

INDEPENDENT LABOUR PARTY: WIDE SUPPORT

Dr. Ambedkar on aim of Organisation

The growing influence of the party and the wide spread support it was receiving from the progressive elements in the Bombay Presidency and outside were emphasised by Dr. Ambedkar to a representative of 'The Times of India' prior to his departure for Geneva by the 'Lloyd Triestino Steamer Conte Verde' on Wednesday night.

The Independent Labour Party which was recently formed in Bombay has bright chances of success in the forthcoming elections to the new Provincial Legislature according to Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Leader of Depressed Classes, who formed the party.

Dr. Ambedkar pooh-poohed the claim of the Congress that it would safeguard the interests of the masses and was emphatic that the "exploiters in the Congress will not allow it to work for the masses."

"I have been agreeably surprised to find that the publication or the aims and objects of the Independent Labour Party has aroused considerable interest among the General Public," said Dr. Ambedkar, referring to the numerous inquiries that were being made regarding the future programme of the party.

Branch in Central Provinces

"A Branch of the Party has already been formed in the Central Provinces," he added, "In the Bombay Presidency, a large number of persons of different classes and communities have generously responded by joining the Party.

"The economic programme of the Party, as also its social and educational Programme, and the fact that the Party has not been organised on communal lines have met with wide acceptance. Although the Party is in its infancy, it is gaining wide-spread support from various progressive elements all over the Presidency."

Fundamental Differences

There were two fundamental differences between the programme and the policy of the Congress and that of the Independent Labour Party. The Congress wanted to capture the legislatures with a view to destroying the new constitution. The Independent Labour Party, on the other hand, wished to enter the legislatures in order to work that constitution for what it was worth.

The Congress claimed to safeguard the interests of the masses, so did the Independent Labour Party. But, added Dr. Ambedkar, the Independent Labour Party feels that by its very composition the Congress is not free to serve the masses. The Congress is a heterogeneous body composed of the exploiters as well as exploited, and it is quite certain that the exploiters in the Congress will not allow the organisation to work for the masses.

A combination of the exploiters and exploited might be necessary for the purposes of achieving political freedom, but to seek to form a common party consisting of exploited and exploiters for purposes of social reconstruction was to deceive the masses, continued the leader of the Depressed Classes.

Membership of Party

The Independent Labour Party, in Dr. Ambedkar's opinion did not want to increase its strength in the legislature by admitting anybody and everybody in its fold. The Party wanted to avoid being a collection of heterogeneous elements.

"Confining its membership to persons who accept its programme without reservation and who have on other affiliations," said Dr. Ambedkar, "the Party has decided to put up fewer candidates for the ensuing elections than it was possible for the party to do."

Although there was work to be done in the legislatures, in the view of his party there was much more important work to be done outside the legislatures in educating the masses, placing before them the correct ideology and organising them for political action through the legislatures.

Appeal to Public

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar thought that a party like the Independent Labour Party was necessary and appealed to all workers, peasants and the lower, middle classes to join it in large numbers and thus make it a mass organisation. He also stated that for the purpose of educating the masses and carrying on propaganda a committee consisting of eight persons had been appointed.

In addition to the candidates nominated to seats reserved for the Scheduled Castes, the Independent Labour Party has decided to put up for the present the following candidates for election to the Bombay legislature :—Mr. A. V. Chitre (Ratnagiri North), Mr. S. V. Parulekar (Ratnagiri South), Mr. S. G. Tipnis (Kolaba), Mr. V. A. Gadkari (Poona East), Mr. C. T. Ranadive (Thana South), and Mr. B. V. Pradhan (Khandesh East).”¹

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