

NAMBOODIRIPAD'S ANTI-COMMUNALISM X-RAYED

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Part I

Today E.M.S. Namboodiripad poses to be the biggest crusader against communalism in India. He is the moving spirit in organising the anti-communalism campaign of Trade Union Organisations. He is its ideologue and its architect. His contention is that communalism is the greatest threat to India at present. Therefore, he wants all the secular progressive forces of India to come together and crush the forces of communalism, because according to him, that is the only way to save India's unity: Trade union movement, the vanguard of the working class, should lead this campaign against communalism, because they are the most conscious, the most radical, the most well organised and therefore the most suited for this purpose.

The objective, *prima facie*, appears most laudable. It immediately appeals to the Indian psyche, which has an instinctive disgust against communal riots, their horrid trail of bloodshed and massacre of innocents.

But one must search a little deeper. Any action should be judged by the motive behind it. Namboodiripad is first and foremost a politician a communist politician at that. He has put it on record that everything he does - yes, everything-is part of his political activity, intended to promote the interest of communism. He has stated times out of number that even his literary activities-how much literary they are and how much crudely propagandist, is another matter, for the communist does not make any distinction between the two-are only part of his political activity.

If one is to understand correctly the anti communalism campaign of trade unions inspired by Namboodiripad, and for that matter all his recent utterances and activities-one must understand the political compulsions that he and his party are facing. Marxist party has reached the saturation point in its growth in the only two states of India in which it is at the moment in power-Kerala and West Bengal. It has been marking time, unable to make any headway in any other state, having reached a blind alley, as it were. With the decline and downfall of Communism elsewhere in the world the party's difficulties have been compounded many times

over. Without a fresh influx of enthusiasm, it will find it well-nigh impossible to stop the erosion that has already set in its ranks, much less to make further inroads in opponent's camps. For the last one decade and more, the party has been making desperate efforts to make an entry into other Indian states, particularly the Hindi heartland. Mr. Namboodiripad himself has shifted his headquarters to Delhi with this sole objective, knowing full well that there is no one in Kerala to occupy the Chief Minister's Office as his substitute, no one who can compare even remotely with West Bengal's Jyothi Basu. But there was no option. Kerala with its complicated caste and communal equations, was not as stable or as dependable as Bengal was. It could slip out of the party's fold, if it does not make additional gain elsewhere and keep the morale of party workers high.

Besides being an astute politician, Namboodiripad is a shrewd tactician. His tactics are the outcome of his masterly use of the theory of dialectical materialism. It is the most handy weapon for an unscrupulous politician like Namboodiripad. Dialectics is the perpetual clash of opposites, leading to higher and higher levels of achievements, operating without end, always in a state of flux or change. So one can always change one's tactics to suit one's convenience without being open to the charge of opportunism. The principles of materialism is equally if not more advantageous. There is no need for any moral or spiritual values to adhere to. The end alone justified the means. The only skill needed is that of polemics to confound your opponent and convince your rank and file. Namboodiripad possesses this skill in enviable abundance.

In any given situation, there is a play of opposites. Dialectics tells how to exploit it. In a political situation, there are some who enjoy power and prestige and others who do not. In democracy, there is the ruling party and there is the opposition. Among the opposition, you can always count upon disgruntled individuals, groups and even whole parties, who are vulnerable to temptation. Namboodiripad has never hesitated to play upon the party selfishness of such persons or groups. But he had always taken care to flaunt arguments of high ideological import to give the impression that what he does is dictated by lofty principles and not by sheer opportunism. He has taken diametrically opposite technical and ideological positions, one in the wake of the other. He has selected and discarded allies in rapid succession, without an iota of principles. He has joined hand with casteist and communal forces most unabashedly in Kerala politics. He has a conveniently selective memory as to facts, figures and

even promises. And he is quite sure that the memory of those whom he is dealing with is shorter still. There is no party with which he has not entered into coalition excepting the Congress (excepting for a short period when the CPM held power jointly with the Antony group of Congress). This exception is because Congress is the enemy, not only in Kerala, but also in the Centre, from whom power has to be wrested. But this has not prevented him from overtly or covertly wooing groups and factions from the Congress party to his side. At the moment, he is engaged in making such overtures to certain elements in Congress and the Kerala Congress. All this goes to prove that apart from political advantage of his party, there is no consideration of any principles, be it of Communalism or Secularism, Socialism or Capitalism, in all the tactics he has been indulging in. The anti-communalism campaign of trade union movement is only another instance in point. It is no exception, but only another ploy.

The provocation for this campaign is as every one knows, the Ramajanmabhoomi issue. Without going into the merits of the question, it can be safely stated that excepting for a mad fringe of politically motivated fundamentalist Muslim leaders, the vast majority of Muslims in India are not in any way interested in Babri Masjid. And they are the same leaders who raised hue and cry against the judgement of the Supreme Court in the Shah Bano case and got it reversed by their fanatic outbursts. Shah Bano Judgement at least concerned the entire Muslim Community because it was supposed to be part of *Shariat*, whereas Babri Masjid does not touch the rights of even a single Muslim, because it is not being used as a place of worship by them for the last 40 years and more. Hindus were in continuous possession of the shrine and they were offering prayers, perfectly legally. If the politicians like Namboodiripad had any sense of fairness, they could have appealed to the Muslim community to make a gesture of goodwill to the Hindus by abandoning their ill founded claim on it. But instead of it, Namboodiripad and politicians of his ilk have chosen to oppose the Hindu claim and boost up Muslim fanaticism. By this short-sighted act, what they have actually done is to side with fundamentalist leaders like Shahabuddin, Banathwala and Shahi Imam. In effect this will only strengthen the stranglehood of these leaders on the Muslim community and make it more and more difficult for them to join the national mainstream. Such a development will be disastrous to the Country's long term interest. But as has already been pointed out, Namboodiripad is little concerned with the long term interest of the country.

He is much more eager to play a leading role and make a dent in North India, where his party has been in the wilderness all these years. Conveniently for him, there are non-communist politicians like, Mulayam Singh Yadav whose temporary political interest coincides with the long term interest of Namboodiripad. It is this situation that the dialectician in Namboodiripad is shrewdly manipulating.

In this game, he knows full well that he will not be able to win over the Muslim masses to his side. His party does not have the required cadre or organisational infrastructure for that. He knows this because he is well aware of the real nature of Muslim fundamentalists. All his attempts to placate Muslim Communalism by appeasing even their most unreasonable demands, have not paid any dividends in Kerala. After successfully extracting their pound of flesh from him, they joined hands with his opponents and ditched him. In the north too the experience cannot be different. But Namboodiripad aims to kill two birds at one shot. One is to isolate the RSS-VHP-BJP-BMS-combine (as he puts it)- from the rest. The other is to establish working rapport with those short-sighted and selfish carrier politicians and to make them serve as his party's stepping stone in North India. He wants Trojan horses for his entry into the Northern belt, and he has found out a few.

THALI AND SREE RAMA JANMABHOOMI

A STUDY IN NAMBOODIRIPAD'S HYPOCRACY

Part II

Namboodiripad's anti-communal stance is hypocritical to the core. It is mask to hide his real intentions. He is opposed only to Hindus and Hindu demands, however legitimate and patriotic they are. On the other hand he had been a life long supporter of Muslim communalism, however perverted and anti-national it is. Any number of instances to illustrate this statement can be gleaned if we cast a cursory glance at his political carrier.

Namboodiripad has never concealed his opposition to the Hindu demand for erecting a temple at the Ram Janmabhoomi. He brings in all sorts of tendentious arguments in support of his stand. He asks whether Rama was ever born. He demands proof to identify the particular spot where Rama is supposed have been born. He questions the variety of the view of Babar's distruction of the temple at Ayodhya and the construction of a Mosque at that site. Even if that is conceded, he raises a moral objection to the Hindu claim by asking whether a wrong committed centuries ago should be rectified now. Finally he comes out with a proposal that the present structure should be converted into national monument.

The actual purpose of all these statements put together, boils down to this: Hindus have no right in Ayodhya. Conversely he is supporting the demand of the Muslim communalists who only want to deny the Hindus their legitimate claim, without saying it in so many words. It does not stop there. Everybody knows that there are so many Muslim monuments in various parts of India, deserted in the wake of partition of the Country. Most of them have now been restored to the Muslims by the previous as well as present governments. They are now being used as regular mosques for all practical purposes. Once Rama Janmabhoomi is declared a National monument and the Hindu claim to it as a functioning temple is withdrawn, what guarantee is there that the Muslims will not mount an agitation for the restoration of "Babri Masjid", and the government will not succumb to their demand? At the present tempo of political activities in the country, such an eventuality is very much on the cards. So the net effect of Namboodiripad's proposal will be, not only to deny the right

of the Hindus, but also to hand over in a platter Sree Rama Janmabhoomi to the Muslims.

While opposing the Hindu demand for the construction of Sree Ramajanmabhoomi temple at Ayodhya, Namboodiripad assumes a highly moralistic stand and says: "I am not opposed to erecting a temple, I am only opposed to pulling down an existing mosque". How right and reasonable it sounds! But the whole thing is a hoax. He is cheating the people down right. The lie is too transparent and needs no great effort to expose it. Namboodiripad was the Chief Minister of Kerala for the second term in 1967-69. Kelappaji was the greatest Gandhian Kerala has produced. Not far from Namboodiripad's native village, there was a dilapidated Shiva temple at "Thali", near Angadipuram, which was destroyed at the time of Tipu's invasion. The majestic idol was lying uncared for at that desolate spot. Shri Kelappaji decided to construct a temple at that site. The Hindus all around enthusiastically rallied round him and started clearing the area for temple construction. But no! The Chief Minister issued an order preventing the renovation work. Kelappaji was rightly infuriated because the order went against the legal and moral right of the Hindus. It was against natural justice. Naturally there was a confrontation. People on the one side and the government on the other. Kelappaji symbolising the people and Namboodiripad the government. The government let loose all its brute force to stop Hindus constructing the temple. Thus frustrated, Namboodiripad came out with his favourite proposal that the Thali temple should be made a protected National monument. The same proposal that he puts forward in the case of Sree Ramajanmabhoomi : But what happened? Though he was Chief Minister with all authority at his command, and though he made ruthless use of brutal force, available to him, he totally failed. Of course, Kelappaji was arrested and put behind bars, where he started an indefinite fast. People rose in their thousands, uncontrollable. Ultimately the "Mighty" Chief Minister had to eat the humble pie, withdraw the objection and allow the temple to be constructed. Today there stands a small but magnificent temple at that historic site. Peoples will prevailed ultimately.

But the most significant factor in the whole episode is this: Why did Namboodiripad issue orders preventing the temple construction at Thali? Why did he want to suppress the Hindu claim and declare it a protected monument? In Ayodhya, he says that he is only against building a temple after pulling down a mosque. But there was no mosque at all

in Thali and therefore there was no question of pulling it down. What was the justification in his attempt to thwart Kelappaji's move excepting that he wanted to placate, a handful of fanatic Muslims who had absolutely no locus standi in the whole affair. It was a classical case of shameless appeasement of Muslim communalism by sacrificing the fundamental right of the Hindus. The Siva temple at Thali thus constructed stands as a living monument of Hindu-Muslim unity, because there was not a murmur against it when the government withdrew its objection. The whole opposition was deliberately whipped up with ulterior motive. Today many Muslims gladly offer worship at the temple. Does not this one small episode prove to the hilt that Namboodiripad's tall moralistic claims have no legs to stand?

Moreover what right has he to recommend to the Central Government to declare Ramajanmabhoomi a national monument, when he as Chief Minister could not implement such a proposal himself in his own State? Sree Ramajanmbhoomi at Ayodhya is thousand times more emotionally important for the Hindus all over India than the Thali temple at Angadipuram. Namboodiripad should be a fool not to realise this. But he is not. He has his axes to grind. He has his party interest to gain, even if it costs the country dearly.

NAMBOODIRIPAD GIVES RESPECTABILITY TO MUSLIM LEAGUE

Part III

How dishonest and deceptive is Namboodiripad's loudmouthed opposition to communalism, can be gauged from the fact, that his party, right from its inception had been instrumental in promoting Muslim communalism, by colluding with it. Communist party's open support to the Muslim League demand for the partition of India is too well known to need reiteration. It was a most sinister move in the sense that the party gave an ideological dimension and thereby lent respectability to a move, which was anti-national. That is one diabolical aspect of communist tactics. Whenever it wants to adopt a tactical line, however opportunistic and unprincipled it may be, the party ideologies take special care to present it in attractive ideological garb, in order to deceive the gullible public. That was what they did when they supported the demand for partition in the name of self-determination ! Even treason can be given a respectable veneer by glossy overcoating !

Even after partition, communists did not realise their mistake, for in post-independent India also, they continued the same policy of appeasing Muslim communalism. There is an impression going round that it was the Congress which first admitted Muslim League into respectable political company, by entering into electoral adjustment with it in 1959, after the first Communist Ministry was overthrown in Kerala, but that is not a fact. Namboodiripad himself has frankly admitted that there was close understanding and operation between the Communist Party and Muslim League in the Malabar District Board Administration in 1952.² He describes this as the first instance of positive co-operation of these two parties in Kerala politics. Not only that, Namboodiripad points out that in the first general elections held in 1952 also Muslim League favoured electoral support to the Communist Party, in order to see that the Congress is defeated wherever possible. This attitude had the desired effect. In Madras Assembly Congress was reduced to a minority party. It was then that C. Rajagopalachari shrewdly played his cards and won over the Muslim League to form a government. Namboodiripad has openly admitted that it was this policy of mutual understanding and active co-operation that enabled the Muslim League in Malabar to get out of the most unenviable predicament

to which it had sunk after partition.³ This clearly proves that first step towards rehabilitating Muslim League after 1947 was taken by Namboodiripad and his party and not by the Congress, which shows that his present hostility towards Communalism is only opportunistic and selective and not based on any principle whatsoever.

Then followed a period of most unhealthy and unscrupulous competition between the Congress and the Communist party to ally themselves with the Muslim League and also the (Christian) Kerala Congress. The only objective was capture of power, and the only excuse given by Namboodiripad was that if he does not ally with the League, then the Congress would ! So to keep Congress out, joined hands with the League ! What about communalism? It does not matter much, because, minority communalism is thoroughly justifiable on the ground that, it is born out of fear and sense of insecurity and poses no harm, whatsoever. And to keep Congress out, Muslim League had to be continuously appeased, all their demands have to be met. Every time such appeasement had to be made, Namboodiripad had to find out some justification for the same. League had only to put forth any unreasonable demand. It was for Namboodiripad to find out its justification. This game went on and on, with the result that League got everything they wanted, until a point was reached when they had no more demand which the Marxist party could supply. Then they ditched Namboodiripad and came out of his company. It was only after that he started talking in terms of opposing Muslim communalism, and not before. The initiative was theirs, not his. He had no choice and then he became opponent to Muslim communalism. But even that is not the end of the story. Of that a little later.....

SHAMELESS SURRENDER TO MUSLIM COMMUNALISM

Part IV

The biggest political gain of the Muslim League in Kerala was the achievement of a Muslim majority district Malappuram-which was probably the costliest gift they extracted from Namboodiripad. It is a slightly modified version of "Mopplasthan" which the League had been demanding before 1947, as part of Pakistan. Nobody had even a shadow of doubt as to the utterly communal nature of this demand. After the partition of India, even the Muslim League had, for all practical purposes, given up that demand, knowing full well that no political party or government worth the name will ever entertain such a demand. But with the inclusion of Muslim League in a coalition government headed by Namboodiripad who went on appeasing one after the other their communal demands, Muslim League leaders thought that the climate has changed in their favour and that the time has come for putting forward their old demand albeit under a changed nomenclature. They demanded that a district be carved out consisting of the Muslim majority areas of erstwhile Kozhikode and Palakkad districts of Malabar where League will hold such a dominant position that any government that comes to power will have to reckon with its overwhelming influence. There was widespread and spontaneous opposition to the demand from all sections of the people, cutting across party barriers. Namboodiripad could have taken advantage of this sentiment and refused to succumb. But he chose the other way. Did he not know that it was an unreasonable, communal demand? Of course he did. If he was opposed to communalism, as he claims today, the option before him was clear. He should have stuck to principle, come what may. Congress Party might have exploited the situation to wean away Muslim League to their side. It might also be true that the Communist party would have had to pay the price namely, lose power in the State. But it would have conclusively proved its loyalty to a principle. The cancer of communalism would have been dealt a death blow. But power was much more tempting than principle and Namboodiripad shamelessly surrendered before the Muslim League. His justification for this surrender exposes the hollowness of his talk of anti-communalism and courage of conviction. Later on, he has written at length to the effect that he very well knew that such a district, if carved out, will become a bastion of Muslim Communalism and also

that league will gain in power and prestige immensely. But he argues, if that demand is not conceded, then the League leaders will go about propagating that Namboodiripad is anti-muslim and might even depict him as pro-RSS.⁴ That would have done him incalculable harm, he says. Therefore, he conceded their demand, for sheer fear of incurring unpopularity with the Muslim League masses. How timid of a man who occupies such a key position in a party which claims to be the most revolutionary, and which promises to usher in radical transformations. As usual he was smart enough to come out with a facesaving justification for this coverdly surrender by saying that a separate district was carved out only in the interest of socio-economic development !

Ever since the formation of the district Muslim League has become a law into themselves in that area. Hindus who form only a minority, are treated as second class citizens. It is only because of the strength of RSS and allied organisations that the Hindus are able to carry on with some amount of self-assurance. But, as far as Namboodiripad is concerned, he had virtually thrown them to tender mercies of Muslim fanatics, only for saving his Chief Ministership !

But the story does not end there. Muslim League after having secured their main objective, gradually fell out with the Marxist Party, inspite of Namboodiripad's effort to keep them in good humour. But even at that stage Namboodiripad was not psychologically prepared to reconcile to the fact and treat it as a good riddance. What he did was to manouvre the formation of a break-away Muslim League, consisting of certain leaders who were disgruntled with the official league leadership. 'All India Muslim League' came into being, with the blessings of Namboodiripad who clung to it in helpless desperation, because otherwise he would be dubbed anti-muslim and pro RSS: He needed the certificate of at least a splinter group of Muslim League to establish his secular credentials in the eyes of the public ! Such is the character and calibre of this self-appointed crusader against communalism !

THE 'BRAVE' MOPLA AND THE 'MEEK' HINDU

Part V

It is while writing about the notorious Mopla riots of 1921, that Namboodiripad excels himself. There he shows himself at his ludicrous best. He wrote a book called 'Kerala the Motherland of Malayalees' towards the end of the nineteen forties (1947-48). Probably that is the earliest book standing in his name. He himself proudly describes it as "a turning point in the historiography in Kerala. It was my first humble attempt to extend historical materialism into Kerala history. Today, after 47 years, when I look back, I still feel that no significant correction is necessary in what I wrote at that time. The obvious meaning is that I was able to formulate a true scientific approach to Kerala history, 47 years back"⁵ The book is note worthy on account of many things. It is in that book that he propounds the theory that India is not one single nation, but a conglomeration of independent nations like Kerala, Tamilnadu, Andhra etc., In the book there is a chapter with the title "The birth of Nation". referring to Kerala's emergency as a separate 'Nation'. That was the official Communist line at that time. It continued to be so for a long time thereafter. It is difficult to say where the Marxist Party stands today vis-a-vis India's nation hood. There is still a good deal of ambiguity about it. Even though they have been vociferous about the integrity of India, they have not defined the exact status of the various states-whether they are only states or whether they are nations. Judging from previous experience, it is not difficult to visualise that they are keeping their options open for the future. It is again in this book that Namboodiripad takes up the subject of the Mopla riots and discusses at length the questions whether it was a communal riot or not. And what does he say in conclusion? That it was not a communal riot. What are the arguments and what are the evidences he advances to come to such an original conclusion? They are such as to startle any sane person who reads it.⁶ He says that the Mopla rebellion took place in Ernad Taluk of Malabar covering an area of 220 villages. By a modest estimate, it can be stated that there existed five temples on an average in every village. That means that there were more than 1100 temples in the whole area. The Moplals destroyed only just above one hundred temples, which comes to nearly nine percent only. According to Namboodiripad that is an astonishingly low number, if the Mopla were motivated by communal passion. Hence it is not justified to

call it a communal riot ! He does not stop there. Quoting official figures supplied by the government in the Madras legislature (Malabar was part of Madras province at that time,) he says that the number of people actually put to death during the rebellion was only about 5 to 6 hundred, he asks whether that was a sufficiently high number to justify the charge of communal riot, and replies with an emphatic 'No'. Finally taking up the number of Hindus forcibly converted by the fanatics, Namboodiripad makes this startling observation. "There were about 4 lakhs Hindus in the riot hit area of whom only 2500 Hindus were subjected to forcible conversion. No sane person will condemn it as a communal riot in the strength of such a small number." Thus taking into account the number of temples destroyed, Hindus killed or converted, he comes to the conclusion that the Mopla riots were not communal at all ! It was only an agrarian rebellion ! The figures quoted by Namboodiripad are those supplied by the British authorities in the Madras legislature. It is only to be expected that the government figures are a gross understatement, that is corroborated by the fact that non-governmental agencies give a much higher number in all these categories. It is strange that Namboodiripad relies heavily on the official figures and not on first hand, eyewitness evidences. The reason is obvious-it suites him. Propaganda, and not truth is what the politician in him is out to achieve. Such is his objectivity and loyalty to facts. Destruction of 100 temples, massacre of 5 to 6 hundred Hindus and forcible conversion of another 2500 of them do not constitute sufficient justification for calling it a communal riot according to Namboodiripad ! One is provoked to ask: - There are thousands of Mosques in Uttar Pradesh. If one of them-just one of them-is pulled down, can Namboodiripad call it a communal act? Going by the evidence of his own written declaration, the answer should be self evident. But a mosque cannot be equated with a temple and a Muslim cannot be equated with a Hindu. Temples can be destroyed, Hindus can be massacred or converted by the Muslims without incurring the odium of being communal, but if the Hindus pull down a mosque or kill a few Muslims, it immediately attracts the odium of communalism and deserves universal condemnation ! That is the scientific logic of this radical revolutionary of modern India posing to be the Champion of anti communalism.

A PEEP INTO NAMBOODIRIPAD'S PSYCHOLOGY

Part VI

Anybody with elementary commonsense might feel astonished at these obviously senseless statements of Namboodiripad. Why does he take such a patently partisan pro-muslim attitude? Why does he not have the slightest sympathy or concern towards those Hindus who were all the time at the receiving end? It is not difficult to find the explanation for this strange behaviour, if we bear in mind the fact mentioned earlier that he is basically a politician whose sole interest lies in promoting his party's prospects. In the book mentioned above, there are enough indications to show that he had come to the conclusion that the Muslims needed to be cultivated carefully, whereas the Hindus can be taken for granted even for a ride ! He says that Moplas are a brave people, ready to fight and die, illiterate though they may be."Moplas are in the fullest sense enemies of imperialism. They were anxious not only to liberate our country but also to put an end to the British rule in Turkey and in the Middle East. Their hatred of foreign oppressors was deep rooted. They were not believers in non-violence. It took about six months for the mighty British Army to put down their revolt. They fought valiently against the British Army and made full use of the terrain of South Malabar for Guerilla warfare. All these show that the Mopla peasants, if aroused sufficiently, are intelligent enough to fight a much stronger enemy."⁷ In contrast to this whole-hearted admirations of the Moplas, what has Namboodiripad to say about the Hindus? "It was very difficult to create a sense of unity among the Hindus. There was so much of caste differences among them. Caste rules which determine their social relations were extremely rigorous. Low-caste Hindus were closer to the Muslims and Christians than to the high-caste Hindus, whereas high caste Hindus wondered why they should not interline and intermarry with Muslims and Christians instead of Low caste Hindus. In fact Hindu Communalism was another form of casteism. More than anti-muslimism what characterised it was mutual hatred among various castes in the Hindu fold."⁸ If this is the perception of a politician, then the natural inference is that he would seek the support of the former in preference to that of the later, because a militant, well organised and illiterate community can be much more easily manipulated to serve the party interest. In a caste ridden society it is always possible to set one

caste against the other by playing upon their selfish interest cleverly. This is exactly what Namboodiripad had been doing through out his political career. He had been a consistent champion of Muslim interest and he had always justified this policy by saying that they were a minority community, feeling insecure, surrounded by the Hindus who are in a majority. He had never cared to explain why the minority community should be always aggressive, if they are so much afraid and insecure. Right or wrong, they could always count upon his party's support. There has never been a single instance where the Marxist party has come out openly against Muslim communalism. For them, the Hindus were always in the wrong and the Muslims were always right ! Why did the Hindus take out a procession when there was a mosque nearby? Why did the Hindus start a shakha, knowing that the muslims did not like it? Why renovate a temple, when there is a mosque in that locality? Why does not the Hindus learn to behave ?

Namboodiripad has started accusing Muslim League of being communal only after it ditched him and went over to the Congress. On the contrary he had always been bitterly opposed to, any attempt on the part of the Hindus to act even in self-defence. It has been his consistent policy to keep the Hindu society divided by opposing every effort to organise them, where as he had always been promoting Muslim consolidation by allying with the Muslim League. In fact if any single individual is to be held responsible for the re-emergence of Muslim communalism in Kerala after partition, it is Namboodiripad. And if any individual is to be described as the most inveterate opponent of Hindu consolidation, it is again Namboodiripad.

Perhaps there is deeper explanation for this phenomenon which can be understood only if one gets an insight into Namboodiripad's mental make up. He was born in the Muslim dominated Ernad Taluk which at present forms part of the Malappuram district. He was born and brought up at a time when thick shadows of the threat of recurring Mopla uprising were always in the air. He belongs to the Namboodiri Brahmin caste which form the uppermost layer of the Hindu hierarchy. The latest of the Mopla outburst known as the Mopla riot of 1921 took place at a time when he was still a young boy. There was real threat to the life and property of all Hindus, particularly the aristocratic Namboodiri families who were big land lords. Namboodiripad, in his autobiography has described how he was carried away to safety from his ancestral home in the early hours

of the day and how he had to trek a long distance to Shornur Railway Station. One can imagine what all emotion would have stirred the mind of the sensitive boy, escaping from mortal danger to safety, leaving his hearth and home for distant and unfamiliar surroundings. The fear of danger from Mopla must have grown with him coloured his vision. But impotent fear can turn into admiration. A bully may look like a hero. That probably explains why he called Moplas a brave people. He must have learnt from experience how united and socially conscious the Moplas were. In contrast the dis-united Hindu, facing perpetual threat and always at the receiving end was an object of pity, if not shame. This probably explains why all through his political career he has never owned his Hindu heritage and called himself a Hindu. This is not because of any catholicity of outlook, because in that case he would not have retained his caste appellation-'Namboodirpad'-with Studious care. Almost all political and social leaders of Kerala had removed their caste surnames as a mark of their earnestness in social reform. But Namboodirpad stands as a glaring exception. He disowns Hinduism as if it a thing to be ashamed of. Even very recently he angrily retorted to a press correspondent that he is not a Hindu but only a Communist. But he has no hesitation to own his Namboodiri Brahminhood ! Incidentally it may be mentioned that none of the Muslim or Christian communist leader has ever hesitated to proudly own their religious affiliation. The sum and substance is that Namboodirpad has always been suffering from a sense of guilt or shame in calling himself a Hindu, but he had always had admiration for the Muslims, with the result that his policies had always been detrimental to the Hindu interest and promotive of Muslim interest. His bitter campaign against Ramajanmabhoomi and his vigorous initiative in organising the 'Anti communalism campaign of Trade Unions' are only natural reflection of this inherent character in him.

But what is disgusting in him is his hypocrisy and double standards. His open condemnation of the R.S.S. and allied organisations on ground of communalism can be understood, even though the same cannot be justified. There are many who genuinely believe that the R.S.S. is communal. But they do not reject outright everything that smacks of Hinduism and Hinduthva. But Namboodirpad stands as a class apart. Anything which is even remotely connected with Hinduism, is anathema to him evokes his wrath. He is the only Chief Minister in the whole of India who refused to make any contribution towards the construction of the Vivekananda Rock Memorial in Kanyakumari. This must have deeper reasons than his

communist affiliations. C. Achutha Menon and Jyothi Basu, both have not only made handsome contributions to the memorial, but also had personally visited it. What explanation can be there for Namboodiripad's singular aversion to the memorial of Swami Vivekananda? It can only be the outcome of some deep rooted psychological complex, because even Namboodiripad would not openly admit that Swami Vivekananda was a bigoted communalist.

It was probably the misfortune of the Marxist party in India that it had a confirmed anti-Hindu as its leading light, guide and philosopher. Otherwise it is possible to conceive that the party would not have been so aggressively pro-Muslim and anti-Hindu.

YEAR 1969

Sayeed Abdul Rahiman Bafaqi Thangal was the undisputed leader of Muslim League in Kerala at that time. His decisions, whatever they may be, were undisputed commands for the workers of Muslim League. With his well known sense of justice and honesty and deep insight and commonsense, he occupied a unique place in the political life of Kerala.

It was the time when discussion between Namboodiripad and leaders of other constituent parties were drawing to a close. Complaints and accusations, charges and counter charges were galore.

The bone of contention was about a certain promise given by Namboodiripad to the Muslim League in 1967 when the United front was formed. The League leader asserted that such an assurance was given, whereas Namboodiripad equally forcefully repudiated it. There was an impasse. At that moment Bafaqi Thangal took out from the pocket of his inner coat a carefully guarded tape-recorder. When it started to play, out came the voice of Namboodiripad. That clinched the issue. Thangal was right and Namboodiripad wrong. He had given such an assurance. That breach of trust brought the Marxist-League coalition to an end. Was it a case of forgetfulness or downright dishonesty?

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