77

I MAKE DISTINCTION BETWEEN AHIMSA AND MEEKNESS

Samata Sainik Dal Conference

(Conference of the Depressed Classes Volunteer Core)

FIRST SESSION -1942

Held At Nagpur

on July 20, 1942

The Samata Sainik Dal Conference commenced its session at 12-30 p. m. on July 20, 1942, in the specially erected pandal in the Mohan Park, Nagpur, in the presence of over 70,000 audience. On the dias, distinguished leaders including the Hon'ble Dr. B. R. Ambedkar were seated.

The President-elect was conducted to his seat by the Chairman of the Reception Committee. After the President-elect and other delegates took their seats, the proceedings commenced with the singing of welcome songs.

Mr. A. L. Kosare, B.A., Chairman of the Reception Committee, delivered his address.

Thereafter, Mr. R. R. Patil, General Secretary, read his report.

Mr. A. L. Kosare called upon Mr. M. M. Sasalekar, General Secretary, *Samata Sainik Dal,* Bombay to move that the President elect, Mr. Gopal Singh, M. L. A. (Punjab) do occupy the Chair.

Accordingly Mr. M. M. Sasalekar moved the resolution.

Mr. R. R. Patil, General Secretary of the *Samata Sainik Dal* Conference seconded the resolution.

Mr. A. L. Kosare, Chairman of the Reception Committee declared that as there is no opposition, motion is carried unanimously. I now request Mr. Gopal Singh to occupy the Chair.

Sardar Gopal Singh occupied the chair and delivered his Presidential Address.

Mr. Gopal Singh (President) called upon Mr. U. L. Karandikar (Bombay) to move the first resolution.

Mr. U. L. Karandikar said,

Mr. President, the resolution which stands in my name runs thus :-

Resolution No. 1 .—Support to All - India Depressed Classes Conference :

1. (A) That the Conference of the All-India *Samata Sainik Dal* heartily supports the resolutions passed at the All-India Depressed Classes Conference, and declares its resolute determination to curry out the provisions of the said resolutions in all possible ways, namely physically, financially and morally.

Branches of the Dal:

(B) That .the Conference requests and appeals to the admirers and supporters of the *Samata Sainik Dal* to establish in every Province and prominent towns of the Provinces, the branches of the *Samata Sainik Dal.*

Constitution :

(C) That this Conference resolves that a Constitution for the All-India Samata Sainik Dal be framed and that for this purpose a Committee of the following gentlemen be formed. The Constitution framed by this Committee shall be submitted to the joint Sub-Committee of the Office Bearers of the Samata Sainik Dal of the C. P. and Berar and the Bombay Provinces, on whose approval, it shall become operative.

(1) Mr. M. M. Sasalekar, Bombay.

(2) ” S.B. Jadhav.

(3) ” R. R. Patil, Nagpur.

(4) ” A. L. Kosare, B. A., Nagpur.

(5) ” P. L. K. Talib, Ph. D., Lucknow.

The resolution is very clear and needs no speech. I commend it for your unanimous acceptance.

Mr. M. M. Sasalekar seconded it.

The resolution was further supported by the following gentlemen.—

(1) Mr. P. J. Roham, M. L. A. (Bombay).

(2) " Parmar (Sindh)

(3) " P. L. K. Talib, M. A., LL. B., Ph.D. (Lucknow).

(4) " D. G. Jadhav, B. A., LL.B., M.L.A., Jalgaon.

(5) " B. K. Gaikwad, M. L. A., Nasik.

Mr. Gopal Singh, the President said, as there is no opposition, I declare the resolution earned unanimously.*

The President called upon Mr. S. B. Jadhav to move the second resolution.

Accordingly Mr. S. B. Jadhav moved the resolution for unanimous acceptance.

Resolution No. 2

United Front against Fascist aggression :

2. That India is immediately threatened by the fascist aggression and the invasion of our motherland by the German and Japanese military hoards is imminent. At this critical hour the main task that faces the nation is to immediately build up a mighty antifascist aggression. This Conference therefore calls upon the Indian people to immediately build up such a united front of the people.

Mr. S. V. Gaikwad seconded the resolution.

Mr. Gopal Singh, the President declared the resolution carried unanimously.

* See Constitution of the Samata Sainik Dal at Appendix. II

Resolution No. 3

Next Session :

The President moved the following resolution from the Chair.

3. That it is resolved that the venue of the Second All-India Samata Sainik Dal Conference be in the Punjab when the All-India Depressed Classes Conference is convened there.

There is no opposition. I declare the resolution carried unanimously.

I now request the Hon'ble Dr. B. R. Ambedkar to address the Conference.

The Hon'ble Dr. Ambedkar was given rousing ovation when he rose to speak.

Address by Dr. Ambedkar

The following is the substance of Dr. Ambedkar's speech to the Samata Sainik Dal :

I am very glad to see this vast body of Volunteer Corps raised in the Province of C.P. This Volunteer Corps was first started in Bombay about the year 1926. The Samata Sainik Dal is an integral part of our general movement. Indeed it is its powerful instrument. The aims and objects of our movement have undergone a complete and a radical change. There was a time when our object was to obtain for our people a place of equality within the Hindu Society as a part and parcel of it. Today we stand for equality with the Hindus as a distinct and separate element in the National life of India. The aims and objects of the Samata Sainik Dal have also changed alongwith this change in the aims and objects of our movement. What led to formation of this Volunteer organization was the original object of our movement namely to foster the demand among the Depressed Classes for social equality with the Hindus. As its name implies, the organization was built up to bring about a reorganization of the Hindu society with a view to find for the Depressed Classes in the Hindu society a place of equality. Today its object is to obtain Social Equality with the Hindus by bringing about a complete separation

from the Hindus. We hope to achieve it by separation in religion. We have to go by stages. We had to begin our struggle with a demand for political equality by demanding political separation. This was most a difficult task, for the Depressed Classes could not find a safe and a secure platform from which to give vent to their political demands. There was a time when this was quite impossible. The Congress organization had become so dominant that in Bombay city they would not allow any other party to hold any political meeting. The Congress volunteers used to come and break-up such meetings. Nobody dared to hold a meeting. To meet this menace we decided to add to the orignial function of the Volunteer Crops a new duty namely to take part in politics and protect our platform from the turbulent and repressive activities of the Congress Volunteers. This proved a most efficacious method of dealing with the menace of the Congress Volunteers. I well remember the incident that took place in Bombay just about the time that I was going to the first Round Table Conference. The Congress held, in Bombay just near where I was living, a public meeting in the name of the Depressed Classes to condemn my going to the Round Table Conference and to declare that I was not true representative of the Depressed Classes. I told the organizers of the meeting that I did not mind any resolution being passed provided it was a meeting of the Depressed Classed and that their meeting was not the meeting of the Depressed Classes. They declined to desist from the line of action they had decided upon. In the evening the meeting was held. Our volunteers came in a body and to the utter discomfiture of the Congress Volunteers captured the meeting. The Congressmen had to run for their life leaving behind their chair, table and bell which was brought by our volunteers as a trophy. Our Volunteer Corps has been the strongest in Bombay. Nobody has ever dared to challenge our volunteers. If we have carried out our political activities without being molested by anybody it is because of the strength of our volunteer organization. We owe them a great debt of gratitude.

You borrowed the idea from Bombay. But I see that you have left Bombay very much behind in the vastness of your organization. In this you excite my admiration. Bombay will

have to bestir itself to come up to your level. I implicitly believe in the necessity for this volunteer organization. It must not only be maintained, but it should be started in every Province and it should be so expanded until it has embraced every young man from the Depressed Classes within its membership.

There are people who object to such volunteer organizations. They are believers in Ahimsa and they object to these organizations and exhibitions of strength. I am myself a believer in Ahimsa. But I make a distinction between Ahimsa and meekness. Meekness is weakness, and weakness which is voluntarily imposed upon itself is not a virtue. In one of the Upnishadas there is a story of a lamb which went to God and lodged a complaint saying that he was the father of all the creatures and all the creatures were therefore brethren: but that notwithstanding this, every creature, said the lamb, was threatening its life forgetting all brotherly affection. How do you explain this ? asked the lamb to God. The reply God is alleged to have given is very instructive. God said you look so meek that even I am tempted to devour you. We have been very much like the lamb in the story and that is why every one has threatened to devour us. I am quite convinced that meekness in the sense of self-imposed weakness is not a virtue. I am a believer in Ahimsa, but in the sense defined by your great Saint Tukaram. Tukaram said and quite rightly that Ahimsa consisted of two things : (1) Love and Kindness towards all creatures, and (2) destruction of all evil-doers. The second part of this definition of Ahimsa is often lost sight of and it is because it is lost sight of that the doctrine of Ahimsa becomes so ridiculous. To destroy all evil-doers is the principal element in the doctrine of Ahimsa. Without that Ahimsa is an empty shell, only a beatitude. It ceases to be a positive duty. So long as we have no evil intention to do harm to anybody and so long as we have confined ourselves to destruction of all evil-doers, nobody can cavil at the acquisition and building up of strength. *Shakti* controlled by sheel is our ideal. You need not be afraid of any

criticism. Avoid doing wanton injury to anybody, exert to help every one who needs your help and you will be rendering great service to our people. Hitherto your activities have been mainly concerned with sustaining our political life. There are other fields to which you should extend your activities. In towns one often hears women being kidnapped by some rascals. In villages one often hears our people being tyrannized by the caste Hindus. These are cases in which you should exert yourselves. These are serious cases in which oraganizations like yours can only help.

I am glad you have passed a resolution to hold an All-India Conference of all Depressed Classes Volunteers Corps. It is a happy idea which if it fructifies will result in great good. I wish you all success.

I thank you and your President for allowing me to say these few words to you.

Mr. S. V. Ramteke expressed the thanks. Thereafter the President declared the Session as dissolved. [1]

●●

[1.] : Report of Depressed Classes Conference, Nagpur Session - July 1942.