Twitter Thread by Ruchir Sharma



Ruchir Sharma
@ruchirsharma_1

Hindutva does not belong to Modi nor his party, it belongs to the people as a unifying, decolonial ideology similar to pan-Africanism or Yugoslavism.

His own brand of "positive secularism" is even milder - deepening special rights and welfare schemes for religious minorities.

> I'm not entirely comfortable with Modi's "Hindutva".
>
> I know many of my Indian followers will come at me, angrily - but let me just say this out.
>
> I'm not sure it is a great model for democracy in a diverse, multi-cultural developing nation.
>
> — Onye Nkuzi (@cchukudebelu) February 2, 2021

After the disbanding of the Hindu Mahasabha and Jana Sangh, Hindutva as a political ideology does not even exist, except as a bogeyman in the minds of the Anglophone elite.

Even the BJP gave up Hindutva for civic nationalism, Gandhian socialism, and positive secularism in 1980s.

Under Modi, there has been compete policy continuity on minority rights and welfare from the Congress era, with little to no "Hindutva agenda" coming to see the light of day.

The most radical policy they can dream of is religion-neutral laws and equal rights for equal citizens.

Hindutva was essential in forming a national consciousness, but was abandoned with time. The modern BJP refuses to self-identify as a Hindutva movement, adopting moderates like Sardar Patel, Deendayal Upadhyay, and JP Narayan as their icons, rather than Savarkar or the Mahasabha.

When they say Hindu Rashtra, all they mean is an "Indic polity".

When British India was partitioned into a Muslim homeland and a Dharmic homeland, one state became a 'Ghazi' garrison state, and one the successor state to the Indic civilisation.

https://t.co/Jiy4gfJ6sD

"The RSS has never said it wants to create a Hindu State. Rashtra is based on a rich heritage of memories and a keen desire to live together. Ernest Renan had once pointed out that people are a nation because they want to be a nation, which is “a soul, a spiritual principle”.

"Speaking the same language or belonging to the same ethnic group does not constitute a nation, but having accomplished great things in the past and wishing to accomplish them again in future ... Those who are co-travellers in this journey are considered as Hindu by the RSS."

"State, on the other hand, is an entirely political construct with elements of land, people, government and sovereignty, and abides by a Constitution. Even when there was no unified Indian State as it exists today, there existed a ‘Hindu Rashtra’ that kept its people together."

"Speaking at the same programme in New Delhi, Sarsanghchalak Bhagwat said that the RSS considers as its own even those who do not call themselves Hindus but consider themselves Indians."

Long after its natural death, Hindutva was revived as a bogeyman by the Congress-CPI ecosystem to discredit indigenous political philosophies.

That backfired when voters believed this and voted for Modi, thinking he was going to be the "Hindu nationalist" he was portrayed as.

What did he do with this mandate? 40% of his welfare schemes go to minorities, he actively works with religious NGOs like the Zakat Foundation to increase Muslim representation in the police and bureaucracy to "build a sense of trust in state institutions among the community".

Unlike Western liberal icons like Macron, he never uses the terms 'Islamist terrorism' or 'jihadism', and rather hosted the World Sufi Conference and waxed lyrical about "the message of the Quran" and how "terrorism cannot be tied to a religion".

https://t.co/yLPQf0AXSR

If a Western leader tried to increase the proportion of Muslims in the police and bureaucracy on these lines, or gave conciliatory speeches like this, they would be hounded out of politics by the media as a "loony left extremist" or "terrorist sympathiser" like Jeremy Corbyn was.

If they really wanted to, a Hindutva party would try to adapt and adopt Article 9 of Sri Lanka's Constitution, scrap the Places of Worship Act, Minority Ministry, religious subsidies.

The centre-left party in power prefers to draft religion-neutral laws and hope for the best.

Parties aside, classical Hindutva is a decolonial foundation to build legitimacy to India's right to exist as a sovereign nation.

Inspired by Italian unification, similar to pan-Africanism, and compatible with a range of political ideologies once such sovereignty is established.

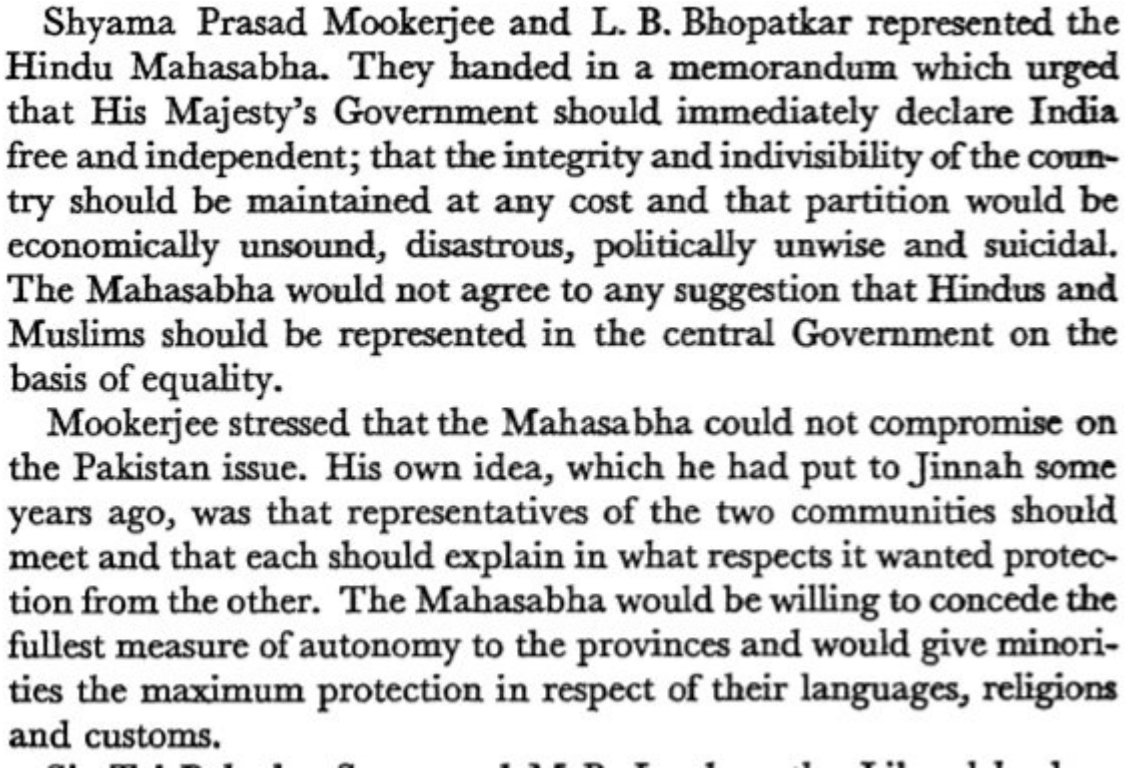
Modern Hindutva does not exist in parliament, only in elections.

Some use it as a bogeyman to discredit indigenous knowledge systems.

Others use it for their election-winning machine, where right-wing voters go in, and left-wing policy comes out, and a bit of steam is released.

For a bit of historical context, let's see the negotiations around Partition in 1946.

The Hindu Mahasabha did not fight for establishing Hindu Rashtra but to defend an undivided India, with one-citizen-one-vote instead of separate electorates, and with "maximum" minority rights.



Shyama Prasad Mookerjee and L. B. Bhopatkar represented the Hindu Mahasabha. They handed in a memorandum which urged that His Majesty's Government should immediately declare India free and independent; that the integrity and indivisibility of the country should be maintained at any cost and that partition would be economically unsound, disastrous, politically unwise and suicidal. The Mahasabha would not agree to any suggestion that Hindus and Muslims should be represented in the central Government on the basis of equality.

Mookerjee stressed that the Mahasabha could not compromise on the Pakistan issue. His own idea, which he had put to Jinnah some years ago, was that representatives of the two communities should meet and that each should explain in what respects it wanted protection from the other. The Mahasabha would be willing to concede the fullest measure of autonomy to the provinces and would give minorities the maximum protection in respect of their languages, religions and customs.

Whereas the only supremacist, exclusionist voice which consistently refused to acknowledge Indian nationhood or sovereignty as legitimate, was that of Jinnah's Muslim League.

Who insisted on a division between Pakistan ("land of the pure") and Hindustan ("land of the Hindus").

Jinnah was interviewed by the Mission on 4 April. He was invited to give his reasons for thinking it better for the future of India that there should be a separate Pakistan. Jinnah replied that throughout her history, from the days of Chandragupta, there had never been any Government of India in the sense of a single government. After the British had come they had gradually established their rule in a large part of India, but even then the country had only been partly united. The Indian States had been separate and sovereign. It was said that India was one, but this was not so. 'India was really many and was held by the British as one.'

Hindu-Muslim tension had begun to develop at the first transfer of a small amount of power in about 1906 and to meet it the British Government had given separate electorates. A similar situation had arisen at the time of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. In the discussions of 1930-35 no agreement could be reached on the communal question and the British Government had been obliged to give an award. In deference to the wishes of the Muslims, Sind had been separated from Bombay and the North-West Frontier Province was made a Governor's province. All these decisions had been taken by Great Britain.

The British Government was now saying that it would give complete independence to India inside or outside the Empire. To whom, asked Jinnah, was the government of this sub-continent, with its fundamental differences, to be transferred?

The differences in India were far greater than those between European countries and were of a vital and fundamental character. Even Ireland provided no parallel. The Muslims had a different conception of life from the Hindus. They admired different qualities in their heroes; they had a different culture based on Arabic and Persian instead of Sanskrit origins. Their social customs were entirely different. Hindu society and philosophy were the most exclusive in the world. Muslims and Hindus had been living side by side in India for a