THE CRISIS OF UNITY: THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND

BROADCASTING AND NATIONAL IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION IN POST-

INDEPENDENCE INDIA, 1947-1965

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Dissertation

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation centers Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications in post-independence India from 1947 to 1965, analyzing this corpus of texts as national identity construction as well as the epistemological origin of contemporary Hindu nationalism. While much of the scholarship on India after independence views the nation-state as adhering to the Nehruvian consensus of secularism, socialism, democracy, I argue that Hinduism informed the national identity construction promoted by the MIB based on Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Congress' goal of uniting the population. I challenge the notion that India was a secular nation-state following independence and maintain that the presence of Hindu themes and terminology within the Ministry's publications provided the scaffolding for Hindu nationalists to capture the political and cultural discourse in the subcontinent. Hindus represented the largest subsection of the Indian population amid religious, linguistic, caste, and class diversity, and Nehru, Congress, and the MIB invoked and appealed to Hindu religion to promote national unity despite the official commitment to secularism. The Ministry frequently referenced the concept of *dharma*, the dispassionate performance of duty couched in religious morality, and promoted an upper class, upper caste, Hindu interpretation of Indian history throughout its publications that marginalized non-Hindus, particularly the Muslim minority. The MIB issued publications throughout the tenures of Nehru and Lal Bahadur

Shastri responding to external conflicts, promoting development efforts, selling the subcontinent as a tourist destination, and producing new works on Indian history, defining Indian national identity to the foreign and domestic audience. Critical analysis of Ministry publications reveals a continuity of discourse and national identity construction between Congress following independence and Hindu nationalists of today, with the national identity construction from 1947 to 1965 producing a history of unintended consequences. The need to foster national unity following independence led the MIB to reference and draw from Hinduism to appeal to the largest number of people, legitimizing religion in political and cultural discourse now dominated by contemporary Hindu nationalists.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

On August 15, 1947, India became an independent nation-state, ending decades of

direct colonial rule under the British Raj and marking the beginning of the subcontinent's

"tryst with destiny."[1] The mass movement of Mohandas Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, and

the Indian National Congress resulted in independence; India was to be governed by

Indians rather than a colonial bureaucracy. India formally became a federal republic on

January 26, 1950, a state whose early politics were dominated by Congress as the legacy

of the nationalist movement. Nehru served as India's first prime minister from

independence to his death in 1964, committing Congress as well as the nation to the

"Nehruvian Consensus" of socialism, democracy, secularism, and non-alignment.[2]

Nehru forged this platform as a response to global developments, seeking to prevent India

from becoming too dependent on either the United States or the Soviet Union in the Cold

War and uniting with other decolonizing nations (viewing the world as "North and

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[1] Nehru used the term "tryst with destiny" on the eve of Indian independence to describe the achievement of Indian independence as the fulfillment of history. Jawaharlal Nehru, "A Tryst with Destiny: Speech on the Granting of Independence, August 14, 1947," *Internet Modern History Sourcebook*, Fordham University, Accessed Feb 16, 2024, https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/1947nehru1.asp.

[2] Achin Vanaik, *The Rise of Hindu Authoritarianism: Secular Claims, Communal Realities*, (London: Verso, 2017), 58.

South" rather than a conflict between East and West) while also pursuing planned development to bolster India's economy and create a more egalitarian society. Nehru's dedication to secularism was predicated on national and regional concerns, the prime minister arguing that only a secular India would unite and ensure the safety of the various religious populations living in the subcontinent. Moreover, secularism offered a refutation to Pakistan, both nations still scarred from the violence and upheaval of Partition and remaining bitter enemies as a result. Under Nehru's rule, the nation would be built on the four pillars of the Nehruvian Consensus, with India's commitment to secularism the most crucial component for national unity.

Fast forward to May 19, 2019, when the general election to form the 17th Lok Sabha concluded with Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) winning a majority of seats in the lower house of the Indian legislative body and Narendra Modi remaining the prime minister of India. Unlike the Indian National Congress and its advocacy of a secular India, the BJP is explicitly committed to a Hindu nationalist agenda espoused in the texts of V.D. Savarkar and M.S. Golwalkar. The BJP, the right-wing paramilitary RSS, and the broader combination of Hindu nationalist organizations, the "Sangh Parivar," rebuke secularism as a remnant of colonial rule, a Western discourse with no proper place in India leading to "unequal treatment" and "pampering of religious minorities" by Congress.[3] Despite outcry from the Indian left and intellectual circles in the West,

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[3] Ratna Kapur and Brenda Cossman, "Communalising Gender, Engendering Community: Women, Legal Discourse and the Saffron Agenda," in *Women and Right-Wing Movements: Indian Experiences*, edited by Tanika Sarkar and Urvashi Butalia, (London: Zed Books Ltd, 1995).

condemning the rhetoric used by Hindu nationalists due to its fascist origins[4] and

demonization of minorities, Muslims and Christians in particular, the BJP actually added

to its majority in the Lok Sabha, the majority of the Indian public actively voting for the

party of Hindu nationalism. The second consecutive electoral victory constitutes a

dramatic change in Indian politics, as political parties other than Congress failed to win

consecutive elections and often only emerged as de facto protest votes (responding to

Indira Gandhi's Emergency and corruption under Rajiv Gandhi). While Nehru and

Congress in the early republic believed that secularism was the path to Indian unity, the

election and growing strength of the BJP challenges this contention, illustrating that

much of India today is uniting around an ideology that looks to discriminate or actively

persecute religious minorities.

     Because the BJP and Congress are political rivals today, it is easy to view the

ascendency of Hindu nationalism as a deviation from Nehru's vision and to periodize

post-independence Indian history as one divided between "secular India" and "Hindu

nationalist India." Moreover, scholarship on Hindu nationalism often posits a sharp

distinction between the nationalism of Congress and that of the Sangh Parivar. Works

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[4] In his most famous work, *We, or Our Nationhood Defined*, published in 1939, Golwalkar explicitly states that India can and should learn from the example of Nazi Germany in its handling of Indian Muslims. The RSS officially distanced themselves from *We, or Our Nationhood Defined* and Golwalkar's explicit fascism in 2006 (Akshaya Mukul, "RSS Officially Disowns Golwalkar's Book," *Times of India*, Mar 9, 2006, https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/rss-officially-disowns-golwalkars-book/articleshow/1443606.cms). Moreover, labeling Hindu nationalism as a fascist ideology is controversial in India and abroad. Hindu nationalists (obviously) dispute the charges of fascism as an uncritical label, one often applied by Western outsiders. Even within academia, there is debate as to whether Hindu nationalism is truly fascist rather than a generic conservative, right-wing ideology (See Vanaik, *Rise of Hindu Authoritarianism*). Nevertheless, Hindu nationalism's ties to fascism and the way it has taken on an exclusionary character throughout history, demonizing Muslims, Christians, and the West, cannot be ignored or overlooked.

such as Des Raj Goyal's account of the RSS, *Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh* (1979) and

Partha Banerjee's *In the Belly of the Beast: The Hindu Supremacist RSS and BJP of

India, An Insider's Story* (1996) argue that the foundation of the RSS in 1925 served as

the origins of Hindu nationalism and a fundamental break from the mass movement of

Gandhi and Nehru. Additionally, because of the continued electoral success of the BJP

and their implementation of a Hindu nationalist platform, particularly elements that

threaten stability within India and the South Asian region like revoking Kashmir's

"special status,"[5] critics are more likely to cite and celebrate the secular platform of

Congress in the early years of Indian independence, the argument being that India was

founded as a secular republic and should remain as such.

Waxing nostalgic about a supposed age of Nehruvian secularism to contrast with

contemporary Hindu nationalism, mythologizing the first prime minister and his ideals,[6]

does little to explain how and why Hindu nationalism and the BJP became the dominant

political ideology and party within the Indian subcontinent. Throughout its history,

Hindu nationalism remained a minor force within Indian politics. The Bharatiya Jana

Sangh (the predecessor to the BJP) formed in 1951 due to the decline of the Hindu

Mahasabha, the party headed by Savarkar that espoused the political platform of Hindu

nationalism, and a merging of former Mahasabha leader Syama Prasad Mukherjee with

the organizational structure of the RSS.[7] The Jana Sangh remained an opposition party

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[5] "Article 370: India Strips Disputed Kashmir of Special Status," *BBC News*, August 5, 2019, Accessed Feb 14, 2019, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-49231619.

[6] Taylor C. Sherman, *Nehru's India: A History in Seven Myths*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2022).

[7] Craig Baxter, *The Jana Sangh: A Biography of an Indian Political Party*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1969), 54. The RSS refrained from engaging in politics as an explicit political party to

throughout the Nehru era and made electoral gains in the 1950s and 1960s but largely

failed to develop a coherent political platform other than opposing Congress.[8] The notion

that Hindu nationalism emerged within the intellectual milieu of Congress and Indian

nationalist movements in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries,[9] declined

following the assassination of Gandhi, then reemerged in the 1990s with the Babri Masjid

movement to such a degree that it is now dominant political ideology is overly simplistic

and contains far too many sharp divergences for any scholar to accept uncritically.

Despite the official line that Congress supported secularism and that India was a secular

nation-state, Hinduism must have maintained some presence within politics, society, and

the national cultural discourse for Hindu nationalism to completely dominate Indian

politics today.

I argue that Hinduism informed national identity construction since independence,

with the Government of India referencing and invoking religion to foster national unity

even during the Nehru era when the prime minister and Congress touted the country was

committed to the ideology of secularism. Furthermore, I challenge the implicit

assumption that India was a secular nation-state immediately after independence.

Though communal tensions and challenges to the prime minister's interpretation of

secularism remained throughout the Nehru era, analysis of the 1950s and early 1960s

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maintain a shroud of secrecy, allowing leaders to proclaim that the organization was religious and cultural
in nature. Additionally, the RSS was banned from 1948 to 1949 after Nathuram Godse, a man with ties to
the organization, assassinated Gandhi on January 30th, 1948. Though Prime Minister Nehru wanted to
outlaw the organization permanently, Home Minister Sardar Vallabhai Patel lifted the ban once the RSS
created a written constitution.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Chetan Bhatt, *Hindu Nationalism: Origins, Ideologies, and Modern Myths*, (Oxford: Berg, 2001).

often posits that the state itself was committed to the Nehruvian consensus, that Nehru himself fashioned the nation-state in his image. This is because most works focusing on the early post-independence period rely on a "great man approach" to history, concentrating extensively on Prime Minister Nehru along with his speeches and selected works when evaluating Indian foreign and domestic policy.[10] This approach is logical, given Nehru's direct involvement in formulating India's foreign policy strategy of non-alignment and his hands-on approach to planned economic development. However, centering on Nehru and sources produced by and devoted to the prime minister leads to the conclusion that Nehru's personal ideology was projected onto the Indian subcontinent in the construction of national identity, particularly regarding secularism. Just because Nehru was personally committed to secularism and Congress touted a secular ideology as part of its political platform does not mean that the Indian nation-state became secular immediately after independence.[11] Hindu traditionalism maintained a presence within Congress and Indian society despite Nehru's opining for a secular India and the Government of India's nominal commitment to secularism.[12] To promote national unity, the Government of India, through the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, invoked

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[10] M.N. Das, *The Political Philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru*, (New York: The John Day Company, 1961), Sukhamoy Chakravarty, *Development Planning: The Indian Experience*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), Robert Desmond King, *Nehru and the Language Politics of India*, (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), Agnadipuram Appadorai, *The Domestic Roots of India's Foreign Policy, 1947-1972*, (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1981), Sinderpal Singh, *India in South Asia: Domestic Identity Politics and Foreign Policy from Nehru to the BJP*, (London: Routledge, 2013), Aparna Pande, *From Chanakya to Modi: Evolution of India's Foreign Policy*, (Noidon, Uttar Pradesh: HarperCollins India, 2017).
[11] Prime Minister Nehru is often celebrated for giving India "a secular and democratic ethos" that continues today. See Das, *Political Philosophy*, M.J. Akbar, *Nehru: The Making of India*, (London: Viking Press, 1988), Ramachandra Guha, *India after Gandhi: The History of the World's Largest Democracy*, (New York: HarperCollins, 2007).
[12] Vanaik, *Rise of Hindu Authoritarianism*, Benjamin Zachariah, *Nehru*, (London: Routledge, 2004).

religion and utilized Hindu terminology to impart civic values, and bolster emotional integration to the nation-state despite the official ideology of secularism.

This dissertation examines national identity construction in the post-independence era from 1947 to 1965, the years in which Nehru and Lal Bahadur Shastri were Prime Minister of India and investigates how the state attempted to define and project Indian national identity in an independent state rather than in the struggle for nationhood. Studying how the nation-state delineated national identity demonstrates the continued presence of themes, motifs, and terminology from Hindu tradition, therefore legitimizing Hindu religion within a nation-state supposedly devoted to secularism and providing an epistemological stem for contemporary Hindu nationalism. Though Nehru and Congress espoused secularism as a tenet of the independent Indian nation-state, governmental sources produced by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) Publications Division relied on Hindu religious themes and language, most often invoking the concept of *dharma* (dispassionate performance of duty) and self-sacrifice along with a presenting information about domestic and foreign policy in a Hindu tenor and within the parameters of the nationalist interpretation and periodization of history. Critical analysis of MIB publications challenges the notion that Indian was a secular nation-state following independence while also allowing scholars to merge the fields of the Nehru era and the history of Hindu nationalism for a fuller and better understanding of Indian history and the process of national identity construction following independence.

Why the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting?

The MIB formed in October 1941, an institution modeled after the British

Ministry of Information and, like the Indian Civil Service and much of the colonial

administrative apparatus, remained a part of India after independence. The Indian MIB

began with "the responsibility of publicity and broadcasting activities of the Government

of India," the Publications Division in particular involved in distributing publications

"meant to serve the internal and external publicity needs of the government," thus

disseminating information and managing the image of the nation-state to both a foreign

and domestic audience.[13] Even today, the MIB remains "entrusted with the task of

disseminating information about government policies, schemes and programmes through

the different medium of mass communication," serving as one of the vital Ministries that

represent the face of the government in reaching out to the masses."[14] In particular, the

Publications Division of the MIB is explicitly charged with managing ""the production,

sale, and distribution of popular pamphlets, books, and journals, on matters of national

importance for internal as well as external publicity, with a view of imparting to the

general public at home and abroad updated and correct information about India."[15] MIB

publications throughout the 1950s and early 1960s were mass published, affordable,

[13] "Descriptive Memoir of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting June 1950," June 1950, PR_000004020539, File No.: MISC/R/5, Digitized Public Records and Presidential Secretariat, National Archives of India Abhilekh Patal, Accessed Nov 6, 2022, 2, https://www.abhilekh-patal.in/jspui/handle/123456789/2769161?searchWord=ministry&backquery=[location=123456789%2F1&query=%22ministry%20of%20information%20and%20broadcasting%22&filtername=dateIssued&filtertype=equals&filterquery=[1947-08-15%20TO%201966-01-01]&filtername_1=dateIssuedTo&filtertype_1=equals&filterquery_1=[1947-08-15%20TO%201966-01-01]&rpp=100&sort_by=dc.date.accessioned_dt&order=desc&originalquery=].
[14] "About the Ministry," Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, Accessed Oct 15, 2022, https://mib.gov.in/about-us/about-the-ministry.
[15] *Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Annual Report*, *2017-18*, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 2018), 27, Accessed Mar 31, 2018, http://www.publicationsdivision.nic.in/AnnualReportEnglish17-18/index.html#p=20

"moderately priced and attractively produced" publications intended for both the literate

domestic audience as well as foreign tourists visiting India.[16] Although the MIB was

explicitly involved in presenting information about India and government policies to both

a foreign and domestic audience, serving as a mouthpiece and effectively a propaganda

wing of the government, the Ministry remains understudied within Indian history. Save

for Peter Sutoris' *Visions of Development: Films Division of India and the Imagination of*

Progress, 1948-75, which scrutinizes MIB films and how they presented government-

driven development to the Indian population and perpetuated many filmmaking

techniques from the British Raj, MIB publications have been used as supportive sources

but never critically analyzed as the primary corpus of texts in historical scholarship. [17]

Focus on MIB publications allows for the study of top-down identity construction

while simultaneously moving away from solely relying on Nehru and Nehru's sources,

shifting past the "great man" approach and "the Nehru Raj" that have and continue to

dominate understandings of the early post-independence era. As cheap, mass-distributed

sources (typically 1 to 4 rupees, with tourist publications between 10 and 30 rupees), they

are documents that are widely accessible for scholars to utilize yet have remained

understudied despite decades of demands that historians "move beyond the archive."

With the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns preventing scholars from traveling to

conduct research still very fresh in our memories, this type of source base provides an

alternative to "do history" in response to the global challenges we face today. The

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[16] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *The March of India*, Vol XI, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1959), 1.
[17] Peter Sutoris, *Visions of Development: Films Division of India and the Imagination of Progress, 1948-75*, (London: Hurst and Company, 2016).

publications issued by the MIB were produced by the state itself, discussing topics and presenting information of governmental and therefore national importance, making them critical to understand how the state explained policy and defined national identity. Within the Indian population, they were specifically meant to be accessible to the middle- and upper-class population, discussing topics and themes of national importance to the "imagined citizens" of the new republic. Given the fact that literacy remained low in India even into the 1960s (only twenty-four percent of the Indian population could read and write by 1961),[18] the potential readership for these publications was a limited and specific audience. Rather than a vast and unconnected body of literature, MIB publications of the 1950s and early 1960s are a collection of documents created in a specific historical context with a single underlying goal, that of maintaining unity within an emerging nation-state and among a diverse population.

While it would be simple to select specific publications dealing with particular aspects of Indian history and culture and point to any utterances of Hinduism and unity as "proof" to support my claims, this "cherry-picking" approach only leads to an inaccurate representation of the past. Not every single publication issued by the MIB referenced Hinduism or religious terminology, but that does not make them unworthy of critical analysis. Instead, I try to be as comprehensive and systematic as possible, reading all of the MIB publications available through libraries in the state of Ohio as well as those that can be found in the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library in New Delhi.[19] Additionally,

[18] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *We Plan for Prosperity*, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1961), 67.
[19] Prior to 2020, scholars at the University of Akron or using the OhioLink system could request titles from the Center for Research Libraries in Chicago, which has a large collection of MIB publications I was able

I draw from the digitized sources from the National Archives of India pertaining to the

MIB and its Chief Ministers, personal correspondence and oral history transcripts of

Ranganath Ramachandra (R.R.) Diwakar and Balkrishna Vishwanath (B.V.) Keskar as

well as the personal papers of Prime Minister Nehru, also available at the Nehru

Library.[20] Diwakar and Keskar were the first two Chief Ministers of the Ministry of

Information and Broadcasting (Diwakar serving from 1948-1952, Keskar from 1952-

1962) and had personal relationships with Prime Minister Nehru, these two men shaping

the language and tone of the MIB publications in line with the governmental agenda and

Nehru's goal of maintaining national unity.[21] While both men were committed to

Nehruvian secularism and certainly not Hindu traditionalists let alone Hindu nationalists

(they were both lifelong members of the Congress with Diwakar a scholar in his own

right and Keskar a music critic) and MIB publications advanced the Nehruvian

consensus, the terminology, themes, and motifs present in these documents often draw

from Hinduism, granting legitimacy to one particular religion over the many others

within the country that claimed to not favor any confessional identity.

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to use when I began my search in 2018. However, the University of Akron ended their affiliation with the CRL in 2020, and by 2022 CRL titles could no longer be requested through OhioLink.

[20] Because of the requirements for foreign scholars to both use the library and access Nehru's papers, I had very little time with the personal documents of the prime minister.

[21] A cursory Google search of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting will say that Sardar Patel was the head of the organization from 1947 until 1950, followed by Diwakar from 1950-1952 then Keskar from 1952-62. This is incorrect. Though the duties of the Minister for Information and Broadcasting fell under the purview of the Home Minister and that Patel was the first Chief Minister of the MIB, Diwakar is credited as the Chief Minister beginning in 1948 in the oral history transcript dedicated to him. Furthermore, Diwakar himself remembers becoming head of the Ministry in 1949. "R.R. Diwakar Oral History Transcript," Apr 15, 1969, Serial No.: 243, Acc No.: 105, Oral History Transcripts, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi, 1.

The need to maintain unity as the nation-state navigated the formative years following independence was perpetual; Hindu religious terms and symbols served as the most widely accessible and "uniting" icons in a nation of many different religions, languages, castes, and classes. The proportion of Hindus compared to other religious groups was much greater than any other categorical subdivision. According to the 1951 census of India, Hindus composed 84.1 percent of the Indian population; Muslims constituted 9.8 percent, while Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism, Jainism, and other faiths did not exceed three percent of the population of the state.[22] While the census highlights the religious diversity of the subcontinent, it also reveals that Hindus were the largest subsection of the population, significantly greater than the proportion of the country that spoke Hindi or Urdu (the next largest subsection of the population). Therefore, Hindu iconography was the most widely accessible and recognizable among the majority of the population. This strategy of mass appeal, defining national identity in a way to reach as many people as possible, had the unintended consequence of keeping Hindu traditionalism within the framework and definition of Indian national identity, allowing Hindu nationalism to latch onto and come to dominate the national discourse in the late twentieth century.

A brief note on the language of the publications. This dissertation focuses on English-language publications despite the fact that the MIB Publications Division produced documents in English, Hindu, and Urdu and would later translate specific

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[22] Stephanie Kramer, "Religious Composition of India," *Pew Research Center's Religion and Public Life Project*, (September 21, 2021), Pew Research Group, Accessed Apr 1, 2024, https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2021/09/21/population-growth-and-religious-composition/

documents (particularly the Surendra Nath's *1857* and the monographs in the *Builders of Modern India* series) into regional Indian languages.[23] Furthermore, the Ministry dubbed propaganda films in fourteen different languages to reach the entirety of the subcontinent: Assamese, Bengali, English, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu.[24] I have made the choice to focus on English language publications due to accessibility, both for myself and for the intended readership of these publications. While certain Hindi language publications are available at the Center for Research Libraries in Chicago, the majority of the publications available to scholars in the United States are English-language publications. At the same time, texts published in English would have been more widely accessible and more practical for the purposes of defining the aspects of national identity and unity, particularly to the Indian middle- and upper-class audience these sources targeted. Hindi became a rallying symbol during the nationalist movement, with nationalists defining it in antithesis to the British Empire and the English language they spoke, but English was the language of commonality within the Congress and among the educated elites before and after independence. The Indian Constitution (1950) stated that English would remain in use for fifteen years following independence to be replaced by Hindi as the new national language, but the implementation of this northern Indian language amid a country with many different languages prompted widespread protest, the creation of linguistic states in the late 1950s, and eventually an amendment to the Constitution declaring Hindi as an

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[23] "Descriptive Memoir," Abhilekh Patal, 3.
[24] Sutoris, *Visions of Development*, 73.

official language but not the *national* language.[25] If the MIB emphasized producing texts

in an Indian language from the north, one spoken by the greatest number of people in the

country but certainly not a majority of the population, it would work against the project

of national identity construction and prompt disarray, disunity, and threaten to unravel the

nation-state. Diwakar, a Kannada speaker himself, recognized the personal connection

people have with their language and was a proponent of the creation of linguistic states,

while Keskar criticized "Hindi bhaktas (devotee or fanatic)" as being too hardline, a

position he shared with Prime Minister Nehru.[26] Because of these considerations and the

scope of this project, English-language publications are the preferable source base for

critical analysis, as they would reach the greatest audience and possessed greater utility

for the purposes of national integration.

Secularism in the Indian Context

Since the contemporary debate on what secularism means for and in India frames

this dissertation, it is important to discuss how historians define the term and whether it is

applicable in an Indian context. Within Western studies, scholars posit two separate

models for secularism, the French model and the Anglo-American model, both framed by

the specific histories of these countries. The French model calls for a complete divorce

between the state and religion due to the historical dominance of the Catholic Church in

France before the French revolution, while the Anglo-American model postulates that the

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[25] See King, *Nehru and the Language Politics of India*.
[26] "R.R. Diwakar Oral History Transcript;" "Letter from B.V. Keskar to Nehru," July 5, 1962, B.V. Keskar Papers, Individual Collections, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.

state rules impartially on matters of religion, not privileging one group over another, a

model informed by the religious persecution of sects of Christianity in England before

emigration to the New World. Throughout its history following independence, the Indian

state tried to implement both models, attempting to prevent Hindu traditionalism from

informing and controlling the state and endeavoring to treat religious groups impartially,

a mixture of incompatible approaches with detrimental results.[27] At the onset of

independence, Congress defined secularism largely in contrast to Pakistan. Unlike

Pakistan, Congress argued, India was not a religious state and would allow religious

minorities to practice their religion in safety, resulting in the mixed-model approach that

persisted in the decades following independence and the muddled understanding as to

what secularism meant in an Indian context. Upon independence, India enacted secular

laws to govern an insufficiently secular state that coexisted with a civil society still under

pervasive religious influence; the creation of a new nation did not bring about an end to

religious loyalty and identity.[28] Furthermore, "secularism" itself is a Western discourse,

one derived from the historical experiences of former Western imperialist powers and

informed by Western religiosity and interests. Thus, it is fair to question the applicability

of a complete absence of religious identity when passed through and Indian ideological

sieve.[29] Nehru himself was not religious, which made it easy for him to profess

secularism as a facet of Indian national identity as well as an antidote to communalism

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[27] Vanaik, *Rise of Hindu Authoritarianism*, 29.
[28] Ibid, 37.
[29] Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse*, (London: United Nations University, 1986), Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments*, (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994). For a discussion of how secularism is used as a way to "other" and further imperialist and racist agendas, see Joan Scott, *The Politics of the Veil*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

before and during his tenure as Prime Minister. Yet, Hindu traditionalism remained a

powerful force within Congress and communal tensions plagued the prime minister

throughout his life. India did not become a secular nation simply because Nehru declared

it so in speeches and writings. Because of both the complications of applying a Western

discourse and model in an Indian context and the continued use of religious symbols and

terminology exemplified by MIB publications, it is clear that India "failed to secularize"

or simply did not overcome "the communal question" in the immediate aftermath of

independence, a development that allowed Hindu nationalism to come to power and

exacerbate communal relations in the subcontinent.[30]

Historiography

This dissertation responds to existing historiography on post-independence India

while also attempting to bridge the work within seemingly disparate fields, the

historiography of Hindu nationalism and studies of "the Nehru Raj." First and foremost,

scholarship on post-independence India is sparse compared to work on the colonial

period. As Gyanendra Pandey explains, this is due to the fact that the received narrative

of Indian history is a teleological one culminating with independence in 1947.[31] Largely

informed by the interpretation of Indian elites, both Hindu fundamentalists and secular

nationalists, Indian history is divided into a "glorious past" that celebrates Sanskrit texts

and the empires of the Mauryas, Guptas, and Cholas among others, followed by "Western

invasion" by Muslim factions, the Mughal Empire, and ultimately the British Empire,

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[30] Vanaik, *Rise of Hindu Authoritarianism*, 270.
[31] Gyanendra Pandey, *Routine Violence: Nations, Fragments, Histories*, (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006).

with independence and the creation of the nation-state as the culmination of Indian history. This nationalist teleology remained pervasive in MIB publications throughout the 1950s and early 1960s as leaders hoped to inspire middle- and upper-class literate citizens through the narrative of the struggle for independence along with undertones of *dharma* and self-sacrifice in the name of benefitting the nation-state. In contrast with the history before 1947, post-independence history is largely viewed as an epilogue of the received historical narrative, with dates and events happening after the achievement of Gandhi and the Indian nationalist movement often presented as "historical journalism" rather than being properly contextualized and scrutinized.[32] All history is vital and relevant for understanding the world past and present, and post-independence Indian history is crucial for comprehending contemporary geopolitics, yet it is a field that is criminally understudied. My research aims to contribute toward filling this void, treating the years immediately following independence as a focal point of study rather than an epilogue.

Furthermore, this dissertation will attempt to bridge the scholarship on Hindu nationalism and the early years of the Indian republic, rejecting the sense that there ever was a sharp break between Congress and Hindu nationalist parties and organizations. For all of the rhetoric in Nehru's speeches and writings and the government's nominal commitment to secularism, the elite, Hindu, upper caste, and upper-class vision of Indian identity continued to dominate national identity construction as well as domestic and

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[32] Guha, *India after Gandhi*, 13.

foreign policy, Congress a party "of pale saffron hue."[33] Though this notion of an elite-driven interpretation of Indian history and identity is a crucial factor in the emergence of postcolonial critique along with the formation of the Subaltern Studies Group, very rarely do we see how this form of identity construction functioned in practice. Examining the mechanics of identity construction--how and why the nation-state defined national identity--through the MIB and its publications in the early post-independence years allows for a fuller understanding of the rise and nature of Hindu nationalism and Indian history.

While independence largely remains "the end of Indian history" according to popular interpretations, scholarship on Hindu nationalism is becoming popular within Indian history writing. Due to contemporary political developments, academics increasingly seek to understand why Indians continue to vote for a party and support organizations with fascist origins and ideologies. Works devoted to Hindu nationalism have offered different assessments regarding the role of Hindu nationalism in India based on the time of publication. Craig Baxter's account of *The Jana Sangh* (1969) treated the Bharatiya Jana Sangh as an opposition party to Congress on the rise, one that could potentially displace the Indian Communist Party as the opposition party in the subcontinent; because of its seemingly prophetic interpretation, it is widely cited today. Publishing decades later, Australian political scientist Bruce Graham deemed the Jana Sangh a political failure and the BJP as a party too weak to truly challenge Congress in

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[33] Vanaik, *Rise of Hindu Authoritarianism*. The mention to saffron referring to the primary color of the BJP and the Sangh Parivar.

his work *Hindu Nationalism and Politics: The Origins and Development of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh* (1990). Within the field, there is now a broad consensus that "the saffron wave" of Hindu nationalism began in the late 1980s and early 1990s centered around the Ram Janmabhoomi movement and protests surrounding and eventual destruction of the Babri Masjid mosque in Ayodhya in 1992.[34] This coalesced with what Atul Kohli described as India's "crisis of governability," the growing sense that by the early 1990s the Indian government had become so disconnected from the general public that it could no longer effectively govern.[35] Because of this disconnect and growing frustration by the Indian people toward the government, according to the established historiography, Hindu nationalist organizations made inroads into local communities through aid and outreach programs, promising to rectify the lasting legacies of colonialism along with the failures of the state.[36] While the aforementioned works of Des Raj Goyal and Partha Banerjee cast Hindu nationalism and secularism as binary opposites, works by Chetan Bhatt and Achin Vanaik offer more nuance and a greater societal critique.[37] Hindu nationalism found its political success, according to Thomas Blom Hansen, because Hindu nationalism managed to take hold of public culture, becoming the dominant voice and

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[34] Walter K. Anderson and Shridhar Damle, *The Brotherhood in Saffron: The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and Hindu Revivalism*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1987); Tanika Sarkar, *Khaki Shorts, Saffron Flags: A Critique of the Hindu Right*, (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1993).

[35] Atul Kohli, *Democracy and Discontent: India's Growing Crisis of Governability*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). This theme is also explored in both the first and second edition of Paul R. Brass' *The Politics of India Since Independence*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[36] Tanika Sarkar and Urvashi Butalia, eds., *Women and Right-Wing Movements: Indian Experiences*, (London: Zed Books Ltd, 1995).

[37] Bhatt, *Hindu Nationalism*; Vanaik, *Rise of Hindu Authoritarianism*.

ideology within political and public discourse, setting the political and cultural discourse at both the top-down and bottom-up level.[38]

I argue that the co-opting and subverting of the discourse first established by Nehru and Congress was possible because of the persistence of elite conceptions of Indian identity and the continued use of Hindu symbols, metaphors, and axioms to construct Indian national identity immediately after independence. Nehru and Congress' greatest concern, more pressing than non-alignment and more important than economic development, was maintaining the unity of the newly independent nation. Internal divisions over language, caste, and religion along with external conflict and demanded the continued articulation and definition of national identity in the name of maintaining unity. Though touting secularism and abhorring Hindu nationalism, Nehru and his government explicitly drew from Hindu traditions to appeal to the majority of the population professing Hindu religious faith to prevent collapse along regional or linguistic lines. The government attempted to appeal to and celebrate the contributions of other religious groups, making great rhetorical efforts to placate the Muslim minority in particular. But the majority of MIB publications within this "crisis of unity" explicitly drew on the elite, upper caste, upper class interpretation of Indian history and identity, one that is equally at the center of contemporary Hindu nationalism. This is not to say that the rise Hindu nationalism and the dominance of the BJP was inevitable, but I contend that there is greater continuity between the discursive strategies and national

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[38] Thomas Blom Hansen, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

identity construction of the early republic and that of today than previously explained in modern Indian scholarship.

This study is not meant to be a character assassination or a personal attempt to disparage Prime Minister Nehru's legacy. Through his speeches and writings along with other scholarly accounts of Nehru's tenure as prime minister, it is clear he truly believed in the principles he touted, particularly a state free from the communal tensions that motivated Partition. While the scholarship on Nehru has moved away from glowing hagiographies to critiques of his policies (particularly the limited success of development planning, the lack of rural land reform causing the continuation of poverty, questioning his rationale in negotiations (or lack thereof) with China leading up to the Sino-Indian War, a failure to curb corruption within Congress), the assessment of the first prime minister largely confirms he was a man trying his best to guide a nation-state in its formative years after independence.[39] Even calling Patel, Rajendra Prasad, and C. Rajagopalachari, often referred to as the "right wing" within Congress, as anything more than Hindu traditionalists would be an ahistorical overstatement, as they still agreed with

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[39] Anup Singh, *Nehru: The Rising Star of India,* (New York: The John Day Company, 1939), Das, *Political Philosophy of Nehru*, and Appadorai, *Domestic Roots of India's Foreign Policy* along with other early biographies and scholars offer almost wholly positive accounts of Nehru, treating the prime minister as a modern-day philosopher king. James Manor, *Nehru to the Nineties: The Changing Office of Prime Minister in India*, (London: Hurst and Company, 1994) and Brass' *Politics of India Since Independence* engage in a wider scope of Indian history and argue that Indian political culture declined since the Nehru era, creating a binary between the first prime minister and his successor that overlooks continuities between tenures or critiques of Nehru's policies. Sarvepalli Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), Judith Brown, *Nehru: A Political Life,* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), and Zachariah, *Nehru,* are still largely positive accounts of Prime Minister Nehru but offer critiques of India politics missing in early scholarship informed by Indian nationalism. R.N.P. Singh, *Nehru: A Troubled Legacy* (New Delhi: Wisdom Tree Publishing, 2015), by contrast, is very much an attempt at character assassination, declaring Prime Minister Nehru a man solely concerned with the accumulation of power, marginalizing any political rivals or dissenting voices and ruling as a de facto autocrat. The BJP, always looking to criticize and minimize Nehru due to his ideological stance against Hindu nationalism, promoted R.N.P. Singh's work on its YouTube page.

and advanced the Congress platform despite their ideological differences with Nehru.[40]

Looking to foster national unity in the aftermath of independence is not a malicious goal; it is the logical step after the creation of a nation-state, one that is glossed over in nationalist teleology rather than viewed and understood as a process of construction. Moreover, given the presence of numerous religious communities, language speakers, and the disparities between the elites and the impoverished as well as high and Scheduled Castes, Nehru and Congress needed to some common ground to cultivate a sense of unity and keep the country together. Nevertheless, the points of emphasis, iconography, and motifs drawing from Hinduism within MIB publications muddle the meaning of secularism in India and allowed Hindu traditionalism to not only survive but remain influential within the political and cultural discourse. The interrogation of MIB sources as a facet of national identity construction is a history of unintended consequences, revealing the continued presence of Hindu terminology in governmental language and sources. Despite an official commitment to secularism, analysis of MIB publications demonstrate that Hindu traditionalism remained woven into the national fabric of the Indian nation-state, a fundamental component of national discourse that allowed Hindu nationalism to take political and discursive power in contemporary India.

Chapter Structure

This dissertation is divided into five chapters centering on a particular group of MIB publications composed within a specific context or responding to a particular event.

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[40] Neerja Singh, *Patel, Prasad, and Rajaji: Myth of the Indian Right*, (New Delhi: SAGE Publications India, 2015).

Chapter One examines the publications produced immediately after independence, works

fundamentally concerned with maintaining a fragile national unity amid significant crises

besetting the newly formed nation-state. The Partition of India and Pakistan granted

independence to both countries but also unleashed violence, atrocities, and the

displacement of millions of people. The aftermath of Partition was but one concern for

the Government of India, as Prime Minister Nehru and Home Minister Patel also had to

manage the princely states in the subcontinent. The question of princely states and the

conflict with Pakistan coalesced into the Kashmir crisis and the First Indo-Pakistan War.

With all of these challenges facing the newly independent country along with the need to

write a constitution and forge a nation-state, national unity was a tenuous proposition at

best. The MIB began creating publications discussing contemporary events and

presenting information about the nation-state and its efforts, establishing the tone the

Ministry used throughout the 1950s and early 1960s as well as illustrating how these

documents were part of the government's efforts to construct national identity and

maintain national unity. While the MIB publications underscored "Indian secularism,"

this was largely in contrast with "Muslim Pakistan," defining the nation-state in

opposition to an external threat. At the same time, the Ministry utilized the concept of

dharma to highlight the efforts of the nation-state as morally righteous and to unite the

population amid instability. Despite proclamations of secularism, the MIB relied on

religious terminology to foster unity and appeal to the largest subsection of the Indian

population.

Chapter Two investigates MIB publications published after 1950 intended for the domestic audience. As with the publications of the pre-republic years, these documents presented the government's efforts and agenda along with defining Indian national identity in an effort to cultivate national unity. Prime Minister Nehru felt national unity came first and foremost, underpinning the success of development planning and building the nation-state.[41] These publications covered many different subjects, including the Five Year Plans and economic development, rural uplift and village co-operatives, Indian education, South India's contributions to Indian heritage, and works dedicated to India's "minorities." Despite the seemingly disparate subject matter, all of these Ministry publications were part and parcel of the "uniting" process of the newly independent nation-state. In these documents there are explicit appeals to Hindu tradition and the use of religious terminology along with urging the domestic population to partake in government programs, upholding their *dharma* in service of the nation-state. These sources illustrate the continued articulation of national identity after a nation-state achieves independence, an often-overlooked process in the history of nationalism and state formation, with the MIB actively involved in the cultural work of building a nation. Moreover, the Ministry's use of Hinduism as a "uniting factor" established an official discourse and public culture that Hindu nationalism could and eventually did latch onto.

Chapter Three analyzes MIB sources intended for tourists, highlighting how the government defined national identity to a foreign audience compared to the domestic

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[41] Jawaharlal Nehru, *Letters to Chief Ministers, 1947-1964*, Vol 1, G. Parthasarathi, ed., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 425.

population. Throughout the 1950s, the MIB created documents for tourists and worked

in conjunction with the Department of Tourism beginning in the early 1960s.

Guidebooks and informational pamphlets covering the entire country as well as Indian

art, architecture, and dance represent another component of national identity construction,

defining Indian identity to foreigners rather than Indian citizens. As comparative

research on European tourism has shown, travel and concerns of tourism play a

significant role in reinforcing national identities, making documents produced for tourists

effective to demonstrate how the government attempted to project and construct a

national identity in the post-independence era.[42] Indian tourism documents often

highlighted and marketed "the exotic" elements within the subcontinent, playing into the

orientalist discourse fostered during the colonial era in an attempt to garner revenue from

wealthy tourists. Furthermore, the Ministry highlighted traditional religious sites and the

importance of religion in contemporary India, nevertheless revealing the importance of

religion to Indian national identity in a post-independence setting. Despite overtures of

secularism following independence, Hinduism informed the construction of national

identity and the understanding of Indian history promoted in MIB publications.

Furthermore, while documents for the domestic audience engaged in "uniting" the Indian

population, publications intended for a foreign readership presented India as

"fundamentally united," an effort to make India more attractive to foreigners as well as

an implicit appeal for "no strings attached" foreign aid. National unity was a process and

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[42] Christopher Endy, *Cold War Holidays: American Tourism in France* (Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Press, 2004), Eric Zuelow, *Making Ireland Irish Tourism and National Identity since the Irish Civil War* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2009).

a goal in publications for the Indian population, yet the Ministry presented the country as already "united" in documents dedicated for tourists, a selling point for visiting the subcontinent and acquiring financial aid, with Hindu tradition depicted as a crucial component of Indian national identity.

Chapter Four discusses various history publications sponsored and issued by the MIB, analyzing historical interpretation and history writing as national identity construction. The MIB continuously repeated the nationalist teleology of Indian history criticized by Subaltern Studies and postcolonial historians, that of a glorious Hindu past followed by Western invasion from Muslims and Europeans ultimately rescued by Gandhi and Congress through the nationalist movement. Moreover, the Ministry utilized the concept of *dharma* in the *Builders of Modern India* series, focusing on men that upheld their duty dispassionately in service to the nation-state. The focus on these "builders of modern India" offered examples of civic duty to inspire patriotism among Indian readers as well as invoking Hindu religious themes for greater appeal and fostering emotional integration to the state. This elite interpretation of Indian history, one promoted by Congress as well as Hindu nationalists, has been referenced in scholarship more often than it has been explored, with little discussion as to how and why the government presented history as it did. Historical interpretation is never objective, either a result of the subjectivities of the author or a Foucauldian construction of knowledge, and the history depicted by the MIB in the 1950s and early 1960s performed a specific purpose, that of national identity formation. History writing produced by the MIB, even with dissent from scholars, served the process of "imagining communities" with the

nationalist teleology of history "an invented tradition" meant to unite the Indian

population in service of the nation-state.[43] The study of history is one of

contextualization, and the history writing of the early post-independence years requires

the same attention and recognition to underscore the mechanics of national identity

construction and the government's search for national unity.

Chapters Five focuses on MIB publications produced within the context of

wartime, centering on sources produced before and during the Sino-Indian War and the

Second Indo-Pakistan War. In response to these external threats, the MIB framed Indian

foreign policy as moral righteousness and characterized military resistance as a

fulfillment of duty, couching the actions of the government and military in Hindu *dharma*

to promote unity and support for the state. The Ministry cast the Chinese invasion as a

"betrayal" of Indian friendship despite the fact that Nehru and Indian diplomats acted

against their own interests in the name of good relations. Moreover, the MIB painted

China as an aggressive neocolonial power, a "new North" threatening Indian freedom and

territorial integrity, thereby framing India's perspective as fulfillment of dispassionate

duty, resisting Chinese invasion only as a last resort to protect the people and the country.

The Ministry continued this rhetorical strategy in publications produced before and

during Second Indo-Pakistan War, portraying Indian resistance as defensive resistance to

a Pakistani invasion. As with the First Indo-Pakistan War, the MIB used "secularism" as

a contrast with "Muslim Pakistan" and defined India as the side of moral righteousness, a

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[43] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*: *Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, (London: Version, 1983). Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds, *The Invention of Tradition*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

point of continuity despite the executive change from Nehru to Lal Bahadur Shastri. Furthermore, the MIB presented resistance as a fulfillment of duty, a protection of Indian territory and the people in service of duty and the greater good. During both conflicts, the Ministry called upon the Indian population to dispassionately perform their *dharma* just as the state was doing for the people. To foster unity and support for the nation-state in response to external threats, the MIB invoking Hinduism in a state nominally separated from religion.

Throughout the early post-independence years, the MIB actively engaged in codifying national identity, presenting information on various topics seemingly disconnected from one another yet all fundamentally concerned with national unity and the interests of the state. Studying these government-issued publications illustrates the construction of national identity and creation of political and cultural discourse in post-independence India in a way not effectively understood before. This dissertation explores the mechanics of this process, the "hows and whys" of national identity construction as well as the similarities and continuities between the Congress and Hindu nationalist conception of Indian identity rather than viewing the two as opposites because they are opposing political parties. Moving past false binaries and a sole reliance of the speeches and writings of Prime Minister Nehru allows for a more complete understanding of the recent past, in turn offering a better insight of contemporary Hindu nationalism and Indian politics.

CHAPTER II

THE DIDACTIC MODE, DEMONIZATION OF PAKISTAN, AND DHARMA OF

THE INDIAN NATION: EARLY MIB PUBLICATIONS AND THE SEARCH FOR

NATIONAL UNITY, 1948-1951

The achievement of independence was a short-lived celebration for both India and

Pakistan, as both states contended with "the furies of Partition."[44] While the Indian

National Congress and the Muslim League struggled for independence against the British

Empire for decades, rivalry between the two parties over their vision of independence

sparked violence and upheaval, one million casualties, fourteen million uprooted

refugees, and countless atrocities that minimized the triumphalism of ending colonial

rule.[45] A culture of fear and anxiety permeated India and Pakistan prior to independence

as religious groups feared persecution as national minorities in a new nation-state, a fear

only amplified after independence and Partition.[46] Violence along with the influx of

refugees exacerbated communal tensions, a problem Congress leaders feared leading up

to independence and one that threatened the stability of the new nation-state. Moreover,

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[44] Nisid Hajari, *Midnight's Furies: The Deadly Legacy of India's Partition*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015), xix.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Yasmin Khan, *The Great Partition*: *The Making of India and Pakistan*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007).

the issue of the princely states (nominally independent principalities outside of the British

Raj proper but dependent on British support) and the question of accession (whether

these independent principalities would join India or Pakistan) weighed on Prime Minister

Nehru and Congress. These major crises combined with the conflict over Jammu and

Kashmir, eventually leading to war between India and Pakistan and a border crisis that

remains unsolved in the present. Rather than an inevitable development of history and

the bringer of stability to the Indian subcontinent (hallmarks of a nationalist teleology),

the arrival of independence brought chaos and disunity, leaving Congress with the task of

managing a country and population rife with instability. Far from a given, national unity

was a process and a goal, necessitating the use of government publicity in the continued

articulation of national identity after the achievement of independence.

This chapter investigates the first publications issued by the MIB immediately

after independence and illustrates the early attempts by the Ministry to codify national

identity and foster a sense of unity in the midst of tension, conflict, and the creation of a

new nation-state. Between 1948 and 1949, the Publications Division of the MIB received

the third largest expenditure of all governmental broadcasting behind All India Radio and

the Press Information Bureau, demonstrating that the government viewed the division and

Ministry as worthy of investment and further national goals.[47] During this period of

instability, Nehru and Deputy Prime Minister Patel marshalled the MIB to disseminate

publications to respond to unrest and conflict and to establish that India was the side of

moral legitimacy compared to the Muslim League and Pakistan. MIB documents

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[47] "Descriptive Memoir," Abhilekh Patal, 42.

produced in the years preceding the formation of the Republic of India (January 26th,

1950) stress the secular character of the nation-state, but this was mainly in contrast to

"Muslim Pakistan" and within the context of conflict. The Ministry, an arm of the

Congress government, used secularism to echo the language and ideology of Nehru as a

component of national identity, defining India as the binary opposite of Pakistan.

Moreover, careful analysis of these publications reveals the MIB's use of *dharma* as an

underpinning of post-independence Indian national identity. *Dharma*, the dispassionate

performance of and adherence to duty, is a term with significant religious meaning for

Hindus (as well as Buddhists), and readers of Ministry publications would readily

understand the use of this language and concept as an appeal to religion.[48] Publications

produced immediately after independence focused on bringing the population together

amid significant instability, and the MIB's use of *dharma* was an attempt to appeal to the

largest subsection of an Indian population divided by religion, language, caste, and class,

using religion as a tool of national integration within a nominally secular state.

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[48] The concept of *dharma* originated within Buddhist tradition, with Buddhism along with Jainism significantly influencing the development of Hinduism (along with Hinduism co-opting customs and figures from these faiths and later characterizing them as "inherently Hindu") throughout Indian history. Because of their origins in the Indian subcontinent and due to their lack of numerical presence in contemporary India, Buddhists and Jains do not constitute a "threat" to the Hindu majority and are often discussed as "natural Indians." Gyanendra Pandey discusses the acceptance of Buddhists, Jains, and Sikhs (though Sikh acceptance by upper class, upper caste Hindus varies based on context) by citing an editorial from the Kanpur Hindi daily *Vartman* published on October 12, 1947. The editors explained that Buddhists, Jains, Sikhs, Indian Christians (differing from Western Europeans), Anglo-Indians, and Parsis "all belong here, because they think of India as their native land." From this example, Pandey declares Buddhists as "natural Indians," a minority population acceptable to the Hindu majority in a way that Muslims were not. See Gyanendra Pandey, "Can a Muslim Be an Indian?" *Comparative Studies in Society and History,* Vol. 41, No. 4, (Oct. 1999), Cambridge University Press, Accessed Jan 15, 2018, https://www.jstor.org/stable/179423. Though they are not Hindus, contemporary Hindu nationalists do not demonize these religious populations in the same manner as Indian Muslims and Christians, and they are readily accepted as "Indians" by both political parties and within an elite interpretation of Indian national history and identity. Drawing from Pandey, I will refer to Buddhists throughout this dissertation as "natural Indians" in discussions of Buddhist terminology, art, and religious sites.

The MIB disseminated publications offering an homage to the assassinated Gandhi and a copy of the Indian constitution, the former highlighting unity between Hindus and Muslims as a necessity to fulfill the Mahatma's legacy and the latter defining India as a secular nation-state by law. At the same time, the Ministry issued publications providing a state interpretation of the events of Partition and its aftermath, pamphlets on the conflict in Jammu and Kashmir and the First Indo-Pakistan War, and sources centered on the new national flag and the Indian military and police. Though these documents also proclaim the secular character of the Indian nation-state, the MIB simultaneously employed *dharma* as a familiar reference point to unite the population and began to demarcate a difference between "Indian identity" and "Muslim identity." These sources reveal the language and tone the MIB used throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, the didactic mode of official interpretation and presenting information to the population to advance national unity, parallel to the filmmaking style and traditions of selling development schemes to the nation.[49] Rather than simply a product of the nation-state, Ministry propaganda codified and projected national interests, the state itself a project of media.[50] While early publications maintained that India was a secular nation-state, the Ministry began to use religious themes and terminology to foster national unity among Indian readers.

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[49] Sutoris, *Visions of Development*, 5.
[50] Ibid, xv.

"An Everlasting Monument to Gandhi's Spirit:"[51] Defining Secular Democracy and National Unity De Jure in Post-Independence India

  With the assassination of Gandhi on January 30th, 1948, Congress and India lost its most recognizable leader and freedom fighter, the beloved Bapu that won independence from the British Empire through nonviolent struggle. Gandhi unified much of the subcontinent in the struggle for independence as the nationalist struggle transitioned from a political interest of the educated Indian elite to a mass movement while also garnering support from the international community due to his appropriation of Western Christianity and appeals to the international press.[52] His death, particularly due to the fact that it came at the hands of a man with ties to the Hindu nationalist RSS and occurred within the context of heightened communalism after Partition, threatened to unravel Indian unity months after independence. Nehru deemed the Mahatma "a great cementing force" for the country throughout his life.[53] Though Nehru was immensely popular in his own right, the death of Gandhi meant the loss of a crucial icon of Indian unity and the man the country as well as Congress believed had the best chance of ending communal tension and violence in the subcontinent. The MIB produced a publication that offered a tribute to the slain Gandhi. The Ministry created this document to celebrate Gandhi's life and achievements and to demonstrate the admiration of the Mahatma throughout the world. At the same time, the MIB distributed this booklet to rally and

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[51] Quote attributed to Senator F. Thomas in tribute to Gandhi in Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *Homage*, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1948), 48.
[52] Sudharshan Kapur, *Raising Up a Prophet: The African American Encounter with Gandhi*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), Nico Slate, *Colored Cosmopolitanism: The Shared Struggle for Freedom in the United States and India*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012).
[53] Nehru, *Letters to Chief Ministers,* Vol 1, 58.

unite the population after Gandhi's death and amid internal and external strife. In this

homage, the Ministry stressed Hindu-Muslim unity as Gandhi's first and foremost goal,

using commemoration as a call to action to bring communal unity to the Indian

population. The memorialization of Gandhi through publication was more than a

document of remembrance; it served the purpose of defining national identity based on

the immediate political problems of post-independence India.

Homage (1948), a publication dedicated to the life of Gandhi, presented readers

with various tributes (snippets drawn from speeches, writings, and commentary) to the

fallen leader from political figures in India and around the world and urged the Indian

population to come together regardless of confessional identity. "Perhaps no man in

recorded history," the publication states, "received such spontaneous tributes of universal

praise, reverence, and love as did Mahatma Gandhi at his death."[54] His assassination

"released an electric current of thought which made the whole world kin;" the MIB

informed the reader that Gandhi's death united the entire world with the hope that the

country would come together.[55] The MIB incorporated tributes from notable Indian

leaders, selecting quotations emphasizing Gandhi's achievements, interpreting the

meaning of his sacrifice, and underscoring the importance of unity following his death.

A quote from C. Rajagopalachari honored the "glorious death" of Gandhi, comparing his

passing with that of Socrates for his beliefs and Christ for his faith, a sacrifice in pursuit

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[54] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *Homage*, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and
Broadcasting Publications Division, 1948), 3.
[55] Ibid.

of principle and the greater good.[56] M.C. Chagla, the Chief Justice of Bombay, praised

Gandhi for raising politics to a high moral level, instilling a sense of dignity and self-

respect, rekindling the flame of patriotism, and raising consciousness of the heritage of

the past, achieving "a miracle" within the course of a generation.[57] Vallabhbai Patel

praised Gandhi's "immortal spirit" and urged the Indian population to "stand united and

bravely face the national disaster that has overtaken us. Let us all solemnly pledge

ourselves afresh to Gandhiji's teachings and ideals."[58] Girija Shankar Bajpai, Secretary

General to the Ministry of External Affairs, celebrated Gandhi's creation of a "unity of

ideals" within a geographically, politically, and religiously diverse country.[59] For leaders

and the general population of India, Gandhi represented Indian unity, and his death was a

moment of tragedy as the loss of the foremost leader of the Indian nationalist movement

as well as sparking fear that national unity would be lost. Without Gandhi, it was unclear

what Indian unity meant or if it existed at all, yet Nehru and Congress leaders knew that

disunity would lead to increased violence and chaos. Throughout the post-independence

era, Congress defined itself as the carrier of Gandhi's mantle, using the apparatus of the

MIB to emphasize that the government was working to preserve the heritage of the past

and in the name of the greater good, both of which took on a religious tenor based on

upper class, upper caste, Hindu interpretations of history and the Ministry's citation of

Hindu terminology. The references to Hinduism throughout MIB publications served the

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[56] Ibid, 5. Author Pearl S. Buck echoed this theme later in the publication, deeming Gandhi's death "another crucifixion."
[57] Ibid, 10.
[58] Ibid, 6.
[59] Ibid, 14.

purpose of national integration, the Ministry attempting to present the Congress agenda in an understandable way for the greatest proportion of the Indian population.

Many of the snippets within this document focused on the need for unity between Hindus and Muslims, a comment on the pervasiveness of communalism within India that Gandhi attempted to combat in his final days. Mir Osman Ali Khan, the Nizam of Hyderabad, proclaimed that Gandhi "laid down his life for Hindu-Muslim unity," while Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy, a Pakistani politician and member of the Awami League (an opposition party to the Muslim League) called for a fulfillment of Gandhi's "cherished dream of Hindu and Muslim unity and oneness of mind and spirit in the common service of humanity."[60] The Ministry's inclusion of a line from Abdur Rahman Siddiqui, another Pakistani politician and member of the Muslim League, deeming Gandhi "the greatest advocate for the cause of Muslims" not only offered a memoriam but also worked toward refuting the Two Nation Theory.[61] Through the addition of this quote, the MIB argued that Gandhi rather than the Muslim League, therefore India rather than Pakistan, offered safety and protection for Muslims. Attacking the Two Nation

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[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid. The Two Nation Theory was the argument developed by Muslim intellectuals and promoted by the Muslim League that the Muslim population of India constituted a separate nation from the rest of the Indian population. While Congress maintained that all religions were welcome and had equal status in India, many Indian Muslims feared that minority status in a nation-state would lead to discrimination and second-class status, a continuation and exacerbation of the "routine violence" and day-to-day aggressions this numerically smaller population experienced. Even after independence, Congress leaders and MIB publications refuted the Two Nation Theory and criticized the Muslim League for violating "a united India." The continued rejection of the Two Nation Theory by the Ministry and Congress leaders informed the binary conception of a tolerant, inclusive, "secular India" compared to intolerant, theocratic, "Muslim Pakistan." The persecution and violence toward non-Muslims within Pakistan, especially in East Pakistan preceding the Third Indo-Pakistan war (See Gary Bass, *The Blood Telegram*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013)) added legitimacy to Indian condemnation of its rival, but the arguments made by Congress and promoted by the MIB following independence must also be contextualized based on the agenda of national identity construction and the goal of fostering national unity.

Theory as well as blaming the Muslim League for dividing India was (and continues to be) a hallmark of elite-driven national identity construction, casting communalism and "Muslim Pakistan" as antithetical to "secular India." India, according to Nehru and Congress, was a nation-state "united in its diversity" rather than a religious state like Pakistan. Furthering this point, the tribute from Sheikh Abdullah (President of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference) promised that his state would follow the example of Gandhi forever, supporting the Congress argument that "secular India" was the side of moral legitimacy compared to "Muslim Pakistan" as well as the argument that "Kashmir belonged to India."[62] The secularism of the nation-state continued to be a touchstone in MIB publications centered on the legacy of Partition and conflict over Jammu and Kashmir, the Ministry casting India as the binary opposite of Pakistan. In publications produced outside of this context of external threat, however, the notion of Indian secularism becomes muddled due to the Ministry's frequent use of religious terminology and the perpetuation of a Hindu interpretation of Indian history that minimized or "othered" religious minorities, particularly Indian Muslims.

The MIB touched on additional Congress political goals through the selective inclusion of tributes to Gandhi. In his remembrance, Labour Minister Jagivan Ram declared "it was Gandhi's mission in life to purge Hinduism of the evil of caste," while a tribute from Rajendra Prasad, President of the Constituent Assembly of India, referred to Gandhi as a "liberator of the Hindu community" and lambasted "men with narrow minds

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[62] *Homage*, 12.

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and limited vision who do not understand the core of Hindu *dharma*."[63] Ending the caste

system and bringing an end to untouchability became part of the Congress platform due

to international condemnation after the publication of Katherine Mayo's *Mother India*

(1927).[64] By tying the abolition of caste to "Gandhi's mission in life," the Ministry used

the clout of the Mahatma as justification for contemporary policies. Furthermore, the

incorporation of Prasad's disapproval of "men with narrow minds and limited vision" that

misunderstood Hinduism informed the reader that Congress stood apart from the RSS and

communalism. The Ministry's insertion of tributes from foreign politicians paralleled

those of Indian leaders, memorializing Gandhi as well as adhering the political agenda of

Congress while highlighting international respect for the Mahatma and the newly

independent state. The MIB incorporated renowned voices from around the world to

instill patriotism among the Indian population, presenting the country as respected by its

global peers and an entity to be proud. *Homage* was a memorial to the most famous

figure of the Indian nationalist movement, but it also served as a mouthpiece for the

government through the MIB to advance its political goals and present information in a

way to unite the population amid significant turmoil. The Ministry used the

commemoration of Gandhi to emphasize the importance of national unity as well as

Hindu-Muslim unity for the strength and stability of the nation-state.

    India's Constitution (1950) provided Indian citizens with a "pocket Constitution,"

the new law of the country widely distributed and made accessible to impart civic values

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[63] Ibid, 9.

[64] I discuss *Mother India*, caste, and untouchability in greater detail when I examine the publication *Social Welfare in India* in the second chapter.

on the literate population. The MIB's distribution of the constitution represented the best

intensions of Nehru and Congress, the government codifying secularism into law in an

effort to end communal violence and bestow equality to all citizens of the Republic of

India. For this particular document, the use English is of significance, making the

publication more accessible for the entirety of the literate population rather than solely

the Hindi readers and speakers of North India. Reprinted numerous times, this brochure

summarizes the constitution in a popular but accurate manner, presenting the Indian laws

and the principles of the new government in simple and accessible language for the

purposes of citizenship and unity.

The Ministry publication of the constitution covers the democratic structure of the

Indian government and the basic rights of every Indian citizen. In the Republic of India,

power derived from the people, the states were autonomous within a federal system, and

all citizens enjoyed universal suffrage and "a single common citizenship assured to all

irrespective of religion, caste, creed, or sex."[65] At the same time, the constitution

promised the provision of adequate safeguards for "minorities, backward and tribal areas,

and depressed and other backward classes."[66] Religious minorities as well as the

Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes,[67] despite their numerical and economic

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[65] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *India's Constitution*, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1950), 13.
[66] Ibid, 9.
[67] The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes refer to the Dalits (historically called "untouchables") and the tribal populations of the Indian subcontinent, respectively. The Indian caste system (a social organization with deep connections to Hinduism) consists of four *varnas* (literally translating to "colors" but within the context of caste refers to social categories): the Brahmin caste of intellectuals and priests, the Kshtriyas (warriors and the ruling caste), the Vaishyas (merchants), and Sudras (laborers, the majority of the population). The Dalit were historically of such low social standing that they were outside of the caste system, hence their "untouchability." The tribal populations of India practiced many traditions that remained unchanged for thousands of years, with colonial and Congress leaders conceiving of these people

disparities compared to the Hindu majority, nominally possessed the same rights as well as additional recognition and protection from the government in the nation-state. Indian citizens, according to the Ministry, now voted as individuals rather than as Hindus, Muslims, or Christians, the government predicating "Indian identity" as first and foremost within the nation-state.[68] By the word of the constitution, this established equality within the Indian population, but throughout the corpus of MIB texts Indian citizenship took on an assumed Hindu default and the citizenship of "minorities" often implied assimilation within the culture and customs of the national majority.

Additionally, the Indian government allowed every citizen to practice the religion of their choice and the state would refrain from discrimination based on religious grounds.[69] Moreover, the state would grant autonomy to every religious denomination to manage its own religious affairs, and "The Constitution taboos religious instruction as such in all educational institutions wholly maintained by the State."[70] By granting freedom of religious practice as well as assuring Indian citizens that the state would not interfere in religious affairs, the Ministry highlighted a mix of both the French and Anglo-American models of secularism within the Indian Constitution, a blend that Achin Vanaik argues led to a "failure of secularization" in post-independence India.[71]

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as separate from modern Indian civilization. The Indian constitution provided separate electorates for these disadvantaged populations (despite the fact that Gandhi viewed this as divisive) to improve their social standing. Their economic shortcomings informed Nehru and Congress' construction of the social welfare state, the government believing that development and economic uplift went hand in hand. At the same time, as we will see in Chapter Two, the government believed (and the MIB presented) development as akin to "civilizing" these populations, incorporating the Dalits and tribal groups within the Indian nation-state with the expectation of assimilation to an established Indian culture grounded in Hinduism and Hindu traditions.
[68] Ibid, 46.
[69] Ibid, 13
[70] Ibid, 26.
[71] Vanaik, *Rise of Hindu Authoritarianism*, 29.

Furthermore, the "taboo" of religious instruction in state-sponsored education did not mean a complete outlaw. Contributors to future MIB publications claimed that religious instruction, especially Hindu religious instruction, was imperative for the development of the Indian education system. As with *Homage*, the MIB stressed the importance of unity, informing the reader that the country was "an integral whole, its people a single people living under a single imperium, derived from a single source," thus attempting to cultivate greater national integration by maintaining that it was already present.[72] The Ministry's dissemination of the Indian Constitution was an attempt to instill civic education among the literate population as well as a governmental effort to outline not just the laws, but the ideals of the nation-state. The written constitution is a projection of what government leaders want the nation-state to be, and *India's Constitution* constructed a vision of a secular and egalitarian nation-state divorced from religious influence and ruling impartially on behalf of all religious communities. Ideals, however, are not the same as reality. The need for national unity in response to external threats and internal strife led the Ministry to use religious language, specifically invoking *dharma* to reach the largest subsection of the Indian population. The MIB presented the Indian nation-state as an entity fulfilling its duty dispassionately in its opposition to Pakistan, protecting the people of Jammu and Kashmir, and maintaining law and order within the country.

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[72] *India's Constitution*, 32.

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"Utopian Visions for Maintaining the Unity of the Country:" MIB Publications Following Partition and the First Indo-Pakistan War

As both India and Pakistan dealt with the violence and upheaval of Partition, leaders from both countries also needed to contend with the issue of the 565 princely states and their accession. Upon British exit from the subcontinent, the nominally independent principalities had the option to join either India or Pakistan. Nearly all of the princely states conformed to the newly established political boundaries. Those within territorial India joined that country, while those located in the new borders of East and West Pakistan went to Pakistan. However, the princely states of Junagadh, Hyderabad, and Jammu and Kashmir proved to be more difficult cases. Junagadh and Hyderabad were located within the boundaries of independent India but were ruled by Muslims considering accession to Pakistan. Through coercion and military intervention,[73] respectively, Junagadh and Hyderabad joined India, maintaining the territorial integrity of the country throughout the Gangetic plain and Deccan Plateau.

Jammu and Kashmir, by contrast, was a princely state ruled by a Hindu maharaja governing a Muslim majority population. Moreover, its location within the Himalayas rather than south of the mountain range, a "natural boundary" of the Indian subcontinent, resulted in multiple claims of ownership in this borderland region.[74] Maharaja Hari

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[73] Indian sources covering the accession of Hyderabad refer to India's intervention as "police action" ordered by Patel, reframing the event as something other than a military maneuver and distancing Prime Minister Nehru from the use of force. The fact that Hyderabad fell within the "natural" boundaries of the Indian nation-state informed (and continues to inform) the interpretation of the event, Indian official sources presenting intervention as a "police action" bringing stability and ousting the Razakars that took control of the state.

[74] India and Pakistan as well as the Republic of China all have claims to territory within the Himalayas due to the lack of clarity within historical treaties and centuries of power change in China and the Indian

Singh wanted independence for Jammu and Kashmir, a "Switzerland of the Himalayas," and delayed making a formal decision to join either country.[75] The invasion of Pathan tribes, which Congress blamed on Pakistan as a maneuver to "force accession," led Hari Singh to rapidly accede to India for protection. To safeguard the new territory, India quickly sent its military to the region to repel the tribal invaders as well as the Pakistani army, proclaiming that with a ceasefire and the return of peaceful conditions the county would welcome a plebiscite held under the supervision of the United Nations to determine the fate of Jammu and Kashmir. The future of the Kashmir region was of particular importance to Nehru, as the state's presence as part of India with its Muslim majority population helped to "prove Indian secularism" (the Congress argument that all religious communities could live freely and safely in India) and reject the Two Nation Theory. Moreover, Kashmir was Prime Minister Nehru's home, one that he imagined as a fundamental part of India, stating, "it would be a tragedy, so far as I am concerned, if Kashmir went to Pakistan. That, I am sure, would ruin it for a considerable time."[76] Nevertheless, documentation and scholarly analysis from the period reveals that Nehru was willing to hold a plebiscite on Jammu and Kashmir despite these ideological and personal considerations if Pakistan withdrew from the region. Neither Pakistan nor India

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subcontinent. These claims to disputed territory resulted in conflict between India and Pakistan in 1947 and 1965 as well as between India and China during the Sino-Indian War (1962). Moreover, the fact that numerous polities possess overlapping claims to the region that became exacerbated with the formation of nation-states fits within the Aron-Adelman model and conception of a "borderland" rather than a "frontier." The transition from borderlands to "bordered lands," nation-states delineating fixed boundaries causing clashes over resources, is a hallmark of modern international conflict. See Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron, "From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in between in North American History," *The American Historical Review*, Volume 104, No. 3, (1999), 814-41, Accessed August 29, 2018, https://doi.org/10.2307/2650990.

[75] Guha, *India after Gandhi*, 79.

[76] "Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Shri Moharchand Mahajan," Oct 21, 1947, Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, Individual Collections, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.

withdrew from the disputed territory, and the Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement (1954) between the United States and Pakistan took plebiscite off the table. Pakistan's alliance with the United States put the former in a new position of strength, and a plebiscite at this moment would highlight Indian weakness and hamper Indian foreign policy.[77] The conflict over Jammu and Kashmir "is the wound that keeps paranoia and hatred of 1947 fresh" for both countries into the present.[78] The protracted struggle for this region is a conflict over territory but also the meaning of both nation-states, a legacy of colonial rule and Partition that pits the two countries against one another in their own Cold War.[79]

Prime Minister Nehru was not only concerned about the status of Jammu and Kashmir, but also how the conflict looked both at home and abroad. He noted to Sheikh Abdullah, President of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, that Kashmir became a symbol of the basic conflict in India, whether the nation could overcome communal tension and strife.[80] Moreover, the prime minister lamented in a separate letter that international opinion of India on the subject of Kashmir was deplorable.[81] Nehru complained about the lack of publicity on Jammu and Kashmir by late 1947, claiming that the information available was dull and unsuitable for the importance of the

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[77] Mahesh Shankar, *The Reputational Imperative*: *Nehru's India in Territorial Conflict,* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2018).

[78] Hajari, *Midnight's Furies*, 178.

[79] Kanishkahn Sathasivam, *Uneasy Neighbors: India, Pakistan, and US Foreign Policy*, (Farnham, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2005), 54.

[80] "Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Sheikh Abdullah," Dec 3, 1947, Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, Individual Collections, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.

[81] "Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to R Karanja," Nov 25, 1947, Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, Individual Collections, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.

issue.[82] In response, the MIB issued new publications centered on the conflict with

Pakistan and the status of Jammu and Kashmir, offering the official state interpretation of

recent history and celebrating the exploits of the Indian military. The purpose of these

publications, as with *Homage* and *India's Constitution*, was to unite the population and

foster loyalty to the nation-state amid a military conflict with ideological and symbolic

dimensions, presenting India as the side of moral legitimacy compared to Pakistan. In the

state-sanctioned interpretation of the causes and effects of Partition as well as

publications detailing the conflict in Kashmir, the Ministry accentuated that India was a

secular state, accepting and tolerant of all religions. While this fit within the Nehruvian

consensus and the Congress platform, the Ministry's definition of a secular India was

more visible in publications centering on conflict with "Muslim Pakistan" than in

subsequent documents, the MIB defining India in contrast with an external threat. At the

same time, however, the Ministry explicitly and implicitly invoked *dharma* as India's

raison d'etre in the conflict, using Hindu religious terminology to garner support for the

Indian cause while also distancing "Indian identity" from "Muslim identity." Though

nominally declaring India's secularity, especially when compared to its rival, close

scrutiny of MIB publications reveals the use of religion to unify the population rather

than a nation-state divorced from or impartial to all religions.

The MIB depicted recent history and contemporary events in *After Partition*

(1948), a publication recapitulating the leadup to independence as well as the Partition of

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[82] "Note on Kashmir," Dec 19, 1947, Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, Individual Collections, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.

India and Pakistan based on an elite interpretation of history. This document discusses

the negotiations prior to independence, the immediate aftermath of Partition, and the

current state of relations between Pakistan and India, demonizing the former and

presenting the latter as the legitimate and benevolent nation. This publication not only

celebrated India and worked as propaganda for state policy, but it also aimed to inspire

patriotism and promote national unity among Indian citizens. The text explains to the

reader that while Congress participated in the Central Government of India following

World War II, the Muslim League benefitted from being "a king's party" favored by the

British, the MIB presenting Congress and India as the side of legitimacy compared to the

Muslim League and Pakistan.[83] The interpretation that the British supported the Muslim

League as part of a "divide and rule" while failing to hold accountability for communal

tension and violence exerted from the Hindu majority (especially from Hindu

nationalism), was (and remains) a hallmark of the elite-driven nationalist interpretation of

Indian history preceding Partition.[84] The British, the MIB explained, conceded to the

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[83] Government of India, *After Partition*, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1948), 8.

[84] The British Empire certainly used "divide and rule" tactics to more effectively govern the Indian subcontinent. British officials racialized the Indian population through the ethnographic efforts of H.H. Risley as well as Orientalist scholarship, while some officials in the early nineteenth century believed that the caste system offered the opportunity to create a loyal, landed aristocracy to assist British rule (see Nicholas B. Dirks, *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001). The thesis that the British supported the Muslim League to curb the influence of Congress also holds truth. Throughout the empire, British officials used "divide and rule" to organize and order the population to aid colonial governance. At the same time, the postwar Labour government of Great Britain embraced the creation of a unified independent India, expecting that a united India would be better equipped (and also willing) to assist the former colonial power in defense (See P.S. Gupta, *Imperialism and the British Labour Movement*, (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1975)), adding vigor to the elite Indian nationalist interpretation demonizing the Muslim League for forcing separatism and Partition. Nevertheless, within India this argument is often repeated and presented in a way that ignores the "routine violence" (see Pandey, *Routine Violence*) and discrimination from the Hindu majority against religious minorities that raised valid concerns regarding the latter's safety in an independent India and informed the desire for a Muslim homeland in Pakistan.

Muslim League by December 1946, even at the expense of their own professed principles.[85] Congress, by contrast, "never wanted to force an unwilling unit into the Indian Union, and when the situation looked far from hopeful, the Congress accepted the principle of partition and wasted no more time on utopian visions for maintaining the unity of the country."[86] While Nehru, Gandhi, and nationalist leaders struggled for a united India and considered the Two Nation Theory a deviation from Indian history and development, a product of communalism and collusion fostered by the Muslim League and the British, the Ministry presented Congress' acquiescence of Partition as proof of India's moral legitimacy and benevolence. The creation of independent India and Pakistan was not what nationalist leaders wanted, but the MIB portrayed the acceptance of Partition as Congress upholding its duty to the people, expediting independence to end colonial rule against their interests and "utopian visions." By blaming the Muslim League and the British for the separation of the subcontinent, the Ministry cast India as the side of righteousness, Congress leaders fulfilling their *dharma* through self-sacrifice and adherence to their duty. To encourage support for and unity within Indian nation-state, the MIB used an appeal to religion despite Congress' nominal commitment to secularism.

Communal violence, the MIB explained, intensified after Partition, as violence and atrocities served as both the backdrop and the result of the Partition.[87] Yet the Ministry once again blamed Pakistan and the Muslim League for its intensity, thus

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[85] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *After Partition*, 9.
[86] Ibid, 12.
[87] Hajari, *Midnight's Furies*.

defining India and Congress as the benevolent party in opposition. The MIB cited Direct

Action Day (August 16th, 1946), also known as "the Calcutta Killings" as an event

sponsored by the Muslim League, an attempt to incite communal violence across the

country in an effort to "force" the creation of Pakistan.[88] The Congress interpretation,

espoused in this publication, blamed the Muslim League for the violence on this day,

with the MIB going further by contending that this was the beginning of violence

condoned by the League. According to the Ministry, despite the calls from Gandhi and

Muhammad Ali Jinnah for peace, "Mr. Jinnah did nothing to condemn the violence on

the part of his followers."[89] The MIB publication claims that Pakistan appointed

"incompetent Muslim officials" to government offices ahead of competent Hindu and

Sikh counterparts in Punjab; seeking to retain their positions, "it was natural for such

officials to think in terms of wiping out the minorities in the new state," the Ministry

accusing Pakistani officials of minority persecution in the name of retaining jobs and

commissions.[90] "The orgy of murder and loot," encouraged if not freely participated in

by the Pakistani police and military, forced the evacuation of Hindus and Sikhs from

Pakistan for their survival.[91] Throughout this publication, the MIB depicted Pakistan as

wholly guilty of the violence and atrocities preceding and following Partition, casting

India as the benevolent nation-state hoping to instill patriotism and a sense of belonging,

unity, and loyalty the nation.

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[88] *After Partition*, 36.
[89] Ibid, 40.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Ibid, 50.

In contrast to the violence blamed on the Muslim League and Pakistan, the

publication painted India as the side of morality and legitimacy, following in the

footsteps of Gandhi amid violence and chaos. Despite the "incalculable harm" caused by

the Muslim League, the MIB includes Nehru's insistence that India must remain a secular

state. "The demand from any section of the people to make India a Hindu State was a

virtual victory for the Muslim League," the publication touting the Nehru's of secularism

to contrast with Pakistan "intent on becoming a full Islamic state."[92] Because the Muslim

League urged the creation of Pakistan for the protection of Islamic religion, Nehru,

Congress, and the Ministry defined India as a secular state, the binary opposite of its

rival. Prime Minister Nehru was certainly committed to secularism on a personal level

and believed that communalism, particularly the threat of Hindu nationalism, threatened

the stability of the nation-state. For Nehru, loyalty to the state regardless of confessional

identity came first and foremost, the prime minister noting, "every State expects loyalty

and allegiance from its citizens whatever religion they may belong."[93] However, even

Nehru was not wholly accepting of "diverse elements," as people that did not profess

their loyalty and submit to the nation-state "will have to be treated as aliens with an

alien's disqualifications."[94] In subsequent MIB publications produced to foster unity

among the domestic audience, loyalty to the state increasingly meant the assimilation of

minority identities within a pre-established Indian culture with Hinduism as its default.

This assumption prevailed within this document as well, as the Ministry maintained that

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[92] Ibid, 44.
[93] Ibid, 45.
[94] Ibid.

Gandhi's message of truth and nonviolence prevented people from acting in excessive cruelty, a message that represented "the undying spirit of Indian culture which kept her alive through the vicissitudes of her history."[95] Through this quote, the MIB equated Gandhi, a man who incorporated Christian language and iconography but drew primarily from Hinduism to rally support for the nationalist movement, with "Indian culture." Going further, in celebrating Gandhi as a manifestation of a Hindu-informed "Indian culture" and spending much of the document demarcating India as the binary opposite of Muslim-oriented Pakistan and "Pakistani culture," the Ministry began to distance "Muslim identity" from Indian identity despite the argument that India was a secular state. Within this publication, dealing explicitly with conflict with Pakistan, the Ministry makes secularism a point of emphasis to differentiate India from its adversary, yet at the same time includes appeals and references to Hindu religion and obscures the inclusivity of the Indian nation-state.

The publication concludes with a chapter on Indo-Pakistan relations, the Ministry depicting India as the side of legitimacy and a nation-state upholding its *dharma*. In spite of the demonization of Pakistan throughout the document, the MIB insisted that Congress accepted and continues to accept Partition in good faith, arguing that India's provision of significant financial and material aid negated claims that the India wanted to paralyze or destroy the latter.[96] India was willing to "live and let live" with regard to Pakistan, accepting the existence of its rival in spite of its aversion to the Two Nation Theory and

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[95] Ibid, 47
[96] Ibid, 114.

recent violence.[97] In doing so, the Ministry demonstrated that Congress and India acted

based on dispassionate *dharma* and the greater good, invoking religion to appeal to

domestic readers. *After Partition* recounts the events leading up to and immediately

following Partition based on elite nationalist conceptions, interpreting recent events for

the reader based on the Congress platform and the ideology of the nation-state.

Moreover, the MIB defined India as the antithesis of Pakistan to foster greater

identification with the Indian nation-state based on opposition to its counterpart. If

Pakistan operated based on passion and incited violence, India acted dispassionately and

was antiviolent, a moral good in distinctly religious terms that would be understood as

such by the reader. This characterization continued in publications produced during the

First Indo-Pakistan War, as the government and MIB sought to rally support for the

country and engender national unity based on opposition to Pakistan.

The MIB published *The Kashmir Story* (1948), *Defending Kashmir* (1949), and

The Kashmir Issue (1950), all centered on the First Indo-Pakistan War and firmly

establishing that "Kashmir belonged to India." The MIB took over publicity for the

armed forces for the Defense Ministry after independence, assuming the didactic mode

and interpreting the Kashmir conflict for the reader based on the desire to inspire national

unity.[98] *The Kashmir Story* begins by describing the landscape, gardens, and resorts in

Kashmir, designating the state as a paradise and "a lovely crown upon the brow of

India."[99] Though Muslim rulers developed many of these celebrated buildings and

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[97] Ibid, 125.
[98] "Descriptive Memoir," Abhilekh Patal, 9.
[99] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *The Kashmir Story*, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1948), 1.

gardens that lend to Kashmir's beauty, the publication subsumes these within Indian

heritage, minimizing the contributions of a religious minority within national space.

Furthermore, the MIB proclaimed that the Kashmiris belonged to "the Aryan race" and

were "as much an Indian as the Punjabi, the Gujarati, or the Madrasi."[100] The mention of

the "Aryan race" is of particular importance; it not only acknowledged the fair

complexion of many Kashmiris but also linked the Kashmiri language and people with

the Indo-European ancestor of North Indian languages and people, reinforcing the notion

that Kashmir was fundamentally "Indian" and not "Muslim."[101] Additionally, the

publication includes images of the landscape as well as the population going to school

and making hand spun cloth, echoing the efforts of Gandhi and demonstrating their

belonging to India, reinforcing the argument to the reader that Kashmir is Indian

territory.[102] Through text as well as images, the MIB delineates Kashmir as a component

of the Indian nation-state.

The Kashmir Story describes Sheikh Abdullah as "a leader of gigantic stature," a

man that fought for equal treatment of all religious groups, thus equating the head of the

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[100] Ibid, 16.

[101] The work of British Orientalists in the nineteenth century uncovered the linguistic links between the languages of Western Europe and Sanskrit, the ancient language of India and ancestor of most Northern Indian languages. Nineteenth century Indian nationalists used this discovery to argue that Indians deserved self-governance through dominion status, as they were equal racially with Europeans as part of the white "Aryan race" (many decades before Adolf Hitler and the Nazis made the concept taboo). A reader knowledgeable of this linguistic linkage would understand this mention as not only a comment on the skin color of Kashmiris but the MIB's attempt to connect the Kashmiri people to the Indo-European Aryans and other North Indians. The argument that Kashmiris were Aryans thus delineated the state as fundamentally Indian rather than part of "Muslim Pakistan." While Urdu (the official language of Pakistan) is an Indo-European language, Arabic, the tongue associated with Islam, is not. Through this inclusion, the Ministry subtly argued that "Kashmir belonged to India" while simultaneously separating "Indian identity" from "Muslim Pakistan" as well as Islam.

[102] *Kashmir* Story, 16.

National Conference with the Congress interpretation of secularism.[103] The MIB

informed the reader that Abdullah served prison time in the same manner as notable

Congress figures, while Jinnah and the leaders of "Azad Kashmir" (the region of Kashmir

governed by Pakistan) did not, demarcating Abdullah as a legitimate political figure and a

"good Muslim" compared to his counterparts.[104] Moreover, the Ministry explained that

the leaders of "Azad Kashmir" were nowhere to be found during the nationalist

movement, yet now they were actively seeking to undermine unity in the state.[105] Jinnah

and "Azad Kashmir," according to the MIB, stood for communalism and disunity,[106]

representing a deviation from the legitimate politics and efforts of Abdullah and

Congress. Going further, the Ministry praised Abdullah because he advanced the

interests of Nehru and Congress, he "became an Indian" through his loyalty to the nation-

state. Though claiming to represent secular inclusivity, the MIB celebrated Abdullah for

his assimilation within the Congress and distance from the Muslim and communalist

Jinnah and "Azad Kashmir," positing the least overly religious figure as representative of

unity and the latter as bringing disunity and antithetical to Indian national identity.

Next, *The Kashmir Story* describes the Pathan tribal people of the northwestern

frontier, clarifying that these tribes were "sturdy, quick to pick quarrels, very warlike,

extremely poor, and backward and education and civilization," maintaining that even the

British had trouble with this population to highlight the success and valiancy of the

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[103] Ibid, 19.
[104] Ibid, 24.
[105] Ibid, 25.
[106] Ibid, 27.

Indian army in repulsing this force.[107] The Ministry argued that Pakistan's support of

tribal invasion was an attempt to solve two problems at once, forcing the accession of

Jammu and Kashmir while also controlling the tribal population and curbing a "Pathanist

movement" developing in the region.[108] The MIB explained that the Indian army "fought

back against cruel and unscrupulous marauders in spite of the inclemency of the season

and difficulty of the communications," contending that the war "will form a glorious

chapter in the history of the Indian army," highlighting the valiancy of the Indian military

to instill patriotism.[109] At the same time, the MIB assured the reader that the Indian

troops would not fight in or fire upon Pakistani territory.[110] Rather than an aggressive

force or duplicitously using proxies, the Indian army fought to defend Kashmir and

prevent violence and the abduction of women, the Ministry presenting India's efforts as

defensive and dispassionate in pursuit of righteousness.[111] The MIB accentuated the

connotation of India as the side of moral legitimacy by including images of local women

and children fighting to support the defense of Kashmir, these innocents defending their

home from an outside aggressor.[112] Moreover, this fit within Nehru's desire to spin the

conflict and international public opinion in India's favor, the prime minister arguing,

> From the larger national and international point of view it is exceedingly
> important that the fact of our military forces functioning in alliance with the civil
> power in cooperation with the people is brough out as much as possible. The
> alternative is an army of invasion and a non-Muslim army imposing its will on a

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[107] Ibid, 38.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Ibid, 50.
[110] The claim that India "would not fight in or fire upon Pakistani territory," of course, neglects the fact that the territory in which both sides fought was disputed (the impetus for the conflict).
[111] Ibid, 40.
[112] Ibid.

predominantly Muslim population. That in fact is not the case and any such impression in India or abroad is fatal.[113]

The publication concludes that India would hold a plebiscite when warfare ceased whereas Pakistan would hold a plebiscite only if Indian troops withdrew.[114] The MIB lambasted Pakistan as attempting to create facts on the ground in contrast to an Indian nation-state willing to hold a vote for the status of Jammu and Kashmir, thus implying that Congress was willing to risk the loss of the territory regardless of the state's ideological and personal importance to Prime Minister Nehru. Holding a plebiscite despite the argument that "Kashmir belonged to India" illustrated an Indian nation-state acting in the pursuit of magnanimity and in the fulfillment of *dharma*, the Ministry invoking the religious concept within its propaganda to demonstrate Indian legitimacy and righteousness.[115] While Nehru wanted the conflict to look non-communal,[116] the MIB's definition of India in contrast with Pakistan to foster unity and support for the Indian military involved the use of *dharma* and the minimization of "Muslims" within Kashmir.

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[113] "Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Maharaja of Patiala," Nov 1, 1947, Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, Individual Collections, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.

[114] *Kashmir Story*, 56.

[115] Nehru and Congress leaders were concerned with internal and external publicity, how the domestic audience and the international community viewed Indian foreign and domestic policy, explaining the continued use of the MIB as an instrument of propaganda throughout the post-independence era. Nehru often tried to present Indian foreign policy as a fulfillment of Gandhi's legacy and an extrapolation of his own ideals, so the emphasis on holding a plebiscite in the name of righteousness (tied to *dharma*, therefore Hindu religion) is not surprising. On a more grounded and practical level, India's willingness to make concessions to Pakistan despite the weakness of the latter conformed with Shankar's concept of "the reputational imperative." While negotiating from a position of strength, Nehru and Congress did not want the world to view India as a bully or an aggressor, so they were willing to act more diplomatically toward Pakistan over Kashmir despite the ideological and symbolic importance of the region. As we will see in Chapter Five, India took a hardline stance over the border negotiations and conflict with China despite being in a position of weakness. See Shankar, *The Reputational Imperative*.

[116] "Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru to Shri Moharchand Mahajan," Oct 31, 1947, Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, Individual Collections, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.

Defending Kashmir treads similar ground as *The Kashmir Story*, presenting the

First Indo-Pakistan War through a military narrative. The defense of Kashmir, per the

publication, was an action of "disinterested devotion to the cause of the weak and the

oppressed," with intervention "not tainted by any ambitions of self-aggrandizement or

acquisition of territory.[117] Furthermore, the MIB declared, "Free India's first military

campaign enhanced the Indian Armed Forces' reputation for high discipline, devotion to

duty, right conduct, and disinterested service, the code of 'dharma' that the Lord

preached to the warrior Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra."[118] While many of the

early MIB publications implicitly referenced or invoked *dharma* as a motivating factor in

policy, this publication explicitly describes Indian military efforts through this religious

terminology to depict the Indian military as a force for justice and righteousness for the

largest subsection of the Indian population. Moreover, the Ministry specifically

referenced the Hindu *Mahabharata* despite previous efforts to define India as a nation-

state separated from religion and not favoring any faith. Despite casting India as a binary

opposite of religiously motivated "Muslim Pakistan," this MIB publication reveals the

overt use of Hindu religious metaphor to justify Indian military intervention and foster

unity among the population.

The remainder of the publication describes the initial invasion from the Pathan

tribes and the arrival of the military to defend Indian Kashmir. After describing the

military successes, the MIB expounded on the efforts of Indian soldiers to rehabilitate the

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[117] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *Defending Kashmir*, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1949), 1.
[118] Ibid.

population, protect locals from epidemics, and assist in the harvest of crops. Moreover, the Indian military began the construction of roads in Kashmir in order to increase exports from and economic development of Jammu and Kashmir. This endeavor toward improving infrastructure in the region served to benefit the local population, but it more importantly served as an attempt to enmesh the state within the Indian union and define Jammu and Kashmir as Indian space, assimilation through incorporation in "the development Raj."[119] The Indian military as well as the Indian nation-state, according to this MIB publication, acted based on national duty rather than territorial aggrandizement, "defending" the region and engaging in uplift of the local population in adherence to the principles of *dharma*. Despite the effort at definition by opposition in previous publications, demarcating India as secular because Pakistan was not, this Ministry publication shows the use of religion, specifically Hinduism, to appeal to and unite Indian readers.

The Kashmir Issue offers another account of the conflict between India and Pakistan, essentially repeating the narrative (and even including some of the same photographs) as *The Kashmir Story* in a more condensed and simplified format. What new information this publication offers deals with the ceasefire negotiations and Pakistan's violation of them, the Ministry blaming Pakistan for the continuation of the conflict. The United Nations resolution to end the fighting in Kashmir called for a ceasefire, a truce agreement, and a free plebiscite. The MIB contended that India accepted this resolution while Pakistan "marked time," offering a reply in such "halting

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[119] Ibid, 12.

and self-contradictory verbiage" that acceptance was in effect a rejection of the proposals.[120] Furthermore, the MIB points to the "Azad Kashmir" forces that remained in the region, which allowed the Pakistani army to pull back and adhere to the ceasefire while simultaneously maintaining a military presence in Jammu and Kashmir.[121] As with *After Partition* and *The Kashmir Story*, the MIB stressed Congress as a party acting dispassionately compared to Pakistan acting in bad faith. The Ministry maintained once again that "India never accepted the Two Nation Theory. It accepted partition on a regional basis because that was the shortest path to freedom."[122] Moreover, India's willingness to hold a plebiscite despite the accession of Kashmir evoked *dharma*, presenting the country as sacrificing its own interests in the name of democracy and peace compared with its Pakistani counterpart "not willing to eschew the use of force."[123] In the publications dedicated to Kashmir and the conflict with Pakistan, the MIB defined India in opposition to its rival as the side of legitimacy and morality, acting dispassionately compared to Pakistani aggression. These publications responded to Nehru's call for increased and improved publicity on the conflict, presenting the Indian interpretation of events to foster a greater sense of national unity. At the same time, the Ministry used Hindu religious terminology and minimized the presence of Muslims, illustrating a nation-state with an identity still informed by religion.

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[120] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *The Kashmir Issue*, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1950), 24.
[121] Ibid, 26.
[122] Ibid, 29.
[123] Ibid, 32.

"The Forces of Law and Order:" MIB Publications on The Indian Flag and Police Forces

While nationalist interpretations of history represent the achievement of independence as "the end of history," the complexities of state formation and the government's management of immediate internal problems often go ignored. Congress leaders had the unique crises of Partition and the First Indo-Pakistan War as well as the domestic concerns of forming a government, building new institutions (though the Republic of India inherited many of these from the British, including the MIB), and preserving stability amid significant upheaval. To maintain national unity and foster emotional integration, the achievement of independence necessitated the continued articulation of Indian national identity, the MIB delineating what the nation and government stood for and what it meant to be Indian. The Ministry issued publications on the Indian flag as well as a document on the Indian administrative and police forces and their responses to internal disorder in an effort to bolster a sense of belonging and celebrate the maintenance of stability, law, and order. In these publications, the Ministry cited *dharma* as a guiding principle of the nation-state as well as underscoring Hinduism as the default faith in the subcontinent.

Our Flag (1950) discusses the history of the Indian national flag since the late nineteenth century, a civics publication with the goal of fostering an understanding of the nation as well as a sense of belonging within the nation-state. Likely intended for children, the publication was deemed of great enough importance that Rajendra Prasad (at that point President of India) discussed the publication with the Minister for

Information and Broadcasting Diwakar.[124] The MIB contended that the evolution of the

National Flag reflected the political history of the country, as political trends, communal

tensions, and waves of enthusiasm were visible based on the people's attitude toward the

flag.[125] Though much of the publication stresses the lack of communal character of the

flag, following the Nehruvian consensus of secularism, the MIB explained, "the flag is to

the freedom seeker what the idol is to the worshipper."[126] Despite the Congress argument

that India welcomed all faiths and governed religious communities impartially, this

quotation reveals that Ministry considered Hinduism the default religion and identity in

the subcontinent. The MIB using the language and iconography of Hinduism to make

this publication more accessible to Indian children for the purposes of citizenship and

unity.

The publication presents the evolution of the flag from the original red, yellow,

and green flag with *bande mataram* (glory to the motherland) written in Devanagari

script and white lotuses and a white sun and crescent to represent the Hindu and Muslim

community, respectively. The flag changed in response to changing politics and

developments, with the flag of Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Annie Besant incorporating a

Union Jack as an articulation for dominion status in the early twentieth century, while

[124] "The publication entitled Our Flag. The material of which the national flag is to be made. Question of Supply of an authorized translation as also the text of our two national songs to Mr. Loy Henderson, the American Ambassador," 1950, PR_ 000004015265, File No.: 144/50, Digitized Public Records and Presidential Secretariat, National Archives of India Abhilekh Patal, Accessed Nov 6 2022, https://www.abhilekh-patal.in/jspui/handle/123456789/2769727?frontend&my-list&query=[query=&frontend&rpp=20.
125 Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *Our Flag*, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1950), 1.
[126] Ibid.

subsequent iterations of the flag included the chakra, initially a hand loom to symbolize

self-reliance and protest against British industrialization and colonial rule. The

publication mentions that in 1947, the central chakra changed from the hand loom to the

dharmachakra (wheel of law) found on the Lion Capital of Maurya Emperor Ashoka.

Nehru claimed this was to maintain the proportions of the flag, but this was also a

political choice. The prime minister drew upon on the historical figure of Ashoka, a

Buddhist emperor who promoted religious tolerance, nonviolence, and possessed what

we might call an "international outlook," as a "usable past," a historical precedent to

justify contemporary political goals.[127] Moreover, Nehru's adoption of Ashoka as a

historical parallel exemplifies the selective drawing from India's ancient, pre-Muslim

past, highlighting the attitude and worldview of the Buddhist, "natural Indian" ("natural,"

according to Gyanendra Pandey, due to Buddhism's origins in the subcontinent, therefore

acceptable to the Hindu majority)[128] emperor, as a national symbol and bedrock of post-

independence Indian identity. At the same time, this inclusion highlights the concept of

dharma through the *dharmachakra*, the wheel of law guiding the nation-state in the

adherence to dispassionate duty, truth, and virtue. While Nehru's appropriation of

Ashoka and the *dharmachakra* nominally avoided a communal bent, drawing from

Buddhism rather than Hinduism, the status of Buddhists as "natural Indians" within the

nation-state and the importance of *dharma* within Hindu faith muddles the sense that the

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[127] While it is a general statement to say leaders of Congress drew from history to argue for Indian nationalism and unite the population, Ananya Vajpeyi, *Righteous Republic: The Political Foundations of Modern India,* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012) underscores the specific aspects, terms, and iconography Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Abanindranath Tagore, Nehru, and B.R. Ambedkar drew from to define their own political ideology and guide India following independence. All of these appropriated terms, symbols, and icons derive from India's ancient, pre-Muslim past.
[128] Pandey, "Can a Muslim Be an Indian?," 621.

prime minister's choice was that of a secular state. The Ministry went even further, claiming that the wheel of law was not just a Buddhist symbol, but one that went back five thousand years, the MIB presenting the *dharmachakra* as a primordial national symbol.[129] Even if Nehru did not tie the *dharmachakra* to Hinduism, the Ministry publication makes this claim, projecting the wheel and Hinduism back in time and presenting both as timeless components of Indian identity. The MIB's *Our Flag* illustrates an articulation of Indian national identity and an attempt to unite the population behind the new flag while also revealing the influence of religion on this national symbol and the government's notion of the ideal Indian citizen.

The MIB pamphlet *On the Home Front* (1951) celebrates the Indian military and police force for their role in maintaining law and order in the country. Throughout this publication, the Ministry portrayed the police and administrative forces as upholders of "law and order" within the nation-state, an association within an Indian context that takes on religious dimensions. Various "forces of disorder" as defined by the Ministry, such as communists, communalists, and violence and upheaval in the wake of Partition, threatened the security of the nation-state following independence. These "anti-social elements" were put down and the administration was strengthened, and because of this the government and the people could devote themselves to the task of reconstruction.[130] The Ministry attributed this success to the late Home Minister Patel (died 1950) as well as to the majority of the people "who refused to be led astray by extremists."[131] The MIB

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[129] *Our Flag*, 9.
[130] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *On the Home Front*, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1951), i.
[131] Ibid.

touted that the majority of the population supported the nation-state, order rather than disorder, stating the existence of unity to underscore the importance of integration.

This publication like those before it lambasted the Muslim League for encouraging hooliganism and communal violence before independence and Partition while also criticizing communalists for "carrying on pro-Pakistan and pro-Razakar propaganda, collecting funds for 'Azad Kashmir,' preaching communal hatred, and indulging in subversive activities."[132] Furthermore, the communalism of the Muslim League released the "basest of human passions," but the Ministry applauded the government for putting these down with a firm hand.[133] The Muslim League, according to the Ministry, represented passion and disorder, meaning that Congress acted dispassionately in the name of maintaining order, the MIB invoking *dharma* to justify the actions of the nation-state. To reach the largest subsection of the Indian population, despite a nominal commitment to secularism, the Ministry referenced Hindu religion in its publicity and dictation of events following independence.

Further scrutiny of the document reveals an inconsistency in how the Ministry discussed "communal elements," highlighting a bias toward Hinduism shared by many Congress leaders. The publication noted that the Government of India banned the Muslim League, the National Guards, and the Khaksars as threats to the nation in response to their agitation. At the same time, the MIB depicted the Hindu nationalist RSS (itself a communal organization) in a much more sympathetic tone despite their

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[132] Ibid, 5.
[133] Ibid.

connections to the Gandhi assassination. Likely drawing from Patel's records (he was sympathetic to the organization) or sources close to the former Home Minister, the pamphlet explains that the government did not act with vindictiveness against the RSS due to Gandhi's death, for "it would have been impossible to maintain that amity among communities on which the existence of a secular democratic state mainly depends."[134] While Congress could easily outlaw "communal elements" from minority populations, leaders feared that banning the organization completely would upset the Hindu majority and spark disunity. Prime Minister Nehru wanted to ban the RSS, deeming their policy and program "intensely communal and based on violent activities,"[135] yet Hindu traditionalists within Congress and throughout India viewed the organization as social and cultural. Despite proclaiming a secular nation-state and defining Congress an opponent of communalism, the Government of India lifted the ban on the RSS once it provided a written constitution (July 1949), thus allowing the organization to continue its operations, attract members, and form the institutional apparatus for the Jana Sangh. Despite contemporary criticisms from the BJP that Congress "pampers minorities," this document shows that, to maintain unity in the nation-state, Congress placated the Hindu majority.

The publication concludes by touting the achievements of the Indian police and military for providing stability and placing country firmly on the road to steady progress.[136] The Indian nation-state faced many challenges following independence, but

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[134] Ibid, 8.
[135] Nehru, *Letters to Chief Ministers*, Vol 1, 46.
[136] *On the Home Front*, 24.

the Ministry views the response, particularly to upheaval at home, as a success, for "With foresight, organization, and determined action of the Central and State Governments, India has now attained a degree of internal stability which no one would have dared to predict on the eve of independence."[137] As with the national flag, the military and police force were institutions that had to be built up and tied to the nation-state following independence rather than simply being a given. The publications centering on these components demonstrate the continued articulation of national identity following independence as well as efforts to unify the population, in many cases acting against the tenet of secularism proclaimed by Nehru and Congress.

Conclusion

While the nationalist teleology of Indian history depicts independence as the culmination of historical forces and developments, relegating the post-independence period as an epilogue or historical journalism, history did not pause or end on August 15th, 1947. Immediately following independence, the Indian nation-state faced significant challenges and upheaval due to Partition and the issue of integrating the princely states, both of these crises coalescing with the conflict over Jammu and Kashmir. Unity and stability were not a given throughout the early post-independence years as communal violence, displacement of the population, and war threatened to unravel the nation-state shortly after its creation. The MIB worked to foster a sense of civic responsibility and national unity in response to the disorder, using publications to define Indian national identity and inculcate pride and belonging in the nation-state.

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[137] Ibid, 15.

Assuming the didactic mode, speaking for recent history and presenting information and events based on political agendas, the Ministry touted India as a nation of moral legitimacy and a benevolent force for good. The MIB repeated the argument that India was a secular state, but this was largely within the context of conflict with Pakistan and definition by opposition. If Pakistan was religious and antithetical to India, then India must be secular. At the same time, to appeal to the greatest proportion of the population, the MIB cited the religious concept of *dharma,* contending that India acted as it did based on dispassionate duty to its citizens and the international community rather than pursuing national interest with the aim of encouraging the population to do their civic duty and unite behind Congress and India in the name of national advancement. The Government of India devoted resources to the MIB for radio broadcasts, films and advertising, and the production of publications, as Prime Minister Nehru and Congress leaders were greatly concerned with image and publicity at home and abroad. Despite the fact that journals and magazines promoting the political platform and policies operated at a loss, the MIB continued to publish following independence.[138] The dissemination of publications and the use of publicity were a fundamental component of Congress' domestic and foreign policy. The MIB's construction of national identity was crucial for advancement of the state agenda and fulfilling Nehru's ultimate goal of unifying the domestic population in the post-independence era.

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[138] "Descriptive Memoir," Abhilekh Patal, 45.

CHAPTER III

EDUCATING AND DEVELOPING NATIONAL UNITY: MIB PUBLICATIONS FOR

THE DOMESTIC AUDIENCE, 1948-1965

Contrary to nationalist narratives of history, the formation of a nation-state is a

tumultuous process rather than a natural transition from the old order to the new. In the

Indian case, not only did the changeover from colonial rule to independent nationhood

represent a dramatic shift, but efforts toward economic planning, combatting poverty,

rural uplift, and constructing a democratic society constituted significant upheaval.

While the new Congress government claimed to speak for and act on behalf of the

population, Prime Minister Nehru worried about "an inherent tendency towards

disintegration of India," fearing that the diversity within the subcontinent threatened to

undo the newly formed nation-state.[139] The success of development planning and

institution building after independence, according to Nehru, depended on national unity,

the prime minister deeming the emotional integration of India the most important need in

the country even late into his tenure.[140] R.R. Diwakar too feared division within the

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[139] Jawaharlal Nehru, *Letters to Chief Ministers, 1947-1964*, Vol 3, G. Parthasarathi, ed., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 367.
[140] Jawaharlal Nehru, *Letters to Chief Ministers, 1947-1964*, Vol 4, G. Parthasarathi, ed., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 477.

country, arguing that it was imperative to emphasize forces for unification and integration and "always try to see that fissiparous tendencies do not develop and are not detrimental to integration," and worked toward this aim as Chief Minister for Information and Broadcasting.[141] As it had immediately following independence in response to Partition, the First Indo-Pakistan War, and the foundation of the Indian Republic, the MIB continued to produce publications with the goal of fostering national unity. The Ministry acted as a mouthpiece for Nehru and Congress to present government programs as inherently good to the literate population while also articulating Indian national identity to cultivate unity and loyalty to the nation-state. At the same time, the Ministry emphasized Hinduism and Hindu terminology to reach the greatest proportion of the Indian population and foster a sense of national unity. Furthermore, MIB publications for the Indian audience reflected an upper class, upper caste definition of Indian national identity, delineating the "imagined community" and "othering" minority populations, particularly Indian Muslims.

This chapter examines MIB publications intended for the domestic audience from 1948 to 1965, illustrating how the Government of India interpreted and presented Congress ideology and programs to the public in an effort to encourage national unity. Nehru placed particular emphasis on the MIB to "educate" the Indian population on various government programs. Diwakar noted when he became Minister for Information and Broadcasting in 1949, "At that time, as this was a portfolio which had so many media of mass communication at command, Jawaharlal was very sensitive. He knew the value

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[141] "R.R. Diwakar Oral History Transcript," Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, 98.

of publicity. He would never allow any chance to lapse where people should be educated."[142] Nehru biographer Sarvepalli Gopal concurred with Diwakar, explaining that Nehru "saw himself as a schoolmaster, trying to explain matters to his audiences in as simple a language as possible and getting them to think and to understand."[143] MIB publications made government programs and plans more accessible to the domestic audience while also advancing national goals and acting as a cementing force in an effort to unify the population. Publications written for the domestic literate audience stressed the inherent and historical unity of India while also covering the government's various development schemes, economic planning, rural co-operatives, and the status of minorities and marginalized groups in the subcontinent. As with the publications produced before the foundation of the Indian Republic, the MIB assumed the didactic mode and presented the efforts of the government and nation-state as inherent positives. Moreover, the MIB aimed to instill pride and encourage sacrifice, restraint, and renunciation of self-interest, hoping to convince the public to realign private values with public ones, a strategy they continued throughout the post-independence years.[144] Throughout these documents, despite a stated commitment to a secular ideology, there are explicit appeals to Hindu tradition and religious iconography based on the desire to reach the greatest number of people, Hinduism being the most accessible reference point for the largest subsection of the Indian population. Despite the official Congress line that

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[142] "R.R. Diwakar Oral History Transcipt," Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, 120.
[143] Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru*, 459.
[144] Srirupa Roy, 'Moving Pictures: The Postcolonial State and Visual Representations of India, Contributions to Indian Sociology 36 (2002): 246, Quoted in Sutoris, *Visions of Development*, 10.

India was a secular nation-state, Hinduism greatly influenced the writing of and terminology in MIB publications aimed at the domestic audience.

Dictating Timeless Unity

One of the arguments used during the Indian nationalist movement to gain mass support was that India was a timeless nation possessing an essential unity, a people and territory linked to one another that did not include foreign rulers. After independence and even today, the conception of a primordial Indian nation remains potent. Furthermore, to support the goal of uniting the population in the post-independence era, the MIB stressed that India possessed a fundamental unity throughout history that connected the population of the subcontinent despite differences of religion, language, caste, or class, and presented this as the basis for national unity loyalty to the state in the present. The MIB sponsored the publication *Cultural Unity of India* (1956), written by Gertrude Emerson Sen, which depicted India as a primordial entity possessing an inherent cultural unity, one primarily based on Hinduism and Hindu religious tradition. Sen was an American-born daughter of an archaeologist, sister of entomologist Alfred E. Emerson, and a founding member of the Society of Women Geographers in 1925, who eventually settled in India and married Indian scientist Basiswar Sen and devoted three books in total to her adoptive home. *Cultural Unity of India* perpetuates the notion that India was a timeless nation, one naturally ordained by geography, history, and culture, and the MIB used this publication to highlight the basis of unity in the past as precedence for continued unity in the present. Though touting the Congress lines of secularism and "unity in diversity," the

"cultural unity of India" was assumed to be Hindu and minimizes the status of minorities in the subcontinent.

The first chapter of Sen's work, "The Homeland," discusses the geography of India, as nature, according to Sen, gave India something of everything, "All her treasures, in endless variety and unstinted measure, she has poured out to fashion this blessed land."[145] Moreover, she explained, "Bounded by mountains and seas, India was created by nature a natural geographic unit," thus projecting the contemporary borders of the nation-state back in time to cast India as a primordial nation having always existed.[146] In her description of India's geography, Sen noted that in the time after the Aryans and Buddhist missionaries, "marauders often enough swept down through the [mountain] passes to ravage the Indian plains," in reference to the invasions of various Muslim factions in the common era.[147] Throughout her book, Sen does not mention Muslims (or any Muslim leaders) by name. Instead, she deemed them "marauders" who ravaged the fertile plains of the motherland, thus perpetuating the sense that India's greatness was violated by "Muslim invasion" as well as the notion that Muslims were not truly "Indian." Furthermore, in the second chapter, "We the People," Sen highlighted "the fusion of the Aryan and Dravidian races" as "the story of India itself," presenting the combination of people and cultures as an example of unity and synthesis rather than one of potential conquest.[148] Though Sen later seems to promote Indian "unity in diversity,"

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[145] Gertrude Emerson Sen, *Cultural Unity of India*, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1956), 7.
[146] Ibid.
[147] Ibid, 8.
[148] Ibid, 15. The discovery that the languages of South India differed from their northern counterparts, Dravidian rather than Indo-European languages, led nineteenth century European ethnologists to propose

contending, "The secret of Indian vitality lies in its wonderful capacity to tolerate different views, different customs, different levels of understanding,"[149] her work does not overturn the previous depiction of Muslims as outsiders nor the sense that the default Indian citizen was a Hindu from the North. Moreover, she makes the argument that foreigners eventually "became so thoroughly Indianized through intermarriages and the adoption of Indian manners, languages, and customs, that they had ceased to be foreigners."[150] Her remarks echoed claims made by Gandhi and Congress that India easily "assimilated diverse elements" but ignored the fact that such assimilation requires a loss of personal identity, subsumed by the dominant (in this case Hindu) national culture. Rather than touting and celebrating "diverse elements" as part of the fabric of Indian history and the nation-state, Sen presented "others" as needing to be managed in favor of a Hindu dictated national unity.

In the third chapter titled "Roots of Indian Culture," Sen claimed that the Vedas and Upanishads foreshadowed the future direction of Indian religions and philosophies, predicating Hindu religious texts as the basis of the development of religion and

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"the Aryan invasion theory." The theory states that the Indo-European Aryans invaded the Indian subcontinent anywhere from 1500 to 1200 BC and became the dominant power in present-day India, with the Dravidian speaking population either migrating to the southern portion of the country or displaced through Aryan conquest depending on the scholarship or political agenda motivating the inquiry. The Aryan Invasion theory, one that offers the most likely interpretation of ancient Indian history based on the available evidence rather than a definitive argument, proves controversial and a political flashpoint for many different groups. South Indian political activists cite the theory as proof of "North Indian imperialism," while Hindu nationalists contend that the Aryans were indigenous to India based on their agenda of depicting Indian history as only of a timeless Hindu nation. See Thomas R. Trautmann, "Inventing the History of South India" in *Invoking the Past: The Uses of History in South Asia*, edited by Daud Ali, (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999). For a discussion of the controversy regarding the Aryan Invasion theory within contemporary Indian politics, see Edwin F. Bryant and Laurie L. Patton, eds., *The Indo-Aryan Controversy: Evidence and Inference in Indian History*, (London: Routledge, 2005).
[149] Sen, *Cultural Unity of India*, 13.
[150] Ibid, 18

intellectual thought and the very roots of Indian unity and the nation-state. Moreover, the four *mathas* (universities) at Puri, Dvaraka, Sringeri, and Badrinath fostered the spiritual unity of the country, again connecting Hindu religiosity to Indian unity past and present.[151] Sen is not wholly positive toward Hinduism, as she credited Islam and Christianity for offering an escape from the caste system, paralleling Congress' efforts to minimize caste and make untouchability illegal.[152] The book concludes with a chapter titled "Modern Synthesis," which attempted to reconcile India's traditions and cultural unity with efforts toward development and modernization. Even as the nation-state implemented development schemes, Sen maintained that the fundamentals of India's cultural unity must not be violated, and believed that Indian traditions, by her estimation Hindu ones, possessed an integral function in the contemporary nation-state.[153] At the same time, according to Sen, Indian citizens needed to act for the benefit of the nation-state, stating, "It is the first duty of every citizen to think of the welfare of the country as a whole and do nothing to weaken national solidarity."[154] Sen invoked the concept of *dharma* as adherence to duty, using an appeal to religion to implore Indians to serve their country. Local and group identities posed a threat to national unity and therefore the security of India and its people, Sen stressing the importance of national unity echoing the goals of the MIB and Prime Minister Nehru.[155] In her discussion of the "cultural unity of India," Sen presented Indian unity as something that always existed but also one

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[151] Ibid, 35.
[152] Ibid, 54.
[153] Ibid, 64.
[154] Ibid, 67.
[155] Ibid, 66.

that was fundamentally Hindu, thus rendering all other groups as outsiders or subsumed by the nation-state. Far from a secular nation-state, one possessing "unity in diversity," Sen portrayed an Indian nation-state built primarily on the tenets of Hinduism, with other religions and local identities minimized in the name of national unity.

India possessed an inherent and primordial unity, according to Sen, the MIB, and Congress, yet it needed to be continually articulated and reinforced, beginning at an early age through the educational curriculum of the subcontinent. In similar fashion to the MIB's dissemination of *India's Constitution* to foster greater civic education, the government viewed the education system as a tool of national integration and identity construction. Nation building and national unity were core tenets of the Indian education curriculum, with education serving to transform the population "into Indians" and Indians into citizens.[156] The MIB publication *Future of Education in India* (1956) presented a series of radio talks initiated by Minister for Education Maulana Abdul Kalam Azadm which debated how to structure Indian education for the benefit of the nation-state. Azad believed "the general education available to the common people is neither adequate nor appropriate to their needs," and criticized the Indian education system as one centered on preparing people for government jobs.[157] Furthermore, because not everyone could attain a government profession, the educational system, "instead of enabling people to become useful members of society, makes them superfluous and turns what should be an asset

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[156] Within scholarship, public education has long been understood as a process of integrating the population within the structure and system of the state. For a clear example of this process (unfairly maligned by scholars), see Eugene Weber, *Peasants into Frenchman: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914,* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1976).
[157] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *Future of Education in India (A Symposium)*, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1956), 5.

into a liability."[158] Education was "the right of every citizen" but also establishing

Gandhian "basic education" was "of great importance to the whole structure of national

education," making the Indian population productive but also loyal citizens of the newly

independent state.[159] The symposium brought together various high-ranking officials to

discuss what India needed to do to improve its educational system, and while the

consensus was that Indian education was paramount to economic development, prestige,

and unity, many of the contributors held that religion, specifically Hinduism and Hindu

texts, were crucial components of the national curriculum.

Minister of Information and Broadcasting B.V. Keskar, the head of the

governmental body publishing this contribution of radio talks, offered his own thoughts

on Indian education, ideas and considerations that informed the texts produced by the

MIB. It was imperative, Keskar contended, that "the system of education in any country

must meet the social and cultural needs of that nation and must be in consonance with its

historical background," and he bemoaned the fact that "Indian education does not possess

any national character or individuality."[160] He complained that the Indian education

system as constructed could only produce "a kind of Anglo-Indian," a student completely

unacquainted with the country in which they were living and more versed in the life of

Great Britain than India.[161] Keskar stressed the importance that Indian education be

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[158] Ibid.

[159] Ibid, 6. Basic education was a model developed by Gandhi in which rural Indians learned how to read but also made handicrafts, encouraging economic productivity but also "induce the growth of a sense of citizenship." See Ministry of Education, *Basic and Social Education*, (New Delhi: Ministry of Education, 1956), 8.

[160] *Future of Education*, 104.

[161] Ibid, 105.

national education, concerned with literacy, knowledge accumulation, and professional

development but also emotionally integrating the population within the nation-state. This

belief no doubt informed the production and dissemination of MIB publications for the

domestic and foreign audience. Moreover, his view that education must meet the "social

and cultural needs of that nation" legitimized the use of religion, specifically Hinduism,

in educational publications and curriculum. India's religions reflected her sociocultural

history and distanced the nation-state from the West, and the corpus of MIB publications

that invoked Hindu themes and terminology reflect the view that religion was an integral

and useful component to national education and emotional integration. Despite the

state's official commitment to secularism, Keskar expressed concern that the education of

a nation-state reflects its history, society, and culture, and invited the use of Hinduism to

promote national unity and construct Indian education.

> Additionally, Keskar criticized the poor state of history textbooks, noting,

> It is heart-rending to see some of the textbooks that are prescribed for our schools or universities. Suitable textbooks are an essential base for the educational system and this question ought to be taken up on a national level. More especially, the history books of our country will all have to be rewritten in a more sensible way so that our students will get the right perspective of India's history and traditions. […] The mediocrity of the books that we prescribe is leading to a mediocrity in the intellectual standard of our students and this is not a good augury for the country's future.[162]

Historical education was a crucial element not only for rewriting the historical

understandings and assumptions produced during colonial rule, but also the "imagining of

a national community" in the post-independence era. The significance Keskar and

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[162] Ibid, 109.

Congress placed on history motivated the process of history-writing as national identity

formation throughout the 1950s and 1960s, sparking the production of numerous

historical texts as well as the *Builders of Modern India* series (discussed in Chapter 4).

The Chief Minister of the MIB viewed education as a national concern, arguing that

instruction and institutions needed to fit within Indian culture and history; put simply,

education "needed to be Indianized." Additional contributors offered their own

suggestions to answer this call, stressing the importance of religion and classical Hindu

texts for Indian education and therefore Indian national identity construction.

The radio talks of Rukmini Devi Arundale, Dr. Sampurnanand, and Dr.

Amarnatha Jha presented Hinduism as a critical component of Indian education, a point

of emphasis for improving the institution as well as national integration. Rukmini Devi, a

renowned Indian classical dancer and member of the Rajya Sabha (1952-1962),

lambasted the implementation of the English education system and Western curriculum

throughout India, which displaced the village system and became the only recognized

symbol of culture.[163] Education, according to Rukmini Devi, was the basis of "the Indian

outlook and spirit," and she believed, citing Gandhi, "that education must be Indian,

based on Indian ideals."[164] For Rukmini Devi, an Indian foundation of education

explicitly meant the incorporation of religion, specifically Hinduism, to provide moral

instruction for the population and future citizens of the nation-state. "India's basis and

root are in religion," she argued, "yet we do not allow religious education. Just because

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[163] Ibid, 47.
[164] Ibid, 47.

the religious spirit has deteriorated we decide to give up the whole basis of our civilization which gave us morality and the true spirit of service."[165] She continued, "Our grandmothers taught us the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata*, told us stories of the great and most of all showed us how to conduct ourselves through life," and feared that "losing God" brought corruption, dishonesty, immorality, and selfishness to India.[166] For Rukmini Devi, it was Hindu texts and the tenets of Hinduism that provided India its foundations, the bedrock of morality, and indeed its national identity, and she contended that Hindu religion was vital in post-independence India despite the official line of secularism and "unity in diversity."

Dr. Sampurnanand, Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh and later Governor of Rajasthan, insisted that "Man must be brought back to religion," and that "Man must be taught to anchor himself on higher things and accept higher ideals," fearing that "a false emphasis on secularism and spurious intellectualism" would hold India back.[167] For Sampurnanand, Indian education and therefore the state needed to emphasize *dharma*, maintaining that "dharma must inspire all teaching and the atmosphere of schools and colleagues should be permeated by it."[168] Sampurnanand overtly defined dharma as duty, and urged a nationwide emphasis on duties rather than rights; while highlighting rights gave rise to the uncovering of man's passions, "there can be no competition in the domain of duty."[169] Furthermore, Sampurnanand pointed to the religious basis of

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[165] Ibid, 48.
[166] Ibid, 50.
[167] Ibid, 76.
[168] Ibid, 74.
[169] Ibid.

dharma, noting that, "Dharma is not religion but religion is certainly a part of dharma."[170] Sampurnanand vocalized the term *dharma* and its importance for guiding India and its citizenry explicitly just as the MIB, Congress, and Nehru urged readers implicitly to fulfill their duty for the sake of the nation-state. Furthermore, Sampurnanand noted the religious component of *dharma* and wholeheartedly supports its implementation for national development and goals. Readers in India would understand appeals to duty, explicit or implicit, as an appeal to religion, specifically Hinduism and the Indian religions of Jainism and Buddhism, in a nation-state that claimed to support all religions without privilege or prejudice.

Dr. Amarnatha Jha, Chairman of the Public Service Commission and former Vice Chancellor of Allahabad University, concurred with Rukmini Devi and Sampurnanand on the role of religion within the post-independence state, affirming,

> To live in the way of God, to recognize the essential sanctity of the human personality, to obtain the approbation of one's inner self, to believe that life on this earth is not the beginning and end of one's existence, to sympathize with and understand different points of view, to be more and more ourselves in order to be more and more an essential part of the community, unselfish devotion to duty, the conviction that the principles of right action are identical for individuals as for states, belief in certain cardinal principles of piety and loyalty, and in the immortality, to these moorings an Indian must be taught to hold fast, if he is to remain an Indian.[171]

Being Indian, and remaining Indian, according to Jha, meant a fulfillment of duty, *dharma*, as well as a Hindu understanding of God, religion, and proper conduct, and this needed to be included and implemented in the Indian educational curriculum.

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[170] Ibid.
[171] Ibid, 113.

Furthermore, Jha stressed that educators needed to "Make the best specimens of the classics of India available to all our students," which thus placed greater emphasis on the Hindu religious texts such as the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* that Rukmini Devi considered crucial for Indian education. All of the contributors to *The Future of Education in India* agreed that education in the subcontinent needed to be improved and altered to promote civic duty, emotional integration, and national unity. However, the inclusion of voices promoting the need for Hindu texts and tenets within the education system demonstrates the influence of religion (specifically faiths native to the subcontinent) within a nation-state that claimed to be secular.

Another series of radio talks republished by the MIB, *Contributions of the South to the Heritage of India* (1961), touted a historical unity throughout the entirety of the subcontinent, presenting Hindu religion as a key facet of national unison and stressing the importance of the south in India's identity and culture. Despite claims during the nationalist movement and post-independence discourse of a united India, South India represented a significant divergence from the North and a potential fault line in India's territorial integrity. Unlike the Northern Indian languages that derived from Sanskrit and possessed Indo-European origins, the states, regions, and people of South India spoke Dravidian languages and had their own literary traditions and unique religious and cultural customs. Because of this, the demands from some members of Congress for the abandonment of English in favor Hindi as the national tongue, the language spoken by the largest number of people but geographically a Northern Indian language, reeked of

Northern or, more bluntly, Aryan imperialism.[172] The creation of linguistic states as well

as the adoption of official languages in 1963 rather than a national language, presumably

Hindi, mediated but did not alleviate this fear within South India.[173] This series of radio

talks worked to emphasize that South India was a fundamental part of the nation's history

and identity. Within this context, the MIB published *Contributions of the South to the*

Heritage of India to mitigate any sense of separatism from the South, the contributors

stressing the commonalities between South and North as well as emphasizing the South's

importance to the history, society, and culture of India. One key point of emphasis

among the contributors was the conception that the southern portion of the subcontinent

was "the preserver of Hindu tradition" as well as equating Hinduism with India's

"glorious past," positing that India was a nation fundamentally built on Hinduism. By

emphasizing the connection between South India and Hinduism, *Contributions of the*

South depicts Muslims as "invaders" and outsiders rather than part of an Indian nation-

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[172] See Trautmann, "Invention of South India."

[173] See King, *Nehru and the Language Politics of India*. In his work, King presents the creation of linguistic states and the passing of The Official Languages Act of 1963 as Prime Minister Nehru's last great political win before his death. This Official Languages Act defined many languages as "official languages" rather than any specific national language and called for the continued use of English for the translation of state and national government documents. King's work, however, ends with 1963 and does not account for continued agitation in the South over the language issue. In 1965, protests erupted in Tamil Nadu over the terms of The Official Languages Act. While the act stated in Clause Three that "the English language *may*, as from the appointed day, continue to be used, in addition to Hindi," the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) (a Tamil Nadu based political party with a platform built on South Indian interests) and South Indian students feared that the use of the verb "may" rather than "shall" meant that the government would ultimately revoke The Official Languages Act and make Hindi the national language. This verbiage along with Nehru's death sparked agitation and protest in 1965 over the language issue. The protests only ended when Lal Bahadur Shastri explicitly ensured the continued use of English for official communication. The language division continues to inform domestic politics and threaten national unity. Though the BJP listed the adoption of the Hindi language as part of its political platform since its first electoral victory in 1996 and Prime Minister Modi chooses to speak Hindi at official meetings and during international visits, a move toward making India a one language nation-state would spark mass protest and threaten to unravel the country.

state, thus casting India as a nation in which religion was integral rather than one built on secularism of tolerance.

Because of the aspiration to bolster contemporary national unity, the contributors highlighted that national unity was always present and that the South was a key component of this historical integration. Telliyavaram Mahadevan Ponnambalam Mahadevan, a professor of philosophy at the University of Madras and scholar of Advaita (non-dualist Hindu philosophy), declared, "Quite early in the history of India a remarkable sense of cultural unity was achieved, in spite of a political pluralism."[174] Political disunity, by contrast, "is what allowed foreign invaders to gain easy success and subjugate and domineer the land."[175] While Mahadevan's mention of political pluralism lends support to the "unity in diversity" thesis promoted by Nehru and Congress, within an Indian nationalist teleology "foreign invaders" refers to not only the arrival of Europeans and subjugation of the subcontinent by the British Empire, but also the Muslim invasions beginning with Mahmud of Ghazni in the early eleventh century. Mahadevan thus portrayed Muslims both past and present as foreigners and "others" within the nation-state. Furthermore, he emphasized the importance of religion as India's heritage and source of Indian unity, stating, "despite internal dissensions and repeated external aggression, if India has preserved through the ages her religio-philosophical culture, which is her heritage, it is because of the fact that a feeling of wholeness has been constantly infused into the people by the wise ones who have appeared in all parts

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[174] T.M.P. Mahadevan, "Thought and Philosophy," in *Contributions of the South to the Heritage of India*, (Faridabad: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1961), 7.
[175] Ibid.

of the country and at all times."[176] Unifiers of the country were those that managed to maintain India's religion and philosophy, Mahadevan thus linking both (assumed Hindu) as part of India's national identity and culture. Indian unity was not only a goal of the nation-state but "a spiritual concept and a holy existence defying the forces of disruption and disintegration," national unity possessing a spiritual dimension rather than solely a political and pragmatic concern for the state.[177]

Other contributors like Mahadevan emphasized a historical unity within India while also highlighting the importance of cultural development and influences from the South. Dr. Charles Fabri, a scholar of Indian art and architecture, deemed India a "composite culture, not the so-called Aryan civilization as believed in the nineteenth century."[178] Fabri criticized the "copius treatment of North Indian art"[179] as a result of British concentration on archaeological sites in the northern part of the subcontinent. By including this opinion, the MIB and Congress by proxy continued to criticize British imperialism to rally support for Indian identity and define the nation-state as the binary opposite of colonial rule. Fabri highlighted South Indian work in stone carving and bronze sculpture and believed Dravidians to be "the greatest painters in Indian history," citing the cave paintings at Ajanta in Andhra Pradesh.[180] Rejecting the Aryan Invasion Theory, Fabri argued that the discovery of the Indus River Valley Civilizations "shook" the belief that all of Indian culture was built on Sanskrit, which in turn predicates an

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[176] Ibid.
[177] Ibid.
[178] Charles Fabri, "Art and Architecture," in *Contributions of the South to the Heritage of India*, (Faridabad: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1961), 22.
[179] Ibid, 23.
[180] Ibid, 25.

Indian culture with foundations in language, philosophy, literature, and religion originating in the subcontinent.[181] Indologist Ramachandra Narayan Dandekar furthered this point on his radio talk dedicated to Indian mythology, explaining that though it was previously believed that the South was entirely indebted to the North with regard to spiritual culture, "Now, however, we see that it was not so much an Aryanization of India as the Indianization of the Aryans."[182] In his discussion of South Indian literature, M. Satyanarana noted, "The builders of our civilization created a union of thought, weaving the threads of the characteristics of the different parts of the country into a fabric which is one and the same and is indivisible" and maintained that culturally "There is no India without South India, and there is no South India without India."[183] Despite linguistic differences between the North and the South, fears of Northern Hindi imperialism and the legacy of the Aryan Invasion theory as a racial classification of the Indian population, contributors to this series of talks stressed that South India was a vital part of the imagined community past and present. Furthermore, it was specifically influences on and preservation of Hindu traditions that led contributors to this volume to celebrate South India, linking a specific religious culture and identity as part of an Indian nation-state that touted secularism and "unity in diversity."

Invited for another government sponsored radio talk, dancer Rukmini Devi Arundale again envisioned an Indian nation where Hinduism was paramount. Speaking

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[181] Ibid, 22.
[182] R.N. Dandekar, "Mythology," in *Contributions of the South to the Heritage of India*, (Faridabad: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1961), 18.
[183] M. Satyanarayana, "Literature," in *Contributions of the South to the Heritage of India*, (Faridabad: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1961), 35.

on South Indian music and dance (her area of expertise) rather than the Indian

educational system, Rukmini Devi held that the contributions of the South to music and

Indian culture more broadly were great and possessed a special significance "due to the

fact that the South did not suffer from foreign invasions to the extent that the other parts

of the country did."[184] Moreover, she contended, both musical traditions and "The

unified culture of India, which was common to all parts of the country prior to the

Muslim invasions, was preserved untouched in the South longer than in the other regions

of India."[185] The music, dance, and culture of South India were particularly important,

according to Rukmini Devi, because they maintained their Hindu influences free from

"Muslim invasion." Moreover, her conception of historical Indian unity is one disrupted

by the arrival of Islam in the subcontinent, Rukmini Devi defining Muslims as "others"

within the Indian nation both past and present. While she claimed that Muslims "were no

longer foreigners" by the time they reached South India, she argued this was because by

then they were significantly influenced by "the culture of this country," again separating

"Indian culture" predicated on Hinduism from "Muslim culture" while also highlighting

the subjugation of diversity rather than the celebration of it.[186] Furthermore, she

contended that Muslim music in the North excelled specifically because *Indian* music

was great and influenced Muslim compositions. Thus, Rukmini Devi minimized Muslim

contributions to musical development as a receiver of Indian creativity rather than noting

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[184] Rukmini Devi Arundale, "Music and Dance," in *Contributions of the South to the Heritage of India*,
(Faridabad: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1961), 28.
[185] Ibid.
[186] Ibid, 29.

mutual exchange.[187] She underscored this, asserting, "The music in other Muslim

countries has neither the greatness of Indian music nor as much variety and richness."[188]

As with education, Rukmini Devi believed that music possessed a religious dimension;

music itself was "the very voice of God" and derived from devotion, and noted that

"Muslim musicians, whose forefathers were Hindus converted to Islam, while they

influenced the music by their rich voices and mysticism, never took the music away from

religion,"[189] again separating "Muslims" from "Indians" while also emphasizing the

importance of Hindu religiosity within Indian music, commending South India as a

preserver of these religious origins and traditions.

In his discussion of literature, Satyanarayana declared the *Ramayana* and

Mahabharata as the best models of creative art and noted the South's rich corpus of

adaptations of these works.[190] Though aa less overt nod toward Hindu religion, it would

nevertheless instill pride among the Hindu population and further the implication that

these two religious texts were the basis of Indian culture and identity. Historian Dr.

Kolappa Kanakasabhapathy Pillay's radio talk on social customs and institutions

similarly presented South India as "the preserver of Hindu Indian tradition." He

explained,

> Thanks to the comparative immunity from foreign invasions, the South was able
> to preserve the traditional way of life much more compactly than the North. On
> the whole, in the present fabric of the South Indian social system, we find pristine
> indigenous customs and institutions flourishing side by side with the imported

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[187] Ibid, 32.
[188] Ibid.
[189] Ibid, 30.
[190] Satyanarayana, "Literature," 37.

ones, while there are numerous others which bear the traces of partial or complete amalgamation.[191]

Though foreign influences changed certain South Indian customs and social institutions, the fact that foreign (specifically Muslim) invasions did not touch the southern portion of the subcontinent resulted in a more traditional (Hindu) way of life, a recurring theme within this publication as the most important contribution from South India to Indian culture and identity. In an attempt to maintain unity throughout the nation-state, explicitly making the Dravidian-speaking South India feel like part of the country and diminish any fears of linguistic imperialism, the contributors within this MIB publication chose to highlight the South's influences on and preservation of Hindu customs and traditions as the region's impact on Indian heritage. This approach in turn depicted Muslims as "others" within the Indian nation past and present, a viewpoint more aligned with that of Hindu nationalism than fitting within the official Congress and Nehru platform of "unity in diversity" and secularism.

While all of the Ministry's publications focused on the need for unity in the early years of the post-independence nation-state, *Facets of Indian Unity* (1963) overtly called for national unity to become part of the day-to-day consciousness of the Indian population to build the country's strength and raise prosperity.[192] This publication combined radio talks delivered before the Sino-Indian War, the conflict adding the context of external threat to bolster claims regarding the necessity of unity. Contributors

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[191] K.K. Pillay, "Social Customs and Institutions," in *Contributions of the South to the Heritage of India*, (Faridabad: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1961), 40.
[192] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *Facets of Indian Unity*, (Faridabad: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1963), 3.

Kavalam Madhava Panikkar, Kasturiranga Santhanam, K. Raghavan Pillai, Kalakinkar Dutta, and Hirubhai M. Patel dealt with the cultural aspects of Indian unity. In doing so, they relied on Hindu traditions and iconography to unite the national majority, conflating Hindu identity with Indian identity despite the fact that Congress professed that India was a secular nation. Panikkar, an Indian diplomat that served as ambassador to China, Egypt, and France throughout the 1950s, contended that India possessed a cultural and social unity based on "the integration of the Hindu people since the fourth century BC," invoking a "glorious Indian past" while also portraying Indian history as Hindu history.[193] Muslims, according to Panikkar may have changed the character of the Indian people, but they did not affect the unity of the subcontinent.[194] Patel, formerly Defense Secretary (1947-53) and later the Minister of Finance (1977-79) and Minister of Home Affairs (1979), concurred with this statement, explaining that most Indians were originally Hindus but "those from outside," specifically referring to Parsis and Mughals, "became Indian," supporting the secular narrative of India as an Eastern melting pot but also explicitly co-opting religious groups "as a facet of Indian unity" rather than distinct individuals and communities.[195] Moreover, the celebration of Mughals and Parsis that "became Indian," groups that more closely adhered to an established Indian identity without mention of Muslims, renders the largest minority group in the subcontinent invisible, an outsider in the nation-state supposedly accepting of all religions. Though writer and professor Pillai called for "unity in diversity" as a motto in cultural matters

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[193] Ibid, 5.
[194] Ibid.
[195] Ibid, 24.

and Dutta, a historian, viewed tolerance as the "key single idea" within Indian society, these arguments suffer from those of their fellow contributors equating Indian history and identity with Hinduism and minimizing other populations of the nation-state.

Santhanam, a South Indian politician and a member of a governmental anti-corruption committee appointed by Lal Bahadur Shastri, justified the importance of Hinduism within contemporary Indian nationalism by defining the religion as a distinct pattern of life rather that a set of dogmas.[196] While he celebrated the fading away of caste distinctions and maintained that it was neither possible nor desirable to seek a complete revival of traditional Indian society, he declared that Indian culture must be a judicious combination of old and new, a mixing of technological development with Hindu religious tradition.[197] Moreover, Santhanam considered Buddhism and Jainism as "sects of conglomeration of Hinduism," co-opting the philosophy and traditions of other religions as components of Hinduism and Indian nationalism rather than distinct in their own right.[198] This also reflects a tactic used by contemporary Hindu nationalists, incorporating Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists within their movement to combat "external others" in the form of Muslims and Christians. Despite nominally supporting a secular nation-state, the MIB viewed indigenous Indian religions in the same manner as Hindu nationalists, rejecting a rigid binary and sharp distinction between the ideologies of Congress and the BJP.[199] "Indian culture," according to Dutta, only emerged with Indian unity, the historian citing the Guptas, Mauryas, Harshas, and Mughals as examples from

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[196] Ibid, 12.
[197] Ibid, 13.
[198] Ibid.
[199] Pandey, *Routine Violence*, 143.

the past that could be replicated with unity and loyalty to Congress and the nation-state in the present.[200] In the wake of invasion from the People's Republic of China, this MIB publication centered on unity took on added significance, rallying support not only for the nation-state but also for the war effort. To reach the largest audience of literate citizens to disseminate the message of national unity and the construction of Indian national identity, the Ministry linked Hinduism and Hindu religious traditions as key "facets of unity," complicating the Congress stance that it stood for a secular Indian nation.

The MIB's *Indian Unity from Dream to Reality* (1964) reproduces speeches and lectures from long-tenured Indian politician Morarji Desai with the stated goal of "contributing to existing knowledge and promote awareness of contemporary problems within the Indian state."[201] The crucial contemporary problem, according to this publication, was the need for national unity. Desai argued that if India was united in the early twentieth century, the nation would be a developed one rather than developing; the lack of unity in Indian history "was a criminal waste of time and opportunity."[202] To highlight the importance of internal cohesion, the document repeats the teleological nationalist interpretation of Indian history and celebrates the achievements of great rulers and dynasties like Chandragupta Maurya, Asoka, the Guptas, and the Harshas as examples of historical Indian unity leading to greatness and prosperity. Moreover, the rule of Mughal Emperor Akbar was the result of "genius and practical common sense," with religious tolerance through the *Din-i Ilahi* faith creating a synthesis between original

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[200] *Facets of Indian Unity*, 21.
[201] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *Indian Unity from Dream to Reality*, (Faridabad: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1964), 7.
[202] Ibid, 68.

"Indian" (assumed Hindu) and new foreign ways of life, culture, and philosophy.[203] The

publication declares that the loss of unity disrupted this "glorious past" in Indian history,

producing the rule of Shahjahan, Aurangzeb, and the establishment of the British Raj.

Continuing the nationalist trajectory, Desai labeled Gandhi as the exponent of

disappointment with British rule and the leader that managed to unite India's diverse

population in a common struggle for independence. Muslims, according to this

publication, joined Gandhi's movement only as a marriage of convenience, projecting the

atrocities of Partition and conflict with Pakistan back in time while also perpetuating the

narrative that Indian Muslims represented an internal threat to Indian nationalism and the

nation-state.[204] *Indian Unity from Dream to Reality* defines Pakistan as "the ultimate

extension of disunity and separatism" and explicitly criticizes Chinese trade and

settlements as fronts for colonialism. The external context of conflict along with the fear

of internal separatism influenced the message and argumentative strategies used in this

publication. The Ministry stressed the importance of unity by defining India against

contemporary external threats as well as reiterating triumphant moments in Indian history

as the result of national unison, using these rhetorical tools in an active attempt to

cultivate unity. The Indian government viewed national integration as fundamental for

the legitimacy of the newly independent nation as well as vital for economic development

and the progress of Indian society in the post-independence period. Whether in response

to external rivalry or active conflict or to mitigate any Balkanization of the subcontinent,

the Ministry underscored national unity as a timeless component of a primordial Indian

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203 Ibid, 20.
204 Ibid, 32.

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nation but also a contemporary goal of the nation-state. At the same time, this national unity was one informed by Hinduism and codified by upper class and upper caste Hindus, with Ministry publications centered on minorities, Scheduled Castes and Tribes, lower classes, and women speaking for these non-dominant groups.

Imagining the National Community and "Others"

In its publications devoted to the domestic audience, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting continuously articulated that India possessed a timeless unity. Moreover, the MIB emphasized that India achieved greatness and was strongest when the population was united, with eras of disunity allowing for "foreign invasion" by Muslims beginning in the eleventh century and then through the arrival of Europeans starting in the sixteenth century. Though Nehru and Congress proclaimed that India possessed "unity in diversity" and was an eastern melting pot of various religious, ethnic, and linguistic identities, MIB publications defined non-Hindus as "others" that either needed to be subsumed and incorporated within the Indian nation or as fundamental opposites within a Hindu-dominated national culture. The MIB devoted publications to marginalized groups within the subcontinent, national minorities (with particular emphasis on Indian Muslims), Scheduled Castes and Tribes, the lower classes, and women. These books and pamphlets contained a surface-level message that these populations were part of the nation-state despite their differences from the dominant upper caste, upper class, Hindu, masculine national culture. However, these texts with the underlying goal of promoting integration instead reflect token inclusion, a nod toward supposed equality but instead reflecting the status of these groups as "others." Despite

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the promotion of "unity in diversity," MIB publications, written in the didactic mode

from the dominant national culture, cast these populations as fundamentally different

from "Indians."

The MIB publication *India's Minorities* (1948) discusses the non-Hindu religious

groups within the subcontinent while also highlighting the emergence of "minorities"

within the context of the nation-state. Citing the Leage of Nations charter written after

World War I, minorities were "inhabitants of a country who differ from the majority of

the population in race, language, and religion," and the document specifically focuses on

Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis, and Anglo-Indians, contending that minorities in India

were mostly religious rather than racial or linguistic.[205] This definition of minorities and

the MIB's decision to center on these religious populations raises numerous concerns. In

his work on the construction of majorities and minorities in Syria, Benjamin Thomas

White explains that the concepts of "majorities" and "minorities" are inherently national,

produced within the context and language of the nation-state and self-determination after

World War I. Majorities are those that embody the "imagined community," the dominant

population within the nation-state, meaning that minorities are inherently "others,"

forever outside of national population.[206] By discussing these religious populations as

"minorities," the MIB is inherently defining these groups as "others" within the Indian

nation-state, aberrations from a dominant Hindu culture and identity. Importantly,

Jainism and Buddhism are not considered "minorities" within this document. While the

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[205] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *India's Minorities*, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1948), 5.
[206] Benjamin Thomas White, *The Emergence of Minorities in the Middle East: The Politics of Community in French Mandate Syria*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011).

small populations of these religious groups informed their lack of focus in this publication, their exclusion from this category also reflects the consideration within India that Jains and Buddhists are "natural Indians" due to their origin in the subcontinent as well as their contributions (and lack of threat) to Hinduism. Their inclusion within Hinduism is a point of commonality between Hindu nationalism and the elite-driven national identity construction promoted by Congress and the MIB.[207] Furthermore, the statement that minorities within India were mostly religious rather than linguistic neglected the pluralism of language within the subcontinent, assuming regional languages as Indian languages rather than truly celebrating "unity in diversity." Within this publication, the MIB rendered Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis, and Anglo-Indians as fundamentally different, "others" within the national identity construction promoted by the Indian government.

The MIB attempted to mitigate this concern by stressing that India was a nation of religious tolerance. The Ministry explained, "Tolerance being the essence of Indian culture, and cultural synthesis the spirit of her history, India never presented the spectacle of religious or racial warfare that has marked the history of Europe," contrasting the subcontinent with the religious wars that marked early modern Europe and defining the nation-state as the binary opposite of the West.[208] At the same time, religious toleration, when defined by the national majority, has the effect of establishing the religion of the majority as the religion of the state, with "religious tolerance" a statement of power rather

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[207] Pandey, *Routine Violence*.
[208] *India's Minorites*, 7.

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than true equality and inclusion.[209] As with other publications produced immediately

after independence and before the foundation of the Indian Republic, the MIB blamed the

British Empire for fostering separatism and the Muslim League for the division of India,

thus solidifying a nationalist interpretation of Indian independence and the violence of

Partition. "British imperialism," the publication states, "emphasized the differences

between the communities and disregarded the fundamental unity underlying the various

racial, religious, and linguistic groups living in India," while the Muslim League "started

with the avowed object of furthering the interests of Muslims as a separate community

and strengthening the Anglo-Muslim alliance."[210] The MIB lambasted the British and the

Muslim League for fostering the threat of Balkanization and sparking separatism within

the subcontinent, presenting the Indian nation-state as the safeguard of unity and the

protection of minorities.[211] Defining nation-state in contrast with colonial rule and with

Pakistan, *India's Minorities* touts India's tolerance and inclusivity. However, because of

the power dynamics within the subcontinent and the dominance of upper caste and upper

class Hindus within Congress, this inclusion "was mere tokenism rather than true

acceptance, with certain minority groups celebrated as model communities and the

ultimate expectation that minorities would put their identities second in deference to

Indian national identity.

The MIB highlighted the democratic process, Indian "secular democracy," a

system of "one man one vote" and full citizenship rights as facets of the state that ensured

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[209] Vanaik, *Rise of Hindu Authoritarianism*, 158.
[210] *India's Minorities*, 9.
[211] Ibid, 10.

the protection of minorities.[212] Though the government reserved legislative seats for

Indian Muslims, Christians, and Scheduled Castes and Tribes, Congress leaders argued

during and after independence that separate electorates fostered a "spirit of separatism"

rather than promoting the interests of disadvantaged communities.[213] Minority

communities "could not become a strong advanced community and effectively play their

part in the State if they continued to be spoon-fed and were always given a special and

preferential treatment," the Ministry viewing separate electorates as detrimental to the

uplift of minority populations.[214] The sense that separate electorates would "pamper

minorities" echoes criticism toward Congress today by contemporary Hindu nationalists,

yet the MIB furthered the very same argument in this publication.[215] Moreover, the

Ministry publication celebrated the Parsi and Anglo-Indian communities for their

advances in education and industry and applauded Indian Christians for abandoning

separate electorates, "throwing their lot" with the general electorate with the exception of

seats in the Central legislature, Madras, and Bombay.[216] With regard to Indian Muslims,

the MIB declared them "more than a protected community, they are a valued

community," noting their significant presence (along with Sikhs) in the Indian military

and police force.[217] Furthermore, the publication states that upon Partition, 10,427

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[212] Ibid, 19.
[213] Ibid, 21.
[214] Ibid.
[215] Hindu nationalists historically accused Congress of "pampering minorities," providing better treatment toward the non-Hindu populations of India, as a critique of the INC conception of secularism as well as to claim that their party represents "equality," treating all people of India in the same manner (neglecting the structural and systemic inequality built into the governmental and societal apparatus. As we will see later in this chapter, however, contributors to MIB publications, who expressed the viewpoint of Congress, raised similar concerns about minorities receiving unequal positive treatment at the expense of the Hindu majority.
[216] Ibid, 23.
[217] Ibid, 24.

Muslim officers joined the Indian military compared to 2,987 non-Muslim officers joining the Pakistani counterpart, with many of those that went to Pakistan, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, returning to India.[218] The publication concludes with testimonies from minorities expressing "loyalty and confidence" in the Indian Union, the MIB citing this praise in contrast with Pakistan and defining India's rival as a theocratic state.[219] *India's Minorities* attempts to define India in contrast with both British colonial rule and Pakistan, presenting the nation-state and Congress as the protectors of minority interests and the guardian of their security. Nevertheless, the government feared that separate electorates or continued reservations of legislative seats invited separatism and threatened Balkanization of the subcontinent while also demonstrating apprehension about "pampering minorities." Congress and the MIB touted legal equality and tolerance as safeguards for minorities in India, with the implicit assumption that minority communities would serve the nation-state first and foremost rather than engage in separatism. The Ministry expected minorities to put their identity as Indian citizens first and foremost before any other. Minority identities were to be subsumed within the nation-state for the sake of unity, "tolerated" by the Hindu, upper caste, and upper class "imagined community" yet remaining "others" within the Indian nation.

In another Ministry publication centering on minority populations in India, *Muslims in India* (1952, reissued in 1964 and 1966) discusses the Indian Muslim minority, explaining the importance of Hindu-Muslim unity to maintain the integrity of

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[218] Ibid, 25.
[219] Ibid, 41.

the Indian nation. The edifice of independent India, according to the document, was

Hindu-Muslim unity, with the Muslim community cementing the structure of the nation

with their lifeblood in the face of aggression by Pakistan.[220] As with *India's Minorities*,

this document touts the Indian Constitution for its guarantees of political, religious,

social, and economic freedom. While the constitution codified de jure equality, it did not

end de facto inequality, discrimination, or communalism within the subcontinent.

Moreover, this publication continues the trend established in *India's Minorities* of

criticizing separate electorates for "causing friction" in India's past while also blaming

British rule for "divide and rule strategies" that ignored India's "fundamental unity."[221]

In clear rejection of the Two Nation Theory, the Ministry stated that Muslims "belong to

the same ethnic stock as the rest of the population," and proved integral to the success of

Bollywood films and contributed to India's first-class cricket, soccer, and field hockey.[222]

Furthermore, the publication highlights notable Muslim military officers, government

officials, artists, musicians, and athletes, commending the triumphs of specific

individuals within this minority community. At the same time, the MIB does not depict

Indian Muslims as everyday citizens. Once Muslims settled in India, according to the

document, "they were considered Indians," a statement from the MIB meant to suggest

inclusion within the Indian nation past and present.[223] As with *Cultural Unity of India*,

Contributions of the South to the Heritage of India, and the nationalist teleology of Indian

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[220] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *Muslims in India*, (Simla: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1952), 3. Reissues of this publication included Muslim stalwartness in response to Chinese aggression and Indian patriotism during conflict with Pakistan.
[221] Ibid, 7.
[222] Ibid, 1.
[223] Ibid, 27.

history more generally, this statement projects an Indian nation-state back in time. It also highlights the loss of Muslim identity in favor of "Indian identity" as a net positive, questioning how inclusive Congress' vision of national identity and "unity in diversity" truly was. Even Nehru, who in many speeches stressed the importance of minority protection and expressed concern regarding their happiness, stated in a letter to his chief ministers, "If India is to progress, we must absorb, and make our own, the various minorities in India, notably the Muslims."[224] This statement reads of inclusion on the surface yet also imagines a subsuming of minority identity and interests, the threat of separatism, in the name of loyalty to the Indian nation-state. If Hindu nationalists argued for a Hindu nation-state, and Congress desired "Indians," neither politically party (past or present) particularly wants "Muslims." Rather than seeing them as part of the "imagined community," *Muslims in India* renders Muslim accomplishments as part of the glory of the nation-state and pays lip service to legal equality, stressing the inclusion of this minority group to contrast India with Pakistan rather than truly accepting the Muslim community as part of the Indian nation.

In addition to the various minority populations within the subcontinent, one of the issues the Indian government had to reckon with after independence was the management of Scheduled Tribes and their role within the nation-state. India's tribal populations (largely located in the east of the subcontinent) shared some religious and folklore traditions with India's indigenous religious groups but largely existed in isolation from

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[224] Jawaharlal Nehru, *Letters to Chief Ministers, 1947-1964*, Vol 2, G. Parthasarathi, ed., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 40.

urban and rural Indian society. Upon independence, the Government of India debated

how to assimilate these populations within the nation-state. The Ministry's *Tribal People

of India* (1953) as well as *The Adivasis*[225] (1955) include contributions from Indian

anthropologists and social scientists that describe India's tribal people as the "backward

sections" of the Indian community.[226] The Scheduled Tribes of India represented the

culture and associations of primitivity that Indian nationalism looked to erase. Noted

anthropologist, scholar of India's tribal populations, and Adviser for Tribal Affairs in the

Northeastern Frontier Agency (NEFA) Verrier Elwin explained that the Indian nation

should not treat the Scheduled Tribes as museum specimens or relics of the past, but also

noted that it was impossible to stop the clock of progress.[227] Moreover, Calcutta

University Professor of Anthropology Tarak Chandra Das explained that, because contact

with modern society led to new wants and needs among the tribal population, they were

no longer satisfied by "a life of few necessities."[228] The Scheduled Tribes were part of

the Indian and global economy and needed to be included within national economic

development, yet the contributors to both volumes debated the balance between

maintaining tribal traditions and efforts toward modernization. Rather than forcing

"civility" upon India's Scheduled Tribes, Nehru (in a 1952 speech transcribed for the

publication) called for Indians to develop a sense of oneness and unity through a

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[225] The term "Adivasi" means "dweller from the beginning" and was used frequently in discussions about the scheduled tribes of India.

[226] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *Tribal People of India*, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1953), iii.

[227] Verrier Elwin, "Do We Really Want to Keep them in a Zoo?" in *Tribal People of India*, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1953), 18

[228] Tarak Chandra Das, "Social Organisation," in *The Adivasis*, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1955), 112.

psychological approach.[229] Assimilation had to occur with a nudge rather than a push, with the goal of improved economic conditions and educational institutions creating conditions in which the natural growth of tribal societies could take place.[230] Though the nation was "an agent of civility," the Ministry argued in *Tribal People of India* that the state must not forcibly assimilate Scheduled Tribes, for this would simply mimic the methods of the British Empire, the MIB once again defining Indian national identity and the nation-state as the binary opposite of colonial rule.[231]

Instead, Indians needed to create bonds of affection and understanding with its Scheduled Tribes, psychological integration and consolidation that would strengthen rather than weaken the nation.[232] The publication cited improved education and economic development as the solutions for this approach, similar to the calls by Indian leaders for the importance of education for national-identity formation and emotional integration among rural Indians in *Future of Education in India.* Education and incorporating the tribal populations in economic development would attach the Scheduled Tribes to the nation-state while also blunting the threat of separatism developing in the northeastern frontier.[233] The "aboriginals," Suniti Kumar Chatterji (Chairman of the Legislative Council of West Bengal and Professor Emeritus of Linguistics at Calcutta University) contended, needed to be looked upon as prospective members of *Hindu*

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[229] *Tribal People of India*, 4.
[230] Ibid, 180.
[231] Ibid, 6.
[232] Ibid, 5.
[233] Ibid, 4.

society.[234] Chatterji, a Kulin Brahmin (upper caste Hindu from Bengal), imagined tribal

assimilation as the subsuming of tribal identity within the Hindu culture of the majority.

As with contributions on Indian education and the history of South India, a contributor to

a MIB publication equates Hindu society with Indian society, treating the two as one and

the same, challenging the notion of a secular nation-state.

Despite the urging for sensitivity in dealing with Scheduled Tribes, the sense that

these people were "primitive" persists throughout the publications. Chatterji deemed the

adivasis as lacking in "intellectual awareness and adaptability" as well as "the education

and culture we find in more sophisticated communities," and it was because of these

factors that the Scheduled Tribes deserved special attention (and a patronizing outlook)

from the state. Moreover, a former professor of linguistics, Chatterji declared that the

languages of the Scheduled Tribes "lacked culture" save for Newari, the latter of value

and utility due to its preservation of Mahayana Buddhist texts produced in Sanskrit.[235]

Despite proclamations of respect and affinity, assimilation and the transformation of the

Scheduled Tribes to Indian citizens was the goal of Nehru, Congress, and the MIB, who

looked to make these populations productive members of the nation-state while also

using tribal land for development projects. The Scheduled Tribes, like the other

minorities living in the subcontinent, were expected to conform to the national culture as

defined by upper caste, upper class, Hindus in Congress and academia. Furthermore, the

calls for psychological integration through peaceful means did not match reality, as the

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[234] Suniti Kumar Chatterji, "Tribal Languages," in *The Adivasis*, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1955), 65.
[235] Ibid, 71.

Indian army crushed tribal uprisings throughout the 1960s to preserve national solidarity rather than achieving unity through benevolent assimilation.[236] India's discussion of and interaction with Scheduled Tribes was an extension of national identity construction, viewing the tribal populations as a relic of the past and attempting to achieve national unity as defined by Congress through erasing "backwardness" and "others" within the subcontinent.

The Ministry's *Social Welfare in India* (1956) similarly sought to "eliminate backwardness" within the subcontinent. Claiming to serve as a reference work of great value for social welfare in India, this book offers essays on the various social problems within India as well as some (but not many; this volume proves better at diagnosis rather than treatment) state- and community-sponsored solutions to address them. The book begins with a preface from Prime Minister Nehru, who stated that despite the achievement of independence, the true progress of India depended on social and economic justice.[237] Moreover, he explained that welfare must be the common property in India, not the monopoly of a privileged group, with greatest importance on the uplift of children, women, and tribal people.[238] According to Nehru, India had social welfare since the days of Buddha, and Ashoka, and Gandhi's movement simply continued this historical precedence. "The idea of social welfare is thus not a new one to us; it is an integral part of our national character and history," stated the prime minister; it was a part of India's history before the arrival of Muslims or Europeans, thereby justifying its

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[236] Stanley Wolpert, *A New History of India*, 8th Ed., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 397.
[237] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *Social Welfare in India*, Issued on behalf of the Planning Commission, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1955), viii.
[238] Ibid, v.

existence in the present as well as to cast the nation-state as rescuing the practice of assisting the unfortunate.[239]

Upon independence, there was "an imperative need to reorientate the role of the State as a provider of social services, a helper of social welfare activities, and an agency for administering welfare departments, so that social security can be achieved on a national scale," adding substance to Nehru's often vague conception of a "socialist pattern of society."[240] Furthermore, India needed a "mental transformation" from the sense that welfare was charity to something state-sponsored.[241] The social problems post-independence India needed to address included the provision of maternity services, child welfare programs to "bring light and hope into the minds and hearts of millions of children, especially those of underprivileged groups," the treatment of the mentally and physically handicapped, the prevention of beggary, the eradication of prostitution and social vice, and the reform and rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents.[242] Other concerns included poverty in rural and urban areas, the amelioration, rehabilitation, and the promotion of the interests of Dalits and other "backward classes," as well as Scheduled Tribes.[243] The contributors to *Social Welfare in India* aimed to bring greater equality to the subcontinent, uplift the lower classes, Scheduled Castes, and Scheduled Tribes out of poverty, and undo the legacies of colonial exploitation, illustrating an ideal vision of the nation-state. However, the contributors often took a paternalistic tone, emphasizing the

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[239] Ibid, xi.
[240] Ibid, xiii.
[241] Ibid.
[242] Ibid, xv.
[243] Ibid.

importance for those receiving welfare to "help themselves" and for the state not to "pamper the impoverished." In *Social Welfare in India*, the MIB depicted the nation-state as a paternal figure toward the marginalized within India, who provided assistance to the various "children" of the state in return for fealty.[244] Though written in the interest of social uplift, *Social Welfare in India*, like other publications centered on non-dominant groups within the nation-state, views social problems and those in need of aid from upper class, upper caste, masculine, Hindu perspective.

This MIB book begins with several chapters devoted to assistance for Indian children; as with anxieties regarding education due to its importance for national goals and the vitality of the nation-state, the well-being of Indian children was of great significance because they were the future of the nation.[245] V.M. Kulkarni, a United Nations Social Welfare Fellow based in the United Kingdom, noted that the UK possessed laws and models of welfare institutions but maintained that Indian child welfare must not be dominated by Western influences and needed to be Indianized.[246] Moreover, an Indianized social welfare state, Kulkarni explained, meant fitting within the spirit and philosophy of the subcontinent.[247] Even in a seemingly disparate subject like the uplift of impoverished children, upper caste, upper class Hindus viewed ties to India's

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[244] See Andrew J. Rotter, *Comrades at Odds: The United States and India, 1947-1964*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000) for a discussion of the patriarchal conception and structure of the Indian government, a model Rotter argues borrowed from that of the Indian family in which the father provided material support to all members of the family in exchange for recognition as the center of power.
[245] V.M. Kulkarni, "Child Welfare in India," in *Social Welfare in India*, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Issued on behalf of the Planning Commission, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1955), 31.
[246] Ibid, 34.
[247] Ibid.

spiritual culture and philosophy (assumed Hindu) as essential, illustrating the profound

influence of religion and religious thinking within a supposedly secular state. Miss S.J.

Narsian argued for Youth Camps and Labor Service schemes to provide "suitable

channels of expression for the release of the exuberance of their energy" but also for the

young to engage "in giving manual labor on projects of national utility."[248] By joining

these government-sponsored organizations, young people would assist in the construction

of roads and canals, the clearance of ponds and slums, repair tanks and old buildings,

partake in afforestation campaigns, and conduct literacy and sanitation drives in rural

areas.[249] Not only would such work provide "a sense of dignity of labor and discipline,"

it would bolster Nehru and Congress' development planning, bolstering economic

development and "preventing idleness" (a reoccurring concern among Indian economic

planners discussed in the next section of this chapter) throughout the country.[250]

Furthermore, working for and receiving assistance from the nation-state, like state-

sponsored education, fostered "emotional integration," encouraging loyalty to the nation-

state and instilling a greater sense of national unity. The marker of a modern nation,

according to Narsian, was the treatment of youth as a category and addressing their

physical, cultural, emotional, and social needs[251] By expressing concern and proposed

solutions regarding the uplift of children and youth within India, the contributors to this

volume, the MIB defined India as a modern nation-state while also looking to bring the

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[248] S.J. Narsian, "Youth Welfare in India," in *Social Welfare in India*, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Issued on behalf of the Planning Commission, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1955), 54.
[249] Ibid, 55.
[250] Ibid.
[251] Ibid, 62.

next generation within the national fold so they could become productive members of society and assist the government in its economic goals. Contributors to this book imagined social welfare as fostering emotional integration to the state while also advocating for connections to religion.

Subsequent chapters in *Social Welfare in India* focused on women, community development, and Scheduled Castes and Tribes in the subcontinent, revealing the didactic tone of the upper caste, upper class, masculine, Hindu perspective that informed this book as well as the MIB's national identity construction. In a chapter devoted to physical fitness, Puthenpurayil Mathew Joseph, founder of the Laxmibai National College of Physical Education, explained that physical education and fitness were integral for the total economy and progress of the community and country, but conveyed apprehension that women not perform any "manly activities" that would disrupt "specific biological functions"[252] To modernize the Indian nation-state, the contributors to this volume and the Indian government looked to implement modern patriarchy, defining women as wives and mothers that should not perform masculine tasks, even something as simple as physical fitness. The codification of heteronormative gender roles was a common practice among nation-states, but in the Indian context also reflects what Sikata Banerjee defines as "hegemonic masculinity," a process in which Indian nationalists (before and after independence) endeavored to redefine masculinity to celebrate Indian (specifically

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[252] P.M. Joseph, "National Physical Fitness," in *Social Welfare in India*, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Issued on behalf of the Planning Commission, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1955), 87.

Hindu) tradition.[253] The state codified masculine and feminine gender roles to reject the

lasting legacies of colonial discourse, while in the Indian context attempted to fit

patriarchy within an established Hindu culture. Social reformer Kamaladevi

Chattopadhyay called for the state to address women's health particularly with regard to

motherhood as well as providing welfare schemes to education women "in the element of

mother craft."[254] Though notable for her work in promoting Indian handicrafts, a cottage

industry driven primarily by village women (therefore including women within the co-

operative development of the post-independence era), and also calling for employers to

provide health insurance, Chattopadhyay stressed the importance of motherhood for

Indian women. The primary objective for women in the nation-state, according to

Chattopadhyay, was providing and raising offspring. The Hindu upper caste, upper class,

masculine definition of the Indian nation-state informed how contributors promoted the

social welfare of women, a hegemonic discourse that nevertheless challenges the

secularity of post-independence India.

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[253] Mrinalini Sinha and Sikata Banerjee explain that British officers defined their masculinity in contrast with "effeminate Indians." In a mutually reinforcing discourse, British officials claimed that their masculinity and martial success made them morally superior to Indians, yet at the same time moral authority bolstered masculinity and military victory. By this imperial logic, Indians were both morally inferior and less masculine, leading to foreign rule. Rather than rejecting this discourse outright, Indian nationalists constructed the concept of the Hindu soldier and the warrior monk as distinctly Indian representations of masculinity, the gendered discourse taking on hegemonic properties upon acceptance by the colonized population. The construction of Hindu masculinity is part of the larger ideological conflict between Congress and the BJP today. See Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The 'Manly Englishman' and the 'Effeminate Bengali' in the Late Nineteenth Century*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), Sikata Banerjee, *Make Me a Man! Masculinity, Hinduism, and Nationalism in India*, (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2005).
[254] Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, "Welfare of Women in India," in *Social Welfare in India*, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Issued on behalf of the Planning Commission, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1955), 151.

Discussions on community development by Dr. B.H. Mehta and G.

Ramachandran, Founder Secretary of the Gandhi Peace Foundation, expressed the

immediate goals of rural and urban programs, such as increasing food supply, improving

agriculture, and the development of communications and infrastructure. Mehta argued

that community organization and development was "cost effective social welfare,"

expensive to implement but paying dividends in the long run.[255] At the same time,

however, community development would include "a programme of cultural and moral

uplift," instilling *swadeshi* (self-reliance) among the impoverished and the majority of the

population.[256] Self-reliance, Ramachandran contended, was "the secret of rural

advancement," tying contemporary economic development back to Gandhian principles,

the nationalist movement, and Hindu terminology for legitimacy and accessibility. Rural

development, according to Ramachandra, needed to counter "the ruthless compulsions

and dictations of Marxism and Communism," but ultimately true uplift out of poverty

needed to come from the impoverished themselves.[257] Through community development

and the communities of India participating in and facilitating government schemes, the

nation-state would become a modern one and the entirety of the population would

improve economically as well as morally, therefore fostering greater connection to the

nation-state. At the same time, the expectation from the national elite was for the rural

and urban communities and impoverished to employ *swadeshi*, to "earn" their way into

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[255] B.H. Mehta, "Community Organization in Urban Areas," in *Social Welfare in India*, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Issued on behalf of the Planning Commission, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1955), 217.
[256] G. Ramachandran, "Gandhian Approach to Rural Welfare," in *Social Welfare in India*, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Issued on behalf of the Planning Commission, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1955), 231.
[257] Ibid, 235.

"the imagined community" and assimilate within the national culture defined by the upper caste, upper class, Hindu elite within the MIB and Congress.

The expectation of assimilation continued in discussions regarding the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and the Muslim population. Respective contributors noted the need for uplift of these populations but expressed concern about "pampering minorities." In his chapter on India's Scheduled Castes, K.S. Shivam celebrated the abolition of untouchability after independence and touted the government's commitment to the *harijans*.[258] The abolition of untouchability was part of the Congress platform as the nationalist movement struggled against British rule (largely due to international condemnation of the caste system), and the Indian Constitution ended the custom by law (but not in practice). Though historically connected to Hinduism, untouchables were a group of people of such low social standing that they existed outside of the caste system entirely. Despite its presence in Hindu tradition, caste, according to Shivam had no precedence in religious shastras.[259] Because caste was not a component of Hindu texts, Shivam argued that the practice was rightly banned by Congress. The celebration of outlawing untouchability, however, was merely triumphalism for the arrival of the

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[258] K.S. Shivam, "Scheduled Castes in India," in *Social Welfare in India*, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Issued on behalf of the Planning Commission, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1955), 465. "Harijans," translating to "children of God," was a term used by Gandhi to redefine the sudras or "untouchables" and rally support for the outlaw of untouchability. Caste became a sticking point within the Indian nationalist movement due to separate movements for increased political rights and economic equality for the scheduled castes as well as a counter to Katherine Mayo's *Mother India* (1927), a book that gained international attention for its criticism of the Indian caste system, proof of "Indian backwardness." India became synonymous with caste due to Mayo's work, and outlawing untouchability and continued critique of the caste system by Nehru, MIB publications, and other Congress leaders after independence was as much about repairing the negative connotations within the international community as it was about uplift of the scheduled castes.
[259] Ibid, 450.

nation-state, touting independence as rescue of the Scheduled Castes from colonial rule and incorporation within the modern citizenry. This determinism ignored the continued economic inequality and discrimination the *harijans* experienced. Moreover, the abolition of untouchability made Dalits a full, legal member of Indian society, but the end of the practice also envisioned accepting untouchables within Hindu society. By making caste illegal, Congress tied Hindu religion to the law of the nation-state, equating Indian society with Hindu society despite the official ideology of secularism. At the same time, in line with previous MIB publications on minority groups in the subcontinent, Shivam condemned the implementation of separate electorates for the Scheduled Castes, contending that separate legislatures for the *harijans* "was tantamount to dividing the Hindu community to the great detriment of its solidarity and homogeneity."[260] As with *Muslims in India*, the official viewpoint espoused within a MIB publication disparages separate electorates as a threat to national unity, proclaiming legal equality as one and the same as de facto equality.

L.M. Shrikant's (Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Tribes 1950-1961) chapter on India's Scheduled Tribes urged a change in mentality of all the "backward classes" of India while specifically calling for scholarships, stipends, and a certain percentage of university seats for students from the Scheduled Castes and tribal populations.[261] At the same time, however, he expressed concerns, maintaining, "essential as these measures are, the main object should be not to spoon feed these

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[260] Ibid, 451.
[261] L.M. Shrikant, "The Scheduled Tribes of India," in *Social Welfare in India*, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Issued on behalf of the Planning Commission, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1955), 477.

classes, but to give them the capacity to feel their equality with the rest."[262] As with the

populations affected by community development, much of the responsibility fell on the

Scheduled Castes and Tribes to improve their own lot, employing *swadeshi* to become

truly equal with the rest of society. While the government recognized social and

economic inequality and proposed measures within the broader umbrella of development

planning, much of the responsibility fell on the marginalized people to help themselves

and cultivate self-reliance rather than being "pampered" by Congress. Though

expressing concerns about marginalized populations and noting the need for social

welfare implementation within the subcontinent, the contributors to *Social Welfare in*

India reflect an upper caste, upper class, masculine, Hindu conception of national

identity.

Rather than looking to manage "diverse elements," the Ministry's *Women of India*

(1958) aimed to consolidate national strength by codifying gender norms in a post-

independence setting. According to a speech from Nehru that begins this publication, the

greatest revolution since Indian independence was the improved status and living

conditions of women, invoking nationalist rhetoric of masculine Indian men and a nation-

state as the only methods to safeguard Indian women from historical misogyny.[263]

Moreover, though Nehru highlighted the participation of women in higher education and

in battle throughout history, it was "their unobtrusive work in the household, village, or

community that has molded the nation" in the present.[264] Women, as the keepers of

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[262] Ibid, 478.
[263] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *Women of India*, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1958), vii.
[264] Ibid, vi.

tradition, mothers, and managers of the domestic sphere, were instrumental in the construction of civic and national values at the family and village level according to the prime minister. Contributors to this volume celebrated the status of Indian women in the past and present, replicating the nationalist interpretation of Indian history in the process. Historian Radha Kumud Mukherjee explained that Indian women were equal to men in India's ancient past and argued that it was imperative to recapture these historic ideals.[265] Not only does Mukherjee tout India's "glorious past" and "ancient genius," her statement invokes India's ancient past before Western invasion, imagining the lessons contemporary India could draw from its Hindu golden age. Furthermore, frequent Ministry contributor K.M. Panikkar specifically blamed Western invasion for the deterioration of the status of women, particularly in North India rather than the South, once again demonizing European and Islamic rule and casting ancient Hindu India as the timeless beacon of moral righteousness regarding the status of women.[266] Women, according to Panikkar, progressed because of Gandhi's movement, the diplomat positing Indian nationalism and the nation-state as the liberator of women from foreign oppression and safeguard of women's security.

Hannah Sen, member of the Rajya Sabha (1952-1957) and former president of the All-India Women's Conference (1951-52), explained that because of independence and emancipation from foreign rule, women were now able to vote and participate in politics while also turning their attention to "modern problems" such as health care, the

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[265] Ibid, 8.
[266] Ibid, 9.

protection of "the backward and indigent," the eradication of social vice, the uplift of the underprivileged, the preservation of India's cultural traditions, the execution of Nehru's Five-Year Plans, and the justice of mankind.[267] To improve society and deal with India's contemporary problems, the modern woman needed education to become better citizens as well as to enter professional opportunities in science and politics, the nation-state looking to transform women "into Indians" along with the rest of the (male) population. Though advocating for modern education and touting the equal status of women throughout the publication, as with Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay's chapter in *Social Welfare in India*, the new emancipated Indian woman was still imagined as a wife and a mother, a perpetuation of "hegemonic masculinity" that valorized Hindu men as defenders of the nation-state and relegated women to the domestic sphere. The values of a modern woman, according to contributor and social reformer Tara Ali Baig, were domestic values. The MIB and Congress expected the Indian woman to learn from the previous generation as well as from home economic courses to ensure the strength of the family, the base unit of the nation-state.[268] Indian women ensured the vitality of the state, serving as agents of progress through citizenship but more importantly as wives and mothers, the Ministry constructing a masculine Indian nation supported by its women rather than built by it. The emancipation of women through Indian independence and their role in preserving and protecting the nation ensured the strength of Indian identity and the progress of the nation.

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[267] Ibid, 53.
[268] Ibid, 130.

In publications produced during conflict with Pakistan, the MIB highlighted India as a nation-state fundamentally concerned with minority protection, contrasting the latter with "an Islamic state." The Ministry devoted numerous publications to various groups outside of the "imagined community," paying lip service to inclusion and emphasizing legal equality for all citizens in the subcontinent. Nevertheless, these publications reveal the didactic mode and the definition of minorities, Scheduled Castes and Tribes, and women as "others" within the Indian nation-state, populations outside of the upper caste, upper class, Hindu, and masculine conception of national identity and the nation-state. Hinduism, as the dominant religion within the nationalist elite, informed how Nehru, Congress, and the MIB viewed and wrote about marginalized groups in India after independence. Despite repeated proclamations of secularism, Hinduism informed national identity construction and domestic policy, informing development planning as it did education, legal rights, and efforts toward socioeconomic reform.

Developing Unity and Unity in Development

Economic development was fundamental for Prime Minister Nehru and Congress' foreign and domestic policy goals following independence. British colonial rule of the subcontinent lined the coffers of the European metropole and left India, as with the rest of the formerly colonized world, facing numerous economic problems. Economic development, Nehru and Congress argued, would uplift the Indian population out of poverty as well as restore the prestige of the nation, bringing the state level with the developed world as well as matching India's "glorious past." Moreover, the creation of a mixed Indian economy, one with increased agricultural production as well as industrial

output, would (in theory) allow India to avoid neocolonial relationships of exploitation while also adding legitimacy to Nehru's strategy of non-alignment in foreign affairs. Following independence, India possessed the natural resources as well as the remnants of British industrialization (in particular the colonial military industrial complex, the British bolstered the military infrastructure in the subcontinent to counter Japan during World War II), sustained economic development would enhance these advantages.[269] A fully developed India, the Prime Minister believed, was a stronger India, a nation-state that could actively pursue a third way and avoid entanglement in the Cold War, a continuation of a world "North and South" rather than a conflict between "East and West."[270] At the same time, however, Nehru wanted to avoid borrowing Western economic models wholesale. Though the British Empire and the United States prospered due to industrialization and mass production, the Prime Minister feared that economic development in the Western mold would exacerbate inequality in India. Instead, Nehru, in response to poverty in India but also owing to his ideological leanings fostered by his English education, wanted to install "a socialist pattern of society" in independent India. The prime minister was thoroughly impressed with the planned economy of the Soviet Union and, along with statistician Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis, sought to implement a blend between Soviet-style planning and Western industrialization, seeking a third way

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[269] See Martin Wainwright, *Inheritance of Empire: Britain, India, and the Balance of Power in Asia, 1938-55,* (Westport, CT, Prager Publishing: 1994).
[270] Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, (New York: John Day, 1946).

with regard to economic development in the same manner as India's foreign policy strategy.[271]

Forging the "development raj"[272] after independence and the pursuit of Nehru's economic goals, in particular the abolition of the *zamindari*,[273] building dams to harness water power for electricity, and attempting to alleviate poverty, constituted fundamental changes to Indian tradition and society, bound to raise concerns throughout the nation-state. Thus, the prime minister and Congress employed the MIB to "sell" the state's efforts toward economic development and the Five Year Plans to the population. The Ministry used all the media at its disposal to convince Indians of the merits of development as well as the role of everyday citizens, including propaganda films shown in theaters in tandem with popular Bollywood fare,[274] radio talks, and the continued production of print publications meant for the literate domestic audience. As with their previous publications, the MIB assumed the didactic mode, illustrating the concurrent efforts of the nation-state and maintaining that economic development was an inherent positive, a restoration of Indian glory lost to foreign rule as well as an augmentation in contemporary national strength and prestige. Simultaneously, the Ministry called upon

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[271] The Indian Five Year Plans of the 1950s and 1960s are often described, both by scholars and detractors, as the "Nehru-Mahalanobis" model of economic development. See Chakravarty, *Development Planning: The Indian Experience*, 1987.

[272] Sutoris, *Visions of Development*.

[273] The term *zamindar* comes from Persian and translates to "landholder." In India, the *zamindari* was a landholding aristocracy that emerged with Mughal rule. As the British became the dominant power in the Indian subcontinent, they co-opted the indigenous aristocracy to assist the East India Company, later the British Empire, in collecting taxes and ruling India. The British granted this aristocracy, puppets kings to assist imperial rule, various honorific titles such as "maharaja" (great king) to legitimize their authority in the subcontinent. See Bernard Cohn, "Representing Authority in Victorian India," in *The Invention of Tradition*, edited by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

[274] Sutoris, *Visions of Development*.

readers and Indian citizens to "do their duty," invoking the Hindu concept of *dharma* and assist government efforts, particularly in the villages. The co-operation of the Indian public united behind development, according to the government, was paramount to post-independence economic growth. Development, the MIB contended, would result in national cohesion, yet at the same time unity was imperative for development to succeed. To unite the country and garner support for the government's development efforts, the MIB stressed the importance of the public's fulfillment of duty, explicitly and implicitly drawing from Hinduism. The domestic reader, the school student and middle- and upper-class citizen in particular, easily understood this call to action as an appeal to religion within a nation-state that claimed to be secular.

The MIB's *India has a Plan* (1951), written in conjunction with the First Five Year Plan, was a publication explicitly aimed at a younger audience to convince school students of the merits of economic development. Planning, the Ministry explained, was "not just for grown-up people;" it concerned everyone that considered India home and called themselves Indian.[275] In line with Nehru's favoritism toward a Soviet-style planning, the publication noted that Russia was a weak and poor country before World War I but was now one of the most powerful countries, insisting to the young reader that, "We [India], too, can make our country great by utilizing our men and natural wealth according to a plan."[276] Planning, per the MIB, was for the betterment of the entire country rather than one section or group, simplifying Nehru's idyllic vision of a "socialist

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[275] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *India Has a Plan*, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, United Press, 1951), 7.
[276] Ibid, 8.

pattern of society" and presenting development as fundamental for equality throughout

India.[277] Furthermore, the Ministry rendered development as benefitting all members of

society, the government's efforts in pursuit of the greater good and a fulfillment of the

state's duty to the Indian people. The publication touts the achievements of Congress

development efforts in the few years since independence, including the construction of

water tanks and wells as part of irrigation schemes and dam projects in Bhakra-Nangal,

Hirakud, and the Damodar Valley, the dams expected to generate twice as much

electricity throughout the subcontinent than at the time of writing.[278] Furthermore, the

MIB praised the establishment co-operative land holdings and credit societies as part of

the betterment of the rural population, moving away from previous inheritance structures

while also encouraging "self-reliance" within Indian villages.[279] As with many of the

discussions in *Social Welfare in India*, the onus of uplift fell on the Indian people,

helping themselves through their own efforts and improvement, akin to the adage of

"pulling oneself up by one's bootstraps" while also tying into the mythology and

terminology of Gandhi and the nationalist movement.

     The publication explains to the reader that, over the course of the First Five Year

Plan and its successors, India will increase its agricultural output and build new factories

to not only produce a larger volume of goods, but to create work for the population.[280]

Furthermore, *India Has a Plan* claimed that, because of economic planning, reforms, and

development, land ownership would be available to all rather than monopolized by the

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[277] Ibid, 10.
[278] Ibid, 30.
[279] Ibid, 15.
[280] Ibid, 38.

aristocratic *zamindars*.[281] Economic development, the Ministry maintained, assured

prosperity and equality for all Indians, an extension and ultimate fulfillment of the lofty

ideals promoted during the nationalist movement, a return to prestige of India's "glorious

past" yet at the same time going even further, envisioning a new utopia created by the

nation-state.

The Ministry informed the reader, however, that the fulfillment of India's

economic plans required the action and support of the entire nation. The MIB presented

development as a collaborative effort, explaining, "In order to carry out the present Plan,

the people of India will have to work hard. They must also be prepared to face

disappointments and failures, for as a Scottish poet [a reference to Robert Burns' "To a

Mouse"] says, 'the best laid plans of mice and men do go oft awry.'"[282] Despite the

chance of setbacks or hardships, the MIB encouraged the reader that development was

the right course of action for individual, societal, and national prosperity, one that all

citizens of the nation-state needed to support. Furthermore, the MIB maintained, "Not

everyone can be a leader or a hero but we can all have the satisfaction of having done our

duty well and selflessly."[283] By calling for readers to perform their duty selflessly, the

Ministry explicitly invoked the concept of *dharma*, a religious appeal readily understood

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[281] Ibid, 13. In 1951, when Congress implemented the First Five Year Plan and when the MIB published this document, the government abolished the *zamindari* system as part of an effort toward land reform throughout the country. Compensated as well as pressured by the government, the *zamindars* relinquished their hereditary land holdings with an eye toward broader land reform in the future, a crucial component in a more egalitarian India and Nehru's "socialist pattern of society." However, neither Nehru and Congress, nor any Indian political party, ever delivered on this promise. A new, rural elite emerged in the vacuum left by the outgoing *zamindars* following independence, this new aristocracy able to influence the policies and actions of the state and the allocation of resources. See Brass, *The Politics of India Since Independence*.
[282] *India Has a Plan*, 72.
[283] Ibid, 11.

by the domestic audience. The MIB, acting as a mouthpiece for Nehru and Congress, implored the readers of the publication and population of the nation-state to assist with development efforts by tapping into Indian religion, using Hindu themes and terminology to be comprehensible and accessible to the largest number of people. *India Has a Plan* presented economic development not as a goal of the Prime Minister nor the underpinning of foreign policy strategy, but as the *duty* of the nation and its citizens. Indians, the MIB argued, needed to come together in unity and reinforce the efforts of Congress, with the Ministry using religious terminology in their appeal to its readership. Unity was crucial for economic development, and the MIB specifically invoked religion to forge a greater sense of national unity and garner support for "the development raj."

The Ministry produced publications throughout the Nehru era in tandem with India's Five-Year Plans, highlighting successes and asking for continued support couched in the fulfillment of duty. Case in point, the MIB's *The Second Five Year Plan* (1956) touted the achievements of its predecessor while also stressing the governmental efforts with regard to social welfare. While the First Five Year Plan "has prepared the way for achieving the socialist pattern of society based on freedom and democracy without caste, class, and privilege," Nehru and Congress formulated the Second Plan with the principal objectives of increasing national income to raise the standard of living, rapid industrialization, a large expansion of employment opportunities, and a reduction of economic inequality with a more even distribution of economic power.[284] In particular,

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[284] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *The Second Five Year Plan: A Draft Outline*, Issued on behalf of the Planning Commission, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1955), 7.

the Second Plan emphasized an increase in industrial output, designating 8.9 billion

rupees, twenty nine percent of the allotted funding, to industries and minerals, nearly five

times what the government spent during the First Plan.[285] While India made significant

gains with regard to agricultural output during the First Five Year Plan,[286] Nehru and

Congress felt that the Second Plan needed to devote more effort and financial resources

to heavy industry, as an expansion of India's industrial capacity would add hard power

and bolster the nation-state's commitment to non-alignment and a third way.

The government also planned to double spending on social services, housing, and

rehabilitation, making social welfare a point of emphasis in the Second Five Year Plan.

Echoing many of the endeavors promoted in *Social Welfare in India*, the government

called for increased and improved education, community development projects, and the

betterment of the Scheduled Castes, the publication touting the recently passed

Untouchability Offences Act (1955) as well as various films, posters, and intercaste

dinners as proof of Congress' commitment to abolishing untouchability by law and by

practice.[287] Furthermore, the MIB highlighted the youth camps (previously discussed in

Social Welfare in India) sponsored by the Ministry of Education to create "a sense of

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[285] Ibid, 22.

[286] Contemporary economists argued that because of India's improvements in agricultural production, and the struggles the state faced kickstarting industrialization in the 1950s and 1960s, the country should focus instead on exports of its most valuable products for the greatest economic benefit. See A.H. Hanson, *The Process of Planning: A Study of India's Five-Year Plans, 1950-1964*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1966). This bottom-line analysis, however, clearly misses the cultural and strategic factors that motivated Nehru and Congress' efforts to create a diverse, mixed economy. An export driven India would result in the continuation of neocolonial structure and dependence on trade partners, a continuation of a "North and South" relationship following independence.

[287] *The Second Five Year Plan*, 165. Congress passed the Untouchability Offenses Act after the submission of chapters and publication of *Social Welfare in India*, hence its lack of mention in that publication that dealt specifically with the issue of untouchability and the uplift of scheduled castes.

dignity in manual labor, provide new interests, and bring together different sections of the

country," social welfare and economic development meant to foster the national unity

Nehru and Congress aimed to achieve.[288] At the same time, however, social uplift

depended on the people themselves rather than government efforts and plans, the MIB

calling for "a change in the mental outlook of the people, instilling in them an ambition

for higher standards."[289] The Indian population not only needed to employ "self-

reliance" in the name of their own social uplift, but the MIB believed that community

projects, development, and co-operation allowed villagers to be "partners in the national

endeavor" of economic development, fulfilling their duty to the nation-state.[290] Public

cooperation and opinion, the MIB explained, constituted the principle force and sanction

behind the Five Year Plans, the manual labor in the villages as well as public

contributions (Congress received voluntary contributions of over 19 Rs. crores for

development) imperative for the success of economic planning.[291] A unity of efforts,

according to the government, was the bedrock of Indian development, the Ministry

stressing the importance of duty to make the population "partners in the national

endeavor." The adherence of dispassionate duty, serving the greater good, was deeply

rooted in the concept of *dharma*, the MIB invoking religion to cultivate participation in

development programs and foster national unity.

The use of religion to encourage participation in economic development informed

the MIB publication *Alpana* (1960), which highlighted the importance of Hindu religious

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[288] Ibid, 61.
[289] Ibid, 88.
[290] Ibid
[291] Ibid, 60.

symbolism in government efforts toward the uplift of Indian villages. This book centered on *alpana*, defined as "ritual decorations or floor paintings executed by women and girls in Bengal on the occasion of various *pujas*, *bratas*, and social ceremonies" (similar to *mandalas*).[292] The purpose of this booklet, according to the Ministry, was to introduce these rural social works into the corpus of art produced in Bengal, but with a bigger focus on community development efforts in rural India, particularly with regard to women.[293] *Alpana* were commonly found in Hindu pujas to the goddess Durga, the Ministry underscoring a rural art form as fundamentally connected to religion. Moreover, the production of a publication devoted religious art as a facet of economic development illustrates the government of India's use of to religion despite an official commitment to secularism. Solely the work and responsibility of rural women, they produced *alpana*s on special occasions, often for religious purposes, the publication explaining that ten or twelve of the forty *pujas* and *bratas* (religious ceremonies) in Bengal required *alpanas*.[294] To know *alpana* and the *bratas* of which they were an integral part, according to the Ministry, was to know the village, their customs, religious faiths, and social history, the MIB characterizing the art form as a vital part of village life.[295] The existence of *alpana* was proof of a highly developed aesthetic sense among Indian people from history to today, the Ministry tying the art form to the sense of India's "glorious past," yet at the same time the resources to produce these art works (painted with a paste made of rice and

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[292] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *Alpana*, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1960), 5.
[293] Ibid.
[294] Ibid, 9.
[295] Ibid, 5.

water) cost next to nothing, even the poorest villager assisted in the creation of *alpanas*.[296]

Despite the importance of *alpana* throughout the history of the Bengali village, the MIB lamented the fact that the art form was not as widely practiced as before; in some villages only the elderly women possessed the skill and knowledge of *alpana*.[297] The decline of *alpana* paralleled the decay of village life and economy under British rule, the Ministry contended, making it important for the government to reintroduce "the primitive art handed down by grandmother to mother" along with new types of decorations to the villages in order to "bring fresh life to this old art and not supplant it by a new one."[298] Reviving *alpana* was a practical goal for Congress and the MIB as well as an aesthetic one, with renewed interest in the art form part of efforts at community development and an extension of Gandhi's "basic and social education" that called for arts and crafts to coincide with reading, writing, and arithmetic-- educating the population while also "preventing idleness." Moreover, it was imperative to incorporate the old themes and motifs, therefore the religious origins and symbolism, when teaching *alpana* to the villagers.[299] The MIB explained that culture played a vital function in the maintenance of the village social structure; the reintroduction of *alpana* would work to maintain and invigorate village life as part of the government's community development program and foster greater integration within the nation-state.[300] Thus, the religious basis

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[296] Ibid, 6.
[297] Ibid, 10.
[298] Ibid, 12.
[299] Ibid, 15.
[300] Ibid.

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of *alpana* was something to inculcate among the villages; the government was not to lose

sight of the religious, specifically Hindu, basis of this art form as part of its community

development program. Prime Minister Nehru concurred with this line of thinking,

stressing to his chief ministers that Congress must encourage cultural tradition in our

development programs.[301] To make community development schemes and to make

economic development understandable and accessible to the greatest number of people,

Nehru, Congress, and the MIB employed religious terminology as well as highly

religious art forms, viewing the ties to religion as imperative to ensure success rather than

something to be avoided or overlooked despite the presence of religious minorities within

Indian villages. While the Nehruvian consensus included secularism along with

socialism, democracy, and non-alignment as part of India's foreign and domestic policy,

the government viewed Hindu religion as something with great utility to promote and

ensure unity within the nation-state.

　　The Ministry's *We Plan for Prosperity* (1961), in similar fashion to *India Has a*

Plan and *You and Community Development*, discussed the formulation and enactment of

the Third Five Year Plan to a secondary school audience. This work "attempts to outline,

in simple language, the major aspects of India's development plans, keeping facts and

figures down to the minimum. It is hoped that the book will reach not only the readership

for which it is primarily intended, but will also serve as a general introduction to planning

in India for the common man."[302] In explaining the concept of planning to a younger

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[301] Nehru, *Letters to Chief Ministers*, Vol 3, 494.
[302] *We Plan for Prosperity*, 3.

audience than some of the other works, the Ministry presents the state as similar to the

reader's family: "your father works in a field or factory, brings his earnings home to your

mother who uses the money to run the house," thus equating the affection the reader feels

toward their family with that they should feel toward the nation-state while at the same

time codifying gender roles at a young age.[303] The state planned its finances just as a

mother used planning to do the best she could with a small amount of money, "otherwise,

she would buy new clothes for everyone in the house, a new shirt for you, a new *sari* for

herself, a coat for your father, and a new dress for your young sister, and there wouldn't

be enough money for food."[304] Economic development and planning were imperative,

the MIB instructed, to continue to increase food production for a population growing at a

rate of eight million per year.[305] At the same time, however, the Ministry highlighted the

importance of co-operative credit societies to prevent farmers from falling into debt, and

the goal of Nehru's "socialist pattern of society," a closing of the gap between rich and

poor and a more fair division of wealth within the country.[306] Though Nehru and

Congress wanted economic development--an increase in production and capital--to

strengthen and modernize the nation-state, a hard power element to the ideals of non-

alignment and pursuing a third way, the Ministry assured the reader that the pursuit of

economic benefit was not done out of greed or selfishness of any kind. The MIB

explained, "We don't want wealth for its own sake, we want it as a means to a better

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[303] Ibid, 5.
[304] Ibid, 6.
[305] Ibid, 17.
[306] Ibid, 10.

living," the nation-state pursuing development without passion in the service of duty.[307]

Thus, the MIB depicted economic development as a moral good couched in religious terminology, aiming to justify radical economic changes to the domestic audience while also encouraging readers to assist with development schemes. The Ministry appealed to religion, as with the entirety of texts dedicated to economic development, to cultivate national integration, uniting people behind the efforts of the government. Underscoring this, the MIB stated, "We in India know fully well the value of unity. In fact, the co-operation of the people is the foundation-stone on which our planning rests. We know that the better we work together as a team the faster our progress will be."[308] Nehru and Congress envisioned development as uplifting much of Indian society out of poverty and bringing modernity to the nation-state, efforts meant to unite and strengthen the country. At the same time, however, the government believed national unity was fundamental for development schemes and the Five Year Plans to succeed. To make this national unity and a reality and draw greater support for the "development raj," the MIB portrayed development as the *dharma* of the people and the nation-state, utilizing religion to attract greater support for the efforts of the nation-state.

Conclusion

> In many respects, charged as it is with the task of putting across to our people Government's policies, plans, etc. the Ministry has a peculiar position in the Machinery of Government. Whereas other ministries have specific responsibilities, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting provides the link between the government and the people through its executive media; directly as well as through the Press and other public agencies, these units keep the people

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[307] Ibid, 10.
[308] Ibid, 82.

informed of the activities of Government and development in the different spheres of national life.[309]

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting issued many publications intended for the domestic audience throughout the tenure of Prime Minister Nehru, ranging from those centered on education and Indian history, to the presence and rights of marginalized groups within the subcontinent, to illustrating the importance of government directed planning to the entirety of the Indian population. Despite the seemingly disparate subject matter, all of these documents have one fundamental goal, that of garnering and strengthening the national unity of the nation-state. The MIB implored its readers to bring their values in line with that of the nation-state and to perform their duty and fulfill their *dharma* for the betterment of the Indian nation. To reach the greatest number of people, the MIB appealed to Hinduism, drawing from religious terminology and themes that the domestic audience understood specifically as a religious call. Amid the diversity within the subcontinent, Hinduism represented the most accessible reference point for the largest subsection of the nation-state, the Ministry's use of religion a strategy of convenience, utility, and expedience, despite Congress proclamations of secularism. Hinduism informed and influenced the writing and terminology in MIB publications

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[309] "Exclusion of certain key posts in Publicity Organisation-Proposals regarding-from the Ministry of I and B," 1953, PR_000004040120, File No.: 18/26/53-ESTS, Digitized Public Records Ministry of Home Affairs and Department of Personnel Training, National Archives of India Abhilekh Patal, Accessed Nov 6, 2022, https://www.abhilekh-patal.in/jspui/handle/123456789/2782756?searchWord=ministry&backquery=[location=123456789%2F1&query=%22ministry%20of%20information%20and%20broadcasting%22&filtername=dateIssued&filtertype=equals&filterquery=[1947-08-15%20TO%201966-01-01]&filtername_1=dateIssuedTo&filtertype_1=equals&filterquery_1=[1947-08-15%20TO%201966-01-01]&rpp=100&sort_by=dc.date.accessioned_dt&order=desc&originalquery=.

despite the official Nehru and Congress narrative that India was a secular nation-state based on the goal of unifying the domestic audience and preventing fissure along religious, caste, class, or linguistic lines. The emphasis on Indian religious terminology and imagery occurred in tourist publications as well, with the MIB emphasizing Indian religiosity many colonial era stereotypes in tourist publications.

CHAPTER IV

'THE BONDS OF CULTURAL UNITY' AND 'THE ARRESTING INFLUENCES OF

ALIEN CULTURES:" MIB TOURIST PUBLICATIONS, 1950-1965

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting produced a wide variety of

publications for the Indian populace throughout the early post-independence era,

disseminating pamphlets, booklets, and other documents to make government policies

and perspectives accessible to the public. The MIB had the specific goals of emphasizing

the importance of as well as cultivating national unity and loyalty to the nation-state,

using the didactic mode to convince readers that Nehru and Congress were fulfilling their

dharma to the Indian motherland and the people. At the same time, however, the MIB

issued publications for foreign readership, in particular tourists looking to understand and

potentially visit the country. The Indian Ministry of Tourism in its current form did not

exist until 1967, and the nascent Department of Tourism only assisted in the production

of print documents beginning in 1960.[310] Instead, the Ministry of Information and

Broadcasting, concerned with "matters of national importance for internal as well as

external publicity, with a view of imparting to the general public at home and abroad

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[310] The Ministry of Transport included a "Tourist Division" by 1956, but the Ministry of Information and
Broadcasting managed the publication of tourist documents on behalf of these government agencies.

updated and correct information about India,"[311] handled the publication of documents,

pamphlets, and guidebooks for tourists and foreign readers throughout the tenures of

Prime Minister Nehru and Lal Bahadur Shastri. In providing information on and about

the Indian nation-state as well as various aspects of Indian culture, the MIB engaged in

national identity construction, stressing the presence of national unity within the

subcontinent, a conception of integration informed by Indian religions despite the

proclamation by Congress of a secular nation.

This chapter analyzes MIB publications produced for the foreign audience,

examining how the Ministry presented the country to foreign rather than domestic

readers. While the Indian tourism industry paled in comparison to those of the West,

Prime Minister Nehru and Congress did include tourist spending as a component of the

Five-Year Plans and money available for economic development.[312] More important, the

production of documents for tourists and foreign readers possessed cultural and symbolic

importance for the government, depicting the Indian nation-state as the government

wanted to portray the country on the international stage. Similar to the efforts of

European counterparts following World War II, appealing to tourists and attempting to

encourage travel to India following independence played a significant role in reinforcing

national identities, "presenting" the nation-state to foreign readers based on the Congress

platform.[313] Moreover, the fashioning of national image was part and parcel of the

foreign policy strategies of many nation-states during the Cold War, with governmental

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[311] *Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Annual Report*, 27.
[312] *Second Five Year Plan*, 33.
[313] Endy, *Cold War Holidays*; Zuelow, *Making Ireland Irish*.

agencies using propaganda and creating new departments devoted to the shaping of their

national image abroad.[314] The Ministry's efforts to codify national identity through

tourist publications, making the country attractive to potential tourists, was a component

of Indian foreign policy following independence, and the MIB worked to define India as

a place worth seeing and experiencing.

Furthermore, the arrival of tourists, and more importantly tourist spending,

represented a potential source of "no strings attached" financial aid for Nehru and

Congress, the government enlisting the MIB to conduct the important work of "selling"

India to foreign readers.[315] In an effort to attract greater numbers of visitors and

encourage travel and spending, the MIB emphasized Indian religiosity, specifically the

religions native to the subcontinent, as integral to Indian national identity. In addition to

many country-wide surveys and guidebooks, the Ministry touted India's plethora of

religious art, architecture, and holy sites, stressing their timelessness and ancient

character, while also underscoring the religious basis of styles of Indian dance. In these

documents, the MIB often mimicked the language of orientalist discourse developed

during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, highlighting "exotic" elements of Indian

culture and therefore playing into the expectations of Western readers and potential

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[314] Justin Hart, *Empire of Ideas: The Origins of Public Diplomacy and the Transformation of U.S. Foreign Policy*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[315] As part of the strategy of non-alignment and understanding of a world divided between "North and South," Prime Minister Nehru worried about accepting foreign aid from the United States, the Soviet Union, and Western Europe. Aid from great powers, he argued in numerous speeches, often came with the expectation of alliance within the Cold War blocs while also locking formerly colonized nation-states into neocolonial relationships. See Jawaharlal Nehru, *Nehru's Foreign Policy: Selected Speeches, September 1946-April 1961*, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1962). Compared to these aid channels "with strings attached," money from tourist spending and (ideally) appealing to their contacts and networks represented another avenue to receive money to fund the Five-Year Plans and development efforts without foreign policy expectations.

visitors.[316] Furthermore, while documents for the domestic audience worked toward

"uniting" the population, publications intended for foreign readers defined India as a

"fundamentally united" nation-state, treating national unity as an achieved goal rather

than one in progress or in constant need of articulation. The image of a united India,

rather than one struggling with linguistic, religious, class, or caste divisions, made the

country appear stable and in lockstep with Congress' efforts toward economic

development, an image the government hoped would encourage more travel and foreign

aid. And as with publications produced for the domestic audience, the MIB stressed

religion as a cementing force within India. In a nation-state nominally committed to

secularism and "unity and diversity," the MIB constructed a vision of the state as one

rooted in Indian religiosity, having the effect of "othering" Christians and Muslims.

Mimicry, Modernity, and Muslim "Others": MIB Country-wide Surveys

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting issued numerous surveys of the

country, typically consisting of short descriptions and photographs working in tandem to

portray the nation-state as the government desired to foreign readers. In these works, the

MIB presented India as a unified nation-state, stressing the mantra of "unity in diversity,"

yet at the same time defining national identity as inherently upper caste, upper class,

masculine, and Hindu, minimizing the presence and identities of "others" living in the

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[316] The term "orientalism" refers to both a discourse and a process in which European powers accumulated knowledge about the Middle East, India, as well as East and Southeast Asia, essentializing and simplifying the "orient" in a way that cast Asia as the binary opposite of Western Europe while also rendering "the East" in a way to justify and assist colonial rule. The creation of knowledge about the powers and people of Asia aided imperialism, while imperialism informed the accumulation of knowledge about "the East." See Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1978).

subcontinent. The MIB's *India: A Pictorial Survey* (1950), a photo album first issued on

January 26th to coincide with the foundation of the Republic of India and reproduced

throughout the 1950s and 1960s, uses photography to encapsulate the whole of India for

foreign readers, highlighting the country as a blend of old and new. This album

"attempts to tell the story of India," both "India the place" as well as "India the people,"

the Ministry outlining the nation-state as both a physical space as well as "an imagined

community."[317] Because of its separation from mainland Asia by the Himalayas in the

north and the Indian Ocean in the south, the MIB maintained that India was a distinct

geographical entity, casting the nation-state as a timeless single bloc defined by nature

and geography.[318] The Ministry characterized India as a land of princes, palaces,

elephants, snakes, and tigers, mimicking the tropes of orientalist fantasy rather than

completely distancing contemporary India from the language of colonialism, but also a

country of villages, cities with many buildings, and large factories, juxtaposing Western

assumptions of Indian identity with Congress' aspirational vision of a developing,

modern nation-state.[319] To further the argument that India was a modernizing country,

this album includes many photographs of factories, labor, minerals and raw materials and

finished goods along with those of India's natural beauty, wildlife, and classical

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[317] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *India: A Pictorial Survey*, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1950), 3
[318] Ibid, 6.
[319] Ibid, 7. Within postcolonial studies, the term "mimicry" refers to the process in which people and nation-states previously ruled by colonial powers "mimic" the language and policies of colonial rule. The development and acknowledgement of this concept reveals that though nationalist discourse presents independence and the formation of a nation-state as a sharp and fundamental break from imperialism, the legacies of colonial rule continue to inform and influence the formerly colonized population. See Homi Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," *October*, Volume 28, (Spring, 1984), MIT Press, Accessed Dec 8, 2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/778467.

architecture. "India," the Ministry explained, "is among the first ten industrial countries of the world. Except for a relatively brief period of 150 years, she has always been an important industrial center," chastising the colonial past as the cause of lagging economic development.[320] The MIB's emphasis on India's industrial capacity and the disruption caused by colonial rule served the purpose of soliciting tourists, ideally those connected to foreign policymakers and officials, to invest in the development efforts of the nation-state, a call to foreign aid to help India reach its former glory and future potential.

The MIB's photos and discussion of "India the people" in this pictorial survey pay lip service to the ideals of Congress, yet at the same time define Indian national identity as inherently Hindu. The Ministry described the population of India in a manner akin to a colonial era ethnographic survey, highlighting the "fair Kashmiri, enterprising Punjabi, the artistic Bengali, the intellectually alert Andhra, Tamilian, Malayali, and Kannadiga, the hard Marathi, the chivalrous Rajput, the business minded Gujarati in the West, and virile Hindi speaking people in center," the government itself stereotyping "India the people."[321] The publication plays lip service to the Congress platform of "unity in diversity," informing the reader that in spite of the state's varied population, "The diversity, however, is superficial, for basically India is one."[322] The "fundamental unity" of the subcontinent, however, is one informed by Hinduism, casting Muslims and Christians in particular as "others" within the nation-state. The MIB explains, "A common thread of cultural unity runs through the entire fabric of the nation. Art,

[320] *Pictorial Survey*, 108.
[321] Ibid, 30.
[322] Ibid.

architecture, customs, festivals, and traditions are similar throughout the country," a statement that suggests a singularity to Indian culture rather than one "united in diversity."[323] Furthering this, the Ministry cites Dussereh (another name for Vijayadashami, a holiday commemorating the end of celebrations toward the Hindu goddess Durga while also celebrated in North India as the victory of Rama against the demon Ravana) and Diwali (an Indian "festival of lights" that occurs in the fall) as the "two most universally celebrated festivals" in the country.[324] Though both of these celebrations occur in the autumn, aligning with the end of the monsoon and commemorating the fall harvest, the former is specifically a Hindu religious holiday, while the latter possesses religious meaning for Hindus, Jains, Buddhist, and Sikhs but specifically not for religions that originated outside of the subcontinent. The "universal festivals" of India, part of the "common thread of cultural unity" of the nation-state, are Hindu religious holidays, the MIB's and therefore Congress' understanding of Indian unity and national identity influenced by Hinduism, not secularism or "unity in diversity."

Furthermore, the Ministry contended that "India's civilization is unique in its richness, vitality, and antiquity. Mainly a product of the country's indigenous creative genius" followed by pictures of Buddha and Siva (Hindu god of destruction), the combination of text description with photography informing the reader that religion, specifically those that originated in the subcontinent, were the foundations of India's

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[323] Ibid.
[324] Ibid, 175.

civilization and "indigenous creative genius."[325] An updated version of *India: A Pictorial Survey* published in 1960 notes that India was "mainly a product of its own indigenous genius but absorbed ideas from Iran, Greece, and Arabia without losing its individuality," suggesting that India subsumed these foreign ideas within an established identity and culture based on native religions and customs.[326] This parallels calls for minority groups to assimilate within the identity of the Indian nation-state in domestic publications, specifically *India's Minorities*. Despite portraying India as a country and people "united in diversity," a modern nation-state worthy of tourist dollars and foreign aid, the MIB's discussion highlights Hinduism as the bedrock of national identity and unity in this publication for a foreign audience.

The Ministry's *Facts About India* (1953) was another publication surveying the entirety of the nation-state for tourists, presenting "facts" about India based on Congress' foreign and domestic policy goals and political ideology. As with *India: A Pictorial Survey*, this publication, in its production of information about the subcontinent, mimics the language of colonialism, describes efforts toward development with the goal of encouraging foreign aid to the nation-state, and underscores the presence of national unity while at the same time "othering" minority groups, specifically Muslims and Christians. The publication begins with a discussion of the "many racial strains" making up the Indian population, noting that India possessed six racial groups: the Negrito, Proto-Australoid, Mongoloid, Mediterranean, Western Brachycephals, and Nordic

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[325] Ibid, 48.
[326] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *India: A Pictorial Survey*, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1960), 31.

peoples.[327] Just as the Ministry mimicked orientalist discourse in *India: A Pictorial*

Survey, this publication demonstrates an internalization of racialized categorizations

developed by British ethnographers such as H.H. Risley during the nineteenth century.

Despite this diversity, presented along the lines of race rather than religion, language,

caste, or class, the MIB assured the reader that, "For the first time in Indian history, the

country has achieved political unity and territorial integrity" through independence and

the formation of the nation-state.[328] While this publication differs from preceding

publications in its argument that unity occurred through the formation of the nation-state,

the Ministry nevertheless maintained that India achieved integration, national unity an

achieved goal rather than one that needed constant work and articulation from the

government.

The Ministry devoted an entire chapter in *Facts About India* to the First Five Year

Plan, lambasting British colonial rule and the upheaval of Partition for creating an

"essentially retrogressive" Indian economy.[329] In particular, Pakistan "destroyed the

unity of undivided India and threw its stable economic structure out of joint," the

Ministry railing against the Two Nation Theory in an effort to "present facts" and elicit

support from foreign readers.[330] The publication includes statistics illustrating increased

Indian productivity and economic growth and discussions of community projects and

their role in uplifting the villages. In a more explicit appeal to foreign aid, the Ministry

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[327] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *Facts About India*, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1953), 5.
[328] Ibid, 7.
[329] Ibid, 40.
[330] Ibid, 87.

noted that the United States, Canada, and Australia promised assistance to India, but with no other external help the country would be compelled to draw 2900 million Rs. from Sterling balances.[331] In this chapter, the MIB underlined that India was a nation-state that was developing and modernizing despite setbacks caused by colonial rule and Partition, implying that India was a country worth investing in but also one deserving of foreign aid. The Ministry produced publications for tourists to make the country understandable and desirable for tourists as well as to attract foreign investment to assist the government's development schemes.

Subsequent chapters in the publication focus on aspects of Indian arts and culture, highlighting the importance of India's "glorious past," specifically the Hindu past, for the construction of national identity. The MIB contended that there was little scope for the development of Indian arts before independence, but the country was now anxious to preserve and develop the valid elements in her cultural past.[332] The emergence of the Indian nation-state allowed for the resuscitation of "Indian culture and heritage," per the Ministry, distancing the culture and identity of the contemporary state from colonial rule and Western styles. Moreover, the active efforts to bolster "Indian culture and heritage," according to the MIB, allowed India to form better cultural relations with the international community, a return to the past viewed as furthering the state's foreign policy goals.[333] The Ministry's conception of "Indian culture and heritage," as in other publications for both foreign and domestic readers, is assumed Hindu, "othering"

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[331] Ibid, 46.
[332] Ibid, 102.
[333] Ibid, 103.

minority identities, particularly Muslims and Christians. To lend support to the Congress

argument that India possessed "unity in diversity," a chapter on Indian festivals (focusing

on Hindu celebrations first and foremost) notes that "Muslim festivals, through fewer in

number, are celebrated with equal zest and enthusiasm."[334] Furthermore, the MIB briefly

mentioned the celebration of Christian festivals "too well known" to describe, indicating

an assumed Western audience while also revealing token inclusion rather than true

acceptance of this minority group.[335] While these mentions back the notion that India

welcomed diversity, the Ministry informed the reader in a later chapter that the

beginnings of Hindi literature centered on the exploits of Hindu kings against "Muslim

invaders," the government body casting Muslims as "invaders," therefore "others," rather

than members of the nation-state based on an upper caste, upper class, Hindu

understanding of Indian history and national identity.[336]

Moreover, the MIB credited Akbar, the "great" Mughal emperor celebrated for

his religious tolerance, for giving new life to Indian architecture. Akbar's predecessors

Babar and Humayun "contributed little or nothing" to architecture, the Ministry

maintained, while the medium as a whole declined under Aurangzeb.[337] This binary

between Akbar and Aurangzeb became a reoccurring contrast in MIB publications

because of Congress ideology, the former serving as a "usable past" and the latter

depicted as a disastrous alternative. Nehru, Congress, and the MIB cited Akbar as a

historical example of just rule because of his religious tolerance, bringing unity to the

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[334] Ibid, 172.
[335] Ibid, 173.
[336] Ibid, 180.
[337] Ibid, 216.

Mughal Empire in the Indian subcontinent. Rather than forcing conversion of the

numerical Hindu majority, Akbar established the *Din-i Ilahi* faith for all subjects to

follow and abolished the *jizya* tax levied on non-Muslims, making loyalty to the emperor

more important than confession. This fit within Nehru and Congress' understanding of

secularism, the prime minister and the party looking to overcome communalism by

stressing the importance of unity and loyalty to the nation-state. A person's identity as an

Indian citizen was (in theory) more meaningful than religious practice. Because Akbar

brought unity to India through religious tolerance, Nehru, Congress, and the MIB defined

this ruler as "the great unifier" and a "usable past" for the Congress understanding of

secularism. Akbar's historical religious tolerance was a pragmatic strategy for a Muslim

numerical minority to rule a much larger Hindu population, and this decision did indeed

bring stability to the Mughal Empire. While tolerance rather than religious persecution is

no doubt a good thing, the appropriation and use of Akbar as a historical example to

justify Congress policies must also be contextualized. Congress drew parallels between

Akbar's *Din-i Ilahi* and their policy of secularism, but it cannot be overlooked that the

Mughal emperor was an acceptable historical precedent because he tolerated Hindus, no

doubt appealing to the upper class, upper caste Hindus that constituted the political

party.[338]

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[338] Furthermore, as explored in greater detail in Chapter Four, publications on Indian history often present Akbar as an "Indianized" ruler because he did not try to vanquish the cultural practices already existing in the subcontinent, customs assumed to be Hindu. Rather than being a "Muslim" ruler, he was an "Indian" one because of his toleration of Hindus and creation of a synthesis identity. Aurangzeb, conversely, was clearly portrayed as a Muslim, religious emperor in contrast with Akbar.

Aurangzeb, unlike Akbar, ruled based on Islamic principles and revoked many of the policies of his valorized predecessor. This change in policy resulted in conflict and strife throughout the subcontinent and became a touchstone for Congress to condemn historical communalism. Aurangzeb, based on the elite Hindu interpretation of Indian history, brought disunity and therefore weakness to the subcontinent. Moreover, his religious orthodoxy allowed the MIB and Congress to use this Mughal emperor as a stand-in for Pakistan during periods of Indo-Pakistani tension and war. If Akbar was a secular, enlightened, and great king representative of everything good about Congress and independent India, then Aurangzeb was a theocratic despot illustrative of what the Muslim League and Pakistan stood for. But, again, within the context of elite-driven national identity construction, the fact that Aurangzeb revoked religious tolerance and persecuted Hindus, treating the numerical majority in the subcontinent as if it were a "minority," cannot be ignored.[339] Aurangzeb was demonized to the same level as Akbar was celebrated, a Congress counterexample of the dangers of ruling based off religion. However, the upper caste, upper class, Hindu composition of the party and government complicates a simple binary of using the two emperors as stand-ins for secular versus communal rule. Subsequent tourist publications as well as those on Indian history

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[339] The policies of Aurangzeb were a driving force that led to the Mughal-Maratha Wars, the Mughal Empire fighting against a Hindu kingdom led by Shivaji Bhonsle and his descendants. Shivaji Bhonsle is another historical figure appropriated for contemporary political discourse, particularly by Hindu nationalists as a hero and defender of the Hindu faith against "invading Islam." While Congress did not lionize Shivaji to this degree, he is often presented as an example of unity, a "sliding doors" moment that might have prevented British rule of the subcontinent. If India was united under the Mughals or the Marathas, according to the thought exercise, foreign rule would not have happened, unity as the underpinning of Indian strength. Nevertheless, his status as "defender of the Hindus" against religious persecution among Indian secularists and Hindu nationalists is another point of commonality between the two sides.

reinforced this binary construction, Akbar acclaimed as the historical embodiment of Nehru and Congress compared to the disruptive, religiously minded Aurangzeb.

Finally, in a chapter centering on Indian sculpture, the Ministry noted that "The Gupta kingdom was politically integrated, and for the first time one could truly speak of a national culture."[340] As with other publications produced throughout the post-independence era, the MIB looked to Indian history to highlight the importance of unity and its correlation with Indian strength and prestige. At the same time, celebrating the Gupta era, often referred to as "the golden age of Hinduism," as the first moment of *national* culture equates Hindu identity with Indian national identity. Rather than a document solely providing information about the subcontinent, *Facts About India* manages to repeat colonial-era categorizations of the Indian population for a foreign audience while also touting the country's development efforts and worthiness of foreign aid. Simultaneously, the MIB constructed an Indian national identity informed by the worldview of an upper-caste and upper-class Hindu elite, offering token inclusion for minority groups yet "othering" their presence and acceptance in the nation-state.

As with *India: A Pictorial Survey* and *Fact About India*, the MIB's *India* (1958) offers a survey of the country, underscoring a state dedicated to development modernization (and in need of foreign aid) and nominally committed to "unity in diversity" yet managing to cast Muslims as "others" outside of "the imagined community." The ten dollar (USD) listed price for this document indicates *India* (with its colorized photos) was a publication for tourists rather than domestic readers, as MIB

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[340] *Facts About India*, 198.

publications for the domestic audience averaged between one to four rupees (other tourist

publications typically sold for 10 to 30 rupees). The Ministry cautioned the reader at the

beginning of this document, advising, "Be cautious about the man who sets himself up as

an expert on India; listen to him by all means, but remember he may be wrong," not

acknowledging, of course, that the government body itself might be wrong despite the

didactic tone.[341] The most vivid first impression of the country, according to the MIB,

was variety, diversity in landscape, color, costume, facial features, food, language, shapes

of houses, names, and trees that "has bewildered many observers," so much so that "it

used to be the fashion till a few years ago to write books to prove there were several

Indias but no India."[342] The Ministry argued, however, that a "common purpose," the

government's development efforts, drove the Indian nation-state and its citizens, the

"development raj" explained to foreign readers as uniting the country just as domestic

publications urged the population to unite around modernization.[343] "Our ancient

heritage," the Ministry expounded, "is no doubt rich, but the future, we realize, lies with

science and technology," the MIB highlighting a nation-state proud of its customs yet

preferring modernity.[344] Economic development "often disillusions those Western

visitors who go to India hoping to find a reign of unsullied Vedanta and Yoga and

Gandhism," the Ministry in this publication challenging the orientalist expectations of

Western tourists rather than mimicking the language of colonial rule.[345] Far from a static,

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[341] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *India*, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1958), 1.
[342] Ibid.
[343] Ibid.
[344] Ibid, 2.
[345] Ibid, 3. Interestingly, the MIB remarked that the legacy of Gandhi lived on in rural development, the reform of Hindu society (abolishing the caste system), in Indian foreign policy, and "the evolution of

unchanging, ancient land, India was an appropriate mix of old and new, one worthy of

visiting as well as investing. The Ministry explicitly called on readers for foreign aid,

stating,

> It was to be expected that a development programme aiming at raising the
> standard of living of 360 million people would involve many stresses and strains.
> The shortage of foreign exchange which the country is facing today is not,
> therefore, a matter of surprise. Assistance from international institutions and
> friendly Governments as well as the inflow of private foreign capital has been
> most valuable in sustaining the rate of progress achieved so far. As the projects
> now under construction--particularly the steel plants--go into production, India's
> own resources for industrial development will be augmented. With the greater
> capacity which is coming into being for making plant and machinery, it will be
> possible in the future to be less dependent on imports for taking up new projects.
> It seems safe to assert, therefore, that the Indian economy is well set on the path
> of progress.[346]

Post-independence India, according to the Ministry, was an integrated nation-state despite

its variety and a country successfully pursuing modernization, a stable and worthwhile

investment as well as an essential tourist destination.

Like preceding country-wide surveys, the MIB depicted India in this publication

as a nation-state "united in its diversity," yet at the same time established national

identity with a Hindu default. The Ministry applauded the reservation of seats in

Parliament for Scheduled Tribes and Castes, which had worked a lifetime's change in

less than a decade, as well as the abolishment of untouchability through law, while noting

that the practice "may linger in subtler forms transformed into preference patterns."[347]

Gandhian socialism." The term "Gandhian socialism" is one used by the BJP in the twenty-first century, an
economic ideology without any true foundation or ideology other than a critique of Congress' history of
social welfare and "pampering minorities." See Partha Banerjee, *In the Belly of the Beast: The Hindu
Supremacist RSS and BJP of India*, *An Insider's Story,* (New Delhi: Ajanta Books International, 1998).
[346] *India*, 43
[347] Ibid, 3.

Though celebrating the illegality of untouchability that came with independence and Congress rule, the MIB surprisingly acknowledged the continuation of caste prejudice within the nation-state, underscoring the difference between legal equality and an end to discrimination in practice. As with many publications for both foreign and domestic readers, the Ministry presented India as a united nation despite its variety, explaining, "Underlying the diversities of race, language, religion, and dress is the fundamental unity of the people, based on common influences shared over many centuries."[348] Moreover, the MIB touted India's "remarkable capacity for adjustment," citing Akbar's fusion of Hindu and Muslim ways of life "into a single national culture."[349] Nevertheless, the fundamental unity and national identity of India as described in the remainder of the document is assumed to be Hindu, and the "capacity for adjustment" represents the assimilation of minority identities within a dominant Hindu umbrella.

A chapter devoted to religion focuses exclusively on Hinduism, remarking that the influences of Islam, Sikhism, and Christianity led to one significant result, the strengthening of faith in one God.[350] The contact and conversations between various religious philosophies, per the MIB, emphasized "the essential unity of all religions," yet the discussion of religion within this Ministry publication is dominated by Hindu philosophy, deities, and festivals. *India* includes brief paragraphs on the Muslim holidays of Id-i-Milad (the birthday of prophet Muhammad), Id-il Fitr (the end of Ramadan), and Id-uz-Zuha (commemorating Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son

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[348] Ibid, 11.
[349] Ibid, 10.
[350] Ibid, 15.

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Isaac in fealty to God) and two paragraphs for Shia Muharram (memorializing the death of Muhammad's grandson Husain ibn Ali), a brief mention of the birthdays of Guru Nanak and Guru Govind Singh as Sikh holidays, and one sentence regarding Christian festivals, the Ministry once again assuming Western readership familiar with Christian holidays and offering token inclusion of this minority community.[351] In contrast, the Ministry lists Buddha Jayanti (the birthday of Siddartha Gautama) as a Hindu festival, thus appropriating a holiday that originated in the subcontinent but also one celebrated by a numerical minority community that did not constitute a threat to the national majority. The Ministry's commentary on religion and festivals in this publication centers primarily on Hinduism, playing into tourist expectations of course while also setting the default faith, therefore the basis of "essential unity of all religions," as Hindu rather than all religions possessing equal standing in the nation-state. Rather than a secular country that governed impartially regarding religion or a state completely divorced from faith, the Ministry defined national identity and projected it to the international community via tourists as one informed by Hinduism.

The MIB furthers this assertion throughout the remainder of the publication, particularly in chapters focusing on Hindu architecture. Hindu temples, according to the Ministry, dominated the countryside with their presence, especially in the South, while "The magnitude of the destruction wrought by time and invasions in the North can be inferred from the fact that Banaras, the holiest city of the Hindus, has hardly a monument

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[351] Ibid, 19.

that can lay claim to antiquity."[352] In this comparison, the MIB presented South India as "the preserver of Hindu tradition" as it would a few years later in *Contributions of the South to the Heritage of India*, as this region of the country was notably marked by monuments devoted to Hindu religion. The MIB depicted North India, by contrast, as a region ravaged by the passage of time but also invasions, specifically the Muslim invasions of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. By highlighting the presence of Hindu temples in the south compared to their absence in the north, the Ministry again portrayed South India as a preserver of tradition and cast Islam as fundamentally different from an established, Hindu informed, Indian identity.

The 1965 version of *India* changes the initial language from "invasions in the North" to "repeated invasions," softening the language slightly from the earlier publication.[353] Later in the document, however, the Ministry informed the reader that the great temples in the North only survived in "out of the way places, namely Khajuraho, Bhubaneswar, and Konarak, where they escaped the fury of the invading hordes."[354] Here the MIB does not explicitly condemn "Muslim invasion" but nevertheless refers to the arrival of Islam as that of an "invading horde" separate from the existing Hindu identity within India.[355] Other significant changes to the later edition include a further reduction of the discussion of Muslim and Christian holidays as well as the removal of the sentence highlighting Akbar's achievement of the "fusion of Hindu and Muslim ways

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[352] Ibid, 20.
[353] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *India*, Issued on behalf of the Department of Tourism, Ministry of Transport, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1965), 28.
[354] Ibid, 28.
[355] Ibid.

of life into a single national culture."[356] The latter exclusion is particularly interesting, as

the MIB issued the updated publication (January 1965) in the midst of rising tensions

with Pakistan that ultimately led to the Second Indo-Pakistan War in August and

September. Despite the Ministry's contrast of "secular India" with "Islamic Pakistan" in

publications produced before and during the war, the MIB removed a sentence supporting

the Congress understanding of secularism and "unity in diversity." Continuing the

established patterns in *India: A Pictorial Survey* and *Facts About India,* the MIB's *India*

portrayed India as a modernizing and developing country, arguing that India was a stable

nation-state worthy of foreign aid and "united in its diversity." Nevertheless, the India

described in these tourist documents is one that was fundamentally Hindu, the default

national identity informed by Hinduism, and minimizing minority groups, Muslims in

particular, as "others" within the nation-state.

Rather than a broad survey of the subcontinent or a general guidebook, the

Ministry's *Festivals of India* (1960) offered a survey of the festivals and holidays

celebrated within the nation-state. The festivals and holidays of the subcontinent, the

MIB explained, worked to "enliven social life and unite the people," the celebrations

themselves working to unite the population despite its diversity.[357] The festivals of India

represented "a revival of cultural traditions" in recent years, the MIB portraying

independence and the nation-state as the champion of India's history and heritage,

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[356] Ibid, 18.
[357] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *Festivals of India*, Issued on behalf of the Department of Tourism, Ministry of Transport and Communication, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1960), 5.

rescuing them from obscurity or degradation due to colonial rule.[358] Moreover, the

Ministry noted that Indian festivals were caste inclusive, the fêtes of the subcontinent

working to overcome the history of caste exclusion and discrimination (according to the

MIB) and thus reinvigorating the nation-state.[359] Furthermore, the MIB again used the

pages of a publication to rail against the Two Nation Theory, maintaining that, "Muslims

in India belong to the same ethnic stock as the rest of the population. The flesh and blood

is the same. There are, therefore, close cultural affinities between Muslims and non-

Muslims in India."[360] Festivals, the Ministry insisted, overcame the religious, linguistic,

caste, and class divisions within India; they brought merriment and, more importantly,

fostered emotional integration within communities and to the nation-state. Though these

examples supported the "unity in diversity" interpretation espoused by Congress, this

publication, like the discussion of festivals in *India*, centers on Hindu holidays and

celebrations as the default in the country. The appendix of this publication includes a

calendar of all the various festivals celebrated in India, the MIB noting where and

(roughly) when the holiday is celebrating in the Gregorian calendar.

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[358] Ibid, 30.
[359] Ibid, 13.
[360] Ibid, 8.

Table 1-1: Calendar of Festivals and Holidays in India[361]

Month/Date	Festival	Place of Celebration
January 1	New Year's Day	Mainly in cities throughout India
January 26	Republic Day	Throughout the country
January	Thyagaraja Festival	In Madras and Andhra Pradesh
January	Pongal	In Madras and Andhra Pradesh
January	Lohri	In Punjab and Haryana
January	Bhogali Bihu	In Assam
January	Gangasagar Mela	In Bengal
February/March	Vasanta Panchami	Throughout India, (north and west)
February/March	Shivaratri	Throughout India
February/March	Holi	Throughout India, especially in north
February/March	Teppam	In Madras
February/March	Ramakrishna Utsav	Mainly in Bengal
March 21	Jamshed Navroz	Mainly Maharashtra
March/April	Mahavira Jayanti	Mainly in Gujarat
March/April	Good Friday	Throughout India
March/April	Easter	Throughout India
March/April	Nau Roz	In Kashmir
March/April	Rama Navami	Mainly in Uttar Pradesh
March/April	Dol Purnima	In Bengal
March/April	Gangaur	Mainly in Rajasthan
March/April	Brahmotsavam	In Madras and Andhra Pradesh
March/April	Vishu	In Kerala
March/April	Christian Mela	At Mehrauli in Delhi
March/April	Car Festival	At Mathura in Uttar Pradesh
April	Jawalamukhi Fair	In Himachal Pradesh
April	Tamil and Telegu New Year	In Madras and Andhra Pradesh

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[361] Ibid, 41. Table retyped from the Appendix of *Festivals of India*.

April	Car Festival	In Madras
April 14	Naba Barsha	In Bengal
April/May	Vaisakhi	Mainly in Haryana and Punjab
April/May	Buddha Jayanti	Throughout India
April/May	Goru and Rangali Bihu	In Assam
April/May	Madurai River Festival	In Madras
April/May	Pooram	In Kerala
	Shab-e-Bharat*	Throughout India
	Id-ul-Fitr*	Throughout India
	Id-ul-Azha*	Throughout India
May	Jaita Ashtami	In Kashmir
June	Mela Hemiz Gompa	In Kashmir
June/July	Car Festival	At Puri in Orissa
June/July	Teej	Mainly in Rajasthan
July/August	Naga Panchami	Throughout India
July/August	Raksha Bandhan	Mainly in northern and western India
July/August	Sravana Festival	At Brindavan in Uttar Pradesh
August 11	The Feast of St. Philomena	In Mysore
August 15	Independence Day	Throughout India
August	Kaveri River Festival	In Madras
August/September	Ganesha Chaturthi	Mainly in western and southern India
August/September	Onam	In Kerala
August/September	Janma Ashtami	Throughout India
August/September	Khordad Sal	Mainly in Maharashtra
August/September	Urs Shah Hamadan	In Kashmir
August/September	Sair-e-Gulfaroshan	At Mehrauli near Delhi
August/September	Ban Yatra	In Uttar Pradesh
	Muharram*	Throughout India
October 2	Gandhi Jayanti	Throughout India
September/October	Dussehra	Throughout India

September/October	Velanganni Festival	In Madras and Andhra Pradesh
	Id-i-Milad*	Throughout India
October/November	Diwali	Throughout India
October/November	Guparb	Throughout India
October/November	Tikka	In Punjab and Haryana
October/November	Kansa ka Mela	In Uttar Pradesh
October/November	Ras Lila	In Assam
October/November	Pushkar ka Mela	Near Ajmer in Rajasthan
	Urs Moin-ud-Din Chishti*	At Ajmer in Rajasthan
October/November	Dev-Diwali	At Girnar in Gujarat
October/November	Navaratri	Throughout India
November 14	Children's Day	Throughout India
November/December	Karthikai Festival	In Madras and Andhra Pradesh
November/December	Vaikunth Ekadashi	In Madras and Andhra Pradesh
December 25	Christmas	Throughout India
	Urs Hazrat Nizam-ud-Din*	In Delhi
December	St. Thomas Day	In Madras and Andhra Pradesh
	Firewalking Festival	In Madras and Andhra Pradesh
		*Holiday can occur in any month of solar calendar

The majority of the holidays listed, by a significant margin, are Hindu celebrations, festivals that the entire community may celebrate but specifically originate with Hinduism. The festivals of India, the MIB maintained at the beginning of the document, work to "enliven social life and unite the people," thus bringing the entirety of the population together around a common celebration. However, if most of these components belong to one religion, that of the national majority, the Ministry is

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inherently arguing that it is Hindu celebrations above others that unite "India," the country and the people. The festivities of Christianity and Islam receive inclusion within this calendar of holidays and the MIB publication, therefore token inclusion within Indian identity, but they are clearly marked as a numerical and national minority, relegated to "other" celebrations and therefore "other" peoples within the nation-state. Moreover, the contention that entire communities celebrate the various festivals of India regardless of their confessional identity assumes a degree of assimilation from the minority communities within the culture of the national majority. Hindu holidays, therefore, were Indian holidays meant to be recognized by the entirety of the population. A tourist reading this document may have grasped the presence of many different religious communities living in India, but their larger impression would have been that India is fundamentally connected to and united by Hindu religion, traditions, and customs, because this is how the MIB defined the nation-state. Though perfunctory inclusion of the festivals of minority communities supported the "unity in diversity" thesis of Congress, the Ministry labeled Hinduism as the default religion in the subcontinent and a key component in the national identity of the state. The MIB built on this notion throughout publications centered on Indian art, highlighting the aesthetic traditions of indigenous Indian religions and minimizing the art of minority communities.

"The Creative Quality of Indian Genius": MIB Publications on Art

As a newly independent nation-state looking to bolster its prestige among the international community and attract foreign visitors (and their spending), the MIB issued many publications focused on the history of Indian art. Attempting to overcome

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stereotypes of "backwardness" and place India on par with the cultural heritage and artistic traditions of the West, the Ministry praised India's art throughout history as testament of "ancient genius" and a "glorious past." Furthermore, these publications celebrated the aesthetic history of the subcontinent while also defining the nation-state as resuscitating Indian art, restoring former glory from disruption by foreign rule and ensuring even greater contributions to the art of the world. The MIB's discussions of Indian art, however, were informed by a nationalist interpretation of history. The "glorious past" presented as a triumph throughout these documents was the Hindu past, with the arrival of Muslims and Europeans leading to disruption and loss. In their publications on India's art history, the Ministry minimized the contributions of India's minorities, save for Buddhism, and therefore "othered" these populations as different from the national majority.

The MIB's *Indian Art Through the Ages* (1951) offered tourists an up-to-date survey that included color plates and black and white illustrations, a publication not exhaustive but covering all the major trends in the history of Indian art.[362] The Ministry explained to the reader that one needed to appreciate art to "understand the soul of India" and that the heritage of art demonstrated "the creative quality of Indian genius," arguing against the notion of a "backward" formerly colonized people.[363] The first artwork incorporated in the publication is Ashoka's Lion Capital, a "poem on stone" emblematic of power, eloquence, vigor, and natural expression, a tribute to Siddartha Gutama as well

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[362] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *Indian Art Through the Ages*, (Calcutta: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1951), v.
[363] Ibid, 3.

as a statement of the Maurya emperor's power and commitment to Buddhist philosophy.[364] More importantly, the Lion Capital, erected at the site of the Buddha's first sermon in Sarnath, Uttar Pradesh, was (and continues to be) the National Emblem of the Republic of India. The MIB's inclusion of this particular artwork first and foremost defines this publication and the included works of art as distinctly national space. The Ministry divided the publication into two sections; the first centered on ancient and medieval art and the second was devoted to modern productions. The MIB praised the sculptures created during the Gupta period, contending that Gupta sculptures deserved a high place in the history of human art, while also stating that the Buddhist cave paintings of Ajanta (circa 3rd century AD) preserved the "brilliant culture of a Golden Age."[365] In its commendation of these particular forms of art, the Ministry again presents history prior to Muslim invasions as the "glorious past," one dominated by the religions that originated in the subcontinent. Furthermore, the MIB treats Buddhists as "natural Indians," a numerical minority that did not pose a threat to the national minority and a religion that began in the subcontinent. At first glance, Buddhism offered a "heritage of lore" for Congress and Prime Minister Nehru, a component of India's history that easily fit within the Hindu identity of the national majority while also not offending minority groups.[366] However, the common appropriation of the Buddha as an avatar of Vishnu and incorporation of Buddhist holidays, icons, and even the terms *ahimsa* (nonviolence) and the oft-cited *dharma* demonstrate a subsummation of this indigenous religion within

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[364] Ibid, 4.
[365] Ibid, 6.
[366] See Rotter, *Comrades at Odds*, Vajpeyi, *Righteous Republic*, Sherman, *Nehru's India*.

an upper caste, upper class, Hindu understanding of Indian national identity.[367] The

Ministry furthered this by chronologizing Indian art history into Hindu and Buddhist eras,

then moving to the contributions of the Mughals, skipping over the centuries of "Muslim

invasion" and rendering "Muslims" as absent from the heritage of Indian art.[368]

Furthermore, the Ministry remarked that art flourished under the rule of Akbar and

Jahangir, the "Indianized" Mughal emperors noted for their religious tolerance, but

suffered setback under the intolerant "Muslim" Aurangzeb.[369] In the "creative genius" of

premodern Indian art, the MIB included Mughal art, particularly architecture and

portraiture, as crucial components of India's cultural heritage. Muslims, however, remain

minimized and demonized from Indian heritage and the Ministry's construction of

national identity.

The second section of the publication defines modern Indian art as fundamentally

different from that of the West, codifying a distinctly Indian artistic identity, therefore

national identity, that drew from its premodern past. The Ministry noted that India

enjoyed undisputed supremacy in art fabrics until the eighteenth century and that the

nineteenth century marked a steady decline in the fine art tradition.[370] The decline in

Indian art neatly parallels the arrival and rising power of the British Empire in the

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[367] Pandey, *Routine Violence*.
[368] *Indian Art Through the Ages*, 9. Part of this is because Muslims cannot create the likeness of the prophet Muhammad in the same way that Christians can depict Jesus or Hindus can represent various deities, as well as periods of restriction on the production of art in the name of religious austerity. However, the fact that the MIB skipped over centuries of Indian history, particularly those defined by non-Mughal Muslims ruling the North, is particularly telling as to whom Congress accepted as "worthy" of inclusion in India's cultural heritage and therefore part of the nation-state's identity.
[369] Ibid, 10.
[370] Ibid, 41.

subcontinent, the MIB arguing that colonial rule brought stagnation and decline from

India's aesthetics and "creative genius" and defining Indian art, therefore Indian identity,

as the antithesis of the West. While it declared Bombay the center of a "cosmopolitan

style" of art, the Ministry contended that it was the styles from Ajanta, the Mughal

period, and Rajput art that influenced "the Bengal Renaissance," a rebirth and

reinvigoration of Indian culture that, according to nationalist teleology, inspired the

Indian nationalist movement.[371] Artists like Abanindranath Tagore (founder of the

Bengal School of Art and nephew of the noted poet Rabindranath Tagore), the Ministry

argued, came to use watercolor rather than oil and canvas and looked to the eastern styles

of Persia, China, and Japan, rejecting the traditions of Western Europe to produce

distinctly Indian art once again.[372] The Ministry concluded the publication by

commenting that heterogeneity marked the contemporary art scene, with India and its

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[371] Ibid, 43. The term "Bengal Renaissance" is one that has ebbed and flowed within scholarship of nineteenth century India. Prior to the 1970s, scholars readily referred to the synthesis between the Macaulay inspired Western education and a revival of interest in Indian traditions as "a renaissance" among the new middle and upper class in Bengal, the intellectual ferment of the mid-nineteenth century serving as an inspiration for the Indian nationalist movement. With the publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism* inspiring more critical scholarship of European imperialism, the "cultural turn" within humanities and social studies, and increased frustration and disillusionment about India's future due to political corruption, Indira Gandhi's emergency and her later assassination (as well as that of her son Rajiv Gandhi), scholars stopped using the term "renaissance" within an Indian context yet perpetuated the teleology that the nationalist movement originated with increased intellectual activity in Bengal. By the 2000s, however, the term "Bengal renaissance" came to be used in some instances yet removed as a precursor within a nationalist history. See David Kopf, *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance: The Dynamics of Modernization: 1773-1835*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1969), Bernard Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), Brian Hatcher, "Great Men Walking: Paradigms in the Historiography of the Bengal Renaissance," in *Bengal, Rethinking History: Essays in Historiography*, edited by Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 2001), Rajat Kanta Ray, *Exploring Emotional History: Gender, Mentality, and Literature in the Indian Awakening*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), Shamita Basu, *Religious Revivalism as Nationalist Discourse: Swami Vivekananda and New Hinduism in Nineteenth Century Bengal*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), Chandrani Chatterjee, *Translation Reconsidered: Culture, Genre, and the "Colonial Encounter" in Nineteenth Century Bengal*, (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010).
[372] *Indian Art Through the Ages*, 43.

artists cosmopolitan in their acceptance of suggestions and national in their assimilation

and interpretations of them.[373] Indian artists, like the nation-state, would accept "diverse

elements," yet at the same time find a way to assimilate them within an established Indian

identity, effectively minimizing the uniqueness of foreign styles and parallelling the

state's expectation that minority populations would assimilate to the national culture, one

influenced and defined by Hinduism. *Indian Art Through the Ages* imparts a history of

Indian art to the foreign reader as well as a sense that the artworks and styles of the

subcontinent are distinct from the West, informed by Asian styles and indigenous

religious traditions. This publication, which proclaimed an "Indian creative genius,"

attaches the greatness of Indian art to the premodern past before the arrival of Muslims

and Europeans, defining the art, therefore the soul and identity, of the nation-state as one

steeped in the religions of India.

The MIB's *Museums and Art Galleries* (1956), rather than being a survey of

Indian art, instead covers the major museums of the nation-state. Though India possessed

eighty museums at the time of publication, the Ministry explained that this number was

small considering the size of the population and lamented the lack of natural history

exhibits, science, children's museums, and especially when compared with the West.[374]

The dominance of the West with regard to the construction of museums is made apparent

by the fact that Calcutta, rather than New Delhi or Bombay (Mumbai) was the seat of all

the major museums, as this was the area where British presence was strongest from the

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[373] Ibid, 47.
[374] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *Museums and Art Galleries*, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1956), 5.

eighteenth century until independence.[375] Like *Indian Art Through the Ages*, *Museums and Art Galleries* includes photographs of various Indian art pieces, celebrating India's glorious past while also minimizing Muslim presence within national heritage and the nation-state. Most of the photographed artworks in this publication are sculptures and carvings of Hindu deities, offset by three depictions of Siddartha Gautama, two of Mughal Emperor Akbar, and one of Mughal Emperor Jahangir. The Mughals are present in this document, therefore included in the history of Indian art, while "Muslims" are not. Furthermore, the Ministry cast Muslims as the disruptors of Indian art tradition. The MIB explained that Indian painting was "already at its height, full of grace and vitality" with the cave temple paintings of Ajanta, the Ministry highlighting India's ancient genius as occurring before the celebrated works of the West.[376] However, according to the MIB, there was a gap in the history of Indian painting after Ajanta up to the twelfth century, save for the Pala school under Buddhist kings that came to an end with the sack of the University of Nalanda by the Muslims in 1199.[377] While an indigenous religion contributed to Indian heritage and cultural achievement, per the Ministry, those practicing a foreign belief caused disruption and decay.

Furthermore, the Ministry instructed the reader that, "With the Muslim activity of the country, artistic activities declined rapidly, for the invaders indulged in the systematic destruction of Hindu works of art wherever they went."[378] Though religious iconoclasm was a point of commonality among all religions, the context of nationalist periodization

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[375] Ibid, 17.
[376] Ibid, 50.
[377] Ibid.
[378] Ibid.

of Indian history as defined by an upper class, upper caste, Hindu elite has the effect of "othering" Muslims, relegating the religious minority as an "other" and an "invader" within the nation-state. The Mughals, compared to previous Muslim rulers, produced a cultural ferment within the arts due to the new influences and positive approach they brought with them, the Ministry distinguishing the "Indianized" Mughal rulers as a positive rather than a destructive force.[379] According to this booklet, the rule of Aurangzeb led to a decline in arts, the Ministry again demonizing the Mughal emperor notable for his Islamic faith and lack of tolerance for other religions. As with *Indian Art Through the Ages*, *Museums and Art Galleries* concludes with a discussion of the Bengal School of Art and the Bengal Renaissance. "Modern Indian Art," the Ministry expounded, "was at first heavily influenced by the West, but the indigenous spirit began to reassert itself with a fresh consciousness of the Indian heritage," the MIB casting the art and aesthetics of India as distinctly different from those of the West.[380] Moreover, based on the dominant presence of Hindu religious artworks throughout the publication, the foreign reader would understand that Hinduism greatly informed Indian art and identity. The Ministry fostered this connotation through its focus on a provincial style of painting informed by Hinduism and readily appropriated within Congress' nationalist worldview.

The MIB's *Basohli Painting* (1959)*, written by Indian Civil Servant Mohinder Singh Randhawa, concentrated on a regional style of painting rather than surveying the

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[379] Ibid, 53.
[380] Ibid, 61.

history of Indian art. Nevertheless, this publication used art to equate Hinduism with

Indian identity while also delineating disputed territory as fundamentally Indian space.

Randhawa explained that the Basohli style, characterized by the vigorous use of primary

colors, lotus-like eyes, and faces with a receded forehead and high nose painted with

unbroken continuation, prevailed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the

foothills of the Western Himalayas, within the contemporary borders of Jammu and

Kashmir.[381] The Basohli style arose as a result of the marriage of the folk art of the hills

with Mughal technique, the latter developing from artists that migrated to the Himalayas

from Delhi due to Aurangzeb, whose "chilly puritanism had frozen art and life."[382] In

another MIB publication centered on Indian art, Aurangzeb, the "bad Mughal," is

lambasted as detrimental to Indian art and culture. Furthermore, the migrating artists that

fostered the development of the Basohli style were Hindus, Randhawa maintaining that

artists were attracted to comparative security and freedom within the region.[383] Hindus,

according to Randhawa, could observe the rituals of their faith in comparative freedom

unlike in the Delhi court of Aurangzeb, and they expressed their religion through their

painting.[384] The seventeenth century was a period of Vaishnava (Vishnu worship)

revival, and the artists of the state of Basohli painted Vaishnava legends, particularly the

stories of Krishna. Randhawa argued that Basohli painting served as the visual

expression of devotional poetry of saints and mystics and embraced the vast range of

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[381] M.S. Randhawa, *Basohli Painting*, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1959), 11.
[382] Ibid, 15.
[383] Ibid, 16.
[384] Ibid.

Hindu religious thought and mythology, thus tying an inexorable link between Hinduism and this particular art form.[385] The focus on this particular style of painting within a Ministry publication is important due to the fact that it focused on a form of art that originated in the contemporary state of Jammu and Kashmir. The MIB delineated the state of Jammu and Kashmir as fundamentally Indian space through the presence of Basohli painting, one marked as "distinctly Indian" because of its ties to Hindu religion. Furthermore, the Ministry attacked the figure and reign of Aurangzeb in yet another publication, demonizing the "Muslim" emperor and casting Muslim identity as separate from an established "Indian" one. Through its publications dedicated to highlighting Indian art, placing the newly independent nation on equal footing with the West, the MIB repeatedly described the artworks produced by Hindus and Buddhists as emblematic of the nation's cultural heritage and ancient genius, thereby minimizing the presence of Muslims and subsuming the works of the Mughals within a Hindu-dominated "Indian" identity. The trends established in the Ministry's country-wide surveys and art publications continued in those on Indian architecture, with Muslims rendered "invaders" and "others" within the nation-state.

"A Place of Honor:" MIB Publications on Archaeology and Architecture

As with its publications dedicated to Indian art, the MIB presented Indian architecture to foreign readers as examples of India's "glorious past" and "Indian creative genius." To place the newly independent nation-state at the level of prestige of the West and attract tourists to the subcontinent, the Ministry produced publications on the

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[385] Ibid, 32.

religious buildings, shrines, and monuments created in India's premodern past. Unsurprisingly, the MIB focused on Indian religious architecture, most notably the Buddhist shrines of North India and the Hindu temples throughout the nation-state. As in other publications written for tourists, Hinduism is the assumed religion and identity within India, with Buddhist and even Jain architecture accepted and appropriated as part of Indian heritage contributed by "natural Indians."[386] Rather than a secular nation-state, the tourist publications on architecture delineate India as a distinctly religious space. Moreover, the accepted religions critical to national identity are those that originated in the subcontinent, while Muslims, as in the country-wide surveys and art publications, are minimized and demonized as "invaders," "othered" as a minority community in the nation-state.

The Ministry's *Buddhist Shrines of India* (1951, reissued in 1956 and 1968) discussed the important sites of Buddhism located in the subcontinent, defining these shrines as part of Indian national heritage. The MIB explained to the reader that India was the origin of Buddhism, the birthplace of Siddartha Gautama and where he codified the religion and philosophy, the implicit argument being that that world (one third of which practiced the Buddhist faith, according to the Ministry) owed India for this contribution to global culture.[387] The publication covers the life of the Buddha while

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[386] In fairness, the MIB did produce two publications on churches and mosques, *Churches in India* (1964) and *Mosques of India* (1966). The former, written by P. Thomas, offers a survey of the history of Christianity in India as well as highlighting the most notable churches. However, it is more academic in tone and reading level, it is unclear if this publication was solely for tourists in the same way that the ones discussed in this dissertation clearly are. *Mosques in India,* published in March 1966, falls out of the period of this paper.
[387] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *Buddhist Shrines in India*, (Faridabad: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1951), 5. Along with offering a "heritage of lore" that

noting that it was Maurya Emperor Ashoka that marked a turning point in the history of

Buddhism.[388] It was Ashoka, the Ministry maintained, that sent Buddhist missions from

India throughout Asia, bringing the philosophy of detachment, *ahimsa*, and

enlightenment to China, Japan, and the countries of Southeast Asia. The MIB's emphasis

on the importance of Ashoka was intentional because, like Akbar, the Maurya Emperor

offered a "usable past" for Prime Minister Nehru and Congress. Nehru justified his

foreign policy ideals of "friendship with all countries" and non-aggression and

highlighted the importance of unity for the strength and prestige of the nation-state by

citing Ashoka as a historical precedent. Under Ashoka, India was united, strong, and

recognized as a prestigious country abroad, the Maurya Emperor offering a model for the

contemporary nation-state to follow (discussed in greater detail in Chapter Four).

Interestingly, *Buddhist Shrines in India* includes terminology recognizable to those

practicing (or familiar with) Christianity, referencing the Buddha's many "miracles,"

"sermons," and "the Nativity of the Buddha," the MIB presenting Buddhism in an

understandable way for an assumed Western reader.[389] The MIB explained that despite

Buddhism's importance for the culture of the world, it was Indian archaeology that

helped resuscitate Buddhist shrines from their long oblivion, thus reinforcing the

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was not overtly Hindu to construct post-independence national identity, Prime Minister Nehru felt that
India's connection with Buddhism would help the country forge closer ties with the other states of Asia,
particularly China. An alliance between India and China, Nehru believed, added hard power to the rhetoric
and strategy of non-alignment, the two countries signing the *Panchsheel* (five principles) of co-operation,
non-interference, and respect for one another's territory (an agreement undone due to the Sino-Indian War
of 1962). Thus, India's hosting of an international conference on Buddhism in 1956 (commemorating the
2500-year history of the religion) was an event with meaning for Indian foreign policy rather than solely a
gathering of religious scholars.
[388] Ibid, 8.
[389] Ibid, 13.

argument of India's importance for global heritage.[390] India was vital for the birth and

development of Buddhist faith and therefore an integral part of the history and culture of

Asia and the entire world.

The Ministry devoted significant attention to the site and relics at Sarnath,

reproducing the narrative of the nation-state within a discussion of archeological

discoveries. Sarnath was the location of the "most authentic remains of the Buddha" as

well as Ashoka's pillar and lion capital, a site of great importance for the entire world as

well as the genesis of the National Emblem of the Republic of India.[391] The capital, the

Ministry contended, was symbolic of India's peace and goodwill to the world, both

historically and in the present, as well as the emblem of a resurgent India.[392] Rather than

allowing the reader to understand or interpret the meaning of the site on their own, the

MIB "speaks for" Sarnath based on the agenda of Congress and the purpose of national

identity construction. Furthering this agenda, the MIB informed the reader that Mahmud

of Ghazni and Muhammad Ghori destroyed Sarnath, the Ministry casting these "Muslim

invaders" as violating a site of national and international importance.[393] Pious devotees,

per the MIB, immediately repaired the places destroyed by the invaders, the former thus

fulfilling their *dharma* and restoring a site of importance to "India," delineated as non-

Muslim.[394] The Ministry further projected the nationalist narrative onto Sarnath, noting

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[390] Ibid, 11. Interestingly, the Ministry only credits "Indian archaeology" for rediscovering Buddhist
shrines and relics rather than mentioning the efforts of British archaeologists. In another publication,
Archaeology in India, the MIB does discuss the efforts of the British.
[391] *Buddhist Shrines in India*, 31.
[392] Ibid, 32.
[393] Ibid, 24.
[394] Ibid.

that Akbar constructed a tower at the site to commemorate his father, the MIB again

highlighting this Mughal emperor as properly "Indianized," and stating that the Ashoka

pillar "occupies a place of honor in the museum hall."[395] The Ministry replicates the

nationalist narrative of a "glorious past" disrupted by "foreign invasion" restored by the

nation-state within its examination of Sarnath, rendering the shrines and relics within the

agenda of the nation-state and "othering" Muslims as disruptors of an established Indian

culture and identity. Furthermore, the MIB concludes the publication arguing that,

"There can be no social order, no security, no peace of happiness, no righteous leadership

until men lose themselves in something greater than themselves," a reference to the

philosophy of detachment within Buddhism that also reads as a call for devotion of duty

and allegiance to the nation-state and India's view of itself within foreign affairs.[396] In

Buddhist Shrines in India, the MIB stressed India's importance to Buddhism and

therefore the culture and philosophy of the world, while also projecting its own national

identity onto the archaeology sites, strengthening a nationalist teleology that incorporated

Buddhism within a Hindu-centered Indian identity and cast Muslims as "invaders" and

"others" in the construction of national identity.

The Ministry's *5000 Years of Indian Architecture* (1951), like *Buddhist Shrines in

India*, uses the history of architecture to codify a nationalist teleology of Indian history.

"Perhaps no branch of human culture," the MIB expounded, "reflects with greater

exactitude the progress of decadence on man than architecture," with the progress of

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[395] Ibid, 31.
[396] Ibid, 75.

Indian architecture from primitive to sophisticated no exception to the global trend of combining beauty with utility, the Ministry equating Indian architecture with the achievements of the West.[397] The publication begins with an examination of the architecture and city planning of the Indus River Valley Civilizations. Looking to reject imperialist discourse regarding Indian backwardness, the MIB informed the reader that that the cities of these ancient societies were rationally planned and that "Practically every house had a bathroom which that was always placed on the street side of the building for the convenient disposal of water," thus highlighting scientific "Indian genius" and proper hygiene throughout time.[398] Photographs of wells and the drainage system of the Indus River Valley Civilizations follow the text, the Ministry showing examples of Indian architecture to foreign readers for greater engagement and as evidence. The publication then focuses on Mauryan architecture, particularly the monolithic pillars of the Ashokan era of which "the Lion Capital features prominently," before moving to the Gupta period, the latter declared the "zenith of Indian architecture."[399] As with discussions of Indian art in other MIB publications, it is specifically "the golden age of Hinduism" that marks the peak of Indian architectural achievement. The Ministry ties the best of Indian architecture to one religion, forging a sense that Hinduism plays a significant role in defining Indian identity, past and present.

The MIB reinforces this connection by speaking about Islamic architecture beginning in Part II of the booklet, literally periodizing Indian history into an ancient past

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[397] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *5000 Years of Indian Architecture*, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1951), 3.
[398] Ibid.
[399] Ibid, 10.

ended by the arrival of Muslims in the subcontinent.[400] Even if the survey of Islamic

architecture was wholly positive, this division repeats a nationalist teleology of Indian

history, one that casts Muslims as "others" within the nation-state. As one would expect,

the publication highlights the Taj Mahal, commissioned by Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan,

as "an everlasting tribute to genius of its builder and the aesthetic sense of the

emperor."[401] As the most famous monument in the subcontinent, but also built by a

Mughal ruler tolerant of Hindus, the Ministry readily incorporates the Taj Mahal within

India's cultural heritage. The MIB proved less laudatory of non-Mughal Muslim

architecture. The Ministry revealed that, "The establishment of Islamic power at the end

of the twelfth century in northern India brought face to face two contrasting cultures

whose combined genius gave birth to what we call the Islamic art of India," the MIB

noting a fusion between Islamic and Indian architectural styles.[402] The Ministry

continued, highlighting that this synthesis "drew inspiration from Syria, Egypt, Northern

Africa, and Sassanian Persia, and its architecture acquired a fundamental character of its

own distinguished by standardized forms and concepts. It is equally true of Islamic

architecture that it always developed local Muslim styles based primarily on indigenous

ideals and stamped with a strong national individuality."[403]

At surface level, this argument would seem to support Congress' understanding of

assimilation, the creation of a new distinctly "Indian" identity that superseded religious

division. Furthermore, it is true that Muslims adopted the architectural styles of non-

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[400] Ibid, 24.
[401] Ibid, 40.
[402] Ibid.
[403] Ibid.

Muslim populations, such as the Roman style arches in the Mosque of Cordoba in Spain and the many pagoda style mosques of the Philippines. However, within this document and in the context of elite-driven national identity construction, this synthesis is written in a tone that suggests that pre-existing Indian styles were the agents of change, subsuming "diverse elements" and "Indianizing" Islamic art rather than Muslim rulers and architects having agency and incorporating local styles for pragmatic or aesthetic reasons. This tone reappeared in the publication's presentation of Indian churches, the Ministry insisting that early Indian churches were designed after Hindu temples, "which naturally proved models for church-building," the indigenous, Hindu (or "natural Indian") architecture as the assumed default.[404] Until the arrival of the British, Indian architecture "assimilated foreign influences in its own way," the Ministry affirming the sense that assimilating and "Indianizing" foreign elements meant subsummation within an established Indian identity.[405] "Diverse elements," rather than receiving full acceptance or equal status, were to be tolerated from a position of Hindu power, incorporated as a facet of Indian cultural achievement, or subsumed by the majority, whether it be architectural styles of the identities of minority populations in a Hindu majority nation-state.

The MIB devoted three tourist publications to the temples of India, one on the *Temples of North India* (1956), their southern counterparts in *Temples of South India* (1960), and a comprehensive survey through *Temples of India* (1964). These

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[404] Ibid, 42.
[405] Ibid, 50.

publications focus primarily on Hindu temples while also mentioning the presence of

Jain, Buddhist, and Sikh centers of worship, delineating the "natural Indians" from the

other religions' populations in the subcontinent. While a discussion of temples will

inherently exclude Muslims and Christians who worship in mosques and churches, it is

the perpetuation of the elite-driven nationalist teleology within these documents that

equates Hindu and indigenous religious identity with Indian national identity and

"others" minority populations. The publications on the temples of India celebrate the

architectural achievements of "Indians" while perpetuating the patterns of exclusion

present throughout Ministry documents.

The MIB begins *Temples of North India* by defining the architecture of the temple

as a project of religious consciousness; "The fully developed Hindu temple thus becomes

an ideal for the union of the human with the divine, its upward movement and lofty spire

expressing something of the human desire to reach out and mingle with the infinite."[406]

The publication takes a region by region approach and describes the popular styles and

most notable temples, yet adds, "All these regional developments have their own special

features to be accounted largely by the availability of materials and partly by the local

tradition of building. Nonetheless, there is a common undercurrent of thought, a

uniformity of procedure, style, and form which show unmistakably that basically all these

temples belong to the same wide movement."[407] As throughout its corpus of publications

for tourists, the Ministry dictated that India was an integrated entity past and present,

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[406] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *Temples of North India*, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1956), 5.
[407] Ibid, 8.

united by geography and culture. The MIB touted the temples of Orissa (a state in East India), of which some "have been acclaimed by critics as the most remarkable examples of architectural achievement in Asia," the Ministry again highlighting India as paramount to the culture of Asia and global heritage.[408] In a discussion playing into orientalist fantasy and curiosity, the MIB asserted that the erotic statues and sculptures of various deities within and around temples exemplified tantrism, the union of human and the divine through sexual experience.[409] The ingenuity and intricacy of temples and their sculptures revealed the Indian mind, the MIB associating the temple as inherently Indian compared with mosques and churches, houses of worship that originated outside of the subcontinent. Furthering this point, the publication, while primarily focusing on Hindu temples, mentions Buddhist, Sikh, and Jain temples, the Ministry pointing out that Jain inclusion of Brahmanical gods speaks to a "spirit of toleration," specifically an acceptance and tolerance of Hinduism.[410] In *Temples of North India*, the MIB tied the temple to what it meant to be Indian, with Hindus and Jains, Buddhists, and Sikhs ("natural Indians") accepted within the upper caste, upper class construction of national identity.

Temples of North India does not ignore Muslims entirely, as the MIB once again demarcated this minority population as an "other" and an invader who disrupted Indian culture and genius. While the beginning of the document centers on Indo-Aryan temples, the Ministry explains that many of these temples no longer existed, stating, "since the

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[408] Ibid, 9.
[409] Ibid, 19.
[410] Ibid, 21.

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path of the Muslim invader lay through the North, the Indo-Aryan temples suffered, time and again, at the hands of religious iconoclasts."[411] Furthermore, the MIB contended, "Where they [temples] were not completely razed to the ground, they were dismantled and mutilated beyond recognition."[412] Additionally, the Ministry described the arrival of Mahmud of Ghazni as the beginning of a "campaign of desecration," with his destruction of the Somnath temple (in Gujarat, Western India) spoiling an object of pure beauty as well as the pages of history.[413] Muslims, according to the Ministry, destroyed a great deal of Gupta architecture in Rajasthan, while Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb destroyed the Govind-deva temple built by Hindu princes during the rule of Akbar, the MIB contrasting the "great" Mughal from the "Muslim" one.[414] Throughout *Temples in North India*, the Ministry portrayed Muslims as "invaders," a population that arrived in the subcontinent and destroyed and desecrated the culture and creations of "Indian genius." After reading this document, a tourist would leave with the impression that Muslims were culturally different from "Indians" due to their history of temple demolition, the MIB defining this minority group apart from the preexisting "imagined community."

The Ministry shifted geography in *Temples of South India*, but nevertheless reiterated the same language and patterns in the construction of national identity. Echoing the central theme it would promote in *Contributions of the South to the Heritage of India*, the MIB informed the reader that unlike the North, well within the path of Muslim "invaders," the South was relatively free from foreign invasion, which allowed

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[411] Ibid, 7.
[412] Ibid.
[413] Ibid, 35.
[414] Ibid, 26.

this region to better preserve religious monuments from wanton destruction or calculated negligence.[415] As in the series of radio talks turned into a publication a year later, the MIB demarcated the South as the preserver of Indian, specifically Hindu, culture and tradition, the region free from the "arresting influences of alien cultures."[416] While the temple was historically where the panchayat met to discuss village affairs and where one would find hospitals and schools prior to the arrival of the British, the main function of the temple was the preservation of traditional values, the Ministry rooting the temple within Indian history, tradition, society, and culture.[417] Furthermore, "as a visible emblem of the religion, philosophy, and ethics of the people, the temple played a far more vital role than any other institution. It became a symbol of '*dharma'* for all-kings, nobles, and laymen alike."[418] In this tourist publication, the Ministry stressed the importance of *dharma,* a theme of great importance in publications produced for the domestic audience. As with *Temples of North India*, *Temples of South India* takes the reader region by region to highlight the architectural styles the most important temples, labeling the development of the temple as a documentation of the history of South Indian culture.[419] In contrast to *Temples of North India*, the publication on south Indian temples does not discuss the contributions of Buddhists, Jains, or Sikhs, owing to the fact that these religions had a negligible presence in South India. Yet again, however, the MIB defined Muslims as "invaders," as Delhi Sultan Alaud-din Khilji and his general Malik

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[415] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *Temples of South India*, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1960), 5.
[416] Ibid.
[417] Ibid, 6.
[418] Ibid, 5.
[419] Ibid.

Kafur brought "defeat and disgrace" to the long established and warring kingdoms of the South, the Ministry painting disunity in South India as leading to invasion but at the same time presenting Muslims as disruptors of an established South Indian, therefore Hindu, identity.[420] Moreover, the MIB maintained that the arrival of Muslims from the North during the Vijayanagar period brought "cataclysmic changes in the political life in this ancient region."[421] Just as *Temples of North India* used the temple to outline "the imagined community" in the North, *Temples of South India* connects the temple with Hinduism as hallmarks of South Indian cultural tradition. Because of this association, the foreign reader leaves with the impression that Hinduism and Indian identity are connected and that Muslims were "disruptors" of India's "glorious past" and outsiders within the nation-state.

The MIB's *Temples of India* combined the surveys of North and South Indian temples into one publication, repeating the same themes (and in some cases even the same language) of the regional examinations. The Ministry explained that "An Indian temple is not necessarily a Hindu shrine. It can belong to any of the several religious denominations-Buddhist, Hindu, Jain, and Sikh," again outlining the indigenous religions and "natural Indians" that lived in the subcontinent.[422] While at first this statement supports the Congress acceptance of multiple religions, by demarcating Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, and Sikhism as religions worshipping at an Indian temple, it declares these religions as inherently Indian. By contrast, Muslims and Christians, religions that

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[420] Ibid.
[421] Ibid, 17.
[422] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *Temples of India*, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1964), 7.

do not worship in temples, are therefore implicitly characterized as "others," an argument the MIB made more explicitly throughout the publication. Moreover, the Ministry highlighted a distinct, Indian character to temples and the societies that built them that remained unchanged despite the arrival of "diverse elements." The Ministry claimed that India absorbed "many tributaries of culture, some turbid and others pure; but the main current has always remained Indian," and that philosophy, religion, literature, art, and architecture have all retained their basic Indianness."[423] These statements posit an Indian nation-state that subsumes "diverse elements," one in which assimilation meant "Indianization" rather than the Congress mantra of "unity in diversity." The Indian temple itself, according to the Ministry, was an insular product aside from "a touch of Hellenistic influence," Modern Europe and Islam having little effect on "the traditional character of temple architecture."[424] The MIB posited that the temple was a fundamentally Indian institution, a preservation of an ancient culture and traditions unaffected by "foreign elements." The sole influence of Islam on the Indian temple, as mentioned in *Temples of North India* and *Temples of South India*, was destruction. Muslims swept through North India with "iconoclast zeal," doing much damage to the preexisting temples.[425] At the same time, the Ministry underscored the South as "the preserver of Hindu tradition" because of its distance from foreign invasion, stating, "India was dotted with thousands of temples at the time Islam gained a firm foothold in North and Northwestern India; but having been relatively free from iconoclastic upheavals, the

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[423] Ibid.
[424] Ibid, 8.
[425] Ibid, 28.

country south of the Vindhyas was able to protect a large number of its religious

monuments from wanton destruction or calculated negligence."[426] Moreover, repeating

the same language as preceding publications more explicitly, the South "remained free

from the arresting influences which came to dominate North India from the thirteenth

century onward," and was thus able to preserve the ancient Indian identity temple.[427] A

tourist visiting the subcontinent would likely be interested in learning about and visiting

India's temples, and the Ministry obliged by producing publications on the history of this

religious institution. At the same time, these documents highlight the temple as a key

component of Indian identity, a construction primarily based on Hinduism, accepting of

"natural Indians," and excluding Muslims as "invaders" and "others" outside of the

national community.

"Evolving from Divinity:" MIB Publications on Indian Dance

In its publications dedicated to Indian temples, the Ministry asserted that to

temple-builders, art was neither purely secular nor religious; it was all one, thus

underscoring the influence of religion on the culture and identity of the nation-state as

well as unwittingly challenging the applicability of Western secularism within a non-

Western society.[428] In its publications devoted to Indian dance, the MIB explicitly

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[426] Ibid, 10.
[427] Ibid.
[428] Ibid, 9. Much of the theoretical work within postcolonial studies questions the applicability of Western
institutions, discourses, and terminology within formerly colonized nation-states, noting that "secularism,"
"nationalism," and "modernity" among others are informed by European history as well as the surrounding
context of colonialism when Western Europeans popularized these concepts. While Achin Vanaik calls for
India to "fully secularize" to combat rising authoritarianism, postcolonial scholars note that the cultural
traditions of formerly colonized societies as well as the balance of power between the colonizer/former
colonizer and the colonized/formerly colonized problematize a one-to-one importation and acceptance of
Western models developed to respond to the historical developments faced by Western Europe. See

argued that religion directly informed this art form. While a dance performance might not have been at the top of a tourist's list of things to see and do when visiting India, the Ministry nevertheless issued several publications on the subject, covering the regional styles of dance as well as discussing high art performances and the dances of the villages and masses. As with the country-wide surveys and the documents on Indian art and temples, the Ministry insisted on an underlying unity to the various Indian dances. This unity was fundamentally entrenched in Hindu religion, the MIB thus depicting Hinduism as a foundation of Indian cultural and national unity.

In the publication *Indian Dance* (1955)*,* the Ministry claimed that the history of Indian dance was "the history of the soul of India, the expression of both the Manifest and unmanifest, spirit of both Eternity and Time, man and woman, expression of evolution of movement, a creative force that has come down to use from the ages," Indian dance therefore intertwined with what it meant to be Indian throughout history.[429] Moreover, the Ministry connected dance to Hinduism at the onset of the booklet, stating, "We cannot divorce it [dance] from religion and philosophy, for in India, religion and philosophy are not just intellectual conceptions or a mere set or rules and regulations."[430] Dance, according to the MIB, evolved from divinity rather than man, the Ministry maintaining that the "first glimpses of dance are given to us by Siva, Yogi of yogis" and

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Vanaik, *Rise of Hindu Authoritarianism*, Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World,* Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism*, (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983).

[429] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *Indian Dance*, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1955), 3.

[430] Ibid.

citing evidence of dance in Rig Veda to bond dance to Hindu scripture and tradition.[431]

Consistent with the corpus of tourist publications, the MIB discussed the regional styles

of dance, stressing the religious origins and significance to the foreign reader. The

Ministry declared the dance form Bharat Natyam (Bharatanatyam) performed in Tamil

Nadu (the southernmost state in India) to be the embodiment of the soul of Bharata

(God), while Manipuri dance from the state of Manipur (East India) was intimately

connected with religious life, as Ananda dance brought spiritual bliss between God, the

dancer, and the spectator.[432]

Simultaneously, the MIB used discussions on Kathakali (from Kerala in the

southwest) and Kathak (from North India) to reestablish an elite-driven nationalist

teleology. The Ministry informed the reader that Kerala's geographic position helped to

keep out "confusing outside influences" which allowed Kathakali to continue almost in

its original form for nearly five hundred years until the arrival of the British.[433] Again,

the MIB highlights South India as "the preserver of tradition" and the protector of the

customs and practices of dance steeped in Hinduism from "confusing outside influences,"

implicitly referring to Muslim invasion. In the North, the Ministry remarked, Islam did

manage to influence Kathak dance, but the Indian dance managed to assimilate foreign

influences, absorbing "diverse elements" without losing its essential Indian character.[434]

In this publication on Indian dance, the MIB rendered assimilation of diversity as

subsummation, inclusion via co-option within an established Indian culture and identity.

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[431] Ibid, 4.
[432] Ibid, 9.
[433] Ibid, 16.
[434] Ibid, 30.

Despite the different styles of dance present in this publication, the Ministry stressed the inherent uniformity of Indian dance, noting, "We should remember that the unity of all true art has been stressed in India from the very beginning." [435] While this is an iteration of "unity in diversity," unlike discussions of art and architecture which at least included the contributions of "natural Indians" or "the good Mughals," this publication on dance establishes that Hinduism is the basis of Indian dance. Rather than "united in diversity," the publication posits that Indian culture and identity was "united in Hinduism," the very argument made by Hindu nationalists past and present. Rather than being united by secularism, this tourist publication predicates Hinduism as the basis of dance and therefore cultural integration, thereby "othering" the contributions and identities of non-Hindus as non-Indians.

While *Indian Dance* centered on the high art styles of dance in the subcontinent, *Folk Dance of India* (1956) focused on the dances of the rural community, folk art being the most direct expression of the innermost spirit of a people.[436] Folk dances of India were simple without being naïve, possessing a profundity of conception and a directness of expression while also serving as the origins of classical dance.[437]   As with the publication *Indian Dance*, *Folk Dance of India* surveys the various regional folk dances of the subcontinent, the Ministry highlighting how dance reflected patriotic themes, day-to-day problems, historical events, and religious expression. Dances, the MIB expounded, were seldom wholly secular and possessed devotional themes, the Ministry

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[435] Ibid, 4.
[436] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *Folk Dance of India*, (Bombay: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1956), 3.
[437] Ibid.

detailing the religious, specifically Hindu, basis of Indian folk dance.[438] Moreover, the

Ministry stated that though the character of dancing varied with climate and topography,

all dancing in India shared a religious nature of origin.[439] India was a land and a

community united in dance but also specifically united by religious dance, the Ministry

connecting national and cultural integration to Hindu religion. Moreover, the MIB

viewed folk dance as a vital part of contemporary national culture rather than simply a

relic of a "glorious past;" the dances of the people needed to be preserved and

encouraged to make the present joyous and secure.[440] A renewed interest in folk dance,

fostered by the nation-state as the protector of India's traditions, would prove beneficial

(according to the Ministry) for the improvement of physical fitness and preventing

"idleness" in the villages. therefore boosting Indian productivity.[441] More importantly,

however, for the Ministry and Congress,

> By taking pride in their folk dancing, the people are beginning to be aware of new
> values and the richness of their own cultural heritage. They have found a
> renewed sense of dignity and unlimited scope for their creative spirit. This in turn
> has instilled in them respect for people from other regions in the country, thereby
> strengthening the bonds of cultural unity which have always sustained the Indian
> people.[442]

In *Folk Dance of India*, the Ministry illustrated to the foreign reader a nation-state united

through rural traditional dance, overcoming differences of language, geography, and local

differences to produce a distinctly Indian identity. This national integration, however,

was not based on the equal status and treatment of all religions in the subcontinent, but

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[438] Ibid, 4.
[439] Ibid.
[440] Ibid, 35.
[441] Ibid.
[442] Ibid, 35.

one grounded in Hindu religious tradition, the Ministry presenting Hinduism as a cementing factor within the nation-state.

The MIB's *The Dancing Foot* (1957), written by Mulk Raj Anand, also focuses on Indian folk dance, described in this publication as "the quick of the primitive soul" and retaining the spontaneity and vitality of their ancient role of appeasing the gods.[443] From the beginning of this document, Anand underscores the relationship between dance and religion, specifically the polytheistic Hinduism, thereby presenting an Indian identity intertwined with one specific religion rather than any sense of secularism. The development of folk dance, according to the publication, mirrored the development of India after independence and provided comfort to the people witnessing these rapid changes. Folk dances, the "exaltations of life itself," faced the challenge of modern industrial civilization, but the interest of the state and the people in the preservation of these old dance cultures would keep them alive.[444] Nehru, Congress, and the MIB portrayed an Indian nation-state, informed by and proud of its heritage but attempting to modernize, as one that endeavored to find balance between tradition and modernity and not lose sight of its traditions and "glorious past." Folk dance was living memory of these ancient customs, as dances revealed not only the individual talents of the Indian people but also the collective traditions of each part of the countryside.[445] In a brief discussion of the scheduled tribes, Anand mentioned that folk dances were "the very life-blood of the tribal people," their passion for dance "perhaps the permanent life force of

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[443] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *The Dancing Foot*, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1957), 5.
[444] Ibid, 9.
[445] Ibid, 7.

their race."[446] Folk dances were more than a relic of the tribal populations, however, for

they possessed significant religious importance and "bridge the distance between this

world and the other."[447] Anand explained that many rural dances reenacted the

Ramayana, while the Raslila dance in Manipur, obligatory for every woman while

optional for men, drew associations to the courtship of Krishna and Radha.[448] While the

document surveyed the folk dances throughout the country, Anand stressed the unity of

Indian folk dance, contending,

> While the differences of landscape and atmosphere have brought about a great
> variety of rhythms, of musical compositions, of costumes and dance styles, the
> underlying religious feelings, which were bound up with the nature-cults of
> ancient and mediaeval India have become part of a unique national tradition for
> the whole country, with an interior oneness of purpose and aspiration.[449]

As in *Folk Dance of India*, this Ministry publication informed the reader that despite

seeming differences between the dances of various regions, they were all connected to

one another and fundamentally "Indian." This unity of dance, bonds of cultural unity that

extended to the population of the nation-state, depended on Hinduism, thus challenging

the notion of an Indian nation "united in diversity."

The MIB's *The Dance in India* (1964) covered tribal, folk, and classical dance in

one volume and emphasized how all three forms derived from religion. The kaleidoscope

of dance throughout the country revealed a fascinating facet of culture that once

contributed to the "glory that was India,"[450] Indian dance being a key component of

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[446] Ibid, 21.
[447] Ibid, 6.
[448] Ibid, 17.
[449] Ibid, 7.
[450] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *The Dance in India*, (Faridabad: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1964), 5.

India's "glorious past" and "creative genius" in the same manner as art and architecture. In this publication, the Ministry mentioned that the religious element of dance was "fast receding into background,"[451] yet nevertheless emphasized the religious foundations of Indian dance. Dance, according to the Ministry, was the expression of artistic urges and outward formalization of religion and philosophy throughout India's history.[452] Moreover, the MIB insisted that Indian dance, an "integral part of the variegated culture of India," conformed to the rules of Hindu iconography and enacted the familiar and beloved stories from the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, thus accentuating the Hindu basis of Indian dance and culture that contests the notion that India was a secular nation-state.[453] This common underpinning resulted in a universality of steps and themes within Indian dance, a union brought about by Hindu religion rather than "unity in diversity."[454] At the same time, the Ministry managed to "other" the Indian Muslim population within this document and reiterate themes based on a nationalist periodization of Indian history. The MIB maintained that South India possessed an unbroken tradition within dance, labeling the South as "the preserver of tradition," while dance in North India was subject to Muslim rulers that patronized Hindu art, with their followers suppressing religious aspects of performance.[455] In their conception of the history of North Indian dance, the Ministry equated "Indian" with "Hindu" while demarcating Muslims as a separate population from that of the nation-state. Furthermore, the MIB touted the revival of

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[451] Ibid, 6.
[452] Ibid, 49.
[453] Ibid, 23.
[454] Ibid, 6.
[455] Ibid, 35.

traditional dance since independence. The Ministry applauded the restoration of Kathak

to its pristine beauty and purity, understood as a return to the religious origin and themes

of the dance, as well as the work done to resuscitate dance by pioneers with the singular

motivating desire to revive the classical art-form from the oblivion into which

"unsympathetic conquerors" had driven it.[456] The renewed interest in Indian dance after

independence, as presented by the Ministry, was the rescue of Hindu culture and tradition

by the nation-state after centuries of foreign subjugation, the MIB tying the identity of the

nation-state to religion rather than secularism. Hinduism informed the origins of Indian

dance and therefore the traditions and customs of the country, just as this religion above

all others influenced national identity construction in the post-independence era.

Conclusion

Though tourism was not the biggest contributor to Indian sterling balances and

appealing to tourists was not the most important part of the government agenda following

independence, the MIB nevertheless devoted considerable time and resources in the

production of tourist publications. The governmental body concerned with "matters of

national importance for internal as well as external publicity" issued several documents

for foreign readers, including country-wide surveys, examinations of Indian art,

explorations of archaeology and architecture, and short volumes on dance, defining

Indian national identity to the international community as the government wanted to

portray the nation-state. The Ministry used these documents to depict a "united" India

and call for "no strings attached" foreign aid in contrast to those published for the

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[456] Ibid, 47.

domestic audience that did the work of "uniting" the country divided by language, religion, caste, and class. Moreover, the production of tourist documents after independence mirrored the strategies of many nation-states using tourism to define and project national identity after World War II; the fashioning of image to outsiders was part of international foreign policy strategy during the Cold War. While the MIB attempted to portray an Indian nation-state "united in diversity," a critical analysis of the corpus of tourist texts reveals the conflation of Hindu identity with Indian national identity, Hinduism serving as the default religion of the "imagined community." In some cases, the Ministry incorporated Buddhists, Jains, and Sikhs as "natural Indians" and celebrated Akbar as an "Indianized" ruler, yet the MIB consistently delineated Muslims and Christians as "invaders" and "others" within the nation-state. Though one could argue that emphasis of India's religions was performative, the Ministry playing into tourist expectations to garner greater interest in visiting the subcontinent, the fact that the publications consistently perpetuated an upper class, upper caste, Hindu interpretation and periodization of Indian history, culture, and identity cannot be ignored. A tourist reading these publications would come away with the conclusion that India was fundamentally informed and influenced by Hinduism rather than a secular nation-state "united in diversity." Writing and appealing to tourists was national identity construction, defining Indian identity to the international community from an elite driven top-down perspective. This process continued through the publication of texts on Indian history, the Ministry constructing historical of knowledge based on the platform, worldview, and agenda of Nehru and Congress.

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CHAPTER V

"AN ABUNDANCE OF SIMPLE BOOKS TEACHING THE LESSON OF

INTEGRATION:"[457] HISTORY-WRITING AS NATIONAL IDENTITY

CONSTRUCTION, 1957-65

On December 23rd, 1948, Prime Minister Nehru delivered the inaugural address to

the silver jubilee session of the Indian Historical Records Commission in New Delhi.

After the initial introductory pleasantries, the author of *The Discovery of India* (1946)

professed himself an amateur on the subject compared to the experts in the room, but

nevertheless felt "even an amateur has a place in the scheme of things and sometimes

perhaps he may see the wood a little more and not be lost in the individual trees which an

expert is apt to do."[458] As he spoke to the gathered historians, he urged them to write not

just for their brother historians, but for the common person, and hoped that the

conception of the history of a country as a chronicle of a large number of kings,

emperors, and battles learned by heart "is long dead."[459] More importantly he

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[457] Jawaharlal Nehru, *Letters to Chief Ministers, 1947-1964*, Vol 5, G. Parthasarathi, ed., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 487.

[458] "Inaugural Address to the Silver Jubilee Session of the Indian Historical records Commission," New Delhi, Dec 23, 1948. From *Nehru's India: Select Speeches*, edited by Mushirul Hasan, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 225.

[459] Ibid, 226. Nation-states around the world specifically used historical education as a means of fostering national integration.

encouraged the Historical Records Commission to emphasize "the binding and constructive aspects of history" rather than "disruptive or fissiparous forces."[460] While establishing and improving the educational system in India was a national goal for development purposes and the expansion of democracy, Nehru, Congress, and the MIB viewed education as a key step in "the emotional integration of India," with educators always to keep India and national unity in view.[461] Education offered knowledge for Indian students as well as an opportunity for "the inculcation of a lively sense of rights and duties of citizenship, both as individuals and as members of a powerful nation."[462] More than any subject studied by children in school, history offered opportunities toward national identity formation and emotional integration, the construction of knowledge for the needs of power resulting in a selective interpretation of the past based on the agenda of the nation-state.

This chapter analyzes publications centered on Indian history as well as historical scholarship sponsored by the MIB, exploring how history-writing in the 1950s and 1960s functioned as a facet of national identity construction in post-independence India. Congress frequently used the interpretation of history and drew from the past as the nationalist movement agitated for independence, as Indian history acted as a key point of differentiation from the British and functioned as a crucial component of national identity construction. Indian history, as interpreted by Indian nationalists of course, aided in the process of "imagining" a national community, the received and dictated historical

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[460] Ibid, 229.
[461] Nehru, *Letters to Chief Ministers*, Vol 5, 460.
[462] *Basic and Social Education,* 7.

narrative itself an invented tradition for building the concept of an Indian nation and eventually a nation-state.[463] After independence, this process expanded as the Government of India looked to replace colonial histories with Indian interpretations distributed by the MIB, the construction and creation of knowledge serving the needs of a bourgeoning nation-state. The state sponsored an elite-driven interpretation of Indian history, that of a "glorious Hindu past," disruption by "Western invasion" of Islam and Europeans, and a primordial nation rescued by Gandhi, Congress, and the nationalist movement. The Ministry repeated this teleological narrative after independence based on the goal of uniting the population, a historical trajectory that read history with an end in sight while also "othering" minorities, particularly Indian Muslims.

The creation and existence of a periodized, nationalized, understanding of Indian history that oversimplifies the past and does harm to minorities and voices from below is one of the most explored topics within Subaltern Studies and scholars following a postcolonial framework; however, the creation of a specific historical narrative in India is more often referenced or posed theoretically rather than explored in great detail or in practical terms.[464] Postcolonial scholars correctly demonstrate the continuation of colonial categories of knowledge and problematize the sense of a sharp break between

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[463] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, Hobsbawm and Ranger, *Invention of Tradition*.
[464] Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Spivak, eds., *Selected Subaltern Studies*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), Gyan Prakash, "Writing Post-Orientalist Histories of the Third World: Perspectives from Indian Historiography," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Volume 32, No. 2 (Apr 1990), 388, Cambridge University Press, Accessed Dec 5, 2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/178920, Dipesh Chakrabarty, "Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for Indian Pasts?" Representations, No. 37 (Winter, 1992), 1, University of California Press, Accessed Dec 5, 2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2928652, Carol A. Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer, eds., *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993).

colonialism and nationalism posited by nationalist discourse in the former colony.

However, they do not explain the "how and why" of history-writing as national identity

construction. Sylvie Guichard's *The Construction of History and Nationalism in India:*

Textbooks, Controversies and Politics (2010) examines the history textbooks produced in

the late 1960s and 1970s to contrast with the BJP produced textbooks of the late 1990s

and early 2000s and demonstrates how the interpretation of history is another

battleground between Congress and Hindu nationalism. Importantly, while her study

largely deals with the changes made to history books based on Hindu nationalist

ideology, she highlights the points of continuity between Congress and BJP texts and

conceptions of national ideology, as both parties imagine a united, homogenous nation

based on an upper caste, urban, and masculine worldview at the expense of India's

religious minorities, Dalits, women, and rural populations.[465] This interpretation of

history and the people and voices it excluded informed history books published by the

MIB immediately after independence, as the Ministry repeated the nationalist

interpretation of history through its publications in an effort to unite the population based

on an invented historical narrative.

This chapter discusses publications produced by the MIB, with emphasis on the

Builders of Modern India series titles produced from 1960 to 1965, as well as works from

scholars either sponsored or republished by the Ministry. Publications issued by the

Ministry retained the didactic mode, speaking for the past and dictating a nationalist

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[465] Sylvie Guichard, *The Construction of History and Nationalism in India: Textbooks, Controversies and Politics,* (London: Routledge, 2010), 124.

vision of history to the reader based on the desire for national unity amid a linguistically, religiously, and ethnically diverse country. The histories of this era were selective interpretations, the search for a "usable past"[466] to justify contemporary political goals such as non-alignment, religious tolerance, social reform, and planning and development. Furthermore, the production of national histories parallels a similar development in the West, as historians searched for an objective understanding of the past following the upheaval World War II, a "rational" approach to history providing a sense of stability and demonstrating "modernity" in the midst of the Cold War.[467]

Of course, there was opposition to state-promoted histories and nationalist interpretations by historians. In the volume *Problems of Historical Writing in India* (1963), the printed proceedings of a seminar held at the India International Centre in New Delhi, January 21st -23rd, 1963, historian Dr. L.B. Kenny of St. Xavier's College in Bombay commented that the nationalist movement, rather than rectifying colonial bias, created a new bias of national pride, noting, "state interference is not an insignificant problem of historical writing."[468] Kenny argued that "History should not be used as propaganda even in the best of causes;" he would no doubt vilify the efforts of the

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[466] The term "usable past" was first coined by cultural critic and literary scholar Van Wyck Brooks in 1918 and is used frequently within scholarship to refer to the use of history (often a selective interpretation of the past) by nationalist leaders to justify their political ideology or contemporary policy. See Van Wyck Brooks, "On Creating a Usable Past," *The Dial*, Volume 64, No. 11 (Apr 11, 1918), 337-341, Accessed Feb 8, 2024, https://courseworks2.columbia.edu/courses/59146/files/3125756/preview?verifier=iva4nRd5yucyTzMIsS ML5mtB23Vf3mjv9UpPqgie.

[467] Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The 'Objectivity Question' and the American Historical Profession*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

[468] L.B. Kenny, "Problems of Historical Writing in India with Reference to the History of the Deccan," in *Problems of Historical Writing in India: Proceedings of the Seminar Held at The India International Centre, New Delhi 21st-23rd January 1963*, (New Delhi: India International Centre, 1963), 28.

MIB.[469] Professor R.I. Crane of Duke University criticized the preoccupation with all India nationalism and Congress, maintaining that the limited use of English-language sources resulted in an overemphasis on a Western-educated elite, a problem that plagues Indian history-writing into the twenty-first century.[470] Professor Jack Gallagher of Oxford University wholly condemned Indian nationalist history-writing, claiming, "In terms of power and change combined, nationalism appears as the continuation of imperialism by other means."[471] These points as well as calls for shifting away from great-man narratives and chronicle accounts, however, did not alter the MIB's publication of history narratives derived from elite understandings of Indian history. History-writing of the 1950s and early 1960s was national identity construction, presenting history in a specific manner and emphasizing particular figures, themes, and eras based on the need for cultivating national unity. At the same time, these history publications endorsed a timeless, cultural unity connected to Hinduism, echoing the claims of contemporary Hindu nationalists, while also presenting "the builders of modern India" as fulfilling their *dharma* through dispassionate service to the nation-state to promote national unity to the largest subsection of the Indian population.

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[469] Ibid, 26.

[470] R.I. Crane, "Problems of Writing Indian History: The Case of Studies of Indian Nationalism," in *Problems of Historical Writing in India: Proceedings of the Seminar Held at The India International Centre, New Delhi 21st-23rd January 1963*, (New Delhi: India International Centre, 1963), 36.

[471] Jack Gallagher, "Imperialism and Nationalism in Modern Indian History," in *Problems of Historical Writing in India: Proceedings of the Seminar Held at The India International Centre, New Delhi 21st-23rd January 1963*, (New Delhi: India International Centre, 1963), 56.

"An Unbroken Chain of Mental Attitudes and Ethical Drives:" MIB History

Publications and Hindu Cultural Unity

History-writing, replacing colonial volumes with those written by Indian scholars, was a process of national importance following independence. As early as 1949, the Government of India began the process of creating a "history of the freedom movement," establishing a committee (of which Minister for Information and Broadcasting R.R. Diwakar was a member) to supervise the publication of volume and the content within it.[472] The Government of India believed that historical education was essential for all citizens in a democratic republic, echoing Nehru's belief that history fostered unity and emotional integration to the nation-state.[473] Dr. Tara Chand's (former vice chancellor at Allahabad University and former Chairman of the Planning Committee for this project) *History of the Freedom Movement* was a four-part volume planned since independence released from 1961 to 1972, with Volume One (1961) falling within the parameters of this dissertation. The very first meeting of the Indian Historical Records Commission passed a resolution calling for "an authentic and comprehensive history of the different phases of the Indian struggle for independence," due to the need for "an objective and impartial account of the freedom movement."[474] Moreover, the commission believed that the way India lost and regained its freedom made the country's historical narrative

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[472] "History of the Freedom Movement in India-Compilation—Establishment of a Committee to Examine Details," 1949, PR_000000000594, File No.: 92-20/49 A2, Digitized Public Records, National Archives of India Abhilekh Patal, Accessed Nov 6, 2022, https://www.abhilekh-patal.in/jspui/handle/123456789/1171?searchWord=r.r.&backquery=[query=%22r.r.+diwakar%22&origina lquery=&sort_by=dc.date.accessioned_dt&order=desc&rpp=20&etal=0&start=80.

[473] Tara Chand, *History of the Freedom Movement,* Vol One, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1961), vi.

[474] Ibid, viii.

significant for the domestic audience as well as a global example.[475] The book begins

with a foreword by Humayun Kabir (Bengali MP and Minister of Education in 1963),

who insisted that India suffered humiliation and defeat because the country and its people

had not learned that strength lies in the spread of national feeling in all strata of society

nor kept up with the development of science and technology.[476] The attainment of

freedom in India, Chand argued, represented the transformation of a civilization into a

nationality, the nation-state the rectification of historical disunity and working in the

pursuit of modernity and progress.[477]

The first volume centers on the social, political, cultural, and economic conditions

in eighteenth-century India against the background of the historical process that shaped

the lives of the Indian people.[478] At the same time, Chand (a historian of antiquity and

archaeologist by training) explained the historical experience of the states of Western

Europe, contrasting what happened in the West with what "failed" to happen in the

subcontinent.[479] The series follows a dialectic pattern (though Chand was not explicitly a

Marxist historian), establishing the "thesis" of British rule in India followed by an

"antithesis" in the nationalist movement culminating in a "synthesis" of the nation-state,

reproducing the nationalist teleology and writing history with an end in sight. *History of

the Freedom Movement* is a work of history published within a specific context,

distributed by the MIB as part of post-independence national identity construction with

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[475] Ibid, vi.
[476] Ibid, ix.
[477] Ibid, xii.
[478] Ibid, x.
[479] Ibid.

the goal of cultivating national unity. Chand's work depicts the developments that led to the freedom movement, illustrating a decay of Indian society into "backwardness" while at the same time equating Indian identity with a culture established prior to the arrival of Islam.

Chand began his work with a discussion of Mughal India and early modern Europe, contending that though Mughal conquest brought many political and cultural changes to India, particularly language, literature, art, and architecture, the foundation and structure of "her old culture" remained intact.[480] To accentuate the presence and power of India's "old culture," Chand noted that the Kushans, a Eurasian empire that arrived in the subcontinent by the first century AD "became completely Indianized," adopting the local culture as their own.[481] Furthermore, he claimed that the Indian socio-economic base prior to the establishment of British rule could be traced back to the first Aryan settlements.[482] At the onset of his work, Chand portrayed India as a timeless nation with an essential unity, one that was established early in the nation-state's history and, because of the existing nationalist conception of history, assumed to be grounded in Hinduism and Indian religion. Moreover, he highlighted an India that subsumed rather than assimilated "diverse elements," incorporating the foreign Kushan Empire within the preexisting structure. Despite the presence of a primordial sense of identity, Chand asserted that India lacked a "state consciousness" under Mughal rule, whereas mercantilism, the Renaissance, and the Reformation in Europe established the economic

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[480] Ibid, 2.
[481] Ibid, 1.
[482] Ibid, 3.

foundations of national unity. In Europe, the formation of national languages and cultures along with national churches and institutions, resulting in cohesiveness and strength.[483] In contrast, India had "lost its dynamism" by the eighteenth century and became a country "whose virtue had failed her," proceeding precipitously toward the loss of independence.[484]

This process began, according to Chand, after the reign of Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb, continuing the Congress and MIB pattern of lambasting the "Muslim" Mughal. While Nehru and Congress cited Mughal Emperor Akbar's religious tolerance as a "usable past" for the nation-state's "secular" identity in contrast with Aurangzeb's "communal outlook," an elite Hindu understanding of the meaning of religious tolerance informed the celebration of the former and demonization of the latter. Because Akbar tolerated Hindus, he was a proper "Indian" ruler readily accepted by Congress and the Hindu elite, whereas Aurangzeb remained "Muslim" due to his religious persecution. Chand insisted that the decline of the Mughal structure due to Aurangzeb, one built on the timeless Indian culture and socio-economic base, resulted in moral decay throughout the subcontinent and the loss of Indian freedom.[485] While Chand's argument nominally supports Congress' promotion of secularism in the post-independence era, it is one informed by an upper caste, upper class, Hindu understanding of the past that labels both "Europeans" and "Muslims" as outsiders to an established Indian identity rooted in Hindu religion and culture.

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[483] Ibid, 36.
[484] Ibid, 38.
[485] Ibid.

Chand described India of the late eighteenth century as "a perfect illustration of the Hobbesian state of nature," a zone of conflict, corruption, and political intrigue that would put Machiavelli to shame.[486] Wars and infighting, especially the civil wars of the 1750s, caused the destruction of temples, priests, and *sadhus* (religious ascetics in Hindu and Jain tradition) being put to the sword, Chand highlighting Indian decay through the desecration of religious structures and violence toward holy men.[487] Indian morals, education, art, architecture, literature, and intellectual thought all declined following Aurangzeb and Maratha Emperor Shivaji, according to Chand, with the Battle of Plassey (1757) exposing all Indian weakness, accentuating ugly traits of character, and instigating self-assertion among the members of the conquering race.[488] His discussion of Shivaji, as with that of Aurangzeb, takes on a religious dimension based on an upper caste, upper class, Hindu reading of the past. Chand maintained that a Maratha victory at the Third Battle of Panipat (1761) likely would not have deterred British rule, as the Maratha Empire was "showing unmistakable signs of cracking," yet he bemoans the Marathas signing for British protection, stating, "Thus vanished Shivaji's dream of *Hindu Pad Padshahi* (rule by a Hindu monarchy)."[489] While at face value, the counterfactual conception of Maratha rule is an imagining of the subcontinent ruled by an Indian dynasty Shivaji, Chand's specific use of the term *Hindu Pad Padshahi* is a reference to language of Hindu nationalist and Hindu Mahasabha member V.D. Savarkar, the man who labeled Hindus as a national population, coined the term "Hindutva," and conceived

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[486] Ibid, 45.
[487] Ibid, 50.
[488] Ibid, 235.
[489] Ibid, 59.

of India as a Hindu nation, in his history of the Maratha Empire.[490] Though Congress

leaders defined their party as non-communal compared to the Hindu Mahasabha, RSS,

and broader Sangh Parivar, the MIB's distribution (and therefore approval) of historical

scholarship echoing that of Hindu nationalism reveals the overlaps between the

supposedly binary opposites. A religious background and an elite worldview influenced

Chand's interpretation of Indian history, as religious biases informed his portrayal of the

"Muslim" Aurangzeb and his Hindu counterpart Shivaji.

Chand continued his work by stating that the loss of freedom led Indians to

develop all of the vices and moral defects of servitude, a process compounded by the

British sense that, "It was felt necessary to reduce Indians to a position of utter

helplessness and root out all germs of ambitions from their minds."[491] British rule was

the first time conquest affected the social fabric and "old culture" of India, changing the

system of administration, property relations, and economic structure, creating a new class

structure of exploiter and exploited.[492] However, further indicating a Marxist analysis of

Indian history, Chand noted that the new economic system created an Indian middle class

for the first time, the "better class of Indians" that eventually used Western education to

create Congress and agitate for independence.[493] Moreover, the "freedom movement"

(explained in the subsequent volumes of this series) tapped into the "culture of common

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[490] V.D. Savarkar, *Hindu Pad Padshahi or A Review of the Hindu Empire of Maharashtra*, (Madras: B.G. Paul and Co., 1925); V.D. Savarkar, *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?* (Bombay: Veer Savarkar Prakashan, 1923).
[491] Chand, *History of the Freedom Movement*, 257.
[492] Ibid, 296.
[493] The concept of "the better class of Indians" refers to T.B. Macaulay's argument in his *Minute on English Education* that bringing and implementing Western education would "civilize" the Indian population.

ways and attitudes" that permeated throughout the subcontinent.[494] Though India never

developed into "a single social organism," Chand explained that India possessed "an

unbroken chain of mental attitudes and ethical drives" dating back to the Upanishads and

that all of India in some way shape or form linked back to the Aryans, as religious

beliefs, practices, and social systems of all the regions of India bore undisputed marks of

Aryan influence.[495] Not only is Chand portraying India as a primordial nation with a

common past and essential unity, he describes this unity as fundamentally based on

Hindu)religiosity. Islam, a religious faith not linked to this Aryan past, influenced the

culture but not the socio-economic structure of India. As such, Chand presented this

"other" religion as one outside of as well as subsumed by the established Indian

culture.[496] Furthermore, Chand included an observation from Mughal Emperor Babar

about the presence of "a Hindustani way" throughout the Middle Ages, again

highlighting a preexisting culture prior to Mughal arrival as well as separating the

"Muslim conqueror" from this established Indian identity.[497] India, according to Chand,

possessed a fundamental unity throughout its history, echoing the argument made by

Getrude Emerson Sen of a timeless, cultural unity built from India's religious traditions.

At the same time, he contended that "the Hindu genius took a particular delight in its own

social atomization," with the village and caste system offering "unyielding resistance to

unification."[498] A lack of unity and moral decay in the eighteenth century led to Indian

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[494] Chand, *History of the Freedom Movement*, 68.
[495] Ibid, 73.
[496] Ibid, 75.
[497] Ibid.
[498] Ibid, 81.

weakness and foreign rule, a devolution overcome by the nationalist movement, the achievement of independence fulfilling the nationalist teleology (the government's motivation for commission a multi-volume series on this subject). *The History of the Freedom Movement* aimed for an inspirational interpretation of history, one that fostered national unity and loyalty to the nation-state. At the same time, as with the broader corpus of MIB publications, Chand highlighted Hinduism as the bedrock of India's cultural unity despite Congress' official commitment to secularism.

A few months after the publication of *History of the Freedom Movement*, the MIB published a transcript of lectures delivered by Tara Chand in 1960 centered on Mughal India. As part of the Sardar Patel Memorial Lecture series that began in 1955, *Society and State in the Mughal Period* (1961) offers a prologue to Chand's discussion in *History of the Freedom Movement*, the former depicting the Mughal era as a "golden age" compared to the decay and disarray of eighteenth-century India. The stated theme of Chand's lectures was "unity in diversity," the Congress mantra of acceptance toward all "diverse elements" in the Indian subcontinent as well as confirming that MIB publications centered around building a sense of national unity. In his first lecture on the Mughals, he declared Emperor Akbar "one of the greatest kings the world has ever known" while deeming Aurangzeb, "who waded to the throne through the blood of his brothers, was a man of a very different stamp," a capable and learned man who "lacked a human touch."[499] Chand argued that Akbar's religious tolerance brought stability and unity to

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[499] Tara Chand, *Society and State in the Mughal Period*, (Faridabad: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division), 19.

the Mughal Empire, a polity of many diverse languages, religions, and ethnicities, and thus served as a precedent and historical example of the Congress ideology and interpretation of secularism. In contrast, Chand maintained, Aurangzeb re-established the *jizya* tax on non-believers and promoted a conservative Islam, provoking revolt and disunity across the subcontinent that allowed Europeans to come to power in India. Mughal India prior to Aurangzeb, according to Chand, was "a golden India" of wealth and prosperity, the binary opposite of eighteenth-century India that required resuscitation from "the freedom movement."[500] While the differing Mughals offered a "usable past" for Nehru and Congress' platform of secularism, it is again important to note that Akbar was so readily appropriated by the party due to his tolerance of Hindus. Akbar was an effective, "Indianized" ruler compared to "Muslim" Aurangzeb, a binary conception informed by an upper class, upper caste, Hindu reading of the past.

As in *History of the Freedom Movement*, Chand contended in his second lecture that even though India it failed to develop a state consciousness prior to European arrival,

> In their attitudes of mind, culture, social ways and economic institutions, the Indian people possessed fundamental attributes of unity almost as ample as any in the contemporary world. Thus it happened that whenever a man gifted with qualities of leadership arose and drew the people together, the vast aberrant energies of India became converged into a focus like the scattered rays of the sun through a crystalline sphere, and kindled a glow of refulgence which bathed the land in dazzling brilliance. Such were Asoka Maurya, Chandragupta Vikramaditya, and Akbar the Great.[501]

Moreover, Chand imagined these "fundamental attributes of unity" as rooted in an established Hindu culture, in line with MIB publications and their respective contributors.

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[500] Ibid, 22.
[501] Ibid, 40.

Religion, he insisted, was the preserver of the cultural values of a people and most clearly

indicated the character of their culture, with Hinduism therefore the foundation of Indian

culture, identity, and unity.[502] The Muslim Mughals brought with them an entirely

different religion, culture, and system of society, "But their stay in India gradually

brought them almost unconsciously under the sway of Indian ideals and ways of

living."[503] Not only does Chand demarcate "Indian ideals" from Islam, he also presented

assimilation as Indianization, the outside religion and identity subsumed by the

established, dominant culture in the subcontinent. He went even further in the third

lecture, explaining,

> In India there was a continuity of cultural change which was brought about by
> internal developments like the spread of Jainism and Buddhism, the rise to power
> of the Mauryas, the Guptas and the Rajput clans, the teachings of the great
> Acharyas like Sankara and Ramanuja. But external impacts too exercised
> influences on society and culture; for example, the Iranian contact, the invasion of
> the Greeks, and later the rule of the Muslims. But none of these affected the basic
> principles of Indian culture. So that through the long vista of change spread over
> three thousand years, it is possible to trace the fundamental identity of Indian
> culture. The reason appears to be that whatever was received from abroad was
> assimilated by India to her own genius. Where it failed to do so completely—as in
> the case of Islam—its failure was only partial, as there was rapprochement in the
> number of cultural features, and, in some, complete fusion.[504]

Though the end of this quotation supports the notion of a hybrid synthesis between

Hinduism and Islam, it is immediately preceded by a history of Hinduism that

incorporates internal and external cultural developments "within her own genius."

Moreover, the fact that a Hindu-dominated Indian culture failed to wholly absorb Islam

lends support to the argument that this faith and those who practice it remain "others"

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[502] Ibid, 78.
[503] Ibid, 45.
[504] Ibid, 76.

within the Indian "imagined community," the lip service paid to inclusion ironically

highlighting exclusion. Unlike the British Empire, which established its own

administrative and economic structures that brought inequality and exploitation to the

subcontinent, the Mughal era prior to Aurangzeb represented a "golden India" for its

acceptance of the established cultural foundations. Village life in Mughal India, Chand

maintained, was idyllic and free from strife, so much so that India did not properly

develop scientists due to a lack of problems to solve.[505] Furthermore, the Mughals

fostered the development of art, architecture, Indian languages, and the production of

industrial goods, all of which were lost by the eighteenth century.[506] The end of Mughal

power marked Indian disarray, moral decay, and foreign rule, a dark age only overcome

by the freedom movement and the achievement of independence. Though Chand devoted

his lectures to the "unity in diversity" thesis and celebrated the good Mughals for their

inclusiveness, his vision of tolerance is one informed by an upper class, upper caste,

Hindu worldview that influenced the entirety of MIB publications in the immediate post-

independence era. Nehru, Congress, Chand, and the Ministry celebrated the Mughals as

a "usable past" because they contributed to Indian heritage without disrupting the

established Hindu culture, the Government of India imagining cultural unity as one built

on religion rather than separate from it.

The MIB used history as a tool of national identity construction, the imagining of

the community, the invention of tradition, and emotional integration to the nation-state,

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[505] Ibid, 48.
[506] Ibid, 55.

through the distribution of historical scholarship for adults, but also focused on historical interpretation for children to impart civic values and formulate a sense of national unity. The Ministry's *Children's History of India* (1960) represents an attempt to instill a sense of historical pride among Indian children, emphasizing the importance of unity and portraying India on a teleological path to progress as well as a nation fundamentally Hindu in character. In line with Nehru's belief that the country lacked good history books, especially for children, the MIB published this history text with the intended aim to stimulate interest in India's history rather than presenting a comprehensive survey of facts.[507] In similar fashion to the Hindu nationalist history textbooks produced in the late 1990s, Congress and the MIB in the 1960s believed that history should inspire Indian children to be good citizens; it did not necessarily have to be true.[508] India possessed an ancient heritage for children to be proud of, as Indian children needed to learn from the lessons of the past in order to look forward and become proper and productive citizens in the nation-state. The resulting children's history book is a recapitulation of Indian history based on an elite, Hindu-biased interpretation that periodizes the historical narrative. Exemplifying this, the Ministry divided the book into sections separated by black stars that correlate with the pre-Muslim "glorious past," "Western invasion" and foreign rule, and the triumph of the nationalist movement. India, per the Ministry, was a rainbow nation, a combination of many religions, ethnicities, and races, a view that repeated the Congress mantra of "unity in diversity" for a younger audience.[509] While the book

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[507] *Children's History of India*, (Faridabad: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1960), v.
[508] Guichard, *Construction of History and Nationalism in India*.
[509] *Children's History*, 1.

highlights historical examples of unity as instances of Indian strength, the MIB ties

Indian identity to Hinduism first and foremost, "othering" Muslims and Europeans from a

pre-established Indian identity rooted in religion. Echoing the scholarship of Chand and

other publications intended for the domestic audience, the Ministry underscored

Hinduism as the bedrock of a timeless Indian cultural unity.

Children's History of India stresses the importance of Indian unity for national

strength as well as the magnitude of Hindu contributions for creating a distinct Indian

culture, contradicting the self-proclaimed secular identity of the Indian nation. The MIB

informed the young reader that the people of Mohenjo-Daro, one of the Indus River

Valley Civilizations, prayed to a divine mother "and a god very much like Siva."[510] In

this manner the Ministry projected Hinduism back to the earliest civilizations in Indian

history to emphasize the religion as a fundamental component of a timeless Indian

identity. The MIB highlighted the "greatness and happiness" in India's past, highlighting

the Guptas in particular as the golden age of art and culture, thereby equating the zenith

of Indian cultural development with the era known as the "golden age of Hinduism.[511]

The book celebrates the Maurya, Gupta, and Harsha empires for their accomplishments

and contributions to the heritage of India, but importantly underscores that these polities

succeeded because of their unity. India "became one great country" under strong rulers

like Chandragupta Maurya, his grandson Ashoka Maurya, and Akbar, but declined and

fragmented during instances of weak rule and infighting.[512] The caste system, one of the

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[510] Ibid, 5.
[511] Ibid, 30.
[512] Ibid, 9.

oft-cited "fissiparous tendencies" of India, was "a bad thing," as caste and untouchability

"prevented the people of India from becoming united even in times of danger," an

assessment that correlated with that of Tara Chand.[513] Great and wise leaders such as

Buddha and Akbar did not see caste, according to the MIB, figures that Congress cited as

historical precedence to abolish the caste system in post-independence India. Historical

unity led to historical strength, the Ministry drawing from a "usable past" to cultivate

unity and emotional integration among Indian primary school children. Division, by

contrast, made India vulnerable, particularly "to an attack from the outside."[514]

While praising strong rulers for fostering unity in the subcontinent, the MIB's

depiction of history predicates Hinduism as a foundational aspect of Indian culture and

national identity rather than being on equal ground with Islam, Buddhism, Jainism,

Sikhism, and Christianity. The book commends Shankaracharya for once again making

Hinduism "the most important religion in India," presenting the displacement of

Buddhism as a net positive despite the acceptance of Buddhists as "natural Indians"

within an upper caste, upper class, Hindu definition of Indian identity.[515] Moreover, the

MIB condemned numerous Muslim invaders as unfit for governing India. Mahmud of

Ghazni simply wanted to loot Hindu temples, the Ministry explained, while Alauddin

Khalji could barely read or write.[516] The good Muslim rulers, per the Ministry's

interpretation of history, were those that embraced Indian culture or acted in a manner

that closely resembled Hindu customs. The book predictably celebrates Mughal rulers

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[513] Ibid.
[514] Ibid, 47.
[515] Ibid, 39.
[516] Ibid, 52.

Akbar and Jahangir, but also applauds Firoz Tughlak for embracing Sanskrit works and

Babar for "giving up attachments" before his death, in line with Hindu and Buddhist

axioms of detachment from the temporal world.[517] *Children's History of India* venerates

the achievements of "the good Mughals" as fundamental for the heritage of the Indian

subcontinent, as they contributed to Indian culture without overturning the established

customs rooted in Hinduism and indigenous religions. Nevertheless, it portrays Muslim

power as something in the past rather than granting agency to contemporary Indian

Muslims, a sense of internal threat and the specter of Pakistan influencing how the MIB

presented Muslim power. Exemplifying this, the Ministry highlighted the Maratha

Revolt against Aurangzeb as just resistance against religious intolerance, with Shivaji

deemed "one of the greatest sons of India" due to his resistance against the intolerant,

"Muslim" Mughal.[518] At the same time, the MIB cites the Maratha Revolt and the

resulting instability as the cause of British domination of the subcontinent, the disunity

throughout the subcontinent leading to "foreign attack" and ultimately rule by an

outsider. A lack of solidarity, by contrast, led to the collapse of ancient civilizations as

well as rule by a foreign power. The MIB stressed the importance of national unity, one

informed by an upper caste, upper class, Hindu worldview that simultaneously "othered"

Muslims, to its readership of children.

The book concludes with a triumphant account of the Indian nationalist

movement, devoting a longer discussion to Gandhi than any other person throughout the

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[517] Ibid, 62.
[518] Ibid, 79.

historical narrative. Years of neglect made India a poor, disjointed, and backward "slave nation;" Gandhi and the nationalist movement united a diverse population and made it appropriate for Indians to be proud of their history and their country.[519] The publication does not mention the Western influences on Gandhi's thought, and it explains that Gandhi conducted a hunger strike for greater rights for Dalits, emphasizing the benevolence of the Mahatma by illustrating his struggle against the caste system.[520] This depiction presents Gandhi as fighting for a caste-less society, but ignores another hunger strike in 1932 in protest *against* separate representation for Dalits to ensure their political rights. As with the ideology of Congress, the book touts a desire for a caste-less, class-less, egalitarian Indian society, with Nehru and the Indian nation teaching the lessons of Buddha and Gandhi to the world.[521] The MIB's account of Indian history in this book for children emphasizes unity as a facet of Indian strength, stressing the need for national integration in the present to ensure the survival and vitality of the Indian nation. Claiming "unity in diversity," this historical interpretation attempts to deemphasize the importance of religion or ethnic identity; one was an Indian first and a Hindu or Muslim second. Yet, the narrative within this text is an elite-driven teleological narrative imbued with biases toward the "greatness" of Hindu tradition and happiness of the Indian past prior to the arrival of Muslims and Europeans. Rather than a "rainbow nation," the reader comes away with the sense that Hinduism is crucially connected to Indian identity and that Islam is a foreign element, other than the "good Muslims" that confirmed or

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[519] Ibid, 115.
[520] Ibid, 134.
[521] Ibid, 146.

assimilated within an established Indian culture. Though political rivals today and posited as binary ideologies, Congress past and present as well as the contemporary BJP both propagate an elite-based interpretation of Indian history, with even the party nominally committed to secularism possessing a Hindu bias in their history publications.

H.R. Ghosal's *An Outline History of the Indian People* (1962) offers another general overview of history, confirming an elite nationalist teleology of history as preceding MIB publications and scholarship disseminated by the Ministry. Prepared in 1957 as part of a prize competition offered by the Ministry of Education, "It [was] meant for the general reader who wishes to have in as concise a form as possible a background of Indian history, rather than for the scholar, for whom there is no dearth of advanced studies on the subject."[522] While covering the chronology of Indian history, Ghosal's work is unique in the fact that he devotes sections in every chapter to the caste system and the status of women in society. Ghosal used this secondary narrative to illustrate India's devolution from the country's "glorious past" and portray the nation-state as a restoration of glory and the end of history. As with *History of the Freedom Movement* and *Children's History of India*, this book was a state-approved narrative of Indian history, one meant to provide information but also depict a "usable past" to inspire the reader as well as justify the policies and ideology of the government. At the same time, it takes on a Hindu tenor. Ghosal celebrated the ancient past and attempted to illustrate commonalities and synthesis between Hindus and Muslims, but nevertheless presenting

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[522] H.R. Ghosal, *An Outline History of the Indian People*, (Faridabad: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1962), 3.

the latter as an outsider throughout Indian history. The historical scholarship within the purview of the MIB, even a submission from an outsider rather than commissioned or produced by the government, adhered to a nationalist periodization of Indian history.

Ghosal's work begins with a discussion of the Indus River Valley Civilizations and the Aryans, highlighting the advanced baths and wells of the former to underscore the notion of ancient Indian greatness as well as to combat stereotypes of backwardness and poor hygiene. Furthermore, Ghosal connected this "ancient genius" with Hinduism, explaining that Siva worship, particularly in the phallic form of the *lingam*, derived from non-Aryan traditions.[523] Neglecting any support or negation of the controversial Aryan Invasion Theory, one that South Indians cited as proof of "northern imperialism,"[524] Ghosal stated that it was unclear whether the Indus River Valley Civilizations were Aryans or non-Aryans, essentializing all of these populations as "Indians" with Hinduism as their fundamental connection.[525] Though noting that Aryan society was patriarchal, Ghosal contended that women were allowed to attend meetings of the *sabha*, one of the semi-political organizations of the time.[526] Moreover, "Polygamy was not unknown but rare, while polyandry was non-existent. Child marriage was the exception rather than the rule, and there was no bar to widow remarriage."[527] With the development of Vedic society after 1000 BC, Ghosal describes caste as a water-tight division of four varnas while noting that polygamy became common among warrior class, with marriage of girls

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[523] Ibid, 13.
[524] Trautman, "Inventing the History of South India."
[525] Ghosal, *Outline History*, 9.
[526] Ibid, 13.
[527] Ibid.

before puberty no longer disapproved.[528] Throughout Ghosal's narrative, the rights of

women decline while the caste system becomes more rigid, a devolution from the

beginnings of Indian history and Hindu tradition presented in such a way as to tout the

nation-state as the benevolent paternal rescuer of these groups from the vicissitudes of

history, a selective interpretation of the past serving the needs of power in the present.

Ghosal then moves to the period from 600 to 300 BC, a period "characterized by

the gradual absorption, chiefly through conquest, of numerous independent kingdoms and

principalities, resulting in the creation of a more or less united India,"[529] another example

of the projection of the nation-state back in time while also stressing unity as a facet of

national strength. Moreover, Ghosal maintained that India's dominant role during this

period was the assimilation of heterogeneous peoples, some of whom came as political

conquerors from outside.[530] While at face value this statement supports an inclusive

India "united in its diversity," the MIB imagined assimilation of heterogeneous

populations as Indianization throughout its corpus of publications, subsuming "diverse

elements" within an established culture grounded in Hindu religion rather than full

acceptance. Ghosal celebrated the achievements of Chandragupta Maurya and Ashoka,

portraying both Maurya emperors specifically to draw parallels to the present.

Chandragupta, according to Ghosal, had been in the camp of Alexander the Great, and he

freed India from the Yavana (Greek) yoke based on what he learned from this experience

and united the country under his scepter, a similar narrative to the experience of many

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[528] Ibid, 17.
[529] Ibid, 20.
[530] Ibid.

Congress leaders using Western contact and education to resist and eventually oust the British and achieve independence.[531] While Chandragupta enhanced the prestige of his fatherland by his exertion, Ashoka strove to elevate humanity by his example, governing and guiding his empire based on the principles of *dharma* and *ahimsa* (nonviolence) just as the MIB invoked *dharma* in their publications and Nehru followed "the pursuit of peace."[532] Ashoka's Buddhist faith did not preclude his lionization, as both Congress and Hindu nationalists conceived of Buddhists as "natural Indians" due to religion's origins in the subcontinent, an overlap between the diametrically opposed sides based on an upper class, upper caste, Hindu reading of history. Buddhism provided post-independence India with "a heritage of lore," a set of traditions accepted as inherently "Indian" that placated the Hindu majority while also not upsetting the Muslim minority. Furthermore, Ghosal declares the Maurya Empire as "the first great welfare state," the empire serving as a historical precedent for contemporary efforts toward social uplift.[533] During the Maurya era, the education of girls flourished and the empire allowed divorce and remarriage, yet Ghosal notes that polygamy was common, the average age of marriage continued to decline, and Indians practiced *sati*. As with his account of ancient Indian history, Ghosal's reading of Maurya history created a "usable past" for the MIB to promote and disseminate to Indian citizens, locating contemporary politics and ideology within historical precedence. Moreover, this vision of the past was one informed by

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[531] Ibid, 21.
[532] Ibid, 22.
[533] Ibid, 23.

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religion rather than divorced from it, Ghosal tying India's cultural identity with the religions that developed prior to the arrival of Islam.

Ghosal characterized the years from 200 to 700 AD as "the full blossoming of the creative genius of India," a period of numerous Hindu kingdoms and empires (most notably the Gupta Empire) several centuries before the arrival of "Muslim invaders."[534] This period, per Ghosal, was an age of thinkers, artists, and scientists, while the standard of living throughout the subcontinent was high due to the influx of gold, silver, and cowrie from the Arab world. The year 712 AD, however, marked "the first Islamic penetration of India," with invasion leading to Arab rule in Sind (a region in the southeast of contemporary Pakistan).[535] As previously argued by Chand in *History of the Freedom Movement* and the Ministry's *Children's History of India*, Ghosal blamed a lack of unity as the reason for Muslim invasions, as a divided India naturally invited aggressors from the outside.[536] As various Muslim polities invaded northern India, the South, "untouched by all this harassment," flourished and contributed greatly to the culture of India.[537] While invasion and warfare no doubt hamper the "blossoming of culture," within a nationalist framing of the Indian past Ghosal's account implies that Muslim invasion harmed the development of "Indian culture" that continued to thrive in the South, equating "Indian culture" with "Hindu culture" and characterizing Islam as an outsider in the subcontinent. This line of thinking perpetuated the pattern established in MIB publications on Indian temples and the publication *Contributions of the South to the*

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[534] Ibid, 34.
[535] Ibid, 42.
[536] Ibid, 44.
[537] Ibid.

Heritage of India, casting South India as the preserver of a Hindu predicated Indian culture due to its isolation from "invasion." Though the next chapter of Ghosal's work, by contrast, attempts to demonstrate the formation of a synthesis between Hindus and Muslims, it proves less convincing when juxtaposed with the "invasion" chapter. The upheaval in the North made caste increasingly rigid and India more inward looking, according to Ghosal, yet women were still well-educated and took part in public life. While caste was a feature of Hinduism rather than Islam, Ghosal nevertheless blamed the intensification on the disorder cause by "Muslim invasion." As with *Children's History of India*, the arrival of Islam in India is presented as a new period in Indian history, the appearance of the "other" in the primordial Indian nation, challenging the notion that Congress accepted all religious faiths and communities equally.

In similar fashion to Chand and the MIB's *Children's History*, Ghosal described the reign of Emperor Akbar as a triumph. "His long reign [1556-1605]," Ghosal explained, "is memorable not simply for the political integration of the greater part of the country but for the fact that he was able to convert an alien kingdom into something like a national empire," the author celebrating a historical example of unity based on the contemporary goal of forging national integration while also declaring the Mughal Empire a precedent for the nation-state.[538] Not only did Akbar unite India territorially, according to Ghosal, he united India's heart and soul under his scepter, achieving the emotional integration Congress sought in the post-independence era.[539] Aurangzeb, by

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[538] Ibid, 65.
[539] Ibid.

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contrast, though possessing many good qualities such as solicitude for the peasantry, a private life free from vice, and piety, "thought in terms of an Islamic state and felt it was his duty to wage *jihad* against unbelievers."[540] Ghosal perpetuated a binary between Akbar and Aurangzeb, one that parallels the contrast between "secular India" and "Islamic Pakistan," yet at the same time celebrated the ruler that tolerated Hindus specifically as an "Indian" and lambasted the emperor that did not as a "Muslim."[541] At the same time, he labeled Maratha Emperor Shivaji "a constructive genius of a very high order," a man that freed his people from their awe of the mighty Mughals, infusing a new spirit in them by establishing an independent Hindu kingdom.[542] Ghosal considered the creation of an independent Hindu polity in the face of great and almost continuous opposition a major achievement.[543] Despite touting the reign of Akbar for uniting the Mughal Empire through religious tolerance, Ghosal viewed Shivaji's Hindu kingdom and resistance to "Muslim Aurangzeb" with similar admiration, yet again revealing the significant overlap between Congress and Hindu nationalist interpretations of history. While the arts flourished under Mughal rule, Ghosal contends that the status of women suffered greatly, as they were neglected by their polygamous husbands, child marriage was a standing evil, and sati was prevalent in Hindu society.[544] As India deviated further from its Hindu "glorious past," the status of women declined and societal vices became more persistent, the moral decay of the subcontinent leading to disunity and foreign rule.

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[540] Ibid, 69.
[541] Ibid.
[542] Ibid, 71.
[543] Ibid.
[544] Ibid, 74.

The eighteenth century marked the displacement of the Mughals by the British East India Company, resulting in the economic decline of the country. Ghosal characterized the eighteenth century as "struggling under a crushing load of unreason. Child marriage, polygamy, sati, female infanticide, human sacrifices, and the extreme rigidity of caste rules were some of the worst abused of the time."[545] Just as Chand depicted in *History of the Freedom Movement,* disunity and moral decay within the Indian subcontinent led to subjugation under foreign rule, underscoring the need for national unity in the present. Contact with the British, however, led to a return of education for girls along with renewed interest in Indian history and culture due to Orientalist scholarship. Having reached the nadir of the elite nationalist periodization of Indian history, the remainder of the book discusses the rise of the Indian nationalist movement, the beginnings of political agitation in the nineteenth century and the formation of Congress, and the eventual transition into a mass movement and the achievement of independence. Interestingly, Ghosal does not mention Jinnah at all in his book and largely discusses Partition and Pakistan as an inevitability of a hasty British exit after decades of "divide and rule." Furthermore, he noted that Gandhi "was shot by a fanatic" but does not name the assassin Nathuram Godse nor the RSS,[546] either signifying an attempt to ignore communalism in any form for its "fissiparous tendencies" or a reflection of the view among Hindu traditionalists that the RSS was a cultural organization rather than a political one.

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[545] Ibid, 91.
[546] Ibid, 129.

Covering the entirety of Indian history from ancient civilizations to independence and the establishment of the republic, Ghosal's *An Outline History of the Indian People* reiterated the importance of unity as a component of Indian strength in the past and therefore a necessity in the present. At the same time, his book repeated the nationalist periodization of history, with independence serving as a culmination and an "end of history." "Culturally," according to Ghosal, "the country has been an integrated unit during the last three thousand years or more, in spite of manifold diversity," with independence an expression of political unity formulated under foreign rule.[547] Like Tara Chand and preceding MIB publications, Ghosal envisioned a timeless, cultural integration within India, a form of unity tied to India's religious customs and traditions. Ghosal's specific phrasing of unity "in spite of manifold diversity" rather than the Congress mantra of "unity *in* diversity" reveals a less accepting view of "diverse elements" as part of the nation-state. Ghosal continued,

> The liberation of India from political thralldom and from the bondage of outdated social conventions, and her efforts to make the good life possible for all her people should enable her to live up to her spiritual tradition in a more positive manner. This tradition, as revealed by her architecture and sculpture, music and literature, consists primarily in detachment, tolerance, ability to assimilate, and innate respect for the spiritual above the material. These characteristics have prevailed throughout the long course of India's history, and it is by actively endeavoring to sustain this tradition that India can rise again to her full stature.[548]

Underpinning all Indian culture, according to Ghosal, was an innate respect for the spiritual that prevailed throughout the course of history. He imagined this timeless spiritual culture as one based on Hinduism, guiding the Indian nation-state throughout its

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[547] Ibid, 138.
[548] Ibid, 139.

past and into the future. Rather than a secular state divorced from religion or governing

all faiths entirely, Ghosal's "outline history" connects Indian history to Hinduism

beginning with the Indus River Valley Civilizations into the post-independence era. Like

the previous works of history-writing distributed by the MIB, his interpretation of history

works to foster national unity while also problematizing the notion of an India committed

to secularism due to its emphasis on Hinduism as the bedrock of Indian cultural unity,

past and present.

The *Builders of Modern India* Series

The MIB issued the *Builders of Modern India* series beginning in 1960 as part of

its efforts to produce history publications to cultivate emotional integration to the nation-

state. From an introduction to every volume in the series by Minister for Information and

Broadcasting B.V. Keskar, "The object of the Series is the publication of biographies of

those eminent sons and daughters of India who have been mainly instrumental in our

national renaissance and the struggle for independence"[549] Due to the lack of

authoritative biographies, specifically by non-British authors, Keskar and the

Government of India viewed it essential for present and coming generations to know

about the great figures from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the series

providing "handy volumes containing simple and short biographies of our eminent

leaders written by competent persons who know their subject well."[550] Under the general

editorship of former Minister for Information and Broadcasting R.R. Diwakar, the books

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[549] R.P. Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji*, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1960), iii.
[550] Ibid.

in the series were written by historians but sponsored and approved by the MIB; they are government histories produced for political purposes. Typically ranging between 200 and 300 pages, these cheap publications were not intended to either be comprehensive studies or replace more elaborate biographies.[551] The Ministry aimed for accessible rather than definitive works, aspiring to reach as much of the literate audience as possible and provide an interpretation of history authorized by the nation-state. While these volumes certainly provided facts and biographical narratives of important Indian leaders, they also stressed key themes such as self-sacrifice and adherence to duty, both grounded in Hindu religious understanding that the domestic reader would understand as an invocation of religion. Moreover, the monographs centered primarily on middle- and upper-class Hindus, signifying the idealized Indian citizen as well as delineating whom the Ministry deemed the builders of the nation-state. These were most often men of privilege, the authors highlighting their subjects' renunciation of wealth in service to their country as an inspirational example for the reader, one couched in a Hindu understanding of *dharma*. The *Builders of Modern India* was a series produced within a specific political context based on the agenda of the nation-state, a corpus of historical narratives to make proper citizens and unite the population yet revealing an upper caste, upper class Hindu understanding of Indian national identity.

The first book in the series was R.P. Masani's *Dadabhai Nairoji* (1960), an Indian politician and "Grand Old Man of India," defined by the author as the "Father of Indian

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[551] Ibid.

nationalism" and the "Herald of Self-Governing India."[552] Nairoji was a Parsi, an

immigrant population "received with arms outstretched" according to Masani.[553] At first

glance, this statement supports the Congress thesis of "unity in diversity," the acceptance

of a non-Hindu population within the umbrella of the nation-state. However, the status of

the Parsis differs significantly from that of Muslims in the subcontinent, with historical

and quantitative factors affecting how Congress and Hindu nationalists view this

population. The Parsis, a Zoroastrian population that arrived in the subcontinent between

the eight and tenth centuries, never challenged Hindu power due to their small

population. Furthermore, this population became quite prosperous on average, a "model

minority" that boosted the economy and productivity of the country without challenging

the dominant national culture. The Parsis were a population that practiced a religion that

originated outside the Indian subcontinent, yet their lack of "threat" to the national

majority and assimilation (understood as Indianization) within the established culture led

to their appropriation by both Congress and Hindu nationalists as an example of their

respective inclusiveness.[554] Though Nairoji was not a Hindu, he came from a population

accepted by upper caste and upper class Hindus as a "model minority." Moreover, he

loved and served India like none of her sons had done before him, Masani framing the

"Grand Old Man's" life as one of dispassionate service to his country, an adherence of

duty to inspire patriotism and civic duty among domestic readers.[555]

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[552] Ibid, 1.
[553] Ibid, 3.
[554] Jesse Buck, "The World's Best Minority: Parsis and Hindutva's Ethnic Nationalism in India," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Volume 40, Issue 15, (Jan 24, 2017), Accessed Feb 13, 2024, https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2016.1259492.
[555] Masani, *Nairoji*, 4.

A bright student and the first Indian elevated to the chair of Professor of
Mathematics and National Philosophy, Nairoji engaged in "pioneering nation-building
work" when he and an unnamed friend went out into the community to educate Hindus,
Parsis, and girls, early origins of "emotional integration" while also a historical precedent
for Congress' post-independence efforts at compulsory education for both boys and girls
despite conservative outcry.[556] Masani presented the Grand Old Man as a modern man
found in the nineteenth century, highlighting that Nairoji attempted religious reform
within the Parsi community to overcome religious conservatism, a historical precedent
for contemporary policies on education and social reform. Nairoji transitioned from
professor to businessman, a stepping stone as "a peerless patriot and Father of Indian
nationalism," Masani writing this biography based on nationalist teleology with the end
goal of the nation-state in mind.[557] Living in England as a business trader, according to
the author, only highlighted the "backwardness" of India and drew Nairoji to the study of
economics.[558] He devoted phenomenal labor and research to establish the thesis (the
"drain theory") that India's growing poverty was being caused by the colonial
administration; while today we know that imperial powers treated their colonies as zones
to extract raw materials and drain resources, this notion went against the received
discourse of British civility.

Moreover, Nairoji lamented, "Since the days of Wellesley [Governor-General of
Bengal, 1797-1805] it had been India's great grievance that neither the British public nor

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[556] Ibid, 15.
[557] Ibid, 26.
[558] Ibid, 29.

Parliament evinced any interest in Indian affairs," leading the "Grand Old Man" to work toward "stirring the public."[559] He believed that appealing to the British public, "their inborn sense and traditions of freedom, justice, and fair play" would help India "to attain self-government."[560] At the same, Nairoji aroused "a distinctly national feeling in India" for the first time in its history when traveling the country in 1869.[561] By highlighting Nairoji's efforts to appeal to the British public as well as raise national consciousness among the Indian population, Masani placed his figure of study as a direct precursor to Gandhi, interpreting history through a teleological trajectory that culminated with Indian independence. Nairoji was eventually elected to the British parliament, but Masani contended that this was simply a "means to an end," with the welfare of India and Congress on his mind first and foremost.[562] By maintaining that the Grand Old Man only viewed parliament as a "means to an end," the end being the betterment of India and its people, Masani illustrated Nairoji as a man acting in the name of *dharma* and pursuit of "the greater good" of Indian freedom. Though Nairoji died in 1917, the author maintained that Gandhi fulfilled his legacy, thereby tying the Grand Old Man to the nation-state and fitting his life within a determinist narrative, part of a process rather than a biography in and of itself. Masani presented the life of Dadabhai Nairoji as one solely in service to the nation-state. The "Grand Old Man" fulfilled his duty dispassionately, struggling for Indian self-government throughout his lifetime despite not surviving to see

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[559] Ibid, 39.
[560] Ibid.
[561] Ibid, 52.
[562] Ibid, 110.

the fruit of his efforts. Nairoji adhered to the principle of *dharma*, and the Ministry celebrated his life to foster patriotism and national unity among readers of the series.

Hemendranath Das Gupta's biography of *Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das* (1960) is the second volume in the *Builders of Modern India* series, and like the work on Dadabhai Nairoji uses history-writing to codify a nationalist teleology. Much of this biography uses the life of Deshbandhu (nickname for Das) to propagate a "usable past" for the Government of India with regard to Hindu-Muslim relations and the Two Nation Theory. Das, according to an introduction from Humayun Kabir, created an atmosphere of understanding and cordiality between Hindus and Muslims, with no other leader since so vividly capturing their imagination, the implication of this claim (later explicitly stated by author Das Gupta) being that the death of Das in 1925 meant the death of a united India.[563] Moreover, Kabir cited Das for his recognition that liberty would only occur through economic uplift of the entire population, "swaraj for the masses, not for the classes," his example serving as justification and historical precedent for contemporary development planning.[564] At the same time however, the author emphasized Das' patriotism and service to India as the fulfillment of dispassionate duty to appeal to the Indian reader. Furthermore Kabir insisted that Das, an attorney, writer, and leader within Congress, directed all of his writings to one end, "the conservation and enrichment of Indian culture and the liberation of her spirit from the West," and portrayed the life and achievements of Das as solely a component of the formation of the nation-state.[565]

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[563] Hemendranath Das Gupta, *Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das*, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information Publications Division, 1960), viii.
[564] Ibid.
[565] Ibid.

Though extolling the life of Das as the pursuit of Hindu-Muslim unity, supporting

Congress' platform of "unity in diversity," the nationalist understanding of "a united

India" is one informed by an upper class, upper caste Hindu perspective, one that

minimizes discrimination and violence toward national minorities that motivated the

demand for Pakistan. Ultimately, the biography of Deshbandhu is one informed by and

appealing to a middle- and upper-class Hindu perspective that demonizes the British and

the Muslim League without critically examining communalism and even attitudes within

the Hindu faith.

The author's account of Das' life begins by explaining the latter's family

background. Das was born to a family of Vaidyas, a family, the author notes, known for

their progressiveness, love of learning, and always on the forefront of women's

education, historical precedent for post-independence education reform and expanding

compulsory education for all children in India.[566] After attaining his education, Das was

not accepted into the Indian Civil Service and pursued a career as a lawyer. He

succeeded in this profession, Das Gupta maintained, for he had "an iron will and never

yielded ground either to judges or adversaries. There was not the slightest trace of

syncophy in his pleading nor the faintest suggestion of fear in the presence of authority.

He stood up like a man and spoke with a sincerity and conviction which influenced even

judges who were initially hostile."[567] It was as a lawyer, the author insists, that Das

established himself as a great patriot of India, as he defended Aurobindo Ghose in the

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[566] Ibid, 1.
[567] Ibid, 22.

Alipore Bomb Conspiracy Case (1907) and earned an acquittal due to the strength of his arguments. Solely devoted to the cause of his client and Indian patriotism, according to the author, Das fought for his client despite the fact that it put him 50,000 Rs. in debt; patriotism and self-sacrifice in the name of country and duty motivated Das, the author offering an example of civic responsibility with the hope of inspiring the reader.[568] Das Gupta concurred with Kabir's introduction, professing that patriotism was the guiding force of Das' literary work and that everything Deshbandhu wrote was imbued with his deep love of country and respect for its traditions.[569] Patriotism inspired Das to follow the example of Gandhi, Nehru, and other Congress leaders and give up his earnings and legal practice in 1920 despite the fact that he was at the top of his profession. The focus on the renunciation of wealth and prestige among Congress leaders for the love of country and adherence to dispassionate duty illustrates the Ministry use of the concept of *dharma* to inspire readers despite the state's official commitment to secularism.[570] To foster patriotism and unity among Indian readers, Das Gupta accentuated Das' self-sacrifice in the service of the nationalist movement, an action couched in *dharma* and indicative of an appeal to religion.

Das Gupta devotes a significant discussion to Das' Hindu-Muslim pact, viewing this moment as a turning point in the narrative of the nationalist movement. More than any other leader in Congress, he argued, Das recognized that "friendship and understanding between the Hindus and the Muslims were an essential condition for the

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[568] Ibid, 10.
[569] Ibid, 27.
[570] Ibid, 49.

attainment of India's independence."[571] To bring the two populations together, Das

formulated his Hindu-Muslim Pact (Bengal Pact of 1923), an agreement stipulating that

representation in the Bengal Legislative Council would be through joint electorates based

on population with special weightage given to Muslims until they made up their

deficiency in services and government.[572] The agreement also urged the Hindu

community to refrain from playing music in processions near mosques, while Muslims

were to avoid cow killing in order to improve relations between the two communities.

This pact, "conceived in the best of spirits," upset both Hindus and Muslims, Das Gupta

condemning "communal sections" in both communities for their vilification of the

agreement and Deshbandhu himself.[573] This contention supported the claim that

Congress stood against and apart from communalism, distancing the party from Hindu

nationalism and the demonized Muslim League.

At the same time, however, the text reveals cracks within this simplistic binary.

Das Gupta explained that leaders within Congress opposed the pact and it was ultimately

rejected at the Cocananda Congress in December 1923, some believing that Das had

given too many concessions to the Muslim minority.[574] Moreover, "even the more

moderate opinion among the Hindus held that Deshbandhu Das had gone too far in trying

to win the confidence of Muslims."[575] Despite the official Congress line of secularism

and "unity and diversity," the example of Das' Hindu-Muslim pact and reactions from

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[571] Ibid, 100.
[572] Ibid, 101.
[573] Ibid.
[574] Ibid, 102.
[575] Ibid, 101.

within the party and among the Hindu population reveal a less than conciliatory attitude toward India's Muslim minority, an ethos that any effort toward equality in government and administration was "going too far." Das Gupta viewed the repudiation of the pact as a missed opportunity, proclaiming, "It is futile to speculate on the 'might-have-beens' of history, but it can be said with confidence that if Deshbandhu Das had lived, united India would in all likelihood have attained freedom long before 1947."[576] This argument reflected the nationalist perspective that Partition was a violation of Indian history caused by British divide and rule and the communalism of the Muslim League, a worldview promoted by an upper caste, upper class Hindu elite that ignores Hindu communalism and minimizes the day to day "routine violence" and discrimination of the majority population against the minority. Though at first glance supporting the counterfactual scenario of a secular, united India, the line of thinking that informed Das Gupta's biography of Deshbandhu Chittranjan Das is that of an elite Hindu perspective that uncritically portrays itself as inclusive and accepting, defining "secularism" as the Hindu tolerance of minorities, a demonstration of the power of the majority rather than true acceptance and equality.

The third volume in the series is a biography of *Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak* (1962), by N.C. Jog. As with the previous two biographies, the account of "the father of Indian unrest" writes history with the end result of the nation-state in mind, presenting Tilak's life within a teleological development of the nation-state. Moreover, Jog depicted Tilak as a figure solely devoted to India, upholding his *dharma* in service to the state.

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[576] Ibid, 104.

Swaraj (self-rule), the author attests, was Tilak's birthright, for "he loved his country more than he loved his life or liberty," Jog painting the Lokmanya as an utmost patriot that served his country per his duty.[577] Tilak pursued higher education and achieved a first class degree despite not being a particularly good student, but the author notes he took a vow of self-sacrifice and dedication to public service upon graduation in 1879, putting *dharma* ahead of furthering his own career and reinforcing the sense of dispassionate duty and self-sacrifice as a key component of patriotism and civic responsibility.[578]

Tilak is often contrasted with Gopal Krishna Gokhale, the former portrayed as an Anglophobe and Hindu traditionalist looking to disobey the law in an active attempt to win dominion status compared to the Anglophilic intellectual attempting to lobby the British for increased political rights, with Gandhi serving as the synthesis of these men and implementing both of their traditions to win independence.[579] However, throughout this biography Jog attempted to minimize Tilak's Hindu traditionalism based on the author's own predilections as well as to curtail any sense that religion or religious traditions played an active role in the struggle for independence and support Congress' claims of secularism. Jog argued the Lokmanya never stood for orthodoxy and the old order, asserting that Tilak possessed enlightened views on women's education and despite his protest against Age of Consent Bill was against child marriage.[580] Moreover,

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[577] N.C. Jog, *Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak*, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1962), 8.
[578] Ibid, 12.
[579] Stanley Wolpert, *Tilak and Gokhale: Revolution and Reform in the Making of Modern India*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1962).
[580] Jog, *Tilak*, 29.

Jog insists that the charge of bigotry and deeming Tilak a reactionary was unfair to his memory.[581] Furthermore, Jog discussed the Ganapati and Shivaji festivals that Tilak started in Maharashtra, considering these events as efforts to raise consciousness while also assuring the reader that these were not meant to rouse Hindus against Muslims.[582]

At the same time, however, the text highlights that Tilak viewed religion and nationalism as mutually reinforcing. "Religious thoughts and devotion," said Tilak, "may be possible even in solicitude, yet demonstration and éclat are essential to the awakening of masses. Through this nationalist appeal, the worship of Ganapati spread from the family circle to the public square" with nationalism providing "the necessary social cement" to make Hindu worship public.[583] Nationalism, according to Tilak, encouraged the public celebration and demonstration of Hinduism, which in turn bolstered the "awakening of the masses" against British rule. Rather than a divorce between Hindu religion and national identity formation, Tilak envisioned them as one and the same. Moreover, Jog noted, "The Ganapati festival was frankly conceived in a spirit of protest as much against the anti-Hindu activities of some Muslims as the partial attitude adopted towards them by the Government. It quickly caught public fancy and proved a useful agency for social consolidation and political awakening."[584] The Ganapati festival, rather than solely an effort toward consciousness raising, was as much about defending Hindus and their faith against "anti-Hindu activities by Muslims" and the British government.[585]

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[581] Ibid.
[582] Ibid, 50.
[583] Ibid, 48.
[584] Ibid, 47.
[585] In his analysis of the intellectual origins of Hindu nationalism and its continued presence alongside the nationalist movement of Congress, Chetan Bhatt examined Tilak's use of these religious festivals,

Tilak viewed Hinduism as "an ingenious mortar capable of uniting the population,"[586] a viewpoint that the MIB echoed through the use of religious terminology and periodization of history in its publications. Furthermore, Jog declared Shivaji "a great national figure"[587] and stated that Tilak became one himself through honoring the memory of the Maratha Emperor, again revealing an overlap in admiration between Congress and Hindu nationalists for "a defender of Hindu faith" against the Muslim rule of Aurangzeb. While Congress delineated itself as the binary opposite of Hindu nationalism, both sides shared an upper caste, upper class, Hindu understanding of Indian history and the construction of national identity.

The remainder of Jog's work highlights Tilak's efforts toward boycott, civil disobedience, and struggle for Indian swaraj. Tilak attempted to educate and rally the peasantry against colonial responses to famine, translating the Famine Code Bill to Marathi, while also implementing boycotts and tapping into the tradition of *khadi* (hand spun cloth) and *swadeshi* (the concept of self-reliance) to protest the Partition of Bengal (1905). Tilak's arrest, charge, and conviction for sedition in 1897 made him a renowned figure overnight and, according to Jog, removed the terror of the charge of sedition, encouraging Indians to speak out and protest British rule.[588] The Surat Split (1907), the division within Congress between the Moderate faction looking to lobby the British

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explaining that Tilak mobilized these icons specifically to unite Brahmins (the highest caste in the Hindu *varna* system) against the British Empire but that they were also marshalled against the Muslim Muharram festival. Bhatt insisted that "it would be highly inaccurate to describe Tilak's ideological and pragmatic political projects as reducible to a bare Hindu nationalism," but contended that his association of Hinduism with a primordial Indian nation and that Hindutva ("Hinduness") was a 'common factor' in Indian society cannot be overlooked. See Bhatt, *Hindu Nationalism*, 36.

[586] Wolpert, *Tilak and Gokhale*, 135.
[587] Jog, *Tilak*, 53.
[588] Ibid 68.

Empire and the Extremists agitating for swaraj, was the fault of the former, according to Jog; the Moderates were duped by the British and tried to cast out the Extremists through backroom politics.[589] The two factions came together "thanks mainly to Tilak's earnest efforts for unity," with Congress further strengthened by the arrival of Gandhi, thus emphasizing the oft-repeated theme of unity as national strength as well as fitting Tilak within a trajectory that led to the Mahatma's mass movement and independence.[590] Jog concludes that Tilak's ultimate success was his transformation of Indian politics from a diversion of the leisured classes to a broad-based movement with participation of the common people (a change often attributed to Gandhi rather than Tilak), insisting that it was unfair to say that Gandhi inherited Tilak's mantle.[591] Furthermore, Tilak's life example demonstrated that "nothing could be achieved without discipline, unity, and strenuous efforts," the author thus encouraging the reader of the merits of unity, self-sacrifice, and duty toward the state.[592] As with the previous entries in the *Builders of Modern India* series, the biography of Tilak offers an inspirational account of a historic figure while also portraying a "usable past" for the contemporary nation-state looking to emphasis unity and civic duty, the Lokmanya a man that fulfilled his *dharma* in service to India. At the same time, Jog's attempt to minimize Tilak's Hindu traditionalism was ultimately a muddled one. The obscuring of Tilak's predilections toward Hindu nationalism incorporated this figure within the Congress pantheon of "builders of modern India," an acceptance that Hindu nationalists would come to exploit in their rise to

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[589] Ibid, 113.
[590] Ibid, 114.
[591] Ibid, 192.
[592] Ibid, 193.

political power and capture of the cultural discourse. The valorization of a Hindu traditionalist, even while minimizing his Hindu chauvinism, reveals the overlaps of national identity construction between Hindu nationalists and Congress elites, as both sides envision an upper class, upper caste Hindu interpretation of Indian history and identity. At the same time, Jog presented Tilak as a man who fulfilled his duty to the nation-state, a patriotic example couched in Hindu religion to inspire the domestic audience.

Benoy Ghose's biography of *Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar* (1965) discusses the life of a nineteenth-century Bengali educator and social reformer, a man not directly connected to Congress or the nationalist movement in any way. At first glance, a biography dedicated to a Bengali intellectual not associated with the nationalist movement nor as famous as Rammohan Roy (his biography was published after 1965) seems like an odd choice. However, Vidyasagar's life and his ideals represented a "usable past" for the MIB and Congress, historical precedent for the Government of India's ideology of "modernity" and efforts toward improving education and women's rights in the early post-independence era. Ghose explained that Vidyasagar not only fought for the harmonious intermingling of Western ideas with what was best in Indian tradition, but also, "It is only today that the social ideals he acted upon a century ago are beginning to emerge as realities."[593] Vidyasagar struggled for educational reform and the social uplift of women through education, allowing widow remarriage, and railing against

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[593] Benoy Ghose, *Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar*, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1965), 7.

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polygamy. As with Masani's work on Dadabhai Nairoji, Ghose presents Vidyasagar as a

modern Indian man located in the nineteenth century, a "builder of modern India"

through his ideals and a "usable past" for the MIB and Congress in the 1960s.

Furthermore, Vidyasagar fulfilled his duty to the nation-state, pursuing "the greater

good" and laying the groundwork for the nation-state despite the fact that he did not live

to see self-governance.

Unlike the other biographies that follow a chronological approach, Ghose quickly

discusses the life of Vidyasagar then devotes individual thematic chapters to his efforts

toward social reform. Vidyasagar was born in "a typical backward village" amid a "dull

and depressing" rural atmosphere.[594] While he inherited very little in the way of

property, he received the best traits of character from his parents and grandparents,

particularly, the author insists, his studious nature and his lack of orthodoxy and rigid

formalism of upper-caste Hindus.[595] His mother set aside all injunctions of caste no

matter the occasion, uncommon for a high caste Brahmin and as well as for the early

nineteenth century, and transmitted this kindness and catholicity to her son. Thus, Ghose

illustrated Vidyasagar as "a man above caste," a historical link to Gandhi's claim to work

for the "harijans" and Congress' abolition of the caste system by law.[596] Vidyasagar

attained a teaching post and eventually became an assistant secretary at Fort William

College in Calcutta and from there sought to reform the education system, namely to

Indianize education by presenting Western mathematics and science in Indian languages,

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[594] Ibid, 15.
[595] Ibid.
[596] Ibid, 11.

"to carry the torch of education to the people through their language."[597] Vidyasagar's

attempt to offer Western education through Indian languages failed due to lack of

government support and because middle and upper class Bengalis recognized the

importance of English education for economic purposes and would not pay the high fees

for a strictly Indian education.[598] Nevertheless, Ghose contended, "Vidyasagar was far

ahead of his time: the time was not yet ripe for such projects," the implicit argument

being that the reform efforts of Vidyasagar in the nineteenth century were now being

fulfilled by the nation-state.[599] Though Vidyasagar did not reap many of the benefits for

his efforts, he nevertheless fought for them for the benefit of contemporary India, Ghose

illustrating a "builder of modern India" that fulfilled his duty dispassionately in service of

the nation-state.

Ghose examined Vidyasagar's work toward women's education, allowing widow

remarriage, and outlawing polygamy, with Vidyasagar experiencing both successes and

failures in his reform efforts. Associated with women's education since the beginning of

the movement in India, Vidyasagar established thirty-five girls' schools with an average

total attendance of 1300 between November 1857 and May 1858.[600] This effort met

opposition; the British Government of India did not support educating girls and

demanded that schools be funded with voluntary aid only, while Vidyasagar painted a

quote from the *Manusamhita* on the doors of the school urging Hindus to education their

daughters to overcome Hindu traditionalism. Similarly, Vidyasagar cited Sanskrit

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[597] Ibid, 51.
[598] Ibid, 57.
[599] Ibid, 51.
[600] Ibid, 67.

sources to argue for widow remarriage within the Hindu community. While Ghose

endeavored to portray Vidyasagar as a "modern Indian in the nineteenth century," a

precedent for Congress and contemporary secularism, even Vidyasagar is not completely

divorced from Hindu religion. He promoted the study of Sanskrit, the ancient language

of Indian history fundamentally connected with the development of Hinduism and

incorporated Hindu texts in his arguments for social reform. While Vidyasagar achieved

success with regard to women's education and widow remarriage, he failed to outlaw

polygamy. "The history of all progressive reforms, since the dawn of human

civilization," Ghose argued, "had been like putting the cart before the horse, that is, they

were introduced before the people were mentally prepared to act up to them."[601]

Vidyasagar fulfilled his duty dispassionately by working toward reform, not witnessing

many of the societal changes he struggled for but laying the groundwork for a modern

nation-state. Vidyasagar, according to Ghose, "ranks foremost among the very few 'first

men' in modern India," a man who along with Rammohan Roy represented "the dawn

between the passing of the medieval age and the advent of the modern."[602] Though not

connected to Congress or the nationalist movement, Ghose's biography of Vidyasagar

presents another "usable past" for the MIB, a modern Indian man found within the

nineteenth century that offered a historical precedent for the Congress ideology and

policies of the post-independence era. Vidyasagar fulfilled his *dharma*, fighting for

social reforms he did not see in his lifetime because it was his duty, an appeal to Hindu

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[601] Ibid, 108.
[602] Ibid, 159.

religion to inspire patriotism and unity among the largest subsection of the Indian population.

Conclusion

At a seminar on the "problems of historical writing in India" held at the India International Centre in New Delhi, A.K. Narain of Banaras Hindu University called for a "Bharat Janapada" history of India, a "history of the Indian people" rather than one of "nation, country, continent, and so on."[603] Though seemingly calling for social history rather than narrative history, he later described India as possessing "a distinct geographical personality" and urged historians not to have "multi-nation theories" or have varied historical interpretations "be misconstrued for political ends."[604] Historians, Narain insisted, must stress the oneness and singleness of Indian society and culture, "the pattern of our history must, therefore, bear an all-India character."[605] Through publications, the *Builders of Modern India* series, and republished works of scholarship, the MIB used historical interpretation to stress the oneness of India and the Indian people, using history-writing as a component of national identity construction in the early years of post-independence. These works of history-writing highlighted an upper class, upper caste Hindu understanding of a timeless cultural unity, one fundamentally connected to Hinduism, while also stressing *dharma* and self-sacrifice for the nation-state, ingraining a nationalist teleology within the consciousness of the population as part of efforts at

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[603] A.K. Narain, "Writing a New History of Ancient India: A Study of Problems and Methods," in *Problems of Historical Writing in India: Proceedings of the Seminar Held at The India International Centre, New Delhi 21ˢᵗ-23ʳᵈ January 1963*, (New Delhi: India International Centre, 1963), 2.
[604] Ibid, 4.
[605] Ibid.

"emotional integration." While authors and MIB documents claimed or attempted to deemphasize religion, a search for historical precedence of the Congress ideology of secularism, often the interpretation of history was biased toward Hinduism or articulated based on the worldview of elite, upper class, upper caste Hindus at the expense of other voices in the subcontinent. The history-writing of the 1950s and 1960s existed within a specific political, social, and cultural context, with the MIB aiming to use history as an invented tradition to forge national unity after independence and the end of the nationalist movement. To achieve this goal of national unity, the MIB rendered the past based on the specific goals and ideology of the nation-state, constructing knowledge for the needs of power "to teach the lesson of integration."

CHAPTER VI

"INDIA DID NOT SEEK WAR BUT DID HER DUTY IN FIGHTING IT:" THE MIB

AND WARTIME PUBLICATIONS, 1962-1965

From April 18 to 24, 1955, ambassadors from African and Asian states met in

Bandung, Indonesia to engage in diplomatic relations and demonstrate the emergence of

"the global South" standing against both imperialism and the US-USSR binary of the

Cold War. This meeting represented the zenith of "colored cosmopolitanism,"[606] a sense

of unity within the non-white world against white colonizers and served as the key

moment for the Non-Aligned Movement. In a world becoming increasingly divided

between the Cold War binary of East and West, the "Third World" sought to maintain its

own autonomy and resist neocolonialism that would result from aligning with the United

States or the Soviet Union.[607] India's embrace of the Non-Aligned Movement fit well

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[606] Slate, *Colored Cosmopolitanism.*

[607] Intentions, however, do not necessarily reflect reality. The power disparity between the Cold War superpowers and the "Third World" as well as the fact that the United States and the Soviet Union, reaching *détente* in Europe by the late 1950s, increasingly sought to "win" the Cold War through alliances and proxy wars in the Third World, prevented the Third World from remaining a truly independent "third force" in post-WWII geopolitics. Moreover, elites within the Third World often shaped their ideologies and political platform specifically to court alliances with the superpowers. See Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012). It is worth noting, however, that India possessed much of the military infrastructure left by the British Empire and had a strong enough military that it could pursue a strategy of non-alignment more effectively than other countries of the "Third World." India's engagement in the Cold War was largely one to "align against Pakistan," forging closer relations with the Soviet Union after the Mutual Defense Assistance Pact between the United States and Pakistan in 1954 yet receiving support from the United

within Nehru's political outlook as well as Indian philosophical thought and national ideals, an application of the ideological framework from the independence movement toward post-independence foreign policy.[608] Rather than viewing the globe as divided between Western capitalism and Eastern communism, Prime Minister Nehru believed the binary of the post-WWII world as one between North and South, a split between imperial and former imperial powers and countries subject to colonial rule or hegemony. Having just achieved independence, Nehru was wary of becoming dependent on aid or support from either superpower and creating a neocolonial relationship of dependence. Drawing on historical examples, particularly the Buddhist Maurya Emperor Ashoka, from a "usable past" as well as recognizing the power disparity between the global North and South, non-alignment fulfilled ideological and practical considerations as a component of Indian national identity as well as a method of maintaining autonomy after independence.[609] Moreover, Nehru's formulation of foreign policy allowed India to maintain a sense of moral righteousness in international affairs, which took on a religious dimension when promoted to the domestic audience during times of crisis.

A crucial component of Nehru's foreign policy outlook and the utility of non-alignment was a positive relationship with China. While Nehru touted "the pursuit of peace" and "friendship with all countries" in many of his speeches, the prime minister believed that "in the perspective of history, it was especially important to have good

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States under the Kennedy administration that became disillusioned with the alliance with Pakistan. See Wainwright, *Inheritance of Empire* and Robert McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery: The United States, India, and Pakistan*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995).
[608] *India Since Independence*, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1971), 117.
[609] Appadorai, *Domestic Roots of Indian Foreign Policy*, Vajpeyi, *Righteous Republic*.

relations with China."[610] China and India possessed historical linkages and cultural

contact with one another, a component of India's "glorious past" (notably before the

arrival of both "Muslim invaders" and Europeans) and therefore something to be

resuscitated and cultivated by the independent nation-state. Moreover, colonial

interference and the hegemony of Western powers affected both countries within recent

memory. Prime Minister Nehru believed that this point of commonality, a recent history

of Western violence and exploitation, would engender greater affinity and support from

China. Despite objections within India about communism, China became a great power,

"united and strong," following Indian independence,[611] a country with a strong military

and enormous industrial potential. China was no doubt a conceivable threat but also,

with the right diplomatic touch, a potential ally. Good relations between India and China

would bolster India's strength and add hard power to the lofty ideals of non-alignment

within the subcontinent as well as the global Non-Aligned Movement.[612] Despite

"surprise and distress" by China's military invasion of Tibet and the wish that the latter

maintained its historical autonomy, India recognized China's suzerainty and worked

toward positive relations in the interest of foreign policy and security objectives.[613] India

urged the United Nations to admit China as a member of the international body and both

countries signed the 1954 Sino-Indian Agreement, often referred to as *Panchsheel*, on

April 29th, 1954, approving the "five principles" of mutual respect for territorial integrity

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[610] Nehru, *Letters to Chief Ministers,* Vol 2, 266.
[611] Jawaharlal Nehru, *India's Foreign Policy: Selected Speeches, September 1946-April 1961*, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1961), 305.
[612] Ibid.
[613] Nehru, *Letters to Chief Ministers,* Vol 2, 237.

and sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in internal affairs, equality and co-operation for mutual benefit and peaceful co-existence. A Sino-Indian alliance represented a relationship of symbolic and pragmatic importance, the linkage of two ancient Asian civilizations against "the global North" as well as cooperation between the prominent political and military powers of South and East Asia, lending legitimacy and military strength to the Non-Aligned Movement.

Thus, the Sino-Indian War (1962) fundamentally challenged India's foreign policy strategy as well as its conception of identity within international relations. While China and India agreed to principles of peace and coexistence, Prime Minister Nehru and Premier Zhou Enlai never reached an agreement on disputed territories and the delineation of the China-India border in the Himalayas despite countless rounds of negotiations. The McMahon Line, according to Nehru, was "the firm frontier, firm by treaty, firm by usage, and firm by geography," and negotiating this border and territory was represented an infringement of India's territorial integrity, dignity, and self-respect.[614] Moreover, the Himalayas were not just territory, according to the prime minister, but a fundamental part of the hearts and minds of the Indian population, bound in the mythology, literature, culture, and "the thinking of our race."[615] China, meanwhile,

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[614] Ministry of External Affairs, *Prime Minister on Sino-Indian Relations*, Vol I: In Parliament: Part I, (New Delhi: Ministry of External Affairs, 1961), 66. Mahesh Shankar notes that while India's claim to the McMahon Line border was a strong case, its claim to the Aksai Chin region in Ladakh was suspect. Moreover, Chinese officials seemed willing to exchange the territory, relinquishing its claims in eastern India for those in Aksai Chin. However, Shankar argues India refused to negotiate with China due to "the reputational imperative," seeking to preserve its reputation and not demonstrate weakness to a stronger military power. He contends that if India showed weakness and deference to China, it would hamper India's international reputation and foreign policy goals. See Shankar, *Reputational Imperative*.
[615] Ministry of External Affairs, *Prime Minister on Sino-Indian Relations*, Vol I, Part II, (New Delhi: Ministry of External Affairs, 1961), 37.

viewed Nehru's unwillingness to negotiate as a threat to their territory and the new

Chinese leadership amid "the Great Leap Forward," with scholars viewing the invasion

as one motivated by fear as well as "to teach Nehru a lesson."[616] Though only lasting

from October 20th to November 21st, the Chinese invasion across the McMahon Line (a

boundary line in Assam (northeastern India) established by the Shimla Agreement of

1913) and in the northwestern province of Ladakh (in Kashmir) culminated in a swift and

decisive victory for the People's Republic of China, forcing India to come face to face

with external insecurity for the first time since achieving independence in 1947.[617]

Rather than military threat or invasion from the United States, the Soviet Union, or a

former Western European empire looking to reclaim imperial glory, the Sino-Indian War

was an offensive conducted by one Asian nation against another.

A few years later, India faced continued tension and conflict with Pakistan,

culminating in the Second Indo-Pakistan War (1965). As with the First Indo-Pakistan

War, the legacy of Partition and the disputed status of Jammu and Kashmir informed the

conflict. The renewed hostilities occurred at a moment of insecurity for both countries.

While Pakistan received military aid from the United States beginning with the Mutual

Defense Assistance Agreement (1954) signed under Dwight D. Eisenhower, the United

States President and his administration became disillusioned with this alliance and

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[616] Dai Chaowu, "From 'Hindi-Chini Bhai-Bhai' to 'International Class Struggle' Against Nehru: China's India Policy and the Border Dispute, 1950-62," Eric Hyer, "The Strategic and Regional Contexts of the Sino-Indian Border Conflict: China's Policy of Conciliation with its Neighbors," both in *The Sino-Indian War of 1962: New Perspectives*, edited by Amit R. Das Gupta and Lorenz M. Luthi, (London: Routledge, 2017).
[617] Wyndraeth Humphreys Morris-Jones, *The Government and Politics of India*, 3rd Ed., (London: Hutchinson, 1971), 115.

questioned Pakistan's commitment to fighting global communism.[618] Building on this,

the Kennedy Administration began to "tilt toward India" in the early 1960s due to a

common democratic tradition and to thwart the rising power of communist China.[619] In

response to the loss of Western support and due to the outcome of the Sino-Indian War,

Pakistani leadership formed an alliance with China that remains a bedrock of Pakistani

foreign policy to this day.[620] At the same time, India faced uncertainty regarding its own

foreign policy. Though the country received greater support from the United States and

the United Kingdom in the early 1960s, the swift defeat of the war damaged the psyche

of Indian military officials and government leaders and remains "a trauma that will not

heal" within contemporary Sino-Indian relations.[621] Moreover, the death of Prime

Minister Nehru in 1964, the loss of India's political and ideological leader since

independence and a renowned international figure, put India in a position of ambiguity

and insecurity. While Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri assured the general population

(as well as Congress) that there would be "no deviation from Nehru's policies,"[622] the

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[618] McMahon, *Cold War on the Periphery*.

[619] Ibid. The United States would "tilt toward Pakistan" during the Nixon Administration, as Pakistani President Yayha Khan promised and delivered on opening up communications between China and the United States (see Bass, *The Blood Telegram*) as well as in the 1980s as a channel to send military weapons and assistance counter the Soviet Union's war in Afghanistan. The United States assisted Pakistan out of "convenience," supporting the South Asian country as part of its larger goal of containing communism, a short-sided strategy that often worked against American foreign policy goals of stability in the region. Moreover, the tenuous nature of American support undermined Pakistani political institutions, leaving the military as the only stable organization in the country, resulting in numerous military coups and the failure of democracy to develop and strengthen in Pakistan. See Stephen P. Cohen, *The Idea of Pakistan*, (Washington DC: Brookings Institution, 2004).

[620] "Pakistan and 1962," in *The Sino-Indian War of 1962: New Perspectives*, edited by Amit R. Das Gupta and Lorenz M. Luthi, (London: Routledge, 2017), 135.

[621] Amit R. Das Gupta and Lorenz M. Luthi, eds., *The Sino-Indian War of 1962: New Perspectives*, (London: Routledge, 2017), 1.

[622] "Speech on Independence Day from Red Fort," Aug 15, 1965, Lal Bahadur Shastri Papers, Printed Material, File No 9, Individual Collections, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.

specter of the Sino-Indian War as well as Pakistan's new alliance with China and possession of American weapons, tanks, and aircraft (holdovers from the first "tilt toward Pakistan") endangered Indian security.   To rally support and unite the population, both Prime Minister Nehru and Prime Minister Shastri marshalled the MIB to distribute publications in response to external conflict, calling for unity and highlighting the religiously grounded righteousness of the Indian cause.

This chapter discusses the Ministry publications produced during the Sino-Indian War and surrounding the Second Indo-Pakistan War, highlighting how the MIB defined Indian foreign policy and national identity based on moral righteousness, a holdover from Gandhi's rhetoric and a connotation couched in *dharma* and Indian religious terminology. While many nation-states frame foreign policy and international relations as testaments of "morality,"[623] within an Indian context this took on a religious dimension based on the government's goal of uniting the population in times of crisis. As with the entire corpus of publications, the Ministry invoked Hinduism to appeal to the largest subsection of the population. Prime Minister Nehru urged his chief ministers, including the Minister for Information and Broadcasting, to "create a sensation all over India that we stand together to oppose this invasion and shall continue to do so till we have freed India from the aggressor."[624] To heed this demand, the MIB issued several short pamphlets detailing the

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[623] Robert W. McElroy, *Morality and American Foreign Policy: The Role of Ethics in International Affairs*, (Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1992); Joshua D. Kertzer, Kathleen E. Powers, Brian C. Rathbun, and Ravi Iyer, "Moral Support: How Moral Values Shape Foreign Policy Attitudes," *The Journal of Politics*, Volume 76, No 3, (July, 2017), Southern Political Science Association, Accessed Feb 3, 2024, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022381614000073.

[624] "Letter to Chief Ministers," Oct 21, 1962, Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, File No 732, Correspondence, Files, Telegrams, No. 1718-PMH/62, Individual Collections, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.

China-India border crisis as well as presenting the Sino-Indian War in a way to unite the Indian population against "the Chinese threat." In these publications, the MIB emphasized that Nehru and India acted against their own wishes despite Chinese aggression in the name of friendliness and good relations, thus painting India as a state acting dispassionately in the pursuit of *dharma* and the greater good. Furthermore, Ministry publications promoted the sense that China's actions were akin to those of colonial powers, the People's Republic representing "a new North" that threatened Indian territory and security. Casting China as a neo-colonizer framed India's perspective as fulfillment of *dharma*; resisting Chinese invasion was only a last resort and an adherence to duty.

After Nehru's death and in the context of the Second Indo-Pakistan War, the Ministry distributed pamphlets and booklets that depicted India as the side of reluctant defense against Pakistani aggression in the Kashmir region. As with the First Indo-Pakistan War, the MIB stressed the importance of secularism for Indian national identity as well as its presence in the nation-state. But, again, this only became a point of emphasis within the context of definition by opposition, contrasting India with "Muslim Pakistan." Furthermore, the Ministry continued to use the concept of *dharma* to justify India's actions within the conflict and present the nation-state as the morally righteous actor. In the two conflicts, both during and after Nehru's tenure as prime minister, the Ministry invoked Hindu religion as the motivator behind Indian foreign policy to foster national unity within the context of war despite the Congress platform of secularism and inclusiveness. While the external threats allowed the MIB to clearly demarcate the

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Indian nation-state from a hostile "other," the Ministry continued to utilize religious

terminology as a unifying factor and a component of national identity construction.

Resisting "Yellow Imperialism": MIB Publications during the Sino-Indian War[625]

The first MIB publication produced during the Sino-Indian War, *India's Answer to Chinese Aggression* (1962), characterized the Chinese invasion as a threat to India's policy of non-alignment as well as a danger to the freedom and autonomy of the Indian nation-state. Moreover, the Ministry stressed Indian resistance to China as a fulfillment of duty and the defense of the population from a neo-colonizer. India, according to the publication, "went out of her way to be friendly with the People's Republic of China," but, the document explained, China "has returned evil for good and invaded our sacred land."[626] The reference to India "going out of its way" to be friendly derived largely from China's invasion and annexation of Tibet in 1950. Nehru and Congress did not approve of the Chinese invasion of Tibet, and the fact that Tibet was not in a position to offer much resistance added to "the wrongness of China's behavior."[627] Tibet, according to Nehru, was culturally "an off-shoot of India"[628] due to the prevalence of Buddhism in the historically autonomous region, the prime minister equating a religion that originated in the subcontinent as "culturally Indian" despite pronouncements of secularism. The invasion and annexation of Tibet represented a disruption of historical, sentimental,

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[625] Term "yellow imperialism" explicitly used by the Indian press when questioning Prime Minister Nehru on the border negotiations and crisis. Ministry of External Affairs, *Prime Minister on Sino-Indian Relations*, Vol II: Press Conferences: Part I, (New Delhi: Ministry of External Affairs, 1961), 60.
[626] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *India's Answer to Chinese Aggression*, (Faridabad: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1962), 1
[627] Nehru, *Letters to Chief Ministers,* Vol 2, 238.
[628] *Prime Minister on Sino-Indian Relations*, Vol II, Part I, 9.

religious, and cultural linkages with India,[629] yet the prime minister and Congress nevertheless accepted Chinese suzerainty over the region in the name fostering and maintaining good relations. Furthermore, the Ministry underscored India's relinquishment of extraterritorial rights inherited from British colonial rule as proof of Indian benevolence.[630] While China displayed aggression (which Nehru deemed a hallmark of Chinese history when she was strong),[631] the MIB presented India as acting dispassionately in a manner grounded in Indian religion, giving up any political interest in the region in favor of diplomacy and regional peace. Despite cultural linkages through religion, the Ministry presented the Indian position as accepting China's suzerainty over Tibet against its own personal connections and interests in the pursuit of the greater good, framing Indian foreign policy as adherence to *dharma* in the face of "northern aggression."

Additionally, the Ministry maintained that independent India wished to revive its ancient contact with the people of China, invoking the "glorious past" of both Asian nations.[632] In a speech held at a banquet in honor of Prime Minister Zhou Enlai in 1954, Nehru highlighted mutual relations between China and India for nearly two thousand years as a precedent for renewed relations in the present.[633] China and India were linked by Buddhist pilgrimage and commerce centuries before "Muslim invasion" in India and European interference in both countries, Prime Minister Nehru envisioning renewed

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[629] Ibid, 21.
[630] *India's Answer to Chinese Aggression*, 2.
[631] Nehru, *India's Foreign Policy*, 369.
[632] *India's Answer to Chinese Aggression*, 1.
[633] Nehru, *India's Foreign Policy*, 306.

diplomacy as a restoration of a mutual "glorious past." The MIB's reference to ancient

contact evoked Nehru's vision, grounding Sino-Indian relations as a facet of "ancient

Indian greatness" during a "glorious past" dominated by Hinduism and Buddhism (an

accepted religion due to its origin in the subcontinent) before the arrival of Muslims and

Europeans. In doing so, the Ministry framed China's invasion not only as a betrayal of

Indian benevolence but as a subversion of Asian harmony, a disruption of a potential

golden age by a "foreign invader" akin to Mahmud of Ghazni or the British Empire. To

explain the Chinese invasion and unite the Indian population, the MIB presented the

crisis through religious metaphors, conjuring the memory a "glorious past" readily

understood in religious terms and equating India's stance as defensive, the side of moral

righteousness in the fulfillment of duty.

In *India's Answer to Chinese Aggression*, the MIB defined the Sino-Indian War

as more than a border dispute; it was a conflict between a colonial invader using deceit to

further its territorial ambitions and challenge Indian freedom. It equated the deeds of the

People's Republic of China with the actions of the British Empire in the past and

contrasted them with Indian benevolence and "the pursuit of peace." The Ministry

condemned the Chinese delegation for producing scanty, imprecise, and inconsistent

evidence to support their claims to Indian territory while simultaneously invading the

subcontinent; India simply wanted to maintain the status quo (though it should be noted

that "maintaining the status quo" meant accepting the borders as they were rather than

negotiating a settlement).[634] Nehru himself maintained, "The Chinese maps are a

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[634] *India's Answer to Chinese Aggression*, 8.

Chinese brush painted over a good chunk of another's territory, this has been happening from pre-Communist days there. It seems to be a habit with them," the MIB directly repeating the language and rhetoric of the prime minister, serving as his messenger to the Indian population.[635]

Moreover, the booklet states that Chinese invasion disregarded preset borders defined by treaty and custom, violating the tripartite conference in Shimla (1913-14) that established the McMahon Line as the Sino-Indian boundary in the eastern sector and an 1842 treaty signed by British representatives in Kashmir, the Tibetan Dalai Lama, and the Qing Chinese emperor that delineated the western border in Ladakh.[636] Despite the fact that the British Empire negotiated these borders decades before independence with no participation from Congress, Nehru and the Ministry declared that the McMahon Line was the Indian eastern boundary and that the established borders were settled facts.[637] To strengthen the Indian case and present the nation-state as the side of morality and legitimacy, the MIB declared Chinese violation of established agreements as a betrayal of Indian friendship and the mutual cause of non-alignment, with invasion emblematic of a

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[635] *Prime Minister on Sino-Indian Relations,* Vol II, Part I, 36.

[636] While Nehru, Congress, and the MIB attempted to define the Indian nation-state as the antithesis of imperialism and cited the renouncing of British extraterritorial rights as proof of Indian benevolence, the Ministry discusses these colonial era agreements as authentic claims to defining the Sino-Indian borders. Nehru expressed personal dissatisfaction with the term "McMahon Line" but nevertheless considered this literal relic of colonial rule as "our border" (*Prime Minister on Sino-Indian Relations*, Vol II, Part I, 50). Officials from the People's Republic of China, however, argued that their country had never agreed to the McMahon Line nor the 1842 agreement, as these treaties were signed by the Qing Empire and the Dalai Lama and therefore not recognized as valid by the Chinese Communist Party. See Wolpert, *New History of India*, 384.

[637] *India's Answer to Chinese Aggression*, 5. By upholding agreements made by the British as contemporary boundaries, the People's Republic of China deemed India guilty of aggression in its own right, the inheritors of a British tradition of imperialism and expansionism (*Prime Minister on Sino-Indian Relations*, Vol I, Part I, 34).

colonizing power threatening an anticolonial nation. India, by contrast, was committed to defending the country and its people and to preserving its integrity, honor, and self-respect.[638] The Indian nation-state, per the Ministry, was the side of righteousness in response to Chinese duplicity, the Indian military resisting aggression and fulfilling its duty to protect territory and the Indian people. India would resist China, not in the name of territorial aggrandizement, but as a defense of national freedom and justice; the MIB emphasized the righteousness of the Indian cause as adherence to *dharma* to appeal to the Indian audience and foster patriotism and unity.[639] Just as Nehru did on the international stage, the Ministry presented Indian foreign policy, specifically the country's "answer" to Chinese aggression, in moral terms couched in Indian religious concepts.

The Ministry discussed India's overarching foreign policy in religious terms, but also used religion on a smaller scale to denounce China and cultivate support for Indian resistance. In *India's Answer to Chinese Aggression* and throughout the corpus of publications produced in the context of the Sino-Indian War, the Ministry made India's sheltering of the Tibetan Dalai Lama a point of emphasis. The Dalai Lama arrived in India on March 31, 1959, seeking asylum as a religious refugee. Interestingly, the MIB does not accentuate the presence of the Dalai Lama as proof "Indian secularism" or the acceptance of a "non-Hindu" within the borders of the nation-state, but as proof of Indian righteousness in response to Chinese aggression. Instead, in the subsequent publication *China's Betrayal of India: Background to the Invasion*, the MIB cited the shelter of the

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[638] *Prime Minister on Sino-Indian Relations*, Vol I, Part I, 278.
[639] *India's Answer to Chinese Aggression*, 10.

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Dalai Lama to illustrate that the law in India recognized many parties and gave protection

to the expression of differing opinions, criticizing the Communist Party of China's

monopoly of power.[640] Though this reflected "secular tolerance" within the nation-state,

the Ministry used this example to underscore Indian righteousness and morality rather

than any sense of Indian secularism. At the same time, the fact that the Dalai Lama was a

Buddhist, an acceptable "natural Indian" and "a cultural off-shoot of India," no doubt

added weight to this MIB argument. Furthermore, the Ministry condemned China for

invading the subcontinent before Diwali, a holiday "which children look forward to."[641]

Not only did China act unscrupulously in border negotiations, but they invaded before a

prominent Hindu holiday, the MIB highlighting a disruption of religious festivities to

lambast China and appeal to the Indian reader.

Though China's invasion surprised the Indian government, the Ministry

maintained that India "was not vanquished and would never surrender" and that the

Indian military would invariably protect a nation that had achieved more in a decade than

in the previous century of colonial rule, defending Indian democracy and the welfare state

against Chinese aggression.[642] Furthermore, the MIB contended that the war itself

brought a sense of unity to the nation, proclaiming that narrow loyalties and parochial

considerations had disappeared as if by magic, putting aside any myopic passions in order

to support the Indian war effort.[643] Through this mention, the publication dictated that

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[640] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *China's Betrayal of India: Background to the Invasion*, (Faridabad: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1962), 24.
[641] *India's Answer to Chinese Aggression*, 29.
[642] Ibid, 35.
[643] Ibid, 27.

unity was always present and under the surface while simultaneously working to inspire

patriotism throughout the subcontinent.[644] Prime Minister Nehru commended the

remarkable unity within India during the war, the "one good outcome" of China's

invasion of the subcontinent.[645] To underscore this, the Ministry booklet includes

examples of brides and wives selling their jewelry with the exception of their

mangalsutra (wedding necklace) and an elderly couple giving their life savings to the

prime minister to assist the war effort, vivid examples of self-sacrifice and civic duty

amid conflict with a foreign aggressor.[646] Just as the nation-state fulfilled its duty in

defending Indian territory, honor, and security, the people of India came together to

support the nation-state. In *India's Answer to Chinese Aggression*, the MIB defined India

as the beacon of moral and spiritual authority and the antithesis of Chinese colonialism,

moving away from a sense of continental or "Third World" solidarity in favor of uniting

the Indian people against an explicit threat to the country. The Ministry presented the

Indian nation-state as well as the Indian people as fulfilling their *dharma,* forsaking their

desires and personal interests in the name of dispassionate duty and morality in response

to Chinese aggression. This moral righteousness, therefore Indian identity, was one

informed by Hindu religion, an association promoted by the MIB to cultivate national

unity.

     The MIB issued several additional publications during and immediately after the

Sino-Indian war to define the People's Republic of China as a colonizer in the same

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[644] Ibid, 27.
[645] Nehru, *Letters to Chief Ministers*, Vol 5, 540.
[646] *India's Answer to Chinese Aggression*, 26.

manner as Western Europe. As with *India's Answer to Chinese Aggression*, the Ministry

portrayed China's invasion as a betrayal of the racial alliance and agreements of

friendship with India while defining India as the champion of moral righteousness.

China's Betrayal of India: Background to the Invasion (1962) underscores the Indian

perception of treachery committed by China, the latter a nation more concerned with

territorial aggrandizement than honoring diplomatic accords. Like *India's Answer to*

Chinese Aggression, this booklet cites a long history of contact between China and India

as well as Tibet, noting that both China and India stood for common resistance against

foreign imperialism into the early twentieth century.[647] India and China, the Ministry

explained, were on good terms dating back to the time of Christ, illustrating longevity

while also harkening to India's ancient past, specifically the "Hindu golden age" of the

Guptas.[648] These deep-rooted connections and history of friendship were now shattered

by China's expansionist policy, the MIB again casting invasion as a disruption of India's

"glorious past," specifically the Hindu past, by an "invader" to instill patriotism among

the population in the midst of conflict.[649]

As with *India's Answer to Chinese Aggression*, the MIB depicted Indian foreign

policy as the side of moral righteousness compared to China. The Ministry informed the

reader that India recognized and supported China on the international stage despite the

fact that Chinese leaders called Nehru and Congress "running dogs of imperialism" based

on the goal of solidarity among Asian nations and bolstering the Non-Aligned

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[647] *China's Betrayal of India*, 6.
[648] Ibid, 5.
[649] Ibid, 3.

Movement.[650] Furthermore, Peking accused India of "having been affected by foreign

influences hostile to China," associating the subcontinent with colonial mentality in the

same manner as the charge the MIB levied on the People's Republic.[651] Nevertheless,

according to the Ministry, India did not waver it its policy of friendship. The MIB

presented India's treatment of China as "turning the other cheek" to insults and

aggression, a concept from Christianity but popularized and Indianized by Gandhi.[652]

Moreover, the Ministry stated that India signed and understood *Panchsheel* as

international morality, while China took it as a temporary device of diplomacy,

contrasting Indian honesty with Chinese duplicity.[653] Prime Minister Nehru himself

described *Panchsheel* in moral terms, deeming the agreement a "code of conduct" and

criticizing China for not living up to the five principles.[654] Furthermore, the Ministry

contended that Peking had gone back on its word regarding the border dispute, with the

Chinese side maintaining "conditions were not right for its settlement;" the MIB arguing

that China was using invasion to create the "conditions" for settling the boundary.[655]

Though in the midst of conflict and despite China's "betrayal" of Indian friendship, the

MIB stated that Nehru and Indian officials were ready to negotiate and explore avenues

of amicable settlement, pursing peace in spite of aggression in the pursuit of the greater

good.[656] While Nehru declared that China returned "evil for good," betraying Indian

goodwill and comradeship in order to acquire territory, India would offer "good for evil,"

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[650] Ibid, 7.
[651] Ibid, 9.
[652] Ibid, 10.
[653] Ibid, 12.
[654] *Prime Minister on Sino-Indian Relations*, Vol I, Part I, 345.
[655] *China's Betrayal of India*, 20.
[656] Ibid, 28.

as it resisted military aggression and a return of colonialism through peaceful negotiations. It was the nation-state's duty, according to Nehru, Congress, and the MIB, to protect its population and defy a neo-colonial power in the pursuit of international peace. Thus, the Ministry portraying India's conflict with China as a battle of morality couched in religious themes.

Ministry publications *China's Fraudulent Peace Offensive* (1962) and *The Chinese Aggression: Some Facts about the Indo-China Border* (1962) further demonize Chinese invasion as the actions of an aggressive colonizer. The MIB once again condemned the "falsehood and deception" that marked the Chinese government's policy toward India, with China's naked aggression warping any possible peace offered by the Chinese side.[657] The Chinese peace offer called for a ceasefire, but this constituted a "fraudulent peace offensive," according to the Ministry, by demanding that both sides return to a line of control based on advanced Chinese positions within the Indian subcontinent.[658] Furthermore, the MIB reasoned that the land grab gave China control of mountain passes that would serve as a foothold for future attacks, as the Government of India feared continued Chinese aggression and potential future invasion.[659] Reinforcing claims of moral righteousness, Nehru and the MIB stated that India was willing to resolve differences through discussions, but only on the basis of decency, dignity, and self-respect rather than under the threat of military might.[660] India, Nehru explained, would

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[657] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *China's Fraudulent Peace Offensive*, (Faridabad: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1962), 3.
[658] Ibid, 7.
[659] Ibid.
[660] Ibid, 5.

not accept Chinese military advance as territorial gain, as this would not allow India to maintain peace and good neighborliness, characterizing China as anti-diplomacy and akin to a colonizing power, thereby presenting India as the side of legitimacy and the "pursuit of peace."[661]

In *The Chinese Aggression*, the MIB called for China to accept the Colombo Proposals as India had rather than accepting a Chinese-crafted peace settlement. Other non-aligned nations such as Burma, Cambodia, Ceylon, Ghana, and Indonesia, the Ministry maintained, met with an Indian delegation from December 10-12th, 1962, to discuss the Sino-Indian border dispute, and the parties agreed on the implementation of a demilitarized zone and further negotiations between China and India after military withdrawal.[662] If China committed to the Colombo Proposals, the MIB argued, it would bolster the Non-Aligned Movement and reestablish friendship and Asian solidarity with their Indian neighbors.[663] A failure to accept the proposals "proved" that China was committed to aggression akin to a colonial power, the MIB thus presenting India as an anticolonial nation-state defending its territorial integrity as well as the destiny of the Third World. The Ministry illustrated the conflict between China and India as more grandiose than a border dispute over mountain territories, delineating a struggle between an imperialist and aggressive China compared to a dispassionate and defensive India taking up arms solely in the name of duty.

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[661] Ibid, 12.

[662] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *The Chinese Aggression: Some Facts about the Indo-China Border*, Colombo Proposals, (Faridabad: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1962), 10.

[663] Ibid, 15.

Though written almost a year following the Sino-Indian War, the MIB's *India's Fight for Territorial Integrity* (August 1963) continued to present the Indian case to the population, casting China as a blatant aggressor and touting Indian unity in the face of the conflict. China, the Ministry claimed, "maintained a façade of coexistence with neighboring countries" while simultaneously conducting "furtive intrusions across well-accepted borders into what is indisputably Indian territory."[664] While previous publications lamented the Chinese invasion of Tibet, this booklet goes further in its condemnation, demonizing the People's Republic for its "covetous eyes on Tibet" in 1950 and for "converting their suzerainty over Tibet into a stranglehold," the MIB tying the invasion of India to a pattern of aggression.[665] The invasion was an attack on India's territorial integrity but it also disrupted India's economic growth and, according to the MIB, served as a play toward establishing political hegemony in Asia and constituted a statement to the international community.[666] The MIB contended that India offered evidence and arguments in their negotiations while the China answered with invasion, and "naked military adventurism," the latter resorting to aggression and creating "facts on the ground" in the same manner as European colonizers in the past.[667]

Despite these acts of bellicosity, the Ministry reiterated that India would continue to discuss the border issue with China on the basis of decency, dignity, and self-respect, and framed the Indian perspective as pursuing peace and shunning personal territorial

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[664] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *India's Fight for Territorial Integrity*, (Faridabad: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1963), 4.
[665] Ibid, 5.
[666] Ibid, 7.
[667] Ibid.

interests.[668] Furthermore, the MIB informed the reader that ninety-three countries

expressed sympathy, support, and concern for India during the war, demonstrating

international support and furthering the argument of Indian legitimacy and moral

righteousness. At the same time, the MIB celebrated that "the nation rose as one man,

and the people united to defend the country and to fight back the menace--the greatest

since India became independent,"[669] highlighting Indian patriotism and fulfillment of

duty in service to the nation-state. Moreover, "The people of India reacted to the crisis

with a demonstration of unity and a single-minded resolve to resist aggression,"

upholding and united by *dharma* and putting aside any "fissiparous tendencies" when

facing an external threat. A year after the Sino-Indian War, the Ministry maintained the

argument that the population and the nation-state were the side of dispassion and moral

righteousness in the face of Chinese invasion, exemplifying this by fulfilling their duty to

their countryman and the international community.

While the preceding Ministry publications on the Sino-Indian War and Indo-

Chinese relations denounced the People's Republic of China as a neo-colonizer in an

Asian form to rally support and garner sentiment for the Indian cause during the war, *The

Chinese Threat* (1963) discusses the long-term consequences of Chinese aggression for

geopolitics and the Non-Aligned Movement. Though the conscience of the world

asserted itself against wanton aggression of a peace-loving neighbor, according to the

MIB, the Chinese military "indulged in actions that even the imperialists and colonialists

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[668] Ibid, 22.
[669] Ibid, 16.

of the nineteenth century never adopted."[670] The publication declares that China captured

Indian soldiers and subjected them to harsh and inhumane treatment while also aligning

with India's rival Pakistan over the Kashmir border dispute, forming an alliance of threats

to Indian independence. The Chinese invasion of the Indian subcontinent endangered

Indian sovereignty, but the Ministry defined this conflict as a global concern, proclaiming

that the invasion of China was a challenge to non-alignment.[671] More than a regional

border dispute, "The Chinese threat is thus directed equally against countries in Asia and

Africa developing in independence and freedom according to their own genius," a threat

to anticolonial and non-white solidarity against neocolonialism.[672] Moreover, rather than

using scientific and technological advances for the promotion of the economic and social

wellbeing of the world, the People's Republic of China opted for domination of one

group of people over another by force, a return to a world of "colonizers and colonized"

rather than the brighter future offered by decolonization.[673]

The Ministry tied the Sino-Indian War to global concerns about the return of

colonialism, defining China as a mirror to imperialist policies of the nineteenth century

and threatening to cause the deterioration of international diplomacy into the jungle law

of "might is right" instead of the freedom, justice, and self-determination of the postwar

world.[674] By portraying China as a colonizing power in the same manner as the West, the

MIB delineated India as the Asian defender of anticolonialism and antiracism, the side of

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[670] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *The Chinese Threat*, (Faridabad: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Department, 1963), 9.
[671] Ibid, 5.
[672] Ibid.
[673] Ibid, 3.
[674] Ibid, 30.

moral legitimacy using "minimum corrective action to counter aggression" in service of world interests and dispassionate duty.[675] Within the context of the Sino-Indian war, the MIB continued the articulation of national identity, portraying China as a neo-colonial aggressor to underscore that India stood as a force for moral righteousness, defending its borders, its population, and the global Non-Aligned Movement for the greater good. The Ministry connected Indian foreign policy and resistance to China as the nation-state's fulfillment of duty, an association grounded in Hindu tradition that the domestic audience would understand in religious terms. By invoking religion in a conflict with an external threat, the MIB aimed to garner support for the Indian military and the government's efforts during the war. The Ministry continued to use *dharma* as a rallying tool even after Nehru's death during the Second Indo-Pakistan War. While MIB publications once again declared India a secular state in contrast with "Muslim Pakistan," the Ministry used religious appeals to unite the population in another episode of conflict.

"Conscious of an Essential Duty:" MIB Publications during the Second Indo-Pakistan War

Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru died on May 27, 1964, marking the loss of the most famous figure of the Indian nationalist movement after Gandhi and the first leader of the Republic of India. Nehru was a world-renowned politician, one of the architects of the Non-Aligned Movement as well as the chief economic planner and international

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[675] Ibid, 18.

diplomat of the independent Indian nation-state. His dominance of the Indian political scene has led to the characterization of the 1950s and 1960s as "the Nehru Raj," and his speeches, writings, and personal papers remain the most utilized sources within historical scholarship of the immediate post-independence era. His death sparked uncertainty regarding the fate of the country, as Congress and India lost its ideological leader and most prominent official. Fearing a takeover by Morarji Desai, a more conservative member of the Congress who posed a threat to the Nehruvian consensus of democracy, non-alignment, secularism, and socialism, party leaders intervened to make Lal Bahadur Shastri the second Prime Minister of India. Shastri was a Gandhian disciple and a politician that held many positions since independence, but most importantly (for Congress leaders looking to counter Desai) he was a committed socialist that promised to continue Nehru's Five Year Plans and economic development. While the second prime minister is often overlooked due to his death in 1966, Shastri's tenure is worthy of study because of his continuity with Prime Minister Nehru. During this two-year period, the MIB continued to produce publications with the same goal of fostering emotional integration, using religion as a unifying factor despite Congress' (now renewed) commitment to secularism.

Prime Minister Shastri did not get a chance to ease into his new governmental role. Still reeling from the defeat of the Sino-Indian War, the prime minister faced rekindled conflict with Pakistan over Jammu and Kashmir, which eventually escalated to the Second Indo-Pakistan War. India charged Pakistan with illegally training guerilla units to infiltrate Kashmir and "soften" the state for invasion, a similar pattern to the

events preceding war in 1947.[676] By contrast, Radio Pakistan announced that a war of

liberation against imperialism spontaneously erupted in Kashmir, ironically mimicking

the Indian Ministry's battle cry from the Sino-Indian War.[677] The Second Indo-Pakistan

War was fought with American arms on both sides; Pakistan still possessed weapons,

tanks, and aircraft from the first "tilt toward Pakistan" in the 1950s, while India acquired

military aid from the Kennedy Administration which was looking to counter the rise of

China.[678] The lack of support for either side during the conflict itself, however, led India

and Pakistan to forge closer ties with the Soviet Union and China, a prelude to the

geopolitical web of the Third Indo-Pakistan War (1971).[679] The month-long war resulted

in a martial victory for India, celebrated within the country as vindication of military

reorganization following the hasty and humiliating defeat of the Sino-Indian War,

allowing Congress to regain its sense of prestige and security. Throughout the conflict,

the MIB issued publications presenting the official Indian interpretation of the border

crisis and the war. Like Nehru, Shastri viewed publicity as essential to communicate and

spread his message to the people.[680] As it had during the First Indo-Pakistan War, the

Ministry defined India in contrast with its rival, stressing the secular nature of the nation-

state with greater emphasis to demarcate the country from "Muslim Pakistan." At the

same time, however, the MIB framed India's actions as a fulfillment of duty and

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[676] Wolpert, *New History*, 395.
[677] Ibid.
[678] McMahon, *Cold War on the Periphery*. Additionally, American officials feared that India's failure to meet the development goals of the Second and Third Five Year plans might push the subcontinent toward communism, another motivating factor behind the "tilt toward India."
[679] Paul McGarr, *The Cold War in South Asia: Britain, The United States, and the Indian Subcontinent, 1945-1965*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
[680] C.P. Srivastava, *Lal Bahadur Shastri: A Life of Truth in Politics*, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995), 101.

adherence to moral righteousness, couching the nation-state's efforts in religious terms to promote unity and support from the domestic population. While Congress leaders chose Shastri to maintain the Nehruvian consensus, the publications produced by the MIB during the Second Indo-Pakistan War reveal a key point of continuity, the perpetuation of *dharma* as a theme to foster national unity within a nominally secular state.

The Ministry pamphlet *Pakistan's Aggression in Kutch* (May 11th, 1965) responded to Pakistani intrusion within the borders of Indian claimed territory in the Rann of Kutch (a disputed region in Gujarat, Western India). Pakistan, according to the MIB, had resorted to shooting, clashes with border controls, and intrusions, followed by a full infantry offensive on April 24th, 1965, an act of naked aggression and a violation of international law.[681] In response, India adopted only defensive measures with great restraint, the Ministry again portraying Indian military and governmental efforts as obligation and duty rather than territory.[682] Despite the fact that Pakistan had encroached on Indian territory since January 1965 and refused to submit its territorial claims to the scrutiny of experts, "enforcing her territorial pretentions by military means," the MIB explained that India continued to be willing to meet and negotiate to settle the issue.[683] As with the border questions with China, the Ministry presented Indian foreign policy as accommodating. pursuing peace and diplomacy first and foremost, casting the nation-state as the side of moral righteousness compared to aggressors. The MIB cited Prime Minister Shastri to claim that India possessed a living and vital stake in peace, the

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[681] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *Pakistan's Aggression in Kutch*, (Faridabad: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1965), 3.
[682] Ibid.
[683] Ibid, 9.

country was committed to economic development and had no interest in border conflicts, and that the path of peace was still open despite Pakistani aggression.[684] The Ministry defined India in contrast with Pakistan, the former looking to dispassionately maintain order and peace for the greater good in spite of aggression while the latter sought to acquire territory unlawfully based on selfish passion.

Despite Indian overtures for peace and negotiation, the territorial dispute between India and Pakistan turned to war in August 1965. In similar fashion to the First Indo-Pakistan War, the Pakistan Army aimed to spark discontent and rebellion within the Kashmir, crossing the Line of Control under a military operation known as Operation Gibraltar. Pakistani military officials believed that they could foment disorder in the region framed as self-determination of the Kashmiri Muslim population. This would hamper the Indian military while simultaneously allowing Pakistan to appeal to the international community, challenge the territorial status quo, and (ideally) pressure the United Nations to hold a plebiscite on the status of Jammu and Kashmir. At the onset of the fighting, Prime Minister Shastri delivered a radio broadcast to the nation (August 13th) to rally support for the war effort and demonstrate confidence that the Indian military, still haunted by the swift defeat of the Sino-Indian War, would emerge victorious. While assuring the public that India still pursued peace and Nehru's policies, Shastri maintained, "Force will be met with force and aggression against us will never be allowed to succeed."[685] The Pakistani attack was so swift and formidable that India

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[684] Ibid, 14.
[685] "When Freedom is Menaced," Aug-Sept 1965, Lal Bahadur Shastri Papers, Printed Material, File No 3, Individual Collections, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi, 7.

"could not afford merely to talk of defending ourselves. We had to take decisive,

effective action without losing time."[686] Far from "the pursuit of peace," India now faced

Pakistani incursion with military force. In the midst of war, Shastri (like Nehru before

him) viewed national unity as imperative for military victory, stating "I appeal to all my

countrymen to ensure that our unity is strengthened and our internal peace and harmony

are not disturbed in any manner."[687] Moreover, Shastri implored the population, "We

have all to stand together firmly and unitedly to make any sacrifice that may be

necessary,"[688] the prime minister calling for emotional integration while at the same time

encouraging the population to make sacrifices to ensure India's victory, fulfilling their

duty dispassionately to the nation-state. To heed Shastri's goals and foster unity among

the Indian population, the MIB issued many short publications describing the conflict

with Pakistan and celebrating Indian victories. While the Ministry emphasized

secularism as it had in 1947 to define the nation-state in contrast with "Muslim Pakistan,"

the MIB would again turn to Hindu religious language and terminology to appeal to the

largest subsection of the population.

The MIB's *Kashmir Answers Pakistan* provided the official Indian interpretation

of Operation Gibraltar as well as the response of the people of Jammu and Kashmir to

Pakistani incursion. The Ministry explained that the "Gibraltar Forces" were ordered to

create confusion and chaos in Kashmir by destroying infrastructure, disrupting

communications, raiding Indian army supplies, and inflicting casualties on troops,

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[686] Ibid, 55.
[687] Ibid, 8.
[688] Ibid.

civilian officials, and VIPs.[689] The MIB informed the reader, "These 'Forces' bore

evocative names such as Salahuddin, Kasim, Ghaznavi, and Babar, after famous Muslim

crusaders and conquerors of India."[690] To cultivate patriotism and rally support for the

war effort, the Ministry demonized the new "Muslim invasion," perpetuating the upper

class, upper caste Hindu interpretation of Indian history despite the government's official

commitment to secularism to contrast India with its rival. Pakistan, according to the

MIB, was now discarding the "thin veil of disguise" which they operated behind prior to

the war, transitioning from the covert duplicity of Operation Gibraltar to explicit

aggression and terrorism.[691] The Ministry placed considerable emphasis on the fact that

the population of Jammu and Kashmir did not co-operate with Pakistani infiltrators,

causing disappointment among Pakistani efforts that they could not present the conflict to

the world as an internal rebellion.[692] The Kashmiris met Pakistani invasion "with staunch

resistance, resoluteness, and widespread indignation,"[693] which Prime Minister Shastri

considered "argument itself that Kashmir belongs to India."[694] Through non-cooperation

with Pakistan, according to Congress and the MIB, Kashmir confirmed its Indianness and

supported Indian secularism, a Muslim majority population siding with the Indian nation-

state rather than "Muslim Pakistan." However, this Ministry publication demonstrates

the continued influence of religion on Indian national identity construction, the MIB

using a religious understanding of history to cultivate national unity. Moreover, the

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[689] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *Kashmir Answers Pakistan*, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1965), 18.
[690] Ibid, 17.
[691] Ibid, 8.
[692] Ibid, 22.
[693] Ibid, 21.
[694] "When Freedom is Menaced," 53.

people of Jammu and Kashmir ceased to be "Muslim" and became "Indian" through their loyalty to the nation-state, assimilating within the Hindu-dominated national culture that demonized historical figures of their faith. While Congress historically characterized the conflict between India and Pakistan as one between secular and theocratic nation-states, the language used by the MIB to define national identity challenges the sense that India remained separate from or ruled impartially on matters of religion.

The MIB's *Who is the Aggressor?* (September 1965), like the preceding publications, labels Pakistan as the aggressor within the conflict and delineates India as the side of defense in the name of duty and moral righteousness.   The pamphlet begins by listing "Pakistan's seven firsts" to highlight Pakistani aggression and present India as a defensive nation-state using force only as a last resort. The MIB explained that Pakistan was the first to cross the ceasefire line, traverse the international border, introduce the air force in the conflict, extend the aerial fighting into Indian air space, take the fight to the sea by impounding merchant ships, utilize navy bombardment, and the first to declare that she "is at war with India."[695] Additionally, the Ministry informed the reader that India wanted peace with Pakistan since independence, yet the latter launched an invasion anyway, thus distinguishing India's morally righteous "pursuit of peace" from the actions of its rival.[696] India's response to Pakistan's crossing of the ceasefire line, according to the Ministry, was an act "to meet a grave threat to her integrity," a defense of freedom rather than military strategy.[697] The arrival of armed infiltrators

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[695] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *Who is the Aggressor?*, (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1965), 1.
[696] Ibid, 7.
[697] Ibid, 4.

followed by military invasion was a threat to territory but also a challenge to the

secularism of India, the MIB underscoring Congress' official commitment to secularism

to define the nation-state in contrast with Pakistan.[698] At the same time, however, the

Ministry framed Indian resistance within the Hindu understanding of *dharma*, an

adherence to duty that the reader would understand as an appeal to religion. While

people within the country expressed concern that India was abandoning its policy of

peace, the Ministry maintained that India was "conscious of an essential duty which she

owed to herself and perhaps in some measure to the cause of freedom."[699] Moreover, the

MIB cited Gandhi as justification for Indian military action, noting, "'Where there is only

a choice between cowardice and violence, I would advise violence,' Gandhi once said.

And to have run away from what was forced on us would indeed have been

cowardice."[700] To garner support among the population for the Indian war effort, the

Ministry framed the conflict as one forced upon the nation-state, the India military

responding to the external threat based on its essential duty. Despite nominally

delineating secular India from Muslim Pakistan, the MIB used religious language and

themes in its interpretation of the conflict to promote national unity during the war.

The Second Indo-Pakistan War lasted barely a month and resulted in no territorial

change for either side. Nevertheless, the international community viewed the ceasefire as

a martial victory for the subcontinent and an embarrassment for Pakistan, with the people

of India rejoicing in the aftermath of the war. The MIB's *Harvest of Glory* exemplified

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[698] Ibid, 5.
[699] Ibid, 7.
[700] Ibid.

this feeling of victory, highlighting the bravery and successes of the Indian military

resisting Pakistani aggression. "The steel of our nation was tempered in the fire of recent

hostilities with Pakistan," the Ministry claimed, yet the India people gave everything they

could and reaped "a rich harvest of glory," thereby restoring the honor of the nation-state

following the Sino-Indian War.[701] The MIB asserted that the "resolute purpose of the

people of India and the indomitable spirit of her armed forces" resulted in victory, a

defense specifically of "our secular way of life, the very basis of our state."[702] Again, the

argument that India was a secular nation-state possessed rhetorical weight when

compared with "Muslim Pakistan," and the Ministry highlighted this facet of Indian

national identity in a way that it did not during the Sino-Indian War. At the same time,

however, the Ministry framed the conflict on Hindu religious terms and presented its

inclusion of religious minorities within the context of assimilation.

The pamphlet primarily contains of accounts of armed forces and ordinary Indians

resisting the Pakistani army with significant attention on the actions of Muslims during

the war. The Ministry celebrated the valiant effort of Company Quartermaster Havildar

Abdul Hamid, a man who took out three out of four Pakistani Patton tanks armed with

only a machine gun.[703] As Abdul Hamid aimed for the fourth tank, he was spotted and

killed by the vehicle's 90mm gun, but the Indian government bestowed the Param Vir

Chakra (India's highest award for valor) for his bravery and martyrdom.[704] Though the

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[701] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *Harvest of Glory*, (Faridabad: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Publications Division, 1965), 4.
[702] Ibid, 6.
[703] Ibid, 39.
[704] Ibid.

MIB called the Indian military "a mirror of the rich mosaic of Indian national life,"[705] a

force "united in its diversity," the Ministry's appropriation of "good Muslims" serving

the interests of the nation-state represents a limited inclusion rather than full acceptance

within the "imagined community." The Muslim soldiers and martyrs that fought against

Pakistan only "became Indian" through their service to the state and their acceptability

within an upper class, upper caste Hindu worldview. Moreover, the Ministry portrays the

war as a fulfillment of *dharma*, again framing the conflict based on Hindu religious

terminology. India did not seek war, but did her duty in fighting it, the Ministry

explained, the military defending freedom and territorial integrity from an external

threat.[706] Furthermore, the MIB celebrated the actions of the Indian people, who

provided sweets and hospitality to the military, captured paratroopers and equipment, or

simply did their jobs in service to the nation-state, exemplifying the presence of *dharma*

informing national conduct from the top-down and the bottom-up.[707] In this "harvest of

glory," the Indian military defended secular modern democracy against medievalism,

bigotry, and war-mongering, the ancient nation of India emerging out of this baptism of

fire with a new luster.[708] Though the Ministry again used secularism as a point of

contrast between India and Pakistan, *Harvest of Glory* reveals the continued use of Hindu

religious terminology and a Hindu conception of national identity.

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[705] Ibid, 52.
[706] Ibid.
[707] Ibid, 51.
[708] Ibid, 55.

Conclusion

In his assessment of Indian foreign policy since independence, Syed Anwarul Haq Haqqi, the head of the Aligarh Muslim University Department of Political Science, claimed that every nation had its "pet illusions" and that Indians "have the illusions of being superior to 'the material West,' being the torchbearers of *ahimsa* and the *dharma*, with goodwill for all and malice toward none."[709] Haqqi, like many commentators and scholars looking back on the 1950s and 1960s, viewed Indian foreign policy as on built on lofty ideals but lacking in pragmatism, resulting in the disastrous result of the Sino-Indian War. Nevertheless, Nehru repeated his positions throughout the border conflict with China, framing Indian foreign policy as deriving from the ethics of Gandhi and the nation-state's culture and traditions. The MIB disseminated publications espousing this worldview, presenting India's resistance to both China and Pakistan as a defense of moral righteousness and a fulfillment of *dharma*. The day after the Chinese invasion, Nehru informed his chief ministers, "Every person who is an Indian must realize his duty in this crisis. We must, therefore, concentrate on building up this unity to face this invasion of India and try to put aside, as far as we can, controversial matters."[710] To promote greater affinity and support for the nation-state and the military effort, the MIB couched Indian foreign policy within the Hindu concept of *dharma*, highlighting Indian righteousness

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[709] S.A.Q. Haqqi, "Some Reflections on India's Foreign Policy," *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, Volume 17, No 1, (Jan-Mar, 1956), Indian Political Science Association, Accessed Feb 3, 2024, https://www.jstor.org/stable/42743842.
[710] "Letter to Chief Ministers," Nehru Memorial Library.

against external threats as a dispassionate adherence to duty, a religious allegory the domestic reader would readily understand.

In the specific context of the Sino-Indian War, the Ministry portrayed China as a colonizing power, a "new North" that threatened Indian freedom and territorial integrity, tying the position and efforts of the Government of India and the Indian military to the anticolonial struggle. Before, during, and after the Second Indo-Pakistan War, the MIB emphasized a defense of secularism as a facet of national identity in a way that it neglected during the Sino-Indian War. Again, however, the presence of Pakistan allowed the Ministry to define India in opposition to its rival, a strategy borrowed from the First Indo-Pakistan War immediately following independence. Despite the cultural and power disparities between the two external threats India faced in the 1960s, the MIB's appropriation of *dharma* to justify Indian foreign policy and promote national unity during conflict was a point of continuity between wars and prime ministers. In a nation-state marked by significant linguistic, religious, caste, and class division, Hindus represented the largest subsection of the population. To appeal to the largest proportion of the country, the Ministry used Hindu language, themes, and concepts to cultivate national unity despite Congress' official commitment to secularism. The prevalence of Hinduism within state-sanctioned post-independence national identity construction resulted in a nation-state that "failed to secularize" despite Prime Minister Nehru's personal ideology and wishes and provided scaffolding for contemporary Hindu nationalism to take hold and dominate Indian political and cultural discourse.

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CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

As of December 2023, Narendra Modi has the highest approval rating of any

global leader, with seventy-six percent of responders to a *Morning Consult* survey

viewing the prime minister favorably compared to eighteen percent that view him

unfavorably.[711] Despite criticism of the BJP's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic[712]

and domestic and international condemnation of the exclusionary rhetoric and policies

espoused by government officials, the party, the prime minister, and Hindu nationalism

remain immensely popular in India today. Modi, the BJP, and Hindu nationalism "make

people proud to be Indians," and marshal a sense of masculinity and prestige that reject

decades of colonial discourse labeling Indians as effeminate, weak, and inferior to their

Western counterparts.[713] Winning the 2014 general election and consolidating their

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[711] "With an Approval Rating of 76%, PM Modi Most Popular Global Leader," *Times of India*, Dec 9, 2023, https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/with-approval-rating-of-76-narendra-modi-most-popular-global-leader-morning-consult/articleshow/105849567.cms.

[712] Valay Singh, "BJP Supporters say 'Won't Forgive' Modi for COVID Indifference," *Al Jazeera*, May 27, 2021, Accessed Feb 17, 2024, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/27/bjp-supporters-say-wont-forgive-modi-for-covid-indifference.

[713] Banerjee, *Make Me a Man*. The sense of Modi instilling pride in Indian identity comes from numerous comments made by Indian Americans at a wedding I attended. While Gandhi is still the most celebrated figure in modern Indian history, his message of nonviolent resistance along with his frail stature does not conjure an image of Indian strength in the same way as the BJP's envisioning of Hindu masculine vigor. Though a hegemonic discourse deriving from colonial rule, the Hindu nationalist imagining of masculinity as India becomes an increasingly global power holds cachet and draws support from people within the subcontinent as well as the Indian diaspora.

power in 2019, the BJP and Hindu nationalism have firmly captured the political and cultural discourse within the subcontinent, a fact that will likely be restated in the upcoming 2024 elections. Though scholars began turning their attention to the history of Hindu nationalism following the BJP's electoral victory in 1996 and the body of literature on the subject is growing, academics have not fully demonstrated how and why Hindu nationalism has come to dictate the Indian political scene and sociocultural discourse. Frustration with Congress' economic policies and governmental corruption causing India's "crisis of governability"[714] along with riding the wave of the Ram Janmabhoomi movement explains the BJP's surprising electoral victory in 1996 and the weakening of Congress' power. However, these factors do not explain the utter dominance of Hindu nationalism today, especially given its history of weakness in Indian politics. Rather than a sharp and distinctive break from Congress, Hindu nationalism seized the political and cultural discourse in India due to the continued influence of Hinduism on national identity formation since 1947.

This dissertation has investigated Indian national identity construction following independence, analyzing the publications produced by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to illustrate how the government defined Indian national identity. Study of MIB publications reveals that Hinduism informed national identity formation in the 1950s and 1960s despite Nehru's personal and Congress' nominal commitment to secularism. Prime Minister Nehru and Congress were fundamentally concerned with national unity, fearing that India's "diverse elements" would lead to Balkanization of the

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[714] Kohli, *Democracy and Discontent*, Brass, *Politics of India Since Independence*.

subcontinent. The Government of India used publicity and propaganda through the MIB to cultivate emotional integration to the nation-state. Though the Ministry issued books, pamphlets, and booklets on a seemingly wide variety of subjects, they were all linked by the goal of fostering national unity. Furthermore, while Congress defined the country as one "united in diversity," a message the Ministry advocated in its publications, the MIB used Hindu symbols, themes, and terminology, particularly the concept of *dharma* (dispassionate duty) in an effort to promote national unity. In a country with numerous religions, languages, and ethnic identities, the invocation of Hindu religion was the most expedient way to unite the population, an attempt to appeal to the largest subsection of the Indian populace. Moreover, the use of Hindu terminology and the perpetuation of a Hindu understanding of history, an "ancient past" disrupted by "foreign invasion" resuscitated by the nation-state, reflected the worldview of the upper class, upper caste, Hindus that held the majority of positions in the Government of India. While "secularism" was one of the key components of "the Nehruvian consensus" and an official part of the Congress platform, the publications disseminated by the MIB highlight a Hindu understanding of Indian national identity, a point of commonality with contemporary Hindu nationalism.

The first chapter of this dissertation focused on Ministry publications produced immediately following independence, which responded to the First Indo-Pakistan War and the foundation of the Republic of India. While the MIB emphasized secularism in these documents, this was largely in contrast with Pakistan, the Ministry defining India as the opposite of its rival. At the same time, the MIB invoked *dharma* to bolster support

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for the Indian government and foster unity in response to an external threat. The second chapter centered on MIB publications produced between 1950 and 1965 for the domestic audience. The Ministry disseminated these publications with the goal of "uniting" the population, as the prime minister viewed national unity as the underpinning of Indian economic development and the building of the nation-state. These publications often repeated the official Congress line of "unity in diversity," yet at the same time promoted a timeless, cultural unity predicated on Hinduism and used the concept of *dharma* to rally support for the government's development schemes. Moreover, MIB publications dedicated to "others" that did not fit within the upper caste, upper class, masculine Hindu national majority divulged an expectation for these "minorities" to assimilate within the established national culture. Assimilation, according to the Ministry, meant Indianization, a subsuming of "minority" identity within the Hindu-oriented national culture. While nominally standing for "unity in diversity" within a secular nation-state, MIB documents intended for the domestic audience demonstrate the use of religious appeal to unite the greatest proportion of the population as well as the imagined links between Hinduism and post-independence Indian national identity.

The third chapter examined MIB publications produced for tourists, as the production of documents for foreign readers was yet another iteration of national identity construction. While documents produced for the domestic audience were part of the cultural work of "uniting" the population, the various guidebooks, pamphlets, and booklets for tourists present a country that was fundamentally united. A united country, the government believed, would attract "no strings attached" foreign aid, and the MIB

worked to present the nation-state as one worthy of tourism as well as investment.

Moreover, the Ministry connected this timeless unity with India's ancient, specifically

pre-Muslim, past, linking Hinduism and Buddhism (a religion acceptable by the national

majority due to its origins in the subcontinent) to India's cultural heritage. The MIB

demarcated Muslims, by contrast, as "invaders" and disruptors of "Indian culture," with

the exception of the cultural contributions of the "good Mughals" like Akbar. The

Ministry represented rulers that did not overturn or worked within the established, Hindu-

oriented, "Indian culture" as "Indianized," while those that disrupted it like Mahmud of

Ghazni or Aurangzeb were demonized as "invaders."

The fourth chapter covered similar ground, investigating MIB publications

centered on historical interpretation and scholarship. History writing in the early 1950s

and 1960s was national identity construction, reflecting an upper caste, upper class,

Hindu worldview rather than a complete separation from religion. Prime Minister

Jawaharlal Nehru urged Indian historians "to teach the lesson of integration" through

history writing, and scholars along with the Ministry highlighted a timeless Hindu

cultural unity as the bedrock of contemporary Indian national identity. Moreover,

through the *Builders of Modern India* series, the MIB presented the biographies of

notable Indian figures within the teleology of the nation-state, presenting these "builders"

as devoting their lives to India in the service of dispassionate duty and the greater good.

Despite the official Congress ideology of secularism, Hinduism informed historical

interpretation in the post-independence era and the MIB continued to use Hindu

terminology and themes to promote patriotism and national unity.

The fifth chapter investigated the publications produced before and during the Sino-Indian War (1962) and the Second Indo-Pakistan War (1965). In both conflicts, the Ministry framed Indian foreign policy, the efforts of the government, and military resistance as the side of moral righteousness, an understanding couched in the concept of *dharma*. India, according to the MIB, was a defensive nation-state taking up arms to protect the Indian people and territorial integrity, upholding their duty dispassionately. The Ministry labeled Chinese aggression as akin to neocolonialism, therefore presenting the Indian response as anticolonial resistance and the side of moral legitimacy. During the Second Indo-Pakistan War, the MIB stressed the existence of Indian secularism, but once again this was in contrast with Pakistan. Moreover, the Ministry continued to invoke *dharma* to inspire the Indian population to support the military and the government in their efforts to resist Pakistan. Despite the executive change between both conflicts, the MIB continued to use the same rhetorical strategies and motifs with the goal of promoting national unity, a point of continuity between the seemingly disparate conflicts. To appeal to the greatest subsection of the Indian population, the Ministry utilized Hindu terminology and themes despite the government's official ideology of secularism. Hinduism informed all aspects of post-independence national identity construction because the government wanted to foster emotional integration to the state, religion providing, as Tilak described, "an ingenious mortar" to unite the Indian population.

The MIB's efforts toward national identity construction from 1947 to 1965 produced a host of unintended consequences. The BJP can marshal Hinduism and an

upper class, upper caste interpretation of Indian history and identity to garner support and unite the Indian population because Congress did it first in the post-independence era. Though professing the secular character of the Indian nation-state and Nehru's personal commitment to secularism, the Ministry's publications underscore the conflation of Hindu identity with Indian identity. Furthermore, Hinduism was the most accessible reference point for the largest number of people in post-independence India, and because of this the MIB invoked religion to inspire national unity. While Nehru, Congress, and the MIB worked to unify the country following the violence of Partition and throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Modi and the BJP now govern an Indian nation-state that is arguably more united than ever. Amid a rising tide of global right-wing populism and democratic backsliding, India could actually be the "eastern melting pot" and an example of "unity in diversity" in a way that countries of both East and West have not been. However, through top-down identity construction and the electoral process, India is choosing the opposite, taking on an increasingly exclusionary character and defining Indian national identity as fundamentally Hindu, accepting "natural Indians" like Buddhists, Jains, Sikhs, and even Parsis but not Muslims or Christians. The history of militarism throughout Sangh Parivar only heightens the danger "minorities," specifically Indian Muslims, face living in contemporary India. Far from "united in diversity," the BJP and Hindu nationalists openly equate Indian national identity with Hinduism, a more brazen manifestation of the MIB's construction of Indian national identity following independence. Rather than binary opposites, it is an upper class, upper caste, masculine Hindu worldview that informs national identity construction within both parties.

Although scholars are beginning to pay more attention to postcolonial India, historians of modern India continue to study the history of the subcontinent during the era of British colonialism to a greater degree than the period following independence. While the British Raj offers a plethora of English-language sources and avenues for exploration (particularly studying nineteenth and twentieth century Europe through the lens of the colonies), this has the effect of perpetuating the nationalist teleology that Indian history "ends" with independence in 1947. Moreover, the majority of studies on British India originate at the starting point that colonialism was unjust. Colonialism brought economic destitution to the colonies as well as imparting hegemonic discourses of race, class, and gender that continue to adversely influence former colonized nation-states and the entire world. At the same time, however, the greater scholarly emphasis on British colonial rule at the expense of post-independence India only reinforces the MIB's construction of Indian nationalism and the nation-state as inherently righteous, the antithesis of imperialism. While nationalism, a discourse deriving from the West, offered the right tool to combat British imperialism, the creation of an "imagined community" inherently excludes "others." The construction of national identity and the nation-state produces a national "majority" that will never fully accept the "minority," the underlying cause of many of the conflicts of the twenty-first century. As India increasingly becomes a global power, scholars cannot simply treat Indian nationalism and the nation-state as a victim of colonialism. Hindu nationalism and Congress' national identity construction following independence both tied Indian identity to a distinct religion, depicting Hinduism as the foundation of Indian cultural unity and excluding those that did not assimilate or subsume

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to the established national culture. India's continued articulation of national identity is a pressing concern for the domestic politics of the subcontinent as well as international relations. With India's rising economic and military power, a potential rival to China as well as the West, Indian national identity construction is important for all global citizens. At the same time, India's definition of national identity is most pressing for the "minorities" that do not fall under the umbrella of the "imagined community," their safety and security in doubt no matter the outcome of India's elections.

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