

On that **matter**, the New Democrat strategy has yet to be borne out.

Clinton also proposes to offset the tax impact on lower-income people by providing additional food stamps, and on moderate-income people by raising the income ceiling for **EITC** benefits to \$30,000. Unfortunately, if there is any design failure in the program, it lies here, in Clinton's trying too hard to be fair. The higher income-ceiling for the **EITC** would provide some wage subsidy not just for the working poor, but for 30 percent to 35 percent of all workers, a potential economic distortion of some consequence. And for lower-income people, the combination of more food stamps and higher **EITC** payments would exceed the Clinton purpose of **EITC** reform, to ensure that all full-time workers can raise their families above the poverty line. Instead, Clinton could lower the income ceiling for the proposed **EITC** expansion to \$20,000 and, in good New Democrat fashion, use the resources to provide a little tax relief for moderate-income people with young children.

These, however, are quibbles. Many of us who have high hopes for a Clinton administration feel the inevitable temptation to want more action more quickly. Among a neoliberal's fantasies would have been an even **greater** attempt at wringing inefficiencies out of government's complex bureaucracy: instead of reforming the premiums for Federal Crop Insurance for a four-year savings of \$550 million, Clinton could replace the program with direct assistance when bad weather drives crop yields far below average-and save \$1.8 billion; rather than raise the fuel fee for **compa-**

nies using federal inland waterways, for a four-year savings of \$320 million, he could assess a user fee and raise \$1.7 billion. Rather than raising **FAA** registration fees for a four-year savings of \$151 million, he could charge airlines a user fee for air-traffic control services and raise \$5.2 billion. Or introduce his proposed reforms of farm-deficiency payments this year instead of in 1995—for triple the proposed \$1 billion, four-year savings. Among forty or so proposed subsidy cuts in Clinton's plan, thirteen also appear in the annual deficit-reduction proposals issued by the Congressional Budget Office. If Clinton merely adopted the **CBO** version in these thirteen cases, the four-year savings would expand from \$4.8 billion to \$16.9 billion.

A budget, however, is not merely a president's responsibility. It is also Congress's. Let those-especially Democrats-who now quibble with the alleged laxity of the president's plan come up with a more radical reinvention of government and join the president in his own New Democrat game. All of us will wish them well. And our most important consolation will be that the terms of the debate have been radically altered. We're no longer asking if the deficit should be cut, but how. There's a broad consensus that government needs to be reformed, the only question is how quickly. Investment as the prevailing principle of economic policy is now the starting point of debate, rather than a questionable premise. For these shifts in the country's direction, a shift long pressed by New Democrats, we have Bill Clinton largely to thank. •

How ancient animosities get invented.

MODERN HATE

By *Susanne Hoerber Rudolph and Lloyd I. Rudolph*

On Inauguration Day, Bill Clinton told the country and the world a story about how 'a generation raised in the shadows of the cold war assumes new responsibilities in a world warmed by the sunshine of freedom but threatened still by ancient hatreds.' The new president seemed to have in mind such things as ethnic cleansing and religious

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fundamentalism, the first a deceptive metaphor invented by extreme nationalist Serbs, the second a ubiquitous term that relieves politicians, news anchors and policy **intellectuals** from thinking about the complexities of the "other."

One event that fed the country's growing preoccupation with ancient hatreds occurred last December, when "Hindu fundamentalists" tore down a mosque built in the sixteenth century by the first **Mughal emperor, Babur**, in Ayodhya, a small town in eastern **Uttar Pradesh**, India's *most* populous state. Its destruction was the climax of three tumultuous years during **which**

the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party piqued emotions over the mosque. It held that Babur had destroyed a temple on Lord Rama's birthsite in order to build what came to be known as the Babri Masjid (Babur's Mosque); thus, Hindus should reclaim their heritage by building a new temple to Lord Rama on the site of the mosque. More than 2,500 people were killed in the retaliatory violence that followed the destruction of the Babri Masjid. In January violence erupted again in Bombay, where the police openly abetted burning and vandalism. At the end of February, the BJP attempted to hold a mass rally in New Delhi to bring down the Congress party government.

But recent news accounts that depict the violence as an outgrowth of old animosities are misleading. Hindus and Muslims in India under the Mughal emperor Akbar, the nationalistic leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress governments of Jawaharlal Nehru have gotten along more often than they have gone for each other's throats. So did Serbs, Croats and Muslims under Tito in Yugoslavia. Clinton and others too easily invoke "ancient hatreds" to explain what are really contemporary conflicts. The question, in other words, is not why old conflicts are flaring up anew, but rather why traditionally harmonious mosaics have been shattered.

Before Christmas, the Hanukkah card section of the University of Chicago bookstore featured a seasonal card depicting two Santas, one with a white beard, one with a brown one, the first carrying the regulation Santa bag, the second carrying a menorah. A scholar of India looks at that card and says, "How Indian!" St. Nicholas integrated into a Jewish festival! Societies with a plurality of religions can and often do work out symbolic settlements. Until recently, the ability to reach such settlements was the dominant theme in Indian history and in its postindependence politics. Friendships are as "ancient" as hatreds. The face we see depends on what human agents cause us to see.

Looking at that Hanukkah card, we were reminded of a friend of ours, an observant Muslim, one of the numerous South Asian diaspora in Chicago. As a child in India, she was once asked to participate in a small community drama about the life of Lord Krishna. Krishna is the blue 'Hindu' god adored by shepherdesses, who dance for his pleasure. They exemplify through their human passion the quest of the devout soul for the lord. Not exactly a Muslim monotheist's theme. She was invited to dance as a shepherdess with other schoolgirls. Her father forbade it: Muslims don't dance. In that case, said the drama's director, we will cast you as Krishna. All you have to do is stand there in the usual Krishna pose, a flute at your mouth. Her father consented. She played Krishna.

Line-crossing seemed as natural to that Krishna-playing child as it did to Mahatma Gandhi. In his autobiography, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, he recalls that his devout mother regularly visited the tomb of a Muslim *pir* and followed Jain ideas about self-suffering and nonviolence. Her un-self-conscious ecu-

menism was common in Gandhi's birthplace, Kathiawad, a cosmopolitan entrepôt area bordering the Arabian sea. Gandhi began his historic career in South Africa, working for migrant Muslim businessmen from the same region.

With about 110 million Muslim citizens, India is the second-largest Muslim country in the world, after Indonesia. Islam takes many forms, from the most severe monotheism to a Sufi mysticism and devotion that features worship of saints and their relics—practices repugnant to a more austere orthodoxy. Sufi *pirs* and their magnificent tombs attract Hindu as well as Muslim pilgrims from all parts of the subcontinent. None is more renowned than the Dargah at Ajmer, the burial place of Kwaja Nuin-ud-din Chisti, founder in the twelfth century of a family of saints and courtiers, a shrine second only to Mecca in the eyes of South Asian Muslims. Cultural practices mingle and mix. Hindu practices persist among converts to Islam—dietary laws are followed, marriage boundaries observed, festivals celebrated. Aristocratic north Indian culture, its language and manners, its music and cuisine, remained distinctively Persian at least until the time of Nehru, embodying the idioms of Mughal court culture. The region's leading performers of Hindu devotional music, the Dagar brothers, are Muslims. Village Muslims, like their urban brothers, share in local or neighborhood Ramayana performances and watch as eagerly as the rest of the nation when Doordarshan, Indian state-run television, airs the eighteen-month-long megaseries on the ("Hindu") *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*.

But not all practices promote a composite culture and unity in diversity. Hindu and Muslim religious sensibilities have vacillated between tendencies to naturalize and demonize differences. Political language in the nationalist era sometimes used religious symbols to make politics meaningful to common people for whom religion was a natural idiom. Religious language, however, is capable of many different forms of expression.

Some nationalists used Hindu religious symbolism that excluded Muslims. B. G. Tilak, India's most influential popular leader before Mahatma Gandhi, led the way in inventing "communalism," the term Indians use for community exclusivism and chauvinism. In the 1890s, keen to build a mass following, he revived a Maharashtrian festival commemorating the birth of Shiva's elephant-headed son, Ganesh, Hinduism's most beloved deity. For ten days each year villagers poured into cities and towns to celebrate and hear recitations of Hindu epic poetry. Ganapati festivals became occasions for clashes with Muslims when paramilitary "Ganesh guards" directed noisy parades past mosques at prayer time. Muslims began to retaliate by acts of profanation and desacralization, "killing cows" and cutting auspicious peepul trees. Bengali nationalists wrote plays and songs that alienated Muslims by using the theme of opposition to Muslim kings as a surrogate for opposition to British rule.

Secular nationalism took different forms: Nehru

maintained that science should ask and answer all questions; Gandhi believed that spiritual truth could be found in all religions. At Gandhi's prayer meetings, the Gita, the Koran and the Bible were read. He favored a national language-Hindustani-which could accommodate Urdu, the language of North Indian Muslims, and Hindi, the language of North Indian Hindus.

"Ancient hatreds" are thus made as much as they are inherited. To call them ancient is to pretend they are primordial forces, outside of history and human agency, when often they are merely synthetic antiques. Intellectuals, writers, artists and politicians "make" hatreds. Films and videos, 'texts and textbooks, certify stories about the past, the collective memories that shape perceptions and attitudes.

Before democracy, modernization and the nation-state, Hinduism was loose, open and diverse, a web of local and regional sectarian groupings defined by a sacred geography of places and events, deities and temples. The very term "Hinduism" was an abstraction, a word used by outsiders to describe a place and a people, not an institutionalized religion. Travelers-Hsuan Tsang, the seventh-century Chinese Buddhist pilgrim, and Alberuni, the eleventh-century Arab savant accompanying Mahmud of Ghazni-designated trans-Indus peoples as Hindus.

Instead of Hindus, there were followers of saints (*sants*): Kabir followers and Dadu followers, Vaishnavites in Gujarat and Bengal, Lingayats in Karnataka and Shivites in Tamilnadu, pursuing distinctive doctrines and practices. It is a truism to say Hinduism had no church. There was no pope, no ecclesia, no bishops to enunciate what was orthodox and heterodox, much less heretical or blasphemous. Great debates at Banaras reverberated through the centuries. Great teachers such as Shankara in the eighth century and Ramanuja in the twelfth were revered. But there was no all-India, transhistorical authority. Even today a local religious teacher in Jaipur or Bangalore is likely to be the person of greatest authority for her followers; no one is in a position to discipline her or to question her doctrine or ritual practices.

If there was no standard version of Hinduism until yesterday, then when and how did the day before yesterday end? How did it happen that the Bharatiya Janata Party was able to hijack Hinduism, replacing its diversity, multivocality and generativity with a monotheistic Ram cult? An answer can be found in the history of storytelling. The ancient legend of Ram, the virtuous god-king, incarnation of Vishnu, who wandered in exile for twelve years with his wife Sita before vanquishing the Southern demon Ravana, can be found all over India. It is a moral tale, exemplifying what right conduct should be between a king and his subjects and among generations, genders and relatives. Ram was an intimate deity, his representations infinitely diverse by region and locale. He was the subject of thousands of *Ramayanas* in many languages, of village drama cycles, of stories told by grandmothers, and today of epic comic books.

In time, Ram stories became consolidated. In *The Life*

of a Text: Performing the Ramcaritmanas of Tulsidas, Philip Lutgendorf writes that this sixteenth-century *Ramayana* was regarded "not merely as the greatest modern Indian epic, but as something like a living sum of Indian culture." Lutgendorf details how during the nineteenth century the recitations of the *Ramayana* became the vehicle for the "rise of the eternal religion" and how, through the *manas*, Hindus became a "people of the book." In 1984 the vastly popular recitals of the text, boxed in a set of eight audiocassettes, was the "hottest-selling recording in the thriving cassette stalls of Banaras," hotter even than the immensely popular cassettes of Hindi film music.

In January 1987 an eighteen-month-long serial of the *Ramayana* based on the *manas* began airing at 9:30 a.m., prime time, on state-run t.v. *Ramayana* episodes quickly became the most popular program ever shown, attracting an estimated 100 million viewers, roughly the size of the audience for presidential debates in America. On Sundays streets were deserted throughout India. Everyone was watching, even knots of cycle rickshaw drivers crowded in front of t.v. store windows.

The *Ramayana* "megaseries" took advantage of a new space for religious discourse in India, Pakistan, Iran, Oman and elsewhere, a public space outside the private arenas of family and village, temple and mosque. In this space a new public culture is being created and consumed. Distant persons, strangers, create representations of public culture for anonymous viewers. Values and symbols, meaning systems and metaphors, can be standardized for national consumption.

And what did the series do to grandmother's version of the Rama tale? Or to the village performance? In Gatali, located in the state of Rajasthan, the local village production of *Ramayana* wasn't performed in 1989. Village leaders who watched the television version had been impressed. The local version seemed to them amateurish by comparison. Why take the trouble and expense to put on an unworthy, moth-eaten version? Other Hinduish megaseries followed-such as the great epic *Mahabharata*, *Chanakya*, a Hindu nationalist reinvention of the Mauryan empire's cunning prime minister. Together they helped stamp out diversity and localism, replacing them with a national, standardized version of Hinduism, what historian and social critic Romila Thapar has characterized as syndicated, **semi-tized** Hinduism, a Hinduism of one Cod, one book, one place, one people, a religion resembling exclusivist versions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Ten months after the *Ramayana* megaseries, the Viihua Hindu Parishad (World Hindu Council) called on Hindus throughout India to make holy bricks, inscribed with Rama's name, for use at Ayodhya. There, at the site of Rama's birth, and on the place of the Babri Masjid, they would build a temple to Rama. Construction was deferred during the national elections of 1989. The Bharatiya Janata Party, which had captured only two seats with 8 percent of the vote in 1984, now garnered eighty-six seats with 11 percent. Its modest 3 per-

centage point increase in electoral votes suggests that the party gained eighty-four seats more by virtue of making electoral alliances than by an increase in popular support, but its electoral gains put religion in the political spotlight. After another two years the BJP emerged from the May-June 1991 election as India's second-largest party, its vote share bounding upward from 11 percent to 20 percent and its seats in Parliament increasing from eighty-six to 118. L. K. Advani told India's electorate that if the countries of Western Europe and the United States can call themselves Christian, India should be free to call itself Hindu.

One of the ways to think about the recent savaging of the Babri Masjid by young Hindu men is to see it as a renegotiation of political and economic power and status, or rather as a sign of the pathology of renegotiation. The youths we saw striding on the domes of the doomed mosque were wearing city clothes, shirts and trousers, not the *kurta* and *dhotis* of villagers or the urban poor. They looked like clerks, boys from urban lower-middle-class families. They are the educated unemployed, not the poor and illiterate. Frustrated by the lack of good jobs and opportunities, they are victims of modernization, seeking to victimize others-like "pampered" Muslims. In an India where, despite its problems, the number of persons under the poverty line has been declining and entrepreneurship expanding exponentially, their expectations have run well ahead of available opportunities.

Social mobility in India has become a widespread phenomenon. Liberalization and economic growth have enormously expanded the opportunities for many Indians. The '80s witnessed the highest economic growth rates of the last five decades. Green revolutionaries have grown prosperous on high-yielding varieties of wheat; doctors and engineers educated at government expense find public sector jobs; craftspeople who have parleyed workshops into lucrative enterprises supply large manufacturers. Such mobility is unhinging a severely hierarchical society, creating social stress bred of envy and resentment. Old, established Hindu middle classes, mostly from the upper literate and landed castes, suddenly see a whole range of **Johnny-come-latelies** at their side who only yesterday were their inferiors in status and income, both **low-caste** folk and Muslims. The hatred, that led Nathuram Godse to kill Mahatma Gandhi was bred in the resentment of upper castes on the way down. Gandhi had mobilized the periphery against the center, the lower castes and village poor against **Brahmanical** orthodoxy. These **are** **conflicts** generated by individuals using the opportunities of recent history.

The short-lived Janata party government of 1990, under V. P. Singh, recognized the political implications of the emergence into politics and social power of these new forces, forging an alliance of the "Backward Classes" (a *raj* euphemism for the disadvantaged lower castes) and Muslims. The Backward Classes, many of them agricultural castes who have profited from the

green revolution, have been demanding quotas in government jobs and education for decades. Their demands threaten the position of urban upper castes who respond to an appeal to Hindu identity, whose long traditions of literacy have given them the advantage in merit-based competitions, and who disproportionately control such jobs.

How is that relevant to the position of Muslims? They do not have such quotas, either in government jobs or in education. The main "privilege" they have in independent India is immunity for their religiously based family law, which allows "privileges" such as multiple marriages for men and easy divorce. Muslims also have had tacit guarantees, imperfectly enforced, from state and federal governments to be represented in Cabinet and party posts. These may not be substantial privileges, but to the upper castes in the midst of backlash against their slipping position, it is easier to resent minority "privileges" for Muslims than for other minorities. At 11 percent, Muslims are a more vulnerable target than the proportionately more numerous and politically more powerful "Backwards."

North India's Muslim population was decapitated at independence in 1947, when Muslim landowners and educated professionals, many descendants of Mughal court families, went to Pakistan. They left behind silk weavers in Banaras, gem cutters in Jaipur, poor cultivators and unskilled laborers, hewers of wood and drawers of water. But in recent years Muslims have found new opportunities through migratory labor to the Middle East.

A major component of India's foreign exchange has come from remittances of guest workers in the Gulf, Iraq and other Middle East countries. When several hundred thousand fled the Gulf war in early 1991, the precipitous fall in remittances that followed triggered a foreign exchange crisis that drove India into the arms of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. A large proportion of India's guest workers were (and are again) Muslims. For years they sent their earnings home to poor relatives scattered all over India. Their relatives built fancy houses and mosques cheek by jowl with the ostentatious homes and temples of newly rich Hindu neighbors. As Muslim youths joined the sons of green revolution farmers in sporting **jeans and** sunglasses, as their parents joined Hindu traders in wearing terry-cotton bush suits and driving Rajiv Gandhi's car of choice, the "Gypsy" off-road vehicle, newly rich Muslims elbowed their way ahead rather than lagging **respectfully** behind.

Prosperity has also bred resentment and anger among those in North India, **Kerala** and **Bombay** accustomed to Muslim invisibility and deference. Hindu **professionals** and businessmen expect Muslims to serve them as tailors and bakers. Industrial and office workers seeking jobs, better pay or promotions expect them to stick to their traditional occupations-weaving, gem cutting, brass tooling. Hindus often respond to Muslim mobility and wealth by challenging Nehru-style secular-

ism that offers special protection to Islam and Muslims. They decry it as privileging Muslim communalism and stigmatizing Hindu communalism. The Hindu backlash to minority protectionism asks, whose country is this anyway? In Bombay in early January, a month after the destruction of the Babri Masjid, the militantly Hindu, Muslim-hating Shiv Sena acted out the fiery images and language of its campaign videos by torching Muslim homes and shops. The Bombay elite's sense of being in charge and safe in India's most cosmopolitan city was shattered when roving bands searched for Muslim names in elegant apartments along hitherto sacrosanct Marine Drive, Club Road and Malabar Hill.

The prospect that the aspiring poor might receive yet another boost from government action helped precipitate the Ayodhya crisis. In August 1990 Prime Minister Singh's minority government implemented the Mandal Commission report. The report recommended "reservations"—quotas—in federal government employment for Backward Classes. Singh, who had campaigned on the issue, announced that 27 percent of federal jobs were to be reserved for Backward Classes. Together with the current 15 percent for untouchables (those at the bottom of the caste system) and the 7 percent for tribals, roughly their proportions of the population, reservations now totaled 49 percent, a ceiling set by the Supreme Court to maintain the credibility of the equal opportunity clause of the constitution.

Singh's minority government had been held in place by support from a number of left and right parties, including the Hindu-oriented BJP. The BJP leaders, who had not been consulted on the implementation, thought that Singh was ditching their party's support with a view to holding a midterm election that would give him a clear majority. He would appeal to the "minorities"—untouchables, lower castes, Muslims, tribals who together constituted some 60 percent of India's population. The BJP set out to trump Singh's social justice platform, which pitted the disadvantaged against the advantaged, with a Hindu communal unity appeal.

Indian politics began to polarize around *mandir* (temple) versus Mandal. Within a week, anti-Mandal, anti-reservation violence backed by the Congress Party and the BJP began in New Delhi and spread throughout northern India. Upper-caste students, fearful of lost job opportunities, protested the job reservations by blocking traffic, burning buses, forcing shopkeepers to close their businesses and staging immolation rituals that sometimes ended in tragedy. Building on the discontents, BJP president L.K. Advani set out on a 10,000-kilometer chariot pilgrimage to arrive at Ayodhya for the proposed construction of a Ram temple. The country was convulsed as pro- and anti-pilgrimage violence joined anti-reservation violence and refocused attention from Mandal to *mandir*. Advani was arrested on October 23, 1990, and the BJP formally withdrew its support of Singh's government, which fell on November 7. Advani had succeeded in polarizing Indian politics on communal rather than caste-class lines.

The Babri Masjid destruction and the ensuing violence tells us something about the making of "ancient" hatreds: that they are being made in Lebanon, Bosnia, the republics of the former Soviet Union, Iraq, Israel, South-Central Los Angeles and Crown Heights—all those places where neighbors and friends have turned into foreigners and enemies. The enlightenment's vision prophesied human progress, modernization predicted affluence with equality and democracy promised fellow feeling and shared citizenship. Together they foretold a world in which Santa Claus would join the menorah in Hanukkah cards, WASPs eat pizza and Anglos tacos, Muslim performers sing Hindu devotional music and Colin Powell could be chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Thinking people are less sanguine about rationality, modernization and democracy reducing ethnic and religious solidarities to harmless dietary differences. Religion has not retreated with increasing media exposure and political participation. The reverse seems to be the case. Religion is on the rise everywhere, from the religious right in Colorado Springs to Islamic fundamentalism in Tehran. It exhibits benign enthusiasm, spiritual exaltation and neo-communitarianism on the one hand, exclusionary and even deadly intolerance on the other. As political ideology recedes with the collapse of communism, the politics of identity and community, of religion, ethnicity and gender have begun to occupy the space vacated by political ideology. Directly and indirectly, religion, ethnicity and gender increasingly define what politics is about, from the standing of Muslim personal law and monuments in India to Muslim and Christian Serbs and Croats sharing sovereignty in Bosnia to the Clinton administration's effort to appoint a government that "looks like America."

Which identities become relevant for politics is not predetermined by some primordial ancientness. They are crafted in benign and malignant ways in print and electronic media, in textbooks and advertising, in India's *t.v. megaseries* and America's talk shows, in campaign strategies, in all the places and all the ways that self and other, us and them, are represented in an expanding public culture. The struggle in India between Mandal and *mundir*, between quota government and Hindu nationalism, reminds us that in America too the politics of interest is being overtaken by cultural politics, the politics of gender, family values, race and sexual orientation. When *t.v. talking heads* and *op-ed contributors* portray "mobs" as "frenzied" and believers as "fanatic," they have given up the task of discerning the human inducements and political calculations that make politics happen. They have given up making motives visible and showing how they are transformed. "Ancient hatreds" function like the "evil empire." That term too was a projection on a *scrim*, obscuring the motives and practice that lay behind it. The doctrine of ancient hatreds may become the post-cold war's most robust mystification, a way of having an enemy and knowing evil that deceives as it satisfies. The hatred is modern, and may be closer than we think. •