

Once Again on Caste Question

Ranganayakamma

K G Satyamurthy has fervently hoped that Marx's dialectical materialism, together with Ambedkar's movement for annihilation of caste, would lay a highway for Indian revolution. In his philosophical treatise titled *Ambedkar, the Sun*, which he wrote as a reply to Ranganayakamma, he has elaborated this aspect very clearly.

— *Andhra Jyothy*, 30 April

I Never considered the book *Ambedkar, the Sun* as a reply to my book (*For the Solution of the 'caste' question, Buddha is not enough, Ambedkar is not enough either, Marx is a Must*) in the past; nor do I consider it as such even today. Since the said essay described the act of combining Marx and Ambedkar as a great 'philosophical analysis', I intend to address that aspect only.

Satyamurthy (a onetime Secretary of CPI-ML, People's War who subsequently joined BSP, Bahujan Republican Party and several other organisations and has recently passed away) is one among those haphazardly enlightened reformers who attempt to bend Marxism as they wish and turn it into indigenous (*desi*) Marxism or National Marxism.

Marxism of Marx insists that exploitative class relations and exploitative division of labour must be abolished by means of the struggle waged by the working classes. According to this theory, class struggle is the main principle for the liberation of working classes in any country where antagonistic classes prevail. Problems specific to a particular country can only be solved, governed by that main principle, by altering the fundamental conditions in that country.

As a result of the working class struggle, even the exploiting classes will become producers and start living on their own labour. Master-Labourer relations will disappear. It is no wonder that the exploiting class rejects Marx's theory which advocates this. But the real wonder is that SC, ST, OBC and other groups

that constitute the major part of the Working classes of India also do not favour the theory which entreats them to break exploitation of labour. The reason for such an attitude of those groups is what their leaders have taught them before and are still teaching them. Their goal is *bourgeoisification* and to develop along the path of exploitation. If this is not the reason, there is no meaning for such opposition to Marxism.

If the leaders of those groups do not like the functioning of existing Communist Parties, those leaders can study Marxism, form their own organization, could teach their groups and attempt to realize their revolutionary goals. Marxism is not the property of existing parties.

If we consider leaders like Ambedkar, there are no contradictory theories in him. He has only one theory. That is, Marxism is useless, don't subscribe to it.

If we consider a leader like Satyamurthy, his is not a single theory; but a combination of contradictory theories. On the one hand, he embraces opposition to Marxism which Ambedkar had taught and on the other hand, he cannot let go of the glamour attached to Marxism in the view of the public. Leaders of this type do not abandon Marxism wholly. As a result, they come up with some clever solution.

In this country one solution is to combine Ambedkar and Marx! Or if one desires, one can add Gandhi to the mix!

Let us do the job of adding together two or three names. We can do so. Well, will the two merge? Can we merge them?

What is Marx's theory? Abolition of exploitative relations of labour. Working class struggle is not violence. It is the means to stop the violence that is resorted to by the class of masters in order to carry on the exploitation of labour. It is nothing but self-protection for the working classes. No specific problem that arises out of class relations will vanish unless old contradictory situations are changed. Marx has no religion. His is materialism.

What is Ambedkar's theory? No class struggles at all! Reforms are there. No castes! Religion is necessary. Let us reform it! Don't abandon spirituality. Let us look at classes after we get rid of castes!

What is Gandhi's theory? Don't touch industrialists! They are the trustees of all the properties! It is enough if there is trusteeship that treats labourers with generosity. About castes? Let us not practice untouchability. Let there be castes as ever. Let washermen do washing work, let a toilet cleaner do the work of toilet cleaning and let a Brahmin do his job. How good it is! What is wrong

with Hinduism, it is wonderful! Well let us sing and praise both Rama and Allah together. Struggles? No! They are violence. However, policemen and soldiers are highly essential for the government. They do not constitute violence. Class struggle? It is terrible violence.

Now, we have to combine these three theories or at least two. Let us combine them! Will they merge?

Ambedkar's theory: Opposed to Gandhi. Opposed to Marx.

Gandhi's theory: Opposed to Ambedkar. Opposed to Marx.

Marx's theory: Opposed to both. Opposed to all those who advocate class collaboration and reforms.

If we consider Buddha as well, his is *Ashtanga Marga*. It is utterly useless.

Those who are aware of the contradictions among these theories would know that it is not possible to combine any two of them. If they are aware, what, then, should they do? They may throw away Gandhi's theory. It is utterly useless.

One ought to take the aspect of 'annihilation of caste' from Ambedkar's theory, but such annihilation is possible only by means of class struggle which is aimed at a radical transformation of relations of labour. Annihilation of caste will not take place before the economic conditions of lower castes are changed.

There will be logic in everything. As per that logic, unity and dissonance are formed. How to combine the principle, 'specific problems are solved by means of working class struggles' with another principle, namely, 'One has to deal with the class question only after annihilating castes'? For intellectuals like Satyamurthy anything is possible. Logic et al are not necessary. According to him, we can combine Ambedkar and Marx. Both theories can be reduced to a single theory. Then, Marxism may change to some extent. Struggles may be given up and collaboration might expand. We ought to change Marxism into indigenous (*desi*) Marxism. It is the need of our country. It means, Marxism will be German Marxism in Germany, English Marxism in England and French Marxism in France. Similarly, here we ought to have Indian Marxism. Marxism will abandon class struggle depending upon countries and regions.

Our indigenous Marxism would be a mixture of Ambedkar, Buddha and Marx. Gandhi's devotees would say, 'we should also add Gandhi!' Saibaba's devotees would like to add 'Baba' as well.

How shrewd a merger is this? Foreign countries had done this a long time ago! Satyamurthy, however, has converted Marxism into indigenous Marxism lately and intelligently. But he demonstrated his wisdom somewhat unwisely.

He equated Buddha, Ambedkar and Marx and described them as ‘these three great personalities (*trimurtulu*) are dreamers and philosophers who aspired for a society free from exploitation and oppression.’ Having described all three of them, he made only Ambedkar the ‘Sun’! (See ‘Ambedkar, the Sun.’ There is no page number for that three-photo page). I will leave out the question, ‘did Buddha and Ambedkar aspire for societies free from exploitation and oppression.’ I will not even touch that question. If all the three are thinkers of the same stature and great personalities of the same level how can Ambedkar alone become the ‘Sun’? Who, according to Satyamurthy, Buddha would be? Should he not become the second Sun? Who would Marx be? Should he not become the third Sun? Won’t these questions arise if Ambedkar alone is called the Sun while all the three are made equals? Even if he says, ‘all the three are the Suns’, other questions would follow, ‘does earth has three Suns or two Suns?’ Whether right or wrong, why didn’t he say, ‘all the three are the Suns’?

To call Ambedkar the Sun is appropriate according to Dalit leaders like Kan-shiram and Mayavathi because in their view, only Ambedkar exists, but not Marx. But, as per Satyamurthy’s claim, he is not an intellectual with a one-sided perspective. He has a three-sided perspective! How can he equate Ambedkar, the Sun with Buddha and Marx who are not the Suns? Only if Satyamurthy had kept Ambedkar above the other two, Ambedkar would become the Sun. Ambedkar is the Sun that fills the entire society with light! Buddha and Marx may be of some use to stand on either side of Ambedkar. Only then Ambedkar could be the Sun.

Satyamurthy might forsake the Communist Party, but he embraced Identity politics as his main objective rather than communism. All the Identity groups constitute different sects. Each one of them has its own problem. Specific movements are necessary to tackle specific problems. It is justifiable. But what solution does any identity group expect? Bourgeoisification!

Bourgeoisification is one which removes class consciousness from Marxism. We should become Bourgeois! We should become bourgeois rulers! If it happens, it is good for a Dalit intellectual. If a Dalit person grows into a capitalist, it is a matter of joy for him to hire a thousand Dalits as his workers and exploit them. What the sectarian movements aim at is the development of such a Dalit.

The activists of Identity, Sectarian movements ignore what their role is and where their place is. They don’t realize that their Identity group is imprisoned in unequal relations of labour. They dream that their group is independent, their

problem is unconnected with other problems and they would get solutions in isolation.

The earth, while revolving around itself, also revolves around the Sun. It is a law of nature. Similar law is applicable to every Identity group. Every group, while revolving around its specific problems, ought to revolve around its class consciousness. Otherwise, no identity-Sun can protect any identity group.

How long will the light of reservations which Ambedkar, the Sun, has provided to Dalit castes continue? Eternally? If that is the case, lower castes too must remain in existence permanently, isn't it? Reservations exist only if castes exist, don't they? But reservations too are a form of discrimination. It indicates lack of self-respect. Should we not consider reservations as temporary relief and search for a permanent solution? Or do we want reservations permanently and retain the status of lower castes forever?

If reservations serve as temporary relief, what, then, is the permanent solution for the caste system? All people know that the solution is inter-caste marriages. Well, then, what is the way that facilitates inter-caste marriages? To know the way, we need to examine a hundred inter-caste marriages (including that of Ambedkar) and identify the grounds on which such inter-caste marriages took place. Creating the conditions that are necessary for inter-caste marriages to take place without any objection, throughout the society, is the permanent solution for annihilation of caste, isn't it?

Intellectuals who transform Marxism into indigenous Marxism are not few in number. We found them across all Communist Parties. Recently, I read an article which depicted Mr Putschalapalli Sundarayya as 'Marxist Gandhi'. Where is the comparison between a Marxist and Gandhi? Is Gandhi, the same kind of austere/simple person as Mr Sundarayya? Has the essayist not heard that Sarojini Naidu once remarked that it is very expensive to keep Gandhi simple/austere? Is he not aware that Gandhi was responsible for the execution of Bhagat Singh? Has he not read that Gandhi made young girls lie down naked beside him and uttered moral principles thus, 'I am testing my celibacy'? In what way and what aspect Gandhi is an ideal Person? How does it amount to honouring Sundarayya if one describes Sundarayya as Gandhi? The Communist Parties have become shameless. They became so adamant that they don't care for others' criticism. They invite bourgeois ministers cordially and with great respect for their meetings, inaugurations etc. All these practices are the manifestations of converting Marxism into Bourgeois Marxism.

If the working classes tolerate bourgeoisified Communists, it will get indige-
nous Marxism or National Marxism. It will be nothing but Legal Marxism which
the bourgeois rulers permit with generosity. As a result we will remain where
we are: the identity groups in their bottom most manual labour; women in their
kitchens!

No Sun will be able to protect anyone. Let us see, what will the Sun do when
Marxism is turned into bourgeois reformism!¹

Egalitarian Divison of Labour

I have gone through all the essays that appeared in response to my essay ‘Hit-or-
Miss-Reformers’. (*Andhra Jyothy*, May 15). Many issues raised in those articles
were already mentioned in my book ‘for the solution of the ‘caste’ question...’
The same kind of debates need not go on unendingly. I, therefore, leave out some
of the issues and confine myself to others. With reference to those who derive
pleasure by concluding that ‘Ranganayakamma is mentally unsound,’ I would
let them have that pleasure. One fellow says, “Ranganaya-kamma thinks that
she alone knows Marxism”, while another fellow says, “Ranganayakamma has
reached her real class and real caste”. Let there be any number of such comments
of animosity, they cannot substitute for debate on the caste question. Every vul-
gar argument can be challenged with a proper counter-argument. It is, however,
unnecessary in view of the limitations of a daily newspaper.

The main point in my essay on ‘...Reformers’ is the difference between the
perspectives of Ambedkar and Marx on the caste question! One of the arguments
put forward by my critics is that “there are not only classes but also castes in this
country”. Who said that there are no castes in the country? Everyone knows
about the existence of castes. The question, however, is “what is the solution for
the existing classes and existing castes?” Another argument is, “In this country,
caste itself is class and class itself is caste”. This amounts to saying, “class and caste
are identical”. Such comments lack clarity with regard to the question, “what is
class and what is caste and how the two are related?”

In the entire debate, actual questions are two: <1> what sort of conditions are
necessary if all people live as equals without the need of reservations? <2> What
sort of conditions should be there for inter-caste marriages to take place on a
large scale and for the elimination of caste distinctions?

¹Appeared in *Andhra Jyothy* daily, May 15

The essence of the two questions is the same. The debate has to be carried out over these issues only. Not on choosing curses against the opponents.

One person says, "Banning Hindu religious texts is the solution for annihilating caste". If banning of Hindu religious texts is the solution, Dalit population could come to state power, establish dictatorship of the Dalits and ban those texts. As a result of that, however, caste distinctions will not wither away.

For those who want religion, Buddhism, which preaches rationalism, is a preferred religion compared to other religions that preach superstitious notions. However great the sayings of Buddha are, the path to achieve them is *Ashtanga Marga*. People cannot realize his sayings by following *Ashtanga Marga*. There was no other way during that age. It was Buddha's limitation.

Some criticize, "Communists argue that economy is the basis but it is not true". One has to note that economy consists of several things: production relations, property rights, master-labourer relations, exploitation of labour and division of labour. The word *Economy* is an abbreviation of several features. It is economy that gives the content and form to human relations. As it (the economy) is full of inequalities, we have to bring in equality.

An essay argued that, according to Ambedkar, it was Brahmins who created the caste system. We ought to discuss this point, if the assumption is that Brahmins (a group of people pursuing a certain occupation) initially composed religious texts and created castes or four varnas in accordance with the rules laid down in those texts. The fact that Brahmins (an occupational group) and other occupational groups existed before castes were created implies that different kinds of labour and occupations were in existence before the emergence of castes. Further, the assumption that people of a particular occupational group created castes implies that there is 'something' that enabled one occupational group to create castes while the other occupational groups did not have such a thing. Just because one occupational group said, "we will remain as Brahmins", the other groups won't agree to remain as washermen, barbers, potters etc. The fact that caste system came into existence irrespective of whether some groups had agreed or not implies that it so happened independent of the will of certain groups and that it was the result of contradictory relations of labour.

I must answer one of the several points of discussion which Mr P Venkateswarlu, of Centre for Dalit Thinkers, has raised (in the issue of May 23). His question is, "who, then, are the revolutionaries?" My answer is, "those who make revolution are revolutionaries. Those who do not make revolution won't be revolu-

tionaries, would they?” The term ‘revolution’ has two types of meanings. The meaning which Venkateswarlu attributed to Ambedkar’s perspective on revolution and the meaning from Marx’s perspective. According to Marx, revolution involves abolition of capitalist property rights, Socialisation of property, making every human being perform labour and establishing egalitarian relations of labour among human beings. It is not revolution from Marx’s perspective if a debate does not involve opposition to exploitation. Of the revolutionary acts, the first change will be that every person must do labour while another change will be that every labouring person is obliged to do certain kinds of intellectual labour as well as physical labour. Unless the exploitative division of labour—whereby one individual always performs Intellectual labour while another always performs physical labour—is not changed, there remain inequalities in the values of their labour and living conditions as before even though all people perform some labour or the other. Then the liberation of physical labour will be a falsity. This means, economy about which Marxism talks is not something that is limited to merely distribution of land among the poor or nationalization of land. It is a path that leads to solve all sorts of inequalities and antagonistic contradictions.

To my statement, “If the existing Communist Parties are not acceptable to Dalits, Dalits themselves could form a party and run it revolutionarily”, Venkateswarlu responded: “Does she think that no attempts have been made to lead the society towards revolution till now?” I did not express that as my perception. As Dalit leaders strongly feel like that, I have indicated as to what they should do in such a situation. They can work jointly with the Communist Parties only if they choose to. If consensus becomes impossible despite their best attempts, they have to part ways. That is what I said.

Arguments such as “It is the party that sent Satyamurthy out”, are totally irrelevant. We cannot argue and decide whether the party sent him out or he himself left the party. Nowhere in my essay did I talk about the history and actions of that Party. My focus is on Marxism. If a debate has to take place, it should be on that theory.

A question is often raised: “Which is the exploiting class in India?” Whether it is in India or elsewhere, the exploiting class consists of those who consume the land rents, interest and profits. The exploitative State rules by means of exploitative laws. The Working classes are those which lose surplus labour or surplus value. These are characteristics of antagonistic classes in any country. For any society, it is the fundamental antagonistic contradiction. In addition, there will

be specific problems. Caste system in India is something intimately connected with relations of labour. The majority of people who are divided into SC², ST³ and OBC⁴ categories do not possess means of production. They are prisoners of bottommost manual labour. The reason for their economic and social plight is the kind of role that they play in the relations of labour. Though numerically fewer, there will be exploiters as well in these caste categories also. If we consider upper castes, all the people there are not exploiters.

There will be wage labourers, the unemployed and also very poor among them. However, more number of people in those castes are associated with Intellectual labour. Though some people are found in certain categories of manual labour, we don't find them in the bottommost manual labour. Although the labour relations and the conditions of division of labour manifest in the form of various castes and caste nomenclature, the essence of the matter is that it is the conditions of the classes that divide human beings into possessors vs. non-possessors of means of production on the one hand and intellectual labourers vs. manual labourers on the other. The same class situation is found in all the countries.

However the influence of those class conditions assumes different forms. Even in those countries where there is no caste system, there are sections of people devoted to bottommost manual labour. But this is not a problem that arose due to caste system. Yet the fix for solving the problem of class situation will serve as a solution for the liberation of the sections of the bottommost manual labourers, which are labeled as castes. The solution is revolutionary division of labour. More specific problems are also solved in a similar manner once the fundamental problems are solved. It is however possible to solve problems to some extent by means of reforms even under those conditions of exploitation. For example, male domination and women's subordination are intimately connected with class relations and the division of labour in terms of housework and outside work. Yet, it is possible to solve some of the problems of women such as education, child marriage, widow remarriage etc to some extent.

But it is not possible to solve a problem like prostitution or gender inequalities

²Scheduled Caste, communities historically subjected to caste-based discrimination and recognized by the government for affirmative action benefits.

³Scheduled Tribe, indigenous tribal communities recognized by the government due to their distinct social, cultural, and economic conditions.

⁴Other Backward Class, socially and educationally disadvantaged communities identified by the government for affirmative action and reservation benefits.

wholly before the liberation of the working classes. Similarly if we consider the caste question, we can solve the problem of untouchability to some extent by means of reforms. We can even accomplish inter-caste marriages once in a while. But it is not possible to create conditions that facilitate inter-caste marriages on such a large scale that they would change the entire caste system before the accomplishment of liberation of the working classes.

Even within an upper caste, marriages do not take place between the rich and the poor. Even between two different upper castes, marriages do not take place between the rich and the poor. This is a general principle underlying marriages. Look at any religion, race or country where there is no caste system. Matrimonial or familial relations do not form between the individuals who perform bottommost manual labour and those who perform intellectual labour. This means, unless the conditions of poverty of lower castes and their confinement to bottommost manual labour change, inter-caste marriages will not take place. Nor the caste system will be eliminated.

“Is it not necessary that people belonging to ‘working class-castes’ become leaders of the working class party? Is this Marxist class struggle? Is Ranganayakamma suggesting our attention be turned towards such struggle?” questions Venkateswarlu. I suggest that they must turn their attention to ‘Marxism’. Leadership of the Working classes must be based on the Working Class consciousness, theoretical understanding, and such related efforts. Whoever has such qualities in abundance ought to go to the leadership positions. We cannot assume that either lower caste persons or upper caste persons invariably possess such qualities. In any caste, the only good quality that can be found among labouring people is that they perform labour. Except for this quality, all the labouring people are born and brought up in feudal and bourgeois societies and their minds are brainwashed with the feudal and bourgeois ideas. No revolutionary idea will ever crop up in the mind of a working class person until he realizes that he is being subjected to exploitation of labour. It means that it is a big illusion to think that lower caste people exist as revolutionaries simply because they were born in those castes.

Castes are not Classes

When Venkateswarlu questioned, ‘who, then, are revolutionaries?’ he meant, ‘obviously labouring people belonging to lower castes are revolutionaries’. This is a grave mistake. Labourers are found in all the castes. No person can become a revolutionary simply because he is a labourer. If we consider a washerman, he cannot become a revolutionary just because of his occupation. Even the toilet cleaner cannot become a revolutionary simply because of his occupation. Similarly those intellectual labourers such as teachers, doctors or scientists cannot become revolutionaries due to their occupations even though they are wage labourers. If people become revolutionaries due to their occupations, it is tantamount to saying that all labourers have become revolutionaries. For people to become class conscious revolutionaries, knowledge concerning classes is essential. They ought to acquire such class knowledge through (social-)science. If we consider the issue of party leadership, reservations do not apply here.

Reservations should not find place in organizations meant for class struggles, the way they are applicable in school admissions and jobs. Members of a party should or should not secure leadership position based on their abilities but not based on the caste in which they are born. But if anyone draws inference from this that we are saying that *Sastries*, *Reddies* and *Chowdaries* (of the so-called upper castes) alone have such abilities, then it will turn into a quarrel and not a debate. If a single individual or a particular group remains in the leadership position for a very long time, it will be like royal practice. Unless people with relatively lower abilities have opportunities, there won’t be any scope for enhancing their abilities. Further, however capable a leader might be, he ought to function in accordance with the will of the majority members and cannot behave like a king. ‘Portfolio’ is a responsibility associated with organizing work, while ‘leadership’ consists of knowledge concerning theory and practice. There won’t be any time limit for leadership. The efforts of a leader remain the same whether he is in a ‘position’ [portfolio] or not.

“Ambedkar had asked us to seize the State which is imprisoned in the hands of exploiting castes, hadn’t he? Has Ranganayakamma not read this point?” asks Venkateswarlu. To call any upper caste an ‘exploiting caste’ is the first blunder. Whoever might call a caste an ‘exploiting caste’, has neither caste-related knowledge nor class-related knowledge. Consider any upper caste, the majority of the population in that caste will be poor. We find a certain number of wage labourers

engaged in Intellectual labour. The number of landlords and various categories of capitalists in an upper caste is lower than the poor people in the same caste. Unlike an individual who wholly becomes an exploiter, a caste as a whole cannot become an 'exploiting caste'. Unlike an individual who becomes a labourer, a caste as a whole cannot become a 'labouring-caste'.

Consider any caste, we will find different classes and different sections within those classes. If we consider a class, we don't find people belonging to a single caste. We will find people belonging to different castes. To put it briefly: the total number of labourers in all the castes taken together constitutes the 'labouring class'. Similarly, the total number of exploiters in all the castes taken together forms the 'exploiting class'. One particular caste as a whole does not constitute a single class and one class as a whole does not consist of one single caste. Just as the rich in an upper caste treat the poor in their own caste callously, the rich in a lower caste also treat the poor in their own caste callously. Take any caste, we will find mainly rich-poor consciousness in its community. 'There is not only division of labour but also division of labourers.' People have been saying this as if it is great logic. By 'division of labourers', they mean that there are inequalities among labourers. How, then, these labourers get united in the class struggle? But, one has to note that, labourers ought to fight not against fellow-labourers but against the master who dominates and exploits all the labourers. It is a class struggle that takes place between the labourers and the master. The improvements that result from the struggle against the master and the State on issues like wage rise, reduction of longer working day, a new legislation etc. are needed for the labourers belonging to all castes. A Brahmin worker and a Mala (an Scheduled Caste) worker may not have inter-dining relations or matrimonial relations. But, both of them would and ought to be united in their fight against the master since an economic improvement is of concern for both of them. This does not mean that we are saying that caste distinctions should remain as before. It only means that caste-divisions do not preclude fight against the master. If class struggles do not ever take place, the reason for that is not the existence of caste divisions but the fact that labourers are not informed properly about classes.

Another related criticism is, "how can Indian workers get united when you give a call, 'workers of the world unite' without undertaking struggle against caste discrimination?" No revolutionary Marxist would say that struggles need not be undertaken on various issues and problems would be solved without movements. In the case of caste discrimination, problems such as two-glass system, temple

entry, untouch-ability will surely be solved with movements. But, 'annihilation of caste' will not take place unless unequal division of labour is changed. If the exploitative division of labour is not changed, the situation of sections of people who are engaged in bottommost types of labour will not change even in those countries where there are no castes. Without class struggle, even Communists cannot achieve such changes. Therefore, it is obligatory to refer to class struggle as the first slogan.

Another argument: 'Some people say that inter-caste marriages take place if feudal caste occupations are changed'. This is wrong. To ascertain whether this argument is right or wrong, one has to examine inter-caste marriages. A young woman of Reddy caste liked a young man of Mala caste as he is a doctor. A young Brahmin woman liked a young man of barber caste because he is not engaged in the occupation of hair cutting but in some intellectual labour. An upper caste woman married a Madiga youth since he is the son of a father who happened to be rich, a political leader and a minister. The same thing had happened in the case of Ambedkar as well. Not only in the case of so-called love-marriages but also in the case of inter-caste marriages arranged by reformist-parents, marriages take place only when educational and economic levels match. Examine any inter-caste marriage. We will know how matrimonial alliances are formed. Had the caste-related occupations of low caste youth not changed, marriages with upper caste young women wouldn't have taken place. This, however, does not mean that forms of labour such as 'hair cutting' would cease to exist. Such kinds of labour are always necessary for the society. For an answer to the question, 'how such types of labour are carried out?' we need to go to the concept of egalitarian division of labour.

"Our ultimate goal is annihilation of caste. The first stage in the struggle to achieve our goal is 'bourgeois democratic revolution'. At this stage, we break the Brahminical hierarchy", says Venkateswarlu. It is, however, not necessary for Dalits to bring about 'bourgeois democracy' afresh. What now exists is exactly the same. Its hallmark is not 'Brahminical hierarchy', but hierarchy of exploitative private property. Even if Dalits take up any number of positions such as the Prime Minister, the Chief Minister, the President, the Member of Parliament, the Speaker and so on, we will not achieve any better rule than that of Mayavathy. That too for those Dalits who sit in those chairs. That too for a period of 5 years only. It will not be a revolution for the Dalits who toil on this earth. Just as upper caste poor remain as before during the rule of the upper caste rich, the

poor of the Dalit castes will also remain as before under the rule of Dalit leaders. It is their personal gain that the Dalit leaders achieve by means of bourgeois democracy. That's all! Let the leaders be! The question, however, is, what about the liberation of Dalit poor?

A Process for Change

Mr Venkateswarlu also tells us about what would happen next, as per his understanding of Ambedkar's perspective on revolution. The last stage in that revolution, according to him consists of: "Removal of domination of upper castes over land and Nationalization of land, Providing reservations for upper castes in employment and other matters". Reservations for upper castes! Ambedkar too had not dreamt of such a revolution! When would they provide reservations for upper castes? After or before land nationalization? If it is before nationalization, the land properties and the intellectual labour of upper castes would remain intact. Where is the need for reservations in such a situation? Or, if it is after the nationalization of land, then the condition of equality must exist for all members of the society. All of them would have education, employment and wages.

Will such dire conditions of poverty emerge for upper caste people that they might need reservations? If such a situation can arise for certain sections of the population in the wake of Ambedkar's revolution, would it be a revolution at all? Well, the reservations, wherever they are, are always temporary, aren't they? Well, then, what is the final stage in the revolution which will put an end to the temporary situation and make all human beings equal? That, Venkateswarlu has not mentioned. If upper castes remain as reservation-castes and lower castes change into non-reservation-castes, even after land nationalization, why should we dream of annihilation of castes? Here, the actual argument is clear.

They say, "our ultimate goal is annihilation of caste". That is, 'removing the domination of upper castes and nationalizing the land'. This means, they will annihilate the caste system prior to removing the properties which are under the control of exploiters and also prior to removing the domination of upper castes. This is the first goal! Which means, they will eliminate castes even as the upper caste people cling to their castes and their domination as before! They will eliminate castes while castes are still alive. Wouldn't it be fun to watch how they would do this exercise? If one treats castes as classes, it implies that annihilation of castes takes place first and later on elimination of exploitation would follow suit. Op-

posing this view, Dr Vidya put forth a very good argument. Her argument : “If castes are classes, and upper castes are the exploiting classes and if annihilation of castes takes place, is it not tantamount to elimination of exploitation altogether? Well, then, why another stage after that stage?”

If one proposes another struggle for nationalization of land after annihilation of caste, it implies that elimination of exploitation has not taken place and will not take place as a result of annihilation of caste. Does it not imply that classes, and their distinctions and exploitation have remained as before even after the annihilation of castes and hence another stage is required? It is not wrong to wish for quick annihilation of castes. But it is just a hope! Unless we have a proper perspective of relations of labour and classes, castes and exploitative property rights, rich-poor differences would remain intact since castes are not merely classes, but a set of intertwined relations of labour.

After commenting that Communist Parties do not have anti-Manuvad programmes, Venkateswarlu raised a question, ‘does the Bahujan working class need such revolutions as these?’ But there is an argument of OBCs which says that Ambedkar had made efforts for the reservations of Dalit castes only and he did not try for the reservations of other BCs; his attempts in drafting constitution were wholly confined to the rights of Dalits and he did not have the history of fighting for the rights of all Bahujans. Will the Dalits and OBCs come together based on caste perspective or based on labour-class perspective? As castes, no two castes are coming closer. They do not have matrimonial relations. But they can come together based on ‘alliance of lower castes against upper castes’. If that is the case, a handful of people from the lower castes will enter into the bourgeois State and positions but cannot wage struggle against exploitation based on such an alliance. When we raise the question of the conditions of millions of lower-caste poor, and if someone says, ‘not now’, it amounts to evasion.

“It is good for Ranganayakamma to realize that Dalits are not in a position to beg others for theories, nor are they facing poverty of ideas”. Venkateswarlu concluded that Dalits are not in a position to beg for Marx’s theory and that Ambedkar’s path of reservations has equipped them with profound theory! Marx won’t lose anything if they reject Marxism but Dalit bourgeoisie and their stooges will benefit a lot. Then the theories of Dalit Bahujan intellectuals will greatly harm the laboring people belonging to those castes. The history of Dalit Bahujan population is going to be like this: one among a hundred thousand may become a capitalist. The remaining millions of people remain wage labourers, part-time

labourers, the unemployed, beggars and criminals as before! Let us, then, stop talking about inter-caste marriages and annihilation of caste.

Mr. Bojja Tharakam (of Republican Party) has written an article titled "*If Dalits ask for Land...*" (*Andhra Jyothy*, June 22). Though this article was not written in response to my essay, there are some issues which need to be examined in the light of our discussion on 'annihilation of caste'. The atrocity committed in Lakshimpeta (of Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh) is utterly reprehensible and all people except those who committed that atrocity know it. The land question has clearly manifested itself in that atrocity. How did people who belonged to a particular caste which is part of Bahujan caste conglomeration become an upper caste? Due to landed property. If Dalits, who have been working as farm labourers get some land, give up the life of wage labourers, turn into independent farmers and consider themselves equals with neighboring upper caste farmers—what would be the reason? It is the result of securing a means of production called land and a change in the old division of labour. Mr Tharakam says that the upper caste people do not like Dalits to become their equals. What is clearly evident here? The upper caste people want Dalits to remain as labourers only. This is one fact. Those who do not have means of production become equals with upper caste people only when they secure means of production. This is another fact. What should happen first to begin the path of equality? The struggle between those who have exploitative ownership over means of production and those who do not possess even means of living. Whatever be the form of struggle, even if it is carried out in the form of making representations to the government (of course, such a form will not help the labourers as a whole), it is a struggle for land between two classes. Even though different castes stand on both the sides, it is not a caste struggle. It is this kind of class struggle that ought to take place even in those countries where there are no castes. Here we need clear-cut answers to clear-cut questions. Does elimination of castes take place first or do old conditions change towards equality first as a result of Dalits getting land and becoming independent farmers and poor wage labourers securing education and employment? If the poor get the land on a certain day will the castes also disappear the same day? Or securing land by Dalits and the elimination of castes happen simultaneously? What happens first and what happens next? Is there any order in the process of change? Why such an order? There is an order of first and next since castes are not classes. Any number of movements may take place simultaneously for the elimination of classes and castes. It is possible. But caste system does not

vanish unless and until conditions of equality that lead to disappearance of classes arise. Instead of analyzing the problems from within the prism of our hopes, our whims, and our fancies, if we are able to analyze them following logic which is free of contradictions, we can solve any problem. Solutions always accompany problems.

“Has Ranganayakamma said anything, anytime concerning annihilation of caste?” they ask. What else have I been saying in innumerable essays since the publication of my book “For the solution of the *caste* question....”?

⁴*Andhra Jyothy*, July 10-12, 2012