The above flag is not the flag of India, but a symbolic construct that captures the agenda of the axis of the Indian Communists, Christian Missionaries and Islamist Organizations in USA and in India.
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The Ramayana argues for the colonization of the peoples of the subcontinent while the Rama caritmanas argues for the worship of an iconic figure rather than, for instance, a consideration of the Upanishads' metaphysics. - Vijay Prashad, Chair of South Asian History and Professor of International Studies, Trinity College. Founding member, Forum of Inqualabi Leftists

Coming back to Samskara, we see that not surprisingly, humanist teachings in Hinduism arise not from our host of gods and goddesses whose life stories are many times filled with outrageous kinds of deceit, manipulations, selfishness and greed...Indeed, when one such God tried to play the role of a guru as seen above in the Gita, the teachings are quite clearly non-humanistic. - Balmurli Natraj, Assistant Professor of Anthropology, William Paterson University. Member, Forum of Inqualabi Leftists

Hinduism is a religion of violence. All Hindu gods killed their enemies and became heroic images. This is the only religion in the world where the killer becomes god. Whom did they kill? From Brahma to Krishna, those who were killed were Dalitbahujans. Now these images and the stories and narratives and everything is out there in the civil society. Now, because of this, the consciousness of worshipping the killer or worshipping violence did not give any space for human rights...for Hindu dharma, resolving of a conflict is only by killing. There is no other discourse. Debate is not there. You have to kill the enemy. - Kancha Ilaiah, author of ‘Why I am Not a Hindu’, in an interview written by Forum of Inqualabi Leftists

The Marxists have long subscribed to the view that Gandhi was a ‘romantic’, a hopeless idealist and even hypocrite; to this a chorus of voices added the thought that Gandhi was an insufferable ‘puritan’. - Vinay Lal, Associate Professor of History, UCLA. Member, Forum of Inqualabi Leftists

I just returned from Patna, India, and am sending this praise note from Calcutta, en route Chennai. But the spectacular baptismal event that has dwarfed the others took place in Patna, where we had in all two batches of 135 converts baptized in the river Ganges – in the very ‘Holy river’, where millions of the idol and demon worshipping pagans go every once in awhile to have a holy dip. - Bishop Ezra Sargunam, head of Evangelical Church of India

[The] Patels began sponsoring a number of Hindu religious outfits and backing Hindutva organisations in the state, thus presenting themselves as ardent Hindus, and, therefore, as ‘high’ castes. One aspect of that newly constructed identity as super-Hindus was a deep hostility towards Muslims. In fact, the Patels, who comprise more than 30% of the Gujarati population, played a major role in the 2002 anti-Muslim genocide. - Mukul Sinha, a speaker at
the 2010 MIT Workshop organized by Indian American Muslim Council, in a 2007 interview with Yoginder Sikand, an affiliate of Forum of Inqualabi Leftists.

[The NRIs'] 'patriotism' is simple: they are jingoistic for whomever will allow them the freedom to make money. Whether saffron or red/white/blue, these cats are heavily into the green...And what are issues that motivate desis? Things to do with the 'homeland' or things that have to do with the exploitation and oppression of desis and others in the U.S. - Vijay Prashad, Chair of South Asian History and Professor of International Studies, Trinity College. Founding member, Forum of Inqualabi Leftists

A country not only divided between Mahommedan and Hindoo, but between tribe and tribe, between caste and caste; a society whose framework was based on a sort of equilibrium, resulting from a general repulsion and constitutional exclusiveness between all its members. Such a country and such a society, were they not the predestined prey of conquest?...India, then, could not escape the fate of being conquered, and the whole of her past history, if anything, is the history of the successive conquests she has undergone. Indian society has no history at all, at least no known history. What we call its history, is but the history of the successive intruders who founded their empires on the basis of that unresisting and unchanging society. - Karl Marx, The Future of Results of British Rule in India. July 22, 1853
About Me

I am a Hindu American youth who was born in India but brought up in the US. I decided to write this report out of a growing frustration and concern that Hinduism and India are routinely demonized by individuals pretending to fight for ‘secularism’ and ‘human rights’; in reality, they follow a polluted Communist/Marxist agenda and support Islamic and Christian organizations at the expense of Hindus. They deeply discount the human rights and grievances of Hindus and blame most of the problems of India on Hinduism. Unfortunately, they have made professional careers out of blatantly inaccurate, highly out of context and racially charged books, articles and activities.

Most Hindus like me are unaware of their machinations, until we face prejudiced and racial views in high schools and colleges as well as in the media. Fellow Hindu and Indian youth are often shocked and even believe the views and arguments put forth by such professors, academics and activists due to inertia on their part or a lack of deeper understanding of Hindu scriptures and Indian history.

We do not consider all Muslims as terrorists or fundamentalists. In fact, many of us have close Muslim, Jewish and Christian friends. We also do not support discrimination against any section of our society based on rigid and hierarchical structures and corruption of our religious texts. We do, however, believe everyone has a fundamental right to practice her religion or spiritual path without being subject to ridicule and bigotry.

An Appeal:

I sincerely appeal to my fellow Hindus all over the world to read this report and understand the game being played against our beloved heritage. We are in this game, whether we like it or not. And, the rules of the game favor our opponents. Either we step up and level the playing field or get wiped out. The impact of their strategies may not be felt immediately, but will certainly be felt over the years.

The Hindu community needs to unite against this rape of its heritage. While there have been some excellent efforts in this space, the community as a whole has yet to go on the offensive and analyze those who ‘analyize’ us.

I am not a scholar and don’t claim this to be a scholarly work. I have also not received help from any organization or group, domestic or foreign, but welcome feedback from anyone and everyone.

Sincerely,

Abhimanyu,
New Jersey
Contact: abhimanyuarjun2011@gmail.com
About This Report

This report is a culmination of almost a year of information gathering, research and discussions. I am grateful to the efforts of all those who have written big and small works exposing the vitriolic agenda of the nexus of Communists/Christian Missionaries/Islamists.

The report is a humble attempt to shed light on individuals and organizations that work hand-in-glove to demonize Hinduism and India through their views, writings and activities. In this respect, two broad themes come forward:

First, in what is a dangerously growing and alarming trend, this nexus attempts to influence (and is many a times successful) policy makers in large Western nations to intervene in internal matters related to India via sanctions, censures or for to provide funds to NGOs that work under the pretense of highlighting ‘human rights violations’ or providing ‘humanitarian relief’. This nexus not only supports the concept of a violent civil war in India but supports and even funds terrorist groups like the Naxals.

To corroborate this point, on Tuesday, July 19, 2011, the New York Times broke the following story: the Federal Bureau of Investigation of the US arrested [Ghulam Nabi Syed Fai] on charges of being an agent of the Pakistani spy agency the ISI. Neil MacBride, the US Attorney in the Eastern District of Virginia, in filing the charges, accused Fai of a ‘decades-long scheme with one purpose — to hide Pakistan’s involvement behind his efforts to influence the U.S. government’s position on Kashmir.’ MacBride also maintained that ‘[his] handlers in Pakistan allegedly funneled millions through the Kashmir Center to contribute to U.S. elected officials, fund high-profile conferences and pay for other efforts that promoted the Kashmiri cause to decision-makers in Washington.’ Similarly, the FBI stated that group’s objective was ‘to persuade the United States government that it was in its interest to push India to allow a vote in Kashmir to decide its future’. Fai was a popular figure among FOIL circles and was invited to a 2003 meeting by organized by Angana Chatterji, Akhila Raman and Friends of South Asia, a sister organization of FOIL.

Furthermore, the report brings forth the political links of the Indian Leftists in the US – under the guise of ‘progressive’, ‘secular’, ‘pluralistic’ work, these organizations and individuals are nothing more than the ambassadors of political parties such as the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), both known for their violent histories and atrocities against their populace. While the western Leftists are mostly at odds with Christian Missionaries and Islamists, the Indian Leftists actually support and work with Christian Missionaries and Islamists to paint India as an oppressor of minorities, especially Christians, Muslims and Dalits. To achieve this goal, they exaggerate facts and provide highly out of context testimonials and go on ‘fact-finding’ missions to gather data for their theses.
As shown in the report, even organizations such as the Association for India’s Development (AID) and Asha for Education are a part of this nexus. The report provides details of the Communist/Marxist leanings of these organizations and how they work with groups and political parties whose members have been prosecuted for criminal activities or whose members have had a history of violent behaviors and terrorist tendencies. It is even more disturbing that the American donors (including well-meaning Indian Americans) and volunteers of these organizations may not know the political and ideological leanings of these organizations because most have a soft corner for India. As shown in the report, in the name of education and development, these organizations actually work to groom innocent kids and unsuspecting individuals in Marxist/Communist ideology.

Secondly, this nexus contains powerful players that have shaped the way Hinduism is studied, viewed, discussed and reported in today’s world, including in India. Hinduism is frequently reduced to a foreign religion of ‘fair-skinned’ people that attacked and subdued the native ‘black’ population of the Indian subcontinent through its ‘Brahminical practices’ and the Caste System. Hinduism is thus seen as an oppressive religion that needs to be abolished and whose people need to be ‘saved’; anything good in Hinduism (e.g. Yoga, Bhagavad Gita, Karma, Reincarnation, etc.) has been misappropriated from other religions or regions (i.e. Buddhism, Christianity, etc. or from Europe) and should therefore be looked at with suspicion.

Several Islamic and Christian organizations and individuals support the efforts of these Communists/Marxists in many ways by: a) Providing funds from foreign governments and religious bodies; b) Inviting them to prestigious or popular conferences, seminars, etc.; c) Publishing documentaries and holding screening of movies that highlight the ‘atrocities’ against Christians, Muslims and Dalits; d) Supporting their appointments to key posts in the academia as well as in politics and media; e) Distributing their venomous writings and views throughout the internet, in the media, in political circles and in the academia; and e) Partnering up with them to lodge protests, petitions, etc. against the Indian government or against various Hindu organizations accusing the latter two of ‘fascism’, ‘extremism’, ‘human rights abuse’, etc.

Together, this nexus has attacked several Indian and Hindu organizations and have attempted to eradicate their existence by false propaganda. For example, in 2002, FOIL and its affiliates attacked the India Development and Relief Fund, accusing it of ‘funding hatred in India”. In 2007 and in 2008, FOIL and its affiliates went on a rampage to destroy the US based youth group Hindu Students Council, accusing it of ‘fascism’ and ‘right wing extremism’. The attack on the HSC was particularly dangerous since FOIL attempted to confuse young Hindus and persuade them to disown the HSC by its half-truths and out of context statements.

The bigotry practiced by the nexus becomes evident when well-meaning Indians or Hindu Americans point out their blatantly inaccurate statements and their political and extremist
connections. When Indians and Hindu Americans ask for a balanced opinion or for including an alternative opinion, they are often discounted or denounced as ‘fascist Hindutva’ types or ‘anti-secular’.
Structure of the Report

The report relies on data from the websites and writings of various organizations and individuals discussed here. It also relies on data from scholarly books, newspapers, journals, magazines and blogs. In addition, the report is diverse in its sources and does not rely on a handful of perspectives.

Chapter I provides a brief background on the Forum of Inqualabi Leftists (FOIL) and sheds light on some of the big wigs of FOIL and those from whom FOIL derives its views on Hinduism and India. Figure 1 provides a model that illustrates how the nexus of Communist/Christian Missionary/Islamist organizations and individuals nourishes anti-India/anti-Hindu worldview. Figure 1 is a visual overview of a number of themes discussed in the report.

Chapter II offers a detailed analysis of FOIL’s disturbing views on Hinduism, Ramayana, Bhagavad Gita, etc. This chapter starts to analyze the connections between FOIL and its affiliates, along with Christian and Islamic organizations. It also offers substantial information on Communist and Christian Missionary organizations that were involved in successfully torpedoing the efforts of Hindu groups to seek a fair portrayal of Hinduism vis-à-vis other religions in 6th grade California textbooks.

Chapter III provides a visual illustration of the interconnectedness of various FOIL organizations parading as secular/human rights organizations. Figure 6 demonstrates that though these groups claim to be separate they contain the same people, are registered to the same people and/or have been started by the same people. Table 1 offers registration details of some of websites associated with FOIL and its affiliates. The information has been gathered from the websites themselves as well as Domain Lookup Services such as Whois.net.

Chapter IV examines a plethora of organizations and individuals within the Communist/Islamist/Christian Missionary nexus. It drills deeper into their views, activities and supporters and attempts to highlight their nefariously anti-Hindu/anti-India agenda.

Chapter V provides some specific examples of how the nexus members promote and work with each other to influence policy making, to provide fodder for shaping anti-Hindu/anti-India agendas as well as to further a worldview that regards Indian civilization as a chaotic mishmash of religious and cultural identities that is a ticking time bomb. In the same purview, Hinduism and India are continuously declared as oppressors of women, minorities and Dalits.
Chapter I. Background

The Forum of Inqualabi Leftists (FOIL) (formerly known as the Forum of Indian Leftists) is a group of Marxists/Communists professors, activists and individuals; the group’s origins date back to the late 1980s / early 1990s. FOIL’s founding fathers are Biju Mathew and Vijay Prashad, both well-known Marxists/Communists who write in far-left leaning publications as well in People’s Democracy, a weekly mouthpiece of the Communist Party of India (Marxist). In a December 1995 note in their newsletter Sanskriti, Prashad and Mathew discuss the idea of establishing the forum, as “…a clearing-house for radical Indian activists in the United States, Canada and England… [to] help build projects that make [their] radical politics more material.”

From the domain registration records, their website seems to have been first registered on December 15, 1997, by Rajasekhar Ramakrishnan, a researcher at Columbia University and Secretary-Treasurer of the SINGH (not to be confused with the Sikh and Hindu last name of Singh) Foundation. Also named PROXSA (Progressive South Asians), the forum of over 300 Marxist/Communist activists is the mother of several organizations and blogs, magazines and forums that have been started or inspired by individual members of FOIL.

Other prominent personalities like Angana Chatterji, whose views are discussed later in the report, are also affiliated with FOIL and its sister organizations.

FOIL’s members subscribe to a strong belief that Marxism/Communism is the solution to problems created by capitalist imperialism led by the US, Zionist interests led by Israel and Hindu ‘nationalist’ interests led by ‘Hindu fascists’. Thus, FOIL established this ‘clearinghouse’ to discuss and disseminate specific political ideas and agendas that provide a Marxist/Communist view of Indians and India. Unfortunately, only Hindu Indians in India and abroad bear the brunt of FOIL’s biased perspectives and studies. Hinduism, as understood and practiced by a majority of Hindu temples, organizations, and families both in India and abroad (e.g. USA), is mythically reduced to an oppressive, non-pluralistic religion practiced by hegemonic ‘upper-caste’ sections of the society. FOIL looks at NRIs (Non-Resident Indians) and Hindus with a cynical view and any efforts by these groups to defend biases against Hinduism, Hindus or India are automatically reduced to extremist, ‘Yankee Hindutva’, right-wing, etc. agendas attacking ‘free speech’. Members of FOIL go so far as to call Hindu deities as colonizers, whose lives are “…filled with outrageous kinds of deceit, manipulations, selfishness

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and greed. It is important to note that most of the members of FOIL and its sister organizations that make such claims have no background or specialization in Hinduism, Hindu Scriptures, Indic Traditions, Sanskrit, Linguistics, Archaeology, Genetics, etc. They merely use their Hindu names as if speaking for Hindus, or rely on biased opinions of other Marxist Scholars or American University Professors with questionable writings and backgrounds. This is illustrated later in the report.

FOIL’s negative views on Hinduism and India find companionship in various Islamist and Christian Missionary organizations in the US as well as in India who have their own agendas. Together, as the report shows, these individuals and organizations lend each other credibility and demonize Hindus and India via various symposiums, ‘human rights conferences’, presentations in front of government bodies and political figures, as well as spreading false propaganda via popular media. This is also illustrated in Figure 1 below. As the model shows, the nexus starts with an already prejudiced agenda and then cultivates this further by holding events, creating reports and documentaries and inviting biased personalities to solidify pejorative opinions and outlook on India and Hinduism. The end results are venomous. For example, thanks to the constant lobbying of the nexus, in 2007, the United Nations deemed India as the first country to be evaluated for various human rights violations. Similarly, the nexus concocted a nefarious propaganda against various Hindu groups, including Hindu parents, and destroyed their attempts to give Hinduism an equal platform versus other religions in 6th grade California textbooks. In the same manner, the nexus spewed venom against Hindu organizations such as the India Development and Relief Fund as well as the Hindu Students Council with half-baked truths, out of context statements and libelous statements.

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**Figure 1 – A Model of How the Nexus Manufactures Anti-India/Anti-Hindu Views and Shapes World Opinion**

**Communist Organizations/Individuals**
e.g. FOIL, FOSA, AID, Asha, NRI-SAHI, SAHMAT, Sabrang, Vijay Prashad, Angana Chatterji, Teesta Setalvad, Romila Thapar, Vinay Lal, etc.

**Christian Missionary Groups and Individuals**
e.g. DFN, DSN, Lutheran Church, Evangelical Council of India, All India Christian Council, PIFRAS, P.D. John, John Dayal, etc.

**Islamist Organizations/Individuals**
e.g. CSSS, IAMC, Omar Khalidi, Kaleem Kawaja, etc.

**Biased Views**

- **Issue reports, resolutions, action alerts, calls for halting of foreign aid to India, UN intervention, American Policy arm twisting, etc.**
- **Symposiums, Conferences, Studies, Movies, Lecture Tours, Articles, etc. on**
  - Human Rights Abuses in India
  - India and Secularism
  - Caste and Hinduism
  - Dalits: Blacks of India
  - The Idea of India
  - In the Name of God
  - Threat to Secularism
- **Present Findings to Gov’t Bodies, politicians, and International Orgs**
  (e.g. DFID, HRW, USCIRF, US Congress, UN, Ford Foundation, etc.)
- **Circulate biased conference reports, minutes, studies, resolutions, etc. via Propaganda Network**
- **Award Individuals for ‘human rights work’, ‘Dalit emancipation’, publication of studies, NGO activities, etc.**
- **Influence Policies on India**
  - 2007 - UN designates India as first country to be reviewed for Human Rights Violations,
  - 2008 - Danish Parliament rejects claim that caste is an internal Indian matter; calls for greater international attention to human rights abuses caused by caste discrimination

**Influence Opinion on Hindus and India**
- Hinduism = fascism
- Hindus are ethnically cleansing minorities
- India is like Kosovo, East Timor, or Chechnya
- All problems of India are due to Hinduism
- Indian government is unlawful and oppressive

**Exaggerate and Cook Up Information**
(e.g. 2000 Muslim Deaths in Gujarat riots, Myth of St. Thomas, Millions of Dalit Killings, Indian Army cruelties in Kashmir and against Naxals, etc.)

**Invite Right Wing Foreign Politicians (e.g. Joe Pitts)**

**Invite biased US Academics (e.g. Wendy Doniger, Lise McKeen, Michael Witzel, etc.)**

**Cite each other’s work as ‘research’ and link to each other’s sites.**
Section 1.01  A Spotlight on Prominent FOIL Members and Their Affiliates

Since FOIL deems itself as a group of ‘radical activists’, it is important to shed some light on the individual members or affiliates of the forum. What are their views and their positions when it comes to Hindus (in India and abroad) and India? What is the basis for their views?

In his groundbreaking book *Breaking India. Western Interventions in Dravidian and Dalit Fault lines*, (India: Manipal Press Ltd, 2011), Rajiv Malhotra, a US based NRI intellectual and founder of Infinity Foundation, and Aravindan Neelakandan, an NGO activist and editor of a highly popular web portal *Tamil Hindu*, discusses how the secular Indian Leftists/Communists, along with some members of the US Left delegitimize India and by extension its Hindu population. According to Malhotra, “While the US right-wing neo-cons support the idea of a Christian India, the left-wing has a general sympathy towards Islam. Both these have Hinduism and classical Indian civilization as their common enemy.”6 Indeed, one will seldom find significant criticisms of Islam and countries like Pakistan or Bangladesh in the writings of FOIL and its affiliates. According to their views Indian society is a splintered mirror of sub-national/regional identities held together by the oppressive and authoritative Indian state and Hindu social order. Per Malhotra, “Such portrayals become tools in the hands of those who demand the US-mediated balkanization of India”7.

The effect of this phenomenon is also felt by Hindus all over the world, including in USA and Europe, where India and Hindus are seen as oppressive caste followers, anti-minorities, anti-women and non-progressive. India is viewed as a legacy of colonial British era with no historical validity.

(a)  Romila Thapar

While not a direct member of FOIL, Romila Thapar is one of the most famous Marxist historians on Ancient India. Her books and writings are a source of reference and inspiration for many of FOIL’s ideas on Hindus and India. She has heavily influenced the way Indian history is written and studied in India and abroad. Thanks to her efforts, Indian history books continue to peddle the racist theory that India was invaded by light-skinned foreigners known as Aryans, who drove the indigenous people known as Dravidians down South and imposed their Brahminic/Vedic religion on the indigenous people.

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7 Malhotra and Neelakandan, 248
Malhotra and Neelakandan highlight Thapar’s views briskly:

Hindu spiritual experiences are devalued as even pathological. She resorts to a quasi-scholarly speculation of racial hatred as existing in entire Indian traditions when she wonders, ‘as to whether the references to the rakshasa, the preta and the dāitya, demons and ghosts of various kinds, could have been a reference to the alien people of the forest. Demonizing the ‘other’ is sometimes a technique to justify holding such people in contempt and even attacking them’. This is exactly the same thesis that is being spread today by Maoist insurgents working among remote tribes in central India, namely, that demons mentioned in Hinduism are actually references to tribal people.\(^8\)

Thus, Maoist insurgents, deemed as a major national security threat by the Prime Minister of India, use analyses of scholars like Thapar to justify their violent war.

She accepts the myth of St. Thomas and his martyrdom in South India as “credible”\(^9\). “Thapar does recognize the legitimacy of Jesus as the Christ and accepts the historicity of his existence while denying the historicity of Rama”.\(^10\) As a further example of Thapar’s biased views, in 2005, she worked with Western Indologists like Michael Witzel and Steve Farmer and lambasted several edits proposed by California Indian parents with respect to the portrayals of Hinduism in 6th grade textbooks. Though they were factual errors, Thapar and her cronies dismissed them entirely and blasted several individuals and organizations as “Hindu fascists” that were bent on changing history and religious texts.

Such ‘authoritative’ writings are also utilized by the Church to harvest Indian souls. Malhotra and Neelakandan, point out to the example of Cambridge Jesuit theologian Michael Barnes. According to the authors, Barnes defines the “…the recent phenomenon of ‘low-caste insurgency’…as an ‘agitation against the hegemonic culture of Brahminically dominant elite’.”\(^11\) Barnes then proceeds further to campaign the Church’s support for these insurgents who consider a unified Indian civilization and nation as a “…narrow interpretation of Indian culture, derived from Vedic times as a creation of the Aryan people”\(^12\). He cites Romila Thapar and states that “‘influence of both oriental and Hindu-nationalist concepts of ‘Indian identity’ are being held up to an increasingly critical scrutiny’”.\(^13\)

In another instance, Robert Eric Frykenberg, professor emeritus of History and South Asian Studies at University of Wisconsin-Madison, in his paper entitled, *Hindu Fundamentalism and...*
the Structural Stability of India at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, he states that the ideas of India and Hinduism are “by-products of official policies of the British Company’s Raj, and he dismisses ‘the fallacy of assuming that some sort of inclusive Hinduism existed”. His source is none other than Thapar, especially her statement that ancient Indians should be seen as merely “‘a cluster of distinctive sects and cults’”. This portrays India as a chaotic cluster much like the various tribes of third-world nations before the European conquest. Under this purview, Hinduism as an entity is a recently machinated phenomenon.

Thapar was appointed as the holder of the Kluge Chair at the Library of Congress in 2003. In 2008, she accepted the $1 Million prize with another recipient Peter Robert Lamont Brown. However, while Thapar gladly accepted the $1 Million prize, she twice declined the Indian government’s highest award, the Padma Bhushan. Perhaps she wanted to stay award from being seen as politically aligned to a particular ideology or government. However, Malhotra and Neelakandan point out that the Kluge award is well-known for being often given to Christian evangelicals. Even more interestingly, according to Kluge Center’s website, “The Center seeks to bring a group of the world’s best senior thinkers - the Kluge Scholars - into residence, to stimulate, energize, and distill wisdom from the rich resources of the Library and to interact naturally over a period of time with political Washington [Emphasis Added]. There is great flexibility in the interaction between the scholars and Members of Congress [Emphasis Added] within the Jefferson Building, where lawmakers find a haven for serious discourse only a short walk from the Capitol.” [Emphasis added]. Why then, did Thapar accept an award that is politically close to Washington (though not offered directly by the American government)?

In another irony, Thapar was given the award even though here research has demonized Hinduism and demolished the sense of Indian civilization. Her co-recipient meanwhile, according to Malhotra and Neelakandan, “…is a historian of early Christian monasticism and his work has brought out a positive picture of Christian monasticism that is equivalent to the Indian spiritual culture which Thapar condemned as life-negating escapism.”

14 Malhotra and Neelakandan, 259-260
15 Malhotra and Neelakandan, 259-260
18 Malhotra and Neelakandan, 261
19 “About the Kluge Chair”, http://www.loc.gov/loc/kluge/about/, accessed June 19, 2011
20 Malhotra and Neelakandan, 261
(b) Vijay Prashad

Vijay Prashad is the George and Martha Kellner Chair in South Asian History and Professor of International Studies. This is indeed ironic, since George Kellner is the founder of Kellner Dileo & Company, which specializes in merger arbitrage, distressed & high income investing and securities lending - core businesses of Wall Street, the very seat of the ideology (Capitalism) that Prashad routinely denounces. Prashad is one of the founding fathers of the FOIL and is the author of several books regarding South Asia, Indians, etc. He has often written articles and papers on US imperialism and capitalist hegemony and impacts of this across the world.

According to Malhotra and Neelakandan, “Prashad endorses the Afro-Dalit movement, including the racist theories of V.T. Rajshekar. The Afro-Dalit project purports to paint Dalits as the ‘Blacks’ of India and non-Dalits as India’s ‘Whites’”. The history of American racism, slavery and Black/White relations is thus superimposed onto Indian society. “But taking its cue from the American experience, the Afro-Dalit project attempts to empower Dalits by casting them as victims at the hands of a different race.” Similarly, Prashad also believes that “both the Africans and the Indian Untouchables and tribals had common ancestors...that Dalits ‘resemble Africans in physical features’”. Though he is aware of the shortcomings and fallacies of Aryan-Dravidian ethnographic projects undertaken by colonial anthropologists, his writings are designed to provoke suspicion against anything to do with Hinduism and India’s legitimacy as a nation-state.

Malhotra and Neelakanda illustrate the net effects of such outrageous ideas in this influential internet age. A Canadian blogger named Plawiuk, crediting the writings of Vijay Prashad and V.T. Rajshekar, which he picked up at the Culture and the State conference at University of Alberta in 2003, for his ideas about Indian civilization as follows:

Modern Hinduism is fascism and racism. It is the origin of what we would call modern fascism. Based on a religious caste system that is Aryan in origin, it divides up the world.

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23 Malhotra and Neelakandan, 263
24 In the Introduction to the book, Malhotra discusses how race relations of America are forced onto Indian society by the likes of V.T. Rajshekar and further endorsed by individuals like Prashad. Dalits are considered a different race than other Hindus/Indians and are therefore encouraged along this theme to rebel against the “whites” of India. http://www.breakingindia.com/introduction/. Accessed June 17, 2011
25 Malhotra and Neelakandan, 263
26 Malhotra and Neelakandan, 263
27 Malhotra and Neelakandan, 263
into three castes, warriors, priests, merchants, and in a slave class, the Dalits or Untouchables.\(^\text{28}\)

Prashad also supports the ideas of Kancha Ilaiah, deemed as ‘the leading Dalit rights campaigner’\(^\text{29}\). However, Kancha Ilaiah is well known for his hatred towards and demonization of Sanskrit, Hinduism and India. Ilaiah’s and FOIL’s views on Hinduism and India are presented later in the report. But, it is sufficient to say that Ilaiah’s views are extremely disturbing, inaccurate and a demonstration of “theories gone wild”. Interestingly, one of Ilaiah’s books *Why I am not a Hindu* is prescribed in introductory courses on Hinduism at many American universities!\(^\text{30}\) Koenrad Elst, a Belgian Indologist, reviewed Ilaiah’s book and found parallels with the anti-Jewish depictions in Nazi writings:\(^\text{31}\)

> These anti-Hindu forces are exploiting the Aryan Invasion Theory to the hilt, infusing crank racism in vast doses into India’s body politic. Read, e.g. Kancha Ilaiah’s book *Why I Am Not a Hindu* (Calcutta, 1996), sponsored by the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, with its anti-Brahmin cartoons: move the hairlocks of the Brahmin villains from the back of the head to just in front of the their ears, and you get exact replicas of the anti-Semitic cartoons from the Nazi paper, *Der Stumer*\(^\text{32}\)

Prashad wrote an article on Hindu Holocaust (News India Times, Sept. 25, 2009) about an event held by French journalist Francois Gautier to raise money to build a Hindu Holocaust Museum that highlights the atrocities against Hindus throughout history. Contrary to available evidence both from Muslim and non-Muslim writers and scholars, Prashad categorically denies the slaughter of Hindus in the Indian subcontinent at the hands of Islamic invaders starting from the 8th century AD. He surmises that Islam entered India via peaceful trade relations rather than on the backs of invaders. And, even when invaders did come, they were mainly interested in warfare and plunder and nothing more. Vinod Kumar, writing a fact based response to Prashad’s article, highlights the following statements from Prashad:

> Between Hindus and Muslims there has not been an endless rivalry for social power. When Islam enters the subcontinent, it does not come in the saddlebags of the Ghaznis or the Ghouris, but amongst the rumble of goods brought by traders. Early conversions are not by the sword but by the merchants. There was killing, but that was as much for reasons of warfare and plunder as for reasons of God and tradition. An interested reader might want to look at the distinguished historian Romila Thapar’s superb book

\(^{28}\) *Malhotra and Neelakandan*, 263

\(^{29}\) *Malhotra and Neelakandan*, 225

\(^{30}\) *Malhotra and Neelakandan*, 225

\(^{31}\) *Malhotra and Neelakandan*, 225

\(^{32}\) *Malhotra and Neelakandan*, 225
‘Samantha: The Many Voices of a History’ (Penguin, 2005). There, Professor Thapar shows us that Mahmud Ghaznis destruction of the Shiva temple in 1026 was driven not so much by a fanatical religious belief but because his father, Subuktigin (sic), needed money to sustain his faltering kingdom in Central Asia. Now it is certainly true, as historian Mohammed Habib put it, that there was ‘wanton destruction of temples that followed in the wake of the Ghaznavid army.’

Prashad’s history knowledge is based on none other the Marxist historian Romila Thapar and her controversial book on the famous Hindu temple of Somnath.

(c) Biju Mathew

Biju Mathew is an Associate Professor of Business Administration at Rider University in New Jersey. Mathew is the co-founder of FOIL. While his background seems to be in Business and Information Systems, Mathew seems to be obsessed with ‘Hindutva’, and describes it as a “...nationalist ideology, based on modern day version of centralized intolerant Hinduism”. In 2002, Mathew, along with other members of FOIL and the South Asian Marxist/Communist community, started a group called ‘Campaign to Stop Funding Hate’ (CSFH), which launched attacks on two US based Hindu organizations - the Indian American charity known as India Development and Religious Fund (IDRF) and the US Hindu youth organization known as Hindu Students Council (HSC). FOIL initiated the attack on HSC in the 2007 Youth Solidarity Summer (youth wing of FOIL, started by Mathew) conference, held at the Marxist organization Brecht Forum in Manhattan, NY. Mathew is associated with Brecht, which he describes as a “...leftist educational space started way back in the Reagan era when anything leftist was anathema in America”.

During the 2002 attack IDRF, Mathew, in an interview claimed:

I am clear that all forms of right-wing religious fundamentalist and obscurantist groups need to be opposed. If there are petrodollars coming into India to fund radical Islamist groups, that needs to be investigated and stopped. Likewise in the case of funding to

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34 See background information on Mathew provided at Rider University’s website. http://www.rider.edu/faculty/biju-mathew, accessed June 17, 2011
37 Yoginder Sikand and Biju Mathew, Ibid.
Christian evangelist groups to engage in proselytism. So, we’ve been equally critical of radical Islamists and right-wing Christian groups as we have of the RSS...  

Mathew is extremely sincere on his tirade against Hindu organizations and exposing their “hateful agendas” but completely ignores any investigation of Islamist and Christian evangelical groups operating in India and creating communal discord. In fact, one would be hard pressed to find any investigative articles or reports compiled by Mathew, FOIL or CSFH regarding the much detailed channeling of American and European church donations to conversion activities in India. Investigative journalism website and newspaper Tehelka, in a report titled Preparing for the harvest..., provides painstaking and extremely disturbing details on such activities.

Religious expansionism has not witnessed this scale, scope, and state resources in a long time. Detailed investigations by Tehelka reveal that American evangelical agencies have established in India an enormous, well-coordinated and strategised religious conversion plan... At the heart of this complex and sophisticated operation is a simple strategy-convert locals and then give them the know-how and money to plant their own churches and multiply.

Tehelka goes further and describes the worldwide evangelical plans in India. “The launch of the Joshua Project in the mid-1990s resulted in scores of American research teams arriving in India to lay preliminary roadmaps for the church-planting mission. In India, a coordinated gospel literature distribution exercise was staged to reach 600,000 villages by the end of 2000.”

Tehelka also mentions that the prime target of these Christian missions was nine northern and central states of India, because:

The Gangetic belt is one of the most heavily populated regions of the world. Forty percent of the Indian population lives here; New Delhi is the capital and centre of political power in India; It is the most socially deprived area of India (the Hindi belt has a literacy rate of 30 percent, infant mortality is double the national average and the government of India officially designates four of these states as BIMARU (sick)); This area of India is known as the heartland of Hinduism, a religion that boasts of some 33 million gods; and It has the smallest Christian presence in all of India. According to the 1991 census, the Christian population of North India is 0.5 percent of the total population.

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38 Yoginder Sikand and Biju Mathew, Ibid. 37
40 VK Shashikumar, Ibid., Page 2
41 Ibid.
These and other facts are widely available on the net and in official church documents. Malhotra and Neelakandan diligently expose the network of these groups as well as their connections with Leftist/Communist individuals, government entities and corporations.

The above statements show that the clear targets of these Christian organizations are Hinduism and Hindus. The numbers are astronomically higher in comparison to the ‘foreign funding of hatred’ that Mathew and others accuse Hindu organizations of. Why hasn’t Mathew, a champion of Marxism and Leftist ideals, been ‘equally critical’ and opposed this ‘harvesting of souls’ and ‘funding of hatred’ in India? Can it be that his Christian background doesn’t allow his conscience to rebel against his own faith? That would be even more disturbing given his Marxist and therefore ‘against all religions’ background.

Mathew, just like Prashad, supports the racist and anti-Hindu ideas of Kancha Ilaiah. In fact, Mathew conducted an interview of Ilaiah on behalf of FOIL, as seen further in the report.

(d) Angana Chatterji

Angana Chatterji is a Professor of Social and Cultural Anthropology at the California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS).\(^2\) Ironically, CIIS was established to bring the integral teachings of Hindu spiritual giant Sri Aurobindo and his Integral Yoga (Purna Yoga) in the US.\(^3\) Chatterji uses her position in CIIS to basically do the opposite - i.e. to demonize Hinduism and the Indian state. One wonders how Chatterji, a rabid anti-India/anti-Hindu advocate, can even be associated with CIIS.

Prior to joining CIIS, she worked in policy and advocacy research for the Indian Social Institute (ISI). This is an organization run by Jesuits and founded by Fr. Jerome D’Souza, Jesuit Priest and educationist.\(^4\) On its website, the ISI, among its role and identity, mentions: For advocacy, the institute also *bends its research methods in order to inflate the magnitude of the social problem* [emphasis added] described, and thereby suggests social action to address the issue.\(^5\) In other words, ISI feels quite comfortable showing one-sided research and inflating numbers to show the ‘human rights violations’ done by ‘Hindu extremists’ against Dalits, minorities, women and children. This is not surprising, since many of these types of NGOs (run by Christian organizations) tend to pump up the data and cast Hinduism/India in a negative light to

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\(^5\) Ibid.
strengthen their case of religious conversion in the name of human rights. Problems of discrimination are largely blamed on Hinduism, even though caste issues are prominent among Indian Christians and Muslims. Indeed, amongst the publications of the Institute is one book called *Human Rights in Indian Situation* by Joseph Benjamin, a professor at St. Francis de Sales’ College in Nagpur, India. The book claims to ‘holistically’ document the human rights violations against Dalits, women, etc. by the Indian government and by the Hindu Caste System. What’s more, such data is used by other organizations (especially Christian organizations) across the world to highlight the ‘bad news’ about Hinduism. *America* Magazine, a prominent Catholic magazine, cites the ISI in the following sentence: “According to New Delhi’s Indian Social Institute, recent Hindu-Muslim riots and attacks on Christians are instigated by affluent, elite, high-caste Hindus who are trying to expel threats to the brahminic caste system, or Varna—the Hindu ideology of superiority and inferiority based on birth, profession, pollution and purity.” Thus, Hindus are depicted as a violent lot that aims to rid anyone who challenges their social structures and systems.

Chatterji is also involved in the Campaign to Stop Funding Hate (CSFH), another organization founded by members of FOIL and other Indian Leftists/Communists. Chatterji provided ‘critical assistance’ to a highly libelous and unsubstantiated report that damned a US-based Indian charity organization, India Development Relief Fund (IDRF), alleging that they were funding hatred and atrocities against Indian minorities. The driving force behind this was that IDRF’s schools in Indian rural and tribal areas were providing a successful alternative to Christian missionary schools involved in conversion, and Chatterji was brought in to defame the non-Christian competition that IDRF provided. More information about CSFH is provided later in the report.

Malhotra and Neelakandan states that “while she finds US intervention in Iraq and Afghanistan to be a violation of those countries’ civil rights...she still wants US intervention in India’s affairs, for example, through the US Commission on International Religious Freedom”. In fact, “Chatterji provided testimony before the United States Congressional Task Force on International Religious Freedom on violence in Orissa, chaired by Congressmen Trent Franks

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50 Malhotra and Neelakandan, 264
51 Ibid.
52 Ibid
and Joseph R. Pitts, both with strong right-wing evangelical connections. "She also sent an unsolicited testimony on Orissa to the Government of India, in which all her data came directly from the report by the All Indian Christian Council. Her data was so one-sided that she completely ignored some well-established facts about the aggressive evangelism involved and the nexus between Christian evangelists and Maoists in the state."  

“She describes the social services done by Hindu organizations, as ‘conscription into Hindu activism’, even as she praises the same kind of social work in ‘health care, education and employment offered by Christian missionaries’.

She is the co-convener of the International People's Tribunal on Human Rights and Justice in Indian-administered Kashmir. The Tribunal seeks to analyze the conditions in Kashmir wrought by Indian military occupation and the subjugation of movements for self-determination, as well as the cycles of violence they produced, including and the earlier armed militancy of 1990s until 2007. Curiously, this Tribunal is ruthlessly focused on the Indian state and the ‘Hindu extremist’ support against Islamist terror. It completely ignores the human rights violations against Hindu Kashmiri Pandits and the situation in Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK), thought it's really meant to be an ‘International’ People’s Tribunal. She was invited to a conference on Kashmir, organized by the Pakistani People's Tribunal at George Washington University, the Embassy of Pakistan, and Pakistan’s Minister of Kashmir Affairs and spoke of the “growing concern among civil society groups about human rights crisis in Indian-occupied Kashmir in the areas of social, political, cultural, religious and economic rights. She accused Indian of ‘continued occupation of [certain areas of] Kashmir.”

Malhotra and Neelakandan further discuss observation of Muhammed Sadiq, a Muslim and the editor of a Kashmiri news portal, on Chatterji’s lopsided statements and activities that find place in the hands of Islamic terrorists:

[Angana Chatterji] announced the formation of the ‘International Peoples’ Tribunal on Human Rights and Justice in Indian Administered Kashmir’ on 5 April in Srinagar. Interestingly, this organization too insists that the focus of HR investigations should be on the Indian side of Kashmir and not in PoK too. Moreover, this is a fault-finding
mission. Its only aim is to slam the Indian security forces, further highlight HR issues and vitiate the situation.\textsuperscript{59}

Thus, such academics continue to portray India as a land of Hindu savages and undemocratic state policies and try to erase the lines between the very real Islamic terrorism and what they call equally horrible ‘human rights violations’ against Muslims, Christians and Dalits. This seems to justify terrorist attacks on India as well‐deserved.\textsuperscript{60} Malhotra and Neelakandan remark the views of Julian Duin, the religion editor of \textit{Washington Times} in the aftermath 2008 Mumbai terror attacks on India: “The terrorist assault - this time by Muslims - on Mumbai later in the year, highlighted the powderkeg (sic) India has become and how often in this Hindu-majority country, the oppressed don’t get a lot of justice. The perpetrators in Orissa have gone unpunished.”\textsuperscript{61}

Thus, biased research by the likes of Chatterji fluidly translates into the view of mainstream media.

\textbf{(e) Vinay Lal}

Vinay Lal is an Associate Professor of History and Asian American Studies at UCLA. Lal runs a blog called \textit{Lal Salaam}, a clever play on his last name but also a reference to the popular Communist salutation (English Translation: Red Salute) in India, used by individuals and political parties alike. Lal is the spokesperson for the Campaign to Stop Funding Hate (CSFH)\textsuperscript{62} and a member of FOIL\textsuperscript{63}. His views on Hinduism, India and Hindus in general use the same hateful/suspicious lens used by fellow FOIL members such as Vijay Prashad and Angana Chatterji and Marxists like Romila Thapar. In his book, \textit{Introducing Hinduism} (USA: Totem Books, 2005), Lal’s pejorative obsession with the ‘evils’ of Hinduism shines brightly in addition to factual errors. Vishal Agarwal, in a review of the book, mentions: “Kalki, the last incarnation of Lord Vishnu is likened to the ex-US President George Bush (page92) in a rather insensitive way. The photograph of Swami Dayanand Saraswati (1824-1883), the founder of Arya Samaj given in the book (p. 119) is actually that of a currently living Swami Dayanand Saraswati, who is

\begin{footnotes}
\item[59] Malhotra and Neelakandan, 265
\item[60] Ibid.
\item[61] Ibid\textsuperscript{59}
\end{footnotes}
the founder of Arsha Vidya Gurukulam in Pennsylvania.”64 Similarly, Lal makes a dubious assertion Buddhism and Jainism introduced vegetarianism and monasticism into Hinduism.65 “When Lal talks about Ramayana in 7 pages (pages 57-63), he devotes 3-4 of them to Sita’s agnipariksha and 1 on ‘alternate’ (= not conforming to the conventional versions) versions of Ramayana.”66 There is barely any discussion on why Rama is considered an ideal son, warrior, etc. by Hindus and why he is considered an Avatar (incarnation) of Vishnu. “The overall impression created is that the Ramayana is a misogynist text.”67 “In discussing the Pauranic Deities, Shiva is of course also referred to as a ‘Pre-Aryan’ transplant into Vedic Hinduism (page 68).”68 Hindu protests against images of Deities on shoes, toilet seats, etc. are categorized as those driven by hateful ideologies and the NRIs in US are automatically considered supporters of Hindu Nationalism. The immensely popular Indian TV series Ramayana and Mahabharata are labeled as fueling “Hindu Communalism”.69 “The doctrines of Rebirth and Reincarnation, Samsara and Karma - which are so vital to understanding Hindu world view, [are] practically ignored in the book.”70 Lal’s views share striking but not surprising similarities to those espoused by fellow FOIL members and like Vijay Prashad, Biju Mathew and others.

In contrast to Lal’s bias against Hinduism, he goes to great pains to defend Islam. In an article discussing the Taliban’s destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas, Lal is particularly sympathetic to the Taliban. He whitewashes the ideology and intents of Taliban and seems to justify the destruction of the statues: “[it] is construed as an expression not only of the Taliban’s anger but of its sense of betrayal, its feeling of isolation, and its profound disappointment that it should not have been suitably rewarded on the one occasion when it subscribed to some norms of international political engagement.”71 Thus, Taliban’s Fundamentalist Islamic view is really out of frustration at the West for not honoring its part of the deal when Taliban made Afghanistan free from Poppy seed production! Lal then proceeds further to offer a more ‘balanced’ view of the Taliban, reminding his readers that “one should not be allowed to forget that Ronald Reagan welcomed the Mujahideen to the White House as ‘freedom fighters’; at this juncture in

65 Ibid.
66 Ibid.64
67 Ibid.64
68 Ibid.64
history, it is still the relentless zero-sum of politics which makes the United States and its adversary Afghanistan look strikingly akin.”

Further in the article, Lal defends Islamic invaders and Islam in general, by adding Bamiyan’s two gigantic Buddhas were spared by Mahmud of Ghazni but Genghiz Khan, the Mongol king, was not so indifferent. Describing Mughal King Aurangzeb as ‘ecumenical’, Lal is ready to point out that while there is some evidence that the king initiated attacks on the Bamiyan Buddhas, he left the Ajanta and Ellora Caves untouched during his twenty year fight with the Marathas in the Deccan. Similarly, he highlights:

...all the Muslim states have emphatically repudiated the Taliban’s actions, and even Saudi Arabia, which fancies itself as the guardian of an authentic and orthodox Islam, declared itself unequivocally opposed to the destruction of the Buddhas. Nothing in the Sharia, or in the pronouncements of various Islamic schools of law, encourages the destruction of monuments which are not the sites of religious worship and cannot therefore be construed as ‘idols’. Most poignantly, the call to jihad, which is described by the Taliban as having furnished it with the warrant to take action at Bamiyan, has been stripped of its endearing promise. The authorized translation of the Holy Quran, published by the King Fahd Holy Quran Printing Complex, states that the essence of jihad consists in abiding by a ‘true and sincere faith, which so fixes its gaze on Allah that all selfish or worldly motives seem paltry and fade away’.73

Lal comes out as a greater defender of Islam while bedeviling Hinduism as a religion that sanctions violence against the lower caste Dalits, women and minorities. Passages from Koran and the Hadiths inciting violence against and destruction of infidels are considered to be taken out of context, while the same is not true in case of Hinduism’s texts. Why doesn’t Lal discuss deeply pluralistic teachings of Hindu scriptures, that the caste system is a construct of latter day society and not sanctioned by Hindu scriptures, that the concept of Sati (bride burning) is also not sanctioned in Hindu scriptures, etc.? But, Lal is keen on peddling theories that Hindus were some beefing eating invaders from outside of India who oppressed the ‘dark-skinned’ Dravidians and drove them down South.

Lal and other FOIL members like Prashad love to quote Gandhi when hitting out at Hindus, as if they hold him in high regard. However, Lal acknowledges “the Marxists have long subscribed to the view that Gandhi was a ‘romantic’, a hopeless idealist and even hypocrite.”74 Gandhi’s company of women is surmised as follows:

72 Ibid
73 Ibid71, Page 7
The vow of brahmacharya did not preclude, as it has for reformers and saints in Indian religious traditions, the company of women; indeed, Gandhi adored their presence and reveled in their touch...[Mirabehn’s] correspondence has a touch of the erotic...She was by no means the only woman with whom Gandhi enjoyed a platonic relationship...

Lal falls just short of labeling Gandhi a homosexual. He says:

Many of his male friendships are equally interesting: for example, he may also have been attracted to Hermann Kallenbach, a wealthy Jewish architect who would become one of Gandhi’s earliest patrons and closest friends.

(f) Meera Nanda

Meera Nanda is a John Templeton Foundation Fellow in Religion and Science (2005–2007), with a Ph.D. from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and an initial training in biology. According to Malhotra and Neelakandan, “She was a visiting fellow at Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi during 2009, and has written several articles and books denouncing Indian culture as inherently anti-scientific and accusing Indian nation builders of paving the way for pseudo-science and even having a Nazi mindset.”

“Another of Nanda’s article - ‘Calling India’s Freethinkers’, accuses Swami Vivekananda and Bankim Chandra (forefathers of the Indian national resurgence) of the ‘cardinal sin’ of trying to appropriate modern scientific thought for Hinduism. All attempts to investigate Hinduism in the light of science are declared to be linked to Hindutva, including works by the ‘apologists associated with the Ramakrishna Mission and Aurobindo Ashram’.” “Links between Indian culture and science resonate with ‘deeply Hindu and Aryan supremacist overtones’.”  

“Nanda has supported Protestantism as being scientific, while describing Hinduism as the exact opposite.” In an article in Open Magazine, Nanda comes down hard on Hinduism and Yoga and tries to destroy any link between the two. She adds: “Far from being considered the crown jewel of Hinduism, yogic asanas were in fact looked down upon by Hindu intellectuals and reformers—including the great Swami Vivekananda—as fit only for sorcerers, fakirs and jogis”.

Has Nanda ever read the writing of Vivekananda and other great spiritual giants of

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75 Ibid.
76 Ibid. 74
78 Malhotra and Neelakandan, 261
79 Malhotra and Neelakandan, 262
80 Ibid.
81 Ibid. 79
India? This is doubtful, because just a cursory look at Swami Vivekananda’s work on Raja Yoga shows ‘Yama, Niyama, Asana [Emphasis Added], Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana, and Samadhi are the steps in Raja-Yoga…83. Why then, did Nanda choose to ignore this fact?

According to Nanda, “…the physical aspects of yoga were hybridised (sic) with drills, gymnastics and body-building techniques borrowed from Sweden, Denmark, England, the United States and other Western countries. These innovations were creatively grafted on the Yoga Sutras…”84

At another instance, Nanda has the following to say about Hindus’ claim on Yoga:

Indeed, if any Hindu tradition can at all claim a patent on postural yoga, it is these caste-defying, ganja-smoking, sexually permissive, Shiva- and Shakti-worshipping sorcerers, alchemists and tantriks, who were cowherds, potters and suchlike. They undertook great physical austerities not because they sought to achieve pure consciousness, unencumbered by the body and other gross matter, but because they wanted magical powers (siddhis) to become immortal and to control the rest of the natural world.85

In an inherent lack of context and an utter disregard for facts, Nanda cherry picks information and splice data together to conjure up a thesis.


When confronted by Hindus with sources that question her ‘research’, Nanda simply labels these individuals as ‘Hindu Nationalists’, a practice all too common within the Marxists/Communist circles.

Nanda’s writings are frequently featured on South Asian Citizens Web (SACW)87, a site founded and run by one of FOIL’s old time members.

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84 Nanda, Ibid.
85 Nanda, Ibid.
86 Malhotra and Neelakandan, 262
Chapter II. FOIL on Hindus and Hinduism

As mentioned earlier, FOIL’s views on Hindus, Hinduism and India are highly biased, unsubstantiated and based on the research of scholars with questionable credentials or without lack of specialty. This is very much an example of the blind leading the deaf. Each has to rely on the other’s faculty and their world view is shaped on what information they feed each other. Furthermore, FOIL and its affiliates are highly selective in their analysis and excel at half-truths. And, they use this view to examine and ridicule other organizations and individuals.

Section 2.01 Sanatana Dharma - A narrow version of Hinduism

In 2007 and 2008, FOIL and its affiliates like the Campaign to Stop Funding Hate (CSFH), Sabrang Communications Pvt. Ltd. and many others, attacked the US based Hindu youth organization called Hindu Students Council (HSC) in a libelous campaign that they claimed was based on ‘meticulous research’ from HSC’s own documents and statements from ‘Hindutva’ organizations. The group’s claim was that the organization is hiding its extremist agenda and puts on a public façade of Hindu spirituality and pluralism.88 CSFH takes exception with HSC’s ‘definition’ Hinduism.

[HSC’s] promotion of Sanatana Dharma, with no mention that the deities being worshipped and the form of Hinduism being extolled is a narrow, version of Hinduism practiced by upper-caste Hindus who constitute less than a fifth of all Hindus, is one element that should set the alarm bells ringing for anyone who knows something about India and Hinduism, and so mars the otherwise liberal public image that HSC is attempting to project.89

Sanatana Dharma, as most Hindus know, is another name given to Hinduism. Mahatma Gandhi, writing in Young India, on June 20, 1921, defines himself thus:

I call myself a Sanatani Hindu, because I believe in the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Puranas, and all that goes by the name of Hindu scripture, and therefore in avatars and rebirth; I believe in the varnashrama dharma in a sense, in my opinion strictly Vedic but not in its presently popular crude sense; I believe in the protection of cow ... I do not disbelieve in murti puja.90

89 Ibid., page 10
Thus, Gandhi’s definition of a Hindu certainly included the concept of ‘Sanatana Dharma’ and that as a Hindu his practice was based on concepts of the Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas and all the Hindu scriptures.

Chinmaya Mission shares the following thoughts on the meaning of Hinduism:

Hinduism, more accurately referred to as Sanatana...The term Hindu was a misnomer used for the people who lived beyond the Sindhu River, and eventually the term Hinduism was coined to denote the Hindu residents of the Indian sub-continent.91

Swami Sivananda, the renowned founder of the The Divine Life Society, in his book All About Hinduism says Sanatana Dharma is “…the Eternal Religion, the Ancient Law….Hinduism is known as Sanatana Dharma”92. Swami Chidananda, the head of Parmarth Niketan and the force behind The Encyclopedia of Hinduism, puts the definition of Hinduism quite beautifully. According to him, “Hinduism is a great tree of life...That tree is Sanatan Dharma.”93

The Encyclopedia Britannica describes Sanatana Dharma, as “the term used to denote the ‘eternal’ or absolute set of duties or religiously ordained practices incumbent upon all Hindus, regardless of class, caste, or sect”.94 Similarly Wikipedia mentions that “Hinduism is often referred to as Sanātana Dharma (a Sanskrit phrase meaning ‘the eternal law’) by its adherents.”95

Similarly, a cursory search of words “Sanatana Dharma” on Google and on popular online marketplaces like Amazon lead you to numerous website, articles and books that basically use the words “Sanatana Dharma” and “Hinduism” interchangeably.

One can’t help but wonder what FOIL and its affiliates know about India and Hinduism that others don’t. Where are they getting their definition of Sanatana Dharma and Hinduism from? Can all these experts, spiritual teachers, great personalities and sources of reference be wrong or portraying some ‘upper caste hegemonic view’? The report on HSC doesn’t provide any references.

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Section 2.02  Critique of Biases Against Hinduism = an Attack on Free Speech

In 2004, *Ghadar*, a publication of FOIL, Ra Ravishankar and Shefali Chandra, ridicule the youth organization HSC for publishing a presentation critiquing the portrayals of Hinduism by western academics. In its ‘slightly deeper’ investigation of the Council, FOIL concludes: “Another section [of the HSC website] virulently lambasts the work of US academics Jeffrey Kripal, Wendy Doniger and Paul Courtright (sic), thus establishing that free speech, even in the name of intellectual pursuits remains antithetical to the dogma of Hindu fundamentalism.”96 So, in essence, FOIL and its members are free to critique the works of any Hindu scholar or organization, but efforts done by the ‘insiders’ of the tradition (i.e. Hindu community members, scholars and organizations) are denounced as attacks on free speech. Unfortunately, the rules of play apply differently to FOIL and its affiliates versus Hindus.

FOIL readily ignores the biased views and research of these academic scholars. For example, Wendy Doniger, Mircea Eliade Distinguished Service Professor at the Chicago Divinity School and probably the most influential US based academic scholar on Hinduism, has this to say about the Bhagavad Gita:

The Bhagavad Gita is not as nice a book as some Americans think... Throughout the Mahabharata ... Krishna goads human beings into all sorts of murderous and self-destructive behaviors such as war.... The Gita is a dishonest book ... 97

This view, combined with the views of others like Kancha Ilaiah, form the basis of statements made by many of the FOIL members. The above definition of Bhagavad Gita is at odds with the myriad of scholars, poets, famous personalities, spiritual leaders and saints that have appreciated the wisdom of the Gita.

In the Foreword to Paul Courtright’s book on Ganesha (discussed later in the section), Doniger claims that the Mahabharata was dictated by Ganesha to Vyasa.98 Any Hindu or any individual who has ever read any translation of the Mahabharata knows that Vyasa dictated the epic to Ganesha! Then, why is Doniger claiming the opposite?

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Jeffrey Kripal, a Professor of Religious Studies at Rice University, in his book *Kali’s Child* psychoanalyzes Ramakrishna Paramhamsa, one of the most revered spiritual saints of India. Though Kripal lacks proper understanding of Bengali and Sanskrit, his analysis of Ramakrishna and the saint’s purported homosexuality knows no bounds. Kripal’s central thesis is summarized in his own words as follows:

Ramakrishna was a conflicted, unwilling, homoerotic Tantrika [xiv]... Tantra’s heterosexual assumptions seriously violated the structure of his own homosexual desires. His female Tantric guru and temple boss may have forced themselves ... on the saint... but Ramakrishna remained... a lover not of sexually aggressive women or even of older men but of young, beautiful boys. [xv]

In imagination gone wild, Kripal, referring to Ramakrishna’s meeting with a member of the Naga sect of *sanyasins*, assumes things without any evidence adds the extra spice to his analysis:

[W]hat it must have been like for Ramakrishna, a homosexually oriented man, to be shut away for days in a small hut with another, stark-naked man. Vedanta instruction or not, it was this man's nudity, and more especially, his penis, that normally caught Ramakrishna's attention. How could it not?

Swami Tyagananda, the head of Ramakrishna Vedanta Society, in Boston, USA and the Hindu Chaplain at MIT and Harvard, offered a detailed refutation of *Kali’s Child* and exposed various flaws in the book. According to Swami Tyagananda,

Kripal's conclusions come via faulty translations, a willful distortion and manipulation of sources, combined with a remarkable ignorance of Bengali culture. The derisive, non-scholarly tone with which he discussed Ramakrishna did not help either... Kripal's ignorance of Bengali culture jumps right off the page. Many of the author's misrepresentations are due to a simple lack of familiarity with Bengali attitudes and customs... [Furthermore,] it’s painfully clear that he also has little knowledge of Sanskrit...


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99 Malhotra, Ibid.97
100 Malhotra, Ibid.97
101 Malhotra, Ibid.97
Like the eunuch, Ganesa has the power to bless and curse; that is, to place and remove obstacles. *Although there seem to be no myths or folktales in which Ganesa explicitly performs oral sex* [Emphasis Added], his insatiable appetite for sweets may be interpreted as an effort to satisfy a hunger that seems inappropriate in an otherwise ascetic disposition, a hunger having clear erotic overtones.\(^{102}\)

Interestingly, in the above analysis, Courtright is that he even acknowledges that there is no textual or folk evidence of such behavior by Lord Ganesha! Yet, he concludes that Lord Ganesha’s love for sweets has something to do with a desire for oral sex! Any Hindu, no matter how devout or not, will see this as a clearly biased view brazenly inserted by the author.

Courtright analyzes Ganesha’s trunk as follows: “...The elephant trunk, which perpetually hangs limp, and broken tusk are reminiscent of Siva’s own phallic character, but as these phallic analogs are either excessive or in the wrong place, they pose no threat to Siva’s power and his erotic claims on Parvati.”\(^{103}\)

Thus, throughout his book, Courtright misuses various tools of analysis based on folk tales and Hindu texts to create dubious theories about Lord Ganesha and his characteristics.

Such analyses run across the gamut of books and articles published by these and other scholars. And, disturbingly enough, these scholars do not have appropriate knowledge of Sanskrit or native languages such as Bengali. Professor Michael Witzel of Harvard has called out Wendy Doniger on her improper translations of Sanskrit.\(^{104}\)

Why doesn’t FOIL, who claims to stand for the ideals of pluralism and for South Asians in general, say anything about such blatant bias? Does it consider all evidence and refutations provided by people like Swami Tyagananda and others “a dogma of Hindu fundamentalism”? Perhaps FOIL, through its own tainted lenses, agrees with such demonization of Hinduism and considers Hinduism inherently evil.

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\(^{102}\) Malhotra, *Ibid.*\(^{97}\)

\(^{103}\) Agarwal and Venkat, *Ibid.*\(^{98}\)

\(^{104}\) Malhotra, *Ibid.*\(^{97}\)
Section 2.03  Bhagavad Gita - A Non-Hindu Text with Non-Humanist Teachings

During the 2007 attack on Hindu Students Council, Vijay Prashad, one of the founding members of FOIL and who was introduced previously in the report, wrote a Letter to a Young American Hindu,105 which essentially called on all of HSC’s chapters to dissociate from the National Body and start another organization (Sarvodaya) catering to everyone. While the letter is written to strike a chord with young Hindu Americans and their understanding of things Hindu, Prashad’s focus quickly turns to ‘Noxious Hindutva’. He weaves in his own definitions and understandings of Hinduism in this prose. He agrees that he is not an expert in the Gita106, but then goes onto make some sweeping conclusions regarding the scripture. He posits that the Gita was “composed long after the Mahabharata, written in classical Sanskrit in the Gupta era, interpolated into the long epic much later.”107 “The Gita is a sublime response to the power of Buddhism with concepts such as karma drawn from it”.108 What is the basis from Prashad’s bizarre statements? Romila Thapar, the Marxist historian discussed earlier in the report, seems to arrive at this conclusion, in her Early India - From the Origins to AD 1300. Thapar summarizes that the Mahabharata ‘may have been’ a localized feud, and the Bhagavad Gita a wholesale interpolation!109 Thapar, in A History of India, goes even further and claims that “the Epics had originally been secular... [and were] revised by the Brahmins with a view of using them as religious literature”110. The audacity and ridiculous nature of such claims is beyond any comparison. Nonetheless, such claims are exactly what form the basis of Prashad’s conclusions about the Gita and its teachings. Anything ‘good’ in Hinduism (i.e. Gita) must have been secular and therefore hijacked by ‘evil’ Brahmins.

Prashad’s and FOIL’s obsession with caste and the ‘Brahminic evils’ again surfaces in his analysis of the Gita. He mentions that “the genius of the text is that it takes concepts and ideas from these popular traditions [i.e. Buddhism] and brings them into line with some of the central principles of Brahmanism (varna, mainly)”.111 So, Gita is looked upon as a mere ‘reconciliatory’ text and the only ‘Brahminic’ concept relevantly synthesized by the Gita is the concept of Varna. Going by that logic, other important concepts such as Karma, Samsara, Yoga, Sankhya,

106 Prashad, Ibid.
107 Prashad, Ibid.105
108 Prashad, Ibid.105
111 Prashad, Ibid.105
the concepts of Brahman/Atman, etc. are not part of the ‘Brahminic’ tradition and have really been borrowed from other traditions. So, arguably, the most widely read and widely cherished Hindu scripture is not really Hindu in origin! In essence, according to Prashad, ancient Hindus are not capable of producing anything fruitful and have continued to steal from other traditions.

He also advises young Hindus to see the Gita as “an experiment in truth”. So, the timeless principles and profound teachings of the Gita are reduced to mere experiments. One wonders if Prashad can dare to send such advice in letters to young American Muslims, Christians, Jews or even Sikhs. What would be the impact of such a letter on Prashad’s reputation? But, all is fair game when it comes to Hindus.

Prashad describes the philosophy of Bhakti (selfless devotion) as one that “drew out from the oppressed peoples of the subcontinent the ability to challenge those who stood between them and divinity (the Brahmans, for instance) and those who stood between them and a peaceful life (Kings, for instance)”. His statement sounds more in line with the Marxist concept of rebellions and the Maoist insurgency in India, rather than the saints’ and poets’ understanding of devotion. Interestingly, he fails to mention that these ‘rebellions’ readily enriched the great fabric of Hinduism. Hindu temples, Hindu families the so-called ‘upper castes’ of Hindus readily sing the poetry and devotional songs of all these saints.

Prashad would benefit to keep the following words of Kabir in mind:

Bijak/Sakhi 171:

hlrA pari bajAr maiN
rahA chhAr lapaTAy
ketihe murakh pachi mUye
koi pArakhi liyA uThAy

A diamond was laying (sic) in the street covered with dirt. Many fools passed by.
Someone who knew diamonds picked it up.

[Those who understand gyan-siddhanta (true knowledge/principles), pause to acquire it].

Unfortunately, FOIL fails to appreciate and understand the knowledgeable principles found in Hindu scriptures and texts.

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112 Prashad, Ibid. 105
113 Prashad, Ibid. 105
Prashad, towards the conclusion of his letter to young Hindus, says: “to keep it alive, Hinduism requires an engagement with its history (which shows us how it evolves and changes) and with its core concepts (what we otherwise call philosophy).”

However, the engagement, according to FOIL is only one way - the ‘outsiders’, like the Western academic scholars discussed above and Indian Communist/ Marxists like FOIL, engage Hinduism and shape its definition and history, while the ‘insiders’ (i.e. Hindu practitioners and adherents) should be mute witnesses. If the insiders attempt to self-define or showcase Hinduism as a dynamic tradition, they are blackballed and labeled as ‘Yankee Hindutvadis’ or ‘Hindu chauvinists’. Challenges to biased interpretations or alternative engagements of Hinduism are labeled as attacks on free speech.

Balmurli Natraj, another member of FOIL and the Campaign To Stop Funding Hate, is a professor of anthropology at William Paterson University. He provides similar example of FOIL's position on the Bhagavad Gita. In a Letter to Progressive Hindu, Natraj takes a particularly peculiar and prejudiced view on Lord Krishna, the Gita and various deities found in Hinduism. In an appeal to so-called progressive Hindus to reject parts or all of the scriptures as not suitable, Natraj cites:

An example could be verses 3.22-3.24 from the Gita wherein Krishna, the God who plays the part of a guru, tries to convince Arjuna to do his ‘duty’ on grounds that failure to do so would result in sankarasya or the intermingling or mixture of castes. For, no amount of intellectual camouflaging will be able to answer the question that a progressive Hindu will ask: So, what is wrong if people intermingle (or if sankarasya happens)? Who is bothered with this and why? Why does the Gita dwell so much on not doing another person’s ‘duty’? Who defines this ‘duty’? What, in other words, is the Gita upholding as a social order?

The verse 3.24 that Natraj cites is not about Arjuna but about Krishna’s role in this universe. According to the verse, Krishna says: “If I did not perform prescribed duties, all these worlds would be put to ruination. I would be the cause of creating unwanted population, and I would thereby destroy the peace of all living beings.” Krishna is saying that by not performing his own prescribed duty in this universe, he will be the cause of great discord, because others would follow suit. In verse 3.25, he also says that “the wise should act without attachment for

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115 Prashad, Ibid.
the sake of leading people on the right path.” In every culture and in every society, most people follow wise leaders. Millions of Indians followed Mahatma Gandhi in the Indian independence struggle. Millions of people followed and still follow the teachings of Buddha, Adi Shankaracharya, Vivekananda, Ramakrishna, Guru Nanak, Guru Govind Singh, Chanakya and many others. These great personalities led lives of detached action and set examples for people to follow. Thousands of people also followed and follow Hitler, Stalin, Osama bin Laden and others throughout history and this created major chaos in the world. So, Krishna’s advice is real and applicable even in today’s world.

Now, let’s turn to Natajran’s question regarding why Gita is dwelling so much on duty. First of all, the Gita has many different concepts in it, and adherence to duty is just one. But, it is important in Arjuna’s case because he was the most powerful warrior on the Pandava side and was critical for the success of the war. Imagine if he did not fight! Pandavas’ defeat was certain then. And, not to mention, Arjuna’s retreat would also defame the entire Kuru dynasty and Arjuna personally. If he had retreated from the battlefield, would he be so famous today? But, FOIL and Natraj easily overlook such simpler logic.

Unfortunately, Natraj is again narrowly focused on caste and its supposed definition found in this verse of the Gita, and his analysis of the concepts of Varna (classes) seems superficial. In fact, the word ‘caste’ itself is a misnomer derived from the Portuguese word “Casta”. “Varna was mistranslated as ‘caste’, and after generations of repetition, it became the prevailing view even amongst Hindus educated under the British system. This interpretation became a self-fulfilling prophecy since the British census of India used rigid caste boundaries into which they force fit the entire population.”

He asks questions to unmask the ‘intellectual camouflaging’ that he blames Hindus for in his letter and his questions are meant to invoke a sense of suspicion regarding the Gita. Thus, per his thesis, progressive Hindus should be bold enough to even reject the entire Gita based on the verse that he provides. However, before any Hindu jumps on that bandwagon, it will be wise to put that verse in context with the entire philosophical discussion that Krishna is having with Arjuna in that chapter. Also, it’s important to remember that Krishna engages Arjuna in various philosophical arguments and concepts. The ‘mixing of castes’ (which is not properly translated by Natraj) is one point out of so many that he makes throughout the Gita to explain to Arjuna why the latter must fight in the Kurukshetra War.

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Chapter 3 is about Karma Yoga and detached action. Krishna discusses Karma Yoga as one of the means of attaining liberation from the cycle of birth and death. For instance, in verse 3.8, Krishna advises: “Perform your prescribed duty, for doing so is better than not working. One cannot even maintain one’s physical body without work.”\(^{120}\) So, in essence, Arjuna must do his duty because that is the nature of all beings. This verse also has obvious truth in it because if a person does not take care of her body, she will have all sorts of health problems. Maintaining our physical body requires work on our part (i.e. exercise, eating healthy, etc.) Similarly, in verse 3.19, Krishna says: “Therefore, without being attached to the fruits of activities, one should act as a matter of duty, for by working without attachment one attains the Supreme.”\(^{121}\)

It is imperative for a warrior like Arjuna to remain detached in his duties because only then can he sincerely perform them at this important juncture of the war. Krishna discusses the concept of detached action in much greater detail throughout this and other chapters. But, in Chapter 5, Krishna also says that one can attain liberation by devotional service and analytical study. In verse 5.5, Krishna advises: “One who knows that the position reached by means of analytical study can also be attained by devotional service, and who therefore sees analytical study and devotional service to be on the same level, sees things as they are.”\(^{122}\) But, analytical study is not the path to follow in a battlefield. It is a soldier’s duty to fight in the battlefield and not open up books to analyze philosophical concepts (although she may do that when not in the battlefield).

Just by looking at a few of these verses, one can easily understand that taking verses out of context and in isolation can lead to a misunderstanding of the powerful concepts presented in the Gita. The Gita discusses multiple approaches for attaining liberation, ranging from Karma Yoga to Bhakti Yoga, Jnana Yoga, etc. Krishna also maintains that a particular approach may be suitable for a person with certain qualities, while another approach may be more attractive to a person with a different set of qualities. But, Natrajan, like his FOIL brethren, sidelines all this to raise suspicions towards the most profound Hindu philosophical concepts.

Natrajan, in the letter, further paints Lord Krishna’s teachings as non-humanist and the teachings of the various deities as filled with incest, greed, etc. Only when the teachings are taught by a guru are they really humanist.

Coming back to Samskara, we see that not surprisingly, humanist teachings in Hinduism arise not from our host of gods and goddesses whose life stories are many times filled


with outrageous kinds of deceit, manipulations, selfishness and greed. [Emphasis Added]
Instead, all humanist Hindu teachings are from its human and humane gurus, not gods. And the best gurus teach to serve humanity and to not observe distinctions of caste, creed, and even gender in ways that create and reproduce hierarchies or inequalities.
Indeed, when one such God tried to play the role of a guru as seen above in the Gita, the teachings are quite clearly non-humanistic.123 [Emphasis Added]

In one swoop, Natraj holds the entire host of deities as well as scriptures like Gita guilty of immoral behavior. Granted, there are erotic stories and sexual references to deities in poems and arts. However, that doesn’t permit anyone from making such sweeping generalizations and painting the entire Hindu tradition red.

It is ironic that Natraj accepts that teachings from gurus are humanist, not those of the deities. But, where are the gurus getting their teachings from? Which gurus is he referring to? The wisest teachers of Hinduism ranging from Vyasa, Valmiki, Yagnavalkya, etc. to Shankarcharya, Ramanujacharya, Madhvacharya, Kabir, Mirabai, Lord Chaitanya, Swami Narayan, Tulsidas, Tukaram, Narasinh Mehta, Sai Baba, Swami Vivekananda, Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Aurobindo, Gandhi, Ramana Maharishi, Swami Chinmayananda, Srila Prabhupada, etc. have all based their teachings on various deities and their avatars, like Shiva, Vishnu, Krishna, Rama, Hanuman, Kali, Durga, Ganesha, etc. So, what does Natraj mean when he tries to separate the gurus from the deities? How do the gurus attain their knowledge without deep devotion towards and meditation upon these deities that are ultimately the personification of the Impersonal Reality known as Brahman in the scriptures? How do deities whose stories are full of ‘deceit, manipulations, selfishness and greed’ inspire so many learned gurus and spiritual personalities? Can they all be deluded?

Consider the following Bhajan of Mirabai, the 16th century devotee of Krishna and a legendary saint of India:

Akanda Varne Varee Saheli, Hu to Akhanda Varne Varee...

O my companion, saheli (female friend)! I am married to The Eternal Husband (Krishna). I am now married to The Indivisible Husband.

Mira Ke Prabhu Giridhar Naagar, Santona Charne Padi Saheli

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123 Natraj, Ibid.116
Gopi Mira’s Lord is Giridhar (who raised the mountain to save his devotees in Vrindavan). He is the true civilized, dependable, pure, selfless friend and husband. I now surrender at the feet of saints.\textsuperscript{124}

In the above Gujarati Bhajan, Mira is clearly in love with Krishna, considers him her husband and offers her complete devotion to him. Her Bhakti (selfless devotion) is extremely strong towards Krishna. Would Natraj consider this an immoral behavior and blame the saint for incest?

Coming back to the Gita, Natraj maintains that Lord Krishna’s teachings are ‘quite clearly non-humanistic’. This one is based on one example of verses 3.22-3.24 that he cites. However, even an amateur student of the Gita and Hindu scripture knows that Hinduism is vastly filled with humanist and pluralistic teachings. The Gita is rich in humanist teachings and has been the source of inspiration for hundreds of millions of people all over the world, both religious and secular, Hindu and non-Hindu, ranging from Gandhi to Thoreau and Einstein, from Shankaracharya to Aurobindo to Vivekananda and many other modern and ancient personalities. In fact, the entire Hindu scriptural treasure is filled with universal, pluralist and humanist teachings.

Bhagavad Gita, verse 9.26 declares: “Whoever with devotion offers Me a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or water, that I accept—the devout gift of the pure-minded”\textsuperscript{125} Similarly, verse 9.29 says: “I am the same to all beings: to Me there is none hateful or dear. But those who worship Me with devotion, are in Me, and I too am in them.”\textsuperscript{126}

Bhagavad Gita, verse 2.64 declares: ‘But the self-controlled man, moving among objects, with his sense under restraint and free from both attraction and repulsion, attains peace.’\textsuperscript{127}

Bhagavad Gita, verse 17.20 declares: “Charity given out of duty, without expectation of return, at the proper time and place, and to a worthy person is considered to be in the mode of goodness.”\textsuperscript{128}

\textsuperscript{124} "Akhand Var Ne Vari Hu - I Am Married To The Eternal Husband", \url{http://www.gitananda.org/bhajans/akhand-var-ne-vari-hu.html}, accessed June 23, 2011
\textsuperscript{127} Swami Chinmayanand, “Peace while one has much work and responsibility” \url{http://www.mychinmaya.org/index.php?id=topic_2}, accessed June 24, 2011
Here are some famous perspectives on the Gita:

When doubts haunt me, when disappointments stare me in the face, and I see not one ray of hope on the horizon, I turn to Bhagavad-Gita and find a verse to comfort me; and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming sorrow. Those who meditate on the Gita will derive fresh joy and new meanings from it every day. -Mahatma Gandhiji

The Bhagavad-Gita is the most systematic statement of spiritual evolution of endowing value to mankind. It is one of the most clear and comprehensive summaries of perennial philosophy ever revealed; hence its enduring value is subject not only to India but to all of humanity. -Aldous Huxley

The Bhagavad-Gita deals essentially with the spiritual foundation of human existence. It is a call of action to meet the obligations and duties of life; yet keeping in view the spiritual nature and grander purpose of the universe. -Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

The Bhagavad-Gita is a true scripture of the human race a living creation rather than a book, with a new message for every age and a new meaning for every civilization. -Sri Aurobindo

In the morning I bathe my intellect in the stupendous and cosmogonical philosophy of the Bhagavad-Gita, in comparison with which our modern world and its literature seems puny and trivial. -Henry David Thoreau

One wonders where these giants of civilization are wrong in their interpretation of the Gita when compared to Natrajan.

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Section 2.04  

Ramayana Argues for Colonization

In 1996, Vijay Prashad gave a talk on the occasion of Diwali, one of the most important Hindu festivals. One would expect the talk to be about Diwali and its significance to Hindus. However, the topic was ‘Diwali and Decolonization’. After mentioning that there are multiple tales surrounding Diwali, Prashad quickly shifts his focus to demolish the stature of Lord Rama in Hindu tradition. He laments on the Ramjanambhoomi-Babri Masjid issue and the subsequent riots and then blames Lord Rama for the controversy. He wonders: “The blood which has sanctified this deity makes me wonder if there is any need to remember Diwali through him...”130 He continues, in his talk to describe Rama as a “commonplace hero’ who was transformed later into a “personal God accessible to the masses”. Though Hindus view Rama as a model of righteousness and compassion, Prashad distinguishes his righteousness versus that of the righteousness found in the Vedas, as if they are both separate. He states: “Rama does not keep to his varna domain, but consorts with various oppressed castes and outcast tribes”131. So, if, through his own conduct, Rama shows compassion and friendliness to others in the society, this is not acceptable since according to Prashad’s view the “Brahminic Vedic texts” are frozen and can only be viewed as oppressive. In essence, Hindus are ‘damned if they do, and damned if they don’t’. If Hinduism has examples of personalities and deities transcending class barriers or overcoming any restrictions, those are viewed with suspicion and discarded as not part of the ‘core oppressive Brahminic religion’.

Then, he makes one of his most outrageous statements:

The various texts offer the story of Ram to make pedagogical and moral points: the Ramayana argues for the colonization of the peoples of the subcontinent while the Ramcaritmanas argues for the worship of an iconic figure [Emphasis Added] rather than, for instance, a consideration of the Upanishads' metaphysics.132

Without providing any evidence or context to his position, Prashad basically demonizes one of the most revered texts of Hinduism as sanctioning colonization! Does he refer to Rama’s battle with Ravana as colonizing the ‘black’ people of the South, in line with his biased beliefs of the Aryan/Dravidian racist theories?

His argument sounds extremely similar to the crackpot theories peddled by the likes of Kancha Ilaiah, whose ideas and work FOIL members widely support. For example, in his book Why I am not a Hindu, Ilaiah maintains that the “The Ramayana is some primeval race war in which the

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131 Prashad, Ibid.
132 Prashad Ibid.
Aryans suppressed the Dravidian south.”  It seems that both Prashad and Ilaiah are oblivious to the fact that one of the most popular versions of Ramayana was composed by Tamil poet Kamban and became widely popular in the South. Why would a ‘Dravidian’ poet compose a glorifying tale of a ‘colonizer’? Furthermore, Ravana himself was a learned Brahmin and the son of sage Vishrava and the grandson of sage Pulatsya. So, in terms of ‘caste hierarchy’, Ravana (Brahmin) was of a higher caste than Rama (Kshatriya)! Similarly, Ravana is described by Valmiki as having knowledge of the Vedas and a great devotee of Shiva. He was a Samavedin and composed the Shiva Thandava Stotram. So, why would a ‘Dravidian’ king be a Brahmin and knowledgeable in Sanskrit as well as the Vedas? This information contradicts Prashad’s and Ilaiah’s views on the Ramayana.

Next, let’s analyze Prashad’s argument that “Ramcaritmanas argues for the worship of an iconic figure rather than, for instance, a consideration of the Upanishads’ metaphysics”. Prashad again subjects Hindu texts to ridicule and suspicion while making outrageous and unsubstantiated statements. His lack of knowledge of Hinduism shines out brightly with such as comments. Ramcharitmanas as well as many other Bhakti works are richly embedded in the Saguna (with qualities) Brahman concept of the Upanishads and express this concept beautifully. Tulsidas preferred the Saguna Brahman form of the Absolute Reality over the Nirguna (without qualities) Brahman. Thus, to him, Lord Rama was the embodiment of that Saguna Brahman. Rambhadracharya (2008) illustrates this from the Uttar Khand of Ramcharitmanas:

In the Uttar Kand of Ramcharitmanas, Tulsidas describes in detail a debate between Kakbhushundi and Lomasha about whether God is Nirguna (as argued by Lomasha adhering to monism) or Saguna (as argued by Kakbhushundi adhering to dualism). Kakbhushundi repeatedly refutes all the arguments of Lomasha, to the point when Lomasha becomes angry and curses Kakbhushundi to be a crow. Lomasha repents later when Kakbhushundi happily accepts the curse but refuses to give up the Bhakti of Rama, the Saguna Brahma.

The Svetashvatara Upanishad provides splendid examples the connection between the philosophy of Bhakti and the Upanishads. Chapter 1, verse 11 mentions:

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134 Devdutt, “This was Ravan Too”, September 30, 2009, http://devdutt.com/this-was-ravan-too/, accessed June 24, 2011


When the Lord is known all fetters fall off; with the cessation of miseries, birth and death come to an end. From meditation on Him there arises, after the dissolution of the body, the third state, that of universal lordship. And lastly, the aspirant, transcending that state also, abides in the complete Bliss of Brahman.

Similarly, Chapter 4, Verse 11 states:

By truly realising (sic) Him who, though non-dual, dwells in prakriti, both in its primary and in its secondary aspect and in Whom this whole world comes together and dissolves—by truly realising (sic) Him Who is the Lord, the bestower (sic) of blessings, the Adorable God, one attains the supreme peace.

Furthermore, it is surprising that Prashad takes issues with Tulidas’ work, since Tulidas is one of the most famous Bhakti saints and Ramcharitmanas is one of the cornerstones of Bhakti writings. In fact, Prashad himself describes Bhakti as “… one of the foundation stones of modern Hinduism”. What is Prashad implying by demoting this great work of Bhakti against the Upanishads? Or, is he holding Rama in contempt and therefore implying that Ramcharitmanas argues for worship of this ‘contemptuous icon’? It is interesting to note that he holds Kabir, Mira, etc. saints in high esteem and lauds them for starting “spiritual and social rebellions”, while Tulidas is not given the same stature based on Prashad’s analysis of his work. If he blasts the Ramcharitmanas, he is blasting the entire Bhakti movement since it essentially calls for unconditional devotion to ‘iconic figures’ like Rama, Krishna, Vishnu, Shiva, etc.

Interestingly, Kabir had this to say about the name of Rama (Raam Naam): “If any one utters Rama Nam even in dream, I would like to make a pair of shoes out of my skin for his daily use.” One of the verses in Kabir’s Bhajans is as follows:

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bhajo re bhaiyaa
bhajo re bhaiyaa raam govi.nd harii .
raam govi.nd harii bhajo re bhaiyaa raam govi.nd harii ..
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138 Nikhilananda, Ibid.

139 Prashad, Ibid.

140 Prashad, Ibid.


Translation: Brother, chant
Brother, chant the name of Raam, Govind (Krishna), Hari (Vishnu)
Raam, Govind, Hari, chant, o Brother, Raam, Govind, Hari

Furthermore, if Prashad takes issue with Racharitmanas because it is ‘non-upanishadic’, he is indeed taking issue with the works of Kabir, Mira, Tukaram, Narasinh Mehta, Lord Chaitanya and numerous other Bhakti saints that have enriched India and Hinduism.

Prashad, in his talk, then equates the “test of loyalty”\textsuperscript{143} of Site in Ramayana with the situation of India. He says: “Like the roots of Diwali, the history of our republic is marked by the tales of many Sitas -- women, dalits, adivasis, Muslims, the working-class -- who have had to face tests of loyalty, ordeals of fire”\textsuperscript{144}. However, in the beginning of his talk, Prashad maintains that there is “no single story which explains Diwali”\textsuperscript{145}. That’s a correct statement, since Diwali is celebrated with various stories and even among Jains and Sikhs\textsuperscript{146}. Yet, in an attempt to spotlight the ‘oppression by Hindus’, Prashad makes the story of Ramayana as the “roots of Diwali”. And, in his categorization of ‘Sitas’, he leaves out the mass killings of Hindus and Sikhs in Pakistan as well as in India, during Partition. For examples “The Great Calcutta Killing of August 1946 was an immediate consequence of Jinnah’s call for ‘direct action’ for the achievement of Pakistan, which he certainly knew meant violence here and elsewhere in the country”\textsuperscript{147}. October 10, 1946 saw another massacre of Hindus in Noakhali.

The majority of the population in the area was Muslim, around 82%, while most of the land belonged to Hindu landlords. As a consequence of the riots in Calcutta, a massive anti-Hindu pogrom was organized by Muslim locals so as to cleanse the region from Hindu presence either by killing them or by forcing them to flee the area. The death toll is close to 5,000 dead according to the press (Sengupta, 2007: 138), though Moon considered that it should rather be counted in hundreds (Moon, 1998: 59). It is claimed that nearly 75% of Hindus previously in the area left the place. (Sengupta, 2007; Moon, 1998).\textsuperscript{148}

Senator Edward Kennedy, submitting a report to the US Senate about the 1971 Bangladesh massacres, had the following to say:

\textsuperscript{143} Prashad Ibid.\textsuperscript{130}
\textsuperscript{144} Prashad Ibid.\textsuperscript{130}
\textsuperscript{145} Prashad Ibid.\textsuperscript{130}
Field reports to the US government, countless eye-witness journalistic ac-counts, reports of international agencies such as World Bank and additional information available to the subcommittee document the reign of terror which grips East Bengal (East Pakistan). Hardest hit have been members of the Hindu community, who have been robbed of their lands and shops, systematically slaughtered, and in some places, painted with yellow patches marked ‘H.’ All of this has been officially sanctioned, ordered and implemented under martial law from Islamabad.149

How about the ethnic cleansing of estimated 400,000 Kashmiri Pandits150 out of Kashmir in the late 80s and early 90s? KPS Gill, the famous former Director General of Police in Punjab, has this to say about the situation of Kashmiri Pandits: “Among the worst victims of this conflict are the Kashmiri Pandits, descendents (sic) of Hindu priests and among the original inhabitants of the Kashmir Valley”151. He describes that, while people have had huge noise about other riots in India, very little is known about the pogrom against these Pandits, who were integral to the economy of the Kashmir Valley and to the cultural harmony that existed there.

On [January 13,] 1990, a Kashmiri Pandit nurse working at the Soura Medical College Hospital in Srinagar was raped and later killed by Pakistan-backed terrorists. The incident was preceded by massacres of Pandit families in the Telwani and Sangrama villages of Budgam district and other places in the Kashmir Valley. While the Jammu & Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) claimed a ‘secular’ agenda of liberation from Indian rule, the terrorist intent was clearly to drive non-Muslim 'infidels' out of the State and establish Nizam-e-Mustafa (literally, the Order of the Prophet; government according to the Shariah). Accounts of Pandits from this traumatic period reveal that it was not unusual to see posters and announcements – including many articles and declarations in local newspapers – telling them to leave the Valley. Pandit properties were either destroyed or taken over by terrorists or by local Muslims, and there was a continuous succession of brutal killings, a trend that continues even today.152

It is even peculiar that Prashad, in his 2007 letter to young American Hindus, talks about his Hindu and Sikh heritage. However, he hardly seems to care about his Hindu heritage and brethren and to make a case for people like the Kashmiri Pandits. Is this a case of selective interpretation? Why does FOIL continue to ignore Hindus and the atrocities they have faced

149 Vivek Gumaste, “The Hindu genocide that Hindus and the world forgot”,
151 Gill, Ibid.
152 Gill, Ibid.150
(even in the last fifty years)? Granted, the Partition riots killed many Muslims and this should not be forgotten. However, presenting a one-sided view of the story only highlights the bias of FOIL and continues to simmer the pot of communal mistrusts and hatred.

Towards the end of his talk, he quotes Gandhi: “It is good to swim in the waters of tradition, but to sink in them is suicide”\textsuperscript{153} But, Prashad hasn’t even ‘skinny dipped’ in the waters of the Hindu tradition because he has already developed a preconceived notion that these waters dirty.

\textsuperscript{153} Prashad, Ibid.\textsuperscript{130}
Section 2.05 Sketchy South Asian History

Figure 2 on the right is an extract of a page on South Asian History from FOIL’s website. For all the South Asian history and cultural expertise of FOIL’s members, it is indeed surprising that they only cover ‘Indian’ history and leave major gaps in their ‘sketches’. Prehistoric Era is defined as 5000-1500 BC\(^{154}\). It is interesting (and perhaps FOIL is unaware) that when one clicks on the link, it actually takes one to a different website on the ancient Indus Valley Civilization, contain links that actually has certain articles and papers debunking the racist Aryan Invasion Theory, the same theory that FOIL and its members subscribe to. In the section called Ancient India (1500-711)\(^{155}\), we only find two write-ups. The first one is about the Greeks and their expedition to India in search of the Ocean. The second one is about ‘The First Victory of Caste in South Asia’. Interestingly, FOIL could not find anything else to write about India in the roughly 800 year time span! How about the Gupta Empire? How about the Maurya Empire? How about Indian trade with Persia, Greece and other parts of the world? How about the famous Indian institution of Takshashila? How about achievements of India in sciences, math, ship building, architecture, etc.? How about the travels of Chinese pilgrims Fa Xian and Xuanzang (Huen Tsang) to India and their documentation of the richness and inclusiveness of Indians? Or, is all this not as important as highlighting the Greek invasion of India? FOIL’s obsession with caste resurfaces again in the second article. Even though, there is growing

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\(^{155}\) Ibid.
evidence that Caste identity fault lines became invigorated and politicized through the British Censuses of India\textsuperscript{156}, the only two things that FOIL can find to talk about are a foreign invasion of India and the so-called victory of caste.

The Medieval Period (712 - 1564)\textsuperscript{157} is completely blank. It begs the question why? Could it be co- incidental that 712 AD marks the first Muslim Invasion of ‘South Asia’? Mohammad Bin Qasim invaded India in 712 AD and conquered Sindh which became the province of Omayyad Khilafat. Following his conquest, for the next 800 years, there are a series of Muslim invasions, establishment of the Delhi Sultanate between 1206 and 1526 and culminating with the establishment of the Mughal Dynasty in 1526. How about the achievements of kingdoms like the Vijaynagara Empire or the Maratha Empires? Or, even the Mughal Dynasty? Why isn’t FOIL including such important historical points in the history of India?

Continuing on, in the Early Modern Period (1565-1946)\textsuperscript{159}, one can see a similar pattern - only three articles. The first one portrays Shivaji and his ‘complexities’. The second talks about the Revolt of 1857 and the third is a brief history of the Communist Movement in Kerala, citing the works of the General Secretary of the Community Party of India (Marxist) Prakash Karat and showing how the Left ‘liberated’ the oppressed castes from the clutches of upper caste Hindus. The article is essentially a defense of an argument made by Victor Fic in his book \textit{Kerala: Yenan of India, Rise of Communist Power: 1937-1969 (1970)}\textsuperscript{160}. Fic argues that the communist movement manipulated local castes and religious identities in its road to power in Kerala.\textsuperscript{161} Prashad, in his essay, declares: “to utilize caste for electoral purposes or to hold power is to play with a politics of fission ... The Left movement, Menon shows us, neither ignores nor manipulates caste”\textsuperscript{162}.

KP Joseph, a former Civil Servant and a consultant to the United Nations, the Director of INSIST (Institute of Studies in Social Transformation) as well as author of several books, has extensively Marxism/Communism and their claims of emancipation of the Kerala underclass. In an interview with Pradeep Krishnan of \textit{Haindava Keralam}, Joseph highlights the hypocritical of the Communist party in Kerala:


\textsuperscript{157} Ibid.\textsuperscript{154}


\textsuperscript{159} Ibid.\textsuperscript{154}

\textsuperscript{160} Vijay Prashad, ”Caste, Nationalism and Communism in Malabar (1900-1948)”, \url{http://www.proxsa.org/history/malabar.html}, accessed June 28, 2011

\textsuperscript{161} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{162} Ibid.\textsuperscript{160}
In Kerala, Marxism provided opportunity to the scions of feudal families to extend exploitation and domination of the underclass feeding the latter with visions of Utopia. Instead of seeking emancipation through education, large numbers of youth of the underclass became followers of Marxist upper crust feudal leaders and the (sic) perished in the flames of Calcutta thesis uprisings. It took fifty years for the Marxist parties in Kerala to put an avarna [i.e. an ‘outcaste’ or ‘untouchable’] in the chair of the Chief Minister (VS Achuthanandan). It is not known how many years will it take for West Bengal to do so. Feudalism in Kerala would have crumbled without Marxism and feudal scions would have been compelled to work hard for a living but for Marxist politics. Leaders like Jyoti Basu to EMS to Nayanar to AK Gopalan to Prakash Karat (the Marxist supreme leaders) rose from the upper crust of feudal society. Much of their stories show that they used ideology to ride and cling to power, rather than for emancipation of the oppressed from poverty and backwardness. If the Marxists leaders were indeed, different from the normal run of leaders, they would not have been Chief Minister for life (like Jyothi Basu) or assumed chief minister ship again and yet again (like EMS and Nayanar). In 1957, EMS was working for the party in New Delhi and TV Thomas was the elected leader in the Kerala Assembly. TV Thomas was a capable leader. EMS had therefore, no business to come down to Kerala to take up Chief Minister Ship. Afterwards also, there were occasions to yield chief minister ship to Suseela Gopalan, VS Achuthanandan etc., but the upper caste leaders clung to power. The record of the leaders proved that the secret agenda of the Marxist leaders was always power and not emancipation as is the case with other political leaders.\(^{163}\)

Finally, the entire section from 1947 when India gained independence is blank. Can’t there be at least some good historical aspects of India (or ‘South Asia’) that can be included here?

Thus, for the entire 5000 years history, FOIL finds it relevant to highlight a foreign invasion of India, some caste politics and supposed history of it, ‘complexities’ of Shivaji and the communist role in the Malabar region of Kerala along the lines of caste.

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Section 2.06 Shivaji - A Questionable Monarch

We have already seen FOIL’s selective portrayal of Indian history in the above section. But, FOIL’s tendency to devalue important Indian figures needs further elaboration. As part of the “Sketches Out Of South Asian History”, Prashad discusses the “The Complexities of Shivaji”\textsuperscript{164}. This article is essentially in response to an event held in New York by an organization called HSS (Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh) in which a speaker by the name of Shripati Shastry described how Shivaji fought Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb and was a defender of Hindu civilization. Prashad questions this portrayal of Shivaji by asking that “the historical record should be scoured to check if Shivaji indeed did fight Aurangzeb to constitute 'Hindu civilization' and if he made it his purpose to cleanse the subcontinent of 'foreigners.'”\textsuperscript{165} In his analysis, Prashad reduces Shivaji to a “a rebellious zamindar and hill-chief”\textsuperscript{166} who, “claimed to be a 'Hindu' king when it suited him...”\textsuperscript{167} He says further that “In 1668, Shivaji's repeated petitions to Aurangzeb won him the title 'Raja' and Chakan fort. After the Mughal treasury refused to reimburse him for a trip he took to Agra, he took up arms again”.\textsuperscript{168} This statement makes Shivaji sound like a little whiner and spiteful.

Then, to raise more suspicions on the Shivaji’s character, he even throws in information about his son’s conduct, as if that is a black mark on Shivaji himself. He adds: “one might add that Shambhaji, Shivaji's son, raped a Brahmin woman in December 1678: such facts often get lost in the blind valorization of historical figures.” What does his son’s behavior have to do with his character? Did he sanction his son’s behavior?

Let’s analyze Prashad’s claim about Shivaji’s stature as a Hindu king and as mere ‘hill chief’. What does history really say about Shivaji? True, in his earlier life, he was given charge of his father’s \textit{Jagir} (territory) of Pune. But, history indeed is more complex than Prashad’s version.

The Maratha Empire was founded and consolidated by Maharaja Shivaji Bhosale.\textsuperscript{169} Shivaji learned much from his father's failed attempts at political independence, his exceptional military capabilities and achievements, his knowledge of Sanskrit, Hindu ethos, patronage of the arts, his war strategies and peacetime diplomacy. Jijabai also instilled in Shivaji a natural

\textsuperscript{165} Prashad, Ibid.
\textsuperscript{166} Prashad, Ibid.\textsuperscript{164}
\textsuperscript{167} Prashad, Ibid.\textsuperscript{164}
\textsuperscript{168} Ibid\textsuperscript{143}
\textsuperscript{169} See the entry on Maratha Empire on Wikipedia, \url{http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maratha_Empire}, accessed June 30, 2011
love for self-determination and an aversion to external political domination. In 1657, while Aurangzeb attacked Golconda and Bijapur, Shivaji, using guerrilla tactics, took control of three Adilshahi forts formerly under his father's command. These victories provided Shivaji with leadership of many independent Maratha clans. Shivaji's small and ill-equipped army survived an all out Adilshahi attack, and Shivaji personally killed the Adilshahi general, Afzal Khan. With this event, the Marathas transformed into a powerful military force, capturing more and more Adilshahi and Mughal territories. At the end of 1676, Shivaji Maharaj launched a wave of conquests in southern India with a massive force of 50,000 (30,000 cavalry and 20,000 infantry). How can a mere 'hill chief' command a force of 50,000? Shivaji established an effective civil and military administration and had a powerful navy. By 1659, he had a fleet of twenty warships and continued to expand his naval presence to strengthen the Maratha Empire's coastal borders. He even launched an amphibious assault on the Sidi Yakub's fort of Danda Rajapur. Toward the end of his career, he had a control of 360 forts to secure his growing kingdom. Shivaji himself constructed about 15-20 totally new forts (including key sea forts like Sindhudurg), but he also rebuilt or repaired many strategically-placed forts to create a chain of 300 or more, stretched over a thousand kilometers across the rugged crest of the Western Ghats. "Aurangzeb spent the best part of 30 years trying to crush the light-footed, rapid-action mountain people of Shivaji's army. In the process, he ruined his health and expended his treasury – fruitlessly, as it turned out, for the Marathas continued to expand their holdings for a full century after Shivaji's death."

All of the above clearly shows that Shivaji was not 'a rebellious zamindar and hill-chief' but one of the greatest kings of medieval India.

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172 Ibid.
173 Ibid.
174 Ibid.
176 Cooper, Ibid., 29
Section 2.07 Hinduism = Spiritual Fascism

As discussed earlier, lunatic and racist theories about Hinduism and India are routinely spitted out of the mouth of Kancha Ilaiah. In fact, he has made a career out of it and has written books venomously denouncing Hinduism. Ilaiah is a darling of Christian missionaries and Islamic organizations and is featured prominently in these circles as a representative authority on Hinduism and India. Dalit Freedom Network, a Colorado, USA based organization run by hardcore Christian missionaries, awarded Ilaiah a post-doctoral fellowship. On its website, DFN list Ilaiah amongst “Indian Champions”. One of the members of their Advisory Board, John Gilman is the head of Dayspring International, which describes its goals in India very directly:

The worship of a hundred million gods will disappear. Idolatry will be cast down. But, what will replace it? National Dalit leaders plead to the Church in India, saying, ‘Come and tell us about your Jesus. Teach us your scriptures.’ They believe this is the only hope for India, a nation that could be on the brink of a bloody civil war - or on the brink of an outpouring of the Holy Spirit unlike any in history. There has never been a better soul-winning opportunity than right now in the nation of India.

FOIL and its members do not distance themselves from personalities like Ilaiah; instead, they wholeheartedly support him and recommend their works as legitimate representations of Hinduism and India. Such dangerous endorsement is a shining example of how FOIL and its members really feel about Hinduism and India. On surface, FOIL and its members appear to fight for the oppressed and for all South Asians. Yet, the ground realities are quite different.

Kancha Ilaiah is the chairman of the political science department at Osmania University. It is appalling that such people are in any important positions and it reflects negatively upon the university’s credentials. He is an activist for the Dalit (referred to as the outcastes of India) movement and expresses severe hatred against all things Hindu. Ilaiah twists and highly exaggerates selective aspects of Hinduism and India in order to demonize the two. In addition, his penchant for misrepresentation of facts is notorious. He is a Buddhist but considers Buddha’s realization of truth as more “political rather than religious”. He also believes that Buddha was basically a non-Aryan and came from a tribal background. However, [in Buddhist

179 Malhotra and Neelakandan, 225
181 Malhotra and Neelakandan, 222
texts], the Shakyas, the inhabitants of Shakya janapada, are mentioned as a Kshatriya clan of Gotama gotra.184 His mother, Queen Maha Maya (Māyādevī) and Sudhodana's wife, was a Koliyan princess.185 So, Buddha was a Kshatriya Shakya prince. Playing by Ilaiah’s own twisted logic then, Ilaiah is following the teachings of an ‘Aryan’ prince!

Malhotra and Neelakandan share that The Indian Express reported that he made a strong presentation before India’s National Conference on Human Rights, saying, “We want to kill Sanskrit in this country.”186 In an interview, he also advocated, “We should close down the IITs and the IIMs as they pander to the upper-caste economy of the country”.187 Similarly, Ilaiah, in an interview with Christianity Today, Ilaiah considers Hinduism “a kind of spiritual fascism because the Hindu books say that Aryans wrote that, and Nazi Germany Hitler believed he belonged to an Aryan race.”188 Modern intellectuals know that Hitler and the Nazis misappropriated Hindu spiritual symbols like the Swastika and the concept of Aryans based on popular Eurocentric theories of those times. However, that doesn’t stop Ilaiah from equating Hindus with Nazis. He conveniently disregards the fact that symbols like Aum and Swastika are used in Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism.189 Not only that, Swastika is also known to have been found in other ancient religions and cultures around the world, as shown by an exhibit in the Royal Saskatchewan Museum.190

In his book Why I am not a Hindu, Ilaiah launches a vicious diatribe against Hinduism, Hindus and Hindu deities. Facts are ignored or misplaced and statements are made as if they are fact. Ilaiah is suspicious of the Brahmins and Krishna and essentially considers Krishna a character manufactured by the ‘evil Brahmins’:

Who is Krishna? Why did the Brahmins create such a god? It is the same Krishna who is said to have authored the most Brahminical text the Bhagavad Gita. At a time when the Sudras had no right to education, how did a Yadava write the Gita? How did a Yadava

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186 Malhotra and Neelakandan, 225
187 Ibid.
writer not provide any social space for Yadavas themselves, leave alone the other Dalit bahujans? (Page 82 & 83 of English version; P. 101 of Telugu version)\(^{191}\)

His bizarre view and lack of regard for facts is illustrated in the following few sentences. Regarding the Mahabharata, Ilaiah says:

The fight was between the minority Pandavas (Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaisyas were always a minority - they constitute 15% of the population) and the majority Kauravas. The hundred Kauravas stood against Brahminical Dharma and represented Dalit bahujans, whereas the five Pandavas represented the Brahminical minority. In the fight for land (and for the kingdom) Krishna stands by the minority. The majority were not willing to give up the land they acquired through sweat and blood.\(^{192}\)

Such sentences are so inaccurate, out of sync with facts and blatantly absent of context that it is extremely difficult to even take them seriously. Every child in India that has ever read any version of the Mahabharata (save Ilaiah’s of course), has seen any of the TV versions of the epic or heard any stories of the epic knows that the Pandavas and the Kauravas were first cousins from the same family! They were also educated under the same teachers (who were Brahmins). Any serious scholar or student of the epic would have major reservations against such unsubstantiated statements.

Ilaiah continues his attack on Krishna and the Mahabharata and superimposes the ‘struggle of the outcastes’ on the epic.

Finally, Krishna resorts to violence. After the defeat of the majority in struggle for land, the Gita was used to create a much stronger consent system to ensure that no serious revolts emerged from the Dalit bahujan social base.

Whenever such attempts were made, either by Yadavas or by other Dalit forces, Krishna’s Gita was effectively used to manipulate them into submission." (p.85 & 86. Eng; p.105 Tel.).\(^{193}\)

One struggles to ask questions such as why would some first cousins be Brahmins and others be some Dalit bahujans? Where is the evidence that Kauravas stood against ‘Brahminical Dharma’? When did the Kauravas ever acquire the land through ‘sweat and blood’? Where is the evidence that the Gita was used a hegemonic ‘consent system’ to suppress any revolts?

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\(^{192}\) Shastry, Ibid.

\(^{193}\) Shastry Ibid.\(^{191}\)
“In his latest book, titled Post-Hindu India, Ilaiah constructs a racist ideology of hatred against Hinduism in general and Brahmans in particular.”194 “In his attempt to revive pseudo-scientific racism, he purports to study what he terms as ‘Brahmin psychology’ and then goes on to characterize Brahmans as sub-humans, stating that Brahmin communitarianism ‘acts like the communitarianism of penguins and sheep, which hardly builds the energy for individual struggle for survival’”.195 “He states that Brahmans are worse than animals, because in their case, even the animal instincts are ‘underdeveloped’”.196 “He concludes that the Brahmin childhood formation itself has ‘genetic and social characteristics of non-transformability’”.197

(i) Advocating a Civil War in India

Based on this hatred, “he envisions a civil war in India, urging the Dalit-Bahujans to start a civil war at the macro and micro level.”198 He suggests the following:

   Historically-upper castes have suppressed the lower-caste masses with weapons, as the Hindu gods’ origin itself is rooted in the culture of weapon usage. The SC/ST/OBCs will then have to turn to a war of weapons in the process of elimination of Hindu violence from India.199

“Predicting a ‘major civil war’ on the lines of violent upheavals that happened in Europe, Ilaiah sees is a ‘necessary evil’ and claims that ‘Dalits have enormous potential to lead the civil war in India’ with inputs from ‘Buddhism and Christianity…growing into planthood’”.200 “However, Ilaiah’s mention of Buddhism is only lip service in order to build up a unified army against Hinduism, because elsewhere in the book he states that Indian Dalits find Jesus to be a more powerful liberator than Buddha.”201 Furthermore, Ilaiah’s inaccurate views on Buddha have also been demonstrated earlier.

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194 Malhotra and Neelkandan, 226
195 Malhotra and Neelkandan, 226-227
196 Malhotra and Neelkandan, 227
197 Ibid.
198 Ibid.
199 Ibid.196
200 Malhotra and Neelkandan, 228
201 Ibid.
Ilaiiah is a resource for FOIL to demonize Hinduism as a non-pluralistic, oppressive tradition. For example, in July 1997, FOIL's Biju Mathew and Chris Chekuri interviewed Ilaiiah in response to the “force-fed celebration of 50 years of independence” of India. The text of the interview, titled as The State of Dalit Mobilization: An Interview with Kancha Ilaiiah, was transcribed by fellow FOIL members Vamsicharan Vakulabharanam, Radhika Lal and Mir Ali Raza in the November 1997 edition of its newsletter Ghadar. FOIL highlights several points made by Ilaiiah in special boxes as if endorsing his views. For example, as Figure 3 shows, Ilaiiah blames Hinduism for having “…created untouchability within its caste structure…” Similarly, Ilaiiah, takes the position that Brahminism (which is what he calls Hinduism) is “anti-labor and anti-production”, a theme that resonates with the communist ideology of FOIL.

Figure 3, a screenshot of an excerpt from the Kancha Ilaiiah’s interview with FOIL members

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204 Vakulabaranam et al, Ibid.

205 Vakulabaranam et al. Ibid.
Further down the interview and also illustrated in Figure 3, on FOIL’s question regarding “creating a mass base for consciousness-raising about civil rights”, Ilaiah agrees with the Communist view of “counter-violence” and doesn’t see a need to give up such violence. He maintains:

Hinduism is a religion of violence. All Hindu gods killed their enemies and became heroic images. This is the only religion in the world where the killer becomes god. Whom did they kill? From Brahma to Krishna, those who were killed were Dalitbahujans. Now these images and the stories and narratives and everything is out there in the civil society. Now, because of this, the consciousness of worshipping the killer or worshipping violence did not give any space for human rights.

In 2002, FOIL and its affiliates started a group called Campaign to Stop Funding Hate as a campaign to against “Hindu ultra-nationalism”. In its introduction, CSFH states that it “stands in absolute solidarity with all groups, South Asian and non-South Asian, that fight hatred”. Yet the group has only targeted the Indian American charity called India Development and Relief Fund, as well as the American Hindu youth association called Hindu Students Council. There is no mention of the atrocities against Hindus Pandits in Kashmir, the denial of rights to minorities in Bangladesh, the ill treatment of Hindus in Afghanistan during the Taliban regime or the inferior status of Hindus in Pakistan.

But, in the context of FOIL’s support for Ilaiah, it is important to point out that amongst the “Resources for a Progressive Hindu”; CSFH suggests Kancha Ilaiah’s venomous works. Similarly, a 2009 book Against Stigma: Studies in Caste, Race and Justice Since Durban, edited by Balmurli Natrajan of FOIL, carries an essay by Kancha Ilaiah, called Caste, race and nation: a discourse in binary history/Kancha Ilaiah.

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206 Vakulabaranam et al Ibid. 202
207 Vakulabaranam et al Ibid. 202
208 Vakulabaranam et al Ibid. 202
209 See the “About Us” section of http://stopfundinghate.org/about.html, accessed July 5, 2011
210 Ibid. 202
Section 2.08 Maligning Hinduism in 6th Grade Textbooks is OK

In 2005, a controversy concerning the portrayals of Hinduism in 6th Grade California Textbooks generated much debate. California is the largest purchaser of textbooks in the US and often influences the purchases of textbooks by other states. Every six years, various textbook publishers submit their drafts of textbooks for review by the California Board of Education. According to the Board’s Standards for Evaluating Instructional Materials for Social Content:

The standards will be achieved by depicting, when appropriate, the diversity of religious beliefs held in the United States and California, as well as in other societies, without displaying bias toward or prejudice against any of those beliefs or religious beliefs in general.

No religious belief or practice may be held up to ridicule and no religious group may be portrayed as inferior...Any explanation or description of a religious belief or practice should be presented in a manner that does not encourage or discourage belief or indoctrinate the student in any particular religious belief.213

The standards clearly state that no group will be subject to an inferior or biased portrayal of its beliefs and practices. Furthermore, according to the Board’s standards, “Textbooks should instill a sense of pride in every child in his or her heritage”214. Yet, the Hinduism is portrayed with an inherent bias. While in Hinduism, women are shown as being treated inferiorly, such information is absent from Christianity or Islam. Similarly, the textbooks point out Hindu atrocities against certain groups; nothing is noted about the same for Christianity, Judaism and Islam. Christian, Islamic and Judaic texts are assumed to be stating historical facts, while Hindu texts are looked up with derogatory criticism.

Some Hindu American groups, in order to address this, followed a process similar to that followed by Christian, Jewish and Islamic groups. They reviewed the drafts and proposed several changes. While the changes proposed by Christian, Jewish and Islamic group hardly met any criticism, those proposed by the Hindu American groups drew virulent criticism by a consortium of individuals and scholars claiming to stand for plurality and for the accurate depiction of the “...the violent truth of caste-based discrimination in India.”215 Knowing well that 11 year olds are impressionable and have a short attention time span and the fact that issues related to Aryan Invasion Theory and Caste System are incredibly complex and require

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215 Ibid.213
deeper study of Hinduism and Indian history, this consortium continued its assault on the edits proposed by the Hindu groups. The arguments put forth by it were not on the content of the textbooks. Rather, it labeled the Hindu American groups as ‘fascists’, ‘fundamentalists’, etc. while linking them to violence in India. While highlighting the ‘horrors’ committed by Hindus, the consortium remains silent on Islamic genocide in South Asia, the Christian genocide of Native Americans, etc. While Hinduism, deemed as a religion of South Asia, is demonized in such a way, the ‘human rights’ standards don’t apply to Islam, which also has hundreds of millions of adherents in South Asia and who has had a much bloodier history in the region. Letters sent by members of the campaign branded the World Association of Vedic Studies (WAVES) as a Hindu Nationalist organization. Even when California parents, expressing genuine concern for their kids, challenged the biased depictions of Hinduism, they were dismissed and branded in the same vein as the other Hindu groups. Similarly, support from other Hindu community organizations was ignored.

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216 The reference to Hindu Nationalists was made by ANHAD; an organization referred to later in the report, in writing to US Ambassador to India David Mulford on January 4, 2005. Also, this letter was signed by several individuals and groups such as Ali Asghar, Harsh Dobhal, Harsh Mander, Ram Puniyani, Anand Patwardhan, John Dayal, etc. that are discussed further in the report. See the letter at http://www.friendsofsouthasia.org/textbook/Letter_From_Concerned_Citizens_To_USAmbassador.pdf, accessed July 8, 2011.
(a) Important players who opposed the edits suggested by Hindu Groups

Several groups, including FOIL, its affiliates like Friends of South Asian (FOSA) and Christian Missionary organizations launched a robust campaign against the changes proposed for Hinduism in the California textbooks. This section highlights some of the groups behind the vitriolic campaign.

(i) Organizations -

a) Friends of South Asia (FOSA)

FOSA was a key organizer of the campaign. The website is registered to Ali Hasan Cemendtaur, who was born in Karachi, Pakistan and now lives in San Jose, California. FOSA was started by Cemendtaur and eight others and is hosted by EKTA, another leftist/communist organization discussed further in this section. FOSA’s mission is to work towards a peaceful, prosperous, and hate-free South Asia and to promote respect for and celebrate the diversity and plurality of South Asia. However, as shown in Chapter IV, FOSA’s depiction of India and Hinduism is highly biased when compared to that of Pakistan, Bangladesh and Islam.

b) Dalit Freedom Network (DFN)

As discussed earlier, DFN is the hardcore Christian missionary organization masking itself as the advocate for the rights of the Dalits (untouchables). DFN considers Kancha Ilaiah (also discussed earlier) as a champion of Dalit causes. In a letter sent to the California Board of Education, signed by Kancha Ilaiah, Joseph D’souza (president of DFN) and Udit Raj (Chairman, All India Confederation of Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes and a Board Member of DFN), DFN dragged the politics of India into the argument and protested the changes. It pushed a rather inaccurate view that “the caste system has ruled social interaction in India for more than 3,500 years.”

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217 As per a search of the website domain name on http://cqccounter.com/whois/, accessed July 8, 2011
220 http://www.friendsofsouthasia.org/about/, accessed July 8, 2011
222 Ibid.
c) Dalit Solidarity Forum in the US

Jebaroja Singh, a professor at William Paterson University and the president of Dalit Solidarity Forum in the US, also sent a letter to the California Board of Education, opposing changes suggested by the Hindu American groups. Singh also drags the politics of India into the depiction of Hinduism in a sixth grade textbook to talk about the “...injustices suffered by Dalit communities in India...”223 and that such things are “...very much a contemporary reality in India, a reality with deep roots in our history.”224 While such ‘protests’ may be appropriate in textbooks catered to more advanced studies about India and Hinduism, these are not appropriate in textbooks designed to show all religions in a positive light and to generate a feeling of pride in a person’s religion or culture.

It is important to note that Singh’s DSF is a part and parcel of the Episcopal Church225. She is also married to a Christian priest226. The website of the Episcopal Diocese of Rochester provides full information about DSF and its mission.

The Dalit Solidarity Forum in the US, Inc. became active as a registered non-profit organization in 1999 in Morristown, NJ as a result of the 1998 International Signature Campaign for Dalit Human Rights, which was led by the National Campaign for Dalit human Rights (NCDHR). The campaign was housed in St. Peter’s Episcopal Church, Morristown, NJ.227

The main objective of this campaign, led by the Church, was to raise conundrum about the ‘dalit problem’ at an international level and label it is a ‘human rights’ problem to force the hands of the Indian government. While policy changes are necessary to address various problems in India, the backing of the Church poses a significant opposition to secular solutions.

The Episcopal Church lists one of the main accomplishments of DSF as establishing a Christian school in partnership with several churches in US and in India. According to its website:

One significant achievement of DSF includes the establishment of a school for Dalit children in India, a long-term project that came to fruition through a unique partnership

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224 Ibid.
225 The Episcopal Church of Rochester’s website hosts a page on DSF and gives a brief bio of Jebaroja Singh, referred to as Roja. See http://dalitusa.episcopalrochester.org/, accessed July 8, 2011
227 Please see the following link that describes the DSF, it’s Mission and other relevant organizations details, http://dalitusa.episcopalrochester.org/digital_faith/dfcfiles/523, accessed July 8, 2011
between DSF and St. Peter’s Episcopal Church, St. Alban’s Episcopal Church in New Jersey, and the Church of South India, Diocese of Madras, under the leadership of Bishop Devasahayam.\(^{228}\)

Singh is also a board member of the D.deVoe Foundation, based in Mount Freedom, NJ.\(^ {229}\) The foundation raises money for St. Peter’s English Medium School in Andhra Pradesh, India\(^ {230}\), shown in Figure 4. Richard Haslet, the Treasurer of D.deVoe “has twelve years church lay leadership and twenty five years as a church school teacher and youth group mentor.”\(^ {231}\) Similarly, Caryl Gwyneth Munn, the Secretary of the foundation “has traveled extensively, including two visits to the underprivileged areas of South India. She has spoken on the concerns of poverty, lack of education and caste persecution in India.”\(^ {232}\)

Hinduism is a natural enemy of Christian missionaries. Therefore, any effort to portray Hinduism in a positive light is vehemently opposed by Christian missionaries working under the pretext of ‘uplifting the oppressed’ while hiding their real intentions to harvest infidel souls.

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\(^ {228}\) Ibid.
\(^ {230}\) Ibid.
\(^ {231}\) Ibid.\(^ {229}\)
\(^ {232}\) Ibid.\(^ {229}\)
d) Campaign to Stop Funding Hate (CSFH)

As discussed earlier, CSFH is the coalition started by FOIL and its affiliates that launched attacks on the Indian American charity India Development and Relief Fund as well as the American youth organization called Hindu Students Council. While CSFH claims to stand in solidarity with all groups that want a hate free South Asia, no attempt is made by CSFH to highlight the human rights violations against Hindus in Bhutan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, Afghanistan and India. While CSFH demonizes Hinduism and India, it does not do the same to Islam and Pakistan.

e) Organizing Youth!

The website of Friends of South Asia (FOSA) describes this organization as “a San Francisco based organization of South Asian activists that seeks to empower South Asian youth through political education and training.” However, Organizing Youth! is another organization started by members of FOIL and its youth wing Youth Solidarity Summer (YSS). In fact, June 2004 of the Ghadar, the mouthpiece of FOIL, publicizes the 2005 Organizing Youth! event under ‘Youth Activism’

f) Youth Solidarity Summer Collective

The website of FOSA describes Youth Solidarity Summer (YSS) as “a volunteer collective of artists, activists, educators and students providing alternate education for South Asian Youth in New York City”. Again, no mention is given to the fact that YSS is the youth wing of FOIL.

g) Federation of Tamil Sangams of North America (FeTNA)

FeTNA is mentioned as “an umbrella organization of Tamil community organizations that function within the North American continent”. “While it calls itself ‘a literary, educational, cultural, charitable, secular, and nonpartisan organization’, FeTNA has been accused of supporting the Sri Lankan terrorist group LTTE, and one of its former directors was arrested by the FBI for trying to bribe US officials in order to get the ban on LTTE lifted.”

Similarly, “FeTNA uses its academic links to spread demonic images of Indian society, with the help of Tamil Nadu-based Dalit activists.” FeTNA was one of the major contributors to the
Tamil Chair established at University of Berkeley in California. One of the first professors invited by the Chair was Ilakkuvanar Maraimalai. Maraimalai previously attended a linguistic conference where he expressed his delight to have learned “many things about the Mormon religion and the Church of the Latter Day Saints.” The Mormon Bible reminded him “of a prominent religious literature in Tamil, Tiruvachagam.” “Like a true Dravidianist, Ilakkunavar believes that the Government of India discriminates against its Tamil citizens and that ‘India remain north’, and that present-day India is a ‘torture camp for religious minorities’.” George Hart, the current Chair holder, has used his post to emphasize the separateness of Tamil from Indian traditions. “For instance, he organized a meeting of Western Tamil educators featuring Thomas Malten, who Tamil Studies department at Cologne University was closely associated with Germany’s Lutheran Church. Other conferences organized by the Tamil Chair often feature papers that deconstruct traditional Tamil images of devotion, in the same manner as is found in modern Dravidian politics.” For example, a paper by Hart interprets Ramayana as ‘a strange work’ filled with contradictions between ‘Brahminical thought’ and ‘martial valor’. “He sees Ramayana primarily yet ‘subtly’ as a way to oppress Dravidians.” This view is similar to the one expressed by Vijay Prashad of FOIL, as discussed earlier in the report. “Hart claims that this was later reflected as the way that the ‘great military and imperial power of the Cholas was leavened by the Brahminical system that they supported’”. “In this manner, India’s classics are deconstructed as a method to tease out the oppression inherent in Indian civilization.”

“FeTNA has also honored Jagat Gasper, a Catholic propagandist, who has used his proximity to Dravidian power centers for Christianizing the Tamil culture.” In 2005, according to the Chicago Tribune, Illinois Congressman Danny K. Davis went on a FeTNA-sponsored trip to the Sri Lankan Tamil regions and acknowledged that he ‘knew that [FetNA was] associated with the Tamil Tigers’.”

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239 See the Background info on the Chair in Tamil Studies, [http://web.archive.org/web/20060718064824/http://tamil.berkeley.edu/Tamil%20Chair/Background.html](http://web.archive.org/web/20060718064824/http://tamil.berkeley.edu/Tamil%20Chair/Background.html), accessed July 9, 2011
240 Malhotra and Neelakandan, 168
241 Ibid
242 Ibid. 240
243 Ibid.
244 Ibid. 240
245 Ibid.
246 Ibid. 240
247 Ibid.
248 Malhotra and Neelakandan, 170
249 Ibid.
“FeTNA’s testimony at the California Curriculum Commission made the blatantly erroneous claim that ‘the Early Tamil texts clearly distinguish between Tamils and Aryans’.” 250 Malhotra and Neelakandan provide a full Appendix (Appendix B) in their book showing this stance to be completely false.

**h) Dalit Shakti Kendra**

Dalit Shakti Kendra (DSK) or “Dalit Empowerment Center” is an initiative of Navsarjan and Janvikas, an NGO based in Gujarat, India. DSK describes itself as primarily a vocational training center serving economically and socially marginalized youth 251 who come from Dalit families. According their website, a central part of DSK’s philosophy is “a redefinition of the word ‘Dalit’, thereby including Dalits from various economic, social and religious backgrounds.”252 However, just like all other organizations, institutions and individuals discussed in this report, DSK holds only Hinduism hostage for the ‘evils’ of the caste system and is another Dalit organization that is connected with the Christian Church. DSK’s founder, Martin Macwan, is a Christian Dalit, supported by the Unitarian Church253. In a 2000 news alert, The Church acknowledges funding Macwan’s DSK through the Holdeen India Program for seven years 254. In its introduction to the Caste System, the Church equates the Varnas (social classes) to Castes (which is more related to the Jatis of India and the word itself is Portuguese in origin and means race, breed or lineage). Similarly, the Church subscribes to the racial Aryan Invasion Theory and declares that “[the] roots of the Hindu caste system were already in place between 1000 and 1500 B.C., when the Aryans settled in the Indus River valley.”255 Furthermore, the Church maintains that tribals predate the Aryan and Dravidian civilization.256 According to the Church, “The Rig Veda [emphasis original], a sacred text from the [Aryan] period, describes the four main castes (varnas) in traditional Hindu society.”257 Such conclusions do nothing but undermine Hinduism, pin the origins of the Caste System and oppression on Hindu scriptural texts and create an atmosphere for ‘liberation of the oppressed’ by the Church and the West.

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250  Ibid. 248  
252  Ibid.  
253  “Martin Macwan receives 17th Annual Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award”, November 21, 2000  
255  “Unitarian Universalist Holdeen India Partner Martin Macwan Featured in New York Times Article”, November 16, 2000,  
257  “A brief introduction to India’s caste system”, July/August 2010,  
258  Ibid.  
259  Ibid.
NCDHR was another signatory opposing the edits related to Hinduism in California textbooks. It describes itself as a democratic secular platform led by Dalit women and men activists, with support and solidarity from movements and organizations, academics, individuals, people’s organizations and institutions throughout the country who are committed to work to protect and promote human rights of Dalits focusing on women and children. The organization serves as a coalition of four Dalit organizations - Dalit Ardhik Adhikar Andolan (DAAA), All India Dalit Mahila Adhikar Manch (AIDMAM), National Federation of Dalit Land Rights Movements (NFDLRM) and National Dalit Movement for Justice (NDMJ). However, NCDHR is yet another Dalit group that has deep relations with Christian churches all over the world. In March 2009, a four day *Global Ecumenical Conference on Justice for Dalits* in Bangkok, Thailand, organized by the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and hosted by the Christian Conference of Asia, drew 95 leaders and representatives of churches and human rights and development organizations worldwide. The main objective of the conference was to highlight the Dalit issues in India and also talk about the killings of Dalit Christians by ‘Hindu militants’. The conference was a continued effort to push the United Nations to recognize caste-based discrimination and crucify the ‘originator’ of the system - that is, Hinduism. It is also disturbing that, through such conference, these Christian groups promote independent Dalit theology as if separate from and therefore oppressed by Hinduism. According to the declaration of the conference, “churches are expected to implement awareness-raising programs, empower Dalits, monitor and respond to caste atrocities, encourage Dalits to express their culture in worship, liturgy and theology, and support Dalit women's initiatives.”

In fact, one of the sessions in the conference was a workshop on *Dalit Theology: Principles and process*. Mr. Vijay Parmar, the National Convener of NCDHR, one of the main Dalit attendees of the conference, “appealed to the ecumenical family to make a ‘moral statement’ and help churches around the world become aware of caste-based discrimination.” “Participants at the conference committed themselves to making Dalit liberation a central mission objective.”

NCDHR is also a partner of Christian Aid, the UK based Christian coalition of over 40 British and

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259 Ibid.


261 Ibid.

262 See the program schedule of the Conference at [http://www.lutheranworld.org/What_We_Do/Olahr/Issues_Events/OIAHR-DalitConf0309_program.pdf](http://www.lutheranworld.org/What_We_Do/Olahr/Issues_Events/OIAHR-DalitConf0309_program.pdf), accessed July 8, 2011

263 Ibid.

264 Ibid. 262
Irish Protestant Churches. In a March 2011 written testimony to the UK Government’s Department for International Development (DFID), Christian Aid highlighted the ongoing ‘social problems’ in India and stressed the need for the UK Government to intervene through the DFID as well as other policy tools. Providing elaborate statistical data about poverty and ‘structural inequality’ (that is, caste based inequality blamed on the Hindu origins of the caste system), Christian Aid suggests:

Keeping in view the magnitude and deeper social and structural dimensions of poverty in India, DFID has a strong role to play in working alongside the Government of India and civil society to tackle poverty. Christian Aid sees a very strong argument for continued, targeted UK aid to India, focused on the poorest states and communities, and for robust UK Government engagement with India’s Government about the inequalities that cause and characterise (sic) poverty there.265

Also, Malhotra and Neelakanda point out that “at the International Dalit Human Rights Conference in London (2000) the head of the Asia Team for Christian Aid presented a paper recommending that the governments which give aid to India should consult and act according to the advice provided by the missionary Dalit groups operating from the West.”266

NCDHR also presented written testimony to the UK Government in the same report. In April 2006, Bishop John Gladwin, Chair of Christian Aid, gave the keynote address at a conference on Dalit Christian Rights, organized by the UK Charity Voice of Dalit International (VODI)267. In its 2007/2008 Annual Report, the UK Charity Dalit Solidarity Network (DSN-UK) highlighted a conference on Dalits at the UK Parliament, where Bishop Gladwin chaired a session called Reflections from India - Tackling Caste Globally, which included venomous anti-Hindu speakers like Kancha Ilaiyah and Joseph D’Souza; Gladwin drew parallels between the Caste System and the abolition of slavery 200 years ago.268 Vincent Manoharan, General Secretary of NCDHR was also present at the conference269 Gladwin is also a patron of both VODI270 and DSN-UK.271

From the above examples, it is clear that most of the Dalit organizations campaigning against edits proposed by Hindu groups in the California textbooks have direct connections with

265 “Written evidence submitted by Christian Aid”, Page2, March 2011, 
266 Malhotra and Neelakandan, 208-209
269 ibid.
various Christian churches around the world and in India. This organizational nexus works closely to demonize Hinduism and blame all social evils of India onto Hinduism, and lobby world governments (like the UK government) to interfere into the domestic affairs of India. Hinduism is crucified as the ‘evil oppressor’ and Christianity is positioned as the ‘holy emancipator’. However, under the pretext of fighting for inequality and injustice, many of these Church organizations only support Dalits that have converted to Christianity or those that will readily convert to Christianity.
Ekta was one of the organizations that issued a joint press release with FOSA denouncing the efforts of the Hindu groups to portray Hinduism in the same manner as Christianity, Judaism, Islam and other religions. Interestingly, Ekta’s website describes that it is on a “temporary hiatus” and urges visitors to go to the FOSA website! Is there no difference between the two organizations? Is Ekta merely a shell organization run by the same people that are behind FOSA, FOIL, etc.?

The organization’s goals focus on “[supporting] the artistic endeavors of South Asians in the literary, musical, performing and visual arts; [providing] social and educational services to the South Asian community; [supporting] charitable projects in South Asia; [collaborating] with other non-profit organizations for providing wider support”.

However, Ekta, just like its brethren leftist/communist organizations, focuses mostly India and the ‘evils of Hindus’ and attempts to promote events, documentaries, artists and projects that portray India and Hinduism in a seriously negative manner. Similarly, Ekta is very much associated with the leftist/communist organizations and forums that have been discussed so far in this report. Under the Resources section of Ekta’s site, (as shown in Figure 5), one can find links to organizations such as FOIL, FOSA, Campaign to Stop Funding Hate, Organizing Youth!, Coalition Against Communalism, RadDesi Summer, Youth Solidarity Summer, and many others. Ekta also hosts the websites of Campaign to Stop Funding Hate, Organizing Youth!, Youth Solidarity Summer, Coalition Against Communalism, etc. Similarly, it hosts the website of FOSA,

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273 [http://www.ektaonline.org/about/index.htm](http://www.ektaonline.org/about/index.htm), accessed July 9, 2011
274 See right Sidebar that lists the various FOIL and affiliate organizations hosted by Ekta, [http://www.ektaonline.org/resources/index.htm](http://www.ektaonline.org/resources/index.htm), accessed July 9, 2011
275 Ibid.
discussed earlier and in Chapter 4, as well as the websites of the controversial film makers Anand Patwardhan and Rakesh Sharma. In 1996, Patwardhan directed a movie titled *We Are Not Your Monkeys*, which takes a seriously biased view of the Hindu deity Lord Rama and the epic Indian epic *Ramayana*.

Vinay Lal, who was discussed earlier, describes Patwardhan as “probably India’s most distinguished, and certainly one of its most controversial, documentary filmmakers; he has no peer among those working in the socialist tradition. He is consistently India’s ‘representative’ at documentary film festivals around the world.” In 1998, FOIL’s Mir Ali Raza and Amitava Kumar interviewed Patwardhan, calling him “one of India’s distinguished filmmakers”. One can only imagine the impact of such movies and filmmakers on the world opinion on India and Hinduism.

Another disturbing aspect is that these organizations put up the farce of being separate from each other when signing petitions, issuing press release, organizing protests, etc. For example, in 2006, FOSA and Ekta, along with other groups like CAC (discussed below), FeTNA, etc. filed a *Brief of Amici Curiae* opposing the Hindu American Foundation’s demand for preliminary injunction against the proposed textbooks in the Superior Court of California. In this legal document, FOSA and Ekta appeared as separate organizations. However, the domain name search for Ekta reveals that it was created in Oct 2000 and is registered under Friends of South Asia. Similarly, in several press releases, Ekta and FOSA are listed as separate organizations in a blatant attempt to inflate organizational representation on particular issues.

**k) Coalition Against Communalism (CAC)**

CAC also issued the press release against the Hindu groups in the California. According to its website, hosted by Ekta, CAC was formed in the San Francisco Bay Area in December 1992 in

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277 Ibid.


281 See a copy of the legal document at [http://www.friendsofsouthasia.org/textbook/Amicus%20Brief%20by%20South%20Asian%20Groups%20Apr%202017.PDF](http://www.friendsofsouthasia.org/textbook/Amicus%20Brief%20by%20South%20Asian%20Groups%20Apr%202017.PDF), accessed July 9, 2011


the wake of the Babri Masjid demolition in Ayodhya. Its website is hosted by Ekta and also points to the websites of FOIL, Sabrang, FOSA, Campaign to Stop Funding Hate, Organizing Youth!, etc. The front page of CAC is strikingly similar to that of Ekta. Hence, CAC appears to be nothing more than another shadowy organization with pretty much the same members and leaders as those in Ekta, FOIL, FOSA, etc.

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284 See the note at the bottom of the page [http://cac.ektaonline.org/about/](http://cac.ektaonline.org/about/), accessed July 9, 2011
2) Individuals -

a) Ra Ravishankar

Ra Ravishankar is simply described as a Graduate Student at University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign. However, Ravishankar is a very active and hate mongering member of FOIL and has written several articles denouncing Hinduism and Hindus in FOIL’s mouthpiece Ghadar. In a 2004 article titled Brahmanising the Diaspora, Ravishankar views celebration of the Hindu festival of Holi with suspicion and deems it “seemingly innocuous celebration”286, implying a sinister agenda behind such celebrations. Ravishankar then attempts to analyze the HSC’s refutation of biased portrayals of Hinduism in Academia and an alternative view of the Aryan Invasion Theory, and concludes that HSC leaves a “noxious trail... thus establishing that free speech, even in the name of intellectual pursuits remains antithetical to the dogma of Hindu fundamentalism”287. In 2005, Ravishankar demoralized marriages and claimed that “marrying is tantamount to supporting the heterosexist agenda of the US state”288.

b) Ashwini Rao

Ashwini K. Rao is listed as an Assistant Professor of Physical Therapy at Columbia University. Again, Rao’s Communist/Leftist background is completely left out. Rao is a member of FOIL. Additionally, both Ravishankar and Rao are mentioned separately from CSFH, as if they are not affiliated. Rao was one of the main CSFH coordinators against the attack on the youth group Hindu Students Council289. Rao blames Dr. Kalyanaraman, a well-known community member and an advisor of one of the Hindu groups in the campaign, for sending anti-Dalit hate mails,290 but does not provide any evidence of such an incident. This seems to be a smear campaign against Dr. Kalyanaraman and an attempt to portray these Hindu groups as complicit towards Dalit human rights violations. Rao continues in the letter and charges the organizations of a “...purely sectarian political agenda, with little or no objective scholarship of Indian or Hindu History.”291 However, Rao conveniently hides FOIL’s own political and racist agenda and the

287 Ibid.
290 See the letter written to the California Board of Education by Rao at http://www.friendsofsouthasia.org/textbook/LetterToCAStateBoard_AR.html, accessed July 9, 2011
291 Ibid. 234
lack of objective scholarship on its side. In addition, the California Board of Education had hired Dr. Shiva Bajpai of the History Department at California State University. Dr. Bajpai had reviewed the proposed changes on behalf of the Board, which were initially accepted by it before the launch of FOIL’s/FOSA’s spiteful campaign.

Rao is also a member of INSAS (International South Asia Forum), which describes itself as “...a coalition of individuals and organizations dedicated to the promotion of peace and social justice in South Asia.” However, INSAS also hosts the newsletter of FOIL, Ghadar. The February 2006 issue of INSAS’s bulletin contained detailed interviews with “Chairman Prachanda”, the leader of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) as well as a document from “Comrade Parvati”, justifying the “people’s war” in Nepal.

c) Shefali Chandra

Chandra is mentioned as an Assistant Professor, History and Women's Studies, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Her FOIL credentials are absent. Chandra also co-authored the 2004 FOIL article *Brahmanising the Diaspora*, along with Ravishankar. In 2005, in an article title *Marriage is Unethical*, Chandra comes down hard on the institution of marriage and suggests the following to her readers:

> The late capitalist, imperialist world celebrates marriage. And marriage is unethical. If there is one, really powerful thing that you can do, curiously enough without even having to step out of the comfort of your bedroom, it is to oppose marriage.

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d) Angana Chatterji

Chatterji’s anti-Hindu and anti-India views have been discussed in Section 1.01. She was one of the major brains behind the campaign.

e) Vinay Lal

Lal’s ideological leanings were spotlighted in Section 1.01. Lal was a major force behind the FOSA/FOIL campaign.

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294 The website address [http://ghadar.insaf.net/](http://ghadar.insaf.net/) shows that it is hosted by INSAS, accessed July 10, 2011


296 Ibid.

297 Shefali Chandra, “Marriage is Unethical”, *Ghadar, a publication of the forum of inqualabi leftists*, Vol. 9, November 2005, [http://ghadar.insaf.net/November2005/MainPages/MarriageUnethical.htm](http://ghadar.insaf.net/November2005/MainPages/MarriageUnethical.htm), accessed July 21, 2011
Section 2.09  
NRIs - Unintelligent, Hindu Extremists; Not Enough Drunks

FOIL takes a rather unkind view towards the Non-Resident Indian (NRI) community in America. In sweeping generalizations, FOIL is audacious enough to label the entire community as unintelligent souls who have sold themselves to Corporate America and those who support extremism.

First, let’s look at the idea of “model minority suicide” as proposed by Vijay Prashad. According to Prashad, “South Asians are disproportionately successful in America not because they are inherently more intelligent or work harder, but mostly because of immigration law.” He then adds that “between 1966 and 1977...83 percent of Indians who immigrated to America entered under the category of professional and technical workers: about 20,000 scientists with Ph.D.s, 40,000 engineers and 25,000 medical doctors.” So, all those scientists, doctors and engineers apparently didn’t need to work hard after coming to America and were not intelligent at all. They made name and fame just by the fact they had good degrees and by the good graces of the US government. It cannot be that these intellectuals, understanding the hardships and obstacles in India, arrived in the US in search of better opportunities and worked their way to the top by utilizing their skills and educational background. It’s as if the US government automatically planted them in guaranteed top posts for the rest of their lives.

Prashad lambasts these intellectuals for asking their kids to work hard and to get a better education. “Parents are setting up INS [Immigration and Naturalization Service] standards for their kids,” a reference to the 1960s opening up of US immigration for Asians. “South Asian young people who don’t conform to the myth...deny their parents access to the power centers of the community: joining the chamber of commerce, becoming a leader in the temple or heading a community organization.” Prashad therefore portrays NRIs as power grabbers and seekers of false statuses. And, if their kids don’t become the model minorities, the NRIs will not be in any prominent position. The individual talents, leadership skills and business acumen of these NRIs amount to nothing. While it is true that youth in Indian American community face enormous pressure at times from their parents to conform to certain values, to get a good education and excel in various fields, it is not fair to assassinate the character of the entire community.

300 Ibid.
301 Ibid. 299
302 Ibid. 299
Similarly, setting high standards of performance, though agreeable by most, “can be very confining”\(^\text{303}\), according to Prashad. “It's not human. It's like taking a group of scientists and making a colony on Mars and pretending the whole world should be scientists. Where are the artists, the poets, the drunks? Where is everybody that makes history possible?\(^\text{304}\) Is Prashad implying that the standards should be relaxed such that Indian American kids become the drunks of the society? Or, does Prashad not want Indian American kids to be in the fields of science, technology, business, politics, law, etc.? Is entrepreneurship frowned upon? Prashad seems to be conveniently ignoring the fact that Indian Americans have excelled in many fields besides just science.

The contributions and achievements of Indian Americans in various fields besides science are well known. In 1982, Vinod Khosla co-founded Sun Microsystems\(^\text{305}\), a world famous company known for the famous Java platform. In 1987, President Ronald Reagan appointed Dr. Joy Cherian, the 1st Indian Commissioner of the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).\(^\text{306}\) In 1989, Rohit Jagessar founded RBC Radio, the first Asian Indian radio station in the US.\(^\text{307}\) In 1994, Guitarist Kim Thayil, of Indian origin, wins Grammy award for his Indian inspired guitarwork on the album Superunknown by his band Soundgarden.\(^\text{308}\) In 1999, Filmmaker M. Night Shyamalan enters film history with his film "The Sixth Sense" becoming one of the all-time highest-grossing films, worldwide.\(^\text{309}\) In 2001, Professor Jamshed Bharucha (born in Mumbai) appointed Dean of the Faculty of Arts & Sciences at Dartmouth College, the first person of Indian descent to serve as dean of a school at an Ivy League institution.\(^\text{310}\) In 2001, Professor Dipak C. Jain (born in Tezpur - Assam, India) appointed as dean of the Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University.\(^\text{311}\) In 2006, Indra Nooyi (born in Chennai, India) appointed as CEO of PepsiCo.\(^\text{312}\) She also serves as a member of the boards of the International Rescue Committee, Catalyst and the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Trustees of Eisenhower Fellowships, and currently serves as Chairman of the U.S.–India Business Council.\(^\text{313}\) In 2007, Vikram Pandit (born in Maharashtra, India) was appointed as CEO of Citigroup\(^\text{314}\). He also serves on the boards of Columbia University, Columbia Business School, the Indian School

\(^{303}\) Ibid.\(^\text{299}\)

\(^{304}\) Ibid.\(^\text{299}\)

\(^{305}\) See the achievements of various Indian Americans at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_American](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_American), accessed July 11, 2011

\(^{306}\) Ibid.

\(^{307}\) Ibid.\(^\text{305}\)

\(^{308}\) Ibid.\(^\text{305}\)

\(^{309}\) Ibid.\(^\text{305}\)

\(^{310}\) Ibid.\(^\text{305}\)

\(^{311}\) Ibid.\(^\text{305}\)

\(^{312}\) Ibid.\(^\text{305}\)

\(^{313}\) Ibid.\(^\text{305}\)

\(^{314}\) Ibid.\(^\text{305}\)
of Business and The Trinity School.\(^{315}\) In 2008, Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson appointed Neel Kashkari as the Interim U.S. Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Financial Stability.\(^{316}\) In 2008, Raj Chetty was appointed as professor of economics at Harvard University\(^{317}\). At that time, he was the youngest person (of age 29) to ever receive tenure of professorship in the Harvard Economics department and one of the top 8 young economists of the world. In 2009, President Barack Obama nominated Rajiv Shah, M.D. as the new head of United States Agency for International Development.\(^{318}\) In 2010, President of Harvard University Catherine Drew Gilpin Faust appointed Nitin Nohria as the 10th dean of Harvard Business School.\(^{319}\) Sanjaya Malakar was a finalist on the sixth season of the show *American Idol*.\(^{320}\) Karsh Kale is a well-known Indian producer, composer and musician who has performed with top artists of the world, including Zakir Hussain, Sting, Paul Oakenfold, Ravi Shankar, etc.\(^{321}\) Kal Penn, whose real name is Kalpen Suresh Modi, is a well-known Indian American actor in Hollywood.\(^{322}\) He is not a son of a rich doctor, but of a fragrance evaluator for a perfume company and of an engineer.\(^{323}\) In early 2009, Penn was offered the position of Associate Director of the White House Office of Public Engagement in the Obama administration, which he accepted.\(^{324}\) Padma Lakshmi is the famous Indian American model, actress and cookbook author. Jhumpa Lahiri is the famous Indian American author of books like *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999) and *The Namesake* (2003).\(^{325}\) The former won the 2000 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction.

One can simply conduct a quick web search to understand the achievements of Indian Americans. The list is incredibly long and it covers almost every major field, from science, technology and mathematics, to business, law, politics, and literature, art, music, etc. Reducing the abilities of Indian Americans to a ‘mere policy quirk’ is highly superficial.

Jason Richwine of the American Enterprise Institute in Washington, in writing about the success of Indian American immigrants, says that “education and culture can take people only so

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\(^{315}\) Ibid.\(^{305}\)
\(^{316}\) Ibid.\(^{305}\)
\(^{317}\) Ibid.\(^{305}\)
\(^{318}\) Ibid.\(^{305}\)
\(^{319}\) Ibid.\(^{305}\)
\(^{320}\) See the list of various Indian American at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Indian_Americans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Indian_Americans), accessed July 11, 2011
\(^{323}\) Ibid.
\(^{324}\) Ibid.\(^{322}\)
According to him, intelligence has a lot more to do with success. He cites a 2003 New Immigrant Survey of basic cognition which was administered to children of arriving immigrants. He describes the results of the survey as follows:

When statistical adjustments are used to convert the backward digit span results to full-scale IQ scores, Indian Americans place at about 112 on a bell-shaped IQ distribution, with white Americans at 100. 112 is the 79th percentile of the white distribution. For more context, consider that Ashkenazi Jews are a famously intelligent ethnic group, and their mean IQ is somewhere around 110.

Thus, Indian Americans exhibit sharp IQs and intellectual capacity as a group. This is certainly one important reason for their rise within the American society.

Two things are clear from the above examples: 1) while immigration policies of the 1960s and today may have helped bring in talented Indian Americans from India, the ascendance of Indian Americans to the top echelon of American society is in great part due to their hard work, values and intellectual abilities; and 2) Indian Americans are in a broad range of fields besides just science and medicine.

Furthermore, “Prashad wants South Asians to commit ‘model minority suicide’ by being outspoken and individualistic...” However, it appears the outspokenness and individualism is to be defined by FOIL only and not the community. When NRIs speak out against the biased portrayals of Hinduism in academia by various scholars like Wendy Doniger, Paul Courtright and others discussed earlier, or when NRIs (including California parents) fight for an equal portrayal of Hinduism in 6th grade textbooks in comparison to the Abrahamic Religions, they are automatically deemed as Hindu extremists and ‘Yankee Hindutvavadis’.

Mathew and Prashad comment further:

The NRIs are caught in a contradiction. At one level they yearn to be well-integrated into American society, for it is, after all, the American Dream of a two car garage and house (a dream monopolised (sic) by White Americans) that brought them to this land. At another level, they seek to retain their identity, a need that is heightened by the contradictions of integration. The NRI’s relation to nationalism and identity is not just a

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327 Ibid.
328 Blake, Ibid.
product of the nationalist construction of India by Hindutva ideologues, but also continuously mediated by the NRI’s link to the American Dream.329

Thus, the individualistic expression of Indian identity within the American society is a problem for FOIL. The identification with India as an ancestral land is automatically deemed ‘Hindu extremism’.

When NRIs start internet groups or forums that cater to a specific subsection of the community or to India in general, this is also a problem for FOIL. According to Mathew and Prashad:

While the nets are often heralded as ‘free’ spaces, they are also spaces of isolation. An India-related newsgroup rarely attracts a non-Indian (or non-South Asian); a Hinduism-related site attracts only those interested in Hinduism or for that matter a Gujarati Samaj mailing list only occasionally contains non-Gujaratis. Thus, these isolated sites become spawning grounds for the technocrats who need to re-invent their identity each night after having sold their souls to corporate America during the day.330

Hence, FOIL takes issue with the fact that India (or Hinduism or Gujarati) related groups or discussion forums will mainly attract Indians (or Hindus or Gujaratis) and not others. That’s like saying that sports discussions and forums should also attract non-sports fans; music discussions and forums should attract non-music fans; discussions on the Quran and Mohammed should attract non-Muslims; white supremacist discussions and forums should attract people who don’t believe in it. It is ironic that FOIL and their affiliates have exactly the same type of ‘isolated’ discussions and forums that focus on Marxist/Communist views of the world, demonizing the Indian state and devaluing Hinduism.

In addition, somehow, these hobbies and passions are considered needs to reinvent an identity, after having sold our souls to Corporate America. Someone who makes an honest living in Corporate America while taking the time about to learn about one’s culture/religion or to participate in causes related to one’s culture/religion is considered the slave of ‘imperialist capitalism’. The same person who works for corporate America during the day and attends community religious events or a temple function is considered a ‘sinner’ that somehow needs to reconcile her guilt of being in cahoots with these ‘imperialist bourgeoisie’. One wonders how FOIL feels about orthodox Jews or about Muslims who also work in Corporate America and sometimes pray while at work.

When NRIs exercise their political clout or organize themselves for causes related to India’s development, their efforts are reduced to those out of greed and guilt. Or, their efforts are

330 Ibid.
scrutinized with suspicion by FOIL and its affiliates. “Wealthy not because of natural selection, but because of the state selection of the U.S., NRI engineers, doctors and scientists lived with the guilt that they had abandoned their nation whose taxes educated them at least in the Indian Institutes of Technology and other such major research institutions.”

Similarly, “[their] 'patriotism' is simple: they are jingoistic for whomever will allow them the freedom to make money. Whether saffron or red/white/blue, these cats are heavily into the green.”

Even within this spectrum, the NRIs are criminalized further. Prashad adds - “And what are issues that motivate desis? Things to do with the 'homeland' or things that have to do with the exploitation and oppression of desis and others in the U.S.”

So, NRIs are now aiding and abetting the exploitation and oppression of people, per Prashad. According to FOIL, it is not possible that the NRIs hold sympathy towards people of India because they realize the challenges that India faces in terms of development, education, infrastructure, social issue, etc. On one hand, FOIL and its affiliates demonize NRIs and especially Hindus for the ‘evils of the caste system’ and not raising their voices against poverty and lower caste people. On the other hand, if an NRI donates money or volunteers for a cause that is ‘India centric’ including the ones that FOIL demonizes her for; she cannot be sincere about it. Is a cause only valid when it resonates with FOIL and its affiliates and their ideologies?

Prashad and Mathew describe social, cultural and religious events held by NRIs as part of an extremist scheme. “Yankee Hindutva operates through multiple organisational (sic) forms, including Gita-reading groups [emphasis original], mahila sabhas [emphasis original], temple-based functions and pujas, informal baby-sitting groups, cultural events of various kinds and summer camps.” Hence, groups that get together, read the Gita and discuss its philosophy are label as ‘Yankee Hindutvavadis’ or Yankee Hindu extremists. Similarly, temple events and ceremonies are considered the breeding grounds for Hindu extremism. Mahila Sabhas (gathering of women) are extremists and so are baby-sitting groups!

Similarly, according to FOIL, NRIs have an extremely narrow minded view of India and its cultural and don’t understand the various nuances that go along with them. This is apparently due to the result of their narrow education in India. “[The] NRIs present themselves as a cultural commodity even though they themselves came to the US without extensive training in the arts of their own culture (that is, during their narrow-minded and extensive education in the post-colonial educational system of India, they never gained the nuanced idea of their cultural history).” It is worthwhile to note that many of the history books in India have been

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332 Ibid.
333 Ibid.
334 Ibid.
335 Ibid.
written by Marxist/Leftist historians like Romila Thapar. So, FOIL’s position here is obfuscating. On the one hand, they chide the NRI for standing up against biased portrayals of India and Hinduism. Then, they disapprove of their educational training in India, even when most of it is based on Marxist/Leftist textbooks. What is FOIL’s idea of Indian cultural history then?

In summary, FOIL portrays NRIs as a group of greedy, unintelligent, extremist lunatics that are slaves of the imperialist capitalism of America. These NRIs have experienced success due to the good graces of the American government. They apply enormous pressure on their children, confine them to narrow career paths and don’t let them become the ‘drunks’ of the society. While FOIL encourages individualistic expressions of identity, it reprimands the NRIs for considering India as their ancestral homeland, and raising their voices against injustice and bias in the media, academia or in other areas. Forums and organizations started by NRIs are labeled as isolated spaces that really exist as a need to reinvent one’s identity after slaving away during the day in Corporate America. NRI activism in the political arena is not considered sincere and is a result of some underlying greed; in essence, they are supporting oppression of people in US and India. Social and religious events such as women’s gatherings, baby-sitting groups, temple ceremonies and celebrations, etc. are considered the breeding grounds for ‘extreme right-wing activities’. And, NRIs’ sense of history and cultural knowledge is shallow, even when it is based on the writings of popular Marxist/Leftist historians like Romila Thapar.
Section 2.10 Indian Independence - Hegemonic Vision of National Community

On August 15, 1997, India celebrated 50 years independence. The year was marked with huge celebrations and joyous outpours from all around the world, including of course, India. India received the notes from almost all the countries in the world and from major leaders, spiritual personalities, media and film personalities, industrial icons, etc.

However, FOIL was not in the same mood. In an article entitled 50 Year?, FOIL felt that the parades and celebrations were “attempts to attempts to suture hegemonic visions of national community”336 and “it is crucial to underscore the limits of national identification in the varied and particular forms of violence and deprivation inflicted on bodies named South Asian”337. In other words, is FOIL implying that vision of India is that of hegemony? Is FOIL saying that the “hegemonic majority of India” is suppressing some poor minority population? Some answers are provided in the article. It mentions: “…the equation of nation and community with the state can make us less mindful of state violence against South Asians”. Yet, the focus is India. FOIL spotlights the ‘atrocities’ of the Indian armed forces in Kashmir. It elaborates: “In Kashmir, the Indian government's arming of paramilitary groups is responsible for summary executions and torture of its subject(ed) peoples, as well election-related intimidation of voters, contributing to the militarization of life in that region”339. One would expect that if talk is of military oppression should include both India and Pakistan, since both are part of South Asia. Sadly, the bias is strong against India. In the same article, FOIL continues to highlight ‘undemocratic measures’ of the government. The economic reforms of 1990 are also denounced in typical Communist dislike of capitalism. FOIL asserts: “Economic liberalization with the interests of capital at the center and the concomitant erosion of labor rights indicate the state's complicity in furthering human bondage and exploitation”.340

In other sections of the article, FOIL refers to many ‘evils’ of independent India, such as the rights for Gays and Lesbians, Babri Masjid Riots, the Bombay communal riots of 1993 (after the embassy bombings by terrorists) and of ‘good Hindu wives’ being burnt for dowry. And, when it discusses the formation of a Uniform Civil Code in India it cautions against “insidiously [reasserting] Hindu Brahminical hegemony”. Thus, time and again, the negatives of India are only slapped onto Hinduism and the problems of South Asia only occur in India. When discussing the Uniform Civil Code, FOIL deliberately ignores the Muslim Personal Shariah Law

337 Ibid.
338 Ibid. 336
339 Ibid. 336
340 Ibid. 336
and bodies such as the All India Muslim Personal Law Board that work to administer a separate personal law for Muslims in India. One of the objectives of the Board is “[to] constitute a permanent standing committee comprising Ulema and legal experts to study laws, rules, regulations and circulars issued by the central and state governments and other governmental and semi-governmental agencies or the Bills introduced in the Parliament and state legislation from the point of view of their impact on the Muslim Personal Law.”\textsuperscript{341} In other words, the Board aims to review laws set by the government and see whether they are in line with Muslim Shariah Law or not. Such ‘reviews’ by a particular religious community should not be favored in a truly secular and pluralistic country. One should not be surprised if FOIL and other leftist/communist organizations are outraged if a ‘Hindu Personal Law Board’ was formed to do the same.

FOIL seems to forget that 1997 also marked the 50th Anniversary of Pakistan’s independence. Since Pakistan declared itself an Islamic nation and pursued a decidedly Islamic course in its political and social life since the 1980s, Hindus as a minority in Pakistan have had considerably fewer privileges, rights and protections in comparison to minorities in India, which constitutionally avows itself secular and giving of equal rights to its religious minorities including the Muslim, Christian and Sikh communities.\textsuperscript{342} Cultural marginalization, discrimination, economic hardships and religious persecution have resulted in many Hindus converting to other religions (Islam, Christianity).\textsuperscript{343} Because Hindus are not ‘People of the Book’ like Christians, they have generally been given fewer rights informally (de facto) by the Muslim majority than the country’s Christians...even if \textit{de jure} Hindus have equal rights under the law.\textsuperscript{344} In 2008, Ali Eteraz, writing for the Guardian in an article entitled \textit{Protecting Pakistan’s Hindus}, gives some disturbing statistics. “According to some sources, at the founding of Pakistan, Hindus comprised nearly 15% of the country’s population and now number barely 2%. Many have left, many have been killed, and many have converted to other religions to protect themselves.”\textsuperscript{345} In July 2010, around 60 members of the minority Hindus in Karachi were attacked and ethnically cleansed following an incident when a Hindu youth drank from a water tap near an Islamic mosque.\textsuperscript{346} In 2011, an article in \textit{India Today} magazine provided gory details of the situation of Hindus in Pakistan, from kidnapping, gang raping and forced conversions of young girls, to state sanctioned revisions of Pakistani history to killings of Hindus

\textsuperscript{341} See the entry on the Muslim Personal Law Board in Wikipedia at \url{http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/All_India_Muslim_Personal_Law_Board}, accessed July 21, 2011
\textsuperscript{343} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{344} Ibid.\textsuperscript{359}
\textsuperscript{346} Ibid.\textsuperscript{342}
under ‘blasphemy laws’. Qaswar Abbas, writing in *India Today*, shares that “in one incident, a 17-year-old girl was gangraped (sic) in Nagarparker area while in another incident, a 15-year-old girl was allegedly abducted from Aaklee village and forced to convert. The Aaklee incident prompted an instant migration of about 71 Hindu families to Rajasthan. Members of the Hindu community in Kotri town in Sindh province recently protested against the kidnapping of four teenagers, Anita, Kishni, Ajay and Sagar.”347

Marvi Memon of the Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) and one of the only lawmakers to stand up for Hindus, describes the situation in her own words:

> The tragedy is that as a result of these kidnappings, many Hindu families have migrated to India. After all, it is better to live in another country than in perpetual fear in Pakistan. It has become routine for Hindus to be humiliated at the hands of the influential Muslim community in Pakistan...Years of keeping a low profile have affected the sense of identity of the Hindus. They have become a people without a true identity...if there is no awareness and concern for the Hindus of Pakistan, they will remain a voiceless people and eventually cease to exist.348

Hindus, Christians, Buddhists and other minorities have been targets of numerous rapes, killings, abductions, etc. in Bangladesh as well.

Anyone who points to the atrocities of Hindus is automatically labeled as ‘Hindu Chauvinist’ or ‘Hindu Extremist’ by FOIL. Do Hindus not matter? If India was founded on a hegemonic vision of nationalism, Pakistan and Bangladesh are shining examples of religious and cultural hegemony at its worst.

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348 Ibid.
Chapter III. A Graphical Illustration of the Connections between Leftist Organizations

Figure 5 maps out the interconnections of leftist/communist organizations and how they are all ultimately connected to FOIL. The information has been compiled from the individual websites as well as from Whois.net. All the websites are registered to individuals who are FOIL members. For example, Rajasekhar Ramakrishnan, an old time FOIL member and Secretary-Treasurer of SINGH Foundation is the registering agent for FOIL’s website as well as those of SACW, INSAF and SINGH. Similarly, Akhila Raman, another FOIL member is the registering agent for CSFH; FOSA member Ramkumar Sridharan is the registering agent of YSS, the Youth Wing of FOIL as well that as of Ekta.

The figure also shows that the websites of FOIL affiliates are in turn hosted by other FOIL affiliates. For instance, Ekta hosts the sites of CSFH, FOSA, CAC, NRI-SAHI, Anand Patwardhan, Rakesh Sharma, and Organizing Youth! (associated with YSS).

Many of the links on each of the websites are broken or point back to the same websites. For example, www.foil.org points to www.proxsa.org (as of July 21, 2011). In the same manner, www.ektaonline.org has a notice saying ‘EKTA is temporarily on hiatus. We recommend you visit Friends of South Asia http://www.friendsofsouthasia.org in the meantime. (as of July 21, 2011)”349

It is important to understand that FOIL and its affiliates use dubious methods when fighting for issues. They use the names of all of these pseudo-organizations when signing petitions, letters of protests, etc., thus creating an impression of a large number of organizations. In reality, as Figure 5 shows, all of these pseudo-organizations are registered to a handful of people and consist of the same individuals.

Table 1 provides addresses and other registration details for the various websites shown below.

Figure 6 – FOIL’s Network of Websites – An Illustration

FOIL’s Propaganda Network At A Glance –
All Roads Lead to FOIL

Source: Whois.Net and Individual Websites
### Table 1 – Registration Information on the Websites of FOIL and its Affiliates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Website</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Created On</th>
<th>Registrant</th>
<th>Registrant Address</th>
<th>Registrant Address 2</th>
<th>Registrant Address 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.insaf.net">www.insaf.net</a></td>
<td>International South Asia Forum</td>
<td>21-May-01</td>
<td>Rajasekhar Ramakrishnan</td>
<td>Columbia University</td>
<td>630 West 168 St.</td>
<td>New York, NY 10032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.singhfoundation.org">www.singhfoundation.org</a></td>
<td>SINGH Foundation</td>
<td>2-Dec-99</td>
<td>Rajasekhar Ramakrishnan</td>
<td>Columbia University</td>
<td>630 West 168 St.</td>
<td>New York, NY 10032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.youthsolidarity.org">www.youthsolidarity.org</a></td>
<td>Youth Solidarity Summer</td>
<td>7-Mar-04</td>
<td>Ramkumar Sridharan</td>
<td>c/o San Jose Peace and Justice Center</td>
<td>48 S 7th St., Suite 101</td>
<td>San Jose, CA 95112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.stopfundinghate.org">www.stopfundinghate.org</a></td>
<td>Campaign to Stop Funding Hate</td>
<td>15-Aug-02</td>
<td>Friends of South Asia</td>
<td>The Campaign To Stop Funding Hate</td>
<td>P.O. Box 20136</td>
<td>Stanford, CA 94309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.ektaonline.org">www.ektaonline.org</a></td>
<td>EKTA</td>
<td>5-Oct-00</td>
<td>Ramkumar Sridharan</td>
<td>c/o San Jose Peace and Justice Center</td>
<td>48 S 7th St., Suite 101</td>
<td>San Jose, CA 95112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.friendsofsouthasia.org">www.friendsofsouthasia.org</a></td>
<td>Friends of South Asia</td>
<td>22-Jan-02</td>
<td>A.H. Cemendtaur</td>
<td>Energy Solutions</td>
<td>3375 Homestead Road Suite 61</td>
<td>Santa Clara, CA 95051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cac.ektaonline.org</td>
<td>Coalition Against Communalism</td>
<td>5-Oct-00</td>
<td>Ramkumar Sridharan</td>
<td>c/o San Jose Peace and Justice Center</td>
<td>48 S 7th St., Suite 101</td>
<td>San Jose, CA 95112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.ektaonline.org/nrisahi">www.ektaonline.org/nrisahi</a></td>
<td>Non-Resident Indians for a Secular and Harmonious India (NRI-SAHI)</td>
<td>5-Oct-00</td>
<td>Ramkumar Sridharan</td>
<td>c/o San Jose Peace and Justice Center</td>
<td>48 S 7th St., Suite 101</td>
<td>San Jose, CA 95112</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** WHOIS.NET and Individual Websites
Chapter IV. Organizations in the Communist/Christian Missionary/Islamist Nexus – Their Activities, Positions and Agenda

While the report so far offers detailed analysis of the views and activities of the Forum of Inqualabi Leftists (FOIL) and touches upon some of their affiliate and sister organizations, the following section delves into greater details on various organizations and entities that are part of the nexus shaping anti-Hindu and anti-India worldviews.

(a) Campaign to Stop Funding Hate (CSFH)

CSFH has been discussed at several places in the report. FAQs on the website describe is as a diverse group of people of Indian origin living and working in India and the United States. However, the diversity’s limited membership includes individuals who are really FOIL members and members of organizations affiliated with or started by FOIL. As discussed in the report, CSFH’s members include the following, among others: Biju Mathew, Vijay Prashad, Ali Mir, Vinay Lal, Balmurli Natrajan Ra Ravishankar, Ashwini Rao, Angana Chatterji, Raja Swamy and Samip Mallick. In addition, as shown in Figure 7, CSFH’s website is hosted by Ektaonline.org, a shadowy organization discussed earlier, which in itself is registered to the organization FOSA. CSFH and FOSA used to share the same mailing address in Stanford, CA. Furthermore, the Publication Sites section of its website, besides self-promoting, lists a host of leftist/communist group sites such as Sabrang Communication and Publishing (India) (a partner of CSFH), The South Asian Citizen’s Web (France) (another partner of CSFH), Alliance for a Secular and Democratic South Asia, Coalition Against Communalism (started by FOIL and CSFH

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351 See Harsh Kapoor’s announcements on the distribution list of INSAF. The January 27, 2002 Press Release titled “PEACE DEMONSTRATORS URGE INDIA & PAKISTAN TO RESUME DIALOGUE” lists Akhila Raman and others under the contact information and the address of Friends of South Asia as P.O. Box 20136 Stanford, CA 94309. http://insaf.net/pipermail/sacw_insaf.net/2002/001296.html, accessed July 22, 2011
353 Ibid. 352
354 Ibid. 352
members), Progressive South Asian Exchange Net (PROXSA)\textsuperscript{356} (which is the main site of FOIL), Dissident Voice\textsuperscript{357}, etc. It is also important to note that these partners and affiliates produce the ‘analysis’ of CSFH word for word on their website, without for any further review or critique; this questions the objectivity of such organizations and outlets. It is a tactic followed by FOIL and its affiliates on many reports and issues. Chapter V provides examples of such collaboration in greater detail.

CSFH claims its goal to be as follows: “We are bound by one common goal: an India without hatred, where people are not persecuted because of their faith or political beliefs.”\textsuperscript{358} Yet, their campaigns are targeted only towards cultivating hatred for Hindus and Hinduism, as illustrated by the views, writings and political leanings of the organization’s members. Persecutions and conversion of Hindus are not on their radar.

(b) Friends of South Asia (FOSA)

FOSA was one the masterminds behind the successful campaign in support of negative and factually inaccurate portrayals of Hinduism in California textbooks. Unfortunately, the organization’s name is ironic. It focuses on delegitimizing the Indian state while ‘also blaming’ the Pakistani government. The criticism of Pakistan is much milder in comparison to that awarded to India. In 2001, one of FOSA’s founders and the main organizer, Ali Hasan Cemendtaur, who is also listed as the registrant for the group’s website, wrote an article titled \textit{What India Must Do, If Peaceful}, rebuking the Indian government for creating war hysteria. Arguing for the separation of Kashmir from India, Cemendtaur completely focuses on the Indian side of Kashmir while conveniently forgetting about Pakistan Occupied Kashmir. He ‘advises’ India to prove herself clean by and a peaceful country by doing the following:

To show the world her clean hands India should enact the UN resolution of 1948 and hold a plebiscite in Kashmir. The result of that plebiscite would prove that people of Kashmir love India and the so-called Kashmiri separation movement is in fact a creation of Pakistan. This in turn would expose the 'terrorist' nature of Pakistan to the world. And that would really 'teach Pakistan a lesson.'\textsuperscript{359}

Notice that the argument of plebiscite only applies to the Indian side and not Pakistani side according to Cemendtaur. Similarly, the four wars fought by India and Pakistan were all

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{355} Ibid.\textsuperscript{352}
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\item \textsuperscript{357} Ibid.\textsuperscript{352}
\item \textsuperscript{358} Ibid.\textsuperscript{352}
\item \textsuperscript{359} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
initiated by Pakistan. Cemendtaur also blames the Indians for Pakistan’s unwillingness or inability to crack down on terrorist organizations. According to Cemendtaur, “the bellicose attitude of the Indian leadership is making it harder for Pakistan to crack down on the organizations suspected of terrorism.”

Cemendtaur is supportive of the creation of Pakistan and sympathizes with the leaders, saying: “I understand that the leaders of the Muslim League didn’t want to see the rights of the Muslims trampled in a unified South Asia under the guise of democracy”. So, the rights of Muslims are ok to fight for, while the rights of Hindus don’t seem to matter as much.

Akhila Raman is another prominent member of FOSA and FOIL. Raman also supports the breakaway of Kashmir from India and is silent on the same from Pakistan or from China.

In 2007, Raman wrote an article titled Kashmir: Terrorism or Freedom Movement?, deeming Kashmir terrorism as a “…genuine freedom struggle going on against the repressive Indian State by the Kashmiris…” The entire article is a blame game against the ‘cruel Indian army’ and the Indian government’s ‘betrayal of the Kashmiri people’. No discussion is accorded to Pakistan Occupied Kashmir or the piece of Kashmir in possession of China.

(i) Activities of FOSA - Promoting ISI Agents, Among Other Things

An organization’s views and positions are showcased by the events it holds, the speakers it invites, the positions it takes, etc. This section provides an overview of these as it applies to FOSA. Many events organized by FOSA are routine India-bashing and Hindu-bashing events.

In 2003, FOSA, along with Angana Chatterji, organized a discussion on Kashmir at University of Berkeley. One of the main speakers of the event was Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai from the Kashmiri American Council. On Tuesday, July 19, 2011, the Federal Bureau of Investigation of the US arrested Fai on charges of being an agent of the Pakistani spy agency the ISI. Neil MacBride, the US Attorney in the Eastern District of Virginia, in filing the charges, accused Fai of a ‘decades-long scheme with one purpose — to hide Pakistan’s involvement behind his efforts to influence the U.S. government’s position on Kashmir.’ MacBride also maintained that ‘[his] handlers in

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360 Ibid.
361 A.H. Cemendtaur, “A South Asian History (1947-2047),
363 People for Peace in Kashmir, “A Progressive Discussion Forum On Kashmir”,
Pakistan allegedly funneled millions through the Kashmir Center to contribute to U.S. elected officials, fund high-profile conferences and pay for other efforts that promoted the Kashmiri cause to decision-makers in Washington.”

Similarly, the FBI stated that group’s objective was “to persuade the United States government that it was in its interest to push India to allow a vote in Kashmir to decide its future”.

Furthermore, one Kashmiri forum accused Akhila Raman and Angana Chatterji of holding a highly biased session on Kashmir. Some prominent Kashmiri activists, including those whose families have suffered as a result of ongoing terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir State of India, were kept away and not allowed to participate in a significant manner; after protesting, one person was given only two minutes while the other was given twenty seconds. Akhila Raman was accused of a definite tilt and misstatements in her slide show at the Forum. Her theory that Maharaja Hari Singh was a brutal ruler and the Muslims were subjected to atrocities was vehemently challenged.

On Jan 24, 2004, FOSA organized an event titled Secularism & Democracy in India: The Challenges Ahead. The key speakers included Asghar Ali Engineer and Angana Chatterji and was co-sponsored by Coalition Against Communalism (CAC), South Asian Progressive Action Collective (SAPAC), Non-Resident Indians for a Secular and Harmonious India (NRI-SAHI), Indian Muslim Council (IMC) and Indian Muslim Relief Committee (IMRC). Interestingly, no mainstream Hindu or Indian organizations were invited to or cosponsored this ‘Interactive Discussion’. The report already discussed Chatterji’s positions and ideological leanings. And, one can see the event was co-sponsored by FOIL’s affiliates including FOSA. The activities and views of Indian Muslim Council (now known as Indian American Muslim Council) and others are discussed further in this section of the report.

In 2002, FOSA organized several India-Pakistan Peace Vigils in attempt to raise ‘awareness’ about the dangers of a nuclear war between the two countries. The events featured Ashish Chaddha, Shalini Gera. Gera and Chaddha are members of FOIL. Gera is the main organizer of Coalition Against Communalism, an affiliate of FOIL and FOSA and wrote an article in Tehelka magazine blasting the efforts of Hindus groups to get a fair portrayal of Hinduism in

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365 Savage and Schmitt, Ibid.
366 Savage and Schmitt.
368 Ibid.
369 Ibid.
372 Ibid.
California textbooks.\textsuperscript{374} She is also a spokesperson for CSFH, along with Angana Chatterji, and Ali Mir Raza.\textsuperscript{375}

On August 2010, FOSA invited Harsh Dobhal for a discussion on Human Rights in India\textsuperscript{376}. According to the announcement, Harsh Dobhal is the [Managing Editor] of Combat Law (www.combatlaw.org), a bi-monthly journal from India that serves as the voice of lawyers and social activists who form the cutting edge of legal activism in India\textsuperscript{377}. \textit{Combat Law} is a Maoist/Communist leaning publication that agrees with the philosophy of the violent and terrorist Naxal movement in India. In the 2006 edition, Colin Gonsalves, one the editors and founders of \textit{Combat Law} is sympathetic to the Naxalites and states the following: “Today, the Naxalites do, by use of force, what the State legislature and judiciary ought to be doing by taking recourse to the Constitution of India.”\textsuperscript{378} Gonsalves states further:

\begin{quote}
Naxalism then is the natural outcome of the globalisation process, which isolates, impoverishes and marginalises the majority of the working people and pushes them inexorably towards rebellion. The very nature of capitalism and the imperatives of globalisation create militants such as the Naxalites who see force as the only way to defend the right to life.\textsuperscript{379}
\end{quote}

The Maoists, with the help of Pakistani InterServices Intelligence (ISI), have been attempting to establish links with Naxalite groups such as the PWG [People's War Group] and the MCC [Maoist Communist Centre] by using the Siliguri corridor in West Bengal.\textsuperscript{380} Such lethal partnership is seriously undermining the internal security of India. Gonsalves, in his article, hails the Maoist overthrow of the Nepalese government and suggests that India should learn from Nepal.\textsuperscript{381}

\textit{Combat Law} addresses the Chairman of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda as “Comrade”\textsuperscript{382}, a popular Communist salutation. Prachanda became the

\textsuperscript{377} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{379} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{381} Gonsalves, Ibid., 11
Nepalese Prime Minister in 2008, after leading an underground militant communist movement for more than two decades. What the Maoists called their ‘people's war’ had left 13,000 people dead, tens of thousands displaced and much of the country's infrastructure destroyed.383

Dobhal is also the Secretariat of the Independent People’s Tribunal (IPT) and in 2010 published a report titled Report of Independent People’s Tribunal on Human Rights Violations in Kashmir. The report blasted the Indian government for ‘ongoing human rights violations’ against people of Jammu and Kashmir. According to the report, “[the] tribunal witnessed testimonies from all sections of Kashmiri [emphasis original] society, including victims, their family members, social activists, journalists and academicians”.384 However, a manner that is routine amongst FOIL and its affiliates, the IPT only blasts Indian security forces. One would expect Dobhal and others, who are key organizers of the Tribunal and Human Rights Law Network385, to discuss the security situation in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir or the situation of Sikhs and Hindus in the Kashmir Valley. However, that is completely absent from their analysis and reports.

The Human Rights Law Network follows a similar approach in exposing the ‘violent abuses of minorities’ by Hindus and the Indian State as the various Church supported Dalit and Leftist/Communist organizations discussed throughout the report. In fact, some of the donors and partners of the Human Rights Law Network include Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst (EED), Christian Aid, Church’s Auxiliary for Social Action, Dan Church Aid, etc. along with several European government agencies.386

FOSA organized the South Asian Human Rights Film Festival on the 61st Anniversary of Indian and Pakistani Independence387. It scheduled a series of film screenings related to ‘human rights abuse’ in South Asia. Not surprisingly, one of the key speakers was Harsh Mander, who rose to fame following the 2002 Gujarat riots where Hindus and Muslims were killed. However, Mander is solely focused on highlighting the atrocities against Muslims while ignoring the human rights of the 58 Hindus, including women and children that were burnt alive by a Muslim mob. FOSA, FOIL and others like Mander easily dismiss these Hindus, including children, as ‘Fascists’ and therefore seem to imply that their lives are not important somehow in

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385 See event announcement titled “An Informal Meeting and Discussion with HARSH DOBHIAL” at http://www.friendsofsouthasia.org/, accessed on July 21, 2011
comparison to those of Muslim men, women and children. One begs to ask how little children turn into “Fascists” automatically and can thus be sidelined. In any case, Krishen Kak, a retired Indian Administrative Services officer, filed a complaint against Mander in 2003 with the Press Council of India for Mander’s highly irresponsible and rumor filled article *Hindustan Hamara* (Times of India, March 2002). The Council’s Inquiry Committee, noted:

The article at several points reiterated rumours (sic) that were being circulated at the relevant time. The truthfulness of the facts mentioned therein had not been established at any point of time till then but Shri Mander had chosen to base his views and sentiments on them, and put pen to the opinion thus formed by him...it was expected of the author as a responsible serving officer as well as of the respondent paper of repute like The Times of India to be more restrained and circumspect in pronouncing a denouement of the whole system in a communally surcharged atmosphere.\(^{388}\)

Thus, Mander’s penchant for pumping up the facts was acknowledged by an independent body. Sadly, major media outlets like Times of India carried Mander’s article without regard to journalistic objectivity.

In 2007, FOSA, Pakistanis at Stanford, Center for South Asia (Stanford), and Sanskriti co-sponsored an event called *The Kashmir Issue 60 Years Later: Rethinking The Kashmir Conflict A conversation with Beena Sarwar and Huma Dar*\(^ {389}\). While the Pakistani perspective was clearly represented, no mainstream or campus Indian organization was invited to represent the Indian side of the story. In addition, Sarwar is a famous Pakistani journalist while Dar is a PhD Candidate in South Asian Studies at UC-Berkeley\(^ {390}\). In 2008, Dar, along with Angana Chatterji and others, wrote a letter to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, highlighting the ‘Humanitarian Crisis in Jammu and Kashmir’ and blasted the Indian government for alleged human rights violations. The letter’s pro-Kashmir independence stance is highlighted when Chatterji, Dar and others cover up Kashmir terrorism as a “pro-independence struggle in Kashmir,”\(^ {391}\) while deeming Indian counterinsurgency operations as “grave abuses of human rights with social, economic, psychological, political, and environmental consequences”\(^ {392}\). Other signatories of the letter include Amitava Kumar, a key member of


\(^{389}\) Ibid.\(^ {387}\)

\(^{390}\) See the event announcement on Stanford’s website at [http://events.stanford.edu/events/113/11355/](http://events.stanford.edu/events/113/11355/), accessed July 22, 2011


\(^{392}\) Ibid.
FOIL\(^{393}\), Sunaina Maira who used to coordinate youth activities of FOIL\(^{394}\), Snehal Singhavi and many others.

In a 2002 interview on *Hardball with Chris Matthews*, Singhavi was exposed for setting a biased agenda for his course called *The Politics and Poetry of Palestinian Resistance*. The course description stated that it “takes as its starting point the right of Palestinians to fight for their own self-determination. Conservative thinkers are encouraged to seek other sections”,\(^{395}\) thus, discouraging diverse opinions on the Palestinian conflict. In calling out Singhavi, Matthews mentions that “[in] a public university, [Singhavi is] accepting students on the basis of their political point of view and rejecting others.”\(^{396}\) Civil rights and free speech advocates reacted strongly, calling [Singhavi’s] statements ‘chilling’, and saying that such restrictions do not belong in a university, especially one supported by public funds.\(^{397}\)

FOSA organized a panel discussion titled *SELF DETERMINATION IN SOUTH ASIA: South Asia’s Struggle against US-led Imperialism* featuring Vijay Prashad, Angana Chatterji, Abdul Nayyar, and Snehal Shingavi\(^{398}\). The political and ideological agenda of this meeting is blatantly clear not only from the lineup of speakers but also by the discussion’s focus. According to the event announcement, the panelist discussed:

> The people's struggle against pro-imperialist Indian elites; the implications of the latest nuclear arms trade agreement between India and the US on the people of India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and the rest of South Asia, especially women; the role of South Asia in US imperialist ambitions; the other opportunities this presents to build Indian communism and fight the agenda of the global ruling class\(^{399}\).

Thus, Indians are labeled as pro-imperialists serving their US masters and the Kashmiri, Maoist and Naxal terrorist activities are labeled as ‘the people’s struggles’. Similarly, according to the

\(^{393}\) Kumar is listed as the FOIL point person for anyone interested in writing leftist/communist leaning articles to major Indian newspapers. See the November 1, 1998 issue of Ghadar at [http://www.proxsa.org/resources/ghadar/v2n1/foil.html](http://www.proxsa.org/resources/ghadar/v2n1/foil.html), accessed July 22, 2011

\(^{394}\) Maira is listed as a contact person for organizing youth activities through “solidarity training programs”. See the November 1, 1998 issue of Ghadar at [http://www.proxsa.org/resources/ghadar/v2n1/foil.html](http://www.proxsa.org/resources/ghadar/v2n1/foil.html), accessed July 22, 2011


\(^{396}\) Ibid.


\(^{398}\) See the announcement at [http://www.friendsofsouthasia.org/events/selfdeterminationpanel/](http://www.friendsofsouthasia.org/events/selfdeterminationpanel/), accessed July 22, 2011

\(^{399}\) Ibid.
discussion, one is led to believe that the ‘imperialist oppression’ of India and US presents an excellent opportunity for Communism to ‘save the people’ from their horrors.

Thus, one can easily see FOSA’s pro-separatist leanings via sponsorship of such events and speakers.

FOSA also hosted FOIL co-founder Biju Mathew at Stanford in A Conversation with BIJU MATHEW. Mathew was hailed as a “Labor Organizer, Anti-War Activist and author of Taxi! Cabs and Capitalism in New York City” but there is no mention of the fact that Mathew is a the co-founder of FOIL.

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(c) Association for India’s Development (AID)

AID was started in 1991 by a graduate student from University of Maryland. The organization describes itself as “a volunteer movement promoting sustainable, equitable and just development. AID supports grassroots organizations in India and initiates efforts in various interconnected spheres such as agriculture, energy, education, health, livelihoods, natural resources including land and water, women's empowerment and social justice.” AID aims to bring about positive social change within India by addressing the various socio-economic issues at the grassroots level. Thus, one can surmise from such statements that AID is apolitical and secular and focuses solely on the underprivileged citizens of India regardless of their religious or political affiliations. In fact, it is precisely such statements and portrayals that attract several well-meaning volunteers and donors to AID. Strikingly, some well documented evidence presented below from AID’s own volunteers and sources demonstrates that AID supports Marxist/Communist organizations (some with known criminal activities) and ideology in the name of development. It is even more disturbing that these links have been removed by AID from its website to hide these connections.

*The 50 Block Plan (for Tamilnadu)* was a project sponsored in part by AID in Tamilnadu, “up economically self –reliant Tamil Nadu Science Forum units in 50 blocks in the state of Tamil Nadu by the end of 2001.” The focus of activities of Tamil Nadu Science Forum (TSF) was: to support credit cooperatives; libraries and information centers and Health interventions or/and interventions for universalizing elementary education. However, in developing the library centers, AID is very selective on whom the library should be linked to. It asserts: “As a policy encourage libraries only where linked to such an activity or to an active TNSF/AIDWA/DYFI/PWA group or activist.”

Who are these groups? AIDWA, or All India Democratic Women Association, is the women’s wing of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPIM). Brinda Karat, the veteran Communist leader and member of CPIM and former General Secretary of AIDWA for several years, gave the keynote speech at the 25th Anniversary celebration of AIDWA. DYFI, or Democratic Youth Federation of India, is the youth wing of CPIM. On the death of veteran Communist

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403 Ibid.
404 Ibid. 402, page 2
406 See the press release by AIDWA on its 25 year celebration at [http://aidwaonline.org/content/aidwa_speaks/present_topics.php?refid=asp007](http://aidwaonline.org/content/aidwa_speaks/present_topics.php?refid=asp007), accessed July 13, 2011
giant and leader Jyoti Basu, the Central Executive Committee of DYFI issued a press release and homage, expressing “its profound grief at the passing away of one of the tallest leaders of the Communist Movement of India”\(^{408}\). Furthermore, it saluted “the memory of Comrade Jyoti Basu”. \(^{409}\) Similarly, homages have been paid for other CPIM leaders such as Harkishan Singh Surjeet and pledging that both DYFI and SFI (Student Federation of India) “will always upheld (sic) the ideology and principles for which comrade Surjeet dedicated his life...Red Salute to Comrade Harkishan Singh Surjeet.”\(^{410}\) SFI is the student wing of CPIM (not to be confused with the youth wing). In 2008, DYFI called for an immediate resignation of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh for signing the nuclear deal with the United States, calling it a “misdemeanor [that] was a serious compromise on India’s foreign policy and on [its] National sovereignty.”\(^{411}\)

DYFI is also known for its abuse of law and order threatening individuals who speak out against its activities. In 2008, four activists of DYFI and three members of CPIM were taken into custody by police in Kerala for substance abuse. When brought to the police station, they abused the Sub-Inspector.\(^{412}\) In 2010, DYFI threatened famous fiction writer and columnist Paul Zachariah after he made some remarks criticizing the group. “According to the writer, hey took away the car key and pushed him around, threatening him that if he ever dared to step into Payyannur again, he would not go back alive.”\(^{413}\)

Dharam Singh, writing for India Herald in the wake of the 2005 Tsunami, outlines several criminal and shocking activities of DYFI:

In November, 2004, eight DYFI activists were convicted and sentenced to life for murdering a Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) activist. In August, 2003, DYFI activists were involved in violent incidents in Kerala, e.g. stone pelting police, bombing offices, etc....In May, 2002, DYFI cadres beat up a respected teacher in West Bengal. In January, 2002, DYFI workers were arrested in connection with violence between two religious

\(^{409}\) Ibid.

Singh, in the same article points out SFI’s positions on various criminal and anti-national matters:

In December, 2004, SFI voted against a resolution condemning China for repeatedly showing Arunachal Pradesh as not being a part of India at the Jawaharlal Nehru University Student Union meeting. In August, 2002, SFI cadres beat up students belonging to Rabindra Bharati University for being “inappropriately dressed”. In July, 2002, SFI students were allegedly behind an article appearing in a college magazine in Kerala that praised Osama bin Laden as the ‘crusader of the poor Muslims the world over’. In September, 2001, 31 SFI activists were arrested on charges of ‘public property destruction, unlawful assembly and violation of the Explosives Act’. In November, 1996, SFI workers murdered several BJP and ABVP workers in Kerala after a friendly leftist state government came to power.\footnote{Singh, Ibid.}

AID has often claimed that it doesn’t fund the activities of DYFI. However, their close association with DYFI was again highlighted by a journalist Amit Varma. In 2005, Varma, writing an article in *Rediff*, praised AID’s work and marked that “DYFI suffers from the drawback of not having a high profile and, consequently, having rather low funds. But AID takes care of that.”\footnote{Amit Varma, “This will also slip away from public memory”, January 3, 2005, http://in.rediff.com/news/2005/jan/03amit3.htm, accessed July 13, 2011}

In 2005, Feroz Mehdi, writing for a Canadian newspaper called *Alternatives* on a tour of areas hit with the Tsunami, describes meeting with the director of AID India Mr. M.A. Devdas. He elaborates on the ‘strategic partnership’ by various Communist organizations and AID, as follows:

The groups associated with the CPM and the All India Peoples Science Movement have reached a strategic alliance with AID by implementing relief measures and taking up mid and long term rehabilitation work. While the material purchase and construction is done by AID, the human power is provided by over a thousand volunteers of the AIPSN [All India Peoples Science Movement], SFI (Student Federation of India), DYFI (Democratic Youth Federation of India), AIDWA (All India Democratic Women’s Association) and TNSF [Tamil Nadu Science Forum] itself.\footnote{Feroz Mehdi, “Tamil Nadu in the wake of Tsunami”, January 20, 2005, page 2, http://www.geocities.com/aid_india_info/doc37.pdf, accessed July 13, 2011}
And, who is the *Alternatives* newspaper associated with? A Whois.Net search conducted on August 06, 2005 revealed that the website of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) was registered under *Alternatives* with the address as 3680, rue Jeanne-Meance, Montreal, QUEBEC, H2X 2K5, CA. Thus, the connection between AID and various Communist/ Marxist parties turns out to be much stronger than AID would like its donors and volunteers to believe. One can argue that during times of disaster, everyone should forget their political/religious ideologies and work together. However, if such connections were found between Hindu aid organizations and parties like the BJP, the Communist/Marxist organizations listed in this report would have raised a huge outcry and accuse Indian charities of ‘fascism’ or ‘communalism’ or ‘funding hatred’ (as they did with IDRF).

Lastly, PWA or Progressive Writers Association is an organization of Marxist/Communist writers and poets. It was started in 1936 by three members of the Communist Party of India. PWA’s political views are highlighted at their 13th Annual National Conference, held in the year 2003. During the conference, they declared: “[the] gravest threat the nation was facing today…was the ‘fascist menace’: of Hindutva at the national level and the war-mongering American imperialism at the international level. And if you see closely, the cultural nationalism of the Hindutva brigade was hand in gloves with the forces of imperialism…”

In 1999, AID’s Dallas, Texas Chapter, drafting its August 1st 1999 meeting minutes, discussed updates of various projects. In one of the proposals submitted to purchase some camcorders and other recording equipment, Balaji Sampath, one of the key AID volunteers in India seems particularly disturbed at watching the Deepa Mehta movie *1947-Earth*. He then connects partition events shown in the movie with the “dangers of Hindu Rashtra (nation)” and how this “will soon lead to a fascist India (the stands of people [especially] middle class is becoming crystallized very fast). When history reviews our role, it will hold us responsible for not having prevented it.” He goes on further to explain how he plans to use the camcorders. One of his thoughts is to “take shots of partition, of fascism in Germany and compare the two and point towards the communal danger haunting India” Thus, mixed in with documentaries about rural programs and development projects, AID’s volunteers create video to heighten communal tensions and blackball the entire middle class Hindu community in India. It is as if Hindus are the only ones and always responsible for communal discord in India. Judged by the views of

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422 Ibid.
AID, Hindus are solely responsible for the partition of India and the massive riots that took place afterwards.

Another correspondence highlighted in the same meeting minutes is about which books to purchase for kids in India. Sampath cautions about buying second hand books from stores, saying to “[never] purchase children’s books (story books, etc) - it is not easy to tell which is useful and which is not.” Sampath, however, recommends a series of books that AID volunteers need to purchase:

b) Purchase all the following: (first two very good and useful)

--- All books (multiple copies ok) by Micheal Apple, Ivan Ilich (Deeschooling Scoeity (sic) and After Deschooling), Philippe Aries (Social history of Childhood), John Holt, Maria Montessori, Danger: School, and all books on educational expts (the ones that fight against the system of education, not for it) in the US.

--- All Cartoon Books in the Beginners series - Marx for beginners, Budhha for Beginners, Trotsky for beginners, Einstien for beginners, Totstoy (sic) for beginners, Freud for beginners, Lenin for beginners, Ecology for beginners, etc.

Thus, Marxist/Communist education books are cleverly mixed in with the works on Einstein and Buddha. It is important to ask why AID is dictating education that is influenced by a particular ideology.

The Penn State Chapter of AID published a report by Balaji Sampath about his work in 1997 through 1999. Under the section, Ideological and Awareness Work, Sampath is very clear about his Marxist/Communist worldview: “The ideas of power, politics, hegemony, social consciousness, how people think, struggle, Marxist analysis techniques, etc that I have learnt are now a part of me.” Similarly, in the report Sampath also highlighted his efforts in the US organizational side and how he tried to bring greater interaction with Asha (Asha for Education, discussed below) and ILP (India Literacy Project) “through joint projects, reviews and joint articles getting them to interact more often and on more things - because fundementally (sic) they are not very different and have a very similar volunteer base.” Indeed, Sampath provides several examples of partnerships between AID and Asha in the article as well as in the meeting minutes of Dallas AID chapter discussed above.

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423 Ibid. 421, Page 21
424 Ibid. 421, Page 21
426 Ibid., Page 38
(i) Other Activities of AID

Besides having connections with violent Communist organizations in India, some of AID’s activities in the US also bear close examination. This is extremely important because AID’s major donations are paid by American donors who would balk if they are made aware of AID’s Communist connections as discussed above as well as the activities the various activities discussed next.

AID has organized several events with FOSA, as discussed earlier. These events have featured members of FOIL such as Biju Matthew, Vijay Prashad, Angana Chatterji and many others.

In 2003, AID organized an event at the University of Minnesota titled Violence and Religious Extremism: Reflections on the Human Condition in the 21st Century. The main speaker of the event was none other than FOIL’s Vinay Lal. More disturbingly, one of co-sponsors was the controversial Islamic organization Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR). Why is CAIR so controversial? Daniel Pipes of the Middle East Forum points out that in 1998, CAIR demanded the removal of a Los Angeles billboard describing Osama bin Laden as ‘the sworn enemy,’ finding this depiction ‘offensive to Muslims.’ Similarly, according to Pipes, “[the] conviction of the perpetrators of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing [CAIR] deemed ‘a travesty of justice.’ The conviction of Omar Abdel Rahman, the blind sheikh who planned to blow up New York City landmarks, it called a ‘hate crime’. Pipes further points out that “the San Ramon Valley Herald [reported that] CAIR Chairman Omar M. Ahmad told a crowd of California Muslims in July 1998, ‘Islam isn’t in America to be equal to any other faith, but to become dominant. The Koran . . . should be the highest authority in America, and Islam the only accepted religion on earth.’” According to a 2004 article in the National Post, “CAIR’s first executive director, Nihad Awad, publicly declared himself a supporter of Hamas at a 1994 forum at Barry University in Florida”. Similarly, according to the National Post, “Randall Todd Royer, a communications specialist at CAIR’s Washington headquarters, pleaded guilty in January, 2004, to belonging to the Kashmiri Lashkar-i-Taibi (sic) terrorist group and illegally acquiring firearms and explosives in order to train for terrorist missions against India. He was sentenced to 20 years in prison.” Does AID not know these publicly available facts or does it blindly ignore these?

429 Ibid.
430 Ibid.
432 Ibid.
In conclusion, AID’s Communist/Marxist connections are more than just casual or coincidental. AID seems to wear the garb of non-political/non-ideological development. Yet, the examples above point out the fact that AID is working hand-in-glove with various Communist/Marxist organizations in the US and in India. Some of these organizations have been found guilty of criminal activities as well as openly advocate violence. Furthermore, why is AID working with questionable Islamic organizations known for their anti-US remarks and terrorist links?
(d) Asha for Education

Asha for education claims to be “a secular organization dedicated to change in India by focusing on basic education in the belief that education is a critical requisite for socio-economic change.” On surface, Asha’s activities seem to mainly focus on providing basic education to underprivileged kids in India. Such mission resonates very well with the Indian American and Hindu communities because of their natural inclination to support the downtrodden in India and to help shape a brighter future for India. Even non-Indian American donors are attracted to Asha’s cause and contribute in many ways. In fact, Asha is very famous for holding various fundraisers, awareness events, etc. to highlight the needs of destitute children in India. One would expect that such a noble purposed organization stays away from political issues and issues not related to education of kids in India. One of Asha’s press releases states that the organization “does not have any political or religious affiliations, neither does it endorse or support any political or religious activities.” However, the information presented below challenges such claims and casts a shadow of doubt on Asha’s intentions and outward image.

Asha was co-founded by Sandeep Pandey, then a student at University of California at Berkeley. Pandey has been in serious controversy surrounding his political and ideological ties. In 2002, Pandey was one of the key speakers at the seventh Party Congress of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist). The theme of the event was ‘Red Resistance to Saffron Subversion’. During the event, “Sandeep Pandey stressed the need of unity of revolutionary communist [organizations] like CPI (ML) and social movements to take on fascist danger.” Characterizing the US led invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq as “the greatest threat to world [peace]”, a draft of the conference report concluded that “[using] the horrific events of September 11 in New York as an excuse to pursue its long-planned imperialist agenda the United States has been waging nothing short of a terrorist war on a global scale.” “The report stressed a 12-point democratic [program] to intensify worker-peasant struggles, strengthen the militant mobilisation (sic) [emphasis added] of the rural poor and sharpen anti-fascist anti-imperialist resistance of the Indian people.” CPI (ML) is notorious for use of violent ideology to achieve its means. CPI (ML) advocated armed revolution and denounced

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437 Ibid.
438 Ibid.
participation in the electoral process.\textsuperscript{439} CPI (ML) saw Naxalbari [the Naxalite terrorist uprising] as the spark that would start a new Indian revolution, and the movement came to be known as 'naxalites'.\textsuperscript{440} The party got moral support from China, which actively encouraged the attempts of CPI (ML) to launch revolution.\textsuperscript{441} Therefore, the call for ‘militant mobilization’ of the poor is no surprise.

Indeed, in the same 2002 event of CPI (ML), the party honored “the kin of 1000 Naxalites known as 'comrade martyrs', from Bihar who have been killed over the last three decades of the peasant struggle.”\textsuperscript{442} Several prominent social activists such as Mahashweta Devi, Arundhati Roy, Sandeep Pandey, Rajinder Sachar, Praful Bidwai, and Anand Patwardhan attended the opening session of the congress.\textsuperscript{443}

Pandey finds Pakistan to be more open to dialogue on Kashmir and accusing India of cross-border terrorism. In 2004, Pandey, in an interview with the \textit{Milli Gazette}, a leading Indian Muslim newspaper, called Pervez Musharraf, the former Military General/President of Pakistan “more forthcoming”\textsuperscript{444} and that India was “evading that question by asking Pakistan to first stop cross-border terrorism.”\textsuperscript{445} He further stressed that “terrorism happens from both sides.”\textsuperscript{446} Similarly, speaking on nuclear disarmament, Pandey found the Pakistani government to be “more accessible and open to dialogue than Indian government”.\textsuperscript{447}

Asha came out with a press release to clarify the stances taking by Pandey and claimed that “some of his statements have been quoted out of context, resulting in many inquiries to Asha for Education for clarification.”\textsuperscript{448} However, the above statements are verbatim from interviews and conference reports and are not taken out of context or misused.

On May 22, 2004, Asha’s Stanford chapter invited Balaji Sampath, a key member of AID that was discussed earlier, and Kalpana Karunakaran, another AID member, to give a talk on their work with AID-India. The event summary read as follows: “Balaji is an AID JeevanSathi [i.e. life time companion/member]. He has been working with AID-India since 1997 and before that was

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{439} See the entry on Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist), in Wikipedia, \url{http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communist_Party_of_India_%28Marxist%E2%80%93Leninist%29}, accessed July 13, 2011
\item \textsuperscript{440} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{441} Ibid.\textsuperscript{439}
\item \textsuperscript{443} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{445} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{446} Ibid.\textsuperscript{444}
\item \textsuperscript{447} Ibid.\textsuperscript{444}
\item \textsuperscript{448} Ibid.\textsuperscript{434}
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
part of AID-USA. Both Balaji and Kalpana have also been working with the Tamil Nadu Science Forum. They will share their stories and experiences”. Interestingly, it seems that either Asha neglected to check the political and ideological views of Sampath and AID or that it knowingly went ahead and invited Sampath.

On June 13, 2001, Asha’s Stanford Chapter hosted a talk with Sandeep Pandey, titled Talk with Asha founder Sandeep Pandey.

Asha, in association with FOSA and AID, organized an even called Neoliberal Destructions A Talk by P. Sainath and Alexander Cockburn. Cockburn is coeditor with Jeffrey St. Clair of the twice-monthly muckraking newsletter CounterPunch. Cockburn is a prominent radical left-wing journalist and writer and his CounterPunch has featured numerous articles by Vijay Prashad of FOIL. Furthermore, Cockburn, in the past, openly gave credence to reports that Jews spread anthrax in the U.S. and that Israel was part of a conspiracy to topple the World Trade Center. “Cockburn’s website ran a piece by Shahid Alam, a tenured professor of economics at Northeastern University in Boston, titled ‘Poverty From the Wealth of Nations.’ Alam argued that the 9/11 attacks were an Islamist insurgency, the attackers believing that they are fighting - as the American revolutionaries did in the 1770's - or their freedom and dignity against foreign control of their lands’. 

In 1998, Chingari, a group associated with and endorsed by FOIL, organized the Eye on India Series. Some topics of the seminar included Elections '98: Evolving Faces of the Indian Democracy; Kashmir: A Dialog; Religion, Caste and Power, etc. Biju Mathew of FOIL was the key speaker of the session on Religion, Caste and Power. Vidhi Parthasarathy one of the coordinators of Asha-Madison, expressed great excitement about the event and “[offered Asha’s help] to provide volunteer support as well as [their] help in networking with other local /non-local interest groups on this event.”

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451 See the event listing at http://www.friendsofsouthasia.org/events/sainath/, accessed July 13, 2011
453 Ibid.
454 Chingari is listed as one among other leftist/communist organizations in Ghadar, FOIL’s Newsletter http://ghadar.insaf.net/links.htm, accessed July 15, 2011
456 Ibid.
457 Ibid.
In 2002, members of Asha-DC joined FOIL and AID and organized a rally against Gujarat Prime Minister Narendra Modi. FOIL, in its monthly mouthpiece Ghadar, describes the formation of a coalition between Asha, FOIL, AID and other organizations to work on various issues, as follows:

The success of the rally has prompted the establishing of a DC collective to deal with issues of concern in South Asia. We have held three meetings, with the objective of creating a loose and broad-based coalition of groups such as FOIL, AID, AAA (Aligarh Alumni Association), Association of Indian Muslims of America, ASHA for Education, and concerned individuals. The aim is to support each other's activities in the DC area, as well as to work on a few specific combined activities such as fund-raising for Gujarat victims and tracking civil liberties violations. The network of groups and individuals will cross-publicize efforts on themes such as fundamentalism, liberalization, and nuclearization in South Asia.  

The above paragraph clearly demonstrates Asha’s partnership with Islamic organizations and communist/leftist organizations on non-education related issues.

Kaleem Kawaja of Association of Indian Muslims of America was in the news for his now famous article called Brother, can you spare a tear for Taliban (The Milli Gazette, Vol.3, No. 5). In the article, written after the US defeated the Taliban regime of Afghanistan in 2001, Kawaja is generally sympathetic towards and sorry for the Taliban. He describes the defeat of the Taliban as an end to “another bold attempt of Muslims to assert themselves and the Islamic values in their own country.”

Painting western countries as enemies of Muslims, Kawaja laments that “[it] was fool-hardy naivette that made [the Taliban] ignore the many plans of the enemies of Muslims who were looking for an opportunity to exploit any loophole to ransack the global Muslim community, especially the recent remarkable growth of Muslim communities in Western countries.”

Similarly, Kawaja again paints Western countries like the US as enemies of the Muslim community and concludes that “[even] at the last minute [the Taliban] had an opportunity to take actions that could have averted the punitive confrontation that Western countries were trying to impose on the global Muslim community.” Speaking on a panel discussion on Indian Muslims in Washington, Kawaja exaggerated the ‘large scale violence’ against Muslims and the “the connivance of the government machinery with the Hindu fanatic

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460 Ibid.
461 Kawaja, Ibid.
marauders, in the last fifty years. During the panel discussion, Kawaja appealed to the Muslims in America “to urge their senators & congressmen to pay attention to the 50 year long, continued oppression of Muslims in India.” So, throughout India’s independence, Muslims have just been oppressed and killed by the government which has been run by Hindu fanatics for the last fifty years!

During the same period, on July 21, 2002 Asha organized A Community Meeting on the Situation in Gujarat & Communal Harmony in India with Shabnam Hashmi of ‘Sahmat’, with the organizations mentioned above. While this was supposed to be a community meeting, it was inevitably a Hindu and Gujarati bashing event with no mainstream Indian, Hindu or Gujarati organization present to offer its opinions on the horrible events of Gujarat. SAHMAT stands for Safdar Hashmi Memorial Trust and is closely connected to the Communist Party of India (Marxist). The January 2006 article in People’s Democracy, the official mouthpiece of CPI(M) offers a ‘Red Salute’ to ‘Comrade Safdar Hashmi’ and talks about how the first day of the year is observed by numerous theatre groups as a day of paying homage to Safdar Hashmi, street theatre activist and communist. The paper goes further and mentions that after the play, Brinda Karat, Polit Bureau Member of the CPI(M), who was the main speaker, praised Hashmi and his ideals. Vijay Prashad, the co-founder of FOIL, provides further insights into Hashmi’s ideological leanings. In his article, Safdar Hashmi Amar Rahe (Long Live Safdar Hashmi)! Communist Cultural Activism in India, Prashad considers Hashmi as “the embodiment of those communist values which shaped his craft -- that of cultural activist and street theatre artist”. Although [Hashmi] wrote books for children and criticism of the Indian stage, he will be remembered best for his work with Jan Natya Manch (People’s Theatre Front) which was formed in 1973 as an outgrowth of the Indian People’s Theatre Association (IPTA) and which became closely linked to the Communist Party of India (Marxist) [CPM] during the 1970s. Prashad even adds that “Safdar's death led to the formation of the Safdar Hashmi Memorial Trust (SAHMAT) which attempts to further progressive [read Communist/Marxist] values.” Thus, Hashmi’s and SAHMAT’s Communist values and beliefs are brought to light in these eulogizing articles. A 2002 article in Outlook India magazine also mentions that SAHMAT was

463 Ibid.
466 Ibid.
468 Ibid.
469 Prashad, Ibid.
founded with the blessings of the CPI (M) and that Shabnam Hashmi was a member of the CPI (M). Similarly, a 2002 online article in the newspaper *The Hindu* pointed out that Hashmi’s SAHMAT and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) shared the same offices in New Delhi and were evicted by the Directorate of Estates under the Union Ministry of Urban Development.

It is also important to know that Shabnam Hashmi also helped with the highly inaccurate libelous and out of context reports that attempted to destroy the Hindu youth group Hindu Students Council in the US.

In 2004, Asha for Education’s Bay Area Chapters co-sponsored a talk by Dr. Mallika Sarabhai on *Communal Harmony and the Role of Civil Society*. The event’s discussion inevitably focused on the 2002 Gujarat riots and the role of Hindus. However, Sarabhai has been remarkably silent or has paid lip service just like other “progressives” on other major riots and human rights issues in India. Furthermore, the list of co-sponsors included Association for India’s Development-Bay Area Chapter (AID), Coalition Against Communalism (CAC), India Literacy Project (ILP), Indian Muslim Council (IMC-USA) and Indians for Collective Action (ICA). The report has already discussed the close associations of FOIL, FOA, EKTA and CAC. Similarly, Indian Muslim Council works closely with FOIL and its sister organizations and has hosted various FOIL members as “experts on India and Hinduism” at its events. More information about IMC and its connections with FOIL is provided further in the report.

(i) *Asha and the Naxal Terrorist Connections - Sympathizing and Funding?*

The Newsletter of Asha Cornell, *Compassion*, highlights some of the other non-education related activities that Asha engages in:

On the social issues initiative, we hosted a screening of the movie Hazaar Chaurasi ki Ma, highlighting (sic) the issue of the Naxalite movement in India. This event was attended by Asha members and others interested in the matter presented. On a slightly larger scale, we participated in an Asha-wide initiative by setting up a photo exhibition to raise awareness about the Naxalite crisis and violations of human rights currently occurring in Chattisgarh as a result of the actions of both Naxalites and the state-supported Salwa Judum. Earlier in 2009, we hosted a screening of the movie ‘Resilient

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Rhythms – A Dalit Story’ and a discussion on the Caste System in India – Past and Present. In Fall 2009, Sandeep Pandey, one of the founders of Asha who is now a grassroots level social activist in India, paid us a visit. In an open, informal discussion he shared with us his experiences, giving us an insight into some of the challenges and success stories of his work in India.  

In fact, the newsletter has two articles talking about the Naxalite situation and the Chattisgarh government’s response. One (on Page 15), compared the Naxalite situation in Chattisgarh to the fictitious Navi people show in the Hollywood movie Avatar. Rajendra Narayanan, the author of the article asserts that “[launching] the 'Operation Greenhunt' and calling Naxalites the gravest security threat just reeks of the government-corporate nexus to further their neo-liberal agenda as opposed to addressing more fundamental development concerns.” Thus, government action against a raging national security threat is reduced to a ‘neo-liberal agenda’. This statement sounds drastically similar to statements made by FOIL and other fellow Communists/Marxists.

It is unclear how sympathy for and politics around the terrorist Naxalites equate to providing for education in India or how Asha still claims that it doesn’t associate with any political ideology.

On July 11, 2007, CNN-IBN ran an article titled Special Investigation: Naxals take hawala route to terror, which describes how the terrorist Naxals in the Indian state of Bihar use the informal money transfer system called Hawala to finance their activities under the radar. According to the article, “Dwarko Sundrani, who runs an NGO, Samanvaya Ashram in Bodhgaya admitted to the [links between NGOs and Naxals]: Naxals often approach us for money, but we provide them food, clothing and shelter as we believe in the concept of hriday parivartan (change of heart). They wanted me to build tube-wells in their village. We got it done.” Thus, such NGOs openly fund projects for Naxals and support them with food and other basic needs.

Asha’s website describes a total of $6500 sent from Stanford University ($2000), North Carolina State University ($1500) and University of Berkeley ($3000). Do Asha’s donors know that this money was sent to an NGO that is involved with Naxal terrorists?

The above examples provide evidence against Asha’s claims as a non-political organization that focuses on education of underprivileged children in India. The speakers that Asha tends to

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475 Ibid., Page 17
invite are undoubtedly associated with Communist/Marxist or Islamic ideology and politics that has often endorsed violence as a means of resistance. Similarly, the speakers are themselves biased in their views of Hindus. It claims that the views of one man (i.e. Sandeep Pandey) do not influence Asha’s work or the organization’s overall ideology. However, why does Asha insist on inviting him to its event to talk about his experience and new projects that he is working on? When one person, who is also the founder of the organization, is revered so much, his ideals and his views are bound to impact the work of the organization. Is Asha ready to dissociate with people such as Pandey and Sampath? Is Asha ready to stop associating with AID, FOIL, FOSA and others? Are its American donors aware Asha’s overtly political and dubious affiliations?

\[478\] Ibid. 473
(e) SINGH Foundation

SINGH Foundation is the fundraising arm of FOIL. The word “SINGH” should not be confused with the Sikh last name. It stands for Secular India's National Growth and Harmony and according to the organization, was started in memory of a late leftist Raghuvansh Prasad Singh. Out of the four board members of the Foundation two are FOIL members and founders - One of the Vice Presidents is FOIL co-Founder Biju Mathew while the Secretary-Treasurer is Dr. Rajasekhar Ramkrishnan, who is listed as the registrant for the FOIL, SACW (South Asian Citizens Web) and INSAF (International South Asia Forum) websites. INSAF, as mentioned before, also hosts FOIL’s mouthpiece Ghadar. Abha Sur, the other Vice President of SINGH is a FOIL member and the main organizer of the Alliance for a Secular and Democratic South Asia, another FOIL affiliate. The Alliance has invited noted Marxist/Communist individuals such Shabnam Hashmi and historian KN Pannikar, who is also a Trustee of ANHAD (Act Now for Harmony and Democracy), an organization headed by Hashmi.

According to the website, the Foundation aims to promote secularism, economic growth and social harmony in India and more general in South Asia. They also sponsor tours of “prominent Indians to promote secularism and tolerance among South Asians” in the US. And, they support grassroots NGOs in India and other countries who share their mission goals.

Hence, one is led to believe that the Foundation fights for secularism and promotes grown in India and other neighboring countries. While the Foundation has given a few grants to organizations in Bangladesh, the bulk of the sponsorship goes to individuals and organizations who are strongly biased against Hindus and even India. These individuals and organizations have been set up solely to demonize Hinduism against Islam specifically and highlight the Indian state as an ‘oppressor’ of minorities.

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484 Ibid. 472
486 [http://www.singhfoundation.org/activities.html](http://www.singhfoundation.org/activities.html), accessed June 20, 2011
487 Ibid.
The Foundation was started in 1993 and received its tax-exempt status (501 (c) (3)) in early 1994.\textsuperscript{488} \cite{footnote488} It has sponsored tours by Anand Patwardhan and Rakesh Sharma\textsuperscript{489}, controversial filmmakers whose films actually inflame communal tensions. In addition, as noted before, Patwardhan made the movie \textit{We are Not Your Monkeys}, which takes a highly biased view of the Hindu epic \textit{Ramayana}. Similarly, besides giving money to Patwardhan and Sharma personally, the Foundation has also given money and support to Harsh Kapoor for “web documentation in France”\textsuperscript{490}. Who is Harsh Kapoor? He is an old time FOIL Member, as mentioned in the November 1, 1998 issue of FOIL’s mouthpiece \textit{Ghadar}.\textsuperscript{491} Kapoor is also the force behind SACW (South Asian Citizens’ Web) since 1996\textsuperscript{492}, whose website’s registrant is the treasurer-secretary of SINGH, Dr. Rajasekhar Ramkrishnan. Kapoor’s SACW was one of the main authors of the libelous and highly biased report on the Indian American charity India Development and Relief Fund (IDRF)\textsuperscript{493}. Can it be that SINGH also raised money to sponsor this hateful and highly out of context report accusing NRIs and Hindus of funding hateful activities in India?

\textit{(i) SINGH Foundation and the Center for the Study of Society and Secularism (CSSS)}

The SINGH Foundation is a sponsor of the “Centre for the Study of Society and Secularism [CSSS] in Mumbai, producing periodic analytic reports on communal tensions and conflicts.”\textsuperscript{494} This is yet another NGO based in Mumbai that attempts to portray Hindus as ‘oppressors’ and against minorities (read Muslims and Christians) and demonize the Indian state as perpetrator of human rights violations against minorities. It does produce ‘analytic reports’ on communal and social issues in India. However, the reports and works have a slant always against Hindus and the Indian society. All the problems of India today are blamed on Hinduism and that all communal tensions in India are the result of ‘Hindu fascists’ in India.

In the December 2010-January 2011 time frame, the CSSS sponsored an internship project on \textit{Status of Women in India: Problems and Concerns}, which featured a series of lectures, discussions, field work and watching documentaries from various film makers. Though the internees came from Hindu, Muslim and Christian communities\textsuperscript{495}, the programs primarily

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{488} \url{http://www.singhfoundation.org/rpsingh.html}, accessed June 20, 2011
  \item \textsuperscript{489} Ibid.\textsuperscript{488}
  \item \textsuperscript{490} Ibid.\textsuperscript{488}
  \item \textsuperscript{491} \url{http://www.proxsa.org/resources/ghadar/v2n1/foil.html}, accessed June 20, 2011
  \item \textsuperscript{492} See reference to the old SACW page, which used to be hosted at \url{www.mnet.fr/aiindex}. The latter was referred to in the November 1, 1998 issue of \textit{Ghadar}, given in Footnote 504. Also see Harsh Kapoor’s note at \url{http://insaf.net/pipermail/sacw_insaf.net/2002/001552.html}, accessed June 20, 2011
  \item \textsuperscript{493} See Kapoor’s note announcing the report at \url{http://insaf.net/pipermail/sacw_insaf.net/2002/001553.html}, accessed June 20, 2011
  \item \textsuperscript{494} Ibid.\textsuperscript{493}
\end{itemize}
highlighted issues faced by Muslims. For example, interns “were sent out for an empirical survey of Muslim families living in the slums of Behrampada, Pipe Line and Kherwadi with a pre-designed questionnaire. Such survey enabled the internees to understand the problems of the poor families in a mega city like Mumbai, both in terms of the amenities and in the face of their religious affiliation.”496 From the description, it implies that only Muslims are poor and they are marginalized because of their religious affiliations. And, the problems of Indian society, especially those of women and minorities, are a result of ‘Hindu oppression’. The report prepared by one of the interns highlights how such misleading programs translate into the indoctrination of hatred towards Hinduism. A report filed by one of the interns start with the following background:

The origin of the Indian idea of appropriate female [behavior] can be traced to Manu in 200 BC: ‘by a young girl, by a young woman, or even by an aged one, nothing must be done independent, even in her own house’. 497

The report contains several inaccurate statements and contradictions by the writers. For example, the writers mention that “[the] system of Purdah [veil]...was prevalent among royal families, nobles and merchant prince classes prior to [emphasis added] the advent of Muslims and spread to other classes also.”498 Yet, further in the report, the authors say that “Purdah was a distinct feature of Muslim women...”499

In the entire report, all atrocities against women (Sati, female infanticide, etc.) are blamed on Hindu texts and Hindu practices. And, “[the] British influence had a very deep impression on the minds of Indian leaders...such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, and many others”500 So, Hindus are not capable of initiating their own reforms and the efforts of important Hindu leaders are really a product of foreign influence!

Similarly, in the section of Islam in India501, the status of women is dealt with relative softness and highlights how women of royalty such as “Babur’s daughter Gulbadan Begum, author of the Humayun Namah was the first Mughal woman to document the social realities of Muslim women [and] Zeb-un-Nissa, Emperor Aurangzeb’s eldest daughter, was an eminent theologian and poet.”502 Per the analysis of the report, there were no educated, independent Hindu women throughout the entire history of Hindus. Such analytical conclusions or derivations

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496 Ibid.
497 Ibid. 495, Page 6
498 Ibid. 495, Page 12
499 Ibid. 495, Page 16
500 Ibid. 495, Page 17
501 Ibid. 495, Page 6
502 Ibid. 495, Page 16
sound awfully similar to those deduced by FOIL and its members. In the same manner, the section on *Muslim Women’s Rights in Muslim Personal Law* says that “a Muslim marriage is contractual in form because it make free consent of the parties an essential element for its validity...Islamic law gives the woman an important role at home and in the society. The Prophet both by example and precept encouraged the institution of marriage and recognized it as the basis of society.”  

Thus, Islamic laws are shown as much more progressive and open minded in comparison to Hindu laws. Further in the report, the section on *Status of women in Islam* states that “Islam has adopted a quite simple, natural and just approach about women and framed its realistic rules accordingly”. Such blatantly biased portrayals clearly show the agenda of organizations like the CSSS. Can such NGOs preach communal harmony and peace while they are indoctrinating the youth (Muslim, Hindu and Christian) into learning that Hinduism is evil and Islam is pure?

In April 2011, CSSS held a *Workshop on Peace and Communal Harmony*. Dr. Ali Asghar Engineer, the Chairman of CSSS and a speaker sponsored frequently by FOIL, FOSA and SINGH in the US, conducted a session on ‘Meaning of Communalism and its Development’, which dealt origin and development of communalism in Indian context. Given the inherent bias of CSSS, one can only conclude that this session focused on ‘Hindu communalism’ rather than taking a more holistic view of communalism in general. Ram Puniyani, a member of CSSS spoke on “Terrorism in India’ and ‘Religion and Politics in India’”. According to the report, Puniyani “de-mystified the popular concepts related with terrorism [and the] communal force’s propaganda to tag terrorism with one particular religious community...” Needless to say that Puniyani’s session was loaded with anti-Hindu remarks and the ‘conspiracy’ of Hindus to label all Muslims as terrorists. It is also important to note that Puniyani is an affiliate of FOIL and has written articles on the FOIL websites like PROXSA and SACW. In September 2001, Puniyani wrote an article on FOIL’s website on the reasons behind the terrorist attack on the United States. He essentially sympathizes with the terrorists and concludes that America had it

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503 Ibid. 495, Page 34
504 Ibid. 495, Page 37
507 Ibid. 505
508 Ibid. 506
509 Ibid. 506
coming. He praises Cuban dictator Fidel Castro and agrees with his views that “American establishment itself has given encouragement and even sponsored terrorist groups in different countries at different times.”512 Interestingly, Puniyani can only find one praiseworthy voice of restraint among all the people and leaders of the world – the Communist dictator Castro.

Puniyani considers the terrorists, Taliban and Al Qaeda as “disadvantaged groups” and opines that “[surely] the present dastardly act of terrorists is a sad reminder that even disadvantaged groups, who are nowhere equal to the might of the most powerful nation can occasionally puncture the high handedness of bullies.”513 Thus, according to Puniyani, the attacks of 9-11 are really out of desperation and retaliation against the ‘bully’ United States and have nothing to do with fundamentalist views of Islam.

Puniyani is also suspicious of a gathering of major Hindu spiritual and community leaders that called for an end of Jihad as well as discrimination against Hindus. Talking about one such gathering, Puniyani feels that “they use saffron color to hide their sectarian ideas and narrow politics in the name of religion.”514 While Muslim religious clerics, scholars and teachers can come together to talk about political rights of Muslims as well as discrimination against Muslims and pressure the Indian government to address the issues faced by Muslims, Hindu spiritual and community leaders cannot do so and are demonized as ‘fascists’ and ‘sectarian’. According to one press coverage of the All India Anti-Terrorism Conference organized by Islamic Madrasas Association, “[the] gathering also sought to heighten the feelings of Muslims having been the victims of historical deprivation, worldwide oppression and discrimination by the Indian government”.515 But, Puniyani and his Leftist/Communist colleagues do not critically analyze such gatherings and are obsessed with Hindus only.

On June 20, 2011, Puniyani wrote an article eulogizing the controversial painter M.F. Hussain, who died on June 9, 2011. Puniyani called him the “most celebrated painter of India, [with] a thorough Indian and understanding Hindu culture much more than any of his detractors.”516 M.F. Hussain was the controversial painter that made nude paintings of India (i.e. Bharat Mata) and various Hindu deities. While many in Indian media ignored the sentiments of Hindus and denounced them as ‘Hindu chauvinists’, it is important to note that Hussain painted Goddess Durga in sexual union with a tiger, Goddess Lakshmi sitting naked on Lord Ganesha’s head,
Godess Saraswati playing the Sitar naked, and a naked Sita sitting on Ravana’s thighs, among others.\textsuperscript{517} This is in contrast to painting of Mother Teresa, his own mother, Muslim ladies, his own daughter, Muslim poets, etc. whom he painted full clothed\textsuperscript{518}. In another instance, Hussain painted a fully clad Muslim King next to a Naked Brahmin in the same painting.\textsuperscript{519} This clearly shows the late artist’s inherent bias against things Hindu.

Besides SINGH Foundation, some of the donors of CSSS include Ford Foundation - New Delhi, Bread for the World - Germany, Misereor - Germany, Heinrich Boll Foundation - Germany, Action Aid - New Delhi, CMC - Netherlands, DCA - New Delhi.\textsuperscript{520} Bread For The World or Brot für die Welt is a Christian organization based in Germany\textsuperscript{521}. It’s not only in the business of “distributing bread” as part of its mission based on Christian values. According to their site, “[the] word ‘Bread’ does not only refer to food. Martin Luther interpreted the request for ‘daily bread’ in the Lord’s Prayer as a request for everything needed to keep body and soul together – like food, drink, clothes, shoes, housing, farms, land, cattle, money and property.”\textsuperscript{522} Thus, the organization applies Protestant principles and engages in providing everything to the poor of the world besides just basic food. They also give assistance to “victims of human rights violations.”\textsuperscript{523} This pattern is quite similar to other Church organizations supporting ‘human rights violations’, particularly in ‘heathen rich countries’ like India. And, who are the decision makers in this organization? “All decisions with regard to project applications received by ‘Brot für die Welt’ are taken by the ‘Committee for Ecumenical Service’, which simultaneously serves as the Allocation Committee for ‘Brot für die Welt’. Its 17 members are nominated by the ‘Diakonische Konferenz’ of the Protestant Church in Germany (EKD) in agreement with the Council of the EKD and the managing bodies of the Free Churches.”\textsuperscript{524} The organization is directly accountable to the Protestant Church of Germany.

Similarly, “MISEREOR is the German Catholic Bishops’ [Organization] for Development Cooperation”\textsuperscript{525}, another Christian charitable organization. And, Christian Aid, the UK based Christian charity, was discussed earlier in the report.

SINGH Foundation also provides financial sponsorship to what it deems “fledgling grassroots groups in the South Asian Community in the United States.”\textsuperscript{526} Apparently, it can only find

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\item See a comparison on Hindu paintings and others paintings by Hussain put together by Hindu Jagruti Samiti. “Muhammad Husain’s Hypocrisy”, \url{http://www.hindujagruti.org/activities/campaigns/national/mfhussain-campaign/intro.php#1}, accessed July 25, 2011
\item Ibid.
\item Ibid. \textsuperscript{517}
\item Ibid.
\item \url{http://www.csss-isla.com/ourdonors.htm}, accessed June 21, 2011
\item Ibid.
\item \url{http://www.brot-fuer-die-welt.de/english/index_3381_ENG_HTML.php}, accessed June 21, 2011
\item \url{http://www.brot-fuer-die-welt.de/english/index_3383_ENG_HTML.php}, accessed June 21, 2011
\item \url{http://www.misereor.org/about-us.html}, accessed June 21, 2011
\end{itemize}
three fledgling groups – Youth Solidarity Summer (YSS)\textsuperscript{527}, the youth wing of FOIL, 3\textsuperscript{rd} I New York\textsuperscript{528}, another FOIL associated group and PROXSA\textsuperscript{529}, which is another name for FOIL itself. Are there no other non-political grass roots organizations that are worthwhile to receive money from SINGH? This goes to show further that the Foundation is nothing but a channel for FOIL and its partners to raise money in support of their political and ideological work.

\textsuperscript{526} \url{http://www.singhfoundation.org/activities.html}, accessed June 22, 2011
\textsuperscript{527} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{528} Ibid.\textsuperscript{527}
\textsuperscript{529} Ibid.\textsuperscript{527}
(f) Sabrang Communications Private Limited

Sabrang Communications Private Limited is a Mumbai, India based organization run by Teesta Setalvad and her husband Javed Anand, along with a magazine called Communalism Combat. The organization seeks to “to provide information on, [analyze] and expose the machinations of communal politics in India, on the subcontinent and abroad” Ostensibly, Sabrang stands for “for equal respect to all religions but [is] opposed to the cynical manipulation of faith in the pursuit of power” and is therefore “opposed to both majority and minority communalism.” However, it appears that Sabrang is absolutely infatuated with ‘Hindu Communalism’ and has dedicated itself to a ruthless pursuit of Hindus in the wake of the Gujarat riots. In 2003, Setalvad, along with Admiral L. Ram Das, received the Staines International Award For Religious Harmony by The International Council of Evangelical Churches for having “championed the cause of secular India and have been heroic promoters of religious harmony”. The award was established in 2000 and was awarded for the first time on 11th April 2000, to Archbishop Allen de Lastic of New Delhi, (India) the President of Catholic Bishops Conference of India and Dr. John Dayal of (India) journalist and National Convenor (sic) of United Christians Forum for Human Rights. The award was set up in memory of Australian Missionary Graham Staines who was burnt down along with his two sons by a mob while on a mission in a tribal area. John Dayal is a known Christian activist who routinely demonizes Hindus and Hinduism. He is also the Secretary-General of the All India Christian Council (AICC), which is “the largest alliance in India of Church bodies and Christian entities that are actively carrying out Christ’s sacrificial mission.” The AICC also works with noted anti-Hindu organizations like the Dalit Freedom Network, whose views were discussed in Section 2.08.

Setalvad’s biography on the website of the International Council of Evangelical Christians highlights her obsession with the ‘Hindu Right’: “From the late eighties, the visible emergence of the fanatic, Hindu right became frighteningly visible...Hate-speech and hate-writing, more and more, was published in the mainline media without a word of editorial censure. Monitoring this kind of hate-politics has been my professional concern and commitment over the past

532 Ibid.
538 Ibid. See section called Composition and Affiliation
decade.” Similarly, Setalvad’s decision to launch Communalism Combat is also explained: “The experience of 1992-93 [the Ram Janmabhumi/Babri Masjid riots] led to a dissatisfaction with the ‘mainstream’ Indian media that tackled ‘tragedies’, ‘sensations’ or ‘communal crises’ only when they happened. There is little inclination to examine processes and the fallout of major social upheavals and trends. Hence the decision to launch Communalism Combat along with colleague, Javed Anand.” So, Setalvad felt that the entire Indian media machinery was against the Muslims in India during the 1992-1993 riots and Setalvad’s magazine would act as their sole voice. Furthermore, according to the site, Setalvad’s “research has involved exposing the findings of judicial commission riots post-Independence that reveal a strong anti-minority mindset and a collusion of Hindu fanatic parties.” From all of this, it is quite clear that Setalvad’s sole focus is to highlight the ‘human rights violations’ against only Muslims, women and Dalits by ‘fanatic, upper caste Hindus’ who run the entire Indian government.

Sabrang also started KHOJ, a ‘secular’ education program for kids in Mumbai. Aman, a project of KHOJ is projected as an “olive branch” of KHOJ to link kids from India and Pakistan. In November 2002, following complaints made by individuals to the Government of India, Setalvad removed a controversial logo (Figure 8) that showed a mutilated picture of India against a strikingly accurate picture of Pakistan. Curiously, the logo, which was on their website for five years, was created by a student at Bombay International School, one of the schools that host the Aman project. The logo annexes the Kashmir part of the state of Jammu and Kashmir and merges it into Pakistan. Parts of Northeast India are also missing. And, Pakistan is show as a much bigger country than India. “Since August, 1994, Teesta Setalvad and other consultant volunteers -- have been engaged in a weekly, one-period [program] with students of standard V, VI & VII of the Bombay International School.” So, in eight years since the involvement in the project at the school, Sabrang has been unsuccessful in teaching fifth, sixth or seventh grade Indian kids how to draw a visibly accurate map of India.

539 Ibid. 533
540 Ibid. 533
541 Ibid. 533
542 Ibid. 533
543 Ibid. 533
544 Ibid.
Sabrang’s Setalvad and Anand, facing a serious financial crunch, appealed to their readers in the US to donate to them around $20,000 through the SINGH Foundation, whose activities were discussed in the previous section, because US based donations are tax-exempt and can also be matched or multiplied via corporate matching programs. Sabrang was also the co-author of the biased report on the Indian American charity IDRF, along with FOIL and France based SACW, the organization started by FOIL member Harsh Kapoor.

In 1999, Setalvad’s Communalism Combat accepted about $1.5 Crores from political parties such as the Congress, CPI, CPM and about ten prominent individuals to run a series of massive ad campaigns against the BJP and labeling them as ‘Hindu fanatics’ that are highly biased against women. Speaking to media, Setalvad shared her thoughts on the campaign: “But we can say that the ad campaign was able to point out some of the ideological precepts of the Sangh Parivar. We were able to create awareness of the RSS and the freedom movement, the RSS and Gandhi, the RSS and Kashmir, about Vajpayee’s role in the freedom struggle.” She even admitted that “[Sabrang has] been making political statements over the past six years”. This shows that Sabrang is politically involved with the Communist Parties as well as Congress and supports their ideological motivations. Such stances puncture Sabrang’s credibility and image of objectivity. Moreover, did Sabrang ever come out with ads against the Congress for its role in the 1984 Sikh Riots? Or, did Sabrang ever publish an ad in a West Bengal or Kerala newspaper blasting the Communist parties for their role in the Nandigram violence in 2007? Some examples of killings by Communist party members are as follows:

Three persons were killed and dozens sustained bullet injuries after CPM cadres opened fire on two unarmed peace rallies [organized] by Bhumi Uchched Pratirodh Committee (BUPC) on Saturday

The Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee government’s armed attempt to reclaim Nandigram ran into waves of resistance fronted by women, leading to the deaths of at least 14 people in police firing….Ward master of the Tamluk hospital, Atal Behari Jana, said 11 bodies,

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548 Ibid.

549 Ibid.

including that of a woman, bore bullet injuries. Most injuries were either in the stomach or chest\footnote{551}

In contrast to the mass outrage expressed towards ‘Hindu extremism’ or ‘Right Wing extremism’, Setalvad has been relatively mute on the Nandigram issue. Is it because she is politically and ideologically aligned with the Communist parties and is therefore complicit with these types of rabid human rights violations? Or, is it because this issue doesn’t expose ‘Hindu fascism’ and is therefore not important enough for Sabrang’s business?

\section*{(i) Setalvad and the Cooking Up of Facts}

Setalvad has been accused of manufacturing lies and exaggerating scenarios related to the 2002 Gujarat riots. In 2009, “[referring] to another instance that exposed the Citizens for Justice and Peace’s much ‘trumpeted’ charges, [Senior Advocate Rohtagi] said the [Special Investigation Team] found untrue allegation about a gangrape of a pregnant woman Kauser Bano, whose stomach was allegedly pierced by sword and her foetus (sic) killed.”\footnote{552} “The Special Investigation Team was led by former CBI Director RK Raghavan and is comprised of former DGP CB Satpathy and three senior IPS officers — Geetha Johri, Shivanand Jha and Ashish Bhatia. It had been asked to do the enquiry into post-Godhra riot incidents in \textit{Godhra, Gulbarg Society, Naroda Gaon, Naroda Patiya and Sardarpura}.”\footnote{553}

In 2010, Sashikant Patil, one of the individuals accused in the 2002 Gujarat riots and who has been in jail since then, approached the Supreme Court to prosecute Setalvad on counts of perjury. “In the application, Patil alleged Setalvad, who heads the NGO, Citizen for Peace and Justice, cooked up the story and made an alleged rape victim of the riot to file a false affidavit before the apex court, which she denied in her statement before SIT on May 20, 2009, that she was raped.”\footnote{554} Another coverage provides the following details of the same case:

> The incident was of Naroda Gaon, where an alleged rape victim filed an affidavit on November 15, 2003, in the Supreme Court and provided a detailed account of her agony and injustice. The affidavit was filed by Nanoomiya Rasoolmiya Malek, the rape victim’s neighbour (sic) who claimed to be an eyewitness. But later in her statement to SIT on May 20, 2008, the victim denying being raped and disclosed that Teesta took her

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signature on the affidavits but did not reveal to her the contents. The eyewitness Malek too charged Teesta of tampering with his statement. He said, ‘At the time of drafting the affidavit, I informed Teesta Setalvad, who runs the NGO, not to mention the said incorrect fact in my affidavit and I strongly objected against the same.’

In April of 2011, one of the key witnesses in the Best Bakery case of the Gujarat riots alleged to the Mumbai high court that she was “lured and misguided by social activist Teesta Setalvad to give false testimony against 17 accused, of whom a Mumbai special court has convicted nine to life imprisonment.” In her petition, Yasmeenbano Shaikh said that she made a “false deposition against the accused and identified them falsely at the behest and advice of Teesta Setalvad only in the false hope that the social activist would help her financially.”

Setalvad, along with her NGO Citizens for Peace and Justice and the NGO SAHMAT (which is headed by Shabnam Hashmi), lashed out at the media and called the reports of the Special Investigation Team (SIT) findings “irresponsible reportage” and that it was “NOT [emphasis original] a note prepared by SIT” Not surprisingly, this rebuttal and other press releases prepared by Setalvad, SAHMAT and others, were hosted on website of South Asia Citizens’ Web (SACW), which is headed by FOIL member Harsh Kapoor.

Dhananjay Mahapatra of Times of India, responding to the charges by Setalvad, then published a subsequent rebuttal to Setalvad’s claims and showed that his coverage was based on SIT’s findings and that the newspaper had a copy of the report. Mahapatra, quoting directly from the SIT report, provides various examples:

Page 9 of the SIT report on the Gulbarga Society carnage on February 28, 2002, says: ‘Insistence of 19 witnesses to take on record their signed statements which according to them were prepared by Smt Teesta Setalvad and advocate Tirmiji’ - the reference here is to witnesses giving signed computerised (sic) statements which were not accepted by the investigating officer (IO) as under Section 161 the officer is required to write the statement of witnesses after interrogating them personally.

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557 Ibid.


559 Ibid.
The report also says (page 8) the allegation about the then Ahmedabad police commissioner C P Pandey visiting Gulbarga Society at 10.30am and assuring police protection to Muslims but not following it up was wrong as ‘he was proved to have gone to Sola Civil Hospital to take care of the dead bodies of Sabarmati Express arson victims.’

Thus, as seen from the above examples, Setalvad has been seriously accused of bending facts and of manufacturing lies to grossly exaggerate the incidents of the Gujarat riots. Furthermore, she faces charges of lying to the court, which if valid, may sentence her for years in prison if not for lifetime. In addition, she has attempted to malign independent media reporters that have brought stories against her, as seen from the example of the Times of India reporter.

On Friday, May 27, 2011, SACW, the website run by FOIL member Harsh Kapoor, posted a Press Release, along with a personal appeal from Teesta Setalvad, announcing the “Formation of Committee for the Defence (sic) of Teesta Setalvad and Justice in Gujarat.”

According to the press release, “The Committee would undertake appropriate actions and activities to see that neither Teesta Setalvad nor anybody else is victimized for working for the cause of justice. The committee would also defend the human rights of vulnerable sections, and would include, but not be limited to, monitoring cases slapped on Teesta Setalvad, to stand in solidarity with her, to bring out detailed facts before the people pertaining to this selective victimization of Teesta Setalvad and those fighting for the cause of justice in Gujarat.”

In other words, this committee plans to counter findings by independent bodies such as the Special Investigation Team and allege the hand of ‘communal forces’ behind this evidence. Moreover, judged by the angry tone of the Press Release, the committee will undoubtedly use every means, political, ideological or otherwise, to exert its influence in support of Setalvad.

The committee comprises of the following individuals, among others: Dr. Asghar Ali Engineer (who is the chairman of the NGO CSSS, discussed previously), Romila Thapar (the Marxist historian discussed in the report earlier), Irfan Habib (another prominent Marxist historian), Ram Puniyani (also associated with the NGO CSSS and FOIL), and Irfan Engineer (also part of the NGO CSSS). One wonders why historians like Thapar and Habib are on a committee involved in a legal battle for a human rights activist. It will also be intriguing to observer whether the

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562 Ibid.
563 Ibid. 561
SINGH Foundation and other FOIL organizations raise money in the US to assist Setalvad in this legal battle.

**Indian American Muslim Council (IAMC)**

IAMC, formerly known as Indian Muslim Council (IMC-USA), is another affiliate of FOIL. IAMC considers itself to be the “largest advocacy organization of Indian Muslims in the United States.”\(^{564}\). The organization fights for the interests and concerns of Indian Muslims in the US and in India. While IAMC stands for “pluralism, tolerance, and respect for human rights”\(^{565}\) and to “provide increasing inter-faith and inter-community understanding in the United States, with particular focus on the Indian Diaspora”,\(^{566}\) its activities routinely demonize Hindus and India by showing both as oppressors of Muslims, Christians and Dalits. Furthermore, under the veil of inter-faith and inter-community discourse, IAMC invites individuals known for their biased views of Hinduism and India. Hindus and India are automatically rendered guilty of crimes against Muslims, Christians and Dalits, while any terrorist attack in India needs to be ‘carefully analyzed’ before blaming Islamic terrorists.

Dr. Omar Khalidi was one of the co-founders and a former General Secretary of IAMC.\(^{567}\) Khalidi considered the Archaeological Survey of India, the official archaeology department of India, as “Handmaidens of Hindutva”\(^{568}\) that manufactures dubious evidence in support of claims that numerous medieval monuments were built upon Hindu, Jain and Buddhist temples. Thus, when the ASI makes important discoveries and unearths fresh evidence that supports destruction of important Hindu/Buddhist/Jain sites by Muslim invaders and kings, Khalidi blames them for being biased against Muslims.

According to Khalidi, British Indian Muslims lack significant political unity “partly because many were marginalized at ‘home’, and partly due to the replication of ‘home’ identities based on regional culture and sectarian affiliation.”\(^{569}\) Thus, according to Khalidi, Indian Muslims are facing some sort of identity crisis and lack of political will in the UK due to their ‘repression’ back in India. Identity and other problems are thus to be traced back to and blamed on ‘Hindu extremists’ running India. Khalidi urged British Indian Muslims to overcome this and unite for a

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\(^{565}\) Ibid.

\(^{566}\) Ibid.\(^{564}\)


greater political clout. Alas, Khalidi and others will quickly censure Hindus of some sort of ‘right-wing conspiracy’ if they organize successfully in India, UK or the US.

In 2009, Khalidi wrote an article in Outlook India magazine called Why India Is Not A Secular State. The article laid out highly selective examples to conclude how the Indian state “actually privileges Hinduism over other religions and religious communities.” Khalidi calls the Indian Constitution as a “concern of the Brahmin establishment” and thinks that “[the] motive of the constitution writers was obvious: to prevent the conversion of Dalits to Christianity or Islam, to ‘reform’ Hinduism to make it palatable to the former untouchables”. He then goes on and writes how “Christian missions and churches have been under attack since decades” and how “[hundreds] of mosques are in illegal possession nationwide including in New Delhi, where scores are occupied by the central government.” Similarly, he selectively describes discrimination against Muslims in employment, army as well as in the general cultural atmosphere. According to Khalidi, “[the] ban on cow slaughter deprived thousands of butchers their livelihood even as it stole millions of poor their only source of inexpensive protein. Cow may be sacred to the upper castes, but not so to the Christians, Dalits, and Muslims.” Will Khalidi say the same thing if pork is banned by countries in the Middle East? In fact, importation or consumption of pork is severely restricted in Islamic countries such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, etc. because it is forbidden in Islam.

Mohib Ahmad, founder of Indian Muslims Blog, offers a rebuttal to Khalidi’s article in Outlook. Ahmad states that Khalidi “selectively picks and chooses dots to create an ugly picture and then presents it as reality. It is as if Dr. Khalidi has come up with a checklist of carefully drawn items that he keeps checking till he reaches the conclusion that India is not secular.” Ahmad cites that “Dr. Khalidi quotes Hindu Marriage Act (1955) to buttress his claim for legislative preference shown to Hinduism.... In reality, some of the biggest critics of the Act were conservative Hindus, including Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), leaders. If the Act was just an attempt to co-opt Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists into the fold of Hinduism, as Dr Khalidi suggests, wouldn’t Hindu leaders have welcomed it with open arms?”

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571 Ibid.
572 Ibid.
573 Ibid.
574 Ibid.
575 Ibid.
577 Ibid.
On the issue of cultural and racial discrimination argued by Khalidi, Ahmad shares the following thoughts:

Indian Muslims, by any stretch of imagination, are not in the same discriminatory situation as blacks were in USA. The community would do well not to pay heed to Dr. Khalidi who, instead of encouraging them to strive for their rights, if and when denied, within a democratic set-up, is curiously bent on proving that they don’t have a chance anyway. Dr. Khalidi’s essay is an affront to all those Indians who are fighting for the rights of fellow Indians -- including those Indians who suffered in Delhi 1984 and Gujarat 2002 -- every day to make India a better country. It is an insult to millions and millions of Muslims -- like my grandfather -- who chose to stay in India because they believed in the idea of India.\(^{578}\)

Khalidi also conveniently ignores the fact that Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar, an ‘untouchable’ and one of the most important personalities who fought against discrimination and untouchability in Indian society, was one of the founding fathers of India and a drafter of the Indian Constitution. However, Khalidi’s agenda is clear in that he is merely interested in a pejorative view of India and Hinduism.

**(i) Biased Stances of IAMC**

IAMC is organizing a multi-city tour of Harsh Dobhal of Human Rights Law Network (HRLN), discussed in Chapter IV, Part b for various lectures and discussions on *Muslims and the Criminal Justice System in India*. Dobhal’s Maoist/Communist connections as well as Christian donors were already brought to light in Chapter IV. Dobhal’s HRLN is also well known for its lopsided approach to highlight the ‘evil acts’ of Hindus and the Indian government against minorities. In fact, the event announcement on the IAMC website poses the following questions: “Whether [overrepresentation of Muslims in Indian jails] is the result of profiling by law enforcement or the lack of legal representation for Muslims? Or is it a reflection on societal problems in dealing with class and religion?”\(^{579}\) Hence, the event has a prejudiced agenda from the beginning - overrepresentation of Muslims in Indian jails is either due to discrimination by law enforcement due to lack of legal representation or due to some discrimination based on class/religion by the ‘upper caste right-wing rulers of India’. It cannot be due to other factors. For example, as Omair Ahmad, a Muslim author and activist points out, one reason for more Muslims in jails is that the Muslim population of India is concentrated in four states – “Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal and Assam, which account for 21% of convicted prisoners and 42% of undertrials (sic) in

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\(^{578}\) Ibid.

India jails”.580 Thus, the Muslim population is concentrated in the states where more people go to jail in general. Ahmad also remarks that “proportionately more Muslims are adjudged ‘innocent’ than Hindus (whose undertrial (sic) to convict ratio is: 69.6% to 70.7% and even Christians (whose undertrial (sic) to convict ratio is 3.8% to 4.2%).”581 However, given the biased background of Dobhal, it won’t be surprising if such facts are never discussed.

On July 13, 2011, IAMC issued a Press Release regarding the bomb blasts in Mumbai. While it condemned the bomb blasts, it also called upon everyone to “refrain from a rush to judgement (sic) until the results of the investigation are known. Several bomb blasts in recent years, led to innocent youth from a specific community being thrown into prison, and still struggling to secure justice, even after the real masterminds confessed.”582 This is a fair statement as no one should prejudge crimes upon a particular community. However, IAMC is not so lenient when it comes to blaming the Hindus. On June 30, 2011, IAMC issued a Press Release condemning the ‘intimidation’ of ANHAD, the NGO started by Shabnam Hashmi and whose trustees include Harsh Mander and KM Pannikar. IAMC blindly pronounces the other side (i.e. the government officials of the state of Gujarat) guilty of harassment and calls it “a characteristic of totalitarian regimes in other parts of the world.”583 It also goes on to mention that such “intimidation is unfortunately part of an alarming trend of harassment (sic) of human rights defenders such as Teesta Setalvad, Binayak Sen and Fr. Cedric Prakash”.584 The report has already highlighted Teesta Setalvad’s falsities and unlawful tactics. Father Cedric Prakash is a Jesuit priest operating as a human rights activist in Gujarat. Prakash is a popular face within various circles that routinely hold India guilty of ‘oppression of Christians, Muslims and Dalits’. Prakash is also known for exaggerating facts to fit his agenda. For example, in August 2010, Prakash submitted a written testimonial to the controversial US Commission on International Religious Freedom. In this statement, he intentionally lied that “more than 2000 Muslims have been killed”585 in the riots of Gujarat. Official government records and even reports by independent bodies show that the number was between 1000 and 2000 people, and not all were Muslims. Prakash, who claims to “champion human rights and freedom of all religions”,586 ignores the fact that the number included over 200 Hindus; also, some 59 Hindus, including women and children, were

581 Ibid.
584 Ibid.
586 Ibid.
burnt to death in Godhra, and this incident sparked the riots in Gujarat. While it is sad that may Muslims were killed in the 2002, why do Prakash, Setalvad, Hashmi and other ‘human rights activists’ ignore the plights of Hindus, including women and children? Are little children considered ‘fascist Hindus’ and therefore dispensable? Further still, why are they reporting blatantly false information?

In April 2006, IAMC created a ‘Special Digest’ on the corruption within the BJP Government, titled “Corruption, Scams and Scandals of the BJP Government”. The Digest contains a litany of articles, opinions, etc. of the various corruption issues during the BJP Government’s reign in India. As expected, the coverage has a clear political tilt. Moreover, some of the major articles are written by none other than Vijay Prashad and Biju Mathew of FOIL (“Hindutva For a Few Dollars a Day”) and Harkishan Singh Surjeet, the former General Secretary of the Communist Party of Indian (Marxist) (“BJP’s Corrupt Face Once Again Bared, Corruption Charges Against BJP Govt The Day of Reckoning is Not Far Away”).

The BJP lost the national elections against the Congress in 2006. The Congress Government has been in power in India since the last five years. Unfortunately, the IAMC, who considers itself a defender of India’s freedom, democracy and pluralism, has never come up with such a ‘Digest’ or any special coverage of the massive corruptions, human rights violations or other issues under the Congress government. Consider the 2G spectrum scandal of 2010, one of the largest scandals in India’s history: “[Comptroller and Auditor General of India], the state auditor estimated India may have lost up to $39 billion in revenue -- equivalent to the defence (sic) budget -- due to violations during the allocation process”. What about the Common Wealth Games scandal, which was a major embarrassment for India on the world scene? What about the Adarsh Housing Society scam, which led to the resignation of the Congress Chief Minister of Maharashtra Ashok Chavan? What about the Oil For Food Program scandal involving Congress minister Natwar Singh? What about the Bofors Scandal involving major big wigs of the Congress Government such as Rajiv Gandhi? On November 19, 1991, Schweizer Illustrierte, one of the most popular Swiss magazines declared, after an investigation, that according to Russian spy agenda KGB's records “Sonia Gandhi the widow of the former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was controlling secret account with 2.5 billion Swiss Francs (equal to $2.2 billion) in her minor son’s name”. Similarly, the KGB records also indicated that “the Gandhi family has accepted

588 Ibid.
589 Ibid. 587
political pay-offs from the KGB — a clear case of treason besides bribe”.\(^{592}\) The Congress Government has also had more indictments of the highest cabinet officials than any other government in the history of India, including the BJP.

IAMC’s silence regarding the Congress Government indicates that it is politically biased and not a patriotic Indian organization. Could it be that, since the Congress Government is generally sympathetic to Muslims and Christians, any of its wrongdoings, no matter how big, can be ignored at the expense of poor people in India? Does the IAMC not care that when billions of Indian rupees are robbed away from India, poor people (both Muslims and Hindus) bear the biggest brunt? Or, does the IAMC not care about poor Muslims?

In yet another example of clear bias, on June 16, 2011, IAMC issued a press release condemning the killings of villagers in Forbesganj in the Indian State of Bihar. IAMC’s ‘cautionary statement’ as seen in the July 13th press release regarding the Mumbai blasts, is absent in this press release. Instead, IAMC immediately blames this incident on the “propaganda against the region launched by the BJP and ABVP”\(^ {593}\) and decides not the wait for any judicial inquiry to determine whether this was a clear case of communal tensions or corporate greed.

\(^{592}\) Ibid.
Chapter V. The Congregation of the Nexus - Illustrations of Anti-Hindu/Anti-India Events and Partnerships

While this report has provided extensive details of the Anti-Hindu/Anti-India activities and views that are coordinated by the nexus, below are specific examples that illustrate the agenda of the nexus to promote these views and influence public opinion as well as policy making.

(a) 2003 IAMC Convention

In 2003, IAMC organized its first ever convention in Washington, D.C. In the convention announcement, IAMC noted that “an impressive array of speakers from vastly diverse backgrounds will assemble to hold groundbreaking discussions on issues related to human rights, sectarian violence, militant nationalism and social amity in India.”594 Besides the lack of any speaker to express counter opinions, the dubious diversity of the speakers can be seen through the roster of speakers who attended. According to the convention announcement, the prominent speakers included, among others: Fr. Cedric Prakash, Praful Bidwai, Dr. Lise McKean, Dr. KP Singh, Dr. Angana Chatterji, Smita Narula, P. D. John, Dr. Hari Sharma, and Raju Rajagopal.595

The report has already discussed Cedric Prakash and Angana Chatterji. And, Dr. Hari Sharma is the President of the International South Asia Forum (INSAF), while Raju Rajagopal is the President of Coalition Against Communalism (CAC), according to the convention announcement596. Both INSAF and CAC are FOIL’s affiliates and have been discussed at various points within the report.

(i) Praful Bidwai

Praful Bidwai is a left-wing political activist in India and “founder-member of the Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament and Peace”597 He is also a FOIL affiliates and has written several articles on FOIL’s website598 and whose articles are recommended by SACW and other FOIL sister organizations. Bidwai, in strongly criticizing the US preparation to go to war with the Taliban

595 Ibid.
596 Ibid.
government and the Al Qaeda, issued a note condemning such “unilateral action”\(^{599}\) and that India should not be a party to such unilateral US action, while deploring the Vajpayee government’s willingness to compromise India’s sovereignty.\(^{600}\) Bidwai also blindly endorsed the highly biased report compiled by Campaign to Stop Funding Hate on the Indian American charity IDRF, claiming that the charity diverted money to “finance violent activities in Gujarat state, which in early 2002 witnessed a pogrom of Muslims.”\(^{601}\) Bidwai, in line with the whole nexus, is highly selective in his analysis about the 2002 riots as well as about the CSFH report itself.

(ii) **Lise McKean**

Malhotra and Neelakandan document Lise McKean’s hatred towards Hindus and India in their new book *Breaking India*. “Whenever there is unrest in India, she shows up as a commentator to educate American audiences about what is wrong with Indian culture.”\(^{602}\) In her book, *Divine Enterprise: Gurus and the Hindu Nationalist Movement*, “she associates everything even remotely connected with Hindu spirituality (such as a cement advertisement featuring a yogi) to the ominous image of Hindu nationalism.”\(^{603}\) McKean doesn’t even spare the well-respected Divine Life Society in Rishikesh, India. According to her, “The respectability of the Divine Life Society, no less than sensationalization (sic) of guru scandals and human sacrifice, however, tends to obfuscate the problem this book addresses: the relation of gurus, religious organizations, and rituals to circuits of power and domination in India.”\(^{604}\) “She sees even Mahatma Gandhi as belonging to the ‘lineage of Hindu nationalists’.”\(^{605}\) She resonates with the Christian Right’s demand that US foreign policy should be based on protecting the specific interests of non-Hindus in India.\(^{606}\)


\(^{600}\) Ibid.


\(^{602}\) Malhotra and Neelakandan, 258

\(^{603}\) Ibid.

\(^{604}\) According to quotation from McKean’s book, as noted by Malhotra and Neelakandan, 258

\(^{605}\) Malhotra and Neelakandan, Ibid. 602

\(^{606}\) Malhotra and Neelakandan, Ibid. 602
(iii) **KP Singh**

KP Singh is a Dalit activist in India who works with Christian Right Wing and Missionary Organizations to malign Hinduism and India. He is also associated with PIFRAS (Policy Institute for Religion and State) of Washington, DC. PIFRAS is known for its Right Wing Christian leanings and has organized several conference aimed at highlighting ‘human rights issues’ in India with a strong bias towards Christian evangelical efforts in India. In 2002, at a symposium on South Asia organized by PIFRAS, Singh made a highly unsubstantiated claim that “since India’s independence, about three million Dalit women have been raped and one million Dalits have been killed.”

“In 2004, on the eve of India’s General Elections, PIFRAS, along with the Center for the History of Religious and Political Pluralism (University of Leicester, England) organized a panel discussion on ‘India’s National Elections and US Foreign Policy Interests’, where Marxist historian Ram Puniyani was the invited speaker along with Mr. John Prabhudoss, executive director of PIFRAS. The main position presented was that India’s forty million Christians are threatened by ‘Hindu state governments’ that have passed laws to hold evangelism accountable for coercion.”

In 2008, Singh was one of the main organizers of the International Convention of Dalits and Minorities in New York “to discuss problems faced by Indian minorities and Dalits and find amicable solutions”, yet another example of collusion between various players in the highly popular anti-India/anti-Hindu workspace. The conference also featured Teesta Setalvad as one of the main speakers who spoke on “communal combat in the villages and human rights”.

Ezra Sargunam, the head of the Evangelical Church of India, was also a key speaker at the conference. Sargunam is an aggressive evangelical in India and is the “visionary behind the movement to evangelize and plant churches among all of the people groups of India.” To see the remarkable progress of Sargunam, as of 2010, “[the ECI has] planted over 3,000 churches across the Indian subcontinent. They have consistently done this at the rate of 3 churches a week—with a goal of one church a day!”

Citing Sargunam’s idea that Christian forms

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607 See the symposium program and excerpts at [http://www.pifras.org/Programs/Past_Programs/Symposium_report/Symposium_speeches/KP_Singh/kp_singh.html](http://www.pifras.org/Programs/Past_Programs/Symposium_report/Symposium_speeches/KP_Singh/kp_singh.html), accessed July 25, 2011
608 Malhotra and Neelakandan, 237
609 Ibid.
614 Ibid.
culturally appropriate in the Hindu context must be allowed to take root, the Greater Atlanta Christian School, in its study of Hinduism, quotes Sargunam as saying: “Christ must increase, Christianity must decrease…A Christianity which is closely identified with the West must be eventually shipped back to where it came from.” In 2003, Sargunam, after returning from a conversion event in Patna, India, had the following to say:

I just returned from Patna, India, and am sending this praise note from Calcutta, en route Chennai. "But the spectacular baptismal event that has dwarfed the others took place in Patna, where we had in all two batches of 135 converts baptized in the river Ganges – in the very ‘Holy river’, where millions of the idol and demon worshipping pagans go every once in awhile to have a holy dip." [emphasis added]

(iv) P.D. John (John Prabhudoss)

P.D. John is actually John Prabhudoss, the Executive Director of PIFRAS. In the 2002 PIFRAS symposium on South Asia, Prabhudoss, in his opening remarks, compares the conflicts in India to those of the Middle East, Sierra Leone, Central Africa, Kosovo, Chechnya and East Timor, thus equating India with some of the most cruel and violent regions in the world. In the same remarks, Prabhudoss provides a quick overview of India and its culture in a classic ‘white man’s burden’ style in which India, before the British, was a wild and uncivilized society “[whose] population was overwhelmingly poor and illiterate and [whose] cultural antecedents did not appear propitious either.” “It was (and remains) one of the most deeply hierarchical societies in the world, which, according to some, had little conception of the egalitarianism and individualism thought to be necessary for a functioning liberal democracy.” This leads the audience to think that the British provided the only efficient system of governance across all of India. The legendary local systems of governance as well as those of large monarchies are completely discounted. Prabhudoss also dismisses fact that India was one of the richest countries in the world with a vast spiritual and religious tradition before the arrival of the British. Indian society was a beacon of interreligious harmony eons before the arrival of the white man from Europe.

618 Ibid.
619 Ibid.
Similarly, Prabhudoss subscribes to the Aryan/Dravidian divisions and states that “[the] geographic regions of India are linguistically and culturally distinct. There are more than a dozen major languages, grouped into those of Dravidian South India and Indo-European (or Aryan) North India.”620 This is again an attempt to show that Indian society is a hodgepodge of identities with no common threads binding the ‘mind-numbing’ diversity of the populace. His stance sounds very similar to those taken by euro-centric philosophers, academics and statesmen in nineteenth century Europe.

Prabhudoss’ speech is also centered on the agenda to look at all conflicts from a religious lens and to especially highlight the ‘Hindu violence’ in India. His speech is peppered with such points. As if to show something negative about Hindus, he states that “India is essentially a secular state in spite of an overwhelming [emphasis added] Hindu population.”621 Thus, that overwhelming Hindu population is naturally an oppressor of minorities. He then goes on to highlight the ‘atrocities’ against Christians in India and how the then BJP government was on a “full scale assault on the religious minorities in India until the Indian American Christian organizations in the US got together and made a lot of noise about it.”622 Similarly, “Christian church institutions and the Christian population are paying the price for [the silence and inaction of the United States] even today. Many states are passing laws with the help of the Hindu radical parties, which effectively ban all conversions from Hinduism to Christianity.”623 Thus, Prabhudoss advocates US intervention in India’s internal matters, especially those related to evangelical Christian work. Prabhudoss is effectively lobbying to ensure a free reign for evangelicals in their aggressive and devious efforts to convert Hindus to Christianity. He even blames the “pro-Hindu lobby in Washington624 for aiding and abetting ‘Hindu radicals’ in India and twisting US foreign policy against India. By the same token, how would Prabhudoss feel if someone states that the United States is an overwhelmingly Christian country; and, since there have been incidents of violence against minorities by White Supremacists as well as lack of ‘reservation’ for religious minorities, Russia, Saudi Arabia, China and India should intervene in its internal matters to ensure the rights of minorities? Or, how would the United States government feel about a symposium organized by Prabhudoss on such a theme?

620 Ibid. 617
621 Ibid. 617
622 Ibid. 617
623 Ibid. 617
624 Ibid. 617
His opening remarks are then followed with speeches by others like Rep. Joe Pitts, who has strong right-wing evangelical connections. The same symposium featured speakers such as John Dayal, KP Singh, Lise Mckean, Bishop Percy Fernandez, the General Secretary of the Catholic Bishops Conference in India and many others known for their strong Christian evangelical connections as well as those with prejudiced views of the India and Hinduism. The symposium also featured an exhibit by Shabnam Hashmi.

In 2003, PIFRAS, the Federation of Indian American Christian Organizations of North America (FIACONA) and NRI-SAHI, a FOIL sister organization, invited peace activist Nirmala Deshpande to talk about interreligious harmony. Not surprisingly, this session was also geared towards showing Hindus as oppressors of minorities. It is disturbing that Ms. Deshpande believed the FOIL propaganda that US based NRIs are funding hatred in India. “On being asked about the reported flow of funds from sections of the Indian Diaspora community in the US to groups in India fomenting religious hatred, she said, ‘in her visit to various cities in the US she was speaking to the Indian community on such problems’.” One wonders if she actually read the half-baked FOIL report on IDRF or whether she was going by the words of FOIL, PIFRAS and others. One would expect someone like Ms. Deshpande to have done her own research to hear both sides of the story before labeling such charitable works as ‘problems’.

Interestingly, Prabhudoss is a Member at Large of FIACONA and John Dayal of the All India Christian Council who was discussed earlier, is on the Advisory Board of FIACONA. FIACONA subscribes to the myth of St. Thomas’ arrival and martyrdom in India. According to its website, under the section of the history of Christianity in India, FIACONA states that “[the dawn of Christianity to South Asia dates back to the arrival of Saint Thomas to Kodungallur in Kerala in 52 AD and establishment of the Seven Churches. He returned to Mylapore, Chennai in 72 AD where he attained martyrdom.” This is a deliberate attempt to establish the antiquity of Christianity in India contrary to known facts.

625 See references to Pitts’ political positions and affiliations at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_R._Pitts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_R._Pitts). For example, he is an evangelical Christian who has opposed the removal of the Ten Commandments from the Chester County courthouse and has been the chairman of the Value Action Team, a group of Republicans that coordinate legislation with the Christian Right. Accessed July 25, 2011


627 Ibid.

628 [http://www.pifras.org/Programs/Past_Programs/Desh_bio/desh_bio.html](http://www.pifras.org/Programs/Past_Programs/Desh_bio/desh_bio.html), accessed July 26, 2011


630 Ibid.

(v) Smita Narula

Smita Narula is a professor of Law and a Faculty Director of the Center for Human Rights and Global Justice at the school of Law at New York University. She has written extensively on the ‘atrocities against Christians and Dalits’ in India and takes a pejorative view on Hinduism. She considers caste as a “defining feature of Hinduism” in her book *Broken People: Caste Violence against India’s ‘Untouchables’* (Human Rights Watch, 1999). Her writings and testimonials serve as ammunition for many Christian organizations that disguise themselves as fighters of Dalit human rights. For example, the International Dalit Solidarity Network (IDSN) and Narula’s Center for Human Rights and Global Justice (CHRGJ) have issued several reports and statements together to highlight the atrocities on Dalits in India, Nepal and other South Asian countries. “IDSN believes that equating caste with race will open the floodgates to international interventions in India’s internal affairs that would help Christian conversions, and it makes the false claim that Indian Christianity does not suffer from caste biases.”

“In 2007, pressured by the sustained anti-India campaigning, the UN selected India as the first country to be reviewed for human rights violations.” IDSN worked with the CHRGJ and National Campaign for Dalit Human Rights and others organizations like the Lutheran World Federation to submit its own report on India.

Narula is also affiliated with the Indian Institute of Dalit Studies (IIDS), along with David Haslam of the Dalit Solidarity Network of UK. Martin Macwan, of Dalit Shakti Kendra, discussed in Section 2.08 is the Founding Director, Chairman and Permanent Trustee of IIDS. Macwan is also the National Convenor for the National Council of Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR).

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632 [http://www.chrgj.org/about/staff.html](http://www.chrgj.org/about/staff.html), accessed July 25, 2011
633 Smita Narula, “Broken people: caste violence against India’s ‘untouchables’”, Human Rights Watch, 1999, Page 24, [http://books.google.com/books?id=Kd28Ay09adgC&pg=PA196&lpg=PA196&dq=Smita+Narula+hinduism&source=bl&ots=NqOLwzWMme&sig=_OJSt8EclgEg0TMxSLuXbH5gY&hl=en&ei=dd4uTv_j_G85ugQepm9WRAQ&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=6&ved=0CDgQ6AEwBTge#v=snippet&q=Hinduism&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=Kd28Ay09adgC&pg=PA196&lpg=PA196&dq=Smita+Narula+hinduism&source=bl&ots=NqOLwzWMme&sig=_OJSt8EclgEg0TMxSLuXbH5gY&hl=en&ei=dd4uTv_j_G85ugQepm9WRAQ&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=6&ved=0CDgQ6AEwBTge#v=snippet&q=Hinduism&f=false), accessed online on July 25, 2011
635 Malhotra and Neelankandan, 310
636 Malhotra and Neelankandan, Ibid.
637 Malhotra and Neelankandan, Ibid. 635
discussed in Section 2.08. In 2001, Macwan wrote a lengthy letter to the UN’s Third Participatory Committee to World Conference Against Racism and argued for equating caste discrimination to racism and thus call out India’s record against racial prejudice.641

“She also participated in the DFN [Dalit Freedom Network, discussed in Section 2.08] briefing before the US Congress, under a resolution introduced by right-wing Trent Franks (who is on the DFN board), asking the US government to pressure India on caste discrimination.”642

(b) 2005 IAMC Convention

In 2005, IAMC organized its third annual convention in Detroit, Michigan. The list of speakers at the convention included Fr. Cedric Prakash, Omar Khalidi (who is introduced as Indian Muslim Historian and Scholar at MIT), and Biju Mathew, Raju Rajagopal (who is introduced as belonging to an organization called Promise of India), John Prabhudoss, Lise McKean and many others.643

Congressman John Conyers, who gave the keynote speech and accepted the Malik Al-Shabazz Award from IAMC, equated the struggle of Indian Muslims and other persecuted minorities in India to that of the Civil Rights movement led by Martin Luther King, Jr. 644. This is yet another attempt to superimpose racially based discrimination in US on to the internal issues of India and follows the same pattern of demonizing Hindus and India as that followed by the Communist and Christian organizations. Khalidi, in the same convention declared: “What is good for India is good for Indian Muslims and What is good for Indian Muslims is good for India.”645 However, such statements are not considered ‘communal’ by IAMC or any of the Communist and Christian organizations since they did not come from a Hindu. Had a Hindu leader made similar comments related to Hindus and India, she or he would be labeled as ‘chauvinist’ or ‘fascist’ immediately. Biju Mathew was given the Tipu Sultan Award for “courageously serving India and India’s interests”646 while Raju Rajagopal was given the Bahadur Shah Zafar Award for “promoting pluralism and communal harmony in India”647.

641 Ibid.
642 Malhotra and Neelakandan, 322
645 Ibid.
647 Ibid.
(c) 2008 IAMC Convention

The 2008 IAMC Convention focused on the theme of “The Idea of India: Challenges and Prospects.” However, the ‘idea’ was to cast India and Hindus again as oppressors of minorities. In yet another blind attempt to equate clashes in India with civil rights movement struggles in the US, Congressman Keith Ellison “described the struggle of Indian Muslims as parallel to the struggle of other groups in United States who have fought for civil rights”. Similarly, the convention featured various screenings of documentaries such as “Impunity: A Roadblock to Justice”, “Encountered on Saffron Agenda?”, and “In the Name of God”, along with a documentary on Dalits. Another panel on “Strengthening India’s Secular Democracy” featured Angana Chatterji and Omar Khalidi. Angana Chatterji was then awarded the Tipu Sultan Award for “Courageously Serving India.”

Similarly, in 2004, Kaleem Kawaja, who was discussed in Chapter IV, received the Tipu Sultan Award for the same “service” as Chatterji.

(d) 2010 MIT Workshop

In April of 2010, Omar Khalidi of IAMC organized a highly contentious workshop at MIT called Group Violence, Terrorism, and Impunity—Challenges to Secularism and Rule of Law in India. The workshop is another illustration of how various Islamic/Communist/Christian organizations work to portray portraying India as a serious violator of human rights of minorities, especially Muslims, and the ‘ruling Hindus’ as perpetrators of atrocities against Muslims, Christians and Dalits. India’s local, state and national governments, all democratically elected, are hence dragged by the hair and lambasted in such workshops.

The introduction to the conference states:

In recent decades, group violence, especially communal violence, has become a recurrent theme in the lives of Indians in many parts of the country. Starting with the Nellie, Assam massacre of Muslims in 1983, anti-Sikh massacres in 1984, communal violence has continued to challenge India’s secular credentials in the Ayodhya riots

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649 Ibid.
650 Ibid
651 Ibid
652 Ibid
(1992), Bombay bomb blasts (1993), Gujarat pogrom (2002), and the Orissa riots (2008). There is a rising phenomenon of terrorism, as seen in the Mumbai terror attacks (2008), which lead to societal and State responses that centrally challenge secularism and rule of law. There is a dire need to study these forms of violence and the impunity enjoyed by its perpetrators.\(^{654}\)

The above paragraph is itself an evidence of the highly biased agenda of the workshop. While it is true that all these events did occur in India, only the ‘Hindu atrocities’ are highlighted. In addition, the government crackdown on Jihadi terrorism in India is labeled as a challenge to secularism and rule of law. There is no mention, again, of the involvement of Muslims, Islamic terrorists or Christian Missionaries, in these riots and clashes. The ethnic cleansing of Kashmiri Pandits in the late 80s is completely ignored, along with Christian terrorism in Northeastern India. While the 2002 Godhra riots are a favorite subject of the nexus of Communists/Christian Missionaries/Islamists, it seems to be oblivious to a similar incident in 2003 on Marad Beach of the Kozhikode district of the Indian state of Kerala.

On 2 May 2003, in the early evening, eight Hindus were hacked to death by a Muslim mob[7] on the beach after reeling in their catch for the day. The killers then escaped into the local Juma Masjid, the Marad enquiry commission’s (Justice Thomas P Joseph) report notes the submission of then Kozhikode Police Commissioner T K Vinod Kumar that hundreds of local Muslim women converged on the mosque to prevent the police from entering it to catch the attackers\(^{8}\).\(^{655}\)

The judicial inquiry also implicated the Muslim League for its clear role in the Marad Massacre and affirmed “a clear communal conspiracy, with ‘Muslim fundamentalist and terrorist’ organisations (sic) involved”.\(^{656}\) Curiously, this incident was never brought up by ‘human rights’ activists such as Setalvad, Hashmi and many others. Could it be that this was a clear implication of a Muslim body versus a Hindu body and hence not a threat to secularism?

In any case, the conference featured various anti-India and anti-Hindu speakers, including Angana Chatterji.\(^{657}\) Chinnaiah Jangam, another speaker at the MIT workshop, discussed the atrocities on Dalits in India. In this paper, Jangam blames all the Dalit problems on Hinduism and as well as the Indian state. In fact, an abstract of his paper states:


Therefore this paper further complicates the role of Indian state and its neutral and secular role to understand the cultural and ideological roots that are entrenched within the Hindu ideological consciousness which thereby interpret the atrocities against Dalits as a part of the caste Hindu social process [Emphasis Added] rather than violation of fundamental human rights of its citizens.\textsuperscript{658}

Mukul Sinha was another speaker at the workshop. Sinha is a Gujarat based lawyer and is one of the founding members of the Jan Sangharsh Manch.\textsuperscript{659} Interestingly, in 2005, he was awarded the “Human Rights Lawyer of the Year” by \textit{Combat Law}.\textsuperscript{660} \textit{Combat Law} is the magazine run by Harsh Dobhal, who was discussed in Chapter IV. Sinha’s communist leanings are clear as he advocates “the urgent need for mass struggles against American imperialism”\textsuperscript{661} in India. Sinha lashes out against the hard working Patel community of Gujarat and the Patel NRI communities of the US and UK and accuses the entire community of participating in and financing genocides on Muslims. Without an inkling of proof, Sinha states:

[The] Patels began sponsoring a number of Hindu religious outfits and backing Hindutva organisations in the state, thus presenting themselves as ardent Hindus, and, therefore, as ‘high’ castes. One aspect of that newly constructed identity as super-Hindus was a deep hostility towards Muslims. \textit{In fact, the Patels, who comprise more than 30\% of the Gujarati population, played a major role in the 2002 anti-Muslim genocide.}\textsuperscript{662} [Emphasis Added]

Sinha, in a 2007 interview with Yoginder Sikand, another affiliate of FOIL\textsuperscript{663}, labels the US as an imperialist nation with a bigoted view of Muslims. Sinha states that the then BJP government was a slave of American imperialism. “They are working in tandem with imperialist forces, including the USA, whose perceptions about Muslims they share and whose economic agenda of so-called liberalisation (sic), a euphemism for market fundamentalism, too, they support, while at the same time paying lip-sympathy to swadeshi.”\textsuperscript{664} It is surprising that MIT, which itself is a seat of free market economy, allows such rabid anti-American ideologues any platform without allowing for an alternate opinion.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{659} http://indiaworkshopmit.com/speakers/mukul-sinha-and-nirjhari-sinha/, accessed July 26, 2011
\item \textsuperscript{660} ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{661} “Hindutva forces are bound to become more aggressive: Mukul Sinha”, November 30, 2007, http://twocircles.net/2007nov30/hindutva_forces_are_bound_become_more_aggressive_mukul_sinha.html, accessed July 26, 2011
\item \textsuperscript{662} ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{663} Yoginder Sikand and Biju Mathew, “Stop Funding Hate”, August 12, 2005, http://www.countercurrents.org/comm-mathew120805.htm, accessed July 26, 2011
\item \textsuperscript{664} ibid.
\end{itemize}
Sinha also shares the same penchant as Setalvad and others for cooking up facts and declares that “thousands of Muslims were killed in the genocide of 2002.”\textsuperscript{665} As illustrated earlier, the number of Muslim deaths was certainly not in the thousands and even Hindus had died during the 2002 Gujarat riots.

Meenakshi Ganguly’s topic at the MIT workshop focused on \textit{Terrorism and Counter terrorism in India: Illegal Detention, Torture and Killings of Terror Suspects}. While, in her abstract, she starts off discussing terrorism and violence from various groups including Maoists, Hindu extremists, and Muslims extremists, her focus quickly shifts to criminalization of Indian government and its treatment of Muslims. She surmises that “The Indian government’s response [to terrorism] illustrates a disturbing trend: grave human rights violations are committed as security forces attempt to identify the perpetrators. Abuses occur at every stage of the investigation.”\textsuperscript{666}

\textbf{(e) Cease and DESIst – A call for organizing against US Imperialism}

In the November 2005 issue of \textit{Ghadar}, the mouthpiece of FOIL, issued a for a coalition of like-minded Communist/Marxist South Asian comrades along with Palestinian and Arab organizations to rally “against the rabid imperialism being practiced by the United States and its allies, incensed by the fascist voices that claim to speak for [them] and [to help] build this coalition and developing its anti-imperialist vision and campaign, and specifically in taking urgent action.”\textsuperscript{667} Thus, \textit{Cease and DESIst} was a call for anyone interested in anti-American activities that showcased the United States as an imperialist oppressor.

Interestingly, the meeting to build this coalition was just “hours prior to and across the street from a panel entitled Self Determination in South Asia”\textsuperscript{668}. This panel was organized by FOSA and featured Vijay Prashad and Angana Chatterji, as discussed in Chapter IV. Thus, FOIL members joined FOSA in the meeting to advocate for separation of Kashmir from India, as the first activity of this newly formed coalition.

Who were the members of this coalition? “The Alliance of South Asians Taking Action (ASATA), and Friends of South Asia (FOSA) are part of this coalition”\textsuperscript{669}, according to the article. DESIst also hints at the possibility of other organizations that may be a part of the Coalition but cannot be a “[vehicles] or the impetus for the building of a radical anti-imperialist South Asian anti-war

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{665} Ibid.\textsuperscript{679}
\item\textsuperscript{666} Meenakshi Ganguly. Abstract of “Terrorism and Counter terrorism in India: Illegal Detention, Torture and Killings of Terror Suspects”, \url{http://indiaworkshopmit.com/speakers/meenakshi-ganguly/}, accessed July 26, 2011
\item\textsuperscript{667} “Cease and DESIst: An Experiment in (re)claiming a Revolutionary Anti-Imperialist Space in South Asian America”, November 2005, \textit{Ghadar, a publication of the forum of inqualabi leftists}, Vol. 9, \url{http://ghadar.insaf.net/November2005/MainPages/desiST.htm}, accessed July 26, 2011
\item\textsuperscript{668} Ibid.
\item\textsuperscript{669} Ibid.\textsuperscript{667}
\end{itemize}
movement"670. At the least, DESIst reached out to "a multitude of bay area South Asian listservs (sic) and activists", namely "AID [Association for India’s Development], ADP [Association for Development of Pakistan, as listed on FOSA’s website671], ASATA, FOSA, CAC [Coalition Against Communalism], SACA [South Asians for Collective Action, as listed on EKTA’s website672], PBN [Progressive Bengali Network673]."674 Also, the contact information for anyone interested in joining DESIst is given as "DESI[AT]southasianprogressive[DOT]org."675 That email address belongs to South Asian Progressive Collective (SAPC). One of the few activities listed on the website is a 2004 Conference. The list of organizers included: 3rd I Films; Alliance for South Asians Taking Action; American Muslim Voice; Association for India’s Development [AID], Bay Area; Association of South Asian Political Activists; Coalition Against Communalism; Ekta; Friends of South Asia; Maitri; Narika; Organizing Youth; South Asian Development Alternatives Network; South Asian Sisters; Trikone676 Furthermore, the conference was organized at the California Institute of Integral Studies677, which is associated with FOIL member Angana Chatterji. Hence, DESIst appears to be a project of SAPC, which in itself is a coalition of FOIL and its affiliated organizations.

Curiously, the dubious nature of this conference is evident from the announcement about the agenda of the conference. The conference used a "flexible form of facilitation where most of the agenda for the gathering will be created by those who come that day."678

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670 Ibid. 687. See the Reference section
671 FOSA recommends ADP as a good NGO doing developmental work in Pakistan and urges donors to contribute money to ADP. http://www.friendsofsouthasia.org/events/SAquake/donate.html, accessed July 26, 2011
673 http://www.bengali.net/pbn/, accessed July 26, 2011
674 Ibid. 687
675 Ibid. 687
678 Ibid. 687
(f) **Coalition Against Genocide**

Coalition Against Genocide (CAG) was the brainchild of IAMC in the aftermath of the 2002 Gujarat riots. This group is yet another example of the close coordination between Communists/Islamists/Christian organizations to lobby government officials such as the US State Department to intervene in matters related to India. The coalition was successful in lobbying against the granting of visa to the Chief Minister of the State of Gujarat in India, Narendra Modi. Though the role of Mr. Modi’s involvement in the 2002 Gujarat riots has never been established and he has in fact been cleared from such charges by various independent investigations, the coalition members had already implicated Modi right at the onset of the riots. The US State Department buckled under intense lobbying by IAMC and the coalition members and rejected Modi’s visa.

According to the website, the “Coalition Against Genocide includes a spectrum of organizations and individuals in the United States and Canada that have come together in response to the Gujarat genocide to demand accountability and justice.” However, the ideological leanings and anti-Hindu/anti-India bias of this coalition become clear when one peruses the list of member organizations. The list of organizations, among others, includes: “Alliance of South Asians Taking Action (ASATA), Association of Indian Muslims of America (AIM), Campaign to Stop Funding Hate (CSFH), Coalition against Communalism (CAC), Ekta, Federation of Indian American Christian Organizations of North America (FIACONA), Forum of Inquilabi (sic) Leftists (FOIL), Friends Of South Asia (FOSA), Indian Muslim Council-USA (IMC-USA), International South Asia Forum (INSAF), NRI’s for Secular and Harmonious India (NRI-SAHI), Organizing Youth (OY), Policy Institute For Religion And State (PIFRAS), South Asian Magazine for Action and Reflection (SAMAR) [the sister publication of FOIL’s *Ghadar*], South Asian Progressive Action Collective (SAPAC), Youth Solidarity Summer (YSS), Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), Tikkun.” Chapter III has already demonstrated that while many of these organizations pose as separate entities, they are, in reality, part of FOIL. Thus, FOIL and IAMC list these organizations in an attempt to overstate the number of coalition members. Furthermore, why are magazines such as SAMAR listed as organizations?

In addition, the website contains a “Preview” to the movie *Final Solution*, by Rakesh Sharma, who was discussed in Chapter IV. Furthermore, the site provides links to Teesta Setalvad’s Sabrang (which was discussed in Chapter IV, part (f)) as well as a PDF entitled *Concerned*

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680 ibid.

Furthermore, a Whois.Net search of the domain name shows that the registered address is in Ellicott City, MD.$^683$ Is it a mere coincidence that Kaleem Kawaja’s Association of Indian Muslims in America is also located in Ellicott City, MD?$^684$

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Conclusion

The report has brought to light the extensive network of Indian Communist/Christian Missionary/Islamist organizations working together to malign Hinduism and India. The nexus has also has links to various individuals and political groups with a history of criminal activities or who support violent ideologies. As recently as July 19, 2011, Ghulam Nabi Syed Fai of the Kashmiri American Council, who was associated with FOIL’s Angana Chatterji and Akhila Raman as well as Friends of South Asia (FOSA), was arrested by the FBI on charges of operating as an agent of the Pakistani spy agency, the ISI. The FBI also provided evidence that Mr. Fai was funded by the ISI to influence US policy on Kashmir against India. This example further shows that operating under the garb of secularism, human rights and minority advocacy, this nexus is at the forefront of shaping major policies against as well as influencing worldview on India and Hinduism. According to its purview, Hinduism is to be seen as an oppressive religion of the ‘white-skinned Aryans’ who destroyed the native cultures of India. Indian society, thus, has no continuity and no homogeneity whatsoever and has only been ‘civilized’ by the Mughals and the British. Furthermore, India is a fragmented entity held together by repressive ‘upper-caste’ Hindus that run the Indian government and are guilty of crimes against minorities, women and the downtrodden. Hence, a dire need exists for the West, led by the US, UK and other countries, to intervene in India’s internal matters and ‘emancipate’ the disadvantaged groups. To support these dangerous views and agenda, the nexus seeks out selective data from Hindu religious texts, Hindu social dynamics, etc. It then recruits individuals to venture out on ‘fact-finding’ missions, ‘social study’ projects, etc. in India and in the US to provide ‘evidence’ supporting its agenda. While the nexus hold such approaches to Islam and Christianity in severe disdain and accuses others of ‘Islamophobia’ for instance, Hinduism is crucified in what is a reminder of Nazi era depiction of Jews and Judaism.

As illustrated in Chapters I and II, the Indian Communist organizations and individuals hold a pejorative view of Hinduism and India and use these views, along with their academic statuses, to routinely blast Hindus and Indian organizations both in the US and in India. Anyone who protests their stronghold and points out their fallacy is awarded labels of ‘Hindu extremist’, ‘Hindu fascist’, etc. Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter III and many other places throughout the report, they operate a multitude of hollow, deceptive organizations to create an impression of a large number of mainstream organizations united against ‘Hindu fascism’. In reality, these organizations and groups belong to the same people or are registered to each other.

Christian Missionary and Islamist organizations, with their own agenda of eliminating pagans/infidels, reinforce the efforts and motives of these Indian Communists by providing funding, recognition and access to mainstream American audience and policy makers. This is disturbing since the Left in the West is generally at odds with the Christian Right. The result,
then, is a lethal concoction responsible for a paradigm shift in the way Hinduism and India are studied, cataloged, discussed and viewed. Chapter IV illustrates this by an analysis of the organizations and individuals that destroyed the attempts of Hindu groups and parents to protest biased portrayal of Hinduism in sixth grade California textbooks. Most of the same players have also attacked the US Hindu youth organizations called Hindu Students Council as well as the Indian American charity known as the Indian Development and Relief Fund. Chapter V of the report contains specific instances of partnerships and backslapping between nexus members to hold India and Hinduism guilty of crimes against women, minorities and Dalits. While the nexus creates hue and cry about involvement of Hindus in the 2002 Godhra riots as well as the ‘tyrannical’ practices of the Indian state, it is surprisingly silent on genocides of Hindus in Kashmir and Bangladesh, killings in areas such as Marad Beach in India as well as the ill treatment of Hindus in Pakistan.

In summary, this report analyzes the nefarious designs of the Indian Communist/Christian Missionary/Islamist nexus and calls on to the Hindu community at large to understand and question the motives of these groups and individuals. It is also an attempt to generate dialogue and debate so that Hindus take charge of their own issues and the way they are analyzed and portrayed in the world. Otherwise, it should not come as a surprise to the thousands of Hindu temples, organizations and groups in the US and in India when one day the world wakes up and declares Hinduism as a racist religion similar to Nazism; it should not come as a surprise when future generations dissociate themselves with Hinduism because they see nothing good in our heritage and philosophy.