

South Asia Citizens Web (SACW): Another Spate of Hinduphobia Exposed

Recently, the Hindu American Foundation (HAF) released [Coalition Against Genocide: A Nexus of Hinduphobia Unveiled](#). The report described how this web portal, which routinely maligns Hindu advocacy efforts while promoting violent revolution in India,¹ is little more than a vehicle for sustained attacks upon Hindu organizations that do not comport to the worldview of the coalition's principals -- many of whom strongly pursue demonstrable Marxist or Islamist agendas. The purported Coalition Against Genocide (CAG) strives to project an image of breadth and significance, but a detailed investigation revealed that it is composed of multiple, often shell organizations with strikingly similar leadership and IP addresses in their own image. These organizations have then been utilized to extensively cross-cite one another and repeat allegations that have been debunked on multiple occasions in the past.

Following the CAG style of Hinduphobic attacks, this past month (July 2014), South Asia Citizens Web (SACW) released a report titled, "*Hindu Nationalism in the United States: A Report on Nonprofit Groups*." This report purports to demonstrate links between a number of prominent Hindu and Indian American non-profit organizations and violence in India. In reality, since SACW is another [CAG affiliate](#) -- hosted once again on a CAG organization web server making many of the same allegations that CAG itself did a few months ago -- the accusations, methodology, and generalizations are familiar. This addendum shows the connection of SACW with CAG (see Figures 1 and 2); the radical, often anti-American and anti-Indian ideologies many of its members promote, and also addresses their many mendacious claims specifically about HAF.

SACW: Looking Behind the Acronym

The background and leadership behind SACW is opaque. SACW appears to refer to both South Asia Citizens Web (SACW), a web portal and South Asian Citizens Wire, a Yahoo group and listserv.² The domain sacw.net is registered under the auspices of Secular India's Growth and Harmony, or SINGH Foundation. According to the website, SACW's tagline is, "Linking Dissent in South Asia and Beyond since 1996."³

No leadership is listed, although an individual by the name of Harsh Kapoor, a web documentarian and self-described activist based in France or Delhi, is publicly quoted by media sources as an SACW associate.⁴ Kapoor also regularly posts to the SACW Yahoo group and website⁵ and has received funding from the SINGH Foundation.⁶

The SINGH Foundation, the sacw.net domain owner, is a federally recognized 501(c)3 tax exempt organization (Tax ID# 13-3719319).⁷ There are, however, no publicly available records of SACW being a registered entity or federally recognized tax-exempt organization. The South Asian Citizens Wire group is hosted by a Canadian organization known as the International South Asia Forum (INSAF) or insaf.net,⁸ another unregistered CAG member organization.

Both the SINGH Foundation and INSAF share key leadership positions (not all individuals are shown in the Figure 1). For example, the President of the SINGH Foundation, [Dr. Vinod Mubayi](#), is also listed as the Vice President of INSAF, while a named Vice President of SINGH Foundation, [Dr. Abha Sur](#), similarly

¹ <http://ghadar.insaf.net/April2005/pdf/domesticelites.pdf>

² South Asian Citizens Wire, http://insaf.net/mailman/listinfo/sacw_insaf.net/

³ South Asia Citizens Web, <http://www.sacw.net/>

⁴ Ifran, Hakeem, "Hindu Nationalist Organizations Take Root in the United States," July 7, 2014, DNA, <http://www.dnaindia.com/world/report-hindu-nationalist-organisations-take-root-in-the-united-states-2000363>.

⁵ Articles Posted by Harsh Kapoor, <http://www.sacw.net/index.php?page=recherche&recherche=harsh+kapoor>.

⁶ Activities, SINGH Foundation, <http://www.singhfoundation.org/activities.html>.

⁷ IRS Documents, SINGH Foundation, <http://singhfoundation.org/irs/index.html>.

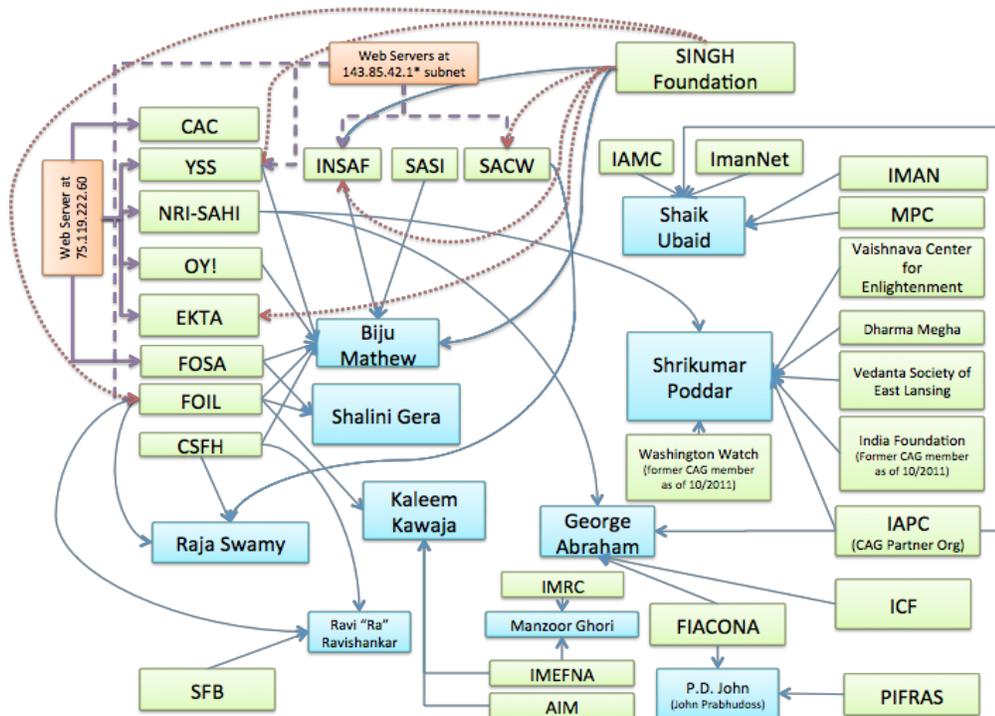
⁸ South Asian Citizens Wire, http://insaf.net/mailman/listinfo/sacw_insaf.net/; <http://www.insaf.net/central/insaf-old/index.html>.

serves as a Vice President of INSAF.⁹ In addition, one of the SINGH Foundation's other Vice Presidents is Biju Mathew, a well-known figure in the CAG¹⁰ and a contributor to SACW. The SINGH Foundation has also funded several other CAG affiliated members, including Forum for Inquilabi (Revolutionary) Leftists' website ProXsa, EKTA, and Youth Solidarity Summer (YSS).

Similar to most of the affiliated organizations of CAG, SACW also appears to be a shell organization with a web of intertwining and overlapping leadership, financial backing, and participation.

Figure 1: Flowchart of CAG Member Organizations

Red dotted line – Shared financing **Blue line** - Shared leadership **Purple solid/dotted line** – Shared web server



Like CAG and as an affiliate organization (SACW posts CAG's activities on sacw.net), SACW's primary activities appear to be of a political nature, rooted in an exclusivist and extremist worldview that engages in the same apologetics for radical Marxist ideology, which is inimical to Hindu ideals and vision, or Dharma. A significant portion of its web based content is devoted to broadly condemning Hindu American non-profit organizations and attempting to suppress the emergence of a Hindu American voice in various fora.¹¹ Its latest report is consistent with this line of attack, and reflects narrow Hinduphobic views. Many of its key contributors have long histories of anti-Hindu, anti-Indian, and anti-American activism.

⁹ Coordination Committee, INSAF, <http://www.insaf.net/central/insaf-old/commitee.html>; Directors, SINGH Foundation, <http://www.singhfoundation.org/>.

¹⁰ Directors, SINGH Foundation, <http://www.singhfoundation.org/>.

¹¹ A sample list of content critical of all Hindu American advocacy efforts, http://www.sacw.net/index.php?page=recherche&recherche=Hindu+American#pagination_articles.

Key Contributors to SACW

Biju Mathew

- Biju Mathew is an Indian American Marxist activist, a board member¹² with the Brecht Forum's New York Marxist School¹³ that promotes a Communist/Marxist ideology,¹⁴ an associate professor¹⁵ at Rider University (New Jersey), and one of the co-founders of FOIL. Mathew is a frequent contributor to SACW and sits on the Board of the SINGH Foundation, which is the SACW.net domain owner and funder to many organizations in which Mathew is involved. He is also involved in several other Communist/Marxist groups in the United States and in India.
- Mathew has a reputation for radical political perspectives that often include violent revolutions against authorities, and his website previously promoted a link to the Unabomber's Manifesto.¹⁶
- Biju Mathew has been a contributor to People's Democracy, the weekly leaflet of the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M).¹⁷
- Biju Mathew is currently the defendant in a lawsuit filed by a Chicago-based businessman claiming defamation as a result of Mathew's work with CAG.¹⁸

Raja Swamy

- Raja Swamy, an anthropologist currently based in Arkansas, is frequently cited as a key leader of CAG and is believed to be a member of FOIL. His writings are featured on SACW. Swamy promotes a radical agenda while supporting violent revolution.¹⁹ His vehement vitriol against India impugns the government for "doing the bidding of imperialist capital"²⁰ while similar hate for Israel is manifest as he labels it "a state that relegates, with impunity, entire populations to the category of expendable human beings to be subjugated, their lands and resources stolen from them and in case of the slightest forms of resistance their bodies destroyed..."²¹
- Swamy has previously alleged a grand conspiracy of the United States, India, and Israel to band together and plunder oil wealth, as part of furthering his radical political agenda combined with anti-Hindu propaganda.²²

Vijay Prashad

- Vijay Prashad, another co-founder of FOIL and frequent contributor to SACW, is a self-described Marxist and anti-Zionist.²³ Prashad's writings are reflective of his critical views of the U.S. being a hegemonic, imperialist power and his published sympathies for North Korea and the Revolutionary

¹² <http://thetaxitakes.com/biju-mathew/>

¹³ <http://brechtforum.org/civicrm/event/info?reset=1&id=12486>

¹⁴ <http://brechtforum.org/links/59>

¹⁵ <http://www.rider.edu/faculty/biju-mathew>

¹⁶ Internet Archive Page of Biju Mathew,

<http://web.archive.org/web/19990423204638/http://www1.rider.edu/~webcis/mathew/bijumain.html>

¹⁷ http://archives.peoplesdemocracy.in/2001/march25/march25_biju_vijay.htm

¹⁸ <http://newsindiatimes.com/businessman-files-suit-against-member-of-anti-modi-group/>

¹⁹ <http://ghadar.insaf.net/April2005/pdf/domesticelites.pdf>

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ <http://mrzine.monthlyreview.org/2006/swamy300806.html>

²² <http://www.proxsa.org/resources/ghadar/v5n2/zionism.html>

²³ "I came to Marxism against my self-interest. Born into affluence, I was raised in an revolutionary city (Calcutta, India)" *Left history*, Volumes 11-12, pp 61, Dept. of History, Queen's University, 2006; Prashad, Vijay, "UNCLE SWAMI," June 5, 2012, *The New Press*; Facebook Page of Vijay Prashad with a link to an automatically generated Anti-Zionist Page based on member interests:, <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Vijay-Prashad/105645076135212?v=info>

Armed Forces of Colombia – People’s Army,²⁴ a State Department designated Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO).²⁵

- Prashad has also called for an end to all U.S. aid to Israel.²⁶
- He has published a book in India entitled, *Namaste Sharon: Hindutva and Sharonism Under US Hegemony* (LeftWord).²⁷
- Vijay Prashad is an advisor for the U.S. Campaign for the Academic & Cultural Boycott of Israel, a movement seeking to limit freedom of speech and the free exchange of ideas by proscribing academic interactions with educational institutions based in Israel.²⁸

Angana Chatterji

- Angana Chatterji is a former academic at the California Institute for Integral Studies (CIIS) who was fired for unethical and dishonest conduct, including intimidation of students who disagreed with her opinions.²⁹ She is listed as the lead author on a CAG report and has been an active member of Friends of South Asia (FOSA), a CAG organization. Dr. Chatterji is well known for espousing Hinduphobic views and has described Indian and Hindu history as “militant and misogynistic.”³⁰
- Chatterji similarly espouses anti-American views and is part of the fringe “911 Truth Movement,” previously signing a statement alleging that high-level U.S. government officials “deliberately allowed the September 11 attacks to occur.”³¹
- Chatterji has served as an apologist for the violent, separatist movement in India’s state of Jammu & Kashmir through her close affiliation³² with Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai, a Kashmiri separatist who operated in the United States on behalf of Pakistan’s ISI spy agency. Fai was arrested by the FBI in 2012 and convicted of illegally lobbying for the ISI.³³
- According to the FBI’s criminal complaint, Fai received explicit instructions on specific individuals to invite to Kashmir American Council (KAC), an organization founded by Fai, conferences.³⁴ The federal complaint further demonstrated several correspondences between Fai and his ISI contacts

²⁴ Statement supporting North Korean regime and FARC’s resistance to “US imperialism,” Prashad, Vijay, “UNCLE SWAMI,” June 5, 2012, *The New Press*, also available at Google Books,

<http://books.google.com/books?id=h9lmLEPR-4QC&printsec=frontcover&dq=uncle+swami&hl=en&sa=X&ei=ZnuUUnA4rjoATFgoGgBw&ved=0CDwQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=uncle%20swami&f=false>.

²⁵ Foreign Terrorist Organizations, U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Counterterrorism, <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/des/123085.htm>

²⁶ Prashad, Vijay, “My Investment in Israel,” April 21, 2010, *Counterpunch*, <http://www.counterpunch.org/2010/04/21/my-investment-in-israel/>

²⁷ Prashad, Vijay, “Casual Imperialism,” August 16, 2003, Global Policy Forum, <http://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/155/25963.html>.

²⁸ <http://www.usacbi.org/advisory-board/>

²⁹ Springer, Richard, “CIIS Fires Two Professors After Student Complaints,” December 14, 2011, *India West*, <http://www.indiawest.com/news/1981-ciis-fires-two-professors-after-student-complaints.html>.

³⁰ Chatterji, Angana, “Letter to the California State Board of Education,” February 17, 2006, Friends of South Asia, http://www.friendsofsouthasia.org/textbook/LetterToCASStateBoard_AC.html.

³¹ “Respected Leaders and Families Launch 9/11 Truth Statement Demanding Deeper Investigation into the Events of 9/11,” October 26, 2004, *911Truth.org*. See signatory #19 <http://www.911truth.org/911-truth-statement/>

³² J&K Interlocutor Padgaonkar One of Fai’s Speakers,” July 21, 2011, *Indian Express*,

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/padgaonkar-j&k-interlocutor-is-among-fais-many-guest-speakers/820304/0>; “ISI Vetted Indians on Ghulam Nabi Fai List of Invitees,” August 15, 2011, *DNA India*,

http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report_isi-vetted-indians-on-ghulam-nabi-fai-list-of-invitees_1576089; Unnithan, Sandeep, “Guilt by Association,” July 22, 2011, *India Today*, <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/us-based-isi-agent-ghulam-nabi-fai/1/145843.html>

³³ FBI Complaint Against Ghulam Nabi Fai, http://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/case_docs/1849.pdf; December 7, 2011, *Times of India*,

http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-12-07/us/30485657_1_kashmir-centers-fund-high-profile-conferences-isi-agent

³⁴ FBI Complaint Against Ghulam Nabi Fai, http://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/case_docs/1849.pdf; December 7, 2011, *Times of India*.

on the specific issues to be discussed at these conferences and in long-term lobbying efforts.³⁵ Chatterji consistently spoke at KAC conferences sponsored by Fai and on topics pre-selected by the ISI to promote a separatist agenda on Kashmir. There is a strong correlation between her writings, testimony, and activism before numerous American and international fora and the guidelines established by the ISI for not only KAC, but Kashmir Centre EU.^{36, 37}

- On March 15, 2011, the FBI complaint asserts that Fai sent an email to his ISI contact “advising him that an individual referred to here as “Mary” would be testifying in front of a United Nations working group. Mary is a human rights activist.”³⁸ Major General Mumtaz Ahmad Bajwa, head of the ISI’s Security Directorate that oversees Kashmiri militant groups, had previously requested that Fai introduce him to “Mary” in July 2009.³⁹ On March 26, 2011, Fai emailed his ISI contact with information describing “Mary’s” testimony at the U.N. working group.⁴⁰ Although the identity of “Mary” has not been revealed, Chatterji did in fact testify and provide a written submission to the United Nations Human Rights Working Group in Mexico City, Mexico in March 2011 and statistics provided in a subsequent report by the working group correlate identically to a report authored by Chatterji.⁴¹

Figure 2: CAG Member and Affiliate Organization Leadership and Legal Status

	Coalition Against Genocide (CAG): Member and Supporting Organizations	Directors/ Founders/ Staff	EIN and/or Legally Incorporated	Functional Website
1.	Alliance for a Secular and Democratic South Asia (ASDSA)	None Listed	None	Yes
2.	Alliance of South Asians Taking Action (ASATA)	None Listed	None	Yes
3.	Association of South Asian Progressives (ASAP)	N/A	None	No
4.	Building Bridges of Understanding Coalition (BB)	None Listed	None	Yes
5.	Coalition for a Secular and Democratic India (CSDI)	N/A	None	No
6.	Center for Study and Research in South Asia (CERAS, Montreal)	N/A	None	No
7.	DC Collective for South Asians (DCCSA)	N/A		No
8.	EKTA	None Listed	None	Yes
9.	Indian Progressive Study Group of Los Angeles (IPSG-LA)	None Listed	None	Yes
10.	International South Asia Forum (INSAF)	None Listed	None	Yes

³⁵ *Id.*

³⁶ Ms. Angana Chatterji’s list of Human Rights Briefings and Testimonials, <http://www.anganachatterji.net/wp/writings-selected/human-rights-briefings-testimonials/>; Ms. Angana Chatterji’s list of submissions of human rights reports, <http://www.anganachatterji.net/wp/human-rights-reports/>; UN Working Group Report, March 2011, http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/RegularSession/Session19/A-HRC-19-58-Rev1_en.pdf

³⁷ *Id.*

³⁸ FBI Complaint Against Ghulam Nabi Fai, http://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/case_docs/1849.pdf. Times Now Video Clip, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b7Vqo9p2kRI>.

³⁹ *Id.*

⁴⁰ *Id.*

⁴¹ FBI Complaint Against Ghulam Nabi Fai, http://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/case_docs/1849.pdf; Ms. Angana Chatterji List of Human Rights Briefings and Testimonials, <http://www.anganachatterji.net/wp/writings-selected/human-rights-briefings-testimonials/>; Ms. Angana Chatterji List of Submissions of Human Rights Reports, <http://www.anganachatterji.net/wp/human-rights-reports/>; UN Working Group Report, March 2011, http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/RegularSession/Session19/A-HRC-19-58-Rev1_en.pdf.

11.	NRI's for Secular and Harmonious India (NRI-SAHI)	Shrikumar Poddar*, George Abraham*	None	Yes
12.	Organizing Youth (OY)	None Listed	None	Yes
13.	Project REACH	N/A	None	No
14.	Sikh American Heritage Organization (SAHO)	N/A	None	No
15.	South Asian Collective (SAC)	None Listed	None	Yes
16.	South Asian Magazine for Action and Reflection (SAMAR)	None Listed	None	Yes
17.	South Asian Network for Secularism and Democracy (SANSAD, Canada)	None Listed	None	Yes
18.	The Organization of Universal Communal Harmony (TOUCH)	N/A	None	No
19.	Coalition against Communalism (CAC)	None Listed	None	Yes
20.	Friends Of South Asia (FOSA)	None Listed	Yes	Yes
21.	Indian Muslim Relief and Charities (IMRC)	None Listed	Yes	Yes
22.	Voices for Freedom (VFF)	None Listed	Yes	Yes
23.	Association of Indian Muslims of America (AIM)	Kaleem Khwaja	Yes	Yes
24.	Campaign to Stop Funding Hate (CSFH)	*Raja Rajaswamy, Angana Chatterji, Biju Mathew, Vijay Prashad	None	Yes
25.	Indian Christian Forum (ICF)	*George Abraham	None	No
26.	Forum of Inquilabi Leftists (FOIL)	Vijay Prashad; Biju Mathew	None	Yes
27.	Foundation for Pluralism	Mike Ghose	None	Yes
28.	India Foundation (former CAG member)	*Shrikumar Poddar	None	No
29.	Indian Muslim/Minority Advocacy Network (IMAN)	*Shaikh Ubaid	None	No
30.	Indian Muslim Education Foundation of North America (IMEFNA)	*Kaleem Khwaja	Yes	No
31.	Muslim Peace Coalition (MPC)	*Shaikh Ubaid; Imam Malik Mujahid	None	Yes
32.	National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF)	Board Listed	None	Yes
33.	South Asian Progressive Action Collective (SAPAC)	Aparna Sharma	None	Yes
34.	Students for Bhopal (SFB)	Board Listed	None	Yes
35.	World Tamil Organisation (WTO)	Board Listed	None	Yes
36.	Youth Solidarity Summer (YSS)	*Biju Mathew	None	No
37.	Dharma Megha	*Shrikumar Poddar, Dan Warmels	Yes	No
38.	Interfaith Freedom Foundation (IFF)	Lawrence Swaim	Yes	No
39.	Supporters of Human Rights in India (SHRI)	Hyder Khan	Yes	No
40.	Tikkun	Rabbi Michael Lerner	Yes	Yes
41.	Vaishnava Center for Enlightenment	*Shrikumar Poddar	Yes	No
42.	Vedanta Society of East Lansing	*Shrikumar Poddar, Dan Warmels	Yes	No
43.	American Federation of Muslims of Indian Origin (AFMI)	Board Listed	Yes	Yes
44.	Center for Religious Freedom (Freedom House)	Board Listed	Yes	Yes

45.	Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)	Board Listed	Yes - Lost 501c3 stat	Yes
46.	Federation of Indian American Christian Organizations of North America (FIACONA)	Board Listed, includes George Abraham	Yes	Yes
47.	Genocide Watch	Board Listed	Yes	Yes
48.	Indian American Muslim Council	Board Listed, includes Shaik Ubaid	Yes	Yes
49.	Institute on Religion and Public Policy (IRPP)	Board Listed	Yes	Yes
50.	Manavi (An organization for South Asian women)	Board Listed	Yes	Yes
51.	Middle East Children's Alliance (MECA)	Board Listed	Yes	Yes
52.	Sneha (A network for women of South Asian Origin)	Board Listed	Yes	Yes
53.	Policy Institute for Religion and State (PIFRAS)	Board Listed	Cannot confirm	Yes
54.	Indian American Coalition for Pluralism (IAPC) (CAG partner organization)	*Shrikumar Poddar, Shaikh Ubaid, George Abraham	No	No
55.	Muslim Youth Awareness Alliance (MYAA) (Former CAG member as of 10/2011)	*Nazir.V.M.Ahmed	Yes	No
56.	Washington Watch (Former CAG member as of 10/2011)	*Shrikumar Poddar, Devesh Poddar	Incorporated in MI	No
57.	South Asia Citizens Web (SACW) (Routinely cross-links website to CAG)	None Listed *Harsh Kapoor and shared web server with number of organizations involving Biju Mathew	None	Yes
58.	Secular India's Growth and Harmony (SINGH Foundation)	Directors Listed, Biju Mathew	Incorporated in NY Yes	Yes

* Leadership not listed, but available on worldwide web.

Piercing a Veil of Hinduphobia

The SAWC report represents a thinly veiled attack on the wider Hindu American community and their right and ability to engage in a range of legitimate activities, including youth participation in cultural and religious camps, college student groups, support for academic studies of Hinduism, charitable work in India, and advocacy on civil and human rights issues. In the process, SACW disparages transparent and well-reputed organizations such as HAF, among several others.

The report fails to intellectually engage HAF on the substantive merits of its positions on various issues, and instead makes dubious allegations against HAF as an entity and its diverse leadership group. In the rare instance where the report endeavors to address a particular issue, such as the California textbook case, it grossly misrepresents events and glosses over critical facts. The credibility of such a report and the motives of the organization behind it must seriously be called into question.

The following sections, therefore, focus on SACW's baseless claims against HAF, and systematically deconstructs them one by one.

CA Textbook Case

1. **Allegation (pg. 29):** *In 2005-2006, many of these groups or their members were part of a campaign to insert Hindu nationalist histories into California textbooks, including the downplaying of certain gender and caste oppressions (more on the California textbook campaign see Visweswaran et al 2009, Maira and Swamy 2006 and Taneja 2006).*

Fact: HAF, in addition to academicians of religious studies and Hindu parent/community organizations submitted reports and participated in the public comment period in California's textbook adoption process in 2005. Just as representatives from the Christian, Muslim, and Jewish communities did, HAF and other Hindu community groups sought to correct blatant errors present in California's 6th grade history-social science textbooks, and ensure that their religion was portrayed accurately, equitably, and in a balanced manner.⁴² For example, textbooks, while discussing other religions, did not present the historic misuses of religion to perpetuate social evils such as the subjugation of women, slavery, crusades, anti-Semitism, or holy wars, all of which are part of the history of other world religions. In contrast, social practices like untouchability and caste discrimination were presented as central tenets of Hinduism. The textbooks failed to distinguish social customs also prevalent in non-Hindu communities throughout South Asia. They also failed to mention that many Hindu sacred texts were authored by "lower castes" and women.⁴³

One textbook stated, "Hinduism also taught that women are inferior to men."⁴⁴ While this statement may reflect certain social norms in Indian society across all religious communities at given points in history, it contradicts actual Hindu teachings. Furthermore, it neglected to note the concept of Shakti, or female divinity, in Hinduism and the fact that women were saints and composers of the Vedas.⁴⁵

2. **Allegation (pg. 29):** *After South Asia scholars, South Asian community groups, Dalit and tribal groups raised objections, the State Board of Education refused to accept most of the Sangh's proposed edits in California textbooks (see Thapar and Witzel 2006 and Visweswaran et al 2009). At this time, the Hindu American Foundation retained the law firm Olson, Hagel and Fishburn to sue the California Board of Education at the state level...*

Fact: After receiving significant comments and submissions during the public comment period in California's textbook adoption process in 2005, the California Department of Education (CDE) formed an Ad Hoc Committee (AHC) with a CDE appointed Content Review Panel Expert (CRPE) to review the proposed edits and corrections submitted by HAF and other Hindu community groups on Hinduism and Ancient India in 6th grade textbooks.⁴⁶ Most of these recommended edits were accepted.⁴⁷

Fact: South Asia scholars lacking any expertise on Hinduism and with a stated interest in opposing any edits to the textbooks then intervened in the process. The CDE and State Board of Education

⁴² California Textbook Issue Summary of Events, http://hafsite.org/campaigns_education_california_summary.htm.

⁴³ Issues with California Textbooks, <http://hafsite.org/media/news/issues-california-textbooks>.

⁴⁴ "Memorandum on Item 11A: Review Ad Hoc Committee Edits and Corrections for History-Social Science Instructional Materials as Directed by the State Board of Education," Curriculum Development and Supplemental Materials Commission, State of California, <http://hafsite.org/pdf/CDE%20Memo.pdf>.

⁴⁵ California Textbook Issue Summary of Changes, http://hafsite.org/issues/academia/california_textbook_summary_of_changes.

⁴⁶ California Textbook Issue Summary of Events, http://hafsite.org/campaigns_education_california_summary.htm.

⁴⁷ "Last Minute Memorandum on 2005 History-Social Science Primary Adoption: Curriculum Development and Supplemental Materials Commission Recommendations," California Department of Education, <http://hafsite.org/pdf/CDE%20Last%20Minute%20Memo.pdf>.

(SBE) subsequently held several closed door meetings with these scholars without informing HAF or other Hindu parent groups.⁴⁸ A new memorandum of recommendations was then released based on these illegal closed door meetings.⁴⁹

Fact: After the SBE and CDE continued to refuse to openly communicate with Hindu groups, HAF sent several letters (individually and through its counsel, Olson, Hagel and Fishburn, LLP) to the SBE and CDE highlighting the lack of due process afforded Hindu groups and urging a fair and open process.⁵⁰ No similar closed door meetings were utilized to consider edits proposed by Christian, Jewish, and Muslim groups, and their recommendations were approved.⁵¹

Fact: HAF garnered letters supporting the proposed corrections and edits and original recommendations of the AHC and CRPE from well-reputed educators of Hinduism studies; Hindu spiritual leaders; temple boards; practicing Hindus; groups that promote human rights and pluralism and fight racism, hate and bigotry; anti-defamation groups; and elected officials.⁵²

Fact: Only after several attempts were made to urge the SBE and CDE to follow due process,⁵³ HAF filed suit against the California State Board of Education (SBE) in California Superior Court in Sacramento. The suit was filed on the basis that a fair and open process was not followed in adopting textbooks that introduce Hinduism to sixth grade students. The complaint further alleged that as a result of procedural flaws and violation of the Open Meeting Act, the textbooks did not meet the standards required by the California Education Code and the Standards of Evaluation of Instructional Materials with respect to Social Content.⁵⁴

Fact: Ultimately, an estimated 75% of edits suggested by Hindu groups were accepted.⁵⁵ A complete summary of events during the California textbook case is available [here](#).⁵⁶

3. **Allegation (pg. 29):** *The HAF case ended in September 2006, with the court “dismiss[ing] Hindus’ claim of bias” (Burress 2006c).*

Fact: The court found that the SBE utilized illegal procedures in adopting instructional materials and in shutting out Hindu parents and community groups from the process. The opinion specifically stated that, “The Court therefore finds that respondent [California State Board of Education] has

⁴⁸ California Textbook Issue Summary of Events, http://hafsite.org/campaigns_education_california_summary.htm.

⁴⁹ “Memorandum on Item 11A: Review Ad Hoc Committee Edits and Corrections for History-Social Science Instructional Materials as Directed by the State Board of Education,” Curriculum Development and Supplemental Materials Commission, State of California, <http://hafsite.org/pdf/CDE%20Memo.pdf>

⁵⁰ HAF Letter to SBE President Ruth Green, December 1, 2005, <http://hafsite.org/pdf/Letter%20to%20SBE.pdf>; Law Offices of Olsen, Hagel & Fishburn LLP Letter to SBE President Ruth Green, January 6, 2006, <http://hafsite.org/pdf/Letter%20to%20Green.January%206.2006.OH.pdf>; Law Offices of Olsen, Hagel & Fishburn LLP Letter to SBE President Ruth Green and Members of the California State Board of Education, January 12, 2006, <http://hafsite.org/pdf/Letter%20to%20Green.January%2011.2006.OH.pdf>.

⁵¹ California Textbook Issue Summary of Events, http://hafsite.org/campaigns_education_california_summary.htm.

⁵² *Id.*

⁵³ HAF Letter to SBE President Ruth Green, December 1, 2005, <http://hafsite.org/pdf/Letter%20to%20SBE.pdf>; Law Offices of Olsen, Hagel & Fishburn LLP Letter to SBE President Ruth Green, January 6, 2006, <http://hafsite.org/pdf/Letter%20to%20Green.January%206.2006.OH.pdf>; Law Offices of Olsen, Hagel & Fishburn LLP Letter to SBE President Ruth Green and Members of the California State Board of Education, January 12, 2006, <http://hafsite.org/pdf/Letter%20to%20Green.January%2011.2006.OH.pdf>.

⁵⁴ HINDU AMERICAN FOUNDATION, et al., v. CALIFORNIA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION, et al., Case No. 06 CS 00386.

⁵⁵ <http://www.hafsite.org/media/pr/haf-wins-partial-victory-lawsuit-over-textbooks>;
http://news.newamericamedia.org/news/view_article.html?article_id=5de7f84384dbd89a6ebe40861af6078c.

⁵⁶ http://hafsite.org/issues/academia/california_textbook_summary_of_events.

failed to comply with a specific statutory mandate that it formally enact its policies and procedures for the adoption of instructional materials pursuant to the APA [Administrative Procedures Act], and thus at all times relevant to this matter has been conducting its textbook approval process under invalid “underground regulations”.⁵⁷ The court also ordered the SBE to pay HAF’s legal fees, as is customary practice for the losing party.

4. **Allegation (pg. 29):** *With the HAF and CAPEEM cases fading from widespread attention after 2006 and both failing to establish bias against Hindus, the Sangh seems to be backing away from public legal strategies and investing more energy into building a public relations infrastructure—networks of information and resources to bolster the Sangh’s versions of culture and identity and its legitimacy to speak on behalf of Hindus to U.S. audiences. The HAF continues to serve in such a role (see Table 6).*

Fact: The Foundation’s 11 year track record as an established civil and human rights organization is manifest in the respect and trust it has earned from leaders in public policy, the media, academia, and within the realm of interfaith circles. It has routinely been quoted by the U.S. Commission on International Freedom (USCIRF) in its annual reports⁵⁸ and has spearheaded as well as supported religious freedom initiatives through the International Religious Freedom Roundtable in Washington, D.C. HAF has also been a leading voice on international and domestic civil rights issues, including [advocating on behalf of minority women’s rights in countries such as Pakistan](#) and Bangladesh, [supporting Muslim and Sikh employment rights in the U.S. through CA Assembly Bill 1964](#), speaking out against the [unconstitutional surveillance of mosques in New York](#), pushing for [immigration reform](#) and [gun control](#), and advocating for the inclusion of [hate crime reporting against Sikhs, Arabs, and Hindus](#).

HAF has consistently taken a stand against [caste-based discrimination](#) and on the importance of [ending violence and discrimination against women](#)., and released a [policy brief on Hinduism and Homosexuality](#). Recently, HAF made international headlines when it expressed disappointment with the Indian Supreme Court’s decision not to uphold the [decriminalization of homosexual conduct](#).

Finally, HAF’s Board, staff, Executive Council, local chapters, and membership represent Hindus of every race, nationality, ethnicity, race, caste, gender, and sexual orientation.

Hindu American Foundation’s Purported Hindu Nationalist Connections (Table 6)

1. **Allegation (pg. 31):** *2001 -- HAF co-founder Mihir Meghani was on the VHP of America Governing Council and a member of the HSS (VHPA 2001; Rao et al 2003).*

Fact: This regurgitation of a more than decade old connection between one of HAF’s co-founders and board members, Mihir Meghani, in his individual capacity, and other religio-cultural non-profit organizations, has no bearing on HAF’s organizational status as an independent non-profit advocacy group that is unaffiliated with any other religious or political organizations.

2. **Allegation (pg. 31):** *2005 -- HAF supported the HSS’s educational wing Hindu Education Foundation and Vedic Foundation in the California textbooks controversy and brought a lawsuit against the California State Board of Education (Visweswaran et al 2009: 108).*

⁵⁷ HINDU AMERICAN FOUNDATION, et al., v. CALIFORNIA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION, et al., Case No. 06 CS 00386.

⁵⁸ Annual Reports, USCIRF, <http://www.uscirf.gov/reports-briefs/annual-report>.

Fact: As noted above, HAF, in addition to academics and Hindu parent/community organizations, submitted comments, and participated in the public comment period in California's textbook adoption process in 2005. Just as representatives from the Christian, Muslim, and Jewish communities did, HAF and other Hindu community groups sought to correct blatant errors present in California's 6th grade history-social science textbooks, and ensure that their religion was portrayed accurately and equitably.⁵⁹ HAF also received support letters from well-reputed educators of Hinduism studies; Hindu spiritual leaders; temple boards; practicing Hindus; groups that promote human rights and pluralism and fight racism, hate and bigotry; anti-defamation groups; and elected officials.⁶⁰ HAF only filed suit after that the State Board of Education refused to afford due process to Hindu groups and utilized closed door meetings and "underground regulations."⁶¹

3. **Allegation (pgs. 24 & 31):** 2006- 2012 -- According to Vivek Welfare and Educational Foundation's tax records, HAF leaders have served on the VWEF board: Suhag Shukla from 2006-2008 and Nikhil Joshi from 2009-2012. During these years the VWEF contributed funds to Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation, HSS, Hindu University, Param Shakti Peeth, Sewa Bharti Bhopal, and Vishwa Hindu Parishad.

Fact: Suhag Shukla and Nikhil Joshi are listed for brief terms on the Board of Directors of the Vivek Welfare and Educational Foundation, as were other prominent members of the Hindu American community then residing in Florida. Both of these HAF leaders limited their interactions exclusively to the management of the Hindu University of America, an institution of unique importance to the Hindu American community. Neither Shukla nor Joshi provided any input in disbursements of funds to other tax-exempt organizations listed by the Vivek Foundation.

4. **Allegation (pg. 31):** November 2009 -- Sheetal Shah, Development and Outreach Director of HAF, attended and spoke at the "Hindu Dharma Sabha" in New Jersey, organized by Forum for Hindu Awakening and self-identified Hindu nationalist group Hindu Janajagruti Samiti (News India-Times 2009).

Fact: HAF leaders have attended and spoken at a number of events and conferences over the past 11 years on a range of topics. Sheetal Shah's talk at the Hindu Dharma Sabha event in New Jersey in 2009 on the challenges facing Hindu Americans and the importance of advocacy was no different. To personally malign her for speaking on legitimate issues that face the Hindu American community is another attempt by Hinduphobic groups, such as SACW, to censure Hindu American voices.

5. **Allegation (pg. 31):** 2012 -- HAF and the VHPA's Hindu Mandir Executive Council collaborated on a Hindu Chaplaincy Program (VHPA 2012).

Fact: HAF is proud to play a role in developing a chaplaincy program with the Hindu Mandir Executive Council (HMEC), the largest network of Hindu temple executives in the country and one of the most respected fora of Hindu temple leaders from throughout the nation addressing urgent issues concerning these institutions. The chaplaincy program aims to train and accredit Hindu American chaplains who seek to serve the spiritual needs of Hindu Americans in hospitals, universities, and the military. Unlike other religious communities in the U.S., Hindu Americans

⁵⁹ California Textbook Issue Summary of Events, http://hafsite.org/campaigns_education_california_summary.htm.

⁶⁰ *Id.*

⁶¹ HINDU AMERICAN FOUNDATION, et al., v. CALIFORNIA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION, et al., Case No. 06 CS 00386.

currently have no formal training and accreditation programs for chaplains.⁶² To attack HAF's involvement in such a program is tantamount to attacking the ability and right of Hindu Americans to have certified chaplains to serve the broader community's spiritual and religious needs.

6. **Allegation (pg. 31):** *December 2012 -- HAF co-founder Aseem Shukla wrote an opinion piece, "Absurd to deny Modi a US visa" in India Abroad (Shukla 2012).*

Fact: The opinion piece in question written by HAF co-founder, Aseem Shukla, made legitimate arguments in its criticism of a 2012 Congressional letter to Secretary Clinton requesting that the U.S. government continue to deny Mr. Narendra Modi entry into the country for his alleged role in the 2002 Gujarat riots.⁶³ The article merely pointed out that Mr. Modi was absolved of any complicity in the riots by an Indian Supreme Court appointed Special Investigative Team, questioned the ideological motivations of the four main legislators behind the letter, and noted the hypocrisy of U.S. policy towards Mr. Modi, while protecting other foreign leaders accused of egregious human rights violations. The position taken by Shukla in that article had little to do with "Hindu nationalism" and has been echoed by many well-respected foreign policy analysts in recent months. Fareed Zakaria, an Indian Muslim, for example, criticized U.S. policy towards Mr. Modi, calling the denial of a visa "utterly arbitrary."⁶⁴

7. **Allegation (pg. 31):** *February 2013 -- HAF was among the groups lobbying U.S. Representative Mike Honda to stop his support of the continued visa denial of Narendra Modi (Jha 2013).*

Fact: On November 29, 2012, 25 Members of Congress, including Representative Mike Honda (D-CA), sent a letter to former U.S. Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, requesting that the U.S. government continue to deny Mr. Narendra Modi, the erstwhile Chief Minister of India's western Gujarat state, entry into the country for his alleged role in the 2002 Gujarat riots.⁶⁵ The campaign behind the letter was spearheaded by the fringe umbrella organization, [Coalition Against Genocide \(CAG\)](#).⁶⁶

Indian and Hindu American constituents and leaders from Congressman Honda's district, including local members of HAF, met with him to provide an alternative perspective to the one presented by CAG and requested him to reconsider his position on the letter. The group provided Congressman Honda with accurate information and facts about the riots, pointed out that the letter attempted to influence events in India and undermined U.S. - India relations, and noted that Mr. Modi's visa denial was selective and arbitrary. No other foreign leader, including from countries where religious freedom remains highly problematic, such as Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan, had ever been denied entry into the United States under Section 212(a)(2)(G) of the Immigration and Nationality Act.⁶⁷

⁶² Sherma, Rita D., "The Necessity of a Hindu American Chaplaincy," The Interfaith Observer, <http://theinterfaithobserver.org/journal-articles/2013/9/6/the-necessity-of-a-hindu-american-chaplaincy.html>.

⁶³ Congressional Letter to U.S. Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, November 12, 2013, <http://pitts.house.gov/sites/pitts.house.gov/files/documents/Letter%20to%20Sec.%20State%20re%20Narendra%20Modi%20visa%20application.pdf>.

⁶⁴ Zakaria, Fareed, "U.S. policy on India, and Modi, needs to change" May 16, 2014, The Washington Post, at <http://fareedzakaria.com/2014/05/16/u-s-policy-on-india-and-modi-needs-to-change/>.

⁶⁵ Congressional Letter to U.S. Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, November 12, 2013, <http://pitts.house.gov/sites/pitts.house.gov/files/documents/Letter%20to%20Sec.%20State%20re%20Narendra%20Modi%20visa%20application.pdf>.

⁶⁶ "Bipartisan Press Conference at Capitol Hill Demands Justice in Gujarat, India," December 5, 2012, Coalition Against Genocide, <http://www.coalitionagainstgenocide.org/press/cag.pr.05dec2012.php>.

⁶⁷ Zakaria, Fareed, "U.S. policy on India, and Modi, needs to change" May 16, 2014, The Washington Post, at <http://fareedzakaria.com/2014/05/16/u-s-policy-on-india-and-modi-needs-to-change/>.

8. **Allegation (pg. 31):** December 2013-2014 -- HAF made public statements against House Resolution 417 (Sohrabji 2013; HAF 2014b).

Fact: HAF, along with a coalition of over 130 Indian and Hindu organizations from the U.S. and across the globe spoke out against [House Resolution 417](#) (H.Res. 417),⁶⁸ a highly flawed and inaccurate anti-India and anti-Hindu resolution, aimed at interfering with the election process in India and undermining its secular democracy. The biased and one-sided resolution selectively highlighted certain incidents of violence in India to portray Hindus as the only perpetrators of religious riots, while ignoring violence committed by other groups and the complex nature of inter-religious dynamics in India. It also provocatively called for the creation of separate extra-judicial religious minority courts to conduct trials and hear appeals (unheard of in the U.S.), and failed to mention India's unprecedented religious accommodations for minorities.⁶⁹

Fact: HAF's position on H.Res. 417 is consistent with a number of well-respected Congressional leaders and members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee (HFAC), including Reps. Tulsi Gabbard (D-HI), Chairman Ed Royce (R-CA), and Ranking Member, Eni Faleomavaega (D-American Samoa), who all [spoke out openly against H. Res. 417](#) for undermining U.S. - India relations.⁷⁰ Two Congressman, Steve Chabot (R-OH) and Scott Perry (R-PA) even withdrew their co-sponsorship from the resolution.⁷¹ Despite a systematic campaign by groups such as CAG and Indian American Muslim Council, and the use of a lobbying firm, Fidelis Government Relations, to push House Resolution 417,⁷² the vast majority of Members of Congress refused to co-sponsor House Resolution 417 (the resolution only garnered 53 co-sponsors out of a total 435 members in the House).⁷³

9. **Allegation (pg. 31):** 2014 -- VHPA leaders Kavita Pallod and Rishi Bhutada are on the HAF Executive Council and Board of Directors, respectively (HAF 2014a). Both have served as directors of a VHPA youth camp in Texas (Chugh 2012; Giri 2005).

Fact: Neither Kavita Pallod or Rishi Bhutada have ever held a leadership position in VHPA or any other VHP organization. This particular youth camp in Texas is primarily run by second generation Hindu young professionals and college students. Previous directors of the camp select the director of that year's camp, and they control the camp's curriculum. VHPA's Houston Chapter only provides logistical and financial support to the camp, and the national VHPA has no role in the camp.

Other Allegations

⁶⁸ Joseph, George, "HAF Versus IAMC Over House Resolution That Calls on India to Protect Minorities," December 13, 2013, India Abroad, <http://www.indiaabroad-digital.com/indiaabroad/20131213?pg=12#pg12>.

⁶⁹ H. Res. 417, 113th Congress, Congress.gov, <https://beta.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-resolution/417/text>.

⁷⁰ "U.S. Lawmakers Critical of House Resolution on India," December 10, 2013, The Economic Times, http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2013-12-10/news/45035332_1_strategic-dialogue-haf-us-and-india; "First Hindu Member Of Congress Opposes Anti-India Resolution, H. Res. 417," December 19, 2013, HAF, http://hafsite.org/First_Hindu_Member_of_Congress_Opposes_Anti_India_Resolution.

⁷¹ H. Res. 417, 113th Congress, Congress.gov, <https://beta.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-resolution/417/text>.

⁷² Joseph, George, "HAF Versus IAMC Over House Resolution That Calls on India to Protect Minorities," December 13, 2013, India Abroad, <http://www.indiaabroad-digital.com/indiaabroad/20131213?pg=12#pg12>.

⁷³ *Id.*; Congressional Profile, Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives, http://clerk.house.gov/member_info/cong.aspx.

1. **Allegation (pg. 24):** *Infinity Foundation (identification number 22-3339826) supports Hindutva by distributing its monies in a more diffuse manner: through offering book grants and concentrating funding on university departments and other academic institutions. The Foundation has not claimed to be part of the Sangh Parivar, though the Foundation's tax returns indicate that the organization has donated to U.S. Sangh affiliates Hindu American Foundation (2007)...*

Fact: HAF is only one among numerous organizations, universities, and individuals that have received donations or grants from the Infinity Foundation. Others include the American Red Cross, Asia Society, Tibet House, Southern Poverty Law Center, Rutgers University, Harvard University, and Miami University, just to name a few.⁷⁴ In the same year that HAF received a donation from the Infinity Foundation for its work in education, the American Economic Association, American Red Cross, and Rutgers University also received donations.⁷⁵ To claim that such donations support "Hindutva" is both inaccurate and illogical.

2. **Allegation (pg. 28):** *The Hindu American Foundation (HAF, identification number 68-0551525), among other groups, protested Narendra Modi's ban in a public demonstration (Joseph 2005).*

Fact: HAF never participated in any "public demonstration" against the denial of a visa to former Gujarat Chief Minister and current Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi. HAF did, however, condemn House Resolution 160, a resolution introduced by Rep. Joseph Pitts (R-PA) and Rep. John Conyers (D-MI) in 2005, for selectively presenting violence in India to imply that all violence was perpetrated by Hindus and terror against Hindus was somehow justified because of the 2002 Gujarat Riots.⁷⁶

Fact: HAF has consistently condemned all violence committed during the 2002 Gujarat Riots,⁷⁷ and only began criticizing the denial of Mr. Modi's visa as selective and arbitrary, in light of his exoneration by India's judicial system and the ability of leaders from countries such as Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Bangladesh with atrocious human rights records to enter the U.S. freely. As noted above, this position is now shared by many in the foreign policy establishment.

3. **Allegation (pg. 30, footnote 23):** *Despite the claim that the 'Hindu American Foundation is not affiliated with any religious or political organizations or entities' on its website, HAF president Mihir Meghani was identified on the VHPA website as a former VHPA National Governing Council member and as a member of the HSS by the defenders of the IDRF (HAF 2014c; Rao et al 2003; VHPA 2001).*

Fact: This footnote doesn't make any evidentiary link between HAF as an organization and any other political or religious organization. It merely rehashes a more than decade old connection between one of HAF's co-founder and board member, Mihir Meghani, in his individual capacity, and other religio-cultural organizations.

4. **Allegation (pg. 34, appendix A):** *Leadership overlaps between Hindu nationalist affiliated organizations: Mihir Meghani VHPA- Governing Council Member (VHPA 2001); HSS Member (Rao*

⁷⁴ Grants Listed by Fiscal year, Infinity Foundation, http://www.infinityfoundation.com/grants_by_year.shtml.

⁷⁵ Infinity Foundation 2007 Tax Return, CitizensAudit.org, http://pdfs.citizenaudit.org/2008_05_PF/22-3339826_990PF_200706.pdf.

⁷⁶ http://hafsite.org/media/news/20050321_pitts.

⁷⁷ http://www.hafsite.org/media/pr/20050321_pitts; http://www.hafsite.org/media/letters/20060217_indiaabroad_california.

et al 2003); HAF Co-founder and on the Board of Directors (HAF 2010); Wrote public letter in support of IDRF (Meghani 2003)

Fact: As noted above, Mihir Meghani's past affiliation with other religio-cultural organizations in his individual capacity (2001 and 2003) prior to HAF coming into existence has no bearing on HAF's status as an independent organization. In addition, Meghani's letter to the editor in response to a smear campaign against India Development and Relief Fund (IDRF) merely expresses his opinion that the attack IDRF was part of a larger politically motivated campaign by Marxist groups against Hindus, that there are many prominent Muslims associated with IDRF, and that the organization "serve[s] the poor and needy marginalized communities in India, irrespective of religion, caste, language, or political view."⁷⁸

Conclusion

Subjected to deeper scrutiny into its background, SACW, similar to CAG, stands exposed in this report as nothing more than an ostensibly anonymous, opaque internet based portal with links to primarily defunct, non-incorporated or shell groups whose purpose is to promote Marxist ideology and openly advocate Hinduphobic, anti-American and anti-Indian views.

Despite SACW espousing "dissent" -- it is nearly absent from any of the crucial civil rights or constitutional debates ongoing in the United States. While HAF has an established track record in taking prominent progressive positions and constructively working towards promoting human/civil rights, immigration reform, gun control and even LGBT rights, SACW seems more intent on importing ideological agendas and cultural wars from India into the American context.

⁷⁸ "Meghani, Mihir, The Enemies of Indian-Americans are Indian-Americans Themselves," Letter to the Editor, April 4, 2003, India West, http://www.letindiadevelop.org/LettersToEditors/4_IndiaWest_April42003.shtml