

Economical With the Truth

An analysis of the report
The Foreign Exchange of Hate
IDRF and the American funding of Hindutva

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1. Summary of the analysis

1.1 This analysis deals with a report entitled "The Foreign Exchange of Hate - IDRF and the American funding of Hindutva" (referred to as the Report hereafter). The Report seeks to implicate Hindutva organisations in indulging in violence against the religious minorities as well as the dalits in India. It then accuses that because IDRF provides donations to some of the social service projects started by the Hindutva organisations, IDRF is funding the violence.

1.2 The analysis first deals with the political agenda of one of the authors, namely Biju Mathew, and one of the publishers, namely Sabrang. It seeks to establish that the political agenda is that of the communists, and that they are the virulent opponents of the Hindutva organisations in India.

1.3 The Report follows the standard communist strategy of putting a label on the person, and then dealing with the issues. This is equivalent to first coming to a conclusion and then seeking data. What does not conform to the conclusion is ignored or dismissed.

1.4 Another strategy that is followed is that of guilt by association. For example, the Hindutva organisations are accused of being fascist on the grounds that the mentor of the founder of the RSS had contacts with Mussolini. The fact that the intensity of the contact was minor is completely ignored. Innuendos and vague statements are used to justify the guilt.

1.5 The Report indulges in perverting the data to suit the pre-determined conclusions. In many cases, it does so in such a blatant manner, that we think that they have a very poor opinion of the readers.

1.6 The analysis exposes the double standards of the authors of the Report. For example, while they have heaped calumny against the Hindutva organisations, they seem to be rationalising the terrorism that is being indulged in the name of Islam and Christianity.

1.7 The analysis shows that the specific target of the report is neither IDRF nor Sangh in general. It is the activities of the Hindutva organisations in the Vanvasi (tribal) areas. The analysis alleges that this has been chosen as a target because it has affected the conversion activities of the Christian organisations in particular.

1.8 The analysis shows that the target audience of the report is not the government of USA, but the various corporates which give matching funds for the charity to which their employees contribute. The objective is to create a scare in the minds of the corporates and encourage them to take a line of least resistance.

1.9 The analysis asks the supporters of the Report to introspect and inquire if the guilt by association principle is not applicable to them.

1.10 The analysis concludes by asking the authors of the Report to stop indulging in negativism and divert their energies in doing something positive. There is nothing that stops them from raising resources from the Indian Diaspora, as well as the corporates, for worthy causes which would help the downtrodden in India.

2. Introduction

2.1 We do not intend to make a response to a report entitled "The Foreign Exchange of Hate - IDRF and the American funding of Hindutva" (referred to as Report in the rest of this essay). A response is a rebuttal of the information provided. This is done only when the information has some modicum of validation, and based on a reasonable level of truth. What we intend to do, for two reasons, is to analyse the Report, along with other statements made by the authors of the Report prior and subsequent to its public release. The first is that anyone who makes an accusation has to first prove it with rigorous data and proper interpretation. It is not for the accused to prove his/her innocence, but for the accuser to prove the guilt of the accused.

2.2 The second reason is that it is well known that the work done by India Development Relief Fund (IDRF) in mobilising resources from the Indian Diaspora is legendary. In some ways, it appears that the authors of the Report feel jealous about this positive work being done, since they themselves have nothing to show about their contribution. The work done by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (Sangh), and its affiliates, is also legendary. It is not for nothing that an organisation, started in 1925, with active government opposition for most of its life (having been banned three times in the post-Independence period), is today the largest Non-Government Organisation (NGO) in the world.

2.3 Almost the whole of the so-called intellectual class in India has been actively opposing the Sangh, and has made serious attempts to spread venom against it. Despite this, the support for the Sangh is continuously increasing in all spheres of the society. If the Sangh is the devil that the Report seeks to project, it would be really insulting the intellectual of the masses that they will allow such a large presence amongst its midst. Yes, you can fool some of the people all the time. But, surely 77 years is quite a long time to fool so many millions.

2.4 So, we do not think it is necessary to defend either the IDRF or the Sangh. The activities of the IDRF and the Sangh are above board. The people of the country have given their verdict on them a long time ago.

2.5 Earlier we had come out with a comment and an analysis to two reports which sought to defame Hindu organisations. The comment was to the Srikrishna Commission Report, which went into the communal riots in Mumbai during December 1992, and January 1993. The Commission had already decided what its conclusions would be, and the whole process of taking evidence was a sham. We have given many instances of the internal discrepancies in the report, and in some cases, the Commission gave diametrically opposite statements on the same incidences. This response is available at the following URL:

<http://www.hvk.org/specialrepo/skc/main.html>

2.6 The analysis was to the report prepared by the Editors' Guild of India into the communal riots that took place after the murder of 58 Hindus at Godhra. This response is available at the following URL: <http://www.hvk.org/specialrepo/guild/index.html>

2.7 The second response started with the following two paragraphs:

- "In setting out in its task to report on the 'ordeal by fire in the killing fields of Gujarat', the Editors Guild Team set out in its task in the standard Marxist methodology. As Nikolay Valentinov (in "Encounters with Lenin") recounts Lenin telling him, "Plekhanov once said to me about a critic of Marxism (I've forgotten his name), 'First let us stick the convict's badge on him, and then after that we will examine his case.' And I think that we must 'stick the

convict's badge' on anyone and everyone who tries to undermine Marxism, even if we do not go on to examine his case. That's how every sound revolutionary should react."

· "The Editors Guild Team put the label of a convict on the Gujarati language media, and then went about the task of evaluating its report. We would like to first discuss the ideology of the English media in India to enable us to put forward our analysis of the report."

2.8 The Report follows the same traditions as the earlier ones. Those who go under the rubric of secular intellectuals have opened up yet another front in their programme of sowing confusion in the society. Their objective is not to enlighten but to indulge in negativism that they seem to have made a special feature in their character.

2.9 They have no intention to tell the truth, but seek to propagate their own agenda. If in the process the society gets hurt, they think it is a small price to pay. This they have done this in the past, and we are sure that they will do so in the future. So, to understand the primary objective of the Report, the background of the persons involved in the publication should be understood.

2.10 The Report gives names of seven persons who have contributed to its preparation. They are: Girish Agarwal, Angana Chatterji, Shalini Gera, Biju Mathew, Ali Mir, S Ravi Raja and Elahe Heptullah, who we have defined as authors of the Report. (It is not clear if they are the authors because their contribution has been acknowledged as giving 'assistance in locating and compiling the material used in this report'.) Since it was Mathew who released the Report in India in a press conference in Delhi on November 20, 2002, only his background is given.

2.11 Simultaneously, it is necessary to go into the background of one of the publishers, namely Sabrang.

3. Biju Mathew

3.1 He is Assistant Professor of Business at the Rider University. He describes his work as follows:

· My work revolves around three primary thematic: Hindutva, Migration, and Globalization and attempts to explicate the inter-relations between these three nodes of interest for contemporary South Asian scholars and activists. On Hindutva, my work is largely on Hindutva's relation to the politics of identity within diasporic Indian-American communities and on the specific aspects of caste and class that make Hindutva such a potent force in diasporic life. Further it locates the flourishing of Hindutva in North America within the context of globalization. The other mode by which the thematic of globalization is reflected in my work is through a critical examination of the discourses of globalization and its (dis)connections with post-80's South Asian labor migration into the US. Much of this work is related to my work as a volunteer organizer for the New York Taxi Workers Alliance. (<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/data/indiv/area/idsas/MATHEW,Biju.htm>)

3.2 Thus, we are not provided with any information about the professional interest in business studies of Mathew. However, from the above it is quite clear that he has an obsessive interest in Hindutva.

3.3 What is missing from the information is Mathew's ideological inclination. From <http://www.proxsa.org/yss/org.html>, we discover that he is a coordinator of the Forum of Indian Leftists. The communists in India, except those who are in the electoral politics field, rarely talk about themselves as being communists. Instead they arrogate themselves to labels like leftists, liberals, progressives, etc. In addition, he has written articles in the Communist publications in India. One such article was "Hindutva For a Few Dollars a Day" co-authored with another known communist of Indian origin, Vijay Prashad. It appeared in the People's Democracy (Weekly Organ of the Communist Party of India (Marxist)) on March 25, 2001 (http://pd.cpim.org/2001/march25/march25_biju_vijay.htm).

3.4 While the Nazi's crimes against humanity have been well documented and commented upon, there is very little mention about the role of the Communists in this respect. A study done by some French writers has documented the infamous history of communism in the places where they were in power. This book was translated into English under the title "The Black Book of Communism - Crimes, Terrors, Repression" and published by the Harvard University Press in 1999.

3.5 The writers have also clearly shown that the devastation done by the communist rulers was justified in terms of their ideology, and not as mere acts of individuals. For example, immediately after the Bolshevik revolution, a large number of so-called bourgeoisie and so-called kulaks were killed. This was rationalised on the grounds that to create an egalitarian social order, the society will have to be first cleansed of elements who would probably come in the way. This is similar to the argument by label mentioned at the beginning.

3.6 Stalin, Lenin and Mao are guilty of overseeing the deaths of millions of their own countrymen. It was not merely the deaths caused by erroneous policies implemented in the name of communism, for example man-made famine. But, it was also murder of a large number of political opponents. No communist anywhere in the world is asked to dwell upon such crimes against humanity. But, these same communist will hold forth against allegations of similar misdeeds of others.

3.7 The various communist parties in India have portraits of people like Lenin and Stalin prominently displayed in their offices. Their public meetings have huge cut-outs of such persons in the background. It is a tragedy of discourse in India that no one has ever questioned these parties for such a blatant display of persons who have to be discussed only in terms of their record of crimes against humanity. And it is the same persons who hurl accusations of fascism, etc., against their opponents.

3.8 It needs to be mentioned that the communists in India supported the creation of Pakistan, and went further to say that India should be divided into 19 nations. During the Chinese attack on India in 1962, the same communists also supported the actions of Mao, and went on to say that Chairman Mao was their chairman too!

3.9 Mathew's links with the Communists in India is further reinforced given the fact that the press conference in Delhi to release Report was organised by SAHMAT, a well-known communist organisation. It was founded in 1989, in memory of Safdar Hashmi, who was an activist in the labour movement. He was killed by what the communists allege to be a mob hired by the Congress party. Strangely enough the communists and the Congress party are in active collaboration in the political field against the Hindutva ideology.

4. Sabrang

4.1 What is of equal interest is the background of one of the publishers, namely, Sabrang Communications Private Limited. (The other is The South Asia Citizens Web, France, of which we have not bothered to find much.) Sabrang is promoted by the husband-wife duo of Javed Anand and Teesta Setalvad. Together they edit a magazine called Communalism Combat, set up some seven/eight years ago. They claim to be intrepid fighters of communalism of all hues. However, in a recent editorial they have said:

- Whenever Communalism Combat is blamed for being 'too pro-minority', we hold the sangh parivar and the rest of the saffron brotherhood responsible for this editorial 'tilt'. Had Hindutva not hijacked the national agenda and targeted the country's religious minorities, so much time and attention would not have been needed to defend Muslims and Christians from the vitriol, vilification and violence that is deliberately directed at them. In fact, but for the hate mongers, this magazine itself would not have been necessary. In such an imagined paradise of communal peace, had your editors still been involved in an issue-based publication, it would have very likely have focussed on how one half of India (comprising Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and men who respond to other identity markers) treats the other half - women. (Editorial, "Minorities within minorities", Communalism Combat, May 2001.)

4.2 At the time, the President of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), Maharashtra, commented as follows:

- According to the husband-wife duo, the Sangh is a very responsible organisation - it is responsible for all the evils in the country! Secondly, the national agenda was being set by non-Sangh (perhaps anti-Sangh) organisations in the past, but is now being set (their word is 'hijacked') by the Sangh. Third, there are deliberate attacks (physical and non-physical) against the religious minorities. Fourth, the reason for the existence of "Communalism Combat" is the Sangh.

- The first allegation is too comical to be commented upon.

- The second allegation in many ways is a credit for the Sangh. I do not think that I would be wrong if I say that it is only since 1985 that the Sangh started to influence the national agenda. Until that time, the dominant ideology at the intellectual level was what was professed to be Marxism. The alleged practitioners of this ideology had a completely open field, and in addition they demanded and received more than adequate funding from the people, through state patronage.

- I hope that the husband-wife duo is not arguing that there was a paradise prevailing at the time when the Sangh started to influence the national agenda. I think it can be quite easily established that by any factor the country is not any worse off today than what it was then, and that in many factors it is in fact better off.

- So the issue that the duo has to handle is why was India not a land of milk and honey in 1985. Given their predilection, I am sure that they will refuse to do this analysis, since it would establish why the Sangh has been able to dominate the national agenda today. Their use of the word 'hijack' more than clearly establishes their mind set, as well as their agenda. In this they do not wish to even face the truth, because not only would it be uncomfortable for them, but would also expose their hollowness.

- It is because of the abject failure of those who claim to be Marxist that the people have turned to the Sangh and the ideology of Hindutva. Shri Arun Shourie in his speech to the RSS cadre from all over India in November 1992, said: "Causes which the RSS has taken up have (now) been embraced by the country.... That you will persevere for as long as that turning around takes, about that I have little apprehension: the way you have persevered over the last 50 years itself assures us of that."

- If this is to be called hijacking, I will not argue about it.

- The third allegation is a canard that is standard in the practice of secularism in this country. The secular fundamentalists have to go to this extent now that they are cornered. Commenting on a bombing of a church in Bihar recently, an editorial in an English paper from Goa, commented: "Seemingly, the act was committed by unknown miscreants to issue threatening notes in Hindi with saffron ink, asking Christians to leave India. The question is: is it the handiwork of the Pakistan's ISI, which is bent on fanning communal frenzy, to belittle Indian in the eyes of the world? Unless the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) or the Centre establishes that, one will assume, it is the design of the old anti-Christian communal outfits, like Bajrang Dal."

- It does not matter to the secular fundamentalists that there is something called natural justice. It does not matter to them that many of the extreme cases of the attacks on Christians have been proved to be either secular acts or downright fabrication by the Christian organizations. It does not matter to them that the communal acts have been after extreme provocation by the Christian organizations. You see, the Sangh is a very responsible organization!

- Re the fourth allegation. I guess the husband-wife duo should really be giving a royalty to the Sangh for ensuring their existence as alleged journalists, or whatever they call themselves.

4.3 Interestingly, the editorial further says:

- The large-scale gender killings through the obnoxious practices of foeticide, infanticide, dowry-related murders and deaths through acute malnutrition of the girl child have led to a situation where the number of women per every thousand population is on a dangerous decline. It's an ugly reality that should make every Indian of the male gender hang his head in shame, but the high command of Hindutva particularly so as the 'national mainstream' which they claim to represent contributes more than its share to what is nothing short of homicide.

4.4 To this, the VHP functionary wrote as follows:

- So, you see, the Sangh is not only behind all sorts of abuses against women, but it is actually a murderous organisation! Since the husband-wife duo is fond of filing public interest litigations, I am sure they will filing one in the Supreme Court asking the honourable justices to direct the government to file a case against the Sangh for gender cleansing.

4.5 It would not be out of place to mention that even after the reply was sent, the same old rhetoric is repeated. In August 2002, Setalvad said the following in a public speech: "The tragedy of this country is that with the dominance of the ideology of Hindu rashtra in public life, with proponents of it gaining power, every real issue that we need to tackle has got sidelined." (<http://www.sabrang.com/news/teesaward.htm>) A poser to Setalvad. Perhaps she could work towards tackling these real issues, even as the Sangh keeps on undertaking what she calls a destructive programme.

4.6 Another interesting aspect of Sabrang was its very active involvement in running an advertisement campaign during the 1999 General Elections against the BJP. In an interview (<http://www.humanscapeindia.net/humanscape/hs1199/hs11997t.htm>, "The Displaced And The Dispossessed", Humanscape, November 1999), Setalvad clearly stated that the initiative was taken by Communalism Combat to seek funds from three political parties - the Congress, the Communist Party of India, and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) - and 'ten prominent individuals'. The cost of the campaign was Rs 1.50 crores.

4.7 This interview took place after the elections were over. While the election process was on, Setalvad was asked about the source of finance. In *The Asian Age* (September 4, 1999), Setalvad had said that the support comes from four political parties, some corporate house and certain NGOs. In *India Today* (September 13, 1999), she said it was "from a wide spectrum of well-wishers including corporates, trade unions, women's group and NGOs." There is an axiom that it is very hard to be consistent when one is telling lies. The reports also said that Setalvad and her team for this campaign operated from the residence of a Congress leader, and worked closely with the media cell of the party.

4.8 Sabrang, therefore, sees no inconsistency in asking for transparency of others, without reciprocating itself.

4.9 Setalvad is also a well-travelled person. Between August 31 to September 7, 2002, she was at Durban to attend a United Nations' programme called "World Conference Against Racism". *The Statesman* (September 30, 2001) carried a picture of her sitting next to one John Dayal. Dayal has a placard around his neck which says: "Hindutva - rapes and kills Dalits, Muslims, Christians in India". This is the same Dayal who has been prominent in calumnising the Sangh, particularly in context of the violence against Christians.

4.10 It needs to be stated that the link between Mathew and Communalism Combat is nothing new. In January 1998, *Rediff on Net*, carried a profile, in two parts, of VHP-A by Mathew, which said that it was an arrangement with Communalism Combat. These reports are available at:

<http://www.rediff.com/news/1998/jan/03vhp.htm> and
<http://www.rediff.com/news/1998/jan/03vhp2.htm>

Whether Mathew chooses to be a Communist, or whether Communalism Combat chooses to be anti-RSS, is a decision that they are free to take themselves. However, just as they claim to expose the ideological position of the Sangh, it is necessary for them to state their own ideological stance. If in this stance, they wish to oppose the Sangh, then there is an obligation on them to stand up to a higher test of impartiality.

5. Thank you

5.1 One of the books that is often quoted in anti-RSS tracts is 'Khaki Shorts Saffron Flags', by Tapan Basu and four others, and published by Orient Longman (1993). However, the effect it had on Ansar Hussain Khan is as follows:

· "The authors of Khaki Shorts Saffron Flags have done a signal service to the cause of India's future by drawing attention to (the social service part) of the Sangh's work. But then they try to give these positive observations an unfavourable twist. Looked at another way, their criticism of the Sangh is in fact in many parts favourable." (The Rediscovery of India, Orient Longman, India, 1995, p 249.)

5.2 In many ways the authors of the Report should also be thanked for listing out the various charity activities being done by members of the Sangh Parivar. Is it not amazing that IDRf has given donations to such a large number of organisations spread all over the country? I think all Indians (including the authors of the Report) should feel proud that, unlike what is normally said, the people of India are very interested in undertaking welfare programmes outside the ambit of the government.

As said before, the Sangh Parivar is the largest NGO in the world. By listing out even part of the activities of the Sangh, the authors of the Report should be thanked for confirming this claim!

6. Conclude first and then get the data

6.1 At the beginning we have pointed out that the standard communist technique is to first put a label of a convict on their opponent, and then examine the case, if possible, but do not worry about such formalities. The programme of 'warning' the donors to stop assisting IDRF is not new. These 'warnings' have been coming for a long time - that is even before the so-called analysis was completed in the form of the Report. This then becomes a standard Goebbles technique of stating a lie a hundred times so that eventually it becomes the truth.

6.2 One such warning came on 14 September, 1999, when the All India Christian Council, based in Andhra Pradesh, came out with a press statement with the following subject line: "How the Parivar gets its dollar funds from innocent and not so innocent organisations abroad. Church funds too find their way to killers of Christians". It alleged that "the Parivar is using its money to train killer gangs who wreak murder on the minorities, torture and rape the Dalits, and otherwise work very hard to demolish the plural heritage of the country and the secular character of its democratic Constitution."

6.3 This press statement also alleged that even Christian organisations, like the Salvation Army, were funding VHP-America, and gave out what it called a truncated list of the donors. What the Council did was to visit the website of VHP-America, and then with a simple switch, changed recipients of moneys from this Hindu organisation into donors. Everything else in the list was kept identical. This is the manner in which 'evidence' is collected. However, since the objective is to create confusion, a tactics of spit-and-run is quite sufficient.

6.4 We have mentioned the article ("Hindutva for a few dollars more") written by Mathew and Vijay Prashad in a communist publication in India in March 2001. On May 23, 2002, The Wall Street Journal published an article "India Confronts Its Own Intolerance", by Kanwal Rekhi, the global chairman of The Indus Entrepreneurs, an organization of South Asian businesspeople, and Mr. Henry S Rowen, a professor emeritus at Stanford and senior fellow of the Hoover Institution. In it they said:

- Many overseas Indian Hindus finance religious groups in India in the belief that the funds will be used to build temples, and educate and feed the poor of their faith. Many would be appalled to know that some recipients of their money are out to destroy minorities (Christians as well as Muslims) and their places of worship. Mr. Vajpayee could deal a severe blow to such covert causes by simply labeling them as terrorists.

6.5 Rekhi-Rowen do not say what is the evidence they have to make this statement. Since the authors of the Report say that they have been working 'meticulously' for the last so many years, could they be the source? Life is interesting if one is permitted to speculate!

6.6 In the week starting May 27, a USA based organisation called Coalition against Communalism, issued full page ads in India Abroad and India West, in which they asked "Did our generosity fund the carnage in Gujarat?" It had the Rekhi-Rowen quote, and in addition there was a quote of IG Patel, former governor, Reserve Bank of India, taken from Rediff.com of May 13, 2002. Patel appeals as follows:

- I earnestly request NRIs not to donate money to spread hatred in India, neither to the VHP nor to Islamic fundamentalists...Don't give it to people who propagate violence. (<http://www.ektaonline.org/cac/actions/gujarat/nriad.htm>)

6.7 We do not know if Patel has specifically identified any of the Islamic fundamentalist organisations, or the basis of his information. In any case, if he has the information, it would be interesting to know if he has passed the same to the government authorities in India.

6.8 The statement of Rekhi-Rowen triggered an article entitled "Deflections to the Right" in the Outlook (July 22, 2002). In its very first paragraph the above Rekhi-Rowen quote is mentioned. This article seems to be a summary of the Report that has now come out, and has also specifically targeted IDRF. Of course, there is no mention that there are some seven intrepid souls who are working diligently and will soon be coming out with the Report.

6.9 It would not be out of place to mention here what the editor of Outlook had to say in June 2002 at a workshop organised by the Network of Women in Media, in Bangalore entitled 'Covering Communal Conflict: Lessons from Gujarat 2002'. According a report by Jyoti Punwani, (<http://www.thehoot.org/mediaactivism/workshop.asp>) he 'argued that it was time journalists became activists to dislodge the BJP government at the Centre'.

6.10 Here one needs to look at an article by Vijay Prashad, which we are not sure if it has appeared in the print version of Outlook, but exists in the internet version (July 22, 2002). Entitled "Suburban Whites and Pogroms in India" (<http://www.outlookindia.com/full.asp?fodname=20020722&fname=vijay&sid=1>), he talks about how the 'Suburban Whites' not only provide 'legitimacy' but also funds for the 'Hindu Right', and by association involves the former into what is called 'Pogroms in India'. (The plural is in the original.) The article also says: "A bumper sticker that says "Free Tibet" seems to offer an entry into a transcendental politics, far removed from the social melancholy of suburban life." Tibet has been occupied by communist China since 1957, and is making serious efforts to change demography of the place, as well destroying the indigenous culture. (How a free Tibet and 'pogroms in India' simultaneously interests the 'suburban whites' is left unexplained.)

6.11 Interestingly, he avers:

- For about a decade, Biju Mathew (best known for his work with the New York Taxi Workers' Association) and I have conducted research on the Hindutva Right in the US and we've found that millions of dollars travel each year through illegal and legal networks to finance right-wing activity in the subcontinent.

6.12 This is the same Mathew who is one of the authors of the Report. Actually, it has intrigued us that Prashad is not identified as one of the authors, since the partnership between him and Mathew is quite legendary. The article in the communist publication, mentioned above, were co-authored by them.

6.13 In the Outlook article, to no surprise, Prashad also mentions the above quote of Rekhi-Rowen.

6.14 The role of Angana Chatterji, another of the authors of the Report, in the build up is interesting, particularly considering that her writings appeared in two Pakistani papers. She wrote an article in the Daily Times, and a letter to a Pakistani newspaper, Dawn. The article, "Indian Diaspora Funding Hindu Extremism", in the Daily Times (July 31, 2002) begins as follows:

- It is now no secret that the Sangh Parivar, the collective name given to the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), the Bajrang Dal and other Hindu extremist organizations, is exploiting religion (Hindutva) to foment communal

violence in India. To this end they are organizing the ultra-right, non-secular and undemocratic forces in India. What is less known is how these forces of injustice and bigotry are funded, especially by the Indian-Hindu communities living abroad.

6.15 It then refers to the Outlook article of July 22, just as the letter in Dawn (August 6, 2002) does. Nowhere does she refer to the Report that would be published in another three months, nor about her role in it. The impression given is that she is basing her views on the Outlook article.

6.16 In the August 8, 2002, issue of The Hindu, Robert Hathaway of a Washington based think tank, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, entitled "Charity... or terrorism?" said: "It is probably advisable for the American Government to hold an official inquiry into fund-raising in the U.S. by groups implicated in the Gujarat violence." He also says:

- Credible reports have recently suggested that substantial sums of money are sent from Indians resident in the U.S., and from American citizens of Indian origin, to groups and organisations in Gujarat and elsewhere in India that are directly linked to the violence in Gujarat. I do not know if these accounts are true. But respected Indian journalists have uncovered disturbing linkages. If these reports prove accurate, then it is possible that such financial transactions violate U.S. anti-terrorism statutes.
- Alternatively, issues of fraud may be at issue. Responsible sources report that some U.S. residents make financial contributions to overseas religious groups in the belief that these funds are to be used for religious or humanitarian purposes, when in fact the monies so raised are used to promote religious bigotry.
- In either event, it is probably advisable for the American Government to hold an official inquiry into fund-raising in the U.S. by groups implicated in the Gujarat violence, to ensure that U.S. laws are not being violated. Legitimate organisations need not fear such an investigation, which would serve to clear their names and reassure potential donors about the legitimacy of their fund-raising activities.

6.17 Hathaway talks about 'credible reports', 'respect Indian journalists', and 'responsible sources'. (How he attributes these adjectives to the various nouns is not clear.) And he also says: 'I do not know if these accounts are true.' If this the standard of scholars at the Woodrow Wilson International Center, then.....

6.18 In June 2002, Hathaway has made a deposition in front of the US Commission on International Religious Freedom. The Outlook article says:

- Hathaway asked the commission to recommend an inquiry into fund-raising activities in the US by groups implicated in the recent violence in Gujarat. He told the commission that "some US residents make financial contributions to overseas religious groups in the belief that these funds are to be used for religious or humanitarian purposes, when in fact the monies so raised are used to promote religious bigotry".

6.19 One assumes that a genuine scholar would not make such statements in a flippant manner. Thus, what is pertinent is to know if Hathaway has provided to the concerned authorities the evidence that he has based on which he asks his government to make an investigation. If he has, there is no news about it. And given the manner in which the Report has been covered in the media, one has to wonder if Hathaway has provided the information to anyone. Or, for that matter, he has any 'evidence' at all.

6.20 (A detailed critique of Hathaway's article has been made by Dr Koenraad Elst, and was published in two parts by Rediff on Net. They are available at: <http://www.rediff.com/news/2002/aug/30guest.htm> and <http://www.rediff.com/news/2002/sep/03guest.htm>)

6.21 Efforts had been made to give the Report wide publicity even before it was officially released. In this endeavour, members of all sorts of organisations in India were used. We have evidence with respect to three - namely Insaniyat, Network for Women in Media (NWM) and Oxfam. Sandhya Srinivasan posted a message on the NWM discussion list, forwarding a request received from Insaniyat, which itself received a communication from a person in Oxfam in Ahmedabad. The communication said that "a report is going to be released today (Oct 30) documenting the sources of money for the IDRF." Interestingly, it also said; "The goal of releasing this report is to pressure several big electronic portals, credit card companies and banks to stop funding IDRF because its money is sent back to help Sangh Parivar agendas." The communication further said there was a need for "committed journalists in India who will help give publicity to this story." (Since this document highlights the mode of working of the groups involved in preparing the Report, we are giving the full text as Annexure 1. Moreover, does Oxfam permit its employees to be so involved?)

6.22 So, what do we have? Mathew-Prashad have been studying the foreign funding of the Sangh for the last decade. However, Mathew has recently said (<http://www.stopfundinghate.org/resources/FAQ.htm>) that the group which prepared the Report got together after the Gujarat riots, that is sometime after March 2002. In May 2002, Rekhi-Rowen make allegations of illegalities of this funding, without mentioning what the source of information they have. In the same month, an advertisement is published in two publications in the USA asking the NRI's not to give money to the VHP. In June 2002, in his presentation to the US Commission on International Religious Freedom, Hathaway asks the USA government to investigate the funding by IDRF to various organisations in India. In July 2002, Outlook comes out with an article with what appears to be a summary of the Report. In the same month, Chatterji writes, allegedly based on the Outlook report, an article and a letter in two separate Pakistani publications. In August 2002, Hathaway also makes similar allegations, again without stating the names of sources, which he thinks are credible, etc., but is not sure if they are accurate.

6.23 Thus, there seems to be a concerted attempt to build up a momentum to build up to a crescendo to coincide with the official release of the Report in November 2002, to much media fanfare, a Report which is claimed to be meticulously prepared. The use, in this case, of international organisations like Oxfam for the purpose of conducting political propaganda is nothing new, and has been done in the past in many cases.

6.24 Since Prashad's name is not included as one of the authors, we are not sure if the evidence collected by Mathew with the help of Prashad forms the basis of the data. It just seems a little odd to us that even after this decade long investigation, the only evidence that they are able to provide is from the websites of those whom they accuse of undertaking a fraud. Perhaps Prashad and Mathew will come out with another report soon, setting out further 'evidence' on the subject. Or perhaps not!

6.25 Interestingly, Prashad has written an article in Frontline (which is an active promoter of the communists in India), in which he says:

· Until the report by the Campaign to Stop Funding Hate most of what we knew had been by innuendo and through interviews with exiles from the land of Yankee Hindutva. Now we

have information and documentation that largely proves the culpability of guilty dollars in the barbarous acts of the Sangh Parivar. ("Countering Yankee Hindutva", December 7-20, 2002.)

6.26 And then we read the ubiquitous Rekhi-Rowen quote. So, is it Rekhi-Rowen who set the ball rolling this 'meticulous' inquiry of how the Hindus in the USA are funding 'hate in India'? Or is it that the ten years of investigation by Mathew-Prashad that is the basis? We wonder if we will ever know.

6.27 But, in the July 2002 article (that is five months ago) in Outlook, Prashad categorically states that, in their ten years of investigation, he and Mathew 'found that millions of dollars travel each year through illegal and legal networks to finance right-wing activity in the subcontinent.' Is this one more example of the definition of meticulousness that the communist are notorious for?

6.28 At a larger level, does this mean that when he (along with Mathew) wrote the article "Hindutva For a Few Dollars a Day" (People's Democracy (Weekly Organ of the Communist Party of India (Marxist)) March 25, 2001), he had based it on innuendos? And that the All India Christian Council, Rekhi-Rowen, Hathaway, Outlook magazine, Chatterjee, etc., were all going on the basis of innuendos? And what about the ten years of effort that Prashad and Mathew claim that they have been making? Things do get very curious, and we hope we have confused the reader of the analysis as much as we ourselves are!

7. Three analysis

7.1 In an article titled "Attack on IDRF: Little Method to Their Madness" (December 11, 2002, <http://www.sulekha.com/column.asp?cid=274949>), Prof Beloo Mehra has analysed how the Report fits in the standard communist technique. In the introduction to the article, Dr Ramesh Rao makes the following comment:

- The attack against IDRF ("The Foreign Exchange of Hate: IDRF and the American Funding of Hindutva") compiled in the 91-page report is a rehash of much that the Forum of Indian Leftists (FOIL) has published over the past five years.

7.2 However, as mentioned above, a fiction is being created that the Report is a new revelation, meticulously compiled, supported by hard facts and razor-sharp analysis.

7.3 Some quotes from the article will clearly establish the agenda of the authors of the Report.

- This response to Sabrang report looks at Chapter 1 that outlines the purpose, methodology, and organization of the report. The emphasis is on understanding and critiquing the methods employed by the researchers and writers of this report. The objective is to determine if the methodology withstands a rigorous critical examination.

- In the first paragraph of the report, section 1.1. titled, "Purpose" the last sentence reads, "The Foreign Exchange of Hate' establishes that the IDRF is. ." Now anyone who has done any semi-academic writing knows that the 'purpose statement' is first and foremost about INVESTIGATION rather than ESTABLISHMENT of facts. (Emphasis in the original.)

- Chapter 1 is titled "Purpose, Methodology and Organization," but only one page is devoted to these three sections. Authors then go on to present a two full page "Summary of Findings" - something that is not mentioned in the title. Why this deceit?

- One reason perhaps why it has not been done so is because the focus of this report is to show the link between IDRF and violence against religious minorities in India. Does this suggest an innate bias or a pre-determined conclusion of the researchers even before doing the content analysis of the selected documents?

- Even before the reader is made aware of the origins of Hindutva as a political ideology, he or she is asked to believe that it is "Hindu supremacist ideology" and has been responsible for much of the "communal violence" in India. Is this a case of reaching at a conclusion even before any evidence is presented?

- Section 1.4 titled, "Summary of Findings" starts with the sentence: "The purpose of this report is to DOCUMENT the links between IDRF and certain violent and sectarian.." Is this an admission on the part of the writers that their purpose is to DOCUMENT rather than to FIND if any such links exist? Is the starting assumption of these writers that such links exist? (Emphasis in the original.)

- Another example of writers' rhetoric intent is obvious in section 1.4, where the writers depict the Hindutva movement as a "violent sectarian movement - similar to the Nazi idea of a pure Aryan Germany."

7.4 A similar exercise was done by Aseem Shukla in analysing the report prepared by Human Rights Watch on the post-Godhra communal violence in Gujarat. His article is titled "The HRW Report on Gujarat: Another Assassination" (May 13, 2002, <http://www.sulekha.com/article/esc.asp?cid=199895>)

7.5 Quotes from the article would give a flavour of the methodology of labelling that we have mentioned.

- I was drawn to this report for this very reason. For as the personal accusations reached a crescendo over the last 6 weeks, despite my compulsive search of all accounts from Gujarat, I had not seen any substantiation to the charge that the State government carried out the attacks on Muslims. Of course, there is no dearth of accusations -- and the headlines in the Indian press, never known for the mastery of subtlety, skip words like "complicity" and just accuse Modi of murder. Yet here was a report from a foreign organization, no less, that confidently declares state participation and complicity in the massacres. Now I had read the 1999 report on Kashmir by the HRW, an amalgamation of Indian Army human rights abuses that failed to devote even a sentence to the plight of Kashmiri Hindus. I was eager now to understand what this inexplicably often-quoted organization had to say of Gujarat.

- So I downloaded this now infamous report (at <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2002/india/gujarat.pdf>) with great anticipation -- perhaps this was the definitive report, the Holy Grail, so many sought to accurately accuse the BJP. Ah, but I expected too much. Scanning the summary I realized quickly that this document owed its genesis to the same biases, the same perverse equations and the very same sources that had vitiated the atmosphere in Gujarat for eight weeks prior.

- Ostensibly written as an account of a tragic, maniacal orgy of murder, this 75-page report evolves into nothing more than a politically charged and hopelessly biased self-serving account.

- The first salvo without which this report would not exist -- the Godhra train burning -- merits exactly 1 paragraph on page 13. That's correct -- 3 sentences out of 75 pages describe the killing of innocent Hindus that sparked a national nightmare. The remainder of the Godhra chapter exhaustively quotes Celia Dugger of the New York Times and Rajiv Chandrasekaran of the Washington Post and their long-exposed, sadistic, blame-the-Hindu victim journalistic gymnastics.

- In its haste to blame the government, the report again overlooks the facts of rapid police deployment and the massive police firing that disproportionately killed Hindu rioters: 90 companies of the State Reserve Police were called in on February 27, 2002 itself, and over 3,900 rounds of ammunition killed close to 100 rioters. The Gujarat Police overlook a population of 50 million (that would rank as the 22nd most populous country in the world) and have largely succeeded in keeping violence at a minimum within one city since the initial days of madness.

- If the rest of the 73 pages of anti-Sangh hatred are not enough, though utterly unrelated, almost 2 pages are devoted to anti-Christian violence. Keep in mind again that the Godhra train killing merited 1 paragraph!

- Why do I devote this article to a report written by an insignificant paper-pusher with no journalistic integrity securely sheltered in New York City? This report is a convenient summary of a rampant dogma among circles immersed in a modern day political witch-hunt. A witch-hunt aimed at discrediting an opposing ideology -- it is tantamount to an arrogant

rejection of Indian democracy, Gujarati electoral intelligence and due process. For evidence of immediate repercussions, just wait until the next session in the United States Congress when the shrinking, yet shrill, India-baiters begin spewing their venom India's way. You can count on them being armed with the HRW report making its way through Washington.

7.6 Shukla was right on the button. Such reports are a staple in the campaign of spit -and-run.

7.7 A third analysis is an article "Politics by Other Means", which looks at a few of the recent reports by Human Rights Watch on India. This article was written by Arvin Bahl, an undergraduate student at Princeton University, and is Chapter 31 of the book "Gujarat after Godhra - Real violence, selective outrage", edited by Ramesh Rao and Koenraad Elst, and published by Har-Anand Publications. Bahl says:

- Upon closer examination, however, extensive and systematic bias exists in HRW's reports on human rights and communal violence in India. The most glaring defect of HRW's reports is the lack of concern for the rights and lives of Hindus. Incidents of communal violence in which both the Hindu majority and a particular minority community are involved in, and share the blame, are portrayed as one-sided attacks by Hindus against 'innocent minorities'. Human rights abuses against Hindus are ignored or downplayed compared to attacks against other religious groups.

8. A hidden target

8.1 A feature of the Report is the allegation that the Sangh is working towards making the Vanvasis into Hindus. It is well known that it is not possible to define a Hindu in a way that it is possible to define a Christian, or a Muslim, or a Communist. The programme to take the Vanvasis out of the Hindu fold is not a new one, and is a continuation of the colonial programme of divide and rule. But, study after study has shown that there are many characteristics of the people dwelling in the forests, which closely match with those who live outside.

8.2 Satyakam Joshi, who did his doctorate in studying the Vanvasis in and around Dangas in South Gujarat, discusses the self-identification of the people in the area in the larger Hindu fold. He says:

- Strong community solidarities are apparent also in the way the people worship and celebrate festivals. The people, whether kokna, bhil or varli, share a common cosmology which incorporates local deities as well as Hindu gods and goddesses..... There is a common belief that Ram and Sita passed through the Dangas in their travels. According to the bhil raja of Gadhvi: "Before there were human beings, the Dangas was full of rakshshas (devils). When Ram and Sita passed through the Dangas they killed all rakshshas and gave birth to us. Ram had created us. Ram is our God." Even today when Dangas meet they use the greeting 'Ram-Ram'. It is notable also that almost all villages have an image of Hanuman, the disciple of Rama, and during festivals and religious ceremonies the people worship and give offerings to this deity. ("Tribals, Missionaries and Sadhus: Understanding Violence in the Dangas", Economic and Political Weekly, September 11, 1999.)

8.3 What is, however, absolutely clear is that the Vanvasis are definitely not Christians or Muslims. The authors of the Report seem to imply that they see nothing wrong if a church or a mosque is constructed amongst the Vanvasis, but complain about a temple being built. They see nothing wrong in the Vanvasis being converted to Christianity or Islam, but when those converted are reverted to their ancient traditions, then it is wrong.

8.4 All this makes one wonder if the authors are working along with the aggressive proselytisers of these two religions. The funding to the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram seems to be a special target. And it is well known that due to the activities of the VKA, the proselytisers have now to work harder in their business programme of raising money for conversion, since they are not able to show the results that they alleged to have achieved in the past.

8.5 The Outlook article of July 22 also dwells quite a bit on the activities of the Sangh in the vanvasi area. Furthermore, journalist Varsha Bhosle noted in her article "Where there's no will to reform, there's extinction" (<http://www.rediff.com/news/2002/nov/23varsha.htm>):

- If you read Chapter 4: Funding Hate of the "report," you quickly realise that the only aim of the campaign is to halt the funding of the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram, Vanvasi Kalyan Parishad, Vivekananda Kendra, Vanvasi Seva Sangh, Sewa Bharati, and Ekal Vidyalays -- ALL being educational institutions set up for the upliftment of Dalits and Adivasis. Those whom the vultures target... (Emphasis in the original.)

8.6 Let us also have a look at a PTI news item, "Foreign funds -- VHP too a recipient, say Catholic Union", (The Indian Express, Nov 2, 1999). It quotes Dr Walter Fernandes, former director of Indian Social Institute (ISI) as follows:

- The VHP receives the same if not more funds from western countries through fund raisers and other events. Organisations like Akhil Bharatiya Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram have launched advertisement campaigns in western media to raise money in the name of tribal uplift.

8.7 Dr Walter Fernandes is a Jesuit priest, and is one of the persons actively involved the propaganda section of the Roman Catholic Church. The Indian Social Institute is a front for the Roman Catholic Church, and tries to give a secular image to communal programmes. One has also to note the date of above news item, namely November 1999, and then consider if there is not a sustained campaign to try and stop the work of the Sangh in this area.

8.8 As if on cue, after the Report comes out, the All India Christian Council takes cognisance of it, and as per a report in The Hindu ("VHP carrying out hate campaign: Christian council", November 29, 2002).

- "The Ekal Vidyalayas were indulging in hatemongering and perpetrating hatred against Christians by assiduously building up hate zones, and the Christian community in those areas were living in fear," according to Sajan K. George, national convener of the Council.

8.9 In its response to the press statement issued by IDRF, we can see yet another example of the hidden target. At one place, the authors of the Report say:

- The nature of "education" supported by IDRF is geared towards generating a militant Hindu revivalism and promoting bigotry (see the article "Hindu Right Goes to School to Build a Nation" in the New York Times on May 13, 2002). The focus on "tribal welfare" is a euphemism. The Sangh Parivar has realized that the continued existence of indigenous tribal identities is a threat to its totalitarian project. Its "tribal welfare" programs are therefore aimed at "re-converting" tribals to Hinduism (notwithstanding the fact that these tribal communities were never Hindu to begin with). (<http://stopfundinghate.org/actions/press/120802.htm>)

8.10 The tragedy is that the authors of the Report criticise the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram for undertaking service programmes in the region, which have had a more lasting effect than that of the Christian missionaries. It would appear to us that the reason is that the activities of the Sangh in the Vanvasi areas has given a severe setback to the proselytisation activities of the Christian missionaries. Sulekha.com reports:

- The greatest challenge to the Bible inspired mission of the NLFT comes from the Sangh Parivar's Banbasi Kalyan Kendra. The dedicated life workers of RSS have started empowering the tribals by running many educational institutions which while empowering them through imparting secular technical education also retain their tribal cultural and spiritual identity. Rather than making them disown their roots, the Kendra made the tribals feel proud of their culture. ("NLFT - The Christian Al-Qaeda", S. Aravindan Neelakandan, May 2, 2002, www.sulekha.com/articlede...cid=195857, full article is reproduced as Annexure 2.)

8.11 It would not be out of place to mention that there is an alleged link between NLFT and the Congress party. Seema Mustafa writes:

- The Congress, guided by Mr Mani Shankar Aiyar, has struck a deal with the relatively new Indigenous National Party of Tripura that has been reportedly floated by the National Liberation Front of Tripura. In a bid to cut into the votes of "these Marxists," Mr Aiyar has now picked up on a relationship with the tribal extremists that was started by his friend and mentor, the late Prime Minister Rajeev Gandhi. (The Asian Age, December 21, 2002.)

9. Selective targeting

9.1 The authors of the Report make no mention about the funding by Christian organisations for conversions specifically targeted against the Hindus, or the funding of the madrasas, where Islamic terrorists are bred. Sabrang has made clear in their mission statement that they think that the only thing that is of concern to them is the acts of the Sangh. But the real intention of the authors of the Report is no different.

9.2 At the new website they have created, there is a section called "Frequently Asked Questions". The answer to question number 3 gives their justification for the selective targeting.

- Q 3. Why don't you criticize other religious groups who send money to India?
- First of all, IDRF is not sending money to a religious group. It is sending it to the Sangh Parivar. We are not opposed to religious groups sending money to India, per se. However, the money that IDRF sends encourages divisiveness and violence. We do condemn all acts of hate and violence - regardless of religion or ideology. The reason for our focus on Sangh Parivar is that we are committed to an India that is democratic, secular and embodies equal respect to all religions.

9.3 Are the authors of the Report contend that the monotheistic religions of Islam and Christianity, which also believe in aggressive proselytising, practice the principle of 'equal respect to all religions'? And was it not Marx (one of the founding fathers of communism) who said that religion is the opium for the poor?

9.4 When the Pope came to India in November 1999, he used the opportunity to ask his clergy and laity to work towards converting the whole of Asia to Christianity - and we think that India is part of Asia, and that the Hindus are 85% of the population. The Christian missionaries utilise all sorts of means to take their proselytising programme forward. An article from the website of Rationalist International on the question of the way Christian missionaries are using the funds for conversions in an unscrupulous manner. The article is that it has named three office bearers of All India Christian Council, namely the president Dr. Joseph D'Souza, the vice-president John Dayal and the general secretary Dr. K P Yohannan, as funding a programme of the Dalits to convert to Buddhism with an eventual target of converting them to Christianity. The article (November 2001) is available at: http://www.Rationalistinternational.net/archive/en/rationalist_2001/83.htm (Full article is available at Annexure 3.)

9.5 The funding by various Islamic countries of the madarasas is not restricted to India. While such institutes in Pakistan have been a fertile ground to nurture that Talibanists who have created such a havoc in Afghanistan, the spread has been far and wide. With the terrorist bombing in Bali, the activities of such institutes in Indonesia have come into the limelight.

9.6 Organisations like the Human Rights Watch show an exceptional concern where the victims are non-Hindus. However, when it comes to the plight of the Hindus not just in India, as in the case of the Kashmiri Pandits or the Hindus in the Northeast, but also of the Hindus in Pakistan and Bangladesh, they seem to have a mental block. There is a large exodus of Hindus from Bangladesh with the formation of the new government there with the help of Islamic parties. It took a lot of prodding by the Hindus in the USA for the various groups which claim to be concerned about human rights to even come out with a press statement. And after a perfunctory report, no further effort at follow-up is made.

10. Sources of information for the Report

10.1 It is interesting that the information about the various Sangh organisations contained in the Report has come from the websites maintained by them. Thus, what is in public domain is what is stated in the Report. They did not have to go away from their computers to access the data that they needed. Is it not strange that organisations that have an intention of indulging in vandalism should be so open about their data? Or is it that the data is perverted in a manner which the authors of the Report wish to convey?

10.2 We guess that the arrogance of the authors of the Report cannot stoop to the level of not examining the case of the persons/organisations that they have labelled as convicts. True revolutionaries no longer have the luxury of undertaking a showcase trial, as Lenin, Stalin and Mao could have done. They have to make a pretence of being fair. So, they have to resort to equally abhorrent methods of distortion to achieve their goal.

10.3 One can also look at the various non-Sangh sources that they quote. It can be quite easily established that each of them is based on an ideology which is opposed to that of the Sangh. For example, the ideological orientation of the editorial policy of The Hindu (head quarters in Chennai) is set by N Ram, an avowed Marxist. As stated earlier, the editor of Outlook wants the journalists to become activists to dislodge the BJP government in Delhi.

10.4 The Report takes quotes from various so-called human rights organisations. While they have highlighted about non-Hindu victims in various riots and incidences of violence, they are invariably quiet when the non-Hindus are the aggressors, as in case of Islamic terrorists all over the country, and the Christian-supported terrorists in the North-East. Furthermore, they refuse to take serious cognisance of the plight of the Hindus in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Fiji, etc.

10.5 As mentioned above, Prashad wrote that he and Mathew have been investigating for a decade the source of funding of the Sangh from the Indian Diaspora. He says that they kept a track of both legal and illegal sources. The Report makes no mention of any special information that is available with them on the illegal sources, and the legal sources are those available from the websites of the various organisations mentioned in the Report. Quite a small amount of 'findings' for two people who spent ten years on the job.

10.6 But did they really spend this much amount of time? In the FAQ on the Saffron Dollar Project, the answer to the first question gives some different answer.

· Q 1. Who is involved in the Campaign to Stop Funding Hate? Where do your funds come from?

· We are a diverse group of people of Indian origin living and working in India, United States, and Europe. We found each other - via the internet and through personal contacts - in the aftermath of the Gujarat riots earlier this year. Among us there are professionals, teachers and students belonging to various faiths and political persuasions. We contribute personal time and money to this work and do not accept any institutional funding from anywhere. We are bound by one common goal: an India without hatred, where people are not persecuted because of their faith or political beliefs.

10.7 So we have a disparate group of people who did not know each other earlier and it was the Gujarat riots that got them together. And about not accepting institutional funding, we guess that this does not include Sabrang.

11. Guilt by association

11.1 A feature of the Report is to establish guilt by association. The case that the authors of the Report are trying to build up is on the basis that the Sangh is a fascist organisation. For this purpose, they rely on an article ("Hindutva's foreign tie-up in the 1930s: Archival Evidence", Economic and Political Weekly, Jan 22, 2000) by Marzia Casolari, identified as an Italian scholar, on the alleged links between Mussolini and the RSS. The information provided by Casolari makes them to arrive at the source of what they call the 'violent underpinnings of Hindutva'.

11.2 So, a detailed analysis of this article will enable us to shed some light on this whole fascist thing. Casolari says, "...the fascist ideological background of Hindu fundamentalism is taken for granted, (but) never proved by a systematic analysis." And so, she says, she will do so in her article.

11.3 She also says: "More generally, the aim of this paper is that of disproving Christophe Jaffrelot's thesis that there is a sharp distinction between nazi and fascist ideology on one side and RSS on the other side as far as the concept of race and the centrality of leader are concerned."

11.4 Jaffrelot has written an anti-RSS book, based on a detailed field study of the activities of the organisation in Madhya Pradesh. He is often invited to speak and write against the Sangh at various forums. In his book ("The Hindu nationalist Movement and Indian Politics 1925 to the 1990s", pp 61-62, Viking Publication, 1993.), Jafferlot wrote:

- The kind of metaphor used by Golwalkar ... echoes his scientific education. Students of natural science were always strongly represented in the RSS, possibly because of the importance of organicism in its ideology. Hedgewar was a doctor, Golwalkar studied and taught zoology, Rajendra Singh, who became sarsanghchalak in 1994, graduated in physics; H.V. Seshadri, who was to become General Secretary of the organisation, in chemistry; and K.S. Sudarshan in engineering.
- The organicist character of Golwalkar's ideology is reminiscent of certain aspects of Nazism. There are more obvious affinities between the two than between Hindu nationalism and Italian fascism since both share a strong emphasis on ethnic homogeneity. However, three differences remain. First, as emphasised in the previous section, the supreme concept in the RSS's doctrine is not race but society. In Golwalkar's works the promotion of an organic society is more important than the purity of the race. Second, even though Nazism attributed more importance than did Italian fascism to the organic nation in comparison to the state, Hitler was nostalgic for the 'old Reich' and valued the state as a means to promote the interests of the race. According to Hitler the 'mission' of the Nazi movement was 'the creation of a Germanic State'. This explains his preoccupation with the need to capture power as a matter of urgency, as attested by the aborted coup of 1923. The RSS, by contrast, is not a putschist organisation and Golwalkar considered that Hitler's capture of the state was a mistake.
- (Golwalkar said:) Hitler's movement centred round politics. We try to build life without being wedded to politics. It is many times found that many are gathered for political purpose. But when that purpose fails, unity is lost. We do not want any temporary achievement but an abiding oneness. And so we have kept ourselves aloof from politics.

11.5 So, we are expected to believe Casolari who has done some archival study, and some conjecture, all based on deskwork, and ignore one who has done a more detailed study on the aspect of fascism of the Sangh.

11.6 In any case, let us analyse the 'proof' provided by Casolari. The Report says Dr. B S Moonje, a well-wisher of the founder of the RSS, Dr Hedgewar, 'visited and met with Mussolini and was granted permission by Mussolini to observe and understand the nature of the fascist organisational structure.' This gives an impression that Moonje had a fascist inclination and had undertaken a special visit to Italy for the purpose studying fascism in greater detail.

11.7 The facts, as narrated by Casolari, are that Moonje went on a tour of Europe between February and March 1931, on his return from the Round Table Conference in London. He spent nine days in Rome between 15 to 24 March, out of which he spent one day, March 19, visiting six organisations working towards the fascist programme of Mussolini. Casolari says: "The same day, namely on 19 March 1931, at 3 p.m., in Palazzo Venezia, the headquarters of the fascist government, he met the Italian dictator." And she further says that Moonje recorded in his diary that he spent thirty minutes with Mussolini. She also says: "The description of the Italian journey includes information regarding fascism, its history, the fascist 'revolution', etc, and continues for two more pages."

11.8 So this is the sum-total of contact between Moonje and Mussolini and his organisations. Casolari says, "Moonje's trip to Italy, contrary to what happened in the case of Subhas Chandra Bose and other nationalists, did not give place to any further cooperation between Hindu nationalism and the fascist regime. However, these contacts were important at the ideological and organizational level." She offers no proof, except innuendos, for the latter part of this quote. In this context, she has used the words 'must have' five times in the following context:

1. This interest (of Hindu radicalism in Italian fascism) was commonly shared in Maharashtra, and must have inspired B.S. Moonje's trip to Italy in 1931.
2. (I)t makes sense to think that the entire circle of militant Hinduism must have been influenced by Moonje's Italian experience. [Note from the Hindu Vivek Kendra: Makes sense to whom?]
3. The influence of fascist ideology and practice must have gone far beyond the limits of the main organizations of the Hindu militant nationalism and must have extended to the wide and intricate net of secondary militant groups and centres of physical education or paramilitary training.
4. The aggressive racial policy carried out by Germany must have played a fundamental role in this shift of interest from Italy to Germany.
5. Accordingly it makes sense to think that the organizations of militant Hinduism must have perceived the necessity to rehabilitate their political past and re-invent a more clear-cut anti-British stand.

11.9 The only time she has used the words 'must have not' is in context of placed the Muslims in a favourable light, as follows: "Apart from the fact that this must have not been the attitude of most of Indian Muslims, militant Hindus had exaggerated claims towards the Muslims."

11.10 And then she has also used the words 'most probably' five times (is five Casolari's lucky number?) as follows:

1. Less well known is the fact that, as showed by a confidential report circulated within the Congress most probably at the time of the first ban of the RSS, after Gandhi's assassination, the similarity between the character of the RSS and that of fascist organizations was already taken for granted.
2. Fascist ideas were widespread among the Hindu nationalists, at least in Maharashtra. The above mentioned script had been printed in the form of a pamphlet and distributed not only among the people Moonje tried to involve in his project, but, most probably, to an even wider public. Fascism therefore, had a certain popularity, which, unfortunately, is at present difficult to be measured.
3. The contacts that Savarkar tried to establish with the consulates of the Axis powers in Bombay did not bring any noticeable result. Most probably this happened because the outbreak of the war made any possible activity in collaboration with foreign powers much more difficult.
4. The only result of these contacts - which could materialize only through the German consulate - was, most probably, the circulation of the already mentioned speech of Savarkar in the German newspapers, in exchange for articles in favour of Germany's Jewish policy in the Marathi newspapers.
5. It is difficult to establish if the organizations of militant Hinduism were arming themselves against possible foreign invaders, the internal enemy, or the British. Most probably they aimed at arming themselves against all of them together, with the purpose of taking advantage of any possible solution.

11.11 Of course, this is not the only basis on which Casolari talks about the Mussolini influence on Moonje, and through him on the RSS. She mentions that the Marathi press discussed fascism right from the early phase of the Italian regime. As a proof of this, she says that 'from 1924 to 1935 "Kesari" regularly published editorials and articles about Italy, fascism and Mussolini.' She does not give the number of editorial and articles that appeared during this time. (Perhaps they do not amount to five, her lucky number.) However, she says that 'what impressed the Marathi journalists was the socialist origin of fascism and the fact that the new regime seemed to have transformed Italy from a backward country to a first class power.'

11.12 Casolari, at the beginning of her analysis, does say, "Indians could not know, then, that, behind the demagogic rhetoric of the regime, there was very little substance." However, she ignores this caveat in the rest of her writings, and based on allusions proceeds to 'demonstrate' that there exists 'direct contacts between the representatives of the fascist regime, including Mussolini, and the Hindu nationalists.'

11.13 It is well known that in 1931 it was not only Indians who did not know that there was little substance in the Italy of Mussolini, or the way the things would unfold in the next fifteen years. The admiration for the methods of Mussolini and his Fascist Party had a good spread, even in Europe.

11.14 We thus see that at best Casolari has established only a tenuous link between fascism and Moonje. We do not know who, other than Casolari, the authors of the Report, and all

those who are associated with them, will even come to start to believe that a half an hour meeting between Mussolini and Moonje would have such a profound impact.

11.15 The other aspect of guilt by association relates to the whole thing about attributing the violence against religious minorities, dalits, vanvasis, etc., in India to the Sangh. Of course, all this flows from the fact that the Sangh is a fascist organisation, which is supposed to have been inspired by Mussolini.

11.16 As in the case of the Mussolini association, in this aspect too there are innuendos and vague accusations. There is no evidence provided where courts have prosecuted any of the Sangh organisations or individuals associated with it. They refer to commission reports, but do not mention that in no case there is a follow up done in terms of taking the matter to the appropriate courts.

12. Agenda of the authors of the Report

12.1 We can give many examples which will more than amply prove that the authors, and the publishers, of the Report have an agenda. For example, the Report says that the first Indian act of Hindutva was the murder of Mahatma Gandhi. What the communists about the Mahatma is well documented. But these same communists also know very well that even after serious attempts by a regime that was virulently opposed to the RSS, no evidence could be found about its involvement or of its members.

12.2 It is true that Nathuram Godse was a member of the RSS for about two years in the early 40s. But, then, Godse was also a member of the Congress Party and assisted it in the independence struggle.

12.3 The Report talks about rapes of Christian nuns. The most notorious incident was that of four nuns in Madhya Pradesh. The Congress government there has confirmed that the dastardly act was done by some 24 tribals, half of whom were converted to Christianity. In another case in Orissa, the forensic report clearly showed that there was no rape. (In this latter case, one has to wonder about the state of mind of the persons who asked the nun to come out in the public and make a false claim of rape.)

12.4 Of course, people will mention about the burning of Graham Staines and his two sons. Here too the Sangh organisations have been cleared of any guilt in the incident by the Wadhwa Commission. However, it is pertinent to reproduce two of the recommendations of the Commission:

- Point No. 9: There should be a Code of Conduct for the political parties when their leaders make statements without verification in a situation like the present one. Leaders cannot make statements merely for gaining political mileage. Their statements should be subdued and not to fan the fire when the atmosphere is communally surcharged. It is the duty of everyone to have regard to each other's faith and to spread a message of love, peace and kindness. Murderer is a murderer to whichever faith he may belong. A criminal is a criminal. Religion need not be brought in such matters. Allow the police to make independent investigation of the crime uninfluenced by politics or religion or caste.

- Point No. 10: Media, both print and electronic, has also to exercise restraint. Screaming headlines should be avoided which have the effect of misleading the public and creating more tension and suspicion among different communities. News headlines in the cases of rape of nun and murder of a Christian boy and girl after rape have been noticed. One cannot imagine the damage that might have been caused to the polity by such headlines and reporting. Reporting of communal strife should not be done without proper verification or an ordinary crime given a communal twist.

12.5 The Report also alleges that in the distribution of the relief after the Gujarat Earthquake of January 2001, the Sangh was deliberately not making it available to the Muslims and the dalits. In this respect, it would be worthwhile to quote from an editorial in The Times of India.

- "The RSS has been very active in relief and rehabilitation work....There are, however, unconfirmed reports from Gujarat that the ideological bias of the RSS towards certain communities and castes is already evident even in the task of providing relief." (Editorial, "Political Aftershocks", The Times of India, Feb 6 2001.)

12.6 Eleven words of praise, based on confirmed reports. And 29 words of damnation based on unconfirmed reports. Strange seems to be the manner of professionalism in Indian journalism.

12.7 Within a couple of days, the RSS spokesman wrote to The Times of India asking for the details of these unconfirmed reports, so that the organisation could take the necessary corrective actions. As of this date no such information has been received. One does guess that it is difficult to provide details of unconfirmed reports.

12.8 Moreover, a photo, from a website of the Times of India group which showed a Muslim family, along with many others, in a huge tent set up by the VHP, was sent to the editor. A photo of a couple of nuns of the Missionaries of Charity bringing a patient to a VHP medical camp was also sent. Was there an acknowledgement of the blatantly false charge by The Times of India? If there was, at least this section of the Report need not have been written.

12.9 When there was a mid-air collision just over the village of Charhi Dadri in Haryana, the first group of people to reach the site were members of the Sangh. That a large number of victims were Muslims did not deter them in providing the necessary assistance in pulling out the bodies from the wreckage and helping in undertaking the final rites. This effort was recognised in the Saudi newspaper Al-Riyad.

12.10 A couple of other points need to be taken up. The authors of the Report talk about Hinduism as a religion. Obviously the level of scholarship of the authors must be quite low, and their integrity non-existent, if they stoop to this low level. All serious scholars on Hinduism would clearly state that referring to it in the same context as Christianity and Islam would guide the person in a completely wrong direction.

12.11 The essence of Hinduism can be taken up from Prof Klaus Klostermaier, who spent quite some time in India before quitting the Jesuit order, has to say.

· "Hinduism will spread not so much through the gurus and swamis, who attract certain number of people looking for a new commitment and a quasi-monastic life-style, but it will spread mainly through the work of intellectuals and writers, who have found certain Hindu ideas convincing and who identify them with their personal beliefs. A fair number of leading physicists and biologists have found parallels between modern science and Hindu ideas. An increasing number of creative scientists will come from a Hindu background and will consciously and unconsciously blend their scientific and their religious ideas. All of us may be already much more Hindu than we think." (A Survey of Hinduism, p 414. Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt Ltd, Delhi, 1990.)

12.12 A second point needs to be mentioned is about Friends of India Society International (FISI). This organisation came to be to co-ordinate the opposition to the Emergency declared by Smt Indira Gandhi between 1975-77. A large number of persons of Indian origin, living in the UK and the USA, came together as a spontaneous act to oppose this rape of democracy. In a very short time, the persons involved came to realise that a huge majority of them had a Sangh background. Just as in India, where the major ground level opposition was by Swayamsevaks, the international experience was no different.

12.13 The organisers of FISI decided to continue with the organisation in the post-Emergency period, so that there is a forum availed to the Indian Diaspora to take up issues which are of concern to the land of their ancestors, without in any way hurting the interest of the land where they are now settled. And yet the authors of the Report allege that this organisation, which worked so hard to help in restoring democracy in India, is itself an undemocratic

organisation. Perhaps they do so because the Communist Party of India, under instructions of the erstwhile Soviet Union, supported the Emergency.

12.14 To fully understand the agenda of the authors of the Report, we should also take cognisance of what they have to say on the subject of the Report and has been published after the Report has been released. At <http://www.stopfundinghate.org/resources/FAQ.htm>, we find the following:

- Q 7. But Hindutva organizations claim that it is the missionaries and madarsas which initiate the problem. Is this not true?
- It is mostly not true. There may be missions which convert. There may be madarsas where hatred is taught. (Emphasis added.)

12.15 Obviously the authors of the Report have a poor opinion of the intelligence of their readers. But, then they do seem to have proved this right at least in case of those who have come out in their support!

12.16 In addition, the authors of the Report seem to be such experts in identifying the castes of people by merely looking at the names, and that too even if the first name is provided. They have created a website called <http://stopfundinghate.org>, where they make the following statement:

- Signatories on a counter-petition launched by a group called "Let India Develop" <http://www.letindiadevelop.org> are almost exclusively from Hindu upper castes. (<http://stopfundinghate.org/actions/press/120802.htm>)

12.17 In the same spit-and-run tactics, the authors of the Report say:

- The Rashtriya Swayamsevk Sangh (RSS) and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), key organizations in the Hindutva movement, are shadowy organizations which have been banned several times in India for fomenting communal violence. VHP and RSS workers have been implicated in murderous activities. (<http://stopfundinghate.org/resources/FAQ.htm>)

12.18 The RSS has been banned three times. The first time was in the aftermath of the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi. It has been more than adequately established that this was a political move, to try and destroy an organisation which was thought to come in the way of implementing the political agenda of Nehru. The second time was during the Emergency of 1975-77. During this period many other organisations were banned for the simple reason that they all opposed the Congress Party of Indira Gandhi. (Which Congress Party was approached by Setalvad of Sabrang to finance the anti-BJP campaign at the time of the last elections.) The third time was after the demolition of the Babri structure that stood at the Shri Rama Janmabhoomi. This ban was not confirmed by the commission which went into the legality of the ban.

12.19 The VHP was banned two times. The first was along with the ~~thi~~ ban on the RSS. The second one was after the statutory period of this ban was over, and this was summarily overturned by the concerned commission. Thus, it is clear that yet again the authors of the Report have to resort to being economical with the truth in trying to take forward their agenda.

12.20 The authors claim that their Report has been 'meticulously researched'. If so, could they list out the cases where the 'VHP and RSS workers have been implicated in murderous activities'?

13. Sangh and the judiciary

13.1 In line with the standard canard against the Sangh, the Report alleges that 'numerous government reports have clearly indicted the Sangh for fomenting communal violence.' The authority used to justify this claim is that of AG Noorani, a known communist in India, and his article "A Half Century's Gory Record" in *The Statesman*, January 15, 2000. The article was accompanied by a cartoon showing a person in shorts (on which was inscribed the letters RSS) shooting at Mahatma Gandhi. The RSS filed a case against the publication, Noorani, and the cartoonist in the High Court of Delhi. In March 2002, *The Statesman* said in the court, "We wish to clarify that the publication was made without malice and with no intention to denigrate or defame any person or persons or RSS. We regret the publication." It should be stated that Noorani failed repeatedly to appear before the Court and a non-bailable warrant had to be issued against him.

13.2 This is yet another example of the spit-and-run tactics in line with a 'true revolutionary' that is commonly applied when calumny against the Sangh is indulged in. Either the authors of the Report are ignorant of this case, or the Goebbels tactics of telling a lie a hundred times is put in place.

13.3 The allegation that evidence of Sangh's involvement in anti-social activities has a long history. When the Sangh was banned immediately after the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru wrote in a letter dated November 10, 1948, to MS Golwalkar, as follows:

· In the course of the last year both the Central Government and the Provincial Governments have received a mass of information in regard to the objectives and activities of the R.S.S. This information does not fit in with what has been stated by you in this behalf. Indeed it would appear that the declared objectives have little to do with the real ones and with the activities carried on in various forms and ways by people associated with the R.S.S. These real objectives appear to be completely opposed to the decisions of the Indian Parliament and the provisions of the proposed Constitution of India. The activities, according to our information, are anti-national and often subversive and violent. You would appreciate, therefore, that mere assertions to the contrary do not help very much. ("Justice on Trial", p 16, Suruchi Prakashan, 1962.)

13.4 However, the Sangh was not charged either in the case of the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi or the 'mass of information' was ever presented to a court of law to establish the charge of being 'anti-national, subversive and violent'.

13.5 Similarly, the allegation of the involvement of the Sangh in creating communal disturbance, as alleged by various commission of inquiry reports mentioned in the Report have never resulted in prosecution of any of the Sangh activists. Given the 'strong evidence' as claimed by the authors of the Report, it is indeed strange that governments which have been inimical to the Sangh have not found it worthwhile to prosecute the activists.

13.6 Government employment rules prohibit the employee to be a member of a political party. On this ground, many Sangh activists have had their services terminated. In each case, the courts have held the termination to be illegal, and the persons have been reinstated. This issue has been dealt with in a booklet entitled "Truth Triumphs: What the High Courts have to say on RSS" (ed Ram Mohan, Suruchi Sahitya Publication, 1977). The first paragraph of the booklet goes as follows:

- There could be nothing better than the considered pronouncements of the highest judiciaries of the land in exposing the outrageous falsehoods, -canards, allegations and mudslinging of the lowest order being repeatedly indulged in by the Govt. -against the RSS. High Court after High Court in different states have quashed the illegal malafide orders of suspension or dismissal issued by the Govt. against the RSS workers in the govt. service. The top insinuations of the RSS being 'subversive', 'violent' 'secret', 'communal', 'anti Muslim', 'political' and so on, have all been subjected to impartial judicial scrutiny & found to be entirely baseless. As many as ten High Courts Judgements - Indore (1955), Patna (1961), Bombay (1962), Allahabad (1963), Jodhpur (1965), Banglore (1966), Chandigarh (1967), Ahmedabad (1970) and Allahabad (1971) - have given identical verdicts nailing the charges leveled by the Government against the RSS.

13.7 Ram Mohan summarises these cases as follows:

- The above judicial verdicts not merely up hold the absolute i nnocence of RSS, they also reveal the mean and jaundiced attitude of the Govt. The utterly and irresponsible way in which the various State Governments have made such serious allegations as "subversive". "secret", "anti-secular", "violent" etc. against RSS is simply breath-taking. The high Courts even in their restrained language, have described the various charges as "without foundation", "a very unsatisfactory explanation", there is no evidence", "it would not be within reason to accept", founded on irrelevant consideration "arbitrary" etc.
- In every case, the Government's order of suspension or dismissal of RSS workers, has been quashed and the Government was ordered to pay the costs.
- That the Government is even today indulging in the same old explod ed allegations against the RSS and has even banned it as 'a danger to national security', only shows to what depths of falsehood & chicanery the Govt. can descend.

13.8 Mohan has also dealt with a case filed against the second chief of the RSS. he writes:

- No less a person than the previous Sarsanghachalak of RSS, Shri M.S. Golwalkar himself was tried in a court of law by the Government for this offence. The case against him was that he had delivered a speech at Darbhanga (Bihar) which had promoted or attempted to promote feelings of enmity or hatred between Hindus and Muslims and Christians of this country.
- The High Court of Bihar at Patna, (criminal) Revision No. 607 of 1959) carefully presented the RSS view point vis-a-vis Muslims and Christians, and held: analysed the entire speech in which Shri Golwalkar had said-
- "..... It is submitted that the principal object of the petstioner in delivering the speech was to point out the objectives of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and to emphasise that the members of the Sangh should strengthen Hindu Culture for the advancement of the Country. In my opinion the submission of learned counsel for the petitioner are not without force.
- "It is difficult to conclude from the speech read as a whole, that the intention of the speaker was either to promote feelings of enmity or hatred between different classes of the citizens of India or that the speaker had deliberately attempted to promote such feeling ... It has been submitted that section 153 A of the I.P.C. ought not to be applied to the case of an honest agitator where primary object was the redress of wrong, real or fancied, and who is not actuated with the mentality of a more mischief monger . In my opinion, in the instant case also, it is different to hold that the speaker had intended to promote feelings of hatred

between different classes of citizens of India, not to speak of having delivered the speech with malicious intentions.

· "In my opinion ... it must be held that the ingredients of the offence under sections 153 A of the I.P.C have not been established in this case."

14. The Christian link

14.1 We have mentioned some instances of the Christian link earlier. One relating to the blatantly false allegations of the All India Christian Council. The other was a statement from a Jesuit priest associated with a front for the Roman Catholic Church.

14.2 In today's context, it would be interesting to view the manner in which the Christian organisations reacted to an invitation from the US Commission on International Religious Freedom on the issue of attacks on Christians. The commission held a hearing on September 18, 2000, the day after Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the Prime Minister of India, completed his visit to the capital of the USA. The commission admitted that the date chosen was a deliberate one since the media focus would be highlighted on India.

14.3 The Catholic World News (September 14, 2000) said,

· "The Catholic Bishops Conference of India (CBCI) had described as "unwarranted" the proposed hearing on religious freedom in India scheduled for Monday by a US congressional committee on international religious freedom. "The CBCI does not believe that the present situation warrants an international hearing," said Father Donald d'Souza, CBCI deputy secretary general, when asked about the Church's reaction to the proposed hearing on religious freedom in India."

14.4 Yet, the Report deals quite extensively on the issue of attacks on Christians. It is pertinent to note that the Commission itself was not exactly above board. In a letter dated September 6, 2000 Chairman Elliott Abrams had urged President Clinton to "impress on the Prime Minister (at his meeting on the 15th) that promotion of religious freedom is indispensable to healthy relations between India and the United States." Thus the hearing, which was held on September 16 was an eyewash, the conclusions were arrived at much prior to the whole tamasha. The conclusions were arrived at even prior to taking on board the comments of the various people.

14.5 But then, such tactics are quite normal to those who wish to be economical with the truth, a politically correct phrase for liars.

14.6 It is also necessary to discuss the role of the Christian missionaries in terrorist activities in the North-East. We can do no better than quote from the US Commission on International Religious Freedom:

· In Christian majority areas, Christians sometimes are the oppressors. In Tripura, there were several cases of harassment of non-Christians by Christian members of the National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT), a militant tribal group with an evangelical bent. For example, NLFT tribal insurgents have prohibited Hindu and Muslim festivals in areas that they control, cautioned women not to wear traditional Hindu tribal attire, and prohibited indigenous forms of worship. In Assam, where the population is increasing rapidly, the issue of Bangladeshi migrants (who generally are Muslim) has become very sensitive among the Assamese (predominantly Hindu) population, which considers itself to be increasingly outnumbered. (<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2002/14023.htm>)

15. On Kashmiri Pandits

15.1 One of the features of the debate on communalism in India is that the attacks on Hindus are to be given a secular colour, even when the perpetrators say that they are doing a communal act. This is best seen in terms of the issue of the Kashmiri Pandits is handled. Many analysts have highlighted the double standards of those who have the same ideology as the authors of the Report. However, even today, if at all the Kashmiri Pandits are mentioned, they are done in a perfunctory manner.

15.2 The cavalier treatment of the plight of the Kashmiri Pandits by Teesta Setalvad, one of the two primary promoters of Sabrang, needs to be highlighted. The people who are shedding crocodile tears over the Muslims in Gujarat, have not even done this with respect to the more than 300,000 Pandits who are living as refugees in their own country for the last thirteen years. In a speech in Delhi on August 20, 2002, she said:

- "For, while there are the hapless and forgotten Kashmiri Pandits also displaced and bitterly abandoned in Jammu and Delhi camps, they have been innocent victims of foreign-bred mercenaries not home grown terror bands; terror bands who moreover speak of a narrow sense of Indian patriotism and nationhood." (<http://www.sabrang.com/news/teesaward.htm>)

15.3 Thus in a speech of about 900 words, only 47 are devoted to the Kashmiri Pandits, while the rest deals with the violence in Gujarat after the burning of the Hindus in Godhra. Interestingly, the word Godhra does not occur even once in her speech. It should also be noticed that the plight of the Kashmiri Pandits are not treated with sympathy, but an attempt is made to explain the problem away.

15.4 The Kashmiri Pandits are refugees in their own country for the last 13 years. Except for the Hindu organisations, their plight is of no concern to anyone else - political or secular organisations. According to Ashish Nandy of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, secularists have been foolishly soft on minority communalism. He said:

- "When Hindus began to be exterminated systematically in Kashmir and to leave in large numbers, our secularist friends said then governor Jagmohan had deliberately organised the forced migration. I would like to see people leaving their ancestral homes with a sack in hand just because the governor of the state asks them to do so! When questioned later as to how the killings of Hindus were not condemned strongly enough, some of them said newspapers had refused to carry their statements." ("A Dangerous Symbiosis", Outlook, April 1, 2002.)

15.5 There are many explanations for the silence of the secularists with respect to the Kashmiri Pandits. What Nandy informs is one of them. Another has been given by one Asha Kachru, in a letter to Manushi, in its issue nr 113. She wrote:

- "I (feel) no one wants to talk about the (Kashmiri) Pandits....., Now because of the Pandit - BJP nexus I also feel uncomfortable raising the issue."

15.6 So, tomorrow if the Sangh says that sun rises in the East, there will be a sustained campaign amongst the intellectuals to say that this is yet another falsehood propagated by the Sangh!

15.7 Setalvad has written extensively about the Kashmiri terrorists (she calls them militants, mercenaries, etc., but never terrorists), both foreign and home-grown, in quite favourable light in the past. But this is probably the first time that she has condescended, even in a

perfunctory manner, to talk about the Kashmiri Pandits. She has visited and talked to the terrorists in Jammu & Kashmir quite a few times. But, she never found it necessary to even make a fleeting visit to the refugee camps of the Kashmiri Pandits.

16. On Godhra

16.1 The communal riot that took place in Gujarat in March 2002 had its trigger in the burning of 58 Hindus (26 women, 12 children, 20 men) in the early morning hours of February 27, 2002. They were returning from Ayodhya after taking part in a programme to rebuild the temple at the Shri Rama Janmabhoomi. A mob of 2000 Muslims in Godhra attacked the train carrying these people and set fire to one of the bogies.

16.2 Given the ideological orientation of the authors of the Report, they do not find it incongruous to treat the event in a cavalier manner. In the Report, consisting of more than 25,000 words of primary text, the sum total of the depiction of the event is in the following 35 words:

- "On February 27, 2002, a train carrying Hindu activists was set afire in Godhra, a city in the western Indian state of Gujarat, allegedly by a Muslim mob, resulting in the death of 58 people." (The only other time the word Godhra appears in the primary text is in context of a resolution passed by the Sangh.)

16.3 Thus the action taken by about 2000 Muslims in the burning of the Hindus, is termed as 'allegedly', while the actions taken against the Muslims and Christians are definitely attributed to the Sangh Parivar.

16.4 While the Report does not make any mention of the reason why the Hindus were burned, there is another report prepared by an organisation called "Concerned Citizens Tribunal" says the following:

- "The Sabarmati Express train started from Ahmedabad for Ayodhya on February 22, 2002, with kar sevaks on board. It appears that on its onward journey to Ayodhya, there was an incident at Dahod railway station where the kar sevaks indulged in vandalism and terrorising of Muslim vendors at the station. According to another version, the Dahod incident took place on the return journey. There is no clear evidence of the date of the incident but it is clear that it took place." (<http://www.sabrang.com/tribunal/volII/godhra.html>)

16.5 This is the manner in which evidence is collected, and it is a feature of the communists writing on issues that they call as Hindu fundamentalism. A rumour is to be treated as a fact if it means that it can 'prove' the case against the one who is already labelled as a convict. Or, perhaps one should invent a rumour if it does not exist. As Lenin said : "That's how every sound revolutionary should react."

16.6 And if one sees the composition of these so-called concerned citizens, the ideological inclination to the left (even extreme left) of the political spectrum is quite clear. And the report of these 'concerned citizens' follows this time-honoured modus operandi in its entirety.

16.7 In this modus operandi, the burning of the 58 Hindus at Godhra has always been rationalised. (Just as the attacks on the Swami Narayan Mandir in Gujarat on September 24, 2002, and the Ragnath Mandir in Jammu on March 31 and November 24, 2002, was rationalised as a reaction to the post-Godhra communal violence in Gujarat.) The comments of Setalvad, of Sabrang, are relevant here. She said:

- "While I condemn today's gruesome attack, you cannot pick up an incident in isolation. Let us not forget the provocation. These people were not going for a benign assembly. They were

indulging in blatant and unlawful mobilization to build a temple and deliberately provoke the Muslims in India." (Washington Post, February 28, 2002.)

16.8 This was before the Hindu reaction had even started. (One wonders if Setalvad would also not pick the demolition of the World Trade Centre in 'isolation', and talk about the 'provocation' provided by the Americans in supporting Israel.) Incidentally, in the speech referred to above, which dealt extensively about the riots in Gujarat, she did even utter the word Godhra even once.

17. Perversions in the Report

17.1 As Beloo Mehra pointed out in his analysis, "even before the reader is made aware of the origins of Hindutva as a political ideology, he or she is asked to believe that it is "Hindu supremacist ideology" and has been responsible for much of the "communal violence" in India." The definition of Hindutva that is being applied in the Report is not what the proponents of the ideology say it is, but what the opponents say it is. What Hindutva is has been a matter for court decisions. Some of the proponents, in the electoral politics arena, have had cases against them for setting aside their elections. However, the Supreme Court decided in the favour of the proponents of Hindutva, and accepted that their definition can in no way be construed to be sectarian or communal. This has been reiterated by LK Advani, Home Minister, in the Parliament on November 18, 2002. He said:

- I will say our concept is the one which the Supreme Court wrote. Justice Verma in his judgement wrote: "The words Hinduism or Hindutva are not confined only to the strict Hindu religious practices unrelated to the culture and ethos of the people of India depicting the way of life of the Indian people. These terms are indicative more of a way of life of the Indian people, and are not confined merely to describe persons practising the Hindu religion as a faith." We in the Government accept that the meaning of Hindutva is the one which the Supreme Court accepts and what Swami Vivekanandaji and others recognised. (The Indian Express, November 23, 2002.)

17.2 The inherent tolerance of the Hindus, an integral part of their ethos, is well accepted. The Jews, the Parsis, the Syrian Christians, and the Tibetians had to flee their own land because of persecution by the Christians, the Muslims, the other Christian sects, and the communists, respectively. It was only amongst Hindus that they were able to survive - not only in terms of keeping their own faith alive, but also in material terms. On December 19, 2002, the Hollywood actor, Richard Gere, during his visit to India, said:

- No nation has helped the Tibetans more than India. Its contribution remains unparalleled as the displaced people have not only been able to rebuild their monastic institutions but have also prospered materially.
(<http://headlines.sify.com/1546news3.html?headline=Richard~Gere's~'Light~of~Truth'~award~for~Indians>)

17.3 However, Hindus have resisted those who came here with an intention of destroying their culture and civilisation. The interface of Islam and Christianity in Indian history can be said, at the very least, to have been architecturally and spiritually harmful on a fairly vast scale. This is a continuing story, with the threat still persisting. Because of the strong resistance, Hinduism today is the oldest surviving civilisation.

17.4 The Report defines the gurukul system of education in India as "Hindu religious schools, equivalent of the Islamic madrassas." The gurukul system provides the students with a modern and secular education, even as it inculcates the traditional values of our civilisation. Perhaps the authors of the Report could give examples of terrorists that have been bred in this system. Only a perverted mind would do link the gurukuls with the Madrasas, which have become jihadi factories all over the world. For the authors of the Report, only some Madrasas, but all gurukuls, teach hatred.

17.5 Even as the authors have never criticised the jihadi factories that the madaras are all over the world, they have brought down an ancient system of education down to the level of

the madarasas. The authors also allege that the 'Hindu madarasas' are operating not only in India, but also abroad.

17.6 One of the comments that the authors of the Report frequently make is that the Sangh is a secretive organisation. Given the extent of the size of the organisation, as admitted by the authors, one would find it very hard to believe this charge. Only if the Sangh had complete control over all branches of the government, right from the panchayat to the centre, can such a state of disguise be maintained. And, experience all over the world has shown, that even this is not possible for a length of time. And the Sangh is today 77 years old.

17.7 Perhaps it would be instructive to read a quote from an article by a known Sangh-baiter, Amulya Ganguli.

· "If there is one aspect of the RSS-led Sangh parivar which evokes admiration, it is candour. In a day and age when false smiles and unvarnished lies are the politicians' stock-in-trade, it is always refreshing to hear the clear, if grim, articulation of their deadly plans for India from the saffron stalwarts, including another "epic war" between Hindus and anti-Hindus. What is remarkable is that even when they are aware that they may be revealing their secrets, or that they are embarrassing a government which is nearer them ideologically than any other will ever be, the high priests of Hindu rashtra are not bothered. Either they have complete faith in the ultimate success of their mission, or they are incapable of terminological inexactitude, the polite term for being economical with the truth. Irrespective of how provocative their statements may be, they have no hesitation in standing by them." ("The RSS game plan", The Hindustan Times, March 27, 2000.)

17.8 The Report alleges that the IDRF raised money for the Bangladeshi Hindus who are once again being driven out of their homelands, the 350,000 Kashmiri Hindus who are living as refugees in their own country for the last 13 years, and given a token donation for the victims of the World Trade Centre, because the perpetrators of the crime were Muslims. (At a polemical level, perhaps one should be amused that the authors of the Report do admit that the perpetrators are Muslims.) By the same logic, one would come to the conclusion that given that IDRF raised large sums of money for the Gujarat earthquake and the Orissa cyclone, these and other such events were actually not natural calamities, but were done by the Muslims! We guess if we are to take the Report with even a modicum of seriousness, we will have to take special precautions that we do not lose our sanity.

17.9 The Report gives an impression that various corporates are giving funds to IDRF directly. The truth is that many corporates have a policy of grants which match the fund raising activities of their employees. This is supposed to give an encouragement to the employees to be more involved in the welfare of the society. For this purpose the concerned charity has to be registered with the corporate concerned. According to the article by Varsha Bhosle (<http://www.rediff.com/news/2002/nov/23varsha.htm>), Cisco 'has given grants to, amongst others, Catholic Charities Euclid Girls' Home, Jewish Vocational Services, and St Vincent de Paul Society of San Mateo County.'

17.10 This is only a glimpse of the type of perversions that the authors have to resort to, as true revolutionaries as commanded by Lenin. A group called Friends of India are making their own analysis of the Report. They have taken the trouble to find out the antecedents of ten of the recipients, identified as being sectarian, of the donation from IDRF. One of them, Miraj Medical Centre, is run by the Church of North India. Janan Prabodhini receives funds from colleagues of the authors of the Report, namely Asha and AID, in the USA. The Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Vaidyakiya Pratishthan is identified as involved in 'Hinduisation, tribal or education'. In actual fact, this institute runs a very large hospital in Maharashtra, along

with some outreach centres in the surrounding villages. The donors to this institute include organisations like the Tatas in India. So much for the level of meticulousness that the authors of the Report claim.

17.11 Similarly, while discussing one of the in-house fund raising project of IDRF, namely "Martyrs for National Integration Fund" (MNIF), the authors of the Report have put the words 'terrorist war' in inverted commas. It would appear to us that this has been done because they do not accept that what is happening in Jammu & Kashmir cannot be classified as terrorism. Given that those creating a problem are receiving substantial material assistance from Pakistan (a fact admitted by Setalvad in her August 2002 speech mentioned above), the contention of the authors of the Report can only be defined as a perversion. They seem to have no appreciation of the tremendous sacrifice made by thousands of our soldiers, from all parts of the country, to keep our country intact.

18. Guilt by association - Part 2

18.1 The authors of the Report lay a lot of emphasis on the theory of guilt by association. This is particularly the strategy followed to label the Sangh as a fascist organisation. Moonje visits Italy as part of a two-month long trip to Europe in February/March 1931. He spends nine days in that country, out of which one day is spent in visiting various institutes of the party of Mussolini. In this one day, he spends thirty minutes in a meeting with Mussolini. All this is supposed to have influenced Moonje to such an extent, that without any other contact with the fascists, he models himself on the basis of their philosophy. All that we are told about future influences is on the basis of innuendos - five 'must have' and another five 'most probably'.

18.2 Since Moonje was closely associated with the founder of the Sangh, ipso facto the fascist leanings of Moonje was absorbed by the Sangh. Small, irritating details like the fact that Moonje spent two months visiting various countries in Europe, only one day out of nine when he was in Italy in interacting with Mussolini's organisations, had a thirty minute meeting with Mussolini, was never a member of the Sangh, and that the Sangh was formed six years prior to the Moonje-Mussolini meeting, are to be discarded. They do not fit in with the conclusions that were drawn prior to the seeking of data.

18.3 However, if guilt by association is to be held as valid, should we also not look at the associations of Mathew and Sabrang, and make some conclusions on them? At least in case of the authors of the Report, the association is strong, even if they make serious efforts to underplay the contacts.

18.4 We have mentioned about what the founders of Sabrang have to say about their mission in life - that is they hold the Sangh responsible for all that is wrong in the country and so the primary task is to fight it, and keep all other tasks on hold until this is finished. Setalvad has admitted in her own words that she was part of a group which approached the Congress Party and two Communist parties for monetary assistance to launch an anti-BJP campaign during the last General Elections. It would not be out of place to mention that the November-December 2002 issue of "Communalism Combat", published by Sabrang, has two full pages of advertisement from the Madhya Pradesh government, and one by the Rajasthan government. (The only other advertisement is a half-page display by a private-sector company.) Both are ruled by the Congress party. Given that Sabrang was actively campaigning against the BJP, with an admitted financial assistance from the Congress Party, it would seem to us that the link is a continuing one.

18.5 We have mentioned that we believe that Mathew is a communist, and also an activist in propagating this philosophy. In the Frequently Asked Questions about the Saffron Dollar Project (<http://stopfundinghate.org/resources/FAQ.htm>), the strong antipathy of the authors of the Report against the Sangh comes out quite clearly.

18.6 On the basis of guilt by association, would we be right if we now allege that all those who support this programme against the IDRf to be anti-Sangh, as well as supporters of communism? In this 'all' we also include the 245 academics who signed the petition asking corporations to end matching funds and other support to IDRf. We are not making an allegation - we just asking all these supporters to come out and make their own political agenda clear to the people at large. Just as the authors of the Report say that IDRf should be transparent, it is first necessary for those making the allegation against IDRf to be equally transparent.

18.7 And they should also say why the guilt by association is a legitimate tool when it comes to IDRF, and why it is not when it comes to themselves.

19. To whom is the Report addressed

19.1 It may appear that the intention of the authors of the Report is to mount a judicially sustainable case so that the USA government would take the necessary action. After the attacks on the World Trade Centre on September 11, 2001, just like many of the so-called charities run by Muslims which have been found indulging in channelling money to terrorist organisations, IDRF could be similarly banned. Of course, it is after a great deal of effort applied by the various governments all over the world, the fronts for the Islamic terrorists were identified. The Report relies only on twisting the publicly available information gleaned from the websites of the IDRF and the recipient organisations, innuendos, and blatant lies.

19.2 The primary objective of the authors of the Report is to sow confusion, and so create a doubt amongst the less informed sections of the society about the work being done by the IDRF. Many of the organisations in the USA do not want to get themselves involved in any type of media controversy, irrespective of the merits of the case. So, such a type of Report can easily frighten them into taking an action of the type desired by the authors of the Report, without even making an attempt to even try and understand if there is infinitesimal justification provided.

19.3 That the authors of the Report accept that they do not have even an iota of a legal case is clear when they give no indication that they want the USA government to proceed against the IDRF at any legal platform. This is clear when they state that Campaign to Stop Funding Hate seeks to do the following (<http://stopfundinghate.org/actions/press/120802.htm>):

- 1) We want to expose the link between IDRF and the sangh, so that well-intentioned donors are not misled into thinking they are giving money for "development and relief" while their funds actually go towards supporting sectarian POLITICAL work.
- 2) We want U.S. corporations to stop their matching donations to the IDRF based on their formal, stated policies of not supporting any religious and political organization.
- 3) We also want to make it clear that while we are politically and morally opposed to the Sangh Parivar, and by extension, the IDRF, we hold that individuals who want to send their money to the Sangh Parivar through the IDRF, they should be able to do so, based on informed consent. Our Campaign is directed against the deception that the IDRF employs to cloak its political affinity.

19.4 In a legal challenge, it is necessary for a person to be proven guilty, and not for the person to prove his/her innocence. The USA government has applied such rigid standards in the past, as is evident from the following news item in the San Jose Mercury, September 13, 1999:

· "In terms of a determination, we have not reached a legal conclusion that Pakistan has received full M-11 missiles," the official said. He noted that the United States has a responsibility to impose "very high evidentiary standards" before imposing sanctions, especially when a government like China has denied providing Islamabad with complete missile systems.

19.5 Perhaps the authors of the report were forewarned in the way the USA government dealt with accusations of serious nature.

19.6 Earlier in this analysis we had pointed out that people like Rekhi-Rowen, Hathaway, etc., have never said what evidence they have to make their accusations against the IDRF.

And even if they have some evidence, they have not stated that they have made them available to the concerned authorities in their country. We think that they are resorting to subterfuge only because they have no case to make, except on the basis of innuendos and falsehoods. This is nothing new, if one has to see the record of the debate on issues surrounding Hindutva, not just in India but also all over the world.

20. Conclusion

20.1 As we had said before, we would first like to thank the authors of the Report for listing out the various social service activities of the Sangh. An allegation that is often hurled against the Sangh and other Hindu organisations is that they do not indulge in such creative work. We would also like to thank the authors of the Report for reviving the support base for IDRf. It is heartening to note the number of people who have shown courage in standing up and be counted. But, then, this is not what the authors had set about to do! Their objective is sow confusion, as mentioned in the previous section.

20.2 Having sown the confusion, it becomes necessary for the target of such maliciousness to spend their own resources in counteracting the same. This is unproductive work - but then being unproductive is a hallmark of those who believe in communism. They do not want to be involved in positive works, but in whining. Hence we find the following mention in the Report:

· "Hindutva organizations in the US do extensive publicity and fundraising for the IDRf. Often the IDRf and the VHP-America are the only 'service organizations' recognized by these groups, completely neglecting respected non-sectarian development and relief organizations, such as Association for India's Development (AID), Asha for Education, Pratham-USA, Child Relief and You (CRY), India Development Service (IDS) and Indians for Collective Action (ICA)."

20.3 The success of the volunteers for IDRf, despite the sustained negative projection over such a long period of time, is a clear indication of their dedication and sincerity. If the authors of the Report had spent the same amount of energy that they claim to have done in compiling the data, perhaps they could have been even more successful than the IDRf volunteers. But, then, perhaps they really did not spend much time on this so-called meticulously prepared Report.

20.4 With the increase in the economic well being of the people of Indian origin in the USA, there is a large amount of interest amongst them in doing something for the land of their ancestors. Some people have taken individual initiatives. But this is a luxury that is available to a few. Others do rely on specialised fund-raising organisations, like the IDRf, to guide them in making sure the funds are used properly. One of the things that has impressed the people about the IDRf is its very low level of overheads, and the individual commitments of the people actively working for it.

20.5 The donors are not unintelligent persons who are not able to distinguish between who spreads hatred and who does not. And if the authors of the Report are so concerned about the situation, why have they and their group not organised themselves in the same efficient way that they seem to criticize the Sangh for doing? Would it not have been better if the authors of the Report involved themselves in undertaking something positive and approach a larger section of the Indian Diaspora and so garner more development funds for India? Given the large media publicity that their Report has got, it would appear that they should have better means of reaching the people at large.

20.6 After all, the donor is looking for ways to do some charity. Instead of nit-picking, the authors of the Report should work towards offering a better alternative for people to route their inclination to do some good. If they have resources to come out with a Report on what they claim to be is an extensive survey, surely they could have utilised the same to organise themselves in a way that the Sangh is not able to do.

20.7 The Sangh has always recognised that the work to be done in the society is beyond the capabilities of a single organisation. Thus, where possible, the Sangh works along with others, and so instead of competing, there is a synergy. In this way, the society will gain immensely, and instead of undertaking a programme of creating confusion, the authors of the Report can better involve themselves in doing something positive.

20.8 We also have a request to make of those who seem to be lending support to the authors of the Report - like, Rekhi-Rowen, Hathaway, the faculty members who have signed a petition, etc. We would like them to consider this analysis that we have made. If we are at fault, we would be happy to receive your comments. If even some of the points that we have made have merit, we would like them to acknowledge the same.

20.9 A more important request is to start working in a positive way and raise funds for the needy in India. The activities of the IDRF and of the Sangh will move forward - facing canard and growing despite the various obstacles put in the way is something that they are used to throughout their existence. The matching funds that are provided by the corporations are only a small part of the collection. However, their denial will not mean that the IDRF and the Sangh will find themselves in difficulties. It is the beneficiaries who will suffer.

21. Annexure 1

Msg from an Sandhya Srinivasan

http://www.symonds.net/pipermail/nwm_mumbai/2002-November/000336.html

(This message has been changed from the original only in terms of formatting to make for easier reading.)

[Nwm_mumbai] Fw: [INSAANIYATBOMBAY] Help needed.
sandhya srinivasan sandhya srinivasan" <sandhya@bom3.vsnl.net.in
Mon, 4 Nov 2002 20:06:15 +0530
Previous message: [Nwm_mumbai] Follow Up on Survey
Next message: [Nwm_mumbai] No communications since 7th
Messages sorted by: [date] [thread] [subject] [author]

----- Forwarded by Roopa Rathnam/Ahmedabad/International/Oxfam on 10/31/02

Check it out - see the website especially the sister organisations in guajrat !!!!

- this is soemthing that has to be EXPOSED even more.

do you knwo any journos etc who can do this. please ask roopa or someone to get in touch with anjali for more information at akam47@yahoo.com

its urgent savio - blatent fueling of communalism!!!

rt

hey folks

i have a question/proposal for y'all and i'm trying to reach everyone who is somewhat interested in politics and is able to decide (to some extent) about the stories they are writing. ok, basically, a report is going to be released today (oct 30) documenting the sources of money for the IDRF (india development and releif fund) and BIG among their sources is our favourite SANGH PARIVAR. (for more of a clue about what idrf does, check out www.idrf.org)

The goal of releasing this report is to pressure several big electronic portals (paypal, bit pal, c2it), credit card companies and banks to STOP FUNDING IDRF because its money is sent back to help sangh parivar agendas.

the people who have researched the sources of funding and where the money goes are hoping to snowball this report into a huge embargo against IDRF starting november 7-nov 15. all the portals will be pressured to take them off their list and (apparently some portals have already agreed, so it will happen in a staggered way and the story will be burning for at least a month) what they need are committed journalists in india who will help give publicity to this story. it doesn't matter where you are or how small of a paper/tv channel you work ffor -- if you're interested in workign on this or if you (AND THIS IS IMPORTANT) know people in your organization who can carry this story, please let me know. i will contact my friend (who is now in india and incidentally one of krishna ananth's close friends as well! how's that for a plug;) and he will get in touch with you.

this is really important for several reasons: nri's in america give thousands of dollars every year for what they think is relief work in india -- but under the front of an orgn like idrf, the money is sent bank to the vhp.

please help make this campaign happen and use your power as people in the media.

lots of love and best wishes

in solidarity

anjali

22. Annexure 2

NLFT - The Christian Al-Qaeda

Author: S. Aravindan Neelakandan

Publication: Sulekha.com

Date: May 2, 2002

URL: www.sulekha.com/articlede...cid=195857

I came to bring not peace but a sword - Jesus Christ

For seven-year-old Shreema, 13th Jan 2002 was a special Sunday. All through the year, the girl had awaited the dawn of this day. For, that was the day one goes out and purchases new clothes, new toys and sweets, as the next day would be Makar Sankranthi -- the harvest festival celebrated throughout India. The Singicherra Bazar was bustling with activity. Like Shreema's family there were many people looking forward to a happy Makar Sankranthi. But they didn't realise that they were violating a fatwa issued by the Baptist Church-created Christian Al-Qaeda, the National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT). Nor did they know that they would pay with their lives for celebrating a heathen festival of their motherland.

Shreema would never again celebrate Makar Sankranthi. She died, along with sixteen others, on the spot as 13 terrorists of the NLFT encircled the people shopping for the festival and fired indiscriminately[1]. The soldiers of Christ have done again in Tripura what they have been doing for centuries to heathens throughout the world.

The Baptist Church of Tripura is not just the ideological mentor of the NLFT; it also supplies the NLFT with arms and ammunition for the soldiers of the holy crusade[2]. Never mind that the holy war involves killing infants and torching the huts of 'heathen Hindoos'. The NLFT does all these to bring to the infidels the peace and love of Christ. So, when Nagmanlal Halam, secretary of the Noapara Baptist Church in Tripura, was arrested by the Tripura police he had rather curious tools for evangelisation, which included along with the gospel 50 gelatin sticks, 5 kg of potassium and 2 kg of sulphur and other ingredients for making explosives. Mr. Halam confessed that his activities for the saving the heathen souls involved buying and supplying explosives to the NLFT over the past two years. Another church official, Jatna Koloj, who was also arrested, admitted that he received training in guerrilla warfare at an NLFT base last year. Surely, gelatin and AK-47s have more efficiency when it comes to bringing the light of the only revealed truth to the disbelievers suffering in 'spiritual darkness'. Those who are in doubt can check it out with another great light-bearer of the other 'only true book', Osama bin Laden (that is, when and if the prophet of terror is captured).

The Baptist Church of Tripura was initially set up by proselytizers from New Zealand 60 years ago. Despite their efforts, even until 1980, only a few thousand people in Tripura had converted to Christianity. Then the Church used one of its most efficient and time-tested weapons of evangelisation -- creating racial and ethnic divide among the people. In the aftermath of one of the worst ethnic riots, engineered by the Church[3], the NLFT was born -- but not without the midwife role of the Baptist Church. From its very inception, the NLFT has been advancing the cause of Christianity through armed persuasion. Every trace of indigenous culture is being eliminated through violent means. Every resisting group is made to bleed its way to extinction.

The case of Jamatya tribals provides a telling example. These tribals have strong spiritual leaders and a network of social service organisations headed by their religious leaders. These indigenous sects are neither exclusive nor expansionist. The Baptist Church has always failed

miserably in its conversion efforts with regard to this well-knit community. Hence, it is no wonder that the NLFT has made Jamatya institutions and their religious leaders the targets of their attacks. In the August of 2000, religious leaders of the Jamatya community like Jaulushmoni Jamatya and Shanti Kumar Tripura were killed by the NLFT, and Jamatya families were uprooted from their homelands and made refugees. The death threats issued by the NLFT to the inmates of these institutions have already forced the closure of 11 Jamatya institutions like schools and orphanages, set up by the slain religious leaders in various parts of Tripura[4]. Interestingly, these tribals are not close-minded fanatics. For one thing, they do not mind teaching the theory of evolution in their schools.

The greatest challenge to the Bible inspired mission of the NLFT comes from the Sangh Parivar's Banbasi Kalyan Kendra. The dedicated life workers of RSS have started empowering the tribals by running many educational institutions which while empowering them through imparting secular technical education also retain their tribal cultural and spiritual identity. Rather than making them disown their roots, the Kendra made the tribals feel proud of their culture. It even conducts national level tribal sports festivals. If the NLFT is to carve out a kingdom for Christ out of the secular republic of India, it has to make sure that the Kendra activities are stopped at all costs. In July 2000, armed NLFT militants torched a residential school and students hostel run by the Seva Mission in the remote Ananda Bazar area of North Tripura[5]. They had also taken hostage four RSS life workers. These RSS workers were all in their sixties. The crime committed by these old men was that they had dared to run educational institutions for tribals while preserving the tribals' culture. Later, all four were killed by the NLFT.

The NLFT has been an active partner of the Baptist Church in winning converts to the Christian creed. They have killed tribal priests to threaten communities and effect mass conversions. But those tactics have obviously backfired. In 2001 alone, the NLFT killed more than 20 Hindus who refused to 'accept the love of Christ'. They also torched to death a Hindu family sleeping in a hut[6]. In 2001, community chiefs and religious heads of 19 tribes formed the 'Tribal Culture Protection Committee' to counter the threat posed by the NLFT[7]. Despite the NLFT taking all possible steps to enforce conversions, the conversions are still slow. Frustrated, the NLFT has now begun an all out war against Hindu tribals. They have issued fatwas against infidel activities. These fatwas prohibit people from celebrating festivals like Durga Pooja and Makar Sankranti, listening to Indian music, watching Indian TV channels and films, and prohibit women from wearing bangles or sporting bindis, etc. Just a year before the NLFT started all these atrocities in India, the Southern Baptist Church of the United States of America had given a clarion call to bring the light of the gospel to "millions of Hindus and Jews lost in the darkness" of their religions[8].

Shreema, the seven-year-old girl from Tripura, died with bullets pumped into her tender body. Her crime was that she violated the Christian fatwa which prohibited her from celebrating an Indian festival. She was not just a victim of barbaric terrorism but she is also a martyr for Indian culture, a culture that has preserved thousands of tribal customs from barbaric persecution. Yet, she will not make it to the glossy covers of the weekly magazines of English speaking Indian media. Unsubstantiated, fabricated stories of Hindu fundamentalists (an oxymoron) killing Christian priests have been making their headlines. However, these fabrications have their use. They do help in the covering up of such acts of Christian love like killing in cold blood a seven-year-old girl or burning a family to death.

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23. Annexure 3

God longs for all Hindus!

Covert Operations Of The Evangelical Church In India

Sanal Edamaruku

http://www.Rationalistinternational.net/archive/en/rationalist_2001/83.htm

Rationalist International, Bulletin Nr 83, November 29, 2001.

Why does the Evangelical Church secretly sponsor a mass conversion of "untouchable" Hindus to Buddhism?

They came from all parts of India, from Bihar, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala and Tamil Nadu to participate in a gigantic mass ceremony in New Delhi, which should change their lives. Thousands of men, women and children from the bottom of the Hindu caste hierarchy have joined Buddhism. The ancient Brahmins called these people too low to have any caste, the British called them "Untouchables", Gandhi called them Harijans, and today they call themselves the Dalits, which means: the oppressed. Leaving Hinduism and joining Buddhism was an act of liberation from the age-old unjust and inhuman social order, which is still spelling discrimination, oppression and atrocities for many born into stigmatized families.

This mass exodus from Hinduism followed a historic example. In a similar ceremony, in October 1956, half a million Dalits became Buddhists. Their leader was Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, the father of the Indian constitution, who was the first "untouchable" to get a high school degree, a Bachelor of Arts degree, a doctorate and a law degree and became the revered patron of the Dalit movement. Since Hinduism was founded on scriptures that sanctioned the caste-based social order, Ambedkar asked his people to seek social justice and dignity outside this religion. Missing the historic chance to consequently promote atheism, he called for joining Buddhism, which he found to be the most peaceful among the established religions.

Thirty per cent of the Indian Hindus (that is nearly one fourth of the total one billion population of the country) are Dalits. One of them is K R Narayanan, the Indian President, which shows that things are changing. The Indian constitution bans un touchability and guards a legal system guaranteeing equality. There are special laws regulating the reservation of proportionate quota in education, government jobs and positions for Dalits. Social life, especially in the cities, has undergone a tremendous transformation since Ambedkar's times. But the old order does not go easily. Recently a young couple in a village in Uttar Pradesh was publicly hanged by their parents in front of the village elders for breaking the caste-norms with their secret marriage. This was only the latest of a series of brutal reminders that the dark ages are still lurking behind the accomplishments of fifty-one years of democracy and social progress in India.

The Delhi ceremony was a perfect replica of its predecessor. Thousands echoed the Buddhist priest's traditional chants in Pali, a dead language. After their leader was tonsured on behalf of all of them, they repeated the 22 basic vows as formulated by Ambedkar, denouncing all Hindu gods and rituals and the belief in reincarnation. And raising their hands in agreement they became Buddhists. Everything was exactly the same as 46 years before - but still there was a major difference.

Official organizer of the Delhi meeting was the "All India Conference of Scheduled Castes and Tribes", an umbrella organization of government employees with a membership of more

than three millions. Secret wire puller and financier of the event, however, was the All India Christian Council (AICC), an outfit of the Evangelical Church, which comprises of all kinds of neo-protestant "born-again" and missionary organizations and is dominated by Baptists and Pentacostals. Special guests on the dias were AICC president Dr. Joseph D'Souza, vice-president John Dayal and general secretary Dr. K P Yohannan. Dayal, a retired journalist, is the key figure of the recent PR-campaigns, projecting harassment of Christians in India, which are securing substantial support from Christians in the USA. Yohannan is the dynamic top conversion driver of the Pentacostals in their hotbed Kerala and known for his enormous capacities to mobilize Dollar donations.

Why does the Evangelical network sponsor a mass conversion of Hindus to Buddhism?

A PR-campaign, launched in June for supporters and donators in the USA and elsewhere, opened hearts and purses by giving the wrong impression that a big catch was heading straightly for the Christian net. "Gospel for Asia", the "largest church-planting movement in the subcontinent", started focussing on the plight of the Dalits and their plan to leave Hinduism. "... The news from around India is that Dalits also plan to move to the Christian faith. The Indian church is therefore presented with a challenge of enormous proportions. It will either stand or fall by the stand it takes during the coming months", informed AICC - president D'Souza. He added carefully: "The Church will also have to support the larger move of the Dalits because it represents freedom of choice, ... and now will have to respect and support whatever choices the Dalits make...."

This was the time when a movement for Dalit Human Rights started to get international attention in connection with the Durban World Conference Against Racism. The Evangelical Church sailed with the wind and sponsored - under the shroud of secrecy - the participation of 300 Dalits in the Durban conference, the biggest, best-coordinated and most vocal group. There was, of course, a strategy behind the generous support. The Durban conference, was the calculation, would cause great embarrassment to the Indian government. Already blamed for Hindu fanatic leanings, they would be held responsible for Human Rights violations against the Dalits, and under scrutiny by a sensibilized international public, they would have to carefully avoid any future offence against them. The Dalits would - in a new sense - become truly "untouchable". So beneficial this outcome may be, it was not for the Dalits' sake that their cause was supported. They were only build up to become proper carthorses for vested interests.

On 7 September, immediately after the Durban conference, a meeting took place in Hyderabad. 740 Evangelical leaders and 26 Dalit leaders discussed the further procedure and fixed the date for the first one million conversions. The AICC leaders started to "mobilize the Church body to respond to this most urgent challenge". Excited newsletters started rejoicing through cyberspace announcing a miracle: 300 millions of Hindus have expressed the heart's desire to join Christianity! Can you help them? - Money flew generously. But while advertising the big catch, the AICC leaders knew and appreciated very well that the Dalits would convert to Buddhism only. Their targets were not the converts of Delhi, though they used them to water their donators' mouths. Their plan was to use the Buddhist conversions as a wedge to open the gates of India for the great millennium crusade. This plan could only succeed under the condition that the missionary finger in the pie remained unseen in India.

The Anti-Conversion-Bill, established in the early fifties, long before the now ruling Hindu party came to power, bans proselytizing by force or by promise of advantage. Change of religion is only allowed as considered individual decision. The old missionary practice of mass conversions, threatening uneducated poor people or luring them with little gifts and promises in order to baptize them village by village and tribe by tribe, is punishable. Major

parts of India's North East have been conquered this way. And missionaries still try to advance into the tribal areas using the rough conversion method of St. Francis Xavier, who managed to obtain permission of the local King to baptize in seven days as many of the poor fishermen as he could. His proselytes were thousands. He called them together by ringing bells, wetted them with huge water sprayers and declared them Christians without wasting further words.

Throughout history, many attempts have been made by Christian missionaries to use the situation of the "untouchables" to harvest souls. But once they were baptized, they had to experience that equality and justice did not come nearer: as Christians they remained as "untouchable" as they had been as Hindus. Especially the priesthood hierarchies of the established orthodox, catholic, protestant and anglican churches kept themselves strictly Dalit-free. There is no single priest - let alone bishop or cardinal - down history, who was born an "untouchable". There is, despite all crocodile-tears for the oppressed, still no quota for Dalit Christians in the thousands of institutions, schools and hospitals owned by the Christian churches.

While the Indian government as well as the general public are alert against Christian conversion attempts, the change from Hindu religion to Buddhism is not taken as conversion and does therefore not fall under the Anti-Conversion-Bill, since Buddhism is understood to be a branch of Hinduism. Hinduism knows about 330 millions of gods and goddesses, and Buddha is one of them. While being freed from the caste system, the Dalits-turned-Buddhists don't lose their right on the provisions of the reservation bill, while Dalits-turned-Christians do - good reasons to follow Ambedkar's example rather than turning to Christianity.

But once, under the shield of its historic predecessor and under protection of the watchful international public, Dalit mass conversions to Buddhism have successfully taken place, an example is set. When thousands of Hindus are allowed to become Buddhists one fine afternoon, just by echoing some chants and raising their hands, no moral or legal right could prevent St. Francis Xavier's resurrection!

"God longs for the whole Hindu people to know Jesus Christ and live under His Lordship", revealed the Consultation of World Evangelization in their meeting in Thailand in 1980. The "Thailand Report on Hindus" delivered appropriate missionary know how for the harvest. The Hindu belief system was introduced with special attention to those of its elements, which could be used in the conversion process. "Miraculous healing", for example was recommended as successful technique. "Demonstrating social concern, for example for scheduled castes and tribes or other 'untouchables' of the Hindu community (lepers, prostitutes etc.) was another proposed technique.

"The oppressed and the poor have always been receptive for the Gospel down the centuries in India and elsewhere... The poor have a natural capacity to put their trust on almost anything. They are not dogmatic. This has always been the 'entry point' in the structure on any society, through which we can easily enter."

It was warned, however, to avoid "premature reaping": "If, as frequently occurs, the first converts are those who are socially isolated for one reason or another reason from the community, premature reaping may create serious barriers to the establishment of the Body of Christ in that area. We must exercise patience as we sow the seed, create a hunger, and work for the conversion of the opinion leaders of the community..."

Despite great efforts and considerable collections abroad, the "Gospel for Asia" brigade was generally not very successful in India. The "Joshua-2000-Project", which announced a kind

of missionary world conquest before the dawn of the new millennium and gathered great holy excitement and still greater donations, did not come up to the expectations. The current grand Dalit-project may have a similar fate. But donators seem to be a confused lot with short memories. Religious action provides entertainment and excitement for its armchair supporters and the satisfactory feeling of contributing considerably to the improvement of the world. Who would want to seriously understand the conditions of real life as long as the show goes on! This approach is unfortunately not limited to the customers of the Evangelical Church.

This gives at last some hopes for the Dalits. They may finally get rid of their new piggy-back riders, provided their own leadership is not too corrupt. Their weak and unprotected situation has made them ideal victims for all kinds of deals of politicians and missionaries throughout history. They all tried to save them from one thing only: from becoming Equals and stopping to be the Oppressed.

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