

CHAPTER IX

A PLEA TO THE FOREIGNER

Let Not Tyranny Have Freedom to Enslave

I

IT is a matter of common experience that barring a few exceptions, almost all foreigners who show interest in Indian political affairs take the side of the Congress. This quite naturally puzzles and annoys the other political parties in the country, such as the Muslim League claiming to represent the Musalmans, the Justice Party—now in a state of suspended animation but still—claiming to speak in the name of the non-Brahmins and the All India Scheduled Castes Federation claiming to represent the Untouchables, all of whom have been appealing to the foreigner for support but to whom the foreigner is not even prepared to give a sympathetic hearing. Why does the foreigner support the Congress and not the other political parties in India? Two reasons are usually assigned by the foreigner for his behaviour. One reason assigned by him for supporting the Congress is because he believes that the Congress is the only representative body of Indians and can speak in the name of India and even for the Untouchables. Is he right in his belief? Two circumstances are mainly responsible for giving rise to such a belief.

The first and foremost circumstance for the spread of this view is the propaganda by the Indian Press in favour of the Congress. The Press in India is an accomplice of the Congress, believes in the dogma that the Congress is never wrong and acts on the principle of not giving any publicity to any news which is inconsistent with Congress prestige or Congress ideology. It is largely due to the Press in India that this cry of the Congress, that it represents all, has been so ceaselessly advertised, with the result that the people in England and America know one thing and only one thing, namely that the Congress is the only representative body in India.

The second circumstance why the world outside believes that the Congress is the only organization which represents India, including even the Untouchables, is because of the absence of

propaganda on behalf of the Untouchables to advertise their case against the Congress claim. There are various explanations for this failure on the part of the Untouchables. They have no Press and the Congress Press is closed to them. It is determined not to give them the slightest publicity. They cannot have their own Press. It is obvious that no paper can survive without advertisement revenue. Advertisement revenue can come only from business and in India all business, both big and small is attached to the Congress and will not favour any Non-Congress organ. The staff of the Associated Press of India, which is the main news distributing agency in India, is entirely drawn from Madras Brahmins—indeed the whole of the Press in India is in their hands and who for well-known reasons are entirely pro-Congress and will not allow any news hostile to the Congress to get publicity. These are reasons beyond the control of the Untouchables. But to a large extent their failure to do propaganda is also due to absence of will to do propaganda. This absence of will arises from a patriotic motive not to do anything which will damage the cause of the country in the eyes of the world outside. There are two different aspects to the politics of India which may be distinguished as foreign politics and constitutional politics. India's foreign politics relate to India's freedom from British Imperialism while the constitutional politics of India centre round the nature of a constitution for a free India. They are really separate. But the Untouchables fear that though the two aspects of India's politics are separable, the foreigner who counts in this matter, and whose misunderstanding has to be guarded against, is not only not capable of separating them but is very likely to mistake a quarrel over constitutional politics for a disagreement over the ultimate purposes of India's foreign politics. This is why the Untouchables have preferred to remain silent and allowed the Congress propaganda to go unchallenged. Congressmen will not admit the patriotic motives of the Untouchables in keeping silent over Congress propaganda which is directed against them. The fact, however, remains that their silence and desire to avoid open challenge has been a material cause which has brought about the general belief that the Congress represents all, even the Untouchables.

Though regrettable, it was excusable for a foreigner to be carried away by propaganda at a time when the representative character of the Congress was not put to test in an election.

But the matter has now been put to test in the elections that took place in 1937. With the results of the elections available to check the position, there is no justification for any one to rest his judgment regarding the representative character of the Congress, on propaganda. What the election results show has already been set out in an earlier part of the book, both generally and also in particular regard to the Untouchables. It may, therefore, be trusted that the foreigners, who have these facts before them, will not hereafter accept the propagandist view that the Congress represents all, including the Untouchables, as they did in the past, and will realize that other parties besides the Congress and particularly the Untouchables, have something different to say on the political problem of India.

The second reason why the foreigner assigns his support to the Congress is because of his belief that the Congress is fighting for the freedom of India. He sees Congressmen engaged in a conflict with the British Government, launching campaigns of civil disobedience, breaking laws made by a Foreign Government, organizing movements for non-payment of taxes, courting prison, preaching non-co-operation with Government, refusing offices and exhibiting themselves in other ways as men out to sacrifice themselves for the freedom of the country. He sees other political parties standing aloof. From this, he concludes that the Congress is a body struggling for the freedom of the country and as a lover of freedom feels bound to support a body carrying on a "Fight for Freedom." I have explained elsewhere why other political parties have not joined in the Fight for Freedom. Here I propose to deal with another aspect of the question, namely, for whose freedom is the Congress fighting ?

II

In taking the side of the Congress as an organization "Fighting for Freedom," the foreigner does not stop to make a distinction between the freedom of a country and the freedom of the people in the country. In not stopping to make this distinction, the foreigner, it must be said, far from understanding the matter, is allowing himself to be misled, if not deceived. For words such as society, nation and country are just amorphous, if not ambiguous, terms. There is no gain-

saying that 'Nation' though one word means many classes. Philosophically it may be possible to consider a nation as a unit but sociologically it cannot but be regarded as consisting of many classes and the freedom of the nation if it is to be a reality must vouchsafe the freedom of the different classes comprised in it, particularly those who are treated as the servile classes. Consequently, it is foolish to take solace in the fact that because the Congress is fighting for the freedom of India, it is, therefore, fighting for the freedom of the people of India and of the lowest of the low.

The question whether the Congress is fighting for freedom has very little importance as compared to the question for whose freedom is the Congress fighting. This is a pertinent and necessary inquiry and it would be wrong for any lover of freedom to support the Congress without pursuing the matter and finding out what the truth is. But the foreigner who takes the side of the Congress does not care even to raise such a question. Why is the foreigner so indifferent to so important a question? So far as I am able to judge, the reason for such indifference is to be found in the wrong notions of self-government and democracy which are prevalent in the West and which form the stock-in-trade of the foreigner who takes interest in Indian Politics.

It is propounded by Western writers on Politics that all that is necessary for the realization of self-government is the existence among a people of what Grote called constitutional morality. By constitutional morality is meant¹ habits of "paramount reverence for the form of the constitution, enforcing obedience to the authorities acting under and within those forms, yet combined with the habit of open speech, of action subject only to definite legal control, and unrestrained censure of those very authorities as to all their public acts—combined, too, with a perfect confidence in the bosom of every citizen, admits the bitterness of party contest, that the forms of constitution will be not less sacred in the eyes of his opponents than in his own." If in a populace these habits are present, then according to Western writers on Politics, self-government can be a reality and nothing further need be considered. Similarly, Western writers on democracy believe that what is necessary for the realization of the ideal of demo-

1 *Grote History of Greece, Vol. III, p. 347.*

cracy, namely, government by the people, of the people and for the people, is the establishment of universal adult suffrage. Other means have been suggested such as recall, plebiscite and short parliaments and in some countries they have been brought into operation. But in a majority of countries nothing more than adult suffrage is deemed to be necessary.

I have no hesitation in saying that both these notions are fallacious and grossly misleading. If democracy and self-government have, failed everywhere, it is largely due to these wrong notions. Habits of constitutional morality may be essential for the maintenance of a constitutional *form* of government. But the maintenance of a constitutional form of Government is not the same thing as a self-government by the people. Similarly, it may be granted that adult suffrage can produce government of the people in the logical sense of the phrase, i.e. in contrast to the government of a king. But it cannot by itself be said to bring about a democratic government, in the sense of government by the people and for the people.

These views of Western writers on politics regarding democracy and self-government are erroneous for very many reasons. In the first place, they omit to take into account the incontrovertible fact that in every country there is a governing class grown up by force of historical circumstances, which is destined to rule, which does rule and to whom adult suffrage and constitutional morality are no bar against reaching places of power and authority and to whom the servile classes, by reason of the fact that they regard the members of the governing classes as their natural leaders, volunteer to elect as rulers. Secondly, they fail to realize that the existence of a governing class is inconsistent with democracy and self-government and that given the fact that where the governing class retains its power to govern, it is wrong to say that democracy and self-government exist unless democracy and self-government are regarded as mere matters of form. Thirdly, they do not seem to be aware that self-government and democracy become real not when a constitution based on adult suffrage comes into existence but when the governing class loses its power to capture the power to govern. Fourthly, they seem to overlook the fact that while in some countries the servile classes may succeed in ousting the governing class from the seat of authority with nothing more than adult suffrage, in other countries the govern-

ing class may be so well entrenched that the servile classes will need other safeguards besides adult suffrage to achieve the same end. Lastly, they seem to pay no heed to the fact that given the existence of the Governing class what matters, most in the consideration of any scheme of democracy and self-government is the social outlook and social philosophy of the governing class, for so long as the governing class retains its means to capture the power to govern, the freedom and the well-being of the servile classes must depend upon the social outlook, the social conscience of the governing class and its philosophy of life.

The recognition of the existence of a governing class as a fundamental and a crucial fact confronting democracy and self-government is the only safe and realistic approach to those who wish for democracy and self-government to come into their own. It is a fatal blunder to omit to take account of it in coming to a conclusion as to whether in a free country freedom, will be the privilege of the governing class only or it will be the possession of all. In my view, therefore, what the foreigner who chooses to side with the Congress should ask is not whether the Congress is fighting for freedom. He should ask : For whose freedom is the Congress fighting ? Is it fighting for the freedom of the governing class in India or is it fighting for the freedom of the people of India ? If he finds that the Congress is fighting for the freedom of the governing class, he should ask Congressmen: Is the governing class in India fit to govern ? This is the least he can do before siding with the Congress.

What are the answers which Congressmen have to give to these questions ? I do not know. But I can give what I think are the only true answers to these questions.

III

To start with it is well to know who constitute the governing class in India. The governing class in India consists principally of the Brahmins. It is strange that the present-day Brahmins repudiate the allegation that they belong to the governing class though at one time they described themselves as *Bhudevas* (Gods on Earth). What can this *volte face* be due to ? Is it due to a guilty conscience born out of the realization that they

have committed criminal breach of the trust imposed upon the intellectual sections in every community by the sacred law of humanity not to serve the interest of their own class but to safeguard the interest of all and therefore dare not stand before the bar of the world? Or is it due to their sense of modesty? It is unnecessary to stop to speculate as to which is the truth.

That the Brahmins are a governing class is hardly open to question. There are two tests one could apply. First is the sentiment of the people and the second is the control of administration. I am sure there cannot be better and more decisive tests than these two. As to the first, there cannot be any doubt. Taking the attitude of the people, the person of the Brahmin is sacred. In ancient time, he could not be hanged no matter what offence he committed. As a sacred person he had immunities and privileges which were denied to the servile class. He was entitled to first fruits. In Malabar, where the Sambandham marriage prevails, the servile classes such as the Nairs regard it an honour to have their females kept as mistresses by Brahmins. Even kings invited Brahmins¹ to deflower their queens on *prima noctis*. There

¹ The Traveller Ludovico Di Varthema who came to India in the middle of the 16th century and visited Malabar says :

"It is proper and at the same time a pleasant thing to know who these Brahmins are. You must know that they are the chief persons of the faith, as priests are among us. And when the king takes a wife he selects the most worthy and the most honoured of these Brahmins and makes him sleep the first night with his wife, in order that he may deflower her. Do not imagine that the Brahmin goes willingly to perform this operation. The king is obliged to pay him four hundred to five hundred ducats. The king only and no other person in Calicut adopts this practice."—*Voyages of Varthema* (Hakluyat Society), Vol. I, p. 141.

Other Travellers tell that the practice was widespread. Hamilton in his *Account of the East Indies* says :

"When the Samorin marries, he must not cohabit with his bride till the Nambourie (Nambudri) or chief priest, has enjoyed her, and if he pleases he may have three nights of her company, because the first fruits of her nuptials must be a holy oblation to the God she worships and some of the nobles are so complacent as to allow the clergy the same tribute; but the common people cannot have that compliment paid to them, but are forced to supply the priests places themselves."—Vol. I, p. 308.

Buchanan in his Narrative refers to the practice in the following terms :

"The ladies of the Tamuri family are generally impregnated by Nambudries ; although if they choose they may employ the higher ranks of Nairs; but the sacred character of the Nambudries always procures them a preference."—*Pinkerton's Voyages*, Vol. VIII, p. 734.

Mr. C.A. Innes, J.C.S., Editor of the *Gazetteer* of Malabar and Anjengo issued under the authority of the Government of Madras says :

"Another institution found amongst all the classes following the *marukak-kattayam* system, as well as amongst many of those who observe *makkattayam*, is that known as "Tali-tying wedding" which has been described as "the most peculiar, distinctive and unique" among Malayali marriage customs. Its

was a time when no person of the servile class could take his food without drinking the water in which the toes of the Brahmins were washed. Sir P. C. Ray once described how in his childhood, rows of children belonging to the servile classes used to stand for hours together in the morning on the roadside in Calcutta with cups of water in their hands waiting for a Brahmin to pass ready to wash his feet and take it to their parents waiting to sip it before taking their food. Under the British Government and by reason of its equalitarian jurisprudence these rights, immunities and privileges of the Brahmins have ceased to exist. Nonetheless the advantages they gave still remain and the Brahmin is still pre-eminent and sacred in the eyes of the servile classes and is still addressed by them as 'Swami' which means 'Lord.'

The second test gives an equally positive result. To take only the Madras Presidency by way of illustration. Consider Table 17 (see page 207). It shows the distribution of gazetted posts between the Brahmins and other communities in the year 1943.

Similar data from other Provinces could also be adduced to support this conclusion. But it is unnecessary to labour the point. Whether the Brahmins claim themselves to be members of the governing class or not, the facts that they control the administration and that their supremacy is accepted by the servile classes, are enough to establish the point.

History shows that the Brahmin has always had other classes as his allies to whom he was ready to accord the status of a governing class provided they were prepared to work with him in subordinate co-operation. In ancient and medieval times he made such an alliance with the Kshatriyas or the warrior class and the two ruled the masses, indeed ground them down, the Brahmin with his pen and the Kshatriya with his sword. At present, the Brahmin has made an alliance with the Vaishya class called Banias. The shifting of this alliance from Kshatriya to Bania is natural. In these days of com-

essence is the tying of a *tali* (a small piece of gold or other metal, like a locket, on a string) on a girl's neck before she attains the age of puberty. This is done by a man of the same or of a higher caste (the usages of different classes differ), and it is only after it has been done that the girl is at liberty to contract a *sambandham*. It seems to be generally considered that the ceremony was intended to confer on the *tali tier* or *manavalan* (bridegroom) a right to cohabit with the girl; and by some the origin of the ceremony is found in the claim of the *Bhu-devas* or "Earth-Gods," (that is the Brahmins), and on a lower plane of Kshatriyas or ruling classes, to the first-fruits of lower caste womanhood, a right akin to the mediaeval *droit de seigneurie*."— Vol. I, p. 101.

Table 17

Communities	Approximate Popula- tion in Lakhs	Percentage of Popula- tion	No. of Posts held out of Total No. Gazetted Posts (2,200)	Percentage of Appoint- ments held	Non-Gazetted Posts				
					Over Rs. 100 Total No. 7,500		Over Rs. 35 Total No. 20,782		
					No. held by	Percentage of Appoint- ments held	No. held by	Percentage of Appoint- ments held	Percentage of Appoint- ments held
Brahmins	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
...	...	15	3	820	37	3,280	43.73	8,812	42.4
Christians	...	20	4	190	9	750	10	1,655	8.0
Muhammadans	...	37	7	150	7	497	6.63	1,624	7.8
Depressed Classes	...	70	14	25	1.5	39	.52	144	.69
Non-Brahmine {Forward Non-Brahmins Backward Class	...	113	22	620	27	2,543	33.9	8,440	40.6
	...	245	50	50	2				
Non-Asiatic and Anglo-Indians	...	—	—	—	—	372	5.0	83	4
Other Communities	...	—	—	—	—	19	.5	24	.11

merce money is more important than sword. That is one reason for this change in party alignment. The second reason is the need for money to run the political machine. Money can come only from the Bania. It is the Bania who is financing the Congress largely because Mr. Gandhi is a Bania and also because he has realized that money invested in Politics gives large dividends. Those who have any doubts in the matter might do well to read what Mr. Gandhi told Mr. Louis Fisher on June 6, 1942. Reports Fisher¹:—

“I said I had several questions to ask him about the Congress Party. Very highly placed Britishers, I recalled, had told me that Congress was in the hands of big business and that Gandhi was supported by the Bombay millowners who gave him as much money as he wanted. ‘What truth is there in these assertions,’ I asked.”

“‘Unfortunately, they are true,’ he declared simply, ‘Congress hasn’t enough money to conduct its work. We thought in the beginning to collect four annas (about eight cents) from each member per year and operate on that. But it hasn’t worked.’”

“‘What proportion of the Congress budget,’ I asked, ‘is covered by rich Indians?’”

“‘Practically all of it,’ he stated. ‘In this ashram, for instance, we could live much more poorly than we do and spend less money. But we do not and the money comes from our rich friends.’”

For this reason, it is impossible for the Brahmin to exclude the Bania from the position of a governing class. In fact, he has established not merely a working but a cordial alliance with the Bania. The result is that the governing class in India today is a Brahmin-Bania instead of Brahmin-Kshatriya combine as it used to be.

The existence of the Governing class does not cover the whole story. What is significant is that the members of the governing class in India are quite conscious of the fact that they do belong to the governing class and that they alone are destined to rule. The late Mr. Tilak could never forget that he was a Brahmin and belonged to the governing class. The same is reported to be the case about Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru² and his sister

¹ ‘A Week with Gandhi (1943), p. 41.

² Mr. Pattabhi Sitaramaya in his introduction to the Life of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru by Mr. Y.G. Krishnamurti, says Pandit Nehru is very conscious of the fact that he is a Brahmin. This will shock many who are under the impression that Pandit Nehru is a Socialist and does not believe in caste. But Mr. Pattabhi

Mrs. Vijaya Laxmi Pandit. Nor is Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel free from the feeling that he belongs to the governing class. Mr. Tilak is held out as the father of the Swaraj movement. Pandit Nehru and Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel are the leading members of the Congress High Command. Not only are they conscious of the fact that they belong to the governing class but some of them hold that the servile classes are a contemptible people, who must remain servile and who must never aspire to rule. Indeed, they have felt no shame and no remorse in giving public expression to such views. In 1918, when the Non-Brahmins and the Backward Classes had started an agitation for separate representation in the Legislature, Mr. Tilak in a public meeting held in Sholapur said he did not understand why the oil pressers, tobacco shopkeepers, washermen, etc.—that was his description of the Non-Brahmins and the Backward Classes—should want to go into the Legislature. In his opinion, their business was to obey the laws and not to aspire for power to make laws. In 1942, Lord Linlithgow invited 52 important Indians representing different sections of the people to discuss what steps could be taken to make the Central Government more popular with a view to enlist the sympathy and co-operation of all Indians in war effort. Among those that were invited were members belonging to the Scheduled Castes. Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel could not bear the idea that the Viceroy should have invited such a crowd of mean men. Soon after the event, Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel made a speech in Ahmedabad and said³:—

“The Viceroy sent for the leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha, he sent for the leaders of the Muslim League, and he sent for Ghanchis (oil pressers), Mochis (cobblers) and the rest.”

Although Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel in his malicious and stinging words referred only to *Ghanchis* and *Mochis*, his speech is indicative of the general contempt in which the governing class and the members of the Congress High Command hold

Sitaramaya ought to know what he is saying. Not only is Pandit Nehru conscious of the fact that he is a Brahmin but his sister Mrs. Vijaya Laxmi Pandit, also seems to be conscious that she is a Brahmin. It is said that at the All-India Women's Conference held in Delhi in December 1940, the question of not declaring one's caste in the Census Return was discussed. Mrs. Pandit disapproved of the idea and said she did not see any reason why she should not be proud of her Brahmin blood and declare herself as a Brahmin at the Census—See *Sense and Nonsense in Politics*” Serial No. XII by Mr. J.E. Sanjana in the *Rast Rahabar* (a Bombay Gujarathi Weekly), 14th January '45.

³ Quoted by Mr. Sanjana in *Sense and Nonsense in Politics*.

the servile classes of this country. Further illustrations of this attitude of the governing class and the Congress High Command can be found from incidents that have taken place in the election campaigns. They are so relevant and so revealing that a special mention must be made of them.

Ever since 1919 when Mr. Gandhi captured the Congress, Congressmen have looked upon the boycott of Legislature as one of the sanctions for making the British Government concede the demand for Swaraj. Under this policy, every time there was an election in which the Congress decided not to take part, the Congress would not only refuse to put candidates on the Congress ticket but would carry on propaganda against any Hindu proposing to stand for election as an independent candidate. One need not quarrel over the merits of such a policy. But what were the means adopted, by the Congress to prevent Hindus standing on an independent ticket? The means adopted were to make the legislatures objects of contempt. Accordingly, the Congress in various Provinces started processions carrying placards saying "who will go in the Legislatures ? Only barbers, cobblers, potters and sweepers." In the processions one man would utter the question as part of the slogan and the whole crowd would repeat as answer the second part of the slogan. When Congressmen found that this was not enough to deter persons from standing for the elections, they decided to adopt sterner measures. Believing that respectable people would not be prepared to stand for election if they felt certain that they would have to sit with barbers, potters and sweepers, etc. in the legislatures, the Congress actually went to the extent of putting up candidates from these despised communities on the Congress ticket and got them elected. A few illustrations of this outrageous conduct of the Congress may be mentioned. In the 1920 election, the Congress elected a cobbler¹ in the Central Provinces Legislature. In the 1930 election, they elected in the Central Provinces two cobblers², one milkman³ and one barber⁴ and in the Punjab one sweeper⁵. In 1934, the Congress elected a potter⁶ to the Central Legislature. It might be said that this

¹ Faguwa Rohidas.

² Guru Gosain Agamdas and Balaraj Jaiswar.

³ Chunnu.

⁴ Arjunlal

⁵ Bansi Lal Chaudhari.

⁶ Bhagat Chandi Mal Gola.

is old history. Let me correct such an impression by referring to what happened in 1943, in the Municipal Elections in Andheri—a suburb of Bombay. The Congress put up a barber to bring the Municipality in contempt.

What an enormity ? The Sinn Fein in Ireland boycotted the British Parliament. But did they make such hideous use of their own countrymen for effecting their purposes ? The campaign of boycott of legislature which took place in 1930 is of particular interest. The elections to the Provincial Legislatures in 1930 in which these instances occurred coincided with Mr. Gandhi's Salt satyagraha campaign of 1930!! I hope that the future (the official historian Dr. Pattabhi Sitamayya has failed to do so) historian of Congress while recording how Mr. Gandhi decided to serve notice on the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, presenting him with a list of demands to be con ceded before a certain date and on failure by the Viceroy in this behalf, how Mr. Gandhi decided to launch a campaign of civil disobedience, how Mr. Gandhi elected an Englishman to carry his notice, how Mr. Gandhi selected Salt Act as a target for attack, how he selected Dandi as a scene of battle, how he decided to put himself at the head of the campaign, how he marched out from his Ashram in Ahmedabad with all pomp and ceremony, how the women of Ahmedabad came out with *Arthi* and applied *tilak* (saffron mark) to his forehead wishing him victory, how Mr. Gandhi assured them by saying that Gujarat alone will win Swaraj for India, how Mr. Gandhi proclaimed his determination by saying that he will not return to Ahmedabad until he has won Swaraj, will not fail to record that while on the one hand Congressmen were engaged in fighting for Swaraj which they said they wanted to win in the name and for the masses, on the other hand and in the very year they were committing the worst outrages, upon the very masses by exhibiting them publicly as objects of contempt to be shunned and avoided.

Such is the mentality of the governing classes in India towards the servile classes.

IV

What is to be the fate of the servile classes of India under this governing class ?

The Congress promises to do wonders for the servile classes—the Congress speaks of masses, it ought really to speak of them as the servile classes held in bondage by the governing classes—when Swaraj comes. It says that it would like to make revolutionary changes but it has no power to make them and it must wait for Swaraj. It is this glib talk which goes to deceive the gullible foreigner. Leaving aside the boast and bluster which lie behind the statement, one may ask what really can happen if India does become a sovereign and an independent state? One thing is certain. The governing class will not disappear by the magic wand of Swaraj. It will remain as it is and having been freed from the incubus of British Imperialism will acquire greater strength and vigour. It will capture power as the governing classes in every country do. In short, Swaraj will not be government *by* the people but it will be a government run by the governing class and in the absence of Government *by* the people, government *for* the people will be what the governing class will choose to make of it.

What will the governing class do when India becomes a sovereign and independent state? Some hope that they will undertake reform of tenancy laws, enlarge factory legislation, extend primary education, introduce prohibition and train people to ply *charkha*, construct roads and canals, improve currency, regulate weights and measures, open dispensaries and undertake other measures to ameliorate the condition of the servile classes. No one from the servile class can be very enthusiastic about such a programme. In the first place, there is nothing very great in it. In the world of today, no governing class can omit to undertake reforms which are necessary to maintain society in a civilized state. Personally, I have grave doubts about the governing class in India coming forward to carry out even such a modest programme of social amelioration. Most people forget that what leads the Congress today to mouth such a programme is the desire to show that the Congress is better than the British Bureaucracy. But once the bureaucracy is liquidated, will there be the same incentive to better the lot of the masses? I entertain very grave doubts on the point. Apart from this, is social amelioration the be all and end-all of Swaraj? Speaking for the servile classes, I have no doubt that what they expect to happen in a sovereign and free India is a complete destruction of Brahmanism as a philosophy of life and as a social order. If I may say so, the

servile classes do not care for social amelioration. The want and poverty which has been their lot is nothing to them as compared to the insult and indignity which they have to bear as a result of the vicious social order. Not bread but honour, is what they want. The question therefore is : Will the governing classes in India having captured the machinery of the State, undertake a programme for the reform of the social order as distinguished from a programme of social amelioration ?

The statement by Congressmen that Congress can do wonders if only India was a sovereign and an independent State, supposing that it is an honest aspiration and not mere propaganda, proceeds on the assumption that for a man to do what he wants, nothing more is necessary than power. Such a belief is not only pitiable but is really a dangerous illusion. Those who are inclined to cherish such an illusion forget that there are serious limitations on sovereignty, no matter how absolute it is. None has described these limitations in more telling language than Dicey. In his *Law of the Constitution*, he says:—

“The actual exercise of authority by any sovereign whatever, and notably by Parliament, is bounded or controlled by two limitations. Of these the one is an external, the other is an internal limitation.

“The external limit to the real power of a sovereign consists in the possibility or certainty that his subjects or a large number of them, will disobey or resist his laws.

“This limitation exists even under the most despotic monarchies. A Roman Emperor, or a French King during the middle of the eighteenth century, was (as is the Russian Czar at the present day) in strictness a “sovereign” in the legal sense of that term. He had absolute legislative authority. Any law made by him was binding, and there was no power in the empire or kingdom which could annul such law... But it would be an error to suppose that the most absolute ruler who ever existed could in reality make or change every law at his pleasure...

“The authority, that is to say, even of a despot, depends upon the readiness of his subjects or of some portion of his subjects to obey his behests; and this readiness to obey, must always be in reality limited. This is shown by the most notorious facts of history. None of the early Caesars could at their pleasure have subverted the worship of fundamental institutions of the Roman world... The Sultan could not

abolish Mahommedanism. Louis the Fourteenth at the height of his power could revoke the Edict of Nantes, but he would have found it impossible to establish the supremacy of Protestantism, and for the same reason which prevented James the Second from establishing the supremacy of Roman Catholicism....What is true of the power of a despot or of the authority of a constituent assembly is specially true of the sovereignty of Parliament; it is limited on every side by the possibility of popular resistance. Parliament might legally establish an Episcopal Church in Scotland; Parliament might legally tax the Colonies; Parliament might without any breach of law change the succession to the throne or abolish the monarchy; but everyone knows that in the present state of the world the British Parliament will do none of these things. In each case widespread resistance would result from legislation which, though legally valid, is in fact beyond the stretch of Parliamentary power.

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“The internal limit to the exercise of sovereignty arises from the nature of the sovereign power itself. Even a despot exercises his powers in accordance with his character, which is itself moulded by the circumstances under which he lives, including under that head the moral feelings of the time and the society to which he belongs. The Sultan could not if he would, change the religion of the Mahommedan world, but if he could do so it is in the very highest degree improbable that the head of Mahommedanism should wish to overthrow the religion of Mahomet; the internal check on the exercise of the Sultan’s power is at least as strong as the external limitation. People sometimes ask the idle question why the Pope does not introduce this or that reform? The true answer is that a revolutionist is not the kind of man who becomes a Pope, and that the man who becomes a Pope has no wish to be a revolutionist..”

None can gainsay the truth of what Dicey has said. What the governing class may do depends not so much upon the degree of its sovereignty as upon what Dicey calls the external and internal limitations in sovereignty. Of these two, if the failure to do good arises out of the external limitations, nobody need blame the governing class. The fear of external limitations blocking progress need not cause much apprehension. For it is the internal limitations of the governing class that have a greater determining force than the external limitations. Progress depends more upon internal limitations of the governing class than upon external limitations. What

are the factors which determine these internal limitations ? The internal limitations are born out of the outlook, traditions, vested interests and the social philosophy of the governing class. The purpose of this discussion is to warn the foreigner that before believing what the Congress proposes to do for the servile classes, he should make it a point to ask: What is the outlook of the governing class ? What are its traditions ? What is its social philosophy ?

To take the Brahmins first. Historically they have been the most inveterate enemy of the servile classes (Shudras and the Untouchables) who together constitute about 80 per cent of the total Hindu population. If the common man belonging to the servile classes in India is today so fallen, so degraded, so devoid of hope and ambition, it is entirely due to the Brahmins and their philosophy. The cardinal principles of this philosophy of Brahmanism are five: (1) graded inequality between the different classes ; (2) complete disarmament of the Shudras and the Untouchables; (3) complete prohibition of the education of the Shudras and the Untouchables ; (4) ban on the Shudras and the Untouchables occupying places of power and authority; (5) ban on the Shudras and the Untouchables acquiring property. (6) complete subjugation and suppression of women. Inequality is the official doctrine of Brahmanism and the suppression of the lower classes aspiring to equality has been looked upon by them and carried out by them, without remorse as their bounden duty. There are countries where education did not spread beyond a few. But India is the only country where the intellectual class, namely, the Brahmins not only made education their monopoly but declared acquisition of education by the lower classes, a crime punishable by cutting off of the tongue or by the pouring of molten lead in the ear of the offender. The Congress politicians complain that the British are ruling India by a wholesale disarmament of the people of India. But they forget that disarmament of the Shudras and the Untouchables was the rule of law promulgated by the Brahmins. Indeed, so strongly did the Brahmins believe in the disarmament of the Shudras and the Untouchables that when they revised the law to enable the Brahmins to arm themselves for the protection of their own privileges, they maintained the ban on the Shudras and the Untouchables as it was without lessening its rigour. If the large majority of people of India appear today to be

thoroughly emasculated, spiritless, with no manliness, it is the result of the Brahmanic policy of wholesale disarmament to which they have been subjected for the untold ages. There is no social evil and no social wrong to which the Brahmin does not give his support. Man's inhumanity to man, such as the feeling of caste, untouchability, unapproachability and unseeability is a religion to him. It would, however, be a mistake to suppose that only the wrongs of man are a religion to him. For the Brahmin has given his support to the worst wrongs that women have suffered from in any part of the world. Widows were burnt alive as *sattees*. The Brahmin gave his fullest support to *Sattee*, the burning alive of a widow. Widows were not allowed to remarry. The Brahmin upheld the doctrine. Girls were required to be married before 8 and the husband had the right to consummate the marriage at any time thereafter, whether she had reached puberty or not did not matter. The Brahmin gave the doctrine his strongest support. The record of the Brahmins as law givers for the Shudras, for the Untouchables and for women is the blackest as compared with the record of the intellectual classes in other parts of the world. For no intellectual class has prostituted its intelligence to invent a philosophy to keep his uneducated countrymen in a perpetual state of ignorance and poverty as the Brahmins have done in India. Every Brahmin today believes in this philosophy of Brahmanism propounded by his forefathers. He is an alien element in the Hindu Society. The Brahmin *vis-a-vis* Shudras and the Untouchables as foreign as the German is to the French, as the Jew is to the Gentile or as the White is to the Negro. There is a real gulf between him and the lower classes of Shudras and Untouchables. He is not only alien to them but he is also hostile to them. In relationship with them, there is no room for conscience and there is no call for justice.

The Bania is the worst parasitic class known to history. In him the vice of money-making is unredeemed by culture or conscience. He is like an undertaker who prospers when there is an epidemic. The only difference between the undertaker and the Bania is that the undertaker does not create an epidemic while the Bania does. He does not use his money for production. He uses it to create poverty and more poverty by lending money for unproductive purposes. He lives on interest and

as he is told by his religion that money lending is the occupation prescribed to him by Manu, he looks upon it as both right and righteous. With the help and assistance of the Brahmin judge who is read to decree his suits, he is able to carry on his trade. Interest, interest on interest, he adds on and on and thereby draws families perpetually into his net: Pay him as much as a debtor may, he is always in debt. With no conscience, there is no fraud, and no chicanery that he will not commit. His grip over the nation is complete. The whole of poor, starving, illiterate India is mortgaged to the Bania.

To sum up, the Brahmin enslaves the mind and the Bania enslaves the body. Between them, they divide the spoils which belong to the governing classes. Can anyone who realizes what the outlook, tradition and social philosophy of the governing class in India, is believe that under the Congress regime, a sovereign and independent India will be different from the India we have today ?

V

If the Congress is honest and sincere in its professions as the champion and the guardian of the servile classes the Congress may well be called upon to show what steps it took to destroy the power of the governing class. It is repeated from housetops that the Congress swept the polls in the elections that took place in 1937. Overlooking the hyperbole, a question could legitimately be asked: It is true that the Congress won the victory but which is the class among the Indian people which carried the trophy ? Unfortunately, no Indian publicist has as yet undertaken to compile an Indian counterpart of Dodd's Parliamentary Manual. Consequently, it is difficult to have precise particulars regarding the caste, occupation, education and social status of members of the legislature elected on the Congress ticket. The matter is so important that I thought of collecting the necessary information on these points relating to members of the Provincial Legislatures elected in 1937 on the Congress ticket. I did not succeed in getting precise information about every member. There are many whom I have had to leave as unclassified. But the information I have been able to gather throws a glaring light upon victory of the Congress and shows what it means to the people of India in terms of their freedom and their well-being.

Table 18 (see page 219) shows the proportion of Brahmins

and Non-Brahmins and the Scheduled Castes that were elected to the Provincial Legislative Assemblies on the Congress Ticket.

Those who do not know how small is the proportion of the Brahmins to the total population of Hindus may not be able to realize the representation which the Brahmins have secured in the Congress Election. But those who know it will realize that in proportion to their numbers the Brahmins have secured overwhelming representation.

What degree of representation did the Congress give to the propertied classes, such as Banias, businessmen and landlords ? Table 19 (see page 220) shows how many Banias, businessmen and landlords were elected on the Congress ticket.

Here again the representation secured by the Banias, landlords and businessmen standing on the Congress ticket is overwhelming. Is there any doubt that the Congress instead of warring against the governing class actually helped the governing class to capture political power ? There is one other feature of the Congress victory in the election which needs to be exposed. It relates to the composition of the Congress ministries¹.

Tables 20 and 21 (see pages 221 and 223) give an idea of the position of the Brahmins in the Congress Ministries in Provinces in which the Congress had obtained a majority.

In all the Hindu Provinces, the Prime Ministers were Brahmins. In all Hindu Provinces if the Non-Hindu ministers were excluded, the Cabinets were wholly composed of Brahmins. This was particularly so in United Provinces, the Province to which Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru belongs.

Is there any doubt that the Brahmins form the governing class in India ? Is there any doubt that the Congress' fight for Freedom is for the freedom of the governing class ? Is there any doubt that the Congress is the governing class and the governing class is the Congress ? Is there any doubt that when Swaraj came in 1937 in the form of Provincial autonomy, the Congress shamelessly put the governing class in places of power and authority ?

To be true to facts it is an understatement to say that the Congress put the governing classes into places of power and authority. It did more than that. Here again, so strange has been the result that people will not believe what the Congress

¹ Indian Information for July 15, 1939.