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HOW TO
DESTROY
CASTE
SYSTEM

(Strategy for Revolution)

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HOW TO DESTROY CASTE SYSTEM

Strategy for Revolution

By V. T. Rajshekar Shetty

1) Magnitude of the problem :

I have been asked to tackle a problem in which India's greatest revolutionaries have failed. Buddha, Basavanna, Mahatma Phule, Narayana Guru, Ambedkar, Periyar could not destroy this world's most durable institution. Even Marxism, which had uprooted societies in almost half the world, appears to be shuddering before the almighty caste. How can a small fry like me be expected to come out with a solution that too in a seminar paper like this. And all of you know how and why seminars are conducted these days and the standard of papers read there.

2) It is the considered opinion of all social scientists, both Indian and foreign, that we are not having a revolution like Russia or China solely because of our caste system, the solid foundation on which the Hindu religion is built. It is the caste that is coming in the way of revolution. So when I am asked to suggest steps to destroy caste system that means you are indirectly asking me to outline a strategy for revolution.

So you can very well imagine the seriousness of the subject. Nay. It is the most important subject. In fact, every thinking person in India and outside is worried about this. Why India is not having a revolution? Why even such grinding poverty has not made the Indians angry? India was in the

Third World and the joke in the international corridors today is that India is no longer in the Third World. It has "graduated" to the Fourth World. It is no longer the "Sick man of Asia". It is indeed the sickest man of the world.

That means our task is made all the more difficult. Serious students of revolution may laugh at our pedestrian approach in this paper. Therefore, we confess our limitations and our inability to tackle such a gigantic problem and that too in a short paper like this. Therefore, we request to be pardoned if our stray thoughts go awry.

3) Language :

The biggest impediment for Indian revolution is not the country's size but language. China, which is three times larger than India, had a revolution two years after India became independent. China despite its size had revolution because there was no caste system. What is coming in the way is the language problem. Language barrier is so serious a problem that even within the four Dravidian South Indian States people from one province cannot understand the language of another. The revolution started by Periyar could not spread outside Tamil Nadu because of this difficulty. The Hindi-speaking people will not recognise the leadership of anybody other than themselves. This was the handicap of a leader from the South. Besides, the vast Hindi heartland is the conservative chunk and the seat of power - Central Government - is situated in this stinking area.

Therefore, knowing the limitations it is better if the plan of action is confined to the South which is the most progressive part of India. Better still if the plan of action is narrowed down to a province. However, we from outside have great hope in Tamil Nadu which we consider as the natural leader of "revolution".

Those interested in anti-caste movement must do everything to resist "Hindi imperialism" led by Hindu communal elements. Therefore, while fighting against Hindi, we should also strengthen the cause of English which is also the best medium to strengthen science and rationalism.

At the same time, we have to launch a movement to remove Sanskrit words from the South Indian languages and also encourage the cause of Urdu. We have to support the agitation to make Urdu as the second language in different States where it is a force. Let it be clearly understood that Hindi cannot be accepted as the national language. Accepting Hindi means accepting the Brahmin leadership. India is not a nation but a confederation of nationalities. The moment we accept Hindi as the "national language", it means we are accepting India as a nation. Hindi is more foreign to us than English.

Language diversity is therefore the biggest bottleneck for revolution which our communal "ruling class" has used to its advantage. Periyar E.V.R.'s stand on the language is the best guide for us. As far as possible we have to take to English. It is English which opened our minds to modern revolutionary ideas. Hindi will make us docile and obedient to caste, while English will whip up our suppressed revolutionary fervour.

4) Beware of politicians :

The most important precaution that we should take in our anti-caste war is never to depend upon politicians. Politics is not merely last refuge of scoundrels. It is the first refuge. Political changes will not lead to social change. We have seen different political parties coming to power both in the Centre and the provinces. Even the extreme Left party CPM has come to power in West Bengal and Kerala. But in no way caste has suffered a setback. On the other hand it is getting fresh feathers. The Indian poverty is not so much due to want of

political or economic changes as due to social reasons. It is the social oppression that has led to economic and political oppression. Therefore those who are interested in social change should never enter into electoral politics.

Avoid contesting elections including trade unions. Nor should we approach a political party or a political leader. However, we can exploit them for our purposes. The advice given by Periyar E. V. Ramaswamy in this is the most scientific. Failure to heed this advice has dampened the revolutionary fervour of our Marxists. So let us keep off electoral politics.

5) Autonomy :

All those who are interested in waging a war against caste must study and know the Brahmin mind. The Brahmin always harps on strong Central Government with a weak province and puts down any move at decentralisation because he knows that autonomy strikes at the very root of caste system. India is such a large country, nay a sub-continent, that any effort at striking at the caste system is like putting 100 bags of sugar to the Arabian sea. It is not possible to sweeten this vast ocean that is India.

So, as far as possible we have to confine our efforts to small areas, if possible even less than a province. For this we have to first understand that India is not a nation but a group of nationalities. Each caste is a nation by itself. So we have to start an agitation to make India a federal State with an autonomous South India. Centre must retain only the Defence, currency, foreign affairs, communications and surrender the rest to the provinces. And even the provincial Government must be further decentralised. The untouchables, tribals and minorities must have full "reservation" and autonomy to decide on their affairs. In the North we must start an agitation to split gigantic States like U.P., Bihar and M. P. into several States. The Eastern part must be an autonomous region like South India.

Brahmins get strength only as long as India remains a unitary state with heavy concentration of power in the Central Government. Any weakening of the Central Government means automatic weakening of the caste system and the power of the Brahmins. The low castes will get greater say only when the unit of administration is as small as possible. Therefore, our strategy should be to "bombard" the Hindi heartland. And this can be done by launching a backward class, Dalit, tribal and Muslim movement in the Hindi heartland.

The Hindi heartland is also called the "Chamar belt", the abode of the lowest variety of untouchables. Chamars are one of the most combustible stuff. Unfortunately this community has not produced a leader of the stature of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. If a militant Dalit movement is organised in this Chamar belt, this oppressed section is sure to explode and set fire to the Hindi heartland. We have to properly harness the Chamar power by spreading the message of Dr. Ambedkar and Periyar into this jungle of Hindu communalism where the contradictions are very sharp.

In this connection, we commend the pioneering efforts of V. Anaimuthu for spreading the message of Periyar into the nooks and corners of Bihar climaxing in a massive celebration in the country's capital of Delhi. We also commend the efforts of Kanshi Ram, President of the BAMCEF, in launching a strong Dalit movement in the Chamar belt with the cooperation of Muslims and Christians.

The strategy adopted by these two persons appear to be by far the best for annihilation of caste.

6) Jharkhand & Dalitastan :

The best and the easiest method of breaking the impenetrable Hindi heartland is to lend full support to the struggle of

the tribals for a separate Jharkhand State comprising 14 districts to be carved out of Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa, M.P. etc. The tribals, being animists (not Hindus) are the most militant people whose support can be fully counted in our struggle against caste. They can be our best and surest ally.

The untouchables forming one-fifth of the Indian population also form the most revolutionary section of the society. Since Hindu religion, based on the "sacred scriptures" have sanctioned the torture of untouchables, these "wretched of the earth" have no other go but to seek a separate autonomous State of their own called Dalitastan. Since we have elaborated this point in a separate paper, there is no need to go into the details. A separate monograph on this subject is under publication. But suffice it to say that a Dalitastan will cut at the very root of caste. The untouchables being the worst victims of the caste, they will be the first to join any movement against caste. So we have to popularise the concept of Dalitastan and start a militant movement towards this goal. Tamil Nadu being the purest Dravidian and Adi Dravidian State and since Tamil was once the language spoken all over India before the Aryans invaded India and since Tamilians even to this day happened to be the most virile people and - thanks to Periyar - the most inveterate enemies of the Brahmins, Tamil Nadu with Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and parts Maharashtra can be easily converted or carved into a Dalitastan. "Tamil or Dravida was not merely the language of South India but before the Aryans came it was the language of the whole of India, and was spoken from Kashmir to Cape Comorin. In fact, it was the language of the Nagas throughout India". (Dr. Ambedkar: "The Untouchables" - Page 74, Bharatiya Bauddha Shiksha Parishad, Rs. 12).

Pending the formation of Dalitastan, we have to support every Dalit struggle - particularly the education of Dalits through formation of a separate Dalit University. Shifting of the Dalit

population from rural to urban areas has to be supported. This has to be done in an organised way.

7) Dictatorship of the Dalits :

The most important pre-requisite for the destruction of caste is the passing of power to the hands of Dalits. The untouchables and tribals are the sworn enemies of Brahmins and their brainchild, caste. Being outside the "Chatur Varna" they are not contaminated by the caste rules. Being a cent percent de-Sanskritised lot, they are not inhibited by the Brahminical philosophy. Therefore we have to do everything to bring about the dictatorship of the Dalits. What the Marxists call the "dictatorship of the proletariat" will take the shape of "dictatorship of the Dalits" under the Indian conditions.

Only such a dictatorship will be able to destroy Brahminism and their progeny, the caste. Therefore, we must first accept this principle of dictatorship of the Dalits. Whether they are high caste shudras or low caste shudras (backward classes and other backward classes), they will have to recognise this fact first. One cannot conduct an anti-caste and anti-Brahmin movement, and at the same time oppress the untouchables. Not only that. We go one step further. And urge upon the BCs and OBCs to give the leadership of the anti-caste movement to the untouchables. You will see the difference then.

Why give the leadership to untouchables? We have already answered this question partly when we said that this is the one section that is uninhibited by the Brahminical rules. The enemy no 1 of the Brahmin is the untouchable and vice-versa also. The two are like the serpent and the mongoose. Ambedkar has cited the reasons (Untouchables-Page 94-1977), for this antagonism:- The untouchables have denied the supremacy of the Brahmin and sacred scriptures. They do not

worship Hindu gods, are not served by Brahmin priests, denied access to Hindu temples, they cause pollution, bury their dead, eat beef and do not rever the cow.

While the rest are tainted by the Brahmin philosophy, the untouchables and tribals are the two purest and perhaps the original Indians. Being socially, economically and culturally the most deprived they are the most revolutionary people. Therefore, they are the most explosive. What is needed is a mere ignition. Somebody has to light the fuse. So the Shudras must surrender to the untouchables. Beg to be pardoned and request them to take over the leadership of the anti-caste war. They must assure them that they would be the backbone of this war and supply them with all the men and resources.

You will see the difference then. Once the untouchables take over the leadership, the anti-caste war will spread like a wild fire and sweep the country. The Periyar movement has suffered in Tamil Nadu because it passed into the hands of the BCs and OBCs who monopolised it and never gave equal opportunity to untouchables who had no say in it. The BCs and OBCs gained a lot from the Periyar movement but having gained repeated what Brahmins did to them. They excelled the Brahmins in the cruelty towards untouchables. Naturally the Brahmins tried to fish in the troubled waters and gained a lot by cultivating the untouchables. No Shudra movement can gain if isolated from the untouchables. For further details please see my "Caravan" article, "Rise and Fall of the Shudra Movement" (dated Oct. 1, 1980).

Therefore we have to learn from this lesson and surrender to the untouchables. I am not elaborating this point for want of time. Brahmins in particular and Hindus in general having been ruling India specially since independence, have not only failed to solve the poverty of India but more than that they have

thoroughly failed in destroying the caste. Nay, they are not interested in the task. Therefore, those Hindus who are interested in the destruction of caste must do everything to strengthen the Dalits and help establish the dictatorship of the Dalits. The leadership of the anti-caste war must go to untouchables and we will see the difference then.

8) Destroy sanctity of the Shastras :

Why do Hindus scrupulously observe caste? Because to a Hindu his religion is caste. There is, therefore, nothing wrong if the Hindu observes caste. So who is our enemy? Is it the Hindu or his religion? And this religion of the Hindu is based on the "sacred scriptures". Therefore, our enemy is not the Hindu but the scriptures. How can these scriptures which are mere books like any other books wield so much of influence on the Hindus from centuries? Because these are not ordinary books. They have the divine sanction. Therefore, we will not be able to destroy the caste without destroying the scriptures and the divine sanction for it. All those who led the crusade against caste and also succeeded a great deal in their historic mission adopted this very same method of destroying the sanctity behind the shastras. Buddha, Ambedkar and Periyar not only asked the people to discard the shastras but also repudiated the divine sanctity and authority behind it. Ambedkar and Periyar also burnt the Manu Smriti. We have to burn not only the scriptures but every institution created by it.

"Caste has a divine basis. You must therefore destroy the sacredness and divinity with which caste has become invested. In the last analysis, this means you must destroy the authority of the Shastras and the Vedas (Ambedkar-Annihilation of Caste-Bhim Patrika Publications-Jullundur-1975, Page 87).

So it is not enough if we merely oppose Brahmins and try to dislodge them and then usurp the places occupied by them. What happens? We dislodge the Brahmins and commit more

crimes than them after taking over their places. That is why we say Brahminism is more dangerous than Brahmins. That is why the Dalits hate the B. Cs and O. B. Cs more than Brahmins. So we have to give greater importance to destruction of the Brahminism rather than ending the Brahmin hegemony. But the destruction of Brahminism is more difficult than dislodging Brahmins. Political power at least in South Indian provinces has passed into the hands of non-Brahmins. But has it weakened the caste in any way? The non-Brahmins have proved to be greater supporters of caste than Brahmins. The latter at least can be silenced by physical threat but the landed Shudras will not be cowed. When Ambedkar said "destroy the sacredness and divinity of the shastras", what he meant was destruction of Brahminism. That means not only we should not go to Hindu temples but we should not worship any gods and goddesses created by the Brahmins, should not recognise the authority of the sacred scriptures also. This is not sufficient. The most important thing is never to invite Brahmin priests and never to observe Brahmin festivals. Our houses should have no trace of Brahmin culture. What Brahmins love, we must hate. What they hate, we must love.

Periyar had shown us the way and we call upon all those people interested in the destruction of caste to emulate the historic example set by Periyar. The self-respect marriage is a revolutionary custom adopted by Periyar, striking at the very root of caste. Discarding the "Mangala Sutra" is yet another fantastic feat. We have to spread this message into every house in South India.

The anti-Brahmin domination movement recently stepped up by the Dravida Kazhagam (which this writer had the privilege of inaugurating at two places in 1980 at Tirunelveli and Coimbatore) will have to be launched vigorously. But it is not enough if it is confined merely to Tamil Nadu and the D. K. will have to spread its net into the neighbouring States-but confine it to South India for the time being. Once the Periyar

movement is spread to the whole of the South, then we can threaten the Brahmin-dominated Central Government. For this, Periyar and Ambedkar literature will have to be translated to other Indian languages and sold in cheap editions.

The rationalist movement will have to be stepped up. We have to conduct classes in slums and villages, teach the youth not to worship the past. The youth must be told that India's "glorious cultural heritage" is nothing but bunkum. The "golden age" of India was not the achievement of the Brahmins but the enemies of the Brahmins. The credit goes to Ashoka—who was the pillar of Buddhism. India's greatest universities that attracted world-wide attention—Nalanda and Takshila—were Buddhist institutions and the language of the students there was Pali and not Sanskrit. We have to tell all these things to our youth and prepare them to bury the past and build a new society without caste. Once they are convinced that caste is a hoax, inter-caste marriage will automatically follow. But let us not be duped by empty Gandhian slogans like inter-caste marriage or inter-dining, common well programme. These things will follow once the caste is destroyed. But those who are interested in perpetuating caste make much of inter-caste marriage, inter-dining, common well programme etc. Beware of this. Caste is not so simple to be eradicated by such cosmetic treatment.

9) Reservations in proportion to population of each caste :

While we have to intensify agitation for reservations to OBCs and fulfil reservations for scheduled castes and tribes in both recruitment as well as in promotions, our main fight should be for reservations in proportion to the population of each caste. Scheduled castes and tribes have constitutional reservations in proportion to their population. That the reservations are not

at all implemented is another question, but the principle of reservation in proportion to the population of each must be accepted. We have to fight for similar population-wise reservations to all castes-BCs and OBCs.

Why do the Brahmins and other high castes unanimously oppose reservations? Why there is a chorus against reservations? Because the high castes know that reservations will spell doom to their domination. They are worried about the fall of their well-preserved citadels. Those who have been enjoying the property and privilege will naturally do anything to fight to preserve it. History is packed with their valiant fight to hold on to their property-privileges. No man with property and privilege has surrendered it voluntarily except at the point of gun. So if the high castes fight against reservations in India, we should not be surprised. On the other hand, their antagonism must make us redouble our efforts to fight for reservations even at the cost of bloodshed.

Therefore, we must fight for reservations even in Central services. The high caste monopoly will crack once reservations are enforced in central services. The reservations must be extended to Muslims and Christians also and also those scheduled caste and tribe converts. And this principle of reservation has to be extended not only to the police and the army but even to the private sector particularly to the newspaper and other media. A separate police force consisting exclusively of untouchables, tribes and Muslims must be demanded.

For this we have to launch a virulent agitation. And there is no time to waste. The high castes will not take this lying down. They will let loose State terror, use the police and the army against us. Let us be ready for this "caste war" to end the caste.

10) Right strategy :

However mighty the defence forces may be and whatever.

be the economic strength and the morale of the people, the best of war may be lost if the strategy goes wrong. In this case, the war is against caste which has withstood every attack from centuries. It is no ordinary war. It is a war to end all other wars in India. So the enemy that we are facing is not an ordinary one. Brahmins have greater destructive capacity than the most dangerous hydra-headed serpent or hydrogen bomb. Unless we have the right strategy and tactics we may not win the war. History's mightiest attack on caste led by the Buddha had failed. Similarly, all other wars had also ended in ignoble defeats, all because of want of proper strategy.

What should be the strategy? The first and foremost strategy should be to identify our friends and seek their cooperation in this war against caste. Enemy's enemy is always friend. Who are the enemies of our enemy? We have to find out this and cast our net wide to broadbase our united front. The larger the number of allies the greater our strength will be. One may have some differences with the allies but for the time being we will have to forget them. Until we defeat and crush the enemy no. 1, let us close ranks.

In this task our best and safest allies are the Muslims and the Christians. And they are ready to jump into this united front. Muslims are the most uncompromising enemies of the Brahminism. Our experience has taught us that Muslims with their sizeable population (about 15%) and international connections will be our most invaluable asset. Islam is the one and the only religion that has refused to compromise with Brahminism. The Hindu communal forces led by the RSS are not afraid of anybody except the Muslims. Brahminism will never compromise with Islam because it is the only religion that has upheld egalitarian principles, abhorred idol worship and also stuck to beef-eating. The frequent "Hindu-Muslim communal riots" are the best indication of the high caste antagonism against this virile race. Muslims can be trusted as our best and most sincere friends in our war against caste.

So let us forge our alliance of untouchables, tribals, Muslims and Christians. Door is open to O. B.Cs. For want of space we cannot expand in this but suffice it to say that such an alliance would be the best strategy in the war against caste.

11) Bury Gandhism :

Gandhism is another name for Brahminism and the title of 'Mahatma' was given by Brahmins to Gandhi for the service rendered to promote Brahminism. In none of his writings or speeches, Gandhi has criticised the caste system. Nay, he defended it. The very fact that the RSS and its political arm, the Jan Sangh, and its political reincarnation, Bharatiya Janata Party, at its annual session (Dec. 1980) adopted "Gandhian socialism" as its basic philosophy proves that Gandhism is the main prop for the Indian brand of fascism. (For further details please read M. N. Roy's book : "Fascism"). Today Gandhi is quoted and Gandhian institutions monopolised by the high castes because they know full well that Gandhism is the best status quoist philosophy available in India. Therefore all those interested in destroying caste must do everything to pull down Gandhi and Gandhism and bury it 100 fathoms deep. The upper caste writers and journalists have succeeded in spreading canards that it was Gandhi who was the saviour of untouchables. They must be told that Gandhi is their enemy no. 1 and that it was Ambedkar and Periyar who saved them.

12) Take to beef-eating :

Nothing will strike at the very foundation of caste system better than beef-eating because it was the root cause of the division of the society into Hindus and untouchables. Brahmins were the most voracious beef-eaters during the Vedic period (there are any number of references to it in the "sacred scriptures"). Why did they give up what they considered as the most delicious food? "To my mind, it was strategy which

made the Brahmins give up beef-eating and start worshipping the cow. The clue to the worship of the cow is to be found in the struggle between Buddhism and Brahminism and the means adopted by Brahminism to establish its supremacy over Buddhism". (Dr. Ambedkar, "The Untouchables"-Page 151)

The non-Brahmins also ate beef but they only gave up eating beef while Brahmins became pure vegetarians, of course barring those in Bengal and Kashmir. Therefore, if we want to destroy Brahminism we must take to beef-eating with a vengeance. The "Sarkari Sant", Acharya Vinoba Bhave, one of the pillars of Brahminism, gets full support from the RSS and Indira Gandhi in his periodic anti-cow slaughter outbursts because they all know that such efforts promote Brahminism.

Therefore, to express our solidarity with Muslims in particular and untouchables, tribals and Christians in general, we must vigorously mount a counter-attack by holding widely publicised beef parties. We must do everything to promote beef-eating and this would win the hearts of Muslims who are the most inveterate enemies of Brahminism. Please do not forget to eat beef on Hindu festival days.

13) Non-violence :

Without tearing aside the mask of non-violence worn by the Hindu, the most violent man on earth, we cannot make a breakthrough in our anti-caste war.

The Hindu is known for his double-talk, double-think and double-cross. The humbug of Ahimsa is the most glaring proof of this. It is this humbug of non-violence that keeps the caste system alive and kicking. It is the ingenious invention of the crooked Brahmin brain, from centuries exclusively enjoying all the privileges and properties. They know that the low castes and untouchables sometimes lose their patience when the burden

imposed upon them becomes unbearable. How to keep them disarmed? Non-violence is the best weapon. "Ahimsa" is the best trick adopted by the high castes to see that the low castes do not retaliate

The low castes must be told that non-violence cannot be a one-way traffic. When the high castes practice so much of violence by keeping 1/5 of the society as untouchables and over half of the Indian population hovering between life and death, why should low castes alone remain silent? The exploited sections have every right to hit back. Even the law provides that under grave provocation even murder is permitted. The organised violence perpetrated by 10% of the Hindu society which derives divine sanction for its violence can be met with organised resistance purely for self-defence. Indian untouchability is the most naked form of racial discrimination before which the apartheid pales into insignificance. The cruelty and heartlessness of the Hindu high castes has no parallel in the world. There cannot be a more violent person than the non-violent-looking Hindu. So there is nothing wrong in fighting tyranny. In self-defence, we can arm ourselves. Not only we have to make all preparations but get proper training in self-defence. The untouchables have their axe in which they cut the buffalo. The Government has permitted them to carry it. The tribals have their bow and arrow. So these two major sections have their own weapons. The rest have to equip themselves for this impending "caste-war" that is fast developing in the countryside, and spreading to cities also. [As this is going to press Gujarat is gripped by the worst caste war in the history of India raging for over two months now].

Whether we like it or not we will be pushed into the "caste war". Therefore, instead of getting caught unawares, and unprepared, it is better that we equip ourselves-in self-defence.

The military, the police and the para-military forces are all full of Dalits and other weaker sections. But unfortunately these very people are used by the "ruling class" to crush us.

Therefore, we have to educate them also and convince them not to be willing tools of the "ruling class" but join us in this "holy war". That will liberate them and liberate the country also

Immediately we have to start an agitation for "arms to untouchables". The untouchables being the worst victims of caste atrocities, nobody needs guns more urgently than them. Voluntary agencies and militant Dalit organisations can give training to untouchables in such violence-prone areas. An agitation may be started demanding arms to the untouchables, a demand conceded by the Bihar Government but not yet implemented.

We have to learn a lot from this heroic struggle of the tribals and particularly the Nagas in the Eastern part of India. Their help can be sought to guide us

14) International Help:

The low castes, particularly the untouchables, have no friends inside India. Not only the "ruling class", the State, the Press, and the "public opinion" are also hostile to them, but they will do everything to crush them. Even their feeble cry will be silenced. In keeping with his noble principle of "tolerance" of Hinduism, every anti-caste crusade has been mercilessly put down. If the country is today reduced to a beggar nation and the people enfeebled, crippled and crushed, it is solely because of caste. So an anti-caste war is the holiest of the "holy war". And we can do everything to explore every possibility and seek anybody's help to fight this holiest of holy wars.

Since we are sure that we can get no friends inside India, and know full well that we are besieged by the most criminal-minded foes, we have every right to save ourselves and save the country. The country rightly belongs to untouchables and

tribals who are its original inhabitants. Brahmins are as much "foreigners" as others. If Islam and Christianity are a "foreign" religion, Hinduism is also equally a foreign religion. So Brahmins being "foreigners" naturally they cannot be expected to have so much love for this land as the untouchables and tribals and Dravidians. Since the country legitimately belongs to them, they can do everything to save it from "foreigners".

So let us look forward for friends and in this holy task nobody can be better friends of us than China. As we are saying this from our personal experiences of discussions with Chinese leaders during our recent visit to that country (as the leader of a goodwill delegation).

Nobody has done greater service to the untouchables and tribals than Christians. And they are continuing to help them despite heavy odds (for further details read our book "Tribal Unrest" - 1980). Even CPM-led Governments have cracked down on Christian organisations working among tribals. The Christians have innumerable organisations which can be profitably approached. Christians and Christian countries can be trusted as our best friends in distress.

The Muslim world has lately become receptive to our cause. The different non-political Muslim organisations in India may be used to approach Muslim countries. If we support the struggle of Indian Muslims, who are equally persecuted, then we will surely evoke the sympathy of the Muslim countries.

The Blacks whether of the U.S. or Africa or U.K. will be also of help in our struggle. They have to be told that the Indian untouchability arising out of the caste system, is more serious than the apartheid. The liberation of Indian untouchables (forming over one fifth of India's 70 crore population) should be linked with the struggle of Blacks elsewhere.

Marxists outside India are also our friends. Marxists inside India have not shown their willingness to support, let

alone launch an independent anti-caste struggle. Marxists outside India are sure to sympathise with us.

We may also approach international organisations like the U.N.O., its Human Rights Commission, World Court and any other organisations and use our friends outside to take up our cause with these world organisations. Newspapers, journals and other media outside may be approached to expose India's most well-guarded secret.

15) Class-caste struggle :

We have made it clear in our earlier works that in India the Marxian concept of "class struggle" will more or less take the form of "caste struggle". Because class is nothing but caste in India. The high castes mostly belong to the richer class also. Low castes constitute the "wretched of the earth". Of the over 50% of the Indian population living below the "poverty line", the majority are untouchables and tribals.

The Brahmins not only form the "governing class" along with the Kshatriyas and Vaishyas but also the owners of all the wealth of the country. The entire top 10% of India belong to the upper castes with minor exceptions. This we have explained in our two earlier works, "How Marx Failed in Hindu India" and "Class-caste struggle".

We have to convince our toiling masses that in India "class struggle" will take the form of "caste struggle". Many low castes in different trade unions will get disappointed and their experience will convince them of the efficacy of caste struggle. Untouchables and tribals are born Marxists. They have to be properly educated on this point. The Indian Marxists may be opposed to "caste struggle". All the more we are prepared to put "class struggle" first and "caste struggle" second. But both struggles should be simultaneous. We don't want to elaborate this point as it has been sufficiently

tackled in our previous writings. However, we would like to say that the Brahmin dominated Indian Marxist movement will get exposed and thoroughly isolated very soon. Class-caste struggle will be the future pattern.

16) Conclusion :

*It is not a tea party as
most say.*

We would like to confess that this is not a recipe for revolution. Revolution is no joke. Much bigger people have attempted and failed to offer a scientific prescription. Brahminism is too powerful and too formidable an enemy to fight and finish in one stroke. No other single institution has created so much of havoc in the world as the caste. This has not only emasculated the Indians but the poison has spread to many other countries as well-Ceylon, Singapore, Africa and now to Arabian countries. Caste follows the Hindu and wherever there is a Hindu the poison weed is there. So U.K., Canada, U.S. has had a taste of it. Says Dr. Ambedkar: "I shall be satisfied if I make the Hindus realize that they are the sick men of India and their sickness is causing danger to the health and happiness of other Indians (Annihilation of Caste-Preface to Second Edition - Page-11-Bhim Patrika Publications-Jullundur-1975)

Caste is therefore a menace not only for India but the world over. India and China are the two most populous countries in the world. China had a revolution and today it is on the top of the world. If India too has a revolution, then the entire world may go Marxist. India therefore is the main stumbling block for world revolution. If by our efforts India has a revolution, we are helping to hasten world revolution.

What is the pre-requisite for revolution? Before the war comes to the street there should be a "revolution" inside our homes. And before there is a revolution inside our house, there should be a "revolution" inside our mind. Revolution

always begins first in our minds. From there it spreads to the house and then spills over to the streets and later it sweeps the entire society and the country. Mental revolution precedes physical revolution, bloodshed.

Therefore before we begin any preparations for revolution, we have to first cleanse the cobwebs in our mind. The Hindu religion and its caste has rusted our minds and made us mental slaves, cowards. Therefore our first job is to get rid of the filth in our brains.

Educating a boy is educating an individual but educating a girl is educating a family. We have to therefore give priority to mental revolution of the girls. Our job is done once the women are prepared. Women are more revolutionary than men and they should form the vanguard of the revolution. But unfortunately the Hindus have so much dwarfed the women that they are not joining us in any of our movements. This is our main weakness. Fifty percent of our society being women we have suppressed a mighty force of power. If only the "woman" power is released, the revolution will get strength. We have to give importance to women and put them in the forefront of our struggle. In this task, we cannot depend so much upon the English-educated women. The non-English educated women are much better and they have to be roused and once they become conscious they will lead the men.

The Brahmins could fool us, subjugate us and permanently make us their most obedient slaves because we have not been able to "graduate" in the arts in which Brahmins are traditional masters. The Brahmins know only three things—reading, writing and speaking and their different permutations and combinations. They have confined themselves to "intellectual" fields deliberately leaving the physical work to the Shudras and the Ati-Shudras. If we have to excel them and defeat them, we have to break into this well-guarded fortress and become its masters.

Every society in the world is led by its intellectual class. In India, Brahmins have been the intellectual class. Intellectual class can either lead or mislead the society. If this intellectual class rightly leads such a society prospers. If it misleads such a society sinks into the dustbin of history. India is thrown into this stinking pit because its intellectual class misled the society. Any student of history can come to this inevitable conclusion.

If India has to be rescued from this dust bin and restored to its place assigned in history, it can be done only by intellectuals. Not politicians, soldiers, sportsmen, athletes, actors or musclemen. Intellectuals and intellectuals alone can do this job. But they should be cent per cent honest intellectuals. Not like our Brahmin intellectuals, communal and corrupt.

So we want plenty of intellectuals among shudras, untouchables, tribals, Muslims and Christians. If they have to excel Brahmins, they must read more, study more. Get up earlier than Brahmins in the morning. They must become cleaner than Brahmins and have better physical exercise and mental discipline. Have good health, good exercise. Austerity, simplicity are also important. What is more important is time and energy. Money can be earned but not these two things. So we have to do everything not to waste our time and energy. This is no time to waste our time in entertainment, fun-seeking, drinking or merry-making. We have to conserve our energy to prepare for the war. It is a relentless war, war to end to all other wars.

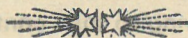
Read the life history of Ambedkar and Periyar and try to learn from that. We will be able to defeat the enemy-if we know more, study more than the enemy. And also know his weak points. Defeat the enemy in his three fields of specialisation-reading, writing and speaking. Capture their well-guarded fortress.

We are trying to kill the tiger which is no ordinary animal, the king of the jungle. This tiger cannot be killed by a stone. If we try to hit it with a stone, it will pounce on us and eat us. So stone is of no use. Stone cannot kill the beast. It can be killed only by a double-barrel gun. So we have to not only possess such a gun but know how to use it. That means we must get full training in the use of this weapon. It is not enough if we merely get such a training. We must also know where to strike the beast and which is its weakest spot. The tiger will die only if it is hit right on its head-not anywhere else. If the bullet strikes at any other part of the body it will escape slightly injured and with a revenge it may come back and attack us at unguarded moments. So there is no point in reckless shooting. Shoot to kill. Otherwise don't. The tiger must die in one single shot. That must be our strategy.

Therefore, a lot of preparations have to be made before we launch the war. We have to not only acquire a gun but get training in its use. Apart from this, we have to study the weak spots of the tiger and aim properly and shoot to kill.

All this needs plenty of time and preparations. That is why Ambedkar laid the greatest stress on education. Educate, organise and agitate. This is the time for us to study and prepare. The time has not come for us to acquire the guns, let alone launching the war. This is the time for us to study and get training in the use of guns. Get ready for the war. Whether you like it or not the war is coming. It has already begun. You will be drawn into it willy-nilly. Therefore you have to get ready.

Destroy caste and save India. India is yours and not of those who want to preserve caste.



AFTER WORD

This treatise comes out at a time when India is plunged into the longest and the worst "caste war" the country has ever witnessed. The caste system is having a naked dance of death in Gujarat, the land of Gandhi. This writer was perhaps the first to reach Ahmedabad to study the "caste war" in which the whole Hindu society ganged up into one solid army to exterminate the untouchables. What began as a Hindu agitation against "reservations" in post-graduate medical colleges soon turned into anti-reservation violence and later ended up as a wholesale war against all untouchables.

Therefore, the Gujarat "caste war", which is currently spreading to different parts of India, is the bloodiest and the best proof of the havoc played by the caste system in India. The beauty of it is that the untouchables are attacked by Hindus in the name of God and Gandhi. No doubt, the Hindu of Gujarat has also suffered in the process but he does not mind suffering but will never give up caste at any cost. To him caste is dearer than the society or the country. To him breaking the backbone of untouchables gives the supreme satisfaction. How blood-thirsty the Hindu could be!

And this violent Hindu derives his authority to kill untouchables and Muslims from Gandhi and God. We have met many good Hindus but these exceptional Hindus are either silenced or dubbed insane. Therefore, our criticism is not against these exceptions.

Hindus have grown sick and their sickness is affecting the health of all other sections-Muslims, Christians, Parsees, Sikhs, tribals. The vast chunk of backward classes (OBCs) are the worst sufferers owing to this contagious disease and we

would like to warn them that if they do not join the untouchables, in this holy war against the caste system, they would be sandwiched. Let our OBC comrades kindly heed this warning.

The Gujarat 'caste war' has conclusively proved that the Hindus are not interested in the welfare of India. To them their caste has become more precious than anything else. They have all become worshippers of Gandhi because he did not speak against caste. "The reason why the Mahatma is always supporting caste and varna is because he is afraid that if he opposed them he will lose his place in politics". Dr. Ambedkar had said this as early as 1930s (Annihilation of Caste-Bhim Patrika Publications-Jullundur-III edition-1975-Page 129).

With all his service to Brahminism by upholding the caste system, Gandhi was finally killed by a Brahmin only. It was neither an untouchable nor a Muslim who killed him. Gandhi died but Gandhism has become the philosophy of caste advocates.

Caste system is killing us. It is the root of all our problems. All other problems are symptoms of this disease. And the disease is the caste. But we are busy curing the symptoms. India is getting pauperised because of the caste. But the religious leaders, politicians, administrators, jurists, journalists, technocrats, writers, industrialists and businessmen are not interested in destroying caste. Because to all these people caste is an asset. It helped them to gain status and exploit the rest.

Caste in Vedic Period :

It is the claim of every Hindu religious leader, be it Vivekananda or even Gandhi that in its original form Hinduism has been pristine pure. But we are not interested in what Hinduism was like when it was born. We are interested in what Hinduism is as it is practised today.

Basing on this premise many Hindu religious leaders have tried to convince the gullible that there was no caste system in the Vedic period and the distinction of high and low. Gandhi defended Varnashrama Dharma and said it is no watertight compartment. He tried to make a distinction between untouchability and Varna or caste. "The former has no scientific basis. It cannot be supported by reason. It denies man the privilege of service to fellow-beings and deprives the untouchables in distress of the right of receiving service from their kind. The caste system has, in my opinion, a scientific basis. Reason does not revolt against it. If it has disadvantages, it has also advantages. It does not prevent a Brahmin from serving his Shudra brother. Caste creates a social and moral restraint. The doctrine of caste cannot be extended. I would restrict it to four divisions. Any multiplication would be an evil. I would reform the castes and rid them of undoubted abuses, but I can find no reason for their abolition" (Young India, March 12, 1925).

Gandhi also quotes from the Gita to prove that it does not preach caste system. "I swear by the Bhagawad Gita because it is the only book in which I find nothing to cavil at. It lays down principles and leaves you to find the application for yourself. The Gita does not talk of Varna being according to Guna and Karma, but Guna and Karma are inherited by birth" (Young India, November 24, 1927).

But who says there was no caste system in the Vedic period? Krishna advocates caste in the Bhagawad Gita itself : According to Dilip Kumar Roy ("The Bhagawad Gita - A Revelation" India Book Company, New Delhi, Page 38-39) : "He (Krishna) classed men into four castes basing the division on the law of the Swadharma :

1) - The Brahmin, whose swadharma is to master the lore of the spirit and master the call of the higher intellect.

- 2) The Kshatriya, who rises to his highest stature when he answers the call of his nature to rule his state and when war is incumbent on him, to fight and chastise the wrong-doer.
- 3) The Vaisya, whose role is trade, agriculture and production of wealth, exploiting the natural resources of the land.
- 4) The Sudra, the menial or labourer-in modern political terminology, the proletariat-whose swadhrama is to serve the higher castes.

The tenet that each of these four types should follow his native swadhrama does mean that a Brahmin should aspire to be an illuminate, a Kshatriya to be a ruler or warrior fighting for justice, a Vaisya to be producer of wealth, trader or a merchant, and a Shudra to be of service to all".

There are also scholars who maintain that even the Varna system did not exist in the Vedic period. To such people Dr. Ambedkar has given an effective reply : "The first piece of evidence I rely upon is that of the Rig Veda itself. There are some scholars who maintain that the Varna system did not exist in the age of the Rig Veda. This statement is based on the view that the Purusha Sukta is an interpolation which has taken place long after the Rig Veda was closed. Even accepting that the Purusha Sukta is a later interpolation, it is not possible to accept the statement that the Varna system did not exist in the time of Rig Veda. Such a system is in open conflict with the text of the Rig Veda. For, the Rig Veda, apart from the Purusha Sukta, does mention Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas not once but many times. The Brahmins are mentioned as a separate Varna fifteen times, Kshatriyas nine times. What is important is that the Rig Veda does not mention Shudra as a separate Varna. If Shudras were a separate Varna, there is no reason why the Rig Veda should not have mentioned them. The true conclusion to be drawn from the Rig Veda is not that the Varna system did not exist, but that there were only three Varnas and that

Shudras were not regarded as a fourth and a separate Varna". (Dr. B.R. Ambedkar: "Who were the Shudras". Thackers, 1970, Page 146).

Dr. Ambedkar also cites the opinion of Kane given in his book "Dharma Shastra" - Vol. II (1), Page 29, that during the Vedic period itself the Brahmins had formed into a separate caste. "But it is clear that even in the times of the Rig Veda Brahmins were a class by themselves, had developed class consciousness and were keen on maintaining class interests". (B. R. Ambedkar, Ibid, Page 235).

Apart from the above-cited scholars, we have the authority of one of the greatest scholars in Sanskrit, Sir Monier Williams who occupied the position of the prestigious Boden Professor of Sanskrit. Monier Williams, in his celebrated book, "Brahminism and Hinduism", (Oxford-1891) quotes from the Rig Veda, which he describes as the "first Bible of the Hindu religion and the special bible of the Vedism", having a collection of 1010 hymns :

"I add a few verses from the celebrated Purusha hymn (Rig Veda, Mandala X-90 as freely translated by me in another work). It illustrates the intertwining of polytheism, monotheism and pantheism. It also foreshadows the idea of sacrifice, as well as the institution of caste, which for so many centuries has held India in bondage. The one spirit is supposed to take a body and then himself to be sacrificed :

*The embodied spirit has a thousand heads,
A thousand eyes, a thousand feet, around
On every side enveloping the earth,
Yet filling space no larger than a span.
He is himself this very universe ;
He is whatever is, has been, and shall be ;
He is the lord of immortality.
All creatures are one-fourth of him, three-fourths
Are that which is immortal in the sky.*

*From him, called Purusha, born Viraj,
 And from Viraj was Purusha produced,
 Whom Gods and holy men made their oblation.
 With Purusha a Victim, they performed
 A sacrifice. When they divided him,
 How did they cut him up? What was his mouth?
 What were his arms? And what his thighs and feet?
 The Brahman was his mouth, the kingly soldier
 Was made his arms, the husband man his thighs,
 The servile Sudra issued from his feet". (Page 17)*

During our tour in different parts of India, one question that is often asked is how to destroy caste system. An occasion was given by the Periyar Equal Rights Movement, Tiruchirapalli, Tamil Nadu, to read a paper at a seminar sponsored by them at Madras on January 11, 1981.

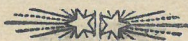
We have tried our best to present this as a "recipe for revolution". We hope to expand this and assure to come out with a more well-studied and scientific formula to destroy caste system.

Incidentally, this is our second publication under the newly-started Dalit Sahitya Akademy. We request our comrades to help strengthen the Akademy.

28/3/1981

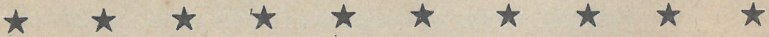
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KARL MARX ON CASTE SYSTEM

“We must not forget that this undignified, stagnatory, and vegetative life, that this passive sort of existence evoked on the other part, in contradistinction, wild, aimless, unbounded forces of destruction and rendered murder itself a religious rite in Hindustan. We must not forget that these little communities were contaminated by distinctions of caste and by slavery, that they subjugated man to external circumstances, instead of elevating man the sovereign of circumstances, that they transformed a self-developing social state into never changing natural destiny, and thus brought about a brutalising worship of nature, exhibiting its degradation in the fact that man, the sovereign of nature, fell down on his knees in adoration of Hanuman, the monkey, and Sabbata, the cow”. From the book : “Marx and Engels On India”, edited by Mulk Raj Anand, Socialist Book Club, Allahabad. Page 21.



NEHRU ON CASTE

“India must break with much of her past and not allow it to dominate the present. Our lives are encumbered with the dead wood of this past ; all that is dead and has served its purpose has to go. But that does not mean a break with, or a forgetting of the vital and life-giving in that past”. “Discovery of India”, Jawaharlal Nehru, (P. 522).



THE AUTHOR

V.T. Rajshekar Shetty, a noted journalist and writer, was till 1979 a senior correspondent of the "Indian Express", Bangalore, South India. A Marxist and rationalist, his first major work, "Dalit Movement in Karnataka", is considered the most comprehensive study of the struggle of untouchables and other oppressed castes. Apart from the Dalit problem, his other field of specialisation is India's Muslim problem.

He was dismissed from the "Indian Express" (1979) for taking up the cause of untouchables, Muslims and other weaker sections and since then he is engaged in a study of the 'class-caste struggle', a theory that is fast catching up in the view of its suitability to Indian conditions. Such an indigenous Marxism combining the "class struggle" theory of Marx and the "caste struggle" theory of Ambedkar, Periyar and Lohia can only trigger the Indian revolution, he says.

His studies on different aspects of untouchability and the problems arising out of it have been translated to different world and Indian languages. As a Dalit writer, he inaugurated the first Karnataka State Dalit Sahitya Sammelan at Bhadravati in 1977. He also led a team of the Karnataka Dalit Action Committee satyagrahis to the historic Marathwada "Long March" and courted arrest at Aurangabad on Dec. 6, 1979. In late 1980, he led a 7-member goodwill delegation to China.

Mr. Shetty (1932) has served a number of national English dailies : Deccan Herald, Bangalore, Indian Express, Free Press Journal, Bombay, Patriot, New Delhi.

He is the Secretary of the Karnataka State Rationalists Association, Ex-President of the India-China Friendship Association, Karnataka, and connected with different all-India cultural, trade union, human rights, Dalit, Muslim, Christian and backward class organisations -

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