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# HINDU - SCHEDULED CASTES CLASHES IN BOMBAY

June 1, 1946

The situation in the Worli area where there have been frequent clashes between the Scheduled Caste members and Caste Hindus during the last four days, resulting so far in five killed and nearly seventy injured, is quiet this morning, strong police parties have been stationed all over the locality and mobile armed police are constantly patrolling the affected area. There were only three stray cases of assaults upto mid-day today.

Mr. B.G. Kher, Prime Minister of Bombay, is meeting Dr. Ambedkar, Leader of the Scheduled Castes this evening with a view to discussing with him how best to bring about normal conditions in the Worli area.

The last four days disturbances have affected the working of certain mills because many of the operatives abstained from attending work for fear of being stoned. Last night four mills had to give up night shift and this morning excepting one mill all the other mills worked with depleted staff.

### State of Emergency proclaimed

A 'State of emergency' has been proclaimed by the Government of Bombay in the disturbed labour areas in Worli and Delisle Road where there have been clashes between Caste Hindu workers and Scheduled Class workers.

This gives wide powers to the police in handling the situation, particularly in the matter of rounding up of bad characters and externing them from the city limits.

One more person who had been admitted to hospital yesterday with a stab wound died today, thus bringing the total killed to 6.

### Dr. Ambedkar Deplores Development

The Government of Bombay in the Home Department has decided on the immediate measures to put down law lessness in the Worli Chawls and Delisle Road with a stern hand.

While the Government has made up its mind in this respect non-official organisations like the Provincial Congress Committee, the Scheduled Castes Federation and local Hindu organisations have had consultations on the methods of restoring peace in the affected area.

This move follows an interview which Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Labour Member, Government of India, had with Mr. Morarji Desai. Home Minister, Bombay Government and later with Mr. B .G. Kher, Prime Minister, this morning. During the interview, Dr. Ambedkar is understood to have deplored the developments in Worli and suggested certain measures to be taken to restore peace. He also assured the Ministers that he would advise his followers to remain peaceful and exercise more restraint on their part.

It is understood that Dr. Ambedkar, Mr. Nagindas T. Master and Mr. S.K. Patil, have decided to issue a joint statement appealing to Caste Hindus, Congress Workers and Scheduled Caste people of the locality to remain calm and make combined efforts to restore normal conditions.

The Home Minister is understood to have suggested to Dr. Ambedkar the appointment of Chawl Committees in Worli who should be held responsible for breaches of the peace and for the maintenance of peace. If things went out of hand, the Members of the Committees should be held resposible.

The Police authorities, under instructions from the Home Minister, are promulgating certain orders to meet the situation. The measures contemplated include round-up of all bad characters in the areas and emergency powers to be exercised if, the situation showed a tendency to deteriorate.

Up-to-date, in the four days agitation six persons have been killed and 70 injured and a large part of the mill area has been kept in a continued state of tension.

### Mr. Rajbhoj's Statement

Mr. P.N. Rajbhoj, General Secretary of the All India Scheduled Castes Federation, after visiting the Worli Chawls in a statement said that the condition of many of his followers was extremely

difficult in the disturbed area. They dared not go to work in the mills for fear of being assaulted. Many of them had not taken even their rations for the week. He complained that police protection was not freely available to them, and that many innocent persons had been taken into custody.

Mr. Rajbhoj said that nearly 130 persons of his party had received injuries in the recent disturbances and two had died.

### More Responsibility on Hindus Bombay Leaders Appeal to Masses

In a joint statement issued on June 3, on the disturbances in Worli and neighbouring labour areas Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Mr. Nagindas T. Master and Mr. S.K. Patil stated that "Being a major community, a greater responsibility lies on the shoulders of the Hindus. The majority community is bound to exercise restraint even under provocation and prove to the minority community like the Scheduled Castes that it need have no fear in the matter of its life, liberty and property even though it refuses to see eye to eye with the majority community on political questions."

The statement says : "We have been deeply pained by the unfortunate incidents which are taking place in Worli, Naigaum and Delisie Road areas of the Bombay city between the members of the Scheduled Castes and Caste Hindus for some time part. The frequent skirmishes between these two sections of the people have already resulted in three dead and several injured. In our opinion there is no reason whatsoever why these two sections should go on attacking each other and thereby disturbing the peace of these localities. Even assuming that there is any cause for honest and even for strong differences of opinion on some point or the other, such erratic reprisals can decide nothing. There are other and more effective methods of settling disputes and securing justice. These acts of violence and bad temper only bring disrepute to the fair name of the city and inflict injury and even loss of life of the innocent. Although we have no desire to apportion the blame for the incidents that have occurred, we would like to emphasise that being a major community, a greater responsibility lies on the shoulders of the Hindus.

We strongly and emphatically condemn these senseless demonstrations of violence and earnestly appeal to the good sense of the parties concerned to cry halt to this mad behaviour. We trust that they will act towards one another as responsible citizens and resume their normal and peaceful avocations.—A.P."[1]

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[1] : Jai Bheem : June 11, 1946.