

Indian Freedom Struggle Great Martyr: No To Bhagat Singh's Second Hanging

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According to some newspapers reports Yadvendra Singh Sandhu, a distant relative of great martyr of Indian Freedom Struggle, Bhagat Singh (hanged on March 23, 1931 along with Sukhdev & Rajguru in Lahore) has invited Hindutva icon, Narendra Modi, Gujarat Chief Minister, who calls himself 'Hindu nationalist' and a member of RSS, to release Shahid Bhagat Singh's *Jail Diary* in Delhi on September 29. The same relative had announced a high prized coffee-table book edition of this *Diary* in the beginning of 2013 to be released by the President of India. Now with Yadvendra's change of heart and outpouring of love for Hindutva icon, President of India has been replaced with Modi.

We need to note few important facts about this *Diary*. This *Diary*, consisting of 404 pages (not all pages filled) mainly contains notes of books/material Bhagat Singh went through during his 716 days of his jail life under British rule (arrest in Delhi on April 8, 1929 and hanged in Lahore on March 23, 1931). He spent his jail days not mourning or repenting but equipping him with world literature on miscellaneous issues specially capitalism, exploitation, atheism and Socialism. During this period according to jail records he received 302 books (English, Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi & Bengali) authored by writers like Marx, Engels, Bertrand Russell, Adam Smith, Charles Dickens, Oscar Wilde, Bakunin, Thomas Paine, Rousseau, JS Mill, Ibsen, Trotsky, Lenin, Upton Sinclair, Gorky, Jefferson and others. Apart from notes of these books he jotted down his vision of youth, working class and peasant movements, revolution, and social movements in this *Diary*. It disappeared after his martyrdom but surfaced later. Interestingly, its English and Hindi versions have been in public domain since 1980s and freely available to lovers of Bhagat Singh. Yadvendra Singh Sandhu's intermittent announcements about this *Diary* are alleged to be part of his design to get monetary and political benefits. Professor Jagmohan Singh, son of Bhagat Singh's favourite sister, Amar Bibi and individuals/organizations carrying forward the revolutionary legacy of Bhagat Singh world-over have strongly reacted to Sandhu's latest overture as bizarre and shameful.

There is no doubt that release of Bhagat Singh's *Jail Diary* by Narendra Modi will be playing havoc with the legacy of Bhagat Singh and his comrades who stood against theocratic, communal, Casteist and pro-imperialist forces. The pre-Independence documents available in the RSS archives make it very clear that Hindutva camp, not only kept silence about Bhagat Singh and other revolutionaries, in fact, abhorred them as we will see in the following.

MS Golwalkar, the most prominent ideologue of the RSS and second boss or Sar-Sanghchalak of the RSS (June 1940 to June 1973) in an article titled 'Martyr, Great but Not Ideal' wrote: "There is no doubt that such men who embrace martyrdom are great heroes and their philosophy too is pre-eminently manly. They are far above the average men who meekly submit to fate and remain in fear and inaction. All the same, such persons are not held up as ideals in our society. We have not looked upon their martyrdom as the highest point of greatness to which men should aspire. For, after all, they failed in achieving their ideal, and failure implies some fatal flaw in them. [MS Golwalkar, *Bunch of Thoughts*, Sahitya Sindhu, Bangalore, 1996, p. 283]

This Hindutva ideologue while addressing top-level cadres of the RSS went to the extent of saying: "But one should think whether complete national interest is accomplished by that? Sacrifice does not lead to increase in the thinking of the society of giving all for the interest of the nation." [*Shri Guruji Samagar Darshan*, (collected works of Golwalkar in Hindi), Vol. I, Bharatiya Vichar Sadhana, Nagpur, nd, pp. 61-62]

Can there be statements more insulting to the martyrs of Indian Freedom Movement than this? The founder of the RSS, KB Hedgewar (Sar-Sanghchalak of the RSS 1925 to 1940) went one step further. He said: "Patriotism is not only going to prison. It is not correct to be carried away by such superficial patriotism." [CP Bhishikar, *Sanghavariksh Ke Beej: Dr. Keshavrao Hedgewar*, Suruchi, 1994, p. 21.]

From RSS standpoint it was bad luck of martyrs like Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, Sukhdev, Ashfaqullah, and Chandrashekhar Azad that they did not come in contact with the then RSS leadership. If they had, they could have been saved from giving their lives for 'superficial patriotism'? This also must be the reason why RSS leaders or cadres did not face repression during British rule and the RSS did not produce any martyr during the Freedom Movement.

I strongly feel that no person should be allowed to betray the great legacy of Shahid-e-Azam Bhagat Singh. It is hoped that Yadvendra Singh Sandhu who claims to be a relative of the martyr will not be party to SECOND HANGING OF BHAGAT SINGH.

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