

DALIT VOICE

[The Voice of The Persecuted Minorities]

Adviser : Dr. Mulk Raj Anand

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MAISAHEB STROMS KARNATAKA

The week-long visit to Karnataka of Dr. Savita Ambedkar, the widow of the late Babasaheb, from Jan. 20 became truly a historic event. We were throughout with her during the tour & therefore we say it with authority.

Dalits in thousands gave her a spontaneous welcome. The Govt. treated her as a State guest. Ministers were eager to be photographed with her. There was a mad rush to see her. Barring a couple of elders hardly any dalit had the opportunity to see Ambedkar. Therefore, when Maisaheb stormed into Karnataka, they saw in her their dear departed leader. The delirious enthusiasm, the warmth of feeling was something to be seen to be believed. And the 70-year-old medical doctor, a Brahmin-turned Buddhist, indeed proved that she was not a mere woman and wife of Ambedkar but a gifted leader by herself. She impressed them with her forthright views fully reflecting the revolutionary philosophy of Ambedkar. She refused to take any rest, accepted every invitation, & promised to come again. Accompanied by Ramdas Athawale, the firebrand Dalit Panther leader from Bombay, she addressed innumerable meetings & also insisted upon visiting Devarasnahalli, 15 miles from Mysore, where 2 dalits were killed in caste clashes following the Assembly elections. The energy she displayed at

that age and the forthright talk she gave made her go right into the hearts of the dalits. And they readily accepted her. Great. At Ashoka Puram, called the Red Square of the dalits at Mysore, the entire 25,000 dalit population including women and children waited for over 3 hours and took her on a two-hour procession on a decorated van round the colony, offering her *aarati* at every doorstep, garlands, *kum kum*. It was indeed : she came, she saw, she conquered. Maisaheb was no Minister, she had now power or wealth. She had nothing to offer. Why then she proved magnetic? A dalit youth asked us: "Why did she not come out earlier? Will she lead the dalit liberation struggle?" We conveyed this to her and she said she was ready to lead. Having watched her closely we feel that she meant business. Her visit had a two-fold purpose. To congratulate the people of Karnataka for defeating the oppressive Indira Gandhi regime in the recent Assembly election. Secondly, to bring about a unity between the dalits, backward classes (OBCs) and other persecuted minorities like Muslims and Chri-

stians. As we have been advocating the very same, we assure our support to Maisaheb. It is no wonder that her visit had raised high hopes. The very fact that all sections of dalits including the Karnataka Dalit Action Committee and the Dalit Sangarsha Samiti had a joint meeting with her proved her pull. She was forthright in her criticism of "Mahatma" Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi. So also she criticised the anti-national RSS — all of whom were aiming at building a Brahmin Raj. Even the Marxists had no plan to destroy caste. She repeatedly criticised Brahminism, the fascist philosophy that was responsible for India becoming a beggar nation. Her thinking was clear. And no where she exhibited any confusion. She appeared dead serious about propagating Ambedkarism by bringing about a unity between the three non-Aryan natives: dalits, OBCs and minorities. She held separate meetings with OBC leaders and minorities. She told OBC leaders that the dalits were too willing to join with them despite the atrocities committed by them on dalits. And, therefore, she would fight for the implementation of the Mandal Commission Report. Her meeting with Muslim and Christians was a bigger success. She told them that they had everything to gain by joining with the dalits. If not RSS would employ dalits to attack Muslims. If dalits were the sufferers, Muslims were the co-sufferers. Both had a common enemy — the Aryan invaders. She also acknowledged the great contribution of Christians to the awakening of Untouchables and tribals. Since Muslims and Christians happened to be better placed in life, it was up to them to embrace the dalits. Never say *namaste*, say *Jai Bhim*.

Stop using the Gandhian humbug, *Harijan*. They would have to study Ambedkarism. She referred to Meenakshipuram and criticised Indira Gandhi for saying that the mass conversions were induced by Arab dollars. It was only the more affluent dalits who kicked off Hinduism and the reservations to seek self-respect through Islam. She asked Muslims and Christians not be worried as dalits would stand by them. Let RSS and Indira Gandhi say anything, they were as much citizens of India as anybody else. There was nothing to fear if they joined with their natural ally, the dalits. She was happy that Muslims at last realised the futility of voting for Indira Gandhi. In fact, it was Mrs. Gandhi by her temple-going spree and support to anti-cow slaughter campaign spreading scare among the minorities. We always used to say that Mrs. Gandhi & RSS were the two sides of the same coin. It was Maisaheb's criticism of the *Gandhi* film that hit headlines in the press. She called upon dalits not to permit the screening of this anti-national film. How could there be Gandhi without Ambedkar? By ignoring Ambedkar and ridiculing Jinnah, the *Gandhi* film had hurt the feelings of both dalits and Muslims. Hence here was an opportunity to launch a joint struggle. Come what may we should not allow this publicity puff of the Gandhi family. We hope the enlightened non-political representatives of these three sections forming over 80% of India's population would give a serious thought to Misaheb's call for unity and form joint front in different centres based on the ideology of Ambedkar. The matter is urgent. Before the Gandhian Era (20th century) ends & the Ambedkarian Era (21st century) begins.

(Contd. on page 11)

A HINDU WILL NOT CHANGE EVEN IF SETTLED IN AMERICA

(Dr. Velu Annamalai, Texas, USA)

Some Indians living in US feel that for an average American, India is holy cow, caste system, over-population and malaria. But I do not see anything wrong with these views since the Indian society is on a peculiar line of its own. What else is there to understand

about India under the present circumstances? We are not talking about the past golden history of Dravidian Harappa and Mohanjadaro civilization in the pre-Aryan period, of course! It appears that India cannot survive without one Gandhi or another. It was "Mahatma Gandhi" first and now Indira Gandhi and soon it will be Rajiv Gandhi (could have been Sanjay Gandhi) or Menaka Gandhi & then a little (Rahul) Gandhi and so on. So what is wrong for an American to think that India is Gandhi! I do not see anything wrong in equating the holy cow to India or the Indian (Hindu) faith. Several innocent people have been killed in the name of the holy cow in India. Vinoba Bhave said he will kill himself if cow slaughter is not stopped. But at the same time he did not even open his holy mouth when unfortunate Untouchables of India were killed, burnt alive, their women raped, their children butchered and thrown alive into the fire. So to a Hindu and thus to an Indian, the life of a cow is much more important than that of a human being. In the recent years, the holy cow has become more holy than ever before, and I will not be surprised to see these holy cows start wandering around pretty soon in this country too by looking at the number of Hindu temples being built. No matter how highly educated a Hindu is, he still firmly believes the superstitious and stupid customs of the Hindu religion without any rational thinking and practises them faithfully and more so blindly. And as long as this continues to happen, the holy cow will be well and alive! Regarding caste system, some Hindus living here say they reject the system, but they practice caste in their private life. They come from the upper caste and never suffered the inhumane practices of untouchability. Caste system, of which untouchability is the nucleus, is the foundation on which Hinduism is built. Untouchables of India today present the world's goriest form of Apartheid before which the South African racial segregation and the other Black problems of US and UK pale into insignificance. Caste system of the Hindu religion and thus its untouchability is an unique phenomenon unknown to humanity and mankind in any other part of the world. Nothing like this is to be found in any other society-primitive, ancient, or modern. J. H. Hutton in his book, *Caste in India*, says that "Caste is an exclusively Indian phenomenon. No comparable institution to be seen elsewhere has anything like the complexity, elaboration and rigidity of caste in India. It is virtually inconceivable that the association of circumstances necessary to produce so complex an institution as caste is in India could ever be found in more than one area of the earth's surface". Has mass or higher education, modern living condition, better communication & wider world exposure made Hindus to think that caste

system is a barbarous system and all men are created equal & thus the caste system is a shame to Hindus as a whole and need to be eradicated from the face of the earth. No! The practice of caste has attained a new life, a new vigor and the Hindus, both literates and illiterates, seem to believe more on the teachings of Hinduism which is based on caste hierarchy. There is more killing, raping, burning, oppression, discrimination and exploitation of the unfortunate outcastes by the Hindus in the name of their religion in recent times than ever before. The caste system sanctioned by Hinduism has created the Untouchables, and today about 20% of the Indian population is Untouchables, about 150 millions or 6 times the population of Canada. These people even today are not allowed to drink water in several places, not allowed to enter the Hindu temples and streets where the upper caste Hindus live, and forced to live in slums outside the village boundary. These people are forced to carry human excreta and dead animal on their head. The minute these people ask any questions about the system and their rights as beings, they are crushed, killed, burnt alive and their women raped. They live in constant fear of attack by the Hindus. Their good clothing or good living causes serious concern and resentment among Hindus. Very few of the outcastes struggled against all odds and managed to come up in life and thus started competing with the rest of the Indians (Hindus), and these upper castes cannot even digest this and hence the barbarous atrocities and brutalities on the outcastes. Ruth Glass, a British sociologist, narrated some of the atrocities on dalits in a recent article in the *Monthly Review* & says these

incidents are probably merely the tip of iceberg. To top it off, I wish to recall a news item which came in *India Tribune* (Feb. 1, 1982) under "Reign of Police Terror". In Goliagarh, Raigarh district, an Adivasi woman of 45-years-old & mother of six children was beaten to her feet by police in front of a magisterial inquiry. While the Adivasi villagers gathered outside, this lady was stripped and chilly powder was applied to her genitals. The police then tortured her with a stick. The lady was then forced to drink the urine of three men & a man was made to heap the ultimate humiliation upon her. Then she was raped and during all these time, the police were also laughing and asking obscene questions. Though she was close to losing her consciousness, the police made a man strike a match and singe the lady's pubic hair. After this incident, a man was paraded naked from his hut to the village school and the police applied chilly powder to his anus and later tried to force in petrol from a pump. *India Tribune* called this police brutality a 'modern sickness'. In India, it is the law of the Hindu caste system which rules the country, or in other words "law of the jungle" (*India Tribune*, Oct. 1, 1981). The latest news of the police merciless and sadistic torture and brutality comes from TN where in a period of five years, 190 undertrials died in prison due to inhuman treatment such as injury to testicles. The large majority of those who died in custody were poor villagers and slum dwellers, who belong to downtrodden communities (*India Today*, Sept. 30, 1982). Some Indians here think that it is a misconception of the American to believe that India is nothing but poverty, holy cow, caste system

and over population. I wonder what else is there for India to be proud of. Well really they should include barbarism, brutality, superstition and highest order of hypocrisy to the above list. Some people say India has sky-scrapers, computers and other advanced technologies. But what is the use? The majority of the Indians can't even smell the fruits of these advancement, leave alone get to eat them. The poor Indians are still sleeping on the road-sides, and still fighting with dogs to eat the thrown-away leftover food. The lower strata of the population still is treated as social exile and discriminated, exploited and oppressed by the small upper castes who seem to enjoy all the good things that India supposed to have achieved in the way of modern technological achievements and in the name of democracy. One of my American friends who recently visited India on an exchange program describes India as a land of "dictatorship democracy", meaning that the democracy in India is for the conveniences of the wealthy and for those people who are in the upper strata in social and religious hierarchy. The "poor" Indians have been and are always in the same low place in the Indian system, suffering, starving and oppressed, suppressed, exploited & tortured. Why is that Indians do not change for the better? According to the British High Commissioner in Delhi, "To a Hindu, the truth is usually that which most suits his convenience at any given moment. There is little place in Hindu ethos for truthfulness, unselfishness, social service or moral courage" (*India Tribune*, April 3, 82). This observation speaks for itself. The bottom-line is that the Hindus will not change their views on anything other than

what Hinduism teaches them. Of, course, it teaches them only, "I", "me", "myself" "my family" and nothing like compassion for the other man, leave alone help the other man and at least not to harm him. But Hindu religion teaches to discriminate people by their birth and to treat a section of the society like animals. If Hindu religion would have taught the simple human values, why should a tiny lady from Albania by the name of Mother Teresa should come to India to help the India's destitutes? Why is that all the early medical, educational and philanthropic happened to be Christian origin? The Hindu *gurus* and swamis have hardly enough time to enjoy the luxuries of life and amassing wealth and driving Cadillacs! Why go so far? The so-called elite and educated Indians in this country who talk from roof tops about "Indianism", helping motherland, patriotic to India etc, waste their millions of dollars in building temples here. Don't you think that these huge sums of money could help the millions of poors in India? Instead, the Indians here spend their money in stones and cement, and on the other hand, the American public sends their money to feed the Indian poor! No wonder an observer calls it, the Indians here are only "literate" and not "educated" (*India Tribune*, July 31, 82). How could anyone call India a modern state when some of her 100 million subjects have been treated as subhumans and who have been forced to exist outside the pale of human society? Where else brutality is used as an institution of social control? Where else but in the traditional India that a social order operates by "blaming the victims"? Where else superstition is the order of the day and the upper

strata keeps the lower strata poorest of the poor in the name of religion and democracy? India may be a nation of 'great' progress; but so long as the progress does not reach the millions of poor Indians, what good does it do to talk about it? Yes, the elite enjoys the fruits of modernization and so they have a vested interest to talk about it. The Indian culture and tradition always talk about "self" and thus as long as "he" is happy, yes everything is fine and great. Poverty is a disease that every nation wants to eliminate, but I am not sure whether Indians feel that way. Indians are basically violent, and hypocritical set of humans who care least about the other human beings. The past and the present are not woven together like colorful marble, but it really smacks of poverty, blind religious superstition, brutality, discrimination exploitation, torture & as a whole outright abuse. A small percentage of Indians enjoy everything; but for the poor, it is a permanent hell, legitimized in the name of religious and traditional values. The Indian society, to a certain extent is a brutal one, despite the myths of non-violence and passivity. Most horrendous forms of caste tyranny can flourish with impunity only in the Indian society. The new ethic in India reads as follows: "Thou shalt crucify thy neighbour for the fast buck" (*India Today*, September 30, 82). It also says that the citizens of India continue to believe that caste bestows special rights on an individual. Untouchability has long ago been 'abolished', but caste prejudice is one of the most insidious cankers eating into the country's vitals. (Sept. 15, 1982). □

Mahatma Phoolley on Brahminism

"Anyone who will consider well the whole history of Brahmin domination in India, and the thralldom under which it has retained the people even up to the present day, will agree with us in thinking that no language could be too harsh by which to characterise the selfish heartlessness and the consummate cunning of the Brahmin tyranny by which India has been so long governed. How far the Brahmins have succeeded in their endeavours to enslave the minds of the Sudras and Atisudras, those of them who have come to know the true state of matters know well to their cost. For generations past they have borne these chains of slavery and bondage. Innumerable Bhut (Brahmin) writers, with the selfsame objects as those of Manu & others of his class, added from time to time existing mass of legends, the idle phantasies of their own brains, & palmed them off upon the ignorant masses of Divine inspiration, or as the acts of the Deity himself. The most immoral, inhuman, unjust action and deeds have been attributed to that Being who is all Holiness himself". —Mahatma Jyotirao Phoolley. □

Ambedkarities Diary- 1983

Has many valuable information about Buddhism, Ambedkar, different legislations for the liberation of dalits, addresses of different dalit leaders, organisations, dalit journals, top officials, dalit population statistics.

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MINORITIES FEEL THREATENED IN INDIA

(Our correspondent)

Bangalore : After the Andhra & Karnataka Assembly elections we have the clear evidence of the dalits & minorities voting against Indira Gandhi's party for the first time. The opinion expressed by the Catholic Bishops Conference of India and many Muslim organisations, apart from the 45 Muslim MPs, has further confirmed that the minorities are feeling very much insecure in India. Parameshwara Rao, president of the Ambedkarities Conference, Hyderabad, whose organisation had backed the Telgu Desam leader, N. T. Rama Rao, told us here that in AP at least 20% of the dalits had for the first time voted against Mrs. Gandhi. In Karnataka, Muslims voted against Muslims set up by the Congress but proved their secular spirit by voting for the Hindus set up by the Opposition parties. So too the dalits voted against the Congress. So much so in AP, near Chittoor and in Karnataka, near Mysore, the high caste Hindus burnt alive many dalits in retaliation. Parameswara Rao felt that with this election, Indira Gandhi was as good as dead. The resolution passed at the CBCI meeting in Bombay clearly indicated the fears of the tiny Christian community that always stood with Indira Gandhi. Its secretary-general Bishop Thumma of Vijayawada said that "the prohibitive legislation eroding the freedom of religion on the lines of the Arunachal Pradesh Freedom of Religion Bill was being proposed by other States". (*Deccan Herald*, Jan. 11) He also referred to the Bills endangering trusts and endowments, harassment of missionaries and refusal to extend residential permits. Christians have won the hearts of the poor suffering people of this country by their great service particularly to the Untouchables and tribals. Mother Teresa won the Nobel award for such a service in India. But the Ruling Class of India, which sent its children only to Christian schools (Mrs. Gandhi and her children were educated in Christian schools), seldom had appreciation for the good work. Hence it was constantly troubling Christians through all sorts of pinpricks and the resolution passed by the CBCI, which rarely antagonises the Govt., sums up the feelings of minorities. The bid to ban cow slaughter which had the blessings of Mrs. Gandhi, is yet another proof the Govt's anti-Christian attitude. But what is more surprising was the speech made the pro-Congress Muslim leader Moulana Asad Madni, also a Congress member of Parliament and president of the Jamat Ulma, a pro-Congress organisation of Muslims. Inaugurating the 24th session of his party in Bombay on Jan. 14, he said "Muslims & other minorities in India were feeling insecure even after 36 years of independence due to communal clashes taking place in the country". (*Indian Express* Jan. 15). We could understand other Muslims making such a statement. But Madni is a close confidant of Mrs. Gandhi. Not only Christians and Muslims, even Sikhs have been also feeling insecure. That every Sikh was checked before entering Delhi during the Asiad proved that Sikhs are no exception. It is insecurity that made them demand Khalistan. Meanwhile, we have received reports of the RSS biggest show of force at Poona on Jan. 15. □

GANDHI FILM DISTURBS DALITS AND MUSLIMS

(Our correspondent)

Bangalore: *The Gandhi film, the much-publicised production of Richard Attenborough has considerably disturbed our dalit & Muslim comrades. Though the film is yet to be released inside India & as such the internal reaction is yet to be gauged, we have received a number letters from our readers in US and UK stating that the film has totally ignored Dr. B. R. Ambedkar— considered the greatest Indian after the Buddha and one who played a notable role in securing "independence" to India. The film has also wounded the sentiments of the Muslims by picturing Jinnah, the greatest Muslim leader of the undivided India, in a bad light. They have sent us clippings of the film review from the prestigious London Times, New Statesman, New York Times, In These Times etc. all of which are critical of the film. A dalit intellectual from UK says dalits there are very much disturbed on seeing in the film. While they consider the British people as very fair and impartial in their judgement, they have started doubting the integrity of Attenborough who did the greatest injustice to Dr. Ambedkar, one who actually saved the life of Gandhi by signing the "Poona Pact" that amounted to a stab on the back of India's vast dalits. To save Gandhi's life Ambedkar sacrificed the interests of the dalits and this fact was recorded by history. But Attenborough ignored history itself to please India's Ruling Class which financed the film. While Gandhi did hardly anything to liberate the dalits, they say, he was busy helping the Brahmins and finally handed over the country to them. After doing them so much of service, it was finally a Brahmin organisation that employed a Poona Brahmin (Nathuram Godse) to kill Gandhi whom this very Brahmine hailed as the "Mahatma". This*

"Mahatma" must be exposed, another angry dalit writes from London. According to the New Statesman, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi herself "vetted the screenplay as part of her bedroom reading and saw the film before the final exciting". The review is a brutal indictment of the film and also the "Mahatma". As for Muslims less said the better. "Jinnah is cast as a political opportunist... hinting that terrorism was a special Muslim preserve". Pat Aufderhide, the reviewer in the In These Times, concludes: Even lacking vitality, though may yet ignite passions if Muslims contest the film's choice of the villains". We have been echoing through the DV what Ambedkar used to so often say that Gandhi was not even an honest enemy of dalits. The Gandhi film has confirmed this. India's middle-class messiah is dead. When alive, just to keep him in poverty, the Govt spent millions of rupees. This complaint against Gandhi was voiced by no less a person than one who was a close lieutenant of Gandhi: Mrs. Sarojini Naidu. It is no wonder therefore that Gandhism has become another word for hypocrisy & corruption as beautifully represented by the Gandhi capped Congressmen. Compare Gandhi with Mao. The latter's teachings have brought about Revolution in China but the former's brought about counter-revolution. Today, Gandhism is the official philosophy of India's Fascist party, RSS. Whatta guy, that Gandhi !!!

Letters to Editor :

Dr. M. M. Thomas, ex-president, World Council of Churches, Thiruvella, Kerala : Whenever I get DV I read the editorial and other items with great interest. I appreciate the manner in which you carry on the struggle.

Y. P. Chibbar, executive-secretary, People's Union for Civil Liberties, New Delhi : We are aware that most of the oppressed in the field of civil liberties today are the poor who are mostly dalits, the OBCs and Muslims and women. Therefore, we would like to develop fraternal relations with you.

Dr. Barbara R. Joshi, New York : The Dec. 16-31 DV carried a letter from N. Srinivasan, Coimbatore, who spoke of the Black poets. There are now several small but influential journals published by socially conscious Black intellectuals, including one called *The Black Scholar*. It features the works of radical Black poets and recently it included articles on other oppressed peoples. Since Arun Kamble, dalit poet from Bombay, had also expressed interest in Black poets, I have sent to *The Black Scholar* a letter introducing the crisis facing India's Untouchables, plus a translation of sample dalit poems. Those interested may write to Conyus, Poetry Editor, *Black Scholar*, PO Box-7106, San Francisco, California- 94120- USA. Most Black Americans still have limited knowledge of Untouchables, the only term they are likely to recognise. However, I am sure these two massive dalit groups do indeed have much to share that will benefit all. So it is worth exploring all possible ways of direct communication.

D. Santokhee, Mauritius : My visit to

India was successful. I met lot of people working for social change. And after meeting you, I think I reached the top. The problems of low caste Hindus here are the same as you face. RSS is growing here. I have talked to many friends here about DV, all of whom evinced interest as it fully reflects our feelings.

C. Madhavan, Trivandrum : "The Agony of Being a Muslim" (DV Jan. 15) is not the one felt by Muslims alone. It is the position of all dalits also. In fact I felt very strongly after witnessing the recent anti-Muslim riots here.

N. Elangovan, Cuddalore, TN : "Devadasi System (DV Dec. 16) was a fantastic piece. You have rightly exposed how Hinduism is exploiting the dalit women. Will *Dalit Kural* bring out all these in Tamil ?

V. Munivenkatappa, BDO, Siddapur, NK dt., Karnataka : The Pejawara Swamy who promised to do something to revoke my suspension ordered by the ex-CM Gundu Rao, has also changed his mind. The Pejawara Swamy's drama was to prevent my threatened conversion to Islam. Dalit Sangharsha Samiti is doing its best to help me. Will the new Karnataka Govt. do something ?

Prof Abul Qasem, Calcutta : Indira Gandhi has no time to go to Meerut, 50 KMs away from Delhi, but she had time to go to Breznev's funeral in Moscow. From there she dashed to Paunar to be present at the funeral of Vinoba Bhave, the "Sarkarai Sant", who was more concerned with the holy cow than the butchering of human beings at Moradabad, Meerut etc.

Mansoor Quereshi, Toronto, Canada : Your editorial on the Devadasis provoked

me to write this. This inhuman practice is the outcome of the basic structures of the Hinduism. How can we perceive of a god who divides humans into graded castes and the rest condemned as Untouchables? The editorial quotes Mrs. Suniti Pungaliya saying that the Muslim "invaders" should be thanked for destroying this beastly Devadasi system. But she indeed has to thank Islam for that job.

Dr. Velu Annamalai, Texas, USA: Thanks for publishing (DV Jan. 16) the speech of the US delegate at the UNO, Mrs. Jeane Kirkpatrick, telling the Indian delegation to shut up and take care of the Untouchables and their problems. It is indeed a great victory for us. Now there is a Human Rights organisation in Washington doing a to god job.

Krishna Kumar, Gen. Secretary, Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad, Trivandrum: I find the DV very interesting. We would like to know more about the activities of the Dalit Sahitya Akademy.

Lalit Patel & Babubhai Parmar, Bombay: We find DV very useful. We will introduce it to our friends. We are publishing *Manthan*, a cyclostyled bimonthly in Gujarati. Glad to inform more and more dalit comrades are coming under the influence of Ambedkar.

S. V. Goudar, Bijapur: As a college lecturer I get lot of opportunities to visit villages under the NSS camp. We find no change in the conditions of dalits even after 35 years of "independence".

Dr. Aruna Rajgopal, Madurai: I was deputed to Zambia where I had an opportunity to meet our Black counterparts. We have to establish close links with them and seek international help to liberate the dalits. I congratulate DV for taking up this noble mission.

Dr M. Vasu, Trivandrum: We are all set to form a DV Readers Forum and a'so taking steps to bring out a Malayalam edition of DV. I will stand by you in your struggle.

G. D. Chamber, Urapar, Jullundar dt.: We are ready to render any service to DV.

A. Naranaswamy, Bharat Electronics, Bangalore: There are 4 major public-sector units here employing 70,000 people of which 9,000 are dalits. But they are divided between 4 trade unions - INTUC, AITUC, CITU, HMS. These unions use our people as servants without giving them any key position in the unions. I lost my increment for participating in a strike in which I led the procession as directed by the union. But the union did not stand by me. Dalits are badly let down by the unions also because these unions are also headed by high caste men. In discriminating against dalits both the management and unions are one. Many a time it is this union office-bearers who instigate the management to take action against dalits. In HAL, Meshram had to suffer at the hands of both the management and union. He is now transferred to the Kanpur unit. I call upon dalits in all industries to form their own trade unions.

Asgharali Engineer, Bombay: We are reproducing your editorial, "Agony of Being A Muslim", in our *Bohra Chronicle*.

Mrs Stella Faria, Bangalore: DV deserves all praise for its bold editorials. "The Agony of Being a Muslim," and "Three Cheers to Andhra and Karnataka", are very striking and bring to view the self-perpetuating dynastic attitude of the Ruling Class under the shallow guise of uplifting the downtrodden. □

Editorial

[Contd. from page 2]

bedkar Era (21st century) begins we must be ready to take over. We attach the highest importance to this unity. And through the DV we had been repeatedly advocating this. Now that Maisaheb had also blessed our move we could go with greater speed. The response was no doubt good. However, we must keep out the politicians including the Marxist brand. We could make use of them. We had to be very careful about RSS and its agents which were ever ready to thwart such a unity. Beware ! RSS had started worshipping Ambedkar. Maisaheb had agreed to tour the Southern States to unite the persecuted sections. We hope our readers and reps of these three sections would offer concrete plans on this. The powerful Dravida Kazhagam (Maisaheb recalled her meeting Periyar EVR at Madras when Ambedkar was on way to Sri Lanka) could invite Maisaheb to Madras and arrange a joint meeting of the dalits and OBCs. Since the Tamil dalits were definite to rally round her, the DK could make use of her leadership to bring about a unity between these two sections perpetually at war with each other. Wherever Maisaheb went, she was told that dalits were without a leader. True. This was the position in India as a whole. She had to fill up this void. No doubt she was bit late. But better late than never. Being a woman she had the additional attraction to the females — the dalits among the dalits. As she was born in high caste (Saraswat Brahmin from Konkan), the heartless Hindu might not be as hostile to her as they were to Ambedkar, an Untouchable. Plus she had the advantage of being a non-political figure. Being the wife of Ambed-

kar she would command the same respect as her late husband. Muslims & Christians were ready to rally round her. The OBCs would not lag behind if she took up their cause through an agitation on Mandal Report. Already she had the powerful Dalit Panthers to provide her the organisational support. She had a razor-sharp mind and every qualification to take the plunge. South should be her battle ground. And we assure her our most sincere support. So we have all-round sunshine. She has the right philosophy. Sincerity. Enthusiasm. Dedication. Where there is will there is a way. Money's a problem but we need not worry where there is sincerity. Only thing is she had to go on tour, picking up honest, committed youth. Stir up our stinking social setup & launch the class-caste struggle. There might be some disunity among the dalits but unity would come only when there was a struggle. The still waters of the social pool must be disturbed — deliberately. Once the struggle begins, unity will come automatically. Will Maisaheb get ready and go ?

Read

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REPUBLIC DAY OBSERVED AS BLACK DAY

Bangalore : *The Republic Day (Jan. 26) was observed as Black Day by thousands of dalits & Muslims & others in Bangalore under the leadership of Maisaheb Ambedkar. She attended the R. Day ceremony at the Sid-dharta Nagar, a Tamil-speaking slum, the biggest in Bangalore, and after walking through the dirty bylanes she addressed a public meeting wherein she waved the black flag and gave a call to dalits, minorities and OBCs that the R. Day and "Independence" day should be always observed as Black Day as over 80% population of India is yet to attain freedom from the bondage of Aryan invaders. R. Elumali, Dalit Cultural Front convener from Madras, presided. Thousands of dalits and Muslims, other oppressed sections who gathered cheered her lustily as she held a Black Flag and waved it before the huge audience. She was garlanded by burqa-clad Muslim women. D. M. Thimmarayappa, convener of the Karnataka Dalit Action Committee, A. Narayanaswamy, dalit leader from Bharat Electronics, also spoke on the significance of observing R. Day as Black Day and waved Black Flags. Later Veeramani, general secretary of the Dravida Kazagam, who came from Madras met Maisaheb and extended full support and invited her to TN. Elumalai also had a separate meeting with her and she urged him to organise the dalits of TN to come*

under the banner of Dalit Panthers. On Jan. 25, she visited Kolar Gold Fields and had a tremendous welcome. The public meeting that she addressed went late into the night. She visited Ambedkar Medical and Eng. Colleges here. □

THE AGONY OF BEING A MUSLIM

by V.T. Rajshekar

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