LIONS OF THE PUNJAB

LIONS OF THE PUNJAB

Culture in the Making

Richard G. Fox

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS
Berkeley • Los Angeles • London

University of California Press
Berkeley and Los Angeles, California

University of California Press, Ltd.
London, England

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Fox, Richard Gabriel, 1939–
Lions of the Punjab.

Includes index.
1. Sikhs. 2. Punjab (India)—Civilization.
3. Punjab (India)—Economic conditions. 4. Culture.
I. Title.
DS485.P3F68 1985 306'.0954'5 84-28016
ISBN 0-520-05491-1

Printed in the United States of America

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

For the people of the Punjab
and for Sarah Sushila

Contents

Preface and Acknowledgments

Can anthropologists be defined as otherwise intelligent human beings who nevertheless believe in the concept of culture? This definition corrupts Elman Service's original one, to the effect that anthropologists are otherwise intelligent humans who do not believe in the germ theory of disease. Trying to "make anthropology" out of the social life I studied in the north Indian state of Punjab led me to question the conception of culture with which I labored. I came to feel that we anthropologists overlooked the ills that often attend our concept of culture in much the way we unthinkingly brave foreign germs.

During August 1980 and from December 1980 until May 1981 I had collected data on Punjab agrarian movements and Sikh religious identities in England and India. As I worked on it, my material proved increasingly resistant to standard anthropological treatment of culture and cultural patterns. Neither a materialist anthropology nor a symbolic one seemed to do any better, because, as I came to perceive the problem, they both depended on a similar concept of culture. Either one gave an inadequate, flat, and unchanging picture of a society. The dimension missing from my anthropology consisted of people acting in unison or individually over time and thereby defining the material conditions and symbolic forms, the culture, within which they lived.

I came to feel that our (we do, after all, feel extremely proprietary about it) traditional concept of culture has often justified the most distorted views about primitive and non-Western societies, the "others" whom anthropologists traditionally study. It does so by stereotyping individuals and groups as mere carriers of the culture, by pressing them pancake-flat under a tyranny of culture. Individual and collective action, response, resistance, and struggle for or against "the" culture get lost in

such a determinism; they are crushed under the despotism of cultural tradition.

Using culture to justify pejorative views of others shows up in many places, but I shall mention only three brief instances of it that I came upon as I worked on the Punjab material. Max Weber could typify Hindus as passive and otherworldly, led away by their culture "from rational conduct in the world."[1] Weber's use of culture is not so distant from the stereotypes employed by the colonial administrator, Hugh Trevaskis, who "explained" the backwardness of India by the pessimism and fatalism of Hinduism and Islam.[2] Similarly, for C. E. Black, as for so many other modernization theorists, the progress of Western industrial societies rests on the "inventiveness and vigor" promoted by their cultural beliefs and institutions, which traditional societies lack.[3]

Anthropologists disown such "misuses" of the culture concept. We may label them "orientalist" or even "racist." We may see them as the result of the diffusion of the culture concept to other disciplines or to the public sphere and its distortion there. But is it possible that to some degree the anthropological concept of culture prepares the ground for these misuses? Does placing human behavior under the tyranny of culture license such stereotyping and homogenizing "explanations" of the human condition in different societies?

The self-diagnosis going on currently in anthropology, the perception of malaise, and the several prescriptions for mending the discipline clearly show that anthropologists feel increasingly ill at ease with basic concepts like culture. I hope this book will aid this effort to compound a better concept of culture, thereby to heal anthropology, and ultimately to strengthen our comprehension of human social behavior, in India and elsewhere. I expect my prescription may displease some anthropologists because I deny to society most of the unitary meanings and structured consensus that our culture concept commonly ascribes to it. That does not mean that I see society simply as filled with conflict and competition. It does mean that I see both cultural conflict and consensus as arising from social confrontation. If society is a battleground over beliefs, then social relations are specific engagements, where people learn about and confront their enemies—but in the process also marshal their friends. The order of culture that I see is therefore the order of this ongoing social battle, not the regimentation by longstanding cultural tradition defended by many anthropologists.

Whatever merit this work has grows out of years of training, and I am thankful to many people for this education. Here, I can only acknowledge the individuals and institutions aiding me in the Punjab research and the writing of this book.

The National Science Foundation materially aided the research through Grant No. BNS-8007726 from the Program in Anthropology. A Duke University Research Council Small Grant paid for the preparation of the maps. I am grateful for the support these institutions have given me.

In India, the National Archives of India, New Delhi, provided much of the archival data for this work; and I wish to thank the staff for their help, especially the director, Dr. S. A. I. Tirmizi. The Nehru Library, New Delhi, also proved a valuable resource, thanks to Dr. Ravinder Kumar, its director, and his staff. At the India Office Library in London, I wish to thank the director, B. C. Bloomfield, who had his staff lead me through the intricacies of the official records. The Oriental Manuscript section of the British Museum was another important source of my data.

Many friends in India greatly aided me in personal and scholarly ways. Andrea Menefee Singh and Har Kirat Singh, Sant Singh, Amrit and Ashok Srinivasen, M. S. A. Rao, Harish Puri, Carolyn Elliott, Ainslie Embree, and Ted Riccardi have my heartfelt thanks. I also wish to thank the anthropology faculty at Delhi University for the opportunity to try out some of my early ideas.

Joel and Maila Kahn and Steven and Joan Nugent helped my family settle in during our stay in England. I also learned a great deal of value in my Punjab work from Joel's research on Indonesia.

In the United States, many people have assisted in making this book better. Avinash Maheshwari, in charge of the PL 480 Collection at Duke, was an invaluable resource on library collections and on the Punjab itself. Prithijit and Inderdeep Chatrath helped fill in gaps in my understanding of Sikhism and the Sikh community, especially in the United States. My colleagues in anthropology, Allen Zagarell, Rob Weller, Carol Smith, and Jeff Boyer have given especially valuable aid, either through their own research, their critiques of my work, or both. I have also learned a great deal as a member of the Duke University Faculty Seminar on Marxism and the Program on Marxism and Society, and I especially value the suggestions of Chuck Bergquist, Bill Reddy, and other members of these programs. Alice Ingerson, Jane Schneider, Emily Ahern, Katherine Verdery, and others who participated in a symposium at the 1983 International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences meetings in Quebec gave me useful comments on the chapter on culture. Alice convinced me that all images of culture, including the kaleidoscopic one I initially proposed, were potentially misleading. I have tried out parts of this book in various other settings, and I especially wish to thank Mack O'Barr, Rolph Trouillot, Brackette Williams, Eric Wolf, John Richards, Ed Haynes, Ainslie Embree, Ernestine Friedl, and Joseph DiBona for their comments.

Judith Huff Fox served as my research associate in the collection of archival materials in India and did the computer runs in the United States. Marjolein Kars coded the census and agricultural data. Without their work, this book would not exist.

R. G. F.

Durham, North Carolina
2 October 1984

Postscript: I finished this book before the tragedy suffered by the Punjab in June 1984, and my dedication of this volume to the Punjab's people is a small and inadequate expression of my sympathy for their losses.

The attack on the Golden Temple and the agitation that provoked it are too recent for any substantial analysis, but in the context of this book, I wish to make two provisional points. One is to note how much Sikh shrines have changed in character over the last half-century. Until late in the Raj, they were staunchly loyalist institutions, but at present some of them have become centers of dissent from government. This transformation is in large part the result of the religious reforms and anticolonial agrarian movement of the 1920s, analyzed in this volume. That an institution could undergo such radical change in so short a time gives the lie to any conception of cultural tradition as inertial and coercive.

The other point is to suggest that the Western media have failed to contextualize the June events within the political economy of the Punjab as it has developed since the Green Revolution of the 1960s. In general, the media have been content to speak of "ancient" communal animosities, the "inherent" distaste of Sikhs for Hindus and vice versa, the "natural" martyrdom and "inescapable" fanaticism associated with the Sikhs or certain Sikhs. Throughout this book, I have suggested that ongoing class relations underlie and intermix with developing communal identities and animosities in Punjab past. In Punjab present, Roger Ballard cogently argues a similar relationship.[4] He identifies the radical antigovernment forces of Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale with the small Punjab cultivators, whose condition has worsened considerably in the aftermath of the Green Revolution. The moderates, the Akalis, he identifies with the Punjab's capitalist farmers, those whom the Green Revolution profited, who originally engaged the government to obtain greater concessions for their advanced agriculture. That these two classes temporarily converged and gained partial consciousness under a single communal banner seconds the analysis of the 1920 Akali protest presented in this book, al-

though the classes and definitions of community were different in the two cases.

4 January 1985

New calamities befall India and occasion an addition to this already lengthy postscript. Indira Gandhi's assassination and the ensuing slaughter of Sikhs are an ugly moment in the making of the Indian nation. These terrible events showed me even more clearly the disabilities in the traditional culture concept, as it was put forward in the American popular press and other media to make sense of what had happened in India. Not only did we "learn" that Sikhs were only a breakaway sect from Hinduism (like Christians from Judaism?) but, more important, the actions of two individuals and the ensuing reactions of many thousands were "explained" by appeals to "ancient" cultural patterns of communal antagonism and "age-old" traditions of martyrdom and religious fervor. This false cultural determinism obscures real history. While it pretends to explain human action in another society, it actually only feeds current prejudices that culture keeps India and other poor countries backward. Whereas individuals are said to move society in the West, people in India are merely carriers of communal traditions, which, once recognized as cultural and therefore presumed to be above history and beyond easy change, need little investigation. In spite of the many tons of newsprint and the many hours of television expended on their plight, the "people without history," as Eric Wolf calls the colonial and neocolonial world, remain so because they are said to have "culture" instead.

Yet, it must be remembered that what appears to us an extensive, complicated, and yet well ordered institution is the outcome of ever so many doings and pursuits, carried on by savages, who have no laws or aims or charters definitely laid down.

—Bronislaw Malinowski, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*

The history which bears and determines us has the form of a war rather than that of a language: relations of power, not relations of meaning.

—Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*

A book on how to handle a fierce lion might then cause a series of books to be produced on such subjects as the fierceness of lions, the origins of fierceness, and so forth. Similarly, as the focus of the text centers more narrowly on the subject—no longer lions but their fierceness—we might expect that the ways by which it is recommended that a lion's fierceness be handled will actually *increase* its fierceness, force it to be fierce.

—Edward Said, *Orientalism*

Introduction: Punjab Lions and the Puzzle of Culture

In the following pages I deal with the nature of culture and cultural meaning—that is, in currently accepted anthropological usage, the system of meanings, beliefs, values, and codes that construct the way of life, the design for living, the perception of "reality," and the pattern of social relations in a society. Current theoretical debate in anthropology pits an approach that treats such cultural meaning as primary and constitutive[1] against an orientation that analyzes culture as a product of material (demographic, technological, and ecological) conditions.[2] These contrasting viewpoints usually go by the labels "idealist" and "materialist," respectively. They are not particularly good labels, because scholars such as Clifford Geertz, whom some might wish to classify as an idealist, resist this designation.[3] In this book, therefore, I suggest that the terms *cultural materialism* and *culturology* more clearly designate the intellectual differences between what others refer to as materialism and idealism.[4] Cultural materialism conjures up technological, ecological, and demographic factors as explaining cultural meanings and social action; whereas culturology, conversely, invokes cultural meanings as determining social action and as defining the way in which technology, ecology, and demography materialize (that is, gain social expression) in a society.[5]

My major proposition is that the cultural-materialism–culturology debate is jejune, for two reasons. The first is because cultural meanings and material conditions combine to determine or constitute any empirical situation. The second and more important reason is that no matter the heated rhetoric that has passed back and forth, both sides in this debate suffer from being too similar; they share many of the same inadequacies in social analysis.[6] Their confrontation, because it has defined the boundaries of anthropological disputation, has acted to obscure their shared deficiencies. Indeed, their fervid polemic may function mainly as an ideological device, a justifying charter, by which to contain anthropological

inquiry; certainly, more smoke than fire has often come from this debate. Both culturologists and cultural materialists conserve a conception of culture that does not escape teleology and tautology, does not adequately explain change, does not comprehend historical processes, and does not accord to individuals independence of social action and cultural construction.

In this book, I propose to amalgamate culturology and cultural materialism for better understanding a specific empirical situation. But that is not all I hope to achieve. My ultimate objective is to go beyond both culturology and cultural materialism and, by building on the work of E. P. Thompson, Raymond Williams, Pierre Bourdieu, and Alain Touraine, to put forward a different notion of culture, one that would comprehend any empirical case.

In the fashion typical of anthropologists, however, I only try to solve the larger puzzle about the nature of culture after I have fit together the ethnographic and historical particulars of what I call the "Punjab puzzle." The puzzle concerns early twentieth-century religious reformism and agrarian protest in the Punjab region of northern India. It consists of two historically particular questions:

> Why did followers of Sikhism, specifically those called Singhs or "Lions," engage in a mass rural protest against British rule that shook early twentieth-century Punjab?
>
> Where did the Singh identity that provided the cultural meaning for this social movement come from?

The political economy of the Punjab under British colonialism as the twentieth century began sets the framework for this puzzle. Sikh religious identities and Singh military recruitment; Punjab urban reformers and rural protesters; British colonial agrarian policies and the capitalist world economy; cultural meanings, both Indian and British, all enter into its composition. The utility of the conception of culture I propose should become clear first in how well it arranges the pieces of the Punjab puzzle.

I keep the two goals of this book—a better understanding of anti-colonial protest in the Punjab and a better conception of culture—before the reader by means of a specific imagery: the Singhs as Lions, a martial, courageous, and stalwart species of men and women, but also one periodically mastered and used by the British. I hope this biological imagery offends no one, least of all those of Singh identity today. My justification is that the imagery elucidates British colonial orientations and policies, specifically, in the way their culturally given beliefs in biological determinism constituted their relations with the Singhs. The biological imagery

also highlights and disputes a current anthropological orientation toward India and the conception of culture, dominant in anthropology, on which it rests. This organismic conception of culture converts the biological determinism of British belief into an indigenous Indian folk theory.

The racism that informed British nineteenth-century colonialism in the Punjab and the cultural determinism that constitutes the organismic conception of culture as currently applied to India are both varieties of what Edward Said calls "Orientalism." Said argues that Orientalism was and is a distinctive cultural understanding found in Western Europe and the United States. This term refers at once to an area of academic specialty, a lay and scholarly stereotyping of the Orient and Oriental, and a way of controlling the regions and peoples so classified. Orientalism is a set of cultural meanings

> for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient.[7]

The biological imagery running through this volume therefore apes nineteenth-century British "sensibilities," which were, of course, simply Orientalizing cultural beliefs, about the biological factors underlying human social behaviors. British colonial understandings licensed the treatment of the religious community of Singhs as separate, as a species possessing a distinctive physiognamy (of superior height and strength), a distinctive habitat (the Punjab), distinctive behaviors (especially the traits of impulsive courage), and unique appearance (the turban and uncut beard). I adopt this imagery and use it as a motif throughout precisely because a major theme of this book is to chart the historical origins and course of this "indigenous" belief. In treating certain Indian religious communities, castes, or regional populations as so many distinctive species of humans, the British believed they were only parroting Indian views; in fact, they were articulating a creole of British racism with Indian caste society, which I translate throughout this book.

Nineteenth-century European cultural beliefs about the racial divisions of humankind, about the inferiority of certain human populations, about the quite separate biological pedigrees of races—some closer to the apes than to other humans—form one species of Orientalism. These beliefs not only rationalized colonial oppression, but also constructed it—that is, they made Europeans see India and act toward her peoples in particular ways. Not all of these ways were therefore necessarily rational, and many of them did not in fact enhance the colonial domination that may have given rise to them. The concept of martial races as applied to the Singhs

had unintended and deleterious consequences for British Indian colonialism, which I show later. Because the British believed the Singhs were a separate race, or species, of men, they tried to get the Singhs to believe it too. By a strange mutation of thought, the British then established the ultimate Orientalism: they justified the biological determinism validating and constituting their colonial domination and having its roots in mid–nineteenth-century European thought as really originating in the cultural beliefs of the Indians themselves. It became another one of those curious aspects of native society to which, along with the foul weather, it behooved the European to adapt. But, in fact, by believing their Orientalist cultural understandings were native to India, the Raj forced indigenous society to evolve according to British beliefs. At the very moment they thought they were helping the Singhs maintain their specific traditions, the British were forcing those traditions to adapt to British beliefs about them. The cultural selection to which the Lions of the Punjab adapted was a colonial one. It worked upon them when the British implemented selective policies based on their reconstruction of Singh "racial" tradition; it equally worked upon them as an internalized cultural concept, when the Singhs themselves came to believe in the British reconstruction.

My resort to biological imagery aims to uncover this fossil Orientalism, to bare its colonial functions, and to constantly remind the reader of its symbolic motifs and political-economic consequences. It also emphasizes that, a century ago, British cultural meanings blended with colonial material forces to create the Punjab puzzle, which is one of the analytic themes of this book.

Sad to say, nineteenth-century British Orientalism in India has present-day scholarly descendants. They claim to find an indigenous South Asian belief in the biological speciation of humankind on the basis of caste and religion. The nineteenth-century British generally accepted the biological reality of what they took as the Indian belief, whereas current scholars naturally reject its biological presumption but accord it social reality in Indian society—and thereby Orientalize India the more. Claude Lévi-Strauss, for instance, has argued that societies with caste systems, such as India, differ from those with totemic organizations because castes think of themselves as separate biological species, able to share goods but not to share mates.[8] McKim Marriott and Ronald Inden perpetuate this Orientalism in their cultural analysis of Indian beliefs. Each caste, they assert, is said to possess a distinctive "coded substance" speciating it from all other castes.[9] Yet their uniquely Indian cultural conception has curiously similar-looking congeners in the midnineteenth-century Western cultural beliefs nourishing colonialism.

Current Orientalism is only a variety of the conception of culture that has dominated anthropology and other social sciences in the last half-

century. This conception nourishes the assumption by culturology of a cultural code or by cultural materialism of an ecological necessity to which history and humans mechanically and automatically adapt. At fault in culturology, cultural materialism, and present-day Orientalism is what I refer to as the organismic conception of culture, which they inherit as a deleterious trait from ancestral anthropology.

So another purpose of the biological cum organismic imagery in this book is to keep before the reader the necessity for a new conception of culture by dissecting the congenital weaknesses of the old one, by warning against the organismic conception of culture from which present-day Orientalism evolved. Through this imagery I want to exhibit the traditional conception's inadequate answers to the specific questions composing the Punjab puzzle, such as where Singh cultural beliefs and identity came from. I also want to show its inability to answer generic questions about culture, such as where cultural meanings come from and what makes them change.

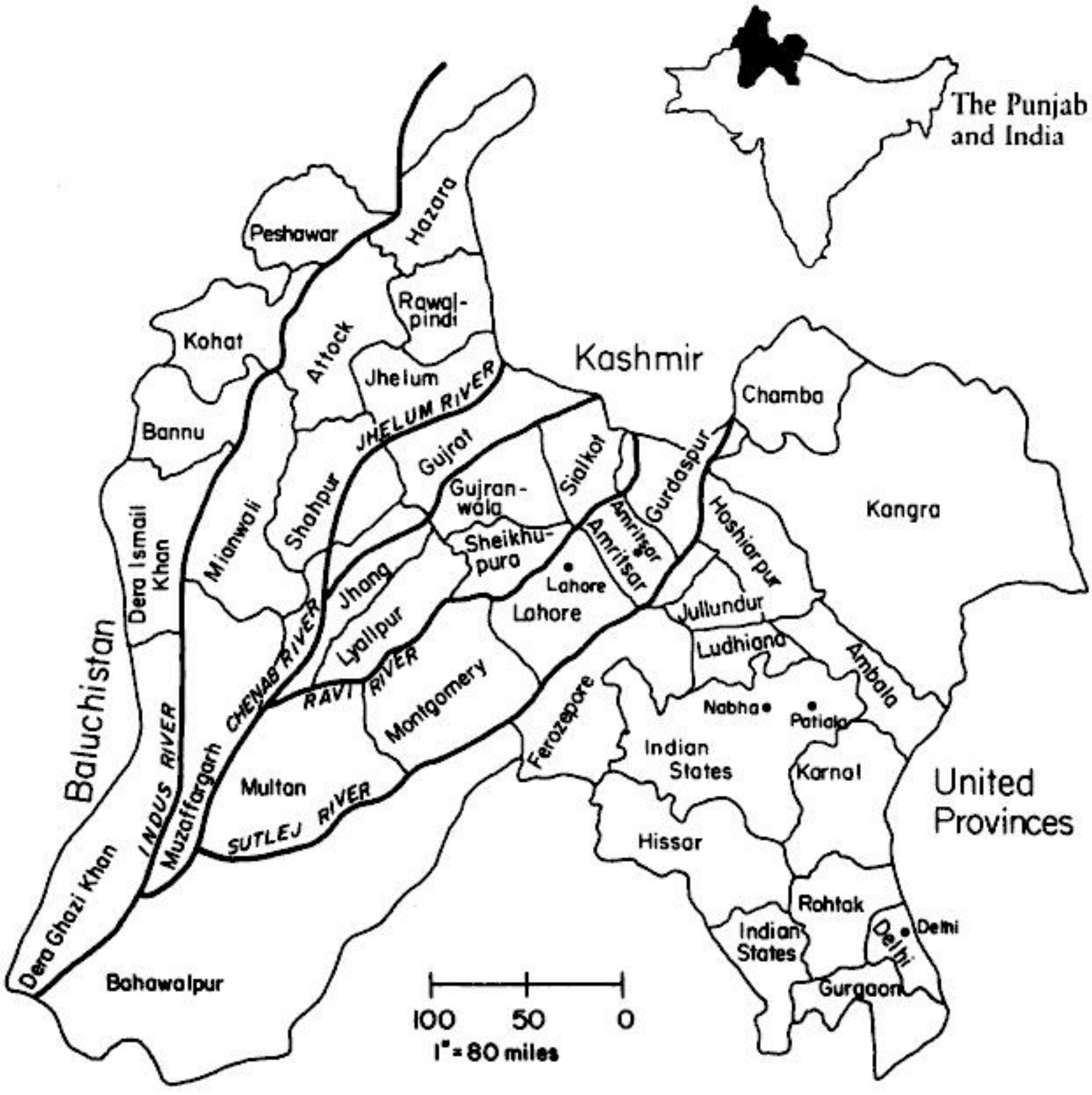
The following chapter sets out both the puzzle that was in the making in colonial Punjab and the conception of culture that is in the making in this volume.

CHAPTER 1

The Puzzle's Nature

Extinction faced the Lions of the Punjab in the middle of the nineteenth century. Or so their British keepers thought. True to the name Singh (lion) that they carried as a matter of their Sikh religion, Punjab's warriors had fought valiantly, but to no avail against the British East India Company's forces. In 1849, John Company annexed the Punjab, the homeland that Singh rulers had only recently wrested from Muslim domination. This acquisition represented the ultimate triumph of British colonial expansion in India.

The Punjab set the limits of British territorial expansion in India because it was the most northerly region that permitted the intensive plow agriculture on which British colonial revenues depended.[1] The Punjab, or the Land of the Five Rivers, to translate its indigenous name, was an extension of the north Indian plain (see map 1). It was a flat, treeless expanse dissected by several major rivers and fertilized through a rainfall that was often deficient in all but the central and eastern (submontane) areas. Beyond the Punjab, to the north, mountainous country formed an effective frontier between British India and Afghanistan. Even within the Punjab, large areas were of more use to the British as pōlitical buffers than for their economic resources. The arid regions of the southwest only marginally supported agriculture, and cultivation in the southeastern districts also suffered periodically from insufficient rain. The most secure and productive agriculture obtained in the central districts, and British colonialism therefore paid these lands its earliest attention. The central Punjab had been ruled by Singhs, had been defended by armies of Singhs (along with Muslim and Hindu warriors), and was inhabited by many persons who denominated themselves as Sikhs.



Punjab includes North-West Frontier Province and Delhi. Districts as of 1931.

Map 1: Punjab and India

The alternation in the last sentence between the labels "Sikh" and "Singh" requires a short terminological clarification and later on will require a long theoretical justification. The terms *Sikh* and *Sikhism* refer to several cultural or symbolic identities prevalent in the Punjab during the nineteenth century. These identities subsumed a range of quite different religious beliefs and social practices. Because the boundary between these several sorts of Sikh identities was indistinct, a self-denominated Sikh might follow an amalgam of religious and social practices drawn from different points along the range of identities. Quite against the actual diversity of belief and observance, the British usually treated one Sikh identity, the Singh or Lion one, as the only true Sikhism, and they often used the labels "Sikh" and "Singh" interchangeably.

Common parlance in India today and elsewhere in the world also coalesces Sikh and Singh. This practice is testimony to the success of an early twentieth-century urban reform movement that also activated a major agrarian protest. The reformers labored to institute a single image of Sikh orthodoxy in the form of a Singh identity. This singular image of the Sikh/Singh, as it has now come down to us, consists of a religious identity expressed publicly in leaving the beard and hair unshorn, in avoiding tobacco, in wearing a steel bangle and dagger, in adopting the common male surname Singh, and in abjuring any connection with Hinduism or Islam. Wearing a specially tied turban is another typical usage, although not scripturally prescribed. These are the most obvious signs of Singh identity. Like the Jews and other religious communities, a person may adhere to the identity without subscribing to all or any of the tenets of the religion. That is why I phrase the matter as adherence to Singh identity, rather than adherence to Sikhism or "Singhism" throughout this book.

The twentieth-century reformers also advanced basic religious tenets, and they too have come to characterize what Singhs today take as orthodoxy. These basic tenets include: monotheism, honest labor (*kirat*), contemplation (*nam simrim*) of the holy scriptures (*Granth Sahib*), baptism or initiation (*pahul*), interdining (*langar*), and equality of all persons.[2]

Sikh identity was neither a singular one nor internally consistent in the middle nineteenth century, however. The tenets observed were also far from uniform.[3] I will use the label "Sikh" in reference to the entire range of identities and observances, and reserve the name "Singh" for the special warrior-martyr identity that formed one segment of the great arc of Sikh potential. Thus, the rulers, whom the British deposed, and their warriors, whom they hoped to tame, were Sikhs, but more specifically, they were also Singhs.[4]

In Punjab, a century and a quarter ago, the British hoped they had destroyed the Singh's niche. They believed that their recent conquest of the Punjab, their institution of mild taxation and reasoned government, would remove the anarchic, warlord social environment that had bred these Lions of the Punjab. Sir Richard Temple, secretary to the Government of the Punjab, prophesized in 1853 that

> the Sikh faith and ecclesiastical polity is rapidly going where the Sikh political ascendancy has already gone. . . . The Sikhs of [the prophet] Nanak . . . will perhaps cling to the faith of their fathers; but the Sikhs of [the prophet] Gobind, . . . who are more specially styled the Singhs or Lions, and who embraced the faith as being the religion of warfare and conquest, no longer regard the Khalsa [the Sikh religious community] now that the prestige has departed from it. These men joined in thousands, and they now depart in equal number. They rejoin the ranks of Hinduism whence they originally came. . . .[5]

British expectations that the Lions would soon become extinct received further subsidy from the 1881 census, which reported a significantly smaller Sikh population than the 1868 enumeration had. In these censuses, the category "Sikh" subsumed Singhs as well as all other Sikh identities. Denzil Ibbetson, the census commissioner, ventured to say that "Sikhism is on the decline."[6]

Some forty years later these reports of Singh senescence proved to be greatly exaggerated. The symbols of religion and social community associated with the Singhs generated a massive rural protest against British colonialism, the largest and longest-lived since the 1857 Indian Mutiny. The British were surprised and angered. The Punjab had been the model province for the benefits of British colonial rule. These benefits, this Pax Britannica, should have promoted the extinction of the pugnacious and belligerent Singhs. At the least the British expected their rule to have tamed them. The domestication of the Singhs had proceeded, the British might have argued, so far that the colonial Indian army heavily recruited them; it enlisted their courage and loyalty in defense of the Raj. Yet in the 1920s new Lions replaced these running dogs of British Indian imperialism. In the British view, these anticolonial Singhs had turned against a benevolent master. The Singhs similarly accused the British rulers of betraying a trust: the colonial rulers had used the Sikh religion to tame them, to make them something less than the Lions they truly were. These accusations of betrayal, these expectations of each other, show how interwoven Singh identity and British rule had become in the political economy of the colonial Punjab in the early twentieth century.

Who were these new Singhs? Where did the cultural meanings that characterized their rural protest come from? What transformed the cultural identity "Singh" into a corporate protest movement with sharp social boundaries and religious observances? What political-economic factors generated their collective anticolonial social actions? What cultural meanings and political-economic factors determined British colonial understanding and reaction to this most threatening rural protest? Answering these questions composes the specific ethnographic and historical goal of this book. Answering them also frames a conception of culture neither cultural materialist nor culturological, which fulfills my most general, theoretical aim.

THE PUZZLE

To answer these questions requires solving a logically prior and theoretically central puzzle: why was it a Singh identity and no other that effectively constituted a rural protest movement in early twentieth-century Punjab? In fact, there was an equally likely contender for this role, which,

although it arose in a similar social environment and communicated a similar set of religious symbols, was singularly unsuccessful in creating rural protest in its own imagery.

The puzzle, then, is how two ideologically similar religious identities can come to differ radically in motivating collective political behavior. In the context of late nineteenth-century Punjab, the question becomes why did a reformist Sikhism, the Singh Sabha movement, and the new version of Singh identity it promulgated, develop into an anticolonial peasant uprising; whereas the Arya Samaj, a Hindu reform movement and the new, embracing Hindu identity it put forward, was generally unsuccessful among cultivators. Solving this puzzle requires employing cultural-materialist and culturological frameworks as well as a hybrid of these concepts and judging their worth as explanations of how cultural meaning is constructed and how social action is generated. If, however, cultural materialism and culturology either in pure or hybridized forms are inadequate because they leave human agency and historical contingency out of their theoretical designs, then their failure authorizes a different solution to the larger puzzle, the nature of culture.

To be found neither in cultural materialism nor culturology, the answer to the puzzle lies in the peculiar historical conjunction of material conditions and cultural meanings that constituted the political economy of the Punjab into the first decades of the twentieth century. My solution is that British rulers, in pursuit of their colonial interests through means dictated by their own cultural beliefs, foreshadowed the reformed Sikh, or Singh identity propounded by the Singh Sabhas. The British Indian army nurtured an orthodox, separatist, and martial Singh identity among Sikh rural recruits to its regiments and companies. They served as the Lions of British India. It is only a slight exaggeration to say that the British lion maintained an imperial presence in India in the form of that other Lion, the turbaned and unshorn Singh.

Hindu urban reformers, however, had no equivalent symbols and identities subsidized and perpetuated in the rural area by the colonial political economy.

The British believed that their Punjab Lions were a dangerous species and also that religion gave them strength. Colonial authorities attempted to lock up their loyalty to the Raj by converting their religious shrines into imperial cages and their ritual officiants into colonial attendants. Urban Singh reformers increasingly conflicted with these temple authorities at the turn of the twentieth century, and the British were soon drawn in on the side of their temple toadies. As these sides were drawn, the Singh identity lionized by the British military took on a distinctly anticolonial mien.

When the Punjab's rural economy deteriorated after World War I (a collapse precipitated by the contradictions of colonial exploitation), peas-

ants, embued with the Raj's image of the militant Singh, joined with urban reformers, who broadcast a similar identity. The upshot was a mass religious protest that was also a political uprising; it lasted for five years and was only put down at great cost to the British.

The British therefore should not have been surprised that their model community, the Singhs, in their model province, the Punjab, turned disloyal. Indeed, both were proper models of a colonialism that had distorted agrarian conditions and classes in the interests of the capitalist world system and had redefined religious identity and institutions to maintain foreign rule. Even if the early twentieth-century Punjab Lions were in large degree creatures of the Raj and their agriculture mainly a colonial manufacture, they valiantly, although unsuccessfully, tried in the rural protest of the 1920s to free themselves and their land from the British tether.

PIECES OF THE PUZZLE

This book begins with one major segment of the Punjab puzzle, the integration of the Punjab into the capitalist world economy under the auspices of British colonialism. What occurred in the Punjab was only an extension of the political economy of British India. In the next three chapters, I show that the "imperial embrace" in India—and in the Punjab—was beset with a systematic contradiction between an objective of colonial underdevelopment and administration "on the cheap" (described later) and an objective of colonial development and state affluence.

Chapter 2, "The Imperial Embrace," argues that the military security, bureaucratic management, and fiscal condition of the colonial government depended heavily on which objective was ascendant in a particular period or in a particular place. So too, the way the capitalist world system penetrated and deformed the political economy of India and the Punjab changed according to the reigning objective. Therefore, different systems of Indian agricultural production and rural labor grew up over the course of British colonialism. Because these production and labor systems reflected contradictory aspects of colonialism and world-system penetration, they too were in a state of contradiction—that is, the nature of the agrarian economy as constituted by one phase of colonialism threw up social classes that strongly protested against the threats to their economic interests induced by a later phase of colonialism. Chapter 3, "A New Breed of Peasant," shows that in the central Punjab, a rural class of petty commodity producers formed under the earlier colonialism of "on the cheap." Chapter 4, "Well Water and Well Watered," shows that as the colonial objective changed and the state invested heavily in canal irrigation elsewhere in Punjab, this rural class was readied to rise in protest

against its deteriorating economic position. These three chapters indicate the material conditions shaping the rural protest movement and how they formed in relation to British colonialism and the capitalist world system.

Chapter 5, "The Third Sikh War," presents the major rural protest that ensued from 1920 to 1925. My intention is not to be historically exhaustive but to add some original information and a new interpretation to the excellent sources already available.[7] I emphasize the movement's strength, duration, provenience, and adherents, so that they take their proper shape in the analysis of the movement I present in later chapters.

Given these most important pieces of the puzzle, the subsequent two chapters fit them together according to a consistent theoretical design. New pieces of the Punjab puzzle enter the analysis along the way, such as the precolonial evolution of several Sikh identities, each embracing a selected set of cultural meanings, and the failure of the Punjab's earlier rural protest movements not based on Singh identity. Chapter 6, "Cultural Materialism and Culturology," asserts that the two concepts must be combined to piece together any empirical puzzle. Moreover, it argues, these approaches must be augmented and superceded for valid historical analysis. Chapter 7, "Class and Culture," considers the theoretical nature of such an analysis and rejects some hybrids of cultural materialism and culturology. Then, building on E. P. Thompson's analytical integration of cultural meaning and material forces within a class framework, I propose a solution to the Punjab puzzle, which the next two chapters elucidate.

The support and definition that Singh identity received from the British military in the latter half of the nineteenth century forms the subject of Chapter 8, "A Martial Species." Impelled by their belief that fighting capacity was biologically given (at least in India), the British instituted companies and regiments composed entirely of Singhs, Gurkhas, and other supposedly biologically favored—and, therefore, British favored—populations. The British feared that the consequences of this "patting" of the Singhs (as one British official called it) would be a greater propensity for mutiny; but in the event, the Lions they came to fear were from an urban lower-middle class bent on reforms that the British opposed. These reformers appropriated the Singh identity fostered by the British to launch an anticolonial protest that captured rural disenchantment with the Raj.

Chapter 9, "An Endangered Species," shows how the new Lions of the Punjab arose in the struggle for cultural identity, political power, and economic well-being among the rural and urban lower-middle class, the rural petty commodity producers, and the colonial state autonomously pursuing its colonial interests. This chapter also explores how religious

identities at first carried and then stymied class consciousness in the Punjab. The way in which economic class interacted with religious identity in the growth of class consciousness explains the confrontations between Aryas and Sikhs, between Sikhs and Singhs, and, ultimately, the struggle between Singhs and the British Raj. This chapter arranges the many pieces of the Punjab puzzle into a coherent framework organized around class, consciousness, contradiction, and confrontation.

The final two chapters entertain what this ordering of the Punjab puzzle means for a conception of culture. Chapter 10, "Organismic Conceptions of Culture," argues that the images of culture in anthropology relating it to a web, a sandpile, an octopus, or a game are ahistorical and homeostatic; they also presume a tyranny of structure (in the form of a cultural system or rules of the game) over individual and collective behavior. Cultural materialism and culturology also suffer from this "organismic" conception of culture. I conclude in Chapter 11, "Culture in the Making," by suggesting an alternative conception of culture: culture is in a constant state of becoming an apparently unitary set of rules and meanings through oppositions and struggles among groups, where the groups themselves and the rules that regulate their interactions only develop in the process of ongoing social relations. What often is taken as a consistent and long-lived cultural pattern, a coherent set of cultural meanings, is only the momentary and localized product of human action and contest. Culture always "is," but it has always just become so.

The form of this book is meant to convey this conception of culture as constantly in the making. Each chapter introduces new pieces of the Punjab puzzle in simulation of the constant unfolding of cultural meanings and social action, the continuous innovation I believe to characterize the history of any culture. Arriving at a new chapter means discovering other pieces of social contradiction and confrontation that must be fit into the Punjab puzzle and requires considering different frameworks for doing this.

CHAPTER 2

The Imperial Embrace

During their first 150 years in India, British merchants were only suitors at the courts of the Moghuls and the other landed princes of India. When the British East India Company gained political hegemony over Bengal midway in the eighteenth century and then proceeded on to further territorial conquests and acquisitions, the European suitor became much more formidable. Paul Scott characterizes British relations with India at the end of the Raj in 1947 as an "imperial embrace," in which the destinies, peoples, and cultures of both nations had become so intimately involved that annulling the relationship, never mind separating the partners, was extremely difficult and painful:

> Two nations in violent opposition, not for the first time nor as yet for the last because they were still then locked in an imperial embrace of such long standing and subtlety it was no longer possible for them to know whether they hated or loved one another, or what it was that held them together and . . . confused the image of their separate destinies.[1]

The imperial embrace was less equal and more forced than Scott's imagery might communicate, however. It only developed into the intimacy Scott identifies at the close of the Raj over a long period of British colonial dominance. British imperial relations with India began as a rape and perhaps ended as an amour; but, no matter how involved the partners became, they never legitimized their relationship, and there were rocky

moments throughout, especially over the domestic economy. This chapter lays bare the liaison between Britain and India in terms of political economy, that is, the way in which British colonial dominance altered Indian agricultural production, labor systems, and economic class relations.[2]

No matter whether it was closer to willing amour than to forced mastery at any moment,[3] this intimacy always depended on offsetting British political-economic desires against Indian realities of production and revenue. And, no matter how the British might have desired their colonial relationship with India's and the Punjab's people and economy to stand, Britain was legitimately wedded to its Government of India, which it had to maintain against any other claims to British favors.

COLONIAL INDIA'S CONTRADICTIONS

British colonialism in India constantly negotiated a difficult balance between two contradictory political-economic objectives. One objective made British administrators try to extract the maximum land revenue from Indian agriculture with the minimum transformation in agrarian production and labor systems. This aim led to the "development of economic underdevelopment" in India. The other objective required a revolutionary alteration in Indian labor and production systems through massive capital investment so that increased industrial and agricultural productivity would enrich the Raj. This goal underwrote the economic development of India.

Depending on which one of these objectives was of greater weight during a particular period or in a particular place, different systems of Indian agricultural production and labor grew up over the course of the imperial embrace. Because these production and labor systems reflected contradictory aspects of colonialism and the world economy, they too were in a state of contradiction, which—as in the case of central Punjab cultivators—often took the form of rural protest against the overarching powers of the colonial state "to make or break." The pivotal colonial institution that expressed this contradiction—which was victimized by it and therefore tried to resolve it—was the Government of India. What was true for India also held for the Punjab, whose changing systems of production and labor grew out of these contradictory objectives of British colonialism as they were implemented by provincial authorities.

The two contradictory colonial objectives involved the commercial and fiscal relations between Britain and India and between the British home government and Britain's colonial Government of India.

DEVELOPMENT OF UNDERDEVELOPMENT

One objective was that India should supply raw materials to Britain and purchase British manufactured goods. This traditional form of mercantilism, or colonial appropriation "on the cheap," required no investment in the growth of India's industry; in fact, colonial policy often worked hard to destroy indigenous artisanry. Hamza Alavi even advances the argument that India was well along the road to capitalism until British conquest suppressed indigenous production of textiles and other commodities produced for the growing world economy.[4] In 1840 a Select Committee was well pleased to report to Parliament that the East India Company "has . . . succeeded in converting India into a country exporting raw produce."[5] This conversion did not depend on the radical transformation of Indian agricultural production and labor, however.

British colonialism "on the cheap" took the precapitalist forms of agricultural production and labor as it found them—based on feudalistic landlords or peasant smallholders—and appropriated their surplus production without radically transforming their productivity through capital investment or through substantial revision of the labor process. For this colonialism to profit, it was sufficient and necessary to commercialize or monetize agriculture—that is, to force agrarian production and rural labor into the market. This "mercantilization of precapitalist relations," as Samir Amin sees it, is a form of primitive accumulation that "compels people to go in search of money, and so either to become commodity producers or to sell their labor power."[6] The commercialization of agriculture everywhere facilitated the collection of government revenues in coin, and it also provided cultivators with cash incomes with which to purchase British imports. The need for money rooted export crops in the agrarian production of ecologically favored regions, such as the Punjab. Export-destined indigo, opium, and, apropos the Punjab, wheat and cotton soon became the tokens of the forced economic mastery of India by Britain.

Indigenous merchants and moneylenders became the unconscious and unrecognized accomplices of this commercialization: unofficial agents for the British, formidable parasites on the rural cultivator. They forced peasants (and even landlords) into a debt peonage that eventually converted the peasant agriculture of fertile regions like the central Punjab into petty commodity production for the market. This debt peonage, or debt bondage, came about as peasants borrowed money to pay government revenue charges on their land. The time for such payments often coincided with a peasant family's lean season or with a period when agricultural commodity prices were low. Borrowing year after year against a future prosperity that never arrived, the peasant cultivator fell increasingly under the domination of the merchant and moneylender. His in-

debtedness might force him to assign the merchant preemptive rights of purchase or might require him to settle for whatever prices the merchant offered. The moneylender might increasingly dictate that the peasant grow certain crops, those with the greatest market value, and in other ways attack the independence of the peasant proprietor.[7] Through high interest charges, forced sales at below-market prices, and other such devices, moneylenders and merchants reaped profits from agricultural commercialization; and each advance in British domination further bloated this class until it achieved a size and power unprecedented before colonialism. Even the British, whose colonial interests they initially served, grew to detest these moneylenders and merchants and the way they drained India's—and the Punjab's—cultivators.[8] As I show later on, in the interests of their own continued mastery of the Punjab Lions, the British eventually began to punish their unacknowledged allies, the Punjab moneylenders.

The British objective of "budget" colonialism corresponds to what scholars following a dependency, neo-Marxist, or unequal-exchange conception of economic development have taken as the typical pattern of colonial exploitation.[9] Their argument, often summed up in the phrase, "the development of underdevelopment," is that the development of the core industrial capitalist nations required the distorted and repressed economic development of the third world. This thesis rests on a world-systems approach: as capitalism developed in northern Europe from the sixteenth century on, it spread over the globe and economically incorporated all societies in an unequal and specialized world economy. Inequality within the world system resulted because core regions of the capitalist world economy developed at the expense of development in peripheral regions. Specialization within the world economy emerged as labor and production in the periphery got distorted and remained backward, whereas the productivity of the core soared.[10] The energy output of peripheral societies was effectively harnessed to the needs of the core, even though—indeed, precisely because—they never became equal partners in core capitalism. India and other countries of the periphery served mainly as dumping grounds for core manufacturers and as suppliers of cheap raw materials for core manufacturers.

Later in this chapter, after the survey of British Indian colonialism is complete, I assess how necessary and universal the development of underdevelopment was in the colonial world. At this point, however, I wish merely to note that the British objective of a penurious colonialism in India clearly embodied the principle of the development of underdevelopment.

This typical development of underdevelopment prevailed during the early years of the East India Company's domination up until the onset of Crown rule in the middle of the nineteenth century. Its ascendancy

during this period might have resulted from the inability of the colonial administration to penetrate and transform India's rural political economy. Eric Stokes argues that the British in their early involvement with India "knew only what was good for them[selves]."[11] Gerald Barrier, Robert Frykenberg, and David Washbrook second this judgment when they show how John Company's rule and even the later Raj had to accommodate to indigenous powerholders and production systems to successfully rule the country.[12] Alternatively, budget colonialism grew out of the general mercantile character of the world economy up to the mid-nineteenth century and the success of a mercantile class in controlling that economy.[13] The primary concern of members of this class being commerce, they would have expedited the production and exchange of commodities within the world system, but they would have been loathe to fundamentally reorganize production and labor through capital investment.

No matter whether necessity or choice dictated the early primacy of the development of underdevelopment in British Indian colonialism, this objective required the colonial government to depend on the same tributary sources of revenue as had the Moghuls and previous rulers of India. In contrast to capitalist societies, appropriation in such tributary systems did not depend on the tyranny of a market in which capitalists owned the means of production and workers had only labor to sell. Instead, peasants and landlords enjoyed de facto, if not also de jure, control over the major means of production, which was agricultural land. State authorities simply claimed or coerced a large share of the cultivator's surplus, or what Eric Wolf calls a "fund of rent."[14] The main form of tribute income, for the British as well as their predecessors, consisted of a portion of agricultural productivity, which the government extracted through an assessment on cultivators' holdings.

India's precapitalist agrarian system—its dependence on human and animal power, its subsistence orientation, its scattered plots—contained many factors limiting agricultural productivity. Because this system of cultivation was not reformed by British capital investment, productivity increases were limited. Pax Britannica brought some increases in productivity in the early years of Company rule, just as a strong indigenous dynasty would have, but even the most powerful state eventually became stymied by the constraints on productivity imposed by the precapitalist technology and organization of labor. The constant pursuit of new territories by the East India Company's Indian administration during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries probably developed out of fiscal necessity, even though it often departed from the express policy of the home company directors. New lands promised new revenues with minimal government investment. The major expense was for an army of

conquest, but the British solved this problem cheaply by recruiting mainly indigenous troops, who were officered by Europeans. A much more costly method of colonial appropriation would have been for the state to impose and fund a revolution in agricultural production in the territories already conquered. So radical a step would have required massive capital investment in the countryside, which the East India Company was unable or unwilling to do, but which the Crown later undertook, in privileged areas like the Punjab.

This colonial objective of cheap and ready exploitation had its limits, however. Shortly after the seizure of the Punjab in 1849, two factors came together and brought an end to the primacy of the colonial development of underdevelopment. First, the British reached the physical and political limits of their colonial expansion in India. The Punjab was the last fertile region to fall under their reign. Further territorial conquest, to the north and east, would have taken the British to the hill country of Afghanistan or Nepal. Neither place offered much possibility for large, government land revenue, which depended on the intensive agriculture of the Indian plains. In the same fashion that the Great Wall of China demarcated the Chinese core of intensive agriculture from the pastoral nomadic frontier,[15] so the North-West Frontier Province (see map 1) and Assam divided the Indian agricultural core, susceptible to intensive British colonial appropriation, from a tribal borderland that was useful to the British only as a political buffer. After the Punjab fell, by the middle of the nineteenth century, the colonial government's fiscal resources had already proved limited and relatively unexpandable by further conquest.

The second factor was that the British had pressed the rural social system already under their control to the breaking point by mid-century. Revenue defaults and forced sales had become customary rural happenings over the previous fifty years of Company rule in lands to the southeast of the Punjab. Hoping to extract more revenue, the colonial authorities had deposed large prebendaries and landlords in favor of collecting revenues directly from cultivators in the recently acquired North-Western Provinces and Oudh.

At this time and by these actions, the British East India Company had reached the limits of its initial colonial exploitation of India and, in attempting to exceed them, precipitated the Mutiny of 1857–59. The two indigenous groups who formed the majority of mutineers reflected the dual limits that a penurious British colonialism could not overcome: disgruntled "native" soldiers joined with dispossessed landed magnates in rebellion against John Company. The soldiers protested against a Company now miserly and no longer *bahadur* (courageous). Company-Bahadur, the adventurous East India Company, had passed away because no new territories were worthwhile to conquer and therefore no bonuses

could be earned from active duty and no wealth could be gained from looting. The landed princes protested against a colonial rule both shrewd and rapacious. Both groups thus rose against the necessary and ultimate character of British colonialism "on the cheap."

After the Mutiny, the Government of India, now under Crown rule, realized the folly of pressing excessive revenue demands on the precapitalist agriculture and rural society of India. But alternative ways of expanding government income were not readily available. The home government prevented the Government of India from an obvious remedy—placing tariffs on British manufactures—because it would have harmed British industry and Britain's balance of trade. B. R. Tomlinson suggests that the devolution of limited political and taxation power to Indian provincial legislatures, district councils, and municipal boards, which began in the late nineteenth century, came about to legitimate new government exactions.[16] But the interests of the home government in building British industry and exports meant that no policy could effectively address Indian interests. Even after changes in the world economy during the last half of the nineteenth century forced such a policy upon the British, the Government of India suffered a continuing fiscal crisis, which grew even worse after World War I.[17]

This colonial development of underdevelopment distorted other important aspects of Indian society besides the agrarian economy. Cheap government required and also sanctioned (because penurious colonial administration, whatever its necessity, was seen as a virtue) the creation of a class of indigenous low-level bureaucrats and clerks, the babus, interpreting, implementing, and enforcing British colonial policies and laws. Cheap government also led to a burgeoning service sector of teachers, physicians, lawyers, journalists, merchants, and bankers, whose professional activities supported the babus and the British. Collectively, the petty bureaucrats and the other professionals who were the offspring of British colonialism formed the urban "educated classes,"[18] the first to profit handsomely under the Raj and therefore the first to be Westernized; but they were also the first to become nationalist and the first to be despised yet feared by the British. From the ranks of the "educated classes," or lower-middle class, a term I introduce later, came the urban Singh reformers in late nineteenth-century Punjab.

A penurious colonialism also meant the British relied on a predominantly indigenous Indian army to maintain their rule. Even after the Mutiny, when they feared their dependence on Indian troops most deeply, economics dictated that in the main the soldiers of colonialism should come from the villages of the colonized.[19] Perhaps because they often supplied their Indian army with inferior military hardware, the British emphasized a martial state of mind as the prime requisite and charac-

teristic of their Indian forces. They were—supposedly by nature—loyal, obedient, courageous, simple, devout (but fanatical only about the military), and unpolitical. That the British enlisted only those Indians who were inherently, so the British thought, of this martial cast of mind is dealt with in chapter 8. Also discussed later is how British dependence on Indian troops greatly influenced colonial state policies in the Punjab. This influence grew especially strong at the onset of the twentieth century, when the army came increasingly to suppress the dissent generated by the growing nationalism of the babus, lawyers, physicians, and other urban "educated classes" whom stingy colonialism had produced.

DEVELOPMENT

The poverty forced upon the Government of India by this development of underdevelopment contradicted the other objective of British colonialism: that a financially secure Indian administration bear all the costs of the British colonial enterprise and that these costs be paid by conversion of rupees into sterling.[20] A related goal was that India should continue to have a trade surplus with nations other than Britain so that India's surplus would eliminate Britain's negative balance of payments. Until the last quarter of the nineteenth century, India did enjoy a trade surplus, mainly from exporting raw materials, and the rupee was a strong currency.

This second colonial objective required a flow of resources from India to Britain; it was accomplished through the notorious form of economic drain called the "home charges." From its revenue collections, the Government of India had to remit large sums to the home government as payment for all the costs of British administration in India, incurred both in India and Britain. Such charges included support of an army in India, the indigenous troops as well as the British soldiers sent out on temporary duty; pensions paid to retired civil servants and military officers, who usually returned to Britain to spend their dotage *and* their emolument; expenses of the colonial offices maintained in Britain; administrative expenditures by the colonial administration in India, from famine relief for peasants to intelligence collection by police informers; and a multitude of other official disbursements. Payment of the home charges out of Indian revenues not only drained India's wealth but also converted rupees into sterling at the officially determined rate—determined to the benefit of the British—and it offset Britain's negative trade balance by a massive input of "foreign" currency.

Although this objective also aimed at a budget colonialism in the sense that British revenue should never have to pay for Indian administration,

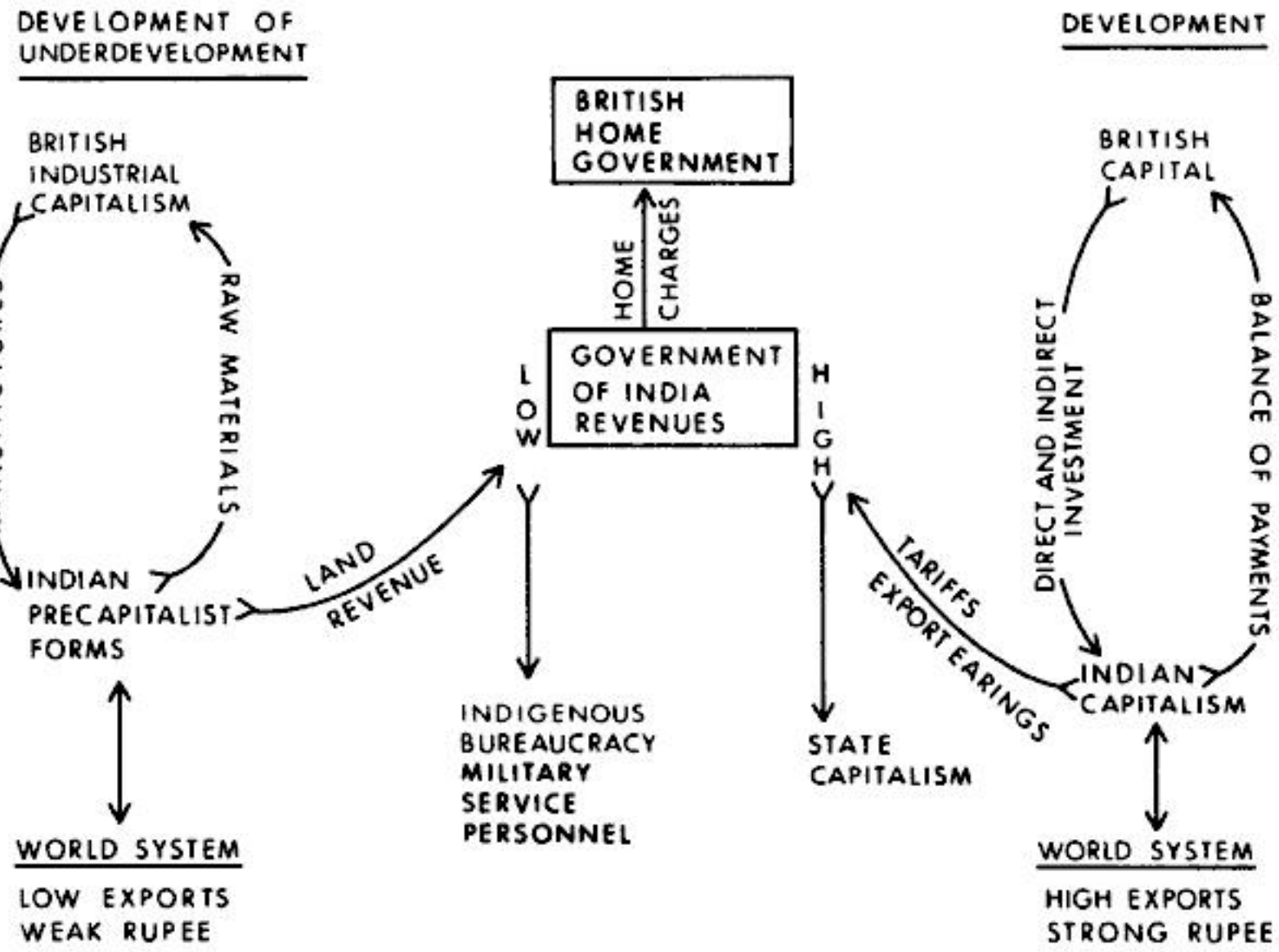


Figure 1: Contradictions of British Colonialism in India

it required a fiscally secure Indian government and a strong indigenous currency. It was thus exactly opposite to the penurious government and weak rupee that the first objective enjoined. If it were not counterbalanced by the development of underdevelopment, the second objective should have led the Government of India to attempt a capitalist transformation and development of its colonial realm. It should have led the government, for example, to try to raise the productivity of Indian agriculture so that revenue collections might increase. It should also have led the government to subsidize indigenous industrial production so that export earnings might grow and to introduce tariffs so that government revenues might improve while the infant industries gained protection.

The "laws of motion" of British Indian colonialism (see fig. 1) grew out of these two contradictory objectives. The imperatives of the "development of underdevelopment" were always difficult to balance with the demands of "development." India, her revenue, her agricultural production, her people's labor had too many colonial masters to serve. British industrial capital wanted her as a consumer of manufactures and as an exporter of raw commodities; free trade and a weak rupee suited these interests. British financial capital wanted a fiscally sound Indian government, a strong rupee, and a solvent indigenous economy. Britain's home government demanded a strong but cheap Indian administration; no

tariffs but plentiful government revenue for the home charges; a dear rupee in earnings abroad, but a cheap one when converted to sterling.

Although the development of underdevelopment and the development objectives uneasily coexisted throughout Britain's mastery of India, each had a different period of ascendancy, as mentioned before.[21] The colonial government began to champion development and protectionism in the last half of the nineteenth century and then, even more strongly, after World War I.[22]

The silver mines of western America had a major impact on the financial integrity of the Government of India during the last third of the nineteenth century. The large amounts of silver bullion produced by these mines lowered the value of India's silver coinage in relation to the gold-based currency of Britain.[23] This change in the world economy forced Britain to rebalance its colonial objectives in India. The home charges became an increasingly difficult burden for the Government of India,[24] and it eventually won permission for a temporary tariff on manufactured cotton goods as a source of revenue.[25] The stopgap measure became a permanent cure: government revenue from customs and tariffs rose from Rs. 57 million in 1901–02 to 97 million in 1911–12 and to 344 million in 1921–22. By 1925–26, customs revenue represented over a third of the Government of India's expected receipts, the single largest source of revenue.[26]

The movement away from laissez-faire to protectionism took on a much more substantial character after World War I. This period also saw the government in fiscal straits, but there was the additional problem that Japan and other countries had ousted Britain from its near monopolization of exports to India.[27] The home government now had less reason to protect imports from Indian tariffs. Government revenue requirements outweighed British industrial chauvinism, and India was launched on an active development of native industry, in part with British subsidy and protection.[28]

By Independence in 1947, India was hardly a typical colonial or postcolonial economy, if those terms evoke the image of a banana republic, sunk in the misery of underdevelopment. Plenty of economic misery attended the end of colonialism in India; throughout their Indian embrace, the British carried off many more items and ones of much greater market value than Rachel Varinder's treasured moonstone or the invaluable manuscripts housed in the India Office Library. Yet some wealth remained and other wealth regenerated at the end of the colonial era under the relatively benign official objective of development and protection. At Independence, local manufacture and import substitution were strong (in comparison to other developing third-world societies like Mexico or Brazil); multinational capital was relatively weak; and a lower-

middle class of rich farmers and urban small businessmen, bureaucrats, and professionals dominated the country.[29]

Increased capital investment in India, mainly under government auspices, marked the ascendancy of the development objective. Begun midway in the nineteenth century, railroad construction was one of the earliest manifestations of what might appropriately be called state capitalism.[30] An even more fundamental transformation of Indian production and labor came from the major irrigation projects undertaken by the colonial state in the late nineteenth century, especially in the Punjab.

CLASS, STATE, AND WORLD SYSTEM

The British colonial liaison with India appears to conform poorly to the development-of-underdevelopment model provided by a world-systems analysis. The Raj enforced economic mastery, to be sure, but it also supported independent economic growth.

A world-systems or dependency theory seems equally unable to explain the divergent political economies of other formerly colonial, now third-world societies.[31] This theory cannot deal adequately with third-world diversity because it ignores the historically concrete social forces that directed, impeded, or facilitated the penetration of the capitalist world system in particular third-world societies. It presumes instead that core capitalism conserves precapitalist political economies in the periphery to meet its needs for accumulation; they are in fact necessary and ineluctable outcomes of capitalist penetration, otherwise they would cease to exist. World-systems analysis concludes therefore that colonized societies are unable to effectively resist the capitalist world system.

Critics of a world-systems or dependency theory have strongly attacked this "functionalist theory of imperialism"[32] and the concept of the development of underdevelopment, which is at the heart of this functionalism. These critics recognize that third-world countries did not become fully capitalist under colonial regimes and even now are not. But they interpret this empirical situation as reflecting historically concrete social forces limiting capitalist penetration of particular third-world societies, rather than taking it as capitalism having had its unimpeded way with these countries and having uniformly misused them. These specific historical circumstances created distinctive colonialisms and particular peripheral political economies from place to place. They constitute the diverse circumstances through which colonized societies had to evolve, which nowadays often continue to enthrall them and which give and gave them different positions in the capitalist world economy.

Among the most important of these historically concrete social forces limiting capitalist penetration is the economic class system and the forms of consciousness and collective action that develop from it.[33] "Economic class" in my usage refers to a population standing in a particular relationship to the means of production rather than to a status or income grouping. Wage workers under capitalism or peasants under tributary political economies represent such economic classes. "Consciousness" refers to a growing recognition of their common economic condition among individuals belonging to the same economic class. Consciousness may or may not arise from this common economic standing; it may only be partial. When most developed, it may lead to collective action and even social protest or resistance by members of a class in pursuit of their common social and economic interests.

Oftentimes created or radically rearranged by the world system's impact, thereafter the indigenous class system has the autonomy that underwrites a distinctive historical development for any third-world society or region therein. Thus, resistance to further capitalist penetration may come from classes thrown up in the early phases of the capitalist world system's penetration.

The other important (and interconnected) social force is the colonial process itself, because the colonial state has its own autonomy and its own imperatives of solvency, military security, and cheap governance. As with British colonialism in India, these several imperatives may lead to different and conflicting colonial objectives. Resistance to the capitalist penetration required by one colonial objective may arise from the political-economic order created by another colonial objective—which is to say, again, that classes created by one form of capitalist penetration may impede any further form of penetration.[34]

Properly locating a society in the world system therefore requires more than assigning it to core or periphery. It also means analyzing the economic class system and the colonial state. These two historically concrete social forces arise from the forced embrace of an indigenous political economy by the capitalist world system. As classes, evolving toward consciousness, and the colonial state, pursuing its autonomous and sometimes contradictory objectives, determine and try to enforce their particular interests, so they qualify the way in which the capitalist world system transforms a third-world society and they account for the amount of resistance indigenous people offer to such transformation.

What is true for locating a society in the world system holds also for understanding the impact of the world system and the reaction of local society to it in a region like the Punjab. Depending on their date of conquest, fertility, and indigenous social system (all interrelated, of course),

different regions of India and even subregions within the regions experienced British colonialism and the world system in distinctive ways. The colonial state always gave its blessings to the penetration of capitalism, but the ensuing relationship differed from place to place according to the state's two contradictory objectives. Regional variation in production and labor systems; thus economic classes; and thence social consciousness, collective behavior, and resistance were the result. In some regions, such as eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, the initial objective of cheap colonialism was hardly balanced by a later movement to capital investment, protection, and development. In the Punjab, however, the colonial government's investment in transforming agricultural production was great, as were the consequences of this investment for the labor and production system fashioned under the previous budget colonialism.

As I propose in the next two chapters, understanding the distinctive impact of the capitalist world economy on the Punjab depends on recognizing the complex interplay between local economic classes, the colonial state, and the capitalist world system. My treatment of these factors now foreshadows the later analytic framework by which I hope to properly arrange the Punjab puzzle and to construct a conception of culture.

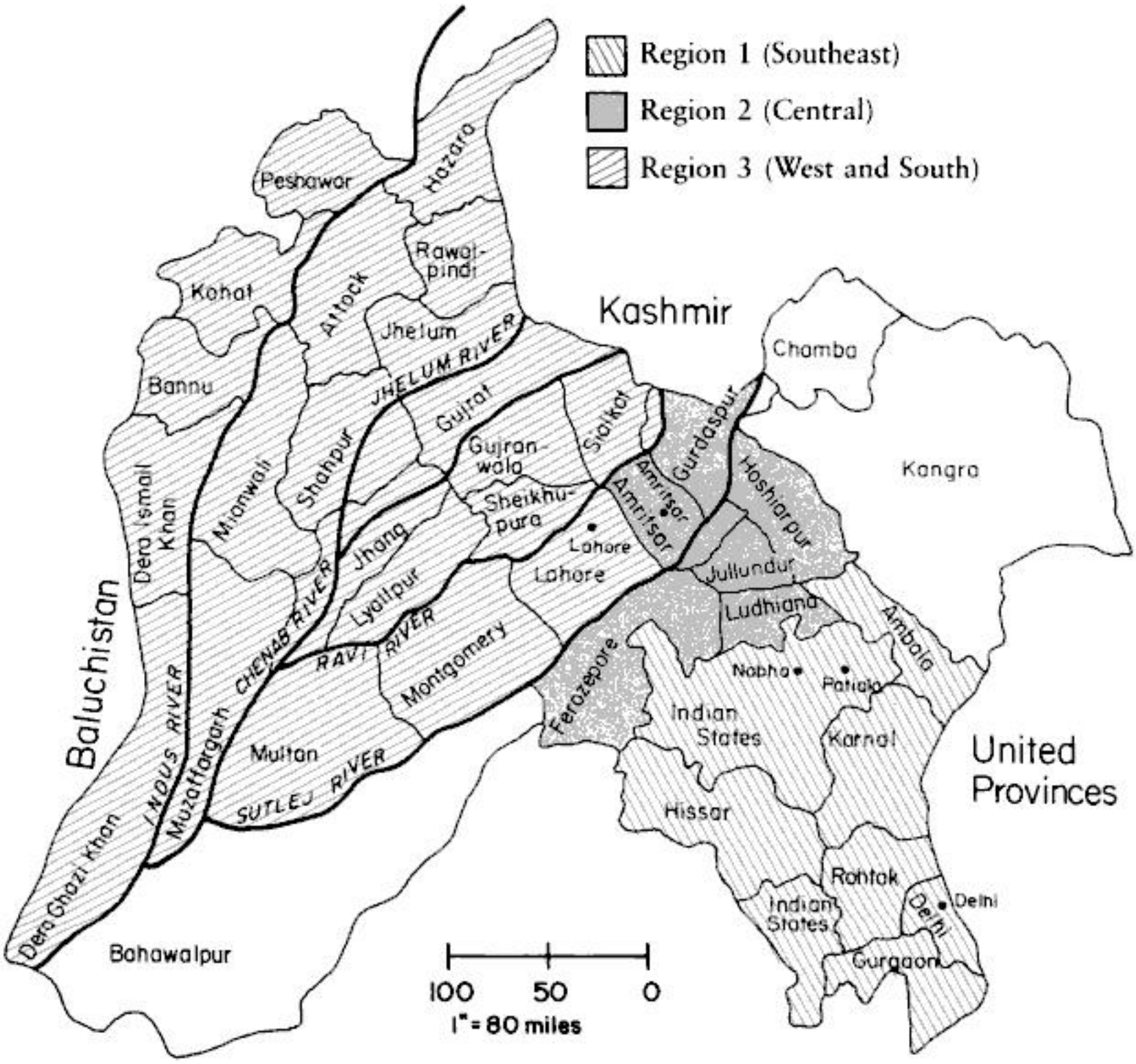
CHAPTER 3

A New Breed of Peasant

The conquest and annexation of the Punjab, finally completed in 1849, required the British East India Company to defeat Singh rulers and their armies in two bloody wars. These Singhs had only recently occupied their thrones, in culmination of a three-hundred-year evolution by which an originally pacific religious sect gave rise to powerful warriors and rulers. During the seventeenth century, as the Muslim rulers of northern India increasingly suppressed it, Sikhism took on a more militant and political mien. The sect of Singhs, which developed in the eighteenth century, brought this transformation to its climax. As Khuswant Singh notes,[1] it fostered an identity combining religious martyrdom and martial relations, and it incorporated a military-religious community to resist Muslim domination.[2]

In the eighteenth century, with the declining fortunes of the Moghul Empire, Singh bands were able to carve out principalities in their Punjab homeland. As the eighteenth century closed, the egalitarian character of these bands and their guerrilla tactics gave way to established kingdoms and rulers.[3] Principal among them was Ranjit Singh and his reign over a great portion of the Punjab until 1839.[4] By superior force of arms, careful exploitation of court factions and personal jealousies, and political manipulation, the British became the effective heritors of Singh rule in the Punjab midway through the nineteenth century. Their rule remained virtually uncontested until the Third Sikh War broke out in 1920.

In their initial colonial tenure, that is, from annexation in 1849 until the 1890s, the British successfully harnessed the Punjab's agricultural production and labor to the world system without radical transformation



Punjab includes North-West Frontier Province and Delhi. Districts as of 1931.

Map 2: Punjab Regions in 1881

or major capital investment. By the late nineteenth century, three distinctive labor and production areas had developed from this colonialism "on the cheap" (see map 2 for the boundaries of these areas in 1881; also see table 1 for their agricultural characteristics in 1901, the first year for which these data are available). These areas, or regions, as I shall henceforth call them, did not correspond to any British administrative division; neither were they recognized by the indigenous population. They are regions purposely constructed on the basis of my theoretical interests. These theoretical concerns dictate that certain social and agrarian variables are especially important, and, when these variables are mapped onto the Punjab, they mark off significant regions—significant, given my initial scholarly purposes.

TABLE 1

PUNJAB REGIONS IN 1901–02

Characteristic	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3
Population density (per thousand acres)	.2848	.3646	.1856
Population density, cultivated land (per thousand acres)	.5667	.7996	.7964
Percentage of land cultivated	.7052	.6610	.2461
Well irrigation, percentage of cultivated land	.0875	.2113	.2377
Canal irrigation, percentage of cultivated land	.1537	.1208	.1588
Dry cultivation, percentage of cultivated land	.6413	.6447	.4100
Wheat acreage, percentage of cultivated land	.1103	.2724	.2885
Gram acreage, percentage of cultivated land	.0511	.0908	.0260
Jowar-bajra acreage, percentage of cultivated land	.1345	.0564	.1030
Owner-worked land, percentage of total cultivated	.5309	.5062	.4747
Tenants-at-will lands, percentage of total cultivated	.2983	.3398	.4315

SOURCE: Computed from Government of the Punjab, *Punjab District Gazetteers* (Tumba, Sweden, International Documentation Centre [1969], microfiche).

NOTE: The Jhang District is excluded.

Region 1 (southeastern): British districts of Delhi, Gurgaon, Karnal, Hissar, Rohtak, and Ambala; Indian states of Jind and Kalsia.

Region 2 (central Punjab): British districts of Ludhiana, Jullundur, Hoshiarpur, Amritsar, Gurdaspur, Ferozepore; Indian states of Patiala, Nabha, Kapurthala, Faridkote, and Malerkotla.

Region 3 (southwestern): British districts of Sialkot, Lahore, Gujranwala, Rawalpindi, Attock, Jhelum, Gujrat, Shahpur, Multan, Montgomery, Muzzarfargarh, Mianwali, Dera Ghazi Khan, Peshawar, and Hazara.

For this reason, the constructed regions do not include all areas or districts that at one time or another were administratively tied to the Punjab. Often the official design of the Punjab was simply for administrative convenience and bore little relation to cultural and political-economic circumstances. For example, the North-West Frontier Province was made a separate government jurisdiction in 1901. It included settled districts like Peshawar and Hazara and areas less affected by British rule like Bannu and Kohat. Only the former are included in the constructed regions. Kangra District, a hilly locale quite distinct in history and culture from the Punjab plains, was always an administrative part of the Punjab but never really of it; the constructed regions therefore exclude Kangra. The Delhi District contained a large rural area as well as the metropole; but, from 1921 on, after the city of Delhi became the new imperial capital, it constituted a separate administrative and census region. The regional breakdown therefore includes Delhi District up until 1921 but excludes the imperial city after that date. The exclusions do not amount to a great deal of the official Punjab and North-West Frontier Province: only about 7.6 percent of the population in the 1881 census year and 8 percent in the 1921 census (the appendix provides a list of the districts contained in each region by census year).

The major social and agrarian variables used to construct the three regions of the late nineteenth century are:

Religious identity—Hindu, Muslim, or Sikh (including Singh).

Cultivation type—nonirrigated or dry (*barani*), irrigated by well (*chahi*), or by canal (*nahri*).

Cropping pattern—the acreage devoted to wheat, gram, cotton, and millet.

Intensity of cultivation—the percentage of the land that was cropped or double-cropped.

Ownership system—the proportion of independent peasant proprietors or landlord-dominated tenants-at-will to the total number of owners or cultivators.[5]

Religious identity and cultivation pattern clearly distinguish three major regions in late nineteenth-century Punjab. Cultivation in southeastern Punjab, Region 1, characteristically involved dry lands worked predominantly by Hindus (table 1 gives the data supporting this and the following regional characterizations). The major crops were "inferior" grains, like millet, which had little market value, or gram, which was to become an important cash crop at the zenith of wheat export. These crops did well

without supplemental irrigation. Region 2, the central Punjab, contained the most fertile and intensively worked lands; it included the Manjha, Malwa, and Doaba traditional regions as well as a large area of Native (later known as Princely) States. In this region, a mixed Hindu and Sikh population raised a mixture of wheat and gram by means of well irrigation. The southwestern Punjab, Region 3, which also includes the western districts, was overwhelmingly Muslim and mostly arid. To cultivate with any security, river water or well irrigation was necessary; large areas went uncultivated, the rangeland of pastoralists. The small proportion of land under husbandry in Region 3 was generally set to wheat.

The three regions also differed in their economic class systems, as reflected in their characteristic ownership pattern. Landlords ruled Region 3. Sharecroppers, mainly tenants-at-will, cultivated their lands under the *batai* system. This arrangement usually called for equal division of the crop, with the landlord responsible for payment of government revenue charges and the tenant liable for all costs of cultivation. Peasant proprietors, who husbanded their own lands, typified Regions 1 and 2. Even when landlords existed in these latter regions (more commonly in the Native States than the British territories), they owned smaller properties and oppressed tenants less than did their counterparts in the southwest.

The agricultural regimen, labor processes, and economic class patterns characterizing the three regions in the late nineteenth century arose from a combination of ecological constraints, indigenous precolonial land tenures, and British colonial impositions and modifications.

The primary ecological factor was rainfall. Obviously, the security and productivity of agriculture varied directly with the amount of rainfall if there was no supplemental irrigation. Much of Region 1 and even more of Region 3 was arid, and what little rainfall they received often proved unpredictable. Rainfall in much of the central Punjab, Region 2, was regular and generous by comparison.

Rainfall also greatly influenced the economic class arrangement of these regions. When it was so deficient that no predictable crop could be grown on dry lands, cultivation required sizable capital outlay for constructing wells. The near desertic conditions of the southwest (Region 3) therefore subsidized landlord control. Landlords had sufficient capital to build wells, and their monopoly over a precious factor of production, water, gave them leave to exercise empire over their tenants.

Sufficiency of rainfall permitted cultivation on small properties by peasant proprietors, other factors being equal. Even the relatively arid southeast (Region 1) had enough rainfall for subsistence cultivation of millet and gram by such smallholders. There was sufficient rainfall to

save many of them from the dire tenancy-at-will of Region 3, although it was not enough to have them be anything but poor. Affluence belonged to the peasant proprietors of Region 2, the central Punjab, to the extent that they often had enough capital to build their own wells.

The relationship between rainfall and the agrarian class system held within regions. Rainfall increased within each region from southwest to northeast, that is, as one moved closer to the Siwalik foothills and other low ranges that rim the Punjab's north-northeastern border. As rainfall rose, so too did the incidence of peasant proprietors. The submontane districts running along the northern and northeastern borders—Attock and Rawalpindi districts in Region 3 and Hoshiarpur and Jullundur districts in Region 2—had higher proportions of peasant proprietors than did other parts of their respective regions. Rainfall and size of holding also generally correlated. Arid regions, like the southeast and southwest, and areas of greater dryness within all the regions generally had larger average holdings; whereas, in the submontane areas just mentioned, small holdings were worked very intensively.

The land-tenure arrangements introduced by successive rulers of the Punjab were probably as determinative of rural class structure as ecology, however. Initial British policy, for example, aimed at leveling the agrarian class structure by eliminating large landlords and equalizing the rights of tenants and proprietors.[6] Colonial authorities began "settling the land revenue"—that is, determining who should pay government charges on the land and thereby hold proprietary rights—on the peasant cultivator rather than rural magnates, who also claimed proprietary rights. Peasant cultivators "were looked upon as the valuable element in the community," whereas their rural overlords were seen "as an interesting survival of a state of society which had passed away and should not be revived."[7] The British generally judged such superior interests in the land as non-proprietary; rural magnates were revenue intermediaries who had interposed themselves between the "actual" proprietor and the state under the previous indigenous regimes. At most they qualified for a percentage of the government revenue.[8] Even when the colonial authorities recognized landlord interests, they invested tenants with strong rights; in such cases, proprietorship brought few benefits beyond a share in the income from the land.[9] The British purpose was to maximize government revenues by removing all intermediaries between the peasant producer and the state. It was probably reasonable for the British to believe that dealing with peasant proprietors would enhance revenue collections; in fact, it generally held true, according to Jeffrey Paige.[10] This policy was consistent with the objective of a pecunary colonialism and the financial stringency it forced upon the colonial government.

British land policy did not install major investment in Punjab agriculture as the means by which to generate higher revenues. Even the changes in proprietorship and landlord-tenant relations were hardly revolutionary. British attempts to level the agrarian class structure continued and extended the land-tenure arrangements and the removal of intermediaries begun by the former ruler of the Punjab, Ranjit Singh.[11] It is a clear instance of how the early colonialism of the British acted to improve but not to revolutionize the precapitalist forms of production and labor.

The British implemented their leveling policy most successfully in areas of the Punjab where Ranjit's administration had held sway the longest or had achieved the greatest potency. This was in the central Punjab (Region 2), where the British securely maintained and/or instituted peasant proprietorship; they were also quite successful in the southeast (Region 1). Landlord interests in the southwestern Punjab (Region 3) had remained too strong under indigenous rule for easy removal; and, furthermore, the British wished these rural magnates to serve as a buffer between them and the tribal chieftains of the northwest frontier.

Indigenous rulers had also anticipated the British policy of collecting government revenue from cultivators in cash. By this practice, the colonial government induced peasants to supply agricultural produce to the market: the need for cash attached the peasant's household economy to the market, turned its products into commodities (meaning objects primarily for sale), and laid the basis for the cultivation of an export cash crop in certain regions.

The central Punjab proved most responsive to this export requirement of budget British colonialism. More than any other region, it combined the fertility, productivity, and peasant proprietorship necessary to offer the colonial government large and dependable amounts of an important cash crop, wheat.

Wheat did best as an irrigated crop. Because it was a subsistence crop for most Punjab cultivators, regions whose wheat production fed many peasant proprietors but few superiors promised to supply more wheat for sale and export. Peasant proprietors in Region 1, however, could not produce wheat on their dry lands. Peasant proprietors in the northern areas of Region 3 could only produce small amounts. Large landlords in Region 3 produced more wheat, but after the consumption needs of both landlord and tenant were satisfied, little surplus for sale and export would be left. The great fluctuations in rainfall also meant that the wheat production of these southwestern landlords was not secure from year to year. Peasant proprietors working large, fertile tracts through well irrigation were plentiful in the central Punjab and landlords were few. Thus,

mainly the central Punjab had the agricultural capacity and tenure arrangements to supply the market with wheat; and, in consequence of its greater responsiveness to the world economy, its peasant proprietors were significantly altered (they became petty commodity producers) although not radically changed (they did not become capitalist farmers).

In effect, central Punjab wheat would not only go to deficit areas within India to bolster the security of colonial rule but would even become an export to Britain to supply the home country with cheap bread.

Punjab's export of wheat and British colonial domination were nearly contemporaneous. The earliest notice of commodity export that Brij Narain, an early twentieth-century nationalist economist, could find came from the Punjab Administration Report for 1865–66. It noted that "the steady increase in prices . . . is due not so much to the deficiency of the supply but to the increased demand, and to the opening out of new markets. . . . Now the products of the Punjab find their way in large quantities beyond the Province."[12] Increasing commodity export depended on improved communications. By 1870 direct freightage, mainly by rail, existed between Amritsar or Lahore in the Punjab and the port cities of Calcutta, Bombay, and Karachi.[13]

The growing importance of wheat export—that is, the developing commercialization of Punjab agriculture—showed up in two profound alterations of the local agrarian situation. The first, which developed around 1885, was the stability in the price of wheat within the Punjab.[14] Before 1885, the price of wheat might vary quite widely from one market in the Punjab to another. In 1879, for example, wheat cost over 40 percent more in northern Punjab than it did in the southeast.[15] The earlier variation existed because local supply and demand mainly determined wheat prices, and there was little internal movement of food grains and even less export. The later uniformity arose as local consumption ceased to be the major determinant of price, which became increasingly responsive to external demand. Now, food grains not only moved freely within the Punjab to equalize internal variations in production and price but they also moved into the Indian and world economy.[16]

A rise in the cost of food grains, led by wheat, was the second and more profound alteration introduced by export. No matter if the crop had been bountiful, the price of wheat might rise simply because of international demand. Brij Narain argued that there had been a steady rise in food-grain prices from the start of export and a quite rapid increase after 1905, as international demand came increasingly to set price levels.[17] During World War I, and even before, official reports from Punjab administrators despaired over the "famine price" of wheat, when of course there was no famine, only an international holocaust. Wheat, being the

main export commodity, led the way in price rise, but the other major food grains —millet, gram, and maize—soon followed.[18]

Indian wheat exports to Europe usually filled the gap in June and July between the American and Australian crops.[19] Wheat from India was also necessary whenever there were major crop failures in Europe or America.[20] Brij Narain believed that precisely because Indian wheat did not compete with American or European wheat and only served to "supplement deficiencies" in the world market, prices in India, the Punjab included, were susceptible to quite large fluctuations.[21]

Given the development of underdevelopment that ruled early colonialism in the Punjab, wheat for export had to come from the peasantry's precapitalist form of agricultural production. The spotty information available on commodity movements before 1890 shows substantial export of wheat (see table 2), mainly from districts in Region 2 (see table 3). The peasant proprietors of the Punjab, especially in the central region, were to produce wheat as a cash crop on their smallholdings using family labor and domestic capital. In this manner, a precapitalist system of labor and production was to be harnessed to the capitalist world economy.

FROM PEASANTS TO PETTY COMMODITY PRODUCERS

Although the term *peasant* encompasses many meanings, it does not usually refer to an agriculturist whose labor and production are fully committed to or controlled by a commodity market. Peasants may produce surpluses beyond what they require for domestic consumption, community obligations, and "funds of rent," and they may sell such

TABLE 2

AVERAGE NET WHEAT EXPORT FROM THE PUNJAB, 1876–77 TO 1888–89 (IN THOUSAND MAUNDS)

1876/77–1879/80	1881/82–1883/84	1884/85–1888/89
180	1,074[a]	6,545

SOURCE: Government of the Punjab, *Report on the Rail and River Trade of the Punjab* (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, annual publication).

NOTE: Net Export computed by subtracting Punjab import of wheat by rail from export of wheat by rail. A maund equals 82.28 lbs.

[a]This figure includes river-carried exports.

TABLE 3

NET EXPORT OR IMPORT OF PULSES AND GRAINS, PUNJAB REGIONS, DURING FAMINE PERIOD 13 FEBRUARY TO 23 OCTOBER 1896 (IN THOUSAND MAUNDS)

	Imports	Exports
Region 1	1,599	
Region 2		2,739
Region 3	389	

SOURCE: Government of the Punjab, *Report on the Famine in the Punjab in 1896–97* (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1898), statement 4.

NOTE: Net figures represent rail-carried pulses and grains for the following districts:

Region 1–Hissar, Rohtak, Gurgaon, Delhi, Karnal, Ambala.

Region 2–Jullundur, Ludhiana, Ferozepore, Amritsar, Gurdaspur.

Region 3–Jhang, Montogomery, Multan, Lahore, Sialkot, Gujrat, Gujranwala, Shahpur, Jhelum, Rawalpindi, Peshawar, Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan, Muzzarfargarh. A maund equals 82.28 lbs.

surplus crops. But they have not thereby tied themselves to the market. Should prices fall or a crop be poor, the peasant producer can simply remove from the market. The peasant's lack of full commitment to the market shows in other ways: he does not specialize in cash crops; he is not in competition with his fellow peasants to see who can produce the most for sale and get the highest prices; and community institutions and obligations of kinship, friendship, and ritual require him to deploy some of his production or take some of his time away from production.

As the force of the capitalist world economy swept over the Punjab like a midsummer dust storm, the agrarian system based on peasant labor and production withered. What grew up to replace it looked like the former peasantry in many respects, but there had been significant alterations. This new breed, no longer peasants, were disciplined by the market for agricultural commodities. That is, the market dictated in large measure their decisions about cropping patterns, labor regimen, and other aspects of agricultural production. Domestic subsistence was still the major goal, but increasingly it was mediated by the market. The cultivator expected ultimately to feed his family from what his farm produced, but now that meant less what the family could eat from the land than what it could earn from it. The former peasant had moved closer to being the wageworker, his labor tied to the tyranny of the market.

Family labor and patrimonial land remained as the major legacies of

the peasant system. Even land began to come under the discipline of the market. The price of land, freed from traditional restraints, began to rise precipitously in late nineteenth-century Punjab. Mortgages, still more common, similarly yoked land to the market and represented a partial freeing of land as a factor of production.

Like the wageworker in another respect, cultivators competed with each other, not for jobs, but for successful sale in the market and for the acquisition of the factors of production like land, temporary labor, and plow cattle that could be bought or rented. Community restraints on such sales or rentals; on the amounts charged; on the familial, caste, or communal obligations owed one's fellow peasant in respect of the factors of production—all these weakened. Perhaps the reputation for pugnacity and dispute that attaches to Punjab cultivators, especially the Jats of central Punjab, emerged from the market competition that early beset them under colonialism.[22] That this predilection to violence was strongest in the central Punjab shows where the world economic forces that accompanied colonialism had greatest effect. Within that region, it was most developed among the cultivators of the Manjha,[23] who were brought to a high point of market competition and, it may be, community violence by the irrigation works that the British constructed there in the 1860s and 1870s.

If they were clearly no longer peasants, what then is the proper label for the central Punjab's new breed of colonial cultivators? They conform quite well to what much recent scholarship on colonialism and agrarian development has come to refer to as petty commodity producers. Household production characterizes both peasants and petty commodity producers: the family owns or controls the means of production, such as land, livestock, and tools; and the family supplies the farm labor except for peak periods, such as the harvest time. Peasants and petty commodity producers therefore do not differ in their relationship to the means of production or in their labor process; they differ in their relationship to the market. Unlike the peasant's position, commodity relations dominate the household economy of the petty commodity producer. Each household

> becomes an enterprise, whose relations to outsiders progressively take the forms of buying, selling, and competition. . . . The transition from "peasant" to simply [petty] commodity production has as its underlying mechanism the individualization of productive enterprises. Personal ties for the mobilisation of land, labour, means of production, and credit are replaced by market relations.[24]

Joel Kahn lists three conditions for the development of petty commodity production:

> Neither feudal landlords controlling tenants nor capitalists employing wage labor can dominate (agricultural) production. The actual producers must control or own the means of production, which means, for agriculture, that the system must depend on peasant proprietors.
>
> Community, tribal, and other ascriptive allegiances tying producers to each other must break down so that individuals (or individual families) do in fact own and operate the means of production and so that these sorts of personalistic, paternalistic, or "traditional" relationships do not hinder their individualized market involvement.
>
> Markets for (agricultural) commodities must develop; and land, labor, and credit must also become commodities freely available by purchase or exchange in the market.[25]

British colonialism and the world economy, as they forcibly mastered the Punjab and especially the central region, brought about or perfected these three prerequisites of petty commodity production. Revenue settlements set aside landlords and recognized peasant proprietors; they also legitimized individual property rights. Requiring payment of government charges in cash introduced the necessity of market sales. World demand for wheat and other agricultural commodities insured a market for Punjab produce and came to control local prices for food grains.

Land, labor, and credit—the factors of production—became readily available in the marketplace. By the early twentieth century, customary or traditional payments for labor had passed away almost everywhere in the Punjab. The wages for agricultural workers and others were set by the market.[26] Tom Kessinger reports that market wages replaced traditional payments in a central Punjab village (Jullundur District) by the 1920s.[27] This change seems to have occurred at least a decade earlier in other parts of the Punjab.[28] In the southwestern Punjab, where landlords predominated, labor was relatively less mobile than in the central region, where petty commodity producers prevailed. Landlords used gangs of toughs (gundas) and other forms of intimidation to curtail the mobility of tenants. Their object was to insure a cheap and docile labor force. The individualized enterprise of the petty commodity producers in the central Punjab disallowed such noneconomic means of coercion. Even in the southwest, landlord control over the mobility of labor had proved a losing battle by the 1920s. Credit became too readily available and placed many cultivators in heavy debt. Land, however, never became a fully "mobile" commodity. Cultivators still observed traditional reservations about its sale or mortgage; they did not easily trade away family holdings because they still carried the family's honor.[29] The defense of reputation and ancestral lands had limits, however, as the constantly

rising price of land and number of sales and mortgages all too clearly attested.[30]

By the late nineteenth century, a new breed of rural petty commodity producers existed in the central Punjab. They engaged in individualized household economies with the objective of producing agricultural commodities for sale in the market. They evolved as a result of the penetration of the world economy under the good offices of British colonialism. But what tied them so inextricably to the market? Collection of government revenue charges in cash surely would not require so nearly complete and irreversible an involvement with the market. In times of low commodity prices or poor crops, why did not the petty commodity producer reject this tyranny of the market and revert to being a peasant, only minimally involved with cash crops and sales in the market?

DEBT AND PETTY COMMODITY PRODUCTION

Because wheat can serve as a subsistence crop, cultivators in the central Punjab could always choose whether to sell or to eat it. Government demands for revenue payments in cash by themselves forced only small amounts of peasant wheat production into the market. There had to be some mechanism to consistently force wheat into the marketplace, to insure the market determination of agricultural production on a large scale, and thus to make the transformation of peasants into petty commodity producers permanent.

The solution required no massive British capital investment; it did not call forth radical transformation of agrarian ownership or labor relations. It was mainly accomplished by the self-interested actions of indigenous moneylenders and merchants. These merchants and moneylenders, not a new breed, but engorged to a new size by the novel opportunities provided under the colonial regime, advanced cash to cultivators for payment of the land revenue and for purchase of the factors of production that were increasingly becoming available—and only available—in the marketplace. For example, as community forms of labor exchange declined or joint families partitioned, more farm labor had to be purchased in peak seasons; acquiring more land or redeeming land from mortgage required paying market-determined amounts. Moneylenders made such loans on the collateral of jewelry, lands, or crops, or in exchange for preemptive rights of purchase. They applied interest rates that made it extremely difficult to ever repay the principal. They extracted mortgages in payment of defaulted loans and, not caring to undertake agriculture themselves, they reduced the smallholder to a tenant on his own lands.[31]

The identity of the moneylender depended on the region of the Punjab. In the southwestern and western districts (Region 3) and in the southeast (Region 1), he most often came from the Hindu traditional trading castes, whereas in the central Punjab (Region 2) these nonagriculturists were joined by better-off cultivators, who started lending money to their less prosperous neighbors.[32]

The result was a form of debt peonage and debt bondage in which finance capital began to reorganize agrarian productivity so that it was necessarily and fully determined by market forces.[33] As the peasant became more firmly bonded to the moneylender/merchant by debt, he was placed in peonage to market forces that demanded petty commodity production from him. As the twentieth century commenced, the independent peasantry of the central Punjab had turned into debt-ridden petty commodity producers, Punjab agriculture had been commercialized and committed to wheat export, and an indigenous breed of merchants and moneylenders had grown large and affluent.

On his horseback tours through the rural Punjab in the 1920s and 1930s, Malcolm Darling, a British official greatly concerned with the cultivator's plight, found a curious condition. Sir Malcolm (as he later became) discovered that rural prosperity and indebtedness were closely linked. The great flow of cash and export crops into the market produced a countercurrent of money and goods for some cultivators but swamped others of the same region in debt. The areas of greatest productivity in the Punjab were the most affected. The fertile lands and industrious smallholders of the central Punjab suffered under the heaviest debt, whereas the small proprietors in the foothills of Region 3 were less productive of cash crops but also less indebted.[34] The large landowners of Region 3, especially in southwestern Punjab, were also heavily indebted, but their condition did not make Darling wonder. He continued the earlier British prejudice against these feudal landlords who did not invest in agriculture, and expected no less than that improvidence would lead them into debt. But the small proprietors, especially in the central region, caused him concern. They were the pride of British administration, favored in the revenue settlement, seen as the backbone of the rural economy, and depended on for the defense of the Raj (literally, not figuratively). Why should these diligent cultivators often reap only the extortions of the moneylender?

Perhaps Darling worried that the coexistence of rural prosperity and debt spoke ill of British rule. He concluded, however, that this dilemma arose from aspects of Indian society, namely its penchant for extravagant expenditure on dowries, marriages, and jewelry; its extreme religiosity and the power it gave traditional leaders to maintain backward ways; and its toleration of the excessive venality of traditional merchants. Dar-

ling believed these "old walls of custom, plastered with the accretions of centuries, [were] crumbling" but the "new light" that shone on the Punjab stood in conflict with the old and had yet to replace it.[35]

Darling failed to place these supposed traditional characteristics of Indian society within their proper historical context. They had only waxed strong in a rural economy greatly altered by the colonial development of underdevelopment. Expenditures on dowry and marriage undoubtedly always represented major financial commitments for a peasant family. But under the impact of the world economy, these costs underwent a great inflation. Successful cultivators now had more money to expend on these means of enhancing family status; and, as caste and community restraints weakened generally, individualized competition in marriage negotiations increased. The petty commodity producer had found a new enterprise.[36]

Market pressures dictated similar distortions of the other indigenous practices that Darling blamed for the cultivator's indebtedness. The religious influence of Muslim saints, an example of what Darling interpreted as the reprehensible indigenous custom of faithfully following traditional leaders, was actually not as strong as he believed. The really strong conservative influence came from southwestern landlords, who used religious appeals, along with physical coercion, to keep their tenants immobile and docile.[37] Through this "hapless subordination" in one form or another,[38] they hoped to prevent the market from drawing their tenants to high-wage areas.[39] Similarly, the venal appetites of moneylenders had only grown insatiable under the colonial regimen the British dished up to the Punjab.

That prosperity and debt traveled together across rural Punjab only indicated that the same factor set them both in motion. Through the world economy and the export and cash crops it required, the cultivator willy-nilly came into the market; and, in the market, the cultivator unavoidably came into both money and debt. Some cultivators, perhaps those with more fertile lands or of more industrious habits, prospered in the marketplace; others, perhaps of spendthrift ways or with smaller properties, fell increasingly into debt and onto the untender mercies of the moneylender.

Whether an individual petty commodity producer was prosperous or pauperized should have made little difference ultimately. Under the discipline of the world economy, prosperity and debt should have produced the same changes in the rural economic class pattern: landlords and tenants or rural capitalists and agricultural laborers should have come to replace petty commodity producers. In the process, successful petty commodity producers should have grown richer and bought out or "mortgaged out" the less successful. The new market in land and the

higher land prices it generated not only should have helped some cultivators fatten off others but also should have taken away any chance of restitution or improvement from the distressed cultivator or his progeny. Rising land prices would make it more difficult for sons with limited patrimonies to buy sufficient land to set up as petty commodity producers in their own right. If indebted petty commodity producers did not fall prey to their more successful rural competitors, they should have succumbed to moneylenders. By foreclosing on defaulting cultivators, moneylenders should have reduced them to tenancy on their own lands or even to wage labor.[40]

Petty commodity production in the central Punjab did not conform to these expectations of doom, however.[41] The late nineteenth century did witness considerable land transfers or mortgages in favor of merchants and successful cultivators throughout the Punjab.[42] But the area under mortgage was only about 20 percent, and the area sold averaged less than half that amount. Merchant capital and economic inequalities among cultivators in the Punjab, especially in the central region, led to "the compulsory enforced destruction of the small producer's self-sufficiency" and the "dominance of capital."[43] But they did not revolutionize economic class arrangements in the countryside.

Petty commodity producers elsewhere also failed to succumb quite as readily to market forces as some scholars had anticipated. There are many special conditions—perhaps too common even to be called "special"—that preserve this system of agrarian labor and production. In southeastern Scotland of the late nineteenth century, petty commodity production in the form of small family farms coexisted with capitalist agriculture because smallholders would take leases and work on unimproved lands that rural capitalists rejected.[44] On a much vaster frontier, the Great Plains of America one hundred years ago, similar special conditions allowed family farms to outproduce capitalist agriculture in wheat.[45] The persistence of family farms in American agriculture up to the present also goes against prediction. One reason may be the special condition of subsidies and price supports from the American welfare state, which has employed the family farm in its political imagery for many years.[46] Another reason may arise from the dependence of many small producers on commodity contracts with processors. The independence of the producers weakens their bargaining power with processors, whereas the contractual arrangements allow the processors to assert strong management over the individual family farms.[47] For nonagricultural petty commodity producers, persistence may depend on the low prices they can charge for their products. In the case of Sumatran blacksmiths studied by Joel Kahn, competition with industrially manufactured metal goods keeps the profits by blacksmiths down and prevents any

economic differentiation between hearth owners and their workers.[48] Petty commodity production persists in Guatemalan rural handicrafts because, according to Carol Smith, rural entrepreneurs must pay artisans high wages. After relatively brief periods of wage labor, artisans are therefore able to set up as handicraft entrepreneurs in their own right, and no permanent class of wageworkers results.[49]

Although petty commodity production can succumb to the pressures of capitalist penetration, it can also, given special conditions, continue under these very pressures. The persistence of petty commodity production under these special conditions should not be taken to mean that the world capitalist system has no effect on this form of production. Such an argument would follow A. V. Chayanov and others who spoke of a peasant economy that followed its own economic rules, different from capitalism's, and that could coexist with capitalism quite autonomously.[50] Rather, as the cases cited above show, the continuation, as well as the dissolution of petty commodity production, takes place under the profound influence of specific political economies generated within the capitalist world economy.

What special conditions propped up petty commodity production in the Punjab in spite of the rural indebtedness *and* prosperity generated by the world economy? To maintain their small family farms, disadvantaged Punjab cultivators increasingly engaged in what at first had been ancillary economic activities. Their earnings forestalled the moneylender and maintained their equality with more affluent agriculturists. These activities also profited the colonial state. Therefore, as the central Punjab cultivator invested more heavily in these activities, the colonial authorities tried through legislation more strongly to protect, even promote, petty commodity production. By the end of World War I, when changes in the world economy had weakened or removed these economic and political props, Punjab cultivators paid dearly for depending on them so heavily over the previous half-century.

REMITTING LABOR AND THE CALL TO ARMS

In addition to export crops, petty commodity production and rural debt bondage provided other, probably unforeseen, advantages to British colonialism "on the cheap." Military service had always been an honorable occupation for rural cultivators; debt made it even more attractive. Colonial authorities soon came to depend on wholesale Punjab recruitment for the large but low-paid indigenous army that their imperial establishment but pecuniary government required. Debt bondage and the tyranny

of the market also led Punjab cultivators to accept, indeed actively seek out, opportunities for wage labor abroad. They commonly worked as policemen and watchmen in Hong Kong, Burma, and Southeast Asia, but in North America they labored more often as agricultural workers or lumbermen. Enlistment as a soldier or overseas laborer provided young men from the Punjab with earnings outside of agriculture. By remitting funds to their families at home or by investing their savings when they returned, these workers kept their patrimonial holdings intact or bought up new lands to make up for deficient inheritances. Their commitment to labor in foreign fields or to maneuvers in faraway lands was simply an extension of petty commodity production at home since all these undertakings went on within the capitalist world economy. Over time, it became impossible to determine if petty commodity cultivation, military service, or overseas wage labor was the primary employment; they formed an ensemble, each part of which bolstered the other.

Gail Omvedt makes a similar point, except she follows a "functionalist theory of imperialism" and argues that British imperialism purposely maintained feudal landlords and peasant smallholders, that is, precapitalist forms of rural production, in order to produce cheap Punjab labor for migration abroad.[51] My presentation makes the creation of cheap labor a historical consequence of colonial objectives the British adopted or had thrust upon them, but without the teleological necessity Omvedt imputes to this development. I do not argue that such cheap labor had to develop to meet the needs of the international labor market; I only wish to indicate why, given how British policies and world economic forces manhandled the indigenous production and labor system, such labor did develop.

The British military shepherded a great flock of Punjab cultivators into the Indian army. At the outbreak of World War I, about 100,000 of the slightly more than 152,000 Indian combat troops, or more than 65 percent, came from the Punjab. By 1917 Punjab enlistments accounted for over 117,000 of the total 254,000 men recruited in India, or almost 50 percent.[52]

The British recognized that military service by Punjab cultivators was not simply an outgrowth of indigenous martial tradition. The compensation it offered was also a major attraction. Thus, when they most needed to round up recruits, as in World War I, the colonial authorities had to promise lavish rewards for service. Recruiters held out the hope of land grants, for example, even when there was little truth in the promise. Some soldiers did receive land grants, of course: one official source states that 250,000 acres were so assigned.[53] But many other ex-soldiers had none. One former soldier launched a protest march in 1929 against the government's failure to honor its promises. In spite of gov-

ernment suppression, two thousand other ex-soldiers with the same resentment joined him. During this agitation, the British admitted in their confidential documents that recruiters had often made extravagant promises.[54]

The normal compensation for military service was much less than what recruiters in World War I were forced to promise. Military pay and benefits probably did not insert much investment capital into the rural Punjab. Indian soldiers commonly earned enough to support themselves away from the family farm and to remit small sums, helping to keep family cultivation intact. An official study in 1940 found that Punjab soldiers upon leaving service spent nearly 20 percent of their accumulated savings on debt repayment. The next largest single expenditures were on house construction (about 18 percent), cattle and agricultural equipment (15.6 percent), and ceremonies (9.5 percent). Their average savings only amounted to between Rs. 200 to 400.[55]

The British rounded up recruits from quite restricted areas of the Punjab. Those locales where colonialism had established or confirmed peasant proprietorship proved most productive. Even within such a locale certain villages would be favored and others passed over by recruiting parties.[56] In general, however, rural cultivators from the northern districts of Region 3, from the Manjha and Malwa areas of Region 2,[57] and from all over Region 1 flocked to the colors. During World War I, Rawalpindi and surrounding districts (in Region 3) were the largest suppliers, followed by Jullundur (Region 2) and Ambala (Region 1).[58] Although figures on the military roundup by district are not available for other periods, the distribution of military pensioners in 1939 shows how different regions stocked the Indian army. Region 1 had 22,096 pensioners, Region 2 had 37,448, and Region 3 had 47,745.[59]

Military service evidently played a more sustaining role in the rural economy of the central Punjab than it did in the other regions. For example, Anup Singh, a former cavalryman, led the mass demonstrations of ex-soldiers in 1929 mentioned before. Almost all of them were from the central Punjab.[60] Central Punjab smallholders also apparently put up greater resistance to the strong-arm tactics of British recruiters during World War I than did peasant proprietors in other regions.[61] Complaints against the inferior pay of Indian troops compared to British units in India seemed more common among the ranks recruited in Region 2, and even cases of insubordination and small-scale mutiny occurred among them.[62]

Even though the northern districts of Region 3 provided more soldiers, they were evidently more complacent and perhaps less mercenary. Their home farms were small, unproductive, and thereby spared the attentions of the world economy. A similar protective backwardness prevailed among

the peasant proprietors of Region 1. They were not constricted by the heavy debt that squeezed the petty commodity producers of the central Punjab and forced them into the military. If peacetime limited their opportunities for military service, they could more readily revert to peasant cultivation on their home farms and subsist there until the next call to arms.

For men from all three regions, army service may have been an exercise in martial art, but for the central Punjab cultivator it was also a necessity in order to keep his smallholding and its petty commodity production going against the debt and unequal prosperity produced by the market.

Because the need for external remittances constantly confronted cultivators in the central region, the economic rewards offered by military service often proved insufficient. They then turned to another source of such earnings: international migration as wage laborers.[63] From 1900 to 1910, 4,581 Punjab workers emigrated from Calcutta. The 1911 Indian census also reported that 13,000 persons from the Punjab had been enumerated in other countries, exclusive of those in North America and Australia.[64] This considerable migration stream is perhaps best remembered for the rivulet that failed to reach its destination. In May 1914 the Japanese ship *Komagata Maru* docked in Vancouver, British Columbia, with 376 migrant laborers on board. The racially motivated provincial authorities had recently instituted migration regulations intended to keep Indians out; there was more prejudice against them than even against the Japanese and Chinese. The passengers aboard the *Komagata Maru* were debarred from landing in Canada; and, after months of litigation and argument, the ship turned back.[65]

The failure of the *Komagata Maru* was owing to the success of many previous migrant workers to North America, whose competition indigenous "white" laborers had come to fear. Many of the migrants had served in the Indian army and gone on from this initial source of remittance income to overseas labor. The prejudice and repressive legislation they met, as well as their proletarian employment, helped radicalize many Punjab migrants, especially in California. They formed a revolutionary organization, the Ghadar Party, in 1913 with offices in San Francisco.[66] Their underground activities in India during World War I form an important piece of the Punjab puzzle that later chapters will handle.

Because the motive factor behind migration was rural debt, the greatest momentum occurred in the region of petty commodity production that the world economy had helped fashion in the central Punjab. The migrants were therefore overwhelmingly from Region 2 and very heavily from the Malwa and Doaba areas within it.[67] Table 4 lists the proveniences for the Punjab migrants repatriated at the start of World War I.

TABLE 4

REPATRIATED PUNJAB LABORERS, 1914–1915

Home region	1914	1915
Malwa		
Ferozepore	236	150
Ludhiana	171	91
Princely States	190	168
Total	597	409
Doaba		
Jullundur	361	259
Hoshiarpur	108	52
Total	469	311
Manjha		
Amritsar	314	263
Gurdaspur	94	54
Lahore	101	58
Total	509	375
Grand total Region 2[a]	1,474	1,037
Region 1	32	21
Region 3	35	42
Canal region[b]	123	66
Grand total	1,664	1,166

SOURCE: List of repatriates aboard ships docking at Calcutta from 14 September 1914 until 9 March 1915 (34 ships) in Government of India, "Home-Political Files A," 345–369, June 1915 (New Delhi, National Archives of India).

[a]Total does not include Lahore.

[b]Total includes Lahore.

The earnings from migration went to much the same uses as had military pay: marriages and house-building.[68] They therefore helped stabilize the social and economic situation but did not represent new capital for investment.[69] The British often applauded the industry of the central Punjab cultivator, as shown by his willingness to travel in search of work. They also sometimes dimly perceived that economic necessity underlay this Punjab version of the Protestant ethic:

> The people of Jullundur [a district in Region 2] are famous for their enterprise, their willingness to seek adventure and livelihood abroad. . . . Their earnings remitted home enable a standard of living to be maintained which would be impossible if the petty holdings were the sole source of income.[70]

Recourse to military service and/or international migration therefore depended on the degree to which the world economy had embraced a specific area of the Punjab. The more market forces controlled the rural economy, the more debt there would be, and the greater likelihood that cultivators would turn to both labor migration and military employment—as they did in the central Punjab. It took remittances from both military service and laboring abroad to protect the agrarian system based on domestic ownership and family labor (petty commodity production) against the inroads of merchant capital or cultivator moneylending. In other areas where smallholders predominated but where market forces did not dominate and debt was less, as in the northern districts of Region 3 and in the southeastern region, military service was the primary strategy.

One other support helped steady agrarian production and class relations in the central Punjab. The colonial state attempted to shore up petty commodity production by constructing new irrigation canals or refurbishing indigenous ones from 1850 through 1880. The Upper Bari Doab canal, begun in 1859 and completed twenty years later, eventually irrigated over a million acres, mainly in the Amritsar and Lahore districts of the Manjha. In Ferozepore District and the Native States of the Malwa, the Sirhind canal, started in 1883 and finished in 1887, irrigated over a million and a half acres.[71] Originally undertaken to give employment to soldiers from the defeated Sikh armies, then later considered attractive for the government revenue they generated, these public works developed into a scheme for furthering production of wheat to alleviate famines in Punjab and elsewhere in India.[72] The British intended that India should meet its food requirements from its own resources. Not only would food surpluses generated by irrigation works in the Punjab enhance colonial revenues, they would help limit or eliminate government expenditures on famine relief. These British intentions grew out of the objective of colonialism "on the cheap."

The British later referred to these early canals in the Punjab as "protective" because their primary function was to even out seasonal differences in rainfall and thus give greater security to the small proprietors of the central Punjab.[73] These irrigation works did not reflect the same capital input for the transformation of rural production that the later massive investment in the "canal colonies" by the colonial government did. The cost of these protective canals was borne entirely out of the immediate land revenue collections of the government.

But, outside the central Punjab, neither external remittances nor protective irrigation works contained the steadily mounting debt of rural areas and the increasing control over agrarian production by merchants

and moneylenders at the close of the nineteenth century. The commercial forces unleashed by the British themselves and the merchant class the British originally fostered threatened the very colonial interests that had first given them purchase in Punjab's rural economy. As mentioned before, the British clearly apprehended that their most successful military recruiting came from locales in which smallholders working marginal plots predominated.[74] Threatening developments—the breakdown of petty commodity production in the central Punjab under the pressures of merchant capital and of inequalities among cultivators, the increased market tyranny over the subsistence peasantry in the northwest and southeast—might not only dissuade many from the military or make them demand higher pay but might also alienate Punjab rural families and communities from which serving soldiers had come. As their home conditions deteriorated under the Raj, could such troops be trusted to defend the colonial regime?

British authorities apprehended these misfortunes most clearly in Region 3. They did so because in the western and southwestern Punjab the aggrandizing merchant/moneylenders were Hindus and the misused cultivators were Muslim peasant proprietors and Muslim tenants of large landlords, also Muslim. Official fear that these unruly tribal populations, following the lead of the feudal landlords, would be alienated from British military service and even British rule propelled the colonial administration to a legislative remedy for the indebtedness that afflicted the entire Punjab.[75]

UNALIENATED LAND AND UNRATIONALIZED PRODUCTION

Fearing loss of army recruits, rural unrest, and disaffection of indigenous troops from the 1870s onward,[76] the colonial administration finally passed legislation, the Land Alienation Act of 1900, that prevented cultivators from alienating their lands or mortgaging them for extended periods except to other cultivators.[77] The act phrased this defense of petty commodity production in ascriptive terms: it divided the Punjab population between so-called traditional agricultural and nonagricultural "tribes," or castes, and disallowed commerce in land between them. But, whatever its cultural phrasing, its economic intent was clear: the colonial state had intervened to protect a rural production system mainly of its own making. The nonagricultural "tribes" that could no longer traffic in land included the predominantly Hindu merchant/moneylender castes practicing debt bondage on rural cultivators. Its major beneficiaries were also clear:

ostensibly, the Muslim sharecroppers of Region 3 were protected against the avaricious Hindu moneylender; but, in fact, the feudal empire exercised over them by large landlords was being confirmed, perhaps even strengthened. There were now to be no sources of rural credit in western and southwestern Punjab except these landlords, who from henceforth would be only too glad to guarantee the British peace.[78]

This legislation, primarily enacted to protect landlord-tenant relations and peasant proprietors in the regions least affected by the world economy—its goal, in the end, was to keep them that way—also applied to the central Punjab, where the world economy had had its way for some time. As a result, the natural rationalization of petty commodity production by merchant capital—"natural," given the conditions British colonialism "on the cheap" had constructed—slowed considerably. The Land Alienation Act removed merchant capital from this rationalization process, and external remittances prevented growing inequalities among cultivators from playing an equivalent role. This rationalization, which constantly rising rural debt had been anticipating, would have replaced petty commodity producers with a production and class system based on landlords and tenants or capitalists and agricultural workers. It was aborted so that certain colonial interests, made necessary by the colonial objective of the development of underdevelopment—namely, cheap military recruits, loyal landlords, contented soldiers, and inexpensive rural policing—could be maintained. But other colonial interests, especially those fulfilled by petty commodity production in the central Punjab, were compromised.

State support for petty commodity production and the limitation of rural indebtedness did not maximize export crop production or government revenues. Disallowing land sales and extended mortgages meant that many uneconomic household production units remained viable. Unlike a capitalist firm or a farm managed by an indigenous moneylender, they did not have to show a profit; they needed only to provide for reproduction of the domestic unit. Lower productivity led to less government revenue. Control over rural debt also limited the debt bondage that drove cultivators to export crop production. New moneylenders, just as venal as the old, were soon to appear in the rural Punjab, as the more successful and larger petty commodity producers provided agricultural loans and held mortgages. Only later did they endanger petty commodity production, however. The Land Alienation Act coped with the threat from nonagricultural moneylenders, which was more immediate and more likely to be lethal as the nineteenth century ended. Through this legislation, British authorities hoped to forestall further ill effects on rural areas from the market system that colonialism had itself champi-

oned—even at the cost of government revenue and export crop production from the central region, which colonialism had forced to embrace petty commodity production.

The colonial government had already taken important steps to implement its interest in revenue and exports in other ways. These ways, part of a new colonialism of development, would increasingly compromise the central Punjab smallholders and eventually bring them into confrontation with a government that could no longer afford to protect them against new market forces.

CHAPTER 4

Well Water and Well Watered

Shortly after World War I the colonial trap finally sprang shut on the cultivator of the central Punjab. The trap consisted of several related changes in the capitalist world system and in the agrarian economy of the Punjab. As they quickly came together in the period between 1880 and 1920, they caught up the central Punjab cultivator in worsening economic conditions. His small holdings, his independent proprietorship, and his family labor represented a species of adaptation to the world economy that was once valued but now seemed only a kind of nuisance. Over the previous forty years he had gone from being a pet of British colonialism to being a problem: What to do about his increasing indebtedness? How to handle his excessive pressure on resources caused by overpopulation? How to control his wasteful use of resources in marriage payments? No longer was his petty commodity production of wheat so necessary to the world economy. Neither was the colonial government any longer so greatly dependent on the land revenue he paid. Other countries did not wish his labor, and the reduced size of the peacetime Indian army made his service unnecessary.

These changes did not evolve from any mutation in the central Punjab cultivator or his petty commodity production. Rather, changes in the world economy and colonialism altered the environment within which the cultivator had evolved and to which he had become well adapted. The new environment produced such negative selective pressures that the only "adaptation" they seemed to allow the central Punjab cultivator was extinction.

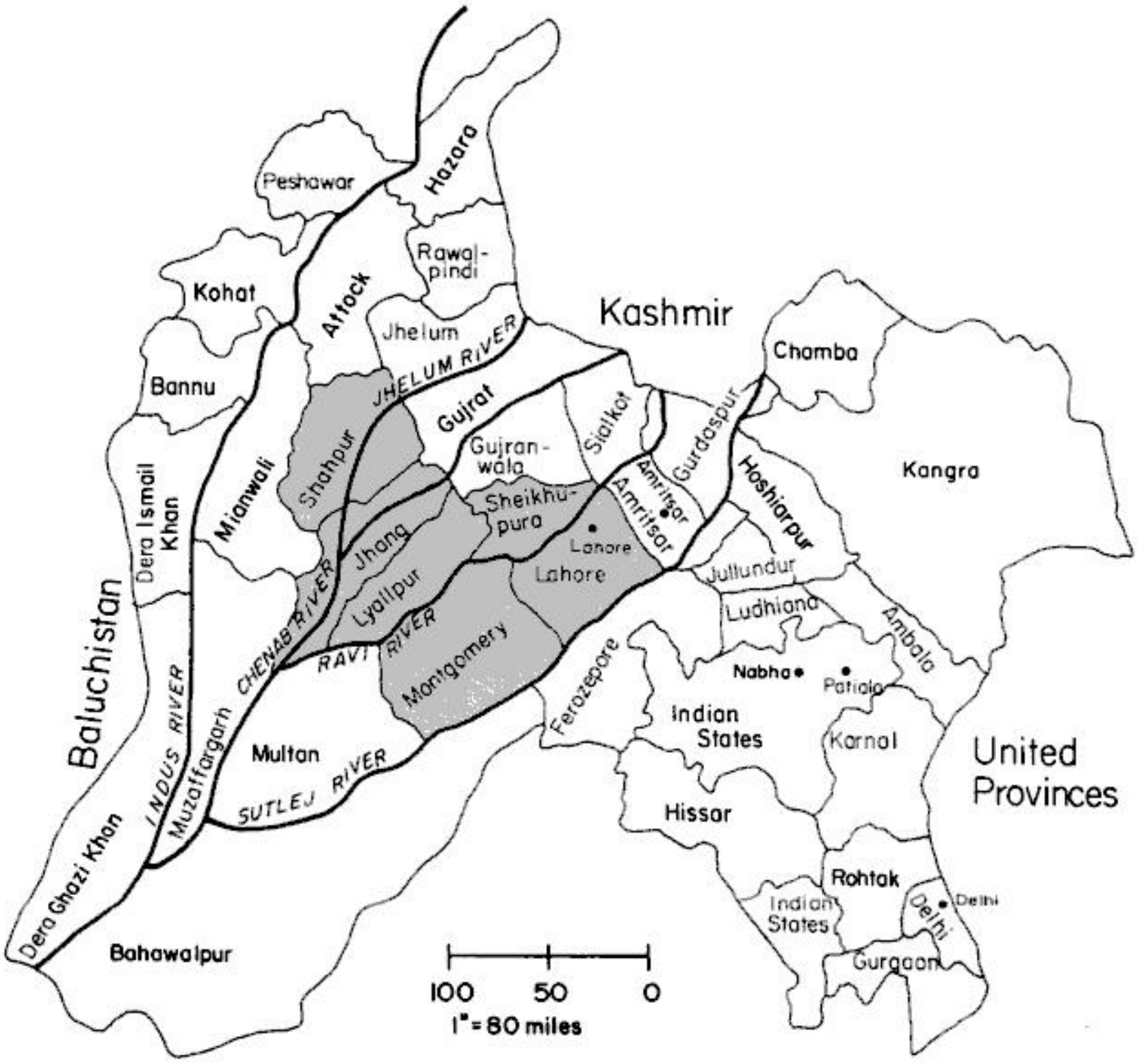
STATE CAPITALISM AND THE CANAL COLONIES

Beginning in the 1880s and ending in the 1920s the colonial government undertook massive capital investment in raising the agricultural productivity of the Punjab to increase land revenue and export income. This state capitalism—for it certainly was intended to bring the government profit, and it did—arose as the second objective of British colonialism in India gained ascendancy during the late nineteenth century. Because the paucity of government revenues obliged the colonial authorities to desert a pecuniary colonialism for a colonialism that developed India's productive capacities, established colonial practices took on new forms.

The evolution of government-sponsored irrigation works in the Punjab is a prime example of the emergence of these new forms of development under colonialism. After 1880 colonial authorities left off building the protective irrigation canals that brought security to the populous districts of the central Punjab through which they passed. They set out, instead, on a monumental combination of British capital and indigenous labor to engineer a vast irrigation scheme for mostly uninhabited government wastelands.[1] These irrigation works, called "productive" because they were forecast to make a profit, depended on capital raised in England by sale of government bonds. The development of India was still to benefit British capitalists, in this case, through the interest charges the Punjab government remitted.

Punjab cultivators, at least some of them, also benefited. This capital investment in agriculture developed rural productivity in a way that the colonial development of underdevelopment never had. Irrigation in agriculture was akin to technological innovations in industry: it enhanced the efficiency of production. Adequate and secure water supply meant a greater return to the cultivator for every hour of work, all other factors being held constant. Whereas the colonial development of underdevelopment worked mainly by altering agricultural labor and tying it to the market, the colonialism of development radically changed the nature of the fixed inputs in agricultural production.[2]

State capital investment in massive irrigation works, and then later, the waters they carried, flowed mainly into the arid reaches of the western and southwestern Punjab (Region 3). Starting in the mid-1880s with two small irrigation works along the Sutlej River and continuing with the large, Lower Chenab River project in 1890, which watered the new Lyallpur District, the irrigation canals moved steadily westward until the Nili Bar, finished in 1926, innundated the Multan District.[3] By the 1920s over 10 million acres of formerly desert lands, most of which had been the hitherto uninhabited and worthless property of the Raj, had been irrigated under state capitalism.[4]



Punjab includes North-West Frontier Province and Delhi. Districts as of 1931.

Map 3: Major Canal Irrigated Punjab Districts in 1921

As the twentieth century began, a new, fourth region in the Punjab had to be recognized. Its distinguishing characteristic was the high proportion of land under canal irrigation, an average of over 59 percent in 1902 and nearly 63 percent in 1921. This region grew quite quickly as new government-sponsored settlements sprang up on the once sparsely inhabited wastes. In 1901 only one Punjab district, Lyallpur, had more than 55 percent of its lands under canal irrigation. By 1921, there were six (see map 3). Most of the settlers in these "canal colonies," as these settlements were called, came from other regions of the Punjab under a process of selective government recruitment discussed later in this chapter.

Region 4, the canal colonies, also had a very low percentage of dry land cultivation (compare tables 1 and 5). Another defining characteristic

TABLE 5

PUNJAB REGIONS IN 1921–22

Characteristic	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4
Canal irrigation, percentage of cultivated land	.1313	.1528	.1197	.6294
Wheat acreage, percentage of cultivated land	.1256	.2501	.3765	.4022
Cotton acreage, percentage of cultivated land	.0393	.0278	.0275	.0883

SOURCE: Government of Punjab, *Punjab District Gazetteers* (Tumba, Sweden, International Documentation Centre [1969], microfiche).

Region 1 (southeastern): Same as table 1 except for deletion of Delhi district and Kalsia state.

Region 2 (central Punjab): Same as table 1.

Region 3 (southwestern): Same as table 1 except for deletion of Lahore, Gujranwala, Shahpur, Multan, and Montgomery.

Region 4 (canal colonies): British districts of Lahore, Gujranwala, Shahpur, Jhang, Montgomery, Lyallpur, and Sheikhupura.

was specialization in the production of export crops. Canal cultivators devoted sizable acreage not only to wheat, the Punjab's premier cash crop, but also to cotton, both the *deshi* (indigenous) and the superior American varieties. Region 4 also differed from the three older regions in the relatively large size of agricultural holdings (see table 6). In spite of their size, these properties were occupied and worked by smallholders and their families in similar fashion to the petty commodity production of the central Punjab. The British were responsible for making canal holdings unusually large and yet mainly owner-cultivated, which I discuss below. Still another characteristic owing to the British was the social composition of the region. Muslims had been the predominant precanal population and still represented a high percentage, but the cultivators on canal lands were commonly Hindus and Sikhs of recent migration. The single largest cultivating caste comprised the Jats, who made up almost a quarter of the settlers in the Chenab colony. Of these, 60 percent were Hindu and 40 percent were Sikh. The Arains, a Muslim caste of market gardeners, followed with 12 percent. Field laborers in the canal colonies came from Untouchable castes like the Chuhras (7 percent) and the Chamars (4 percent).[5]

The canal region soon displaced the central Punjab in the volume of wheat and other crops produced for export (see table 7). The region's state-financed irrigation works also allowed wheat export from the Punjab to triple between the 1890s and World War I. Although wheat export

TABLE 6

REGIONAL DIFFERENCES IN THE SIZE OF AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS IN THE PUNJAB, 1925

Region	Percentage of holdings			
	5 acres or fewer	5–15 acres	15–25 acres	25 acres or larger
1. Southeast	51.53	32.44	8.74	7.32
2. Central Punjab	62.23	27.23	5.53	4.75
3. Southwest	61.86	24.65	5.73	5.93
4. Canal colonies	42.98	29.49	9.84	16.73
Punjab average	58.30	26.20	7.00	8.10

SOURCE: Computed from Hubert H. Calvert, *The Size and Distribution of Agricultural Holdings in the Punjab*, Board of Economic Inquiry, Punjab Rural Section Publication no. 11 (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1925).

from the central districts rose during this period, its contribution to the Punjab's total declined from considerably over half to less than a third.

Perhaps of more immediate concern to the colonial administration, the canal region became the primary factor in government solvency. The budget of the Punjab government increasingly depended on irrigation receipts. Government collections from canal-irrigated lands rose from less than 20 percent of total revenue as late as 1913 to over 40 percent in the 1920s, whereas receipts from other lands remained fixed between 25 to 30 percent.[6]

The colonial government also profited from the auctioning of canal lands, which, under irrigation, turned from worthless government desert to valuable property. At these land sales, the bids of official "noncultivating tribes" were as good as anyone else's; given the provisions of the Land Alienation Act, government auctions became the main venue where noncultivating castes could acquire real property. A major unintended accomplishment of this regulation was to create a market for government land sales and to bid up the price of government lands by restricting merchant capital from freely purchasing other properties. In one colony, for example, a tract sold four years before the Land Alienation Act brought an average price of Rs. 50 per acre, whereas one sold four years after the Act earned the government an average of Rs. 266 per acre.[7] To argue, as one Punjab newspaper did, that the colonial government did all this with foreknowledge would be to reward the British with too great a prescience.[8] The unanticipated consequences of their actions to protect the Punjab cultivator were true to the spirit of colonialism, however, in

TABLE 7

WHEAT EXPORT FROM THE PUNJAB AND SELECTED PUNJAB REGIONS

	Average net export (in thousand maunds)		
	Punjab	Cis-Sutlej Region (central Punjab)[a]	Sutlej-Jhelum Region (canal colonies)[a]
1890–94	8,126	3,821	3,185
1895–99	6,392	954	3,617
1900–1904 (1901 missing)	15,339	2,850	10,947
1905–09	23,218	6,172	15,796
1910–1914 (1912 missing)	26,370	6,835	18,214
1915–19	19,435	5,375	13,252
1920–22	12,908	1,003	13,372

SOURCE: Government of the Punjab, *Internal Trade of the Punjab* (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, annual publication). In an austerity move, the government ceased publication after 1922.

NOTE: Net exports from the Punjab were calculated by subtracting its wheat imports from its wheat exports. Net exports from the Cis-Sutlej and Sutlej-Jhelum regions were calculated by subtracting imports into these regions from both outside the Punjab and other Punjab regions from exports from these regions to both places outside the Punjab and other Punjab regions. These calculations are required because trade statistics reported by the Government of the Punjab were figures for rail freight coming into and out of the Punjab and moving among several regions.

[a]The regions used by the Government of the Punjab for the collection of trade statistics are not identical with those referred to as the central Punjab (Region 2) and the canal colonies (Region 4) in the text. These figures, however, show the increasing transfer of export wheat production to the Sutlej-Jhelum area, which contained all of the canal colonies and only a small part of the central region (compare maps 2 and 4).

that the British did well for themselves by doing some little good for others.

The canal colonies illustrate this basic principle for successful colonialism in another way besides in land sales. The British planned the canal colonies to alleviate the pressure put on agriculture by overpopulation in the central Punjab. They assigned the greatest proportion of land by the early canals to smallholders practicing petty commodity production (whom the British labeled "peasant proprietors") drawn from Region 2. In the Lower Chenab colony, for example, 80 percent of the land grants went to small cultivators.[9] Each "peasant" grantee received a consolidated parcel of land, usually no less than a half and no more than two "squares." A square varied from approximately twenty-two to twenty-eight acres depending on the colony.[10] The government divided the remaining lands between large grantees, who enjoyed allotments of from fifty to several hundred acres, and auction purchasers.[11]

Government benefaction of the hard-pressed central Punjab cultivators redounded to the colonial administration's immediate profit. The old British idea that the most revenue could be derived directly from a cultivator-owner certainly must have supported the championing of the "peasant proprietor." Furthermore, local-level officials carefully selected the very best cultivators from the central districts to be canal colonists.[12] Political docility was more than likely an important criterion of those judged as the best. Such careful selection insured that only the most competent hands would work the lands on which the government increasingly depended for revenue and export crops.

Probably of greatest benefit to colonial interests was the self-exploitation, the overwork of self and family, or, put positively, the pioneering zeal associated with petty commodity production. The British constructed nothing more than the main irrigation channels and secondary canals; each settler had to build the water courses on his own plot.[13] Every acre had to be dissected by at least ten channels into which irrigation water could be introduced in succession. Each peasant grantee also had to clear and prepare the soil, build a house and, in other ways, cultivate for the first time not only the fields but also the community's infrastructure. The return for these pioneering labors was in theory to be future productivity and profit from the irrigated lands, but the significant point is that the migrant central Punjab cultivator accepted most of the risks, and the government almost never lost its revenue.[14] It certainly never lost its investment capital. Through the industry and husbandry of the central Punjab cultivator the canal colonies returned an average of 14.38 percent annually on their original capital costs after all operating costs were deducted.[15] Perhaps a major reason the yeomen and capitalist grantees of large holdings seemed so unenterprising to the

colonial government was that they would not gladly accept those initial costs, preferring instead to let tenants or the small proprietors absorb them first.[16] Another benefit the colonial government derived from peasant grantees was their contractual breeding of horses and camels for military use as a condition of their allotments.[17]

The government's growing fiscal reliance on canal land sales eventually perverted the official peasant design of the new canal colonies, with important consequences for other regions of the Punjab. Later colonies assigned progressively fewer acres to smallholders and many more to large grantees and auction sales. Only 75 percent of land grants went to smallholders in the Lower Jhelum colony, opened in 1901, as against the 80 percent that obtained in the earlier Lower Chenab settlement; the Lower Bari Doab colony, opened in 1913, saw a further reduction to 59 percent.[18] The Nili Bar canal, opened in the mid-1920s, provided even fewer peasant land grants than earlier irrigation colonies.[19]

Some land went to larger-holding grantees as political concessions for their loyalty; this practice became prevalent after 1914.[20] Other land went to increase the offerings at government auctions. To recoup the high cost of the Nili Bar canal, one of its last projects, the government had to assign a much larger amount to auctions.[21] Slightly more than 40,000 acres of government-irrigated land passed into private hands from 1892 to 1913, whereas from 1915 to 1921 the colonial government sold over 95,000 acres (if figures on sales of Nili Bar canal lands from the mid-1920s were available, they would make for an even greater contrast). Prices also rose: before 1915 the highest return to the government from a single auction had been an average price of Rs. 266 per acre; after 1918, the lowest average price at a single sale was Rs. 294 and the highest was Rs. 793.[22] By the 1920s the canal projects had become more important as sources of government earnings and as rewards to government followers than as settlements for the excess population of the central Punjab.

CANALS AND THE WORLD ECONOMY: THE TYRANNY OF GOVERNMENT

Inundated by British capital investment, the canal colonies came to be the promised land of export crop production. Railroad lines to carry off the products of this agriculture followed right behind the irrigation channels.[23] But even with readily available water and transport, successful export required the cultivator to commit his labor and production to the market. With the canal colonies, the British had substantially revised Punjab agriculture. Would they still have to depend on the tyranny of

the market, in the form of rural indebtedness and the exactions of moneylenders, to bring the products of canal cultivation into the world economy? Would export precipitate the unwanted central Punjab situation onto the irrigation colonies?

The British did not wish it so. By late in the nineteenth century, they had come to fear the tyranny of the market that, although desirable for colonial appropriation "on the cheap," had trapped the central Punjab cultivator in a petty commodity production beyond his control. The colonial authorities intended to protect the canal settlements from the merchant capital earlier colonialism had unwittingly championed. Shifting colonial objectives—from the development of underdevelopment to development—authorized such protective policies.

Some methods by which the government hoped to limit rural debt but require export production were relatively noninvasive. One such was through the scale of enterprise. The British situated canal colonists on holdings of over twenty acres; Malcolm Darling estimated that a family of five could subsist on nine acres.[24] The typical grant was therefore much larger than the acreage required for a family's subsistence. The British expected, quite correctly, that the smallholder would naturally commit the crops from his excess holding to the cash market.

Another noninvasive method depended on increasing the efficiency of agricultural labor beyond the improvement already gained from canal irrigation. Increased efficiency would mean increased production, some of which would have to come into the marketplace. To this end, the British awarded consolidated plots to canal grantees, that is, the government did not subdivide an individual's holding into physically separated segments of land. This kind of subdivision existed in the central districts and the other regions of the Punjab as a result of inheritance patterns.

The British were not content with such unintrusive methods. What came to replace the tyranny of the market and the appropriation of the indigenous moneylender in the canal colonies was another, noneconomic tyranny: paternalism by the colonial government. Through careful management the British expected to keep their settlements proof against merchant capital, but producing for the world economy.

One quite invasive method was to limit the proprietary rights of the canal colonists. All smallholders initially took up their land grants as the tenants of the colonial government. In some of the early canal colonies, they could purchase proprietary rights to their lands at a nominal charge after a ten-year probation. In 1907 a British plan to keep the canal cultivators in a permanent tenant status produced a major protest in the canal colonies, which is discussed in a later chapter. Under the compromise policy instituted after the protest, the government still maintained

considerable paternalistic control. Following an initial ten years of probation, the canal smallholder gained occupancy rights but was still a tenant of the government; he could only purchase full proprietary rights after an additional ten years.[25]

Protecting the canal smallholder from himself, whether he wanted it or not, led the colonial authorities to promulgate a strict code of rules about the preparation of fields, water use, irrigation channels, and other agricultural responsibilities for the cultivator. These official dicta infringed on the smallholder's management of his holdings much more directly than had merchants in the central Punjab.

The British had ways to enforce their paternalistic control unavailable even to the most avaricious moneylender. A large cadre of canal officials scrutinized each colony and applied a multitude of fines and punishments quite liberally to keep the cultivator in colonialism's line. The officiousness and exactions of these colonial agents were major complaints of the 1907 protesters.[26] British paternalism in the canal colonies went so far as to determine the physical conditions of settlement—to lay out house sites, streets, communal village lands, grazing grounds, sanitary facilities—all "methodically planned . . . before the colonists arrived on the ground" and carefully enforced by the government.[27]

The paternalism of development paid dividends to British colonialism. The canal colonies were not under the heavy burden of debt that the central Punjab was sinking under in the 1920s.[28] They produced a great volume of export crops and a large amount of government revenue, neither of which was controlled or threatened by merchant capital. They even lessened population pressure on resources in the central Punjab.

All might have been well had the flow of capital into irrigation under government initiative continued indefinitely. Much as the early budget colonialism committed British colonialism to a domino game of conquest, the new colonialism of development required a constant refloating and reinvestment of capital, especially as the costs of colonial government rose during World War I. Without new irrigation works, how would export production increase and the colonial government earn foreign credits? How otherwise would revenue continue to rise? Where else could the excess population of the central region migrate?

By the 1920s, however, the physical limits on the extension of irrigation were evidently reached, given the technology then current and the available capital. The Nili Bar canal had been more costly to build and less effective in irrigating lands and generating new revenues than had been the case for earlier colonies. The government had even earlier begun to compromise its use of the canals to resettle smallholders, as already mentioned. From about the start of World War I, the acreage under government canals remained fairly steady compared to its steep ascent

earlier: between 1888 to 1902 the government-irrigated acreage increased by over 100 percent; from 1902 to 1916 the increase was well over 60 percent; but, from 1916 until the end of the 1920s, the irrigated acreage leveled off and even at its peak, in 1923, represented less than a 20 percent increase.[29] In the late 1920s and early 1930s the colonial government brought more land under irrigation mainly because it reduced irrigation charges during the Great Depression. These reduced rates induced cultivators to use canal water for irrigating marginal lands. But by this time, rural society and colonial administration had already undergone the Third Sikh War, a crisis generated in part by the lack of new canal colonies after World War I.

Early in the twentieth century, the colonialism of development formed a new export-producing and revenue-generating canal region in the Punjab. State capital investment helped it grow ever larger until about 1920. Yet the older, market-dominated agrarian system, which prevailed under the colonial development of underdevelopment, endured in the central Punjab—with the help of external remittances and government protection. The contradictions inherent in the two forms of British colonialism came to be expressed in a growing inequality and competition between the two Punjab regions, the canal colonies and the central Punjab, that embodied these separate colonialisms. As the canal colonies waxed stronger in this competition, the condition of the central Punjab cultivator became more desperate.

UNEQUAL COMPETITION AND UNEQUAL EXCHANGE

The British irrigation works were major capital improvements in the means of production, and they markedly increased the efficiency of production. By comparison to the central Punjab petty commodity producer, canal cultivators worked fewer hours, needed less bullock labor, and allocated much less land to fodder crops, as the figures from the 1930s indicate. (See tables 8, 9, and 10. These data from the 1930s are the earliest available. There is no reason to think that much had changed from the 1920s. If the Great Depression had any effect on labor and cultivation regimens, it probably dissuaded the market-oriented cultivators of the canal region from normal labor inputs.) The difference in human and animal labor expenditure and cropping pattern between the two regions mainly arose from the technical requirements of the well irrigation on which most central Punjab smallholders depended. Drawing water from a well was time-consuming labor for humans and animals;

TABLE 8

PERCENTAGE OF CULTIVATED LAND FOR FODDER CROPS

	1936–37	1937–38	1938–39	1939–40	1940–41	1941–42	Average
A. Peasant proprietors (well irrigation)							
1. Dry land	28	27	26	30	28	27	28
2. Well irrigated land	28	25	38	28	20	22	27
B. Canal cultivators	14	13	14	13		11	13

SOURCE: Board of Economic Inquiry, Punjab, *Farm Accounts in the Punjab*, Publications no. 63, 66, 75, 78, 85, 89 (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1939, 1940, 1941, 1943, 1945, 1946).

TABLE 9

ANNUAL LABOR-DAYS (OF EIGHT HOURS) PER WORKER ON CULTIVATION AND LIVESTOCK MAINTENANCE

	1937–38	1938–39	1939–40	1940–41	1941–42	Average
A. Peasant proprietor	370	328	317	345	339	340
B. Peasant proprietor, central Punjab		412	387	381	370	388
C. Canal cultivator	215	261	239	271	345[a] (280)	247[b]

SOURCE: Board of Economic Inquiry, Punjab, *Farm Accounts in the Punjab*, Publications no. 63, 66, 75, 78, 85, 89 (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1939, 1940, 1941, 1943, 1945, 1946).

[a] The figure given in the sources appears to be an error. The figure in parentheses is the average labor-days expended by canal tenants on the government farm in 1941–42.

[b] Excluding 1941–42.

TABLE 10

LABOR-DAYS PER BULLOCK

	1937–38	1938–39	1939–40	1940–41	1941–42	Average
A. On peasant-proprietor holdings	168	166	160	161	152	161
B. On peasant-proprietor holdings in central Punjab		176	161	170	159	167
C. On canal-cultivator holdings	104	112	113	128	120	115

SOURCE: Board of Economic Inquiry, Punjab, *Farm Accounts in the Punjab*, Publications no. 63, 66, 75, 78, 85, 89 (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1939, 1940, 1941, 1943, 1945, 1946).

it added further labor time for the upkeep of bullocks and for the cultivation of their food. No wonder that the central Punjab smallholder had to work harder to maintain his family holding—in fact, on average, nearly sixty hours a week per adult worker as compared to the canal colonist's weekly average of thirty-eight hours.

When the canal region replaced the central Punjab as the major exporter of wheat early in the twentieth century (see table 7), the central Punjab smallholders on their well watered lands began to suffer from unequal competition, and then later, from unequal exchange. Even assuming the most adverse circumstances for the canal cultivator, namely that he was only a sharecropper, and the most advantageous conditions for the central Punjab smallholder, namely that he owned all his cultivated land, the canal cultivator still received on average a higher return for his labor than the central Punjab proprietor received for his labor and land ownership (see table 11). The net return per acre was also higher on the canal irrigated lands (see table 12) in spite of the fact that central Punjab cultivators often earned a higher return on the well irrigated portion of their lands. The problem was that from a third to a half of their holdings was unirrigated and brought a quite inferior return compared to the fully irrigated holdings of the canal cultivator.

Another indication of this unequal competition was the rise in wage rates in the canal colonies relative to those in the central Punjab. A day's labor in the canal region was worth a good deal more than the same labor in the central Punjab and was even worth more at times than the prorated return the central region's smallholder earned by working his own lands (see tables 13 and 14). This difference in wage rates does not seem attributable to a difference in market involvement between the two regions. That is, there is no evidence that the central Punjab laborer gained more of his necessary maintenance costs from nonwage labor, as, for example, in subsistence cultivation, than did the canal colony worker and therefore could accept lower wages. If anything the opposite was true. Smallholders in the central region depended on the cash market for a greater percentage of their household expenditures than did the canal colony sharecropper (see table 15).

The existing data on household income also show that in most years a canal colony sharecropper was better off than a small proprietor of the central Punjab, and the same is true for household savings (table 15).[30] The data from the late 1930s and early 1940s also show that as commodity prices rose in the first years of World War II, the balance of farm income weighed increasingly in favor of the canal sharecropper. High commodity prices also prevailed from World War I until the mid-1920s, and it is likely that the income of the canal sharecropper was higher then, too.

TABLE 11

ANNUAL RETURN PER WORKER AND PER HOLDING (IN RUPEES)

	1936–37	1937–38	1938–39	1939–40	1940–41	1941–42	Average
I. Return per Worker							
A. Peasant proprietor[a]	177	137	124	181	179	255	175
B. Canal cultivator[b]	123	112	123	233	175	342	185
II. Return per Holding (Cultivated Acreage)							
A. Peasant proprietor[a]	218	152	151	198	216	313	208
B. Canal cultivator[b]	98	90	114	218	173	298	165

SOURCE: Board of Economic Inquiry, Punjab, *Farm Accounts in the Punjab*, Publications no. 63, 66, 75, 78, 85, 89 (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1939, 1940, 1941, 1943, 1945, 1946).

NOTE: Annual return based on cost estimates for all inputs, depreciation, and crop outruns. Because not all of these inputs and outruns were bought and sold in the market, these figures must be treated with caution.

[a]Based on the assumption that all land was owned by the peasant proprietor. In reality some proportion was rented.

[b]Based on the assumption that the canal cultivator owned none of the land and received only a tenant's share. (These two assumptions thus hypothetically differentiate peasant proprietors from canal cultivators as greatly as possible.)

TABLE 12

NET RETURNS PER ACRE ON PUNJAB HOLDINGS (IN RUPEES)

	Canal irrigated total	Well irrigated total	Well irrigated, dry lands	Well irrigated, irrigated lands
1927–28	24			
1928–29	34	32 (36)[a]		
1929–30	24	18 (24)		
1931–32	15	11 (12)		
1932–33	19	21 (26)		
1933–34	17	10 (9)		
1934–35	22	16 (19)	9	21
1935–36	28	15 (19)	3	12
1936–37	25		12	33
1937–38	24		7	25
1938–39	27		4	29
1939–40	38	25	9	35
1940–41	29	24	11	32
1941–42	51	35	14	53
Average[b]	26 (21)	20 (20)	9	30

SOURCE: Board of Economic Inquiry, Punjab, *Farm Accounts in the Punjab*, Publications no. 26, 32, 35, 58, 66, 75, 78, 85, 89 (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1932, 1933, 1934, 1938, 1940, 1941, 1943, 1945, 1946).

[a] Figures in parentheses represent the return per acre on well irrigated holdings in the central Punjab.

[b] The averages in parentheses represent the return per acre on canal irrigated holdings and central Punjab well irrigated holdings from 1928–29 to 1935–36.

The world economy's influence over wheat prices in the Punjab, which had started in the 1870s under the old colonialism, grew even stronger once the canal colonies began producing for the market. The larger amounts of wheat and cotton available for export helped perfect this linkage with the world system. The prices of other agricultural commodities rose in sympathy with wheat to the point that "famine" prices prevailed for most of the first quarter of the twentieth century even though there was no famine. The increase in commodity prices deriving from the world market benefited the canal cultivator, who sold more foodstuffs in the market than he bought. But, as the contemporary nationalist Brij Narain warned, it put the central Punjab smallholder, who bought more in the market than he sold, at a disadvantage.[31] British authorities proudly proclaimed the prosperity that prevailed in the Punjab during the reign of high prices, but these congratulations over the good

TABLE 13

REGIONAL DAILY WAGE RATE OF UNSKILLED WORKERS (IN ANNAS)

Region	1909	1912	1917	1922	1927	1932	1937
1. Southeast	3.70	4.10	4.70	6.40	6.80	6.40	4.00
2. Central Punjab	5.91	6.17	7.92	11.67	10.50	11.67	6.00
3. Southwest	4.55	5.35	6.11	8.89	8.66	8.89	6.00
4. Canal colonies	6.60	7.00	8.00	14.83	12.00	12.80	8.20

SOURCE: Government of the Punjab, *Wages Survey of the Punjab* (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1913–1943).

NOTE: Most common rate is used. When two rates are listed as most common, an average of them is taken.

TABLE 14

DAILY WAGES OF LABORERS COMPARED WITH PER DIEM RETURN ON CULTIVATION PER FAMILY WORKER (IN ANNAS)

	1936–37	1937–38	1938–39	1939–40	1941–42
Wages					
Canal colonies	5.17	4.17	4.83	5.50	6.58
Central Punjab			4.00	4.00	5.08
Average in regions other than canal colonies	4.67	4.67	3.67	3.83	4.83
Return					
Canal colonies	2.83	2.58	4.50	9.58	14.75
Central Punjab			1.83	7.17	4.83
Other well irrigation regions	4.00	1.92	1.50	4.42	4.83

SOURCE: Board of Economic Inquiry, Punjab, *Farm Accounts in the Punjab*, Publications no. 53, 66, 75, 78, 85 (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1937, 1940, 1941, 1943, 1945).

NOTE: The figures for return per family worker equals net income from cultivation after paying for all rented land, hired labor, and cost of manure. It does not include rental of land owned, outside wages earned by family workers, or interest on capital.

TABLE 15

COMPARISON OF FAMILY BUDGETS OF WELL IRRIGATORS (PEASANT PROPRIETORS) AND CANAL TENANTS

	1936–37		1937–38		1938–39		1939–40		1940–41		1941–42		1942–43	
	C	W	C	W	C	W	C	W	C	W	C	W	C	W
Total income*	454	520	430	530	330	514	559	453	589	452	898	652	2045	1388
Total expenses	446	451	433	436	337	420	296	515	366	402	372	483	706	723
Savings	8	69	(3)	95	(7)	93	263	(62)	223	50	526	169	1339	666
Percentage maintenance from farm	49	45	56	50	47	46	56	38	56	51	69	48	49	52
Percentage food from farm	74	76	75	77	71	76	78	64	78	69	83	74	71	74

SOURCE: Board of Economic Inquiry, Punjab, *Family Budgets of Punjab Cultivators*, Publications no. 62, 67, 72, 88, 92, 94 (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1939, 1941, 1946, 1947, 1949).

NOTE: Figures in parentheses represent losses.

*Excludes small honoraria (commonly about Rs. 50) paid to well irrigators by the Government of the Punjab for keeping family budgets.

fortune that came with living under the Raj were appropriate to the canal colonists but to few others. For the British, the canal colonies were the Punjab—in the real sense that their colonial interests intertwined with the system of production and labor of this region.

The central Punjab smallholders tried to cope with this competition and market disadvantage by increasing the one factor of production they could expand: they raised their labor input on the family farm. Working harder, they cultivated more intensively and raised more crops for sale. The farm accounts collected by the Punjab government in the 1930s reported an average intensity of cultivation of 111.6 percent for the smallholder, whereas the comparable figure for canal cultivators was 99 percent.[32] These figures do not indicate that increasing intensity in well irrigated cultivation was extra costly in human labor and bullock power. Malcolm Darling and other colonial officers were right to praise the industry of the central Punjab cultivator;[33] they were wrong to attribute it, as they often did, to some inherent or racial capacity[34]—although this explanation was in keeping with the biological determinism by which they explained most things Indian, as I discuss in chapter 8. The husbandry of the central Punjab smallholder was not simply industry, it was self-exploitation; it was not due to racial constitution but to the colonial constitution of the Punjab, specifically the construction of the canals. The central Punjab cultivator could not simply revert to subsistence cultivation, because debt compromised his ability to withdraw from the market. So he worked, much, much harder—and did not get ahead, as perhaps the British thought his industry would deservedly promote, but simply stayed afloat.

Because petty commodity producers do not need to make a profit, do not have to compensate for family labor, need, in fact, only to earn enough to maintain the family estate and raise the next generation, self-exploitation through increased labor input is a natural strategy for coping with a deteriorating market situation. Although more family labor goes into the crop, the important fact is that the crop is larger and will bring a greater total return. That it brings a smaller return per person-day of labor is not important because labor costs are not computed. The ultimate limit on self-exploitation is the same that curtailed the absolute surplus extraction from wage workers under early capitalism: there are physical limits to how long and how hard a worker can labor.

As competition from the canal colonies forced central Punjab cultivators into increased labor, an odd labor and economic class situation arose in the early twentieth century. Intensifying production by harder work on their own plots could go only so far; in addition, smallholders and their families became sharecroppers or hired out their labor. By spreading his labor widely, the smallholder could exploit his own and

his family's labor beyond what his individual holdings would absorb. Families with insufficient labor (their children were too small; the family head or some adult males were working abroad, serving in the army, physically incapacitated, or dead; or other such demographic exigencies) rented out their lands to families with excess workers. Ownership of land and land under cultivation coincided less and less.[35] But no permanent class of tenants seems to have been evolving. An economic survey of a central Punjab village (Amritsar District) in the mid-1920s, for instance, found no sharp distinction between tenants and owners: "In most cases the owner of a small area of land is also the tenant of other plots, which, added to his own, make up an area which it is worth his while to cultivate." Tenants-at-will, neither owning land nor having occupancy rights in any, cultivated only about 6 percent of the village acreage.[36]

Other workers became wage labor migrants. Some went to the canal colonies for seasonal employment; others worked abroad. The pressure of competition with the canal settlements propelled the central Punjab migrant stream to Southeast Asia and North America. From 1901 to 1911, net out-migration from the central region increased from 1.52 percent to 4.72 percent, the highest of any Punjab region.[37]

This amalgam of labor systems—petty proprietorship, sharecropping, and wage labor—defies rigid Marxist class categories but probably reflects common conditions in colonial situations.[38] There was only one class among central Punjab smallholders, but it held varied relationships with the means of production. As a result, various economic and social arrangements, rather than any single interest (like wage rates or land rental costs) were crucial to its maintenance. Any attack on or limitation of its proprietorship, or its tenancies, or its wage-labor opportunities equally threatened the economic interests of this class. Ultimately, all three were to spring the trap shut.

The unequal competition between the canal colonies and the central Punjab soon gave way to unequal exchange between them. As the canal region came to dominate the production of export wheat and cotton in the early twentieth century, the southeastern Punjab (Region 1) began to specialize in gram and millet production for shipment to the canal settlements. Gram and millet were cheaper foodstuffs, which fed the canal cultivators while they sold their wheat. The central Punjab stood midway between the southeast and the canal colonies in crop specialization. It had always combined wheat and gram production. As the canals competed successfully in wheat from about 1900 on, the central Punjab was forced to specialize more and more in gram, which was primarily grown on unirrigated land. Its production of this crop soon came under competition from the increased gram cultivation of the southeastern region

TABLE 16

GRAM ACREAGE BY REGION (IN THOUSAND ACRES) AND PERCENTAGE OF ALL CULTIVATED LAND IN GRAM

Region	1902	1912	1922	1932
1. Southeast	339	1140	1724	1478
	.0511	.1261	.2069	.1815
2. Central Punjab	694	1806	1994	1691
	.0908	.1390	.1725	.1359
3. Southwest	305	453	517	767
	.0260	.0449	.0578	.0705
4. Canal colonies	9	564	1517	1079
	.0244	.0908	.1942	.1342
Punjab total	1347	3963	5752	5015
	.0498	.0963	.1472	.1815

SOURCE: Computed from Government of the Punjab, *Punjab District Gazetteers* (Tumba, Sweden, International Documentation Center [1969], microfiche).

and from gram production on the unirrigated lands within the canal districts[39] (see table 16 for comparative figures on the growth of gram cultivation in Punjab regions, and table 17 for the regional export figures for gram). Here again, the market tyranny and market discipline forced upon the central region by early British colonialism "on the cheap" was becoming, under the changed colonial conditions of the twentieth century, an increasing liability.

Only two strategies were possible, neither of which was satisfactory. If the central Punjab smallholder grew gram on unirrigated land as a cash crop and ate the wheat he grew on his irrigated acreage, he thereby recognized the advantage enjoyed by the canal colonies in wheat production. But he then fell into competition over gram production with the southeastern region, and, perhaps more important, given his indebtedness, reduced the cash income generated by his cultivation. Net returns for dry lands were always less than half and usually under a third of the net return to well irrigated holdings (see table 12). The alternative strategy of growing gram as a cash crop on irrigated land was even less satisfactory. This strategy also recognized the superiority in wheat production of the canal colonies, and it gave the central Punjab a competitive advantage over the southeast in gram production, where it was mainly an unirrigated crop. But it led to an unequal exchange between the central Punjab and the canal region. Central Punjab gram purchased and eaten by canal cultivators allowed them to export more wheat. The yield of gram was less per acre than of wheat and yet the price was lower per equivalent unit (see tables 18, 19, and 20). Because the amount of labor

TABLE 17

NET GRAM EXPORT AND WHEAT IMPORT
FIGURES FOR THE CENTRAL PUNJAB, 1900–1922 (IN THOUSAND MAUNDS)

	Export total	Gram export to canal col.	Percentage going to canal col.	Wheat import from canal col.
1900–04[a]	545	190	34.86	335
1905–09	979	245	25.02	269
1910–14[a]	1,434	860	59.97	195
1915–19	1,083	551	50.88	791
1920–22	1,172	760	64.85	1,445

SOURCE: Computed from Government of the Punjab, *Report on Rail and River Trade of the Punjab* (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette, annual publication).

NOTE: Net gram export figures were computed by subtracting gram imports into the central Punjab from gram exports out of it. Net wheat import from the canal colonies was computed by subtracting the central Punjab's export of wheat to the canal colonies from its wheat imports from the canal region. Official regions used in the compilation of trade statistics do not exactly correspond to the canal and central Punjab regions as defined in this book. See table 7.

[a]One year missing.

that a central Punjab well irrigator invested in the production of a unit of gram greatly exceeded the equivalent investment by the canal irrigator in an equal volume of wheat, there was a flow of value—an unequal exchange—in favor of the canal colonies.[40]

Formerly, because of unequal competition, the canal cultivator simply did better than the central Punjab petty commodity producer, either in the form of increased leisure or higher profits. Every hour of agricultural labor in the central Punjab brought a smaller return than such labor did in the canal colonies. Or, another way to express the unequal competition: the unrelenting toil of the well irrigator in the central Punjab, which pressed hard on human physical capabilities, earned him no more than the relatively leisured work of the canal irrigator. But now, with unequal exchange, the canal cultivator reaped a profit directly from the labor of the central Punjab petty commodity producer. Every maund of gram grown in the central Punjab and sold to the canal colonies embodied more labor than required by the equivalent unit of wheat produced in the canal colonies and sold in the world market. Yet the wheat brought a higher price and a greater profit than gram did because the world economy rather than local consumption determined the price of wheat. In this unequal exchange, the toil and impoverishment of the central Punjab producer fed the wealth and leisure of the canal cultivator.

The contradictory objectives of British colonialism had forced another embrace on the central Punjab. Not only was its labor and production

TABLE 18

WHEAT AND GRAM PRICES (IN RUPEES PER MAUND)

	Wheat	Gram
1861–70	2.058	1.907
1871–80	2.081	1.751
1881–90	2.101	1.595
1891–1900	2.727	2.268
1901–05	2.510	1.945
1906–10	3.376	2.769
1911–15	3.609	2.871
1916–20	4.982	4.409
1921–25	4.53	3.54
1926–30	3.51	3.45

SOURCE: Board of Economic Inquiry, Punjab, *Agricultural Statistics of the Punjab, 1901–02 to 1935–36,* Publication no. 52 (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1937); W. H. Myles, *Sixty Years of Punjab Food Prices, 1861–1920,* Board of Economic Inquiry, Punjab, Rural Section Publication no. 7 (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1925).

tied to and appropriated by the world economy, but now it was also under exploitation by another Punjab region.

THE WELL-TRAPPED CULTIVATOR

Petty commodity production in the central Punjab deteriorated to a crisis point of contradiction shortly after World War I. The underlying factor, the unequal market competition and unequal exchange with the canal colonies, had set the trap over the previous quarter-century. Government actions after the war unintentionally helped spring it. They removed the

TABLE 19

YIELD OF WHEAT AND GRAM (IN TONS PER ACRE)

	Wheat	Gram
1906–16	.3254	.2678
1917–26	.3275	.2260

SOURCE: Board of Economic Inquiry, Punjab, *Agricultural Statistics of the Punjab, 1901–02 to 1935–36,* Publication no. 52 (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1937).

TABLE 20

RETURN PER MAUND OF WHEAT AND GRAM (IN RUPEES)

	Return		Market Price	
Period	Wheat	Gram	Wheat	Gram
1927–28	1.73	1.33	3.07	3.11
1931–32				

SOURCE: Board of Economic Inquiry, Punjab, *Studies in the Costs of Production of Crops in the Punjab (1927–28 to 1931–32)*, Publication no. 33 (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1933).

NOTE: The gram and wheat was grown on canal irrigated land.

external sources of income that had hitherto protected the smallholder.

After the war, the many soldiers demobilized from the British Indian army became so many mouths to feed from a family income that no longer included any military remittances. The fiscal difficulties of the colonial government in the 1920s dictated economies that reduced the peacetime army to below what it had been before World War I, and—for those lucky enough to continue in service—established pay scales that ignored the Great War's great inflation.[41]

A similar loss of external remittances resulted from the immigration restrictions placed on Punjab workers and their repatriation from North America and Southeast Asia early in the war. Although other governments were the culprits, the repatriates blamed the Raj and the abject status of colonialism in which it held India for their prejudicial treatment and outright rejection by other nations.

The colonial government also shouldered blame for the waterlogging that had become a major problem along many of the protective canals the British had constructed in the central Punjab, especially in the Amritsar District. Instead of the irrigation by which to survive droughts, the government canals made these lands the equivalent of dessicated wastes from excess of water.[42]

These sources of income diminished at the same time that new canal grants ceased to be readily available. There were few new government irrigation works underway, and, in any case, the last canal lands had gone as rewards to rural magnates who helped with the war effort or as properties to auction.

State actions also unintentionally subsidized forces threatening the system of labor and production in the central Punjab from within. The Land Alienation Act had curtailed the dominance of merchant capital over agricultural petty commodity producers. But it had transferred rural

TABLE 21

SALE PRICE OF LAND PER CULTIVATED ACRE (IN RUPEES)

For five-year period ending						
1901	1906	1911	1916	1921	1926	1931
81	79	114	166	258	400	392

SOURCE: Board of Economic Inquiry, Punjab, *Agricultural Statistics of the Punjab, 1901–02 to 1935–36*, Publication no. 52 (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1937).

debt bondage to a new type of moneylender, the rich farmer, who stepped in to supply the same credit and extract the same concessions as had the traditional nonagricultural "tribes" excoriated by the British.[43] The war enhanced the fortunes of these prosperous cultivators and widened their influence over the rural economy in the following fashion: the war had accelerated the rise in wheat prices set in motion by export production. Those central Punjab cultivators who managed to raise more for sale in the market than they bought amassed capital. During World War I, much of this capital had been secreted away from British war drives and other so-called voluntary collections, but in the twenties it reappeared en masse and helped buy out or "mortgage out" the less successful smallholder.

The postwar surge in capital also helped the price of land rise steeply (see table 21). The start-up capital necessary to purchase land for petty commodity production increased beyond the means of many men who inherited insufficient land or no land at all.[44]

When the trap closed on central Punjab cultivators in the early 1920s, this rural population cried out in the fiercest protest against British colonialism since the 1857 Mutiny, as the next chapter shows. The colonial authorities were dismayed that a province whose productivity they had invested in so heavily and whose people they had so selectively favored in the military service should now become so untrue to their (British-given) "salt." The British did not see that these two benefits of colonial domination represented two quite different—and contradictory—forms of colonialism. They did not see that their own state policies intentionally and unintentionally maximized the good fortune of the canal colonies at the expense of central Punjab smallholdings. The two agrarian regions, representing the two colonialisms, could remain locked in an unequal competition only as long as the state could maintain both the development of underdevelopment and development objectives. But the patches that the state had applied, like the Land Alienation Act and land grants, or that central Punjab smallholders had utilized, like army service or emigration, to dam the destructive forces flowing from the canal colonies and the world economy had by the early 1920s seriously weakened.

CHAPTER 5

The Third Sikh War

The Third Sikh War, as one major participant termed it,[1] or the Akali movement as it is more commonly known, rallied rural cultivators to perhaps the largest and longest mass protest against colonial rule in India.[2] It certainly represented the largest and longest application of the Gandhian program of satyagraha, or nonviolent resistance. Over its course from 1920 to 1925, one contemporary estimate was that 30,000 Singhs suffered arrest, 400 were killed, and 2,000 were wounded; additionally, the colonial government assessed Singhs 1.5 million rupees in fines and temporarily ceased recruiting them for civil and military employment.[3] Because its participants were overwhelmingly from the peasantry, the British greatly feared this movement, no matter its ostensible commitment to nonviolence. Gandhi's nonviolence and that of his urban followers was more a matter of cowardice and weakness than of principle, so some Britishers thought. For Punjab cultivators, the acceptance of satyagraha might be principled, but the British feared it might be temporary as well, especially if the inherent martial character the colonial authorities ascribed to the Singhs came to the fore. Written before the height of the uprising, one confidential official memorandum expressed such a fear in this manner:

> The Akali movement is likely to be a cause of much greater concern than the civil disobedience campaign instituted by Mr. Gandhi . . . [whose] propaganda makes its appeal mainly to the urban classes, which lack both the stamina and physical courage to oppose successfully even small bodies of police; the Akali campaign is essentially a rural movement, and its followers are men of fine physique with a national history of . . . martial characteristics.[4]

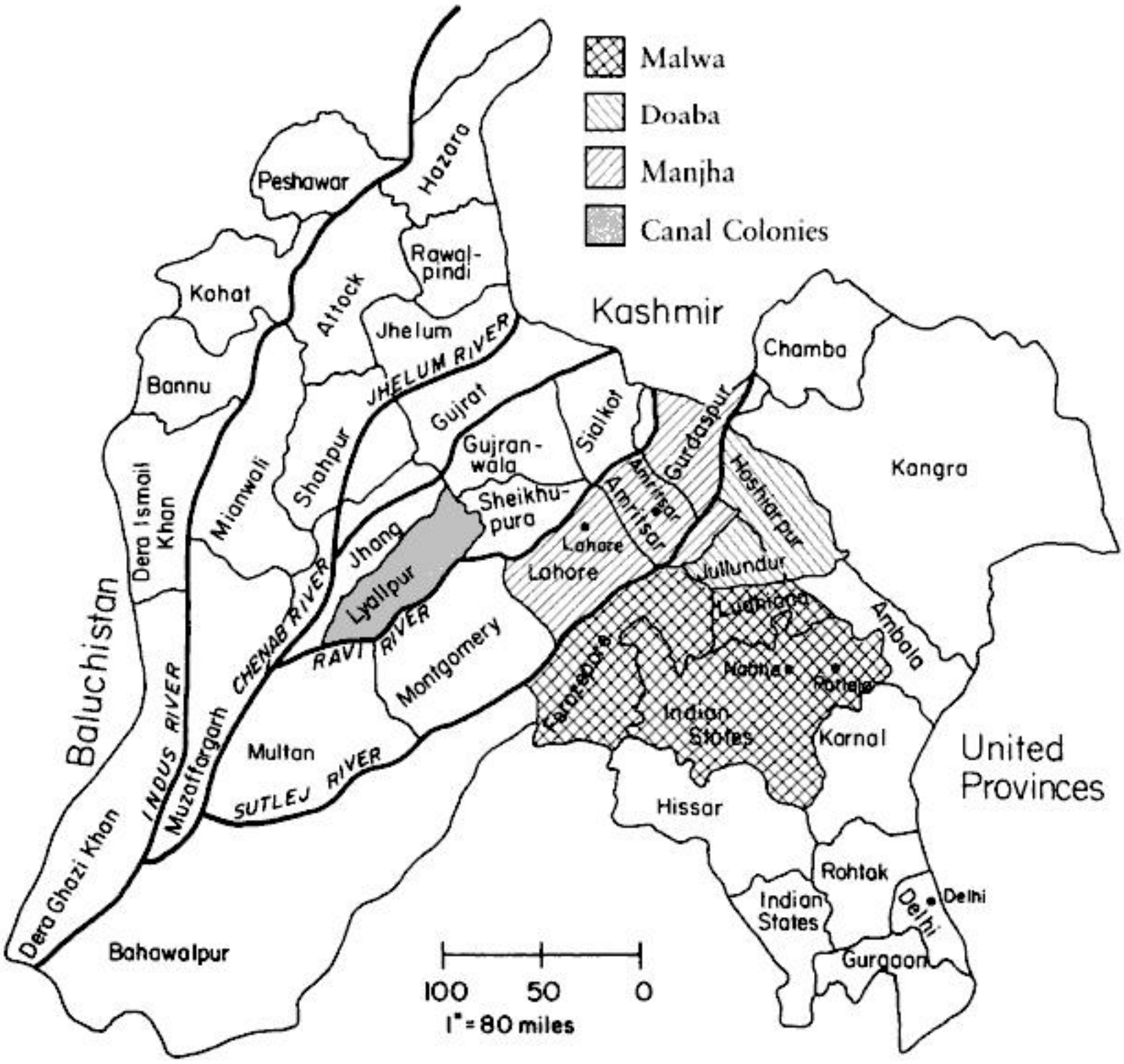
These rural protesters had adopted a strict and militant Singh identity. They strongly committed to an orthodoxy that they believed represented original Sikhism, but that in many aspects had only been promulgated by an urban reform movement over the last quarter-century. By calling themselves "Akalis," the protesters asserted their connection with the small bands of Singhs who, in Ranjit Singh's reign, had adopted this name, meaning "servants of the Eternal God," as testimony to their tireless defense of the faith.[5] The protesters adopted the dark blue or black dress (especially turbans in these colors) associated with the earlier Akalis as a marker of their similar dedication, and their dagger-length kirpans became long swords as a symbol of their equal militancy.[6]

SINGH NATURE AND HABITAT

The Third Sikh War recruited its frontline troops, including violent commandos like the Babbar Akalis, from the rural areas of the central Punjab, especially the Doaba and Malwa regions. Its commanders came from the major cities of the Punjab, especially Amritsar, Lahore, and Sialkot, and from rural areas, like Lyallpur District, which were part of the canal colonies. The Manjha, Malwa, and Doaba were indigenously recognized regions within the central Punjab that had somewhat different ecologies. The British also believed that their populations had different hereditary psychologies and constitutions. The Doaba's higher elevation and superior rainfall permitted more unirrigated agriculture and smaller holdings than was the case in the Manjha and Malwa, where well irrigation and, in some places, canal irrigation provided security against drought. Outside the central Punjab, Lyallpur and the other areas referred to as the "canal colonies" had only recently been opened to productive, secure agriculture. Map 4 shows the approximate boundaries of these regions and their relationship to the administrative districts of the British Raj.

According to an admittedly imperfect official British survey in 1920, rural Jats represented the overwhelming majority of Singh forces in the Doaba and Malwa (see table 22). The 1920 enumeration indicated that overall almost two-thirds of the Akalis were Jats. The preponderance of Jats indicates the strong rural roots of the protest movement. Jats enjoy a traditionally low caste status, below the clean twice-born Brahmins and Rajputs but above Untouchables. They were among the most industrious cultivators in rural Punjab, especially in the central districts, where they composed a large proportion of the agriculturists.

The only other caste group mentioned by name in the 1920 report—"menials," or low castes—accounted for about 15 percent of the protesters overall. Menials, also mostly of rural provenience, were in high pro-



Punjab includes North-West Frontier Province and Delhi. Districts as of 1931.

Map 4: Traditional Regions of the Punjab and the Canal Colonies in 1901

portion among protesters in the Doaba and Malwa. Other areas, especially the western Punjab and, to a lesser extent, the canal colonies had lower percentages of Jats and menials, the rural elements, but considerably higher proportions of "others," who most likely were urban supporters from the Arora and Khatri castes. These urban Singhs composed almost 19 percent of the protesters.

The British surveyed Akali strength when the movement was still growing rapidly, and they themselves recognized their underestimation of the militants in the earliest surveyed areas of the Punjab. Because these areas contained a higher proportion of Jats in the movement, the British survey also probably underestimated the percentages of rural people and of cultivators involved.

What little other information exists on the nature of the militant Singhs concerns characteristics that interested British officials. The colonial administration worried that many of the protesters were immigrants recently returned from North America and elsewhere. They continued to believe such "extremists" were important to the movement even after their 1920 survey showed their proportions to be negligible: less than 2 percent. Conversely, the British downplayed the role of former soldiers in the protest, but in the survey they composed a little over 8 percent of the Akalis. Almost half these ex-soldiers were military pensioners, whose previous loyalty and service to the Raj were beyond reproach (see table 22).

Any explanation of rural sympathy and mass participation in the Third Sikh War must give special place, therefore, to the condition of the central Punjab countryside, as I have in the two preceding chapters. My previous analysis of the central Punjab's petty commodity production also helps explain another characteristic of the Singhs: the exceedingly high proportion of rural protesters in the Doaba and Malwa who were ex-soldiers.

SHRINES, SINGHS, AND RURAL PROTEST

The protesting Singhs initially wished to wrest control over hundreds of Sikh shrines (*gurudwaras*) from the religious functionaries who managed their finances, controlled their eleemosynary lands (which provided handsome incomes for some shrines), and determined their pattern of worship.[7] The hereditary officiants (*mahants*) and appointed managers (*sarbrahs*) of many shrines did not follow orthodoxy as the Singh protesters understood it. For the Singh militants, such temple functionaries were apostates or sinners: they unethically diverted the temple's communal income to their own enrichment; they permitted Hindu practices to invade Sikh worship; they rejected the true Sikh identity of Singh; they disallowed worship by Untouchable Singhs; and they lived slothfully and sinfully. Such religious dereliction by the manager of the Golden Temple in Amritsar especially galled the reformers because the shrines contained within its precincts are among the most prestigious in Sikhism.

These presumed corruptions and heresies often betokened something other than moral turpitude and religious backsliding. They existed in many cases because the temple officiants adhered to a different sect of Sikhism, which led them to reject the strong Singh identity of the protesters. As I discuss in chapter 9, both the Singh protesters and the "apostate" mahants portrayed their version of Sikhism and Sikh identity as original and hegemonic, quite against historical reality.

TABLE 22

DISTRIBUTION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF AKALIS IN 1920

Region	Number of Akalis	Percentage of Jats	Percentage of menials	Percentage of immigrants	Percentage of military	Percentage of others
Doaba	1,974	85.8	14.2	5.1	15.0	0.0
Malwa[a]	1,277	78.2	21.6	4.5	25.9	0.0
Manjha	3,994	66.9	27.6	1.6	8.0	5.6
Native States	4,000					
Central Punjab total	11,245	74.0	22.9	3.2	12.9	2.0
Canal Colonies[b]	5,675	68.0	10.1	0.1	3.2	21.9
Western Punjab[c]	2,586	37.9	6.5	0.2	5.8	55.6
Total	19,506	65.8	15.5	1.6	8.2	18.7

SOURCE: Government of India, "Home-Political Files A," 459, II, & K.W., 1922 (New Delhi, National Archives of India).

NOTE: The figure for the Native States, geographically part of the Malwa region, was an official British estimate not based on any survey.

[a]Ambala District is included in the Malwa region.

[b]Sheikhupura, Lyallpur, Montgomery, and Shahpur districts are included in the canal colonies.

[c]Sialkot, Gujranwala, Gujrat, Jhelum, and Rawalpindi districts are included in the Western Punjab.

British involvement in what appeared as a matter for Sikhs alone developed because many of the temple mahants were strong British supporters and some shrine managers, among them, the functionary at the Golden Temple, were appointees of the Raj. The British quite blatantly demanded that these religious figures publicly defend their rule. In the most heinous instance for many Singhs, the Golden Temple manager honored the British general, R. E. H. Dyer, after his massacre of unarmed civilians at Jallianwala Bagh in 1919, a matter that will be considered presently. The history of how the British came to stand behind these functionaries appears in chapter 8.

The Third Sikh War forced these silent partners out into the open, and what began as a confrontation over religion between different sorts of Sikhs ended as a battle over power between the British and the Singhs.

That rural Singhs were the main troops in the Third Sikh War was readily apparent to contemporaries, precisely because it was so unusual. Nationalist activity had hitherto been the preserve of the urban "educated classes," whom the British had grown to distrust by G. N. Curzon's viceroyalty at the turn of the twentieth century, if not earlier.[8] The British generated a compensatory folk ethology that portrayed the Indian peasant—no matter whether from ignorance, passivity, or appreciation for the Raj—as politically passive and respectful of authority, and therefore, in the British view, loyal: at best, a stolid plugger, mindful at the widest horizon of family honor and little more, intent on eeking out a living with backward technology, but by that token at least industrious and hardworking; at worst, the peasant was mired in caste and communal practices of the most atavistic sort, prone to debt, under the double though different exactions of his priest and moneylender.[9]

When the Lions of the Punjab, supposedly among the most dependable and stolid of these humble, rural species of men, sounded their collective protest, the British were perplexed. But immersed in their own cultural understandings of India, they did not question their principles of ethology; rather they fell back on a conspiracy theory, which expectably blamed their Indian betes noires, the urban educated classes. One official posited a quite irrational and almost lemminglike hysteria as prodding the rural Lions to social protest:

> The Sikh peasant has been committed to a policy of "self-determination" imposed by men who are not his natural leaders, and has been induced by some mysterious process of mass psychology to enter a sphere of activity hitherto [interdicted] by all traditions of loyalty and self-interest.[10]

The British were not in doubt, however, about the rural protest's anticolonialism. An official letter quoted Akali public speeches filled with

anti-British sentiment.[11] At the many religious meetings (diwans) held in the countryside, Singh speakers appealed against British oppression and for national unity, martyrdom, and freedom by the sword.[12] They used issues like the mistreatment of Sikhs in Canada (for which the British were held responsible), the miserable pay of the Indian sepoy compared to the British tommy, and the general poverty of India to awaken their audiences. They recalled past misuse and massacre—British incarceration and murder of returning Sikh immigrants at Budge-Budge,[13] the Rowlatt Bills suppressing dissent, the Jallianwala Bagh massacre of civilians, the martial law regime and the aerial bombing of Punjab villages, the British complicity in the Nankana killings (discussed below), and others—to rouse people's ire.[14] At country fairs, Singhs showed "utmost contempt" for the British government, not only or necessarily in what they said (for which they could be arrested under the Rowlatt Bills) but in their "conduct and bearing."[15]

The British failed to understand what appeared to them as the strange mixture of religion and politics in the Akali protest. An official report of a village meeting faithfully portrays its mix of religious exhortations (against dowry, mismanagement of the Golden Temple, the position of women) and political protest (against the treatment of immigrants, General Dyer's perfidy, the unequal pay of British versus Indian soldiers).[16] Administrators attempted to discern whether the movement was truly religious in inspiration and goals or whether it masked an anticolonial undertaking. Some officials argued that it was essentially a religious movement: "Though the outward manifestations of the present Akali movement are more political than religious, its inward inspiration is religious zeal."[17] Others, while accepting the religious characterization, nevertheless feared that it was being captured by "extremist" elements (they had in mind nationalists like Gandhi and Nehru), who would pervert it and lead it to "outrages" against the Raj. Still others conceived it as nothing more than a political agitation, "a plain and naked attempt at revolt."[18] Even an indigenous informer could write of "the so-called religious meetings, where anti-Government speeches are made," but overlook the anomaly that at the same meetings prayers for the destruction of the British Raj were offered by religious functionaries.[19] Singh leaders insisted their motivation was entirely religious and their goal was only shrine reform, but the British who believed the movement was political naturally saw this argument as disingenuous. Never fully resolving the issue, the British reacted situationally: in 1923 they defined the Akalis as an anticolonial political movement and suppressed it; in 1925 they accepted its religious credentials and effected a reform of shrines through legislation.

Throughout their official reports, the British were concerned to iden-

tify the moderates, those with reformist religious goals only, and the extremists, those with nationalist pretensions and Congress connections, within the Akali leadership.[20] Very often, factions of this sort did exist, and they contested for control over the movement. There were also caste and regional differences that followed this ideological split. Discovering factions among the Singh leadership and exploiting them helped confirm the British conception that the movement was fundamentally either religious or political. Their overconcern with the leaders also meant they never really scrutinized the basis for massive rural support (witness the comment on a mysterious mass psychology quoted above). They therefore never allowed that political protest and religious reform could become inextricably intertwined in the colonial jungle they had made of India.

The truth was that controlling the shrines promised to benefit both the reformers and the nationalists for the same two important reasons. The first reason was that the shrines were important centers of communication with rural areas; their religious prestige helped carry their pronouncements, whether sacred or secular, far and wide.[21] Urban reformers wished to use this nodality to make their definition of Singh identity paramount; urban nationalists hoped to employ it for broadcasting and legitimating their anticolonialism. Thus, one value of the shrines for reformers and nationalists came from their custodial role over cultural meanings and their authority to constitute legitimate cultural meanings for a large rural populace.

Shrines earned large incomes from the lands bequeathed them as well as from the contemporary offerings of the faithful. Control over this source of funds was the second reason both urban religious reformers and nationalists addressed themselves to the shrines. Reforming the shrines meant establishing the principle that temple incomes belonged to the congregation, not to the religious functionaries. The reformers envisioned this wealth in the service of the community of Singhs: for supporting orphans and widows, for endowing schools, and for other social-welfare enterprises. The nationalists saw this treasure as funding protests and agitations against the British, antigovernment tracts, and schools independent of government subsidy. Public expression of Akali goals, as, for example, in the newspapers of the day, combined reformist and nationalist designs on shrine incomes.[22] Urban Singhs of both persuasians opposed the first shrine-reform bill because temple functionaries would have continued to control shrine incomes under its provisions.[23] The British administration especially feared the competency that came to the protest movement as it took control of shrine incomes. A common sentiment was that religious reform was only a ploy to gain control over such incomes; the real intent was to employ these funds for revolutionary

purposes. Some officials claimed that Singh reformers launched campaigns only against shrines with large incomes. They believed the entire rural protest would not have lasted long, or even begun, had the leadership not used temple funds to incite mass agitation.[24]

Thus, the second reason for the attraction of shrine reform was an avowedly materialistic one: shrines were a major source of funds, which the British had been quite content for temple functionaries to dissipate but which urban reformers and nationalists aimed to use more providentially.

Rural protesters also undoubtedly recognized these two attractions. The shrines were important to these cultivators because they did materialize the cultural meanings, the religious understandings, on which they had come (in some cases, very recently) to base identity. The shrines were also important because their funds, properly employed, might promise some relief from the deteriorated rural economy that had developed in the colonial Punjab by the 1920s. Rural protesters might not have recognized what the last two chapters revealed: that their economic plight developed from the way British colonialism had trained and misused rural production and labor. Nevertheless, precisely because they adopted symbolic and materialist redesigns on the shrines, these rural peoples had to commit to collective protest against colonialism: the British controlled the mahants who controlled the shrines. The British were no more likely to give up their lion's share in temple management without a fight than they were to return their lion's share of India's peasant production.

FROM REFORM TO REVOLT

The Third Sikh War began as religious reformism in Punjab cities and ended as anticolonial revolt in Punjab villages.

Urban Singhs began agitating for reform of shrine management during the first decade of the twentieth century. They criticized what they took as the venality and misappropriation of funds by temple functionaries in the vernacular and English-language newspapers that had sprung up in the Punjab.[25] They won a small victory in 1905 when Hindu icons were removed from the Golden Temple's precincts, and they pursued redress through the cumbrous legal system of British India.[26]

Urban reformers took little direct action until 1920, however. The conversion of urban reformist rhetoric into rural protest rested on a combination of factors that had estranged urban Singhs from British rule (detailed in chapter 9) and that had depressed cultivators of the central Punjab (already considered in chapters 3 and 4). Events in 1919 and

1920—the British massacre at Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar city, the ensuing harsh martial law administration of the Punjab, the Indian National Congress meeting at Amritsar, the formation of the nationalist Central Sikh League, followed by Gandhi's noncooperation movement—helped bring about public consciousness of these factors and their expression in collective social action.

In this conversion of Singh rhetoric into protest, the precipitating event concerned both nationalist politics and management of the religion. It thereby anticipated and faithfully reflected the mixture of religious and nationalist protest that would characterize the Third Sikh War. This event inaugurated a major confrontation, initially between Singh urban reformers and temple functionaries and then later between cultivators and their colonial masters.

Singh reformers generally believed that the government-appointed manager of the Amritsar Golden Temple had honored General Dyer, the colonial officer responsible for the Jallianwala Bagh massacre.[27] After public outrage forced this manager's retirement, the Singhs put his successor, also selected by government, to a severe test.[28] Current practice at the Golden Temple was to allow Untouchables to worship at restricted times only; their religious offerings at shrines were only acceptable if someone of high caste presented them. In August 1920 reformers, including Untouchables, entered the sacred locale and made offerings. Because the temple officiants had decamped to avoid witnessing what they regarded as desecration, the Singhs took over management of the shrine.[29] To maintain indirect control over the Golden Temple and several affiliated shrines, the British constituted a new managing committee, but the reformers preempted it by organizing their own. In October 1920 Singhs from all over the Punjab came together to form the Shiromani Gurudwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), whose charge was to gain control over all Sikh shrines and to manage them according to the dictates of the Singh reformers.[30] About the same time, other shrines fell under the reformers' control.[31]

Starting in late 1920, large numbers of reformers in both urban and rural Punjab joined together to form separate and independent bands, or jathas, of Akalis, intent on gaining control over their local shrines. Under command of its leader (*jathedar*), a jatha would occupy a shrine and try to gain a transfer of management in its favor from the shrine's current officiants. Often the transfer went peacefully, especially in the case of the smaller, poorer, and less prestigious shrines, albeit not without the threat of force. But when there was resistance, jathas physically usurped the management of shrines; and, to that end, large numbers of Akalis could be massed at short notice.[32]

Jathas differed greatly in size and sophistication, from dozens of men to thousands and from a highly elaborate internal organization to a loose one. Only a loose hierarchy coordinated local jathas into regional bands.[33] Ties to the Akali Dal, the central organization founded in December 1920 as the paramilitary arm of the SGPC, were even weaker.[34] Although the Akali Dal ostensibly coordinated all jathas, it had only nominal control over many of them.[35]

Jathas were similar in being composed mainly of rural Jats. Their members also shared a dedication to what they regarded as the orthodox Sikh—that is, Singh—way. All jathas generally had associated religious functionaries, such as scripture readers and preachers, who encouraged new membership. And expenses were usually apportioned among the members. Each jatha had its own rules for membership and initiation, however. Some even required signed pledges and sent these admission forms to the Akali Dal.[36]

As the reform of Sikh shrines and the mobilization of jathas gathered pace in 1921, the British colonial authorities intervened on the side of the temple incumbents, avowedly to preserve the sanctity of property and respect for the rule of law. Their real concern was to preserve their management of Sikhism by protecting the persons and property of those who were cat's-paws of the Raj. Thus, the officially controlled Punjab Council endorsed a bill to regulate Sikh shrines in April 1921; it called for a central management committee containing non-Singhs and did not define what constituted a Sikh shrine.[37] The Singh reformers reacted to the bill with derision and, in May 1921, countered with a resolution embracing noncooperation and calling for a boycott of British goods.[38]

Other events in 1921 clearly convinced the militant Singhs that they did not enjoy British sympathy. When the mahant of the Nankana Sahib shrine slaughtered 130 members of a jatha he feared had come to dispossess him (February 1921), the Akalis widely believed that British officials had known the mahant's plans but done nothing or, worse, been actively complicitous.[39] After the Nankana tragedy, a British administrator took control of the keys of the Golden Temple and appointed a new manager. Akalis used public meetings in the cities and countryside to criticize what they regarded as government intervention in their religious affairs. The British responded by declaring the meetings political rather than religious and by arresting Akali leaders.[40] These events clarified the direct role of colonial government in curtailing the religious reformers.

Consequently, the later stages of the Akali movement, those most involving mass protest by rural cultivators, became a direct confrontation between British colonialism and the militant Singhs. Inspired by Gandhian rhetoric, the Akalis adopted an unflagging devotion to nonviolence

and passive resistance in the face of police brutality. Through their suffering and endurance they gave the lie to British notions that the Lions of the Punjab were inherently pugnacious—and undisciplinable except by their British masters.

At Guru-ka-Bagh shrine in 1922 the mahant refused to allow Akalis to cut firewood from temple land, and the British set out to protect his property rights. Singh reformers commonly believed that the British put the mahant up to this confrontation.[41] From August to November of that year, daily bands of some twenty-five Akalis marched unarmed and unresisting up to the shrine's entrance, where British forces beat them to the ground and, often, into unconsciousness. The same brutal treatment awaited the jathas of one hundred men that marched each day from Amritsar's Golden Temple to the shrine, a few miles away.[42] Later, when the governor of the Punjab interceded and stopped these beatings, the daily bands suffered only arrest and imprisonment. In British jails, the militants went naked because they refused to replace their Akali garb with prison wear. They were whipped to enforce discipline and were treated as common criminals rather than as political prisoners—much like the British government in Northern Ireland treated I.R.A. prisoners over a half-century later.[43]

The Singh protesters achieved their goal at Guru-ka-Bagh in November 1922 through a private agreement, which, however, the British administration had initiated as a face-saving retreat. Fifteen hundred Akalis suffered beatings and five thousand underwent imprisonment in this agitation.[44] Such sacrifice profited the reformers: by late January 1923, one hundred shrines were under their control.[45]

The Akali agitation at Jaito, in the Princely State of Nabha was the last mass protest by the Singh militants and the most directly anticolonial.[46] After the British deposed the ruler of Nabha, who had supported the Akali movement, the militant Singhs launched an agitation in September 1923 to restore him.[47] On the pretext that state officials had interrupted a religious ceremony at the Jaito shrine, seventeen shahidi jathas, or bands of martyrs, each several hundred strong, marched from all over the Punjab into certain imprisonment,[48] and, in the case of the first such jatha, into a government attack that left twenty-three dead and thirty-three injured (February 1924).[49] By December 1925 Nabha prisons held over five thousand Singhs, not counting the one hundred who had died while interned.[50] The thousands of Singh martyrs at Jaito, as well as those at Guru-ka-Bagh, along with the many thousands more who fed these jathas along their routes of march, joined them in their religious devotions, and sometimes even formed a huge congregation (sangat) attending them to their ultimate destination are an indication of how successfully urban Singhs leashed rural supporters to their cause.[51]

The Guru-ka-Bagh and Jaito agitations followed upon the greatest success of the protest, the time when its anticolonialism was overt and when rural guerrillas entered its ranks. In January 1922 British authorities gave over the administration of the Golden Temple to the militants and released all Akali prisoners from jail. They thereby recognized the Singh militants as the legitimate managers of the premier Sikh shrine, and they besmirched the government's prestige, or "face," by reversing their policy. Both Singh protesters and many British officials regarded this act as cowardly, rather than as conciliatory.[52] The necessity to preserve face (*izzat*) was a belief common to the British and the Akalis. The British adhered to this belief because they thought such considerations ruled Indian society; the Akalis followed it because they thought governments naturally defended saving face—even to the point of oppression (*zulum*)—in order to impose their authority. This instance is only one of many in which a common cultural understanding or meaning developed between the colonial authorities and the Singhs and informed their interrelationships. As with the other cases I discuss later on, the British explained the shared cultural meaning by ascribing its origins to the indigenous society, whereas the reality was that a common cultural meaning had developed from the continuing interaction, initially friendly, then later hostile, between the British lion and the Punjab Lions.

In the aftermath of government capitulation, rural protesters asserted their independence from the Raj:

> They marched about in bands, openly displaying sword and axes, terrorized village officers, travelled in trains without payment . . . , established village courts which inflicted barbarous punishments, declaimed violently against Government, and spoke openly of the coming rule of the Sikhs. At a sign of opposition, they concentrated for action, and the police in some districts became afraid to deal with them.[53]

Colonel R. H. Anderson of the 45th Sikhs reported that Akalis were also insulting recruiting officers and throwing stones at first- and second-class rail carriages.[54] The Punjab government underplayed the seriousness of rural disaffection in its fortnightly reports to the Government of India. But the severe loss of government authority was finally admitted in August 1922, when the Punjab authorities conceded that secret reports to the Government of India were true: rural areas had been unsafe and full of the lawless. The imposition of punitive police posts,[55] the Punjab argued, had reversed this loss of government authority, but the subsequent Akali success at Guru-ka-Bagh (and the even greater official suppression that then ensued) proved this judgment false.[56]

Gandhi summed up the triumphant anticolonial mood in 1922 when

he telegrammed the SGPC that the "first battle for India's freedom won."[57] A confidential official memorandum judged it similarly, but with British bias: "an idea is prevalent among the Sikh peasantry that the present movement is a prelude to a big revolution"; the movement has led to the "creation of a citizen army of zealots."[58]

In the summer and fall of 1922, the Babbar Akalis, a jatha independent of the Akali Dal, renounced nonviolence. By February 1923, they had begun a policy of exterminating British sympathizers in the rural areas of the central Punjab. Only a major British police effort, which included harsh suppression of the rural area that supported and protected these dissidents, successfully finished off the Babbar Akalis in the summer of 1923.[59] But by this time the jatha had assassinated several British rural supporters, and its remnants continued sporadic acts of violence until 1930.[60] Although they claimed no responsibility for the Babbar Akalis and eventually disowned them,[61] leaders of the Akali Dal did send two delegations to the afflicted rural areas to investigate police abuses.[62] When British authorities discovered that one of these delegations had begun, in September 1923, lecturing villagers on government cruelties and the Jaito agitation, they promptly arrested them.[63] This reaction to the Babbar Akalis was another indication of the movement's strengthening anti-colonialism, and of its effective communication of protest to rural people.

The Punjab government decided to crush the protest in October 1923, when it declared the various Singh reformist associations, such as the Akali Dal, unlawful. Begun two weeks before the crackdown, the protest at Jaito, so overtly anticolonial and yet so neatly involving the religious pride of rural Lions, overcame the colonial government's fear that its further involvement in Sikh religious affairs might alienate Singh soldiers. The Punjab administration was also under extreme pressure from the Government of India to set aside its previous inactivity and take strong action to control the Singhs.[64] There followed rapid raids by police and military in which 1,153 presumed Akali leaders were arrested. Recruitment of rural protesters seems to have suffered thereafter, because it became increasingly difficult to muster cultivators for the last shahidi jathas, which marched to Jaito during 1924 and early 1925.[65]

The Jaito protest in the Nabha Princely State, the most overtly anti-colonial agitation in the Third Sikh War, oddly cost the movement the support of India's leading nationalist, Gandhi. Gandhi foreswore the movement ostensibly because he disapproved mixing the political support of the deposed Nabha ruler with the religious issue of shrine reform; he regarded only the latter as a worthy cause. Mohinder Singh convincingly taxes the Mahatma for abandoning a movement that had embraced his principles and followed his earlier dictates so closely.[66] An unacknowledged factor may have been the communal consequences of Singh reli-

gious reforms, especially the purging of Hindu elements. K. M. Pannikar, Gandhi's "man on the spot" in the Punjab and likewise a Hindu, wrote the Mahatma in April 1924 of Singh-Hindu animosity aroused by the religious reforms; he worried about the intimidation of village Hindus by Singhs and feared that the rural jathas might threaten other communities.[67] When the Punjab's Lions began to roar against the British, their voice was different from that of the Hindus'; its new sound frightened Pannikar and troubled Gandhi, just as I later show it discomforted Punjab's urban Hindus in the early days of Singh reform.

Eventually the colonial authorities and Singh leaders compromised on legislation, the Gurudwara Reform Act of 1925, that put the shrines under the control of a central managing committee composed of Singhs. This political concession alienated some rural Singhs and the most radical urban reformers,[68] and mass protest by cultivators quickly died away.[69] An informant identified as a "shrewd Indian resident of Lahore" in a confidential British file from June 1927 explained that cultivators were fed up with the treachery, corruption, and malfeasance of the Akali leaders. Rural opinion reportedly was that the leaders gained wealth but the peasant got nothing from the protest, not even care for the relatives of the rural protesters who had been killed. Religious conviction had also disappeared from rural areas, because, the informant suggested, even though the mahants had been removed, the change in management aided only a few, and the cultivators, thus dispossessed, had now become disaffected.[70] Economic entrapment of the cultivator, which weakened the rural class supporting the anticolonial protest, had also ensnared the movement, as described in chapter 4.

SINGH STRENGTH AND SUPPORT

How many rural combatants took part in the Third Sikh War? Only British official sources attempted such an enumeration, and their count must surely have suffered from the natural secrecy of the Singhs before their colonial masters. Even their admittedly imperfect official estimates considerably worried the British. Maynard claimed there were 20,000 Akalis in 1923,[71] whereas the Criminal Intelligence Department estimated, on the basis of informal censuses by informers, that there were 16,500 in July 1920.[72] This intelligence report goes on to note its own deficiencies: the recruitment to the movement was proceeding so rapidly that the figures for Punjab areas surveyed early were incorrectly low by comparison to areas censused later. Additionally, the numbers of Akalis in the Princely States, where British intelligence did not operate, were difficult to judge. Considering new recruitment and estimating for the

Princely States, the report suggests a figure of 25,000 Akalis for 1922, and uneasily supposes there may be a good many more.[73] This uneasiness may have been occasioned by British estimates of the number of Akalis attending the 1922 annual religious fair at Nankana: there were 50,000 Singhs, of whom 20,000 were "professed" militants and between 12,000 and 15,000 belonged to jathas.[74]

To derive more than a very general sense of the movement's size from official sources is probably untrustworthy. The British, and their informers, after all, had reason to make the numbers serve political expediency. A nationalist newspaper reported in January 1922 that informers surveying Akalis in rural Punjab purposely recorded only a few of those who claimed to be Akalis in each village; the undercount's purpose, so the newspaper argued, was to convince the government that it could outlaw the small number of Akalis with impunity.[75]

It is no easier task to judge the number of rural sympathizers, those who may not have been the frontline protesters in the Third Sikh War but who gave it invaluable material and symbolic aid. Yet indications of strong auxiliary support appear throughout British official reports. The large "congregations" (sangats) that gathered around the jathas on the march to Jaito represented the most developed form of this support. The huge congregation, numbering in the thousands, that accompanied the first shahidi jatha to Jaito precipitated the police attack, according to the British.[76] In another instance, a jatha of 50 had swelled to 3,500 by the time it reached its destination.[77] Strong support is also apparent in the large attendance at the religious meetings held along the jathas' routes of march toward Jaito.[78] Three to eight thousand Singhs mustered out daily for the religious meetings held after the massacre of the first shahidi jatha.[79]

Other support involved money, food, and housing. Cultivators in villages near Guru-ka-Bagh provided protesters with supplies, even though the British attempted to confiscate them.[80] Villagers along the way to Jaito fed jathas and let them camp on village land. They also gave jathas cash contributions. Again, the police sometimes seized their food supplies.[81]

Another important rural contribution was mass enthusiasm for the Akali cause. British documents speak repeatedly, and with chagrin and fear, of the popular appeal of the protesters, their warm reception in villages, and the number of conversions they made.[82] A sense of just how strong this appeal was comes from a strange quarter: the reaction of Nabha state soldiers and administrators (all of whom were Indian) to the Jaito agitators. On 13 April 1924 the chief police officer of the state wrote about the growing disaffection of state troops and administrators from British suppression of the Akalis. He noted that small groups of soldiers had been reading the Sikh scriptures, that infantry had taken off

their shoes and bowed when the second shahidi jatha passed, and that these same soldiers had refused to make a party of arrested protesters board a train.[83]

What the British did or thought of doing to suppress the movement best shows the rural support it aroused. Besides mass arrests and imprisonments, police beatings and killings, contrived confrontations at Guru-ka-Bagh and Jaito, instigation of committees of "loyal" Sikhs,[84] complicity with murderous mahants, torturous penal "discipline," attempts to play off factions within the Akali leadership, confiscation of food and supplies, and interdiction of civil and military employment to Singhs, the British also used the threat of punitive police posts to chastise villages involved with jathas.[85] They even contemplated, upon the urging of the British Indian military, confiscation of the pensions and land grants held by Indian soldiers who embraced "Akaliism" and joined jathas, and the Punjab government claimed it had begun an unspecified number of such actions.[86]

The concern, even fear, the British expressed by these forms of suppression arose not only from Akali rural strength; the British also found the organization and coordination of the protest movement alarming.

SOLDIER SINGHS

The way in which the Akali Dal organized and coordinated rural protest in many respects emulated patterns established by the British military. Jathas marched four abreast and in military cadence. They carried ceremonial weapons, the dagger (kirpan), which under their usage had grown to sword's length. They wore unofficial uniforms of dark blue or black, colors symbolic of their religious militance, that in many cases were made of homespun cloth (khaddar).[87] Their leaders carried whistles and wore Sam Browne belts.[88]

Discipline among Akalis was also military style. Before laying siege to a shrine, Akali Dal officers would call up volunteers from the rural jathas, who would assembly in the Amritsar Golden Temple and await their orders. Jathas bound for Guru-ka-Bagh had sworn never to turn around until they reached their destination. When one jatha marcher en route turned his head to observe something behind him, he received a severe reprimand from the leader for breaking his oath.[89] On another occasion, a jatha missed the side road to Guru-ka-Bagh; its leader marched his men through fields deep with water rather than retrace his steps. Even the way in which jathas marched to Jaito showed military discipline: the Akali Dal fixed their beginning dates, route directions, and bivouacs and then publicized them well in advance.[90]

Two instances especially show the degree to which the militant Singhs modeled themselves after the British military. At the large Nankana fair of 1922, previously mentioned, a camp of two thousand Akalis posted sentries, who were relieved at fixed hours, on a known rotation. These sentries also directed traffic and helped detrain passengers at the railway station. A reserve force of five thousand was under the command of an officer, who marched his men in columns and deployed them with whistle and hand signals. There was also an intelligence bureau that kept track of government officials, informers, and others who were unsympathetic to the Akalis.[91] The other instance occurred in March 1923, when, during a Hindu-Muslim riot in Amritsar city, Akalis acted as a paramilitary force guarding the public peace alongside the British police. Recognizing their effective military organization, local officials had readily accepted the Akali offer to perform this service.[92]

The military style adopted by the Akali Dal undoubtedly owed its inspiration in part to the new militancy and military bearing of the volunteer movement within the Indian National Congress, which developed shortly after World War I. Congress volunteers had existed for some years to help in handling crowds at meetings, guiding processions, and doing other nonmilitant social work. In early 1920 Gandhi joined forces with Indian Muslims in the Khilafat movement, which protested British treatment after World War I of the Sultan of Turkey, who was also the Islamic Caliph. Under the influence of this Muslim religious protest and the mass support it could engender, combined with Gandhi's Noncooperation movement, Congress/Khilafat volunteers took on the character of a paramilitary force. They wore uniforms, drilled in formation, and took orders from officers, some of whom had served in the British Indian army. This military character soon died away, however. The colonial administration declared many provincial volunteer groups illegal and arrested the volunteers; the cooperation between the Congress and Muslims quickly declined; and Gandhi called off Noncooperation in February 1922 after Congress volunteers led a mob that killed twenty-three policemen.[93] By comparison, the Akali Dal maintained its military style for a much longer time, brought it to a higher level of development, and used it to enlist more rural supporters for an anti-British protest than the Congress did until its 1930 Civil Disobedience campaign or the 1942 Quit India movement, if even then.

This military model of organization helped coordinate the many local Singh bands that emerged across rural Punjab into just a few regional jathas. An official report in 1922 mentioned ten such jathas, each possessed of an exclusive area of dominance (see table 23 and map 4, which show the location of the districts where the various jathas operated).[94]

TABLE 23

REGIONAL JATHAS IN 1920

Jatha	Headquarters[a]	Operating region	Size
Doaba	Jullundur City	Jullundur, Hoshiarpur Dist., Kapurthala State	3,000
Khalsa Dewan Malwa (Ranjit Khalsa Malwa)	Sekha	Ludhiana, Ambala Dist., Patiala State	1,200
Habir Akali	Pandal	Kapurthala State	—
Narbhe Akali Dal	Ludhiana City	Ludhiana, Ambala Dist., Patiala State	2,000
Gargaj Akali	Tarn Taran	No specific area	1,500
Khalsa Central Dewan Majha	Kirtangarh	Amritsar Dist. (?)	1,200
Guru Ram Das	Guru-ka-Bagh	Ajnala Tahsil, Amritsar Dist.	500
Shahidi Dewan Bar Dharowali	Dharowali	Sheikhupura Dist.	2,200
Akali Dal Khara Sauda Bar	Sacha Sauda	Sheikhupura Dist.	
Lyallpur	Thikrivala	Lyallpur Dist.	3,000

SOURCE: Government of India, "Home-Political Files A," 459, II, & K.W., 1922 (New Delhi, National Archives of India).

[a]All headquarters not specified as in cities were in villages.

Some of these predominantly rural jathas retained a high degree of independence from the central organizations, the SGPC and the Akali Dal, in which urban reformers were more prominent. The government order outlawing the SGPC and the Akali Dal in October 1923 also declared three regional jathas illegal—the Gargaj, the Khalsa Majha, the Khalsa Dewan Malwa—that were not affiliated with the Akali Dal or the SGPC.[95] More localized jathas probably had even greater degrees of independence. These autonomous jathas were often more radical in action, more anticolonial in orientation, than was the ostensibly parent body. For example, the jatha slaughtered at Nankana proceeded there against the recommendation of SGPC leaders, who counseled restraint. Another jatha seized a shrine at Heran, whose capture the SGPC had not sanctioned.[96] The Babbar Akali jatha in the Doaba area, which undertook political assassination, best illustrates the combination of independence with a more revolutionary perspective. This autonomy shows that rural protest in central Punjab was often coordinated but never fully subsumed by urban leadership, and sometimes this rural independence put the urban and rural at odds. This point, considered in chapter 9, will help explain the dissolution of the movement after 1925.

The military symbols that garbed and guided the Singh protest clarify a curious facet of the jathas that marched on Jaito in 1924 and 1925. They never went directly from Amritsar, where they took their oath of martyrdom, to Jaito, a distance of less than a hundred miles. Instead, their route march took them through the Punjab countryside, from village to village, and each jatha covered different rural areas. The third shahidi jatha, for example, took sixteen days and passed through five districts or Princely States. It stopped in sixteen different villages along the way.[97] The later jathas marched en route even longer. The sixth took forty days, covered four districts, and visited thirty-eight villages en route.[98] The eleventh jatha covered six districts or Princely States and stopped in forty-four villages and towns over the course of fifty days.[99]

These indirect itineraries appear rational, considering that the jathas combined religious *and* military forms and pursued sacred *and* martial objectives. The religious form consisted of the open meetings sponsored by jathas along their march. At these meetings Akalis exhorted villagers to accept Singh orthodoxy and resist Singh enemies, including the British government. During the meetings the converted underwent baptism as a Singh and got a free kirpan.[100] The gift of a dagger/sword was an important symbolic link with the military form of these jathas.

The peripatetic marches through the Punjab countryside emulated British recruiting parties, whose custom was similarly to tour rural areas in search of soldiers. Recruiting parties for the British Indian army usually consisted of an officer (sometimes British) and native enlistees from the

region or villages of recruitment. As they moved from one village to another, the military recruiters often sponsored the baptism of villagers into the Singh identity, a point enlarged upon in chapter 8. All these aspects the Singh jathas emulated in their route marches to Jaito. They played on and out the meanings, both religious and martial, that villagers understood to surround British recruitment. The Singhs recruited for their own war, which by the time of Jaito was directly anti-British, and yet they adopted as their own weapons symbols constructed by their enemies. The longer they marched, the more villages they covered; the more converts they made, the more militants they recruited; and the more too they appeared as a successful army en route.

A DIFFERENT SPECIES OF PROTEST

The canal colonies had adverse effects on another region of the Punjab. The fact that it also launched a protest, although one completely different from the central Punjab's involvement in the Third Sikh War, supports my argument that the well watered canal settlements debilitated the well water agriculture of other Punjab regions. The southwestern and western Punjab (Region 3) also depended on well irrigation and wheat production that placed it in competition with the canal region. Because landlords and tenants rather than petty commodity producers formed the economic class system of Region 3, especially in the southwestern districts, the competition did not lead to self-exploitation by cultivators. Instead, it led landlords increasingly to exploit their tenants: by shifting them constantly so they never acquired occupancy rights; by using extralegal means to coerce them; by making them accept additional costs of cultivation and thus reduce their share. Even so, many southwestern landlords as well as tenants were deeply indebted.[101]

But the most severe competitive pressure on landlords was the wage-labor opportunities the canal colonies offered their tenants. Official reports indicated that the high wages available in the canal region had made it difficult for southwestern landlords to find tenants.[102] The debts tenants owed moneylenders probably made wage labor on the canals even more attractive. But in this landlord system, debt bondage to moneylenders hurt the landlords more than it did their tenant cultivators. Without captive cultivators, landlords could not get away with their feudal-like exploitation, and the debts *they* owed moneylenders hung more heavily. And landlords received no benefits from the external wages earned by their mobile tenants.

Extralegal and noneconomic means—physical intimidation by gangs of toughs and religious injunctions against new ways—were the remedies

landlords applied to this situation. But the world war and its impetus to export production in the canal region raised wages still higher and provoked tenant mobility even further.

The landlords protested their pressed condition by organizing the Unionist Party to represent their interests. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, this party controlled the provincial legislative council elected by limited suffrage, which the British had introduced under the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms of 1919. Along with the large landlords of the southwest, who contributed its main support, the Unionist Party represented large landowners in the southeastern Punjab (Region 1). Because the landlords of the southeast were predominantly Hindus and those of the southwest were overwhelmingly Muslims, the Unionists considered theirs a secular party. A more truthful label would have been a class party, for the common interest of large landowners made it cohere.[103] In return for their generous support of the Raj, the landlords were allowed by the colonial government to enact agrarian legislation that met their interests, mainly concerning regulation of debt and moneylenders.

Landlord "protest" thus legitimated colonial authority rather than challenged it, as the Third Sikh War did. Nevertheless, the landlords were reacting against the threat from the canal colonies, and their collective class resistance developed into a consciousness based on a political party and a set of cultural meanings or symbols defined by secularism, at least in public. Their form of protest probably ultimately achieved more than did the rural upheaval contained in the Singh movement. The British paid for Unionist loyalty with land grants in the irrigation settlements as well as titles and honors of many kinds. The British so entrenched this class by political benefits and wealth from irrigated land that it was even able to survive the end of the Raj, although by this time, it had changed its party label: from the secular Unionists to the communal Muslim League.[104]

The main rural protesters, the central Punjab smallholders, had a different historical origin, reached a different form of consciousness, and followed a different course of collective protest.[105] These petty commodity producers had been called into existence by the world economy and British colonialism and then had become their dependent creatures. Their plight came from the later creation of the canal colonies by these same external forces. Thus, an economic class created by the world economy in one period came to resist the dictates of the world economy in a subsequent stage. The large southwestern landlords, however, were a pre-British class to a greater degree; indeed, they continued in some cases to exist against the initial colonial revenue policy. Wheat production for the market became simply a by-product of their feudal domination of agriculture. Unlike the southwestern landlords, the central Punjab small-

holders reached an anticolonial consciousness—that is, the people falling into this petty commodity-producing class became aware of their collective interests and the British domination that had already misused them and threatened them further. From consciousness these cultivators moved to corporate behavior against the colonial state. This class resistance, this consciousness and collective behavior, took its cultural meanings and symbols from a reformist religious identity promulgated by the Singh movement and carried into battle during the Third Sikh War.

The numbers of protesters it mustered, the rural support it aroused, the military-styled organization and discipline it achieved, and the British fears and suppression it provoked all illustrate the strength of rural protest in the Third Sikh War. Jats, the Punjab's premier cultivating caste, and former soldiers (most of whom were Jats) enlisted in large numbers and became a new breed of Lion pursuing religious reform and anticolonial politics.

The protest was in the end futile and the collective behavior short-lived. By the mid-1920s the British had contained the Third Sikh War by suppression and cooptation. The petty commodity class in the central Punjab was drowning under a deluge of mortgages and land sales that concentrated agricultural wealth in a growing class of rich peasants (see table 24). By 1939, almost two-thirds of the Punjab's landowners held five or fewer acres, and they owned little more than 12 percent of the land, whereas less than 10 percent of the Punjab's landowners controlled nearly 60 percent of the land in holdings of twenty acres and above (see table 25). Between 1921 and 1930, total agricultural debt rose by 56 percent, and the rate of new mortgage debt tripled: from an average annual increase of Rs. 8.5 million between 1899 and 1919, it rose to an average increase of Rs. 28.5 million per year between 1919 and 1931.[106]

The Great Depression saved the smallholder from complete destruction, however, as it brought back low commodity prices, slowed the appreciation of land, and increased the removal of the Indian economy from the capitalist world economy. World War II reinstigated the export of wheat (although in smaller amounts than was the case in World War I, probably because of increased local consumption; see table 26), but it also provided abundant military employment and labor projects within India.

Independence in 1947 and the trauma of Partition also helped preserve the central Punjab petty commodity producer because it removed the canal colonies to Pakistan and replaced the unequal competition and exchange between the two regions with an impenetrable international boundary. Also, new sources of remittances became available when large-scale migration to Britain's industrial midlands began after the war. Still, the relative equilibrium between 1880 and 1920—or more accurately,

TABLE 24

LAND SALES AND ACRES SOLD

Region	Land sales (in thousands for preceding five-year period)					
	1905	1910	1915	1920	1925	1930
1. Southeast	177	155	193	142	174	154
2. Central Punjab	453	496	601	524	682	810
3. Southwest	400	365	422	386	455	569
4. Canal colonies	47	78	187	139	207	153
Punjab total	1,077	1,094	1,403	1,191	1,581	1,686

Region	Acres sold (in thousands for preceding five-year period)					
	1905	1910	1915	1920	1925	1930
1. Southeast	2,412	2,243	4,841	1,300	1,596	922
2. Central Punjab	4,766	3,739	4,338	5,609	7,376	11,166
3. Southwest	3,635	2,959	2,027	1,864	2,076	2,191
4. Canal colonies	538	2,071	5,331	4,863	8,761	9,360
Punjab total	11,351	11,012	16,537	13,636	19,809	23,639

SOURCE: Computed from Government of Punjab, *Punjab District Gazetteers* (Tumba, Sweden, International Documentation Centre [1969], microfiche).

TABLE 25

LAND CONCENTRATION IN THE PUNJAB, 1925–1939

Size of holding in acres	Percentage of owners		Percentage of land	
	1925	1939	1925	1939
0–5	58.3	63.7	12.0	12.2
5–15	26.2	24.2	26.6	22.2
15–20	4.7	3.6	8.5	7.2
20–50	7.5	6.1	27.2	20.4
50+	3.3	2.4	25.7	38.0

SOURCE: Bhagwan Singh Josh, Mridula Mukherjee, and Bipan Chandra, "The Peasant Movement in the Punjab Before 1947." Centre For Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Mimeograph.

the relatively slow extinction during this period—could not be maintained. The Third Sikh War marked the resistance of petty commodity production to the forces entrapping it; and defeat in this protest signaled the eventual demise of this class, even though its disappearance was slowed by subsequent world events and remnants of it still remain in the Punjab today.[107]

With heavy government investment in new irrigation works and tubewell construction after 1947 and then the Green Revolution of the 1960s, the central Punjab region has apparently become the source of a fully emergent capitalist agriculture, based on the same sort of capital investment in transforming agrarian means of production that earlier and on a smaller scale characterized the canal colonies. In present-day Punjab, a class of rich peasants, actually capitalist farmers, has become en-

TABLE 26

NET WHEAT EXPORTS FROM THE PUNJAB, 1937–38 TO 1939–40
(IN THOUSAND MAUNDS)

	1937–38	1938–39	1939–40
Net exports[a]	15,044	15,960	13,444

SOURCE: Board of Economic Inquiry, Punjab, *Agricultural and Trade Statistics of the British Punjab, 1939–1940*, Pamphlet no. 5, Supplement no. 4 to Publication no. 52 (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1941).

[a]Net wheat exports were computed by subtracting wheat imports into the Punjab from wheat exports out of the Punjab.

trenched, formed in part from the more successful petty commodity producers and rural moneylender-agriculturalists. This class has firm control over the land, machinery, and chemical inputs required by the highly productive agriculture introduced with the Green Revolution. Although the less successful petty commodity producers may continue to exist as proprietors of small plots of land (which, rather than working themselves, they increasingly lease to capitalist farmers), they have become ever more dependent on wage labor. Still, they resist turning into entirely landless laborers and precariously maintain a state of what T. J. Byres labels "partial proletarianization."[108] Nevertheless, their home farms have become places of residence more than sources of occupation and income.

CHAPTER 6

Cultural Materialism and Culturology

A very large piece of the Punjab puzzle is now at hand: the change in agrarian economy under British colonialism, the economic contradictions it created, and the anticolonial consciousness it aroused. Showing that objective material conditions, or "real" forces of environment, technology, and production underlie collective symbols and corporate social behavior, as I have just done for the Third Sikh War, often passes as an adequate explanation for those beliefs and behaviors. Such explanations assert that cultural beliefs or meanings and the social actions they motivate in a society generally satisfy certain needs growing out of its ecological, demographic, or productive characteristics.

Such a materialist explanation, which Marvin Harris titles "cultural materialism,"[1] necessarily fails because it is both functionalist and teleological, as Paul Diener et al.,[2] have remarked. Cultural materialism is teleological because it often argues that adaptive social beliefs and action must develop to meet the material forces impinging on a society. Its functionalism comes from presuming that social beliefs and actions in a society can be explained by uncovering their adaptive value, which is their primary function.

Applied to the Punjab, this materialist position would presume that a militant reformist Sikhism, the Singh identity that expressed it, and the Third Sikh War that enacted these beliefs existed or came into existence to express the deteriorating condition of the central Punjab cultivators as the colonial pattern of petty commodity production declined. This

chapter maintains, however, that the Punjab puzzle consists of a historical reality that will not conform to so simple a materialism.

The historical reality portrayed below fits no better into an ungrounded culturology that argues for the inherent power of cultural meanings to constitute social reality and therefore effect social action. Strangely, scholars who find it reprehensible for cultural materialists to argue that technoecological forces have their way with culture find no contradiction in proposing an opposite but equivalent determinism. They assert that cultural meanings, fully formed by some unexplained historical process and unmodified in their essence by ongoing human social action, undergird society. Clifford Geertz, for example, explains the struggle for power in precolonial Bali as the "combination of an essentially *constant cultural form*, the divine king cult, with an enormous variability in the people and resources available for *constructing that form*" (italics added).[3] He therefore defines history as a "medium through which certain abstract principles move."[4] Geertz maintains that these abstract cultural principles, or codes, constitute different sorts of societies as they migrate through history, given the different demographic or ecological conditions under which they materialize. The principles themselves evidently do not change.

Neither of these frameworks properly arranges the Punjab puzzle. Against culturology—in the specific form of a moral-economy explanation for peasant protest—this chapter shows that those who labeled themselves "Sikh" in the nineteenth century embraced no single cultural meaning, religious identity, or social practice; rather, an amalgam of what later reformers made into separate Hindu and Sikh cultural principles prevailed. Therefore, long-standing, widely shared, and consistent Sikh cultural principles cannot explain why the Third Sikh War was fought on the basis of Singh identity and over Sikh religious institutions. In fact, no such tradition existed.

Against cultural materialism—in the specific form of a cultural division-of-labor theory to explain ethnic conflict—this chapter shows that there was no absolute congruence between the nineteenth-century Sikh population and the hard-pressed rural cultivators of the central Punjab. In other words, class and religious identity were not coterminous, and Sikh identity could not serve as simply a mechanical expression of agrarian protest.

The product of neither a long-standing cultural code nor a mechanical fit between class and religion, the identity that informed the Third Sikh War only developed as a Singh reform movement matured early in the twentieth century. Similarly, adoption of this tradition by central Punjab cultivators also happened over time and through human action, again, beginning in the early 1900s. It depended on the missionary efforts of

the reformers, which proved effective given the set of social beliefs and practices fostered by British colonial domination. Their success was not, therefore, only a given of the immediate material conditions buffeting the central Punjab.

Cultural materialism and culturology do no better at explaining the success of these twentieth-century Singh reformers in activating the rural protest of the Third Sikh War. This chapter goes on to examine the failure in the rural areas of the Ghadar conspirators, precursors of the Singhs, who adopted a revolutionary nationalism rather than a reformist religion. Their lack of success indicates that some cultural meanings cannot carry collective action and social protest forward even when material conditions are ripe for them.

Potent or resonant cultural meanings are not sufficient in themselves, however, as the final piece of the Punjab puzzle set out in this chapter reveals. Another militant religious movement, the Arya Samaj, grew up alongside reformist Sikhism in early twentieth-century Punjab. The Hindu reformism of the Arya Samaj was somewhat more radical, or anticolonial, in beliefs and in the class origins of its leadership than was the Singh movement. Its call for a Hindu revival and its symbolic reconstruction of Indian history had the potential to incorporate more indigenous adherents than did the call of the Singhs. Yet the Aryas' "better" reformist religious ideology—in terms of its radical anticolonial message and its creative redefinition of cultural meanings with potentially wide appeal—failed to constitute the rural protest movement. Singh success and Arya failure therefore argue against culturology's assumption that cultural meanings, being in essence unchanging and uncontested, in themselves constitute social action. But it also shows the limited explanation provided by cultural materialism. For if social beliefs and collective action are simply cosmetic superstructures that humans unwittingly pat onto the hard facts of their technoecological conditions, as the cultural materialists see it, then why did the reformist Singhs and not the other religious movement provide the symbolic makeup of rural protest?

After presenting these pieces of the Punjab puzzle that do not fit well with cultural materialism or culturology, this chapter ends with a further consideration of why these frameworks misalign the pieces.

MORAL ECONOMY AND SINGH IDENTITY

A moral-economy framework attributes peasant protest to long-standing traditions of resistance, militancy, and social justice incorporated into rural life. Even though long submerged, when state oppression or eco-

nomic misery provides the material conditions for peasant uprisings, these folk memories may resurface and galvanize latter-day protest. Moral economy is therefore a specific instance of culturology because it asserts that such peasant cultural traditions constitute rural dissent.

A strong proponent of moral economy, James Scott writes:

> Persistent beliefs in a golden age or in the return of a just king have supplied the ideological basis for many rebellions. . . . For the most part such themes are but an undercurrent, a potential, which lies beneath the surface of a prevailing secular and religious order. At times, however, this latent radical version may became a powerful social myth for which thousands of peasants may be willing to risk everything.[5]

The Punjab puzzle does not fit the moral-economy thesis that a dissenting tradition latent in Sikhism reactivated and propelled twentieth-century rural protest. Singh leaders undoubtedly used Sikh history, especially the armed resistance to the Moghuls (as they understood it), as a rallying symbol for rural militancy (witness the use of Akali dress), but there is no indication that this elite manipulation of symbols echoed a long-standing historical consciousness in the ordinary cultivator. A single religious community, in the sense of a shared set of traditions, cultural meanings, and social practices, was absent among those who called themselves Sikhs in late nineteenth-century Punjab.

SIKHS AND SINGHS

Sikhism developed in the Punjab as one regional movement within the several egalitarian and deritualized versions of Hinduism that sprang up in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Its first spiritual leader, Guru Nanak (1469–1533), and the early gurus who succeeded him preached a faith in monotheism, hard and honest labor, contemplation of the holy word, interdining, and congregational worship, while abjuring idol worship, caste distinctions, seclusion of women, Brahmanical superiority, and lavish rituals. During the seventeenth century, as the Muslim rulers of northern India increasingly suppressed it, Sikhism took on a more militant and political mien. Guru Gobind Singh (1666–1708), the tenth guru, institutionalized this transformation by creating the *khalsa,* or community, of baptized Sikhs. Sikhs who underwent the baptism ceremony (pahul) instituted by Guru Gobind Singh called themselves "Singhs" but otherwise continued within the religious traditions of Guru Nanak. Baptized Sikhs were no longer to follow a human teacher, however; the holy scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib, would serve this spiritual func-

tion. Even Sikhs who had not been baptized might say they were Singhs if they embraced the martial identity and community allegiance promulgated by Guru Gobind Singh. Those who embraced the Singh identity were therefore always Sikhs, but not all Sikhs were Singhs.

Even though they basically carried on the dissenting religious tradition of Guru Nanak, Sikhs adhering to Guru Gobind Singh's dictates underwent a major social and physical transformation. They were to take the name "Singh" (lion) and to observe five practices that radically altered their body image, public presentation, and social identity. Singhs were to leave their hair and beard unshorn and to wear or carry a comb, a bangle, a dagger, and shorts. They were, additionally, to eschew tobacco.

Khuswant Singh notes that these observances defined the image of the Singh as a combination of the saint and the soldier.[6] In South Asia then and today, uncut hair and beard symbolize a rejection of the world and of normal manly appearance.[7] The dagger and shorts, conversely, represent the weaponry and garb of a soldier (from Guru Gobind Singh's time). The requirement to give up tobacco is another symbol emphasizing saintliness, whereas the absence of any prohibition against eating meat and use of alcohol accentuates a martial identity.[8] The bangle and comb bridge and draw together the symbolic images of the martial and the saintly. Bangles are the common decoration of women, not men, and therefore make Singh men different from normal males, just as saints are. But when worn by Singhs, bangles are made of iron or steel rather than the gold, silver, or glass used by women; this difference in composition betokens the military employment of the Singhs. A common rationalization of the bangle among Singhs today is that it gave the arm protection in military combat. While functionally and historically dubious, this explanation recognizes that the bangle symbolically combines images of the martial and of the atypical male. The comb embodies the injunction to keep the beard and hair neat (whence also arises the custom of invariably wearing turbans), and so a militarylike punctiliousness disciplines the unkempt look of the normal Indian ascetic (that is, those who do not shave off their hair). The baptism ceremony put this sanctity of the martial, or soldierly sacred, into ritual practice by requiring a military offering: five Singhs preside over an offering of sweets made by the initiate to the sacred scripture; a special sword cuts the offering.

After the British annexation of the Punjab, some colonial officers expected or hoped that the Singhs would die out. By the second half of the nineteenth century, the boundary separating Singhs from other Sikhs and Hindus was indeed ill-defined. But the underlying problem of who was a Sikh/Singh, what Sikhism was, and what its relationship with Hinduism should be had undoubtedly existed since Guru Gobind Singh's time.

What ensued in the late nineteenth century was a long struggle involving competitive definitions of the label "Sikh," in which British colonialism was a major combatant. At that time in the Punjab there were several populations that called themselves "Sikhs," and they had separate images of what the religious identity meant, who was included within it, and which cultural meanings and practices marked them as distinctive.

On the face of it, there should have been only two religious communities professing Sikhism: the Singhs, or baptized Sikhs, who were also sometimes called "Keshdharis" in reference to their uncut hair (*kesh*) or "Guru Gobindis" in recognition of their adherence to Guru Gobind Singh's dictates; and the unbaptized Sikhs, who were called "Sajdharis" or "Nanakpanthis." They followed Guru Nanak's teachings but did not adopt Guru Gobind Singh's prescriptions about habit and toilette. However they regarded each other, adherents of these two Sikh identities should each have identified with a religious community separate from Hinduism.

The reality, however, was a gradient, even a conglomerate of practices and beliefs between baptized and unbaptized professors of Sikhism, and the various labels did not index identities that were well-defined and unequivocal in terms of religious beliefs and social practices. That is, Sikh practices and beliefs showed a degree of variation and yet also intermixture that disallowed any simple sectarian duality. Capt. R. W. Falcon, entrusted with the recruitment of Singhs, wrote at the close of the nineteenth century that "the line between the strictest Singh and a Hindu is but vague."[9] The judgment of the commissioner for the 1891 census was similar: "There are few who maintain all the outward forms and rules of conduct of the recognized Sikh religion" (by which he meant the religion of Guru Gobind Singh).[10] Falcon estimated that less than 10 percent of the Sikhs/Singhs in Amritsar, "the strictest of the Sikh districts," had taken baptism.[11] Many "Singhs" with uncut hair and beard were not baptized, and they often followed only some of the other prescriptions made by Guru Gobind Singh. This practice is still common at present, although, after the many years of reformist agitation, it is understood to be a temporary condition; the person expects to take baptism at some future time when he or she can faithfully adhere to the tenth guru's commands. Conversely, Sajdharis considered themselves no less devout Sikhs than the Singhs; the tenth guru had not substantially changed the religion to their minds.

In practice, however, both Singhs and other Sikhs commonly worshipped Hindu deities and intermarried with Hindus according to Brahmanical rites. For instance, until the Akalis put a stop to it in the 1920s, the Hindu Ramlila festival took place within the Amritsar Golden Temple.[12] These practices, too, continue into the present in village Punjab.

One community study found that, besides Hindu marriages, Jats who were ostensibly Singhs practiced Hindu funeral customs, including immersion of the remains in sacred rivers, until very recently.[13] In another village, located very close to one of the most important Sikh shrines, Singhs worshipped the high gods of Hinduism, local deities, and even Muslim saints.[14]

Caste identities also intervened in late nineteenth-century Sikhism, even in the ostensibly egalitarian community of the Singh khalsa. Mazhabis and other Untouchables were not the religious equals of other Singhs, as indicated by their inferior access to Sikh shrines. Although inequalities in temple entry have disappeared and caste is now officially outlawed, Paul Hershman reports such caste differences among Singhs as a continuing factor in village life.[15] Another important caste division was between the Jats, who were mainly cultivators, and Khatris and Aroras, who were traditional merchant castes, usually urban-dwelling and educated. The Jats often regarded the urban castes as devious; the Aroras and Khatris reciprocated with a typical image of the Jat as uncouth.

There were sectarian differences among Sikhs, along the ideal-typical continuum between the baptized and unbaptized. At one end came the Nirankaris and Namdharis (also known as Kukas), who were the most punctilious followers of Guru Gobind Singh. The Udasis represented the other extreme. This sect of ascetics originated under Guru Nanak's son, Sri Chand, who was passed over in favor of Amar Das as the second Sikh spiritual leader.[16] The Udasis did not think of themselves as Singhs and closely followed what Singh reformers labeled as Hindu social and religious practices. The Udasis, however, believed they were as truly Sikh, in the sense of devout followers of Guru Nanak, as were the Singh reformers.[17] Because the Udasis controlled many Sikh holy places and the lands bequeathed to them, they became the primary targets of the Singh reformers in the early phases of rural protest.

Finally and most important, many Sikhs, including Singhs, and Hindus considered Sikhism only a sect within Hinduism, while others thought of it as a separate religion, as different from Hinduism as it was from Islam. Arguing for a separate Sikhism were the beliefs in equality, interdining, and monotheism, which violated Hindu principles, especially those of caste and Brahmanical superiority. The opposite case, the lack of a sharp boundary between the two religions, rested on seeing Guru Nanak as but one reformer in a general fifteenth-century Hindu revival and on interpreting Guru Gobind Singh as the creator of a special sect of Hindu militants against Muslim persecution.

The travails of successive Punjab census commissioners in "properly" enumerating the Sikhs clearly reflect this undefined religious boundary and these several overlapping religious identities. The census of 1881

allowed respondents to denominate their religion, but in 1891 and 1901 the instructions to enumerators stipulated that only those who had uncut hair and beard and abstained from tobacco, that is, the Singhs, could be listed as Sikhs. Protests soon arose from Sajdharis, who claimed they were Sikhs but not Singhs.[18] Their opposition proved unnecessary. The reality that met the census takers, wherein no single trait or set of traits invariably indicated Singh identity, soon led these officials to abandon their instructions and record whatever people said they were.[19] In the censuses after 1901 the British acknowledged their inability to determine and apply a strict definition of the category Sikh; whoever claimed to be Sikh was so recorded.

What made the British despair were the several self-classifications based on distinct religious beliefs and social identities that they found (see table 27). In the 1891 census, for example, over a third of the people who referred to themselves as Sikh claimed they belonged to the Hindu religion and were Sikh only by sect. Of these, the great majority were Sajdharis ("Hindu Nanakpanthi" or "Hindu Sikh" in table 27), but 15 percent were Singhs (Hindu "Gobind Singhi" in table 27). Two-thirds of the Sikhs believed they constituted a separate religion, and among these, not only were there the expected Singhs but also there was a large Sajdhari minority, comprising nearly 40 percent of them. The Sikh population was almost evenly divided between Singhs and Sajdharis. Later censuses showed less of this variation, in part because the British stopped publishing data on sects and in part because Singh reformism led the former Sajdharis to report themselves either as Hindus or Singhs.

The Sikh Sajdharis and other Sikh/Hindu sects may have disappeared from British census enumeration quietly, but they resisted elsewhere the attempts by Singh reformers in the Third Sikh War to define all Sikhs in their own image. Udasi mahants, for example, organized what they termed a "Sanatan (orthodox) Sikh Conference" in February 1921 to resist the Akalis, whom they branded a heterodox sect.[20] In December 1921 a party of Hindu sadhus entered the sacred precincts of the Golden Temple and attacked worshippers and religious officiants alike; the ensuing melee left one dead and scores injured.[21] A "large party" of Sajdhari Sikhs tried to remove Akalis from a Montgomery District shrine in April 1921.[22] A "serious affray" took place between Akalis and Namdharis at Tarn Taran in Amritsar District on 12 July 1923.[23] Another confrontation, between Hindus and Akalis, occurred in January 1924 in a Rawalpindi shrine that both communities claimed.[24] Throughout 1921 and 1922 there were complaints in the vernacular press against the pressure the Akalis put on the Namdharis to join their movement.[25] The newspapers also carried complaints by Hindus that Akalis were appropriating their shrines.[26] Namdharis and other non-Akali Sikhs repeatedly memorialized Gandhi

TABLE 27

SIKH POPULATION IN THE PUNJAB, 1881–1931

Census category	Census year (population in thousands)					
	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921	1931
Hindu Nanakpanthi (Hindu Sikh)		579		22	10	2
Sikh Sajhdhari (Sikh Nanakpanthi)		397	297	451	229	282
Sikh Keshdhari (Gobind Singhi)		839[a]	420	2,048	2,876	3,589
Proportion of Sajhdharis to Keshdharis		.47	.70	.22	.08	.08
Total Sikhs	1,716[b]	1,870[b]	2,103	2,884	3,110	4,072
Increase in Sikhs		+8.97	+12.46	+13.71	+7.84	+30.93

SOURCE: Government of India, *Census of India, 1881–1931, Punjab,* vol. 1 (Tumba, Sweden, International Documentation Centre [1964], microfiche).

[a] An additional 79,000 people were reported as Hindu Gobind Singhi.

[b] Includes North-West Frontier Province.

and the Indian National Congress against the militant Singhs and pleaded with the nationalist leadership to help them obtain proper representation in Sikh affairs.[27] And Gandhi's emissary to the Punjab, Pannikar, feared that Akali jathas would terrorize rural Hindus. At once the most desperate and despicable resistance was the previously mentioned slaughter of Akalis by the Udasi incumbent of Nankana in February 1921. A similar "serious riot" between Akalis and temple functionaries at Tarn Taran's shrine had left two dead a few weeks earlier.

The resistance to the Akalis in the 1920s, after some forty years of urban Singh reformism, indicates that there still was no single community of Sikhs. Therefore, the Akali takeover of shrines often seemed like religious imperialism to other Sikhs and Hindus. It also shows that there was no clear or agreed-upon boundary between shrines that belonged to Singhs and those that belonged to Hindus and other Sikh sects. When, for example, in March 1921 the Akalis invested the Manak shrine in Lahore District and dispossessed the Udasi officiant, they took over a sacred place that a British court judged to have no connection with Sikhs. Its management, the court ruled, had always rested within the Udasi order, and it had not been founded or visited by any Sikh guru. The Sikh sacred book was kept on its premises, but it was only one among many other scriptures. In another case from March 1921 a British court determined that a dispossessed shrine manager was as much a true follower of the Singh faith as the Akalis who had dispossessed him.[28] These incidents, along with the many other contests over shrines, indicate that the militant Singhs were in the act of defining what was a Sikh shrine; that is, as they carried out their collective action to capture shrines, they were creating the boundaries of their religious tradition.

Singh reformers accomplished the same boundary marking when they branded the Udasi shrine functionaries as apostates or sinners. This reinterpretation of the Sikh past eliminated the variety of legitimate religious identities and beliefs. Only the Singh identity was canonical; the others existed due to religious backsliding and individual intemperance. Although the Singh reformers came to oppose the British, they imposed the same definition on the Sikh religious community that the colonial authorities espoused: the only true Sikh was a Singh.

The reformist Singhs practiced this religious boundary marking, this symbolic definition, this tradition fixing in other ways. There was a major confrontation with British authorities over the length of the kirpan, or dagger, which represented one of the five prescriptions of Guru Gobind Singh. Its length seemed to increase with Akali strength; perhaps it was a proper measure of the protest's success.[29] By the early 1920s it had grown to sword size. The Akali rationalization was that only a Singh could determine what dimensions his kirpan should have. The ultimate

tradition fixing was the work of the British, however. They disallowed any kirpan longer than nine inches, closed down the manufactory where longer ones were made, and arrested anyone wearing one exceeding the legal dimensions.

A decade earlier in the Singh reform movement, this religious boundary marking involved fixing the proper method of animal slaughter. Muslims up to the late nineteenth century were the major purveyors of meat in the Punjab. Meat-eating Singhs had mainly depended on animals slaughtered by the *halal* method of the Muslims, which requires that the throat be slit and the blood drained while the animal is still alive. According to the reformist Singhs, the proper Sikh method was *jhatka* slaughter, in which the animal's head is chopped off by a single sword stroke. Under their tutelage, this "tradition" began to emerge as an important definition of identity. One British official, in warning the administration of potential Muslim-Singh conflict on this issue, noted that "a genuine desire for Jhatka meat has been stimulated by the reformed Sikh movement and that this desire is now much stronger than at any previous period of our occupation of the Punjab."[30]

Another instance of tradition making involved editing the sacred book, the Guru Granth Sahib.[31] Singh reformers just before World War I pressed to remove or at least devalue the Rag Mala, a listing of musical modes with which the Guru Granth Sahib concludes, because it was used to justify the inclusion of Sajdharis as "true Sikhs."[32] Although today the Rag Mala continues to be an authorized part of the sacred book, it is seldom read. Even at *akhand paths*—which are unbroken and ostensibly complete readings of the scripture—this section is omitted.[33]

Other cultural meanings the protesters adopted were wholly novel traditions and the social actions they subsidized were quite unprecedented. Any re-creation of the old, Singh warrior bands based on a folk consciousness of them would hardly have adopted the strict nonviolence that most jathas followed. Gandhi's program of satyagraha (nonviolent resistance), which Indian nationalists adopted as they moved into active confrontation with the British, formed the basis of this so-called tradition. The organization of the jathas was also a new Singh "custom." It copied British military practices, including the order of march, the issuance of commands, the enforcement of discipline, and, at the Guru-ka-Bagh confrontation, the presence of a "complete medical side . . . organized on the British model."[34]

Another indication that a latent folk consciousness did not generate and structure agrarian protest comes from what the Namdhari sect of Sikhs did *not* do during a short-lived rural protest in 1871. These most militant followers of Guru Gobind Singh's dictates, mostly from the central districts, evidently arose as a mass movement in protest against

the British Raj and the increasing penetration of the world economy it promoted. Although its numbers and the social derivation of its followers are difficult to judge, the Namdhari movement probably carried the protests by peasant proprietors against the initial encroachment of capitalism on their autonomy; whereas the Third Sikh warriors, fully committed to petty commodity production by then, protested their increasing disadvantage within the market.[35] The Namdharis did not organize their protest along the military lines of the Akali jathas. Their jathas undertook missionary activities entirely.[36] They apparently recognized the crucial cultural ingredient that was missing: although they religiously boycotted British goods, schools, courts, and most government employment, they tried to take up service in the British Indian police and army and in the military of neighboring states like Kashmir. Their objective was to gain the military training that their presumed consciousness of the Singh martial tradition was supposed to provide them with but that they in fact lacked.[37]

The major activity of Singh reformers was not to awaken a latent tradition of dissent and resistance in the Sikh community, as the moral-economy framework requires. None such existed. The reformer's major activity was precisely to define that tradition, to fix those cultural meanings, and to exclude all other versions of Sikh identity as uncanonical. The traditions that in some unexplained fashion remained latent in the community until called forth by circumstances were actually in process of becoming, at first as a result of British colonial racism (as I discuss in chapter 8), thereafter in the struggle of urban reformers, and finally through the rural protest itself. In each case, the Sikhism propounded, its militancy, its martial character, its dissent, its loyalty, or its resistance, was a selective construction of the past for contemporary purposes.

FAILED CULTURAL MEANINGS: THE GHADAR MOVEMENT

My criticism of moral economy should not be read to authorize a reversion to cultural materialism. To argue against moral economy and the latent potency of putative traditions is not to devalue belief systems and cultural meanings entirely. Cultural meanings may only be situational productions, not long-standing traditions, and yet still be more than mere expressions of immediate material forces. Some situationally constructed belief systems do fail to motivate collective action, no matter what material forces supposedly might decree. Another piece of the Punjab puzzle, what the British called the Ghadar conspiracy in 1914–1915, illustrates this point.

The Ghadar conspirators attempted to raise a rural revolt in the very region of the Punjab, the central districts, that formed the main recruiting grounds for the Third Sikh War little more than five years later. They also hoped to encourage mutiny among Punjab regiments. The Ghadar revolutionary beliefs and organization developed among Punjab immigrants to North America as a response to the racial prejudice they met there. This radical consciousness was then transferred to the British colonial regime in India, for the Ghadarites argued that people in India would never be properly treated abroad so long as they were not free at home. Along with the many other repatriates, Ghadar cadres returned to the Punjab early in World War I to foment a general revolt. But the Ghadarites failed to win rural support in 1914, and their grand revolutionary movement was reduced to scattered acts of robbery, sabotage, murder, and incitement to mutiny. The police and military soon subdued them; and, at the subsequent trial, of fifty-seven conspirators convicted, only twenty-one were not returned immigrants.[38] This figure shows how little conviction the Ghadar program inspired among central Punjab cultivators. Their response, as Harish Puri indicates, was "that the Ghadarites were crazy, or 'unfortunate men afflicted by some pernicious foreign influence.'"[39]

Although Sikhs formed a large segment of the overseas community and of the Ghadar rank-and-file, the cultural meanings of the Singh reformers—a return to a putative orthodoxy and temple reform—did not appear in the consciousness promoted by the Ghadarites. Their foremost goal was to get rid of the British and end India's enslavement and looting under colonialism. With this goal of national freedom, the Ghadarites believed they made common cause with other oppressed peoples, such as the Irish, Chinese, or Mexicans.[40] Although the Ghadar movement utilized many Sikh cultural meanings in its political propaganda, it carried a nationalist message that embraced a much wider community and summoned all of India to revolutionary violence in the cause of independence. In this way, Harish Puri writes:

> The interpretation of the Sikh legacy by the Ghadarites was very different from the one forcefully argued by the Singh Sabha movement.
>
> True faith to them lay not in any of the concerns propagated by the Sikh social organizations of the time, not in seeing the Sikh community as demarcated separately from other communities, but in its Indian national identity. A regular refrain of their utterances was the destiny of India expressed in . . . "the one Nation of Hindus, Sikhs and Mohammedans" all of whom were "sons of one mother."[41]

In its reinterpretation of Sikh cultural meanings, the Ghadar movement departed from Singh reformism on the issue of religion. An adamant

secularism informed the movement: religion diverted the revolution; it created discord among India's peoples; it provided an avenue for the greed of religious functionaries. No need to reform religion, the Ghadarites believed, better to dissolve the different faiths or make it an entirely private and personal matter—and they did so, at least to the point of excluding religious discussion from their meetings.[42]

Their divergent reinterpretation of Sikh cultural beliefs, especially on the religious issue, brought Ghadarites and Singh reformers into active opposition:

> There is considerable evidence that in their social relations, the Ghadarites generally discarded considerations of caste and religion. The question of "*kesh*" [unshorn hair] amongst the Sikhs . . . , and the observance of any religious norms, appeared irrelevant to them. Consequently, . . . the [Singh reformist] elements continued a virulent campaign against the Ghadarites who were regarded as the "fallen Sikhs."[43]

As this ideology came into the Punjab, it may have gathered more symbols of religious persecution and protest. One villager told the British police that the Ghadarites who came through his community accused colonial officers of desecrating the Granth Sahib carried by a party of returning immigrants.[44] If this symbolic change was of general occurrence, it shows that the Ghadarites anticipated some of the meanings that would summon up rural protest some five years afterward. But in the main, the Ghadarites failed to inspire the revolutionary uprising they desired or even the anticolonial protest later achieved by the militant Singhs.

Do the different symbols they propounded explain why the Singh reformers succeeded shortly after the Ghadar revolutionaries utterly failed? Or do changes in material conditions over this brief period explain it? The material conditions of the central Punjab undoubtedly had further deteriorated by 1920, but, as I have shown, rural decline was an outcome of long-term economic processes, not an immediate postwar development. Furthermore, the plight of the returned immigrants and of the central Punjab smallholder under the "famine" commodity prices of the world war was certainly acute in 1914.

The different beliefs by which they articulated anticolonialism and the different institutions against which they prescribed protest seemingly provide a better explanation for why the Singhs successfully evoked rural support and the Ghadar did not. The shrine reform of the Singhs elicited a greater response from cultivators than did the national revolution of the Ghadarites. The appeals to a newly defined Singh orthodoxy were stronger than was the Ghadar exhortation of a new Indian consciousness. The anticolonialism based on the British conversion of shrine function-

aries into the *toady bacchas* of the Raj proved more persuasive than the anticolonialism premised on panhuman rights to freedom and self-determination. The Ghadar conspiracy may have been proleptic of the Third Sikh War, but if that is true, it is only so to the extent that the earlier movement promoted some of the symbolic usages that would later prove successful. When this anticipation did not occur, as it did not for the most part, the Ghadar conspiracy failed to constitute its cultural meanings in the Punjab populace and thereby failed as a revolution.

Comparing the Ghadar conspiracy with the Singh reform seems to indicate that cultural meanings can be independently causal, that is, can be constitutive of social action—even though these symbols and beliefs are situationally constructed; in other words, even though they are always a selective construction of the cultural past for contemporary purposes. The causal role of cultural meanings, therefore, cannot be entirely set aside even though the moral-economy framework or the other culturologies do not help answer where these cultural meanings come from and why they (some of them, sometimes) work to create group consciousness and collective action.

The cultural division-of-labor variety of cultural materialism considered in the next section will bring us to a similar impasse.

CULTURAL DIVISION OF LABOR AND SINGH IDENTITY

Just as moral economy does, the cultural division-of-labor theory postulates that long-standing and consistent traditions, specifically ethnic or religious identities, can constitute social protest. It links such identities directly to class exploitation and conflict, however, and therefore is a version of cultural materialism.

Cultural division-of-labor theory asserts a mechanical and causal relationship between economic class and ethnic or religious identity. In this view, these ascriptive boundaries arise or become significant as one means by which dominant classes exploit economically subordinate populations. As this objective inequality leads to consciousness in the exploited, it takes on an ethnic or religious cast. For example, Michael Hechter argues that internal colonialism within Great Britain created a cultural, or ethnic, division of labor, in which the Irish, Scottish, and Welsh worker received lower wages than did his English peer. Eventually, Hechter says, the inequalities of this cultural division of labor lead the exploited population to organize ethnic political movements by which to redress the balance in regional development and labor compensation. In other words, the organization of class conflict takes place along ethnic lines.[45]

Are the Punjab Singhs equivalent to the United Kingdom Celts? Did

the most economically distressed rural area, the central Punjab, happen to have high concentrations of Singh cultivators? Was it therefore only "natural"—a mechanical outcome of material conditions—that the Singh identity incorporated their protest?

The Jats formed the preeminent cultivating caste population in the central districts, and they composed the overwhelming majority of the Singh forces in the Third Sikh War. If an ethnic or religious division of labor truly existed, most of the Jats should have been Singhs—or, given the census categories in use, they should have been enumerated as Sikhs.

The census figures for the religious identity of Jats in the central Punjab tell a different story, however (see table 28). From 1881 (the first reliable census) to 1901, before either the Arya or the Singh movement had gained momentum in rural areas, the Hindu Jat and the Sikh Jat population of the central Punjab remained steady, at about 36 and 54 percent, respectively. The slight Sikh majority does not argue convincingly that all or most of the cultivators in economic plight came from this religious grouping, especially given how ill-defined the Hindu-Sikh boundary was at this time. From 1901 to 1931, however, the percentage of Hindu Jat population underwent a precipitous decline, until it was only 9 percent, or one-quarter of what it had been. During the same period, Sikh Jats increased by almost 50 percent, and this population formed over three-quarters of the Jats in 1931. Throughout these years, the combined Hindu and Sikh Jat population remained approximately 88 to 90 percent of the entire Jat population (the remainder were Muslim Jats), which seems to indicate that the large increase of the Sikhs came at the expense of the Hindus. Thus, rather than Sikh identity being originally coterminous with an embattled peasantry, large masses of such cultivators, who formerly called themselves Hindus, adopted the Singh identity preached by the reform movement as a vehicle for their agrarian protest.

The major problem with the cultural division-of-labor notion is not its assumption that an economic class division and an ethnic or religious boundary can be congruent. This conjunction is probably true or very nearly true of many cases. The real problem arises because the cultural division-of-labor perspective takes the development of ethnic or religious consciousness from material conditions as automatic. But, as Marshall Sahlins writes, "no cultural form can ever be read from a set of 'material forces,' as if the cultural were the dependent variable of an inescapable practical logic."[46] The cultural division-of-labor perspective fails to show the historical process by which growing consciousness of exploitation and growing bonds of religious identity joined together; it simply assumes they did. It does not allow that the cultural practices demarcating a religious or ethnic identity might themselves be situationally produced in step with maturing group consciousness; it simply takes such practices

TABLE 28

HINDU AND SIKH JATS IN THE CENTRAL REGION, 1881–1931 (TO NEAREST THOUSAND)

	Hindus		Sikhs		Sikhs and Hindus	Total Jats
	number	percent	number	percent	percent	number
1881	676	37.81	954	53.36	91.17	1,788
1901	684	33.89	1,094	54.21	88.10	2,018
1911	288	16.42	1,266	72.18	88.60	1,754,
1921	277	14.54	1,410	74.02	88.56	1,905
1931	191	9.37	1,618	79.35	88.72	2,039

SOURCE: Government of India, *Census of India, 1881–1931, Punjab* vol. 2 (Tumba, Sweden, International Documentation Centre [1964], microfiche), 1881, 1901, 1911, 1921, table 13; 1931, table 17.

NOTE: Data not available for 1891.

as unproblematic givens, ever present and ever ready for manipulation. It does not allow that the evolving ethnic or religious consciousness might condone, given the internal logic of its nonmaterial (ethnic or religious) objectives, collective action inimical to the class interests of the exploited. That is, it does not permit consciousness to be misinformed, misled, or involved with goals other than class interests. Consciousness becomes simply an unproblematic adaptive response.[47] In sum, the cultural division-of-labor approach suffers from the general functionalist and teleological assumptions of cultural materialism. It similarly avoids history, and it ignores human consciousness to the same degree.

The same inadequacy holds for the moral-economy version of culturology. It presumes an unproblematic and undifferentiated folk tradition, capable of remaining latent until contemporary conditions elicit it and then able to direct social action and belief. Historical events and human action are only agents, not creators, of these cultural meanings.

Neither the cultural division-of-labor version of cultural materialism nor the moral-economy variety of culturology properly arranges the Punjab puzzle. The Third Sikh War did indeed incorporate agrarian protest and material objectives and reflected the material forces at work in the Punjab. Therefore the role of material forces cannot be rejected outright. But reducing religious or ethnic community to economic class brings us no closer to explaining why Singh identity encoded rural protest. Similarly, the causal role of cultural meanings cannot be set aside entirely, but moral economy proved inadequate for the questions of where cultural meanings come from and why some of them lead to social action.

I now turn to the Singh reform movement of the early twentieth century, which perfected the identity, or consciousness, and traditions the Third Sikh War incorporated. I show its derivation from material conditions, namely, an economic class system produced by British colonial domination. But I also indicate that it was not simply a mechanical response to those conditions in that there were two coexistent and competing reformist belief systems. They proved quite similar in reformist mission but quite different in how successfully they generated rural protest. Again, this complex history confounds the neat designs of cultural materialism and culturology.

ARYAS AND SINGHS

At the end of the nineteenth century, two reformist religious movements developed in the Punjab, one Hindu, the Arya Samaj, and the other Sikh, the Singh Sabha. Because they grew up in response to the way colonialism had deformed indigenous society, they were remarkably similar.

The Aryas and the Singhs wished to purge Hinduism and Sikhism, respectively, of the superstitions, social inequalities, immoral practices, and stultification of progress that, in their view, had come improperly to dominate them.[48] For the Aryas, true Hinduism resided only in the early sacred books, the Vedas, not in the corrupted practice of the Hindu religion that had arisen after centuries of Brahmanical pretension and Muslim and, then later, Christian proselytizing. For the Singhs, the source of corruption was different—it mainly came from Hindu accretions to Sikhism—but the way to purity was similar: a return to the religious community defined by the eighteenth-century spiritual leader, Guru Gobind Singh. Late in the nineteenth century, associations—first, the Aryas' samajes and shortly thereafter the Singhs' sabhas—formed in most Punjab cities and towns to put these reformist principles into practice.

Associations with similiar reformist dedication festooned India during this heyday of British colonial rule. Some were ostensibly secular and political, like the Indian National Congress, although its connection to Hindus and even more specifically, to Brahmans, was quite strong. Other associations represented new combinations of formerly separate castes or subcastes. Their objective was usually to lobby with the government for preferments of one sort or another. Civil service employment and welfare benefits represented the most substantial requests. Changed name or rank in the census enumeration reflected the most symbolic, but no less important, claims of these caste associations. Still another form of association organized around religion. Earlier than the Arya Samaj and Singh Sabha, the Brahmo Samaj evolved in Bengal with the aim of assimilating Hinduism to the "modern" world by ridding it of antique usages. Whether secular, caste-based, or religious, these associations generally stressed reform of their constituencies so that they could be more successful in the India that Britain had created. Only some of them, the Indian National Congress and the Aryas and Singhs in particular, saw that Indian reform required British removal.[49]

Comparing the reformist beliefs of the Aryas and Singhs in the late nineteenth century supports the contemporary view of one British official that "the two religions are in their general nature closely akin."[50] They both followed monotheism and deplored idol worship; they accepted the religious authority of a sacred text or texts—the Vedas for the Hindu reformers, the Granth Sahib for the reformist Singhs; they disavowed the social superiority of Brahmans and their ministrations at marriages and other rituals; and they strongly opposed Islam and Christianity, particularly their attempts to convert Indians but also their allowance of cow slaughter. Aryas and Singhs equally strongly opposed a long list of features that were part of Hinduism and Sikhism as they were then being practiced: caste inequality, especially the inferior treatment of Untouch-

ables in temples and at religious performances; prohibitions on widow marriage; the servility and mistreatment of women, including female infanticide, purdah, dowry payment, and lack of education; and the wastage and false display of lavish ceremonials. Arya and Singh reformers promulgated new, simplified marriage ceremonies, perhaps the most important rite of passage in India, as symbols of their disdain for the current observances taken as orthodox; neither gave Brahman priests or Brahmanical rituals their customary roles. Arya and Singh views were so compatible that in the early years of these movements, leading Singhs actively participated in the Arya samajes, and Arya and Singh associations collaboratively reconverted Indian Muslims and Christians to their "original" Indic identity.[51]

The agency by which these movements promulgated their reforms was also similar. Each had missionaries, or preachers, who exhorted the Punjab population to religious revival at devotional meetings (diwans) held throughout the province. Reformers also made liberal use of newspapers and religious tracts.

The Aryas and Singhs were perhaps most akin in demanding radical transformation of the colonial Punjab in the guise of returning to an ancient orthodoxy. Their avowal and subsidy of Western education, which became the major social reform they put into practice, makes this most apparent. They felt that education would remove the backwardness, the ignorance and superstition, that had formed a thick deposit over true belief. They also recognized that Western education would give young people the skills they needed to succeed in the India growing up under colonial rule. Aryas and Singhs might have been content with the educational facilities provided by the British government had such institutions in their view not been, at best, secular or, at worst, subtly making Christian converts. The reformers could only combine Western education with what they regarded as proper instruction in religion if they established their own schools. Most of the early associational activity therefore concerned fund-raising for schools. The first such for the Aryas, an "Anglo-Vedic" high school, opened in 1886 at Lahore, and a college followed three years later. The very titles for these schools indicate the ultimate commitment to Westernization that informed the ostensible revitalizing of India's ancient culture. The Khalsa college, founded at Amritsar in 1892, was the earliest educational foundation by the Singhs.

Although both reformist movements similarly argued for and worked toward the transformation of contemporary society, the beliefs put forward by the Aryas were somewhat more radical, anticolonial, and nationalistic. When India had been ruled by Vedic precepts, the Aryas believed, it had had a progressive society and an advanced technology. Many of the scientific discoveries of the modern period had been foreseen or understood in Vedic times; and the rational, scientific approach equated

with the West was simply a latter-day iteration of Vedic principles of knowledge. Sponsoring Western education did not inculcate alien learning. Rather, it led to rediscovering ancient Indian ways that had once made the society strong and by which it could now be reclaimed from the decline brought on by Muslim and Christian influences and by foreign rule.

The Singhs also believed that Western education would remove the backwardness of their community, but they did not regard such learning as their onetime legacy, which foreign domination had suppressed. The golden time they looked back to was when Singh warlords ruled the Punjab, not the precociously scientific Vedic society imagined by the Aryas—although both reformist associations imputed superior military might to these forebearers. According to the Singhs, once these warrior kings were defeated, their community deteriorated under the sloth of decadent temple functionaries and the malign influence of Hinduism. The inequalities based on caste, the inferior treatment of women, the extravagant expenditures on ceremonies, the syncretizing of Hindu rituals and gods with Sikhism, and the immorality of religious officiants—all existed because Singhs had permitted their separate religious identity to weaken when they lost control over their political destiny. Reformist Singhs eventually came to oppose British colonialism because its governance of the Punjab underwrote this moral turpitude, this loss of independence, this lack of conviction among themselves. But their earlier confrontation was with the Aryas; after a short period of concerted reform, the Aryas and Singhs fell out. A fervid polemic about identity and religion, to be specified in chapter 9, broke out between them. Only later did the Singhs transfer their anger with the Aryas onto the British. By comparison, the beliefs of the Aryas put them in much earlier and more direct confrontation with British colonialism. The Aryas made orthodox Hinduism their most immediate target, but they blamed Hinduism's enfeebled condition and vicious practices on foreign rule.

Arya beliefs therefore more fully clothed the acceptance of innovations like Western education in a hypothetical ancient dress, more directly blamed colonial conquest for India's backwardness and moral decline, and more broadly defined who was or who could easily become an Arya than had the cultural meanings advanced by the Singhs.

THE URBAN LOWER-MIDDLE CLASS

Turning from beliefs to material factors, such as the economic background of their earliest sponsors, will reveal little more of a difference between the Arya and the Singh associations. They found initial support among an urban lower-middle class of merchants, bankers, moneylend-

ers, professionals, and teachers, whom the British collectively referred to as the "educated classes."

A lower-middle class stands, conceptually, intermediate between an upper-middle class, or industrial bourgeoisie (including both indigenous and foreign capitalists), and proletarians, or wageworkers. The distinctive position of the lower-middle class is that its members own means of production but primarily use their own and their family's labor. They are therefore self-employed and different from the two classes Marx identified as pivotal to capitalism, namely, the industrial bourgeoisie and wageworkers, neither of which was strongly represented in colonial India. Peasants and petty-commodity producers had not yet been reduced to wageworkers for the most part, and British capitalists and capitalist firms composed India's industrial bourgeoisie in the main. The lower-middle class consists of merchants owning and operating family businesses and factories, moneylenders, rich peasants (those producing a surplus for sale), urban professionals like lawyers and physicians (whose specialized education represents a means of production), and venal bureaucrats (who traffic in their official powers like independent contractors).[52]

This economic class, as noted previously, was an outgrowth of British colonialism "on the cheap." The professionals and teachers staffed the legal, bureaucratic, and educational institutions introduced by the British in support of their colonial enterprise in India. The merchants and moneylenders were the indigenous agents for the penetration of the world capitalist economy into the existing forms of agricultural production, and they helped construct the export agricultural economy of the Punjab through mercantilizing rural production and debt-bonding the small cultivator. The lower-middle class was especially strong in the Punjab because of the extensive penetration of the world economy under British colonialism and yet the absence of class competitors. Bombay-side, an indigenous industrial bourgeoisie was growing up in textile production; at Calcutta, British management houses represented the same class, but with foreign origins. The Punjab had neither, perhaps because most of its export production consisted of agricultural commodities that came from thousands of small producers. An industrial bourgeoisie likely could not have organized this system of production for its profit as easily as a merchant/moneylender lower-middle class could.

Traditional merchant castes like the Khatris and Aroras, who added the professions and civil service to their commercial involvement, were the mainstay of this lower-middle class in the Punjab. These castes, which made up less than 5 percent of the Punjab's male population in 1891, contained both Hindus and Sikhs in approximately a 10:1 ratio.[53] They lived primarily in cities and towns, and their literacy rate in 1891 was seven times higher than the average for all castes.[54]

The Arya Samaj and Singh Sabha served as vehicles for the maturing consciousness of this urban and educated lower-middle class and as means by which to achieve its vested interests. The subsidy of higher education, which would train children of this class in skills needed to maintain the family position, is a good example of both the developing class consciousness and the way these associations furthered the interests of this class. The first schools formed by both the Aryas and the Singhs were high schools and colleges, which mainly served the needs of the urban well-to-do; and even as late as 1944 only 45 out of 149 boys' schools founded by Singh reformers were at the primary level.[55]

The Arya Samaj early on gained some influence over landlords or their representatives in the southeastern Punjab, men like Sir Chhotu Ram.[56] These landlords soon deserted the Hindu reformers and eventually affiliated with the Unionist Party, perhaps in reaction to the increasing anticolonialism of some Aryas. In 1907 these political activists within the Arya Samaj tried to recruit canal cultivators for a mass protest against British rule, but their attempt, which I discuss later on in this chapter, failed. The Arya Samaj therefore never transcended its origins in the Punjab's urban lower-middle class. In 1911 only 14 percent of Aryas came from the Jat and Rajput caste categories, the premier rural landowning castes in the Punjab.[57]

In addition to the lower-middle class, the Singh Sabha movement also gained limited, early support from Sikh princes and rural gentry, who gave the movement a somewhat more conservative class composition and loyalist political complexion than that of its Hindu counterpart.[58] Gentry membership and financial support as well as official British sponsorship of the Singh reformers were important until 1908. About the same time, Singh urban reformers began to gain the increased support of Jat cultivators, who changed their denomination from Hindu to Sikh in great numbers after 1901 (see table 28)—a prolepsis of the major rural support the reformers would earn in the Third Sikh War. The Singh movement was able to transcend its original sponsorship by the urban lower-middle class and incorporate the interests and collective protest of other, rural classes.

ARYAS AND THE 1907 RURAL DISTURBANCES

This abbreviated history, expanded in chapter 9, shows that the Arya Samaj and Singh Sabha at the outset espoused comparable reformist religions among people belonging to the same economic class. Objective colonial economic conditions had brought this urban lower-middle class

into existence by the nineteenth century's close; the reformist associations were now bringing it to consciousness and collective action. The question of why two reformist movements developed to carry forward the consciousness and to represent the interests of a single economic class will be broached in chapter 9.

Although the Arya Samaj was somewhat more anticolonial in beliefs and less loyalist in class sponsorship than was the Singh Sabha, its presumably superior appeal on both counts never successfully mobilized rural protest against the British. Arya political militancy began with the swadeshi movement in 1905, a nationalist and anti-British program that some Aryas promoted to the lower-middle class. Followers of swadeshi spurned imported articles, especially cloth, and purchased only indigenous products. The movement combined nationalist enthusiasm with lower-middle class self-interest. The Arya proponents of subsidizing indigenous manufactures came from the class that would provide these products.

Arya militants were much less successful at enlisting Punjab cultivators into their anticolonialism. Their most concerted attempt—and greatest failure—developed in 1907 during the "disturbances" (as the British called them) that occurred in Punjab cities and the canal colonies.[59] The Punjab government had decided to amend the Land Alienation Act so that urban mercantile capital would be at an even greater disability in rural areas. The result in the urban Punjab, among the lower-middle class of moneylenders and professionals, was mass protest meetings, street violence, and inflammatory rhetoric in the vernacular press. The government retaliated with an official ban on public meetings, suppression of a newspaper, troop deployment, mass arrests, and political trials. The large, popular support and the intensity and duration of these protests showed that the political message of the radical Aryas had been taken into the streets of Punjab cities.

During these 1907 disturbances, militant Aryas attempted to forge a class alliance with the canal cultivators.[60] The Aryas hoped to unite with this rural population of well-off cultivators who produced for sale in the market. The canal colonists and the Arya urban lower-middle class suffered in common from British colonial policy—the British had penalized the lower-middle class with the Land Alienation Act, and they had placed very strict controls on the proprietorship of the canal cultivators, as indicated in chapter 4. Even before 1907, canal colonists had sought legal protection from the government's restrictive and punitive supervision of their cultivation, especially the paternalism and/or venery of the canal officers made possible by strict government controls. When the Punjab government introduced legislation in 1906 to reaffirm and enhance this control, the canal colonies erupted in mass protest meetings during the early months of 1907.

Urban Arya leaders pressed for political action jointly with the canal colonies. This alliance was short-lived and incomplete, however. British police, army, and law courts quickly suppressed the protests and deported two Arya leaders; British administration withdrew the rural legislation and accorded the canal colonists the proprietary rights and freedom from canal officers they demanded. Most important, Arya beliefs and practices did not transfer from city to countryside to any extent, even though the canal cultivators represented a rising rural lower-middle class, whose objective interests coincided with the urban Aryas in large degree. I return to this shared economic class condition in chapter 9, but at this point an example of the similar interests that might have linked urban merchant and rural canal cultivator must suffice: the debt bondage that pitted the urban moneylender, representing the lower-middle class, against the petty commodity producer in the central Punjab did not threaten the canal cultivators. Canal cultivators in fact needed the credit offered by these urban interests for productive agricultural investment. This merger of interests and development of a common consciousness under the aegis of the Arya Samaj did not occur, however. Other than this short and incomplete episode in the canal colonies early in the twentieth century, militant Aryas failed to proselytize cultivators into protest; they failed to symbolically constitute rural resistance.

Around the same time as the Arya's aborted agitation, urban Singhs fell out with the British administration over the fiscal and educational management of Khalsa college and other matters; and the urban discontent that arose from this much less dramatic issue eventually mushroomed into the five years of rural protest called the Third Sikh War. Here again is the Punjab puzzle; it still remains to see how it can be solved.

RIGID FRAMEWORKS AND NONCONFORMING PUZZLES

Neither cultural materialism nor culturology—or their variants, cultural division-of-labor or moral-economy theory—arranges the Arya Samaj, the Singh Sabha, and the other historical pieces of the Punjab puzzle in such a way as to explain why the Singh identity and movement informed the rural protest of the Third Sikh War. Cultural materialism has no answer for why the Singh reform movement succeeded whereas the Ghadar and the Arya Samaj failed to constitute agrarian protest. It can point out the material factors, the declining position of petty commodity producers under late British colonialism, that underlay rural unrest. But it cannot explain how or why these material forces translated into a specific course of collective social action and why a particular constellation of cultural meanings based on Singh identity and no other informed that social

action. The culturology framework suffers from an equivalent analytic rigidity. Culturology can decipher the nationalist dissent and anticolonial protest, actual or potential, in the credos of Ghadarites, Aryas, and Singhs; but it explains no better than does cultural materialism why only Singh reformism, the less favored symbolically, prevailed.

There is a timelessness and determinism to both these frameworks, as if human social action were simply an unaltering precipitate of the belief system or an involuntary reflex of the impersonal forces of ecology and technology. Neither specifies the historical processes, the human agencies by which the putatively omnipresent belief system or the supposedly omnipotent material forces get translated into the ordinary living of people. Bridget O'Laughlin makes the essential point against the culturology of Marshall Sahlins, but her criticism is just as valid against cultural materialism. She writes:

> There is no theoretical placement of culture in the dynamic of social life. . . . Culture is the property of [the] society as a whole; the general code is not the language of particular classes or groups and their interest.[61]

The same systemic coercion, the same importunity accorded impersonal forces, the same absence of human consciousness, and the same functionalist reification of society disarray culturology and cultural materialism. Marvin Harris assures us that "cultural materialism does not view . . . human beings as zombielike automata whose activities are never under conscious control"; but later in the same paragraph he reverts to type: "the conclusion seems inescapable that when the infrastructural conditions are ripe, the appropriate thoughts will occur, not once but again and again."[62] Those proposing culturology would agree, with one inversion. For them, once the cultural code or principles are set, only the appropriate thoughts will occur, not once but again and again, down through the history of the society.

The Punjab puzzle has now become a dilemma between materialist and culturological frameworks. The next chapter considers ways to rearrange the Punjab puzzle so that we can avoid either choice.

CHAPTER 7

Class and Culture

With the pieces of the Punjab puzzle complete, it is time to organize them according to an explanatory design neither cultural materialist nor culturological. The first requirement of such a framework is that it should successfully incorporate both material and cultural factors, a merger that the last chapter showed to be imperative. In the following pages, I argue that a class analysis, set in the context of history and human intention, can truly incorporate, that is, give equal valuation to, material and cultural forces in social analysis. Such an analysis, I intend to show, can avoid the mechanistic and ahistorical character of cultural materialism, culturology, and some unfortunate hybrids of the two, discussed below. Having provided an analytic framework for the Punjab puzzle in this chapter, I use this design in the next two chapters to arrange the pieces of the puzzle.

The most obvious arrangement of the Punjab puzzle is to allow that both material forces and belief systems coalesced to determine the actual historical design. By granting partial autonomy and a "harmonic," or resonating, effect to cultural beliefs, and yet determination "in the final instance" to material conditions, some admixture of cultural materialism and culturology could be manufactured. For example, in interpreting Marx and Engels, Louis Althusser proposes the concept of "overdetermination" to avoid both the economic determinism authorized by cultural materialism as well as the idealism that culturology licenses. According to Althusser, revolutionary situations arise from conditions of overdetermination. Overdetermination occurs when material forces and the "superstructure" of cultural traditions, politics, and other noneconomic aspects of the "total structure of the social body" fuse, or merge, "into a ruptural unity."[1] The economic contradictions and sep-

arate superstructural contradictions resonate with and reinforce one another to produce a harmonic social upheaval, a "revolutionary rupture," a destabilizing of the social body based, nevertheless, on the society's very structure.

Combining cultural beliefs and material forces to explain collective social action is salutary and necessary, but Althusser's framework achieves this combination at considerable—excessive—conceptual cost.

Assembling the Punjab puzzle Althusser's way would conserve the worst aspect of both cultural materialism and culturology: it would attribute the genesis of social action to impersonal forces, or structures—now both cultural beliefs and material conditions—that determine society through some unanalyzed historical process and without benefit of human agency. The entire matter of human activity and temporal development is finessed by appeals to inherent and overdetermined contradictions imputed to the social system, which follow their inexorable course independent of historical events and human intentions. Anthony Giddens vividly criticizes Althusser's portrayal of social actors as "structural dopes of . . . stunning mediocrity":

> If we understand the social totality as a structure, according to Althusser, and thus as "self-determining" . . . , it follows that human actors are never more than occupants of positions within the structure: they are, in his now notorious terms, "supports" or "bearers" of the structure. . . . Ideology integrates the "individual" in "society" by transforming the "supports" of the real movers of history—structural features of social formations—into subjects with definite forms of consciousness and needs.[2]

The supposed liaison of cultural beliefs and material forces achieved by Althusser's structural determinism is actually only a mixture of what cultural materialism and culturology already shared. Like them, it favors mechanistic and ahistorical forces and undervalues historical events and human actors in the creation of society. A true merger cannot take the social expression of either material forces or cultural beliefs as unproblematic. Inescapable structural contradictions and overdeterminations must give way to contingencies of time, place, and persons. Such contingencies compose the historical class analysis that I now propose as the proper arrangement of the Punjab puzzle.

CLASS AND CONSCIOUSNESS IN HISTORY

Guiding the explanation for the Punjab puzzle in the next chapter are these interrelated points: Both cultural meanings and objective economic conditions materialize in a particular time and place; that is, preexisting

beliefs and material conditions set limits but do not mechanistically create consciousness or collective action. Material conditions and belief systems do not have social effects that are fully formed and fully predictable apart from the actual history of social relations in a society. Thus, neither cultural meanings nor material forces have social relevance apart from human social interaction, expression, and experience; they attach to social actors occupying different economic class positions in society and having different and opposed interests as a result of their positions. Individuals occupy economic class positions in a society according to their relationship to the means of production, a relationship deriving from the material conditions of production and labor as well as from cultural beliefs about production and labor.

Two terms introduced in the previous paragraph, *economic class* and *interest,* require a brief elaboration. Some societies, the most primitive and therefore proverbially anthropology's own and dear, have no economic classes. Ownership of the various means of production is not so advanced that some people can deprive others of subsistence or reproduction. Conflicts over interests appear in such societies, too, but in the form of attempts by individuals to wrest a better living from a natural world that makes no special provisions for them. Among the Tiwi of Australia, for example, there is an ongoing competition among men for control over women and their labor. Given this society's simple sexual division of labor, Tiwi women gather roots, nuts, and other such foodstuffs to collect the primary comestibles. Conflicts between men and women and confrontations between men arise from the desire to control women as a "natural resource" and to accumulate as many of them as possible.[3]

Economic classes exist in societies where individuals or collectivities can prevent others from subsisting or reproducing, usually through their exclusionary control over means of production. Conflict involves issues of survival, and divergent class interests set individuals in direct and earnest opposition to each other. The peasant who must avoid his lord's extortions to survive suffers much greater adversity than does the Tiwi woman or man, whose own subsistence is not threatened, no matter how he or she stands in the competition for mates. This qualitative difference in the conflict of primitive and class societies comes out most clearly in the highly individual and gamelike competitions—the big-man politics, feuds, potlatches, and kulas—that typify conflict in primitive societies, quite unlike the collective and fully committed adversities—peasant revolts, workers' strikes, wars of national liberation—in societies with economic classes.[4]

In primitive and class societies, some individuals and collectivities suffer under varying degrees of appropriation or exploitation of their labor and of other means of production, and other individuals and col-

lectivities visit such appropriation and exploitation on their fellows. To speak of interests is to refer to actions that individuals and collectivities might take to lessen or remove these inequalities or, conversely, to confirm or strengthen them. Interests need not necessarily be narrowly economic. E. P. Thompson cites a case in which religious reform, rather than economic or political goals, correctly defined and materialized class interests.[5]

Individuals may not be conscious of their individual or their collective interests. Consciousness of collective interests seems generally poorly developed in primitive societies, whereas individual interests are well understood and actively pursued. Potlatches, kulas, mate bargaining, and other such competitions show the predominance of individual wheeling and dealing over group confrontation in these societies without economic classes. In class-based societies, consciousness develops over time from the economic class system, the contradictory collective interests it creates, *and* the way humans come to understand and act upon them. As Ashok Mitra notes, "the dialectics of classes do not cease functioning merely because consciousness about class interests is not perfect. The consciousness itself is an aspect of maturing experience."[6]

Consciousness of collective interests, that is, of class interests, may mature over time or it may not; it may do so imperfectly, experiencing reversals and disunity under changing economic circumstances, political suppression, or internal symbolic contradictions. Consciousness may be carried by ethnic, religious, or other so-called ascriptive identities, especially in precapitalist class societies. Although outgrowths of the system of production and labor, these identities may only carry class consciousness so far and then impede or even subvert its more mature development. Consciousness thus may ultimately prove disfunctional; in other words, it may foster collective involvements and conflicts that do not carry forward the vested interests of an economic class and cannot be understood as motivated by class interests. Chapter 9 gives the example of how internal symbolic contradictions led the Arya Samaj, representing the Punjab's urban lower-middle class, to a "noninterested" pursuit of religious goals rather than political militancy. That is, the Aryas' religious goals were disfunctional to lower-middle class interests. Conversely, the consciousness that aids class exploitation at one point in time may later come to be the vehicle of class protest. The following chapter shows that the Singh identity underwent this transformation, as it ceased being the cultural means by which British colonialism impressed indigenous soldiers and became the symbolic basis for anticolonial protest.

In short, consciousness is always historically contextualized and historically concrete; it is always in the making under particular conditions of time and place.[7] So too, by extension are the cultural meanings and social relations that consciousness throws up or, at least, struggles to

throw up. The impersonal forces of putatively objective material conditions (which are no more socially real for existing apart from human consciousness of them) and so-called subjective cultural beliefs (which are no less socially real because they cannot exist apart from human consciousness) are publicly constituted and materialized only in the activities of social actors, both individually and collectively: as they gain increasing consciousness of their interests through confrontations involving these interests; as they collectively organize over time to aid their struggle with other groups that are similarly evolving; and as they fail or succeed in recognizing, organizing, and achieving their interests. This sort of class analysis recognizes indeterminacy and disfunction in human action and avoids a mechanical rendering of history.

Individual and collective consciousness of and struggle over interests, as it develops in history—in the course of human events—constitutes social action and, thence, society. Society becomes an arena for contests over beliefs and material conditions between individuals and groups. Society becomes a workplace wherein individuals and groups labor to create social relations and cultural meanings favorable to their interests; their work produces a more mature consciousness. The continuous struggle over interests, the rising and ebbing consciousness coterminous with these struggles push against the domination and inequality set up by existing cultural beliefs and material forces and thereby may reproduce those cultural beliefs and material forces or change them.

CULTURAL CODE OR CLASS SYSTEM?

Marshall Sahlins develops a similar argument respecting cultural change, with one major difference. In conceptualizing how Hawaiian society changed after European contact, he surmises that

> people act upon circumstances according to their own cultural presuppositions, the socially given categories of persons and things. . . . [But] the worldly circumstances of human action are under no inevitable obligation to conform to the categories by which certain people perceive them. In the event they do not, the received categories are potentially revalued in practice, functionally redefined. According to the place of the received category in the cultural system as constituted, and the interests that have been affected, the system is more or less altered.[8]

Sahlins recognizes that individuals and social action are culturally constituted, but he also allows that individuals through their experiences and their pursuit of interests (also culturally given, not simply a me-

chanical outcome of material forces) can bring about social transformation. Sahlins thereby avoids the structural determinism and ahistoricism of Althusser and the cultural determinism and ahistoricism of culturology. But in common with many such arguments, Sahlins believes that a unitary cultural system (for Althusser, an underlying structural contradiction) composes or constitutes any society and that the separate interests of collectivities or status groups derive from this cultural system. He writes, for example, that "the motivation for the differential responses of men and women or commoners and chiefs to the [Europeans] was altogether Hawaiian" in explanation of how their separate interests rested in fact on a common cultural code.[9]

This view, that a single set of cultural meanings constitutes a society, leads Sahlins to an unsatisfactory formulation of social change. His problem is how culturally constituted individuals pursuing their culturally constituted interests can transform the very cultural system that has defined them and their interests. Sahlin's solution is the "structure of the conjuncture," the idea that

> practice . . . has its own dynamics . . . which meaningfully defines the persons and objects that are parties to it. And these contextual values, if unlike the definitions culturally presupposed, have the capacity then of working back on the conventional values.[10]

Sahlins employs this concept to explain how trade relations with Europeans transformed the Hawaiian cultural system. In pursuing their culturally given interests in the novel practice associated with European trade, the Hawaiians were trying to reproduce their cultural system under new circumstances. But in the event, this attempt at continuity forced a revaluation of the cultural system and a transformation in the relations between men and women, commoners and chiefs, and affines and collaterals of the royal line. The practice of trade overstressed their indigenous relationships and carried these populations further apart than they had been.

Sahlins thus treats interests as within culture but practice as somewhat outside it. Interests, those of chiefs as against commoners or men as against women, lead to different social behaviors, but all of these behaviors are ultimately consistent with and specified by a single cultural code. Because it supposedly has a certain autonomy, practice can place these separate interest "groups" into interactions that stretch the underlying cultural code until it finally snaps. The result is cultural change.

Although Sahlins believes that his "structure of the conjuncture" models all situations of change, there is good reason to doubt that it does. Why should practice have its own dynamic, separate from the unitary

cultural system Sahlins hypothecates, except in radical culture contact situations, such as obtained in Hawaii? During radical culture contact, practice necessarily involves interaction with and reaction to foreign social behaviors and cultural meanings, which might produce innovations in the indigenous culture. In (relatively speaking) undisturbed cultures, however, by what means could the practice of culturally constituted individuals as they pursued their culturally constituted interests within their culturally constituted understanding of the world lead to social behaviors and thence cultural meanings possessing novelty and autonomy from the existing culturally constituted code? Yet precisely because he believes in a single cultural code, Sahlins must endow all practice with this questionable autonomy. Only by this deus ex machina can an indigenous cultural system be stretched and finally disintegrated and changed.

An alternative view is that a unitary cultural code does not exist, that no single set of meanings constitutes individuals, their interests, and society—or, against Althusser, that no single structural contradiction invests all social relations. Instead, a social system is a composite of the separate but interlinked (if only by struggle) interests of individuals and collectivities on their way, primarily in class-based societies, to becoming status groups and social classes. What may appear as a unitary cultural system derives in fact from the production of cultural meanings as groups and classes interact with or oppose each other in the process of their very formation. A cultural system, to the extent that such a unitary code exists, is a construction of the social oppositions and contradictions in a particular time and place. New cultural meanings and new social relations arise from such ongoing social contests. Contest, struggle, and the stress that may eventually cause social transformation are givens of human activity in this conception; social transformation need not depend on an imputed autonomy to practice in an otherwise hermetic and integrated cultural system, as in Sahlin's framework.

Authorizing this viewpoint, E. P. Thompson allows that in the eighteenth century there may have been a

> coherent mental universe of symbolism informing practice. But the coherence (and here I would expect some anthropologists to lay this paper down in disgust) arises less from any inherent cognitive structure than from the particular field of force and sociological oppositions peculiar to eighteenth-century society; to be blunt, the discrete and fragmented elements of older patterns of thought become integrated by class.[11]

For Thompson, social class (or status group) relations in the present selectively reformulate and reintegrate past cultural meanings into new

cultural beliefs. Therefore, social practice is as important for Thompson as it is for Sahlins. But Thompson locates the transformative effects of practice within the system of social confrontation and struggle that constitutes the society. Sahlins, less persuasively, places the transformative effects of practice outside the cultural system. Class for Thompson is an evolving practice by which people learn to perceive and proceed on their interests, and they are led or pushed to this practice by the social oppositions or oppressions surrounding them:

> Class eventuates as men and women *live* their productive relations, and as they *experience* their determinate situations, within "the ensemble of the social relations," with their inherited culture and expectations.[12]

Thompson's writings are somewhat ambiguous about the relative importance he attaches to people living and experiencing their situations as compared to their inherited culture and expectations. At times, he argues for the persistence of cultural meanings, arising to be sure at first from oppositions and confrontations, over extended periods of time, and with lengthy caesuras.[13] Such an excessive emphasis on cultural continuity would assimilate Thompson's orientation rather closely to a moral-economy perspective.

The alternative reading of Thompson's work would emphasize, to paraphrase Thompson, that class, and, by extension, society and culture, are never "things," not even historical things; they are always "happenings," always constructions of the present, always in the making. The image of a society and a culture as a historically derived "thing" is misleading because it takes a cultural tradition as having existed over the long term, when in fact it is continually rebuilt over successive generations. It assumes some inherent tendency to continuity, when even the physical expressions of human society and culture—actual houses, for instance, along with automobiles, atlatls, and hand axes—show the opposite, the constancy of breakdown and dissolution. Men and women at any historical moment do not construct their contemporary social relations and cultural meanings within the narrow confines of a sturdy and stable preexisting culture. Rather, they construct their social and cultural accommodations anew from the selected cultural debris of the past. Even when they simply renew the previous cultural foundations, it is a "happening" of the present, a social act that must be studied to be understood, not assumed to be natural or a historical given.

Society is an evolving practice, a labor of people as individuals and as apprentices to evolving groups and social classes. Just as individuals through their oppositions and growing consciousness labor to constitute society, so they also work to create cultural meanings out of the "discrete

and fragmented elements" of older patterns, which they join together at different points and cement into new places. From their social relations and oppositions, people not only manufacture the organization of their material conditions but also the code, or system, of their cultural meanings.[14]

The proper arrangement of the Punjab puzzle, according to this framework, should be found in society, as it was in the making through growing consciousness and evolving oppositions in early twentieth-century Punjab. The way in which individuals and collectivities organized, and organized around their interests (or did not organize,) and the kind of social confrontations resulting from this progressive organizing are especially important. Also important is the extent to which the groups thus forming carried economic class interests (or stymied them) through the cultural meanings they produced and the social activities at which they labored. How did individuals and groups as they became constituted in the Punjab nearly a century ago progressively perceive their antagonistic interests, how did they construct cultural meanings selectively from past beliefs to express their perceptions, and then how did they act upon the new beliefs so created?

Let me now arrange the Punjab puzzle according to this design. I start in the next chapter with the way certain beliefs and institutions of Sikhism and Singh identity had intertwined with the cultural beliefs of British administration to constitute a colonial pattern of labor exploitation and social control in the Punjab of the late nineteenth century.

CHAPTER 8

A Martial Species

The Lions of the Punjab, after the British successfully subdued them, became, oddly enough, braver under British upkeep, as the imperial masters tried to turn the Singhs into guardians of the Raj. The British hoped to keep these new domesticates of colonialism on a short leash by having Sikhism's religious institutions and functionaries discipline them to obedience. But the very act of colonial taming unleashed a consciousness among the Lions that led them, instead, to reject these religious functionaries as of another nature. As they turned on the temple officiants, the Lions came to recognize their true opponents, the British. They came to understand that while one colonial hand fed them, the other hid the keys to their community institutions in its grasp (literally, in the case of the Golden Temple).

BRITISH METHODS OF OBEDIENCE TRAINING

After annexing the Punjab, British administration developed two separate methods of bringing their former opponents, the Singhs, to heel. One method aimed at securing the loyalty of Sikh temple functionaries to British rule; the other hoped to recruit a cheap but dependable and, above all, obedient soldiery for the Raj by promoting Sikhism as a separate religion and Singh as a separate social identity based on that religion. These two training methods selected for contradictory Sikh identities and institutions, however. Yet simultaneously they brought individuals

and groups espousing these identities into contact. As the two varieties of Sikhs tried to occupy the same colonial niche, they became more and more different, until in reviewing their own histories, they saw themselves as forever having been separate species.

This natural history was, in fact, artificial. One of the species, the Singhs, was purposefully constituted out of the range of Sikh identities by British colonialism in pursuit of its vested interests. British colonial instrumentality will be obvious in the following pages, but less obvious will be the British cultural beliefs that defined or constituted this instrumentality. Explaining this point, which is why the British thought the domestication of the Punjab Lions was in their best colonial interests, will require a short excursion—safari—into nineteenth-century culture history, particularly the thickets of racial determinism that obscured the cultural world for many colonial administrators. The safari will also discover the origins of the biological imagery running through British Indian colonialism, which dovetails with the imagery I have used in this book to emphasize the Orientalism in these British beliefs. Our mid-nineteenth-century safari will lead on to an expedition into the anthropology of India in the late twentieth century. Current anthropology in its passage-to-Indian society has often staked out intellectual positions that flounder around in just as dense an ideological thicket as the previous biological determinism did. In this way, the latter-day expedition will come upon the limitations of an organismic conception of culture, as exemplified in recent anthropological accounts of India.

LOYAL LIONS

The colonial authorities purposefully enlisted the symbols of Singh identity, the combined saintly and soldierly character of the baptized Sikh, into the British Indian army. Only Singhs or those willing to become Singhs could enlist in the "class" companies and regiments that came to characterize Indian army organization by the late nineteenth century.[1] By this time, the British military had chosen to make caste, tribe, or religion the organizing principle of fighting units, as I explain further below. The British gathered the Sikhs, the Gurkhas, the Punjab Muslims, and others whom they regarded as "martial races" each into a separate, or "class" company or regiment. British officers commanding so-called Sikh regiments and companies, which perforce were entirely Singh, took no chances, however. They required all enlisted Sikhs to undergo baptism.[2] The 1901 census, for example, reports a very large increase in Sikhs enumerated in several Native States as the result of army recruitment and the resulting baptisms.[3] Because the Hindu-Sikh boundary,

especially in the rural areas, from which the British drew most of their recruits, was indistinct, Sikh identities, practices, and beliefs of various sorts intermixed; and only the British, with a concept of purity that derived from their belief in biological determinism (as I explain shortly), could speak of "true" Sikhs and invariably mean by that a stereotyped view of the Singh.

Reality intervened and challenged the colonial racism subsidizing the recruitment of the so-called pure Sikh—the British recognized that some castes and village communities produced inferior military specimens, and they even had an explanation for this based on their folk biological beliefs. In 1896, Capt. R. W. Falcon authored an army recruiting manual that cataloged the major areas of Sikh residence in the Punjab on the basis of martial proclivities, which ranged, by his grading, from very bad to very good.[4] (Alfred Bingley somewhat revised this rating about 1900.[5]) The British also probably suspected that some young men adopted Singh habit and habits to obtain military employment.[6] For these reasons, the British labored to insure the religious conformity of the Sikh recruit—actually, the recruit's conformity to British cultural meanings about Sikhism as a separate religion and Singhs as a martial species of men. Roy Edgardo Parry, serving in the Indian military in the first decades of the twentieth century, described the ritual enactment of this admixture of British colonialism and Sikhism. It consisted of a strange syncretism of British military form and Singh ritual symbolism. Parry had accompanied a recruiting party as it toured the rural Punjab. After fifty recruits had been collected, a baptism ceremony took place. Each recruit wore a bayonet (instead of the kirpan?), and two soldiers, members of the recruiting party, flanked the main altar in the temple.[7]

Not only was induction into the Indian army and into Singh identity often one and the same[8] but also military commanders required a strict observance of Singh customs and ceremonies afterward.[9] Regiments and companies were sure to have readers of scripture (granthis), and British officers saluted or stood at attention before the sacred book, the Granth Sahib.[10]

The British were evidently quite aware of their instrumental use, their selective maintenance of those beliefs. David Petrie, an official with the Criminal Intelligence Department, wrote a decade before the outbreak of the Third Sikh War that

> Sikhs in the Indian army have been studiously "nationalised" or encouraged to regard themselves as a totally distinct and separate nation. Their national pride has been fostered by every available means.[11]

Some British officials went so far as to congratulate the colonial regime for "buttressing the crumbling edifice of the Sikh religion";[12] and then,

as signs of discontent gathered early in the twentieth century, they came to regret this "cult of the birth of which Government has itself been largely responsible."[13]

The British hoped to deploy the symbols of Guru Gobind Singh's Sikhism to create a courageous, obedient, and long-suffering army corps, true to its (British) salt, loyal only to its British *ma-bap* (literally, parents; figuratively, the British officer in loco parentis), and without Hindu or Muslim sympathies. The ultimate necessity underlying this strategy came from the objective of colonialism "on the cheap," which required the British to field a large but inexpensive indigenous army. The offspring of this strategy was an Indian army, which, at the outbreak of World War I, depended on these Sikhs, transmuted into Singhs by British agency, for 39.6 percent of its combat troops.[14] The proportion of Sikh troops in the army was over three times larger than the proportion of Sikhs in the Punjab's population and almost twenty times their representation in the Indian population. Indeed, the Sikh contingent was absolutely larger than the Hindus' or Muslims'. Not only did this colonially constituted Sikhism socialize many and excellent soldiers, it also produced cheap ones. The symbolic reinforcement of Singh identity and the syncretism of military and Sikh ritual worked "downward" to separate Singhs from Hindus and Muslims, but it also worked "upward" to separate them from Britishers. This symbolic boundary helped legitimate the inequality in pay and conditions suffered by Indian troops in comparison to British enlisted men of equivalent rank who were stationed in India. It also supported the reservation of all higher ranks in an Indian regiment for British officers.

MARSHALING THE MARTIAL

The instrumentality under which the British military "fostered and patted" the Sikhs was culturally given;[15] it was not a naked calculation of advantage on the part of the British. This strategy grew out of British racial beliefs that allowed populations to have biologically given behaviors or propensities, such as martial skills.[16] Maj. George MacMunn typified the biological determinism with which the British viewed the peoples of India:

> It is one of the essential differences between the East and the West, that in the East, with certain exceptions, only certain clans and classes can bear arms; the others have not the physical courage for the warrior.[17]

In building an effective colonial army within the givens of their biological beliefs, the British recruited Indians selectively, to build companies

and regiments of the martial. They protected and even cultivated these "racial" populations. They championed the Sikhs or Dogras or Jats or whoever was under their command by stereotyped portrayals that were ostensibly full of praise and actually filled with racism:

> The Sikh is a fighting man and his fine qualities are best shown in the army, which is his natural profession. Hardy, brave, and of intelligence; too slow to understand when he is beaten; obedient to discipline; attached to his officers; and careless of caste prohibitions, he is unsurpassed as a soldier in the East. . . . The Sikh is always the same, ever genial, good-tempered and uncomplaining; as steady under fire as he is eager for a charge.[18]

Physical features, mainly size and physique (girth), played a dominant role in the British estimation of a race as martial; the valor and loyalty of a population emerged from a physical superiority to the run of unwarlike Indians.[19] The Sikhs, for instance, belonged to the "hardier" northern peoples; they were "tall" and "well knit." Jats were "sturdy" and Gujars were "powerful" and "strong-featured."[20] Philip Mason suggests that even in the early East India Company armies, preference went to fair, tall soldiers who would look good on parade.[21] South Indians, Madrasis, and those from Bombay-side, were generally shorter, smaller, and darker—and not by chance, much less martial in British estimation—than were the northern warlike races, mainly from the Punjab, who came to fill the ranks.

Where did the British folk theory about "martial races" come from and how did it affect the organization of the army? This distribution of supposedly inherent martial skills bore little relationship to the historical reality that the British themselves had experienced in India. The putatively meek Madrasis, who were "unfit" for service in the North-West Frontier because they found "barren regions and inhospitable climates" repugnant,[22] and the *purbiya* Hindus and Muslims of the United Provinces and Bengal, who were equivalently disfavored for recruitment, had conquered India for John Company, had even bested the Sikhs in spite of their vaunted martial inheritance. The British should also have reckoned with the effects of their own military system on what they only saw as warlike "instincts." After the 1857 Mutiny and up to the twentieth century, the British carefully maintained the independence of the three original presidency (provincial) armies recruited by the East India Company. By keeping the Madras, Bombay, and Bengal (including the United Provinces and Punjab) presidency armies distinct and forcing them to recruit and serve mainly in their respective regions, the British hoped to avoid a mutinous combination of troops against their rule. But this precaution had the unintended consequence of restricting active service, which mainly ex-

isted along the northwestern frontier in the late nineteenth century, to the Bengal army. The British chose to ignore the effects of relative inactivity on the courage of their Madras soldiers.

If they had not learned of martial races from their own history in India, perhaps the British adopted this notion to keep Indians apart, to exacerbate or even constitute divisions within the population so that a unified India never came to exist. Recruiting only the warlike races filled the army with Indians said to be different from the common run. Their sense of distinction, in both meanings of the word, might keep them loyal in the face of a popular insurrection. If mutiny broke out, one martial race might be set against another. K. M. L. Saxena projects such a bare, Machiavellian calculation onto a British colonial administration allegedly bent on a program of divide and rule. According to him, the British rationally cost-accounted their situation and came to a belief in martial races as amenable with, and perhaps only the most superficial rationalization of what was in their colonial best interests.[23] Cultural materialism, with its aggressive debunking of cultural meanings and its sturdy defense of material forces clearly sallies forth from this explanation. Unfortunately, real history and real human actions no more support it than they do the British cultural belief in martial races upon which the colonial authorities constituted their Indian army. Roger Beaumont sums it up neatly: "Folklore as a basis for policy is not found exclusively in the case of the Indian army, but the martial classes' rationale was more heavily cloaked in illogical justifications [read "British cultural beliefs"] than usual."[24]

MARTIAL MANEUVERS

The historical reality was that the British colonial administration carefully and consciously considered the military organization they were to have in India. After the 1857 Mutiny, they *chose* a particular kind of native army as in their best interests. But later in the nineteenth century, they reversed their earlier decision and instituted a military organization that they had believed to be more risky for their interests. Altered material conditions in combination with British cultural beliefs about inherited martial skills forced this change. Throughout, the British followed their sense of advantage, but their calculations were never culture-free, never simply automatic and functional responses to material conditions. Instead, these calculations often simply summed up British cultural understandings, and, given that some of these cultural premises were wrong or maladaptive, they often brought negative results for British colonialism in India.

Before the Mutiny of 1857, the three presidencies composing the East India Company's territorial holdings—Bombay, Madras, and Bengal—each fielded its own army. Their armies differed to the extent that they recognized caste and religious distinctions: the Madras and Bombay armies enlisted all recruits and intermixed them without concern for the niceties of caste and religion; this south Indian pattern has been called the "general mixture" system. Bengal limited recruitment to the high castes and organized the several caste and religious identities found among its ranks into separate military units. Later in the century, Bengal's military system became known as the "class company" or "class regiment" pattern. Each martial race or religious identity formed a single class and provided the entire compliment of troops in a company or regiment organized along these lines.[25]

The mutiny of the East India's Company's Native Army in 1857 nearly lost the British their Indian empire. It therefore become the occasion for substituting Crown for Company rule and for reconsidering colonial policy, especially military operations, by this new governing body. A major concern was the fact that the Bombay and Madras armies, which ignored, even undercut caste distinctions, had remained loyal; whereas the Bengal army, composed of high castes and organized around caste and religious divisions, had been at the center of the mutiny. Drawing the obvious lesson, the Peel Commission of 1859 recommended that the three presidency armies remain separate to lessen the danger of a widespread mutiny and that the Madras and Bombay pattern of general mixture be adopted throughout the colony: "the Native Army should be composed of different nationalities and castes, and, as a general rule, mixed promiscuously through each regiment."[26] The selective admission and class organization of the Bengal army had proved too dangerous; so many men of the same caste, religion, and/or region enlisted in a single military unit was too great an encouragement to mutiny.

Yet in spite of what the British commission construed as in the best interests of Indian colonialism in 1859, the military authorities in India had abandoned the general mixture system by the late nineteenth century. By 1883, thirty-two class-company regiments (regiments whose constituent companies were drawn entirely from a single martial race) and twelve class regiments (regiments drawn entirely from a single martial race) composed the Bengal army, and there were no mixed regiments left. The Bombay and Madras armies underwent a similar development of class organization somewhat later, although it always remained partial. The two southern armies also changed in composition; they remained southern in terms of location rather than recruitment. More and more of their troops came from the mainly northern martial races. Even the northern army saw this concentration of the warlike: Punjab soldiers,

considered the most martial, and Hindustani troops (from the rest of northern India), thought of as less warlike, were put in separate regiments, even if they shared a caste or religious identity, such as Jat or Muslim.[27]

Why did British authorities late in the nineteenth century institute a class military system that they earlier had determined to be too risky for internal security? There had been no lack of strong proponents of it after the Mutiny.[28] The administrators initially chose one thing and then, upon equally conscious but culturally rational consideration later on, chose something altogether different. The important points are that these choices were neither unconsciously driven by material forces, nor informed by a culture-free calculation of advantage, nor necessarily the most effective courses to follow.

Given the enemies they anticipated at the close of the nineteenth century, the British decided they had to field the most competent fighting force India could offer. Because of their cultural belief in inherited martial skill, colonial military leaders thought that the most competent army was one filled with the warlike races and able to deploy such soldiers in close-knit class units during military actions. Rather than a technological concern with fielding maximum firepower, their worry was the most effective way to marshal the brave, steadfast, and hardy.

The new enemies were the Russians and their allies, the Afghans, on the North-West Frontier. As the Indian army's main mission shifted from the internal security of the Raj to its protection against foreign attack, the British put more and more emphasis on purging the military of the nonmartial. The Marquess of Lansdowne, India's viceroy from 1888 to 1894, wrote in 1890 that "we should be culpable if we did not endeavor to replace the worst of our Native troops by men recruited from the warlike races."[29] In the same year, Field Marshall Lord Roberts, commander-in-chief in India from 1885 to 1893, made the theory of martial races quite explicit:

> When I was in Afghanistan in 1897–80 . . . only our best Native soldiers could hope to cope with the Afghans in their own mountainous country. . . . How much more necessary it is that we should have soldiers in our ranks who can be thoroughly depended upon when it seems almost certain that, instead of having to fight badly armed, undisciplined Afghans . . . , we shall find ourselves opposed, when next we go to war, by well-armed, well-disciplined Europeans . . . and who may very possibly be assisted by the whole, or greater part, of the Afghan nation.
>
> I have no hesitation in stating that except for Gurkhas, Dogras, Sikhs, the pick of Punjabi Muhammadans, Hindustanis of the Jat and Ranghur castes . . . and certain classes of Pathans, there are no Native soldiers in our service whom we could venture with safety to place in the field against the Russians.[30]

Martial races went together with class companies and regiments, the British thought, because mixed military units would allow the martially inferior classes to attenuate the military skills of the superior races. Class companies and regiments were also supposedly more efficient fighting units because the men forged close ties on the basis of their shared caste or religious identity and because the British officers got to know their customs well and became "honorary" Sikhs, Jats, or whatever, to the good of morale.[31]

That the movement toward a class regimental and company system was a British choice—a British colonial cultural meaning in the making—is clear because many British commanders opposed it.[32] They argued for a different, older instrumentality: the necessity to maintain an equilibrium of castes and communities in the military to discourage mutiny. This view depended on what Lord Roberts labeled as "the erroneous belief that one Native was as good as another for purposes of war."[33] The martial races notion had no less instrumental an intention for the Britishers who espoused it, but it was of course wrong in its biological determinism. Therefore the British believed it was an instrumentally sound policy, that is, that it advanced their colonial military interests, only because they also believed in the inheritance of cultural traits like martial skill, courage, loyalty, and obedience. Over the latter course of the nineteenth century, as these British biological beliefs were historically produced outside of India (as I discuss below) and then advanced in India and as the Russian presence advanced in Afghanistan, the Indian army became "as perfect a fighting machine . . . as possible" by substituting "men of the more warlike and hardy races" for the nonmartial and by replacing general mixture with the class system.[34]

ORIENTALISM PAST: ORGANISMIC CONCEPTIONS OF RACE

Where did the British military's belief in biological determinism come from? It was clearly not a predetermined outcome of contemporary material conditions; it was not a true reading of Indian history or human capabilities; it was not due to a culture-free calculation of British interests. It was therefore culturally given. But were the martial races the cultural creatures of Britain, or did they belong to India? Roger Beaumont believes that the "Indian Army was a child of Asia."[35] After the Mutiny, he argues, the British stopped meddling with the indigenous caste and religious sensibilities of the Indian population and learned to use these social divisions to advance their colonial interests. Philip Mason asserts a different and more complex interpretation: the distinction—meaning both

the cultural belief in this distinction and its social reality—between the warlike and the nonmartials was indigenous to India; it grew out of the all-pervasive caste system. But the legitimation of such distinctions by cultural beliefs in biological determinism and in the physical inheritance of cultural traits was of distinctly British invention. Mason suggests that "behind the reconstruction of the Bengal Army on class lines lay undoubtedly the deep feeling of the late Victorian British about the importance of heredity."[36]

Expanding Mason's argument, I intend to show that the racial determinism informing British views sprang up in mid-nineteenth-century Europe, accompanied the colonial masters in their passage to India, and came to replace the earlier British cultural expectation that the army could make a good fighting man of anyone.

The nineteenth century experienced a vogue of biological determinism and a confusion of race and culture in both popular and intellectual European thought.[37] Stephen Jay Gould argues convincingly that all too often supposedly scientific researches only confirmed popular prejudices.[38] George Stocking provides the example of James Cowles Prichard, the leading anthropologist of the mid-nineteenth century:

> This was a period when the ideas of progress and of civilization were increasingly viewed in Europo-centric and racial terms. Prichard no doubt shared to some extent the prevailing cultural arrogance. . . . He frequently evaluated the "fineness" of a race by its approximation to the European physical type. . . . He accepted . . . the notion that the gradient of skin color was linked to one of nervous structure and psychic makeup. Negroes were tougher and coarser, more perfect in their sensory organs—adapted in short to the savage state. Whites were "finer and more delicate," . . . and were in general "best fitted for the habits of improved life." Indeed, Prichard's system involved an equation of color and culture.[39]

Stocking traces what he calls the nineteenth century's "organismic" treatment of putative races to the Romantic period. Races were thought to have souls, geniuses, or essences and to follow life cycles of youth, maturity, and senescence. Organismic treatment thus made of them much more than populations displaying a certain degree of physical distinctiveness. Stocking indicates that such European cultural usages were not metaphorical. Accepting their biological logic as real led Europeans to concerns about race suicide and debilitation through interbreeding and to calculations of racial inferiority.[40]

Allen J. Greenberger's survey of British literary uses of India in the period 1880 to 1910 serves as a guide to popular cultural beliefs about race and about Indian races. He finds that the British justified their

colonial domination of India by their racial "blood," which gave them inherent and inheritable leadership abilities superior to all Indians'. The same cultural logic based on blood explained the Indians:

> Just as the British novelists saw their countrymen primarily in terms of "racial characteristics" so they saw the Indians. . . . With great emphasis they made the point that there is no such thing as an "Indian race," but rather that there are numerous "Indian races"—Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh; Bengali, Rajput, or Pathan. They distinguished carefully between the "racial characteristics" of these groups.[41]

Edward Said shows how such racial notions, especially in their "organismic form" that pretended to explain all Sikhs or Muslims or Arabs, were intrinsic to Orientalism as an intellectual pursuit and as a charter for colonialism. For example, he presents the pseudoscientific Orientalism contained in the racial label "Semitic":

> "Semitic," therefore, was a transtemporal, transindividual category, purporting to predict every discrete act of "Semitic" behavior on the basis of some pre-existing "Semitic" essence, and aiming as well to interpret all aspects of human life and activity in terms of some common "Semitic" element.[42]

Like all systems of cultural meanings, nineteenth-century pseudoscientific and popular racism had ways to explain anomalies, such as when individuals did not act according to their presumably unalterable racial characters. Greenberger fails to perceive that certain British racial beliefs he finds in the popular literature of the late nineteenth century performed this function.[43] He grows perplexed at the seeming contradiction between British beliefs in inherited behaviors and yet their notion that such behaviors could be lost. The British insisted that one's "blood" would tell but at the same time required individuals to strive to keep "pure" behaviorally. They believed Europeans could go "native" and ruin their racial inheritance; they thought Singhs could grow "soft" and revert to Hinduism. Such beliefs supported the orthodoxy of the white man's burden under which most Britishers abroad lived, and they mandated the fostering of Singh identity by the British military. But how could a race and its biologically fixed psychic characteristics and social behaviors degenerate except by miscegenation?

European racial beliefs as they had historically developed by the close of the nineteenth century explain this seeming contradiction. Biological determinism, or scientific racism, had become the dominant European and American explanation for human social diversity by the mid-nineteenth century, but it suffered from an internal polemic between monogenists

and polygenists. The polygenists explained human social diversity as the result of different human lines of biological descent. Inferior contemporary races came from different animal ancestors; some races were closer to chimpanzees or gorillas than they were to other humans. Thus, polygenists believed that only interbreeding could improve an inferior race, but that the other race's superior qualities would thereby be impaired. Monogenists rejected the multistranded development of human races in favor of preserving the Christian story of a single divine creation. For them, the separate races came about by environmental adaptations. Racial improvement by environmental modifications was possible, therefore.[44] Later in the nineteenth century, after Darwin's *Origin of the Species* but before modern genetics, the monogenist view gained supremacy, but only after evolutionism had given it the same dark view of racial perfectibility that the monogenists had espoused.

Late nineteenth-century monogenism hinged on the doctrine of the inheritance of acquired characteristics, which at that time was a quite legitimate theory for the evolution of species. Human races represented different points along the evolutionary path leading from the original human ancestor to the whites or Caucasoids, who were, naturally, the most evolved race. Those races at a higher level of development had more effectively adapted physically, psychically, and culturally to the environmental stresses on them. The development of the brain and, from it, intelligence and cultural life was so much more advanced in the forward races that there was no hope for the inferior races to catch up. The later monogenists thus could maintain their belief in a single human origin, could theoretically subscribe to human perfectibility by environmental adaptation, and yet could also champion the permanent inferiority of the backward races, in line with polygenist views.[45] The inheritance of acquired characteristics also meant that superior racial characteristics could deteriorate in certain environments. The better races would have to work at perpetuating their specific qualities. Greenberger's contradiction thus turns out to be the internally consistent cultural meanings associated with pseudoscientific evolutionary monogenism, which also constituted much popular thinking at the nineteenth-century's end and even thereafter.[46]

British colonial administrators similarly found it not at all contradictory to believe that the biologically inherited skills and behaviors of the Singhs could attenuate and dissipate in the wrong social environment. David Petrie undoubtedly represented the cultural beliefs of many officials when he wrote confidentially that "with the relapse into Hinduism and readoption of its superstitious and vicious social customs, it is notorious that the Sikh loses much of his martial instincts and greatly deteriorates as a fighting soldier."[47] Another instance comes from the last days of the

Jaito agitation, when the British had long ceased to curry the Singhs and instead wished them a speedy extinction. Colonial officials gloried in the poorer physique of the Akali participants in the later jathas, as if their supposedly deteriorated physical condition indicated a moral weakening of the movement.[48] Believing in inherited martial skills but also the inheritance of acquired characteristics (mainly the possibility of dissipating superior racial traits), the British military "naturally" believed that the only true Sikh was a Singh; the other Sikhs were simply deteriorated specimens of the race. Hardly natural, the British simply followed the logical entailments of their own cultural understandings.

The Singhs provide the ultimate measure of how far British cultural belief in biological determinism confused their colonial perception, by which I mean constituted their perception against the Indian social reality. In his 1896 manual on the recruitment of Singhs, Capt. R. W. Falcon advised British officers that Singhs are made, not born—and then with an illogic so obvious that it could only be based on the culturally determined "logic" of his racial beliefs, Falcon reassured his readers that breeding will tell: he wrote, "though a man becomes a Sikh [Falcon meant a "Singh"] by initiation and is not born one, still his value as a military Sikh depends on what stock he came of, i.e., is hereditary."[49] Falcon "biologized" the Singhs even further. He argued that the only "true" Singhs belonged to tribes that had converted during Guru Gobind Singh's times; more recent converts did not necessarily have a martial character. Again, inheritance rather than religious conviction is the determining factor. Falcon also believed that environmental factors could rob even the true Singhs of their inherited capacities. Outside the core districts of the Manjha and Malwa regions, in places where Singhs were a minority, where they married Hindu women, or where they were taken up too much with cultivation, Falcon judged them of deteriorated stock.[50] At several points Falcon referred to the Malwa and Manjha regions as "military colonies," by which he seemingly meant "breeding grounds."[51]

The British cataloged the Indian population according to a human taxonomy imported from nineteenth-century Europe. What the Indians had were castes and communities, each with distinctive eating, ranking, marrying, and religious practices. What the British "found" were biologically given species of humans, each with a distinctive pedigree of inherited traits. Consequently, the superior traits of specific Indian populations could only be maintained in a British colonial environment, and the British were the only guarantors of peace against the blood hatred of Hindus for Muslims and high castes for Untouchables. According to Philip Curtin, the British in Africa practiced a similar cultural deception on themselves and on the populations they ruled, who could not resist their cultural hegemony: "the image of Africa, in short, was largely

created in Europe to suit European needs—sometimes material needs, more often intellectual needs."[52] In Africa, too, the British ignored indigenous beliefs and practices different from what they expected to find there, and they thereby not only defended their culturally skewed notions with great tenacity, but they also constituted these notions as the reality of Africa.

ORIENTALISM PRESENT: ORGANISMIC CONCEPTIONS OF CULTURE

The Orientalism of the nineteenth century no longer exists, at least not in the form of a flagrant biological determinism. But Edward Said believes a related Orientalism—both popular and academic—continues into the present-day. This Orientalism still uses the nineteenth-century organismic image of a population to explain its cultural behaviors stereotypically, although it does not attribute these common characteristics to biology and descent. Criticizing the unregenerate Orientalism of Near Eastern scholars, Said laments that

> for them there are still such things as *an* Islamic society, *an* Arab mind, *an* Oriental psyche. . . . [They] anachronistically use texts like the Koran to read into every facet of contemporary Egyptian or Algerian society. Islam, or a seventh-century ideal of it constituted by the Orientalist, is assumed to possess the unity that eludes the more recent and important influences of colonialism.[53]

Said blames this organismic and reductionist view on "culturalist theory," in part.[54] His reference seems to be the common anthropological approach to culture as a code, or integrated set, of cultural meanings, specifically the ahistorical and agentless form of it I have called "culturology."[55]

The "cultural accounts" of India offered by anthropologist McKim Marriott and historian Ronald Inden appear to represent Said's latter-day Orientalism, this continuing European and American intellectual empire exercised over India. Marriott's and Inden's cultural account of India rests on an organismic contrast between Indian culture with its "bio-moral" order, and Western, or American, culture with its distinction between a "natural" order and a "moral" order. The Indian biomoral order depends on the "ancient and continuing" cultural belief that caste mates, religious brethren, races, tribes, and other human "genuses" not only share ways of believing and acting ("codes for conduct") but also partake of a common biology ("bodily substance" or "coded substance"). Thus, as Marriott and Inden put it, "Indian thought does not separate

'nature' and 'morality' or 'law,' so that castes are, in Western terms, at once 'natural' and 'moral' units of society."[56] Inden makes the Orientalizing contrast even sharper: "Thus, no distinction is made [in Bengali Hindu culture], as it is in American culture, between an order of 'nature,' defined by shared biogenetic substance, and an order of 'law,' defined by code for conduct."[57]

The problem with this cultural account, like all organismic conceptions of culture, is that it leaves out history and human action. It presumes that nothing equivalent to the ostensibly indigenous Indian concept of genuses of castes, religions, and so forth existed in Europe and America. Yet a scant hundred years ago, biological determinism encumbered many Europeans with the same notion that the various human races/societies possessed different biomoral codes—even to the extreme that polygenists denied them a common humanity.[58]

If Europe and America a century ago subscribed to a biomoral order, while nowadays Marriott and Inden find only a "moral" order, or order of "law," in these cultures, then it seems precipitous to treat the current Indian order as "ancient and continuing" without active historical investigation.[59] If other societies can change their cultural code, why could not India?

Consulting nineteenth-century European and American history turns up the scientific racism and biological determinism that informed British colonialism in India late in the nineteenth century. The supposedly indigenous Indian conception of genus was very similar to the imperial ideology of races. Is this homology due to chance alone? Or did the colonial domination of India, meaning the late nineteenth-century Orientalism represented by biological determinist beliefs, also infect indigenous concepts of caste, tribe, and community?[60] If indigenous cultural meanings do change, they would be most likely to do so under colonial domination. Only a very narrow view of colonialism would restrict its effects on India to politics and economics. In their imperial embrace, the British overpowered Indian beliefs, too; the notion of martial races and inherited propensities entered India from Britain along with Manchester's textiles and Westminster's bureaucracy.

Why does this cultural account of India impute to Indian antiquity meanings and codes that India's foreign conquerors and rulers felt at home with, that these rulers perceived as in their interest to perpetuate as Indian beliefs, and that these rulers labored to instill in the subject population—for example, British subsidy of Singh identity and hereditary martial skills? Why, in effect, is this cultural account intent on finding India unique and Oriental? The reason, I believe, is to defend a conception of culture as a unitary code of meanings that passes down over time without fundamental alteration and that operates apart from individual or collective action. Earlier I called this framework "culturology" and

criticized a specific form of it, moral economy. In this chapter, I have indicated how it Orientalizes India through an organismic approach, how it incorporates an India suffused with a single underlying culture, and how it discards colonialism and other historical events that constituted present-day Indian culture.

Such a cultural account is Orientalizing and organismic because it does not conceive of cultural meanings as outcomes of developments over time and as results of human actions. My account of the martial Singhs in this chapter aims to place cultural meanings and culture in a non-determinist historical framework. The concept of martial races grew up as the colonial state labored to perfect its apparatus of rule over India, including its control over what the Indian population believed. This colonial labor was in important ways defined by British cultural beliefs, which had their own historical development in European intellectual and popular thought. Colonial administrators therefore *acted* and *made choices*, which amounted in sum to what the British Government of India did, which greatly influenced how well or how badly its imperial interests would be served, and which defined many cultural meanings and social conventions with which Indians and Britishers lived. How colonial officials perceived their interests and chose among them, whether for their ultimate good or bad, changed over time—or, better phrased, were in a permanent process of development. Altering material conditions or British perceptions of altered material conditions led to changes in the colonialists' understanding of what was in their interests, as when the British worried less about an army mutiny or an Indian revolt and more about Russian advances on the northwestern frontier. Altered cultural understandings also played a determinate role, as when biological determinism emerged as a main current in European, and British, thought. Lest it be objected that European racism simply mechanically arose to charter colonialism, no less a cultural materialist than Marvin Harris argues that its origin lies in European society itself: it justified social class inequalities arising under industrial capitalism in pseudoscientific biological terms.[61] The outcome or by-product of this belief, in the environment of India, was a set of cultural meanings, at once colonial and indigenous, that apportioned martial skills on the basis of caste, race, or religion and that required official subsidy of Singh identity.

THE STATE OF THE KEEPERS OF INDIA

In my account of this official subsidy, those entrusted with the colonial state, the British keepers of India, appear very much like an economic class, undergoing a developing or, at least, changing consciousness of their interests and laboring through their official enactments and unof-

ficial ideologies to satisfy those interests. My treatment of the colonial state in this chapter is both exemplary and proleptic of the analysis of the other emerging classes and contending groups that constituted cultural meanings and social interactions in early twentieth-century Punjab, which follows in the next chapter. It also clarifies my presentation in chapter 4 of the contradictory objectives in colonial agrarian policies. I do not treat the state as an expression of the interests of a single class or as an organ of class oppression; neither do I endow it with the omniscience and omnipotency to avoid mistakes and contradictions. That the material conditions and cultural meanings for which the colonial state labored so industriously ultimately threatened British interests—that the warlike eventually trained their specific wrath on the colonial authorities who nurtured them, that contradictory political-economic policies directed British colonial management of agrarian production and labor in the Punjab—therefore comes as no surprise.

In this conception, the colonial state, meaning its several branches staffed by officials, police, and military, was autonomous from any single class, either British or Indian; and it pursued autonomous interests, which might be contradictory to those of any single class. So much is the state not a "thing" but a "happening,"[62] that these autonomous interests may develop and change over time until the latter may come to contradict the earlier, as I indicated in the previous section on British military choices and in chapter 2 on colonial agrarian policies. The developing state partially evolves in playing the role of arena for contending classes, but it also "becomes" and "happens" according to its own internal dynamic and the struggle among its bureaus and bureaucrats. For example, the contradictory agrarian objectives of British colonialism in the Punjab undoubtedly favored different segments of the home bourgeoisie, but like their effects on the indigenous urban lower-middle class or rural petty commodity producers, their influence over these classes seems often to be an unintended consequence of policies whose ultimate determinant was the solvency of the colonial state, the balance of payments in Britain and India, and the relative valuation of their respective currencies.[63]

Although it may be lobbied by various classes and physically resisted by others, the colonial state stands above and acts independently of any particular class. This autonomy exists because the state must often undertake functions that no single class or class segment will do, as, for example, the construction of Indian railroads and Punjab irrigation canals; because the state must often adjudicate the conflicting interests of various classes, whose pursuit of self-interest threatens the entire system, as in the regulation of merchant capital under the Land Alienation Act; and because the state also is directly subject to the world economic order, as in the devaluation of the rupee and its consequences for government finances.

Furthermore, the colonial state had its own imperatives, such as the recruitment of an indigenous army with which to defend India cheaply. These state imperatives dictated state policies working against certain classes, even supposedly dominant ones in England. For example, the fiscal difficulties of the Government of India in the 1920s required tariffs against manufactured imports that deeply hurt the Lancashire cotton industry.[64] Colonial state policies often resulted from factional contests within the administration itself. But to what extent these internal disputations were apologia for class interests is moot. For example, the major directive behind the utilitarian political philosophy that led the British to establish peasant proprietorship in the central Punjab was the hope of increased land revenue. Setting aside large landholders and prebendaries and equalizing tenants and peasant proprietors, within the limits of British military competence, the colonial state operated autonomously in pursuit of its own interests with an internal class made up of literati, its Indian administrative cadre, and of warriors, the Indian army, to define those interests and implement them.

Any state may develop this autonomy from the successful struggle of state authorities against the domination of any and all classes, especially when the contending classes are relatively undeveloped and no one class has superordinate power. According to Anupam Sen, this treatment of state autonomy follows the original understanding of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, rather than the view that later Marxists attributed to them, namely that the state was always a vehicle for the domination of a single class. Sen says that "the state, according to Marx, does not mechanically become an instrument of class rule; the state is transformed into an apparatus of class rule as and when a particular class emerges victorious over other classes."[65] He argues that colonial states were particularly prone to autonomy because they inherited and employed the despotism of the indigenous precapitalist states. Whether the Indian colonial state was more or less autonomous is not my major concern. The important point is that the state and its bureaucratic cadres were in a continuous struggle to effect their interests, which may or may not have coincided with those of any class and which may have had a changing coincidence with the interests of various classes over time.

The autonomy of the state means that its interests are neither mechanically given by class domination nor necessarily monolithic. The state is not proof against internal contradictions due to competition among its bureaus and officers; to incomplete consciousness of state interests by this staff; to their incorrect reading of how to accomplish those interests, often based on false cultural understanding; and to conflict between the individual officer's interests and the state's. Other contradictions in state activities may arise because state officers pursue different and ultimately contradictory ways of satisfying state interests as they perceive them.

Such a contradiction existed in the colonial exploitation of rural Punjab by both a development and a development-of-underdevelopment objective, as I indicated in chapters 3 and 4. A like contradiction arose between the colonial military's construction of a martial Singh identity and the civil administration's championing of Sikhs who were not Singhs.

KEEPERS OF THE FAITHFUL

The "glorification" of the Singhs in the British Indian army contradicted the other strategy the colonial authorities adopted to train the Singhs to obedience. The British attempted to turn Sikh temple functionaries into their toadies and even took over de facto management of the Golden Temple in Amritsar, the chief Sikh shrine. Their latter action only continued an involvement in the shrine's management begun by the previous ruler of the Punjab, Ranjit Singh.[66] The British were careful, however, to change that prince's and their own early "overt and formal" involvement to "a more informal and covert connection."[67] Nevertheless, they continued the "special arrangement" at the Golden Temple by which the colonial authorities appointed a Sikh manager and by which the chief British civil officer of Amritsar district handled the "secular administration" of the shrine.[68] The special arrangement endured even though it contradicted the laws of the colonial Government of India.[69]

No doubt their culturally given beliefs in the Singhs as a martial race led the British to a direct involvement in Sikh sacred institutions that they religiously avoided in Hindu and Muslim affairs. The stolidity and blind loyalty of those with martial instincts could turn to fury and wild abandon, if aroused by agitators, so the British believed. To keep the Singhs in soldierly line, it was necessary to control the religious leadership that could command their obedience and insure their docility. The management of the Golden Temple played the dual role of keeper of the faithful and servant of the Raj well. In the 1907 agrarian protest, when incendiary accusations spread across the Punjab that the British authorities had been poisoning wells, the Golden Temple manager reminded the population of the benefits British rule brought: ostensibly on behalf of the community of Sikhs, his proclamation denounced the agitation and the rumors and exhorted the people to "value this peaceful Government where tiger and goat drink water in the same *ghat* [pond]."[70] Shortly thereafter, the Golden Temple manager also approved the harsh suppression of returning Sikh migrants by the colonial authorities. Gen. R. E. H. Dyer, the army officer who perpetrated the 1919 Jallianwala Bagh massacre, must have deeply appreciated this alliance between Sikh church and colonial state when the Golden Temple functionaries honored

him and made him, in effect, an honorary Singh even though he smoked and shaved.[71]

So well did the British come to control these influential institutions and their officiants that the only shrines to protest colonial conditions and to hold anti-British positions before 1920 were outside the Punjab, in the North American settlements of the migrant Sikhs.[72] British officials in India entertained sending a delegation of leading Sikhs, including the Raja of Patiala, to bring these Canadian "apostates" back to a true sense of their religion,[73] because as far as the British were concerned, "the orthodoxy of a Sikh means loyalty to his sovereign."[74]

By this alliance with or (at worst) employment of temple managers and other shrine functionaries, the British willy-nilly subsidized a contradictory Sikh identity. These officiants often belonged to the Udasi sect and rejected an exclusively Singh definition of Sikhism. If they even allowed that the two communities might differ in basic religious beliefs, they believed that Hinduism and Sikhism were one in social usages,[75] and they lived out this perception by accepting Hindu notions of caste and by denying the social equality of Sikh lower castes required by the Singh identity. They also readily tolerated Hindu ritual practices and worship within the perimeters of their shrines. For the later urban Singh reformers, these were "accretions" from Hinduism, but for the temple functionaries they had always been part of Sikh belief. In 1908, when urban Singh reformers tried to gain government recognition of the Anand marriage ceremony as legitimate for Singhs, the Golden Temple functionaries opposed it. These authorities were troubled by the substitution of what they regarded as only a prayer for the highly Hinduized and Brahmanical ceremony that then constituted most Sikh marriage rites. Even at this late date, they argued that their view represented the majority opinion and that the supporters of the Anand reforms were the real mavericks.[76]

At one and the same time and in equal pursuit of their colonial interests, the British military and civil administration became proponents of a strong Singh identity and also advocates of powerful Sikhs who were not Singhs. Some of the Sikhs who were not Singhs outrightly rejected Singh identity; others, probably the majority, believed that both Singhs and non-Singhs were "true" Sikhs. Each strategy licensed different cultural meanings and authorized them for different populations. Each strategy encoded a distinctive "true Sikhism," constructed from selected indigenous beliefs and reformed within British cultural understandings, in separate social environments. At the close of the nineteenth century and in the early years of the twentieth, the contradictory strategies of the British grew less and less secure as an urban lower-middle class grew to consciousness in Punjab cities. Finally, British policy toward Singhs and Sikhism unwound like a badly tied turban.

CHAPTER 9

An Endangered Species

This chapter properly arranges the final pieces of the Punjab puzzle: the genesis of the urban reform movements and their growing anticolonial consciousness; the confrontation between British authorities and urban Singh reformers; the latters' enlistment of rural protesters in Singh identity; and a hitherto neglected piece, the participation of canal cultivators in the Third Sikh War. Behind these confrontations lay the emergence to consciousness of the Punjab's lower-middle class late in the nineteenth century. As a result of all these struggles, the unraveling of British colonial strategies came to a head in the 1920s.

The puzzle complete, it will be apparent why Singh, nor Arya, identity carried rural protest in the Third Sikh War. It will also be clear how two conflicting reformist religions—the Arya Samaj and the Singh Sabha—came to rise among the same lower-middle class in urban Punjab. The overall design remains the same that I set out theoretically in chapter 7 and used in chapter 8 to explain the colonial state: to show how the constitution of cultural meanings and social behavior—the very construction of society and culture in a particular time and place—goes on by confrontations and struggles between classes in the making, between individuals in the act of developing collective identity and choosing public actions.

This chapter puts the puzzle into final shape to explain the Punjab and the Singhs, but, as well, so that what it shows about the general design of culture becomes ready for discussion in the following chapter.

THE ARYA CLASS

Although the urban lower-middle class, as I have defined it earlier,[1] existed as an economic stratum within the Punjab's political economy by the 1870s, it had little consciousness. The Punjab's merchants and moneylenders, lawyers, teachers, and other professionals and civil servants shared certain objective economic situations, having all evolved within the colonial political economy; but they had developed no collective cultural meanings, no public formal institutions, no mass social actions by which to safeguard and promote their common interests. About this time, the reformist Hinduism of the Arya Samaj began to make converts among the lower-middle class of the urban Punjab. As a set of cultural meanings and a social organization, the Arya Samaj articulated the goals of this class, fit its social composition, and thus brought this economic class to partial consciousness. The founder of the Arya Samaj, Dayanand Saraswati,

> envisioned an open social system with education and not birth as the determinant of status. . . . Dayanand's world view appealed directly to the educated elite, drawn as it was heavily from the Vaishya [traditional merchant-moneylender] castes. The way to material success, to spiritual status and to social superiority was now one and the same—the path of education.[2]

Arya ritual acts and temples, missionary work, and educational foundations incorporated the lower-middle class population into congregations with common beliefs and behaviors for collective pursuit of their interests.[3] The establishment of Arya schools, the most important public collective action of the Arya Samaj, was fundamental to lower-middle class interests. Arya schools grew up across the Punjab to train children from the sponsoring lower-middle class in both Vedic and Western knowledge. Not only the schools' curriculum, but also their administration and recruitment of students, were outside the direct control of Christian missionaries and the British authorities, who previously had enjoyed a monopoly over Western education. Thus, no competing interest controlled the education needed by lower-middle class children.

My argument that the Arya Samaj as a set of religious beliefs and as a religious congregation coalesced lower-middle class interests and helped develop its consciousness and collective action may appear strange. To be sure, the consciousness generated by the Arya Samaj was not directly consciousness of class; neither did it enlist all of the urban lower-middle class. In numbers of adherents and cultural beliefs, then, it was hardly a perfect class consciousness. It did direct its adherents to incorporate

and to prosecute their collective class interests, however. The consciousness it brought the urban lower-middle class was therefore partial.

The Arya Samaj served as the maturing, partial consciousness of the lower-middle class because of the historical fit between economic class and communal religious oppositions in nineteenth-century Punjab. The traditional merchant castes who formed the main lower-middle class population were overwhelmingly Hindu, with a sprinkling of Sikhs. Their most powerful antagonist was the British colonial administration, which was Christian. Opposition to Christianity and to British colonialism could and did combine in the special lower-middle class consciousness fostered by the Arya reformist movement.

The reformist Hindu identity served as a proxy for class opposition not only with the British rulers but also with urban Muslims and Untouchables. The traditional artisan castes who supplied labor and services to urban Hindu merchants were predominantly Muslim. The class division is clear from the following census figures: in 1881 less than 1 percent of the Muslim population but 14.7 percent of the Hindu population belonged to traditional merchant castes. Artisan castes accounted for 27.6 percent of the Muslims and only 13.6 percent of the Hindus in the same year.[4] The figure for Hindus is inflated because urban Untouchables, many of whom were artisans, are included as Hindus. Although nominally referred to as Hindu, Untouchables were not actually treated as such by high caste Hindus.

The Punjab's urban lower-middle class was therefore tantamount to Hindu merchant castes, and a Hindu identity could effectively constitute its consciousness separate from other urban economic classes. Of those reported as Aryas in the 1901 census, 60 percent belonged to the three major Hindu/Sikh merchant castes, the Khatris, Aroras, and Baniyas.[5] Even the small proportion of these merchant castes who were Sikh favored and often strongly supported the Arya Samaj during its early years.

Arya religion also separated the urban lower-middle class from rural classes. As a reform movement within Hinduism, the Arya Samaj marked off its followers from the traditional Hinduism of rural landowners, peasant proprietors, and tenants. In 1901 Jats and Rajputs, the major cultivating castes of the Punjab, composed only 5 percent of those reported as Aryas; and in 1911 they made up only 14 percent.[6] The early successes the Arya Samaj achieved among Jat cultivators in the southeastern region soon dissipated, just as happened to its initial enlistment of urban Sikhs, which I presently describe. The Arya Samaj successfully converted only the low-caste village menials in the rural areas. But the more success the Aryas had with these low-caste conversions, the more they alienated the major cultivating castes, who often resented urban reformers meddling with their bound labor force.

Perhaps more important, the militant Hinduism of the Arya Samaj radically differentiated its followers from the Muslim rural population. Muslims formed 53 percent of the Punjab's population in 1881 (using my regions). This demarcation also reflected—and brought to consciousness and collective action—a major class opposition between Hindu merchant/moneylenders and Muslim cultivators. Throughout the Punjab, urban Hindus in high percentages were found in association with low overall percentages of Hindus but very high percentages of Muslims (see table 29). The Hindu urban population, most of whom were merchant/moneylenders belonging to the lower-middle class, was concentrated in areas where it preyed on a predominantly Muslim rural population.

The beliefs promulgated by the Arya Samaj separated its adherents from, indeed militantly opposed them to, Christian, Muslim, and traditional Hindu identities equally, all of which were congruent with economic class differences existing in late nineteenth-century Punjab. Not by chance, only Sikhs, many of whom were also members of the urban lower-middle class, escaped denouncement by the Arya Samaj until later in its development. Many Aryas played down the antipathy their spiritual leader, Dayanand, felt for Sikhism in order to attract them to the movement. This suspended criticism of Sikhism is an example of the way the developing reformist Hinduism adapted to the interests of the lower-middle class, at least in the early years.

The traditional merchant castes who formed the mainstay of the Arya Samaj were virtually coincident with the urban "educated classes," who arose due to British administration of the Punjab. In 1891 the average literacy rate of the Punjab's three major merchant castes was 22.14 percent, as against a provincial average for all castes of 3.27 percent. In the same year, these three castes made up 41.73 percent of all literates in the Punjab.[7]

The conjunction of trading-caste status, urban residence, literacy, Hindu or unreformed Sikh identity, and the existing pattern of class/communal oppositions lies behind the rising consciousness of the emergent lower-middle class in terms of a reformist Hinduism. The Arya Samaj provided the class with cultural meanings, social programs, ritual assemblies, and educational institutions to reproduce its niche within the colonialism "on the cheap" the British initially implemented in the Punjab.

This presentation may appear much like the cultural division-of-labor explanation for ethnic and religious conflicts that I criticized earlier: the notion that class and an ethnic or religious communal boundary run coterminously.[8] The difference is that I do not argue for a mechanical, or automatic, use of Arya beliefs and religious community to carry class conflicts. I have only proposed, instead, that given the particular historical circumstances of the Punjab at this time a reformist Hindu identity could

TABLE 29

PERCENTAGE OF MUSLIM POPULATION COMPARED TO THE PROPORTION OF HINDU POPULATION IN URBAN AREAS, PUNJAB DISTRICTS AND PRINCELY STATES, IN 1901

Place	Muslim population (percentage)	Proportion of Hindu population living in urban areas (percentage)
I. Punjab districts		
Delhi	.2424	.252
Gurgaon	.3257	.098
Karnal	.2729	.060
Hissar	.2583	.131
Rohtak	.3201	.109
Ambala	.2953	.113
Ludhiana	.3507	.101
Simla	.1750	.375
Jullundur	.4586	.146
Hoshiarpur	.3162	.057
Kangra	.0521	.017
Amritsar	.4639	.231
Gurdaspur	.4926	.073
Sialkot	.6614	.080
Lahore	.6179	.382
Gujranwala	.7028	.121
Ferozepore	.4676	.151
Rawalpindi	.8682	.457
Jhelum	.8872	.249
Gujrat	.8735	.157
Shahpur	.8454	.297

carry lower-middle class oppositions and interests toward greater consciousness. That it failed to do so beyond a certain point and after a certain time—that in the end it became an impediment to a mature class consciousness—indicates that it was no simple mechanical response, but a product of history and human action.

The early twentieth century witnessed British colonial policies that threatened the urban lower-middle class. In response, a more mature consciousness developed within the lower-middle class, although still contained in the communal religious identity. It took the form of political militancy and nationalism in order to protect the interests of this class threatened by British policies. But the limitations of a consciousness based on religious identity also became clear at this time.

TABLE 29 (*continued*)

Place	Muslim population (percentage)	Proportion of Hindu population living in urban areas (percentage)
Multan	.8017	.360
Jhang	.7784	.177
Montgomery	.7198	.066
Muzzarfargarh	.8621	.135
Mianwali	.8753	NA
D. I. Khan	.8651	.323
D. G. Khan	.8747	.351
Bannu	.8918	.260
Peshawar	.9290	.583
Hazara	.9518	.046
Kohat	.9174	.477
II. Princely states		
Patiala	.2235	.097
Nabha	.1980	.100
Kapurthala	.5669	.134
Jind	.1383	.098
Faridkote	.2880	.149

SOURCE: Government of India, *Census of India, 1901, Punjab,* vol. 1 (Tumba, Sweden, International Centre, microfiche), general population tables, p. xxxviii.

NOTE: Correlation Coefficient = .5352 (significant at .001 level).

ALIENATING LAND AND THE LOWER-MIDDLE CLASS

The Land Alienation Act of 1900 announced the colonial government's opposition to the vested interests of the urban lower-middle class. By first dividing the Punjab's population into putative agricultural and non-agricultural tribes (castes), the former mainly rural, and the latter mainly urban, and then restricting the freedom of the nonagriculturalists to purchase land or hold mortgages on it, the act clearly targeted the urban lower-middle class.[9] Because caste determined nonagricultural status, the Land Alienation Act attacked the entire lower-middle class, comprised as it was mainly of Hindu and Sikh traditional moneylender and merchant castes, not just those actually engaged in commerce and banking.

The Land Alienation Act was simply the most punishing of several government actions threatening the position of the urban lower-middle class as the twentieth century arrived. Another was government hiring

policy. From 1887 onward, British authorities in the Punjab secretly pursued a policy of bringing more Muslims into colonial administration at the expense of educated Hindus. In 1904 the government disclosed and reaffirmed its hiring practices.[10] Still another blow to the lower-middle class came from educational reform at the all-India level. Early in the twentieth century, the British reversed their earlier policy of "free enterprise in education" in favor of more government control.[11] Acts passed in 1904 set standards for the affiliation of colleges to universities, introduced greater official control of university senates, and required inspection of colleges. The British also shifted emphasis from higher to primary education because, B. B. Misra argues, they had come to fear the nascent nationalism of the educated Indian.[12] These policies threatened the educational institutions through which the lower-middle class had built up and maintained its educational advantages. Such challenges led the Punjab's urban lower-middle class to a more mature consciousness, which individuals expressed in a new political activism, early in the twentieth century.

The most mature lower-middle class consciousness, in terms of political confrontation and anticolonial beliefs, developed in 1907 during the short-lived disturbances in Punjab cities and in the canal colonies previously mentioned.[13] The 1907 disturbances were at once the highest and last collective expression of class consciousness by the Punjab's lower-middle class. After this time, the Arya Samaj ceased to carry this class's consciousness on to further maturity, and, instead, the class became riven by competing Hindu and Sikh reformist identities.

FROM SIKHS AS ARYAS TO SINGHS VS. ARYAS

The two strands—religious identity and class identity—that interwove in the Arya Samaj as it carried the nascent consciousness of the urban lower-middle class began to unravel late in the nineteenth century. One strand led to a maturing class identity that developed into the collective political action of 1907. The other strand, which was an equally logical, or probable, outcome of the cultural meanings attached to the Arya Samaj, led to a more mature religious identity—that is, it underwrote stronger support for a purely religious set of institutions and collective actions. Both the anticolonial protestants and the militant religious proselytizers engaged in rational collective behaviors given the peculiar vested interests of an economic class partially constituted by a religious community.

The limitations of a class consciousness based on religious identity became apparent. The religious identity that cultivated the early growth of class consciousness and brought the recognition of class interests to a certain maturity impeded, then subverted their further development.

As they separated, class consciousness and religious consciousness projected different goals for the Arya Samaj, and the different goals then led to internal conflict and schism within the movement. In the early 1880s, vegetarianism provided the first context for this conflict.[14] The nonvegetarians, who simply argued that vegetarianism was not mandatory for Aryas, were also the proponents of Western education and the political activists. Their opponents, the vegetarians, claimed that meat eating was not permitted to Aryas as part of a much more comprehensive spiritual message they proclaimed. These "militants" pressed for a much deeper commitment to missionary work, preaching, and proselytizing. They began to practice mass conversions of lower castes, whereas before only individuals were converted. They came to despise the "Anglo-Vedic" school system set up by the Arya Samaj because it produced clerks rather than saints, and they planned for educational institutions (the *gurukul*) that would preserve Arya religious values rather than inculcate Western secular skills.[15]

This division within the Arya Samaj waxed and waned during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, depending on whether the religious community was under attack from external enemies or not. Disunity and internal competition over goals were sufficiently continuous, however, to make the Arya Samaj a poor vehicle for the further development of class consciousness. Especially after the severe government repression of the 1907 disturbances, when the religiously militant Aryas disowned their anticolonialist brethren, it ceased to have a very active political role.[16]

The aggressive pursuit of religious goals by some Aryas had even more important consequences than limiting the maturation of class consciousness. It also facilitated the growth of economic and political competition within the urban lower-middle class on the basis of opposed communal religious identities. Religious identity, which, given the pattern of colonial Punjab, had served to demarcate social class, came to have a very different function: it became a way in which individuals organized themselves in order to improve their competitive position relative to others of the same economic class.

What it all came down to was the position of the urban Sikhs, most of whom also belonged to the lower-middle class and the traditional merchant/moneylender castes. In the 1870s and 1880s a reformist organization called the Singh Sabha sprang up among urban Sikhs in various

parts of the Punjab, a historical development I shortly chronicle in detail. Because of internal conflicts over leadership and religious identity, the Singh Sabha movement remained weak until the first decade of the twentieth century. And because religious militancy had not yet strongly developed among certain Aryas, reformist Sikhs were not necessarily hostile to the Arya Samaj at this early date. I refer to them as reformist "Sikhs" because they had not yet adopted an uncompromising Singh identity, sharply demarcated from Hindus, especially Aryas. Reformist Sikhs and Aryas cooperated in the reconversion of Indian Muslims and Christians until the mid-1890s.[17] As late as the early years of the twentieth century, British authorities worried that the Arya Samaj would take over what had become by that time a Singh reform movement, or they opined that there was no real difference between them.[18]

The maturing religious consciousness and goals of the militant Aryas soon ended this amity. Their literal rendering of Arya beliefs led them to see Sikhism in much the same pejorative manner that they viewed Christianity, Islam, and traditional Hinduism. These escalating Arya attacks made many Sikh reformers give up membership in the Samaj and moved them to develop a distinctive religious identity as far removed from Hinduism—and the Arya Samaj—as possible. They also indirectly led to a confrontation between proponents of contradictory Sikh identities, a conflict in which the British entered on one side but ended up on the other, thereby precipitating the Third Sikh War. Thus, in reaction and retaliation against the Aryas, Sikhs clarified, refined, and delimited their own religious identity and organizations, becoming at first the Singhs of the Singh Sabha and then later the Akalis of the Third Sikh War.

SIKHS INTO SINGHS

The cities of Amritsar and Lahore were the early centers of the Singh Sabha movement—in reality, movements, because there was severe conflict over leadership, identity, and the nature of religious reform between the two places. They shared two goals, however. One was a desire to differentiate Sikhs and Sikhism from the Aryas. Even though the Lahore and Amritsar associations promoted very different Sikh identities, they agreed in their opposition to the Arya attack, mainly on Nanak, the first guru, whom both Singhs and Sikhs who were not Singhs recognized as a major spiritual ancestor.[19] The other agreement concerned the need for more government perquisites—mainly employment in the civil service and military—and government support for Sikh/Singh education. The objective in this instance was to use a separate Singh/Sikh identity to attain a competitive advantage for the Sikh segment of the lower-middle

class. Especially after colonial legislation in the early twentieth century (the Morley-Minto reforms) recognized Muslims as a separate communal group for electoral purposes and after the Punjab government decided to employ fewer educated Hindus, it was in the best interests of lower-middle class Sikhs to argue that their distinctive non-Muslim and non-Hindu identity justified greater rewards and preferments.[20]

The growth of the Singh Sabha movement in the interest of competition within the lower-middle class comes close to a "split labor market" explanation of ethnic boundaries and religious communities. This theory argues that ethnic hostility and divisiveness are ways in which one segment of a class protects or enhances its position in competition with another segment of different ethnicity.[21] For example, working-class whites in the United States used racial prejudice to limit job competition from working-class blacks.[22]

Split labor-market theory, like the cultural division-of-labor explanation discussed earlier, is another variety of cultural materialism. Whereas the cultural division-of-labor approach emphasizes class *conflict* as crucial for ethnic/religious identity, the split labor-market notion accepts intraclass *competition* as causal. Clearly, both conflict (a cultural division of labor) and competition (a split labor market) can enter into instances of ethnic or religious division and confrontation. But as I argued earlier, such ethnic/religious competition or conflict is not a mechanical (teleological) or necessary (functionalist) outcome of divisions within a class or between classes. If it happens, it must be explained in terms of historical events and human agency. I have already argued that the Punjab's lower-middle class might not have split into competing Hindu and Singh groups if the militant Aryas had not alienated many Sikhs. Similarly, the following history of the Singh Sabha will make clear that separate Singh educational and communal institutions, which carried forward the competition between lower-middle class Singhs and Aryas, might not have succeeded without the support of British authorities and without the subsidy of gentry and princes, who were not of the lower-middle class. Historical circumstances and contingencies make better sense than an ahistorical and teleological split labor-market perspective.

Amritsar was the home of the first Singh Sabha, organized in 1873.[23] Its most influential founder, Baba Khem Singh Bedi, was a direct descendant of Guru Nanak. This association especially revered the religious practices and beliefs associated with this guru and therefore espoused an encompassing definition of Sikhism, with many links to Hindu practices.[24] Given their conformity with current images of Sikhism at the Golden Temple and most other shrines, the Amritsar reformers were, not surprisingly, "the rich, landed gentry and the orthodox."[25] They were of course the orthodox of the moment, the temple functionaries whom later

Singh reformers would label apostates. Princely and gentry subsidy indicated that the Amritsar Singh Sabha did not primarily represent the Sikh urban lower-middle class, but rather a class of landlords loyal to the Raj. Because of the eleemosynary lands they commanded, shrine functionaries were also of the gentry class in many cases. The colonial administration readily gave its patronage to their reform mission.[26] Indeed, Ruchi Ram Sahni, who lived through this period, argues that princely and gentry endowment would not have materialized without British acquiescence and even insistence.[27] In this instance, the British supported the temple functionaries and their gentry allies, and therefore indirectly subsidized a Sikh identity little separated, and little wishing to be separated, from Hindu usages in many respects.

Six years later, a rival Singh Sabha in Lahore began preaching a more egalitarian and separatist identity, based on strict adherence to Guru Gobind Singh's dictates and therefore unfalteringly Singh. Because one of its leaders, Bhai Dit Singh, a teacher in the Lahore government college, was an Untouchable, his desire to sever all connections with Hinduism —and its acceptance of caste—is understandable; and this pursuit of equality also made him resist the superiority claimed as a matter of descent by his Amritsar opponent. Other supporters of the Lahore Singh Sabha came from higher castes, but of less august pedigree than did the Amritsar aristocrats. They also generally were from the urban lower-middle class, not the landed gentry. Their own place as proper Sikhs depended on banishing the elitism of the Amritsar group and what the Lahore reformers saw as their Hinduized version of Sikh identity.[28] Yet, although its message was more radical and its support by the gentry was less, the Lahore Singh Sabha depended just as much as Amritsar's did on British official imprimatur. The lieutenant-governor of the Punjab became its sponsor and was especially helpful in its drive to establish the Khalsa college, which opened in 1892. Correspondingly, its political stance was equally loyalist. Its rules forbade membership to any enemy of the colonial government, and anti-British positions could not be expressed at its meetings.[29] In Lahore the British lent support to a strong Singh identity and a lower-middle class of urban reformers in direct contradiction to the generalized Sikh identity and gentry class they backed in Amritsar.

Other Singh Sabhas sprang up in the Punjab and elsewhere. Each had its own constitution of Sikh/Singh identity. Some, like Karachi (Sind), reserved seats on its governing board for Sikhs who were not Singhs. Others allowed female members.[30] In 1880, the Lahore and Amritsar associations cooperatively formed the Khalsa Diwan to coordinate the various Singh Sabhas. But their differences were apparent from the very first meeting, when a motion by the Amritsar group to change the name

of all Singh Sabhas to "Sikh Singh Sabhas" carried. This new name allowed a very broad definition of Sikh identity. Although the original name was restored the next year, rivalry continued between Lahore and Amritsar, and their merger fell through a few years later.[31] There ensued competition and conflict between the two premier associations for the loyalty of the subordinate sabhas—a confrontation not only over institutional affiliation but also over religious meanings and consciousness.[32] The battle between Lahore and Amritsar, between Sikh and Singh, between temple functionary and lower-middle class, served as the agency for turning the contradiction in British domination of the Sikhs and Sikhism into an anticolonial confrontation.

The Lahore association eventually won the battle, and the Amritsar group withdrew, although it did not fully capitulate. Amritsar's image of reform eventually turned into a conservative defense of the mahants and a more avowedly Hindu construction of Sikhism. By 1921, after the Third Sikh War had begun, Baba Khem Singh Bedi's son organized the remnants of the Amritsar reformers into a conference of putatively Sanatan (orthodox) Sikhs. This conference aimed to defend the Udasi mahants, a broad definition of Sikh identity, and the British colonial interests underlying both against Akali attacks.[33]

The British government in the Punjab was not idle while the dispute over Sikh identity took place in the major cities. The Arya Samaj was, after all, proclaiming a pan-Hindu set of beliefs, inclusive of the Sikhs, that the British feared was subversive. The British thought that the Singh Sabha movement might league with the Arya Samaj against colonial rule.[34] This worry undoubtedly lies behind official support for the Lahore reformers and their strong avowal of Singhs as separate from Hindus. The foundation of Khalsa college is the prime example of this involvement.

URBAN SINGHS END
THE IMPERIAL EMBRACE

The Chief Khalsa Diwan of Amritsar, formed in 1902 to succeed the Lahore and Amritsar associations, served as a representative body for all the Singh Sabhas that had by this time developed throughout the Punjab. As loyalist as the earlier Singh Sabhas had been, the Chief Khalsa Diwan nevertheless revitalized and redirected the reform movement.[35] Its major activity was not purging Sikhism of foreign beliefs and practices, but rather furthering education, managing schools, and, later on, sponsoring the annual Sikh Educational Conference. The Chief Khalsa Diwan preached an unequivocal Singh identity and came increasingly to labor for the religious equality of the low castes. Its controlling element, ac-

TABLE 30

OCCUPATIONS OF SINGH REFORMERS

	General committee, Chief Khalsa Diwan	Government list
Government service	14	20
Professional[a]	14	32
Teacher	12	20
Merchant[b]	11	8
Army and police	7	38
Landlord	6	10
Religious officiants	2	6
Other	2	6
Reform worker[c]	5	47
Not identified	24	37

SOURCE: Computed from data in David Petrie, *Developments in Sikh Politics (1900–1911), a Report* (Amritsar: Chief Khalsa Diwan, [1911]), appendices B and C.

[a] Includes doctors, pleaders, and engineers.

[b] Includes contractors also.

[c] Includes preachers, editors, and others employed by Singh reformist institutions.

cording to the 1911 British confidential report, consisted of members of the Arora merchant caste engaged in urban banking and thereby exemplary of the urban lower-middle class.[36] There was also continuing gentry membership and financial support, and official benevolence to it continued until 1908.[37] An occupational breakdown of the General Committee of the Chief Khalsa Diwan in 1911 shows that 78 percent of the members were either teachers, professionals, merchants, or government servants, whereas military men and rural magnates comprised 10 percent each (these figures exclude those not identified by occupation or only identified as working for Singh reformist institutions; see table 30 for a total breakdown).

In the early years of the twentieth century, more rural Jats joined the movement (see table 28) as urban reformers successfully played on the Singh image promulgated by the British Indian army in village Punjab. Increasing rural support also came from a lower-middle class that was forming in the canal colonies, as I make clear later in this chapter. These rural converts (along with the Lahore Singh Sabha incorporated into the Chief Khalsa Diwan) were to prove more radical that the leadership of the Chief Khalsa Diwan. An indication of this changing basis of support

comes from a list of Singh reformers contained in the confidential British report of 1911. Compared in terms of occupations with the Chief Khalsa Diwan's General Committee, many more of these Singhs had military backgrounds (28 percent) and fewer came from the urban "educated classes" (58 percent)—although they were still the majority—or the rural magnates (7 percent). (These figures exclude those not identified by occupation or only identified as working for Singh reformist institutions; see table 30).

The Arya attack on Sikhism attained a new fervor early in the twentieth century. It was the result of the increasing religious intensity of the militant Aryas, as expressed in the public ritual of reconversion. These Aryas began in 1900 to convert low-caste Sikhs en masse.[38] At one such event, held in Jullundur District in the monsoon season of 1909, Aryas invited Rahtias, Ramdasis, and Mazhabis, all low caste or Untouchable, to a meeting dealing with "measures to uplift them." Aggressive conversion by Aryas forced reformist Singhs to distinguish themselves even more sharply, especially by a stronger denial of the Hindu caste principle and by greater efforts at inclusion of low castes. Singh reformers held their own meeting in Jullundur during August 1909 at which one hundred low-caste men were formally accepted into Sikhism.[39]

The militant Aryas carried the battle much closer to the Singh lower-middle class. Official reports note attempts by Aryas to infiltrate the Khalsa college and other educational institutions and thus to "permeate" the whole of Sikhism with Arya doctrine.[40] These fears may have been exaggerated by British worries that the Arya Samaj was bent on revolution. Singh reformers also took these Arya intrigues seriously, however. They decided to establish a school in a Hoshiarpur District village, for example, to counter the influence of an Arya school already in existence there. At a meeting in the village, Singh leaders spoke against Arya beliefs and warned that Singhs who converted had to cut their hair. They told the painful story of forty-six youths in Jullundur District who became Aryas and cut their hair, which was then sold to Untouchables.[41] Aryas retaliated that converts would not have to cut their hair, and so the confrontation continued.[42]

As Singh reformers responded to Arya attacks by accentuating their distinctive religious identity and their removal from Hindu practices, such as caste, they necessarily came into ever more direct and heated confrontation with temple authorities and shrine functionaries. The reformers could no longer countenance how these keepers of the faith also conserved a set of religious understandings and practices that disadvantaged low castes, that tolerated Hindu practices, and that maintained strong links to Hinduism.

The first success of the Chief Khalsa Diwan was to limit the toleration

of Hindu practices at the Golden Temple. In 1905 all Hindu idols were removed from the shrine's precincts, even though for over a century both Hindus and Sikhs had customarily performed Hindu rituals within the temple compound.[43] Another victory came in 1909 when the Anand Marriage Act passed into law.[44] By prescribing a non-Brahmanical ceremony as legal for Singhs, the act broke a major link between Sikhism and Hinduism. But it also evoked the anger and formal resistance of temple authorities, as I earlier indicated.[45] British authorities backed the bill in keeping with their initial policy of strengthening Singh separatism to counteract Arya influence.

What the Chief Khalsa Diwan could not change as easily in the first decade of the twentieth century—but what mass conversions by the militant group of the Aryas pressured them to change just as much—was the equal admission of low castes to religious worship in the Sikh shrines. They also could not stop the use of temple funds to provide magnificent livelihoods for temple functionaries. Such funds could have subsidized educational institutions for lower-middle class children, in competition with Arya schools, and thereby lessened the chances that educational access might promote conversion. Both changes required a direct confrontation with the religious authority and secular proprietorship of shrine functionaries. These issues were sure to rouse the functionaries to an even stronger opposition than they had made to the Anand marriage bill. A confrontation with British officials was also likely. Because the British controlled the management of the Golden Temple, they would probably continue to accept many temple incumbents as the truly orthodox. British courts were also likely to defend the proprietary rights of these temple officiants.

What convinced the Singh reformers to set aside their fear of or loyalty to the Raj and to usurp the administration of temples? Pressure from the militant Aryas was constant after 1900, to be sure. But a major threat by British colonialism to the vested interests of urban lower-middle class Singhs seems to have played a precipitating role. Because of financial irregularities and purportedly antigovernment teaching, the British in 1908 reorganized the managing committee of Khalsa college so that government officials exercised effective control.[46] Perhaps the British took this action out of concern for the infiltration of the school by Aryas and fear of student radicalization. There had been an antigovernment demonstration in 1907 when the moderate nationalist leader G. K. Gokhale had been feted.[47] Or perhaps the Punjab authorities were carrying out the Indian government's general crackdown on lower-middle class educational institutions started in 1904.

The reorganization of the college attacked the vested interests of the Singh reformers as members of the lower-middle class and alienated them

from the government.[48] It also probably made them increasingly resent the misspent wealth of the shrines, which might have guaranteed the fiscal autonomy of their educational institutions. Along with other contemporary blows to lower-middle class interests, such as the Land Alienation Act and the tilt toward Muslims for government employment, the reorganization of Khalsa college confirmed that the secular involvement of the British was no more friendly to reform interests than was their indirect support of the shrine administrations.

To maintain educational autonomy, the Chief Khalsa Diwan formed the Sikh Educational Conference in 1908. Its annual meetings consisted of community exhortations, identity building, and collecting funds for schools.[49]

The college reorganization was the initial signal that the colonial authorities were in the process of choosing between the two Sikh identities and the two Sikh leaderships that they had earlier simultaneously cultivated. They abandoned the Singhs, whose orthodoxy they had befriended against the Arya attack, and allied with the temple authorities, whose part they continued to take until the final compromise with Singh leaders in 1925. The British position became increasingly contradictory. Through underlings who did not identify as reformist Singhs, the British hoped to defend their control of Sikh shrines against lower-middle class Singh reformers. At the same time, their military supported the reformers' image of the Singh in the rural recruiting areas and in the "class" companies and regiments of the Indian army.

Another radicalizing influence on Singh reformers was the prejudicial treatment of Sikh immigrants to Canada and the failure of the Government of India to remedy the situation. Perhaps they kept the plight of their Canadian brethren in mind because some of the funds for the annual Sikh Educational Conference came from Canada and the United States.[50] These feelings reached a boiling point in 1914 when the British massacred a number of the Sikhs they had taken into custody at Budge-Budge in Bengal upon their return from the ill-fated voyage of the *Komagata Maru*. The growing hostility focused on the manager of the Golden Temple, who, as a spokesman for British colonial interests, had condemned the Budge-Budge "rioters." The Lahore Singh Sabha (which continued to be the more radical group within the Chief Khalsa Diwan) in turn condemned the manager.[51] Hostility also focused on the pro-British attitudes of the Chief Khalsa Diwan, which was denounced for its silence on the Budge-Budge affair.[52]

The refusal of the Chief Khalsa Diwan to discuss such issues and others at the educational conferences alienated the younger and more radical Singh reformers.[53] They eventually broke away in December 1919 and formed the Central Sikh League, which became the left-wing of the SGPC

and the major support of the Akali Dal in the 1920s.[54] The urban lower-middle class was the predominant element in this new militant organization. At the Sikh League's inaugural meeting, for example, nine of twenty-two leaders were identified as having either M.A. or LL.B degrees,[55] and its leader for many years, Kharak Singh, came from a well-off family of contractors in Sialkot.

The Central Sikh League initiated its anticolonial position by attacking another government action against Singh lower-middle class interests. The Montagu-Chelmsford reforms of 1919 gave the Punjab a legislative council with a certain proportion of members elected by limited adult franchise. Representation was based in part on separate communal electorates, that is, Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs were each given a certain number of "reserved" seats. Their dissatisfaction with the number of seats they received in the council radicalized many Sikhs, especially the urban lower-middle class leadership of the Central Sikh League, against the colonial government and probably against the more conservative Singh reformers.[56]

Shortly before World War I, Singh reformers tested the authority of the shrine functionaries and the support they enjoyed from colonial officers. In building the new imperial capital at New Delhi, the British purchased lands belonging to the shrine of Rikabganj from the temple manager. Singh reformers challenged this functionary's right to alienate shrine property, but nothing more happened until 1918. In response to Singh agitation and the threat of direct action by Singh volunteers, the government agreed to hand back the property to a committee of Singhs who had taken over management of the shrine. But it failed to agree to the principle that temple functionaries should have no control over shrine incomes.[57]

In the early 1920s reformers began organizing jathas to take over shrines. Caught up even more by their own colonial contradiction, the British administration chose to further buttress the temple functionaries. After World War I, the Government of India and its cadres "on the spot" in the Punjab had grown increasingly worried about what the Singh reformers might do and about the extent to which they were influenced by the Indian National Congress. This apprehension was especially strong because of the increasingly antigovernment stand of the Punjab's urban lower-middle class, both Hindu and Sikh, in response to official land, school, and employment policies that attacked its interests and to the political and military repression, such as the Rowlatt Bills and the 1919 Jallianwala Bagh massacre, used to enforce obedience to government policies. The colonial authorities could not countenance a takeover of shrines by Singh reformers, representing one segment of this lower-middle class. One official warned in 1911 that if the reformers ever gained control

over the Golden Temple, they would "arrogate to themselves the leadership in religious affairs which they have already assumed in politics."[58] This fear led the British into an increasing defense of their temple toadies and an increasing opposition to the more radical reformers.

Similarly, the reformers, originally in the main loyal to the Raj, whose very avowal of Singh identity fit well with British beliefs about the "true" Sikh, were steadily drawn into direct confrontation with the colonial authorities. Government infringement of their lower-middle class interests in land, education, civil service, and civil liberties was direct and obvious. They had come, too, to recognize that their real opponents in temple reform were also the British, and after the Nankana tragedy in 1921 they could easily see how far the colonial authorities would go to condone the use of physical repression. The Central Sikh League called for jathas against temple functionaries and noncooperation with the government at one and the same time. The basis for this protest was a developing anticolonial consciousness, strongly influenced by the Indian National Congress.[59] Its roots were in the increasingly hostile struggle with the Aryas in the early twentieth century. By 1920 at the latest—with the creation of the SGPC and the Akali Dal—both the colonial government and the Singh reformers had become conscious of what their confrontation had always objectively involved: religion, identity, *and* power.

RURAL AREAS TURN ON THE RAJ

The initially urban crusade had broadcast its religious meanings and political intentions with increasing effectiveness since the turn of the twentieth century to the rural population of the central Punjab. At the same time, these rural cultivators endured continuously deteriorating economic conditions for which the government was largely responsible. The crusade gathered up central Punjab cultivators who had been primed on what Singh identity meant: militancy, loyalty to a cause, fearlessness, sense of distinctiveness and superiority to other communities, and responsiveness to leadership. The British military had developed these meanings as it subsidized the identity. But those who had served in the British Indian army were not the mainstays of the rural protest, although they were a large proportion, especially in the Malwa and Doaba regions (see table 22). There had been a great deal of discontent among troops demobilized from Sikh regiments after World War I, many of whom came from these regions.[60] They undoubtedly worried about the economic difficulties that awaited them in the rural areas, difficulties that led them into the Third Sikh War and, when that ended with little relief, into Anup

Singh's agitation in the late 1920s. Still, training in Singh identity during service in the Indian army cannot account for the enculturation of most rural protesters.

Neither were the rural people who responded to the identity put forward by urban reformers staunchly and unwaveringly Singh. If they had been, jathas would not have required baptism for membership and the traveling diwans would not have performed so many baptisms as they moved, like recruiting parties, throughout the Punjab. Instead, the set of cultural meanings associated with Singh identity captured the militancy of cultivators, their sense of frustration and oppression under British colonialism, and directed it to the reform of the shrines. Theirs was a commitment to a new identity, a new orthodoxy, except for the former soldiers. They knew about this identity, or selected aspects of it, before urban reformers began to broadcast their own version. But because of the range of Sikh identities and the ill-defined boundary between Hinduism and Sikhism, in the case of self-denominated Sikhs, they had often not believed in a Singh identity, or had not practiced it fully, or, in the case of self-denominated Hindus, had neither believed nor practiced it at all. Along with the new identity and orthodoxy came a reformist goal that equally expressed religious intent, anticolonialism, and agrarian protest.

Mohinder Singh suggests that British wartime propaganda extolling the warlike Lions of the Punjab reinforced this imagery among the rural population.[61] The mercenary employment of Singh soldiers and therefore the heightened colonial employment of Singh martial imagery during World War I undoubtedly raised the salience of these cultural meanings for rural cultivators, perhaps even to new heights. It may even have constituted a necessary "anticipatory socialization." But World War I propaganda neither created the cultural meanings nor perpetrated them on the rural population. The meanings had been established institutionally by British colonialism for some time. The British military selectively recruited the cultural meanings defining Singh identity from the past, then validated, spread, and, most important, constituted them in the very organization of their colonial army. These cultural meanings, when British civil administrators abandoned them, became the symbolic property of urban reformers, who reenlisted them against the Raj by actively inducting the rural population into new versions of them.

The meaning of Singh identity that the British had revalidated and realized was now reversed. The new recruiting parties circulating throughout the Punjab inducted opponents, not defenders of the Raj, but they extracted from enlistees an equivalent, albeit paramilitary, commitment and discipline and on the same basis: that they had been or were now to become the martial species of Singhs. The loyalty, dedication,

martyrdom, and sense of election that this baptism authorized now served in opposition to the colonial regime, not in its service. Because the British military so thoroughly syncretized its own order with Singh identity, rural militancy adopted British military conventions—the order of march, the discipline, the leadership, the organization of camps and pickets, and the other aspects noted earlier—as defining its practice. The cultural meanings led to an identity and collective practice that subsumed, but also directed toward new social action, the anti-British, anti-Christian perspective of the Arya Samaj, the revolutionary design of the Ghadarites, the reformist aims of the Chief Khalsa Diwan, and the self-perceived distress of the petty commodity producers in the central Punjab as their labor migration, military service, and rural economy faltered.

A RURAL LOWER-MIDDLE CLASS

This urban crusade proselytized another rural population, representing a part of the puzzle about which little has been said up to now. The Third Sikh War gained considerable support among cultivators in the canal colonies (see table 22), even though they were not experiencing the same economic disruption that central Punjab cultivators suffered. If the central Punjab's well irrigated agriculture became petty commodity production under British colonialism, how should the cultivation in the canal colonies be characterized? And what led the canal colonists, whose cultivation had prospered and who did not depend on military service or foreign employment, to join up for the Third Sikh War?

The canal cultivators might seem to merit characterization as petty commodity producers, similar to the well irrigating cultivator of the central Punjab, or even as feudal-like landlords. Some colonists depended on family labor to work their proprietary holdings except for some seasonal employment of wage labor, the same basic regimen as the central Punjab cultivator followed. Others sharecropped their lands using non-occupancy tenants, like the landlords of the southwest. These similarities are mainly superficial, however. In their market relations and production orientation, the canal colonists who continued to use mainly family labor were decidedly different from central Punjab cultivators. The canal cultivators were settled on lands made dependably productive by colonial investment, were relatively untroubled by debt, were therefore self-committed rather than debt-bonded to market and export production, had grown well-off through wartime high prices and profits, and were concerned with technical improvements to their agriculture. They also owned and worked large consolidated plots. When they employed tenants on their lands, canal colonists intervened in the actual production process

much more directly than feudal-like landlords—through supplying tenants with credit, seed, and other necessities for their agriculture and often through forestalling or, in other ways, controlling the marketing of the tenant's share. In the early twentieth century, then, canal cultivators formed an evolving rural lower-middle class, which invested money and management, controlled labor, and determined the production process in order to make a profit. Their nascent capitalist enterprise meant that they produced and wished to produce a surplus for the market rather than being debt-bonded to it.

My characterization of the canal cultivators follows the argument of Jairus Banerji and Hamza Alavi that capitalist agriculture in India began during the colonial period, well before the Green Revolution, even though what appeared to be feudal-like landlord-tenant relations or peasant proprietorship continued as the norm.[62] This superficial appearance of continuity with precapitalist agrarian relations belied the political-economic reality, which was that a formal subsumption of labor under capital was beginning. That is, the precapitalist relations between landlords and tenants were being transformed into capitalist relations between them, even though tenants were not turned fully into agricultural wage-laborers. Similarly, a capitalist class of rich farmers was beginning to emerge as a result of class differentiation among petty commodity producers, although the poorer cultivators might not have become landless laborers yet. The "typical" capitalist labor process involving capitalists and wageworkers only exists in the fully crystallized form of capitalism, when a real subsumption of labor by capital succeeds the formal subsumption.

The markers of increasing formal subsumption of agrarian labor by capital are high indebtedness, forced sales, forced cropping patterns, and other factors indicating increasing intrusion of the landlord/moneylender/rich farmer into a tenant's or poor peasant's production process.

This process had begun in the central Punjab but had been held back by the Land Alienation Act, the multiple sources of peasant income, and the extreme labor requirements of well irrigation. The formal subsumption of labor by capital reached its highest development in the canal colonies, where those who were landlords dominated tenants much as capitalist employers would or where those who directly cultivated their own plots actually employed seasonal wage labor in a real subsumption of labor by capital. I use the term *rural lower-middle class* for these nascent capitalist landowners and landlords, following Ashok Mitra, who applies it to similar surplus-producing farmers in India today.[63]

The canal cultivators were the rural counterparts of the urban lower-middle class that originated the Arya and Singh movements. Like their urban peers, canal cultivators increasingly in the early twentieth century

TABLE 31

JATS IN LYALLPUR DISTRICT, 1911–31

	Hindus		Sikhs		Total number
	number	percent	number	percent	
1901	19,139	8.31	60,518	26.28	230,259
1911	5,104	2.18	77,554	33.20	233,567
1921	5,369	2.09	89,642	34.98	256,248
1931	2,508	0.86	98,852	33.81	292,356

SOURCE: Government of India, *Census of India, 1901, 1911, 1921, Punjab*, vol. 2 (Tumba, Sweden, International Documentation Centre [1964], microfiche), table 13; *Census of India, 1931, Punjab*, vol. 2 (Tumba, Sweden, International Documentation Centre [1964], microfiche), table 17.

came to recognize and resist official interference with their interests, as I detailed earlier. Singh urban reformers in the 1920s much more effectively built up support among this rural lower-middle class population than the Aryas had in 1907.[64] The census returns from the major canal district, Lyallpur, show the same reduction in the percentage of Hindu as against Sikh Jats that typified the central Punjab (see table 31; 1901 was the first enumeration of this district).

Two rural populations with quite different objective interests, yet in active but unperceived competition—the canal colonists and the central Punjab petty commodity producers—adopted the same identity and entered into the same collective behavior. They did so given a particular field of class oppositions, cultural meanings, and geographical segregation that had come to characterize the Punjab in the first years of the twentieth century. The fact that in 1907 urban Arya reformers and canal colonists shared many objective interests was not enough to allow the Arya Samaj to constitute a major and ongoing rural protest. The Aryas failed and the Singhs prevailed with still another rural population (other than the central Punjab cultivators), namely, the canal colonists, a rural population, furthermore, who occupied the same lower-middle class economic position as the urban reformers did and whose interests had been earlier and more radically articulated by the Hindu movement. The difference was that the image of the Singh had been prefigured in the canal region, just as it had been in the central Punjab, by the British military.

The last piece of the Punjab puzzle, the failure of the Arya Samaj in the rural areas, now falls into place. Although the urban Hindu reform movement had even earlier than the Singhs come to oppose the British and although there were many Hindus in the most economically distressed rural areas, Arya beliefs and identity did not inform rural protest.

These urban Hindu meanings had never been supported, selectively maintained, trumpeted, and realized in rural areas by the colonial power itself. Had the Aryas captured rural protest, they would have had to awaken some latent Hindu consciousness of dissent and resistance. That they did not rebukes any notion of moral economy.

The course followed by the Singhs led to a heightened religious identity rather than an overt class consciousness, just as it did for the Aryas. But in the case of the reformist Singhs, there was a better fit between religious reform and class protest than the Aryas experienced. This conjunction also depended on British colonial involvement in Sikhism and Singh identity. British domination not only actively opposed the class interests of the urban lower-middle class and the rural petty commodity producers of the central Punjab but also covertly controlled the religious institutions, functionaries, and beliefs of Sikhism. As urban reformist Singhs in rational pursuit of their religious interests directed themselves to shrine reform, they also attacked the enemies of the lower-middle class, for the goal was the same in both cases: the British colonial authorities. As this confrontation worsened, urban reformers called up rural supporters by intermixing religious and nationalist appeals.

Just as British colonialism, especially the British military, was the positive factor behind the acceptability of Singh identity to rural protesters, so too British colonialism, given its support for contradictory Sikh identities and institutions, set in motion the confrontation over cultural meanings and religious organizations between temple managers and Singh reformers, which led the reformers to look for converts in the rural areas. What proved positive for the Singhs acted negatively on the Aryas as they tried to spread their doctrine among cultivators. The Indian army recruited no Hindu regiments or companies as such; as far as the military was concerned, Hindus did not form a single "class" for purposes of recruitment. So there was no incorporation of an identity, no constitution of an orthodoxy in rural recruitment, and therefore nothing equivalent to the martial Singh symbolism for Aryas to develop into anticolonial collective action. More than this, the regiments the British filled with rural Hindus from the Punjab, the Jat and Rajput regiments, depended on caste identity. They separated rural Hindu cultivators, Jats and Rajputs, mainstays of the military, from the Hindu merchant castes composing the urban lower-middle class, mainstays of the Arya Samaj.

Besides lacking the original inadvertent colonial subsidy and then the later colonial contradiction and opposition, under which the Singhs both suffered and succeeded, the Aryas had no institutions as handy as Sikh shrines at which to direct their opposition. They claimed no historical justification for assuming the management of traditional Hindu temples as did the Singhs for "their" temples. Their only political target was the

British colonial state, and many rural cultivators were sufficiently loyal to or afraid of the government to be unwilling to join a direct uprising. The Ghadar revolutionaries also lacked such a subtle target of protest, which allowed for protest not directed at the state, but nevertheless involved the colonial administration deeply. The Ghadarites fell back on assassination and sabotage, which the state suppressed with ease. Sikh shrines combined, just as the reformist Singh identity did, anticolonial political protest and religious reform in one handy location. Lower-middle class urban reformers, lower-middle class canal colonists, and petty-commodity-producing central Punjab cultivators all rightly believed that striking out for temple reform was striking a blow for their respective interests.

In the end, this combination of political protest and religious reform, this constituency composed of two economic classes, proved the Singhs' downfall. Just as Arya religious identity carried lower-middle class consciousness so far and then impeded its further development, so too, Singh identity and shrine reform eventually backfired on the interests of the central Punjab cultivators. Given the changes in the colonial political economy, these cultivators were a dying breed. Only a major revolution in the nature of rural production and labor, actually a reversion to the conditions before the canal colonies had been built, would have saved them.[65] Such a revolution or reversion was not in the interests of the urban lower-middle class and even less in keeping with those of the canal colonists. Therefore, once the urban lower-middle class reformers and their allies in the canal colonies had gained British compromise on their main goals, they were content to let the anticolonial rhetoric of an independent Singh Punjab, which had fired up the central Punjab cultivators, die down. In any case, with the acceptance of gurudwara reform by the colonial government, the unity of interests between nationalists and religious reformers began to break down; and by 1926 the conservative SGPC was under attack from the militant Akali Dal and disaffected jathas in the Manjha region. Class differences appear to underlie this factional struggle. Urban lower-middle class reformers, mainly of Khatri and Arora castes, composed the SGPC group, whereas Jat cultivators from the Manjha, Doaba, and other rural areas made up the dissidents.[66]

The resolution of this strife among the leadership, which went in favor of the militants, did not regenerate an active and collective anticolonialism, however. The concessions from the colonial authorities in 1925 were those valued by the lower-middle class leadership: recognition of Singh rights over shrines also claimed by other Sikhs and Hindus; control over the income of Sikh shrines; dismissal or deposition of the previous temple functionaries; and official recognition of an all-Singh committee as a communal lobby, free to press for government placements and pre-

ferments independent of Muslims and Hindus. The lower-middle class was then content to domesticate its former revolutionary views within a permanent quasi-political association, the Akali Dal, and much of its subsequent history came down to internal tussles over individual and factional precedence and rewards. Some who maintained a nationalist fervor worked through the Indian National Congress directly; others, more radical still, joined Marxist revolutionary parties that began to form in the 1930s.[67] For many central Punjab cultivators, however, the only avenues left were intermittent, unorganized, and unsustainable protests like Anup Singh's ex-soldiers, now petitioning government for their promised land, rather than any longer taking it forcibly from mahants.

The pieces of the Punjab puzzle thus consist of cultural meanings and material conditions as they attached to evolving classes and the changing, contradictory objectives of the colonial power in early twentieth-century Punjab: the British and their contradictory, culturally given strategies toward the Sikhs; the urban lower-middle class and its growing consciousness through Singh and Arya reformers; the petty-commodity-producing cultivators of the central Punjab, victims of another colonial contradiction, whose awareness and protest against the tyranny of the world market was carried by a Singh identity and a religious struggle against the colonial government; and finally, the privileged canal cultivators, who, like the urban lower-middle class, found British restraints on their proprietary freedom and entrepreneurship irksome. People, perceiving and therefore acting in terms of their class interests to a greater or lesser extent, made history, but not exactly as they wanted. Some classes followed practices that prevented consciousness from further maturing, and the interests of any one class never came to dictate the entire social system. The two contradictory strategies the British pursued to tame the Sikhs became a major dilemma, and only after great effort did they finally stifle the Third Sikh War —and at the cost of a compromise with urban and rural lower-middle class Singhs that gave them effective control over the shrines and that recognized them as a puissant influence group. The lower-middle class did not profit fully, however. The Third Sikh War in the rural areas exceeded its expectations and took a revolutionary turn (as with the Babbar Akalis) that challenged its control. Lower-middle class leaders, at least the conservative ones, eventually came to disown the radical rural activists and welcomed compromise with the British.[68] Those who gained the least, who found neither redress of their economic plight nor even a major voice in the management of shrines and their incomes, were the Singh converts among the central Punjab smallholders. Perhaps they made do by emphasizing the martyrdom that was one element in their new orthodoxy.

CHAPTER 10

Organismic Conceptions of Culture

The Sikhs and the Aryas or the British and the Singhs compose only one part of the puzzle that this volume tries to put together. The larger puzzle is the nature of culture: where do cultural meanings and social actions come from, what makes them change, and how do they change?

Using the concept of culture and answering questions about its genesis and development have constituted the self-defined skills of a peculiar academic species, the American anthropologist. The study of culture gave American anthropologists a unique subject matter, shared with no other academic specialists. The concept of culture therefore helped define a professional niche for anthropology, first of all in museums and thereafter in universities. It also gave American anthropologists a professional credential, a "something" they did that amateurs did not do. This credential was fieldwork, during which they "mucked in with the natives"[1]—at first, for collecting culture traits to display in museums and, later, for observing cultural configurations to put before university students and the general public through writing and lecture. The culture concept also provided an effective rebuttal to a competing orientation within anthropology, the biological determinism championed by late nineteenth-century monogenists.

Perhaps because culture was such an important defining intellectual and professional trait of American anthropologists, it was often used in the same deterministic and tautological way that monogenists used biology. That is, in answer to why humans differed so greatly in social

practices and attainments, it often became enough to reply that differences in culture caused them. Franz Boas in anthropology's early days, for example, showed that what racial determinists took to be instances of primitive language, the fact that a "native" pronounced the same word in different ways, depended in actuality on the European's inability to properly hear a sound foreign to his language. He also argued against supposed primitive spans of attention by suggesting that Europeans would find no wont of attention were they to inquire about things the indigenous people found interesting.[2] As a reply to racial determinism, this rejoinder was sufficient, because it established social and learned behavior as the basis of the difference. But it was not adequate for analyzing where this culture or any culture came from and what made it change or not change. In some ways, the history of American anthropology might be written as the story of attempts to fortify and rationalize the culture concept, which grew up for its professional and intellectual utility at a certain time, but thereafter seemed to become much less clear and much less clearly useful.

This chapter very briefly and highly selectively chronicles the history of the culture concept and therein discusses at the most general level the two issues that the Punjab puzzle presented in specific: what is the proper explanation for culture and how should it be conceived?

CULTURAL MATERIALISM, CULTUROLOGY, AND ORGANISMIC CONCEPTIONS OF CULTURE

Anthropology today appears intellectually threatened to the same degree that anthropologists have become an endangered species of academic. The professional danger has to do with the decline in jobs, university programs, research support, and other erosions of the professional status of anthropologists. The intellectual threat to anthropology comes from within the discipline: two disputing views of culture, which share too much and argue about too little.

Cultural materialism explains systems of belief and codes of meaning as responses to ecological, technological, and demographic forces. Belief systems functionally and teleologically respond to the needs of these impersonal forces, and culture is only their public expression. Culturology places the cultural materialist explanation on its head: cultural meanings and codes define reality and constitute the material world, which humans can only understand and which only works on humans through culturally given understandings and perceptions. Culturology is equally teleological and functionalist; only in its case, the demands or impersonal

forces energizing the social system come from the cultural code, the set of cultural meanings, not from technology or ecology.

Earlier chapters argued that anthropology must go beyond what has increasingly become a puerile debate between cultural materialists and culturologists. Material forces and cultural meanings inextricably intermix to constitute any social situation. The Punjab puzzle provided several instances of this mixture: as when the British, in following what they thought was a totally instrumental goal of creating the most effective fighting force, built an Indian army on their cultural belief in inherited martial skills; or when, given the peculiar conjunction of economic class and status group in the Punjab, a reformist religion carried forward class consciousness, but then later the cultural meanings informing the religion came to impede consciousness's further development; or when a relatively conservative and loyalist Singh reformist movement captured radical rural protest because the identity it promulgated had been previously constituted and subsidized by British colonialism, whereas the more revolutionary and anticolonial program of the Aryas had not.

These three cases thus reflect and qualify the interrelations between material forces and cultural meanings. Cultural meanings can determine or constitute a response to perceived material forces, as with the British and their inherently martial army, but the response may not be adaptive to those forces. Cultural meanings can arise in response to material forces, as Aryanism arose out of the urban lower-middle class; but there is no teleological necessity that they do so, and they may ultimately prove disfunctional with the material forces generating them. And the calculated constitution of certain cultural meanings by a dominant class or government, as when the British military promulgated Singh identity, may prepare the ground for those same cultural meanings, but not others, being turned against their perpetrators. Of necessity, then, there must be some mixture of culturology's sensitivity to the cultural constitution of social reality and cultural materialism's recognition of the unavoidable contest between humans and nature "out there."

Would the explanation of culture be substantially improved by blending material forces into cultural systems, and vice versa? Many cultural materialists and culturologists would undoubtedly readily agree to such a mixture. My presentation of the Punjab puzzle was designed to do just that, as the instances given in the previous paragraph indicate. This blending is an important corrective, perhaps, but is not enough in itself. It does not radically challenge, in fact it conserves, a conception of culture on which cultural materialists and culturologists agree; and their agreement on this major issue makes their differences, no matter how much they have been polemicized, appear minor. In addition to blending ma-

terial forces with cultural meanings, I have also introduced into this book a conception of culture that does not agree with cultural materialism and culturology.

Cultural materialists and culturologists conceive culture as a structure, a system, that constrains and constitutes individuals and that persists in doing so over time. The imagery may differ, but the conception is constant: each generation is born into its culture, each generation builds on the shoulders of the previous ones, or each generation bears up under the weight of cultural tradition. Culture constitutes a structure into which each child is enculturated and within which every adult finds a proper status and lives out an appropriate role in the social world. For the cultural materialist this structure satisfies material forces in order to insure its continued survival; for the culturologist, this structure has internal designs and desires that individuals meet to keep it going; but both admit that it exists and dominates, that it lives and functions with an eye (or nose?) for its own preservation. Even when culture changes, as cultural materialists conceive it, what alters is a structure devoid of humans and of historical occurrences. Pigs stop being eaten; cows become sacred; humans become tasty sources of protein.[3] The imperatives behind these changes are the structure's, not the peoples': Aztec society needed more protein; pigs ruined the Near East's ecology; cows maximized Hindu society's exploitation of resources. Similarly, many culturologists only admit of change most stintingly, so strong and resilient, so self-preserving is their structure of culture.[4] When culture does change, humans are simply coerced or constituted by the new one, enculturate their children into it, and add the weight of this change to the burden of subsequent generations.

Culture for both cultural materialist and culturologist is a fully constructed house in which people must live out their time on earth. They may change the drapes and furnishings and paint it in new colors, and their taste may run from antimacassars to madras bedsheets. But the same fully constituted and rigid frame domesticates their beliefs and actions and houses their interactions with others. Even the superficial changes in dress, decor, and design may only be givens of changing cultural fashions, may only be patterned changes dictated by the cultural structure. Or, when radical change does occur, the frame is reconstructed; and the people, still passive occupants, must redecorate accordingly. Culture again provides the firm foundation and the overarching roof; and it shapes, or locks up, humans and history within its configuration.

The problem with this organismic conception of culture (as I have previously labeled it), and therefore the problem with both cultural materialism and culturology, is that processes of cultural and social changes are difficult to formulate and explain. How do new cultural meanings

arise? How do new material forces come about? How do impersonal forces—whether material or cultural—translate into human consciousness and action? These questions are moot in cultural materialism and culturology because both agree in discounting human agency and historical event in the construction and reconstruction of cultural meaning and social action.

Their agreement betrays a common historical pedigree, a common line of intellectual development in anthropology with particular reference to an organismic concept of culture. In turning to this history, I intend to show the genesis of the problems from which they suffer because of their conception of culture and the validity of the criticisms I have made of them above. Following the historical review, the presentation of an alternative conception of culture constitutes the conclusion of this book.

CULTURE AS A SANDPILE OR A SPIDER'S WEB

"The appropriate image, if one must have images of cultural organization," says Clifford Geertz, "is neither the spider web nor the pile of sand."[5] His reference for the image of culture as a sandpile would appear to be the historical particularism associated with Franz Boas and his early students, like Robert Lowie and Alfred Kroeber.[6]

Franz Boas, more than any other scholar, professionalized American anthropology and set its intellectual stance in the early years of the twentieth century. Until he fully prevailed in the early 1920s, Boas waged a constant battle with cultural evolutionists for control over the nascent field of anthropology.[7] Culture for the evolutionists was a variable; some societies, the more evolved, were more "cultured" than others. The most evolved societies had civilization, that is, culture in the highest degree of development.[8] Boas regarded cultural evolution as lacking in scientific rigor and validity, and he promoted the alternative concept of universal culture(s). Each society had its characteristic culture, which was a composite of its beliefs, folklore, material culture, kinship and family practices, and so forth. The distinctiveness of each culture was a historical concatenation of its internal development plus the accretion of practices and beliefs incorporated into it as a result of diffusion from other cultures. A culture could be likened to a sandpile because it consisted of a debris of cultural traits piled up by chance over time.

Because each culture was a historical composite, Boas believed that there was no necessary systemic, or functional, integration of its parts.[9] A culture might have a very simple technology with a very complex kinship pattern (as among the indigenous Australians) or a very complex

technology with a very simple kinship system (as in the United States). What "integrated" a society was the force of its customs, that is, the power a culture had to define reality for individuals and the nonrational loyalty to its "genius" it therefore extracted from them.[10] Again like a sandpile, culture was held in place by its own accumulated weight of tradition.

This conception of culture as a historical residue and as a heavy load of nonfunctional tradition pressing down on individuals continued strong, perhaps took on greater weight, in Boas's first generation of students. Alfred Kroeber argued that culture was superorganic, that it stood beyond the individual, that it obeyed its own laws. He showed that women's "fancy" dress fashions in Europe and America followed a cyclical pattern of style changes along several dimensions, each of which reached apogee approximately every century without regard for major social upheavals such as revolutions. Robert Lowie's explanation for the inferior status accorded women in most societies was another palpable example of the sandpile conception of culture. Lowie rejected what he termed the "economic interpretation," and contended that women's inferiority was not a functional consequence of their economic inequality in societies; rather, it was an accident.[11] Sexual inferiority, Lowie argued, may have developed in one culture at a certain time and then may have spread and piled up in cultures across the world: it "could evolve *once*, was disseminated as a unit, and has persisted from sheer conservatism." Lowie's general observation was that "the forces of suggestibility and mental inertia are shown to be so powerful by anthropological evidence that the propagation and preservation of an accidental complex is entirely possible." Lowie concluded that the human "aversion from or inability for creative effort" was "correlated with the persistence of cultural features once established."[12]

Even though it recognized history in the form of cultural diffusion, the early Boasian conception of culture as a sandpile did not deal effectively with cultural change. It could document changes in cultural inventory, that is, historical alterations in the complex of cultural traits, but it had no way to explain changes in the weight of custom, the cultural tradition itself. If man was uninventive, if cultural traits were unadaptive, if tradition was emotionally comforting and allegiance inspiring, then how did change, other than inventory changes, enter? Not by chance, the early Boasians concentrated on situations of cultural change involving massive inventory replacement and substitution, as in colonization of the American Indian by the United States. They approached even these cases with a trait-listing, or inventory-taking, orientation that saw change as a unilinear process of acculturation, meaning the acquisition of one culture's traits by another.

The concept of culture as a spider's web developed among the second generation of Boas's students, such as Ruth Benedict and Margaret Mead. American anthropologists were becoming more interested in the relationship between individuals and their cultures and in the way in which individuals enculturated to their societal traditions. The spider's web concept of culture provided an image of what individuals adapted to or adopted when they were enculturated. It presumed that each culture constituted a major configuration, which had a systemic character, overall structure, or pattern. Rather than an analogy such as British social anthropologists used, which likened a society to a biological organism, its constituent parts mutually dependent and necessary for the body's preservation, these American cultural anthropologists used a different biological imagery. A culture was like a spider's web because all its strands were interlinked by the overall scheme or plan of the web. The Americans did not conceive of a functional integration of culture, as the British did for society; instead, they assumed an ideational integration based on a cultural code. Thus, Benedict wrote of a culture's pattern in terms of psychological configurations like Appolonian or Dionysian and suggested that each human population chose its particular configuration from the great arc of human possibilities.[13] Even Margaret Mead's research on individual deviance in primitive societies presumed that there was a single and homogeneous cultural configuration to which some individuals could not easily adapt.

The problem with spiders' webs is that if they are well made, it is extremely hard to escape from them. If cultures had patterns in much the same degree, how could change, short of total destruction, ever enter? And what constructed the web and determined its overall pattern in the first place? Even the increasing interest of American anthropologists in individual enculturation seems ill-served by the conception of culture as a spider's web. The individual then became simply a repository for the cultural pattern, most times accepting of it and therefore judged "normal," but some times temperamentally unsuited to it and therefore labeled "deviant." In neither case did individuals reconstruct the web or change its pattern by their actions in society.

Even when Margaret Mead described rapid cultural change among the Manus and recognized that individual actions and historical events had helped make it successful, the concept of an all-enveloping culture was prominent in her account. Rapid culture change succeeded among the Manus, according to Mead, because the indigenous culture made the population receptive to Western culture; because the indigenous culture had grown shaky under European administration, economy, and religion; because the old culture was completely replaced by the new; and because the cargo cult that led the Manus to change was culturally flexible and

open, whereas other cultural systems are closed.[14] Mead betrayed her assumption that individuals are mainly passive receivers of their culture and are lost without the support of an enveloping cultural pattern in an analogy she drew between culture and language:

> If we realize that each human culture, like each language, is a whole, capable of accommodating within it the wide varieties of human temperament, and that learning another culture is like learning a second language, . . . then we can see that if individuals or groups of people have to change . . . then it is most important that they should change from one whole pattern to another.[15]

Although the history done by the first generation of Boasians mainly consisted of mapping trait diffusion rather than chronicling historical events, the second generation did even worse by it, as the example of Mead on Manus indicates. History, it appeared, never interrupted cultural patterns unless they were already riven by internal discords or cracking under pressure from another cultural pattern. Cultures retained control over human destinies: threatened with loss of his old culture, the individual should hurry to adopt a new one, lest he end up tongue-tied and uncommunicative. That historical event and human action might control and produce new cultural systems, not just half-way or patched mixtures of the old and new or the primitive and modern, was not allowed.

From the classic Boasian orientation or paradigm, by which I mean the first fully professionalized orientation in American anthropology, post-World War II anthropologists inherited an organismic conception of culture that failed to explain the origins and development of cultures and how cultural meanings and social actions originate and change. But unlike the "real" cultures studied by the Boasians, the academic culture of anthropologists began to change—as scholars chose to consider and work within new conceptions of culture.

THE OCTOPUS OF CULTURE

In 1966, Clifford Geertz proposed that culture was like an octopus,

> whose tentacles are in large part separately integrated, neurally quite poorly connected with one another and with what in the octopus passes for a brain, and yet who nonetheless manages both to get around and to preserve himself, for awhile anyway, as a viable if somewhat ungainly entity.[16]

The octopus conception of culture retained the idea that culture constitutes the social world fully and systematically; an octopus is an organism that is integral and integrated. But it allowed some aspects, or

parts, of the cultural system to be poorly attached, maximally autonomous, even antithetical to each other: the tentacles of the octopus operate somewhat independently, they lack an efficient central direction. Geertz's conception therefore admitted of diversity within a culture and allowed for culture change, as some of the peripherally integrated tentacles of culture became transformed.

Perhaps it requires as many tentacles as an octopus to simultaneously juggle a strong sense of a cultural system or structure along with notions of internal diversity and social change. Or so it seems from Geertz's effort, because he was forced to set many questions aside. Geertz admitted that all cultures contain antithetical elements: "patterns counteractive to the primary ones exist as subdominant but nonetheless important themes."[17] But how is primacy and subdominance established? Geertz simply noted that this determination is an empirical problem.[18] It is, however, a conceptual problem—what I will subsequently argue is an unwarranted conceptual assumption—that led him to conceive of primary and subdominant patterns, no matter how difficult to determine they may be. By doing so, he insisted that *a* cultural system exists, even when the allowance he made for internal diversity and contradiction might subsidize an opposite conclusion.

The octopus conception is also ungainly when dealing with cultural change. Cultural discontinuity occurs because not everything in a culture is connected to everything else, according to Geertz. Some significant symbols and clusters of symbols in a culture are "densely" or "tightly" interconnected, and others are not. Any internal or external "development" that "attacks" a significant symbol or cluster of symbols would be most likely to effect major transformation in the culture, so Geertz argues.[19] But what forces cause tight interconnectedness or its absence? Do some cultures simply choose to make concepts of person significant and primary, whereas others choose purity and pollution, and still others choose property—as Ruth Benedict evidently believed? If cultures do not choose (because they are not octopuses or any other animate being), then who does? And how do forces "attack" and transform these symbols and clusters? Can new patterns of tight—or loose—connectedness develop, and if they can, how do they? What forces therefore underlie cultural change? Again, Geertz believed that these were matters for empirical determination.[20] But an investigation that looks for the significant symbols or clusters of symbols and for the primary patterns in a culture does not question the essential matter: whether in fact such a "dominant tendency," such a "cultural emphasis," exists and, if it does, how it came to be.

The octopus,, weak-minded and ill coordinated though it might be, nevertheless continued the strong organismic character that the culture concept had acquired in American anthropology under the later Boasians.

Another conception of culture abandoned the natural imagery of sandpile, web, and octopus and the organismic assumptions that they carried in favor of a social analogy, the game.

THE GAME OF CULTURE

Conceiving culture as a game meant that anthropologists focused on the ways in which individuals manipulated cultural meanings and social interactions for their own ends. By emphasizing individual actions and interactions, this conception of culture rejected the reification of culture plaguing the organismic images and tried to avoid the reduction of humans to mere objects of the cultural system. F. G. Bailey and Fredrik Barth were exemplary of this new approach.

Bailey distinguished between games and fights. Games represented the common form of social interaction and competition, the usual way in which individuals went about advancing their interests. Individuals calculated what was to their advantage and then set about manipulating social interactions to gain their wants. Given the many individual games ongoing at any moment in a society, what made for cultural integration were the rules, which all individuals knew; the prizes, upon which they agreed; and the legitimate tactics, which they accepted and followed. Fights, Bailey asserted, occurred when individuals did not play according to common rules and did not compete through agreed-upon tactics.[21] Games confirmed the cultural rules: such contests resolved the status, wealth, or power of individuals but did not challenge the cultural understandings. Fights negated the cultural rules: they challenged the appropriateness of cultural meanings for dealing with the "real" world. For Bailey, cultural change—the transformation of the rules, tactics, and rewards of cultural games—came about through small changes in interactions.[22]

By assuming that there are sets of rules, both universal and culture-specific, for human game playing, Bailey conserved an organismic conception of culture, however.[23] The rules within which humans manipulate for advantage are givens of the cultural system. But who gives these rules in the first place? If social fights may change them, how do fights arise? What leads people to set aside the rules of the game they presumably know and play by "dirty" tactics and uncommon principles for unknown rewards?

Fredrik Barth went much further than Bailey in abandoning an organismic conception of culture. For Barth, the game is all: social behavior is not a product of cultural beliefs and "moral injunctions"; instead, "patterns of social form . . . [are the] cumulative result of a number of

separate choices and decisions made by people acting vis-à-vis each other."[24] Individual decisions taken in total can have the cumulative effect of producing social patterns and cultural conventions, and individual actions can therefore be prior in development to values and social arrangements.[25] Individual manipulation for status, material gain, or other desirables energizes social interaction for Barth, as it did for Bailey. Human calculation of advantage (rationality) and consciousness (awareness of what is advantageous) are givens of game playing for Barth, as they are for Bailey. But Barth does not distinguish games from fights. All games are fights or may become so because the rules for the games do not necessarily preexist the social competition; as he conceives them, rules are made up during the course of fights.

Barth thus suggests a major reconception of culture, which does away with organismic analogy, which replaces culture history with real history, and which substitutes for "structural morons" following behind their culture social actors making real choices. The next chapter entertains the question of whether the puzzle of culture can be solved by treating it as a game.

CHAPTER 11

Culture in the Making

The conceptions of culture as sandpile, web, and octopus, and even Bailey's notion of culture as a game, all presume that culture exists in advance of human history and action. There is the weight of custom that keeps the sandpile from blowing away, the intricate lattice of the web that holds the cultural system together, the significant symbols and primary patterns that coordinate the octopus, and the rules of the game that discipline play and determine when someone is cheating. This underlying conception of culture as preexisting and preeminent has served as American anthropology's framework since Franz Boas professionalized the discipline. Although Benedict, Mead, Geertz, Bailey, and, of course, many others have worked modifications into the scheme, they have had trouble working the original problems out of it. Anthropologists have yet to come up with a satisfactory explanation for where cultural meanings come from, how they change, and what causes them to change. Marshall Sahlins's recent analysis of culture and practice is still another attempt to engage these questions and to answer them satisfactorily. In this case, too, the organismic conception of culture as a structure of meaning, or code—this weight of anthropological tradition (maintained by academic stratification and reward)—stymies Sahlins, as I indicated in chapter 7.

Perhaps then it is time to abandon the organismic conception of culture, as Barth advises anthropologists to do, although maybe not quite in the way he suggests. Instead of proceeding as if a culture existed in advance of human action in history, what if anthropologists presumed that culture as a system of meaning emerged from the sum of social relationships composing a society—that it arose and endured only as

men and women struggled to make it? What they hope and act to make may in the short or long run fail because it takes social life outside the broad limits set by contemporary material conditions. People acting in pursuit of their interests may misconstrue them or choose inappropriate actions. What they hope and act to make may also fail because it runs afoul of the domination, or hegemony, encoded and carried in existing cultural meanings. People's labor may therefore make a culture they never intended to produce. The significant point is that a culture only exists in a specific time and place and as a result of a field of differing interests, oppositions, and contradictions. There is no weight of tradition, only a current of action.[1]

What if the rules of cultural games are made up only as individuals and groups play them? Rather than preexisting rules known to the players, all games are really fights, where the limits of what can be done, what can be achieved, and what can be believed are constantly tested. After the fact, the anthropologist can construct the rules followed and can constitute a cultural pattern that covers all happenings and becomings, but this code only came to exist as a product of game playing/fighting and as a result of interaction. The cultural pattern is the product, not the determinant of society.

This conception of culture is that it only exists as it happens. Each moment of history gives new alignments and relationships, new interactions and oppositions. As people build their current culture out of pieces of the old and live out their material conditions in new ways, so their social world takes on new configurations. The configurations give the appearance of stability and timelessness but they are only momentary as people realign and force movement. The forces prompting realignments come from people learning and choosing and, perhaps more often, struggling to learn and choose over time.

Cultural stability and persistence result only from the successive reproductions of similar fields of forces; they therefore come about because of culture's continuous construction and reconstruction, not because it has stopped and remained stable. When various individual and collective meanings are publicly expressed and publicly enacted, a degree of unity of belief and practice thereby happens to get created at that particular moment in time and space, a culture is in the making. (I detail this process for the Punjab later in the chapter.)

Culture then is not a house already constructed in which minor changes in decor and some repairs are permitted. The culture of any single time is a selective construction from the debris and standing structures of the past—contemporary individuals and groups take pieces, not the pattern, of the past and form them into new social arrangements. They do so as they gain consciousness of their material conditions and interests and

work to further them. There are no traditions of the past except those that enter into consciousness in the present. Traditions therefore only constrain social action when they become tokens in ongoing confrontations between groups in society, struggling to impress their beliefs, their cultural "traditions" as dominant.

This conception of culture builds on Barth's notions but differs with them as well. It agrees with the idea that society is not the result of a structure of cultural values or essences. In this view, "society is nothing other than social action," to use Alain Touraine's words.[2] It disagrees, however, with the freewill strategy and market mentality Barth attributes to social actors and the maximization of fully perceived interests he attributes to individuals. These assumptions by Barth partake of the "neoliberal" social science that Touraine criticizes for portraying society as simply a "result of its decisions," arrived at through a "network of deciders," each of whom consciously and rationally pursues purposes and interests.[3] Pierre Bourdieu similarly criticizes the viewpoint associated with Barth, generally known as transactional analysis in anthropology, for its faulty methodological individualism, its bestowal on

> some creative free will the free and wilful power to constitute, on the instant, the meaning of the situation . . . [and its reduction] of actions and works to the conscious and deliberate intentions of their authors.[4]

Barth falls into methodological individualism because he sees society (and its characteristic cultural meanings) as nothing more than the multiplied actions of the individuals composing it. He takes the individual as the basic operating unit of society, and he accepts individual manipulation as society's basic (or only) practice. In the conception of culture I follow, society (and its characteristic cultural meanings) exists for a certain time and place as the sum of individual and group social relations. Society is therefore real, not an epiphenomenon, as in Barth's methodological individualism.[5] Collective oppositions and struggles, which are not simply compounded of individual manipulation and competition, keep culture happening.[6]

Barth also tends to assume that humans possess a preexisting (that is, preexisting the social interaction) and total rationality about their goals in manipulation. He ignores the historical process by which people achieve greater knowledge of their interests as they gain consciousness of their placement in society. For example, in his studies of ethnicity, Barth allows that individuals change ethnic identities when they cannot live out in society the identities they espouse. But as Abner Cohen notes, Barth conceives these ethnic identities, these potential ethnic consciousnesses, as fully formed and always available; only their specific cultural content and individual adherents may change over time.[7]

In this book, I have portrayed culture "as nothing other than social action" without falling prey to methodological individualism. My argument has been that as culture happens, people learn what they are and are not over time. Their ethnic or class identities may mature and change; their perception of goals and interests may also become more concrete. Social interactions do not teach people whether they can successfully manipulate this or that ethnic identity. Rather, social interactions help form these identities, these social boundaries, and the cultural meanings attached to them. Thus, people not only learn what they can and cannot be in terms of individual identity, but constitute what they are collectively and thereby define other groups who oppose their interests. They constitute what society can be: its individual strategies, its collective identities, its group confrontations, its institutions for managing cultural meanings and material conditions.

MAKING CULTURE: THE PRACTICE OF DOMINATION AND RESISTANCE

If culture is truly always in the making, social action is constituted neither by an inertial and stable weight of tradition nor by individual maximizing strategies. It is an outcome, instead, of individual and group confrontations, placed within a field of domination and inequality. But how does social action, so constituted, produce the degree of cultural order or the strain toward cultural order that we know to exist in most societies? How, in other words, can a conception of culture that sees social confrontation as spinning a society into ever more eccentric cultural orbits still allow for the observed fact that the trajectories of many cultures are and remain fairly well defined? Must we fall back on a conception of tradition to regulate the apparently regular movements of such cultures? Or is there a way to conceive cultural order and conformity, to the extent it exists, as an outcome of confrontation in society? Clearly, there is need to reconcile a conception of culture as social action with a perception of cultural meanings as persistent. The work of Pierre Bourdieu, Alain Touraine, and Raymond Williams will aid this reconciliation. With the help of their ideas, I intend to show that cultural stability and consensus can emerge from social confrontation and change. I thereby hope to bring together social action and cultural persistence without having recourse either to weighty traditions and moral codes that dominate people into culture or to maximizing individuals who "freewill" society into being.

Pierre Bourdieu's notion of "habitus" portrays social life and cultural meaning as a constantly developing practice, akin to the conception of culture as always in the making. This concept also shows how behavioral

and perceptual regularities emerge from the ensemble of individual social action—how collective regularities appear out of individual practice and how they may persist over time. According to Bourdieu, living in the world, people adjust to its objective conditions and thereby create a habitus, or customary social practice, in response to those conditions. In their earliest upbringing, children experience and practice this habitus and then live it out as reality in their own social practice and rearing of the next generation. Bourdieu explains that

> the objective homogenizing of group . . . habitus which results from the homogeneity of the conditions of existence is what enables practices to be objectively harmonized without any intentional calculation or conscious reference to a norm and mutually adjusted *in the absence of any direct interaction* or . . . explicit coordination.[8]

Undifferentiated societies may have a single habitus, whereas class-based societies may have multiple customary social practices. Bourdieu also distinguishes customary social practices that are "doxic," that is, taken without question as real, from those subjected to conscious scrutiny, that is, the "orthodoxies" and the "heterodoxies" that particular classes or groups in a society champion or resist. According to Bourdieu, states of "doxa" occur when there is a "quasi-perfect" fit between "subjective principles of organization" in a society—its social classifications based on age, sex, "internalized class," and other "schemes of thought and perception"—and the society's objective conditions. Confrontation within systems of domination—between classes or groups—destroys doxa and makes the habitus of everyday life conscious and an element in social struggle. Social practices therefore always exist within and take their character from a social field of domination, which Bourdieu believes constitutes the conditions producing habitus in the first place.[9]

In opposition to organismic conceptions of culture, where the cultural code exists sui generis, Bourdieu's habitus, even in its doxic state, grows out of and gets maintained by social practice. Bourdieu also allows for changed cultural meanings when he argues that class and group conflicts destroy doxa and make habitus a matter of controversy and opposition.

To make a thorough-going break with the organismic conception of culture, however, Bourdieu must adequately answer two questions essential for understanding how cultural meanings change and therefore how culture is always in the making. First, he must clearly show that doxic conditions originate in social action, rather than as a structural propensity of human societies to evolve a unitary and unchallenged cultural code. Unfortunately, he seems to argue the reverse. For Bourdieu, doxa represents the natural course of development of any society, es-

pecially "ancient" and "undifferentiated" ones. Thus, he writes that "every established order tends to produce . . . the naturalization of its own arbitrariness."[10] The development of doxa is therefore a natural tendency in all societies and is most likely at certain evolutionary levels. By this argument, it appears to be a structural given rather than an outcome of social practice.

The second question that Bourdieu must answer to break completely with an organismic conception of culture is: what makes the unthinkable thought? That is, what makes habitus consciously perceived, questioned, and, perhaps, altered; what causes doxa to disintegrate into contested and contesting orthodoxy and heterodoxy? Again, his answer is not completely satisfactory. According to Bourdieu, group and class conflict makes doxa a matter of controversy and breaks it down. Thus he writes that "in class societies . . . the definition of the social world is at stake in overt or latent class struggle."[11] Bourdieu believes the dialectical relationship between a habitus and "objective structures"—"in the last analysis . . . the economic bases"—creates revolutionary situations in which consciousness of and confrontation over habitus emerge.[12] They occur when "the dominated have the material and symbolic means of rejecting the definition of the real . . . imposed on them through logical structures reproducing . . . the state of the power relations."[13]

But Bourdieu never specifies how such revolutionary conjunctures come about through the internal pattern of social practice in a society. Rather, he insists on the difficulty individuals face in developing new systems of thinking and perception and therefore new patterns of social practice with which to meet crisis situations in society.[14] Crises and the revolutionary conjunctures to which they give rise thus appear outside the system of customary social practice.

Yet Bourdieu must specify the conditions of social action, of customary practice, that produce doxa; he must detail the social actions under which customary practice is interrupted and new practices emerge; he must clarify the social actions that change doxa, appearing self-evident and uncontested, into heterodoxy and orthodoxy, licensing controversy and codification. Otherwise, doxa and habitus are not completely rooted in social action and practice, and it becomes impossible to completely supplant an organismic definition of culture with a conception of it as in the making. Indeed, in Bourdieu's work, just as seemingly external "objective structures" come forward to explain revolutionary conjunctures, so it appears that some organismic conception of cultural code, tradition, or structure must make a backdoor entrance to explain a doxic state. Such a structure enters into Bourdieu's belief that relations of domination can become self-reproducing and not require active social involvement and practice. Witness his distinction between

> social relations which, not containing within themselves the principle of their own reproduction, must be kept up through nothing less than a process of continuous creation [and] . . . a social world which, containing within itself the principle of its own continuation, frees agents from the endless work of creating or restoring social relations.[15]

The conception of culture in the making I have put forward argues that this distinction is invalid. Social relations of domination and the cultural meanings that attach to them are always in "continuous creation." Social practice never becomes "a system of mechanisms" that "the dominant classes" allow to "take its own course in order to exercise [their] domination," that is, an uncontested, self-regulating structure removed from the field of social action, as Bourdieu seemingly permits.[16]

A satisfactory conception of culture in the making must place habitus and doxa (to use Bourdieu's terms) within a framework of continuous social action and ongoing social practice. Such a conception must explain in the same fashion the extent to which doxa exists and the manner in which habitus changes. The work of Alain Touraine helps formulate this conception.

Touraine proposes that a society's class system and class confrontations, its social relations and actions based on domination, compose an internal dynamic that generates the material conditions and cultural meanings infusing social existence. In primitive (nonclass) societies, status inequalities based on age and sex would play an equivalent dynamic role. According to Touraine, the image of correct living and actual social practice are always up for grabs in class societies; they are always a product of contention between classes. There is not only dispute over the distribution of goods and wealth but also confrontation over the conceptions of history, knowledge, and values that should rule the society.[17] Dominant classes attempt to manage a society's cultural meanings as well as its surplus production.

For Touraine, therefore, a society's system of values is a "more or less coherent ideology" held by dominant classes or ruling groups. But these values never completely determine social practice because "society is always shot through with refusals, revolts, conflicts; it is constantly being challenged and contestation is constantly being repressed."[18] Society, in Touraine's view, is neither completely closed and integrated nor completely open and contradiction-filled; it is always in some state of disequilibrium in between. Social movements, in which individuals unmask the collective domination they experience, work to make confrontation endemic and continual, whereas systems of domination operate to perpetuate an integrated and consensual social order, without ever achieving complete success.[19] In this wise, Touraine, against Bourdieu, rejects a

"system of mechanisms" that takes its own course in reproducing domination. Rather, social relations of domination are necessarily in a process of continuous creation and reproduction in social action. Touraine thus locates both continuity and change in ongoing social relations—society is always in the act of producing itself.

Another factor, not emphasized by Touraine, limits both the coherence of dominant values and therefore the ability of these values to determine social practice. The consciousness of any class, including dominant ones, its understanding of its interests, and its articulation and practice of suitable values is always in the making. In the process, collective understandings and group values may develop that are disfunctional with the interests of the class—which, in the case of dominant classes, may impede their collective domination. I return to this point shortly.

Therefore, an integrated, consensual, and uncontested cultural code or even a self-reproducing mechanism of domination is a figment of organismic analysis. The unthinking acceptance of customary practice—doxa—is never a natural state; it only occurs when the normal confrontation and opposition of groups based on developing consciousness becomes momentarily suspended. States of doxa, their degree and duration in any society, are not the result of society's structural dispositions. They are outcomes of previous group conflicts, aftermaths of antecedent systems of domination, and indices of the current state of social consciousness and collective action.

Too often everyday life in class-differentiated societies is treated by anthropology as unquestioned and long-standing, rather than as recent conformities and susceptible to doubt again. Unquestionably, much of daily existence simply follows the path of least social resistance, the way defined by domination, as Thompson suggests.[20] But momentary quiescence is not the same as permanent acceptance. Even the supposedly most basic and consensual understandings in class-differentiated societies can come up for grabs at some future point because their apparent consensual and basic character only betoken the (perhaps recent and maybe short-lived) victory of a system of domination.

Late twentieth-century America proves how the most fundamental cultural meanings, supposedly agreed upon long ago and for the long term, can be questioned and argued over in social confrontations. Americans now confront each other over when human life really begins or when someone is truly dead even though a generation ago such questions of belief were so completely culturally apparent that they were actually nonquestions. A woman, so become by virtue of a sex-change operation, sues a United States government agency that has defined her femaleness as superficial.[21] Now who and what is a female becomes legally contested in a battle over cultural beliefs.

Just because the winners of such contests for cultural domination dignify their victorious beliefs as venerable does not make them so. The Great American Cornflakes Breakfast, now urged upon us as our veritable tradition, a hundred years ago was one means by which an emerging industrial middle class disciplined itself to sober eating and drinking and to mass consumption of prepackaged industrial foods. What was healthy eating for the middle class was soon urged upon a working class accustomed to breakfast on salt pork, eggs, and potatoes, shortly followed by beer as a thirst quencher.[22] Every snap, crackle, and pop of our newly "customary" breakfasts should remind us of the battle over the cultural meanings involving food and eating that went on in early industrial America.

The impress of the system of domination on everyday life in class-differentiated societies is much too obvious to ignore completely. Recent research in primitive societies, ostensibly the major props for the organismic concept of culture, shows clearly that their everyday life also bears the scars of domination. Although not divided into classes, these societies contain systematic domination on the basis of sex and age.[23] Men appropriate women's labor and biological reproduction; seniors demand status and control goods to the disadvantage of their juniors. Marriage, family, generational relations, and the other social practices of everyday life in these societies therefore are hardly socially neutral. These practices totalize and carry forward the state of domination that has come to exist and is continually being made to exist in quotidian life.

This research speaks directly and critically against the common anthropological portrayal of these societies as organized by a consensual (and therefore, by implication, unitary) cultural code. Given its organismic conception of culture, an older anthropology simply failed to see generational and gender domination in such societies.

In both primitive and class-based societies, then, domination strains to become doxic as the dominant and the ruling try to avoid continuously re-creating their control. Ongoing social practice, the reaction and resistance to domination, keeps cultural meanings fluid, however, and domination has to be constantly re-created. Thus, cultures—in this instance meaning systems of cultural and material domination—are always in the making.

The notion of "hegemony" that Raymond Williams derives from Antonio Gramsci is the clearest exposition of this process. Hegemony is

> a whole body of practices and expectations, over the whole of living: our senses and assignments of energy, our shaping perceptions of ourselves and our world. It is a lived system of meanings and values. . . . It thus constitutes

> a sense of reality for most people in the society. . . . It is, that is to say, in the strongest sense a "culture," but a culture which has also to be seen as the lived dominance and subordination of particular classes.[24]

The system of domination can "saturate" everyday life

> to such a depth that the pressures and limits of what can ultimately be seen as a specific economic, political, and cultural system seem to most of us the pressures and limits of simple experience and common sense.[25]

Hegemony for Williams is a process, not a structure, of social relations and lived meanings and values. Unlike Bourdieu's doxa, it is constantly motile and fluid. "It has continually to be renewed, re-created, defended, and modified. It is also continually resisted, limited, altered, challenged."[26]

Hegemonies come into being as the result of the interested actions of dominant classes. But they are not simply ideologies that conspire against the disadvantaged for the benefit of the powerful. Because the process of building hegemony always involves social confrontation and resistance, the cultural code that strains to be hegemonic at any moment in time may contain elements not in the best interests of the dominant classes that perpetrated it. Hegemonies are codes that encumber the dominant classes (as well as the dominated) in chains of unintended and intended (but not predetermined) consequences resulting from social confrontations whose rules are made up and understood only in the very act of confrontation.

The process of hegemony therefore has a "dialogic" quality. Cultural meanings perpetrated by dominant groups or classes may become appropriated by the dominated, who alter and use them in their resistance, just as Singh reformers used the British colonial model of the proper Sikh. At any moment in the making of culture, many cultural meanings adopted by the dominated may in fact derive from the beliefs of the dominant, now twisted into new meanings that shape up collective resistance.[27]

Taking hegemony as a process that is constantly attempted by the dominant and constantly resisted by the subordinate answers the conceptual problem with which this section began: how can cultural persistence and conformity be assimilated to a conception of culture as social action and as always in the making? If the quandary for organismic approaches to culture is the explanation of social change, the equivalent problem for a conception of culture in the making is to explain cultural continuity and consensus. The answer has come from looking at dominant groups or classes and the interested social actions they must con-

stantly undertake to preserve privilege and position. These interested social actions can develop into a relatively unreflective and consensual understanding of the world, a culture that is also a hegemony based on domination. Thus, a culture, no matter how structured and doxic it may appear, is nothing more than the sum and state of social confrontations at the particular moment or the moment just past. In spite of dominating classes and the hegemonies they attempt to broadcast, or precisely because of them (if they are viewed as processes, not structures), culture is still always in the making. Momentary crystallizations of hegemony, precipitated by a particular field of domination and subordination, dissolve into labile constellations of orthodoxy and heterodoxy, as the state of class conflict and consciousness takes on new forms; they, in turn, may reform into a new hegemonic compound, catalyzed once again by the social practice of domination.

Therefore, understanding the contemporary limits within which culture is being made requires studying the past. The current field of social action is delimited by the antecedent pattern of dominance, the just past state of social confrontation. So too, the existing hegemony takes its character and extent from what has immediately gone before. Marshall Sahlins, quoting Frederick Maitland, says that anthropology will be history or it will be nothing.[28] The conception of culture in the making affirms history equally strongly—but not a cultural history, in which structural or normative principles prefigure events and humans.[29] It requires a real history, defined by actual happenings over time and human actors as they confront themselves (through growing consciousness) and others (through evolving confrontation)—a history that engages the particulars of systems of domination and their relevant cultural codes along with the specifics of resistance to domination through collective action and its accompanying heterodoxies.

It might appear that such a history dooms anthropology to historical particularism and historicism. That is not the case, however. The objective is neither to chart a specific historical sequence for its own value or explain what happens in social life by the particularities of a unique historical sequence. Rather, the objective is to explain real social processes and practices, carried on and developed over time in social actions—to explain culture in the making at the most general level through the specifics of real historical events and people.[30] Defining successive fields of social action and the states of confrontation, domination, resistance, hegemony, and heterodoxy they reflect may lead to infinite historical regress. But that should hardly be surprising and should not deter our search for historical process in human society. For, if culture is always in the making, then it has always just been made.

PUNJAB CULTURE IN THE MAKING

What went into the making of the colonial Punjab's culture from annexation in 1849 until the Great Depression? I have presented four major developments of individual and collective consciousness and confrontations, of cultural becomings and social happenings, in the Punjab during this period. In alignment, they arranged Punjab culture, political economy, and society into an integral social design and cultural configuration during this period. They reworked the existing state of Punjab production and labor and the ongoing state of class relations and consciousness, which had been developing within the tributary mode of production of antecedent precapitalist regimes. They also redefined Sikh ethnic practice, which contained a range of identities and observances, as a result of earlier developments in response to changing systems of domination. The varied and unbounded habitus denominated as Sikh at the time of British annexation combined the reformist message of Guru Nanak (an answer to Muslim domination) with the militant communalism of Guru Gobind Singh (a response to direct Muslim persecution), augmented by the incorporation of the religion into Ranjit Singh's Sikh kingdom (a reaction to attaining domination). These antecedent conditions of class relations and religious identities set the material and cultural limits for the making, including the unmaking and remaking, of the Punjab's culture in the early twentieth century.

One confrontation involved British colonial objectives and the colonial state in relation to the rise of economic classes. The rules of colonial appropriation and colonial administration changed as the social confrontation among the principals changed—as the world economy altered, and British colonial objectives evolved, but also as indigenous economic classes formed, their consciousness matured, and they came to resist the colonial situation. Colonialism "on the cheap," or the colonial development of underdevelopment, depended on two economic classes: rural petty commodity producers, debt bonded to the world economy, and an urban lower-middle class, commercializing agriculture by indebting cultivators and staffing the professions in the new order of British Indian society. An otiose colonial state, minimally investing in agriculture, combined with these indigenous classes to create an export economy in wheat without revolutionary transformation of Punjab productivity and labor. But the colonial government lived under fiscal stringency as a result of this system.

When various changes in the world economy late in the nineteenth century devalued the rupee and placed colonial administration in a greater crisis of solvency, another colonial objective, development, became pri-

mary. The state capitalism enjoined by the latter-day objective of development led to the canal colonies and the creation of a new rural economic class, a lower-middle class of cultivators. No longer needing to squeeze the rural petty commodity producers for government revenues or export crops, the state could attempt to protect them from indebtedness and loss of their lands in order to avoid major social unrest. This action brought the colonial administration into confrontation with the urban lower-middle class, threatened by the state's protective policies. At the same time, the economic decline of petty commodity producers did not halt, as they came into increasing export competition with the canal colonists. Within the limits set by the contemporary material forces—and these material forces were in part constituted by social actions and beliefs, such as British government policies and indigenous tribute systems—a resistance movement combining these two economic classes was possible.

There remained important matters contingent on historical events and human action, however, before this Punjab colonial society and culture in the making became the Third Sikh War. For one, such a protest movement was not inevitable. Attempts like the Ghadar rebellion or the 1907 Arya disturbances failed. For another, a protest movement might not recognize British domination as the true enemy; it might dissipate maturing class consciousness and conflict in communal violence, as so often happened in twentieth-century Punjab. Still another, material forces could not determine what cultural meanings and identities such a protest would adopt, if it ever started up. A final matter outside the control of material forces was how successful such a movement might become, how far it would carry class protest, how many adherents it would recruit, how long it would go on, and how severely it would challenge British rule. The failure of the Ghadar movement and of the 1907 Aryas and the comparative success of the Singhs shows that the cultural meanings and identities informing and carrying protest had a major impact on the size, extent, duration, and success of protest movements within the limits set by the same material forces.

That such a combined protest movement did take place, that it recognized the British as oppressors, and that its identity and cultural meanings were Singh arose from the other confrontations aligning the Punjab as the twentieth century began. One was the contest between urban Arya and Singh reformers, the outcome of which, even the contest itself, did not mechanically develop from the material forces, but had great significance for urban protest and rural upheaval. The Arya Samaj carried and matured the consciousness of the urban lower-middle class to a certain point. Then the movement split into one group striving for a greater class consciousness through anticolonialism and another searching out a more

devout religious practice through proselytizing and conversion. Directing their gospel against the urban Sikhs, the religious militants within the Arya Samaj effectively sundered the urban lower-middle class and pushed the Sikhs into a search for separate cultural meanings and identity. The Sikhs had to deal with the range of cultural beliefs, identities, and religious practices contained within Sikhism and to constitute a new Sikhism, combining elements of the old with new interpretations. They championed Singh identity as orthodox and regarded other Sikhisms and Sikh identities as misled or apostate.

In their search for a specific identity and a separate communion, urban Singh reformers ended up confronting the colonial state. The Singh urban lower-middle class, and afterward, their followers among rural cultivators correctly identified British domination as the threat to both their religious integrity and their class interests. Conversion to Singh identity became tantamount to an anticolonial pledge as rural and urban converts to the Singh reforms came to recognize that British authority stood behind the shrine functionaries, who opposed these reforms.

These shrine officiants were so strongly entrenched and the Singh identity fashioned by the urban reformers was so strongly opposed by them only because of another contingency: the contradictory ways in which the British state attempted to control Singhs and Sikhism and use them for colonial purposes. One way was to support, even directly control, the religious functionaries at Sikh temples. The other way was to nurture, even to the point of forced growth, Singh identity, thereby constituting a martial species for an Indian army arranged on racial principles. British beliefs in biological determinism, which enjoyed a European vogue in the nineteenth century, rationalized both colonial employment of Singhs in the military and colonial desires to control their community leaders. The goal in either case was to keep the Singhs racially distinctive, pure, and true to their inherent nature as the British perceived it, one aspect of which was docility before the reigning power.

Attempting to disarm Singhs and Sikhism through religious functionaries and yet to arm them in the interests of an effective colonial military worked as long as the two conflicting identities had not matured and attached to groups who came into confrontation. Arya pressure and, to a lesser extent, British subsidy provided the maturing experiences for urban reformist Singhs, however. As they rationally moved toward temple reform and struggled with temple functionaries, in keeping with their strong Singh identity, these urban reformers found the British had chosen to abandon Singh identity and to defend the proprietary rights of the temple officiants. The British overestimated the religious authority that the shrine managers could exercise and they underestimated the effect their own subsidy of martial Singh identity had had on rural areas. Singh

reformers, otherwise stymied by official resistance, decided on the forceful takeovers of shrines, which required collective action. For this mass protest, they were beholden to rural areas, where reformism had gained steadily over several decades. Shortly before the Third Sikh War, reformers not only came from the urban lower-middle class, but also from the lower-middle class emerging in the canal colonies and the petty commodity producers of the central Punjab. These reformers came to village Punjab possessed of the Singh identity that the British had so carefully constituted in the Indian army and used it to inspire protest, to recruit followers, to organize the ensuing rural upheaval, to discipline it to nonviolence, and to batter away at British domination with commitment and firmness for five years. For these reasons, the uprising was Singh, not Arya.

The final confrontation explains why the identity evolved by urban reformers was so strongly Singh and anti-Hindu, that is, why it came to conform so closely to British views of the "true" Sikh and orthodox Sikhism—a conformity that was to cost the British dearly when it enlisted rural protesters. The early Singh Sabhas at Lahore and Amritsar materialized two different Sikh identities and represented two different maturing economic classes. At Lahore, a low-caste, lower-middle class Singh movement fought against what they regarded as the Hinduized identity propounded by the high-caste, landlord class movement of Amritsar. Their confrontation disallowed any accommodation of the range of Sikh identities and committed the ultimate victor, the Lahore group, to an uncompromising Singh identity. The Third Sikh War carried the consciousness of the lower-middle class and petty commodity producers (again, only up to a certain point) because the strong Singh identity had early on cast out the gentry and religious functionaries who toadied to the British.

The composite of these dominations, subordinations, contradictions, oppositions, and confrontations formed the social field and the cultural pattern of the time, from which arose the specific cultural meaning of Singh as an anticolonial identity and the particular social protest of the Third Sikh War that put that identity into practice. They were the making of the Punjab early in the twentieth century.

The framework I propose for the Punjab puzzle and the design I put forward for a conception of culture intend to do away with both organismic and Orientalizing conceptions—which often come down to the same thing. The Orientalizing of India and other nations by Europeans was clearly an attempt to discipline them intellectually and in other ways. But it also led to misunderstandings, mistaken colonial policies, and other negative consequences for the Europeans themselves. So it cannot be said

that Orientalism simply functioned to legitimate or constitute colonial exploitation, unless the discrepancies and disfunctions of Orientalism's performance of this role are allowed. Perhaps Orientalism, which in its present form is a special variety of the organismic conception of culture, grows up less as a charter for colonialism and more as an unintended consequence—being the latest version of several hegemonic Western intellectual traditions, both prescientific and scientific, each of which tried to discipline human action and historical event by an organismic conception of some overriding and determinative structure. The earliest perhaps was a religious conception of an ordered and patterned moral universe based on Christian principles. Time and people followed God's way except where the Devil and his advocates successfully denied it. In either case, humans and their history were dominated by supernatural structures. Then came an orderly but competitive human world made red in tooth and claw by ineluctable biological principles and the inherited constitutions of races. We find it easy today to see how these structural determinisms, these hegemonies of lived cultural meanings and values, encoded inequality and domination.

The final instance of structure is the notion of an orderly society and a configurated culture that stands above and beyond histories and individuals and that coerces or constitutes them. This organismic conception has cultured both anthropology and Orientalism. Is the organismic conception of culture now jejune? In its worst usage—Orientalism—and perhaps in its best—the anthropological conception of culture—has it not proved as hegemonic, yet as barren, as the divinely sanctioned or biologically determined structures once imputed to human histories and human worlds?

APPENDIX

Punjab Regions

A. ENUMERATION OF BRITISH DISTRICTS AND PRINCELY STATES IN PUNJAB AND NORTH-WEST FRONTIER PROVINCE

British Districts

1. Delhi, 2. Gurgaon, 3. Karnal, 4. Hissar, 5. Rohtak, 6. Sirsa, 7. Ambala, 8. Ludhiana, 9. Simla, 10. Jullundur, 11. Hoshiarpur, 12. Kangra, 13. Amritsar, 14. Gurdaspur, 15. Sialkot, 16. Lahore, 17. Gujranwala, 18. Ferozepore, 19. Rawalpindi, 20. Attock, 21. Jhelum, 22. Gujrat, 23. Shahpur, 24. Multan, 25. Jhang, 26. Montgomery, 27. Lyallpur, 28. Sheikhupura, 29. Muzzarfargarh, 30. Mianwali, 31. Dera Ismail Khan, 32. Dera Ghazi Khan, 33. Bannu, 34. Peshawar, 35. Hazara, 36. Kohat.

Princely States

37. Patiala, 38. Nabha, 39. Kapurthala, 40. Jind, 41. Faridkote, 42. Malerkotla, 43. Kalsia.

B. REGIONAL COMPOSITION, 1881–1931

Regions in 1881

Southeast: 1–5, 7, 40, 43.
Central: 6, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 18, 37–39, 41, 42.
Southwest (including West): 15–17, 19, 21–26, 29, 32, 34, 35.

Regions in 1891

Southeast: Same as 1881.
Central: 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 18, 37–39, 41, 42.
Southwest (including West): Same as 1881.

Regions in 1901

Southeast: Same as 1881.
Central: Same as 1891.
Southwest (including West): 15–17, 19–24, 26, 29, 30, 32, 34, 35.
Canal: 25.

Regions in 1911

Southeast: Same as 1881.
Central: Same as 1891.
Southwest (including West): 15, 19–22, 24, 26, 29, 30, 32, 34, 35.
Canal: 16, 17, 23, 25, 27.

Regions in 1921

Southeast: 2–5, 7, 40.
Central: Same as 1891.
Southwest (including West): 15, 19–22, 24, 29, 30, 32, 34, 35.
Canal: 16, 17, 23, 25–28.

Regions in 1931

Southeast: Same as 1921.
Central: Same as 1891.
Southwest (including West): Same as 1921.
Canal: 16, 23, 25–28.

NOTES

PREFACE

1. Max Weber, *The Religion of India* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1962), 337.
2. Hugh Kennedy Trevaskis, *The Punjab of Today,* 2 vols. (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1932), 1:71.
3. C. E. Black, *The Dynamics of Modernization* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 33.
4. Roger Ballard, "The Bitter Drama of the Sikhs," *New Society* 68, no. 1126 (21 June 1984): 464–466.

INTRODUCTION

1. For a similar argument, see William Roseberry, "Balinese Cockfights and the Seduction of Anthropology," *Social Research* 49 (1982): 1013–1028.
2. Compare Marshall Sahlins, *Culture and Practical Reason* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 206; for the application of a similar viewpoint to India, see Louis Dumont, *Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and Its Implications*, trans. Mark Sainsbury (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 9–10.
3. See Marvin Harris, *Cultural Materialism: The Struggle for a Science of Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 29–76.
4. Geertz argues that idealism does not typify his work because he deals with "envehicled meanings," publicly expressed symbols, rather than ideas reputed to be in people's minds. But the very primacy he accords envehicled meanings shows that he belongs in the class of scholars most anthropologists label "idealist," although Geertz is also right to complain against the rather loose usage of this term. See Clifford Geertz, *Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth-Century Bali* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 135.
5. Leslie White coined the term *culturology* and urged that it replace *anthropology* as the term for the scientific study of culture. According to White, culturology's guiding principle should be to explain culture by the "science" of

culture. In other words, he believed that explanations of culture had to be "superorganic" and could not reduce culture to individual psychology, biology, or other noncultural forces.

My usage of the term *culturology* may seem highly idiosyncratic to those who think of Leslie White as an archmaterialist. White was in fact a cultural determinist, although of a somewhat different breed from the culturologists I discuss in chapter 6. White was a technological determinist; he believed that cultures evolved as new inventions allowed humans to increase their capture of energy. Because technology, for White, was part of culture, he therefore followed his own dictum that only culture could explain culture when he argued that cultural evolution depended on technological innovations. But he also thereby departed from a materialist argument. The degree of his removal from materialism is best judged by his explanation for why new technologies appear or gain acceptance: they do so only when the culture is ready for them. This argument, which makes culture concretize technology, rather than the reverse approach of materialism, shows why White belongs with the others who practice a somewhat different form of the culturology he recommended. See Leslie White, *The Science of Culture* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Cudahy, 1949), 73, 366.

6. Marshall Sahlins makes a somewhat similar distinction between "practical" theories of culture and "cultural" theories, although his practical category differs from my "cultural materialism" in that his includes Marxism. See his "The State of the Art in Social/Cultural Anthropology: Search for an Object" in *Perspectives on Anthropology 1976*, ed. Anthony F. C. Wallace, J. Lawrence Angel, Richard Fox, Sally McLendon, Rachel Sady, and Robert Sharer, American Anthropological Association Memoir no. 10 (Washington, D.C., 1977), 15.

7. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978), 3.

8. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 109–133.

9. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed., s.v. "caste."

1: The Puzzle's Nature

1. Owen Lattimore similarly spoke of an ecologically and culturally determined frontier between pastoral nomadism and intensive agriculture in China. See his *Inner Asian Frontiers of China* (1940; reprint, New York: Beacon, 1962), 25.

2. See W. Owen Cole and Piara Singh Sambhi, *Sikhism* (London: Ward Lock, 1973).

3. Heterogeneity of religious observance and identity is still to be found among Sikhs/Singhs in India and abroad, although it differs from that which existed before the twentieth-century reform movement; see chapter 6.

4. I remind the reader that their self-identification in the mid-nineteenth century as Singhs did not necessarily mean that they followed all the dictates that the twentieth-century reform movement later defined as incumbent on that identity.

5. Sir Richard Temple, quoted by Denzil Ibbetson, in Government of India, *Census of India, 1881, Punjab*, vol. 1 (Tumba, Sweden, International Documentation Centre [1964], microfiche), 140.

6. Ibid., 141.

7. The most thorough source is Mohinder Singh, *The Akali Movement* (Delhi: Macmillan, 1978).

2: The Imperial Embrace

1. Paul Scott, *The Jewel in the Crown* (New York: Avon, 1966), 9.

2. I do not discuss in this chapter the earliest period of British intimacy with India. Under the East India's mercantilist policies of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, before John Company became a territorial power in India, the liaison was relatively equal and unforced. The Company's objective was to export as large a volume of Indian textiles and other commodities as possible.

3. That is, forced mastery over a reluctant paramour in the form of a pre-capitalist society—or, in the image I prefer and employ throughout this book, forced mastery over a people caged by colonialism and trained to its exploitation.

4. Hamza Alavi, "India: Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 10 (1980): 363–386; also see Anupam Sen, *The State, Industrialization and Class Formation in India* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982), 37–64.

5. Quoted in Brian Davey, *The Economic Development of India* (Nottingham: Spokesman Books, 1975), 46.

6. Samir Amin, *Unequal Development* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976), 204–205. Frank Perlin argues that commercialization of agriculture had begun in India even before the British in his "Growth of Money Economy and Some Questions of Transition in Late Pre-Colonial India," *Journal of Peasant Studies* 11 (1984): 96ff.

7. Himadri Banerjee discusses the reasons for rural indebtedness in the Punjab and the benefits reaped by merchants and moneylenders from it in *Agrarian Society of the Punjab, 1849–1901* (New Delhi: Manohor, 1982), 105–116. Jairus Banerji makes the general argument for how merchant capital can come to discipline peasant cultivation in his "Modes of Production in a Materialist Conception of History," *Capital and Class* 3 (1977): 32–36.

8. See, for example, the statements by British officials in P. H. M. van den Dungan, *The Punjab Tradition: Influence and Authority in Nineteenth-Century India* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1972), 160ff.; and, for a more balanced but still quite negative treatment of moneylenders, Malcolm Darling, *The Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt*, 4th ed. (1947; rev. ed., Columbia, Mo.: South Asia Books, 1978).

9. As, for example Amin, *Unequal Development*, 198–292; Ernesto Laclau, "Feudalism and Capitalism in Latin America," *New Left Review* 67 (1971): 19–

38; and Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System* (New York: Academic, 1974), 348ff. Aidan Foster-Carter, "Neo-Marxist Approaches to Development and Underdevelopment," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 3 (1973): 7–33; and Joel S. Kahn, *Minangkabau Social Formations: Indonesian Peasants and the World Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 205ff., review and critique this literature.

10. Compare Wallerstein, *World System.*

11. Eric Stokes, *The Peasant and the Raj* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 34ff.

12. Gerald Barrier, "The Punjab Government and Communal Politics, 1870–1908," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 27 (1968): 523–540; Robert Frykenberg, *Guntur District, 1788–1848* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965); David Washbrook, *The Emergence of Provincial Politics: The Madras Presidency, 1870–1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

13. Joel Kahn advances this class argument to explain the mercantile world economy of the early colonial era in "Mercantilism and the Emergence of Servile Labour in Colonial Indonesia," in *The Anthropology of Pre-Capitalist Societies,* ed. Joel S. Kahn and Josep R. Llobera (London: Macmillan, 1981), 185–213.

14. For the concept of a tributary mode of production, see Amin, *Unequal Development,* 13–16; and Eric Wolf, *Europe and the People without History* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1982), 79–88; for the "fund of rent" concept, see Eric Wolf, *Peasants* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966), 9–10.

15. Owen Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China* (1940; reprint, New York: Beacon, 1962), 469–506.

16. B. R. Tomlinson, *The Political Economy of the Raj* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 26.

17. From 1861–62 until 1898–99 (when the rupee was revalued), the Government of India enjoyed twenty years of surplus revenue and suffered seventeen years of deficit, for a net loss of Rs. 49 million. From 1899–1900 until 1924–25, the Government of India had sixteen years of surplus (mainly from 1900 to 1914) and nine years of deficit, but it had a net loss for this period of Rs. 259 million. These figures are calculated from K. T. Shah, *Sixty Years of Indian Finance,* 2d ed. (Bombay and London: P. S. King and Son/D. B. Taraporevala and Sons, 1927), 53.

18. Quotation marks around "educated classes" indicate that this phrase was emically real—that is, of native use, although in this case, the natives were the British colonial authorities. The quotation marks also serve to differentiate this British usage from the concept of class that I present later.

19. Philip Mason, *A Matter of Honour* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, Winston, 1974), 318. The proportion of Indian troops to British units temporarily stationed in India was approximately two to one.

20. Compare Tomlinson, *Political Economy,* 27–28. Tomlinson speaks of the Government of India's difficulty in maintaining an "equilibrium" between Imperial and domestic interests. He sees this "delicate balance" as requiring the government to compromise between domestic demands for low taxation and the British state's desire for enhanced revenues. But he says little about the political

economy of British Indian colonialism and how its various objectives distorted India's production and labor so that no government could be affluent except by skinning the indigenous population. Karl Marx came much closer to seeing the dynamics of the system, even though he understood them mainly in terms of competition within the British ruling class among mercantile, industrial, and landed interests and gives much less weight to the fiscal condition of the Government of India than he should. See Karl Marx, "The Future Results of the British Rule in India," in *The First Indian War of Independence,. 1857–1859*, K. Marx and F. Engels (Moscow: Foreign Lanugages Publishing House, n.d.), 33–40.

21. Neil Charlesworth gives the empirical evidence for the difficult balance between development and underdevelopment in his *British Rule and the Indian Economy 1800–1914* (London: Macmillan, 1982). The long-standing and continuing argument between the "drain" theorists, who see British colonialism in India as essentially having negative economic effects, and their opponents, those who see colonialism as either beneficial or too weak to have had any marked effect, shows scholarly polemic as reproducing the contradictions in British colonial objectives. For a summary of the debate, see ibid., 11–16.

22. Sabyasachi Bhattacharya summarizes this alteration in government policy and official movement toward what he labels "judicious interventionism" in his "Laissez Faire in India," *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 2 (1965): 14.

23. Arnold P. Kaminsky, "'Lombard Street' and India: Currency Problems in the late Nineteenth Century," *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 17 (1980): 307.

24. Ibid.

25. Clive Dewey, "The End of the Imperialism of Free Trade: The Eclipse of the Lancashire Lobby and the Concession of Fiscal Autonomy to India," in *The Imperial Impact: Studies in the Economic History of Africa and India*, ed. Clive Dewey and A. G. Hopkins (London: Athlone, 1978), 35–67.

26. These figures are computed from Shah, *Indian Finance*, 286, 213.

27. Tomlinson, *Political Economy*, 45ff.

28. Dewey, "Imperialism of Free Trade," 41.

29. See Tomlinson, *Political Economy*, 44; R. H. Cassen, *India: Population, Economy, and Society* (London: Macmillan, 1978), 333; and, for the analysis of the domination of India's post-Independence "intermediate regime" by a lower-middle class, K. N. Raj, "The Politics and Economics of 'Intermediate Regimes,'" *Economic and Political Weekly* 8, no. 27 (7 July 1973): 1189–1198; Ashok Mitra, *Terms of Trade and Class Relations* (London: Frank Cass, 1977); and Richard G. Fox, "Urban Class and Communal Consciousness in Colonial Punjab: The Genesis of India's Intermediate Regime," *Modern Asian Studies* 18 (1984): 459–489.

30. Railroads were almost as important as customs revenue in keeping the Government of India on track financially. In the estimated budget for 1926–27, revenue from railroads was expected to bring in 27 percent of the government's total receipts, the second largest single source after customs; computed from Shah, *Indian Finance*, 213.

31. Compare Sidney Mintz, "The So-Called World System: Local Initiative and Local Response," *Dialectical Anthropology* 2 (1977): 253–270, and Kahn, *Minangkabau Social Formations,* 205.

32. Banaji, *Agrarian Society,* 14; Robert Brenner, "The Origins of Capitalist Development: A Critique of Neo-Smithian Marxism," *New Left Review* 104 (1977): 25–92; Richard G. Fox, "British Colonialism and Punjabi Labor," in *Labor in the Capitalist World Economy,* ed. Charles Bergquist (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1984), 107–134; Kahn, *Minangkabau Social Formations,* 204–205; Nicos Mouzelis, "Modernization, Underdevelopment, Uneven Development: Prospects for a Theory of Third-World Formations," *Journal of Peasant Studies* 7 (1980): 353–374; Theda Skocpol, "Wallerstein's World Capitalist System: A Theoretical and Historical Critique," *American Journal of Sociology* 82 (1977): 1075–1089; Ellen Kay Trimberger, "World Systems Analysis: The Problem of Unequal Development," *Theory and Society* 8 (1979): 127–137.

33. Compare Robert Brenner, "Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial Europe," *Past and Present* 70 (1976): 31; James Petras, *Critical Perspectives on Imperialism and Social Class in the Third World* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1978), 40; Trimberger, "World Systems Analysis," 130; and Carol Smith, "Labor and International Capital in the Making of a Peripheral Social Formation," in *Labor in the Capitalist World Economy,* ed. Charles Bergquist (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1984), 152.

34. See Fox, "British Colonialism," 129–133, for a discussion of resistance to capitalist penetration in third-world societies and its relationship to economic classes and contradictions in colonial state objectives.

3: A New Breed of Peasant

1. Khuswant Singh, *History of the Sikhs,* 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 1: 76–98.

2. Chapter 6 considers this historical transformation of Sikhism and explores the symbolic charter provided by Singh identity.

3. For further detail on these bands, or *misls*, see Gurbachan Singh Nayar, "The Sikh Misl," in *Essays in Honour of Dr. Ganda Singh,* ed. Harbans Singh and N. Gerald Barrier (Patiala: Punjabi University Press, 1976), 161–165; Khuswant Singh, *History of the Sikhs,* 131 ff.; and Joyce Pettigrew, *Robber Noblemen: A Study of the Political System of the Sikh Jats* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), 26–33. Pettigrew sees present-day factional alignments among village Jat Sikhs as similar to the organization of the misls.

4. See Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs: Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1978); and Fauja Singh, *State and Society under Ranjit Singh* (New Delhi: Master Publications, 1982).

5. The decennial Censuses of India from 1881 to 1931 provided data on the population of the Punjab, broken down by religion. The other data came from the agricultural statistics provided by the Punjab District Gazetteers beginning in 1901–02 and appearing every five years thereafter.

6. Dolores Domin, "Some Aspects of British Land Policy in Panjab after Its Annexation in 1849," *Panjab Past and Present* 8 (1974): 19–20.

7. James Douie, *Punjab Settlement Manual* (Lahore: Superintendant of Government Printing, Pakistan, 1961), 59.

8. Domin, "British Land Policy," 19.

9. Ibid., 20–21; Himadri Banerjee, *Agrarian Society of the Punjab, 1849–1901* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1982), 145.

10. Jeffrey Paige, *Agrarian Revolution* (New York: Free Press, 1975), 16.

11. Banerjee, *Agrarian Society,* 2ff.; and David Paul Gilmartin, "Tribe, Land, and Religion in the Punjab: Muslim Politics and the Making of Pakistan" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1979), 21, analyze the leveling policy of Ranjit Singh; Dolores Domin, *India in 1857–59: A Study of the Role of the Sikhs in the People's Uprising* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1977), 32, shows why the British continued it.

12. Punjab Administration Report, quoted in Brij Narain, *Eighty Years of Punjab Food Prices, 1841–1920* (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1926), 37.

13. Ibid., 36.

14. Ibid.

15. W. H. Myles, *Sixty Years of Punjab Food Prices, 1861–1920,* Board of Economic Inquiry, Punjab Rural Section Publication no. 7 (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1925) provides an unnumbered diagram comparing the cost of wheat over a sixty-year period in six regions of the Punjab.

16. Salish Chandra Mishra uses the convergence of prices among internal markets as an index of commercialization in "Commercialization, Peasant Differentiation, and Merchant Capital in Late Nineteenth-Century Bombay and Punjab," *Journal of Peasant Studies* 10 (1982): 9.

17. Narain, *Punjab Food Prices,* 42, 43, chart D.

18. See Hugh Kennedy Trevaskis, *The Punjab of Today,* 2 vols. (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1932), 2: chart facing page 45.

19. Government of the Punjab, Punjab Provincial Banking Committee, *Report* (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1936), par. 9.

20. Narain, *Punjab Food Prices,* 42.

21. Ibid.

22. Khuswant Singh, *History of the Sikhs,* 2:153, for example, says "the Sikh Jat indulged in violence without motive or provocation"; also see Prakash Tandon, *Punjabi Century* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1961), 50; Malcolm Darling, *The Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt,* 4th ed. (Columbia, Mo.: South Asia Books, 1978), 68, reports on the litigious character of the Punjab peasant, especially in the central districts.

23. The Manjha, Malwa, and Doaba were indigenously recognized subregions of what I have called the central Punjab. They differed somewhat in ecology, agricultural practice, and tenure arrangements. For more detail, see map 4 and the discussion in chapter 5.

24. Harriet Friedmann, "Household Production and the National Economy: Concepts for the Analysis of Agrarian Formations," *Journal of Peasant Studies* 7 (1980): 163, 167; and "World Market, State, and Family Farm: Social Bases

of Household Production in the Era of Wage Labor," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 20 (1978): 546–549.

25. Joel S. Kahn, *Minangkabau Social Formations: Indonesian Peasants and the World Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 134–135.

26. Government of the Punjab, *First Report of the Regular Wage Survey of the Punjab* (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1912), par. 4, states that Gurgaon in the southeastern Punjab was "the only district in which the old customary rate appears to survive."

27. Tom G. Kessinger, *Vilyatpur, 1848–1968: Social and Economic Change in a North Indian Village* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1974), 128, 160.

28. Government of the Punjab, *Wage Survey*, par. 4.

29. Kessinger, *Vilyatpur*, 137.

30. Fauja Singh, "The Effects of Land Transfers on Rural Economy during the Latter Half of the 19th Century," in *Punjab History Conference Proceedings, 13th Session* (Patiala: Punjab Historical Studies Department, Punjabi University, 1980), 260–261. Market penetration of Punjab agriculture also led landlords to maintain or revert to collecting rentals in kind rather than cash from their best lands. Rentals in kind, usually a fixed share of the harvest, might appear to contradict monetization of the agrarian economy, but in fact they were a rational response to it. In years of good harvests, landlords received a greater return than they would have from a fixed money rent; in bad years, landlords found it difficult to extract any rent from their hard-pressed tenants, whether in kind or in cash. The rents in kind were therefore market-determined rentals rather than customary ones and were just as much a reflection of agricultural commercialization as if they were in cash. See Trevaskis, *Punjab of Today*, 2:10.

31. Banerjee, *Agrarian Society*, 105–116, discusses the ways in which cultivators became indebted.

32. Fauja Singh, "Land Transfers," 260–261.

33. Jairus Banaji, "Modes of Production in a Materialist Conception of History," *Capital and Class* 3 (1977): 32–36, analyzes the general course of this quite common colonial development. Neil Charlesworth, "Rich Peasants and Poor Peasants in Late Nineteenth-Century Maharasthra," in *The Imperial Impact*, ed. Clive Dewey and Nicholas Hopkins (London: Athlone, 1978), 99–101, illustrates the specifics of this development in another part of colonial India. For similar developments in other parts of India, see Eric Stokes, *The Peasant and the Raj* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 243–289.

34. Darling, *Punjab Peasant*, 74–81; for his later tours, see *Rusticus Loquitur; or, The Old Light and the New in the Punjab Village* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1930); and *Wisdom and Waste in the Punjab Village* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1934).

35. Darling, *Rusticus Loquitur*, 339.

36. Darling reported the great inflation in marriage costs and bride-prices in *Punjab Peasant*, 48–58. The modern version of the Punjab practice is the dowry murders perpetrated on young brides by their husbands and in-laws, which have

become a common occurrence among lower-middle class families in north Indian cities.

37. Saghir Ahmad, "Islam and Pakistani Peasants," *Contributions to Asian Studies* 2 (1971): 96, 104.

38. Board of Economic Inquiry, Punjab, *An Economic Survey of Durrana Langana, a Village in the Multan District of the Punjab* (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1938), 194.

39. Landlords exercised the same feudal relations over tenants during World War I by generally resisting British efforts to enlist their tenants in the Indian army. These feudal powers meant that one landlord could bring forward 100 recruits from his own estates when it served his interests to show devotion to the Raj. See Government of India, "Fortnightly Report" (hereafter *FR*), on the Punjab for 31 December 1917 (New Delhi, National Archives of India); and the speech by Lt.-Gov. Michael O'Dwyer at Jhang, 3 December 1915, in Government of India, "Home-Political Files A" [hereafter *HP(A)*], 545–546, January 1916 (New Delhi: National Archives of India), in which he chides the southwestern region for its failure to provide recruits. For another instance of the reluctance of this region's inhabitants to join the Indian army and of the role played by local landlords in forcing men into military service, see B. J. Poff, "The Resistance of the Laks of the Shahpur District," in *Punjab History Conference Proceedings, 14th Session* (Patiala: Punjab Historical Studies Department, Punjabi University, 1981), 233–249.

40. Jairus Banaji, "Modes of Production," 32–36, shows how merchant/moneylender capital can subvert independent rural proprietors, and William Roseberry shows how economic inequalities and class differentiation can arise among cultivators to do the same thing in "Rent, Differentiation, and the Development of Capitalism among Peasants," *American Anthropologist* 78 (1976): 45–58.

41. Lenin originally proposed that petty commodity production was transitional between feudalism and capitalism and necessarily temporary; also see Samir Amin, *Unequal Development* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976), 21. For this issue, see R. Sherry, "Independent Commodity Production versus Petty Bourgeois Production," *Monthly Review* 28 (1976): 52–60; Alain De Janvry, "Social Differentiation in Agriculture and the Ideology of Neopopulism," in *The Rural Sociology of the Advanced Societies*, ed. Frederick H. Buttel and Howard Newby (Montclair, N.J.: Allanheld, Osmun, 1980), 155–168; and R. W. Shenton and Louise Lennihar, "Capital and Class: Peasant Differentiation in Northern Nigeria," *Journal of Peasant Studies* 9 (1981): 46–70. Carol Smith critiques the Leninist scenario in "Does a Commodity Economy Enrich the Few While Ruining the Masses? Differentiation among Petty Commodity Producers in Guatemala," *Journal of Peasant Studies* 11 (1984): 60–95.

42. Fauja Singh, "Land Transfers," 260–261.

43. Banaji, "Modes of Production," 33.

44. Ian Carter, *Farm Life in Northeast Scotland, 1840–1914* (Edinburgh: Donald, 1979).

45. Friedmann, "Household Production," 158–184; see the similar analysis by Susan A. Mann and James A. Dickinson, "State and Agriculture in Two Eras of American Capitalism," in *The Rural Sociology of the Advanced Societies*, ed. Frederick H. Buttel and Howard Newby (Montclair, N.J.: Allanheld, Osmun, 1980), 288–301.

46. Compare Mann and Dickinson, "State and Agriculture," 301–315.

47. John Emmeus Davis, "Capitalist Agricultural Development and the Exploitation of the Propertied Laborer," in *The Rural Sociology of the Advanced Societies*, ed. Frederick H. Buttel and Howard Newby (Montclair, N.J.: Allanheld, Osmun, 1980), 133–154.

48. Kahn, *Minangkabau Social Formations*, 75–102, 195–196.

49. Smith, "Commodity Economy," 82–83.

50. See Utsa Patnaik's presentation and critique of Chayanov and other neopopulists in "Neo-Populism and Marxism: The Chayanovian View of the Agrarian Question and Its Fundamental Fallacy," *Journal of Peasant Studies* 6 (1979): 375–420.

51. Gail Omvedt, "Migration in Colonial India: The Articulation of Feudalism and Capitalism in the Colonial State," *Journal of Peasant Studies* 7 (1980): 185–212.

52. Dewitt C. Ellinwood, Jr., "An Historical Study of the Punjabi Soldier in World War I," in *Essays in Honour of Dr. Ganda Singh*, ed. Harbans Singh and N. Gerald Barrier (Patiala: Punjabi University Press, 1976), 340–341.

53. *HP(A)*, 138, 1930.

54. Ibid. See note 60 below for more detail on this protest.

55. Board of Economic Inquiry, Punjab, *Soldiers' Savings and How They Use Them*, comp. Roshan Lal Anand, Publication no. 68 (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1940), 14, 16–17. Darling, *Punjab Peasant*, 42, 43, ruefully compared the large amount of remittances from military service and yet the great amount of debt in Jullundur District of the central Punjab. Remittances from such external service hardly kept up with debt, and, as Darling recognized, provided insufficient capital for agricultural investment and at best only enough to keep the peasant proprietor out of debt.

56. Ellinwood, "Punjabi Soldier," 340.

57. See note 23 above.

58. Ellinwood, "Punjabi Soldier," 343.

59. These figures are computed from data in Board of Economic Inquiry, Punjab, *Soldiers' Savings*, 5. One area, Kangra District, not included in my regions, had 9,580 military pensioners.

60. Anup Singh's story begins in 1926 when he led a jatha of one hundred ex-soldiers intending to seize agricultural lands. Government officials convinced them to submit petitions instead. After the mass demonstration in early 1929 still failed to achieve government concessions, he led a smaller party to Lahore in December 1929, whereupon he and two hundred followers were arrested. See *FR*, 15 November 1926; 15 January, 15 December, 31 December 1929; and *HP(A)*, 138, 1930.

61. See, for example, *FR*, 16 February 1918. The greatest resistance occurred among the pastoral population of the landlord-dominated southwest, however.

See ibid., 15 May, 31 May, 30 June 1918; also see Poff, "Resistance of the Laks," 233–249.

62. For some cases of insubordination or mutiny among troops from the central region, see Mohinder Singh, *The Akali Movement* (Delhi: Macmillan, 1978), 146; and *HP(A)*, 268, 1922 (these cases occurred after the Third Sikh War began, however).

63. See Darling, *Rusticus Loquitur*, 28; Kessinger, *Vilyatpur*, 175, shows that migration is an old coping pattern in rural Punjab that continues up to the present.

64. Government of India, *Census of India, 1911, Punjab*, vol. 1 (Tumba, Sweden, International Documentation Centre [1964], microfiche), 70.

65. See *HP(A)*, 1–13, 1915; 301, 1916.

66. Mark Jurgensmeyer, "The Ghadar Syndrome: Immigrant Sikhs and Nationalist Pride," in *Sikh Studies*, ed. Mark Jurgensmeyer and N. Gerald Barrier (Berkeley: Graduate Theological Union, 1979), 181; Harish K. Puri, "Ghadar Movement: An Experiment in New Patterns of Socialization," *Journal of Regional History* 1 (1980): 123–125, and "Revolutionary Organization: A Study of the Ghadar Movement," *Social Scientist* 9 (1980): 54–55.

67. Jurgensmeyer, "Ghadar Syndrome," 177.

68. Darling, *Punjab Peasant*, 29.

69. Kessinger, *Vilyatpur*, 134, reports that foreign remittances raised land prices in his village, however.

70. H. H. Calvert, in his Introduction to Board of Economic Inquiry, Punjab, *An Economic Survey of Tehong, a Village in the Jullundur District of the Punjab*, comp. Anchal Dass, Publication no. 18 (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1931), ii.

71. Paul Paustian, *Canal Irrigation in the Punjab* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1930), 28ff., 41ff., 168.

72. Ibid., 27, 38, 42.

73. Ibid., 43ff.

74. Darling, *Punjab Peasant*, 106.

75. Compare Fauja Singh, "Land Transfers," 265–266.

76. P. H. M. van den Dungan, *The Punjab Tradition: Influence and Authority in Nineteenth-Century India* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1972), 168–172.

77. Norman G. Barrier, *The Punjab Alienation of Land Bill of 1900*, Program in Comparative Studies on Southern Asia Monograph no. 2 (Durham, N.C., 1980); van den Dungan, *Punjab Tradition*, 279–291.

78. See the discussion of the Unionist Party in chapter 5.

4: Well Water and Well Watered

1. The designation "wasteland" in India did not necessarily mean land was permanently uncultivable, but only that it was not currently worked.

2. Another way to express this change is to say that irrigation increased the organic composition of capital. This phrasing makes a distinction between vari-

able capital, the labor invested in production; and constant capital, the means of production invested in production. If the amount of production per unit of labor rises by increased investment of constant capital, the ratio of constant capital to variable capital increases; that is, the organic composition of capital grows larger. See Karl Marx, *Capital*, 3 vols. (Chicago: Charles Kerr, 1926), 1:671.

3. Board of Economic Inquiry, Punjab, *Agricultural Statistics of the Punjab, 1901–2 to 1935–6*, Publication no. 52 (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1937).

4. Paul Paustian, *Canal Irrigation in the Punjab* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1930), 48–63, 168.

5. Government of India, *Census of India, 1911, Punjab*, vol. 1 (Tumba, Sweden, International Documentation Centre [1964], microfiche), 11.

6. Board of Economic Inquiry, Punjab, *Agricultural Statistics*.

7. Government of the Punjab, *Report of the Colonies Committee, 1907–08* (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1908), 6.

8. Government of India "Report on the Native Newspapers, Punjab" (New Delhi, Nehru Memorial Library, microfilm), *The Tribune* (Lahore), 1 May 1914.

9. Paustian, *Canal Irrigation*, 68.

10. Ibid., 64; also see Malcolm Darling, *The Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt*, 4th ed. (1947; rev. ed., Columbia, Mo.: South Asia Books, 1978), 115.

11. In the Chenab colony the larger property holders were called "yeomen" and "capitalists," depending on the size of their grant. The government intended that they set an example of excellence in cultivation for the smallholders. See Paustian, *Canal Irrigations*, 69; Darling, *Punjab Peasant*, 118–119.

12. Darling, *Punjab Peasant*, 115–116, and Paustian, *Canal Irrigation*, 66–67, provide a good description of this process for selecting canal colonists.

13. Paustian, *Canal Irrigation*, 52.

14. Ibid., 54–55, details the disaster of the Sidhnai canal project for the initial migrant smallholders. Over time, the severe waterlogging problems that began to afflict many tracts in the canal colonies cost the cultivator dearly.

15. Ibid., 145.

16. Compare Darling, *Punjab Peasant*, 118.

17. Ibid., 116–117.

18. Paustian, *Canal Irrigation*, 68, 168.

19. Government of India, "Home-Political Files A" [hereafter *HP(A)*], 138, 1930 (New Delhi, National Archives of India).

20. David Gilmartin, "Tribe, Land, and Religion in the Punjab" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1979), 23.

21. *HP(A)*, 138, 1930.

22. Figures computed from Paustian, *Canal Irrigation*, 166.

23. Ibid., 37; Darling, *Punjab Peasant*, 172–173.

24. Malcolm Darling, *Rusticus Loquitur, or The Old Light and the New in the Punjab Village* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1930), 199.

25. Paustian, *Canal Irrigation*, 67–68.

26. See Norman G. Barrier, "The Punjab Disturbances of 1907: The Response of the British Government in India to Agrarian Unrest," *Panjab Past and Present* 8 (1974): 450–451.

27. Paustian, *Canal Irrigation*, 65.

28. Darling, *Punjab Peasant*, 125.

29. Board of Economic Inquiry, Punjab, *Agricultural Statistics*.

30. Some of this difference may result from caste-distinctive consumption patterns. The canal sharecroppers in the sample came from castes lower than those of the small proprietors, and for this reason may have eaten fewer dairy products. Alternatively, the difference may reflect the greater amounts of wheat, a high status grain, available for the sharecroppers' consumption, which made expenditures on dairy products less necessary.

31. Brij Narain, *Eighty Years of Punjab Food Prices, 1841–1920*, Board of Economic Inquiry, Punjab, Rural Section Publication no. 13 (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1926), p. 49.

32. These averages are for the period 1931–32 to 1935–36. See Board of Economic Inquiry, Punjab, *Farm Accounts in the Punjab*, Publications no. 32, 53, 58 (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1931–32, 1934–35, 1935–36).

33. Darling, *Punjab Peasant*, 43–44.

34. Compare Hugh Kennedy Trevaskis, *The Punjab of Today*, 2 vols. (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1932), 2:70–71. Although Darling understood that debt forced the central Punjab smallholder to unremitting toil, he too indulged in racial determinism at times, as when he explained the willingness to work hard as a racial characteristic. See Darling, *Punjab Peasant*, 25, 44, for examples.

35. Tom G. Kessinger, *Vilyatpur: Social and Economic Change in a North Indian Village* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1974) 116, provides data over time on the changing relationship between proprietary holdings and cultivation units (actual farms) in a central Punjab village (Jullundur District). Also see Hubert Calvert, *The Size and Distribution of Agricultural Holdings in the Punjab*, Board of Economic Inquiry, Punjab Rural Section Publication no. 4 (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1925) and *The Size and Distribution of Cultivators' Holdings in the Punjab*, Board of Economic Inquiry, Punjab Rural Section Publication no. 11 (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1928), 3–4.

36. Board of Economic Inquiry, Punjab, *An Economic Survey of Gaggar Bhana in Amritsar District*, comp. S. Gian Singh, Publication no. 16 (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1928), 48, 69.

37. Computed from Government of India, *Census of India 1901, Punjab*, vol. 1; and *Census of India 1911, Punjab*, vol. 1 (Tumba, Sweden, International Documentation Centre [1964], microfiche).

38. Compare Michael Adas, *The Burma Delta: Economic Development and Social Change on an Asian Rice Frontier* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1974).

39. Trevaskis, *Punjab of Today*, 1:330.

40. Samir Amin discusses the theory of unequal exchange in *Unequal Development* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976), 138–149 (especially pages 140 to 142), where he presents the case of unequal trade in goods having different organic compositions of capital but where a uniform price is set by the world capitalist system, which is the situation that arose in the Punjab.

41. Mohinder Singh, *The Akali Movement* (Delhi: Macmillan, 1978), 146, gives examples of problems in the military in the 1920s, although only in connection with the Third Sikh War.

42. See Elizabeth Whitcombe, *Agrarian Conditions in Northern India* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1972), 76–81, for an equivalent situation in the adjoining United Provinces.

43. On the surfacing of capital after the war and its use in moneylending by agriculturists, see Trevaskis, *Punjab of Today*, 2:42–43. Also see Darling, *Punjab Peasant*, 17, on the agriculturist moneylender. On increasing differentiation among Punjab cultivators in a somewhat earlier period, which agriculturist moneylending after World War I took even further, see Naved Hamid, "Dispossession and Differentiation of the Peasantry in the Punjab during Colonial Rule," *Journal of Peasant Studies* 10 (1982): 52–71; and Salish Chandra Misra, "Commercialization, Peasant Differentiation, and Merchant Capital in Late Nineteenth-Century Bombay and Punjab," *Journal of Peasant Studies* 10 (1982): 5. Later British efforts to discipline merchant capital only strengthened these rural, agriculturist moneylenders. The co-op program launched by British authorities aimed to control the finance capital of the merchants from destabilizing the countryside, but its actual consequence was to give official recognition and subsidy to the more affluent landholders and their debt bondage of the poorer cultivators because it was these larger cultivators who ran the co-ops. On the cooperative program, see Trevaskis, *Punjab of Today*, 2:25–65, and Darling, *Punjab Peasant*, 228–245.

44. See Harriet Friedmann, "World Market, State, and Family Farm: Social Bases of Household Production in the Era of Wage Labor," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 20 (1978): 545–586; Joel Kahn, "Economic Scale and The Cycle of Petty Commodity Production in West Sumatra," in *Marxist Analyses and Social Anthropology*, ed. Maurice Bloch (New York: John Wiley, 1975), 137–158; and Carol Smith, "Does a Commodity Economy Enrich the Few While Ruining the Masses? Differentiation Among Petty Commodity Producers in Guatemala," *Journal of Peasant Studies* 11 (1984): 60–95, for instances of the opposite condition: where capital demands for starting up in petty commodity production do not increase, and wage labor, rather than being a permanent class condition, is only a temporary stage in the acquisition of sufficient capital to set up petty commodity production in one's own right.

5: The Third Sikh War

1. Sardul Singh Caveeshar, *The Sikh Studies* (Lahore: National Publications, 1937), 191.

2. I shall use "Akali movement" and "Third Sikh War" interchangeably and I refer to the participants as either "Akalis" or "militant Singhs."

3. Khuswant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), 2:213.

4. Government of India, "Home-Political Files A," 459, II, & K.W., "Notes on the Akali Dal and the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, 1921–1922," par. 45 (New Delhi, National Archives of India). Hereafter, these confidential files will be referenced as *HP(A)*.

5. See Mohinder Singh, *The Akali Movement* (Delhi: Macmillan, 1978), 157 n.18. Khuswant Singh, *History of the Sikhs*, 2:215n, claims the Akalis, also known as Nihangs, took their name and garb from the suicide troops of the Moghuls, similarly named Nihangs, and that Akalis originated under Guru Gobind Singh.

6. British authorities began arresting any Singh with a kirpan longer than nine inches, and they closed the factory where they were made. The Singhs protested that their religion forbade the use of the kirpan as a weapon, but the British were unconvinced. See Hugh Kennedy Trevaskis, *The Punjab of Today*, 2 vols. (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1932), 1:130; Khuswant Singh, *History of the Sikhs*, 2:203. Much the same argument went on over a half-century later when the Indian governnment restricted Singhs from taking kirpans onto airplanes.

7. Sikh shrines are not only places of worship but also serve as community centers and provide free food and accommodation. Many shrines enjoy additional religious importance because they are associated with events in the lives of the ten Sikh spiritual leaders (gurus).

8. See B. B. Misra, *The Indian Middle Classes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), 284.

9. Sir Malcolm Darling employed these two images to define the range of the Punjab's peasantry. For the most favorable image, see his description of the central Punjab's Jat cultivators and, for the pejorative, his presentation of the unthrifty Baluchi cultivators of the Punjab's southwestern drylands in *The Punjab Peasantry in Prosperity and Debt*, 4th ed. (1947; rev. ed., Columbia, Mo.: South Asia Books, 1978), 35, 97, 110. Trevaskis, *Punjab of Today*, 1:70–71 employed a similar folk ethology of the Punjab peasant.

10. *HP(A)*, 459, II, & K.W., 1922, "Notes on the Akali Dal . . . ," par. 45.

11. Ibid., letter from J. Wilson-Johnston, Sec. Punjab Govt. to C. W. Gwyne, Depty. Sec., GOI, Home Dept.

12. K. S. Talwar, "Early Phases of the Sikh Renaissance and Struggle for Freedom," *Panjab Past and Present* 4 (1970): 294.

13. Such protest oratory at rural diwans is reported in *HP(A)*, 71–72, August 1920.

14. Compare Mohinder Singh, *Akali Movement*, 47–48.

15. *HP(A)*, 459, II, & K.W., 1922, "Notes on the Akali Dal . . . ," par. 39.

16. *HP(A)*, 71–72, August 1920.

17. *HP(A)*, 459, II, & K.W., 1922, "Notes on the Akali Dal . . . ," par. 25; but see an argument against its religious character in par. 43.

18. Komma, "The Sikh Situation in the Punjab (1907–1923)," *Panjab Past and Present*, 12 (1923; reprint, 1978), 437; and *HP(A)*, 459, II, & K.W., 1922, report of Lt. Col. R. H. Anderson.

19. Report by Sant Singh on 13 December 1921, in *HP(A)*, 459, 1922.

20. The letters of 2 May and 4 July 1925 from Sir Malcolm Hailey, Gov. Punjab to Sir Alexander Muddiman, Home Member, GOI, in *HP(A)*, 120, III, 1925, provide examples.

21. As the British well knew and often used: for example, the instances of pro-British political statements issued by the Golden Temple functionaries given earlier.

22. Government of India, "Report on the Native Newspapers, Punjab" (hereafter *Native Newspapers*) (New Delhi, Nehru Memorial Library, microfilm), 4 April 1921, report on *Kesari* (Lahore), and 5 April 1921, letter from Sant Singh published in *The Tribune* (Lahore). The oratory at meetings is also reported in *HP(A)*, 203–204, October 1921.

23. *Native Newspapers* 3 April 1921, report on *Sikh* (Lahore); and instances cited in 22 above.

24. Letter of 21 March 1924, from Lt. Col. A. B. Minchin, Agent to the Governor General, Punjab States in *HP(A)*, 1, II, 1924. Minchin gives the figures of twenty lakhs of rupees as the income derived from the shrines. One lakh equals 100,000. Trevaskis, *Punjab of Today*, 1:127, makes the same point.

25. The reports in *Native Newspapers*, 15 February 1907, and 15 February 1919, provide examples; see also Mohinder Singh, *Akali Movement*, 15.

26. See Kenneth W. Jones, *Arya Dharm: Hindu Consciousness in 19th-Century Punjab* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1976), 211, for the removal of Hindu idols from the Golden Temple in 1905; and Mohinder Singh, *Akali Movement*, 17–18, for legal actions taken against mahants.

27. Mohinder Singh and others report that Dyer was made an honorary Sikh by the Golden Temple authorities. See Mohinder Singh, *Akali Movement*, 14; Ian J. Kerr, "The British and the Administration of the Golden Temple in 1859," *Panjab Past and Present* 10 (1976): 310 n.13; and Ruchi Ram Sahni, *Struggle For Reform in Sikh Shrines* (Amritsar: Sikh Itihas Research Board, n.d.), 60–61.

28. Sahni, *Reform in Sikh Shrines*, 60–61.

29. My presentation follows the description by Sahni, ibid., 62, who was a contemporary observer and later participant in the Akali movement. Other scholars, such as Mohinder Singh and Khuswant Singh, do not specifically mention this August incident. Another contemporary, Sardul Singh Caveeshar, places this event in October 1920. See his *Sikh Studies*, 223–224. Whatever the actual dates and events, it appears true that the issue of worship by Untouchable Singhs precipitated the confrontation between urban reformers and the Golden Temple's officiants; see, for example, Sir David Petrie, *Developments in Sikh Politics (1900–1911), Report* (Amritsar: Chief Khalsa Diwan, [1911],) 28 and Mohinder Singh, *Akali Movement*, 22.

30. See Sahni, *Reform in Sikh Shrines*, 62, and Gopal Singh, *A History of the Sikh People (1469–1978)* (New Delhi: World Sikh University Press, 1979), 652.

31. Mohinder Singh, *Akali Movement*, 19–26.

32. *HP(A)*, 459, II, & K.W., 1922, "Notes on the Akali Dal . . . ," par. 25, reports that one thousand Akalis appeared quickly in one confrontation.

33. Ibid., par. 33.

34. Mohinder Singh, *Akali Movement*, 188.

35. *HP(A)*, 459, II, & K.W., 1922, "Notes on the Akali Dal . . . ," par. 33, gives an instance of a jatha that was not under central control. When the British outlawed the SGPC and Akali Dal in 1923, they separately outlawed several other jathas not formally connected with the Amritsar-based Akali organizations, as noted in *HP(A)*, 395, 1925, "Summary of Sikh Situation," by J. Crerar, Secy. Home Department, Government of India.

36. *HP(A)*, 459, II, & K.W., 1922, "Notes on the Akali Dal . . . ," pars. 31, 35, 36.

37. Khuswant Singh, *History of the Sikhs*, 2:202.

38. The growing animosity between Singh reformers and the colonial authorities after the Nankana tragedy is chronicled in the newspaper *The Tribune* (Lahore) throughout March and April 1921.

39. Mohinder Singh, *Akali Movement*, 188–189.

40. See *Native Newspapers*, issue for 12 March 1921; Mohinder Singh, *Akali Movement*, 36; Sahni, *Reform in Sikh Shrines*, 64, 66. The attempt by Akalis to proselytize over the "keys affair," as they came to call it, and the British response with arrests appears in *The Tribune* (Lahore), 1 December 1921, and for the next month thereafter.

41. Sahni, *Reform in Sikh Shrines*, 172.

42. Ibid., 126.

43. Ibid., 185; Government of India, "Fortnightly Reports on the Punjab" (hereafter *FR*) (New Delhi, National Archives of India), 31 January 1923.

44. Mohinder Singh, *Akali Movement*, 59.

45. *FR*, 31 January 1923.

46. Because certain hereditary rulers had proved loyal to the Raj, the British upon taking over the Punjab confirmed their possessions, which were known as Native States and then later as Princely States. Their independence from British India existed in practice mainly when it suited colonial interests. For example, the British thought it would be easier to handle the Akalis in a Princely State such as Nabha, where British law did not obtain, than it would be in the British districts of the Punjab. See Jawarharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography* (1942; reprint, Bombay: Allied, 1962), 107–116, where he summarizes his imprisonment and trial in Nabha.

47. Mohinder Singh, *Akali Movement*, 59, 189.

48. *HP(A)*, 120, III, 1925, noted that a seventeenth jatha was in formation, but the records available to me indicate no more than that the thirteenth was the last to be arrested; see *HP(A)*, 67, IV, 1924.

49. Khuswant Singh, *History of the Sikhs*, 2:210; *HP(A)*, 1, II, 1924.

50. *HP(A)*, 120, I, 1925.

51. *FR*, 15 February, 15 March 1924.

52. Throughout the Third Sikh War, the Government of India taxed the Punjab administration for its failure to act more forcefully to suppress the Akalis. Similarly, Khuswant Singh, *History of the Sikhs*, 2:203, reports that many district officials, unhappy over the handling of the "keys affair," began a crackdown on rural Akalis; see *HP(A)*, 459, II, & K.W., 1922, letter from J. Wilson-Johnston, Secy. to the Punjab Government, to C. W. Gwynne, Dpty. Secy., GOI, for details of this roundup of Akalis in late March 1922; also see *HP(A)*, 942, 1922.

53. John Maynard, "The Sikh Problem in the Punjab," *Panjab Past and Present* 2 (1923; reprint, 1977): 137.

54. *HP(A)*, 459, II, & K.W., 1922.

55. A common method by which the colonial government managed rural unrest was to station extra police forces in villages or regions that it deemed troublesome or untrustworthy. These extraordinary police posts were considered punitive because the British assessed the local peasantry for the additional cost. At first mainly used against bandits, the punitive police increasingly became in the twentieth century a means of suppressing anti-British protest in the countryside. See *HP(A)*, 67, 1924, for an example of how the British controlled political dissent through threatening to impose punitive police posts on protesting villagers.

56. The exchange between the Government of India and the Punjab Government appears in *HP(A)*, 459, II, 1922.

57. Gandhi quoted in Mohinder Singh, *Akali Movement*, 47.

58. *HP(A)*, 459, II, & K.W., 1922, "Notes on the Akali Dal . . . ," pars. 43, 40.

59. Government of the Punjab, Police Administration, *Annual Report, 1922* (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1923), 17, indicates the failure of the rural population to aid the police effort against the Babbar Akalis; the same point is made in the Criminal Intelligence Department report in *HP(A)*, 1, X, 1924, par. 8.

60. See Khuswant Singh, *History of the Sikhs*, 2:206, and Mohinder Singh, *Akali Movement*, 117ff.

61. An undated letter from the Punjab government contained in *HP(A)*, 134, II, 1923, claimed that this repudiation came "as the result of a hint from Government."

62. Reports of police oppression appear in *Native Newspapers*, 26 May 1923 issue.

63. *HP(A)*, 134, II, 1923.

64. The apprehension of the Government of India about Akali strength, dissidence, and attempts to alienate Singhs in the military is expressed in *HP(A)*, 459, 1922.

65. Statement by Rev. McKee, in *HP(A)*, 1, II, 1924; and report of J. Wilson-Johnston on 22 May 1924, in *HP(A)*, 67, 1924.

66. Compare Mohinder Singh, *Akali Movement*, 75–77.

67. Letters from K. M. Panniker to M. K. Gandhi dated 1 April 1924, in *HP(A)*, 67, 1924; and dated 18 April 1924, and no date in *HP(A)*, 67, III, 1924.

68. The Akali movement continues up to the present as a political party based on the SGPC's control over the Sikh shrines. Before Independence, it generally represented the nationalist politics of the Congress Party, but it also worked hard to represent Sikh interests in the communal awards of the 1935 reforms and in the partition agreement arranged just before the British quit India. The mass social protest of the Third Sikh War never appeared in British India again, however. In independent India, the Akalis have been party to mass movements—such as the "Punjabi Subah" agitation of the 1950s and the current "Khalistan" movement—aimed at wresting more autonomy or even independence for the Punjab and its Punjabi-speaking population, most of whom are Sikhs. For its later history, see Kailash Chander Gulati, *The Akalis Past and Present* (New Delhi: Ashajanak, 1974); and Paul Brass, *Language, Religion, and Politics in North India* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 312–319.

69. Part of the compromise required jailed Akali leaders to accept the provisions of the bill before they could be released. The more militant and anticolonial reformers refused to do so and remained imprisoned for some time after the moderates had been released. See Mohinder Singh, *Akali Movement*, 112. For rural protest against the gurudwara bill, see *The Tribune* (Lahore), 1 July 1925.

70. *HP(A)*, 132, III, 1927, note writeen 16 June 1927.

71. Maynard, *Sikh Problem*, 139.

72. *HP(A)*, 459, II, & K.W., 1922, "Notes on the Akali Dal . . . ," par. 30.

73. Ibid., par. 31.

74. Ibid., par. 39.

75. *Native Newspapers*, issue of 22 January 1922, *Bande Mataram* (Lahore).

76. *HP(A)*, 1, II, 1924.

77. *FR*, 31 March 1924.

78. Ibid., 15 March, 31 March, 15 April 1924; *HP(A)*, 67, 1924, report on fifth jatha.

79. *FR*, 29 February 1924.

80. Sahni, *Reform in Sikh Shrines*, 131.

81. *HP(A)*, 67, 1924.

82. As, for example, in *FR*, 15 March 1924.

83. *HP(A)*, 67, 1924.

84. *HP(A)*, 307, 1930.

85. Letter, dated 12 April 1924, from Govt. Punjab to GOI, in *HP(A)*, 67, 1924.

86. Letter from the General Staff, dated 2 June 1924, and reply by Govt. Punjab, dated 5 July 1924, in *HP(A)*, 1, VI, 1924.

87. The use of homespun cloth aligned the protesters with the swadeshi campaign of the Congress Party, which aimed to replace cloth imports from Britain with indigenous textiles.

88. *HP(A)*, 327, I, 1922, telegram from Govt. Punjab to GOI, dated 29 November 1921. This telegram shows how early in the Third Sikh War the quasi-military pattern became established.

89. Sahni, *Reform in Sikh Shrines*, 143–144.

90. *HP(A)*, 1, II, 1923 ; 67, 1924; 67, III, 1924.

91. Maynard, *Sikh Problem*, 139; *HP(A)*, 459, II, & K.W., 1922, par. 39.

92. *HP(A)*, 112, II, 1923.

93. A. C. Niemeijer, *The Khilafat Movement in India 1919–1924* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1972), 112, 138, 141; and R. C. Majumdar, *History of the Freedom Movement*, 3 vols. (Calcutta: K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1963) 3:106. It is worth noting that the Khilafat movement combined anticolonial protest with a religious crusade, just as did the Akalis, and that the successful use of military organization to mobilize north Indian Muslims worked on a population that was a mainstay of British military recruitment, just as the Sikhs were.

94. *HP(A)*, 459, II, & K.W., par. 33.

95. *HP(A)*, 395, 1925, summary of Sikh situation by J. Crerar, Sec. Home Dept. GOI, dated 17 May 1925.

96. *HP(A)*, 459, II, & K.W., 1922.

97. *HP(A)*, 1, II, 1923.

98. *HP(A)*, 67, 1924.

99. *HP(A)*, 67, III, 1924.

100. *FR*, 15 May 1924.

101. See Darling, *Punjab Peasant*, 100.

102. Government of the Punjab, Department of Agriculture, *Report of the Seasons and Crops of the Punjab, 1922–23* (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1923); Government of the Punjab, *Report of the First Regular Wages Survey of the Punjab, Taken in December 1912* (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1924), par. 4.

103. David Gilmartin, "Tribe, Land, and Religion in the Punjab," (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1979), 171ff.

104. Craig Baxter, "Some Aspects of Politics in the Punjab, 1936–1945" in *Pakistan: The Long View*, ed. Laurence Zirling, Ralph Braibanti, and W. Howard Riggins (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1977), 66–67; I. A. Talbot, "The 1946 Punjab Elections," *Modern Asian Studies* 14 (1980): 65–91.

105. Chapter 9 considers the reasons why another rural population, the canal colonists, joined in the Third Sikh War.

106. Mridula Mukherjee reviews the effects of the Great Depression and World War II on the rural economy of the Punjab in "Aspects of Agrarian Structure in the Punjab, 1925–47." Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Mimeograph; Darling, *Punjab Peasant*, 209.

107. Agricultural data from the Punjab, which showed the advent of capitalist relations, set off the famous "mode of production" debate among Indian scholars about the nature of capitalism and its development in India. This literature also contains important empirical material on capitalist agriculture in the Punjab, although it tends to define capitalist relations as only pertaining to the Punjab after Independence. See the bibliography provided by Hamza Alavi in "India and the Colonial Mode of Production," in *The Socialist Register, 1975*, ed. Ralph Miliband and John Saville (London: Merlin Press, 1975), 193 n.1. Some of this exchange has been reprinted in (Anonymous), *Studies in the Development of Capitalism in India* (Lahore: Vanguard, 1978). Alavi continued the discussion of capitalist agriculture in India in "India: Transition from Feudalism to Colonial Capitalism," *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 10 (1980): 395–398. T. J. Byres

analyzes capitalist relations in Punjab agriculture today in "The New Technology, Class Formation and Class Action in the Indian Countryside," *Journal of Peasant Studies* 8 (1981): 405–455.

108. Byers, "New Technology, Class Formation and Class Action," 427.

6: Cultural Materialism and Culturology

1. Harris defines the basic principle of cultural materialism as "infrastructural determinism," meaning

> The assumption that variations in social response repertoires are in some sense "adaptive" to [the ecological] context. In the cultural materialist strategy the ecological conditions embodied in the infrastructure raise or lower the bio-psychological costs and benefits of innovative responses. . . . Certain innovative behaviors rather than others are retained and propagated . . . because they maximize bio-psychological benefits and minimize bio-psychological costs.

See Marvin Harris, *Cultural Materialism: The Struggle for a Science of Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 137. Besides constantly reifying societies, Harris frequently imputes an economizing adaptability or "market mentality" to them—as when he refers to the "cultural materialist optimizing mini-max, cost-benefit analysis." There is not much difference between the cost-accounting economism that Harris applies to whole societies and the economizing choices imputed to individuals by classical economists. Therefore, Marshall Sahlins argues that "culture" for Harris "is business." See Sahlins, "Culture as Protein and Profit," *New York Review of Books*, 23 November 1978, 45. Rather than "cultural materialism," a more appropriate label for Harris's approach might be "capitalist materialism."

2. Paul Diener, Donald Nonini, and Eugene E. Robkin, "The Dialectics of the Sacred Cow: Ecological Adaptation Versus Political Appropriation in the Origins of India's Cattle Complex," *Dialectical Anthropology* 3 (1978): 221–243.

3. Clifford Geertz, *Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth-Century Bali* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 126.

4. Ibid., 5. An example of culturology applied to India is the work of Louis Dumont, who explains Hindu India as a social order constituted by a set of cultural meanings based on ritual purity and pollution. Short of total destruction, this Hindu cultural system can remain intact, even though its expression may be quite different under specific material conditions. Even when Dumont does find India to have changed under Western contact, it takes place at the allowance of the indigenous cultural system. Western influence on India has prevailed, he says, in domains that were "relatively neutral" with respect to indigenous cultural values and in ones where these indigenous values prefigured Western ideas. See Louis Dumont, *Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and Its Implications*, trans. Mark Sainsbury (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 218–219, 237.

5. James Scott, "Protest and Profanation: Agrarian Revolt and the Little Tradition, Part I," *Theory and Society* 4 (1977): 17, 32. For a critique of moral economy, see Robert P. Weller and Scott E. Guggenheim, "Introduction," in *Power and Protest in the Countryside: Studies of Rural Unrest in Asia, Europe, and Latin America* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1982), 3–12. An example of moral-economy analysis, applied to the political aspirations of the Sikhs in the Punjab is Paul Brass, *Language, Religion, and Politics in North India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 278.

6. Khuswant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs,* 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 1:86. Another indication of this point is that most of Guru Gobind Singh's injunctions applied to and were mainly carried out by males. The status of women in the khalsa because of this fact proved a great trial to British census officers, who were never certain about how to enumerate them. See, for example, Government of India, *Census of India, 1901, Punjab,* vol. 1 (Tumba, Sweden, International Documentation Centre [1964], microfiche), 124.

7. The norm for Hindu and Muslim adult men requires kempt and trimmed head and facial hair. Some Hindu ascetics shave off their hair entirely. J. P. Singh Uberoi contrasts this practice with the Sikh injunction against cutting hair and concludes that Sikh practice is a reversal of the Hindu ascetic norm. He then argues that through this inversion, the Sikhism of Guru Gobind Singh symbolically differentiated itself from Hindu asceticism and reaffirmed a worldly existence for its followers. See his "The Five Symbols of Sikhism" in *Sikhism* (Patiala: Punjabi University Press, 1969), 127ff. My interpretation is somewhat different: through requiring uncut but kempt hair, Singh identity was separated from both Hindu ascetic traditions of shaved hair or uncut and unkempt hair, but it was also linked to the sacred in that Singhs were differentiated in appearance from typical Hindu males.

8. Nonvegetarianism and alcohol consumption are associated with physical strength in South Asia, but are proscribed for many castes.

9. R. W. Falcon, *Handbook on Sikhs for Regimental Officers* (Allahabad: Pioneer Press, 1896), 16.

10. Government of India, *Census of India, 1891, Punjab,* vol. 1 (Tumba, Sweden, International Documentation Centre [1964], microfiche), 92, 149.

11. Falcon, *Handbook,* 120.

12. Niharranjan Ray, *The Sikh Gurus and the Sikh Society: A Study in Social Analysis* (Patiala: Punjabi University Press, 1970), 32.

13. Paul Hershman, *Punjabi Kinship and Marriage* (Delhi: Hindustan Publishing, 1981), 22–24.

14. Ray, *Sikh Gurus,* 32.

15. Hershman, *Kinship and Marriage,* 22–23.

16. Ray, *Sikh Gurus,* 68.

17. Government of India, "Home-Political Files A," 179, III, 1922 (New Delhi, National Archives of India) [hereafter *HP(A),*] contains a memorial drafted by Udasi mahants claiming that Udasis and Akalis represent separate strains of religious development from Guru Nanak's preachings. The Udasis claim they fall under Hinduism.

18. For protests by Sikhs who were not Singhs see Government of India, *Census of India, 1901, Punjab,* vol. 1 (Tumba, Sweden, International Documentation Centre [1964], microfiche), 124; and *Census of India, 1911, North-West Frontier Province* (Tumba, Sweden, International Documentation Centre [1964], microfiche), 63. Note that the census criteria did not include baptism in the definition of what census commissioners chose to refer to as the "true" Sikh. See *Census of India, 1891, Punjab,* vol. 1 (Tumba, Sweden, International Documentation Centre [1964], microfiche), 92.

19. Government of India, *Census of India, 1901, Punjab,* vol. 1 (Tumba, Sweden, International Documentation Centre [1964], microfiche), 124.

20. Reported in *The Tribune* (Lahore), 19 February 1921. This conference, which was expected to attract twenty-thousand participants, was scheduled for the day before the Nankana tragedy. It is not clear that it ever took place, and its relation to Akali actions at Nankana or to the slaughter perpetrated by the mahant has never been investigated.

21. Reported in ibid., 13 December 1921.

22. Government of India, "Fortnightly Reports on the Punjab" (hereafter *FR*) (New Delhi, National Archives of India 15 April 1921).

23. *FR,* 15 July 1923.

24. *FR,* 31 January 1924.

25. Government of India, "Report on the Native Newspapers, Punjab" (hereafter *Native Newspapers*) (New Delhi, Nehru Memorial Library, microfilm), 15 May 1921 issue of *Kesari;* 27 March, 25 August, 17 November 1922 issues of *Kuka;* 29 July 1922 issue of *Shamsher.*

26. For example, *The Tribune* (Lahore) 6 April 1921, 11 June 1925.

27. See S. L. Malhotra, *Gandhi: An Experiment with Communal Politics* (Chandigarh: Punjab University Publication Bureau, 1975), 85.

28. *HP(A),* 383, 1921.

29. Hugh Kennedy Trevaskis, *The Punjab of Today,* 2 vols. (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1932), 1:130.

30. *HP(A),* 50–53, 1914, letter from C. A. Barron, Sec. to Punjab Govt., dated 9 May 1913.

31. The Guru Granth Sahib consists of devotional songs compiled by various spiritual leaders. See Khuswant Singh, *History of the Sikhs,* 1:304–309.

32. See *Native Newspapers,* issues of *Khalsa Samachar* (Amritsar), 11 January 1918, and *Khalsa Advocate* (Lahore), 23 February 1918.

33. W. Owen Cole and Piara Singh Sambhi, *The Sikhs* (London: Ward Lock, 1973), 134. Some Sikhs have told me that the Rag Mala is included in a complete reading of the Guru Granth Sahib.

34. Komma, "The Sikh Situation in the Punjab (1907–1922)," *Panjab Past and Present* (1923, reprint 1978), 436–437.

35. For the thesis that the "middle peasant" is the first wave of resistance to commercialization and capitalist penetration, see Hamza Alavi, "Peasant Classes and Primordial Loyalties," *Journal of Peasant Studies* 1 (1973): 291–377; and Eric R. Wolf, *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), 290–292. Neil Charlesworth argues against the middle-peasant thesis by showing that peasant resistance, at least in some cases, occurs long after

the peasant has fully committed to market production. See his "The 'Middle Peasant Thesis' and the Roots of Rural Agitation in India, 1914–1947," *Journal of Peasant Studies* 7 (1980): 275. Charlesworth's perspective better captures the nature of Akali rural protest, which was not against the world market but against the peasant's declining position within it. The middle-peasant thesis appears to hold for the earlier Namdhari protest, however.

36. Fauja Singh Bajwa, *Kuka Movement* (Delhi: Motilal Benarsidass, 1965), 34.

37. Ray, *Sikh Gurus*, 169–170; Bajwa, *Kuka Movement*, 66; Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikh* (Bombay and New York: Asia Publishing House, 1964), 131–138.

38. *HP(A)*, 671–684, & K.W., October 1915; and 188–191, December 1914, give details on Ghadar actions in the Punjab. See Harish K. Puri, "Revolutionary Organizations: A Study of the Ghadar Movement," *Social Scientist* 9 (1980): 53–66, for an analysis of Ghadarite organization and training—or lack thereof—in the United States before the immigrants returned to the Punjab.

39. Harish K. Puri, "Ghadar Movement: An Experiment in New Patterns of Socialization," *Journal of Regional History* 1 (1980): 120.

40. Ibid., 130.

41. Ibid., 133–134.

42. Ibid., 135–136.

43. Ibid., 136.

44. *HP(A)*, 188–191, December 1914, statement of Nikka Singh.

45. Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1975), 314–315. Joel Kahn reviews this literature in "Explaining Ethnicity: A Review Article," *Critique of Anthropology* 4, no. 16 (1981): 43–52.

46. Marshall Sahlins, *Culture and Practical Reason* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 206.

47. Compare the comment on the danger of "class reductionism" by Nicos Mouzelis in "Modernisation, Underdevelopment, Uneven Development: Prospects for a Theory of Third-World Formations," *Journal of Peasant Studies* 7 (1980): 372; also see Richard G. Fox, "Urban Class and Communal Consciousness in Colonial Punjab: The Genesis of India's Intermediate Regime," *Modern Asian Studies* 18 (1984): 459–489.

48. For the Arya Samaj, see Kenneth Jones, *Arya Dharm: Hindu Consciousness in 19th-Century Punjab* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1976), and Richard G. Fox, "Colonial Punjab." For the Singh Sabhas, see Teja Singh, "The Singh Sabha Movement," *Panjab Past and Present* 7 (1944; reprint, 1973), 31–44; K. S. Talwar, "Early Phases of the Sikh Renaissance and Struggle for Freedom," *Panjab Past and Present* 4 (1970): 288–299; Khuswant Singh, *History of the Sikhs*, 2:136–150; and N. Gerald Barrier, *The Sikhs and Their Literature* (Delhi: Manohar, 1970), xvii–xlv.

49. For a general overview of associations, but mainly those ostensibly secular, see Anil Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism: Competition and Collaboration in the Later Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,

1970). For caste-based associations, see Eugene F. Irschick, *Politics and Social Conflict in South India: The Non-Brahman Movement and Tamil Separatism, 1916–1929* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969); Marguerite Ross Barnett, "Creating Political Identity: The Emergent South Indian Tamils," *Ethnicity* 1 (1974): 237–260; and Richard G. Fox, "Resiliency and Change in the Indian Caste System: The Umar of U.P.," *Journal of Asian Studies* 26 (1967): 575–587.

50. David Petrie, *Developments in Sikh Politics (1900–1911), a Report* (Amritsar: Chief Khalsa Diwan, [1911]), 30.

51. Jones, *Arya Dharm*, 134–135.

52. Michael Kalecki made the earliest significant use of the concept of the lower-middle class in *Selected Essays on the Economic Growth of the Socialist and the Mixed Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972). Indian scholars have used Kalecki's concept to analyze the class that has dominated the post-Independence Indian state; see K. N. Raj, "The Politics and Economics of 'Intermediate' Regimes," *Economic and Political Weekly* 8, no. 27 (7 July 1973): 1189–1198; Ashok Mitra, *Terms of Trade and Class Relations* (London: Frank Cass, 1977); and Prem Shankar Jha, *India: A Political Economy of Stagnation* (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1980); also see Fox, "Colonial Punjab," 461ff.

53. Government of India, *Census of India, 1891, Punjab*, vol. 1 (Tumba, Sweden, International Documentation Centre [1964], microfiche), abstract 18.

54. See Fox, "Colonial Punjab," 472.

55. Teja Singh, "Singh Sabha Movement," 41.

56. See D. C. Verma, *Sir Chhotu Ram, Life and Times* (New Delhi: Stirling, 1981), 52–53.

57. Government of India, *Census of India, 1911, Punjab*, vol. 1 (Tumba, Sweden, International Documentation Centre [1964], microfiche), 137.

58. See Ruchi Ram Sahni, *Struggle for Reform in Sikh Shrines* (Amritsar: Sikh Itihas Research Board, SGPC, n.d.), 24–29.

59. N. Gerald Barrier, "The Punjab Disturbances of 1907: The Response of the British Government in India to Agrarian Unrest," *Panjab Past and Present* 8 (1974): 444–476; Jones, *Arya Dharm*, 269–279.

60. The involvement of the Arya Samaj in these protests and in a general anticolonial stance was clear to contemporaries. See, for example, Ganda Singh, ed., *The Deportation of Lala Lajpat Rai and Sardar Ajit Singh* (Patiala: Punjabi University Press, 1978), 7, and Valentine Chirol, *Indian Unrest* (London: Macmillan, 1910), 111–114.

61. Bridget O'Laughlin, "Imperialist Culture and Its Practical Reason," *Dialectical Anthropology 3* (1978): 100–101. O'Laughlin convincingly argues that what I have labeled "culturology" contains an implicit functionalism similar to that found with cultural materialism. Whatever happens, for culturology, is a functional product of the cultural code—just as cultural materialists proceed as if everything that happens is functional to the ecological and demographic needs of society.

62. Harris, *Cultural Materialism*, 59.

7: Class and Culture

1. Louis Althusser, *For Marx*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: Verso, 1977), 100–101.

2. Anthony Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1979), 52, 157.

3. C. W. M. Hart and Arnold R. Pilling, *The Tiwi of North Australia* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979), 9–30, 67–78.

4. Some conflicts in primitive societies anticipate the confrontations typical of class societies. For example, when chiefs attempt to convert their high rank and sumptuary privileges into class superiority and control over means of production, there can be collective contradictory interests similar to those in class societies. For such a situation, albeit under the stimulus of European contact, see the discussion of the relations between Hawaiian chiefs and commoners in Marshall Sahlins, *Historical Metaphors and Mythical Realities: Structure in the Early History of the Sandwich Islands Kingdom* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1981), 55ff.

5. E. P. Thompson, *The Poverty of Theory and Other Essays* (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1978), 268.

6. Ashok Mitra, *Terms of Trade and Class Relations* (London: Frank Cass, 1977), 93. For an example in South Asian research of an analysis of class consciousness as a result of maturing experience, see Ravinder Kumar's study of the classes involved in the 1919 Bombay textile strike in his "The Bombay Textile Strike, 1919," *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 8 (1971): 1–29, and especially page 28. For a review of class analysis applied to modern South Asian society and especially the nationalist movement, see Rajat K. Ray, "Three Interpretations of Indian Nationalism" in *Essays in Modern Indian History*, ed. B. R. Nanda (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1980), 8–19.

7. Thompson, *Poverty of Theory*, 295–296.

8. Sahlins, *Historical Metaphors*, 67.

9. Ibid., p. 37. See also his treatment of interests on pages 35–36.

10. Ibid., 35; also see page 38.

11. E. P. Thompson, "Eighteenth-Century English Society: Class Struggle Without Class?," *Social History* 3 (1978): 156.

12. Ibid.

13. See, for example, Thompson's treatment of eighteenth-century food riots as depending on "an inherited pattern of action" continuing over hundreds of years in "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the 18th Century," *Past and Present*, no. 50 (1971): 119. William Roseberry similarly remarks Thompson's steady intellectual development away from a moral economy orientation in "From Social History to Politics: Culture, Community, and Class" (Paper delivered at the Eleventh International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences Meeting, Quebec City, Quebec, 1983).

14. This phrasing and orientation owes much to Raymond Williams's portrayal of culture in materialist terms, namely as a production of individuals and groups culturally laboring in society. See his *Marxism and Literature* (London: Oxford University Press, 1977), 19, 119ff.

8: A Martial Species

1. G. MacMunn, *The Armies of India* (1911; reprint, Delhi: Gian, 1980), 135.

2. David Petrie, *Recent Developments in Sikh Politics, 1900–1911, a Report* (Amritsar: Chief Khalsa Diwan, [1911]), 11; MacMunn, *Armies of India,* 135; John J. H. Gordon, *The Sikhs* (1883; reprint, Lahore: Department of Languages, Pakistan, 1970), 228; Alfred Horsford Bingley, *Sikhs* (1899; reprint, Patiala: Department of Languages, Punjab, 1970), 96.

3. Government of India, *Census of India, 1901, Punjab,* vol. 1 (Tumba, Sweden, International Documentation Centre [1964], microfiche), 122. Army recruitment may explain some of the increase in the numbers of Sikh Jats in comparison to Hindu Jats that took place in the central Punjab after 1901 (see table 26), rather than the growing success of Singh urban reformers, as I argued in chapter 6. But, as I show in this chapter, military service and Singh identity were so intertwined—and Singh reformers depended on and utilized this interconnection so greatly, as I discuss in chapter 9—that the spread of Singh identity in the rural areas through increased military recruitment was tantamount to a rise in Singh reformism's rural influence, given the fact that urban reformers were not avowedly anti-British until after 1920.

4. R. W. Falcon, *Handbook on Sikhs for Regimental Officers* (Allahabad: Pioneer Press, 1896), 69ff.

5. Bingley, *Sikhs,* appendix.

6. Paul Hershman reports such a temporary cultural adoption among the tanner caste of a Punjab village in *Punjabi Kinship and Marriage* (Delhi: Hindustan Publishing, 1981), 24n.

7. Roy Edgardo Parry, *The Sikhs of the Punjab* (1921; reprint, Patiala: Languages Department, Punjab, 1970), 29ff.

8. There is no better expression of this point than the following: "During the Great War [Bhai Arjun Singh] rendered invaluable help to Government by making extensive tours into the countryside . . . in furtherance of recruitment. During two such tours he baptized 25,000 persons, sometimes baptizing as many as 500 a day." Quote from Lepel Griffin, Charles Francis Massey, W. L. Conran, and H. D. Craig, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab,* 2 vols. (Lahore: Government Printing, 1940), 1:208.

9. Petrie, *Sikh Politics,* 11; Komma, "The Sikh Situation in the Punjab (1907–1922)," *Panjab Past and Present* 12 (1923; reprint, 1978), 426; Gordon, *Sikhs,* 228; MacMunn, *Armies of India,* 135; Bingley, *Sikhs,* 76.

10. Petrie, *Sikh Politics,* 11; Komma, "Sikh Situation," 426.

11. Petrie, *Sikh Politics,* 11.

12. Ibid., 52; also see Bingley, *Sikhs,* 76; MacMunn, *Armies of India,* 135; and the precis of R. W. Falcon's 1896 recruiting manual in Philip Mason, *A Matter of Honour* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1974), 352.

13. Petrie, *Sikh Politics,* 52.

14. M. S. Leigh, *The Punjab and the War* (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1922), 44.

15. Petrie, *Sikh Politics,* 52.

16. K. M. L. Saxena, *The Military System of India* (New Delhi: Stirling, 1974), 100ff., traces the history of the British military's obsession with the warlike of India; a list of the martial races appears in Roger Beaumont, *Sword of the Raj: The British Army in India, 1747–1947* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1977), 6.

17. MacMunn, *Armies of India,* 129.

18. Falcon, *Handbook,* 65–66.

19. See V. Longer, *Red Coats to Olive Green* (Bombay: Allied, 1974), 128–129.

20. MacMunn, *Armies of India,* 139, 161, 162.

21. Mason, *Matter of Honour,* 21.

22. Saxena, *Military Systems,* 104.

23. Ibid., 86–88.

24. Beaumont, *Sword of the Raj,* 6–7.

25. Saxena, *Military System,* 91–93; Mason, *Matter of Honour,* 23.

26. Quoted in Saxena, *Military System,* 89.

27. Ibid., 110–113; Mason, *Matter of Honour,* 325.

28. Mason, *Matter of Honour,* 320.

29. Lansdowne, quoted in Saxena, *Military System,* 101.

30. Roberts, quoted in Beaumont, *Sword of the Raj,* 64.

31. Saxena, *Military System,* 106; Mason, *Matter of Honour,* 355, 359–360.

32. Mason, *Matter of Honour,* 346–347; Saxena, *Military System,* 264–265.

33. Roberts, quoted in Mason, *Matter of Honour,* 346.

34. Ibid.

35. Beaumont, *Sword of the Raj,* 33.

36. Mason, *Matter of Honour,* 24.

37. George Stocking, Jr., *Race, Culture, and Evolution* (New York: Free Press, 1968), 38–40.

38. Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1981), 21–23.

39. George S. Stocking, Jr., "From Chronology to Ethnology," in James Cowles Prichard, *Researches into the Physical History of Man* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), lvi–lvii.

40. Stocking, *Race, Culture, and Evolution,* 65–66.

41. Allen J. Greenberger, *The British Image of India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 7.

42. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978), 231–232.

43. Greenberger, *Image of India,* 15.

44. See John S. Haller, Jr. *Outcasts from Evolution: Scientific Attitudes of Racial Inferiority, 1859–1900* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971), 70–74, 74–79; Gould, *Mismeasure of Man,* 38ff.

45. See Haller, *Outcasts,* 95–120; Gould, *Mismeasure of Man,* 73; Stocking, "From Chronology to Ethnology," lxx.

46. See Gould, *Mismeasure of Man,* 146–320, for its manifestation in the twentieth century.

47. Petrie, *Sikh Politics,* 52.

48. "Home-Political Files A" [hereafter *HP(A)*], 67, 1924, letter from J. Wilson-Johnston, 22 May 1924 (New Delhi, National Archives of India); *HP(A)*, 67, IV, 1924.

49. Falcon, *Handbook*, 61.

50. Ibid., 61–62.

51. Ibid., 81, as one instance.

52. Philip D. Curtin, *The Image of Africa: British Ideas and Action, 1750–1850* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1964), 480.

53. Said, *Orientalism*, 301.

54. Ibid., 298.

55. Said derives this criticism of the concept of culture in anthropology from Abdallah Laroui, *The Crisis of the Arab Intellectual*, trans. Diarmid Cummel (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1976), 49–59. Laroui criticizes Von Grunebaum's use of A. L. Kroeber's culturological notion of culture as a fundamental principle or matrix with which to explain Islam.

56. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed. s.v. "caste."

57. Ronald B. Inden, *Marriage and Rank in Bengali Culture* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1976), 12.

58. Inden's discussion of the varieties of Bengali castes (*jatis*)—"genuses"—indicates that this presumably indigenous term corresponded closely to nineteenth-century European usage of the term *races* and even to current American colloquial understanding of the label "nationalities." See Inden, *Bengali Culture*, 12–14.

59. Inden's data seem to show that the early Bengal system gave priority to "code for conduct" over biogenetic "substance." That is, how people acted, especially how they married, and how rulers ranked them in the local caste system seemed to define their jati status much more than their pedigree and their presumed inherited biological qualities did. Ibid., 41, 66, 149–150. If that is the case, the change to conceptions of hereditary martial qualities and other biogenetically given characteristics, which brought Indian conceptions much closer to the nineteenth-century European priority given to biological substance, might be the result of colonial domination. The congruence between "jati" as Inden claims it was defined indigenously and "race" as Europeans used it a century ago therefore would be only a recent development. See note 58 above.

60. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed., s.v. "caste."

61. Marvin Harris, *Rise of Anthropological Theory: A History of Theories of Culture* (New York: Crowell, 1968), 106. Harris reinforces the point that biological determinism arose in Europe and then was exported as a justifying ideology when he writes that "racism smoothed the way for the rape of Africa and the slaughter of the American Indian."

62. A paraphrase of E. P. Thompson, *The Poverty of Theory* (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1978), 295, writing on class.

63. For a discussion of unintended consequences, see Anthony Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1979), 44, 213–214.

64. Clive Dewey, "The End of the Imperialism of Free Trade: The Eclipse of

the Lancashire Lobby and the Concession of Fiscal Autonomy to India," in *The Imperial Impact: Studies in the Economic History of Africa and India*, ed. Clive Dewey and A. G. Hopkins (London: Athlone, 1978), 35–67.

65. Anupam Sen, *The State, Industrialization and Class Formation in India* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982), 211–218.

66. Ian J. Kerr, "The British and the Administration of the Golden Temple in 1859," *Panjab Past and Present* 10 (1976): 309.

67. Ibid., 308n.

68. John Maynard, "The Sikh Problem in the Punjab 1920–23," *Panjab Past and Present* 11 (1923; reprint 1977), 132.

69. Kerr, "Golden Temple," 316n.

70. "Home-Political Files B," Daily Report of the Director of the Criminal Intelligence Department, 17 June 1907 (New Delhi, National Archives of India).

71. Mohinder Singh, *The Akali Movement* (Delhi: Macmillan, 1978), 13–14.

72. Harish Puri, "Ghadar Movement: An Experiment in New Patterns of Socialization," *Journal of Regional History* 1 (1980): 123.

73. *HP(A)*, 301, November 1916. The plan was scotched because the British feared that once the Sikh leaders saw their brethren's condition in Canada, they might be more sympathetic to their protests.

74. Macauliffe, quoted in Puri, "Ghadar Movement," 123.

75. See K. S. Talwar, "The Anand Marriage Act," *Panjab Past and Present* 2 (1968): 406.

76. Ibid.

9: An Endangered Species

1. See the discussion of the urban lower-middle class in chapter 6.

2. Kenneth Jones, *Arya Dharm: Hindu Consciousness in 19th-Century Punjab* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1976), 33.

3. See chapter 6 for an elaboration of the cultural meanings and public actions connected with the Arya Samaj.

4. Government of India, *Census of India, 1881, Punjab*, vol. 1 (Tumba, Sweden, International Documentation Centre [1964], microfiche), 197.

5. Government of India, *Census of India, 1901, Punjab*, vol. 1 (Tumba, Sweden, International Documentation Centre [1964], microfiche), 116.

6. Government of India, *Census of India, 1901, Punjab*, vol. 1 (Tumba, Sweden, International Documentation Centre [1964], microfiche), 116; *Census of India, 1911, Punjab*, vol. 1 (Tumba, Sweden, International Documentation Centre [1964], microfiche), 137.

7. Government of India, *Census of India, 1891, Punjab*, vol. 1 (Tumba, Sweden, International Documentation Centre [1964], microfiche), abstract 60.

8. See the previous discussion of cultural division-of-labor theory in chapter 6.

9. The act did assign certain village low castes to the nonagricultural category, which joined them with the urban lower-middle class, just as they were sometimes combined by allegiance to the Arya message.

10. Jones, *Arya Dharm,* 183–184.

11. B. B. Misra, *The Indian Middle Classes, Their Growth in Modern Times* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 286.

12. Ibid., 284.

13. See the discussion of the 1907 disturbances in chapter 6.

14. Jones, *Arya Dharm,* 168ff., 186ff.

15. Ibid., 202–223.

16. Those Aryas who remained political went over to the Indian National Congress. See ibid., 274ff.; and N. Gerald Barrier, "The Arya Samaj and Congress Politics in the Punjab, 1894–1908," *Panjab Past and Present* 5 (1971): 343–367.

17. Jones, *Arya Dharm,* 203.

18. See, for example, Government of India, "Fortnightly Reports on the Punjab" (hereafter *FR*) (New Delhi, National Archives of India), 19 October 1907; and David Petrie, *Developments in Sikh Politics (1900–1911), Report* (Amritsar: Chief Khalsa Diwan, [1911]), 28–30.

19. A late example of Arya calumny appears in *FR,* 6 June 1911.

20. See, for example, the demands for greater employment of Sikhs in the police, education department, railway service, medical department, and civil service in Government of India, *Reports on the Native Newspapers, Punjab* (hereafter *Native Newspapers*) (New Delhi, Nehru Memorial Museum, microfilm), issues of *Khalsa Advocate* (Amritsar), 29 September 1919, *Panch* (Lahore) 19 October 1919, and *Khalsa Advocate* (Amritsar), 20 January, 28 February 1920.

21. See Edna Bonacich, "A Theory of Ethnic Antagonism: The Split Labor Market," *American Sociological Review* 37 (1972): 547–559.

22. William Wilson, *The Declining Significance of Race* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 51.

23. Petrie, *Sikh Politics,* 12–13; Gurdarshan Singh, "Origin and Development of Singh Sabha Movement: Constitutional Aspects," *Panjab Past and Present* 7 (1973): 50.

24. Gurdarshan Singh, "Singh Sabha Movement," 50.

25. Khuswant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs,* 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), 2:141.

26. Ibid., 142.

27. Ruchi Ram Sahni, *Struggle for Reform in Sikh Shrines* (Amritsar: Sikh Itihas Research Board, SGPC, n.d.), 29.

28. Khuswant Singh, *History of the Sikhs,* 2:142–143.

29. Ibid., 144–145; Kailash Chander Gulati, *The Akalis Past and Present* (New Delhi: Ashajanak, 1974), 194.

30. Teja Singh, "The Singh Sabha Movement," *Panjab Past and Present* 7 (1944; reprint, 1973), 33.

31. Gurdarshan Singh, "Singh Sabha Movement," 48–49.

32. Teja Singh, *Singh Sabha Movement,* 34; Gurdarshan Singh, "Singh Sabha Movement," 54; Khuswant Singh, *History of the Sikhs,* 2:143.

33. *The Tribune* (Lahore), 19 February 1921, announces this conference.

34. Petrie, *Sikh Politics*, 30.

35. Khuswant Singh, *History of the Sikhs*, 2:145.

36. Petrie, *Sikh Politics*, 47; Gurdarshan Singh, "Singh Sabha Movement," 55; Teja Singh, *Singh Sabha Movement*, 39.

37. In 1911, the president, vice-president, and secretary of the Chief Khalsa Diwan were all from the rural gentry. See Petrie, *Sikh Politics*, appendix C.

38. Jones, *Arya Dharm*, 207–208, 210.

39. *FR*, 14 August 1909.

40. Ibid., 19 October 1907.

41. Ibid., 21 August 1909.

42. Ibid., 28 August 1909.

43. Jones, *Arya Dharm*, 211.

44. K. S. Talwar, "The Anand Marriage Act," *Panjab Past and Present* 2 (1968): 403, 406.

45. See "Keepers of the Faithful" in chapter 8.

46. K. S. Talwar, "Early Phases of the Sikh Renaissance and Struggle for Freedom," *Panjab Past and Present* 4 (1970): 295; Ganda Singh, "The Khalsa College, Amritsar, 1897–1947" in *The City of Amritsar*, ed. Fauja Singh (New Delhi: Oriental, 1978), 207.

47. Petrie, *Sikh Politics*, 30; Khuswant Singh, *History of the Sikhs*, 2:158; Mohinder Singh, *The Akali Movement* (Delhi: Macmillan, 1978), 9; Talwar, "Sikh Renaissance," 295.

48. Sardul Singh Caveeshar, *Sikh Studies* (Lahore: National Publications, 1937), 128–139, gives an extended account of one meeting.

49. Mohinder Singh, *Akali Movement*, 9.

50. *FR*, 28 April 1914, makes this assertion.

51. Reported in various newspapers on 11 Oct 1914, in *Native Newspapers*.

52. The condemnation of the Chief Khalsa Diwan appears in ibid., issue of *Khalsa Advocate* (Lahore), 23 October 1914. A statement was eventually issued.

53. *FR*, 28 April 1914.

54. Government of India, "Home-Political File A" [hereafter *HP(A)*], 459, II, & K.W., 1922, par. 40 (New Delhi, National Archives of India). The Akali Dal contained the more radical segment of the Singh leadership and was always somewhat autonomous from the more conservative SGPC. Over time, the two organizations grew further apart in methods and goals, until, in 1926, they came into active oppositon (discussed later in the chapter).

55. *The Tribune* (Lahore), 30 December 1919.

56. Ibid., 19 May 1920, contains an article by Sant Singh, vakil and joint secretary, Sikh League, complaining against the number of seats awarded Sikhs in the legislative council; the issue of 2 June 1920 reprints a cable from the Central Sikh League making this protest official. The more conservative Singhs defended the council award, as for example the letter by Mohinder Singh in ibid., 28 May 1920. S. Mangal Singh, editor of a Singh nationalist newspaper, wrote of the new Young Sikh movement and its desire to do away with the conservative "Sikh autocracy" in ibid., 31 July 1920. Notice that these protests by the more radical reformers against the conservative view occur shortly before the major movement against the management of the Golden Temple in late 1920.

57. Petrie, *Sikh Politics*, 51.

58. Khuswant Singh, *History of the Sikhs*, 2:167, 197.

59. Gandhi, who met with the radical Sikh leadership in 1919 and attended the second session of the Central Sikh League in 1920, was a major influence on this association, although more as a catalyst for action by local leaders than as originator of it—in other words, similar to (but on a smaller scale than) the role he played in the Champaran agitation at about the same time. For the Central Sikh League, see ibid., 196–197. For Gandhi's role, see S. L. Malhotra, *Gandhi: An Experiment with Communal Politics* (Chandigarh: Punjab University Publication Bureau, 1975), 78–59. For Champaran, see Stephen Heningham, "The Social Setting of the Champaran Satyagraha: The Challenge to an Alien Elite," *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 13 (1976): 59–73.

60. See Mohinder Singh, *Akali Movement*, 144, and Roy Edgardo Parry, *The Sikhs of the Punjab* (1921; reprint, Patiala: Languages Department, Punjab, 1970), 121–122, on the discontent of demobilized troops.

61. Mohinder Singh, *Akali Movement*, 11–12.

62. See Jairus Banerji, "Capitalist Domination and the Small Peasantry," in *Studies in the Development of Capitalism in India* (Lahore: Vanguard, 1978), 351–429; and Hamza Alavi, "India: Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 10 (1980): 363–386.

63. Mitra, *Terms of Trade and Class Relations* (London: Frank Cass, 1977), 75, 97ff., who applies it to similar surplus-producing farmers in India today.

64. Komma, "The Sikh Situation in the Punjab (1907–1922)," *Panjab Past and Present* 12 (1923; reprint, 1978), 428.

65. As I noted at the end of chapter 4, the Great Depression and, afterward, Partition introduced world economic conditions or national political situations that did help conserve petty commodity production in the central Punjab; but since the Green Revolution, agriculture in this region has been undergoing transformation into fully capitalist farming.

66. The factional strife began just as the gurudwara bill was introduced in the legislative council and continued throughout 1925 and into 1926. *The Tribune* (Lahore), 1 July, 6 October, 8 October, 10 October, and 11 October 1925, document the declining unity within the movement; *FR*, 15 June 1925 and 30 June 1926, also document this internal struggle. The connection of this factional strife to a division between the urban lower-middle class and rural cultivators as well as an opposition of Manjha and Doaba Jats to Malwa and Rawalpindi Aroras or Khatris is made in *FR*, 15 February 1926.

67. Compare Mohinder Singh, *Akali Movement*, 112 and 143.

68. Malcolm Hailey, the governor of the Punjab, noted that the SGPC had encouraged and used "extremists" but now found it difficult to control them and therefore was more open to compromise; *HP(A)*, 120, III, 1925, letter from Hailey to Sir Alexander Muddiman, dated 2 May 1925.

10: Organismic Conceptions of Culture

1. I. C. Jarvie, *The Revolution in Anthropology* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1967), 13.

2. George Stocking, Jr., *Race, Culture, and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology* (New York: Free Press, 1968), 157–159, 219.

3. My reference is to Michael Harner's explanation of Aztec human sacrifice in terms of protein deficiency and Marvin Harris's explanation for Near Eastern prohibitions on eating pork and South Asian prohibitions on eating beef as fulfilling ecological necessities. See Marvin Harris, *Cultural Materialism: The Struggle for a Science of Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 190–191, 242–253, 334–340.

4. Compare Louis Dumont, *Homo Hierarchicus,* trans. Mark Sainsbury (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 218–228, on change in Indian society.

5. Clifford Geertz, *Person, Time and Conduct in Bali,* Yale University, Southeast Asia Studies, Cultural Report Series no. 14 (New Haven, 1966), 66.

6. I have appropriated these terms from Professor Geertz, but my application of them below is entirely to satisfy my reading of the history of anthropology and may violate his original meaning.

7. Compare Stocking, *Race, Culture, and Evolution,* 270–307.

8. Cultural evolutionists, such as Lewis Henry Morgan and his later supporters, often subscribed to monogenism. They believed in the inheritance of acquired characteristics and that humans, in meeting environmental pressures, developed bigger and more intelligent brains, which then led to the invention of new technologies, which in turn brought about a more "cultured" population. See Lewis Henry Morgan, *Ancient Society* (New York: Henry Holt, 1878), 4, for example.

9. Franz Boas, *The Mind of Primitive Man,* rev. ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1938), 197.

10. Ibid., 236.

11. Lowie's rebuttal may be to a garbled interpretation of Friedrich Engel's argument that women were the first exploited "class" in society.

12. Robert H. Lowie, *Primitive Society* (1920; reprint, New York: Liveright, 1970), 193–194, 436.

13. Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture* (New York: Houghton-Mifflin, 1934), 24, 36.

14. Margaret Mead, *New Lives for Old: Cultural Transformation—Manus, 1928–1953* (New York: William Morrow, 1956), 163–244, 452–453, 457.

15. Ibid., 451.

16. Geertz, *Bali,* 67.

17. Ibid., 65.

18. Ibid., 84–85 n. 46.

19. Ibid., 65–67, 68.

20. Ibid., 66.

21. F. G. Bailey, *Stratagems and Spoils* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 21ff.

22. Ibid., 155.

23. Ibid., 23.

24. Fredrik Barth, *Models of Social Organization,* Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland Occasional Paper no. 23 (London, 1966), 2.

25. Ibid., 3, 15.

11: Culture in the Making

1. The conception of culture I present grows out of the work of Raymond Williams, especially *Marxism and Literature* (London: Oxford University Press, 1977); the more recent writings of E. P. Thompson, especially "Folklore, Anthropology, and Social History," *The Indian Historical Review* 3 (1977): 248–266, and "Eighteenth-Century English Society: Class Struggle Without Class?," *Social History* 3 (1978): 133–165; and Eric Wolf, *Europe and the People without History* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1982), especially the "Afterword." Sherry Ortner in her article, "Theory in Anthropology since the Sixties," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 26 (1984): 150, accuses Thompson of voluntarism, that is, of believing that society is simply the product of human intentions. Such a reading may perhaps be made of some of Thompson's work but it would be less applicable to the other works cited above and even to Thompson's later writings. My conception of "culture in the making" avoids voluntarism by recognizing that society is never simply a product of human intentions (because there are always unintended and unforseen consequences of social action) but at the same time by understanding that society does not exist independent of human intentional action. Compare Roy Bhaskar, *The Possibility of Naturalism* (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1979), 45.

2. Alain Touraine, *The Self-Production of Society,* trans. Derek Collman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 2.

3. Ibid., 2–3.

4. Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice,* trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 73.

5. See Bhaskar, *Naturalism,* 32ff., for an economical statement of this point and a penetrating critique of methodological individualism.

6. Ortner, "Theory in Anthropology," 126–166, in defining what she refers to as the new anthropological concern with "practice," conflates the methodological individualism associated with Barth and other transactional anthropologists with the view of society as the sum of social relations and social action advanced here. Although both approaches deal with "practice" as Ortner defines it, she fails (or chooses not) to see that they define practice in quite different ways, as my discussion indicates. They agree mainly in seeing cultural meanings as derived from practice. Still another definition of practice, which, again, Ortner chooses not to differentiate from the others, is Sahlins's "structure of the conjuncture" discussed in chapter 7, which postulates that practice derives from, but is to some extent autonomous of, the existing unitary code of cultural meanings.

7. Fredrik Barth, "Introduction," in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries,* ed. Fredrik Barth (Boston: Little, Brown, 1969), 9–38; Abner Cohen, "Introduction: The Lesson of Ethnicity," in *Urban Ethnicity,* ed. Abner Cohen (London: Tavistock, 1974), xv.

8. Bourdieu, *Theory of Practices,* 80.

9. Ibid., 164, 169–170.

10. Ibid., 164.

11. Ibid., 169.

12. Ibid., 83.

13. Ibid., 169.

14. Ibid., 83.

15. Ibid., 189.

16. Ibid., 190. It is not easy to gauge Bourdieu's meaning correctly on this issue. At some points, he seems to mean by the "system of mechanisms" only that domination can become less direct and personal so that the dominated and the dominant do not need to reproduce their unequal relations in face-to-face interaction. At other points, he seems to believe this system of mechanisms removes domination from the field of ongoing social practice, as when, on page 190, he allows that it is "capable of objectively ensuring the reproduction of the established order by its own motion." I have emphasized the latter reading. A similar ambiguity or internal contradiction appears in Bourdieu's article on education. He argues at once that an educational system is a mechanism which helps "insure the reproduction of the structure of relations between classes" but then says that academic qualifications, to be truly class reproducing, must be validated by family connections and other social practices of the dominant classes—in other words, that the educational structure apart from social practice cannot reproduce inequality. See Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, "Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction," in *Reproduction in Education, Society, and Culture*, trans. Richard Nice (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1977), 71–111 passim, especially page 97.

17. Touraine, *Self-Production of Society*, 2–10.

18. Ibid., 19, 40–41, 59.

19. Ibid., 58–59.

20. Thompson, "Folklore, Anthropology, and Social History," 265, labels such accommodations "congruities."

21. *Durham (N.C.) Morning Herald*, 13 March 1984.

22. See Gerald Carson, *Cornflakes Crusade* (New York: Rinehart, 1957).

23. Compare Jane F. Collier and Michelle Z. Rosaldo, "Politics and Gender in Simple Societies," in *Sexual Meanings: The Cultural Construction of Gender and Sexuality*, ed. Sherry B. Ortner and Harriet Whitehead (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 275–329.

24. Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, 110.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid., 112.

27. The term *dialogic* derives from the work of M. M. Bakhtin, as in his *The Dialogic Imagination*, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, and ed. Michael Holquist (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1981). Carlo Ginzberg in *The Cheese and the Worms* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), employs this concept to understand popular resistance against the hegemony of the dominant class. Ginzberg, however, believes that his sixteenth-century Italian case of appropriation of dominant beliefs by the lower class is based on an "instinctive," "ancient," "remote," and "unfathomable" popular culture—whereas I have proposed the stance, with the Singhs as my case, that cultural resistance does not exist apart from the ongoing experience and social relations of its originators. In other words, resistance does not grow out of long-standing, popular, peasant, or folk religious traditions, but is always a product

of "traditions" that are constantly in the making. Ginzberg's argument is a variety of moral economy, which in the end devalues the dialogic process. I wish to thank an anonymous reviewer for the University of California Press for calling the work of Bakhtin and Ginzberg to my attention.

28. Marshall Sahlins, "The State of the Art in Social/Cultural Anthropology: Search for an Object," in *Perspectives on Anthropology, 1976*, ed. Anthony F. C. Wallace, J. Lawrence Angel, Richard Fox, Sally McLendon, Rachel Sady, and Robert Sharer, American Anthropological Association Memoir no. 10 (Washington, D.C., 1977), 21.

29. Compare Geertz's notion of "developmental" history and the criticism made of it at the beginning of chapter 6.

30. Compare Touraine, *Self-Production of Society*, 31.

Index

Designer: Robert S. Tinnon
Compositor: Publisher's Typography
Printer: Thomson-Shore, Inc.
Binder: John H. Dekker & Sons
Type: 10/12 Sabon
Display: Sabon