

DALIT VOICE

[The Voice of the Persecuted Minorities]

Vol. 1

AUG. - 15 - 1981

No. 5

EDITORIAL

POLITICAL PARALYSIS

Keen observers of the country's political developments in recent months would not have failed to notice the creeping paralysis as India attains the age of 34. Despite the massive majority in Parliament including the Rajya Sabha, the ruling party is not able to rule the country. This is clearly evident from its confused action, indecision, wide-spread social unrest, deepening economic crisis. The Ordinance banning strikes is yet another proof of the paralysis. But the strikes and lockouts are merrily going on despite the ordinance. The economy is so much shattered that a latest World Bank report said India is pushed as the 11th poorest country among 150 members of the UNO.

The general belief is that a government will be stable if it has a good majority in the legislature. But our ruling party has a much bigger majority. If the gate is opened today, there will be a stampede of MPs and MLAs. So the problem is not of majority. That majority rule will bring stability did not work under Indian conditions. The chief ministers in the States are having equally comfortable majority. This majority, however, did not lead to stability. A stable government need not mean a good government. Pahlajji in Rajasthan was changed not because he did not have a majority. Antulay is not able to govern not because his party is weak. Gundu Rao in Karnataka is said to be on the way out not because of want of confidence in the party. So too Anjaiah in AP and all other chief ministers. In fact all these persons are suffering from indigestion as far as votes are concerned. Votes come without even asking for it. So the problem is not want of party stability but stability in society. The popular belief that a massive majority will lead to stable government has

proved false in India. However can a govt. be stable when the society is not? The Janata Party which had a stunning victory, also collapsed for the very same reason. At least the Janata can be excused because it was a conglomerate of conflicting interests. But that is not the case with the Cong. I which is a one single party. There is none to question the leader who enjoys the confidence of the masses. The chief ministers are facing problems not from the Opposition-less said the better about the Opposition mad house—but from their own party. That means as days pass no political party, even after getting a landslide victory in the general election, can manage the affairs. This has become the pattern of the day. The tendency to pull apart and pull down the leadership will increase even within a party. This is not the case of the Cong I alone. Every party is facing a revolt more from within, the CFM, CPI are no exception.

That means a political party even if it sweeps the poll will lose all meaning as it can't assure a good government. Already the thinking section of the population has lost faith in the electoral process because

it is convinced that people are not assured of economic change, let alone social change. When a party winning an election and forming a stable government cannot assure economic or social change what is the use of that government? The people are naturally wondering why they have been pushed to this precipice. So when a duly elected government is not able to rule, the leadership will have to find a reason to confuse the gullible and shirk responsibility. Hence the discovery of foreign hand, Gulf money, CIA, plot of a civil war, Muslim-Christian 'global conspiracy', Communist threat etc. Non-political leaders of persecuted minorities should educate their people on the failure of the so-called democratic process in India and hold discussions on the suitable alternative. Militant sections among Dalits in Karnataka and elsewhere had given a call to observe Aug. 15 Independence day as "Black Day" and also to quit Hinduism on that day because of the increasing realisation that freedom has brought nothing to them. This realisation is coming in more and more people. Please think: you also will realise the political paralysis creeping India. □

TRUST FOR RATIONALISTS

Bombay: To encourage rationalist movement in India, particularly in Gujarat and Maharashtra, a trust is being formed to collect funds. Already Rs. 25,000 have been deposited in the name of Buddhipramanyawad Pratsahan Trust. Those interested may write to Y. A. Lokhandwala, president, Indian Rationalist Association, 29 Municipal Industrial Estate, K. Khadye Marg, Bombay - 400 011. □

COMMUNAL KILLERS OF HYDERABAD

The "Sunday", the Calcutta-based weekly, is the first journal in India to come out with a truthful report on the July 12-17 communal riots. Since official authorities came out with the theory that it was not a

communal riot the "Sunday" report will be helpful to understand the truth. On July 12, when the Hindus took out the procession, they stopped before the Deeni mosque. Muslims inside asked the Hindus not to create noise before the mosque and this led to a fight between a Hindu and Muslim youth, Sabir, and the latter was stabbed in the stomach. The procession later, "freely attacked shops and houses of Muslims" and they were "armed with lethal weapons which included swords, knives, spears, trishuls, barbers razors, cycle chains, iron rods and lathis". The Hindus were taking out only a religious procession but the description looked as if they were going to a war.

The Sunday gives the name of two Muslims who were stabbed to death on July 12. On July 13, three Muslims and two Hindus died. On July 14 and 15 further attack on Muslims. The Sunday has given the Cong (I) MLA from Karwan area as the man behind the riots. On July 18, a Muslim head constable in uniform was attacked by the Arya Samaj mob. It mentions the name of Vandemataram Ramachandra Rao, the Arya Samaj leader, for inciting communal passions by addressing a series of press conferences on Meenakshipuram conversions. It says pork was thrown into mosques at three places. Allwyn factory workers attacked namazis in a mosque near the factory. Chief Minister Anjaiah said a particular Hindu business community has financed the riots. □

BRAHMINS ATTACK DALITS

Brahmins in the village Benipur, Fatehapur dt., near Allahabad, have beaten up untouchables because they refused to work as their bonded labour. A Times of India (July 31) report says a large number of Dalits left the village unable to bear the Brahmin torture. The report says the Brahmins circled the houses of Dalits-beat them up and forced them to work as bonded labourers. □

PLIGHT OF DALITS IN MARXIST BENGAL

(*Krishna Dhan Sardar*)

I belong to a SC community called "Poundra" in West Bengal, 24-Paraganas dt. Some years back we were called "Poundra Kshatriyas". On the West Bengal Government order, the Kshatriya part of the surname was dropped. Two leaders of the community, Ananda Prasad Naskar and Hemachandra Naskar, both from 24-Paraganas district, were responsible for improving the lot of the community. Their social reform movement was against using contemptuous caste names. The latter became a Minister under Chief Minister B. C. Roy. The community still maintains a degraded position. The economic condition has risen a little. Educationally however it has improved a lot. The credit for this progress cannot go to the government alone. It is mainly due to the expansion of Calcutta city and the increased demand for labour supplied by this community.

The trade union movement under the communists no doubt has helped lessen caste distinction, thanks to Marx's materialistic and atheistic philosophy. This attack on the caste could have made greater headway if the CPM and other Left parties were not dominated by the high caste Hindus. By crafty means they captured the leadership of Left parties and made the bureaucracy run along a line which was anti-Dalit.

I have been fighting against the corrupt Brahmin priesthood and also against fanatical Muslims. It is true that Muslim political leaders like Fazlul Haque, who once formed Krishak - Mazdur Praja Party during the Muslim League Ministry in undivided Bengal, joined hands with the SCs which forced the Hindu-dominated later governments to think in terms of doing something for them. Fazlul Haque later became the Prime Minister of undivided Bengal under the British.

There are several SC communities in 24 - Paraganas area. They are Rajbanshi, Muchi, Kaora, Havi, Chandal. There are several Hindu low caste communities whose condition is no way better than the SCs. These Hindu communities are called "Sankhari" (conch-maker, seller etc.) Brahmins treat them as low-born. Feelings of caste-distinction, of low caste and high

caste, are acute in Bengal. But this feeling never rose to the point of untouchability. Here, I found, non-Brahmins have a separate Durga Puja house by the side of the Brahmins and Kayasthas, who politically, economically and educationally occupy key positions, will not allow even a little chance not only to the SCs, whose condition can be compared to that of the street beggar, but also to other low caste Hindus.

The tactical side of warfare against SCs and other low-caste Hindus waged by the Brahmins and Kayasthas is by joining any ruling party and capturing its leadership right from the village to the State level. The Bengali Brahmins and Kayasthas (Joyti Basu is a Kayastha) know that the SCs have hardly any time to think as to how they are being exploited by their own "religious" bretheren. In Bankura those who were once landlords and who still possess large amount of lands in a fictitious way, by making malafide transfer of lands even to the name of dogs and to the name of those who are still to be born, are the very leaders of the CPM conducting the movement to grab surplus lands from the big landholders and then to distribute it to the landless.

CPM has no programme of work against caste distinction. They say if socialism comes,

all these obnoxious systems would automatically vanish. They are more eager to win votes by allowing caste feeling to flourish than to incur displeasure arising out of such a work. As a member of the CPI and then of CPM since 1957, for about 12 years at a stretch, I became convinced that the Hindus especially Brahmins and Kayasthas, would wage a war against the SCs and STs in the name of defending their economic class interest under the very banner of Marxism, and shouting the slogans of 'workers of the world unite'

We did not find this sort of hypocrisy during the Congress rule. When Siddharta Sankar Ray was Chief Minister of West Bengal, he said educated shudras should be invited to worship Durga. Brahmins protested against this.

From this we can conclude that appearances of 'progressiveness' is deceptive-CPM or no CPM. As long as Brahminism exists, caste system will not go Brahminhood is not only a pure religio-social matter, but it has also political and economic overtones. The Hindus, at least the upper strata of them, want the caste because otherwise their economic and political inter-

est will be in jeopardy. The recent caste riots in Gujarat is as much social as they are politico-economic. The burning of Sakrabhai by some high caste Patels is a very glaring example of Hindu benevolence. It is no wonder therefore that humanism tried to save itself from the suffocating atmosphere of the value system of Hindu religio-social culture through conversion to Islam. It is a solace to those converted Muslims that they would be treated as humans hereafter.

When I first tried to replace a Brahmin by a shudra in 1952, our family priest and guru tried their best to create confusion by raising the bogey of divine curse to fall on our head. I was once thrown out of the temple by the Brahmins during the singing of 'Harinam' because of my being born in a low caste. I am still on the look out for the means which would finally put Brahminism to the grave.

Instead of going over to Islam for emancipation from the curse of caste-hatred, I like Dalits to get united and wage war on Hindus. I know it is an uphill task. We want to fight Brahminism, caste system, and idol worship. If necessary let us organise a movement for Dalitastan. □

CPI dilemma

New Delhi: CPI is in a dilemma. Party members are confused. The recent split with the Dange faction forming a rival party, has taken away many stalwarts. ISCUS (Indo Soviet Cultural Society) is also split. The Dange party is claiming that it is closer to Soviet union, and the latter has given enough indication that it is so. Meanwhile, there are reports that Moscow has asked the CPI to support Indira Gandhi, failing which the flow of huge funds to the CPI may be stopped. There are also reports that it has asked the CPI to denounce RSS and the BJP as the enemy No. 1 and launch a campaign against them. All these have

brought about terrible confusion. There are reports that Moscow has demanded change in the CPI leadership. All these indicate a victory to the Dange faction. □

Postal Censorship

New Delhi: BJP leader Vajpayee said in Delhi that the Union Home Ministry officials have been directed to carry out "unofficial censorship" of the mail of 300 political leaders and journalists, according to a Statesman report of Aug 3. Such a censorship is conducted by them within post offices. This interception and censorship of the mail came to light in Karnataka also. But we have definite information that RSS agents in postal dept. also undertake a similar job and quite a number of victims have complained to us about this. □

CASTE PREJUDICES AMONG NAXALITES

(Our Correspondent)

Hyderabad : Chapala Erriah, the only CPML member in the Andhra State Assembly who jumped to the ruling Cong. I, is a standing example of the deep caste prejudices inside the Naxalites who claim to be the most revolutionary parties in the country. He is an uneducated tribal leader belonging to the Chandra Pullareddy group of Naxalites—one of the powerful ML groups in A-P. They have strong tribal base in the Bhadrachalam forest on the bank of Godavari, Khammam district. Pullareddy, over 60, has a price of Rs. 1 lakh on his head. His student front is PDSU (Progressive Democratic Students Union).

All the M-L groups were shocked when Erriah crossed over to the Cong-I. Naturally everyone is interested in knowing what made a Naxalite join Cong-I. What are the facts? And to probe this we went to his constituency.

The tribals we met said Erriah was often ill-treated by the M-L leaders and students. He had no freedom to do anything. He was treated as a slave. He was not allowed to go any where without their permission even though he was an MLA. He was not even allowed to sleep in his room at Hyderabad MLA hostel as it was always crowded with youths and students and Naxalite leaders. He was asked to sleep

in the verandah. He was not allowed to send his salary to his family. Even boys of 16 tried to dictate him as they felt that being an uneducated, that too a tribal, he did not know Marxism. But as long as he was in the ML party they did not openly say that he was ignorant of Marxism. But when he left, they said he knew nothing of Marxism.

Other ML groups did not protest such insinuations. The CPI & CPM enjoyed such allegations. This is the position of our Left parties and their caste prejudices. How can Marxism come to India with such Left leaders heading our Left movement?

Mahesh Yogi bid to convert tribals

Bhopal: If Christians open any institution to uplift the tribals they are accused of conversion. Mahesh Yogi, who has returned to India, is investing crores of rupees in MP tribal belt. According to a Statesman's special representative report (26/5/81), Mahesh Yogi is investing at least Rs.10 crores in different industries in the tribal areas. Mahesh Prasad Shrivastav, as he was then known, the Yogi was born in a village near Raipur. The Statesman says he has already invested Rs 3 crores and is about to set up a number of industries all over India, to prove that the TM (Transcendental Meditation) improves productivity. The investment on handloom industries alone comes to over Rs.3 crores. In 13 districts, he has bought land. The whole idea is to turn tribals into his devotees. The RSS is actively helping him. The officials are rendering every assistance. In Jagdalpur, Bastar

dt. he has opened a silk factory. The tribals and others have demanded a probe into the source of Mahesh Yogi's funds

HINDUS HIRE DACOITS TO KILL DALITS IN MP

Bhopal: Caste Hindu Thakurs have hired dacoit caste men to kill three untouchables in the Chambal valley, on July 29. According to the Bhopal special correspondent of the Statesman (Aug.2) the offence committed by the Dalits was that they offered 'holy Ganga water' to a Shiva idol despite objection from the Hindus. The ghastly incident took place in Shivapuri district. The report says Brahmin priests colluded in the murder of the Dalits in Dhorla village. On July 29, when some 16 Dalits were walking away after offering the prayers and the "holy water", the Thakurs brought the decoits and made them shoot down the Dalits. Hiring dacoits by Hindus to terrorise Dalits is not new in this area. Police officers who are also Hindus just wink at such offences.

Letters to the editor :

GREETINGS FROM U.K. DALITS

L. PATIL, President, Dr. Ambedkar Memorial Trust, Watford, UK. : Members of the trust and other Dalits who have gone through the Dalit Voice, & your contribution to the Marathwada agitation, the Gujarat caste war really appreciate your hard work towards the Dalit cause. Dalit Voice is very much appreciated here. Your coverage of the Dalit issues is not found in the mass media in India. □

M. N. JAVARAIAH, Mysore : Very much impressed with your burning facts about the mass conversion of untouchables at Meenakshipuram. As a matter of fact, untouchables are mere untouchables and nothing else in the eyes of Hindus. When untouchables can never become Brahmins let them become Muslims at least where they can be secure. It is none of the Brahmins' business to comment upon or to question the religious rights of untouchables. My only suggestion to Brahmin leaders like Vajpayee and Pejawar Swamy, and their RSS people is that, let them also become Muslims; so that there will be an absolute equality. And as a result, there would never be Hindu-Muslim clashes and bloodshed. On the other hand, as long as untouchables remain as Hindus, untouchability can never be removed, because of which India in the eyes of the world is a nation of untouchables and, it is a greatest stigma on humanity. Therefore untouchables have paved the way for the Hindus to protect the national prestige of India by becoming Muslims. So dear Hindus, don't waste time, follow untouchables, become Muslims and protect India. □

Carlos Monteiro, Panjim, Goa : The revolutionary content of the 'Voice' has made our blood boil. We extend our solidarity in struggle □

N. THANGARAJU, gen. secretary, All-India Backward Class Railway Employees Association, Villupuram (TN) : We are very much interested in the implementation of the Mandal Commission report. We want the 'Voice' to fight for this. The Dravida Kazagam general secretary Veeramani is organising a backward class mass rally in Delhi in August. As for the mass conversion of Dalits to Islam, please send your representative to Meenakshipuram to ascertain the facts. □

HONNAPPA KAHLE, Bangalore : Your editorial, "Why this war preparation? (July 15) is quite timely and thought provoking. After getting disappointed for years the Dalits of Meenakshipuram took to Islam. It is after deep thinking and conviction they took this decision, and thus gave a green signal to Dalits in rest of India to follow them. How can it be a danger signal as interpreted by Vajpayee? An untouchable sees his emancipation only in conversion as the quickest and sure method of progress, getting rid of harassment, ill-treatment and humiliation from Hindu society. Is there any other quicker method for his emancipation? It is the experience of an "Hindu Harijan" that a convert to Islam or Christianity is far better in his social life. Hindus and Hinduism have forfeited their right to think on behalf of Dalits and decide about their future. Only Dalits know their interests better and where it lies. □

S.A. Veerapandian, Tanjore: Congratulation to Voice which has the potential of becoming the Voice of all socially exploited. No force on earth has the guts to face the Dalit-OBC-Muslim and Christian united front. Therefore your policy to seek an alliance of all these persecuted minorities is the best strategy. □

CONVERSIONS & SOCIAL CHANGE

(P. R. Kuppuswamy, Advocate, Karur, T. N)

Meenakshipuram has become the symbol of the trend now seems to set in Tamil Nadu and all over India. What a storm it has created throughout the length and breadth of the country is now well known.

Some Christians too opted for Islam since they see the continued presence of untouchability among Christians also. Reports are daily pouring about individual and group conversions. As Makwana puts it the intelligent untouchables of Tamil Nadu had opted for Islam implying thereby that the other religions neither absolve them from the curse of untouchability in social practice nor they afford the required self-respect and protection from the continued oppression. Hindu communalists and the RSS see a danger in the conversion. Their apprehension is understandable. They stand for the interests of the upper crest of the Hindus. If about 20% of the SCs/STs opt for other religions, especially Islam, there will be corresponding depletion of the Hindu population and rise in Muslim and other population. The relative weakness is there. Further the onslaught of backward classes against the Brahmins and their allies will increase. Since the conflict between BCs and SCs may soon cease, the Brahmins' manipulative tactics to use such conflicts for their advantage will be greatly minimised.

Formerly under the Rajas and feudal lords the Brahmins were allotted all or most of the good cultivable lands as Inams etc. They had been cruelly exploiting the untouchables who were mainly agricultural labourers. Untouchables can never forget the Brahmin tyranny. The Tamil poetical work, "Nandanar Charithram" was written in such a situation. Now most of the Brahmins had sold their lands to the BCs who started imitating the Brahmins and in fact excelled in their tyranny against SCs. Formerly the conflict between them was more social. But now the eco-

nomie aspect is more explicit. Unfortunately neither the BCs nor the SCs seem to realise that all their social disabilities, cultural backwardness and their economic degradation are the result of the Brahmin-Bania conspiracy over years. They do not realise that their conflicts on caste lines, despite their identical economic interest, will not deliver the goods, on the other hand, will help keep them permanently under the yoke of their exploiters. Those who work for social change in India especially our political leaders including those in Left parties have no scheme to fight the caste system. Nay. They have been only strengthening the hands of high caste exploiters.

Brahmins, who had disposed of their lands, captured the entire governmental administration and the leadership of the political parties, trade unions, cultural and educational organisations, mass media, financial institutions etc. Brahmins and Banias, now manage the whole economic, political, social, cultural, religious, and educational affairs of the country.

Left forces have failed to bring about the social changes because their leadership is also in the hands of the very high caste Hindus. Hence, the oppressed sections who could have otherwise sought solution in Marxism are opting for religious conversions as an immediate relief. This is like trying to cure the symptoms leaving the disease as it is. That means exploitation as such will continue. The caste conflicts will be replaced by communal confrontations. The consequence is that the ranks of the have-nots will be at logger heads on caste and communal lines and thereby postponing the meaningful confron-

tation between haves and have-nots. Such ghastly state of affairs is imminent because of the continued refusal of the Hindu fanatics to change their ways and means. But they cannot. Because, unless one renounces Hinduism, one cannot practise equality. This is the paradox.

Where is the light? Periyar is no more. Ambedkar is dead. We have to have a new leadership which is able to galvanise and unite the entire poor despite their caste differences and lead them to victorious march against their religious, social, economic and political oppressors. Conversions to other religions from Hinduism is not new in India. But the present conversions are creating concern for those who stand for social change—those interested in building a society based on equality. But the concern expressed by the high caste is not about this. They are worried about the depletion of the ranks of Hindus and the swelling of the ranks of Muslims. The D. K. has been voicing the case of the SCs and is exposing the Brahmin villainy and their propoganda stunt. Though Periyar himself had given a call to the suppressed to join Islam to achieve brotherhood, he had refrained from doing so after 1947. There is continued good relationship among Muslims and the parties of Dravidan movement in Tamil Nadu. The DMK too is supporting the SCs cause on this issue. There is no ripple at all in Tamil Nadu among the people over the conversions. In fact R. M. Veerappan, the right hand man of the Chief Minister MGR had expressed his astonishment at the Tamil Nadu peoples' apathy over conversions. MGR himself had chided the new converts "as they were lured by money". The visits of religious luminaries, the Hindu conference for unity at Meenakshipuram attended by religio-political leaders like Vajpayee, the screamings by the Brahmin press and MGR's current open-pro-Brahmin posture and his papers secret support to the Hindu communalists have not been able to create any desired impact on the masses. □

A CONVERT SPEAKS :

Dr. H S. ABDUL RAHIMAN, Kerala: Thousands of untouchables were converted and being converted every day by Christians. No Hindu speaks a word against that because converts will be inferior to them but as soon as they accept Islam, they become equal to the high castes: That is why the Hindus cannot tolerate. Some people advise the Dalits to adopt Buddhism which is a branch of Hinduism itself. Another thing to be kept in mind is that there are several castes among Hindus and though all of them call themselves Hindu there cannot be inter-marriages among them. But as soon a man embraces Islam he is a member of the Islamic brotherhood and he can have marriage with old Muslims. In my own case, I am a convert and have married from the old Muslim family and my son has married the daughter of a Syed who is a coffee planter. The only way to progress for untouchables is to embrace Islam and no other way.

RAMESCHANDRA PARMAR, President, Gujarat Dalit Panthers, Ahmedabad: The July 15 issue of the Dalit Voice is thought-provoking. The editorial, "Why this war preparation?" is inspiring. I have distributed ten copies of the Voice to Gujarati newspapers which are misleading the people on conversions. Voice alone has given the correct picture. Brahmins all over India are making a lot of noise about conversions because they are really worried. □

DANGEROUS TREND

Mrs. M. R. Bhatt, Nagpur: I find the entire trend towards conversion to Islam very disturbing. Knowing how Muslim leaders have manipulated their voting strength in the past, it is likely that unscrupulous elements will easily exploit converted Dalits to their own detriment. They will then become the target of persecution for having been Harijan and then becoming Muslim. Also, I see the entire Dalit movement as such splitting and dividing its strength between Harijan, Muslim and Neo-Buddhists. At least as neo-Buddhists they are still self-directed with their leaders chosen from among their own ranks. As Muslims they will become subject to the will of the Islamic clerics and no longer masters of their own destiny. The long-term effects could prove disastrous to them. I think Ambedkar had thought about all these aspects before he decided on Buddhism. □

WHOSE "HIDDEN HAND" BEHIND HYDERABAD RIOTS ?

Hyderabad : Union Home Minister Zail Singh said after a tour of the riot-affected areas here on July 29 that the "Government had evidence of a hidden hand behind the recent disturbances" in which the official figure of the dead is put at 40 and those stabbed at 350. Chief Minister Anjiah had also made a similar statement.

Anjiah said that it was not a Hindu-Muslim clash but a conspiracy to overthrow his Government. Both said "there were instances of a particular culprit stabbing persons of both the communities and hence it was not a communal clash". Unlike other communal riots, there was no mob confrontation with the police, no looting, arson or mob frenzy. The pattern was entirely new as the stabbing were of hit and run type in narrow bylanes, they said. Beyond stating this both the leaders were very much secretive about the whole thing while asserting that they had full facts but would divulge it only at appropriate time.

This make us suspicious about the whole thing. While communal clashes are becoming a daily feature, the victims of it are mostly the minorities and that too the poor. The Government has taken hardly any steps to check this rising tendency. On the other hand, the ruling party goes on exploiting communal clashes, putting the blame on RSS to please the minorities and thus cornering all their votes. Therefore as long as communal clashes are there -and this is sure to be there- the minority votes will never go out of its hand. That is why the political parties do not want to publish facts about the so-called foreign

hand and hidden hand. If the Hyderabad violence was not a communal clash, the facts will be known the moment the names of the dead and the injured are published. But the govt does not reveal even the exact figure of the dead and the injured. The whole thing is kept in secret and the public is allowed to be fed on rumours. Already RSS leaders have started speaking about an "international conspiracy". Indian Express (Aug. 3) quoting Vandematram Ramachandra Rao, Hyderabad's Hindu leader, who participated in the Rahamatnagar conference to reconvert untouchables-turned Muslims, says the Hyderabad clashes are connected with the conversions. Rao revealed that the 'Reagan Government in collusion with Arab nations were out to upset the political setup in India' through such clashes and conversions. The Government is only helping the Hindu communalists by not coming out with the facts.

This "hidden hand and foreign hand" was cited at Moradabad, Biharsharif and now at Hyderabad. The non-political leaders of minority community should fully understand this game of the country's ruling class and do something about it to break this vicious circle. □

TRIBAL WOMEN ON WARPATH

Smt. Vibhuti Patel

Bombay: In Dhulia District, Maharashtra, over 2000 women participated in a working class women's convention on the May Day this year. The Conference was organised by the Shramic Stree Mukti Sanghatana (Toiling Women's Liberation Group) formed in Oct. 1980.

The Adivasi tribals constitute the majority of the toiling masses in this district and the Sanghatana has waged many struggles around the specific oppression of women:

wife-beating, dowry, rape as well as economic exploitation and tribal oppression.

Ban on RSS

The Central Govt is examining the advisability of restricting the activities of the RSS and certain extremist organizations, it is authoritatively learnt, reports PTI.

The Government has received reports from various parts of the country about concerted plans by communal elements to create tension and disturbances. □

SELECTION BY MERIT OR CASTE ? THE BATTLE ROYAL

(Our Correspondent)

Coimbatore : A furious battle is going on all over India whether admissions to education and recruitment to jobs, promotions should be on the basis of caste or merit-cum-income. The high caste people all over India are unanimous that merit and efficiency have suffered in India because admissions, recruitment and promotions are increasingly being done on the basis of caste.

Such a shift has started effecting the privileges and properties being enjoyed by these high castes from centuries. However, the Constitution which says caste as the criterion, has upheld the claims of SCs & STs. The Nov. 14, 1980 Supreme Court judgment of V. R. Krishna Iyer dismissing the Akhil Bharatiya Soshit Karmachari (non-SCs & STs) Sangh's writ petition thus upholding the job reservation in Railways for SCs & STs and its final review by Supreme Court on March 31, 1981, has tried to end this controversy temporarily. But who bothers about the Constitution and the Supreme Court? The high caste people launched the Gujarat caste war on untouchables on this very same issue of reservations to SCs & STs. They are so furious about reservations that a speaker at the RSS-sponsored "Hindu Resurgence Conference" at Ramanathapuram on July 27 said: The Government has created a new class of religion-the gazetted religion. They are the SCs, STs and OBCs"

The Young Mens' Brahmin Association of Coimbatore wants only those with an annual income of Rs 9,000- and less to be entitled for reservations. It wants merit and income alone as the criteria to determine backwardness. The above demand highlights that the high castes of India are not prepared to accept the Constitution or Krishna Iyer's judgment.

When they are not prepared to show any mercy to the SCs & STs, will they listen to the claims of OBCs, a report (Mandal Commission) on which is pending before the Govt? OBCs constitute about 50% of our population and economically

they are as poor as the SCs & STs. Sometimes poorer. The latter at least have the constitutional reservations but the OBCs have none. Meanwhile the Gopal Singh Committee has recommended job reservations for minorities who have been reduced to second-rate citizens.

That means all those who have been denied a say in governing the country must join hands, to offer a joint fight. The minorities have already joined hands with the SCs & STs. The whole problem is the vast OBCs. The Akhil Bharat Soshit Karmachari Sangh which went in a writ petition against the SCs & STs before the Supreme Court and the different Oppressed Employees Associations springing up in different places are mainly led by OBCs. The upper castes all over India are using the OBCs to fight the low castes and the minorities. This has been their game. In Meenakshipuram and Korayar (TN), the SCs embraced Islam not because of high caste atrocities but the Thevars who are OBCs. The philosophy of Periyar had come as a boon to the backwards and they were able to seize political power from the high castes in TN only because of the awakening brought about by Periyar. The DMK & ADMK enjoyed power in TN only because of Periyar. But it is an insult to Periyar that the OBCs having been benefited by Periyar later turned against the untouchables. The Dravida Khazagam which is the organisation of Periyar now led by a great leader like Veeramani should seriously examine this development and avert the crisis, educate the OBCs on proper lines and make them join hands with the SCs and minorities. If the OBCs fail to join hands with SCs and minorities they will be the worst sufferers and not others. □

AMBEDKAR - GANDHI CLASH

(Our Correspondent)

Bangalore : A massive 3-ton 13-feet high bronze statue of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar claimed to be the tallest in India costing Rs. 1.25 lakhs was installed before the Vidhana Soudha here on July 23. The statue stands on a well-chisled marble pedestal. Chief Minister Gundu Rao, who will unveil it on Aug. 19, must be thanked for readily conceding the demands of the Karnataka Dalit Action Committee for renaming the Vidhana Veedhi as Ambedkar Road and for installing an Ambedkar statue before the Vidhana Soudha.

He has also granted holiday on the Ambedkar Jayanti - April 14. Besides, he has agreed to give a piece of land in the centre of the city to put up Ambedkar Bhavan and a handsome grant for the Dalit Sahitya Akademy. All these concessions to the Dalits has led to serious heart-burning among communal Hindus. A standing proof of this is the damage they did to the Ambedkar road name-board. They filed a writ before the High Court against renaming the road. Some members questioned in the legislature the Government's decision to instal Ambedkar statue

before the Vidhana Soudha. According to them, only the statue of Kengal Hanumanthaiya, a former Chief Minister who built the Vidhana Soudha, should be installed. The controversy will increase. All over India Ambedkar statues are being attacked and damaged. And Bangalore will not be an exception. Since Ambedkar is the symbol of the rising Dalit power, it will not be tolerated by the pro Gandhi high castes who own the properties and privileges. A clash between Ambedkar and Gandhi is inevitable. We welcome such a clash. □

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TARKUNDE BACKS CONVERSION

Cochin : Justice V. M. Tarkunde, a leading jurist and chairman of the People's Union for Civil Liberties, has defended untouchables joining Islam. The Hindu (Aug. 8) says "Harijans had now found a powerful weapon to escape from oppression-the threat to embrace Islam. They are following the right policies to make the Hindu society behave", he said. □

MORE JOIN ISLAM

Despite the RSS-sponsored Hindu conference at Meenakshipuram, inspired reports on reconversion, bribes offered by Hindu leaders, more untouchables have embraced Islam at Meenakshipuram.

"The Hindu" (Aug. 10) has published a PTI report saying 25 more untouchable families became Muslims. More untouchables in nearby villages are getting ready, it says.

Madurai : A UNI report says 28 more untouchables from Veeranatur and six from Vairavanaendal, near Chatrakudi in Ramnad district, embraced Islam, the police said. □

WORLD CHURCH COUNCIL URGED TO PROBE APARTHEID IN INDIA

Dalits appeal to WCC

The World Council of Churches, Geneva, has given its findings on the racial discrimination by the White rulers of Australia against the native aborigines numbering 1.5 lakhs against a total population of 1.4 crores. Racism is entrenched in every aspect of Australian society, a WCC report says. The aborigines have become the "invisible, unseen and unheard people of Australia". The WCC report has called upon churches all over the world to raise a cry and bring pressure on their respective governments to initiate international action. It urged the International Commission of Jurists, the UN Human Rights Commission and the Amnesty International to visit Australia.

While welcoming the report we call upon the WCC to send a similar team to India to probe the conditions of Indian untouchables whose position is worse than that of any similarly placed groups in

the whole world. A request to this effect had been already made by the convener of the Karnataka Dalit Action Committee when he addressed the Amsterdam conference of racial minorities. The request was reiterated during the recent Christian Conference of Asia session in Bangalore. Forming almost a third of India's population, the untouchables constitute the single largest racially segregated group in the world "Apartheid in India", (Re. 1) a booklet brought out by the DAC, contains the speech of its convener delivered at the New Zealand conference of racial minorities. As the untouchables are faced with hostile forces all around, they have none to appeal to inside India. They are in search of allies. Christians have been always their best friends. Therefore we look upon the WCC to come to their rescue to expose this world's most well-guarded secret - the Apartheid in India.

BANJARA YOUTH REVOLT

Bangalore : Lambanis or the Banjara population is 16 lakhs in Karnataka & about 1.75 crores in India. Lambanis, which once produced a famous political leader V.P. Naik, Chief Minister of Maharashtra, are probably the only all-India community speaking one language and having one single but colourful dress. Mostly agricultural labourers, they live in grinding poverty with hardly any education. There is not even a single, IAS or IPS officer

from the community. In Karnataka recently K.T. Rathod, a former Minister, was made president of the State PCC (I). L.R. Naik MP, another, leader is the president of their State - level community association.

The youth of the community have been for long complaining against the community leadership. Recently they met here and complained that the elders of the community have done nothing to help the youth. Lambanis may not be untouchables but they have been included in the SC list in Karnataka. In AP, Orissa and Bihar they are classified as STs.

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Published by the Dalit Sahitya Akademy,

109/7th Cross, Palace Lower Orchards,

Bangalore 560 003, India. Phone : 33854.

Printed at : SVP / RLO / B-3

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