

**PEOPLE CEMENTED BY FEELING OF
ONE COUNTRY, ONE CONSTITUTION AND
ONE DESTINY, TAKE THE RISK OF BEING
INDEPENDENT**

As a reaction to the report of Simon Commission there was a need to ascertain and decide the political rights of the Untouchables as a future plan of action. Moreover there was a need to nominate the representatives of the Untouchables for the Round Table Conference to be held at London, in which the general outline of the future Constitution of India was to be framed.

The representation of the Untouchables for safeguarding the political rights of seven crore Untouchables was absolutely necessary while deciding the future of India. For this reason, a national level conference was to be held and it was held at Nagpur. Thus the credit goes to Nagpurians for this historical event.

The local Untouchable leaders especially Dashrath Laxman Patil and Laxmanrao Ogale, M. L. C. went to Mumbai to discuss the issue with Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. They expressed their desire to hold the all India Depressed Classes Conference at Nagpur under the Chairmanship of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar who consented, told to hold this conference on 8th & 9th August 1930. A reception committee included Mr. T. C. Sakhare as Chairman, Mr. Dashrath Laxman Patil, Bela as Vice Chairman, Mr. Vishramji Sawaithool as Treasurer, Mr. L. K. Ogale, MLC, Amravati, Mr. Hardas L. N., Kamptee, Mr. P. K. Bhatkar, Amravati, Mr. Shamrao G. Rahate, Wadgaon, Mr. H. D. Behade, leader of Matang communtiy, Nagpur, as Secretaries.

Mr. Hardas L. N., Secretary of the Conference, requested Shivram Janba Kamble from Poona to inform the names of invitees and Chairman for the proposed All India Conference to be held at Nagpur.

The letter is as follows :**THE ALL INDIA DEPRESSED CLASSES CONGRESS**

Office-Vishram Hall,
Lakadganj Cir. 15/10
Nagpur city
Dated the 1st February, 1930.

Reception Committee Chairman—K. G. Nandagawali,
Vice-Chairman—D. L. Patil,
Treasurer—V. S. Sawaitool,
Secretaries—L. K. Ogale, MLC, Hardas L. N., P. K.
Bhatkar, H. D. Behade.

To,
Mr. S. J. Kamble,*
Poona,
Dear Sir,

You are aware of the proposed Round Table Conference is to be held in London next autumn to discuss the future political Constitution of India. I am sure, you will agree that the Depressed Classess must at this critical juncture assert themselves and make it clear to the power that be as to what safeguards and guarantees the future Constitution of India must contain for the protection of their civic right. The discussion of this momentous issue requires the immediate attention of our people. To bring out people from the different Provinces of India together for the purpose of this discussion we have in consultation with Dr. Ambedkar, M. A., Ph. D., D. Sc, Bar-at-Law, MLC, Bombay, thought convening an All India Depressed Classess Congress at Nagpur some time immediately after the publication of the Report of the Simon Commission and have in anticipation of your consent formed a Reception Committee.

* **Shivram Janaba Kamble**—An Untouchable leader from Poona who had a unique distinction of convening the first Conference of Untouchables in India. Prominent leader of pre-Ambedkar era, the editor of a 'Somavanshiya Mitra' Poona, he sent a memorandum to the British Govt. in 1910, appealing to them to enlighten and elevate the Untouchables.

We shall feel obliged, if you kindly favour us before the 15th February next with your views about the advisability of holding such a Congress and name of the person, whom you would like to preside over it.

Thanking you in anticipation,
Remain,
Yours sincerely,

Hardas L. N.*
Secretary, A. I. D. C.
C.C., Nagpur.”¹

Reply of Shivram Janba Kamble :

Kamatipura, 5th Street,
Camp Poona.
February, 1930.

“To,
The Secretary,
All India Depressed Classes Congress,
Nagpur.

Dear Sir,

I am in receipt of your printed letter of 1st Feb. 1930 and I am glad to read that you are holding shortly an “All India Depressed Classes Congress” at Nagpur.

With regards to the Presidentship of the proposed Congress, I suggest the name of Dr. Ambedkar and also that he should be sent to London as the representative of the Depressed Classes for the Round Table Conference.

* Hardas L. N.—Secretary, All India Depressed Classes Congress, Nagpur. Admirer and devoted follower of Dr. Ambedkar from Kamptee (Vidarbha), popularly known as Babu Hardas.

¹ : Surwade. Vol. 1, Pp. 83-84.

Wishing every success in your endeavours, to uplift the cause of our six crore of fellow brothers, who have been downtrodden by the Caste Hindus for years together.

I remain,
Yours Sincerely,
Shivram J. Kamble.”¹

Mr. Hardas L. N. Secretary of the Conference issued a Circular about holding the Conference. The Circular is as follows :

“THE ALL INDIA DEPRESSED CLASSES CONGRESS
OFFICE
VISHRAM HALL, NAGPUR CITY

Dated 20th June, 1930.

Circular No. 5

Ref. No.

Dear Sir,

As it was noticed from reports in the papers that the Report of the Simon Commission will be published on the 24th June, we were in a position to fix the date of our Congress and the Provincial Reception Committee in its meeting dated 24-5-1930 had appointed the 12th and 13th of July 1930, giving sufficient time for our leaders to study the Report and come to some definite understanding.

But we are asked by Dr. Ambedkar to reconsider the dates fixed. He says that the first volume of the Simon Report was out on 10th instant, but there is no copy available as yet and he is told that it will not be available till the 22nd, The Second Volume is due on 24th and if similar delay taken place in getting the copies thereof, we are afraid we shall be holding the Congress, if we keep

¹: *Surwade*, P. 84

to the above dates, either without seeing the Report or without having studied it. Such a situation if it were to materialise will render the Congress futile. We must, therefore, guard against such a contingency and the dates of the Congress ought to be changed.

For this purpose our Reception Committee met on 20th and fixed the 8th and 9th of August 1930 as the dates for our Congress. We may also have time for the Subject Committee to meet and according to the suggestion of Dr. Ambedkar on Reception Committee invite all our leaders to be in Nagpur on the 7th, a day previous to the meeting. No doubt these dates being holidays will suit to our leaders to attend the Session.

It has also been decided by the Provincial Reception Committee from the opinions received that Social, Educational, Youth and Women's Conferences' should also be held along with the Congress and that Rao Sahib Rama Charana, B. A., L. L. B., Advocate, MLC (U. P.) of Lucknow, Rao Sahib V. I. Munishwamy Pillay, F. M. U. M. T. C. (Madras) of Ottacamund, Mr. M. B. Mullick, M. A., B. L., Advocate, MLC (Bengal) of Calcutta and Shreematee Gunabai Gadekar of Poona should be invited to preside over the Conferences in the order they have been mentioned above and I have the pleasure to inform you that they have accepted the offers. Separate Reception Committees have been formed for each of these Conferences and 10th and 11th have been appointed for them.

Depressed Classes all over India are earnestly requested to send their delegates to make the Congress and the Conferences successful. The names of delegates, draft resolutions will be sent to the Secretary of the All India Depressed Classes Congress Office, Vishram Hall, Nagpur City.

Nagpur City
The 20th June, 1930

I remain,
Yours most sincerely,
Hardas L. N.
Secretary.”¹

¹: *Surwade*. Pp. 99-100

The Committee had declared the Various Conferences on this Occasion as Follow :

ALL INDIA DEPRESSED CLASSES CONGRESS

WILL BE HELD AT Nagpur City (CENTRAL PROVINCES) In the Orange Market Building On Friday and Saturday, the 8th and 9th August 1930 at 8 a.m. and 2 p.m. Under The Presidentship of

DR. B. R. AMBEDKAR

M. A., Ph. D., D.Sc. Bar at-Law, M. L. C. of Bombay.

The Reception Committee will meet on 7-8-1930.

THE PROPOSED CONGRESS IS CONVENED

(1) to settle the attitude of the Depressed Classes towards the political movement now going on in India (2) to settle the attitude of the Depressed Classes towards the recommendations of the Simon Commission. (3) to settle the formation of All India Body to voice the Sentiments of the Depressed Classes on all problems arising in the country from time to time.

RECEPTION COMMITTEE

President:- T. C. Sakhare, Nagpur. Vice-President :-D. L. Patil, Bela. Treasurer :- B. S. Sawaitul. Nagpur. Secretaries :- L. K. Ogle, M. L.C. Amravati. Hardas L. N. Kamptee. P. K. Vhatkar, Amravati. S. G. Rahate, Wadgaon. H. D. Behade, Nagpur.

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SOCIAL CONFERENCE

WILL BE HELD

Under the Presidentship of

RAO SAHIB RAMCHARANA, B. A. LL. B.

Advocate. M.L.C. [UP] of Lucknow

On Sunday the 10th August 1930, At 8 A.M.

RECEPTION COMMITTEE

Chairman :-Kisan Fagu Bandsode Patil, Nagpur,
Secretaries : D. M. Nagrare, Nagpur. S. G. Jadhav,
M. T. Godghate, Nagpur. N. U. Athe, Raipur.

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EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE

Will be held Under the Presidentship of
Rao Sahib V. I. Munishwamy Pillai
F. M. U. M. L. C. (Madras) of Ottacamund
on Sunday the 10th August 1930, At 2 P. M.

RECEPTION COMMITTEE

Chairman :- J. G. Sonone, Amrawoti
Secretaries :- CM. Somkuwar, Nagpur. V. D. Makesar, Yaotmal.
R. S. Khandare, Akola.

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YOUTH CONFERENCE

Will be held
Under The Presidentship of
MR. M.B. MULLICK, M. A. B. L.
Advocate, M. L. C. (Bengal) of Calcutta
on Monday the 11th August 1930, At 8 P. M.

RECEPTION COMMITTEE

Chairman :- R. M. Borkar, Nagpur.
Secretaries :- D. B. Barse, Nagpur. R. S. Mandavdhare, Akola,
G. G. Geaaini Anjangaon Bari.

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WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

Will be Held Under the Presidentship of Sw. Gunabai Gadekar
of Poona on Monday the 11th August 1930 AT 2 P. M.

RECEPTION COMMITTEE

Chairman :- Sw. Shevantabai Ogle, Amraoti, Secretaries:-
Tulsabai Bandsode Patil, Jaibai Chawdhary, Nagpur,
Kashibai Mandawdhare, Akola.

**N. B. CHANGES IF ANY IN THE PROGRAMME, WILL BE
PUBLISHED AT THE TIME.**

The arrangement for stay of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was made in the Bungalow of Abdulbhai Khakar, which was near to the Governor's Bungalow. But Dr. B. R. Ambedkar refused to stay there and preferred to stay with other leaders.

The venue of the conference was Vyankatesh theatre.* A large pandal was erected near the Cotton Market for the accommodation of the guests. Along with this Conference, Social, Educational, Youth & Human Conferences were also held. Mr. P. N. Rajbhoj was the president of the Social Conference while Mr. Dashrath Patil was the chairman of the Reception Committee. Mrs. Shewantabai Ogale, Amravati was the chairperson of the reception committee of the women's conference while Mrs. Tulsabai Bansode, Nagpur, Mrs. Jaibai Choudhari, Nagpur, Mrs. Kashibai Mandaodhare, Akola were the secretaries. Adv. Shivdayalsingh from Lucknow presided over the youth Conference and Raghvendraraao Borkar was chairman of the Reception Committee.

Importance of this Congress :

'All India Depressed Classes Congress' played a historical role for the political upliftment of Untouchables. Firstly, it was the maiden conference which united all the Untouchable classes from India under a single banner. Secondly, for the first time the Untouchable leaders accepted the leadership of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and they submitted their political demands on all-India level jointly. Thirdly, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was elected as the leader of Untouchables unanimously to represent them in the proposed Round Table Conference to be held at London. Fourthly, all-India level organization of the Untouchables was established and lastly, the milestone of the planned political life of the Untouchables was laid.

In short, the first page of out caste India's freedom struggle was written by this Conference of the Untouchables who were deprived of basic human rights for ages. In all, thirteen resolutions were passed unanimously in this Conference.

* Later on, it was known as Shyam Talkies.

“DEPRESSED CLASSES CONGRESS RESOLUTIONS.

The All-India Depressed Classes' Congress which met in its first Session at Nagpur on 8th August 1930 under the presidentship of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar M. A., Ph. D., D. Sc, Bar-at-Law, M. L. C. of Bombay, passed the following resolutions :—

1. This Congress unhesitatingly declares that the idea of independence declared by the Indian National Congress is bound to be disastrous and detrimental to the interests of India and therefore dissociates itself from that ideal. In the opinion of this Congress the idea of Dominion Status is best suited to the conditions of India.

Immediate Dominion Status

2. In the matter of the immediate realisation of the goal of Dominion Status, this Congress has no objection for the transfer of Executive Responsibility in all matters except those in which the immediate transfer of control is impracticable for reasons of administrative efficiency, provided the following safeguards for the safety and security of the interests of the Depressed Classes are introduced in the constitution of India :—

(1) Adequate representation in all the Legislatures of the country, Central as well as Provincial ;

(2) Reservation in adequate proportion in the Public Services of the country.

3. Right of appeal to the Secretary of State in cases of neglect in matters of Education, Local Self-Government and other rights and interests of the Depressed Classes, the Secretary of State having the right to certify on the consideration of such appeal any provision in the Budget or in any enactment as he may deem necessary and sufficient and his certificate to be binding upon the Executive in India Provincial or Central.

Inhuman Conduct

4. As the Orthodox Classes have failed to secure the confidence of the Depressed Classes by a real change in their inhuman conduct towards them and as they have not shown readiness to consent to the safeguards for the Depressed Classes in the future constitution of India and as the Depressed Classes believe that no political constitution of India acceptable to all can

be framed without taking due account of the social condition of the country and as the necessary adjustment cannot be made in constitution except by the method of mutual agreement and as the movement of Civil Disobedience is a method of stampede and is incompatible with the means of peaceful negotiations, this Congress cannot approve of the method of Civil Disobedience and advises the Depressed Classes not to participate in it.

R. T. Accepted

5. This Congress accepts the Round Table Conference as the best means of solving the present constitutional problem and advises the Depressed Classes to take part in it. The Congress also takes this opportunity to impress upon the Government the necessity of making the Round Table Conference a complete success as far as it may by inviting to that Conference all parties including the Depressed Classes in their due proportion.

6. This Congress is opposed to the system of representation of the Depressed Classes by nomination in the Legislatures of the country. It demands representation by their own members through election and rejects the recommendations of the Simon Commission in so far as they provide for nomination for representation of the Depressed Classes by the members of other communities and certification by the Governor.

Want Joint Electorates

7. While believing in the efficacy of Separate Electorates this Congress is prepared to accept the principle of Joint Electorates and reserved seats for the representation of the Depressed Classes provided it is accompanied by the system of adult suffrage.

8. This Congress expresses its regret at the undervaluation by the Simon Commission of their claims to representation and the more favoured treatment it has shown to other Minority Communities whose social disabilities are nothing as compared with those under which the Depressed Classes are labouring. This Congress invokes the principle of equality of treatment to all the minorities and demands by way of adequate representation to the Depressed Classes of weightage commensurate with their disabilities in addition to their population quota of representation.

Indirect Representation

9. This Congress accepts the system of indirect election for the representation of the Depressed Classes by members of the Depressed Classes in the Assembly and the Council of State but demands that right of the Depressed Classes to adequate representation therein should be recognised.

10. This Congress regrets to find no provision being made by the Simon Commission for the representation of the Depressed Classes in the Council of State and demands that the right of the Depressed Classes for adequate representation in the Council of State should be recognised.

11. While realising the advantage of the frame-work prepared by the Simon Commission for the reconstruction of the Assembly this Congress is of opinion that it is more appropriate to the Council of State than to the Assembly. In view of this and in view of the great necessity of improving the constitution of the Council of State so as to make it a more democratic body, this Conference is of opinion that the frame-work suggested by the Simon Commission for the Assembly should be applied to the Council of State and the Assembly should be constituted on the basis of direct election.

Simon Report Condemned

12. This Congress does not approve of the proposals of the Simon Commission in respect of the Military in India. This Congress is of opinion that the Army even if it be a reserved subject should not be withdrawn from the Executive Control of the Government of India.

13. This Congress is convinced of the necessity of having one Central All-India organisation for the Depressed Classes of India. In view of this the Congress appoints a Committee :—

(1) To frame a constitution for such an All-India organisation to be submitted at the next Session of the Congress and ;

(2) To function as a Working Committee of the Congress for the next year to deal with all matters relating to the Depressed Classes and arising out of the present political situation in the Country.”¹

¹: The Bombay Chronicle dated 18th August 1930.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar delivered his Presidential Address
at The All India Depressed Classes Congress,
Nagpur, on August 8, 1930.

He said,

“Ladies and Gentlemen,

I greatly appreciate the honour you have done me by inviting me to preside over your deliberations to-day, and I am grateful to you for the same. But while I value so much this mark of confidence, I feel the responsibility attaching to the position which you have so kindly called upon me to assume is one of an unusual difficulty, from which it would not have been unwise to have sought an escape. Nevertheless I have consented to assume it because it was borne in upon me that at this juncture it was the duty of every public man to place his services, for what they might be worth, unreservedly at the disposal of his compatriots labouring in the promotion of a common cause. But in taking this responsibility I derive courage from the thought that you will not stint me support and assistance, and that the trusted leaders of our people who are assembled here on this occasion will give us all the benefit of their considered judgment and ripe experience.

I. Problem of Self Government in India.

2. The one question that is looming large in the horizon today is, “Is it possible for the peoples of India to become one united self-governing community?” We have met here to define the attitude of the Depressed Classes with respect to this question which is agitating not only the minds of this country and of the British Empire but also of the whole world as well. Our answer to this question will go a great way in the decision of the final destiny of this country. Our decision will certainly have the potency of retarding or accelerating its realisation and may possibly go so far as to make it or mar it. You cannot therefore, I venture to say, treat this question in a light-hearted manner. You must weigh with deep consideration, its pros and its cons. Let us not fear that our judgment will be different from that of others. But let us be careful that our conclusions will be the result of independent thought and honest belief.

3. You are aware that to this question there are two sides. It has been pointed out that the Indian people are composed of a large number of distinct races; that they profess various religions antagonistic in their creeds and diverse in their rites; that they speak different languages and are separated from each other by discordant prejudices, by conflicting social usages and by opposing material interests. The question is asked how can a heterogeneous mass of humanity function as a self-governing community ? These are hard facts and no wise man can ignore the bearing which they must necessarily have upon the question of self-government in India. But admitting these hard facts, what is the conclusion to be drawn from them ? Gentlemen, before you proceed to pronounce your opinion let me draw your attention to certain facts equally hard. Consider the position as it obtains in countries like Latvia, Rumania, Lithuania, Yugoslavia, Estonia, and Czechoslovakia. These are new States which have come into being after the close of the great war of 1914 which was fought with the avowed object of establishing the principle of self-government throughout the world. These newly, constituted States are all of them self-governing sovereign, independent States, each supreme in its external and internal affair. What are the internal social conditions in these States ? You will be surprised to know that they are as bad as in India, if not worse. In Latvia there are Latts, Russians , Jews and Germans, besides other nationalities. In Lithuania there are Lithuanians, Jews, Poles and Russians in addition to other smaller minorities. In Yugoslavia there are Serbs, Croates, Slovenes, Rumanians, Hungarians, Albanians, and Germans, not to mention other Slave people. In Estonia there are Estonians, Russians, Germans and other small groups. In Czechoslovakia there are Czechs, Germans, Megyars, Ruthinians and others. In Hungary there are Magyars, Germans and Slovaks. Different by race and language these groups form so many warring nations within their respective States. There is not even that religious unity to cement these heterogenous elements into a common whole. You will find amongst them four or five different sorts of Catholics. There are Roman Catholics, Greek Catholics, Czechoslovak Catholics. Besides Catholics, you have Evangelicals, Jews, Protestants, not

to mention the many small creeds that prevail there. Ponder over this. Is the Indian cosmos more bewildering, more heterogeneous than the human cosmos we find in these countries? I dare say it is not. In making your decision about India you shall have to take cognizance of these facts if your judgment is to be honest, independent judgment. Gentlemen, is there any answer to the question that arises as a result of this comparison that if Latvia, Lithuania, Yugoslavia, Estonia, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Roumania, with all their difference of race, creed, language and culture, can function as united self-governing communities, why cannot India? I have none to give. And I am looking forward to hear with great interest those of our friends who think they can.

4. It seems to me, to insist that the divergent elements in a country shall be one united whole before it can have the blessings of self-government is sometimes to reverse the order of things and to ignore the unifying effects of the great process of self-government. It is given to very few countries to have within their boundaries a homogeneous people connected by one language, one religion and one culture. But there are many in which, as a result of historical, geographical and political factors, sets of peoples, differing in their creeds, in their languages and in their cultures, have been intermingled. Such people could never have become heirs to a system of self-government which is theirs to-day, if the rule of homogeneity had been applied to them in all its absolutistic rigour. And after all is said and done, has not the system of self-government itself been the cause of unification of many a people who, in its absence, would have remained as discordant and as distinct as they were in their original conditions? Has not the self-governing constitution adopted by the German Empire been the cause of the unification of the German people? Could the Bavarians, Prussians, Saxons and the various other groups that prevailed as distinct nationalities and as separate States before 1870 have merged themselves into one united nation if they had not been brought under a common Government? A common government is often the best instrument one can devise to mould a diverse people into a nation. But why go so far to Germany for illustration.

Does not the case of India itself prove the point ? If India to-day has a feeling of unity and nationhood, however inchoate, the cause of it admittedly is the common Government under which she has been living since the British rule. Historically as well as logically it seems to me not open for any one to urge that the diversity of condition and peoples puts a bar in the way of India's self-government. Indeed, if the ideal is that India should be a united nation, I venture to say, self-government would be the most potent instrument for the realisation of that ideal.

II. Conditions of the Problem.

5. You will no doubt ask, is this diversity of conditions and peoples prevalent in India a matter of no consequence ? Need we not take it into account in framing the constitution for a self-governing India ? I say without hesitation that we must. There is a tendency in the average Congress politician in India to ignore this diversity of conditions and peoples and to insist upon a constitution for a self-governing India free from any limitations or restrictions. Gentlemen, where would be the centre of political power in the constitution of a self-governing India which did not recognise the social conditions of the country ? Do you think it will find its lodgement in the members of the minority communities ? Do you think it probable that the lower classes can become heirs to it ? If I am certain of anything it is of this; that in a self-governing India which did not recognize the hard facts of Indian society the strings of political power will be in the hands of the ambitious members of the upper strata of Indian society drawn from the high-placed, well educated and opulent castes, *i. e.* in the hands of the aristocracy of wealth, education and social standing. In politics as in other walks of life the victory is always to the stronger. The aristocracy will have the resources derived from wealth and education. But this will not be the only advantage in favour of the aristocracy against which members of the minor and weaker communities will have to struggle for their share of political power. There is another which, though subtle in its operation, is yet real. It consists in its social determinism. In this

determinism there is no place for merit or ability. The only thing that counts is kinship which prompts the Indian to discriminate against persons who are not his kindred. The effect of this determinism operating in the minds of the members of the majority community is bound to put members of the smaller communities at a formidable disadvantage and may indeed for ever shut them out from political power. The working out of this social determinism is bound to be most pernicious to the Depressed Classes. As you are aware the gradation of castes in India, founded as it is in theology, forms an ascending scale of reverence and a descending scale of contempt. The effect of this gradation is to create in the minds of the lower orders a preference for the members of the higher and in the minds of the higher orders a repulsion for the members of the lower. The working of such a psychology is bound to be disastrous to the Depressed Classes in their struggle for political power. Without casting a single vote in favour of the Untouchables, the touchables will be able to make a large draft upon the votes of the Untouchables who will therefore not only lose in the fight but will quite unwillingly help their opponents to win. If the effect of the ignoring of the social facts is to make the aristocracy of wealth, education and social standing the governing caste, I think it is our duty to prevent it by all means consistent with our aim. For, surely we ought not to be content with the mere change of masters. I agree with the Congressman that no country is good enough to rule over another. But I must also take the liberty to tell him pointblank that the proposition does not end there and that it is equally true that no class is good enough to rule over another class. In the competition between the members of the European bureaucracy and the native aristocracy—I am using the word to denote the combined force of wealth, education and superior social standing—as to who can best look after the masses, the aristocracy asserts that as far as knowledge of the conditions of the life of the masses, their habits, their ways of living and thinking, their wants and grievances, and ability to enter into their thoughts and appreciate what is necessary for them, are concerned, it has all these in a far higher degree than the European bureaucracy can lay claim to.

But be that as it may ; it seems to me that the aristocracy cannot escape the charge that its members have in them a class bias, a definite clanishness, a tendency to favour their own kindred, which makes them quite unworthy of being entrusted with power to decide the destiny of the masses. Indeed one might go to the length of saying that due to the great social gap that separates it from the masses and the superior isolation in which it lives, it cannot be said to be charged with the wants, the cravings and the desires of the masses; it may even be said that it is quite inimical to their aspirations. What makes me so emphatic in my assertion that the aristocracy cannot be trusted with political power is because the root notions of democracy on the operation of which alone self-governing India can be safe for the masses run counter to all the ideas which for thousands of years have formed and do form even to-day the common stock of their beliefs. The fundamental principle of the modern democratic state is the recognition of the value of the individual, and the belief that as each individual has but one life, full opportunity should be accorded to each to attain his maximum development in that life. Neither of these propositions be said to form the part of the accepted philosophy of the aristocracy of India. They rather hold that the present life is for each only one of a series of existences, that the position of each individual in this life has been determined for him by his merits or demerits in his previous births, and that therefore no character howsoever high, no ability howsoever great which a man may have to his credit can alter his place in the social strata in which he is born. With the aristocracy the notion that a man born a Brahmin cannot be other than a Brahmin and a man born a Pariah cannot be other than a Pariah, is no idle talk; it is a living and operative faith. To give unrestricted power in the hands of the people of this sort is to arm the hangman with a knife.

6. We, who take this attitude, are mercilessly denounced as communalists and often as the enemies of the country. The Congressman is never tired of reiterating that in every country power always rests in the hands of the intelligentsia and that in the interest of efficient administration it must always be so. Those who will have us leave the coming political power in the hands of the aristocracy seem to think that the social and

the political are two separate compartments of human conduct having no inter-action between them. Gentlemen, you must be on guard against being led away by such a mechanical notion of human conduct. If you will beware of such abstraction you will realize that men cannot be reduced for political purposes any more than for any other, to bare figures, marks to be placed in rows over against one another. A man when he comes to vote-taking that to be the embodiment of politics-does not put off from him, like a suit of old clothes, his outlook, his interests and his opinions and become a naked unit. He carries with him in his voting all that which goes to make his personality and determine his attitude towards life. The talents of the aristocracy are a great asset to the country. But these talents by themselves cannot give it any title to manage the affairs of the country. That title must depend upon its character and the use which it is likely to make of its talents. We must look not to efficiency but to utility before we admit its right to rule over us. For, as Addison has observed, that "There can be no greater injury to human society than that good talents among men should be held honourable to those who are endowed with them without any regard how they are applied. The gifts of nature and the accomplishments of art are valuable but as they are exerted in the interest of virtue or governed by the rules of honour. We ought to abstract our minds from the observation of an excellence in those we converse, with, till we have taken some notice or received some good information of the disposition of their minds; otherwise the beauty of their person or the charms of their wit may make us fond of those who our reason and judgment will tell us we ought to abhor." I have already dwelt upon the character of the aristocracy which is clamouring for political power and I need say nothing more. But one cannot pass over certain very shameful things for the continuance of which the aristocracy of this country must be held responsible. In this country there are between 50 and 60 millions of people who are suffering from the curse of Untouchability- a curse and a calamity unknown in any other part of the world. They are denied the elementary rights due to every human being and refused the benefits of civilization and culture. Without equality of

opportunity theirs is the most degraded condition. Besides the Untouchables, there is still in this country an equally huge population of aboriginals and hill tribes who are left to roam about in a nomadic and barbarous state without any attempt to bring them within the pale of civilization and culture. These things bear an eloquent testimony to the spirit of service and the sense of responsibility which the aristocracy has shown in the past. We are asked to believe that the conduct of the aristocracy will be entirely different in the future. I am not sufficiently credulous to accept this. For, I know of no instance of the satans of to-day to have been transformed overnight into angels on the morrow.

7. We are also told that the settlement of the social problem should wait till the political freedom of the country is achieved. A wise man will not fall in with this line of thought. Before one enters into what is called a parlour one must make certain that it is not a trap. Every one of us knows or ought to know that the man in possession is more powerful than the man who is out of possession. Every one of us also knows or ought to know that those in possession of power seldom abdicate in favour of those who are out of it. You cannot therefore hope the effectuation of the settlement of the social problem if you allow power to slip into the hands of those who stand to lose by the settlement unless you are prepared to have another revolution to dethrone those whom you have helped to capture power. Gentlemen, my advice to you is the advice of the great political philosopher Edmund Burke, who said, "Better to be despised for too anxious apprehensions, than ruined by too confident a security." Following that advice I think it would be just and proper for us to insist that the best guarantee for the settlement of social problem is the adjustment of the political machine itself, and not the will of those who are contriving to be left in unfettered control of that machine.

III. Safeguards for the Depressed Classes.

8. It must therefore be made clear that while we do not think that the social factors can be a bar to self-government in India we do not admit that the constitution of a self-governing

India can ignore the necessity of checks and balances to ensure that in the political re-construction the smaller and the weaker communities will not go to the wall. How best to do this, as far as the Depressed Classes are concerned, is therefore the next question that I propose to deal with. There are some students of the political problem of India who admit the necessity of finding some solution of this question and also agree that the same should be embodied in the constitution of a self-governing India. These students in finding their solution have drawn largely upon the constitution of the post-war States to which I have referred in the earlier part of my speech, and it is very natural that they should draw upon that source. For these are the only States in which a close similarity to the existing Indian conditions is to be found. The scheme for the protection of minorities which obtains in these States consists in the enactment of the clauses in the constitution recognising what are called the fundamental rights of the minorities. The Nehru Committee's report adopts this scheme as the best sort of protection for safeguarding the interests of the Depressed Classes. I must sound a note of warning against your being duped by such a scheme. The Indian politician seems to have an inordinate degree of faith in the efficiency of a constitutional law embodying what are called fundamental rights, and is as eager to offer its benefits to the minorities in India as a guarantee against the autocracy of his own class as he was eager to have it in favour of his own class against the encroachments of the bureaucracy. We must however refuse to be satisfied with such a scheme for our protection. While such declarations are not unwelcome it must be pointed out that no declaration of rights howsoever comprehensive in its scope and howsoever clear in its terms and tenor, can insure the enjoyment of those rights. The guarantee of a right consists not in its declaration but in the provision of a remedy for its enforcement in case it is violated. In the constitutions of the post-war States I have mentioned, there is at least the provision that if the minorities feel that their fundamental rights are infringed and violated by the majority in power they can appeal to the League of Nations, which has a Committee appointed for the sole purpose of receiving and passing upon their complaints. Is there any remedy provided

in the Nehru Committee's Report against the infringement of the fundamental rights ? I find none, not even the appeal clause. The guarantee in the Nehru Constitution is therefore quite illusory.

9. Even if there was the appeal clause in the Nehru Constitution I would still advise you not to accept the scheme. A right of appeal to the League of Nations or to the Viceroy or the Government would be a very desirable addition to the armoury of the Depressed Classes. But it cannot be an effective weapon. The best guarantee for the protection of your own interests, consists in having the power of control in your own hands so that you may yourselves be in a position not only to punish when the mischief to your interests is done but to keep a watch over your interests from day to day and prevent possible mischief from arising. This will never be secured by leaving the power in the hands of the third party be it the Governor, Viceroy or the League of Nations. For of what good will that power be to us if those who will hold it in trust for us refuse to exercise it when we call for their intervention ? The safest remedy for the protection of our interests seems to me lies in securing control over the future executive in self-governing India in your own hands and that you can have only by means of adequate representation in the Legislatures of the country. It is by this means and by this means alone that we can keep a day today watch upon the doings of the executive and thereby ensure our safety and our progress. If you can get other additional safeguards and guarantees, by all means have them. They will add more strings to your bow. But let nothing offered as a substitute for adequate representation be acceptable to you. And you will be perfectly within your rights if you refuse to consent to any change in the political constitution of the country, unless a guarantee in the form of adequate representation is given to you.

10. The phrase adequate representation is on the lips of every minority in India. But owing to the difficulty of defining it in quantitative terms it has, in its vague and indefinite form, become a field for acrimonious contention. But if we wish to give our

demand some specific consent, some quantitative definition of that phrase must be framed. There is prevalent in the Congress-circles a theory according to which adequate representation is tantamount to representation according to population. In my opinion this arithmetical theory of the representation of minorities is a crude and absurd doctrine and forms the best reflex of the prevailing ungenerous attitude of the majority towards the minorities in India. A Minority holds such power as it can derive from its members and its social standing. And it is because that it feels that this much power is insufficient for its protection that it claims an augmentation of it. Without such, an increase in its representation it does not feel strong enough to withstand the force of the majority armed with political power. On this view, the protection of the minority consists in. an increment of representation above its population quota. Now if this is true, one may well ask where is the protection of the minority if its representation is confined to its population? To speak of protection to minorities and confine their representation to their numbers seems to me a contradiction in terms. To prescribe that the minorities shall be represented in the legislatures according to their numbers is to make the legislatures do nothing more than be society in miniature and thus reflect the strength of the majority and the minority in the proportion in which they exist in society outside. Such a scheme keeps the balance of power in tact. It keeps the status quo as it is. From the stand point of the protection of the minority interest, any reform in order to be a real reform, must involve a change in the balance of power in favour of the minorities and this can be secured only by allowing over and above its population ratio some weightage in the allotment of its representation.

11. While all minorities are agreed upon the necessity of weightage in the matter of their representation, there does not seem to be any agreement in the application of it. This is due, it seems to me, to a want of clear understanding regarding the function that weightage is expected to perform. From what I have said above, it will be obvious to you that weightage is a scheme improvised for lengthening the arm of a minority,

which otherwise would be too short for its protection. The length to be added must therefore depend upon the shortness of the arm. If the arm is short the length to be added must increase. If the arm is long, the length to be added will have to be curtailed. To put it differently this weightage cannot be uniform for all the minorities and that it must vary with their social standing; to be high, if the standing of the minority is low and to be low, if the standing of the minority is high. Unfortunately there is a tendency in certain minorities not only to place themselves on a pedestal higher than the common level of the ordinary citizen, but also to monopolize a larger share of representation, not on the ground that their social standing is low; but because their social standing is high. As I have said the idea underlying weightage to a minority is the same as tampering the wind to the shorn lamb and we must therefore guard against such a perversion thereof as I have referred to which cannot but result in injuring the interests of the country and of the other minorities as well.

12. So far I have only given an indication of the right line of approach for the proper application of the principle of weightage to minority representation. The question of determining the exact quantum of weightage still remains. That must vary with circumstances and I cannot do more than suggest a general principle for its computation. It is this. First of all, by a mutual agreement between the majority and minority communities a figure should be arrived at for a maximum increase in the population ratio of representation to be called the weightage factor. In its application to a particular minority for determining its quota of adequate representation the weightage-factor should be made to vary inversely with the social standing of the minority defined as it must be by (1) its social status, (2) its economic strength and (3) its educational position. If this is done, it seems to me, we will have a settlement between the minority communities themselves and between the majority on the one hand and the minorities on the other which will be just and equitable and will leave no cause for complaint to any of the parties concerned.

13. The question that arise next in order for our consideration, pertain to the electorates and the franchise. Gentlemen, what shall be our demand in respect to them? Regarding the formation of the electorates there are two altenatives open to us. One is the scheme of separate electorates and the other is that of joint electorates with reserved seats. I know that the opinion of the depressed classes is divided on this question. There is a large body of the people in favour of separate electorates. They fear that in joint electorates the majority community having a right to vote in the election of our representatives will favour only such men from amongst us as will be subservient to them. I don't say that such fears are altogether without any foundations. But if this is true, then the remedy lies not in enclosing lies in a separate compartment, but in increasing our voting strength to the fullest possible extent by demanding adult suffrage, so that we may thereby be in a position to minimise such influence, as the majority community may happen to cast in the election of our representations. In my opinion, if we can get adult suffrage and here I must say that we must insist upon it as one of our most essential demands, we ought to have no objection to the scheme of joint electorates with reserved seats being applied to the Depressed Classes.

14. In this connection there is one observation which I feel I must make. To say that this is a country which is divided by castes and creeds and that it cannot be one united self-governing community unless adequate safe-guards for the protection of the minorities are made a part of the constitution is a position to which there can be no objection. But the minorities must bear in mind that although we are today "riven by sects and atomised by castes," our ideal is a united India. This is an ideal which no minority which claims to be heard can fail to place in its forefront. That being so, it follows that every minority in formulating the safe-guards it needs, must take care that they will not be incompatible with the realisation of that ideal. By all means insist on your self-guards because the handicap you suffer from is real, but let not your safeguards be such that they will peipetuate the differences which it must be the desire of us all to see bridged. There is undoubtedly an obligation