



**RSS, SCHOOL TEXTS  
AND THE MURDER  
OF MAHATMA GANDHI**

324.241  
095 4 M 896 R

**ADITYA MUKHERJEE  
MRIDULA MUKHERJEE  
SUCHETA MAHAJAN**

**THE HINDU COMMUNAL  
PROJECT**

Foreword by Bipan Chandra





***INDIAN INSTITUTE  
OF  
ADVANCED STUDY  
LIBRARY, SHIMLA***

# RSS, School Texts and the Murder of Mahatma Gandhi

**RSS, School Texts and the  
Murder of Mahatma Gandhi**

*The Hindu Communal Project*

ADITYA MUKHERJEE, MRIDULA MUKHERJEE  
AND SUCHETA MAHAJAN

 **SAGE** Los Angeles • London • New Delhi • Singapore  
[www.sagepublications.com](http://www.sagepublications.com)

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or utilised in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

First published in 2008 by



**SAGE Publications India Pvt Ltd**

B1/I-1, Mohan Cooperative Industrial Area  
Mathura Road, New Delhi 110 044, India  
www.sagepub.in

**SAGE Publications Inc**

2455 Teller Road  
Thousand Oaks, California 91320, USA

**SAGE Publications Ltd**

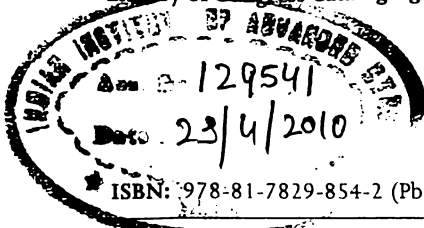
1 Oliver's Yard, 55 City Road  
London EC1Y 1SP, United Kingdom

**SAGE Publications Asia-Pacific Pte Ltd**

33 Pekin Street  
#02-01 Far East Square  
Singapore 048763

Published by Vivek Mehra for SAGE Publications India Pvt Ltd, typeset in 11/13.5pt Joanna MT by Star Compugraphics Private Limited, Delhi and printed at Chaman Enterprises, New Delhi.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data Available



324.241 095 4  
M896 R

The SAGE Team: Rekha Natarajan, Jyotsna Mehta, Sanjeev K. Sharma and  
Trinankur Banerjee



Library

IAS, Shimla

324.241 095 4 M 896 R



00129541

For Bipan Chandra, Irfan Habib, D.R. Goyal  
and Late Mohit Sen,  
fighters against communalism of all hues.

# CONTENTS

Foreword by Bipan Chandra 8

Acknowledgements 13

## **Part I**

RSS and School Education 15

## **Part II**

The Long Shadow of Gandhiji's Assassination 45

Conspiracy to Murder Gandhiji 49

Context of Gandhiji's Murder 58

Threat to the Nature of the Indian State 69

No Regret for Gandhiji's Murder 71

## **Part III**

Ideological Underpinnings of the Hindu Communal Project 77

Attitude towards Non-Hindus 82

Anti-Muslim Bias 84

Anti-Congress and Anti-Gandhi Stance 87

Hindu Communal (re)Definition of Indian

Nationalism and their Own Loyalism 90

Bibliography 95

Index 106

About the Authors 111

## FOREWORD

**D**uring the election campaign for the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly in April 2007, it was found that some audio-visual CDs were being circulated with the intention of spreading vicious communal poison. It was vicious enough for the Election Commission to order the Uttar Pradesh Government to lodge a First Information Report (FIR) with the police against several Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) functionaries including the national president of the party, Rajnath Singh. The BJP typically<sup>1</sup> denied responsibility for it. The CDs, for example, show how Muslims pretending to be Hindus acquire cows from unsuspecting Hindus and slaughter them mercilessly (elaborate footages showing profuse bleeding from the throat of the animal) and how Muslim boys abduct Hindu girls by deceit and forcibly convert them. They warn that while Hindus produce two children, Muslims would marry five times and produce a litter of 35 pups (pillas) and make this country into an Islamic state.<sup>2</sup>

This episode drives home a shocking truth: sixty years after independence vicious communal propaganda continues to spread its poison in large parts of the country. The communal

---

<sup>1</sup> The book shows how the Hindu communalists from the very beginning presented a sharp contrast to the nationalists in this respect, in that, unlike the latter, they rarely owned up when caught on the wrong side of the law.

<sup>2</sup> See *The Hindu*, 7 April 2007, for a detailed account of the CDs.



forces (both majority and minority communalisms) in the colonial period acted as a major bulwark against Indian nationalism and now seriously threaten the nature of the independent state based on the values of the national movement; values such as secularism and democracy.

This book highlights some critical aspects of the Hindu or the majority communal project. The book is divided into three parts. Part I focuses on the attempt by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) to promote communal ideology by attempting to poison the minds of children through school textbooks. Communal ideology constitutes the core of the communal project. Once society has been converted to a communal way of thinking by spreading communal ideology, the communalisation of state institutions such as the legislature, bureaucracy, police and educational institutions follow and so does communal violence characterised by riots and even genocide.

The RSS recognises this fact and therefore gives its ideological work the utmost importance. This book recognises this and brings before us how the RSS through school textbooks creates hatred towards other religious communities in young and impressionable minds. It shows how the effort is made chiefly by promoting a distorted, often totally false and imagined version of history which corroborates the negative and hostile image of other religious communities that the RSS wants to promote. This version is then presented to young minds as a historically proven fact. The book also points out how no civilised society any longer tolerates spreading of prejudices like that of racism (communalism is akin to racism) among school children, though in India it is still rampant.

In Part II, the book focuses on the role of the Sangh combine<sup>3</sup> in the murder of Mahatma Gandhi. This is done partly because Gandhi's assassination symbolises the 'murder' of the values of the Indian National Movement of which the Mahatma was the greatest adherent and populariser; and partly because Gandhi's assassination not only shows the extreme consequences of the Sangh type of activity but also provides a very good example of the mode of functioning of the RSS. It, for example, shows how vicious ideological propaganda indulged in by the Sangh combine prepared the ground for the murder, making the issue of who actually pulled the trigger of lesser importance. It shows the fascist mentality promoted by the combine where the method of dealing with opposition was readily 'elimination'. It underlines the contrast between Gandhiji and the Sangh combine where the latter legitimised any means for the achievement of their ends whereas Gandhiji was convinced that no good can be born of evil means. It shows how duplicity and lies are resorted to habitually by the Sangh combine. It shows how this communalist strand, in sharp contrast to the Indian nationalists, refused to accept responsibility for their actions and in fact readily disowned their actions in order to avoid punishment. In fact, often, in order to achieve certain immediate benefits they hypocritically pretended to value the very objects of their hatred. After all let us not forget that the descendants of the Sangh combine which masterminded Gandhi's murder and which was viscerally anti-communist had no hesitation in

---

<sup>3</sup> The authors correctly do not use the description 'Sangh parivar'.

trying to pass themselves off as 'Gandhian Socialists'<sup>4</sup> a few decades later.

Part III of the book analyses the basic elements of the Hindu communal ideology, as propounded by some of its founders like Savarkar and Golwalkar, which we see reflected in all the activities of the Sangh combine, including in the ideological propaganda attempted through school education. It is shown here how the Hindu communalist ideologues not only, by definition, exclude the non-Hindus from their conception of the Indian nation but cast them in the image of anti-nationalists and therefore objects of hatred. They also glorify Hitler, and the fascist methods used by the Nazis to annihilate the Jews are held up as an example of what the Hindus could do to the Muslims. Further, it shows how the Hindu communalists (who in practice remained as loyalists as the minority communalists) tried to masquerade as nationalists. They changed the very definition of nationalism (seeing it primarily as a fight against Islam), so that they looked like nationalists and the actual nationalists (who swore by Hindu-Muslim unity and the centrality of the struggle against colonialism) looked like the enemies of the people.

In fact, it is disturbing that in recent years many well-meaning secular people have inadvertently begun to accept the Hindu communalists' description of themselves as 'Hindu nationalists'. Many secular scholars and a substantial section of the media now refer to them as 'Hindu nationalists', a description scrupulously avoided by the nearly 100 year long

---

<sup>4</sup> This is how the BJP described itself at the early stages of its formation in the 1980s.

Indian national movement. The Indian nationalists referred to them as communalists. In a multi-religious society like India, the very term Hindu nationalism (or for that matter any nationalism linked to a particular religion) is a contradiction in terms. Such a nationalism would, by definition, exclude other religious communities from the nation and thus inevitably push towards partition of the nation or expulsion, if not annihilation, of the other communities.

In sum, the book brings home to us in a dramatic manner the great threat communalism poses to our society. The defeat of the communalists in the 2004 general elections provided the secular forces with a historic opportunity to combat communalism and to restore the 'civilisational values of the freedom struggle', which were getting severely eroded. To the extent that this opportunity is not being used on a war footing, to the extent that thousands of RSS schools can still spread communal poison and elections can be routinely conducted with communally inflammable material, to the extent that secular parties—for the sake of short-term electoral advantage—turn a blind eye to or even cooperate with communal forces, it suggests full justice is not being done to this historic opportunity.

This book is an urgent wake-up call. History has taught us the bitter costs of such missed opportunities, which have to be paid by several generations.

Bipan Chandra

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A large number of friends, colleagues and co-campaigners in the struggle against communalism have contributed to the making of this work. In fact this work is very much a fallout of the campaign against communalisation of education, which we tried to promote as part of the Delhi Historians' Group since 2001. From among the large number of historians from universities and other institutions in and around Delhi who broadly constitute the Delhi Historians' Group, we would like to particularly thank Bipan Chandra, Arjun Dev, Shireen Moosvi, Salil Misra, Visalakshi Menon, Lata Singh, Bhupendra Yadav, Shri Krishan, Rakesh Batabyal, Mahalakshmi, Amit Mishra, Amar Farooqui and Sanjay Verma for support in more ways than one. We are also thankful to Rajendra Prasad of SAHMAT, Medha and Gyanesh Kudaisya, Bodh Prakash, Shabnam and Suhail Hashmi, Gauhar Raza, S. Irfan Habib, Bhuvan Jha and Vagish Jha for their constant support.

We thank the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library for permission to use the photographs from its collection.

We are very grateful to our publishers, SAGE, for not only publishing this book but also prodding us to improve it and complete it on time. We would particularly like to thank Sugata Ghosh, from among the SAGE team, who saw a raw version of this rather unusual book and immediately agreed to publish it, while making very useful suggestions on how

to improve it. Sunanda Ghosh, Payal Kumar, Rekha Natarajan, Jyotsna Mehta and Trinankur Banerjee, all from SAGE, helped in various ways.

Tejeshwar Singh who had given us generous support during our campaign against communalisation of education is unfortunately no more, but we are certain he would have been happy to see SAGE contribute to the campaign by publishing this book. We lost a dear friend and a great publisher as head of SAGE. This book is a small tribute to his memory.



**RSS  
AND SCHOOL  
EDUCATION**



The values of democracy, civil liberties, secularism, equality of all citizens irrespective of religion, caste, region or gender, which the Indian people had fought for in the course of their national liberation struggle against colonialism and had proudly nurtured for over half a century after independence, are today under severe threat. The civilisational values of the freedom struggle which got enshrined in our constitution are today threatened by communal forces, which had not only refrained from participating in the struggle against colonialism but had also increasingly emerged as its chief prop or ally.

The loyalist role of the Muslim League representing Muslim communalism is quite well known and generally accepted. However, the fact that the Hindu communalist played the same loyalist role is often overshadowed as the representatives of majority communalism tend to masquerade as nationalists just as the minority communalists resort to separatism. Both the communalisms, however, fed on each other and apart from playing a pro-British, loyalist role in the colonial period they seriously endanger the values of secularism, democracy and national interest as envisaged now in independent India. This book focuses on the threat posed by the Hindu communal project.

The communal challenge, which has been there since virtually the rise of modern nationalism itself, has in recent years acquired monstrous proportions with the communal forces coming to power in several states and even in the Centre. We are now witness to a situation where the



communal forces have spread the tentacles of their hate ideology at the grassroots level even among children and in various state apparatuses such as the bureaucracy, police, media, the education system and the judiciary.

The Sangh combine or cohorts ('parivar' or 'family' connotes a decent, humane value and cannot be associated with organisations that promote hatred and murder) led by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) have been very clear that communalism could establish its stranglehold only if communal ideology was spread effectively. Hence it is in the ideological sphere that they have focused their maximum efforts. What better place to start than by poisoning the tender formative minds of young children with hatred and distrust about other (non-Hindu) communities. For many years now, the RSS, for example, has undertaken this project through tens of thousands of its Saraswati Shishu Mandirs and Vidya Bharati primary and secondary schools, and through its shakhas. Part of the hate project is to portray all communities other than the Hindus as foreigners in India, who are disloyal and unworthy of trust. Particularly, the Muslims, whom the RSS founder, K.B. Hedgewar, described as 'hissing Yavana snakes',<sup>1</sup> had to be put in place or they were to face extinction—become 'dead as a dodo'.<sup>2</sup> It is claimed that Ashoka's advocacy of ahimsa (non-violence) and the growing influence of Buddhism spread 'cowardice' and that the struggle for India's freedom became a 'religious war' against Muslims, and so on. It is not surprising that Mahatma Gandhi, the apostle of non-violence

---

<sup>1</sup> C.P. Bhashikar. Keshov: Sangh Nirmata, Suruchi Sahitya Prakashan, New Delhi, 1979, p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> RSS mouthpiece, *Organiser*, 4 January 1970.

and the builder of the freedom struggle as a common struggle of the Hindus and Muslims against British imperialism, got described in the RSS lexicon as a 'Dushtatma' who had to be eliminated. In recent years, with the active use of state power the RSS has succeeded in spreading this hate agenda to unprecedented levels in the name of spreading education and culture.

It is this which has made it absolutely imperative that the secular formations take on the communal challenge on a war footing. It becomes the duty of the government to ensure that in no school is a child exposed to communal prejudice and hatred. Keeping the communal bias out of school textbooks does not amount to just introducing another historiographic or political bias of the Left or Right variety. It is a civilisational and constitutional imperative. Communalism is akin to racism and anti-Semitism. No civilised society in the world today would allow racist prejudice to be propagated at the popular and particularly at the child's level. The role of the government is not only to provide the funds for building the educational infrastructure but also to remain non-interventionist as far as the curriculum is concerned. It has to ensure that the basic civilisational values, which our freedom fighters fought for and which are enshrined in our constitution, are not violated. We must remember that Gandhiji, the fiercest defender of and fighter for civil liberties, made one exception. He believed that state power should be used to ban 'all literature calculated to promote communalism, fanaticism ... and hatred....'<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Harijan, 2 May 1936, cited in Bipan Chandra, 'Gandhiji, Secularism and Communalism', *Social Scientist*, 32(1-2), Jan-Feb. 2004. Also reprinted in Irfan Habib, Bipan Chandra, Ravinder Kumar, Kumkum Sangari and Sukumar Muralidharan (eds), *Towards a Secular and Modern India—Gandhi Reconsidered*, Sahmat, New Delhi, 2004, p. 50.

The costs of not doing so are very high. As the studies of the post-Godhra Gujarat experience have shown, it was the poisoning of the minds of school children that had been going on for nearly two decades, which made the subsequent human carnage almost inevitable.<sup>4</sup> (The communal penetration of the government, bureaucracy, police, media and even the judiciary enabled this carnage to take monstrous proportions.) Let us not forget that the communal ideology promoted by Murlī Manohar Joshi, his lieutenant J.S. Rajput and the writers of hate textbooks makes it possible for the Modis and the Togadias to successfully mobilise fascist mobs who revel in pulling down places of worship or dismembering helpless women and children.

The next section will try to outline some aspects of the content of the divisive hate ideology of the RSS and the strategy of spreading it through the education system. The influence of the Saraswati Shishu Mandirs, the first of which was started in 1952 in the presence of the RSS chief, M.S. Golwalkar, has now multiplied manifold. It will be in order, to first examine what these 'Mandirs' or 'temples' of learning dish out in the name of education.

A National Steering Committee on Textbook Evaluation consisting of widely respected eminent scholars was set up before the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) regime came to power to look into school textbooks. The Committee consisted of Professor Bipan Chandra, Professor Emeritus, Jawaharlal Nehru University, National Professor and Chairman, National Book Trust as Chairman of the Committee; Professor Ravinder Kumar, former Director, Nehru Memorial Museum

---

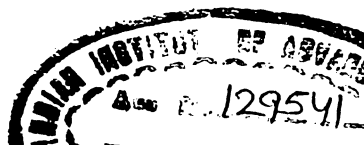
<sup>4</sup> Secular activist and editor of the journal *Communalism Combat*, Teesta Setalvad, has been making this point repeatedly.

nd Library; Professor Nemai Sadhan Bose, former Vice Chancellor, Vishwa Bharati University, Shantiniketan; Professor .S. Bal, former Vice Chancellor, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar; Professor R.S. Sharma, former Chairperson, ndian Council for Historical Research; Professor Sita Ram Singh, Muzaffarpur University; Professor Sarojini Regani, Osmania University, Hyderabad and Shri V.I. Subramaniam as members and Professor Arjun Dev, Dean NCERT as Member Secretary. In its meetings held in January 1993 and October 1994 the Committee considered reports prepared by the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) on textbooks in use in various states and those brought out by the RSS-run Saraswati Shishu Mandir Prakashan and Vidya Bharati Publications. The extracts from the Committee's recommendations to the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) and the educational authorities of various states, and the reports prepared by the NCERT given below reveal the nature of partisan and communal poison that is being fed to our children. The emphasis in the extracts given below is ours.

The Committee's recommendation regarding the Saraswati Shishu Mandir Prakashan was:

Some of the textbooks which are currently in use at primary level in Saraswati Shishu Mandirs present an extremely virulent communal view of Indian history.... The intolerant and extremely crude style and language as well as the totally uninhibited way historical 'facts' have been fabricated are designed to promote not patriotism, as is claimed but totally blind bigotry and fanaticism.... These textbooks should not be allowed to be used in schools.

Similarly, regarding the Vidya Bharati Publications, the Committee recommended:



The Committee shares the concern expressed in the report over the publication and use of blatantly communal writings in the series entitled, *Sanskriti Jnan* in the Vidya Bharati Schools which have been set up in different parts of the country. Their number is reported to be 6,000. The Committee agrees with the report that much of the material in the so-called *Sanskriti Jnan* series is 'designed to promote bigotry and religious fanaticism in the name of inculcating knowledge of culture in the young generation'. The Committee is of the view that the Vidya Bharati schools are being clearly used for the dissemination of *blatantly communal ideas*. ... The *Sanskriti Jnan* series are known to be in use in Vidya Bharati Schools in Madhya Pradesh and elsewhere. The Committee recommends that the educational authorities of Madhya Pradesh and other states should disallow the use of this series in the schools. The state governments may also consider appropriate steps to *stop the publication of these materials which foment communal hatred* and disallow the examinations which are held by the Vidya Bharati Sansthan on the basis of these materials.

Some extracts from the reports submitted to the Committee will explain the strong recommendations of the Committee.

**Extracts from *Gaurav Gatha* for Class IV, Saraswati Shishu Mandir Prakashan, Lucknow, 1992**

It was said that under emperor Ashoka:

*Ahimsa* began to be ... advocated. Every kind of violence began to be considered a crime. Even hunting, sacrifices in *yajnas* and use of arms began to be considered bad. It had a bad effect on the army. Cowardice slowly spread throughout the kingdom. The state bore the burden of providing food to the Buddhist monks. Therefore people began to become monks. Victory through arms began to be viewed as bad. Soldiers guarding the borders were demoralized.... The preaching of *Ahimsa* had weakened north India (pp. 30-31).

(Note how apart from the denigration of Buddhism and one of its basic tenets, non-violence, this prepares yet another ground for promoting hatred against the greatest apostle of *ahimsa* in modern times, Mahatma Gandhi, by the RSS. More on the latter aspect later.)

On the rise of Islam it was said:

Wherever they went, they had a sword in their hand. Their army went like a storm in all the four directions. Any country that came [in] their way was destroyed. Houses of prayers and universities were destroyed. Libraries were burnt. Religious books were destroyed. Mothers and sisters were humiliated. Mercy and justice were unknown to them (pp. 51–52).

Delhi's Qutb Minar is even today famous in his (Qutbuddin Aibak's) name. This had not been built by him. He could not have been able to build it. It was actually built by emperor Samudragupta. Its real name was Vishnu Stambha.... This Sultan actually got some parts of it *demolished* and its name was changed (p. 73).

(It strangely does not occur to the Hindu communalist how apt this above description is of what they have been up to in Gujarat, Pune and Ayodhya in recent years. In Pune the library of the Bhandarkar Institute was vandalised, in Gujarat mothers and sisters were humiliated, and in Ayodhya the Babri Masjid was demolished.)

**Extracts from *Itihas Gaa Rahaa Hai* for Class V, Saraswati Shishu Mandir Prakashan, Lucknow, 1991**

...After that the invaders came with a sword in one hand and the Quran in the other. Innumerable Hindus were forcibly made Musalmans on the point of the sword. The struggle for freedom became a religious war. Innumerable sacrifices were made for religion. We went on and

## RSS, School Texts and the Murder of Mahatma Gandhi

on winning one battle after another. We never allowed foreign rulers to settle down but we could not reconvert our separated brethren to Hinduism (p. 3).

(Apart from the spewing of hate against Muslims it is notable how the struggle for freedom is depicted here as a religious war against Muslims and the apparent unfinished task was the re-conversion to Hinduism of the Muslim converts!)

No wonder in the 'freedom struggle' so defined, the RSS founder, Hedgewar, and his successor, Golwalkar, get pride of place in this textbook and which said:

These Swayamsevaks removed the evils which hundreds of years of slavery had given.... This Sangathan became an object of pride for the country.

The report of the NCERT quite appropriately summed up the impact of these books as:

The main purpose which these books would serve is to gradually transform the young children who came to these schools to study into bigoted morons in the garb of instilling in them patriotism [sic].

### **Extracts from the report on the publications of Vidya Bharati**

The Vidya Bharati Sansthan claims to be engaged in providing to the young generation education in religion, culture and nationalism. The catechistic series is part of the Sansthan's effort in this direction.

Each booklet in the series comprises questions and answers on geography, politics, personalities, martyrs, morals, Hindu festivals, religious books, general knowledge, and so on. Much of the material in these books is designed to

promote blatant communal and chauvinist ideas, and popularise RSS and its policies and programmes.

Some examples of the kind of 'knowledge' of sanskriti these booklets are disseminating are given below:

India is presented in extreme chauvinistic terms as the 'original home of world civilisation'. One of the booklets (No. 9), for example, says,

India is the most ancient country in the world. When civilisation had not developed in many countries of the world, when people in those countries lived in jungles naked or covering their bodies with the bark of trees or hides of animals, Bharat's Rishis-Munis brought the light of culture and civilisation to all those countries.

Some of the examples of the 'spread of the light of Aryatva by Bharatiya Manishis' are given as follows:

- (i) The credit for lighting the lamp of culture in China goes to the ancient Indians.
- (ii) India is the mother country of ancient China. Their ancestors were Indian Kshatriyas....
- (iii) The first people who began to inhabit China were Indians.
- (iv) The first people to settle in Iran were Indians (Aryans).
- (v) The popularity of the great work of the Aryans—Valmiki's *Ramayana*—influenced Yunan (Greece) and there also the great poet Homer composed a version of the *Ramayana*.
- (vi) The languages of the indigenous people (Red Indians) of the northern part of America were derived from ancient Indian languages.

Many of these booklets have a section each on 'Sri Ramjanmabhumi'. They present RSS-VHP (Vishwa Hindu Parishad) propaganda in the form of catechisms to be memorised by the faithful as absolute truths. Some of the questions-answers in these sections are as follows:



- Q. Who got the first temple built on [sic] the birth place of Shri Ram in Ayodhya?  
A. Shri Ram's son Maharaja Kush.
- Q. Who was the first foreign invader who destroyed Sri Ram temple?  
A. Menander of Greece (150 BC)
- Q. Who got the present Rama Temple built?  
A. Maharaja Chandragupta Vikramaditya (AD 380–413).
- Q. Which Muslim plunderer invaded the temples in Ayodhya in AD 1033?  
A. Mahmud Ghaznavi's nephew Salar Masud.
- Q. Which Mughal invader destroyed the Rama Temple in AD 1528?  
A. Babur.
- Q. Why is Babri Masjid not a mosque?  
A. Because Muslims have never till today offered Namaz there.
- Q. How many devotees of Rama laid down their life [sic] to liberate Rama temple from AD 1528 to AD 1914?  
A. Three lakh fifty thousand.
- Q. How many times did the foreigners invade Shri Ramjanmabhumi?  
A. Seventy-seven times.
- Q. Which day was decided by Sri Ram Kar Sewa Samiti to start Kar Sewa?  
A. 30 October 1990.
- Q. Why will 2 November 1990 be inscribed in black letters in the history of India?  
A. Because on that day, the then Chief Minister by ordering the Police to shoot unarmed Kar Sewaks massacred hundreds of them.
- Q. When was the Shilanyas of the temple laid in Sri Ram Janmabhumi?  
A. 1 November 1989.
- Q. What was the number of the struggle for the liberation of Ram Janmabhumi which was launched on 30 October 1990?  
A. 78th struggle.

Some other questions are as follows:

## RSS and School Education

*When did Ramabhakta Kar Sewaks unfurl the saffron flag on Shri Ramjanmabhumi?  
Mention the names of the young boys who laid down their life [sic] while unfurling  
the saffron flag.*

In one of the books in the series (No. 12), there is a section on the saints of the world and the sects/faiths founded by them. The statements made in this section are designed to promote contempt and blind hatred against other religions. One statement on the followers of Christianity who are portrayed as anti-national and a threat to the integrity of India reads as follows:

*It is because of the conspiratorial policies of the followers of this religion that India was partitioned. Even today Christian missionaries are engaged in fostering anti-national tendencies in Nagaland, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Kerala, and other regions of our country because of which there is a grave danger to the integrity of present day India.*

About Islam, one of the statements is as follows:

*Thousands of opponents of idol worship, the followers of Islam, go to the pilgrimage centre of Islamic community at Kaaba to worship 'Shivalinga'. In Muslim society, the greatest wish is to have a darshan of that black stone (Shivalinga).*

In another question, children are asked to fill in the blanks 'rivers of blood' as an answer to the question on the means by which Prophet Mohammad had spread Islam.

There are special sections in some of the booklets on RSS, its founder and its other leaders. In one booklet (No. 11), RSS—which is mentioned along with Arya Samaj and Ramakrishna Mission, and so on as a social reform organisation—is given the status of possessing divine power. It says:

Some divine power, whether it was Bhagwan Ram or Bhagwan Krishna, has always emerged for the preservation of the greatness of Indian culture. The Hindu organization Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh has arisen to end the present miserable condition and for the defence of the greatness of Bharatiya Sanskriti.

The NCERT report, thus, sums up its view on this kind of study material as:

Much of this material is designed to promote bigotry and religious fanaticism in the name of inculcating knowledge of culture in the young generation. That this material is being used as teaching and examination material in schools which, presumably, have been accorded recognition should be a matter of serious concern.

Indeed it is a matter of serious concern considering the rapidly growing influence of the RSS institutions spreading such hatred and poison. The first Saraswati Shishu Mandir was set up in 1952 in Gorakhpur (Uttar Pradesh) in the presence of the RSS chief Golwalkar. By the time the Vidya Bharati, an apex all-India organisation of the RSS providing an umbrella to its educational effort, was formed in 1977, there were already about 500 RSS schools with 20,000 students. In the early 1990s, the BJP governments in states like Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh encouraged the growth of Vidya Bharati schools and even permitted them to set their own syllabus and conduct examinations for the lower classes and run teacher training programmes. By 1993–94 the total number of schools run by Vidya Bharati was claimed to be 6,000 with 40,000 teachers and 1,200,000 students. With state power coming to the BJP at the Centre in 1998, the RSS influence on schools took a quantum leap. In 1999, there were reportedly

14,000 Vidya Bharati schools with 80,000 teachers and 1,800,000 students!<sup>5</sup>

Moreover, state power was now being used to go beyond the RSS schools. In September 1998, the Kalyan Singh government sought to link all state run schools to the RSS *shakha*. It was made compulsory for all primary schools in the state to involve RSS *pracharaks* for imparting *naitik siksha* or moral education.

The link between the recent, post-Godhra human carnage in Gujarat under the BJP government in the state (and the Centre) and the poison fed to young formative minds in Schools has been repeatedly pointed out. Children reading the Gujarat State Social Studies text for Class IX would learn:

... apart from the Muslims even the Christians, Parsees and other *for-eigners* are also recognised as the minority communities. In most of the states the Hindus are in minority and Muslims, Christians and Sikhs are in majority in these respective states.

In the Gujarat State Social Studies text for Class X, which virtually eulogises fascism and Nazism, the children would learn how to deal with these 'foreigners' who are making the Hindus a minority in their own country.

Ideology of Nazism: Like Fascism, the principles or ideologies for governing a nation, propounded by Hitler, came to be known as the ideology of Nazism. On assuming power, the Nazi Party gave unlimited total and all embracing and supreme power to the dictator. The dictator was known as the 'Führer'. Hitler had strongly

---

<sup>5</sup> See Pralay Kanungo, *RSS's Tryst with Politics from Hedgewar to Sudarshan*, Manohar, New Delhi, 2002; and Desh Raj Goyal, *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh*, New Delhi, 2000.

declared that 'the Germans were the only pure Aryans in the entire world and they were born to rule the world'. In order to ensure that the German people strictly followed the principles of Nazism, it was included in the curriculum of the educational institutions. The textbooks said, 'Hitler is our leader and we love him'.

*Internal Achievements of Nazism: Hitler lent dignity and prestige to the German government within a short time by establishing a strong administrative set up. He created the vast state of Greater Germany. He adopted the policy of opposition towards the Jewish people and advocated the supremacy of the German race. He adopted a new economic policy and brought prosperity to Germany. He began efforts for the eradication of unemployment. He started constructing Public buildings, providing irrigation facilities, building Railways, roads and production of war materials. He made untiring efforts to make Germany self-reliant within one decade. Hitler discarded the Treaty of Versailles by calling it just 'a piece of paper' and stopped paying the war penalty. He instilled the spirit of adventure in the common people.<sup>6</sup>*

That in order to maintain the purity and supremacy of the 'Aryan' race millions of Jews were butchered is not even thought worthy of mention. 'Nationalism', efficient administration, economic prosperity, and so on are approvingly discussed. An uncanny similarity to a 'shining India' while Muslims and Christians in Gujarat are burnt.

It is important to realise that the communalists have focused their attention on history because it is on a particular distorted and often totally fabricated presentation of history that the communal ideology is hinged on. If it is to be believed, for example, that the Muslims cannot be trusted, that they can never live peacefully with others, that they

---

<sup>6</sup> See 'Demonising Christianity and Islam' and 'On Fascism and Nazism' in *Communalism Combat*, October 1999, emphasis mine. Also see <http://www.sabrang.com/cc/comold/oct99>.

are barbaric, immoral and in the words of RSS founder, Hedgewar, like 'hissing Yavana snakes', then they have to be shown to have historically behaved like this. Similarly, in order to argue that Muslims and Christians are foreigners, it was necessary to argue that the 'Aryans', whom the RSS acknowledge as the true Indians, did not migrate from outside India but originated in India (and that they predated the Harappan civilisation) even if it meant that another RSS guru, Golwalkar, had to argue, doing considerable violence to history and geography, that the Aryans may have come from the North Pole, but the North Pole was originally in India, in the region of today's Bihar and Orissa, and while the Aryans remained in India the North Pole later zigzagged its way up to its current location! To quote Golwalkar '...the Arctic Home in the Vedas was verily in Hindusthan itself and that it was not the Hindus who migrated to that land but the arctic which emigrated and left the Hindus in Hindusthan'.<sup>7</sup>

While the RSS/Hindu communal effort to spread a communal interpretation of history has been around for many years, the new and more dangerous trend, after the BJP came to power at the Centre, was the attempt to use government institutions and state power to attack scientific and secular history and historians, and promote an obscurantist, backward looking, communal historiography through state-sponsored institutions at the national level. The last time the RSS came close to power at the Centre was when the Jan Sangh had merged with the Janata Party and the Janata Party came to power in 1977.

---

<sup>7</sup> M.S. Golwalkar, *We or Our Nationhood Defined*, Bharat Publications, Nagpur, fourth edition, 1947, pp. 11-13. First published in 1939.

At that time an effort was made to ban school textbooks which were published by NCERT who had persuaded some of the tallest historians of India like Romila Thapar, R.S. Sharma, Satish Chandra and Bipan Chandra to write. A country-wide protest including from within the NCERT and other autonomous institutions put paid to this attempt and it had to be abandoned. The next time the Sangh combine came to power at the Centre was in the late 1990s and the lessons of the previous experience were well learnt by the BJP. Anticipating resistance from autonomous institutions like the NCERT, University Grants Commission (UGC), Indian Council for Social Science Research (ICSSR) and the Indian Council for Historical Research (ICHR), the government first took great care to appoint those who were willing to serve as its instruments as directors, chairpersons and council members in these bodies.

Having achieved that, the BJP government gave the then education minister, Murli Manohar Joshi, full backing in implementing the RSS ideological agenda in education. For the RSS combine, there was no pulling back in the ideological sphere unlike what was done in the economic, political and even foreign policy spheres. The demands of the trade union or peasant fronts of the Sangh were often set aside, the Swadeshi Jagran Manch's objections to economic reforms could be essentially ignored but not the RSS agenda in spreading communal ideology.

Murli Manohar Joshi now presided over the systematic destruction of the academic edifice built painstakingly over decades. The NCERT director introduced a new National Curriculum Framework (NCF) in 2000, without attempting any wide consultation, leave alone seeking to arrive at a consensus.

This when education is a concurrent subject (involving partnership between the Centre and the states) and virtually since independence the tradition had been to put any major initiative in education through discussion in the Parliament and the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE), a body which includes among its members the education ministers of all states and Union Territories. The NCERT arrived at the New Curriculum, which was widely seen by professional academics as introducing the Hindu communal agenda, without any reference to the CABE, thus violating both tradition and procedural requirements.

This was followed by deletion of passages from the existing NCERT history books written by eminent secular historians of the country such as Romila Thapar, R.S. Sharma and Satish Chandra, without any intimation to the authors, violating all copyright norms. As mentioned above, these globally renowned authors had been persuaded by the NCERT on the recommendation of the National Integration Council to write textbooks for children which would correct the existing colonial and communal bias in history books. Shockingly, these deletions were decided not by any recognised committee of professional historians but by the RSS with its view put on record in a published volume a few months before the NCERT was ordered to carry them out! In fact Dina Nath Batra, the General Secretary of Vidya Bharati, which runs a network of schools for the RSS, complained that Murli Manohar Joshi was moving too slowly. Vidya Bharati had suggested 42 deletions but the NCERT carried out only four so far (actually there were 10 deletions from four books). A book edited by Dina Nath Batra of the RSS, called *The Enemies of Indianisation: The Children of Marx*,



*Macaulay and Madarsa*, was published on 15 August 2001. The book, which was an attack on scientific secular history and historians, contained an article listing 41 distortions in the existing NCERT books. The then NCERT director, J.S. Rajput, had contributed an article in the volume listing a few more distortions. Significantly, on the basis of an NCERT notification the deletions of certain passages from the NCERT books were ordered by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) (after of course the eminent historian Prof. D.N. Jha was unceremoniously sacked as the chairperson of the History syllabus committee) on 23 October 2001.

It was repeatedly claimed that the deletions were in deference to the religious sentiments, especially of the minorities. However, the larger purpose was clearly to create doubts in people's minds by making allegations that the books violate religious sentiments of different communities and thus divert attention from the real motive: to replace secular history with communal history. If those who were masterminding the whole show had any concern for minority sentiments, would Dina Nath Batra, the head of the education section of the RSS, say in justification of the deletions: 'Jesus Christ was a *najayaz* (illegitimate) child of Mary but in Europe they don't teach that. Instead, they call her Mother Mary and say she is a virgin'.<sup>8</sup>

Apart from handing over the textbooks to RSS activists and supporters for their approval an equally dangerous trend was started with the NCERT director asserting that he 'would consult *religious experts* before including references to any religion in the textbooks, to avoid hurting the sentiments of the

---

<sup>8</sup> See *Outlook*, 17 December 2001.

community concerned'.<sup>9</sup> This extremely pernicious move was reiterated by the education minister Murli Manohar Joshi, who stated that 'all material in textbooks connected with religions should be cleared by the heads of the religions concerned before their incorporation in the books'. Once such a veto is over what goes into textbooks is given to religious leaders or community leaders, as the government had started doing, it would become impossible to scientifically research and teach not only history but other disciplines, including the natural sciences. Deletions had already been made from textbooks for pointing out the oppressive nature of the caste system in India, presumably because some 'sentiments' were hurt. 'Sentiments' have been hurt in India when the practice of Sati (widow burning) was criticised. Would this mean deletion of references regarding this evil practice from textbooks? Sentiments could be hurt if science lessons questioned the 'immaculate conception' or if they proposed theories of origin of man which were not in consonance with the beliefs associated with most religions. Should such lessons be altered or 'talibanised' according to the dictates of various religious leaders? If the teaching of the modern scientific advances 'hurts' the religious sentiments of one or the other group, should it be banned altogether?

There were a lot of protests from the secular forces against this attempt for communalising the education system. Historians, the secular media and a very wide section of the Indian intelligentsia voiced their protests unambiguously. The Delhi Historians' Group (a group of Historians from several universities in and around Delhi who had got together

---

<sup>9</sup> See *The Times of India*, 5 October 2001 (emphasis by the author).

to fight the government's effort to communalise education) brought out a book putting together the views of eminent historians, journalists and eminent citizens like Nobel Laureate, Amartya Sen and the former President of India, K.R. Narayanan on the attempt for communalising education. The book also listed the deletions made from the history textbooks.<sup>10</sup>

However, at this point an alarming trend began of attacking those who did not agree with the kind of interpretations or fabrications promoted by the Hindu communal forces. They were branded as 'anti-national'. The RSS Sarsanghachalak, K.S. Sudarshan, called those who were resisting the revisions of the NCERT textbooks as 'anti-Hindu Euro-Indians'. Sudarshan laments that these anti-Hindu Euro-Indians hate 'Vedic maths' and do astonishing things like not believing that in ancient India we knew about nuclear energy and that Sage Bharadwaja and Raja Bhoj not only 'described the construction of aeroplanes' but also discussed 'details like what types of aeroplanes would fly at what height, what kind of problems they might encounter, how to overcome those problems, etc'.<sup>11</sup>

Calling them anti-Hindu and anti-national was not enough, a group of self-appointed protectors of Indian nationalism demanded that historians Romila Thapar, R.S. Sharma and Arjun Dev should be arrested. The Human Resource Development (HRD) minister, Murli Manohar Joshi, at whose residence this group had collected, defended the deletions from their books and called for a 'war for the country's

---

<sup>10</sup> See Mridula Mukherjee and Aditya Mukherjee ed. *Communalisation of Education: The History Textbooks Controversy*, with an introduction by the authors, Delhi Historians' Group, Delhi, 2002.

<sup>11</sup> See the RSS mouthpiece *Organiser*, 4 November 2001.

cultural freedom'.<sup>12</sup> The minister went one step further and added fuel to this fascist tendency of trying to browbeat or terrorise the intelligentsia which stood up in opposition by branding the history written by these scholars as 'intellectual terrorism unleashed by the left' which was 'more dangerous than cross border terrorism'.<sup>13</sup> He exhorted the BJP storm troopers to counter both types of terrorism effectively. The dangerous implications of Joshi making this charge against these eminent historians at a time when the whole country was agitated by the attack on the Parliament by cross border terrorists must be noted.

Civilised societies cannot ban the teaching of unsavoury aspects of their past on the grounds that it would hurt sentiments or confuse children or it would diminish patriotic feelings among its children, as the government was trying to do. Nor can we fabricate fantasies to show the greatness of our past and become a laughing stock of the world. Should America remove slavery from its textbooks or Europe the saga of witch-hunting and Hitler's genocide of the Jews? Let us stand tall among civilised nations and not join the Taliban in suppressing history as well as the historians.

The communal attempts to distort Indian history and to give it a narrow sectarian colour in the name of instilling patriotism and demonstrating the greatness of India actually end up doing exactly the opposite. It in fact obfuscates the truly remarkable aspects of India's past of which any society in the world could be justifiably proud. Amartya Sen, for example, argues that 'India's persistent heterodoxy' and its 'tendency towards multi-religious and multi-cultural coexistence'

---

<sup>12</sup> *Hindustan Times*, 8 December 2001.

<sup>13</sup> *Indian Express*, 20 December 2001.

(aspects vehemently denied by the communalists) had important implications for the development of science and mathematics in India. Arguing that the history of science is integrally linked with heterodoxy, Sen goes on to say that:

...the roots of the flowering of Indian science and mathematics that occurred in and around the Gupta period (beginning particularly with Aryabhata and Varahamihira) can be intellectually associated with persistent expressions of heterodoxies which pre-existed these contributions. In fact Sanskrit and Pali have a larger literature in defence of atheism, agnosticism and theological scepticism than exists in any other classical language.<sup>14</sup>

He goes on to say that rather than the championing of 'Vedic Mathematics' and 'Vedic Sciences' on the basis 'of very little evidence'...

... what has ... more claim to attention as a precursor of scientific advances in the Gupta period is the tradition of scepticism that can be found in pre-Gupta India—going back to at least the sixth century BC—particularly in matters of religion and epistemic orthodoxy.

The tradition of scepticism in matters of religion and epistemic orthodoxy was continued by Mahatma Gandhi, for example when he argued, 'It is no good quoting verses from Manusmriti and other scriptures in defense of ... orthodoxy. A number of verses in these scriptures are apocryphal, a number of them are meaningless'.<sup>15</sup> Again he said, 'I exercise

---

<sup>14</sup> 'History and the Enterprise of Knowledge', address delivered by Amartya Sen to the Indian History Congress in January 2001, Calcutta. See also Amartya Sen, *The Argumentative Indian: Writings on Indian History, Culture and Identity*, Allen Lane, Penguin, London, 2005 for a brilliant critique of the communal interpretation of Indian history.

<sup>15</sup> Rajmohan Gandhi, *The Good Boatman: A Portrait of Gandhi*, Viking, New Delhi, 1995, p. 237.

my judgment about every scripture, including the Gita. I cannot let a scriptural text supercede my reason'.<sup>16</sup>

(Let us hope that no group with hurt sentiments now demands the arrest of Amartya Sen as yet another son of 'Macaulay, Marx and Madarsa'. Let us hope that Murlī Manohar Joshi in true Taliban fashion does not ask his storm troopers to extinguish the 'intellectual terrorism' unleashed by Sen, in the same manner as it was felt necessary to silence Gandhiji, 'the greatest living Hindu'.)

Despite nationwide protests, particularly from the academia (including the widely respected, more than 60 years old, Indian History Congress, the national organisation of professional historians) and the media, this process of what the *Hindustan Times* editor, Vir Sanghvi, called the 'Talibanisation' of education was continued.<sup>17</sup> A new syllabus based on the NCF 2000 was adopted, again without following the proper procedures. There was widespread criticism of the new syllabus. The Delhi Historians Group held a workshop of eminent social scientists in Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi on 3 March 2002 and brought out a critique of the syllabus by NCERT, which was based on the new curriculum framework.

The process culminated in the existing NCERT history books written by eminent scholars (from which deletions were made) being withdrawn altogether and being replaced by books written by people whose chief qualification was their closeness to the Sangh ideology and not recognised

---

<sup>16</sup> *Harijan* 1936, quoted in Chandra, 'Gandhiji, Secularism and Communalism'.

<sup>17</sup> *Hindustan Times*, 25 November 2001.

expertise in their field of study. The Indian History Congress, alarmed at what poison was being dished out to our children, published a volume called *History in the New NCERT Text Books: A Report and an Index of Errors*.<sup>18</sup> The volume ran into 130 pages just listing the major mistakes and distortions introduced in these books.

While it would not be possible here, for reasons of space, to list the specific distortions that are present in the new books it may be useful to reproduce below an extract from the History Congress publication, which sums up what is wrong with the four new books, which were scrutinised, published by NCERT in 2002. These included Makkhan Lal, et al., *India and the World*, for Class VI; Makkhan Lal, *Ancient India*, for Class XI; Meenakshi Jain, *Medieval India*, for Class XI and Hari Om, et al., *Contemporary India* for Class IX.

Often the errors are apparently mere products of ignorance; but as often they stem from an anxiety to present History with a very strong chauvinistic and communal bias. The textbooks draw heavily on the kind of propaganda that the so called Sangh Parivar Publications have been projecting for quite some time. The major features of the presentation of Indian history in the new NCERT books may be summed up as follows:

1. India is held to be the original home of the Aryans. No concern at all is shown with the origins of peoples speaking Dravidian and Austro-Asiatic languages.
2. The Indian civilization is supposed to have its sole fountain-head in the 'Vedic Civilization' which is given much greater antiquity than historians have been willing to assign it so far. The latter is claimed to have embraced the Indus Civilization,

---

<sup>18</sup> Irfan Habib, Suvira Jaiswal and Aditya Mukherjee, *History in the New NCERT Textbooks: A Report and an Index of Errors*, Indian History Congress, Kolkata, 2003.

now to be called 'Indus Saraswati' civilization, which is thus entirely credited to the Aryans.

3. All substantive, scientific discoveries (from zero to decimal placement of numerals to heliocentric astronomy) are supposed to have been made in the 'Vedic Civilization'.
4. The Hindu religion is held superior to other religions. The *Upanishads* are proclaimed as 'the most profound works of philosophy in any religion'. Both Buddhism and Jainism are held to have emerged out of them. Hindus had no sense of constraints about chronology, unlike the Christians. Hindus, moreover, had been by their faith true patriots. In the modern freedom struggle too, they alone are held to have been sincere, while the Muslims only dreamt of a Muslim empire or a separate nation. Medieval Muslims and modern Christians are also held to have been deeply influenced by racism.
5. The caste system was all right in the beginning; only 'rigidities' (not inequities or oppression of Dalits) are seen in its later stages and very lightly touched upon. The Dalits in effect are excluded from history.
6. A neutral or even admiring stance is maintained about practices such as *sati* or *jauhar* in ancient and medieval India. Abductions of women are described as a legitimate form of marriage, not apparently inconsistent with women being held in honour.
7. Foreigners have taught little or nothing to Indians, while India has given so much to the world in all realms of culture.
8. Muslims brought little new to India, except oppression and temple-destruction. All the dark corners are thoroughly presented in the narrative of medieval India, as regards Muslims, while they are coolly overlooked in that of ancient India.
9. The rise of a composite culture is ignored or downplayed. Kabir gets with difficulty a sentence in the medieval India textbook (where, on the other hand, Guru Gobind Singh appears as a 'devotee of Goddess Chandi').
10. In modern India, 'Muslim separatism' is the great bugbear, while Hindu communalism is not even mentioned, and the Hindu Mahasabha leaders appear uniformly as great patriots.



11. The growth of the great modern values of democracy, gender equality, secularism, welfare state, etc., is neglected, or passed over in silence.
12. There is little or nothing on Indian social reformers like Ram Mohan Roy, Keshav Chandra Sen, Jotiba Phule, and even B.R. Ambedkar—since apparently traditional Hindu society is not thought to have been in need of reform.
13. The mainstream secular and democratic elements in the National Movement are presented as unimportant or mere obstacles to the growth of (Hindu) 'Cultural Nationalism'. Harsh words are used for the Moderates; there is a deliberate effort to either ignore or present in unfavourable light Jawaharlal Nehru, and also the Left, especially the Communists.

With such parochialism and prejudice as the driving forces behind these textbooks, it is clear that these cannot be converted into acceptable textbooks by a mere removal of the linguistic and the factual errors pointed out in our Index. In many cases the basic arguments in the textbooks are built on these very errors of fact, and so the errors cannot be removed without changing the main ideas behind the textbooks.

These textbooks are therefore beyond the realm of salvage, and they need to be withdrawn altogether.

Until such a withdrawal takes place, we hope our Index will help both teachers and students to rectify the more serious errors in the books and so attain a more balanced view of our past.

(It may be pointed out that this Report and Index of Errors had the unanimous approval of the entire executive committee of the Indian History Congress.)

There is an uncanny similarity between the distortions in these NCERT books and those produced by the RSS Shishu Mandirs and Vidya Bharati, and the ideas of the RSS/Hindu communal ideologues Golwalkar, Hedgewar and Savarkar.

The distrust of minorities, particularly Muslims, the insistence that the Aryans originated in India and that the Vedic civilisation predated any other in India and was superior to other civilisations and sometimes their creator, so on and so forth, are constant motifs throughout.

In today's context it is of particular interest to see how the RSS/Hindu communal effort to appear as nationalist, when their actual role in the Indian national movement was not only nil but negative, has led to the distortion of the history of the national movement itself. Since the Hindu communalists fought against Muslims and not against British colonialism, there is an attempt to define Indian nationalism itself as a 'religious war' against Muslims. The actual Indian national movement, which was a secular struggle against the political economy of colonialism and not a religious or racial war against the British, is termed 'cultural nationalism', by which the Hindu communalists mean Hindu nationalism.

The foremost leader of the Indian national movement, Mahatma Gandhi, who fought for a common struggle of Hindus and Muslims against British colonial domination and not a religious war against anybody, is uniformly demonized by the RSS/Hindu communalists, as has been shown later in the book. In the NCERT textbooks, it takes the form of grossly underplaying the role of the Mahatma and completely ignoring the role of the Hindu communal forces in the elimination of perhaps the greatest person to walk the earth in the 20th century. In the first edition of Hari Om's *Contemporary India* for Class X, a book dealing with the 20th century, Gandhiji's assassination was not even mentioned! When there was a national furore on this question a reprint edition was brought out, which had this bare sentence:

Gandhiji's efforts to bring peace and harmony in society came to a sudden and tragic end due to his assassination by Nathuram Godse on January 30 1948, in Delhi while Gandhiji was on his way to attend a prayer meeting ( p. 57).

No mention was still made of who Godse was, and of his strong links with the RSS and the Hindu Mahasabha, particularly with its leader Savarkar. This was done, as we have pointed out in the next Part, despite Sardar Patel, the then home minister's clear conclusion that it was a fanatical wing of the Hindu Mahasabha directly under Savarkar that hatched the conspiracy and saw it through.

Clearly, the RSS and the Hindu communalists had much to hide which they did and still try to do so in a cowardly manner; a manner which they have tried to justify as clever strategy. The next Part will discuss the whole issue of Gandhiji's assassination, and the role of the Sangh and associated bodies in making that happen.



**THE LONG SHADOW  
OF GANDHI'S  
ASSASSINATION**



Gandhiji's assassination on 30 January 1948 was the most glaring omission in the infamous NCERT books produced overnight and unleashed with unholy hurry, by the BJP government, on unsuspecting and impressionable young minds in 2002. When this omission was pointed out, a single sentence was added stating the bare essentials. There was nothing on the enormity of the crime, its extreme significance at that juncture when a newly independent secular state was struggling to survive, its impact in the long term for our secular polity; and this when the assassination was at par with the partition in terms of its impact on our polity. As Nehru stressed, communalism dealt two grievous blows to our body politic. It was the unifying link between partition and Gandhiji's assassination:

Communalism resulted not only in the division of the country, which inflicted a deep wound in the hearts of the people which will take a long time to heal if it ever heals but also in the assassination of the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi.<sup>1</sup>

One can only conjecture about what direction Indian polity would have taken had Gandhiji's life not been cut short so peremptorily. What compounded the situation was that it occurred at arguably the most critical point in his life and

---

<sup>1</sup> Coimbatore, public speech, 3 June 1948 in S. Gopal, ed., *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru* (JNSW), second series, Vol. 4, Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund (JNMF), New Delhi, 1986, p. 25.

that of the nation, which, in Nehru's words, was 'a new born babe'.<sup>2</sup>

Would Gandhiji's presence have brought about greater Hindu-Muslim unity, better Indo-Pakistan relations, a decentralised polity, a grassroots democracy? His contribution, suggested by Mountbatten's tribute to Gandhiji as a 'one man boundary force', is matched by Nehru's tribute to him as 'a rock of purpose and a lighthouse of truth':

How many of you realize what it has meant to India to have the presence of Mahatma Gandhi these months? We all know of his magnificent services to India and to freedom during the past half century and more. But no service could have been greater than what he has performed during the past four months when in a dissolving world he has been a rock of purpose and a lighthouse of truth, and his firm low voice has risen above the clamours of the multitude pointing out the path of rightful endeavour.<sup>3</sup>

This begs the question, why then this deliberate silence, this obliteration of the historical record, on this dastardly act of premeditated murder? What is sought to be concealed half a century after the deed has been committed, its perpetrators hanged and enquiry commissions having given their reports? Who is afraid of the truth behind Gandhiji's murder? Will the real conspirators and beneficiaries please stand up?

This silence in the historical record is at one with the attempt of all-Hindu communal parties to hide their link with the murder by any means possible—dissociating, disowning, dissolving and reinventing. It was well known that Nathuram

---

<sup>2</sup> Speech at Kanpur, 16 December 1947, *ibid.*, Vol. 4, p. 219.

<sup>3</sup> Address by Nehru at the jubilee convocation of Allahabad University, 13 December 1947, *ibid.*, p. 206.

Godse and Narayan Rao Apte, the men hanged for the murder, were ardent 'Savarkarites'; yet Savarkar disowned Godse in his statement at the trial and Godse in turn denied that Savarkar was involved in any way in the conspiracy. The Hindu Mahasabha chose to dissolve itself when confronted with a ban. The RSS was willing to accept any conditions, any restraint on its functioning, to get the ban removed. It accepted a written constitution and gave an undertaking that it would only be a cultural organisation. Tainted by its link with Gandhiji's murder, the Hindu Mahasabha beat a tactical retreat and Syama Prasad Mookerjee, with the collaboration of the RSS, founded the Bharatiya Jana Sangh in 1951. This was to be the main political vehicle of the Hindu communal articulation, its frontline political party.

### Conspiracy to Murder Gandhiji

Gandhiji's murder was not an act of emotional insanity, it was a premeditated conspiracy. In November 1947, Karyanand Sharma, the Communist Party of India (CPI) kisan leader from Bihar, warned that the demand for a Hindu Raj 'was very bad and behind it there was a conspiracy to murder Gandhiji and Panditji'.<sup>4</sup> When an abortive attempt was made on his life on 20 January 1948 and a co-worker suggested that the bomb blast was accidental, Gandhiji's retort was, 'The fool; Don't you see, there is a terrible and widespread conspiracy behind it?'<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Government of Bihar, Political Department (Special), File No. 113(V) of 1947, (Confidential), Bihar State Archives, Patna.

<sup>5</sup> Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Volume II, Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1958, p. 750.

There is consensus that it was an extreme wing of the Hindu Mahasabha led by Savarkar that was behind Gandhiji's murder. Then why was Savarkar exonerated? What was his role in the conspiracy?

In January 1948, after Gandhiji was assassinated, Savarkar was arrested as he was suspected of being the mastermind behind the conspiracy. He was eventually exonerated in the Gandhi murder trial for lack of evidence to corroborate the testimony of the approver, a technical point in criminal law. Sardar Patel, being a fine criminal lawyer, was personally convinced of Savarkar's guilt, otherwise he would not have agreed to put him up for trial. He told Jawaharlal Nehru in unambiguous terms, 'It was a fanatical wing of the Hindu Mahasabha directly under Savarkar that [hatched] the conspiracy and saw it through'.<sup>6</sup>

When the Commission of Inquiry set up in 1965 under Justice Jeevan Lal Kapur, a former judge of the Supreme Court of India, gave its report, it came to the following conclusion, 'All these facts taken together were destructive of any theory other than the conspiracy to murder by Savarkar and his group'.<sup>7</sup>

The Kapur Commission had access to a lot of evidence which was not available to the trial judge. Two of Savarkar's close associates, A.P. Kasar and G.V. Damle, who had not testified at the trial, spoke up before the Kapur Commission, now that Savarkar was dead, and corroborated the approver's statements. If they had testified at the trial, in all probability

---

<sup>6</sup> Durga Das, *Sardar Patel's Correspondence, 1945-50*, Vol. VI, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1973, p. 56.

<sup>7</sup> Jeevan Lal Kapur, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Conspiracy to Murder Mahatma Gandhi* (hereafter Kapur Commission Report) New Delhi, 1970, p. 303, para 25.106.



Savarkar would have been proven guilty. Given this, it is shocking that Savarkar's portrait has been installed in Parliament, amidst and despite widespread furore. One would imagine that even if there is a whiff of suspicion about Savarkar this should not happen. And here was the political guru of Godse and Apte, whose acquittal was only on technical legal grounds, but who stood indicted in the eyes of the public as politically and individually responsible and morally culpable for the act. As Rajendra Prasad pertinently pointed out,

I could understand any murderer claiming to be defended and, as a person having a legal training, I more or less instinctively consider a man to be not guilty unless his guilt is brought home to him, but it was not the defence of the accused which was being offered but a hero was being made of the suspects.<sup>8</sup>

What about the role of Godse, who pumped the shots into Gandhiji's frail body? He made out at his trial that only he and Apte were involved in the conspiracy and that the Hindu Mahasabha, let alone the RSS, had nothing to do with it. This was patently false. Godse had everything to do with the RSS and Hindu Mahasabha. As for the link with Savarkar, Apte and Godse were acolytes of Savarkar. Savarkar financed their newspaper *Agrani*, later named *Hindu Rashtra*.<sup>9</sup> They travelled with him on his political tours. Godse was the chief organiser and Apte the secretary of the 'Savarkarite' outfit, the Hindu Rashtra Dal, set up in Poona in 1942 as a volunteer organisation to carry out the secret activities of the Mahasabha.<sup>10</sup> They were the executors, and he was the inspiring genius and mastermind behind the conspiracy to murder Gandhiji.

---

<sup>8</sup> Letter to Patel, 13 October 1948, *Sardar Patel's Correspondence*, Vol. VI, p. 92.

<sup>9</sup> Kapur Commission Report, p. 68.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 66–67.

What about Godse's links with the RSS? The RSS has insisted that he was not associated with them. Advani said:

Nathuram Godse was a bitter critic of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. His charge was that the RSS had made Hindus impotent. *We have had nothing to do with Godse. The Congress is in the habit of reviving this allegation against us when it finds nothing else.*<sup>11</sup>

Nathuram's brother and fellow conspirator, Gopal Godse, countered Advani's assertion vehemently and insisted that Nathuram had never left the RSS but had said so in his statement at the trial in order to shield Golwalkar and the RSS:<sup>12</sup>

Q. Were you a part of the RSS?

A. All the brothers were in the RSS. Nathuram, Dattatreya, myself and Govind. You can say we grew up in the RSS rather than in our homes. It was like a family to us.

Q. Nathuram stayed in the RSS? He did not leave it?

A. Nathuram had become a *boudhik karyavah* (intellectual worker) in the RSS. He said in his statement that he left the RSS. He said it because Golwalkar and RSS were in a lot of trouble after the murder of Gandhi. But he did not leave the RSS.

Q. Advani has recently said that Nathuram had nothing to do with RSS.

A. I have countered him saying it is cowardice to say that. You can say that RSS did not pass a resolution, saying that, 'go and assassinate Gandhi'. But you do not disown him [Nathuram]. The Hindu Mahasabha did not disown him. In 1944 Nathuram started doing Hindu Mahasabha work when he had been a *boudhik karyavah* in the RSS.

It is revealing that the prayer Nathuram recited before going to the gallows was the new Sanskrit RSS prayer, which replaced the old Hindi and Marathi prayer in 1940. If he was

---

<sup>11</sup> *The Times of India*, 22 November 1993, cited in A.G. Noorani, *Savarkar and Hindutva, The Godse Connection*, Left Word Books, New Delhi, 2002, p. 138.

<sup>12</sup> Interview with Gopal Godse by Arvind Rajagopal, *Frontline* 1994, cited in *ibid.*, pp. 138–39.

no longer in the RSS, as he claimed, then how did he know the new prayer and why did he recite it at such a critical point in his life, on the threshold of its end?<sup>13</sup>

Again, the RSS and Hindu Mahasabha were at pains to show that they had nothing to do with each other, with the conspirators behind Gandhiji's murder and indeed with politics altogether. This calls for suspension of belief. It is well known that the separate existence of the two organisations meant only a division of labour towards the same end. RSS and Hindu Mahasabha members worked together, the former building the ideological bases, and the latter functioning as the formal political party. This overlap between the RSS and Hindu Mahasabha is clear from the report of the Kapur Commission. When the Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), Bombay and the Commissioner, Police, Bombay, were asked by the Home Secretary on 8 August 1947 to prepare lists of RSS and Hindu Mahasabha workers, the Poona police sent a list of Mahasabha leaders of Poona; it did not prepare a separate list for the RSS. This suggests the difficulty of differentiating between the two. The Kapur Commission further notes that 'there is evidence to show that many RSS members were members of the Hindu Mahasabha'.<sup>14</sup> Morarji Desai deposed before the Jeevan Lal Kapur Commission that 'at that time Hindu Mahasabha and the RSS were working together'.<sup>15</sup> R.K. Khadilkar, Purshottamdas Trikamdas and N.S. Gurtu, all witnesses from Bombay, in their testimony referred to the RSS and Hindu Mahasabha together.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> D.R. Goyal, *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh*, 2000, pp. 202-3.

<sup>14</sup> Kapur Commission Report, 1970, Chapter XIX, p. 59.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

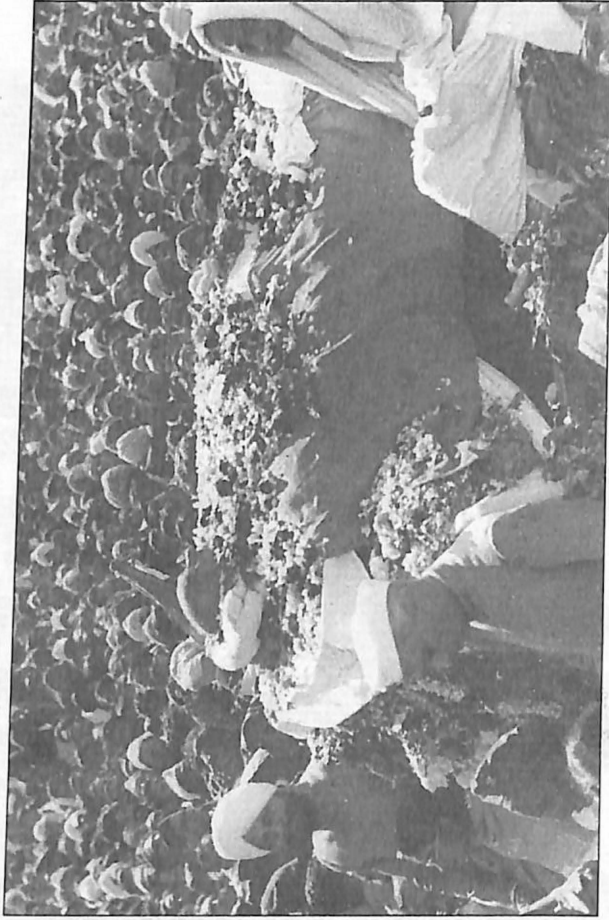
<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.



V.D. Savarkar, the leader of the Hindu Mahasabha, being taken in a procession in Poona by RSS Volunteers after his release from internment in Ratnagiri Jail, June 1937. An example of the close link between the RSS and Hindu Mahasabha, a link which was sought to be opportunistically denied during the trial for Gandhiji's assassination.



Dead body of Mahatma Gandhi lying in state. The bullet marks on his chest are visible.



Gandhiji's funeral procession. Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel accompanying the procession.



Gandhi Murder trial at Red Fort. Left to Right, front to back: Nathuram Godse, Apte, Karkare, Badge (approver), Madanlal, Gopal Godse, Shankar Kistayya, Savarkar and Dr Parachure (hidden). 22 June 1948.

which was preached until only a few months ago by many spokesmen of the Mahasabha, including men like Mahant Digbijoy Nath, Prof. Ram Singh and Deshpande, could not but be regarded as a danger to public security. The same would apply to the RSS, with the additional danger inherent in an organization run in secret on military or semi-military lines.<sup>22</sup>

The Chief Minister of Bombay, B.G. Kher, explained the political situation in Maharashtra to Patel, 'The atmosphere of hatred against the Congress and Mahatma sought to be created by the Hindu Mahasabha culminated in the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi at the hands of a few Maharashtrians'.<sup>23</sup>

What strikes one about the political style of the RSS and Hindu Mahasabha is the duplicity, lies and a tendency to disown their own men if need be. One cannot help thinking what a contrast there is between Savarkar and his men, and revolutionaries like Bhagat Singh who prided themselves on never asking for clemency, choosing to suffer all punishment, including death. In fact, from the very early days Indian nationalists had evolved the practice of bravely accepting responsibility for committing anti-British acts, facing trials, using the trials for further propagation of nationalist goals and then willingly accepting imprisonment, exile or even death as punishment.

A good example of the contrasting behaviour of the Hindu communalists is Savarkar's conduct during the Gandhi murder trial. He was so keen to give the impression that he had nothing to do with the conspiracy that he refused to even talk to Nathuram Godse and the other accused in public in the court as well as in private in the jail. P.L. Inamdar, the

---

<sup>22</sup> *Sardar Patel's Correspondence*, Vol. VI, p. 66.

<sup>23</sup> B.G. Kher to Patel, 26 May 1948, *ibid.*, Vol. VI, pp. 77-78.



defence lawyer for Parchure and Gopal Godse, has recorded in his memoirs:

During the whole of the trial, I never saw Savarkar turning his head towards even Nathuram, who used to sit by him, in fact, next to him, much less speak with him.... Savarkar sat there sphinx-like in silence, completely ignoring his co-accused in the dock, in an unerringly disciplined manner....

During the various talks I had with Nathuram he told me that he was deeply hurt by this—Tatyrao's [Savarkar's] calculated demonstrative non-association with him either in court or in Red Fort Jail during all the days of the Red Fort Trial. How Nathuram yearned for a touch of Tatyrao's hand, a word of sympathy, or at least a look of compassion in the secluded confines of the cells. Nathuram referred to his hurt feelings in this regard even during my last meeting with him at the Simla High Court.<sup>24</sup>

Inamdar also bears quoting on how Savarkar put on a great act in the court regarding his admiration for the Mahatma:

Savarkar had prepared a written statement in defence of his case ... and he read out the statement in the Court with all the gimmicks of an orator bemoaning his fate of being charged with the murder of Mahatmaji by the independent Indian Government, when he had admired and eulogized the personality of the Mahatmaji so sincerely and so often. Savarkar actually wiped his cheeks in court while reading this part of his oration.<sup>25</sup>

Given that Savarkar's trenchant criticism of Gandhiji was well known, especially after he became the President of the Hindu Mahasabha, it is quite remarkable that he should

---

<sup>24</sup> P.L. Inamdar, *The Story of the Red Fort Trial*, Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1979, pp. 141–43 cited in Noorani, *Savarkar and Hindutva*, pp. 107–8.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

have made such a hypocritical attempt to pass himself off as Gandhiji's admirer. But then this is not surprising given his earlier history of apologies, undertakings and assurances of good behaviour.<sup>26</sup> Within three weeks of his arrest in connection with Gandhiji's murder, he made a representation to the Police Commissioner from Arthur Road Prison expressing his 'willingness to give an undertaking to the Government that ... [he would] refrain from taking part in any communal or political public activity for any period the Government may require in case I am released on that condition'.<sup>27</sup>

### Context of Gandhiji's Murder

While the actual conspiracy may have been hatched by a small group directly under Savarkar's control, in the ultimate analysis it was the *atmosphere of hatred* and bitterness in the strife torn days of 1947 that made such a heinous crime possible. Hostility towards the Congress, towards Gandhiji, had been promoted over the years but in 1947 there was a significantly qualitative and noticeable escalation in the language of vituperation.

There is no doubt that the communalised atmosphere created by the riots, migrations and massacres that accompanied partition was extremely conducive for the growth of Hindu communalism. Strident anti-Muslim propaganda, instigation and organisation of riots, demand for a Hindu state and a call to overthrow the government and hang the

---

<sup>26</sup> Savarkar had repeatedly asked the British for pardon and offered to help the British government when he was in jail in the Andamans. This aspect is discussed towards the end of this Part.

<sup>27</sup> Letter dated 22 February 1948, cited in Noorani, *Savarkar and Hindutva*, pp. 146–47.

national leaders reached a climax in January 1948 just before the assassination of Gandhiji.<sup>28</sup>

The Hindu Mahasabha did not celebrate the attainment of independence and declared 15 August 1947 as a day of mourning. It refused to accept the national flag, upholding the *bhagwa jhanda* as the only flag worthy of veneration. The Congress, as the ruling party, was repeatedly pressurised to declare the state a Hindu *rashtra*. The very raising of such a demand was an indicator of the strength of Hindu communal forces by this time. The resolution passed by the All India Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha at its meeting on the 7th and 8th of June 1947 was:

The Committee considers it its duty to warn the Hindus and unless they are more careful and vigilant in future and take immediate and effective steps to build up a real and powerful Hindu state, not only will their interests under the new proposed arrangements be unsafe but also they may lose even what is left to them of India.<sup>29</sup>

Needless to say the idea of a Hindu state was rejected outright, as absurd, by the Congress leadership.<sup>30</sup> It was this issue of the direction of the Indian polity which divided the secular and communal forces. This contest on the terrain of nationhood was the 'politics of the assassination'.<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> See Sucheta Mahajan, *Independence and Partition: The Erosion of Colonial Power in India*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 2000a, Chapters 10 and 11.

<sup>29</sup> All Indian Hindu Mahasabha Papers (AIHMP), File No. C-162/1947, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (emphasis by the authors).

<sup>30</sup> B.M. Birla to Patel, 5 June 1947, SPC, Vol. 4, p. 56. Patel rejected this suggestion outright in his letter to B.M. Birla, 10 June 1947, *Sardar Patel's Correspondence, 1945-50*, Vol. 4, p. 56.

<sup>31</sup> Ashis Nandy, 'Final Encounter: The Politics of the Assassination of Gandhi', in *At the Edge of Psychology—Essays on Politics and Culture*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1980, pp. 70-98.

After independence, the Hindu communal groups moved from trying to influence the Congress to direct provocation of 'organized' communal 'violence'.<sup>32</sup> The capital city, Delhi, was an important centre of their operations. They were behind the riots of September 1947. Lord Ismay, Mountbatten's chief aide, reported back to the Cabinet, 'Nowhere was there reason; Delhi was on the verge of chaos'.<sup>33</sup> General Rees' report on the Punjab Boundary Force noted that 'the civil administration, just taken over, virtually ceased to function'.<sup>34</sup> Nehru impressed upon Patel that the riots were not mere riots, they were part of a wider nettle, which had to be grasped:

As far as I can make out, we have had to face a very definite and well-organised attempt of certain Sikh and Hindu fascist elements to overturn the Government, or at least to break up its present character. It has been something much more than a communal disturbance. Many of these people have been brutal and callous in the extreme. They have functioned as pure terrorists. They could only do so, of course, with success in a favourable atmosphere as far as public opinion was concerned. They had that atmosphere. These gangs have not been broken up yet although something has been done to them, and they are still capable of great mischief.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> On 19 August 1946 in his presidential address to the All India Hindu Mahajati Sammelan, B.S. Moonje, the Mahasabha leader, had observed that to counter Jinnah 'we will have to organize violence on a scientific basis' All India Hindu Mahasabha Papers, File C-105/46, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.

<sup>33</sup> Ismay's note on India and Pakistan, Chiefs of Staff (47), 125th meeting, 8 October 1947, PREM 8/588, Papers of Prime Minister Attlee's office, microfilm in National Archives of India, (NAI), New Delhi.

<sup>34</sup> 15 November 1947, War Staff Department, L/WS/1/1134, file 17132/2, India Office Records, microfilm in NAI, New Delhi.

<sup>35</sup> Nehru to Patel, 30 September 1947, JNSW, series 2, Vol. 4, p. 114.

Many members of the RSS actively participated in the post-independence riots. By January 1948, a 'mass of information' was available to the government about its 'close association with riots and disorder'.<sup>36</sup> Kingsley Martin, editor of *New Statesman*, visited India in January 1948 and met Gandhiji, Nehru and Patel. He cabled to his paper, 'Notice with apprehension growing strength of more extreme Hindu groups such as Mahasabha and the large body of R.S.S. young Hindus, who are a kind of unofficial Hindu fascist army'.<sup>37</sup>

Involvement in riots was accompanied by flagrant defiance of the government and the slander campaign against the Congress leaders and Gandhiji, charging them with appeasement of Muslims.

The cry of appeasement was an old one. In 1927, Savarkar spoke of feelings of anger and hatred towards Gandhi for appeasing Muslims.<sup>38</sup> The Gandhi-Jinnah talks in 1944 were opposed by Savarkar who took the lead in convening an Akhand Hindusthan Leaders Conference to forestall any agreement Gandhiji may arrive at with Jinnah during his 'unholy mission'. Savarkar wrote to Srinivasa Sastri in appreciation of the latter's comment that sacrificing the rights of the majority to buy the loyalty of the minority was 'anti national' and encouragement of treachery.<sup>39</sup>

The General Secretary of the Hindu Mahasabha, Ashutosh Lahiri, made a public statement on 19 January 1948:

What we oppose is the basic policy of Mahatma Gandhi and the followers of his way of thinking that whatever might be done to

---

<sup>36</sup> Nehru to S.P. Mookerjee, 28 January 1948, *ibid.*, 1987, Vol. 5, p. 31.

<sup>37</sup> Kingsley Martin Papers, File 20/6, xerox copies in NAI, New Delhi.

<sup>38</sup> Gopal Godse, *Gandhi Vadh aur Main*, Vitasta Prakashan, Pune, 1973.

<sup>39</sup> 24 September 1944, V.S.S. Shastri Papers, NMML.

the Hindus in Pakistan, Muslim minorities in India must be treated like other minorities ... we dissociate ourselves completely from this suicidal policy.<sup>40</sup>

Gandhiji often faced hostility from Hindu communal groups enraged at what they saw as his anti-Hindu policies. In 1944, Hindu Mahasabha picketers reached Sevagram and tried to physically stop Gandhiji from proceeding to Bombay to see Jinnah. A dagger was recovered from one of them.<sup>41</sup> Narayan Apte and twenty-five youths demonstrated against Gandhi at Panchgani on 22 July 1944 and then again in Bhangi Colony, New Delhi. The burden of the protest was—do not appease Muslims with Hindu sacrifices.<sup>42</sup> There was an attempt to derail the Gandhi Special train just beyond Karjat on the Kalyan and Poona section of the railway.<sup>43</sup>

When Gandhiji stationed himself in Calcutta on Suhrawardy's request in August 1947 in order to ensure that Muslims were safe, Hindu youths demanded that he go where Hindus were being forced to flee from their homes. Another day some Mahasabha youths brought a man allegedly stabbed by a Muslim.<sup>44</sup>

Many wrote to him to the effect that Muslims were traitors or loyal to Pakistan. Gandhiji would read these out in his prayer meetings and rebut the charges. A total of 20,000 attended the prayer meeting on 2 December 1947. The mood was angry

---

<sup>40</sup> Tapan Ghosh, *The Gandhi Murder Trial*, Bombay, 1974, p. 15.

<sup>41</sup> J.C. Jain, *The Murder of Mahatma Gandhi—Prelude and Aftermath*, Chetana Ltd., Bombay, 1961, p. 45.

<sup>42</sup> Godse, *Gandhi Vadh Aur Main*, p. 112.

<sup>43</sup> Kapur Commission Report, p. 306.

<sup>44</sup> Robert Payne, *The Life and Death of Mahatma Gandhi*, London, Dutton, 1969, pp. 535, 538.

and the shouts heard were—‘expel Muslims’, ‘Marta hai to mame do’ (let him die), ‘khoon ka badla khoon se lenge’ (blood shall avenge blood).<sup>45</sup>

The conspirators were old critics of Gandhi and votaries of Hindutva. Godse’s newspaper, *Agrani*, later renamed *Hindu Rashtra*, preached retaliation against Gandhiji. It carried stories of brutalities on Hindus in Noakhali and Punjab.<sup>46</sup>

Dismay at ‘appeasement’ sometimes took a violent form. Madan Lal Pahwa (who made an unsuccessful bid to murder Gandhi on 20 January 1948) had earlier assaulted Rao Saheb Patwardhan, the Congress leader, with a knife while he was making a speech preaching Hindu–Muslim unity.<sup>47</sup> Narayan Apte, Godse’s accomplice in Gandhiji’s murder, had devised various plans which included killing Pakistani leaders, blasting a train carrying ammunition to Pakistan and blowing up the Pakistan Constituent Assembly.<sup>48</sup>

Godse explained his decision to murder Gandhiji, at the trial:

Gandhiji continued to pursue the same policy of appeasement, my blood boiled and I could not tolerate him any longer.... The only effective remedy to relieve the Hindu from Muslim atrocities was, to my mind, to remove Gandhiji from the world.<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup> 5 October 1947 and 2 January 1948 prayer meetings, Mahatma Gandhi, *Delhi Diary: Prayer Speeches from 10-9-1947 to 30-1-1948*, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1948, p. 61; Manohar Malgaonkar, *The Men who Killed Gandhi*, Macmillan, New Delhi, 1978, p. 92; D.G. Tendulkar, *Mahatma: Life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*, Vol. 8, Government of India, New Delhi, 1963, p. 234.

<sup>46</sup> Ghosh, *The Gandhi Murder Trial*, pp. 28, 39.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 104.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 87–88.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 217, 13 respectively.

Godse believed that duty to his religion demanded that he, as a son of Mother India, who was a deity to be worshipped, must put an end to the life of the so-called father of the nation.

I firmly believed that the teachings of absolute 'Ahimsa' as advocated by Gandhiji would ultimately result in emasculation of the Hindu community and thus make the community incapable of resisting the aggression or inroads of other communities, especially the Muslims.<sup>50</sup>

Godse and Apte carried to the gallows a map of united India, a saffron flag and the Gita.<sup>51</sup>

In his appeal on 2 May 1949 before the Punjab High Court at Shimla, Godse charged Gandhiji with addressing Suhrawardy as 'Shahid Sahib', with reading the Koran as part of the prayer meeting in front of a Hindu temple in Bhangi Colony, New Delhi, and so on:

The accumulating provocation of years culminating in his last pro Muslim fast, at last, goaded me to the conclusion that the existence of Gandhiji should be brought to an end immediately. When the top rank leaders of the Congress with the consent of Gandhiji divided and tore the country—which we consider as a deity of worship—my mind became full with the thoughts of direful anger. I felt that the Indian politics in the absence of Gandhiji would surely be practical, able to retaliate, and would be powerful with armed forces. I have resorted to the action I did purely for the benefit of the humanity. I do say that my shots were fired at the person whose policy and action had brought rack and ruin and destruction to lacs of Hindus.<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>50</sup> Godse's statement at the trial, Ghosh, *The Gandhi Murder Trial*, p. 29.

<sup>51</sup> Godse, *Gandhi Vadh aur Main*, p. 104.

<sup>52</sup> Gopal Das Khosla, *The Murder of the Mahatma*, Chatto and Windus, London, 1963, pp. 240–42.



Why was Gandhiji the target of Hindu communalists? Why did fear, anger, hatred, awe, centre on him above all? One answer is that he was seen as pro-Muslim. At another level, there was the fear that Gandhiji's *swaraj*, conceived as *Ram rajya*, would be the main obstacle in the achievement of Hindu *raj*. The cry for Muslim *raj* could be countered by Hindu *raj*, Pakistan with Akhand Hindusthan. But what could be the answering cry to *ram rajya*? Why would Hindus rally behind Hindu *raj* when promised the ideal society par excellence, *Ram rajya*? Hence, the supreme irony, that the votaries of Hindutva targeted the greatest living Hindu!

The Hindu Mahasabha workers publicly charged the national leaders with betraying the interests of the Hindus. They threatened that Nehru, Patel and Azad would be hanged and *Gandhi Murdabad* (Death to Gandhi) became a common slogan at Mahasabha meetings. The Delhi Police, Abstract of Intelligence, dated 18 December 1947, reported an annual rally of the RSS attended by 50,000 volunteers, where Golwalkar described the attitude of the government as 'unIndian and Satanic'. At a meeting of 2,500 workers on 8 December 1947 Golwalkar said:

The Sangh would finish Pakistan and if anybody stood in their way they will finish him also. 'No matter, whether it would be Nehru Government, or any other Government.' India, he said, was no place for them to live. They [the RSS], he said, had means whereby their opponents could be immediately silenced.<sup>53</sup>

At a meeting in Delhi on 27 January 1948 Mahant Digvijaynath, the Mahasabha leader, exhorted the gathering

---

<sup>53</sup> Kapur Commission Report, Chapter XIX, p. 66, emphasis ours.

to send Mahatma Gandhi and other anti-Hindu elements to Pakistan.<sup>54</sup> Godse's paper *Agrani* wrote:

Does the Sultan blinded with power consider the blood of the Hindu people as not worth a pie, so that this Bania who is a traitor to his community should despite the flowing of several rivers of it, devise fresh means of satisfying the blood thirst of these monstrous aggressors.<sup>55</sup>

It went on to advise him to commit suicide if he wished to retain any self-respect; if not, he should bid goodbye for ever to Indian politics.

The *Hindu Rashtra* of 9 July 1947 exhorted:

The motherland was vivisectioned, the vultures tore pieces of flesh (from her), the chastity of Hindu (lit. Arya) women was violated on the open streets, everything was lost and the big guns of the Congress eunuchs watching the rape committed on their own wives have begun to growl at you. How long can one bear this? And if this suffering is going to be a matter of habit, what greater agony can there be in transportation for life?<sup>56</sup>

Transportation for life generally being the punishment for murder, this statement was as clear a public exhortation to murder as could be.

The tone of the speeches, when not vituperative, was mocking and sarcastic. The *Hindu Rashtra*—after cautioning those who wished to sacrifice their lives for Akhand Hindusthan, urged them 'not to do so at a wrong place'. Very obviously in a reference to the national leaders it exhorted, 'Remove these obstacles.... The flood of Indian bravery will in no

---

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> *Agrani* 12 April 1947, *ibid.*, p. 69.

<sup>56</sup> Kapur Commission Report, p. 71.

time integrate the whole of India into one'. The next line was sarcastic: 'Of course, all this [will be done] by peaceful ways of elections, meetings, propaganda, etc. What more than that can we tell?'<sup>57</sup>

The same paper, significantly six days before the assassination, wrote, 'We request that the Government of India should provide more armed soldiers for Gandhiji's protection so long as he makes anti-national and terrible statements as above'.<sup>58</sup>

The Bihar Chief Minister had warned in September 1947 'that if this kind of propaganda is allowed to go on, there would be serious communal trouble in the province, as communal relations are still far from normal'.<sup>59</sup> On 28 January 1948 Nehru complained to S.P. Mookerjee that the speeches of Mahasabha leaders were 'extraordinary in their virulence.... I fear that the limit is being reached if it has not already been crossed'.<sup>60</sup> In January 1948 he wrote to Patel: 'In view of the attitude of the Hindu Mahasabha and the RSS it has become increasingly difficult to be neutral towards them'.<sup>61</sup> He told the then Bihar Chief Minister, 'that Hindu Mahasabha speeches are getting more and more intolerable and objectionable and something has to be done to meet this menace'.<sup>62</sup>

The final 'proof' of the sell out, the betrayal by the Indian government, according to the propaganda of the Hindu

---

<sup>57</sup> 7 September 1947, *ibid.*, p. 72.

<sup>58</sup> 24 January 1948, *ibid.*, p. 72.

<sup>59</sup> To Rajendra Prasad, 3 September 1947, *R.P. Papers*, 24-C/1940-7, Col. 2, S.No. 155, National Archives of India.

<sup>60</sup> *JNSW*, 2nd series, Vol. 5, 1987, p. 30.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

communal groups, was the payment of Rs 55 crore (1 Indian crore is equivalent to 10 million) to Pakistan. This was the amount the Government of India had agreed to pay as financial compensation for Pakistan's share of immovable assets in Indian territory. The predicament of the Indian government was that India and Pakistan were fighting a mini-war in Kashmir and payment of the money at this stage would have amounted to financing Pakistan in its war against India. The Pakistani end pressurised the Indian government to make immediate payment by publicly accusing it of renegeing on its commitments.

Gandhi's response was to decide to go on a fast on 13 January 1948, partly to get the Indian government to honour its commitment, and partly to shame Hindus and Muslims to unity. The Indian government, headed by Nehru and Patel, and Gandhiji's associates and disciples, was left with little room for manoeuvre and paid the stipulated sum.<sup>63</sup>

Hindu communalists could hardly have wished for a better opportunity to pillory the national leadership as anti-national. The General Secretary of the Hindu Mahasabha made a public statement (the day after Gandhiji called off his fast in response to the seven-point pledge of the Hindus of Delhi to live in amity with their Muslim neighbours) to the effect that the government's decision to pay Rs 55 crore 'roused the deepest resentment throughout the country'.<sup>64</sup>

---

<sup>63</sup> See Appendix to Mahatma Gandhi, *Mahatma Gandhi: Collected Works (MGCW)*, Vol. 90, 1984, Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, New Delhi, pp. 500–56 for the Government of India's stand before and after Gandhi's fast. Also see Pyarelal, *Last Phase*, p. 711.

<sup>64</sup> Ghosh, *The Gandhi Murder Trial*, p. 15.

For Madan Lal Pahwa the fast proved conclusively that Gandhiji was all for appeasing Muslims. He was angry with the pledge given by the Hindus of Delhi and noisily interrupted the public meeting at Sabzimandi addressed by Jawaharlal Nehru and Jayaprakash Narayan. He was removed by the police.<sup>65</sup> Godse said at his trial that Gandhiji's fast was the last straw, 'I lost nearly all my control on my feelings'.<sup>66</sup>

Gandhiji was made the target of attack. There were demonstrations outside his residence, Birla House, in New Delhi. On 20 January 1948, an abortive attempt was made to murder Gandhiji. On 30 January, the assassin made no mistake. Gandhiji was shot dead.

### Threat to the Nature of the Indian State

The actions and propaganda of Hindu communalists in the months after partition leading up to Gandhiji's murder were not a mere threat to law and order. They constituted a challenge to the very nature of the Indian state. The government communiqué dated 4 February 1948 declaring the RSS unlawful stated:

It has been found that in several parts of the country individual members of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh 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 fire arms, to create disaffection against the government and suborn the police and the military.<sup>67</sup>

---

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 137.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 217.

<sup>67</sup> Text quoted in Appendix III in Goyal, *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh*, p. 251.

Gandhiji refused to be taken in by the RSS leaders' attempts in 1947–48 to convince him that they were for protecting Hinduism and not for killing Muslims.<sup>68</sup> When a Gandhian worker present at the meeting praised the good work done by the RSS in the refugee camp at Wah in North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), Gandhiji remarked, 'But don't forget even so had Hitler's Nazis and the Fascists under Mussolini'.<sup>69</sup>

Patel pointed this out to Syama Prasad Mookerjee, 'The activities of the RSS constituted a clear threat to the existence of Government and the state'.<sup>70</sup>

Nehru already realized this. He described the RSS as not only 'an injurious and dangerous organisation' but also a 'fascist in the strictly technical sense of the word'.<sup>71</sup> His fortnightly letter to the chief ministers, dated 7 December 1947, dealt at length with the threat posed by the RSS: 'The R.S.S. is an organisation which is in the nature of a private army and which is definitely proceeding on the strictest Nazi lines'.<sup>72</sup>

He warned the people that we have learnt our lesson at a terrible cost and must do everything possible to see that the communal monster does not rear its ugly head again, 'We have to hold together and fight that terrible poison of communalism that has killed the greatest man of our age'.<sup>73</sup>

---

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 208.

<sup>69</sup> Pyarelal, *Last Phase*, p. 440, cited in Goyal, *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh*, p. 208.

<sup>70</sup> 18 July 1948, *Sardar Patel Correspondence*, Vol. 6, p. 323.

<sup>71</sup> To Kanwar Dalip Singh, 21 November 1947, *JNSW*, second series, Vol. 5, p. 330.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 461.

<sup>73</sup> Nehru's letter to Chief Ministers, 5 February 1948, *ibid.*, pp. 312–13.

## No Regret for Gandhiji's Murder

Gandhiji's murder horrified those who had sympathised with the Hindu communal way of thinking. A close associate of Gandhiji wrote:

For months the Muslim minority throughout India was safe from molestation. The R.S.S., by destroying the Mahatma, had given the country the shock it needed. Those who had been angrily criticising him now saw the tragic consequences of their own short sighted anger. They knew that he had been right.<sup>74</sup>

Not so the RSS and Hindu Mahasabha. Those who go about righting older historical wrongs,<sup>75</sup> forgetting that two wrongs do not make a right, have not expressed regret for this act, let alone doing any penance for it.<sup>76</sup> There has never been a simple statement that the RSS denounces Gandhiji's murder. They continue to defend the act by pointing to chinks in the argument of the other side.<sup>77</sup>

Godse continues to be glorified, Gandhiji vilified and Savarkar selectively remembered as a revolutionary.

A meeting was held in Bombay on 19 November 1993 in a hall in the Patil Maruti temple in Dadar, a suburb of Bombay. The programme was organised in honour of Gandhiji's assassin, Nathuram Godse. His younger brother, Gopal Godse, one of the accused in the Gandhi murder conspiracy case,

---

<sup>74</sup> Horace Alexander, *Gandhi Through Western Eyes*, New Society, Philadelphia, 1969 [1984], p. 175.

<sup>75</sup> The demolition of the Babri Masjid, they claim, was one such historical wrong.

<sup>76</sup> When it comes to other parties they are quick to demand apologies—for instance, the Congress for Operation Bluestar.

<sup>77</sup> Goyal, *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh*, p. 194.

read out Nathuram's call for the creation of Akhand Bharat (undivided India), which would include Pakistan and be a Hindu Rashtra. The audience repeated the lines, which were in Sanskrit, solemnly, as if they were taking an oath.

The speeches were full of hatred, fanaticism and glorification—hatred for Gandhiji, admiration for Nathuram Godse and communal venom of a kind that could outdo Bal Thackeray, the leader of the Shiv Sena. One of the speakers was S.G. Shevade, honoured as Dharmabhushan by the Shankaracharya of Sankeshwar. Shevade's hailing of Gandhiji's murder drew loud applause.

Gopal Godse asked the audience to donate liberally for the task of 'liberating the Sindhu river by bringing Pakistan under Hindu Rashtra'.<sup>78</sup> He explained that the Sindhu river was sacred to the Hindus because the Vedās and holy books were composed on its banks. Moreover Nathuram Godse had wished that his ashes should be immersed only in the Sindhu river—he had said in jail that all the other rivers were polluted with Gandhiji's ashes.

Gandhiji was described as the father, not of India, but of Pakistan. The day of his killing was termed a day of celebration. Gandhiji's assassination was termed as *vadh*, the killing of a demon, by all the speakers. Gandhiji was called a traitor, while Nathuram Godse was hailed as a national hero, who, by killing Gandhiji, saved India from another partition. Otherwise, another Muslim nation would have been created out of some parts of India—according to a plan of the Nizam of Hyderabad, which allegedly had Gandhiji's backing.

---

<sup>78</sup> *The Times of India*, 20 November 1993.



Gandhiji was described as a 'fanatic' and 'bloodsucker' who had the blood of innocent Hindus on his hands.<sup>79</sup> One of the speakers declared that the only way to stop the massacre of innocent Hindus was to massacre innocent Muslims.

Other leaders have expressed the same sentiment. On 16 May 1991, Bal Thackeray, said in Pune, 'We are proud of Nathuram. He saved the country from a second partition'.<sup>80</sup>

In 2002 when the BJP led coalition government was in power at the Centre a major newspaper reported that, 'Britain's Sangh Parivar celebrated India's Independence Day today by resolving to "advocate Godse's outlook and action" and challenge every anti-national Mulla-Commie'.<sup>81</sup>

To quote Noorani in an email to parivar member, Bipin Patel—a hard core Hindutva activist and believed to be close to the Deputy Prime Minister, L.K. Advani—warned that:

...every drop of blood needs to be avenged. And we are ready at any cost.... We see the merit in Gandhi's [sic] but only after all theology inspired terrorists are reduced to dead meat. Till that goal is not achieved, we advocate Godse's outlook and action. And if in the meantime a Gandhi comes to create hurdles in the way, then that Gandhi would need to be put out of the way.<sup>82</sup>

Another instance of glorification of Godse in recent years is Pradeep Dalvi's play in Marathi, sympathetically portraying Godse. Denied permission to be staged by the Congress government, it was allowed to be staged by the Shiv Sena-BJP government in Maharashtra.

---

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> *The Times of India* 18 May 1991, cited in Noorani, *Savarkar and Hindutva*, p. 10.

<sup>81</sup> *The Hindu* 16 August 2002, cited in *ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

Perhaps the climax was when Savarkar's portrait was unveiled in Parliament in 2003 at the behest of the BJP government despite widespread protest against this insult to the memory of the tallest man of our age. To add insult to injury it was placed opposite Gandhiji's portrait.

It is of course legitimate to ask why there was silence on Savarkar in the RSS and Jan Sangh-BJP camp for over forty years after Gandhiji's murder. Was it because it was politically suicidal to mention Savarkar as he was associated in the public mind with Gandhiji's murder, and now that much time had lapsed, it could be assumed that public memory was short and Savarkar could now be resurrected? Also, with the public emphasis on 'Hindutva' as part of the new aggressive phase, it was difficult to ignore the original creator of the concept. Further, for a party claiming to be 'nationalist' it is a little embarrassing to have few freedom fighters to show. Therefore, in a desperate effort to discover nationalist icons, Savarkar is sought to be cast in that mould.

A nationalist veil is drawn over Savarkar's communalism by remembering him as *Krantiveer*, the Andamans revolutionary, rather than as one of the men who has the blood of Mahatma Gandhi on his hands. That Savarkar shamed the revolutionaries by repeatedly asking for pardon in the Andamans and that he never took part in any nationalist activity after his release, is forgotten. He petitioned Sir Reginald Craddock, a visiting British official, for his release, offering to be loyal to the British Government:

If the Government in their manifold beneficence and mercy release me, I for one cannot but be the strongest advocate of constitutional progress and loyalty to the English government which is the foremost condition of that progress. *I am ready to serve the Government in*

## The Long Shadow of Gandhiji's Assassination

any capacity they like, for as my conversion is conscientious so I hope my future conduct would be. The Mighty alone can afford to be merciful and therefore where else can the prodigal son return but to the parental doors of the Government?<sup>83</sup>

What we have before us then is that, those aspects of the national past get resurrected, reconstructed and distorted which are in keeping with the communal ideology and practice. Gandhiji becomes the *deshdrohi* (traitor) and Godse the national hero. Gandhiji's *shahadat* (martyrdom) becomes *asura-vadh* (slaying of a demon) in the communal rewriting of our history. All this is done while appropriating (and in the process parodying) Gandhiji's *swadeshi* nationalism and vision of *ram rajya*!

The inversion is complete. It must be challenged.

---

<sup>83</sup> Government of India, Home (Political) February 1915, Nos. 68–160, cited in Satadru Sen, *Disciplining Punishment: Colonialism and Convict Society in the Andaman Islands*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2000, p. 271 (emphasis ours).



III

**IDEOLOGICAL  
UNDERPINNINGS  
OF THE HINDU  
COMMUNAL  
PROJECT**



**W**hat were the critical elements in the ideological make-up or discourse of the Hindu communal forces? Who were the real killers of the Mahatma? Why did promotion of Hindu interests come to mean the elimination of the 'greatest living Hindu'? A close look at the ideological framework constructed by the main early ideologues such as Savarkar and Golwalkar reveals that Godse and his associates only took it to its logical conclusion. The notion of Hindutva, of India being a land of Hindus alone, of Muslims as enemies, as anti-national and traitors, of reducing Indian nationalism to Hindu nationalism, of the Congress as anti-Hindu, of hatred of Gandhiji, are all there in the writings of the ideologues.

The communal bias is introduced in the very conception of the nation, in its name itself. For example, Savarkar defines it in the following manner:

The land which extends from the Indus to the Southern Seas is Hindusthan—the land of the Hindus and we Hindus are the Nation that owns it. If you call it an Indian nation it is merely an English synonym for the Hindu nation. To us Hindus, Hindusthan and India mean one and the same thing.<sup>1</sup>

Golwalkar echoes the same idea, '...in Hindusthan, the land of the Hindus, lives and should live the Hindu Nation....'

---

<sup>1</sup> V.D. Savarkar, Presidential Address, Akhil Bharatiya Hindu Mahasabha in Nagpur, 1938, quoted in V.D. Savarkar, *Hindu Rashtra Darshan: A Collection of the Presidential Speeches*, Laxman Ganesh Khare, Bombay, 1949, 63–64.

Hindusthan is the land of the Hindus and is the terra firma for the Hindu Nation alone to flourish upon...'.<sup>2</sup>

Thus in the very description of the country, communal notions are introduced. The use of the term 'sthan' instead of 'stan' in Hindustan as is commonly used is itself communal because it is a way of rejecting what is perceived as Persian influence on Indian languages. Also the notion that Hindus have some kind of ownership rights on this land is a very important one in Hindu communal thinking (however archaic it may sound to us today) as it is the basis for denying equal claims to members of other religious groups.

In fact, Savarkar clearly says that 'India must be a Hindu land, reserved for the Hindus'.<sup>3</sup>

He unambiguously asserts that Hindus should be 'masters in our own house, Hindusthan, the land of the Hindus'.<sup>4</sup>

Although it is sometimes argued by Hindu communal ideologues that the term 'Hindus' is meant for all those who owe allegiance to the country, and that Hindutva is merely a synonym for Bhartiyata, it is obvious that this is another example of the usual double-talk that is the staple of the RSS and its allied organisations. Savarkar, who was the original creator of the concept of Hindutva, was unambiguous about who could be a Hindu (and Hindu is equal to Indian): 'A Hindu means a person who regards this land of Bharat-Varsha from the Indus to the Seas as his Fatherland as well as his Holyland, that is the cradle land of his religion'.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> M.S. Golwalkar, *We or Our Nationhood Defined*, fourth edition, Nagpur, 1947, pp. 52–53.

<sup>3</sup> Savarkar, *Hindu Rashtra Darshan*, p. 92.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted prominently on the cover of V.D. Savarkar, *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu*, Hindu Sahitya Sadan, New Delhi, 2003 (first published in 1923).

## Ideological Underpinnings of the Hindu Communal Project

These are the essentials of Hindutva—a common nation (Rashtra) a common race (Jati) and a common civilization (Sanskriti). All these essentials could best be summed up by stating in brief that he is a Hindu to whom Sindhusthan is not only a Pitribhu but also a Punyabhū. For the first two essentials of Hindutva—nation and Jati—are clearly denoted and connoted by the word Pitribhu while the third essential of Sanskriti is pre-eminently implied by the word Punyabhū, as it is precisely Sanskriti including *Sanskaras* i.e. rites and rituals, ceremonies and sacraments, that makes a land a Holyland.<sup>6</sup>

This statement of Savarkar is of utmost importance as it automatically excludes the Muslims and the Christians from the definition as their holy lands are outside India. It also enables the inclusion of members of what could be called breakaway religions, such as Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism, and so on, in the ranks of Hindus. This definition is repeated by Golwalkar as well, thus signifying its acceptance by the RSS.

If those whose holy lands were outside India could not be part of the Hindu nation, then were they a separate nation? Were there then two nations in India? The answer to this question is given by Savarkar in 1937 in his presidential address to the Hindu Mahasabha: 'India cannot be assumed today to be an unitarian and homogenous nation, but on the contrary there are two nations in the main, Hindus and Muslims, in India'. He refers to 'centuries of a cultural, religious and national antagonism between the Hindus and the Moslems'. The title of the section in which the above statements are made is: 'As it is there are two antagonistic nations living in India side by side'. India is not a nation

---

<sup>6</sup> V.D. Savarkar, *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?* Mumbai, fifth edition, 1969, p. 116.

but it is the name of the state in which these two nations live. He even envisages in one place that they could continue to exist within 'an Indian state in which none is allowed any special weightage or representation'.<sup>7</sup>

It is important to note that Savarkar made this formulation of the two-nation theory before Jinnah. The Muslim League adopted the Pakistan demand only in 1938. Possibly as a reaction to the League's demand, Savarkar changed his formulation in his presidential address to the Hindu Mahasabha in 1938. He now vehemently dismissed the idea of two nations. In fact, any parity between Hindus and Muslims was dismissed as absurd. Hindus were not a community, they were the nation. Other religious groups (minorities) were communities. 'It is absurd to call us a community in India. The Germans are the nation in Germany and the Jews a community. The Turks are the nation in Turkey and the Arab or the Armenian minority a community. Even so the Hindus are a nation in India—in Hindusthan, and the Moslem minority a community'.<sup>8</sup>

### Attitude towards Non-Hindus

The attitude to be adopted towards non-Hindus is brought out clearly in the following statement by Golwalkar:

...The non-Hindu peoples in Hindusthan must either adopt the Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and hold in reverence Hindu religion, must entertain no idea but those of

---

<sup>7</sup> Savarkar, Presidential Address, All India Hindu Mahasabha session, Ahmedabad, 1937, in Savarkar, *Hindu Rashtra Darshan*, p. 26.

<sup>8</sup> Savarkar, Presidential Address, All India Hindu Mahasabha session, Nagpur, 1938, *ibid.*, p. 64.



glorification of the Hindu race and culture i.e. they must not only give up their attitude of intolerance and ungratefulness towards this land and its age-long traditions but must also cultivate the positive attitude of love and devotion instead—in one word they, must cease to be foreigners, 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; and let us deal, as old nations ought to and do deal, with the foreign races, who have chosen to live in our country.<sup>9</sup>

In case there was any doubt about what he meant, he gave a concrete example:

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 use in Hindusthan to learn and profit by.<sup>10</sup>

Since the BJP and the RSS are apt to say that *We or Our Nationhood Defined* does not reflect the current views of the organisation as it was withdrawn from circulation, it may be appropriate to quote Golwalkar from his *Bunch of Thoughts* (1966) which has not yet been disowned. Referring to Muslims and Christians, he says:

They are born in this land, no doubt. But are they true to its salt?...  
No. Together with the change in their faith, gone are spirit of love and devotion for

---

<sup>9</sup> Golwalkar, *We or Our*, pp. 55–56.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

*the nation*. . . . The story does not end there. They have also developed a feeling of identification with the enemies of this land. They look to some foreign lands as their holy places. . . . So we see that it is not merely a change of faith, but a change even in national identity. What else is it if not treason, to join the camp of the enemy leaving the mother nation in the lurch.<sup>11</sup>

The *Organiser*, the RSS mouthpiece, puts it even more crudely, threatening to make all those who dare to disagree as extinct as the dodos, a bird species that died out years ago:

Muslims must accept the fact that India is as much a Hindu country as Pakistan is a Muslim country or Britain is a Christian country. Any body who does not accept this way of life is an ostrich today . . . and he will be dead as dodo tomorrow.<sup>12</sup>

### Anti-Muslim Bias

Of particular significance in the context of the discussion on Gandhiji's murder is the strong anti-Muslim component of Hindu communal ideology. This anti-Muslim bias is not just an occasional, contingent feature, but an essential element of the very basic ideological structure. That is why the whole justification for the anti-Gandhi campaign culminating in the assassination was built on the argument around Gandhiji's allegedly pro-Muslim policies and activities. Gandhiji could be declared a traitor because he was protecting the Muslims, and promoting their interests, and thus was an ally of those who were basically anti-national. The founder of the RSS, Hedgewar, referred to Muslims as, 'yavana snakes reared on

---

<sup>11</sup> Golwalkar, *Bunch of Thoughts*, Bangalore, 1966, pp. 127–28.

<sup>12</sup> *Organiser*, January 1970.

the milk of non-cooperation (who) were provoking riots in the nation with their poisonous hissing'.<sup>13</sup>

The 'Moslem' community, it was declared, is so dangerous that:

We must watch it in all its actions with the greatest distrust possible.... Not only while we are engaged in our struggle for liberating India but even after India is free we must look upon them as suspicious friends and take great care to see that the northern frontiers of India are well-guarded by staunch and powerful Hindu forces to avoid the possible danger of the Indian Moslems going over to the alien Muslim nations across the Indus and betraying our Hindusthan to our Non-Hindu foes.<sup>14</sup>

Thus it is clear that even before Pakistan came into being there was this notion of a threat from 'our Non-Hindu foes', 'the alien Muslim nations across the Indus'. Even then, Indian Muslims were thought to be in danger of going over to the side of the Muslim nations to the north, that is, before India was partitioned and it could be argued that Muslim loyalty was in suspect because many of them were supporters of the Muslim League and by implication of Pakistan, and because families were found on both sides of the border.

In fact, Muslims were condemned as essentially communal in nature, just as Hindus were declared as secular by nature. 'It is useless simply to declare the Muslim League communal. That is no news. The fact is that the whole Moslem community is communal, including the Congressite Moslems', says Savarkar.<sup>15</sup> Also, it is said that Muslims cannot be loyal

---

<sup>13</sup> Hedgewar quoted in Bhishikar, Keshav: Sangh, p. 41.

<sup>14</sup> Presidential Address, All India Hindu Mahasabha session, Nagpur, 1938, in Savarkar, *Hindu Rashtra Darshan*, pp. 70-71.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 58-59.

to a non-Muslim power since Islam considers it to be an enemy state, which they should help to be conquered by a Muslim power. They are also said to especially look down upon Hindus as they are *kafirs* (infidel) and not *Kitabis* (people of the book) like the Jews and Christians.<sup>16</sup>

The notions about the extra-territorial loyalties and links of the Muslims also enabled the creation of a fear psychosis among Hindus. In fact, a major problem for the Hindu communalists was how the majority was to be made to fear the minority, because without fear communal feelings do not grow. Therefore, the recourse to allegations of extra-territorial loyalties, references to their disproportionate presence in the army and police, and the stereotype of the aggressive Muslim brute or *gunda*, who specialised in sexual aggression against Hindu women. It is amazing how Savarkar could even raise the bogey of the re-establishment of a Muslim Empire in India, as in the following incredible statement:

In the Indian Army and the armed police, they the Muslims in spite of their being in minority are already the predominant factor holding some 60% jobs, with all these factors in their favour they are fully confident ... that in case the British are over-powered in some big world war, the Moslems with the help of the non-Indian Moslem powers bordering our country may snatch out the political sovereignty of India out of the British hands and re-establish a Moslem empire here.<sup>17</sup>

Golwalkar too seeks to emphasise that it is in the nature of Islam to be intolerant and oppressive of other faiths. Alleging the persecution of Jews and Parsis by Islam, he laments,

---

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., pp. 59–60.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 62.

'The same old tale of Islamic invasion, with its attendant massacres, devastation, destruction, loot and arson....'<sup>18</sup>

In *Bunch of Thoughts* (1966), he says:

Their [Muslims'] history of the past one thousand two hundred years, full of incidents of destruction, depredation all sorts of barbaric atrocities, is there before our eyes. The present day large Muslim population in our country is one of the results of the fatal devastation that they wrought all over the land.... What has our good behaviour towards the Muslim faith and the Muslim people brought us? Nothing but desecration of our holy places and enslavement of our people.<sup>19</sup>

Savarkar also warns the Muslims that they could meet with the same treatment that Jews were getting in Germany. Alleging that the Muslim League was threatening to play the role of Sudeten Germans, he says, 'if we Hindus in India grow stronger, in time these Moslem friends of the League type will have to play the part of German-Jews instead'.<sup>20</sup>

### Anti-Congress and Anti-Gandhi Stance

It is erroneously thought that communalists are mainly interested in curbing or eliminating the rights of the 'other' communities, and in defending those of their own. In fact, communalists are interested in the other community only so far as they are impediments to their project of casting the entire society in their own image. Their ultimate objective is to make members of their own religion conform

---

<sup>18</sup> Golwalkar, *We or Our*, p. 25.

<sup>19</sup> Golwalkar, *Bunch of Thoughts*, pp. 294–95.

<sup>20</sup> Savarkar, Presidential Address, All India Hindu Mahasabha session, Nagpur, 1938, *Hindu Rashtra Darshan*, pp. 64–65.

to the communalists' notion of what is the correct path in life. Therefore, non-communal, liberal elements in their own community are as much enemies as the members of the other community, sometimes even more so. Therefore, we see Hindu communalists had as much venom in store for the Congress as they had for the Muslims. It was characterised as anti-national, anti-Hindu, pro-Muslim and non-violent, all of which had negative meanings in the Hindu communal lexicon. Witness the following statement of Savarkar:

The Indian National Congress only condemns itself as an anti-national body when it calls in the same breath the Hindu Mahasabha and the Moslem League as bodies equally communal in the reprehensible and treacherous sense of the term.<sup>21</sup>

'We Hindus made the Congress what it is today but it has now suddenly turned against us. It looks today like "a veritable anti-Hindu tower of strength"'.<sup>22</sup>

He refers to this 'anti-Hindu and anti-National policy of the Congress',<sup>23</sup> which has to be opposed by the Hindu Sangathan. Accusing the Congress for an 'anti-national pro-Moslem attitude'<sup>24</sup> he asserts that 'the Congress has compelled us to disown it'.<sup>25</sup>

Savarkar warns Hindus of serious consequences if they do not vote against the anti-Hindu and anti-national body such as the Congress:

...and if you Hindus do not do even that much and determine to commit a cultural and political and racial suicide by voting for

---

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 66.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., pp. 71–72.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 78.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 73.

## Ideological Underpinnings of the Hindu Communal Project

an anti-Hindu and anti-National organization as the Congress has ‘‘grown today into one—not even Brahmadeva can save you.’’<sup>26</sup>

Golwalkar was no less abusive. He referred to Congress leaders as traitors and enemies, ‘Strange, very strange that traitors should sit enthroned as national heroes and patriots heaped with ignominy’.<sup>27</sup>

‘Those who do not glorify the Hindu race and nation are “traitors and enemies to the National Cause” or “mere simpletons, misguided, ignorant fools”.’<sup>28</sup>

In addition to the other abuse heaped on the Congress, Gandhiji was specially singled out for attack for his advocacy of non-violence. In Savarkar’s view, absolute non-violence (as advocated by Gandhi) was not only sinful but also immoral. It was because of the influence of Buddhism, and its belief in non-violence, he said, that India was devastated by barbarians like the Huns and Scythians.<sup>29</sup> Golwalkar was to critique Gandhian non-violence very provocatively saying that it led Congress leaders to ask the Hindu:

To ignore, even submit meekly to the vandalism and atrocities of Muslims. In effect he was told ‘Forget all that the Muslims have done in the past and all that they are now doing to you. If your worshipping in the temple, your taking out gods in procession in the streets irritate the Muslims, then don’t do it. If they carry away your wives and daughters, let them. Do not obstruct them. That would be violence’.<sup>30</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 82.

<sup>27</sup> Golwalkar, *We or Our*, p. 6.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>29</sup> Keer, *Savarkar and his Times*, pp. 274–75.

<sup>30</sup> Golwalkar, *Bunch of Thoughts*, p. 150.

In the same speech Golwalkar expresses his extreme aversion to Gandhiji's insistence on Hindu-Muslim unity, "Those who declared "No *swaraj* without Hindu-Muslim unity" have thus perpetrated the greatest treason on our society. They have committed the most heinous sin of killing the life-spirit of a great and ancient people'.<sup>31</sup>

No wonder this treacherous sinner who did not even care for the honour of Hindu wives and daughters had to be eliminated.

### Hindu Communal (re)Definition of Indian Nationalism and their Own Loyalism

It is very necessary to note that the Hindu communal ideologues took great pains to redefine Indian nationalism. They were not merely asserting the rights of the Hindus as a community, they questioned the freedom struggle's definition of nationalism by asserting that Indian nationalism is really Hindu nationalism, that Muslims cannot be Indian nationalists, that Hindu nationalism is an age-old phenomenon, that the Congress has an erroneous notion of territorial nationalism, and so on. They accuse the Congress of pseudo-nationalism (a precursor to pseudo-secularism). They point out the weaknesses of territorial nationalism, and argue that it has failed in Europe. They assert that the Congress was not a national organisation but was formed as a safety-valve and, except for the Extremist phase, played that role. The Moderates or early nationalists and Gandhiji and his colleagues

---

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 152.



are not accepted as nationalists by Hindu communalists. In Golwalkar's long list of illustrious Indians, Gandhi, Nehru and Patel, for example, find no place.<sup>32</sup> The Congress is criticised for believing that 'we are a nation in the making and had never enjoyed National life before'.<sup>33</sup>

It is very clear that what irked Hindu communal ideologues the most was the refusal of the Congress to treat the Muslims as enemies and second-class citizens. The Congress leaders were accused of committing the sin of 'hugging to our bosom our most inveterate enemies and thus endangering our very existence'.<sup>34</sup> The reference was very obviously to Muslims. To be a nationalist, you had to be anti-Muslim—such was the belief. Golwalkar, at least, remembered to formally include the British as enemies: 'As a matter of fact we have in Hindusthan a triangular fight. We, Hindus are at war at once with the Moslems on the one hand and British on the other'.<sup>35</sup> But Savarkar actually justified non-support of the Hindu Mahasabha and the RSS to the Quit India Movement in 1942 on the grounds that it will lead to division of India and that energies must be preserved for the battle for the integrity of India (against Muslims). What is most striking is that, in fact, neither in Golwalkar's nor in Savarkar's writings (after his release from jail) is there any discussion of British Imperialism or the struggle against it. The only references are to cultural suppression, denationalisation, cultural nationalism and so on.

---

<sup>32</sup> Golwalkar, *We or Our*, pp. 49–50.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 72.

<sup>34</sup> Golwalkar, *We or Our*, p. 73.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

In his presidential address to the Hindu Mahasabha in 1938, Savarkar ended with the following passage. He spoke of heralding an,

Independent and strong and mighty Hindu nation which is but tantamount with a mighty Indian Nation based on perfect equality of citizenship for all loyal and faithful Indian citizens irrespective of race and religion from Indus to the Seas.... Raise the standard of a Hindu Nation! See to it that India must remain a Hindusthan for ever; never a Pakisthan!—an Anglisthan never never!! And let all India resound with—Hindu Dharma ki Jay! Hindu Rashtra ki Jay!! Vande Mataram!!!<sup>36</sup>

It is indeed ironic that the political forces who lay claim to being the most ardent nationalists today played no role at all when the actual struggle for India's freedom was being fought. The RSS as an organisation did not participate in any of the major battles for freedom from colonial rule. The RSS was founded in 1925, and apart from the Simon Commission Boycott in 1928, at least two major movements, the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930–34 and the Quit India Movement of 1942 were launched by the Congress after that date. In none of these did the RSS play any part. Hedgewar did go to jail in his individual capacity in 1930, but he kept the organisation and its members away from the movement. In 1942, along with the Hindu Mahasabha, the RSS stayed out of the movement under Golwalkar's leadership, and the more restless young cadre were told to keep their energies for the real battle that was about to come (presumably against the Muslims). The government was very clear that it had

---

<sup>36</sup> Savarkar, *Hindu Rashtra Darshan*, pp. 82–83.

nothing to fear from the RSS. A Home Department note on the RSS reported that, 'At meetings of the Sangh during the Congress disturbances (1942), speakers urged the members to keep aloof from the Congress movement and these instructions were generally observed'.<sup>37</sup>

H.V.R. Iyengar, Home Secretary, Bombay, pointed out on 16 February 1944 that 'the Sangh has scrupulously kept itself within the law and, in particular, has refrained from taking any part in the disturbances that broke out in August 1942'.<sup>38</sup> The only 'danger' could be from their communal activities, as was pointed out by the governments of the Punjab and Central Provinces.<sup>39</sup>

Nor did the RSS organise any struggles on its own against the British. Neither did they indulge, like the revolutionary terrorists, in any 'action' such as assassination of British officials, or, like the Ghadar Revolutionaries, in fomenting disaffection in the Army and among immigrants.

Golwalkar in fact went so far as to say that anti-British nationalism was reactionary:

The theories of territorial nationalism and of common danger, which formed the basis for our common 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.<sup>40</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup> Home Department (Political) Proceedings, File 28/8/42-Poll(I).

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., File 28/3/43-Poll(I).

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Golwalkar, *Bunch of Thoughts*, pp. 152-53.

The Hindu Mahasabha also became increasingly loyalist in the 1930s and 1940s. Though the loyalist tendency was there earlier, initially some of its leaders participated in Congress-led movements. But from the mid-1930s they joined the Muslim League in competing for the crumbs thrown from the Imperial table. The outbreak of the Second World War brought the differences with the nationalist forces out into the open. While the Congress provincial ministries resigned in protest against the British Government's decision to make India a party to the war without her consent, Hindu Mahasabha leaders offered cooperation to the British, and advocated that Indians participate in the war-effort and join the Army. Savarkar, as President of the Mahasabha, appealed to Hindus 'to participate in all war-efforts of the British Government' and not to listen to 'some fools' who 'condemn' this policy 'as cooperation with Imperialism'.<sup>41</sup> In private, Savarkar told the Viceroy in October 1939 that the Hindus and the British should be friends and made an offer that the Hindu Mahasabha would replace the Congress if the Congress ministries resigned from office.<sup>42</sup> When the Quit India Movement was going on in 1942, S.P. Mookerjee of the Hindu Mahasabha was a minister in the Fazlul Haq ministry in Bengal. It is another matter that all this loyalism could not get them electoral success and they suffered a rout in the 1946 elections! It was perhaps this total political marginalisation, this rejection by the Indian people, including Hindus that led to acts of desperation and cowardice such as the one embodied in the assassination of the Mahatma.

---

<sup>41</sup> Savarkar, *Hindu Rashtra Darshan*, pp. 203ff.

<sup>42</sup> Linlithgow, Viceroy, to Zetland, Secretary of State, 7 October 1939, *Zetland Papers*, Vol. 18, Reel no. 6.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alavi, Hamza. 2002. 'Social Forces and Ideology in the Making of Pakistan', *Economic and Political Weekly (EPW)*, 37(51), 21 December: 5119–24.
- Alexander, Horace. 1969 [1984]. *Gandhi Through Western Eyes*. Philadelphia: New Society.
- Andersen, Walter. 1972. 'The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh' I to IV, *EPW*, 7(11–14), 11, 18, 25 March and 1 April.
- Andersen, Walter and Shridhar Damle. 1987. *The Brotherhood in Saffron: The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and Hindu Revivalism*. New Delhi: Vistaar.
- Azad, Maulana Abul Kalam. 1959. *India Wins Freedom: An Autobiographical Narrative*. Bombay: Orient Longman.
- Bacchetta, Paola. 2004. *Gender in the Hindu Nation: RSS Women as Ideologues*. New Delhi: Women Unlimited.
- Banerjee, Partha. 1998. *In the Belly of the Beast: The Hindu Supremacist RSS and BJP of India—An Insider's Story*. Delhi: Ajanta.
- Barrier, Norman G. (ed.). 1976. *Roots of Communal Politics* (includes the Report of the Kanpur Riots Enquiry Committee, 1931). New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann.
- (ed.). 1981. *The Census in British India: New Perspective*. New Delhi: Manohar.
- Basu, Tapan, Pradip Datta, Sumit Sarkar, Tanika Sarkar and Sambuddha Sen. 1993. *Khaki Shorts and Saffron Flags: A Critique of the Hindu Right*. Delhi: Orient Longman.
- Batabyal, Rakesh. 2005. *Communalism in Bengal: From Famine to Noakhali, 1943–47*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Bathval, Harishchandra. 1998. *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh—Ek Parichay*. New Delhi: Suruchi Prakashan.
- Baxter, Craig. 1969. *The Jana Sangh: A Biography of an Indian Political Party*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Bhatt, Chetan. 2001. *Hindu Nationalism: Origins, Ideologies and Modern Myths*. Oxford: Berg Publishers.

## RSS, School Texts and the Murder of Mahatma Gandhi

- Bhishikar, C.P. 1979. *Keshav: Sangh Nirmata*. New Delhi: Suruchi Sahitya Prakashan.
- Brass, Paul R. 2003. *The Production of Hindu-Muslim Violence in Contemporary India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Casolari, Marzia. 2000. 'Hindutva's Foreign Tie Up in the 1930s: Archival Evidence', *EPW*, 22 January: 218–28.
- Chakrabarty, Bidyut, (ed.). 2003. *Communal Identity in India: Its Construction and Articulation in the Twentieth Century*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Chand, R.B. Lal. 1938. *Self-Abnegation in Politics*. Lahore: Central Yuvak Sabha.
- Chandra, Bipan. 1984. *Communalism in Modern India*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House.
- . 1994. *Ideology and Politics in Modern India*. New Delhi: Har-Anand.
- . 2004. 'Gandhiji, Secularism and Communalism', *Social Scientist*, 32(1–2).
- Chandra, Bipan, Mridula Mukherjee and Aditya Mukherjee. 2008. *India Since Independence 1947–2000*. Delhi: Penguin.
- Chandra, Bipan, Mridula Mukherjee, Aditya Mukherjee, K.N. Panikkar and Sucheta Mahajan. 1988. *India's Struggle for Independence, 1857–1947*. New Delhi: Viking.
- . 2004. *Communalism: A Primer*. New Delhi: Anamika Publishers.
- Chatterjee, Margaret. 1983. *Gandhi's Religious Thought*. London: Macmillan.
- Chatterji, Joya. 1995. *Bengal Divided—Hindu Communalism and Partition, 1932–47*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chatterjee, N.C. 1944. *Hindu Politics—The Message of the Mahasabha: Collection of Speeches and Addresses by N.C. Chatterjee*. Calcutta: Ramesh Chandra Banerjee.
- Chaudhri, Sandhya. 1984. *Gandhi and the Partition of India*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers.
- Cleghorn, Bruce E. 1977. 'Religion and Politics: The Leadership of the All India Hindu Mahasabha Punjab and Maharashtra, 1920–1939', in B.N. Pandey (ed.), *Leadership in South Asia*, pp. 395–425. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House.
- Curran, J. 1951. *Militant Hinduism in Indian Politics: A Study of the RSS*. New York: Institute of Pacific Relations.
- Das, Durga (ed.). 1973. *Sardar Patel's Correspondence, 1945–50*, Vol. VI. Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House.

## Bibliography

- Das, Suranjan. 1991. *Communal Riots in Bengal, 1905–1947*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Das, Suranjan and Sekhar Bandyopadhyay (eds). 1993. *Caste and Communal Politics in South Asia*. Calcutta: K.P. Bagchi & Company.
- Deshmukh, Nana. 1979. *RSS: Victim of Slander—A Multidimensional Study of RSS, Jana Sangh, Janata Party and the Present Political Crisis*. New Delhi: Vision Books.
- Deshpande, B.V. and S.R. Ramaswamy (edited by H.V. Sheshadri). 1981. *Dr Hedgewar: The Epoch-Maker*. Bangalore: Sahitya Sindhu.
- Dharmaveer Dr B.S. Moonje Commemoration Volume, Birth Centenary Celebration Committee, Nagpur, 1972.
- Dhooria, Ram Lall. 1970. *I was a Swayamsevak—An Insider View of the RSS*. New Delhi: Sampradayikta Virodhi Committee.
- Erdman, Howard Lloyd. 1967. *The Swatantra Party and Indian Conservatism*. London: Cambridge University Press.
- Fagg, Henry. 2002. *Back to the Sources: A Study of Gandhi's Basic Education*. New Delhi: National Book Trust.
- Freitag, Sandra B. 1980. 'Sacred Symbol as Mobilising Agency: The North Indian Search for a "Hindu" Community', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 22(4): 597–625.
- . 1990. *Collective Action and Community: Public Arenas and the Emergence of Communalism in North India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Gandhi, Mahatma. 1984. *Mahatma Gandhi: Collected Works (MGCW)*. New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India.
- Gandhi, M.K. 1948. *Delhi Diary: Prayer Speeches from 10-9-1947 to 30-1-1948*. Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House.
- . (ed). 1949. *Communal Unity*. Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House.
- . 1992. *Hindu Dharma Kya Hai?* New Delhi: National Book Trust.
- Gandhi, Rajmohan. 1995. *The Good Boatman: A Portrait of Gandhi*. New Delhi: Viking.
- Gandhi, Tushar. 2007. *Let's Kill Gandhi: A Chronicle of His Last Days, The Conspiracy, Murder, Investigation and Trial*. New Delhi: Rupa.
- Gangadharan, K.K. 1970. *Sociology of Revivalism: A Study of Indianization, Sanskritization, and Golwalkarism*. New Delhi: Kalamkar Prakashan.

- Ghosh, Partha S. 1999. *BJP and the Evolution of Hindu Nationalism: From Periphery to Centre*. New Delhi: Manohar.
- Ghosh, Tapan. 1974. *The Gandhi Murder Trial*. Bombay: Asia Publishing House.
- Godse, Gopal. 1973. *Gandhi Vadh Aur Main*. Pune: Vitasta Prakashan.
- . 1989. *Gandhi's Murder and After* (translated by S.T. Godbole). Delhi: Surya Prakashan.
- Golwalkar, M.S. 1947. *We or Our Nationhood Defined*. Fourth Edition. Nagpur: Bharat Publications.
- . 1966. *Bunch of Thoughts*. Bangalore: Vikram Prakashan.
- . 1974. *Spotlights*. Bangalore: Sahitya Sindhu.
- . 1990. *Kalpavraksh*. New Delhi: Janki Prakashan.
- Golwalkar, M.S. and K.B. Hegdewar. 1980. *Antim Sandesh*. Lucknow: Lokhit Prakashan.
- Gopal, Ram. 1967. *How India Struggled for Freedom*. Bombay: Book Centre.
- Gopal, S. (ed.). 1986. *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru (JNSW)*, second series, Vol. 4, New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund.
- . 1991. *Anatomy of a Confrontation: The Babri Masjid–Ramjanmabhumi Issue*. New Delhi: Viking, Penguin.
- Gopal, S., et al. 1990. 'The Political Abuse of History: Babri Masjid-Rama Janmabhumi Dispute', *Social Scientist*, 18(1–2): 76–81.
- Gordan, Richard. 1975. 'The Hindu Mahasabha and the Indian National Congress, 1915 to 1926', in *Modern Asian Studies*, 9(2): 145–203.
- Government of Bihar. 1947. 'Political Department (Special), File No. 113(V), (Confidential)'. Patna: Bihar State Archives.
- Goyal, Desh Raj. 2000. *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* (second revised edition 2000, first edition 1979). New Delhi: Radha Krishna Prakashan.
- Graham, Bruce D. 1968. 'Shyama Prasad Mookerjee and the Communalist Alternative', in D.A. Low (ed.), *Soundings in Modern South Asian History*, pp. 330–74. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
- . 1990. *Hindu Nationalism and Indian Politics: The Origins and Development of the Bharatiya Jan Sangh*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gupta, Dipankar. 1991. 'Communalism and Fundamentalism: Some Notes on the Nature of Ethnic Politics in India', *EPW*, Annual Number, 12 March, 26(11&12): 573–82.



## Bibliography

- Habib, Irfan, Bipan Chandra, Ravinder Kumar, Kumkum Sangari and Sukumar Muralidharan (eds). 2004. *Towards a Secular and Modern India—Gandhi Reconsidered*. New Delhi: SAHMAT.
- Habib, Irfan, Suvira Jaiswal and Aditya Mukherjee. 2003. *History in the New NCERT Textbooks: A Report and an Index of Errors*. Kolkata: Executive Committee, Indian History Congress.
- Hansen, Thomas Blom. 1999. *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Hartung, Jan-Peter, Gillian Hawkes and Anuradha Bhattacharjee. 2004. *Ayodhya 1992–2003: The Assertion of Cultural & Religious Hegemony*. New Delhi: Media House.
- Hartung, Jan-Peter and Helmut Reifeld (eds). 2005. *Islamic Education, Diversity and National Identity: Dini Madaris in India Post 9/11*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Hasan, Mushirul. 1991. *Nationalism and Communal Politics in India 1885–1930*. New Delhi: Manohar.
- (ed.). 1993. *India's Partition: Process, Strategy and Mobilisation*. New Delhi: Oxford Univeristy Press.
- (ed.). 2000. *Inventing Boundaries: Gender, Politics and the Partition of India*. New Delhi: Oxford Univeristy Press.
- Hedgewar, K.B. 1967. *Navyug Ka Shankhanad*. New Delhi: Suruchi Prakashan.
- . 1969. *Hamara Adarsh*. 3rd edition. Nagpur: RSS.
- . 1985. *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh*. Lucknow: Lokhit Prakashan.
- Inamdar, P.L. 1979. *The Story of the Red Fort Trial, 1948–49*. Bombay: Popular Prakashan.
- Islam, Shamsul. 2000. *Freedom Movement and the RSS: Story of Betrayal*. 4th edition. New Delhi: Joshi Adhikari Institute of Social Studies.
- . 2002. *Undoing India the RSS Way*. Revised edition. New Delhi: Media House.
- . 2004. *Savarkar—Myths and Facts*. New Delhi: Media House.
- . 2006. *Golwalkar's We or Our Nationhood Defined—A Critique* (with the full text of the book). New Delhi: Pharos Media and Publishing.
- Jaffrelot, Christopher. 1996. *The Hindu Nationalist Movement and Indian Politics 1925 to the 1990s: Strategy of Identity Building, Implantation and Mobilisation with Special Reference to Central India*. London: Hurst & Company (first published as *Les nationalistes hindoues*, Paris, 1993).

- Jaffrelot, Christopher (ed.). 2005. *The Sangh Parivar: A Reader*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Jain, J.C. 1961. *The Murder of Mahatma Gandhi—Prelude and Aftermath*. Bombay: Chetana Ltd.
- Jalal, Ayesha. 1985. *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jayakar, M.R. 1959. *The Story of My Life*. Bombay: Asia Publishing House.
- Jhangiani, M.A. 1967. *Jana Sangh and Swatantra: A Profile of the Rightist Parties in India*. Bombay: Manaktalas.
- Jones, Kenneth W. 1989. 'Politicised Hinduism; The Ideology and the Program of the Hindu Mahasabha', in Robert D. Baird (ed.), *Religion in Modern India*, pp. 447–80. New Delhi: Manohar.
- Jordens, J.T.F. 1981. *Swami Shradhdhanand: His Life and Causes*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Joshi, Subadhra. 1966. *RSS: Is It a Cultural Organisation?* New Delhi: Sampradayikta Virodhi Committee.
- (ed.). 1967. *RSS—A Danger to Democracy*. New Delhi: Sampradayikta Virodhi Committee.
- Kanungo, Pralay. 2002. *RSS's Tryst with Politics: From Hedgewar to Sudarshan*. New Delhi: Manohar.
- Kapur, Jeevan Lal. 1970. *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Conspiracy to Murder Mahatma Gandhi*. New Delhi: Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.
- Katju, Manjari 2003. *Vishwa Hindu Parishad and Indian Politics*. Hyderabad: Orient Longman.
- Keer, Dhananjay. 1950. *Savarkar and His Times*. Bombay: A.V. Keer.
- Khosla, Gopal Das. 1963. *The Murder of the Mahatma and Other Essays from a Judge's Notebook*. London: Chatto and Windus.
- . 1989. *Stern Reckoning—A Survey of the Events Leading Up to and Following the Partition of India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Kohli, R. 1993. *Political Ideas of M.S. Golwalkar*. New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications.
- Kumar, Krishna. 1990a. *Quest for Self-Identity: Cultural Consciousness and Education in the Hindi Region 1880–1950*. Occasional Papers, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.
- . 1990b. 'Hindu Revivalism and Education in North-Central India', *Social Scientist*, 18(10): 4–26.

## Bibliography

- Ludden, David (ed.). 1996. *Making India Hindu: Religion, Community, and the Politics of Democracy in India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Madhok, Balraj. 1954. *Dr Shyama Prasad Mookerjee: A Biography*. Delhi: Deepak Prakashan.
- . 1986. *RSS and Politics*. New Delhi: Hindu World Publications.
- Mahajan, Sucheta. 1996. 'Hindu Communal Pressures on the Congress in 1947: The Secular Stance of Congress Ministries', *Journal of Historical Studies*, 2, December.
- . 2000a. *Independence and Partition: The Erosion of Colonial Power in India*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- . 2000b. 'Gandhi's Swaraj or Hindu Raj? Making of Post-Independence Polity', in V. Damodaran and Maya Unnithan-Kumar (eds), *Postcolonial India: History, Politics and Culture*, pp. 55–72. Manohar: New Delhi.
- . 2006. 'Communalising the Tribal in the Name of Mainstreaming the Marginal: Adivasis in the Hindu Rashtra', in *Social Science Probing*s, 18(2): 105–20.
- Malgaonkar, Manohar. 1978. *The Men Who Killed Gandhi*. Delhi: Macmillan.
- Malkani, K.R. 1980a. *The RSS Story*. New Delhi: Impex India.
- . 1980b. *How Others Look at RSS*. New Delhi: Deen Dayal Research Institute.
- Mathur, Sobhag. 1996. *Hindu Revivalism and the Indian National Movement: A Documentary Study of the Ideals and Policies of the Hindu Mahasabha, 1939–45*. Jodhpur: Kusumanjali.
- Misra, Salil. 2001. *A Narrative of Communal Politics: Uttar Pradesh 1937–39*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Mookerjee, Shyama Prasad. 1993. *Leaves from a Diary*. Calcutta: Oxford University Press.
- Moore, R.J. 1974. *Crisis of Indian Unity, 1917–1940*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Mukherjee, Mridula and Aditya Mukherjee. (eds). 2002. *Communalisation of Education: The History Textbooks Controversy*. Delhi: Delhi Historians' Group.
- Muralidharan, Sukumar. 1994. 'Patriotism without People: Milestone in the Evolution of the Hindu Nationalist Ideology', *Social Scientist*, 22(5–6), May–June.
- Nanda, B.R. 1998. *Making of a Nation: India's Road to Independence*. New Delhi: HarperCollins.

- Nandy, Ashis. 1980. 'Final Encounter: The Politics of the Assassination of Gandhi', in *At the Edge of Psychology—Essays on Politics and Culture*, pp. 70–98. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Narayan, Badri. 2006. 'Memories, Saffronising Statues and Constructing Communal Politics', *EPW*, 11 November: 4695–701.
- National Book Trust (NBT). 2005. *The Communal Problem: Report of the Kanpur Riots Enquiry Committee*. New Delhi: NBT. (First published by Sunderlal, Secretary, Kanpur Riots Enquiry Committee in 1933.)
- Nehru, Jawaharlal. 1948. Public speech at Coimbatore on 3 June 1948. *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru (JNSW)*, Second Series, 6:25.
- Noorani, A.G. 2000. *The RSS and the BJP: A Division of Labour*. New Delhi: LeftWord Books.
- . 2002. *Savarkar and Hindutva: Godse Connection*. New Delhi: LeftWord Books.
- Nussbaum, Martha C. 2007. *The Clash Within: Democracy, Religious Violence, and India's Future*. Ranikhet: Permanent Black.
- Page, David. 1982. *Prelude to Partition*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Palkar, Narayan Hari. 1969. *Dr K.B. Hegdewar*. Pune.
- Pandit, H.N. 1975. *Climate for Political Murder*. New Delhi: Pageant.
- Panikkar, K.N. (ed.). 1991. *Communalism in India: History, Politics and Culture*. New Delhi: Manohar.
- . 1993. 'Culture and Communalism', *Social Scientist*, 21(3–4): 24–31.
- Parmanand, Bhai. 1936. *Hindu Sangathan*. Lahore: The Hindu Yuvak Sabha.
- Payne, Robert. 1969. *The Life and Death of Mahatma Gandhi*. London: Dutton.
- Prakash, Indra. 1938. *Review of the History and Work of the Hindu Mahasabha and the Hindu Sangathan Movement*. New Delhi: Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabha.
- . 1966. *Hindu Mahasabha: Its Contribution to India's Politics*. New Delhi: Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabha.
- . 1977. *They Count Their Gains—We Calculate Our Losses*. New Delhi: Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabha.
- Prasad, Beni. 1941. *The Hindu-Muslim Questions*. Allahabad: Indian Press.
- Prasad, Rajendra. 1946. *India Divided*. Bombay: Hind Kitab.
- . 1955. *At the Feet of Mahatma Gandhi*. New York: Philosophical Library.

## Bibliography

- Puniyani, Ram. 2000. *The Other Cheek—Minorities Under Threat*. New Delhi: Media House.
- . 2001. *Communal Politics—An Illustrated Primer*. New Delhi: SAHMAT.
- . 2002. *Fascism of Sangh Parivar*. New Delhi: Media House.
- . 2003a. *The Second Assassination of Gandhi*. New Delhi: Media House.
- . 2003b. *Communal Politics: Facts versus Myths*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- (ed.). 2005. *Religion, Power and Violence: Expression of Politics in Contemporary Times*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- . 2006. *Contours of Hindu Rashtra: Hindutva, Sangh Parivar and Contemporary Politics*. Delhi: Kalpaz.
- Puri, Geeta. 2005. *Hindutva Politics in India—Genesis, Political Strategies and Growth of Bharatiya Janta Party*. New Delhi: UBS Publishers.
- Pyarelal. 1958. *Mahatma Gandhi: The Last Phase, Volume II*. Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House.
- Rajagopal, Arvind. 1994. 'Interview with Gopal Godse'. *Frontline*, 28 January.
- Ram, P.R. (ed.). 1998. *Secular Challenge to Communal Politics Anthology on Communal Problem*. Mumbai: Vikas Adhyayan Kendra.
- Rao, U.R. (ed.). 1963. *The Way to Communal Harmony*. Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House.
- SAHMAT (Safdar Hashmi Memorial Trust). 2001. *Against Communalisation of Education*. New Delhi: SAHMAT.
- . 2002a. *Saffronised and Substantiated: A Critique of the New NCERT Textbooks*. New Delhi: SAHMAT.
- . 2002b. *Communalisation of Education: The Assault on History Press Reportage, Editorials, and Articles*. New Delhi: SAHMAT.
- . 2003. *Plagiarised and Communalised: More on the NCERT Text Books Articles, Editorials, Reports*. New Delhi: SAHMAT.
- . 2004. *The Savarkar Controversy*. New Delhi: SAHMAT.
- . 2005. *Debating Education: A Critical Appraisal of National Curriculum Framework*. New Delhi: SAHMAT.
- Sarkar, Sumit. 1993. 'Fascism of the Sangh Parivar', *EPW*, 28(5): 163–67.
- Savarkar, V.D. 1949. *Hindu Rashtra Darshan: A Collection of the Presidential Speeches*. Bombay: Laxman Ganesh Khare.

- Savarkar, V.D. 1969. *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?* Fifth Edition. Bombay: Veer Savarkar Prakashan. (First published in 1923 and another edition was published by Hindu Sahitya Sadan, New Delhi, 2003.
- Sen, Amartya. 2005. *The Argumentative Indian: Writings on Indian History, Culture and Identity*. London: Allen Lane, Penguin.
- Sen, Satadru. 2000. *Disciplining Punishment: Colonialism and Convict Society in the Andaman Islands*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Sharma, Jyotirmaya. 2003. *Hindutva: Exploring the Idea of Hindu Nationalism*. New Delhi: Penguin.
- . 2007. *Terrifying Vision: M.S. Golwalkar, the RSS and India*. New Delhi: Penguin.
- Sharma, Suresh. 1995. 'Savarkar's Quest for a Modern Hindu Consolidation', *Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences*, Winter, 2(2): 189–216.
- Sheshadri, H.V. 1988. *RSS: A Vision in Action*. Bangalore: Jagarana Prakashan.
- Shraddhanand, Swami. 1926. *Hindu Sangathan: Saviour of the Dying Race*. Delhi: Arjun Press.
- Singh, Anita Inder. 1987. *The Origins of the Partition of India, 1936–1947*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Smith, Donald Eugene (ed.). 1966. *South Asian Politics and Religion*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Smith, Wilfred Cantwell. 1946. *Modern Islam in India: A Social Analysis*. London: Victor Gollancz.
- Sundar, Nandini. 2004. 'Teaching to Hate RSS' Pedagogical Programme', *EPW*, 39(16): 1605–12.
- Tendulkar, D.G. 1963. *Mahatma: Life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*, Vol. 8, New Delhi: Government of India.
- Thapar, Romila. 1989. 'Imagined Religious Communities? Ancient History and the Modern Search for a Hindu Identity', *Modern Asian Studies*, 23(2).
- Thapar, Romila, H. Mukhia and B. Chandra. 1969. *Communalism and the Writing of India History*. Delhi: People's Publishing House.
- Thengadi, D.B. 1988. *Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya—Ideology and Perception*. New Delhi: Suruchi Prakashan.
- Thursby, G.R. 1975. *Hindu-Muslim Relations in British India: A Study of Controversy, Conflict and Communal Movements in Northern India 1923–1928*. Leiden: E.J. Brill.

## Bibliography

- Tuteja, K.L. 1998. 'Hindu Consciousness, Communalism and the Congress in Pre-partition Punjab', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, 50th session, Bangalore, 1997*, pp. 425–73.
- Upadhyaya, Deendayal. 1968. *Integral Humanism*. Delhi: Navchetan Press.
- Van der Veer, Peter. 1994. *Religious Nationalism: Hindu and Muslims in India*. Berkley: University of California Press.
- Vanaik, Achin. 1994. *Situating the Threat of Hindu Nationalism: Problems with the Fascist Paradigm*, Centre for Contemporary Studies. New Delhi: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.
- Wilkinson, Steven I. 2005. *Religious Politics and Communal Violence*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Zavos, John. 2000. *The Emergence of Hindu Nationalism in India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Zelliot, E. and M. Berntsen (eds). 1988. *The Experience of Hinduism*. New York. State University of New York Press.

# INDEX

- Akhand Hindusthan Leaders Conference, 61
- Apte, Narayan Rao, 49, 51, 62-64
- Batra, Dina Nath, 33, 34
- Bharatiya Jan Sangh, 49
- BJP government and RSS, 12, 20, 31, 37, 47, 74, 83 (*See also* Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh [RSS])
- Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh [RSS]
- Godhra human carnage in Gujarat, 29
- and Murlī Manohar Joshi's role in destruction of academic edifice, 32
- support to growth of Vidya Bharati schools, 28
- Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE), 33
- Chandra, Bipan, 13, 20, 32
- Chandra, Satish, 33
- Civil Disobedience Movement (1930-34), 92
- communalism (*See also* education system, RSS impact on; Hindu communal ideology)
- Hindu communalism, 58
- impact on education system, 35-36
- role in division of country, 47
- and Savarkar's communalism, 74
- as threat to society, 12
- education system, RSS impact on (*See also* Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh [RSS])
- comments about Islam and Muslims, 23, 27, 30, 31
- communalisation of education system, 34-36
- Indian history in NCERT books, 40-42
- Gaurav Gatha* extracts, 1992, 22
- Gujarat state social studies text, 29-31
- Itihas Gaa Raha Hai* extracts, 1991, 23-24
- K.S. Sudarshan's role in, 36
- NCERT report, on impact and content of books, 24, 28
- reports on Vidya Bharati publications, 24-28
- revision of NCERT history books, 31, 33, 34
- RSS/Hindu communal effort in distortion of history, 39-42
- RSS ideological agenda in education, 32



- sections in books on RSS and its glory, 27
- statements on followers of Christianity and missionaries, 27, 31, 34
- 'Talibanisation' of education, 39
- Gandhiji (*See also* Godse, Nathuram)
- assassination, 47, 48, 63
- communalised atmosphere and murder of, 58-59
- Gandhi-Jinnah talks and opposition by Savarkar, 61
- Hindu Mahasabha and RSS role in, 50, 52-55, 65-68
- hostility faced from Hindu communal groups by, 62, 63
- Nehru's thoughts about communalism and, 47-48
- role of Sangh in, 11
- and Savarkar role in, 50, 51, 56-58
- threat to nature of Indian state, 69-70
- conspiracy to murder, 49-58
- Madan Lal Pahwa and unsuccessful bid to murder, 63
- Morarji Desai desposition, 53
- Narayan Rao Apte, Godse's accomplice in Gandhi's murder, 48-49, 63
- Nathuram Godse responsible for, explanation of decision for killing, 63-69
- glorification of Godse and revilement of, 71-75
- Kapur Commission, 50
- disclosure of Godse links with RSS and Hindu Mahasabha, 50-54
- payment to Pakistan and fasting by Gandhiji, 68
- pro-Muslim attitude of, 61, 62, 64, 65
- role in partition and, 47
- referred in RSS lexicon as '*Dushtatma*', 19
- General Rees' report on Punjab Boundary Force, 60
- Godse, Nathuram, 48-49 (*See also* Gandhiji)
- Advani's remarks on, 52
- conspiracy to murder, 49-58
- and explanation of decision for killing, 63-69
- Gandhiji's assassination (30 January 1948) by, 47, 48
- glorification instances of, 71-74
- Inamdar memoirs about Savarkar, and link with, 56, 57
- links with RSS and Hindu Mahasabha, 51-54, 65-68
- Golwalkar, M.S., 11, 20, 24, 28, 31, 42, 52, 65, 79-84, 89-93
- Hedgewar, K.B., 18, 31, 42, 54, 84, 85, 92
- Hindu communal ideology, 11, 80

- anti-Congress and anti-Gandhi stance, 87–90
- anti-Muslim component of, 84–87
- and anti-Gandhi campaign, 84
- reference about 'Moslem' community, 85–87
- communal bias in, 79
- nationalism and loyalism, (re)definition of, 90–94
- two-nation theory formulation by Savarkar, 81, 82
- Hindu communalists, 11, 17, 23, 43, 44, 56, 65, 68, 69, 86, 88, 91
- Hindu communal project
- anti-Congress and anti-Gandhi stance, 87
- attitude towards non-Hindus, 82–84
- reference to Muslims and Christians, 83, 84
- Hindu communal definition of nationalism, 90
- portrayal of non-Hindus as foreigners, 18
- 'religious war' against Muslims, 18
- and threats posed by communal forces, 17
- Hindu Mahasabha
- demand for Hindu *rashtra* and warning to Hindus, 59–60
- formation on 15 August 1947, 59
- Godse link with, 44
- Lahiri, Ashutosh (General Secretary) of, and his public statements, 61–62
- Hindu nationalists, 11, 12
- Hindu Nation concept, 79, 80
- Hindu Rashtra Dal (set up in Poona in 1942), 51
- Hindu state idea and rejection by Congress, 59
- Hindutva concept, and definition of Hindu, 80
- Hindu nationalism, (re)definition of, 90–94
- history and RSS/Hindu communal role in distortion of, 43
- Amartya Sen arguments about, 37–39
- errors in books, 40–42
- ignoring the contribution of Gandhiji and his assassination, 42–43
- Indian History Congress opposition to, 39, 40
- Murli Manohar Joshi's contribution in, 39
- Indian History Congress, 39, 40
- Joshi, Murli Manohar, 20, 32, 33, 35, 39
- communal ideology promoted by, 20
- role in supporting RSS agenda in education, 36, 37
- Kalyan Singh government, effort to link schools to RSS *shakha*, 29

## Index

- Mahatma Gandhi (See Gandhiji)
- Mookerjee, Syama Prasad, 49, 55, 70
- Muslim League, 17, 82, 85, 87, 94  
Pakistan demand in 1938 by, 82  
and role in Muslim communalism, 17, 85
- National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT), 21  
ban on school textbooks by, 32  
Gandhiji assassination, omitted from books by, 47  
report, on impact of books, 24, 28  
revision of history books, 33, 34, 36, 39, 40, 42
- National Curriculum Framework (NCF) in 2000, 32, 39
- nationalism and loyalism, communal (re)definition of Indian, 90–94
- National Steering Committee, on textbook evaluation  
concerns raised on *Sanskriti Jnan* in Vidya Bharati Schools, 22  
members of, 20–21  
recommendation regarding Saraswati Shishu Mandir Prakashan, 21  
Vidya Bharati Publications, 21–22
- Quit India Movement of 1942, 92
- Ramakrishna Mission, 27
- Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)  
anti-Muslim bias and, 84–87  
attitude towards non-Hindus, 82–84  
banning school textbooks by NCERT, 31, 32  
hate ideology of, 18, 20  
and impact on school education, 27, 28  
institutions and its influence, 28, 29  
link with Gandhiji's murder, 10, 49  
Nehru's view on RSS after Gandhiji's murder, 70  
participation in post-independence riots, 61  
and promotion to communal ideology, 9, 11  
through school texts, 9  
relationship with Hindu Mahasabha, 53–55  
and role in battles for freedom from colonial rule, 92, 93  
spreading communalism through  
Saraswati Shishu Mandirs and Vidya Bharati schools, 18, 19
- RSS-VHP (Vishwa Hindu Parishad) propaganda, 25
- Sanskriti Jnan* series and impact on young minds, 22
- Saraswati Shishu Mandir Prakashan, 21

## RSS, School Texts and the Murder of Mahatma Gandhi

- Saraswati Shishu Mandir(s)  
influence of RSS on, 18  
formation of 1952, 20  
*shakhas*, role in boosting communalism, 18
- Sharma, R.S., 33
- Simon Commission Boycott (1928), 92
- Sudarshan, K.S., 36
- Thapar, Romila, 32, 33, 36
- Vidya Bharati Publications, 21  
and extracts from reports on revised book by, 24, 25  
revision of NCERT history books, 33  
used for dissemination of communal ideas, 22
- Vidya Bharati schools (*See also* Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh [RSS])  
BJP governments support for growth of, 28  
of RSS on, 18

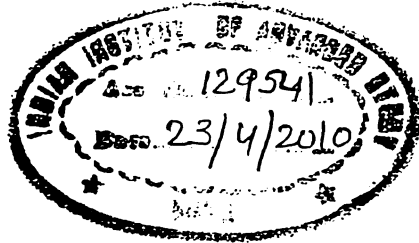
## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

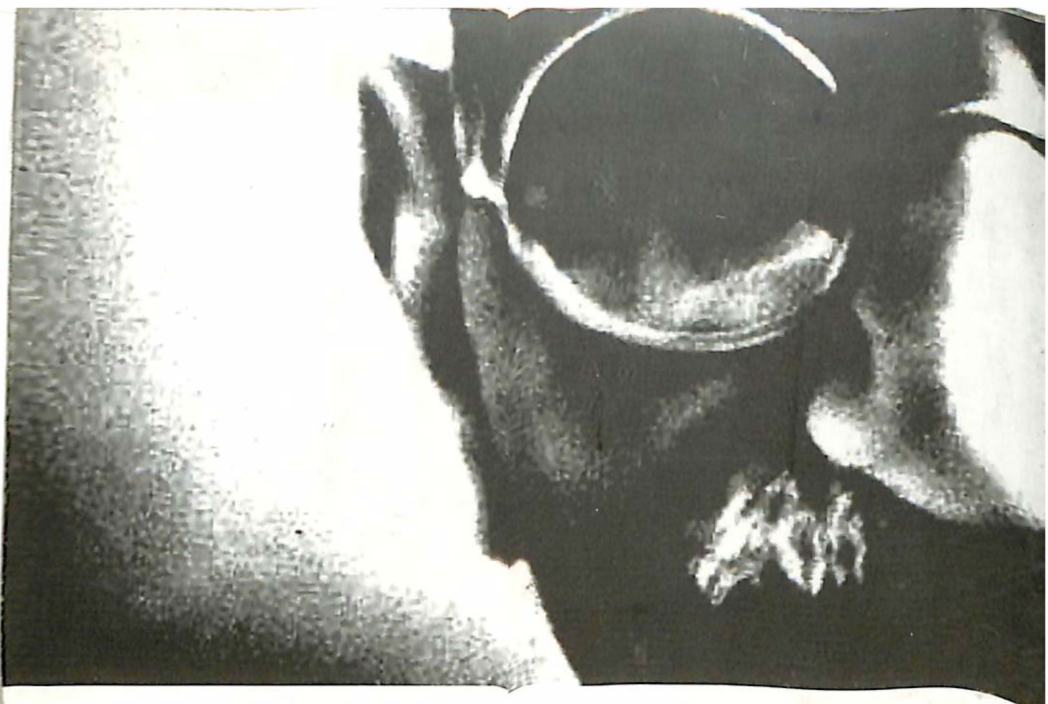
**Aditya Mukherjee** is Professor of Contemporary India History at the Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi and Director, Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Advanced Studies, JNU, New Delhi. He was a visiting Professor at Duke University, North Carolina, USA in 1986 and Japan Foundation Fellow at the University of Tokyo (1999–2000). His major publications include *Imperialism, Nationalism and the Making of the Indian Capitalist Class* (2002), *India Since Independence*, (2008) and *India's Struggle for Independence* (1988).

**Mridula Mukherjee** is Professor of Modern Indian History at the Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and Director, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi. She was a visiting Scholar at Duke University, North Carolina, USA in 1986 and at the University of Tokyo (1999–2000). Her major publications include *Peasants in India's Non-violent Revolution* (2004), *Colonialising Agriculture: The Myth of Punjab Exceptionalism* (2005), *India Since Independence* (2008) and *India's Struggle for Independence* (1988).

**Sucheta Mahajan** is Professor, Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and Chairperson, P.C. Joshi Archives on Contemporary History, JNU. She taught at the University of Delhi and was a fellow of the Indian Institute of Advanced Study.

Shimla. She was also Rockefeller Fellow at Bellagio, Italy. She has published widely on the history and politics of India in the 20th century. Her important publications include *Independence and Partition: The Erosion of Colonial Power in India* (2000), *India's Struggle for Independence* (1988) (co-authored with Bipan Chandra et al.), *Rites of Passage: A Civil Servant Remembers: H.M. Patel* (2005) and *Education for Social Change: MVF and Child Labour* (2008).





*RSS, School Texts and the Murder of Mahatma Gandhi: The Hindu Communal Project* undertakes the novel experiment of juxtaposing three apparently quite different issues, the nature of the RSS school textbooks, the murder of the Mahatma and the basic Hindu communal ideology as articulated by Savarkar and Golwalkar. While deeply delving into all three aspects, it brings out the interplay among them.

The book brings home to us in a dramatic manner the threat communalism poses to our society, thus making it a must-read for the general educated reader, including politicians, political workers, social activists, journalists, historians and other social scientists.

**Aditya Mukherjee** is Professor of Contemporary Indian History at the Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi and Director, Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Advanced Studies, JNU, New Delhi.

**Mridula Mukherjee** is Professor of Modern Indian History at the Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and Director, Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Advanced Studies, JNU, New Delhi.

**Sucheta Mahajan** is Professor, Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and Chairperson, P.C. Joshi Archives of the Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

Library IAS, Shimla  
324.241 095 4 M 896 R  
00129541

**SAGE** Los Angeles • London • New Delhi • Singapore  
[www.sagepublications.com](http://www.sagepublications.com)

FOR SALE ONLY IN SOUTH ASIA  
**SAGE**  
ISBN 9788178298542  
RS 195.00  
9 788178 298542