

AMBEDKAR'S RECIPE FOR MAHARASHTRA

Voice of the People

The communications I have received indicate that the Maharashtrians are not quite satisfied with the proposals that I recently made in the Rajya Sabha over the Maharashtra-Bombay issue. They are afraid that in Bombay City they may not get the majority.

The Gujeratis, on the other hand, realise that with 15 per cent of Gujerati population in a house of 100 they would not have more than two to four seats. Both the communities will remain helpless and chafe at each other. I, therefore, make another suggestion.

The Maharashtra State, I suggest, should be divided into two States, one of which should consist of—(1) Greater Bombay ; (2) Thana district; (3) Colaba ; (4) Ratnagiri ; (5) Kolhapur and (6) Marathi-speaking parts of Surat district, Belgaum and Karwar districts. The dividing line is Sahyadri mountain.

The advantages of this division are :—(1) it can give Maharashtrians majority over Bombay through North Bombay ; (2) it is a separate cultural unit; (3) it is a separate linguistic unit and (4) the total area of this unit is 19,800 sq. miles with a total population of 9,067,413, which makes it a sizable State. The people are both maritime and martial.

I do not see why the Brahmins are insisting on United Maharashtra. Even then, there will be two rival claimants for power, Shri. B. S. Hiray and Shri Ramrao M. Deshmukh. Possibly, Dr. Punjabrao Deshmukh may have his own view.

There is another point which is raising difficulty and that relates to the capital of the second division of Maharashtra. The Deccan Brahmins want Poona, while the present Madhya Pradesh Brahmins want Nagpur. Others suggest the third alternative of the Legislature's session being held alternately at these two cities. I condemn all the three alternatives. I am sure that under the name of United Maharashtra we are not calling Peshwai back. I suggest

the capital of United Maharashtra be Aurangabad. Adjacent to it is Daulatabad which was the capital of Maharashtra until it was destroyed by the Muslims. It has a fine climate.

The question must be decided immediately. Whatever the Congress High Command may say, there is not the slightest chance of a Gujarati voting for a Maharashtrian candidate and the Maharashtrian voting for the Gujarati Candidate.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar (New Delhi)”¹



¹: The Free Press Journal, dated 31st May 1956.

SECTION IV

**INSTITUTIONS, ORGANISATIONS AND
THEIR CONSTITUTIONS**
