

NO DISPUTE OVER INDIA'S GOAL OF FREEDOM

“Except the communal question, there is no dispute among the various parties in India,” said Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Labour Member, Government of India, speaking at a party given in his honour by a group of friends at ‘Cafe Model’, Bombay, on Sunday the 20th May 1945. He added that there was no differences of opinion between the parties as to the ultimate goal of Indian political evolution—freedom.

Analysing the present situation, Dr. Ambedkar said, that it could be summed up in the question: “Is a majority rule right?” His view was that it was wrong. It was wrong to consider that the needs of the State were paramount and those of the individual not, as that amounted to a Fascist or a Nazi doctrine. Protection of the individual, he further said, was the fundamental concern of the State and the suppression of the individual could not be tolerated.

Proceeding he said that the majority could be classed as political majority and communal majority. The former was always changing. That sort of majority was tolerable. But a “born majority” was not, he said. To settle this problem, he added, they had to depart from the principle of “mere majority.” That done, a solution for the problem facing them will have been found.

Turning to the question whether it was Dominion Status or Independence that was to be accepted, Dr. Ambedkar said that it was hardly a question of dispute. He considered the former as the first step in reaching the second. He personally felt that it would be better for India to accept Dominion Status. It was hardly of any use, he said, to win liberty which they could not retain. The determination Indians should make, he added, was not so much that they should free themselves from the British yoke, but they should be able to retain that freedom after having attained it.

The two important questions that a free India will have to tackle, Dr. Ambedkar said, were industrialisation and defence. He had grave doubts that India had all the resources necessary to proceed

along both the lines at the same time. Dominion Status, he said, imposed no obligation towards Britain, and according to International Law, it meant perfect sovereignty.

Referring to the work done by the Government for welfare of labour in the post-war period, he said that a Social Security Fact Finding Committee had been appointed which was expected to submit a report by August next, after which experts would be appointed to deal with the findings of the Committee.

Mr. G. N. Sahasrabudhe proposed a vote of thanks.”¹

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¹: The Times of India, dated 21st May 1945.

MAKE DELIBERATE ATTEMPT TO MAKE MAN POLITICALLY CONSCIOUS

“The charge that the Congress had not been able to make any headway in solving many of the outstanding problems of the country simply because its leaders chose to remain ignorant and refused to study politics was made, by the Hon. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Labour Member of the Government of India, in a speech at Poona on Wednesday night, the October 3, 1945.

The occasion was the opening ceremony of the Dr. Ambedkar School of Politics in Poona, of which students of the Scheduled Castes interested in politics are members. Dr. Ambedkar said that before the entry of Mr. Gandhi in the sphere of politics in this country, two main political schools of thought held the field. The first was the school led by Mr. Ranade and Mr. Gokhale, which came to be known as the Liberal school of thought. The other school was led by the revolutionaries of Bengal. The important thing about them was that both the schools were “fool-proof and knave-proof.” The qualifications for the membership of the Liberal school were so high that neither fools nor knaves could get into the organisation. Their standard was study and knowledge. Only those well versed in politics could aspire for their platform.

The Revolutionary School also set a high standard. No man who was not prepared to play with his life could be member of that party. Mr. Gandhi’s organisation, declared Dr. Ambedkar, had been thrown open to both fools and knaves. The cherished tradition of study and knowledge did not seem to appeal to the Congress organisation. This had led to many tragedies in the public life of the country, and the Congress had not been able to solve any vital problems, the communal question being one of them.

Dr. Ambedkar said that no institution or society could survive in the struggle for existence which was not free to make such adjustments in its ideas as time and circumstances required.

It was also true that a society which had inherited a set of ideas regarded as something sacred was not in a position to make adjustments. Such societies ultimately perished. Dr. Ambedkar declared that it was not proposed to found a school or creed of his own. He should be sorry if such a school came into existence after his death.

He knew the tragedies caused by the creation of political creeds. He was a keen student of politics in Maharashtra, and he was astonished to see how, when new problems arose, people met in committees and exercised their imagination, visualised and tried to guess what Mr. Tilak would have done in similar circumstances. It was a precarious sort of existence to be always dependent upon the inspiration of those men who had died long ago.

He appealed to the students to follow his lead only if they were satisfied in their minds that he was right. Dr. Ambedkar, however, commanded the object of the institution which was to permit the study of politics. He disagreed with those who believed that man was a political animal and said that one had to make the most deliberate attempt to make man politically conscious.”¹

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¹: The Times of India, dated 4th October 1945.

ACTION BY GOVERNMENT IN AUGUST 1942 WAS JUSTIFIABLE

Replying to the address of the Ahmedabad Municipality, presented on 30th November 1945* Dr. B. R. Ambedkar remarked that the drastic action taken by the Government in August 1942 was justifiable ; otherwise India would have been over-run by the Japanese and the Germans. This justification of the repression of the Government of the 'Quit India' movement roused the sentiment of the people and added to their earlier prejudices. It was the main cause of the unbridgeable gap that separated the Depressed Classess from the rest of the people during the years of the struggle for freedom.” ¹

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*Janata, dated 1st and 8th December 1945.

¹: Kuber, B. R. Ambedkar, P. 58.