

Communalism and the Green Revolution in Punjab

Marco Corsi
University of Pisa, Italy

ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the rise and fall of the 'Green Revolution' in Punjab and on its social impact, demonstrating how this modernization process had a forefront role in the process of formation and consolidation of the political and social forces that supported and fed the political violence that was triggered from the tension among the area's main religious communities (Sikhs and Hindus). The research hypothesis of this study is that there is a close relationship between the rapid process of modernization set off by the Green Revolution, starting from the second half of the 1960s, and the separatist violence that devastated the Indian Punjab throughout the 1980s. The argument is that the forces behind the violence did not derive from Punjabi economic backwardness, but, rather, from the overcoming of this condition as a result of the Green Revolution.

Keywords: communalism, Green Revolution, modernization, the Panth, violence

Introduction

The origin of the term 'Green Revolution' is attributed to William Gaud of the United States Agency for International Development. During a conference held in March 1968 at the Society for International Development, Gaud alluded to the possibility of a 'green' technical revolution in the production of foodstuffs, as opposed to the 'Red Revolution' of politics (Lakshman, 1993). This term has been widely used in India – both in the specialist literature, and at the journalistic level – to indicate the collection of economic policies implemented by the Indian government starting from 1966 and aimed at strengthening the agricultural sector and attaining food self-sufficiency (Corsi, 1996a).

India's second (1956–61) and third (1961–6) Five-Year Plans were criticized by many scholars: at a quantitative level due to the insufficient investments reserved for the primary sector and the consequent incapacity to eliminate the obsolete structures existing in the agricultural sector; and at the qualitative and method level, because the adopted development model was considered insufficient and unable to solve the enormous social differences characterizing Indian society. At this time, in fact, the class structure still saw a predominance of the traditional landlords that had been joined together by the British colonizers. Some laws, however, were passed in the 1950s and 1960s that discredited them,

Copyright © 2006 SAGE Publications www.sagepublications.com
(London, Thousand Oaks, and New Delhi)
Vol 22(2): 85–109. DOI: 10.1177/0169796X06065798

while promoting the rise of the classes of the peasants and of non-absentee landlords, who were thus able to take over the lands that once belonged to the large landowners. After 1966, the economic policy of the Indian government was aimed at favoring the development of the primary sector, giving birth to the Green Revolution.

The commitment of scientific research to the strengthening of Indian agricultural production dates to 1904, the year of the foundation of the Imperial Institute of Agrarian Research in the state of Bihar. This institute was later transferred to Delhi, renamed the Indian Institute for Agrarian Research, and flanked by other academic and non-academic structures. The main activities of these bodies were directed at the improvement of the quality of grain and, following a series of hybridizations, some varieties resistant to the most widespread diseases were developed. These varieties produced high quality seeds but were characterized by an excessive development in height and by a considerable fragility of the stalks, thus rendering them unsuitable for intensive cultivation.

Research in this direction was also carried out in parallel in Mexico. The first program of the Mexican Ministry for Agriculture that was aimed at increasing wheat production dates back to the 1930s. During the 1940s, a second program, carried out with aid from the Rockefeller Foundation, focused its efforts on the hybridization of some seed varieties in order to meet the requirements of the large wheat-growers and traders of the American Northwest. The decisive turning point took place, however, following studies made by the Nobel prizewinner Norman Borlaug who, in the years 1961–2, made it possible to prepare seeds containing the Norin 1 gene. This gene was able to shorten the ripening process of the plants and reduce the height of the stalks, so increasing their resistance to the main infesting agents. The introduction of these seeds on the Indian market, launching the Green Revolution on the subcontinent, is usually officially dated at 1966.

The introduction of these High Yielding Varieties (HYV) of grain was confined mainly to wheat and rice (the latter in the 1970s) because of their high yield (a fact that led to a consequent fall in the production of legumes, maize, fruit, etc.) The seeds in question were initially purchased abroad and, only later, prepared in Indian experimental centers. Their main characteristics were: 1) a capacity to absorb a quantity of fertilizer superior to that tolerated by normal varieties; and 2) the fact that, by reducing the growth times of the plant in this way, it was possible to have a number of harvests in a year and, therefore, considerable increases of production even in semi-arid land.

The introduction of these seeds was accompanied by new biochemical and mechanical production factors: new non-organic fertilizers, insecticides, farm machinery, tractors, threshers, and new mechanized irrigation systems. The results of these choices were so positive as to represent a turning point in Indian economic development. Agricultural production grew considerably during the

Fourth (1969–74) and Fifth (1974–9) Five-Year Plans. India became self-sufficient in food production and appeared in the world market as an exporter of foodstuffs.¹ Today, 40 years since the introduction of these new growth techniques, the annual wheat harvest has sustained a considerable increase and has guaranteed an average yield index that is such that, without it, the country would have had to ‘sacrifice’ a further 70 million hectares of land to crop production to cover national requirements.

The Economic and Social Consequences of the Green Revolution

There is no doubt that the Green Revolution met with great success; however, both its sustainability and the social repercussions that this new economic policy generated are still being debated today (Torri, 1980). In fact the Green Revolution initially reduced genetic diversities, increasing the vulnerability of the crops to external conditions, with the resulting lesser capacity of the plants to resist drought or infesting agents (Shiva, 1993; S. Singh, 2000). Even the increase of the irrigated surfaces, without suitable investments in hydraulic works for regulating the outflow of the water, caused ecological imbalances. Subsequently, however, research efforts were concentrated on the diversification of species, and India can now count on a wide range of HYV grains (over 230 varieties). This is not, however, a guarantee for a production free from ecological damage and from threats to its sustainability.²

As regards the debates about the ‘social’ implications of the new technologies, many scholars pointed out the danger of the tensions that such modern techniques of cultivation had produced (or could produce) exactly where they had had greatest success (Torri, 1980). The advocates of this line of thinking pointed out that the technologies on which the Green Revolution were based were usable only by a limited agrarian elite, that is, only by those who possessed both large enough properties to make scale economies, and the money necessary for purchasing the costly new inputs. The use of these inputs in fact presupposed a certain availability of initial capital for investment purposes and the availability of a considerable amount of land. This prompted the large landowners to reacquire the lands they previously rented out so that they could cultivate them with the new methods, using a salaried workforce. The direct result was the transformation of their former tenants into laborers, due both to the growing demand for manpower and to the lack of economic advantage associated with using the new techniques to cultivate a small piece of land. Apart from this fact it is important to note that the Green Revolution was accompanied by the massive introduction of agricultural machinery, a phenomenon that cut the cost of labor and of production.

These developments led scholars to recognize that the conditions for serious tensions of a social nature were being created. It was feared that these developments might be a hindrance to the achievement of a land reform aimed

at lowering the maximum limit of the size of holdings, and thereby preventing the redistribution of land on the basis of the criteria of social equity. In the second place, it was clear that there were few possibilities that the workforce freed by the introduction of new technologies with low labor content could be absorbed by the industrial sector, even if it was undergoing development (Torri, 1980).

Other views were held by those who maintained that the new agricultural techniques could produce positive results, independent of the dimensions of the plots of land to which they were applied (Torri, 1980). These scholars believed the crucial factor in the success of the new strategy was evidence of the intensive application even to small plots of land of both labor and of the new agricultural techniques. This development, together with a state-controlled irrigation system, was hoped would render the families of the small landowners self-sufficient. The result would bring about a revolution in the relationship of dependence that previously existed in the rural world between the lower levels of society and the small dominating elite.

Another consequence of the new agricultural strategy was the increase in the disparity of economic and infrastructural development (irrigation canals, roads, etc.) at the local level. The new seeds did in fact work more efficiently in areas characterized by ideal climatic conditions, such as to facilitate the photosynthetic activity of the plants (Collotti-Pischel, 1984). These characteristics were present in Northwest India (Punjab and Haryana) but not in other regions in which, therefore, the new varieties could not be exploited to the fullest. This was an important element in widening the gap in the distribution of resources among the regions, favoring the development of some regions and the persistent underdevelopment of others.

Not only did this technological revolution within an archaic agrarian structure perpetuate the poverty of the rural masses, it also led to a further increase in the gap between the social classes. The greatest limitation of the Green Revolution seems therefore to have been its incapacity to lessen rural poverty and, indeed, its tendency to heighten the inequality between the existing social classes. Those who could not afford the new technologies were forced to resort to loans, mostly from moneylenders. They thus entered a spiral of debts that led them to sell their land to the large landowners and move to the shantytowns in the cities. The other owners of small plots faced a similar destiny. They could not compete with the large-scale production of the large landowners. The small farmers who did not stay abreast of the times found themselves in the same situation. For them, the decrease in the prices of foodstuffs (which was an important result of the Green Revolution) and therefore their earnings turned out to be a real catastrophe.

The Green Revolution in Punjab

The Punjab is the Indian state in which the Green Revolution quantitatively had the greatest success, both in terms of production and in terms of the effective application of the new technologies (Latouche, 1993; Puri, 1983; S. Singh, 2000). Currently, its agricultural production sector is highly mechanized and has a high degree of capital intensity. The success of this region was certainly influenced by its fortunate geographical position, its climate and also the input from the local agrarian experts, all factors that allowed for the successful importation of this new agro-industrial approach.

In order to spread the HYV grains, the Punjab state government subsidized wheat and rice seeds and, as a result of these efforts, in 1980 almost the entire state (98.01%) was cultivated with these seeds (P. Singh, 1981). Teams of workers were trained to transfer their technological knowledge to farmers (through the Training and Visit Program). The land reforms undertaken in 1947 also promoted the success of the Green Revolution since these reforms, as we will explain shortly, brought about the consolidation of the landed properties. In its turn, this consolidation later allowed many owners to make those improvements – for example, irrigation systems – that would subsequently guarantee their rapid adaptation to the necessities of the new technologies.

Further factors that determined the readiness with which the Punjab responded to the new technologies included the ‘human factor’, that is to say the culture of the Sikhs. This culture emphasizes the dignity of manual work, the tendency to hard work and the spirit of initiative of the Sikhs and their dynamic and ‘progressive approach to everyday life’ (McCormack, 1988: 10). Another factor was the way in which the territory was divided. The 1947 partition of India and the formation of Pakistan resulted in approximately six million Sikhs and Hindus moving from the western Punjab to eastern Punjab (which remained part of India), and an almost equivalent number of Muslims moving the opposite direction into the western Punjab of the ‘new-born’ Pakistan. The Sikh and Hindu refugees left approximately 6.7 million acres of land in western Punjab, while the Muslims abandoned approximately 4.7 million in eastern Punjab (Jeffrey, 1986). The problem then arose of distributing a lesser number of lands than those previously owned by those who left Pakistan. Although initially it was thought that every family involved in farming should be given the same amount of land as it had previously abandoned, it was necessary to apply proportional reductions. The result was that the same class structure that had characterized western Punjab was reconstructed in eastern Punjab.

The 1960s, however, saw the launch of a new program of land reform. The outcome was land consolidation, in which thousands of small fields were joined into larger blocks, resulting in less waste of physical energy, fewer problems for irrigation and large savings. Finally, there were the interventions carried out by the British during the colonial period (irrigation, canals, land reclamation, the

strengthening of the banking system to face the increasing demand for liquid cash, the extension of infrastructures, etc.), which also contributed to the readiness of the Punjab for the Green Revolution.

Communalism

The new agricultural transformations, as we have already mentioned, generated social tensions that, according to some scholars and political analysts, suggested the Green Revolution might turn into a 'Red Revolution', that is, a social revolution. The fact that this did not happen was among other things due to India's peculiar socio-religious structure. This structure is responsible for the political importance of social groups that are defined on the basis of religious and/or caste criteria and for the continuing state of tension that exists between these groups. In other words, one of the reasons why the Green Revolution did not become 'red' can be traced to the existence of what is called 'communalism' in India.

Communalism is defined as an ideology in which the members of different religious groups see themselves as distinct social, political and economic units, and their identity is based on this distinction as well as the antagonism between these groups (Dumont, 1991). In Indian society this term refers to the attitudes and actions that derive from religious or caste identity and social forces that use this type of identity as the basis for their ideology (Thapar, 1993). Basically, it is characterized by the political, economic and social claims of groups that contend their members have beliefs or cultural norms in common and support programs of social action aimed at safeguarding the interests of their caste or religious community. This disproportionate loyalty to a caste or religious group has found a very fertile soil in the deep differentiations inherent in Indian society (Engineer, 1992).

The identification of a group of individuals on religious or caste grounds is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for communalism. What is essential is the perception of antagonism between those who identify themselves as belonging to these various communities (Kumar, 1984), and the belief that the members of each group can guarantee the protection of their own interests (economic, political, etc.) only inasmuch as they belong to this particular 'faction'. The implicit idea that derives from this view is that the interests of various groups (for example, Sikhs and Hindu) are in conflict and that violence is the best means for protecting and promoting the interests of one's group or community. In order to fully understand the phenomenon of Indian communalism, one needs to take into account the chain of historical and dynamic socio-economic and political developments that have given rise to its current manifestation.

The economic development of India, which by virtue of its 'structural logic of inequality and injustice' (R. Singh, 1973: 49) meant exploitation and oppression,

not only produced 'two Indias' in mutual estrangement, but also a society with countless forms – ancient and modern – of alienation and oppression. This presence of alienation and oppression constantly provides the socio-material for the production, reproduction, support and increasing strength of excessive religiousness, revivalism, extremism and, above all else, communalism. The latter is in fact both the product of the social, moral and political crisis of Indian society, and also the response of the governing class to this crisis. Faced with the ever more disastrous situation of civil society, and the resulting discontent of the people that leads to continuing disorder and violence, the Indian political class has increasingly been inclined to adopt authoritarian measures to deal with such 'emergencies'. In this context of potential class struggle, communalism – understood both as an ideology, and as a practice – has become useful for the authorities, just as it was in colonial times (R. Singh, 1993). Basically, social tensions that could be potentially explosive for the existing balance between social classes have been directed to flow along the channels prepared by the country's inter-communal divisions. In this way, the tensions in question and the violence that they generate, although serious and bloody, are not so grave as to endanger the positions of political power and economic privilege enjoyed by the ruling classes.

It is important to emphasize that the central position of the recourse to violence in Indian politics (Banerjee, 1996) must be seen in the context of the continuity of a political system that has remained fundamentally stable, except for a few rare exceptions, until very recent times. The recourse, in this system, to a 'strong hand' can be considered the result of a growing tendency towards the centralization of power (Corsi, 1996b). The highly centralized development model adopted in the post-colonial period, rather than abolishing economically backward and socially unjust production relations, opted for investments in specific sectors and areas. This contributed to creating unequal growth and a deadlock in the development of some regions as well as class fragmentations and contradictions. This in turn 'fixed' the perception that 'injustice' is based on pre-existing caste, language and religious divisions. Communalism does in fact find decisive support in the changes taking place in the socioeconomic structure and in the economic insecurity and social anxiety that are the product of precisely the unjust distributions associated with these changes. Explosions of communal violence are therefore the product of a dialectical process involving factors of an ideological nature that find approval at both the national and local level. The use of violence is a powerful tool of social promotion both for the emerging social forces and for reactionary forces. The most important aspects of this process are the class structure of the society, the underdevelopment of the economy and the scarcity of resources: all this generates an inter-regional, inter-community and intra-community economic gap that inevitably gets linked to the problem of communal and religious identities, which in turn become a decisive instrument for the mobilization of the masses.

The communal nature of the breeding grounds in which the modernization process of India has taken place did not permit either the birth of a class structure that was transversal with respect to the existing groups, or the formation of organic inter-community links. The well-to-do classes who did not benefit from a socioeconomic take-off developed rivalries with regard to those who obtained the greatest advantages and, in order to gain the support of the community to which they belonged, prepared their own demands and claims not in terms of 'class' but of 'community'. It was easier to achieve their aims, and to have greater effects, by using religious-cultural categories. On the basis of these categories, the history of the community to which they belonged was presented in terms of a dramatic or heroic viewpoint and distorted causes of social conflicts were identified. Resorting to religious symbols in the collective memory thus became a form of communication and, at the same time, an instrument for political and religious struggle (Pace and Guolo, 1998).

Communalism is therefore a phenomenon of a lay nature (Engineer, 1995), in the sense that its origins may be found in motivations that are not actually religious, but rather linked to the struggle for power at the social, economic and political levels. Communalistic violence is therefore a systemic characteristic that results from the encounter of the traditionalism of Indian society with modernizing tendencies. It is a sign of dynamism in the direction of the 'secularization' that is an imperative in the formation of a modern state-nation. But paradoxically, it also is one of the main obstacles to this process of nation-building. Communalism can therefore be classified as an attempt at political assertion on the part of a community seeking to conserve its identity within a plural society (characterized, that is to say, by the presence of communities defined on the basis of religious and/or caste criteria), in a context of rapid modernization (Kumar, 1984). By virtue of the hostility and antagonism in which these fundamental socio-cultural and community differentiations are expressed, communalism becomes 'resistance to the development process' (Berger, 1981: 220), 'reaction to modernity,' and an 'expression of the crisis of modernity' (Eisenstadt, 1994), and as a result, a reactionary phenomenon.

With regard to the relatively recent origin of communalism, some studies (e.g. Hasan, 1980) link it to the structural changes in politics and the unequal development of the different communities in colonial India. This thesis sustains that ironically it was precisely the granting by the British of an increasing share of political power to the Indians – with the institutional reforms of 1909, 1919 and 1935 – that transformed the already marked diversities of the society into deep fractures. In fact, the British colonial rulers 'communalized' the process of political representation by dividing the electorate on communal bases and they gave hyper-representation to the 'weakest' communities (which were the least politicized and least opposed to the political positions of the colonial rulers). The lines between 'communities' that in pre-colonial India were less clear and distinct, were well defined by the British Raj,³ which 'froze' the divisions of

Indian society that were previously more fluid and flexible, through the simple stratagem of distributing political power (and administrative privileges) on the basis of membership in a particular community (Jeffrey, 1986).

In other words, although British colonialism certainly was not responsible for the creation of divisions along religious and/or caste lines, there is no doubt that they gave them a political weight that they previously did not possess, cynically exploiting them in order to prevent the formation of an anti-colonial movement that would have united all Indians (Kothari, 1989; Kumar, 1984). From this viewpoint, it has been noted that, while modern European states have homogenized the uses, customs and beliefs of their population, the Anglo-Indian colonial state, even while carrying out a series of functions typical of a modern state, has tried in every way to divide its subjects on communal lines, by strengthening and making permanent divisions that, as has already been noted, were fluid and usually without any political value prior to colonial rule (Torri, 2000).

Communalistic violence still raises its head quite frequently in India yet it no longer seems to have that characteristic of being as 'wide scale' as it was in the 1920s and 1930s and even more so in the 1940s. In the period following independence, the number and seriousness of inter-communal clashes fell considerably. They took on a character of sudden disorganized local demonstrations rather than operations that were planned and studied in the utmost detail, as had usually been the case in the decades before independence. The situation however worsened again dramatically in the period between the second half of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, with the political rise of Hindu fundamentalism and its parliamentary front, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). But, since 1993, inter-communal violence has declined and the involvement of political parties in it appears reduced. It does in fact seem that the forms of extreme violence that made their mark especially in Bombay and Surat in March 1993 (Torri, 1994) disgusted large sections of the population, despite the fact they held communal types of ideologies. For this very reason, the political forces which refer to communal ideologies seem to have arrived at the conclusion that recourse to violence is no longer a profitable instrument from a political viewpoint (Engineer, 1997). The phenomenon, however, still remains present and in 1999 and 2000 there were attacks by certain communal organizations against the Christian and Muslim communities as well as conflicts between the Sikh and Sunni communities (Engineer, 2000, 2001).

The Communal Structure of the Punjab

In spite of the fact that the social organization of the Panth⁴ reflects the original teaching of Sikhism and rejects the Hindu caste system, it is not however exempt from it.⁵ The caste that has a prior position among the Sikhs of the Punjab is the Jat, whose members are natives of the Sind, and who settled in the north of India long before the birth of Sikhism, although many of them converted to that

religion. Traditionally low caste shepherds, the Jats gradually abandoned this vocation and turned to agricultural activity. They hold a relatively low position in the Hindu caste system (Torri, 2000). On the other hand, in Punjabi society they have assumed a position of prestige and are mainly rich landowners.

Apart from justifications of a religious nature, another characteristic of the peculiarity of the Punjabi caste system can be found in the geographical position of the Punjab. The Punjab has often been described as the 'gate to India', as it has always been the historical passage for foreign conquerors. This has led both to a marked inclination of the local population to take up arms in defense of their land and to a certain instability in social organization. The result of all this is that Punjabi culture has always been assimilative and less characterized by castes. They are present but in a lesser number than that of the Hindu communities and, above all, less binding than the latter in terms of the observance of behavioral practices. The Brahmin do not hold important socioeconomic positions and the dominant castes are those of the large Sikh Jat landowners in rural Punjab, and the Hindu mercantile castes in the urban areas.

According to figures that date back to the 1971 census, 60.21 percent of the entire Punjab population are Sikhs and 37.54 percent are Hindus (D'Souza, 1982). This division is quite different however in the rural areas than in the urban areas. In the rural areas Sikhs represent 69.37 percent of the population and Hindus 28.56 percent, while in the urban areas the Hindus are 66.39 percent against 30.79 percent Sikhs.⁶ In short, in the urban areas there is an upper layer formed mostly by members of the Sikh Jat (mainly powerful landowners who are predominantly concentrated in the south in the Malwa region where the largest land tracts can be found) and to a lesser extent by members of the Hindu castes such as the Rajput, Saini, and Kambho (G. Singh, 1994a; J. Singh, 1996). And there is a lower layer, formed of Sikhs that do not belong to the Jat caste (they are lower caste or members of the so-called 'scheduled castes'). In the urban areas, however, there is an upper layer, formed of both Sikh mercantile groups, the so-called Bhapa, and Hindu mercantile groups (Khatri, Arora); and a lower layer formed of castes of craftsmen and wage-earners (Ramgharia, Lohar, Suniara, Nai, Kumhar, Chhimba, Mehra).

The rural-urban divisions in the Punjab are therefore directly linked to religious and caste membership: the Sikh Jats are generally involved in agriculture and resident in rural areas; while the Hindus are mainly occupied in trade and resident in urban areas. Summarizing even further, we can state that the two communities carry out distinct roles and while the Hindu farmers are not able to compete with the Sikh Jat farmers in the production sector, in their turn the Sikh Bhapa cannot compete with the Hindu traders.

Social Impact of the Green Revolution in the Punjab

Although the modernization process bore good fruit in some areas, it was not painless. Indeed in some cases it turned out to be the author of deep fractures both between the different communities, and between different regions, creating the premises for the birth of social tensions. In spite of the fact that the Punjab can be considered tangible proof of the success of the Green Revolution, this success seems to have increased, and not reduced, the problems connected with the ancestral religious, linguistic and caste 'rifts.' The negative effects of modernization appear to have channeled economic differentiations into political polarizations and expressions that claim to offer alternatives to that oppressive situation.

By the late 1960s, it was already clear that, in spite of the new work opportunities offered by the innovations in agriculture, the Green Revolution was producing a widening of the 'gap' between the social classes. In principle, the use of new technologies produced ambiguous effects for the poorest social classes. On the one hand, the intensive use of water, fertilizers and insecticides made it possible to have two harvests in a year and required a considerable expansion of transport, which seemed to suggest a situation that would be characterized by a considerable increase in the demand for labor. On the other hand, that same technology involved the extensive use of machinery (tractors, threshers, motorized ploughs, etc.) and a resulting inferior demand for labor. In addition, the owners of small plots of land, even while enjoying better living conditions than their fellows in more arid areas of India or in areas with less favorable irrigation conditions, were only able to profit from the new agricultural strategy to a very reduced extent (10%) even if they formed 75 percent of the total farmers of the area. The pre-existing unequal distribution of income and of property thus further discriminated against the Punjabi population belonging to poorer social classes.

To be more precise, it is indeed true in the Punjab, where rural unemployment had never been high, that the modern technologies linked to the Green Revolution caused an increase not only in employment and productivity, but also farm wages. However, very soon the large landowners began to replace local labor with labor from other states of India. This meant that they were able to reduce wages, by using the vast 'reserve army' of unemployed from the rest of India. Basically, the modernization of the agricultural sector of the Punjab undermined the traditional relations between classes, formerly based on an exchange of benefits and services. There was therefore a gradual falling off of the old links of mutual dependence between the Jat farmers and the local laborers. This caused a parallel fading of the 'social cohesion' that had until then characterized the Punjab.

The already large number of laborers present from the very beginning of the Green Revolution were joined by new categories of workers that were forced

to abandon their previous vocations. In the first place, with the Green Revolution, tenants, as a category, ceased to exist. Moreover, many traditional artisans whose work had become superfluous with the modernization of rural society now were forced to join the ranks of the farm laborers. The transformation from 'farming with high labor intensity' to 'farming with high capital intensity', and the impossibility of competing with the rich landowners, forced many small landowners to abandon their land in search of other means of support. The majority of these too became farm laborers. Moreover, a huge immigration of manpower especially from Uttar Pradesh, from Bihar, from Rajasthan and from Madhya Pradesh led to the formation in the Punjab of a new community of Hindus that did not know the local language and traditions, with the resulting intensification of social tensions.

Seen in this way, the numerical increase of laborers, if understood as an indicator for demonstrating the high offer of employment, is therefore misleading. Their daily wage did in fact undergo constant decreases, and, although there were no visible signs of unemployment, the number of people forced to live under the poverty threshold increased progressively. The new unemployed of the Punjab were not absorbed either into the industrial sector, which also favored Hindu workers from other states who were willing to accept lower salaries, or into the tertiary sector, since the new unemployed being of rural extraction did not have the necessary experience (G. Singh, 1994b).

The Green Revolution interfered with the relations among the communities of the Punjab. It strengthened considerably the linkages between the agriculture and trade sectors that traditionally had little in common. Raw materials, agricultural products and consumer goods now began to pass increasingly through the markets of the urban areas controlled by Hindu castes of traders and merchants who obviously speculate on the prices. These Hindu traders or merchants provide a considerable amount of credit to Sikh farmers, both in cash, and in the form of raw materials or postponed payments. The problem is that, in most cases, the interests applied are of a usurious nature. This web of economic relations generates tensions between the two communities: the Hindu traders and merchants consider the Sikh farmers to be 'rough, bad-mannered and easily confused'; the latter, on the other hand, are suspicious of the former and consider the Hindu merchants and traders to be 'clever exploiters' (S.G. Singh, 1988: 1387).

The greatest reason for frustration of the Bhapa (the Sikh traders) is their incapacity to prevent the Hindu traders from controlling most of the economic relations with the Sikh Jat farmers; but, in their turn, the Bhapa and Jat are divided by tensions of a religious nature, stemming from the more deep-rooted religious orthodoxy of the Bhapa as opposed to the less orthodox Jats. On the other hand, even though they do not observe the same degree of religious orthodoxy, the Jats consider themselves 'purer' than the former inasmuch as they dedicate themselves to hard physical work in the fields rather than to commercial and financial activities of the Bhapa (Dumont, 1991).

In order to complete this intricate socioeconomic structure, which is important contextually to the modernization process in the Punjab, we must also analyze the condition of the Jats. They went through a very prosperous period between 1966 and 1976, the peak of the agricultural revolution. But then they experienced a subsequent decline in the positive benefits of the Green Revolution that was followed by a gradual quantitative decline in productivity. Among the causes of this phenomenon were the rise in the population increase and the increase in purchasing power within the less well-to-do classes. While these developments led to a greater demand for food products, there was a decreasing amount of land per capita available for cultivation and a declining amount of water. Furthermore, a decisive role was also played by the large gap between the techniques of production and those of conservation, especially with regard to perishable foodstuffs. The techniques of conservation continued to be unsatisfactory and there was considerable wastage.

The surplus that resulted from the Green Revolution was not converted into investments and the agricultural revolution did not create 'intersectoral' bonds, and while its fruits did guarantee a strong increase of consumer goods, they did not result in investments in trade and industry, nor an increase in employment. The rapid economic growth increased the purchase of 'positional' goods and not investments in production (Hirsh, 1981). Thus, industrial development did not follow the agricultural 'explosion', although this created the conditions for it; and mechanization considerably reduced the demand for labor, which in turn increased unemployment.

The industrial sector of the Punjab deserves being discussed separately. Its backwardness cannot be ignored. While the primary sector emerged as the sector of greatest importance in the economic life of the Punjab, the secondary and tertiary sectors were not characterized by a comparable development. Industry in the Punjab made little progress compared to other Indian states and its backwardness is revealed by the minimum contribution that it makes to the gross national product of the State (P. Singh, 1983). The explanation for this may be found in the geographical position of the Punjab, specifically its border with Pakistan. This means that it borders a country that always has had hostile relations with India – marked by three open wars and a low intensity conflict that began at the end of the 1980s and is still being waged. This is an objectively dangerous situation that explains why the Punjab does not attract many investments of private capital. The industry of Punjab is small-scale and family run. It depends almost entirely on raw materials from other states. These conditions have negatively affected employment levels and in spite of the economic potential of the state and its relatively high average per income per capita (the country's highest) these conditions have forced many young Sikhs to emigrate.

The Perception of Social Marginalization in the Punjab

The social and economic dynamics of post-colonial Punjab that we have just described reveal the social and economic causes for the religious fractures that have characterized the Punjab, particularly the relations between Hindus and Sikhs. They lay the premises for demonstrating how social and economic self-identification has resulted in religious polarization.

These dynamics have produced an historical literature of Sikhism which spreads an image of it as an egalitarian and libertarian religion that has constantly struggled against oppressors – the Moghul empire first, then the British and, finally, the national government in New Delhi.⁷ This is an interpretation of events that emphasizes the perennial ‘struggle for survival’ of the Panth (Kumar, 1995: 55). This community is seen as perennially involved in maintaining a cultural and economic identity that is perceived as being in danger as a result of the attempts at destroying and ‘canceling of diversities’ carried out by the government of India in post-colonial times. The Panth feel therefore that they are victims of abuse and injustice that come from the past and they feel a sense of ‘alienation’ from a country for which they feel that they have done a lot. From this viewpoint, ‘terrorism’ is a concept that can be traced back to the work of the central state and not to the violent actions of Sikh armed struggle against oppression, which is vindicated as ‘political militancy’ and justified by a well-defined ideology about their ‘right to exist’. Violence, as a frequent means of expression, therefore, is attributed to the ‘political practices’ of the Indian system (Corsi, 1996b).

Whether or not this interpretation of history does or does not reflect the real unfolding of events, it has been influenced by and has revealed the state of oppression that is still in the Punjab. This view of history has been useful for the political and socioeconomic forces involved in the struggle for gaining independence from the central Indian government in New Delhi. Many Sikhs believe that they are still living under a colonial regime, now incarnated in a political class that is a ‘child’ of the British colonial regime who educated it. Independence therefore has not reduced the exploitation of the Punjab rather it has just changed the ‘exploiters’. The national government is considered responsible for having reduced the Punjab to the level of a ‘satellite state,’ and for having involuntarily perpetrated the backwardness of the industrial structures of the region through a strategy designed to control the agricultural production of the Punjab and use its market for boosting the industrial production of other areas of India (G. Singh, 1994). National fiscal policy, which makes the Punjab the most taxed state on the entire subcontinent and the policy of the so-called ‘reservations’ that provides only a minimal amount of aid to the Punjab are considered further examples of the national government’s violation of the rights of the Sikhs.

It has been observed that this interpretation of history by the Panth does not reflect the position that the Sikhs now occupy in India, especially when

compared to other minorities. For example, the Sikh farmers are among the richest in the nation, and Sikh entrepreneurs have had success not only in the Punjab, but also in all the urban areas in the north of India. Likewise, the representation of the Panth in the armed forces, although inferior to what it was in colonial times, is still a very high proportion, certainly superior to the proportion of the Sikhs in relation to the Indian population as a whole. However, in this case there is validity in the famous sociological law according to which what is considered true (independent of the fact that it is or not true) becomes true in its consequences. If the Sikhs' perception of discrimination has a minimum basis of justification, it consists in the fact that the position of privilege enjoyed by them during the colonial period entered a period of relative decline starting precisely after the end of the colonial regime. In itself, this relative decline (which, as we have already stated, must be countered by the fact that the Sikhs have continued to be one of the Indian communities with the greatest success) does not justify the view of the Sikhs that they are a community 'under siege' (B.A. Singh, 1988). But the particular interpretation that the Sikhs have given to their history (a type of interpretation that, after all, is in no way a peculiarity of the Sikhs, since it is recurrent among minorities, even successful ones) is such that it has given them a sense of persecution and legitimized the recourse to extreme measures of political struggle, including terrorism and civil war.

Considering all this, we do not intend to examine the evidence for or against the particular historical interpretation held by the Sikhs concerning their relations with the rest of India. Likewise, we will not attempt to determine if it is an apologetic interpretation that, starting from events that really happened, provides an ideological justification for their actions.⁸ Basically, what interests us is that there exists a widely believed narrative of a history of persecutions, marginalization and injustice to which the Sikhs feel they have always responded with heroic armed resistance.

In the following paragraphs we will examine how 'this' history, which has become an integral part of the way in which the Panth perceive the real world, has played an important role in their political mobilization. This aspect is especially important, given that their organized claims for 'subnationality' (i.e. an ethnic group with a separate political identity and homeland within a larger national political system) and territorial integrity have been relatively weak.⁹ On the other hand, politics has always been characterized by mobilizing the masses along communalistic lines.

How the Sikhs Interpret their History

The history of the Punjab pulsates with movements that tenaciously struggle in defence of freedom, and the Panth interprets its past as a continuous commitment to the struggle for the preservation of its political, religious and social personality. In pre-colonial times, the Sikhs often fought against invaders by

'sealing' the northwest frontiers. During the Moghul domination they were victims of violent political and military clashes with the empire. These produced an historical memory of this period that emphasizes two distinct developments: the concentration of spiritual and temporal authority in the person of the guru, and a change from the pacific diffusion of the faith to its defence even with arms, if necessary, for the survival of the dignity, honor and freedom of the religious community perceived as a victim of persecutions.

Subsequently, in the 19th and 20th centuries, the Sikhs continued to be the harshest opponents of British domination, fighting vigorously against the colonial Raj. In 1858, the Namdhari, or Kuka puritan movement had a militant and anti-imperialistic character and used non-cooperation as a political tool. The Ghadr and Babbar Akalis movements had a similar character (Lajwanti, 1991). They tried to physically eliminate British agents and informers. In 1873, the Singh Sabha movement tried to find remedies to combat the proselytization and numerous conversions to Christianity that had accompanied British colonization. The objective of this movement was the restoration of the 'original purity' of Sikhism, rejection of western culture, diffusion of the use of the Punjabi language and the reconciliation of the apostates. In short, this movement opposed the decline of orthodox Sikhism that had taken place since the overthrow of the Sikh empire in 1849 by the British (Singha, 1985).

The interpretation of the historical events at the end of the 19th century emphasized the sense of distinction between the Sikh, Hindu and Muslim communities in the Punjab due to controversies regarding the role and use of the various languages and writings. However, it was only in the early years of the 20th century that the process of self-determination began to experiment with modern forms of political expression. Through Chief Khalsa Diwan (the political wing of the Singh Sabha), the urban and aristocratic elite demanded better education and employment opportunities, separate constitutional representation and other political demands, while the Sikh peasants were attracted to more radical movements (Fox, 1984).

The decisive step towards mass politics was made in 1919–20, when the Panth joined the Rowlatt Satyagraha movement of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (Shirer, 1993), and with the inauguration of the Akali movement. The latter gave birth to the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandahk Committee, the central administrative commission of the Gurdwara (the Sikh temples), which was endowed with a parliamentary structure and widespread power. The Shiromani Akali Dal political party emerged in the early 1920s as the main representative of the nationalistic aspirations of the Sikh community.

The process of politicization of Sikh identity culminated in the claims of the Akali Dal in the period before the carving-up of colonial India. Sikh demands for independence began in the 1940s with the petition for the establishment of 'Sikhistan', and it was then that the Akali leaders encouraged the claim for 'Khalistan' (literally 'pure people land') on a geographical basis (G. Singh,

1994b).¹⁰ The Sikh claims were unrealistic, due to the simple fact that the Sikhs were not a majority in any district of colonial Punjab. The year 1947 marks a historical moment that was tragic for the Punjab because of the devastating territorial division that carved up the province between India and Pakistan. Approximately a million people (of whom a very high number were Sikhs) were the victims of the communal clashes that took place at the time of the exchange of the populations, in which about 13 million people passed across the new borders in both directions (Grewal, 1990). On that occasion, the 'land of the five rivers' (which is the meaning in English of the word Punjab) was deprived of territories that from the Sikh viewpoint were of extreme importance in terms of their historical memory. For the Panth, this moment marked the beginning of its decline and the advent of the danger of its fusion with the much more numerous Hindu community. These fears were subsequently nourished by Indian Prime Minister Nehru's 'treachery', when he decided to not grant autonomy to the Sikhs in the form of a linguistic reorganization of the State, breaking promises to the Sikhs that had been made more than once before independence. The continual refusal of the national government in New Delhi to give in to these demands was interpreted by the Panth as a premeditated effort to reduce the Sikhs to a minority in their own native land, rather than a majority in a new state with the Punjabi language. Viewed from the center, now that the division was made, there was no longer any danger that the Punjab – essential to India for the production of grain – might decide to join the Pakistan federation.

In 1953, the central government set up the States Reorganization Commission to carry out an extensive reconstruction of the state frontiers. This involved many areas all over India and its aim was the creation of 'linguistic states.' However, once again, the demands from the Punjab (or rather from the Sikhs) were ignored. The demands of the Hindu political representatives, orientated towards promoting the replacement of the Sikhs' mother tongue – Punjabi – with Hindi, laid the basis for violent agitation. The first such agitation, aimed at the formation of a Sikh state called Punjabi Suba, was organized by the Akali Dal in 1955. On that occasion, the demands of the Sikhs were not satisfied. The government project of reorganizing the states of the Indian Union on a linguistic basis led to the fusion in 1956 of the state of Patiala and the East Punjab Union (PEPSU, formed in 1948 and made up of areas in which the Sikhs were in the majority) with the state of Punjab, and several northern districts of Punjab in the Himalaya were added to the state of Himachal Pradesh (K. Singh, 1966).

After the first Indo-Pakistan war (1965), in which the contribution of Sikh soldiers was decisive, the national government could not oppose making Punjabi officially the main language of the state and the Indian premier Indira Gandhi was forced to recognize the demand for Punjabi Suba (a Punjabi-speaking state). Thus, the state of Punjab, literally the 'land of the five rivers', understood

as the 'land of the Sikhs' in religious terms, was born in 1966. It represented a communalization of the linguistic question and showed just how much internal dynamism the Punjabi issue had achieved by this point in time.

Another factor worrying the Panth was what they considered the economic exploitation of the Punjab by the government of the Indian Union. This involved especially the distribution of the water of the rivers in the region (originally five, but only three after 1947). Before the creation of Punjabi Suba, the Punjab had complete control over the enormous wealth formed by the waters of its rivers. Subsequently, however, only 25 percent of that wealth was granted to the Punjab, as the remainder was diverted, through canals, to other areas – Rajasthan, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, and Delhi. After the Punjab Reorganization Act of 1966, the government in New Delhi acquired the authority to control and distribute this wealth, violating the laws in force regarding international and interstate division of water patrimony and even the Indian constitution that attributes this authority to the local governments. In order to remedy the resulting scarcity of water, the farmers had to resort to the use of underground water supplies, with prohibitive costs for its extraction.

Relation between the Green Revolution and Civil War

Whether or not justified, the 'disillusion' that was widespread among the Sikhs, especially the Sikh Jats, due to their unrealized expectations and hopes, fuelled their interpretation of the economic difficulties of the Punjab as being a consequence of the impossibility of gaining access to the enormous energy potential of the State due to the centralizing policies of the national government in New Delhi. Similarly, the imposition by the central government of fixed supply prices for farming inputs, its taxation policies and, lastly, the impossibility of finding openings on the international market for its products (due to the autarchic policy of the Indian government) were all causes that fueled the perception of the Panth that they were an 'internal colony' of India.

The deprivations that were fueled by the previously described social dynamics found political expression and the social tensions were soon transformed into a clash between landowners and the 'landless'. The rural proletariat, oppressed in social and economic terms, began in fact to perceive Sikhism as the religion of their Jat 'oppressors' who, although only 20 percent of the population, possessed 60 percent of the tillable land (Puri, 1983). This gave rise to widespread resentment towards all Sikh institutions and many joined socio-religious organizations (such as the Nirankari, Radha Soamis, and Adi Dharam) considered 'heretic' by the Sikh orthodoxy. The laborers' response to the increasing agricultural capitalism was a decisive moment in the process of communalization of the Punjab. While it is true that Sikh separatist terrorism operated in favor of the landowners and more than once struck the laborers, it is likewise true that the tension between Sikh fundamentalism and the 'heretic'

groups, and between Sikh laborers and the Hindu immigrant laborers were important sources for triggering violence.

According to some sources (e.g. Purewal, 2000), however, the civil war that took place in the Punjab was based on the conflict between Sikh landowners and Hindu traders. The Sikh landowners invoked the solidarity of the Sikh religious followers to form a front with the Sikh laborers and the small landowners and to oppose the urban Hindu traders and industrialists. The frustrations of the Jats were transformed into political ambitions to overcome the obstacles they perceived that had been erected intentionally by the central government to delay the economic development of the Punjab. In this context, political demagoguery exploited and magnified the apologetic interpretation of the history of the Panth, and fomented the use of religious symbols rooted in the collective memory to invoke the solidarity of the community in a mutual struggle to eliminate its antagonists. It thus provided an ideological justification for the use of violence. In the shadow of the Akali Dal movement and the political expression of Jat ambitions, extremism developed that violently incarnated the resentment against the existing order.

One of the causes of the tensions and fanaticism in the Punjab was what has been called the 'hope factor' (Hirshmann, 1992: 79). The rising expectations that were widespread following the agricultural boom were soon transformed into rising frustrations: the Jat farmers powerlessly watched the decline of the benefits of the agricultural revolution and feared for their traditional privileges. Having seen their hopes frustrated and experiencing this situation as a form of social marginalization, they fell back on the ancestral divisions of Indian society (religions, castes, ethnic groups) in an attempt at self-defense. The economic development that the Punjab had witnessed permitted the formation and growth of new lobbies which, to protect their status, triggered off a chauvinist, communalist, reactionary movement (R. Singh, 1994). This movement sought to throw off the imposition of a middle-class nation with its homogeneous national culture on the multi-religious and pluri-cultural society in the Punjab (Dev, 1996). The economic development fomented by the Green Revolution created repercussions on traditional Punjabi society. In a context characterized by both an increase in population and in educational structures, there was an increase in the expectations of young people. However, after years of study, often completed abroad, the latter found that they were not able to find openings in types of work outside the usual traditional occupations. Young people soon began to ignore the Sikh religious rituals and to reject the exterior symbols of religious confession. The future of Sikhism was again a cause of worry and this was enhanced by the high number of non-Sikh laborers from other states drawn to the Punjab by its 'miraculous' development. The more orthodox factions tried to resist the 'absorption' of Sikhism into Hinduism.

The reluctance of the government in New Delhi to grant further autonomy and the growing sense of social marginalization that had rapidly spread among

the Sikhs caused an increase in political agitation. The increasing demonstrations and frequent violent clashes which accompanied them degenerated into civil war and led in October 1983 to the suspension of the powers of the state government and the imposition of government control by the then prime minister, Indira Gandhi. The responsibilities of the premier and of other important leaders of the ruling Congress party for the internal clashes in Punjab have since been ascertained, and this is not only by literature on the Sikh side.¹¹

In June 1984, Indira Gandhi sent the army into the Punjab with the objective of putting an end to the cycle of violence and to the occupation of the Harimandir Sahib, the 'Golden Temple' of Amritsar, the *sancta sanctorum* of Sikhism that had been transformed into the 'headquarters' of the Sikh militants.¹² The events that followed had devastating psychological consequences for the Panth: the so-called Bluestar operation caused over a thousand deaths and the profanation of the Sikhs' most important place of worship, which suffered very serious damage at the hands of the artillery divisions that intervened in the conflict on the night of the 5/6 June. On 31 October 1984, Indira Gandhi – assassinated in her residence in New Delhi by her Sikh bodyguards – personally paid the price for having injured the pride and religious sentiments of the entire Panth. The next month another event took place that intensified the sensation of 'siege' within the Panth. The murder of the Indira Gandhi was followed by a pogrom of Sikhs in New Delhi. From 31 October to 4 November 1984, there was a real life communal holocaust. About 3000 Sikhs were massacred in New Delhi and the surrounding areas by enraged Hindus that had been manipulated by certain political elements (Kothari, 1984).

The restoration of political normalcy (the elections of 1992, 1997 and 1999) after years of imposed government from New Delhi has produced decreased violence and the gradual return of the Punjab to its original status of the most prosperous state in the Indian Union. However, the brutality of the repression carried out by the Indian government's security forces, a repression that saw an increase in both deaths from 'shootings' or 'escape attempts', often contrived by the police forces themselves, and of the 'disappearances' of citizens, and the more or less constant violation of the normal legal procedures has continued to fuel the perception of social marginalization present among the Sikh community, the Panth. The restoration of the democratic process has not therefore placated the complex network of ethnic-religious and political-economic resentments that continue to prevail in the state. At the moment, in fact, the violent phase of Sikh militancy can be said to be over, but the profound and deep-rooted motivations that caused and fuelled it, and in particular the sense of frustration that still characterizes the Panth, are still present.

Conclusions

The Punjab is the Indian state where the Green Revolution met with its greatest success. However, as several scholars anticipated in the period between the 1960s and 1970s, this revolution created deep social imbalances. Many of these scholars had warned that these imbalances might explode into a class conflict of a violent nature, that is to say, that the 'Green Revolution' might become a 'Red Revolution.' This forecast did not come true. But, at least in the Punjab – the real epicenter of the Green Revolution, there was in fact an explosion of violence that culminated in a civil war in the 1980s and 1990s. The fact that this explosion of violence has been justified in coded language that, depending on one's political view, can be seen as either 'communalistic' or 'nationalistic,' has tended to hide the direct link between this violence and the socioeconomic transformations caused by the Green Revolution. On the other hand, one can question whether this process of modernization, in itself, would of necessity have exploded into the civil war of the 1980s and 1990s, if it had not been grafted onto a particular social context, marked by a particular ideology – that of Sikh sub-nationalism – which legitimized a massive use of violence.¹³

NOTES

1. In 1995, 65 million tons of wheat was harvested against 6.5 million in 1950. As a producing country, India is inferior only to China and the European Union, almost on a level with the USA (Sud, 1996).
2. Among the many who sustain this theory are Chopra (1990); K.G. Singh (1993); and Shiva (1989). At present, the contamination of agricultural products in the Punjab due to the indiscriminate use of insecticides harmful to health is among the highest in India (Vinayak, 1997).
3. Chakrabarty (1996). Torri, in controversy with Lakshmi Subramanian, shows how the divisions on a community basis of the population of the large port city of Surat in the second half of the 18th century had very little importance from a political or economic viewpoint. Hindus, Sunni Muslims, Bohras, Parsees and Armenians cooperated or clashed, at both a political and economic level, on the basis of considerations of personal advantage that had nothing to do with religion. Moreover, as the conflicts among the Parsees of Surat demonstrate, belonging to a religious group tended to be an element of division rather than a factor of solidarity (Torri, 1987, 1991, 1997, 1998).
4. 'Panth', which literally means 'path', is the name for the whole Sikh community, i.e. those who follow the path of Sikhism.
5. For further details on Sikhism, please see: McCormack (1987); Nandi (1996); Pace and Guolo (1998); Piano (1971); G. Singh (1993); R. Singh (1981); and I. Singh (1976).
6. See Puri (1983); G. Singh (1994b); S.G. Singh (1984).

7. What follows is just a selection of the extremely vast Sikh and non-Sikh literature that interprets the story of the Panth as a continuous struggle against oppression. Each of the texts that we mention contains an ample bibliography: Gupta (1973); Kumar and Sieberger (1991); B.A. Singh (1988); G. Singh (1979); G. Singh (1986); G. Singh (1994); G.D. Singh (1992); J. Singh (1976); K. Singh (1992); M. Singh (1978); R. Singh (1966); S.S. Singh (1971); and Tully and Satish (1991).
8. Western scholars have often accepted in a more or less uncritical manner Sikh apologetic literature, without bearing in mind alternative sources and interpretations; see Torri (2000).
9. For a discussion of subnationalism within the Indian context, see Nag (2002).
10. G. Singh (1994).
11. Among the many bibliographical sources that testify to this are: Andrew (1985); Banarjee (1984) and Shekhar (1995).
12. For a detailed analysis of the relations between the Sikh community and Indira Gandhi, see Torri (2000).
13. Obviously, as the previous section indicates, the illegitimate use of violence was far from being one-way. But an analysis of the reasons for the use of violence by the Indian state lies outside the scope of this article.

REFERENCES

- Andrew, J. (1985) 'Sikh Ethno-nationalism 1967–1984: Implication for the Congress', *South Asia* June/December: 168–81.
- Banarjee, S. (1984) 'The Best Lack All Conviction, While the Worst are Full of Passionate Intensity', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 7 July, pp. 1019–21.
- Banerjee, S. (1996) 'The Politics of Violence in the Indian State and Society', in K. Rupesinghe and M. Khawar (eds) *Internal Conflicts in South Asia*. London: Sage.
- Berger, P. (1981) *Le piramidi del sacrificio*. Turin: Einaudi.
- Chakrabarty, D. (1996) 'Modernity and Ethnicity in India', in J. McGuire, P. Reeves and H. Brasted (eds) *Politics of Violence. From Ayodhya to Behrampada*. New Delhi: Sage.
- Chopra, K. (1990) *Agricultural Development in Punjab*. New Delhi: Vikas.
- Collotti-Pischel, E. (1984) *L'India oggi. Lo sviluppo come speranza e come dramma*. Milan: Angeli.
- Corsi, M. (1996a) 'Il Separatismo sikh nel Punjab', *Rivista di Studi Politici Internazionali* 251: 399–408.
- Corsi, M. (1996b) 'Violenza in India: un'analisi', *Culture* (Annali dell'Istituto di Lingue della Facoltà di Scienze Politiche dell'Università degli Studi di Milano) 10(2): 255–63.
- D'Souza, V. (1982) 'Economy, Caste, Religion and Population Distribution in Punjab', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 8 May, pp. 783–92.
- Dev, N. (1996) 'India: From Civilization to Nations', in K. Rupesinghe and M. Khawar (eds) *Internal Conflicts in South Asia*, p. 24. London: Sage.
- Dumont, L. (1991) *Homo hierarchicus*. Milan: Adelphi Edizioni.
- Eisenstadt, S. (1994) *Fondamentalismo e modernità*. Bari: Laterza.

- Engineer, A. (1992) 'Communalism and Nation Building', in P. Kumar (ed.) *Towards Understanding Communalism*, p. 67. Chandigarh: Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development CRIDD.
- Engineer, A. (1995) *Communalism in India, a Historical and Empirical Study*. New Delhi: Vikas.
- Engineer, A. (1997) 'Communalism and Communal Violence', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 15 August, p. 323.
- Engineer, A. (2000) 'Communalism and Communal Violence', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 29 January, pp. 245–9.
- Engineer, A. (2001) 'Communal Riots 2000', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 27 January, pp. 275–9.
- Fox, R.G. (1984) 'Urban Class and Communal Consciousness in Colonial Punjab: The Genesis of India's Intermediate Regime', *Modern Asian Studies* 18: 459–89.
- Grewal, G.S. (1990) 'The Sikhs of the Punjab', in *The New Cambridge History of India*, Volume II:3. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gupta, H.R. (1973) *History of the Sikhs*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal.
- Hasan, M. (1980) 'Communalism in the Provinces: A Case Study of Bengal and the Punjab', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 16 August, pp. 1395–406.
- Hirsh, F. (1981) *I limiti sociali allo sviluppo*. Milan: Bompiani.
- Hirshmann, A.O. (1992) *Ascesa e declino dell'economia dello sviluppo*. Turin: Rosenberg & Sellier.
- Jeffrey, R. (1986) *What's Happening to India? Punjab, Ethnic Conflict, Mrs Gandhi's Death and the Test for Federalism*. London: Macmillan.
- Kothari, R. (1984) 'Genocide 1984: The How and Why of it All', *The Sikh Review* 42(491): 37–42.
- Kothari, R. (1989) 'Cultural Context of Communalism in India', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 14 January, pp. 81–5.
- Kumar, P. (1984) *Punjab Crisis: Context and Trends*. Chandigarh: Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development, CRIDD.
- Kumar, P. (1995) 'Violence in Punjab', *Seminar* 434: 55–8.
- Kumar, R.N. and Sieberger, G. (1991) *The Sikh Struggle: Origin, Evolution and Present Phase*. New Delhi: Chanakya.
- Lajwanti, R.K. (1991) *Il Sikh: La leggendaria setta dalle origini al XX Secolo*. Florence: Convivio Nardini Editori.
- Lakshman, Y. (1993) 'What are Improved Seeds? An Epistemology of the Green Revolution', *Economic Geography: Environment and Development, Part 1* 69(3): 254–73.
- Latouche, S. (1993) *Il Pianeta dei naufraghi*. Turin: Bollati Boringhieri.
- McCormack, M.K. (1987) *Brief Outline of the Sikh Faith*. London: The Sikh Cultural Society of Great Britain.
- McCormack, M.K. (1988) *An Introduction to Sikh Beliefs*. London: The Sikh Cultural Society of Great Britain.
- Nag, S. (2002) *Contesting Marginality: Ethnicity, Insurgency and Subnationalism in North-east India*. New Delhi: Manohar.

- Nandi, P.K. (1996) 'Sociopolitical Context of Sikh Militancy in India', *Journal of African and Asian Studies* 3-4: 178-90.
- Pace, E. and Guolo, R. (1998) *I Fondamentalismi*. Bari: Editori Laterza.
- Piano, S. (1971) *Guru Nanak e il Sikhismo*. Fossano: Esperienze.
- Purewal, S. (2000) *Sikh Ethnonationalism and the Political Economy of Punjab*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Puri, H.K. (1983) 'The Akali Agitation, An Analysis of Socio-Economic Bases of Protest', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 22 January, pp. 113-18.
- Shekhar, G. (1995) 'A Bitter Sweet Legacy', *India Today*, 15 January, pp. 58-9.
- Shirer, W. (1993) *Mahatma Gandhi*. New Delhi: Sperling Paperback.
- Shiva, V. (1989) *The Violence of the Green Revolution*. Dehra Dun: Research Foundation for Science and Technology.
- Shiva, V. (1993) *Sopravvivere allo sviluppo*. Turin: Isedi.
- Singh, B.A. (1988) *Siege of the Sikhs. Violation of Human Rights in Punjab*. Toronto: New Magazine Publishing.
- Singh, G. (1979) *A History of the Sikh People, 1479-1978*. New Delhi: World Sikh University Press.
- Singh, G. (1986) *Religion and Politics in the Punjab*. New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications.
- Singh, G. (1993) *Sikh rehat maryada. A Guide to the Sikh Way of Life*. Hong Kong: Unknown publisher.
- Singh, G. (1994a) 'Complexities of the Question of Sikh Nationality', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 16 July, pp. 1877-82.
- Singh, G. (ed.) (1994b) *Punjab: Past, Present and Future*. New Delhi: Ajanta.
- Singh, G.D. (1992) *India Commits Suicide*. Chandigarh: Singh & Singh.
- Singh, I. (1976) *Nanakism: A New World Order Temporal and Spiritual*. New Delhi: Ranjit.
- Singh, J. (1976) *Facts and Rhetoric: The Demand for Punjabi Suba*. New Delhi: Super Press.
- Singh, J. (1996) *Society, Culture and Socio-cultural Change*. New Delhi: National Book Organization.
- Singh, K. (1992) *My Bleeding Punjab*. New Delhi: UBSPD.
- Singh, K. (1966) *A History of the Sikhs Vol.2: 1839-1974*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Singh, K.G. (1993) *A Growing Agricultural Economy*. Oxford/New Delhi: IBH.
- Singh, M. (1978) *The Akali Movement*. New Delhi: Macmillan.
- Singh, P. (1983) *Emerging Pattern in Punjab Economy*. New Delhi: Sterling.
- Singh, R. (1966) *Punjabi Suba Demand*. Amritsar: SGPC.
- Singh, R. (1973) *Five Lectures in Marxist Mode*. New Delhi: Ajanta Publications.
- Singh, R. (1981) *The Sikh Way of Life*. New Delhi: India Publishers.
- Singh, R. (1994) 'Marxists and the Sikh Extremist Movement in Punjab', in G. Singh (ed.) *Punjab: Past, Present and Future*, p. 373. New Delhi: Ajanta Publications.
- Singh, S. (1995) 'Giani Zail Singh Obituary', *The Sikh Review* 43(493): 81-2.
- Singh, S. (2000) 'Crisis in Punjab Agriculture', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 3 June, pp. 1889-92.

- Singh, S.G. (1984) 'The Punjab Problem: Its Historical Roots', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 7 April, pp. 603–08.
- Singh, S.G. (1988) 'Contradictions of Punjab Model of Growth and Search for an Alternative', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 15 October, pp. 1386–7.
- Singh, S.S. (1971) *The Destiny of the Sikhs*. New Delhi: Sterling.
- Singha, H.S. (1985) *Junior Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*. Sahibabad: Vikas.
- Sud, S. (1996) 'La coltivazione di grano in India', *India*, April, p. 13.
- Thapar, R. (1993) *Interpreting Early India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Torri, M. (1980) 'L'India indipendente', in *Il mondo contemporaneo, vol III: storia dell'Asia*. Florence: La Nuova Italia.
- Torri, M. (1987) 'Surat During the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century: What Kind of Social Order?', *Modern Asian Studies* 21(4): 679–710.
- Torri, M. (1991) 'The Hindu Bankers of Surat and their Business World in the Second Half of the 18th Century', *Modern Asian Studies* 25(2): 367–401.
- Torri, M. (1994) 'India: crisi e sopravvivenza del governo rao', in G. Borsa and E. Collotti-Pischel (eds) *Asia Major 1994. Luci e ombre sullo sviluppo in Asia Orientale*, pp. 143–64. Bologna: CSPEE/il Mulino.
- Torri, M. (1997) 'A Loch Ness Monster? The Mahajans of Surat during the Second Half of the 18th Century', *Studies in History* 13(1): 1–18.
- Torri, M. (1998) 'Mughal Nobles, Indian Merchants and the Beginning of English Conquest in Western India: The Case of Surat, 1756–1759', *Modern Asian Studies* 32(2): 257–315.
- Torri, M. (2000) *Storia dell'India*. Bari: Editori Laterza.
- Tully, M. and Satish, J. (1991) *Amritsar: Mrs. Gandhi's Last Battle*. Calcutta: Rupa & Co.
- Vinayak, R. (1997) 'The Killing Fields', *India Today*, 15 February, pp. 46–7.

Marco Corsi's educational background includes a Masters Degree in Cooperation and Development Economics from the University of Pavia, and a PhD in Development Sociology from the University of Pisa, where he was a contracted Professor and Chair of Development Sociology up to 2004. He has first-hand experience of development work in the field, having carried out research on behalf of universities and NGOs in India and Pakistan at various times throughout the 1990s. Since 1995, he has been a member of the Editorial Board of the *Academic Review Asia Major*, based at the University of Pavia, and is responsible for the annual country report for Pakistan. His published work includes articles in a number of journals, including *Economic and Political Weekly*, *South Asia Research (SOAS)*, *Environment and Urbanization*, and the *Rivista di Studi Politici Internazionali*. He works as freelance consultant for international organizations, having spent the last decade with NGOs, UN, Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the European Commission in different duty stations, including Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, and Azerbaijan. Address: University of Pisa, Via Marradi 146, 57126 Livorno, Italy. [email: mcorsi@email.com]