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Beef: A Study of Hindu and Muslim Conflict in Nineteenth Century Azamgarh

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by

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To my Dad, for making me read *What my 5th Grader Needs to Know* and other history flashcards after school everyday. You helped cultivate my love for the subject!

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Glossary

ahir	an occupational caste of Hindus known for cow-herding
brahmin	the priestly caste of Indians, said to have come from Brahma's head
caste	a western description of the Varna system
chamar	an occupational caste of Hindus known leather workers; they are identified among the untouchable castes
chutki	a system of contributions used by cow protection societies where its members would donate a portion of their daily grain for funding
cowri	a form of donation practiced by the Julahas where one rupee and nine anna would be deducted out of every one hundred rupees
gaushala	a shelter for rescued cattle
imambarah	a holy site for Shia Muslims to commemorate their Khalifa (Imam), or religious leader
julaha	an occupational caste of Muslims known for cloth-weaving
kafan	a shroud used to wrap the deceased that are ritually made by the Julaha caste
karail	a manure-based soil used specifically for sugarcane production
kshatriya	the warrior caste of Indians, said to have come from Brahma’s arms
lathi	a bamboo staff
lekhpal	the title given to village record-holders in the North-Western Provinces
mahajan	the title given to moneylenders in the North-Western Provinces
musjid	a Muslim place of worship where congregations gather for prayer
patias	a leaflet or letter; used here for circular or “snowball” letters

qasba	the center of town; commonly refers to the citadel of a town
qurbani	the sacrifice of cows by Muslims on Bakr-Id
razil	a term used in the North-Western Provinces to group together the laboring people of the society
sharif	a term used in the North-Western Provinces to group together the high status people of the society
tahsildar	a tax collector of a sub-division of a district
ta'zieh	a Muslim space where passionate plays are performed to mourn the passing of the prophet Muhammad's grandson, Imam Hussain
varna	the division of Hindu society into Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras
zamindar	a landowner

Introduction

Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century, Uttar Pradesh was one of the most rapidly changing states in all of India. The area of present day Uttar Pradesh was gradually acquired by the East India Company beginning in the late eighteenth century and concluding by the middle of the nineteenth century. The territories of present day Nepal and Madhya Pradesh were some of the first to be conquered by the Company in what is now present-day Uttar Pradesh, and were named the North-Western Provinces by 1833. Later in 1856, the Kingdom of Oudh was also annexed by the Company, and the British combined the two in 1877 to form the United Provinces, or present day Uttar Pradesh. One of the first regions to experience serious adaptation under British rule was the Azamgarh district of the North-Western Provinces. Azamgarh was on the border of the North-Western Provinces, and just south of the Gorakhpur district and the Oudh Kingdom.[1] On its Eastern border was the Ballia district, and stretching from the east side to the south of Azamgarh was the Ghazipur district.[2]

With the rise of modernization and nationalist thought throughout the nineteenth century, the United Provinces, and especially these districts mentioned, were at the center of many reformation movements. This paper focuses on the reaction of this region to British rule and their struggles with an abrupt culture shift. The reaction of Azamgarh to British rule was so important because it initially led to feelings of dissatisfaction. As a result, multiple religious movements intended to help Indians adapt to the new westernized country were formed within the North-Western Provinces. However, regional conflicts were also captured in many of these

[1] Fisher, F.H., "Vol. XIII Part I.-Azamgarh." in *Statistical, Descriptive, and Historical Account of the North-Western Provinces of India* (141. Allahabad: North Western Provinces and Oudh Government Press, 1883), 2.
[2] Fisher, 2.

movements, even as they began to nationalize. The cow protection movement, one of the most prominent agendas of many Hindu reform movements, arguably reached its climax in 1893, when multiple riots emerged in the Azamgarh district. The local feelings involved in these riots, which stemmed initially from the reaction to British government, were later honed by local disputes. Then these feelings were eventually captured in the Nationalist Movement of the twentieth century, as the Indian National Congress adopted the ideals of the popularized cow protection movement. The Nationalist Movement eventually succeeded in India gaining independence from the British in 1947, but the act of liberation was not possible without the creation of Pakistan, in order to separate Indian Hindus and Muslims.

Certain aspects of both the Hindu and Muslim religions in India had to be properly addressed if "pure" nationalism were to succeed. However, the concept of Indian-Nationalism was not dealt with properly, and as a result the struggles that Hindus and Muslims faced modernizing their religions are still prevalent in modern day India. Today, communalism–a form of sectionalism through religion– is still very much a modern issue in India. For instance, the idea of interfaith marriage between Hindus and Muslims is still heavily opposed by most of India. In a poll taken in 2021, the Pew Research Center recorded that almost two-thirds of Hindus did not approve of interfaith marriage.[3] As for Muslims, over three-fourths of the population felt the same.[4] Many liberal Indians believe these thoughts have been made into law, with the establishment of the "love jihad" laws. In Uttar Pradesh, and a few other Indian states, the love jihad rules are basically implemented to protect men and women from forced conversion

[3] *Religion in India: Tolerance and Segregation*, (Survey. India: Pew Research Center, June 29, 2021).
[4] *Religion in India: Tolerance and Segregation*.

through marriage, specifically the conversion of Hindu women to Islam.[5] However, it is argued that these laws are really intended to prohibit interfaith marriage altogether.[6] In Uttar Pradesh, days after the love jihad laws were implemented in 2021, Muslim men were targeted by the police and arrested.

More recently, in a much more deliberate attempt to communalize India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced he will be implementing a new Citizenship Amendment Bill, which many believe to be anti-Muslim as well. The original law on citizenship in India prohibited illegal migrants from becoming citizens in India, unless they were to work for the federal government for at least eleven years.[7] However, an Amendment was constructed in 2019, and is to be put into effect this year. The amendment states that now there will be an exception to the law, where an illegal migrant will only have to work under the government for six years in order to earn citizenship. If the migrant can prove that they are from Pakistan, Afghanistan or Bangladesh, and are "members of six religious minority communities" –Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi and Christian –then they will be eligible for the new exception.[8] Hindus are not a "religious minority community" in India by any means, as they make up over eighty percent of the population. While the other five communities make up a very small percentage of the Indian population, totaling only six percent.[9] The Citizenship Amendment Bill was deemed anti-Muslim because it did not include Muslims in this exception, despite being the largest minority in India,

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[5] Frayer, Lauren, *In India, Boy Meets Girl, Proposes — and Gets Accused of Jihad*, (National Public Radio, October 10, 2021).

[6] Frayer, *In India, Boy Meets Girl*.

[7] *CAA: India's New Citizenship Law Explained*, (British Broadcasting Corporation, March 12, 2024).

[8] *Religion in India: Tolerance and Segregation*.

[9] *Religion in India: Tolerance and Segregation*.

at nearly thirteen percent, and making up the dominant majority in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh.[10]

Lastly, discrepancies around the cow's sanctity in the Hindu and Muslim religions is still a major cause of violence in India. Perhaps one of the most traumatic incidents in recent years was the Jharkhand lynching of 2016. Two Muslim cattle traders, of the ages thirty five and fifteen, were intercepted by "cow-protection vigilantes" on the way to the Friday market. The two Muslims were relentlessly beaten to death. When recovered, their hands were forcibly tied behind their back, and cloth was stuffed in their mouths as a gag.[11] After they were killed, the bodies were then hanged from a tree.[12] Sadly, this was just one of many cow-related deaths or injuries that have been reported in modern India. In Uttar Pradesh alone, where the riots of 1893 took place, nine Muslim and Dalit Indians have been killed and over fifteen injured since 2015.

Whether it be logistical, political, or local, communalism is still a relevant problem in India, especially regarding discrimination toward Muslims and those of the Dalit castes. At the time of the 1893 riots, it was difficult to understand how the cow protection movement would directly impact the development of the country after independence. But, now that the ideals of the movement and the Indian National Congress are seen in the present government, it is more evident just how the cow protection movement induced discrimination by caste and religion. India has been one of the fastest growing economies in the world since their independence. Yet, it still struggles to compete with other global powers. This is in part because the original modernization effort of India did not properly prepare the country for the modern world. Certain

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[10] *Religion in India: Tolerance and Segregation*.
[11] Hebbar, Prajakta, *Muslim Cattle Traders Beaten To Death In Ranchi, Bodies Found Hanging From A Tree*, (Huffington Post, July 14, 2016).
[12] Hebbar, *Muslim Cattle Traders Beaten To Death In Ranchi*.

practices such as the caste system and cow worship, while helping to maintain traditional thought in a modern world, can be argued to hold the country back economically. Hindu reform movements of the past, and even those today, have presented ways to practice the religion, without the restricting "non-essentials" of it. But, it is only through a unified effort that Hindus, and in effect India as a whole, will be able to flourish in a modern world. In this paper, I plan to investigate how "pure" nationalism failed by researching the development of nationalist and modernizing thought in the local Julaha, Ahir, and Brahmin communities of Azamgarh, and how their local sentiments against each other were then adopted by the Indian National Congress after the riots of 1893.

A Brief Background of Azamgarh

Before one can analyze the reaction of the Azamgarh Indians to colonial rule, it is first important to understand the historical background of the district, and surrounding districts. Historically, Azamgarh had always been a district that was heavily dependent on pasture and agriculture.[13] As of 1881, the government gazetteer of Azamgarh noted the total population of the district was 1,604,654 civilians.[14] Of that total, about 108,769 (52,391 females) were Brahmins; 124,867 (57,943 females) were Rajputs; 5,674 (2,705 females) Banias; and 1,154,077 (568,213 females) were recorded as "persons belonging to the other castes".[15] Of these "other castes" two of the most popular were the Ahir caste, totaling to 253,229 representatives (121,570 females), and the Chamar caste, with 259,816 people (131,377 females).[16] In Azamgarh, and the surrounding districts, these cultivators worked in accordance with the rainy season, which lasted from late

[13]Pandey, Gyanendra, "Rallying Round the Cow Sectarian Strife in the Bhojpuri Region, c. 1888-1917'." In *Subaltern Studies II Writings on South Asian History and Society*. (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983), 65.
[14] Fisher, 60.
[15] Fisher, 63.
[16] Fisher, 84.

June to early October.[17] The primary crop of the rainy season was barley, while in the fall it was sugarcane and rice.[18] It has been noted that, of these crops, barley and rice were meant for personal consumption, while sugarcane was how the "agriculturist pays his rent".[19] Through a study of the cultivators and their crops, it also becomes evident just how important the cow was to these communities. For instance, the act of threshing rice and barley, in order to be separated for consumption, was usually assigned to the cattle.[20] Additionally, the ideal *karail* soil for sugarcane was produced using the manure of the cow.[21] This, along with the fact that the Ahirs and Chamars were both occupational castes centered around the cow, speaks to the economic importance of the cow in this region. This is important to take note of as tensions surrounding the cow begin to arise in Azamgarh and the surrounding districts.

In the same gazetteer, it was noted that the only other industry in the district with a similar following to cultivation was weaving.[22] In the days prior to colonial rule, the whole population of the district would have been seen "clad in cloth of local manufacture".[23] However, under colonial rule this community witnessed dramatic changes to their profession. I mention this because, while the majority of cultivators were Hindu, the weaver population was predominantly Muslim. Recorded in a district gazetteer from 1911, the Julahas, who were the occupational caste of weavers, made up the largest sect of the total population of Muslims in Azamgarh, totaling to 54,238 Julahas, or 25.27% of the Muslim population.[24] Now of the total

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[17] Fisher, 27.
[18] Fisher, 41.
[19] Fisher, 47.
[20] Fisher, 44.
[21] Fisher, 13, 48.
[22] Fisher, 124-5.
[23] Fisher, 124.
[24] Drake-Brockman, D.L., *Azamgarh: A Gazetteer Being Volume XXXIII of the District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh* (Vol. XXXIII. Lucknow: Newal Kishore Press, 1911), 90.

population of Azamgarh, Muslims were certainly in the minority, accounting for only 211,190 (106,937) of the total 1,604,654 civilians of the district.[25] But the Julaha community especially was very clustered, and actually made up the majority of the population in the three largest villages of the district, namely Mau, Mubarakpur, and the village of Azamgarh itself.[26] Further evidence of the Julaha's dispersion in Azamgarh was recorded in 1876, when a report mentioned that 13,058 looms were in use, predominantly in the villages of Mau, Mubarakpur, and Kopa.[27] These villages grow important throughout this discussion because, especially the villages of Mau and Mubarakpur, become the grounds for the majority of tensions and riots that develop in the district. Of course, the Julahas are at the center of most of these conflicts. But, it is important to understand their economic struggles and connection to the land before analyzing their protests of the nineteenth century.

Lastly, I believe it is important to understand how administration of Azamgarh and relation to neighboring districts changed under colonial rule. Before the arrival of the British, the Azamgarh district was ruled by Muslims.[28] However, despite being ruled by Muslims, the district was reportedly still welcoming toward Hindus. In Pandit Bishar Narain Dar's *Appeal to the English Public on Behalf of the Hindus of N.W.P and Oudh* (which will be cited heavily for this report), he claims pre-colonial Azamgarh was "the Government of Indians by Indians; in other words, the Government was composed of those who knew the wants and requirements of the subject people".[29] He goes on to further state that Government officials of that time would meet

[25] Fisher, 60.
[26] Drake-Brockman, 91.
[27] Fisher, 124.
[28] Fisher, 132.
[29] Dar, Pandit Bishan Narayan, *An Appeal to the English Public on Behalf of the Hindus of the N.W.-P. and Oudh* (Lucknow: G.P. Varma and Brothers Press, 1893), 24-25.

with the common people “daily and hourly".[30] The community was allowed to express their satisfactions, grievances, and even discuss topics unrelated to politics altogether. This built a trust, and even a friendship with the ruling class. Natives of Azamgarh felt that the government was perfectly integrated into the community, on a professional, and unprofessional level. The pre-colonial government of Azamgarh was always knowledgeable of Muslim-Hindu complications because of their consistent communication with the community. This changed however, when the Muslim rulership ceded the district to the East India Company on November 10, 1801.[31] The British appointed Zamindars (landlords) to independently care for specific plots of land, and their only requirement was to collect a set tax revenue for the government. Moneylenders and brokers were also predominantly in charge of the money exchange of the district. This led to countless attempts of loan inflation and coercion among the men holding such positions.

However, what the British did bring to Azamgarh was a wave of industrialization. While most of the railways constructed in Azamgarh only appeared in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the British were still responsible for promoting modern transportation and communication in other ways. One of the earliest innovations of the British was an institutionalized series of “metalled roads”, that were to be used for networking.[32] The gazetteer of 1881 placed the metalled roads in order of importance:

> The most important metalled roads are—(1) from Azamgarh to Ghazipur (43 ½ miles); (2) from Azamgarh to Jaunpur (40 miles); (3) from Azamgarh to Dohri and thence across the Gogra to Gorakhpur (62 miles); and (4) from Dohri to Ghazipnr (49 miles).[33]

[30] Dar, 25.
[31] Fisher, 138.
[32] Fisher, 24.
[33] Fisher, 23-4.

Since their establishment in the mid 1840s, these metalled roads have been credited to have greatly facilitated traffic in the district.[34] On the other hand, communication tactics were greatly improved by the British due to the introduction of post-offices throughout the district. By 1881, there were twenty-three imperial post offices positioned throughout Azamgarh, with an additional four district post offices in Koelsa, Kendrapur, Mahul and Powai.[35] An increase in mail sent throughout the district is evident as well. A report conducted on the postal receipts of the Azamgarh post-offices showed that in 1865-66, the offices only made Rs 5,043, whereas in 1880-81, the income of the offices was Rs 17,429.[36] Likewise, a corresponding increase in letters received was also recorded in the same time period. In 1865-66, the number of received letters was 144,578, compared to 1880-81, where the total number of letters received was 362,206.[37] The improvement in transportation and communication, especially between Azamgarh and its neighboring districts, becomes particularly important as well when studying the cow protection movement and the 1893 riots of Azamgarh. Directly leading up to the Azamgarh riots of 1893, the cow protection societies of the Azamgarh mobilized with societies of neighboring districts through the abundant delivery of *patias* (or "snowball" letters) and by traveling to neighboring society meetings. Eventually, on the day of the riots, many of the society members involved in the riots were from neighboring districts such as Ghazipur and Ballia.[38]

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[34] Fisher, 24.
[35] Fisher, 99.
[36] Fisher, 99.
[37] Fisher, 99.
[38] Pandey, *Rallying Round the Cow*, 83.

Main Sources

Before beginning the first chapter, it is necessary to acknowledge Pandit Bishan Narain Dar's *Appeal to the English Public on Behalf of the Hindus of N.W.P and Oudh* as the main primary source of this paper. Throughout his working career, Bishan Narain Dar was respected among his peers as a diligent lawyer. He traveled to England between 1884 and 1887, where he studied Law, as well as Sociology, Political Science, Moral Philosophy and Constitutional History.[39] His goal was to return to India as a master of both Western thought and Indian society, and his peers would have said he was successful in this. For the case of the Azamgarh riots of 1893, he was chosen to be a representative of the Indian National Congress for the Hindus involved in the riots in an address to the English crown. He was chosen for this role because of his famously studious attitude, and "habit of serious study".[40] But, more importantly he was known to be someone who presented evidence with a "sane judgment" and possessed a "strong and pure light" of thought.[41] In a biography written by one of Dar's students, Mr. B.N. Chakbast wrote of Dar that, "In politics as well as in matters affecting social reform, his 'clear vision' came to his aid, in placing facts and events in their proper perspective, and enabled him to 'see things steadily and see them whole.'"[42] However, on multiple occasions I challenge this claim as I compare Dar's *Appeal* to historical evidence. In Dar's *Appeal*, he argues that the Azamgarh riots were the result of three factors of British rule: a "Divide and Rule" government, a "shift in favoritism" from British officials, and complications regarding the "established customs" of Azamgarh. All of these factors are certainly apparent in Azamgarh, as the district fell victim to a government looking to

[39] Chatterji, H.L. "'A Short Sketch of Mr. Dar's Life By Mr. B.N. Chakbast B.A.LL.B." In *Pt. Bishan Narain Dar's Speeches and Writings*, Vol. I. Part I & Part II:10. Lucknow: Anglo-Oriental Press, 1921), 2.
[40] Chakbast, 2-3.
[41] Chakbast, 1.
[42] Chakbast, 3.

industrialize, and not taking interest in the rural areas of the country. But there were also tensions between Hindus and Muslims, as well as high and low caste Hindus, which heavily influenced the riots too. British and Indian factors in tandem caused the violent outbreaks of June 1893, however Dar fails to mention this. Perhaps Dar's belief in "a stormy patriotism", or his religious feelings, which formulated in the latter years of his life, blurred his once clear vision on such an important event for India's future.

Another author who certainly deserves recognition for their impact on this project is Gyanendra Pandey. Pandey has more or less dedicated his life to the study of prejudice in South Asia and later the United States. In more recent years, he has been credited for founding the Subaltern Studies Collective, which is a group of South Asian scholars who dedicate study to the post-colonial masses of Indian society. In a similar effort, this paper attempts to do the same, focusing only on the impact of rural society before, and during the Nationalist Movement. For this paper, Gyanendra Pandey's book titled, *Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*, helped provide excellent background on the developing thought of India at a nationwide level, and how communalism resulted from such thought. His other work, titled, *Rallying Round the Cow Sectarian Strife in the Bhojpuri Region, c. 1888-1917*, was also substantially referenced when discussing the regional intricacies of Azamgarh. This book presented a more detailed description of the local conflicts that arose in my region of study, which in turn also influenced communalism. With the help of these two works, I was able to gain a much deeper understanding of how the developing thought of India and the local thought of the region both affected the ideals of the cow protection movements that stemmed out of Azamgarh.

Chapter 1

Initial Reactions to Modernization in Azamgarh: Feelings of Desperation for the Julahas and Zamindar Temple Building.

On November 10th, 1801, the district of Azamgarh, as well as the divisions of Mahul and Maunath Nathbhanjan, were handed over from the previous Nawab Saadat Ali Khan to the Governor-General of the East India Company.[43] The head collector of the time, Mr. John Routledge was responsible for collecting Rs 6,93,767 from the district.[44] However, he only made Rs 5,89,264 by the end of 1802.[45] It was apparent to the government of Azamgarh that the agriculture and trading interests of the community were severely depressed, and their rulership would have to adjust to the land.[46] Much like many other ceded provinces, Mr. Routledge decided to focus on separate subdivisions of the district for three years each.[47] In those three years, he would focus on cultivating that land specifically, and after the agricultural reformation was complete, the villages with the most prosperity would be the most heavily populated.[48] The Governor-General agreed to work with the local Zamindars who agreed to their terms and conditions. The Zamindars were allowed to manage certain sections of the land independently so long as the proper revenue was collected for that land's value. Once the tax was collected, ninety percent was to go to the government, while the Zamindars were allowed to keep ten percent as

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[43] Drake-Brockman, D.L., *Azamgarh: A Gazetteer Being Volume XXXIII of the District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh* (Vol. XXXIII. Lucknow: Newal Kishore Press, 1911), 123.

[44] Drake-Brockman, 125.

[45] Drake-Brockman, 125.

[46] Drake-Brockman, 125.

[47] Drake-Brockman, 125.

[48] Drake-Brockman, 125.

profit.[49] The tax was made payable in eight installments throughout the year. To help with these transactions, six tahsildars, or tax officers, were appointed throughout the district. Payment for their successful work was ten percent of all revenue they collected. Similarly, to assist those working the land owned by the Zamindars, moneylenders were dispensed throughout the district as well, practically equal in number to the Zamindars.[50]

In terms of magisterial leadership, there was one head magistrate for the district of Azamgarh, along with the head collector.[51] Below the primary magistrate there were four honorary magistrates of Azamgarh; two of whom held office for life and the other two for fixed periods.[52] However, it is important to note that in the later years four additional magistrates were appointed to Mau and Mubarakpur, two for each place.[53] This was because Mau and Mubarakpur both experienced serious tensions under the new rule of the East India Company. Under the previous rule of the Nawab Saadat, Mau and Mubarakpur were developed into weaving centers for the Muslim Julahas.[54] By the arrival of the East India Company, the Azamgarh district as a whole was only fourteen percent Muslim, but the towns of Muhammadabad and Kopaganj, and especially Mubarakpur and Mau, were home to a Muslim majority.[55] However, the power dynamic of these villages changed with the appointment of Zamindars and moneylenders from the British. The majority of Zamindars were of the Hindu Brahmin caste, and the moneylenders were also commonly Hindu. With their arrival to the weaving centers of Mau and Mubarakpur,

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[49] Drake-Brockman, 125.
[50] Drake-Brockman, 54.
[51] Drake-Brockman, 121.
[52] Drake-Brockman, 121.
[53] Drake-Brockman, 121.
[54] Drake-Brockman, 79.
[55] Pandey, Gyanendra, "Rallying Round the Cow Sectarian Strife in the Bhojpuri Region, c. 1888-1917'." in *Subaltern Studies II Writings on South Asian History and Society* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983), 67.

they attempted to repurpose Muslim dominated villages to their religious preference. This was often through the defilement of Mosques and construction of Hindu temples. As a result, multiple agitations were instigated by the Julahas and Zamindars of the district, leading to the immediate tensions of the district that were later captured in the 1893 riots.

In Dar's *Appeal*, he argues that the initial tensions of Azamgarh, which blossomed into the 1893 riots, were a direct result of the era of modernization forced upon Azamgarh by the British government. With the introduction of British rule, there was a heavy focus on the industrialization of the country in an effort to catch up to western civilizations. As a result, rural societies such as Azamgarh struggled immensely with the advance of the market. Discontent from the Julahas was simply ignored by the British, until eventually the Julahas sought to voice their dissatisfaction against their oppressors by resuming cow sacrifice, which ultimately only excited the Hindus to riot. Again, this was a key understanding of Dar's argument as to why the 1893 riots came about. In summary, he stated:

> These riots [Azamgarh 1893] must also have shown to such Englishmen as are capable of looking at things from a non-official point of view, how ignorant the official generally is of the real feelings of the subject people, how little is he in touch with them, and how his ignorance and self-confidence born of ignorance are the root of our political ills. He has by his own folly driven popular discontent under-ground, and there it works unnoticed and unobserved, bursting out here and there in riots and outbreaks, but indicating beyond all possibility of mistake, like the occasional outbursts of flame and smoke at the top of a volcano, the advent, at no distant date, of some grave social convulsion.[56]

Immediate tensions were certainly caused by the arrival of colonial rule, as was evident after the Azamgarh riot of 1806. The British introduction of Hindu Zamindars and moneylenders at the

[56] Dar, Pandit Bishan Narayan, *An Appeal to the English Public on Behalf of the Hindus of the N.W.-P. and Oudh* (Lucknow: G.P. Varma and Brothers Press, 1893), 30.

start of the nineteenth century posed an immediate threat to Julaha livelihood. The Julahas requested that the British government allow them the right to sacrifice cows under their governance. Cow sacrifice, or *qurbani*, was not permitted in Azamgarh before colonial rule. However, this was because Muslim leaders previously ruled over the district. During their reign, the Muslim rulers felt their religious sanctity was protected enough politically to display religious tolerance toward the local Hindus. But, with the introduction of British rule, Muslim leadership was replaced by the authoritative positions of Hindu moneylenders, Zamindars, and Lekhpals. With their arrival, these new Hindu powers began to invalidate the previous customs of the Julahas with the establishment of Hindu temples and overall reconstruction of the land. Because the Julahas no longer felt their religious practices were protected politically, many of them pushed to revive the aspects of their religion they previously gave up for the sake of tolerance for the minority–namely cow sacrifice. But of course, the Hindus of Azamgarh felt the traditional custom of cow protection should not be tampered with, regardless of a change in governance. The two differing communities of Azamgarh eventually confronted each other physically in 1806 over the controversial issue of cow sacrifice.

Dar's explanation for the emergence of initial turmoil in the region, coming at the hands of the British, certainly holds merit; as is indicated by the 1806 riot. However, Gyanendra Pandey's explanation for the correlation between British rule and the early signs of discontent from the Julahas is more accurate. In his article titled "Rallying Round the Cow", Pandey described the immediate impact of British modernization on Azamgarh villages:

> "The situation in the town when the British took over the direct administration of eastern UP in 1801 might appear, then, to have been tailor-made for conflict between Hindus and Muslims, with Hindu Zamindars, traders and moneylenders in the ascendant in an area

> where a majority of the inhabitants were Muslims with a memory of imperial favour and local Muslim dominance".[57]

The placement of Hindu landlords and moneylenders in Muslim villages certainly affected the religious comfortability of the Julahas. However, I appreciate Panday's use of the phrase "might appear" when speaking on the tailor-made conflict of the British government. As Dar argued in his *Appeal*, the removed British government allowed Hindu-Muslim strife in Azamgarh to boil until, "the discontent [became] too sullen to pass unnoticed".[58] Dar believed that the positioning of Hindu subordinates in traditional Muslim communities, like Mau and Mubarakpur, and the failure of the British to engage consistently with the communities caused tensions to build into the riots of 1893. However, the "bigotry" of the Hindu landlords, moneylenders, and village record keepers, after being placed in Azamgarh by the British government, should not be left unchecked. The Julahas were always a low caste community who consistently battled with poverty. After British industrialization made their occupation obsolete, the weaving centers that had been built during better times were all that was left to represent an endangered community. Meanwhile, the majority of Zamindars in these villages were Hindu Brahmins, while the moneylenders were consistently of reasonable wealth. Even during British modernization, when many of the Brahmin Zamindars witnessed their worst economic period in history, these men were still in positions of power over the shudra and untouchable castes. Especially in the first half of the nineteenth century, the Julahas and other low caste members of the district were still consistently requested to donate portions of their crops to their Brahmin landlords. The Brahmin Zamindars were certainly witnessing troubling times, but the establishment of Hindu temples

[57] Pandey, *Rallying Round the Cow*, 79.
[58] Dar, 24.

was an excessive display of dominance, and oppressive to the Julahas. Similarly, the moneylenders, and later Lekhpals, engaged in direct economic and political oppression of an already suffering caste. In this chapter, I plan to explain why the Julahas felt such a desperate need to protect their religious infrastructure, and how the Zamindars, Mahajans, and Lekhpals all acted in such oppressive ways to the Julahas that their actions cannot be dismissed. Finally, the chapter will conclude with recounts of temple conflicts in Azamgarh, where I will question how "petty" the disputes really were.

The Desperation of the Julahas

Even before the introduction of colonial rule, the Julahas were always an incredibly devout sect of Muslims. In an effort to better understand the Julaha society, I have referred to Deepak Mehta's Ph.D Thesis titled, "A Sociological Study of Gandhian Institutions: Work, Weavers and the Khadi and Village Industries Commission". In one of his chapters, he goes in-depth into the weaving practices of the Julaha and their inherent religious ties. The Julaha method of weaving is captured in a Julaha-specific text, known as the *Mufid-ul-Mominin*. In this text, Julahas are taught to combine work and worship into one.[59] The *Mufid-ul-Mominin* begins with an explanation of how the Julaha practice came to be. In summary, Adam, from the traditions of Adam and Hawwa (Eve), complains to Allah about his nakedness. In response, Allah sends Jabril to give Adam a kit of weaving materials and to teach him the art of weaving. When teaching Adam, Jabril says that there are certain prayers to recite while weaving, equal to "reciting the Holy Qoran one thousand times". Jabril then goes on to state that weavers who recite these prayers while weaving are protected from calamity, while those who do not are

[59] Pandey, Gyanendra, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*. (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990), 97.

“barred from entry into the Muslim community on the day of judgment".[60] In terms of practice, within the Julaha community, four traditions are accustomed to every weaver. The first of course, is producing cloth to sell. However, this is seen as a privilege and not every Julaha is guaranteed the right to sell their product. On the other hand, the second practice is to create a shroud, or *kafan*, for the dying of their community. This practice is not a right but more so a ritual, and it is deemed as “an obligation that every [male] Julaha is required to fulfill at some point in his or her life”.[61] The third and fourth practices are like the second in that they are more ritualistic than optional. Julaha families conducted ceremonies to initiate the male children into the practice of weaving. During the first six days of the month when the initiation takes place, the man of the household recites all of Adam’s questions to Jabril and the answers that follow. Then, the male child repeats those prayers back. Finally, when the loom is officially passed down from father to son, the conversation between Adam and Jabril is read once again by a “Holy Man" that is present. As the Julahas entered the nineteenth century, and were forced to abandon the Muslim rule of the past, these religious ties within the occupation did not simply fade away. On the contrary, religious piety only grew stronger among the Julahas.

This was especially true once the Julahas began to experience severe poverty as a result of British industrialization reaching the district. One of the most critical developments that came from the British was the creation of India’s textile mill industry. As these mills became prominent in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the demand for weavers was actually quite high. However, weaving communities that were colonized before Azamgarh were recruited first to work in the mill centers of Bombay and Calcutta. Furthermore, the Julahas of

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[60] Mehta, Deepak, “Work, Worship and Word: A Study of the Weaver's Loom.” In *A Sociological Study of Gandhian Insti- Tutions: Work, Weavers and the Khadi and Village Industries Commission.* (Delhi University, 1989).
[61] Mehta, *Work, Worship and Word: A Study of the Weaver's Loom.*

the Azamgarh were especially known for their high-end cloth making. Yet, the British factories were only interested in mass production. Ironically, their skill as weavers put them out of business. The cloth industry of Azamgarh was almost immediately made obsolete with the introduction of colonial rule.

Struggles for the local Julahas only worsened by the middle of the nineteenth century as a result of the United States Civil War. In a battle between the North and South regions of the United States, the production of cotton, which was usually performed by African slaves, was put on hold for the war. For the British, they relied heavily on their cotton trade with the United States, and they abruptly lost their primary source of cotton for good. In a frenzy, the British looked to acquire raw cotton from any of their colonized assets, and thus, the cotton boom emerged in India. Cotton was brought from regions all over India to the primary trade ports in order to be produced within the mills. This led to a mass output of business from the textile industry, earning this era the reputation of the "cotton boom". However, what was known as the cotton boom globally was referred to as the cotton "famine" in rural communities of India such as Azamgarh. In the weaving centers of the North-Western Provinces, the number of cotton maunds that were "normally retained for production within the district" were nearly halved in order to support the mill industries of the port cities.[62] By this time, the Julaha class was on the brink of extinction. Many had migrated away from the Bhojpuri belt, leaving behind a family history which could be traced as far back as the days of Mughal emperor Akbar (r.1556-1605), and those who stayed were forced to resort to other methods of work, namely as coolies, servants or beggars.[63]

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[62] Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*, 73.
[63] Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*, 73.

While the worst of the Julaha's misfortune was yet to come, the weavers of Azamgarh were already noted as a desperate community by the early nineteenth century. In a report on the Azamgarh district, anthropologist James Thomason recorded that by 1837,

> The Julahas of Mubarakpur, Mau, Kopagan and other such places in that region were "a weak and sickly-looking people, but mostly possessing firearms, and very liable to be excited to riot by anything which affects their religious prejudices. They have of late years been particularly turbulent, in consequence of the spread amongst them of the tenets of Syed Uhmud [Saiyid Ahmad]".[64]

While the Julahas had experienced poverty in the past, nothing compared to their poverty under the East India Company. To the Julahas, the economic instability they experienced was the initial sign of the fall of the previous Muslim rule. As their good fortune came to an abrupt halt, the Julahas tried desperately to maintain any level of self-respect they previously had within the district. Such an attempt to restore equity was displayed in the riot of 1806. Now that, under British rule, Muslims were the minority community in terms of authority, they believed it was practical for the Hindus to practice religious tolerance the same way they once did. However, with the failure of the riot, the last remembrance of Muslim representation and prosperity in the district was found in their religious infrastructure.

In Mau for example, under the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan, 84 mohallas (residential localities) and 360 Mosques were built in the region.[65] By the nineteenth century, this was the only Muslim representation the Julahas of Mau had left. The Julahas of Mau and Mubarakpur were "very liable to be excited to riot by anything which affects their religious prejudices"

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[64] Thomason, James, *Report on the Settlement of Chuklah: Azimgarh.* (Agra: Secundra Orphan Press, 1854), 130.
[65] Drake-Brockman, 254.

because the Zamindars and moneylenders of the Julaha centers were specifically targeting Muslim buildings. The animosity of the Julahas did not travel to the British, who were the source of their economic misfortune, because the moneylenders and Zamindars all independently chose to economically and religiously oppress the Julahas. Without a direct order from the British government telling the Hindu tenants to oppress the Julahas, the resentment of the weavers fell upon the Hindus directly. There is a certain irresponsibility seen from these Hindu subordinates that Dar failed to address in his *Appeal to the English Public*. But, in order to properly understand all which caused the 1893 riots, the actions of the Hindu moneylenders and Zamindars–as well as the local Lekhpals–should be reviewed as well.

The Zamindar, Mahajan, and Lekhpal.

Since the Mughal period, Azamgarh was controlled locally by Sheikh Muslim "Zamindars".[66] In the Mughal sense of the word, a Zamindar was a local landowner. Under jurisdiction from the Mughal courts, the Zamindar had the right to collect local tax on a piece of land on behalf of the government. Their allowance was a small fraction of the tax they collected. Through the authority of their occupation, the Zamindars of the past had achieved princely status, and often overtaxed their land for personal wealth.[67] This practice had been continued for generations, and the Zamindars had legitimized their positions through ritual.[68] But with the arrival of the East India Company, the responsibilities of the Zamindar changed dramatically in Azamgarh. Before colonial rule, the Zamindars of the district were only responsible for the taxation of the land under their jurisdiction, they were not responsible for its upkeep, nor were they given a set

[66] Pandey, *Rallying Round the Cow*, 79.
[67] Baden-Powell, B.H. "The Permanent Settlement of Bengal." In *The English Historical Review*, (10:276–92. Oxford University Press, 1895), 285.
[68] Baden-Powell, 285.

revenue to collect. This led to common *over*-taxation, and thereby their elevation to princely status. In an effort to fix this issue, and to combat opposing authorities, the East India Company established the Permanent Settlement Act of 1793 after colonizing Bengal.[69] Under the new system, the Zamindars of Bengal were required to collect a fixed sum of tax from the land they oversaw by personally owning responsibility for its upkeep.[70] By the time the East India Company reached Azamgarh in 1801, Sheikh and Rajput Zamindars were in control of the land, and had achieved a similar elevated status to those in Bengal. Naturally, the Zamindars of such high status did not want to admit subservience to new rulership. As a result, the British replaced the previous Zamindars with select Brahmins who were willing to cooperate with the new government.[71] These Zamindars were made to follow the same rules as those in Bengal, with a bonus allowance similar to the custom of the former government.[72]

However, despite the effort of the Settlement Act of 1793 to prohibit exploitation, the new role of the Zamindars led to social and economic imperfections as well. Other than their annual reports to the tahsildars, the Zamindars were allowed to act more or less independently from the British, so long as they collected their fixed tax contribution. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, a few of the more privileged Zamindars purchased large quantities of the land in Azamgarh. Given the freedom to act upon their land as they wished, these Zamindars would build Hindu temples and destroy Mosques as a way of displaying their status. Less wealthy Zamindars would also build temples on their land as well, but this act was done out of pressure, not flamboyance. As mentioned, the Zamindars in Azamgarh were of the Brahmin caste.

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[69] Baden-Powell, 285.
[70] Baden-Powell, 286.
[71] Drake-Brockman, *Azamgarh: A Gazetteer Being Volume XXXIII of the District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh*, 125.
[72] Drake-Brockman, 125.

Brahmins are the highest caste in the Varna system. For those Brahmin Zamindars who did not purchase large sums of land upon the introduction of British rule to the district, they were forced to rely on supervising, and sometimes even personally cultivating their small shares of land in order to meet the expected tax goal of the British.[73] In a land stricken by poverty, such as the weaving centers of Mau and Mubarakpur, many of the Brahmin moneylenders and Zamindars were "not easily distinguished in terms of income, status or style of life" from the shudra and untouchable castes.[74] Therefore, for the poor Brahmin Zamindars, the establishment of a Hindu temple on their land meant an expression of status and comradery with their wealthier Zamindar counterparts. As a result, the independence given to the Brahmin Zamindar led to an outbreak of unnecessary temple building in Azamgarh, ultimately infuriating the Muslim Julahas.

Like the Zamindars, Hindu moneylenders, or *Mahajans*, were also recruited to occupy the villages of Azamgarh. Their main role in the new society was to support the lower castes financially, so they could pay the appropriate tax to the local Zamindar.[75] However, the Mahajan was notorious for exploiting the working classes, especially the Julahas. Local moneylenders of the region would often discriminate their rates of interest depending on the borrower's economic and social status.[76] Rich people of the district were allowed to borrow at six percent interest, while depressed communities had to pay up to twenty-five percent interest.[77] While this was certainly an improper practice, the true oppressive act of the Mahajans was the price rate of working class products.[78] The working classes would often sell their product to the Mahajan in

[73] Pandey, *Rallying Round the Cow*, 72.
[74] Pandey, *Rallying Round the Cow*, 70.
[75] Drake-Brockman, 54.
[76] Bhanu, Dharma, *Economic Condition of the People in the Northwestern Provinces 1830-1860* (Vol. 19. Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, 1956), 405.
[77] Bhanu, 405.
[78] Drake-Brockman, 55.

order to pay off a debt. For cultivators, the primary money-yielding crop of the district was sugarcane.[79] But the Mahajan would not consider the sugarcane brought to him at market price, and would instead deduct five, or sometimes even ten percent off of the original price.[80] Furthermore, the Mahajan would often weigh the product brought to him to his own advantage and then make considerable deductions.[81] The exploitation of the Julahas was even worse, as their product had increasingly lost value by the nineteenth century. Additionally, some Hindu moneylenders would refuse to give out loans to Julahas altogether. The Mahajans would argue this was because of the poverty of the Julahas, but the Muslim community believed it was on the basis of religious oppression. The refusal of loan service in particular led to a few riots in Mau and Mubarakpur, which will be covered later in the chapter.

Given the tensions between the Zamindars, Mahajans, and Julahas of Mau and Mubarakpur, conflicts commonly emerged among the communities. As this became more apparent, the British government assigned contractors, known as Thekedars (or Lekhpals in the North-Western Provinces), across the district to help with the division of local rule and mediate village affairs.[82] While there is not much research conducted on the Lekhpals of Azamgarh, research has been done on the self proclaimed brokers (dalal) of other regions, and similarities across India have inferred that brokerage existed as such, in varying degrees, throughout India.[83] In Bihar, a neighboring state to the North-Western Provinces, they were presumed to hold the

[79] Drake-Brockman, 55.
[80] Drake-Brockman, 55.
[81] Drake-Brockman, 55.
[82] Witsoe, Jefferey, *Everyday Corruption and the Political Mediation of the Indian State: An Ethnographic Exploration of Brokers in Bihar* (Economic and Political Weekly 47, no. 6 (February 11, 2012): 47–54), 49. These contractors, or brokers were often self titled. The terms *Thekedar* (contractor), *Vichawlia* (middle-men), and *Dalal* (broker) were all commonly used in Bihar. Whereas the title *Lekhpal* was used in Uttar Pradesh.
[83] Witsoe, 48-9.

position of conflict mediators within the state. They would attempt to resolve conflicts within the village, and if the situation were to worsen, the broker would send reports from both sides to the local British Officials.[84] However, in many cases, brokers would not mediate conflicts at all, rather, he would instigate further, in an effort to extort money. In Bihar, the middle men of that region would often exploit their positions for money, as it was recorded that for every rupee that traveled upwards, possibly hundreds were diverted.[85] Further examples are found among the brokers of Maharashtra. They were accused by Bahujan ideologue Jotirao Phule of manipulating conflicts and statements of the lower castes in favor of the other side. In one of his earliest works titled *Shetkaryacha Asud (Cultivator's Whipcord)*, he claimed the Kulkarnis of Maharashtra would "play various kinds of tricks" while taking down a statement in an effort to scare the naive untouchable into giving a false report.[86] These brokers, who were believed to be trusted figures within the community, would go to both parties individually and give them advice. This advice would not mediate the conflict, instead it would encourage actions that would anger the both sides further, enough to result in conflict.[87] Once, the dilemma was too apparent to avoid, the broker would then deliver reports from both parties to the local officials. However, the Kulkarnis would only abuse their position further, now for financial exploitation. Jotirao Phule reported on this act in further detail when he said:

> If a party has given him a bribe, he asks them some leading questions and takes down their statements, but if a party has not taken his hand, he wreaks havoc with their statements such that whoever listens to or reads the statement will not understand its actual form. While writing down the statements of ignorant cultivators, many Brahman

[84] Witsoe, 51.
[85] Witsoe, 49.
[86] Phule, Jotirao, "Shetkaryacha Asud." In *Mahatma Phule Samagra Vangmaya*. (Mumbai: Maharashtra Rajya Sahitya Ani Sanskruti Mandal, 1980), 211.
[87] Phule, *Shetkaryacha Asud*, 206-7.

> clerks outright exclude certain points. Many will take a statement home with them at night and bring a different one with them to the government office.[88]

Of the events previously cited in Mubarakpur, it is likely to assume that only the Mahajans or Zamindars statements were recorded accurately when a dispute happened among them and the Julahas. In consequence, general reports were misconstrued so that Julaha grievances were often left unreported.

Temple Building in Azamgarh

The process of weaving and being a weaver had always been incredibly spiritual and ritualistic for the Julahas. For many Julahas, when the community began to collapse due to the economic instability of rural India, the survivability of architecture from the previous Muslim rulers became the foundation of their stability. The Julahas of Mubarakpur and Mau became "particularly turbulent" among the Hindu Mahajans and Zamindars only when they went out of their way to economically and religiously oppress an already impoverished community. On the other hand, for the Zamindars of Azamgarh, "Religious symbols, religious practice and display of piety provided a major means for the expression of status, and of claims to higher status, throughout this period [early nineteenth century]".[89] This conflict of interests led to immediate turmoil surrounding the issue of expression through temple building in the early nineteenth century.

The town of Mubarakpur, specifically the Muslim qasba (citadel) in the center of town, was the center for multiple attempts of such expression. Upon the introduction of Hindu moneylenders and Zamindars to Mubarakpur, multiple attempts to construct Hindu temples and

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[88] Phule, *Shetkaryacha Asud*, 207.
[89] Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*, 81.

defile long-standing Mosques within the qasba were made. Riots initiated by the Julahas in Mubarakpur in 1813, 1834, 1842, and 1879 were grounded in the defilement of Mosques and temples.[90] The author of an early district gazetteer of Azamgarh felt, "the features of all these disturbances are similar, so that a description of what took place on the first occasion will suffice to indicate their character".[91] Upon that note, the author continues to describe the riot of 1813 as a "petty dispute" which later evolved into a "sanguinary battle" at the hands of the Julahas. The conflict began when a Hindu moneylender built a temple directly next to a *ta'zieh* platform where traditional Muslim plays are performed. Actions were performed by the Julahas in order to enrage the Hindus and the same was done back to the Julahas in response, including the defilement of *ta'zieh* altogether. The Julahas fought back by murdering Rikhai Sahu, the Hindu moneylender in charge of building the temple. The temple was also defaced, and many of the poor Julahas also took this as an opportunity to plunder the moneylenders' houses. Naturally, this brought dangerous turmoil to Mubarakpur and the surrounding Hindu population attacked the Muslims of the qasba with overwhelming force, leading to deaths and injuries on both sides.[92]

As similar riots occurred again in Mubarakpur in 1834, 1842, and 1879, the Julahas began to earn a reputation of being an irrationally violent group among British officials. A Ghazipur District Gazetteer referred to the Julaha community directly as, "The most bigoted of all Musalman".[93] Dar also appears to readily accept this sentiment, as he repeatedly refers to the Muslims involved in the 1893 riots (who were almost all Julahas) as "ignorant" and "backward".

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[90] Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*, 70.
[91] D.L. Drake-Brockman, Azamgarh: A Gazetteer, being vol. XXXIII of the District Gazetteers of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh (Allahabad, 1911), 260-1; Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*, 61.
[92] Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*, 61.
[93] Ghazipur District Gazetteer (Allahabad, 1909), p. 90.

[94] Both Dar and the British officials of the district portray the low caste Julahas as irrational and violent, but neither party questions the morality of the Brahmin Zamindars in their actions, which could also be considered "bigoted". Even the Gazetteer which recounted the riot of 1813 was incredibly biased against the Julahas involved. As mentioned, the author describes the establishment of a Hindu temple next to a *ta'zieh* platform as a "petty dispute", but how petty was the whole interaction truly? The *ta'zieh* is a special Muslim space where passionate plays are performed in order to properly mourn the passing of Imam Hussain–the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad. In Mubarakpur, It was a center for the community and a space for everyone to share heavy emotions. The establishment of a Hindu temple within direct view of such a space took away the strength of the *ta'zieh*. Then, for it later to be vandalized, such strong emotions of mourning were bound to mold into rage upon its destruction. The other two riots in 1834 and 1842 involved the vandalism of a Mosque and Imambarah, other Islamic spaces that would certainly induce similar emotions. For a spiritual community such as the Julahas, Islamic sanctity has always been a priority. But once the Julahas began to experience serious poverty at the start of the nineteenth century, the wellbeing of their religious practices became prioritized even more for their stability as a community. The construction of Hindu temples, in order to establish Brahmin superiority, was a display of bigotry in itself. While the Brahmins may not have been as socially stable as before colonial rule, their authority as Zamindars was not questioned within the Muslim villages of Azamgarh. To construct Hindu temples and defile Julaha spaces was an unnecessary act of dominance from the Brahmins toward an already fragile group. Such acts can

[94] Dar, *An Appeal to the English Public on Behalf of the Hindus of the N.W.-P. and Oudh*, 23.

justifiably be responded to through riots of protest, causing for a reexamination of the Julaha's "bigoted" label.

However, it could still be argued that such riots were started out of economic desperation from the Julaha community, and that the personal actions of the Julahas was no more than an excuse to plunder the houses of the wealthy. While this may have been true for some of the Julahas involved, I believe the intent of these attacks was more for personal revenge than economic gain. There was an attack in the Shahabad on a Hindu moneylender by the name of Sabsukh Rai in 1849.[95] In short, Rai refused to give loans to Muslims, and as "the most respectable merchant in the district", the reputation of the Muslim community was tarnished.[96] In response, the Muslims of Shahabad broke into Sabsukh Rai's house and stole property worth over 70,000 rupees.[97] However, what is different about this case is that it was acted out by middle class Muslims, who would not be particularly motivated by financial gain. Because of this, one could assume that the attack was conducted more for religious reasons than financial ones. Furthermore, the Pathan Muslims who were responsible for the attack and robbery, "completed their task by building a small miniature Mosque at the door of his house with some loose bricks". [98] The construction of the Mosque shows that the attack had religious overtones. The Pathan Muslims attacked the moneylender because they felt persecuted against as Muslims and they wanted justice. The Julaha riots were no different. The British government was responsible for the introduction of Hindu moneylenders and Zamindars in Muslim centers, as well as for the economic frustrations of the Julahas, but financial concerns were not the ultimate inspiration

[95] Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*, 80.
[96] Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*, 80.
[97] Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*, 80.
[98] Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*, 81.

behind the recorded riots of Azamgarh. Money may have been the motive for some, but feelings of religious oppression appears to have consumed many more.

Chapter 2

"A Shift in Favoritism": The Julaha Reaction to Modernity.

Before the revolt of 1857, the "British government" was still technically the East India Company, which was just a business under the crown. The company acted similarly to how the central British government would act when colonizing a nation, in the sense that they introduced the native people to western "modernity" in an effort to convince them they needed colonization. The East India Company emphasized the establishment of railways in order to commercialize the agriculture business of India.[99] Later postal services and newspapers were introduced in India, accelerating mass communication dramatically.[100] Equally as important, the modernization efforts of the East India Company included an introduction of Western thought. Colleges and universities were built around India by 1835. However, one could receive teaching only after learning English, and the sciences taught within the schools often contradicted the traditions of Hinduism and Islamism. The British also redefined the household habits and domesticity of Indians, in a further attempt to colonize. Before colonial rule, the Indian household was often multigenerational: being the joint home to fathers, grandfathers, uncles, and all of their wives at once. The British promoted a more nuclear household, consisting of one mother, one father, and the children. The role of women was also redefined by British rule. Women's magazines and other forms of women's literature created by the British described the proper roles of women as "respectable" housewives, and not laborers themselves.[101] The reconstruction of native culture

[99] Metcalf, Barbara D., "Civil Society, Colonial Constraints, 1885–1919." in *A Concise History of Modern India*, 123–66 (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 126. As mentioned in the introduction, railways did not reach Azamgarh until the end of the nineteenth century, leaving the district subject to harsh poverty until then.
[100] Metcalf, 136.
[101] Metcalf, 146.

was a common practice of colonization, often attempted by the British Empire. The intended goal was to introduce western thought and technology to the native people, so that they could understand the "uncivilized" aspects of their culture and openly receive colonization.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, upper caste Hindus were more readily accepting of British colonization, which is why they were originally favored in Azamgarh. They were described as "Indian in blood, English in taste". On the contrary, the Julahas readily opposed colonization, and were thus descibed as "bigoted". As Dar put it, a "shift in favoritism" was displayed by the British government, shifting away from the Hindu community in favor of the Muslim working class in the 1860s and 70s.[102] Dar believed that this shift in favoritism began out of fear of the "bigoted Julaha". He argues that, In conjunction with the many riots initiated by the Julahas in Azamgarh, that the assassination of two British officials–John Paxton Norman in 1871 and Lord Mayo in 1872–at the hands of Muslim convicts, caused the British government to become more lenient toward Muslim wants and less concerned with the Hindu perspective.[103] But, this was not the case. The Muslim community did not win the favor of the British government because of fear, instead, the Muslim working class actually took very calculated steps to earn their place as the crown's favorite. As McLane noted, "As Indians developed new pride in their Indianness, often they did so through a heightened appreciation of their particular religious traditions".[104] After the revolt of 1857, the Julahas, and other Muslim and Hindu groups, began to view the British modernization efforts in a new light. Instead of openly

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[102] Dar, Pandit Bishan Narayan, *An Appeal to the English Public on Behalf of the Hindus of the N.W.-P. and Oudh* (Lucknow: G.P. Varma and Brothers Press, 1893), 20.
[103]Dar, Pandit Bishan Narayan, *An Appeal to the English Public on Behalf of the Hindus of the N.W.-P. and Oudh* (Lucknow: G.P. Varma and Brothers Press, 1893), 20
[104] McLane, John R, *Indian Nationalism and the Early Congress* (Princeton Legacy Library. Princeton University Press, 1977), 272.

accepting the new British culture, many Hindus and Muslims alike attempted to integrate specific British teachings that fit into the parameters of their religion. For example, an influential Muslim text known as the *Bihishti Zewar* was written in the latter half of the nineteenth century on the topic of Muslim women's rights.[105] The book builds on the teachings of the British for women to be educated and homebound, but it also emphasized that Muslim women should be viewed as upholders of the religion, something British teaching was opposed to.[106] Julaha movements associated with Deoband and Sayyid Ahmad Khan began to see values of individualism and equality in modernizing thought, and incorporated them into their own traditional Islamic teachings.[107] Metcalf explains this phenomena when he stated,

> Whether Hindu or Muslim, those who claimed to speak for 'tradition' did so in the context of interaction with what was 'modern'. Rather than call such thinkers 'traditional', they can best be called 'traditionalist', to signal their greater continuity with the received tradition (in terms of texts, ritual, social life, and institutions) and yet, simultaneously, their self-conscious participation in the new world around them.[108]

More specifically to the Julaha community, the heterogeneous household promoted individual success, as lower castes were no longer encouraged to support a household together. Instead, each man was presented with a more capitalistic approach to provide for their own family independently. In light of this, the Julaha reformist movement attempted to tie their religious reform to an economic revival of sorts as well. Under the local administration system, the Julahas of Azamgarh were unable to make progress in either of these categories, and had only been oppressed further in recent years by the Zamindars. Because of this, the Julahas sought

[105] Metcalf, 146.
[106] Metcalf, 146.
[107] Metcalf, 143.
[108] Metcalf, 143.

to appeal to the British government directly. In this chapter, I plan to describe the actions the Julahas of Azamgarh took in order to win the favor of the British government, and why such actions were necessary in order to achieve the "shift in favoritism" Dar argues appeared out of fear. As we will see, the cow becomes an important symbol during this time and an indicator of shifting favoritism. For the Julaha community, the sacrifice of the cow represented a key distinction between the Muslim and Hindu aspecs of their background. However, as they grew in favor of the British, much of their reformist actions began to focus specifically around this distinction. This focus on cows also becomes important when studying the motivations of low caste Hindus to join the 1893 riots. Laws implemented by the British against cow protection were what motivated Hindus to believe a "shift in favoritism" had occurred, and open violence against the cow is what led to the aggressiveness of Hindu mobilization in Azamgarh.[109]

The Razil and Sharif Classes

In order for the Julahas to prove their value to the British government, they first had to redefine their stereotypical image. Again, the Julahas had earned the reputation of "the bigoted people" among the British government. From a British perspective, the concept of caste was a complicated topic, with too many intricacies to keep track of. In Azamgarh alone, there were Muslims of Sayyid, Shekh, Mughal, and Pathan descent, as well as multiple castes within the Julaha population, including the Koli, Chamar, Mochi, and Ramdasi Julahas.[110] To make things easier for themselves, the local British officials accepted a common classification system used by the "locally dominant elements" of the United Provinces.[111] The majority of upper caste Hindus

[109] Chapter 3 covers this in greater detail.
[110] Crooke, W., *The Tribes And Castes Of The North-Western Provinces and Oudh*. Vol. 3. 4 vols. (Delhi: Nice Printing Press, 1896), 69.
[111] Pandey, Gyanendra, "Rallying Round the Cow Sectarian Strife in the Bhojpuri Region, c. 1888-1917'." in *Subaltern Studies II Writings on South Asian History and Society* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983), 71.

and Muslims alike separated the rural communities of the United Provinces into two groups: the *sharif* (respectable classes) and the *razil* (laboring people). The sharif class comprised of Brahmins, Rajputs, Bhumihars, Syed and Sheikh Muslims, as well as "Pathan converts from the Rajput community, and some smaller Hindu castes like the Kayasths", as Pandey observed.[112] While the razil class encompassed all the rest, including the Ahirs, Kurmis, Koeries, Chamars, and Julahas.[113] As was previously mentioned, the Brahmins of Azamgarh, and other districts of the United Provinces for that matter, were not substantially wealthier than the lower castes. The razil and sharif labels gained popularity throughout the United Provinces because they acted as a backbone to a wavering caste system. The razil and sharif classes also allowed upper class Hindus and Muslims (and eventually the British as well) to establish hierarchy using the same system. For the British, a community's razil status was determined through observed indications of extreme poverty. But within the village society, the razil label held a much stronger social connotation. While the Julaha's attempted to redefine themselves under British rule, they were also forced to oppose local customs, as the two were linked through the razil label. In order for the Julaha reformist movement to succeed, they worked not only to improve their economic status, but also redefine their social identity, as they tried to win the favor of the local British government.

Economic Actions of the Julaha Reformist Movement

Even within the razil class, the Julahas of Azamgarh were seen as some of the most depressed of the laboring castes. The general poverty of the Julahas was discussed in the previous chapter, but by the mid nineteenth century, independent weaving practice had almost completely collapsed,

[112] Pandey, *Rallying Round the Cow*, 71.
[113] Pandey, *Rallying Round the Cow*, 71.

and many Julaha's were leaving the villages in search of work elsewhere.[114] For the British officials and sharif locals, emigration became a key indicator of a communities razil status. An official Azamgarh Gazetteer reported that between the years of 1872 and 1882, 2,785 people were registered for emigration, nearly all of whom were from the "lowest or laboring class".[115] The report continued to state that of the 2,785 emigrants, 1,262 were male, 949 female, and 574 children.[116] Because many Julaha families were so poor, they could not afford to travel together, and only the working men of the household would leave in search of work. As a result of this, many Julaha women and children were forced to work in Azamgarh. The number of working women in comparison to the sharif class was also a key indicator of a communities razil status, as it worked against the reformation efforts of the Indian women that were trending during this period.[117] In Azamgarh, the Julaha community had the highest number of working women, along with the Dusadh caste.[118] However, despite such a large number of working women, they still struggled financially because they lacked the proper training, which had historically been dedicated to the men. In a gazetteer that Pandey cites, it was recorded that throughout the 1890s an average total of 13,00,000 rupees a year was sent home from all of those who left Azamgarh. The report continued to state that "but for this addition to their earnings, it would be impossible for the people to support themselves by agriculture alone".[119]

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[114] Drake-Brockman, 255.
[115] Fisher, F.H., "Vol. XIII Part I.-Azamgarh." In *Statistical, Descriptive, and Historical Account of the North-Western Provinces of India* (141. Allahabad: North Western Provinces and Oudh Government Press, 1883), 93.
[116] Fisher, 93.
[117] Pandey, *Rallying Round the Cow*, 71.
[118] Pandey, *Rallying Round the Cow*, 71.
[119] Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*, 77.

The British readily accepted the razil label for the Julahas of Azamgarh because the severity of their poverty perfectly defined the class to them. It was clear that for a Julaha reform to take place in Azamgarh, much work would have to be done. Still however, the Julahas centers of Azamgarh were comparatively the best option for a Julaha reform in the United Provinces. As the British sought to strip rural India of their cotton supply in reaction to the US Civil War, the weaving centers of Azamgarh were some of the only weaving communities in all of India to not collapse completely.[120] To put this into perspective, the neighboring city of Jais was a historic weaving center in the United Provinces which saw its demise in the nineteenth century. In 1840, Jais was home to 600 Julaha families, all of whom supported themselves through their weaving practices. By the 1880s, however, only 50 workmen continued to work the loom.[121] Many of the Jais Julahas would quit, as they would find more success as beggars! Others similarly looked to emigrate in hopes of finding work at the mill capitals of Bombay, Cawnpore and Calcutta.[122] However, compared to Azamgarh, emigration was much more evident in Jais. By the 1890s, the total number of Julaha families in the region had dropped to 200 from its previous 600.[123] While the Julaha centers of Azamgarh were in the process of dying, other Julaha societies were already dead. The Julahas of Mau and Mubarakpur felt particular pressure to differentiate themselves from the growing stereotype of Julaha depression that was developing throughout the United Provinces.[124] If the Julaha caste were to survive in North India it would have to be in Azamgarh.

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[120] Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*, 75.
[121] Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*, 75.
[122] Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*, 75.
[123] Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*, 75.
[124] Kumar Rai, Santosh, *The Fuzzy Boundaries: Julaha Weavers' Identity Formation in Early Twentieth Century United Provinces* (SAGE Publications, 2013), 122.

2,785 people were registered for emigration between 1872 and 1882. However, the Julaha centers of Mau, Mubarakpur, and Azamgarh all accounted for over 10,000 returning emigrants each in that same time frame.[125] Out of 4,641 village records of the region, these were the only three towns to return over 10,000 emigrants.[126] Most other villages were nowhere close to this number, with the majority returning less than 1,000.[127] These statistics are relevant because the volume of emigrants returning home to the Julaha centers of Azamgarh captures the reformist thought that was coming from the Julahas of this district at this time. As other weaving villages in the United Provinces continued to collapse, there was a shifting mindset in Azamgarh to revive the Julaha name and community, rather than abandon it in search of work elsewhere. The return of emigrants to Mau and Mubarakpur had strategic implications as well. As previously stated, the number of working women within an occupational caste was a clear indicator of their razil status to the sharif and British classes. When a Julaha reformist movement began in Azamgarh, many working men who left their families previously came back to support them, but also to support the movement by removing women and children from the workforce. Additionally, migration provided the Julahas of Azamgarh with an external outlet for economic advancement.[128] Those who left Azamgarh were exposed to new social identities, so upon their return it was much easier to dismiss their razil label.[129] Overall, the mass return of emigrants to Mau and Mubarakpur helped Julahas begin to reconstruct their image of poverty, while also

[125] Fisher, 93.
[126] Fisher, 93.
[127] Fisher, 93.
[128] Kumar, *The Fuzzy Boundaries: Julaha Weavers' Identity Formation in Early Twentieth Century United Provinces*, 136.
[129] Kumar, 136.

creating a new image of a unification among the eyes of local British officials and the sharif class.

From an economic standpoint, Mau and Mubarakpur were never in as dire of a state as most other weaving villages (such as Jais mentioned earlier). This, combined with the thousands of Julahas who migrated back to the villages, allowed for Mau and Mubarakpur to be the prime locations for a revival of the Julaha weaving industry. By the 1870s, the weavers of Mau offered their business to the Commissioner of Banaras, claiming they would make "cloth of the finest quality" and it would be "cheaper than the coarser, as the latter required more cotton thread".[130] The commissioner accepted the offer, and before long the Julahas of the Mau became recognized by the British government as a reliable source of high quality cloth. The Julahas of Mau and Mubarakpur were certainly victims of exploitation, but their business with the British kept Julaha practices from going extinct altogether. Over the next decade, the traffic accumulated in Mau, so much so that an imperial customs port was built in the village to better conduct business.[131] The success of the Mau weavers was later evidenced by the eventual opening of a railway line directly through the village in 1898.[132]

Further proof of the Julahas economic revival was seen through their unified efforts to reconstruct the weaving centers of Mau and Mubarakpur. By the late 1870s, the Julahas began to encourage *cowri*, a form of donation among the community. The *cowri* would deduct one rupee and nine anna out of every one hundred rupees.[133] With such a small percentage being donated, the *cowri* donations relied on a high volume of contributors, which in turn encouraged an unified

[130] Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*, 73.
[131] Pandey, *Rallying Round the Cow*, 79.
[132] Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*, 75.
[133] Kumar, 135.

Julaha community.[134] The *cowri* donations surpassed all expectations, earning enough money to reconstruct Mosques that were defiled earlier in the nineteenth century and afford salaries for religious teachers[135] In 1887, the unified contributions of *cowri* in Mubarakpur allowed the Julahas build a big Mosque with a well within the district.[136] Growth of religious teaching can also be seen in Azamgarh as a result of the *cowri* donations of the Julahas. By the early twentieth century, there were thirty-four Julaha *ulemas* in the qasba of Mau, as well as seventeen others reported in Azamgarh.[137]

Social Actions of the Julaha Reformist Movement

The Julaha reformist movement was proving successful from an economic perspective. But economic *and* social uplift were necessary in order to properly redefine themselves in the eyes of British officials, sharif Hindus and Muslims. The social aspect of the Julaha reformist movement consisted mostly of efforts to legitimize the Julaha caste as a dignified group. These efforts were equally intended to appeal to the British officials from a distance, and to the immediate community in order to justify respect locally. One of the key efforts the Julahas made was to publicize their origins. During the age of modernization, Several Hindu and Muslim communities revived their identities through focused engagement with their origins. By legitimizing the roots of one's religious sect, that community would be able to back their social agenda with historical evidence. The origins of the Julaha profession were popularized in a book titled the *Mufid-ul-Mominin*.[138] But this book also served as evidence for the communal rebranding that the Julahas were attempting to complete at the time. The original publication of

[134] Kumar, 135.
[135] Kumar, 135.
[136] Kumar, 135.
[137] Kumar, 122.
[138] See chapter 1, section 2.

the *Mufid-ul-Mominin* is unknown, but it is generally accepted that it did not become the official "book" of the Julahas until the late nineteenth century. This is because the Julahas were not referred to as *Mominin* until after their reformist movement. The term Julaha comes from the Persian origin (*julah*—weaver, from *jula*—ball of thread). However, by the nineteenth century, the Arabic meaning for Julaha, being "ignorant class" became popularized.[139] With the introduction of census reports from the British government, along with the cemented hierarchy of the razil and sharif classes, the importance of a communities labels only grew in social significance.[140] The Julaha name was already depicted as "bigoted" and "depressed", so for social uplift to occur, the Julaha name would have to be redefined. By the late decades of the nineteenth century, Julahas protested against their name, relying heavily on the content of the *Mufid-ul-Mominin* as evidence for their deserved social uplift. The Julahas then recommended new titles for themselves, being: *Nurbaf*, *Ansari*, and *Momin*. The title of Nurbaf was intended to appeal to the upper class Muslims of the sharif community, as Nurbaf meant "weavers of light" which was a play on the Islamic theme of light. Whereas the Ansari and Momin labels were supposed to represent the development of the Julaha caste. Julahas would begin as simple weavers, even "ignorant" to some extent. The term Ansari was supposed to represent weavers who gained material well-being.[141] Then finally, the title Momin described Julahas as "the faithful" or "men of honor", and was only used once an Ansari also achieved spiritual growth.[142] By the 1880s, the Julahas of Mau and Mubarakpur only referred to themselves as either Momin or Nurbaf.

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[139] Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*, 88.
[140] Kumar, 120.
[141] Kumar, 120.
[142] Kumar, 120.

On the contrary, the Julahas also focused on removing certain aspects of their religion that were inherently tied to the razil class. As previously mentioned, the Julahas were an occupational caste. It was assumed by some that the Julahas were originally a Hindu weaving caste that later converted to Islam.[143] While others believe their origins had always been inherently Muslim.[144] Regardless, up until the nineteenth century, many Hindus from lower castes identified with the Julaha community, including individuals from the Koli, Chamâr, Mochi, and Râmdâsi castes.[145] Even under the class system of razil and sharif, many lower caste Hindus and Muslim Julahas lived together peacefully and shared similar religious practices. For example, many Julahas, Chamars, and Ahirs followed a religious figure known as *Saiyid Salar Mas'ůd Ghazi*, or "Gházi Mián". Gházi Mián was a popular soldier turned saint from the Sultanate period. So popular that upon his death mass pilgrimages of Muslims were made to praise him. It was noted that, "thousands of Muslims flocked every year to Salar Mas'ůd's tomb in Bahraich 'to invoke the deceased soldier's aid in the fulfillment of their worldly objects'".[146] In Azamgarh, all the Julahas of the region also celebrated Gházi Mián, for he was "to whom they ascribe the conversion of their ancestors'".[147] Two Festivals were held yearly in Azamgarh in celebration of Gházi Mián. One was in the town of Bhagatpur, where it was rumored that Gházi Mián rested during his journey, and the other was a two day festival in Mubarakpur, which was an annual wedding ceremony for all the couples of the Julaha caste.[148] These two festivals were celebrated by several thousands of Muslims and Hindus from Azamgarh and the surrounding

[143] Crooke, *The Tribes And Castes Of The North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, 69.
[144] Crooke, 69.
[145] Crooke, 69.
[146] Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*, 86.
[147] Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*, 86.
[148] Kumar, 169.

districts, usually consisting of the Julaha, Chamar, and Ahir castes.[149] However, when razil status came to prominence, such Hindu-Muslim unified practices were used to classify the most depressed classes. Thus, upon the birth of the Julaha reformist movement, Julahas were encouraged by the orthodox practices of upper class Muslims to distance themselves from their Hindu counterparts in an effort to achieve a purer Islamic status.[150] By 1881, It was noted in the Gazetteer of Azamgarh that the "inhabitants of Mau are chiefly weavers. They are not, like most other weavers, worshippers of Gházi Mián and his flag…The caste is now a distinct one".[151] The actions of the Julahas of Mau and Mubarakpur to rebrand themselves in the eyes of the British were ultimately successful. However, it must be duly noted that as the Julahas began to focus more on the social barriers of the razil class, advancement was only possible at the cost of their unity with lower caste Hindus.

The Julaha Movement Shift to Cow Sacrifice

The Julaha reformist movement was proving successful for the rebranding of the Azamgarh Julahas, now Momins. Their unique origins and now respectable lifestyle impressed British officials enough to conduct business with them, and even show them favoritism in local politics. However, more so than the economic disadvantages of being labeled a razil, the social inferiority within the community is what many of the Julahas resented most.[152] Especially among the upper caste Hindus and Muslims of Azamgarh, the Julaha reformist movement was slow to gain traction. In order for the Julahas to change within the community, they had to separate themselves from other razil castes in a dramatic fashion. One of the most obvious social

[149] Kumar, 123.
[150] Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*, 86.
[151] Fisher, 169.
[152] Pandey, *Rallying Round the Cow*, 71.

indicators of a communities razil status was that they engaged in physical labor, while the upper caste Rajputs, Brahmans and Bhumihars "never [soiled] their hands with the messy business of cultivation".[153] The Julahas were not farmers or workers of the soil, but their manual labor as weavers fell under similar criticism. The Julahas could not avoid manual labor as weavers, but the history of their profession now indicated honor in their work. Nevertheless, the razil label was still closely tied to the Julaha community among the sharif class. This was because in the immediate community the utmost indicator of a groups razil status was their willingness to complete tasks for the upper castes and landowners.[154] Consequently, in their own battle for modern hierarchy against the upper caste Hindus, high status Muslims urged the lower castes, such as the Julahas, to oppose their social captivity by resisting Brahmin command. This would work to the benefit of the low and high class Muslims alike. For the Julahas, resisting command from the upper caste Brahmins would help them remove the subordinate image of their caste. Whereas for the upper class Muslims, resistance to Hindu command from the lower castes would invalidate the authority of upper caste Hindus, consequently transferring power to the high class Muslims. Such commands commonly included the donation of food and money, and the rules Zamindars had as landowners. But above all, the protection of cows was a universal command from all Brahmins and higher castes. Many Muslim elites encouraged cow slaughter to be the symbol of the Julaha movement, as they believed it was the key to "freedom from Hindu supremacy".[155] And for the sake of the Julaha movement, it was also the most clear way to actively resist Brahmin command. Cow sacrifice was an important aspect of Islamic tradition

[153] Pandey, *Rallying Round the Cow*, 70.
[154] Pandey, *Rallying Round the Cow*, 71.
[155] McLane, John R, *Indian Nationalism and the Early Congress* (Princeton Legacy Library. Princeton University Press, 1977), 279.

that could help Julahas remove their Hindu connections, which were tied to the razil name. Both Hindus and Muslims found sanctity in the cow, but it was the *sacrifice* of the cow that was sacred for Muslims, not its life. *Bakr-Id* is one of the two main holidays of Islam, and it is a feast of sacrifice, where Muslims honor the willingness of Abraham to sacrifice his son. Bakr-Id is believed to mean "the Feast of Sacrifice", but many Indian Muslims translated "Bakr" to its Arabic form, meaning cattle.[156] As a result, cow sacrifice became a necessity of the holiday. This necessity to the festival of Bakr-Id is why Muslim elites argued it was a signifier of one's Muslimness and a clear way to differentiate Julahas from razil Hindus.

As the Julaha reformist movement continued to gain favor among the British, cow sacrifice was also used as a means of expression for the Julahas and their rising status. Just as the Brahmin landowners of Mau and Mubarakpur built Hindu temples in their time of glory, cow slaughter was used by the Julahas as a way to display the changing tides of the British government. After the riot of 1806, cow slaughter was permanently banned in Mau under British rule. There were a few attempts to sacrifice cows in the decades to follow, but they were thwarted each time, either by Hindu or British intervention. However, by the mid 1860s, the Julaha reformist movement began to push urgently for the right to sacrifice cows. The shifting tides of British favoritism can perhaps be captured in 1862, when a dispute arose between the Hindus and Muslims of Mau around a Hindu temple being built within the qasba.[157] It was declared by the British magistrate of the district that since the Hindu Zamindar was building it on his own land, he was allowed to continue. The Muslims of the qasba appealed this order in

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[156] McLane, 279.
[157] Concannon, J.W., "Memo by Mr. J.W. Concannon." In *An Appeal to the English Public on Behalf of the Hindus of the N.W.-P. and Oudh With an Appendix Containing Full and Detailed Account of the Cow-Killing Riots in the United Provinces and All Public Documents upon the Same* (Lucknow: G.P. Varma and Brothers Press, n.d.), 23.

November 1862, but the appeal was dismissed. From this point forward, the Julahas of Mau made a distinct effort to testify their own persecution in hopes of convincing the British government. The goal was to convince the British that the Julahas needed support in the face of a seemingly dominant Hindu party. From December of 1862 to February of 1863, multiple petitions were sent to the British magistrate on behalf of the Muslims, reporting on Hindu provocation.[158] One such report was on December 17, 1862, when the Julahas reported that Hindus stuck a pig's head within the *Musjid* of the qasba and the local police failed to react accordingly.[159] Through multiple petitions, the Julahas begged for the right to kill cows, so that they could have a religious activity to counter the actions of the Zamindars. Their persistence eventually paid off in February of 1863, as the town magistrate allowed Muslims to kill cows in the qasba, as long as they were within their houses and out of sight of Hindus.[160] They also earned the right to kill cows outside of the qasba later that year, in September. These orders were obviously contested by the Hindus of Mau, and in March of 1863, the original order passed by the magistrate, allowing Muslims to kill cows within their homes, was overturned.[161] However, it could be argued that this reverse order was never properly enforced, for in October 1864, certain Jualahas of the qasba of Mau were reported to have killed a cow within their home. Despite the Magistrate's most updated order on killing cows within the qasba, the case was dismissed on the grounds that "the parties sent in appear to have used all requisite precaution not to offend the religious prejudices of the Hindu community".[162] This case was one of the first signs of progress

[158] Concannon, 23.
[159] Concannon, 23.
[160] Concannon, 23.
[161] Concannon, 23.
[162] Concannon, 24. Early disputes around cow protection in Mau and elaboration on the present case of cow killing within the Qasba of Mau are elaborated on in Ch. 3 section 3.

for the Julaha community of Mau. The proactiveness of their reformist movement allowed them to achieve political success for the first time under colonial rule. In that regard, the right to sacrifice cows was seen by many Muslims going forward as the key to freedom from Hindu supremacy and razil status.

The upper class Muslims of the orthodox reformist movement argued that cow sacrifice was an essential aspect of the movement for social and political reform. However, it was argued by the Hindus of Mau that cow killing was never a common practice among the Julahas. Even before colonial rule, when the Muslim Nawab Wazir was the ruler of the Oudh, cow-killing was abolished in the district in an attempt to respect Hindu culture as Muslim rulers. This ban on cow-killing was present in Mau before the British overtook the land. The Hindus of Mau argued that there was no true religious sanctity in cow sacrifice, since Muslims of the town were able to do without for so long. Additionally, for a community that was not previously accustomed to cow sacrifice, the Julahas sacrificed in abundance during their reformist movement. It is true the cow played a significant role in the Julaha's efforts to remove their razil status, but it can also be assumed that some of the sacrifices were committed to spite the Hindu moneylenders and Zamindars who previously oppressed them. Even with the example of Mau in 1862, the Julahas originally petitioned to the British government so they would stop the construction of a Hindu temple. But, as the dispute continued, the Julahas suddenly began to petition to request the right to sacrifice cows within the qasba. As disagreements around the temple continued, personal attacks were made on both sides. By the time the pig's head was reported in December, the Julahas began to request the right to sacrifice cows because they knew it would successfully retort the spiteful acts of the Hindus.

The Intricacies of Julaha Reform

The organization of a movement from the Julahas was not simply motivated by anger towards the moneylenders and Zamindars. Azamgarh was ruled by Muslims before the arrival of British powers. Upon arrival, the British favored Hindus who were more readily submissive to new rulership. However, by the 1860s, there was a shift in Indian culture, as Western modernization influenced many Hindus and Muslims alike to reconsider the origins of their religion in comparison to modern thought. Many upper class Muslims of Azamgarh believed that if the Muslim community could revive the religious roots of Islam, the roots which previously made them rulers of India, then they could climb back to the top of the social stratum. Similarly the Julahas were also motivated to begin their own reformist movement, not in support of the upper class Muslims, but in efforts to achieve similar social standing to them. However, the Julahas faced extra challenges attempting to reform as one of the most impoverished groups. In order to successfully reform, they would have to defeat the social stereotypes of the depressed razil class as well as reconstruct their religious identity. The Julahas of Azamgarh had to reform in two ways: economically, in order to appeal to the British, and socially, in order to appeal to their local society. In Mau and Mubarakpur, Julahas who previously left the village to find work elsewhere migrated back home to strengthen the Julaha community and local workforce. This also allowed the Julahas to successfully lower the percentage of women laborers in Mau and Mubarakpur, which was a key indicator of razil status for the British government. Socially, the Julahas also legitimized their religious history, arguing the name Momin (men of honor) better suited them over Julaha (ignorant class). However, one of the biggest indicators of a class's razil status was their obedience to the sharif class. In order to counteract this stereotype, Julahas opted to engage

in the traditional Muslim practice of cow sacrifice, a practice that had always been sinful to Brahmins. The upper class Muslims argued that cow sacrifice was essential to the Muslim revival. However, as argued by the Hindus of Mau, the Muslims there never practiced cow sacrifice, even before colonial rule, thus the religious importance of its revival was invalid. But, it could also be argued that the acquiescence of the Julahas to Hindu protest against the revival of cow sacrifice could have been viewed as a sign of weakness, and a hole in the entire orthodox reformist movement. From this perspective, once cow slaughter was resumed, it was absolutely necessary to continue the practice despite resistance. Hindu and Muslim tensions began to come to the forefront of conversation during this period. Much of this had to do with the reaction of rural India toward modernization, as well as the shift in favoritism that Dar mentions, where the British government abandons Hindus in favor of the Muslim population. But, for the North-Western Provinces, the most considerable cause for tension was the traditional razil and sharif labels. The stereotypes behind the razil class inherently renounced aspects of Julaha culture that were Hindu friendly. Additionally, the principal indicator of one's razil status was their subordination to the upper castes, particularly Brahmins. This forced Hindu-Muslim tensions to develop in Azamgarh if the Julahas hoped to achieve a higher quality of life.

Chapter 3

Direct Causes of the Azamgarh Riots: The Impact of the Gaurakshini Sabhas and Local Government.

Alongside the Muslim movements of Deoband, Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Amir'Ali, many Hindu thinkers also sought to spark religious revival among their religious sects. John McLane, one of the premier scholars of Indian Nationalism, attempted to describe Hindu reform in his own words. He noted that for many Hindu reformists, they "reacted to British overlordship by discovering ethical and spiritual qualities in Hinduism that enabled them to regard their own culture as equal or superior to Christianity".[163] The Orthodox Hinduism revival was started alongside the Muslim reform by the Kukas in the 1860s, and began to mature in the 1870s by the Arya Samaj.[164] But these movements struggled to gain a larger following because their ideals did not transcend the sectional and language barriers of Hinduism.[165] However, as Muslim reform efforts began to focus on cow sacrifice, it became evident to Hindu activists that the sanctity of the cow was one of the few aspects of Hinduism that was accepted across all castes. In Azamgarh, for example, the district had a total population of 1,604,654 civilians in 1881, of which 1,154,077 (568,213 females) were recorded as "persons belonging to the other castes".[166] Of the "other castes" one of the most populous was the Ahir caste, totaling to 253,229 (121,570

[163] McLane, John R, *Indian Nationalism and the Early Congress* (Princeton Legacy Library. Princeton University Press, 1977), 272.
[164] McLane, 280.
[165] McLane, 280.
[166] Fisher, F.H., "Vol. XIII Part I.-Azamgarh". In *Statistical, Descriptive, and Historical Account of the North-Western Provinces of India* (141. Allahabad: North Western Provinces and Oudh Government Press, 1883), 60.

females).[167] In the same gazetteer, the Ahir caste was categorized as a cow herding caste, therefore classifying them as an inherent cow-protecting community.[168] Likewise, many of the upper caste Hindus who acted as Zamindars relied on the Ahirs to cultivate their land with the help of the cow. For Azamgarh, and really much of India's Hindu community, the economy relied on the well-being of the cow. McLane once again summarizes this claim coherently when he states, "In a religious group lacking institutional integration or linguistic unity, the cow became a basis for sentimental community for orthodox and reformist Hindus alike".[169]

The cow protection movement became central to the Hindus by the 1880s not only because of their unified attachment to the animal, but also in response to British efforts of colonization. In the emerging westernized education systems, British scholars were attempting to minimize the sanctity of the cow in the Hindu religion. Beginning around 1860, European education systems began to argue that Vedic texts acknowledged the sacrifice and feast of a bullock on special occasions.[170] Furthermore, the commonality of cow slaughter among the British was highly invoking of protest to Hindus, some even argue more so than Muslim sacrifice. Beef consumption was regular practice for British officials since the arrival of the East India company.[171] It also became popularized that the British killed cattle for other routine reasons, like greasing the cartridges for the East India Company's military. Yet, the British received very little resentment from the cow-protecting community by the climax of the cow protection movement, five years prior to the 1893 riots. [172] In this chapter, I will attempt to

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[167] Fisher, 84.
[168] Fisher, 84.
[169] McLane, 280.
[170] Dharampal, T.M. Mukundan, *The British Origin of Cow-Slaughter in India* (Uttaranchal, India: Society for Integrated Development of Himalayas, 2002), 1.
[171] Dharampal, 1-2.
[172] Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*, 176.

explain how the issue of cow protection shifted from the British to the Muslim population as the movement reached Azamgarh. Then, in the final chapter of this paper I will explain why Muslim cow sacrifice generally received more backlash from Hindus than regular cow slaughter.

The Urban Phase of the Cow Protection Movement

By the middle of the 1880s, Gaurakshini Sabhas, or cow protection leagues, were beginning to appear in central India in reaction to national concerns for the cow's vitality. In an effort to best understand the Gaurakshini Sabha Era, it can be studied in two periods. Among multiple historians, these two periods have been categorized geographically.[173] The early period of the Gaurakshini Sabha is known as the "urban" period. While the second phase of the movement is the "rural" phase. By the late 1880s, economic concern surrounding the cow had begun to gain heavy traction among the Hindu elites and was eventually made public to all of India. Journal articles and agricultural fairs began to publicize the fact that, compared to other countries, Indian cows were sickly and produced less milk.[174] Government gazetteers also, which were only intended to provide an accurate report on a region, also reported a correlating weakness in the cow and its surrounding community. The Gazetteer of Azamgarh from 1883 reported that "The domestic cattle of the district are of an inferior breed…generally underfed and ill-conditioned, in this respect resembling the human population of the lower order".[175] These official reports on the cow only supported the emerging movement as highly respected Indian intellectuals began to present the argument that poverty in India was a direct result of cow killing. For instance, the "Voice of India" by Lala Nand Gopal, argued that the forbandance to graze in government

[173] John McLane in *Indian Nationalism and the Early Congress*, Gyanendra Pandey in *Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*, and Charu Gupta in *The Icon of Mother in Late Colonial North India* all reference the urban and rural phases of the Cow Protection Movement.
[174] McLane, 285.
[175] Fisher, 31-2.

forests, along with the growing cost of fodder, and of course the slaughter of kine, were altogether threatening the existence of India.[176] Without cows, Hindus and Muslims alike would be unable to till their fields, and a country which heavily relied on their agricultural output would no longer be able to sustain itself. These arguments urged wealthier Hindus in particular to organize Gaurakshini Sabhas on the basis of economic plight alone. At this point, the movement began in reaction to British nonchalance toward the cow. The early Gaurakshini Sabhas were not yet openly concerned with any religious differences regarding the animal.[177]

The early Gaurakshini Sabhas were focused on community development as much as cow protection. The Hindu elites who started the Sabhas were often noted to advocate for better treatment of the poor. They would visit peasant villages and urge people to take better care of their cattle and to save manure for agricultural uses.[178] But the urban Gaurakshini Sabha's main goal was to rescue and revitalize the cattle of India. Members would rescue abandoned cows and place them in *gaushalas*–homes for sick and aged or deserted cattle.[179] The methods of the early Gaurakshini Sabha proved to be quite successful. In Nagpur, one of the first Gaurakshini Sabhas was established out of a collective concern regarding the annual cow slaughter of the city. Before the Gaurakshini Sabha was established, 16,000 cows were slaughtered annually. Only five years later that number was less than 500.[180] The urban era of the Gaurakshini Sabha also helped the Hindu community take impressive strides toward their political goal of nationalizing as a religion

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[176] McLane, 285.
[177] On page 286 of *Indian Nationalism and the Early Congress*, McClane references Gopalrao Hari Bhide, a prominent Brahman lawyer and Congressman in Nagpur. He organized the Nagpur Gaurakshini Sabha, motivated solely by economic concerns.
[178] McLane, 286.
[179] Pandey, Gyanendra, "gaushalas". In *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*. (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990), 176.
[180] McLane, 286.

and overpowering the British government. As mentioned, the elite members of the Gaurakshini Sabha would check in with peasants regarding the health of their cattle. This conversation was similar to the routine check-ins that many of India's pre-colonial officials would practice, where Dar noted Muslim rulers of Azamgarh would meet with the working class "daily and hourly".[181] In a further effort to unify, the founders of the Gaurakshini Sabhas allowed for it to act as a unique space to its lower caste members to raise their social standing. In most Gaurakshini Sabhas, especially those that emerged in Azamgarh, these members were the Ahir caste. However, in Azamgarh the Ahirs who earned a voice in the Sabhas had different priorities than their higher class predecessors altogether.

The Transition From the Urban to Rural Phase

In the urban phase, the Gaurakshini Sabha's main intention was to combat the efforts of the British government to neglect the cow in modern society. However, in the five years prior to the riots of 1893, when the Gaurakshini Sabhas reached their peak productivity, the motives of the sabhas shifted to much more radical and militant views, specifically targeting the Muslim population. This period became known as the "rural phase" of the cow protection movement, and is also the time when the Gaurakshini Sabhas reached Azamgarh. In Azamgarh, the violence of the Gaurakshini Sabhas toward the Julahas is what eventually led to the riots of 1893. Dar argued that even this Hindu on Muslim violence was the fault of the British, and that "meddlesome" officials would stir up conflict between the two communities.[182] In his *Appeal*, he provides examples of such deceit in instances I took the liberty of naming the "Mau Slaughterhouse

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[181] Dar, 25.

[182] Dar, Pandit Bishan Narayan, *An Appeal to the English Public on Behalf of the Hindus of the N.W.-P. and Oudh With an Appendix Containing Full and Detailed Account of the Cow-Killing Riots in the United Provinces and All Public Documents upon the Same* (Lucknow: G.P. Varma and Brothers Press, 1893), 1.

Verdict" and the "Order of Established Custom". Further evidence suggests that the "Allahabad Court rulings of 1887" also played a significant role in the influence of the Gaurakshini Sabhas in the United Provinces, and their turn to militancy. However, the impact that the Ahir caste's religious reform efforts had on the Gaurakshini Sabhas of Azamgarh is rarely noted when discussing the violent shift seen in the rural phase. These events mentioned by Dar and others are worth acknowledgement before studying the rise of Gaurakshini Sabhas in Azamgarh. However, this paper will also describe the importance of the Ahir caste's revival efforts and how their militant intentions within the Sabhas raised tensions between the League members and Julahas leading up to the 1893 riots.

I. Allahabad Court Rulings of 1887

In the United Provinces, many districts had specific laws on religion that were implemented by pre-colonial rulers, as Dar references in his *Appeal*. It was necessary to uphold these laws with the arrival of the British government because they set a guideline for the religious behavior of Hindus and Muslims in the region. However, Muslims began to challenge these laws out of motivation to reject Hindu tradition in favor of their own. In light of the Muslim orthodox reformist movement, upper and lower class Muslims from all of the United Provinces refused to obey the law which promoted cow protection any longer. Likewise, Hindus of the region also refused to tolerate the rebellious nature of Muslims overlooking the law in place. Throughout the 1860s and 70s, reports of *qurbani* flooded the offices of United Province officials. Additionally, petty reports of Muslim and Hindu misdemeanors were described just as much, and relayed to state authorities. The officials of the United Provinces were overwhelmed; It soon became evident that, in order to end this contest of complaints, adjustments needed to be made to the law

in order to satisfy both parties. However, laws around cow protection were different in urban and rural sections of the state. Hindus from rural regions were used to cow sacrifice being forbidden, while many urban Muslims were used to being allowed to sacrifice cows within the cities of the United Provinces. The laws established by the British government were challenged by Hindus and Muslims alike as religious revival popularized. Starting in 1886, the Hindus in Allahabad attempted to challenge the long-standing laws of the city. The Allahabad People's Association, a local Hindu Congress organization, independently passed a temporary "by-law forbidding kine-slaughter within the municipal limits".[183] Muslim discourse arose around what constituted legal cow-slaughter under this rule, as it was formed under a local Hindu organization and not officially by the British government.

The discontentment of the Allahabad Muslims was eventually heard by the Allahabad High Court the following year. In 1887, the Allahabad High Court overturned two lower court rulings which supported the law of the Allahabad People's Association. While the first ruling is understood to be less impactful than the second, it is still relevant to note. John McLane, who investigated this same topic, summarized the first ruling by stating, "The court set aside the conviction of two Muslims who had been convicted of committing a public nuisance for slaughtering two cows in a private compound whose broken wall allegedly enabled a Hindu to witness the act".[184] The second ruling was much more controversial. In this case, a lower court of Allahabad found two Muslims guilty of committing qurbani on the day of Bakr Id. According to the lower court, they had violated Section 295 of the Indian penal code which makes it illegal to destroy "an object held sacred by any class of persons" with the understanding of that object's

[183] McLane, 292.
[184] McLane, 292.

religious value.[185] All five High Court Justices unanimously reversed this decision. The argument provided by the justices was that a cow was not an object of a religious group.[186]

This verdict shocked the Hindus of the United Provinces. The cow had always been sacred to the Hindu community, and their efforts to protect it had generally been supported by the local government. However, this ruling emphasized a shifting thought among the British, and how they valued the cow. With this ruling, the Allahabad High Court not only refused to support the Hindus protection efforts any longer, but by contradicting the claim that the cow was an object of Hinduism, they also removed Hindu ownership from the cow under British law. This court ruling in particular led many Hindus within the United Provinces to believe that Muslim propaganda tainted British Officials. Out of the five Allahabad Justices, only one of them was Indian, and he happened to be the son of Sayyid Ahmad Khan, a known Muslim reformer. Along with the fact that the second ruling was unanimously overturned, the Hindus of Allahabad, and eventually Azamgarh, were led to believe that a "shift in favoritism" from the Hindu community to the Muslims was now present among the British officials of the United Provinces.

II. Mau Slaughterhouse Verdict

More specifically, Dar mentions the Mau slaughterhouse verdict as an indicator of a shifting favoritism at the heart of the Azamgarh riots. For the Ahirs of Mau, the necessity to protect the cow was always of grave importance to the community, given the details of their caste. While conflict around cow protection reached its climax in 1893 with the Azamgarh riot, the buildup of tensions in Azamgarh can be traced back to the beginning of the nineteenth century. The East India Company reached Azamgarh in 1801, and with it came the new designation of authority

[185] McLane, 292-3.
[186] McLane, 293.

from previous Muslim leaders to new Hindu ones. Immediately, laws of cow protection were questioned in Mau as Muslims felt underrepresented in colonial Azamgarh. However, the Hindus of the district believed that the previous laws implemented by the Muslim rulers, that emboldened religious tolerance toward Hindus in the form of cow protection, should remain in effect so as not to excite conflict. The two contradicting parties quickly grew restless on the subject and the "first" cow protection riot of Mau erupted on October 27th, 1806, where many ended up wounded, and many more killed. After this outbreak, it became evident to the leaders of the British government that certain pre-colonial laws would have to be revisited, and either removed, modified, or solidified under the new rule. The riot of 1806 attracted nationwide attention. So much so that, the Nizamat Adawlat, an appeal court for criminal matters in nineteenth century India, proposed to the Governor-General of India that the impermissibility of cow sacrifice was already well established in Mau, and that these practices should remain in place so as not to "invariably excite the Hindus to resistance".[187] On June 10th, 1808, the Governor-General responded to the courts proposition, simply agreeing to the measures proposed and putting them into British legal binding. The British had already placed Hindus in positions of authority within Julaha dominated villages, and they now supported the Hindus legally as well. It goes without saying that, by the time the Nizamat Adawlat's law was passed, the Hindus of Mau felt confident in their position within the community.

For the next half a century, Hindus in Mau boasted Hindu supremacy through the establishment of temples within the qasba, heavy censorship of Muslim practices, and overall

[187]Dar, Pandit Bishan Narayan. "Appendix: The Truth About The Azamgudh Riots". In *An Appeal to the English Public on Behalf of the Hindus of the N.W.-P. and Oudh With an Appendix Containing Full and Detailed Account of the Cow-Killing Riots in the United Provinces and All Public Documents upon the Same* (96. Lucknow: G.P. Varma and Brothers Press, 1893), 22.

oppression of the Julaha community. The Julahas of Mau naturally grew tired of playing the proverbial role of "monkey in the middle" to the British officials and Hindus of Mau, and by the mid-nineteenth century, they were ready to combat their position as the lone outcasts. In an effort to sustain their survival as a religion in Mau, the Julahas proposed petition after petition to the local Magistrate begging them to either condemn the Mau Hindus for their acts of flamboyance, or to allow the Julahas religious freedom in the form of *qurbani* (cow sacrifice).[188] The Magistrate eventually gave in to the Julaha's pleas, as Mr. Lushington, the Magistrate of Mau at the time, issued orders on the 28th of January and the 5th of March of 1863, which stated, "As long as the Mahomedans slaughtered cows within doors the Hindus had no right to interfere with them".[189] After hearing the order of Mr. Lushington, the Mau Ahir caste angrily reminded Mr. Lushington of the illegality of his statement with a copy of the Governor-General's previous order from 1808. By March 18th of the same year, the Ahirs successfully petitioned for Mr. Lushington to reverse his order. As a result, Mr. Lushington released a proclamation reinstating the law of 1808 and "absolutely forbidding the slaughter of all kine within the town".[190] However, in this new reinstatement of the law, Mr. Lushington only ordered the prevention of cow killing within Mau, and more particularly the qasba of the town. The neighboring villages of Mau did not have the same law enforced, and instead followed the Indian Penal Code (IPC), which did not record cow killing as a crime. In the following year, cases began to accumulate of Julahas committing qurbani directly outside of Mau. In May 1864, two Ahirs were fined for

[188] See chapter 2, section 5 for further detail.
[189] Concannon, J.W., "Memo by Mr. J.W. Concannon." In *An Appeal to the English Public on Behalf of the Hindus of the N.W.-P. and Oudh With an Appendix Containing Full and Detailed Account of the Cow-Killing Riots in the United Provinces and All Public Documents upon the Same* (Lucknow: G.P. Varma and Brothers Press, n.d.), 23.
[190] Dar, "Appendix: The Truth About The Azamgudh Riots", 25.

assaulting a Julaha group that sacrificed a cow outside of the Mau borders.[191] This case hindered the legitimacy of Mr. Lushington's law, as the Julahas were wrongly accused. This encouraged more Julahas to test the fragile laws of cow killing in Mau; challenging the traditional law of the IPC against the specific law of Mau. Later that year, several Julahas were brought to trial for slaughtering a cow within their house. They were acquitted on the basis that the sacrifices were not done with the intention of hurting the feelings of the Hindus.[192] This case was decided in favor of the accused, as there were no laws against the killing of cows or bullocks within houses or private property.[193] This only further disrupted the established custom within Mau, and both the Ahirs and Julahas now felt a sense of urgency to win the favor of British officials. For the rest of the year, and continuing into 1865, the Ahir and Julaha communities of Mau reported one another relentlessly for alleged hate crimes.

By 1865, the Magistrate felt he could no longer control the Mau district alone, so he requested additional police support from the government. In response, the government sent the requested police force, but they also insisted on further orders with the intention of solving the problem with their own input. From a distance, the government issued the construction of a slaughterhouse for Muslims, intended to "prevent disturbances" and keep Muslims from feeling "compelled to slaughter in their houses".[194] The slaughterhouse was officially built by April of 1866 in "which alone the Mahomedans were permitted to kill kine".[195] Mr. Lushington's order of 1863 was still in effect however. Given this, the Ahirs of Mau originally assumed that the slaughterhouse was only for the killing of buffaloes and not cows, since the slaughterhouse was

[191] Concannon, 23.
[192] Concannon, 23.
[193] Concannon, 24.
[194] Dar, "Appendix: The Truth About The Azamgudh Riots", 25.
[195] Dar, "Appendix: The Truth About The Azamgudh Riots", 29.

still within the parameters of Mau.[196] However, in the following years, the Ahirs began to realize that Julahas were not, in fact, killing solely buffalo within the slaughterhouse, and instead were more commonly killing cows. This made the slaughterhouse intolerable for Ahirs to even look at from the outside. Furthermore, over the course of a decade, the mud walls of the slaughterhouse began to crumble, and the act of slaughter was now visible to Ahirs from a distance.

The Ahirs of the qasba began to feel subjugated to the slaughters, and by 1886 they forced the Magistrate to revisit the establishment of the slaughterhouse in Mau. In an effort to compromise, the Ahirs and Julahas of Mau looked to relocate the slaughterhouse, but the true motivation of the Ahirs was to remove the slaughterhouse altogether, or at the very least remove it from Mau. Many locations for the slaughterhouse were proposed by both the Julaha and Ahir parties. Every location proposed by the Ahirs were rejected by the Julahas because it interfered with other Islamic spaces such as the Imambarah of Mau. While the locations proposed by the Julahas were rejected by the Ahirs because they would be "within sight" of Hindu livelihood.[197] Much like the establishment of Hindu temples next to Julaha places of worship, the sight of the slaughterhouse spoiled Ahir spaces of worship. It soon became evident that the two parties would not be able to agree on a location for a new slaughterhouse, and it became increasingly obvious that any site proposed by one party would be rejected by the other. These quarrels were presented by the town Magistrate to the state government along with a proposal to refurbish the Slaughterhouse located in the quarter of the town occupied by Julaha butchers until a new location could be agreed upon. In response to this, the state government simply responded, "the Government sees no reason to interfere with the orders passed by you in the case".[198]

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[196] Dar, "Appendix: The Truth About The Azamgudh Riots", 29.
[197] Dar, "Appendix: The Truth About The Azamgudh Riots", 30.
[198] Dar, "Appendix: The Truth About The Azamgudh Riots", 31.

The slaughterhouse was reconstructed in the same spot as it was previously, and no changes were made until the riot of 1893, when the dispute had already developed into violence. The Slaughterhouse Verdict of Mau displayed the lackadaisical efforts of the British government to resolve local issues. The slaughterhouse was initially constructed because the British government attempted to provide a solution to the Magistrates proposed problem without conducting any proper research on the town. It was then refurbished in 1886 because the government again was too far removed to understand the details of the dispute. This time, the government simply agreed with the local magistrate in an attempt to remove themselves from the quarrel completely, even though official order is what the community needed most at this point.

III. Dar's Account of the Established Custom Order

Dar's argument that the British government's divide and rule strategy was the cause of the 1893 riots comes into full fruition through the case of the Mau slaughterhouse. However, he argued the failures of the British government were intended, in an effort to pit the Hindus and Muslims of Mau against each other, eventually resulting in the 1893 riots. He claims that an official order of the local magistrate, which I will refer to as the "established custom order", was provided not as a means of pacification within the district, as an act of "meddlesomeness" that would incite riots further. As Dar recounts, a few weeks before the Bakr-Id festival of 1893, Muslims proposed to the magistrate a list of villages in Azamgarh where they would be allowed to sacrifice cows. In response, the local magistrate approved the locations, as long as the festival of Bakr-Id took place the same way it had in years past, and that "nothing new or contrary to old established custom will be allowed to occur".[199] But Dar argues that the villages proposed by the British did

[199] Dar, Pandit Bishan Narayan, "Government Resolution on Cow Disturbances in the Azamgarh District." In *An Appeal to the English Public on Behalf of the Hindus of the N.W.-P. and Oudh With an Appendix Containing Full*

not have any established custom of years past. As he notes in his *Appeal*, "the Hindus contended that in most places claimed by Mahomedans the custom of cow-killing did not exist; the Mahomedans contended that it did".[200] As a result, the Hindus "naturally felt aggrieved" by the order and the "excitable natures among them were driven under the impulse of religious passions, to the extent of breaking the law".[201]

However, Dar leaves out many key details about the events within Azamgarh that led up to the riots. He claimed the British officials did "practically nothing" to stop the impending riots, despite knowing of the tensions of the district well in advance.[202] But, Mr. Dupernex, the official Magistrate of Azamgarh, was actually quite diligent in attempting to resolve the conflicts. Furthermore, in Mau, the center for the largest riot, Mr. Dupernex's subordinate successfully created a compromise between the Hindus and Muslims of the village before the riots began. This compromise was only broken because of the violent intentions of the local Ahirs and other castes involved in the Gaurakshini Sabhas, which Dar intentionally avoids citing in his *Appeal*. Finally, reaction towards the violent actions of the Sabhas was a large factor as to why the Julahas felt so encouraged to sacrifice in abundance in 1893. The actions of the Ahir-led Sabhas excited premeditated feelings of violence on both sides, which is why the riots had such a militant design to them.

Ahir Involvement in the Rural Phase of the Gaurakshini Sabhas

In urban settings, where most of these Sabhas were started, members would protect the species by rescuing stray cows that were sickly and nurturing them back to health in the gaushalas. But

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and Detailed Account of the Cow-Killing Riots in the United Provinces and All Public Documents upon the Same (Lucknow: G.P. Varma and Brothers Press, 1893), 15.

[200] Dar, *Appeal to the English Public*, 7.

[201] Dar, *Appeal to the English Public*, 7.

[202] Dar, *Appeal to the English Public*, 6.

under Ahir leadership, the Gaurakshini Sabhas that reached Azamgarh took a new approach to the cow protection movement. The Ahirs continued to enforce the practice of cow rescuing, but instead of searching for stray or abandoned cows, the Gaurakshini Sabhas of Azamgarh would instead seize cows that were owned by Muslims. Furthermore, members of the Sabhas would refuse to sell cattle to Muslims and would even threaten non-members to forbid the sale of cows to Muslims as well. In a response to the Azamgarh riots of 1893, the British government addresses the early shifts seen in the Sabhas as they reached the Azamgarh district. The resolution states:

> For some years past, a vigorous propaganda has been carried on by these Societies, but until lately their operations have been confined to aims and objects which are innocent, and even laudable. The movement, although undoubtedly closely connected with the Hindu religion, was ostensibly directed towards the preservation and improvement of the breed of cattle, which, it was alleged, were decreasing in numbers and deteriorating in quality. The preachers sent forth by the Societies inculcated the duty of treating cattle with kindness and of providing an Asylum for sick and infirm animals. To this was soon added a corollary that no Hindu should sell cattle to persons who were likely to slaughter them, that if a Hindu found himself compelled to sell cattle in fair, he should inform the society who would purchase the animal and place it in an Asylum.[203]

This shift toward violence in the rural phases of the Gaurakshini Sabhas can be attributed to the efforts of the Ahir caste during this time. Much like the Julahas, the Ahirs in Azamgarh also attempted a religious revival as Indians began to reflect on their religious traditions from a more western perspective. By the 1870s, the Ahirs also looked to reinforce the origins of their caste in an effort to receive higher "Kshatriya" status. An emerging belief stated that the Ahir caste was originally a member of the Kshatriya Varna, a warrior caste and the second highest tier of the

[203] Dar, "Government Resolution on Cow Disturbances in the Azamgarh District.", 12.

Varna system. As a warrior caste, the duties of the early Ahirs were to protect the Brahman caste and the cow population, because both were regarded as the sacred entities of ancient India.[204] Also, to give the caste further validity, Ahir sokesmen self-proclaimed the caste as the descendents of the "cowherd god" Krishna.[205] Ahir spokesmen during the Hindu mobilization also often regarded two of the most respected emperors of India, Chandragupta and Ashoka, as Ahirs themselves. They argued that, throughout history, a division of labor emerged within the Kshatriya Varna. Half of the Kshatriyas remained protectors of the Brahman caste, while the other half of Kshatriyas, now the Ahir caste, became the designated protectors of the cow.[206] By the time the East India Company began to colonize India, the legacy of the Ahir was no greater than that of any other laboring caste, and in the United Provinces they were later categorized along with the other razil castes. The Ahirs particularly despised their razil status because they were not as heavily depressed as lower castes such as the Julahas. To be grouped among the lower castes by the Sharif caused extreme resentment among them. This is why the views of Gaurakshini Sabhas became more militant with the introduction of mass Ahir support.

As mentioned, there were multiple Hindu movements which began by the 1870s, and with nationalist sentiments emerging, multiple movements began to unify the Hindu population in an effort to resist colonial rule. However, not all movements were created equal. To the Ahir caste, the cow protection movement was the only cause where they saw hope for their placement in society to improve in the coming future. As a movement based around cow protection, the movement endorsed the occupation of the Ahir caste and they were given a stronger voice and

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[204] Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India,* 92; Pandey cited from Hindu text titled, *Ahir Itihasa Ki Jhalak*, by D.S. Yadav.
[205] Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India,* 92.
[206] Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India,* 92.

more authority within the societies as a result. The cow protection movement helped promote Ahir superiority over other cultivating castes better than any of their personal tactics self-proclaimed status. This influenced the Ahir caste to push the movement with a certain sense of urgency and aggressiveness toward all opposing social parties which posed a threat, not just against the British government. As Rafiuddin Ahmed notes, by the 1890s, qurbani became the main concern of the Gaurakshini Sabhas, "not so much because the Muslims loved to sacrifice cows as because the militant Hindus made it an issue…'What used to be a quiet and private ritual now came to be celebrated with public éclat as an ostentatious response to the Hindu challenge".[207] The focus of the Gaurakshini Sabha became less about the strengthening of cows and more about the abolishment of qurbani because the Ahirs were not simply interested in the original causes of the upper-class endorsers, but also the actions necessary to beat out opposing Indian movements and keep the Ahirs prominent. As McLane notes in reference to the latter half of the cow protection movement, "when cow protectors filed suits in the law courts challenging the right to kill kine, or when they tried to intercept cattle on the way to commissariats, butcher shops, cattle fairs, and Muslim sacrifices, they affirmed the supremacy of Hindu customs and openly challenged the right of Muslims and the British to violate religious traditions of the majority".[208] For the Ahirs of Azamgarh, the sub-nationalist actions of the Gaurakshini Sabhas had to prevail over opposing parties in order to protect their social standing. Ultimately for places like Azamgarh, Muslim resistance to cow protection in the district was the most immediate threat, and had to be intercepted by any means necessary.

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[207] Ahmed, Rafiuddin, *The Bengal Muslims 1871-1906. A Quest for Identity* (Delhi, 1981), 170.
[208] McLane, 275.

The pressure induced by the Ahir-led Gaurakshini Sabhas can be seen not only through its violent actions but also its membership and recruiting. In Mau, and other villages of Azamgarh, propaganda in the form of "poorly printed leaflets", pictures, and "snowball letters", were designed by the Ahirs in an effort to spread the new messages of the rural Societies.[209] These new ideals consist of three core beliefs. The first, was that the cow was the "universal mother", and all humans drank her milk. The second argument was that the cow was the "dwelling place" of all the major Gods and Goddesses of the Hindu religion, making the slaughter of the animal an incredibly belligerent act toward Hindus. And finally, the third belief of the Ahirs was "the representation of the Muslim—and to a lesser extent the English-man, the Indian Christian and others—as the killer of cows and, hence, the enemy of Hinduism", as Gyanendra Pandey puts it.[210] Pandey also refers to a picture found outside of a cow-protection lecture in Bahraich in 1893, which can provide as an example of how Ahir advertisement captured all three of these new beliefs. Gyanendra Pandey described the picture as such:

> It showed a cow, inside which several Hindu deities were depicted, waiting to give milk to the assembled Hindus, Muslims, Parsis and Christians. Near the cow was a demon, half-human and half-animal, with a raised sword. A man representing Dharma Raj appeals to the demon: 'Oh! Demon of the iron age! Why art thou going to kill this useful animal. Have mercy on her.'[211]

It was not distinctly confirmed, but many Muslims and British officials believed that the head of the demon portrayed in this image was intended to resemble a pig's head, and was done so to "deliberately insult Muslims".[212] Nevertheless, even if this specific image could not be proven, it

[209] Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India,* 180.
[210] Pandey, "The Three Beliefs". In *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India,* 180.
[211] Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India,* 180.
[212] Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India,* 180.

is undeniable that, leading up to the riots of 1893, the Gaurakshini Sabhas of Azamgarh were inherently anti-Muslim, as other images were recorded of Muslim butchers preparing to slaughter a cow and Hindus of all different castes begging the to stop.[213]

Hindus of all different castes were displayed in such propaganda messages because the Ahirs of the razil class and the Brahmins of the sharif class both equally wanted the cow protection movement to succeed, but for their own reasons. However, there were still some groups of Hindus who did not want to join the Gaurakshini Sabhas. Leading up to 1893, Ahir leadership pressured non-members to join the Sabhas in multiple ways, eventually recruiting the entire Hindu community to Sabhas by the time of the riots, turning them into a militant party. As the Gaurakshini Sabhas sought to rescue cattle found in "suspicious" circumstances, they also expected Hindus to donate funds to support the gaushalas. Such donations usually came in the form of *chutki* contributions. For each member of a Hindu household, one portion of food (or chutki) was set aside for each meal. The food would then be collected from the village as a whole and given to the Sabha treasurer, who would then sell it for the benefit of the League (not necessarily the gaushalas).[214] This donation process was heavily pressured by members of the Gaurakshini Sabhas however, and particularly within Mau, it soon became a taxation of Hindus rather than an option.[215] At the height of popularity for the Azamgarh cow societies in 1893, the official magistrate of the district described the authority of the Leagues as such:

> The whole of the Hindu population is driven into its arms by the tyranny of caste, and when once the league is established in any place, its grasp is so powerful that every man,

[213] Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India,* 180.
[214] Pandey, Gyanendra, "Rallying Round the Cow Sectarian Strife in the Bhojpuri Region, c. 1888-1917'." In *Subaltern Studies II Writings on South Asian History and Society* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983), 81.
[215] Pandey, *Rallying Round the Cow*, 82.

> woman and child must openly or secretly contribute to its funds, or cease to be a Hindu.[216]

The threat to "cease to be a Hindu" was present throughout Azamgarh, as seen in a particular instance within the village of Panda Kunda. Just before the Bakr-Id celebration of 1893 was supposed to take place, a "respectable Hindu farmer" by the name of Lachman Paure was "remorselessly boycotted" for selling a single bullock to a Muslim. Moneylenders, Zamindars, and other Hindus rioted outside of his house, pulling down the tiles from his roof and smashing his "earthen vessels". Furthermore, the League members also sabotaged Lachman's sugarcane field so that no produce would prosper. After the riots, League members went so far as to forbid the village Kahars from giving his daughter the proper sweets necessary to enter her father-in-law's home. Lastly, they slapped Lachman repeatedly, and "threatened to loot his house and put him to death" if he did not get his cow back.[217]

Leading up to the Azamgarh riots of 1893, the Gaurakshini Sabhas of this rural district had developed into militant political parties. The discourse surrounding cow protection had by this point blossomed into the primary discourse within the district. In his *Appeal*, Dar blames the local British officials for the riots because of their purposeful incompetence as leaders of the district. First, the distance of state district and state officials from the community allowed for inevitable tensions to brew among the Muslims and Hindus. Then, he claims Mr. Dupernex incited religious feelings from both Hindu and Muslim parties when he ordered everyone to act in accordance with the "established custom". However, in an attempt to more accurately recount the events leading up to the Azamgarh riots, the end of this chapter will provide substantial

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[216] Pandey, *Rallying Round the Cow*, 82.
[217] Pandey, "Lachman Paure anecdote". in *Rallying Round the Cow*, 82.

evidence for just how much of an impact the militant Sabhas had on the riots. By 1893, the mobilization efforts of the Gaurakshini Sabhas were more powerful than the local British government. This ultimately led to the pacification efforts of the British proving useless once the Sabhas chose violence.

The Tensions and Riots of Azamgarh in 1893.

The Azamgarh riots of 1893 occurred on June 25th, in line with the Bakr-Id celebration of that year. But, leading up to this date there were several instances among the Julahas and Ahirs of Mau and other villages which foreshadowed the impending attacks. First, on January 9th 1893, Muslim butchers taking cattle from Kopa to Ghazipur were intercepted by a group of Hindus a few miles from Kopaganj (Azamgarh's third largest weaving center six miles north of Mau). The Hindus "rescued" the cattle from the butchers, and began to guide them toward Ballia.[218] During the journey, police recovered the stolen cattle back from the Hindus in the nearby village of Kasara. But, in response, a large group of around 200 Hindus–from Kasara and neighboring villages–formed and forcibly rescued the cattle once more and pushed forward to the Ballia border.[219] A few months later, on the 19th of April, another similar case of violent rescue was witnessed, this time on a much larger scale. In the neighboring district of Gorakhpur, an attack was made by "a large body of Hindus" on a few Muslims who purchased cattle from a fair. In this instance, "several hundreds" of cattle were rescued from them.[220] Then, only three days after this event, in Sonadeb, a butcher riding a buffalo was stopped on the road and his buffalo was taken from him.[221] As Jawahir Singh (an inspector for the Azamgarh Magistrate) mentions, it is

[218] Dar, "Government Resolution on Cow Disturbances in the Azamgarh District.", 13; Pandey, *Rallying Round the Cow*, 80.
[219] Dar, "Government Resolution on Cow Disturbances in the Azamgarh District.", 13.
[220] Dar, "Government Resolution on Cow Disturbances in the Azamgarh District.", 13.
[221] Dar, "Government Resolution on Cow Disturbances in the Azamgarh District.", 13.

difficult to argue that the prevention of Muslims from purchasing buffalo and goat was done out of religious duty, since certain Hindu sects, and Hindus in Nepal under a Hindu government, both regularly sacrifice goats and buffalo.[222]

While both of the abduction cases which occurred in April were outside of the Azamgarh district, it is important to make note of their actions, especially in the months leading up to the Bakr-Id riots. In a government resolution released in light of the Azamgarh riots, they claim that "constant meetings" of the Gaurakshini Sabhas were taking place throughout the first half of the year, and that the two rescue missions in April were the result of such meetings. They continue to report that notices were distributed among the rural communities to attend these meetings. Other notices were passed along between districts, directing members of laws constructed in other districts and mobilizing the Gaurakshini Sabhas together. The government resolution recalls such notices:

> Notices were also disseminated enjoying the duty of not selling cattle to Mussulmans, and directing that the recipients should send five (or two) copies of the notice to adjacent villages. Some notices also have been found, but of uncertain date, calling on those who received them to come quickly and rescue cows which were tied up for slaughter in the house of Mussulmans.[223]

In the month of May, two large meetings were held by the Gaurakshini Sabhas of Azamgarh, intended to organize the Sabhas of the district.[224] Inspector Jawahir Singh feared that these two meetings, in particular the latter, were organized to direct League members to forcefully interject on the cow sacrifices of the upcoming Bakr-Id celebration.[225] The two meetings were held in the

[222] Dar, "Government Resolution on Cow Disturbances in the Azamgarh District.", 14.
[223] Dar, "Government Resolution on Cow Disturbances in the Azamgarh District.", 13.
[224] Pandey, *Rallying Round the Cow*, 80.
[225] Dar, "Government Resolution on Cow Disturbances in the Azamgarh District.", 14.

town of Azamgarh and Jahanaganj respectively. Both meetings hosted several thousand Hindus and were led by Sabha leaders from the Ballia district.[226] In the second meeting at Jahanaganj, on the 19th of May, a small group of Muslim representatives were present. During the meeting the League members pressured the Muslims to stop kine killing, but the Muslims refused their demands. In response, the Hindus threatened the Muslims, telling them if any sacrifice was attempted at the upcoming Bakr-Id celebration, then they would rescue the cattle by force.[227] Three days later, members of the Gaurakshini Sabhas endorsed their threat at a local wedding in Sikandarpur of the Ballia district. At the wedding, a Muslim was attempting to kill a single buffalo to prepare for the wedding feast. In response, several hundred Hindus arrived at the wedding and rescued the buffalo from the Muslim man.[228]

By the 27th of May, Inspector Jawahir Singh advised the Azamgarh Magistrate to make safety precautions for the impending Bakr-Id celebration. If the actions of recent months were of any evidence, he had reason to believe that the Hindus of the Gaurakshini Sabhas planned to disrupt the cow sacrifices on Bakr-Id by any means necessary. He also understood that the Muslim community was "consequently much irritated" and may very well sacrifice kine "in excess of the usual number".[229] On 30th of May, Mr. Dupernex, the Officiating Magistrate of Azamgarh, requested that his officers visit each village of the district and report back on any where there is clear friction between the Hindus and the Muslims, enough to result in a riot.[230] On the 3rd and 7th of June, the reports came back. At the top of the list was Muhammadabad, where Mau and Mubarakpur were located, followed by Jianpore, Chirakot, and Nizamabad

[226] Pandey, *Rallying Round the Cow*, 80.
[227] Dar, "Government Resolution on Cow Disturbances in the Azamgarh District.", 13.
[228] Dar, "Government Resolution on Cow Disturbances in the Azamgarh District.", 13.
[229] Dar, "Government Resolution on Cow Disturbances in the Azamgarh District.", 14.
[230] Dar, "Government Resolution on Cow Disturbances in the Azamgarh District.", 14.

accordingly.[231] After all the results were in, the next day Mr. Dupernex requested clarification from the Muslims of these high friction villages on whether or not they intended to sacrifice cows during Bakr-Id. However, miscommunication within the Azamgarh police force resulted in requests from Muslims of every village on their intentions to sacrifice. 426 Muslims responded intending to sacrifice 317 cows and 29 buffaloes.[232] Because the results of the survey were skewered, Mr. Dupernex still was unaware of the sacrifice plans of the high-friction villages. On the same day, Mr. Dupernex requested that the "leading Hindus and Mahomedans" of the high-friction villages were to meet with him, or his sub-divisional Magistrate, directly.[233] After much conversation, statements were recorded by the Hindu and Muslim representatives present in front of the Magistrate. The Hindus statement proceeds as follows: "We have no objections to the sacrifices taking place according to *established custom*. If the Mahomedans do anything new we shall inform the police".[234] Whereas the Muslim statement is this: "We shall sacrifice only in accordance with *established custom*, and shall do nothing new in contravention of usage".[235] There were only a few Hindus who refused to sign the engagements and instead declared that they intended to prevent sacrifices. These men were held in custody of the police until after the Bakr-Id celebration had passed.[236]

With Bakr-Id only four days away, Mr. Dupernex wrote an official order for the Azamgarh district on the 21st of June. His subordinates were told the following:

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[231] Dar, "Government Resolution on Cow Disturbances in the Azamgarh District.", 14.
[232] Dar, "Government Resolution on Cow Disturbances in the Azamgarh District.", 14.
[233] Dar, "Government Resolution on Cow Disturbances in the Azamgarh District.", 14.
[234] Dar, "Government Resolution on Cow Disturbances in the Azamgarh District.", 14.
[235] Dar, "Government Resolution on Cow Disturbances in the Azamgarh District.", 14-5.
[236] Dar, "Government Resolution on Cow Disturbances in the Azamgarh District.", 15.

> Hindus and Mahomedans are to be made to understand that the festival should be performed as in previous years, and that nothing new or contrary to old established custom will be allowed to occur. The Mahomedans should be made to understand that if any innovation is introduced for the purpose of hurting the religious feelings of the Hindus they will be prosecuted under section 298 of the Indian Penal Code. The Hindus should be made to understand that if they forcibly obstruct the Mahomedans from celebrating the festival as performed in previous years, they will be prosecuted for rioting.[237]

In the following days, Mr. Dupernex took further precautions to prevent riots within the high-friction villages of Azamgarh. In the town of Azamgarh, a petition was brought forth to Mr. Dupernex claiming that, according to Municipal by-laws, no sacrifice could take place within private houses.[238] Upon review, Mr. Dupernex dismissed the petition, saying that the law only applied to ordinary cow slaughter and did not account for sacrifice during special occasions.[239] This decision was ultimately correct, as such by-laws were not intended to prohibit Muslims from sacrificing during Bakr-Id. In a further effort, Mr. Dupernex released a further order for the impending Bakr-Id celebrations in the town of Azamgarh. On June 24th, the day before Bakr-Id, Mr. Dupernex published a statement saying, "To-morrow from 9 to 12 sacrifice may take place where it has been customary to perform it. After 12 noon no sacrifice is permitted. It must be performed inside the houses, and the flesh should be covered up when carried away for distribution".[240] The day of the Azamgarh riots there were no outbreaks in the town of Azamgarh. Additionally, Mr. Dupernex made an effort to take safety measures in the town of Mau, which was believed to be the town with the highest tension between Hindu and Muslim parties. These precautions were represented with the placement of Garstin, the superintendent of

[237] Dar, "Government Resolution on Cow Disturbances in the Azamgarh District.", 15.
[238] Dar, "Government Resolution on Cow Disturbances in the Azamgarh District.", 15.
[239] Dar, "Government Resolution on Cow Disturbances in the Azamgarh District.", 15.
[240] Dar, "Government Resolution on Cow Disturbances in the Azamgarh District.", 15.

the Azamgarh district police force, and Janki Prasad, a Deputy Magistrate, within the town. In fact, the day before Bakr-Id, the Deputy Magistrate successfully arranged a compromise agreement between the local Hindu and Muslim leaders of Mau.[241] However, throughout the night and into the morning of the Bakr-Id celebration, Hindus from Ballia, Ghazipur, and other villages of Azamgarh came to Mau intending to protest the sacrifices, unaware of the compromise agreed upon the day before.[242]

On June 25th, 1893, the day of the Bakr-Id celebrations, riots took place all across the Azamgarh district. Mau was the scene of the worst riots. By the early morning, a crowd estimated between 700 to 1,200 Hindus gathered to attack a party of Muslims planning to sacrifice in the qasba of Mau.[243] Both sides were armed with swords, guns, and bows, but most of all *lathis*–a large wooden staff. The compromise agreement from the day before was completely ignored and battle ensued, stopping only after police opened fire into the riot, killing two Hindus.[244] Police had to stand between the parties for two hours to stop the fighting, all the while more Hindus from neighboring districts continued to arrive and strengthen the Hindu forces. The police left to send a report to the magistrate at 11:30am, and as soon as they did the Hindus launched another attack. This time, the Hindus pushed forward with overwhelming force. They entered Muslim houses and used their lathis on "everyone and everything in sight".[245] By the time the police returned, three Muslims were dead and many more injured.[246] The British officials present tried desperately to establish another compromise agreement, but the Hindus

[241] Pandey, *Rallying Round the Cow*, 83.
[242] Pandey, *Rallying Round the Cow*, 83.
[243] Pandey, *Rallying Round the Cow*, 83.
[244] Pandey, *Rallying Round the Cow*, 83.
[245] Pandey, *Rallying Round the Cow*, 83.
[246] Pandey, *Rallying Round the Cow*, 83.

refused all efforts. Eventually, the Muslims gave in to the pressures of the League members and several representatives signed a stamped agreement saying they would not sacrifice cows this Bakr-Id, or at all in the future.[247] They also forfeited six or more cows to the Hindus. However, even despite complete submission to the League's demands, some Hindus still were not satisfied. As they were leaving, a group of Hindus attacked and destroyed multiple houses in a Muslim region of Mau, smashing the tiled roofs. By this time, most of the Muslim rioters had returned to their homes, defeated. But a small group of about 150 Muslims remained, and witnessed the act of vandalism. The group prepared to fight, and as they did, the group of Hindus who attacked were backed by "united Hindu forces".[248] This attack resulted in the death of six more Muslims, who were beaten to death, and one more Muslim who died from a wound.[249] The riots at Mau were the most horrific, but several other riots took place throughout Azamgarh where large Hindu demonstrations were made. Kopa, Ghosi, Chiriakot, Jahanaganj, Jianpur, Azmatgarh and Gaurdih were home to such demonstrations, which also took a violent turn.[250] Apparently Mubarakpur was also targeted, but given the history of Hindu-Muslim strife in the village, Julahas of the region had already made preparations to battle, discouraging Hindus from attacking.[251]

[247] Pandey, *Rallying Round the Cow*, 84; Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India,* 165.
[248] Pandey, *Rallying Round the Cow*, 84; Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India,* 165.
[249]Pandey, 84; Pandey, 165.
[250]Pandey, *Rallying Round the Cow*, 84.
[251]Pandey, *Rallying Round the Cow*, 84.

Chapter 4

Upper Caste Influence on the Cow Protection Movement

In Narayan Dar's *Appeal to the English Public*, he pleads to the Queen of Great Britain that the Azamgarh riots of 1893 were due to incompetent leadership from local British officials. He summarizes each fault of the government that he believes led to the eventual outburst of violence. Generally, he argues that the distance of British officials due to their "divide and rule" government caused tensions to boil over. He also believes that a sudden "shift in favoritism", from Hindu to Muslim parties, encouraged the Hindu party to revolt against the British government and mobilize as Gaurakshini Sabhas. Finally, not only were British officials so far removed from the local villages of Azamgarh that they were unable to properly stop the violence of the riots, but Dar believes they also intentionally ordered each party to act in accordance with a complicated "established custom" in a meddlesome effort to create more conflict.

The Effects of Divide and Rule Government on a Rural Society

The British colonization efforts certainly did not coincide well with the traditional practices of Azamgarh. With the introduction of British officials to the district in 1801, the ruling efforts of the British might appear to have been "tailor-made for conflict between Hindus and Muslims".[252] In particular, the mechanization of the weaving industry caused extreme poverty within the Azamgarh district. At the same time, the British also introduced Hindu moneylenders and Zamindars into predominantly Muslim villages, and gave them the authority over the Muslim

[252] Pandey, Gyanendra, "Rallying Round the Cow Sectarian Strife in the Bhojpuri Region, c. 1888-1917'." In *Subaltern Studies II Writings on South Asian History and Society* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983), 79.

population. Industrialization caused extreme poverty within Julaha centers, for both the Julahas and the Brahmin small landholders. As a result, both parties felt pressured to assert themselves within the community. The Julahas wanted to protect their villages, which were accustomed to Muslim dominance. While the Brahmin Zamindars felt the need to build Hindu temples in an effort to display their higher caste status and wealth over the Julahas. Then, as religious revivals began to emerge throughout India, controversy around the sanctity of the cow was heightened for Hindus and Muslims, especially in rural regions like Azamgarh. The Divide and Rule governance of the British kept them from noticing the growing frustrations of the district, and government orders such as the Mau Slaughterhouse Verdict and the Allahabad Court Rulings increased tensions even further. Ultimately, by the time the British officials "awoke from their slumber" and grew aware of the possible violent outcomes from these pent up aggressions, their efforts to mediate were far too late.[253] This is seen through the development of the established custom order. Both Hindu and Muslim representatives agreed to act in accordance with the "established custom" of each region. However, as Dar mentions, "the Hindus contended that in most places claimed by Mahomedans the custom of cow-killing did not exist; the Mahomedans contended that it did".[254] Knowing that the term could be misinterpreted, and the incompetent British would not pick up on this, the Hindus and Muslims agreed to act according to "established custom", but still left the magistrates office with the intention of fighting. Dar believed that meddlesome tactics from the British were involved in the creation of the established custom order, and that the wording of the order was calculated by the local magistrates in an attempt to incite riots. This may be an exaggeration, but even if one were to

[253] Dar, Pandit Bishan Narayan, *An Appeal to the English Public on Behalf of the Hindus of the N.W.-P. and Oudh* (Lucknow: G.P. Varma and Brothers Press, 1893), 24.
[254] Dar, *An Appeal to the English Public on Behalf of the Hindus of the N.W.-P. and Oudh*, 7.

give Mr. Dupernex the benefit of the doubt, it is still apparent that the order was still not properly debriefed, due to the incompetence stemming from the Divide and Rule system.

Tradition vs. Modernization

Dar is correct to address that the British modernization efforts were not properly equipped for the rural community of Azamgarh, and thus led to the outbreak of riots in 1893. However, Dar refused to note that certain local Indian traditions in Azamgarh also acted as prohibitors to modernization efforts of any kind and thereby promoting tensions further. With the introduction of British rule, the Brahmin Zamindars built Hindu temples, which in turn excited the Julahas to protest. This was because the Zamindars felt a need to display their Brahmin status in the developing society. While many of the Brahmin Zamindars experienced similar poverty to that of the Julahas, their position as Zamindars still placed them in a higher authoritative position over their weaver neighbors. Furthermore, in the early nineteenth century, the Brahmins still experienced favoritism among the Julahas, in the form of money and food donations. Lastly, the poor Brahmin Zamindars were inspired to build Hindu temples in part to display their wealth to the richer Brahmin Zamindars. Even if the poor Zamindars were difficult to differentiate from the Julahas, the display of piety through temple building, which only resulted in Hindu-Muslim tension, was the result of wealthy Brahmins still feeling the need to express dominance, and suppress the lower castes (in this case the Julahas).

Later, once the Julahas attempted to reform in light of a modernizing India, their biggest obstacle was the razil label that was implemented by the upper class Hindus and Muslims of the United Provinces. In order to successfully modernize, the Julahas were forced to digress from the Hindu aspects of their background, as well as openly oppose sharif command, in order to shed

their razil labels. In this regard, the razil and sharif labels created by the upper classes inherently promoted Hindu-Muslim tension in the face of modernization. The razil label also contributed to the violent shift seen among the Gaurakshini Sabhas that reached Azamgarh. In order for the Ahirs to escape their razil label, they felt a sense of urgency to dominate all other opposing movements in favor of the one that granted them higher status within the community. Of course, the Gaurakshini Sabhas of Azamgarh and the surrounding districts grew completely anti-Muslim as a result of this, and the riots of 1893 did nothing more than capture these feelings of animosity.

"Extremist Politicians"

In hindsight, it is clear that both factors of British and Indian culture prohibited a smooth transition toward an independent India. However, directly after the riots had occurred, Dar, and other "extremist politicians" of the Indian National Congress, (Congress Members who put their personal interests as Hindus ahead of the interests of the country) instead convinced Gaurakshini Sabha members that they were justifiably rioting for the right to protect cows in an effort to oppose British rule. It is important to note that, while all Hindus who joined the Gaurakshini Sabhas cared equally for the sanctity of the cow (as eventually did all of the Hindu community), each class's reasoning for joining was different. For the upper class Hindus, the Gaurakshini Sabha was beneficial mainly for economic reasons. Many upper class Hindus argued that the weakness of the cow in India caused the economic depression of India throughout the nineteenth century. The main goal of upper class Hindus was to "improve the feeding, breeding, and general care of cattle" and were often "indifferent to the question of cows' sacredness".[255] But for the

[255] McLane, John R, *Indian Nationalism and the Early Congress* (Princeton Legacy Library. Princeton University Press, 1977), 285.

Ahirs of Azamgarh, the pressures to improve their social standing through the cow protection movement led them to push the initiative of Hindu dominance, more so than any economic aspects of cow protection. To this group, the central offenders were Muslims, then the British, and the economic concerns surrounding the cow were mostly referenced as an argument to legitimize their actions. Lastly, there was a select group of "extremist politicians" who invested in the Gaurakshini Sabha for more personal reasons. The Indian National Congress supported the Gaurakshini Sabha because they felt it was the best way to defend the cow and more importantly, orthodox Hinduism against an "emerging social order" from opposing parties that had a different agenda for Hindu modernization.[256] The "extremist politicians" that supported Gaurakshini Sabhas were the primary financial donors to the cow protection movement during its early and middle stages. It is often claimed that, in the latter years of the cow protection movement, these high caste politicians and businessmen grew quiet in their support, and this is what caused the Gaurakshini Sabhas to turn violent and lead to riots such as those seen in 1893. However, in multiple instances, there has been evidence recorded of rich upper caste involvement in the cow protection riots.

An official of Shahabad, a neighboring district to Azamgarh, reported on two instances of cow protection riots which involved the wealthy upper caste members. The first was a similar riot in 1893, which also occurred in reaction to the Bakr-Id of that year. The official noted briefly that all the Zamindars who were acquitted for complicity in the riots were "either Brahmins or Bhumihar Brahmins".[257] The fact that these Zamindars were able to acquit themselves of the charges suggests that they were either wealthy, or that the Gaurakshini Sabhas of the district

[256] McLane, 274.
[257] Pandey, Gyanendra, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990), 58.

were associated with wealthy figures. These Zamindars may not have been direct members of the Indian National Congress, but they were politically linked. The connection of the cow protection movement to extremist politicians is described in much greater detail with the recounting of the second Shahabad incident. During the Bakr-Id celebration of 1911, another set of riots emerged throughout the Patna District. These riots started off with small crowds of Ahirs and Babhans (Bhumihar-Brahmins) standing together to fight against cow slaughter. Similar actions were seen again in Patna during the Eid of 1915, and this time a "rajput mob" was identified as the primary conspirators.[258] The mobilization efforts only continued in Patna in the following year. During the Eid of 1916, when Hindus were cited arming themselves with lathis and sickles in an attempt to prevent qurbani. It was also noted that, sometimes, if they could not prevent the sacrifice, these groups would seek revenge by attacking Muslims or the police of the region. For example, in Kanchanpur, Patna, of the same year, some 5,000 armed Hindu villagers attacked a police base. It was recorded that the Hindus involved arranged themselves in "some kind of military formation" and were only stopped by heavy police firing where several Hindus were killed.[259] The military formation of this riot suggests that it was a planned attack, meaning leaders were involved to mobilize the Ahirs. It can be assumed that the mobilization efforts involved in this attack are similar to what occurred the following year, of 1917. An outbreak happened again, this time in Shahabad, and was described by observers as "unprecedented since 1857-58".[260] A few weeks before the intended day of sacrifice, two meetings were held in Arrah. The first meeting consisted of Hindu barristers, pleaders, *mukhtars* (local government officials) and "many others

[258] Pandey, *Rallying Round the Cow*, 88.
[259] Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*, 167.
[260] Pandey, *Rallying Round the Cow*, 88.

of the influential gentry of the town and district".[261] The second meeting took place at the house of Jai Bahadur, a rich banker in Arrah and the previous president of the Arrah Gaurakshini Sabha. This meeting also consisted of several Hindu lawyers, merchants, and Zamindars.[262] During these two meetings, the men involved came to the decision that, during the upcoming Eid in Ibrahimpur, they would attempt a "Hindu demonstration" of sorts, and prevent all acts of qurbani. Much like the previous Gaurakshini Sabhas, this decision was determindly spread throughout all of Shahabad by the circulation of *patias* (or "snowball" letters).[263] The result was the mobilization of thousands of Hindus throughout Ibrahimpur and other villages of Shahabad. Immediately following the Eid sacrifices, a week-long "civil war" broke out throughout the district. Police admitted that they had lost control of nearly 150 square miles of territory. The war was only contained once heavy military reinforcement arrived.

The events of Shahbad provide a good example of the influence of extremist politicians on the Gaurakshini Sabhas, even during their violent stages. In Azamgarh, one of the most vocal extremist politicians was Pandit Bishan Narayan Dar, who encouraged the cow protection riots on behalf of the Indian National Congress. In Dar's *Appeal to the English Public*, he portrays the riots as if they were completely the fault of British officials, and that the "law-abiding" Hindus would never engage in such activities unless coerced.[264] He uses further propaganda strategies to victimize the Hindus of Azamgarh to British oppression. He mentions that he visited the Hindus of Azamgarh during the riots, and that he "pities them from the bottom of his heart" for "terror and despair are depicted on their faces".[265] He goes on to explain that this despair is caused by

[261] Pandey, *Rallying Round the Cow*, 89.
[262] Pandey, *Rallying Round the Cow*, 89.
[263] Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*, 168.
[264] Dar, *An Appeal to the English Public on Behalf of the Hindus of the N.W.-P. and Oudh*, 28.
[265] Dar, *An Appeal to the English Public on Behalf of the Hindus of the N.W.-P. and Oudh*, 12.

the local British authorities. He says, "they [Hindus] never rose against the authorities and yet the authorities are treating them with marked severity; they never resisted the Police and yet the Police are oppressing them day and night".[266] Then, in the climax of his *Appeal*, Dar criticizes the British, claiming that the violent riots "served a useful purpose" by displaying the ineffectiveness of the British government's Divide and Rule style.[267] He continues to support the cow riots directly, saying they are a way for the Hindus, whom he describes in this section as "the proverbial dog [of the British] whom any stick is good enough to beat with", to finally rebel against the oppressive system.[268] Dar finally concludes his argument by defending these beliefs with the approval of the Indian National Congress:

> We [the Indian National Congress] too think that it is best that these riots have happened because they have shown that the policy of "Divide and Rule" is a dangerous policy…The riots and the prosecutions which have followed upon them will go far to bind the Hindu community together more firmly than ever.[269]

The Indian National Congress' Interest in Cow Protection

So why did extremist politicians such as Dar approve of the cow protection riots and convince Hindus of their innocence, even though, more than anything else, they caused tension between the Hindus and Muslims? Well, as mentioned, there were many aspects of Indian tradition that made modernization for certain communities difficult. These traditions also led to increased friction within Azamgarh, eventually resulting in the 1893 riots. But, with a closer look, the Indian traditions which were most directly opposed to the trending religious modernization of

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[266] Dar, *An Appeal to the English Public on Behalf of the Hindus of the N.W.-P. and Oudh*, 12.
[267] Dar, *An Appeal to the English Public on Behalf of the Hindus of the N.W.-P. and Oudh*, 28.
[268] Dar, *An Appeal to the English Public on Behalf of the Hindus of the N.W.-P. and Oudh*, 29.
[269] Dar, *An Appeal to the English Public on Behalf of the Hindus of the N.W.-P. and Oudh*, 28-9.

India were those of the upper castes. The overcompensation of temple building in early Azamgarh was a result of the Brahmins feeling the need to establish their religious dominance in a community where caste was not easily distinguishable. Furthermore, the razil and sharif classes were implemented as a way to establish a caste-like hierarchical system that could be accepted by both Hindu and Muslim upper classes, and still give Brahmins the highest status. directly conflicted with the religious modernization of lower castes. These labels later directly conflicted with the religious modernization of lower castes as a communities razil status depended on their subordination to sharif, but mainly brahmin, superiors. Lastly, the cow protection movement, even in its radical rural phase, supported the establishment of the caste system, through its practices and ideology.

During the age of religious revivals in India, there were multiple movements within the subcontinent that were just as engaging as the early cow protection movement. In Bombay, an organization known as the Satyashodhak Samaj was founded in 1873.[270] Jotirao Phule, the founder of the Satyashodhak Samaj, believed in the modern values of rationalism and equality, and incorporating those values into classic Hinduism. He encouraged working class Indians to "search for truth" in their social standing by not accepting traditional systems as law. Phule discussed multiple layers within this search for truth, but at the root of his ideals he believed that "although *shudra-atishudras* may be free from the physical slavery (*kayik dasyatva*) of Brahmans…they have not been fully freed from the bonds of mental slavery (*mansik dasyatva*). [271] Among other efforts to uplift the working class, the Satyashodhak Samaj directly opposed Brahmin suppression by refusing to call Brahmins to perform wedding ceremonies, which was a

[270] Bhadru, *Contribution of Shatyashodhak Samaj to the Low Caste Protest Movement in 19th Century*, 845.
[271] Vendell, *Jotirao Phule's Satyashodh and the Problem of Subaltern Consciousness*, 56.

customary but expensive practice.[272] They also refused to participate in food donations to Brahmin moneylenders and priests, which was also common practice among shudras.[273]

Similarly, the Arya Samaj, one of the earliest Hindu movements, also spoke out against caste. Founded in 1875 by Swami Dayanand Saraswati, the Arya Samaj grew especially influential among the westernized Hindus of the United Provinces.[274] Similarly to the Satyashodhak Samaj, The Arya Samaj also preached the abolishment of caste, but more so from a Hindu perspective. The Arya Samaj accepted the beliefs of the British that Hinduism had been misinterpreted over time, and as a result the community has fallen behind other modern societies. In an era of rapid change, the Arya Samaj believed the best way to modernize while remaining Hindu was to "minimize ascriptive status based on birth", as well as remove idolatry and polytheism from their daily routine.[275]

By 1893, the ideology of the Satyashodhak Samaj had attracted members "irrespective of caste", including shudra Hindus, working class Muslims, and liberal Brahmins of Bombay.[276] The Arya Samaj had also shown signs of attracting members of all different castes to nationalist ideals, and even pioneered the cow protection movement. However, the Indian National Congress still sought to push the cow protection movement without accepting the beliefs of the Arya Samaj. It is important to note such support from the Indian National Congress because they attempted to remain neutral on the issue of cow protection given its significance in Indian

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[272] Bhadru, 848.
[273] Bhadru, 848.
[274] Metcalf, Barbara D., "Civil Society, Colonial Constraints, 1885–1919," in *A Concise History of Modern India*, 123–66 (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 141.
[275] Metcalf, 141.
[276] Bhadru, 846.

society. Nevertheless, Dar outwardly supported the cow protection movement as a representative of the Indian National Congress in his *Appeal*:

> If the Congressists who are English-knowing men can excite the masses and sympathise with such movements as the cow-protection Societies, then they are beyond doubt the true representatives of the people, their voice the voice of the people, and therefore the Congress is truly a national movement.[277]

The reason the Indian National Congress decided to support the cow protection movement was because other movements that opposed caste threatened the livelihood of a party that identified completely with the upper castes.[278] With nationalist thought consistently emerging throughout India by the start of the twentieth century, Hindu and Muslim elites actively contested for the right to power after succession. The cow protection movement was a sentimental issue for many Hindus, and support of the movement would gain the support of the lower caste Hindus. Additionally, the cow protection movement positively reinforced caste, strengthening the argument for Brahmin (or Indian National Congress) authority over a Muslim influence in a liberated India.

The Gaurakshini Sabha's Caste Implications

As referenced, the cow was one of the few unifying factors of Hinduism that transcended sectional and linguistic barriers, and with the foundation of the Gaurakshini Sabhas it later supported caste. In a previous section, I briefly mention the Chutki contributions enacted by the Sabhas.[279] For reference, Chutki contributions were performed by the Gaurakshini Sabhas starting in the late 1880s. Each member of a Sabha was requested to donate a portion of each

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[277] Dar, *An Appeal to the English Public on Behalf of the Hindus of the N.W.-P. and Oudh*, 14.
[278] Metcalf, 136.
[279] See chapter 3, section 4.

meal to the league, so that it may be sold and the profits used for the benefit of the league. At the head of each Sabha were always its Brahmin ambassadors, and the treasurer of the societies was always certainly upper caste. The Chutki contribution successfully mimicked the taxation that Brahmins notoriously enacted upon the shudra caste, only now the intended recipient was the cow figurehead instead of the Brahmin. Furthermore, the rural militant phase of the Gaurakshini Sabhas actually helped support the institutionalization of caste further. As the Gaurakshini Sabhas grew more radical, Hindus who preferred not to join the societies were harassed and isolated by their Hindu peers. By the 1890s, Hindus who refused to join the leagues were tormented so much by militant members of the Sabhas, that their general livelihood became unbearable, unless they should join the movement. Of course, this only elevated the chances that Brahmin superiority should survive post-independence, as Hindus were coerced to join the movement by its radical members.[280]

The Mother Cow's Caste Implications

However, even more so than the Sabhas social structure, it was the representation of the cow in the Hindu religion that endorsed the caste system the most. For Hindus in the earliest civilizations, the cow was a valuable economic resource. The milk of the cow provided vital nutrients to Indians. While at the same time, the manure and threshing ability of the cow also supported agriculture, as seen even in Azamgarh by the nineteenth century. Some Hindu's even saw value in the cow after its death, as its skin was used to create leather that would keep Indians warm. Over time, the cow became worshiped for its economic value. By the Vedic era, the cow was accepted as the "universal mother" of all humans and the "dwelling place" of the major

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[280]*This is partly why I argue that the rural militant phase of the Gaurakshini Sabhas were not abandoned by upper caste supporters–as other historians have stated–but rather, such violence continued to be encouraged by them.*

Gods and Goddesses of Hinduism.[281] By the start of the Gupta period, further glorification of the cow was seen in Hindu folk tales. In the *Mahabharata*, the story mentions a sacred cow named Kamdhenu, who had the power to grant wishes. Then in the same story another cow, Nandini, was proclaimed to produce milk that could make a man immortal.[282]

At this time, the only other aspect of civilization that was believed to be of equal importance to the agricultural success of the Hindus was sacrifice. As it was declared in the Manusmriti, that sacrifice was intended to "support the whole animal and vegetable world, since the oblation of clarified butten duly cast into the flame ascends in smoke to the sun; from the sun, it falls rain; from rain comes vegetable food; and from such food animals derive their subsistence".[283] However, sacrifice could only be completed with the blessing of a Brahmin, and those who tried to eat the sacrifice, or prepare the ritual alone were cursed.[284] Because of this, Brahmins quickly assumed a distinguished position among other Hindus and, like cows, became looked upon as God-like figures among the lower castes. To cultivators, the power a Brahmin held during sacrifice meant the success or dismay of the upcoming season.[285] As a result, Brahmins were expected to be honored everywhere in return for good karma.

Of course, with the economic importance of the cow in ancient India, its use for sacrifice was quickly deemed off limits by Hindus. In a similar fashion, the protection of the Brahmin soon became an essential practice of the other castes. The Manusmriti once again stated that

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[281] Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India,* 180.
[282] McLane, 276.
[283]Nesfield, John C, *Britef View of the Caste System of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh Together with an Examination of the Names and Figures Shown in the Census Report, 1882* (Allahabad: North-Western Provinces and Oudh Government Press., 1885), 51. Nesfield referenced chapter III, page 76 of the *Manusmriti* for this quote.
[284] Nesfield, 51.
[285] Nesfield, 51.

there was “no greater crime than the slaying of a Brahmin”.[286] Furthermore, such ideology is reinforced in the Sanskrit epics of the Mahabharata and *Ramayana*. In book two of the Mahabharata, one King says to another, “The righteous have always preached to the good men that it is wrong to lift any weapon in a place of refuge, or against women, cows, brahmins and those whom one has deprived of food”.[287] Whereas in the *Ramayana*, a cow named Sabala was described as having the power to grant Brahmins lifelong wealth.[288] Jotirao Phule, a dalit activist and leader of the Satyashodhak Samaj, later argued that, in the following centuries, Brahmin and cow worship became equally ritualized throughout India, to the point where it became cemented as law to the lower castes.[289]

With the arrival of the British government, cow protection became a relevant concern once again. As early as the 1750s, the East India Company enacted daily cow slaughter to support the army and just for regular beef consumption.[290] On the other hand, Muslim cow slaughter was far less common, and was usually only done for sacrifice on special occasions such as Id. Despite this however, by the peak of the cow protection movement in 1893 the primary offenders were Muslims who sacrificed on Id, not the British who killed cows daily. This was because not only did the slaughter of the cow offend Hindus, but also the act of sacrifice by the Muslims. By not having someone of the Brahmin caste present, the sacrifices of cows were tainted and sinful. These sacrifices offended Hindus on two fronts by disregarding the sanctity of

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[286] Nesfield, *Brief View of the Caste System*, 51. Here Nesfield views the Manusmriti again, this time in chapter VIII on page 381.
[287] Wilmot, Paul, *Mahabhárata: The Great Hall* (Vol. 2. 10 vols. New York: New York University Press, 2006), 287.
[288] McLane, *Indian Nationalism and the Early Congress*, 277.
[289] Vendell, Dominic, “Jotirao Phule’s Satyashodh and the Problem of Subaltern Consciousness.” In *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, (34:52–66 North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2014), 56-9.
[290] Dharampal, T.M. Mukundan, *The British Origin of Cow-Slaughter in India* (Uttaranchal, India: Society for Integrated Development of Himalayas, 2002), 17.

the cow and the Brahmin. As a result, the cow protection movement, through heightened grievance toward qurbani, developed caste implication in thought too.

Conclusion

Since their foundation, the Indian National Congress made multiple efforts to invite Muslims onto their board. However, most Muslim leaders believed that Congress "could not be the spokesman for the interests of the two distinct 'communities' that comprised India".[291] Of course, these Muslim representatives viewed the two "lustrous eyes" of India as the Hindu and Muslim communities where, especially among the "extremist politicians" of Congress, equal representation certainly was not a concern. Despite attempts to encourage Muslim support, it was clear that the extremist politicians of Congress wanted Hindu supremacy over anything else. Dar's *Appeal* once again provides an excellent example of this phenomena. From pages twenty-one to twenty-three of the *Appeal*, Dar argues for the unification of Indians, stating that Muslims were "just as good and loyal citizens as the Hindus".[292] However, even within his argument for Hindu-Muslim unity, Dar implies Islamic intolerance for the sake of the cow protection movement. Dar first applauded the previous Muslims rulers of the North-Western Provinces for being dominant yet respectable. However, he later reveals that he only believed this because Muslim rule historically practiced religious tolerance for Hindus.[293] Once under British rule, Dar continued to argue that the fall of Muslim rulers led to the loss of sense of reason among Muslims, which in turn increased cow sacrifice.[294] Dar believed in Hindu-Muslim unity, but only if the Muslim group was the only community required to practice religious tolerance. While the Muslims ruled over the North-Western Provinces they practiced religious

[291] Metcalf, "Civil Society, Colonial Constraints, 1885–1919", 137.
[292] Dar, *An Appeal to the English Public on Behalf of the Hindus of the N.W.-P. and Oudh*, 21.
[293] Dar, 21-3.
[294] Dar, 23.

tolerance by forbidding their own practice of cow sacrifice in an effort to spare Hindu feelings. With the Nationalist movement Dar intended, the Hindu community would become the dominant religious group of India. However, despite recognizing how Muslims acted during their time of rule, Dar believed that Indian unification could only be achieved if Muslims became tolerant once more under Hindu rulership. Dar acknowledged this outright when he wrote, "In the day of their power they [Muslims] tolerated our prejudices; is it supposed that now when they have fallen from their former eminence, they would cease to be tolerant?"[295]

More direct evidence of Dar's reluctance to represent the Muslim comunity is depicted through his chosen descriptions of the Muslim and Hindu communities and their respective involvement in the riots. Still within his argument for Indian unification, Dar praises Muslims for becoming "bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh".[296] However, by saying "our bone" and "our flesh", Dar is still not acknowledging Muslims as true Indians, but rather imposters who have inhabited the land for centuries, only to become indistinguishable from real Indians. Furthermore, throughout the *Appeal*, Dar continues to misconstrue the events of the riots, to pit the Muslims and British as the aggressors of violence. Dar elects to describe the Muslims as "ignorant", "backward", and "crying for vengeance".[297] Whereas the Hindus were described as "law-abiding", "quiet", and "hopeless".[298] He later recounts the riots of Mau, about which he stated that "beyond all possibility of a doubt…hundreds of Mohamedans were armed with swords and guns, while the Hindus had only lathis".[299] He also accuses the British officers

[295] Dar, 23.
[296] Dar, 23.
[297] Dar, 12, 23.
[298] Dar, 12, 28.
[299] Dar, 11.

present of only prosecuting Hindus during the riots.[300] However, expanded research reveals that the majority of Hindus in Azamgarh were members of the Gaurakshini Sabhas, joining either willingly or unwillingly. The majority of League members were not scared, but actually the aggressors of violence, as they encouraged one another to prevent Muslims from purchasing or sacrificing cows. More accurate accounts of the Mau riots also acknowledge that both sides of the riots were armed with swords, guns, bows, and lathis. The Muslim side was also severely outnumbered by the mobilized Sabhas of local districts, and only Hindus were recorded for killing members of the opposing party.[301]

With extremist politicians such as Dar still involved with the Indian National Congress, it became clear that they could not accurately represent the needs of both the Hindu and Muslim communities. But, perhaps the distinction of communities goes farther than such. As noted, the cow protection movement was inherently linked to caste hierarchy, through social and religious traditions. And of course, the Indian National Congress supported the cow protection movement, enough to portray the cow as the symbol of the party in the twentieth century. Therefore, the Indian National Congress, especially through their support of the cow protection movement, not only opposed Muslim thought, but also more fundamentally did not support the motives of any castes besides the elite. Over time, the worship of the cow and the worship of Brahmins had become indistinguishable from each other. Especially in regard to the Bakr-Id festival, the sacrifice of cattle was equally as infuriating as the act of sacrifice without the blessing of a Brahmin. When discussing religious reform in the age of a modernizing India, the topic of "essentials" and "non-essentials" of a religion was commonly discussed by Hindu and Muslim

[300] Dar, 11.
[301] Pandey, *Rallying Round the Cow*, 83.

scholars alike.[302] But the cow as one of these essentials is a unique subject. The cow was certainly an essential aspect of the Hindu religion, but what did its sanctity entail? If Muslims were to again prohibit their practice of cow sacrifice, what would that mean for the lower castes? Not only would Muslims have to tolerate the prejudices of Hinduism, but lower castes would have to tolerate the prejudices of Brahmins as well, for the sanctity of the cow and the sanctity of the Brahmin had become intertwined throughout history, and only the adherence of one could retire the other.

[302] By the beginning of the twentieth century, Hindu and Muslim political thinkers began to emphasize this distinction between the "essentials" and "non-essentials" of religion, and what must be adjusted in order to achieve a "pure" nationalism. For further detail on specific scholars, see Gyanendra Pandey's *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India,* chapter VII, section II.

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