

In my opinion the main reason for this was the family deity's (*kula deva*) worship. In India like the village deity and national deity, there were family deities also who were worshipped through the Brahmins. The priests who used to go for worshipping these deities started influencing the affairs of the State through the queens. Asoka after embracing Buddhism discontinued this practice and removed the idols of such deities. Asoka said, "As I venerate the Buddha, the Enlightened One, there is no need to worship any other deity." This action of Asoka disturbed the Brahmins very much as it ended their unfair means of livelihood and exploitation. They pledged to take revenge for this loss.

The Brahmins were of the view that after death, kings go to hell because of their errors and omissions. Therefore, they did not agree to be rulers but preferred to be the Chief Advisers to the Kings. In order to take revenge for the loss they suffered on account of stoppage of *Kulapuja* (family deity's worship). Brahmins gave up the approved motto of being advisers only and tried to grab power. With the help of their well-wisher *Kshatriyas*, they also organised an united Brahmin-Kshatriya axis against Buddhism. The ascendancy of Brahminism again in Indian society, is one of the reasons for the downfall of Buddhism.

The foreign invasions are also responsible for the decline of Buddhism in India. The Greeks did no harm to Buddhism. There are positive proofs available that the Greeks gave liberal financial assistance for Buddhist activities. The Huns invaded India, and after being defeated by the Guptas, they settled in India. Prior to this, the Huns tried to destroy Buddhism. The religion of the Buddha got the severest blow from the Muslim invasion. They destroyed the Buddhist idols and killed the *Bhikkhus*. They mistook the great Nalanda University as the Fort of Buddhists and killed a large number of monks thinking that they were soldiers. The few *Bhikkhus* who escaped an onslaught fled away to the neighbouring countries like Nepal, Tibet, and China.

Some of my Hindu friends often ask why Hinduism, which has also idol-worship, survived in India and Buddhism died.

My answer is that whatsoever the religion may be, it requires the priest community to preserve it. Due to the shortage of Buddhist monks, Buddhism declined. Efforts were subsequently made by some Buddhists to raise another priest-hood in order to revive Buddhism but their efforts failed. Such is not case with Hinduism. A Brahmin's son is priest by birth. Therefore, no separate priest community is required to protect their religion. This is why Hinduism survived Muslim onslaught. Moreover, Buddhism as a religion is difficult to practise while Hinduism is not. Besides, the political climate in India had also been inhospitable to its advancement.

I do not agree with the suggestion made by many people in India that Buddhism was destroyed by the dialectics of Shankaracharya. This is contrary to the facts as Buddhism existed for many centuries after his death. In my opinion, Shankaracharya himself was a Buddhist. His Guru too was Buddhist. Of course, Buddhism declined in India because of the rise of *Vaishnavism* and *Saivism*, the two cults which adopted and absorbed many good points of Buddhism. Today, Hinduism is in a very much changed form. Hinduism which taught and practised violence earlier has started teaching non-violence. This has been copied from Buddhism. Buddhism may have disappeared, in material form but as a spiritual force it still exists in India.”¹



¹. Bauddha Dharam hi Manav Dharam (Hindi)—Speech in Colombo. Sri Lanka, on 6-6-1950.

Reprinted : Dr. Ambedkar on Buddhism : Editor D. C. Ahir, Pp 111 — 114.

I SHALL DEVOTE REST OF MY LIFE TO THE REVIVAL AND SPREAD OF BUDDHISM

“Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Law Minister, Government of India, has appealed to people to embrace Buddhism.

“The present Hinduism was the same about a thousand years ago”, he said and added : it was nothing but Buddhism, but after the Mahomedan invasion and other causes it lost its purity and was mixed up with dross.”

Dr. Ambedkar, who was speaking at Bombay’s Buddha Temple at Worli on Friday night the 29th September 1950 deprecated the idea that political independence would end all the ills of the country. He said, “as long as there is no purity of mind, wrong doing and utter disregard of morals would continue in every day life; and as long as man does not know how to behave with man and creates barriers between man and man, India can never be prosperous”.

“To end all these troubles, India must embrace Buddhism. Buddhism is the only religion based upon ethical principles and teaches how to work for the good and well-being of the common man.”

Dr. Ambedkar declared that he would devote the rest of his life to the revival and spread of Buddhism in India.” ¹

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¹. The Sunday News, dated 1st October 1950.

THE BILL WAS AIMED AT THE SOCIAL ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

On December 26, 1950, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar while addressing a rally of 50,000 people under the auspices of the Belgaum District branch of the Scheduled Castes Federation stated,

The lack of moral courage and strength of character of the women in India had come in the way of the Bill (Hindu Code) that had been drafted by him. None of the prominent women leaders were really interested in the social progress of our women, Dr. Ambedkar declared.

Dr. Ambedkar said, "I drafted the Bill in confirmity with the dictates of the *Smritis* which allow several rights to women. The Bill was only aimed at removing the obstruction of Law in the social advancement of women. On wealth depends independence and a woman must be very particular to retain her wealth and rights, to help retain her freedom.

Dr. Ambedkar compared the Hindu Code Bill to milk which has been spoiled by mixture with a bitter acid. Referring to agitations by some orthodox people and even women for whose benefit the Bill had been introduced, he remarked, "I challenge everyone to show me whether any of the Sections in the Bill are not based on the dictates of the *Smritis*"

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The Times of India, December 26, 1950, "Opposition to Hindu Code", "Dr. Ambedkar's Criticism."

Reprinted Bharill, Pp. 101—102.

THE SCHEDULED CASTES SHOULD GIVE UP POLITICAL ALOOFNESS

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar delivered speech at Bombay on 12th June, 1951.

“The Scheduled Castes should give up their political aloofness and co-operate with other communities in strengthening our newly won freedom. But in such co-operation the separate entity of the Scheduled Castes Federation should be maintained. You must change your policies radically towards the Congress. Up to this time our relations with the Congress had been one of opposition. On the political field we were enemies of each other. So far, we were rather narrow minded in our outlook, the only interest before us being that of our Community. Now that we have achieved our freedom, we should change our outlook entirely and co-operate with others, keeping in view the interest of our Community and help consolidate our newly won freedom.

It is wrong to say that the foundation of the Federation was last collapsing. As a matter of fact we gained strength and we stand solidly united. The Federation had a very bad defeat at the polls in 1946. I found that it was essential for a few of us to get into the Constituent Assembly to safeguard the interest of the Community. All the doors and windows were then closed to us. I was not sure of my-self but stood for election from Bengal. I won the seat,

At that time, I had not the least idea that I would do some thing for the nation as a whole. The responsibility of framing a Constitution for the country was placed on my shoulders. I feel now that it was the golden opportunity for myself and community. By framing this Constitution, I convinced the Hindus, who were abusing me and my party, for the last 20 years as anti-nationalist, that they were entirely wrong. We are as staunch a nationalist organisation as any other.

The time has now changed and we were different from that of Hindu domination, when we were not sure of our future. Our ultimate goal now should be to consolidate our newly won freedom.

The Federation should give up its aloofness. Ours is a small Community and if we have to maintain our *status quo* we must co-operate with some political party in the coming Election.

This question will, however, be decided at the time of Elections in the light of the political situation then prevailing in the country.”

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I AM LIKE A ROCK WHICH DOES NOT MELT BUT TURNS THE COURSE OF RIVERS

Dr. Ambedkar's speech at Ramdasapur, Jullundar, Punjab on 27th October 1951, during Election Campaign.

He said,

“Dear brothers and sisters !

I had an idea to tour the Punjab before, but I could not come here and I have come to know that many people were collected in Jullundur and were disappointed to find that I had not come here. I hope you will excuse me for this inconvenience caused to you all. My inability to come here although caused much inconvenience to so many people, but, I was helpless and it was all due to the following reasons. Firstly, during my four years in the Congress Government, I had been overburdened with official work and could not find time to come here. Secondly, I was also not keeping good health during all those years and still I am not quite well. Thirdly, the Achhuts of the whole of India wish that I should tour the whole of India and speak to them. You can well understand that our country is such a big continent that it is not possible for a single man to tour the whole country even in two years. So I could not fulfil people's desire and could not come here when they wanted me. Therefore, I want that all our people should stand on their own legs and be united so that they may be able to weather away the storm without my assistance and not to press upon me too much.

A man should leave politics after the age of 55 years, because even Government gives notice to a Government servant after the age of 55 that he is unfit for service now and he should retire. But the politicians of the present age start their politics after the age of 55 years so that they may be able to earn their livelihood; does not matter whether they are able to serve the country or not. They have only one point in mind and that is to get something out of it for their own self. I have no selfish motives. I am not continuing in the politics simply for my own good ; but I am doing so for the sake of my community. I jumped

into politics in 1920 and since then I have taken part in politics and upto this time, I have spent thirty long years of my life in serving my community. Although I want to leave politics, but I have been compelled to remain in politics thinking the necessity of organising my community. Out of these thirty years, eight years I was Member of the Government. I do not know if there is any politician who has been in politics continuously for such long time. I remained in the Government for eight years and had I wished I could have remained for ever there. I am not proud of it but I know that with my qualifications at my back, nobody had power to expell me if I simply wanted to remain there. But the cause of my community necessitated my resignation from the membership of the Congress Government. I may assure you that I have always kept the well-being of my community in mind wherever I go.

When I came from England after getting my degree in Doctor of Philosophy, there was nobody in India with such qualifications. So when I reached Bombay and settled in the Mohalla from where I had gone, the Bombay Government after a great difficulty found my place, as nobody knew where I was residing, it was such an unpopular place, and approached me to accept the post of Professor of Political Economy. I refused the offer. If I had accepted that job, I would have been at least the Director of Public Instructions. I would have got three or four thousands of rupees per month. I refused the post because I had a great feeling for the service of my community which I could not have done remaining in that service. A Government servant, you know, cannot serve his community as he has to go according to the wishes of the Government and follow the policy of the Government.

After earning some money for two-three years, I again went to England for further studies and came back as a Barrister. When I returned to Bombay, I was again asked by Bombay Government to accept the post of a District Judge. I was offered Rs. 2,000 per month and promised that I will be a High Court Judge after some time. But I did not accept that also. My income although, from the other source at that time was only Rs. 200.

In 1942, I had to face two questions. One was to serve as a High Court Judge and the other was to join the Government of India as a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council. Had I joined the High Court, I would have received Rs. 5,000 per mensem as pay and Rs. 1,000 as pension after retirement but I did not do that. I entered politics. I got birth in *Achhut* community and will die for my community and the cause of my community is supreme to me. I did not join any party or body. I remained independent. While in the Congress Government, I remained true to my people. Many people thought that I had joined the Congress party as I had accepted the Cabinet Minister ship of the Congress Government. The critics pointed out that Dr. Ambedkar had joined Congress and why the Scheduled Castes people should continue to remain in the Scheduled Castes Federation. I explained about it at Lucknow that earth and stone are to different things and they can never mix together. Stone will remain the stone and the earth will remain the earth. I am like a rock (stone) which does not melt but turns the course of rivers. Wherever I may be, in whatever company I may find myself, I would never lose my separate identity. If anybody asks my co-operation, I would gladly give it for a worthy cause. I co-operate with the Congress Government for four years with all my might, and with the sincerity in the service of my mother-land. But during all these years I did not allow myself to merge into the Congress organisation.

We want to join that party which we think has sympathy with the Scheduled Caste people and which will take pains to redress the grievances of our people as we are taking. But there is not a single party which has sympathy with our people, all are selfish.

I have come here in connection with the elections. I may tell you that unless you are united you will not be successful. To be successful, one must be either powerful or rich. One of these is essential for our success. We have neither any money nor we are in majority. Marwadi and Banias do not have power but they have money. So they can purchase anything with that. They can purchase the police, as well as the Courts. Our people have

neither power nor money. Our people are in minority in the villages and they have always to live at the mercy of the Caste Hindus and other high caste people. Our people are put to all sorts of hardships and when they complain to police authorities, they are not heard. They are even abused when they complain. Under such circumstances, if we have achieved any thing, it is only some political rights. If we unite under the banner of the Scheduled Castes Federation, we can realise those rights and pull our community out of chaos.

But we can have one power and that is the political power. This power we must win. Armed with this power, we can protect the interest of our people.

Are you assured of this power in the freedom this country has gained? We were never against our country getting independence. But we wanted a straight answer to only one question. What will be our fate in free India? I posed that question before Gandhiji and other Congress leaders. Only one question is that what will be the position of our people in Swaraj? Whether we will remain the same Bhangis and Chamars as we are today; whether our children will not be admitted to the schools in the same way as it being done now; and our people will have to suffer as they are suffering now in the villages? What will happen to our people? At the Round Table Conference, this question was again raised whether we want *Swaraj* or not, I asked Gandhi who was the sponsor of this move, the same question that what will he do for the poor people if India got *Swaraj*. Whether we will be given safeguards as are proposed to be provided for Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and Anglo-Indians. But when the Scheduled Castes people were given separate rights in 1932, Gandhi started fast unto death until this provision of Separate Electorates for the Scheduled Castes was repealed. At that time, an agreement was reached between us but what is happening today is quite different to what was agreed to. He promised at that time that no candidates on Congress tickets will be put against those of the Scheduled Castes Federation. We want to send our people for the reserved seats but Congress Party is interfering with it. They are trying to put people for our

reserved seats who are fools and have selfish motives, who will be yesmen of the Congress. When any Brahmin or Baniya ask for the ticket of the Congress, he is asked one question. They want to know how many times he had gone to jail. I want to ask the Congress, why they do not ask the same question from Scheduled Castes people, who seek Congress ticket? And why only illiterate and unpopular people are selected by them.

There were 30 Scheduled Caste people in the Parliament. I ask them what have they done there. They never asked any question, they never moved any resolution and they never submitted a bill for consideration in the Parliament. If anybody comes from outside and sees that 30 Members of Parliament have not put up any grievance, he will think that our people are at right and do not require any special consideration. That is why we want to send our true representative who will put our grievances before the Assemblies secure redress.

From the very first election, we have been fighting against the Congress because it is unnecessarily interfering with our rights. Just see the leader of the Congress Party, Pandit Nehru. He has delivered two thousand speeches during the last 20 years, but he has never spoken about the welfare of the Scheduled Castes even once. From this you can judge what sympathy the Congress party can have for our people when its leader is so much adamant. Pandit Nehru is always for the Muslims. I do not want that Muslims should be neglected but I do want that Muslims should not enjoy at the expense of the other communities who need more protection. I heard that some people went to Pandit Nehru and requested that something should be done for the Scheduled Castes. But Pandit Nehru told them that everything has been done for them and they do not require any thing special now. At the time of Partition, when our people were asked by the Pakistan authorities to remain in Pakistan so that they may not have to do the menial duties themselves, I asked Pandit Nehru to do something for the evacuation of the poor Scheduled Castes. Pandit Nehru did not do anything. I sent two persons to Pakistan for the evacuation of our people and our Mahar Battalion was also sent there for protection of the poor Scheduled Castes. If Congress Leader has so much sympathy for our people, what Congress will do for us ?

There are 21 seats reserved for Scheduled Castes in the Punjab Assembly out of 120 seats and three reserved in the Union Parliament. I want to ask one question from all those parties which want to put candidates of their choice to these reserved seats and to show sympathy with the Scheduled Castes why they put the candidates against the reserved seats only and why they do not put those candidates to general seats ? If they are sincere, let them provide general seats for our people. All these parties want to take away from us what we have achieved after great hardships.

I want to tell you that without political power we cannot exist in this world. We have secured reservation of seats in the Provincial Assemblies and the Union Parliament but this is only for 10 years and nobody can say what will happen after 10 years. If our true representatives are not sent to Assemblies and Parliament, all our efforts will be in vain but if they are sent something will come out of it. Otherwise, we cannot have voice in the Government and local bodies.

The map of politics has changed in India now. First, Congress was fighting for *Swaraj* and that is why all the people joined it. And those who opposed the Congress were supposed to be anti-nationalist. But, now the condition has changed. See the Congress *Pahalwans* of Punjab. There was a time when Bhargava and Sachar were like brothers. They promised to be peaceful with each other. But, now they are the worst enemies. The last date for the filing of papers is 5th November and today is 27th October, but the list of Congress candidates has not so far been sent from Punjab. Both of these people are anxious to become Prime Ministers. The same thing is happening in Bihar. I am surprised to see that Congress Party which was so powerful at the time of partition, has so weakened in such a short period. Today, the man with Gandhi cap is not considered a gentleman. People say either Congress man or gentleman. Nobody can be both. Such is the position of Congress now. Congress has become old now and it is not able to fight with others and will die its natural death.

If you vote for the Scheduled Castes Federation, then I assure you that our candidates will be successful in the coming general elections. There is no doubt about it, the only thing is that you should vote for our true representatives. On the day of voting all men and women should leave their business and go to polls.

The reservation of seats for the Scheduled Castes is for 10 years only. I wanted that this reservation should remain for such time as Untouchability is there, but the Congress leader, late Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel opposed me. So the other persons who were there in the Committee also had to support Sardar because they belonged to his party. Therefore, we should try to send our true representatives to the Assemblies, so that they may safeguard our right and also try to secure this reservation after 10 years. The people who are trying to secure tickets from other parties forget that after 10 years, they will be nowhere. No other party will come to them to say that they would stand on their tickets. Today, other parties are only anxious to secure our votes and capture our seats and not that they are sympathising with us.

When the time came for the award of different symbols to different parties, our party, the Scheduled Castes Federation was also considered as an All India Party. Other parties gave their symbols as Oxen, Horses, Donkies etc., but for your convenience I made our symbol, the "*Elephant*" so that people may not find difficulty in recognising our party candidates. Elephant can be easily distinguished from other animals.

This time the cumulative voting system has been replaced with distributive system. Where there are reserved seats, the voters of that constituency can cast two votes, one to a candidate standing on reserved seat and the other to a candidate who is standing on general seat. We cannot cast two votes to one man. So we will have to make alliance with some party, whose voters will cast their second vote in our favour. The party with whom we enter into agreement will be declared in a few days and you must vote for that party and in return that party will support our candidates. In this way, our candidates will be successful. Our voting strength is not so strong and moreover there are joint electorate which makes our position more awkward. So we will have to make alliance with one party or the other.

At the end, I want to inform you that there is only one party which can do something for the Scheduled Castes and that is the Scheduled Castes Federation. I have built the house for you and it is for upto you to maintain it in proper order. I have planted the tree, if you water it, you will enjoy the fruits and you will be able to enjoy its shade, if not, you will have to sit in the sun. Our community will be ruined. So every Scheduled Caste should come under the banner of the Scheduled Castes Federation and make it more powerful. Only if we unite, we can achieve something. United we stand and divided we fall.

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FAILURE OF PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY WILL RESULT IN REBELLION, ANARCHY AND COMMUNISM

In this speech, delivered before the students' Parliament of the D.A.V. College, Jullundar City (Punjab) on October 28, 1951. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar lucidly explains the Parliamentary Democracy.

He said,

“Principal, the Hon’ble President and Hon’ble Speaker,

I am, indeed, thankful to you for the great honour done to me of asking me to address the special session of your Parliament. During my whole life, I have been, so to say, a wanderer, from subject to subject, from profession to profession. I began my career as a Professor of Political Economics in the Government Commerce College, Bombay, in 1919, after my return from England. But I soon felt that the Government service was no good for a man who wishes to do public service. A government servant is bound by rules of discipline. He is hampered at every stage in his work of public service. I then went back to England and qualified for Bar. After my return I practised for a short period and then accepted the post of the Principal of the Government Law College at Bombay. I came back to the profession of teaching. I worked as the Principal of the Law College for five years. Then, the 1935 Government of India Act came into being, which brought the popular legislatures in existence for the first time. I then thought of taking a jump into the politics and I left the service and took to politics. Since then I have alternatively been doing legal practice and serving the public. Legal practice and public service are, thus, the alternating currents in my life ; and I do not know on which current my life will end whether A.C. or D.C.

I am very fond of teaching profession. I am also very fond of students. I have dealt with them. I have lectured them in my life. This is the first opportunity I have got to address the students since my resignation from the Cabinet. I am very glad to talk to the students. A great lot of the future of this country must necessarily depend on the students of this country. Students is an intelligent part of the

community and they can shape the public opinion. I, therefore, take special pleasure in addressing you, the members of the Parliament, and I am really thankful for this opportunity given to me.

When your Principal wrote to me requesting me to address you, he did not indicate any particular subject. I also had nothing in my mind about the topic on which I shall speak to you this morning. But suddenly, as it usually happens in my case, at the flash of moment the subject became clear to me, and I have decided to speak a few words with you on the subject of Parliamentary Government. The time at my disposal is very short and I will, therefore, be able to give only a brief analysis of the subject.

During the discussion in the Constituent Assembly there was a variety of opinion as regards the nature of the Consitution that we should have. Some preferred British system ; some American system. There were others who did not want either of these two types of Government. But after a long discussion, a large majority of members came to a conclusion that the system of the Parliamentary Government as it is in Britain is best suited to our country.

There are some sections of people who do not like Parliamentary Government. Communists want the Russian type of Government. The Socialists are also against the present Constitution of India. They are agitating against it. They have declared that if they come to power, they will modify it. Personally speaking, I am very greatly attached to the Parliamentary System of Government. We must understand what it means and we must preserve it in the Constitution.

What is meant by Parliamentary Government ? There is a book on English Constitution by Walter Bagehot. It is, indeed, a classic treatise. It was later expanded by other authorities on Constitutional Government like Laski and others. He has put the conception of the Parliamentary Government in one sentence. He says Parliamentary Government means Government by discussion and not by fisticuffs. You will always find in British system of Government that they hardly ever resort to fisticuffs while taking any decision. The decision is always taken after discussion. Nobody introduces element of disturbance in British Paliament.

Look at the French Politics. Decision are arrived at more than often by knocking knock-out blows. You will find that this system is hardly adequate to those not born in that system. It is an alien institution to them. We must learn, understand and make it a success.

Parliamentary Democracy is unknown to us at present. But India, at one time had Parliamentary Institutions. India was far more advanced in ancient times. If you go through the '*Suktas*' of *Mahaparinibbana*, you will find ample evidence in support of my point. In these '*Suktas*' it is stated that while Bhagwan Buddha was dying at Kusinara (Kusinagara) a message to the effect was sent to the Mallas who were sitting in session at that time. They were devoted to Parliamentary Institutions. When they received the message about Buddha, they decided that they shall not close the session, but would carry on with their work and will go to Kusinara after finishing of the business of the Parliament. There are innumerable references in our literature to prove that Parliamentary System of Government was not unknown to us.

There are many rules about Parliamentary Procedure. May's Parliamentary practice is generally followed. One rule that is invariably followed everywhere is that there can be no discussion without a motion. That is why there is no discussion on a question. This rule was also practised in our land in ancient times. The system of secret ballot now in vogue is also not new to us. It was followed in Buddhist *Sanghas*. They had the ballot papers which they called, '*Salapatraka Grahakas*'. Unfortunately, we have lost all this past heritage that was good. Historians of India must tackle this question as to why these Parliamentary Institutions disappeared from our land. But I find that they cannot or do not want to find out the reasons for it. Ancient India was the master of the World. There was such intellectual freedom in ancient India as was nowhere else to be found. Then why this ancient civilisation went to dogs ? Why was India subjected to autocratic monarchies ? We were familiar with Parliamentary Institutions. We know about votes, voting, committees and other things related to Parliamentary Institutions. Today, Parliamentary System of Government is alien to us. If we go to village, we will find that the villagers do not understand what

is vote, what is party. They find it something strange, something alien. It is, therefore, a great problem as to how to preserve this institution. We will have to educate public, we will have to tell them the benefits of Parliamentary Democracy and of Parliamentary System of Government.

We know what Bagehot means by Parliamentary Government. But today his definition is of no use, it is utterly inadequate. There are three main things inherent in the Parliamentary System of Government.

Parliamentary Government means negations of hereditary rule. No person can claim to be hereditary ruler. Whoever wants to rule must be elected by the people from time to time. He must obtain the approval of the people. Hereditary rule has no sanction in the Parliamentary System of Government.

Secondly, any law, any measure applicable to the public life of the people must be based on the advice of the people chosen by the people. No single individual can presume the authority that he knows everything, that he can make the laws and carry the Government. The laws are to be made by the representatives of the people in the Parliament. They are the people who can advise the men in whose name the law is proclaimed. That is the difference between the monarchical system of Government and the Democratic System of Government. In monarchy, the affairs of the people are carried on in the name of a monarch and under the authority of a monarch. In democracy, the affairs of the public are carried on in the name of the head of the State : but the laws and the executive measures are the authority on which the Government is carried on. The head of the State is the titular head ; he is merely a symbol. He is a consecrated '*Murti*.' He can be worshipped but he is not allowed to carry out the Government of the Country. The Government of the country is carried out, though in his name, by the elected representatives of the people.

Thirdly and lastly, Parliamentary System of the Government means that at a stated period those who want to advise the head of the State must have the confidence of the people in themselves renewed. In Britain, formerly, the elections to the Parliament were every seven years. The Chartists agitated against this. They wanted

annual elections. The motive behind this agitation was very praiseworthy, indeed. It would have been best in the interests of the people if annual election were held, had it been possible, of course. But, Parliamentary elections are very costly affairs. So some sort of compromise was arrived at and five years period was supposed to be a responsible period at which the Legislators and the Ministers were to go back to the People and obtain the fresh renewal of their confidence.

This is also not enough. Parliamentary System of Government is much more than Government by discussion. There are two pillars on which the Parliamentary System of Government rests. These are the fulcrums on which the mechanism works. Those two pillars are (i) an opposition and (ii) free and fair elections.

For the last 20 or 30 years, we acclimatised to one single political party. We have nearly forgotten the necessity and importance of 'opposition' for the fair working of Parliamentary Democracy. We are continuously told that opposition is an evil. Here again we are forgetting what the past history has to teach us. You know that there were '*Nibandhkaras*' to interpret the Vedas and Smrities. They used to begin their comments on '*Slokas*' and '*Sutras*' by stating firstly the '*Purva Paksha*' the one side of the questions. They used to follow up by giving the '*Uttar Paksha*' - the other side. By this they wanted to show us that the question raised was not an easy question : it is a question where there is dispute, discussion and doubt. Then they used to give what they termed as '*Adhikaran*' where they used to criticise both the '*Pakshas*'. Finally, they gave the '*Siddhant*', their own decisions. Here from we can find that all our ancient teachers believed in two party system of Government.

One important thing in the Parliamentary Democracy is that people should know the other side, if there are two sides to a question. Hence, a functional opposition is required. Opposition is the key to a free political life. No democracy can do without it. Britain and Canada, the two exponents of Parliamentary Systems of Governments recognize this important fact and in both countries the leader of 'opposition' is paid salary by the Government. They regard the 'opposition' as an essential thing. People of these countries believe that the 'opposition' should be as much alive as the Government. The Government may suppress the facts, the Government may have only one-sided propaganda. The people have provision against this eventuality in these two countries.

Now the question arises as to whether there is any desire on the part of the party in power to permit any opposition to be created. Congress does not want any 'opposition'. Congress is attempting to gather people of sundry views under one canopy. I ask you whether this is a desirable trend in the political life of this country ?

Free and fair elections is the other pillar on which Parliamentary Democracy rests. Free and fair elections are necessary for the transfer of power from one section of the community to the other in a peaceful manner and without any bloodshed. In olden times, if a king died, there was at least one murder in the palace. Revolution used to take place in palace resulting in murders before the new king used to take the reigns of his country into his authority. This has been the history of India. Elections must be completely free and fair. People must be left to themselves to choose those whom they want to send to the Legislatures.

What about free and fair elections ? We must not lose sight of the fact that 'Big Business' is trying to play a great part in political life of this country. The amount that is being contributed to the Congress on behalf of the 'Big Business' is very dangerous thing. If moneyed people try to influence the elections by contributing to the election fund of any political party, what will be the result. If the party to which they have supported financially comes into power, they will naturally try to extract concessions for themselves either by modifying the present legislation or by influencing the party in power to legislate in such a manner as would be beneficial to their interests. I ask you gentlemen, whether under these circumstances there is any hope left for the Parliamentary System of Government to do any good to the country. I would like you to refer to the Mahabharata. During the battle between the Pandvas and the Kaurvas, Bhishma and Drona were on the side of Kaurvas. Pandvas were in the right and the Kaurvas were in the wrong. Bhishma admitted this. When somebody asked Bhishma as to why he was supporting the Kaurvas if he found the Pandvas to be in the right. Bhishma replied that memorable sentence :

"I must be loyal to the salt : If I eat the food of the Kaurvas, I must take their side even if they might be in the wrong."

Today the same thing is happening. Congress is accepting the financial help of the Banias, Marwaries and other multi-millionaires. Congress is eating their food and it follows, therefore, naturally that Congress will have to take the side of these 'Big Business' at all crucial times.

We also find that the Government servants are influencing the elections in favour of the party which is feeding them and their dependants. No less a personality than Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, at the inaugural session of the Bhartiya Jan Sangh at Delhi recently, openly charged the Government servants of helping the Congress and thereby nullifying the elections from being free and fair. Under these circumstances, do you, gentlemen, think that there is any hope for the Parliamentary Democracy to succeed.

If Parliamentary Democracy fails in this country and it is bound to fail for the reasons mentioned by me, the only result will be rebellion, anarchy and Communism. If the people in power do not realize that people will not tolerate hereditary authority, then this country is doomed, Either Communism will come, Russia having the sovereignty over our country, destroying individual liberty and our independence or the section of the people who are disgruntled for the failure of the party in power will start rebellion and anarchy will prevail. Gentlemen, I want you to take note of these eventual certainties and if you wish that Parliamentary System of Government and Parliamentary Democracy prevail in this country, if you are satisfied that we will be assured of our liberty of thought, speech and action, if we should preserve our independence, if we cherish the inherent right of individual liberty, then it is your duty as students, as intelligent community of our country, to strive your utmost to cherish this Parliamentary System of Government in its true spirit and work for it.

Gentlemen, I have done. I thank you for having given me this opportunity to address this August gathering.¹



¹ : Lokrajya: Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Special Number, April 16, 1981. Pp. 45-48.

IF OUR TRUE REPRESENTATIVES ARE NOT ELECTED, INDEPENDENCE WILL BE A FARCE

Dr. Ambedkar's Speech during Election campaign in Ludhiana, on 28th-October 1951.

He said,

Dear brothers and sisters,

This is the first time that I have visited Ludhiana to speak to our people. Many times before I proposed to visit this place but due to certain unavoidable circumstances, I could not do so. What an auspicious occasion it is that you all have gathered here !

You know in two-three months elections are going to be held in which many parties are taking part. The Scheduled Castes Federation is also putting its candidates for the election. We will contest all the seats reserved for the Scheduled Castes in the State Assemblies and the Union Parliament and also some general seats where we have sufficient number of votes. I hope that our candidates will be successful. Our candidates' success depends mostly upon our own people. If all our people voted for our candidates, I am sure of our success, I would therefore urge that all the Scheduled Caste people should vote for the candidates put by the Scheduled Castes Federation, which is the only organisation of the Scheduled Castes and other Backward Classes.

I want to tell you how the British people have deceived during the period of their rule over India. They were successful in establishing their Raj in Hindustan although they were hundreds of miles away. First of all when the East India Company came to India its purpose was only to do business but by and by the Britishers became anxious to establish their *Raj* here. How were they able to achieve that objective ? They had no army of their own in India. Nobody has so far been able to tell how the Britishers were able to subdue all the *Rajas* and *Maharajas* of India without army of their own. I am now going to answer this question. The British people became the rulers of India with the help of the Scheduled Castes people, who were called the Untouchables; who were illiterate and with whom the

treatment of the High Caste Hindus was very degrading. They had no means of livelihood and were always at the mercy of these High Caste people. Thus, they had no alternative but to join the British army and earn their livelihood. I do not want to impress upon you that what has happened was good but I want to emphasise something else. I want to point out that even the people whom we helped to establish their power in India have treated our people in such a way. Our people died in the army for the sake of these Britishers. But what they got in return ? Who were benefitted ? In spite of the fact that the Scheduled Caste, people helped the Britishers, Brahmins and other High Castes people derived full benefit out of it. The Britishers educated their children and gave all financial assistance to them whereas our people were not paid any attention. This resulted in the well-being of these High Castes at the expense of the poor Scheduled Castes who remained as before. This is the reason why up-til-now there are no well-to-do Scheduled Castes families; why their children are not educated and why they are generally backward. Consequently, the important posts in the Army, Police and other department of administration are in the hands of these High Caste people at present. The British people should have done something for the betterment of our people but they did not do anything for us. In 1857 when there was mutiny what were the causes of that ? Because the Britishers failed to do anything for our people, our people in the army had to revolt against them. When the mutiny was subdued, and it was found that our people in the army had revolted against the Britishers, they stopped recruiting our people in the army any further. Instead Hindus and Rajputs were recruited in the army. Thus the main source of income of our people lost. In 1947 when the British people left India, our conditions remained the same as were before they came to India. At the time of transfer of power to Indians, Britishers handed over all power to the High Caste people. We did not get anything. We were left at the mercy of these brutes.

From this you can well understand the way in which other people treated the Scheduled Castes. This is the reason, we have remained so backward up-to-now. I want to ask now one question, whether you still want to remain backward and work as slaves in the hands of these high caste people ? When