

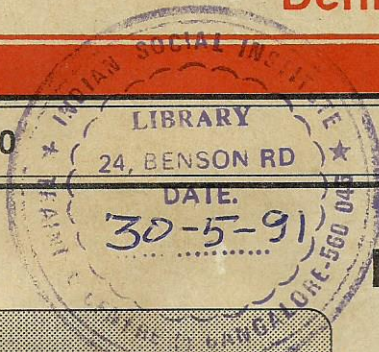
# DALIT VOICE

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Why Muslims sought Homeland? :  
Thus Spake Ambedkar

## Thus Spake Ambedkar

### If India is a nation why Muslims sought a separate homeland?

That there are factors, administrative, linguistic or cultural, which are the predisposing causes behind these demands for separation, is a fact which is admitted and understood by all. Nobody minds these demands and many are prepared to concede them. But, the Hindus say that the Muslims are going beyond the idea of separation and questions, such as what has led them to take this course, why are they asking for partition, for the annulment of the common tie by a legal divorce between Pakistan and Hindustan, are being raised. The answer is to be found in the declaration made by the Muslim League in its Resolution that the Muslims of India are a separate nation. It is this declaration by the Muslim League, which is both resented and ridiculed by the Hindus. The Hindu resentment is quite natural. Whether India is a nation or not, has been the subject-matter of controversy between the Anglo-Indians and the Hindu politicians ever since the Indian National Congress was founded. The Anglo-Indians were never tired of proclaiming that India was not a nation, that 'Indians' was only another name for the people of India. In the words of one Anglo-Indian "to know India was to forget that there is such a thing as India." The Hindu politicians and patriots have been, on the other hand, equally persistent in their assertion that India is a nation. That the Anglo-Indians were right in their repudiation cannot be gainsaid. Even Dr. Tagore, the national poet of Bengal, agrees with them. But, the Hindus have never yielded on the point even to Dr. Tagore (p.29). This was because of two reasons. Firstly, the Hindu felt ashamed to admit that India was not a nation. In a world here nationality and nationalism were deemed to be special virtues in a people, it was quite natural for the Hindus to feel, to use the language of Mr. H.G. Wells, that it would be as improper for India to be without a nationality as it would be for a man to be without his clothes in a crowded assembly. Secondly, he had realized that nationality had a most intimate connection with the claim for self-government. He knew that by the end of the 19th century, it had become an accepted principle that the people, who constituted a nation, were entitled on that account to self-government and that any patriot, who asked for self-government for his people, had to prove that they were a nation. The Hindu for these reasons never stopped to examine whether India was or was not a nation in fact. He never cared to reason whether nationality was merely a question of calling a people a nation or was a question of the people being a nation. He knew one thing, namely, that if he was to succeed in his demand for self-government for India, he must maintain, even if he could not prove it, that India was a nation. In this assertion, he was never contradicted by any Indian. The thesis was so agreeable that even serious Indian students of history came forward to write propagandist literature in support of it, no doubt out of patriotic motives. The Hindu social reformers, who knew that this was a dangerous delusion, could not openly contradict this thesis. For, anyone who questioned it was at once called a tool of the British bureaucracy and enemy of the country. The Hindu politician was able to propagate his view for a long time. His opponent, the Anglo-Indian, had ceased to reply to him. His propaganda had almost succeeded. When it was about to succeed comes this declaration of the Muslim League — this rift in the lute. Just because it does not come from the Anglo-Indian, it is a deadlier blow. It destroys the work which the Hindu politician has done for years. If the Muslims in India are a separate nation, then, of course, India is not a nation. It is natural that they should feel annoyed at it and call it a stab in the back (p.30). But, stab or no stab, the point is, can the Muslims be said to constitute a nation? Everything else is beside the point. This raises the question: What is a nation? Tomes have been written on the subject. Those who are curious may go through them and study the different basic conceptions as well as the different aspects of it. It is, however, enough to know the core of the subject that can be set down in a few words (p.31).

*(Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Writings & Speeches, Volume VIII "Pakistan or Partition of India", 1990, Rs.40, Govt. of Maharashtra, Bombay). The book may be had from Director, Government Printing, Stationery and Publications, Netaji Subhash Road, Bombay - 400 004.*

## Dr. Ambedkar's warning to Hindus on havoc played by caste system

It is true that Untouchables are not Hindus and never Hindus, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, (DV, April 16, 1989, p. 6-9). Only those who belong to the chaturvarna, namely the Hindu caste system, are Hindus. Since the Untouchables (20%) tribals (10%) and Backward Castes (35%) - a total of 65% of India's population - do not belong to the chaturvarna; they are outside the caste system. Outcaste means outside the caste system. So the SC/ST/BCs need not worry about the cancer of caste system as it does not bother them. The victims of the caste system/Hinduism are those belonging to the four-fold caste system, the savarnas. Babasaheb Ambedkar has written a whole book (*Annihilation of Caste*, Dalit Sahitya Akademy 1988, Rs.10) to the savarnas warning them about the dangers of getting afflicted with the cancer of caste. He wanted them to destroy caste before the caste destroys them. But they did not heed Babasaheb's warning and so much so they are all today down with this deadly disease - the caste system. The problem with this caste cancer is it is contagious and it has already spread into Christianity and Sikhism. It is also threatening Islam and other egalitarian religions. That is why, though we are outcastes and hence outside the caste, we have to be worried about this spreading cancer in the interest of country's health and well being. The very unity and integrity of the country is being threatened by this disease. The author of this article is an elderly Ambedkarite and had worked with Dr. Ambedkar during his official career in Delhi. His article though addressed mainly to the savarnas will also serve as a warning to those outside the caste to beware of the caste cancer. — EDITOR.

**T.K. NARAYANAN TRIVANDRUM**

Literature is the mirror of a people. In all the brahminical literature starting from the Rigveda numbering umpteen, the priestly class has declared itself as "supermen and gods on earth". They have also declared themselves as the "intellectual class" of India. In his historic book, *What Congress and Gandhi have done to the untouchables*, Babasaheb Ambedkar has said about this class as follows: "No intellectual class has prostituted its intelligence to invent a philosophy to keep its uneducated countrymen in a perpetual state of ignorance and poverty as the Brahmins have done in India".

Let us see how this class of "gods on earth" has prostituted its intelligence to invent a philosophy which in practical life has turned out to be deadlier than the whiteman's atom bomb. The philosophical weapon of the priests in the course of its existence for the last scores of centuries has peacefully wiped out from the face of this country millions and millions of illiterate, poor and innocent people for no fault of theirs. The philosophical weapon these ingenious priests used to prostitute their intelligence is known by the inglorious name of Purusha Sukta. It is laid down in the 19th hymn of the 10th Mandala of Rigveda. Sukta means song in praise of Brahma, the god of the bhoodevata. It is this Purusha Sukta that gave birth to the ideal society of savarnas known as chaturvarna (the four-tired caste system) that stands vertical and not horizontal. It is this ideal society of savarna created by the priests that paved the way for India's degradation and downfall. Graded inequality and untouchability is the essence of the ideal society of the Aryan known as Chaturvarna, the fruit of the prostitution of the intelligence of India's intellectual class.

Purusha Sukta is a theory of the origin of the universe and hence it is a cosmogony. Cosmogonies have never been more than matters of academic interest. But in the case of Purusha Sukta, the matter stands on a different and serious footing. It explains how the

four varnas, Brahmins (priests) Kshatriyas (soldiers), Vaishyas (traders) and Shudras (slaves) arose from the various parts of Brahma, the creator. Purusha Sukta should not be understood as being merely explanatory of a cosmic phenomena. It is treated as containing a mandatory injunction from the Brahma to the effect that society must be constituted on the basis of the four varnas mentioned above. Thus chaturvarna is the very constitution of the brahminical social order that governs their social life. The authority and the influence of chaturvarna has never been questioned by any one except the Buddha.

**Law defends injustice:** What are the features of the social ideal of Purusha Sukta that gave birth to chaturvarna? The Shankaracharyas say that the hall mark of their society is unique. Various classes, high and low, rich and poor, existed in every society but none of these societies have elevated this material fact to the dignity of an ideal society. This has been done only by the Purusha Sukta. In that sense Purusha Sukta is unique. No community other than the Aryans/Sanatans/Hindus has ever thought of giving the reality of classes existing in their society the sanction of law. No society has ever accepted that their class composition is an ideal one.

But Purusha Sukta regards that its class composition of castes is sacred and divine. This is another unique feature of a Purusha Sukta. The number of the classes in a society has never been a matter of dogma in any society known to history. No society has an official gradation laid down fixed and permanent, with an ascending order of reverence and a descending degree of contempt. In this respect also Purusha Sukta is unique. It is unique because it fixed a permanent warrant of precedence among the different castes which neither time nor circumstances can alter. This warrant of precedence is based on the principle of graded inequality among the four castes whereby it recognises the Brahmin to be above all, Kshatriya below the Brahmin but above the Vaishya and Shudra and the Vaishya below the Kshatriya but above the Shudra and Shudra below all. This is how the Purusha Sukta

has given birth to the ideal society of the Hindus, named chaturvarna, where the monster of caste rules the roost. The day it came into being it is gnawing inch by inch the very marrow of this country causing its disunity and disintegration, degradation and downfall. Is there anything for a Hindu, high or low, to be proud of his ideal society of caste? Nothing. But there is everything for him to be ashamed of it.

**Divine sanction to jati:** Now, turning to the riddles of Purusha Sukta: the upper castes/Hindus claim that Purusha Sukta was the creation of their Rishis (sages) who were endowed with the knowledge of the past, present and future. The question is why these great Rishis did not have a sense of unity and consciousness of kind necessary for an associated ideal life of equality, fraternity and liberty making one and all to feel that they are kith and kin, blood of the blood, vein of the vein and flesh of the flesh? In creating chaturvarna, the ideal Hindu society, why these great sages were absolutely indifferent to the human values of equality and fraternity though their minds were clothed with the tripple time? Were their minds tainted with the smell of the jungles on account of their long life there? The inalienable quality of man inherent in him is a longing for an associated life of unity and integrity. Ideals, as norms, are necessary. Neither a society nor an individual can do without a norm, a value system. But a norm must change with the changes in time and circumstances. The possibility of revaluing values remain open only when the institution is not invested with sacredness which prevents revaluation of its values. Once sacred, always sacred. Purusha Sukta makes chaturvarna a sacred institution, a divine ordination. Why did Purusha Sukta make a particular form of social order so sacred to be beyond criticism and beyond change? This is the first riddle of Purusha Sukta.

**Jugglery:** In presenting the doctrine of chaturvarna, the Purusha Sukta plays a double-game. It proceeds first to raise the real, namely the existence of the four castes, to the status of an ideal society. This is a deception because the ideal is in no way different from facts as they exist. This is a deception because the ideal is in no way different from facts as they exist. This attempt of Purusha Sukta to idealise the real and to realise the ideal is a kind of political jugglery, the like of which is not to be found in any other book of religion. What else is it if not a fraud and a deception? To idealise the existence of four castes which is full of inequalities is a selfish thing intended to obtain power, position and social status by mere accident of birth. Only when a person finds a personal advantage in things as they are that he tries to idealise the real. This is an attempt nothing short of a criminal one. It means perpetuating inequality on the ground that whatever is once settled is settled for ever. Such a view is opposed to all morality. No society with a social conscience of justice has ever accepted it. On the contrary, the human progress in the course of

history is entirely due to the recognition of the ethical doctrine that whatever is wrongly settled is never settled and must be resettled. *The principle underlying the Purusha Sukta is therefore, criminal in intent and anti-social in its results.* For, it aims to perpetuate an illegal gain obtained by one caste and an unjust wrong inflicted upon another. What else can be the motive behind this jugglery of the Purusha Sukta? This is its second riddle.

**The position of shudras:** The last and the greatest of all these riddles is the one relating to the position of the shudra. The Purusha Sukta concerns itself with the origin of castes and says that they were created by god (i.e. Brahma). This is a doctrine which no other theology has thought it wise to propound. This in itself is a strange thing. But what is astonishing is the plan of equating different castes to different parts of the body of the Brahma, the so-called creator. The equation of the different castes to different parts of the body is not a matter of accident. It is deliberate. The idea behind this plan seems to be to discover a formula which will solve two problems. One is to fix the functions of the four castes and the other to fix the gradations of the four castes after a pre-conceived plan. The part fixes the gradation of the castes and the gradation in turn fixes the function of the caste. The Brahmin is equated to the mouth of the Brahma. The mouth being the "noblest" part of the body. The Brahmin becomes the "noblest" of the four castes, as he is the noblest in the scale, he is given the noblest functions, that of the custodian of knowledge and learning. The Kshatriya is equated to the arms of the Brahma. Among the limbs of a person arms are just below the mouth. Consequently the Kshatriya is given an order of precedence next to the Brahmin and is given a function which is second only to knowledge, namely fighting. The Vaishya is equated to the thighs of the "creator". In the gradation of the limbs the thighs are next below the arms. Consequently, Vaishya is given a position next to the Kshatriya and is assigned a function of industry and trade which is below the function of a warrior. The shudra is equated to the feet of the "creator". The feet form the lowest and the most ignoble part of the human frame. Accordingly, the shudra is placed last in the social order and is given the filthiest function, namely to serve as a menial.

This is how the Purusha Sukta has created the ideal society of the Hindus known as chaturvarna. As has already been said, this is the social constitution of the savarnas/Aryans/upper castes/Hindus.

The later developments of chaturvarna are mainly two. First is the creation of the "fifth caste" next below the shudra. The second is the separation of the shudra from the first three twice-born Dwija castes. These changes have got integrated with the original scheme of Purusha Sukta that they have given rise to peculiar terms and expressions so well-known that anybody understands what they stand for. (In North India, even

the Untouchables think they are shudras). These terms are: Savarnas, Avarnas, Dwijas, non-Dwijas and Trivarnikas. Ati-Shudras etc. They stand to indicate the sub-divisions of the original four castes and the degree of separation between them. It is necessary to take note of the relative position of these "castes" because they disclose a new riddle. These names are not mere names but they stand for definite rights and privileges. The Savarna is contrasted with Avarna. Savarna means one who belongs to one of the four varnas (i.e. castes).

**Untouchables have no caste:** Avarna means one who does not belong to any one of the four varnas (varna means colour). The Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras are savarnas. That is to say those people who belong to a caste. The Untouchables and BCs are Avarnas. That means those who belong to no caste. The first four varnas are within chaturvarna and the Untouchables and BCs are outside the pale of chaturvarna. Dwija is contrasted with non-Dwija. Dwija means twice-born and non-Dwija (shudras) means one who is born only once. This distinction is based on the right to wear the so-called "sacred thread". The wearing of this "sacred thread" is treated as a second birth. Those who have the right to wear the thread are called Dwijas and those do not have the right to wear the thread are called non-Dwijas. The Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas are Dwijas and the shudra though he is part of chaturvarna has no right to wear the thread and hence he is called a non-Dwija. He is thus, a Shudra (shudra means slave) as well as a non-Dwija.

**Varieties of "sacred thread":** Another very important aspect of the chaturvarna is that the three twice-born castes of Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas though they have a right to wear the thread should not use the same materials for making their thread. The material with which a Brahmin's thread is made of should not be used by the Kshatriya for making his thread. He has to use a material different and inferior to the material used by the Brahmin for making his thread. Similarly, the Vaishya should not make his thread with the materials used either by the Brahmin or by the Kshatriya for making their thread. He must use only a different and inferior substance, for making of his thread. *Look at the madness which seems to have a method in it. Brahminism, Vaidhik Dharma/Sanathana dharma or Hinduism if it is a religion at all, is sinking deeper and deeper in the mire of degradation, inequality and untouchability!*

This is the structure, the intent and the essence of chaturvarna, the social constitution of the Hindu society. The alpha and the omega of Hinduism is graded inequality and untouchability. This constitution of the Hindus is eternal as claimed by its makers - the priests of the yore, and it is being preserved in tact by the priestly class of today. No wonder they are the gods, the supermen and the intellectual class of India.

*Let the oppressed Indians including the shudras know where they stand in the Hindu constitution of the chaturvarna, the product of the prostitution of the intelligence of a class of people who declared themselves as the gods on earth: Of course, these gods are the gods of the last three varnas standing one above the other, within the pale of the chaturvarna, the social hierarchy. Does the "Hindu constitution" meaning the Manu Dharma-shastra recognise them as Hindus? Does the law-giver of the Hindus, namely Sumati Bhargava (Manu is only the pen name of Sumati Bhargava who was a Brahmin) recognise them as Hindus? Neither the constitution nor the law-giver does recognise them as Hindus. These are the real facts brought out by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar in his precise words given above. *The oppressed Indians, namely SC/ST/BCs, are not Hindus. They are a distinct people, though they are oppressed, dedicated to the cause of establishing a new social order based on the noble human values of equality, fraternity and liberty where man's inhumanity to man will be abolished for ever.* Let the oppressed Indians be proud of being known as "Bahujans", a name that smacks no smell of caste and their society be known as "Bahujan Samaj".*

Let us bury the caste that gnaws inch by inch and minute by minute the very marrow of this great country of ours. Let unity and integrity be our watchword! ■

### **Dr. Ambedkar Bhavans in MP: BJP sets a model**

(N.K. Sharma)

The BJP govt. of Madhya Pradesh is to build Dr. Ambedkar Bhavans in all the 45 districts of MP at a cost of Rs.2.5 crores. BJP leader L.K. Advani laid the foundation one such at Vidisha costing Rs.4.25 lakh. Advani told newsmen that Dr. Ambedkar Bhavans would be used by the Scheduled Castes for their social functions. All other State govts. should follow the pattern set by the BJP and build Ambedkar Bhavans in all the districts in this centenary year. The Rs.2 crores set apart for this project by each State govt. is indeed a peanut. SC organisations should take up this matter with their respective State Govts. The Madhya Pradesh govt. should build a 100 foot-tall Dr. Ambedkar Buddha vihar at Mhow, the birth place of Dr. Ambedkar. In each State, the SCs should form centenary celebrations committees of Babasaheb. Then, they should demand land and grants from the State govts. to build Dr. Ambedkar centenary Buddha viharas. The govt. will agree provided we apply properly and followup the matter with the concerned ministries and departments. Secure the recommendation of MLAs and ministers, for the success in this matter. The centenary celebrations of Babasaheb will continue for five long year because Dr. Ambedkar is the Father of India and Father of Indian Constitution. ■

# Hindu fundamentalists & their false claims

(Dina Nath Das, New Delhi)

A pervasive feature of the brahminical Nazi discourse is the strong emphasis that is constantly given to a conjured up "golden age" of the Vedas and the Puranas. We are told by these Nazi ideologues that the Vedic Aryans were the founders of a civilization that reached such dazzling heights that today's western scientific revolution is put to shame before it. It is declared, among other things, that Sanskrit gave rise to all languages of the world, that neutron bombs and aeroplanes were invented by the Vedic rishis, that Vedic mathematics holds the key to the future of the high-tech computer industry and even that the dreaded disease, AIDS, was also discovered by the Vedic Aryans.

Behind all these inflated claims, which have absolutely no element of truth to substantiate them, one can discern two motives at work. Firstly, these false claims are a mechanism to cover up for a deep sense of inferiority that Nazi Hindus entertain regarding the virtual bankruptcy of their heritage. Psychologists tell us that it is often that those who suffer from an acute inferiority complex, seek to compensate for it by portraying themselves, instead, as superior to others. A similar phenomenon is observable in the claims of our Hindu Nazis.

Secondly, these portrayals of Aryan "glory" and "superiority" and the alleged inferiority of all things non-Hindu, may also be understood as a mechanism to prevent those who suffer immensely from brahminical slavery from seeking their liberation either through western science or Marxist revolution or through conversion to non-Hindu religions. The non-Hindus, called "lower castes," are told that since Hinduism is the superior philosophy, their problems can only be solved by becoming better Hindus, that is to say, by becoming better slaves of the "upper castes". The inflated claims of Hindu superiority are thus, clearly, a means of the further enslavement of the so-called lower castes.

This point is well-brought out by GTK Ranga Charyulu in his book, *Superiority of Hinduism* (Andhra Ashram, Rishikesh 1986). The writer tells us that, "Science is *maya sastra*. It is delusion and is *rakshasa vidya* (devil's knowledge)" (p.123). In other words, the Hindu fundamentalist is staunchly against rational, scientific progress, seeking, instead, his solutions to his problems in the medieval brahminical "scriptures".

**Kanchi Swami saved by science:** In contrast to this, the *Statesman* (New Delhi, Feb. 5, 1991) gives us a totally different picture, thus exposing the utter hollowness of the Hindu Nazi claims. Under the caption, "Shankaracharya keeping fit," it reports:

"The senior Shankaracharya of the Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam, Sri Chandrashekarendra Saraswati, is keeping well and there

is no cause for concern. Sophisticated electronic medical equipment worth Rs.2.5 crores from the USA has been installed at the Kamakoti mutt to monitor the health of Sri Chandrashekarendra Saraswati. The equipment has been installed at a specially air-conditioned room at the mutt."

One ought to get shocked at reading this. The Shankarachari, the grand pope of the brahminical social order, resorting to *rakshasa vidya* (western science) to cure himself and squandering Rs.2.5 crores in the bargain? How is it that the Shankarachari's own Hindu vidya (knowledge), which claims to have even invented the atom bomb and the aeroplane thousands of years ago, was unable or was not even used to monitor his health? Instead of using the alleged "great power of the Hindu rishis who knew the secrets of all things," how is it that even this Shankarachari has to depend on western scientific equipment? And, have we not always been told by the fundamentalists that a "true" Brahmin is one who lives the life of "poverty and simplicity"? What then, was this chief of the brahminical social order doing with exorbitantly expensive American (Mleccha) equipment worth Rs. 2.5 crores? What a difference between what the Nazis practise and preach?

By propagating the myth of the infinite superiority of all things Hindu, while at the same time employing and monopolising western scientific knowledge for their own advancement, India's upper caste (alien Aryan races) rulers seek to prevent the "lower" castes (Indian races) from gaining the benefits of western science and want to force them to remain in the barbaric, medieval world of brahminical superstition and slavery. This then, is a plan to revive the old, barbaric social order which in fact characterised the rule of the upper castes in the past. So much for Hindu revivalism. ■

## SS disgusted with democracy

**New Delhi:** Shiv Sena supremo Bal Thackeray perceives a threat of military coup in India in the event of no party getting a majority in the forthcoming Lok Sabha polls. He sees the latter as a certainty. He prefers a 'one-man rule' by a person who is not corrupt and who should devote himself to eradication of poverty. In an interview with Ahmed Shareef for the FANA at his Bandra East residence. Thackeray expressed his disgust with the democratic experiment in India and felt that the system has grown barren enough to be discarded. He does not even anticipate bright prospects for the BJP which has been a Shiv Sena ally and with which the negotiation on electoral alliance or adjustment have been facing rough weather. (*Radiance*, April 28). ■

# Neglected Economic Thoughts of Babasaheb Ambedkar

(Narendra Jadhav)

Babasaheb Ambedkar was not only an economist by training, but he devoted considerable attention to analysing the economic dimensions of social problems. His interest in, and insights into, contemporary economic problems stand out in the many memoranda he submitted to the government from time to time. Against this background, the general ignorance of Dr. Ambedkar's contributions as an economist is as surprising as it is unfortunate.

Babasaheb Ambedkar was one of the most illustrious sons of India of this century. His great contribution as the principal architect of the Indian Constitution is widely acclaimed. His varied contributions as a scholar, educationist, journalist, authority on comparative religion and a champion of human rights for the downtrodden masses in India are also widely recognised. *Yet there remains one crucial aspect of his multifaceted genius that has not been fully appreciated, viz, his contribution as an economist.*

As a matter of fact, Ambedkar was an economist by his basic training. In 1917, he earned his doctorate in economics at the Columbia University, USA. Again, the degree of Doctor of Science (DSc) which the London School of Economics conferred on him in 1921 was for his research in economics. Besides his dissertations for these formal degrees, Ambedkar also analysed the economic dimensions of social maladies in India. His speeches were replete with stimulating economic thoughts. Various memoranda and statements that Ambedkar submitted to the government from time to time are also indicative of his deep insights into India's economic problems.

It is against this background that one finds the widespread ignorance regarding Ambedkar's contribution as an economist unfortunate. This lack of awareness, to an extent, could be explained by his phenomenal contributions in other spheres such as law, religion, sociology

and politics, which might have overshadowed his contribution to economics. *Yet it is surprising that even the so-called expert studies on the evolution of Indian economic thought such as those by Ganguli or Madan do not seem to take much cognisance of Ambedkar's contributions.* (B N Ganguli, *Indian Economic Thought: Nineteenth Century Perspective*, Tata McGraw Hill, 1977, and B K Madan, *Economic Thinking in India*, S Chand, 1966).

This paper makes a modest attempt to fill this gap in the academic literature and in the general understanding. Section I recounts Ambedkar's contributions to the conventional sub-disciplines in economics such as monetary economics and public finance, drawing on his erudite dissertations. Ambedkar's views on the economic dimensions of India's dominant social characteristics such as the

caste system and untouchability are presented in Section II. The final section then brings together Ambedkar's thoughts on broader issues in the strategy of economic development. His perceptions regarding communism, state socialism and economic democracy are covered in that section.

## I Ambedkar's Contribution to Monetary Economics and Public Finance

Ambedkar's contribution to monetary economics is evident from his DSc dissertation, *The Problem of Rupee: Its Origin and Solution*, and his subsequent statement and evidence before the Royal Commission on Indian Currency and Finance (which led to the establishment of the Reserve Bank of India).

In this monumental book, Ambedkar offers an excellent exposition of the evolution of Indian currency in terms of its form as a medium of exchange and its equivalence in terms of precious metals, such as, gold and silver. Unlike the treatises existing then,

Ambedkar goes into the most neglected period of Indian currency extending from 1800 to 1893. With this historical perspective, brought up to the 1920s, he focuses on the currency crisis prevalent then regarding relative effectiveness of the pure gold standard vis-a-vis the gold-exchange standard.

The pure gold standard comprises use of gold in some form, especially coins, as a medium of exchange. In its variant called

gold-convertible standard, paper money is also issued in addition to gold coins and is pledged to be redeemable in gold. In contrast, under the gold-exchange standard, the medium of exchange comprises only paper money which is kept exchangeable at fixed rates with gold and authorities back it up with foreign currency reserves of such countries as are on the gold standard.

In the controversy regarding the relative merits and demerits of these currency standards in the Indian context, Ambedkar crossed swords with Keynes. In his treatise *Indian Currency and Finance* (1909), Keynes had favoured the gold-exchange standard and maintained that the gold-exchange standard contains an essential element as the ideal standard of the future. Ambedkar vehemently criticised Keynes and other supporters of the gold-exchange standard

*In the Feb. 1, 1991 DV (p.17), we had published an article by Om Prakash to highlight the greatness of Dr. Ambedkar as an outstanding economist of the 20th century and how his thesis at London School of Economics deserved a Nobel Prize. In this, yet another expert proves how the prejudiced "intellectuals" of India deliberately neglected Babasaheb's economic thoughts -*  
EDITOR.

and argued in favour of the gold standard of a modified form.

Ambedkar argued that the gold-exchange standard does not have the stability of the gold standard. Under the gold standard, additions to the supply of currency are so small that stability is not affected. On the other hand, under the gold-exchange standard, additions are dependent upon the will of the issuer and can be augmented to such an extent that stability could be jeopardised. Ambedkar provided statistical evidence to show that in the Indian context, prices varied much less under the gold standard than under the gold-exchange standard. The supporters of the gold-exchange standard, like Keynes, had argued that the gold standard is a hard standard as it ties mankind to the wheel of nature, and that the gold-exchange standard allows an escape from this fridity. Ambedkar's counter-argument was that there must be some regulator by which the discretion left to the issuer is regulated. Under the gold-exchange standard, the discretion of the issuer is unregulated and is, therefore, undesirable. To the argument that the gold-exchange standard economises on gold, Ambedkar reasoned that economising of gold raises its supply, thereby lowering its value and, as a depreciating commodity, it then becomes unfit to that extent to function as a standard of value.

Ambedkar proposed that all further coinage of the rupee should be permanently prohibited; a suitable gold coin be minted; the ratio between the gold coin and the rupee may be fixed by law and the rupee and the gold coin should not be mutually convertible. In course of time, India would thus have rupee as well as gold coins as unlimited legal tender. Since the ratio between the gold coin and the rupee is fixed under the law and the supply of gold is stable, Ambedkar argued that issue of currency would be regulated leading to stable prices and hence a stable currency standard.

*The context in which these currency reforms were suggested by Ambedkar has completely changed. The Indian economy has an altogether different institutional set-up now. Yet the essential message of Ambedkar has remained surprisingly timeless.* The basic contention of Ambedkar was that there should be some regulator by which the discretion left to the issuer of currency is regulated. In the present economic milieu with unbridled growth of government deficits and their automatic monetisation, the need for an effective restraint on liquidity creation is as imperative today as it was then.

Equally important is Ambedkar's contribution to the arena of public finance. His Ph.D dissertation *The Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India* represents a major contribution to the history of Indian public finance. In this book he dilates on the Centre-province financial relationship in British India during

the period 1833 to 1921.

The setting of the problem is a familiar one. The expanded role of government calls for larger revenue collection from taxation; yet in a poor country like India there are obvious limits to the extent of taxation. As a result, the problem of equitable distribution of burden among various forms of governments, such as, the Central government, provinces, local governments, assumes significance. Ambedkar provides a detailed and insightful historical perspective on the financial relationship between the Central government and the provincial governments in British India.

Ambedkar demonstrates how centralisation of government finances, which prevailed in India during 1833 through 1871, was a failure on account of a faulty fiscal system marked by injurious taxes and unproductive or extravagant expenditure. The imperial system of government which came into existence in India in 1833 reflected centralisation of the weakest kind. De jure there was an imperial system of administration, but the de facto administration was conducted as though the primary units of executive government were the provinces and that the government of India was only a coordinating authority. The imperial government was responsible in law but did not administer the country whereas, the provincial governments administered the country but had no responsibility in law.

This dichotomy had perilous consequences for government finances. Under the imperial system, the expenditure budgets were prepared by the provincial governments, but the responsibility for finding the ways and means for financing them rested on the government of India. Not surprisingly, it led to extravagant demands and since the government of India did not possess the necessary machinery to appraise the demands and to control the expenditure, it often had to yield. Inevitably, government finances came under severe strain and it was realised that the provincial governments must draw up their own revenue and expenditure budgets. Accordingly, the regime of 'provincial budgets' came into force in 1871.

Initially, provincial finance was introduced in the form of what Ambedkar calls the method of 'budget by assignment', which prevailed in India during 1871-72 through 1876-77. Under the scheme, financial responsibilities of certain departments of administration were delegated to the provinces and the receipts accruing from those services were handed over to them with fixed lump sum assignments from the imperial treasury.

Ambedkar shows that this scheme led not only to higher taxes but also made taxation more inequitous. With a part of the financial burden passed on to the provinces, the Government of India abolished the income tax in order to silence the outcry against it by the richer classes. Consequently, deficits in the

provincial budgets were financed by increasingly resorting to the imposition of taxes on the already over-burdened class of tax-payers, namely, the landowners. "As a matter of justice we should have expected the continuance of the income tax to the relief of the state and the ratepayers. But justice was for a long time absent from the Financial Secretariat of the Government of India" (p 130).

Then came along the scheme of 'budget by assigned revenues' which was operational during the period 1877-78 through 1881-82. Under this method, sources of revenues were allocated separately between the Centre and the provincial governments. Assignments from the imperial treasury continued to form a part of the new system, but were made somewhat flexible. Under the revised method, assignments were computed on the basis of the 'normal yield' from various sources, determined by averaging yields over a number of years. In order to make allowance for errors of estimating, an ingenious technique was introduced. It was agreed that if the actual results deviated from the estimated normal yield, the difference should be equally divided between the provincial and imperial governments. In other words, if the actual yield turned out to be higher than the normal yield the corresponding imperial assignments was reduced by half of the excess and if it were less than the normal yield, the assignment was reduced by half of the excess and if it were less than the normal yield, the assignment would be increased by half the shortfall. Ambedkar argues that the "consent secured from the provinces to bear half the burden of a possible deficit in the normal estimate directly put a premium on economical and judicious administration of the ceded revenues" because "the fear that their obligation to bear half the deficit might assume a large proportion... compelled them to bestow greater vigilance than they would otherwise have done" (p 137). On the other hand, the "prospect of gaining half the excess over the normal gave a more direct stimulus to the provinces to develop their resources beyond the normal than would have been the case if the total excess had been entirely appropriated by the imperial government" (p 137).

Next in the process of evolution of provincial finances was the scheme of 'budget by shared revenues.' According to Ambedkar, the earlier schemes were deficient in that they "fell short of the requirements of provincial finance from the standpoint of elasticity", i.e. the sources of revenues assigned to the provinces had little room for enlargement over time. Under the new scheme of shared revenues, specific revenues were collected either by the imperial government or provinces and a portion of the proceeds was allotted to the other. This scheme was most successful and lasted for as many as 38 years until 1920-21 when "progressive realisation of responsible government" was accepted as an integral part of the British Empire, which marked the end of one epoch and the beginning

of a new one. Major fiscal reforms were introduced in 1921 which, according to Ambedkar, were not induced by any inherent defects in the system. Indeed, the scheme was eminently workable but the system as a whole was inconsistent with the great revolution which the Reforms Act of 1919 sought to effect in the governmental system of the country.

*One may ask what is the contemporary relevance of Ambedkar's contribution to public finance? First, it is a piece of pioneering work. As his guide, Seligman, wrote in the foreword to Ambedkar's book, it presents "the objective recitation of the facts and impartial analysis" of the Centre-State financial relations in British India, which has a great historical significance. Second, and perhaps more importantly, it provides the invaluable ground-work on which rests the edifice of the Centre-State financial relationship in modern India. Seligman had conceded that "... nowhere to my knowledge, has such a detailed study of the underlying principles been made." The set of principles, no doubt, have been the guiding spirit behind the reports of successive Finance Commissions in independent India.*

## II. Economics of Caste System and Untouchability

Traditionally, Hindu society is based on the so-called 'chaturvarnya', i.e., a division into four classes, i.e., Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. Ambedkar believed that the multitude of castes in India was created as a result of mixed unions between the four 'varnas'.

The holy scriptures had regarded the division into four 'varnas' as the ideal form of social organisation. Renewed justification and rationalisation was provided for them in the times of Ambedkar. One common argument in support of 'chaturvarnya' and the caste system was that it was in accordance with the time-honoured economic principle of division of labour. Even people like Mahatma Gandhi were sympathetic to this viewpoint. At the same time, contemporary scholars like Nesfield had propounded an occupational theory of castes which argued that superiority or inferiority of occupations eventually led to the hierarchy in the caste system.

Ambedkar in his *Annihilation of Castes* came out with a hard-hitting critique of these rationalisations and demonstrated logical flaws therein. He emphasised that what was implicit in the caste system was not merely the division of labour but also a division of labourers. Moreover, this division of labourers was not based on natural aptitudes or acquired skills but on the dogma of predestination. While there is nothing wrong in the notion of the division of labour, no civilised society in the world has a division of labour along with such unnatural division of labourers! As to the theory by Nesfield, Ambedkar argued that caste is the natural outcome of certain religious beliefs which have the sanction of the "Shastras". As such, it is not occupation

which is responsible for castes but it is the caste system which was the basis of assigning occupations.

Ambedkar believed that the caste system in India was a major obstacle to economic growth and development. The caste system generally did not allow people to teach their professional skills to any other than their own caste members. Even if an individual does possess the skills necessary for a job, he would be reluctant to take up a profession of a caste lower than his own. In a casteminded society, there is no willingness on the part of individuals to seek employment where they may be best suited. This inevitably reduces mobility of labour. The caste system also reduces mobility of capital because occupation is inherited from caste. An individual entrepreneur has to invest his capital into his own occupation which is predetermined by heredity. The immobility of capital, in turn, hinders optimal utilisation of investible resources.

According to Ambedkar, the caste system reduces mobility of labour as well as capital leading to inefficiencies in production, thus impeding economic growth. In a broader sense, change is the essence of the process of economic development; it calls for continuous changes in socio-economic patterns. The caste system, on the other hand, advocates perpetuation of the traditional socio-economic pattern and as such is detrimental to economic development.

As a champion of human rights, Ambedkar also denounced untouchability. According to him, *untouchability was not only a religious system but also an economic system which was worse than slavery. In slavery, the master at least had the responsibility to feed, clothe and house and save and keep him in good condition or else the market value of the slave might come down. In contrast, under the system of untouchability, the upper castes take no responsibility for the maintenance of the untouchables.* Ambedkar observes in his *What Congress and Gandhi Have Done to the Untouchable* that "as an economic system, it (the caste system) permits exploitation without obligation. Untouchability is not only a system of unmitigated economic exploitation but is also a system of uncontrolled economic exploitation" (pp 196-97). In another book, *The Untouchables*, Ambedkar argued that the caste system was a "diabolical contrivance to suppress and enslave humanity. Its proper name would be infamy" (Preface, p ix).

### III Strategy for Economic Development

Ambedkar believed that the thrust of strategy for India's economic development should be on eradication of poverty, elimination of inequalities and on ending exploitation of the masses. *He accepted the Marxian view that there is exploitation in the world; that the poor are exploited by the rich; and that the enslavement of the masses by the privileged few leads to perpetuation of poverty and its attendant*

*suffering. Yet Ambedkar did not sympathise with the Marxist paradigm of development.*

Ambedkar's view on communism are presented in his essay 'Buddhism and Communism'. *Unlike Marx, Ambedkar did not accept economic relationships as the be all and end-all of human life and rejected the economic motive as the driving power behind all human activity.* He emphasised that exploitation has many dimensions, economic as well as social, religious or political. Indeed, in the Indian context, social or religious exploitation is no less oppressive than economic exploitation.

According to Ambedkar, communism stands for revolution and not for reformation. Communism, he argued, advocates revolutionary methods for overcoming the opposition of the capitalists for establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Any action that is in the interest of the proletarian revolution is ethical and there is no consideration for human life. Ambedkar as a champion of democracy and human rights was against dictatorship in any form or shape. He disliked violent methods of change and believed that constitutional provisions and democratic means should be relied upon for the desired reformation.

Ambedkar rejected the totalitarian approach of Marx in advocating control of all the means of production. He did not accept the Marxian position that the abolition of private ownership of property would bring an end to the poverty and suffering of the have-nots. He also did not accept the Marxian prognosis that the state is a temporary institution that will 'wither away' in course of time.

Ambedkar believed in a classless society but not in a stateless society. He maintained that the state would continue to exist as long as human society survived. Indeed in his book *States and Minorities*, he has entrusted "an obligation on the state to plan the economic life of the people on line which would lead to highest point of productivity without closing every avenue to private enterprise, and also provide for equitable distribution of wealth" (p 34).

In other words, Ambedkar sought active involvement of the government in economic development without the Marxian totalitarianism and state monopoly. In his above-mentioned book, Ambedkar has advocated state-ownership of agricultural land with a democratic collectivised method of cultivation and limited control of industries (i.e., heavy industries and large public utilities). Ambedkar's concept of State Socialism is based on three basic tenets:

- (i) State ownership of agricultural land and key industries to meet the demands of the poorer strata of society;
- (ii) Maintenance of productive resources by the state; and
- (iii) A just distribution of the common produce among the different people without any distinction of castes or creed.

Ambedkar perceived an active but well defined role for the state in the economic affairs of the country. He did not favour imposition of arbitrary restraint on the economic processes. He was not prepared to forsake individual incentive for the economic welfare. *Given the recent developments in Soviet Union, China and the East-European countries, especially their move towards greater accent on individual incentives, Ambedkar's apprehensions regarding the evils of totalitarianism have indeed turned out to be almost prophetic.*

#### SUMMING UP

Through his economic philosophy, *Ambedkar comes across not only as an economist of the highest order but also one with unmatched social commitment; a*

#### Debate

### Tirupati temple is Buddhist Even Today

(N.K. Sharma, New Delhi)

Kudos to Dr. K. Jamnadas for his book, *Tirupati Balaji was a Buddhist Temple*. Fortunately, he substantiated my thesis that Tirupati tonsures of hair is a Buddhist custom. Unfortunately he relied too much on the cooked up stories of the Aryan tomfoolery. Even for a change, he did not refer to the history and political history.

The title, *Tirupati Balaji was a Buddhist Temple*, is wrong. It should be, "Tirupati Balaji is a Buddhist temple". It is a Buddhist temple even today and the main idol is that of Buddha.

The Aryans called Buddha as their Vishnu, the way Indians call Christ as Eswara and Prabhu. Each race honoured Buddha with their own unique titles and ornamented Buddha with their exclusive symbols. The Aryans had no gods of their own, and they could not have some different idol of Vishnu except that of Buddha. Proof? "We saw that the only difference in appearance between Vishnu and Avalokiteswara idols lies in weapons". (Ibid, DV p.18). Precisely for these reasons, I have already stated that Murugan, Jagannath, Viswanath, Ayyappa, Satyanarayana Konda etc. are Buddhist idols and customs. The shocking matter is that you are worshipping Buddha at Tirupati, and yet you presume that you are doing some other thing.

**Brahmin will run away:** In view of the fact that the Brahmin is worshipping Buddha's idol today, the alleged conversions to brahminism or the alleged attempts, are meaningless propositions. Neither the Brahmin nor the Nawabas showed any interest in conversions. The Nawabs brought the Brahmins and Shudras to Andhra or to the South. You will hear more on this in future. Meanwhile, do not read the cooked-up or ready-to-eat cock and bull stories in the Aryan literature. Read political history of Nawabs in

champion of human rights who detests exploitation but does not favour violence, or any such extremes to end it; and ardent supporter of democracy who warns us that political equality has no meaning unless it is complemented by economic and social equality; a relentless fighter against economic oppression but one who does not favour dictatorship of any kind including that of the proletariat and advocates constitutional provisions and democratic means for eradicating poverty and suffering. *It is indeed most unfortunate that Ambedkar's economic thoughts and ideas have not received their due attention and recognition.*- (Economic and Political Weekly April 13, 1991).

(An earlier version of this paper was presented at a seminar organised by the Indian Institute of Technology, Powai, in February 1991).

South India to know the historical truths about Buddhist races and kingdoms. No need to waste our energies to take possession of all these Buddhist temples. *When SC/BC races in Andhra become Buddhists, the Brahmin will run away.* Fight is only with your equals. How is the Brahmin equal to you? Do your duty i.e. become a Buddhist and the rest of the things would be added unto you. Dr. Jamnadas served the truth eminently. Nawabs confiscated Tirupati temple and placed it under the custody of the Brahmins and the shudras.

#### Self-determination conference

(Smt. Kalai Selvi, Convener, National Self-determination Youth Front, Bangalore)

June 14 is Che Guevera's 64th birth anniversary which we are observing as the "Day of Emancipation of the Oppressed Peoples" by organizing a Conference on "National Self-Determination" on June 15, 16, 1991. Che Guevera fought for the emancipation of the beleaguered nationalities *crossing* all barriers of race, language, country and even religion. Recent developments in the world shows a trend of using self-determination as a *weapon for liberation* of each Nation. In Soviet Union, the breaking up of various nationalities, Serbian revolt in Yugoslavia. At the same time, inspite of belonging to same nation, East and West Germany were separated after the II World War. North and South Yemen were also separated. But now both these two nationalities got united together. In the Indian sub-continent also many nationalities are there, having their own distinct national characteristics. To retain these, they are fighting for their emancipation. Why these nationalities are fighting in this sub-continent? What are the reasons and what are the solutions for their problems? Some communal organisations are raising lot of noise about the threat to India's unity and integrity. This noise is intended to drown the feelings of the different nationalities. To have a wide discussion, we have organised this Conference. (see also DV May 1 p.15 and DV edit "self-determination for all nations").

## Letters to Editor

**C. Gautam**, gen. sec., Dr. Ambedkar Centenary Celebrations Committee, UK, London: *Dalit Voice* has given us a good coverage of the different functions we held in connection with the Dr. Ambedkar Centenary. A reception was held at India House by the High Commissioner, Dr. L.M. Singhvi, on April 14. It was addressed by the Mayor of Hounslow, Shyam Sunder Jasser, Lord Justice Bingham, Lord Templeman, Julius Silverman, Chanan Chahal etc. Silverman, chairman of the India League, said Dr. Ambedkar "belongs to the most select company in history, that of the great liberators and emancipators, along with Lincoln, Wilberforce, the Tsar Alexander II (perhaps), and very few others.

**Dr. Velu Annamalai**, chairman, International Dalit Support Group, PO. Box-842066, Houston, TX 77184-2066, USA: Our membership drive for IDSG is getting good response. We are approaching all Afro-American sisters and brothers here. Runoko Rashidi, the noted Afro-American historian and the *Dalit Voice* American representative, is in it full scale. I have come to admire him, adore him and love him as my own brother. It is something in Rashidi that cannot but love him. You can't get a better ambassador for DV than this great man. He is dedicated to the welfare of Dalits. He has been talking and writing about Dalits ever since his return from India inaugurating India's first Dalit Writers Conference at Hyderabad and a meeting with you.

Our association with the Afro-Americans began with our visit to Libya in early 1986 on the invitation of Col. Gadafi. At an international conference held at Tripoli we met Louise Farrakhan, America's most famous Black leader, and his brother, Abdul Wali Khan, editor of the *Final Call*, the most vocal champion of Blacks and Dalits. The Black and the Muslim world came to know of the oppression and persecution of Dalits for the first time at this conference. Hundreds of copies of our pocket book, *Apartheid in India*, was sold out at this conference. The entire audience gave a standing ovation for two minutes after we concluded our speech. It was this speech that cost our passport which was impounded following our return to India. The Editor of the *Final Call* (address 757-West, 79th st., Suit 316, Chicago, Ill 60620) should be approached to popularise the IDSG. The American Blacks should be told that the Black Untouchables of India constitute the world's largest single persecuted minority. They form 20% of India's of 850-million population. And together with their other persecuted brothers and sisters belonging to the Tribal (10%) and Backward Castes (35%), they will be the world's largest group. India's Untouchables and the American Blacks, according to historians, have a common origin, common physical features. If all the Blacks of the world come together we can end this Aryan white racism, which is the common oppressor of both, and establish justice and liberate all other oppressed groups of the world and jointly fight the threat of the New World Order looming over all of us. On behalf of the *Dalit Voice* we congratulate Dr. Velu Annamalai, V.G. Jackson and Runoko Rashidi for coming to our rescue — EDITOR

**Salman Hyder**, Washington, USA: Some of your recent write-ups on the Gulf War and its impact on

Indian Muslims ("Welcome Gulf war", DV Edit, Feb. 16, 1991, "Salute to Saddam," DV March 16 and the most recent "Muslims must throw out corrupt leadership," DV April 16) are all very bold and also truthful. As an Indian Muslim I congratulate you for thoroughly exposing the degeneration in the Muslim world. In fact, you were the first to warn the world about the dangers of the "Global gangup of Whites and Zionists against Blacks and Muslims," (DV Nov. 16, 90) even before the world woke up to the horrors of the New World Order threatened by President Bush. Unfortunately, the Muslim rulers of Gulf countries have not yet fully grasped the dangers of this NWO. Barring Iran and Iraq, none is serious about fighting this new menace of NWO. The breakup of Soviet Russia and the silence of China is helping the white racists to clamp their hegemony over the world.

You are right. India's Aryan racist rulers have not raised even a whimper over the NWO. There appears to be no worry in this country. The ruling upper castes are not at all perturbed. On the other hand, they will quite welcome the NWO which seeks to impose the Aryan white and Zionist rule over the whole world. When Prime Minister V.P. Singh announced the implementation of the Mandal Commission report, which assured reservations to the Backward Castes, these white Aryan racists of India exploded with wild anger and the so-called intelligentsia took to the streets to denounce VP's measure that sought to restore the human rights of BCs. They even committed some fake self-immolations. But when the American President announced his NWO, none appeared perturbed. This is because the Indian ruling racists and the American White racists have a common origin and also a common goal. Racism is playing greater havoc in India than in any other part of the world. Before the Indian brand of racism the South African Apartheid pales into insignificance. In *Dalit Voice* we have been doing our duty warning the country about the dangers of racism inside India and the white-zionist racism outside. But the *Dalit Voice* is a lonely voice, passive voice. Who can hear this Voice of sanity amid such a din and bustle of the barking mad dogs? — EDITOR.

**V.T. Hireker**, London: Indians have misused the supreme economic talents of Dr Ambedkar either due to caste hatred that he was an untouchable or due to political bias against him that he was an open challenger to the Congress Mahatma. Dr. Ambedkar obtained the highest degree D.Sc (Economics) from London School of Economics which is very rare. When I requested Prof. Goodhart of the LSE to represent the school in Babasaheb's centenary celebration on May 19 and told him over the phone that Dr Ambedkar was a former student of the LSE who got the degree M.Sc (Econ) and higher doctorate degree D.Sc. from the LSE and whose portrait hangs in Room A86 of the school, immediately he expressed his willingness to participate in our centenary programme. He arranged to send Prof. M.Desai. Dr Ambedkar intended to economically modernise India and make it a welfare state on the British pattern according to Lord Beveridge's plans. But, the Hindus did not understand his supreme economic talents. They pursued Gandhi's economic primitivism. Today, the majority live below the absolute poverty line (at their subsistence level of the 19th century England, according to poverty studies

conducted by Charles Booth in London and by Seebom Rowntree in York.

**Gorakh Prasad Siddharth**, president, Dr. Ambedkar Mission of Purvanchal, 542-Jungle Tulsiram, Richiya, Gorakhpur, UP-273 014: Our celebration of Dr. Ambedkar centenary was a big success. Seminars and public meetings of April 16 and 17 had a big response. Bikhsu Dharmathirth of Kushinagar, Dr. M.B. Vimal etc. spoke. Ram Kawal Prasad, advocate and founder president of the All-India Chamar Mahasabha, was killed by an upper caste on Jan. 28. he was president of the Arjak Samaj from 1969 to 74 and Dt. Secretary of the Soshit Samaj Dal. His younger son also died on Jan. 16 last due to poisoning by some unknown person.

**Dr. Prahlad Gangaram Jogdanad**, Reader in Sociology, Poona University, Pune - 411 007: My book, *Dalit Movement in Maharashtra*, is just published by the Kanak Publications, New Delhi (1991, pp 185, Rs.200). I had met you in Hyderabad during the first All-India Dalit Writers Conference.

**C.L. Bains**, Faridkot, Punjab: I have been entangled in a false criminal case by a local Nazi Shiv Sena bully full details of which has appeared in a local Punjabi daily, *Jantak Lehars* dt. nov. 22, 90. I was having a Hindi edition of the *Ramayana* by Periyar E.V. Ramaswamy published by the Periyar Self-Respect Propoganda Inst., Periyar Thidal, Madras-7. They managed to get that book from my son and after taking a xerox of that they published some pages under my name and address and got it circulated. The UP Govt. had banned this book but in 1970 following the Allahabad High Court judgment, lifted the ban, vide case no. 412 of 1970. The UP Govt. went in appeal to the Supreme Court which dismissed the appeal. Now the Punjab govt. has imposed the ban on the same book. I want our Dravida Kazaghama friends in Tamil Nadu to help me with all material, for my defence. Address C/o Kamalesh Kanta, Gali No.5 (Left), Balbir basti, Faridkot, Punjab.

The Nazi elements being cowards have no courage to confront us directly. That is why they seek the support of the Nazis in the police and judiciary by filing criminal cases against our people. *The Ramayana, A True Reading* by the great Periyar was published in Madras decades back. Even the most notorious Nazis of Tamil Nadu could not do anything overawed by Periyar's logic, rational arguments and scientific approach to the subject. Even the highest court of the land had set aside the ban on this book. When that is the case we can't understand how the Punjab police could file criminal cases against a truth-seeking Dalit 20 years after the matter was settled. Our friends in Tamil Nadu should provide full support to Brother Bains — *EDITOR*.

**Ram Sharan**, President, Punjab Civil Secretariat SC Welfare Assn., Kothi No. 3560/37-D, Chandigarh: We have submitted a memorandum to the State Govt. about the non-implementation of reservation policy by the upper caste authorities. Till 1982, no reservation was implemented in Punjab. Even up to 60% of the posts were occupied by upper castes. We filed 14 writs in the Punjab High Court which gave its verdict

on 23-8-89 favouring us. The govt. went in appeal to the Supreme Court which upheld the High Court judgement but the State govt. did not give effect to the Court directive. While all the govts are reaping big publicity harvests during this Babasaheb Centenary year, these upper caste custodians of the Govt. are actually cheating the innocent SC/STs and thereby the Constitution. On one side these upper castes are persecuting the Sikhs and on the other side they are torturing the SC/STs. Smt. Joginder kaur, supdt. grade-II, who is senior to a non-SC, has been superceded and ignored in promotion as Suptd. Grade-I.

**Prof. Jagmohan Sahoo**, Lecturer in Oriya, Vedvyas College, Qr. No. DL-257, Basanti Colony, Udit Nagar, Rourkela, Orissa-769 012: After reading a copy of the *Dalit Voice* in Jan. 91, my whole philosophy of life got changed. Being from the Backward community, I got so enthused by DV that I translated your famous editorial, "Hindu unity aims at breaking Indian unity," (English reprint available, Re.1) into Oriya. After selling 5,000 copies, to meet additional demands we got it reprinted. We also got the fourth chapter of the Mandal Com. printed in Oriya. SC/ST/BC professionals have started evincing keen interest in our literature. We have formed a "Dalit Parishad". Some communal Brahmins are jealous and soon they may wage a caste war against us. We have also decided to publish some books in Oriya. I have started writing a book on how the Aryan upper castes have reserved the whole educational institutions to themselves for the past 3,000 years. We also have a plan to publish DV in Oriya. Yet another proposal, to put pride into the broken hearts of our people, is to celebrate the famous Durga Puja in Orissa in a different manner. Since we belong to the Asura race (Brahmins are suras), Mahishasura becomes our hero. When we are not Aryans but pre-Aryans it is our duty to honour our heroes. We will call upon our women not to do such brahminical Durga pujas but celebrate it as the day of Mahishasura. We must give a new twist, new interpretation to the history so that we bring back our true glories. Your book, *Know the Hindu Mind*, had a tremendous impact on me. Many people got it xeroxed. If we go at this speed, in a couple of years we can unite the SC/ST/BCs into a separate community.

We congratulate Brother Sahoo for all his support. Honest intellectuals like him have a big role in searching our roots and recovering our lost glories. Orissa is a state where the SC/ST/BCs are in an overwhelming majority but ruled by Brahmins and Kayasths whose hegemony can be ended in five years if only we get a dozen committed intellectuals like him in different parts of the state. We assure our fullest support to the Orissa Dalit Liberation Struggle — *EDITOR*.

**S.R. Talukdar**, New Delhi: By continuously asking us to vote for the Janata Dal, you are behaving like VP. Singh publicity agent. But how did you forget your good old friend Kanshi Ram, and his party, BSP, of which you were a great admirer?

**G.C. Biswas**, Gauribidnur, Karnataka: You have called upon us to vote for V.P. Singh. I fail to understand

what wrongs you have noticed in BSP.

**Er. G.S. Raju**, Bangalore: DV is the only paper in India which is supporting V.P. Singh. You have rightly divided the people into Bandals vs Mandals and asked the latter to vote for VP. We congratulate you for this clearcut stand.

**P. Gopalkrishna**, Retd. Dt. Munsiff, Rajahmundry, AP: DV edit of May 1: "Only one-point agenda for elections: Reservations" and your call to vote for V.P. Singh is superb.

We have received many letters endorsing our appeal to vote for Janata Dal-National Front and "bring back V.P. Singh with a vengeance" (DV edit May 16). We have also received some letters about our "silence" on BSP. The reason is this. Kanshi Ram and BSP are very old friends and in fact we were accused of being Kanshi Ram's publicity agents. However, in this election, BSP is not contesting all the seats all over India — both the Lok Sabha and Assembly. Only the Janata Dal-National Front is fielding candidates in all the seats. So to defeat the Aryan forces and consolidate the SC/ST/BCs and Muslims into a separate community through this difficult battle of the ballot boxes only VP. Singh has the capacity. That is why we don't want the pro-VP votes to get split — *EDITOR*.

**Mathew Sulewehain**, H.No. 47-Civil Station. Bhatinda, Punjab-151 001: We have made Babasaheb Ambedkar brass badges. Beautiful. Rs.3.50 per badge. DV has given the deep in sights which I don't get from any other journal or daily. All our doubts get cleared.

**Lekha Pramanick**, Maukhal, W.Bengal: N.K. Sharma's article (DV April 16): "What DV did in 10 years" brought tears in my eyes.

**Sajeev**, H.No. 680/30 New Friends Colony, Behind Mahila Ashram, Rohtak, Haryana 124 001: We want to publish one pamphlet every month taking some important topics from DV. The first one will be on the most hated word, *Harijan*, which means bastard. Our people this side have not understood its true meaning and how M.K. Gandhi cheated us by renaming our people with this insulting word. I have collected lot of material from DV and other writings of Babasaheb on this hated word. Those interested in supplying us more material and extending their support may directly contact me. Your book, *Know the Hindu Mind*, has caught the imagination of our people here.

**Ajit Kamble**, Benaras Hindu University, Varanasi, UP: I discontinued my DV subscription and this was a big mistake. It is very difficult as an Untouchable student to live in this in this BHU in this heartland of Hindu conservatism. I thought that by trying to integrate with Hindu students, I can win them over. That is why I stopped taking DV. But I failed. Hindus refuse to integrate with the Untouchables even if we want it. This is my experience having lived in this university for the past three years. They hate us from the bottom of their heart. Babasaheb said the only way-out is conversion and that will finish Hindus and their caste. I want your advice on this. Only conversion can challenge their Ramrajya. Having decided, I am now renewing my subscription to DV and I also want to actively promote the Dalit movement through "Educate,

agitate, organise". SC/ST/BC students live in a state of fear here. Either they are pretending to hide themselves or they are disinterested. Some of them are even critical of me. Please guide me.

**Smt. Surlinder Kaur**, Calcutta: S.Dhan Singh, a strong Ambedkarite, is contesting the Ropar Parliament seat and he is my father and a dedicated fighter for human rights causes. He wants to take up the genocide of Sikhs to the UN. His address: Dr. Ambedkar Research Inst., Jodhpur, near Fatehgarh Sahib, Sirhind, Patiala, Punjab.

**Kodali Satyanarayan Murthy**, Editor, "Godavari Keratalu", 64-1E-1, Treasury Emp. Colony, Kakinada, Ap - 533 004: We are publishing the above Telugu monthly from March. We deal with the nationality question, Dalits and women.

**Alok Bhowmick**, Delhi: We thank you very much for expressing solidarity against fascist forces. The very secular polity is at stake and hence there is an urgent need to work together in spite of all our differences.

**Mrs. Mamta Saran**, Publisher, Horizon India Books, New Delhi: I greatly appreciate your magazine and I have recently become its subscriber. We deal with entirely women's issues.

**O. Mahaboob Subhan**, journalist, Hospet, Karnataka: The difference between the Hindu Nazis and the Congressmen is that the former stab from the front and the latter stab in the back. I can even go to the extent of saying that these Nazis are real friends of Indian Muslims. Because, they constantly and forcibly remind us to be better Muslims. Muslims in Gulf countries, where there are no Hindu Nazis, have become affluent and the Muslims there are forgetting Islam. Due to wealth and western influence, Muslims in these countries are forgetting Islam. So to keep Islam pure, a cruel enemy is essential. If there had been no Hindu Nazis in India, we too would have become like Turkey, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia. The kicks of these Nazis, their constant burning of our mosques keep us on defensive. Every time there is a Nazi offence we are forced to be on the defensive. By this we are constantly put on the alert. This is the real essence of Jihad. So the real saviours of Islam in India are our Hindu Nazis. By their barbarity they have done immense service to Islam. Every devout Muslim must salute these Nazis.

**Prof. S.A. Ansari**, D.M. College of Arts & Com., Imphal-795 001: Congratulations to Kushawant Singh for speaking about the "Brahmin power" (*Illustrated Weekly Feb. 2, 91*). The brahmin rule has replaced the British rule in India now. Before "independence", Brahmins held the British responsible for all our ills. Today, the very same Brahmins are ruling India. Everything is monopolised by them. So the Brahmin is directly responsible for all the ills afflicting us as he is the ruler.

**Syed Mansoor Alam**, Hyderabad: I want one information. RSS has published, it is said eight years

ago or so, the Muslim scripture, *Hadis*, and distributed it secretly among its members. One Jestamarman of Bombay is its editor, published from the USA. A friend who read it (not Muslim) says that it was meant to warn RSS cadres and to alert them about the dangers of Islam. I also learn that the RSS has published this scripture on the advice of the American CIA which is also worried about the growing might of Islam in the world. It is learnt that hints are given in this book about reducing the Muslims of India to the level of Indonesian Muslims, who are no Muslims at all. I am reminded of your famous editorial on "Spanish Experiment." (May 16, 1985).

**Akbar Ali**, Hidayat Centre, Beebi Alabi Rd., Mangalore-1: In a rejoinder to one of the "Letters to Editor," you say that there are several verses in the Koran asking Muslims to fight and liberate the *Mustadafeen*. Then, why don't you publish them? It might help our Dalit brothers to know our stand clearly?

The leadership of most Muslim organisation, political and otherwise, are in the hands of elite Muslims, who are not interested in teaching the revolutionary aspects contained in the Koran. There are several references in the Koran to *Mustadafeen*. Abdullah Yusuf Ali's English version of the Koran says *Mustadafeen* means one reckoned weak, and therefore ill-treated and oppressed. In verse IV, section 10/75 of the Koran it is clearly stated that the cause of Allah is the cause of justice, the cause of the oppressed. The Koran directs the Muslims to fight on behalf of the oppressed and help his liberation. But India's elite Muslim leadership, being under the obligation of its upper caste rulers, has failed even to identify the *Mustadafeen* in India, not to speak of fighting on their behalf and supporting their liberation struggle. This is the biggest failure of the Muslim leadership and that is why we had given a call in DV to the Muslim masses to reject this corrupt leadership (DV April 16). We are also plannign a book itself on the *Mustadeen* in India — EDITOR.

**S.M. Doula**, GodavariKhani, AP: The Aryans/Brahmins had grabbed thousands of Buddhist temples and violently eradicated Buddhism from india. They changed the idol of Buddha and installed an Aryan God at the Tirupati temple in AP. But the idol in the temple is that of Lord Buddha. So also at the Jagannath temple of Puri, Vitthal of Pandharpur, Ayyappa of Sabarimala of Kerala etc. The lovers of the so-called Aryan god, Rama, are not willing to accept the court verdict though the Babri Mosque and the land is visible to one and all and the experts of archeological survey have given their expert opinion that there was no temple of any kind. The Muslims should actively cooperate with Buddhists and help recover all their temples from the illegal occupation of Aryans.

**Syed Shah Ghaziuddin**, Adcoate, 209-Shaniwarpeth, Sholapur, MS-413002: In reply to S.M. Doula's letter (DV April 16) you have stated that Moulana Sirajul Hassan Saheb, chief of the All-India Jamaat-E-Islam, is your esteemed friend and deeply interested in your work but some of his colleagues are not. I have personal experience of this fact. Syed Yusuf, Editor of the English weekly, *Radiance* of the Jamaat, had come here some time back. During talks, I suggested

him to reproduce in *Radiance*, materials from *Dalit Voice* as DV is doing a lot of useful work for the Indian Muslims. His reply was most distressing. It is a pity that a coherent organisation like the Jamaate-Islami lacks unity and coherence on important issues.

**Arshad Kalliath**, Trivandrum: Frequent, slanderous and emotional outbursts against reservations (human rights of India's oppressed 85%) by a so-called Gandhian upper caste, Dr.K. Velayudhan Nair, expressed through his articles in Malayalam journals of Kerala vindicates your assessment of the real attitude of the "Father of the upper caste nation," M.K. Gandhi, and his fans towards the non-Hindu majority.

**Momin Abdul Rashid Tahir**, president, Bhiwandi Nizampur Municipal Council, Bhiwandi, Thane dt., MS: We have just established a well-furnished library costing Rs.20 lakhs and named it "Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Municipal Library." We want to see that this library has all the books by Babasaheb, on Babasaheb and also your books. We need your guidance on this.

**S. Akhtar**, Khanpur, Dt. Bharuch, Gujarat - 392 150: After retiring as a municipal clerk, I find it difficult to subscribe to DV which since a few years has almost become part of my life. Yet I will send Rs.8 a month as I can't afford Rs.90 in lumpsum. I am enclosing the English translation of the most poisonous writings published in the April issue of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad's Gujarai monthly, *Vishwa Hindu Samachar* (near Jagannath Mandir, Ahmedabad - 22) which fans hatred against Muslims. Yet no case has been filed under the IPC. Even the Election Commission is silent on such anti-Muslim writings.

**Prof. Yashwant Vaghela**, A/41 Tapobhumi, SO no. 2, Isanpur, Ahmedbad - 43: I am a Gujarati poet and an Ambedkarite fully subscribing to your prophecy that the Gandhian Era would end with the end of the 20th century and the 21st century would be "Dr. Am edkar Era." In this Gandhian state of Gujarat upper castes are sucking the blood of the Dalits. This is the 11th college I am serving because of discrimination against me. Gandhi's Gujarat is cruel. So much fake. For the past ten years I have been fighting only these Gandhians. I have so far published four books. ■

## Brahmin - Bhumihar clash

**Gopalganj**: The recent murder of Nagina Rai, former MP and Janata Dal leader, is due to caste rivalry. The arch rivals, the Brahmins and the Bhumihars, had earlier decided to bury their hatchet in the wake of the violent anti-reservation agitation and work together against the Janata Dal. The fact is that Rai was a Bhumihar and the accused, Bachcha Choubey, is a Brahmin. ■

## "Chamar" used for abuse: IPS man dismissed

**New Delhi:** A young IPS probationer, Umesh Kumar, who was discharged from service two years ago for calling his scheduled caste batch-mate "Chamar" has lost his last legal battle for leniency in the supreme court.

Umesh Kumar (27) joined the IPS in 1987 and was discharged from service on October 23, 1989, under rule 12 of the IPS probationers' rules, 1954, by the home ministry on the allegation of his colleague, Sunil Kumar, that the former had called him a "Chamar". Belonging to the Bihar cadre, Umesh Kumar had moved the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) at Patna challenging his removal from the IPS. But the CAT dismissed his petition on Nov. 15 last.

**It is all in joke:** While seeking relief from the CAT, Umesh Kumar's counsel had pleaded that "he is in the period of adolescence and maturity is only dawning on him. As such, these were jokes without any sting, which are usual among youngster. Such a hard decision would make the young probationer weep for life." Later, he moved the supreme court seeking leniency and reinstatement in service. But the two-judge bench comprising Justice K.J. Shetty and Justice Yogeshwar Daya dismissed his appeal on April 26. Among other grounds that the petitioner had raised before the apex court was that "this is a case where the petitioner is discharged from service for allegedly

calling a Chamar a Chamar." (*Times of India* April 30).

**Literal Insult:** The judgement highlights the acuteness of caste sensitivity in the Hindi heartland. The case reflects the fact that the echelons of bureaucracy are not insulated from the commonest of social prejudices. More important is what was revealed by the legal, or rather legalistic, defense put forward by the probationer's counsel who claimed that the petitioner is "in a period of adolescence", a weak argument indeed. The counsel added that the petitioner after all only called "a Chamar a Chamar". It would appear that the petitioner was penalised for his literal-minded truthfulness. The judges, however, seem to think differently.

As a matter of fact, caste terminology, despite its rigidities, has place for harmless bantering, none of which however is accessible to the lowest castes. This alone ensures that words like "Chamar" would be powerfully double-edged. Banter remains harmless only when it is a two-way process. Although it should be possible to sanitise such terms in descriptive use, it needs no saying that they are often employed to hurt and demean. The moral of the episode may be that there is a difference between being literal and pretending to be literal, even when the laws cannot strictly tell one from the other. (*Times of India*, May 5).

## Dr. Ambedkar: Why TN anti-Brahmin movement failed?

Talks of Dr. Ambedkar with the Editor, "Sunday Observer", Madras on 23.9.1944.

As far as I have been able to study, the advent of the Non-Brahmin Party has been an event in the history of India. Many people had not even been able to realise that the fundamental basis of the Non-Brahmin Party was not the communal aspect which the word Non-Brahmin indicated. No matter who ran the Non-Brahmin Party, whether it was what they called the 'intermediate class' which lay between the Brahmins at one end and the untouchables at the other. Therefore everybody who believed in democracy had a deep concern in the interests and fortune of the party. The organisation of the Non-Brahmin Party was an event in the history of the country. Its downfall was also equally an event to remember with a great deal of sorrow. Why the party crumbled in the 1937 elections was a question that the leaders of the party should assess themselves. Firstly, they had not been able to realize exactly what their differences were with brahminical sections. Though they indulged in virulent criticism of Brahmins, could any one of them say that those differences had been doctrinal? How much brahminism had they in them? They wear 'Namams' and regarded themselves as second class Brahmins. Instead of abandoning brahminism they had been holding on to the spirit of it as being the ideal they ought to reach. And their anger against Brahmins was that they (the Brahmins) gave them only a second-class degree. How could a party take roots when its followers did not know in clear terms

what were their doctrinal difference between the party to which they belonged and the party to which they were asked to oppose. So the failure to enunciate the doctrine of differences between the brahminical sections and the Non-Brahmins was one of the reasons for the downfall of the party. The second reason for the downfall of the party was its very narrow political programmes. The party had been described by its opponents as a party of job-hunters. That was the term the 'Hindu' had often used. I do not attach much importance to this criticism; for "If we are job-hunters, then the other side are no less than we are". One defect in the political programme of the Non-Brahmin Party had been that the party made it its chief concern to secure a certain number of jobs for their youngmen. That was perfectly legitimate. But did Non-Brahmin youngmen for whom the party fought for twenty years to secure jobs in public services remember the party after they had received emoluments for their jobs? During the twenty years the party had been in office, it forgot the 90% of the Non-Brahmins living in the villages, leading an uneconomical life and getting into the clutches of the money lenders. I have been greatly pained by the turn of the events. One thing I would like to impress was that a party was the only thing that would save them. A party needed a good leader, a party needed an organisation, party needed a political platform.

Therefore, I would say to the Non-Brahmins, "Unity is of supreme importance. Learn the lesson before it is too late". (*Bahujan Voice* April 14, 1990)

## Nazi lies about Kashmir temples exposed

Hindu Nazis and the "national press" they control thrive only on falsehoods. Hundreds of instances we have published in these columns. Publishing false stories is the most important part of the Nazi game. Some simpletons think that by printing posters and stickers with anti-communal slogans, they can combat "communalism". These simpletons must know that communalism is part of the vulture system of the Hindu Nazis. And they can remain as the ruling class of India only if they manufacture new and newer lies daily. Nazis, in fact, sit on a mountain of lies. The "national press", their creation, is meant to spread these lies. One of their main games is to make the non-Hindu original inhabitants of India — namely SC/ST/BCs — feel that they are Hindus by creating hatred against Muslims, Christians and Sikhs. In Punjab, no Hindu trusts Sikhs and vice versa. This was proved in the city-dwelling Hindus voting wholesale to the Nazi party during the recent civic elections in Punjab. Hatred has gripped every section of the Indian society. Nay, hate rules India today. Here we publish excerpts from an article in the *Indian Express*, the country's chief pro-Nazi English daily owned by a pro-Nazi Marwadi Goenka empire. The article is by its former editor and close to Gandhians and also Nazis. Even such a person could not tolerate the bundle of lies these Nazis reel out to whip up hatred. The article is yet another proof of our oft-repeated charge about the Nazi mind-manipulation game. Thereby the Nazis have created a suffocating atmosphere of hatred all over India and the just concluded elections have proved the amount of hatred burning in the hearts of these Nazis. The Nazis think that they can rebuild India into a Ramrajya of their dream through hatred. Babri Masjid tops the list in their agenda for hate-mongering. Can a society be built on a foundation of hatred? The Nazis say yes. They don't think that hate produces more hate and that the monster of hate may devour its very creator. But Nazis say what they are creating is not hatred but promoting dharma. When India's topmost "intellectuals" are silent on the Nazi hate mantra, the hate that hate produces, what can a lone B.G. Verghese do? It is a sure sign of the country disintegrating — *EDITOR*.

**B.G. Verghese:** For quite some time, statements have been made and reports published variously to the effect that Hindu temples, religious places and dharmashalas in the Valley of Kashmir have been demolished, burnt, desecrated, looted or otherwise damaged, ostensibly by fundamentalist Muslims. Your issue dated April 21 (Delhi edition) reports the Kashmir Samiti asking the Governments to protect all places of worship in the Valley and threatening a nationwide agitation against such "shameful acts" by misguided elements.

In order to pinpoint the alleged incidents and ascertain the facts, this writer sought and obtained a list of 62 temples said to have been "burnt and damaged in Kashmir by terrorists in 1990" from this same contact. The list referred to temples in Srinagar as well as in Anantnag, Pulwama, Buramulla and Kupwara districts. Together with this was another list of 644 villages which had been renamed on Jammu and Kashmir Government orders in 1981 and 1982. In this case, the inference appeared to be that many traditional place names had been changed and given Islamic

names and, most objectionably, that Anantnag town itself had been renamed Islamabad.

Armed with these lists, I made inquiries of responsible persons in Kashmir and Delhi. After detailed investigations on the spot, my informants tell me that no harm has come to these specified Srinagar temples (some with attached dharmashalas), namely, at Jawaharnagar, Karan Nagar, Ganpatyar, Dashnami Akhara, Purshyar, Bairav, Sheetal Nath and Fatehkadal which were named as having been demolished, burnt or stoned. Photographs have been furnished in some cases. Some of the temples, dharmashalas or akharas are occupied by BSF or CRPF personnel, presumably with the knowledge and consent of the temple authorities., through this could make them targets. What emerges on the basis of a limited survey in Srinagar City is that the many reports and statements made with great emotion and doing the rounds of the country about large-scale desecration of Hindu places of worship in Kashmir is not true and amounts to self-serving propaganda or disinformation. (*Indian Express*, May 8)

## Dr. Ambedkar becomes Father of India

(N.K. Sharma, New Delhi)

Dr. Ambedkar has become the Father of India. This is proved by the Indian Constitution. Dr. Ambedkar donated the Constitution to knii all races in this country as a federation of equal nations/races on the basis of liberty, equality and fraternity. This country will remain as a country as long as the Constitution guides it. This country, therefore, means nothing but the Constitution. Dr. Ambedkar being the Father of the Constitution automatically becomes the Father of India that is Bharat. If the Constitution is violated, misused or abused to subvert the freedoms of the peoples/races by the alien Aryan colonial rulers, then this country is going to disintegrate into many countries and many nations. The original inhabitants of India do not have any vested interest in its disintegration unlike the alien Aryan colonial races. But for Dr. Ambedkar the Constitution would not have achieved its rare sanctity. The Aryan colonials may topple the Constitution when they find signs of an end to their colonialism. Be careful while necking them out of

offices. As the Aryan colonialists misused and abused the Indian Constitution, the situation in Punjab and Kashmir became explosive. The colonial powers are replacing one Chengiskhan by another Chengiskhan as governors to pulverise the Sikhs and Kashmiris. They are bypassing the Constitution. The Sikhs and Kashmiris are merely revolting against the colonialism of the Aryan races. Or else, they do not have any quarrel with the Constitution. Recognise colonialism as colonialism, and do not call it Aryanism or brahminism or Hinduism. Dr. Ambedkar is the saviour of Indian races called SC/ST/BCs, Dalit Muslims and Dalit Christians. Thus do not reduce Babasaheb as "Father of our nation". Babasaheb is an international leader and liberator - much above all other pigmies. Babasaheb formulated the universal principles of justice and emancipation of all nations/races in the world. It is more appropriate to honour ourselves by calling Babasaheb as the Father of India.

## In defence of Kerala Jamaat Islami chief

(P.K. Kalim, Calicut)

It is with great interest that I read V. Prabhakaran's Kerala News Letter (DV March 16) and N.K. Sharma's subsequent demand (DV May 1 p.10) that the Kerala Jamaat Chief must apologise for his alleged remarks about the SC/BCs. As one who knows T.K. Abdullah Moulavi, the former chief of Kerala Jamaat-e-Islam, in close quarters, it is very hard for me to believe that he had made such a comment in the first place. Abdullah Moulavi is known here as an enlightened Muslim scholar without any elitist or casteist prejudices. Abdullah Moulavi was in fact addressing a large SIM gathering and he talked about 'undans and adakodens' without particularly referring to SC/BCs. That is a phrase in Malayalam standing for the dregs of the society. They can be savarnas or avarnas depending upon the circumstances. Abdullah Moulavi had in his mind those unscrupulous people who rush to enter Islam, without being actually convinced of its truth, for material benefits. The tone of his speech also made it very clear that he had nothing against the Dalits. I should appreciate it if DV correspondents go right into the original sources before raising allegations of racial slur against people of integrity and faith.

**League leadership:** This doesn't mean that Muslim's have no problems with the so-called elites who try to dominate poor Muslims politically and economically. I can understand N.K. Sharma's rather angry response, himself being a resident of North India where even Muslims have developed a sort of caste mentality mainly due to centuries-old Hindu influence. But the caste system of the North Indian Muslims is a very faint reflection of the oppressive Hindu caste structure. Here, in Kerala Muslims have no castes. Any convert into Islam will become a full-fledged member of the community in a generation. That also undermines Sharma's allegation that the Muslim League leadership in Kerala belongs to the elites. Like any political party, the League has also got its own wheeler-dealers but its leadership is drawn from all classes. True there are Muslim leaders who do not want to ruffle the feathers of the ruling class. They try to become meek and docile making correct noises about Indian secularism and democracy. Conversions are like red rags to them. But unlike the Christian leadership, Muslims still show great empathy for the hardships of the lower castes. Muslims were the only community in Kerala who allowed the SCs to take water from their wells and eat from their plates. It is one of the strange paradoxes of recent history that some of the BCs have joined hands with their tormentors to taunt and humiliate the Muslims who once gave their all succour and help. They go about in shorts and Maratha caps wielding lathis to strengthen, of all things, the "unity of the nation!" ■

## Violation of human rights in India

**Washington:** Indian security forces in Kashmir have come under a scathing attack by a prominent US human rights group for using lethal force against protesters, shooting unarmed demonstrators, conducting summary executions and attacking civilians. Asia Watch, a New York-based group that has become increasingly critical of the Indian government, said in a 110-page report that its own investigators "directly gathered" information on some 200 of the extrajudicial killings by government forces since the beginning of 1990. Independent testimony was reportedly obtained from several eyewitnesses whose accounts corroborated each other. The report, entitled "Kashmir under siege," is by far the strongest indictment of the Indian government for violations of human rights. The Asia Watch report was written after two of its researchers visited India last year and collected information by visiting Kashmir and talking to Indian lawyers, journalists and civil liberties groups. Much of the information is based on reports from Indian newspapers. The allegations are contained in the chapter called "Violations by government forces," which lists specific incidents in Noorbagh, Pattan, Phazipora, Handwara and other places. The report also refers to the incident involving *The Telegraph* correspondent, Yusuf Jameel, who was detained by security forces. (*Telegraph* May 7).

**New Delhi:** The Left Front government in West Bengal is using all legal avenues available to stall the release of political prisoners illegally detained in the state, despite a High Court ruling. At present, there are 22 political prisoners belonging to the Second Central Committee faction of the Naxalites languishing in different jails in the state. In most cases, the prisoners have been detained without trial for more than nine years. On the basis of a petition filed by the Association for the Protection of Democratic Rights, the high court had instructed the state government to release all the prisoners by April 13. The state government, however, raised some new points in a bid to stall their release. Sujato Bhadra, general secretary of the APDR, accused the state government of "deliberately" trying to stall the release of the prisoners so that it was not made into a political issue in the coming elections. He said his association would move the Supreme Court if the Left Front government continues to stall the release of the prisoners. Citing instances of police excesses and killings in police firing during the last 14 years of Left Front rule, the APDR alleged that the tactics and arguments being resorted to by the Front government to justify these actions were in no way different from that used by S.S. Ray during his tenure as chief minister. Bhadra said there had been 108 lockup deaths, 167 killings in police firing and five deaths in encounters with the police since the Left Front government came to power in 1977. (*Telegraph* May 7) ■

## Christians feel let down

**New Delhi:** The Christian community in India feels let down by the major political parties. This feeling emerged at the national debate on issues before the elections, organised under by the All-India Forum of Christian Organisations, at the instance of the All India Catholic Union (AICU). It was held at the Indian Social Institute, here on April 20 and 80 delegates from all over the country participated. Smt. Margaret Alva M.P., (Cong) Prakash Karat, CPM, George Fernandes (Janata Dal). AICU President Chhotebhai expressed the specific concerns of the Christian community. For 40 years, since the Presidential Order of 1950, we have been struggling for the rights of the Dalit Christians. Ever since it was prepared in 1980, the AICU has also consistently supported the Mandal Report, regardless of which party was in power. Hence Christians would be inclined towards those who showed a special concern for them. ■

## A Brahmin wonders why Brahmins are hated most

(D. Anjaneyalu, Madras)

The Brahmins were and are hated because they are descendants of the Aryans (poor fellows, the local category have little in common with the Vedic Aryans); the upper caste non-Brahmins are hated too, because they were marked as 'exploiters'. Strangely enough, by 'Dravidians' in the new political mythology is meant not the historically-recognised ethnic group covering the whole of South India, but only the members of certain non-Brahmin communities in Tamil Nadu, who were ready to fall in line with the hate chorus and vilification campaign. All this was the manifestation of pathological xenophobia, rather than a well-considered social philosophy or a scientific political dialectic. During the two decades and more, Indians seem to have reached a topsy-turvy state in their social and political thinking, that everyone who seeks to play to the gallery, must say, like Milton's Satan again, "Evil, be thou my good"! Everything connected with the Centre, which still holds us together as of today, is presented as a form of unmitigated evil. But even here there is no semblance of an attempt at consistency. The President, Mr.R. Venkataraman, who was hailed only a few years ago by these parochial leaders as the first 'true Dravidian' to occupy the Rashtrapati Bhavan, was more recently threatened with impeachment, by the same worthy gentleman. Was it a theatre of the absurd or a street play of the grotesque? The saddest part of the whole story is that 'national integration', so dear to the heart of farseeing nation-builder, Jawaharlal Nehru, has become a dirty word in the dictionary of those who flourished on the philosophy of hatred and the politics of separatism and vivisection in the name of 'autonomy' and 'regional identity'. But it may not be that easy for them to fool all the people every time. But Indians need sanity in their social life, and breadth of vision and perspective in

political life. Mahatma Gandhis and Jawaharlal Nehrus are not born in every generation — nor Ram Mohan Roys and Vivekanandas. But India can do with at least a Sardar Patel and an Indira Gandhi to stem the rot of today, and strengthen the forces of national integration (*Hindu* May 7). ■

## Brahmins are worried because brahminism is dying out

(S.R. Kumar)

There has been a lot of concern recently among Brahmins as to their survival. Although this has taken the name of caste-propagation, there is probably a deep-seated reason, if not justification for such a fear among them. Two questions have to be asked in this context. First of all, has there been any good that has come out of the Brahmin caste over a period stretching to perhaps two-and-a-half millenia? The only fact we have is that Brahmins have played no mean role in preserving our hoary past. The second question is if there is a relevance for Brahmins and their fear for survival in the present age. I am convinced that the fear of Brahmins is for Brahminism as such, by which I mean the tradition of preserving the ancient knowledge intact. If we believe that this knowledge is relevant in the present times and even in future, then Brahminism is important. If I argued earlier that Brahmins as a caste have till now persevered in keeping up this tradition, I would also like to point out that at present, *Brahminism is dying out, a most unfortunate situation*. Few Brahmins can even recite the Gayatri Mantra. Fewer still can recite ten Solkas. Sanskrit is an almost totally forgotten language. One has to seek very hard to find a Brahmin proficient in Vedic chants. All Indians have to be concerned about this, since with the disappearance of Brahminism, all that is fundamental and special to the Indian system of philosophy, beliefs and tradition is lost. (*Hindu* April 30). ■

## A great Tamil deity dubbed criminal god by Aryans

(Our correspondent)

**Bangalore:** We found the review of a book in the *Statesman* (March 30) titled *Criminal gods and demon devotees*. The book by Alf Hiltebeitel is published by Manohar Publications, Rs.40. The alien brahminical social order, which stood for injustice and inequality, was always opposed by the Indian races who stood for a just and equitable social order. Those who opposed this unjust order were described as Asuras, Danavas, Pischis, demons, Yadavas, Rakshasas, Vanaras, Bhootas, Pretas, and all sorts of deogatory words. Ravana was called Rakshasa because he protected Sita deserted by the Aryan god Rama.

The indigenous peoples of India, who today are called SC/ST/BCs and "religious minorities", never

compromised with the invading Aryans who were uncivilised barbarians. So all the deities of the pre-Aryan natives were condemned by the Aryan writers as "criminal gods" and their followers as "demon devotees". This book deals with one such set of gods and their devotees. The native people and their gods always challenged the Aryan imposters and this fight is continuing even to this day. The following review refers to one such famous Tamil Nadu pre-Aryan deity. Those who are interested in knowing the glories of Tamil Nadu may read Ellis O Shaw's book, *Rural Hinduism*, CLS, 1986 - P.O. Box 501, Madras-3, Rs.10.

**Kattavarayan of Tamil Nadu:** In the rogues gallery of popular divine or semidivine heroes who figure so

prominently in the village cults of southern India, the outrageous, protean figure of Kattavarayan occupies a place of enviable eminence. His cult, originally centered, it would seem, in Tiruchirappalli district, extends through Tanjavur and South Arcot (although he is also known further South). His myth is recorded in what is perhaps the longest and most lurid of all such accounts of popular divinities, the Kattavaraya Cuvami sources such as the Kattavarayan Cantai ennum Kattamuttu Nataka.

The hero is persistently identified with Murukan. But Siva cursed him and called him an Untouchable.

I will display my magic tricks and ruin the Brahman's family, he says.

**Anti-brahminism:** Kattavarayan's magical pranks are clearly directed towards an anti-nomian goal, the destruction of the Brahman's family and of the "round-eyed" women he desires; both elements, the hero's anti-Brahminism and his obsession with ravishing beautiful women, are persistent features of Kattavarayan's myth. If Kattavarayan is, as we shall see, a kind of South Indian Trickster, the narrator still finds it necessary to reveal the logic that underlines the role.

The geographical heartland of Kattavarayan's myth is the villages of Putturakam or Puttyakam. A Brahman girl who came to draw water ate the fruit and became ten months pregnant, as she was about to throw herself into the water, the child fell from her womb.

She abandoned him in sorrow and a Paraiya woman found him and took him home, but when her hut caught in fire from the baby's crying, the child had to be taken back to the Pillaiyar shrine and left there. This Kattavarayan's first earthly birth. He was next born from the womb of a deer that came to graze beside Kali's shrine, the "low caste" Valaiyan Civapputaiyan, servant to King Ariyapurajan, adopted the baby and brought him up the age five. At that point Kattavarayan, already aware of his true identity, announced to his distressed and loving father that he was going to seek his mother. Carrying an oxgoad (tarrukkol), he wandered in the direction of Omantur, where the goddess Kamakai was standing in penance under an enormous banyan tree on the bank of Kampa river.....

**Rewrite Tamil history:** Moreover, she is in effect adopted by the king, who has an equally high-sounding title, Ariyapurajan. Kattavarayan will persistently challenge the Brahmins and their royal protector and humiliate them, in his relentless pursuit of Ariyamalai, says the *Statesman* review.

The book proves that the pre-Aryan Dravidas and Adi-Dravidas of Tamil Nadu had a glorious history and civilisation which the Aryans tried to destroy. In the fight that followed, the Aryans defeated the simple, innocent indigenous Tamils. Our people in Tamil Nadu should now re-construct the history and recover our lost glory. ■

#### SHAKARACHARYA'S REVELATION

#### Jersey cow is cross-breed of cow with pig?

(Ravi Kumar, Bikaner)

The wave of mass insanity unleashed by the rabid forces of Hindutva sees no sign of abating. Not even when this madness has been brought into public ridicule. The limit, surely, to the madness of the Manuiste monks, was at the April 4 BJP-RSS-VHP Boat Club rally at New Delhi, addressing which the Shankaracharya of Badrikashram Jyotishpeethadhiswar, Swami Vasudevananda Saraswati, had this to say:-

"The foreign powers want to turn the Hindus into idiots in order to eliminate the race. This is the reason why they want us to stop drinking cow's milk. And these Jersey cows being sent to India are a cross-breed of cow and pig." (Quoted in "Shri Ram to Aid BJP" by Praful Lahiri, *New Age*, Vol. XXXIX No. 15, April 14, 1991).

Now, we all know full well how the Hindutva humbugs never tire of trumpeting the concocted story that Hinduism is fully compatible with science. But the Shankaracharya's rabble-rousing speech only exposed the utter hollowness of this ridiculous claim. Jersey cows being produced from sexual unions of cows and pigs may only be perhaps conceivable in Hinduism, which has stories of children being produced from the sexual union of two males, of an animal who was half-lion, half man etc. etc. But, unfortunately, such curious things never happen in reality. One can well imagine the miserable fate of the Science and Technology Dept. if and when the Hindutva forces, led by people like this Shankaracharya, come to power.

And what is more, by condemning the Jersey cow (which yields much more and better milk than the Indian cow), the Shankaracharya perhaps seeks to imply that he does not want the millions of India's downtrodden milkmen (Yadavas, Ahirs, Gujjars etc.) to improve their miserable lot. After all, according to Manu, menials like the milkmen must always remain slaves of their "upper caste" Aryan masters. Further, the Shankaracharya had this message to give to the millions of India's farmers the bulk of whom come from the BC/SC races:

"The tractors and threshers should be banned. They have taken the country backwards. No more do the farmers have Ox for ploughing, this is a very bad omen."

The Shankaracharya, being a Brahmin, of course, is prohibited to even touch a plough. And, therefore, he does not have even the faintest idea of the misery, poverty and drudgery that plough cultivation means, in contrast to modern agricultural technology. By condemning India's oppressed farmers to the plough, and by denying them modern technology, the Shankaracharya perhaps wants the millions of India's "Cow-caste" (non-Aryan) farmers, milkmen and agricultural labourers to remain poor, as Manu had commanded in his Manu Smriti. The Hindu Raj being forcefully championed today by the brahminical forces would prove disastrous for the Indian farmers and peasants, too. The Shankaracharya's statements point in this direction. ■

N.K. Sharma in his rejoinder to Khadga Dhari Buddha (DV Apr.1) warns Dalits that "If every one exercises his own brains, you do not have a community or much less a Buddhist community." The same writer quoting Babasaheb works (*Why Go for Conversion*) in his article "Aryan Sex Bombs & Bluff Bombs" (DV. Oct. 16, 1988) had directly advised Dalits that "In the changed circumstances, untouchables may have to search for salvation in other religions as well".

When Babasaheb himself gave us the choice of choosing a religion, why can't I seek refuge under Khadga Dhari Buddha? Why a man like me working for Dalits for the past 15 years, can't advise my brothers with the experience I got?

The right to self-defence is a human right. In India, this is denied to the Dalits. Manu, the law-giver to Hindus, prohibited arms and protection to the untouchables in his code of law and justice. The Government of India is strictly following the Code of Manu, denying arms and protection to Dalits, though the Constitution guarantees this right. Then who will protect Dalits? Should we not defend ourselves?

**Gods with weapons:** Can we possess weapons legally to save our life and dignity of our women? My own brother was killed. My life is also being threatened. I have applied for a gun licence. But I can't get it before I die. So I have searched for a religion which can provide me a weapon for self-protection. So seeking refuge under Khadga Dhari Buddha is not against Buddhism. Lord Buddha or Babasaheb did never oppose self-defence. There is a proverb in Telugu that the sheep can bite one who is not having even a stick in his hand. The three-crore Aryan gods are holding weapons of different types only to finish we the Anaryans. When these mighty gods themselves are having weapons, why not a human being like me have one? The Constitution and the law may provide weapons to some individuals. This is of no use. The whole community must possess weapons. When there is an eternal threat to the life of Dalits what a wise man should advice? If we go to Khadga Dhari Buddha we can secure at least a Khadga if not a revolver.

**Sikh & Christian religions:** Thinkers and revolutionaries all over the world supported violence for self-defence. Jesus Christ asked his disciples to go with a knife to spread the gospel. He clearly said (Luke 22-35-37) "He that hath no sword, shall sell his garment and buy one". Prophet Muhammad and guru Nanak loved swords for self-defence, and for the survival of their community. Only such religions are alive today. The Black American revolutionary, MalcolmXsupported violence wherever necessary. He said non-violence is the language of cowards. In India, it is the language of humbugs and imposters. People

who are far away from Dalit movement and who are silent spectators do not realise the need for militancy. The militants in Punjab with just a Hukum Nama are today controlling the brahminical press even the TV. Only militants can change the history or rewrite the history. Not *ahimsa vadis*. We may talk peace but keep the gun ready.

People who have read Babasaheb, and who can apply their brains wisely can never oppose militancy. Baba saheb was a militant. His writings are the best evidence to prove it. Reading his books, our blood starts boiling. Please read page No.249 Vol. 1. *Source material of babasaheb writings and Speeches*. (1982 edition) Govt. of Maharashtra Publication. You would find the militant writings of Baba Saheb printed in italics.

"He declared: you may be faced with constituent assembly again. Your place will not be in the constituent assembly. You will not find my place there. Your legitimate place will be in your own head quarters manufacturing Bombs Yes, Bombs ! Make no mistake about it. We can handle hand grenades better than many other people".

The great Libyan leader Col. Qathafi, in his *Greenbook* giving solution to the problem of the minorities, clearly writes "its political and Economic problems only can be solved by the masses in whose hands power, wealth and Arms should be placed." (*Green Book. Minorities*). So wise people all over the world are supporting the theory of arms to the masses. Only a religion can provide arms to the masses, but not any government. Our Editor, V.T. Rajshekar, had also recommended arms to the Dalit masses. "Revolvers to Dalits".... "Always be on the offensive, never defensive".. "This is not violence. This is intelligence".. "There in no alternative but the bullet". I respect the words of Malcom-X: "We should protect ourselves by any means necessary when we are attacked by racists". (*Ready Reference to Revolutionaries V.T. Rajshekar - 1991*).

We must remember that only the militants all over the world changed the history. To be militant for the down trodden masses is a great honour. Buddhism itself can convert Dalits to militants. Khadga Dhari Buddhism was a philosophy hundreds of years back. Kungfu and Karate are the martial arts of Buddhists. Temples like Shaolin were dedicated to this martial arts. They were the training centres of the militant Buddhists. (Both monks and nuns). In the present Indian situation we are badly in need of militant Buddhists not only to protect the individuals but the whole Indian society from the "goonda rajya". The Indian intellectual class is too dishonest and it cannot lead the masses. So the masses are searching for a militant spiritual leader. Only dedicated Khadaga Dhari Buddhists can lead the masses.

# "Class" argument used to deny reservations to SC/ST/BCs

(Yoginder Sikand, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi)

The heated debate on the nature of contemporary society, in particular, the issue of caste and class, remains to be settled. This issue lay at the root of the conflicting assertions put forward by the mutually opposed groups when reservations for the BCs were sought to be implemented by the V.P. Singh Govt. Those opposing the Mandal Commission recommendations have various arguments in support of their stand. But certainly the most strange of these various arguments was that by substituting "caste" as a basis for reservation for "class," V.P. Singh was, in fact, seeking to divide the working class on the basis of caste differences, and thereby, destroy all possibilities of a proletarian revolution to overthrow the present capitalist order. What was precisely curious, indeed baffling, about the assertion, was that it was in fact the feudal, casteist and capitalist elements themselves who were making such declarations. This was certainly a brilliant illustration of sophistry, of Marx being employed in the service of Manu. (*Dilemma of Class & Caste*, V.T. Rajshekar, Dalit Sahitya Akademy, 1984.)

At this juncture it would be worth considering what Iravati Karve had to say about the caste-class character of Indian society. Karve deals with the issue of why it is that the upper caste/Hindus seek to play down the issue of caste in public, while actually not engaging in any concrete action to break-down the caste system. Karve says:

Almost every Indian of note (i.e. upper caste/class) talks of abolishing caste distinctions and the opposition to it comes from the great masses of agricultural (i.e. low) castes. Though this might seem paradoxical on the face of it, it is completely logical, for the majority of posts in higher paid government services are held by the Brahmans, Kayasthas, and a few other castes. Political power is also wielded by them. They are the most literate and have established a tradition for higher collegiate education which has given them a virtual monopoly of such professions as teachers, lawyers, doctors etc. The 'abolition of caste' today would mean competition (on unequal terms) for all these above item between the already well-entrenched and highly educated castes on the one hand, and the poorer, illiterate majority of the agricultural and other castes on the other.

**Poverty byproduct of deprivation:** What Karve is suggesting here is that the already entrenched upper castes now seek to reduce the awareness of the "lower caste" masses of their social deprivation by denying that the exploitative caste system still exists. This suits their purpose since it effectively prevents the lower castes from realizing that it is precisely because of their "lower caste" status that they are socially and economically oppressed. Thus, the "lower castes" are made to forget about the true cause of their exploitation (that is the caste system) and this being the case, they cannot then do away with their exploitation!!

In addition, it ought to be remembered that in a socially backward society like India's, primordial ties of family, clan, tribe, caste and kinship are the strongest ties that bind an individual to his social group. These ties can best be used for mobilization of the masses, especially if, as in the caste-system of India, certain castes or ethnic groups are synonymous with certain economic classes. But the upper castes, by denying that caste exists, seek to prevent "lower castes" from using these strong primordial ties for mobilizing themselves against the upper caste/class hegemony.

**Cunning strategy:** Further, if the upper castes were still to openly glorify the brahminical caste system (though they still adhere to it in practice) the political system of one-man - one-vote would cause the awakened "lower caste" masses to stiffly oppose the upper caste hegemony. Thus, the upper castes prefer not to openly praise the caste system, rather, they denounce it in public (to mislead the lower castes) yet practice it in private. Keeping all this in mind, one can understand why the "upper castes" have adopted this strategy.

Karve, therefore, suggests that, "The only way to break the monopoly of the higher castes is for the lower castes to unite as castes, and fight for preferential treatment. The handicapped castes must first be brought on a par with the advanced castes as regards education and economic opportunities before one can talk of breaking the caste system." (quoted in Venugopala Rao, "Caste War in the Open", *Mainstream*, 29/9/90, p.4).

Class-based reservations are demanded using the argument that because capitalism is characterized by classes as the main social categories, Indian capitalism must also be characterised as such. But what is conveniently forgotten is that capitalism, or any other economic system does not operate in a sociological vacuum, but actually in a given specific social context. Given the fact that pre-capitalist Indian society and economy were caste-based, capitalist development naturally followed the contours established by the given caste-based social formation, with the "upper castes" turning into upper classes and the lower castes being proletarianized. This has led to the broad synonymy of caste and class in contemporary India.

**False income certificates:** As for reservations for the "poor" (irrespective of caste), the ease with which false income certificates can be procured by those who hail from affluent families is too well known to need any elaboration. The fate of reservations on the basis of economic criteria can only be imagined!

It is also suggested that since the practise of untouchability "has died out," the caste system itself has disintegrated, and that, therefore, caste-based

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It is also suggested that since the practise of untouchability "has died out," the caste system itself has disintegrated, and that, therefore, caste-based

reservations are irrelevant. Now, it ought to be noted that caste and untouchability are two very different, though related, issues, and that the decline of untouchability in no way automatically leads to the disintegration of the caste system. Further, it is well worth noting that *those who proclaim that "untouchability is dead" do not themselves belong to the untouchable castes* who still face social discrimination and are still the victims of untouchability. Those who make such claims are largely from the westernized educated elite. (For them, untouchability may have died out but it would be more correct to state that they still do practise untouchability, although in a more sophisticated, subtle and therefore more dangerously deceptive form). It certainly is impudent on their part to assert that just because the traditional form of untouchability is not practised by them, it has died out, and is not practised at all. What this class imagines, therefore, is that it alone represents the nation, its values and practices, it implicitly asserts, are or must be, true for the entire society.

**Religion necessary:** As regards the altitude that social revolutionaries ought to adopt towards religion, while it certainly is true that religion is "false consciousness", a distinction ought to be made between the reactionary religious movements of the upper castes/classes and the emancipatory religion movements among the socially oppressed (eg. the Buddhists and other conversion movements among the Dalits). In a society characterized by a virtual stranglehold of religion on the minds of the masses, especially the "lower castes", to expect them to discard religion at once would be sheer utopianism. Instead, the Buddhist conversions, for example, should be seen as a gradual, yet very positive, process of the "de-religionization." of the masses so that the contradictions present in contemporary Indian religion and society become clear to them in a language and idiom with which they are familiar. One should note that most leaders of successful mass movements in India expressed their secular ideologies in familiar religious terms - eg. Dr. Ambedkar, Phule, Birsa Munda, etc.

Further, with the traditional Marxist understanding of religion as the "opium of the masses" and as a mere superstructural fringe entity, Indian Marxists have totally ignored attacking religious-based exploitation. Instead, they have been of the naive opinion that religion would disappear with the escalation of the class struggle. This has failed to happen. As Gunnar Myrdal notes:-

"A remarkable situation has gradually come about in South Asia. Practically no one is attacking religion. Even the communists do not take a stand against religion in any of the South Asia countries." (G. Myrdal, *Asian Drama*, 1968, p. 103).

The debate over the caste/class nature of Indian society now seems to overwhelm the discourse of politics in contemporary India. Only time can tell what the resolution of this contentious issue will be.

## Ban on Mussawi

**Bombay:** Acting under the pressure of communal elements, some bureaucrats in the Union Home Ministry have reportedly served an order on Maulana Syed Mohammed Mussawi, spiritual leader of the Shias in India and president of the National Forum for Peace and Integration based in Bombay, not to move out of the city to any other part of the country. The surprise move of the Home Ministry came in the wake of a meeting of about 50 religious heads of different faiths had with PM (*Clarity*, May 5).

## Marwadis Warned

**Bhubaneswar:** The Orissa chief minister, Mr Biju Patnaik, has threatened Marwaris that they would have to leave Orissa with the same lota and kambal (jug and blanket) with which they had initially come here to do business.

Addressing an election meeting at Rajgangpur earlier this week, Mr. patnaik described the BJP as the party of Marwaris with big money. He accused the business community of backing a party which, he said, was out to threaten the unity and integrity of the nation by arousing communal passions (*Telegraph*, May 12).

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar  
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Dr. Pervez Hoodbhoy is a physicist at Quaid-i-Azam University, Pakistan, and MIT.

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**Payable in MO or DD to: "Dalit Voice".**  
**Foreign Airmail: US 40\$ dollars**

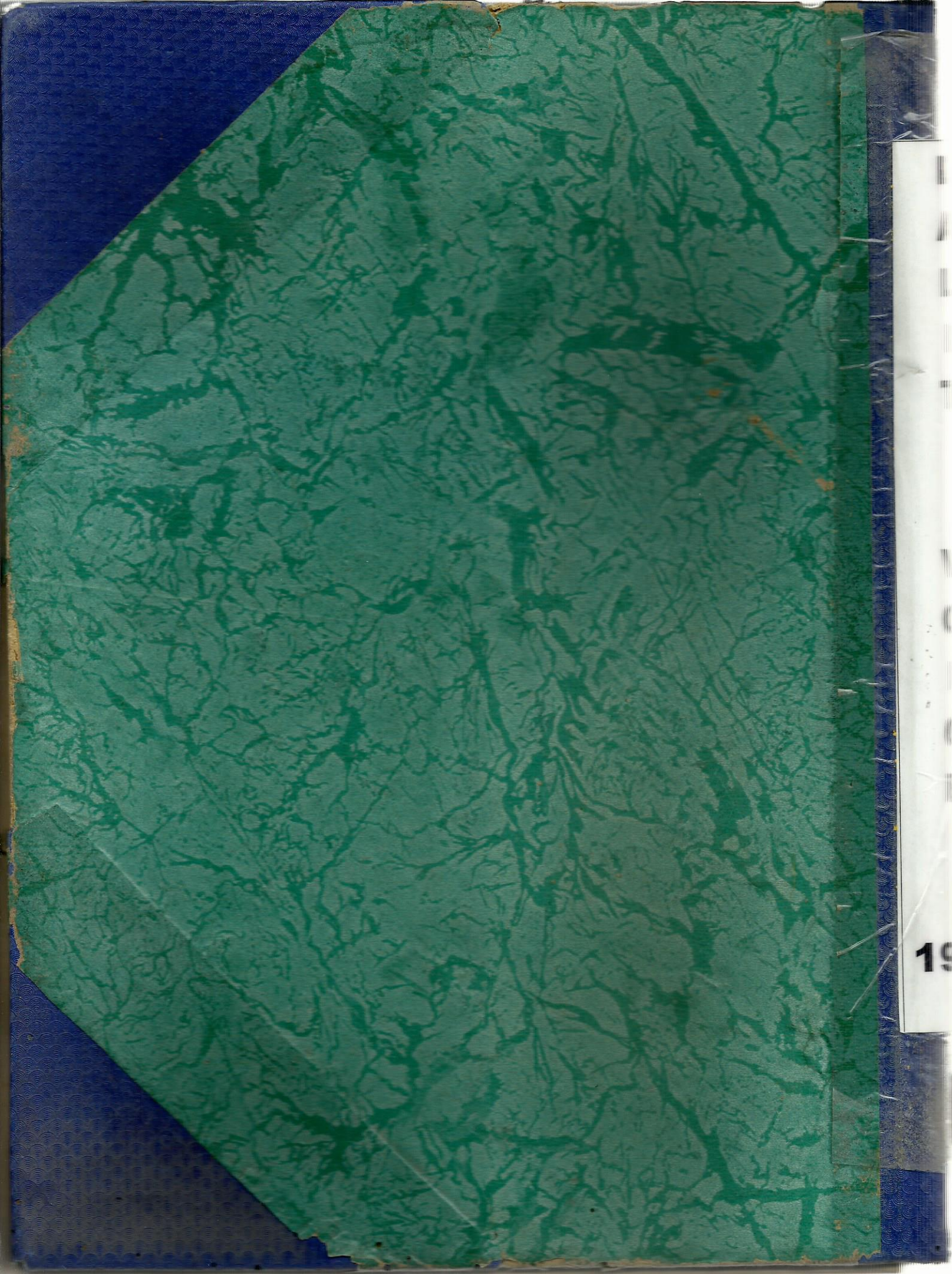
*Dalit Voice*

When corresponding, please quote your label number

To

.....  
 .....

BC 43 (ends on 1.1.92)  
 Librarian  
 Indian Social Institute  
 No. 24, Benson Road  
 Bangalore - 560 046



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