

Note
on
the Annexure

The present volume of 'What Congress and Gandhi have done to the Untouchables,' is the reprint of the first edition published in 1945. Dr. Ambedkar brought out a second edition, in 1946. Certain changes by way of substantial additions and improvements are noticed. Chapter 9, which contains these changes is therefore annexed to the Volume. No changes are noticed in the remaining text.

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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 that it is the only representative political organization of the Indians and can speak in the name of India and even for the Untouchables. Is such a belief founded on facts ?

It must be admitted that there have been circumstances which are responsible for creating 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 the Congress prestige or the Congress ideology. To the foreigner the Press is the principal medium of information about the Indian political affairs. The cry of the Indian Press being what it is, there is therefore no wonder if the people in England and America know one thing and only one thing, namely, that the Congress is the only representative body in India including even the Untouchables.

The effect of this propaganda is considerably heightened because of the absence of counter-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.

The Untouchables have no Press. The Congress Press is closed to them and is determined not to give them the slightest publicity. They cannot have their own Press and for obvious reasons. No paper can survive without advertisement revenue. Advertisement revenue can come only from business and in India all business, both high and small, is attached to the Congress and will not favour any Non-Congress organization. The staff of the Associated Press in India, which is the main news distributing agency in India, is entirely drawn from the Madras Brahmins—indeed the whole of the Press in India is in their hands and they, 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.

To a large extent the failure of the Untouchables to do propaganda, it must be admitted, is also due to the 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. For a discriminating student the two issues 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 incapable 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.

The 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 the silence and the desire to avoid open challenge on the part of the

Untouchables have been materially responsible for the general belief that the Congress represents all, even the Untouchables.

While, as explained above, there are circumstances which are responsible for creating the belief that Congress represents all including the Untouchables, such a belief is not warranted by the facts as disclosed by the elections that took place in 1937. How the claim of the Congress to represent all has been disproved by those elections, has already been described in an earlier part of this book, both generally and also with particular regard to the claim of the Congress to represent the Untouchables. If the foreigner will make a note of it he will see how wide the propaganda is from the facts.

At a time when the representative character of the Congress was not put to test in an election it was excusable for a foreigner to be carried away by propaganda. 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, it may be hoped that the foreigners will revise their view that the Congress represents all, including the Untouchables, and that they will realize that the other parties are equally representative of elements in the social life of India which are outside the Congress and have therefore the right to be heard.

II

There is another reason why the foreigner lends his support to the Congress. It lies in the difference between the demonstrative activities of the Congress and the other political parties in the country. While he compares the activities of the different political parties, 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. On the other hand, he sees the other political parties uninterested, passive and taking no part in such a struggle. From this, he concludes that the Congress is a body struggling for the freedom of India, while the other parties are indifferent, if not obstructive and as a lover of freedom feels bound to support.

the Congress as a body carrying on a 'Fight for Freedom' in preference to other parties.

This is quite natural. But a question arises which calls for attention. Is this partiality to the Congress the result of an infatuation for the 'Fight for Freedom' movement? Or, is it the result of a conviction that this 'Fight for Freedom' is going to make the people of India free? If it is the former, all I can do is to regret that what I have said in Chapter VII in explanation as to why the Untouchables have not joined with the Congress in this 'Fight for Freedom' has not produced the desired effect on the foreigner. But I cannot quarrel with him on that account. For it is quite understandable that many a foreigner on reading that chapter may say that while the reasons adduced by me as to why the Untouchables refuse to join the 'Fight for Freedom' are valid and good, I have shown no ground why he should not support a body which is carrying on a fight for freedom.

If the basis of his partiality to the Congress is of the latter sort then the matter stands on a different footing. It then becomes necessary to examine the rationale of his attitude and to save him from his error.

Ordinarily, no one trusts the word of a person who is not prepared to place all his cards on the table and commit himself to something clear and definite, so as to prove his *bona fides*, to inspire confidence and secure the co-operation of those who have doubts about his motives. The same rule must apply to the Congress. But as I have shown in Chapter VII the Congress has not produced its blue print of the sort of democracy it aims to establish in India, showing what place the servile classes and particularly the Untouchables will have in it. Indeed, it has refused to produce such a blue print, notwithstanding the insistent demand of the Untouchables and the other minority communities. In the absence of such a pronouncement it appears to be a strange sort of credulity on the part of the foreigner to give support to the Congress on the ground that it stood for democracy.

There is certainly no ground for thinking that the Congress is planning to establish democracy in India. The mere fact that the Congress is engaged in a 'Fight for Freedom' does not warrant such a conclusion. Before any such conclusion is drawn it is the duty of the foreigner to pursue the matter further and ask another question, namely, 'For whose

freedom is the Congress fighting ?' 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 further 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. One should have thought that he would very naturally raise such a question and if he did raise it and pursue it, I am confident, he will find abundant proof that the Congress far from planning for democracy is planning to resuscitate the ancient form of Hindu polity of a hereditary governing class ruling a hereditary servile class.

The attitude of the foreigner to the cause of the servile classes and particularly to the cause of the Untouchables is a vital matter and no party can leave it out of consideration, as a case of idiosyncrasy. For any one representing the Untouchables it is necessary to take note of it and do his best to convince the foreigner that in supporting the Congress he is supporting a wrong party.

III

Apart from the question of likes and dislikes, the real explanation for this strange attitude of the foreigner towards the Congress seems to be in certain notions about freedom, self-government and democracy propounded by western writers on Political Science and which have become the stock-in-trade of the average foreigner.

As to 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. He takes it for granted that the freedom of a country is the same as the freedom of the people in the country and once the freedom of the country is secured the freedom of the people is also thereby assured.

As regards self-government he believes that all that is wanted in a people is a sense of constitutional morality, which Grote¹ defined as habits of "paramount reverence for the form of

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

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 the western writers on Politics, self-government can be a reality and nothing further need be considered. As to democracy he believes that what is necessary for achieving it is the establishment of universal adult suffrage. Other aids have been suggested such as recall, plebiscite and frequent elections and in some countries they have been brought into operation. But in a majority of countries nothing more than adult suffrage and frequent elections is deemed to be necessary for ensuring Government by the people, of the people and for the people.

I have no hesitation in saying that all these notions are fallacious and grossly misleading.

Not to make a distinction between the freedom of the country and the freedom of the people in the country is to allow oneself to be misled, if not deceived. For, words such as society, nation and country are just amorphous if not ambiguous terms. There is no gainsaying 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 of those who are treated as the servile classes.

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 the government by the people and for the people.

Anyone who knows the tragic fate of Parliamentary Democracy in Western Europe will not require more and

better evidence to prove the fallacy underlying such notions of democracy¹. If I may quote myself from what I have said in another place, the causes which have led to the failure of democracy in Western Europe may be summarized in the following words :

“The Government of human society has undergone some very significant changes. There was a time when the government of human society had taken the form of autocracy by Despotic Sovereigns. This was replaced after a long and bloody struggle by a system of government known as Parliamentary Democracy. It was felt that this was the last word in the framework of government. It was believed to bring about the millennium in which every human being will have the right to liberty, property and pursuit of happiness. And there were good grounds for such high hopes. In parliamentary democracy there is the Legislature to express the voice of the people ; there is the executive which is subordinate to the Legislature and bound to obey the Legislature. Over and above the Legislature and the Executive there is the Judiciary to control both and keep them both within prescribed bounds. Parliamentary democracy has all the marks of a popular Government, a government of the people, by the people and for the people. It is therefore a matter of some surprise that there has been a revolt against parliamentary democracy although not even a century has elapsed since its universal acceptance and inauguration. There is revolt against it in Italy, in Germany, in Russia and in Spain, and there are very few countries in which there has not been discontent against parliamentary democracy. Why should there be this discontent and dissatisfaction against parliamentary democracy ? It is a question worth considering. There is no country in which the urgency of considering this question is greater than it is in India, India is negotiating to have parliamentary democracy. There is a great need of some one with sufficient courage to tell Indians: “Beware of parliamentary democracy, it is not the best product as it appears to be.

Why has parliamentary democracy failed ? In the country of the dictators it has failed because it is a machine whose movements are very slow. It delays swift action. In a parliamentary democracy the Executive may be held up by the Legislature which may refuse to pass the laws which the Executive wants and if it is not held up by the Legislature it

1. Labour and Parliamentary Democracy—A lecture delivered on 17th September 1943 to the All-India Trade Union Workers’ Study Camp held in Delhi.

may be held up by the judiciary which may declare the laws as illegal. Parliamentary democracy gives no free hand to dictatorship and that is why it became a discredited institution in countries like Italy, Spain and Germany which readily welcomed dictatorships. If dictators alone were against parliamentary democracy it would not have mattered at all. Their testimony against parliamentary democracy would be welcomed for the reason that it can be an effective check upon dictatorship. But unfortunately there is a great deal of discontent against parliamentary democracy even in countries where people are opposed, to dictatorship. That is the most regrettable fact about Parliamentary democracy. This is all the more regrettable because parliamentary democracy has not been at a standstill. It has progressed in three directions. It began with equality of political rights in the form of equal suffrage. There are very few countries having parliamentary democracy which have not adult suffrage. It has progressed by expanding the notion of equality of political rights to equality of social and economic opportunity. It has recognised that the State cannot be held at bay by corporations which are anti-social in their purpose. With all this, there is immense discontent against parliamentary democracy even in countries pledged to democracy. The reasons for discontent in such countries must obviously be different from those assigned by the dictator countries. There is no time to go into details. But it can be said in general terms that the discontent against parliamentary democracy is due to the realization that it has failed to assure to the masses the right to liberty, property or the pursuit of happiness. If this is true, it is important to know the causes which have brought about this failure. The causes for this failure may be found either in wrong ideology or wrong organization or in both. I think the causes are to be found in both.

Of the erroneous ideologies which have been responsible for the failure of parliamentary democracy I have no doubt that the idea of freedom of contract is one of them. The idea became sanctified and was upheld in the name of liberty. Parliamentary democracy took no notice of economic inequalities and did not care to examine the result of freedom of contract on the parties to the contract, in spite of the fact that they were unequal in their bargaining power. It did not mind if the freedom of contract gave the strong the opportunity to defraud the weak. The result is that parliamentary democracy in standing out as protagonist of liberty has continuously added to the economic wrongs of the poor, the downtrodden and the disinherited class.

The second wrong ideology which has vitiated parliamentary democracy is the failure to realize that political democracy cannot succeed where there is no social and economic democracy. Some may question this proposition. To those who are disposed to question it, I will ask a counter-question. Why did parliamentary democracy collapse so easily in Italy, Germany and Russia? Why did it not collapse so easily in England and the U.S.A.? To my mind there is only one answer. It is that there was a greater degree of economic and social democracy in the latter countries than existed in the former. Social and economic democracy are the tissues and the fibre of a political democracy. The tougher the tissue and the fibre, the greater the strength of the body. Democracy is another name for equality. Parliamentary democracy developed a passion for liberty. It never made even a nodding acquaintance with equality. It failed to realize the significance of equality and did not even endeavour to strike a balance between liberty and equality with the result that liberty swallowed equality and has made democracy a name and a farce.

I have referred to the wrong ideologies which in my judgment have been responsible for the failure of parliamentary democracy. But I am equally certain that more than bad ideology it is bad organization which has been responsible for the failure of democracy. All political societies get divided into two classes—the Rulers and the Ruled. This is an evil. If the evil stopped here it would not matter much. But the unfortunate part of it is that the division becomes so stereotyped and stratified that Rulers are always drawn from the ruling class and the class that is ruled never becomes the ruling class. This happens because generally people do not care to see that they govern themselves. They are content to establish a government and leave it to govern them. This explains why parliamentary democracy has never been a government of the people or by the people and why it has been in reality a government of a hereditary subject class by a hereditary ruling class. It is this vicious organization of political life which has made parliamentary democracy such a dismal failure. It is because of this that parliamentary democracy has not fulfilled the hope it held out to the common man of ensuring to him liberty, property and pursuit of happiness.”

If this analysis of the causes which have led to the failure of democracy is correct, it must serve as a warning to the protagonists of democracy that there are certain fundamental considerations which go to the root of democracy and which

they cannot ignore without peril to democracy. For the sake of clarity these considerations may be set down in serial order.

First is the recognition of the hard fact of history that in every country there exist two classes,—the governing class and the servile class between whom there is a continuous struggle for power. *Second* is that by reason of its power and prestige the governing class finds it easy to maintain its supremacy over the servile class. *Third* is that adult suffrage and frequent elections are no bar against governing class reaching places of power and authority. *Fourth* is that on account of their inferiority complex the members of the servile classes regard the members of the governing class as their natural leaders and the servile classes themselves volunteer to elect members of the governing classes as their rulers. *Fifth* is 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 believe that democracy and self-government have become realities of life. *Sixth* is 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. *Seventh* is 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 governing class may be so deeply entrenched that the servile classes will need other safeguards besides adult suffrage to achieve the same end.

That there is great value in having these considerations drawn up and hung up, so to say on the wall, before every lover of democracy, so that he may see them and note them, goes without saying. For they will help, as nothing else can, to make him realize that in devising a constitution for democracy he must bear in mind : that the principal aim of such a constitution must be to dislodge the governing class from its position and to prevent it from remaining as a governing class for ever ; that the machinery for setting up a democratic government cannot be a matter of dogma ; that ousting the governing class from power being the main object the machinery for setting up a democratic government cannot be uniform and that variations in the machinery of Democracy must not merely be tolerated but accepted for the reason that

the processes by which the governing classes obtain their mastery over the servile classes vary from country to country,

This is what democracy means and involves. But unfortunately Western writers on Politics from whom the foreigner draws his notions have failed to take such a realistic view of democracy. Instead, they have taken a very formal and a very superficial view of it by making constitutional morality, adult suffrage and frequent elections as the be-all and end-all of democracy.

Those who propound the view that democracy need involve no more than these three devices are probably unaware of the fact that they are doing nothing more than and nothing different from expressing the point of view of the governing classes. The governing classes know by experience that such mechanisms have not proved fatal to their power and their position. Indeed, they have helped to give to their power and prestige the virtue of legality and made themselves less vulnerable to attack by the servile classes.

Those who wish that democracy and self-government should come into their own, and should not remain as mere forms, cannot do better than start with the recognition of the crucial fact that the existence of a permanently settled governing class is the greatest danger to democracy. It is the only safe and realistic approach for a democrat to adopt. It is a fatal blunder to omit to take account of its existence 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 will give what I think are the only true answers to these questions.

IV

I cannot say if the foreigner will be impressed by what has been said in the foregoing section of this chapter. If he is he will no doubt ask for proof in support of the statement that the Congress in fighting for the freedom of the country is really fighting not to establish democracy but is planning to resuscitate the ancient Hindu polity of a hereditary governing class ruling a hereditary servile class. I am not certain that the foreigner will be satisfied with the evidence. But I am prepared to place it before him for what it is worth.

Who constitute the governing class in India ? For Indians such a question is unnecessary. But for the foreigner it is a necessary preliminary and it must therefore be dealt with. The governing class in India consists principally of the Brahmins. Strangely enough some 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 ? The intellectual class in every community is charged by its moral code with one sacred duty, namely, to safeguard the interest of the community and not to sacrifice it to the interest of their own class. No intellectual class has so grossly violated this trust as have the Brahmins in India. When one finds the Brahmins repudiating their position as the governing class in India one begins to think whether it is due to a guilty conscience, born out of the realization that they have committed a criminal breach of this trust and therefore dare not stand before the bar of the world. Or is it due to their sense of modesty ? It is not necessary to speculate as to what the truth is. For, it is hardly open to question that in India the Brahmins are a governing class. If necessary there are two tests which one could apply for the purpose of ascertaining the truth. First is the sentiment of the people and the second is the Brahmin's share in administration. Taking the attitude of the people towards the Brahmin, nobody can deny that the person of the Brahmin is regarded as sacred by every Hindu, high or low. He is the most "Worshipful Master" to whom everyone high and low must bow. In pre-British days he had immunities and privileges which were denied to the servile class. For instance he could not be hanged even if he committed murder. That was because he was a sacred

person. There 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 the sacred liquid to their parents who would not take their food without having a sip of it first. He was entitled to first fruits. In Malabar, where the Sambandham form of marriage prevails, the servile classes, such as the Nairsy regard it an honour to have their females kept as mistresses by the Brahmins. Even kings invited Brahmins to deflower their queens on *prima noctis*.¹

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 persona 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 Nair ; but the sacred character of the Nambudries always procures them a preference."—*Pinkerton's Voyages*, Vol. VIII, p. 734.

Mr. C. A. Innes, I.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 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.

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 18 (see page 213). It shows the distribution of gazetted posts between the Brahmins and the other communities in the year 1943. Similar data from the other provinces could also be adduced to support this conclusion. But it is unnecessary to labour the point. Whether the Brahmins accept or deny the status the facts that they control the State and that their supremacy is accepted by the servile classes, are enough to prove that they form the governing class.

It is of course impossible for the Brahmins to maintain their supremacy as a governing class without an ally to help them on account of their being numerically very small. Consequently, as history shows, the Brahmins have always had other classes as their allies to whom they were ready to accord the status of a governing class provided they were prepared to work with them in subordinate co-operation. In ancient and mediaeval times they made such an alliance with the Kshatriyas or the warrior class and the two not merely ruled the masses, but ground them down to atoms, pulverized them so to say—the Brahmin with his pen and the Kshatriya with his sword. At present, Brahmins have made an alliance with the Vaishya class called Banias. The shifting of this alliance from the Kshatriya to the Bania is in the changed circumstances quite inevitable. In these days of commerce 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 and is in fact coming from the Bania. If the Bania is financing the Congress it is because he has realized—and Mr. Gandhi has taught him—that money invested in politics gives large dividends. Those who have any doubt in the matter might do well to read what Mr. Gandhi told Mr. Louis Fischer on June 6, 1942. In his book *A Week with Mr. Gandhi*, Mr. Fischer

Table 18 (i)

Communities	Approximate Population in Lakhs	Percentage of Population	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
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Brahmins	15	3	820	37	3,280	43.73	8,812	42.4
Christians	20	4	190	9	750	10	1,655	8.0
Muhaminadans	37	7	150	7	497	6.63	1,624	7.8
Depressed Classes	70	14	25	1.5	39	.52	144	.69
Non-Brahmins	113	22	620	27	2,543	33.9	8,440	40.6
	245	50	50	2				
Non-Asiatie and Anglo-Indians ...	—	—	—	—	372	5.0	83	.4
Other Communities	—	—	—	—	19	.5	24	.11

records very revealing answers to some of his most interesting and pertinent questions. Mr. Fischer writes¹:

“I said I had several questions to ask him (Mr. Gandhi) about the Congress Party. Very highly placed Britishers, I recalled, had told me that Congress was in the hands of big business and that Mr. 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.’ ”

Being dependent on his money, it is impossible for the Brahmin to exclude the Bania from the position of a governing class. In fact, the Brahmin has established not merely a working but a cordial alliance with the Bania. The result is that the governing class in India to-day is a Brahmin-Bania instead of a Brahmin-Kshatriya combine as it used to be.

Enough has been said to show who constitute the governing class in India. The next inquiry must be directed to find out how the governing class fared in the elections to the Provincial Legislatures that took place in 1937.

The elections that took place in 1937 were based on a franchise which though it was neither universal nor adult was wide enough to include classes other than the governing class, certainly wider than any existing prior to 1937. The elections based on such a franchise may well be taken as a test to find out how the governing class fared as against the servile classes in this electoral contest.

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

1. *A Week With Gandhi* (1943), p. 41.

necessary information on these points relating to members of the Provincial Legislatures elected in 1937. 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 is I believe sufficient to warrant our drawing certain definite conclusions.

As an answer to the question as to how the governing class fared in the electoral contest of 1937, attention may be drawn to Table 19 (see page 216) which shows the proportion of Brahmins and Banias (landlords and moneylenders) representing the governing class and non-Brahmins and the Scheduled Castes representing the servile classes, 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 degree of over-representation which the Brahmins have secured in the election. But there is no doubt that on comparison with their numbers the Brahmins have secured overwhelming representation.

Those, who wish to know what degree of representation the propertied classes, such as Banias, businessmen and landlords obtained, may see the figures given in Table 20 (see page 217). It shows how many Banias, businessmen and landlords were elected on the Congress ticket. Here again the representation secured by the Banias, landlords and businessmen is quite out of proportion to their numbers.

Such is the position of the governing class in the legislatures constituted under the elections that took place in 1937. Some may say that on the whole the governing classes were in a minority in the legislature. As against this, it must be pointed out that the supremacy of the governing class can be measured not by its position in the legislature but by its ability to get possession of executive authority. An inquiry into the class composition of the Ministers is therefore very pertinent. Information on this point will be found in Tables 21 and 22 (see pages 218 and 219). A glance at the tables¹ is enough to show that the Brahmins—the premier governing class—succeeded in capturing an overwhelming majority of seats in

1. The facts summarized in those Tables are taken from the issue for July 15, 1939, of *Information*, an official publication issued by the Government of India.

Table 19
Classification of Congress Members of Provincial Assemblies by Castes

Province	Brahmins	Non-Brahmins	Scheduled Castes	Not Stated	Total
Assam	6	21	1	5	33
Bengal	15	27	6	6	54
Bihar	31	39	16	12	98
C.P.	28	35	7	—	70
Madras	38	90	26	5	159
Orissa	11	20	5	—	36
United Provinces	39	54	16	24	133