Sikh Nationalism

This important volume provides a clear, concise and comprehensive guide to the history of Sikh nationalism from the late nineteenth century to the present. Drawing on A. D. Smith's ethno-symbolic approach, Gurharpal Singh and Giorgio Shani use a new integrated methodology to understand the historical and sociological development of modern Sikh nationalism. By emphasising the importance of studying Sikh nationalism from the perspective of the nation-building projects of India and Pakistan, the recent literature on religious nationalism and the need to integrate the study of the diaspora with the Sikhs in South Asia, they provide a fresh approach to a complex subject. Singh and Shani evaluate the current condition of Sikh nationalism in a globalised world and consider the lessons the Sikh case offers for the comparative study of ethnicity, nations and nationalism.

Gurharpal Singh is Emeritus Professor of Sikh and Punjab Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. His publications include *The Partition of India* (2009), *Sikhs in Britain: The Making of a Community* (2006) and *Ethnic Conflict in India: A Case Study of Punjab* (2000).

Giorgio Shani is Professor and Chair of the Department of Politics and International Studies at International Christian University in Tokyo, Japan. He is the author of *Religion, Identity and Human Security* (2014) and *Sikh Nationalism and Identity in a Global Age* (2008).

New Approaches to Asian History

This dynamic new series publishes books on the milestones in Asian history, those that have come to define particular periods or to mark turning points in the political, cultural and social evolution of the region. The books in this series are intended as introductions for students to be used in the classroom. They are written by scholars whose credentials are well established in their particular fields and who have, in many cases, taught the subject across a number of years.

A list of books in the series can be found at the end of the volume.

Sikh Nationalism

From a Dominant Minority to an Ethno-Religious Diaspora

Gurharpal Singh

School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London

Giorgio Shani

International Christian University

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Contents

Maps

Figures

Tables

Acknowledgements

This work has been long in the making. The number of people who have supported us over the years is too numerous to mention. Our main debt is to colleagues in the fields of ethnicity and nationalism and Sikh studies who have provided us with academic and moral support. Special mention needs to be made of the late Anthony D. Smith and John Rex, who were the first to encourage us to complete this work. In addition, we note our long-term indebtedness to the following: Paul R. Brass, Brendan O'Leary, Khachig Tölölyan, Robin Cohen, Ian Talbot, Arvind-Pal S. Mandair, Christopher Shackle, J. S. Grewal, Indu Banga, Darshan. S. Tatla, Joyce Pettigrew, Verne Dusenbery, Katharine Adeney, Harihar Bhattacharyya, Surinder S. Jodhka, Pal Ahluwalia, Tom Lyne, Mustapha Kamal Pasha, John Hutchinson, Atsuko Ichijo and Balbinder Bhogal.

Members of the Sikh community in the diaspora (United Kingdom, Canada, United States, France, Italy, Singapore and Malaysia) and India gave freely of their time and support. Their generosity and kindness remain unmatched and we give warm acknowledgement of their help. For obvious reasons, unless mentioned in the text, most remain anonymous. We thank the many journalists, commentators, administrators, official spokespersons and politicians, both in India and overseas, whose insights contributed to the richness of our work. Again, unless specifically mentioned, they remain anonymous.

We would like to record our appreciation of all those who participated in the 'What Is Happening to Sikh Ethno-nationalism?' workshop held at the University of Birmingham on 28 and 29 May 2009. Some of the ideas that flowed from the discussions there have matured and now inform this work. Marigold Acland and Lucy Rhymer of Cambridge University Press deserve special mention for keeping their faith in us. We hope the wait has been worthwhile.

We gratefully acknowledge the help and support of library staff at the School of Oriental and African Studies and the Senate House Library at the University of London, British Library of Political and Economic Science, British Library, National Army Museum, Sikh Reference

ix

x   Acknowledgements

Library, Golden Temple, Amritsar, Bhai Khan Singh Nabha Library, University of Patiala and the Centre for South Asian Studies, University of Cambridge. Nick Schweitzer, Raghujit Kaur, Satnam Singh Deol, Jugdep Chima and Nadhra S. N. Khan deserve particular mention for their help and support in the production of the figures, maps and tables.

Our special thanks go to the two external readers who made many helpful suggestions on the first draft. We are particularly indebted to Brendan O'Leary for a meticulous reading of the manuscript, insightful comments and helping us to ensure that the work appeals beyond the core South Asian readership. Richard Fynes also kindly read the manuscript and saved us from many embarrassments. Any errors of fact or interpretation are of course our sole responsibility.

This is not a joint book in the conventional sense. Singh wrote the Introduction, Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and the Conclusion, and Shani wrote Chapters 1 and 8. Chapter 2 was written jointly. Following the first draft, the manuscript was thoroughly rewritten by Singh, who also prepared the volume for production with the tables, figures and maps and the index, and secured the copyright permission for the prints and the maps.

A work on Sikh nationalism is unlikely to be received uncritically or, indeed, even to be welcomed by some. This perhaps explains why the subject so far has avoided serious scrutiny. We have attempted to provide a sociologically informed historical perspective that we hope will appeal to the specialist and general reader alike and be of interest to students of ethnicity, nations and nationalisms.

Abbreviations

AAP	Aam Aadmai Party
AISSF	All-India Sikh Student Federation
ASR	Anandpur Sahib Resolution
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
BK	Babbar Khalsa
BKI	Babbar Khalsa International
BSP	Bahujan Samaj Party
BTFK	Bhindranwale Tiger Force Khalistan
CK	Council of Khalistan
CPI	Communist Party of India
CPI (M)	Communist Party of India (Marxist)
DSS	Dera Sacha Sauda
INC	Indian National Congress (Party); the Congress Party
ISYF	International Sikh Students Federation
JD	Janata Dal
KAC	Khalistan Affairs Centre
KC	Khalistan Council
KCF	Khalistan Commando Force
KLF	Khalistan Liberation Force
RSS	Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh
SAD	Shiromani Akali Dal. The faction leaders' initials appear in brackets: B = Badal; L = Longowal; M = Mann. Synonymous with Akalis.
SC	Scheduled Castes
SGPC	Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee
ST	Scheduled Tribes
VHP	Vishwa Hindu Parishad
WSO	World Sikh Organisation

Only abbreviations used regularly in the text are listed. In other cases the full title is given.

Glossary

Akal Takht	The seat of Sikh temporal authority; building facing the Golden Temple entrance
Akalis	'Immortals'; followers of the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) Party
amrit	'Nectar of immortality'; sweetened water used in the Sikh initiation ceremony
Amrit-dhari	An initiated member of the Khalsa who has taken *amrit*
ardas	A formal prayer recited at the end of most Sikh religious ceremonies
dera	Camp or settlement
dharam	Righteous behaviour, moral order; translated as 'religion'
dharam yud	A struggle for righteousness; a religious war
Five-Ks	Five items, each beginning with k, which a Sikh of the Khalsa must wear
Ghadar	Revolt; party formed in Stockton, California, USA, in 1913
ghallughara	Great massacre
granthi	Reader of Sikh scriptures
gurdwara	Sikh temple
gurmata	A collective decision by a congregation of Sikhs arrived at in the presence of the *Guru Granth Sahib*
Gurmukhi	'From the Guru's mouth'; script in which Punjabi is written
Guru Granth Sahib	The Sikh scripture; also known as the *Adi Granth*; the holy book

Only terms used regularly are listed. Less common Indic terms are translated in the text. Following McLeod (1997), Punjabi/Sikh terms beginning with a capital letter are not italicised in the text.

xii

Harimandir Sahib	The Golden Temple; also known as the *Darbar Sahib*
Hindutva	Hinduness; the ideology of the Hindu Right
Jat	Punjabi agricultural caste; majority caste among Sikhs
jatha	Bands; military detachment
jathedhar	Commander of a *jatha*
jathka	Sikh method of killing an animal for consumption with a single blow
kacha	Short drawers; one of the Five-Ks
kanga	A comb to keep the hair tidy; one of the Five-Ks
kara	A steel bangle worn on the wrist; one of the Five-Ks
kesh	Uncut hair; one of the Five-Ks
Kesh-dhari	One who keeps uncut hair
khande-di-pahul	Ceremony of initiation into the Khalsa
Khalistan	'Land of the pure'; an independent Sikh state
Khalsa	The religious order established by Guru Gobind Singh in 1699
Khatri	Urban Sikh trading caste
kirpan	Sword; one of the Five-Ks; now symbolically represented by a small dagger
langar	Communal kitchen attached to a *gurdwara*
mahant	Head of a religious establishment; the owner of a historic *gurdwara*
miri-piri	Temporal and spiritual authority; symbolised in the two swords worn by Guru Hargobind; the union of the temporal and the spiritual
misls	Sikh military bands of the eighteenth century
Mona-Sikhs	Sikhs who cut their hair; historically mostly in the diaspora
morcha	Campaign or agitation
panj piare	'The five bellowed ones'; first five Sikhs initiated into the Khalsa
panth	Path, or 'the way'
Panth	The Sikh community
Patit-Sikhs	Lapsed Sikhs
Punjabi Suba	A Punjabi-speaking state; demand for which the SAD led from 1949 to 1966
Punjabiat	Punjabiness; Punjabi nationalism
qaum	'People who stand together'; race or nationality
Ramgarhia	A Sikh artisan of the carpenter caste

Ravidasias	Followers of the Ravidas *dharam*
Sahaj-dhari	'Slow learners'; non-Kesh-dhari Sikhs
sampradaya	A movement led by a succession of gurus
sanatan	'Eternal' and 'everlasting'; a synonym for Hinduism
Sanatan Sikhs	Those who viewed Sikhism as branch of Hinduism and sought to align the Sikh tradition with traditional Hindu (i.e. Brahmanical) values and social structure of caste
Sangh Parivar	Family of Hindu Right organisations that includes the BJP, VHP and RSS
Sarbat Khalsa	'The whole Khalsa'
Sikh Rahit Maryada	The Sikh Code of Conduct
Singh Sabha	'Assembly of Singhs'; a reform movement of Sikh renewal in the late nineteenth century that propagated the Tat Khalsa ideology
Tat Khalsa	The 'true Khalsa'; radical members of the Singh Sabha
vaisakhi	A spring festival that now commemorates the creation of the Khalsa