji Golwalkar considered him a legal adviser and nominated him to the National Council of the R.S.S. Narendrajit Singh established Pt. Deendayal Upadhyaya School to spread Hindutva values through public school education and this school was inaugurated by Bhaurao Deoras in 1970. Singh was a specialist in Company Law and a Director of the British India Corporation. See ‘Mukt’, \textit{Beesavin Sadi ke Kanpur ke Prasidh Purush avam Mahilayein} (Kanpur, Kanpur Itihaas Samiti, 2004), pp. 126-130.} Narendrajit Singh belonged to an eminent family of Kanpur. His father Rai Bahadur Vikramajit Singh (1874-1942) was a lawyer with industrial interests, a pro-colonial public man who was Chairman of Improvement Trust/ Municipal Board and a socially conservative Hindu Mahasabha leader who was also the head of Sanatan Dharma College’s Governing Body.\footnote{See Biographical Note on Rai Bahadur Vikramajit Singh in Chapter II, p. 71, footnote 80.} It was, as we have already seen, in this college that the R.S.S. first struck its roots in Kanpur.

The organisation expanded by leaps and bounds in Kanpur during the period of the rise of communal extremism and the escalation in communal rioting in 1946-1947.\footnote{There was a sevenfold increase in the membership of R.S.S. during the five years before Independence, viz. from 76,000 (in 1943) to 600,000 (in 1948). In 1948, out of the 6 lakh swayamsewaks, one-third (or 200,00) members were from U.P. alone and this was followed by Greater Punjab (including Himachal Pradesh and Delhi) and Madhya Pradesh which had 125,000 members each; Bombay Presidency with 60,000 swayamsewaks and Bihar with 50,000 members came thereafter. The density of R.S.S. in the East (with just 16,000 in the whole of Bengal, Assam and Orissa) and in the South (with just 31,000 out of which half were in Karnataka alone) was much less than in the North. Christophe Jaffrelot, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 75.} Even after this expansion, however, local opinion on R.S.S. was
quite negative. For instance, there was more apprehension than relief after the ban imposed on R.S.S. (on February 4, 1948) was lifted on July 11, 1949. In its editorial Vartman, which has been rightly considered to be having a largely Hindu audience as also 'latent leanings towards the Hindu Sabha', believed that the R.S.S. 'had no moral ideals, it practiced devious diplomacy.' The editor, therefore added, it 'should continue to be under watch so as to prevent it from becoming a danger to the country again.\textsuperscript{227}

Riots were like a propaganda campaign for strengthening communal organisations. The number of persons associated with the R.S.S. increased by more than four times after reports started coming about massive carnages in Bengal, especially Noakhali. Hence, while in May 1946, it was reported that 250 R.S.S. workers were being drilled with \textit{lathis} at Kanpur,\textsuperscript{228} and after the violence in Calcutta following the Muslim League’s Direct Action Day, this figure increased to 350 in September 1946.\textsuperscript{229} After the Hindu Sabha observed ‘Noakhali Day’ in the end of October 1946, R.S.S. volunteers increased even more sharply. It was reported that 1,500 R.S.S. volunteers demonstrated before an audience of 15,000 persons on November 3, 1946. Presiding over this function, the Raja of Jaunpur advocated a strong organisation for self-defence.\textsuperscript{230}

\textsuperscript{227}Vartman, 17-7-1949, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{228}PAI, 24-5-1946, p. 82.
\textsuperscript{229}Ibid., 13-9-1946, p. 142.
\textsuperscript{230}Ibid., 8-11-1946, p. 171.
Support from educated sections came more easily for the R.S.S. now. There was a proposal to ban the R.S.S. immediately after the Interim Government was formed but some persons among these educated sections reacted to these suggestions quite sharply. One correspondent claimed that the record of R.S.S. was very clean; that it taught the art of self-defence; and that it was cowardice to ban R.S.S. but allow Muslim organizations full freedom even when the latter openly preached communal hatred and rebellion against the Congress. Another correspondent said the R.S.S. was not a political institution but a physical training club of young boys. Hence, a ban on this organisation that was socially beneficial would hurt the feelings of the people.

Pre-Partition violence in Punjab provided the R.S.S. with an opportunity to grow under the garb of a service organisation. In April 1947, the R.S.S. formed the Hindu Sahayata Committee at Delhi to help persons displaced from West Punjab and to enrol their children in schools. A branch of this Committee was also formed in Kanpur in April 1947 itself. The Kanpur branch of Hindu Sahayat/Sahayta (Help/Relief) Committee made a collection of Rs. 4,648 for the victims of Punjab carnage of March 1947. Two things are interesting about this Committee and its promoters. At this stage, R.S.S. had very little hold over Arya Samaj institutions because neither the Arya Samaj Mandir(s) nor D.A.V. College

---

231 Letter signed by one P.N.C. The Leader, 19-9-1946, p. 4.
232 K.M. Chaudhari wrote this letter from Allahabad and he considered R.S.S. to be an ideal national organisation of the country. The Leader, 19-9-1946, p. 4.
233 The Committee in Delhi was headed by Hans Raj Gupta, a leading industrialist and Arya Samaji who became Sanghchalak of Delhi in 1947. See Christophe Jaffrelot, op. cit., pp. 73 & 76.
students/staff figure among the prominent donors to this Committee. And Tilak Nagar, which alone provided more than a quarter of the help received by the R.S.S. in April 1947, was once a centre of nationalist, not communal, mobilization in 1925.

Secondly, in June 1947 the Hindu Sahayak (or aid) Committee was renamed ‘Hindu Sahayata (or help) Committee’ which formed a formal executive committee after elections. It has been claimed that aggressive Hindutva found more followers in North India because one-fifth of its population consisted of upper castes and Hindutva assertion belonged ‘almost entirely to Brahmanical culture’ and this was the reason for ‘the inability of the R.S.S. and the Hindu

---

234 Vartman, 27-4-1947, p. 4. The amount was collected by this Committee in descending order was from Tilak Nagar/Arya Nagar - Rs. 1,299; Civil Lines - Rs. 634; Generalganj and Lohai - Rs. 572; Ghamni Mohalla - Rs. 511; Sisamau - Rs. 379; Sadar Bazar - Rs. 324; Ganesh Nagar and Dhankutti both gave Rs. 226 each; Gausala, Rail Bazar - Rs. 126; B.N.S.D. Hostel - Rs. 101; Kailash Mandir - Rs. 76; Lajpat Rai Park - Rs. 32; and Miscellaneous and others - Rs. 152. Ibid.

235 Tilak Nagar hosted Arya Swarajya (or self-rule) Conference in December 1925 and the Chairperson of its Reception Committee was Dr. Jawaharlal Rohtagi, a prominent Congress leader. Through its resolutions this Swarajya Conference decided to build an organisation of young committed volunteers for national and human development and to remove untouchability there was a ‘sehghog’ (or joint feast) at which Khadwa’s ruler Rao Gopal Singh was also present. Pratap, 4-1-1926, p. 19.

236 Vartman, 8-6-1947, p. 4. Considerable confusion remained about the name of this Committee because when the President of the Committee issued an appeal for help to displaced persons of Punjab, it was again in the name of the old ‘Hindu Sahayak Committee.’ The appeal was entitled: “Hindus! Open your Eyes.” In seeking help, it said: ‘A pitiable condition has arisen after the riots. Many Hindus are victims. The wealthy have turned poor, the strong have become strengthless, the the poor have turned beggars. Thousands of refugees have come from Punjab and N.W.F.P. Thousands of women have been widowed, sons orphaned, and mother without help are hungering around for food and clothing. These are heart-rending scenes and tears flow from our eyes at this situation. So, Hindus in Kanpur have formed Hindu Sahayak Committee. The purpose of this Committee is to help Hindus in distress.’

‘Is it not a shame that thousands of our Hindu brethren have to loose their lives without food or clothing despite the presence of crores of us? Brothers organise and rise above sectarianism. We hope Hindus all over the country will encourage us by helping the Hindu Sahayak Committee.’ Vartman, 9-6-1947, p. 2.
Mahasabha to attract mass support.\textsuperscript{237} To the contrary, we find that the Committee created in Kanpur by R.S.S. to help Punjabis in distress was clearly dominated by the mercantile community (Marwaris and Khattris) with just a sprinkling of Brahmans.\textsuperscript{238} The R.S.S. seemed to be consciously breaking out of its Brahmanical image and reaching out to the third Varna, viz. Vaishyas and Khattris, of the Hindu caste hierarchy during this period.

The notable expansion of the R.S.S. was, however, stymied by an impression among large sections of the people that this organisation was linked, indirectly if not directly, with the conspiracy to kill Mahatma Gandhi. In 1948, after the assassination of Gandhi, there was extensive dismay with and anger against the R.S.S. Several individuals severed their ties with Hindu communal organisations.\textsuperscript{239} Some even decided to change their names because they were the same as that of the assassin of Gandhi.\textsuperscript{240}

\textsuperscript{237} Christophe Jaffrelot, op. cit., pp. 75 & 78.
\textsuperscript{238} The Hindu Sahayak Committee had its headquarters in the home of Narendrajit Singh, the Sanghchalak of R.S.S. in Kanpur who was a Khatri by caste. \textit{Vartman}, 5-4-1947, p. 4. This Committee was renamed Hindu Sahayata Committee in the beginning of June, probably to have the same nomenclature as the R.S.S. sponsored Hindu Sahayata Committee of Delhi. \textit{Vartman}, 3-6-1947, p. 4. The President of Hindu Sahayata Committee was a Marwari, Lala Ramswarup Bharatiya; all its Vice-President(s) except Babu Manohar Lal Jain, were either Marwaris or Khattris like Mannilal Newatia, Babu Dwarka Prasad Singh (a Khatri who was also the current Chairman of the Municipal Board); and Lala Gopikrishan Jaipuria; its General Secretary was a Khatri, Babu Kishorechandra Kapoor and Joint General Secretary was a Brahmin, Pandit Babulal Mishra; its Secretaries were Babu Mohanlal Arora, Sardar H.S. Birdi and Pandit Mathura Prasad Vajpayi; and its Treasure was Lala Mannilal Gupta. \textit{Vartman}, 8-6-1947, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{239} Moolnarian Khanna announced his resignation from the Hindu Sabha and declared that he would not join any communal organisation for all his life. \textit{Vartman}, 15-2-1948, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{240} Nathu Ram Shukla of Civil Lines said that he had changed his name to Mohan Ram Shukla because he did not want to share his name with Gandhi's killer, Nathu Ram Godse. \textit{Vartman}, 9-2-1948, p. 4.
The Government banned the R.S.S. but among the public too there was a widespread disapproval of its work and members. In keeping with the organisation's policy, the local Pracharak of R.S.S. disclaimed any truck with Gandhi's assassin and declared that to mourn Gandhi's death the Sangh would defer all programmes till the tehravi (or the thirteenth day of mourning after death) of the Mahatma. Not even his own cadres believed him. Some Sangh members, who were 'really sad' on Gandhi's assassination, held a meeting where they decided to appeal to the R.S.S. workers to leave the organisation.

The reaction of students against the R.S.S. was the sharpest. Hostellers in D.A.V College, the institution whose tradition bound it with 'Hindu assertion' and where Atal Behari Vajpayee studied, were the first to take action against the R.S.S. members. The Hostellers of D.A.V. College asked the R.S.S. members to either leave this organization or the hostel. A week after Gandhi's assassination students of several schools and colleges took out a procession in which they carried the bier of Communalism through the city and burnt it before their meeting at Parade - the main public meeting ground in Kanpur. Two donkeys wearing black caps led this procession and the photo of the R.S.S. 'Guruji' (namely M.S. Golwalkar) was pasted on their head.

---

241 Vartman, 6-2-1948, p. 2.
242 Ibid., 26-2-1948, p. 4.
243 Even before the ban was imposed on R.S.S. three of its members, who happened to be students, were sentenced to jail on some charge. Ironically, they were released from jail just after Gandhi's assassination. When they returned to the College after their release, fellow hostellers asked them to leave either the hostel or the R.S.S. This led to a brawl, which could only be controlled after the City Magistrate whisked the three R.S.S. students away from the College and they were advised to live elsewhere. Vartman, 6-2-1948, p. 4.
244 Vartman, 9-2-1948, p. 4.
After the ban was imposed on the R.S.S., two things were revealed about this organisation during the raids conducted on the offices and personnel of the R.S.S. Firstly, the R.S.S. had a tremendous capacity to go underground.⁴⁴⁵ We have noted that prior to the ban on it, the R.S.S. drilled 1,500 members and that 1,000 members of this organisation attended the meeting to celebrate the lifting of the ban on it in Kanpur. But immediately after the ban on the R.S.S. as the police swooped down on it less than 100 members were actually arrested and in fact the number of raids by the police were usually higher than the number of R.S.S. members caught by it.⁴⁴⁶ This led some news reporters to allege that Congressmen were settling personal scores by reporting the innocent to the police and hence, the police was not very successful in their raids.⁴⁴⁷ The fact, however, was that the Congressmen opposed to the R.S.S. (like Hamid Khan, Secretary of City Congress Committee and Hari Shankar Vidyarthi, Editor of Pratap) received anonymous letters threatening to kill them.⁴⁴⁸ The letters were traced down to Baba Kamta Prasad of Gorakhpur who was popularly called the ‘R.S.S. Baba’ and could be arrested only a month after his reported misdeed of

---

⁴⁴⁵ Though not at Kanpur then, Atal Bihari Vajpayee is reported to have himself gone underground and he started working as a scribe at Allahabad after the Bharat Press of R.S.S. was locked in Lucknow. Chandrika Prasad Sharma, op. cit., p. 88.

⁴⁴⁶ On February 5, 1948 the police raided 55 places but was able to arrest 35 people only. Vartman, 7-2-1948, p. 4.
On February 6, 1948 the police raided 28 places and was able to catch the organiser of R.S.S. Rajnikant M.A. and the treasurer of its Sisamau branch Raghubar Dayal Sharma as also another member Pandit Shivprasad Agnihotri of Baldari Mohalla. Proving the allegation that lower level Government servants also had R.S.S. proclivities, the police arrested Amarnath, Inspector of Industries Department and Babu Rameshwar Dayal Gupta Supervisor in the Telephone Department. Vartman, 8-2-1948, p. 4.
On February 7, 1948 the police raided 20 places and was able to arrest 11 R.S.S. workers only. Vartman, 9-2-1948, p. 4.

⁴⁴⁷ Vartman, 9-2-1948, p. 4.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid., 7-2-1948, p. 3.
authoring the anonymous letters threatening to kill Congressmen and posting them secretly.\textsuperscript{249}

The second thing revealed during the ban on R.S.S. was that it commanded a sizable backing of moneyed people at Kanpur and that the Kanpur branch of R.S.S. was funding activities of the organisation at places like Gwalior. On the suggestion of some press reporters, police searched a pond where, apart from several pictures of Golwalkar, the R.S.S. activists had dumped receipts worth Rs. 35,000.\textsuperscript{250} During its raids, the police stumbled upon evidence that the R.S.S. had sent some money to Gwalior.\textsuperscript{251} The treasurer of Sisamau branch of the R.S.S., Raghubar Dayal Sharma, admitted during investigations that he had sent Rs. 6,000 to Gwalior as \textit{Gurudakshina} (or gift to the guru). This led a news scribe to enviously remark 'R.S.S. has rich patrons'.\textsuperscript{252}

During the period of the ban on the R.S.S. (from February 4, 1948 to July 11, 1949), the C.I.D. reported that to avoid public objection to their activities, the R.S.S. workers were thinking of working with the Congress in Kanpur.\textsuperscript{253} At a private meeting on September 17, 1948, the R.S.S. workers in Kanpur wanted the Government to shower legitimacy on it by giving a seat in the Legislative Assembly to one of them and also to supply arms to Sangh members.\textsuperscript{254}

\textsuperscript{249} Ibid., 12-3-1948, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{250} Ibid., 10-2-1948, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{251} Ibid., 8-2-1948, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{252} Ibid., 9-2-1948, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{253} PAJ, 20-8-1948, p. 145. The report also observed that they would work separately no sooner their party was declared lawful. Ibid.
\textsuperscript{254} PAJ, 17-9-1948, p. 165.
Support for the R.S.S. was combined with fierce opposition to it in Kanpur. The ban enforced on the R.S.S. following Gandhi's murder was lifted on July 11, 1949. To rejoice the release of Bhaurao Deoras, the R.S.S. organised a meeting on July 14, 1949 in Kanpur. 500 persons attended it. But the meeting ended in a bedlam because some students gathered there and shouted anti-Fascist slogans and Sangh activists clashed with them. Some people sustained minor injuries in the brickbating that followed the altercation.  

Conclusion
The Hindu Sangathanist Committee and the Hindu Sangh were local communal organisations in Kanpur but the Hindu Mahasabha was the main political outfit of Hindu communalism in the period of our study. A.K. Mishra, a scholar quite sympathetic to the Hindu Mahasabha, accepts that this party failed to win mass support. He has blamed the diversity in Hindu religious beliefs for having prevented unity among Hindus and has argued that Gandhi's constructive programmes made it easier for Hindus to believe in the Congress instead of the Hindu Mahasabha. Scholars, like Mishra, say that the main reason for the failure of the Hindu Sabha to win mass support was that Hindus were divided along lines of caste, Varna, religious beliefs (like Arya Samaji, Sanatan Dharma, Jain and Buddhist), etc. The Sanatan Dharma Hindus then were further divided by the Gods they worshiped, viz. Vishnu or Shiva. Secondly, Mishra believes that Hindus liked Gandhiji's leadership and Congress's secularism more than Savarkar's slogan to 'Hinduize politics' and to 'Militarize Hindus'. Mishra regrets

\[255\text{Ibid., 15-7-1949, p. 123.}]\]
that though the Hindu Mahasabha could consolidate itself into an impressive political party under Savarkar, it lost out to Congress in popularity because Congress reached 85% of India's rural population through Khadi and village industries.\textsuperscript{256}

We observed during the course of this chapter that Hindu communalists in general, and the Hindu Mahasabha ites in particular, failed to win the confidence of not just rural but even of the urban people. Hindu communal organisations grew rapidly in the 1920s basically because several nationalist leaders and left radicals brought to it their legitimacy by becoming members of the Hindu Sabha. In the 1930s, the Hindu Sabha shrank in size and significance in Kanpur due to two developments. After the riots of 1931, several Congress leaders openly regretted their decision to be active in Hindu Sabha and left it for good. Whatever support of nationalists to Hindu Sabha remained was also withdrawn after the Congress put a ban in 1938 on members of the Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League from holding any office in the Congress organisation. Salil Misra has, therefore, shown how Hindu communalists were barely 'struggling to

\textsuperscript{256} Anil Kumar Mishra, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 150.
\textsuperscript{256} \textit{PAI}, 18-4-1925, pa. 121, p. 162.
\textsuperscript{256} \textit{Ibid.}, 8-3-1930, pa. 168, p. 164.
\textsuperscript{256} Anil Kumar Mishra, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 295-6. Besides these reasons for the inability of Hindu Sabha to win mass support, these scholars also mention the following as the main factors for the failure of Hindu Mahasabha: the difference of opinion on policy among Hindu Mahasabha leaders; the rejection of ideas like 'One Nation One Religion' by both the Congress and even by the people; the inability of Mahasabha to reach rural areas; indifference of a majority of Hindus to Shuddhi and Sanghathan; depletion in the number of Hindus because some 'Hindus' like Sikhs, Buddhists and even untouchables refused to be counted among Hindus; belief of Hindus in secularism; lack of 'Hindu nationalism' among Hindus due to casteism, regionalism etc.; and erosion of whatever credibility and legitimacy the Mahasabha had after the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi. \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 296-302.
survive' in U.P. during the late 1930s. There was a proliferation of Hindu communal organisations in Kanpur in the 1940s as the Hindu Sangh and the R.S.S. joined the existing Hindu Sabha in this decade. These organisations tried to counteract the Muslim League's slogan of Pakistan but they did so from a blatantly communal plank as we have shown (in a section A above). Hindu communal organisations ridiculed the idea of Pakistan and called Muslims names, which gave further grist to the rumour mills of the Muslim League that Islam was in danger and that Muslims would become second-class citizens in Independent India. In this way, instead of exorcising the ghost of Pakistan, Hindu communal organisations inflamed the issue. At the same time, they failed to gain many adherents.

Hindu communalists failed to establish themselves as a credible organisation, it has been argued, due to its skewed social base. For instance, the Hindu Mahasabha wanted to grow into an organisation with a mass following but its programme was reviverist and sectarian. Its appeal was limited to the upper and middle classes. In the South and in Bengal, Hindu Mahasabha mostly represented the upper castes.

Kanpur was a centre of national politics and by failing to participate in it, Hindu communalists lost the opportunity of making a favorable impression on the minds of common Hindus about their sincerity and seriousness for

Independence. No matter what the cause, the Hindu communalists were always afraid of confrontational politics. Hence, while the nationalists were making sacrifices, Hindu communalists kept looking for excuses for collaborating with colonialists. We find that during the Civil Disobedience movement 1,149 persons were arrested and imprisoned in Kanpur for different periods. This figure is high considering the fact that Kanpur was just one out of U.P.’s 48 districts in this period. In the whole of U.P., up to March 1934, the total number of arrests during the Civil Disobedience movement was 15,230 and this makes the share of Kanpur to be one-thirteenth of the total. Some socialists, however, claimed that 5,000 persons from Kanpur had been to jail from the beginning of the national movement up to 1935. In 1940-41, during Individual Satyagraha, 1,799 persons courted arrested and were sentenced for various terms whereas during the Quit India movement in 1942 the police jailed 526 persons. Recently, in what has been a major revision of Gandhi’s position in the Freedom movement from a Leftist perspective, Irfan Habib has argued that conviction for political activities in the colonial period did not just mean incarceration for a said duration of time. But conviction also meant loosing one’s property, and it resulted in damage to prospects for a secure employment. It could, therefore, be understood as to why communalists did not join nationalist activities with any fervour. Both Hindu and Muslim communalists fought, among other things, for

260 Home Political, NAI, File No. 377/1934. Home Political, NAI.
261 PAI, 11-1-1936, pa. 2, pp. 4-5.
262 Kailash Narain Pande, op. cit., p. 49.
263 Irfan Habib, “Gandhi and the National Movement,” Social Scientist, 23 (No.(s) 4-6), April-June, 1995, p. 11.
improving their own job prospects. Hence, while remembering the sacrifices of the approximately 3,500 “freedom fighters” of Kanpur with “reverence”, it can be understood why Hindu communalists remained peripheral to politics in Kanpur.

The Hindu Sabha failed to get volunteers to make sacrifices but it could not even garner votes in elections. The Congress beat it roundly on this score also. There were clearly two opinions about the relationship the Hindu Mahasabha had with the Congress in the 1940s. There was a section of the Hindu Mahasabha ideologues who believed that the Congress should be opposed because it ‘appeased’ the Muslim League and espoused social radicalism. The other opinion was in favour of a more sympathetic attitude to the Congress and desired a tie-up with the nationalist organisation. The opponents of the Congress in the Hindu Mahasabha accused Congress of ‘waiting with hands on its knees’ for the Muslim League and its dictator Jinnah to make demands, which it would then happily concede. These opponents quoted Dr. B.R. Ambedkar to say that the Congress policy of appeasement towards the Muslim League would land ‘Hindus in the same fearful situation in which Allies found themselves after trying to appease Hitler.’ The other opinion among Hindu communalists was that they counted for little in politics as late as 1945. Hence, a

264 The article arguing this was published just before the elections in 1945. The author who belonged to Tikra said that Dr. Ambedkar was not a Hindu Mahasabha-ite and added sarcastically that Ambedkar had only as much love for Hindu Mahasabha as Jinnah had for Congress. He then quoted Ambedkar to say, "The Congress has failed to realize that the policy of concession has increased Muslim aggressiveness, and what is more, Muslims interpret these concessions as a sign of defeatism on the part of Hindus and the absence of the will to resist. The policy of appeasement will involve the Hindus in the same fearful situation in which allies found themselves as a result of the policy of appeasement which they adopted towards Hitler." See Suresh Prakash Singh, "Why Mahasabha is Fighting Congress?" The Pioneer, 27-11-1945, p. 5.
few days before the election in November 1945, Pandit Bhudev Vidyalankar, Secretary, Hindu Sangh, and Pandit Rajendramani Shastri of Hindu Mahasabha asked their candidate, Ram Mohan Lal, to withdraw from the contest against Balkrishna Sharma, the Congress candidate for Cities of UP for the Legislative Assembly of India.\textsuperscript{265} The gentleman did not oblige and was reportedly able to secure less than two-dozen of the votes of his constituency from Kanpur.\textsuperscript{266}

\textsuperscript{265} Vartman, 23-11-1945, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{266} Ibid., 29-11-1945, p. 6. Out of the 22 polling stations in Kanpur, Ram Mohan Lal of Hindu Mahasabha got votes in just two. He secured 1 vote from Patkapur and 21 from Karnailganj. Ibid. In their handbook on elections, scholars claim that there were two candidates only for the Non-Muslim Urban seat for the cities of UP for the Legislative Assembly of India. The total number of voters in this constituency was 41,707 and 42.85\% (or 17,873) out of these voted in November 1945. And Ram Mohan Lal Agarwal, the Hindu Masabha candidate secured 75 votes only out of the total votes polled in all the cities of UP. See P.D. Reeves, B.D. Graham and J.M. Goodman, A Handbook of Elections in Uttar Pradesh 1920-1951 (Delhi, Manohar, 1975), p. 52.