

LOOKING BACK

## RSS and Murder of Mahatma

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After the murder of Mahatma Gandhi on January 30, 1948 the RSS was banned on February 4, 1948. It was banned for anti-national activities and the government communique banning the RSS was self-explanatory:

"In their resolution of February 2, 1948 the Government of India declared their determination to root out the forces of hate and violence that are at work in our country and imperil the freedom of the Nation and darken her fair name. In pursuance of this policy the Government of India have decided to declare unlawful the RSS." [Cited in 'Justice on Trial', RSS, Bangalore, 1962, p. 64.]

The communique went on to disclose that the ban on the RSS was imposed because, "undesirable and even dangerous activities have been carried on by members of the Sangh. It has been found that in several parts of the country individual members of the RSS have indulged in acts of violence involving arson, robbery, dacoity, and murder and have collected illicit arms and ammunition. They have been found circulating leaflets exhorting people to resort to terrorist methods, to collect firearms, to create disaffection against the government and suborn the police and the military." [Ibid, pp. 65-66.]

It is well known that the then Home Minister, Sardar Patel, had a soft-corner for the RSS and continues to be a favourite with the RSS. However even Sardar Patel found it difficult to defend the RSS in the aftermath of Gandhiji's assassination. In a letter written to the head of the RSS, Golwalkar, dated 11 September 1948, Sardar Patel stated:

"Organizing the Hindus and helping them is one thing but going in for revenge for its sufferings on innocent and helpless men, women and children is quite another thing...Apart from this, their opposition to the Congress, that too of such virulence, disregarding all considerations of personality, decency or decorum, created a kind of unrest among the people. All their speeches were full of communal poison. It was not necessary to spread poison in order to enthuse the Hindus and organize for their protection. As a final result of the poison, the country had to suffer the sacrifice of the invaluable life of Gandhiji. Even an iota of the sympathy of the Government, or of the people, no more remained for the RSS. In fact opposition grew. Opposition turned more severe, when the RSS men expressed joy and distributed sweets after Gandhiji's death. Under these conditions it became inevitable for the Government to take action against the RSS...Since then, over six months have elapsed. We had hoped that after this lapse of time, with full and proper consideration the RSS persons would come to the right path. But from the reports that come to me, it is evident that attempts to put fresh life into their same old activities are afoot." [Ibid, pp.26-28.]

Hindu Mahasabha and RSS were jointly responsible for the murder of Father of Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, this fact was further corroborated by Sardar Patel in a letter to a prominent leader of Hindu Mahasabha, Shyama Prasad Mookerjee on July 18, 1948. Sardar wrote:

"As regards the RSS and the Hindu Mahasabha, the case relating to Gandhiji's murder is sub-judice and I should not like to say anything about the participation of the two organizations, but our reports do confirm that, as a result of the activities of these two bodies, particularly the former, an atmosphere was created in the country in which such a ghastly

tragedy became possible. There is no doubt in my mind that the extreme section of the Hindu Mahasabha was involved in the conspiracy.

The activities of the RSS constituted a clear threat to the existence of Government and the State. Our reports show that those activities, despite the ban, have not died down. Indeed, as time has marched on, the RSS circles are becoming more defiant and are indulging in their subversive activities in an increasing measure."

[Letter 64 in Sardar Patel : *Select Correspondence* 1945-1950, Volume 2, Navjiwan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1977, pp. 276-277.] □□□