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"Wipe Out this Menace of Terror": The Unofficial Hindu Nationalism of an Officially Pro-Peace Hindu Reform Movement

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Oral Presentation O8.1

**"WIPE OUT THIS MENACE OF TERROR": THE UNOFFICIAL HINDU
NATIONALISM OF AN OFFICIALLY PRO-PEACE HINDU REFORM MOVEMENT**

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The Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan tradition is a sect of the Swaminarayan devotional Hindu reform movement, which was founded in Gujarat in the 19th century. It has risen to worldwide prominence in the last 30 years due to its remarkable growth among the Gujarati diaspora. It is now perhaps one of the most visible faces of Hinduism outside of India. Though it is officially and publicly a pro-peace movement, the fundamentalist aspects of the tradition tend it toward Gujarati nationalism, and perhaps, more intolerant forms of Hindu Nationalism. I argue that the place to look for these nationalistic undercurrents is at the unofficial level, and in my paper I attempt to present evidence of the Swaminarayan sect's connections with hardline Hindu ideology.