

# DALIT VOICE

*[The Voice of the Persecuted Minorities]*

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EDITORIAL

## R. S. S. AND COMMUNAL RIOTS

Yet another report of the judicial inquiry commission on a communal riot has come 2½ years after the carnage: this time on Jamshedpur steel-town in Bihar's tribal belt that engulfed in a major bloodbath in April 1979 resulting in 108 (official figure) deaths. The Commission headed by Justice Jitendra Narain, formerly of the Patna High Court, has directly blamed the RSS and its two front organisations BJP (then called the Jan Sangh) and the BMS for being responsible for the riots.

And after the Jamshedpur riot, we had Moradabad, Hyderabad and Biharshreef and many other minor riots. Every day we have one or more. Over 5,000 communal incidents since the Independence. The Jamshedpur inquiry commission has directly indicted the RSS and particularly its chief, Deoras, and the local MLA, Dinanath Pandey. The trump-card of the RSS is communal riots. The RSS can make inroads into an area only if it succeeds in engineering a riot. This is the secret behind every riot. At Jamshedpur, RSS wanted a riot to wean away the Tata Iron and Steel Co. workers and others from Leftist unions and bring them under the umbrella of the pro-capitalist Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh, the trade union front of the RSS. Pandey had reportedly testified to this effect before the inquiry commission. Yet another purpose behind this riot is to Hinduise the tribals who actually are not Hindus but animists. RSS and many other organisations are currently engaged in a multi million rupee foreign-financed projects to Hinduise the Bihar tribals so that

they do not get converted to Christianity, later agitate for a separate state of Jharkhand and thus go the way of their North-eastern counterparts. The RSS thus scored a double-victory in Jamshedpur: checking the growth of Left movement in the steel-town and weaning the tribals away from Christian missionaries who have done marvellous service to the tribals. The evidence before the commission has hinted at the indirect blessings the RSS got from the TISCO management. So, it was a very deep-rooted conspiracy. Tribals, who led the attack on the Muslims—also equally poor industrial workers—were told by the RSS that their enemies were not the industrial tycoons who exploited the tribal areas but the Muslims. RSS, which succeeded in introducing the communal virus in this industrial city, has actually killed two birds with one stone: the Left movement suffered a setback, BMS was able to capture the trade unions and secondly, turn the wrath of the tribals from their real exploiters, the industrial tycoons, to imaginary enemies, the poor

Muslims How beautiful. No doubt Deoras has quickly dubbed the verdict as "absolutely false, baseless and politically motivated". This is their usual song whenever a verdict goes against it. After executing a communal riot, RSS is always the first to demand a judicial probe. At Jamshedpur too, the RSS was the first to shout. Dinanath Pandey was so confident of suppressing the facts and managing to considerably delay the verdict, that he said Commission would "expose the international conspiracy of the Muslims". When the verdict went against the RSS, they came out with their stock statement calling the whole thing baseless. But it was only couple of days back that RSS leaders were shouting that so far not a single inquiry commission had held RSS responsible for the communal riots. RSS has been repeatedly indulging in such false propoganda. Because its agents are there in the "national press", it gets wide publicity for its lies. But what are the facts? Madon Commission report on Bhiwandi-Jalgaon riot of 1970 (Vol. vi part vi, para 103-155) says: "Rastriya Utsav Mandal, majority of whose members belonged to the Jan Sangh were responsible for the

riots". The Commission noted that the important leaders of the JS were from the RSS. A similar verdict against RSS had come in the Tellichery riot as well. We have no illusion that the latest report will end all future communal riots. Judicial commissions have proved to be useless. Not only the verdict is delayed but no action taken on that. Meanwhile, Hindu fascist forces are out to finish the untouchables, tribals, OBCs and the minorities. That is why it exploited the Tamil Nadu conversion of a few hundred untouchables to Islam and described it as a national crisis. The motive behind raising such a hue and cry over TN was to start a communal riot there and then make inroads into this State which had been its weakest link. The conversions gave it an ideal opportunity. But its calculations misfired. However, the conversions have helped the RSS to pitch its tent in TN also. It has thus succeed in spreading its wings all over India, getting ready for many more Jamshedpurs. Dalits, persecuted minorities and all other progressive forces must get ready for the fast-approaching battle with the RSS out to clamp a class-caste fascist dictatorship over India. □

#### NEW QUID-E-AZAM :

Jagivan Ram is wooing the Muslims to become the leader of both Harijans and Muslims. For this purpose a Harijan-Muslim Manch was floated recently in Delhi. The secretary of the Manch, who was earlier in the CFD, has embraced Islam with family. Meanwhile, the Shahi Imam of Jama Masjid is trying to bring together once more Babuji and Bahuguna to pursue the plan jointly. (RSS weekly Organiser Aug.23) □

#### WHY CONVERSION ?

by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar

Excerpts from the historic speech delivered on May 30-31, 1936 while addressing a conference of untouchables, making his stand clear on conversion. The document is topical in the context of the current controversy raised by the communal Hindus on the issue of conversion. It is the most authentic voice of Dr. Ambedkar on conversion. Price : Re. 1 Published by the Dalit Sahitya Akademy, 109-7th cross, P.L. Orchards, Bangalore-560 003-India.

**POLICE PERMIT SATI :** A UNI report from Banda says the atrocious Hindu custom of widow-burning was held on Aug. 11. Mrs. Dasia, 65, committed sati by jumping into the burning pyre of her husband. What adds significance to the report is that the Sati was watched by thousands of people and the police (Indian Express-Aug 15).

## DALIT OFFICIALS HAIL CONVERSION TO ISLAM

Four retired but enlightened scheduled caste officers of Karnataka have issued a statement hailing conversion of untouchables to Islam. The statement says: Conversion of untouchables to Islam in Tamil Nadu and other parts of India has shaken the Hindu society and according to some Hindus this is the biggest crisis faced by Hinduism since the partition. The Hindus are extremely worried because their properties and privileges are threatened by this wholesale revolt of the Dalits.

The report submitted by Union Minister of State for Home Makwana to the Prime Minister and the findings of many Hindu leaders like Prof. Subramanian Swamy and others, reports in the national Press and the findings of the Regional Director of SCs and STs have all gone to conclusively prove that the Tamil Nadu mass conversion of untouchables was solely due to socio-religious reasons. The untouchables themselves had testified that they felt fully liberated after becoming Muslims. The bogey raised by the Shankaracharyas, the Pejawara Swamis and other Hindu communalists under the leadership of the RSS about Arab money and the use of force in conversion has not worked. On the other hand, it is the Hindu leaders who are now trying to bribe the Dalits in their desperate but futile attempts to reconvert them. The very fact that they have failed to publish the names of those Muslims who were allegedly reconverted at Maenakshipuram and also other places further proves that all the noise raised by the RSS has proved to be totally false. Meanwhile, the conversion to Islam has spread to North India as well.

In the light of this most significant turning point in the history of the untouchables' liberation struggle, we the following elders belonging to the oppressed SC community express our full solidarity and sympathy in this liberation struggle. We also assure to stand by them in this struggle.

The most important thing that has to be correctly understood is that what the

untouchables of India want is destruction of the caste system which alone shall destroy untouchability. All the constitutional reservations and governmental schemes, even where implemented sincerely, have only tried to improve the economic conditions of the untouchables. But the problem of the untouchables is not economic but social. Man cannot live by bread alone. He wants self-respect and manhood. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar said the untouchables must realise that, as long as they live within Hinduism, they cannot get self-respect. The Marxists' oft-repeated theory that untouchables will be liberated when the have-nots launch the "class struggle" against the haves, has been falsified in India.

Therefore the Government's economic reforms having failed to deliver the goods, the Marxists having failed to bring about revolution and the Hindu leaders having no programme to destroy caste system, the untouchables are forced to take recourse to the only path left—a religious solution by embracing Islam which they say has assured them human dignity. This is what they have been searching for centuries and if Islam offers them the way out, no Hindu, who is the very cause of the untouchables' miseries, has the right to question what they do.

Therefore, we congratulate Makwana for upholding the right of the untouchables to seek justice and the Karnataka Dalit Action Committee for giving a call to the

Dalits of India to quit Hinduism on August 15, which they observed as a "BLACK DAY". As for the charge that some Dalit organisation has sought money for conversion, we would like to vehemently condemn such insinuations. Such mischievous propoganda is nothing but adding insult to injury. The Dalits are not so cheap like the Brahmins who were responsible for selling this country to every foreign invader.

In Karnataka, the position of untouchable is in no way better than that of any other part of India. In Kollegal, Hunsur (Mysore Dist), Kolar, Bhalki (Bidar) Hole-narsipur (Hassan), Gulbarga and in many parts of the State the untouchables are being persecuted. We call upon Dalits of all these places to immediately quit Hinduism. We also call upon students and officials to kick off these Hindu crumbs of bread given in the shape of reservation and seek salvation by getting out of this gas chamber of Hinduism. It is better to live in honour for one single day than live as a dog for hundred years.

We also call upon our Muslim brothers

not to worry about any repercussions as long as we two persecuted minorities, together forming a sizeable population, say 40 per cent, come together. Along with Christians and tribals, we will be a force to reckon with. The Hindu communalists are trying to use this opportunity to engineer communal riots and all of us will have to be guarded against this danger. Untouchables must know Muslims and Christians are our best friends and therefore we should not fight the Hindu battle.

Remember we are doing this in the interest of saving the honour of India. Only those who are traitors and anti-nationals can oppose our holy crusade".

The signatories are Dr. D. RUDRAIAH, Director of Animal Husbandry and Vet. Services, S. PUTTASWAMY Engineering in Chief, Rlys., D. R. NANJAYYA, Deputy Commissioner, Commercial Taxes, & Editor BHEEMAVANI, all retd. K. DODDA-VEERAAIAH Under Secretary to Govt. several others officials have also signed the statement. □

## LEFTIST SILENCE ON CONVERSIONS

Nikhil Chakravarty, editor of prestigious New Delhi weekly, "Mainstream", in an editorial (Aug. 8) criticises the Hindu religious leaders, Govt., the press and politicians for converting "a small incident" of 600 Dalits embracing Islam in Meenakshipuram. Congratulating the Dalits for effectively demonstrating their protest, he says: "If the Harijan is beginning to lose confidence in the Hindu social set-up, should he be blamed for that? It is Hindu bigotry which has to thank itself if the Harijans choose to leave its fold. NC, as he is popularly known, denounces the communal Hindu charge that the Dalits were lured by the Arab money and says: "Those who have been wallowing in the pollution of our public life have no business to malign these innocent villagers, facing paucity and persecution, changing their creed in search of material as well as spiritual gain". He criticises gov't. authorities for raising an alarm over conversions as it is none of the government business

to take note of such developments. "To single out this case of conversion to Islam is a serious commentary on our pledge to build Hindu-Muslim amity, this undermines the very concept of national integration based on secularism". He raises another important point: "it is strange that the Left parties have not yet woken up to the dangerous implications of the controversy over Meenakshipuram: is not the upholding of the right to change ones religion an issue for a national campaign?"

How many editors we have in India like NC?

The issues raised by NC are: (i) can a govt. take note of conversions in the guise of law and order trouble and press its machinery including police to terrorise the poor illiterate Dalits? Does it not amount to a so-called secular government siding with communal Hindus? (ii) Left parties by their silence on the conversion conversions have indirectly supported the communal Hindus. After-all who is heading these Left parties? Their own brothers in the RSS. □

## WHY CASTE WAR SHOULD BE WELCOMED

V. T. Rajshekar Shetty

Our Marxists friends have often repeated the cliché that "class struggle" will lead to revolution. We have replied to them in our two previous monographs- "How Marx Failed in Hindu India" (1979) and Class-Caste Struggle — Emerging third force" (1981). Therefore, we do not wish to go into that question here. However, under Indian conditions, broadly speaking it is the "caste" that has become a "class".

That is why "caste struggle" is more or less synonymous with "class struggle". However we are not minimising the importance of class struggle. But in India it is mainly through "caste struggle" it is possible to have a class struggle. It is the caste struggle that will have to graduate into class struggle. No doubt, the ultimate aim should be that India must have a class struggle. But this will become possible only when the poor people belonging to higher castes join hands with the poor of the low castes. For this caste barrier has to be broken.

Almost 95% of the poor Hindus belong to the low caste, and the untouchables are almost 100% poor. Brahmins and other high castes are invariably the property-holders. Caste division in villages is in fact class division - (EPW - 1979 annual issue page-317). The reservations have no doubt helped some untouchables to go up the ladder of lit- and numerous studies have been made by sociologists about the "Harijan elite". This elite class is keeping itself away from the less fortunate, uneducated untouchables. But this elite class is not a special feature of untouchables alone. Every caste including the Brahmins has its own elite. And this elite class in every caste maintains aloofness from the rest. This is true of the Muslims and Christians also. Sikhs too are divided on "class" lines.

Since the untouchables are almost 100% poor and almost 100% illiterate, the formation of such an elite class becomes strikingly visible and, therefore, has become a great eye-sore to the Hindus. The

mass conversion of untouchables to Islam in Tamil Nadu was mainly due to the fact that the Hindus could not tolerate their prosperity. Once a servile class, living on the outskirts of every village, the untouchables coming to occupy houses next to that of a high caste and working in the same office and in the same position, travelling in the same bus and eating in the same hotel-all this will naturally lead to serious heart-burning. Caste system means gradation. Ascending order of reverence and descending order of contempt. Reservations have sought to shake a stagnant society in which there is no scope for equality. Hinduism cannot tolerate democracy, equality, socialism and secularism. When reservations seeks to assure, however half-heartedly, a brighter future for the untouchables, it immediately comes into conflict with the Hindu ethos. Therefore what we witnessed in Gujarat can be described as a fight between socialism and Hinduism in which socialism temporarily vanquished and Hinduism triumphed and ultimately the whole thing ended up in a draw. There is a silence of graveyard prevailing over Gujarat now. And this calm before the storm may end any moment and a fresh but a more bloody caste war may break out any moment. If caste has to graduate into class, this should be welcomed. The reservations, however poorly implemented, has helped about 20 lakhs of scheduled castes to become Government servants out of a total SC population of about 30% of the country's population. Is it not something that we should be proud of? Is it not a happy

sign? No doubt, this "Harijan elite" class is itself getting estranged from the rest of the exploited sections of untouchables. Sanskritization and Westernisation is sucking this "elite class" more and more into the orbit of other exploiting classes. That is why, the jealous Hindu society has started calling the SCs as "Government Brahmins". That this 20 lakhs of Government servants have not spared a thought for their less-fortunate, illiterate, poor untouchables subjected to atrocities every day in the country-side, amply proves that this "elite class" is joining hands with the other exploiting classes in the Hindu upper castes. That means a "class" is being formed out of a "caste". This "class" among the SCs may not come up to the level of life of other high caste Hindus but they are sure to swell the rank of other exploiting classes. This is a new development of far-reaching significance in the Indian social set-up: "Caste" is gradually breaking and out of its debris "class" is taking shape. Is this not a welcome development? From this, it is clear that the "caste war" raging in different parts of the country has helped formation of a "class" which is indeed the need of the hour. Because, in India we have had no "class" in the strict Marxian term. Every "caste" including the Brahmins has its own poor. Caste cuts across class and vice versa. What we ultimately want is a "class struggle". But how can class struggle come about in India when there are no "classes"? Class struggle cannot come about without first destroying castes. And caste will get destroyed only in the caste war. This is a lesson which our Marxists can ill-afford to ignore. Kerala's communal politics is the standing example of castes graduating into a "class". All the "forward" communities there have joined hands and merged into a "class". According to one report the "poverty line" among "forward" communities parti-

cularly the Nairs has moved up. They have formed a political party (N.D.P) to fight for their rights, linking up their struggle with the Christians. The backward toddy-tapper community, Ezhavas, are the single largest caste group of Kerala. But it is this group which is out to break the Nair and Brahmin monopoly in land and services. Land reforms did break the backbone of Brahmins and Nairs. With this began the impoverishment of Nairs who joined hands with Brahmins and Christians. The Ezhavas in turn linked up their struggle with Muslims, a persecuted minority. It is unfortunate that a minority community like the Christians has joined hands with the Brahmins and Nairs. Rich Christians are said to be joining R.S.S. This is because the Christians economic interest has to be protected. And hence the gang-up of all exploiters against the exploited. Beautiful polarisation. Socialism means poor must come up and when they come up the rich naturally will have to be levelled down. This is inevitable. This is what we mean by "caste" graduating into "class".

The link-up of the political struggle of "exploiters"—Nairs, Brahmins and Christians—in Kerala is a new development holding an important lesson to the rest of India. Kerala is perhaps the most politically conscious State with the highest percentage of literacy in India. Therefore, the current experiment in Kerala of caste graduating into a class will be repeated in the rest of India also as caste and class consciousness develops and caste struggle gets accelerated. This is bound to happen even if the CPM refuses to read the writing on the wall. No doubt a high caste Nair, Nayanar, is the Chief Minister of Kerala. It is the poverty of thinking among Indian Marxists that they are not able to groom low castes to shoulder party responsibilities. The West Bengal Ministry headed by a high caste Hindu (Kayastha) and dominated by Brahmins with not even

a single untouchable or tribe given a cabinet rank, is the standing example of the high caste prejudices still dominating the Indian Left movement.

But despite all these hurdles, the low castes are slowly gravitating to the Left movement. In Kerala, the very backbone of the Left movement is backward Ezhavas. The growth of the Left movement in Kerala is essentially the outcome of the caste and communal conflict in Kerala. The Left movement still dominated by the high castes do not want to accelerate the "caste struggle" in Kerala for fear of annihilating the continued high caste domination of left politics. Kerala's Nettur Commission report on backward class is being repeatedly shelved solely because of this reason. The untouchables of Kerala disenchanted with the Left movement are already reported to be flocking to the RSS camp. And if the Marxist leadership continues to ignore the Nettur Commission report, it might drive the powerful Ezhavas also into the waiting RSS wings. That will be a tragedy for which EMS Namboodiripad will be solely held responsible. However, the unique Kerala experiment should open the eyes of the Indian Left movement to the realities of the situation and the CPM must accept "caste struggle" as part of the class struggle, by implementing its Howrah party plenum resolution. Or else they will be driving more and more low castes out of it as it happened with CPI in Biharshariff communal riots. All over India, higher castes are gradually coming together and forming into a "class". Take the case of the youth. Mudaliars, Vellalas, Chettians and Naidus (Tamil Nadu), Nairs (Kerala), Lingayats, Vokkaligas and Bunts (Karnataka), Reddys and Kammas (Andhra Pradesh)-all these land-owning dominant castes were once in the forefront of the anti-Brahmin movement. Justice Party comprised all these powerful feudal lords. With the help of the British, they secured reservations and thereby able to completely dislodge the Brahmins from the political power and to some extent in the administrative power. After having taken over the place of Brahmins, they

started playing the very same game for which they once criticized Brahmins. Nay They outdid the Brahmins. They started oppressing the backward classes (O.B.Cs) and more so untouchables. In oppressing the castes lower below them, the landed gentry excelled the Brahmins. Nay. They joined hands with Brahmins. They surpassed the Brahmins in oppressing the low castes. Then came the turn of the backward classes and with the help of Periyar E V Ramaswamy, the backward classes mobilised and captured political power. After enjoying power these people also followed the illustrious foot-steps of higher castes and got Brahminised. In no way, they were more kind to the untouchables. The Meenakshipuram exodus of untouchables to the fold of Islam is mainly because of the unbearable atrocities at the hands of a very backward class (O.B.C.) section called the Thevars. These Thevars are now closely cooperating with Brahmins and other higher castes. The Railway Oppressed Employees Union is mainly an organisation of backward classes and it is they who went in writ against reservations in promotion to SCs. No doubt Justice Krishna Iyer dismissed the writ and upheld the reservation in promotions to SCs but the historic legal battle points out one significant development, namely 'castes' are gradually turning into "class". In other words 'caste struggle' will help promotion of 'class' and such a transformation will help liquidation of 'castes' and help formation of 'class' - bringing the country to the decisive stage of class struggle. But let it be remembered that destruction of castes is the pre-requisite for class struggle. The point that we are driving at is how caste struggle is getting graduated into class struggle. We feel this is a happy sign and it must be encouraged, by all those interested in revolution. Let it be remembered that Hindu India will never have revolution without first destroying the caste. □

## Letters to Editor :

**V. Anaimuthu, President, All-India Federation of Backward Classes, Trichy (TN) :** Voice will go a long way to consolidate the Dalits, OBCs all over India. We hail your bold attempt in opening a new chapter in linking the struggle of the different oppressed sections

**S. Balachandra Rao, professor of mathematics, National College, Bangalore :** I have the fullest confidence that the Voice will turn out to be a great journalistic force to reckon with

**Vibhuti Patel, Atyachar Virodhi Samiti, Bombay :** Congratulations for the Voice. It is a bold venture.

**Rao Sahab Kasbe, Sangamner College, Ahmednagar :** I have been reading your writing for the past three years. I think the Muslim-Dalit unity is the necessity of our times. Majority of both are oppressed and exploited. So their unity should be welcomed purely on material ground and not on religious ground.

**S. V Goudar, Bijapur :** Your writings have fascinated me. So also your logic and arguments. They are thought-provoking, heart-searching and mind-boggling.

**Bola Paswan Shastri, chairman ; Scheduled Castes and Tribes Commission, New Delhi :** The Voice is informative and useful.

**Bramwell Samuel Kumar, Church of South India, Madras :** I enjoyed reading the Voice.

**Abdul Salam, Shimoga :** The Voice is thrilling. You have been rendering precious service to the oppressed.

**Mohinder Paul, Patiala :** I cannot find appropriate words to explain my gratitude for the Voice-the voice of the persecuted minorities. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was cherishing such a dream that we dalits should be equipped with a proper press to voice their feelings. History will always remember the people who share the miseries of others.

**N. Elangovan : Cuddalore (TN) :** Every educated Dalit must read the Voice, which will guide and inspire him.

**Bharatha Nambi, Gowthampapura, Bangalore :** Reading Dalit Voice is like hearing war-drums. The wishes and aspirations, the pains and problems of dalits are fully reflected in the Voice.

**Sudheer, Amalapuram, (AP) :** Your editorial, 'The National Farce', is very timely and constructive, helped us dispel many of our illusions.

**M. A Ahmed, Triplicane, Madras :** The Voice gives many valuable information about the movement of the persecuted minorities and at the same time highlights the urgent need to get a just and lasting solution to their problems and sufferings that are plaguing the minorities in India and particularly the untouchables and tribals.

**Dr. Lalit Parmar, vice-president, Gujarat SC Youth Federation, Hansot, Dt Bharuch :** No Chief Justice of a High Court will recommend the name of a Dalit advocate for the post of a high court judge. Chief Minister Solanki of Gujarat said : I am convinced that the caste Hindus have been biased against the Harijans and their profession. There are brilliant Harijan advocates in Gujarat but none of them has become High Court judge because those who select belong to upper caste" (India Today March 15). Article 217 (1) of the Constitution says the consent of the Chief Justice of a high court is required for the appointment of an advocate. But is it necessary to have a positive consent of the Chief Justice of a High Court? One cannot forget the well known incident that at the time of appointment of three High Court Judges in 1978, the then Chief Justice of the Gujarat High Court did not recommend their names.

**Y. A. Lokhandawala, president, Indian Rationalist Association, Bombay :** The valiant struggle you are putting up for the emancipation of all the persecuted minorities in India deserves unequivocal support.

**Prab-dhanam, weekly, Calicut (Kerala) :** The Dalit Voice clearly reflects the voice of the oppressed class of India. The articles are very much appreciated.

**C. Madhavan, Trivandrum :** The tragedy of dalits in Kerala is they take upon themselves the ruling class ideologies and the practice of communism, with all its orientation and sympathy for the poor, lacks the roots needed in the soil. They deluded themselves with the thought that they will one day be taken straight into the communist heaven. This is a reality born out of their enslavement under Hinduism. The possibility of saving the Kerala dalits from this treachery is a herculean task. Even the youth is not coming out of this calculated, cunning mischief. What can we do in this emerging pattern of behaviour in Kerala is our main worry. The Kerala dalits have not yet identified their cause. They have not even protested against the Hindu conspiracy of enslavement exemplified in Gujarat. In our office we are fighting against a cartoon war launched on us by an organisation called the O3 on the model of the Ku Klux Klan of the US. I am pained that after all that Dr. Ambedkar did, the dalits have not yet realised not to look up to the ruling class which is amassing all the wealth, power, authority in all the socio-economic field and culture.

**L. Patel, president, Ambedkar Memorial Trust, Watford, UK :** During my stay in India I visited several villages in my native Kutch (Gujarat) and I was shocked to discover that the high caste Hindus have not accepted our people as part of the society. Kada, a village five kms from Bhuj, with a population of 150, has no school and no water supply. Untouchables have to beg water from the Hindus.

**Fr. P. A. Augustinae, Catholic church, Khagul (Bihar) :** We minorities applaud the services rendered by the Voice for the

dalits and other persecuted minorities. We wish you all the best.

**S. G. Sardesai : CPI leader, Bombay :** I positively appreciate the emotional conviction with which you champion the cause of the dalits and weaker sections and also your uncompromising opposition to the RSS and the forces of Hindu reaction as fascist forces which have to be fought to the finish. You have been advocating that neither the Left movement nor the social movement to liberate dalits can achieve its end without mutual cooperation. This is the crux of the of the question.

**T. K. Narayanan, Trivandrum :** The Voice and the Dalit Sahitya Academy have been doing marvellous work to prepare the minds of the dalits, crushed by the cruelties of the Brahminism, towards revolution. I find no words to express my feeling of gratitude for your courage and scientific analysis of the ills of the society. The Voice has fully identified itself with the cause of the dalits who have been oppressed, misguided, confused and sidetracked by Brahminism, the poisonous flower of India, whose only object in life is power and position through treachery. India never had an 18th and the 19th century, which Europe had, and it will never have it as long as Brahminism exists here. I hope the Karnataka Dalit Action Committee, the Dalit Sahitya Academy through the Dalit Voice will pave the way for India's insurrection and renaissance that will dawn the light of equality in this ancient land of dalits. The educated Kerala is indifferent to science and facts. The educated dalits are indifferent to their rights and duties due to lack of intellectual activities. They hardly read Ambedkar works and not many know the great Periyar. Knowing a person means knowing his works. I know why they are indifferent. Only when they get kicked by their enemies, they will try to wake up from their slumber. That day is not far off. Gujarat has already started here in various offices and educated dalits have started running in desperation. I am asking them to read the literature brought out by the DSA and the Dalit Voice. The Kerala dalits look up to you for guidance. □

## GOVERNMENT CAN'T INTERFERE WITH CONVERSIONS, SAYS EXPERT

E. D. Devadason, a constitutional expert from Madras, says the State has absolutely no right to interfere with conversions. Any interference amounts to constitutional violation which can be challenged in the court.

The Hindu leaders who met in Ramanathapuram have called for a ban on conversions. An effort was made by the Janata Government to ban conversions through the RSS-sponsored Freedom of Religion Bill to curb Christians. But it didn't succeed. A similar demand is being made now. But the Constitution does not sanction such curbs.

Devadason says: When the Supreme Court in the context of the Emergency held that the right to propogate does not include the right to convert, it was sought to be corrected by jurists like Jethmalani by introducing a Bill in Parliament called The Freedom of Religion (Removal of Restriction) Bill to clarify that the right to propogate a religion is incomplete without winning any adherents to that religion. The word 'propogate' is used by all religions and indicates positive action. Conversion is a result of such propogation.

Therefore, as long as the Constitution guarantees the right to propogate, the people have the right to dispute the efficacy of one religion and extol the efficacy of another and to restrict such a right is unconstitutional.

The State has absolutely no responsibility to watch the working of the conscience of any citizen and only a totalitarian State seeks to do so. Propagation necessarily postulates winning over others from another fold. No one can say that a person has a right to argue but not to convince the other. In fact restriction on the right of conversion negates the secular character of the State as enshrined in the Preamble and infringes one of the basic features of the Constitution. Policing of this activity itself is an infringement of the freedom of speech and expression guaranteed under the Constitution. □

### **NEW CHAIRMAN FOR SC COMMISSION**

K. Rajamallu, MP, has been appointed chairman of the SC & ST commission in place of Bola Paswan Shastri, a former CM of Bihar. The Commission had already submitted two reports, but both of them are gathering dust. The first annual report was reviewed in the Dalit Voice of Aug. 1 and Shastri in a letter dt. July. 3 expressed appreciation of the work of the Karnataka Dalit Action Committee. As for the Dalit Sahitya Akademy, he says: "Your publications are quite informative and useful to the Dalits. The Commission would certainly like to place order".

While greeting the new chairman, we hope he would bring fresh enthusiasm to the commission. Being a ruling party

leader from Andhra he should try to implement the commission's recommendation regarding special police force comprising SCs to tackle caste riots. Our dalit comrades may write to the chairman at the Lok Nayak Bhavan, V floor, New Delhi-110003 or to K. Arumugham, IAS, Director of SCs & STs, Govt. of India, Shastri Bhavan, II Floor, V Block, Madras-600 006. Dalits all over India should also agitate for the implementation of the commission's findings. □

### **FELLOWSHIP FOR ASGHAR ALI**

BOMBAY: The Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi, has awarded a fellowship to Asghar Ali Engineer to work on the "Continuity and change in the dynamics of Muslim problem in India", the central board of the Dawoodi Bohra community said in a press release. □

## TRADE UNION STATUS FOR SC & ST EMPLOYEES UNIONS

**P. & T. DALIT Leader's Demand**

(our correspondent)

New Delhi: J. R. Antwal, chairman of the Federation of the All-India SCs and STs Employees, Posts and Telegraphs Dept., New Delhi, has demanded that service organisation of SCs and STs in different departments, nationalised banks, public undertakings etc. should be recognised by the Govt. and facilities should be given to fight on behalf of their members.

In a circular to members of his organisation, Antwal has offered a five-point plan to meet the rising discontent among the dalit employees. 1. Backlog in various cadres, services should be filled up within a stipulated period of two years. 2. At the time of initial recruitment itself, it should be ensured that reservations are fulfilled in every category of posts. 3. All appointments, training, promotions should be made simultaneously. The existing system is harmful to the interests of the dalits as they are made en bloc junior to non-dalit employees and they are appointed and promoted much later. Because of this, they lose seniority and financial benefits. Besides future promotions are also disturbed. This is the main reason why many posts are de-reserved. Therefore, it calls for a wholesale review of the entire mode of recruitment. Not only reservations in recruitment should be maintained but appointments and promotions should also be made accordingly. 4. Responsibility should be fixed upon the appointing authorities to see that the reserved vacancies are filled up. To ensure this in every Ministry and department there should be a special SC & ST cell.

Antwal's demands deserve serious consideration even by those dalits outside the P. & T. They should start agitation on this five-point plan.

Antwal in a four-page circular says that as days pass dalits are facing countless

cases of discrimination at the hands of the Hindus and because of this the dalits have developed a strong hatred for Hinduism. It is because of this hatred, dalits in different parts are going over to Islam. He calls upon the dalits to develop self-respect and never to stomach the insults of the Hindus. "A day's respectful life is better than a hundred years' life in subjugation and slavery. The SCs and STs must learn the art of dying to live a respectful life. They are not sheeps and goats to be killed and roasted alive in their own hutments", he says.

Meanwhile, all over India SC and ST organisations are realising the need to take to trade union activity. In Ahmedabad, the Dalit Panthers have succeeded in mobilising the mill workers and the success of the mill strike called by them during the Gujarat caste war has made the Panthers to launch into the trade union field. In the Reserve Bank, Railways and nationalised banks also the dalits are demanding trade union rights. The Labour Ministry has received a spate of demands to this effect. The High-power committee headed by Dr. Gopal Singh and the SC and ST Commission have also received similar representation. In Bangalore, the Karnataka Dalit Action Committee has already decided to enter the trade union field. In Madras, the different dalit employees unions are making such a preparation. The chief reason for the dalits to establish their own trade union is because existing trade unions have not bothered to look into the grievances of the dalits. In many cases the leadership of the recognised unions has joined hands with the management. □

## NO PROOF OF FOREIGN MONEY : PM

(Our correspondent)

Madras : The ghost of "foreign hand" and "Gulf money", said to be responsible for the mass conversion of untouchables in TN, has been at last laid to rest by the country's topmost authority, the Prime Minister herself.

She told newsmen in Madras on Sept. 11 that "there was no proof" of foreign money used in conversions. The Hindu, India's most important Brahmin paper which was chiefly responsible for raising this bogey, reported such an important statement as if it is of no consequence. The same statement almost went unreported in the country's press, which had described the mass conversions as a national crisis. The Hindu report (Sept 12)

said : "Replying to the question whether the Centre had any report that Gulf money had played a role in mass conversions, the Prime Minister said some people had suggested this. But there was no proof". Look at the way the "national press", owned by corrupt capitalists and manned by high caste journalists, are playing havoc with the lives of the minorities. What should have been a front page report, did not even see the light of the day. □

### ANNOUNCEMENT

With this the Dalit Voice has completed seven 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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