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* Dr. Ambedkar to Mr. Attlee

[L/P&J/10/50 :f 55]

“Rajgraha”

Dadar, Bombay 14

12th August 1946

My dear Attlee,

Thank you for your letter of the 1st August 1946.¹ I did not expect you to find time to reply to my letter of the 1st July 1946. I am therefore grateful to you for your having found time to let me know your views about the points that I had raised in my letter.

2. I am afraid I cannot accept your justification for the revision of the policy followed by His Majesty's Government in the Simla Conference of 1945 nor of the Mission's method of treating the Scheduled Castes. I cannot help saying that Mr. Alexander's statement in the House of Commons that the majority of the Scheduled Castes are with the Congress is an atrocious statement and has no foundation in truth. This is not only my view but the view of every Englishman in India. If you only consult Sir Edward Benthall who is now in England, I am sure he will support me.

3. With regard to the analysis you have given of the result of the achievements of the Federation in the Primary Election, all I can say is that you have misunderstood the situation and I am afraid no outsider who does not know the significance of the facts or the method of the election will be able to understand what they mean without proper explanation. The main ground of my charge against the Mission is that when the other side of the picture were (was) presented by the Congress, it was their bounden duty to have called me and to have asked for an explanation. This, the Mission did not do, which they

* The Transfer of Power, Vol. VIII, No. 142, pp. 221-23.

were in justice bound to do. If I had failed to give them satisfactory explanation then they would have been justified in the conclusion to which they came. That the Mission was grossly misinformed is proved by my election to the Constituent Assembly from Bengal. The Cabinet Mission stated in the House of Commons that my influence was confined to Bombay and C.P. How is it then that I was elected from Bengal? In connection with my election, I would like to impress upon you three facts: One is that I did not merely scrape through but I came at the top of the poll beating even Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose, the topmost Bengalee leader of the Congress Party. Secondly, I am in no way connected by communal ties with the Scheduled Castes community of Bengal. They are of different caste to which I belong. In fact the people of my caste do not exist in Bengal at all and yet the Bengalee Scheduled Castes supported me, so strongly that I was able to come first. Thirdly, though the Scheduled Castes in Bengal had been returned on the Congress ticket yet they broke the rule of their Party not to vote for anybody except for Congressmen and voted for me. Does this prove that I have no following in Bengal? I am sure if the Cabinet Mission are honest in their conclusion, they ought to revise the erroneous opinion which they have expressed in the House of Commons and revise the view and give proper recognition to the Federation.

4. With regard to the status of the Scheduled Castes in the Minority Advisory Committee, I am glad to have an assurance that the British Cabinet considers the Scheduled Castes to be an important minority. I am afraid that I must again repeat that unless and until the Cabinet Mission were to make a public declaration, this view will not help the Scheduled Castes. I say this because, as you will see, (in) the last letter which Maulana Abul Kalam Azad wrote to the Viceroy on behalf of the Congress before the negotiations broke down, he emphatically challenged the view that the Scheduled Castes were a minority. The Scheduled Castes fear that if this view is not corrected by the British Cabinet in time, the Scheduled Castes' case may not be considered in the Advisory Committee which is bound to be packed by Congressmen. The danger of their being relegated to the position of a social group within the Hindus as distinguished from a minority, appears to be most certain in view of the recent pronouncement of

Mr. Gandhi who evidently thinks that he can now do anything he likes with the Scheduled Castes in view of the fact that the British Government have refused to lend them their support.

5. In these circumstances, I would press upon you to reconsider the matter and make a declaration that the Scheduled Castes are an important minority to avert a possible danger to their future position in the new Constitution.

6. I am sorry to read that you cannot hold out any hope of the Scheduled Castes getting two seats in the Interim Government. I do not see any justification for this denial. Both on the ground of their numbers and also as compared to the assurance given at the time of the last Simla Conference of 1945, they are entitled to better treatment than is proposed to be given to the Sikhs and other smaller minorities. I should think that the claim made by me was more than justified.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

B. R. AMBEDKAR.

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