

Veer Savarkar

THE MAN WHO COULD HAVE
PREVENTED PARTITION

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PREFACE

SCENE ONE: FEBRUARY 1947

That India will be partitioned at the point of the Muslim League's loaded gun in the guise of Direct Action is now final. Riots start engulfing various parts of India, killing thousands. However, the worse massacres in Punjab, such as the one in Sheikhpura that took a toll of over 10,000 lives—mostly Sikhs and Hindus—and that resulted in the dishonour of hundreds of women, are yet to happen. A Congress structure, based on the slogan of complete non-violence and Hindu–Muslim unity at any cost is clueless about the Muslim League violence and, therefore, caving in under influence. In this atmosphere of distrust and violence, Vinayak Damodar (V.D.) 'Veer' Savarkar receives a letter from a distraught Dr Syama Prasad (S.P.) Mukherjee. One line in the letter says it all: 'Had the Hindus listened to your call, they wouldn't have remained slaves in the land of their birth.'¹

SCENE TWO: MAY 1963

While addressing a meeting as the chief guest at the militarization week of the Hindu Mahasabha in Bombay (now Mumbai), General (later Field Marshal) K.M. Cariappa remarks that had the nation listened to Savarkar and adopted the militarization policy propagated by him and prepared itself, it wouldn't have been placed in such a predicament.² He was referring to the debacle of

¹Dhananjay Keer, *Veer Savarkar*, Popular Prakashan Pvt. Ltd; Second edition, 2019, p. 379.

²Rohit Thakur, 'Hindu Militarisation—regaining the martial spirit, 16 December 2020, *Rising Hindutva*, <https://risinghindutva.in/2020/12/16/hindu-militarisation-regaining-the-martial-spirit/>. Accessed on 17 August 2021.

the 1962 Indo-China War.³

There comes a moment in the history of a nation when it should ponder over its past and indulge in deep introspection, cutting across the various 'isms' to secure its future. Such a moment has arrived for India today. Interestingly, the canvas of history is sometimes very deceptive. On its turf, people who look like eternal heroes in their lifetimes degenerate into pale figures after some decades or after their demise. Inversely, as history unfolds, some who seem unacceptable during their lifetime emerge as heroes and their true character and contribution emerge before the world. In the first category falls Jawaharlal Nehru, who, despite his extraordinary work in institution building, doesn't carry the tag of a hero anymore, except among a small band of Nehru lovers. This is largely owing to a series of blunders he committed on the national security and foreign policy fronts, for which India has paid a huge price. In addition, his cultural disconnect with the core Indian identity and his Muslim-appeasement policies that have kept the country divided have contributed to his loss of face.

In the second category comes Veer Savarkar, one of the longest-surviving revolutionaries on India's canvas. Born in 1883 in Nashik's Bhagur, he participated in both forms of Indian freedom struggle before Independence, revolutionary as well as political. Even though he neither participated in politics nor in apolitical public activism after Independence, very few know that his contribution to India's vision as a nation was very significant during the 19 years that he lived after 1947. In fact, the insights and political recommendations he offered for free India during the last phase of his life were invaluable. Many of his principles and suggestions were, in fact, incorporated in the Constitution.

Despite this, Savarkar's name has been embroiled in artificial controversies, thanks to the machinations of his ideological opponents. He has been constantly painted as an anarchist, while his defenders have relied only on one theme to defend him—his

³As part of inculcating military culture, the Hindu Mahasabha used to observe a militarization week annually. This occasion was used to spread awareness about military preparedness with the view to implore the youth to join the defence forces.

sacrifices and exploits as a revolutionary. As a result, very little is known to the common Indian about his thoughts for the evolution and development of free India.

Though he was reviled as sectarian in the heady days of the Indian National Congress (INC), before and after Independence, his warnings on national security threats to India, which were made almost nine decades ago, have come true today. Savarkar died on the sidelines in 1966 as an unsung hero. However, today if India has been able to revoke Article 370 and create a strong security structure against the designs of the fissiparous forces, it is Savarkar's vision of no compromise with divisive forces that the Narendra Modi-led government at the Centre is actually implementing.

People might ask here: where does Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel fit in? Though a valid point, the counter to this question is: had Savarkar been in the Congress, would he have allowed the party to pass the 1942 resolution giving provinces the right to self-determination (secession) on the issue of joining the Indian Union? This resolution proved to be the last seed for nurturing Pakistan and made it a foregone conclusion five years before it was granted. Sardar Patel was a signatory to this resolution, notwithstanding his great role later in the integration of the Indian Republic.

History proves that Savarkar's understanding of the psyche and plans of the pan-Islamists was far better than that of the other two heroes of India's struggle for freedom and integration—Sardar Patel and Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. Incidentally, Bose was one of the members of the committee that truncated 'Vande Mataram' under Islamist pressure. Perhaps the only political leaders who could fully match Savarkar's understanding of the pan-Islamist psyche and strategy were Dr B.R. Ambedkar and Hindu Mahasabha leader, B.S. Munje (better known as Dharamvir Munje).

It is this historical need of the hour that has impelled me and my co-author, Chirayu Pandit, an extremely knowledgeable person on the Savarkarian ideology, to attempt this work. Though a large number of works on Savarkar in the past are surcharged with an emotional narrative, this book represents a broader analysis

of Savarkar and his true contribution to the nation, which goes beyond his role as a revolutionary. It analyses Savarkar the thinker and the guarantor of India's security in totality.

Our book proves that even while holding strong views about the Muslim community, Savarkar welcomed those Muslims who didn't demand special concessions for their community, who wanted to remain in the national mainstream and believed in the principle of 'one-person, one-vote', which is the essence of true democracy and nationalism. But it is also true that Savarkar's harsh views on Muslims were proved correct when in the 1945–46 Central Legislative Assembly elections almost 87 per cent of the total Muslim votes polled went to the Muslim League and only 3 per cent to the Congress.⁴ This is further acknowledged in Sardar Patel's famous 3 January 1948 public speech in Calcutta (now Kolkata): 'Most of the Muslims who have stayed back in Hindustan, helped in creating Pakistan. Now, I don't understand what has changed in one night that they are asking us not to doubt their loyalty.'⁵

No honest student of history can deny that probably the main basis of Pakistan was the Muslim-appeasement policy of the Congress, which encouraged the Muslim leadership to make more and more special demands before the nation. Its last demand was Pakistan. Of course, the Anglo-Muslim Alliance in which the British encouraged the Muslims' separatist demands also played a significant role. From tracing the history of the phenomenon to showing how allegations aimed at defaming Savarkar to make him unacceptable for the nation's new generation are all wrong, this book uncovers the complete dark side of this disease that has negatively affected the nation's progress. It is pertinent to note here that eminent leader Dadabhai Naoroji, a Parsi, had strongly pitched for equal treatment to all Indians in 1886 when the Aligarh School was trying to prevent Indian Muslims from joining the Congress.⁶

⁴Sheshrao More, *Congress Ni Ani Gandhiji Ni Akhand Bharat Kaa Nakarla*, p. 425.

⁵'Sardar Patel speech from Calcutta Maidan, 3rd January, 1948' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=40aannaRcUI&t=6s>. Accessed on 23 August 2021.

⁶R.P. Masani, *The Grand Old Man of India*, Mysore: Kavyalay Publishers, 1968, p. 93.

Therefore, Savarkar was voicing the same demand as Naoroji in 1937—based on appeasement of none and equal rights for all—from the Hindu Mahasabha platform. It also shows the fall of the Congress from a party voicing equal rights for all in 1886 to a party favouring Muslim appeasement at any cost in 1937. So, this book will help the society at large in understating the true factors that led to India's partition and its consequences.

This book also seeks to explore the entire gamut of actions on Savarkar's part to prevent the formation of Pakistan and also answer as to whether Partition could have been prevented had the nation and the Congress heeded Savarkar's advice. It also provides a reply to those who say that Partition was a good, long-term augury for India as it divided the Muslim power. This is a fallacious argument, to say the least. It is full of incongruities in the light of the fact that since 1947, the Hindu population in today's Pakistan has declined by 92 per cent⁷ and by almost 70 per cent in Bangladesh⁸, while the Muslim population in India has grown over 500–600 per cent during the same period, as per our analysis. This also reveals the baselessness of the allegations of Muslim victimhood being repeatedly levelled by many senior Muslims leaders, communists and pseudo-secularists. If the charges were true, then Indian Muslims would have fled to Pakistan and Bangladesh—just like Hindus and non-Muslims fled the two countries to India because of the persecution they faced from a section of fanatical Muslims in those two countries after Partition.

Yet another facet that this book examines is the contribution of the revolutionary movement when India finally attained freedom in 1947. The impression we get from history books is that the passive fight of the Congress was the main reason behind Britain granting us Independence. However, when Clement Attlee, British prime minister at the time of India's independence, came to stay with

⁷Anand Ranganathan, 'The Vanishing Hindus of Pakistan: A Demographic Study,' *NewsLaundry*, 9 January 2015, <https://www.newsLaundry.com/2015/01/09/the-vanishing-hindus-of-pakistan-a-demographic-study-2>. Accessed on 15 July 2021.

⁸*Banglapedia: National Encyclopedia of Bangladesh*, <https://en.banglapedia.org/index.php/Population>. Accessed on 2 September 2021.

the acting governor of West Bengal, Justice P.B. Chakraborty, as his guest at Calcutta in 1956, he told Chakraborty in a discussion that Gandhi's influence over the British was 'minimal' in the British decision to grant Independence to India and that there were other factors responsible that impacted the British's move.⁹ These factors, according to Attlee, were the spectre of fear created by Bose's Azad Hind Fauj (Indian National Army [INA]) episode¹⁰ and also the threat of lakhs of Indian soldiers returning from Europe after the end of World War II, who wanted the British to leave India against the services they had rendered to the British empire in the war. The British feared that the returning Indian soldiers might revolt against the British's act of persecuting those Indian soldiers who had joined the Azad Hind Fauj after being made prisoners of war by Germany and Japan in World War II and who were later caught by the British Indian forces following the fall of Bose's army. Attlee also mentioned the 1946 mutiny of navy soldiers at Bombay dock as one of the final reasons for the British's departure.

It would be pertinent to recall Savarkar's militarization call to Hindus to join British Indian forces in 1939 at the outbreak of World War II. This informs of the important role that Savarkar played in the evolution of the Indian nation as we see it today. In 1937, Savarkar had suspected that separatist Muslims would demand India's partition in the future. (The word 'Pakistan' was in public domain since 1932 when the name was coined by Choudhary Rahmat Ali while studying in Cambridge and when Mohammed Ali Jinnah too was living in London.) Therefore, the following year, Savarkar called upon the Hindu youth to join the army as British Indian soldiers and get arms training in view of the future threat to the unity and integrity of India. With the start of World War II, he intensified his drive for the militarization of Hindus. Savarkar was the only leader to perceive this threat at that time. He repeated his

⁹Maj. Gen. (Dr) G.D. Bakshi, S.M., *Bose or Gandhi: Who Got India Her Freedom*, K.W. Publishers Pvt. Ltd; First edition, 2019, p. 61.

¹⁰This is well described by historian R.C. Majumdar in his book *History of Bengal* (B.R. Publishing Corporation, 2011). P.B. Chakraborty himself shared this with Majumdar in a letter that he wrote to him.

clarion call with greater vigour after the Muslim League adopted the resolution demanding the formation of Pakistan in 1940.

Savarkar prophetically observed that Muslim leaders, as part of their future, separatist strategy, were facilitating the recruitment of Muslim soldiers in the British Indian army, taking advantage of the war in which Britain needed more troops to fight the Axis forces. But he noticed that the number of Hindu soldiers in the army was less than Muslims as per the Hindu–Muslim population ratio in the country.¹¹ Savarkar was finally proved correct when lakhs of Hindus joined the defence forces as soldiers following Savarkar’s campaign and that of his party, the Hindu Mahasabha, leaving Muslim League leaders extremely alarmed. The Muslim League leaders officially objected to increased recruitment of Hindu soldiers several times between 1941 and 1944. The shrewd League leaders perhaps knew that due to the Congress’s weak-kneed strategy, India would concede Pakistan and, on the day of Partition, the army strength of Pakistan vis-à-vis India’s would play a big role in determining the final size of the two nations. Over 90 per cent of the Muslim soldiers of the undivided British Indian army chose to go with the Pakistan army and very few joined the Indian army, thus proving Savarkar correct.¹² Interestingly, Savarkar’s words proved prophetic when in 1948, within months of Partition, the newly created Pakistan tried to swallow Kashmir through masked military intervention. It was a development in which India finally lost almost one-third of Kashmir to Pakistan.

Had Savarkar not given the call of militarization to Hindus and had the military strength of India been inferior as compared with Pakistan at the time of Partition, the new Islamic nation might have tried to swallow more areas of partitioned India, apart from Kashmir. Savarkar’s ideology and actions had a major impact even when the last nail was being driven into the coffin of British rule in India. Sadly, the nation is unaware of this.

¹¹B.R. Ambedkar, *Thoughts on Pakistan*, Prabhat Prakashan, 2020, p. 85.

¹²‘Muslims in Indian Army’, *Dawn*, 15 March 2010. <https://www.dawn.com/news/842925/muslims-in-indian-army>. Accessed on 27 July 2021.

The last chapter of this book deals with how the absence of Savarkarian vision has affected our national psyche and prevents us from realizing our true potential. It illustrates with examples how the lack of Savarkarian vision has led to distortions in history which, in turn, have affected our national vision and left our mind fractured in many other areas. It further analyses what today's India would have been like had the Savarkarian vision been implemented soon after Independence.

But a more important issue that the book tries to analyse is the Savarkarian belief vis-à-vis the Congress's that complete non-violence against an enemy is a perversion of virtue because aggression from an unprincipled enemy has to be met with aggression which, he strongly believed, is necessary for maintenance of permanent peace. This Savarkarian belief was, in turn, rooted in the beliefs of the Hindu deity Lord Parshuram, who had said that the principle of non-violence against a cruel aggressor is cowardly, and a sin and that for establishing peace, even a pious Brahmin should take up weapons. India's answer to Pakistan after the 2019 Pulwama attack was perhaps based on this belief.

The book analyses Savarkar's unalloyed nationalism with new instruments and proves that it doesn't discriminate between people on the basis of religion and that it could be an answer to all the present ills of the country including the challenge of obscenity in films and OTT (over-the-top) platforms. It even proves that if propagated properly, Savarkar's brand of nationalism has the power to assimilate even those Muslims and Christians who want to remain in the national mainstream but are misguided.

NOT A HAGIOGRAPHY

No one can deny that patriotism evokes emotions. Rather, demonstration of patriotism without emotions isn't possible. However, when one is writing on a person like Savarkar, whose every warning about the threats to India's national security is coming true today and who has been loathed by divisive forces to prevent him from emerging as an icon of India's new generation,

one has to keep emotions away to bring the true Savarkar before the nation. Therefore, we have looked at his shortcomings too. We believe a seminal work that could perhaps change the thinking of a vast section of people about an important aspect of the nation is incomplete without a mention of the shortfalls of a man of Savarkar's stature.

Otherwise, it could add to the culture of sheer hypocrisy in this country, partly based on emotions and partly due to the designs of the divisive forces wherein only a positive side of a great personality is presented and his shortcomings are sought to be buried. That amounts to writing unfair history. And distorted history is harmful for a nation's future and against Savarkar's own principle of true Nation First. In India, this has put spokes in the path of the nation's goal of becoming a Vishwaguru.

The year 2022 will be the Diamond Jubilee year of India's independence and the nation looks forward to celebrating it with the required fervour despite the ugly shadow of the COVID-19 crisis that the country faces. But the nation can't forget that it is also the 75th year of the tragic story of India's partition which saw 1.5 million deaths and plunder and rape of thousands of women in what was nothing less than medieval vandalism. It was the greatest catastrophe to hit humanity in the twentieth century, perhaps even greater than the Nazi holocaust. But the pressures of vote-bank politics have worked overtime in this country to ensure that the nation forgets this tragedy and doesn't draw a lesson from it. This book is also an attempt to ensure that the country draws the right lessons from that gory episode to prevent its recurrence. In that sense, this book is a guide to preventing another Partition in the future.

Completing this book gives both me and Pandit a deep sense of fulfilment. Both have been long-time admirers of Savarkar's contribution as a great thinker. But we believe that we have maintained enough distance from the subject of the book to appear as dispassionate. In this work, we have drawn extensively from the original sources on Savarkar, many of which are written by Savarkar himself. It has been of immense value to us because Savarkar, a

great literary figure, wrote almost 6,000 pages in his lifetime.

We thank authors Akshay Jog and late Balarao Savarkar, Yuvraj Krishan and B.N. Jog, whose works we have referred to draw our own new conclusions. Balarao Savarkar, secretary to Veer Savarkar, was what personal secretary Mahadev Desai was to Mahatma Gandhi. The admirable job of record keeping that Desai did for Gandhi, Balarao performed for Veer Savarkar. The greatness of both Gandhi and Savarkar won't have shown so much in the public domain but for the passionate work of these two men.

We also place our gratitude here for late writer, Padma Vibhushan Dhananjay Keer, whose seminal work on Savarkar was of immense value to us, no less than Babasaheb Ambedkar, whose writings have helped us greatly in understanding the strategy of pan-Islamists. We have also drawn from the work of late general secretary of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), H.V. Sheshadri, who was the keenest observer of the tragic story of India's partition and therefore express our gratitude to him. We would also like to thank the other authors whose work we have cited in this book. We thank Mumbai-based senior journalist Ashok Shinde for his help in making available the source material. We also thank Ranjit Savarkar, chairman, Swatantryaveer Savarkar Rashtriya Smarak, for providing rare photographs of Savarkar. Finally, we thank our publisher, Rupa Publications, for giving us the opportunity to write this book.

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