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EDUCATED PERSONS SHOULD JOIN MILITARY

"Under the auspices of the *Mahar* community a public lecture was delivered by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar "on *Mahar* Battalion" at R. M. Bhatt High School, Parel, on September 24th 1941. at about 9-15 p.m. About 500 *Mahars* attended the meeting.

Dr. Ambedkar said that the meeting was held to encourage educated men from his community to join Military. The Government of India had promised him to form a *Mahar* Battalion on account of the great valour shown by the 111, *Mahar* Battalion in the last Great War. He also pointed out that the said Battalion was abolished as the officers of that battalion who were almost high class Hindus and Muslims complained that the soldiers were useless for military work. So this time, the lecturer said he insisted on the Government to appoint *Mahar* Officers in *Mahar* Battalion. Therefore he requested the audience to join Military in general and particularly to those who were educated.

The lecture terminated at about 10 p.m."[1]

However, there were additional dimensions in the speech of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar on the subject which were reported by the 'Times of India' The dimensions were :

"Dr. Ambedkar stated that in spite of the harsh treatment being meted out to them, on account of the '*Watandar*' system pursued in Nasik, Khandesh and other districts of the province by the local Government, this was not the time for *Mahars* to withhold their co-operation. After the last war, the *Mahar* Battalion was disbanded and the *Mahars* who had joined the army were not provided for. Recently, he had made representations to Government that a *Mahar* Battalion should be permanently maintained. The thanks of the community for the success of their cause were due to the Governor of Bombay and the Viceroy.

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[1]: B. S. A, dated 25th September 1941.

Several *Mahars,* continued Dr. Ambedkar, were now studying in colleges. He appealed to them to suspend their studies and join the army and qualify themselves for King's and Viceroy's commissions. A large number of the rank and file had already joined the army and there was a dearth of educated *Mahars* for officers' ranks. He felt confident that the educated youth of the community would come forward immediately to enlist."[1]

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[1]: The Times of India, dated 26th September 1941.