

Fanatic Madness: Democracy at Crossroads

Shamsul Islam

Editorial Prologue

The future of democracy will be determined by its past. From the state of “primitive innocence,” birth of property, invention of agriculture, feudalism, colonialism, imperialism, capitalism, socialism, and the eventual return to tribalism, failed civilization has come a full circle. We confront religious forces, extremism, insurrection, seditious conspiracies, and populism that falsify truth and subvert secular democracies in the name of nationalism and national “Emergency.”¹ The United States and India demonstrate uncanny resemblance despite being on the dichotomized scale of development. Donald Trump’s role in January 6th failed coup détente and Narendra Modi’s aggressive lead to Hinduize Mahatma Gandhi’s India are concurrent exemplars of a new fascist wave on far-right masquerading as national movements. The ramifications of these developments unfold frightening realities. Can you imagine glorification of assassins of “the father of nation” in a revivalist history in the making?

¹Indu Sarkar is more than a film: It’s a sad chapter in India’s post-Independence history that Jawaharlal Nehru’s notoriously heralded grandson Sanjay Gandhi degraded into a dictatorial rule at the behest of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, his “mummy.” Democratic institutions did survive after a 19-month misrule by her delinquent son. On the other side, in Pakistan, army rule has continued soon after the death of her founder. As I write this footnote, Imran Khan, a dethroned Prime Minister, is under house arrest. He knows that his life is in danger. The popularity of this former playboy has nearly given him a reprieve. The pernicious “two nation” theory, the basis of India’s Partition, did not serve anyone except the colonial rulers who practiced “divide and rule” with brutal ingenuity. Jinnah did not create Pakistan; nor did Nehru and Gandhi as most Indians are made to believe. It was Winston Churchill’s wickedly brilliant mind that India contuses to suffer (See *The Shadows of the Great Game: The Untold Story of India’s Partition*, by Narendra Singh Sarila. New York, NY: Carroll and Graph Publishers, 2005).

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A temple for Savarkar and deification of Nathuram Godse? The “Kerala Story” is another spectacle of unfortunate communalism in India’s most progressive state, Kerala. Shamsul Islam personifies Wittgenstein’s dictum: “Write before speaking.” The two segments that follow these prologues reflect certain paradoxes and platitudes of Social Development in the world’s largest democracy.

As I assayed before, India’s Partition in 1947 is the most crucial—albeit underrated—post-war calamity of the post-colonial era. I grew up hearing the harrowing tales of mayhem, genocide, and ethnic cleansing on the two sides of a divided culture. Was Jinnah a British “Secret Agent”? Controversies and conspiracy theories muffle any self-introspection. The bitter truth is: Both Nehru and Jinnah were “Open Agents” of the British imperialists to reap the rotten fruits of a centuries-old colonial rule.

The complex dyad of—takers and givers (haves and have-nots)—the oppressors and the oppressed is a perpetual neurosis of global developmentalists: Shamsul Islam’s brutally sincere and insightful analysis unravels the inhospitable reality.

Inauguration of the New Parliament Complex on Savarkar’s Birthday shall Not Whitewash his Anti-National & Anti-Humanity Crimes

India’s Prime Minister (PM) Modi inaugurated the new complex of Indian Parliament on May 28 (2023) which also marked the 140th birth anniversary of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar who is described as the “great son of India” and “Veer” [gallant/fearless] by the RSS-BJP lot. Thus, the new parliament built under the direct supervision of PM Modi and his chosen few has been dedicated to Savarkar. It is a horrendous and shameful decision in many respects. Dedication to Savarkar will mean the rejection of the whole idea of an egalitarian, democratic, and secular India, which came into being on August 15, 1947. Honoring of Savarkar would also mean dishonoring of the martyrs and other participants of the Indian freedom struggle. Let us know the truth as told by Savarkar himself or contained in the archives of the Hindu Mahasabha (HM).

Savarkar’s Hatred for the Tricolor

Savarkar, like the RSS, abhorred every symbol of the Indian people’s united struggle against the British rule. In a circular issued on September 22, 1941 to be followed by the HM cadres, he declared:

So far as the flag question is concerned, the Hindus know no flag representing Hindudom as a whole than the ‘Kundalini Kripanankit’ Mahasabha flag with the ‘Om and the Swastik’ the most ancient symbols of the Hindu race and policy coming down from age to age and honoured throughout Hindusthan...Therefore, any place or function where this Pan-Hindu flag is not honoured should be boycotted by the Hindu sanghatanists at any rate...

The Charkha-Flag [before the present national flag spinning-wheel used to be at the centre of the Tricolour] in particular may very well represent a Khadi-Bhandar, but the Charkha can never symbolize and represent the spirit of the proud and ancient nation like the Hindus.²

Savarkar Preceded Jinnah in Propounding the Two-Nation Theory

Muslim league (ML) under M. A. Jinnah demanded Pakistan in March 1940. Long before it, Savarkar had laid down his two-nation theory. Savarkar took over the leadership of HM in 1937. While addressing the 19th Session of HM at Ahmedabad in the same year, he stated:

As it is, there are two antagonistic nations living side by side in India, several infantile politicians commit the serious mistake in supposing that India is already welded into a harmonious nation, or that it could be welded thus for the mere wish to do so...India cannot be assumed today to be a unitarian and homogenous nation, but on the contrary there are two nations in the main: the Hindus and the Moslems, in India.³

This shameless collusion between Savarkar and Jinnah was described by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in the following words:

Strange as it may appear, Mr. Savarkar and Mr. Jinnah instead of being opposed to each other on the one nation versus two nations issue are in complete agreement about it. Both not only agree, but insist that there are two nations in India—one the Muslim nation and the other Hindu nation.⁴

HM Led by Savarkar Declared Unconditional Support to the British Government during the Quit India Movement

The Quit India Movement began on August 9, 1942 as per Gandhi's call to "Do or Die" in order to expel the British from India. The British rulers swiftly responded with mass detentions on August 8th itself. Over 100,000 arrests were made, which included the total top leadership of Congress including Gandhi, mass fines

²Bhide, A. S. (Ed.). (1940). *Vinayak Damodar Savarkar's Whirlwind Propaganda: Extracts from the president's diary of his propagandist tours, interviews from December 1937 to October 1941* (pp. 470–473). Bombay: na.

³*Samagra Savarkar Wangmaya: Hindu Rashtra Darshan* (Collected works of Savarkar in English) (p. 296). Pune: Hindu Mahasabha, 1963.

⁴Ambedkar, B. R. (1940). *Pakistan or the Partition of India* (p. 142). Bombay: Government of Maharashtra. (Reprinted edition)

were levied, and demonstrators were subjected to public flogging. Hundreds of civilians were killed in state-sponsored violence, many shot by the police and army. Congress was banned. During these times of repression, Savarkar announced full support to the British rulers in line with the ML.

Addressing the 24th session of the HM at Kanpur in 1942, Savarkar outlined the strategy of the HM of co-operating with the rulers in the following words:

“The Hindu Mahasabha holds that the leading principle of all practical politics is the policy of Responsive Co-operation [with the British].”

He called upon HM councillors, ministers, legislators and conducting any municipal or any public bodies to offer “Responsive Co-operation which covers the whole gamut of patriotic activities from unconditional co-operation right up to active and even armed resistance...”⁵

Savarkar led HM-ran coalition governments with ML during the Quit India Movement

HM and Jinnah-led ML joined hands in running coalition governments in Bengal and Sind (and later in NWFP) in 1942. Defending this collusion between HM and ML against Congress, Savarkar stated:

In practical politics also the Mahasabha knows that we must advance through reasonable compromises. Witness the fact that only recently in Sind, the Sind-Hindu-Sabha on invitation had taken the responsibility of joining hands with the League itself in running Coalition Government. The case of Bengal is well known. Wild Leaguers whom even the Congress with all its submissiveness could not placate grew quite reasonably compromising and socialable [*sic*] as soon as they came in contact with the Hindu Mahasabha and the Coalition Government, under the premiership of Mr. Fazlul Huq and the able lead of our esteemed Mahasabha leader Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerji, functioned successfully for a year or so to the benefit of both the communities.⁶

It is to be noted that Mookerji was deputy premier and held the portfolio of suppressing the Quit India Movement in Bengal.

⁵Savarkar, V. D. (1963). *Hindu Rashtra Darshan* (Vol. 6, p. 112). Poona: Maharashtra Prantik Hindusabha.

⁶*Samagra Savarkar Wangmaya: Hindu Rashtra Darshan* (Collected works of Savarkar in English) (Vol. 6, pp. 479–480). Pune: Hindu Mahasabha, 1963.

Backstabbing Netaji Subhash Chander Bose

When Netaji Subhash Chander Bose was planning to liberate India militarily, Savarkar offered full military co-operation to the British masters. Addressing the 23rd session of HM at Bhagalpur in 1941, he declared:

Our best national interests demands that so far as India's defence is concerned, Hindudom must ally unhesitatingly, in a spirit of responsive co-operation with the war effort of the Indian government in so far as it is consistent with the Hindu interests, by joining the Army, Navy and the Aerial forces in as large a number as possible and by securing an entry into all ordnance, ammuniton and war craft factories...Again it must be noted that Japan's entry into the war has exposed us directly and immediately to the attack by Britain's enemies...Hindu Mahasabhaitis must, therefore, rouse Hindus especially in the provinces of Bengal and Assam as effectively as possible to enter the military forces of all arms without losing a single minute.⁷

According to HM documents, Savarkar was able to inspire one lakh Hindus to join the ranks of the British armed forces.

Savarkar's Mercy Petitions Were No Ruse but Instruments of Abject Surrender

Savarkar submitted a minimum of five mercy petitions (MPs) in 1911, 1913, 1914, 1918, and 1920. Savarkarites claim that these were submitted not as an act of cowardice but "as an ardent follower of Shivaji, Savarkar wanted to die in action. Finding this the only way, he wrote six letters to the British pleading for his release." A perusal of the two available MPs will prove that there cannot be a lie worse than the claim that Savarkar's MPs were in league with the tricks which Shivaji used to hoodwink the Mughal rulers successfully. The mercy petition dated 14th November, 1913 ended with the following words:

[Therefore] if the government in their manifold beneficence and mercy release me, I for one cannot but be the staunchest advocate of constitutional progress and loyalty to the English government which is the foremost condition of that progress. ...Moreover my conversion to the constitutional line would bring back all those misled young men in India and abroad who were once looking up to me as their guide. I am ready to serve the Government in any capacity they like, for as my conversion is conscientious so I hope my future conduct would be. By keeping me in jail nothing can be got in

⁷Ibid. [*Samagra Savarkar Wangmaya: Hindu Rashtra Darshan* (Collected works of Savarkar in English) (Vol. 6, pp. 460, 479–480). Pune: Hindu Mahasabha, 1963].

comparison to what would be otherwise. 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?

The petition dated 30th March 1920 from this prodigal son of the British masters ended with the following words:

The brilliant prospects of my early life all but too soon blighted, have constituted so painful a source of regret to me that a release would be a new birth and would touch my heart, sensitive and submissive, to kindness so deeply as to render me personally attached and politically useful in future. Far often magnanimity wins even where might fails.⁸

There was nothing wrong on the part of the C.J. detainees in writing mercy petitions to the British. It was an important legal right available to the prisoners. Apart from Savarkar, Barin, H. K. Kanjilal, and Nand Gopal too submitted petitions. However, only Savarkar and Barin sought forgiveness for their revolutionary past. Kanjilal and Nand Gopal did not demand any personal favor but the status of political prisoners.

Savarkar Secured Remission of 37.5 Years in His Sentence of 50 Years

Savarkar was incarcerated at Andamans on July 4, 1911 for two life terms [50 years]. On May 2, 1921 [after NINE years TEN months], he was transferred along with his elder brother, Babarao, to the mainland. He was finally released conditionally on January 6, 1924 [total imprisonment TWELVE years SIX months] from Yeravda Jail.

Savarkar as a Worshipper of *Manusmriti* and Casteism

Savarkar is glorified as a rationalist and crusader against untouchability. Let us compare these claims with Savarkar's beliefs and acts as recorded in the HM archives. While delivering presidential address to the 22nd session of the HM at Madura, he declared Manu to be the lawgiver for Hindus and emphasized that once we "re-learn the manly lessons," which Manu taught, "our Hindu nation shall prove again as unconquerable and conquering a race as we proved once."⁹

He declared *Manusmriti* to be "that scripture which is most worship-able after Vedas for our Hindu Nation ...Today *Manusmriti* is Hindu law. That is fundamental."¹⁰

⁸Available with the National Archives, Delhi.

⁹*Savarkar Wangmaya: Hindu Rashtra Darshan* (Collected works of Savarkar in English) (Vol. 6, p. 426). Pune: Hindu Mahasabha, 1963.

¹⁰Savarkar, V. D. Women in *Manusmriti*. In *Savarkar Samagr* (collection of writings of Savarkar in Hindi) (Vol. 4, p. 415). Delhi: Prabhat.

So far as his crusade for untouchables' entry into Hindu temples was concerned, he gave an undertaking to the Brahmins that:

the Hindu Maha Sabha shall never force any legislations regarding the entry of untouchables in the ancient temples or compel by law any sacred ancient and moral usage or custom prevailing in those temples. In general, the Mahasabha will not back up any Legislation to thrust the reforming views on our *Sanatani* brothers so far as personal law is concerned.¹¹

Savarkar wanted the King of Nepal to rule India in case the British decided to leave India

Savarkar even preached that it was legitimate to have the King of Nepal as "Free Hindusthan's Future Emperor" if the British plan to leave India. His advice to the British rulers was very clear:

If an academical [*sic*] probability is at all to be indulged in of all factors that count today, His Majesty the King of Nepal, the scion of the Shisodias [*sic*], alone has the best chance of winning the Imperial crown of India. Strange as it may seem, the English know it better than we Hindus do ... *It is not impossible that Nepal may even be called upon to control the destiny of India itself. Even Britain will feel it more graceful that the Sceptre [*sic*] of Indian Empire, if it ever slips out of her grip, should be handed over to an equal and independent ally of Britain like His Majesty the King of Nepal than to one who is but a vassal and a vanquished potentate of Britain like the Nizam.* [Italics as in the original]¹²

Savarkar criticized Shivaji for not allowing molestation/rape of captured Muslim women

Savarkar was a great defender of molestation and rape as a political tool against the women of adversaries. In his important work of Hindu history, *Six Glorious Epochs of Indian History*, originally written in Marathi and translated into English in 1971, he included a chapter titled "Perverted Conception of Virtues" (chapter VIII). He criticized Shivaji and Chimaji Appa for restoring back to the families the

¹¹Bhide, A. S. (Ed.). (1940). *Vinayak Damodar Savarkar's Whirlwind Propaganda: Extracts from the president's diary of his propagandist tours interviews from December 1937 to October 1941* (p. 425). Bombay: na.

¹²Bhide, A. S. (Ed.). (1940). *Vinayak Damodar Savarkar's Whirlwind Propaganda: Extracts from the president's diary of his propagandist tours interviews from December 1937 to October 1941* (pp. 256–257). Bombay: na.

women of defeated Muslim and Portuguese governors. Since Shivaji did not allow molestation of captured women Savarkar complained:

Did not the plaintive screams and pitiful lamentations of the millions of molested Hindu women, which reverberated throughout the length and breadth of the country, reach the ears of Shivaji Maharaj and Chimaji Appa?

He went on to lament that: "It was the suicidal Hindu idea of chivalry to women which saved the Muslim women (simply because they were women) from the heavy punishments of committing indescribable sins and crimes against the Hindu women. Their womanhood became their shield quite sufficient to protect them."¹³

With these irrefutable facts about Savarkar, PM Modi's act of honoring him on May 28, 2023 will only accelerate the undoing of democratic-secular India, egalitarian part of the Indian civilization for which RSS has been dreaming since its inception in 1925.

Who Cares About Dishonoring of Kerala Hindu Women by RSS Guru Golawalkar

Demonizing Indian Muslims as barbarians is a project as old as the birth of Hindu nationalism courtesy high-caste Hindus in the second half of the 19th century. Muslims were described as *mleccha*, a Sanskrit term used for non-Aryans or barbarians. It is interesting to note that when the same barbarians, the dynasties with Muslim names, ruled India for almost a millennium, the same high-caste Hindus served them most loyally as military commanders and senior administrators even occupying posts of *Vazier-e-aalaa* (prime minister). The "Muslim" rule was an oligarchy of Muslim rulers plus high-caste Hindu. India is the only country in world history where absolute majority of the country did not convert to the religion of the rulers. It is corroborated by the 1872–73 Census undertaken by the British rulers. It was the first census held at the time when even ceremonial "Muslim" rule was over. According to this Census report:

The population of British India is, in round numbers, divided into 140½ millions [*sic*] of Hindoos (including Sikhs), or 73½ per cent., 40¾ millions of Mahomedans, or 21½ per cent. And 9¾ millions of others, or barely 5 per cent., including under this title Buddhists and Jains, Christians, Jews, Parsees, Brahmoes...¹⁴

¹³Perverted conception of virtues. In V. D. Savarkar (Ed.), *Six glorious epochs of Indian history* (pp. 147–159). Transl. S. T. Godbole. Delhi: Bal Savarkar India, 1971.

¹⁴*Memorandum on the Census of British India of 1871–72: Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty London* (p. 16). George Edward Eyre and William Spottiswoode, Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1875.

In this context, another important point not to be lost sight of is that the demonization of the Indian Muslims by the Hindu nationalists followed a pattern set by the British masters in the post-1857 War of Independence. The British held Muslims responsible for the Mutiny (though Hindus–Muslims–Sikhs unitedly fought against the East India Company rule throughout India and jointly laid down lives in every nook and corner of the country) describing them as uncivilized, untrustworthy, butchers, rapists, and fit for annihilation.

With the birth of RSS in 1925, Hindu nationalists committed to Hindutva offered a singular platform to carry forward this hatred to new heights with a military-like apparatus to cleanse Muslims of India. To the bad luck of RSS, India chose to be a democratic-secular polity in which emulation of Hitler was not possible in India. Though violence against the largest religious minority of India continued through its innumerable clandestine and open appendages, more emphasis was accorded to the use of propaganda machinery for demonizing them. Love Jihad, land Jihad, abnormal population growth, appeasement, beef-eating, and many more issues have been and are being used to spread hatred against Muslims. With Hindu nationalist PM Modi, the Hindutva juggernaut started running amok. State-approved films became another powerful tool to spread hatred against Muslims. The Kashmir Files (2022) and May 2023 release of Kerala Story are part of the same strategy of targeting a large section of Indians as barbarians thus making it vulnerable to physical annihilation. Kerala Story touted as the truthful narration of happenings in Kerala has turned out to be a bunch of lies as has been confessed by the director. This film conceived and executed by the RSS-trained personnel at the surface seems to be the outcome of concern for the tragic end of Hindu/Christian women wronged by Islamic Jihadists.

How much RSS cares about the honor of Kerala Hindu women needs to be judged in the light of a speech of the most prominent ideologue of the RSS till date, M. S. Golwalkar. This Guru of Hate has been religiously followed by the RSS leaders and cadres. PM Modi credits Golwalkar for grooming him into a political leader. Golwalkar was invited to address the students of the School of Social Science of Gujarat University on December 17, 1960. In this address, while underlying his firm belief in the Race Theory, he touched upon the issue of cross-breeding amongst Hindus in Kerala in history. He said:

Today experiments in cross-breeding are made only on animals. But the courage to make such experiments on human beings is not shown even by the so-called modern scientist of today. If some human cross-breeding is seen today it is the result not of scientific experiments but of carnal lust. Now let us see the experiments our ancestors made in this sphere. In an effort to better the human species through cross-breeding the Namboodri Brahmanas of the North were settled in Kerala and a rule was laid down that the eldest son of a Namboodri family could marry only the daughter of Vaishya, Kashtriya or Shudra communities of Kerala. Another still more

courageous rule was that the first off-spring of a married woman of any class must be fathered by a Namboodri Brahman and then she could beget children by her husband. Today this experiment will be called adultery but it was not so, as it was limited to the first child.¹⁵

The above statement of Golwalkar is highly worrying in many respects. Firstly, it proves that Golwalkar believed that India had a superior Hindu Race or breed and also an inferior Hindu Race, which needed to be improved through cross-breeding. Secondly, a more worrying aspect was his belief that Brahmans of the North (India), especially Namboodri Brahamans, belonged to a superior Hindu Race. Due to this quality, Namboodri Brahamans were sent from the North to Kerala to improve the breed of inferior Hindus there. Interestingly, this was being argued by a person who claimed to uphold the homogeneity and honor of Hindus world over. Thirdly, Golwalkar as a pervert male chauvinist believed that a Namboodri Brahman male belonging to a superior Race from the North only could improve the inferior human Race of Hindus from the South. For him, wombs of Kerala's Hindu women enjoyed no sanctity and were simply objects of improving the breed through intercourse with Namboodri Brahamans who in no way were related to them. These were nothing but rapes. Thus, Golwalkar was, in fact, corroborating the fact that in the past, male-dominated high-caste Hindu society in many regions forced newly wedded women of other castes to pass their first nights by sleeping with superior caste males.

Astonishingly, Golwalkar expressed these pervert, sexist, Racist, anti-women, and anti-egalitarian views not in the presence of some uneducated or lumpen crowd but before a noble gathering of gentry consisting of the faculty and students of a prime university in Gujarat. In fact, Golwalkar was welcomed by Dr. B. R. Shenoy, Director of the School of Social Sciences, while he arrived at the auditorium. The press reports make it clear that there was no murmur of protest against such fascist and ridiculous ideas. It shows the degree of respectability which high-caste oratory enjoyed in Gujarat and explains why Hindutva could make inroads in this region.

It is also surprising that despite holding such ideas, which openly denigrated Hindu women and Hindu society of Kerala, RSS has been able to create pockets of influence in Kerala.

Not only as Keralites but as Indians we must demand that RSS should tell us for how many centuries such rapes of Kerala women continued. Can films like *Kerala Story* hide the criminal deeds glorified by Golwalkar?

¹⁵M.S. Golwalkar cited in *Organizer*, January 2, 1961, p. 5. The page is reproduced with this article.