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***Why Indian Labour is Determined to Win the War**

*Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's Broadcast
from Bombay Station of All India Radio*

“Labour is aware that, if this is a war against the New Nazi Order, it is not a war for the Old Order. It is a war on both the Old Order and the Nazi Order. Labour is aware that the only compensation for the cost of this war is the establishment of a New Order in which liberty, equality, and fraternity will not be mere slogans but will become facts of life,” said the Hon’ble Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Member for Labour, Government of India, broadcasting recently on “Why Indian Labour is determined to win this War” from the Bombay Station of A.I.R.

Here is the full text of Dr. Ambedkar’s broadcast :

There is to be a series of broadcasts by persons who are connected with and interested in Labour. My talk tonight is the first of this series. The subject of my talk is of a general sort. It is to serve as an introduction to the series. The title I have chosen for the subject is ‘Why Indian Labour is determined to win this War’. There is one fact which must arrest the attention of all. It relates to the attitude of Indian Labour towards the War. In the midst of this sudden surge of non-co-operation with and opposition to the war effort which we are witnessing in India, Labour has been actively co-operating in the prosecution of the war. Of this there can be no question. This, Labour has done and is determined to do notwithstanding the many efforts that are being made to dissuade it from doing.

What Labour Wants

During the war Labour has secured many gains and will no doubt secure many more. As pointed out by me recently, Labour has obtained

*Indian Information, January 1, 1943, pp. 16-19.

security through legislation. It has obtained the right to safety, care and attention, through the conditions of welfare which have been enforced by the Central Government upon the Employers for the benefit of Labour. But, if Labour is determined to do its utmost to accelerate the war effort, it is not simply because of the lure of these immediate gains. There are other and stronger reasons which are at the base of this determination. Labour is not content with securing merely fair conditions of work. What Labour wants is fair conditions of life. Let me explain what Labour means by fair conditions of life.

Liberty, Equality, Fraternity

Labour wants liberty. There is perhaps nothing new in this. What is new is Labour's conception of liberty. Labour's conception of liberty is not merely the negative conception of absence of restraint. Nor is Labour's conception of liberty confined to the mere recognition of the right of the people to vote. Labour's conception of liberty is very positive. It involves the idea of Government by the people. Government by the people, in the opinion of Labour, does not mean Parliamentary Democracy.

Parliamentary Democracy is a form of Government in which the function of the people has come to be to vote for their masters and leave them to rule. Such a scheme of Government, in the opinion of Labour, is a travesty of Government by the people. Labour wants Government which is Government by the people in name as well as in fact. Secondly, liberty as conceived by Labour includes the right to equal opportunity and the duty of the State to provide the fullest facilities for growth to every individual according to his needs.

Labour wants equality. By equality Labour means abolition of privileges of every kind in law, in the civil service, in the Army, in taxation, in trade and in industry : in fact the abolition of all processes which lead to inequality.

Labour wants fraternity. By fraternity it means an all-pervading sense of human brotherhood, unifying all classes and all nations, with "peace on earth and goodwill towards man" as its motto.

The Nazi New Order

These are Labour's ideals. They constitute the New Order, the establishment of which alone can save humanity from destruction. How

can this New Order be established if the Allied Nations lose the war? That is the supreme question which Labour knows it would be fatal to shirk or to avoid. Can this New Order be established by sitting idle and refusing to fight? Labour believes that Victory for the Allied Nations is the only hope of such a New Order coming into being. If the Allies fail, sure enough there will be a New Order. But the New Order will be no other than the Nazi Order. It will be an Order in which liberty will be found to be suppressed, equality denied, and fraternity expurgated as a pernicious doctrine.

This is by no means the whole of the Nazi New Order. There are parts of the Nazi Order which must compel every Indian to give anxious thought to its dangers, no matter what his religion, his caste and his political faith. The most important part is the one which enunciates the creed of racial gradation. This is the principal dictum in the Nazi Order. The Nazis regard the German Race as the Race of Superman. They are pleased to place the other While Races below the German race. But to the Brown Races—and Indians are included in this category—they give the last place in the gradation. As though this is not humiliating enough, the Nazis have declared that the Brown Races shall be the serfs of the German and the White Races. They arc not to have education, they arc not to have any liberty—political or economic.

“A Direct Menace”

The fury with which the British Government has been denounced by Hitler in his *Mein Kampf* for having given Indians education and political liberty, is quite well-known. The Nazi ideology is a direct menace to the liberty and freedom of Indians. Given this fact, there is the strongest reason why Indians should come forward to light Nazism. No one who compares the Nazi Order with the New Order which Labour has in view, can have any doubt that Labour, in making up its determination to fight for the Allies and to defeat and destroy Nazism, has taken up a position which is the only position which all sensible people can take. There are, however, people who refuse to take this view.

There are some who think that they do not mind a Nazi victory’ and the coming of the New Nazi Order. Fortunately, not many of these are to be found in the country. Those who take this view are not serious

themselves. Nobody takes them seriously. They are embittered politicians who will not be satisfied unless they are allowed to dictate their way and whose motto is "all or nothing"

There are pacifists who argue that all wars are wrong. They argue that the troubles of the world are largely due to the wars that have devastated and defaced human civilisation which men have built up at the cost of so much human effort. This is true. But in spite of all this, Labour refuses to accept pacifism as a principle of life. Wars cannot be abolished by merely refusing to fight when attacked. Peace obtained by surrender to the forces of violence is not peace. It is an act of suicide for which it is difficult to find any justification. It is a sacrifice of all that is noble and necessary for maintaining a worthy human life to the forces of savagery and barbarism.

Surrender is not Labour's way to abolish war. Only two things will, in the opinion of Labour, abolish war. One is to win the war and the other is to establish a just peace. In the view of Labour both are equally important. Labour holds that the origin of war does not lie in man's thirst for blood. The origin of war is to be found in the vile peace that victors often impose upon the vanquished. According to Labour, the duty of the pacifist is not to sulk and to refuse to fight when war is on. Labour believes that the duty of the pacifist is to be active and alert both when the war is on and also when the terms of peace are being forged. The pacifist fails to do the right thing at the right time. The pacifists are active against war when war is on. They are inactive and indifferent when the war is over and peace is being made. In this way pacifists lose both, war as well as peace. If Labour proposes to fight this war, it is because pacifism is not the Labour's way of abolishing war.

French Revolution Recalled

There are pessimists who say that there is no guarantee that victory will be followed by a New Order. There is perhaps room for this pessimism. The New Order, which is the ideal of labour, has its roots in the French Revolution. The French Revolution gave rise to two principles—the principle of self-government and the principle of self-determination. The principle of self-government expresses the desire of the people to rule itself rather than be ruled by others whether the

rulers be absolute monarchs, dictators, or privileged classes. It is called 'democracy'.

The principle of self-determination expresses the desire of a people united by common ideals and common purposes to decide, without external compulsion ; its political status—whether independence, interdependence, or union with other peoples of the world. This is called nationalism. The hope of humanity was centred on the fructification of these principles. Unfortunately, after a lapse of nearly 140 years, these principles have failed to take root. The old regime has continued either in all its nakedness or by making sham concessions to these two principles. Barring a few countries, there was neither self-government nor self-determination in the world. All this, of course, is true. But this is no argument against the attitude taken by labour—namely, that the preliminary condition for the establishment of the New Order is victory over the forces of Nazism. All that this means is that Labour must be more vigilant and that the war must not stop with victory over Nazis, but there must be no peace unless there is victory over the Old Order wherever it is found.

Labour And Nationalism

More serious opponents of Labour are, of course, the Nationalists. They accuse Labour of taking an attitude which is said to be inconsistent with and injurious to Indian nationalism. Their second objection is that Labour agrees to fight for the war without getting any assurances about India's independence. These are questions so often posed and so seriously argued that it is necessary to state what labour thinks of them.

As to nationalism, Labour's attitude is quite clear. Labour is not prepared to make a fetish of nationalism. If nationalism means the worship of the ancient past—the discarding of everything that is not local in origin and colour—then Labour cannot accept nationalism as its creed. Labour cannot allow the living faith of the dead to become the dead faith of the living. Labour will not allow the ever expanding spirit of man to be strangled by the hand of the past which has no meaning for the present and no hope for the future : nor will it allow it to be cramped in a narrow jacket of local particularism. Labour must constantly insist upon renovating the life of the people by being ever ready to borrow in order to repair, transform and recreate the body

politic. If nationalism stands in the way of this rebuilding and reshaping of life, then Labour must deny nationalism.

Labour's creed is internationalism. Labour is interested in nationalism only because the wheels of democracy—such as representative Parliaments, responsible Executive, constitutional conventions, etc.—work better in a community united by national sentiments. Nationalism to Labour is only a means to an end. It is not an end in itself to which Labour can agree to sacrifice what it regards as the most essential principles of life.

Independence : A Wrong Approach

As to independence, Labour fully recognises its importance. But Labour thinks that there is a wrong approach to the question of independence and a misunderstanding about its importance. The independence of a nation *ex hypothesi* does not tie it up to any particular form of government or organisation of society. External independence is quite compatible with internal slavery.

Independence means nothing more than that a nation has liberty to determine its form of government and its social order without dictation from outside. The worth of independence depends upon the kind of government and the kind of society that is built up. There is not much value in independence if the form of government and the order of society are to be those against which the world is fighting today. Labour thinks that more emphasis ought to have been placed on *New India*—and less on '*Quit India*'. The appeal of a New India with a New Order is bound to be greater than the appeal of independence. Indeed the vision of a New Order in a New India would very greatly strengthen determination to win freedom. Such an approach would certainly have stopped the many embarrassing questions which are being asked, namely, freedom for what and freedom for whom.

Secondly, immediate realisation of independence as a condition for support to the war effort, Labour finds it difficult to understand. This condition marks a sudden development in the attitude of some people to the war effort, and could be justified only if there was any sudden conspiracy to rob India of her right to freedom. But there is no evidence of any such conspiracy. Nor can such conspiracy, if there were any, succeed no matter who the conspirators are. In the view of Labour no

one can deprive India of her right to freedom if she demands it with the combined strength of united people. If India's independence is in the balance, it is because of disunity among Indians. The enemies of India's independence are Indians and no others.

Labour And War

Labour's attitude to this war is framed after a full realisation of what is involved in the war. Labour is aware that it must win the war as well as peace if war is to be banished from the world. Labour is aware that it is not enough to defeat the Nazis and to destroy the possibilities of the New Nazi Order, it is not a war for the Old Order. It is a war on both the Old Order and the Nazi Order. Labour is aware that the only compensation for the cost of this war is the establishment of a New Order in which liberty, equality, and fraternity, will not be mere slogans but will become facts of life. But the question of all questions is how can the hope of this New Order materialise? On this question Labour is quite emphatic. Labour insists that for the materialisation of all these ideals there is one condition that is primary—and that is success in the war. Without success in the war there can be no self-government and self-determination for India. Without victory in the war, independence will be idle twaddle. This is the reason why Labour is determined to win this war.

Two Features Of Present War

This war is full of potentialities for good. It promises to give birth to a New Order. Labour finds that this war is different from other wars. There are two features which distinguish it from other wars. In the first place, this war is not altogether a war for the division of the world's territory amongst the most powerful nations of the world as the preceding wars have been. In this war the division of the world's territory is not the only cause. This is a war in which there is a conflict of ideologies relating to the forms and systems of Government under which humanity is to live. In the second place this war is not altogether a mere war as other wars have been. Its object is not merely to defeat the enemy, to march on to his capital and to dictate a peace. This war besides being a war is also a revolution—a revolution which demands a fundamental change in the terms of associated life—a replanning of the society. In this sense it is a people's war, and if it is not, it could and should be made into a people's war.

Given these facts, Labour cannot be indifferent to this war and to its outcome. Labour is aware how the efforts in the past for the establishment of a New Order have been frustrated time and again. That is because democracy, after it was brought into being, was left in Tory hand. If the people of the world take care to see that this mistake is not committed again in future, Labour believes that by fighting this war and establishing the New Order the world can be made safe for democracy.

Correct Leadership

The country needs a lead and the question is who can give this lead. I venture to say that Labour is capable of giving to the country the lead it needs. Correct leadership apart from other things, requires idealism and free thought. Idealism is possible for the Aristocracy, though free thought is not. Idealism and free thought are both possible for Labour. But neither idealism nor free thought is possible for the middle-class. The middle-class does not possess the liberality of the Aristocracy, which is necessary to welcome and nourish an ideal. It does not possess the hunger for the New Order, which is the hope on which the labouring classes live. Labour, therefore, has a very distinct contribution to make in bringing about a return to the sane and safe ways of the past which Indians had been pursuing to reach their political destiny. Labour's lead to India and Indians is to get into the fight and be united. The fruits of victory will be independence and a New Social Order. For such a victory all must fight. Then the fruits of victory will be the patrimony of all, and there will be none to deny the rights of a united India to share in that patrimony.

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