

UNDOING INDIA THE RSS WAY

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Dedicated to the victims of
the communal carnage in Gujarat whose sufferings reiterate the need
to rise to defend a democratic-secular India

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INTRODUCTION

There can be no two opinions that while ‘Swayamsevaks’ like Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Lal Krishan Advani and Murli Manohar Joshi ruled this country, [1998-2004] courtesy the National Democratic Alliance, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh¹ (RSS) greatly accelerated its old favourite pastime of minority-bashing and playing havoc with a democratic-secular-federal India. Sarsanghchalak or the Supreme Leader of the RSS, KS Sudershan while addressing a rally on the eve of the 75th founding day of the RSS in Nagpur, called upon the Muslims and Christians of the country to prove their patriotism. Later, the RSS at the end of its Bangalore session on March 7, 2002, came out with another warning to the Muslims: “Let the Muslims understand that their real safety lies in the good-will of the majority”. This statement came in the aftermath of the carnage of the Muslims allegedly organized by the cadres of the RSS in Gujarat. How the Muslims and other minorities could earn RSS ‘good-will’ was clear by the following words of an editorial in the Hindustan Times:

“Daughters were gang-raped in front of their fathers and then had their heads bashed in. Their fathers were doused with petrol and set on fire. Their property was looted. Their businesses were destroyed. And the police stood by and did nothing.”²

It is really atrocious that an organization, which had been banned at least twice for anti-national activities by the Government of India after Independence should pose as the controlling authority of patriotism in the country. Should we once again refresh the memory of the RSS brass that their rabid communal organization was banned in 1948 for collaborating in the murder of Father of the Nation M. K. Gandhi,³ and in 1992 it was again banned for demolishing the Babri mosque at Ayodhya? Do we also need to tell the RSS that misadventures like the demolition of the Babri mosque, the large scale pogrom of the Muslims in Gujarat, violence against Christians and Dalits by its outfits only

served the strategic goals of the enemies of India like the ISI of Pakistan who wanted to see an India fractured, and at war with itself?

The RSS and its leadership historically have been great worshippers of Hitler and Mussolini and their ideas. Nazism and Fascism have greatly moulded the ideological as well as organizational frameworks of the RSS. They do not hide this love. The RSS does not hate minorities only, it publicly wants to build up an India of Manu's dehumanizing ideas and establish a theocracy in which the Dalits/Untouchables, lower castes, downtrodden and women amongst the Hindus will have no humane or respectable existence.

It is high time that the people of this country scrutinize the record of patriotism and loyalty to the Nation of the RSS itself. Unfortunately, the RSS, which is fond of demanding unwavering and unflinching loyalty to the nation from the minorities, is loyal neither to the Constitution of India nor to the National Flag. The RSS is an organization which openly decries the existence of a democratic, federal and secular India; and these characteristics are the 'Basic' features of the Constitution of India. It is an organization which not only openly decried the Freedom Movement against the British rule but also made fun of the heroic and patriotic revolutionary tradition of great martyrs like Bhagat Singh and his companions who laid down their lives for the liberation of the Motherland.

In order to know the truth we will simply have to make access to the literature and publications of the RSS and its different outfits, specially the writings of M.S. Golwalkar who, as an ideologue is religiously followed by the bosses and cadres of the RSS. Here it is attempted to present the original and official viewpoints of the RSS on different aspects of Indian Nationalism, so that there is no room to allege that they have been misrepresented.

It must be stressed here that it is the need of the hour that we know about the RSS and its game plan. It is no more a fringe organization now, as the present BJP leaders have declared their open allegiance to the RSS. They have even told the Nation that the RSS to them is what

Gandhi was to Nehru! Interestingly, the RSS, despite these claims and declarations, denies any political role for itself! It claims to be just a cultural organization of the Hindus.

It is hoped that with all these facts available (from horse's mouth itself) our nation and the world will get familiarized with the real face and intentions of the RSS, otherwise it may be too late to save our dear Motherland.

ORIGIN OF RSS

The Prime Minister of India, Atal Behari Vajpayee issued a commemorative postage stamp to mark the 110th birth anniversary of the 'freedom fighter' and founder of the RSS, Dr. K. B. Hedgewar, on March 18, 1999 in New Delhi. It was the first instance since India's independence that a postage stamp was issued commemorating the birthday of the founder of the RSS or any other leader of this organization. On this occasion, the Prime Minister, while addressing mainly a gathering of the RSS cadre, took credit for the fact that by issuing the postage stamp his government had corrected an injustice whereby the great freedom fighter and patriot Hedgewar was denied his due place in the history of Independent India. Rajendar Singh, the then chief of the RSS, and the Union Home Minister L. K. Advani too spoke on the occasion and described Hedgewar as a great revolutionary.⁴

This is not the place to go into the issue whether revolutionaries and freedom fighters who challenged the might of the British rulers need to be honoured by this government or for that matter any other government. However, the fact of the matter is that the Prime Minister, the Home Minister, and the RSS chief were talking dishonestly about the contribution of Hedgewar in the freedom struggle. They were trying to pass off a pre-independence political trend represented by the RSS as a legacy of the anti-colonial struggle whereas in reality the RSS was never part of the anti-imperialist struggle. On the contrary, since its inception in 1925, the RSS only tried to disrupt the great anti-imperialist struggle

of the Indian people against the British colonial rulers.

Interestingly, the ‘contribution’ to the freedom struggle for which the BJP Government honoured Hedgewar was made by him as a Congressman long before he founded the RSS in 1925. It may not be known to many that he went to jail for the first time for giving an inflammatory speech in support of the Khilafat Movement (1920-21). He was subsequently sentenced to one year’s rigorous imprisonment. According to his biography published by the RSS: “The experiences gained by him in the freedom movement till now, gave rise to a number of questions in his mind. He felt that some other way should be found”.⁵ In the same book, it is further mentioned that Hedgewar was attracted by ‘Hindutva’ towards 1925 and

“through his talent he found a new method of Shakha (the drill), different from the ways then prevalent, of doing public work and the type of efforts then being made for gaining freedom.”⁶

The truth is that Hedgewar by then had openly taken the path, which Mohammed Ali Jinnah was to take later, of breaking the united movement of the Indian people against the British rulers and splitting it along religious lines.

Hedgewar was sent to jail a second time by the British government; the last time he went to jail. The reason for his second imprisonment has been described in the same biography in the following words:

“[In 1930] Mahatma Gandhi had called upon the people to break different laws of the government. Gandhiji himself launched the Salt Satyagraha, undertaking the Dandi Yatra. Dr. Saheb [Hedgewar] sent information everywhere that the Sangh will not participate in the Satyagraha. However those wishing to participate individually in it were not prohibited. This meant that any responsible worker of the Sangh could not participate in the Satyagraha.”⁷

However, rather surprisingly, Hedgewar decided to participate in

Gandhiji's Dandi Salt Satyagraha as an individual. Of course, he had an ulterior motive behind this participation. We learn about this from the same biography published by the RSS:

“Dr. Saheb had the confidence that with a freedom-loving, self-sacrificing and reputed group of people inside with him there, he would discuss the Sangh with them and win them over for its work.”⁸

In this context it is further stated in the biography,

“Doctor Saheb did not let the work of the Sangh get away from his mind (aankhon se aujhal nahin hone diya) even for a moment during his imprisonment. He established close links with all the leaders and activists [of the Congress] who were in prison, made them understand the work of the Sangh and obtained from them promise of cooperation in work for the future. He came out of the prison only after making plans for a big leap for work expansion.”⁹

It is clear that Hedgewar chose to go to jail this time not because he was committed of the cause but in order to break and disrupt the ranks of the Congress cadres. These cadres were participating in the Non-Cooperation Movement and going to jails upholding the banner of the united struggle of the people of all religions of the country. In fact, the Congress leadership soon realized that communal and sectarian organizations were bent upon using the cadre of the Congress for their vicious designs. In order to thwart such designs, the All India Congress Committee passed a resolution in 1934, forbidding Congress members from becoming members of the RSS, the Hindu Mahasabha, and the Muslim League.

It needs to be underlined here that, on the two occasions that Hedgewar went to jail, it was at the call of the Congress. If it is true that the Vajpayee government had honoured him for his participation in Congress-led movements this should have been clearly stated. On the other hand if he was honoured as the founder of the RSS then the only ‘contribution’ for which he could claim credit was that of propagating

the communal and disruptive ideology of the Hindu Rashtra (Nation), an ideology which divided and undermined the Freedom Movement.

The people of this country have every right to know about the movements which were launched by the RSS before 1947, to free India from the clutches of British imperialism. They must share with the nation the information about its leaders and cadres who suffered repression under the colonial rule. They must tell us who amongst them went to jail or became martyrs for the cause of the freedom of the country?

The truth is that the foundation of anti-imperialist people's unity, especially the unity of the Hindu and Muslim masses, was firmly laid by the great struggle of the Indian people for Independence in 1857. This unity also formed the basis of the Non-Co-operation Movement (1920-22), in the course of which India's struggle for freedom underwent a qualitative change. The single most important feature of the immediate post-World War I period was the politics of mass mobilization which was initiated largely by Gandhiji. The period following the Non-Co-operation Movement witnessed the growth of the workers' and peasants' movements, which strengthened the united anti-imperialist struggle.

At the same time an unfortunate feature of the National Movement during the mid-1920s was the growing tendency of some of the prominent leaders to take positions along communal lines. This was a development which suited the British, and the imperialist rulers left no stone unturned to encourage this trend. Hindu and Muslim chauvinists undermined the unity which had been built up during the Non-Co-operation Movement. The communal stance of the Hindu Mahasabha, which had the support of the Congress right wing, made things difficult for communal amity. As for the Muslim chauvinists, particularly the more obscurantist and reactionary sections among them, they tried to project the Khilafat issue as one concerning the Muslim community alone. By stressing the religious aspects of the issue they diluted the political and anti-imperialist content of the movement. After the Non-Co-operation Movement some of them took to communal politics, while

several others like Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Saifuddin Kitchlew, who were dedicated to the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity, became part of the Congress leadership. The Hindu and Muslim communalists thus complemented each other's politics, and British imperialism nurtured both of them.

It is against this background that Hedgewar formed the RSS in 1925. Hedgewar was born in 1889 in Nagpur. After completing his school education he went to Calcutta (1910-1915) to study medicine. Although the RSS publications claim that he was in touch with the revolutionary terrorist groups there, no independent confirmation of this is available. Moreover, there are absolutely no documents available, official or otherwise, in archives to support this claim. Almost nothing is known of his political activities for nearly five years after he returned to Nagpur in 1915. It seems that Hedgewar did not set up a medical practice. The details of the 'formative' period of his political career are vague. He was associated with the Congress for a brief period and as we have seen he was imprisoned during the Non-Co-operation Movement.

In the Congress Hedgewar was close to the extreme right-wing Hindu Mahasabha leader Dr. B. S. Moonje. Moonje was at that time in the Congress, though he was opposed to Gandhiji's programme for building Hindu-Muslim unity and was also willing to go in for limited cooperation with the British. The other mentor of Hedgewar was VD Savarkar, also known as Veer Savarkar. The official biographer of Savarkar, Dhananjay Keer writes,

“Before starting the volunteer organization known as the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, Hedgewar had a long discussion with Savarkar over the faith, form and future of the organization. A great Hindu leader and an unbending upright nationalist, Hedgewar wanted to conserve and direct the energy of Hindu youth towards all-round uplift of the Hindu Nation. After the collapse of the Non-Co-operation Movement of Gandhi and the fiasco of the Khilafat Movement, the country lay prostrate, and chaos and confusion reigned in the student world. In the wake of this

confusion and in consultation with Savarkar and others, Hedgewar decided to build up an organization to supply the Hindu society with power and pillars.”¹⁰

How close Savarkar was to RSS can be known by the following description of Keer,

“Another programme Savarkar attended whenever and wherever possible was his encouraging visits to the centers, gatherings and parades of the RSS. He encouraged the RSS, patronized them, at times advised them not to fritter away their whole life-time under incrustation and asked them to fight for the realization of their ideal.”¹¹

After coming out of prison Hedgewar criticized Gandhiji for his views on Hindu-Muslim unity and equated nationalism with the Hindu Rashtra. A major theme of the RSS since its inception was the ‘disloyalty’ of the Muslims and other minorities to the nation. According to Hedgewar,

“As a result of the Non-Co-operation Movement of Mahatma Gandhi the enthusiasm [for nationalism] in the country was cooling down and the evils in social life which that movement generated were menacingly raising their head. As the tide of national struggle came to ebb mutual ill will and jealousies came on the surface. Personal quarrels raged all round. Conflicts between various communities had started. Brahmin-non-Brahmin conflict was nakedly on view. No organization was integrated or united. The yavana-snakes [i.e. Muslims] reared on the milk of Non-Co-operation were provoking riots in the nation with their poisonous hissing.”¹²

With the aim of propagating these views among youngsters, mainly teenage boys, he formed the RSS in 1925. The RSS concentrated on disseminating Hedgewar’s views of the Hindu Rashtra (which were basically the ideas of Savarkar) among the youth. The organization was not engaged in undertaking any movement or launching any struggle against the British. This was the time when revolutionaries like Bhagat

Singh and his comrades were shaking the foundations of the British rule. Importantly, official documents of the late twenties contain no reference to any anti-British activities of the RSS. The main task of the Sangh was to carry on a hate campaign against the minorities. It sought urban middle-class Maharashtrian Brahmin boys for audiences, and in the early years this remained the main social base of the organization. It is pertinent that a spurt in the membership of the organization came soon after a Hindu-Muslim riot in Nagpur in 1927.

While the RSS embarked on its hate campaign the freedom struggle was, by 1927-28, ready to enter a new phase. The twenties had witnessed the rise of the left movement in India with the formation of Socialist groups and the founding of the Communist Party. A strong trade union movement had also come into existence. Towards the end of the twenties a number of working-class strikes swept the country. 1927 saw another development. This was the announcement by the British of another commission to go into the question of constitutional reforms for India-the Simon Commission. The Nationalists opposed the Simon Commission and the Congress gave a call to boycott it. The boycott of the Simon Commission developed into a major mass agitation. The British relied upon the growing aggressiveness of Hindu and Muslim communalists to disrupt the unity of the anti-imperialist mass upsurge of the late 1920s and hoped that this would enable them to impose a constitutional arrangement which would safeguard the British interests.¹³

BETRAYAL OF THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE

There is a vast amount of archival source material and other documentation, which provide detailed information about the activities of the Congress, the revolutionaries and various other groups, which were engaged in the anti-imperialist struggle. The Communists, who throughout this period had to work secretly and remained underground due to severe imperialist repression, have already published voluminous

source material pertaining to a large part of their activities in this period. This source material is corroborated by the official and semi-official records, and can be easily verified and crosschecked. The revolutionaries too, even though they worked in utmost secrecy, have left behind extensive evidence of their activities. However no similar documentation has been forthcoming from the RSS. In fact, it has not been possible to locate any material in contemporary records including Press, which would shed light on the anti-British role of the organization. Today we have to rely exclusively on what we are told by the RSS propagandists in their publications citing no historical proofs. The reality is that so far RSS has not been in a position to produce even a single volume containing documents that could show that the organization played any role in the freedom struggle.

The contemporary writings and speeches of the RSS leaders have a very different story to tell. These leaders showed little enthusiasm for the anti-British struggle. Golwalkar, while deliberating about the attitude of the RSS towards the freedom struggle said:

“There is another reason for the need of always remaining involved in routine work. There is some unrest in the mind due to the situation developing in the country from time to time. There was such unrest in 1942. Before that there was the movement in 1930-31. At that time many other people had gone to Doctorji. This delegation requested Doctorji that this movement will give independence and Sangh should not lag behind. At that time, when a gentleman told Doctorji that he was ready to go to jail, Doctorji said: ‘Definitely go. But who will take care of your family then?’ That gentleman replied: ‘I have sufficiently arranged resources not only to run the family expenses for two years but also to pay fines according to the requirements’. Then Doctorji told him: ‘If you have fully arranged for the resources then come out to work for the Sangh for two years’. After returning home that gentleman neither went to jail nor came out to work for the Sangh.”¹⁴

This incident clearly shows that the RSS leadership was bent upon demoralising the honest patriotic persons, making them run away from the cause of Freedom Movement.

Non-Co-operation Movement and Quit India Movement were two great milestones in the history of the Indian Freedom Movement and here is the great thesis of the great Guru (Golwalkar) of the RSS on these two great happenings of the Freedom Movement. While deliberating over these two great anti-British movements led by the Congress Golwalkar stated:

“Definitely, there are bound to be bad results of struggle. The boys became unruly after the 1920-21 movement. It is not an attempt to throw mud at the leaders. But these are inevitable products after the struggle. The matter is that we could not properly control these results. After 1942, people often started thinking that there was no need to think of the law”.¹⁵

Thus Golwalkar wanted the Indians to respect the draconian and repressive laws of the inhuman British rulers! Golwalkar admitted that despite universal condemnation of the RSS attitude towards Quit India Movement of 1942, the then RSS leadership did not budge from its stand of keeping aloof from the freedom struggle. He admitted:

“In 1942 also there was a strong sentiment in the hearts of many. At that time too the routine work of Sangh continued. Sangh vowed not to do anything directly. However, upheaval (uthal-puthal) in the minds of Sangh volunteers continued. Sangh is an organization of inactive persons, their talks are useless, not only outsiders but also many of our volunteers did talk like this. They were greatly disgusted too.”¹⁶

However, there is not a single publication or document of the Sangh which could throw some light on the great work the RSS did indirectly for the Quit India Movement.

As we have seen, Hedgewar participated in the Salt Satyagraha in his individual capacity. But after this the RSS leaders kept away completely

from the anti-British struggle. The RSS scrupulously avoided any political activity which might have been construed as being against the British authorities. According to a publication of the RSS:

“After establishing Sangh, Doctor Saheb in his speeches used to talk only of Hindu organization. Direct comment on Government used to be almost nil.”¹⁷

It may be interesting to note that the RSS literature available on Hedgewar so far has absolutely no reference of any ‘indirect’ comment of his on the barbaric and de-humanized, ‘white rule’ or ‘Gorashahi’ in India. Even close scrutiny and scanning of the nationalist Press of the times of the freedom struggle throw no light on any role played by the RSS.

Though it is possible, given the mass upsurge of that period, that some members of the RSS might have individually participated in some anti-British movement, these would have been isolated instances. However, the RSS as an organization never launched any struggle or campaign against British colonial rule or for the rights of the oppressed Indian masses. Nor was the top leadership of the RSS ever part of the freedom struggle. The RSS documents of the period make it very clear.

Golwalkar, as the Sarsanghchhalak of the RSS, was never able to hide his opposition to any movement against foreign rule. As late as March 1947 when the British rulers had decided in principle to go away from India, Golwalkar while addressing the annual day function of the RSS at Delhi declared that leaders with narrow vision were trying to oppose the state power of the British. While elaborating the point he said that it was wrong to hold the powerful foreigners responsible for our ills. He decried the tendency of “initiating the political movements on the basis of our hatred towards our victors”.¹⁸ While narrating an incident in the course of his speech he got more original on the issue:

“Once a respectable senior gentleman came to our shakha (the drill). He had brought a new message for the volunteers of the RSS. When given an opportunity to address the volunteers of the shakha, he spoke in a very impressive tone,

‘Now do only one work. Catch hold of the British, bash them and throw them out. Whatever happens we will see later on’. He said this much and sat down. Behind this ideology is a feeling of anger and sorrow towards state power and reactionary tendency based on hatred. The evil with today’s political sentimentalism is that its basis is reaction, sorrow and anger, and opposition to the victors forgetting friendliness.”¹⁹

In all fairness to Golwalkar, he did not claim that the RSS had been opposed to the British rule. During the course of a speech delivered before the top-level cadres of the RSS drawn from whole of India at Indore on March 5, 1960 he said,

“Many people worked with the inspiration to free the country by throwing the British out. After formal departure of the British this inspiration slackened. In fact there was no need to have this much inspiration. We should remember that in our pledge we have talked of the freedom of the country through defending religion and culture. There is no mention of departure of the British in that.”²⁰

The RSS was not even willing to regard colonial domination as an injustice. In a speech of June 8, 1942, at a time when India was reeling under unprecedented British repression, delivered at the conclusion of the all India training programme of the cadres at the Nagpur RSS headquarters, Golwalkar declared:

“Sangh does not want to blame anybody else for the present degraded state of the society. When the people start blaming others, then there is basically weakness in them. It is futile to blame the strong for the injustice done to the weak...Sangh does not want to waste its invaluable time in abusing or criticizing others. If we know that large fish eat the smaller ones, it is outright madness to blame the big fish. Law of nature whether good or bad is true all the time. This rule does not change by terming it unjust.”²¹

Interestingly, Golwalkar or RSS will not treat Mughal rulers or other rulers with Muslim names with the same generosity even if they decided to be part and parcel of the Indian society.

The RSS thus can be seen as having played an extremely treasonous role throughout the freedom struggle. All evidence points towards its disruptive activities and the fact that the organization and its leadership were never a part of the freedom struggle. The single most important contribution of the RSS was to consistently disrupt the emerging unified struggle of the Indian people against British imperialism through its extreme exclusivist slogan of Hindu Rashtra.

Golwalkar was born in 1906 near Nagpur. After his initial education he went to Banaras Hindu University (BHU) where he studied zoology and is believed to have taught at the same University till 1933. He worked briefly for the RSS, but subsequently turned towards spiritualism. In 1937 he again became active in the RSS and eventually was named by Hedgewar as his successor (despite his being relatively junior in the organization). He took over the leadership of the RSS in 1940, at a time when the Muslim League's Pakistan resolution on March 26, 1940 at its Lahore session had provided fertile ground for heightened communal propaganda. The political antecedents of Golwalkar reveal that he too was not associated with the national movement.

During the 1940s also the RSS aggressively campaigned for Hindu Rashtra, but stayed tenaciously aloof from the anti-British struggle. Golwalkar in fact made it clear that the variety of nationalism which the RSS espoused had no anti-British or anti-imperialist content whatsoever:

“The theories of territorial nationalism and of common danger, which formed the basis for our concept of nation, had deprived us of the positive and inspiring content of our real Hindu Nationhood and made many of the ‘freedom movements’ virtually anti-British movements. Anti-Britishism was equated with patriotism and nationalism. This reactionary view has had disastrous effects upon the entire course of the freedom movement, its leaders and the common

people.”²²

What did the British rule mean to an average patriotic Indian? It symbolized repression, plunder, and pauperization of the people of this country. It meant the divide and rule policy of the foreign rulers through which they encouraged communal and sectarian divisions in Indian society. And what could be the moving spirit behind any struggle against such a British rule? What could have been the essence of the Freedom Movement against British rule? It could not have been anything other than a call to throw the British out. But the RSS shamelessly thought otherwise.

Denigrating Revolutionary tradition of Bhagat Singh, Chandrashekar Azad and Ashfaqullah Khan

The RSS and its top brass not only kept aloof from the freedom struggle but also had no qualms about denigrating the movements led by revolutionaries like Bhagat Singh, Chandrashekar Azad, Ashfaqullah and their associates. Here are the original ideas of Golwalkar decrying the whole tradition of martyrs:

“There is no doubt that such men who embrace martyrdom are great heroes and their philosophy too is pre-eminently manly. They are far above the average men who meekly submit to fate and remain in fear and inaction. All the same, such persons are not held up as ideals in our society. We have not looked upon their martyrdom as the highest point of greatness to which men should aspire. For, after all, they failed in achieving their ideal, and failure implies some fatal flaw in them.”²³

Could there be a statement more insulting and denigrating to the martyrs than this?

Golwalkar was not alone in spreading canard against great revolutionaries. It will be shocking for any patriotic Indian who loves and adores the martyrs of the Freedom Movement to know what Hedgewar and the RSS felt about the revolutionaries fighting against the

British. According to Hedgewar's biography published by the RSS, he firmly believed:

“Patriotism is not only going to prison. It is not correct to be carried away by such superficial patriotism. He [Hedgewar] used to urge that while remaining prepared to die for the country when the time came, it is very necessary to have a desire to live while organizing for the freedom of the country.”²⁴

It is indeed a pity that ‘fools’ like Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, Sukhdev, Ashfaqullah, Chandrashekar Azad did not come into contact with this ‘great patriotic thinker’. If they had the great opportunity to meet him, these martyrs could have been saved from wasting their lives for “superficial patriotism.” This also must be the reason that RSS produced neither martyrs during the Freedom Movement nor any patriot who suffered persecution under the colonial rulers.

Even the word ‘shameful’ is not appropriate to describe the attitude of the RSS leadership towards those who had sacrificed everything in the struggle against the British rulers. The last Mughal ruler of India, Bahadur Shah Zafar had emerged as the rallying point for the patriotic Indians and symbol of the Great War of Independence of 1857. Golwalkar wrote thus while making fun of him:

“In 1857, the so-called last emperor of India had given the clarion call-Gazio mein bu rahegi jub talak eeman ki/takhte London tak chalegi tegh Hindustan ki [sic] (Till the warriors remain faithful to their commitment/Indian swords will reach throne of London.) But ultimately what happened? Everybody knows that.”²⁵

What Golwalkar thought of the people sacrificing their lot for the country is obvious from the following words of his also. He had the temerity to ask the great revolutionaries who wished to lay down their lives for the freedom of the motherland the following question as if he was representing the British:

“But one should think whether complete national interest is

accomplished by that? Sacrifice does not lead to increase in the thinking of the society of giving all for the interest of the nation. It is borne by the experience up to now that this fire in the heart is unbearable to the common people.”²⁶

HITLER AND MUSSOLINI AS GURUS

The Italian researcher of Indian politics, Marzia Casolari has done pioneering work in tracing the fraternal links between the RSS founders on the one hand and Fascism and Nazism on the other. After a laborious search of different archives in India and abroad, she has been able to unearth, as we will see in the following, the existence of direct contacts between the representatives of the (Italian) fascist regime, including Mussolini, and Hindu nationalists making it clear that Hindu nationalism had much more than an abstract interest in the ideology and practice of fascism. According to her,

“The interest of the Indian Hindu nationalists in fascism and Mussolini must not be considered as dictated by an occasional curiosity, confined to a few individuals; rather, it should be considered as the culminating result of the attention that Hindu nationalists, especially in Maharashtra, focused on Italian dictatorship and its leader. To them, fascism appeared to be an example of conservative revolution.”²⁷

After going through the archival evidences she, comes to the conclusion that,

“by the late 1920s, the fascist regime and Mussolini had considerable popularity in Maharashtra. The aspect of fascism which appealed most to the Hindu nationalists were, of course, both the militarisation of society and what was seen as real transformation of society, exemplified by the shift from chaos to order. The anti-democratic system was considered as a positive alternative to democracy which was

seen as a typically British value.”

Her perusal of archival material leads to the tracing of strong linkages between Moonje and Mussolini. The first Hindu nationalist who came in contact with the Fascist regime and its dictator was BS Moonje, a politician closely related to the RSS. In fact, Moonje had been Hedgewar’s mentor; the two men were related by an intimate friendship. Moonje’s declared intention to strengthen the RSS and to extend it as a nation-wide organisation was well known. Between February and March 1931, on his return from the Round Table Conference, Moonje made a tour of Europe, which included a long stopover in Italy. There he visited some important military schools and educational institutions. The highlight of the visit was the meeting with Mussolini. An interesting account of the trip and the meeting with Mussolini is given in Moonje’s diary in full 13 pages.

According to Maria’s findings the Indian leader was in Rome during March 15-24, 1931. On March 19, in Rome, he visited, among others, the Military College, the Central Military School of Physical Education, the Fascist Academy of Physical Education, and, most important, the Balilla and Avanguardisti organisations. These two organisations, which Moonje described in more than two pages of his diary, were the keystone of the fascist system of indoctrination - rather than education - of the youths. Their structure was strikingly similar to that of the RSS. They recruited boys from the age of six, up to 18: the youth had to attend weekly meetings, where they practised physical exercise, received paramilitary training and performed drills and parades.

Marzia after going through the Moonje dairy declines to accept the RSS claim that the structure of the RSS was the result of Hedgewar’s vision and work. Moonje played a crucial role in moulding the RSS along Italian (fascist) lines. The deep impression left on Moonje by the vision of the fascist organisations is confirmed by his diary.

The contents picked up from Moonje’s diary by Marzia are quite startling as we will see in the following.

“The Balilla institutions and the conception of the whole

organisation have appealed to me most, though there is still no discipline and organisation of high order. The whole idea is conceived by Mussolini for the military regeneration of Italy. Italians, by nature, appear ease-loving and non-martial, like Indians generally. They have cultivated, like Indians, the work of peace and neglected the cultivation of the art of war. Mussolini saw the essential weakness of his country and conceived the idea of the Balilla organisation...Nothing better could have been conceived for the military organisation of Italy...The idea of fascism vividly brings out the conception of unity amongst people... India and particularly Hindu India needs some such institution for the military regeneration of the Hindus: so that the artificial distinction so much emphasised by the British, of martial and non-martial classes amongst the Hindus, may disappear...Our institution of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh of Nagpur under Hedgewar is of this kind, though quite independently conceived. I will spend the rest of my life in developing and extending this Institution of Hedgewar all throughout Maharashtra and other provinces.”

Moonje had a personal audience with Mussolini on March 19, 1931 at 3 pm, in Palazzo Venzia, the headquarters of the Fascist government. The meeting was recorded in the diary on March 20 in the following words,

“I shook hands with him saying that I am Dr Moonje. He knew everything about me and appeared to be closely following the events of the Indian struggle for freedom...Then he asked me if I have visited the University. I said I am interested in the military training of boys and have been visiting the Military Schools of England, France and Germany. I have now come to Italy for the same purpose and I am very grateful to say that the Foreign Office and the War Office have made good arrangements for my visiting these schools. I just saw this morning and afternoon the Balilla and

the Fascist Organisations and I was much impressed. Italy needs them for her development and prosperity. I do not see anything objectionable though I have been frequently reading in the newspapers not very friendly criticisms about them and about your Excellency also. ‘Signor Mussolini: What is your opinion about them?’

‘Dr Moonje: Your Excellency, I am much impressed. Every aspiring and growing Nation needs such organisations...

Signor Mussolini- who appeared very pleased - said - ‘Thanks but yours is an uphill task. However I wish you every success in return.’

Saying this he got up and I also got up to take his leave.”

According to Marzia’s account,

“Once Moonje was back in India, he kept the promise made in his diary and started immediately to work for the foundation of his military school and for the militant reorganisation of Hindu society in Maharashtra. He really did not waste time, for, as soon as he reached Pune, he gave an interview to ‘The Mahratta’. Regarding the military reorganisation of the Hindu community, he stressed the necessity to ‘Indianise’ the army and expressed the hope that conscription would become compulsory and an Indian would be put in-charge of the defence ministry. He finally made a clear reference to the Italian and German examples in his diary: ‘In fact, leaders should imitate the youth movements of Germany and the Balilla and Fascist organisations of Italy. I think they are eminently suited for introduction in India, adapting them to suit the special conditions. I have been very much impressed by these movements and I have seen their activities with my own eyes in all details.’”

According to Moonje’s diary on March 31, 1934, he himself, Hedgewar and Laloo Gokhale had a meeting, the subject of which was again the military organisation of the Hindus, along the Italian and

German lines. Moonje told the gathering,

“I have thought out a scheme based on the Hindu Dharm Shashtra which provides for the standardisation of Hinduism throughout India... But the point is that this ideal cannot be brought to effect unless we have our own swaraj with a Hindu as a dictator like Shivaji of old or Mussolini or Hitler of the present day Italy or Germany... But this does not mean that we have to sit with folded hands until (sic) some such dictator arises in India. We should formulate a scientific scheme and carry on propaganda for it...”

According to Marzia, Moonje publicly admitted that his idea of militarily reorganising Hindu society was inspired by the “military training schools of England, France, Germany and Italy.”

Moonje’s ‘Preface to the Scheme of the Central Hindu Military Society and its Military School’ which he circulated among influential personalities, says at the outset:

“This training is meant for qualifying and fitting our boys for the game of killing masses of men with the ambition of winning victory with the best possible casualties (sic) of dead and wounded while causing the utmost possible to the adversary”.

This is, in fact, what the RSS cadres, meticulously put into practice while undertaking the cleansing of the Muslims in Gujarat recently.

The other great mentor of the RSS, Savarkar also had great liking for Hitler’s Nazism and the Fascism of Mussolini. While delivering the Presidential address to the 22nd Session of the Hindu Mahasabha at Madura in 1940 he declared,

“There is no reason to suppose that Hitler must be a human monster because he passes off as a Nazi or Churchill is a demi-God because he calls himself a democrat. Nazism proved undeniably the saviour of Germany under the set of circumstances Germany was placed in...”²⁸

Savarkar went on to severally criticise Nehru for opposing Fascism and Nazism in India. According to him,

“Who are we to dictate to Germany, Japan or Russia or Italy to choose a particular form of policy of government simply because we woo it out of academical attraction? Surely Hitler knows better than Pandit Nehru does what suits Germany best. The very fact that Germany or Italy has so wonderfully recovered and grown so powerful as never before at the touch of Nazi or Fascist magical wand is enough to prove that those political ‘isms’ were the most congenial tonics their health demanded.”²⁹

Savarkar went on to support Hitler’s anti-Jewish pogroms and on October 14, 1938, he suggested the same solution for the Muslim problem in India: “A Nation is formed by the majority living therein. What did the Jews do in Germany? They being in a minority were driven out from Germany”.³⁰

These champions of Hindu nationalism also believed in the superiority of the Aryan race like Hitler and the Nazis. Racism is the common tie, which binds them. Hindus happened to be Aryans belonging to the National race whereas Muslims and Christians were treated as foreigners because they followed religions, which took birth in non-Aryan foreign lands. The RSS divided religions professed in India into two categories, Indian and foreign. Interestingly, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism were declared to be of the Indian variety but were not accorded the status of independent religions. These were simply treated as part of Hinduism. Golwalkar, the most prominent ideologue of the RSS who came to head the organization after Hedgewar, naturally, inherited deep love for Fascism and Nazism from his seniors. He continued to idealize the Nazi cultural nationalism of Hitler, which was nothing else but ‘ethnic cleansing’, in the following words:

“The other Nation most in the eye of the world today is Germany. This Nation affords a very striking example. Modern Germany strove, and has to a great extent achieved

what she strove for, to once again bring under one sway the whole of the territory, hereditarily possessed by the Germans but which, as a result of political disputes, had been portioned off as different countries under different states...German pride in their Fatherland for a definite home country, for which the race has traditional attachments as a necessary concomitant of the true Nation concept, awoke and ran the risk of starting a fresh world-conflagration, in order to establish one, unparalleled undisputed German Empire over all this 'hereditary territory'. This natural and logical aspiration of Germany has almost been fulfilled and the great importance of the 'country factor' has been once again vindicated even in the living present. Come we next to the next ingredient of the Nation idea - Race, with which culture and language are inseparably connected, where religion is not the all- absorbing force that it should be. German Race pride has now become the topic of the day. To keep up the purity of the race and its culture, Germany shocked the world by her purging the country of the Semitic races-the Jews. Race pride at its highest has been manifested here. Germany has also shown how well-nigh impossible it is for races and cultures, having differences going to the root, to be assimilated into one united whole, a good lesson for us in Hindusthan to learn and profit by."³¹

These are not Mussolini and Hitler only who have been favourites of RSS. In fact, diverse totalitarian ideologies and regimes of the modern world, too, have special attraction for the RSS. Whatever, world may be saying about murder of democracy and denial of basic human rights to Noble laureate Aung San Sui Kyi in Burma by the military junta there [which also runs one of the biggest drug cartels in the world] RSS, shamelessly, enjoys close affinity with this gang of murderers of democracy in our neighbouring country. According to a report in the official organ of the RSS, 'Organizer' dated February 28March 5, 2000, filed by its own correspondent in Burma:

“The 50th anniversary of the Sanatan Dharma Swayamsevak Sangh (SDSS-The RSS counterpart in Burma) was held at the National Theatre on Mayoma Kyaung Street, Yagon, recently. Secretary-2 of the State Peace and Development Council, Lt. Gen. Tin Oo attended the meeting. The programme was attended by ministers and senior military officers. Minister for Commerce, Brig. Gen. Pyi Sone; Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, Maj. Gen. Sein Htwa; Minister for Health, Maj. Gen. Ket Sein were among the prominent persons who attended the function...The Secretary-2 delivered speech at the function.”

This report appears with two photographs. In one photograph five military Generals including second in command of the military junta, Lt. Gen. Tin Oo, are standing on the stage in the midst of SDSS leadership wearing khaki shorts. In the other photograph leading lights of the Burmese military junta are seen sitting in the front row of the auditorium.

When the present day Europe was shocked by the resurgence of fascist groups in France, Germany and Austria, RSS true to its breed was celebrating this fascist revival. One could see this rejoicing in the article, ‘Resurgence of Nationalism’ by Atul Rawat in Organizer dated May 26, 2002:

“The post-September Eleven world is a different place to live. People all over the world are growingly becoming more and more nationalistic and patriotic...The recent presidential elections in France have clearly indicated the large amount of support that has come to exist for ultra nationalist Jean Marie Le Pen. Although he was defeated in the elections, according to reports in world media, he was successful in getting almost 6 million votes, which is no small success keeping in view the hate campaign that was run against him in the liberal and left establishment and in media. And these are not the only leaders and parties who have gained due to the resurgence of sentiments of nationalism in their respective countries. Other

countries of significance like Germany are also witnessing a similar political phenomenon. The rise of Ronald Schill has chilled many communist sympathisers. Austria has a coalition government in which the ultra-nationalist Freedom Party of Jorg Haider is a partner. His is an eye opener case. When he came to power, the left lobby sought to create a specter of 'sky is falling'. Freedom Party has been in power as partner of others. Yet, Austria has not witnessed any great rightist calamity, the impression of which the Communist propaganda machinery had sought to create. Many other European countries are also witnessing similar trends.”

CLEANSING OF MINORITIES AS PRIORITY

The large scale organized killings of the Muslims and the destruction of their properties in Gujarat by the RSS cadres in 2002 is the result of a well thought-out philosophy of hatred towards the minorities preached for more than three quarter of a century. However, it will not be possible to understand the rise of recent fascist Hindu nationalism without going into the history of its origin and development.

The ideology of Hindu nationalism which developed in the second half of the 19th century under the leadership of high caste Hindus had two essential elements. The first was a deep hatred towards the Muslims with a strong urge to destroy them violently. The second was a deep love and liking for the imperialist rulers. The philosophy of the Hindu Rashtra has never lost sight of these two essential elements of its structure.

Anandamath, a novel in Bengali, written by Bankimchandra Chatterjee, the first most important work outlining the concept of the Hindu Rashtra, contained these two very elements explicitly. Anandamath is the Bible even today for the believer in the concept of

Hindu Rashtra. Before quoting directly from Anandamath, it will be crucial to know few significant facts about the novel and its author.

This is the same novel in which Bankim presented the song ‘Vande Mataram.’ Anandamath is basically the story of the Hindu Sanyasi Rebellion of the late 18- century in North Bengal against Muslim rulers of the province. These rebels called themselves ‘Santans’ (children). This novel appeared in the year 1882-85, full 25 years after the defeat of the Indians in the Great War of Independence of 1857 when even the ceremonial authority of the Muslim rulers was gone. It also must be remembered here that the British rulers in their assessment held mainly the Muslims responsible for the 1857 Rebellion and consequently penalized them heavily.

Anandamath appeared when the British sovereignty had been formally established over a large portion of India. Interestingly, Bankim, the author of Anandamath was appointed directly to the post of Deputy Magistrate in the year 1858 by the British Lt. Governor of Bengal. He was the first Indian to be appointed to such a post in the aftermath of 1857. When Bankim retired as the District Magistrate in 1891 he was conferred the titles of Rai Bahadur and CIE by the British Crown for his loyal services to the Raj and the Empire.

Let us now go through few relevant passages of Anandamath. Thus wrote Bankim about the defenders of the Hindu Dharma, the Sanyasi rebels in the novel:

“Later they started sending up the spies to the village after village. After going to the villages and finding out the Hindus there, the spies asked them, ‘brothers, would you worship the Lord Bishnu?’ They gathered 20/25 persons by this means, they came down to the Muslim villages and torched their houses. The Muslims were worried for safety of their lives and the Santans robbed them of everything and distributed the booty amongst the new devotees of the Lord Bishnu. Obtaining share of the booty, the rural people were satisfied; they were brought down to the Bishnu temple and converted

to the virtues of Santans after touching the feet of the idol. The people found that Santanism paid instant dividends...They organized themselves in groups and went out to subdue the Muslims...They brought home money by way of looting wherever they found it. Wherever they got the Muslim villages, they reduced them to ashes by arson.”³²

The following are the minutes of a meeting of the Santans as described in the novel.

“Someone shouted, ‘kill, kill, kill Muslims, others shouted as victory, victory, victory to the Maharaj’...Some other said, ‘brothers, when the Sunday would come up while I would build up a temple of Radhamadhab, demolishing down the mosque.’”³³

And here are graphic details from the Anandamath of a post-victory jubilation of the Hindu Army and Muslim cleansing:

“The country was replete with the shouting of name of Hare in the night. The Santans wandered here and there in group-by-group...Someone ran amuck towards the village, someone towards the town, caught the traveler or other house-hold people and asked them to recite as ‘I salute thee mother’ otherwise I would kill you, someone lives on looting of the sweet-maker’s shop, someone goes to the house of the cowheard, sips the curd after bringing down the soil pots. Someones [sic] say, we are milkmen coming from Braja, where are the milk maids? Great uproars prevailed in village after village, town after town within one night. Everybody said, the Muslims have been defeated, the country belonged to the Hindus again. All of you tell once again in open loud voice, ‘Hari, Hari’. The rural people ran out to kill the Muslims while coming across them. In the night, someones were organized in groups and going to the Muslim locality, they torched their houses and looted their everything. Many Muslims were killed, many of them shaved their beards, smeared their bodies with soil and started singing the name

of Hari. When asked, they said, we were Hindus. The frightened Muslims rushed towards the town in group after group...The Muslims said, Allah, Allah! Is the Koran Sareef [sic] (holy Koran) proved entirely wrong after so many days? We pray namaz for five times but couldn't finish the sandal-pasted Hindus. All the universe is false.”³⁴

The recent pogrom of the Muslims in Gujarat is witness to innumerable re-enacting of this scene from the Anandamath. In fact, the re-enactment of this scene of Anandamath is one of the games which are played in the shakhas.

Bankim as a pioneer of the cause of the Hindu Rashtra was very clear in his liking for the British rulers. His comparison of the British rulers with Muslims is very meaningful and shows his clear preference. In Anandamath, a leader of the Hindu Army, Bhavanand, explains the difference to a ‘new recruit’ in the following words:

“One Englishman does not flee away even at the risk of his life, the Muslim flees while sweating his body—he searches for the sherbat (sweet drink)—supposing, the Englishmen have their tenacity—whatever they start, they accomplish it, while the Muslims have only foolhardiness...Then last word is courage...while finding one cannon-ball (falling) Muslims would flee away with their entire community—while coming across the barrage of cannon-balls, not a single Englishman would flee away.”

There could not have been bestowed greater praise than this one on the imperialist masters. The British masters who had fettered Mother India were depicted as wonderful perfect souls. They were the greatest and were there for our salvation!

This love for the British masters and exploiters is further exhibited in the last lines of the Anandamath. The debate on the Hindu Rashtra is concluded with the following words:

“There is no possibility of restoring the Sanatan virtue without the Englishman becoming King...The subjects

[Hindus] would be happy in the English kingdom—they would practice the virtue without any trouble. Therefore, oh prudent—you refrain from waging the war with the Englishmen and follow me...Your mission has been successful—you have performed well-being of the Mother—the English reign has been established. You give up the war and enmity-mood. Let the people be engaged in cultivation—let the earth be full of corns, let the people be prosperous...There is no more enemy. The Englishman is our ally King. Moreover, none possesses such power who can win the war with the Englishmen ultimately.”³⁵

The Anandamath which heralded the Hindu nationalist movement, is full of such perceptions and facts.

In fact the recent upsurge of Hindu Nationalism with its fascist attitudes is the continuation of the same Anandamath legacy. Anandamath propagated that the destruction of the Muslims as such was very essential for the establishment of the Hindu Rashtra.

The ISI, the dreaded intelligence network of Pakistan, is working overtime in its attempts to subvert the secular-democratic Indian State; there can be no two opinions on this count. (Though there is no guarantee that the CIA and KGB, the intelligence agencies of the USA and Russia respectively, would like to have a United India) However, the much talked about designs of the ISI for the dismemberment of India need deeper probing. There are many serious questions that require proper and objective responses. Is it the complete truth that only the ISI is trying to foment communal trouble in this country? Did not the communal fascist acts like the demolition of the Babri mosque by the cadres of the RSS in 1992 and the recent carnage of the Muslims in Gujarat, turn India into a communal volcano to the joy of organizations like the ISI? Are not there communal elements well entrenched in our country, enjoying state support, which are out with full force to destroy the communal peace of the country? Are these not forces that are making the job of the ISI easier?

It was 1997 onward that organizations like the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), Hindu Jagran Manch (HJM), Bajrang Dal (BD), and other affiliates of the RSS, started using Gujarat as a laboratory for the religious cleansing of the minorities specially Christians and Muslims, are now spreading their tentacles throughout India. The leaflets containing highly provocative statements like, “Muslims are filth of the gutter, don’t let them enter in your houses”, or

“wherever Christian priests have gone in the world, they loot the people. Lies and deceit are their religion. The Christian priests teach people to tell lies, to steal in the name of religion...they curse the Hindus, and decry the Hindu religion. Awaken Hindus and struggle against these thieves who lie, who rob you of your rights, and bring these people to their senses.” or “One addition in the population of Christians or Muslims is not only the addition of an anti-Hindu, but of an anti-national person.”

Such leaflets issued on behalf of the VHP, HJM and BD which used to be confined to Gujarat only are now circulating in many parts of the country. The fascist ideas contained in these leaflets are not the brainchild of some hotheaded cadre. Golwalkar unhesitatingly wanted to model his Hindu Rashtra on Hitler’s totalitarian and fascist pattern as is clear from the following words of his in the same book:

“It is worth bearing well in mind how these old nations solve their minorities (sic) problem. They do not undertake to recognize any separate element in their polity. Emigrants have to get themselves naturally assimilated in the principal mass of the population, the National Race, by adopting its culture and language and sharing in its aspirations, by losing all consciousness of their separate existence, forgetting their foreign origin. If they do not do so, they live merely as outsiders, bound by all the codes and conventions of the Nation, at the sufferance of the Nation and deserving no special protection, far less any privilege or rights. There are only two courses open to the foreign elements, either to

merge themselves in the national race and adopt its culture, or to live at its mercy so long as the national race may allow them to do so and to quit the country at the sweet will of the national race. That is the only sound view on the minorities problem. That is the only logical and correct solution. That alone keeps the national life healthy and undisturbed. That alone keeps the nation safe from the danger of a cancer developing in its body politic, of the creation of a state within a state. From this stand point, sanctioned by the experience of shrewd old nations, the foreign races in Hindusthan must either adopt the Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and hold in reverence the Hindu religion, must entertain no idea but those of the glorification of the Hindu race and culture, i.e., of the Hindu nation and must lose their separate existence to merge in the Hindu race, or may stay in the country, wholly subordinated to the Hindu Nation, claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, far less any preferential treatment, not even citizen's rights. There is, at least should be, no other course for them to adopt. We are an old nation: let us deal as old nations ought to, and do deal, with the foreign races who have chosen to live in our country.”³⁶

In fact, the Bible for the RSS cadres, Bunch of Thoughts, the compilation of the writings of MS Golwalkar, the ideologue of the RSS, has a long chapter titled, ‘Internal Threats’, in which the Muslims and Christians are described as threats number one and two respectively. The Communists get the honour of being ‘Enemy’ number 3. This chapter opens with the following statement:

“It has been the tragic lesson of the history of many a country in the world that the hostile elements within the country pose a far greater menace to national security than aggressors from outside.”³⁷

While treating the Muslims as hostile element number one he goes on to elaborate, Even to this day there are so many who say, ‘Now there

is no Muslim problem at all. All those riotous elements who supported Pakistan have gone away once for all. The remaining Muslims are devoted to our country. After all, they have no other place to go and they are bound to remain loyal...It would be suicidal to delude ourselves into believing that they have turned patriots overnight after the creation of Pakistan. On the contrary, the Muslim menace has increased a hundredfold by the creation of Pakistan, which has become a springboard for all their future aggressive designs on our country.”³⁸

Elaborating further on the ‘Muslim Enemy’ Number one, Golwalkar presents his thesis which was religiously used by the VHP goons for exterminating the Muslim localities in Gujarat in the year 2002, in the following words:

“Within the country there are so many Muslim pockets, i.e., so many ‘miniature Pakistans’, where the general law of the land can be enforced only with certain modifications, and the whims of the miscreants have to be given the final say. This acceptance, indirect though it may be, implies a very dangerous theory fraught with possibilities of the destruction of our national life altogether. Such ‘pockets’ have verily become the centers of a widespread network of pro-Pakistani elements in this land...The conclusion is that, in practically every place, there are Muslims who are in constant touch with Pakistan over the transmitter...”³⁹

While deliberating on the ‘Internal Threat’ number two, he says,

“such is the role of the Christian gentlemen residing in our land today, out to demolish not only the religious and social fabric of our life but also to establish political domination in various pockets and if possible all over the land.”⁴⁰

So led by this ideology of hatred, the RSS cadres are working overtime to exterminate minorities like Muslims and Christians.

In the post-independence era it has not been possible for the pro-RSS elements to defend such shameless fascist attitudes towards the

minorities and their love towards the British masters. The book *We or Our Nationhood Defined*, which was openly circulated by the RSS during the British rule and had gone into four editions, is now suddenly presented as if its authorship is disputed or it had been withdrawn by the RSS. The RSS machinery started spreading different theories about the authorship according to their own requirements. Interestingly, even though this book glorified the German dictator Adolph Hitler at a time when the British were engaged in a struggle of life and death against him during the World War II, the British authorities did not ban it. The obvious reason for allowing the book to be freely circulated was that such literature was essentially required to supplement the imperialist policy of 'divide and rule'.

The 'Operation Authorship Cover-up' still continues. Former Prime Minister Chandrashekhar while participating in the confidence motion debate in Lok Sabha on March 28, 1998 raised the issue of the fascist ideas contained in this book once again. He was perturbed by the fact that the BJP Government was following the diktat of the RSS whose ideological guru had authored the above book, which contained fascist ideas and preached hatred for the minorities which was extremely detrimental for the democratic polity of the country. Home Minister L. K. Advani intervened to say that the author of the book, Golwalkar, had distanced himself from the book and declared to have no relation with the book. This is Mask One.

Subsequently the mouthpiece of the RSS, *Organiser*, on May 31, 1998 carried a story titled 'The Fascist Identified' by David Frawley. The story gave another interpretation to the issue of the authorship. It read,

"Those who call the RSS Fascist emphasize one book to prove it, *We or Our Nationhood Defined*, by B. S. Savarkar, the elder brother of the great Indian revolutionary Veer Savarkar. The book in places expresses some sympathy with the Germany of the times, the nineteen thirties, which appeared to be making great strides as a nation. Golwalkar, who later became the leader of the RSS in 1940, translated

the book in 1938. Leftists like to pretend the book was written by Golwalkar and expresses long term Sangh policy, though it was only part of the general literature of the times that he was examining.”

This explanation is all the more intriguing since the title of the original book has the following words about the author: “M.S. Golwalkar, M.Sc., LL.B. (Sometime Professor Benaras Hindu University).” Would this mean that Golwalkar was simply a translator and dishonestly got his name printed as author and RSS simply collaborated with him in this unethical act by publishing it? However, this is Mask Two.

It is for the consumption of the liberals and the democrats. Such explanations may help the RSS to show a humane face the world over, where Hitler is still regarded as the anti-thesis of all that is good in civilization and held responsible for the annihilation of Jews and millions of toiling people in Germany and elsewhere. It is also worth mentioning that B. S. Savarkar, the elder brother of V.D. Savarkar, was a very close associate of Hedgewar. B.S. Savarkar had formed an organisation called Tarun Hindu Sabha which he merged with the RSS in 1931. Therefore whoever is the real author of ‘We or Our Nationhood Defined’, the views contained in it represent the ideology of the RSS leadership.

For the die-hard believer in the cause of the Hindu Rashtra and the cadre of the RSS, they have another mask, Mask Three: This appears in an affidavit which two important officials of the RSS, Bhausahab Deoras (brother of a former chief of the RSS) and Rajender Singh (who became Sarsanghchhalak later) submitted before the Charity Commissioner, Nagpur. The affidavit read:

“With a view to give a scientific base to propagate the idea-India being historically from time immemorial a Hindu Nation-the late Shri M. S. Golwalkar had written a book entitled We or Our Nationhood Defined, which was published in 1938.”^{40A}

Whatever may be the controversy over the authorship of *We or Our Nationhood Defined*, the crucial thing is that the RSS has never modified its views about the cleansing of minorities in India, especially the Muslims. Left untouched by the British rulers they developed the organizational capability to attempt blood baths of the Muslims in many parts of the country. The following passage from the autobiography of the first Home Secretary of UP, Rajeshwar Dayal, a senior bureaucrat, clearly shows the sinister designs of the RSS to break the unity of the country just on the eve of Independence.

“I must record an episode of a very grave nature when the procrastination and indecision of the UP Cabinet led to dire consequences. When communal tension was still at fever pitch, the Deputy Inspector General of Police of the Western Range, a very seasoned and capable officer, B. B. L. Jaitley, arrived at my house in great secrecy. He was accompanied by two of his officers who brought with them two large steel trunks securely locked. When the trunks were opened, they revealed incontrovertible evidence of a dastardly conspiracy to create a communal holocaust throughout the Western districts of the province. The trunks were crammed with blueprints of great accuracy and professionalism of every town and village in that vast area, prominently marking out the Muslim localities and habitations. There were also detailed instructions regarding access to the various locations, and other matters which amply revealed the sinister purport.

Greatly alarmed by those revelations, I immediately took the police party to the Premier’s [chief minister’s] house. There, in a closed room, Jaitley gave a full report of his discovery, backed by all the evidence contained in the steel trunks. Timely raids conducted on the premises of the RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh) had brought the massive conspiracy to light. The whole plot had been concerted under the direction and supervision of the Supremo of the

organization himself. Both Jaitley and I pressed for the immediate arrest of the prime accused, Shri Golwalkar, who was still in the area.

Pantji [G. B. Pant] could not but accept the evidence of his eyes and ears and expressed deep concern. But instead of agreeing to the immediate arrest of the ringleader as we had hoped, and as Kidwai would have done, he asked for the matter to be placed for consideration by the Cabinet at its next meeting. It was no doubt a matter of political delicacy as the roots of the RSS had gone deep into the body politic. There were also other political compulsions, as RSS sympathizers, both covert and overt, were to be found in the Congress Party itself and even in the Cabinet. It was no secret that the presiding officer of the Upper House, Atma Govind Kher, was himself an adherent and his sons were openly members of the RSS.

At the Cabinet meeting there was the usual procrastination and much irrelevant talk. The fact that the police had unearthed a conspiracy which would have set the whole province in flames and that the officers concerned deserved warm commendation hardly seemed to figure in the discussion. What ultimately emerged was that a letter should be issued to Shri Golwalkar pointing out the contents and nature of the evidence which had been gathered and demanding an explanation thereof. At my insistence, such a letter if it were to be sent, should be issued by the Premier himself to carry greater weight. Panditji asked me to prepare a draft, which I did in imitation of his own characteristic style. The letter was to be delivered forthwith and two police officers were assigned for the purpose.

Golwalkar, however, had been tipped off and he was nowhere to be found in the area. He was tracked down southwards but he managed to elude the couriers in pursuit. This infructuous chase continued from place to place and weeks passed.

Came January 30, 1948 when the Mahatma, that supreme apostle of peace, fell to a bullet fired by an RSS fanatic. The tragic episode left me sick at heart.”⁴¹

Belief in Two-Nation Theory

Importantly, champions of ‘Hindutva’ totally agreed with the logic of the Muslim communalists and the Muslim League that India consisted of not one nation but two races or nations. In fact, in this respect the RSS always echoed the philosophy of VD Savarkar who like Mohammed Ali Jinnah’s Muslim League believed in the Two-Nation Theory. While delivering the presidential address to the 19th HM session at Ahmedabad in 1937, Savarkar, openly supporting the Two-Nation Theory, said:

“As it is, there are two antagonistic nations living side by side in India; several infantile politicians commit the serious mistake in supposing that India is already welded into a harmonious nation, or that it could be welded thus for the mere wish to do so... But the solid fact is that the so-called communal questions are but a legacy handed down to us by centuries of cultural, religious and national antagonism between the Hindus and Moslems... India cannot be assumed today to be a Unitarian and homogenous nation, but on the contrary there are two nations in the main: the Hindus and the Moslems, in India.”⁴²

This evil but essential unity between Hindu and Muslim communalists was commented upon by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in the following words:

‘Strange as it may appear, Mr. Savarkar and Mr. Jinnah instead of being opposed to each other on the one nation versus two nations issue are in complete agreement about it. Both agree, not only agree but insist that there are two nations in India-one the Muslim nation and the other the Hindu nation.’⁴³

This equation of Indian nationalism with Hindu religion often drew flak from many Hindus as is evident from an incident narrated in a publication of the RSS itself though in a different context. The incident occurred at a meeting at Banaras Hindu University, in 1929-30, where both Hedgewar and Golwalkar were present:

“Doctorji explained to the gathering the meaning of the oath and asked those who were in agreement with its aims to take the oath. Doctorji used to keep always a small iron idol of Hanuman and a saffron flag. After the meeting, in the presence of Hanuman idol and saffron flag he used to go through the process of oath taking for the willing persons. The same day he used to appoint Sanghchalak and Karyavah also.

When the time for the oath taking ceremony approached, some people got impatient. In the meeting some college professors and scholars were present. They said Sangh is undoubtedly good but they cannot agree to the mention of Hindu Rashtra. Doctorji refused to make any change in the oath. When people present in the meeting stressed on changing the text of the oath and offered to take the oath only after the changes were affected [Golwalkar intervened and said], ‘Doctorji has put before us a definite work and programme. Those who feel good about it should accept it, otherwise they should refuse. But there is no need to teach lessons to Doctorji. If he starts implementing all those suggestions which he receives while touring the country, then the coming into existence of the organization will be impossible.’” 44

After the meeting Golwalkar was appointed the Sanghchalak of the shakha of Banaras Hindu University.

POLITICS OF HISTORIC WRONG REDRESSAL

The RSS and its satellite organizations have been talking of “historic wrong redressal” and they have singled out the medieval period in order to focus on the persecution by Muslim rulers. It is really intriguing that in a country like India whose civilization is more than two thousand years old, a period of 400-500 years (the so-called Muslim Rule) only is put under the scanner. It may still be relevant to inquire into two aspects of this ‘Muslim Rule’. Firstly, why do the common Muslims of today’s India have to pay for the sins of the Muslim rulers who had very friendly and cordial relations with the high caste hierarchy of the Hindu society? This is clear from the fact that landownership under ‘Muslim Rule’ remained mainly with the high caste Hindu landlords. Secondly, We need to know why, in spite this repressive and killer ‘Muslim Rule’, India remained a country predominantly inhabited by Hindus who, historically, continued to constitute about 80 percent of the population.

Interestingly, the two greatest and most popular Epics of India, the ‘Ramayana’ and ‘Mahabharata’ relate stories of the worst kind of bloodshed, persecution, devastation and destruction in which all the players were Hindus. The India folklore is witness to the fact that the Kauravs of ‘Mahabharata’ and Ravan of ‘Ramayana’, the perpetrators of all kinds of violence and evil acts, were in no way Muslims. The flag bearers of Hindu theocracy must realize that Muslim-bashing has its own serious limits.

Let’s take the examples of the Somnath Temple in Gujarat and Jagannath Temple at Puri in Orissa. The ideologue of RSS, Golwalkar admitted that Somnath Temple was desecrated and destroyed by Mahmud Ghazi (Mahmud Ghaznavi) with the active help of local Hindus. Likewise, Swami Vivekananda tells that the temple of Jaganath was an old Buddhist temple which was converted in to a Hindu temple forcibly. There are innumerable instances of this kind. Moreover, India has been a land of perpetual violence being inflicted on Sudras

(Untouchables) by the castist elements of the Hindu society. In the face of such realities, how justifiable it is to single out Muslims as culprits. Organisations like RSS which are masters in spreading poison against minorities must also tell how to take revenge against the misdeeds of Ravana and Kauravas and perpetrators of terrible violence against Dalits and Buddhists.

In the following are reproduced crucial statements of Golwalkar and Swami Vivekananda which prove that religious persecution was not confined to the 'Muslim Rule'. In the light of the incident highlighted by the two icons of Hindutva it is clear that Muslim-bashing by the RSS is not due to 'historic wrongs' but due to some ulterior motives.

Golwalkar while referring to the desecration and destruction of Somnath Temple said,

“One thousand years back our people invited foreigners to invade us. A similar danger threatens us even today. How the glorious temple of Somnath was desecrated and devastated is a page of history. Mahmud Ghazi had heard of the wealth and splendour of Somnath. He crossed the Khyber Pass and set foot in Bharat to plunder the wealth of Somnath. He had to cross the great desert of Rajasthan. There was a time when he had no food, and no water for his army, and even for himself left to his fate, he would have perished, and the burning sands of Rajasthan would have consumed his bones. But no, Mahmud Ghazi made the local chieftains to believe that Saurashtra had expansionist designs against them. In their folly and pettiness they believed him. And they joined him. When Mahmud Ghazi launched his assault on the great temple, it was the Hindu, blood of our blood, flesh of our flesh, soul of our soul-who stood in the vanguard of his army. Somnath was desecrated with the active help of the Hindus. These are facts of history.”⁴⁵

Vivekananda while intervening in a debate whether Jesus Christ ever visited Jagannath Temple at Puri made the following disclosure about

the history of the Jagannath Temple.

“There was a book written a year or two ago by a Russian gentleman, who claimed to have found out a very curious life of Jesus Christ, and in one part of the book he says that Christ went to the temple of Jaganath to study with the Brahmins, but became disgusted with their exclusiveness and their idols and so he went to the Lamas of Tibet instead, became prefect, and went home. To any man who knows anything about Indian history, that very statement proves that the whole thing was a fraud, because the temple of Jaganath is an old Buddhistic temple. We took this and others over and re-Hinduised them. We shall have to do many things like that yet. That is Jagannath, and there was not one Brahmin there then, and yet we are told that Jesus Christ came to study with the Brahmins there. So says our great Russian archaeologist.”⁴⁶

The RSS is never tired of dividing the minorities in India into two categories. In the first category are the Jains, Buddhists and Sikhs who follow religions born in India. In the second category are Muslims and Christians who are the followers of ‘foreign’ religions. It claims that the real problem is with the second category that needs to be Hinduized whereas minorities of the first category have no problems. How dishonest is this proposition can be known by the fact that the RSS does not accord the status of independent religions to any of these indigenous minority religions. These are declared to be part of Hinduism. There have been strong protests from the concerned minorities against such hegemonic designs of the RSS. How much the RSS respects and honours these indigenous religions can further be known by its attitude towards the massacre of Sikhs in 1984.

In the following is reproduced in full a shocking document on the massacre of Sikhs in October-November 1984, authored and circulated by a luminary and veteran of the RSS, Nana Deshmukh. In the aftermath of the killing of Indira Gandhi on October 31, 1984, by her two security guards who happened to be Sikhs, hundreds of innocent Sikh men,

women and children were burnt alive, butchered, and maimed throughout India. Hundreds of Sikh religious places were destroyed, with countless commercial and residential properties owned by Sikhs.

It has been a general belief that the Congress cadres were behind this mayhem. This may be true but there were other fascist and communal forces also which actively participated in this massacre, whose role has never been investigated. This document may help in unmasking the whole lot of criminals who played Holi with the blood of innocent Sikhs who had nothing to do with the killing of Indira Gandhi. This document may also throw light on where the cadres came from, who meticulously organized the butchering of Sikhs. Those who were witness to the genocide and mayhem of 1984 were stunned by the swiftness and military precision of the killer marauding gangs (later on witnessed during the Babri mosque demolition, burning alive of Dr. Graham Steins with his two sons and recent pogrom of the Muslims in Gujarat) who went on a burning spree of the innocent Sikhs. This was beyond the capacity of the Congress thugs. Nana's document may help the researcher in investigating the source of the trained 'cadres' who helped the Congress goons in this genocide.

This document also shows the true degenerated and fascist attitude of the RSS towards all the minorities of India. The RSS has been arguing that they are against Muslims and Christians because they are the followers of foreign religions. Here we find them justifying the butchering of Sikhs who according to their own categorization happened to be the followers of an indigenous religion.

The RSS often poses as a firm believer in Hindu-Sikh unity. But in this document we will hear from the horse's mouth that the RSS like the then Congress leadership, believed that the massacre of the innocent Sikhs was justified. Nana Deshmukh in this document is seen outlining the justification of the massacre of the Sikh community in 1984. His defence of the carnage can be summed up as in the following.

1. The massacre of Sikhs was not the handiwork of any group or anti-social elements but the result of a genuine feeling of anger.

2. Deshmukh did not distinguish the action of the two security personnel of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, who happened to be Sikhs, from that of the whole Sikh community. From his document it emerges that the killers of Indira Gandhi were working under some kind of mandate of their community. Hence attacks on Sikhs were justified.
3. Sikhs themselves invited these attacks, thus advancing the Congress theory of justifying the massacre of the Sikhs.
4. He glorified the 'Operation Blue Star' and described any opposition to it as anti-national. When Sikhs were being killed in thousands he was warning the country of Sikh extremism, thus offering ideological defense of those killings.
5. It was Sikh community as a whole which was responsible for violence in Punjab.
6. Sikhs should have done nothing in self-defence but showed patience and tolerance against the killer mobs.
7. These were Sikh intellectuals and not killer mobs which were responsible for the massacre. They had turned Sikhs into a militant community, cutting them off from their Hindu roots, thus inviting attacks from the nationalist Indians. Interestingly, Deshmukh would not mind having militant Hindus. Moreover, he treated all Sikhs as part of the same gang and defended attacks on them as a reaction of the nationalist Hindus.
8. He described Indira Gandhi as the only leader who could keep the country united and on the killing of such a great leader such killings could not be avoided.
9. Rajiv Gandhi who succeeded Mrs. Gandhi as the Prime Minister of India and justified the nation-wide killings of Sikhs by saying, "When a huge tree falls there are always tremors felt", was lauded and blessed by Nana Deshmukh at the end of the document.
10. Shockingly, the massacre of Sikhs was being equated with the attacks on the RSS cadres after the killing of Gandhiji and we find Deshmukh advising Sikhs to suffer silently. Everybody knows that the killing of Gandhiji was inspired by the RSS and the Hindutva Ideology whereas the common innocent Sikhs had nothing to do with the murder of Mrs. Indira Gandhi.

11. There was not a single sentence in the Deshmukh document demanding, from the then Congress Government at the Centre, remedial measures for controlling the violence against the minority community. Mind this, that Deshmukh circulated this document on November 8, 1984, and from October 31 to this date Sikhs were left alone to face the killing gangs. In fact November 5-10 was the period when the maximum killings of Sikhs took place. Deshmukh was just not bothered about all this.

Deshmukh document did not happen in isolation. It represented the real RSS attitude towards Sikh genocide of 1984. It may be relevant to know here that the RSS cadres did not come forward in defence of the Sikhs. The RSS is very fond of circulating publicity material, especially photographs of its khaki shorts-clad cadres doing social work. For the 1984 violence they have none. In fact, Deshmukh's article also made no mention of the RSS cadres going to the rescue of Sikhs under siege. This shows up the real intentions of the RSS during the genocide.

Interestingly this document was published in the Hindi Weekly Pratipaksh edited by George Fernandes (Defence Minister of India, 1999-2004, and a great pal of the RSS) in its edition of November 25, 1984 with the following editorial comment:

The author of the following document is known as an ideologue and policy formulator of the RSS. After the killing of Prime Minister (Indira Gandhi) he distributed this document among prominent politicians. It has a historical significance, that is why we have decided to publish it, violating policy of our Weekly. This document highlights the new affinities developing between the Indira Congress and the RSS. We produce here the Hindi translation of the document.

The shocking Deshmukh document is reproduced in the following:

“MOMENTS OF SOUL SEARCHING⁴⁷

Indira Gandhi ultimately did secure a permanent place at the doorstep of history as a great martyr. With her dynamism

borne out of her fearlessness and dexterity, she was able to take the country forward like a colossus for over a decade and was able to build an opinion that she alone understood the realities of the country, that she alone had the ability to run the decadent political system of our corrupt and divided society, and probably that she alone could keep the country united. She was a great lady and her death as a brave leader had added to her greatness. She was killed by a person in whom she kept faith despite several complaints. Such an influential and busy personality was killed by a person who had the duty to protect her person. This act came as a blow not only to her admirers in the country and the world but also her critics. This cowardly and treacherous act of killing not only ended the life of a great leader but also killed, in the name of the Panth, the mutual faith of humanity. Explosion of sudden arson and violent hysteria throughout the country was probably a direction-less and improper expression of the hurt, anger and feeling of loss of her followers. Lakhs of her followers used to see her as the only defender, powerful protector, and a symbol of united India. It is a different matter whether this is right or wrong.

For these innocent and uninformed followers, the treacherous murder of Indira Gandhi was the tragic culmination of the poisonous campaign of separatism, antagonism and violence conducted over the previous three years in which hundreds of innocents had to lose their invaluable lives and the sanctity of religious places was destroyed. This campaign assumed an ominous pace after the painful army action in June which, in the eyes of most of the people of the country, had become necessary to protect the sanctity of the religious places. Barring a few exceptions, the Sikh community observed silence for a long time on the barbaric massacres and heinous killings of innocent people, but they condemned the long-pending army action with anger and dangerous explosiveness. The country was stunned at their attitude. The

army action was compared to the “gallu ghara” action of Ahmed Shah Abdali in 1762 to desecrate the Harmandir Sahib. Without going into the objectives of the two incidents, Mrs. Gandhi was pushed into the category of Ahmed Shah Abdali. She was termed the enemy of the Sikh panth and big prizes were announced on her head. On the other hand Bhindrawale who was guilty of heinous crimes against humanity in the name of religion was hailed as a martyr. Open display of such feelings in different parts of the country and abroad played a special role in increasing the distrust and alienation between the Sikhs and the rest of Indians. In the background of this distrust and alienation, stunned and bewildered people accepted the validity of the rumours of celebrations by the Sikhs at the heinous murder of Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards in retaliation of the army action. Of these the most hurting explanation was that of Giani Kripal Singh who being the Head Granthi considered himself to be the sole spokesman of the Sikh community. He said that he expressed no sorrow at the death of Indira Gandhi. This statement added fuel to the fire of boiling anger. No immediate and natural condemnation of this despicable statement by an important leader came from responsible Sikh leaders, intellectuals or organization. Therefore the already angered common and unimaginative people took it as correct that the Sikhs celebrated the death of Indira Gandhi. Because of this belief, selfish elements could succeed in making the common people become violent against the hapless Sikhs.

This was a most explosive situation which needed utmost patience and skillful conduct on behalf of our Sikh brothers. I am saying this, being a life member of the RSS, because on January 30, 1948 a Hindu fanatic, who was a Marathi and had no relation with the RSS, rather was a bitter critic of the Sangh, committed unfortunate killing of Mahatma Gandhi. On this occasion we also suffered the sudden eruption of

hysteria, loot and atrocities of misdirected people. We ourselves saw how selfish elements who were well acquainted with this incident, deliberately declared a murderer to be a member of the RSS and also spread the rumour that the RSS people were celebrating throughout the country death of Mahatma Gandhi, and thus they succeeded in diverting the love and the feeling of loss and hurt in the hearts of people for Gandhi. Such feelings were spread against Swayamsewaks and their families, particularly in Maharashtra.

Having gone through such experiences myself, I can understand the strong reaction and feeling of innocent Sikh brothers who became victims of sudden eruption of people's violent hysteria. In fact, I would like to condemn in strongest words the inhuman barbarity and cruelty on Sikh brothers in Delhi and elsewhere. I feel proud of all those Hindu neighbours who protected lives and property of troubled Sikh brothers without caring for their lives. Such things one being heard from all over Delhi. These things have practically increased the faith in natural goodness of human behavior and particularly faith in Hindu nature.

I am also worried at the Sikh reaction in such delicate and explosive situation. As an activist engaged in national reconstruction and unity for half a century and being a well-wisher of Sikh community I am hesitating in saying that if reactive armed action by Sikhs is even partly true then they have not been able to evaluate the situation correctly and comprehensively and as a result could not respond according to the situation. Here I wish to draw the attention of all my countrymen including Sikhs that in a similar difficult situation arising out of murder of Mahatma Gandhi when in the hysteria against the RSS crimes of destruction of property, heinous burning alive of children, inhuman cruelty etc. were being committed and the news was reaching Nagpur from all over India, then the 'dictator' of the RSS

known as the so-called big private army, the then head of the Sangh late M.S. Golwalkar issued an appeal in Nagpur on February 1, 1948 to the lakhs of armed young followers throughout the country in the following unforgettable words: 'I direct all my Swayamsewak brothers that despite spread of provocation under lack of understanding, they should adopt cordial attitude towards all and remember that this mutual distrust and improper hysteria is the result of the love and respect that the whole country has for Mahatma who made the country great in the eyes of the world. We salute such great respected departed soul'.

These were not empty words to hide cowardice and helplessness in the hopeless situation. In those life threatening serious moments he proved that every word of his appeal had a meaning. On the evening of February 1, hundreds of Swayamsewaks in Nagpur urged for armed resistance and resisting till the last drop of their blood to stop the probable attack on their leader the same night. And some associates of Guruji told him of a conspiracy against his life and requested to shift his residence to a safe place before the attack, Guruji told them in such a black moment also that if the same people whom he had truly and with full ability, served throughout his life wanted to take his life, then why and for whom he should save his life. Thereafter he cautioned them in stern voice that even if a drop of blood of his countrymen was shed in saving him, then such a life would be useless for him. History is a witness that lakhs of Swayamsewaks spread throughout the country followed this directive word by word. Though they had to digest vulgarities in exchange of their patience and tolerance but there was a faith to give them patience that whatever may happen to them in present condition, history will definitely prove them innocent.

I hope that in present difficult situation my Sikh brothers will also show the above-referred patience and tolerance. But I

am deeply pained to know that rather than displaying such tolerance and patience at some places they have retaliated against the crowd with arms and played into the hands of such selfish elements who were eager to spread the trouble. I am surprised how a section of our society considered to be most disciplined, organized and religious, adopted such a negative and self-defeating attitude. May be they could not get proper leadership at the moments of such a crisis. Through my scanty study and understanding of Sikh history I consider that such a nonpolitical reaction of Sikhs in moments of such a crisis came from their complete involvement with teachings of love, tolerance and sacrifice of Sikh nature. Warrior nature of Sikh religion was a short time provision against barbarity of foreign Mughals which was taught by tenth Guru. For him Khalsa was a relatively small part of a broad Hindu-Sikh brotherhood and was designed as an armed hand to defend Hindu community and its traditions. Guru Govind Singh laid down for Khalsa followers five KS (Kesh, Kripan, Kangha, Kara and Kachha) and 'Singh' in the name of Khalsas. This was a symbol of their being soldiers. But unfortunately today these only are being projected as basic and necessary forms of Sikh religion.

I am sorry to say that Sikh intellectuals too have failed to understand that conversion of Sikh religion into Khalsatism is a much later event and this was due to deliberate plan of British imperialists to divide and rule in Punjab. Its aim was to cut the Sikhs off from their Hindu environ. Unfortunately, after independence power hungry politicians kept alive for their own interest the unnaturally born problems of separation and equal existence, and carried forward the game of imperialists to divide and rule by their vote bank politics. This improper equating of Sikhs with militant Khalsatism is not only the basic root of separatist tendencies in some parts of Sikh community, but it also raised militancy and faith in the power of weapons to the level of religious worship.

This religious worship gave rise to terrorist movement like Babbar Khalsa in the second decade and recently Indira Gandhi was killed as a result of terrorist wave under the leadership of Bhindrawale and a long 'hit list' is yet to be executed.

I used to imagine that Sikh community has freed itself totally from illiteracy, ignorance, frustration and defeatism in which it was in the fifth decade of 19th century after losing its freedom and which was exploited by cunning British imperialists and selfish Sikh elites for their selfish interests. It is clear that in eighth decade Sikhs adorning the places of high responsibility represent highly educated, laborious, vigilant, relatively rich, enlightened and active section of Indian society in every walk of life. In nineteenth century their experiences and vision was limited to the boundaries of the then Punjab but today they are spread not only throughout India but throughout the world, and they are in a situation to directly know the conspiracies of big powers which are being hatched against independent and united India rising strongly in the world. In such an advantageous situation they should know their historical development as an integral part of India. Such a revaluation of history will give them the opportunity to see many wrong formulations of their own religion and past which has been systematically drilled into their brains by wrong and distorted historical writings by British administrators and intellectuals about nature and development of their religion. Such an attempt will take them to their real roots.

This is the time that our Sikh brothers should search their hearts so that they can get rid of the false description inserted by British imperialists and power greedy opportunist people into their basic religious nature. Removal of such false descriptions is necessary to bridge the gulf of distrust and alienation between two communities of similar destiny, nature and similar traditions. I am afraid that without such a

self-introspection and revaluation of history they would not be able to live with peace among themselves and with other countrymen. A disinterested analysis of their own enlightened interests will be enough to make them understand that their fate is indivisibly linked with the destiny of India. Such an understanding will save them from falling prey to the disruptive and destructive interests of foreign powers.

I disbelieve (sic) that my Sikh brothers will accept the cautious words of spiritual expression of a well-wisher.

Lastly, it is not to deny the truth that sudden removal of Indira Gandhi from Indian political scene has created a dangerous void in the Indian common life. But India has always displayed a characteristic inner strength in the moments of such crisis and uncertainty. According to our traditions, responsibility of power has been placed on the inexperienced shoulders of relatively young person in a lively and peaceful manner. It will be hasty to judge the potentialities of his leadership at this time. We should give him some time to show his ability.

On such challenging juncture of the country, in the meanwhile he is entitled to get full cooperation and sympathy from the countrymen, though they may belong to any language, religion, caste or political belief.

In the capacity of a nonpolitical constructive worker I only hope and pray that God bless him with more mature, balanced, inner strength and ability to give an impartial Govt. to the people so that he can take the country to real prosperous unity and glory.

Guru Nanak Divas
November 8, 1984
Nana Deshmukh.

HIDE AND SEEK WITH POLITICS

We often hear that the RSS is a cultural-social organization and has nothing to do with politics. It is fond of claiming that,

“The RSS is not a political party. It does not take part in elections nor its office bearers are supposed to become office bearers of any political party. The RSS has no election symbol nor its leadership or members have ever endeavoured to seek political office. It is a social-cultural organization trying to inspire all national activity.”⁴⁸

We must compare this claim of the RSS with the following two statements of Golwalkar, who headed the RSS after the death of Hedgewar, and is considered the greatest ideologue of the organization till date. The first statement tells us about the kind of personnel who are sent to manipulate politics and what is expected of them by the RSS. While delivering a speech on March 16, 1954, in Sindi, Wardha, he said,

“If we say that we are part of the organization and accept its discipline then selectiveness has no place in life. Do what is told. If told to play kabaddi, play kabaddi, told to hold meeting then meeting.... For instance some of our friends were told to go and work for politics that does not mean that they have great interest or inspiration for it. They don't die for politics like fish without water. If they are told to withdraw from politics then also there is no objection. Their discretion is just not required.”⁴⁹

The second statement is also very significant which delivered while addressing top level cadres of the RSS at Indore on March 5, 1960:

“We know this also that some of our Swayamsevaks work in politics. There they have to organize according to the needs of work public meetings, processions etc., have to raise slogans. All these things have no place in our work. However, like the character in a play whatever role has been

assigned should be portrayed with best of capability. But sometimes Swayamsevaks go beyond the role assigned to a performer (nat) as they develop over-zealousness in their hearts, to the extent that they become useless for this work. This is not good.”⁵⁰

We find here Golwalkar referring to the Swayamsevaks loaned to political offshoot as ‘nat’ or performers who are meant to dance to the tunes of the RSS. This fact should not be missed here that Golwalkar’s above design of controlling the political arm was elaborated in March 1960 almost nine years after the establishment of Jansangh (the forerunner of the BJP) in 1951.

The RSS cadres who control the BJP keep on harping the theme that BJP is an independent political organization and does not work under the dictates of the RSS. It is pertinent that one compares this with the facts available in the official publications of the RSS. It is necessary to know the whole nexus. The central publication house of the RSS, Suruchi Prakashan, Delhi, published a book in 1997, titled Param Vaibhav Ke Path Par (ON THE ROAD TO GREAT GLORY) penned by Sadanand Damodar Sapre, a senior RSS functionary. This book contains details of more than 40 organizations created by the RSS for different tasks. The preface of the book itself declares that

“without the knowledge of the different kinds of activities of the Swayamsevaks (the volunteers of the RSS) the introduction of the RSS is incomplete. Keeping this in mind it has been attempted in this book to produce the brief information about the diverse activities of the Swayamsevaks. This book covers the organizational status till 1996. We believe that this book will prove to be of use for those who want to understand the RSS along with the Swayamsevaks.”

The BJP as a political organization figures prominently in it at number 3.

This publication of the RSS shows how the organization is run in a

clandestine manner. It runs like a well-organized mafia through its subsidiaries and satellites. There has always been a conscious attempt to create confusion about its different fronts which provide RSS with the opportunity to dissociate with any of these as per its convenience. For instance it used Hindu Jagaran Manch (HJM) for attacking Christians in late 1990s and when public opinion, media and Parliament seemed to turn against it, RSS denied any relation with HJM. Recently, when nefarious designs of Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Bajrang Dal and Dharam Sansad were exposed before the Nation, RSS announced that these were independent organizations. Interestingly, it was often seen mediating between the BJP lead government (1998-2004) and these fronts.

It will be interesting to know that many of these organizations have been organized on a true fascist and clandestine manner. For instance while giving the details of Hindu Jagaran Manch (HJM), the book says,

“From the point of view of Hindu awakening this kind of forums (HJM) at present are active in 17 states with different names like ‘Hindu Manch’ in Delhi, ‘Hindu Munani’ in Tamilnadu, ‘Hinduekjut’ in Maharashtra. These are forums, not associations or organizations, that’s why it is not required to have membership, registration and elections.”

It is clear that these work as mafia to avoid scrutiny by law and government. Such an organizational mode provides an opportunity to RSS to disown any individual or organization.

RSS can indulge in conspiracies too. It can be known by the following disclosure in ‘Param Vaibhav Ke Path Par’ about a case in Delhi immediately after Partition:

“Swayamsevaks had posed to have adopted Musalman [sic] religion in order to gain the confidence of Delhi Muslim League for knowing their conspiracies.”⁵¹

Of course, nobody knows about the communal violence or evil acts which they might have triggered off by posing as Muslims.

The following is the list of organizations mentioned in the RSS book.

The serial numbering is the same as in the book, the bracket has been added to explain the nature and function of each organization.

- 1 Akhil Bhartiya Vidyarthi Parishad (student).
- 2 Vidya Bharati (education).
- 3 Bhartiya Janata Party (political).
- 4 Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Bajrang Dal, Durga Vahini, Dharam Sansad or Religious Parliament (anti-minority). The RSS insists that Dharam Sansad is the highest supreme body of Hindus. This book tells us that, "VHP established Dharam Sansad in 1984". It means that Dharam Sansad or the Religious Parliament is a puppet in the hands of VHP.
- 5 Akhil Bharatiya Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram (tribal).
- 6 Bhartiya Mazdoor Sangh (working class).
- 7 Bhartiya Kisan Sangh (peasants).
- 8 Rashtriya Sevika Samiti (national women's committee).
- 9 Seva Bharati and Tatsam (social service. SV has taken over governmental welfare programmes in slums and poor areas even in cities like Delhi, which has Congress government. It is alleged that these are basically fronts to divert government welfare funds to the RSS. Recently got license for sending adopted kids to foreign countries).
- 10 Vishva Vibhag (foreign affairs).
- 11 Akhil Bhartiya Rashtriya Shekshik Mahasangh (teachers).
- 12 Bhartiya Shiksha Mandal (education).
- 13 Rashtriya Sikh Sangat (for propagating 'Hindutva' among Sikhs).
- 14 Swadeshi Jagaran Manch (propaganda, gets crores of rupees from government departments to run its activities).
- 15 Deen Dayal Shodh Sansthan (research).
- 16 Bharat Vikas Parishad (developmental activities).
- 17 Bhartiya Itihas Sankalan Yojna (re-writing of history).
- 18 Sanskrit Bharati (Sanskrit language-favourite of UGC these days).
- 19 Sanskar Bharati (for imposing 'Hindutva' culture].
- 20 Akhil Bhartiya Adhivakta Parishad (lawyers)
- 21 Hindu Jagaran Manch (against minorities. The terrible attacks on

- Christians and Muslims in Gujarat and other parts of the country were mounted and owned by it).
- 22 Samajik Samrasta Manch (anti-reservation front).
 - 23 Akhil Bhartiya Sahitya Parishad (history).
 - 24 Pragya Bharati (religious).
 - 25 Vigyan Bharati (science).
 - 26 Laghu Udyog Bharati (small scale industry. Huge government grants available).
 - 27 Akhil Bhartiya Grahak Panchayat (consumers).
 - 28 Sehkar Bharati (co-operative, gets huge government funds).
 - 29 Poorva Sainik Sewa Parishad (ex-servicemen).
 - 30 Bharat Prakashan (publishes organs of RSS like Organizer) and the following publication houses.
 - 31 Suruchi Prakashan, Delhi.
 - 32 Lokhit Prakashan, Lucknow.
 - 33 Gyan Ganga Prakashan, Jaipur.
 - 34 Archana Prakashan, Bhopal.
 - 35 Akashvani Prakashan, Jullundur.
 - 36 Bhartiya Vichar Sadhana, Nagpur.
 - 37 Sadhana Prakashan, Gujarat and about 10 more publication houses in different parts of the country.

DENIGRATING DALITS AND WOMEN

According to the philosophy of RSS these are not only minorities but also Dalits/Untouchables/Sudras and women who have to be kept bereft of all civil and human rights. India is said to be the biggest democracy in the world today. This may be true academically but with the presence of organizations like RSS crores and crores of Sudras or Dalits or Untouchables in India, do not have much to rejoice in this biggest democracy. It is true that Dr. BR Ambedkar, crusading for the rights of the Untouchables saw to it that the Indian Constitution through its Preamble commits itself

“To secure to all its citizens: Justice, social, economic and political; Liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship: Equality of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all, Fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual...”

It is also true that the Indian Constitution, through Article 17, abolishes Untouchability, declaring,

“Untouchability is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden. The enforcement of any disability arising out of ‘Untouchability’ shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law.”

But the bitter reality is that in spite of these pious and sacred declarations, the wretched of the earth in this country; the Untouchables suffer open and blatant discrimination. The year 2001 report of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Tribes brings out the fact that in comparison to the year 1999 when 27561 cases were filed under the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, in the year 2000 this number increased to 28441. This fact must not be missed here that these figures in no way represent the horrendous ground reality. It is a minuscule minority of the persecuted Dalits, which dares to file complaints against persecution. Many studies and reports are available which clearly show that in very large number of cases either the caste discrimination is tolerated as a fact of life or official machinery in collusion with the high caste tormentor/s is able to hush up the complaints. Moreover, these are the faceless-nameless Untouchable women who in far flung areas of the countryside bear the brunt of caste persecution, which almost remain unreported.

How seriously the incidents of atrocities of Untouchables are taken can be known by the disdain the Indian State shows towards the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST), a statutory body. The yearly reports on the status and treatment of SC's and ST's, presented by the Commission for years together are not tabled in the Parliament. Recently the National Commission for SC/ST threatened to put its annual reports on the Internet if the government

failed to table the same in Parliament. One of the Commission members complained that it was depressing to bring about reports on the state of STs and STs, which get tabled only after four years.

The eminent parliamentarian, Professor Hiren Mukherjee says that so far as the reports of the SC/ST Commission are concerned, “it has been my experience that neither Parliament nor the country takes much notice”. President of India, KR Narayanan in his Republic Day address of 2001 had to concede, “Untouchability has been abolished by law but shades of it remain in the ingrained attitudes nurtured by the caste system”. The President also lamented the fact that high caste male sadism seemed earmarked for Dalit women who were subjected to most heinous forms of humiliation. An Indian Parliamentary committee admitted in July 1998 that Untouchability was prevalent in 12 prominent states of the Indian Union.

The Hindu Right or RSS/BJP upholding the banner of ‘Hindutva’, which directly ruled India during 1999-2004 and has significant political presence in the country has been totally unconcerned about these mounting atrocities against the Untouchables who happen to be mainly Hindus. This should surprise nobody that the states where maximum incidents of caste atrocities are taking place (The states of Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Haryana) are the states where either RSS/BJP have notable social base or being ruled by them or by their allies.

The barbaric lynching of five Dalit youths in Haryana in October 2002 once again exposes the role of ‘Hindutva’ elements in instigating violence against Untouchables. The Indian Express while reporting this gruesome carnage under the caption: “They were skinning a dead cow to sell hide, local VHP and Shiv Sena spread rumour of cow slaughter: Five Dalits lynched in Haryana, entire administration watches” stated,

“Less than two hours from the capital, this was the scene today outside the Dulena police post in Jhajjar district: patches of blood on the road, a pile of smouldering ashes.

This is where five Dalits, all in their 20s, were beaten to death last night, two of them torched. They were doing what they have been doing for years: skinning dead cows to sell the hide. This time, however, ‘someone’ spread the word that the cow was alive. So a mob, returning after the Dussehra fair, dragged them out of the police post where they had taken refuge and lynched them to the cries of Gau mata ki jai. Watched by the City Magistrate, the DSP of Jhajjar and Bahadurgarh, the Municipal Corporator’s husband, the Block Development Officer and at least 50 policemen. One FIR has been registered against ‘unknown people,’ while a second has been filed against the victims under the Cow Slaughter Act. Local office-bearers of the VHP and the Shiv Sena have submitted a memorandum to the local police asking them not to take any action against the guilty.”⁵²

The Indian Express correspondent, Sonu Jain spoke to several eyewitnesses and district officials to reconstruct the incident. And what was revealed was that,

“This was no impulsive act, the frenzy built up over a good three and a half hours-the Dalits were first ‘spotted’ at 6.30 pm, beaten and dragged to the police post and then battered to death between 9 and 10 pm.”⁵³

According to the report,

“Five Dalits had bought what they claimed was a dead cow from Farooqnagar and were on their way to sell the hide-something which they traditionally do here to earn a living. They were first seen 500 meters from the police post by a group of men returning from Dusshera festivities. This group reached Jhajjar, 15 minutes away, and informed the local Dharamshala that ‘cow slaughter was going on.’ Within minutes, two vehicles with the District Magistrate, two priests from the temple and some local VHP leaders left for the spot. By then, the five had sought refuge at the police post. The word spread in at least 10 nearby villages, and in an

hour, the crowd swelled to 2,000.

‘Local VHP workers and some anti-social elements were spotted at the scene,’ says District Commissioner Mohinder Kumar, who claims he reached late because of a traffic jam. ‘The word spread by telephone, word of mouth and of course a tractor full of people returning from the fair stopped.’ Local VHP office-bearers dare the police to take action. ‘If they can kill our mother then what if we kill our brothers who kill her,’ says Mahendra Parmanand, the priest of the local temple. ‘I will say it in front of the police that what they were doing was wrong and they deserve to be punished,’ says Ramesh Saini, VHP office-bearer.

Shishu Pal from the local Shiv Sena unit says that whatever happened was wrong but ‘could not have been helped’⁵⁴

There have also been reports that factions of Arya Samaj active in this area were, too, involved in this gruesome act.

Shockingly, Giriraj Kishore, senior leader of the VHP, an offshoot of the RSS, showing once again hatred for Dalits declared that life of a cow was more important than any number of people. This kind of justification of lynching of Dalits was so nauseating that the daily Hindu, indeed, expressed the anger of the civil society when it editorially commented:

“The VHP leader’s observation, as has been reported, that the life of a cow is very important, according to the shastras, is only a premise to suggest that the life of five Dalits who were killed were not as important. There cannot be a place for men with such ideas in a modern society and the civil administration at this stage cannot gloss over such remarks as merely another instance of raving and ranting by someone constituting the lunatic fringe of society. The danger in seeking to establish such abhorrent notions as the “national sentiment” is all too apparent.”⁵⁵

Hindustan Times in its editorial, ‘Murderers Call the Shots’ while

describing the depressing scenario in Uttar Pradesh wrote,

“It has become routine for the landless Dalits to be treated as outsiders, humiliated, beaten and murdered, and their women raped and paraded naked, often as public spectacle to teach the entire community a lesson. The perpetrators almost always belong to the upper castes, who know that the political system is their monopoly that they will get away with almost any outrage. It is hardly a matter of surprise, therefore, that in the course of just one week, two massacres have taken place in Uttar Pradesh, in Jahrana and Hasanpur in Aligarh and Fatehpur districts. A little girl has been raped, women and children have been murdered by the torchbearers of feudal pride. What was till now a free run for Ranvir Sena in Laloo Yadav’s Bihar seems to becoming a predictable pattern in Rajnath Singh’s UP. If the Dalits are complaining that the BJP led government patronizes the upper castes, they are telling the truth. What was Naresh Majhi’s crime that his employers burnt alive his wife and five children in early April? A bonded labourer at a brick klin in Hathras, Majhi had merely demanded his wages. On June 9, a Dalit was savagely beaten and his wife burnt alive in Kusumpur village in Jalaun district in UP in front of the entire village because the family had dared to campaign against the upper caste candidate in the panchayat elections.”⁵⁶

Delhi, the capital of democratic, modern and the biggest democracy on this earth does not seem to be different from UP so far as hatred for Dalits is concerned. How grave situation is in the Capital of India can be known by the following report from correspondent, Sanjay K Singh in ‘The Statesman’:

“The worst of Indian caste prejudices was demonstrated in the heart of Delhi, in a function attended by among others, Mr. LK Advani. Organizers of a function in Vasant Kunj Institutional Area forced 10 families to leave their homes at 5 a.m. on February 1, because the latter’s presence would have

‘polluted’ the atmosphere at a havan. Mr. Advani attended the havan, which was followed by his laying the foundation stone for the Vedic Studies and social services. The organizers, the Sri Rama Vitthal Shikshana Sewa Samiti and the Sudesh Foundation, who had taken out newspaper advertisement announcing the function on February 1, could not be contacted despite repeated efforts by the correspondent.. The 10 families who were unceremoniously dragged out of their homes and asked to shift to a forest area 300 meters away, at 5 a.m. on February 1, belong to the Jusadh caste (originally from Mahoba area in Uttar Pradesh). They were told by the organizers that their presence at the venue of havan will be inauspicious. ‘Meri taang tooti hui hai aur mujhe phir bhi jane ko kaha kyonki hum jusadh hain. Bade log to dus baje aaye lekin hamen subah paanch baje hi thhand mein bhaga diya (I have a broken leg but they told me to leave because I belong to a lower caste. Though the VIPs came at 10 a.m., we were forced to shift at 5 a.m. when it was freezing cold)’ said 55 year old Jamuni Devi.”⁵⁷

Tamil Nadu is witnessing resurgence of ‘Hindutva’ among rulers and with this there has been an eruption of violence against Dalits. According to a report in a premier national daily,

“Despite police action against the practice of Untouchability in tea shops of rural Tamil Nadu, several shopkeepers, under pressure from caste Hindus, continue with the discriminatory ‘two-tumbler system’. In the caste-riven state, tea shops in several villages do not serve just hot beverages but also trade Untouchability in ‘two-tumblers’-cheap glass ones for the Dalits and shiny stainless steel containers for the caste Hindus. And now, a ‘three-tumbler’ system too is adopted in some areas-plastic cups for outsiders whose caste identity is not known.”⁵⁸

According to another report,

“Numerous are the ways in which Dalits are tormented. They

are murdered and maimed; women are raped; their children are abused and deprived of schooling; they are dispossessed of their property; their houses are torched; they are denied their legitimate rights and their sources of livelihood are destroyed. Adding to the long list of atrocities committed on Dalits were two incidents reported recently in Tamil Nadu, in which three Dalits were forced to consume human waste.

On September 5, at Kaundampatti in Dindigul district, Sankan, a Dalit agricultural worker, was forced to drink urine - for having lodged with the police a complaint of trespass against a caste Hindu, following a dispute between them over a piece of land. Sankan had to suffer many atrocities during his five-year-long struggle against his (high) caste-Hindu landlord to get possession of the land. In his complaint, Sankan stated that the landlord had collected nearly Rs. 1 lakh over a period of 15 years through deductions from his wages, as the price of the land.

An equally horrifying incident occurred at Thinniyam village in Tiruchi district on May 22. Two Dalits, Murugesan and Ramasami, were forced 'to feed each other' human excreta. The 'crime' they committed was that they stood by another Dalit, Karuppiyah, who was engaged in a prolonged struggle against a former panchayat president and her husband to recover an amount of money he said he had given them as bribe to get a house allotted for his sister."⁵⁹

Shockingly, State of Tamil Nadu under the Chief Ministership of Jayalalitha (during her earlier chief ministership) instead of taking effective remedial actions against these atrocities has gone ahead to promulgate on October 5, 2002, 'The Tamil Nadu Prohibition of Forcible Conversion of Religion Ordinance', now a law, in order, to further appease the 'Hindutva' lobby in the country. The RSS/BJP/VHP were quick to welcome this Ordinance and demanded similar law throughout the country. This is the typical 'Hindutva' response to mounting atrocities on Dalits. If Dr. Ambedkar was alive today he would

have been surely debarred from converting to Buddhism!

Andhra Pradesh has been touted as one of the states in India where great strides have taken place in the field of information technology. It is also the state where BJP/RSS alliance has been having fraternal relations for last so many years and ruling the state together. What miserable life Dalits have been forced to live in the state will be clear from the report 'In Venkaiah's town, tell us your caste if you want water' by Nirmala Ganapathy in the Indian Express, April 27, 2004. This report appeared on the eve of voting for 2004 Parliamentary/State Assembly elections in Andhra exposing the gravity of caste persecution in the area of Nellore parliamentary constituency. Interestingly, this is the area from where not only the BJP president Venkaiah Naidu hails but also has been his initial turf for practicing Hindutva politics. The report reads:

“As Nellore goes to the polls...many of its citizens know that while their vote counts, it will not grant them water from the well or tea in a steel tumbler. Ask Lakshmi. A day before the election, she stood nervously, begging two girls from the Reddy community to pour some water from the village well into her bucket. They ignored her, chatted among themselves and perhaps secretly enjoyed her discomfiture. After one full hour, bored of their little game, they gave Lakshmi her water. This happens every day and whoever comes to power will not change Lakshmi's daily routine. She and other Scheduled Caste villagers are not allowed to dip their buckets into the only source of drinking water in the area. Sometimes, she waits all day to get her bucket filled. The rules are clear and the village is divided into two worlds. Dalits can't wear chappals or ride bicycles in the Other Caste area. In school, children from the two sections sit separately. Dalit children have their own cricket team while Other Castes have theirs, but the two never play together. And the village 'rachabanda' or a chaupal is out of bounds for Dalits. Raghura fumes as he speaks about the situation. The 29-year-old teacher is the only Dalit from the village with a college

education. His BA and B.Ed. degrees are not enough to let him drink tea in a stainless steel tumbler at the village shop.

'The steel tumblers are for Other Castes, the glass ones are for us,' he says. He has tried to get his community to speak out, but no one wants to take the first step. Raghura can see why. 'All the Dalits in this village are daily wage labourers working for the Other Castes. So if they rebel, their only source of income is cut off. How do we survive then?' he asks. The rules are arbitrary and have no logic. A Dalit can drive a bullock cart to the boundary of the village, but he cannot drive

it into the village. From that point, the owner takes over.

While Raghura seethes, his mother Pinchulamma is sanguine. 'Things have become better,' she says. 'There was a time when we were not allowed to eat out of a plate. It will all change one day.' If so, politicians may have no role to play in the change.

Although Nellore, which happens to be BJP president Venkaiah Naidu's hometown, is a reserved SC seat, and a quarter of the village's population is Dalit, coastal Andhra politics is still dominated by Other Castes - the Naidus, Reddys, Kammas and Kapus. The caste divide helps political arithmetic as the Dalits traditionally vote for the Congress while Other Castes tend to support the TDP and the BJP. Politicians have more important things to worry about than a steel tumbler for Raghura, although Pannaba Lakshmi, the Congress candidate, admits: 'This is shocking news. This is the first time I have heard of it.' Apart from Depur and Mahimura, politicians say that caste-based humiliations run through Cuddapah, Ananthpur and the entire Rayalseema area. The BJP candidate, former DIG B Balakondaiah, blames it on the backwardness of the area. 'Where there is illiteracy among the upper-castes there will be problems,' he says.

If elected, he promises to bridge the divide, but the Dalits have heard such promises before. They have even tried to take matters into their own hands. Around six months ago, the collector and other district-level officers came to the village and told the Reddys and Naidus to stop the segregation. The officials even provided two buckets for the two communities to draw water out of the well. The villagers agreed, but after the officials left, a Dalit boy was beaten up. Other Castes suspected that it was he who had tipped off the authorities. The bucket was thrown away.

Most Dalits have accepted the ground realities. But Raghura will stay back to fight. 'This is my village and I don't want to leave,' he says."

Rajasthan represents the same scenario. With the ascendancy of forces of 'Hindutva' there is a simultaneous upsurge in crimes against Dalits. Chakwara, a village near Jaipur, capital of Rajasthan has come to symbolize all that is happening against Dalits in Rajasthan. It is to be remembered here that BJP/RSS is paying special attention to Rajasthan as elections for the State Assembly are due soon.

According to well-known columnist, Praful Bidwai,

"The immediate divisive issue in Chakwara goes beyond politics and local power equations. It involves access to the common village pond, where stepped ghats have been built and maintained over the years with state funds and contributions raised by the entire village, including the Dalits. But the Dalits have been barred from using the common ghats for decades. Caste-based 'purity' demands they be treated lower than the buffaloes, cows and pigs which have virtually unrestrained access to the pond. The only exception are women who too, irrespective of caste, have always been excluded."60

Praful says,

“The issue in Chakwara is not merely access to a pond. It is systemic, systematic, entrenched discrimination against the Dalits. From land maldistribution and denial of basic services-the village barber won't ever shave a Dalit-this extends to inequality in access to water, common pastures and wasteland, employment and drought-relief schemes, and unequal wages.

A Dalit woman may not wear sandals in the main village. Dalit children may only sit at the back of the classroom and drink water from a separate pot. The bridegroom riding a horse at a wedding baraat risks being roasted alive. Droit de seigneur (the upper-caste landlord's right to 'deflower' a Dalit bride-to-be) is prevalent.

This violence has a well-defined purpose: to keep the lowly in their place, the Hindu hierarchy secure, and conditions for rapacious economic and social exploitation intact. Crucial to legitimising the violence is casteist Hinduism and obscurantist myth-making.

The force of Hindutva tends to overpower even the Congress, certainly the party's local MLA, himself a Dalit. It is impossible even to imagine liberty, human agency, development or social progress until Dalit oppression is combated.

Chakwara was mentioned by Ambedkar way back in the Thirties. The Bairwas then defied the savarnas by making desi ghee-a 'privilege' denied to them. Caste-Hindus retaliated by pouring dirt into the ghee.

The Bairwas have asserted themselves again, after decades, with greater resources: most men are literate and no longer submissive. They have the law explicitly on their side. But so long as the law's guardians, driven by parampara-based obscurantism, continue to make a travesty of it, the Dalits' struggle for elementary human dignity will face heavy

odds.61

Chakwara incident also represents the true Brahmanical face of 'Hindutva', which only wants to use Dalits against minorities without bothering to care about their human rights, which are threatened by Hindus themselves. Praful goes on to tell about "painful disillusionment" of people like Hari Shankar Bairwa, a politics-savvy village elder, president of the local Ambedkar Janakalyan Parishad, and once-proud member of the VHP, who even went to Ayodhya as a kar-speak with two other Dalits from Chakwara. (Bairwa has preserved the receipt for a recent Rs. 20 donation to an Ashok Singhal felicitation fund.)

He now accuses the VHP-BJP of having cynically 'used' the Dalits with the high-sounding slogan of 'Hindu unity' only to betray that idea and contemptuously tell them they should observe maryada (prescribed quasi-sacred norms) and parampara (tradition), that is, defer to rank Casteism. So much for 'unity'!"⁶²

It has also been observed, generally, that with the ascendancy of Hindu Right to power at the national level in India there has been a spurt both in caste and communal related violence. In fact, persecution in the name of caste and communal violence may not be two different things for the Hindu Right. If Untouchables are targeted for the sins of being of low birth so are minorities like Muslims and Christians, which mainly come from Dalit/Untouchable stock. Another important point not to be missed here is that they may be the leading lights in spreading caste-communal hatred in the country but parties like Congress with thoroughly castist leadership have also been responsible for the present situation.

It is interesting to note the response of the Hindu Right led by RSS/BJP to this escalating violence against Untouchables. Their oft-repeated ready-made answer is that Hindu society had no caste antagonism; these were Muslim-Christian rulers who injected caste conflict into the Hindu society.

However, facts available in the Brahmanical ‘holy’ texts tell a different story.

We will soon read portions related to caste or varna system in Hinduism as put forward in Manusmriti or Manavadharmasastra. Interestingly, Manu nowhere uses the terms like Hindus or Hinduism; however, it is believed that this work composed in 1500 BC, presents in totality the system of jurisprudence of Hinduism. The great German Indologist Max Muller got this translated as the ‘Laws of Manu’ which was first published in 1886 under the series, ‘The Sacred Books of the East’. There have been other international editions in different languages of Europe. It has been translated into almost all languages of India.

Manu as a saint and learned Brahmin holds a place of reverence in the high caste Hindu world of thought. There has been a demand to install a magnificent statue of Manu in the Parliament House in Delhi, though one such statue stands outside the High Court of Rajasthan in Jaipur, despite strong protest from the organizations of Dalits.

“How holy and sacred is Manusmriti for the Hindu Right needs no probe with the following utterances of the philosopher and guide of Hindutva, VD Savarkar and RSS. According to Savarkar,

Manusmriti is that scripture which is most worship-able after Vedas for our Hindu Nation and which from ancient times has become the basis of our culture-customs, thought and practice. This book for centuries has codified the spiritual and divine march of our nation. Even today the rules which are followed by crores of Hindus in their lives and practice are based on Manusmriti. Today Manusmriti is Hindu Law.”⁶³

When the Constituent Assembly of India had finalized the Constitution of India RSS was not happy. Its organ complained,

“But in our constitution there is no mention of the unique constitutional development in ancient Bharat. Manu’s Laws were written long before Lycurgus of Sparta or Solon of

Persia. To this day his laws as enunciated in the Manusmriti excite the admiration of the world and elicit spontaneous obedience and conformity. But to our constitutional pundits that means nothing.”⁶⁴

The RSS continued vigorously its campaign for the enforcement of Manu’s Codes in India. Sankar Subba Aiyar, a retired High Court Judge, wrote in the same RSS organ,

“Even though Dr Ambedkar is reported to have recently stated in Bombay that the days of Manu are ended it is nevertheless a fact that the daily lives of Hindus are even at the present day affected by the principles and injunctions contained in the Manu Smrithi and other Smrithis. Even an unorthodox Hindu feels himself bound at least in some matters by the rules contained in the Smrithis and he feels powerless to give up altogether his adherence to them.”⁶⁵

It is to be noted here that a copy of Manusmriti was burnt in the presence of Dr. Ambedkar during Mahad agitation in December 1927.

What kind of civilization the RSS wants to build by enforcing the laws of Manu, can be known by having a glimpse of the laws prescribed by Manu for the Dalits/Untouchables and women. Some of these dehumanizing and degenerate laws, which are presented here, are self-explanatory.

LAWS OF MANU CONCERNING DALITS/

UNTOUCHABLES.⁶⁶

- (1) For the sake of the prosperity of the worlds (the divine one) caused the Brahmana, the Kshatriya, the Vaisya, and the Sudra to proceed from his mouth, his arm, his thighs and his feet.
- (2) One occupation only the lord prescribed to the Sudras, to serve meekly even these (other) three castes.
- (3) Once-born man (a Sudra), who insults a twice-born man with gross invective, shall have his tongue cut out; for he is of low origin.
- (4) If he mentions the names and castes (gati) of the (twice-born) with

contumely, an iron nail, ten fingers long, shall be thrust red-hot into his mouth.

- (5) If he arrogantly teaches Brahmanas their duty, the king shall cause hot oil to be poured into his mouth and into his ears.
- (6) With whatever limb a man of a low caste does hurt to (a man of the three) highest (castes), even that limb shall be cut off; that is the teaching of Manu.
- (7) He who raises his hand or a stick, shall have his hand cut off; he who in anger kicks with his foot, shall have his foot cut off.
- (8) A low-caste man who tries to place himself on the same seat with a man of a high caste, shall be branded on his hip and be banished, or (the king) shall cause his buttock to be gashed.
- (9) If out of arrogance he spits (on a superior), the king shall cause both his lips to be cut off; if he urines (on him), the penis; if he breaks wind (against him), the anus.
- (10) If he lays hold of the hair (of a superior), let the (king) unhesitatingly cut off his hands, likewise (if he takes him) by the feet, the beard, the neck, or the scrotum.
- (11) A man who is not a Brahmana ought to suffer death for adultery (samgrahana); for the wives of all the four castes even must always be carefully guarded.
- (12) A (man of) low (caste) who makes love to a maiden (of) the highest (caste) shall suffer corporal punishment; he who addresses a maiden (on) equal (caste) shall pay the nuptial fee, if her father desires it.
- (13) A Sudra who has intercourse with a woman of a twice-born caste (varna), guarded or unguarded, (shall be punished in the following manner): if she was unguarded, he loses the part (offending) and all his property; if she was guarded, everything (even his life).
Tonsure (of the head) is ordained for a Brahmana (instead of) capital punishment; but (men of) other castes shall suffer capital punishment.
- (14) Let him never slay a Brahmana, though he have committed all (possible) crimes; let him banish such an (offender), leaving all his property (to him) and (his body) unharmed.

LAWS OF MANU CONCERNING WOMEN⁶⁷

1. Day and night woman must be kept in dependence by the males (of their families), and, if they attach themselves to sensual enjoyments, they must be kept under one's control.
2. Her father protects (her) in childhood, her husband protects (her) in youth, and her sons protect (her) in old age; a woman is never fit for independence.
3. Women must particularly be guarded against evil inclinations, however trifling (they may appear); for, if they are not guarded, they will bring sorrow on two families.
4. Considering that the highest duty of all castes, even weak husbands (must) strive to guard their wives.
5. He who carefully guards his wife, preserves (the purity of) his offspring, virtuous conduct, his family, himself, and his (means of acquiring) merit.
6. As the male is to whom a wife cleaves, even so is the son whom she brings forth; let him therefore carefully guard his wife, in order to keep his offspring pure.
7. No man can completely guard women by force; but they can be guarded by the employment of the (following) expedients:
8. Let the (husband) employ his (wife) in the collection and expenditure of his wealth, in keeping (everything) clean, in (the fulfilment of) religious duties, in the preparation of his food, and in looking after the household utensils.
9. Women, confined in the house under trustworthy and obedient servants, are not (well) guarded; but those who of their own accord keep guard over themselves, are well guarded.
10. Women do not care for beauty, nor is their attention fixed on age; (thinking), '(It is enough that) he is a man,' they give themselves to the handsome and to the ugly.
11. Through their passion for men, through their mutable temper, through their natural heartlessness, they become disloyal towards their husbands, however carefully they may be guarded in this (world).
12. Knowing their disposition, which the Lord of creatures laid in them

at the creation, to be such, (every) man should most strenuously exert himself to guard them.

13. (When creating them) Manu allotted to women (a love of their) bed, (of their) seat and (of) ornament, impure desires, wrath, dishonesty, malice, and bad conduct.
14. For women no (sacramental) rite (is performed) with sacred texts, thus the law is settled; women (who are) destitute of strength and destitute of (the knowledge of) Vedic texts, (are as impure as) falsehood (itself), that is a fixed rule.

Reproduced parts of Manusmriti here need no further elaboration and commentary. They are too glaringly venomous, fascist and degenerated against Untouchables who are referred to as Sudras by Manu. Perhaps this was the reason that the German philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche who contributed immensely to the growth of totalitarian ideas in Europe in the 20th century, fell in love with this work.

Books such as Manusmriti explain the philosophical basis of perpetual persecution of Untouchables not only in India but the whole of the Indian sub-continent. Manu influenced even the Muslim ruling elite of this region historically as we find Casteism percolating into Muslim societies and high caste Muslim rulers using caste divisions to perpetuate their unjust rule. There also have been innumerable instances when Muslim rulers had cordial social specially marital, political and administrative fraternal relations with the sections of high caste Hindus then interacting with lower caste Muslims of the Indian origin.

In the Hindi heartland there is a recent flood of low-priced mass editions of Manusmriti. In one of such editions by one of the biggest publishers of pocket books in Hindi, the back cover has the following illuminating description of Manusmriti:

“The Manusmriti is the oldest social system of the world which establishes constitution and justice. Largely the social and judicial systems of today’s India are modeled after this book. It is an essential book for each family, organization and society.”⁶⁸

Such publishers are unconcerned about the poison and hatred, which Manusmriti carries and conveys against the Untouchables and women. There seems to be an inherent relationship between the mass publication of such books (with increasing violence against the lower castes and women in the country) and the rise of the Hindu Right. It is high time that we realized that the RSS and Hindu Right's dream of recreating the golden past is fraught with terrible dangers. Whatever it may be saying about the Muslims and Christians as dangers as minorities it may end up depriving the Hindu Dalits and all women of all their human rights. Their love for the scriptures like 'Manusmriti' only underlines the fact that the real targets are the Dalits and women of the Hindu society.

The story does not end here. The country is flooded with low priced anti-woman literature, which is being published and marketed by an organization, which has close affinities with the RSS. Astonishingly, this publication house has even been allotted stalls at railway stations. Here is a glimpse from a book, which is in the question-answer form and available openly.

“Question:- What should the wife do if her husband beats her and troubles her?

Answer:- The wife should think that she is paying her debt of her previous life and thus her sins are being destroyed and she is becoming pure. When her parents come to know this, they can take her to their own house because they have not given their daughter training to face this sort of bad behaviour.

Question:- What should she do if her parents don't take her to their own house?

Answer: - Under such circumstances what can the helpless wife do? She should reap the fruit of her past actions. She should patiently bear the beatings of her husband. By bearing them she will be freed from her sins and it is possible that her husband may start loving her.”⁶⁹

There is blatant preaching in favour of the inhuman Sati as we will see in the following:

“Question: - Is ‘Sati Pratha’ (viz., the tradition of the wife being cremated* with the dead body of the husband on the funeral pyre) proper or improper?

Answer: - A wife’s cremation with the dead body of her husband on the funeral pyre is not a tradition. She, in whose mind truth and enthusiasm come, burns even without fire and she does not suffer any pain while she burns. This is not a tradition that she should do so, but this is her truth, righteousness and faith in scriptural decorum.”⁷⁰

Manusmriti Enforced in Madhya Pradesh

The old RSS dream of promulgating the Manusmriti as fundamental law of the country got impetus recently when Uma Bharti, a seasoned sadhvi of the RSS came to head the state government in Madhya Pradesh. Soon after coming to power Uma Bharti government promulgated an ordinance on January 23, 2004, banning cow slaughter in the state. The crucial aspect of this ordinance was that it referred to Manusmriti for justifying this ban. The ordinance read: “Manusmriti ranks the slaughterer of cow as predator and prescribes hard punishment for him.” It was for the first time in the history of free India that commitment to enforce Manusmriti as part of legal set up was announced by any government. This surely opens the gate for enforcing Manusmriti in relation to Dalits and women too.

AGAINST DEMOCRATIC-SECULAR-FEDERAL INDIA

LOYAL TO NATIONAL FLAG?

The RSS since its inception in 1925 hated anything which symbolized the united struggle of the Indian people against the British rule. The case of the Tricolour is a most pertinent one. In December 1929 Congress at its Lahore session adopted Purna Swaraj as the national goal and called upon the people to observe January 26, 1930 as

Independence Day by displaying and honouring the Tricolour (the Tricolour was by consensus considered the flag of the national movement by this time). In response to this Hedgewar as Sarsanghchhalak issued a circular to all the RSS shakhas to worship the bhagwa jhanda (saffron flag) as the National Flag. The RSS leaders like Murli Manohar Joshi may go to unfurl the Tricolour at Lal Chowk of Srinagar, Kashmir, in order to hypocritically demonstrate their patriotism ('Ekta Yatra' 1991) but the fact is that the RSS openly decries and denigrates the national flag as we see in the following statements.

Golwalkar while addressing a Gurupurnima gathering in Nagpur on July 14, 1946, stated that it was the saffron flag, which in totality represented their great culture. It was the embodiment of God: "We firmly believe that in the end the whole nation will bow before this saffron flag."⁷¹ Even after Independence when the Tricolour became the National Flag, the RSS refused to accept it as the National Flag insisting that only saffron flag could occupy this place. Golwalkar while discussing the issue of the national flag in an essay entitled 'Drifting and Drifting' in the book Bunch of Thoughts, an RSS publication, has the following to say:

"Our leaders have set up a new flag for our country. Why did they do so? It just is a case of drifting and imitating. Ours is an ancient and great nation with a glorious past. Then, had we no flag of our own? Had we no national emblem at all these thousands of years? Undoubtedly we had. Then why this utter void, this utter vacuum in our minds?"⁷²

Shockingly, just on the eve of India's Independence the RSS English organ Organizer (dated August 14, 1947) carried a feature titled 'mystery behind the bhagwa dhawaj' (saffron flag) which while demanding hoisting of saffron flag at the ramparts of Red Fort in Delhi, openly denigrated the choice of the Tri-colour as the National Flag in the following words:

"The people who have come to power by the kick of fate may give in our hands the Tricolour but it never be respected and

owned by Hindus. The word three is in itself an evil, and a flag having three colours will certainly produce a very bad psychological effect and is injurious to a country." The National Flag was declared to be inauspicious and injurious for India!

REJECTS CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

How loyal the RSS is to the Constitution of India can be known by the following statement of Golwalkar:

“Our Constitution too is just a cumbersome and heterogeneous piecing together of various articles from various Constitutions of the Western countries. It has absolutely nothing which can be called our own. Is there a single word of reference in its guiding principles as to what our national mission is and what our keynote in life is? No!”⁷³

ANTI-SECULARISM

The RSS demands total loyalty to the Indian Nation from the minorities. It is another thing that it does not feel it proper to be loyal to the constitutional-legal set up of this very Nation. The study of Prarthana (prayer) and Pratigya (oath) as practised in the shakhas of the RSS is an example of how Indian nationalism has been equated with Hinduism, in the same way as the Muslim League had combined Islam with nationality. Significantly, both the Prarthana and Pratigya are in direct contravention to the existence of an Indian Secular State where secularism is an important ‘Basic’ feature of the Constitution of India. It is very important to note here that other groups which have been decrying and opposing the Indian constitutional set-up have been facing the might of the Indian state in the form of bullets or jails, but here is the RSS, which openly rejects the legitimacy of the constitutional system of the country, still allowed to have a free run of the country.

Just imagine the former Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Home Minister, L.K. Advani of our country (1998-2004), who took the oath to uphold the integrity of a democratic and secular India, were also

committed to the task of creating a Hindu Rashtra as per the texts of the Prarthana (Prayer) and Pratigya (Oath), to which both were committed as the RSS cadres.

RSS prayer:

“Affectionate Motherland, I eternally bow to you/O Land of Hindus, you have reared me in comfort/O Sacred Land, the Great Creator of Good, may this body of mine be dedicated to you/I again and again bow before You/O God almighty, we the integral part of the Hindu Rashtra salute you in reverence/For Your cause have we girded up our loins/Give us Your Blessings for its accomplishment.”⁷⁴

RSS oath:

“Before the all-powerful God and my ancestors, I most solemnly take this oath, that I become a member of the RSS in order to achieve all round greatness of Bharatvarsha by fostering the growth of my sacred Hindu religion, Hindu society, and Hindu culture. I shall perform the work of the Sangh honestly, disinterestedly, with my heart and soul, and I shall adhere to this goal all my life. Bharat Mata Ki Jai.”⁷⁵

Thus they were not faithful to the Indian Nation, as it existed as a legal entity but wanted to subvert it and turn it into a theocratic state.

ANTI-DEMOCRACY

The RSS, contrary to the principles of democracy, has been constantly demanding that India be ruled under a totalitarian regime. Golwalkar while addressing the 1350 top level cadres of the RSS at its headquarters at Nagpur in 1940 declared,

“The RSS inspired by one flag, one leader and one ideology is lighting the flame of Hindutva in each and every corner of this great land.”⁷⁶

This slogan of one flag, one leader and one ideology has directly been borrowed from the programmes of the Nazi and Fascist Parties of Europe.

AGAINST FEDERALISM

The RSS is also dead against the federal structure of the Constitution, again a 'Basic' feature of the India polity. This is clear from the following communication of Golwalkar, which he sent to the first session of the National Integration Council in 1961. It read,

“Today’s federal form of government not only gives birth but also nourishes the feelings of separatism, in a way refuses to recognize the fact of one nation and destroys it. It must be completely uprooted, constitution purified and unitary form of government be established.”⁷⁷

It was because of this hatred for federalism that the RSS opposed the formation of Maharashtra with all its might. Golwalkar who always pretended to be a non-political person often presided over anti-Maharashtra formation conferences. While presiding over one such conference at Bombay in 1954, he demanded, “India should have Central Rule and from the administrative point of view states should be administered territories.”⁷⁸

These have not been some stray ideas of the RSS ideologue on Indian Federalism. The Bible of the RSS, Bunch of Thoughts, reading of which is a must for every cadre has an exclusive chapter titled, ‘Wanted a unitary state’. While presenting his remedy to the federal set-up of India he writes,

“the most important and effective step will be to bury deep for good all talk of a federal structure of our country’s Constitution, to sweep away the existence of all ‘autonomous’ or semi-autonomous ‘states’ within the one state viz., Bharat and proclaim ‘One Country, One State, One Legislature, One Executive’ with no trace of fragmentational, regional, sectarian, linguistic or other types of pride being given scope for playing havoc with our integrated harmony. Let the Constitution be re-examined and re-drafted, so as to establish this Unitary form of Government and thus effectively disprove the mischievous propaganda indulged in

by the British, and so unwittingly imbibed by the present leaders, about our being just a juxtaposition of so many distinct ‘ethnic groups’ or ‘nationalities’ happening to live side by side and grouped together by the accident of geographical contiguity and one uniform supreme foreign domination.”⁷⁹

ENDNOTES

1. National Volunteer Union
2. Hindustan Times, Delhi, March 21, 2002.
3. These were the anti-national activities of the RSS due to which the organization was banned on February 4, 1948. The government communiqué banning the RSS was self-explanatory:

“In their resolution of February 2, 1948 the Government of India declared their determination to root out the forces of hate and violence that are at work in our country and imperil the freedom of the Nation and darken her fair name. In pursuance of this policy the Government of India have decided to declare unlawful the RSS.” The communiqué went on to disclose that the ban on the RSS was imposed because, “undesirable and even dangerous activities have been carried on by members of the Sangh. It has been found that in several parts of the country individual members of the RSS have indulged in acts of violence involving arson, robbery, dacoity, and murder and have collected illicit arms and ammunition. They have been found circulating leaflets exhorting people to resort to terrorist methods, to collect firearms, to create disaffection against the government and suborn the police and the military”.

It is well known that the then Home Minister of India, Sardar Patel, had a soft corner for the RSS. Sardar Patel continues to be a favourite with the RSS. However, even Sardar Patel found it difficult to defend the RSS in the aftermath of Gandhiji’s

assassination. In a letter written to Golwalkar, dated 11 September 1948, Sardar Patel stated:

“Organizing the Hindus and helping them is one thing but going in for revenge for its sufferings on innocent and helpless men, women and children is quite another thing.

“Apart from this, their opposition to the Congress, that too of such virulence, disregarding all considerations of personality, decency or decorum, created a kind of unrest among the people. All their speeches were full of communal poison. It was not necessary to spread poison in order to enthuse the Hindus and organize for their protection. As a final result of the poison, the country had to suffer the sacrifice of the invaluable life of Gandhiji. Even an iota of the sympathy of the Government, or of the people, no more remained for the RSS. In fact opposition grew. Opposition turned more severe when the RSS men expressed joy and distributed sweets after Gandhiji’s death. Under these conditions it became inevitable for the Government to take action against the RSS.

Since then over six months have elapsed. We had hoped that after this lapse of time, with full and proper consideration, the RSS persons would come to the right path. But from the reports that come to me, it is evident that attempts to put fresh life into their same old activities are afoot”.

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6. Ibid, p. 11.
7. Ibid, p. 20.
8. Ibid, p. 20.

9. Ibid, p. 21.
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11. Ibid, p. 300.
12. Cited in Tapan Basu and others, Khaki Shorts Saffron Flags, Orient Longman, Delhi, 1999, p. 14.
13. For more details see, Shamsul Islam, The Freedom Movement and the RSS: A Story of Betrayal, Joshi-Adhikari Institute, Delhi, 1999.
14. Shri Guruji Samagar Darshan, (collected works of Golwalkar in Hindi), Vol IV, Bharatiya Vichar Sadhana, Nagpur, nd, pp. 39-40. Hereafter referred as SGSD.
15. Ibid, p. 41.
16. Ibid, p. 40.
17. Sanghavriksh Ke Beej, p. 24.
18. SGSD, Vol.1, p. 109.
19. Ibid, pp. 109-110.
20. SGSD, Volume IV, p. 2.
21. Ibid, Vol. 1, pp. 11-12.
22. MS Golwalkar, Bunch of Thoughts, Sahitya Sindhu, Bangalore, 1996, p. 138.
23. Bunch of Thoughts, p. 283.
24. Sanghavariksh Ke Beej, p. 21.
25. SGSD, Vol I, p. 121.
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34. Ibid. pp. 161-162.
35. Ibid. pp. 191-194.
36. We or Our Nationhood Defined, pp. 47-48.
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39. Ibid, p. 185.
40. Ibid, p. 193.
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70. Ibid., p. 36.
71. SGSD, Vol. I, p. 98.
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