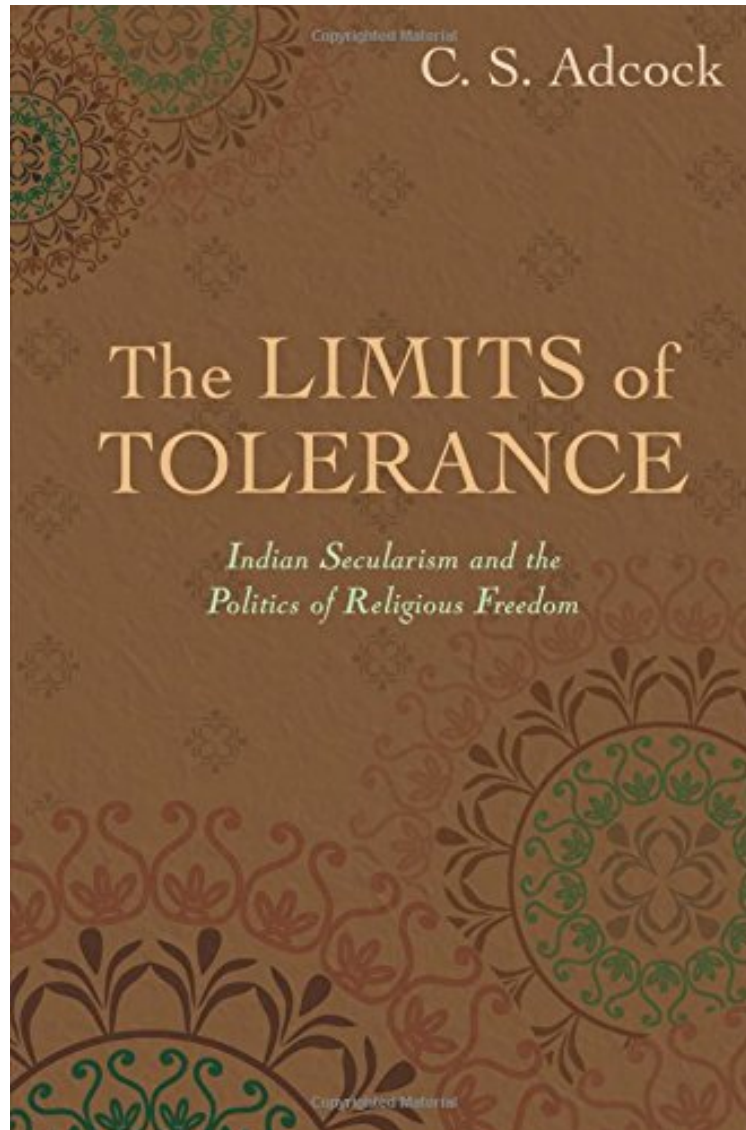


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The Limits of Tolerance: Indian Secularism and the Politics of Religious Freedom

C.S. Adcock

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C.S. Adcock : The Limits of Tolerance: Indian Secularism and the Politics of Religious Freedom before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Limits of Tolerance: Indian Secularism and the Politics of Religious Freedom:

This book provides a critical history of the distinctive tradition of Indian secularism known as Tolerance. Since it was first advanced by Mohandas Gandhi, the Tolerance ideal has measured secularism and civil religiosity by contrast with proselytizing religion. In India today, it informs debates over how the right to religious freedom should be interpreted on the subcontinent. Not only has Tolerance been an important political ideal in India since the early twentieth century; the framing assumptions of Tolerance permeate historical understandings among scholars of South Asian religion and politics. In conventional accounts, the emergence of Tolerance during the 1920s is described as a victory of Indian secularism over the intolerant practice of shuddhi "proselytizing", pursued by reformist Hindus of the Arya Samaj, that was threatening harmonious Hindu-Muslim relations. This study shows that the designation of shuddhi as religious proselytizing was not fixed; it was the product of decades of political struggle. The book traces the conditions for the emergence of Tolerance, and the circumstances of its first deployment, by examining the history of debates surrounding Arya Samaj activities in north India between 1880 and 1930. It asks what political considerations governed Indian actors' efforts to represent shuddhi as religious on different occasions; and it asks what was lost in translation when they did. It reveals that by framing shuddhi decisively as a religious matter, Tolerance functioned to disengage Indian secularism from the politics of caste.

"The Limits of Tolerance is a fascinating and important book—a cautionary tale really—that should be read by anyone interested in the global politics of religious freedom. Insisting on the value of the micro-history of the political work that concepts such as tolerance and religious freedom do in very specific times and places, in this case late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century India, Adcock makes a significant contribution to our understanding of the way such ideas migrate, transform, and serve partisan political ends." - Winnifred Fallers Sullivan, Professor and Chair, Department of Religious Studies, Indiana University "The Limits of Tolerance is an exciting and much-needed contribution to our historical understanding of the origins of specifically Indian ideas of religious freedom as freedom from proselytizing, as well as to contemporary debates over the nature of secularism, the political entanglements of religion, and the competing interests of religious toleration, freedom of expression, and governance." - Robert A. Yelle, author of *The Language of Disenchantment: Protestant Literalism and Colonial Discourse in British India* About the Author C. S. Adcock is Assistant Professor of South Asian Studies and Religious Studies in the Department of History, Washington University in St. Louis.