CHAPTER VI

A FALSE CLAIM

I

THE Congress has been loudly and insistently claiming that it is the only political organization in India which is representative of the people of India. At one time it used to claim that it represents the Musalmans also. This it does not now do, at any rate not so loudly and insistently. But so far as the Untouchables are concerned the Congress maintains most vehemently that it does represent them. On the other hand, the non-Congress political parties have always denied this claim. This is particularly true of the Untouchables who have never hesitated to repudiate the Congress claim to represent them.

In this rivalry the Congress has been able to beat down the Untouchables and the other non-Congress Parties by the sheer strength of the resources in publicity and propaganda. The result has been that most foreigners interested in Indian affairs have become infected by this propaganda, and have come to believe in the validity of the Congress claim. So long as the world had to depend upon nothing but propaganda, the Congress could very easily fool the foreigner and there was no help for those who denied the Congress claim to represent all. They had no means of coping with the situation. But since the Election of 1937 to the Provincial Legislatures the situation has been altered. Instead of depending upon general statements backed by propaganda, one can now determine the issue in terms of seats and votes which is a more concrete measure of appraisement than mere propaganda.

What do the election returns show ? What is the total number of seats captured by the Congress ? What is the total number of votes secured by the Congress ?

First, let us ascertain the number of seats captured by the Congress. Soon after the elections had taken place, the Congress held a Convention of all those who were elected to the Provincial Legislatures on the Congress ticket, which met

in New Delhi on March 19, and 20, 1987. In that connection, the Congress issued a bulletin in which their names are given. Taking that information as accurate, the following appears to be the strength of the Congress in each Provincial Legislature :—

Table 6

Congress Strength in Provincial Assemblies

Province	*Total Strength of the Assembly*	*Congress Strength in the Assembly*
Assam	108	35
Bengal	250	60
Bihar	152	95
Bombay	175	85
C. P. and Berar	112	70
Madras	215	159
Orissa	60	36
Punjab	175	18
Sind	60	8
U.P	228	134
N.W.F.P.	50	19
Total	1,585	719

Table 7

Congress Strength in Provincial Councils

Province	*Total Strength of the Council*	*Congress Strength in the Council*
Assam	18	*Nil*
Bengal	57	10
Bihar	26	8
Bombay	26	14
Madras	46	26
Total	173	58

These tables show that taking the two Houses together the Congress secured 777 seats out of a total of 1,758. The Congress obviously is not a majority party. It did not secure even half the number of seats.

This is the position of the Congress in terms of the number of seats. What is the position of the Congress in terms of voting strength ? The following figures will show that even in point of voting strength the Congress came out as a minority.

Table 8

Abstract of Votes Cast in the Election distributed as between Congress and Non-Congress Parties

Province		*Total Votes cast*	*Votes cast in favour of Congress*	*Votes cast in favour of Non-Congress*
Madras	Assembly ...	4,327,734	2,658,966	1,668,768
	Council ...	33,511	16,907	16,604
Bombay	Assembly ...	3,408,308	1,568,093	1,840,215
	Council ...	23,730	9,420	14,310
Bengal ...	Assembly ...	3,475,730	1,055,900	2,419,830
	Council ...	5,593	1,489	4,104
U.P.	Assembly ...	3,362,736	1,899.325	1,463,411
	Council ...	9,795	1,580	8,215
Bihar ...	Assembly ...	1,477,668	992,642	485,026
	Council ...	4,318	96	4,222
Punjab ...	Assembly ...	1,710,934	181.-265	1,529,669
C. P. ...	Assembly ...	1,317,461	678,265	639,196
Assam	Assembly ...	522,332	129,218	393,114
	Council ...	2,623	Nil	2,623
N.W.F.P.	Assembly ...	179,529	43,845	135,684
Orissa	Assembly ...	304,749	198,680	106,069
Sind	Assembly ...	333,589	18,944	314,645
Total	...	20,500,340	9,454,635	11,045,705

It is not enough to know these figures. They must be read in the light of other circumstances. The first such circumstance is the level of the franchise. The other is the relative position of the two parties in the election. Without taking these into account it would not be possible to understand the full significance of the election results. As to franchise, it is very high, and the electorate, compared with the total population, is indeed very small. How small a part of the total population it formed will be seen from the comparative figures given in the following table:—

Table 9

Province	*Population (1931)*	*Electorate*
Madras	47,193,602	6,145,450
Bombay and Sind	26,398,997	3,249,500
Bengal	51,087,338	6,695,483
U.P	49,614,833	5,335,309
Punjab	24,018,639	2,686,094
Bihar and Orissa	42,329,583	2,932,454
C.P.	17,990,937	1,741,364
Assam	9,247,857	815,341
N.WJ.P.	4,684,364	246,609
Total	272,566,150	29,847,604

Only about ten per cent of the population was given the right to vote. The high franchise made the electorate a hive of the middle and the intellectual classes, both of which were intensely pro-Congress. Coming to the relative position of the Congress and the Non-Congress Parties, the following points call for special notice. On the Congress side there were massed all the sinews of war, money and organization. The Non-Congress candidates were without a party chest and had no organization. The Congress candidates were the blue boys of the public. They were enemies of British Imperialism, out to achieve freedom and independence of the country. Gaol life had invested the Congress candidates with the halo of martyrdom. As a rule no one was selected as a Congress candidate who had not gone to gaol. The Non-Congress candidates were represented by the congress Press—and as I have said there is no other press in India—as the showboys of the British, with no record of service to or sacrifice for the country, agents of British Imperialism, enemies of the country, job-hunters, fellows out to sell the interests of the country for a mess of pottage and so on. There was another factor which told in favour of the Congress candidates and against the Non-Congress candidates. The Congress had boycotted the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms of 1920 and the Congress candidates had not to answer for any act of commission or omission in regard to the administration of the country. The Non-Congress candidates on the other hand were drawn from those who had worked the Reforms and had to answer for many acts of omission and commission, which is the lot of all those who have the courage to take upon their shoulders the responsibilities of administration. The Non-Congress candidates were accused of having made the places dirty and the Congress candidates were proclaimed as angels going to clean the augean stables. In a situation like this, any one, knowing how the dice was loaded in favour of the Congress, cannot but feel surprised at the sorry figure the Congress cut in the election. With all its resources, prestige and public sympathy the Congress should have swept the polls. But it did not even get fifty per cent of the seats or the votes.

Is there any doubt that the Congress claim to represent all classes and communities is a hollow claim with no foundation in fact ?

II

LET me next proceed to examine the Congress claim to, represent the Untouchables. This claim also can now be determined by reference to the results of the elections that took place in 1937. A correct understanding of the results of the electoral contests between Congress and the Untouchables, I fear, will not be possible to those who have no knowledge of the electoral plan devised to give representation to the Untouchables. I therefore feel it necessary to explain in the first instance the Indian Electoral system, particularly for the benefit of the foreigner. It may be described by reference to the four elements of an Electoral System, namely, (1) Electorates which is the Indian term for constituencies, (2) Right to vote, (3) Right to stand as a candidate for election and (4) Rules for determining who is a successful candidate.

1. There are two sorts of Electorates recognized by the Government of India Act, 1935,
   (1) Non-Territorial.
   (2) Territorial.
2. Non-Territorial Electorates are Electorates which are designed to give representation to special interests such as Landlords, Chambers of Commerce, Trade Unions, etc.
3. Territorial Electorates fall into three categories :—
   (*i*) Separate Territorial Electorates known in their abbreviated form as Separate Electorates.
   (*ii*) General Territorial Electorates.
   (*iii*) Joint Territorial Electorates with Reserved Seats, commonly spoken of as Joint Electorates.
4. Separate Electorates are Communal Electorates. They are designed to give representation to specified Communities, namely, Muslims, Indian Christians, Europeans and Anglo-Indians. The voters of each of these Communities in a given area are grouped into one Electorate, separate from the rest. They elect a voter of their Community as their representative exclusively by their own votes. The governing feature of a separate electorate is that in an election through a separate electorate only voters of a Community can vote and stand for election. If it is a Muslim Electorate the voter and the

candidate must be a Musalman; if it is a Christian Electorate the voter and the candidate must be a Christian and so on. The election is decided by a majority of votes cast by voters of the particular community.

5. A General Electorate is the normal usual form of the electorate, an electorate which comprises of voters of all communities living in an area but which are outside the system of Separate Electorates. It is called a General Electorate because it is an electorate in which neither community nor religion finds any recognition. It is an electorate of the Rest i.e. other than Muslims, Indian Christians, Europeans and Anglo-Indians. In a General Electorate :—

   (*i*) No voter who is in a Separate Electorate has a right to vote in or stand for election.

   (*ii*) Every voter who is on its electoral roll has a right to vote and to stand for election without reference to his caste, creed or community.

   (*iii*) The result of the election is determined by a simple majority of votes cast.

6. A Joint Electorate is a cross between Separate Electorate and the General Electorate. It has some things in common with Separate Electorate and the General Electorate. But it also differs from both in other particulars. The points of agreement and of difference are set out below :—

   (*i*) *Joint Electorate compared with Separate Electorate :*

      (1) Joint Electorate is akin to Separate Electorate in as much as both aim to earmark a seat for a particular community.

      (2) Joint Electorate differs from a Separate Electorate in two respects :—

         (*a*) In a Separate Electorate the right to vote in the election is confined to voters of the community for which the seat is earmarked, while in a Joint Electorate, though the seat is earmarked for a particular community, in other words though the right to stand is confined to a member of a particular community, the right to vote in the election for that seat is open to other communities which make up the General Electorate.

(*b*) In both cases the poll is declared on the basis of majority votes. But in the case of a separate electorate the majority is and must be of the voters belonging to the same community as that of the candidate, while in the case of a joint electorate majority need not be of the same community as that of the candidate.

(*ii*) *Joint Electorate compared with General Electorate:*—

(1) A Joint electorate is akin to a General Electorate in as much as in both a voter is free to vote for any candidate standing for a general Constituency.

(2) A Joint Electorate differs from a Separate Electorate in two respects :—

(*a*) A General Electorate may be a single member electorate. But a Joint Electorate must at least be a two-member electorate one general and one reserved.

(*b*) In a General Electorate no seat is earmarked for any community. But in a Joint Electorate one at least must be reserved.

7. *Special Features of Joint Electorate.*

A Joint Electorate with Reserved Seats is essentially a General Electorate with the following distinguishing features:—

(1) A General Electorate may be a single member electorate. But a Joint Electorate must necessarily be a plural member Electorate.

(2) In a General Electorate the seat or seats to be filled by Election are open to all, and all communities not enclosed in separate electorates are entitled to contest and the result of the election is determined by majority of the votes polled by the candidates without reference to community of the voter or the candidate. But in a Joint Electorate at least one seat is reserved for some particular community which means that the right to stand as a candidate for such reserved seat is restricted to members of that community.

(3) While the right to stand in a Joint Electorate is restricted, the right to vote is unrestricted and all

voters in the General Electorates, i.e., even voters of communities other than the one for which the seat is reserved are free to vote for the election of the candidate for the Reserved Seat.

(4) In declaring the result of the election to the reserved seat, there is no requirement that the successful candidate must have obtained a specified quantum of votes of the voters of this community. The rule is that the candidate of the community for which the seat is reserved if there is only one or if there be more than one candidate then the one who polls the highest number of votes must be declared to be elected even if another candidate belonging to the general community has secured a greater number of votes than the community's candidate.

Such is the Electoral system which obtains in India. The system made applicable to the Untouchables is the one referred to as the system of Joint Electorates with Reserved Seats and described under 7 above. To give effect to the principle of reservation for the Untouchables what is done is to pick out a requisite number of General Electorates, convert them into plural member electorates and reserve in each such electorate one or two seats for the Scheduled Castes. Different Provinces have different number of such Joint Electorates. Their actual number is determined by the number of seats allotted to the Scheduled Castes in the Provincial Legislature and by the number of seats reserved for them in each Joint Electorate. Attention may also be drawn to some features of the plan, which from the point of view of results are of crucial character.

The Joint Electorate is a general electorate. But it must not on that account be supposed that it is a constituency consisting of the generality of voters. As has already been pointed out, the Muslims, Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians and Europeans have been given separate electorates and consequently, the Muslim, Indian Christian, Anglo-Indian and European voters are excluded from a Joint Electorate. The result is that the Joint Electorate is a constituency in which the only voters who are included are those belonging to the Scheduled Castes, Hindus, Parsis and Jews. As the Parsis and Jews are negligible except in Bombay, the Joint Electorate consists of Hindus and Scheduled Castes only.

Although the General Electorate selected for reserving a seat for the Untouchables may be bigger than a two-member constituency and although it is open to reserve more than one seat for the Untouchables in one General Electorate, in all provinces the general plan is to select a two-member General Electorate, and to reserve one seat for the Hindus and one seat for the Scheduled Castes. It is only in Bengal there are three constituencies in which two seats are reserved for the Scheduled Castes. The Joint Electorate is thus a linked constituency. Two features of this Joint Electorate should be noted: (1) The Hindu voters in a Joint Electorate are almost always in a majority, if not in an overwhelming majority and the Scheduled Castes voters are almost always in a minority, if v not in a hopeless minority. (2) A Hindu voter can vote for the election of a Scheduled Caste candidate standing for the seat reserved for the Scheduled Castes and a Scheduled Caste voter can vote for the election of a Hindu candidate standing for the Hindu seat.

Under the system what are the probabilities ? Will the Scheduled Castes be able to elect a Scheduled Caste candidate who has their confidence to the seat reserved for them or will the Hindus be able to elect a Scheduled Caste candidate who is their tool and who has no confidence of the Scheduled Castes ? The probabilities will be determined by two considerations: (1) by the number of seats reserved for the Hindus and (2) by the nature of the political organizations prevailing among the Hindus. If there is only one seat reserved for the Hindus and if the Hindus are so organized that they can prevent a contest for their seat and avoid frittering away their votes then it is absolutely certain that the Hindu nominee from the Scheduled Castes will win. The reason is that the Hindus who have a larger voting strength will find a surplus of votes which they do not need for election to their seat and which they can bestow upon their nominee from the Scheduled Castes and help him to win the seat reserved for the Scheduled Castes. The system of joint electorate and reserved seats which is in operation is a system of two member constituency. The Hindus under the Congress are so completely organized that there is no possibility of an electoral contest and consequent waste of votes. The result is that the system helps the Hindus to win the reserved seats and works against the Scheduled Castes. The Hindus are greatly aided in this matter by reason of the fact that for

winning the seat reserved for the Scheduled Castes in a Joint Electorate it is not necessary that the majority of voters should belong to the Scheduled Castes for whom the seat is reserved.

How these weaknesses in the system of joint electorate were exploited by the Congress in the Elections which took place in 1937, will be explained later on. For the moment, I am only drawing attention to the Electoral plan devised for the purpose of giving representation to the Scheduled Castes and how vulnerable some of its features are.

III

We may now proceed to examine the Election Returns. It may be well to begin by asking a simple question: What do Congressmen mean when they say that the Election of 1937 shows that the Congress represents the Untouchables ? A clarification is necessary, because quite obviously the question can have two meanings. It may mean that those Untouchable candidates who stood on the Congress ticket for seats reserved for the Untouchables were elected as against those Untouchable candidates who did not stand on the Congress ticket. It may also mean that more votes were cast by the Untouchable voters in favour of those Untouchable candidates who stood on the Congress ticket than other Untouchable candidates. I propose to examine the returns from both points of view.

The results of the Election, in terms of seats won, have already been presented. It is not necessary to repeat those figures here. It was shown that out of 151 seats the Congress won 78. One cannot say that this result of the contest between the Congress and the Untouchables is a strong piece of evidence : to support the Congress claim that it represents the Untouchables. If the Congress got 78 the Untouchables got 73. It was a neck to neck race.

Let us examine the claim of the Congress to represent the Untouchables in term of votes cast in favour of the Congress Untouchable candidates. The total number of votes cast by the Untouchable Voters in the election of 1987 numbered 1,586,456.

The following table shows how they were distributed, now many were cast in favour of the Congress Untouchable

candidates and how many in favour of Non-Congress Untouchable candidates :

Table 10

Province	*Voting by Untouchable Voters*		
	In favour of Congress	*Against Congress*	*Total of Untouchable Votes cast in the Election*
United Provinces	52,909	79,571	132,180
Madras	126,152	195,464	321,616
Bengal	59,646	624,797	684,443
Central Provinces	19,507	115,354	134,861
Bombay	12,971	158,076	171,047
Bihar	8,654	22,187	30,841
Punjab	*Nil*	69,126	69,126
Assam	5,320	22,437	27,757
Orissa	5,878	8,707	14,585
Total	290,737	1,295,719	1,586,456

It is well-known that the number of seats captured by a party is not always in proportion to the number of votes cast in favour of the party and often a party carries a majority of seats with a minority of votes. This is particularly true where the single member constituency system prevails as it does in India. The real strength is measured by the number of votes secured by the party. Applying this test, it is clear that out of 1,586,456 votes only 290,737 i.e., eighteen per cent have been cast in favour of the Congress. Eighty-two per cent have been against the Congress. Can there be any evidence more conclusive against the Congress claim to represent the Untouchables ? Congressmen may not accept voting strength as a measuring rod. They may continue to base the claim of the Congress to represent the Untouchables on the ground of seats captured. No sane man will look upon 78 out of 151 or majority of five as a victory worth talking about. As a matter of fact the Congress claim even on the basis of seats is futile. For, a further analysis of the Election Returns shows that the Congress far from capturing a majority of seats got only a minority of seats reserved for the Scheduled Castes.

If the credit side of the Congress is to be real and not bogus, then the following deductions must be made from the total of 78 which the Congress has won:

(1) Seats won by the Congress with the help of Hindu voters and which if left to be decided by the votes of the Untouchables only would have been lost by the Congress.

(2) Seats won by the Congress not by reason of an absolute majority but by reason of the splitting of the Untouchable votes due to too many Non-Congress Untouchable Candidates having stood to contest the seat against the Congress Untouchable candidate.

(3) Seats which, it was in the power of Untouchables to win, if they had used their votes in the election to the seats reserved for them and not cast them away in the election of candidates contesting the general or non-reserved seats.

I cannot see how a fair minded person can object to these deductions being made. A candidate whose majority is due to votes of persons other than Untouchables has no right to say that he is a representative of the Untouchables and the Congress cannot claim to represent the Untouchables through him merely because he belongs to the Untouchables and stood on a Congress ticket. An Untouchable candidate whose majority is the result of split in the camp of his opponents and who if there had been no split would have lost, cannot be taken as a real representative of the Untouchables and the Congress cannot claim to represent the Untouchables merely because he belongs to the Untouchables and stood on the Congress ticket. A candidate for a seat reserved for the Untouchables who succeeds in an election in which a large majority of the electors have not played their part cannot be a representative of the electors merely because the seat is an Untouchable seat. Untouchable seats captured by such Untouchable candidates must also be deducted from the total number of seats won by the Congress. The only Untouchable seats which the Congress can claim to have won are those which it has won, exclusively by the votes of the Untouchable voters. All the rest must be deducted. The following table gives the distribution of the seats reserved for the Scheduled Castes and won by the Congress and the circumstances responsible for its success.

Table 11

Analysis of Circumstances which helped Congress to Win the Seats it has Captured

Province	*Number of Seats won by The Congress*				
	With Hindu Votes	*Without Hindu Votes*	*Due to Splitting of Scheduled Castes Votes*	*By want of interest shown by Scheduled Castes in the Election to Scheduled Castes Seats*	*Total*
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
United Provinces ...	3	6	3	4	16
Madras	5	15	4	2	26
Bengal	—	4	—	2	6
Central Provinces ...	1	5	—	1	7
Bombay	1	1	1	1	4
Bihar	1	3	—	7	11
Punjab	—	—	—	—	—
Assam	1	2	—	1	4
Orissa	1	2	—	1	4
Total	13	38	8	19	78

These are the facts revealed by a study of the Election Returns. They are incontrovertible and must be accepted. Judged by the test of voting the Congress far from representing the Untouchables, the Untouchables are proved to have repudiated the Congress. Judged by the test of seats, the Congress has only won 38 seats out of the total of 151. The account shows that 73 seats it failed to win, 13 it won by Hindu Votes, 8 as a result of split due to too many Untouchables standing against the Congress Untouchable candidate and 19 on account of the foolishness of the Untouchables in not taking sufficient interest in the election to the seats reserved for them.

The following table specifies the Constituencies where such phenomena have occurred. They are classified under three heads and shown Province-wise and referred to by their serial number as shown in the Appendices.

*Table 12**

Provinces	*Analysis of Scheduled Castes Constituencies.*		
	Serial Numbers of Constituencies in which Congress won with Hindu Votes	*Serial Numbers of Constituencies in which Congress won because of splitting of Scheduled Castes Votes*	*Serial Numbers of Constituencies in which Congress won because the Scheduled Castes were indifferent*
United Provinces ...	1, 3 & 4	8, 9 & 10	11,13, 14 & 18
Madras	1, 22, 23, 24 & 25	8, 12, 15 & 17	4 & 21
Bengal	*Nil*	*Nil*	6 & 7
Central Provinces ...	6	Nil	15
Bombay	1	14	3
Bihar	11	Nil	2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 & 13
Punjab	Nil	Nil	Nil
Assam	1	Nil	4
Orissa	6	Nil	2

The claim that the Congress represents the Untouchables is thus a false claim from beginning to end. It is a myth which in the light of the results of the election stands completely exploded.

The results of the election reveal other interesting facts which are summarised in the following two tables :

Table 13

Election to Scheduled Castes Seats

Provinces	*Contested*	*Uncontested*	*Total*
United Provinces	15	5	20
Madras	26	4	30
Bengal	28	2	30
Central Provinces	19	1	20
Bombay	14	1	15
Bihar	6	9	15
Punjab	6	2	8
Assam	6	1	7
Orissa	4	2	6
Total	124	27	151

* For details, see Appendix II passim.

Table 14

Scheduled Castes Seats won by the Congress

Provinces	*On Contest*	*Without Contest*	*Total*
United Provinces	14	2	16
Madras	24	2	26
Bengal	6	*Nil*	6
Central Provinces	6	1	7
Bombay	3	1	4
Bihar	4	7	11
Punjab	Nil	Nil	Nil
Assam	3	1	*4*
Orissa	4	*Nil*	*4*
Total	64	*14*	78

Table 13 shows what keen interest the Untouchables have taken in the election to the seats reserved for them. Out of 151 as many as 121 were contested. This disproves the allegation that used to be made that it was no use giving political rights to the Untouchables as they had neither political education nor political consciousness. Table 14 shows that the Untouchables far from looking upon the Congress as their friend and ally have regarded it as their political enemy No. 1. They have very seldom allowed the entry of the Congress in the election to the seat reserved for the Untouchables to go unchallenged. In most of the cases where the Congress had put up an Untouchable candidate on the Congress ticket for a seat reserved for the Untouchables, the Untouchables did not meekly surrender the seat to the Congress but came forward to contest the election by putting up their own candidate on a Non-Congress ticket. Out of the 78 candidates put up by the Congress for the Scheduled Castes seats as many as 64 were contested.

Table 15

Province	*Number of Constituencies classified according to the ratio of Scheduled Castes Voters to every 100 of General i.e. Hindu Voters*											*Remarks*
	10 and Below	*11—15*	*16—20*	*21—25*	*26—30*	*31—35*	*36—40*	*41—45*	*46—50*	*Above* 50*	*Total*	
United Provinces.	*Nil*	7	*3*	6	2	1	*Nil*	1	*Nil*	*Nil*	20	
Madras	*Nil*	5	6	10	3	3	1	1	1	*Nil*	30	
Bengal	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*	3	1	3	1	1	*Nil*	14	25*	
Central Provinces	5	5	1	2	1	*Nil*	1	1	1	3	20	
Bihar	4	5	2	2	2	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*	15	
Punjab	1	1	*Nil*	1	2	*Nil*	*Nil*		*Nil*	2	8	
Orissa	2	*Nil*	*Nil*	2	*Nil*	2	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*	6	
Assam	3	1	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*		*Nil*	2	7	
Bombay	5	3	6	1	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*	*Nil*	15	
Total ...	20	27	18	27	11	9	3	8	2	21	146	

* Five Constituencies have two seats reserved for Scheduled Castes which makes up the total of 30 Seats reserved for the Scheduled Castes of Bengal.

IV

To say that the elections of 1937 do not prove that the Congress was victorious over the Untouchables in the electoral fight is an understatement. In a real sense the Untouchables triumphed over the Congress. If not many are found to admit this, their inability or unwillingness to do so must be attributed to their ignorance of the difficulties which the Untouchables have had to face in their contest with the Congress. These difficulties were very real and very great. It is worthwhile to detail them so that people may know the courage and tenacity with which the Untouchables have fought to prove that they are independent of the Congress and that the Congress does not represent them.

These difficulties can be classified under two heads (1) Organizational and (2) Electoral.

Under the first head special mention may be made of two :—

The first was the difference in the relative degree of resources at the command of the Congress and of the Untouchables. That the Congress is the richest political party goes without saying. No estimate has so far been made of the money the Congress spent in the elections of 1937. If an investigation was made it would be found that the money it spent in advertisement, in conveyance and in canvassing for the candidates who stood on its ticket was simply colossal. All these resources were placed by the Congress at the service of those Untouchables who stood on the Congress ticket. Not one millionth part of these resources were available to those Untouchable candidates who stood against the Congress. Some of them had even to borrow money to pay their deposits. They fought their elections without the help of advertisement, canvassing or conveyance.

The second is the existence of a party machine on the side of the Congress and the complete absence of it on the side of the Untouchables. The party machine as every one knows constitutes the real strength of the Congress. The credit for the creation of a party machine must be given to Mr. Gandhi. It has been in existence for the last 20 years and with the resources it possesses the Congress has kept the machine well oiled and in perfect order always ready to be put in motion by merely pressing the button. It is a vast machine which covers every town and every village in the country. There is no area in

which there is no agent of the Congress to operate this machine. The Untouchables who stood on the Congress ticket had their electioneering done for them by this party machine of the Congress. Those Untouchables who stood against the Congress had no such party machine to help them. The scheme of separate representation was first introduced in Indian politics in the year 1909. The benefit of it was however given only to one community, namely, the Muslims. In 1920 the constitution was revised. In this revised constitution it was extended to the Non-Brahmins. The Untouchables were again left out. They were consoled with representation with one or two seats in the various Provincial Legislatures filled by nomination. It is for the first time in 1935 that they got the franchise and the right to representation through election. It is obvious that not having had any franchise the Untouchables had felt no need to set up a party machine of their own as there were no elections to be fought. They hardly had any time to organize themselves and to set up a party machine when suddenly in 1937 they were called upon to fight the elections. The fight between the Congress and the Untouchables was a fight between an army and a crowd.

The electoral difficulties in the way of the Untouchables were equally great. The first electoral difficulty arose from the unequal voting strength between the Hindus and the Untouchables in those General Electorates in which seats are reserved for the Untouchables. The following table contains figures showing the relative voting strength of the two.

This table shows how in the General Electorates the Scheduled Castes voters are outnumbered by the Hindu voters. Special attention should be paid to the proportion in which they are outnumbered by the Hindus. As the figures in the table show, in 20 constituencies the proportion of Scheduled Castes voters to Hindu voters is 10 to 100, in 27 constituencies between 11 and 15 to 100, in 18 constituencies between 15 and 20 to 100, in 27 constituencies between 21 and 25 to 100 and in 11 constituencies between 20 and 30 to 100. These instances will show how overwhelming is the majority of Hindu voters and by what a substantial margin the Hindus can overpower the Scheduled Castes voters. In this connection it must also be remembered that every Scheduled Caste Constituency is a Joint Electorate in which both classes of voters—those belonging to the Scheduled Castes and those belonging to the

Hindus—can vote for the Scheduled Castes seat and compete to capture it. In this game the relative disproportion in voting strength of the two becomes of immense importance. For success in election in such a linked constituency primarily depends upon relative voting strength of the competing groups.

The second electoral difficulty arose out of the number of the seats fixed for the general constituencies in which seats were reserved for the Untouchables. The following table shows the system adopted in the different provinces.

Table 16

Classification of General Constituencies in which Seats for Untouchables are Reserved

Province	*No. of Seats Reserved for Untouchables*	*No. of Constituencies with 2 Seats*	*No. of Constituencies with 3 Seats*	*No. of Constituencies with 4 Seats*
Madras	30	30	*Nil*	*Nil*
Bombay	15	*Nil*	6	9
Bengal	30	20	5	*Nil*
United Provinces	20	20	*Nil*	*Nil*
Punjab	8	8	*Nil*	*Nil*
Bihar	15	15	*Nil*	*Nil*
Central Provinces	20	20	*Nil*	*Nil*
Assam	7	6	1	*Nil*
Orissa	6	6	*Nil*	*Nil*
Total ...	151	125	12	9

This table shows that out of 151 General Constituencies required to be declared as reserved for the Scheduled Castes as many as 180 were two-member constituencies in which one seat was reserved for the Scheduled Castes and the other was kept as a general seat. It is quite possible that many will not realize the electoral danger that is involved to the Untouchables in this two-member constituency system. But the danger is very real. How real it is, will become clear if it was considered along with the relative voting strength of the Hindus and the Untouchables in the General constituency to which attention has already been drawn. Where the constituency is a plural constituency of—say three or four members— one reserved for the Scheduled Castes and two or three left for the general community, the relatively higher voting strength of the Hindus is not so much a matter of danger as it is when

under the two-member constituency the Hindus have only one candidate to elect. With more candidates to elect the voting strength of the Hindus is split as they become engaged in fighting out the election of their candidates to the general seat and there is no surplus votes left with them, with the result that their excessive voting strength in the constituency does not become a menace to the Scheduled Castes. But, when they have only one seat to win, the chances of their votes being frittered away are remote. Under an organized party system such as that established by the Congress, they are nil. The excess of unused voting strength which they are thus able to retain becomes surplus and unnecessary for them, and which they are quite free to use in supporting a Scheduled Caste candidate of their choice, standing on their ticket as against another Scheduled Caste candidate who is independent and who is not prepared to be their tool. What havoc the Hindus played with their surplus votes is clear from the result of the elections.

When one considers the method of voting and the number of seats fixed and the distribution of the voting strength in the general constituencies one feels whether any better electoral system for deceiving the Untouchables could have been devised. The Joint Electorates to which the Scheduled Castes are tied are like the Rotten Boroughs which existed in England before the Reform Act of 1832. Under the Rotten Borough, the candidate elected was in fact nominated by the boss who controlled the Borough. Similarly, under the system of Joint Electorates the Scheduled Caste candidate who is elected to the Legislature is virtually nominated by the Hindus. That is the reason why Mr. Gandhi is so keenly devoted to the system of Joint Electorates.

One hears a great deal about the Muslim League having grown from strength to strength. But few realize how sheltered the Muslim League is by reason of the system of separate electorates. The Muslims are secure from the menace and mischief of the Congress. Not so are the Untouchables. They axe open to the full blast of the Congress money, Congress votes and Congress propaganda. That the Untouchables overcame all these difficulties without resources, without a party machine and in spite of all electoral difficulties shows their triumph over the Congress and their desire to maintain their independent existence.

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