

## **M.S. Golwalkar: Conceptualizing Hindutva Fascism**

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Beginning this twenty Fourth February, RSS combine has undertaken programs in different parts of the country to celebrate the centenary year of RSS second Sarsnghchalak (supreme dictator), Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar, known in Sangh circles as Shri Guruji. What are going to be the implications of this celebration? To answer this, we will have to delve into the work of Golwlakar, who penned a small book, 'We or our Nationhood Defined' (We...), which gives an outline of his ideology and later his articles were published as a compilation, 'Bunch of Thoughts'. In both these books and also in various other outpourings of his, he denigrates democracy and pluralism on one hand and upholds fascist concept of nationhood and sectarian version of culture on the other. His writing is most intimidating to the minorities in particular. He was the chief of RSS for 33 long years and was instrumental in giving RSS a direction, which assumed menacing proportions in times to come, and strengthening the foundations of the 'hate minorities' ideology resulting in the consequent waves of violence, undermining the democratic norms in the society. He can also be 'credited' with giving the sharp formulations which laid the ideological foundation of different carnages in the country.

Golwalkar praises Lord Manu as the greatest law giver mankind ever had. It was the same law giver Manu's book, which was burnt by Dr. Ambedkar in his pursuit of getting justice for the dalits. In current times, Golwalkars' successor also

demanding a throwing away of Indian constitution, to be replaced by the one which is based on Hindu holy books, implying Manusmriti, of course.

His formulations of Hindutva Fascism are so blatant that even his followers, the RSS combine, is running for cover and claiming that this book, having a naked hatred for minorities and eulogies for the likes of Hitler, *We...*, was not written by him. They avoid owning these ideas. But one knows that this book was penned by him. In an affidavit submitted to the charity commissioner, Rajendra Singh, a later Sarsanghchhalak pleaded, "With a view to give a scientific base to propagate the idea-India being historically from time immemorial a Hindu nation-the late Shri M.S. Golwalkar had written a book entitled 'We or Our Nationhood defined', which was published in 1938." (Quoted in Islam, *Undoing India: The RSS way*) J.A. Curran in his classic study, *RSS: Militant Hinduism in India Politics- A study of RSS:* points out "The genuine ideology of Sangh is based upon principles formulated by its founder, Dr. Hedgewar. These principles have been consolidated and amplified by the present leader ( i.e. Golwalkar) in a small book called "We or our nationhood defined". It is a basic primer in the indoctrination of Sangh volunteers... (Curran 1979, p.39). Since its quotations have been brought to the notice of people, RSS publishing houses have stopped republishing this book. What does Golwalkar say in this book?

In this book he rejects the notions of Indian nationhood, India as a Nation in the making. He rejects the idea that all the citizens will be equal. He goes on to harp the notions of nationhood borrowed from Hitler's Nazi movement. He rejects that India is a secular nation and posits that it is a Hindu Rashtra. He rejects the territorial-political concept of nationhood and puts forward the concept of cultural nationalism, which was the foundation of Nazi ideology. His admiration of Hitler's ideology and politics is the running thread of the book and he takes inspiration from the massive holocaust which decimated millions of people in Germany. He uses this as a shield to propagate his political ideology. It is this ideology which formed the base of communal common sense amongst a section

of the population. "German national pride has now become the topic of the day. To keep up purity of the nation and its culture, Germany shocked the world by her purging the country of the Semitic races, the Jews. National 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 a united whole, a good lesson for us in Hindustan to learn and profit by." (We..., 1938, p.37)

In the Sangh circles this book is regarded as their Gita. The implications for Indian minorities are presented here in a forthright manner. Today the swayamsevaks brought up on this Gita, do believe in all this but the language of expression is being made more polished so that the poison is coated with honey and administered with ease. Golwalkar goes on to assert, "From the standpoint sanctioned by the experience of shrewd nations, the non-Hindu people in Hindustan must either adopt the Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and revere Hindu religion, must entertain no idea but the glorification of Hindu nation i.e. they must not only give up their attitude of intolerance and ingratitude 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, for less any preferential treatment, not even the citizen's rights." (Ibid p.52).

When the Hindutva politics came up in the late 1980s, in the beginning an unsuspecting observer could not comprehend from where has the concept of Hindu nation come up suddenly, why such an intense hatred for minorities, a glance at We... and one becomes clear that those fed on this ideology cannot but be what they are, cannot do anything else than what they did and have been doing since 1990, the Babri demolition, the anti minority violence and an open violation of democratic ethos of the country. These ideas were translated into the stories of atrocities of Muslim kings, the myth of Hindus owning this land from

times immemorial and a lot of such make believe concoction. Irrespective of the fact the freedom movement rejected this ideology and its formulations, it was kept alive through the ideological indoctrination work in the RSS shakhas going on ceaselessly.

Golwalkar was also faced with some of the naïve swaymasevaks wishing to participate in the national movement, more so after the massive Quit India movement was launched. That time Golwalkar was the RSS chief and he dissuaded the people from participating in the movement, and some of them who participated did it in their personal capacity, some of them now claim that they also participated. ( e.g. Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who was onlooker in the anti British movement, was arrested but wriggled out of the jail and later claimed to have participated in the movement.) As matter of fact Golwalkar was very contemptuous towards the anti British movement. There is no mention of presence of RSS in the anti British movement even in most of the sympathetic accounts written about it. Even Nanaji Deshmukh, the foremost leaders of RSS puts this question, why did RSS not take part in the liberation struggle as an organization? (Deshmukh, Victim of Slander, Vision Books, 1979, p.70) Since Golwalkar propounded religion based nationalism, there was no place for anti British stance. "The theories of territorial nationalism and of common danger, which formed the basis of our concept of nation, had deprived us of the positive and inspiring content of our real Hindu Nationhood and made many of the 'freedom movements' virtually anti-British movements. Anti Britishism was equated with patriotism and nationalism. This reactionary view has had disastrous effects upon the entire course of freedom movement..." (Bunch of thoughts, 1996, p.138). In a frank defense of British colonialist he reminds the people of RSS pledge, "We should remember that in our pledge we have talked of freedom of the country through defending religion and culture. There is no mention of departure of British in that." (Shri Guruji Samgra Darshan, Vol 4, p. 2) With allies like this British could merrily pursue their policy of divide and rule!

No wonder British never repressed RSS. Also the collusion between Religion based nationalism and colonialism can be understood from such statements. Later the World saw that in tune with this pro imperialist ideology, Golwalkar was to support the US aggression on Vietnam and his successor Sudarshan defended the US aggression against Iraq.

The murder of Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi by a Hindutva follower Nathuram Godse not only shocked the whole nation; it led RSS followers to celebrate this event by distributing sweets. While RSS followers were celebrating, and the links of Godse with RSS became apparent, RSS was banned and Golwalkar was arrested. They denied that RSS had any links with Godse. At that time it was easy to claim so as RSS had no written constitution and membership lists, enrollment register etc. Godse was RSS Pracharak and later he joined Hindu Mahasabha and was editing a newspaper, Agrani (leader), the subtitle of the paper was Hindu Rashtra. In the court he denied any links with RSS. Later his brother Gopal Godse, who was also an accomplice in the murder, in an interview given to Times of India (25 Jan 98) stated that his brother Nathuram spoke a deliberate lie in the court, "The appeasement policy followed by him (Gandhi) and imposed on all Congress governments' encouraged the Muslim separatist tendencies that eventually created Pakistan...Technically and theoretically he (Nathuram) was a member (of RSS), but he stopped workings for it later. His statement in the court that he had left the RSS was to protect the RSS workers who would be imprisoned following the murder. On the understanding that they (RSS workers) would benefit from his dissociating himself from the RSS, he gladly did it."

In the wake of the murder of Gandhi, RSS was banned and Golwalkar was jailed, from where he wrote a letter to the Government of India offering to cooperate with the government in 'dealing with the menace of Communism' in return for being released from the jail. Incidentally it was also the period when US was on the witch hunt of communists world over. Today, the global US agenda of

demonization of Islam, and Muslims world over matches with the RSS agenda, coincidence again? Is this running parallel in the matching agenda US and RSS policies a mere coincidence?

For him the notion of Hindu Rashtra remained supreme and he could never reconcile to the secular values of Indian constitution. Time and over again he kept on harping on how UnBharat the constitution is and how Manu's rules are more desirable and profound one's. The partition of India and the consequent tragedy was registered through the Hindutva eyes, "Even to this day there are many who say, 'now there is no Muslim problem at all. All those riotous elements who supported Pakistan have gone away once for all. The remaining Muslims are devoted to our country. After all they have no other place to go and they are all bound to remain loyal...It would be suicidal to delude ourselves into believing that they have turned patriot overnight after the creation of Pakistan. On the contrary, Muslim menace has increased a hundredfold by the creation of Pakistan, which has become a springboard for all their future aggressive designs on our country.'" (Bunch of Thoughts, Bangalore, 1996, p. 177-78)

The way to look at Indian communities as Hindus and Muslims as uniform monoliths continues to be exhibited all through. Further he also goes on to label Muslims, Christians and Communists as internal threats to Hindu nation. And this is the 'ideological fodder ' of RSS shakhas and its practical unfoldment is visible in the regular occurrence of attacks against Muslims and Christians. With collapse of Soviet Union, the venom against communists has been given a different turn. And in the third category secularist have also been added up as a threat to Hindu nation.

It was Golwalkar again under whose stewardship the RSS gave birth to other organizations to play the divisive role in different arenas of social and political life. He was instrumental in helping bring up Bharatiya Jansangh, Akhil Bhartiya

Vidayarthi Parishad, Bharatiya Majdoor Sangh, Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram and Vishwa Hindu Parishad, amongst others. The infiltration of RSS cadres in different wings of state apparatus; army, police, bureaucracy, judiciary, education and media was another move initiated by Golwalkar, the effects of which are visible prominently from last two decades.

While secular democratic elements, activists have a long road ahead, we need to take care that in the already vitiated atmosphere, the communal divide is not accentuated further by this move of RSS and we put forward the values of humane plural and democratic society and dispel the ideologies which have been playing a very divisive role in the society.