Chapter II

Building a Secular Democracy

The Retreat of Cultural Nationalism

Introduction:

The advent of secular nationalism in post-Independence India, inaugurated by the adoption of a Constitution embodying a commitment to the preservation of India's cultural diversity, also saw the unfolding of a national agenda that prioritised issues of governance and economic development. Thus the paradigm shift enabled by the post-Independence circumstances automatically rendered particular issues such as the orientation of nationhood less compelling as subjects for contemplation in the public discourse. As noted in the preceding chapter, the stark horror of Partition and its high costs, visible in the division of families and the sharp escalation of inter-communal bitterness and violence, was a lesson internalised by the leaders of the new nation. Adding to this was the assassination of Gandhi, a beloved icon of the freedom movement, by a Hindu nationalist, which caused a deep sense of public revulsion with the politics of cultural nationalism. This chapter highlights the political and ideological processes that went into the shaping of the enduring secular national identity that withstood the various pulls and pressures, including that of cultural nationalism, through the decades.
While the Constituent Assembly proceedings, gently nudged forward by leaders like Nehru set the tone for the new democratic framework, the sense of a great democratic experiment with all the necessary safeguards for the freedom of the citizens of the Indian republic was shared by the leaders and the public alike. Thus the changed context after Independence forced the Hindu cultural nationalists to devise new political responses. It is argued here that with the hopes of a new democracy offering fundamental civic freedoms, promising to tackle the enormous challenge of poverty and sharp socioeconomic deprivation in all earnest, the ability of the Hindu nationalists to retain a meaningful presence in the public discourse was seriously compromised.

Therefore, a major decision taken by the Hindu nationalists, in this new context of rapidly declining relevance, was to make Pakistan and its alleged emotional appeal for Muslims, the central theme of the post-Independence discourse. Holding aloft the card that Pakistan stood as a perennial and potential homeland for Muslims of the subcontinent, Hindu nationalists sought to kindle xenophobic fears in the Hindu community about the loyalty of Muslims who had elected to be citizens of free India. The calculation was that by campaigning on the idea that inevitably, there would always be a dangerous nexus between Pakistan and Indian Muslims, they could create uncertainty and apprehension about the stability and cohesiveness of the new national framework. As highlighted also in earlier research, considerable psychological pressure was piled on Indian Muslims to force them to accept second-class status in the new scheme of things. The arguments that were advanced by the Hindu nationalists in an attempt to retain a corner in the public discourse, which of course

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1 Gyanendra Pandey in his essay, "Can A Muslim Be an Indian?", op.cit., notes that after Partition and Independence, "...Muslims were now the minority, as of course were Sikhs, Anglo-Indians, Indian Christians, Parsis and Jains...The Muslims were now the 'minority' even in districts, cities or towns, where they were a numerical majority: the latter term applied only in a descriptive sense. They were the minority that had fought for, or wanted, Pakistan, and they now had not only to choose where they belonged but also to demonstrate the sincerity of their choice: they had to prove that they were loyal to India and hence, worthy of Indian citizenship."
ultimately failed to make a dent in the fast emerging consensus on a secular national identity, are discussed in this chapter.

It is important at this stage of this thesis to situate the Hindu nationalist phenomenon in the wider context of the national culture that emerged after Independence. As is apparent from the various accounts of the early days of the post-Independence era, the overarching concern was the preservation of the new nation-state from the prospects of fragmentation or disintegration, with all divisive tendencies being viewed with suspicion. In this context, secularism was seen as part of a larger democratic project, one of its key elements, along with federalism, cultural autonomy of regions and linguistic pluralism. Before embarking on a scrutiny of the discourse of the Hindu nationalists who were fighting a rearguard battle in an India piloted by leaders such as Nehru, determined to put the new nation in the vanguard of modern democratic nation-states, the salient points in the efforts to entrench a new national culture, secular and pluralist, with a strong focus on economic development, are highlighted.

The Secular Nationalist Vision

The Congress, as the leading element in the freedom struggle had recognised early on that the prospective Indian nation would have to be democratic and pluralist in its outlook, placing emphasis on citizenship rather than any other identity. As is known, Mohandas Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru had no doubt in their minds that the way forward was to eschew cultural nationalist yearnings so that common ground could be built between the different communities in order to forge a united resistance to British rule. Gandhi, like Abul Kalam Azad, even saw potential in participation in the Khilafat agitation, recognising that by responding empathetically to the
dilemmas of the Muslim community, it would be possible to forge strong bonds between the communities in Indian society. Gandhi’s remarkable political strategies that captured the imagination of different communities and welded them into a mass anti-colonial movement, helped transcend inter-communal differences.

Jawaharlal Nehru made plain his understanding of the requirements of the situation, in which unity against colonial rule was the primary imperative. In his classic work, “The Discovery of India”, written from Ahmadnagar Fort jail in 1946, Nehru pointed out that “...It was obvious that even for purely political reasons the Congress was eager and anxious to bring about a communal solution and thus remove a barrier to progress. There was no such eagerness in the purely communal organisations, for their chief reason for existence was to emphasise the particular demands of their respective groups, and this has led to a certain vested interest in the status quo. Though predominantly Hindu in membership, the Congress had large numbers of Muslims on its rolls, as well as all other religious groups...It was thus forced to think in national terms. For it, the dominating issue was national freedom and the establishment of an independent democratic state. It realised that in a vast and varied country like India, a simple type of democracy, giving full powers to a majority to curb or overrule minority groups in all matters, was not satisfactory or desirable, even if

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2 Mushirul Hasan, Nationalism and Communal Politics, op.cit, observes that “The architect of Hindu-Muslim unity during the Khilafat and Non-Cooperation days was no other than Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi... ‘It is impossible’, he noted in Navajivan, ‘that one of the four limbs of the nation be wounded and the rest of the nation remains unconcerned. We cannot be called one nation, we cannot be a single body, if such a wound has no effect on us.” (pp127-129).

3 Thomas Blom Hansen, in his study, The Saffron Wave: Democracy And Hindu Nationalism in Modern India, (Princeton University Press,1999) suggests that ”Gandhi’s ability to represent and give body to the middle-class social fantasy of the masses as an ‘empty signifier’ of political innocence and religious purity did indeed create a large space for himself within the nationalist movement. To many, he became nothing less than a redeemer who made it possible to transcend the strategic deadlock of the national movement, to abstract from the everyday realities of localized political conflict and to play down internal differences in favour of the grander cause of independence.” (p.45)
it could be established."\textsuperscript{4} Nehru was mindful of the dangers that cultural nationalism posed to this vision of a united nation. As scholarly research has also noted, the discourse within the Congress came under intense pressure from the Hindu cultural nationalists.\textsuperscript{5}

However, with Nehru's leadership, the countervailing forces within the Congress managed to restore the balance whenever it tilted dangerously towards a softness to Hindu cultural nationalist yearnings or appeared to pander to Muslim separatism. One of those voices which had political credibility was that of Maulana Azad, who had stood up to the forces of cultural nationalism within his own community and was therefore well-placed to take on the cultural nationalist challenge to the Congress platform of composite nationalism. Azad's statement on April 15, 1946, on the demand for Pakistan indicated his strong commitment to a united Indian nation, which he recalled in his autobiography:

\begin{quote}
I have considered from every possible point of view the scheme of Pakistan as formulated by the Muslim League. As an Indian, I have examined its implications for the future of India as a whole. As a Muslim, I have examined its likely effects upon the fortunes of the Muslims of India.

\ldots it seems that the scheme of Pakistan is a symbol of defeatism and has been built up on the analogy of the Jewish demand for a national home. It is a confession that Indian Muslims cannot hold their own in India as a whole and would be content to withdraw to a corner specially reserved for them.

One can sympathise with the aspirations of the Jews for such a national home as they are scattered all over the world...The
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{4} Jawaharlal Nehru, \textit{The Discovery of India}, (First Published, Calcutta, 1946, Penguin 2004), p.422.
\textsuperscript{5} Hasan's study, op.cit, contains a detailed discussion of the contradictions in the Congress policy approach to communal groups which complicated the situation. On the one hand, there were arguments by Tilak, Lajpat Rai and Aurobindo Ghosh that the Hindu masses could be aroused only through the use of 'religious predispositions'. On the other hand was the 'serious drawback' in the Congress mobilisation campaign in its insistence on treating Muslims as a distinct religious community and a homogeneous political entity. By "allowing itself to be dictated by narrow regional and sectarian causes, the Congress created a space within which such concerns had to be accommodated even at the risk of destroying the democratic and secular structures it was striving to build." (pp. 22, 208, 103).
condition of Indian Muslims is quite otherwise. Over 90 million in number, they are in quantity and quality, a sufficiently important element in Indian life to influence decisively all questions of administration and policy...

In such a context, the demand for Pakistan loses all force. As a Muslim, I, for one am not prepared for a moment to give up my right to treat the whole of India as my domain and to share in the shaping of its political and economic life. To me, it seems a sure sign of cowardice to give up what is my patrimony and content myself with a mere fragment of it.⁶

The voices of Gandhi, Nehru and Azad ultimately prevailed in the Congress as the party found itself uncomfortably sucked into a political maelstrom with the Muslim League upping the ante at the one end and the Hindu Mahasabha at the other. Nehru's repeated expressions of a firm commitment to secular nationalism, a concomitant of his core belief in democracy as being the future of the Indian nation helped dissolve the ambivalence surrounding the Congress position on Indian nationhood. Speaking to the press in Bombay, on January 1, 1938, Nehru was categorical that: “...so far as the minorities question is concerned, it is the declared and well established policy of the Congress not only to do full justice to them but to go even beyond that in order to inspire confidence and goodwill in them. The Congress can conceive of no freedom for India which is not an equal freedom for all the religious communities which inhabit India and in which all do not share equally and have full opportunities of growth and development. So far as religious and cultural matters are concerned, it has given the fullest possible assurances and

declared that these should be incorporated in our fundamental rights in the constitution…”

The growing consensus in favour of civic nationalism was greatly helped by the fact of the sharp polarisation of the political debate by the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha, which made it increasingly clear to the public at large that the cause of national freedom was becoming imperilled by the intransigence of these cultural nationalist extremists. One powerful voice, convinced that the divide between the two extreme positions was unbridgeable, was B.R Ambedkar who made plain his distaste for the politics of V.D Savarkar and Mohammed Ali Jinnah. In his treatise on Pakistan or The Partition of India, written on the eve of Partition, while appearing to concede that Pakistan was an inevitability, Ambedkar also made clear that he for one, representing a large section of the Indian masses, the Dalits, would not acquiesce in making India a Hindu nation. In his tract he wrote:

It is beyond question that Pakistan is a scheme which will have to be taken into account....The British will insist upon some kind of settlement being reached between the Hindus and the Muslims before they consent to any devolution of political power. There is no use blaming the British for insisting upon such a settlement as a condition precedent to the transfer of power. The British cannot consent to settle power upon an aggressive Hindu majority and make it its heir, leaving it to deal with the minorities at its sweet pleasure. That would not be ending imperialism. It would be creating another imperialism. The Hindus, therefore cannot avoid coming to grips with Pakistan, much as they would like to do

...The Hindu Nationalist who hopes that Britain will coerce the Muslims into abandoning Pakistan forgets that the right of nationalism to freedom from an aggressive foreign imperialism and the right of a minority from an aggressive

majority’s nationalism are not two different things; nor does the former stand on a more sacred footing than the latter…

Ambedkar was quite clear in his mind that the Hindu nationalist extremists had the larger share of responsibility for the situation in which Pakistan had become an inevitability. He found it ironic that "strange as it may appear, Mr Savarkar and Mr Jinnah instead of being opposed to each other on the one nation versus two nations issue are in complete agreement about it. Both agree, not only agree but insist that there are two nations in India—one the Muslim nation and the other the Hindu nation. They differ only as regards the terms and conditions on which the two nations should live". Indicating that he was more critical of Savarkar's position, Ambedkar noted that he (Savarkar) would not "allow the Muslim nation to be co-equal in authority with the Hindu nation" and that he "wants the Hindu nation to be the dominant nation and the Muslim nation to be the servient nation." How was it that "after sowing this seed of enmity between the Hindu nation and the Muslim nation," Savarkar "should want that they should live under one constitution and occupy one country," was difficult to explain.

It was clear that while the Congress was taking the lead in this movement, other voices in the political arena, not of the Congress stream, were also speaking up in favour of the creation of a secular and civic nationhood. These non-Congress voices appeared to share the sense of the Congress party that at the very least, the new nation would have to be ensconced in a democratic framework that could insure it against disintegrative impulses of any kind. Thus at that point in time, cultural nationalism was seen as one such disintegrative force, and the focus was on the larger task of setting up a Western-style

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9 Ibid, pp. 142-143, 144.
democracy in a radically different socioeconomic environment, intended also to be exemplary in tenor and substance.

Building a Civic National Culture

Various studies of the making of the Indian Constitution have noted that there was very little quibble with the normative significance attributed to secularism and the protection of minority rights in the Constituent Assembly which had some 100 or more members representing different shades of political opinion. The proceedings of the Constituent Assembly make clear that Nehru's views on what ought to be the shape of the new structure were regarded as pivotal by those assembled in the Constitution Hall. On December 13, 1946, Nehru, who was moving the "Resolution re: Aims and Objects" of the new Constitution, appeared to sum up the essence of the obligation that was felt to acknowledge that independence was a legacy of a heterogeneous movement and that democracy was at the heart of that quest for freedom. "Governments are, in fact the expression of the will of the people. We have met here today because of the strength of the people behind us and we shall go as far as the people—not of any party or group but the people as a whole—shall wish us to go," Nehru said. Making clear that national unity was a prerequisite for the adoption of a constitution that could be acceptable to the masses of the Indian

10 Rochana Bajpai's paper "Minority Rights in the Indian Constituent Assembly Debates, 1946-1949" notes that "in nationalist opinion in the Constituent Assembly, individuals as well as groups were recognised as entities to which a liberal regime of rights and its underlying norms of equality would apply" which would reflect in the future Constitution "where cultural and educational rights of religious minorities are enshrined as justiciable fundamental rights in the forms of rights of individual members of minority communities as well as minority group rights." (Queen Elizabeth House Working Papers series No.30, first published December 1999, revised June 2002.<www2.qeh.ox.ac.uk/research/>

Another detailed discussion of the main trends of the deliberations of the framers of the Constitution on these issues can be found in James Chiriyankandath's paper "Creating a Secular State in a Religious Country: The Debate in the Indian Constituent Assembly", The Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics, Vol.38, No 2, July 2000.
people, Nehru asserted that "It is at the same time manifest that when a great country starts to advance, no party or group can stop it."\textsuperscript{11}

What also stands out is the sense, as defined primarily by Nehru but echoed by his party colleagues and others, that what was at work was the building of a modern democracy, that would fully strive to meet the aspirations--economic, political and social--of all its citizens. The Resolution on the objectives of the proposed Constitution reflected the mixture of idealism and anticipation that was invested in the new democratic enterprise. A particularly vivid token of the commitment to a broad range of democratic freedoms as embodied in the Resolution was the promise that there would be "guaranteed and secured to all the people of India, justice social, economic and political; equality of status, of opportunity, and before the law; freedom of thought, expression, belief, faith, worship, vocation, association and action, subject to law and public morality". That the leaders of the new nation wanted to ensure that the two perceived evils of caste and religious hatreds were kept at arm's length was clear from the commitment in the Resolution to provide "adequate safeguards for minorities, backward and tribal areas, and depressed and other backward classes."\textsuperscript{12} It was these clauses that were developed into the fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution.

There were several affirmative indicators that Nehru was not alone in his conviction that the new nation required a vibrant democratic structure that would privilege citizenship and ensure a basic set of freedoms for its people. The embodying of a vision of secular nationhood was clearly a priority for the members of the Constituent Assembly, cutting across party lines. As seen from the speeches of the various members, there was indeed an acute consciousness on their part that national independence was a result of the sacrifices of all the

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid, p.59.
communities in different parts of the country. Hence, barring a few voices, the sentiment in the Constituent Assembly while against giving the minorities separate political rights or separate electorates\textsuperscript{13} was demonstrably against majoritarianism. Even a member such as Purushottam Das Tandon, known for his sympathies to the Hindu nationalist ideology, was impelled to support Nehru in the Assembly when he was moving a Resolution containing the future fundamental rights for all citizens. Tandon expressed his support, stating “The history of our relations with the British show that Hindu-Muslim differences are purely a British creation…They were not in existence before their advent. Hindus and Muslims had a common civilisation and lived amicably…Congress has always tried to unite all the sections of the population to fight for the freedom of the country…To say that such and such sections be separated from the country on a religious basis is no religion but pure politics—politics which destroy the unity of a country…”\textsuperscript{14}

Interestingly, speakers even while inveighing against the idea of separate electorates and expressing apprehensions that this would lead to “permanent minorities”\textsuperscript{15}, repeatedly laid stress on the duty of the majority towards the minorities and also affirmed the need to protect minority rights. One member, Jerome D’Souza (Madras) cautioned the Assembly against the inclination to impose homogeneity and expressed apprehension at a suggestion by a member that minorities would have to be ‘absorbed’. Agreeing that “…there should be a certain degree of homogeneity and that there should be a common recognition

\textsuperscript{13} Bajpai, op.cit., notes that “nationalist opinion was hostile to such provisions at the outset”, fearing that these would impede the development of a common national identity.


\textsuperscript{15} Gobind Ballabh Pant (United Province), India’s future Home Minister, expressed the view then that “...In the new status that we have now secured, every citizen in this country should in my opinion be able to rise to the fullest stature and always have the opportunity of influencing the decisions effectively; so I believe separate electorates will be suicidal to the minorities and will do them tremendous harm. If they are isolated for ever, they can never convert themselves into a majority and the feeling of frustration will cripple them from the very beginning...Do the minorities always want to remain as minorities or do they ever expect to form an integral part of a great nation and as such to guide and control its destinies?”, August 27, 1947, CAD, Vol.V—14.8.1947-30.8.1947, p.223.
of common interests and rights and that the State and the nation should be
organised on the recognition of these common rights and interests”, D’Souza
raised the query—“But... ‘absorption’ in the sense of cultural or religious or any
other absorption is something against which it is necessary for us to guard and it
is, I am sure, not the wish of the majority communities nor the sober reflecting
opinion of this great House that they should impose anything on any minority
which would lead to such absorption.”16 D’Souza reminded the Assembly that
“Cultural autonomy, for which I am pleading and which has been promised as
far as it is not inconsistent with national strength, even though it may appear in
some sense as opposed to national unity, is still consistent with it...”17

Another important point which Ambedkar raised in the Assembly, in the
context of the deeply vitiated atmosphere between the two communities, was on
the rights of minorities in India. In response to suggestions from members such
as K.M Munshi and Mahavir Tyagi who argued that a particular clause under
discussion pertaining to the cultural and educational rights of the minorities in
India should be settled only after ascertaining what would be the rights for the
minorities in Pakistan after Partition, Ambedkar expressed his dismay at the
attempt to tie the issue of minority rights in India to the situation in Pakistan.
“...I confess that I am considerably surprised at these amendments—both by
Mr Munshi as well as Mr Tyagi. They have, I submit, given no reason why this
clause 18 should be referred back to the Committee. The only reason in support
of this proposal—one can sense—is that the rights of minorities should be
relative, that is to say, we must wait and see what rights the minorities are given
by the Pakistan Assembly before we determine the rights we want to give in the
Hindustan era. Now, Sir, with all due deference, I must deprecate any such idea.

Rights of minorities should be absolute rights. His sentiment was shared by others. Speaking before him, Seth Govind Das (C.P & Berar) referring to the proposed Clause 18, relating to the cultural and educational rights of minorities, said: "...I feel that it should be passed by us today. Whether there is one Hindustan or Pakistan, undivided or divided India—the phantom of this thought sticks to us and we look at all problems when they come up obsessed with that view...Without looking to what is going to happen to India in future, we should pass this resolution keeping in view as to what our duties are and what should be done in this Assembly."  

It was evident that the members of the Constituent Assembly, divided as they might have been in their opinions as regards the political situation and its handling by the leadership, nonetheless remained conscious of their historic responsibility to the nation. They were clearly mindful of the fact that they were representatives of a national movement in which people of different identities had participated and therefore had stakes in the construction of India's nationhood. Acknowledging this key point, M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar said on August 27, 1947, that "Let us not forget that we wanted to reinstate in our country the rule by our own people, whether Hindus or Muslims, wherever they were, in various parts of the country. They joined in a strenuous fight for the release of this country and for its independence...There is no doubt that differences between the Hindus and Muslims do exist. One prays to the East and the other towards the West. But there is also a common bond...There must be a common platform on which all could stand. I look forward to the day when humanity will be one, when all castes and creeds will disappear, when children are asked as to what religion they belonged, they may say, 'I do not belong to any religion but I am an Indian and do take pride in being one.'" His emotional

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19 Ibid, p.505.
remarks were greeted with cheers, indicating that the majority in the Constituent Assembly shared his perception.20

The Constituent Assembly as a whole appeared to recognise that they were engaged in a historic mission in their efforts to wrest a viable and enduring national structure from a gamut of social identities across different regions, bridging enormous socioeconomic disparities. It was also evident that led by Nehru, the members of the Assembly were aware that India's emergence as a free nation and its embarkation on the ambitious enterprise of setting up a democratic republic, was an event of great interest to the rest of the world. Nehru gave expression to this sentiment when he reminded the Assembly that as they prepared to make a Constitution, it was obvious that "what we are going to do in India, is going to have a powerful effect on the rest of the world" not just because a "new free independent nation comes out in the arena of the world" but because "India is such a country that by virtue not only of her large size and population, but of her enormous resources and her ability to exploit these resources" which meant that India could "immediately play an important and vital part in world affairs" Therefore, said Nehru, "it is right that the framers should always bear this larger international aspect in mind."21

The emphasis laid by the Constituent Assembly on the need to set up a democratic structure that would ensure basic freedoms for the citizen was not unique to the Indian situation but was a feature of all transitions from heterogeneous national liberation movements to nationhood. Theorists of nationalism and democracy have highlighted the intrinsic connections between nationalism, democracy and the fact that modern democracies by their inherent structure require a common identity to be emphasised and thereby place greater emphasis on the citizen above all other identities. In her study of nationalism,

Liah Greenfeld underscores the link between nationalism and democracy: "The location of sovereignty within the people and the recognition of the fundamental equality among its various strata which constitute the essence of the modern national idea are at the same time the basic tenets of democracy. Democracy was born with the sense of nationality. The two are inherently linked and neither can be fully understood apart from this connection..."²² Philosopher Charles Taylor also has observed that democracies "require a relatively strong commitment on the part of their citizens." Highlighting the essence of the civic national identity, Taylor explains that "in terms of identity, being citizens has to rate as an important component of who they are...the modern democratic state needs a healthy degree of what used to be called patriotism, a strong sense of identification with the polity and a willingness to give of oneself for its sake..."²³ He argues that this is why democratic states "try to inculcate patriotism and to create a strong sense of common identity even where it did not previously exist." Thus, according to him, "one thrust of modern democracy has been to try to shift the balance within the identity of the modern citizen, so that being a citizen will take precedence over a host of other poles of identity, such as family, class, gender, even (perhaps especially religion.)"²⁴

In the case of newly independent India, Nehru and his colleagues recognised that the construction of national identity would have to draw less from the past and more from the future expectations of the new state. Nehru's construction of national identity as well as his attempt to build a new public culture emphasising tolerance, pluralism and mutual coexistence sat well with the mass of Indian citizens recognising the imperative of a democratic

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²² Greenfeld, op.cit, p.10  
²⁴ Ibid.
framework for an expeditious resolution of major challenges on the economic and social fronts. Nehru acknowledged in an address to the Congress party in October 1951 that the biggest challenge facing the new state was the large scale mass deprivation and that "the next vital stage of our journey after political independence" was the fight against poverty and unemployment which could be achieved only by social and economic planning. The national ethos that Nehru and his colleagues sought to build with its premium on rapid economic development, which clearly required an integration of the national framework, with regions being bound together for the better dispersal of resources, required the outlawing of sectarian tendencies.

Cultural nationalism was now clearly perceived as communalism, according to the new terms of engagement in the new republican framework that was now firmly entrenched. Nehru's description of the dangers of communalism, in this regard, is worth quoting. "Communalism is a narrow and disrupting creed... There can be no progress in India if we put up communal barriers among ourselves. This is not merely a question of Hindu and Muslim but of other religious and sectarian and caste groups also. Once this dangerous tendency spreads, we do not know where it will end and any dreams that we may have of rapid progress in this country will have to be given up."  

He also made it clear that not only would internal progress be impeded but India would find it difficult to maintain its standing in the world if it succumbed to communalism. "Communalism bears a striking resemblance to the various forms of fascism that we have seen in other countries. It is in fact the Indian version of fascism. We know the evils that have flowed from fascism. In India we have known also the evils and disasters that have resulted from communal conflict... It is degrading and vulgarising; it plays upon the basest

\[25\] Jawaharlal Nehru, *Presidential Address, Indian National Congress, 57th Session*, New Delhi, October 18, 1951, (Nehru Memorial Museum and Library)  
\[26\] Ibid.
instincts of man. If India were to listen to this pernicious cry, then indeed India would not only have continuous trouble within her own borders but would be isolated from the rest of the world, which would look down upon her." Nehru also drew attention to the dangers of provincialism and in an implicit rebuff to Hindu cultural nationalism, rejected the demand that "one culture" be imposed on India, noting that India's basic cultural outlook had been "enriched in the distant past by numerous streams coming from the various parts of Asia and, in later years, from the western world." It was that "composite culture which is our proud heritage and which we have to preserve and develop." If "we try to deprive ourselves of something that has grown with us and is part of us, we grow the poorer for it and we start a process of disruption which is bad for us politically, culturally and in the domain of the spirit." 27

That Nehru's modernising vision for India had won the day was evident from the victory of the Congress party in the general elections of 1952, sweeping up 45 per cent of the vote, clearly outclassing all the contenders, including the Hindu Mahasabha which polled only 0.95 per cent of the vote and the recently formed Jana Sangh, a clear substitute for the now discredited Hindu Mahasabha got only 3.10 per cent of the vote. 28 There was little doubt that among the several serious challenges testing the political skills of the Nehru regime, particularly the growing demand for linguistic states, the overriding concern was to consolidate the sense of Indian nationalism that would transcend all other loyalties. The demand for a linguistic reorganisation of states troubled Nehru and while a massive reorganisation exercise did take place under the aegis of the States Reorganisation Commission, it was evident that Nehru felt the need to constantly highlight the danger of chauvinism of any kind, seeing it as a major obstacle to the development of a sense of national identity.

27 Ibid.
Nehru was himself passionately engaged in this endeavour of arousing the spirit of national loyalty to the idea of an integrated Indian Union as is evident from this account in *The Hindu* newspaper, of Nehru's exhortations at a massive public meeting in New Delhi, in August 1957, to commemorate the centenary of the 1857 uprising. Nehru made a ringing declaration that "the time has come when every Indian has to search his heart consciously and make up his mind determinedly about his first loyalty to India which must have precedence over every other loyalty--to family, community, caste, language, village and province". Nehru's declaration was greeted with "loud cheers". The newspaper report also records that Nehru who dwelt on the concept of loyalty to India for a considerable length of time "took the mass gathering completely unawares when he dramatically asked them to excuse him for putting them a question." Nehru then asked them whether their "first loyalty" was to India "or to a thousand other small petty parochial things". A "thunderous chorus of voices responded "India, India, India". 29 As this report showed, Nehru's mass mobilisation efforts continued to focus on building this sense of pan-Indian unity. It is to be noted that the challenge that Nehru had in his mind at that time was more the agitation for linguistic states rather than any perceived threat from the Hindu communal groups.

Meanwhile the Hindu cultural nationalists had been plunged into the political wilderness as a result of the assassination of Gandhi which had led to a ban on the RSS and the Hindu Mahasabha and a virtual eclipse of that worldview. Nevertheless Nehru appeared wary of underestimating the possibilities of a regrouping of these Hindu nationalists and a reentry into the public discourse. In a special letter, apart from his customary fortnightly ones, to the Chief Ministers, in March 1958, Nehru dwelt at length on the important point of ensuring that minority communities had full play in the democratic scheme.

"The real test about a minority community is not how we feel about it but how they feel. If they are not satisfied, then we have to search for some remedy to their malaise. In a democracy this is especially important. Democracy means rule by the majority but it means something more, that is full play and opportunity for the minorities. It means also that the minorities should have the sensation of having this full play and opportunity." Nehru also urged the Chief Ministers to "remember that a minority community is a trust for the majority and constant thought should be given to its needs and complaints." He also observed that "We have also, let us be frank about it, communalism not only in the minority but very much so in the majority. The chief difference is that in the majority it puts on the garb of nationalism and democracy. But that is a false democracy."30 In other words, Nehru was warning of the possible danger of majoritarianism, which was the obvious strategic choice of the Hindu nationalists, now on the margins of a polity ensconced in the framework of secular and civic democracy.

Pakistan, Focus of Hindu Nationalist Resistance

It now became imperative for the Hindu nationalist organisations, the RSS and the Hindu Mahasabha, whose political activity had been suspended in the wake of the ban imposed upon these groups after the Gandhi assassination, to return to the political arena by repackaging their campaign. They had to develop radically new strategies to confront the post-secular political realities, particularly the pervasive influence of the Nehruvian discourse. Since there was an unassailable consensus for a secular national identity, it became imperative to reopen the question of the place of Muslims in the Indian Union by raising the

bogey of the existence of Pakistan as a natural magnet for the affections of Muslims of the subcontinent. With the three postulates of Hindu cultural nationalism—prior antiquity, sacred geography and numerical preponderance—rendered obsolete overnight by the modernising tenor of the secular discourse, the only potential mobilisational tool left was the issue of Muslim national loyalty. Therefore in the post-secular context, it became inevitable that this issue of Muslim "untrustworthiness" would be the centrepiece of the Hindu nationalist campaign. As has been briefly touched upon in the first chapter, even before Independence, the Hindu nationalists led by Savarkar, Golwakar, Mookerjee and BS Moonje, had begun their campaign against the idea of Pakistan, raising the bogey of the Indian Muslim community's "pan-Islamic sympathies" and its susceptibility to softness towards Pakistan. When it was becoming clear that political developments were heading towards the creation of two separate states—India and Pakistan, the Hindu nationalists had stepped up their rhetoric against the Congress and Gandhi in particular for what they publicly alleged was betrayal of Hindu interests in the willingness to concede a separate state for Muslims. In a letter to Gandhi, in September 1945, BS Moonje, Hindu Mahasabha leader and co-founder of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, had asked angrily:

...Then contrary to your previous position wherein you have maintained that change of religion does not involve change of Nationality, you now hold that Mussalmans are a separate nation and they must have what they call Pakistan, their separate sovereign Homeland...

...This land of Hindusthan has been handed over to us as our estate from times immemorial more than seven thousand years ago, Shree Rama Chandraji says "This land, with its mountains, waters and forests belongs to the children of King Ikshvaku ...Not only that, but the right of controlling and punishing and showing favours to the animals, birds and the mankind inhabiting the land is also inherited in them."
Will it be a sign of manliness or a matter of pride for us if we were to hand over a part or the whole of it, without giving a fight to others who call themselves a separate Nation and do not belong to our religion, but on the other hand, want to submerge it and destroy it?  

As early as 1940, Savarkar had made the link between the Congress view of nationalism and what he called its role as a ‘handmaid of the Moslems’ in India.

...Under the leadership of its early leaders like Messrs Dadabhai Naoroji, Gokhale, Lala Lajpat Rai, Lokmanya Tilak and others, the Indian National Congress tried its best to sail clear of all rocks and shoals of any perversely Communal bias or shortsighted anti-National vagaries. But ever since the grievous error of foisting the Khilafat agitation on the Congress was committed, the Congress rapidly lost its National moorings and began even to pride itself on serving as a handmaid to the Moslems in India...

...And here I sound a grave warning to all Hindus, whether Congressite or not, that a number of Congress leaders of eminence are very likely to go a long way in acquiescing even in this nefarious demand of the Moslems to break up the unity and integrity of India and the Indian State,- if the Hindus do not repudiate in time the claim of the Congress to speak on behalf of Hindudom as a whole.

Consequently so long as the Congress persists in hugging to this perverse conception of ‘Nationalism’ which practically amounts to the betrayal of the Hindu cause, there cannot and should not be any cooperation between the Hindu Mahasabha and the Congress. On the contrary it will be the bounden duty of every Hindu who does not want to sell his birthright for a mess of pottage, to undermine the Congress and free Hindudom in general and the Hindu electorate in

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31 BS Moonje, letter to Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, Nasik, September 10, 1945, SP Mookerjee Papers, [Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NMML), New Delhi].

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particular from the grip of the so-called ‘Indian National’ Congress....

Even before Independence, it was the issue of Pakistan and the alleged softness of the Congress towards Muslim separatism that made Gandhi the principal target of the Hindu nationalists’ ire. In a press statement in September 1944, Savarkar, noting that “Mr Jinnah demands vivisection of India even more relentlessly than before,” and that “the Moslems are openly claiming that they have nothing to do with the so-called Indian Nation, that they are a different Nation by themselves and that they want to cut off as many provinces as possible, utilise them as a territorial base to rear up an anti-Hindu Moslem State”, went on to accuse Gandhi of being “ready to hand over, at any rate, our four frontier provinces which form the natural and invulnerable Himalayan border line of our Motherland to the Moslems for the above treacherous objective for the mere asking of it without firing a shot!”

In his statement during his trial for the murder of Gandhi, Nathuram Godse, the Mahatma’s assassin minced no words when he linked what he called was his “anger” to his perception of Gandhi’s role in the “appeasement of Muslims” and the creation of Pakistan. Godse charged that "thanks to three decades of leadership of this Mahatma...one-third of the country was lost to Pakistan." Gandhi, according to Godse had "founded his politics on the premise of Hindu-Muslim unity. To frustrate the British shifts and stratagems, he began to court the Muslims and made them promises which had the potential to harm the Hindus."
Listing what he called the “dire blunders that Gandhiji committed”, in which particular mention was made of Gandhi’s support for the Khilafat, his ‘acceptance’ of the separation of Sindh from Bombay, and his urging that Hindustani be made the national language, Godse said the “Muslims were rewarded with Pakistan for their anti-national activities” and what “destroyed” his peace of mind was that “the Gandhian leaders stigmatised as communal and traitorous those who had opposed the demand for Pakistan but themselves conceded Pakistan which was what Jinnah demanded.” His “anger might have been calmed if the Congress government had taken steps to protect the Hindus left in Pakistan... Leaving millions of Hindus in Pakistan at the tender mercies of the Muslims, the Gandhians kept up the chant that the Hindus should not leave Pakistan but stay behind. Thus the Hindus fell into the clutches of Muslims and fell prey to dire misfortunes...”35 Godse also confessed that “I felt compelled to raise my hand because Gandhiji was solely responsible for the dreadful events that accompanied the creation of Pakistan.”36

It must be noted that after Partition and Independence, the Hindu Mahasabha which had been in the foreground of the Hindu nationalist discourse during the freedom struggle because of their public debates with the Congress over the course of the movement against British rule, appeared to be losing ground to the more assertive Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). The studies of Jaffrelot and Pralay Kanungo have explained the historical circumstances for the RSS’ eclipsing of the HMS in the Partition-Independence period.37

35 Ibid, pp. 47-48
36 Ibid, P.47.
37 Jaffrelot, The Hindu Nationalist Movement, op.cit, notes that while the RSS founded in 1925 by KB Hedgewar, it had less interest in pursuing a political agenda than a social reform agenda vis-à-vis the Hindu community. The RSS initially “showed its divergence from the Hindu Mahasabha since it gave priority to the creation of a Hindu Rashtra as the necessary preliminary for a Hind Raj which could not be contemplated at this early stage... The general stand of the RSS was that the anti-colonial struggle took second place to a Hindu nationalist social reform...”, pp.73-74. Yet, in the late 1940s, “the fortunes of the RSS in the Hindi belt were undoubtedly linked to the circumstances of Partition. At that time, the organisation tended to function as a militia, for both offensive and defensive purposes: for example, swayamsevaks were involved in anti-Muslim riots in Delhi in September 1947”, p.75.
The details of the divergence between the positions of the HMS and the RSS in this period are not so relevant for this study which is concerned primarily with the discourse of Hindu nationalists as regards Indian nationhood but it is necessary to point out that in the post-Independence period, the RSS rather than the HMS, especially through the Sangh’s new weekly—Organiser—born on July 3, 1947, took the lead in shaping the propaganda response to Partition and the creation of a secular Indian nation-state. An editorial in the very first issue of the Organiser launched a broadside against the “appeasement” that had led to the wrestling of a separate homeland for Muslims. Lambasting the British for the decision to partition the country, the Organiser editorial titled ‘An Unwise Decision’, declared:

Since the beginning of history, Hindusthan has been the land of the Hindus. It has been known as such to the outside world also. That there are certain religious minorities within the country, it is true, but to accord them separate political rights which are in conflict with the main and larger interests of the nation as a whole is repugnant to the civilised notions of modern democratic practice...

...In India a novel practice was followed with intentions best known to its sponsors. Not only separate electorates were granted to the Muslims but concessions like separate schools for the education of their children were also given. In many other ways also the separatist tendencies of the community were encouraged and actively supported by the ruling power. It was thought this was only a temporary passing phase but for the last few years the Muslims were encouraged to demand a separate homeland for them. How can they have a separate homeland in a country in which they are as much strangers as the British or the Germans and on that ground

Pralay Kanungo notes in his study, RSS’s Tryst with Politics, From Hedgewar to Sudarshan, (Manohar, New Delhi, 2002) that “the increasing communal tension and demand for Pakistan helped its (RSS’s) expansion drive as more and more Hindus started believing that the RSS would be able to defend and counter the Muslim aggression,” p.54. Kanungo also points out that while both the HMS and the RSS shared the same ideology, “organisationally, however the RSS was independent of the Hindu Mahasabha” and “in fact the Hindu Mahasabha leadership was unhappy because the RSS refused to become a subsidiary of their organisation”, pp. 47-48.
how can they claim separate nationhood or a separate State?
The vast majority of the Muslims in this country are
descendants of those who have been converted forcibly or
otherwise, from Hinduism, and change of religion cannot be
a sufficient justification for the constitution of a separate
nation or a separate State... 38

The editorial writers and columnists of the Hindu nationalist press had
begun to sense that the ideological battle against secular nationalism would need
to primarily and intensely focus on the Congress party and discredit its concept
of a composite nationhood by portraying it as a sell out to the Muslim
community. A columnist, B. Bannerji, writing in Organiser that same July, a few
weeks before Independence, made an unconcealed attempt to stoke Hindu fears
by sketching a picture of a Hindu India likely to be encircled by threatening
Muslim States. The excerpts from this essay, set out below, indicate how the
birth of Pakistan was used in the Hindu cultural nationalist propaganda to infuse
fresh life into the flagging propaganda battle of Hindu cultural nationalism. One
can also see in the arguments contained in this particular piece, core elements of
the Hindu majoritarian discourse of later years. In his column titled ‘Hindus,
Organise’, the writer, Bannerji, offered his analysis of why the Congress had
“failed so disastrously”. He reasoned that:

...Its weakness has been that, though fed and maintained by
the Hindus, it has, in the pursuit of the chimera of composite
Indian Nationalism, persistently followed anti-Hindu policy
with a view to appease the Muslims. Each measure of
appeasement has strengthened the Muslims, and with this
added strength, they have demanded and received more.
Finally they have fulfilled the slogan “Lar Ke Lenge Pakistan—
Mar ke Lenge Pakistan”—“We shall take Pakistan by fighting,
by killing”

The Congress has been weak, in spite of its apparent mightiness because its policy has been based on false foundations. The Congress has never understood the real ambitions of Muslim India—to rule this ancient land by holding the Hindus under subjection. It has therefore consistently weakened the Hindus in every way, till at last it has yielded one-third of India to the Muslims even without so much as the show of a fight.

It is an amazing sight how this Hindu community has walked forward step by step towards complete national suicide...

Can it still be cured of the suicidal mania—now that there are going to be sovereign Muslim States on all sides of the portion of the territory that is still left to it? That is the question to which every patriot must address himself.39

The second line of attack in the resistance by Hindu nationalists to the emerging consensus in favour of a composite nationhood was as expected, directed at the Indian Muslim community, alleging a nexus with the new state of Pakistan, charging Muslims with being fifth columnists, and in effect, questioning their loyalty to the new Indian nation. The “fifth columnists” thesis was the key element of the Hindu nationalist platform and the Hindu nationalist ideologues invested heavily in this argument recognising its powerful polarising potential in a context in which the other side—the Congress—was determinedly trying to unify behind a composite nationhood. It was the “fifth columnist” stereotype of the Indian Muslim which became a staple of the Hindu nationalist discourse,40 surfacing as a core element of the majoritarian discourse several decades later.

40 The “fifth columnist” stereotype dominated not only Hindu Mahasabha/RSS characterisations of Indian Muslims but was immediately adopted by the Bharatiya Jana Sangh after its formation in 1951. One of its early resolutions protested that “a separate Muslim culture is being promoted and protected resulting in the continuance of the Two-nation theory... the increasing activities of Pakistan Fifth columnists are natural corollaries of that mentality.” (December 30, 1956, Delhi), Bharatiya Jana Sangh, Party Documents, 1951-1972, Vol.4., Resolutions on Internal Affairs, Bharatiya Jana Sangh Central Office, New Delhi.
Building the core thesis: ‘Indian Muslims-- Fifth Columnists’

Having lost the strenuously argued case that was made before Partition and Independence, as detailed in the earlier chapter of this study, that Hindus should be “masters in their own house”, to recall Mookerjee’s words, the next strategic move of the Hindu nationalists was to unsettle the growing consensus in favour of a composite and secular national ethos, by casting doubts about the loyalties of the Muslims who stayed behind after Partition, suggesting that there would be a perennial link between them and the ‘homeland’ created in Pakistan. The bloodshed and bitterness of Partition so poisoned the political atmosphere that overnight, attitudes to Muslims changed in India, as several scholars have pointed out. Gyanendra Pandey observes: “Few people now cared to differentiate carefully among the Muslims of India... The Muslims were now, more and more—in official documents, in journalism, and in common conversation—simply ‘Muslims’, and all of them were suspect as open or closet Pakistanis... The ‘Muslims’—that blanket, undifferentiated category—had been much too involved in the Muslim League demand for Pakistan; their sympathies were not likely to change overnight and their loyalties could not be counted upon.”

The RSS was quick to seize upon this point. The idea of Muslims as the "internal enemy" became an explicit part of the Hindu nationalist discourse. In an attack on the Congress party and on Muslims, Golwalkar declared that "it has been the tragic lesson of the history of many a country in the world that the

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41 Pandey, op.cit. The irony was, as Pandey has noted in a subsequent study, Routine Violence: Nations, Fragments, Histories (Permanent Black, New Delhi, 2006), that the "choice between India and Pakistan could have no clear meaning for Muslims living in what were called the Muslim-minority provinces" especially as they did not belong to the elite who possessed the resources and "the bureaucratic and political contacts, to move to and fro, at least for a time.” The less fortunate did not have "the luxury of such trial periods or the possibility of an appeal to Jawaharlal Nehru, yet moved one way and the other in search of security and peace,”(p.151).
hostile elements within the country pose a far greater menace to national security than aggressors from outside." Implicitly ridiculing the efforts of the Congress leadership to build national unity, he observed that "wishful thinking born out of lack of courage to face realities, mouthing of high-sounding slogans by the persons at the helm of affairs to cover up the tragedies overtaking us one after the other" combined with "opportunistic alliances of parties and groups with the hostile elements to further their own narrow self interests" had made the threat of "internal subversion of our national freedom and security very real." Explicitly pointing to the Muslim community, Golwalkar charged that it was the Muslims in Hindu-majority provinces, led by the United Provinces (later Uttar Pradesh) which had provided "the spearhead for the movement for Pakistan right from the beginning." Yet they had "remained solidly here after Partition." It would be "suicidal", he asserted, "to delude ourselves into believing that they have turned patriots overnight after the creation of Pakistan." On the contrary, "the Muslim menace has increased hundredfold by the creation of Pakistan which has become a springboard for all their future aggressive designs on our country." 

The atmosphere was so surcharged with communal bitterness that it provided space for the Hindu nationalists to reignite their campaign against Muslims, using some of the themes of the pre-Independence period, and also to challenge the very act of Partition itself. Hindu Mahasabha leader, S.P Mookerjee, writing in the first issue of the *Organiser* of July 3, 1947, immediately sought to rally Hindu sentiment against the new state of Pakistan and staked claim for a Hindu nation in India on the basis of Partition and the birth of an Islamic state in Pakistan. In his piece, "Hindus will never accept Partition";
Mookerjee outlined the contours of the new Hindu nationalist challenge. He argued:

...The question of the hour today is, will Hindus and other nationalist elements in India realise why they could not keep intact the political unity of India? If 30 crores of Hindus had remained united today, no power could have divided India and thrown nearly 20 millions of Hindus and Sikhs into an Islamic State which would be guided by barbaric and fanatical passions.

...What is the remedy? We have to organise that portion of India which is now outside Pakistan so that an organic homogeneous Hindu State may triumphantly flourish within this area.

Mookerjee also unveiled the second aspect of the Hindu nationalist attack—on Indian Muslims. “No citizen of this State,” he said ominously, “no matter what his religious beliefs may be, need be afraid of his rights and privileges so long as he does not play the role of a fifth columnist and identifies himself with the legitimate interests of the State.”

Another aspect of Mookerjee’s conceptual foray which has now become incorporated as a perennial feature of the Hindu nationalist-majoritarian approach to Pakistan, was the declaration of hostility to its existence. “...Our aim must be to re-annex Pakistan to India. I have no doubt this is bound to come whether by pressure of economic or political factors or for other reasons.”

It is noteworthy that the hostility to Pakistan remained the staple of the Hindu nationalist-majoritarian discourse well after Independence, fitting in with the other pieces of the Hindu majoritarian critique of Indian Muslims. Thus Golwalkar was able to seize upon

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45 Ibid.
46 Ibid.

Mookerjee continued to hold that Partition should be reversed. In his Presidential Address to the first Convention of the All India Bharatiya Jana Sangh, October 21, 1951, he described Partition as “a tragic folly”, serving no purpose and solving no problem, economic, political or communal. “We believe in the goal of a reunited Bharat,” he said. (The Jana Sangh Approach, Bharatiya Jana Sangh, New Delhi, November 1968.)
this as a propaganda point, even years later. "The separate state we conceded has become a permanent headache for us— a permanent peril. Our leaders say we are not against Pakistan or the people of Pakistan with whom our relations are cordial. But why should we shut our eyes to the fact that this state was born in, and thrives on hatred? It's a poison seed we have sown. It can only bear poison-fruit."47

While the Nehru-led Government was clear that India should seek to develop friendly relations with Pakistan, putting firmly behind all the painful baggage of the bloodshed and agony of Partition, the Hindu nationalist campaign decided to adopt a combative tone towards Pakistan and simultaneously put the Muslim community in India on the defensive by continuously placing the onus on it to prove its loyalty to the Indian state. The second aspect of the Hindu nationalist approach was to renew the claim that Hindus should have hegemony in post-Partition India. Thus the Hindu Mahasabha President, NB Khare, in his presidential address to the HMS in April 1951, set out an assertive Hindu majoritarian platform claiming that India would have to be a Hindu nation just as Pakistan had become an Islamic nation. Referring to the minorities in India, but meaning primarily Muslims, Khare declared:

…If these foreign faiths are assimilated in the all pervading Hindu Pantheon, their methods of worship and prayer would be exactly the same as at present, but they must observe certain unwritten Dharmic principles followed by all Hindus. They must call themselves Hindus. They must align themselves for better or for worse, as against all other outside groups in the whole world…they must abstain from cow-killing and beef-eating. And they must regard the ‘Ancient History of India’ as their own; and respect the heroes of Indian history although they may have been(sic) descended from people who may have fought against these heroes in the past. If this happens

47 MS Golwalkar, From Red Fort Grounds; English rendering of speech at public rally at Red Fort Grounds, Delhi, November 14, 1965. (NMML).
the whole of India will be knit together and form itself into a mighty Hindu Nation. And there will be no communal problem at all and this would pave the way for Akhand Bharat. In short, these faiths must not look for their culture to Arabia, Europe, Persia or Palestine, but must adopt Bharatiya culture, which in essence is not different from Hindu culture.

I believe it would not be disputed that the foregoing conditions are the minimum for the establishment of homogeneous Nationalism in the country. All those who are not prepared to be loyal to the country and fight for its glory and greatness and who do not want to live amicably, harmoniously and peacefully with the majority of its inhabitants have no right to live in that country. Such people should immediately leave this country and go to any other country which is dear to their heart...

...one can say without any fear of contradiction, that times are now favourable as never before to make concerted attempts for assimilating foreign elements in Hindu society and to achieve complete unity amongst sections of the population by a steady process of Nationalisation based on one homogeneous culture. 48

It is clear from the points made in Khare's presentation to the HMS that based on the fact of Pakistan's Islamic orientation, a fresh pitch was being made for a Hindu nation in India. But more significant was the laying out of a plank of Hindu majoritarianism, replete with the demands that (a) Hindu culture be made the national culture which all minorities would have to subscribe to and adopt to the extent of forswearing their own personal cultural habits (b) Minorities, read Muslims, would have to demonstrably prove their “loyalty” to Hindu India or else face the threat of expulsion. The intimidating rhetoric was in full flow, the intention clearly to revive the flagging agenda of Hindu cultural nationalism, using Pakistan as the *casus belli*.

48 NB Khare, Presidential Address, Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabha, Special Session, Jaipur, April 28, 1951, pp.9-11, (Published by the Secretary, Reception Committee, Hindu Mahasabha, Johari Bazaar, Jaipur)
Recognising that it was becoming increasingly difficult for the forces of Hindu nationalism to overcome the taint of the Gandhi assassination and make a re-entry into the post-secular context, Golwalkar and his colleagues decided to portray the Partition and the birth of Pakistan in 1947 as a “defeat” for Hindus, suggesting that this was yet another round in the perennial conflict between Hindus and Muslims. This was Golwalkar’s argument--

...Thus it was due to the utter lack of will and conviction on the part of our leaders to face the Muslim intransigence squarely from the standpoint of undiluted nationalism, that the seed of appeasement of Muslims was sown. In their phantom chase of achieving a new unity and a new nationality, our leaders raised the slogan of ‘Hindu-Muslim unity’ and declared that anything that stood in its way should be forgotten. As they dared not tell the Muslim to forget his separatism, they pitched upon the docile Hindu for all their preaching...The exhortations of the leaders did not stop at that. The Hindu was asked to ignore, even to submit meekly to the vandalism and the atrocities of the Muslims...

...The direct result was that Hindus were defeated at the hands of Muslims in 1947. And who were these Muslims? The overwhelming majority of them were those who were converted to Islam at the point of sword or by temptations of power and pelf. That is, they were the progeny of that section of society which had not the mental stamina or the self-respect to stand up in defence of their swadesh and swadharma...And we, the brave children of heroic ancestors of peerless valour who for centuries braved and stamped out waves after waves of the invading hordes of Muslims, accepted defeat at the hands of such a people!

And what a disgraceful defeat at that! During the last one thousand years of our struggle with those aggressors never had we accepted their sovereign rights over any part of this land....However for the first time in 1947, we gave up the fight, put an ignoble end to the glorious one-thousand year long struggle for national freedom, surrendered all our rights and acquiesced in an unchallenged domination of the aggressor over huge portions of our land...
...Finally their (Muslims) price rose to such a pitch that they not only got two big slices of this land where they live today as complete masters with plans to conquer the rest of our country, but continue to remain here in sufficient numbers to act as a potential fifth-column.49

Writing in the *Organiser*, in 1950, Hindu Mahasabha president, Khare challenged the Congress for its “mad pursuit of the mirage of a composite Indian nationalism” which was bound to fail because “Islamic preachers are generally opposed to the idea of territorial nationalism because their dream is Pan-Islam.” He went on to theorise that “Islam recognises only two categories of territories, viz. Dar-ul-Islam, ‘land of peace’ and Dar-ul-Harab, that is ‘land of conflict’. Dar-ul-Islam means the land where Muslim rule prevails. Dar-ul-Harab means land where non-Muslim rule prevails and Muslims are in a minority or in a subordinate position. According to Islam, it is the duty of Mussalmans to convert Dar-ul-Harab into Dar-ul-Islam... On account of this ideology, it is impossible to evolve a composite Hindu-Muslim Nationhood in India i.e Bharat. In fact, a Muslim cannot be nationalised unless he is de-Islamised. We cannot believe that they have overnight become loyal citizens of Bharat by donning a Gandhi cap.” At the end of this devastating critique of Muslims, Khare’s conclusion was that “The Christians, the Parsis and Jews have got no extra-territorial patriotism. Their loyalty to Hindusthan can always be taken for granted. This cannot be said of the Mussalmans of Bharat who agitated and voted for Pakistan...there is no difference between a Pakistani Muslim and a Muslim of Bharat...”50

The Hindu Mahasabha continued to campaign on this theme, even in the Sixties. In his presidential address to the 49th session of the HMS in Patna, in

April 1965, Nitya Narayan Banerjee argued that 3.5 crores of about 10 crores of Muslims of undivided India “did not go to the Islamic Republic but preferred to stay back with the ‘Kafirs’ in Hindusthan…” and “with a militant Muslim State on both the sides of Hindusthan, the only homeland of the Hindus in the world”, the Indian Muslims were in “a better position to create a Pan-Islamic State” and were “working for it.” Banerjee asserted further that “infiltration into India by Pak –agents, existence of Pak fifth columnists and saboteurs within India are all well known facts today.”

The relentless questioning of the patriotism of Indian Muslims to India, given their voting for the Muslim League before Partition was a potent weapon in the Hindu nationalist arsenal, used time and again at every public forum. Not only were the Muslim community portrayed as being soft towards Pakistan but its presence in India was projected as a Trojan horse. This was a favourite theme for the Organiser, which gave free play to this argument in its columns. “It is robust common sense,” warned a columnist writing under the pseudonym ‘Vajra’, “not to forget the solemn words of Chaudhury Kaliquzaman, the President of the Muslim League, a native of U.P, that Pakistan is only the stepping stone for the Moslem conquest of the whole of India.”

Writing an article titled “National Security—Our First Concern”, in the Organiser, in November 1947, a columnist, Hoondraj Kirpalan argued:

...It is inconceivable that those Muslims who were the pioneers of the Pakistan movement who voted for Pakistan at the last elections and returned all League candidates have undergone such a profound change of heart. From the two-nation theory and Pakistan to loyalty to India is a far cry. If we fall into the trap of putting faith in these fake professions, Muslims of India would be able to re-emerge as an aggressive

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52 Organiser, Oct 2, 1950, op.cit.
force, say by 1960, demanding East Punjab, West Bengal, Assam, Hyderabad and a Moplastan.

If one thing emerges more clearly than any other from the recent happenings, it is the folly of putting faith in professions of allegiance and loyalty of Muslims to the Indian Union. Pakistan with a large and effective fifth column in India, fails to give future security; but neither has this moth-eaten Pakistan left the Muslims satisfied... If we bank upon the prospect of a satisfied and cooperative Pakistan, we should of course hand over East Punjab, West Bengal and Assam to Pakistan, allow Mr Jinnah a free hand in bullying and coercing Indian States and to permit Indian Muslims to live here as equal citizens so that after 10 years they concentrate in some areas like Hyderabad, Bhopal and the east coast and then forward another partition theory in due course...\(^53\)

But what was significant in this piece was the inherently subversive challenge to the attempt to install a secular nation in India, reflected in the demand that Muslims would have to reap the consequences of the demand for a homeland. Here there was no distinction between the Muslims who had crossed over and the hapless Muslims who had chosen to stay behind as Indian citizens. In effect what the Hindu nationalists were beginning to argue publicly was that Muslims had "taken out their share" of the land in the form of Pakistan, and therefore had no place in Hindu India. More incendiary still was the threat that these Muslims who had stayed in India should be stripped of their citizenship rights. The open challenge posed by raising such abrasive questions was of course deliberate and intended to catapult these increasingly marginalised Hindu nationalist groups back into the mainstream. It was another matter that this attempt did not succeed because of the widespread consensus in favour of a secular nationhood. The arguments made in Hoondraj Kirpalan's essay

highlight the sort of reasoning advanced by Hindu nationalists to put Indian Muslims on the defensive and to put pressure on the Hindu community's acquiescence to the vision of a secular nation. Making a direct link with Pakistan, Kirpalan's essay then launched into a sharp critique of the Muslim community in India—

The manner and the conditions in which Pakistan has taken birth have created an atmosphere of hatred and ill will;

...It may be a bad prospect but we must muster courage to admit the real situation...To allow this enormous population of three crores of people, whose sole efforts for Pakistan brought untold suffering to millions of Hindus, to live as equal citizens, seems incompatible with the considerations of national safety and security.

...The problem is to determine whether the Muslims of India, as a group can owe unquestionable allegiance to this land, accept its culture and way of life, look upon its heroes as their own and cease looking abroad for inspiration and help.

...This mischief must be nipped in the bud, here and now; the mentality behind it combated and crushed for all time...Muslims of the Indian Union who were the arch-saboteurs of Indian unity, these architects of the two-nation theory and Pakistan must now prepare themselves to reap the harvest which they alone did sow. By their own loud professions they demanded a separate homeland because they had all the characteristics of a distinct nationhood and it is time they act up to it. They cannot have it both ways to have Pakistan and to choose to stay in India as a minority.54 (emphasis added.)

As can be seen from the above, the Hindu nationalists began to campaign openly that Muslims had no place in India and that they should be forced to go to Pakistan. The only alternative offered to them, should they choose to stay, was for them to accept in toto—as Golwalkar and his colleagues, including the

54 Ibid.
columnist cited above, demanded--Hindu culture, its way of life, and even its heroes would have to be acknowledged. The public campaign against Muslims following as it did, the bitterness of the communal bloodshed and exodus of refugees on both sides, put tremendous pressure on the Government to restore normality and peace which it was strenuously trying to do. With strong prodding from the Hindu nationalist groups, a “memorial” was sent to the Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru by the “Hindus of Delhi”, as reported in the *Organiser*. The report quotes the “memorial” to Nehru as demanding the Muslims in Delhi be evacuated *en masse* to Pakistan and that mosques be searched. There was also a recommendation in that “memorial” that until the evacuation took place, Muslims should be put in concentration camps.\(^5\) The “memorial” is quoted as saying:

> ..It is now a well known fact that the Muslim military, Muslim magistracy and Muslim police and… even other non-official Muslim organisations helped in the murder, arson, rape and other indescribable atrocities on the Hindus and Sikhs in West Punjab. This clearly shows that Muslims cannot be trusted in any position of responsibility.

> …In the interests of peace of the capital of India, therefore, it is absolutely necessary that the Muslim police, the Muslim military and other Muslim officers holding positions of trust and responsibility should be dismissed forthwith and those responsible for offences should be given deterrent punishment to set an example to others…

> …It is thus clear beyond doubt that the Muslim population of Delhi cannot be trusted and steps should be taken to disarm them immediately..

For the future peace of this place it is also necessary to evacuate the Muslim population of this place to Pakistan or failing that to some concentration camps, as *usual in the*}

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\(^5\) “Muslims Have No Place in Delhi Province: Disloyal and Rebellious Conduct”—Memorial sent to Pandit Nehru by the Hindus (including Sikhs) of Delhi—*Organiser*, Vol.I.No.14, October 2, 1947.
case of criminal-minded inhabitants of any country.. (emphasis added).

...Mosques and the so-called religious centres of the Muslims have been used for collection and protection of arms which have been utilised as strategic centres and arsenals against the military and the Hindus...

In the interest of peace, it is essential that all the mosques should be thoroughly searched and watched and constant vigilance exercised that these mosques do not continue to be misused as arsenals. 56

In sharp contrast to the mainstream discourse which was increasingly preoccupied with issues relating to governing challenges and economic development, the Hindu nationalists' propaganda continued to dwell on the themes of evacuation of Muslims, an “exchange of population” on the premise that “if Hindus are to be rehabilitated on this side of the border, the creators of Pakistan shall have to wend their way thither and make room for their numerous victims here,” 57 and the allegation that Muslims represented a permanent threat to national security.

In an editorial in March 1950, the Organiser demanded that Muslims be expelled from the civil service and the police force. It argued that India's civil and police administration could not “be safe in the hands of gentlemen who till yesterday were known fanatics... and whose affiliations with Pakistan continue...” In the “vital interests of Bharat, Pakistanis must move to Pakistan...” It would not be sensible to allow “the supporters of Pakistan to remain in Bharat to disrupt it from within... There are not a few Pakistanis who seem to believe that they also serve (Pakistan) who stand and wait (in Bharat). We must defeat this strategy.” Rights, the editorial said pointedly were

56 Ibid.
57 “Reign of Terror in E. Pakistan...”, Unsigned Commentary in Organiser, Vol I. No 44. November 6,1948
“conditional on duties” and “these gentlemen by their life-long crusade against Bharat have forfeited any claim on Bharat. Their only place is in the land of their creation—Pakistan. 58

A corollary of the argument that Pakistan was created as a homeland for Muslims was the insistence on assimilation and acceptance of Hindu majoritarianism in India. The Organiser in an editorial in April 1951, noted that “Bharatiya Muslims, their leaders particularly, seem to have forgotten nothing and learnt nothing since the Partition. They are still sailing in two boats. They live in Bharat for Pakistan. Their bodies are in Bharat but their souls are in Pakistan”. 59

The editorial went on to suggest that worse still was “the sinister influence the Muslim intelligentsia and the Mullahs are having on the Muslim masses”. This “mischievous class which still provides leadership to the Bharatiya Muslims deliberately keeps the spirit of separatism, created in the Muslim mind...alive in so many ways” and “their money and propaganda has made many Muslims potential fifth columnists and Pakistani agents in this country.” Hence, said the editorial, the “Bharatiya Muslims” must be helped by the Government and the people to get rid of the pro-Pakistan Mullah class. “Therein lies the permanent security of Bharatiya Muslims as parts and parcels of the Bharatiya nation as also of Bharat itself.” 60

Providing a handle to the Hindu nationalist propaganda and campaign for mutual “exchange of populations”, was the continued exodus of Hindu and Muslim refugees from either side. The Hindu nationalists seized upon the East Bengal situation to press their political points. NB Khare, in his presidential address to the Hindu Mahasabha session in Calcutta in 1949 alleged that “In Pakistan, there is no doubt that the policy of genocide against the Hindus, including the Sikhs is being followed...In East Bengal...the Hindus there are

60 Ibid.
being persecuted—their property, their honour is not safe”, and hence “two
million have migrated to West Bengal or neighbouring provinces of Hindustan.
Thus a great refugee problem has been created by the establishment of
Pakistan.” He lambasted the Congress Government for not being able to deal
“properly with the Muslims who have gone or are going to Pakistan.” S P
Mookerjee who had been invited to join Nehru’s Cabinet as Minister of Industry
and Supply, resigned from office in protest against the Nehru-Liaquat Ali Khan
Agreement of April 8, 1950—an agreement that was intended to emphasise the
commitment of both India and Pakistan to the protection of the rights of their
respective minorities, in an attempt to calm the situation in both countries, and
bring the panic-driven exodus of refugees to a halt. Explaining his position to
the American media, Mookerjee appeared to dramatise the situation by stating—
“My American friends would perhaps understand the situation better if I
compare the position of Hindus under the Islamic State of Pakistan with that of
the Jews under the Hitler regime… He (Hitler) sought to make his State
homogeneous by Jew-baiting practised on a large-scale. The same policy is being
followed by Pakistan. Five million of Hindus had to flee from Pakistan. Today
they are paupers… It is my mission to stop Hindu-baiting by Pakistan… If
necessary, there must be a planned exchange of population. If not, God help
us…”

The argument that Muslims had “taken out their share of land” in the
form of Pakistan and should therefore leave India to the Hindus was built into
an explicit political line in the decade immediately after Partition and
Independence, with the Hindu Mahasabha and the Bharatiya Jana Sangh,
formed in 1951, taking this on board their political agenda. A representative of
the HMS placed before the All Parties National Integration Conference in

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61 Khare, HMS Calcutta Session, 1949, op.cit.
62 SP Mookerjee, Statement to American Press on Nehru-Liaquat Ali Khan Agreement, SP Mookerjee
Papers, NMML.
September 1961, a note demanding that Muslim political groups and parties be very “closely and carefully watched from the point of view of national security as they are a serious threat to our national solidarity and National Integration.” Arguing that “Muslims had demanded Pakistan as a homeland for their community” and that “naturally a section of Indian Muslims who were responsible for the creation of Pakistan have a soft corner for that State and instances have come to the notice of Government that they have indulged in activities of sabotage”, the HMS representative, Bishan Chandra Seth, a Member of Parliament, said the “greatest danger to National Integration” was the “effort to equate the 10 per cent Muslim minority community” with “the 90 per cent majority of Hindu nationals” even after seeing that “Muslims in India represent an ideology which refuses to merge with the national life of this country and it was on this account that it got the country vivisected into Hindu and Muslim homelands."

The Hindu Mahasabha, now reduced to a fringe movement, with the Jana Sangh becoming the main voice of Hindu nationalism, nonetheless continued to make this demand, despite the fact that it was beginning to sound increasingly obsolete, with these communal issues fading into history. Yet, the political point sought to be made was not so much in the expectation of a serious countenancing but in the underscoring of the suggestion that Muslims had no right to stay in India after a homeland had been created for them. At its Sholapur session in May 1964, protesting against what it called the Government’s indifference to the plight of nine million Hindus in Pakistan, the Hindu Mahasabha appealed to Indian Muslims to "realise that it is they who had asked for creation of Pakistan as a homeland for the Muslims of India.” It was not only the Muslims who were now living in Pakistan who had been

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agitating for the creation of Pakistan “but 97 per cent of the Muslims in the whole of India” had “voted for this demand in the election of 1945” and “…Under such circumstances it is in the interest of the Indian Muslims to opt for their holy land which they themselves carved out of united India.” Another reason cited by the Mahasabha for the demand was the need to "be free from the fifth columnist elements and defend our freedom." Hindus should have "a national homeland and a homogeneous nation". Unless there was an exchange of population, that could not happen, the Mahasabha said. In what was virtually a threat of ethnic cleansing, the Mahasabha also argued that whether the Government wanted it or not, "the exchange of population is going to take place by the force of circumstances" and that "our only anxiety is that it should not be accompanied by bloodbath in Pakistan and India." However the attempts of the Hindu nationalists to make capital out of the problems of Hindus in Pakistan made no headway with Nehru and his Government refusing to rise to the bait and emphasising that regardless of Pakistan's policies, India would not deviate from its policy course of secular nationalism.

A Secular State Transcends the Challenge

As is well known, S.P Mookerjee expressed his unhappiness with the Nehru Government’s stance on the plight of Hindus in East Bengal by tendering his resignation as Minister of Industry and Supply. Speaking in Parliament on April 19, 1950, Mookerjee voiced his deep reservations over the Nehru-Liaquat Ali Khan Agreement, an agreement intended to limit the

64 Mahasabha's Stand on Exchange of Population, Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabha, New Delhi, August 14, 1964, (NMML).
damaging consequences of the spiralling refugee problem on both sides. Mookerjee's reaction exemplified the nature of the Hindu nationalist response to the post-Partition context. His main grievance as regards the Agreement was that—"Hindus will continue to come away in large numbers and those who have come will not be prepared to go back. On the other hand, Muslims who had gone away will now return and in our determination to implement the Agreement, Muslims will not leave India. Our economy will thus be shattered and possible conflict within our country will be greater." A second reason he cited was—"In the garb of protecting minorities in India, the Agreement has reopened the problem of the Muslim minority in India, thus seeking to revive those disruptive forces that created Pakistan itself." 65

Nehru's response to Mookerjee's observations summed up the essence of his Government's unswerving commitment to the secular essence of India's national framework. Nehru appeared to take the bull by the horns, by challenging their version of a one-sided exodus of Hindus into India and he made clear that he would not allow such distorted narratives to derail the commitment to secularism. Addressing the questions raised by Mookerjee and others in regard to the Agreement, Nehru who was both Prime Minister and Minister for External Affairs, said: "For my part, I am prepared to apply one test and it is an adequate and sufficient test for me. I am prepared to apply the test to Pakistan and to India. And the test is this: What does the minority think the majority is doing? Not what the majority thinks. So long as the minority in Pakistan itself does not feel secure and does not give a chit to the majority, so long there is something wrong there. I am prepared to apply it to India too. So long as the minority in India does not feel secure and is not prepared to give a chit to the majority, so long there is something wrong here. Because we must

consider the picture on both sides evenly, objectively and fairly. If we do not do so, we put ourselves in the wrong and take a lopsided view of the situation.”

He was equally swift in his rebuttal of the Hindu nationalist projection of a scenario of an overwhelming exodus of Hindus. “There is so much talk of exodus. So many times, it has been said that there is a one-sided exodus. I am amazed because nothing could be falser than that statement. It has not been, for one day, a one-sided exodus—not for a day, not for one hour…”

What was most clinching in Nehru’s exposition was his categorical defence of India’s secular nationhood while rejecting the proposal for an exchange of population. “And take the other proposals…of exchange of populations. I ventured to describe that some months ago, I think in this House, or maybe elsewhere, as a completely impracticable and fantastic proposal. I would like to repeat that…this Government will have nothing to do with that, more so because it is something which is completely opposed to the whole political, economic, social and spiritual basis for which we stand and so long as this Government remains where it is, it will not have anything to do with it…”

It was clear that despite the Hindu Mahasabha and the RSS attempting to revive the embers of Hindu cultural nationalism by using the events of Partition and its painful aftermath to whip up a xenophobic hysteria against Muslims, the political firmness of Nehru and his colleagues, apart from the inspirational symbolism of Gandhi being felled by a Hindu nationalist fanatic’s bullet, ensured that the new nation-state was insulated from these pressures as it moved to embody a secular and democratic nationhood. Nehru faced the whispering campaign of “appeasement” head-on in the early days of Independence. In one of his earliest letters to the Chief Ministers, or ‘Prime

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67 Ibid.
Ministers' as the heads of provincial governments were then called, in October 1947 before the Indian Republic was born, Nehru had explained his stance. "I know there is a certain amount of feeling in the country...that the Central Government has somehow or other been weak and following a policy of appeasement towards Muslims. This is of course complete nonsense. There is no question of weakness or appeasement. We have a Muslim minority who are so large in numbers that they cannot, even if they want to, go anywhere else. They have got to live in India. That is a basic fact about which there can be no argument. Whatever the provocation from Pakistan and whatever the indignities and horrors inflicted on non-Muslims there, we have got to deal with this minority in a civilised manner." In other words, Nehru was making clear that he would not fall into the trap laid by the Hindu nationalist extremists seeking to reverse the decision to anchor India's nationhood to secular moorings.

As India's first Prime Minister, Nehru was aware that the Hindu nationalists would attempt to intensify the pressure on Muslims using the allegation that as a community, they had largely voted for the Partition and therefore did not belong here. He recognised the incendiary role of majority communalism in the occasional sparks of communal conflict that erupted in the decade after Independence. One of Nehru's customary letters to the Chief Ministers, dated May 18, 1959, expressing his distress at communal disturbances in North India, provides an interesting insight as to how he believed the conflict between majority and minority communalism ought to be handled. It was clear too from his observations that he believed that it was the Muslim community which had to be handled with great sensitivity and tact. "Vast members of Muslims remained in India after partition; many of these had supported partition and may be said to have been emotionally attracted to the idea of

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Pakistan. Nevertheless they remained in India and tried to adapt themselves to the new conditions here. There was no other way for them. I think that by and large they did adapt themselves. The fact that India was going ahead while Pakistan was static also helped in this process." The next part of Nehru's observations showed that he placed the onus of maintaining the communal peace upon the majority community. "It must be recognised that Muslims in India cannot, in the nature of things, adopt aggressive attitudes. Individuals may do so or occasionally small groups. But conditions in India are such and their numbers are relatively so small that any attempt at aggressive action will recoil on them." Therefore "basically the responsibility for communal peace rests on the majority community, that is, the Hindus. If there is a breach of this peace, I would start with the presumption that it has been caused by Hindu communal elements who have created a situation leading to fear and conflict. Indeed this is not a question of being Hindu or Muslim but of the majority always being responsible for this kind of thing."\(^70\)

It was evident that with Nehru's dismissive approach to communalism, regarding it as he did as a disintegrative force in the same league as regional or linguistic chauvinism, even as the priorities of the national agenda were now economic development and national integration, for which purpose the National Integration Council was set up in October 1961, endorsed by a wide section of political opinion\(^71\), the political movement for Hindu nationalism was heading into obscurity.

The next chapter explores the efforts of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh and other vehicles of Hindu nationalism to channelise the currents of Hindu cultural nationalism into a political platform of majoritarianism. Having lost the battle to


\(^71\) A report in *The Hindu*, October 1, 1961, of the proceedings of the National Integration Conference on September 30 that year, noted that "it would be no exaggeration to say that the expression oft repeated at the conference --unity in diversity--seemed to have been the motto of all those who participated."
the forces of secular and civic nationalism, it was now necessary to reprioritise and reassemble the elements of the discourse. Given that it would not be possible to reopen easily the question of national identity, which of course remained the long-term goal of Hindu nationalists, in the short and medium-term, it was necessary to shift the discourse to an emphasis on majoritarianism, by standing terms like secularism and democracy on their head and seeking to undermine the moral authority of these governing concepts by criticising the manner of their implementation.

Yet the Hindu nationalists recognised that the most important tool of communal mobilisation could only be the stigmatisation of Muslims. It was acknowledged that the strongest assertion of the claim that a Hindu nation must take shape in India, would have to manifest in a political campaign depicting Muslims as having natural affinity for Pakistan, which had been conceived of as a homeland for the Muslims of the subcontinent. This ceaseless battering of the national imagination with this constructed linkage, despite the fact that there was absolutely no evidence on the ground of any such collaboration, was intended to discredit the secular consensus. The consequent marginalisation of the discourse of Hindu nationalism which sent it into hibernation for decades and the fact that the political context in India settled around other issues relating to development and democracy, ensured that the campaign against the alleged linkage between Pakistan and Indian Muslims, was seen as an enduring instrument of mobilisation.