

# DALIT VOICE

[The Voice of the Persecuted Minorities]

Vol. 1

NOV. 15-30 1981

No. 3

EDITORIAL

## BRAHMINISING THE "HARIJANS": A DANGEROUS TREND

A UNI report from Cochin of Oct. 24 says: "Discarding tradition and practice high caste Brahmins made a beeline to Kuppuswamy, a Harijan priest, at the Andavar temple, at Trippunithura, near Cochin, to receive thirtham and prasadam from him. The occasion was the visit to the temple by the Shankaracharya of Kanchi Kamakoti peetham. Earlier, the swamiji was received with purna kumbham. A group of Harijans played panchavadyam. The un-lettered Kuppuswamy himself sang some bhajan, one of them in praise of the acharya. Kuppuswamy lives in a hut nearby." This report was prominently published in the "national press" all over India. Naturally, it is not a news that any press can miss. Many Untouchables and other low caste Hindus would have become so happy on reading this "change of heart" of orthodox. As this report is of vital significance to the dalits in particular and other low castes, we thought it needs a comment. The communal Hindus always like to select an isolated case of an individual low caste to advertise to the rest of the starving, illiterate masses that they are very charitable, tolerant. Who says that low castes are not admitted into their fold? Such reports help serve as a wonderful piece of advertisement to the outside world where many foreigners have been deceived by this Hindu double-game. Now and then they stage-manage such a show to impress the world that the doors of priesthood are open to one and all irrespective of caste.

They also say that caste is decided not on the basis of birth. We want our innocent dalit comrades not to be deceived by such a propoganda. Let us examine what type of an Untouchable is selected for such a unique honour? What qualifications he has to fulfill? While selecting an Untouchable to stage such a show, they exercise tremendous caution. They screen the individual and only one who will obey them for ever will be selected for such an honour. Such a person by entering the priesthood, which has been for centuries the exclusive privilege of the Brahmins, is only helping to strengthen Brahminism. It has to be clearly understood that the communal Hindus will admit only an individual here and there after good deal of grilling, written and oral tests and after fully assuring themselves that such an individual will help strengthen the pillars of Brahminism. There is no instance in history of Untouchables being admitted to priesthood en masse. A single swallow does not make a summer. This only goes to prove that Brahminism unlike all other world religions, Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, believes in "individual salvation."

But no collective salvation is permitted. Tolerated. When a Christian, Muslim or Buddhist enters his place of worship, his religion directs him to pray for the welfare of the whole society. There is no scope in those religions to pray for one's own happiness as we find in Hinduism. When a Hindu goes to temple, if at all he goes, he first prays for his own prosperity, then his wife, then his children and then his parents. Seldom for his family members. Never a Hindu prays for the collective welfare of his society. To the Hindu, society does not exist. Therefore, an individual by pleasing the high castes, by becoming corrupt, debasing himself, pandering to their tastes can come up the ladder of life. It is called worming one's way up. There is no bar to corruption under Brahminism because Brahminism thrives on corruption. There is no mention in Hindu "sacred scriptures" where the corrupt are punished. Greater the corruption, higher the man goes, and nearer to the *swarga*. It is the richest who are the nearest to the god. Every temple is a den of corruption in India. The Hindu god has to be bribed non-stop, fed and sexually roused to shower his holy benediction. When the gods themselves are corrupt and debauched, their creators - the gods of earth - must have to be doubly corrupt. So we have the priests who have sold the very gods. And there is a thriving smuggling business on Hindu gods. Thousands of such gods have been exported to West to adorn the drawing rooms of White households. Brahminism likes a corrupt low caste man. Take the case of some of our top Untouchable political leaders. One such leader was discovered by communal Hindus to counteract the influence of Ambedkar. He was admitted inside their closed circles and allowed to amass any amount of wealth on the condition that he praised Brahminism. Communal Hindus paraded him,

describing him as the best representative of the Indian "Harijans." But the same facility was not allowed to Dr. B. R. Ambedkar because he was the embodiment of honesty, integrity, dedication and scholarship. Kuppuswamy of Kerala represents this dangerous trend of the Untouchables getting brahminised. Brahminism is a dying force. It has to reinforce, rejuvenate itself now and then, periodically—getting fresh blood and fresh recruits from the low castes. The Kuppuswamy *kayakalpa*. We have a number of instances in history where stray individual low castes were admitted into the fold of Brahminism. Such an individual will be hailed as the model for the entire "Harijans". But we would like to appeal to the dalits that such people should be taken not as the best specimen but the scum of earth. That the high castes are not serious about admitting Untouchables collectively to priest-hood could be made out from the fact that not a single one has been so far made a Shankaracharya. On the other hand, the Tamil Nadu Govt. effort at giving "agama shastra" (temple worship) training to dalits was challenged by the communal Hindus who took it to the court which was ever eager to set aside this revolutionary order. Karunanidhi refers to this in a wonderful article in the Calcutta journal-*Sunday* (Nov. 1). What is the point in making much ado about a Kuppuswamy? The dalit salvation, said Ambedkar, lies not in getting brahminised but in revolting against it. Throwing aside lock, stock and barrel whatever that represents Brahminism. The dalits are neither interested in becoming priests nor in temple entry. Even many other Hindus themselves are not interested in such things. In fact the dalits are not the only victims of this temple apartheid. Many other low caste Hindus are also not admitted into the priest-hood and temples. Sanskrit knowledge was denied to all these people. They have

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## CASTE IN KERALA CHURCH : PLIGHT OF "HARIJAN" CHRISTIANS

(K. J. Jacob, Kottayam.)

Christain converts of scheduled caste origin of Kerala belong to the lowest rung of social and economic ladder. These Untouchables of Kerala, who embraced Christianity only 150 years ago, are looked down upon by their orthodox Christian brothers. This racial stigma has prevented them from attaining social recognition as Christians and forced them to keep identity as a separate community. In July 1899, Rev. Alexander John, wrote in "The

Travancore - Cochin Diocesan Recorder": "The condition of the depressed classes of Travancore is extremely deplorable. They are regarded as pollution and polluters." Pulayas are a major community among the Kerala SCs. 'Pulaya' means 'one who is a pollution'. 'Pula' was a social custom practised by caste Hindus. When a caste Hindu died other members of his household were to keep away from all religious rites and social activities for 16 days. In the case of Pulaya this is a perpetual condition that persisted throughout his life. In other words, his life was an extended 'Pula' into death. E. B. Thomas, who was a judge in Calicut, while writing about slave-trade in Malabar, says that in 1842, a young woman of Cherama caste was worth only three rupees and eight annas, and a child of the same caste could be bought at a price of one rupee and ten annas. European missionaries inaugurated a new era of great social change and progress. The British ascendancy in India also turned out to be a blessing in disguise for the oppressed people. The Church Missionary Society started its work in 1816. In the beginning they worked in collaboration with the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church. But this union of convenience did not last long and in 1836, the CMS broke with the Syrian Church and started missionary work on their own. The credit for announcing the good news to the slaves of Central Travancore goes to Rev. Rugland, who was corresponding secretary to the CMS in Madras. In 1850, while on a tour of Travancore, he came across a group of Pula-

yas in a paddy field working to the tune of an enchanting choral song. This made him think about the possibility of missionary work among the Untouchables. Thus, in 1854, in the village of Kaipatta in Kerala a slave called Theyyathan was baptized and christened Habel (Abel). Habel was the first convert from the Untouchables in Kerala.

This was an epoch-making event in the history of Kerala. There was an exodus of slaves to Christianity where they were recognized as human beings. The services rendered by the European missionaries for the emancipation of the slaves must be written in golden letters. The missionaries to be remembered in this connection are Benjamin Bailey and Joseph Peet.

The missionaries acquired lands and the landless slaves were comfortably rehabilitated. Ayyankali was a great leader of the Untouchables, who fought for their freedom of movement, the right to education, the right to dress properly, the right of Untouchable women to cover their breasts, etc.

After the European missionaries left the educated "Harijan" Christians gradually began to feel the existence of caste-barriers within the church. Orthodox Christians were bent upon segregating the converts. It was at this time that the Communist Party made its appearance on the political scene of Kerala with its call for the emancipation of the oppressed and exploited. Naturally, communism found a fertile ground among the working class, especially among the Untouchables inclu-

ding the converts. The Communist Party's contribution in the social uplift of the oppressed classes in Kerala is unique. But today, the party is split into groups and this caused disillusionment among the oppressed classes.

There are about one million "Harijan" Christians in Kerala, who belong to various denominations viz. the CSI, the Malankara Mar Thoma Church, Malankara Jacobite Syrian Church, the Roman Catholics, the Salvation Army and the numerous Pentecostal sects. Most of the converts are agricultural labourers. The pauperisation process in the agrarian sector has driven many upper caste people to seek work on the land thereby reducing the employment opportunities of the backward class Christians. Farm labour is only seasonal and that too is not available. Unemployment is the greatest threat that the converts face today.

A survey conducted in 1979 among farm labourers by the Socio-Economic Development Society of the CSI, Madhya Kerala Diocese, reveals that an agricultural labourer gets only 170 days of work a year. Another sample survey carried out by the CISRS in 1972 showed that the average annual income of a convert family of five to six members was Rs. 830. Some recent surveys have fixed the amount at present as Rs. 2,000. A survey conducted of late by the UNICEF has pronounced Kerala the poorest state in India. Indian needs Rs. 64 a month for his minimum diet. Then a family of six should have an annual income of Rs. 4608, whereas the actual figure is below Rs. 3000. This leads us to the alarming discovery that the backward Christians are one of the poorest sections in the country.

The CISRS survey of 1978 fixes the literacy of the backward Christians at 32%. The Venganur study shows that the literacy of Pulayas there is only 12.39% in a State with 66% literacy.

I would like to attract your attention to a recent sensational case of murder in Kerala. George Soman, Police Sub-Inspector at Panoor was most cruelly shot to death. It is suspected that (and there is enough evidence) his subordinates who were caste Hindu did away with him because they could not tolerate a Harijan above them.

The Harijan Christians suffer discrimination on the basis of religion in a secular state. The SCs are assured representation in the Indian Parliament and the State legislature by reserving constituencies for them. While the Government is spending crores on the Harijans, it is obstinately reluctant to give it to the Harijan Christian as he ceases to be a Harijan and will forfeit his benefits of reservation. But his reconversion assures him all those benefits. This is sheer violation of the fundamental principle of secularism enshrined in the Constitution, which rules out any discrimination against a citizen in respect of his religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth.

Various commissions appointed by the Central and State Governments viz. the Kalelkar Commission, Kumara Pillai Commission, Nettur Commission etc. and pronouncements of the Supreme Court and several High Courts agree with the view that there is no basic difference between a Hindu Harijan and a Harijan who became a Christian. The only difference is the difference of religion. The Harijan Christian continues to bear the shackles of his early existence as a Harijan.

Caste system prevails in the church also. Harijan Christians are subjected to discrimination by their orthodox fellow Christians. There are several places of worship in Kerala that are meant exclusively for the Harijan Christians. The policy of segregation is followed by the church in many places. They are not given their due share of employment in the institutions run by

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## Letters to Editor :

**Fr. IGNATIUS PINTO, St John's Medical College, Bangalore :** Your editorial, "Bid to Throttle Christians in India," is a very fine piece of objective thinking and we congratulate the *Dalit Voice* on the correct analysis you have made of the whole problem. We wish there are more people like you who could enlighten others with equal clarity.

**SANTOSH KUMAR, Philadelphia, USA :** I am a member of the VISION and had a chance to read the booklet, "Why Go For Conversion?" published by the Dalit Sahitya Akademy. We are very much impressed by the contents, therefore, want to send a copy each to every member of our organisation. We feel this booklet will bring more awareness among the dalits.

**Dr. P AROKIASWAMY, Archbishop of Bangalore :** Congratulations on your excellent editorial, "Bid to Throttle Christians in India.", (DV Oct. 15.)

**M. KUMARAN, Nagpur :** Press reports say that the Sankaracharya of Kanchi Kamakoti has distributed certificates to 26 non-Brahmin pujaris at Cochin. Why can't the acharya convert the untouchables into Brahmins and give them sacred thread and the status? The sanatanists are doing all these tricks as they are very much worried about the conversion of untouchables to Islam.

**FATHIMA AKHTAR, Madras :** Will you define the the word "dalit"? Which sections of the country come under it? It is said that Hinduism embraces all sections of the society except Muslims and Christians. Muslims are yet to be recognised as forming an integral part of India by the majority community. It is recognised only as a religious minority. Whether the dalit movement adopts the same position?

**M. K. SUBRAMANIAN, Erode (TN) :** DV writings are really very fiery. But I have certain doubts. You say Muslims and Christians are persecuted minorities. But in some educational institutions run by these minorities, its employees are suppressed. The Govt. is unable to to interfere in the affairs of these colleges as they enjoy constitutional protection. College teachers are not feeling secure. Regarding conversion, we can't fight Hinduism if we leave it. Our aim is to abolish caste system. Periyar advised Ambedkar not to embrace Buddhism only because of this. Hinduism survived but Buddhism declined. Periyar worked for social, atheistic revolution.

**R. M. PREMANANDAM, I I C. S., Secunderabad :** We congratulate you on your editorial "Bid to throttle Christians in India" with reference to the action of the communal groups against the most prestigious medical institution of India-St John's Medical College, Bangalore. We thank you for the bold editorial and for the clarion call given to the dalits for unity. Prior to this incident several other attempts have been made by communal groups and biased govts to put down progressive programmes of the minority communities. So St John's College affair should not be taken as a stray incident but as one reflecting on the whole minority population of India. We call upon you to mobilize the strength of dalits throughout the country and rally them under a single banner so that the ruling community might reckon with the strength of the minorities. We assure you of our unstinted support in all your efforts.

**M. A. RAZAKH, Vizag :** Muslims are being edged out of Govt services. Their representation is about 2 per cent while their population is more than 12 per cent. Is it justice? The Muslims in this area are very poor. The educated youth are not getting jobs because of some objection or other.

"KALYAN", ISKAPALLI (AP) : "Kick off these Hindu crumbs of bread given in the shape of reservations, and seek salvation by getting out of this gas chamber of Hinduism". This (DV Sept. 15) warning against the traps laid by their high caste oppressors sums up the dreams and expectations of the Dalit front. Two suggestions may be pertinent. 1) Those dalits who enjoy financial security need not avail of reservations thus enabling their less fortunate brothers to get jobs and other benefits. They should not use their sub-caste names as this could lead to class discrimination, and give their children a feeling of insecurity and unwantedness. 2) We should promote an awareness of the benefit of humanising education. Dr. K. Wilson says : "Humanising education is the premium which the nation cannot afford not to invest - for the establishment of a just society". This kind of education has more chances to give birth to a new humanised political race. It is the duty of educated dalits to share this message with their rural counterparts to help develop and organise themselves against oppression. Dr. Ambedkar said that dalits must renounce Hinduism. Today those who leave the fold are justified. But they need not join another religion. They could create a society for the development of a "meaningful life," in the social structure and thus help root out the caste system. Hopefully this could be the solution rather than any other religion.

S. SUDHEER. (AP) : After 33 years of Independence, and inspite of constitutional guarantees, Untouchables continue to be segregated and oppressed. About 70-80% exist below the poverty line. Opportunities are denied to them by Hindus. Social indignities and oppression have resulted in the Meenakshipuram conversions to Islam, a lesson to Hinduism and caste system. □

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## LONDON JOURNLS QUOTES DALIT VOICE

IMRC Bulletin, published by the Indian Muslim Relief Committee. London, in its issue of Sept. 1981 has reproduced the entire editorial of the *Dalit Voice* (July 15), "Earthquake at Meenakshipuram".

Similarly, *Dalit Voice* articles, comments and editorials are also translated to languages and published in Indian journals. Dalits living in UK, USA, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Canada and other parts of the world have evinced keen interest in *Dalit Voice* and also in the different publications of the Dalit Sahitya Akademy. Representatives of the persecuted minorities are free to reproduce or translate any part from the *Dalit Voice* after acknowledging the name

EDITOR.

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## SINISTER INDIAN SECULARISM

The state of affairs in India is no better than that obtaining in the United States of America, as explained by Dr. Madalyn Murray O'Hair in her speech. She had visited India in July 1978, and in Bombay we had organised a public meeting which she had addressed. The Indian politicians and almost all those who are at the helm of affairs of the state and the society, have purposefully distorted the meaning of secularism to serve their malicious ends and they are brazen-facedly thrusting down the throats of gullible people that distorted meaning of secularism, i. e. equal respect for all religions.

As defined by all the English dictionaries the honest and truthful meaning of secularism is that the state, morals, education, administration, civic, health, law, police and all such public institutions should be entirely bereft and independent of religion and religious ceremonies, performances etc.

Y. A. Lokhandwala, *President,*  
Indian Rationalist Association.

## CASTE WAR : SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL IMPACT

( V. T. Rajshekar )

**Caste is Class :** Caste in India broadly fits into a class. The Brahmins of India forming the apex of the caste pyramid are mostly the property-holders all over India. Untouchables forming the other extreme, the bottom of the caste pyramid, are mostly landless agricultural labourers. The Kshatriyas and Vaishyas, the other two twice-born (dwijas) varna groups and the landed gentry, dominant caste shudras (like Marathas of Maharashtra, Patels of Gujarat, Reddis and Khammas of AP, Nayars of Kerala, Mudaliars, Pillais and Gounders of Tamil Nadu) are also property holders. The pyramid-shaped caste groups have property holders on the top. Lower the caste, lesser the property. No doubt, there are poor in every caste group but this is only an exception. Therefore, at least some social scientists have now come to agree that in India caste is a class. As a clash between the classes is inevitable as per the Marxist analysis, a clash between castes in India becomes quite natural. Therefore, we often get the caste clashes which have now taken the form of caste war; the biggest, the longest and the bloodiest being the "Gujarat caste war" which raged for over 3 months from December 26, 1980 (with the burning alive of an Untouchable youth Sakharbai at Jetalpur village, near Ahmedabad, by Patels since convicted).

**Why Caste Conflict ?** Caste clashes will, therefore, increase in days to come. This is because despite the ruling class reluctance to give education to the Untouchables and hence keep them as their slaves, they are managing to gain consciousness. The philosophy of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and Periyar have awakened them. They have started asserting their

rights in a mild way. But even this is not tolerated by the landed gentry. The Indian village system is not compatible with democracy. Hindu values cannot co-exist with democratic and socialist ethos. If the low castes start asserting their rights, the Indian village system will collapse. It cannot sustain without caste but caste is bound to be there as long as Hinduism is there. Because Hinduism is the other name for caste. So the propertied castes, whose values are derived from Brahminism, will do their best to crush any body opposing the status quo. Caste clashes are the inevitable outcome of such a development. That is why India has started witnessing bigger caste clashes. Kilvenmani, Belchi, Pipra, Parasbigha, Marathwada caste war and the latest Gujarat caste war. As literacy increases and the political process raises the hope of the Untouchables without fulfilling them, caste clashes will increase. As already stated, caste being class in India, the Indian road to revolution is paved with pebbles of caste struggle unlike in China and Russia where it was class struggle.

**Failure of Left Movement :** Unfortunately the Indian Marxists have failed to take note of it. Or is it that they know it and yet deliberately stick to the "class struggle theory" to prevent caste wars as agents of the upper castes ? The caste background of the Indian Marxist leadership is an important factor to be taken note of in this background. In the Gujarat caste war, the Leftists failed to come to the rescue of the Dalits. So too in all other places where the Dalits were tortured. The high caste leadership of the Left movement is mainly responsible for delaying if not betraying the Indian revolution. We have come to

this conclusion after visiting Marathwada and Gujarat during the caste wars and also with our long association with the Dalit movement.

**Marathwada :** We don't want to go into individual cases of clashes. The list is too long. But the subject given to us will be incomplete if we do not at least briefly touch the two major caste wars. The 1979 Marathwada caste war is the result of the agitation launched by the dalits to change the name of the Marathwada University to Ambedkar University in keeping with the unanimous resolution of the Maharashtra legislature to this effect. The landed Maratha community fury (EPW-12/6/79, Page 846) affected 1200 villages out of the 9000 villages in the five Marathwada districts. In all 5,000 people of 1,000 villages became homeless. 25,000 Dalits became destitutes and 2,000 of them had to flee their villages. We courted arrest at Aurangabad along with 60,000 other Dalits at the culmination of a historic "Long march". One police SI was burnt alive. For 11 days the rich Hindu landlords launched an unprovoked aggression on innocent, poor dalits. Four dalits were killed. Their wells were poisoned, huts burnt. The naked rule of the Manusmriti. The Government is afraid to implement its own unanimous resolution. That means India is not governed by its Government but by its ruling class.

**Gujarat Caste War :** This is India's biggest caste war raging for about three months killing over 30 people in the early part of 1981. The war was led by the landed Patels deriving inspiration from Brahmins. The issue was reservations of seats in PG Medical course to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. But scheduled tribes who form a much bigger population than scheduled castes (8%) were spared. The anger was only on Untouchables. The beauty

of the Gujarat caste war is that what began as an attack on scheduled caste PG medics ended with a wholesale attack on illiterate, poor, landless Untouchables having no connection with medical college or having never known what is reservation. And we call the Hindus as the most non-violent people on earth. That such a violence can come in the very land of Gandhi, and in the name of Gandhi, is another important aspect. On behalf of the Karnataka Dalit Action Committee we visited Gujarat twice and addressed over a dozen meetings. Therefore, we speak with full knowledge and responsibility. There is one important point of difference between the two wars. Hindus of Gujarat could say that they stand to lose something if the scheduled castes get reservations in PG courses. Although this is factually incorrect, they can at best say at least as an excuse. But what did the very same Hindus stand to lose in Marathwada? After all what the Dalits there were demanding was just a change of name of an university. Those who cannot concede even a mere change of name, will they give reservations in medical college? Therefore, viewing from this angle, the Marathwada war is a more serious manifestation of Hindu fascism than the Gujarat caste war.

**Why caste war should be welcomed? :** The caste war had inflicted heavy loss on Untouchables, their life and property. But at the same time it has pushed them to the brink and forced them to be militant. They are gradually losing faith in Hinduism and Gandhism. The current conversions are a result of their frustration, desperation. The political leadership of the "Harijans" and particularly of the ruling party is washed out and the leadership of the movement got passed into the hands of the militant, dedicated Dalit Panthers. The fakes were eliminated. The Dalits are also losing faith in the electoral system

and our sham democracy, all this is a welcome sign that proves that dalits, the born revolutionaries, are getting ready for revolution.

**Dalitstan:** To repeat, the Hindu religion is the other name for fascism. Even the country's Constitution, which is itself anti-poor, is not tolerated by this over-fed high castes. Therefore, the country is going to gradually slip into a regular, periodical civil war resulting in a lot of bloodshed. The only two things keeping the revolution at check are the caste system and the "Karma theory." If we are indeed heading for revolution, we would have welcomed this periodical blood-letting by the Hindus. But we have hardly any chance of a revolution in the foreseeable future because of these two formidable obstacles. Therefore, the dalits will have to take every precaution to save themselves, their property and the honour of their women. The one immediate plan that we are trying to implement is migration of Untouchables to urban areas and transfer of population. Migration is taking place now steadily but transfer of population has to be undertaken in an organised way by dalit organisations. The next step is the carving out of a separate autonomous state of Dalitstan comprising the entire South India plus Maharashtra in proportion to the dalits. We are planning a book on this subject giving a concrete shape to this idea. Please do not think it is a tall and impractical claim. We have given deep thought to the subject and found it quite feasible.

**Conversion:** Meanwhile, we are fully in favour of conversions as it has proved to assure social equality to the Untouchables. The problem of Untouchables is mainly social and not so much economic. The Indian poverty is also not so much due to economic reasons as due to social factors. If the Maharashtra dalits are today in the forefront of the Dalit movement, it is because of the mental slavery

they got rid of by quitting Hinduism, and becoming Buddhists as directed by Ambedkar. The Untouchable converts in Tamil Nadu have also said that they have achieved social equality by embracing Islam. Similar conversion to Christianity have also helped dalits (look at North-eastern states like the Nagaland etc.) although there are complaints of caste discrimination. We have just published Ambedkar's speech, "Why Go For Conversion?" (Re. 1) in which the greatest leader of the Indian Untouchables had said that conversion is the only salvation to the Untouchables in the existing circumstance. Therefore, we call upon the dalits to quit Hinduism and embrace Buddhism, Sikhism, Christianity or Islam. As Marxists have failed to deliver the goods to dalits, they have no other go but to chart out their own course. □

*(Paper presented at the tenth annual Political Reflection Seminar held at Gurukul Lutheran Theological College and Research Institute, Kilpauk, Madras - 10 during 2-4, October 1981)* □

## FOREIGN MISSIONARIES

**Delhi:** Foreign missionaries were trying to "denationalize the Naga people in a bid to create pockets of Western neo-colonialism and cultural imperialism". N. C. Zaliyang, MLA from Nagaland, said according to a report in the Statesman (Oct 14) inaugurating an eight-day all-India camp of tribal workers organized by the Bharatiya Vanavasi Kalyan Ashram in Delhi on Oct. 12; he saw a "growing menace to our national solidarity at the hands of the alien soul traders".

More than 700 workers including 150 women from tribal areas of the country are participating in the camp named after Thakkar Bapa, a Harijan leader and close associate of Mahatma Gandhi.

(Bharatiya Vana-Vasi Kalyan Asram is RSS - sponsored organisation trying to Hinduise the tribals) □

## VALMIKI : A BRAHMIN VIEW

(S. D. Thirumala Rao, Anantapur A P)

Valmiki, the poet of the Ramayana, did not belong to the scheduled caste. Valmiki was a Brahmin, and the son of Prachetasa maharshi. That is why he is called Praachestasa.

Why then has Valmiki been reckoned as belonging to the scheduled caste? There is an apocryphal story in a purana, that a certain young man among wild people was behaving in a cruel manner, committing deceptions, killing people etc. He was made to realise his folly by a sage. The repentant man then began doing penance. Anthills grew over him, due to which he was called Valmiki. ('Valmiki' means anthill) According to the same purana, the naughty young man was a Brahmin boy, brought up by tribal people.

It is not probable that the writer of the Ramayana should have been any other than a Brahmin. The reason for this, is that the Ramayana considered a commentary on the Gayatri, the 24 letters of the Gayatri having been enlarged into 24000 verses in the Ramayana. In those days, nobody but a Brahmin was permitted to recite the Gayatri or practice tapas.

In the seventh kanda of the Ramayana, we come across the story of one Sambuka, a pious Sudra sage, being punished, reluctantly, by Rama, for violating the varna dharma in practising tapas, which was the prerogative of Brahmins. Valmiki would not have written this had he himself been a scheduled caste man. Valmiki also could not have cursed the professional hunter, the Vishada, who had shot the male krauncha bird.

However, Valmiki was a great sage, and cannot be considered to belong exclusively to one group or caste. (*Indian Express* Oct 26) □

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## ಸಂಕ್ರಮಣ

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ಇಂದಿಯದ ಹೆಸರಾಂಕ ಸಾಹಿತಿಗಳ, ಸಮಾಜ ವಿಜ್ಞಾನಿಗಳ  
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by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar

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Published by the Dalit Sahitya Akademy,  
109 - 7th cross, Palace Lower Orchards,  
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**Caste in Kerala Church**  
[Contd from Page-4]

the church - schools, colleges, hospitals etc. The backward Christians have no say in the functioning of the church and they are kept away from the key administrative posts. The church is now in the grip of a pack of upper caste conservatives who are more interested in running the institutions than in announcing the Kingdom of God to the poor. They join hands with the reactionary forces in society and turn their faces away from popular movements engaged in liberation struggles. The church is always opposed to the people's struggle for their legitimate rights. The church, as is evident from its teachings, is eager to sustain the existing structures of injustice. "What if we suffer here on earth?" they ask: "God is going to reward you in heaven". People are made

to believe in an everlasting blissful life beyond death totally irresponsive to the present responsibilities. The church goes on teaching like this pacifying the tide of wrath against injustice. Passive acceptance of suffering and injustice is considered a Christian virtue. This will lead to a sort of moral castration of the people making them passive and indifferent spectators to the crying injustices which they suffer.

What we need today is the transformation of the church into a dynamic movement for realizing the Kingdom of God. The poor and the down-trodden are a force to be reckoned with in the context of any social change. They can be turned into a revolutionary force for transforming the church and society. □

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## BRAHMINS FILE CASE AGAINST RAM

MATHURA: Two local journalists have filed a case in the court of Chief Judicial Magistrate against Jagjivan Ram under Section 295 of the Indian Penal Code. The complainants, M. Ramesh Chandra Sharma and Akhilesh Kumar Sharma, alleged in their complaint that Jagjivan Ram had made defamatory speeches against Brahmins on October 6 and 18, in which he called upon Harijans to discard Brahmins and fight against them, according to a PTI report. □

## A GOAN NEWSPAPER

PANJIM: "The GOA FREE PRESS TRUST" will publish a newspaper "The Goan weekly," with S. B. Desai as Editor. On the Board are Messrs: M. Saldanha, chairman, A. Kansar, Prof. S. Carvalho, V-Chairman, J. Couto, Gen. Sec., R. Furtado Jr. Sec., S. Naik Treasurer and J. Carvalho Jr. Treasurer. Trustees: Messrs A. Fonesca, S. B. Dessai, C. Rodrigues, G. Vaz, A. Couto, J. Rebello, C. Martins, J. V. Botelho, F. Tavora, J. Rodrigues, O. Gonsalves and D. Dennis. □

**Brahminising "Harijans"**

(Contd. from Page-2)

been kept out for centuries despite remain ing as the most loyal servants of the ortho- dox. At a time when they were eager to get brahminised, the facility was denied to them. Those attempting to stealthily get entry into this high caste fortress were mercilessly dealt with. But the clock has now turned a full circle. The dalits today are agitating not to become priests and gain temple entry but get rid of all those institutions that symbolise their slavery. The mass conversion to Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, Sikhism etc., is an indication of their protest against Brahminism. Dalits have come to realise the dangers of Brahminism. So, at a time when the dalits are rebellious, the communal Hindus are out to thrust down their throats what they do not want to swallow. Let the commu- nal Hindus know that a single Kupu-

swamy, however widely advertised in their own press, will not tempt others to fall into this trap. All the more it is quite possible that some poor, illiterate dalits, who are so innocent, here and there may consider the forbidden fruit sweet and go to eat it like Kuppuswamy. To such un- wary dalits we call upon to be cautious. It is the duty of all educated dalits to advice their less fortunate and save them from the clutches of Brahminism which indeed is the curse of India. Ambedkar said any amount of applying "kum kum" or ashes on the forehead and body, any amount of offering of money in temples and any amount of worship of Hindu gods will not bring them equal status with high castes. Instead of imitating higher castes and get kicked later it is better to get out of Hinduism and pro- claim to the world that they are not Hindus. And they were never Hindus. □

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**DALIT MARCH TO HIGH  
COURT**

**BANGALORE :** Karnataka Dalit Action Committee has decided to organise a novel "Dalit March to High Court" on Nov. 23 to protest against the injustice meted out to dalits in the "the temple of justice" and also burn the effigy of Chief Justice D. M. Chandrashekar on that day. Three top communities, Lingayats, Brahmins and Vokkaligas are controlling the High Court which has just one judge each from the SC, Muslim and OBCs. Christians have no judge. A. Natarajan, a dalit leader of the AG's office, presiding over the DAC mee- ting here, said judiciary is anti-dalit.

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*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 / PLO / B-3

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