CHAPTER IV

SECULARISM: THE EXTREMISTS' PERSPECTIVE
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Before 1904, as we have already mentioned, the Indian National Congress was dominated by the moderates. Even activists like Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Lala Lajpat Rai initially accepted the philosophy of the moderates. Upto a considerable extent, they accepted the latter's political programmes, methods and goals. Of course, some differences did exist between the two but they were far less than the areas of agreement. It was only after 1904 that the separation between the moderates and the extremists became final and complete. There was a shift in their attitudes and they began to oppose the moderates' view. This shift found expression in numerous forms. So much so that extremism soon emerged into a parallel movement.
What gave rise to this extremism? Why did they part company with the moderates? It is difficult to conclusively answer these questions. Many things happened during the period 1885 to 1904 whose cumulative effect was the breakdown of moderation and corresponding rise of extremism among the Hindu nationalists.

Before dealing with the perspective of the extremists on secularism, it would be worthwhile to briefly discuss the origin and rise of extremism in Indian politics.

Firstly, the major demands made by the Indian National Congress at its different sessions held between 1885 to 1904 remained unfulfilled and this amounted to a failure of the moderates. For example, the Congress had persistently asked for the abolition of the India Council. It had demanded the simultaneous examinations in India for the coveted Indian Civil Service. They had sought the separation of judiciary from the executive at various levels particularly at the district level. They had asked for quick industrialisation of India. They had demanded extensive reforms in land revenue policy. They had wanted the repeal of excise duty on cotton. The British Government did not concede any of these demands. A realisation dawned in the Congress that most of its demands had remained unfulfilled. Consequently, many
leaders of Indian National Congress got disillusioned with the basic assumptions of the moderates namely:

01 that the British rule was providential for India;
02 that the economic interests of India and England were allied rather than antagonistic; and
03 that Indians should have full faith in British fair play and justice.

Second major reason for the rise of extremism was the emergence of middle class in India. The growing unemployment in the members of this class in the beginning of the twentieth century generated a feeling of resentment. This resentment of unemployed educated youth provided psychological and moral support to the extremist leaders of the Congress.

Third important factor which led to the rise of extremism was the defeat of the mighty Italian army by a small state like Ethiopia in 1896 and the defeat of a big country like Russia by a tiny country like Japan in 1905. These incidents exploded the very myth of white man's invincibility.

Around the turn of the nineteenth century, some severe famines took place. It is estimated that between 1876 and 1879, eight hundred thousand people died as a result of severe famines. According to official estimates, 1.25 million people died because of famines during
1899–1900 only. Epidemics like Plague were a common phenomena during the last days of the nineteenth century.\(^1\)

The rule of Lord Curzon in general and the partition of Bengal in particular ignited this resentment. It was the most immediate and the most important single reason for the rise of extremism in Indian politics. The partition was viewed not only as an administrative measure but a deliberate attempt to divide the people of Bengal. It was also viewed as an attempt to divide the Hindus and Muslims with a view to weaken nationalism in Bengal. We have the evidence of the British officials themselves about this motivation. Risley, Home Secretary to the Government of India, wrote in an official note on December 6, 1904:

Bengal united is a power. Bengal divided will pull in several different ways. That is what the Congress leaders feel: Their apprehensions are perfectly correct.\(^2\)

The Viceroy, Lord Curzon himself wrote in a similar vein in February 1905:\(^3\)

Calcutta is the centre from which the Congress Party is manipulated throughout the whole of Bengal and indeed the whole of India.... Any measure in consequence that would divide the

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2 Cited in Ibid., Volume III, p.310.
Bengali-speaking population; that would permit independent centres of activity and influence to grow up; that would dethrone Calcutta from its place as the centre of successful intrigue ... is intensely and hotly resented by them.  

The partition of Bengal was like the proverbial last straw on the back of the camel. This created strong resentment in the minds of the Indians. The extremists started challenging the adequacy of Constitutional methods advocated by the moderates. Tilak was of the view that mere protest not backed by self-reliance will not help the people of India and that the days of protests and prayers were over.

When Lord Curzon was being increasingly adamant in his utterances and deeds, Tilak started talking in the language of agitation and independent action. He was of the view that Indians should organise their power so that the Britishers could be forced to concede what they demanded. Under his leadership the extremists thought that India could not progress so long as the Britishers were on the Indian soil. Prayers, petitions

3 Ibid., p.311.
and protests could not convince the British, whose primary interest was to exploit the Indians for their own prosperity. The extremists evolved a three-fold programme of 'Boycott, Swadeshi and National Education' with a view to ensuring effective political action.

The moderates borrowed the concept of secularism from the West and tried to adapt and modify it to suit the Indian context. The moderates were secular mainly because they tried to separate religion and politics. They laid down the foundations of nationalism irrespective of religious affiliations. While some of them completely separated politics from religion, others subordinated religion to politics.

As against this, the extremist school led by the famous trio of nationalist leaders, LalaBal-Pal and Sri Aurobindo mixed their religion with politics to some extent. They used religion in their political actions or in arousing the sentiments of nationalism among the Indian masses. The extremists used religion consciously and deliberately as the basis of their nationalism. For the extremists, nationalism was the prime consideration and highest value which should be achieved by all means. What the extremists believed was that as soon as nationalism gets deeply rooted in India, secularism would inevitably get promoted because nationalism
itself is an agent of secularism. The extremists were not in favour of a theocratic state. Their nationalism accepted the conception of India remaining a multi-religious community. They firmly believed in Hindu-Muslim cooperation.

The whole attempt of extremists was to transform the Indian National Congress, which represented the educated middle class of the country into a popular movement of the masses. For this purpose, they appealed to three principal ties which are common to both the educated and the uneducated. These ties are Language, History and Religion. They wrote and spoke in the regional languages and it was easily understood by the masses. As against the western reformism of the moderates, they talked of revivalism. They talked of India's glorious past. They used religious symbols and terminology to expand and intensify devotion to the mother land. They talked of self respect and self-confidence of the Indians.

The extremists revived the memories of the Vedic past of the Hindus. They talked of the Gupta period as the Golden age of India. They advertised the heroic and patriotic examples of Rana Partap and Shivaji. They described the revolt of 1857 as the "first war of Indian Independence". Rani Lakshmi Bai was portrayed as a great freedom fighter. The extremists believed that India was,
and by this they meant Hindu India, a special case in the History of the world because it had strong spiritual moorings. It had a spiritual message for the world. In the words of Bipin Chandra Pal:

The Hindus constitute a distinct people. The regulative idea in the evolution of Hindu character, the idea which has given a peculiar shape and colouring to the entire history of the race, is their innate consciousness of the spiritual and the eternal. 4

The extremists expressed their nationalism in religious terms. In Bengal, they used the Neo-Vedantic movement and the cult of the Mother worship to foster nationalism among the Bengali Hindus in particular and rest of them in general. Aurobindo identified his concept of the nation with Dharma itself. In his words:

The Hindu nation was born with the Sanatana Dharma. With it, it moves and with it, it grows. When the Sanatana Dharma declines, then the nation declines and if the Sanatana Dharma were capable of perishing with the nation it would perish. The Sanatana Dharma, that is nationalism. 5

Another extremist leader Lala Lajpat Rai considered nationalism in India as an illusion though at times, he

defined nationalism to mean:

One common name, a common ancestry, a common history, a common religion, a common language and a common future. 6

It is true that the extremists expressed their nationalism in religious terms. However, they also preached their nationalism in economic terms. In this manner they had two concepts of nationalism, one was expressed in terms of religion and the other was expressed in terms of economic variable. 7

True, the extremists preached religious nationalism but also preached and practised Swadeshi which was a form of economic nationalism. Rabinder Nath Tagore, B.C. Pal and Aurobindo Ghosh worked for the Swadeshi Movement in

7 Rajendra Prasad in his book India Divided made a distinction between personal nationality and political nationality. According to him personal nationality is founded on characteristics which are personal, often inherited and usually objective. These characteristics exist in the individual quite independently of the locality in which he may be domiciled. Whether the majority of the inhabitants share them or not and independently of the political regime under which he may live, whether this be in the hands of persons possessing these characteristics or no. The body of persons possessing these characteristics i.e., similarity of race, language and religion constitutes the nation. These characteristics have no political significance; a German of Austria, Czechoslovakia, Brazil or Honolulu is as much a German as is a citizen of Berlin. As against this political nationality is the membership of a state. This distinction between two kinds of nationalism can easily be seen in the views and thoughts of the extremist leaders.
Bengal, Tilak worked for this movement in Western India, while Lajpat Rai worked in Punjab. In the words of Rabinder Nath Tagore, the objectives of Swadeshi were as below:

01 to undertake the fulfilment of the country's needs by the effort of the people themselves;

02 to take over the responsibility of people on their own shoulders;

03 to execute all national activities with the agency of Indians alone and to refuse the help of aliens in these matters;

04 to abstain from the use of foreign cloth and other goods;

05 to refrain from writing letters to relations and friends in the English language, using English goods, English furniture, English music, English drinks and having social intercourse with the English people;

06 to establish Indian schools;

07 to decide disputes without resort to the courts established by the British government. 8

The extremists were not content just with the Swadeshi Movement. They combined Boycott of foreign goods with it. Boycott was an economic as well as a political weapon. It was a reprisal against the British rulers in India.

From the point of view of the extremist leaders, the problem with the concept of secularism was that even if it was a desirable objective in the Indian conditions, it had limited applicability in the Indian social context. Secular nationalism was confined only to the educated middle class in India. Indian nationalism could not fulfill itself unless it was spread among the common masses. The extremists realized that in order to spread nationalism among the masses it was necessary to make use of religious symbol for political purpose. In fact, they used not only religion but also language and history in generating the mass nationalism in India.

In order to explain views of extremist leaders on the concept of secularism and to examine their role in the process of secularisation, it is sufficient to analyse the views of four leaders of extremists—Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, Lala Lajpat Rai and Sri Aurobindo. However, a brief reference to Sri Bankim Chandra Chatterjee is necessary in order to indicate how he laid the foundations that were latter used by the extremist leaders.

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee was perhaps the first Bengali Hindu who employed the triple appeal of language, history and religion to build Hindu Nationalism at the mass level. He encouraged writing in the Bengali language.
His historical novels in Bengali talked of India's glorious past. His poem 'Bande Matram' mixed religion and politics in a very effective and highly emotional manner. Bande-Matram was a hail to the land of Bengal as also to the Hindu Goddess. In this poem, Bankim brought about complete identity between the land of Bengal and the Goddess of the Hindus. The love of the country was identified with the love of God. This concept of the Divine Motherland was originally meant for Bengal. However, in 1905, the agitation against the partition of Bengal assumed a nation-wide character. After 1905, Bande-Matram became the symbol of the rise of Hindu Nationalism all over the country.

Balganga Dhar Tilak (1856-1920) in Maharashtra was the most prominent successor of Bankim's ideas of mass nationalism based on native language, history and religion. Tilak came to be known popularly as the Lok-Manya which means respected among the people. His effort was to transform the character of the Indian National Congress from that of being a representative of the middle class to that of a mass movement.

Tilak was a Chitpavan Brahman. He was a scholar, journalist, educator, and in the words of Chirol, "the father of Indian Unrest". He was one of the founders of
the Deccan education society and the Fergusson College. In 1890, he resigned from this society because he had differences with Agarkar and Gokhale on the question of social reforms. After this, he edited two newspapers, the Marathi Weekly Kesari and its English counterpart The Maratha.

Tilak used religion as a political tool, as a weapon in India's struggle for Swaraj. In the words of T.L. Shy, an American interpreter of Tilak:

Swaraj was his Dharma. Swaraj was for Tilak a birthright and a Dharma not because he believed in the philosophy of Natural Rights, but because Swaraj was according to his classical value system, a moral necessity.\(^9\)

Tilak was well aware of the secular theory of nationalism. In his trial speech of 1908, he quoted with approval Mills definition of nationalism. However, he was firmly of the view that religion and politics can not be separate. He accepted that religion is an element in nationality. He observed that Dharma means a tie to hold. Dharma connects the soul with God and hence man with man. Hindu religion is very old and it provides for moral as well as social ties. He argued that during the Vedic Times, India was a self-contained country. It was united.

as a great nation. He further pointed out that the study of Hindu scriptures like the Gita, Ramayana and Mahabharata produced the same ideas throughout the country.

Tilak asserted that if Indians lay stress on this common heritage, they will be able to consolidate all the different sects into a mighty Hindu Nation. This according to him ought to be the ambition of every Hindu. According to him:

I regard India as my motherland and my Goddess, the people in India my kith and kin, and loyal and steadfast work for their political and social emancipation my biggest religion and duty.\textsuperscript{10}

Tilak started the celebration of two new annual festivals. The first annual festival related to the Hindu God Ganesh. The celebration of this festival coincided with Muslim celebration of their festival of Muharram. He also organised the Shivaji festival in the memory of a Maratha warrior. It was an attempt to involve the Hindus to rise against the foreign rule. On the basis of these festivals, he was able to organise the Hindus of Maharashtra and more particularly the Marathas. He brought them into the mainstream of Indian nationalism. However, this created conditions culminating in confrontation between the Hindus and the Muslims.

By the celebration of Ganapati and Shivaji festivals, Tilak tried to organise the Hindus through the use of religious-historical symbols. According to Tilak, Shivaji was the symbol of the resistance of the people against injustice of the Muslim Emperors. Tilak defended the celebration of Shivaji festival by arguing that the fight of Shivaji was not against the Muslim community. He was fighting against the injustice of the Muslim kings.

Tilak has been hailed as the prophet of mass nationalism in India. But he has also been criticized for his role in retarding the process of secularism in India. M.N. Roy, a marxist revolutionary described Tilak's concept of nationalism as an orthodox nationalism. The problem with Tilak was that he was not satisfied with the secular concept of nationalism. He did not seek secular foundations for his nationalism. For him, nationalism was in the nature of a sentiment which must have its roots in the indigenous culture, tradition and history of the people. Tilak frankly admitted that Indian nationalism could not be secular and that it must be based on Hindu orthodoxy. It was fully realized by him, as well as by his supporters that they were consciously avoiding and even retarding the secular roots of Indian nationalism. They were consciously trying to negate that the moderates had achieved in this regard.

Roy argued that Tilak and his school retarded the process of secularism in India and that their role was reactionary. He said:

Reactionary forces that contributed to the doctrine of integral nationalism stood revealed when Tilak declared that Indian Nationalism could not be purely secular, that it must be based on Hindu Orthodoxy.¹²

Roy pointed out that Tilak's concept of nationalism was the same as that of the leaders of the mutiny of 1857. After the mutiny the Western concept of secularism had entered India through the moderates. For Tilak and his school this concept had no use and, therefore, they wanted to return back to the political theories of the orthodox nationalism of the nineteenth century. According to Roy, there was another important way in which Tilak retarded the process of secularization in India. The secular concept of nationalism recognised that the rights of Indians to self-government was contingent upon some kind of preliminary political evolution either social or economic, for those who believed in secularism, nationalism must have social or economic or both as foundations. For Tilak, religion was the main foundation of nationalism and to this he only added history and language.

Tilak's rejection of secularism was a matter of great controversy even in his times and have remained so thereafter. The charge against Tilak has been that he retarded the process of secularism and this retardation was the root cause of Hindu-Muslim communalism in India. It was because of his reactionary step that the Muslim masses were alienated from the Indian National Movement. Rajne Palme Dutt has rightly argued that:

Tilak because of his identification of the national awakening with the revival of Hinduism, alienated the Muslim masses from the national movement. ¹³

Some other scholars had gone even to the extent of describing Tilak as anti-Muslim and communal. Thus, Zacharias says that Tilak was the spokesman of an anti-Muslim retaliation. ¹⁴ A British historian, Powell Price says that:

The Muslim League was an answer to the Indian National Congress, necessary because the possibility of self-government raised the spirit of separation which the intolerance of Tilak had emphasised. ¹⁵

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¹⁵ Quoted in Ibid.
Chirol says that due to Tilak's extreme orthodoxy the Muslim members of the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha resigned from that body.  

It is difficult to accept the charge that Tilak was anti-Muslim. Actually, he could count some of the Muslim leaders as his good personal friends. In fact, he believed in Hindu Muslim Unity and was the architect of the Congress-League scheme known as Lucknow Pact which brought the two communities on the same platform. However, he raised his nationalism on the idea of religious exclusiveness. Even much against the advice of Ranade, he organised a large public meeting of the Hindus to support the demands of the Hindus against the Mohammedans.

It can be argued that Tilak added another obstacle in the way of secularizing Indian politics by taking a stand against the social reform activity of the day. This is so because social reform activities constitute an important element of secularization. Social reform activities, if encouraged, expand the authority of the state vis-a-vis the religious establishment. It prepares the grounds for the growth of rationality, spirit of enquiry and scientific temper as against traditions, customs and orthodoxy. However, Tilak's opposition to the social reform activities of the day and his role as a Hindu

16 Ibid.
obscurantist was not directly responsible for retarding secularism. This we shall examine as we proceed.

Tilak was not against social reforms. In August, 1890, he and Ranade signed a circular letter advocating the following social reforms:

01 that not more than a year's income should be expended on the marriage ceremonies of a son;

02 that not more than a year's income should be expended on the marriage ceremonies of a daughter;

03 that boys should not marry before the ages of 16, 18 or 20;

04 that daughters should not be married before the ages of 10, 12 or 14;

05 that polygamy should be prohibited;

06 that no one should marry after the age of 60;

07 that liquor should be taken medicinally only;

08 that every endeavour should be made to promote female education.\footnote{17}

Tilak was in favour of social reforms being carried out by the state but his contention was that political reforms must precede social reforms. It seems that as a matter of political tactics he would not alienate from his leadership the orthodox Hindu masses by supporting radical measures of social reform against which they were generally hostile. He wanted that India must have political reform i.e. Swaraj and that social and economic reform may

be undertaken only after political liberation has been won. He would not allow the state ruled by aliens to interfere with the social activities of the people and protested against the intervention of the state in matters of a socio-religious character. Even such measures of social reform which he not only believed to be necessary but which he, in his every day life practised, he would not allow the state to legislate upon. Thus he protested against the 'Age of Consent Bill', but he did not permit his daughters to get married till they were 18 which was the main purpose for which the bill was introduced.\(^{18}\)

We must emphasize that Tilak's attitude to social reforms in his times was determined by considerations of political expediency. He was of the view that social change should come gradually through the growth of enlightened public opinion instead of through legislative interference by an alien government.\(^{19}\)

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\(^{19}\) In the words of Tilak:

... before any new practice is sought to be followed or legislation passed for it, one should try to change public opinion, it is of no use unless there is the sanction of public opinion behind it.

This was written in 1881 and continued to represent Tilak’s position on the question of social reform throughout his life. See, N.R. Inamdar, *Op.cit.*, p.276.
It has been argued that Tilak was a social conservative and he took consistently a conservative stand regarding the reform of Hindu social institutions. It has been said that:

The several issues like the Age of Consent Bill, the issue of women's education, the controversy over the marriage of Hindu widows, his stand on the right of all Hindus to hear the recitation of the Vedas, his constant ridicule of the religious reformers, particularly the Prathana Samajists, the controversy connected with the Panchhoud Mission "tea", his stand on the Rakhmabia case are well-known as they have a consistency which should be regarded as enviable when contrasted with vacillation and contradictions that the reformers were subject to. 20

The fact of the matter is that in his private life, Tilak was not a social conservative. In his public life he ridiculed the social reformers but this does not imply that he was against social reforms of course he was certainly against social legislation. His opposition to social reform was based on the belief that coercion was undesirable and that voluntary efforts would achieve the desired social reform. In his own words:

We have often pointed out, that we are not against the particular reform (the Age of Consent Bill) advocated. Individually, we would be

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20 Quoted in *Ehhd.*, p.103.
prepared to go even further than what the Government proposes to do, but we are certainly not prepared to force our views upon the large mass of orthodox people... We have every confidence that in time most of the reforms now preached would be gradually accepted.21

Tilak's major objection, however, was that a people seeking liberation from foreign domination should refrain from getting help from the foreign rulers in solving their social problems. It was humiliating, morally wrong and socially weakening to ask for legislation by them to curb a domestic social evil; 'education and not legislation is the proper method for eradicating the evil'.

Tilak was firmly of the view that social reform was not an end in itself, nor he was convinced that they were the pre-conditions of political progress. He argued that Burma had achieved considerable social reform yet politically the country was backward. He was particularly opposed to the conception that an alien government should be requested to legislate in the sphere of social reforms. Moreover, he wanted to carry out social reforms in the spirit of compromise with the ordinary people. He was against the social reformers

who sought to bring about reforms with a magic wand.

As against this, he was of the opinion that social reform can be brought about in conformity with the spirit of the times and the environment. In his words:

We all have families and want to live with society. Under these circumstances, a compromise between the individual wishes and society's expectation would have to be arrived at. Reforms accomplished through such compromises would come to stay. Those who only want to live according to their own individual wish should do so on a desert island. Others who want to live in society will have to adopt a compromise. 22

It can be emphasised that Tilak was described as a social reactionary mainly because he opposed the Age of Consent Bill 1891. It would be convenient to indicate the various proposals of the bill and Tilak's response to them. Some of the proposals of the bill were:

01 Cohabitation by a husband with his wife, under twelve years of age, should be made penal;

02 In case of infant-marriages, the wife should be entitled to cancel the marriage, if she liked, on attaining maturity;

03 Suits by husbands for the restitution of conjugal rights should not be allowed; and

04 A widow should continue to hold her first husband's property even after her remarriage.

22 Quoted in Kheer Dhananjay, Lokamanya Tilak—Father of our Freedom Struggle, (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1939), p.36.
Tilak's reaction to the above bill was that he condemned it as a danger to Hindu religion and Hindu tradition. In an article in his paper Kesari, he said:

If we want Acts and Resolutions to regulate child-marriage, why then, not have 'Dinner Acts' 'Sandhya Adoration Acts' and 'Bathing Time Acts'? In short it was the confirmed belief of the latter that because the latter laid too much stress on India's inferiority, they were trying to imitate English life, diet and habits. They wished to westernise India and hence they said that women should be educated, widows must remarry and castes must go. Instead of fighting for their political independence they were pining for social reforms.23

Tilak and his colleagues suggested that these proposals of the bill should only be applicable to the so-called social reformers. However, the Hindu masses should be free to decide for themselves as to whether they want social reform or not.

Tilak's position on social reforms can be summed up by saying that political independence was the prime consideration for him and he did not want any social issue to be raised till the former was achieved. Social reform as Agarkar had noted, was after all an endless process political goals, on the other hand, were finite and should therefore have priority over the social.

23 Ibid., p.57.
Tilak might have adopted an attitude of indifference rather than hostility to the social reform movement if it were led by men who were either politically radical like himself or were generally willing to practise what they preached. Tilak was not against a rationalistic attitude in life. He applied rationality, spirit of enquiry and scientific temper in his thought and practices. He applied these principles not only in the sphere of religion but also in the social field. This is illustrated by the fact that in his private life Tilak was not a Hindu obscurantist. As a matter of political strategy he adopted an attitude of hostility towards social reforms and social reformers. However, Tilak never criticized the social reforms which were suggested nor did he prefer tradition, custom and orthodoxy to rationality and the spirit of enquiry. In fact, Tilak was a social liberal and an enlightened man. He was in favour of rationality and the spirit of inquiry. Therefore, it is difficult to fully agree with the view that Tilak in any significant manner retarded the process of secularism in Indian politics. At the most it can be maintained that Tilak failed to advance the process of secularism because of his stand in the sphere of social reform. This is so because he agreed to play the role of a leader of the Hindu Orthodoxy.
Second important leader of the extremist school whose position we propose to assess and analyse is Lala Lajpat Rai (1865-1928). Rai was born in an Aggarwal Bania family of Punjab. His father was a follower of the Muslim sect headed by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan. His mother came from a Sikh family. He joined the Arya Samaj in 1882. In the sphere of social reform he was closer to the moderate school. Throughout his life he was engaged in social reform activities like widow re-marriage, untouchability and abolition of caste. He believed in the interdependence of social reform and political growth.

24 The chief aim of the Arya Samaj was to purify Hinduism, rather than remake it. The founder of Arya Samaj had given the call, “Back to the Vedas.” The Samaj gave to the Vedas the same place in Hinduism which is that of the Quran and Bible for the Muslims and the Christians. Arya Samaj is a half-way house between tradition and modernity. It was a religious as well as social reform movement. It also inspired the movement for political freedom.

25 In Lala Lajpat Rai words:

National efficiency cannot be achieved without such social and economic conditions as will make the nation as a whole, self-confident, self-reliant, physically fit, normally reliable and intellectually alert. Quoted in The People, January 10, 1925.
extending the role of the state in the sphere of social reform, particularly among the Hindus. 26

Lajpat Rai was a leader of the Punjabi Hindus. In his own times he was criticized for his association with the Hindu Mahasabha. He frankly admitted that nationalism in India was based on religion and what existed in India was religious nationalism and not secular nationalism. He was so firm in this belief that he was not ashamed of being described as a Hindu commnunalist.

Lajpat Rai considered himself as an opponent of muslim communalism. He was very much against the muslim demand for separate electorates. He believed that Hindu communalism was inevitable because of the rise of Muslim communalism. 27

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26 Lajpat Rai in his reply to 'Mother India' regretted that in India the reformers are working against heavy odds for they have to contend against prejudice and ignorance without absolutely any help from the state. In fact, the alien bureaucracy have devised new methods of perpetuating the old system and making it subserve their own ends. Quoted in Lajpat Rai, Unhappy India, (Calcutta: Banna Publishing Company, 1928), p. 97.

27 In his own words:

They (Muslims) insist on communal representation all along the political lines and also on organising their separate communal entity so completely as to become the dominating communal entity in India... under the circumstances it becomes absolutely essential for the Hindus to organise themselves in order to avert these consequences. Communal organisation has, thus, been thrust upon us. Quoted in The People, September 27, 1925.
Lajpat Rai was convinced that in the Indian context, the bonds of religious nationalism were so firmly rooted that secular nationalism seemed to be an illusion. Indeed, he defined nationalism in purely religious terms. For him, nationalism was tied with the conception of a common race, a common history, a common language and a common religion.\(^{25}\)

Lajpat Rai like all other extremist leaders employed the triple appeal of Language, History and Religion to build Hindu nationalism at the mass level. However, he believed in religious tolerance and was in favor of Hindu-Muslim cooperation. He argued that the clash of creeds among the Hindus and the Muslims was the main cause of India's continued bondage under the British rule. He believed that India can achieve freedom only if the clash between the Hindu and the Muslim creeds was stopped. He believed that the ideal of Hindu-Muslim unity cannot be achieved till we insist on religious forms and religious formulas of the two communities. He appealed to members of both the communities to forget their religious differences at least in the field of politics. However, he realised

\(^{25}\) Lajpat Rai defined Nationalism to mean:

One common name, a common ancestry, a common history, a common religion, a common language and a common future. Quoted in Lala Lajpat Rai, The Man in His Words, (Madras: Ganesh & Company, 1917), P.64.
that religious differences between the two communities were bound to continue. Still he argued that these conflicts should at least be separated from the political life. He insisted that Hindu-Muslim unity in the political field was imperative before they could be relieved from their bondage of the British rule.

Lajpat Rai was particularly opposed to the system of communal representation and separate electorates. He believed that the system of separate electorates will promote and perpetuate religious differences for ever. He said that by accepting the Muslim demand of separate electorates, some amount of temporary unity can be created. However, this unity would be based on hatred and not love. Therefore, he pointed out that this kind of unity is bound to remain temporary and will not assume a permanent character.29

29 In the year 1925, Lala Lajpat Rai wrote a series of articles on the Hindu-Muslim problem under the title "The Clash of Creeds". In the concluding article he warned:

We will thus by a conflict of religions in our own country be a direct cause of the coloured world's continued bondage, a cause of their fall in the whiteman's march towards world dominion ... communal representation is only another name for the continuance of this clash of creeds in its full fury. Must this clash continue to poison our political life? Is it impossible to eliminate it? Quoted in The People, July 19, 1925.

Lajpat Rai also pointed out:

I do not believe in a unity based on hatred... To expect emanicipation on the basis of promoting and perpetuating religious differences by a system of communal representation all along the political field is simply unthinkable. Ibid., July 26, 1925.
In 1920, Lajpat Rai also disagreed with Mahatma Gandhi and his programme of Non-Cooperation. He opposed this programme because Gandhi had mixed religion in this programme. He said that to use religion as an element of non-cooperation would amount to committing a great blunder. Gandhi had tried to appease the Muslims to create temporary unity among the Hindus and the Muslims. Lajpat Rai did not agree with this viewpoint of Gandhi.

As a Hindu communalist, Lajpat Rai could be accused of having retarded the process of secularism in India. One important reason for his being considered a communalist was that the socio-economic and political environment which surrounded him was quite different from the atmosphere in which Tilak, Bipin Chandra and Gandhi operated.

Lajpat Rai's main area of political activity was Punjab. He assumed the leadership of the Punjabi Hindus who were in a minority in Punjab at that time. As against this the Muslims were in a majority in that region. Tilak's main area of operation was Maharashtra where the Hindus constituted the bulk of the population. In Bengal where Bipin Chandra operated, although Muslims were in a majority but it were the Hindus who dominated the economic sphere. Moreover, socially
speaking there was a great deal of amity between the two major communities in Bengal. Infact, communalism was practically non-existant there. So much so that a Bengali Muslim felt himself closer to a Bengali Hindu than to his counterpart anywhere else in the country.

As against this background, in Punjab, muslims were in a majority and they also dominated in the economic sphere. The muslims landlords, particularly of East Punjab used and exploited communalism to consolidate and perpetuate their economic gains. Socially speaking, communalism had taken deep roots in the soil of Punjab and each community felt that it had serious religious differences with the other communities. It felt separate and independent and tried to perpetuate its socio-religious and cultural identities. Lajpat Rai's inclination towards Hindu communalism was a reaction to the growing muslim communalism. This is a significant fact and we cannot overlook it while comparing and contrasting Lajpat Rai and other extremist leaders of his times on the issue of secularism.

On the issue of separate electorates, different extremist leaders took a different stand depending on the socio-religious atmosphere of their area. For example Tilak supported the idea of separate electorate but for Lajpat Rai this was a very dangerous and a suicidal step.
He emphasised that the theory of separate electorate would further strengthen Muslim communalism. On this issue he was supported by Gokhale who was against separate electorates but was in favour of separate representation. In fact Gokhale suggested joint electorates because he believed that this would diminish rather than accentuating Muslim communalism.

Lajpat Rai had also opposed Gandhi because the latter introduced an element of religion in his non-cooperation movement. He believed that Gandhi was following a policy of appeasement towards the Muslims to create temporary unity between the two communities. Gandhi tried to exploit the Muslim sentiment of pan-Islamism and wanted that all other communities should support the Muslims on this issue. As against this, Lajpat Rai was of the opinion that religion could not be used to bring about Hindu-Muslim unity. Religion can only be used to strengthen unity and solidarity within a community and not between the communities. Lajpat Rai wanted that Indian political leaders should follow a realistic approach to politics. He believed that religious differences between the Hindus and Muslims were very wide and real. These differences divided the people, instead of uniting them.
He clearly recognised that the foundation of Hindu-Muslim unity could be created only on economic grounds. That was the main reason why he considered Swadeshi as the common religion of united India. He was firmly of the view that economic and political factor alone could be the true foundations of secular nationalism. In his own words:

The Swadeshi ought to teach us how to organise our capital, our resources, our labour and talent, to the greater good of India irrespective of creed, colour or caste. Infact, Swadeshi ought to be the common religion of united India. 30

Lajpat Rai was one of the prominent leaders of Arya Samaj Movement in Punjab. This movement preached militant Hindu nationalism and often came in clash with Muslim communalism particularly on the issue of Shudhi, i.e. reconversion of Muslims into Hindu religion. This movement also preached the slogan "back to the Vedas". Lajpat Rai’s association with this movement has earned for him the charge that he retarded the process of secularism in India. However, he was not a Hindu revivalist. Infact he himself described, how he differed from Tilak in matters of social reform. He said that Tilak was an orthodox revivalist while he was a social

reformer. Tilak was a staunch Sanatanist while Lajpat Rai was an Arya Samajist.

In the sphere of social reform, Lajpat Rai was closer to the moderate school. He believed in the intimate relations between social reform and political work. He believed in the interdependence of social and political reforms. He was of the opinion that political freedom was a consequence of national efficiency and this cannot be achieved without the creation of proper social and economic conditions.

Throughout his life, Lajpat Rai as a leader of the Arya Samaj was engaged in social reform activities like widow remarriage, abolition of untouchability and changing the character of castes. He believed that the state should extend support to the social reformers in their efforts to bring about social reforms. He regretted that the social reformers of his time had to work against heavy odds. These reformers had to fight against the prejudice and ignorance of the orthodox Hindus and also against the conservative attitude of the state machinery which was controlled by the aliens. In his own words:

In India the reformers are working against heavy odds for they have to contend against prejudice and ignorance without absolutely
any help from the state. Instead, the alien bureaucracy have devised new methods of perpetuating the old system and making it subserve their own ends.31

In this manner we find that Lajpat Rai was not a Hindu obscurantist and was in favour of social reforms. He expected the state to help in bringing about social reforms. His efforts in the field of social reforms did not retard the process of secularism among the Hindus but sought to promote it even though indirectly.

The Arya Samaj Movement overemphasized on the Vedas. Instead within the movement, there were two views regarding the type of education to be taught. One school i.e., the Gurukul school was of the opinion that religious instruction alone should be provided while the other school headed by Lajpat Rai was in favour of Western education along with religious instructions. This school of thought came to be known as the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic Movement (DASV). This school worked in direct confrontation with the Gurukul school. However, Lajpat Rai insisted on secular education and pointed out that secular education was as important as religious instruction for the Hindus. He even went a step further by saying that secular education was more important.

In one of his open letters to Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, he said:

Our English education, the study of eminent European minds and European Sciences—alas, that you cannot feel this has expanded our souls and we can no longer be selfish 'Sat Bachina' prodigies of our oriental language.\footnote{32 Lajpat Rai, The Man in his Ward, (Madras: Ganesh and Company, 1907), p.19.}

Lajpat Rai clearly recognised that the Western civilization is a gigantic force and we cannot protect ourselves from its advancing march. In this manner, we find that inspite of the fact that Lajpat Rai was an Arya Samajist, he provided not only for secular education in the DAV's schools and colleges but gave a superior place ot it as against religious instruction. Thus, he did not retard the forces of secularism but helped in his own unique way to promote them.

After dealing with the perspective of Lajpat Rai on secularism, we shall now analyse the views of another important extremists leader from Bengal i.e. Bipin Chandra Pal (1858-1932).

Bipin Chandra Pal received Western education and studied for a time at Oxford. He was one of the activists in the Brahma Samaj Movement. He founded the famous nationalist paper \textit{Bande-Mataram}. He was the chief architect of the Swadeshi Movement of 1905. He
was the main spokesman of extremism in Bengal.

Like other extremist leaders, Bipin Chandra also talked of religious or spiritual nationalism. He believed that there were fundamental differences between European nationalism and Indian nationalism. European nationalism was based on secular foundations. Therefore, in that kind of nationalism, there was excessive emphasis on territorial unity and territorial loyalty. As against European nationalism, Bipin Chandra and other extremist leaders were developing another kind of nationalism which was based on cultural unity. He pointed out that the causes as well as the consequences of nationalism in Europe were economic conflicts, industrial competitions and greedy rivalries for the acquisition of unappropriated territories and the possession of unexplored markets. These were the consequences of nationalism in Europe and these consequences also became the cause of the quickening and preservation of nationalism in Europe.

Bipin Chandra was very clear in his mind that the concept of nationalism as had arrived from the West was never developed and existed in ancient India. He condemned European nationalism by saying that it represented narrow and selfish patriotism. He felt sure that nationalism could not be a mere political sentiment. He
was not satisfied with the secular foundation of nationalism. He felt that nationalism could be strong and permanent only when it is based on religious foundation. In fact he repudiated the idea of the separation of politics and religion. He believed that the sacred and the secular cannot be separated. He was firmly of the opinion that what Indian needed in his time was spiritual nationalism. It was a form of nationalism which had both secular and sacred religious foundation.

Bipin Chandra made full use of religious symbols in promoting Hindu nationalism in Bengal. There were two schools of religious people among the Hindus in contemporary Bengal. These were the Mother-worshippers and the Neo-Vedantists. He used the Mother-worshippers to carry his message of nationalism to the women and the masses of the country. Similarly, he used the Neo-Vedantists for spreading the message of nationalism among the intellectuals.

The major effort of Bipin Chandra was to attract the masses towards the national movement. With this in view, he brought about an identity between nationalism and religion. That is why he said that the idea of the nation is not a mere word or a mere abstraction. For him, the Mother Earth and the Mother God was the one
and the same thing. In his own words:

It is something very tangible, something very concrete. It is both word and thought, both an idea and a symbol and manifestation—it is both abstract and concrete. Its concrete elements are places and persons sanctified by noble historic associations.\textsuperscript{33}

For Bipin Chandra the Mother-Earth was not a mere piece of territory. Infact, he identified the concept of Mother-Goddess with the concept of Mother Earth i.e. he said that the Mother Earth is not a mere abstraction it is something very tangible and something very concrete.\textsuperscript{34} He said that the Mother-Earth is both abstract and concrete. He glorified the Mother-Earth by endowing it with a personality of its own. Talking of the personality of the Mother, he said that the mountains, rivers the plain and the plateau were a part of the personality of the Mother-Earth. He even said that our history, our philosophy and even our religion express the personality of the Mother Earth. Not only that he identified the Mother Earth with the Mother Goddess but he also said that the Mother Earth in its most concrete form was like our own Mother. In


\textsuperscript{34} B.C.Pal, \textit{Soul of India} (Calcutta: Chowdhry and Chowdhry, 1924), p. 199.
his own words:

The mountains, these rivers, these extensive plains and lofty plateaus are all witnesses into the life and love of our race, in and through which the very life and love of the Mother has sought and found uninterrupted and progressive expression. Our history is the sacred biography of the Mother. Our philosophies are the revelations of the Mother's minds, our poetry and our painting, our music and our drama, our architecture and our sculptures all are the outflow of the Mother's diverse emotional moods and experiences. Our religion is the organised expression of the soul of the Mother. 35

In this manner, we find that Bipin Chandra tried to build up Hindu nationalism on the basis of religious foundation. It can be argued that he retarded the process of secularism. However, he did not stop at Hindu nationalism only. He believed that Hindu nationalism was necessary and inevitable. He wanted that religious communities also to develop their own personal nationalism based on religious foundations. He firmly believed that the work of nation building could be carried out only when five main religious communities of India: Hindu Persees, Bhuddists, Muslims and Christians will develop their respective religious nationalisms. After these different religious nationalism grow up he wanted that they should establish cooperation and unity among themselves. Thus he said

35 Ibid.
The Hindu nation-builder, therefore, shall not seek to superimpose his own ideals and methods upon his Mohamedan brother, nor shall the Mohamedan, the Buddhist, or the Christian, seek to obliterate the essential characteristics of the Hindu culture and the Hindu civilisation, by forcing their own special ideas and forms on them. 36

Bipin Chandra like other extremist leaders believed that nation-building within the Hindus and similarly among other religious communities should be carried out both on religious and secular grounds. However, cooperation and unity between different religious communities could be carried out only on the bases of secular foundation. For this he, like other extremist leaders, recommended the concept of Swadeshi.

Bipin Chandra believed in Hindu nationalism and from Hindu nationalism he wanted that on the basis of cooperation between different religious communities Indian nationalism will emerge. However, he did not stop even at the level of Indian nationalism. From there he wanted nationalism of different countries to evolve universal humanism. For him humanity is the eternal revelation of God to man. He visualised the synthesis of nation and essential universalism. He believed that both nationality and humanity are equally divine.

36 Ibid., p. 201.
Bipin Chandra believed that his concept of nationalism did not work in contradiction with the concept of internationalism. He said that nationalism is necessary and inevitable only because every nation must first be true to itself. However, after different countries had evolved their nationalisms they must be affiliated to universal humanity. He interpreted orthodox Hindu thought in such a manner that he arrived at the conclusion that the Mother Goddess was the Mother Earth. The Mother Goddess rests eternally on the lap of Maha Vishnu who he identified it with universal humanity. In this manner he started with the idea of Indian nationalism which finally ended in universal humanity.37

Like Lajpat Rai, Bipin Chandra was also a social reformer. He belonged to the Brahma-Samaj and therefore supported social-reforms. He did not do much in the field of social reform himself but the very fact that he sided with the social reformers gives him some credit for having contributed to the process of secularism, at least indirectly.

37 During the period 1908-1911, his ideas on nationalism changed considerably. During this period he talked of federal internationalism or imperial federation. During this period he believed that there was no conflict between nationalism and imperialism.
Another important extremist leader from the point of view of our study is Aurobindo Ghosh (1872–1950). He was one of the great Indian thinkers and also one of the important leaders of the extremist school during the period 1905–1910. He had received Western education. His parents wanted him to join the India Civil Service. But while in England, he was inspired by the ideas of nationalism. He returned to India as an educationalist and a writer.

Rabinder Nath Tagore hailed him as one of the messiahs of Indian civilization and culture. In 1909, C.R. Das had pronounced that:

Long after he is dead and gone, Aurobindo will be looked upon as the poet of patriotism, as the prophet of nationalism and as the lover of humanity. His words will be echoed and re-echoed not only in India but across distant seas and lands.38

Like Bipin Chandra, Aurobindo believed in the idea of spiritual nationalism. He argued that nationalism is religion by which we are trying to recognise the presence of God in the nation and in our fellow countrymen. For Aurobindo, the nation was not a mere territory but a spiritual being. The nation was to be organised not on the basis of common self-interest but on the basis of common-feeling that we are all sons of one common mother.

Sri Aurobindo was a sage. Even before he retired from active political life and left for Pondicherry, he was of the firm conviction that religion and politics could not be separated. For him, the spiritual was more important than the material. Infact, in his view the secular was subordinated to the spiritual. According to him the very talk of religion and politics as unconnected aspects of human activity provokes laughter. In his words:

Here everything that claims popular attention must have the sanction of religion. Neither does religion concern any other subject so intimately as politics. 39

Not only that Aurobindo believed that religion cannot be divorced from politics but he also believed that religion alone is the bases of all political activity. He justified his interest in politics because he argued that efforts in the direction of spiritual development led us to politics. Thus he said that self knowledge and self-realisation are the aims of the religious men, but spiritual development depends on the preservation of the body. In his words:

Those who allow others to take possession of their body cannot long remain in possession of their soul. 40

40 Ibid., p.129.
It is on the bases of this conviction that he argued that a nation has to be free from alien government in order to develop according to its own genius.

Like Bipin Chandra, Aurobindo also said that our country was our Mother and this Mother Earth was a concrete personality. According to him this Mother is not merely the soil, it is not merely a division of land but it is a living thing. In his own words:

It is the Mother in whom you move and have your being.\footnote{41}

To emphasize that his concept of nationalism was not merely political or materialistic, Sri Aurobindo said that nationalism not politics but a religion, a creed, a faith. He went even further and said that nationalism was not simple religion. Nationalism was Sanatana Dharma. To quote him again:

I say no longer that nationalism is a creed, a religion, a faith; I say that it is the Sanatana Dharma which for us is nationalism.\footnote{42}

Aurobindo said that the Hindu nation was born with the Sanatana Dharma. The Hindu nation grows and declines with the growth and decline of Sanatana Dharma. The Hindu nation was capable of perishing but only if Sanatana Dharma was capable of perishing. The conviction

\footnote{41 Aurobindo Ghose, \textit{Speeches}, (Calcutta: Arya Publishing House,1922), p.34.}
\footnote{42 Aurobindo Ghose, \textit{The Ideal of the Karmayogin}, (Calcutta: Arya Publishing House,1937),p.4.}
was that since the Sanatana Dharma by definition means imperishable, the Hindu nation was also imperishable.

Aurobindo talked of the birth of Avtar in the nation. He described how the idea of nation was immortal because the three hundred millions of people of this country are God in the nation. He told his audience that the idea of nationalism for which they were working was immortal.

Even after his retirement from active politics, Aurobindo expressed his views on the concept of nationalism. In his book *Ideal of Human Unity*, he defined the nation as:

A persistence psychological unit which Nature has been busy developing throughout the world in the most various forms and educating into physical and political unity.  

What is very significant in this book is the conception that political unity was not the essential factor of nationalism. Another significant idea in this book is that he argued that patriotism or nationalism was not enough by itself. He said that our ideal of patriotism looks beyond the unity of the nation and envisages the ultimate unity of mankind. He discussed the various ways in which world unity could be achieved.

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He argued that some kind of unity among human beings could be achieved with the help of political and administrative means. However, this kind of unity could be precarious and mechanical unity. Real unity of the human race for him could be achieved only on the bases of religion, spirituality and humanism.

It is clear from what we have discussed above that Aurobindo preached the concept of spiritual nationalism during the phase of extremism and even thereafter he emphasized the same kind of nationalism based on religion and spirituality with the difference that in his later life he talked much more of the ideal of Human unity than Hindu nationalism. Throughout his life he sought to subordinate the secular to the spiritual. In this manner he sought to retard the process of secularism in India. He was not indifferent to things secular but believed firmly that they could not be separated from the spiritual and that secular ideals would have meaning only when based on religion and spirituality. Thus his views were similar in many ways with the views of other extremists.

Now we can sum up the views of extremists. What is common in their exposition about the relation of religion and politics? What place they assign to religion? One can say that all the extremists realized that the
heart of India was in religion. They realized that the
religious people of India would not understand anything,
unless stated in religious terms and that a purely
political propaganda without the touch of religion
would not appeal to the masses.

The extremist promoted the growth of nationalism
in India. But in the process of doing so, they also
retarded the growth of secularism in the country. They
strengthened religious obscurantism.

Secondly, in addition to retarding the progress
of secularism, their role had another indirect consequences.
They alienated the Muslims who were prevented from
joining the main stream of nationalism.

The extremist also weakened the growth of
secularism because they did not have a social and economic
programme which alone could serve the foundations of
nationalism. For them, the question of Hindu-Muslim
unity and of bringing about social reform was a secondary
issue. They side-tracked these important elements of
secularism in India. In this manner, they lost the
opportunity of laying down solid foundations for the
growth of secularism.

Another dimension of the extremists ideology was
that the Muslims did not join the nationalist movement
as the former were raising Indian Nationalism on Hindu
Ideology. To quote Dutta:

To identify the national awakening with a revival of Hinduism. By this act they cut off the Moslem masses from the national movement and opened the way to the Government’s counter-move with the formation of the Moslem League in 1906. 44

It must be pointed out that the role of the extremists was not the main reason for the exclusion of the Muslims from the main stream of Indian nationalism. Infact, they remained out mainly because of the British policy of divide and rule and also because of their educational, social and economic backwardness. Even a moderate like Gokhale wrote to Sir William Wedderburn on May 24, 1907:

There is no doubt that the officials have allowed the impression to spread (and have even openly encouraged it) that the Hindus were in their bad books and that the Mohamadan community was the special object of their favour and patronage ... there was a marked tendency to wink at Mohamadan rowdyism and leave the Hindus more or less to their own fate. 45

It can be emphasized that as against the British rule and a well organised and favoured Muslim communalism, the extremist were forced to organise themselves on the basis of Hindu ideology.

45 Gokhale Papers, File No.205, Part I. Available in National Archives of India.
The extremists kind of nationalism started with Bankim Chandra Chatterjee. He with the help of his Bengali writings fostered Bengali nationalism. His concept of Bande-Mataram referred to the land of Bengal as well as to the female Hindu deity. This association between the country and the worship of the female deity became the basis of Hindu religious nationalism. In the words of Shankar Ghose:

Bankim gave a religious significance to the idea of the motherland by declaring the image of the Goddess Durga could be seen the future greatness of the Motherland. This identification between the Motherland and the Mother Goddess was exploited and popularised by the extremist leaders like B.C.Pal and Sri Aurobindo. Sri Aurobindo declare that the greatest contribution to Bankim was that he raised nationalism to the dignity of religion. The direct advantage of identifying religion with nationalism was that it became popular and a mass movement because it appeared to be an indigenous ideal and not as something derived from the alien culture of Europe.  

The extremist leaders utilised the popularity of the Mother-worshipper among the masses and the popularity of the New-Vedantist among the intellectual for the service of the spiritual nationalism. They condemned the territorial idea of nationalism and also the secular

idea of nationalism. They emphasized religious and cultural nationalism. They were of the view that nationalism must have religious and cultural foundations. All this would lead us to believe that the extremists were retarding the process of secularism in modern India. However, we must also realize that religion and culture were the means and methods for the extremist leaders. These were matters that were available and were exploited or a particular purpose i.e. mass nationalism and freedom. However, the end was very clearly the attainment of political nationalism. We must here emphasize that nationalism is an agency of secularism and nation-building leads to secularism directly or indirectly.

Like the Bengali extremist, Tilak also exploited religion in order to bring about a mass national movement. He used the dynamite of religion to convert middle class nationalism into mass nationalism. He exploited religious festivals. In one of his articles, he points out the significance of these religious festivals for Indian nationalism. Thus he said:

The educated people can achieve results through these national festivals which it would be impossible for the Congress to achieve. Why should you not give the shape of huge mass meetings to the bigger Jatras? Will it not be
possible for political activities to enter
the humblest cottages of the villages
through these festivals. 47

The Bengali extremist had used the Mother Goddess
while Tilak used the God Ganapati for identical purposes.
Moreover, he also used the Shivaji festival to bring
the Marathas into the mainstream of Indian nationalism.

Lajpat Rai was more frank than the other extremist
leaders. He operated in a different atmosphere. He
talked of the two concepts of nationalism. One was the
concept of Hindu nationalism which was the result of the
fear of Muslim majority in Punjab. The second concept
was that of secular nationalism based on purely economic
and political foundations. He was against appeasement,
separate electorate and Muslim-pun-Islamism because he
believed that these things would create temporary unity
but long term division. For permanent unity, it was
inevitable that nationalism should be based on solid
economic and political foundations rather than on
religious moorings.

It can be concluded that the extremists school
did mix religion with politics to a considerable extent.
However, they cannot be charged with retarding the
process of secularism in India. At the most, it can be

said that for them secularism was a secondary issue in the contemporary situation while nationalism was the supreme consideration. In this sense, the extremists school were less secular than the moderates and more secular than the Muslim thinkers whom we shall discuss in the next chapter.