

CHAPTER V

The Hindi-Nagari Movement

Hindi's condition at this time was very bad. It was remarkable that it was still living. . . . To even mention the name of Hindi was considered sinful. There was absolutely no respect for it in the courts. In schools it had a place only up to middle class. The majority of students took Urdu. A student who could speak English fluently was considered excellent and capable and held in esteem. Hindi speakers were regarded as stupid yokels.¹

Introduction and Overview

The Hindi-Nagari movement in the sense of organized groups seeking change through political action began in the late 1860s and continued with varying intensity well into the twentieth century. The supporters of Hindi and the Nagari script did not achieve final success until shortly after independence in 1947, when the Government of Uttar Pradesh adopted Hindi written in the Devanagari script as the official state language.² During the nineteenth century the movement remained largely on a provincial level, and mostly in the NWP&O, but in the next century the issue of the proper language and script advanced to a national level and did much to exacerbate Hindu-Muslim relations.

In the NWP&O one of the most important milestones in this lengthy controversy occurred in 1900, when the provincial government issued a resolution granting the Nagari script equal status with the Urdu in certain important areas of official business.³ Though scholars discussing the language politics of this period usually cite the 1900 resolution as the culmination of the Hindi-Nagari movement, a careful investigation reveals that Hindi-Nagari adherents had won a largely symbolic victory which brought little real change in the dominance of Urdu in the official sphere.⁴

The Hindi-Nagari movement in the NWP&O flared up and died down several times before the twentieth century, with periods of intense activity followed by periods of nearly total inactivity. Part of the explanation for this lies in the lack of a stable organizational base before the founding of the Nagari Pracharini Sabha (Society for the Promotion of Nagari) of Banaras in 1893. Prior to this date, no major organization

had had the promotion of Hindi and Nagari as a chief goal, with the result that sustained efforts proved impossible. The Sabha provided a body of men emotionally and intellectually devoted to the growth of their chosen language and script, and effectively channelled resources for a wide variety of political and cultural purposes. The Nagari Pracharini Sabha (NPS) not only spearheaded the agitation which led to the resolution of 1900 but also conducted a search for old Hindi manuscripts, founded a library, published numerous Hindi works including school texts, awarded prizes for good Nagari handwriting and good Hindi literature, and published a scholarly journal in Hindi.⁵ The NPS also had much to do with the founding of the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan (Society for Hindi Literature) of Allahabad in 1910, which soon became the premier organization for the promotion of Hindi and Nagari on the national level.

The leaders and members of the Sabha represented a Hindi-speaking elite which attempted to promote certain views of the proper nature of Hindi, Hindi literature, and the Nagari script. For example, the NPS constructed a major myth about the antiquity of 'Hindi' by using the term to include older writings in other literary dialects, particularly Braj Bhasha, but to exclude modern writings in these same dialects. Also, many of the Sabha's activities aimed at attaching value to Hindi, Nagari, and a literature which glorified a Hindu past, thus implicitly expressing a Hindu communalism and supporting the equation Hindi = Hindu.

This emphasis on a Hindu past was reflected in the social origins of the Sabha's earliest membership, which bore a striking resemblance to that of students enrolled in Hindi schools fifty years earlier and to that of Hindu candidates (excluding Kayasths) for the Anglo-Vernacular and Vernacular Middle Examinations a decade previously. The composition of the Sabha's membership remained essentially unchanged for many decades. Despite several efforts, the organization failed to enlist any significant support from the Kayasth community, and never succeeded in attracting more than minuscule numbers of Muslims. The equation Urdu = Muslim + Hindu remained unchanged, though not unchallenged, by the Sabha.

The supporters of Urdu, chiefly Muslims and Kayasths, enjoying all the benefits of government patronage and never finding themselves on the defensive before the resolution of 1900, felt no need to establish a permanent organization devoted exclusively to the promotion of Urdu. The picture changed after 1900, however, when numbers of short-lived Urdu Defence Associations sprang up, followed by the creation of the

Anjuman Taraqqi-e-Urdu (Society for the Progress of Urdu) in 1903, which became the major Urdu organization on the national level.

Though the practical effects of the 1900 resolution hardly injured Muslim interests, the psychological impact proved substantial. After 1900 Muslims in the NWP&O could no longer take for granted government support for one of their most cherished cultural symbols. The resolution did little to aid the interests of Hindi partisans but much to embitter Hindu-Muslim relations. In the end, all attempts at compromise between Hindi and Urdu adherents, whether by government or by national leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi, came to nothing. The partition of British India into India and Pakistan found an echo in the partition of Khari Boli into Hindi and Urdu.

The Hindi-Urdu Controversy of the 1860s and 1870s

To attempt to establish the exact date on which the Hindi-Urdu controversy began in the NWP&O would prove neither practical nor profitable. Nevertheless, contemporary evidence indicates a terminus a quo in the early 1860s. About this time debating clubs, societies, institutes, and other similar organizations whose members included Europeans and educated Indians sprouted like mushrooms in cities all over north India. Since their aims often included the discussion of contemporary ideas and problems, the issue of the proper language and script inevitably arose. Thus, in 1864 some members of the Benares Institute (founded in 1861) raised the question of whether the vernacular of the North-Western Provinces (NWP) was Hindi or Urdu; the membership opted for Hindi.⁶ In 1866 a contemporary observer, the French scholar of languages Garcin de Tassy, reported that a great dispute had arisen between Hindus and Muslims over the respective merits of Hindi and Urdu, and mentioned the pro-Hindi views of Navin Chandra Ray of the Anjuman-i-Punjab (Society of the Punjab).⁷

In 1867 the British Indian Association of the North-Western Provinces, among whose prominent members was Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, put forth a proposal for a Vernacular University and met with strenuous opposition from the Anjuman-i-Punjab which had advanced the idea of an Orientalist University. The former urged the exclusive use of Urdu as the medium of instruction, while the latter called this approach 'one-sided'.⁸ In 1868 a Bengali member of the Allahabad Institute raised the question of the proper vernacular for the NWP and advocated Urdu written in the Devanagari script.⁹

The vernacular press provided another forum for the discussion of language and script. For example, the Allahabad Institute meeting

touched off a debate in the *Aligarh Institute Gazette* between Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, one of the leading Muslims of the NWP, and Saroda Prasad Sandel, a member of the Allahabad Institute. Sandel asked Khan whether Hindi, which he called the mixed language of north India, in the Devanagari script should become the official language of the NWP.¹⁰ Khan replied that he called this mixed language Urdu, though he would not oppose the recognition of the Nagari script. Sandel then asserted that Hindi and Urdu were not the same, and that Urdu should make room for the more popular Hindi, just as Persian had made room for Bengali and Urdu.¹¹ In a subsequent exchange of views Khan argued against any proposal to discontinue Urdu and revive 'the old dead *Bhasba*'.¹²

This series of interchanges represented in miniature much of the debate that continued up to independence and beyond. Urdu's champions emphasized assimilation by maintaining that their language originated in India and represented a joint Hindu-Muslim product, and that Hindi stood for an attempt to resuscitate a defunct tradition. Hindi's advocates, on the other hand, emphasized differentiation by arguing that Urdu contained many foreign elements, and that Hindi would promote the welfare of the (largely Hindu) masses.

The Hindi-Urdu controversy continued to occupy the vernacular press intermittently during the rest of the century. During 1869 the issue occupied more space in the Hindi and Urdu newspapers of the NWP than any other single subject. Thereafter the matter died down, but surged up again in 1873, the year in which supporters of Hindi and Nagari presented a memorial to the provincial Lieutenant-Governor. The early 1880s and the late 1890s saw even greater bursts of activity, though in the intervening years the torrents of contention shrank to mere trickles of disputation.

Throughout the entire controversy many of the same arguments, some of them in existence since the original decision to replace Persian in 1837, appeared again and again. Those in favour of Hindi repeatedly attacked the Urdu script as illegible and ambiguous,¹³ and the Urdu language as foreign. Those in favour of Urdu derided the Nagari script as slow and clumsy, and Hindi as unstandardized and poor in technical and scientific vocabulary. The strongest argument which Hindi partisans could muster reappeared ad nauseam: the good of the Hindu majority required the introduction of Hindi even if the Muslim minority should suffer from the change.¹⁴

The Hindi-Urdu controversy found yet another outlet, the public arena of petitions, memorials and memorandums to the government. In

1868 Babu Shiva Prasad, a prominent official of the provincial Department of Public Instruction, wrote a memorandum on the question of the official language in favour of Hindi.¹⁵ The provincial government received other memorandums and memorials in 1869, 1872 and 1873.¹⁶ Two of these four, those of 1868 and 1873, deserve more detailed discussion, for they contain statements of an elite which has already passed through the first stage of becoming a subjectively conscious community and entered the next stage of becoming a nationality through articulating political rights. For their authors, language and script have become symbols of religious and cultural identity, and they reveal the process of multi-symbol congruence in their implicit assumption that Hindi = Hindu.

Prasad's work, *Memorandum: Court Characters; in the Upper Provinces of India*, though bearing the words 'For Private Circulation' on the title page, clearly aimed at influencing the government. The author presented a full-blown myth of the antiquity and ubiquity of Hindi:

When the Muhammadans took possession of India, they found Hindi the language of the country, and the same character the medium through which all business was carried on.¹⁷

By 'the country' he meant the great plains of northern India including Bihar, the North-Western Provinces, Oudh, Rajputana, the Punjab, and parts of the Central Provinces; by 'Hindi' the different dialects spoken throughout this area; and by 'the Hindi character' Devanagari and all its various cursive forms including Kaithi. Among these dialects, Prasad continued, those originating from Mathura, Kanauj and Delhi (i.e., Braj Bhasha and Khari Boli) had formed the basis of this grand universal speech of most of north India.

The new Muslim rulers, however, wrote Prasad, did not trouble themselves to learn Indian languages, but rather forced Hindus to learn Persian. Whoever aspired to wealth and power had to learn Persian, but outside the cities and Muslim courts the masses of people had still carried on their business in Hindi. Moreover, he added scornfully in an obvious reference to the Kayasths, those Hindus 'who did not aspire or seek to gain the favour of the Muhammadans by becoming, if not altogether, half Muhammadanized, still valued Hindi works'.¹⁸ Persian words, finding their way into the dialects that made up Hindi, had brought about a new mixture of languages known as Urdu or 'semi-Persian'.¹⁹

Prasad reserved some of his harshest words for the British, whose language policy he blamed for forcing a foreign language, Urdu in the Persian script, on the masses:

The Persian [in this context, including Urdu or 'semi-Persian'] of our day is half Arabic; and I cannot see the wisdom of the policy which thrusts a Semitic element into the bosoms of Hindus and alienates them from their Aryan speech [i.e., Hindi]; not only speech, but all that is Aryan; because through speech ideas are formed, and through ideas the manners and customs. *To read Persian is to become Persianized, all our ideas become corrupt and our nationality is lost. Cursed be the day which saw the Muhammadans cross the Indus; all the evils which we find amongst us we are indebted for to our 'beloved brethren' the Muhammadans. . . . I again say I do not see the wisdom of the policy which is now trying to turn all the Hindus into semi-Muhammadans and destroy our Hindu nationality.*²⁰

In addition, went on Prasad, by supporting Urdu in the NWP, Oudh and the Punjab, the government was cutting off the vernacular literature of this area from other branches of the Aryan language family such as Bengali, Marathi and Gujarati. Scientific and technical terms for all these Aryan languages could easily be coined from the same Sanskrit roots, while similar terms for Urdu had to be formed with greater difficulty from Arabic.²¹

Prasad concluded his memorandum with a plea that the government should drive the Persian script from the courts as it had previously expelled the Persian language, and bring in Hindi. Numerous advantages would result: the masses would understand court proceedings, only one vernacular would exist, the time required for an education would lessen, vernacular literature would rapidly expand, and most important, 'Hindu Nationality' would be restored.²²

The memorial of 1873, presented by Hindi supporters to the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir William Muir, opened by asking for 'the restoration of Hindi or Nagari characters' in all courts and offices using the Persian script. The authors reiterated many of the arguments against Urdu and the Urdu script already published in the vernacular press: the Persian (Urdu)²³ script made court documents illegible, encouraged forgery, facilitated the use of incomprehensible Arabic and Persian words, and had a foreign origin; the bulk of the population used Hindi and only a part of the higher classes—who themselves formed only a small part of the population—had become used to Persian; Muslims, who probably would not like the change, made up only one-eighth of the population, and even many of them lived in villages and used Hindi for their ordinary business; courts in Rajputana, Central India, Nepal, and in the hill districts of the NWP used Hindi without experiencing any difficulty.²⁴

In short, government should favour the interests of the majority.

Among the benefits, emphasized the memorialists, would be the great impetus which the education of the masses would receive from the introduction of the new script. Such a change would combine the already existing 'national sympathy' for the Hindi script with greatly increased prospects for the public service, and thereby lead to 'the rapid and general spread of knowledge among the people'.²⁵

The concern of the memorialists for the education of the masses smacked of self-interest, for the vast majority of the population could never hope to receive employment in the public service whatever the official language or script. Behind this invocation of benefits to the masses, most likely lay the potential rewards for those Hindus who did not share the Kayasth and Muslim near-monopoly of government service. A change of the official language would have greatly benefited those Hindu aspirants to government employment—notably Brahmans, Rajputs, and Baniyas—educated in the Hindi-Sanskrit rather than the Urdu-Persian tradition.

Like others before and after them, the memorialists several times confused the names for language and script; 'Hindi', 'Hindi character', and 'Nagari character', all seemed interchangeable to them, as did 'Persian' and 'Persian character'. So persistent was this tendency among language partisans that Sir George Grierson, author of the massive *Linguistic Survey of India* remarked:

Amongst fanatics who ought to know better, but do not wish to do so, this question of characters has unfortunately become a sort of religious shibboleth . . . these fanatics have confused alphabet with language. They say, *because* a thing is written in Devanagari *therefore* it is Hindi, the language of Hindus, and *because* a thing is written in the Persian character *therefore* it is Urdu, the language of Musalmans.²⁶

The radical differences between the two scripts provided the most salient feature for those who wished to differentiate Hindi and Urdu. Writers could and did use a mixed language incorporating Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit words, but no writer could use a mixed script including elements of the Persian and the Devanagari. This irreducible difference contributed much to the process of multi-symbol congruence by which language, script and religion fused into one common identity for increasing numbers of Hindus.

Despite their efforts, the memorialists failed to bring about any change in government language policy. Muir, known for his fondness for Urdu and Persian, retired without passing any definite orders on the subject. His successor, Sir John Strachey, regarded Hindi as an inferior

language, and *his* successor, Sir George Couper issued the order of 1877 (see Chapter IV) giving preference to candidates for government service taking Urdu in qualifying examinations.²⁷ Moreover, near the end of 1873, a number of Muslims formed a temporary league to prevent any concessions on the issue of the court language, and this too may have prevented serious consideration of the memorial. More important, the document's authors could speak only for a small fraction of all Hindus, and only a part of educated Hindus. They represented an elite which had become a self-conscious community trying to expand that community and to forge a nationality.

The Hindi-Nagari Campaign of 1882

During the latter half of the 1870s the Hindi-Nagari movement languished on the political front, and only occasional items in the vernacular press betrayed the fact that the Hindi-Urdu controversy still smouldered in the hearts of some. In the early 1880s, however, Hindi-Nagari partisans in the NWP&O regained hope, for in 1880 the Government of Bengal had issued a resolution ordering the Nagari (or Kaithi) script to be used exclusively in large parts of Bihar.²⁸ In 1882 they became enthusiastic when the Government of India appointed a commission under the chairmanship of Sir William Hunter to review the progress of education in India. Many believed that this body had the power to bring about a change in the language policy of provincial governments, and the Hunter Commission soon found itself the focus of an extensive campaign in the NWP&O and to a lesser extent in the Punjab and elsewhere. Several NWP&O organizations collected over 67,000 signatures in favour of Hindi and Nagari and sent them to the Commission along with more than a hundred memorials. Twenty-eight witnesses from the province either appeared before the Commission or sent written testimony, among them Babu (now Raja) Shiva Prasad, Babu Harishchandra (Bharatendu), and Sir Syed Ahmed Khan.²⁹

These developments aroused great expectations in the vernacular press and elsewhere. For example, the Hindi *Prayag Samachar* (Allahabad) reported that the agitation attending the visit of the Commission had produced a widespread impression that Hindi would shortly take the place of Urdu as the court language of the province.³⁰ During much of 1883 the vernacular press dealt frequently with the matter, but when the Commission declined to deal with the controversy in its report issued later in the same year, coverage once again shrank to almost nothing.³¹

Urdu partisans made minimal efforts in the NWP, submitting only a single memorial, which nevertheless gave a clear picture of how its Muslim authors interpreted the motives of their opponents.³² To them, Hindu religious feeling lay at the bottom of all the agitation for Hindi and Nagari. Those who wanted to change the court language and script to Hindi and Nagari had no concern with the public interest, but rather had simply expressed their religious bigotry. By extending the use of Hindi and Nagari they thought they were 'giving currency to one of their religious points'.³³ Moreover, the advocates of Hindi showed an astonishing inconsistency, claiming that Nagari and Hindi were the 'common character and language of the country' but using Urdu in their domestic and social lives, indeed even in the meetings they held to promote their chosen language.

These views had some justification, since several memorials plainly showed the connection between Hindi and Hinduism in the minds of their authors. The memorial submitted by the Satya Dharmavolambini Sabha (Society for Supporting the True Religion) of Aligarh asserted that 'for the people at large the study of Hindi is not necessary only because it is their vernacular, but also because it is the only language, except of course Sanskrit, through the medium of which they can be instructed in their social and religious duties'.³⁴ A memorial from the Meerut Association declared that 'the Muhammadans have no religious prejudices against learning the characters of the Hindus, but the Hindus are bound not to utter a single word of Persian or Arabic in their divine devotion'.³⁵ A memorial from the Hardoi Union Club presented a view of an impure Urdu and a pure Hindi which appeared again and again in the course of the movement: Hindi exercised a beneficial and positive moral influence on people, while Urdu enticed them to lead dissolute and immoral lives. To introduce Hindi for official and educational purposes would lead the public to read religious books and avoid 'the immoral effects of so many Urdu love stories'.³⁶

Whatever the true motives of Hindi partisans, no previous campaign had mobilized them in the tens of thousands, which suggests that the more and more Hindus had begun to accept the twin equations of Hindi = Hindu and Urdu = Muslim. Several witnesses appearing before the Hunter Commission spoke to this point. Babu Bireshwar Mitra, a pleader in the High Court of the NWP averred that the people regarded the recognition of Urdu as the court language 'as a pure and simple survival of the old Moslem tyranny in India'.³⁷ Professor Raj Kumar Sarvadhikari, speaking of Oudh, put the matter more baldly:

'Urdu is the dialect of the Muhammadan inhabitants and Hindi of the Hindus'.³⁸

Despite enjoying greater support than previous campaigns,³⁹ the 1882 campaign failed for essentially the same reasons as earlier efforts, namely, Muslim opposition, British patronage of Urdu and disregard for Hindi, and Hindu apathy. This setback, however, did not discourage the stauncher supporters of Hindi. As the editor of the Banaras Hindi weekly *Bharat Jivan* wrote in grandiloquent style: 'Shall we cut out our tongues and cast them away and not speak the truth? No. No. If the government does not listen we must cry out so loudly that the sound reaches its ear'.⁴⁰ The Hindi-Nagari movement continued though a campaign had been lost, because the forces which generated it continued to grow stronger.

The Hindi-Nagari Movement in Vernacular Literature

The Hindi-Nagari movement took yet another form, namely, Hindi literature, particularly drama and poetry. These literary genres presented familiar arguments with more depth and passion, and also developed other themes more suited to literature than to memorials, newspaper editorials, and learned discussions. Contemporary evidence suggests that such literature had some impact: people saw some of the dramas and read the poems, one of which stirred up considerable local controversy.⁴¹ A brief glance at four such works reveals several aspects of the Hindi-Nagari movement from a different perspective.

In 1889 the *Devanagari Gazette* (Meerut) reported that Hindi advocates had taken advantage of a recent *melā* (local religious fair) to make speeches in favour of Hindi and to perform four dramas. The *Gazette* edified its readers by printing the first and last scenes of one of these dramas, entitled *Kishitī Kasbī Nāṭak* [*The Drama of the Boat and the Prostitute*]. In this drama, the first of our four works, a District Superintendent of Police sends an order in Urdu to one of his Sub-Inspectors to keep a boat (*kishitī*) ready for his coming. The sub-Inspector, misreading the order because of the ambiguity of the Persian script, arranges instead for a prostitute (*kasbī*). When his superior arrives he produces the prostitute, arousing the fury of the Superintendent and the jealousy of his wife. In the end the Superintendent's head clerk removes the wife's suspicions and her husband's wrath by explaining how the nature of the Persian script brought about the unfortunate misunderstanding.⁴²

The author of this play may well have been Pandit Gauri Datta, a

Saraswat Brahman who founded the Devanagari Pracharini Sabha (Society for the Promotion of Devanagari) sometime before 1882, published the *Devanagari Gazette* for several years, sent a memorial to the Government in favour of Hindi in 1894, and established or inspired the founding of several Nagari schools. He also wrote a number of works in Hindi including several school books, a dictionary, and a play entitled *Nāgarī aur Urdū kā Svāng* [*The Melodrama of Nagari and Urdu*], the second of our four works.⁴³ He earned his living as a teacher until the age of forty, when he gave up his career, made over all his property to the cause of Nagari, and became a *sanyāsī* (a homeless wanderer who has renounced the world), devoting the rest of his life to a crusade for his chosen script. Whenever a fair or festival took place in the area around Meerut he was likely to be found with a crowd of boys around him speaking on the virtues of Nagari. While other Hindus used greetings like '*jāy Rām*' [victory to Rama], he used the salutation '*jāy nāgarī kī*' [victory to Nagari].⁴⁴

Babu Ratna Chandra, the author of the third work, practised law in the High Court at Allahabad. His drama, *Hindī Urdū kā Nātak* [*A Play of Hindi and Urdu*], used a British court as the setting of a confrontation between the two rivals.⁴⁵ Sohan Prasad, the author of the fourth work, a poem of about 400 stanzas in Avadhi with a sprinkling of Khari Boli Hindi, taught school in Gorakhpur district (northeastern NWP). His poem, *Hindī aur Urdū kī Larāī* [*A Quarrel between Hindi and Urdu*], caused a furore on its first appearance in 1885. Local Muslims, protesting that the poem contained strictures against Islam and one of the caliphs, appealed to the government to have the work banned and all copies burned, and started legal proceedings against the author. Various Hindu organizations raised funds to support Prasad, and eventually the opposing parties reached an out-of-court settlement under which Prasad promised to withdraw the most offensive stanzas from future editions.⁴⁶

The latter three works share a number of characteristics worthy of attention. All three date between the Hunter Commission of 1882 and the government resolution of 1900;⁴⁷ as a result, they portray a despised, rejected and despondent heroine, Hindi or Nagari,⁴⁸ and a proud, conceited and triumphant villainess, Urdu. In Datta's play, for example, one of Urdu's supporters, Begam Wanton-Pleasure, contrasts the two adversaries thus:

All have love for Urdu, ask anyone you want.

No one cares for Nagari, Nagari old and gaunt.⁴⁹

In Chandra's play, Maulvi Akil, one of Urdu's lawyers, presents a

counter-statement in which he asserts that 'the plaintiff [Hindi] has stayed so long in the jungle that . . . she is not even fit to live in the city, let alone come before a court of law. She has become a savage.'⁵⁰ Akil adds that even her own offspring consider her uncivilized and despise her, echoing the words of Shyam Sundar Das at the beginning of this chapter that 'Hindi speakers were regarded as stupid yokels.'⁵¹

The most dominant theme, which we have encountered before, contrasts the virtue and morality of Nagari or Hindi with the vice and immorality of Urdu with more subtle overtones and innuendoes than non-literary mediums.⁵² This theme allowed Hindi supporters both to enhance the value of their own and to diminish the value of their opponents' symbol. In all three works Urdu behaves like a woman of loose morals or a prostitute, though she is seldom openly labelled as such. In Datta's play, for example, Urdu's testimony to the Hindu judge, Maharajah Righteous-Rules, seems more like an indictment than a defense:

This is my work: passion I'll teach,

Your household tasks we'll leave in the breach.

We'll be lovers and rakes, living for pleasure,

Consorting with prostitutes, squandering our treasure.

Give heed, you officials, batten on graft,

Deceiving and thieving, till riches you've quaffed.

Lie to your betters and flatter each other,

Write down one thing, and read out another.⁵³

Urdu's immorality, as Datta's words suggest, takes several forms. Her script leads to a great deal of fraud—Prasad's poem devotes many stanzas to possible misreadings of Urdu words—and thus harms the general public. Moreover, she corrupts Hindus and leads them astray from their own religious and cultural heritage. Perhaps worst of all, she and her mother, Persian—forced on the people by Muslim rulers—have replaced the golden age of justice and goodness under Hindi and her mother, Sanskrit, with a darker era of misrule and tyranny.

Datta, Chandra, and Prasad all agree with the twin equations Hindi = Hindu and Urdu = Muslim, though the latter two implicitly admit that Urdu = Muslim + Hindu by discussing the motives of those Hindus who support Urdu. In Chandra's play one of Hindi's lawyers, Pundit Buddhi Prakash (light of wisdom) explicitly equates language and religion when he identifies his client as 'Lady Hindi Devi, daughter of Sanskrit, caste Hindu, resident of Hindustan'.⁵⁴ The Pundit explains the embarrassing fact of extensive Hindu support for Urdu by economic necessity, which drives Kayasths and others to become devotees of

Urdu, though as Hindus they cannot totally reject Hindi. In Prasad's poem, an Urdu-loving Hindu, called on to give his opinion of Urdu, hesitates before speaking:

He thinks in his heart of hearts: now nothing but lies from me,
For if I speak against Urdu, out the window my service will be.
If Hindi enters my office, through begging my living I'll earn,
For we know nothing of Hindi—at home it's Urdu we learn.⁵⁵

Chandra's drama goes still deeper into the question of the motives of Hindus who support Urdu, by giving a whole scene to a dialogue between Hindi, her advocate Pandit Satyanand, and two Urdu defenders almost certainly Kayasths, Lala Ilahi Das and Khuda Ram. Satyanand berates his fellow Hindus for failing to consider their own welfare and that of their countrymen: they have dishonored Hindi, the real ruler of the country, and called in the foreigner Urdu to usurp her place. They have not only prospered unduly through Urdu's favours but also attacked their countrymen 'like mad dogs'. When Hindi meets the two Kayasths, she questions their motives, but they defend themselves by saying they wish to acquaint themselves with their possible future ruler. They justify themselves; Urdu's sweet speech and alluring glances, and the intemperate assaults of Hindi's partisans have led them to behave as they have. They address Hindi respectfully, calling her 'mother', but also point out the obstacles she faces, namely, Muslim opposition to Hindi, especially that of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, and government patronage of Urdu. In the end, they promise nothing.⁵⁶

Prasad's work goes far beyond the others in expressing anti-Muslim animosity, thinly disguised as tirades against Urdu by her adversary Hindi. Hindu calls Urdu a prostitute, a murderer, unclean, a wicked Muslim, and—because she is Muslim—low-caste. Hindi refers to Muslims as *mlecch*, a word with stinging connotations of alien, unclean, and vile. The two threaten each other with physical violence; Hindi tells Urdu that she will seize her by the hair, throw her down, and pull out her teeth. Hindus who worship the god of Muslims will spend many years in hell, says Hindi, and any Hindu who abandons Hinduism for Islam makes his mother wish she had never given birth to him. Hindi goes still further, and taunts Muslims with not following their own religious traditions: Muslims use intoxicating drugs and drink alcoholic beverages, they do not allow their widows to remarry despite the injunctions of the Koran, and they allow their women to sing during marriage ceremonies against Islamic principles.⁵⁷

One of the most significant parts of Prasad's publication occurs when he has Hindi raise the issue of cow slaughter. Anticipating the 1893 anti-

cow-slaughter movement, which reached the greatest intensity in the eastern NWP&O, he castigates his fellow Hindus, especially Hindu princes, for doing nothing while cows all over India are weeping and bawling in agony as they are butchered by *mlecch*'s. In a final plea for Hindu unity near the end of his poem, he links the two issues of cow slaughter and Hindi:

Let Hindi enter offices, cow killing cease to be,

Then India like the sun and moon will shine most splendidly.⁵⁸

This part of the poem gives us a revealing glimpse of the process of multi-symbol congruence: the author identifies Hindi, the cow, and patriotism with the master symbol of Hinduism. He expresses the dark side of the Hindi-Nagari movement—narrow, smugly pious, bigoted, and malicious.

Had these three works been expressed visually, they might have taken the form of an illustration which appeared in the November 1902 issue of *Saraswati*, the leading journal of the Hindi literary world for many years. On the left stood a Muslim prostitute, decked out in all the finery of her profession. On the right, facing her rival, sat a Hindu matron, modestly clothed in an ordinary sari. The caption—'Hindi-Urdu'—and the Hindi dialogue below, clearly indicated that on the left stood Urdu personified and on the right sat Hindi. The author of the verses was Radha Krishna Das, a cousin of Bharatendu Harishchandra and a leading member of the Nagari Pracharini Sabha of Banaras.⁵⁹

Precursors of the Nagari Pracharini Sabha

Several organizations promoted Hindi and Nagari before the founding of the Nagari Pracharini Sabha (NPS) in 1893, but none showed the staying power of the Banaras institution. Their activities foreshadowed those of their more effective successor, suggesting that the NPS did not so much innovate new policies as more successfully implement existing ones. The NPS became the only major Hindi organization founded in the nineteenth century to survive right up to the present; many other Hindi organizations came and went.

During the Hindi-Nagari campaign of 1882 a number of these organizations, which might otherwise have remained shrouded in obscurity, emerged into temporary prominence. The Satya Dharmavolambini Sabha (Society for Supporting the True Religion) of Aligarh, for example, came into existence in 1878, drawing supporters not only from the city and district of Aligarh, but also from other parts of the country.⁶⁰ By 1882, the organization had published a few books, written by members, in the Nagari script. The Aligarh Bhasha (i.e., Hindi) Improvement Society, founded a year earlier, had soon published

several works in Hindi on a variety of subjects. The general aim of the organization was to improve Hindi, regarded as the true vernacular of the country, through the publication of original works and the translation of other works from both ancient and modern world languages. By the time of the Hunter Commission, the Society had plans to give prizes of up to Rs 200 for books in Hindi on subjects considered important, e.g., Indian agriculture, female education, and chemistry, and had also established a small library. The membership of 150 came from all parts of India and included a few Europeans and Muslims. Members had no fees or subscriptions to pay, but had to purchase one copy of each work published by their organization. The Society discouraged difficult and uncommon Sanskrit words in these publications, and accepted Arabic and Persian words which had become part of Hindi through long usage.⁶¹

The Devanagari Pracharini Sabha of Meerut, founded by Pandit Gauri Datta, took part in the 1882 Hindi-Nagari campaign. By 1889 the Sabha had also established a school, the Devanagari Pathshala, in which children received a primary education in Hindi. In addition to the activities of Datta already mentioned above, the Sabha held frequent public meetings to celebrate auspicious events or to award prizes and certificates to the Pathshala's graduates. Some of these meetings resulted in memorials and addresses in favour of Hindi and Nagari, linked with expressions of loyalty to the British government. By 1895 the Meerut organization had established formal relations with its Banaras counterpart, the Nagari Pracharini Sabha. The former never achieved the prominence of the latter, however, and faded into obscurity by the beginning of the twentieth century.⁶²

Two other organizations, though devoting only a fraction of their efforts to the Hindi-Nagari movement, deserve mention, partly for their contributions and partly for their blend of Hindi and Hinduism. The first of these, the Hindu Samaj (Hindu Society) of Allahabad, came into being in 1880 under the leadership of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, later one of the most prominent members of the Indian National Congress. Though not listed among those organizations sending memorials to the Hunter Commission, the Samaj soon took up the cause of Hindi. In 1884 the Samaj began a drive to send memorials in favour of Hindi to both the Government of the NWP&O and the Government of India, though nothing ever seems to have resulted. Later in the same year the Samaj sponsored a conference at Allahabad to consider various matters, among them the promotion of Hindi to official court language. Over fifty persons from all over northern India attended the four-day

conference, including prominent landowners such as Raja Rampal Singh of Oudh. A year later the Samaj held a similar conference and again considered the question of Hindi. By 1889, when the Samaj held an anniversary meeting, the subject had receded into the background, although in 1890 the organization briefly—and unsuccessfully—agitated for the inclusion of Hindi in the University of Allahabad entrance examinations, and then lapsed into inactivity. By 1894 both Malaviya and Singh had joined the Nagari Pracharini Sabha of Banaras.⁶³

The second of these, the Arya Samaj, a Hindu revivalist organization founded in 1875 by Swami Dayananda Saraswati, played an important role in the promotion of Hindi in the Punjab, and a lesser role elsewhere in north India. Dayananda himself became an active promoter of Hindi after meeting the Brahmo Samaj leader Keshab Chandra Sen, who advised him to make that language his medium. Subsequently the Swami used Hindi for speeches, polemical works, correspondence, and popular translations of Sanskrit scriptures. The earliest rules of the Samaj provided for a newspaper in Hindi, and later rules enjoined all members to learn either Sanskrit or Hindi.⁶⁴ In 1882 the Samaj took part in the Hindi-Nagari campaign and collected more than 5,000 signatures in the western NWP&O and in the Central Provinces.⁶⁵ An Oudh newspaper reported that the local Arya Samaj had sent a memorial in favour of Hindi to the Hunter Commission with the signatures of 1,366 Hindus and 69 Muslims.⁶⁶ Arya Samaj leaders, one of whom (Lala Lajpat Rai) confessed that he did not know the language at the time, actively promoted the cause of Hindi in the Punjab in 1882, and continued to lend their support as the Hindi-Nagari movement began to gather momentum in their province in the first decades of the twentieth century.⁶⁷ In all of these groups and their activities we can see elements of the processes through which ethnic groups become subjectively conscious communities: elites taking the lead in attaching value to a linguistic symbol, in differentiating Hindi speakers from Urdu speakers, and even in articulating political rights for themselves.

The Nagari Pracharini Sabha of Banaras.

The premier Hindi organization of the nineteenth century rose to prominence in an ideal location. Banaras, probably one of the oldest continually inhabited cities of the world, had achieved fame as a centre of sacred learning several centuries before the birth of Christ. Many prominent religious and literary figures had made their home there: the fifteenth century poet-saint Kabir; the sixteenth century poet Tulsi Das,

author of the *Rāmcharitmānas*, an immensely popular Avadhi version of the great Hindu Sanskrit epic, the *Rāmāyana*; Raja Shiva Prasad, and Bharatendu Harishchandra, key figures in the development of Khari Boli Hindi; and many others. Under British rule Banaras continued its tradition of learning, becoming the site of one of the oldest colleges established by the East India Company. Banaras Sanskrit College, dating from 1792, was intended to encourage the study of the Hindu linguistic, literary and religious heritage.⁶⁸

Banaras, long renowned for Sanskrit learning, had also become a major centre of Hindi (i.e., Braj Bhasha and Avadhi) literature by the early nineteenth century, and the largest publisher of Hindi works by the early twentieth. During the decade 1891–1901 the census showed Banaras to be the second largest city in the NWP&O, surpassed only by Lucknow, and also the most polyglot.

Thousands of Hindus from all over India visited or settled in Banaras, as one of the holiest sites of Hinduism. Speakers of Bengali, Marathi, Gujarati, Nepali, Rajasthani, Punjabi, Tamil and Telugu mingled with speakers of Bhojpuri and other Hindi dialects in the city's narrow streets and lanes, and princely families from Maharashtra, Bengal, Bihar and south India lined the banks of the sacred Ganga with many massive buildings. Just across the river lay the town of Ramnagar and the palace of the Hindu Maharaja of Banaras. In short, size, religious and literary heritage, a thriving publishing industry, possible princely patrons, and close contact with other Indian literary traditions made Banaras a uniquely suitable environment for the growth of the Sabha and the Hindi-Nagari movement.⁶⁹

The first meeting of what eventually became the Nagari Pracharini Sabha took place in Banaras in March 1893, ironically in a classroom used for teaching English in one of the buildings of Queen's Collegiate School.⁷⁰ Several schoolboys had decided to form a debating club whose chief aim soon became the promotion of Nagari (in the sense of both language and script). The fledgling organization led a precarious existence for a few months, driven from the classroom meeting place by schoolmates supporting Urdu, and gathering first in a nearby park and later in a room over the stables of the father of one of its more affluent members. During the summer holidays in May and June the little group temporarily disbanded, but reconvened in July. Twelve students came to this meeting, three of whom, Shyam Sundar Das, Ram Narayan Mishra, and Shiv Kumar Singh, were to remain members for the rest of their lives, and later came to be considered the joint founders of the

Sabha.⁷¹ Their long and stable relationship with the Sabha had much to do with the organization's long and stable existence.

All three spent much of their lives in Banaras and had careers in education. Thakur Shiv Kumar Singh, a Rajput, was born in Banaras district in 1872, and enrolled in Queen's Collegiate School to study English in 1888. He began his career as a teacher in 1897, gradually rising to the position of Deputy Inspector of Schools by the time of his retirement. He played a minor part in the history of the NPS. Pandit Ram Narayan Mishra came from a Saraswat Brahman family of Delhi. The influence of his maternal uncle, Dr Channulal, one of the leading members of the Arya Samaj in Banaras, brought him to Queen's to complete his education. After receiving his B.A. he became a member of the Provincial Education Service in which he held the rank of Deputy Inspector of Schools for ten years. After retiring from government service, he occupied the post of headmaster at several schools in Banaras, including Harishchandra High School (founded by Bharatendu Harishchandra) and Central Hindu School (founded among others by Mrs Annie Besant). He also was the unsalaried head of the D.A.V. (Dayananda Anglo-Vedic) College, an Arya Samaj institution in Banaras, for several years. He played a much more important role in the affairs of the Sabha than his Rajput colleague.⁷²

Shyam Sundar Das, who came from a Khatri family of small shopkeepers originally from the Punjab but residents of Banaras for three generations, had a deeper influence on the Sabha than either of his two associates. More than anyone else he charted the course of the Sabha and took a disproportionate share of literary and administrative burdens upon himself. He enrolled at Queen's after passing his Anglo-Vernacular Middle Examination in 1890, and succeeded in receiving his B.A. in 1896, after failing on his first attempt because of illness. Thereafter his career took him to a variety of institutions, mainly educational, including ten years at Central Hindu School, three years in the State Office of the Maharajah of Kashmir, nine years at Kalicharan High School in Lucknow, and sixteen years as the first head of the Department of Hindi at Banaras Hindu University. An indefatigable worker, Das earned the sobriquet of the 'soul' of the Sabha.⁷³

The three founders of the Sabha acquired their devotion to Hindi from several sources. Shiv Kumar Singh had learned to love Hindi through the influence of his village school teacher, who had introduced him to the writings of Bharatendu Harishchandra. Not long after his entrance into Queen's Collegiate School, Singh became acquainted

with two students from Gorakhpur, one a nephew of Harishchandra, who acquainted him with more of Bharatendu's writings and also introduced him to friends and relatives of the late author. Among these were Radha Krishna Das, later to become the first president of the Sabha, a cousin of Bharatendu, and Shri Jagannath Das 'Ratnakar', a renowned poet of Braj Bhasha, also to become a member of the Sabha. Ram Narayan Mishra gained some of his fondness for Hindi from his maternal uncle, whose Arya Samaj affiliations influenced him in favour of that language. Shyam Sundar Das first began to take note of Hindi as a boy of ten when his studies at a local school exposed him to Tulsī Das's *Rāmcharitmānas* and brought him into contact with Babu Gadadhar Singh, the head clerk of a government office in the neighbouring district of Mirzapur. Singh had collected a small library of Hindi books which found a home at Das's school, and had also translated several books from Bengali into Hindi.⁷⁴

By the end of the first year the membership of the Sabha had grown to 84, of whom 46 came from Banaras. The Sabha's roster included a number of distinguished men: Dr G. E. Grierson, author of the *Linguistic Survey of India*; Raja Rampal Singh; Madan Mohan Malaviya; Devki Nandan Khatri, a widely popular Hindi author; Shridhar Pathak, one of the first poets of Khari Boli Hindi; Ram Krishna Varma, the Khatri publisher of the Hindi weekly *Bharat Jivan* of Banaras; and Radha Krishna Das, cousin of Bharatendu and Hindi author and poet in his own right. The membership of Das, who had hesitated for several months before joining the Sabha in January 1894, fearing that it might prove to be a short-lived failure, did much to increase the organization's prestige. Moreover, through his efforts many friends and associates of the late Bharatendu joined, further enhancing the Sabha's stature.⁷⁵

The Sabha's membership list for 1894 shows several notable aspects of the social origins of Hindi supporters. Brahmans, Bhumihars (considered a Brahman caste by some), Rajputs, Agarwals and Vaishyas (the latter two both classifiable as Banias, a generic term for merchant castes) together accounted for over 60 per cent of the total, and Brahmans alone over 40 per cent.⁷⁶ These same groups had predominated in the indigenous Hindi schools many decades previously, and had made up the bulk of the non-Kayasth Hindu candidates for the Anglo-Vernacular Middle and Vernacular Middle Examinations a decade earlier (see Chapter IV). The proportion of Khatriis—over 15 per cent—seems surprising when we recall the Khatri tradition of Persian and Urdu learning. Perhaps the greater occupational diversity of Khatriis, especially

in business, made them less dependent on government service than their fellow Hindus, the Kayasths.⁷⁷

Of the 73 members whose caste could be ascertained, only two were Kayasths, and none Kashmiri Brahmans. Though the Sabha approached the Kayasth community on more than one occasion, nothing ever resulted. Looking back over nearly fifty years of pro-Hindi efforts by the Sabha, Shyam Sundar Das wrote disparagingly of both these groups:

If Kayasths and Kashmiris would place themselves on the side of Hindi, then a great deal of help would be gained for promoting Hindi. But when among Kashmiri pandits there are even those individuals who consider it their good fortune to accept Urdu as their 'mother tongue' [written ironically in words of Persian origin] then what hope can there be?⁷⁸

Not surprisingly, no members were Muslim, although four years later the roster included a single Muslim name, Syed Akbar Husain, and a year later two more. Though nothing in the Sabha's rules prohibited Muslim members, they never constituted more than a minuscule fraction of the Sabha's supporters.⁷⁹ The composition of the Sabha's membership explicitly suggested that the equation Hindi = Hindu, and implicitly the equation Urdu = Muslim + Hindu still held true.

The geographical distribution of the Sabha's membership, like its social origins, paralleled other patterns. The majority of the members came from areas where Hindi students predominated in government schools and where Hindi publications outnumbered others (see Chapter IV). In 1894 about 80 per cent of the membership came from the NWP&O, and 85 per cent of these came from the eastern NWP, with 70 per cent from Banaras itself. Ten years later these proportions had shifted to 70 per cent from the NWP&O, 61 per cent of these from the east and 33 per cent from Banaras. By 1914, 70 per cent still came from the NWP&O, but only 50 per cent of these from the east and 25 per cent from Banaras. In sum, for the first twenty years the Sabha remained an overwhelmingly north Indian organization, and continued to be centred in the NWP&O. Within the home province, however, a shift away from the lopsided dominance of the eastern NWP and Banaras district took place, mirroring the shift occurring about the same time in Hindi publishing (see Chapter IV). In overall terms, the Sabha's membership increased steadily from 1894 until 1915, when the number of members began a gradual decline for the next ten years and finally stabilized at a level the Sabha had reached during its eleventh year.⁸⁰

The Sabha's financial support came from a number of sources

including dues, book sales, loans, government aid, and donations of various sorts including large amounts from princely patrons. During the first six years, the organization faced severe financial difficulties, for annual income averaged only Rs 500 and a large percentage of this came from the somewhat unstable sources of dues and donations. In its seventh year (1899–1900) the Sabha first received financial aid from the Government of the NWP&O, and in the next few years annual income increased by leaps and bounds, reaching a high point during a fund-raising campaign for a permanent headquarters building. During the Sabha's eighth and ninth years, the annual income expanded to nearly five times the level of the first six years, and thereafter, though considerable fluctuations of income occurred, the Sabha's financial condition remained viable.⁸¹

Donations provided a substantial portion of the Sabha's income, as suggested above. Just how substantial became apparent when the Sabha published a list of all donors—government, princely, and private—for its first thirty years. This document revealed that donations accounted for more than one-third (37 per cent) of the organization's total income. Various levels of government accounted for a little over 13 per cent (with the Government of the NWP&O topping the list at more than 9 per cent), princely donors for nearly 12 per cent, and private donors for the remainder of about 12 per cent. (The roster of Hindu princes included the Maharajas of Gwalior, Rewah, Bikaner, Chatrapur, Alwar and Banaras, all of whom became recognized patrons of the Sabha.) Of the nearly 24 per cent from non-governmental sources, over 43 per cent came from Rajasthan with only 14 per cent of the membership in 1924.⁸²

The heavy reliance of the Sabha on government and on politically conservative Rajasthan (which together furnished nearly a quarter of the average annual income for the first thirty years) clearly indicated that the Banaras organization did not intend to take political risks. Unlike the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan (Society for Hindi Literature) of Allahabad, whose members included political leaders of national stature such as Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajendra Prasad and Mahatma Gandhi, the Sabha took little part in any political activity associated with the Indian National Congress. For the most part, the Sabha laboured to promote Hindi and Nagari through literary activities.⁸³

In this area after little more than a decade the Sabha could point to a number of accomplishments: establishing a series of prizes for Nagari handwriting and Hindi literature, founding a library of Hindi and English books and journals, initiating a search for old Hindi manuscripts

—later to win critical acclaim, starting two long-lived and successful journals, producing numerous Hindi textbooks, publishing several classics of 'Hindi' literature (i.e., in Braj Bhasha and other literary dialects), compiling a Hindi dictionary of scientific terms, and constructing a permanent headquarters building.⁸⁴ In most of these endeavours the Sabha was carrying out activities similar to those of its predecessors, but on a larger scale and more successfully.

During the same period the Sabha garnered considerable prestige by leading a campaign to secure the recognition of the Nagari script by the Government of the NWP&O. The Hindi elite who led the Sabha had clearly begun to articulate and even acquire political rights, even though Hindus had hardly become a cohesive group at the level of a 'nationality'. Indeed the Sabha's success in this activity, though not leading to further political exertions, gave considerable fillip to the organization's continuing literary efforts.

Before turning to examine the role played by the Sabha in bringing about the official recognition of the Nagari script, we must briefly examine its language attitudes.⁸⁵ The official principles of the organization, embodied in a report written after an extensive survey of various Hindi authorities, seemed to place the Sabha in a moderate position concerning the proper style for Hindi. In practice, however, the language of many of its publications was highly Sanskritized. Moreover, the Sabha made explicit which certain kinds of publications merited praise: in 1897 these included a work in Braj Bhasha by the sixteenth century poet Surdas, another in a mixture of Braj and other literary dialects by the seventeenth century poet Bihari, a volume on integral calculus, and a translation of a Bengali novel into Hindi. Members of the Sabha had written or edited all of these.⁸⁶

The Sabha also expressed literary opinions implicitly. Despite the fact that the novels of Devki Nandan Khatri had won a wider circle of readers than any other vernacular works of their time, and that Khatri became an early member and even General Secretary of the Sabha for a year, no mention of his literary efforts ever appeared in the annual reports. One can therefore surmise that Khatri's writings, which would certainly have been considered 'Hindustani' by the Sabha, fell below the standards the organization had set for good Hindi literature. A passage from the autobiography of Shyam Sundar Das written years later bears out this inference:

I think that there is danger of great harm to Hindi from the promotion of Hindustani, because the advocates of Hindustani are especially those

people who are badly acquainted with Hindi or not at all, but are well acquainted with Urdu. Besides this, the creation of elevated works of literature is not possible in Hindustani.⁸⁷

Das went on to say that Hindustani could never embody the common religious and cultural heritage of the Hindus of India, because this style replaced Sanskrit words with Urdu words, striking a mortal blow at the very root of Hindi. The use of Hindustani would sever the connections of the Hindus of the UP with other parts of the country, e.g., Bengal, Maharashtra, and Gujarat.

Perhaps most revealing was the Sabha's controversy with its first President, Pandit Lakshmi Shankar Mishra, who held office from 1894 to 1902. Mishra was the holder of an M.A., then a rare accomplishment, one of the first scholars to publish on the subject of science in Hindi, and a highly-placed official in the provincial Educational Department who had made efforts to increase the use of Hindi in government schools.⁸⁸ Matters came to a head in 1902 when Mishra, writing to the Provincial Text-Book Committee, argued that an 'attempt should be made to assimilate the two forms [Urdu and Hindi] into one language, which may be called Hindustani, and may be written either in the Persian character or the Nagri character'.⁸⁹ Since the *raison d'être* of the Sabha lay in the differentiation of Hindi from Urdu, any attempt to combine them or to eliminate or reduce their differences undermined the very foundations of the organization. Mishra resigned soon after and the Sabha found another President.

The Hindi-Nagari Campaign of 1895-1900

The Sabha's earliest efforts to change government language policy came in the form of a letter to the provincial Board of Revenue, pointing out that Act XIX of 1875 and Act XII of 1881 enjoined officials to fill out summons and other documents in both Hindi and Urdu. Since these rules had remained a dead letter in practice, however, the Sabha asked the Board to enforce them. Receiving no answer for nearly two years, the Sabha sent a memorial to the Government of the NWP&O, whereupon the latter issued a circular letter late in 1896 instructing officials of all districts to have all Board of Revenue summons and similar documents completed in both Hindi and Urdu. This fresh reminder of the rules had little effect.⁹⁰

The arrival of Sir Antony MacDonnell as the new Lieutenant-Governor in 1895 gave new hope to the champions of Hindi and Nagari. MacDonnell's record in Bihar, where he had supported the

change to the Nagari and Kaithi scripts, led many to believe that he would support a similar change in the NWP&O.⁹¹ Soon after his accession, MacDonnell paid a visit to Banaras, and the Sabha wasted no time in sending him an address of welcome. The Lieutenant-Governor's reply expressed interest in the question of the substitution of Hindi for Urdu as the official language of the courts but avoided any commitment to any definite opinion beyond the promise that he would give the matter his attention at some future time. A major drought and famine occupied much of MacDonnell's attention during 1896-97, but early in 1898 he found the time to meet a delegation of leading Hindu citizens which asked him to elevate Nagari to the dignity of an official script and presented him with a memorial bearing many thousands of signatures. Nevertheless, he gave little time to the issue until mid-1899 when he initiated the process of inquiry and deliberation which eventually led to the official recognition of Hindi and Nagari.⁹²

Soon after MacDonnell's visit to Banaras, leaders of the Sabha and other Hindi supporters, encouraged by MacDonnell's response and by other signs,⁹³ began to devote their energy to a province-wide campaign. In the summer of 1896 the Sabha appointed a special sub-committee for this task, and sent representatives to at least nineteen districts, mainly in the eastern part of the province. Radha Krishna Das travelled to the western districts of Meerut and Muzzaffarnagar where he received considerable help from the Meerut Devanagari Pracharini Sabha, while Shyam Sundar Das journeyed to Allahabad and Lucknow. The Sabha's representative collected over 60,000 signatures, which compared favourably with the 67,000 gathered during the Hunter Commission campaign. The memorial which accompanied the signature did not ask for a change in the court language or for the elimination of the Urdu script, but rather requested that 'the written character of the immense majority of the people [i.e., the Nagari script] should be used in Government courts, and all summonses, decisions and decrees should be issued in that character'.⁹⁴

The sentiments of the Sabha's memorial echoed those expressed in a book by Madan Mohan Malaviya entitled *Court Character and Primary Education in the N.-W. P. and Oudh*.⁹⁵ Malaviya, leader of the Hindu Samaj which had made some desultory efforts for Hindi several years earlier, and already an important figure in the Indian National Congress, came from a Malaviya Brahman family of Allahabad. His father and grandfather had had reputations as Sanskrit scholars, and Malaviya himself studied Sanskrit in his childhood and went on to learn Hindi,

Urdu and English. He graduated from the University of Calcutta in 1884 and the next year began a career as a teacher. Soon he changed to a career in journalism, and became the editor of the Hindi daily *Hindustan* from 1887 to 1889 at the invitation of the proprietor, Raja Rampal Singh. In 1892 Malaviya received an LL.B. and began the practice of law with considerable success, becoming a lawyer at the Allahabad High Court in 1893. He went on to become President of the Indian National Congress in 1909 and again in 1918, and to found Banaras Hindu University in 1916.⁹⁶ After joining the Sabha early in 1894, he remained a member for more than twenty years, and on the important occasion of the 1898 delegation to MacDonnell, he acted as the Sabha's representative.⁹⁷

Malaviya's book, presented to MacDonnell on that occasion along with the Sabha's memorial, fell into four parts: the first dealt with the historical background of the linguistic situation, the second with the merits of the Nagari and the defects of the Urdu script, the third with the relation of the official language and script to education, while the fourth contained dozens of supporting documents. In the first section Malaviya repeated the oft-asserted idea that 'Hindi' had served as the medium of public business in much of north India before the Muslim invasions of medieval times, traced the history of Muslim and British language policy, and asserted that the bulk of the population understood 'Hindi' but found Urdu unintelligible. In the second section, he reiterated most of the arguments already used over and over again by critics of the Urdu script, especially its *shikasta* form.⁹⁸ In the third section, which contained the heart of his argument, Malaviya linked the deficiencies of the provincial educational system—especially primary education—to the fact that in the NWP&O the official language and script differed from the language and script most widely known and taught. In other provinces such as Bihar and the Central Provinces or even in the hill districts of his own province, he pointed out, education had progressed more satisfactorily because no such linguistic mutilation existed. To remedy this situation the government had only to substitute the Nagari script for the Persian (Urdu) in courts and offices; no change in the official language should prove necessary, for the introduction of the Nagari script would naturally lead to a simpler style closer to the language of the people.⁹⁹

Although well-written, persuasive, and thoroughly documented, Malaviya's book contained important flaws in reasoning and also reflected the narrow interests of a professional class. On more than one occasion he fell into the error of identifying Hindi and Urdu with their

respective scripts. In some places he urged a change of script only, while in others he spoke for a change of both script and language. His linguistic panacea for all the troubles of the educational system grossly oversimplified a complex situation. Though he frequently invoked the welfare of the masses as the most pressing reason for a change in policy, the very title of his book suggested that he, as a lawyer, was more concerned for the interests of the professional classes which had sprung up around the British-initiated judicial system. Thus he paid as much attention to the few hundred candidates for the Middle Class Anglo-Vernacular Examination as he did to the tens of thousands of children in primary schools, and he ignored the fact that the vast bulk of the population could never aspire to government service whatever the official language or script. Moreover, he overlooked the consideration that large numbers of students at both primary and secondary levels continued to study Hindi, which suggested that the language had other social uses—such as keeping business accounts, maintaining land records, and carrying on private correspondence—than preparing candidates for government service.¹⁰⁰ Finally, he failed to mention even once the widespread use of the Kaithi script, both in the NWP&O and elsewhere.

The most important shortcoming in Malaviya's work, which vitiated much of his argument, came from his ambiguous use of the word 'Hindi'. The 'Hindi' in use when the Muslims came to India, the 'Hindi' in use in government schools, and the 'Hindi' in use by the masses of the NWP&O blended into one monolithic entity stretching far back into the past and sprawling great distances across India. The first 'Hindi' referred to north Indian languages generally or to various literary dialects such as Braj Bhasha and Avadhi, the second to a highly Sanskritized Khari Boli Hindi (the style promoted by most Hindi enthusiasts), and the third to various local dialects or regional standards such as Bhojpuri, Avadhi, Braj Bhasha, and Khari Boli.¹⁰¹

The same mythical 'Hindi' appeared in the Sabha's first annual report, which credited Hindi literature with an age of eight centuries. The Muslim invasion of India, said the Sabha, had prevented the further progress of Hindi. India's new rulers, seeing that they could not settle in India unless they knew Hindi, and wishing to avoid Sanskrit-mixed Hindi, created Persian-mixed Hindi or Urdu. When the Sabha talked of the distant past, only 'Hindi' was mentioned, but when the Sabha talked of the more recent past, phrases like 'Braj Bhasha or Hindi' were used. The meaning of 'Hindi' expanded when moving backwards in time, but

contracted when moving forwards. To give 'Hindi' a glorious past one had to include all of her elder sisters, but when one came to the present only the youngest sister—Khari Boli Hindi—received attention.¹⁰² This basic contradiction reflected the need to invest the symbol 'Hindi' with dignity and to mask the embarrassing fact that the rise of Sanskritized Khari Boli Hindi could hardly have occurred without the previous widespread use of Urdu. We can reasonably conjecture that this form of Hindi represented the creation of a new style of language according to the time-honoured formula of the Sanskritization of an existing form. Only such a transformation could make Hindi an acceptable symbol for the process of multi-symbol congruence which expressed itself in the equation Hindi = Hindu.

The same arguments, assumptions and shortcomings found in the writings of Malaviya and the reports and memorials of the Sabha began to fill the pages of the vernacular press once more. Articles and letters on the issue of Hindi versus Urdu began to appear more and more frequently in both Hindi and Urdu newspapers in 1897, swelled to a torrent in 1898, flooded the columns in 1899 and 1900, and quickly subsided by 1901. The same arguments and counter-arguments repeated themselves again and again with occasional new twists such as the writer who argued that the encouragement of the Nagari script would benefit the cause of female education and thereby transform Indian women from shrews into models of amity.¹⁰³ Most writers, whether Hindi or Urdu partisans, spoke in uncompromising tones: either Hindi and the Nagari script or Urdu and the Urdu script should have official status. Few advocated the use of both. Many, though not all, identified Hindus with Hindi and Muslims with Urdu, and many confused language and script. Before the 1900 resolution of government recognizing Hindi and Nagari, Hindi newspapers published most of the polemical materials, after the decision Urdu papers indulged in the same kind of articles.¹⁰⁴

While the controversy raged in the vernacular press, the Sabha conducted a vigorous campaign to influence the government, particularly MacDonnell. Not long after the Lieutenant-Governor returned from a leave late in 1898, Malaviya informed officials of the Sabha that Sir Antony intended to make a tour of the western NWP&O to determine the real feelings of the people on the language issue. On Malaviya's advice the Sabha sent Shyam Sundar Das and another member to several western cities where they met leading citizens and founded organizations for the promotion of Nagari not long before MacDonnell's own visit. About the same time the Sabha sent the Lieutenant-Governor

another memorial, and letter after letter and thousands of signatures began to pour into his office. The Sabha also published and distributed thousands of copies of a pamphlet in English entitled 'Should Nagari be Introduced in the Courts?'¹⁰⁵

A nearly religious fervour animated all these activities. The annual report of the Sabha for 1897-98 condemned as bigots those who opposed the recognition of Nagari, and declared that any thoughtful person could see that the progress of education, the spread of justice, the destruction of forgery, and the establishment of good relations between ruler and subjects all depended on this change. Even the Kayasths aided the Sabha's efforts for a while. In 1899 the Kayasth Conference, founded in Lucknow to advance the interests of Kayasths and to promote reforms in Kayasth society, passed a resolution favouring the introduction of the Nagari script in government courts and offices and sent a memorial to the Lieutenant-Governor.¹⁰⁶

The 1900 Decision: The Machinery of Deliberation

While the Sabha was conducting a vigorous campaign and the vernacular press was indulging in high-flown rhetoric, the Government of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh was pursuing a leisurely process of investigation which began in July 1899 and continued until April 1900, when the Lieutenant-Governor issued a resolution purporting to give the Nagari script a status equal to that of the Urdu. During the course of this inquiry MacDonnell consulted with the provincial Board of Revenue, the High Court of the North-Western Provinces, and the Judicial Commissioner of Oudh. Further consultation with the Government of India after the issuance of the resolution brought the promulgation of a modified version a month later. Despite the length of these deliberations, their outcome only added to the existing confusion. Though hailed as a great victory for the champions of Hindi and lamented as a calamitous defeat by the defenders of Urdu, once the uproar had died down, little had actually changed.¹⁰⁷

The series of documents setting forth the process of inquiry reveals several striking features, not the least remarkable of these being the rapid geographical expansion of Hindi in the letters of the provincial government. Writing to the Board of Revenue in July 1899 the Lieutenant-Governor asked for opinions of various reforms concerning the Nagari script proposed for the appropriate areas, namely, the three easternmost divisions of Gorakhpur, Banaras, and Allahabad. Seven months later in a letter to the Judicial Commissioner of Oudh, the Government of the

NWP&O referred to these three divisions and Agra division as those in which Hindi was 'by far the most prevalent language', and added that it was 'very largely used' in the western divisions of Meerut and Rohilkhand as well.¹⁰⁸ In a May 1900 letter to the Government of India the provincial government claimed:

Hindi is the language of the vast majority of the inhabitants of these Provinces. Throughout the whole of Oudh and in Gorakhpur, Benares, Allahabad, Agra and Kumaun Divisions, it is the language of the people. It is more largely spoken than Urdu in the Meerut and Rohilkhand Divisions.¹⁰⁹

In ten months the spread of Hindi from the eastern divisions to the entire province was wonderful to behold!

Comparisons of several of the documents reveal a good deal of fuzzy thinking about language and script. In a February 1900 letter to the High Court of the NWP the government referred to Hindi as a 'language' while in the April resolution Hindi had become a 'character'. The same confusion appeared in the government's May 1900 letter to the Government of India:

I am to state for the information of His Excellency the Governor-General in Council, that Hindi is the *language* of the vast majority of these Provinces. . . . The proscription of the Hindi *character* in public offices has long been a cause of discontent . . .¹¹⁰

This muddle did not escape the eye of an observer in London, C. J. Lyall, the Secretary of the Judicial and Public Department of the India Office at the time. Lyall, the author of a work on Hindustani grammar, wrote that the 'NWP letter of 4th May displays much confusion of thought as to the use of the words Urdu & Hindi for difference of *language*, whereas the sole question at issue is one not of *language*, but of *character*.'¹¹¹ The Government of India did little better in commenting on the April resolution of the provincial government. Rule (3) of this resolution had used the terms 'Nagri and Persian characters' while the Government of India replaced these with the 'Hindi and Urdu . . . languages', displaying a almost incredible lack of clarity and precision.¹¹² The obtuseness of the supreme government seems almost perverse because MacDonnell's resolution had clearly stated that he intended to deal with script only and not with language.¹¹³

The clearest heads in the whole process belonged to the Board of Revenue who recognized that no 'Hindi' spoken generally by the people existed, and that Khari Boli had assumed two extreme forms which they labelled 'Pandit's Hindi' and 'Persianized Urdu'. The junior member of the Board, D. T. Roberts, displayed a superior grasp of another facet of

the situation. He remarked that the Kaithi script had a currency nearly equal to that of the Nagari in the province as a whole, while in the eastern districts Kaithi had practically superseded Nagari for ordinary manuscript. The proposals which the government had presented to the Board, he continued, mentioned only the Nagari script, but to allow the use of the Nagari and not the Kaithi as well would prove largely in vain because of the lack of any practised Nagari writers for the courts and offices. If the government wished to allow those dealing with the courts to use the script most familiar to them, then in the eastern districts at least, that script should be Kaithi and not Nagari.¹¹⁴

The April 1900 resolution of the Government of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, however, took no notice of the Kaithi script in the new rules, which read as follows:

- (1) All persons may present their petitions or complaints either in the Nagri or in the Persian character, as they shall desire.
- (2) All summonses, proclamations, and the like in vernacular issuing to the public from the Courts or from Revenue officials, shall be in the Persian and the Nagri characters, and the portion in the latter shall invariably be filled up as well as that in the former.
- (3) No person shall be appointed, except in a purely English office, to any ministerial appointment henceforward unless he can read and write both the Nagri and Persian characters fluently.¹¹⁵

In failing to give Kaithi recognition, the Government of the NWP&O continued a long-standing tradition of opposition on the part of both government officials and Hindi-Nagari supporters.¹¹⁶

The new rules displayed other elements of continuity, for in fact all of the second and most of the third rule already existed. The second was the very rule which the Nagari Pracharini Sabha had earlier asked the Board of Revenue to enforce, while the third was already in effect for persons appointed to executive positions. As the Board of Revenue had remarked in its reply to the provincial government, these rules were 'prescribed at present, but not sufficiently insisted upon'.¹¹⁷

Only the first rule represented an innovation, yet several considerations made enforcement impossible. While there was a class of government officials, legal practitioners, petition writers, and numerous other petty officials with a strong vested interest in maintaining the Persian (Urdu) script, no corresponding class for the Nagari script existed. In rejecting the Kaithi script the leaders of the Hindi-Nagari movement also rejected the possibility of a ready-made class of minor officials to replace that already entrenched. The experience of F. J. Shore with this class sixty years earlier in the Saugor and Nerbudda Territories,¹¹⁸ and

the experience of MacDonnell himself in Bihar should have made it obvious that only orders enjoining the *exclusive* use of Nagari as the court script could bring about any real change. The Government of the NWP&O had ordered only the *permissive* use of Nagari, had created no incentives for the development of a new class of Nagari-knowing writers and officials, and had provided no sanctions to enforce this new rule or the two older rules, which had been continuously ignored in the past. In short, while the resolution of April 1900 seemed to be an important political victory for the Hindi-Nagari movement, the triumph was little more than a symbolic one, and had few practical results.

The Aftermath of the 1900 Decision

MacDonnell's decree took most Urdu partisans by surprise. After all, the Hindi-Nagari movement had been sputtering along in fits and starts for more than three decades with no visible result, so why should any renewed efforts be taken seriously? A few concerned supporters took steps to protect Urdu: several lawyers, mainly Muslims, established an Urdu Defence Association at Allahabad not long after MacDonnell's meeting with the pro-Nagari delegation in March 1898; the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental Educational Conference, a creation of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, passed a resolution in 1899 protesting any official recognition of the Nagari script; a large anti-Congress meeting held in Lucknow in December 1899 condemned the proposal to substitute the 'Hindi' for the Persian script; and a group of Muslims from the eastern district of Pratapgarh sent a memorial to the Lieutenant-Governor complaining that the movement to adopt Hindi as the court language clearly aimed at excluding Muslims from public service.¹¹⁹ For the most part, however, Muslims and other Urdu partisans disregarded the potential threat. Hamid Ali Khan, a prominent Muslim barrister and member of the Indian National Congress, found his efforts to warn fellow Muslims pooh-poohed.¹²⁰

The April resolution galvanized Urdu's defenders into action. They held scores of meetings all over the province, passed resolutions condemning the new rules, sent memorials, letters, and telegrams to the provincial and imperial governments, and formed several organizations to protect Urdu. Some expressed highly emotional and exaggerated feelings of shock and dismay. For example, in a letter in the *Indian Daily Telegraph* a month after the resolution's promulgation, a Muslim wrote:

... this new calamity [the resolution] ... hangs above our head; we are required thereby to wander amidst the zigzag of the strange and horrible

characters of the Deo-Nagri and to bid farewell to the language which reminds us [of] the glory of our forefathers . . . Is it not the severest suffering for a man of the slightest sentiment?¹²¹

Others complained that the change threatened Muslim businesses and Islamic literature, that the people found the Nagari script no less foreign than the Persian, that even the partial substitution of Hindi for Urdu would retard the progress of the province, that MacDonnell had reversed a long-standing policy, and that the resolution would harm Muslim prospects for the public service.¹²²

Sir Antony stood firm in the midst of the storm of protests. He defended himself by declaring that his measure provided 'the merest justice to over 90 per cent of the people of these Provinces, including the poorest classes of Mahomedans as well as Hindus'.¹²³ In a letter to the Government of India he asserted that the provisions of his resolution allowed no tenable objections, though some 'extreme Muhammadans . . . would prohibit the use of Hindi altogether from short-sighted motives of personal, race, or religious intolerance'.¹²⁴ Elsewhere he noted that the opposition to his decree came largely from Muslim members of the legal profession, and hardly at all from any of the important landlords or from the agricultural and industrial interests of the province.¹²⁵ In the meantime, as if to justify a decision already made, MacDonnell ordered an investigation to determine the respective numbers of Hindu and Muslim clerks in provincial courts and offices familiar with Hindi or Urdu or both. The results, though almost certainly skewed in favour of Hindi, showed that Muslims had a heavy vested interest in Urdu, while Hindus, though rivalling Muslims in knowledge of Urdu, far surpassed them in Hindi.¹²⁶

The most determined opposition came from Aligarh, home of the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College founded by the recently deceased (1898) Sir Syed Ahmed Khan. Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk, the Secretary of the College, Theodore Morison, the Principal, and many prominent Muslims from Aligarh, other western districts of the NWP&O, and the Punjab, took part in a protest meeting less than a month after the resolution was proclaimed. From this meeting grew another on a larger scale, held three months later in Lucknow under the direction of Mohsin-ul-Mulk. Several hundred delegates came from the NWP&O, the Punjab, the Central Provinces, and elsewhere. Many Muslim students and merchants came from Lucknow itself. A number of Hindus attended the meeting, among them Pandit Kedarnath of Banaras, and some Indian Christians also took part. The numerous Muslim landlords of Oudh, however, were conspicuous by their absence.¹²⁷

Despite the lack of support from some quarters, the gathering took place with considerable panache: when Mohsin-ul-Mulk arrived at the station, he was greeted by a guard of sixty Muslim volunteers wearing red badges embroidered with the word 'Urdu' on their chests.¹²⁸

Most of the eleven resolutions passed by the meeting expressed the already time-worn arguments in favour of Urdu and against Hindi. The eleventh resolution, however, foreshadowed the birth of an organization for the promotion of Urdu very much like the Nagari Pracharini Sabha. This resolution gave the meeting the right to establish a society for the defence of Urdu and to collect subscriptions for it. No permanent organization resulted until January 1903, when the Anjuman Taraqqi-e-Urdu (Society for the Progress of Urdu) came into being as part of the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental Education Conference. For the first nine years, the Anjuman's headquarters remained at Aligarh, and its leaders were associated with the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College. Though the new society accomplished little during these years compared to the Sabha, the Anjuman eventually rose to prominence as the leading Urdu organization of India.¹²⁹

The Lieutenant-Governor did not allow these expressions of opposition to go unchecked. Several weeks before the Lucknow meeting he persuaded a prominent Muslim landlord of Oudh, Kunvar Ali Khan, to resign the presidency of the Urdu Defence Association. A speech at Banaras in which MacDonnell described efforts against his resolution as 'unreasonable and mischievous' caused other Muslim notables to take alarm and withdraw their support from the Urdu movement.¹³⁰ He reserved his severest measures for Aligarh, which he visited in November 1900. While he took pains to reassure a gathering of Muslims there that no harm could come to Urdu, Sir Antony declared that if the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College wished to continue receiving government funds and if Mohsin-ul-Mulk wished to retain his position as Secretary to the College Committee, he would have to sever all connections with the anti-Nagari agitation. The Nawab eventually yielded, submitted a written apology, ended his connection with the Urdu Defence Association, and refused to sign a memorial which the Association had prepared. Many other eminent Muslims followed his example, and by 1901 the whole affair had come to an inglorious end.¹³¹

Paralleling the protests of the defenders of Urdu, the wave of controversy in the press which had been gathering strength for many months finally crested and burst with the proclamation of the April resolution. Thereafter the conflict flooded the columns of both English and

vernacular newspapers for many months until finally subsiding well into 1901. While many of the arguments had appeared time and again previously, some merit further attention.

Several writers expressed the oft-mentioned equations of Hindi = Hindu and Urdu = Muslim more starkly than ever before. On the Hindu side one of the most extreme statements came from a public notice circulated with issues of the Hindi monthly *Brajbasi* (Brindaban). This document urged all Hindus to use 'the Hindi character'. Any Hindu who continued to use the foreign Persian script did not even deserve to be called a Hindu.¹³² On the Muslim side an equally extreme statement came from the Urdu weekly *Al-Bashir*, exhorting all Muslims to consider attendance at an upcoming meeting at Lucknow in support of Urdu more important than the traditional religious duty of a pilgrimage to Mecca.¹³³ Underneath such dramatic statements lay fears for the future of Urdu. Many writers expressed their apprehension that even the optional use of the Nagari script would eventually lead to the complete extinction of Urdu. None stated Muslim misgivings as clearly as a correspondent of the *Punjab Observer* who conjectured that the introduction of Nagari would lead to the abolition of Urdu which would in turn cause Muslim boys to become Hindu in thought and expression.¹³⁴ One could hardly find clearer examples of the process of multi-symbol congruence.

Such extreme misgivings partly stemmed from an exaggerated notion of the power of the government to bring about linguistic changes. Again and again opponents of the resolution wrote as if change could take place overnight, and they seldom mentioned the entrenched resistance facing the introduction of the Nagari script. They forgot the example of Bihar, where the permissive introduction of Nagari had failed to bring any significant change, and even its mandatory and exclusive introduction had met with difficulties. A striking example of this naive faith in the powers of the government came from a resident of Aligarh writing in the *Indian Daily Telegraph*:

Let us consider that if Urdu were to be substituted for Gujarati in the Bombay Presidency, what would be the result? Each and every person will, the next day the Resolution is passed, be seen with an Urdu primer in his hands, and will not in the least care if Gujarati is to live or to perish, as his existence, so to speak, depends on his knowledge of Urdu.¹³⁵ Such views also underlined the fact that those most concerned about the resolution were those who looked to government for employment.

The most extended Muslim statement in defence of Urdu, a direct

reply to Malaviya's *Court Character and Primary Education*, appeared in July 1900. Bearing the title *A Defence of the Urdu Language and Character*, and published under the auspices of the Urdu Defence Association of Allahabad, this work repeated many earlier arguments, added some new ones, and severely criticized several of Malaviya's basic pronouncements. Unlike the more extreme writers in the vernacular press, the Association argued that Urdu belonged to both Hindus and Muslims, and explicitly denied the equations Hindi = Hindu and Urdu = Muslim. Moreover, since both Urdu and Hindi shared the same fundamental grammar, they were not distinct languages. To call the spoken language Urdu or Hindi, then, amounted to a 'mere difference of opinion'.¹³⁶ Judged from the viewpoint of those with a taste for Persian, this language became Urdu; judged from the viewpoint of those with an inclination to Sanskrit, Hindi. To quarrel over nomenclature was 'simply fighting over a shadow and useless speculation'.¹³⁷ In short, the Association declared that Urdu = Hindi and Urdu = Hindu + Muslim, explicitly arguing for assimilation rather than differentiation.

Two of the Association's more important arguments deserve consideration, namely, that dealing with the relationship of the official script to primary education, and that dealing with Malaviya's use of statistics. Contrary to Malaviya's assertion that the basic cause of the stagnation of primary education in the NWP&O lay in the exclusive use of the Persian script in government courts and offices, the progress of primary education, the Association pointed out, depended on far more complex factors and faced a number of non-linguistic obstacles. The great bulk of the population earned a living through agriculture and hence had little appreciation of education. The people of the province, particularly the literary castes, looked upon mass education as something unprecedented and unnecessary. Moreover, numerous castes and sects using different languages existed, the strict purdah system prevented females from taking advantage of educational opportunities, and the lack of religious instruction in government schools offended many who looked to education to provide religious training. Further, the facilities for primary education in the NWP&O lagged behind those in other provinces. Educated parents who desired more than primary education for their children considered the instruction in elementary arithmetic and the Hindi alphabet provided by Hindi primary schools a waste of time. Hence the great majority of students reaching the secondary level took Urdu or Persian as their second language. Finally, even the United Kingdom needed laws to enforce mass education; how much more

difficult to promote this in India where such a scheme was something 'quite foreign'.¹³⁸

The Association then turned to Malaviya's use of statistics; he had cited figures for the Punjab and the NWP&O purporting to show that primary education among the Muslims was languishing, and had attributed this to the use of the Persian script in the courts.¹³⁹ In reality, countered the Association, the low figures for Muslim primary education showed that the village schools which furnished Hindi training did little to fulfil the educational aims of Muslims, who consequently made private arrangements for elementary education. In another section of his work Malaviya had quoted figures showing that the number of pupils in the primary schools of the NWP&O had dropped continuously from 1880-81 to 1895-96, claiming that this resulted from the neglect of Hindi and the patronage of Urdu.¹⁴⁰ During the previous decade, however, argued the Association, according to Malaviya's own figures, the number of pupils enrolled in primary schools had increased substantially—from 153, 252 in 1870-71 to 204, 512 in 1881-82. Obviously government patronage of Urdu had little to do with the state of primary education. Furthermore, the decline in enrolment after 1881 had nothing to do with the question of the official language or script. The annual report of the Educational Department (which the Association cited in considerable detail) showed that the decline had resulted from a variety of causes. These included stricter registration practices, the closure of many marginally successful schools, the introduction of new fees, the imposition of stricter standards of inspection, and widespread sickness in 1879-80.¹⁴¹

Perhaps the most significant part of the Association's assault on Malaviya's work lay in the undisguised contempt for Hindi and Nagari which emerged from time to time. Such stinging expressions as 'one can hardly come across a man with a Hindi education only to whom the epithet of an educated man could in any sense be applied', or 'the introduction of Nagri will degenerate and defile the Hindustani language', or 'the shifting vulgar speech used by the rude villagers is known as Hindi', showed the truculence of Muslim partisans of Urdu and boded ill for any hope of harmony between the opposing groups.¹⁴² The Association's book typified much of the Hindi-Urdu controversy: an intellectual edifice erected on an emotional foundation.

Epilogue

The jubilation of Hindi supporters over the April 1900 resolution reached heights of rhetoric in extolling the government hitherto unknown. One Hindi newspaper avowed that Sir Antony had earned immortal fame for himself by doing justice to the Nagari script. Another said that the Lieutenant-Governor's resolution had made his name a household word in the NWP&O, and reported that some enthusiasts had proposed establishing a memorial for him, while others had suggested placing a photograph of him in every house.¹⁴³

The euphoria soon dissipated as the leaders of the Nagari Pracharini Sabha discovered to their chagrin. Although donations of nearly Rs 600 from the Raja of Bhinga (a minor prince in the NWP&O) and the Maharaja of Rewah (a more important prince of the Central Provinces) allowed an agent to make two extensive tours of the province in 1900, during the next two years the Sabha received and spent little for the promotion of Nagari. While the agent visited almost every district, meeting with well-known lawyers, influential citizens and Hindi enthusiasts, and urging them to promote the use of the Nagari script, soon after his return the interest of those whom he had visited began to wane.¹⁴⁴

In 1903 the Sabha took a fresh approach. Abandoning any hope that the old class of lawyers and legal officials might be persuaded to change, and despairing of sufficient efforts from Hindi lovers, the Sabha decided to set about establishing a new class of legal officials trained to write Nagari. Each district in the province was to have two *muharrirs* (writers or scribes), one for the civil court, and one for the criminal court, who were to write plaints and other legal documents in Nagari without charge. Since the Sabha's finances did not permit the shouldering of so massive a burden, the district of Banaras alone would benefit at first. Should the experiment prove successful, the scheme could be extended to other districts.

By August 1903 the Sabha had managed to appoint a Nagari *muharrir* to the Banaras criminal court, who wrote nearly 900 petitions in the course of the next ten months. By the end of 1904, financed largely by another donation from the Raja of Bhinga, two more *muharrirs* joined the ranks, one in Fyzabad and the other in Bahraich, both districts of Oudh. The grand plan of two Nagari writers in each district never materialized; indeed the Sabha experienced great difficulty in even finding competent men, and still greater difficulty in employing them.¹⁴⁵ The Sabha's failure bore out the earlier statements of D. T. Roberts

about the lack of practised Nagari writers especially in the eastern districts of the province.¹⁴⁶

A similar lack of success attended efforts to create a legal dictionary in Hindi. First conceived in 1904, and intended to consist of simple words to replace the difficult Arabic and Persian legal terms currently in use, the dictionary did not appear until 1932. To replace the entrenched legal terminology proved no easier than to replace the equally entrenched Urdu script or the class of lawyers and officials which used them both.¹⁴⁷

The Sabha's most enduring contribution to the Hindi-Nagari movement took the form of another organization, the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan (Society for Hindi Literature), whose success eventually far overshadowed that of its older sister. The idea of an annual conference for writers, editors, publishers and other persons interested in the development of Hindi had received attention for some time in the Hindi press. In late 1910 the Sabha sponsored the first Hindi Sahitya Sammelan which met in Banaras with Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya serving as president.¹⁴⁸ Approximately three hundred delegates from several provinces attended along with more than forty editors of Hindi newspapers and journals. The Sammelan soon passed out of the Sabha's tenuous grip and came under the firm control of members in Allahabad, chief among whom were Malaviya and another prominent political leader, P. D. Tandon. Subsequently, several leaders of national stature became associated with the Sammelan, including Rajendra Prasad, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Mahatma Gandhi. The leadership of the Sabha, composed mainly of figures from the Hindi literary world and the Educational Department, and concentrated chiefly in Banaras, lacked the political experience and national status needed to guide the Sammelan, which soon became concerned with the promotion of Hindi as the national language of India.¹⁴⁹

The Sammelan's chief rival on the political front eventually became the Anjuman Taraqqi-e-Urdu (Society for the Progress of Urdu) under the leadership of Maulvi Abdul Haq, who guided the organization from 1912 until his death in 1961 in Pakistan.¹⁵⁰ During the Anjuman's earlier decades, its activities displayed striking parallels to those of the Nagari Pracharini Sabha. After Haq managed to bring stability to the Anjuman's finances, starting with an annual grant from the Nizam of Hyderabad in 1914, he initiated a series of projects. In 1917 the Anjuman received a grant from the Nizam to prepare a dictionary of scientific and technical terms, nineteen years after the Sabha had begun its scientific dictionary. In 1921 the Anjuman's journal *Urdū* first appeared, twenty-five years

after the inauguration of the Sabha's *Nāgarī Prachārīnī Patrikā*. In the late 1920s Haq started a search for old Dakani manuscripts, nearly three decades after the beginning of the Sabha's search for old Hindi manuscripts.¹¹

The parallels even extended to the lives of the dominant figure in each organization. In 1930 Haq retired from the principalship of an Aurangabad school and took a post as the head of the Department of Urdu in the Muslim University of Osmania in Hyderabad. Shyam Sundar Das had left the headmastership of a school in Lucknow in 1921 to accept the position of head of the Department of Hindi in Banaras Hindu University.¹² Such remarkable likenesses suggest that both Hindi and Urdu supporters operated through parallel institutional structures though they opposed each others' aims, much like two people filling the same algebraic equation with two different sets of numbers. Leaders of two rival language elites, each strove to attach value to opposing linguistic symbols and to increase their differentiation from each other, and each aided the process of multi-symbol congruence to divide Hindus and Muslims into opposing nationalities.

NOTES

1. Shyam Sundar Das, *Merī Ātmakāhānī* (Prayāg, 1957), pp. 20–1.
2. *Report of the Uttar Pradesh Language Committee (August, 1962)*, p. 51. The NWP&O became the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh in 1902, and Uttar Pradesh in 1947.
3. The Government of India modified this resolution—apparently due to a confusion between language and script—to the effect that *Hindī*, not the Nagari script, was to have equal status with *Urdu*, not the Urdu script.
4. See for example: Paul R. Brass, *Language, Religion and Politics in North India* (London, 1974), p. 132; Jyotirindra Das Gupta, *Language Conflict and National Development* (Berkeley, 1970), p. 105; Kerrin Dittmer, *Die Indischen Muslims und die Hindi-Urdu-Kontoverse in den United Provinces* (Wiesbaden, 1972), pp. 103–13.
5. See: Christopher R. King, *The Nagari Pracharini Sabha (Society for the Promotion of the Nagari Script and Language) of Benares 1893–1914: A Study in the Social and Political History of the Hindi Language*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1974, Chapters XV, XVI, and XVII.
6. Jürgen Lutt, *Hindu-Nationalismus in Uttar Pradesh 1867–1900* (Stuttgart, 1970), p. 41.
7. M. Garcin De Tassy, *La Langue et la Litterature Hindoustaniennes de 1850 a 1869* (Paris, 1874), pp. 322–3. Also see the section of Chapter IV entitled 'Attitudes towards the Vernaculars'.
8. Jeffrey Price Perrill, *Punjab Orientalism: The Anjuman-i-Punjab and Punjab University, 1865–1888*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Missouri, 1976, pp. 360–1; Shan Muhammad, *Sir Syed Ahmad Khan: A Political Biography* (Meerut, 1969), pp. 208–9; *NWP Educ Rpt*, 1867–68, Appendix B, pp. 22–4.
9. Dittmer, *Die Indischen Muslims*, pp. 89–90; *NWP SVN*, 1868, p. 551; *Ibid.*, 1869, pp. 94, 125.
10. Oudh was not officially joined to the North-Western Provinces and Oudh until 1877, when the two became known as the North-Western Provinces and Oudh.
11. Dittmer, *Die Indischen Muslims*, p. 90. See also the *Pioneer* (Allahabad) of 20 November 1868, p. 7, for a letter to the editor from Sandel on the subject of 'The Dev Nagree as a Language of Our Courts'.
12. *NWP SVN*, 1869, p. 125.
13. One of the most difficult-to-read forms of the Persian and Urdu scripts was *Shikasta* (literally meaning broken writing), the cursive or running hand form of the script.
14. A typical example of this argument appears in the *Kavi Vachan Sudha* (Banaras) of 8 August 1873. See *NWP SVN*, 1873, p. 528.
15. Shiva Prasad, *Memorandum: Court Characters, in the Upper Provinces of India* (Banaras, 1868).
16. Dittmer, *Die Indischen Muslims*, p. 89; *NWP SVN* 1900, p. 162; *The Pioneer* (Allahabad), 24 March 1869, p. 5.
17. Prasad, *Memorandum*, p. 3.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 4–5.
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 5–6. Emphasis mine.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
23. The Urdu and Persian scripts are nearly identical; the chief difference is several extra letters in Urdu to represent sounds in Khari Boli—e.g., retroflex consonants—with no equivalents in Persian.
24. Madan Mohan Malaviya, *Court Character and Primary Education in N.-W. P. and Oudh* (Allahabad, 1897), Appendix, pp. 74–5.
25. *Ibid.*
26. Sir George Abraham Grierson, *Linguistic Survey of India* (Calcutta: 1903–1928), Volume IX, Part 1, pp. xiv, 49. Emphasis in original.
27. *The Pioneer* (Allahabad), 1 March 1869, p. 6; *NWP&O SVN*, 1900, p. 162; *NWP Educ Rpt*, 1873–74, Orders of Government, p. 16.
28. *The Calcutta Gazette*, 16 June 1880, pp. 502–3. Also see the section of Chapter III entitled 'The Nagari and Kaithi Scripts in Bihar'.
29. Report of the *Indian Education Commission* (Calcutta, 1883), pp. 630–1, 635–9, and Appendix C. In the Punjab, the Hunter Commission became the centre of a three-cornered controversy between Hindi (or Bhasha), Urdu and Punjabi (or Gurmukhi). Its report listed a total of 67,290 signatures in support of Hindi: at least 30,063 came from the western part of the NWP&O, 25,946 from the eastern, 6,392 from other provinces or princely states (including Gwalior, Central India, Rajputana and the Punjab), and 4,673 were untraceable. Interestingly, fewer than 3,000 signatures came from Oudh, all from Lucknow, and very few from Banaras.

30. *NWP&SVN*, 1882, p. 660, summarizing an article in the 2 October 1882 issue.
31. One example of continuing efforts appeared in the Hindi weekly *Bharat Jivan* (Banaras), 23 June 1884. The paper reported that some residents of Kanpur had sent a memorial to the Lieutenant-Governor with twenty-three statements attached. These statements dealt with several contentious issues: the large number of Hindi speakers, the small number of Urdu speakers, the problems of villagers in finding Urdu-knowing translators for government documents in Urdu, the use of Hindi by missionaries, the difficulty of Urdu, the faults of the Urdu script, the greater ease of learning the Nagari script, and the use of Nagari or its variants by both Hindu and Muslim merchants and *patwāris* (village record keepers). The memorial closed with a request for Hindi and Devanagari in the courts.
32. In the Punjab, Urdu supporters displayed much greater vigour, collecting thousands of signatures and sending more than twenty memorials. In contrast, the Commission did not encounter any linguistic agitation at all in Madras, Bombay, Bengal and the Central Provinces. *Educ Comm Rpt*, pp. 632–9.
33. *Education Commission. Report by the North-Western Provinces and Oudh Provincial Committee; with Evidence Taken before the Committee, and Memorials Addressed to the Education Commission* (Calcutta, 1884), p. 421.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 422.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 479.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 543. See also Christopher R. King, 'Images of Virtue and Vice: The Hindi-Urdu Controversy in Two Nineteenth-century Hindi Plays', in Kenneth W. Jones, editor, *Religious Controversy in British India: Dialogues in South Asian Languages* (Albany, 1992) for a discussion of how Hindi supporters attached images of virtue and goodness to their language, and of vice and depravity to Urdu.
37. *Educ Comm Rpt NWP&O*, p. 400.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 462.
39. Though I know of no direct evidence of the numbers signing petitions in the pre-1882 campaigns, a hint of the scale of earlier efforts appeared in an 1871 Urdu newspaper. This reported a meeting of the Allahabad Institute the previous year which resulted in a petition being drawn up in favour of Hindi and sent to the Lieutenant-Governor of the NWP with 4,000 signatures. *NWP SVN*, 1871, p. 20.
40. *Bharat Jivan*, 24 March 1884, p. 1. Translation mine.
41. Ram Chandra Shukla, *Hindī Sābitya kā Itihās* (Kāśī, 1968), p. 462; *NWP&O SVN*, 1889, p. 284. See also Note 43.
42. *NWP&O SVN*, 1889, p. 284.
43. Pandit Gauri Datta, *Nāgarī aur Urdū kā Svāng*. (Meerut, n.d.).
44. Saraswat Brahmins, a north Indian caste, were known for their close ties to the merchant caste of Khattris. The author of the source from which these details come does not define 'Nagari' in this context, but Datta probably included both the Hindi language and the Nagari script in its meaning. Shukla, *Hindī Sābitya*, pp. 462–3.
45. Babu Ratna Chandra, *Hindī Urdū kā Nāṭak: Hindee versus Urdu* (Prayāg, 1890). The author was probably a Kayasth judging from his name and from the viewpoint expressed in his play.
46. Sohan Prasad, *Hindī aur Urdū kī Lāṭī* (Gorakhpur, 1886). See *Bharat Jivan* (Banaras) 6 July 1885, p. 3, and 30 November 1885, p. 6; and *NWP&O SVN*, 1885, pp. 434, 783, 784, 831, and 839. During the uproar, which lasted for several months, a number of Hindu organizations and Hindi newspapers became involved, including the *Hitkari* (Champaran, Bihar), the Hindu Samaj, and the Arya Samaj; all of them counselled moderation.
47. Prasad's poem first appeared in 1885, and a second edition in 1886, Ratna Chandra's drama in 1890, and Datta's play some time between 1882 and 1900—for he mentions the Hunter Commission but makes no reference to the government resolution of 1900.
48. In the usage of many Hindi writers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Nagari meant either the Hindi language or the Nagari script or both. Shri Ray Krishna Das, Interview, 12 April 1972, Banaras.
49. Datta, *Nāgarī aur Urdū*, p. 11. Translation mine. *Begam* is a respectful title for a Muslim lady.
50. Chandra, *Hindī Urdū kā Nāṭak*, p. 29. Translation mine.
51. See Note 1.
52. See Note 36.
53. Datta, *Nāgarī aur Urdū*, p. 10. Translation mine.
54. Chandra, *Hindī Urdū kā Nāṭak*, p. 17. Translation mine. *Devī*, literally goddess, is a respectful term of address for a Hindu woman.
55. Prasad, *Hindī aur Urdū*, stanzas 280, 281. Translation mine.
56. Chandra, *Hindī Urdū kā Nāṭak*, Act I, Scene 3.
57. Prasad, *Hindī aur Urdū*, *passim*.
58. *Ibid.*, stanza 405. Translation mine.
59. *Saraswatī* (Allahabad), III, 11 (November 1902), p. 359. In this dialogue Urdu addresses Hindi very rudely, calling her an ill-favoured and ugly witch, and expresses amazement that even though she has supposedly died she is still alive. Hindi replies patiently, calling Urdu 'daughter' and asks what harm she has done that Urdu should attack her.
60. *Educ Comm Rpt NWP&O*, p. 422.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 418; *Bharat Jivan*, 13 July 1885, p. 1; *NWP&O SVN*, p. 960.
62. *NWP&O SVN*, 1889, pp. 403–4; *Ibid.*, 1898, p. 641; *NPS 2nd Ann Rpt*, p. 8.
63. B. J. Akkad, *Malaviyaji* (Bombay, 1948), Appendix, pp. 1–2; Lütt, *Hindu Nationalismus*, pp. 126–7; *NWP&O SVN*, 1884, pp. 285, 885; *Ibid.*, 1886, p. 60; *Ibid.*, 1889, pp. 251–2; *Ibid.*, 1893, p. 257; *NPS 11th Ann Rpt*, Membership List, Nos. 54, 89.
64. Lakshminarayan Gupta, *Hindī Bhāṣā aur Sābitya kī Ārya Samāj kī Den* (Lucknow, [1961]), pp. 25–7, 53–7, 87–93.
65. *Educ Comm Rpt*, pp. 636–7.
66. *NWP&O SVN*, 1882, p. 438. These figures tally with an entry in the *Report of the Indian Education Commission*, p. 636, for 1,435 signatures for a pro-Hindi memorial from Lucknow, though the organization sponsoring the memorial is not named. The Hindi monthly *Bharat Sudasha Pravartak* of Farukhābad

- reported in its May-June 1900 issue that during the 1882 Education Commission agitation, hundreds of Muslims, especially in the interior of Farukhabad district, had signed memorials for the introduction of Nagari! NWP&O SVN, 1900, p. 323. Such instances, if true, are difficult to explain.
67. Gupta, *Hindī Bhāṣā*, pp. 258-62.
 68. *United Provinces District Gazetteers*, XXVI (Benares, 1909), pp. 106-8; R. L. Singh, *Banaras: A Study in Urban Geography* (Banaras, 1955), pp. 3-4; A. L. Basham, *The Wonder That Was India*, revised edition (New York, 1963), p. 165; J. N. Farquhar, *An Outline of the Religious Literature of India* (Delhi, 1967), pp. 328-9, 331-4; Motichandra, *Kāśī kā Itihās* (Bombay, 1962), pp. 199-202, 216-19; George A. Grierson, *The Modern Vernacular Literature of Hindustan* (Calcutta, 1889), pp. 108-9 and following; A. M. Montearth, 'Note on the State of Education in India during 1865-66', *SRGI Home Department*, No. LIV (Calcutta, 1867), p. 93; *Hindustan Review* (Allahabad), June 1903, p. 554; Diana Eck, *Banaras: City of Light* (New York, 1962), *passim*; *Benares State Administration Report*, 1911, pp. 1-2.
 69. *Ibid.*
 70. Queen's Collegiate School was part of Queen's College—the renamed Banaras Sanskrit College.
 71. *Kāśī-Nāgarīprachārīnī Sabhā kā Arddhśatābdī-Itihās* [*The History of the Nagari Pracharini Sabha's First Half-Century*] (Kāśī, 1943), pp. 1-5.
 72. *Ibid.*, pp. v, 3. Saraswat Brahmins and Khatrias had a special relationship. The former served the latter as priests, and would even accept food cooked by Khatrias. William Crooke, *Tribes and Castes of the North-Western Province and Oudh*, Volume III (Calcutta, 1906), pp. 267-8.
 73. Shyam Sundar Das, *Merī Ātmakabānī* [*The Story of My Life*] (Prayāg, 1957), pp. 1-19, 43-4, 131-9, 183-8, 209, 253; Shri Devi Narayan Vakil, Interview, 16 March 1972, Banaras.
 74. *Arddhśatābdī-Itihās*, pp. v, 3; Das, *Merī Ātmakabānī*, p. 11.
 75. *Arddhśatābdī-Itihās*, pp. 5-6, chart facing p. 252; Das, *Merī Ātmakabānī*, pp. 21-2, 27, and Chapters 2, 3, and 6 *passim*; Ram Chandra Shukla, *Hindī Sāhitya kā Itihās* (Kāśī, 1968), p. 458; R. A. Dwivedi, *A Critical Survey of Hindi Literature* (Delhi, 1966), p. 162; *NPS 1st Ann Rpt*, p. 5; *NPS 11th Ann Rpt*, Membership List, Nos. 227, 313; *Bharat Jivan* (Banaras), 14 August 1893, p. 7; Shri Ray Krishna Das, Interviews, 6, 8, and 25 April 1972, Banaras.
 76. Since the caste background of 11 of the 84 members could not be determined, these figures may well be even higher. See King, *The Nagari Pracharini Sabha*, pp. 251-9, for a more detailed analysis.
 77. Ray Krishna Das, Interviews, 8 and 12 April 1972, Banaras.
 78. Das, *Ātmakabānī*, p. 25. Translation mine.
 79. See, for example, the membership lists in *NPS 5th Ann Rpt* and *NPS 6th Ann Rpt*.
 80. See King, *The Nagari Pracharini Sabha*, pp. 262-8, 445-50. The Sabha's numbers did not reach the 1914 high-water mark until its 50th anniversary in 1943.
 81. For a more detailed discussion of the Sabha's income and expenditures, see King, *The Nagari Pracharini Sabha*, pp. 273-82, 452-4, 459-61.
 82. All figures and percentages have been calculated from *Kāśī-Nāgarīprachārīnī Sabhā kā Vinīt Nivedan* (Kāśī, 1923), pp. 15, 16, 19-23. See also King, *The Nagari Pracharini Sabha*, pp. 456-7.
 83. So politically 'safe' was the Sabha considered by the provincial government, that according to an official of the organization, it was allowed to keep officially proscribed books in its library. Shri Shambhu Nath Bajpeyi, Interview, 3 April 1972, Banaras.
 84. See King, *The Nagari Pracharini Sabha*, Chapters XV and XVIII for a more detailed account of these activities of the Sabha.
 85. For a more extended discussion of this subject, see King, *The Nagari Pracharini Sabha*, Chapter 16, 'The Language Attitudes of the Sabha', pp. 306-21.
 86. *NPS 4th Annual Report*, 10-12.
 87. Das, *Merī Ātmakabānī*, 251-2. Translation mine.
 88. *NPS 1st Annual Report*, 35-6, 40-1.
 89. *UP Educ Progs*, May 1903, 31-2.
 90. Das, *Merī Ātmakabānī*, p. 26; *Arddhśatābdī-Itihās*, pp. 118-19; *NPS 2nd Ann Rpt*, p. 5; Radha Kishen [Krishna] Das, 'An Abstract Report on the Nagari Pracharini Sabha' ([Banaras], 1900), India Office Library MSS. Eur. D. 641, p. 4.
 91. *NWP&O SVN*, 1896, pp. 203-4, 369. Sir Antony took office on 6 November 1895 and served as Lieutenant-Governor until 14 November 1901.
 92. Das, *Merī Ātmakabānī*, p. 30; *NWP&O Gen Admin Progs*, October, 1900, pp. 101-3.
 93. Das, *Merī Ātmakabānī*, pp. 30, 39. Hindi supporters received encouragement at this time from Justice Knox of Allahabad, and behind-the-scenes aid from Dr George Grierson, author of the *Linguistic Survey of India*.
 94. *Arddhśatābdī-Itihās*, pp. 119-20; *Nāgarīprachārīnī Sabhā Kāśī ke Vigat 60 Varsō kā Sīnhāvalokan* (Banaras, [1953?]), p. 93.
 95. Madan Mohan Malaviya, *Court Character and Primary Education in N.-W. P. and Oudh* (Allahabad, 1897).
 96. Akkad, *Malaviyaji*, p. 7, Appendix pp. 1-2; Lütt, *Hindu Nationalismus*, 148; Padmakanta Malaviya, editor, *Mālavīyaji: Jīvan Jhalakīyā* (Delhi, [1962]), *passim*; Nand Lal Singh, editor *Mahamana Malaviyaji Birth Centenary Commemoration Volume 25th December 1961* (Varanasi, [1961]), pp. 197-8; Sachchidananda Bhattacharya, *A Dictionary of Indian History* (New York, 1967), p. 575.
 97. *NPS 11th Ann Rpt*, Membership List; *NPS 21st Ann Rpt*, Membership List; Das, *Merī Ātmakabānī*, p. 40.
 98. See Note 13.
 99. See Malaviya, *Court Character*, *passim*. See also King, *The Nagari Pracharini Sabha*, pp. 363-9 for a more extensive analysis.
 100. As an example of these other social uses, in the mid-1870s a series of reports, discontinued after a few years, appeared in the annual Post Office report for the NWP&O. The 1875-76 report showed that the number of Hindi letters was more than 80% of the number of Urdu letters. *NWP Gen Dept Progs*, August 1876, pp. 27-35. Also see Table 5, Chapter II.
 101. See Chapter I and the Glossary for an explanation of these terms.

102. *NPS 1st Ann Rpt*, pp. 1-3. See also Kiing, *The Nagari Pracharini Sabha*, Chapter XIV, especially pp. 316-20, and Chapter XV, especially pp. 328-37.
103. *NWP&O SVN*, 1899, p. 80.
104. See King, *The Nagari Pracharini Sabha*, pp. 377-83, 399-407, for a more detailed discussion of this point.
105. Das, *Merī Āmakahānī*, pp. 25, 41-2; Charles H. Heimsath, *Indian Nationalism and Hindu Social Reform* (Princeton, 1964), pp. 281-3; *NWP&O SVN*, 1899, p. 39; *Arddhśatābdī-Itihās*, pp. 129-30; *NPS 5th Ann Rpt*, p. 18; *NPS 6th Ann Rpt*, p. 17.
106. *Ibid.*
107. Documents outlining the whole process are contained in the *NWP&O Gen Admin Progs* for October 1900.
108. *Ibid.*, pp. 93-120.
109. *Ibid.*, p. 105.
110. *Ibid.*, emphasis mine.
111. Written comments of C. J. Lyall on a Minute Paper, subject Home Department Judicial Proceedings for June, 1900, *Judicial and Public Papers 1900*, 555 (21-71), India Office Library; C. J. Lyall, *A Sketch of the Hindustani Language* (Edinburgh, 1880). Emphasis *not* mine.
112. *NWP&O Gen Admin Progs*, October 1900, p. 117. Emphasis mine.
113. *Ibid.*, October 1900, p. 102.
114. *Ibid.*, October 1900, pp. 93, 94. The two members of the Board of Revenue present at the session which drafted this 16 August 1899 reply were J. J. D. Latouche, later Lieutenant-Governor of the United Provinces, and D. T. Roberts, who had served as a Revenue Settlement Officer in the eastern district of Ballia. See D. T. Roberts, *Report on the Revision of Records of Part of Ballia District. 1812-1885 A. D.* (Allahabad, 1886).
115. *Ibid.*, October, 1900, p. 102.
116. See the section of Chapter III entitled 'The Kaithi Script'.
117. *NWP&O Gen Admin Progs*, October 1900, p. 95.
118. See the section of Chapter III entitled 'The Nagari Script in the Saugor and Nerbudda Territories'.
119. *NWP&O SVN*, 1898, p. 266; *Ibid.*, 1899, pp. 265, 671, 698; *Ibid.*, 1900, pp. 35, 47-8, 113, 168. The Urdu Defence Association authored an extensive reply to Malaviya's *Court Character and Primary Education in the N. -W. P. and Oudh* entitled *A Defence of the Urdu Language and Character* (Allahabad, 1900) which appeared not long after the April 1900 resolution of the Government of the NWP&O. The Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental Educational Conference was founded by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan in 1886 to further educational development among Muslims. See Shan Muhammad, *Sir Syed Ahmed Khan: A Political Biography* (Meerut, 1969), pp. 83-4.
120. Hamid Ali Khan, *The Vernacular Controversy: An Account and Criticism of the Equalisation of Nagri and Urdu as the Character for the Court of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, under the Resolution No. 585 III-3430-68 of Sir A. P. MacDonnell, the Lieutenant-Governor, N. -W. P., and Chief Commissioner, Oudh, Dated 18th April 1900* (N.P., [1900]), p. 12.

121. *Ibid.*, p. 52.
122. *Ibid.*, pp. 86-92, 101-5, 116-7; *NWP&O Gen Admin Progs*, October 1900, pp. 117-18. In regard to Muslim prospects for the public service, a correction to the third rule of the resolution, allowing one year for aspirants to government service to qualify in both Hindi and Urdu, did not appear until 26 June 1900, more than six weeks after the Aligarh meeting.
123. Khan, *Vernacular Controversy*, p. 99.
124. *NWP&O Gen Admin Progs*, October 1900, 105.
125. *The Report of the Nagari-Pracharini Sabha, Benares, from 1893-1902* (Banaras, 1902), p. 14.
126. *NWP&O Gen Admin Progs*, October 1900, pp. 111, 119, 122-4. See also King, *The Nagari Pracharini Sabha*, pp. 409-12 for a more thorough discussion of this investigation. For contemporary criticism of the investigation, see Khan, *Vernacular Controversy*, pp. 15-16.
127. Khan, *Vernacular Controversy*, p. 101; *Bharat Jivan* (Banaras), 6 and 27 August and 3 September 1900; *NWP&O SVN*, 1900, pp. 348, 435, 466, 544; Sayyed Hashmi Faridabadi, *Panja Sāla Tārikh-e-Anjumān Taraqqī-e-Urdū* (Karachi, 1953), p. 11; Rafiq A. Zakaria, 'Foreword', *Glimpses of Urdu Literature*, N. S. Gorekar (Bombay, 1961), p. xxxiii.
128. *NWP&O SVN* 1900, pp. 434-5.
129. *Bharat Jivan* (Banaras), 3 September 1900; Faridabadi, *Panja Sāla Tārikh*, pp. 13-20.
130. Zakaria, 'Foreword', p. xxxiii; *NWP&O SVN* 1900, pp. 348, 466, 544; *Bharat Jivan*, 6 and 27 August 1900.
131. *Bharat Jivan*, 26 November 1900; *NWP&O SVN*, 1901, pp. 124, 143; *Ibid.*, 1902, 108-9; Zakaria, 'Foreword', pp. xxxiii-xxxiv; Mohammad Noman, *Muslim India (Rise and Growth of the All India Muslim League)*, (Allahabad, 1942), pp. 61-2.
132. *NWP&O SVN* 1900, p. 326.
133. *Ibid.*, p. 361, citing the July 1900 issue of *Al Bashir*.
134. *Ibid.*, pp. 239, 294-5; Zakaria, 'Foreword', xxviii-xxix; Khan, *Vernacular Controversy*, pp. 20-1, 42, 52, 64-5, 79, 105, 117, 123.
135. Khan, *Vernacular Controversy*, p. 64, quoting from the June 1900 issue.
136. M. Rahmat-Ullah, LL.B., *A Defence of the Urdu Language and Character. (Being a reply to the pamphlet called 'Court Character and Primary Education in N. -W. P. and Oudh')*, (Allahabad, 1900), p. 12.
137. *Ibid.*
138. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
139. This line of argument, if applied to the Nagari script, would vitiate Malaviya's entire approach. No one seems to have noticed this contradiction, however.
140. Under the governments of Sir John Strachey and Sir George Couper (1874-82), Malaviya had stated, this patronage had reached a high point with the rules of 1877 requiring Persian or Urdu as a second language for aspirants to government service. See the section of Chapter IV entitled 'The Relationship of Education and Employment'.
141. Rahmat-Ullah, *Defence of Urdu*, pp. 71-7.

142. Ibid., pp. 34, 64, 68.
 143. NWPE&O SVN 1900, pp. 220, 348.
 144. *Arddhsatābdī-Itihās*, p. 136; *NPS 8th Ann Rpt*, pp. 14–15.
 145. *NPS 10th Ann Rpt*, pp. 24, 25; *NPS 11th Ann Rpt*, pp. 11, 29.
 146. See the section of this chapter entitled 'The 1900 Decision: The Machinery of Deliberation'.
 147. *NPS 11th Ann Rpt*, p. 2; *Arddhsatābdī-Itihās*, pp. 138, 202.
 148. *A Short History of the Nagari Pracharini Sabha Banaras City. (July 1893 to June 1915)* (Banaras, [1915?]), pp. 42–3; *Arddhsatābdī-Itihās*, 219–220. Jyotirindra Das Gupta in *Language Conflict and National Development* (Bombay, 1970), p. 113, states that the first Sammelan was held in Allahabad, certainly an error. As the annual *Kārya Vivaraṅs* [Reports of Activities] of the Sammelan show, the first Sammelan was held in Banaras, the second in Allahabad. Kerrin Dittmer in her *Die Indischen Muslims and die Hindi-Urdu Controverse in Den United Provinces* (Wiesbaden, 1972), pp. 148–9, notes that the Sabha's claim to have originated the Sammelan has been disputed by the leaders of the latter.
 149. *Arddhsatābdī-Itihās*, pp. 220–1; Das Gupta, *Language Conflict*, pp. 112–14, 118–19; Nand Lal Singh, editor, *Mahatma Malaviyaji Birth Centenary Commemoration Volume 25th December 1961* (Varanasi, [1961?]), unnumbered pages immediately following table of contents.
 150. Faridabadi, *Panja Sāla Tārīkh*, pp. 16, 20–1, 28, 32–6, 41, 44–4, 48–50, 52–3.
 151. Ibid.
 152. Ibid. Das, *Merī Ātmakahānī*, pp. 183–8, 209, 253.

CHAPTER VI

Conclusion

Urdu: Hey you old witch! In spite of having died, you're still alive?
 Hindi: Daughter! Why have you tried to kill me for so long? What harm have I ever done to you?'

Introduction

The words above come from Radha Krishna Das, official of the Nagari Pracharini Sabha of Banaras, relative of Bharatendu Harishchandra, and an ardent supporter of Hindi. They appear in the November 1902 issue of *Saraswatī*, one of the leading literary journals of the Hindi world, as an accompaniment to a striking picture. Urdu, personified as a Muslim courtesan, stands on the left, right hand resting on her hip, left hand stretched out towards her rival, while Hindi, personified as a Hindu wife, sits demurely on the right, left hand placed on her thigh, right hand supporting her chin. The postures and the words suggest an arrogant and provocative Urdu taunting a long-suffering and patient Hindi.

They also hint at the intensity of the clash between the partisans of the two branches of Khari Boli in the UP: an intensity displayed in the exaggerated reactions to the 1900 Resolution, in the agitation which vitiated the language statistics for the 1901 census, and in many other ways; an intensity echoed less forcefully in the adjoining provinces of Bihar, the Punjab and the Central Provinces, and hardly at all in other areas. This intensity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century UP increasingly infected the Hindi movement on the national level, evidenced not only in the bitterness of the Hindi-Urdu struggle, but also in the resentment crystallized in the expression 'Hindi imperialism'² and widely felt in such diverse linguistic areas as Tamil Nadu and West Bengal. The divisiveness engendered and encouraged by the extremists on both sides in this process of linguistic differentiation formed part and parcel of the process of multi-symbol congruence. As Hindi became more and more closely identified with Hindu, and Urdu with Muslim, linguistic antagonism both reflected and affected religious antagonism in a vicious spiral of separatism which eventually led to the partition of British India into two countries and of Khari Boli into two distinct forms.³