

# DALIT VOICE

[*The Voice of The Persecuted Minorities*]

Adviser : Dr. Mulk Raj Anand

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## ANTI-BRAHMINISM AS AN IDEOLOGY

“Anti-Brahminism” may not be a perfect, systematic ideology but it undoubtedly is a powerful philosophy which once moved and still moves millions of people not only among Hindus in India but others as well. Since some urban-bred people cannot so much appreciate the importance and significance of this most powerful indigenous ideology, an effort is being made here to go into its different aspects. How anti-Brahminism, a negative concept, can be an ideology, a philosophy? It is being described so far want of any other appropriate name. When Brahminism can be a philosophy, why not anti-Brahminism? Suffice it to say that the revolt against the domination of Brahmins & even those non-Brahmins immediately below them in the Hindu caste hierarchy by those who have suffered at the hands of Brahminism has played and continues to play a great role in shaping the Indian society and politics. Anti-Brahminism has been therefore the central theme of all protest movements in India from centuries—from the days the Aryans invaded India. However, anti-Brahminism cannot be confined merely to a revolt against the Brahmins alone but all those non-Brahmins also

who subscribe to their value system. Brahminism is, therefore, more dangerous than Brahmins. Because, the Brahmins themselves have been the victims of Brahminism. From the Buddha, the greatest enemy of Brahminism, Basaveshwara, Guru Nanak, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Dayananda Saraswati, to Mahatma Phule, Narayana Guru, Ambedkar, Lohia and Periyar E. V. Ramaswamy, all of them rank among India's most virulent crusaders against Brahminism. Therefore, anti-Brahminism can be considered as the most indigenous among the different secular ideologies of India. Social or political leaders can ignore this ideology only at their peril. What gives teeth to anti-Brahminism is the caste system which is a specific Indian phenomenon. Caste is the curse of Hinduism with its ascending scale of reverence and descending degree of contempt. Anti-Brahminism believes that the caste structure with the Brahmin standing at the apex of this deathless

pyramid is the root cause of exploitation, inhumanity and slavery in India. The Brahmin domination has the religious sanction & the Brahmin hereditary priesthood plays a central role in perpetuating Brahminism. Therefore, anti-Brahminism calls for destruction of its three major institutions— the "Sacred Scriptures", the caste system and the priestcraft. This is the quintessence of its philosophy. Including the Brahmin every Hindu has been the victim of Brahminism, particularly the Untouchables, many of whom have sought refuge in other religion to escape its tyranny. Women, including women among Brahmins, have suffered silently from the barbarity of Brahminism. Even Vivekananda and Gandhi, two of its greatest pillars, were forced to speak out against the havoc caused by Brahminism. M. N. Roy and Nehru both Brahmins, had also lent powerful support to anti-Brahminism. Democracy and caste cannot coexist, they said. Anti-Brahminism has thus become the most powerful ideology that did not fail to move a single social, cultural literary and political movement in India from the days of Jainism, over 2,500 years ago. Every political party was rocked by it. Even the Communist parties are not spared and many splits have taken place because the Indian Marxists refused to heed the pulls of this ideology. Mahatma Phule of Maharashtra is considered the father of this anti-Brahminism in recent times. Author of several books on this philosophy and the founder of the powerful Satya Shodak Movement, he described *Manusmriti* as an unholy book. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, an Untouchable, was mainly inspired by Phule who belonged to a (gardner) backward caste. Anti-Brahmi-

nism also became the ideology of a powerful social, cultural and political movement for realising the Dravidian identity of Tamils. Founded in 1944, by Periyar E. V. Ramaswamy, the DMK of Annadurai came as an offshoot of DK in 1949. EVR improved upon this philosophy and ridiculed the Hindu gods and the Hindu religion itself. Hinduism (its correct name is Brahminism), he said, is founded by Brahmins to exploit the poor, illiterate, ignorant masses. The abolition of Brahmin priestly services was his basic programme. Ambedkar follows a similar line of thinking. He says the caste deadens, paralyses and cripples the people. It has ruined the Hindus and has destroyed, demoralised and devitalised the Hindu society. Ranked among the greatest thinkers and philosophers of modern India, Ambedkar in his innumerable books, has given a call to free every woman & man from the thralldom of "sacred scriptures". He also considered the priest as the real villain of Brahminism. Both Ambedkar and EVR dubbed Brahminism as a reactionary philosophy. What did anti-Brahminism achieve? By reviving the glorious cultural and social traditions of the original inhabitants of India before the Aryan invasion, it helped them to find their roots, get a self-identity, a self-respect. Phule, Ambedkar and EVR said *shudras* and *ati-shudras* (Untouchables) with tribals were the original inhabitants of India before the Aryan invasion. They had enough historical evidence. To condemn the Brahmin as a stranger in Tamil Nadu has become a handy weapon of the non-Brahmin to beat the Brahmin with, but the popularising of the myth of their (Contd. on page 11)

## FRESH ANTI-CHRISTIAN RIOTS IN T. N.

(Our correspondent)

Madras : 'Kill Christians & Muslims to promote Hinduism'. This is the dictum of RSS. And this high caste Hindu fascist party has been systematically implementing its principle & spreading its influence with great speed unmindful of the serious damage it is doing to the society. Since such a hate Muslim & Christian slogans help divert the attention of the poor masses from issues to non-issues, the Big Business pours funds to such RSS counter-revolutionary activities. RSS staged its latest anti-Christian riots at Nagercoil, the hqrs. town of the Kanya Kumari dt. on the southern tip of India, with great vigour from Feb. 11-14, in the name of holding the second "Hindu Unity Conference". DV readers may recall that it was exactly last year, soon after concluding the first 'Hindu Unity Conference', KK dt. was caught in India's worst-ever anti-Christian bloody riots killing six poor Christian fishermen. Hundreds of khaki-clad *chaddi* party boys have been brought to this district to attack Christians in the name of uniting Hindus. RSS has been nourishing this dt. bringing funds from North India given by the rich businessmen, whipping up anti-Christian hatred among poor backward class Hindus. The one argument that RSS uses with great effect is that in the latest 1981 census the Christian population of the district has exceeded that of the Hindus & this proves that the church is bent upon carving out a Christustan out of the strategic southern tip of India by resorting to largescale conversions. The TN govt. headed by Chief Minister MGR, who is a puppet in the hands of Brahmins, thought of making use of the RSS to its political advantage, particularly to finish the powerful Dravida Kazaghham of Periyar EVR. But actually RSS started eating into his own party, made the MGR govt. unpopular. It is this

forced the Govt to come out with a strong indictment of the RSS role in the Feb. 13 Nagercoil anti-Christian riots. The TN Finance Minister making a statement in the State Assembly here on Feb. 15 admitted that the riots were "planned & instigated by fanatical elements like the RSS". This is the first time the TN govt. is openly admitting the RSS role in KK dt. And the *Hindu*, always a symathiser of RSS, rarely publishes anything critical of the RSS. But surprisingly in its issue of Feb. 16 it carried a three-column story of the Assembly proceedings criticising the RSS. From this we can make out the seriousness of the situation. While we are yet to receive reports from our Nagercoil dalit contacts, the Govt. version given in the Assembly itself is very alarming. The Minister said hundreds of RSS activists had gathered at the Hindu College grounds on Feb. 13 despite the ban order. The Govt. banned the conference after receiving definite reports that the RSS was planning a major attack on the Christians, many churches. Largescale arms and ammunition was also collected for this purpose. The crowd exceeded 10,000. And RSS leaders were instigating the innocent crowd to defy the ban. Some leaders were heard shouting that "we want religious freedom to destroy other religions". It is this cry that alarmed the police and it decided to stop the growing might of RSS. CPM, CPI, DMK, ADMK, Muslim League and all sections of the House greeted the Govt decision to crush the RSS fascists. □

## WHY THE R.S.S. WORKED FOR INDIRA GANDHI IN DELHI ELECTIONS ?

(Our correspondent)

Bangalore : *A. B. Vajpayee's resignation as the president of the Bharatiya Janata Party, following his party's defeat in the recent Delhi elections, has generated lot of speculation in the Press. Of this the most important is that Vajpayee is sought to be*

ousted by the RSS, the father of the BJP, for his "secular, progressive outlook which have won him support from dalits, Muslims etc." Added to this comes the *Times of India* editor Girilal Jain's signed article (Feb. 16) revealing that the BJP got defeated in Delhi because the RSS worked for Indira Gandhi ! Yet another propaganda is that Vajpayee withdrew his resignation because he won his way in the BJP executive meeting at Jaipur that snubbed RSS. All this and many more stuff are sold to the newspaper readers who are ever ready to believe whatever the newspapers say. We in India 'believe' what we want to & only that what is in our interest. We have in this country what are called as opinion-makers whose sole job is to feed this manufactured opinion to the consumers. Fortunately, their tribe just does not exceed 5% of India's vast population. Thank god, over 90% of the people can't read the newspapers. Yet another speculation is that Vajpayee will form his own party with the support of Charan Singh. All sorts of cock-and-bull stories are sold. And the newspaper readers, so much interested in political gossip, devour this nonsense with so much glee. The whole problem of India is this "educated" people. Not only they create all the problem, they are a problem unto themselves. Hence the need to educate the "educated". Be that as it may, we could make out the RSS and its agents in

the Press are at great pains to sell the idea that Vajpayee is being edged out by the hardcore in the RSS. What do they mean by this ? RSS may be bad but Vajpayee is a good boy and loved by the people. Such a propaganda aims at projecting Vajpayee so that the party he heads becomes more acceptable to the masses & then captures power after Indira Gandhi. But top leaders of the RSS tell us that Vajpayee is the blue-eyed boy of the RSS. The whole drama enacted by the pro-RSS press that Vajpayee is good and RSS is bad is sheer humbug. This well-orchestrated propaganda is done with a view to projecting Vajpayee's image so that he becomes the next Prime Minister. If the BJP is different from RSS, why Vajpayee has not so far publicly condemned RSS ? Why he has not so far said BJP must cut off its RSS connections ? Why he has not weeded out the top RSS leaders from his party executive ? Why he has not so far refused to be dictated by Nagpur ? Why he has not stopped attending RSS *shakas* in Delhi ? On the other hand we have any number of statements from top RSS leaders saying that BJP is the child of the RSS. Paul V. Parakal writing in CPI organ, *New Age*, (Feb. 20) says Vajpayee's "resignation is merely the outward manifestation of the growing rift within the BJP". But where is the chance for any rift within the BJP, completely con-

trolled by the RSS which is nothing but a fascist organisation? To have a rift there must be some scope for differences, some discussions. But RSS does not believe in any democracy. Everything is settled at Nagpur and dictated. It has a clear-cut ideology : class-caste dictatorship. How could there be any rift under such a situation? Amid all these speculations, the statement of Girilal Jain, considered in journalistic circles sympathetic to RSS, (remember his unusual front-page signed article when the Moradabad anti-Muslim riots broke out, accusing the Muslims) that RSS worked for Indira Gandhi during the recent Delhi elections has lot of significance. He says a substantial section of the RSS refused to support BJP candidates. "The fact of the rift is indisputable. In constituency after constituency, RSS volunteers stayed away from the BJP election campaign. They just did not show up ... They are believed to have worked for the Congress." This may come as a shock to many RSS admirers but not to us. Because RSS insiders tell us that RSS & Indira Gandhi are two sides of the same coin. They say that lately RSS has come to realise that Indira Gandhi is doing the job that it wanted to do in a much better way. They also say that through Vinoba Bhave & the Shankaracharyas the RSS & Mrs. Gandhi have come closer. The Hindu leaders have also convinced the RSS that any amount of its efforts would not bring it to power as RSS has antagonised the two most important segments, namely dalits & Muslims. Hence instead of making this futile bid why not back the winning horse? The Vajpayee-RSS rift story advertised by the Press is said to be part of this game.

By making RSS look bad in the eyes dalits & Muslims, such a propaganda only helps to swing the votes in favour of Mrs. Gandhi. Whole thing is stage-managed. Hence it was RSS that asked Vajpayee to resign & then withdraw so that Indira Gandhi would shine in contrast. After all the aim of RSS is to establish a high caste-rich (propertied) class dictatorship. If Indira could do this job with greater ease why not support her? This is the latest thinking in the RSS inner circles. Dalits & persecuted minorities could be easily hoodwinked by this game. Delhi results did show the way.

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A C.P.I. PUBLICATION

## THE ANATOMY OF MEERUT RIOTS

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## DALIT LEADER EXPOSES THE PEJAWARA SWAMI

[B. Basavalingappa, Ex-Minister, Karnataka]

*Thank Dr. A. M. Rajashekaraiah, Head of the Department of Political Science, Karnataka University, Dharwar, for inviting me to present a paper on "Politics of development of weaker sections" on behalf of the Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Memorial Chair. Edmund*

Burke said "the people crushed by law & religion have no hopes but from power; if law and religion are enemies to them, they will be enemies to law and religion". In other countries, the status of a person is decided on economic factor but in India it is decided on birth. The Hindu society is graded into innumerable castes, based on the descending order of humiliation & contempt. The Hindu religion is never known to be different from the Hindu society, consisting of thousands of castes with clear-cut compartment of exclusive and isolated living. As long as one remains a Hindu, he has to accept the caste hierarachy throughout his life & suffer the ignominy or enjoy the honour. The status of a person is decided at the birth. There is no instance in history of any country that a people or a crowd of people led the opinion. The opinion is engineered by a political or a religious leader and is made to be accepted by the people, and the people in turn will be prepared to act in pursuance of the opinion. If the leader is good and interested in the well-being of all the people more meaningful results will follow. The general happiness of all the people can be achieved by the good leadership. If economic and social imbalances and the status of the weaker sections continue, the natural inference is that there has not been a good leadership. It can be presumed that the persons who suffer the indignities of the society have not been allowed to occupy the

positions of power to solve their own problem. This idea of leading the opinion is more exploited in the religious field than in other fields. The religious leaders, particularly of Hindu religion, have tried to maintain the division of the society into castes and sub-castes. These religious leaders belong only to higher castes compelling the obedience of low (poor) castes. There is no instance of a person belonging to a low caste becoming a religious leader and who is accepted also by the higher (richer) castes. A low caste man cannot enjoy the status of a religious leader in Hindu society, as he is not entitled to compel reverence from the stronger sections. In this field also the weaker sections cannot have the privilege of leading the opinion. The weaker sections are subject to social indignities. They are made to work without adequate pay inspite of the constitutional provisions to give them a living wage. They form nearly 40% of the population. They have continued to live the same life without any change in their minds to live a better life by asserting their positions. They have compromised with the prevailing inhuman conditions and situations for generations. And in short, they have resigned themselves to the given situations and have drained themselves of their self-respect and human values. They have learnt to behave like a sheep which moves in a flock, and which has no choice for rational thinking and free life. There are other inhuman customs inflicted on

the weaker sections to drain off their self-respect. The custom of dedicating the daughters of the poor for prostitution has a religious sanction, even though law prohibits such customs. With all these social handicaps it is impossible to think of a leader to lead the opinion on behalf of the weaker sections and to fight for their legitimate rights. We come across some inspired individuals of the stronger sections of the society taking up the cause of the weaker sections to secure for them the freedom, liberty and security of life and happiness. These individuals are also in small number. All such individuals have preached against the perpetrated injustices on the weaker sections. But there has been ample evidence to show that they try to get collective bargain out of their stand and yet retaining their status in a caste or a community in which they have taken birth. In other words, these inspired individuals expressed compassion, kindness for the sufferings of the weaker sections, but yet retain their pride

in enjoying the privileges attached to castes of the stronger sections. The stand and preachings of the Pejawar Swamy of Udipi is one such instance. He proclaimed that there should not be discrimination in the treatment among the Hindus, irrespective of their births and all persons to be treated equal. He visited several localities in several places of Karnataka where these Untouchables lived and said they were all equals & they should enjoy all the benefits of Hindu society. But he was not prepared to promote all those dalits to the caste to which he belonged to exhibit the sincerity of his preachings. He is not even prepared to convert the people of his caste to admit all these dalits into the fold of his caste. He is not even prepared to give up the post of the head of the Mutt, in case the people of his caste never approved of his stand. This is an example of a paradoxical behaviour of the stronger sections of the Hindu society. □

**A GANDHIAN STRUGGLE  
BY THE VICTIMS OF  
BARODA RIOTS**

by Dr. J. S. Bandukwala  
Reader in Physics, MS University,  
founder, Young Muslims Action  
Committee, Baroda.

Write to : Bhanu Adhavary, president,  
Gujarat Vishamata Nirmulan Samiti —  
B-5 Kedar Apts., Behind H. L. Commerce  
College, Ahmedabad-380 009  
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## ANDHRA CM WINS BATTLE AGAINST GODS

Hyderabad: *Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. T. Rama Rao of the Telugu Desam party has won his battle against the gods & their creators. The Kanchi Shankaracharya echoing the opinion of the entire Brahmin community of India had issued a statement opposing NTR's order to the famed Tirupati temple, housing India's richest god, Venkateswara, to deposit its vast funds in govt. treasury. The executive of the temple trust had earlier met at Madras and had the audacity to defy the govt. order. The Kanchi Acharya who normally speaks for the entire Brahmins of India, in his statement said which by implication meant that the gods cannot serve the poor but only the Brahmins. "No doubt food and water should be provided for the poor. But it is a secular purpose & the expenditure thereon should be met by the govt. from its own funds and not from the temple funds." (Hindu Feb. 27). Every "national daily" of India had prominently featured this statement thereby implying that Hindus of India do not like any govt. utilise the Tirupati temple funds or any temple money to provide water and food for the poor. They are right, because under the Hindu religion there is no connection between its gods and the poor.*

Fully sensing this danger from the "gods of earth", NTR appointed some of his party legislators on the Tirupati temple board which promptly reversed the executive's earlier decision. But the board did not give a blank cheque. It put several conditions to release the funds. E. V. Chinniah, editor of the *Prajabhandu*, Nellore, dalit leader of AP and a noted in an editorial (Feb. 15) has called upon NTR to "Rob the gods to feed the poor":- "Our gods are very wealthy. They have crores of rupees in their coffers in addition to precious jewellery worth crores on their stony bodies. They marry their wives once in every year in a very luxurious way involving millions of rupees. The Tirupati temple has over Rs. 300 crores lying idle in its bank accounts solely enjoyed by its corrupt priests. The example set by AP govt. should be followed by other States. Dalits and other persecuted sections must mount pressure on the govt to "rob the Gods to feed the poor" as E. V. Chinniah put it. □

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## Letters to Editor :

*Homer A. Jack*, Secretary-General, World Conference On Religion and Peace, New York : May your Voice continue strong.

*D. David*, Movement for the Protection of Human Rights of Marginalised Communities, Vellore, TN : We have invited Savita Ambedkar to tour TN for a month to start the TN unit of the Dalit Panthers. We need your support.

*D. S. Chinnadorai*, National Gen. Secretary, YMCA's of India, New Delhi : We like your crusading journal.

*Gobind Mokhoty*, Advocate, President, Peoples Union for Democratic Rights, New Delhi : Shame that even after so many years of Independence the minorities remain persecuted.

*Sunil Bhattacharya*, Gen. Secretary, Indian Radical Humanist Assn., New Delhi : Share your experience in such wonderful work with us and we together plan our activities for creating the pre-conditions for a free and better life for mankind. The 5-day study camp of the IRHA was inaugurated by me at Meerut on Dec. 25. The 7th biennial conference of the IRHA was inaugurated at Meerut on Dec. 30-31 by Prof. Rajni Kothari. V. M. Tarkunde, Arun Shourie, Ramesh Awasthi, Sambasive Rao, chairman of the IRHA, spoke.

*S. D. Thirumala Rao*, Anantapur, AP : In the Feb. 16- DV, it was said that a Backward Class CM of AP, Anjiah, was removed. Anjiah is neither a BC nor Anjiah his name. He is a Reddy, his real name is T. Ramakrishna Reddy. As he worked as a factory labour, he took that name being popular in the Telengana.

*James A. Gittings*, Editor-at-Large, A. D. Magazine, New York : Keep us informed on the progress of your democratic movement.

*Anthony Hayman*, Amnesty International, London (camp Calcutta) : A membership campaign is mounted from March against political killings in 8 countries including India. Our annual report for 1982 on India has expressed concern on the use of preventive detention to arrest govt. critics, police brutalities, torture & death in custody, continued killings in various States of political activists in encounters with police. We have protested against indiscriminate arrests of DMK workers in TN, the arrest of Shamim Ahmed Khan, president of the UP Muslim League, arrest of newspaper editors in Manipur, M. Mithai and S. B. Bhushan, torture of Naxalites in AP prisons etc.

*Abdul Zakir Khan*, Kamakhya Nagar, Orissa : We want to translate the DV editorial (Jan. 1) "The Agony of Being A Muslim India", & distribute it throughout the State.

*Mrs. Ishrat Rahman*, Sultanpur, UP: We congratulate you for the daring articles in DV. We read it regularly and found it the only hope for India's oppressed.

*Dr. Md. G. Ghousuddin*, Hyderabad : I have been reading DV for the past one year and appreciate its services to fight for the rights of the poor and the oppressed. I am at your service.

*Mansa Ram*, New Delhi : I am a dalit writer and poet in Hindi. I have six works for publications and another collection of 275 cases of atrocities against dalits. Will somebody support me to publish them? Recently two "letters" of mine were published in the *Navabharat Times* demand-

ing continuation of reservation policy as long as the posts of the Shanakracharayas are reserved for the Brahmins. I had also criticised its editorial attacking MP Chief Minister Arjun Singh's decision to rename a university after Ghasidas, a famous dalit saint. When these "letters" were published, I received an unstamped, anonymous letter threatening to kill me, using all unprintable abusive language against me. I am enclosing the photocopy of my "letters" & the threatening letter to you. I need your support.

*Issac C. Tirkey*, vice-president, SC, ST Welfare Council, W. Bengal, Calcutta : The 10th all-India conference of SC/STs, OBCs & minorities was held here on Feb. 20, 21 attended by 1,500 delegates from all over India. The public meeting attended by 10,000 was a historic event. Our people are getting confused about the need for a separate union for dalits because of the arguments advanced by the high caste people. We need to educate our people on this urgently. DV must take up this work.

*V. Munivenkatappa*, Block Development Officer, Malavalli, Karnataka : The new Govt of Karnataka reinstated and posted me here pending inquiry into my suspension for publishing my dalit poetry book, *Kendada Naduva*. The case against me is not yet dropped. I can't forget your support.

*Gail Omvedt*, Kasegaon, Maharashtra : I agree with you that there is a vital need for a united fight now against caste, religious oppression & also for dalit and women's liberation, a scientific, atheistic (*nastik*) toilers culture. Some of us in South Maharashtra have organised a Satya Shodak Sanskritik Manch on these lines. Will keep in touch in solidarity.

*Ram Vilas Paswan*, MP, New Delhi : I like DV very much & support your Voice.

*R. M. Solenki*, Ahmedabad : DV is the real Voice of all the persecuted minorities. We appreciate your efforts to unite all of them against the Ruling Class exploitation.

*I. Yunus Khan*, Ontario, Canada : I read your article in the *Crescent International* of Toronto entitled, "Upper Caste Extravaganza at Asiad in India's Sea of Poverty." That is how I came to know of the DV. I liked the article immensely. Your support of the Sikhs was in subdued tones. You should have been more bold in support of those brave, simple people. Then you did not mention that these "games" were "played" on Muslim graves and mosques. □

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Editor: Gandhian scholar N. Damodaran  
Nayar

Dismissed at the instance of RSS from  
the Gandhi Memorial for quoting from  
Morarji Desai's autobiography (page  
248) that the killer of Gandhi  
belonged to RSS

Editorial (Contd. from page 2)

Dravidian origin also gave to the Tamil non-Brahmin Hindus both an identity and a self-confidence, says E. F. Irschick. Evidences have also been found to prove that the Tamil society was free from idol-worship and caste system before the Brahminism invaded. The Indus Valley Civilisation has conclusively proved that the Aryans were not the first or the most important creators of Indian culture. Father Heras said that Tamils were the purest cultural descendants of the Indus Valley. Brahminism being a proselytising religion it savagely persecuted Jains and Buddhists and reconverted them to Hinduism, a new name given to Brahminism after the death of the Buddha. Murder and torture of Buddhists and Jains is cited by many historians. Behind the DK-DMK slogan of "Tamil for Tamilians" lies the conviction that Aryans are the aliens and non-Brahmins are the Dravidians. Anti-Brahminism has thus brought a new awakening, a new pride among the non-Brahmins, and convinced them that their poverty and suffering were due to Brahminism. The emphasis given to social revolution has made them conscious of their exploitation at the hands of Brahmins. So much so, many non-Brahmins preferred the British rule to Brahmin rule. Both Ambedkar and Periyar EVR boldly said so. It is this anti-Brahminism that drove EVR out of the Congress and made him found the Self-Respect Movement. Later, he launched an agitation for separate Dravidistan. EVR also said the so-called nationalism is nothing but Brahminism in another form. The growth of RSS, Jan Sangh (now BJP) has confirmed their fear. Lohia has contributed a

great deal to the promotion of anti-Brahminism in the Hindi heartland. Lohiaites all over India are today in the vanguard of the anti-Brahminism. It is to be noted that all the leaders of anti-Brahminism came into conflict with the Indian Left movement for ignoring the basic principles of its philosophy. All of them warned that Marxism, an alien philosophy, cannot take roots in India as long as it fails to attack Brahminism and its three pillars. Ambedkar said Brahminism and capitalism are the twin enemies of the working class and thus both must be attacked simultaneously. He criticised Dange, the lone Lenin Order winner in India, and other controlling the Communist parties as a "bunch of Brahmin boys". EVR was also critical of the Brahmin domination of the Communist parties. So too Lohia. Caste being the principal contradiction in India, its elimination should be our prime effort. One of the greatest impacts of anti-Brahminism was on education. Phule and Ambedkar launched an education drive among the low castes laying stress on anti-Brahminism in their books. Ambedkar has set up a chain of educational institutions. Both Phule and Periyar introduced anti-Brahmin interpretation to the Puranas. *Ramayana* and *Mahabahrata*, the epics, are interpreted as a fight between Brahmins and non-Brahmins. Bonfires of *Gita & Manusmriti*, which spread the poison of Brahminism, became popular. Ambedkar himself publicly burnt *Manusmriti* in 1927. Periyar entered temples and broke idols, burnt scriptures, tarred hotel name boards bearing Brahmin names, cut Brahmin tufts. His most popular programme which turned out to be a mass movement is the "self-respect

# WHY ANTI-BRAHMINISM?

marriage", which eliminates priests. He also established a powerful Press and a publishing house. Periyar will thus go down in the history of India as one of the greatest pillars of anti-Brahminism. Unfortunately, his rationalist crusades got confined to Tamil Nadu as he was not good at English or other languages. What is the inspiration behind anti-Brahminism? Search for equality and human respect. The non-Brahmins might not have secured these to their satisfaction but certainly they have at least succeeded in driving Brahmins out of political power in the whole of the South & Maharashtra where anti-Brahminism has had a tremendous impact. Ambedkar did not reject religion as such. He went over to Buddhism. But Periyar was a militant atheist. To him conversion was no solution. Ambedkar wanted to reform Hinduism but Periyar called for its destruction. Therefore, he is rightly hailed as India's first and foremost rationalist who was able to win over people of all castes including Untouchables. However, his followers later started compromising, forced by their greed for political power and thus gradually played into the hands of Brahmins. Periyar had strictly warned that Dravidian movement must be confined to cultural and social issues and should not stray into electoral politics. The followers did not heed this advice and as a result they are today well on their way to lose the battle in their war against Brahminism and hand over TN back to Brahmins. No other ideology has helped the submerged sections of India as much as anti-Brahminism. If the masses in South India are better informed, more progressive & militant than their counterparts in the North, the credit must go to this ideology. It had its impact on all other ideologies including Marxism. India's topmost Marxist, EMS Namboodiripad, has

himself admitted this in an article in the *Economic & Political Weekly* (Feb. 1979). Unfortunately, anti-Brahminism is losing its teeth in recent times because all those non-Brahmins who climbed up the ladder of life with the help of this ideology deserted, if not betrayed the movement and joined the enemy camp—thanks to Sanskritization and Westernization. The upper caste non-Brahmins particularly those belonging to the landed *shudra* castes have turned into neo-Brahmins, if not super Brahmins, and thus swelled the rank of Brahminism. Not only these beneficiaries of anti-Brahminism have been indifferent to the plight of the more oppressed group lower below the caste ladder, particularly the Untouchables, but more than that they have turned more aggressive towards them. So much so the Brahmins have started telling the Untouchables that it is not they who are committing atrocities on them but the non-Brahmins. These are the very non-Brahmin oppressors who were once in the forefront of the anti-Brahmin movement to displace the Brahmins from positions of power.... Once they occupied it driving out the Brahmins, they started imitating the Brahmins and excelled them in cruelty. This is the inherent weakness of conforming to mere "caste struggle" which makes the winner in the race to swell the ranks of the oppressors. If the army of the oppressed should not suffer defection and desertion and if it has to gain strength day by day, this purest indigenous ideology of anti-Brahminism will have to be suitably amended to combine "class-struggle," the Marxian concept, "with caste struggle". A happy welding of Marxism with anti-Brahminism which we had described as "class-caste struggle" or "Indian Marxism", can alone bring us the desired result. □

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