The Bharatiya Janata Party of India: A social movement striving for political dominance

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THE BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY OF INDIA: A SOCIAL MOVEMENT
STRIVING FOR POLITICAL DOMINANCE

by

Joel Aaron Lauer

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Communication Studies

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University of Nevada, Las Vegas
May 1997
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ABSTRACT

There has been a rise in religious nationalism over the past two decades throughout the world. This study will focus on one political party that has gained much of its popularity through the appeal to Hindu nationalism: The Bharatiya Janata Party of India (The BJP). This study will use James Darseys catalytic event model to study the events that have shaped the BJP, the rhetorical periods that these events spurred, and the values of the BJP during these periods. This study has also incorporated "The Evil" from Robert Frykenbergs model to attempt to show what group the BJP criticizes during each period.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

India is often referred to as "the country of tolerance" by world leaders around the world, but this label is actually a myth propagated by the Indian government many years ago in an attempt to maintain stability. This label has been shown to be opposite to anything that India has experienced since the beginning of the 1980's (Mahmood, 1993). Until recently, the Indian government successfully maintained the appearance of stability. However, India has experienced more ethnic strife from 1980 to 1997 than it did from 1949, the year that India was recognized as a country, to 1979 (Swamy, December 18, 1996). The BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party of India) is a Hindu nationalist party that has tended to be at the center of the problems that India has faced over the last 15 years. L.K. Advani, a leader of the BJP, has said, "We are creating a nationalist force in the country--we are changing the nature of politics...Nehru said, 'We shall crush [the Hindu movement].' I say we shall crush the crushing mentality...This is our war, our revolt." (Coll, January 2, 1991).

India is now at an historic crossroads which pits the BJP and its anti-secular allies against the Congress Party of India and its secular allies (Ayoob, 1996). The most recent confrontation between the groups occurred in the spring of 1996, when the BJP ruled India for one week. The BJP was not able to gain a majority or form a coalition
India and thus this is an important time to look at the possible future rulers of India, since future policy makers around the world may have to deal with the BJP in the near future.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to analyze the rhetoric surrounding politics in India, specifically, rhetoric of the BJP. The intent of this study is to argue that there are catalytic events that have shaped the BJP and the values that it believes in and promotes. I will use James Darsey’s (1991) catalytic event model to discover and the examine the catalytic events, the eras that the catalytic events create, and the values of the BJP within the rhetorical periods that the catalytic events create. Finally, I will attempt to outline the future of the BJP and reveal if they will truly rule India before the end of this century.

JUSTIFICATION

This study is of value for two reasons. First, although much research has been done in the area of social movements, there is a lack of scholarly, both communication and non-communication oriented, research on Hindu nationalism in general, and the BJP specifically. Most scholarly research is found in political science journals. These articles mainly focused on the BJP over a short time frame within the movement. The articles did not look at any prolonged time periods. The dearth of research within the communication field is surprising. Because of a lack of previous research, this essay will hopefully bring about a new understanding of a group and culture that has not been studied by
communication scholars. This new research will bring to light aspects of this culture so that researchers may understand the culture and the group more.

Second, I believe that India is an important country to study in this time of ethnic conflict throughout the world. For forty-eight years India has balanced the interest of Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jains, Muslims, Sikhs, and numerous other religious and ethnic groups. It is remarkable that a country like India has remained relatively stable, and much can be learned by looking at ethnic movements within Indian society. Without knowledge of ethnic conflict around the world, it will be much harder for world leaders to solve ethnic conflict.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature reviewed for this thesis falls into three categories: 1) studies focusing on investigations of social movements; 2) literature which contains studies focusing on Hinduism and Indian politics; 3) Popular magazines and newspapers which focus on Indian politics.

Social Movement Literature

Leland Griffin's (1969) essay, "The Dramatistic Theory of the Rhetoric of Social Movements", examines the progression of social movements over time. In this essay Griffin argues that to study a social movement, "is to study a progress, a rhetorical striving, a becoming. It is progress from stasis to stasis..." (pp. 461-462). In effect, Griffin argues that every movement is divided into a series of stages.
James Darsey (1991) in his essay, "From 'Gay is good' to the Scourge of AIDS: The Evolution of Gay Liberation Rhetoric, 1977-1990", has taken Griffin's analysis further by arguing that every movement is shaped by catalytic events. These catalytic events, "(1) are historical rather than rhetorical, (2) are nontactical (either extraneous to the movement in origin, spontaneous in origin, or both), (3) achieve tremendous significance for the movement, and (4) precede rhetorical responses that constitute demonstrably discrete internally homogeneous rhetorical eras" (p 46). More will be said about James Darsey and the catalytic event theory in the Method section.

Mary G. McEdwards (1968) article, "Agitative Rhetoric: Its Nature and Effect", investigates social movements and the use of agitative rhetoric to achieve their goals. McEdwards states that a social movement always evokes "extreme movement from the status quo." McEdwards argues that this is the main reason that people have a negative reaction when they hear about social movements. People, she argues, do not like to be stirred out of their status quo existence. McEdwards concludes that the agitators have found that powerful rhetoric is needed if they aim to achieve radical goals.

Maurice Charland (1993), in his essay "Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the Peuple Quebecois", argues that although people may not like to listen to movements that argue for change from the status quo, they are nonetheless shackled into listening. He explains that people are bound to listen if they are around near the speaker. This point seems especially true for political parties, such as the BJP, since without the subjects they would
have no audience to persuade. Thus, although audiences may dislike agitative rhetoric, the audiences are bound to listen to the agitator because the audience is in the right place at the right time.

**Academic Literature on Hinduism and Indian Politics**

The first category that should be examined when studying a Hindu political party is literature that examines Hinduism as a religion. Daniel Gold (1991) argues that Hindus have historically been aware of themselves as many different groups and not as one unified community. When the British colonized and formed what they called India, they labeled the natives with words such as Sikh, Hindu, and Muslim. The British labeled these people because they felt that the natives shared some sort of tradition that was based on religion (Gold, p. 536). The British actually created Hinduism out of many diverse groups. This grouping together of many different groups to form Hinduism explains why there are many different scriptures and texts within this religion, rather than one unified religious text.

The people who have been labeled as Hindus do not share a unified vision of themselves. They usually describe themselves by their caste or community, not as Hindus (Narayanan, 1996). However, the rise of Hindu nationalism in the form of political parties is raising questions about the belief that Hindus will never see themselves as a group. Although Hindu nationalism is on the rise, any group, from inside or outside, that attempts...
to unify Hindus is going to face an uphill battle because of the lack of any one holy book or prophet within Hinduism.

In studying the BJP, I have focused on articles and books that look at the BJP as a social or political movement. Not much of importance was written on the BJP before 1991, a year before the mosque in Ayodhya, India was razed. An excellent account of the years before and the months after the razing of the Ayodhya mosque exists in Creating A Nationality: The Ramjanmabhumi Movement and Fear of the Self (Nandy, Trivedy, Mayaram, Yagnik, 1995). Nandy, et al explore the historical development of the destruction of the Ayodhya Mosque. The authors conclude that the government of India spurred the destruction of the mosque by implementing the Mandal Commission, a report that called for affirmative action for Muslims and the untouchables within India. The BJP disliked the Mandal Commission, but it wanted to divert attention from the fact that it opposed a policy that was aimed at helping lower caste Hindus. The BJP retaliated against the Indian government by marching to Ayodhya to protest the implementation of the Mandal Commission, but the BJP claimed that it was just attempting to unite Hindus against Muslims.

In 1990 the BJP was stopped from starting riots over the mosque. However, the Indian populace was not so lucky in 1992. Just as the Mandal commission resulted in lots of agitation caused by the BJP, Narayanan (1996) investigated the causes for the change of values in the BJP after the razing of the mosque in 1992. He found that the BJP lost
many of its more moderate votes when it attacked the mosque. The BJP, in response to the loss in popularity among the moderates, started changing its values and rhetoric to attempt to regain the lost votes. In essence, the BJP realized that to gain power it had to moderate its views. In a similar article, Eric Kolodner (1995) described the losses that the BJP suffered after they destroyed the mosque and the resulting moderation that the BJP pursued so that it could reestablish itself as a party with influence in the country.

Ayoob (1997) examines the 1996 Indian National elections in which the BJP ruled for one week. The BJP could not form a working majority so it had to resign. This article argues that the elections were a significant turning point for the BJP and that they are currently in a re-evaluation phase that will result in a decision that will affect all of Indian politics. This soul searching could result in either a moderate or much more radical BJP.

**Popular Literature**

The final group of literature comes from newspapers and non-academic magazines. Again, just like the academic literature, not much was written in popular literature about the BJP before the 1990's.

Clarke (1993, June 12) explained that after the Ayodhya riots, the BJP became more and more radical in its rhetoric, while increasing in power. This radicalizing of the BJP almost destroyed it because as the leaders were becoming more and more radical they were also losing many of their more moderate followers. Dalyrymple (1992, December 13) also agrees with the view that the 1992 riots put the BJP in a very difficult situation.
While many of the upperclass voters, the main supporters of the BJP, supported the razing of the mosque, many of the lower classes felt alienated by the riots. This situation hurt the BJP because the party was attempting to get lower class support. Many of the moderate BJP members distanced themselves from the group.

Ghosh (1993, September 18) examines the issue of the BJP’s attempt to rule India and explains that shortly after the destruction of the Ayodhya mosque the BJP realized that it needed to focus on another issue. The issue that the BJP chose was the economy. Ghosh explains that the BJP leadership realized that without a solid economic policy it would never rule India. Sang (1995, May 25) also delves into the issue of the BJP and its attempt to create an economic policy. As these authors explain, by the spring of 1995 the BJP was already creating its new economic policy and accusing the government of helping multinational companies at the expense of hard working Indians. The electorate praised the BJP’s movement toward a formulation of a socioeconomic policy. By the summer of 1995, (Graves 1995, August 9) the BJP organized non-violent protest groups throughout India, thus getting its economic message out to the populace. Trying to bring forward the imagery of a war on an economic battlefield, the BJP, “has identified it (Swadeshi) as the battle-cry for the polls.” (Handoo, December 6, 1995). This battle cry for their economic policy has become, “an economy of the people, by the people, and for the people.” (Handoo, December 6, 1995).
In 1995 politicians and reporters realized that the elections of 1996 would be a battle between the BJP and the then ruling Congress Party, the party that Gandhi formed.

The general election next spring will be critical, a battle between those who adhere to the Nehruvian ideal and the Hindu nationalist movement, with its strong thread of extremism and fanaticism, which has risen to political strength by exploiting prejudice (Fishlock, 1995).

Besides the issue of secularism, which the BJP attempted to avoid as much as possible because it was attempting to moderate its values, the 1996 elections tended to focus on corruption within Indian politics. Specifically, the BJP focused on the seemingly irreversible corruption that was plaguing the Congress Party. Manjeet Kripalani and Nicole Harris investigate the issue of corruption and how the BJP used it to win the 1996 elections (1996, May 20). The BJP wielded the weapon of corruption so well during the elections that it resulted in the replacement of the former Prime Minister P.V. Narashimo Rao by Sitaram Kesri in the Indian Congress almost five months after the 1996 elections. The reason, as John Zubrycki explains, is that Rao was tainted by so much corruption before the 1996 elections (1997, January 6).

Most of the literature that has been written since the 1996 elections focuses on the impending collapse of the current ruling Indian coalition. This coalition was formed solely to stop the BJP from calling new elections, not because any of the parties are similar to one another. This coalition is composed of 13 different parties ranging from free market
capitalists to communists (Swamy, December 18, 1996; The Morning Call (Allentown), June 7, 1996; Xinhua New Agency, December 26, 1996).

METHODOLOGY

In order to study the ever-changing group known as the BJP, I will use James Darseys' catalytic events model (1991). As stated earlier, Darsey identifies catalytic events within movements and the rhetorical events that ensue. I will also borrow from Robert Frykenbergs' religious fundamentalism model in which he identifies five issues that all fundamentalist movements reflect in order to be successful. In this thesis I use "the evil" from Frykenberg's model. "The evil" is a group or person that the movement focuses on and says must be destroyed.

"The evil" is almost always a danger from within a society. "Like a serpent, it is insidious and insinuating. Betrayal and deception lurk inside the shadows of the best of societies."(Frykenberg, 1994, p. 595). "The evil" is relevant when studying a religious social movement because of the inherent desire of religious groups to blame someone for anything that goes wrong. This is especially true of Hindu groups (Frykenberg, 1994).

The methodology in this paper will include identifying catalytic events that have affected the BJP movement in India, the identification of the rhetorical eras created by the catalytic event, an examination of "the evil" in each rhetorical era, and the value appeals within the BJP during the different rhetorical eras. The catalytic events are events in India.
that resulted in changes in the values of the BJP and in the overall power structure relating to the BJP.

Many may ask why a non-western group can be studied using two theories that have been formulated in the western world, there are three reason for this. First, as noted earlier in this paper, Hinduism is largely a creation of the west. Therefore, a western model may be superior to a model that was created in India because the western model has possibly been created in the mindset of Hinduism itself.

Second, the BJP is pro-western. While the BJP is anti-western in certain instances, such as what they label junk food culture. The BJP sees low level jobs, such as restaurants, as the junk food culture. On the other hand, the BJP is a very pro-western when it comes to high technology and firms that it sees as helping India. This answers the problem that some people may have with studying a group that is perceived as overtly anti-western. The third and final reason that the BJP can be studied effectively with the theories that are in this thesis is because Frykenberg did much of work in South Asia. This means that this theory was created in the culture that it is studying.

Era one begins with a catalytic event which occurred on April 4, 1980- the banning of membership in the Janata coalition and the RSS at the same time- and continues until 1984 with the humiliating defeat of the BJP in elections. This era was a formation period in which the BJP embraced moderate views.
Era two began in 1986 when two catalytic events occurred. The first event was when the Congress Party passed through Parliament the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights On Divorce) Bill which followed traditional Islamic laws. The second event was the opening of the Ayodhya Mosque, which had been locked since 1970. This period ended in 1990.

The third era began on August 7, 1990 with the announcement by the ruling government that it would implement the Mandal Commission, a job reservation program. This period ended in 1992.

The fourth era began on December 6, 1992 with the demolition of the Ayodhya Mosque and ends with the 1996 elections in which the BJP took power for 19 days. This period marked a return to moderation for the BJP in its attempt to gain power and is the completion of the 16-year period for this case study.

It is hoped that this case study will lead to the identification of unique insights in the development of BJP rhetoric from 1980 to 1996. Hopefully, this study will allow the examiner to draw conclusions about how the BJP rhetoric has changed over the past 16 years.
CHAPTER 2

THE BJP IS BORN

Period One

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Politics in India is unstable, but 1980 was truly an unusual year even for India: The first non-Congress national government since partition in 1947 suffered a huge defeat. Thus, the Congress Party was once again at the helm of India. In addition, the Bharatiya Jana Sangh part of the Janata Party that had ruled India since 1977 broke away and formed a new political party called the Bharatiya Janata Party, or The Indian People's Party, on April 5th, 1980 (Frykenberg, 1993). No one could foresee it at the time, but the BJP would be in the race to rule India by the end of the 1980's.

In 1975 Indira Gandhi, daughter of the late Jawaharlal Nehru and, at that time ruler of India, called a national emergency after the Supreme Court of India invalidated her seat in Congress due to charges of corruption. Gandhi ignored the Supreme Court ruling and called for a crack down on all political opponents. She placed all people that she believed were subversive under preventive detention. The result of this crackdown was two years during which popularity of Hindu nationalism increased. In 1977 Gandhi lifted the state of national emergency and called new national elections. The elections resulted in the first
non-Congress Party government. The coalition was composed of many different parties with various ideologies, including the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, or the Jana Sangh as they were commonly known. The Jana Sangh was a nationalist party that gained many of its supporters because of its Hindu nationalistic rhetoric. However, the main reason it was such an integral part of the Janata Party was because of its discipline and organization, traits which the other parties in the coalition lacked (Embree, 1994). Indian political groups are usually unorganized and undisciplined, but not the Jana Sangh. The Jana Sangh was disciplined because of its affiliation with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, or the RSS. The RSS, which still exists today, is a Hindu nationalist group that prides itself on its organization. Its supporters refer to its organization as looking like the boy scouts. Its critics liken the RSS organization to the Nazi Party of Germany. The RSS has promised not to be a traditional political party, but this promise has not stopped it from supporting political parties. It has therefore become a quasi-political entity.

Unfortunately for the Jana Sangh and the Janata Party, the membership that most of the Jana Sangh members had with the RSS became a contentious issue. This became an issue because of the history of the RSS. Before 1977, the RSS had been implicated in many bombings in India, and it was also alleged that Mahatma Gandhi’s assassin had been a member of the RSS. Because of actions such as these, any affiliations with the RSS were shunned by most citizens. This dual-membership controversy proved to be the end for the Janata coalition, which was so focused on party in-fighting that it could not focus
on the elections during 1980. The result of the dual-membership controversy was the victory of Indira Gandhi (after the Supreme Court dropped the corruption charges) and her Congress Party.

On April 4th, 1980 the majority of the Janata Party executive board voted to outlaw any member of the party from working with a front organization. This action prevented any member of the Janata party from being a member of both the Janata Party and the RSS (Ram Rejoins, 1980). The outlawing of dual membership in the Janata coalition and the RSS resulted in the formation of the BJP on April 5th, 1980, by most of the members of the Jana Sangh, and the beginning of an era for the newly formed BJP.

The birth of the BJP received scant attention by the media. The reason for this lack of media attention was because its predecessor had never had much success at the polls, (except during the 1977 elections and only then when it formed a coalition with a diverse set of political parties). One of the reasons that the Jana Sangh had not had much success was its fanatical use of Hindu nationalistic rhetoric which only motivated a specific group of Indians. When the BJP was formed, its leaders consciously decided to moderate its rhetoric and values in an attempt to get more votes and appear as a viable alternative to the moderate Congress Party (Frykenberg, 1993). One example is the creation of the BJP flag, which had the color green which is associated with Islam.

Following the creation of the BJP, the leaders of the newly formed BJP felt betrayed by their former colleagues in the moderate Janata Dal coalition. The leaders had joined
the Janata Party in an attempt to gain power so they could force their views on the populace. However, the leaders of the Jana Sangh soon discovered that, when they joined the Janata government, they had to give up their individuality and autonomy. When the BJP was formed, the leaders vowed never to give up their autonomy again (Auerbach, December 28, 1981).

THE EVIL

The BJP coalesced in an attempt to destroy the evil, which was the Congress party. Everything that the BJP did was an attempt to vanquish the Congress Party from office.

Corruption and danger and pollution come from outside, from out there, in the world. That is expected. But there is often a danger more deadly. It comes from within. Like a serpent, it is insidious and insinuating. Betrayal and deception lurk inside the shadows of the best of societies (Frykenberg, 1994, p. 595).

The BJP saw the Congress party as evil because it was extremely corrupt, especially since the time Indira Gandhi declared a national emergency. When speaking about the Congress party in this era, the BJP used words such as “betrayal and exploitation”. The Congress Party was also seen as the protector of secularism, which the BJP saw as undemocratic because it saw this as an attempt to avoid the majority’s values. In the BJP’s eyes there was no need to protect a minority through law. The minority should accept the rule of the majority.
VALUE APPEALS

Unity through individuality in the BJP is the key value appeal in this rhetorical period. The BJP leaders felt that they had been betrayed by the Congress Party, but they also felt that they had been betrayed by the members of the Janata Coalition. This sense of betrayal meant that, even though the BJP was opposed to the Congress Party, it was also opposed to the other political parties. The BJP was in its formation phase, which meant that it must stay unified or risk assimilation by another political party.

The unity of the BJP was given its first test at the end of 1981 and the beginning of 1982, when various political parties started forming a coalition to align against the Congress Party. The coalition desperately needed the support of the BJP, because it was perceived as having the support of militant, middle-class Hindus, a large voting bloc. Contrary to the hopes of the coalition, the BJP declined to join the coalition because of its past experience with the Janata coalition. The coalition was unable to win the fight against the Congress Party, perhaps because of the lack of BJP support (The Economist, December 19, 1981). However, the ability to avoid joining a coalition was a key moral victory for the BJP, which had been unsure of its political ability to remain unified. The other opposition parties in India once again asked the BJP to join a coalition in 1984, but L.K. Advani, the Secretary General of the BJP, quick to show that the BJP was unified, said “There is no question of a fusion of identities” (April 25, 1982).
Besides attempting to unify itself, the BJP was also attempting to unify Indians against the Congress Party and, to a lesser extent, the other political parties. One of the ways that the BJP attempted to unify India was by accusing the Congress Party of corruption. In 1984 the BJP formalized these charges by issuing a manifesto against the Congress Party that accused it of institutionalizing corruption within India (O'Neil, November 30, 1984).

In 1981, the Indian government reported that India had produced a record wheat crop, but it then stated that India had to import grain. The BJP used this statement to its own benefit in an attempt to unite Indians against the Congress Party. The BJP called for the resignation of the Union Food Minister and then proceed to call the Congress Party treacherous and a threat to the nation (India Imports, July 10, 1981).

The BJP also capitalized on the perception that Gandhi was becoming less and less democratic. In 1984, Gandhi dismissed the chief minister of the state of Jammu and Kashmir (Williams, July 11, 1984). This dismissal resulted in the BJP joining other groups to show its support for democracy and unity. The BJP and its allies sharply criticized Gandhi for her use of police powers instead of calling for new elections in the state.

The BJP went one step further than just calling for unity against the Congress Party. It called for unity against the United States and international pressure to open its economy. The call was for self-reliance. In 1982, the Congress Party succumbed to United States' wishes and desist reprocessing nuclear fuel. The BJP accused the government of bowing down to the United States and called for Indians to unite against the United States. In the
same year Atal Behari Vajpayee, the president of the BJP, accused the Indian government of accepting conditions on loans from the International Monetary Fund. The BJP attempted to force the Indian government into either giving back the money or refusing the conditions.

Moderation was the second value appeal that the BJP used during this rhetorical period. The BJP leaders thought that the reason the Jana Sangh had never been very prominent (except in coalitions) was because of its radical stance toward Muslims and other non-Hindus. The Jana Sangh had taken the stance that the Indian nation should consist of only Hindus, or at least that non-Hindus should accept Hindu rule. On the other hand, the Congress Party had always been in favor of a secular state and had stayed in power because of its moderate views. The Congress Party had always tried to protect all religions and minorities. The BJP immediately set to preserve some of the broader base of support that the Jana Sangh had known while it was part of the moderate Janata coalition. The result was an ironic reversal of roles between the BJP, heir to the radical Jana Sangh, and the Congress Party, the party traditionally that protected minority rights.

The BJP made Vajpayee its president, because of his history of moderation. During the ruling period of the Janata government, Vajpayee had been the foreign minister and had dealings with Pakistan, the most populous Muslim State in the world. Vajpayee was able to create constructive relations between India and Pakistan and the BJP hoped that he would be able to lure Muslims and other minorities to the BJP. The BJP also appointed
Sikhanda Bakht, a Muslim, as one of its general secretaries in an attempt to appear moderate (Gold, 1991).

The BJP did more to appeal to moderates than just appoint moderate leaders. The BJP went so far as to make sure that the symbols associated with the BJP were seen as moderate. The first symbol that the BJP changed was its party flag. The Jana Sangh flag was saffron, a flag associated with Hindu nationalism (Gold, 1991). The newly created BJP flag was saffron and green. The green was extremely important because it is a color associated with Islam. The flag was meant to symbolize the unification of Hindus and Muslims. The BJP also made the lotus, an Indian symbol, its official symbol. The BJP, once again, was attempting to appeal to the non-Hindus.

The BJP was, in essence, striving to become the party that was truly the Indian’s People Party. At the same time, Gandhi and the Congress Party were becoming more and more embroiled in the separatist troubles of India. Therefore, the Congress Party and the BJP had almost completed an ironic reversal of roles. Gandhi who started playing the Hindu card by speaking about Hindu hegemony over all of the other people of India (Frykenberg, 1993). She raised Muslim fears in all of India and turned a deaf ear to Sikh pleas for mercy and democracy when they were faced against the Indian army.

The BJP thought that its appeal for moderation would pay off but it resulted in the defeat of the BJP in the 1984 elections. Almost all of the RSS supporters left the ranks of
the BJP, because of its apparent abandonment of Hindu nationalism, and voted for their supposedly secular opponents.

The intensification of the religiopolitical crisis during Indira Gandhi’s administration, in part the result of some of her policies, dealt heavy blows to the structural stability of India’s political system. The government’s anxiety to win Hindu support, coupled with its failure to satisfy Sikh demands for autonomy, even in a limited way, resulted in turmoil and an increase in terrorism. This in turn led to the strengthening of radical factions within Sikh as well as Hindu fundamentalism. The Operation Blue Star storming of the Golden Temple at Amritsar on 5 June 1984, for example, led to a spiral of retaliatory violence in which the prime minister herself was assassinated by two Sikh bodyguards (31 October), and over three thousand Delhi Sikhs were in turn massacred at the hands of Congress supporters and Hindu nationalists. The parliamentary elections held in the aftermath of these events communalized the issue of national unity; a blatant form of competitive communalism between major parties and a flagrant exploitation of communal vote banks contributed to Rajiv Gandhi’s landslide victory a few weeks later. The Congress party had effectively co-opted BJP issues and had encroached upon BJP constituencies. Congress even won support from RSS leaders who were worried about ways to check India’s disintegration (Frykenberg, 1993, p. 245).
Why did the BJP’s appeal of moderate values fail? Many people within India associated the BJP with the RSS (which had been accused of assassinating Mahatma Gandhi), and the Jana Sangh (which had been part of a an unstable Janata government). The Congress Party, on the other hand, was associated with Mahatma Ghandi, who had been a great hero for India and society as a whole. While the people of India saw that the Congress Party had been accused of corruption, people tended to favor the stability of the Congress Party over the unknown BJP.

The BJP also lost the most important people within its organization: the RSS. Although not all RSS members were members of the BJP, they had traditionally supported nationalist organizations that espoused Hindu hegemony. Once the BJP started moderating its rhetoric, it forgot about the RSS. The Congress Party did not forget about the RSS, and Gandhi embarked on a campaign to generate a wave of Hindu nationalism behind her party (Claiborne, August 27, 1983). The Congress Party quickly became the defender of Hindu rights. It counted on the fact that most people would not believe the BJP truly believed in rights for non-Hindus. The reason that the Congress Party felt that Hindus would believe it was because the Congress Party could actually implement legislation and laws to protect Hindus in order to show its sincerity. Gandhi spurned the Muslims by passing up the opportunity to link Congress with the Moslem National Conference Party, all in the name of pursuing the Hindu vote. However, since the BJP
was a smaller party, it did not have the votes or voice to show that it was sincere about protecting minorities.

In 1983 the Congress Party started rumors of meeting with RSS leaders in secret. These rumors incensed the BJP leaders, especially when the RSS leaders never denied the meetings. The Congress Party made a grab for the Hindu votes in northern India, which is a key area of votes.

However, even in 1983 people knew that Hindu nationalism could get out of control if not quickly stopped. "The danger of creating a wave of strong Hindu nationalist sentiment in northern India...is that Gandhi could lose control of the movement and it could grow to challenge the authority of Congress." (Claiborne, August 27, 1983).

Gandhi and the rest of the Congress Party had truly unleashed a movement that would prove to threaten the secular democracy that had made up India since its partition in 1947. By getting the Hindu vote in 1984, Gandhi won a short term victory without thinking about the long term effect that the division of Hindus and Muslim would have on India.

Little did the BJP or the other political parties realize in 1984, but the BJP's electoral fortunes would start to change in 1986. 1986 would mark the unleashing of the BJP as a nationalist force. It would quickly shed its image as a moderate party for all Indians and it would join forces with the RSS and the VHP, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (The World Hindu Society). This would result in the emergence of the BJP as the champion for Hindu rights.
CHAPTER 3

THE BJP RETURNS TO ITS RADICAL ROOTS

Period Two

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

At the onset of the second period, spanning from 1986 to 1990, the BJP rose in power by capturing the Hindu votes that the Congress Party had previously gotten. In the beginning of 1986, the Congress Party committed two acts that are the catalytic events for this period.

In 1978, the Muslim Ahmed Shab divorced his wife of forty four years, Shah Bano. He then returned her dowry, as was required by Muslim community law. Shah Bano sued for maintenance and was awarded a sum of rupees per month, to be paid by Ahmed Shab. Shab appealed to the Supreme Court, arguing that the maintenance violated Muslim community law, in which the wife’s family was supposed to support her. The Supreme Court, at the end of 1986, decided that Shah Bano should be awarded maintenance and that she had not been awarded enough, so the court increased the amount to be paid (Frykenberg, 1993).

The result of the ruling was a significant protest by Muslims, who argued that the Hindu majority was taking away their rights. At issue was a fundamental conflict between
procedural and substantive law. When India was created by the British, each communities
customs and laws were to be respected as long as peace was not endangered (Frykenberg,
1993).

The ruling was tied to the Congress Party, because, in India, the ruling party can
invalidate a court decision if the party does not like the ruling. At first, Rajiv Gandhi
supported the Court ruling and announced that all divorced women should get alimony.
Political reality soon set in for Gandhi. The Supreme Court ruling was seen “as a threat to
Islam and to the identity of the Muslims in India” (Embree, 1990, p. 100). Gandhi and the
Congress Party still depended on the Muslim vote, so Gandhi responded to this mistrust
by forcing the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights On Divorce) Bill through a reluctant
Parliament. This bill preserved the Muslim Personal law that orthodox Muslims alleged
the Supreme court had invalidated. The bill barely passed through Parliament on May 5,
1986 (Rudolph, 1988). The result invalidated the Shah Bano court decision.

In December of 1985 the Congress Party lost as an election. Then in February of 1986
the Congress Party saw that its popularity ratings falling in the polls. Congress Party
members reasoned that ratings were falling because of the Shah Bano issue. The party had
failed to act quickly enough to recover the Muslim votes after the Shah Bano debacle.
The Congress, by February 1986, was working to remedy this problem by attempting to
pass the Muslim Women Rights Bill. The Congress Party did not realize what a disaster
this bill would pose for its attempt to get the Hindu vote. The Congress Party alienated
the Hindu voters when it pushed the bill through Congress. The Congress Party then made a serious error in the way that it attempted to placate the Hindu voters when it opened up the Babri Masjid.

In February of 1986 the Congress Party allowed the Babri Mosque, a Muslim Mosque in Ayodhya that had been locked since 1970, to be reopened. This mosque is important to Hindus, who believe that the Mosque is on the site where Rama, a Hindu God and Hero, had been born and where a temple had been built to honor him. Hindus believe that Babur, the first of the Mughal emperors, singled out and destroyed the mosque to celebrate the victory of Islam over the Hindus.

In 1949 idols of Rama appeared, or were placed, in the Babri Mosque. Hindus claimed that the idols were a divine action by Ram while Muslims claimed that Hindu revivalists had entered the mosque and set up the idols to defile the holy place. Soon after the idols appeared Muslims and Hindus clashed. The animosity between the two groups quickly reached the boiling point and in 1970 the local magistrate ordered the doors of the mosque, or temple, to be locked until the issue was settled (Embree, 1990).

On February 14, 1986, a state judge ruled that Hindus could use the building as a temple until the issue was resolved. This action did not preclude Muslims from also using the building as a mosque (Van Der Veer, 1994). The ruling meant that, for a certain number of days each year, Hindus could enter the Muslim mosque, but, for the rest of the year, it could only be used by Muslims. The Congress Party saw this situation as the
vehicle to assuage the growing unease due to the focus on the Shah Bano affair. This attempt to appease both Muslims and Hindus backfired on the Congress Party, and helped the BJP.

Two days after the court decision, Muslims and Hindus took to the streets to protest the ruling. Neither side was happy with the decision. Syed Shahabuddin, a Muslim member of Parliament, said “For a Muslim, nothing could be more shocking, more insulting, than the sign of idol worship inside of a mosque.” (Tempest, April 13, 1986). Hindus and the BJP members were a little happier than the Muslims. However, the BJP still wanted the mosque to be replaced with a temple.

The influx of Muslims and Hindus into Ayodhya brought the city to the boiling point. On either the 13th or 14th of February, the riots started in Ayodhya. No one knows who started the riots, but the Hindus and Muslims struck at each other with a vengeance. The violence soon spread throughout India. The government stood paralyzed and horrified by the result of its ruling. On March 7th, the Congress Party finally retaliated against the violence. Prime Minister Gandhi ordered the dismissal of Chief Minister G.M. Shah and ordered Governor’s rule, which is the dismissal of the state government and the imposition of central government control, in Utter Pradesh, the state where Ayodhya is located. Gandhi soon placed a curfew on many Muslim neighborhoods in India and banned all religious rallies and meetings. Gandhi once again was attempting to get Hindu votes by
not placing curfews on Hindu neighborhoods, but the BJP was already reforming its strategy and values to reach the Hindu voters.

As the riots over the Babri mosque subsided, the Congress Party finally got the Muslim Women Rights Bill through Parliament. But the bill did not have the effect that the Congress Party had envisioned. Many Muslims felt that the Congress Party had abandoned them when it allowed the initial Shah Bano court decision. Muslims were not about to be fooled by a Congress Party that was only looking for votes and not for the best interest of its constituents. The Congress Party had been trying to increase its votes with Muslims and Hindus, but in the end, the party alienated both Hindus and Muslims. This blunder resulted in a wave of Hindu nationalism. Hindus began searching for a party that would represent their interests.

The BJP had been looking for a new strategy and new values to support ever since its humiliating defeat in the 1984 elections. The BJP had seen how the Congress Party had won the 1984 elections, and it realized that Hindu voters had been the key votes. The BJP also saw how badly the Congress was managing the Shah Bano and Ayodhya issues by attempting to please everyone, while in the end not making anyone happy. The BJP started to reformulate its values and strategies around Hindu nationalism, its roots that it had discarded in 1980 in the hope of winning through moderation. The result was the emergence of a powerhouse that would end up challenging the Congress Party for national power.
After the riots, as an anonymous Hindu reveler declared, "We are 700 million strong" (Tempest, April 13, 1986). The importance of this statement was the implicit declaration of the coming wave of Hinduism as an identity within India.

Rajiv Gandhi, even as early as May, realized the strategic errors that he had made in the Shah Bano and Ayodhya affairs, and attempted to draw attention away from them by ordering attacks on Sikh nationalists, similar to the ones that his mother had made before her assassination. The attacks had a different effect than the one that Gandhi had desired. The attack drew attention to the fact that Gandhi was becoming increasingly desperate and authoritarian (Los Angeles Times, May 1, 1996). Not only did it draw attention to Gandhi’s desperation, but it almost resulted in his assassination by Sikh nationalists in October of 1986 (Pain, October 5, 1986).

Concurrently, as the Congress’ political capital base was trickling away, the BJP was finishing its internal reconstruction. The BJP hoped that this internal reconstruction would be able to push the Congress Party out of power. The BJP strategically put together its “Free Rama” platform, in which it demanded that the Ayodhya mosque be demolished and replaced with a temple to worship Rama.

The first thing the BJP did to reformulate its stance around this value was to have Atal Behari Vajpayee step down as president of the BJP, so that Lal Krishna Advani could take over as president. Vajpayee had been elected as president of the BJP because of his moderation. However, when the BJP decided that it wanted to reestablish its Hindu
nationalist roots, it knew that it needed a passionate leader. L.K. Advani was certainly the leader that the BJP had been looking for because of his passion for politics. His first action was to reestablish the links between the BJP, RSS, and VHP. By reestablishing these ties, the BJP once again became the party for Hindus. Advani intertwined the BJP with the Ayodhya issue, and essentially declared that the BJP would win or lose elections based on this issue.

The BJP had its first success with this strategy in June of 1987. When the BJP and the Lok Dal, another political party, joined together to win as an election in Haryana, a state where a Congress Party politician had been in power (“Opposition anti-Gandhi”, July 2, 1987). Advani used this victory as the rallying point to call Hindus to throw Gandhi out of power. The election results were a serious setback for the Congress Party, because Haryana was in the core of the “Hindi heartland” which had kept the Congress Party in power for almost 40 years. However, many in India believed that the Congress Party could stage a comeback. “I don’t think this will be the end of Gandhi, but it’ll be a major setback that will make him more vulnerable to pressures from the (conservative) party members or dissidents.” (Tenorio, June 19, 1987).

After the Haryana election, the Congress Party lost two more state elections and the BJP kept rising in power. The Congress Party was experiencing a crisis like none it had ever seen before. The Congress Party could not do anything right. From 1987 to 1989,
India experienced even more riots over the Ayodhya issue and the Congress Party leaders could not solve the problem.

From an electoral standpoint, 1989 proved to be the worst year for the Congress Party and the best year for the BJP. The BJP was declared India's fastest growing political party, while the Congress Party seemed to be fighting for political survival (Coll, November 5, 1989). The National Front, a coalition formed in 1988 which attempted to resurrect the Janata Dal coalition of 1977-1980, was requesting that the BJP to join them as an official member of the National Front. The BJP, however, turned down the National Front's request and declared that the elections, when the BJP had joined with the National Front, would be the last time that it would politically align with another party, especially one that had members who were Communists. The Congress Party also approached the BJP in early 1989 to offer a political coalition, but the BJP outright rejected this offer.

By the fall of 1989 it became clear to the National Front that it needed the BJP votes. When the BJP fully realized that the National Front needed its votes, it increased its demand that the Ayodhya Mosque be demolished and that a temple be built on the spot. The BJP and VHP created a strategy that called for ramshila (bricks of Lord Ram). This procession called for each village and town in India to bring a brick to Ayodhya to build a temple in place of the Babri Masjid mosque (Van Der Veer, 1992). Gandhi immediately attempted to jump on the bandwagon and even laid a stone next to the Babri Masjid. This
feeble attempt did not help. Actually it helped the BJP, because it gave even more legitimacy to their crusade in Ayodhya.

The laying of the foundation stones in Ayodhya immediately started riots in towns all over India. Bhagalpur and Bihar, towns in northern India, had most of their Muslim populations wiped out. How the riots started is questionable. The Muslims said the Hindus were shouting blasphemous slogans at them. The Hindus said the Muslims began throwing stones and acid bombs at them without any provocation. “Before, we [Muslims and Hindus] were just like a family,” said one Muslim father whose son had been killed in the riots (Coll, September 23, 1989). Many people in India realized that the riots were planned political events designed to gain votes. “This is going to happen more frequently before the elections...I think these kinds of incidents are well-orchestrated, well-organized and planned on either side...Both groups do it.” (Coll, September 23, 1989).

By November, riots had spread throughout India, but curiously they had not occurred in Ayodhya. The police in Ayodhya were preparing by putting up barricades around the mosque. Throughout Ayodhya soldiers and police erected barricades (Coll, November 5, 1989). The VHP and the BJP, by November, had backed away from the promise to demolish the mosque, and had instead pledged to conduct a peaceful foundation-laying ceremony next to the mosque. This change was the result of pressure from the Congress Party, which had threatened the BJP. The BJP felt that, if riots ensued in Ayodhya, then the populace, most notably Muslims, would punish the BJP and vote for the Congress
The BJP knew that Muslims were angry at Gandhi for wooing Hindu votes, because they felt that Gandhi had abandoned them. The BJP also realized that it would probably not get many Muslims to vote for it, but, if the BJP scared the Muslim population by creating riots, there was a possibility that Muslims would vote for the historically electorally strong Congress Party (Bajpai, November 12, 1989). Gandhi’s decisions to attempt to get Hindu votes had made Muslims feel like the country had been thrown “back into the age of barbarism just for the sake of its political gains and out of sheer ineptness.” (Bajpai, November 12). The BJP gambled that in areas where the electoral battle was mainly between the BJP and the Congress Party, Muslims would choose to vote for a third candidate. The BJP won the battle. The BJP, which had only won 2 out of 545 seats in India’s Lok Sabha, won 85 seats in 1989. This may not seem like many seats, but India has many political parties which divide the Parliament up into smaller pieces (Kolodner, 1995).

The BJP was the only party celebrating the results of the elections because it proved to be a potent political force. The elections were indecisive because no party was able to form a majority government. The BJP held the block of votes that the Congress Party and the National Front needed to achieve a majority so that a coalition government could be formed. Vajpayee dashed any hopes that the Congress Party had of getting the BJP votes. “We have fought the election against them. Now, how could we join hands with them?” (Kelliher, November 27, 1989).
The National Front quickly approached the BJP and asked it to join the coalition. The BJP placed demands on the National Front that it knew would not be met. Two of these demands were especially outrageous: 1) that constitutional safeguards for India's 100 million Muslims be scrapped and 2) that India be turned into a secular state. At first, many politicians in the National Front demanded that the leaders withdraw the offer to the BJP. The leaders refused to do this because they realized that "The people of India want a non-Congress government to replace the corrupt and inefficient Congress government." (Bajpai, November 28, 1989). If new elections were called, the National Front leaders feared they would lose their votes, possibly some of them to the BJP.

By the middle of December the BJP had agreed to join the coalition, without the National Front conceding on many of the BJP demands. The BJP also did not give in to the demand of the National Front for the BJP to give up its autonomy. This coalition marked the beginning of as an uneasy alliance (Madhavan, December 17, 1989). The survival of the minority National Front government, headed by V.P. Singh, was dependent on its ability to placate the BJP on Muslim rights and the Ayodhya issue. The National Front felt that it could please the BJP rather easily because one of the BJP's goals was to keep the Congress Party out of power and the BJP knew that support of the National Front was crucial to do this.

Although the National Front had thought it would be easy to keep the BJP in line, it found this task anything but easy. Less than two months after V.P. Singh had been in
office, cracks began to form in the coalition. Soon after he had taken the reigns of power, V.P. Singh appointed a Muslim as the new Home Minister. This was a bold choice since the BJP had complained that Gandhi had given too much power to Muslims. Shortly after the appointment, the Home Minister’s daughter was kidnapped by Kashmiri separatists. These separatists demanded the release of five prominent members of their organization who were in jail.

The BJP wanted the government to retaliate with arms and crush the rebels. V.P. Singh soon gave in to the demands of the rebels, creating a rift between the BJP and the rest of the ruling coalition (Allen-Mills, January 20, 1990). This capitulation gave rise to more violence in Kashmir, which spurred the BJP into demanding military action. Singh, feeling that his ruling coalition was unraveling, gave in to the BJP and sent the military into Kashmir to crack down on the rebels. Singh could have ordered the military to use tear-gas or rubber bullets, but instead the security forces opened fire with live ammunition on the unarmed crowds. The BJP leaders further escalated the tension in Kashmir by warning that India would go to war to protect Kashmir. Kashmir became calm after the security forces arrived, but Singh had created a rift with the leftist faction in his coalition by allying himself with the BJP on the Kashmir issue.

The end of February and the beginning of March marked further political jockeying in the National Front coalition because state elections were taking place. The elections were also proclaimed as the watershed that would decide the death or resurgence of the
Congress Party. Elections were taking place in eight of states in which the Congress held power. Singh had claimed, since the BJP joined his coalition that it would moderate on issues such as Ayodhya. However, the BJP had claimed that, if its power increased dramatically in the state elections, it would demand more power in the coalition (Anxieties in India, February 26, 1990). This is the main reason the BJP did not run with the rest of the coalition in the state elections.

The state elections resulted in the further demoralization of the Congress Party, which only retained power in two of the eight states. The results of these elections raised questions about the ability of the Congress Party to remain a serious party in India. The Janata Dal secured outright power in one state and formed coalitions in three other states. One of the major coalition parties was the BJP. The BJP secured a majority in two states and formed a coalition with the Janata Dal in three other states. The results of the state elections made ruling the National Front coalition harder for Singh because of his reliance on a strong BJP which hated many of the leftist parties in the coalition (Hindu Danger for India, March 7, 1990).

The Pakistani-Kashmir issue soon appeared again after the elections in India. Talk of war between India and Pakistan continued to escalate, fanned by the newly found confidence within the BJP. Singh was manipulated by the BJP, which threatened to withdraw support from the coalition unless Singh kept a hard line on the Kashmir issue. The BJP’s national executive demanded “hot pursuit” of rebels in Kashmir. Soon after the
national executive called for the chasing down of rebels, signs began appearing with the BJP lotus symbol on them demanding to "Save Hindus from slaughter in Kashmir." (Thomas, April 14, 1990). These events coincided with the introduction of a defense budget, in which the BJP succeeded in pushing the National Front to call for increased spending.

The beginning of summer marked further escalation in the dispute. Advani called for the government to crack down and repress Kashmir further. He also called on the government to build nuclear weapons. "We believe India should acquire a nuclear deterrent. Nuclear power gives you leverage in diplomatic relations." (Tarrant, June 1, 1990). This huge escalation within the crisis resulted in the United States becoming involved to help defuse the problem. While no settlement was agreed upon, the possibility of war diminished considerably.

Soon after the Kashmir crisis had settled down on July 13, 1990, a political crisis erupted within the ranks of the Janata Dal portion of the National Front Coalition. Late on July 13th, three of Singh's senior cabinet members resigned shortly after a controversial reappointment in the state of Haryana. O.P. Chautala was reinstated as the head of the Haryana State Government two months after he had resigned, because he had been charged with inciting electoral violence and vote rigging. Singh denied that he had been informed before Chautala was reinstated. Shortly after the reappointment, observers showed them disillusionment with Singh, who had been voted to power on the platform of
promoting "value-based politics." (India: Government, July 14, 1990). On July 14th, Singh offered his resignation to the President of the Janata Dal, but the President rejected his resignation on the grounds that Singh would probably be able to keep the coalition together. By the beginning of August the coalition looked as if it were going to survive, but then on August 7th Singh announced the implementation of the Mandal Commission which called for the reservation of civic jobs for the lower castes and other minorities. This marked the beginning of the end of the National Front coalition.

THE EVIL

The BJP made it clear who it considered its primary enemy in this rhetorical period: The Congress Party. The BJP had seen how easily the Congress Party had co-opted its votes in 1984 and swore that it would not happen again. The BJP quickly rallied to take back the Hindu votes that it had lost in 1984. The BJP also made it perfectly clear that there was no way that it would ally itself with the Congress Party in the 1989 elections. This hatred of the Congress Party overrode the BJP's desire for power when the Congress Party approached the BJP and offered as an alliance in 1989. "We have fought the election against them. Now, how could we join hands with them?" Asked Vajpayee, a former ruler of the BJP (Kelliher, November 27, 1989).

The BJP also resented the Congress Party because of its use of power to reserve jobs for minorities. The BJP saw this action as an attempt to win votes among minorities in India. The BJP attacked the Congress Party in this rhetorical period for being
hypocritical. The BJP felt that the Congress Party was hypocritical because it attempted to get votes from the Muslim section of the population when it needed votes, but the rest of the time the Congress Party argued that it was a party that protected Hindus.

VALUE APPEALS

The BJP quickly regrouped from its humiliating defeat in the 1984 elections and returned to its Hindu roots, discarding the attempt to moderate and get Muslim and Hindu votes. Positive Secularism is the most prominent value appeal in this period. Positive Secularism is in safeguarding minority rights while giving Hindus their rightful place in a country where they compose 80 percent of the population. The BJP believed that Hindus should be able to decide everything and that the Muslims should let the Hindu majority rule India (Tefft, December 19, 1989). Advani claims that Hindus are as an oppressed majority that cannot speak its mind “There’s a curious secularism in this country. A Christian saying he is proud of his religion is a good thing, A Muslim saying he is proud of Islam is a good thing, but Advani saying he is proud to be a Hindu is communalism.” (Tefft, December 19, 1989). Positive Secularism was quickly labeled as communal and racist by almost all other political parties. While the BJP claimed that it would safeguard minority rights, it never said how it would do if it stuck to its 1989 election manifesto which sought to scrap all constitutional safeguards for Muslims.

The closer the 1989 elections came, the more the BJP called for a Hindu state in which all Muslims would give up their constitutional rights. This call was also one of the main
reasons that the BJP marched to the Ayodhya Mosque in 1989 and 1990. The marches were a reaction to policies that the government had implemented to help Muslims and the lower Hindu castes. Protecting the downtrodden was seen as dividing the Hindu identity.

The second most prominent value appeal in this period was militarization. The BJP's solution to most communal problems in India was to repress the problem group with weapons. In 1987, some prominent BJP leaders were killed by Sikh separatists. BJP followers began rioting across India and burning Sikh homes, temples and shops. The BJP leaders called for military rule in Punjab, the home of the Sikh separatists (Lingam, July 10, 1987). The BJP held rallies at which they chanted "Death to Rajiv Gandhi", because of his failure to stop the Sikh attacks (Lingam, July 31, 1987).

By 1988, the Sikh problem had gotten worse and the BJP was calling on Gandhi and the Congress Party to deploy the army to "quash" the Sikh rebels. Strikes were organized by the BJP to show the Congress Party that it wanted a solution to the Sikh crisis. The government sent troops in periodically, but no permanent solution was found during this period.

Kashmir flared up after the BJP joined the National Front coalition and the issue created a controversy in the coalition. The National Front attempted to solve the problem through diplomacy at first, but then a top minister's daughter was kidnapped by Kashmir rebels. After Singh gave in to the demands of the rebels, the BJP started pressuring the
Singh government to take military action against the rebels and Pakistan, which the BJP claimed was supporting the rebels with weapons.

Singh soon accepted many of the demands of the BJP, which could at any time topple his government, and sent troops to Kashmir to crush the rebels. This crisis escalated out of control for two months, all the while the BJP was calling for increased military spending to help in the “war against Kasmiri rebels” and demanding that the government “save Hindus from slaughter in Kashmir” (Thomas, April 14, 1990). This militarization of the BJP broadened to include the Ayodhya issue when the Singh administration announced the implementation of the Mandal Commission.
CHAPTER 4

RADICALIZATION CONTINUES: RAM RAJYA AND HINDUTVA

Period Three

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

In the fall of 1990 the Singh government collapsed after the BJP withdrew its support. Singh created the situation that led to the destruction of his National Front coalition. On August 7, 1990 the Singh administration announced the implementation job reservations that were called for by the decade-old Mandal Commission. The Mandal Commission called for the raising of government job reservations for lower Hindu Castes from about 25% to almost 50%. The Singh administration may have been able to brush aside the controversy that arose from the announcement of the Mandal Commission, but Singh did not consult any of the parties that were part of the National Front coalition before the announcement. Riots and other anti-reservation demonstrations soon broke out all over India (Housego, September 29, 1990).

The Singh government wanted to implement the job reservations for political purposes. Singh knew that his coalition was unstable because of the wide spectrum of political parties in it. Because of this situation, Singh gambled that by implementing job reservations he would be able to gain enough lower caste voters so that he could push the
BJP out without destroying his government. When Singh announced the implementation of the Mandal Commission he put the BJP in a very awkward situation. The BJP was opposed to the Mandal Commission because the jobs that it would take away from the upper castes. The upper caste voters were the people that were most likely to vote for the BJP. However, the BJP did not want to oppose the Mandal Commission completely, because that would be perceived as catering to the upper castes and would destroy any chance that they would have with getting the lower caste votes. The BJP decided on a compromise solution that they hoped would allow them to increase their support among all castes.

This compromise solution was to oppose the government by claiming that it was attempting to divide Hindus. The BJP claimed that Hindus should be united and that they should not be divided by caste. This vision that the BJP held out was based on the idea that caste should be overwhelmed by a common Hindu identity. BJP leaders, to show their interest in a common Hindu identity, embarked on a 10,000 kilometer tour on September 25, 1990 throughout India to mobilize Hindu opinion in favor of building a temple in place of the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya, India. This tour was called the Rath Yatra (pilgrimage on a chariot). L.K. Advani rode in a jeep painted to look like a war chariot and called on all Hindus to engage in jok shakti (people power). This pilgrimage to Ayodhya was justified on the grounds of maintaining Hindu unity above caste disunity. Advani used the slogan of “people power” to bring forth the image of Hindutva, or
Hinduness. Hinduness conjures forth the imagery of religious unity over individuality (Thakur, 1993).

On October 23, 1990 Singh ordered Advani’s arrest, before he could arrive at Ayodhya. Singh did this because he feared that if the BJP and its allies were allowed to destroy the Babri Masjid that a religious war could erupt between the Muslim and Hindus. Singh attempted to prove that he was not acting out of political motivation, but out of love of his country. “It is not a question of saving the government, but that of saving the nation. A hundred governments can come and go, but the nation should remain one.” (McGirk, October 24, 1990). Only four hours after Advani’s arrest, BJP leaders delivered notice to the President of India that the BJP was withdrawing support for Singh’s government. The BJP cited many failures of the government, such as failing to resolve the Ayodhya Mosque controversy and the hatred that Singh had caused between upper and lower-caste Indians when he attempted to implement the Mandal Commission.

The BJP began working on demands for the release of Advani and other BJP leaders who had been detained. Curfews were implemented in many towns after people supporting Advani skirmished with police. The BJP also called for a nationwide strike until Advani was released. While not everyone went on strike, many supporters of the BJP did. Even though Advani and many of the BJP leaders were under arrest, the Rath Yatra continued towards Ayodhya and was scheduled to arrive there on October 30th. The government had placed 100,000 security forces in Ayodhya to protect the Mosque.
On October 30th tens of thousands of Hindus arrived at Ayodhya and clashed with security forces. Although the government had sent 100,000 security forces, some Hindu militants were able to get past them and damage the Mosque. The damaging of the Mosque dealt a heavy blow to the Muslims who were increasingly worried about the governments’ ability to defend them. Muslims began claiming that the security forces would not support them in the event of riots because of the sympathy they had for the BJP and Hindu militants. This lack of faith in the government hurt Singh and his government, who were counting on the support of the Muslim vote in a general election.

On November 9, 1990 the inevitable event occurred, Singh was voted out of power. This event had been unavoidable since the BJP had withdrawn its support from the Singh coalition. Chandra Shekhar, a bitter enemy of Singh and a former member of the Singh coalition, created a party called the Janata Dal-Socialist and made a deal with the Congress Party for its support. The Shekhar government was even more at the mercy of the Congress Party than Singh had been at the mercy of the BJP. Shekhar only had 55 supporters in the 548 seat parliament and depended completely on the 195 Congress Party members. The main reason that Shekhar was allowed to form a party was that the President of India wanted to wait for communal tensions to cool down before calling as an election. The Congress Party had been asked if they wanted to form a coalition, but they had opted to wait for elections, hoping that they would then be able to form a majority government (Crossette, November 11, 1990). While these elections took place, there
were still riots going on all over India. The riots had been started by the Rath Yatra and had spread after the VHP vowed to extend the campaign to 3,000 other disputed mosques if the Ayodhya mosque was not turned into a temple.

While the President of India had hoped that communal tensions would calm down near the end of 1990, they were actually spiraling out of control and the government could not seem to do anything about it. Mistrust began to rise between the Hindus and the Muslims, the BJP leaders, such as Shakar Rawat a leader in Agra, were not helping the situation.

“There’s a devil in the ordinary Moslem heart; you saw it in the past when they knocked down our temples,.. Their population is on the increase rapidly. Soon they will be equal or the majority. Why aren’t they abiding by the national interest and the rules for population control?” (Coll, January, 2).

On March 7 Shekhar resigned as the leader of India, possibly because the Ayodhya crisis could not be solved, and elections were announced for May. The BJP Vice President, K.R. Malkani, took this opportunity to announce that the BJP would build a temple in Ayodhya by October. “If we come to power, then construction will begin immediately,...If we don’t, construction will begin by October.” (Tarrant, March 18, 1991). The rest of the political parties in India soon began labeling the BJP as a radical party that used every event in India as a possible political springboard to prominence. The ceremonial President of India told the country that it should “get used to” coalition
governments (Clad, March 31, 1991). This plea to the country, however, was ignored by the political parties who immediately started attacking each other.

As the various political parties started attacking the BJP for its non-secular policies at Ayodhya the BJP did something that surprised many people. The BJP became more involved with the VHP and other Hindu nationalists. If the BJP had been attacked for being non-secular five or six years earlier it would have denounced the accusations and then attempted to look like a much more moderate party, but no more. “Jai Shri Ram” (Hail Lord Rama) became one of the many religious slogans that could be increasingly heard at BJP political rallies. The BJP called for the abolishment of the “pseudo-secularism” and “minority appeasement” that the other political parties were calling for (Tiwari, April 5, 1991). Advani declared that a revolution was taking place between the BJP and the government.

The BJP went so far as to get the blessing of 6,000 of India’s most esteemed Hindu holy men to show that they truly were the party for Hindus. These holy men, in their attempt to get Hindus to vote for the BJP, declared that politics must give shape to the demands of Hinduism (India; Rally for, April 13, 1991). The BJP and the holy men who were followers of the VHP failed to note that Hinduism is a highly individualistic faith and actually lacks any hierarchy. Caste was created by the British and not by Indians. The BJP used the blessings to promote the idea of Hindutva in order to attempt to organize Hindus in a way they had never been organized.
The battle in the elections soon became a race between the BJP, with Advani as its leader, and the Congress Party, with Gandhi as its leader. Advani immediately began attacking Advani and the Congress Party in every way possible. He accused Gandhi of taking orders from Muslim preachers and of appeasing various Muslim nations, such as Iraq and Pakistan (Coll, April 29, 1991). He claimed that Gandhi would implement the Mandal Commission if brought to power and pleaded for Hindus throughout India to reject Gandhi and the Congress Party on election day. Any time criticism was aimed at Advani, he replied, "I will not be defensive [about Hinduism]. We have been defensive for too long." (Swamy, May 17, 1991). The BJP soon expanded its call for Hindutva into a call for Rama Rajya (the period of Rama). Rama Rajya is the mythical period of Rama’s rule. The BJP claimed that when it ruled India it would return to a beautiful and mythical India in which everyone would live in harmony. The BJP forgot to tell everyone that Rama Rajya would actually only bring harmony to Hindus and that everyone else would be deemed a second class status. The BJP strategy after the first stage of the elections put them in a good electoral position and looked like it would win them the election easily. However, on May 21st the BJP’s dreams of power were shattered.

On May 21st Gandhi was busy campaigning in the southern state of Tamil Nadu when he was killed in a bomb explosion. Within hours riots erupted throughout India (India’s fragile political, May 22, 1991). The assassination looked as if it could both hurt and help the Congress Party. The death of Gandhi ended a political dynasty stretching back to
Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajiv Gandhi's grandfather. The Nehru-Gandhi family had ruled India for 38 of its 44 years of independence. This situation posed as an interesting question to the Congress Party. Who would rule the Congress Party? Congress Party members soon became involved in a power struggle that would decide the future ruler of the party. Members of the party saw the good that could possibly happen because of the assassination: a sympathy vote similar to the one that Rajiv Gandhi experienced after his mother was killed. Because of Gandhi's death, the elections were postponed. The postponement would allow the resolution of the leadership issue and allow the party to gain sympathy over Gandhi's death.

The BJP attempted to capitalize on the disarray within India and the Congress Party by claiming that it was the only hope for stability. It also argued that the entire basis of stability within the Congress Party had been focused around one family, and the leading members of this family were dead. This proclamation stung the Congress Party and other political parties deeply. The statement frustrated the leaders of the Congress Party because it had always claimed to be the party of stability, but the Congress Party never really counter-attacked the BJP. The statement irked other political parties because they felt that the BJP had overstepped the bounds of morality by attacking the Congress Party so soon after Gandhi's assassination (Coll, May 27, 1991).

The political climate, after the assassination of Gandhi and the quick BJP attack on Congress, shifted to become a battle between the BJP and all other parties. Advani
claimed that he was not displeased with this outcome, “Before, the debate was pro-
Congress and anti-Congress...Now let the country be polarized between my view point
and my antagonists’s. It’s a debate. Let it go on.” (Teft, May 30, 1991). Politicians in
other parties were also happy with the turn of events, especially the leader of the Janata
Dal, V.P. Singh. Singh had hated the BJP since they had caused the fall of his government
in 1990: “The BJP is getting more and more politically isolated. Indeed, a new
consensus is emerging across the entire political center and left, which is opposed to the
sectarian politics and combative campaigning tactics of the BJP.” (Teft, May 30, 1991).

When the final stages of the elections arrived, the Congress Party won the majority in
Parliament: 225 seats out of 511 seats. Polls showed that Congress’s post-Gandhi
assassination vote was nine percent higher than the first round. Had Gandhi not been
assassinated, the BJP may have had more seats than the Congress party. The Congress
Party was still in the tenuous position of finding coalition partners to form a minority
government or another party would be given the chance to form a government. The
Congress Party was also left with the perilous track of choosing a Prime Minister within
the party, perilous because of the divisions that a choice could create in the party. The
Congress Party picked P.V. Narasimha Rao, a moderate, to be the Prime Minister of the
coalition. Rao, to appease his rivals in Congress, appointed other people who had been
jockeying to become Prime Minister in powerful positions in his cabinet. Rao promptly
talked to many parties about possible coalitions. He was immediately rejected by most of
Mosque and pronounced that a temple to Rama would be built. This declaration brought a wave of protest throughout India. Singh and members of his National Front coalition marched to Ayodhya to protest the acquisition of the land, claiming that it would spark riots. The BJP ordered the arrest of the protesters the moment they entered Ayodhya, claiming that they were disrupting communal harmony in the peaceful town. The BJP also argued that the National Front was anti-Hindu and was trying to placate minorities. The Supreme Court, however, disagreed and ordered the BJP not to build a temple.

The paralysis on the issue of the Ayodhya mosque created divisions within the BJP government and threatened to stop the momentum of the movement. The divisions were between members of the Uttar Pradesh BJP government, who had grown used to the perks that they had enjoyed since being elected and had pledged to follow strictly legal constitutional means on demolition of the mosque, and the rest of the BJP, who wanted to destroy the mosque any manner possible. The younger members of the BJP were especially disgruntled with the paralysis on the Ayodhya issue: "We are disillusioned because we feel we have given them enough time." (Coll, November 19, 1991). The BJP leaders attempted to focus on other issues, such as following the Hindu way of life. This was as an attempt to shift the issue away from Ayodhya. The BJP also announced the start of another pilgrimage, similar to the one that Advani had done in 1990, but this one was not scheduled to go through Ayodhya. The pilgrimage had nothing to do with
Ayodhya and was a desperate diversion to draw attention from Ayodhya (India: The Hindu, December 14, 1991).

Murli Joshi, the new president of the BJP, started the march in late 1990. He had planned to finish the march in Kashmir on India’s independence day so that the BJP could unfurl India’s flag in front of everyone. The journey, with its climatic conclusion, was supposed to show the world that India was united against all separatists. The Ekta Yatra (unity march) did not get the great fanfare that the previous march to free Ayodhya had gotten. From the beginning the other political parties, especially the Congress Party, had pleaded with the BJP not to go through with the march, claiming that the areas of India that the march was scheduled to pass through were too dangerous. The BJP, however, spurned all attempts to get them to call off the march.

The call for the demolition of the Ayodhya mosque was absent from the rhetoric of the BJP during this march. The BJP through this march attempted to cloak its sectarian image in the more attractive image of nationalism. Joshi called for the people of India to rally against the secessionist and anti-nationalist forces. Joshi even argued that the Muslims of India were converts from Hinduism and that they shared a cultural heritage with India’s Hindus, thus they should convert back to Hinduism (Tarrant, January 9, 1992).

The march was uneventful until January 23rd, three days before the end of the journey, when Sikh separatists attacked the travelers and killed five of them. Joshi was forced to
amend his plans of bringing all of his followers into Kashmir and instead took the Congress Party's offer of using a jet to fly 80 of the BJP members to Kashmir.

The unveiling of the Indian flag by the BJP was a complete failure. The BJP was outnumbered by the number of security forces that it took to protect them, and there were still militants shooting bullets and avoiding the all day curfew that the government had enacted to protect the BJP. The march did not succeed in uniting the Indian people behind the BJP. If anything the march emboldened militants to close their ranks and engage in a wage war against the country even more vigorously then before (Brown, January 28, 1992). The BJP realized that the diversion from the Ayodhya Mosque would not work, so they again focused on Ayodhya.

By the end of March the BJP had started laying the groundwork for the building of the temple. The BJP government in Uttar Pradesh deployed two bulldozers and started building a wall around the mosque. The Congress Party warned the BJP that it would sack the BJP government if it built the temple. Advani, always with a quick wit, thanked the Congress Party for getting out the word that the BJP was working on its promise to build the temple: “What we could not convey to the people [about building the long-promised temple] is now being conveyed by those who criticize us.” (Guha, March 29, 1992).

In July the BJP and its allies once again upped the ante in the battle over Ayodhya when 5,000 Kar Sevaks (religious volunteers) showed up and started rituals that marked
the beginning of building the temple. The BJP government assured the central
government that no work would begin on the temple until the court order banning the
temple was removed (Sidva, July 11, 1992). The BJP government, to show its compliance
with the law, canceled all police leaves until the crisis was over. Still, more volunteers
arrived to camp outside of the mosque. Near the end of July the BJP and the Congress
Party agreed on a settlement that bought the central government four months to find a
solution. This compromise said that the court would render a verdict on the Ayodhya
Mosque/Temple in four months. This compromise got the volunteers to disband their
camps and go home, although most of them were not happy with the settlement.

Four months went by, relatively uneventful, and still no court decision was rendered.
The Congress Party seemed content to make the BJP wait and hope that the crisis would
go away. By the end of November Hindu religious volunteers were flowing into Ayodhya
by the thousands and still the court rendered no decision. Pressure was mounting on Rao
to do something about the crisis. Many in his government called for the dismissal of the
BJP Uttar Pradesh government and the implementation of central government rule. Rao
instead accepted the BJP's promise that nothing would happen to the mosque. Rao
should have not listened to the BJP promises, especially when the leader of the BJP in
Uttar Pradesh proclaimed that he believed in the Ayodhya crusade; “I will not hesitate to
sacrifice my chair for the cause of the Rama temple.” (Indian Parliament in, November 30,
By December 6, 1992 at least 100,000 kar sevaks had assembled at the call of the BJP. On that date the issue got out of control.

THE EVIL

The BJP, in this rhetorical period, did not focus on one group as "the evil", but attacked all who were secularists and secessionists. The BJP claimed that the "pseudo-secularists" were the real villains in India and must be vanquished from the political arena. The BJP argued that these politicians were out to maintain their power by appeasing minorities and were not doing it for the good of these people (Coll, January 2, 1991). The BJP argued further that these minorities should accept the rule of the Hindu majority and quit attempting to get preferential treatment.

The unity ride that the BJP employed early in 1992 was its attempt to show the evils of secessionist movements and as an attempt to get the population of India to reject the militants. The BJP argued that there was a need for Indian unity in the new world order that was emerging and warned of the dangers of the break up of India. BJP members pointed to the breakup of the former Soviet Union to prove their point.

VALUE APPEALS

Hindutva was the most prominent value appeal that the BJP made to the Indian populace. When Advani and the BJP brought forth the idea of Hindutva, or Hinduness, they were borrowing from a theory that V.D. Savarkar created in 1923. This appeal was a blatant attempt to return to nationalist roots. There are many non-Hindu religions in India.
and the politics of Hindutva aims at decreasing the significance of these groups (Garvey, 1991). Hinduness proclaims that the Hindu religion gave birth to the religions of Jains, Sikhs, and Indian Buddhists. Therefore, all members of these religions are actually Hindus.

The theory of Hinduness states that non-Indic religions are foreign elements on the Indian subcontinent and should be rejected. These non-Indic religions are Christianity and Islam (Gold, 1991). By using the theory of Hindutva, the BJP was attempting to unify the so-called Indic religions into a voting block against the Congress Party and Singh. Through its use of Hinduness, the BJP was attempting to show that religious cohesiveness was more important than caste in Indian society (Oberoi, 1995). The BJP also used the value of Hindutva to battle the Mandal Commission by claiming that the Singh government and the rest of the Indian political parties were attempting to divide Hindus and thus were not following the precept of Hindutva. Joshi, for a short time, attempted to preach this kind of unity without the religious rhetoric, but he soon found that this did not have the mass appeal that a religious Hindutva did. The BJP was also attempting to cloak its ideal of Hindu supremacy behind the thin veil of Hindu unity. The political strategy of Hindutva is a electoral strategy that has paid huge dividends for the BJP. “It largely accounts for the considerable influence of the BJP-VHP-RSS contingent in electoral politics.” (Frykenberg, 1993). However, by this strategy India’s Muslims, Sikhs, Buddhists, Christians, Jains, and other communities cannot be counted as trustworthy
members of India. By the BJP use of Hindutva these communities are increasingly seen as impure and inferior.

The second most prominent value appeal, that goes hand in hand with Hindutva, is the idea of Ram Rajya (Ramas rule) or Hindu Nation.

They exploited the weakness of the ruling elite and capitalized on the fears and insecurities of the Hindu majority. Channeling the economic and social frustrations of Hindus, they were able to appeal to many diverse groups of Hindus with a broad range of disparate messages (Kolodner, 1995, p. 242).

The messages that Eric Kolodner is talking about are actually as an elaborate rhetorical vision that the BJP has created in as an attempt to get people to vote for it. The majority of the rhetorical vision that the BJP has “created” is actually just a theory created by V.D. Savarkar in his book Hindutva. The theory that Savarkar created is called Hindu rastra (Hindu Nation). Hindu Nation proposes that the subcontinent of India is one culture and one people. This theory stands in sharp contrast to the current nation-state, which is a territorially and politically defined entity (Gold, 1991, p. 548).

While the BJP does not feel, or at least say in its discourse, that the whole Indian subcontinent should be reunited, the BJP does believe that a Hindu Nation would make India greater. The BJP version of Hindu Nation is divisive and at the same time uniting. While the idea of unifying and dividing at the same time may seem to be a contradiction, it
is not. Advani has continuously referred to the unity that the BJP is attempting to achieve.

At the end of 1991 and beginning of 1992 Joshi marched throughout India in as an a
desperate call to unify India. On this march Joshi even stated that Muslims and other
religious minorities in India were in actuality Hindus who had been converted to other
religions. Through this discourse, the BJP was attempting to unify the so called Hindu
community. The BJP creates the vision of unity by explaining that all people are allowed
into the Hindu nation that they seek to create. However, as Martin E. Marty and R. Scott
Appleby (1993) show, the effect of this “unity” is actually assimilation into the Hindu
community.

They seek to “Hinduize” all of India, which they refer to as

“Hindustan,” the sacred Hindu nation. All citizens of Hindustan,
including Sikhs, Muslims, Christians, Jains, Buddhists, and Marxists
must put aside ethnic, religious, or ideological beliefs and practices that
conflict with the dominant Hindu ethos.... (p. 627)

The BJP allows all groups to join the Hindu nation, but only if these groups want to
give up their identities. The loss of identity fits in with the ideologies of the Hindu nation
and Hinduness, since these ideas favor the community over individuality. The newly
converted groups of Hindus are asked to rise up and resist the oppression of the Hindu
community by the government and other minorities. The rhetorical vision creates the “us
versus them” mentality which creates a division between Muslims and Hindus. Many in
this Hindu community feel that the Muslims are given preferential treatment. This view is reflected in the words of an anonymous Hindu:

My temples have been desecrated, destroyed. Their sacred stones are being trampled under the aggressor’s feet. My gods are crying. They are demanding of me for reinstatement in all their original glory. When I speak out my agony, you of the secular tribe condemn me as a threat to our “secular peace.” You add insult to my injury. You rub salt into my wounded heart, and still expect me to keep my mouth shut?...

Anything objected to by the “minorities” as Hindu becomes a cause of intense concern for you. Even the breaking of a coconut or lighting a lamp is taboo. For you, our national life minus every bit of Hindu is secularism. In short, you want me to cease to be myself.... Sometimes, I really pity you for your diseased mind. Can you not see the simple fact that I form 85% of this land? (Oberoi, 1993, p. 100)

This quotation shows that while the BJP says all are welcome in the Hindu Nation, the Hindu Nation will only accept the converted. The BJP attempts to use this value to portray the policies of the ruling Congress Party as favoring the Muslims. This vision has resulted in many Hindus becoming increasingly aware of a Hindu identity that has been created by the BJP. The BJP has used the division that this rhetorical vision creates to increase their voter base with Hindus.
The BJP has used the value of a Hindu Nation to focus on the Ayodhya Mosque. The BJP claim that the mosque should be a temple because it is the birthplace of Rama. The idea that this birthplace was extremely significant to the Hindus was, in reality, a fantasy propagated by the BJP to build the backing of the Hindu community. The mosque in Ayodhya was virtually unknown in historical records, and there had been almost no controversy over the mosque from 1949-1984 (Embree, 1994). The BJP found as an issue that no other group was focusing on and decided to create a controversy where none had existed before. The BJP created the controversy of Ayodhya to rally the constructed Hindu community behind it.

The BJP claimed that the move to a Hindu Nation would spark the return of Ram Rajya. Ram Rajya is the time when Rama was the ruler of the land. This is a very mythical rhetorical vision. Ram Rajya, the BJP claimed, would be a place where all Hindus would be able to live in peace and harmony, never having to fear anything. The rhetorical vision created by the BJP hints that Ram Rajya would also incorporate the Hindu Nation into it, thus India would span all across Asia (Gold, 1991, p. 546). Through this rhetorical vision that the BJP has created, Ram Rajya is the only way to achieve utopia. Ram Rajya is the vision that the BJP used when campaigning in 1991 (Oberoi, p. 107). The BJP did not realize it, but they would have to soon change their values and strategies because of what was about to happen in Ayodhya.
CHAPTER 5

THE MODERATION OF THE BJP

Period Four

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

On December 6, 1992 at 11:45 a.m. a small frenzied group of the now 300,000 kar sevaks charged through the police lines and started attacking the Babri Masjid mosque. This action triggered a mass riot which resulted in the destruction of the mosque. The BJP did not try to stop the eradication of the mosque. The leveling of the mosque threw India into chaos. Ramesh Thakur illustrates (1993):

The demolition of the mosque plunged India into the worst outbreak of communal violence since partition, with 1,700 dead and 5,500 injured.

The savage communal riots in Calcutta, seat of a Communist Party government for more than a decade, and Bombay, home to the Laxmiputras (sons of Laxmi, the wealth goddess), sent shock waves through a country unaccustomed to seeing such eruptions in its principal cosmopolitan cities. Scenes of Muslims in the thousands crowding railway stations in a desperate effort to escape from Bombay
were reminiscent of the mass exodus after the post-partition riots (p. 645).

The violent discourse that had oozed from the leadership of the BJP during the days before the riots turned the masses of Hindus into as an unstoppable hurricane of violence. Much to its dismay, the national government had miscalculated the strength of the BJP’s beliefs. The government did not truly believe that members of the BJP were ready to die for their cause, although the rhetoric they had espoused before the riots should have been a warning to the Indian National government.

The Rao government quickly attempted to make up for its miscalculation and dismissed the BJP Uttar Pradesh government, claiming that it was the BJP governments’ fault that the riots occurred. The Rao government then dismissed the other three BJP state governments, claiming they had also been involved in the riots.

The leadership of the BJP quickly attempted to control the damage that had been done to their reputation. Kewal Malkani, the vice president of the BJP, claimed that “The masses are delighted...Look at Maharashtra, [the state which includes Bombay and has born the brunt of the post-Ayodhya violence]. If we had as an election there tomorrow we would win.” (Wagstyl, December 11, 1992). The BJP blamed the central government for causing the riots. The BJP
argued that the government had stalled the settling of the Ayodhya dispute in the courts for more than the four months. Four months, the BJP pointed out, had been the deadline set for resolution of the affair.

These riots shocked the moderate members of the BJP. The riots, although a symbolic victory for the BJP because it had finally completed its campaign promise, almost struck the death blow to the BJP because many of the moderate BJP members distanced themselves from the group. The moderate BJP members believed that the Mosque should have been brought down but wanted it done nonviolently (Dalyrymple, December 13, 1992).

Middle class and upper class Hindus were most likely to support the destruction of the Mosque (Chhibber and Misra, 1993). These groups identified with the status quo. The destruction of the Mosque was symbolic of the oppression of the Muslim minority and the upholding of the current system. The rich and middle class had the most to lose if the current system collapsed. They felt that the BJP would help them keep the Muslims oppressed while maintaining their place in society.

The destruction of the Babri Masjid mosque marked a turning point for the BJP because it could no longer use the mosque as a rallying cry in elections as they had done since 1986. In the aftermath of the Ayodhya mosque destruction, the BJP had few issues that they could focus on. These issues were the sacking of the BJP state governments, the arrest of Advani and other BJP leaders, and the banning of the RSS and the VHP by the
central government. This focus on these issues was as an attempt by the BJP to rally people to its cause.

The BJP disrupted parliament by bursting in and waving black banners and calling Rao the “murderer of democracy” (Barr, December 17, 1992). The BJP found allies in its crusade against the Congress Party on the issues of Advani’s arrest and on the sacking of all of the BJP state governments, except for Uttar Pradesh. Other political parties in India felt that the arrest of Advani and the sacking of the state governments was unjust because they were seen as unconnected with the riots that had occurred after the destruction of the mosque. The BJP called for a no-confidence vote against the Congress Party, but it was overwhelmingly defeated in parliament. The other parties felt that some of what the Congress Party had done was unjust, but the parties were unwilling to destroy the government because they feared that the BJP would win if elections were called.

After the Ayodhya riots, the BJP became more and more radical in its rhetoric, while increasing in power (Clarke, June 12, 1993). While this statement may seem to contradict the statement above that the riots almost brought the death knell of the BJP, it really coincides perfectly. As the BJP increased in power, it was also alienating more and more of its followers. On one hand, the BJP was increasing in power because of its radical nature and discourse. However, this rise in power was destined to be short lived because the BJP, through its radical rhetoric, was alienating more and more of the moderate voters. So while they won some state elections, they were also losing the votes that they
so desperately needed to win the national elections. However, the BJP had always drawn
most of its voters from the radical parts of society, thus if the BJP moderated its discourse
it might stop the rise in power that the BJP desired.

As the BJP became more radical and increasingly ready to upset the balance of power
in India, it started searching for more beliefs that would increase its power base with the
Hindu voters. Almost all of the beliefs that they backed were anti-Muslim. They started
campaigning to stop the infiltration of illegal Muslim refugees from Bangladesh (Clarke,
June 12, 1993). Some of the other anti-Muslim issues that the BJP backed were the
acquisition of nuclear weapons by India to counterbalance Pakistan, a Muslim country,
and the taking away of basic human rights for Indian Muslims (Clarke, June 12, 1993).

By the end of 1993, the BJP looked as if it had seen its peak. The BJP had been voted
out of power in three of the four states where it had taken power in only two years earlier
(Aggarwal, December 3, 1993). The surprising thing about these elections was that
traditionally weak groups banded together and formed political coalitions with the sole
purpose of defeating the BJP. However, this coalition also stopped the Congress Party
from winning soundly and thus returning some legitimacy to the party. This coalition also
served notice to the BJP that if its rhetoric was radical, the BJP would never attain power.

The death of the BJP was pronounced with glee. Congress Spokesman V N Gadgil
stated, “The verdict of these elections is as an endorsement of the decision to dismiss BJP
governments in the four states. The election results are a tremendous rebuff for the BJP”
(Aggarwal, December 3, 1993). At the end of 1993, it finally seemed that the BJP and its rhetorical campaign were on its way to the grave. However, the pronouncement was premature.

By 1994 the BJP was desperate to find a new subject that would excite the militants within the party. The BJP organized 2,000 volunteers to get the government to take a hard-line stance against Kashmir, which is primarily Muslim. At first, the BJP used nonviolent activities, combined with a touch of violent rhetoric. However, when the nonviolence failed, the BJP leadership increased its use of violent and confrontational discourse. As the rhetoric became increasingly violent, so did the BJP. The BJP was calling for airstrikes against the city to punish what it labeled Muslim militants. The BJP seemed to be caught in its own web of violent rhetoric.

When the government refused to use airstrikes against the populace, the BJP turned to using violence against the Muslims. At least 800 BJP activists were arrested in the Kashmir protests (India's Hindu Party, June 23, 1994). Rhetoric, such as these protests, that the BJP used to keep militants in their camp was usually very low keyed and not broadcast all over India. The BJP seemed to have realized finally that, while it needed the radicals to stay in the party, it did not have to flaunt the radical presence continually.

By the summer of 1995, the BJP was once again experiencing popularity throughout India. Its new success was owed to its "insistence on a strong Hindu ethos, a free market stance, its promise to be tough on Kashmir and Pakistan and its attacks on
corruption” (Fishlock, September 1, 1995). The BJP brandished its rhetorical sword brilliantly. The rhetoric that the BJP used, such as charging that Muslims intended to outbreed Hindus and that Muslims were not committed to a strong India, kept the militants in its camp. The BJP also stated that it wanted to, “kick out all Muslims.” (Fishlock, September 1, 1995).

The BJP attended to moderate its rhetoric by alleging that the reason that they were calling for a Hindu nationalism was that all of India was threatened by Islamic fundamentalism (Austin and Lyon, 1993). By inserting the threat of Islam into its rhetoric, the BJP was attempting to deny that it was calling for Hindu nationalism just to get votes. The BJP claimed that Islam was a threat and that Hindu nationalism was the cure to this threat. The BJP still believed more in the militant side of its platform. They just realized that they needed the moderate votes to win elections. The BJP still demonized Muslims:

Muslims can speak of Islam, but apparently Hindus cannot speak of Hinduism. Hindu nationalists demonise Muslims. They say that they are pampered by the government, that they intend to outbreed Hindus, that they are not committed to India-and cheer for Pakistan in the test matches (Fishlock, September 1, 1995).

The BJP used this demonization of Muslims to exploit Hindu perceptions that the government was treating the Muslim minority better than the Hindu majority. The BJP
was, in essence, creating the threat of Islamic fundamentalism as a scapegoat for all of the problems in India.

By 1995, the BJP had brought moderates back into its camp by removing the hateful rhetoric from its national platform and taking a stance on the economy. The BJP felt the main reason that it had been voted out of power was that it had not formulated a socio-economic model into its rhetoric that would appease and excite the populace.

BJP leader Govindacharya felt his party failed because it was unable to move from its promise to build a Ram temple in Ayodhya to formulating a socio-economic model of “Ram Rajya” (a period of just rule in a mythical golden age) (Aggarwal, December 3, 1993).

The BJP vowed that this setback was temporary, and it could not be stopped from taking over as the rulers of India. In the next two years, the BJP formulated as an economic policy that, it asserted, was a free-market stance. Contrary to what the BJP claimed, its economic policy was protectionism or economic nationalism at its worst. Whatever the BJP wanted to call it, its economic policy became extremely popular with the populace. The BJP even began to let people know that its economic policy was somewhat protectionist. Trying to bring forward the imagery of a war on as an economic battlefield, the BJP, “has identified it (Swadeshi) as the battle-cry for the polls.”(Handoo, December 6, 1995). The battle cry for its economic policy became, “as an economy of the people, by the people, and for the people.” (Handoo, December 6, 1995).
By the summer of 1995, the BJP had organized non-violent protest groups throughout India, thus getting its economic message out to the populace.

About 100 protesters gathered in the rain in New Delhi, smashing bottles of Pepsi and shouting slogans denouncing the policies of Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, who opened up the Indian market in 1991. "Foreigners go home," screamed right-wing activists from the Forum for National Awakening. Protesters vented their anger mainly at Pepsi, one of the best-known foreign brands. They burned a poster showing a Pepsi bottle topped by a hat bearing a U.S. flag and passed out pamphlets headed "Declaration of War" and "Pepsi leave India."

(Graves, August 9, 1995).

Colonel Sanders of Kentucky Fried Chicken and Pepsi became the key hate symbols in this battle for power. Through its rhetoric, the BJP demonized the junk food culture and proclaimed that junk food should be abolished throughout India. It also attacked other corporations such as Dupont and various power companies, but Kentucky Fried Chicken and Pepsi were highlighted the most in the BJP rhetorical campaign. The BJP attempted to formulate a policy that was the opposite of the status quo. The Congress Party was liberalizing and reforming the economy. The economic situation had not set well with the section of the populace that was used to subsidies. Not only were subsidies being removed, but inflation was at 8 percent, a rate which hurt the poor (Goldenberg, September 15, 1995). This economic policy attracted the lower class to the BJP as never...
before. The BJP had always primarily been a party for the upper middle class and the upper class. The BJP still did not attract many lower class citizens. The BJP had a problem attracting lower class people because of one of its core beliefs, which was to maintain the caste system and protect the interests of Hindu business people. The BJP also advocated against privileges for the lower classes. This new battle cry had the Congress Party running scared, since the Congress Party usually got the lower class votes. In reality, the BJP had only used the rhetoric of Hinduism to unite the Hindus. The BJP was forced into modifying its rhetorical focus for the elections once it realized that the issue of religion would never propel it into power (Kolodner, 1995, p. 251).

The race that would decide what party would rule India heated up the beginning of 1996. The five-year-rule mandate of the Congress Party was drawing to a close, and it had to call elections by the end of May. The realization that elections were coming resulted in alliances between parties across the political spectrum. The BJP started allying itself with different caste parties, such as the Bhangis caste (one of the lowest castes), in an attempt to show that it was not just a party for the rich castes.

The BJP, at this point, was looking for another issue besides Hindutva and economics that would excite the populace. The party thought that it had found this issue by taking as an anti-corruption stance, since most of the political parties in India were seen as corrupt, except the BJP. However, on January 16th, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) took away the BJP's chances to capitalize on the corruption issue. The CBI charged seven politicians, including key Congress leaders, L.K. Advani, and other opposition
leaders with receiving bribes. This scandal led to the resignation of Advani, who denied
the charges, but quit because the BJP wanted to make corruption as an issue (Goldenberg,
January 17, 1996). The corruption scandal was quickly labeled a political tool being used
by Rao to dispose of his political opponent. He soon retaliated by stating that even some
of his cabinet members had been charged with corruption. However, the opposition
parties noted that the cabinet members had all been possible contenders of Rao in the
election.

The scandal rapidly spiraled out of Rao’s control. The Supreme Court ordered the
CBI to speed up its investigation and to quit reporting to Rao. This court order resulted
in the implicit idea that Rao was also corrupt. The Congress Party also looked worse off
than the BJP because Advani had resigned when he was charged with corruption, while
most of the Congress Party members who had been charged resigned after initially fighting
the charges (Zubrzycki, January 22, 1996).

The BJP and other political parties, seeing that the Congress Party was starting to be
on the defensive, attacked Rao and claimed that he had taken bribes during his years in
office. “There is a prima facie case that the Jain brothers [key suspects in the scandal]
made payments to the prime minister to win favours,” said Sushma Swaraj, a
spokeswoman of the BJP (Chanda, January 22, 1996). Vajpayee also accused Rao of
accepting bribes from the Jains. Vajpayee went so far as to claim that he had seen
evidence that Rao had accepted 1.1 million dollars in bribes during the 1991 elections to
secure a ruling mandate. The Congress party attempted to dismiss the allegations, but
more and more evidence implicated Rao in the scandal. Chandraswami, Rao’s spiritual adviser, testified to the CBI that he had taken Rao to meet one of the Jain brothers in 1991. R.K. Dhawan, one of the Congress ministers who resigned after being charged with corruption, testified that he had taken one of the Jain brothers to meet Rao in 1991. This information was the final straw that crushed any chance of Rao being able to turn the scandal into an electoral advantage. However, the scandal also destroyed the BJP’s hopes of being able to make corruption as an issue during the campaign.

The final result of the scandal was to put much uncertainty into the campaign. All of the political parties were attacking each other, but also looking for possible allies in the event of a hung parliament. A hung parliament is exactly what resulted in the elections, with the BJP gaining the most seats. Polls before the scandal erupted had predicted the BJP winning as an outright majority in the Lok Sabha. However, the scandal created a political climate of mistrust that hurt the national parties: The BJP, the Congress Party, and the Janata Dal. The result was a parliament which consisted of many regional parties that had increased in power. The BJP increased its seats to 160, but this was not enough to gain a majority.

THE EVIL

The BJP, in this rhetorical period, focused on the Congress Party as “the evil”. The main reason that the BJP once again focused strictly on the Congress Party was because it realized that the Congress Party was the strongest political party in India. Thus, the BJP reasoned that if it were able to defeat the Congress Party, it would achieve political
dominance. The BJP used every political tool that it could muster in as an attempt to defeat the Congress Party.

VALUE APPEALS

Hindutva was still a prominent value appeal made by the BJP during this rhetorical period, but, as I noted earlier in this chapter, the BJP attempted to keep this out of the national headlines. This was a blatant attempt to keep the moderates in the party, since the BJP felt that these voters were key to its rising popularity.

Economic nationalism was the other prominent value appeal during this rhetorical period. The BJP continually attacked the Congress Party’s economic reforms, because they, the BJP claimed, were actually allowing the western nations to take over India, just like during the colonial period. The BJP denounced the arrival of what it called junk food culture from the west. The BJP claimed that it was desirable to have high technology shipped in from other countries, but not to allow low technology industries to come to India.
CHAPTER 6

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

On May 15th, the President of India gave the BJP its first chance to form a government, and, as a result, Vajpayee became the Prime Minister (Berfield and Ranawana, May 24, 1996). Vajpayee immediately began looking for possible allies. He only found 20 members of Parliament who were willing to back him and his party, far short of a majority. All of the other political parties united against the BJP and its traditionally nationalist policies. On May 28th, Vajpayee resigned as Prime Minister of India, robbing his enemies of the chance to disgrace the BJP by calling a no-confidence vote which would have resulted in every political party being able to publicly show its disdain towards the BJP.

The President of India approached the Congress Party and asked it to form the next government, but the Congress Party turned down the invitation. This refusal came about possibly because the Congress Party had seen what had happened to the last two coalition governments. The President then approached the United Front coalition and asked it to form a government. The coalition agreed to form a government. The coalition assembled a government that consisted of 13 parties and the Congress Party supporting the coalition from the outside. The coalition was declared to be dead before it even began. There were two main reasons for this: One, the coalition relied on the still politically strong Congress Party that would probably withdraw its support when it felt that it could win as an
election. Two, the coalition consisted of free market parties and Communists, groups that are almost always diametrically opposed (Sidhva, May 30, 1996). H.D. Gowda, a politician who was not known by many outside of his small state, was sworn in as Prime Minister on June 1, 1996. Gowda was chosen to be the leader of the United Front coalition because of his virtual anonymity among the various political parties. He was the third choice of the coalition because the previous choices were unacceptable to various members of the coalition.

More than anything else, the 1996 elections proved that the populace was angry with the Congress Party (Lev, June 7, 1996). The elections resulted in no mandate for any political party and perhaps showed that the Indian populace wanted coalition rule. Arun Nehru, nephew of Indira Gandhi, stated, “Coalition politics is here to stay,” (Lev, June 7, 1996). With the Congress Party losing half of the seats that it had possessed in the previous parliament and the BJP still short of enough votes to form a government, the leadership of India fell to the United Front, which had no discernible philosophy. The lack of a philosophy was made clear when it delayed the release of a position paper by several days, and even then, it was so small that it was aptly called the “minimum common program.” (Lev, June 7, 1996).

The lack of power of the United Front, without the Congress Party backing, was clear when Gowda ordered the CBI to stop investigating former Prime Minister Rao on the issue of his corruption. It was alleged that the Congress Party told the United Front that it
would withdraw its support from the government if Rao was prosecuted (Zubrzycki, June 20, 1996). The instability in India has not only affected the coalition government. The BJP has also been affected.

The past year has been a period of transition for the BJP with internal conflicts appearing in almost every state that the BJP holds power. This internal division within the BJP is especially disturbing for the BJP leadership, because the BJP is usually known for its unity and discipline. The reason that many of these divisions are now appearing is because of the failed attempt by the BJP to form a working government. The BJP had thought that it had played all of its cards correctly and would be in power by the beginning of June, 1996. Instead, the BJP fell short of a majority and saw itself opposed by almost every other political party in India.

The internal BJP division has created three different factions. The first group is composed of compromisers who believe that the BJP must cast off most of its Hindutva beliefs to project itself as a viable governing party in India. This group wants the BJP to become a political party in the Congress tradition, except that it would be much more disciplined and less corrupt. This group would like the BJP to still pander to the Hindu voters, but it would also like for the BJP to be able to attract minorities (Ayoob, Winter, 1997).

The second group is composed of the tactical compromisers who want to make compromises in the short term to make the BJP look better to the voters. This group, led
by Vajpayee and his supporters, agrees with the first group that without compromises on issues such as Hindutva, the BJP will never achieve national power. However, unlike the first group, this group would attempt to implement the policies once it consolidated power and swayed the majority of the Hindu population into accepting the BJP as the rulers of India (Ayoob, Winter, 1997).

The third school of thought encompasses ideological purists, who see attempts at compromises as a betrayal and exercises in futility. This group is composed of the VHP and the RSS. This group sees the fall of the BJP government as showing that the other parties will never accept the BJP and its allies. This group advocates going it alone and attempting to achieve a majority, without forming coalitions. They believe that the electorate will soon reject the United Front, just as they have spurned the Congress Party, and vote the BJP into power. A indication of the displeasure of this group with all compromises was the refusal of the RSS to attend Vajpayee’s swearing in ceremony (Ayoob, Winter, 1997).

The internal divisions of the BJP has created some problems for the BJP over the past year. In the state of Gujarat, a BJP controlled state, the national leadership of the BJP outright stopped certain BJP members from running as BJP candidates. The members that were denied access to the political tickets rose up and fought street battles with other BJP members, who were seen as favored by the national leadership. The members were seen as favored by Vajpayee and his supporters because of the moderate views, abandoning
Hindutva, that they took. The members that were denied tickets formed their own political party (Handoo, July 31, 1996). In October of 1996, more BJP legislators defected to the new political group. This resulted in the toppling of the BJP state government (13 Hindu Nationalist, October 29, 1996).

At the same time that this was occurring, the BJP was experiencing an internal revolt in Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state. Again, the revolt concerned the apparent favor of certain BJP members that were seen as politically popular. The national leadership of the BJP promised a post to a person that was part of a backward caste, which was unacceptable to the state leadership of the BJP. This internal division within the BJP resulted in a hung parliament in Uttar Pradesh when elections were held there in October of 1996. Rajasthan was also experiencing as an open war between the supporters of Vajpayee and Advani (Handoo, July 31, 1996).

1997 has proven to be a much better year for the BJP than the months after the 1996 elections. Rao resigned as Congress President and Parliament leader and was replaced by Sitaram Kesri, a former Rao loyalist. This brought up many doubts within the Congress Party. Kesri is not known as a good campaigner. The only positive quality that he is known for is raising funds for campaigns. While in the past the raising of funds might have been perceived as a virtue, now it is perceived as a negative aspect and is associated with corruption (Zubrzycki, January 6, 1997).
The BJP has also set to repairing its discipline and unity. In January the BJP set up a new school, in addition to the RSS school's, to train party activists. This school is supposed to imbue party unity. "We see indiscipline as an organizational weakness, we are in the process of putting into place a grievance redressal mechanism," said Advani (Fernandez, January 12, 1997). The BJP's recent attempt to unify itself has resulted in the BJP taking part in a coalition government in the Punjab, the first ever BJP there, and in Uttar Pradesh.

The United Front coalition will also most likely fall by the end of April. On March 29, Kesri announce the withdrawal of Congress Party support for the United Front coalition. The announcement was not only unexpected news to pundits throughout the world, but many Congress members had also not been told that the party was withdrawing its support (Naqvi, March 30, 1997). The withdrawal of the Congress Party's support will most likely result in new elections, even though Gowda has vowed to fight until it is proven he does not have enough support. However, Gowda has until mid-April to find allies because parliament is on recess until then (Ruling Coalition in, March 31, 1997).

IMPLICATIONS

Observations can be made in this thesis, which examined sixteen years of BJP rhetoric, spanning from the creation of the BJP in 1980 to the 1996 elections in which the BJP held power for 13 days by detailing the value appeals of this group, similar to the detailing that
Darsey engaged upon. The BJP emerged from the fallen Janata Coalition with a clear agenda: it wanted to rule India.

This period was identified by the BJP’s attempt to separate itself from the RSS and unify itself against the Congress Party. The BJP felt that the RSS had isolated the Jana Sangh from all other political groups, which kept it from achieving real power, and had then been the cause of the Janata coalitions’ fall. The second period lasted for four years and reflected the BJP’s belief that it had to go back to its RSS and Jana Sangh roots or forever live in the history books. 1990 to 1992 marked the further radicalization of the BJP, which ended in the destruction of the Babri Masjid Mosque. The last period marked a turn back to moderation. During this period, Vajpayee was returned as the leader of the BJP, and he attempted to moderate the BJP so it could take power. Each of these periods marked the change in what the BJP saw as “the evil”. However, the BJP always saw part of the evil as the Congress Party. The advancement of the BJP’s rhetoric, examined with the catalytic events, allows a few general observations about the BJP.

**BJP as Doppelganger**

The BJP always seems to be one step ahead of its opponents in the political arena. Each time, this doppelganger of politics changes its rhetorical appearance. It gains more momentum in its drive toward its goal of ruling the national government of India. One can always hope that the BJP will be uncovered as the changing, unethical, conniving group that it is, but I predict that the BJP will be able to hide its true appearance through
rhetorical means and gain political power in the elections that will have to be called in 1997. The BJP has proven to be a master doppelganger able to master changing rhetorical platforms and policies at its discretion, without the populace backlashing to a flip-flop in policies.

The BJP learned much in their loss in the spring of 1996. The BJP knew how to moderate and mutate its rhetoric to fit the public will, but the BJP has gotten even better at this game after they saw how much the other political parties hate them. Now the BJP is speaking out of both sides of its mouth. On one hand, the BJP is saying that they accept everyone in their party and that they do not want to kill Muslims. On the other hand, the BJP is once again affirming their commitment to build the Hindu temple in Ayodhya. This doublespeak that the BJP is employing has put much pressure on the United Front coalition.

The more doublespeak that the BJP employs, the more stances that the BJP co-opts from the different parties within the United Front coalition. The rhetoric that the BJP uses is hurting the coalition because, as a party's stance is co-opted by the BJP, another party within the coalition distances itself from the party that has had its stance co-opted. The parties distance themselves from the party that has had its stance co-opted because all of them hate the BJP so much. This fracturing of the coalition has led to a further disillusionment within the populace towards the coalition, thus resulting in as an increase in the popularity of the BJP, because they are seen as outsiders.
Expansion is Dangerous

The BJP, over the years, has found itself walking a political tightrope. While the BJP has become a doppelganger and attempted to mutate its stances it has also alienated some of its followers. The BJP has found itself in a quandary: expand its vote block into the lower castes and minorities and lose many of its upper caste followers or pander to the upper caste followers and lose out on the increase in votes. The BJP has gone back and forth on the issue. In the early eighties, the BJP gave up its allegiance to the RSS and attempted to get votes from the poorer strata of society. Later, the BJP attempted to unify the Hindu populace behind the ideas of Hindutva and Ram Rajya, but it found that these issues could not win the national election. The BJP, in the final period, attempted to moderate again, but found that many of the other political parties would not believe that the BJP had moderated. The BJP is again in a period of changing its values, but these values have not yet been defined.

BJP Rhetoric Relies on "The Evil"

If nothing else is certain, the BJP’s survival depends on the ability to create or focus on “the evil”. The BJP would never have been formed had it not been for the seeming corruption of the political establishment. While the BJP has evolved over the past decade and a half, there has always been the presence of something that the BJP labels as “the evil”, whether it be the Congress Party, all other Political Parties, or secularism. While I
am not sure if all movements rely on "the evil" to sustain themselves, this thesis concludes that all political parties that are also movements rely on "the evil".

Coalition Governments will Emerge

As noted above, the BJP is in an electoral quandary. The question for the BJP is how to increase its popularity with one group and not lose its popularity with another at the same time. The answer for the BJP is to move slowly and not to attempt to gain all of the seats that it needs to rule a majority government at one time. This means that, for the next five to ten years, the BJP will probably remain the largest political party in India, but it will be unable to form a government because the other political parties will still see the BJP as politically untouchable.

If the BJP decides to attempt to win lots of seats in the next election, it will probably see a loss in the number of seats that it obtains. The reasoning behind this loss is that many of its traditional followers will abandon it, while it will not get enough of the other voters to increase its seats in parliament. Whichever scenario occurs, India is likely to see coalition governments rule India for the short term. The only other strong political party currently in India is the Congress Party and it will probably continue to decline, unless it does a make-over soon.

The aim of this thesis was to understand the rhetoric of the BJP through a meshing of the methods employed by Darsey and Frykenberg. This method allowed the examiner to
draw conclusions and gain insight on how rhetoric may evolve or regress almost independently of the social movement.

This method also appears to be useful for future research of other political movements. For the purposes of future research, additional types of investigation should be used to provide further insights.

First, future investigations should examine the recent rise of the backward castes in the political realm in apparent opposition to the BJP. The early 1990s would be the most logical point to start researching this phenomenon since this is when these groups started rising in political power. However, one could also look at the early 1980's, when the Congress Party started abandoning the backward castes in an attempt to gain the upper castes support.

Secondly, future research into political movements should investigate the issue of moderation by radical political groups and how to speed up this process. This study looked at the radicalization and the subsequent moderation of the BJP. Future research should look at other political movements in other cultures and compare the BJP movement with the other movement.

Finally, future studies should look at the non-political versions of the BJP, which are the RSS and the VHP. These studies should address how these groups interact with each other and with the BJP. Such as an investigation would perhaps be able to explain the allure of the Hindu nationalism from a stance other than politics.
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