

DALIT VOICE

[The Voice of the Persecuted Minorities]

Adviser : Dr. Mulk Raj Anand

Vol. 1

MAY 1-15, 1982

No. 14

TRADE UNIONS, DALITS & MINORITIES

Dalits and persecuted minorities being the poorest of the poor they naturally form the Indian working class—the proletariat. Ambedkar called them born Marxists. It is this section which is the backbone of the organised trade union movement controlled mostly by the Left parties—CPM and CPI. It is these dalits in the State-owned and private sector industries who provide the muscle for the trade unions. It is they who shout slogans, carry banners, flags, stick posters, lead the strike, face the police bullets, get arrested, injured and face dismissals. It is true that a much larger section of the dalits and persecuted minorities are in the rural, unorganised sector (landless farm labourers) but our trade union movement has not bothered about them. It is not paying. Therefore, here we are concerned with the urban, organised labour force controlled by our trade unions which wield considerable influence. They can paralyse a city's life. They can hold Bombay, Calcutta, Madras to ransom. A number of our unionised dalit comrades in different parts of India, particularly South, are facing a dilemma, torn between their class loyalties to unions & caste loyalties as Untouchables, tribes Muslims, Christians and OBCs. A number of them have complained that their trade unions, the leadership of which is in the hands of high caste Hindus, are indifferent if not hostile to their interests. So much so in all major Govt. undertakings such as Railways, LIC, P&T, RBI, banks, State-owned industries, they are forced to form their own unions called SC & ST Welfare Associations & fighting for their recognition as a trade union. J. R. Antwal, chairman, P&T, SC/ST Employees Federation, New Delhi, has given such a call to all dalit employees in India. When they are all members of a recognised, powerful trade union, what forced them to have a separate welfare association? The answer to this question will reveal the anti-dalit role played by our trade unions. We have the famous case of the Railway "Oppressed Employees Union" going to Supreme Court unsuccessfully challenging the reservations in promotions to SC/STs in Railways. Dalit employees alone collected funds to fight this case but our trade unions having huge funds refused to pay anything. In Canara Bank, we have the shocking story of a CPI-controlled union siding with management whenever the dalit employees have a dispute. Dalit

employees will be naturally most concerned with the implementation of constitutional reservations in recruitment and promotions. But on such a crucial issue dalit members of unions have found the trade union leadership more hostile to them than the management. In many cases, the trade union leadership is pressing the management not to implement reservations to SC/STs. Such complaints have come from almost every factory & office. The list will be too long if we go on citing cases of trade unions turning anti-dalit & anti-minority. In the Madras Tank Factory (Defence Ministry) union leaders themselves assaulted dalit employees for installing Ambedkar photo inside the factory. In Beharshariff communal riots, the CPI did not come forward to protect the interest of Muslim bidi workers who were killed in the riot (see *Mainstream*- 16-5 81, Pg. 887-89). The Karnataka Dalit Action Committee in a statement (March 22, 1981) about discrimination against SC/STs in Bangalore-based public sector units said the workers are controlled by trade unions belonging to CPI, CPM. "These unions in which SC/STs are also members do not show any concern to the welfare of this section. In fact, the union leadership and management are one when it comes to the question of dalits". We have reports from our dalit comrades of union office-bearers themselves assaulting dalit colleagues at union meetings called to discuss reservations issues. In some places, dalit employees were removed from union posts for fighting on the reservations issue. Dalits are rarely given important positions in unions. Those who dare contest important posts get defeated. During the Gujarat Caste War, the Majoor Mahajan unions controlled by the Gandhi-

an INTUC got split on caste lines in all the Ahmedabad mills. Dalit workers are kept out of weaving depts. in all mills in India. Hindu workers attacked dalit colleagues in Ahmedabad mills. It is this that forced the Gujarat Dalit Panthers led by Rameshchandra Paramar to think of forming their own Dalit mill workers union in Ahmedabad following the success of a strike call given by the Panthers. This is a significant development worth emulating by our dalit comrades all over India. From this we can make out that a new development is taking place in India on the trade union front. Caste is cutting into class. Because caste interests are stronger than class. That is why recognised trade unions have failed to protect the interest of Dalit workers who because of this are being forced to form their own unions. This is a welcome development. In South, dalits have formed their own unions in every office & factory. In North, this is yet to develop. Trade union movement is becoming increasingly irrelevant in India. While we will not deal with that subject now, we call upon our dalit and persecuted minority comrades in organised unions to realise this danger and get prepared for the combined onslaught on them both from the management and their own trade unions. Both have turned enemies to this section but in many cases, the union has become the bigger enemy. When dalits and persecuted minorities are facing special problems which other employees do not face, though poor, they have every right to have a separate trade union for themselves. Dalits and minorities should seriously apply their mind to this new development, assert their rights and face the challenge. □

THE FATE OF AN UNTOUCHABLE GOD

(A. N. Abraham, Bangalore)

His name is Pottan Teyyam, the god of the Pulyans, the Untouchables of North Malabar, Kerala. The word 'Pottan' means in Malayalam deaf and dumb. 'Teyyam' is said to be a folk expression for the word 'Daivam', meaning god.

He was called Pottan because he was the god of a mute, the Untouchables deprived of voice by the Law of Manu which entitled the higher castes to free service by them. In the song (tottam) of Pottan, he is depicted as keeping watch over the rice fields of Kerala, an obvious reference to the toil of his people. Lo and behold there comes against him an high caste 'chovar', other higher castes 'machar', & 'elanko', other religionists, the Muslim 'Koya' are in his company. The allusion may be to the collusion of the rich and powerful regardless of their caste and religion against the impoverished slave: — "Seeing Pottan, the chovar shouts 'get off the way, a little Pulaya (polluted fellow), a little Pulayi' (polluted woman). To which Pottan replies: I have a baby in my arms, today on my head, on one side of me is the thorny bush and the other side is the forest. How can I give way to you? It may be that you travel on elephants while we travel on buffalows; but is it a reason for this wrangling over birth and caste? Isn't blood that comes when you are cut; Why then this quarrel over birth and caste? You may wear garlands of lotus but we do also wear strings of flowers. Isn't rice you cook? Isn't the same rice we boil? Why then this wrangling over birth and caste? Didn't you break open the coconut we gave you? Didn't you find water in it? The knife you wield is sharp, the knife we wield is also sharp. Isn't blood that gushes out if

you are cut? Why then is this wrangling over birth and caste? We raise plantains in our backyards, the fruit there of you offer to your gods, we tender Tulasis in our frontyards; with these Tulasis you do puja to your gods. Why then this difference and discrimination 'O Chover'? When 33 trees were planted, only three of them sprouted up; the flower of that tree in bloom I hold in my hands. Why then this difference and discrimination, 'O Chover'? when a boat comes from further shore, a boat goes away from this shore; It is in that boat you go, it is in that boat we also go crossing over the river we reach the yonder shore we meet the creator of perfect bliss ..."

This song of Pottan Teyyam is a powerful religious protest against caste oppression. Pottan condemns caste and teaches a religion of human equality. His language is simple, direct and refers to the social practices of his day. His arguments are drawn from the fact of common human nature and faith in one god. One may wonder why then this religious symbol of Pottan Teyyam against caste oppression and injustice played no role in the emancipation of the Pulayas. I think there are two important reasons for this. (1) The overall religious outlook of the Untouchables and of the people around them has continued to be magical and superstitious. They have prostituted the very symbol of Pottan Teyyam into one of a magical god. For instance the great

marvel about Pottan Teyyam is not his teaching on the fundamental human equality regardless of one's wealth and position in society but the magic power with which he can fall into a heap of burning embers, walk over it and play in it. At the celebration of his Teyyam festival everyone comes to watch Pottan Teyyam dance and play in the fire and no thought is given to his teaching. When I asked the Teyyam dancer why the occasion is not made use of to expound the great teachings of Pottan Teyyam in the context of the struggles of the Untouchables in our times for social and economic equality, the answer was that "religion should not be concerned about such worldly matters. The purpose of Teyyam dance is to experience god. As a dancer of the Pottan Teyyam, I should be above such mundane matters". The idea of worship prevalent among the devotees of Potten is that the god will be pleased if his Teyyam is celebrated with fire-walking, offering of chicken and toddy. Many even today believe that diseases, misfortunes, conflicts and strains in personal relation are caused by evil spirits or the evil influence of the stars. Though hospitals and other agencies are made use of in dealing with them, they also consult astrologers and perform rituals to appease the evil powers. In short in their simple faith it is ultimately through religious categories & symbols they understand and cope with their economic condition, social situation and personal conflicts. In other words the historic-cultural world in which they live is believed to be the product of gods. They do not imagine that they can shape it by their activities and make history. On the other hand the few who understand

the socio-economic world as the product of historical forces do not look up to Pottan Teyyam to bring about changes as they have written off all religion as of no practical value. (2) In the given circumstances the economic and social odds against Untouchables, prevent all possibilities of Pottan Teyyam emerging as god of liberation among the Untouchables. Pulayyas are so poor that rarely they own a permanent place of worship dedicated to Pottan Teyyam. Temporary sheds are erected in some isolated corner or on govt. lands to be pulled down soon after the Teyyam celebration. Absence of a permanent place of worship, as well as the low esteem with which Pottan Teyyam is held by the higher castes compel the younger generation among the Pulayyas to abandon their traditional community god for the sake some god who is popular among the higher castes & whose shrine is open to all castes. Some even believe that Pottan Teyyam is an evil spirit. It is even impossible for an Untouchable to keep a picture of Pottan Teyyam in his humble hut as pictures of the gods of these lowly people are not printed. They buy picture of the gods of the higher castes. Potten Teyyam is of course a religious symbol of protest against caste domination. But the traditional social, economical and political setup made him yet another instrument of the overlordship of the higher castes over the Pulayyas. For instance, the Teyyam festival should be celebrated only after taking permission from the old Chirakkal Royal family. A Pulayan is made a Teyyam dancer with the approval of the Royal Palace. His competence is recognised, judged and given

different titles by the royal family. A Nambudiri Brahmin priest is brought to do a purification ceremony at the start of the festival of Pottan Teyyam. In other words the god who condemned caste oppression is made subservient to the caste-class power structure existing in the society.

There are many gods among the Untouchables all over India who are voices of protest against caste oppression and injustice. However the magical world view of the great majority of the Untouchables coupled with the traditional tendency within the Hindu culture to understand these gods as 'parts' or 'forms' of the so-called higher gods make them effectively 'deaf and dumb' (Pottan). In addition to this, the economic and social dependence of the Untouchables on the higher castes makes the gods of Untouchables yet another instruments in the hands of the dominant caste-classes to perpetuate their hold on them. Will the songs of these 'deaf and dumb gods' be ever heard over these double sound-barrier of magical world view of Untouchables & of the structure of social power over their religion exercised by the higher castes is a mute question as the Pottan god himself. □

Just published

Who is Ruling India ?

by

V. T. RAJSHEKAR

(price Rs. 5)

copies will be posted on receipt of MO for Rs. 5+ Re. 1 for packing & postage.

DALIT SAHITYA AKADEMY

109/7th Cross, Palace Lower Orchards,
Bangalore-560 003
Karnataka, India.

Indira Gandhi & Sai Baba

New Delhi: Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had a private audience with Sai Baba here on April 8. The half-hour meeting took place at the residence of P. N. Bhagwati, Supreme Court Judge. (*Indian Express, April 16, 82*) □

Books of Periyar E. V. Ramasami

FOUNDER-LEADER OF THE
DRAVIDA MOVEMENT IN
TAMIL NADU

IN ENGLISH

	Rs. P.
1. The World to Come	0 60
2. Untouchability	1 00
3. Family Planning	1 00
4. God and Man	1 00
5. Man and Religion	1 50
6. Manu-A code of injustice to Non-Brahmins	1 00
7. The genesis of my Self- Respect Movement	1 00
8. Why Communal G. O. ?	1 00
9. Golden Saying of Periyar	2 00
10. My Leader Periyar I (Arignar Anna)	1 00
11. Periyarana (Prof. Darmalingam)	5 00
12. Periyar and his ideologies (K. Veeramani)	0 50
13. Ramayana—A true reading	2 00

Trade discount to agents : 20%

(No. V. P. P.)

50, E. V. K. Sampath Road,
Madras - 600 007, India.

SHUDRAS ALSO MUST QUIT HINDUISM WITH DALITS

(Prof. A. M. Dharmalingam, Bangalore)

RSS supporters always defend the Hindu caste hierarchy and the sacred thread more than their national ideology. By their strong defence of the *dwija* symbol of sacred thread and hence of caste hierarchy, they have only confirmed my point that the RSS has no plans whatsoever to destroy caste and thereby create a Hindu nation, if not an Indian nation. There is no doubt whatsoever that the greatest evil of the Hindu society that prevented it ever becoming a strong and united nation and still continues to be so is graded caste. Without destroying caste, of which the sacred thread is a part and parcel, a Hindu nation, let alone an Indian nation, can never be built. The complaint against the RSS is that instead of building a Hindu nation free from caste, divisions and discriminations, it is trying to divert the attention of the people towards anti-Islamism and anti-Christianism. "The Chaturvarna Dharma expressed a pyramidal society with each layer fixed and immovable, thus making social revolution virtually impossible," says B. G. Gokhale (*Indian Thought Through the Ages*). Though professing to be a revealed religion and highly spiritual, Hinduism or to be more correct Brahmanical Hinduism, has been dragging along and has survived as an emaciated, defeatist religion buttressed by caste, hereditary priestcraft, endogamy, untouchability and karma. It knows nothing about justice, liberty, equality and fraternity & is therefore the total enemy of democracy. "In the context of society today," said Jawaharlal Nehru in 1944, "caste system & much that goes with it are wholly incompatible, reactionary, restrictive, & barriers to progress. There can be no equality in status and opportunity within its frame

work, nor can there be political democracy, and much less economic democracy. Between these two conceptions conflict is inherent and only one of them can survive." (*Discovery of India*, page 217). Has Hindu India changed after independence? Has the Constitution adopted by the people on the Western parliamentary system, brought any significant changes? No. "The Indianisation of India that has been going on since independence is becoming a kind of regression to the days before the Raj", says Ved Mehta. An assault against caste has been possible to a very limited extent only with the advent of general education in English, scientific knowledge and the principles of democracy and equality introduced by the British. Coupled to them, the national liberation movement has weakened orthodoxy, but not caste as such. Though religion has declined by way of Hindus dropping the common religious symbols like the tuft & the creed marks, the caste mark of the sacred thread for the *dwijas* still remains in all its ancient glory to prove that the inexorable and undemocratic division of the Hindus as *dwijas* and *adwijas*, twice born, superior and inferior, are all there in fact as in ancient times. India adopted a Constitution 34 years ago enshrining the Western democratic principles of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity in its preamble and there is, therefore, no excuse either for the Brahmins or the Vaisyas or Ganigars, or Chettiares and host of

others to wear the sacred thread to show off as the first, second or third caste in an unequal and unjust Hindu world. Critics have written as if the sacred thread is only a religious symbol which has nothing to do either with democracy or equality. That they are wrong is evidenced by the history of the Brahmo Samaj, which was started in 1828 by Raja Ram Mohan Roy to reform the Brahman religion free from idolatry, multiple gods, caste divisions, etc. The debate on whether Brahmos should wear the cross thread or not went on for many years. Afraid of losing support from the high caste people, the Raja was not outspoken on this subject. In fact he died with thread on and this was discovered when he was buried in Bristol & the British press publicised it. The debate that the thread was inconsistent with the principle of equality raged for long and Devendranath Tagore as head of the Samaj refused to order its removal when demanded by the progressive reformers. The Samaj split on this account in 1865 and the New Society of Brahmo Samaj of India was established by the progressives who firmly believed that the sacred thread was opposed to the principle of equality. Keshab Chandra Sen, a Kayasth, became the secretary of the Brahmo Samaj in 1859 and he gave up caste and the sacred thread and stayed away from idolatrous festivals, dancing of public women and drinking and many orthodox Brahmins who followed Sen gave up the old practices. The final seal against sacred thread was laid by Sivanath Sastri who joined the progressive section of the Samaj in 1868. He discarded the thread as it was a badge of Brahmanism. (*History of the Brahmo Samaj* by Sivanath Sastri-1911). It is claimed that "Hinduism is the most toler-

ant of religions". Most often this tolerance is the result of weakness, helplessness born out of irreconcilable internal divisions and lack of conviction in one's own creed and indifference to numbers. There are so many creeds and cults in Hinduism that nobody knows which is the creed or cult that should fight the foreigner. However, it would be interesting to see the RSS attitude to other religions. Here are a few gems from Golwalkar's speeches and writings. He said : "The religion of Christianity is no religion at all. It is only a sect. There are no Christians in the world. There was one and he died on the cross, somebody has said. For us Hindus the traditionally imbibed characteristic is not only to tolerate other religions, but also to respect them. If you examine closely, you will find that Hindu religion is the only religion which can be called religion. The others are not religions at all". Golwalkar had a wonderful estimate of the great Chinese nation. As regards Urdu, he said : They try to build a movement in the name of Urdu which is unworthy of being called a language at all. RSS also promotes superstition. "The ultimate liberation of the soul is possible only in India. One gains birth in India as a consequence of the performance of the good deeds in other countries. Mukti is then to be attained here. It is only by the purity of this soil that the realisation of god is possible. That is why even the birth of insects here is considered as an endowment. The marvellous power of this land must necessarily be accepted." All these statements are from the book, *The Strange Culture of Sri M. S. Golwalkar* by Aryaman with a preface by S. R. Bhat, Bangalore (9-2-1971). Decras told me on May 26, 1979 here that even

Muslims & Christians are free to join the RSS provided they accept "our ideology and way of life." Defenders of RSS say it is not political or communal. This is clearly Goebbellian talk. The demand "to establish a Hindu Rastra as a national necessity" is most certainly political. The RSS has been espousing the most communal cause of Hindu-Hindi and Hindustan in a land that has accepted democracy & secularism. But the RSS never took kindly to the Western concept of democracy. Golwalkar has said: "The concept of democracy as being by the people and of the people, meaning that all are equal sharers in the political administration, is to a large extent only a myth in practice." He adds: "The system of democracy that has evolved breeds two evils—self-praise and vilification of others—that poison the peace and tranquility of the human mind and disrupt the mutual harmony of individuals in society." On socialism, Golwalkar says: "Further, socialism is not a product of this soil. It is not in our blood and tradition. It has absolutely nothing to do with traditions and ideals of thousands of years of our people here. As such it does not have the power to thrill our hearts to a life of dedication and character" and he warned the people against secularism. In a speech in October, 1965 at Nagpur, he says: "Neither secularism nor democracy nor socialism are able to exercise any patriotic appeal for our people as yet. The democracy we speak of is a borrowed hotch-potch... the name does not strike responsive cord in the common man." All these great statements have been made by Golwalkar in the context of the infamous caste hierarchy, the degradation of the sudras, the slavery of the Un-

touchables, the subordination of women in a country where 70% of the people—almost all of them non-Brahmins—are illiterate and where 60% of the people—all of them backward classes and Untouchables—are below the poverty line. Who says that the RSS is not feudal, fascist and archaic with ambition to put the clock back and revive the culture of the sinister Manu Dharma Sastra? One RSS leader asks: "If the Brahmins throw off their sacred thread will the Sudras stand automatically emancipated? By this very statement, he concedes that the Sudras are enslaved and will not be liberated from degradation and humiliation even when the dwijas abandon the distinguishing caste symbol. Removal of the thread will certainly not abolish caste, but it will be the first step in the abolition of caste distinction and the open & shameless and sinister exhibition of inequality among the Hindus. Foreign tourists taken round the temples and bathing ghats have to be told by the guide even in 1982 that the men wearing the thread are high caste people, dwijas, twice-born and the other no-threads are low caste people, Sudras and once-born. Then the guide will have to explain what twice-born myth is. Is this situation, a respect for the Constitution, a regard for the noble Preamble, a honour for Hinduism and a credit for socialism? Is it decent and sensible for the dwijas to carry their superior caste symbol to the street, market place, the temple & the bathing ghat in defiance of the Constitution with all its great ideals? Our intellectuals must decide to stand by the Constitution or firmly go back to the Manu Smriti. They cannot have one leg in democracy and another in Manu's Code.

Double-standard and double-talk will lead to untruth, hypocrisy, delusion and defeat. How caste has destroyed public spirit, corrupted social life and prevented the emergence of a Hindu nation has been well explained by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : "Caste has killed public spirit, caste has destroyed the sense of public charity. Caste has made public opinion impossible. A Hindu's public life is caste. His responsibility is only to his caste. His loyalty is restricted only to his caste. Virtue has become caste-ridden and morality has become caste-bound. There is no sympathy to the deserving. There is no appreciation of the meritorious. There is no charity to the needy. Suffering as such calls for response. There is charity but it begins with the caste and ends with the caste. There is sympathy but not for men of other caste." Further he says : "These castes are anti-national in the first place because they bring separation in social life. They are anti-national also because they generate jealousy and antipathy between caste and caste." Again, he says : "Unless you change your social order, you can achieve little by way of progress. You cannot mobilise the community either for defence or for offence. You cannot build up a nation. You cannot build up morality. Anything you build on the foundation of caste will crack and will never be a whole." (*Annihilation of Caste*, 3rd Edn. 1975)

It is true that dalits in villages are exploited by the upper caste among the non-Brahmins. The backward class Sudras are the victims of the Brahminic caste hierarchy as much as the dwijas. So long as the graded inequality is there, the Hindu society cannot avoid its unjust and un-

social consequences. The remedy lies in destroying caste by the only sovereign remedy of universal inter-caste marriage. Another RSS writer pleads that hatred should not be injected into the Hindus already divided. It is the division made by chaturvarna that was responsible for Hindus succumbing to foreign invasions, and particularly because the defence of the land and soldiery was confined to the Kshatriyas, a mere 5% of the population. Is it ever possible for a people which allots defence to 5% of the adult male population to win when pitched against a people in whom 100% of the male adults are soldiers? Did any Hindu law-maker or chief priest or Hindu monarch ever think of this problem? What else can explain the extraordinary phenomenon of a few thousand Muslim horsemen subduing this vast Aryavarta so easily? It is to eliminate this sinister and unsocial division of the Hindu that the rationalists plead for the abolition of caste. But my learned critics seem to go with Dr. M. N. Srinivas, who holds the view that if and when caste disappears, Hinduism will also disappear. But Gandhi said that "the caste system as we know it, is an anachronism. It must go if both Hinduism and India are to live". What will go with caste is Brahminism and its dwija and adwija divisions and the sacred thread. Even after vast changes, Hinduism has not died. Western habits, intercaste dining, inter-caste marriage, diluted vegetarianism cropped heads, bare foreheads, monogamy, divorce, remarriage of widows, threadless chests, ignorance of Sanskrit, sleeveless jackets, and bell-bottoms and unshaven nose-ring widows, have not destroyed Hinduism. All these changes

have made the Hindu, modern, cosmopolitan, socialist and secular. This is why Dr. Ambedkar said: "Brahmanism is the poison which has spoiled Hinduism. You will succeed in saving Hinduism if you will kill Brahmanism." Nobody need agree with M. N. Srinivas. Hinduism will survive even after caste and untouchability are destroyed. Totally dependent on govt. service, Brahmins bewail that "the Brahmins have been successfully shunted out of government jobs" and comforts himself by saying that they have gone into the private sector or have emigrated. Louis Dumont, who has made a special study of the Hindu hierarchic caste, has said: "It would be an illusion to suppose that the castes could be abolished without bringing any affliction on the Brahmins. It is inevitable that they should suffer perhaps unjustly, in the transformation Gandhi professed to desire, simply because they are at the summit of the hierarchy to be abolished". (*Homo Hierarchicus-1956*)

It must be noted that under the democratic principle of equality of opportunity and distributive justice, it is not only the Brahmin that will suffer, but also the other upper castes who enjoy an undue proportion of the good things of life. Whether we destroy caste or not, "Harijan & Girijan and backward classes uplift" will hit the new-brahmins. I am accused of being anti-Brahmin and that I will never see without yellow glasses. This is partly true. Owing to the accident of birth, I have been forced to look on the Hindu world through yellow Sudra glasses and the scene I got all along is one of injustice, indignity and inequality. Disgusted with the scene and anxious to remove the Sudra glasses, I finally renounced Brahmi-

nic Hinduism in favour of rationalism. I, therefore, demand that it is not only the Untouchables that must quit Hinduism, but every Sudra must renounce Hinduism if he is ever to live in dignity and honour. Inter-caste marriage of an universal character will not take place and, therefore, hierarchic caste will not go. The only alternative is either destroy Brahmanism in order to save Hinduism or once and for all quit Hinduism. The aims and purposes of the RSS is a danger for the future of India. It will not destroy caste or Brahmin superiority, but will generate separatist tendencies everywhere and strengthen the demands for Khalistan, Dalitastan, Adivasisthan, Dravidastan etc. RSS is a cancer in the body politic of India. □

SUBSCRIPTION RATES FOR DALIT VOICE

India (Annual) : Rs. 10

Europe & N. and S. America and

Africa, West Asia : 12

Asia : 10

Bangla Desh : Rs. 15

Pakistan and Sri Lanka : Rs. 70

Subscription may be paid through MO.
Outstation cheques must include bank
commission.

Phone : 33854

Dalit Sahitya Akademy,
109/7th cross, P.L. Orchards,
Bangalore-560 003, India

Letters to Editor :

Amarajit Singh, London : When Indira Gandhi came here Bharat Dalit Mukhti Alliance picketed her meetings. Some of the placards said : "Indian Culture - 100,000,000 Untouchables," Indira's Culture - detention without trial, "Indian Culture - 10,000 major atrocities on dalits last year."

I. Joubert, Cape Town, S. Africa : DV no. 10, I can assure you, constituted extremely interesting & inspiring reading for all of us here. Keep it up.

Salim Lakha, lecturer in Asian Studies, Swinburn Inst. of Technology, Hawthorn, Australia : DV no. 8 & 9 issues were very useful to us. Looking forward to further issues with great interest.

ZIK, London : We are regularly getting DV. No. 10 issue was very interesting and informative. We share with you DV's visions and goals and will be glad to work closely. We are fully convinced of your dedication and commitment. That is why we maintain close relations with you.

Dr. S. G. Balani, MD, professor of medicine, Marine Drive, Bombay : The problems of dalits have two facets. (1) Highlighting their inhuman conditions, bias against them, atrocities and (2) offering solutions. DV has had a fair measure of success on the 1st front. But it has not come out with any solutions. The pain on the back you get specially from readers of two communities, have vested interests in increasing their numbers. Gandhi, Ambedkar and many others tried to help dalits. But the technique suggested by Vivekananda is the best.

E. G. Lingam, Hyderabad : We have asked all dalit employees to subscribe to

DV and you may soon get 200 to 250 MOs each for Rs. 10 towards yearly subscriptions.

Hem Raj, Patiala, Congratulations for launching Tamil DV. Every issue of DV is eagerly awaited, studied, discussed and filed.

G. Gopal Rao, Amalepuram, AP : On Ambedkar jayanti we resolved that untouchability is widespread in Hinduism & it is impossible to abolish it. Christians are also observing caste. Harijan Christians here heckle dalits. AP Govt. went all-out to observe the jayanti. It directed all municipalities and panchayats to observe the jayanti. We are happy that Ambedkar is at last being recognised.

Rev. Arokiasamy, SJ, Vidya Jyoti, Delhi : DV is doing a wonderful work. We here are committed to work for justice for all oppressed of any religion or race. DV reflects a universal outlook and a real supporter of persecuted minorities.

M. A. Haq, Ahemadnagar : Every issue of DV is so valuable and I pass it on to other friends. There is a big demand for DV here.

V. S. Kamaruddin, Kadayannallur, TN : DV has become a powerful weapon for persecuted minorities and the downtrodden. We support your holy crusade.

Lancy Lobo, Delhi University, Delhi : I am a Ph D. student in sociology dept. and with great interest went through the DV and the works of the Dalit Sahitya Akademy, such as *Tribal Unrest & Brahminism*. I want to read all your books and become a DV subscriber.

George Menezes, Bombay : The protest against treatment of minorities has already begun here as you can see from the enclosed clipping of the *Indian Express* (April 12) under the heading "Minorities Rally for Justice". □

DALIT STAGE ARTISTES GREET DALIT VOICE

B. S. Shinde, Chairman, Dalit Rangabhoomi, Pune : I could obtain DV through a well-wisher in Bombay. Read it & felt very happy to know that our voice is really a powerful voice which can break the darkness of casteism and enlighten the masses to embrace a neo-society in the dream of Dr B. R. Ambedkar & Mahatma Jotirao Phule. Ours is a troupe of dalit artistes engaged in the same task through the medium of stage, movies, radio etc. We wish to support DV. Our troupe has presented two productions on stage throughout Maharashtra. The first play, "In the womb of darkness", written by me was appreciated at all levels. It focuses

on injustice and atrocities done by the Hindus towards dalits during 32 years of Independence. It has since been published as a book in Marathi. I like to know any individual who can translate it into South Indian languages as it has interested many South Indians. We are trying to stage our plays on an all-India level in Hindi. Stage is a powerful medium through which the message can be passed with great effect. Our troupe recently celebrated here the silver jubilee show of this play in April. This is a historical event in the field of stage that dalit stage is celebrating a silver jubilee of a dalit play. DV has to guide and support us. □

MINORITY-DALIT UNITY MEET

Patna : The founding conference of the Indian League for Minorities was held here under the chairmanship of Ghulam Sarwar from March 27-29. It was inaugurated by Jagjiwan Ram. Gopal Singh, chairman, High Power Panel on SC/STs, minorities and weaker sections, was the chief guest. George Fernandes, MP, delivered the valedictory address. M. Azam Khan, MLA, Rampur, Dr. Haleem, Lucknow, also spoke. M. A. Lari, chairman, reception committee, welcomed. Dineshwar Prasad, secretary, reception committee, read the report. N. E. Horo, MP, joint convenor of the League, thanked. The co-general secretaries of the League, Richard Hauser & S. Hoda also spoke. About 200 delegates from all over India representing Christians, tribals, Untouchables, Sikhs, Muslims and other minorities attended the conference to discuss social, economic, educational, law and order problems facing the persecuted minorities in India. The conference elected N. E. Horo as chairman of ILM. □

EDITOR : V T. Rajshekar

Published by the Dalit Sahitya Akademy,
109/7th Cross, Palace Lower Orchards,
Bangalore-560 003, India. Phone 33854.
Annual subscription Rs 10-

Printed at : SVP, No. 79/PLO/B-3

10

PRINTED MATTER