

DEPRESSED CLASSES ARE NOT A PART OF HINDU COMMUNITY

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, is leaving Bombay by Madras Express this afternoon i.e. on 20th September 1944, for Hyderabad. He will be accompanied by several Depressed Class leaders.

It is learnt that after stopping at Hyderabad for a day, Dr. Ambedkar will proceed to Madras where he will make a very important pronouncement on the position of the Depressed Classes under the future constitution of India.

It is believed that the pronouncement will be based on the outcome of the Gandhi-Jinnah talks.”¹

“When Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was on his tour to South India, he visited Hyderabad Provinces of Nizam for the first time on September 20, 1944. He was warmly and whole-heartedly welcomed at Nampalli and Secunderabad. He was greeted at Begumpeth Railway Station by Mr. J. Subaiyya, the Chairman of Scheduled Castes Federation, Hyderabad Provinces, Mrs. Subaiyya, Shrimati Rajmani Devi and Mr. Madre.

The visit became memorable by the enthusiastic welcome by men and women of Scheduled Castes Federation, Hyderabad. The guard of honour given to Dr. B. R. Ambedkar by female Volunteers was so excellent that even the Viceroy never could have received such guard of honour. The whole atmosphere was filled with echoes “Ambedkar Zindabad.” He was taken in a procession from Secunderabad Railway Station to “Paach-Bandhu-Seva-Hall” first and then to the big pandal where the function took place. On this occasion, the Reception Committee Chief, Premkumar welcomed Dr. B. R. Ambedkar while, on behalf of Scheduled Castes Federation, Mr. J. H. Subaiyya presented an address to Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar arose to speak amidst the thunderous applause. He spoke for 45 minutes in Hindi. He made all the audience spell-bound with his impressive speech and language

¹ : Bombay Chronicle, 20th September 1944.

touching to the hearts of people. He appealed all present to be united under the flag of Scheduled Castes Federation. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, in his speech, said,¹

“Holding out a threat, Dr. Ambedkar said, if the members of the Scheduled Castes did not get a fair deal and due recognition of their rights and privileges they would fight it out, if need be, with their lives. Dr. Ambedkar clearly stated that if political power ever belonged to anyone it was to the three parties—Hindus, Muslims and Scheduled Castes. Nobody could deny them their rightful place, he asserted.

Recalling the memories of the Second Round Table Conference Dr. Ambedkar observed that Gandhi had no knowledge of the strategy and tactics of different parties at the First Round Table Conference. Therefore he was “anxious that he should warn Gandhi about the land which lay ahead.” With this subject he took the first opportunity to speak at the Federal Structure Subcommittee so that he could expose the whole business. Dr. Ambedkar stated. Gandhi, who followed him after some time, said, “my heart is with Dr. Ambedkar, but my head is not with him.” Next morning before the proceedings opened, he asked Gandhi certain questions which were the cause of the quarrel between them. He asked whether Gandhi had any mandate from the Congress in support of the statement that he would welcome representation of the Indian Princes by nomination and whether the Congress was not opposed to indirect election, to which Gandhi had said that he had no objection, and whether the Home Rule Bill had not been rejected by the Congress for that very reason. Mr. Gandhi refused to answer the questions.

“The point I want to illustrate by saying all this is that if India has been let down, it is not by me, it is not by the Scheduled Castes, it has been let down by Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Srinivasa Sastri and others “Dr. Ambedkar added. Dr. Ambedkar further observed :

It is much better that the caste Hindus reconcile themselves to the fact that the Scheduled Castes are a separate element in the national life of India. We are in perfect accord with them

¹: Kamble B. C ; ‘Samagra Ambedkar Charitra’ (Marathi) Vol. 17. Pp. 66-67.

that this country should get its freedom. But any new Government, the *Swaraj* Government, must be a Government in which Hindus, Muslims and the Scheduled Castes are all heirs to sovereignty.

.... It seems to me the policy of Mr. Gandhi who acquires strength from the Congress, the largest party in the land, is to intimate the British Government and force it to come to terms without being obliged to grant the demands of the Scheduled Castes. Mr. Gandhi's whole aim in his political career ever since the minority problem began to loom large, has been one and one only, to neglect the Scheduled Castes, to by-pass them. I have had very unpleasant experience of Mr. Gandhi's tactics in this matter.

Dr. Ambedkar stated that at the Round Table Conference Gandhi tried to isolate him, to cut off every kind of support to his efforts. Every time Gandhi failed but ultimately he used a weapon, "which I am sorry to say no honest man would have used. He went to the Muslims and told them that he was prepared to concede the 14 points of Mr. Jinnah, provided the Muslims agreed not to support these dirty dogs, the Untouchables."

Dr. Ambedkar said that he had got in his possession an agreement which was drawn up between Gandhi and the Muslims at the Round Table Conference. Fortunately, the Muslims had a certain amount of sense of shame and did not support Gandhi. "¹

However there were additional dimensions in the speech of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar which were covered by the Times of India. The dimensions were as under—Editors.

"He wanted to make it clear to the British Government that a real National Government would be one that was composed of Hindus, Muslims and the Depressed Classes. The Depressed Classes were not part of the Hindu community but constituted a different nation. The Depressed Classes were prepared to agitate and fight to gain their objects.

Dr. Ambedkar warned his community that great obstacles lay in their path. While Mr. Gandhi and the Hindus had accepted the demand of the Muslims for a due share in the Government, they had not accepted a similar demand made by the Depressed Classes.

¹ : Hyderabad Bulletine, 20th September 1944.

Reprinted : Bharill Chandra, Pp. 63-65.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar declared that the Depressed Classes did not lag behind any other community in their love for India's freedom but they wanted the independence of their Community alongwith the independence of the country.

The address presented to Dr. Ambedkar by the Hyderabad State Scheduled Castes Federation referred to the Gandhi-Jinnah talks and said that no understanding or agreement, whether openly or tacitly concluded, would be binding on the Depressed Classes unless it had the support of Dr. Ambedkar as their accredited leader.”¹

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¹: The Times of India, dated 22nd September 1944.