

Hindutva Terror in Nepal

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Churches in Nepal, the erstwhile *Hindu Rashtra* on the face of the earth have maintained a unique tradition. They hold services on Saturdays because it is a public holiday when schools and offices are closed.

When Deepa Patrick, 22 and Celeste Joseph 15, both from Patna went to visit some of their relatives in Lalitpur, situated south of Kath-mandu, they found this fact of Lalitpur's Christian communities' social life very interesting. In one of her last e-mails to her parents back home Deepa even specifically mentioned this aspect of Lalitpur, which has a very small community of Christians living there for many decades.

The e-mail by Deepa is the last communication which her mother has with her now, as Deepa is no more.

She and Celeste died in the same Church when a bomb exploded at the time of the service itself. It was Saturday and about 500 people were attending the service on that day. The priest had just started giving his sermon that there was an explosion in which a bomb ripped through the Church of the Assumption killing both of them on the spot. Around 12 others were also injured. Five of the injured are in serious condition (aljazeera.net, May 23, 2009). The blast at the Roman Catholic church was the first such attack in Nepal [EPA]. According to an eyewitness who attended the church service, a bag was lying on the floor of the church and someone moved it to make some space and it just exploded with a loud noise.

The bomb blast took place just few hours before the country's parliament was to elect a new prime minister.

A hindu extremist group called the *National Defence Army* claimed responsibility for the bloody act. The said group is fighting to restore the nation's Hindu monarchy abolished in 2008. The NDA, which was formed by Ram Prasad Mainali of Sarlahi district, following the declaration of Nepal as a secular state by the Constituent Assembly last year, has been involved in various violent communal activities, including last July's murder of Father John Prakash at Don Bosco School in Sirsiya, along Morang, eastern Nepal. As his record shows, Mainali has walked out every time after serving jail terms and paying fines.

The group also said it bombed a mosque in the east of the country last year, killing two people.

Definitely it was not for the first time that a hindu extremist group had involved itself in criminal/terrorist activities to sabotage the nascent republic which was being built on the ruins of the decadent monarchy.

Birgunj had also witnessed a bomb blast in 2007 which was executed by a similar hindu extremist group.

BIRGUNJ. Feb 16 - A pro-Hindu organisation on Friday took responsibility for the series of bomb blasts that ripped across Birgunj yesterday.

A previously unknown organization that calls itself 'Nepal Defence Army' owned up to the responsibility for explosion at CPN-UML party office, district education office and Drugs Administration Regional Office.

In a letter circulated to the media, the organization, claiming to have been suppressed by the Royal regime, warned against the attempt to consign Hindus to a status of refugees by labeling them "extremists".

The letter was signed by "Azad" or "the free".

Two weeks ago, the head priest of Kali Math at Raxaul—in the Nepal-India border namely Sanjaya had come to Birgunj to express his solidarity with the Terai movement during which he had announced another revolution to declare Nepal a Hindu nation.

[Pro-Hindu body takes responsibility for Birgunj blast—Kantipur Report]

In fact when the members of the newly elected constituent assembly were to take oath last year, then also Kathmandu had witnessed two bomb blasts of different intensity which were attributed to the designs of the Hindu extremists. Incidentally nobody was injured in the incidents. As Nepal was ushering into a republic then, this piece of news did not get the coverage which it deserved. Looking back one can decipher it to be an opening shot by the fanatic Hindus to fulfil their dreams of restoring *Hindu Rashtra* to demonstrate that they are ready to go to any extent to achieve their goal.

It is an open secret that the Hindu extremists in Nepal have maintained close relations with extremists forces on this side of the border since quite sometime. This relationship had blossomed during the colonial period in India itself, when one found elements belonging to RSS or Hindu Mahasabha frequenting Nepal or using its example to show their 'model state'.

For the Sangh Parivar and its affiliated organisations it was the only state in the world where the 'one nation, one people, one culture' *weltanschauung* of the Hindu *rashtra* was already in place. For the monarchy, the strong 'ideological relationship' with forces fighting for Hindu *Rashtra* in India was also beneficial. It was not for nothing that the Monarchy let the Sangh Parivar organisations spread their network in the Himalayan kingdom, and on their part BJP and other Sangh Parivar organisations provided crucial support to the beleaguered monarchy on very many occasions.

It is now history how VHP working president, Ashok Singhal had exhorted Hindus of the world to follow the great monarch in a conference of Hindu leaders from across the world which was held in Kathmandu. He said : "It is the duty of 900 million Hindus the world over to protect the Hindu samrat (king) ...God has created h i m to protect Hindu dharma." (*Indian Express*, January 23, 2004).

It is no wonder that Sangh Parivar and affiliated organisations made last ditch efforts to save the monarchy despite the overwhelming majority going against them. When Terai region in Nepal witnessed violent agitation in the year 2007, the role played by Hindu extremist organisations had also come under scanner. Mr Bharat Bhushan had specifically commented on this aspect in one of the writeups in "The Telegraph" :

Nepalese political observers also point to the role being played by Hindu extremist organizations from India in fomenting trouble in the Terai to save the king. A high-ranking Rashtriya Swayam-sevak Sangh

representative from Nagpur is believed to have held a meeting in Gorakhpur with several royalists, including Upendra Yadav and members of the Sadbhavna Party. The role played by the local Indian MP, Mahant Avidhyanuth, is also being questioned by some in this regard.

(Royalists Fish In Terai Trouble, 29th January 2008, *The Telegraph*)

Last year after the historic victory of the Maoists in the elections to the Constituent assembly, a three day meeting of the Vishwa Hindu Mahasangh was organised in Balrampur, UP, at the behest of Yogi Adityanath, the 'firebrand' BJP MP from Gorakhpur. The meeting resolved to make an International Working Group to restore 'Hindu Rashtra' in Nepal and decided to adopt an aggressive stance vis-a-vis the Maoists. Apart from 75 other representatives of different social-political formations from Nepal this meeting was also attended by Bharat Keshar Singh. International President of Vishwa Hindu Mahasangh—who happened to be an honorary ADC of the then King Gyanendra and represented Nepal as an ambassador in different countries. In this particular meeting Bharat Keshar Singh is reported to have said "If Maoists can take up arms, then why not religious people like us do it?"

As reported in a section of the media, Yogi Adityanath, the convenor of the meeting and President of the I n d i a chapter of Vishwa Hindu Mahasangh, underlined that the emergence of Maoism in Nepal is a danger to India's security. According to h i m "our policymakers ensured that we do not share a common boundary with China, therefore they emphasised buffer states like Nepal, Tibet and Bhutan. Since Nepal is no more a Hindu Rashtra, there are chances that Buddhism can improve its influence in Nepal. At the end of the meeting he said that Vishwa Hindu Mahasangh is ready to take on the Maoists in Nepal and we can confront them in the language which they understand."

It needs to be deciphered whether the 'resolve to take up arms' expressed by the likes of Bharat Keshar Singh has deeper connections with the 'terrorist actions' by the Hindu extremist groups in Nepal or not.

But it is clear that Hindutva terrorists from this side of the border use Nepal as a sanctuary. Few of the accused in the Malegaon bomb blasts case are said to be still hiding in the border areas of Nepal.

"We asked for four things—continuous and uninterrupted supply of equipmental training, secondly allow us to start our office with a saffron flag in Tel Aviv, number three political asylum and number four support our cause in the United Nations that Hindu nation is born."

—Lt Col Purohit, vide ATS transcript

The 4,000 page chargesheet filed in Malegaon bomb blasts case by the Anti-Terrorist Squad in the MCOCA court reveals previously less explored dimensions of the Hindutva terror formations. The chargesheet exposes the radical intentions of creating a separate Hindu nation and extensive attempts by the saffron terror brigade to network with Nepal and Israel. According to the Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) the transcripts of audio video recordings recovered from terror mastermind Dayanand Pandey's laptop is evidence enough to prove that Purohit had already kicked off efforts to liason with establishments in Nepal and Israel to set up a separate Hindu rashtra (nation).

The said chargesheet provides details of few meetings of these terrorists at various places in India. In one such meeting where many of the leading lights of the Hindutva terror were present (namely Dayanand Pandey alias Sudhakar Dwivedi, Delhi based Dr R P Singh, a Col Bappaditya Dhar, Himani Sawarkar and others), Purohit is reported to have said the following “I have contacted Israel and one of our captains has been to Israel. There has been a very positive response from their side. They have said show us something on the ground because we have just shown them everything on paper right now: They said wait and watch for six months.”

In the same meeting Swami Dayanand Pandey is reported to have said : “I had told you that day that two people from Israel had come to us. They sat here and talked for a while and whatever it is they promised to cooperate first.”

The transcripts also talks of group’s efforts to take help of ousted monarch of Nepal namely King Gyanendra. It is learnt that Purohit had a meeting fixed with King Gyanendra for June 24, 2006 and then again on February 13, 2007. It is worth noting that a Nepal army official who acted as a middleman for Purohit and King Gyanendra, through whom Purohit had almost got a clearance to train cadres in Nepal.

As of now the ATS has made few of the other accused namely Himani Sawarkar, serving colonel Bappaditya Dhar and Delhi-based Dr R P Singh—the key witnesses in the case with a hope that it would be able to prove its case.

Few years back the US State department added internet sites of certain organisations to the foreign terrorist organisations’ list when “4 Jewish Web sites deemed ‘terrorist’ (By Jerry Seper, THE WASHINGTON TIMES)”. Of course the unusual alliance between radical Jewish groups with Hindutva groups bringing together two extreme religious philosophies from different parts of the world is premised on the fact that they share a distant enemy namely the Muslims. The report stated :

Four Internet Web sites operated by two extremist Jewish groups have been included by the State Department on its list of “foreign terrorist organizations” — the first time the list has been extended to include internet sites.

The listing, which went unnoticed when announced Oct. 3 in the department’s annual redesignation of the world’s terrorist organizations, includes the four sites operated by the Kach and its offshoot, the Kahane Chai, both of which have been designated by the department as terrorist organizations.

Interestingly one of these—www.kahane.org (<http://www.rediffmail.com/cgi-bin/red.cgi?red=www.kahane.org>) has had an important relationship with [Hinduunity.org](http://www.hinduunity.org). (which ‘Promotes and Supports Ideals of Bajrang Dal: VHP youth with Bharat’) The [Hinduunity.org](http://www.hinduunity.org) site then still showed a prominent hyperlink to the www.kahane.org site. Secular activists in the states had known for long that, the website of [Hinduunity.org](http://www.hinduunity.org) was hosted by [Kahane.org](http://www.kahane.org). on a common server and bear the same IP address. The particulars were : devserver.gwsystems.co.il (67.153.104.163) (Ref. Notice recently published in the Federal Register. (Federal Register : October 10, 2003 (Volume 68, Number 197) Page : 58738-58739)

Some years ago secular activists in the USA had after a painstaking work brought out a report 'Funding Hate' which had exposed the linkages between the funds collected by IDRf (an umbrella organisation floated by Hindutva brigade) which collected money in USA and the way the money thus collected goes into sponsoring sectarian violence in India. The *Project Saffron Dollar* launched by intellectuals, students and other professionals compelled many a respectable US company to even stop funding the innocuous looking funding arm of the Sangh—IDRF (India Development and Relief Fund). A news item published in *Financial Times*, London had boldly stated 'Cut the flow of funds to instigators of sectarian violence' (INDIA'S HARD MEN, page 16, 24 Feb. 2003 (no author's name given)). It need be noted that it was not alone in raising its voice against the modus operandi of the Hindutva formations in Western countries which supposedly had been aiding and abetting sectarian violence at home. The report unambiguously stated :

A year ago India was scared by some of the worst sectarian violence since partition, when up to 2000 Muslims were killed in pogroms in the western state of Gujarat, ostensibly sparked by an arson attack by Muslims on a train that killed 59 Hindu activists. Human rights organisations in India, the US and Europe implicated two organisations in the well-orchestrated attacks, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP or World Hindu Council) and its youth offshoot, the Bajrang Dal (devotees of the monkey-god Hanuman).

Now a *Financial Times* investigation has established that these groups receive extensive funding from Indians abroad, collected mainly as tax-free charity donations to front organisations in the US and UK. This fund-raising is increasingly coming under scrutiny. So it should—as should the links between these groups and India's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Behind the VHP and Bajrang Dal stands a quasi-paramilitary body, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS or Association of National Volunteers), which is the mother organisation of the Hindu revivalist BJP. Described by Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime minister, as "an Indian version of fascism", the RSS is at the centre of a protean network of front organisations. This structure facilitates arm's-length money-raising. It also makes it easier for the RSS to deny it is inciting agitation against Muslims and Christians.

Of course IDRf (India Development and Relief Fund), the US based charity organisation also presented a report in defence of itself against charges made in a report published last year that it was closely affiliated to the RSS and raised funds for sectarian causes in India. (Not funding hate, says IDRf, *Hindu* June 15, 2003) but that did not carry much ice and it was largely ignored in the media.

Definitely the story of the global dimensions of Hindutva terror does not end here.

One needs to emphasise that much on the lines of terrorisms invoking other religions, the threat of Hindutva terror cannot be undermined. Looking at the fact that fanatic Hindutva organisations have been able to make inroads in the sprawling diasporic community in the rest of the world, there are always chances that their energies can be channelised into sinister directions to serve the cause of Hindutva. The glee with which 'articulate sections' among the Indian diaspora looked at the Gujarat genocide 2002 is a stark reminder of this possibility.

