

by the applicants (Plaintiffs) that if a temporary injunction as asked for is not granted and the water of the tank is allowed to be contaminated, irreparable injury would result to the Plaintiffs. Taking into consideration, how sensitive the touchables classes generally are on this point, both on account of their religious susceptibilities, as well as the wide gulf which has existed between the two communities from time immemorial, I am inclined to attach very great weight to this condition. I have no doubt that the spread of education will, in course of time, materially alter these conditions and bring the two communities in a clear and friendly contact with each other and that Untouchability will be a thing of the past. But as things at present stand, I am bound to attach great weight to the sentiment of the applicants who feel that, the injury that will sustain if the water is allowed to be contaminated, will be that it would not admit of being adequately compensated by damages.

Taking all these circumstances into consideration, I think I would be failing in duty if I were not to refuse the injunction prayed for. It is a very painful duty that I am called upon to perform, but the call of duty leaves no room for choice. I therefore order that a temporary injunction as asked for, with notice be issued.

14-12-27.

(Sd.)—G. V. Vaidya ” ¹

On the side of Depressed Classes “Elaborate preparations for holding the Conference were made. As no Hindu landlord allowed the use of his land for the pandal, a site for the Conference was secured with great difficulty from a Muslim. As the local merchants refused to have any dealings with the men connected with the Conference, the Reception Committee had to purchase corn and other materials from out-side, sufficient to last for ten days. Anantrao Chitre managed the work very efficiently. Subhedar Ghatge was entrusted with the food arrangement and maintenance of order and discipline. All the Chief Government Executives of the District gathered at Mahad on December 19. Police were posted on all sides of the Chawdar Tank. Delegates and spectators began to pour in

¹: Khairmode, Vol. 3, Pp. 234—237.

Mahad from December 21. The District Magistrate visited their camp every day to dissuade the delegates from the proposed *Satyagraha*.

With a batch of two hundred delegates and leaders, Dr. Ambedkar left Bombay on the morning of December 24. The next day they got down at noon at Dasgaon, five miles off Mahad. There, with anxious faces, an army of 3,000 *satyagrahis* awaited their leader. When they saw their leader, they greeted him with tumultuous applause.

After the reception, the Police Superintendent handed over a letter from the District Magistrate to Dr. Ambedkar, requesting him to see the District Magistrate at his Mahad office without loss of time. Dr. Ambedkar, with one of his lieutenants, Sahasrabudhe, hurried to his office. The District Magistrate in a swift and soft tone advised, argued and pressed for the postponement of the struggle; but the leader did not see eye to eye with the Chief Executive of the District. It was however, agreed that he should be given an opportunity to address the Conference. In the meanwhile, the procession of the delegates had left Dasgaon and accompanied by police officers, it reached Mahad at half past two in the afternoon, singing songs which were punctuated by sky-rending slogans. The vast crowd entered the pandal amidst shouts of 'Shivaji Maharaj ki Jai'. In the pandal proverbs hanging from pillars displayed inspiring immortal truths. In front of the gate there was a pit.

After his interview with the District Magistrate, Dr. Ambedkar hastened to the pandal and had his lunch in the company of his common followers. He refused to have any special food.

The Conference commenced its proceedings at four-thirty in the evening. Messages from several prominent persons wishing the *satyagraha* success were read out. Then the leader rose to address the Conference amidst deafening cheers, shouts and slogans raised by a mammoth gathering of fifteen thousand people. A majority of them had no clothes to their backs. Their old turbans were torn, their chins were unshaven; but their sunburnt faces shone with a peculiar enthusiasm and hope. The vast audience calmed down, and Dr. Ambedkar began his speech in a low, dignified but forceful voice.”¹

¹ : Keer, Pp. 98-99.

“Dr. Ambedkar’s Plea for Abolition of Social Disabilities

Following is a summary of the Presidential address of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, M.A., Ph.D., D.Sc., Bar-at-Law, M.L.C.. delivered at the *Satyagraha* Conference at Mahad (District Kolaba) held on the 25th December 1927.

Welcoming the *Satyagrahis* on behalf of the *Satyagraha* Committee, of which he is the president, Dr. Ambedkar reminded them of the unfortunate ending of the Conference held at the same place in March last when a number of their fellow delegates had been ill-treated and assaulted by the so-called Caste-Hindus for committing the offence of drawing the water from a Public Tank named “*Chawdar*”. Nobody prevented the members of the Depressed Classes from using the water of the tank, but some ringleaders took it into their heads to punish the delegates of the Conference after the event and incited the mob to commit assaults on them. Some of the offenders were prosecuted, convicted and sentenced to four months’ imprisonment.

Continuing Dr. Ambedkar said: “Had the caste-Hindus admitted the right of the Depressed Classes to use the tank, this *Satyagraha* would not have been necessary. Unfortunately, however, the Caste-Hindus at this place are obstinate in their attitude and refuse to admit the right of the Depressed Classes to use the Public Tank which is open to persons of all castes including Mahomedans and other non-Hindus. The irony of the situation is that although the cattle owned by the so-called Untouchables are allowed to go, their owners, who are as good human beings as the other people, are prohibited from going to the tank.

The Hindus are known for their humanitarian sentiments and their regard for animal life is proverbial. Some section do not kill even poisonous reptiles. The Hindus maintain a large army of *Sadhus* and able-bodied beggars, and believe that they acquire merit by feeding and clothing them and giving them cash for indulging in luxuries. The Hindu philosophy teaches the doctrine of an all-pervading soul, and the *Geeta* exhorts them to make no distinction between a Brahmin and a Chandal.

The question therefore arises why the Hindus having such traditions of charity and humanity and possessing such grand philosophy should behave so heartlessly towards their fellow human beings and in such unreasonable ways. In the reply to this question lies the real significance of this Conference. The Hindu Community is set in the steel-frame of the caste system, in which one caste is lower than another in social gradation involving particular privileges, rights, inhibitions and disabilities with regard to each caste. This system has created vested interests which depend upon maintaining the inequalities resulting from the system.

The so-called Caste-Hindus are bitterly opposed to the *Panchamas* (person belonging to the fifth class, the Depressed Class) using a public tank not because they really believe that the water will be thereby spoiled or will evaporate if Mahars and others use the tank, but because they are afraid of losing their superiority of caste and of equality being established between the former and the latter. We are resorting to this *Satyagraha* not because we believe that the water of this particular tank has any exceptional qualities, but to establish our natural rights as citizens and human beings.

Struggle for Equality

This Conference is held to unfurl the banner of *Equality* and thus may be likened to the National Assembly in France convened in 1789. Our Conference aims at the same achievement in social, religious, civic and economic matters. We are avowedly out to smash the steel-frame of the caste-system.

Low Aim Is A Crime

Some men may say that this should be satisfied with the abolition of Untouchability only, leaving the caste-system alone. The aim of abolishing Untouchability alone without trying to abolish the inequalities inherent in the caste-system is a very low aim. Let us remember “not failure but low aim is a crime”. Let us probe the evil to its very roots and be not satisfied with mere palliatives to assuage our pain. If the disease is not rightly diagnosed the remedy will be useless and the cure may be postponed.

Not only Untouchability and restrictions regarding intercaste-dining must be removed, but inter-marriages among the Hindus of various castes must be made common. This alone will lead to the establishment of true-equality. Even supposing that the stigma of Untouchability is wiped out, what will be the status of the present Untouchables. At the most they will be treated as '*Shudras*'. And what are the rights of the '*Shudras*'? The '*Smrities*' treat them as mere zealots and the '*Smrities*' are the guides of the caste Hindus in the matter of gradations in the caste system. Are you willing to be treated as '*Shudras*'? Are you willing to accept the position of zealots? Are you prepared to leave your fate in the hands of the upper class?

Self-Help

That the caste-system must be abolished if the Hindu Society is to be reconstructed on the basis of equality, goes without saying. Untouchability has its roots in the caste-system. They cannot expect the *Brahmins* to rise in revolt against the caste-system, because that system confers on them certain special privileges and they will not willingly give up their privileged position and the present supremacy in the hierarchy of Hinduism as based on *Smrities*. It would be too much to expect them to resign all their privileges as the '*Samurais*' of Japan did. Also we cannot rely upon the Non-Brahmins and ask them to fight our battle. Many of them are still enamoured of the caste-system and are tools in the hands of the Brahmins, and most of these others who resent the supremacy of the Brahmins are more interested in levelling down the Brahmins than in levelling up the suppressed classes. They too want a class of people on whom they can look down and have the satisfaction of not being quite the under-dogs of the Society. This means that we ourselves must fight our battles, relying on ourselves. We are the most downtrodden classes in the country. Services in the army, police and public offices are practically closed to us. We are debarred from following a number of trades and professions and we have been reduced to utter economic helplessness. All this is due to the Untouchability and the lowest social position to which we have been relegated. Should we fail to assert our rights as human beings and citizens we shall have to remain fallen forever.

A Real Service to the Nation

Ours is a movement which aims at not only removing our own disabilities, but also at bringing about a social revolution, a revolution that will remove all man-made barriers of caste by providing equal opportunities to all to rise to the highest position and making no distinction between man and man so far as civic rights are concerned. If we achieve success in our movement to unite all the Hindus in a single caste we shall have rendered the greatest service to the Indian nation in general and to the Hindu community in particular. The present caste-system with its invidious distinction and unjust dispensations is one of the greatest sources of our communal and National weakness. Our movement stands for strength and solidarity; for equality, liberty and fraternity. We wish to carry on our movement as peaceful as we can. However, our determination to remain non-violent will to a large extent depend upon the attitude of our opponents. We are not the aggressors and our oppressors for generations should accuse us of aggression a strange thing. We refuse to be controlled and bound by the ‘*Shastras*’ and ‘*Smrities*’ composed in the dark ages and base our claims on justice and humanity.”¹

Thereafter “Mr. G. N. Sahastrabuddhe, a Brahmin, read extracts from *Manusmriti* those portions which related to the treatement to be meted out to the *Sudras*.”

Burn Manusmriti

The first resolution passed ran as follows :—

Taking into consideration, the remarks in the *Manusmriti* and such other books which are most vulgar and which most flagrantly violate the human rights, this meeting condemns them emphatically and as an expression of that condemnation resolves to burn them and makes the following declaration of rights to form the basis of reconstruction of Hindu Society.

The declaration stated that all Hindus should be considered as one of *varna* and should be recognised and called as such and law should be enacted prohibiting the use of class words as Brahmin, Kshatriya etc.

¹ : The Indian National Herald, dated 28th December 1927.

A place at Mahad where Manusmriti was burnt



The bonfire of *Manusmriti* was quite intentional. We made a bonfire of it because we view it as a symbol of injustice under which we have been crushed across centuries.

—Dr. B. R. Ambedkar

Another resolution urged that a competitive examination be held for the admission of persons to the Hindu priesthood and that licenses be issued only to the successful candidates.

The speeches were mainly denunciations of Brahmins and Brahminism. Mr. Mandlik asked permission to address the meeting but the President refused permission.

Mr. D. V. Pradhan, a touchable also supported the burning of the *Smriti*.

The ceremony of burning the *Smriti* * then took place and the conference concluded for the day.”¹

“ The bonfire of the *Manusmriti* by Dr. Ambedkar and his followers on 25th December 1927, anticipated this age. While speaking of bonfire of *Manusmriti*; Dr. Ambedkar in an interview with T. V. Parvate in 1938, said “The bonfire of *Manusmriti* was quite intentional. We made a bonfire of it because we view it as a symbol of injustice under which we have been crushed across centuries. Because of its teaching, we have been ground down under despicable poverty and so we made the clash, staked all, took our lives in our hands and performed the deed.”²

“The Collector, the Superintendent of Police and 100 armed police were present. In the night *harikirtan* composed by an “Untouchable” and hitting at Brahmins was enthusiastically sung.

Collector's Letter

Second day's proceedings of the Conference began on the morning of the 26th. Dr. Ambedkar read a letter from the Collector which said that it was the desire of Government that the “Untouchables” should obey the injunction of the Civil Court. Government were always sympathetic to the cause of the Untouchables and were willing to advance their cause in every lawful way and help them to establish their right of access to places of public utility. But, in view of the temporary injunction granted, Government were helpless and desired that the Untouchables should not embark on *Satyagraha* at this moment.

* Manusmriti.

¹: The Indian National Herald, dated 31st December 1927.

²: Parvate, Pp. 58-59.

The whole Conference converted itself into Subjects Committee when Dr. Ambedkar reviewed the whole situation and advised the delegates to embark on *Satyagraha* against the Civil Court's injunction provided the delegates were prepared for the consequences of their action and to undergo imprisonment and other sufferings in a cheerful and voluntary manner.

The sense of the Conference was strongly in favour of the advice to embark on *Satyagraha* immediately and the President had difficulty in getting a hearing for any speaker who was for postponement of *Satyagraha*.

More Than 3,000 Volunteers Sign Pledge

Dr. Ambedkar then suggested that to gauge correctly the intensity of feeling, those delegates who were in favour of *Satyagraha* should be asked to give their consent in writing for practising *Satyagraha*. Accordingly, the registration of delegates willing to practice *Satyagraha* was commenced and within one hour, 3,884 delegates had registered their names as ready to offer *Satyagraha*.

The Collector was informed that the Conference was in favour of *Satyagraha* on hearing which the Collector expressed a desire to address the Conference personally.

Collector Addresses Conference

The *Satyagraha* Conference assembled at 5-30 p.m. when Mr. Hood, the Collector, accompanied by the Superintendent of Police attended the Conference. The Collector addressed the meeting in Marathi. Mr. Hood said: "I know why you have all gathered in this Conference. I know also that if I advised you to defer *Satyagraha* you would all very much regret it as you have been preparing for this for the last three months. You all, however, know that the Bombay Legislative Council has passed a resolution to the effect that the "Depressed" Classes be admitted to the public tanks and schools and that the Bombay Government have instructed accordingly and have also advised the Local Board to do the same. The Government are quite willing, Mr. Hood said to admit them to the tank but 10 days ago there has taken place a new development. The touchables have filed a suit against the "Untouchables" contending that the tank was a private one and a temporary injunction has been granted in their favour.

“I am speaking to you as the Collector of the district and I wish to assure you on behalf of the Government that the Government are on the side of “Untouchables” and to tell you that the Government and I, are your friends. I regret very much to see that some of you intend to offer *Satyagraha* by disobeying the order of the court. This action, I consider, will be very harmful, I advise you to prepare your case and fight it constitutionally and legally. I sincerely hope that the decision may be in your favour.”

Mr. Jawalkar who had come in the morning said he had come to the Conference to deliver the message of the Non-Brahmin party namely that the “Untouchables” should obey the injunction of the court and offer *Satyagraha* after the decision of the court.

Subhedar Ghatge and other speakers said they had come there to offer *Satyagraha* against the touchables and not against the Government.”¹

“The Collector was then led by Dr. Ambedkar out of the pandal. Till seven in the evening, speaker after speaker supported the launching of *Satyagraha*, and those who uttered discordant notes were booed and heckled. Dr. Ambedkar again adjourned the discussion till the next morning.

At night the chief men gathered together, held discussions and decided to postpone the struggle in view of the case pending before the court, but it was also decided to march in procession winding its course around the tank. Accordingly, this decision was notified to the District Magistrate.

On the morning of December 27, Dr. Ambedkar rose to withdraw the first resolution on the struggle and to move another resolution amidst breathless silence, asking the Conference to postpone the struggle. He was on the horns of a dilemma. It was now the psychological moment to curb the enthusiasm of the delegates and pin it down. He tactfully began to deal with the critical situation. He said in an appealing tone to the delegates, who had by now grown restless and frantic: “You are a brave people. The people who are prepared to lay down their lives for the vindication of their just rights are sure to prosper. But the

¹: The Indian National Herald, dated 31st December 1927.

moment now has come when you should think twice before you strike the blow. You know well that the *Satyagraha* movement started by Gandhi,” he proceeded, “was backed up by the people as it was against a foreign domination. Our struggle is against the mass of Caste Hindus and naturally we have little support from outside. Taking these facts into consideration. I feel, we should not antagonise the Government and put it on the side of our opposition. It is not beneficial either.”

“Do not suppose,” asserted the leader, “that if you postpone the issue humiliation will be its concomitant. As regards my position, I assure you I am prepared to face the three-fold danger-breaking of an order, being charged with a breach of rules governing the conduct of a lawyer and the possibility of imprisonment. My brothers,” he softly concluded, “you rest assured that a postponement of this struggle will not mean that we have given up the struggle. The fight will go on till we establish our claims to this Tank.”¹

Satyagraha postponed

As a result of deliberations, the following resolution was adopted :—

“Taking into consideration the fact that the touchable classes of Mahad by obtaining a temporary injunction from the Civil Court at the last hour against the “Depressed” Classes bring them into conflict with the Government which had yesterday morning resolved to offer *Satyagraha* have after listening to the Collector and after taking into consideration the assurance given by him in the open Conference that the Government have every sympathy for the Depressed Classes in the struggle for equal rights resolved that *Satyagraha* be postponed till the decision of the Civil Court.”²

¹ : Keer, Pp. 102-103.

² : The Indian National Herald, dated 31st December 1927.

“The Conference agreed. The delegates immediately formed themselves into a procession and started volunteers with slogans, boards and placards were pacing slowly. The procession reached the Tank and took its round. And what were the Caste Hindus doing? The streets were deserted. They had shut their houses and the Orthodox Hindus were wriggling with excruciating venom in their hearts. After one hour and a half, the procession returned to the pandal about noon without any mishap.” ¹

“DR. AMBEDKAR AT RAIGARH

“Untouchables” Bathe in Ganga Sagar Tank

A correspondent writing under date January 5 in “*Kolaba-Samachar* of Pen, says” After the conclusion of the *Satyagraha* Conference Dr. Ambedkar proceeded to Raigarh, the famous fortress and the capital of Shivaji, in company of about a hundred Untouchables. He encamped in the Raigarh *Dharmashala* and the watchmen of that place, one Yesu Shedge, a Mahratta by caste and maintained by the *Dharmashala* Committee, looked after the requirements of the visitors. He asked them not to touch the waters of the Gangasagar Tank. He suggested that if they wanted to take bath, they could do so in another tank nearby, specially built for the Untouchables. Dr. Ambedkar and others, however, “defiled” the waters of the “Gangasagar.”

The correspondent adds that this has led to great excitement among the Mahrattas of the Raigarh valley, most of whom are *sepoys* in the army, the valley being a good recruiting field.” ²

Comments

“Commenting editorially on this episode, “*Kolaba-Samachar*” in its issue for January 7 refers to the methods followed by Dr. Ambedkar pointing to a suggestion made in its columns that Government should see its way to prosecute Dr. Ambedkar and his followers. The paper sets its face against the suggestions on the ground that Indians must do as much as possible to settle their own quarrels and should never invite Government of their own accord, to interfere.” ³

¹ : Keer P. 104.

² : The Bombay Chronicle dated 12th January 1928.

³ : Kolaba-Samachar, dated 7th January 1928.

“Maharashtra’s Mind

For some weeks past Dr. Ambedkar and the *Satyagraha* Conference of Untouchables at Mahad have been the subject of much adverse comment not only in the Orthodox Hindu Press but also in journals that are definitely committed to the removal of Untouchability. Most of the Marathi journals came under the second variety and may generally speaking be divided into three classes, *viz*, N. C. O., Responsivist and Non-Brahman. The principal points that these journals make in their attacks against Dr. Ambedkar and his friends are (1) his alleged excess of burning the *Manusmriti*, and (2) his alleged acquiescence in the Kolaba Collector’s order to stop *Satyagraha*. In the whole controversy there are many other charges and countercharges made against either party, but they are not very material. Dr. Ambedkar has now published in “*Bahishkrit-Bharat*” quite a lengthy account of the Conference and met the charges made against him. He does not fight shy of the first accusation against him and defends it by saying that in as much *Manusmriti* ordains and sanctifies the age-long oppression and exploitation of the Untouchable Hindus by the so-called High-Class Hindus, this main source of present day Hindu law deserves to be burnt. While meeting the second charge, Dr. Ambedkar takes the wind out of the sails of his opponents when he states that no gagging order was ever passed against and therefore there never arose any question of disobeying it. All that he did, he was persuaded to postpone the *Satyagraha* to a later day by the Collector of Kolaba and he did entirely in the interests of the *Satyagrahis* and the Untouchables. He leaves perfect liberty to his critics to say anything against him on this distinct ground.”¹

“ The case, Hindu versus Untouchables regarding ownership of Chawdar Tank was fixed for hearing on 12th January 1928 in the Court of Second Class Sub-Judge; Mahad. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar started preparation for pleading the case. He wrote a letter on 24th January 1928 to Advocate Markand Dattatraya Vaidya to

¹: The Bombay Chronicle, dated 27th February 1928.

obtain certain documents and also to attend the Court. He specifically asked Mr. Vaidya to obtain a copy of an affidavit filed by a Brahmin priest namely Mr. Pandurang Bhaskar Shashtri Palaye on 30th January 1928 in favour of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and other quoting the various quotations from the scriptures. The letter is as under :

BHIMRAO R. AMBEDKAR
M. A., Ph. D., D. Sc,
Bar-at-law
Member, Legislative Council.
Bombay.

Damodar Hall, Parel
Bombay, 12
24-1-28

My dear Vaidya,

I am (in) receipt of your letter of the 12th. I notice that the Court is anxious to have the injunction order argued earlier i.e., before the 5th Feb. Well, I propose to come on Thursday the 2nd of Feb. to argue the matter.

I am sending herewith forms of affidavits which you will please prepare in due form and have them declared in time. You may find some difficulty in getting a Mahomedan butcher (I must have a butcher) to make the affidavit. But if you will see the police Sub-Inspector of Mahad and request him on my behalf, I am sure he will oblige you a copy of an affidavit by a Brahmin priest supporting us which will be declared here.

Give sufficient notice to the Defts, in time of the date and also give them copies of affidavits, so that they would have no cause for complaint. Give my regards to Surba. Let me have your reply by Monday the 30th of January at the latest, informing me if everything is ready for the 2nd of Feb.

With my very best regards I am,

Yours sincereley
Sd/-B. R. Ambedkar” ¹

¹ : Khairmode, Vol. 3, Pp. 239, 244, 245.

Following is the article by P. R. Lele about Mahad Satyagraha—

“Untouchables will renew Satyagraha

The Untouchable's *Satyagraha* of the famous *Chawdar Tank* of Mahad had to suspend their *Saryagraha* in view of a temporary injunction granted by the Sub-Judge of Mahad restraining Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and others from taking water out of that tank. At that time i.e. December last they had to rest satisfied with holding a Conference and giving emphatic expression in several ways to their resentment against the tyranny of Caste-Hindus.

The delegates and visitors of that Conference organised a huge procession and impressed their strength on the minds of the tyrants. Thereafter Dr. Ambedkar with a select party went round the Mahad Taluka and even to the Raigarh Fort. About his visit to Raigarh, I refrain from saying anything inasmuch as Dr. Ambedkar is contemplating or probably has started legal proceedings against certain papers which are alleged to have given misleading reports.

The tour of this party created a sensation in Mahad Taluka, as a repercussion of which even Mussalmans of a certain villages in the vicinity certain papers who are alleged to have given misleading reports.

Interim Injunction Dissolved

Now the Sub-Judge of Mahad has dissolved the interim injunction. I have not got a copy of the judgement on the interlocutory notice but have definite information that it is a considered and pretty long one.

The Judge has hinted that he was misled when he granted the interim injunction and has virtually expressed sorrow for having been instrumental to what may be called the continuation of an insult and a sore. More than this must not at this stage be said as the main case is still subjudice. For the time, however, this is a distinct victory of a just cause. The assertion of civil rights by the so-called Untouchables can now be made without involving the risk of being jammed in between the judiciary on the one side and the orthodoxy on the other.

In the great *Guruka Bagh* struggle there was at least the wholehearted and unanimous sympathy of the public with the Sikh *Satyagrahis*. In the Mahad affair it was not so. The leaders of the Orthodox Hindus refused to listen to the words of advice of the bosses of Poona or even of the *Hindu Sabhawalas*. Those same leaders though discomfited and repulsed, would not take up a strong attitude in favour of the Mahar *Satyagrahis* when it came to the actual assertion of rights. What had to be postponed can now be taken up again.

The Next Campaign

And it is going to be taken up again, this time with far less risk and far greater chances of success. After the return of Dr. Ambedkar, who had been to Mahad for the case, after delivering his well-informed budget criticism, a public meeting was held in the Damodar Thakarsey Hall, Parel, on Sunday 26th instant.

Dr. Ambedkar in a lucid speech explained the situation as it existed on that day and told his followers to consider the earliest date on which to launch the campaign again. The meeting was attended by more than a thousand members of the Depressed Classes. The hall was packed and on the dais were a few Caste-Hindu Friends of the so-called Untouchables besides a majority of prominent members of the latter classes.

The majority of speeches were by these and were full of sincerity and devotion to their leader Dr. Ambedkar. One of the speakers spoke with the greatest impression because he was amongst those who were assaulted by Caste-Hindus sometime in March last when the first attempt was made to take water from the now famous tank.

At that time it was recklessly circulated that hides were washed in the tank and this assaulted gentleman being a cobbler by caste the story was taken up and a wanton assault was perpetrated on him. As another speaker explained water was actually drawn by him and the assault went vicariously to that other gentleman, whose name is Rajbhoj and who was humourously called Bhoj Raja. One could clearly see life in the meeting of Sunday last.

Within A Month

To see them and to say they were Untouchables would be absurd. All the same in the eyes of the orthodox they were so. They have not only to cure themselves of Untouchability but have to uplift the orthodox who are immersed in the slough of prejudice. Their struggle is an essentially patriotic and essentially human struggle.

With such a huge dead weight the nation cannot rise. So long as equal elementary rights are not conceded and assured to them, Hinduism shall stand shackled and manacled. In asserting their rights and in raising themselves, these warriors of the so-called Untouchable classes are raising the country and the Hindu religion. Dr. Ambedkar is now busy organising the next campaign in right earnest. It has been decided to start it within a month probably on the Hindu New Year's Day when every Hindu house-holder flies a flag. The leaders of these Depressed Classes propose to fly their flag of "equal human rights to all" on that day and, God willing, they will do it." ¹

This is an article by D. V. Pradhan about Mahad *Satyagraha*—

"TRIUMPH OF JUSTICE

When in March last, Dr. Ambedkar led the Untouchables to the Chawdar Tank at Mahad, the orthodox section of the Caste Hindus lost their sleep, appetite and all over the "Sacrilege" and mercilessly belaboured the poor unsupported Untouchables while they were returning from the tank. Soon after, criminal proceedings were taken against the rowdies and they were punished for disturbing the public peace. Every effort was made by these so-called "Protectors" of the religion to oppose the Untouchables from coming near the tank and they were encouraged in their action by the orthodox press. It was to assert their right of ordinary human privileges, the Untouchables launched the *Satyagraha* Movement, and in December last, a conference of about 10,000 assembled and unanimously resolved to march on to the tank. But the Orthodox Caste Hindus who smelt this resolve

¹ : The Indian National Herald, dated 28th February 1928.