

AMBEDKAR KING STUDY CIRCLE

Report to be Submitted for 3rd General Body

Sep 29 2019, Cupertino, California

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1 Introduction

Ambedkar King Study Circle (AKSC) was started in October 2016. Nonetheless there was a loose discussion for a long time to start a study circle, a concrete idea took shape in Aug 2016 followed by a protest organized in San Francisco against Dalits being attacked in Una, Gujarat. This report has details of programs organized between Oct 2018 and 2019.

AKSC's activities are categorized as below :

- ❖ Programs Organized
- ❖ Books read and discussed
- ❖ Audio Conferences
- ❖ Other Interventions

2 Programs Organized

Sl.No	Program Name	Date	Venue
1	Kilvenmani Massacre 50th Remembrance Day	Dec 16 2018	Fremont,, CA
2	Workshop Report on What is Fascism and How to Resist it?	Feb 23, 2019	San Jose, CA
3	128th Dr Ambedkar Birthday Celebration in Cupertino, California	Apr 13, 2019	Cupertino,, CA
4	AKSC'S Second Annual Conference	Sep 07, 2019	Cupertino, CA

2.1 Kilvenmani Massacre 50th Remembrance Day, Documentary Screening

Ramiahvin Kudisai (The Hut of Ramiah) is a documentary directed by Bharathi Krishnakumar released in 2006 based on this gruesome incident. It documents the series of events which led to the massacre of 42 (or 44 as per the documentary) people and aftermath of the incident.

The movie documents the survivor's and their relative's accounts about the massacre, which is one of the brutality unleashed by the landowners on the innocent farm laborers, all of them were Dalits, to destroy their struggle for a ½ litter of wage increase of paddy. Even though the struggle looks like a class struggle, there is underlying casteism which triggered the landowners to unleash the brutality on the oppressed caste laborers. It was the assertive Dalits who entered the privileged caste landowner's

home to free their abducted village Head and Panchayat Head actually offended the landowner who had the support of Police, especially the farm laborers belonging to the oppressed caste.

The event was well attended by around 45 people with the family and kids to watch the documentary and involved in a healthy discussion. Ms. Shanthi Kathiresan, Executive Member, AKSC, had delivered the vote of thanks and stated that the screening actually showed the struggle of the oppressed, that fight is not just for wage, it's for their dignity of life.

2.2 128th Dr Ambedkar Birthday Celebration in Cupertino, California

April 13, Saturday , Ambedkar King Study Circle (AKSC), Association for India's Development (AID), San Jose Peace and Justice Center (SJPJC) and Organizations for Minorities of India (OfMI) have jointly organized Babasaheb Dr B.R Ambedkar's 128th birthday celebration in Cupertino, California under the theme 'Ambedkar on State Socialism' to trigger a debate on Ambedkar's position on state socialism and popularize and introduce his writings on the same, among the masses.

Dr Suraj Yengde, a Harvard fellow, electrified the audience with his one hour speech with pedantic details on Ambedkar's state socialism. Besides the historical perspective of Ambedkar's state socialism he connected the dots with contemporary Indian conditions. He said that if the land had been distributed equally across all the castes who are working on the land after Independence, caste discrimination and violence would have ended long before. Ambedkar's state socialism provided more job security for the workers which would address their physical and mental health. Social discrimination against Dalits was directly linked to their economic dependence on so called upper castes. In the rural areas, Dalits depend on the so called upper caste for the land and in the urban economy Dalits depend on non-Dalits for jobs and employment. He concluded that the annihilation of caste is tantamount to annihilation of landlordism and redistribution of all lands across the castes. He emphasized reservation in private sector is an urgent need of social justice in the neoliberal era.

Mr Sandy Perry , the president of affordable housing network of Santa Clara county; California , walked the audience through the history of racism, racial discrimination and its current manifestation. He said that american racism is the product of american capitalism.

Mr Sharat G Lin, Research Fellow at SJPJC, talked about the intersectionality of class and caste. India's social contradictions to some extent were addressed by the Public Sector Units (PSUs) but the PSUs have been shrinking due to privatization. He argued that Indian capitalism is casteism.

The event was well attended by 90 people who have come from different parts of the Bay Area and belong to different races and religions.

2.3 Workshop Report on What is Fascism and How to Resist it?

On Feb 23 , Saturday , Ambedkar King Study Circle (AKSC) organized a workshop on 'What is Fascism and How to Resist it?' in San Jose , California. Aim of this workshop is to raise the working class conscious among the working class to challenge the fascism ideologically. Participants of the workshop has gone through two works of Com. Georgi Dimitrov viz 1/ Unity of the Working Class against Fascism

and 2/ The Fascist Offensive and the Tasks of the Communist International in the Struggle of the Working Class against Fascism.

Ms. Nassim Nouri , member of Green Party , started with GP's 10 key values and of which social justice and democracy are inextricably coupled. She walked the participants through the details of America's imperialist intervention in destabilising democracies across the globe and establishing dictatorship in Latin America in particular.

Mr. Mani M Manivannan , a well known Tamil and Indian scholar in Bay Area, explained about the evolution of the Hindutva from Jan Sangh to the Bharatiya Janata Party. He narrated about the social , cultural and political infiltration of Hindutva forces in the south India during the post Indian emergency period i.e. between June 1975 and March 1977.

Mr. Michael Paradela of Anakbayan , California based mass organization organizing the people of Philippines origin, tracked the fascist suffering of the Philippines by national bourgeoisie abetted by the imperialists. He walked the participants through the rise of dictator Ferdinand Marcos in 1960s and 1972 people's protest against outright corruption of Marcos's regime.

This workshop provided a great insight to the AKSC members who have participated in a healthy discussion on how exactly caste is another manifestation of that fascist ideology and how capitalism is a force that drives that.

2.4 AKSC 2nd Annual Conference

AKSC's 2nd conference was held successfully on Sep 7th, 2019 at Cupertino, California. With over 120 registered participants which has about 40% of women, it is considered a great success for our effort in building an equality and equitable society.

Speakers, Dr. Kancha Ilaiah, Dr. Suraj Yengde, enthralled the participants with their thought provoking speech. And we had 3 Panels discussions.

Dr. Kancha Ilaiah Shepherd inaugurated the conference and delivered the keynote address under the title 'Ambedkar and Martin Luther King, Jr: the Giant Epoch Makers'. In his address Dr. Ilaiah said that non-Brahmins are the producer class who developed agriculture by working on fields and developed various technologies in ancient India to meet the needs of the common men whereas the priestly class exploited the producers by chanting slogans. He took a strong position on the de-politicalized nature of Indian Christians. He appealed to the Indian Christians that the Indian Christians should take a leaf out of the book from American Christians especially the black Christians who used religion for their spiritual emancipation.

After the keynote, 3 panel discussions with a lunch break. First panel discussion is '21st Century Organizing: Issues, Results, Challenges. The speakers were Mr. Kunal Shankar (Columbia University)

and Ms. Sabiha Basrai (Co-ordinator, Alliance of South Asians Taking Action), this panel was moderated by Mr. Karthikeyan, AKSC.

Dr. Suraj Yengde (Harvard University) and Ms. Rachel Herzing, Center for Political Education (CPE) spoke on the panel, Assimilation of Race and Caste Question & Building Global Organic Movement and this panel is moderated by Mr. Chaitanya Diwadkar, AKSC.

Prof. Hatem Bazian Director, Islamophobia Research & Documentation Project Center for Race and Gender. The University of California, Berkeley and Mr. Anto Akkara, award-winning investigative journalist & author were part of 'Religious Freedom and Freedom in Religion.' and this panel was moderated by Ms. Anu Mandavilli, ASATA.

Overall this conference was a great success in terms of the number of participants increased by about 30% and 40% of women attendance. And most of the participants engaged in a very healthy discussion throughout the panel discussion. Dr. Kancha Ilaiah patiently listened to all those panel discussions and actively shared his insights in those discussions.

3 Books read and discussed

Sl.No	Book	Date
1	What Congress and Gandhi have done to the Untouchables? - Dr. Ambedkar	Nov 2018 and May 2019
2	#BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation by Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor	June 2018 - Sep 2019

Between Nov 2018 and Mid, Sep 2019 , we have 11 book discussions and covered 2 books.

4 Audio Conferences

Sl.No	Program	Date
1	Neo fascism and the tasks of class struggle by GN Nagaraj	Feb 2019
2	Pon Parrapi Attack - Conference call with Aloor Shanavas, Dy Secretary of VCK, on the election day attack on the Dalits to deny their voting rights happened on Apr 18th 2019	Apr 2019

3	Conference Call with Com. Brinda Carat on Abrogation of article 370 & 35A on Kashmir	Aug 23 2019
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5 Other Interventions

Besides organizing the above discussions and conference calls, AKSC organized public demonstrations and made other interventions. Some of these demonstrations are under AKSC banner and joint banner and sometimes without any banner.

5.1 Demonstration against Kashmir Abrogation 370 & 35A

AKSC organized a protest against the Abrogation of 370 & 35A for Jammu & Kashmir. The gathering of about 20 people who have raised their concern and against militarization of Kashmir and remove the unlawful imposed curfew in Kashmir.

6 Newsletters

AKSC sent 3 quarterly newsletters to its members and supporters.