

RSS on manage-media drive

K Balasubrahmanyam (New Delhi, The Pioneer, 12 May 2002)

The media management of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh is going to get a fillip with V Ram Madhav, a young blood from Andhra Pradesh, taking over charge as additional spokesperson of the organisation. Of late, realising the importance of media management, the RSS top brass has assigned Mr Madhav to streamline its 28 media centres, popularly known as Viswa Samvad Kendra, set up in all major cities to disseminate information instantly to the lower rung cadre. The media centres, though computerised, are still groping in the dark as they were unable to understand how to go ahead in conveying the views of the RSS on several national issues, including their relations with its political outfit, Bharatiya Janata Party. So far, the media centres are confined to picking up few media reports and forwarding them to other centres. Mr Madhav, who made his debut on Wednesday, told The Pioneer that his immediate task was to project the correct image of his organisation and to counter their detractors' arguments that the RSS was being considered as an communal and backward looking. Besides, Mr Madhav has also been asked to interact with the intelligentsia and garner their support for the organisation. It is a part of the RSS' new strategy of building up a brigade of 'fellow travellers'. "A massive disinformation campaign is going on against us, as we never involve in self-promoting exercise. Now, the RSS has taken media management as one of its main activity to put the record straight and remove the misconceptions in the minds of the people," he said. "Despite the fact that the RSS shakhas (units) have reached an all time high, 45,000, in the country, there is a disinformation campaign in the media that they have gone down. In the south Indian cosmopolitan city of Bangalore alone, more than 350 shakhas are effectively running. A separate shakha is being run exclusively for software professionals where more than a 100 engineers take part everyday," he said, adding that a separate shakha was being conducted for medical professionals in Hyderabad. Mr Madhav said a two-day interactive session with several national and international intellectuals was organised a couple of months back in Hyderabad, in which entire top leadership of the RSS participated and requested them to be a fellow traveller. Similar meetings would be held in future, he said. The young RSS leader felt that a situation has emerged where the media cannot ignore the RSS' version on various national issues and the RSS also realised the necessity of holding regular interaction with the media. Mr Madhav's principal job is to assist 80-year-old official spokesperson of the RSS, MG Vaidya, in holding media conferences and interacting with reporters in his absence in New Delhi. The RSS leadership summoned Mr Madhav to New Delhi last September and asked to acquaint himself with the nitty-gritties and intricacies of media management. He was officially declared as additional spokesperson at All India Prathinidhi Sabha held in Bangalore in March.

<http://www.dailypioneer.com/secon3.asp?cat=nt1&d=NATION>

GUJARAT ONLINE VOLUNTEERS

Dear Friends,

As you might know that number of initiatives are working to provide relief, rehabilitation and legal aid to victims of recent Gujarat Carnage. To help creating additional visibility to these efforts some of us (an informal collective of individuals known as online volunteers collective) have put together a web section - Gujarat Carnage - on a web site [onlinevolunteers.org](http://www.onlinevolunteers.org). We invite you to visit these pages at: <http://www.onlinevolunteers.org/gujarat/>. We would appreciate your comments to make these pages useful. We also urge you to consider being part of this voluntary initiative. What You Can Do to Be a Part of this Initiative:

- Send us all documents / information you wish to post on this web section.
- Suggest other web site on this subject for linking.

- All those who are running web sites on this subject please consider including a link to <http://www.onlinevolunteers.org/gujarat/>
- Include following at the end of your email address to spread information available on this web site. Together We Can Make a Difference: Help Victims of Gujarat Carnage. Visit <http://www.onlinevolunteers.org/gujarat/> for more information.
- Volunteer your time for technology development for this web site to make it easy for end users and maintain it efficiently.
- Translate some key documents in other languages.
- Suggest this site to media contacts.

Please accept our apology for addressing you in a somewhat impersonal way. We hope you will understand it.

Thanks for your consideration and we look forward to your support and active participation in this voluntary initiative.

With regard,

Jagdish Parikh, New York

For onlinevolunteers collective

MARKETING FASCISM AS HINDUTVA

Shamsul Islam

The former Prime Minister of India, and a well-known socialist leader, Chandra Shekhar, while participating in the debate over Gujarat violence in Lok Sabha on April 30, 2002, said, "Parliamentary democracy appears to have reached its nadir. The Nazis also similarly misused Parliament." He was specifically referring to the fascist outburst in the House of Ms. Uma Bharati, minister in the central government and a storm trooper of RSS since early 1990s. He said, Uma Bharati's speech reminded him of the manner in which Hitler and his troopers manipulated the German Parliament. He seemed quite prophetic when he said, "This type of language will be calamitous for the health of the nation. It resembles a speech by a Nazi volunteer rather than a Hindu sanyasin. You are deliberately playing into the hands of those who want to fracture nation". Uma Bharati while reacting to these comments of Chandra Shekhar said, "If Chandra Shekhar compares me to Nazis it means he does not understand! either the Nazis or me".

It should surprise nobody that RSS and Fascism-Nazism have old fraternal ties. In fact, any student of Indian Politics and specially of communal politics knows the historically close ties which bind Uma Bharati's RSS and totalitarianism of German and Italian varieties. Can Uma Bharati and her tribe deny the facts with which archives of RSS must be full? RSS was the brain child of KB Hedgewar, VD Savarkar and BS Moonje. All of them including MS Golwalkar who became chief (sarsanghchalak) of RSS after Hedgewar were great fans of Fascism and Nazism. The Italian researcher of Indian politics, Marzia Casolari ('Hindutva's Foreign Tie-up in the 1930s-Archival Evidence') has done pioneer work in tracing the fraternal links between RSS founders on the one hand and Fascism and Nazism on the other. "The existence of direct contacts between the representatives of the (Italian) fascist regime, including Mussolini, and Hindu nationalists demonstrates that Hindu nationalism had much more than an abstract interest in the ideology and practice of fascism. The interest of Indian Hindu nationalists in fascism and Mussolini must not be considered as dictated by an occasional curiosity, confined to a few individuals; rather, it should be considered as the culminating result of the attention that Hindu nationalists, especially in Maharashtra, focussed on Italian dictatorship and its leader. To them, fascism appeared to be an example of conservative revolution" Moonje had a personal audience with Mussolini on March 19, 1931 at 3 pm, in Palazzo Venezia, the headquarters of the Fascist government. The meeting has been recorded in the diary on March 20 in the following words, "I shook hands with him saying that

I am Dr Moonje. He knew everything about me and appeared to be closely following the events of the Indian struggle for freedom. Signor Mussolini asked me if I have visited the University. I said I am interested in the military training of boys and have been visiting ! the Military Schools of England, France and Germany. I have now come to Italy for the same purpose and I am very grateful to say that the Foreign Office and the War Office have made good arrangements for my visiting these schools. I just saw this morning and afternoon the Balilla and the Fascist Organisations and I was much impressed. Italy needs them for her development and prosperity. I do not see anything objectionable though I have been frequently reading in the newspapers not very friendly criticisms about them and about your Excellency also. 'Signor Mussolini: What is your opinion about them?' 'Dr Moonje: Your Excellency, I am much impressed. Every aspiring and growing Nation needs such organisations.' 'Signor Mussolini - who appeared very pleased - said - Thanks but yours is an uphill task. However I wish you every success in return.' 'Saying this he got up and I also got up to take his leave.'

Once Moonje was back in India, he kept the promise made in his diary and started immediately to work for the foundation of his military school and for the militant reorganisation of Hindu society in Maharashtra. He openly made reference to the Italian and German examples: "In fact, leaders should imitate the youth movements of Germany and the Balilla and Fascist organisations of Italy. I think they are eminently suited for introduction in India, adapting them to suit the special conditions. I have been very much impressed by these movements and I have seen their activities with my own eyes in all details". On March 31, 1934 Moonje, Hedgewar and others had a meeting, the subject of which was again the military organisation of the Hindus, along Italian and German lines. Moonje told the gathering, "I have thought out a scheme based on Hindu Dharm Shashtra which provides for standardisation of Hinduism throughout India... But the point is that this ideal cannot be brought to effect unless we have our own swaraj with a Hindu as a dictator like Shivaji of old or Mussolini or Hitler of the present day in Italy or Germany. Moonje also wrote Preface to 'The Scheme of the Central Hindu Military Society and its Military School' where he declared, 'This training is meant for qualifying and fitting our boys for the game of killing masses of men with the ambition of winning victory with the best possible casualties (sic) of dead and wounded while causing the utmost possible to the adversary'. One can see how this 'mantra' was meticulously applied in the cleansing of Muslims in Gujarat recently. The other great mentor of RSS, VD Savarkar also had great liking for Hitler's Nazism and fascism of Mussolini. While delivering the Presidential address to the 22nd Session of Hindu Mahasabha in 1940 at Madura he said, "There is no reason to suppose that Hitler must be a human monster because he passes off as a nazi or Churchill is a demi-God because he calls himself a Democrat. Nazism proved undeniably the saviour of Germany under the set of circumstances Germany was placed in." Savarkar went on to chide Nehru for opposing Fascism and Nazism in India. According to him, "Who are we to dictate to Germany, Japan or Russia or Italy to choose a particular form of policy of government simply because we woo it out of academical attraction? Surely Hitler knows better than Pandit Nehru does what suits Germany best. The very fact that Germany or Italy has so wonderfully recovered and grown so powerful as never before at the touch of Nazi or Fascist magical wand is enough to prove that at those political "isms" were the most congenial tonics their health demanded". Savarkar went on to support Hitler's anti-Jewish pogroms and on October 14, 1938, he suggested the following solution for the Muslim problem in India: "A Nation is formed by a majority living therein. What did the Jews do in Germany? They being in minority were driven out from Germany".

MS Golwalkar, ideologue of RSS who came to head the organization after Hedgewar, naturally, inherited love for Fascism and Nazism from his seniors. He continued to idealize the Nazi cultural nationalism of Hitler, which was nothing else, but 'ethnic cleansing' in the following words (from We Or our Nationhood Defined), "German Race pride has now become the topic of the day. To keep up the purity of the Race and its culture, Germany shocked the world by her purging the country of the Semitic Races-the Jews. Race pride at its highest has been manifested here. Germany has also shown how well-nigh impossible it is for Races and cultures, having differences going to the root, to be assimilated into

one united whole, a good lesson for us in Hindusthan to learn and profit by". Golwalkar unhesitatingly wanted to model his Hindu Rashtra on Hitler's totalitarian and fascist pattern as is clear from the following words of his in the same book: "It is worth bearing well in mind how these old Nations solve their minorities problem. They do not undertake to recognize any separate element in their polity. Emigrants have to get themselves naturally assimilated in the principal mass of the population, the National Race, by adopting its culture and language and sharing in its aspirations, by losing all consciousness of their separate existence, forgetting their foreign origin. If they do not do so, they live merely as outsiders, bound by all the codes and conventions of the Nation, at the sufferance of the Nation and deserving no special protection, far less any privilege or rights. There are only two courses open to the foreign elements, either to merge themselves in the national race and adopt its culture, or to live at its mercy so long as the national race may allow them to do so and to quit the country at the sweet will of the national race. That is the only sound view on the minorities problem. That is the only logical and correct solution. That alone keeps the national life healthy and undisturbed. That alone keeps the nation safe from the danger of a cancer developing into its body politic of the creation of a state within a state. From this stand point, sanctioned by the experience of shrewd old nations, the foreign races in Hindusthan must either adopt the Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and hold in reverence Hindu religion, must entertain no idea but those of the glorification of the Hindu race and culture, i.e., of the Hindu nation and must lose their separate existence to merge in the Hindu race, or may stay in the country, wholly subordinated to the Hindu Nation, claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, far less any preferential treatment not even citizen's rights. There is, at least should be, no other course for them to adopt. We are an old nation: let us deal, as old nations ought to and do deal, with the foreign races who have chosen to live in our country". Are you listening, great sanyasin, Umaji?

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