

# DALIT VOICE

[The Voice of the Persecuted Minorities]

Vol. 1

SEPT. - 1 - 1981

No. 6

EDITORIAL

## REFORM OR REVOLUTION ?

Ever since conversions started bringing sleepless nights to communal Hindus, we have been hearing about the Shankaracharyas' sudden realisation that Hindu society needs correction. The RSS executive at a crisis session in Delhi on July 11 & 12 came out with a 12-point plan to reform Hindu religion such as opening of bhajan centres in untouchable colonies, supply of musical instruments and books to conduct prayers, inter-dining, etc. On Sept. 6 a national level meeting is fixed in Delhi.

The RSS conducted an expensive conference at Meenakshipuram attended by Vajpayee and its drummer boys. Chief Minister MGR attended a temple dinner for "Harijans". The Kanchi Kamakoti Swami, Pejawara Swami and Subramanian Swami have come out with different schemes "to retain Harijans in Hindu fold". Even a secular party like the Cong. I has proposed a four-point programme: providing common drinking water wells, burial grounds, approach roads and shops. For the first time in the history of independent India, Hindus have started admitting that there is something wrong with their religion. One RSS leader (K R. Malkani) went to the extent of saying that the mass conversion to Islam is the biggest crisis faced by Hinduism since partition. The way the RSS boys are being made to run from house to house distributing a booklet, "Warning of Meenakshipuram", free of cost proves that the communal Hindus are in a serious crisis. Everybody that matters—from the godman Shankaracharya to the fraudman Satya Sai Baba and from Indira Gandhi to film actor MGR—is

concerned. "Heavens are falling. Therefore, Hinduism must be reformed. The need of the hour is a Vrvakananda". Reforming Hinduism is thus given the top-most priority. Preparations to this end are going on a war-footing. Even the Govt. is actively collaborating in this mission of salvaging Hinduism. We do not want to doubt the sincerity of these reformers. People like the Pejawara Swami of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and Swami Ranganathananda of the Ramakrishna Mission may genuinely feel that Hinduism needs urgent reform. Gandhi too had felt the same and did everything to reform Hinduism. And that is why he was shot dead by a fanatical Hindu. Many other reformers have come and gone. We have no objection to the Hindu reform movement launched by Hindu leaders. Who are we to object? The holes in the Hindu net made the untouchable fish to escape. Therefore the owners of the net have realised the urgent need to repair the net in their own interest. This is a natural instinct that comes to any human being. The very fact that the custodians of

Hinduism have realised the urgent need to repair their cracking, sinking boat is something great. Better late than never.

But the question is are the untouchables and tribals—the original inhabitants of India—interested in reforming Hinduism? This is the most important point that every conscious dalit will have to seriously ponder. And to such of these dalits who are in doubt at this crucial juncture what Dr. B.R. Ambedkar had said should come as a guide. "To reform the Hindu society is neither our aim nor our field of action. Our aim is to gain freedom. We have nothing to do with anything else. If we can gain our freedom by conversion, why should we shoulder the responsibility of reforming the Hindu religion? And why should we sacrifice our strength and property for that? No one should misunderstand the object of our movement as being Hindu social reform. The object of our movement is to achieve social freedom for the untouchables. It is equally true that this freedom cannot be secured without conversion". This is what Ambedkar had said on May 30 & 31, 1936 in Bombay while addressing a conference of untouchables, making his stand clear on conversion.

Is it possible to get liberation of untouchables by remaining within Hinduism? Ambedkar says such a thing is not possible. It is true that dalits want equality. Can they get equality by remaining as Hindus. Nobody has answered this question better than Ambedkar. There are two ways of achieving equality. One by remaining in the Hindu fold and another by leaving it, i.e. conversion. If equality is to be achieved by remaining in Hindu fold, mere removal of the sense of being a touchable or an untouchable will not serve the purpose. Equality can be achieved only when inter-caste dinners and marriages take place. This means Chaturvarna must be abolished and the Brahminic

religion must be uprooted. Is it possible? And if not, will it be wise to expect the equality of treatment by remaining in the Hindu religion? And can you be successful in your efforts to bring equality? Of course not. The path of conversion is far more simpler".

(This quotation is from the full text of his historic speech as published in the Maharashtra Government's special issue, Lokrajya, brought out on the Ambedkar Jayanti, dated April 16, 1981. It was translated from Marathi by Vasant Moon and originally published in the "Oppressed Indian", organ of the BAMCE-).

Can Hinduism be repaired and reformed? We are not putting this question to those who have come forward to reform it. We are not interested in talking to them. Our questions are addressed to dalits and other persecuted minorities. The same question can be put in another way: Can a leopard change its spot? No, never. Hinduism is like the leopard. There can be no Hindu without a caste. Hinduism, said Ambedkar, is the other name for caste system, the bedrock on which Hinduism is built. Untouchability is a part and parcel of Hinduism. As long as caste system is there, untouchability will not go. All these Hindu reformers are complaining only of untouchability but have no programme to abolish caste. Dalits should know that the Constitution of India as framed by Ambedkar had gone much forward than what all the Hindu reformers put together are trying to do. Please note these reformers are crying only about untouchability. But the Constitution has abolished untouchability and those practising it are ordered to be punished. Long back, in 1951, no Hindu reformer has gone to such lengths as the Constitution. In spite of such a constitutional mandate, untouchability did not go. Why? Because the Constitution has

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# WHY DALITASTAN?

(R. Elumalai, Convener, Dalit Cultural Front—Madras)

The Gujarat caste war, the Marathwada massacre of untouchables and the series of caste riots in Bihar had received wide publicity in the press. Every party tried to make political capital out of the agony of the victims. Newspapers had sent special correspondents for an on-the-spot inquiry. Every political party submitted its own report blaming the other. The Scheduled Caste Commission of the Government of India then headed by Bhola Paswan Shastri had come out with its own recommendations.

Ministers had given their own version of the incidents at Parasbigha, Dohia, Pipra etc. Editorial writers have come out with their comments. But not one has suggested a lasting solution to this recurring problem in the countryside. Fed up by the failure of the ruling class and the Government, the untouchables are finding their own solution by embracing Islam.

It is however admitted by everybody that the victims of these "caste wars" were the untouchables who both class-wise and caste-wise occupy the lowest place in India. Being the poorest of the poor, they are mostly landless agricultural labourers depending on the mercy of the landlords and the vagaries of nature. All agricultural labourers may not be untouchables but untouchables are mostly landless agricultural labourers. Since there is no machinery to implement the minimum agricultural wages, these farm hands continue to be the victims of the worst exploitation all over India. Barring perhaps Kerala, no where minimum agricultural wages are enforced. It is not possible to enforce it because these labourers are not united. And there is no political will also. Surplus labor has led to severe unemployment and this in turn to excess supply which the landlords exploit to their advantage.

Caste-wise also the untouchables form the base of the Hindu social pyramid. In every village these untouchables are segregated as part of the least publicised Indian apartheid. Their plight is worse than that of the Blacks or Negroes. So,

economically they are the weakest and socially the lowest. And yet they form a sizeable population in the countryside, particularly in Bihar and UP.

They are tolerated as long as they are meek and submissive. But once they start asserting as it happened in Gujarat Marathwada they will have to face grave consequences. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi herself admitted in Parliament recently that the killing of untouchables was because they insisted on payment of minimum wages. This was the immediate cause for the carnage all over India.

From this we can make out that under the existing scheme of land reforms agricultural labourers have no place. Even in the most radical States like Kerala and West Bengal, agricultural labourers are not benefitted by the land reforms. So much so, land reform has turned into a big joke. While the proportion of owner-cultivators declined every year, an additional 1.5 million are converted into landless labourers every year. Their number increased from 18 p.c. to 30 p.c. of the rural population between the 50s and the 60s. That means the rural areas are getting pauperised and the landless labour, mainly the untouchables, are bearing the brunt of this poverty. Even some landholding untouchables sold their lands and swelled the ranks of the army of farmhands. Official statistics confirm this.

That means these untouchables have neither the support of the Government nor the village. Everybody is hostile to them. And with the increasing awareness of their rights, it is quite possible that these

untouchables will have to face greater fury from the landlords who are fully armed with the police on their side. Therefore we expect more such Gujarat caste wars. This is the peculiar problem facing the Indian agriculture. I am really sorry to note that not a single social scientist, economist or journalist has come out with any solution to this peculiar problem faced by the Indian landless labourers even when they know full well that the Indian Government is not interested in this.

According to me under the existing agricultural system wherein we have a huge surplus of landless labourers the latter have no place in it. The surplus agricultural labourers in each village or panchayat should be shifted to the nearest urban centre and provided jobs in small-scale industries or absorbed elsewhere.

Such a shifting of population serves two important purposes. Firstly, the over crowding on the land will be reduced and the land owner will consequently be forced to go in for mechanisation. Farming also will become more economical and productive. Pressure on land will also be reduced. Secondly, such a shifting of population of agricultural labourers (mostly untouchables) would remove the very source of constant friction in the countryside.

In every village untouchables are in a minority. Therefore their life is always in danger. That is why in almost all villages wherein they have been subjected to atrocities by the upper castes they have fled to the nearest urban centre. Many a time they don't return. This happened in the 1978 Marathwada caste riots on the issue of renaming a university after Dr. Ambedkar. Hundreds of Dalits who had fled from their native villages have not yet returned. Reports from Pipra also say that the untouchables had fled, never to return. This is happening all over India. Urban slums are full of untouchables, all

migrated from villages in search of jobs and safety.

But it will be good if an organised effort is made to promote the migration of the untouchables from the villages to the cities where, in the urban anonymity, they are likely to find a more congenial social atmosphere. Reports from Pipra referred to a demand for Dalitastan. It says that this demand was voiced by no less a person than Jagjivan Ram, India's top most leader of untouchables, after visiting Pipra village. Ram Dhan, another Dalit leader, also had made a similar demand for Dalitastan. The demand is gaining ground.

Immediately after the 1978 Marathwada massacre of untouchables, the Karnataka Dalit Action Committee, had come out with a demand for a separate settlement and it is gaining momentum. This demand is not new because as early as 1942 Dr. B. R. Ambedkar had himself come out with such a demand though he called it "separate settlement" for untouchables. Since then the problem of untouchables has got very much aggravated and caste riots have become the order of the day. We are glad that the Gujarat caste war has made leaders of untouchables to demand a separate Dalitastan. Pending such a separate homeland we have to work for the destruction of the existing social structure in the village by seeking the migration of untouchables from the rural to the urban centres and thus helping them to abandon their lifestyle. They have to be convinced that the rural landed gentry will never compromise with them as long as caste system remains what it is. Therefore, they have no hope in sticking to their villages.

Why atrocities against Dalits cannot be prevented? Because "majority rule" in India has become the rule of the "majority community". That is the rule of the caste Hindus. Where is the democracy in India?

The Dalits are demanding a separate State of their own not because they are

not willing to live with the caste Hindus. For the past 2500 years they had served the upper castes as their most loyal slaves and servants and even to this day they are serving in different capacities. It is the Hindus who are refusing to tolerate even the slightest progress of the untouchables and therefore it is the Hindus who have forced the untouchables to seek a separate homeland. The Dalits are not to be blamed for it.

Already India is full of little Dalitastans segregated in the outskirts of every village. What the Dalits seek is a consolidation of these ghettos into a viable unit by transfer of population. This is the only workable solution to save the Dalits from the most organised mass murder. □

### RSS, ISLAM & RATIONALISM

Yadavrao Joshi, joint general secretary of the RSS, said in Madras on Aug. 10 that Prophet Mohammed had said that Islam would vanish in 1,400 years. "Our Muslim friends should not hasten the process by reconversion. If Islam reigns the fate of democracy, socialism and secularism is sealed for ever". He held the rationalists responsible for the destruction of Hinduism. "The sustained vilification campaign against Hinduism by rationalists had destroyed the faith of the Harijans in Hinduism in TN and that paved the way for conversions", he said. □

### FISHERMEN WARN KERALA GOVT.

GOA: Matanhy Saldhana, president, National Forum for Catamaran & Country Boat Fishermen's Rights & Marine Wealth, has urged the Kerala Govt. to ban all trawling operations during fish-breeding season of monsoon and thus help lakhs of traditional fishermen of Kerala and particularly those of Trivandrum district. The Forum is shocked that the CPM Government of Kerala has begun a slander campaign against the just and peaceful movement of the poor fishermen. □

### PANTHERS ARRESTED

(Our correspondent)

Bombay: Over 130 Dalit Panthers were arrested here on July 27 for staging a protest demonstration demanding renaming of the Marathwada University after Dr. Ambedkar. Those arrested include Dorai Anbalagan, president, Dharavi unit of the Dalit Panthers. Manohar Ankush and other Panthers were arrested on the 6th floor of the secretariat for shouting slogans against the Antulay Government for its failure to implement the unanimous resolution of both the houses of the Maharashtra legislature. The Panthers also protested against the eviction of pavement and hut dwellers of Bombay during the rainy season. □

### Christians become untouchables

The Pejawara Swami has taken pledge to reconvert to Hinduism 15 Harijan Christian families at Bukkachera village in Kudair Panchayat, 15 km. from Anantapur, in AP. The Anantapur correspondent of the Hindu (22 July) says Pejawara Swamy who visited the village was "pained to find an old temple of Narasimhaswami in the Harijan colony converted into a Church". □

**HINDUS BECOME MUSLIMS:** The first report of conversion comes from Kurnool. Two caste Hindus, Balaramudi, 20, a weaver, and Yella Goud, 39, Ediga, of Joharepuram, Kurnool town, have embraced Islam changing their names to Abdullah and Yousuf Mia respectively. All members of their family have changed their names too. Similar reports from other parts of the State are also coming (Deccan Herald - Aug. 18). □

“ಮನವಿ”ರವರ ಕವನಸಂಕಲನ

“ಕೇಳು ಜಗಮಾದಿಗಹೊಲೆಯ”

ಪುಟ 52 ಎಂ. ಓ. ಮಾಡಬಹುದು ಬೆಲೆ : 6 ರೂ.

(ಅಂಚೆ ಮೆಚ್ಚು ಉಚಿತ) ಪ್ರತಿಗಳಿಗೆ ಬರೆಯಿರಿ

ಪ್ರಕಾಶಕರು : ಸಿದ್ಧಾರ್ಥ ಗ್ರಂಥ ಮಾಲೆ

ಅಶೋಕಪುರಂ : ಮೈಸೂರು-8

## WHAT IS NAXALISM ?

(Our Correspondent)

Trivandrum : Our Left parties are so much divided and dissipated that instead of identifying and attacking their common enemy, they are more busy sniping at each other. And to fight the common enemy, they have not even identified one. Naxalites are no exception. The Left parties are proliferating and more and more people are calling themselves as Marxists. It has become a fashion to describe oneself as a Marxist.

One latest instance of the confusion in the Left rank is available from Kerala. Kanu Sanyal, the Bengali Brahmin and a top Naxalite leader, was on his second visit to Kerala to unite the different Naxalite splinter groups. Indian Express (Aug 19) reports Sanyal attacking the Kerala Naxal groups as a bunch of anarchists. He singled out the Venu group for misusing the name of Naxalbari like Charu Mazumdar. He denounced the "peoples court" trial by the Venu group in Kerala. In Kerala alone there are half a dozen Naxalite groups. At the all-India level different groups have come together and formed the Organising Committee of Communist Revolutionaries (OCCR) of which Sanyal is the secretary.

One Naxalite group with its leadership operating from Canada is active in the Bombay slums. But the high caste boys who come to distribute the Naxalite litera-

ture are not concerned about the caste problems faced by untouchables of these slums. Another Naxalite group brings out a journal from Calcutta, but it is full of articles and reports on every other country in the world except that of India. Our Naxalite comrades spend all their time in hair-splitting arguments about Marxism, Leninism, Maoism but are not interested in discussing the real problems of the Indian Dalits. It is no wonder they have failed to win the hearts of the Indian Dalits.

NAXAL MOVEMENT FAILS ? : Chowdary Tejeswara Rao, leader of the Srikakulam Naxalite movement who has been in the jail for the past 11 years, has written to the CPM seeking admission. He has admitted the failure of the Naxal movement and its "incalculable damage to the communist movement", says the staff reporter of the Hindu (Aug. 17) at Vijayawada. □

### ANTI-DALIT ACTIVITIES IN GANDHI MUSEUM

[Our Correspondent]

Madurai : The Gandhi Museum here like the Sabaramati Gandhi Ashram, Ahmedabad, has become notorious for its anti-Dalit activities. High caste exploiters have used these Gandhian institutions to enrich themselves at the cost of the Government and the employees.

S. P. Andiappan, a Harijan Sevak Sangh worker, was the first to raise the issue of ill-treatment to Dalit employees and for this he was thrown out as far back as 1977. There is not even a single Dalit in the clerical, technical or higher cadre of the museum. Dayanidhi, M.A., a Dalit clerk

in the Khadi and VI section, was sacked in 1977 to accommodate a Hindu. In the appointment of education officer in 1973, the claims of a Dalit applicant, Gnanamani, was overlooked. Dalits who are mostly gardeners are ill-treated. At least nine Dalit employees suffered punishment at the hands of the management.

Like a feudal lord the secretary imposes fines on Dalit employees. Formerly they were required to work in his private farm without pay.

G. Jagannathan, a backward class employee commended by no less a person than great leader Kamaraj for his courageous devotion to the Dalit movement, was dismissed on trumped up charges. He was just reinstated after a prolonged fight. □

## RSS LEADER PRAISES ISLAM

Calcutta : Truth is stranger than fiction. And when RSS speaks truth, we can hardly believe it. Can we ever think of an RSS leader praising Islam? The very existence of RSS in India is on the basis of whipping up communal hatred against minorities.

That is why many were shocked when a senior RSS leader, that too the chief editor of the Organiser, the official organ of the RSS, K. R. Malkani wrote an article in Statesman (Aug. 5) on the "Attraction of Islam" to untouchables. Like M. N. Roy who has paid glorious tributes to Islam, Malkani says Islam's sturdy egalitarianism, its militancy and socio-psychological appeal attracts a certain kind of persons not only in India but in Africa also.

He says : It is possible to argue that Islam does have a certain appeal for certain people. It is necessary to understand the nature of this appeal. The founder of Islam was not only for one God, he was also for one market. Islam not only believed in the theoretical equality of Muslims, it conceded this equality in fact, as it won more territories and more tribes. However, to the extent that one Muslim does not treat another as an untouchable, Islam scores over Hinduism, socially and politically. As Count Keyserling wrote in his Travel Diary of a Philosopher : The demo-

cracy of Islam explains its power of attraction, especially in India, where conversion to it implies the only possibility of escaping from caste rigidity. Keyserling added : The more I see of Islam the more am I impressed by the superiority this faith, gives to its confessors.

"This fundamentally military attitude explains all advantages of a Mussulman. But yet another attraction of the religion is its honesty about what might be described as the good things of life. But other things being the same, the Muslim seems to be able to get a bigger-if not a better-kick out of life. But Islam always had the other socio-psychological attraction which was felt by both King John of England and the Emperor Napoleon. This is not to suggest that its total appeal is necessarily greater than Hinduism's. But it does seem to appeal more to some people. And so you get Meenakshipurams. Many Africans and some blacks even in the USA are becoming Muslims". says Malkani. □

### DALIT GIRL KILLED ?

( Investigation Report by the Stree Jagrati, Mangalore)

The alleged rape and murder of a Dalit girl in a government hostel at Puttur, South Kanara, (Karnataka) is one of the most brutal manifestations of the exploitation of low caste women. Her death is hushed up by the police as a case of suicide.

Sita hailed from Konke, Balnad village, of Puttur taluk. She was staying at the Government Hostel for SCs & STs girls at Haradi, near Puttur. Sita's letters to her family give an idea of some of the happenings in the hostel. In her letters, she has mentioned that the warden, Smt. Shambhavi Rao, and the Social Welfare Inspector

would sleep on the same bed and that Sita had to do their work. On 5-3-81 at 10 A. M. three persons came to Sita's parent's house to inform them that Sita was missing from 5 A.M. that morning. Next day her body was found in a public well close to the hostel. The dead girl had only a skirt on. A slap mark was seen on the right side of her face. The father of Sita was not allowed to touch the body. It was taken to the girl's house for the mother to have a glance and was cremated immediately. Inquest was not conducted on the spot, but later on in the hospital when the postmortem examination was done. After the body was taken out of the well, Sita's father was summoned inside

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## JUDGE WHO WARNED OF GUJARAT CASTE WAR

*V. T. Rajshekar Shetty*

At the height of the Gujarat caste war we met Justice M. P. Thakkar of that High Court at Ahmedabad. In a long interview, he spoke with great feeling, sometimes wiping tears. He had to pay a heavy price for upholding the cause of the Dalits. While congratulating on the elevation as the Chief Justice, we would like to publish our long interview with him at his official bungalow, as a tribute to this brave judge.

M. P. Thakkar, just appointed Chief Justice of the Gujarat High Court, is a great friend of the Dalits. He was the first in the country to warn the Hindus of a caste war engulfing Gujarat on the reservations issue. N. D. Sharma of the Indian Express (Feb. 2-1981) reporting Thakkar's historic observations on a writ petition filed by the striking doctors, quoted the judge saying: "What would happen if the rickshaw-wala refused to carry the doctors, the launderer refused to wash their clothes and the grocer refused to sell them the provisions? The judge said that for hundreds of years they (the Harijans) had carried the excreta on their heads. If they get two or three more seats, should we mind it?" Thakkar begged the medicos to withdraw the writ petition challenging government order asking medicos to vacate their hostels following the reservation agitation against Dalits.

Thakkar created history when he allowed the medicos to hold consultation meeting right in his court room itself. When the medicos announced their decision not to withdraw the writ but go ahead with the agitation Thakkar was virtually in tears. He said the decision of the medicos to fight against reservation of seats to SCs in medical colleges is the "beginning of the caste war". And as predicted by Thakkar, the caste war began and it raged all over the State for nearly three months claiming 50 lives.

Therefore, the credit goes to Thakkar for predicting India's first caste war. We met Thakkar during our second visit to Ahmedabad to study the caste war. He said: India would be torn to pieces because of the caste system. Blaming the Hindu communal forces for launching the Gujarat caste war, he said for going against their wishes, he was not being allowed to function as a judge. The high castes occupied over 90% of the top positions in the society. That means reservation in fact exists in favour of only the high castes. Dalits have reservation only on paper. Caste is a class in India with minor exceptions. Press has played a very nasty role in Gujarat. There was no attack on the Gujarat Samachar office as it was published in the press. The reports to this effect were totally false. The local press was pro-RSS. The Dalits and Muslims were being made to feel that they did not belong to this country. What is to be done. Whom to blame? "he said in an emotion-charged voice. He wanted the government to stop advertisement to the press promoting communalism. Why should the government pay for abusing its own programme? Something must be done to discipline our press which was owned by capitalists and run by high caste journalists. Thakkar then referred to the problems that he started facing after the caste war became hotter. "I don't know if you have heard of

ex-communication from a society. Today those who support the Dalits and Muslims face ex communication. It is impossible to function in this society once you identify yourself with these sections".

During our stay in Ahmedabad, we learnt that Thakkar had become the most hated man in the judiciary as well as the bar. His movement was watched, telephone tapped. At one time he was said to be seriously thinking of resigning. We could read the agony in his face. To that extent the Hindu society could be blood-thirsty. Thakkar belonged to a reputed high caste (non-Brahmin) family of Kutch, then occupying the no. 2 position in the High Court like Justice Bhimiah of the Karnataka High Court. Bhimiah at least was an untouchable and it was but natural that he should be denied the position of the Chief Justice which he should have become almost 10 years ago. When Thakkar was told about Justice Bhimiah,

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the hostel by the warden. Here, along with two kitchen maids of the hostel, the warden tried to force him to give his thumb impression on a paper. But, he refused to do so.

The facts are Sita was summoned at 9 P.M. on the 4th night by the warden accompanied by the Social Welfare Inspector. Soon a cry was heard and the girls noticed Sita's body lying in a pool of blood. The body was kept in the hostel on that night and the whole of next day. On the 5th midnight, the girls saw a heavy object being carried out of the hostel.

The hostel warden is known to be using hostel girls for prostitution. The men who visit these girls are known to be high government officials from Puttur, Mangalore and surrounding areas. On Sept. 1, 1980 the Marathi Sangha filed a case against the illegal, immoral activities of warden to the Deputy Commissioner, Mangalore.

he said he could recollect the incident (Kittur and Sumitra Desai episode) which marred the chances of his becoming the Chief Justice. It was a conspiracy. Thakkar was critical of the role played by the Marxists in the Gujarat caste war. CPI & CPM did nothing to save the Dalits, he said and added: "Parliamentary system will not work in India. I am really frustrated and disillusioned." He disclosed what a post-graduate medical course examiner had told him. The examiner had confessed that if the answer papers of the Dalits came up for valuation, it would not even be seen. The candidate would be straightaway failed. No mercy. That was the amount of caste prejudice ruling our foreign-returned highly educated specialist doctors. "India would break up. It is a question of time" he sighed.

Since India is not a nation, such a break-up was inevitable. Revolutionary sections should get ready for such an eventuality.

The high caste Hindu officials do not mind sleeping with untouchable girls. Sex has no caste, you know.

Meanwhile, the Karnataka Dalit Action Committee has demanded the dismissal of both the warden and the S.W. Inspector. □

**CAPITALIST PLAN :** The Government having failed to improve the villages, a top capitalist of India has come forward with a great plan. Aravind Mafatlal has asked the Government to hand over 50 rural blocs to private industrialists to manage the affairs for five years. They will invest Rs. 75 lakhs. He was addressing a meeting in Bombay on Aug. 13. □

**Poverty in India and China :**

In India, 40 crores of people do not have enough to eat. A World Bank survey says China is also a poor country but the "physical quality of the life of the bulk of the Chinese people is strikingly better than that in India. The adult literacy is 66% for China in 1976. India is 36% (Indian Express - Aug.19). □

Letters to Editor :JAPANESE UNTOUCHABLES  
GREET DALITS

**Yoichi Mitsuhashi**, Buraku Organisation, Tokyo, Japan : It is a very interesting news about the mass conversion of untouchables to Islam in Meenakshipuram. The news hit headlines in the Japanese press also. We are glad to learn the details of the "earthquake" in Meenakshipuram from the III issue of the Voice. We are studying the Gujarat caste war from the "Samata". We are impressed that 700 Dalit families embraced Buddhism in Ahmedabad. Happy Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's thoughts have revived. □

**Dr N. Srinivasan**, England : Congratulations for launching the Voice. The conversions did not come as a shock to me. But surprised to note the Hindu fanatics should take such a stand on a set of people whom they never considered as part of the society. Hinduism is a decaying religion and we can get its stink even in UK where the Hindus live. When other religions are flourishing, why the people are leaving only Hinduism? Even after another 100 Shankaracharyas are born the prejudice in the minds of the Hindus will not go. So what is the alternative? What happened at Meenakshipuram is one such.

**Yerra Nagaiiah**, Isakapalli, AP : The editorial "Fascist clouds over TN", was revealing. We offer our full cooperation in liberating the Dalits. □

**Prof H L. Auluck**, Sholapur : The problem you are tackling is very complex and does not admit of a simple solution as conversion to Islam. Islam is as dead as Buddhism. Read what the Bahais have to say about Islam. They massacred thousands of Bahais. You do not see the crisis in Islam. It is a pity. Read the Bahai literature. It will help you to understand things better. □

**Dr K. Wilson**, Indian Inst. of Cultural Studies, Secunderabad: Dalit Voice is coming out at its best. The contents, the spirit and the approach are just inspiring and informative. This will become a powerful weapon in opening the eyes of Dalits and for preparing them to shape their future on their own terms. □

**G. Gopal Rao**, Amalapuram, AP: Everybody is happy over the conversions. We want to organise a "Quit Hinduism" movement here. Religious conversion is a must to every SC who wants to live with honour and self-respect. We must discard the Hindu crumbs Ambedkar said man cannot live by bread alone. He wants culture. All the educated SCs here are supporting the conversion to Islam which liberated them from untouchability and casteism. We want all SCs to get converted. Not only the illiterate and ignorant masses but even the educated. Not only the Brahmins and other high caste Hindus but also the backward castes are joining hands with the upper caste/class to torture the SCs. Therefore we are forced to quit Hinduism. □

**Rameshchandra Parmar**, president, Dalit Panthers, Gujarat : Meenakshipuram has rocked the press police, political parties and Brahmins. On behalf of Dalits of Gujarat, we congratulate you for focussing light on the issue of conversion. For the revolutionary youth, I am translating for "Panther" our Gujarati monthly, your article "Communal riots, why suppress facts?". □

**R. E. Murthy**, President, BFL Rationalists Association, Bangalore : On behalf of our association, we congratulate you for starting a journal to fight for the Dalits and rationalists. □

**Aloysius Raj**, Tribal Centre, Chaibasa, Bihar: Voice is really sharp and useful. Support the tribals. We are sure the struggle of the tribals here will be enriched by the solidarity of the national and international dalits.

(Contd from page 2—Reform or Revolution?) abolished only untouchability but not the caste. And as long as caste is not abolished, untouchability cannot be removed. Therefore where the country's Constitution itself has failed will these reformers, however genuine they may be, succeed? No. Therefore our dalits need not take note of the bid to reform Hinduism. It is a waste of time, energy and money. Ambedkar had said it as far back as 1936: "A bitter thing can be made sweet. The taste of anything can be changed. But the poison cannot be made Amrit. To talk of annihilating caste is like talking of changing the poison into Amrit. For annihilating castes and untouchability from among the untouchables, change of religion is the only antidote".

Therefore, let us not get confused in the din the lovers of Hinduism have raised. They are crying because the Hindu boat is sinking. And if the boat sinks, they will lose their properties and privileges. Not only that. They will also get drowned. So it is but natural that they have to do everything not only to save their properties

(Contd from page 12—Mandal Report)

the whole Union Cabinet, there is only one OBC representative - Law Minister Shivshankar. A minister told Kashyap that an expert committee was examining the Mandal report and that means all the painstaking work done by a veteran like Mandal is to be judged afresh by a team of officials. The ruling class of India, which is just about 10 per cent of the Indian population, is successfully sabotaging every report on the OBCs, SCs and STs, minorities who together constitute over 75 per cent of the population. The OBCs are as poor as the SCs and STs if not poorer sometimes. The latter have the reservations though on paper. The OBCs have none. The vast number of OBC are sandwiched between the untouchables on one side and the landed gentry and the Brahmins on the other. The OBCs thought that they had a real champion in Charan Singh but he proved to be a paper tiger. Devaraj Urs in the South was promising but before he could become an all-India leader, the upper castes finished him. Ram Awadesh Singh, another Yadava leader from Bihar, who took up militant posture on the lines

and privileges but also to save themselves. They are only reaping what they have sown. Hinduism is their making. If their life is endangered today it is not because of the dalits. They did not build this boat and, therefore, they cannot be held responsible for any mishap. What the dalits are interested, therefore, is not reform but revolution. Hinduism has brought misery not only to dalits but Hindus themselves. And the poison of Hinduism has spread wherever Hindus have migrated. Dalits are therefore seeking salvation through conversion as directed by their saviour, Ambedkar. They are not interested in reform but revolution which, Ambedkar said, is possible only through conversion. Dalits must fight not for reform but revolution. And this revolution shall not only save themselves but save Hindus as well. And thereby India. This country belongs to dalits and therefore, nobody can be more interested in saving India than its original owners. Therefore, the dalits have rightly rejected the path of reform and taken to revolution—to save India and secure it an honourable place in the world. □

of Lohia, lost all interest after getting defeated in the elections. So the political horizon is devoid of any silver lining. Therefore, the OBCs are today looking to non-political leadership. And the only person of promise is Veeramani, general secretary of the militant Dravida Kazhagam of Tamil Nadu. It is possible that if he decides, he can take up the issue of the Mandal Commission report implementation and launch a virulent agitation. As a dedicated follower and now wearing the mantle of Periyar EV. Ramaswamy, India's greatest rationalist leader, he is ideally cut out for the job. The SCs, STs have already offered their full support to the struggle of the OBCs in spite of the fact that they have suffered only at the hands of the OBCs. Since both these sections have jointly suffered under the high caste tyranny, they have decided to join hands to fight their common enemy. The help of the minorities will have to be taken. And the country is looking up to Veeramani to launch the agitation that shall not stop until the Govt. of India accepts the Mandal report and implements reservations to the OBCs on the lines of the SC and STs. □

# MANDAL REPORT TO WASTE PAPER BASKET ?

(Our correspondent)

New Delhi : The ill-fated Mandal Commission report on the backward classes is likely to meet the very same fate of its predecessor, the Kaka Kalelkar Commission report. This is the impression that we gathered after Jaipal Singh Kashyap, a fishermen leader from Allahabad, made bold in the Lok Sabha on Aug. 27 to raise the issue and extracted a promise from a nervous minister that the report would be placed on the table of the House in this session itself.

As the ruling class of India has already frowned on the Mandal report, it is sure to be thrown to the waste paper basket. The report by B. P. Mandal, a Yadava leader from Bihar, was submitted to the Govt. over 8 months back and on this depends the fate of over 50 per cent of the Indian

population. Even Kashyap, though an Opposition MP, could have the courage to raise the issue in the lower House because of the indirect support that he got from Speaker Balram Jakhar, also an OBC. In

[Contd on page-11]

## ANNOUNCEMENT

With this the Dalit Voice has completed six issues beginning from June 1. The response is good even when it is confined to private circulation. The revolutionary sections among the persecuted minorities have started waking up to the realities. This is a good sign. We thought of charging the readers only after the title is cleared and the paper registered. Since this work got delayed, we can no longer afford to mail the copies free. **Therefore, we have decided to collect a small donation of Rs 10 only** and this may be later adjusted towards an year's subscription.

Readers are requested to send the MO in the name of the Dalit Sahitya Akademy.

Change of address should be promptly intimated.

It is difficult to run a paper on mere circulation revenue. The expenditure can be met only if there is enough advertisement. Therefore, we welcome advt. from those who can afford.

Please spread the message of the Dalit Voice. We thank the readers for their cooperation and assure them that we will continue to fight for the persecuted minorities and make this a truly Dalit Voice. Each reader can introduce us to five more and thus help reach the Voice far and wide.

*Publishers*

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Published by the Dalit Sahitya Akademy.

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Bangalore 560 003, India. Phone : 33854.

Printed at : SVP / PLO / B-3

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