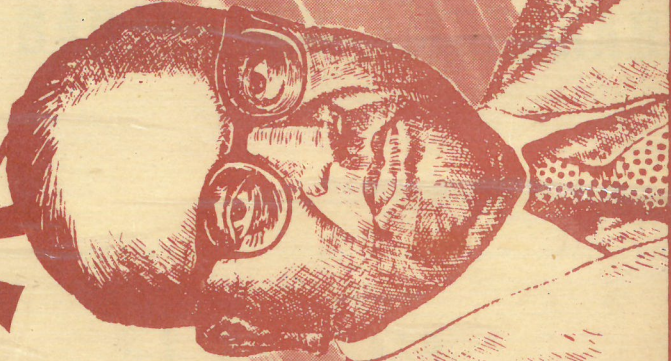


KARL MARX & DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR



V.T. RAJSHEKAR

DSA 35

Amkar

KARL MARX
AND
Dr. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR

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KARL MARX
AND
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Sub : 'KARL MARX & DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR'

(V. T. RAJSHEKAR, *Editor, Dalit Voice*)

Dr. M. N. Javaraiah, President, and my Dalit and Muslim friends :

I am entering the Sharada Vilas Law College (venue of the meeting) after 30 years. I did my First-Year Law here and when I was about to go to the Second-Year, I was dismissed. And I had to discontinue. My dismissal was because I had to then lead a non-Brahmin struggle against the College Brahmin management. This was perhaps in the year 1958 or so. The then Chief Minister, K. Hanumanthaiya, who used to like me as a student-leader, said he wanted 'bright young non-Brahmin youths' to take to journalism and admitted me to the then leading Kannada daily (*Tainadu*) which he had bought at Bangalore. Had I continued law, I would have become a lawyer but my career changed because of this incident at Mysore. My father, who was then a Deputy Collector of my district (South Kanara) was so much disappointed that I quit law and took to "useless journalism". He wanted to make me a lawyer preparatory to becoming a judge. Many times he had expressed disgust that I failed to fulfil his dreams. But I feel I took the right course. I have no regrets. I am coming back to my Alma Mater (law college), of which I was a second-batch student, after 30 years or so.

I am sorry owing to my tour in North India attending "Ambedkar Jayanti" functions, I couldn't prepare my promised paper, but I assure you I will do my best to present a fairly good picture of the two great revolutionaries: Karl Marx and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar.

False love of mother tongue : I have prepared my notes in English but I will try to use both English and Kannada. The upper caste rulers of India are creating (in the Dalits) a false love in your mother tongue and making you hate English so that they

will become rulers and you will become clerks. If you want to fight the ruling class, you too should learn English. India's upper caste rulers are denying the freedom of language to SC/ST/BCs and minorities. English is the gateway to knowledge. Even the Chinese and Japanese are learning this international language.

Over 85% of the Indian population comprising SC/ST/BCs and minorities are kept devoid of human rights. Mental bondage is invisible violence. It is worse than physical slavery. Being pauperised, they naturally can't afford education, much less English education. But the upper caste rulers have mastered English and that is how they continue to rule us. This is what I mean by saying that freedom of language is denied to us. English language is the best tool for Dalit liberation. But the rulers are denying us English language reserving it for themselves.

A student of Marxism : I have made a fairly good study of Marxism. Some newspapers have called me a "Marxist" though this is not true. I am only a student of Marxism. Perhaps what prompted them to call me a Marxist was that I was president of the India-China Friendship Association and had led two delegations to China. During my student days at Mangalore, I was close to the (undivided) Communist Party. Except joining it, I did everything for the party. I used to sell communist literature secretly even as my father was then a Special Magistrate to try communist cases. I used to address public meetings arranged by the Communist Party. To that extent I was close to the Party. I was on the verge of joining the Communist Party. Till I was 30-35 I was steeped in Marxism. I resigned from the *Indian Express* in Bombay and joined the Communist Party-sponsored English daily, *Patriot*, in Delhi. This was in 1963. S. A. Dange was the chairman of the Communist Party then.

But soon I was disappointed with the communists. My three years in *Patriot*, Delhi, opened my eyes. Indian "Marxists" have cheated Marxism. They have betrayed the Indian revolution. Imagine, in the *Patriot* office, the workers went on a strike! Naturally I was on the side of the workers. And this antagonised the *Patriot* editor, a "communist", and the management also "communist". This was the beginning of my disenchantment with

the Marxists. The division of the Communist Party into CPI and CPM also contributed to my despair.

That doesn't mean I have become an anti-Marxist. No. I have lost faith in Indian "Marxists"—rather the Brahmin Marxists—but not Marxism which helped me to get myself liberated from brahminism and made me a rationalist.

Like all youths, I too was brought up in a traditional "Hindu" atmosphere, going to temples and observing all stupid "Hindu" customs. Like all other "Hindus", I too was an unthinking idiot.

My days in a Bombay Mill : But Marxism helped me a lot to give me a good grounding. When I joined the Dawn Mills, a hosiery textile mill in Bombay (1951), I could see from my own eyes the naked exploitation of the workers because of my Marxist background. But the behaviour of "Marxists" in the *Patriot* gave me a real shock. I learnt that Indian "Marxists" are bogus. I was to soon learn that we have no sociology but only "casteology".

Dr. K. V. Puttappa, poet-laureate of Karnataka, has said that when Karl Marx comes to India, they (Brahmins) will put a "sacred thread" round his chest (laughter).

With this preface, I will now go to my subject, "Karl Marx and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar".

I have brought with me a reprint* of an article published in a Marxist-Leninist journal, *Frontier*, Calcutta. It was reprinted by a Brahmin "Marxist" of Mysore.

Babasaheb not anti-Marxist : In this, the author, also a "Marxist", calls Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar an anti-Marxist. I have read all the books of Dr. Ambedkar but nowhere I have found him criticising Marxism. He might have criticised Indian communists and the Indian brand of communism, but nowhere he had criticised Marx or Marxism. He was against the communalism of India's "cross-thread" communist leaders (laughter) but not Marxism.

* Dr. Ambedkar : *Bourgeois Reformer or Revolutionary* : Khobad Gandhi, *Frontier*, Dec. 8, 1979.

without class awareness. If class consciousness is present in a society, the best way to find out about its extent and other properties is to ask the members of the society directly what their perceptions of "class" are. We can directly ask him: "What class do you belong to?" If you put this question to any blue-collar or white-collar worker in India, he will simply be perplexed. The society in India is divided into hundreds of castes and sub-castes (*jati*). And in these there are also "rich" and "poor". Apart from these divisions, then we have several non-Hindu religions like Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and in this also there are castes and sub-castes apart from rich and poor. How can such a divided society have a "class-consciousness"? "Status" in India comes from the caste you are born. You tell the area in a city you live and you are disclosing your "status". All the upper castes live in fashionable areas and SC/ST/BCs and minorities normally reside in slums. But even the cotton mill workers in Bombay, though all belonging to only one economic category, are divided on caste basis. In USA, White workers and Black workers though economically belong to one single "class", they have not developed "class-consciousness" as they are racially divided. *The existence of caste and race has prevented "class consciousness". That is the reason for the absence of class-consciousness in India.* Non-economic factors prevent workers of the same category joining hands on economic issues. This is the biggest weakness of Marxism. That is why class struggle is an impossibility. *No "poor" Brahmin is prepared to fight the "rich" Brahmin. That is how "caste" cuts across "class".*

Kashmiri Brahmin : Is class-consciousness possible in a caste-conscious society? Periyar E. V. Ramaswamy has said when a Kashmiri Brahmin catches cold, a Kanyakumari Brahmin starts sneezing. This is called intuition. The fellow-feeling is so much. Brahmins may quarrel between themselves—they don't fight in public—but when they want to fight non-Brahmins, they will all join hands. But this is not the case with non-Brahmins. They will join hands even with Brahmins to kill their own caste kins. This is the essential difference between Brahmins and non-Brahmins. You cannot use one Brahmin to fight the other Brahmin. So strong is the caste-consciousness. E. M. S. Namboodiripad will

never fight the Shankaracharyas because his ancestor was the Adi-Shankara.

That is why we say : “ Ambedkarism is Marxism plus something more ” (cheers).

What is this something more ?

It is this : Dr. Ambedkar was India's first philosopher who told the slaves of India that they are slaves. Who are these slaves ? The Untouchables. (V.T. Rajshekar : *DALIT—The Black Untouchables of India*, Clarity Press, Atlanta, USA, 1988). They are the real proletariat of India. Scheduled Castes (20%), Scheduled Tribes (10%) and Backward Castes (40%) are those in India living under the “ poverty line ”. Most of them are agricultural labour. They are the poorest of the Indian “ poor ”. Ambedkarism appeals to this 70% of the Indian population better than Marxism. Because it touches their heart. Dr. Ambedkar was India's first human rights leader who made the slaves of India aware of their slavery. “ Tell the slave you are a slave he will explode ”, he said. Did anyone tell us this before Dr. Ambedkar ? None (cheers).

Did the “ Marxists ” of India work for our real, genuine proletariat—the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Backward Castes and Muslims ? No.

On the other hand, they cheated us by using our people to carry their flags, shout their slogans, fight their battle, receive police bullets.

That is why we say that “ Ambedkarism is Marxism plus something more ”.

Unthinking youths : What is this “ something more ” ? It is not correct to say that Dr. Ambedkar was anti-Marxist. Quite a number of our youths, being ashamed to call themselves Ambedkarites, are disguising themselves as “ Marxists ”. These days it is a fashion to call oneself a Marxist. Imitating the ruling class is a natural thing. In India, Marxism is a rage with our upper caste boys and girls. So to imitate the upper caste rulers and to hide their shame (of being Untouchables) quite a number of our

young men pose themselves as Marxists. I know a number of such Dalit friends caught in this Marxist cage. It is our duty to free these innocent souls from the clutches of our "sacred thread Marxists" (laughter).

Once, I too thought Marxism was the panacea for the country's ills. I was waiting all along for this elusive revolution that never came. Quite a number of our innocent SC/ST/BC youths are also deceived like me.

Naxalites : Upper castes adopt many strategies and tactics to deceive us and ensure that we remain as their slaves. Wearing a Marxist mantle is their latest strategy.

There was none to tell me when I was a student that "Ambedkarism is Marxism plus something more". But that is not the case today. It is our duty to rescue these innocent SC/ST/BC youths from the dope of "Marxism". They will certainly realise their mistake and correct themselves if we convince them that "Ambedkarism is Marxism plus something more". They will be too happy to accept Ambedkarism if we put it this way. These innocent but unthinking SC/ST/BCs and minorities should be wooed back to Ambedkarism. As they have all experienced caste and religious oppression, it will not take long for them to correct their mistakes. Suffering itself is a better teacher. With little persuasion they will be convinced that "Ambedkarism is Marxism plus something more". It is our duty to open before them the glories of Ambedkarism.

"Sacred thread Marxists", or "socialist brahmins" have done so much of propaganda against Ambedkarism, that quite a lot of our boys and girls have believed and fallen victim to the game. *The Naxalite movement or the Marxist-Leninist movement is using SC/ST/BC and minority youths while its leadership is with the upper castes. It is our duty to rescue these youths from the clutches of Marxism.* And they will all come to us if we tell them that "Ambedkarism is Marxism plus something more".

Laws of Contradictions : "The laws of contradictions" are an integral part of Marxism. So it is the duty of Marxists to identify the "principal contradiction" in a given society.

Did the Indian “Marxists” identify the principal contradiction in India? No.

But Dr. Ambedkar did. In fact, he was the first Indian leader to do this.

What is the “principal contradiction” in India? No doubt, there are several contradictions. Some minor, some major. Some antagonistic, some non-antagonistic. We cannot fight all of them simultaneously. If you have several enemies and if all of them encircle your house, you cannot fight all of them at one time. So you have to find out who is your most deadly enemy. Who should be eliminated first? After doing that, all doors and windows should be closed and only the one from which the Enemy No. 1 is trying to come in should be kept open and then you have to engage him. And in fighting this Enemy No. 1 you can use the other lesser enemies against him. Only after finishing the Enemy No. 1, the others, one by one in the order of your priority should be engaged. This is called the laws of contradictions (Mao Tse-tung: *On Contradictions*, Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, China, 1967). You can find this as part of *Mao's Collected Works*, Vol. I.

Brahmin women : A proper study of the laws of contradictions is a must. Brahmins are the only people in India who have made a study of this. They use SCs against BCs and then use both SCs and BCs against Muslims, Sikhs etc. By making one of their enemies to fight their other enemy, they remain aloof and enjoy the fun.

Dr. Ambedkar said the main enemy—the Enemy No. 1 of Indian society is “caste”. His book, *Annihilation of Caste*, (DSA, 1987) is perhaps the best book on this subject. It should be read by every SC/ST/BC and religious minorities.

Caste is the foundation on which the “Hindu religion” is built. Today, not only the SC/ST/BCs and minorities but even upper caste women are victims of caste. Hinduism is caste—*jati*. Upper caste women and even Brahmin women have complained to us that their men are killing them by resorting to *sati*, bride-burning etc. *The Brahmin woman is also a victim of brahminism.*

Sociology and Casteology : Each university in Karnataka is sold to one caste. Mysore University to Vokkaligas, Bangalore University to Brahmins and Karnataka University to Lingayats. This is the case in Bihar, UP and all over India. There is no secret in this.

So the Indian society is a caste society. Our press is caste press, banks are caste banks, judiciary and administration is caste-based, police and even military is caste. No non-Brahmin can become the Prime Minister of India. Even "Marxists" decide on caste basis. Caste decides the life of Hindus from birth to death and even after death. There is no sociology. What we have in India is "casteology".

Therefore, if "democracy", "socialism", "secularism", "liberty", "equality", "fraternity" should live, Hinduism must die.

Who said this for the first time in India? Dr. Ambedkar. Our red-hot "Marxists" did not say this. And yet they have the cheek to say that Babasaheb was anti-Marxist. Marxists must be first and foremost humanists, but our upper caste "Marxists" are anti-human. It is these anti-humanists who call Babasaheb anti-Marxist.

That is why we say: "Ambedkarism is Marxism plus something more".

Dialectics in Marxism and Ambedkarism : If the dialectics in Marxism is "class", in Ambedkarism it is "caste" and "race". At the bottom of the society stand the Dalits, the born proletariat. And at the apex of the caste pyramid stand the Brahmins. So when the bottom of the caste pyramid shakes, the first to fall and perish will be the Brahmin. *The Brahmin is the serpent and the Dalit is the mongoose. Both are blood enemies.* From centuries they have been so. The Brahmin uses all other castes and religious groups to keep the mongoose engaged. The serpent many a times is disguised as a "Marxist"—Naxalite. In anti-Muslim riots the serpent woos the mongoose to kill Muslims. The serpent confuses the mongoose, diverts its attention so that the sufferers and co-sufferers engage in fighting. The serpent sometimes makes the

Backward Castes fight Dalits and vice-versa. Brother fighting brother. Sometimes it unleashes both BCs and SCs to kill Sikhs.

Brahmins are the one and the only caste group which has mastered the laws of contradictions.

BCs not our enemies : Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was the first person in India to point out the different contradictions in Indian society and tell us that the *caste based on brahminism is India's principal contradiction and all other minor and non-antagonistic contradictions should be used to kill this caste.* Backward Castes, no doubt are oppressors of Dalits because the caste rules have told them to do so. The caste rules are made by the Brahmins. So if this caste based on brahminism is destroyed, BCs will cease to be our oppressors. Towards this Dalits have to befriend the BCs and win them over to fight brahminism. Similarly, Muslims, Christians and Sikhs are not the enemies of Dalits. A majority of them are Dalit converts. But this serpent in disguise, using the media it controls, sometimes uses the Dalits and tribals to attack Muslims, Sikhs and Christians. A proper study of the dialectics of Babasaheb will make us understand that *Muslims, Sikhs and Christians are our co-sufferers being victims of the same serpent.* These religious minorities are also victims of the same serpent. So when both are victims of the same serpent, why should we fritter away our energies by waging separate wars? Why not join hands?

Dr. Ambedkar's discovery : Just as Marx discovered "surplus value", Dr. Ambedkar discovered enslavement in a caste-ridden and racist Indian society. This enslavement—not merely of the body but more of the mind—has made SC/ST/BCs culturally a no-man. It imprinted an inferiority complex in him. It made the SC/ST/BCs to hate themselves. A person under mental bondage needs no police or army to control him. He will be self-contained. He will be his own enemy. This is what brahminism has done to over 85% of our people.

If the Brahmin is so proud even if he is a "poor cook" and proudly displays his "sacred thread," a Dalit IAS officer is afraid to disclose his identity. The Brahmin shows his "thread" to announce that he is a Brahmin but a Dalit though an IAS officer is afraid to disclose that he is a Dalit. The very purpose of the caste is to inspire and

invigorate the "high born" and inveigh the "low born". This imprinted superiority and inferiority complex cannot be destroyed through a class struggle but only through a caste struggle.

This is the most outstanding contribution of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and that is why we say "Ambedkarism is Marxism plus something more".

Though wide disparities in income exist in India "class differences" have not emerged leading to "class antagonism". This is because caste is the dominant factor in deciding everything. Vanniyars, who claim to be the single largest caste group in Tamil Nadu, are trying to organise on caste lines because every political party has failed to bring them relief. Caste offers better solidarity, better identity.*

The Marxist Crime: We can understand the failure of Marxist leadership to recognise this fact. But the failure of the Indian "intellectuals" and particularly the social scientists becomes all the more serious. It is this failure to recognise this fact of its strength and weakness, the secret of its centuries of survival, that has resulted in the caste getting such a long, long life.

You talk to anybody in India whether he be a SC/ST/BC or a religious minority, every conscious person of this group knows the havoc played by the Brahmin. Not only that, we had heard even upper caste shudras and even Kshatriyas and Banias (Vaishyas) cursing the Brahmins.

*Merely cursing the Brahmin is no use unless the caste is recognised as an institution and declared as our principal contradiction. Every party including the "Marxists" have failed in this. Dr. Ambedkar was the first to give us a scientific explanation of caste and the tools to destroy it. So his book, *Annihilation of Caste*, may be called the *Das Capital* for India.*

How to fight a system as long as you don't recognise it as a system that is eating our body vitals? The first failure of the "Marxists" is in not recognising caste as the principal contradiction and the road-block to all our progress.

* R. Vidyasagar: "Vanniyars' Agitation", *Economic and Political Weekly*, March 12, 88, p. 507-511.

But Brahmins are the one and only group which fully knows the strength of the caste and the benefit they accrue out of it. Having known its strength, they have hidden their strength through the mind-manipulating media and the education system they have evolved. So the main perpetrators of the caste know its strength but the victims of the caste are unaware of it having been made India's unthinking people. Indian "Marxists" are preserving the caste by hiding the caste. So they are the worst criminals.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was the first philosopher who attacked the very citadel of caste. That is why we say "Ambedkarism is Marxism plus something more".

Racism and Marxism :

There are communist parties in Europe, America and other countries. Japan also has a communist party. But to the victims of White racism, Marxism offers no solution. Blacks in USA are the proletariat and the American Communist Party should have been the most popular party with their support. But the Blacks in USA have not evinced much interest in communist parties. The Japanese Communist Party has not taken interest in the oppression of the Burakumin, about 3% of the Japanese population, treated as polluted people.

This is because Marxism has no solution to racism. Entire African continent should have gone communist by this time. But we find hardly any trace of communism in Africa.

The Blacks of USA and Europe found greater attraction in Ambedkarism as it offered a solution to racism because India's "caste" is sanctified racism. Dr. Ambedkar's diagnosis of India's casteism (brahminism) is found to be useful even in the Black struggle against White racism.

Burning Babasaheb Books : Do you know another secret?

India's upper castes—Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Baniyas—are no longer afraid of "Marxism". They have swallowed it and digested it.

At one time Marxist literature used to be sold underground because it was considered a "revolutionary" literature. But today it is freely available even on footpaths. Upper castes them-

selves sell it and make money. In Bombay, a Maharashtra Brahmin has started an organisation called "Practical Socialism" and has come out with a book, that Marxism is a good tool to crush Muslims (Nilakanth Khadilkar : *Practical Socialism*, editor, Navakal, Bombay-4).

Today, India's "topmost Marxist" leaders happen to be mostly Brahmins and other upper castes—headed by EMS Namboodiripad who is a Kerala Namboodiri Brahmin. To these upper castes, their caste is more important than the country. And that is why they will use anything to protect their *jati*. If Marxism can do this, why not? ("Marxism to the rescue of Brahminism," *Dalit Voice* editorial, June 1, 1985).

The ruling class not only does not mind promoting Marxist literature but is doing everything to convert our youths into "Marxists". Because they know it is Marxism which alone can rescue brahminism.

But the same upper caste "Marxists" don't like Dr. Ambedkar's literature. They hate it. It was they who burnt Babasaheb's book, *Riddles in Hinduism* (1987). Indian Communist Parties run their own bookshops but they have refused to keep our books for sale. And yet they have no objection to sell Brahmin literature.

War on "Riddles": Why was the *Riddles* book burnt and the Shiv Sena, RSS and other Hindu Nazis agitated for its ban? Because Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's literature today is fire, the most revolutionary literature. This is the secret. Marxist literature no longer "burns". But Babasaheb burns. Upper castes know that Babasaheb will burn them. That is why they took so much of pain to burn and then fight for the ban on the *Riddles*. That they failed and we won in this war of *Riddles* is different.

Nowhere the upper castes are burning "Marxist" literature. They not only have taken over Marxism but put a "sacred thread" on the chest of Karl Marx (laughter). Anything the Brahmins touch will become mud. Marxism has also become mud (more laughter).

Marxist literature is no longer considered revolutionary. Marxism in India has proved to be brahminism with a "socialist" face.

Three enemies of Nazis : Guru Golwalkar had listed three varieties of people as the enemies of "Hindus": (1) Communists, as the external enemy, (2) Muslims and (3) Christians as the two internal enemies but today RSS leaders no longer consider "Marxists" as their enemy. In several places, Marxists and RSS are working together. On the Muslim Personal Law issue, reservations to SC/ST/BCs and Sikh struggle for human rights, the Marxists and Nazis fought jointly. They think alike on many other issues.

Indian "Marxists" have stopped criticising Gandhi and Gandhism. Because Gandhism is synonymous with Hinduism. (*Hinduism, Gandhism and Fascism*, DSA, 1985, Rs. 5.) But Dr. Ambedkar has said Gandhi is the enemy No. 1 of Untouchables. Did the "Marxists" say this? Even if some "Marxists" know this they have no courage to say this. They are a set of humbugs (cheers).

Why, because Gandhi wanted to make the slaves better slaves by preventing them from quitting "Hinduism". Gandhi prevented a cultural revolution that would have broken out along with India's "independence" struggle (1947). Now that Gandhi and Gandhism are dead, the upper castes are using Marxism to perpetuate their hegemony. Since Ambedkarism is opposed to this hegemony, in many places the Marxist leadership has come into clash with Ambedkarism.

The Cunning Bania :

Where Gandhi failed, Dr. Ambedkar succeeded. He launched a cultural revolution. Had Gandhi accepted "separate electorate" with "separate settlement" for SC/STs as demanded by Dr. Ambedkar, by this time India's face would have changed. Gandhi, the cunning Bania, knew this. He knew that accepting Dr. Ambedkar demands meant sure death to Hinduism. So he went on a "fast-unto-death" against our people and thus prevented a cultural revolution.

Dr. Ambedkar was also India's first leader who said Untouchables are not Hindus. They are outcastes. Why they are outcastes? Because they are outside the caste system. He was the

first to say that SC/STs are not Hindus and never Hindus. We are a separate, distinct cultural entity with a glorious past.*

“Outcaste” means something very great, very noble. We all should be proud that we are outcastes. Because we are uncontaminated by the blasted caste system.

If Untouchables are not Hindus and are never Hindus, what are we? The answer is: we are human beings. Who told this? Dr. Ambedkar (cheers).

That is why we say: “Ambedkarism is Marxism plus something more”.

Vertical society: Marx talked only of “economic justice”, but not “social justice”. Because, as a German brought up in a non-Hindu (Indian) society he had not experienced social injustice. So his philosophy did not suit India. Marx lived in a horizontal society where the “rich” can become “poor” and vice-versa. But the Indian society is vertical. Here an Untouchable cannot become a Brahmin and vice versa. Caste is decided by birth. So there is no promotion or demotion in caste. And since the status goes by ones caste, a “poor” Brahmin is higher in status compared to a millionaire Untouchable like Jagjivan Ram. So the Marxian theory does not apply to a vertical society. Did any Marxist theoretician say this? No.

But Dr. Ambedkar improved upon the Marxian theory and said “social justice” is more important in a vertical society than economic or political justice. The clogged, contaminated water—stinking and infested—should be released and made flowing. And made drinkable. In India, “caste” itself is “class”.

Did he not prove right? Yes. In India, whether it is the Dalit or the Brahmin he has only one vote. Both enjoy equal “political rights”. In government offices, a Dalit and Brahmin may draw the same salary. But once out of office, inequality begins. During the “Gujarat caste war”, *savarna* textile mill workers fought their own Dalit colleagues in pitched street battles

* Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: *What Congress and Gandhi Have Done to Untouchables*, Thacker & Co. Bombay, p. 174-181.

in Ahmedabad. Did they not belong to the same "class"? If so, why did they break? Because "caste" cuts across "class".

Jagjivan Ram's case : Dr. Ambedkar had foreseen all this and had rightly warned that political and economic equality, if it does not lead to social equality those who suffer from this social inequality would blow up the very political structure of the society. Did he not prove right?

Jagjivan Ram became the Deputy Prime Minister of India, a crore-pathi. But Brahmins did not allow him to become the Prime Minister of India because upper castes can never tolerate an Untouchable as Prime Minister.

Even a statue that he unveiled was washed by Brahmin boys at Varanasi. A High Court judge in Hyderabad told me that he couldn't get a house for rent. Hundreds of such cases of social inequality we read daily in the paper. Hinduism or brahminism does not sanction social equality.

So what is the use of your official position, big salary as long as you are denied social justice? Reservations may bring you some economic benefits, but not social justice. Your own upper caste junior colleague in the office will not allow you into his kitchen. So all this Marxist talk of economic benefit is nonsense. They are meant to deceive us. The upper castes so far deceived us through the law of Manu. Today, they want to deceive us through the Marxist mantra.

Gandhi's crooked plan : "Reservation" was not Dr. Ambedkar's demand. He wanted only "separate electorate" with "separate settlement". It was Gandhi's crooked plan to keep our people as slaves of the upper castes. So he offered this compromise plan of "reservations" because he scented the danger in Dr. Ambedkar's plan.

Gandhi never had any quarrel with "Marxists". He fought all his life with Dr. Ambedkar. Not with Marxists. If Gandhi can be considered a "Hindu leader", and thereby becomes a counter-revolutionary, does it not automatically elevate Dr. Ambedkar as India's greatest revolutionary? History has already pronounced its verdict and none can question history (cheers).

If China and Russia are Marxist countries and if they know that Gandhism is a counter-revolutionary force thwarting the possibilities of a revolution, why they are not exposing Gandhism? Why Babasaheb Ambedkar alone had the courage to fight Gandhi and expose the Gandhian humbug? Does it not prove that Ambedkarism is truly revolutionary unlike Marxism?

Mere philosophy no use : Karl Marx was just a philosopher. He sat in the London Museum and wrote volumes and volumes.

Philosophy by itself is no use. It will remain a dogma, a dead letter. Marxism will be reduced to a dead letter unless that philosophy brings about social change. A philosophy needs appropriate strategies and tactics so that the philosophy is transformed into a tool of action. A philosophy is no use as long as it is not translated into action. But action needs strategies and tactics. And it is these strategies and tactics that will create a revolutionary situation. A revolution is impossible without a revolutionary situation. Did the "Marxists" of India create any revolutionary situation? No. On the other hand, it is Ambedkarism which led to caste wars. And India's road to socialism lies only through caste war. So who is a better Marxist? Dange or Dr. Ambedkar?

Strategies and Tactics : The upper caste "national press" and the upper caste Marxist leadership always describe Ambedkarites as "casteists". Kanshi Ram who contested the much-publicised Allahabad parliamentary by-election (1988) was criticised by all political parties including the "Marxists". They said Kanshi Ram's BSP was devoid of any ideology except rousing anti-upper caste anger. The fact is that no political party (including the CPI and CPM) has any ideology in India.

Kanshi Ram spoke of the upper caste exploitation and how over 85% of the Indian population comprising SC/ST/BCs and minorities got enslaved by this upper caste imperialism. In a caste-based society this is the only ideology that appeals to the heart of the slaves and they voted him in full strength. Whereas the "Marxist" parties, both CPI and CPM, worked for V. P. Singh who was also supported by Nazis and "Right" parties.

On every issue the ultimate decision lies with the masses. What is right and what is wrong is to be decided by the people. That

the masses have voted Kanshi Ram in full proves that they endorsed his ideology and rejected the "Marxists". He proved a better Marxist than our "sacred thread Marxists". Kanshi Ram not only bagged over 70,000 votes but made the ruling party (Congress) candidate to lose. So the Ambedkarite philosophy appealed to the masses and we are sure more and more masses will go with BSP. Because the Marxism of Indian brand doesn't appeal to the masses.

Kanshi Ram's Ambedkarite approach was very much criticised by the upper caste "national press." Their criticism conclusively proves that the BSP is the party of the "poor" and the exploited. But unfortunately our "Marxist" parties have also joined this howl convincing us that Indian "Marxists" are anti-Dalit and hence anti-Ambedkar and hence counter-revolutionary. (Lenin : *Letters on Tactics*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976).

To repeat, Marx was just a philosopher. It was Lenin who implemented Marxism in 1917 in Russia and Mao in China. If Lenin and Mao had not implemented what Marx wrote, Marxism would have been unknown to people.

So in India it is Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar who brought Marxism to the huts and hovels of the SC/ST/BCs and minorities—not our "sacred thread" Danges and Namboodiripads.

Combination of Marx, Lenin and Mao : Dr. Ambedkar was thus both a philosopher as well as a strategist and tactician. This is a very rare combination in history. He was Marx, Lenin and Mao combined in one. That is why we say "Ambedkarism is Marxism, plus something more".

Dr. Ambedkar not only wrote but also put into action what he wrote through suitable strategies and tactics. A philosopher rarely becomes a revolutionary. But Dr. Ambedkar was both a philosopher and a revolutionary.

Strategies and tactics sometimes are more important than the philosophy. A philosophy is no philosophy if it can't be translated into action. Nobody practices Gandhism in India today because it simply can't be practiced. I am sorry to say Gandhism can be a good tool for oppression but not an instrument of social change. Gandhism is nothing but sugar-coated brahminism.

Four strategies and tactics : What are the principal strategies and tactics of Dr. Ambedkar ?

(1) Conversion (*Why Go for Conversion?*: Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Dalit Sahitya Akademi, 1987), (2) separate electorate coupled with separate settlement and proportional representation to each caste and community. (*Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Writings and Speeches*, 1979, Maharashtra Government publication, Vol. I, p. 265), (3) urban migration and (4) joining hands with co-sufferers.

He had identified India's Enemy No. 1 as brahminism. Dalits can happily join hands with all those fighting brahminism. Who are those fighting brahminism in India today? Muslims, Sikhs, Christians. All of them are also victims of brahminism.

A correct interpretation of Ambedkarism will convince us that Dalits by themselves cannot liberate themselves much less liberating India. Dalits will have to join hands with their co-sufferers. It has to be a Grand Alliance of SC/ST/BCs and minorities—a Bahujan Samaj. A rainbow alliance.

We (Dalits) are sufferers and they (minorities) are co-sufferers. Today, two political parties have already become popular following Dr. Ambedkar's above-cited four strategies and tactics. The parties are Dalit-Muslim Minorities Suraksha Mahasangh and Bahujan Samaj Party.

God and Soul : Marxism is godless, atheistic. But Ambedkarism is not. Dr. Ambedkar might have been silent on god. The most important point to be noted here is that Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was a Buddhist and hence was not an atheist. But at the same time Ambedkarism has all the "materialistic philosophy" of Marxism plus something more. (Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : *The Buddha and His Dhamma*, Siddhart Publication—1974 ed., Bombay). Like the Buddha and Marx, he also did not accept that god created the universe. That means *Ambedkarism is scientific socialism. He rejected every thing that is supernatural including the existence of soul or Atma.* He also rejected life after death. His Dhamma differed from all other religions. So we can safely say that Dr. Ambedkar believed more in science and nature than in god or religion.

He might have been silent on the existence of god but at the same time he was deeply spiritual. If Dr. Ambedkar had been anti-religious or anti-god like Marxism, Indian Muslims, Christians and Sikhs would have refused to join hands in the struggle of Dalits. So in this Ambedkarism is very much an improvement upon Marxism.

What quarrel a Dalit has with a Muslim, Christian or Sikh god? They did not harm Dalits. On the other hand, these egalitarian religions liberated millions of our sisters and brothers who have embraced Islam, Christianity and Sikhism. Today the Dalits who embraced Islam, Christianity and Sikhism are more militant and leading the Dalit movement in many parts of India. So SC/ST/BCs have to be thankful to Islam, Christianity and Sikhism.

But these three religionists hesitate to join hands with "godless Marxists" because Marxism is atheism though Indian Marxist leadership is not. Dr. Ambedkar by emphasising spiritualism brought us closer to other religions. This is his greatest contribution. Because of this stand he united the sufferers and co-sufferers. This is Babasaheb's unique contribution.

Violence and Vegetarianism : The upper caste propagandists say that Dr. Ambedkar opposed violence because he became a Buddhist. This is wrong. *Non-violence is not part of Buddhism. Nor vegetarianism.* It is not that what you eat that makes you holy. It is not food but evil actions that matter, he said. The non-violent-looking upper castes are more violent than beef-eaters. (Prof. K. S. Bhagvan : *Violence in Hinduism*, DSA). So in this also Ambedkarism is Marxism plus something more.

Dr. Ambedkar never ruled out violence. "Non-violence wherever possible and violence wherever necessary", he said. Non-violence is the language of the cowards.

To Dr. Ambedkar "justice" was more important than non-violence. So he advocated violence where justice is required. If you don't kill the upper caste killer first, you will be killed. *Self-defence does not mean violence.*

Dr. Ambedkar was India's first leader to break the monopoly of upper castes by uniting the SC/ST/BCs and minorities against

the 10% Aryans. Indian "Marxists" neither produced any literature to this effect nor worked to this effect. In the "Marxist" ruled States, SC/ST/BCs and minorities continue to be persecuted. That is why all the persecuted peoples of India rally round Ambedkarism and not Marxism. That is why we say "Ambedkarism is Marxism plus something more".

Dr. Ambedkar and Backward Castes : He is also the saviour of BCs (Backward Castes) who constitute 40% of the Indian population. It is he who introduced reservations to them.

Backward Castes being a heterogeneous group have neither a leader nor a philosophy—except in Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu where they regard Mahatma Phule and Periyar EV Ramaswamy as the leader of the BC movement. But Dalits have a leader, Dr. Ambedkar. They also have a philosophy. Ambedkarism. But BCs have none. I have talked to many BC leaders to accept Dr. Ambedkar as their leader. And they have agreed.*

BCs form over 40% of India's population. They are living in a *Thrishanku Swarga*. Neither here nor there. SC/STs have at least reservations. But BCs have none. So in many parts of India, BCs are "poorer" than SC/STs.

BCs should note that they are neither sudras nor Hindus. They are also Untouchables. Washermen, toddy-tappers, weavers, fishermen, boatmen, barbers, temple-pipers and drummers, carpenters, goldsmiths, and many other "service castes" are also treated as Untouchables. So it will be good if they join the SCs.

Nationality question : Marxists call these "poor" people as proletariat, working class. But Dr. Ambedkar did not resort to such an artificial division of Indian society. While India as a whole was a tribal society, consisting of different nationalities, he respected the distinct identity of every tribal group which later degenerated into a "caste" because of brahminical influence.

Indian "Marxists" being upper castes, tried to misinterpret India while Dr. Ambedkar tried to reconstruct India. The country is today suffering because its rulers have refused to respect what

* Nagesh Choudhary : "BCs agree they are not Hindus : Decide to join with Dalits", *Dalit Voice*, Aug. 1, 1988).

Dr. Ambedkar had said. The Khalistan, Jharkhand, Gorkaland, Uttarkhand, Bodoland demands would not have cropped if we had heeded Dr. Ambedkar's suggestion to respect the distinct identity of each nationality.

M. K. Gandhi wanted the SC/ST/BCs to "merge" with upper castes to strengthen Hinduism. He wanted to make the Untouchables the fifth *varna* by renaming them as *Harjians* (children of god).

Women's liberation : But Ambedkar wanted SC/ST/BCs to assert their human rights so that India is liberated and made a happy home. Gandhi worked for just 10 to 15% of the Indian population namely upper castes to make them more rich, more aggressive. But Dr. Ambedkar worked for the liberation of over 85%, including the upper caste women.

Armed struggle : Some "Marxists" criticise Dr. Ambedkar saying that he was not a revolutionary because he did not give a call for "armed struggle". This is wrong.

He was not against "armed struggle". As one coming from the very bottom of the society, he was well aware of the actual position of the people whom he represented. Our people all over India are slaves—poor, illiterate, physically weak and numerical minorities in every village. How can such an enslaved people resort to "armed struggle"? They are so poor that many of them can't afford even a razor blade for shaving. How can a starving people be made to fight? How can they procure arms? And thereby make them cannon-fodders?

Naxalite Movement : Even if it is possible to procure them some arms, the State armed might can overwhelm and finish them. This is what happened with the Naxalites. The State broke the backbone of the Naxalite movement. When the mighty, oppressive Indian State can break the well-armed Sikhs (Blue Star) and even the militant Lankan Tamils, the starving, illiterate Dalits will be a peanut.

So he was fully aware of the Indian realities. He didn't want to dupe the Dalits. He knew the mind and heart of Dalits. The "Marxists-Leninists" called our people "Naxalites" and handed

them over to the upper caste police. The "Naxalite" movement is wiped out. That is how the struggle of "Naxalites" proved a total failure.

Three Slogans : That is why Dr. Ambedkar gave our people three slogans :

1. Educate
2. Agitate
3. Organise.

In that order. He gave the first priority to "education". Not the class-room academic education, but "education" to make the slaves aware of their slavery. Tell the slave you are slave, he will explode, he said.

After completing this ideological "education" in Ambedkarism, he wanted them to graduate to the second and third phase of the struggle, namely : "agitate" and then only "organise".

When the first phase of the struggle graduates into second and the second into third, it will automatically lead to armed struggle.

He did not spell out "armed struggle" in so many words, but the very slogan "educate, agitate, organise" leads us to armed struggle. Perhaps the armed struggle may come about even at the end of the very second phase.

Right now, we are already witnessing such a situation. Gujarat has seen two "caste wars" and this has brought about tremendous awareness among SC/ST/BCs in Gujarat.

Did the "cross thread Marxists" bring about any armed struggle ?

The way the "Ambedkar Jayanti" was celebrated this year (1988) proves that Dr. Ambedkar has emerged as India's greatest revolutionary thinker and leader. Babasaheb's ideas are spreading like wild fire. SC/ST/BCs and minorities—over 85% of India's population—have accepted him as their leader. Even democrats among upper castes acknowledge the fact that future belongs to Ambedkarism. His name brings heart-burning to the UCs. But democrats among UCs and women will come to him for succour. But is it the case with Marxism ?

Ambedkar Era : “ Gandhi Jayanti ” is an official function whereas “ Ambedkar Jayanti ” is a people’s festival. Look at the difference. M. K. Gandhi has gone to background. This was because he was a “ Hindu ” leader. Despite all his services to Brahmins, finally a Brahmin only killed him.

The 20th century is called the “ Gandhian Era ”. It is coming to an end in another 12 years. The 21st century will be the “ Ambedkar Era ” (cheers).

Dr. Ambedkar has become the greatest Indian after the Buddha. Even with all the opposition of the entire ruling upper castes, they could not prevent Dr. Ambedkar emerging as the leader for the whole country.

UCs may call Gandhi as the “ Father of the Nation ”. But our people—SC/ST/BCs and Minorities—say Gandhi is not the father of our nation. Gandhi may be the father of their (upper caste) nation. He worked for them. But Dr. Ambedkar is the “ Father of our nation ” (more cheers).

So it is only 12 years away. All of us must get ready. Remember. This take-over is not easy.

Educated Dalit leaders like you must know what is “ community service ”. You must set apart 10% of your pay for community service. Invest in Babasaheb books. Get ready for the “ Ambedkar Era ”. It is coming. It is coming.

I conclude my talk by repeating *Ambedkarism is Marxism plus something more*. Our books are kept outside for sale. You may read them to better understand what I have said.

Now I invite questions.

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