

SCHEDULED CASTES' CASE TO BE PRESENTED BEFORE U. N. O.

“Bombay, Jan. 17, 1947.

The Working Committee of the All-India Scheduled Castes Federation adopted a resolution today, seeking to submit to the United Nations Assembly the case of “the sufferings of the Scheduled Castes in India against the Hindus for their acts of social, economic and political tyranny.” The Committee concluded its two-day session held under the Chairmanship of Mr. N. Shivraj, President of the Federation.

The Committee approved the memorandum prepared by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, for submission to the UNO and directed the President of the Federation to take early steps to submit the case formally to the Secretary of the UNO and to organise a delegation of the Federation for the purpose.

The memorandum among other complaints added that the “tyranny and the constant and shameless resort to violence by Hindus, makes the position of the Scheduled Castes far worse than the position of Indians in South Africa.” The memorandum also complains of the “failure of the British Government to give protection and do justice to the Scheduled Castes” and requests the intervention of the UNO for “necessary international action”.

With regard to the problems arising out of the framing of the future Constitution of India, the Working Committee declared in another resolution that the Federation stood for “a United India and a strong Central Government.” The Federation according to the resolution “would be prepared to accept the proposals of the Cabinet Mission regarding Grouping in order to secure the co-operation of all parties and to arrive at a peaceful solution of India’s constitutional problems.”

EQUALITY SHOULD BE THE BASIS OF THE CONSTITUTION

The resolution stated that the Federation stood for liberty and equality as the fundamental basis for a future Indian Constitution. “While fighting for the cause of the Scheduled Castes

and without detriment to that cause” the Federation supported the “just and necessary demands of all minorities irrespective of the communities to which they belong.”

The Working Committee also expressed the opinion that “it was in the interest of India that she should be satisfied with Dominion Status and accept it for a term of years which was without prejudice to the right of Independence for India.”

MEMORANDUM TO MINORITIES' COMMITTEE

The Working Committee also approved another memorandum prepared by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar who is a member of the Constituent Assembly. This memorandum suggests safeguards for the Scheduled Castes in the future Constitution of India.

The Working Committee directed the representatives of the Federation in the Constituent Assembly to insist that “the ultimate sanction for the Constitutional Safeguards should be lodged in the Central Government” and emphasised that “Separate Electorates were the only way of guaranteeing real representation of the Scheduled Castes in the Legislatures without which all other safeguards were sure to be only paper safeguards.”

The Committee also passed a resolution condoling the death of Mr. B. J. Deorukhkar, Member of the Bombay Municipal Corporation and two other Scheduled Castes workers from Andhra, Messers Hari and Dr. Dharmanna.

Dr. Ambedkar, in an interview to the Press, explained the resolutions passed by the Working Committee of the Federation and asserted that the UNO had jurisdiction over the issue to be submitted by eight crores of Scheduled Castes in India, inasmuch as the UNO had jurisdiction over the case of Indians in South Africa. He said that he was in communication with the leader of Negroes in the United States, Paul Duabois, who, according to Dr. Ambedkar, was submitting the case of Negroes in U.S.A., before the U.N.O. Paul Duabois, Dr. Ambedkar stated, was the founder President of the Negroes Association in U. S. A. who was fighting for political, economic and social rights of Negroes in that country.*

*Some words in this sentence are illegible—Editors.

Dr. Ambedkar, referring to the “sufferings of the Scheduled Castes” in India, compared them with the condition of Negroes in U. S. A. who, he said, “are as much tyrannised by the White Americans as Scheduled Castes are by Caste-Hindus.”

Discussing the problem of framing the future Constitution of India, Dr. Ambedkar said that he had an ingenious method of preventing the formation of an executive of a majority community belonging to one party disregarding completely the interests and susceptibilities of a minority community belonging to another party. He refused to disclose the details of his scheme, but said that under the present Constitution, the major community belonging to one party took possession of the administration in a Province, “thus imposing the worst form of tyranny on a minority community.” The helplessness of the minority community, when the major community makes a monopoly of the executive of the Government in the Province should be prevented by a statutory provision in any future Constitution of India,” he said. He added that he stood for coalition Governments formed by representatives of both major and minor communities in different Provinces and also at the Centre.

Dr. Ambedkar reiterated his view that India under the present circumstances should be satisfied with Dominion Status. “My approach to the question of Indian Independence is purely from the stand point of defence of the country and I firmly believe that India is not well equipped at present to defend herself alone without the help of Britain,” he declared. “If the Constituent Assembly adopts my method, India could have the help of the British Army stationed in India without British control over that army, he concluded.” ¹

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¹ : Jai Bheem, dated 26th January 1947.