

I WOULD NOT BUDGE AN INCH FROM MY RIGHTEOUS CAUSE

“Poona, April 28, 1932.

At the invitation of the All-India Anti-Untouchability League, with its headquarters at Poona, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the representative of the Depressed Classes at the Round Table Conference, at present serving on the Franchise Committee, will come to Poona early in May to accept an address in appreciation of his work, from the League.

At the same time he will be presented with an address from the Depressed Classes of the Poona District.

A local reception committee under the Chairmanship of Subhedar R. S. Ghatge, has the preparations in hand”.¹

“After the Kamptee Congress, Dr. Ambedkar visited Poona, Sholapur and Nipani, where he addressed meetings of the Depressed Classes. Of these visits, the visit to Poona was very important. He reached Poona in the evening of May 21, 1932. There he was taken out in procession. The huge procession went on raising anti-orthodox slogans and reached the open space at the Ahalyashram. There he was given an address of welcome* under the presidentship of A. B. Latthe. Latthe revealed to the audience how in London British statesmen and high officials secretly inquired of him whether or not Dr. Ambedkar belonged to the Revolutionary Party of India. Latthe added that it was quite disgraceful on the part of the so-called nationalist press to depict a great man like Dr. Ambedkar as a traitor. Latthe, who, it is said, had once offered Dr. Ambedkar the principalship of the Arts College at Kolhapur, recalled an occasion when he had asked Dr. Ambedkar about his success as a lawyer. He told the audience that Dr. Ambedkar’s reply was that according to him success in life meant success in raising the Depressed Classes to the status of human beings. Latthe concluded by declaring that since

¹ : The Times of India, dated 30th April 1932.

*The address was presented by ‘The Pune District-Depressed Class’ in Marathi language, on which names of 322 men and 42 women were printed—Editors.

Dr. Ambedkar was striving for the amelioration of the downtrodden humanity in India, his services to India were in themselves a great contribution to India and to the world as well.*

Replying to the address, Dr. Ambedkar said :

“At present I am the most hated man in Hindu India. I am represented as a traitor, I am denounced as an enemy of the Hindus, I am cursed as a destroyer of Hinduism, and branded as the greatest enemy of the country. But believe me when I say that, when after some days the dust settles down and a review of the proceedings of the Round Table Conference is dispassionately taken by future historians, the future generations of the Hindus will acclaim my services to the nation. If they do not recognise, well I would not care for their disapprobation. My great satisfaction,” he concluded with a serene face, “is that the Depressed Classes have implicit faith in my work and undivided devotion to the mission for which I stand. It is my solemn vow to die in the service and cause of those down-trodden people among whom I was born, I was brought up and I am living. I would not budge an inch from my righteous cause, or care for the violent and disparaging criticism by my detractors.”¹

However, there were additional dimensions in the speech of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar which were reported by the Bombay Chronicle. The dimensions were as under :—Editors.

Replying Dr. Ambedkar said that he did not want temples, or wells or intercaste dinners but Government service, food, clothing, education and other opportunities.

Besides caste systems, there were other distinctions, such as “*Guna Bheda*” for education which political reforms needed. He for this reason changed his opinion and was now convinced that political reform should precede social reform.

He also stressed the necessity of the community, having Separate Electorates for the time being even though leaders like Rao Bahadur Raja and Gavai now advocated the Joint Electorates.”²

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* Janata, dated 25th June 1932.

¹: Keer, Pp. 201-202.

²: The Bombay Chronicle, dated 23rd May 1932.