

WE ARE A SEPARATE ELEMENT IN THE NATIONAL LIFE

A journalist from London, Mr. Bevarali Nikolas interviewed Dr. B. R. Ambedkar when he became a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council. Mr. Beverali recorded his interview in his book "Verdict on India" published in the year 1944. The personal observations that were revealed in the interview about Dr. Ambedkar are as follows : Editors.

'A man of about fifty, waiting for me in a wicker chair on the veranda of his house. Bulky, dynamic. Very charming manners, but nervy, inclined to fiddle with his shoe-laces. Seemed to be on his guard, as though ready to parry taunts from all directions. Well after all it's only to be expected.

So runs an extract from my diary.

The man is Doctor Ambedkar. And in a moment we shall see what it is 'only to be expected.'

Dr. Ambedkar is Labour Member in the Government of India. and **one of the six best brains in India**. He is the Cavour School of Statesman, an implacable realist. When he speaks in public he is galvanic, creative, an almost embarrassingly to the point. To comparing a Hindu Chart with a fusillade of pistol shots.

As a result, he is one of the best hated man in India.

And why is it 'only to be expected,' this nervousness—this suggestion that he would be ready to take offence ?

Because Dr. Ambedkar, in the eyes of most of the 180 million Caste Hindus is 'Untouchable'. A person to bring pollution if his Mayfair dinner jacket should happen to brush against their dhoties. A creature from whose touch the extreme orthodox must fly as though he were a paper, a mouster whose slightest contact compels them to precipitate themselves into the nearest bath-tube,

to soap and pray, and pray and soap, and soap and pray, so that the filth of Dr. Ambedkar (M. A. London)* the shame of Dr. Ambedkar (high honours at Columbia University) the plague and scourge of Dr. Ambedkar (special distinction at Heidelberg) should be washed for ever from their immaculate and immortal souls.' (P. 30)

Dr. Ambedkar said to me : 'The keynote of my policy is that we are not a sub-continent of the Hindus but a separate element in the national life.'

'Gandhi says to us 'Trust us-trust the Caste Hindus !' I reply 'We will not trust you, for you are our hereditary enemies.'

'In every village there is a tiny minority of Untouchables. I want to gather those minorities together and make them into majorities. This means a tremendous work of organisation-transferring populations, building new villages. But we can do it, if only we are allowed.' (P. 40.)

'We are as staunchly nationalist as any of the Congress. But we do not want the British to quit India till our rights are safeguarded. If they do, our fate will be mere terrible than the fate of any of the oppressed people of Europe.'

(Verdict on India, P. 41)¹

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*Dr. Ambedkar obtained degrees of M. A. and Ph. D. from the Columbia University and not from London, but he obtained his degree of D.Sc. from London University.—Editors.

¹: Quoted : Khairmode, Vol. 8, Pp. 36-39.