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PERIYAR'S BIRTHDAY
SPECIAL ISSUE



- * PERIYAR'S BIRTHDAY :
LET US ACCOMPLISH HIS IDEALS !
- * JJ'S STATE TERRORISM
- * PERIYAR ON NATIONAL LIBERATION
- * TAMIL EELAM : TAMILS IN CANADA

PERIYAR ERA

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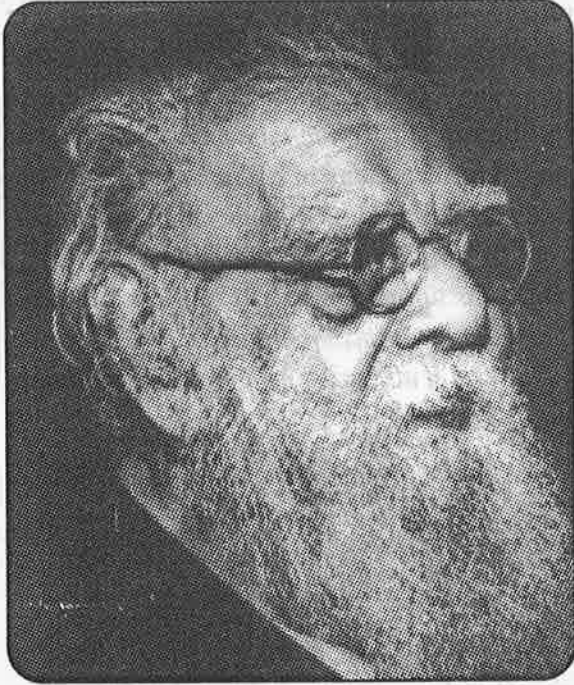
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EDITORIAL

PERIYAR'S BIRTHDAY: LET US ACCOMPLISH HIS IDEALS!



Periyar E.V.R'S 123rd birthday will be celebrated by the Tamils in Tamil nadu and elsewhere and the people of down trodden classes and humanists and rationalists all over India and abroad on the 17th of September 2001. It is being done as a routine affair from 1939 onwards. But it is a pity that no individual or organisation had taken initiative to calculate to what extent his ideals have been accomplished during the past 75 years from 1926.

Periyar E.V.R strived hard for over 60 years to achieve equality in the society in which he was born. Human dignity was absent; equality was not there among groups of Tamilians and others. This was because of divisions perpetuated in the name of Varnashrama dharma and age old customs imposed by shastras. This has taken deeper and stronger roots because of royal patronage for over 2000 years.

Periyar gave a heavy blow on the inhuman attitude and outmoded practices. It made a section of the people to think aloud and work for winning dignity and equality among the people. Some of the laws adopted by the Govt. of India during 1955 and 1956 and by the Government of Tamil nadu between 1924 and 1971 have helped to bring in equality between men and women in certain matters and between high and low classes and castes to some extent. But protection for observing Varnashrama dharma is still there on the strength of the legal provisions in the Hindu Law, in the Indian Constitution and the decisions of the higher and the highest courts. Neither the all India parties or the regional political parties, nor the Dravidian political outfits have taken cognisance of this awkward situation and initiated any measure to abolish such protection to Varnashrama dharma. Even after acquiring sufficient education, attaining a good level of culture and securing positions in the legislature and administrative spheres and an assured source of income crores of people belonging to Hindu religion are characterised and treated as the 4th and 5th castes on the basis of birth, even in 2001.

The new millennium is hailed as hall mark of human progress because of the rapid development in the spheres of communication and space technology. But at the same time the heads of Christianity, Islam and Hindu religions have vowed to achieve supremacy over the others in Asia, West and India respectively. This deserves to be taken note of seriously by all right thinking men and women. Such hypocracies based on religious superstitions and racial chauvinism have to be exposed and fought against. This has to be done in Tamilnadu, in India and in other countries of the world by rationalists and humanists. It is appropriate for us to take a vow on this occasion to eradicate this malicious position and achieve equality in Indian society.

In India even democratic rights in the spheres of dispensation of education to all and distribution of appointments and posts to every segment of Indians have been denied by the ruling classes even after the Britishers have quit. A considerable section of the women belonging to scheduled castes/tribes is kept illiterate. Untouchability, seclusion, and landlessness have kept one fourth of the Indian population - the S.Cs and S.Ts voiceless dumb and deaf.

The Socially and Educationally backward classes among Hindus, Muslims, Christians and others who constitute over 60% of the Indian population remain deprived of due opportunities in acquiring higher and highest education and securing jobs and posts in administration, Judiciary and other wings of the Governments under the States and the Centre. They are denied proportional share in the spheres of higher, technological and science education and employment under the Government and also economic and trade ventures supported by the States and the Centre. The existing constitutional provisions for reservation in education and employment is interpreted by the judiciary to suit the object of maintaining the supremacy and domination of the high castes and land-owning classes who constitute only 15% of the total Indian population. This is being deliberately done in the garb of maintaining merit in the sphere of education and of merit and efficiency in the fields of administration and judiciary. This pernicious and prejudicial situation has to be changed at a faster pace and these injustices removed through necessary constitutional amendments and making rules and regulations sufficient for strict implementation of proportional reservation to B.Cs for fairly a long time to come. These have to be accomplished by the Periyarists, Ambedkarites and Lohiites in India with the active cooperation of leaders of all parties who profess real faith in democracy and who work for securing equality and dignity in the society.

Periyar E.V.R was the foremost of all the social revolutionaries who stood, upheld and fought for equal rights of women in family, social, political, administrative, economic and other spheres. It is true that the 50 crores of women of all religions in India irrespective of region, language and attainment of literacy, remain subjugated and treated as low class citizens in private and public life.

Modern day women liberators are afraid of shaking off the religious and caste based manners, beliefs and customs among the women and then raise louder voices for equal share in jobs and property ownership for women.

In the absence of right type of women liberation movements, atrocities against women are left unnoticed, uncared for and unattended to and thus left unremedied

In India where illiteracy is there in rural parts and among large section of women, secularism has become a mockery. To pray the almighty God, if one such exists, does not mean that one should pray before an idol made of stone or metal. To inculcate beliefs in the existence of-god, men with supernatural powers and of performing of religious rituals and ceremonies - in the minds of the young through education, through religious congregations, through lectures and through print and electronic media is totally against the principle of secularism. The "secular activity" that is expected of the State Governments and the Centre simply aims at overseeing the temples, mosques and gurdwaras and make them to administer their respective financial resources in proper manner and further to assist them to carry on all rituals, ceremonies and festivals according to the religious books of the concerned. Such a protection in the Constitution in Article 25(2)(a) has enabled and encouraged the Hindu, Islam, Christian and other religious leaders to vie with one another to carry on religious propaganda in a virulent manner.

The present Government of India presided over by the B.J.P has taken a very wrong step to introduce vedic Science, vedic astrology and simple Sanskrit lessons in colleges and schools in the name of "Indianising education." It is nothing but "Hinduisation" and "Brahminisation" of education at the cost of the state and at the expense of

tax payers and murdering of democracy and killing of the 'Sprit of inquiry' and tampering with the development of 'sprit of scientific temper'. It is against humanism and rationalism and the existing provisions of the constitution.

Let us all- the down trodden men and the women awake from the age old slumber and become conscious of our due and just rights in all spheres of life and fight to accomplish the unfinished tasks left by Mahatma Phule Periyar E.V.Ramasami, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and Dr. R.M. Lohia and that will be a fitting birthday tribute to Periyar EVR.

1.9.2001

V. ANAIMUTHU

DECONSTRUCTING THE LEGEND



EACH of us has our first memory of Phoolan Devi. Mine is a faint recollection of a short news report in 1981 of the killings of 22 men in Behmai. Naturally, it was what Phoolan Devi had done and not what was done to her that first made her a public personality. She had been raped at 10 by her "husband," gang-raped again by the police in her late teens and then again by upper-caste dacoits who resented this low-caste woman becoming a leader of a gang of dacoits. Yet, such happenings had not become news because it was acceptable to perpetrate violence on a person who refused to accept her position in society.

Now that Phoolan Devi is no longer around, the familiar process has begun of stripping the personality of a dead person who was never really in the centre of society. That she was not a feared dacoit. She never really led a gang. And she never really engaged the police in an encounter. This is all part of the effort to "deconstruct" the legend. The truth is that we were never quite comfortable with Phoolan Devi, not once but

twice, becoming a Member of Parliament. We knew what she had lived through and that made us a bit circumspect about expressing a definite negative opinion about her new role. But we could not get ourselves to accept that a low-caste former dacoit and alleged murderess could sit in the Lok Sabha.

It was always easy to see Phoolan Devi the MP as an example of the criminalisation of politics. There can be no justification for the Behmai massacre, least of all as retribution for what society had done to Phoolan Devi. **But why is it that when gangsters, smugglers and dacoits sit in Parliament that is criminalisation of politics, and it is not the same thing with political personalities in high positions who have provoked / organised communal, caste and linguistic riots? Phoolan Devi must have rubbed shoulders with many such "legitimate and respectable" political workers who had the blood of hundreds on their hands.**

Phoolan Devi was and will always be a

mystery. There were many personas, many legends and she was an icon of many kinds. For now, she is perhaps best remembered as an example of the "criminalisation of society," not of politics. Society never gave this intelligent girl/woman a chance to live a life of dignity. First, it denied her a childhood. Then, because she refused to accept a life ordained by her birth, position and family poverty, it brutalised her, made her an outcaste and later a criminal. Even after Phoolan Devi was brought into the "mainstream", she did not get a second chance of living with dignity. Legitimate society appropriated her for its own ends - **as an anointed leader of the low-castes, as a feminist from the Chambal ravines and as a late 20th Century woman Robin Hood.**

In retrospect, Phoolan Devi had a smaller chance of survival in New Delhi than in the Chambal. She made the headlines once again, she was hailed as a leader of the low-castes and in 1996 had a stunning electoral victory. But she had become a pawn of the legitimate political process which finally consumed her.

Even after the courts give their judgment, who killed her and why will become as much a mystery as her own life was. India's society probably killed her when it got her married at 10. There are Phoolans being created every day, though most of them do not become leaders of dacoit gangs. And for every brutalised Phoolan who rebels against her situation, there must be 10 who are crushed by "criminalised" society.

("THE HINDU", 5-8-2001)

terrorists. Why did not Eelam Tamils around the world mount a counter?

It is reported that there are two popular Tamil dailies and 24 hour Tamil radio and TV facilities in Canada. Can't these facilities be used to educate Eelam Tamils to unite and work to a plan to achieve Tamil Eelam? Why can't these facilities cry out to the world about the atrocities committed by Singhalese on Tamils in Sri Lanka. If communication Programmes are well planned and executed they will surely attract world attention. We do not hear much about the activities of Eelam Tamils in America. But there seems to be more enthusiasm and activity connected with Tamil Eelam in Canada, U.K., Europe and Australia.

The one lakh Eelam Tamil refugees in India are a dead loss to Tamil Eelam. After Rajiv Gandhi's murder the Eelam Tamil refugees in Tamil Nadu have been placed under Police supervision. Eelam Tamils in Tamil Nadu cannot speak in support of Tamil Eelam. As of now it looks India will not allow Tamil Eelam even if the Singhalese come round to the reality of Tamil Eelam.

Eelam Tamils around the world in addition to helping Eelam Tamils in Sri Lanka must also keep an eye on the psychologically wounded Eelam Tamils in Tamil Nadu. Six crores Tamils in Tamil Nadu are engaged in fratricidal warfare and they have no time for Tamils around the world.

Eelam Tamils around the world, especially in Canada must turn their

attention on Eelam Tamils in Tamil Nadu, now and then to keep in touch with the topsy tury politics of Tamil Nadu. There is no chance of the one lakh Eelam Tamils in Tamil Nadu doing anything for themselves or their people in Sri Lanka because they are in chains themselves

Conclusions

We hope we have convinced the 2.5 Lakh strong Eelam Tamils assembled in one place in Canada with all modern facilities at their command, that they can play a crucial role in setting up a separate state of Tamil Eelam. Five good Eelam Tamils with talent and dedication can start the ball

rolling. They must declare, every Saturday a Tamil Eelam day. All Eelam Tamils in Canada must meet at a neighbourhood centre and devote the day for work to set up a separate state of Tamil Eelam.

We sincerely hope the example of Canada will lead other Eelam Tamils around the world to follow suit and make Thanthai Chelva's dream of a separate state of Tamil Eelam come true. We Eelam Tamils are heirs to a wonderful ancient language, literature and culture and we certainly can make our contributions to the world as free members of the United Nations.

1.9.2001

S.A. DAVID

BIRTHDAY LUNCHEON PARTY HOSTED BY PARITHIDASAN alias VENKATESAN



Parithi Dasan alias P.S. Venkatesan of Malaysia celebrated his 67th birthday on the evening of 24.8.2001 at APOORVA FAST FOOD HOTEL, Anna nagar, Chennai

Near and dear friends and comrades of Parithidasan spoke on his contribution to Tamil literature and his role in the successful running of the Tamil Cultural Movement for the advancement of Malaysian Tamils for several years.

He has authored four books in Tamil on literature, short stories and grammar for beginners.

"PERIYAR E.V.R ON SOCIOLOGY"

An article on "PERIYAR E.V.R ON SOCIOLOGY", translation of writings and speeches of Periyar E.V.R. by S.A. DAVID, will be serialised and published from October 2001 issue.

- Editor - in - Chief

Sivaji Ganesan, the Legendary - A symbol of Suppressed Tamilian

Nanchil

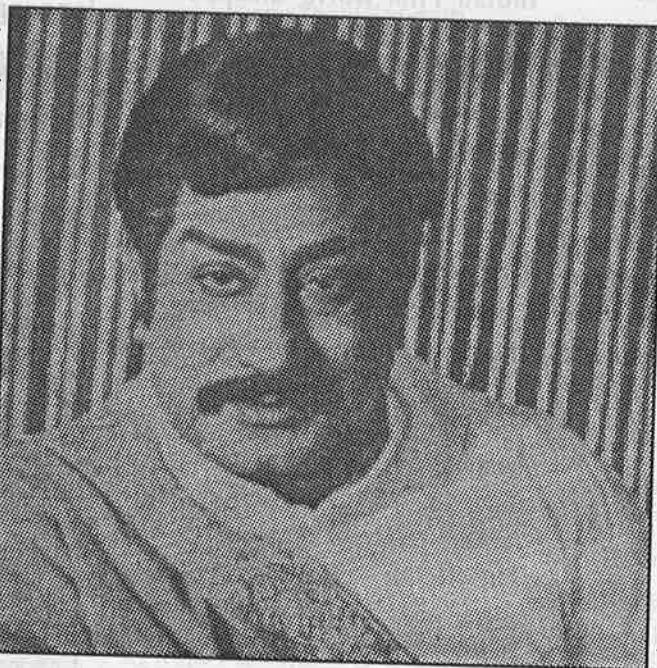
Sivaji Ganesan who remained the Legendary in the Film Field for over 50 years, passed away on 21.7.2001. Starting his career from the theatre, he entered film field through the famous "Parasakthi", almost lived through every character he had to represent numbering little over 300, has left with the "Sivaji Method of Acting."

It is a lifetime experience to view his movies while he was living amongst us. As Gunasekaran, an angry young man fumed at the state of affairs of this country (in Parasakthi), as Villain, as Romantic Hero, as Comedian, as innocent devoted servant, as monarch, as patriot roaring against invading Britishers, as old saint Appar, as V.O. Chithambaram Pillai, as Othello, as Sacratiss, as Sivaji... an astonishing list he displayed his entire talent to live in our memories for years to come.

His "shift" from the Self Respect Movement to the Indian Nationalism, although claimed by few as "translating from social reform to political entity", the truth lies elsewhere. While the Self Respect Ideology stood for the formation of a casteless society, the Indian Nationalism is the assertion of the

"status-quo" of the fragmented society. As the intellectual wing of the Dravidian movement used cinema as a tool for their ideological propaganda, the ruling Congress Govt. banned scores of films

were busy in "Box Office Hits" and the poor man submitted himself before the greedy, self-centered producers and directors. They never visualised the vast world outside India which was waiting for such a talent at the international arena, with themes of Realism (and without masalas)



UNFINISHED TASK

The doyan of Tamil film world has passed away with unfulfilled dream, cherished by him and kept close to his heart. His desire to take up the role of Periyar E.V.R. has been burnt alive along with his body. Villupuram Chinnayya Ganesan came to Chennai in the early 40's; It was time that the Self Respect Movement under the leadership of Periyar shook Tamil Nadu like a storm with three pronged torches - Social Equality, Socialism and Freedom. V.C. Ganesan joined the mainstream and on his part appeared in dramas propagating the ideals of Self Respect Movement. Once Periyar was asked to witness Anna's drama - "Sivaji Kanda Indhu Raajyam"; The story was a pet theme for Periyar exposing the cunning, vile and mean characters of brahmins who exploited the valour of the warriors in the name of "Hindu Dharma". Ganesan's action moved Periyar, who announced on the stage itself that V.C.



PERIYAR ON NATIONAL LIBERATION

Introduction

To understand and appreciate the thoughts of Periyar E.V. Ramasamy it is instructive to see them against the background of his unique life.

Periyar E.V.R. was born on 17.9.1879 at Erode in Tamil Nadu as the son of a rich merchant. He was born with a silver spoon in his mouth and never had the need to work for a living. This left a sense of sturdy independence in his outlook on life. He approached the problems in life with supreme confidence and ease. He was a giant of a man in body and mind and was a born leader of man.

He was a rebel by instincts. Even as a mere child he broke all caste rules and superstitious religious observances and made fun of blind beliefs of priests and pundits.

His formal education stopped at the primary level. He learnt his lessons at the hard school of life. He was a self made man who has written volumes on economics, sociology, politics, culture, philosophy and religion with keen insight and originality. It is said that if all his writings are printed it will run into more than 50 large volumes of six hundred pages each.

Periyar was an accomplished total personality. He thought deeply, spoke

with power and conviction, wrote volumes with ease, and charm. He has left behind a treasure house of knowledge for the Tamils.

The distinctive quality of Periyar's life is rational humanism. The motive power for his tireless work upto the age of 95 came out of love and compassion to humanity, particularly to the weak and down trodden in India especially the Tamils. Rationalism was the hall mark of his methodology. Anything outside reason he simply ignored and at times sharply ridiculed.

Periyar's guide to knowledge was through conversations with experts in many fields and reading of Aryan, Dravidan history, Hindu Vedas, Sastras and epics. It is reported that he studied 27 different versions of Valmiki Ramayana, may be to get to the heart of the Aryan - Dravidian conflict.

Periyar's greatest achievement was that he fathomed the depth of the inequity of the Indian brahmin and has recorded it in black and white in immortal Tamil prose for generations to come.

Periyar started his public life as a worker in the Indian Congress and came very close to the brahmins. He studied their trickery and inhumanity and resolved to fight them to a finish, after the Kanchipuram Congress Conference in 1925.

In 1929 at the First Self - Respect Chengalpattu Conference he formally proclaimed the "Self - Respect" movement to challenge Aryan and

brahmin arrogance and deceit. In 1946 at Madurai he held "Black shirts' brigade conference and declared "Dravida Nadu Separation Day' in 1947 and spread the message in all parts of Tamil Nadu.

Step by step through agitation against caste, religious bigotry, Hindi imposition, proportional representation to all segments of population, right to temple entry he was preparing the Tamils for National Liberation from Aryan, brahmin domination. In the thick of the fight Periyar breathed his last on 24.12.1973.

It is a tragedy of the first magnitude that Periyar's followers have betrayed his trust and are sunk deep in the mud and mire of political intrigue and corruption.

We have on purpose written a lengthy Introduction to prepare the reader for the fireworks of Periyar EVR's thoughts on National Liberation. Periyar's demand for "Dravida Nadu for Dravidinas' in 1939 and later "Tamil Nadu for Tamils' in 1956 is the climax of a noble, glorious life.

National Liberation

Before we take up Periyar's thoughts and fiery words on National Liberation as exemplified in his demand for "Dravida Nadu for Dravidians", we will try to understand the meaning of the words "Nation' and "Liberation'.

According to United Nations definition - Nation is a group of

people connected by race, language, religion and culture and live in a distinct area of land. They are of one mind and are united in the preservation of their cultural heritage.

When we read Periyar's words we will see how forcefully and poetically he visualises "Nationalism" (see quote 23)

Liberation presupposes suppression. If there is no suppression many groups of people can live at peace together. It is suppression by arrogant majorities that has led towards of liberations all over the world. There are many examples in history. There is a war of liberation taking its toll in Sri Lanka during the period of the last 20 years. India is precariously poised for series of wars of liberations in the near future.

Periyar's thoughts on National Liberation

We have selected passages from Periyar's ideas on "Dravida Nadu for Dravidians" from vol.2, pages 694 to 721 in "Thoughts of Periyar EVR" edited by Comrade V. Anaimuthu.

It is very hard to bring on faithfully the fiery spirit of Periyar EVR in translation, still we have made an attempt for the benefit of our readers.

1. "Dravidian people and Dravidian land must be saved from Aryan domination" p.694.

2. "If we wish our world famous arts, culture and civilisation to progress and shine in the world we must liberate our land" p.694.

3. "All we ask is that others should not monopolise our economy, arts and culture" p.695.

4. "Will not the owner of a land

put a fence around his fields to keep out cattle and goats. Is it wrong for him to fence his land?" p.695

5. "Hence till we reach our goal we must raise our voice and work hard." p.695.

6. "All the people in India do not belong to one family. We are not children of the same mother. We do not have the same father. We belong to different families. Can a jailor or superintendent be the head of a family?" p.695

7. "Hence if we demand freedom from the European, Freedom for growth and self respect, what right has the Aryan to object?" p.696.

8. "Our demand is not new. Aryan and Dravidan conflict is there from the time of the vedas." p.696.

9. "Compare the Aryan and the Dravidian. Is the Aryan sweeping roads? Is he carrying heavy loads? Is he driving carts? Is he working as a peon? Is he ploughing? Is he harvesting? Does he perspire one drop of sweat on his body? Are his hands soiled? Compare the life of the Aryan with the life of the Dravidian." p.695.

10. "To spread Hindi, the Multani, Gujarati and Marwari are donating lakhs. At the Hindi mandal, brahmins are spending Rs.20,000/- Rs.30,000/- . Costly buildings are built. Life in the Mandal is like life in Aurobindo, Rama Krishna and Ramana Ashrams." p.697.

11. "Dravidians in Bombay are working as coolies and barbers and living in hovels as untouchables. But Patels, Desais and Birla and Bajaj are sucking blood of the Dravidians and are living in marble palaces with 3 to 4 cars and 2 to 3 Bombay prostitutes." p.697

12. "We can progress economically and socially if we Dravidians attain separation. Look at Burma and Ceylon." p.697.

13. "If Dravidians want to know themselves and be proud of their country and achieve progress, the Dravidians must achieve separation." p.698.

14. "The Madras Mail' paper on 22.11.1944 wrote an editorial. The demand for Dravidanadu implies total freedom. Anything less will not be acceptable. Jinnah may come down but comrade Ramasamy will not yield even in inch." p.700

16. "How can we demand freedom? 90 percent of Dravidians are illiterate. 90 percent have no idea of the birth and history of their race. They have no reasoning power. They are steeped in superstition. 80 percent are thoroughly selfish. They will never unite to achieve a good thing." p.702.

17. "The concept of Dravidanadu is purely economic and social. It is not a political issue. Exploitation and untouchability must be removed. Our land must not be a market for foreigners or people of other states." p.703

18. "At the Thiruvarur convention in 1940 we resolved we must not call ourselves, 'Indians' and 'Hindus' and instead we must call ourselves, 'Dravidians' and 'rationalists' p.704.

19. "If we call ourselves Hindus, by varnasrama dharma, we will become the 4th and 5th castes after Brahmins, Kashtriyas and Vyshyas, we will be low and degraded" p.704

20. "In the Trichy convention in 1945, we removed the word 'India' and substituted the word, 'Dravida Nadu'. Politics, sociology, economics,

The sandhai has 178 sheds. The farmers are coming there from 208 villages. The average arrival of vegetables is put at 42.940 kg per day.

"Even in the evenings the sandhai remained opened. The Agricultural Marketing Society identified it as a Model Uzhavar Sandhai."

The minister was in deep contemplation with his cheeks cupped up- by the palm of his left hand and its elbow seated on his left thigh. The minister whispered into the ears of his P.A.:

"Could the A.M. Society be dissolved and formed a new one with the induction of our henchmen?" The PA was astonished at the ignorance of the minister who was not aware that it didn't belong to his portfolio

SCENE -2

The minister for village industries and khaddar went to attend a marriage function of his relative. After the function was over he was relaxing. Some farmers, some men and women from the public met him in the government Rest House.

"All over Tamil Nadu wherever the farmers' markets exist, demonstrations are taking place opposing the closing down of the markets. So you must withdraw the policy of closure. We submit this petition to you", the farmers in chorus!

"Stop this, I have come here to relax. Simply because there is opposition, should we withdraw the order? Don't you understand it is a plot hatched by the DMK to justify the retention of these markets."

"Sir, we are the farmers. We have nothing to do with the DMK. The Uzhavar Markets benefit us. That is why... we have come here to give the petition...."

"You are all hard working farmers. Don't you realise the weekly sandhais are quite good opening to market your vegetables. You are for years accustomed to weekly markets.... on a particular day every week."

"Sir, Uzhavar Sandhai is a better substitute... in many ways... than weekly vegetable markets. In the former there is no middlemen. Only fresh vegetables are being sold daily... Uzhavar Sandhais are 1000 times better, sir!"

The minister lost his temper and yelled at the farmers: "You are partisan, being the DMK sympathisers."

"Sir, please hear us... At least you are a good Minister... because atleast you received us. But... if you don't believe us.. your government official told us that weekly sandhais would not be a substitute for Uzhavar Sandhais. Because in the latter there are not middlemen... Actually the farmers are earning 20 to 25 percent more in the new dispensation."

The minister impatiently asked who that official was! The farmers pleaded with him not to ask, and said in a low voice:

"Not one official but many!... hold the same opinion. They told us not to divulge their names."

The minister looked askance at what farmers told him. He called the P.A. aside.

"Take steps to transfer those officials to far off places where the land is dry, water is the most scarce commodity...."

"We don't know who they are..."

"No... ask the police to find out", The curtain falls.

SCENE - 3

All MLAs of the ruling party meet. The C.M. presides. Having committed to the winding up of the "non-functioning' Uzhavar Sandhais, the unexpected pro - Uzhavar Market demonstrations and the parties' appeal to withdraw the order to closure have made the CM feel like a brahmin lady who lost her dry fish pickles! She starts eliciting the views of her MLAs who are nervous as they have to adjust their opinion to her unexpectedly changing mood-without being bold to express their ideas freely.

The MLA from Vellore District reads the report on protests against closure. Other MLAs from Thanjavur and Tiruvarur districts as well as from Erode, Salem and Coimbatore districts read their reports on protests.

All reports seem to the CM, to be the same as though copied from one another - all being non-committal! Then the minister rises up to give the gist of these reports. He is new to the political profession and also unaccustomed to the changing mood of the C.M.

He starts speaking the truth as reported in the news sheets.

"Farmers in Katpadi picketed the market. Protests continued in Salem for the second day. In Thanjavur and Tiruvarur districts, farmers demanded improvements to Uzhavar Sandhai and protested against closure."

"Is it your tailored version in favour of the farmer's market?", the CM shoots at him.

Shaking with fear and getting emotional! he almost shouted, ""No... No...!" and stopped abruptly!

"Remember. you are nothing but for my favour... to you! You must give reasons for abolishing the market."

Another minister is called to read the report. He rises up frightened, and gets the report sheet from his colleague, utterly confounded by sudden call from the leader, he reads it without editing it then and there, to please the madam:

"In Vellore the markets, have been well patronised since they were started more than a year ago. Their success is due to reasonable prices, correct weight and the customer - friendly behaviour of the farmers."

"Stop this, who prepared this report sheet? Don't you realise our policy is to dismantle the whole edifice of the DMK regime?" the CM roared.

Continuing her blast, she almost thundered in rage: "You are all ministers to carry out our policy..." The P.A. intervened and said in low voice: "Leaders of other parties have given statements to the press, not to close down the Uzhavar Sandhais."

"Who are they?" the CM barked.

"Kumari Anandan, the Thondar Congress founder; G.A. Vadivelu, State President of the Janata Dal (Secular); Vazhapadi K. Ramamurthy of Tamizhaga Rajiv Congress. And others....", said the P.A.

The P.A. - very clever... and cunning man - whispered into the ears of the C.M. The C.M. then - much relieved - spoke in a determined tone, to the ministers in anxiety!

"My policy to close down the non-functioning Uzhavar Sandhais stands. Without wasting time the ministers should go back to their places and close down the non-functioning sandhais without giving them time to develop and improve. You must find ways and means to put obstacles to the functioning ones so that they would also

become non-functioning. At the end all Uzhavar Sandhais should be declared non-functioning, and closed down."

"One of the ministers (who was the student of English Literature), a full-fledged partyman who worships the Chief Minister - rises up with hands up, and warms up himself and says:

"Madam, you are really great! As the business magnet in one of Somerset Maugham's short stories has solved the unemployment problem by billing the unemployed you are going to close down all the Uzhavar

Sandhais by declaring them to have become "non-functioning!"

The Chief Minister laughs. Ministers leave the meeting. One Minister mischievously refers to the short story and exclaims:

"Our Amma, like that business magnet, is going to kill the Uzhavar Sandhais! She is really great!"

His colleagues laughed slightly but frightened at the remark, left him without a word!

The curtain falls...

Govt. To Celebrate Sanskrit Week

By Our Special Correspondent

Undeterred by the criticism against using scarce resources to set up "Simple Sanskrit Speaking Centres" under the aegis of the University Grants Commission (UGC), the Government has now decided to celebrate Sanskrit Week every year in the first week of August as part of its ongoing effort to use the classical language as a tool for national integration. Though the decision to celebrate 'Shravani Purnima' as Sanskrit Day was taken way back in 1969 and even today critics of saffronisation of education have nothing against the study of the language, the Government's latest decision is likely to raise a number of eyebrows; particularly because of the link that is sought to be established between Sanskrit and national integration.

Highlighting "the importance of Sanskrit as a potent factor in national integration", the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) has written to the Education Secretaries of all States and Union Territories, and the Vice-Chancellors of universities with Sanskrit Departments informing them about the decision and suggesting measures to popularise the "mother" of most Indian languages.

That the effort to broaden Sanskrit is evident from the activities suggested by MHRD for Sanskrit Week. According to the Ministry, programmes highlighting popular aspects of the language and literature could be organised to "arouse popular interest in Sanskrit." Earlier this year, the University Grants Commission (UGC) had decided to set up "Simple Sanskrit Speaking Centres" in selected universities to facilitate better understanding of the country's heritage and provide a window to the scientific achievements of ancient India.

For this academic year, the UGC had set aside Rs. 1 crore from its budget for setting up these centres even as cash-strapped universities across the country clamoured for higher allocation for their regular courses. As per the UGC proposal, 50 such centres are to be set up in various universities this year with an annual allocation of Rs. 2 lakhs.

But even as the Government is stepping up its efforts to revive interest in Sanskrit, progress is slow if not on the wane. Though the Government had provided Rs. 14 crores for all the schemes under the Development of Sanskrit in the last financial year, the demand from States for financial assistance under this scheme appears to have tapered off.

Not now, but soon, Vajpayee may quit. Then?

What will happen if Vajpayeeji actually quits? We can be sure of what will NOT happen: The skies will not fall.

Indian skies, that is. The BJP's skies may indeed fall. If this party enjoys a measure of acceptance in India today, it is because of Vajpayee's persona. The sectarian bigots in the party hate him the more for this. But they know that they cannot manage without the Vajpayee mask.

If he calls it a day, no one in the top echelons of the party will find the general acceptance necessary to form a government. Without the mask, the hardness of an Advani and the monomania of a Murli Manohar Joshi will stand out in sharp relief.

George Fernandes recognised this early on in the game. He thought he was moving all the pieces carefully and cleverly, pleasing the circles that mattered, positioning himself as *mukhota, dusrah varg*. He saw himself as a compromise prime minister in a post - Vajpayee free-for-all. The accursed Tehelka messed up all that though Fernandesji hasn't given up.

It is not that the BJP does not have leaders capable of commanding respect beyond the party's limited vision. Sushma Swaraj and Arun Jaitley and even Pramod Mahajan represent a non-rigid, and therefore

less suspect, political line - the same sort of liberal culture that makes Vajpayee popular. For that very reason, they will be thwarted by the diehard old guard.

The irony is that Vajpayee sounded quite genuine when he made those memorable "confessions" - that he is old and unwell and must give up the chair. He does look older than he is. He feels his age. He is infirm as he ambles along, especially in the company of sprightly leaders like Clinton and Musharraf. Physical problems take on an unkind edge in the television age. So, if not this time, at the next opportune moment, he will find a way to lay down the thankless job of leading a team that's not a team.

That means an election, for there is no way a Vajpayee-less NDA can agree on a new supreme leader. That in turn could well mean the Congress emerging as the single largest party. The warlords in north India's fiefdoms, castaways like V.P.Singh and Deve Gowda, single-point operators like Chandrashekhar and Sharad Pawar and the lost sheep of the Left are too disparate, incompatible and riddled with contrariness to ever put Humpty Dumpty together again. **The Great Indian Tragedy remains: Ideologies are dead and Power alone matters.**

There is nothing intrinsically wrong in the Congress emerging somewhere

up front and putting a coalition together. Unfortunately it will mean a return to the biggest insult to Indian democracy: dynastic rule. A Congress without the dynastic factor could have produced a capable cadre of leaders. But the Digvijay Singhs and the S.M. Krishnas are condemned to serve the Madam before they can serve the country.

We have no leaders of the kind Rajagopalachari once visualised. "A deaf government and a dumb people do not make democracy," he said. "A knitting together of people's hearts makes democracy, the hearts being not of sheep, but of men."

What we have are Tricolour sheep and Saffron sheep and colourless sheep and colour changing sheep. Not knitting them together but keeping them apart, manipulative leaders manipulate stock exchanges, investment trusts and defence purchases. The anarchy functions only by the grace of God.

India's crisis of governability is highlighted every time a Vajpayee sunset or a dynastic sunrise looms. If one sets and another rises, the skies won't fall. But the days won't be any brighter either.

(Courtesy: "The New Indian Express", 5-8-2001)

(Continuation from Wrapper IV)

vindictive judgement in the case of a lower caste women (working in government service in a particular state, perhaps Rajasthan) who was raped by upper caste men which included a brahmin, was that the victim being a lower caste woman could not attract upper caste men for the purpose of sexual intercourse.. and hence the story of rape of a low - caste woman by high - caste men could not be but a concocted story!

Here is a brief report on which Dr. Meena Radhakrishna has to say about the tribes who are, according to that social anthropologist, "Dishonoured by history"

- Sansis, Pandhis, Kanjors, Gujjars, Bawarias, Banjaras and almost 200 such communities are condemned as criminal tribes.

- It is alleged that a group of Sansis committed a gruesome murder of an elderly couple to rob them of all their valuables; a group of Pardhis had brutally done to death a lonely woman...! How flagrantly the privileged classes conduct television programmes on these tribes putting the fear of the devil in the minds of the terrified viewers! As a result, the privileged sections subject the educated members of these so-called criminal tribes to deep suspicion and insults.

- In several rural areas in Gujarat the dalit women were beaten up by caste Hindus for their having drawn water from the well where the upper caste members were alone drawing water.

- In 1992 In Rajasthan 17 dalits were killed. This Kumher massacre was the worst ever caste carnage

- There had been going on a deeply motivated mischievous propaganda against the dalits that they were the people without brains.

-Thousands of dalit women In Rajasthan work as scavengers, The news report runs thus. These dalits clean dry latrines daily for as little as a roti a day and Rs 5 per household each month. They carry night soil in containers on their heads to a dumping place. The dalit women fighting against this practice meet with stiff social, upper caste resistance.

- As early as 1993, a dalit girl of 17 belonging to the Irula Community was raped by policemen In South Arcot district, Tamil nadu

The unbearable insults, heart - breaking rapes and cold - blooded murders - the dalits and other under - privileged sections of the society have been subjected to by the upper caste - upper class nexus as well as the ruling classes... for ages! Somebody - courageous enough - should have come forward to fight against the oppressor!.. Phoolan Devi is that somebody to fight for the depressed classes!

At the age of eleven Phoolan got married. At this small age she was exposed to home family violence. At her 17th year she was raped... gang raped. She was thrown to dust but she rose from it with a gun in her hand, and riding on a horse.

Yes, she was a queen... bandid queen In the Chambal ravines. For about 10 years, 1973 to 1983 she was a woman-bandid riding on a horse with a gun in hand! To see her picture is to feel this! And I started (when I was in my forties!) reciting a ballad:

"The highway man comes riding, riding, riding..."

She voluntarily surrendered in 1983 and for 11 years she was in prison. She was released in 1994 on the basis of a Supreme Court's ruling in a leading case that an under-trial prisoner should not be kept in jail for a period exceeding the maximum prison term awarded on conviction.

Vijayawada - based Lavanam (who called himself a humanist) questioned this while both of us were discussing this - I don't know why he was (being a humanist!) spitting fire of hatred at Phoolan! Because the upper caste men don't have sympathy for her as she belongs to the lower caste!

O! yonder! Hear the "thud' "thud"... of the horse coming galloping... In the Chambal...

"The highway woman Phoolan comes riding, riding, riding...."

- M.K.S.

LAST PAGE

THE GIRL WITH THE GUN

The roar of the waves, on the shore, the fastly moving gale, the torrential rains, the gushing floods, the fall of giant trees in a thick forest, the jump of the tiger, the leap of the leopard, the spread of wild fire - which are all commonly attributed to Nature's Fury - feed in me a sense of awe and wonder, a mixed feeling of fright and fascination and even a rare thirst for such a fury, such an outburst, such a violence in me in imitation of Nature herself. If not I, it was Phoolan Devi, the victim of a male - dominant and caste - ridden society who had in her the mounting flames of fury growing against the upper - caste rapists. Nature would rise in fury against man when he wounds the earth! Phoolan rose in fury against man as he wounded her! As he raped her!

Phoolan Devi who was born a poor, rural, much abhorred Dalit girl, inhaled the air of Nature and inherited its fury when she was gang - raped about 28 years back by upper - caste men. This was the case of a twin crime of unspeakable horror. The rape of a girl of 16 or 17 is a cruel crime. But more cruel, nay, many times more cruel crime was the gang - raping of the girl. And this could occur only in a male dominant society! And the rape of the low caste girl by upper caste men could occur only in a caste - ridden society!

In a caste - ridden, male - dominant society there had been many such instances of raping and gang - raping of lower caste women by upper caste men. The brahmin - bania media may give tremendous focus to raping and gang-raping but never utter a word about the involvement of upper caste men in the molestation of lower caste women.

There had been, and there are several instances... in several places ... in Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and other states... which illustrate the awful plight of the backwards and the depressed at the wicked hands of the upper class - caste men of Bania - Brahmin axis. One most

(Continued on Wrapper III page)

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