

POVERTY OF IDENTITY POLITICS: A Planetarium of Brainless Blunders

"What are you working on?" Mr. K. was asked. Mr. K. replied: "I'm having a hard time; I'm preparing my next mistake."

(Bertolt Brecht, *Stories of Mr. Keuner*)

The great physicist Albert Einstein had famously said "Only two things are infinite, the universe and human stupidity, and I am not sure about the former." Our sympathizer friend from BAPSA has taken upon himself the herculean task of proving Einstein correct on this point. Scientists observed that the velocity with which a galaxy was moving away from Earth was proportional to its distance, and gave the Hubble Constant (68 km/s/Mpc) as the rate of expansion of the universe. Similarly, we observe that the velocity with which our sympathizer friend is moving away from logic is directly proportional to his anxiety to defend identity politics. The more he tries to defend identity politics, the more he opens the can of worms that expose the shallowness of his ideas and absurdity of his arguments. This coefficient might be named 'Mr. Sympathizer Constant'.

We have received the "detailed" response of our sympathizer friend from BAPSA and to our utter disappointment (but not surprise), our premonition about his "detailed" statement has come true. As we had suspected in our previous pamphlet, his response is based primarily on three things:

- 1. Lies, slandering, misrepresentation of our statement and sheer ignorance of politics and history.*
- 2. Playing the worn-out card of identity politics.*
- 3. When questioned, employing the fascist tactic of slapping labels to avoid the question and declare the questioner to be against an entire community.*

The "detailed" response by our Sympathizer friend is a labyrinth of rhetorical statements made from identitarian grounds bereft of even an ounce of logic or fact. Through a façade of hollow phrase-mongering our friend has shrewdly tried to evade the important questions raised by us in our first statement. Nevertheless, we will once again embark on the tedious task of navigating through the smokescreen of slanders, misrepresentation, rhetoric and infantile arguments to show how our intellectual imposter and political fraudster has

miserably failed in his attempts at defending identity politics and dodged the questions of state, capitalism and anti-caste movement.

Before we proceed to a point-wise dissection of the "detailed" response, there is one important thing to which we would like to draw the attention of our readers. Unable to respond to the political questions raised in our statements, our sympathizer friend has resorted to playing the cheap identity card. For the fascists, questioning BJP-RSS is synonymous to being anti-Hindu. Similarly, for identitarian organizations like BAPSA and its "sympathizers", questioning their politics means one is *savarna* or anti-dalit. This is the old identitarian trick of declaring oneself the sole spokesperson for an entire social group or community. By this trick, anyone who criticizes you, automatically becomes an antagonist to that entire social group or community. Just as the RSS tries to project an image where anyone who critiques Modi, automatically becomes anti-Hindu!

The logic is the same here. The whole statement is based on the bizarre premise that Disha is a *savarna* organization (why? how?) and thus any question asked by us is dismissed as a *savarna* ploy to keep down the bahujans! This is a prime example of the fallacy of identity politics as, like we have said earlier, *it replaces politics and political questions with the identities of individuals*. This is not even factually sustainable. Disha is an organization working in 13 states including Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Bihar, Delhi, Punjab, Chandigarh, etc. and its members come from all caste, religious, national, linguistic and ethnic backgrounds. Those who agree with the progressive, democratic, secular, anti-communal, anti-fascist, anti-caste common minimum program of Disha, are part of it, irrespective of their personal identity.

Readers will be surprised to know that in the "detailed" response of Mr. Sympathizer, the word '*savarna*' has been used 72 times and 'upper caste' has been used 21 times - *not to make any valid argument but only as a rhetorical tool to inflate a hot air balloon devoid of any substance*. In JNU, such identitarian bigotry might have succeeded in intimidating the capitulationist, apologetic, surrenderist and opportunist pseudo-left organizations with this kind of vulgar and obscene use of identity card. However, this tactic is not going to work against Disha Students' Organization. ***You cannot hoodwink the students and run away from the real political questions by throwing around identitarian labels.*** We will keep dragging you back to the real political questions until your flimsy shroud of "progressiveness" and "social justice" is completely uncovered in front of the students. *Identity politics is not anti-caste politics and identitarian organizations do not have the monopoly over anti-caste politics, nor can they claim to be the sole spokesperson of an entire community.* In fact, history proves that nothing has been more detrimental to the anti-caste movement than the identitarian turn that it took, especially in the latter half of the 20th century. Same has been the case with radical mass movements fighting for the liberation of blacks, women and indigenous people around the world. Today, for instance, the American and European progressives rue the day when they started their surrender and capitulation

to and compromise with identitarian politics, as it led to unending fragmentation and dissipation of the struggles against myriad forms of social oppression and dispersal of progressive organizations themselves. It is a pity that organizations like AISA, SFI, DSF, Collective, PSA, etc. do not understand this fact and the dangers of identity politics, and continue to commit their shame-faced surrender to identitarian organizations. What else can they do when their mother parties are doing the same at the national level? *However, as a revolutionary mass organization we deem it our bounden duty to keep exposing the dangers of identity politics among the students in an unflinching and unapologetic manner.*

Another small point of reminder to our readers. At the end of our first statement, we had hoped that our sympathizer friend would abide by the ethics of political debates and share our statement in all those WhatsApp groups where he had shared his pamphlet. ***We have circulated both sides of the debate in all the groups.*** However, we are not surprised to see that Mr. Sympathizer has not shared our statements on the groups where he had shared his pamphlet in the first place. This makes it easier to distort and misrepresent our statement to fit his dim-witted arguments. This also shows that the BAPSA sympathizer does not have confidence in his own position.

With these two caveats, we would move to a point-to-point rebuttal of Mr. Sympathizer's latest identitarian tirade.

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We will present our rebuttal in a point-wise manner so that it is easier and less taxing for our readers to steer through the filthy swamp of slandering, misrepresentations and ignorance that our sympathizer friend has landed us all in.

1. First of all, our seemingly "innocent" sympathizer friend is heartbroken by the acerbic language used by us in our statements. We have already written in detail on this lamentation in our last statement. We request our readers to read it through the following link. ([Our_Rebuttal.docx-4.pdf](#)). To say the least, the history of political debates among democrats, progressives and radicals shows abundant use of acerbic language, much more bitter than what we have used here. After all, ignorance will be called as such, because one of the basic principles of radicals, democrats and progressives is this, too: **call a spade a spade!** We do not *tolerate* each other, we *offend* each other and see it as a sign of *solidarity*. The whole idea of tolerating is humiliating and anti-solidarity. It is the worst form of liberalism and intellectual sophistry. The more important question here is this: *why is our sympathizer friend pleading for sympathy from the readers by appealing to the middle class (and brahmanical) morality of "Bhadralok Language"?* It is yet another ruse to deflect the real political questions to few words and tone of the statement. His opening lines remind us of Modi's (in)famous speech where he pleads for sympathy of his audience on the basis of the fact that the opposition has called him names! This is the *aestheticization* of politics, in order to run away from political debates.

2. The claim that our sympathizer friend came to talk to us after the presidential debate and left the discussion due to our "humiliating" language is **a plain lie**. The fact is that the discussion on that day started with the questions that Disha's presidential candidate had asked BAPSA's presidential candidate during the cross-questioning round. Our sympathizer friend, like his organization, had no answer to these questions. Then the debate turned to our approach to the anti-caste movement. Here our friend was miserably entangled in his own poorly crafted logic of identity politics. Thus, running away from the debate by throwing away the identitarian label of "*savarna*" was the only option left to him and that was exactly what he did. Recourse to petty identitarian labels instead of logic and reason would only end up making one look like a pitiable liar. We hope our sympathizer friend understands this.

3. Our sympathizer friend often writes things that leave us flabbergasted and compel us to wonder how one can be so lost in his own trip! First he says that we (Disha) think a student must read all the necessary books regarding the ideology before becoming a sympathizer of an organization. WRONG! We have never said this. We have said that to become a member of *an ideology-based organization (a party organization)* one must be acquainted at least with the basics of that ideology. We never said this about a sympathizer. This quote from our first statement will clarify:

"If a student is willing to fight for various material issues affecting common students and against all forms of chauvinism, fundamentalism and reaction, should we first tell them to become sympathizers, then learn about our ideology in detail and then become a member of our mass (!) organization? No wonder the writer of the statement has remained only a sympathizer of BAPSA even after three years of engagement! Any organization following this approach will only remain an organization of a small number of ideologically trained cadres (which is okay for a party organization!) and can never become a genuinely mass organization."

Amplifying our sense of bewilderment, our sympathizer friend passionately writes:

"According to the latest census, there are more than 281 million illiterate people in India. Even there are very few who can understand academic documents. But you think they are basic readings that everyone must read before becoming sympathizers of an organization. I am being part of the anti-caste movement, will not accept any kind of such brahminical arguments. Bahujans, who have been excluded from the rights of education, cannot be excluded from the movement just because they are not able to read a book. Even getting accessibility to the books and schools is still part of this long-run struggle. We always say that those who do not

know to read and write but they can join the movement, through their dedication to the cause."

Isn't this another reason why mass organizations built on a Common Minimum Program are needed to build a mass movement? Isn't this what we have been saying from the very outset? As we have said in our earlier statement, even when an ideology-based organization, i.e. a party organization, builds a mass movement it is again on the basis of a common minimum program and not on ideology. The majority of the working masses of this country lack the formal education and free time to read and consciously imbibe a progressive ideology. They fight for their immediate economic and political demands based on a common minimum program. Maybe the onset of summers has bleached the remaining grey matter of our friend. *Half of the time he does not understand what we are writing and in the other half, he does not understand what he himself is writing!* As one can see, in our first statement itself, we had suggested to him and other political adversaries of Disha to first read our pamphlet carefully, think it through cool-headedly and then start writing.

4. The next part of his "detailed" response is on the Common Minimum Program of Disha. Here the buffoonery of our identitarian fanatic, Mr. Sympathizer, reached to the extent of declaring the concept of CMP to be a *savarna* conspiracy! As the readers can see, our naive sympathizer friend has no idea what a CMP is and is oblivious of the fact that anti-caste organizations and anti-caste movements built by Ambedkar, Phule, Periyar and Ayyankali were also built on CMPs. It is our humble request to BAPSA: *first train your members and sympathizers in the ideology which you profess to follow, make them study the history of the anti-caste movements, lest they jump around "debating" like our friend here and create more such embarrassing moments for you!* We have already responded to this section in our previous statement and it is available on the following link ([Our Rebuttal.docx-4.pdf](#)). Here we have also explained our position on reservation in general and EWS reservation in particular. We are not going to waste more of our time and space by responding to his ludicrous arguments.

ON IDENTITY POLITICS

5. Here the smokescreen of rhetoric, misrepresentation, confusion and sheer ignorance is the thickest. By hook or by crook, our sympathizer friend has tried to convince the readers that he or BAPSA *does not* practice identity politics. For example, look at the following paragraph written by our friend:

"In India, an identity is not merely a name but rather a deciding factor for all the privileges and disadvantages one would face in their lifetime. By mere birth in a

community, one becomes superior, and others become inferior in all spheres of life. Because of the identity of 'Untouchables' or 'Shudra', a majority of the masses were denied all rights, whether educational, economic, political, or religious. Even after the introduction of democracy, people are not identified for their achievements but rather by their hereditary communal identity. This is the same cruel society where even after getting the first rank in entrance exams, a Dalit cannot be considered meritorious, and a Muslim who sacrifices his life for the country cannot be considered a deshbhakt."

This is nothing but empty rhetorical phrase-mongering, yet, it proves our point: Mr. Sympathizer is deeply submerged in the slime of identity politics from head to the toe. Moreover, was there ever a debate between us whether or not the caste system exists or whether or not different caste identities are entitled to differential access to educational, economic, political or religious rights? No! Clearly enough, Mr. Sympathizer, finding himself unable to respond to concrete issues of the debate, is resorting to emotive pleas and appeals to titillate the identitarian nerves.

Here we also want to remind our readers that caste identity is not the only determining factor that decides the access one gets to different socio-economic-political rights; other forms of social identities (gender, sex, language, etc.) and class background also impact the status of a person in a society. Moreover, none of the identities, including caste identity, are homogeneous or monolithic, but highly differentiated. One cannot compare a dalit agricultural laborer with the celebrated 'dalit capitalists' like Chandrabhan Prasad; one cannot compare a dalit from common working masses with Ramdas Athawale, Ramvilas Paswan or Mayawati. It is the poor and working class dalits who face the most brutal anti-dalit atrocities as well as the most horrendous forms of caste discrimination. *The interests of the small well-to-do sections among dalits and the overwhelming majority of dalit working poor are not the same.* The former claim in the name of identity to maintain their political hegemony over the latter. The same is true of all identities. *That is the truth, whether the unsuspecting and naïve identitarians like it or not and everybody knows it.* To fight against brahmanical reaction, the anti-caste movement must, in the main, rely upon the 90 percent of dalit masses who come from common working masses and on the entire working people of India, irrespective of their caste, religion, etc. Only through such a *people's anti-caste movement*, we can fight against the impact of brahmanical ideology among the working masses, too. *People's solidarity and struggles are the only ways to do so, not identity politics, which only thrives on the logic of othering, benefitting the ruling elites in all caste groups and causing harm to the working poor in all caste groups.*

Only a myopic adherent of caste-based identity politics can claim caste to be the only deciding factor and turn a blind eye to other forms of social oppression and economic exploitation. However, the main point of contention here is not whether caste determines social status or not. *Have we ever said caste is not a reality of the Indian social system? The*

point of contention is how to annihilate the caste system. What must be the general orientation of a radical anti-caste movement? In our earlier statements we have clearly stated that identity politics cannot be the path for annihilation of caste. As we have said earlier, identity politics replaces the political line with identities of individuals. Certain identities are made to be *always-already* and *automatically* progressive or oppressive/regressive. A born *savarna* is automatically and always to be considered an oppressor of Dalits (*had this been true, Sahasrabuddhe and Chitre would never have been close associates of Ambedkar!*); a *man* is automatically and always to be considered an oppressor of *women*, as if a man oppresses a woman *because* he is a man; a white person is automatically and always to be considered an oppressor of blacks. Such irrational arguments are not only irrational but also deeply pessimistic. Identity politics precludes the possibility of *a united people's struggle against oppression*.

Identities intrinsically are divisive in nature. A revolutionary movement tries to build unity IN SPITE of different identities, not ON THE BASIS of different identities. A people's anti-caste movement must build unity across castes among the working masses of all castes and identities. Only through this the brahmanical ideological hegemony, too, could be challenged among the people. Also to reiterate what we have written earlier: *one cannot emphasize their own identity without emphasizing the opposite identity*. The formation of a Dalit organization would inevitably provide scope to casteist forces to mobilize their strength around a Brahmin organization or Thakur organization or a Yadav organization, depending on what is the dominant caste in that area. In fact, this is precisely what the reactionary casteist forces have done. Similarly, forming a Muslim organization to fight against communal fascism would provide an opportunity to the fascists to further polarize the masses along communal lines and strengthen the fascist organizations like Bajrang Dal or VHP or RSS. This mobilization on caste or along identitarian lines would invariably play into the hands of the ruling elites of the dominant identities and be used by the ruling class to divide the masses. Instead of dalit movement, we should strive to build *a militant people's anti-caste movement*; instead of Muslim movement, we should fight to build anti-communal and anti-fascist movement for secularism. That is precisely what Jyotiba Phule meant when he said if people join your struggle, do not ask their caste. We believe there is a dearth of radical anti-caste forums and organizations which would fight against caste oppression on the streets. What we want to emphasize here is these forums/organizations cannot be formed on the basis of a particular identity. A radical anti-caste forum/organization must include the toiling masses from all castes and organize them to fight against caste atrocities and caste based discrimination of any kind as well as the brahmanical ideology. We want our sympathizer friend to first read what we have written here carefully before writing anything because we do not want to waste more time responding to such dim-witted arguments or emotive tirades.

6. Mr. Sympathizer then goes on to produce the crown jewel of all obnoxious statements produced till now when he says

"The Origin of identity politics in India can be traced back to the late 19th century and early 20th century. Identity politics was a reactionary movement against the emerging consciousness of oppressed sections".

Our friend has left us flabbergasted again! From which book of history, politics or sociology has our friend plucked out this gem of a statement? Where is the Bodhi tree sitting under which our friend had this moment of epiphany? We hope now our readers realize, as we had written in our first statement, the need to expose such pseudo-intellectuals masquerading as champions of "social justice" on campus. It is clear that our sympathizer friend does not even know what identity politics is. He merely knows that it is something that is politically stigmatized and hence sets about clarifying how BAPSA is not an identitarian organization. Instead of conjuring things up had our friend dedicated a few hours to reading before taking up the pen to slander Disha, we could have saved some of our precious time.

To elucidate it briefly, identity politics in general have the following basic features. Identity politics argues that:

(I) only those who have the lived-experience of a particular form of social oppression can understand it and fight against it; so only blacks can fight against racism, only women can fight against patriarchy, etc. because all the other are beneficiaries of racism and patriarchy and enjoy the "weightless knapsack of privileges". This is one of the constant refrains of identity politics.

(II) There is no link between different forms of social oppression; every form of social oppression is independent from each other and no identity has primacy over the others. Thus, a completely metaphysical view of social oppression, totally divorced from the material history of the evolution of all forms of identity-based social oppression in the moment and framework of class, and therefore blind to the inter-relationship among all forms of social oppression as well as the relationship between all forms of social oppression on the one hand and class exploitation on the other.

(III) There has to be separate, autonomous struggles to fight against different forms of social oppression. So, a *fetishistic celebration of fragments*, instead of a *concerted people's struggle against all forms of social oppression*. This is how the ruling elite of all caste groups and other identities deny any agency to the working masses and working class in all social groups.

(IV) Anyone born in the oppressor identity cannot be part of the struggle of the oppressed identity. The most they can do is to 'keep quiet' and become "sensitized"

because they cannot understand social oppression and cannot fight against it and because they are beneficiaries of it!

(V) **Although different forms of social oppression intersect, they are still autonomous** from each other and require *autonomous struggles*.

(VI) Even if and when different struggles against different social oppressions come together, it is just an **aggregative unity**, just like “bahujan unity”, and still remains autonomous from each other.

(VII) **Class itself is an identity, like any other social identity**, and oppression based on this identity is reflected in the form of "classism", "snobbery" etc. Notably, *class is not just another identity*; in fact, *it is not an identity at all*, which is biologically or socially given or constructed, but a *social relation of production* that is *produced and reproduced* in the very process of production.

(VIII) Identity-based oppression is constituted by *the subjective experience* of the oppressed; **identitarianism takes social oppression to the realm of subjectivity, instead of it being entrenched in the definite socio-economic relations of the capitalist system**. It promotes an idealist and etherealist understanding of social oppression and totally dematerializes it. One can gauge the destructive repercussions of such logic, which, in the West, has already led to the endless fragmentation of all progressive movements for the liberation of oppressed people, along an endless stream of subjective definitions.

(IX) This reification of subjectivity excludes and **absolves the role of the capitalist system and its state** which constantly produces and reproduces and sustains the relations of exploitation and oppression. Thus, the result is not a unified struggle against this system to end all forms of exploitation and oppression but **fragmented struggles** of different identities for *recognition, representation, accommodation and sensitization*, which, as a matter of rule, directly or indirectly puts the state out of the dock.

As far as the philosophical roots of modern identity politics is concerned it is generally attributed to **Foucauldian Postmodernism** and **Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's Post-Marxism**, with the latter heavily influenced by the former. We cannot discuss these two philosophical trends in detail here. However we will briefly discuss their understanding on the question of Power. According to Foucault power is not concentrated at any nodal point (like state) but decentred and distributed throughout the ‘social body’ (society). He invokes the concept of **capillarity** to explain this alleged ‘phenomenon’. Foucault also argues that wherever there is power, there is resistance. But as power itself is decentred and fragmented, resistance against it, too, must be dispersed and localized. The state is systematically absolved by it and no more remains an instrument of domination by the ruling classes! Under the ostensibly radical rhetoric, this is the real agenda of

postmodernist politics. Furthermore, every power relationship produces its own forms of knowledge, and together they are called the *power-knowledge* complex. **As Foucauldian postmodernism rejects the concepts of objective knowledge, universality and generalization, it is only natural for it that knowledge about different forms of oppression is purely in the realm of the subjective, localized and particular, with no scope for generalization.** The whole phenomenon of oppression is dematerialized and subjectivized. Thus, only someone who has directly experienced an identity-based oppression can truly *understand* it and *fight* against it. Limitation of space does not permit us to go into greater detail on this topic. We can safely say that it is an accepted fact among scholars and academicians that the period of advent of modern identity politics throughout the world, including India, began from the 1960s onwards. Although the masses struggled for black, women and dalit liberation even before, their struggle took a decisive turn towards modern and much more dangerous and anti-people identity politics only in the 1960s. Earlier forms of identity politics were very crude and unsystematic and theoretically very weak. Postmodernism provided them with philosophical and theoretical basis and also systematized them politically.

Now, the claims of our sympathizer friend, that identity politics, as we know it today, emerged in the late 19th century as a reactionary movement against the emerging consciousness of oppressed castes and sections, does not hold water. Besides, **categorizing Fascism merely as a *savarna* movement shows that our sympathizer friend does not have any understanding of Fascism.** No doubt that Brahmanism is one of the constituent elements of Fascist ideology in India. However, that is not the *differentia specifica* of Fascism. First and foremost, Fascism is a modern phenomenon and a product of capitalism. Fascism is an arch-reactionary social movement of the petty-bourgeoisie that represents the interests of big monopoly capital in the age of imperialism. Fascist ideology systemically involves the creation of an imaginary enemy, an image of the 'other', to drive the wrath of a socially and economically insecure petty-bourgeoisie against it and absolve the real force responsible for this insecurity, namely, profit-centric capitalist system. This figure of 'the other' or the imaginary enemy was that of the Jew in Germany, the Roma community in Italy, immigrants in contemporary France and Austria and Muslims in India. Undoubtedly Fascism in India also nurtures and encourages the casteist forces to keep the working masses from among dalits and other oppressed castes under their yoke, but predominantly, the imaginary enemy that it created in India are the Muslims. The writings of the prominent Fascist ideologues in India - from Savarkar to Golwalkar and Hedgewar and Moonje prove it. Organizationally, Fascism is based on a disciplined cadre-based Party like the Nazis in Germany and the RSS in India. Describing Fascism in India as a reactionary movement against growing consciousness of the oppressed castes is an oversimplification that can be detrimental to our fight against Fascism.

7. Now based on the above-mentioned features of identity politics let us see whether or not our sympathizer friend and his organization BAPSA practice identity politics. However, first of all, we would like to draw our attention to one line written by our friend where he says "**I will never allow a *savarna* man to lead our movement. Bahujans are capable enough to do that.**" These sentences are enough to expose the narrow identity politics of our friend and we want to remind this cannot be purely an individual's opinion but the politico-organizational line of the organization he has been associated with since last three years, i.e. BAPSA. The question is not whether Bahujans are capable of leading a movement or not. The issue is excluding someone from being part of a movement and including being part of its leadership, even though they completely agree with the cause and are committed to work for it. ***If this is not identity politics, then what is?*** You might write thousands of words clarifying that you do not practice identity politics, but these two sentences penned by you, are enough to expose your identitarian bigotry. If not letting someone from non-dalit and non-OBC background be a part of leadership on the basis of their personal identity is justified, *then why let them be part of the movement at all, if they lack any credibility due to their personal identity?*

8. As we had mentioned in our first statement, the General Secretary candidate from BAPSA, responding to an audience question, had said that a born *savarna* can become part of an anti-caste organization/movement but they cannot tell the oppressed castes how to fight and they cannot lead the movement. Now let us see how our sympathizer friend tries to defend the General Secretary candidate from BAPSA saying:

"Let me make it clear that she was targeting the patronizing attitudes of *savarnas* when they want to solve the problems of dalits without considering *savarnas*."

Now, who even says that caste annihilation is possible without considering the *savarnas*? Any serious student who, irrespective of their caste, is coming forward to become part of an anti-caste movement can never say this. A radical anti-caste movement is bound to ruffle the feathers of the high priests of Brahmanism acting as custodians of the caste system and their rabid watchdogs to be found in every nook and corner of the country. This is inevitable and everyone knows it. Furthermore, a radical anti-caste movement cannot just be limited to the dalits but as we have said earlier, it has to mobilize and organize the toiling masses from every caste to fight against caste system (Although BAPSA and identitarians despise going beyond their narrow identitarian lines and doing something like this, but this ought to be done). So, where is the "patronizing attitude of *savarnas* when they want to solve the problems of dalits without considering *savarnas*"? It is just a disappointing and hopeless attempt to prove BAPSA does not practice identity politics.

9. Moving on, we thank our sympathizer friend for providing us with the complete answer given by the General Secretary candidate of BAPSA. She said:

"Our 'upper caste' allies are also associated with our Ambedkarite movement, but we do not want them to tell us how dalits are oppressed. Instead, they should tell us how Brahmanism operates in their homes, circles and communities. They should contribute to us by not teaching us about our struggle and sufferings, but by understanding what their stand and strategies to mobilize other *savarnas* against the caste system, which also makes them privileged".

This is classic identity politics. Readers can refer to point (I) and point (IV) of the salient features of identity politics as we have mentioned above. First of all, only those who experience a particular form of identity-based oppression, in this case dalits facing caste oppression, can understand and fight against it. Anyone born in the oppressor-identity cannot become part of the struggle against it and the maximum they can do is become "self-aware" and "sensitized" from anti-oppression training etc. The whole essence of what the General Secretary candidate from BAPSA is saying is even if a born *savarna* wants to join an anti-caste movement he cannot truly be part of a united struggle, all he can do is sensitize and reform "his own" *savarna* space and "his" *savarna* people! That is to say, a *savarna* will fight their own struggle and a dalit will fight their struggle separately. There will be a logic of identitarian and non-critical "tolerance" if there ever is some kind of alliance! **Again, if this is not identity politics, then what is?** Our poor sympathizer friend has no idea what he does or writes. *He sets about trying to defend BAPSA but ultimately ends up doing the exact opposite!* Thanks again for this quote! **From this logic, August Babel had no right to write about women oppression because he was not a woman; similarly Marx had no right to write about worker's exploitation because he himself was not a worker (mind you, workerists/*operaismo* ideologues treat workers as an identity!), Sartre had no right to write about oppression of Algerian nation and blacks because he himself was neither Algerian nor black; Howard Zinn had no right to speak or write about the oppression and genocide of American Indians or blacks, as he himself was neither an American Indian or black! All these radicals were allowed to do was only this: sensitize "their space", "their people" and understand "their privilege" and keep quiet about understanding and fighting against all these oppressions as invisible part of the struggles against these oppressions and exploitation! This is classic identity politics.**

10. Our sympathizer friend has dedicated one and half pages to differentiate between identity politics and 'politics of assertion' and tried to prove that what BAPSA does is politics of assertion, not identity politics. First of all, out of this one page our friend dedicated nearly half a page to share his personal anecdote of discrimination that he and his Muslim friend faced while house hunting in Delhi. We wonder what the point of this personal anecdote here is! Is there a disagreement over whether or not there is discrimination on the basis of caste and religion in India in the housing market?

ABSOLUTELY NOT! Is this discrimination something new or peculiar in some way? NO! Islamophobic and casteist behavior by landlords, especially when Fascism is threatening to tear apart the social fabric of the country, is becoming more and more normalized. There is no controversy as to the need to wage a consistent struggle against this.

*Then what was the purpose of this anecdote here? It serves only one purpose - only to further inflate the hot air balloon of rhetoric in order to appeal, not to the logic and reason of the reader, but to the emotive side of an unsuspecting reader. **This is another way to aestheticize politics, apart from the fascist way.***

Now coming to the question of identity politics vs. 'politics of assertion'. As we have written earlier, **our friend has no idea what identity politics is. This section has proven that he also does not have any idea about 'politics of assertion'**. In these one and half pages, except for a vague mention to unite and raise voice against oppression, there is no clarity as to what one is exactly asserting for? What exactly is the assertion against? What are the concrete demands of your assertion? What is the concrete roadmap or program of this assertion? And what is the final objective of this assertion? *Assertion can be done for a variety of purposes, from representation, reform, accommodation, etc.* This is precisely the point made by the likes of Teltumbde and Jaffrelot that all this hullabaloo regarding 'assertion' is for representation and accommodation based on caste identities within the present system. It is not at all a radical politics aiming for revolutionary change, but in fact, aims to save the system. One of the slogans of Mr. Sympathizer's favorite, Kanshi Ram reflected this: *Jiski jitni sankhya bhaari, uski utni hissedari*. **One might ask: hissedari in what?** Well, in the booty accumulated by the loot and plunder of all the working masses, the bulk of which comes from among dalits, OBCs and other oppressed sections! **And whose hissedari?** That of the small elites among all these oppressed social groups. **That is what the assertion is for!** Moreover, if different castes, including oppressed castes, merely celebrate and assert their association to that identity, is it not going to further strengthen the caste divisions? Is not assertion of the identity by one caste also going to encourage assertion of their respective identities by others castes, including the oppressor castes? *Then how is this 'politics of assertion' going to lead towards annihilation of caste?* And is it not just another version of identity politics? The oppressed sections can definitely assert their economic and political rights which are continuously being eroded by the oppressive and exploitative system. **However, in that case this 'assertion' is concretely aimed against the ruling class and its state and not only for the fulfillment of immediate concrete demands, but for a radical transformation of the entire society.** Besides, this assertion cannot be a radical and progressive assertion if it is limited only to the oppressed castes. There would be a conscious effort to include the toiling masses from all castes in this assertion to make it a really progressive and radical political assertion, instead of just another pitiable version of identity politics. *Sorry to say Mr. Sympathizer, 'politics of assertion' that you are advocating is only a slimy version of identity politics!*

11. Producing another treasure from his bag of hollow identitarian rhetoric, our friend emphatically declares:

"With the emergence of self-claimed revolutionary politics, 'Progressives' have always been against Bahujan leaders like Jyotiba Phule, Savitribai Phule, Baba Saheb Ambedkar, Kanshi Ram, or Behen Kumari Mayawati, etc. Analyzing all these, one can easily argue that self-claimed progressive politics has always been against Bahujan people, their rights, interests, movements, and icons, while securing all the privileges of *Savarna* in the name of progress."

First of all, give us one instance where any revolutionary or progressive organization has denounced Jyotiba Phule and Savitribai Phule? Just give us one example from your immense reservoir of knowledge! We bet you cannot because no progressive or revolutionary organization has ever denounced Jyotiba or Savitribai Phule as they are the beacons of light for any revolutionary movement. As we can see here, with every passing page, our friend, sitting on top of the hot air balloon of identitarian rhetoric, is moving farther away from logic and facts! Secondly, no one has *denounced* Ambedkar as well! If one critiques Dr. Ambedkar's pragmatic politics and thought, then that is not something reactionary or *savarnist*. In fact, that is something that the anti-caste movement must do in order to transcend the limits of legality and statolatory posed by pragmatist politics and the ruling class and its state. One can do so, while respecting Ambedkar's contributions and concerns for the annihilation of caste. In fact, to the consternation of identitarians, to make him into a sacrosanct monument is, indeed, 'being against Ambedkar'. That is precisely what BAPSA and their ilk do: make Ambedkar into a sacrosanct identitarian figure. We refuse this 'prohibition to think' and identitarian intellectual blackmail. This cheap identitarian trick might work with the likes of SFI, AISA, AISA, etc., but not with us.

Secondly, as our sympathizer friend claims, does BAPSA also believe that every progressive and revolutionary politics has always been against bahujan people and secured the privileges of *savarna*? So the great revolutionaries of our country who dedicated their whole lives fighting for the rights of people, were all anti-bahujan and secured the privileges for *savarnas*? ***Does BAPSA believe, like its sympathizer, Bhagat Singh, Chandrashekhar Azad, Sukhdev, Rajguru, Ashfaqullah Khan, Ram Prasad Bismil, Bhagwati Charan Vohra, Surya Sen, Pritilata Waddedar, Durga Bhabi, Kartar Singh Sarabha, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi and Rahul Sankrityayan, just because they were not born in Bahujan families, were working against bahujan people and secured privileges for the Savarnas?*** It is both funny and outrageous at the same time to see this identitarian pigmy distributing certificates of competency to our great revolutionaries solely based on their caste identity. This is the level to which identity politics can fall!

Furthermore, **in the post-independent India, it was the communists and the CPI, when it was still a revolutionary party and had not degenerated into social-democracy and rank opportunism, who had most radically fought for the rights of the dalits and oppressed castes.** Once they degenerated into opportunism and social-democracy, what they did is a different story. However, in their revolutionary period, the struggles of Tebhaga, Telangana and Punnapra-Vayalar bear testimony to the fact of their militant struggles of dalit landless workers against the *savarna* landlords. Similarly, in the post-Naxalbari period, caste oppression was most radically challenged in the areas which had the strongest Marxist-Leninist movement, for example in Andhra Pradesh and Bihar, even though this Marxist-Leninist movement was seriously affected by the “left” adventurist deviation and lacked any systematic understanding of the character of Indian society and Indian ruling classes. ***The communists were indeed lacking in formulating a correct program to understand and annihilate caste system (which was part of their general political and programmatic weakness), but the fact that the communists have most radically fought against caste system on the streets is something no serious scholar of post-independence Indian history can deny. You do not need to be a communist to accept that fact. This fact is even accepted by the 2018 presidential candidate of BAPSA. (2018 Presidential Debate Q/A round).***

Does our sympathizer friend now call the presidential candidate of BAPSA a stooge of the “*savarnist*” Communist Party? AGAIN A HUMBLE REQUEST TO BAPSA: Please train your members and sympathizers at least about the history of anti-caste movement in India, and check their pamphlets before publishing them.

12. As our sympathizer friend has referred to Dr. Ambedkar's book 'Castes in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development' to talk about the origin of the caste system, we shall devote some time to this. In this book Dr. Ambedkar says that endogamy started by Brahmins was the point of origin of the caste system. Thus, Brahmins created the caste system through endogamy. According to Ambedkar, Brahmins did not impose caste system on the society but successfully persuaded the society to accept *their* customs and traditions as superior practices, most important of which was endogamy. Some castes soon adopted endogamy and others had to willingly or unwillingly follow suit. **However, this is basically circular logic. Let us see how. Brahmins created the caste system through endogamy; but then, who created the caste of brahmins in the first place? No serious historian takes this thesis to be the actual origin of the caste system.** As Jaffrelot has argued, most of Ambedkar's theories about the evolution of the caste system, were more of a political exercise in identity-construction, rather than historical writings. They should be studied as such.

The first reference to the 'varna' was found in the tenth mandala of *Purushasukta* of *Rig Veda*. This belonged to the later part of the Rig Vedic period. **In its first reference the word 'varna' lacked three of its most essential features, i.e., hereditary labor division, endogamy and untouchability.** These three features developed with the *varna*-caste system over a course of time. **The early description of the word 'varna' in the Rig Veda resembled more of a labor division and embryonic class division. In other words at its point of origin, varna division represented the embryonic class division and labor division of the latter half of early-Vedic period.** The Vedic Aryans, just like pastoral nomadic societies, were divided into three social strata: *brahm* (priests), *rajanya* (warriors) and *vis* (common labor). With their arrival in the subcontinent the Vedic Aryans clashed with the pre-Vedic Aryans, who had arrived in the Indian subcontinent before the Vedic Aryans. The defeated pre-Vedic Aryan tribes were called '*dasas*' and were later termed as '*shudras*' and used as slaves.

Between 700 BC and 1st century AD, we see proliferation of new castes into different *varnas*, beginning of caste endogamy and consolidation of hereditary labor division. The later Vedic period marked the ideological legitimation of class hierarchy through religious-ritualistic ossification of the labor division and class division of this period. In other words, the labor division of later Vedic period was fossilized or ossified in the religious codes and this was the beginning of mutually exclusive *varnas* and *jatis* with their respective hereditary labor division and practice of endogamy. Here one must keep in mind that caste and class are *not* the same thing. Only at its point of origin there was an overlapping between *varna* and class. In the later Vedic period, as the caste system assumed a ritualistic and divine aura through religious codification, the overlapping between caste and class disintegrated. The relation of overlapping transformed into *a relation of correspondence* whereby caste dynamics assumed a relative autonomy from class relations. However, it must be remembered that the autonomy was only *relative* and during periods when class relations underwent tectonic changes, caste system was also restructured and reconfigured. This is the reason why the caste system underwent changes not only temporally but also spatially. If caste system was engendered by *Manusmriti*, it should have been the same all over India and through ages. However, we know that is not true. The caste system and its hierarchy in South India was very different from that in North India, especially the Gangetic plains. In Southern peninsula, the peasant castes like Vellalas became dominant and since the peasant castes had been classified as shudras in North India, the brahmanical ideology created a new distinction: *sat shudra*, who was equated with *kshatriyas*, and *asat shudras*, who were stamped as inferior like the *shudras* in North India. However, the two intermediate *varnas* were originally absent in South India. *Why this change?* Because the modes of production and class relations were different in the two areas, even though the same ideology of Brahmanism was used to create legitimation for the ruling class and keep the working masses under structural subordination in both the regions. **Therefore, it was**

the real and material system of oppression, created in the moment of class, namely, the varna-caste system, which engendered its ideological justification and legitimation in the form of Manusmriti and other brahmanical scriptures and codes and not the other way round! As Dante had said, "In the beginning was the deed."

This view of origin and initial development of *varna*-caste system is shared and substantiated by most of the prominent historians of ancient India like D.D. Kosambi, R.S. Sharma, D. N. Jha, Suvira Jaiswal and BNS Yadav with archaeological, literary, numismatic and other evidence. We are curious if our sympathizer friend would now label Suvira Jaiswal, D.D. Kosambi and R.S. Sharma as *savarna* conspirators!

13. We would also like to add a few words here about the question of **separate electorate** and communal award by Simon Commission. There is no doubt that standing on religious grounds Gandhi opposed a separate electorate for all the wrong reasons. For Gandhi, the primary concern was the 'unity of the Hindu society'. However, Bhagat Singh and his comrades and the Communists, too, opposed it and without any concern whatsoever for the 'unity of the Hindu society'! But due to their concerns regarding the unity of the toiling masses. The unity of the toiling masses is not something which is already there, but has to be established through constant political struggles. However, the creation of separate electorates would preclude the possibility of such a unity. If Gandhi and the Congress opposed the demand for separate electorates for wrong reasons, that does not make the demand a correct one! **Would the identitarians now call Bhagat Singh a *savarna* stooge for opposing the communal awards and the demand of separate electorate?**

ON THE QUESTION OF CONFRONTATION WITH THE STATE

Before going to the question of state we would want to ask our sympathizer friend *where he has seen Disha Students' Organization using Ambedkar's photo? We want to make it clear that we are not based on Ambedkarite ideology (or any ideology for that matter, but a common minimum program), we do not agree with the pragmatic politics of Dr. Ambedkar despite his genuine anti-caste concerns, and we have nowhere used Ambedkar's photo or icon.* We would suggest our friend to stop hallucinating and come out of his wild flights of imagination.

14. In our first statement we had asserted, as universally accepted by every scholar of Ambedkarite thought and Ambedkar himself, that Ambedkar's philosophy is based on the pragmatist philosophy of John Dewey which is also called instrumentalism and progressive experimentalism. Stating the two most important features of the pragmatist philosophy of John Dewey we had written:

"According to Deweyan Pragmatism, the state is the most rational actor and the 'great mediator'. Secondly, all changes happen gradually and incrementally and therefore there can be no rupture/leap/revolutionary change in nature or society. Hence, any group claiming their rights, must only make petitions to the state and not go directly in confrontation against the state."

Citing three concrete examples - the Mahad Satyagraha, Nasik Temple Entry Movement and Telangana Uprising - we asserted that pragmatist approach towards the state was evident throughout Ambedkar's political life despite the ostensible radicality of his social program, and asked how can BAPSA wage an anti-caste movement that radically challenges the state and at the same time claim to follow Ambedkar's ideology at the same time?

As we expected, *our sympathizer friend completely circumvented this question again with hollow rhetoric, just as BAPSA's presidential candidate had done during the presidential debate.* The logic is simple: ***If someone is a consistent Ambedkarite, i.e. if someone is a consistent Deweyan Pragmatist, one cannot wage a consistent, radical and subversive struggle against the state. It is as straight as that.***

Neither did our sympathizer friend challenge our assertion that Ambedkarite ideology is based on Deweyan Pragmatism, nor did he challenge our claim that according to Deweyan Pragmatism, the state is the most rational actor and any change can come only by the agency of the state, from above, in an incrementalist and gradualist process. *This means our sympathizer friend accepts both the postulates. That ipso facto means BAPSA or he himself as a follower of Ambedkarite thought cannot wage a consistent struggle against the 'benevolent' state.* There cannot be any ifs and buts here, there cannot be any other way. *Thus, he took the easy face-saving way of completely sidestepping the question.*

15. Now coming to the quote of Ambedkar which he has rhetorically tossed to claim that Ambedkar was anti-state. *First of all, our sympathizer friend has intentionally misquoted and taken Ambedkar out of context. Ambedkar did not say:*

"I will be the first to burn the constitution if it is wrongly used."

Ambedkar's actual words were:

"It is by placating the sentiments of smaller communities and smaller people who are afraid that the majority may do wrong, that the British Parliament works. Sir, my friends tell me that I have made the Constitution. But I am quite prepared to say that I SHALL BE THE FIRST PERSON TO BURN IT OUT. I DO NOT WANT IT. IT DOES NOT SUIT ANYBODY. But, whatever that may be, if our people want to carry on, they must not forget that there are majorities and there are minorities, and they simply cannot ignore the minorities by saying, "Oh, no. To recognize you is to harm democracy." I should say that the greatest harm will come by injuring the minorities."

The context here is that *Ambedkar is demanding special powers to be given to the governor of the newly formed state of Andhra Pradesh to protect the rights of linguistic minorities and dalits*. However, the Indian constitution, the framing of which had a lot to do with Ambedkar himself, did not provide any such special powers to the governor, who just followed the decisions of the council of ministers of the state. It was also pointed out to Ambedkar that in the constituent assembly Ambedkar had earlier defended such restricted powers to the governor and limited his role to merely 'aid and advice'. Now, as we can see, Ambedkar made this pragmatic and figurative statement of burning the constitution just to prove his point that constitutional principles and practices can be changed if needed. ([Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Writings and Speeches Vol. 15](#) p. 862–863)

If it was not merely a rhetoric and Ambedkar was serious about burning the constitution, then why did he, on March 19, 1955, say these words:

"If I may say so, and I say it with a certain amount of pride, the Constitution which has been given to this country is a wonderful document. It has been said so not by myself, but by many people, many other students of the Constitution. It is the simplest and the easiest. Many, many publishers have written to me asking me to write a commentary on the Constitution, promising a good sum. But I have always told them that to write a commentary on this Constitution is to admit that the Constitution is a bad one and an un-understandable one. It is not so."
(ibid, pg. 948)

When another member Anup Singh reminded Ambedkar of his expressed wish to burn the constitution and asked the reason why he suddenly became so appreciative of the same constitution, Ambedkar tried to defend himself by saying this:

"Well, in a hurry I did not explain the reason. Now that my friend has given me the opportunity, I think I shall give the reason. The reason is this: We built a temple for God to come in and reside, but before the god could be installed, if the devil had taken possession of it, what else could we do except destroy the temple? We did not intend that it should be occupied by the Asuras. We intended it to be occupied by the Devas. That's the reason why I said I would rather like to burn it."

So, this was the explanation Dr. Ambedkar gave! Sounds quite *savarnist*, by the way! Anyway, we would assume it to be merely rhetorical and figurative. Still, it is crystal clear, this was clearly a flip-flop because the original statement itself was a rhetorical one.

The fact that it was nothing more than a plain rhetorical statement is corroborated even by Anand Teltumbde in one his recent speeches. ([Anand Teltumbde On Dalit -Marxist Synergy](#)). ***Would our identitarian bigot friend now claim that Anand Teltumbde has hatred in his belly for the 'Bahujans'?*** One is compelled to ask, if the constitution did not suit anybody, as claimed by Ambedkar, why did not he actually burn it? The answer is simple: He never

intended to burn it and used it rhetorically to make a point. If only Ambedkar had known that one day, in his name, his followers would latch on to the rhetorical statement to portray Ambedkar as anti-state!

Our readers might be wondering why did our sympathizer friend intentionally misquote Dr. Ambedkar? Here the political fraudster who also happens to be the sympathizer of BAPSA hoped to carry off a sleight of hand. According to his distorted quote, *Ambedkar would burn the constitution IF IT WAS WRONGLY USED*. If asked why Ambedkar did not actually burn the constitution, fraudsters like our sympathizer friend would say that because it was not wrongly used during Ambedkar's time, he did not burn it. Such are the tricks up in the sleeves of identitarians! We will see, however, that is NOT SO!

16. Our readers must keep it in mind that the constitution was indeed sufficiently abused even when Ambedkar was alive. BAPSA claims to be in solidarity with the oppressed identities of Kashmir and North-East. However, does our Mr. Sympathizer know that the **constitution itself provided the means to suppress the national liberation struggles of the Kashmiris and oppressed nations from the North-East?** In 1953 the Nehru government engineered a coup-d'état in Kashmir, dismissed Shaikh Abdullah - the democratically elected Prime Minister of Kashmir - soon arrested him on charges of anti-national activities and appointed the puppet regime of Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed. *All this happened constitutionally.* Similarly, from 1949 onwards, the Naga liberation movement was also crushed by Nehru through *brute force* and draconian laws like sedition provided by the constitution. Finally, in 1958, AFSPA was imposed in Naga Hill territories and this provision was also mandated by the constitution. **It must not be forgotten that the Constitution of India was heavily based on the Government of India Act of 1935 made by the colonial state to repress the people.** Readers also must remember that the constituent assembly that elected the drafting committee to draft the constitution and which passed the constitution, was constituted by members elected by the members of provincial assemblies who in turn were *elected not by a universal adult suffrage* but by a limited suffrage based on property, education and nature of job (**only 11.5 percent of the population voted in the elections for provincial assemblies**). From the very beginning the constitution gave the right to the state to use its police powers whenever it deems fit, like it did during the Emergency (which was imposed totally in congruence with the provisions of the constitution).

In terms of caste oppression, the constitution did not illegalize the caste system itself but only formally abolished untouchability. It did not have any provision either to curb anti-Dalit atrocities or to annihilate the caste system on the whole. As a result of which anti-dalit atrocities have continuously increased in India since 1947, as Sukhdeo Thorat has shown in his studies. Due to shortage of space, we cannot write more on the limitations of

the Indian constitution. That would require a separate pamphlet. However, we would just like to ask our sympathizer friend from BAPSA: leave alone the times of Ambedkar, when the constitution was “misused” repeatedly! Don't you believe the constitution is being “misused” now? If you believe so, why don't you convince BAPSA to burn the constitution as Dr. Ambedkar wanted? If you claim that it is not misused today, we would just have a hearty laugh and move on! ***The constitution definitely gives us certain democratic rights, but these are incomplete and insufficient.*** Why glorify the constitution as a savior of the oppressed masses? We know in response our sympathizer would just blabber some identitarian nonsense about how criticizing the constitution is a *savarna* ploy! how criticizing Dr. Ambedkar's political thought itself is brahmanical, etc. Why is it so hard for BAPSA to just accept the truth: it is a liberal organization based on identitarian politics, cold inside but seething on the surface with radical posturing!

17. Let us now turn our attention to the long quote of Dr. Ambedkar produced by our friend in his pamphlet. This is part of the speech delivered by Dr. Ambedkar to the Bombay presidency Mahar Conference, 31st May 1936 (Part 19, titled "Doubts about Conversion"). We are not surprised to see the identitarian Mr. Sympathizer again selectively quoting Ambedkar to make it look like Ambedkar is talking about mobilizing the social strength of the dalits to confront the state. Now look carefully at the actual quote:

"A second doubt is about political rights. Some people express [concern] as to what will happen to our political safeguards if we convert. Nobody can say that I do not realize the importance of the political safeguards the Untouchables have achieved... But I feel it is not proper to depend solely on political rights. These political safeguards are not granted on the condition that they shall be everlasting. They are bound to end sometime. According to the Communal Award of the British Government, our political safeguards were limited for twenty years. Although no such limitation has been fixed by the Poona Pact, nobody can say they are everlasting. Those who depend upon these political safeguards must think about what will happen after these safeguards are withdrawn. On the day on which our political rights cease to exist, we will have to depend upon our social strength. I have already told you that this social strength is wanting in us. So also I have proved in the beginning, that this strength cannot be achieved without conversion... In my opinion, conversion is the only remedy, for eternal bliss. Nobody should hesitate, even if political rights are required to be sacrificed for this purpose. Conversion brings no harm to political safeguards. I do not understand why political safeguards should at all come in trouble [=be endangered] by conversion... Nobody should misunderstand [=wrongly think] that if we leave the Hindu society, all the fifteen seats allotted to us will go back to Hindus. If we become Muslims, our fifteen seats will be added to the seats reserved for Muslims. Likewise, if we become Christians, our seats will be added to the seats reserved for Christians. In short, our

political rights will accompany us. So nobody should be afraid of it." ([What Path to Salvation? by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar](#))

Now even a school student can tell that Dr. Ambedkar here is assuaging the fear of the dalits that if they convert into some other religion, they would lose their political right of reserved seats granted to dalits under the Poona Pact. When he says "we will have to depend upon our social strength" he means to seek strength in a religion that will treat the dalits as humans and not discriminate against them as it is done in Hinduism. It is totally a part of his *social program* and not *political program*, which is essential for any fight against the state.

In fact, this quote by Ambedkar goes on to prove exactly opposite to what our sympathizer friend intends to prove. Here instead of directly confronting the British state for the social, political and economic rights of the Dalits, Ambedkar is convincing his followers to accept conversion as the "only remedy for *eternal bliss*", even at the cost of sacrificing their political rights. This faith in conversion and his long search for a suitable religion to convert stems again from his Deweyan Pragmatism. John Dewey asserted that the state as the 'Great Mediator' cannot resolve all *perceived contradictions* in the inter-personal human relationships and therefore there is a need for an *ethical and humanist religion* in society. Presence of such a religion is essential for the process of '*endosmosis*' (a word that Ambedkar borrows from Dewey and uses frequently) in the society to end isolation/segregation. We genuinely feel sorry for our sympathizer friend for he sets about proving a point and ends up helping us prove the exact opposite! Maybe sitting on his hot air balloon of lies, misrepresentation and rhetoric, our friend has gone so high in the atmosphere that sufficient oxygen is not reaching his lungs and sufficient blood is not reaching his brain. *We want our friend to remember that we in Disha take our political readings seriously unlike the pseudo-left organizations you have been engaging with till now. You cannot deceive us with such tricks of misrepresentations! You might get away with your lies and tricks in front of AISA and SFI, but not with us.*

18. Also, our sympathizer friend does not tell us about the history of Ambedkar's idea about conversion. Therefore, we would take the liberty to dwell on this for a little while.

First reference by Ambedkar to conversion comes in Jalgaon Depressed Classes Conference in 1927 where Ambedkar says that if the untouchables cannot get rid of the injustice within the fold of Hinduism, they would not lose anything by abandoning this identity. After this proclamation a few dalits had converted to Islam. This scared the brahmanical orthodoxy and in some villages, they opened up the wells for dalits, as Christopher Jaffrelot has shown in his book *Dr. Ambedkar and Untouchability*. Consequently, Ambedkar gave a number of allusions to his strategy of conversion. Jaffrelot shows that Ambedkar had told G. A. Gavai, with whom he had represented the Untouchables at the Third Round Table Conference, that

he wanted to leave the fold of Hinduism **but Islam repelled him**. In an open letter of 1936, Ambedkar compared Islam, Christianity and Sikhism and argued that by converting to Sikhism the dalits would not 'denationalize' and will continue to be part of the Indian nation! This is what Ambedkar wrote,

“What the consequences of conversion will be to the country as a whole is well worth bearing in mind. Conversion to Islam or Christianity will denationalize the Depressed Classes. If they go to Islam the number of Muslims will be doubled and the danger of Muslim domination also becomes real. If they go to Christianity, the numerical strength of Christians becomes 5 to 6 crores. It will help to strengthen the hold of the British on this country. On the other, if they embrace Sikhism they will not only not harm the destiny of the country, but they will help the destiny of the country. They will not be denationalised.” (quoted in Jaffrelot, *Dr Ambedkar and Untouchability*, p. 122).

Nobody can say that Jaffrelot is anti-Ambedkar or brahmanical! In the course of the year 1936, a galvanization was taking place on the question of mass conversion of the dalits. First of all, the very idea of a nation based on religion demonstrated by Ambedkar here is incorrect, historically as well as scientifically.

However, why Ambedkar chose Sikhism over Islam and Christianity has to be understood. Moonje, a leader of Hindu Mahasabha had a three day-secret talks with Ambedkar in which J. K. Birla, brother of G. D. Birla also participated. Moonje persuaded Ambedkar to convert to Sikhism because by this the dalits will only leave Hindu religion but not Hindu culture and civilization. This idea was supported by Shankaracharya of Karweer Peeth who thought that Sikhism is part of Hinduism as one of its protestant sects. It is noteworthy that Ambedkar accepted the advice of Moonje and expressed his choice of Sikhism and even explained it to the dalits: *“to have some responsibility as for the future of the Hindu culture and civilization.”* (quoted in Jaffrelot, *Dr. Ambedkar and Untouchability*, p. 129). When it became clear to Ambedkar that the benefits of minority would not be granted to the dalits converted into Sikhism, anti-Dalit atrocities by Jatts within the fold of Sikhism are common and that the leader of Sikhs, Master Tara Singh, opposed the idea of dalit conversion to Sikhism, Ambedkar slowly dropped this idea. The next time this idea resurfaced in Ambedkar's thought in the late-1940s and then came the manifest idea of choice of Buddhism in the 1950s.

Our sympathizer friend smoothly glosses over all these important historical details. Whether it is out of sheer ignorance or intentional omission, we leave it to the readers.

19. Next, referring to the 2nd April 2018 Bharat Bandh demonstrations our sympathizer friend claims that Ambedkarite organizations had directly clashed with the state. Let us examine this closely.

First, let us analyze this particular event. No doubt the 2nd April Bharat Bandh agitation against the dilution of SC/ST act was a militant agitation where the dalit masses radically protested against the oppressive state which tried to dispossess the SCs and STs of their constitutional right of protection against atrocities. The proposed amendments to the SC/ST Act were aimed at effectively nullifying the Act and embolden the casteist forces to escalate the already growing number of atrocities against the dalits and the adivasis. However, here Mr. Sympathizer tried to pull off another sleight of hand by portraying *a spontaneously mass agitation of the dalit masses as an organized movement by Ambedkarite organizations*. Anyone remotely associated with the movement or anyone who closely observed the chain of events that took place before and after Bharat Bandh would remember that *the mainstream Ambedkarite organizations hardly did anything beyond issuing statements in a symbolic and ritualistic fashion*. It was the pent-up anger of the toiling dalit masses against the fascist Modi regime, which was responsible for increasing anti-dalit atrocities like Rohith Vemula's institutional murder, Una, Saharanpur, Bhima Koregaon etc., which burst out on the streets on 2nd April 2018, transcending the realm of symbolism and ritualism that had shackled the anti-caste movement for years. More than 12 Dalit youths lost their lives on this day, mainly due to police atrocities and attacks by casteist goons. Dalit settlements throughout the country, and especially in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, were continuously attacked by casteist goons for months after the Bharat Bandh. Young protesters were hounded by the state and cases ranging from destruction of public property to murder and attempt to murder were slapped against them. If the mainstream Ambedkarite organizations were so determined to fight against the state, why did they not build a sustained movement on these issues? Was the death of more than a dozen of dalit youths not a big enough issue for them? The reason is simple. *Mainstream Ambedkarite organizations never intended the 2nd April Bharat Bandh to be a militant agitation. It was the radicalism of the toiling dalit masses that took the agitation beyond the control of these feeble organizations*. Undoubtedly the militancy of the 2nd April Bharat Bandh sent a chill down the spine of the fascist Modi regime and its state. However, like any spontaneous movement it dissipated as soon as it had erupted, leaving the participants vulnerable and fending for themselves. It is our sincere request to our sympathizer friend to not distort history to defend his frivolous arguments. The great Dagestani writer Rasul Gamzatov had famously said "*If you fire at the past from a pistol, the future will shoot back at you from a cannon.*"

However, the more important point here is that Mr. Sympathizer from BAPSA does not even understand what anti-state politics is. From his response it is evident that for him merely condemning the government or giving a call of a strike or Bharat Bandh or

partaking in forceful agitation is an example of anti-state politics. The primary and principal aspect of doing anti-state politics is to, first of all, understand that any form of social oppression or economic exploitation of the working majority by a parasitic minority cannot sustain itself without the support and protection of the state, which is nothing but an instrument of domination of the exploited and oppressed people by the exploiters and oppressors. The basic question of taking a consistent anti-state stand is whether or not we recognize and question the role of the state in perpetuation of any form of exploitation and oppression. If only giving a call for Bharat Bandh and confronting the police is made the yardstick of anti-state politics, we would be obliged, ironically, to accept that even RSS, BJP and Shiv Sena or even Congress at times does anti-state politics! Because they, too, have given numerous calls for Bharat Bandh in the past, many of which involved violent confrontation with the police. To reiterate, any anti-government rhetoric, forceful agitation or confrontation with police is not necessarily an example of anti-state politics. It can even be an example of merely submitting petitions to the state. Anti-state radical politics is first of all characterized by the understanding that the state is an instrument of domination of the working people by the ruling elite. Secondly, it is characterized by the view that within the ambit of the present political socio-economic system, there is no justice for the common working masses and there is a need to go beyond this system. Third, it is precisely the state that protects and defends the present socio-economic and political system by force and violence.

Precisely because of these reasons we say that had our sympathizer friend first read and tried to understand the basics of politics and then written a pamphlet it would have saved a lot of time of everyone.

ON THE QUESTION OF CAPITALISM AND DR. AMBEDKAR

20. On this question as well, our poor sympathizer friend has sought to create a smokescreen of hollow rhetoric to flee from the concrete questions that we asked in our first statement. We reiterate our questions here so that the readers can see for themselves that our friend has not answered even a single question asked by us. We had asked:

(I) Can BAPSA show any quote by Dr. Ambedkar from the pre- or post-ILP period where he talks against capitalism?

(II) If Dr. Ambedkar was against capitalism throughout his life, why did he become part of the first cabinet of the Nehru regime which initiated the process of capitalist development in India?

(III) Does the Republican Party of India envisioned by Dr. Ambedkar and formed by his closest comrades-in-arms include a program to fight against capitalism?

(IV) If Dr. Ambedkar was a thorough anti-capitalist thinker, what kind of a revolution has he proposed to uproot the capitalist state?

(V) The economic program of Dr. Ambedkar as clearly mentioned in his famous essay 'States and Minorities' is mostly a copy of the Fabian program to have a welfare state. Keynes is regarded as one of the biggest proponents of the welfare state model. Does our friend consider Keynes to be an anti-capitalist economist?

Instead of answering to these questions our friend resorts to more rhetoric and gives another stupid statement saying: *"I am sure that if Karl Marx were to analyze the economic history of Indian society through the 'mode of production' he would not differentiate between slavery, feudalism, and capitalism; rather, he would collectively name them 'Brahminism.'"*

What kind of idiotic statement is that?!

Leave alone Karl Marx, even a BA student reading history and political economy would not say such insane thing! We want to ask whether Ambedkar has ever said that capitalism and Brahmanism are the same thing? Even BAPSA maintains that capitalism and Brahmanism are two distinct phenomena and it claims to fight against both (although it is also a mere rhetoric and one cannot be adherent of Deweyan Pragmatism and anti-capitalist at the same time). *This is precisely the reason why we request BAPSA to sit its members and sympathizers down and teach them about their own ideology.* If Ambedkar were to see what our sympathizer friend is writing, he would have pleaded with him to show some mercy on his soul and stop maligning his name and his ideology!

One might wonder why our sympathizer friend is trying so hard to sidestep the questions related to capitalism. It is because if he speaks the truth that BAPSA, like any genuine Ambedkarite organization, cannot be anti-capitalist due to its adherence to Deweyan Pragmatism, the first ones to desert BAPSA would be the students coming from the toiling masses. Dalits and oppressed castes form the majority of the working class and the toiling masses. It is this section of the population that faces the most vicious forms of oppression and exploitation. Why would they support an organization that does not recognize capitalism as the primary source of their destitution and hardships? The truth is that such identitarian organizations only represent the upper and upper-middle echelons of the dalit population. Leaving apart the identitarian rhetoric, they have nothing, indeed, to do with the overwhelming majority of dalit working poor population.

ON KANSHI RAM, MAYAWATI AND POLITICS OF BSP

21. Reading the response of our sympathizer friend one gets a clear impression that Kanshi Ram and Mayawati are portrayed as messiahs for Dalit liberation, second only to Dr. Ambedkar. Many quotes of Kanshi Ram are produced in an attempt to justify the identity

politics of BAPSA and calling for a larger “bahujan unity”. Let’s start with a slogan that BAPSA frequently raises in JNU:

“Mile Mulayam Kanshi Ram, Hawa Mein Ud Gaye Jai Shri Ram.”

History is the best judge of the validity of any slogan or program. In order to probe the validity of the above slogan, as an expression of the cherished “bahujan unity”, we will take our readers back to 1993.

The country was polarized along the lines of *Mandal vs. Kamandal* politics and RSS-BJP was riding high on the post-Babri Masjid communal frenzy, particularly in UP. The SP-BSP alliance had managed to keep BJP out of power in UP assembly elections and Mulayam Singh Yadav became the CM. However, the electoral alliance was soon shattered culminating in what is infamously called the 'Guest House Incident' in 1995 where SP goons ended up beating up BSP MLAs. Even Mayawati could not escape this attack of the so-called “bahubalis” (muscle men) of SP. Mulayam Singh Yadav sent this mob of bloodthirsty goons to teach Mayawati and her MLAs a “befitting lesson” for withdrawing support for SP and declaring her alliance with the BJP. **Within a few days the BSP-BJP alliance came to power.** *At a time when BJP was shunned by every party for Babri Masjid demolition and series of communal riots throughout the country, BSP stepped up to hold its bloody hands and bring it back to power in UP. In return Mayawati was made the CM, although BSP had less than one-third of the number of MLAs in comparison to BJP.*

Why did not the alliance between SP and BSP last? After all, was it not a much acclaimed win for “bahujan unity”? As we have written in our first statement, “bahujan unity” can be formed only in a fool’s paradise, because the class interests of the constituent caste groups are diametrically opposite to each other. In UP, after the Green Revolution, Yadavs emerged as a dominant land owning caste, with its upper echelons becoming rich farmers and kulaks, exploiting agricultural labor to maximize their profits. On the other hand, dalits worked primarily as landless agricultural laborers. In villages, often the primary contradiction was between these two castes due to their antagonistic economic interests. **Christopher Jaffrelot** in his book *Religion, Caste & Politics in India* talks in detail about this as he says:

“Relations between the two partners, however, soon deteriorated. First, the BSP was getting worried about the advancement of Yadavs in the administration.’ Second, the Backward Castes, who were anxious to improve their social status and to keep the most subaltern groups under their domination, reacted violently to the Dalits’ efforts towards social mobility. Conflicts over the wages of the agricultural laborers,’ disputes regarding the proprietorship of land and clashes over expenditures on wedding processions that Untouchables can or cannot afford in the eyes of the OBCs, have always been acute. However, they have increased since both groups, the Dalits and the OBCs, have become more

assertive since the 1993 elections. These bones of contention partly explain the increasing number of atrocities... The breakup of the SP-BSP coalition showed how difficult it was to associate OBCs and SCs. It had been possible in 1993 because of the Mandal affair, but ties between the two parties began to weaken once the battle for quotas had been won." (Jaffrelot, 'Religion, Caste and Politics in India, pg. 502).

We are waiting for our identitarian fanatic friend to declare the hatred in the belly of Christopher Jaffrelot!

22. Following the 1996 assembly elections, the BSP-BJP alliance returned to power, this time with an agreement of rotating the CM after every 6 months. Thus, Mayawati and Kalyan Singh became CMs on a rotation basis. We would not be surprised if our friend with a myopic identitarian vision sees a "bahujan unity" working here as Kalyan Singh belonged to the OBC Lodhi community! *Jaffrelot goes on to comment that the BJP-BSP alliance was epitome of convergence between dalit and upper caste leaders to keep the OBCs, especially the Yadavs, out of power. (Ibid, 549)*

We would like to draw the attention of our readers to the following quote by **Kanshi Ram**:

"We can take the help of the BJP to advance our national agenda. We feel that the upper castes will be more amenable to social transformation than the intermediate castes." (ibid, 549)

What happened to the talks of "bahujan unity" here?

23. *In 2002, BSP came to power with BJP's support for the third time. We must remember this was just after Gujarat riots when the whole world condemned Modi for his state orchestrated genocide killing thousands of Muslims. In July, 2002, Mayawati campaigned for BJP for the Gujarat assembly elections giving a clean chit to Modi saying "The charges against Modi are baseless. A chief minister will never do anything which will bring bad name to his own government."* Mayawati also said that as BJP is supporting her in UP, it is her moral responsibility to support BJP in Gujarat. BSP supported BJP in 151 constituencies and independently contested in 31 constituencies. *Thus, at a time when the need was to isolate BJP further on the electoral plane, BSP actively worked towards mobilizing dalit votes for BJP. (Teltumbde, Republic of Caste, pg. 348).*

We want to ask our sympathizer friend wreathing paeans in praise of Mayawati and BSP, *is BSP's moral responsibility towards annihilation of caste or towards strengthening RSS-BJP - the most casteist and Brahmanical organization in the country?* One cannot deny the fact that BSP, too, is to be blamed for the historical sin of washing the blood stains of RSS-BJP.

By 2005, BSP had started moving away from the concept of "bahujan" to "Sarvajan" including Savarnas in its electoral arithmetic. It stopped using its ostensibly radical slogans like "Tilak Taraju aur Talwar, inko maaro joote chaar" and gave slogans like "Brahmin Dalit Bhai Bhai" and established 'Bhaichara Samitis' with Brahmin presidents and Dalit secretaries (Nota bene: brahmins were made presidents and dalits their secretaries! So much for 'politics of assertion'!). BSP, with Satish Chandra Mishra as its new General Secretary and Kanshi Ram's and Mayawati's blessings, organized a series '**Brahmin Sammelans**', more than 50 'Brahmin Jodo Sammelans' culminating in the '**Brahmin Maha Rally**' in Lucknow **where Mayawati was presented with the ax of Parashuram - one of the most brahmanical figures in Hindu mythology - by a group of Brahmin priests chanting Brahmanical Vedic hymns. BSP did not even leave its election symbol and associated it with overtly Brahmanical symbols with slogans like "Haathi nahi Ganesh hai - Brahma Vishnu Mahesh hai."** (So much for atheism and destruction of religion!) This is the level to which BSP degenerated even during the lifetime of Kanshi Ram.

Can our sympathizer friend tell us what kind of "unity of the oppressed" did BSP, Mr. Sympathizer's knight in shining armor for the liberation of the dalits, aimed to forge here? Were Brahmins an oppressed caste in UP? We can anticipate a possible answer from Mr. Sympathizer: **"Mayawati and Kanshi Ram did this to cunningly fool the brahmanical BJP! Is fooling only the prerogative of brahmins? We have the right to do everything disgusting and despicable that the savarnas have done! This was only to give a dent to the brahmanical BJP!"** This is such an obscene and vulgar and also stupid argument that it is difficult to respond to this. However, we are still tempted to ask: did this "cunningly fooling BJP" ultimately strengthened the BJP or weakened it?!

24. It is recorded that anti-Dalit atrocities in UP increased immediately after Mayawati came to power in 2007 with considerable support from the Brahmin community. **What is interesting is the fact that often the main accused in these anti-Dalit atrocities would be Brahmins who belonged to BSP itself! We request our readers to go through the following link to read on this topic in detail: ([Dalit Atrocities in UP](#)).** That is not all! **Mayawati issued a decree to stop the implementation of the SC/ST act in 2001, saying that it was being "misused".** Soon the dalit masses in UP protested against this Brahmanical diktat and the Allahabad High Court scrapped the order issued by Mayawati. **In order to appease the brahmanical forces, Mayawati also scrapped the provision for reservation for dalits in sports hostel in UP. Readers can read more on this and more such anti-dalit actions perpetrated by Mayawati on the following link: (<https://countercurrents.org/2023/04/how-dalit-friendly-is-mayawati/>)**

Now we want to ask our sympathizer friend whether he is trying to fool himself or is he fooling the students by portraying opportunist leaders like Kanshi Ram and Mayawati as messiahs for the oppressed castes. Our identitarian bigot goes on asking everyone their stand on EWS reservation with the only motive of slapping the label of *savarna* on them. **However, does our political imposter, Mr. Sympathizer, know that BSP in 2008 promised to implement EWS if it won the Lok Sabha elections?** ([Reservation for upper caste if BSP comes to power: Mayawati | India News](#))

In 2018 it welcomed the implementation of EWS reservations by the BJP and lamented that it should have been implemented earlier. ([Reservation for EWS: Mayawati says BSP welcomes Modi govt's 'immature' move](#))

Even after years of formal breakup of the BSP-BJP alliance, BSP's tryst with fascist and brahmanical politics has continued unabated. Almost every anti-people move by the Modi regime in recent years has been supported by BSP. **Most recently it welcomed the inauguration of Ram Mandir in Ayodhya** ([Mayawati welcomes Ram temple event in Ayodhya, thanks for invitation](#)). *Before that, she had welcomed the decision by BJP to scrap article 370 and said that the move would bring "social, economic and political justice" in the country* ([BSP expects people of J&K to benefit from Centre's decision to revoke Article 370: Mayawati](#)). *BSP's history of opportunism is so pathetic that compared to it rabidly reactionary parties like SP and Congress might also look radical!*

So, these are the messiahs of "bahujan unity" for Mr. Sympathizer! The less we speak, the better it is!

25. It is not surprising that a rank opportunist party like BSP who has taken pragmatist politics to the next level has become a shelter for corrupt businessmen, gangsters and local *bahubalis*. In fact, in 2009 Lok Sabha elections BSP surpassed even SP and BJP to give tickets to maximum number of candidates with criminal records ([BSP tops list in fielding candidates with criminal background - The Economic Times](#)). So, does our friend believe that BSP is going to annihilate caste riding on the back of these gangsters, rapists and local *bahubalis*, often coming from dominant castes?

26. Identity politics and pragmatic alliances with other parties to get power at any cost are the only two cards that BSP can bring to the table. However, one must remember that fascists are better equipped at playing these two cards and can beat any other party any day in this game. BJP has proven this in UP especially with BSP. From 30.4% vote share and 206 seats in 2007 elections to 13% vote share and only one seat in 2022 elections, BSP has almost been wiped off from mainstream politics. Even a chunk of its traditionally loyal Jatav votes has been transferred to BJP. This is the inevitable fate of a party with virtually no

economic program for the upliftment of the masses. Initially Kanshi Ram talked about getting "all government land" and all "surplus land" of landlords for dalits to become self-employed (*'jo zameen sarkari hai, wo zameen hamari hai'*). But the question is, even from the perspective of democratic revolution, ***why not demand radical land reforms that would include nationalization of land? After all, land is a natural resource and private monopoly over it is unacceptable even from the perspective of the bourgeois political economy of Adam Smith and Ricardo. In fact, Ambedkar himself had raised a similar demand: instead of demanding the expropriation of the landlords, he demanded giving extra land lying fallow, to dalit families, as if the landlords had some kind of divine right over the land. The fact is Kanshi Ram and BSP even abandoned this rank reformist and opportunist demand of "all government land" and "all surplus land" of landlords once it came to power.*** All that BSP did was to propagate a pretty-bourgeois utopia where the ideal for dalits is to become independent petty-producers or well-educated civil servants. Its aim was to secure a relatively better position for an upper section of dalits within the existing socio-economic structure. It never aimed at smashing the structure. Annihilation of caste was never an agenda for Kanshi Ram and BSP.

27. This lack of an economic program is not limited to BSP but is pertinent to all so-called "social justice" parties who harp on the rhetoric of "bahujan". Just to reiterate what we have already said about "bahujan" politics, we borrow the words of Anand Teltumbde:

"Kanshi Ram's conception of bahujan glosses over the material disparities between various castes and communities. There is a class divide between rich shudra farmers and dalit farm laborers. Caste atrocities are a manifestation of these contradictions, and the perpetrators are invariably people belonging to the shudra castes, assumed to be constituent of the bahujan category."
(Teltumbde, *Republic of Caste*, pg. 366)

The Tamil Nadu dalit identitarian groups realized that and refused to tailend this path of 'bahujan unity' in Tamil Nadu. Instead they avoided to ally with DMK (the party of vanniyars, one of the most backward castes) and AIADMK (the party mainly representing thevars, the economically and socially upward mobile backward caste). But, as far as pragmatist and opportunistic alliances with parties representing castes that dominate and oppress dalits, they, too, are in some way followers of Kanshi Ram. Their fate, too, has become clear today, just like BSP's fate has become crystal clear. We do not have to remind readers of the rendezvous of other "bahujan" parties like Ram Vilas Paswan's Lok Janshakti Party and Ramdas Athawale faction of RPI with BJP-RSS.

28. Snuggling into the embrace of fascist politics is not only limited to opportunist electoral parties. BAPSA is also learning the art of doing the tango with fascist forces on campus. Prof. Vivek Kumar, the chairperson of CSSS, the most famous ideologue of BAPSA and often considered to be the brain behind the organization, could be seen openly attending RSS events and giving public lectures on social justice in events organized by BAPSA. First is the link of Vivek Kumar attending the RSS function where it is hoped that he would lead a struggle against “leftists” and “anti-national forces” in JNU (<https://www.facebook.com/lalit.aarsheya/posts/pfbid0agnAxJWRTYEoSK6PM8G2wiC46EGNXAPyVkgpYw1GD3B5sLinRNBNUamuP4vaSMaMl>). Second is the link of him giving a talk on 'Contribution of Bahujan Leaders' just a few days back (<https://www.facebook.com/share/BmifcdNdmTKiCDNY/?mibextid=xfxF2i>)

We would also like our readers to listen to this telephonic interview of Prof. Kumar where he unapologetically defends BSP's alliance with BJP as he believes “power is everything” and “you need power to bring change.” ([Listen to Prof. Vivek Kumar, JNU on Ambedkarite politics and RSS | SabrangIndia](#)) *Maybe Prof. Kumar aims to lead BAPSA down the same road taken by BSP and forge an alliance with ABVP on campus because, after all “power is everything”. What does our sympathizer friend has to say on this? Has he questioned his own organization on their duplicity?*

It might be useful to wrap this discussion with Anand Teltumbde's words, even though we do not agree with everything he says or, in general, with his political line of shamefaced compromise with pragmatism:

"Kanshi Ram excelled at taking identity politics to new heights. While everyone played caste politics, he beat them hollow' at this game. Identity politics can massage your ego, make you feel good, but it cannot feed your hunger, or liberate you from bondage. It can give you statues and memorials, but not what these icons lived for. Kanshi Ram never agitated on any real issue, but harped on an abstraction of political power. The BSP's accomplishments are painted by its proponents as the empowerment of dalits, even a silent revolution, but all this was confined to the realm of notions." (Teltumbde, Republic of Caste: pg. 365-366)

ON ANNIHILATION OF CASTE

Now let us come to our friend's comments on Disha's preliminary program towards annihilation of caste. **This whole segment is nothing but a bunch of lies and misrepresentations interspersed with more rhetoric and identitarian diatribe.** We request all our readers to read what we have written in this section and you will be able to see for yourself how this intellectual charlatan has distorted our arguments. We are providing the link to our first statement here: [Disha's Response to a BAPSA Sympathiser.pdf](#)

29. Responding to the point that merely having a social program would mean the ruling class and its state have no role to play in the sustenance of caste-based oppression, our friend writes:

"We have never said that the state does not play any role in sustaining caste oppression. Rather, we are clear on the fact that the *state is made up of people*, and those same 'upper caste' people are in the government, judiciary, and bureaucracy. The monopoly of the 'upper caste' Hindus over the state is the primary reason our constitution is in danger."

Here our friend has again proved that we are not wrong in calling his arguments dim-witted. As we have said earlier, it would be much better if our sympathizer friend had actually read some basic texts of political science, history and political economy before showcasing his buffoonery through pamphlets. **Any student doing their BA in political science would laugh at this theory which sees the state as a collection of few individuals.** The state as a socio-political institution came up at a particular time in history - to serve a particular function - namely, to safeguard the system based on exploitation and oppression of the working majority by the minority parasitic elite. *The way the state behaves is dependent on this concrete purpose of state and is independent of the personal whims and fancies of individuals who work as its functionaries.* It is a machine of coercion by a particular class or classes that ensures exploitation and oppression continues in such a manner that it serves the interest of those class(es). For example, even if the state is full of well-intentioned people who want to do something good for the toiling masses, still they will not be able to make the state work for the interests of the toiling masses because the machine, i.e., the state, itself, is not built to meet this purpose. ***A machine designed to produce shoes will not produce chapatis, no matter who is operating the machine.***

The superficial understanding of the state that our sympathizer friend possesses leads all the identitarians to the conclusion that if there are enough ministers, bureaucrats, professors and other state functionaries from the "bahujan" communities then they are going to work for the "bahujan" interests. Dr. Ambedkar had harbored the same illusions, only to be shattered towards the end of his life. Leave alone bureaucrats from OBC castes, even the bureaucrats from dalit background, in general, never did anything in the interests of common dalits, because they represent the state and the state has a class character. The case of Khairlanji is revealing here. After the Khairlanji incident, the role of dalit police officers and medical officers was shameful and horrible. Read S. M. Dahiwale's article 'Khairlanji: Insensitivity of Mahar Officers', published in EPW, Vol. 44, Issue 31, 01 Aug, 2009. This is only one example. The moral of the story is simple: ***if you do not understand the class character of power, then you don't grab the 'power', the 'power' grabs you!***

30. Look at the rhetorical question that our friend is asking here: "I want to ask Disha, why do you want to save those Brahmanical scriptures? Do you want them to maintain the authority of your janeau hidden under the kurta of progressiveness?" ***Now we ask our friend to show us where we have said this? Where has he seen us vouching for the sanctity of the Brahmanical scriptures? We request our readers to see page no. 14 and 15 of our first statement ([Disha's Response to a BAPSA Sympathiser.pdf](#)), and our entire statement, and tell us where we have written anything like this!***

We have criticized his views that one needs to first relinquish his religion, become an atheist and then be organized in the anti-caste movement. Any reasonable person would see that this in no way means to preserve the Hindu scriptures as something sacrosanct! **Only a political crook can attempt to equate the two things.** Now, what was our argument?

Our logic was simple, about which Mr. Sympathizer is quite dense and tense: *Disha holds a clear-cut anti-caste position and does not tolerate casteism in any form; having said that, atheism cannot be made the basis of being anti-caste; contrarily, one can show a number of atheists who were casteists, like Savarkar; you cannot put a sign of 'equals to' between atheism and anti-caste project; secondly, ideologically speaking, Hinduism has always been a very hegemonic, as it is not based on one 'holy book'; Harbans Mukhia argues that what came to be known as Hindu society was full of monotheistic non-brahmanical sects and even a strong trend of atheistic sects ("Hinduism, in fact, comprised several strands, including monotheism as well as a very strong strand of atheism", Harbans Mukhia, 'Kabir in His Time and Ours');* Romila Thapar confirms this fact; in fact, as Gail Omvedt has shown the very term 'Hindu' began to be used only after the Turkish conquest and beginning of the Sultanate period and even till the 19th century, it was not used in entire Indian subcontinent; as Romila Thapar has shown, that is why, one of the projects of RSS is 'semitization of Hinduism'; there have been radical protestant sects within what is called Hinduism or Hindu society, that rejected caste system and brahmanical ideology, but did not give up the very idea of a (monotheistic) religion and god. **Would we exclude someone from the membership of a mass organization who retains some idea of a supernatural power but keeps his religious idea completely as his private affair, completely detached from his social and political life, opposes caste discrimination and brahmanical ideology, practices and rituals in all forms?** *Even majority of dalits are not atheists, bulk of them practicing some form of Hindu religion, even if some protestant sect. How would an anti-caste organization keeping atheism as a precondition of membership, organize even the overwhelming masses of dalits and other oppressed castes? That was the basic question. There was no question whatsoever of supporting the brahmanical scriptures! However, instead of answering a real and concrete question, Mr. Sympathizer has engaged in erecting an identitarian smokescreen.*

31. Responding to our claim that division between mental and manual labor has provided the material basis for 'superiority' and 'inferiority' of different castes, our friend emphatically quotes the famous quote of Dr. Ambedkar that caste system is not merely a division of labor but also a division of laborers. We are very certain that Mr. Sympathizer neither understands the meaning of 'division of labor' nor the meaning of 'division of laborers'. As we have written in detail on the origin of the caste system, refuting the erroneous understanding in Dr. Ambedkar's work 'Castes in India', at the point of its origin, the *varna* system resembled the labor division and embryonic class division of the latter part of the early-Vedic period. There was no hereditary division of labor as yet, i.e., no division of laborers that time, in the society. Nor was there untouchability at this point. Only through ritualistic ossification and codification did "division of laborer", i.e. hereditary division of labor started in the society, commensal prejudices emerged, endogamy solidified and eventually untouchability, too, developed. It happened with the development of class society, patriarchy and the religious and ritualistic ossification of the class and labor division into religious texts and codes, increasing subordination of, first, the shudra castes and then the so-called outcastes, the dalits. In other words, the labor division of a particular time period was ossified and fossilized by the ruling class through religious codification in brahmanical scriptures which led to the emergence and consolidation of the varna-caste system. Ergo, first there was division of labor and later there was division of laborers! This theory on the origin of the caste system is substantiated by historians like DD Kosambi, RS Sharma, Suvira Jaiswal, Vivekanand Jha, Irfan Habib, etc. If saying that the *varna*-caste system came into being with the division of labor in the latter half of the early-Vedic period makes one a devotee of RSS and Manu, then the above-mentioned historians must all be declared Manuvadis and fascists! Will our friend, blazing in the heat of identity politics, go to the extent of calling Suvira Jaiswal or Irfan Habib as Manuvadi and fascist historians?

32. On the next point our friend intentionally misrepresents our quote, cut from context, and then to prove us wrong goes on a meaningless rant, writing a pile of identitarian gibberish. Our friend criticizes us for our "limited understanding of the caste system" as, according to him, we believe that "the problem of caste system can be solved by solving only the problems of dalits". Now let us look at what we had actually written in our pamphlet:

"A revolutionary anti-caste movement has to undertake protracted anti-caste agitation and propaganda among the toiling masses of every caste and make them conscious that their real enemy is not toiling people of other castes but the ruling class of exploiters and oppressors."

If we were to think that an anti-caste movement should limit itself only to the dalits, why would we write this? In fact, our intellectual imposter, Mr. Sympathizer, has referred to the

exact quote that we have quoted above on page no. 11 of his pamphlet. *There he criticizes us for trying to organize the toiling masses of other castes and making them conscious about who their actual enemies are. The actual enemies of the toiling masses, whatever caste they might belong to, are not the toiling masses of some other caste, but the ruling class of exploiters and oppressors.* Yet, now Mr. Sympathizer conveniently forgets this quote and claims that we focus only on the dalits! Do you seriously think the readers are so immature that they would not see through these cheap tricks? Intellectual honesty is the basic tenet on which we can hope to have a fruitful debate. But our hope to have a sustained fruitful debate with a habitual liar and imposter is shrinking fast. Also, as dalits are the most oppressed section among the oppressed castes, a revolutionary anti-caste movement must have the real economic, political and social issues of the dalits as the bedrock of its program, but not limited by this. If we say that the program of the anti-caste movement must be limited only to the issues of dalits that would again be identity politics, which we are fighting against in the first place. Mr. Sympathizer also knows this fact very well. However, in the anxiety to criticize us he has tried to pull a sleight of hand and misquote us and out of context.

33. The simpleton sympathizer from BAPSA then attempts to criticize us on our statement when we said "Caste system has percolated the pores of every religion in the Indian subcontinent." He said that this statement must be taught to us in an RSS Shakha. However, then Mr. Sympathizer himself goes on blatantly to write: "We believe castes or jatis, wherever they are present, have to be completely destroyed, because it is the most inhumane system in the world." So here he concedes that the caste system is present in other religions as well. **Were we wrong to claim earlier that half of the time our naïve friend does not understand what we are writing, and half of the time he does not understand what he himself is writing!**

Having embarrassed himself again, Mr. Sympathizer goes on to enlighten us with profound knowledge about how the caste system started in other religions. Referring to Ambedkar, he says that even when a dalit converts into Islam or Christianity he is not treated as equals in his new religion because the Muslims and Christians fear that if they treat the dalits as equals, the upper-caste Hindus would see them as lowly. Thus, Muslims and Christians follow untouchability like Hindus. *This is again an over-simplistic argument, much like his understanding about the state.* Obviously Brahmanism, as a ruling class ideology, commands a hegemony over the society, and it can induce Muslims or Christians to follow it and internalize it. However, that cannot be the primary reason why the caste system was so easily accepted by other religions. We must keep in mind that neither the Muslim rulers of India nor the British ever tried to tinker with the caste system. This is because of the fact that the caste system provided a ready-made system of 'divide and rule' and oppressed the working people of the country and kept them under structural subordination. Every caste is

graded on a hierarchical table. Every caste which is above some other caste thinks itself to be superior and unity simply along caste lines is virtually impossible. **Why would the ruling class from any religion bother to amend this efficient machine that divides people and keeps the working masses under structural subordination?** Irfan Habib shows that after the Muslim conquest of Sind in 714 AD, one of the Muslim generals Muhammad Ibn Qasim highly praised the caste system as an efficient way to keep the people subordinated! Similarly, the ruling class within Islam and Christianity in India readily adopted the brahmanical practices and kept the converted dalits at the same downtrodden level where they were before conversion. This would ensure that the unity of the toiling masses is made difficult. There is nothing more frightening for the ruling class, irrespective of religion, to see the unity of the toiling masses.

34. Our sympathizer friend is so relentless in his idiocy that till the last moment he keeps writing some gibberish. In the last paragraph he declares that we have learnt two things from RSS:

(I) "Untouchability is the only problematic thing in the caste system"

(II) "Anti-Caste movement is merely Anti-Religion movement"

His anxiety to defend the identity politics of BAPSA has reached to such a point that the velocity with which he is receding away from logic approaches the speed of light and his brain has become a black hole that has swallowed the light of reason. ***It is the Indian constitution that believes untouchability is the only problematic thing in the caste system, not us!*** Therefore, the constitution does not go beyond abolishing untouchability. In fact, nowhere in our last statement we wrote that we only want to abolish untouchability. Show us one instance where we have said this!

As for the second statement we cannot even understand exactly what our friend is trying to say here, and we are equally sure even he does not understand it. ***If anything, it was our friend who was taking a stand that to fight against the caste system, we have to fight against Hindu religion and must all become atheists. Thereby implying that the anti-caste movement is merely anti-religion movement.*** It was not us who said that! In fact, we opposed this line of argument and showed that you can even have an atheist who is also, at the same time, a casteist, like Savarkar!

We seriously think that Mr. Sympathizer suffers from amnesia, selective memory and short-term memory loss, as the readers, too, can see.

35. Before we conclude our rebuttal we want to draw the attention of our readers towards one glaring aspect of the whole debate. We are sure it must not have gone unnoticed by our

readers as well. **While we have clearly written about our preliminary program towards annihilation of caste, Mr. Sympathizer has not yet written a single word about his ideas on how to annihilate the caste system.** He has dedicated two pages criticizing our program, but he himself has maintained a stoic silence on this important aspect. We want our readers to understand that the biggest advocates of identity politics who go around slapping the label of “*savarna*” on everyone who questions them, are most clueless on the basic question of how exactly to annihilate the caste system. They indulge only in hollow phrase-mongering like “*bahujan unity*” but do not have a speck of idea about how to annihilate the caste system. The most they talk about is “*representation through reservations*” in jobs, in educational institutions and in the state. In our last statement we have talked in detail why in the era where doors of public education is being fast shut on the face of the toiling masses and when generation of new jobs has virtually stopped, reservation cannot provide quality education and employment to even a miniscule proportion of youths coming from oppressed sections of the society. Secondly, in this pamphlet itself we have discussed why mere representation in the state would not change its exploitative and oppressive character. Then what is the way forward? We wish Mr. Sympathizer had answered this question concretely without blabbering any identitarian rhetoric. We would like to quote Gail Omvedt here, even though one cannot agree with her entire political line. She says the following about Kanshi Ram's anti-caste politics, but it is equally applicable to the barrenness of the entire identity politics in general:

*"In all of this, what is striking is the nearly total lack of any clear ideology in the programmes and functioning of BAMCEF, BSP, etc. The thrust is solely on breaking the caste system to overthrow the rule of the three upper castes by organizing the "oppressed and exploited" for "equality". "Changing" and "destroying the system" are stressed, **but the system is described almost solely in social terms** (i.e. on caste terms). An economic programme is absent, so is any concrete outline of what dalits and backwards might do once they gain political power, or what kind of society might be built."*

36. As our readers can also see, Mr. Sympathizer has nothing new to say, no salient arguments to make. Thus, he wants to hide his failure behind the thick smokescreen of rhetoric, lies, slander and misrepresentations. We are pretty sure that his response to this statement, if any, is going to be on similar lines: inability to answer will lead him to put labels of “*savarnists*”, “*brahmanical*”, “*casteist*”, etc. on us! If he still thinks this identitarian arm-twisting or blackmail would work on Disha, just because in the past it has worked on the likes of AISA, SFI, AISF, DSF, etc., we are sorry to inform him: *that's not gonna happen!*

We would continue to expose the cheap tricks of identity politics. If Mr. Sympathizer's response proves our suspicions, we reserve the *right of not responding* to any such statement that he writes in the future and that is bereft of any logic and fact and brims with identitarian slurs. If he really engages logically and factually, we would definitely respond.

We have made our stand aptly clear on the questions of ideology, common minimum program, mass organization, identity politics and annihilation of caste. We appeal to our readers to carefully go through all three of our statements and discuss your views with us. We are engaging in this debate not merely to respond to the infantile arguments of the BAPSA sympathizer but to initiate a sincere debate and discussion on these important questions. Feedback of our readers will be eagerly awaited.

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