

The great Hindutva hoax: The Hindutvavaadins' technology, line, and fraud

Why Hindutva is the biggest threat to Indian Science and Indian Intellectualism: Read this note along with all our other papers to understand how and why Hindutva groups misrepresent History.

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This note seeks to explain how and why Hindutva groups misrepresent history. In order to appreciate this, you will also need to understand the different dimensions of the Aryan problem. All intellectuals and thinkers, both in India and abroad, must expose Hindutva groups for what they are: they are an affront on science and intellectualism. Such ideologies will put paid to India's attempts to emerge as a scientific superpower and ensure instead that it emerges as the laughing stock of the world. The Hindutva ideology is already in retreat now, as people are increasingly aware of their machinations, but they must be completely vanquished and must not be allowed to raise their ugly head again. The RSS ideology is very obviously directly targeted against Muslims, Christians and even Dalits, and all their devious tactics are devised with this singular objective. Anything other than this is irrelevant for the purpose, and from their point of view.

How and why Hindutva groups misrepresent history

No theory presently exists that posits a European origin for IE languages. Both the Anatolian and Kurgan hypothesis posit an Asian origin for IE languages, not a European one. Even the multi-PIE hypothesis presented as a part of our papers postulates an urheimat which was spread from south central Asia to Western Asia. What Eurocentrism can be found here, given the fact that all theories call for a migration of IE speakers into Old Europe? A summary of points negating the OIT or an Indian homeland for IE languages have been presented in our papers, and readers may go through the relevant sections to assess for themselves whether these are plausible. No one accuses all VIT or OIT supporters of fanaticism. Many scholars have presented the VIT and the OIT, which, for many reasons are untenable, in good faith, and among them, were doyens of the caliber of S R Rao. It is the approach of rabid Hindutva proponents, one which usually excludes all meaningful debate and a comprehensive assessment of issues, that is quite worrisome, and the key components of the Hindutva approach are presented below:

1. Shouting out against a myth, an obsolete or a half-imaginary theory i.e. The Aryan Invasion theory or the AIT (which should have been abandoned before it actually was-or at least the fact that it was abandoned should have been communicated properly to all affected or concerned parties). This was the chief strategy of Hindutva revisionists in the 1990's and the early 2000's, and was usually a ploy to promote Hindutva theories such as the VIT or the Vedic Indus Theory. In any case, no present-day scholar anywhere in the world subscribes to the AIT anymore. Therefore, a criticism of the Aryan Invasion theory is wholly irrelevant from a Twenty-first century standpoint. As Romila Thapar points out in the article "Hindutva and history" (Frontline, Volume 17, issue 30, Sept 30-Oct 13, 2000) "Why then do Hindutva

ideologues - Indian and non-Indian - keep flogging a dead horse and refuse to consider the more recent alternative theories? For them the only alternative is that if the Aryans were not invaders, they must have been indigenous. That there is a range of possibilities between the two extremes of invaders or indigenous does not interest them. The insistence on the indigenous origin of the Aryans allows them to maintain that the present-day Hindus are the lineal descendants of the Aryans and the inheritors of the land since the beginning of history. This then requires that the presence of the Aryans be taken back into earliest history. Hence the attempt to prove, against the prevailing evidence from linguistics and archaeology, that the authors of the Rigveda were the people of the Indus cities or were possibly even prior to that.”

As Witzel says of N S Rajaram (EJVS, Volume 7, (2001), issue 2 (March 31) “As Rajaram's star dimmed, however, renewed beating began of a much more ancient dead horse -- the Aryan Invasion Theory ("AIT") -- of which, 50 years after the theory's heyday, I am fantasized by Rajaram et al. as the archetypal Western champion.”

2. Confusing immigration with invasion (i.e. deliberately) is another tactic of Hindutva proponents. A definition of the two terms can be found in any English dictionary. A very morbid fear of complex acculturation models – these have become extremely complex in the recent past, and can explain all aspects of Indian culture well – also characterizes Hindutva. As Witzel points out, “K (Kazanas) does not have a firm grasp on the complexity of the AIT discussion; he confuses, like Elst, invasion (intentionally) with immigration, trickling in etc.; this leaves all disturbing details by the wayside and simplifies his job enormously: always beating down the straw man, 'invasions', as in his elaborate Norman example! In fact, his summary (p. 22) § 19 reads like a farce... (Ruckspiegel, Pratibimba, Rear view mirror “The Kazanas fiasco” (7/5/2001)). Dr Robert Zydenbos, who has unequivocally stated that he does not support the idea of an invasion, only immigration, has spoken very strongly against Hindutva tactics and calls AIT-bashing “shouting

out against a myth". (He has likewise been fantasized by Hindutva proponents to be an archetypal AIT supporter, which, as stated above, he is not.) Zydenbos very categorically states ""In recent years, certain persons in India have revived a 'debate' over what is known as the Aryan Invasion Theory. Basically, this oversimplified and outdated theory says that the original speakers of Indo-European languages (Sanskrit and its derivatives), the Aryans, were invaders who overran the subcontinent, destroying older civilizations and subjugating the peoples of those earlier civilizations. Although certain elements of this old theory still hold good (such as the origin of the Indo-Aryan, i.e., Indian branch of the Indo-European language family being outside the Indian subcontinent), no up-to-date academician today takes the whole of the old theory as valid." ('A Hindutva polemic', by Robert Zydenbos)

3. The general Hindutva obsession with the issue of whether the "Aryans" came from inside or outside India, to the exclusion of all other serious problems facing Indology, and even Indian Science. This is irrelevant to history because identities can keep changing from generation to generation, and as immigrants could only have been extremely small in number (it is also virtually impossible that they identified themselves as 'Aryans'), they would have lost their identity long ago. The question of immigration or non-immigration is practically irrelevant from any standpoint, more so given that only small groups of people were involved, and should not interest anyone except a small group of specialists. Very few can even deny that people of this kind are not interested in history but in politics. The "Aryans" migrated to Iran and other parts of the world as well, but nobody creates a hue and cry there. Witzel has, time and again, pointed out that the term 'Aryan' only has a cultural connotation in the RV. Hindutva protagonists deliberately introduce covert shenanigans and proffer dubious arguments to mislead the laity and the gullible.

4. Let us assume momentarily that the Aryan Invasion theory did exist in the popular public consciousness till 2005. We give them this liberty as there unquestionably has been a failure from many sides. The BJP and their cohorts have however, killed it in polemical style since; now that the RSS and their ignominious cronies have killed it off, why shout about it after they themselves have pronounced its death? Anyone who shouts out against the defunct AIT will be declared politically motivated.
5. Hindutva proponents are, if all these arguments are taken into account, very clearly not interested in history or have no love for history for history's sake: The history of the Gangetic plains was, and is being researched by scholars such as F.E Pargiter, Smith, Rau, Witzel and several others. Hard-core Hindutva proponents will not be interested in history because it will conflict with their ideology.
6. We also draw our readers' attention to the Indus script fiasco: In 2004, Steve Farmer proposed that the Indus script was not a script at all. This provoked several angry reactions from Western and Indian scholars. Scholars of many different hues and colours objected. These included several truth-seekers and lovers of science and history. Among the Indian scholars who very strongly objected were Rajesh Rao, S Kalayanaraman, Mayank Vahia, Nisha Yadav and Iravatham Mahadevan. One may like to draw to attention of Hindutvavaadins' role in this fiasco. Hindutva proponents, (they will, of course, go deliberately unnamed) were conspicuously absent even as most Western scholars defended the Indus script theory on behalf of Indian scholars and researchers; the reason for this would be quite clear to most impartial observers: The Indus script is very clearly outside the purview of Hindutva. This speaks volumes about their patriotism and clearly exposes the shallowness of the Hindutva ideology.
7. Equating a sub-sect of Hinduism to the whole of Hinduism and then equating Hinduism to the whole of India is an obvious tactic adopted by proponents of Hindutva ideology. The term

Hinduism is itself a mirage, because it is recent in origin, and the obvious objective of all Hindutva strategies is to demonize Christians and Muslims. It would be obvious to most that Hindutva is nothing but crass and degenerate Brahminism of the worst kind. While few will deny that Brahminism has contributed in a major way to what is what is today known as Hinduism, and Sanskrit has played a major role in the cultural and linguistic unification of India in a manner no other language could have, given the fact that it was primarily a lingua franca of the elite in post-Harappan India, Hinduism does not comprise of Brahminism alone. This would be very greatly undermining the diversity of Indic religious traditions. Proponents of extreme versions of Hindutva will also never talk about Sanathana Dharma. The reasons for this are not too far to seek: Hindutva has nothing whatsoever to do with the capaciousness of Sanathana Dharma or the tolerance or the innate respect for diversity enshrined therein.

8. When it was proposed that the IVC could not have been Vedic, Hindutvaadins began introducing a crude “is “mine” older” or “is “theirs” older” competition .i.e. Vedic civilization is pre-IVC theory. This type of an approach does not qualify as a science at all; Hindutva relies on history to promote its political ideology. No more, no less.
9. Using the services of foreigners who probably cannot understand the complexity of Indian culture to promote Hindutva. Employing the services of foreign scholars has been a key component of the Hindutva approach.
10. Using the perceived weaknesses and irrationality of Marxist Historiography (Now effectively dead) as an excuse for promoting the Hindutva movement. Readers are welcome to read the writings of Marxist Historians such as D.N Jha, for example, and assess for themselves whether they are unbiased or not. Remember the golden rule, “One kind of bias provides a justification for every other kind of bias” (scholars of this type are as guilty as Hindutva proponents themselves because such scholarship throws up counter-reactions and

only leads to a polarization of views). If the menace of Hindutva is to be contained, balanced scholarship is the only way. The only difference between these groups of people is that the former is driven entirely by the desire to boost sectarian pride, the latter by dogma. The day may even come when people of this type are declared to be as guilty and as inimical to national interest as Hindutva proponents themselves. However, Hindutva proponents use such ideology-driven approaches as a pretext to promote their own theories. Using Dravidian nationalism as an excuse to promote Hindutva is another Hindutva technique, and Dravidian nationalism will almost certainly perpetuate the Hindutva menace, and therefore, a change in attitude from all sides is warranted. A desire to boost sectarian pride will never get people very far; it breeds counter-reactions always. Dravidian Harappa proponents must always be willing to take contradictory evidence into account, and must present their ideas only if they are convinced that they are correct. Sentimental approaches make people nutty. Of what use is a proposal if it does not stand the test of time or if the targeted audience makes a mockery of it? Using Euro centrism as an excuse to promote Hindutva is also a well-known Hindutva strategy. Read posts in 'Indo-Eurasian research list' for example, and the day may even come when people of this type are declared to be as guilty and as inimical to science as Hindutva proponents themselves. Many scholars, both Western and Indian, have been critical of this type of an approach. Farmer's approach has been undermine the hard-work put in by scores of American, European and Indian scholars in uncovering India's past. While no scholar, Western or Indian will oppose a quest for the truth, few would deny that Farmer's approach is loaded with bias and prejudice, and this fact was tacitly acknowledged by Farmer himself in a post in the 'Indo-Eurasian research list'. (We say this not because of any antipathy but to drive home a point. We say this in the interests of

science and scholarship.) This approach is dangerous for many reasons (a) it sets a bad precedent not only for Indology but for other sciences as well. (b) it undermines the hard work put in by American, European and Indian researchers, makes a mockery of objective scholarship, and results in a loss of confidence in mainstream scholarship, particularly Western scholarship in Indology, which at the time of writing this article, may already be in very steep decline. This is unfortunate, because most moderate Indians insist on an East-west collaboration in Indology as well as a major role to be played by the west as this would be crucial to the containment of religious fanaticism and other kinds of ideology-driven approaches. People of this type are therefore, typically not India's problem. They are America's problem, and a problem of the West, because they give American and Western science a bad name, and this is distressing, more so because the West has much to benefit from it financially and intellectually. While Steve Farmer may be no friend of India, it is clear that is no friend of science and objectivity either, and while we acknowledge their contributions in tackling the Hindutva menace, they owe their existence almost entirely to Marxist dogma in India and well-entrenched cabals that would like the Nineteenth century school of Indology to continue in some form or the other. (c) such approaches automatically lead to a polarization of views and as long as such approaches continue, Hindutva will almost certainly exist. Farmer's approach has also been to "corrupt" scholars of the caliber of Witzel and Dr Richard Sproat, whether they may be individually guilty or not, and it is most sad that this has been allowed to happen, to the detriment of science. His approach has also always been to drag Indology backwards, in the direction of the Nineteenth century, parading it as objectivity. One may read the so-called Indo-Eurasian research list if he likes. We say this not because we have any hatred against him at a personal level. We say this because it stymies progress in many areas and produces counter-reactions. All this is ephemeral and transient; such digressions cannot last long and will ultimately be left by the wayside. Many

new epigraphic and archeological discoveries are being made constantly in the subcontinent. The IER, with its apparent bias and racism is not a place where new discoveries are analyzed and discussed, although Witzel may, individually, not be entirely guilty, as Steve Farmer may have been largely responsible for his degradation over the past few years, and at times have made an earnest attempt to bring order into to the mayhem, at other times being swayed by his assistant. If, on the other hand, they are willing to change, and turn over a new leaf, everyone must welcome it. This approach is like Katherine Mayo's in her much-maligned 1927 book 'Mother India' i.e. to take anything that may be of some pride to locals and negate it, to give Western culture an upper hand. Can this kind of an approach survive in the longer run? We leave it to the lay-man to decide. The plight of colonialism is well-known. One of her fixations was Indian cultures' imagined cruelty towards animals. Is this true, in comparison to other cultures given that many Indian sects abhor cruelty towards animals in any form? Given that Western universities depend on Indian students, India-bashing of this kind, in the guise of scholarship is not a bad business strategy, it is anachronism. Archaic Western scholarship had for long depended on Marxist dogma to propagate imperialism. All this will change in the next decade as both get consigned to the rubbish-heap of history. On the other hand, what contribution did Hindutva proponents make in exposing this bias? Absolutely nothing, in the view of most. This may be because they are not interested in anything that is outside the purview of AIT-bashing! This is by now a hackneyed, and a stale old trick, and would now even appear ludicrous to most. What other tricks do Hindutvavaadins have in their stable? Their approaches clearly reflect their narrow and parochial mindset. Hindutva will not survive if like-minded individuals create and awareness among the larger sections of the public. On the other hand the fact the viable alternatives do not exist means that Hindutva is a ticking time-bomb.

Hindutvavaadins, sensing mainstream scholarships imminent demise, are waiting on the wings to take over.

11. Using the fact that current approaches to Indology are considered to be hopelessly obsolete to their full advantage instead of opting for via media solutions. There can be no smoke without fire; Hindutva proponents managed to wrest control of institutions such as the Indian Council of Historical research because there is a failure from all sides. Older Indologists must understand the limitations and drawbacks of obsolete models and Marxist historians must similarly understand that they must take a major portion of the blame. Marxist historians have argued that all schools of historiography have been encouraged. This is wrong, because dogmatic scholarship such as those always attributed to Marxist historians throw up counter-reactions. Marxists themselves are legitimizing Hindutva. As long as dogmatic Marxist historiography exists, Hindutva will continue to exist. We will even argue that dogmatic Marxist historiography is one of the pillars of Hindutva. The approach must be to marginalize Hindutva, not to give it a reason to exist. Only people who are free from ideology or dogma will have the moral and ethical right to speak out against Hindutva. Only the abandonment of their ideology will give them enormous power and the ethical and moral right to criticize other ideologies as well. While there may be no consensus on most or many issues even among the so-called Marxist intelligentsia, the fact that there is a clear and an illogical and an irrational bias among some sections of the left is visible and apparent to most logical thinkers. This, of course may be a purely ideology-driven one, and not necessarily one driven by an intention to deceive. When a Warangal-based student painted Hindu deities in the nude, he was supported, as it was artistic freedom. The same was the case with M F Hussein. When the Dutch cartoon controversy erupted, the response was tragically and quite drastically different. We only demand that all sections of the intelligentsia take a common stance regardless of religion. A section of the left

intelligentsia categorically stated that they would not condone fanaticism of any kind, irrespective of whether it was Hindu or Islamic. This kind of a pronouncement is always welcome, but must be followed up with action consistently. A change is nonetheless perceptible, and this will serve to bring people on all sides of the table together one day, regardless of ideology. The Marxist magazine 'Frontline' criticized the Varanasi bomb blasts, and rightfully so. Even former hardliners like Prakash Karat have apparently learnt to change with the times. This kind of a change in approach is welcome, and would actually be beneficial to the interests of scholarship. This cannot however be said of all sections of the left, and one may do his or her own homework to assess whether this statement is substantiated. We will differentiate between the left, the far left (the differences being the degree of ideology), and what we may call the disoriented and antediluvian far left, which is essentially driven by dogma. At least the third category has to change, and the author is of the firm conviction that this can eventually happen. If this does, Hindutva will be marginalized. We will always say, 'one kind of a bias legitimizes every other kind of bias.' We will also be looking forward to a quantification of bias and prejudice of all kinds, and this is an exercise interested scholars must undertake. This can be done only by proving Hindutva and Marxist dogma empirically, analyzing Hindutva and Marxist writers and their works thoroughly, that we can lay the foundations for a more objective school of Indology. We will look forward to such works from scholars in the near future. Remember the golden rule: Absence of a male fide intention can be no excuse. The road to hell can be paved with the best of intentions. If dogmatic Marxist historians still wish to persist, others must declare them to be anti-science and anti-national just as Hindutva is declared anti-science and anti-national. Mainstream Western and Indian scholars are equally guilty because they persist with outdated paradigms. Marxist scholars have clearly made no effort whatsoever to expose Farmer's bias in the IER even though it is as damaging to science as Hinduva misuse of

history. Clearly, dogmatic Marxist historiography of the kind practiced in India is biased, one-sided and irrational, and due to this, we declare them anti-national in some respects, even though they may have no mala fide intentions per se. The fact that their approach is one-sided has been pointed out by many other scholars and we are certainly not the first to have done so. In many cases, they may be working against national interest, and in what cases they are working against national interest, they themselves may have no control, given that they may be entirely driven by dogma, unlike that approach that should be ideally adopted by logical-thinking individuals. As has been pointed out Marxist historiography has become synonymous with obsolescence and senility, and this kind of an approach cannot even continue beyond one or two generations, and will lead to depleted intellectual faculties, illogical and irrational behavior, loss of personal respect and dignity, lowered level of professional competence, and such individuals may frequently act against national interest and interests of science and will inflict, like Hindutva, damage on the education system as well. We will persist with this categorization, however provocative it may seem, till they change, or can at least provide a convincing refutation backed by data. We can still find Western and Indian scholars talking about the terms 'Aryan' and 'Dravidian' in a racial context, and arguing facetiously for second millennium BC migrations, for example. All this needs to change, as they can be pronounced guilty for encouraging Hindutva. Modernization of Indology is the only surefire method to nip Hindutva in the bud before it evolves into a Frankenstein monster of uncontrollable proportions and devours objective scholarship completely in the next couple of years. Those who do not want such a thing to happen must forge a consensus to found a new school of Indology. This must happen as soon as possible because we are leaving too many things open to risk, and the loss of objectivity in scholarship will be to the major detriment of the west. Marxist intellectuals rightly criticized Hindutva and their endeavours that culminated in the containment

of Hindutva must be highly appreciated. However, by persisting with outdated paradigms, Marxist intellectuals are actually encouraging imperialism and racism. Marxist historiography is one-sided, and India is none the better for it. Hindutva misuse of history may be a reaction to Marxist historiography. Needless to say, Hindutva proponents have a vested interest in promoting their own ideology, not just criticizing Marxist historiography because it may be biased, and the result of one kind of bias is that it produces an unequal counter-reaction, the end-result being far worse than the relatively innocuous Marxist dogma that may have produced it in the first place. Both ideologies i.e. the Marxist-imperialist nexus and Hindutva may have actually depended on each other for survival, even to some extent providing a stimulus and a *raison d'être* for both. One ideology cannot be a substitute for another. The best antidote for Hindutva fascism is objective scholarship, not any other form of ideology; the latter will be clearly exacerbating it more in the longer run. All students who wish to join Indology courses in mainstream institutions must become a harbinger of change by insisting that obsolete paradigms be abandoned forthwith. The nineteenth century school of Indology will have a vested interest in prolonging its existence, and those who subscribe to it may have an emotional attachment to it that is not in the long-term interests of scholarship. Scholarship is global, not local. By resorting to tactics such as these, Western scholarship will not only be digging its own grave (this will be sad as it has contributed so much and the rest of the world has still so much to benefit from Western scholarship) but will also be producing counter-reactions that will undermine its own well-being.

12. Taking full advantage of the fact that the man in the street cannot understand or will not be interested in understanding the complexity of the Aryan problem, given that this is a topic dealt with in the ordinary course of events, only by a small group of specialists, and using his historical naivety in this respect to their advantage.

(Most people are pre-occupied with issues that generate popular interest and not issues such as these!) Hindutva strategies are extremely complex, albeit somewhat stale now, and those who understand them must expose them in the interests of the greater good of society. It is of paramount importance that the masses, or at least a sliver of intellectuals be educated on Hindutva strategies, and modern paradigms and alternative approaches must be similarly widely disseminated to the masses and it will help contain the menace of Hindutva.