

SCHEDULED CASTES IN PAKISTAN SHOULD COME OVER TO INDIA

New Delhi, November 27th, 1947.

“The Nizam deserves no sympathy in opposing union with India. I am anxious that no person from the Scheduled Castes brings disgrace upon the community by siding with one who is an enemy of India,” says Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Minister for Law, in a statement extending to them an open invitation to migrate to India. issued today.

Regarding the status of his followers in Pakistan, Dr. Ambedkar mentioned that the Muslim League and its President had sided the Scheduled Castes only when it suited them and in view of the wrongs perpetrated on them, he suggested that they too should come over to India from Pakistan.

Dr. Ambedkar felt that the number of Scheduled Castes in India was so large and well-organised, they could not fail to influence the Government of the day.

He added : “I have received innumerable complaints from the Scheduled Castes from Pakistan and Hyderabad asking me to do something to relieve them from the distress in which they have been placed as a consequence of the policy adopted by Pakistan and Hyderabad towards them. In Pakistan, they are not allowed to come over to India and they are being forcibly converted to Islam. In Hyderabad also they are being forcibly converted to Islam in order to increase the strength of the Muslim population there. Further, there is a regular campaign carried on by the Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen by burning the houses of the Untouchables in order to strike terror into the hearts of the Scheduled Castes of Hyderabad so that they may never join the movement for responsible Government in Hyderabad and compelling Hyderabad to join the Indian Union.

Open Invitation

“All I can do is to invite them to come to India. For, the condition of the Scheduled Castes in India is as it is in Pakistan. In

India they are being tyrannized by the Caste Hindus in all parts of the country. While in Pakistan they are subjected to forcible religious conversion, in Hindustan they are subjected to forcible political conversion. They are compelled to be members of the Congress and if they refuse to become members they are boycotted and their lives made impossible. There have been cases particularly in the U. P. where the tyranny and oppression against the Scheduled Castes have been carried to the length of burning them alive. The tyranny and oppression that is being practised upon the Scheduled Castes in East Punjab by the the Sikhs and Jats who have come from West Punjab have been equally unbearable. The administration which is entirely by Caste Hindus has done nothing to render them the slightest assistance.

Notwithstanding the gloomy prospect for the Scheduled Castes who are in India, I would like to tell the Scheduled Castes who happen today to be impounded inside Pakistan to come over to India. The Congress party has weakened the political safeguards necessary for the Scheduled Castes under the new Constitution to such an extent as to make them worse than useless. Nonetheless, our numbers are so great that if we are well-organised, we cannot fail to influence the Government of the day.

Muslims Are not Friends

It would be fatal for the Scheduled Castes, whether in Pakistan or in Hyderabad, to put their faith in the Muslims or the Muslim League. It has become a habit with the Scheduled Castes to look upon the Muslims as their friends simply because they dislike the Hindus. This is a mistaken view. The Muslims wanted the support of the Scheduled Castes but they never gave their support to the Scheduled Castes. Mr. Jinnah was all the time playing a double game. He was very insistent that the Scheduled Castes were a separate entity when it suited him but, when it did not suit him he insisted with equal emphasis that they were Hindus. The Muslims and the Muslim League, charged as they are with the passion to make the Muslims a governing class as quickly as possible, will never give consideration to the claims of the Scheduled Castes. This I speak from experience.

As regards conversion, we Scheduled Castes must look upon it as a last resort forced upon them by violence. And even to those who are converted by force and violence, I say that they must not regard themselves as lost to the fold for ever. I pledge my word that if they wish to come back I shall see that they are received back into the fold and tressed as brethren in the same manner in which they were treated before their conversion.

“The Scheduled Castes of Hyderabad should under no circumstances side with the Nizam and the Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen. Whatever the tyranny and oppression which the Hindus practise on us, it must not warp our vision and swerve us from our duty. The Nizam deserves no sympathy in opposing Union with India. In doing this he is acting against his own interest. He does not realize that his own dynastic rights would be much safer if they were guaranteed by the Union Constitution which would have the sanction of 90 per cent of the Hindus of India than they would be if he relied on the Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen. I am anxious that no person from the Scheduled Castes bring disgrace upon the community by siding with one who is an enemy of India.” A.P.I.”¹

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¹ : The National Standard, dated 28th November 1947.