

# AMBEDKAR'S ATTACK

(A critical examination of Dr. Ambedkar's book: "What Congress and Gandhi have done to the Untouchables.")

*By*

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THE HINDUSTAN TIMES  
NEW DELHI

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

The manuscript of this book was ready in the beginning of this year and it was hoped that it would be in the hands of the readers in March or April. I regret that publication has been delayed. In the interval, the Cabinet Mission has come and gone and Dr. Ambedkar, and his colleagues in the Executive Council have had to relinquish office. These events have not, however, affected the controversy between Dr. Ambedkar and the Congress and there is no reason to expect that his forced retirement into non-official life will induce him to withdraw his charges or even to refrain from repeating them. It is, therefore, hoped that, in spite of the delay, this volume will serve the purpose indicated in the first chapter.

New Delhi  
7th July, 1946.

K. Santhanam.

## CONTENTS

I.	Introduction	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
II.	Trading in Bogeys	..	..	..	..	..	..	7
III.	Reductio ad Absurdum	..	..	..	..	..	..	15
IV.	Wounded Vanity	..	..	..	..	..	..	22
V.	A Hard Bargain	..	..	..	..	..	..	32
VI.	The Missing Chapter	..	..	..	..	..	..	41
VII.	A Calumny	..	..	..	..	..	..	50
VIII.	Tirade against Gandhiji	..	..	..	..	..	..	59
IX.	Caricature of Gandhism	..	..	..	..	..	..	66
X.	Conclusion	..	..	..	..	..	..	74

## APPENDICES

I.	The Harijan Sevak Sangh	..	..	..	..	..	..	83
II.	The Congress Election Manifesto	..	..	..	..	..	..	106

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

After nearly three years of detention, the Congress President and the members of the Working Committee were released in June 1945 on the eve of the publication of the first Wavell Plan. The White Paper containing this plan was published on June 14, and on the same day Lord Wavell, the Viceroy, announced in a broadcast speech the summoning of a Conference of Indian leaders on 25th of the same month. Dr. Ambedkar's book "What Congress and Gandhi have done to the Untouchables" was published in the same month and as it contains as Appendices the text of the White Paper and Lord Wavell's broadcast speech, it must have been published in a tremendous hurry. The book itself was not planned or written with any sense of emergency. In his Preface, Dr. Ambedkar has explained that the idea of the book occurred to him soon after the elections in 1937. His objective was then limited to proving by abstruse mathematical calculations that the result of those elections did not show that the Congress had obtained the support of the majority of the scheduled castes. "Having led the Untouchables against the Congress for full five years," says the author, "in the Round Table Conference and in the Joint Parliamentary Committee, I could not pretend to be unaffected by the elections. To me the question was : Had the Untouchables gone over to the Congress? Such a thing was unimaginable." Facts had to be explained away to suit the imagination. It is easy to imagine what a headache it must have been to the worthy Doctor to explain to the world that in spite of his wonderful leadership, the scheduled castes returned 26 Congress members out of a total of 30 in the province of Madras which has been considered to be the worst part of the country in the matter of untouchability. It was natural that he should have taken to his task rather leisurely. It was not quite expedient to publish his investigations while the provincial legislatures were

functioning, for the unimaginable might happen again and his thesis be flatly repudiated by the representatives of the scheduled castes in the various legislatures.

Years rolled on. The Indian National Congress surrendered the ministries rather than submit to the national indignity of being dragged into war without the people of India being even consulted. Attempts were made in 1940 to arrive at a settlement of the political deadlock but they failed. In the first expansion of the Executive Council in 1941, the British Government were not particular about the inclusion of a scheduled caste representative though Dr. Ambedkar's name was talked about. They were more anxious to rally the Muslims and non-Congress Hindus. When hostility to the Congress became the main qualification for membership to the vacant seats, Dr. Ambedkar got his chance on the eve of the great struggle of August 1942.

With this change in the political situation and his own elevation, the original purpose of the book underwent a radical modification. Dr. Ambedkar has suggested that the extension of the scope of the book far beyond what was originally planned, was due to a friend who read the proofs and proposed that the book should "expose the efforts of the Congress and Mr. Gandhi to improve the lot of the Untouchables for the information of the Untouchables and also of the foreigners whom the Congress had deluded into accepting its side by misrepresentation of facts." The result is a bulky book in which the original purpose of analysis of the election results has receded into the background. The book is now claimed to be a "record of the deeds of the Congress and Mr. Gandhi from 1917 to date in so far as they touch the problem of the Untouchables". Dr. Ambedkar is a laborious scholar and if he had compiled a truthful record of the work of the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi in the cause of the scheduled castes, it would have been a useful contribution irrespective of his own estimate of the worth of this record. Actually,

the book is an incoherent jumble of incidents torn from their contexts, allegations unsupported by any evidence, and sweeping conclusions devoid of rational justification, all strung together by one tenacious purpose, viz., that whatever the Congress and Gandhiji have been doing and have done must be represented as wholly evil.

While an Indian might find it difficult to understand how an intelligent man like Dr. Ambedkar could hope to establish such a hopeless thesis, for a foreigner it will be natural to conclude that there must be something very unwholesome in the atmosphere of India of today in which a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council can speak of the Indian National Congress and the apostle of non-violence in terms similar to those used to describe Hitler. He may marvel that such a book was allowed to be published while the author was holding a high office in which he was expected to deal justly with all classes and communities of India. If the Executive Council were a party Cabinet, one-sided propaganda might be permitted, for there would be constitutional means of dealing with it. As the Executive Council is not constitutionally responsible, such propaganda is highly objectionable and, until recently, there was a convention that it should be avoided. But of late, all these restraints have been removed and the members of the Executive Council, secure against popular disapproval, can prostitute their high position to defame and vilify their political opponents.

I venture, however, to suggest a hypothesis that will explain many things in the book which are otherwise altogether unintelligible

Dr. Ambedkar wants to establish his own claim as the exclusive leader of the scheduled castes and that of his organisation, the All-India Scheduled Castes Federation, as their sole organ. These objectives are sought to be gained by charging the Congress and Gandhiji with hostility to the scheduled castes throughout their career. In the book, which professes to be a record of Congress activities in relation to the depressed classes,

the vital period of Congress ministries has been omitted. Till 1937 the Congress was not in power and its main activity was propaganda. It could not do much for or against the scheduled castes in the way of legislative or administrative action. If the Congress and its source of inspiration, Mahatma Gandhi, were hostile to these classes, it should have been possible for Dr. Ambedkar to pile up a charge-sheet of ministerial actions and omissions relating to them and it would have been a real indictment. From his contention that no less than 73 out of a total of 151 seats allotted to the scheduled castes in the Provincial Legislatures were captured by non-Congress members of these castes, it would have been easy to show from the resolutions and speeches of these members, who the author would like the reader to imagine were his own followers, how the Congress in its brief duration of office neglected its duty to the depressed classes. The book has been brought up to date till June 1945. Is it not a reasonable inference that Dr. Ambedkar could find no material for his main thesis during this period and that had he dealt with it he would have had to admit that the actions of Congress ministries had the general approval not only of the Congress members of the scheduled castes in the Provincial Legislatures but also of the non-Congress members. It would have completely demolished the fantastic structure he has built up out of stray tit-bits of mythology, religion, tradition, prejudice and misrepresentation.

For many years, the use of the term 'untouchable' had been objected to as a degrading appellation by the members of the scheduled castes, so they came to be called 'Depressed Classes'. In Appendix II of the book is printed the supplementary memorandum submitted by Dr. Ambedkar, dated November 4, 1931, to the Second Round Table Conference. The last paragraph of this memorandum dealt with the nomenclature used to describe the scheduled castes. It says: "We would like to point out that the existing nomenclature of Depressed Classes is objected

to by members of the Depressed Classes who have given thought to it and also by outsiders who take interest in them. It is degrading and contemptuous and advantage may be taken of this occasion for drafting the new constitution to alter for official purposes the existing nomenclature." It was in response to this representation that the name was changed to 'Scheduled Castes' by the British Government while Mahatma Gandhi has preferred to call them 'Harijans', meaning "The Children of God", to bring home to the Indian people the sinfulness of the custom of looking down upon them. How does it happen that the same Dr. Ambedkar who thought the appellation 'Depressed Classes' degrading and contemptuous should have had no hesitation in using the far more degrading and contemptuous term 'Untouchables' throughout the book? Was it not to obtain some cheap sympathy from the foreigner for whom the book is primarily intended? It is for those on whose behalf Dr. Ambedkar professes to speak to judge whether this sympathy is worth the degradation of getting back to the hated nomenclature. But members of the scheduled castes are Indians and no Indian can help feeling sad and sick at heart that a person of the status and education of Dr. Ambedkar should have stooped so low.

It is not without much hesitation that I have taken up the task of scrutinising this book. Normally, I should have left it alone in the faith that even big lies cannot deceive for long. But Dr. Ambedkar is not only one of India's distinguished intellectuals, he is a member of the governing organ of British India. The unwary foreigner is apt to think that his statements and allegations have official authority. Also the classes on whose behalf he has written the book really deserve the active sympathy of all patriotic and enlightened Indians. Their treatment remains one of the indelible blots on Hindu civilization and the cause of their emancipation is a sacred moral crusade in which every true Indian should play his part. Both the cause of Indian nationalism and the liberation of the scheduled castes will be gravely compromised if



the idea gets currency in this country or abroad that the two are inconsistent and conflicting.

It is neither possible nor desirable that I should examine all the allegations of Dr. Ambedkar in this book. It will make the reply as bulky as the book itself and will weary the reader with endless repetitions. I shall confine myself to some of the main charges and give a few examples of the recklessness with which they have been made. It will be my endeavour to deal with them as objectively as possible. I would have liked to keep out of the reader's mind my name and associations so that he might read this as an impersonal review of the book. But I dislike anonymity in general and, in this case, it would be altogether unfair to Dr. Ambedkar. It may also prove to be highly embarrassing to Mahatma Gandhi and other national leaders who might be suspected of defending themselves by a subterfuge. It is, therefore, necessary to say a word as to why I undertook this work. A scrutiny of Dr. Ambedkar's book can best be undertaken by one who has been intimately connected with the Congress and has personal knowledge of its work. At the same time, the person should be free from Congress discipline and capable of taking a detached view. I happen to possess both these qualifications. Having worked in the Congress from 1920 to 1942, been a member of the All-India Congress Committee and the Tamil Nad Congress Committee for many years, and finally a member of the Congress party in the Central Assembly, I resigned all these positions in 1942 in order to advocate opinions not approved by the majority. I hold no office in the Congress now. Finally, I am firmly convinced that rapid liquidation of the medieval distinctions of caste and creed and with them of all traces of untouchability is essential if political freedom is to bear real fruit. It was, therefore, difficult for me to refuse the request of friends who felt like me that it was in the interest of the country and of truth itself that the grave charges contained in Dr. Ambedkar's book should not pass unchallenged.

## CHAPTER II

### TRADING IN BOGEYS

The key to the entire book is to be found in Chapter IX entitled "A plea to the foreigner". In this chapter, Dr. Ambedkar blames foreigners for their misplaced sympathy for the Indian National Congress as the leader of the Indian struggle for freedom. He tells them that "in their hurry to bring freedom to India they have no time to realize that by siding with the Congress what they are doing is not to make India safe for democracy but to free the tyrant to practise tyranny."

How does Dr. Ambedkar establish this terrible indictment? The Indian National Congress has been in existence for 60 years and all the noblest sons and daughters of India have been associated with it. It has passed thousands of resolutions during this period and the speeches of its leaders will, if they are compiled and published, run into a whole library. If Dr. Ambedkar had given a fair analysis of the resolutions and the speeches and shown that they had the slightest tendency to oppress or enslave any section of the population, then this indictment would have been worth serious examination. As it is, the whole chapter is such an incoherent jumble of nonsense that it is not possible even to criticize it coherently.

The worthy Doctor starts with a bitter complaint that "the Press in India is an accomplice of the Congress, believes in the dogma that the Congress never does wrong, and acts on the principle of not giving any publicity to any news which is inconsistent with Congress prestige or Congress ideology". Again, "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—who for well known reasons are entirely pro-Congress and will not allow any news hostile to the Congress to get publicity". The author takes for granted the absolute ignorance of

foreigners about India. Otherwise he would not have ventured on such utterly false statements. Many of the important English dailies in India which have the greatest influence on foreigners are European-owned, like the "Times of India" of Bombay, the "Statesman" of Calcutta and the "Madras Mail". Their policy has been consistently critical of the Congress, ranging from bitter hostility during periods of direct action to condescending advice and self-complacent contempt when the main Congress activity is constitutional agitation. Far from suppressing news and views against the Congress, they have always been on the alert to give the widest publicity to all kinds of accusations and charges against the national organisation. The Congress has never owned and does not own to-day a single newspaper. It is true that many of the nationalist papers generally support its main policies but they have never shrunk from criticizing and opposing it when they felt that its policy was wrong. The nationalist papers were split in two when Mahatma Gandhi started the non-co-operation movement in 1920. They were again sharply divided over the Swarajist movement for abandoning the boycott of the legislatures. Though the Congress boycotted the First Round table Conference, the editor of the "Hindu" of Madras, which is one of the oldest and most influential nationalist newspapers of India, attended it as a member. Whatever their editorial views may be, it has been the established tradition of all newspapers of India to give fair publicity to all news, and important speeches and proceedings of Conferences and public meetings are faithfully reported irrespective of their political complexion. The Indian reader of Dr. Ambedkar's book will be highly amused at the charge of pro-Congress tendencies directed against the Associated Press of India. But the foreigner may not know that it is a subsidiary agency of "Reuters" and that it is largely influenced by the Central and Provincial Governments in India.

Having laid at the doors of the Indian Press the principal charge of misleading the foreigner, Dr. Ambedkar

blames his own generosity for not counteracting the mischief. He says that the Untouchables refrained from doing anti-Congress propaganda because the foreigner "is very likely to mistake the quarrel over the constitutional politics for a disagreement over the ultimate purposes of India's foreign policies". As throughout the book Dr. Ambedkar has assumed an identity between himself and the Untouchables, the foreign reader will duly admire "the patriotic motives of the Untouchables in keeping silent over Congress propaganda which is directed against them". The learned Doctor has not given a single instance of Congress propaganda against the Untouchables. Presumably, the present book is to serve as a noble monument of Dr. Ambedkar's restraint.

The foreign reader is not only lectured on his ignorance of India; he is also accused of ignorance of the fundamental principles of democracy. The poor Britishers and the Americans believe that "what is necessary for the realization of the ideal of democracy, viz., government of the people for the people by 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". The learned Doctor marvels at this foolishness. He has chosen to enlighten his reader on the true theory of democracy of which he seems to be the unique exponent. It is a theory which is a parody of the Marxian analysis of economic classes. We are told that the people of every country should be classified into a governing class and a servile class. The existence of a governing class is inconsistent with democracy and self-government. Therefore, "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".

The foreigner will not only be amused at the fantastic nature of the theory put forward, but he will also wonder what application it can have to India where the British have been the exclusive governing class for over 200 years. Dr. Ambedkar is, however, not wanting in invention. In the true Hitlerian style he has invented in the bania and the Brahmin the big bogeys to frighten the foreigner with. The following description of the bania will remind one of Hitler's tirades against the Jews: "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 as he is told by the 'Smritis' that money lending is the occupation prescribed to him by Manu. He looks upon it as both right and righteous". The word bania is loosely used. It denotes the trading and commercial classes of North India which come under the various sections of the Vaisya caste. It has also been used for the money-lender, who may belong to any caste or no caste. In the first sense, the banias form neither an economic nor a social class. There are among them many of the biggest industrialists of India. There are also thousands of poor, hard-working banias who run small shops in remote rural areas and made a meagre livelihood. To represent them all as money-lenders is as untrue as it is unjust

Assuming that banias are wicked as a class what has it to do with the Indian National Congress? The only banias who have had any influence over the Indian National Congress are Mahatma Gandhi and the late Seth Jammalal Bajaj. They are, no doubt, banias by birth, but Dr. Ambedkar's description of the type applies

to them as little as Shakespeare's picture of Shylock resembles Jesus Christ or Albert Einstein.

The Brahmins, as the hereditary intellectual leaders of the country, have had as much influence on the Congress as in every other sphere of Indian activity. To slander them Dr. Ambedkar employs all the methods used by unscrupulous propagandists. The Brahmins do not form a compact community. The only thing that is common to them is a certain traditional reverence. The Brahmins of the Punjab and Kashmir eat meat, the Bengal Brahmin eats fish while the South Indian Brahmin is a strict vegetarian. Socially, the Brahmins of the various parts of India are as completely segregated as various castes. In wealth and education their position varies widely. It is broadly true to say that except in South India the Brahmin is not superior to the majority of the people in either respect. If the Brahmins of India were taken as a whole, their average income would not be more than the national average. It is only in South India that owing to special causes, the Brahmin has had a position in recent times superior in some respects to the rest of the Hindu community. Dr. Ambedkar himself has had to admit that the Brahmin has no special legal right, immunity or privilege to-day. To prove that the Brahmins are the governing class, Dr. Ambedkar gives a table showing the distribution of government posts in the province of Madras. He has selected Madras for he knows that if figures are taken for the whole of India his thesis will break down. It is true that, when recruitment to government service was based purely on educational qualifications, the Brahmins of South India obtained a majority of posts. The knowledge of the English language and ability to pass examinations held for government services are neither a crime nor the hallmark of a governing class. Dr. Ambedkar carefully omits mentioning the fact that during the last 20 years recruitment to Government services has been regulated in Madras by a system of communal rotation in which the Brahmin can get a maximum of only two out of 12 posts.

Whatever the merits and faults of the Brahmins may be, the real issue is whether the Brahmins have dominated or are dominating the Congress. According to the Congress constitution since 1920 any one who pays four annas is entitled to be a member of the Congress. For the last 25 years the vast majority of the primary members of the Congress as well as its various committees have been non-Brahmins, even in South India. On page 219 of his book Dr. Ambedkar gives a classification of Congress members of provincial assemblies by caste. It shows that in Madras there were 38 Brahmins out of a total of 159; in Bihar 31 out of 98; in the U.P. 39 out of 133; in Orissa 11 out of 36; in Bengal 15 out of 54 and in Assam 6 out of 33. By no trick of arithmetic can the Brahmins be said to dominate any of these legislatures. It is no doubt true that their representation is far larger than their proportion to the total population. It should, however, be borne in mind that these members were selected by Committees consisting of a majority of non-Brahmins and elected by constituencies in which the Brahmin voters formed only a very small minority. They were selected for their individual qualifications and not as Brahmins. Dr. Ambedkar has wisely refrained from giving the number of banias in the legislatures. He wants somehow, to prove the theory that the Congress consists of governing classes as against the servile classes. So he has compiled a table to show that among Congress members of the Provincial legislatures a considerable number are lawyers, medical practitioners, landlords and business men. This is true of all legislatures in the world. Even in Russia, persons belonging to analogous professions are bound to form the majority in representative institutions.

On page 218 we read an astounding statement. "In all Hindu provinces if the non-Hindu ministers were excluded the Cabinets were wholly composed of Brahmins". On the very next page Dr. Ambedkar has published a table which altogether refutes the statement. As I have already remarked, the Brahmin-non-Brahmin issue has

importance only in Madras where out of seven Hindu ministers, three were Brahmins, three non-Brahmins, and one a member of the scheduled castes.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel is neither a bania nor a Brahmin, and according to Dr. Ambedkar's classification he belongs to the servile classes. What is one to make of a statement that he is not "free from the feeling that he belongs to the governing class"? Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru is a well known socialist and rationalist. He has written many books and delivered thousands of speeches. Dr. Ambedkar has not been able to find a single quotation indicating any caste or class feeling. Yet he is not ashamed to charge him and his sister Mrs. Vijayalaxmi Pandit with feeling that they belong to the governing class. Dr. Ambedkar says that the Congress treated the servile classes with contempt by setting them up for the legislatures when they were boycotted by Congressmen. The entire story is a fabrication. In 1920 the Congress not only boycotted the legislatures but also asked all the voters to abstain from polling. In 1930 all Congressmen were in jail. Throughout the book Dr. Ambedkar has adopted the trick of taking up instances of odd happenings in remote parts of the country, distorting and attributing them to the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi and then abusing both. I may give an example of this method. Dr. R.P. Paranjpye, the Indian High Commissioner in Australia, has been a consistent and hostile critic of the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi ever since 1920. He published a parody intended to enforce the absurdity of the demands for special representation made by the various communities. This is considered to be an instance of the governing class in India pouring ridicule on the political demand of the servile classes. The reader is expected to add it to the charge-sheet against the Congress.

A review of this vicious chapter of Dr. Ambedkar's book will not be complete without a reference to the malicious libels relating to the past history of India, even though they are not relevant to a discussion of present



day problems. Dr. Ambedkar has stated that "the disarming of the Shudhras and the Untouchables was the rule of law promulgated by the Brahmins". It is doubtful whether even in pre-historic times, the Brahmins ever held the power to promulgate or enforce any such rule of law. There can be no doubt that the masses of India were not disarmed during historic times: from Chandra Gupta to Shivaji Indian history is full of dynasties belonging to what Dr. Ambedkar has called the servile classes. The Maurya, the Gupta, the Pandava and the Chola were all non-Brahmin, non-Kshatriya empires, which could have been established and maintained only by the armed might of those classes whom the Brahmins are said to have disarmed. The charge that the servile classes were deprived of education is no less false and grotesque. In the list of poets and saints who have been the main torch-bearers of Indian culture the honours are even between the so-called governing and servile classes. Thiruvalluvar, the philosopher-poet of the Tamil country, was an untouchable. Kamban, the greatest Tamil poet, was a Vellala, i.e., of the cultivator caste. This is true all over India.

It may be asked why Dr. Ambedkar should thus distort history and defame his ancestors. Presumably, he felt that without such monstrous falsification, he could not convince the world of the justice or desirability of recognising the untouchables as a separate element in the Hindu population and Dr. Ambedkar as the exclusive spokesman of that element.

## CHAPTER III

### REDUCTIO AD ABSURDUM

Let us assume for a moment that the Hindus can be divided into the governing class consisting of the brahmins and the banias and the servile class consisting of the rest. It follows that it is in the interest of the servile class to stand united and wrest power from the governing class. Dr. Ambedkar would then have become a champion of the servile class. Strangely enough he has argued in the first eight chapters of the book that the scheduled castes form "a distinct and separate element in the Hindu community". For once Dr. Ambedkar has rightly represented the Congress view as asserting "that the Untouchables are a chip of the Hindu block". In Chapter VIII of the book, the separate identity of the scheduled castes is sought to be established by all kinds of fantastic analogies which are intended to confuse rather than clarify the issue. For instance, look at the reasoning of the following paragraph: "The only test which can be of use is its social sense as indicating a member of the Hindu society. Can an Untouchable be held as a part of the society? Is there any human tie that binds them to the rest of the Hindus? There is none. There is no connubium. There is no commensalism." If this argument is correct, then there are no Hindus at all. There are only different castes and sub-castes for there is no more connubium or commensalism between the different castes than between the high castes and the scheduled castes. This is no less true among the various scheduled castes themselves.

Throughout the book Dr. Ambedkar has not defined an untouchable and he would like the reader to imagine that all the scheduled castes form a single homogeneous community which can be dealt with in a uniform manner. A list of castes included in this term has been given in the Government of India Scheduled Castes Order 1936.

It contains no less than 74 castes in the province of Madras alone. There are 37 such castes in Bombay, 66 in Bengal and similar numbers in other provinces. The only factor common to all these castes is that they are found at the bottom of Hindu society in all provinces and their condition and treatment are everywhere deplorable. But the word 'untouchable' can be reasonably applied only to a few of these castes in South India. Mr. C.S. Mallen, I.C.S., writes in the 1931 Census Report of Assam: "The untouchable caste is unknown here and boys of all castes are freely admitted into all schools and colleges, nor are any difficulties worth mentioning as regards the drawing of the water by all castes from public tanks and wells." The Punjab Census Report of 1931 has the same tale to tell: "The castes which fall under the first category (i.e. causing pollution by proximity or touch) are comparatively rare and at present no caste in this province is considered to cause pollution simply by coming within a certain distance of the caste Hindu. In private buildings no caste Hindu would let a sweeper enter his residential room, not to speak of the latter ever dreaming of going into the kitchen. In many cases the shadow of a Chamar or a Chura would pollute a caste Hindu if he happens to be in his own house, but they would not mind such a thing in a playground or a public place". As regards Bengal, Mr. A.R. Porter, M.A., I.C.S., says in his report of the Bengal Census of 1931: "In Madras there are groups to whom the use of public roads, public wells, public markets and public burial grounds are all denied. The extent to which the lowest classes in Bengal suffer from similar disabilities is extremely small. In Bengal, nowhere is any caste excluded from any public road merely on the ground of the position of the caste. In certain areas the very lowest classes of scavengers, sweepers, etc., are not allowed, as in Malda and Hugly, to use the public wells, but in most cases the restriction does not exist at all and where it exists it is either dependent upon the size or nature of the well or is overcome by some form of adjustment between the classes. And although children may belong to the lowest classes of the Hindu social

system or be outside the pale of caste altogether, there is no difficulty in their being admitted to primary schools.”

Prohibition of inter-dining and inter-marriage has been the main feature of the caste system and to the extent that these apply to the untouchables, they cannot be said to be special sufferers. That these taboos are absurd under modern conditions and must go, is admitted by all enlightened Hindus, but customs and traditions which have come down from the remote past die hard. Dr. Ambedkar has purposely turned a blind eye to the rapid social changes that have taken place in Hindu society during the last 30 years. I may state my own personal experience, as coming from an orthodox Brahmin family in South India, I have a full experience of caste and untouchability as they were in the first decade of this century and as they are now. During my boyhood days, the Vaishnavite Brahmins of South India would not dine even with Smartha Brahmins. There was no question of their eating or associating with non-Brahmins. To-day excepting in remote villages, the taboo against inter-dining or other forms of association has almost disappeared. My sons have been living in hostels with members of all castes and in fact do not know the castes of their hostel-mates. I have attended innumerable Congress conferences during these 20 years and have not found in them any distinctions of caste or untouchability ever observed. Whatever may be the political value of the great Civil Disobedience Movements of 1920-23, 1930-33 and 1940-45, there can be no doubt that the intimate social contact of thousands of national workers in jails as equals and comrades in utter disregard of all rules of caste has brought the day much nearer when the caste system will have disappeared altogether. It goes without saying that with the disappearance of the caste system itself, the social incidence of untouchability also will vanish. The issue brought before the Congress by Mahatma Gandhi in 1920 was whether a special attempt should not be made to eliminate the particular disabilities of untouchables even before the disappearance of the caste system as a whole.

He was emphatically of the opinion that in the matter of temples, roads, wells, entry into houses and such other matters, the discrimination against the untouchables should disappear even before the taboos of caste relating to interdining and inter-marriage fell into disuse. Dr. Ambedkar attacks Mahatma Gandhi for making this distinction between caste and untouchability. On the other hand he himself emphasises this distinction to prove that the untouchables are separate from the Hindus.

The careful reader of Dr. Ambedkar's book will be puzzled as to what Dr. Ambedkar wants. It is true, he wants the British Government to recognise the scheduled castes as a separate community like the Muslims and the Sikhs and give them representation in the Legislatures and Executives. I shall deal with this claim in a later chapter. But on the main issue as to whether he wants the untouchables to be permanently treated as an inferior section of Hindu society, he is confused and contradictory. Speaking at the Tenth Meeting of the Minorities Committee of the Second Round Table Conference on November 13, 1931, Mahatma Gandhi put the whole issue of the separation of the scheduled castes from the main body of Hindu society in a nutshell as follows :-

"Sikhs may remain as such in perpetuity, so may Muslims, so may Eurasians; will untouchables remain as untouchables in perpetuity? I would far rather wish that Hinduism died than that untouchability lived. Therefore, with all my regard for Dr. Ambedkar and for his desire to see the untouchables uplifted, with all my regard for his ability, I must say in all humility that here the great wrong under which he has laboured, and perhaps the bitter experience that he has undergone, has for the moment warped his judgment. It hurts me to have to say this, but I would be untrue to the cause of the untouchables which is as dear to me as life itself, if I did not say this. I have been speaking with a due sense of responsibility and I say that is not a proper claim that is registered by Dr. Ambedkar, when he seeks to speak for

the whole of the untouchables of India. It will create a division in Hinduism which I cannot possibly look forward to with any satisfaction whatsoever. I do not mind untouchables, if they so desire, being converted to Islam or Christianity. I should tolerate that, but I cannot possibly tolerate what is in store for Hinduism if there are two divisions set forth, and those who speak of the political rights of the untouchables do not know their India and do not know how Indian society is to-day constructed. Therefore, I want to say with all the emphasis that I can command that if I was the only person to resist this thing, I would resist it with my life."

Dr. Ambedkar has to admit that in religious beliefs, in the observance of caste distinctions and in their general outlook on life, untouchables are not different from the rest of the Hindus. So he has to fall back upon the economic argument to justify a new and more rigid separation of the scheduled castes from the Hindus. He says: "The system of Untouchability is a gold mine to the Hindus. In it the 240 millions of Hindus have 60 millions of Untouchables to serve as their retinue to enable the Hindus to maintain their pomp and ceremony and to cultivate a feeling of poignant dignity befitting the master class which cannot be fostered and sustained unless there is beneath it a servile class to be looked down upon. In it the 240 millions of Hindus have 60 millions of the Untouchables to be used as forced labour and because of their state of complete destitution and helplessness could be compelled to work on a mere pittance and sometimes on nothing. In it the 240 millions of Hindus have 60 millions of Untouchables to do the dirty work of scavengers and sweepers which the Hindu is debarred by his religion to do and which must be done for the Hindus by non-Hindus, who could be no others than the Untouchables. In it the 240 millions of Hindus have 60 millions of Untouchables who can be kept for lower jobs and prevented from entering into competition for higher jobs which are preserved for the Hindus. In it the 240 millions of Hindus have 60 millions

of Untouchables who can be used as shock absorbers in slums and dead-weights in booths. For all the slums it is the Untouchables who are hired first and the Hindus who are hired last."

This picture is as perverted as it is eloquent. To say that the vast majority of the Hindus, who in the next chapter become the servile classes dominated by the governing class of brahmins and banias, are a purposeful master class resolved to deal with the Untouchable as a mere slave is an utter distortion of truth. The bulk of the so-called untouchables are agricultural labourers whose economic state is unalterably linked with that of the impoverished Hindu peasants who form the majority of the 240 millions. If the 240 millions of Hindus formed a homogeneous community resolved to maintain the 60 million scheduled castes as economic slaves, it is difficult to see what power on earth could prevent them from doing so. Fortunately for India and the world, the Hindus have neither the coherence nor the desire to do so. They are anxious to absorb the untouchables gradually but effectively as equal members of a caste-free Hindu society.

The scheduled castes of India have a right to be bitter and impatient but Dr. Ambedkar is not pointing out to them the way of emancipation. It is not possible to have a real picture of their position in this country from the statistical tables given in the Appendices to Dr. Ambedkar's book. Their number is given as 41 millions in British India and 9 millions in the States, though Dr. Ambedkar has added another 10 millions for the purpose of his arguments. Whether they are 50 millions or 60 millions, it is of minor importance. I may point out that they are distributed almost evenly in all the villages of India. In each village they constitute a minority. They are divided into innumerable sub-castes each having existence only in a small area. It is far easier to try to amalgamate them with the rest of the people of that area than to unite them vertically as Dr. Ambedkar would like to do. The hope of the depressed classes lies in the rapid industrial develop-

ment of India by which they will become merged in the main body of Hindu agricultural and industrial workers. Any leader and any movement which seeks to separate them from the Hindu workers can only do them harm.

Dr. Ambedkar's argument that the untouchables are separate from the Hindus leads to a *reductio ad absurdum*. The political segregation of the scheduled castes can only give a long lease of life to the dying caste system, and so long as the caste system is in existence the untouchables are bound to suffer socially and economically.



## CHAPTER IV

### WOUNDED VANITY

It is the object of Dr. Ambedkar to make the ignorant reader believe that from the beginning there has been a continuous struggle between the Congress and the scheduled castes, but he has no material of any sort to show that before the Round Table Conference of 1930, there was the slightest dispute between the two. The first 40 pages of the book are mere drivel unworthy of any serious writer. The Congress refused to enter the legislatures under the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms of 1919 and the scheduled castes were free to get what relief they could from the non-Congress ministers under Dyarchy. Dr. Ambedkar has made some foolish and irrelevant charges about the Tilak Swaraj Fund which was raised in 1920 and largely spent for the conversion of the Congress from a liberal middle class organisation into a mass organisation. Any reasonable historian would marvel that such a miraculous transformation was achieved so quickly and at so little cost. The actual amount in money hardly represented a small fraction of sums spent personally by Congress leaders and workers all over the country. On page 33, some tables have been printed to show that the distribution of the Tilak Swaraj Fund collections of 1920 was not fair among the various Provinces. It is a matter for Congressmen and if a large body of them had felt the injustice, they would surely have taken steps to censure those responsible for it. If Mahatma Gandhi had shown criminal partiality towards Bombay and Gujerat, he would not be the beloved All-India leader that he has been all these 25 years. The collections were made under the rule that every province should keep 75% of its collections and hand over 25% to the All-India Congress Committee. For uniformity of accounts, all provincial collections were brought into the central accounts and allotments were made according to this rule,

In trying to become the conscience keeper of Congress finances, Dr. Ambedkar is playing a role which he would himself admit to be ridiculous if he had not been so jaundiced as to feel that any stick was good enough to beat the Congress with. His attempt to show that the All-India Congress Working Committee was reluctant to vote substantial amounts for constructive work among the scheduled castes merits closer examination. In 1920, the Congress plank was removal of untouchability through intense propaganda among the caste Hindus. During the three stormy years 1920-23, rural India which had continued in its somnolent medieval existence awoke to the puzzling spectacle of youths belonging to the highest castes thundering to shocked audiences on the crime of treating fellowmen and women as untouchables. These youths went to the hamlets of the untouchables and defied the elders to boycott or punish them. Having had the privilege of belonging to this heroic band, I can testify to the marvellous effect produced by these years of intense propaganda. In fact, I have always been of the opinion that this kind of work was far more difficult and consequently more valuable for the untouchables than provision of schools, wells and other amenities.

Dealing with the Harijan Sevak Sangh which was started ten years later for doing the very work which the Congress is charged with failure to do in 1920-22, Dr. Ambedkar says. "One may differ with the Sangh on the nature of the welfare work it does. Much of the work the Sangh does is obviously the work which any civilised government is bound to undertake out of public revenues. It may well be asked, why should the Sangh not ask the Government to undertake this work and use its funds on projects which Government does not do and are yet urgently required to be done?" This was exactly the Congress position in those days. The Montagu-Chelmsford Constitution had come into force. Scheduled caste leaders like the late M.C. Rajah and R. Srinivasan were trying to get from the non-Congress and anti-Congress ministers

of the various provinces under the Dyarchical regimes facilities regarding schools, wells, etc. The one work which these ministers could not do was to go out to the people and denounce the evil custom of untouchability. This the Congress did from a thousand platforms and Dr. Ambedkar wants to tell the world that this was no service and that the funds spent on this propaganda were wasted.

As Dr. Ambedkar himself has admitted, the years 1920-23 witnessed the transformation of the Congress from a middle class organisation which did little work beyond meeting once a year and passing resolutions to a mass organisation with branches all over the country and doing work all the year round. It started with non-co-operation which rapidly changed into civil disobedience so that by 1922 most of the leaders and workers were in jail. At that early stage, it was not practicable to develop quiet constructive work among the untouchables. When Gandhiji was able to turn to this type of work in 1932, we find that Dr. Ambedkar did not like it much. After citing some odd and unconnected bits from the proceedings of the Congress Working Committee in 1922-23, Dr. Ambedkar triumphantly asks, "Where was Mr. Gandhi when all this was happening to the cause of the Untouchables in the Congress Camp?" He was in jail, and it is strange that Dr. Ambedkar should not have known it. Throughout the whole book, he has adopted the deliberate policy of omitting all reference to the struggles of the Congress with the British Government so as to give the impression that the only problem facing the Congress was that of the scheduled castes.

I do not believe in the *tu quoque* argument. Yet it is hardly possible to resist asking this question: "Where was Dr. Ambedkar during these stirring days?" He is not particularly reticent about himself. All his activities and statements are printed in full irrespective of their relevancy. Dr. Ambedkar emerged into public life as a champion of the scheduled castes when he was nominated

by the British Government as a member of the First Round Table Conference in 1932. His comment on this great event is significant and gives a valuable clue to his thoughts. "For the Untouchables it was a landmark in their history. For, the Untouchables were for the first time allowed to be represented separately by two delegates who happened to be myself and Dewan Bahadur Srinivasan. This meant that the Untouchables were regarded not merely as a separate element from the Hindus but also of such importance as to have the right to be consulted in the framing of a constitution for India". The Congress had refused to attend the Conference, and when it met the Salt Satyagraha was in full swing. Thousands of Congress workers were in jail. The members of the Conference were chosen for their hostility to the Congress. Another object in making the nominations was to magnify the differences in the Indian social structure as a justification for British domination. Dr. Ambedkar's eminence was initially due to his hostility towards the Congress, and the idea has gripped him that it can last only so long as this hostility lasts and so long as the British Government backs him. How his hostility and with it British backing have grown together is evident from his elevation to his present position and his grateful offering of this book to his patrons.

Let us resume the story of the Round Table Conference which forms the core of the book. At the First Round Table Conference, there was no Congress representative. What were the privileges which Dr. Ambedkar was able to obtain for the scheduled castes from this pro-British and anti-Congress body? Only the obscure reference in para 8 of the Report of the Minorities Committee: "The discussion made it evident that the demand which remained as the only one which would be generally acceptable was separate electorates. The general objection to this scheme has been subject to much previous discussion in India. It involves what is a very difficult problem for solution, viz., what should be the amount of communal representation in the various Provinces and the Centre; that, if the whole, or practically the whole, of the seats in a legislature are

to be assigned to communities, there will be no room for the growth of independent political opinion or of true political parties, and this problem received a serious complication by the demand of the representative of the Depressed Classes that they should be deducted from the Hindu population and be regarded for electoral purposes as a separate community". In para 19, it was merely noted without comment that "the Minorities and Depressed Classes were definite in their assertion that they could not assent to any self-governing constitution for India unless their demands were met in a reasonable manner."

It is obvious that, in the absence of the Congress, Dr. Ambedkar did not pull much weight and could not cash any of his bills. In the beginning of March 1931, the Gandhi-Irwin agreement was reached by which a temporary truce was established between the Congress and the Government, civil disobedience was discontinued and political prisoners were released. One of the most important terms of the agreement was the consent of the Congress to send its representative to the Second Round Table Conference. The Congress session at Karachi was held at the end of the same month. At this session, the Congress adopted a resolution on fundamental rights of which the following were of great importance to the scheduled castes :

- (4) All citizens are equal before the law irrespective of caste, creed or sex;
- (6) All citizens have equal rights and duties in regard to wells, tanks, roads, schools and places of public resort, maintained out of State or local funds or dedicated by private persons for the use of the public;
- (10) The franchise shall be on the basis of universal adult suffrage;
- (11) The State shall provide for free and compulsory primary education,

It will be seen that except in the matter of separate electorates the Congress was ready to concede all the demands made on behalf of the scheduled castes. Till Mahatma Gandhi sailed from Bombay on August 29, it was uncertain whether he would attend the Round Table Conference at all. Many disputes had occurred all over the country over the interpretation and application of the Gandhi-Irwin agreement and it was only at the last moment after meeting Lord Willingdon at Simla that he finally decided to go. It is unnecessary to analyse in detail the proceedings of this conference and of the committees under it. So far as the scheduled castes were concerned, Dr. Ambedkar and Mr. Srinivasan made three demands: fundamental rights, adult franchise and separate electorates. Mahatma Gandhi had been authorised to agree to the first two. He had no authority to agree to separate electorates. At the Working Committee meeting held in July 1931, a resolution clarifying Congress attitude on the communal question was passed which stated:

3. (a) Joint electorates shall form the basis of representation in the future constitution of India.

(b) For the Hindus in Sindh, the Muslims in Assam and the Sikhs in the Punjab and North-West Frontier Provinces and for Hindus and Muslims in any province where they are less than 25% of the population, seats shall be reserved in the Federal and Provincial legislatures on the basis of population with the right to contest additional seats.

It will be seen that the Congress was altogether against separate electorates and even in the matter of reservation it wanted to restrict the evil of separate representation to Hindu and Muslim minorities because the pernicious principle had been adopted by the British Government in the Minto-Morley and Montagu-Chelmsford reforms. Besides the general objection to separate electorates for any community, Mahatma Gandhi felt intensely that all

his efforts to abolish untouchability and merge the scheduled castes into the general body of Hindu society would be nullified if untouchability were converted into a political vested interest. It may be conceded that Dr. Ambedkar felt in the opposite way, viz., that separate representation would give the scheduled castes an immediate lift in social and economic status which could not be achieved in any other way and it would not be difficult to abolish separate representation when these castes were nearly on a level. Experience has shown that it is easy to concede separate electorates but almost impossible to get rid of them. Yet there should be no difficulty in acknowledging that there was weight in these points of view. If Dr. Ambedkar had contented himself with saying that Mahatma Gandhi was wrong, there would be no need to quarrel with him. But throughout the book, he has assumed that to differ from him (Dr. Ambedkar) is an unforgiveable crime and has not hesitated to ascribe the lowest motives for such difference. Even the most anti-Congress reader of the chapter, 'A Mean Deal', will be astounded at the tirade on page 74 charging Mahatma Gandhi with intrigue against the untouchables. He says: "Mr. Gandhi in his passion for suppressing the Untouchables had lost his sense of discrimination to such an extent as not to be able to distinguish between means which are fair and means which are foul". There is not even an attempt to indicate the 'foul means'. He publishes in parallel columns draft proposals said to have been discussed between Mahatma Gandhi and the Muslim delegates. In the Muslim proposals, the significant fact is that no mention was made about the untouchables or other communities. In the alleged proposals of Mahatma Gandhi, the only clause which had reference to them was No. (2) which stated that there were to be no special reservations for any other community than Sikhs and Hindu minorities. This was in pursuance of the Working Committee's resolution already quoted. Dr. Ambedkar accuses Gandhiji of not caring to honour his word. It is worth while investigating this charge to show the utter unscrupulousness

of his method of controversy. Dr. Ambedkar says on page 74, "Mr. Gandhi did not care to honour his word. In the Minorities Committee, Mr. Gandhi had said that if the Committee agreed to accept the claim of the Untouchables for separate recognition it was free to do so, which meant that he would abide by the decision of the majority. But when he came to know that the other minorities had agreed to support the Untouchables, he did not hesitate to approach the Musalmans and turn them against the Untouchables by accepting their fourteen points which the Congress, the Hindu Mahasabha and even the Simon Commission had rejected". More untruths could not be compressed in so few sentences. The facts are as follows :—

On October 1, 1931, Mahatma Gandhi asked for a week's adjournment to facilitate the private negotiations that were going on for a communal settlement. Dr. Ambedkar said that he would oppose the adjournment if the private negotiations were to be only regarding Hindu-Muslim-Sikh representation. Mahatma Gandhi's reply may be quoted in full. "Prime Minister and friends, I see that there is some kind of misunderstanding with reference to the scope of the work that some of us have set before us. It would appear that Dr. Ambedkar, Colonel Gidney and other friends are unnecessarily nervous about what is going to happen. Who am I to deny political status to any single interest, class, or even individual, in India? As a representative of the Congress I should be unworthy of the trust that has been reposed in me by the Congress if I were guilty of sacrificing a single national interest. I have undoubtedly given expression to my own views on these points. I must confess that I hold to these views also. But there are ways and ways of guaranteeing protection to every single interest. It will be for those of us who will be putting our heads together to try to evolve a scheme. Nobody would be hampered in pressing his own views on the members of this very informal conference or meeting. We need not call it a committee. I have no authority to convene any committee or bring into being any committee. I can only act as a messenger of peace



to try to get together representatives of different interests and groups and see whether by being closeted in one room and by heart to heart conversation, we may not be able to remove cobwebs of misunderstanding and see our way clear to the goal that lies hazily before us today.

“I do not think, therefore, that anybody need be afraid as to being able to express his opinion or carrying his opinion also. Mine will be there equal to that of everyone of us; it will carry no greater weight; I have no authority behind me to carry my opinion against the opinion of anybody. I have simply given expression to my views in the national interest and I shall give expression to these views whenever they are opportune. It will be for you to reject or accept those opinions. Therefore, please disabuse your mind, every one of us, of the idea that there is going to be any steam-rolling in the Conference and the informal meetings that I have adumbrated. But if you think that this is one way of coming closer together than by sitting stiffly at this table, you will not only carry this adjournment motion, but give whole-hearted co-operation to the proposal I have made in connection with these informal meetings”.

Can any one find in this factual statement of his position at the committee any undertaking that Gandhiji would abide by a majority decision? In any case, there was no decision. By completely ignoring the elementary facts of chronology given in his own pages, Dr. Ambedkar has tried to make out that Gandhiji wanted to appease the Muslims at the expense of the untouchables. The negotiations took place in October 1931 soon after Gandhiji reached London. The Muslim draft did not contain any proposals about other minorities. So far as the Muslim representatives were concerned, they were willing to settle with Gandhiji without bothering about the untouchables or other communities. But the negotiations broke down on the demand for a majority of one in the Punjab and Bengal. After this failure, the Muslim delegates conspired with Dr. Ambedkar and others

and produced a Minorities Pact which was presented to the Minorities' Committee at its last sitting on November 13, 1931. The boot was on the other leg. The conspiracy was made not by Gandhiji but against him and the Congress by the communalists nominated by the British Government for exaggerating communal claims. It was obvious to the signatories to that Pact that it would not be accepted by the people of India. In concluding this chapter, it may be pointed out that Dr. Ambedkar makes the baseless assertion that Gandhiji signed the requisition to Mr. Ramsay MacDonald to arbitrate on the communal question. Only some of the members were agreeable to giving the British Premier general authority to arbitrate. Some delegates wanted him to give an award on the Hindu-Muslim question alone. Dr. Ambedkar would have published the requisition and the signatures if it supported his case.

## CHAPTER V

### A HARD BARGAIN

Mahatma Gandhi returned to India at the end of 1931. During his absence in London the Gandhi-Irwin Pact had broken down and the struggle between the Congress and the Government had been resumed in the N.W.F.P. and the U.P. On arrival in India Gandhiji offered to discuss the situation with the Viceroy but his offer was refused and the beginning of 1932 saw the revival of the conflict which had come to an end through the efforts of Lord Irwin. The story of this struggle is not relevant to this book but the reader should remember that till 1937 when the Congress accepted ministries neither the national organisation nor Gandhiji had anything to do with the constitutional discussions which resulted in the Government of India Act. The only point at which Gandhiji felt called upon to intervene was in connection with the Communal Award which Mr. Ramsay MacDonald announced in August 1932. Dr. Ambedkar has tried to make out that this award was favourable to the scheduled castes but that its advantage was reduced by Gandhiji's fast and the Poona Pact. I shall place the facts before the reader and let him judge for himself.

On page 310 of Dr. Ambedkar's book is published a table giving the number of seats for the various communities proposed by the Minorities' Pact which, according to Dr. Ambedkar, was the result of Muslim solicitude for the scheduled castes and other minorities. The following table gives the number of seats assigned by that Pact in the various legislatures and those given by the award to the Muslims and the scheduled castes.

Minorities' Pact and the Communal Award.

	M U S L I M S		SCHEDULED CASTES.	
	Min. Pact.	Com. Award.	Min. Pact.	Com. Award.
Assam	35/100	34/108	13/100	4/108
Bengal	102/200	119/250	35/200	10/250
Bihar & Orissa	25/100	42/175	14/100	10/175
Bombay	66/200	63/200	28/200	10/200
C.P.	15/100	14/112	20/100	10/112
Madras	30/200	29/215	40/200	18/215
Punjab	51/100	86/175	10/100	9/175
United Provinces	30/100	66/228	20/100	12/228
Total	354/1100	453/1463	180/1100	71/1463
	32%	31%	17%	5%

Dr. Ambedkar's signature to the Minorities' Pact got the Muslims all that they wanted while the scheduled castes got less than a third of their demand. Having resolved to make out the thesis of Gandhiji's hostility to the scheduled castes in contrast with the benevolent attitude of the British Government, Dr. Ambedkar has passed silently over this curious result of his efforts at the R.T.C. While Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's Award did not give the scheduled castes their due representation, it gave separate electorates which Gandhiji had declared that he would resist with his life. Those who want to understand the intensity of his conviction in this matter should read carefully *The Epic Fast* written by Syt. Pyarelal, Gandhiji's Secretary, and published by the Navajivan Press. The central argument of Gandhiji against separate electorates can be briefly stated. The position of the scheduled castes is not the same as that of non-Hindu communities. The objective of all reforms is to eliminate the superstitions and practices which have helped to keep these classes as inferior and suppressed and to make them

equal to and indistinguishable from the rest of the Hindus. It would defeat this objective to add political to the existing social and economic segregation. The scheduled castes are not concentrated in any part of the country, nor are they one community with special cultural or other distinct characteristics. They are merely the lowest rungs of the Hindu social ladder and they are to be found as a minority in every village. Gandhiji's view is that adult franchise combined with a powerful moral and social drive against untouchability is the true means of liberation. While separate electorates may help the scheduled castes to send to the legislatures representatives who do not have the goodwill of the higher castes, their capacity for usefulness will be proportionately less. It is certainly open to Dr. Ambedkar to argue that separate electorates at the present stage are preferable. But to take it for granted that opposition to his opinion should be due to insincerity or dishonest motives is to insult the intelligence of the reader.

Gandhiji began his fast against the Communal Award on September 13, 1932. The whole country was startled. Thousands of meetings were held all over India not only in the towns but in remote villages calling upon the British Government to change the award. But the British Government declared that without the consent of the leaders of the scheduled castes, they would not change it. As Dr. Ambedkar and Dewan Bahadur R. Srinivasan of Madras had been nominated as representatives of the scheduled castes to the Round Table Conferences, their consent was considered vital to a settlement. Dr. Ambedkar says that in agreeing to the Poona Pact, he responded to the call of humanity. I have no desire to dispute it. Nevertheless, it may be pointed out that this response was combined with hard bargaining and shrewd business. (The Poona Pact gave the scheduled castes 148 seats against the 71 given by the British Government.) I have already shown what percentage of his claim he got from the British Government. The following

table gives what he wanted from the Hindu leaders assembled at Poona at the time of the fast and what he got out of them:

PROVINCE.	SEATES CLAIMED BY DR. AMB.	SEATES OFFERED BY HINDU LEADERS	SEATES GIVEN IN POONA PACT
Assam	8	6	7
Bengal	37	27	30
Bihar & Orissa	20	15	18
Bombay	16	11	15
C.P.	21	17	20
Madras	33	26	30
Punjab	10	8	8
United Provinces	30	13	20
	<u>175</u>	<u>123</u>	<u>148</u>

Thus Dr. Ambedkar got 85% of his demand from the Hindu leaders as against 30% from the British Government. What did he think of his achievement at the time? He stated: "I am happy to be able to say that it has become possible through the co-operation of all of us to find a solution so as to save the life of the Mahatma and consistent with such protection as is necessary for the interest of the Depressed Classes in the future. I think in all these negotiations a large part of the credit must be attributed to Mahatma Gandhi himself. I must confess that I was surprised, immensely surprised, when I met him that there was so much in common between him and me."

It is necessary to point out that at that time the Congress was not functioning, its leaders and workers were in jail. Among the signatories to the Poona

Pact, the only Congress leaders were Sjt. C. Rajagopalachari and Babu Rajendra Prasad. They too lost all connection with further constitutional discussions after the incorporation of the Poona Pact in the Communal Award. Dr. Ambedkar refers to some disputes he had with some unnamed persons regarding the application of the Poona Pact with reference to the election of the preliminary panel and the method of voting. He has represented this as the attempt of the Hindus to nullify the Poona Pact. As he does not give references or names it is difficult to verify his statements. It was open to any individual to send any representation to the Hammond Committee, and it is, to say the least, most unfair to take up some obscure points raised by unnamed persons, magnify them into a conspiracy of the Hindus, and indirectly suggest that the authors of the Poona Pact were responsible for them. If anybody argued that the panel of four should be a minimum and if the number was not forthcoming the reservations must lapse, it was manifestly absurd. But as regards the dispute about cumulative and compulsory distributive vote, Dr. Ambedkar is confused and conflicting. He makes a great ado about the loss of the double vote as a result of the Poona Pact. The compulsory distributive vote would have preserved this feature of the original award by making it obligatory for each scheduled caste voter to vote for a caste Hindu candidate and thereby forced the Hindu candidates to seek scheduled caste votes. Dr. Ambedkar himself complains that the Congress voluntarily adopted the distributive system while non-Congress caste Hindu voters cumulated their votes for caste Hindu candidates. I admit that the cumulative voting system had also some advantages as it would enable constituencies where the scheduled caste votes were considerable to return scheduled caste candidates against the opposition of caste Hindus. The arguments are almost even on the two sides and Dr. Ambedkar only makes himself ridiculous by suggesting that this proposal was put forward maliciously. I have already said that the Congress had no part or lot in all these discussions.

As the learned Doctor gained both these points, he should be content, but when one is resolved to be dissatisfied one is led to all kinds of perversities. He had secured 151 seats, at the time of the separation of Orissa three more seats being added to the number agreed to in the Poona Pact; he had gained the cumulative vote and the maximum panel of four. But then he found that the 151 seats secured by the Poona Pact did not belong to him but to the scheduled castes of India and that the latter did not owe undivided allegiance to him. This shocking discovery was filled his soul with gall and wormwood.

In the 1937 elections, the Congress captured 26 out of 30 scheduled caste seats in Madras, 16 out of 20 seats in the U.P., and 11 out of 15 seats in Bihar. On the whole it secured 78 out of 151 seats. This it did by setting up scheduled caste candidates and securing scheduled caste votes. Any fair commentator would have appreciated this political success of the Congress which is a non-communal organisation and which is, therefore, bound to contest all seats if it can. Dr. Ambedkar exclaims in chagrin: "The Congress in capturing 78 seats left only 73 seats to be filled by true and independent representatives of the Untouchables." I wonder if Dr. Ambedkar knew that he wrote truer than he meant. The scheduled caste candidate who stood and got elected on the Congress ticket did to a large extent cease to be an untouchable. He became a member of the Congress party in the various Legislatures: he sat with them, and discussed all issues as an equal and a comrade, and was feasted and garlanded by women and children of the highest castes just like the other Congress members. If untouchability deserved to be cherished as a precious possession, Dr. Ambedkar is certainly justified in counting out the Congress scheduled caste members. It is not, however, true that the scheduled castes were obliged by the Poona Pact to return representatives whom they did not like. In Bombay, the followers of Dr. Ambedkar secured 11 out of 15 members. He does not explain why similar results were not secured in Madras, Bihar and the U.P. Only two explanations



are possible. Either Dr. Ambedkar had no colleagues in these provinces who could organise the scheduled castes in the same way as he had done in Bombay, or the Congress was able to persuade the scheduled castes that they had more to gain by throwing in their lot with the national organisation. Perhaps both causes produced the result.

Dr. Ambedkar wants to have his cake and eat it too. He wants to show that the result of the elections of 1937 demonstrated that the Congress did not secure a majority of the scheduled caste seats. If this is correct, then a system which confirms the case of the author cannot be wrong. At the same time, he would like the reader to believe that in so far as the scheduled castes returned Congressmen, the system was at fault. He assumes that if the original award had been retained, the Congress could not have captured a large number of scheduled caste seats. This assumption is entirely unwarranted. Many of the Indian Christian seats were captured by the Congress in spite of separate electorates. Naturally the Congress is in favour of joint electorates as it wants to eliminate communalism and separatism from politics, but even under separate electorates it cannot be prevented from contesting and winning seats.

At the end of the book, Dr. Ambedkar has given some tables intended to show that though the Congress got candidates elected, it was largely through caste Hindu votes and that a majority of the scheduled caste voters were against the Congress. It is inevitable under joint electorates that the representative finally elected is acceptable to the electorate as a whole. It may happen in some instances that a scheduled caste candidate may be defeated by another who may be less acceptable to the scheduled castes but more acceptable to the joint electorate. But the tables themselves are arithmetical frauds. As the final voting is in common ballot boxes, it is altogether impossible to find out how many votes of a successful candidate were from caste Hindus and how many from the scheduled castes. All that can be known is the total

number of votes polled from each of the two sections. Faced with this arithmetical impossibility, Dr. Ambedkar has resorted to a simple stratagem. He has assumed that all the votes obtained by a scheduled caste candidate not belonging to the Congress must have been scheduled caste votes. Deducting these votes from the total scheduled caste votes polled, he has obtained what he thinks must be the scheduled caste votes obtained by the Congress candidate. This is obviously absurd. In Madras, for instance, caste Hindu voters of the Justice Party concentrated in some places on defeating the Congress Harijan candidate by voting for his non-Congress rival as they felt that it would not be possible to get their own caste Hindu candidates elected. Dr. Ambedkar's assumption has led to curious absurdities. For example, in the contested constituency of Malapuram, Madras, the successful Congress scheduled caste candidate is presumed to have secured no caste Hindu votes at all. This is an impossibility as it was the uniform directive of the Congress that all Congress votes should be distributed. As the total scheduled caste votes polled were 10,148 and the non-Congress scheduled caste candidate got only 2,606 votes, the Doctor had to attribute all the 7,154 votes polled by the Congress candidate, to scheduled caste voters. Unfortunately for him, even this allotment leaves 388 votes unexplained. It is easy to imagine what must have happened. As each voter had two votes (assuming this was a two member constituency) the total scheduled caste voters must have been 5,074. Of these 1,303 persons must have given their votes to the non-Congress candidate. The other 3,771 scheduled caste voters must have distributed their votes between the two Congress candidates. The reverse kind of absurdity is shown in his analysis of the voting in Sattur. Here the total scheduled caste votes were 6,980. The unsuccessful scheduled caste candidate got 11,894. It is obvious that he must have secured a large number of caste Hindu votes. In this constituency the Justice Party was once strong and the adherents of that party must have voted for this candidate. Dr. Am-

bedkar assumes that all the scheduled caste votes must have gone to the non-Congress candidate and not a single vote went to make the majority of the Congress scheduled caste candidate who got 18,514 votes. Presumably, the Congress candidate himself—he must be a voter as otherwise he could not have contested—his relations and friends voted for the opponent. It is difficult to imagine how Dr. Ambedkar hoped to get away with these fraudulent tables.

On page 98, Dr. Ambedkar angrily asks why the Congress did not include scheduled caste members in the ministries. He has repeated this false statement in more than one place. Yet in the table published by him on pages 221 and 223, he shows that scheduled caste ministers were included in the ministries in Madras and Bihar and there were Parliamentary Secretaries belonging to them in the U.P., Madras and Bihar. If it is remembered that the scheduled castes had come into the legislatures in any strength for the first time, these facts do not indicate want of sympathy or lack of recognition of their claims.

On page 98, it is stated that Gandhiji opposed Dr. Khare's second ministry on the ground of Dr. Khare's taking Mr. Agnibhoj, a scheduled caste member, as one of the ministers. This is as grotesque as it is false. Dr. Khare quarrelled with his colleagues and tried to form a second ministry over their heads without consulting the Congress Parliamentary Board. It is not known what authority Dr. Ambedkar has for asserting that Dr. Khare "openly said that according to Mr. Gandhi the act of indiscipline consisted in the inclusion of an Untouchable in the Ministry." As no reference has been given, it is not right to charge Dr. Khare with this falsehood. If Dr. Ambedkar had followed the usual canons of propriety in such matters, he should have referred this allegation to Gandhiji. As this is not the only instance in this book of irresponsible and damaging statements being made without any justification or enquiry, I have to conclude that Dr. Ambedkar has throughout acted on the principle that the ends justify the means,

## CHAPTER VI

### THE MISSING CHAPTER

It has already been remarked that the most curious feature of Dr. Ambedkar's book is that it does not deal with the Congress ministries at all. No reason for this omission has been given anywhere in the book. As it has been brought up to date and contains the latest declarations of the British Government, it is but reasonable to infer that the author could not find anything in this period to support his thesis of Congress opposition to the scheduled castes. He must have felt that even a prejudiced version of the Congress regimes might have given the case away.

Sir Reginald Coupland is no friend of the Congress. Part II of his *Indian Politics* has attempted to present the Congress and the Congress ministries in the worst possible light. Yet, Sir Reginald has given a summary of the work of the Congress ministries in relation to the scheduled castes which to any unprejudiced reader would appear to be a creditable record for the short period of a little over two years of office. All that his hypercritical mind could think of in this matter was that "in general, however, it cannot be said that the Congress Governments showed a great deal more courage than their predecessors in their handling of the thorny question of Harijans."

In Chapter IV, Dr. Ambedkar has tried to make out that Syt. C. Rajagopalachari and Mahatma Gandhi beat a hasty retreat from their support of the Temple Entry Bill of Mr. C.S. Ranga Iyer. He does not state the circumstances in which that Bill was introduced. The Congress parties in the Central Assembly and the Provincial Legislative Councils had resigned *en bloc* to take part in the non-violent struggle for freedom. Mr. C.S. Ranga Iyer was one of those who seceded from the

Congress and got themselves re-elected. After the Poona Pact, Dr. Subbarayan introduced the Madras Temple Entry Bill in the Madras Legislative Council. This was disallowed by the Governor-General. ( At about the same time Mr. C.S. Ranga Iyer presented for introduction in the Assembly the 'Untouchability Abolition Bill' for which sanction was accorded under the express condition that the Bill would be circulated for public opinion and that the Government of India were not committed in any way to acceptance or support of the principles contained in it. Later on Mr. Ranga Iyer introduced Dr. Subbarayan's Bill suitably amended for the Central Legislature. There were no Congress parties in the Central or any other legislature at that time. Anyone who is acquainted with the working of the Central Legislature in India knows that a private bill has no chance of finding its way into the Statute Book unless it gets the active support of the Government. The time allotted in the Assembly for private bills is very limited. There is the Government bloc of official and nominated members. Finally, the Government has an absolute majority in the Council of State. The majority of members elected to the Central Assembly in 1931 were social conservatives and political independents who had no party affiliations. There was no prospect of Ranga Iyer's Bill going through except with active Government support which was not forthcoming. Still both Gandhiji and Sjt.C. Rajagopalachari felt themselves bound to support the Bill. They did so in their individual capacity as the Congress Working Committee was not functioning at that time. Dr. Ambedkar asks why they did not make it the main plank in the elections of 1934. The Congress fought that election as it did all other elections on the issue of Swaraj. It did not want to change its plank to satisfy deserters like Mr. Ranga Iyer or with a view to forestalling future critics like Dr. Ambedkar. Is it not, however, strange that Dr. Ambedkar has nothing to say about the obstructive attitude of the Government of India who could have passed Mr. Ranga Iyer's Bill with the wholehearted support of Gandhiji and other reformers. So far as Gandhiji and

Sjt. C. Rajagopalachari are concerned, they never went back on their pledge. They bided their time. The opportunity came when the Congress ministries were formed. The following quotation is from *Two years of Congress Rule in Madras* published by the Madras Legislature Congress Party :-

“The outstanding event during the two years was the throwing open of Hindu shrines to Harijans. Public opinion in favour of the reform had gathered such momentum that it was practically impossible to resist the innovation and on 8th July, 1939, a party consisting of Harijans and caste Hindus entered the temple of Sri Minakshi at Madura and offered puja at the innermost shrine with the willing consent of and amidst the rejoicings of the Hindu population of the town. This event was followed by the throwing open of the other temples in the Madura, Tanjore and other districts. Varnashramites could not, however, reconcile themselves to the reform and filed civil and criminal suits against the temple authorities and reformers. The Government felt it necessary to condone the technical breach of the law involved in this reform and published an Indemnity Bill for protecting the participants in the event. In order to prevent harassment by interim proceedings in courts pending the passing of the Bill by the Legislature, the Government promulgated an Ordinance in terms of the Indemnity Bill to take effect immediately.

“Two important measures for the amelioration of the scheduled castes were passed. The Malabar Temple Entry Act provides for the throwing open of major temples to excluded classes if the step is favoured by the majority opinion among the non-excluded classes who are voters for the General Constituency of the Madras Legislative Assembly in the revenue taluq in which the temple is situated.

“The Removal of Civil Disabilities Act provides that no Harijan shall be prevented merely by reason of his caste from enjoying any social or public amenity to which

other classes of Hindus have access or which is maintained for the use of the public from out of State or local funds and that no court of law shall recognise such disability."

These far-reaching legislative measures were not put through by the steam rolling of the party machine. Intensive propaganda for them was started by the Prime Minister of Madras and his colleagues from the very moment of taking office and they had to face vehement opposition from the orthodox *sanatanists* belonging not only to the Brahmin caste but also other caste Hindus. It is no exaggeration to say that Sjt. C. Rajagopalachari was and perhaps is even now the most hated man among his own caste in Madras. It should, however, be acknowledged that he found among brahmins many of his most ardent supporters.

The following table gives the expenditure of the Madras Government on special measures for the amelioration of the scheduled castes.

		1937-38	1938-39	1939-40
Education	(In lakhs) Rs.	7.18	7.79	8.49
Public Health	„	1.60	1.71	1.29
Commissioner of Labour and staff	„	1.97	2.03	1.91
Total	„	10.75	11.53	11.70

It must be remembered that this expenditure was in addition to the general expenditure on education and health in which the scheduled castes had their share. The Congress ministry refused recognition to aided schools which declined to admit scheduled caste pupils. Various concessions in the matter of fees, special scholarships, exemption from examination fees, age-limit for employment, special co-operative societies, acquisition of house

sites and leases of government lands were among the other measures taken for their benefit. In each district an advisory committee was formed to advise the Collector on matters relating to the welfare of the scheduled castes and a Provincial Advisory Committee was formed to co-ordinate the work of the District Committees.

The benefits which accrued to the scheduled castes from the enforcement of prohibition in four districts and the scaling down of debts were no less than those derived from the special measures. There was one Minister and one Parliamentary Secretary belonging to the scheduled castes in the Madras Congress ministry.

In the United Provinces, two Parliamentary Secretaries were appointed from these classes. The disqualification for recruitment to the police was removed and special steps were taken to recruit scheduled caste members to various other branches of public service.

The following note of Mr. Sampurnanand, who was then Minister for Education in the U. P., gives a brief indication of the attitude and action of the Congress ministry of that province towards the scheduled castes:

“(I) (A) It was proposed to pass an Act legalising Temple Entry by Harijans but our resignation prevented the idea from materializing.

“(B) A large number of steps were taken to ameliorate their condition. I shall briefly indicate a few. In May 1938 a circular was issued to local bodies stressing the great importance of all questions relating to sweepers. They were also ordered to provide maternity benefits to sweeper women. A Special Officer was appointed to look after the general interests of these classes. He was a member of the superior branch of the Provincial Civil Service. A statement of Government policy was sent to all District Magistrates for information and guidance. Here is an extract from it:—

“Public wells are as much free and open to these castes as to the high caste Hindus and other sections



of the community. Government cannot possibly recognise any distinction on any ground whatsoever in the case of the users of public wells and will do their utmost to enforce such right. All people are entitled to a free and unfettered use of all public property, such as public highways, public wells, public parks and public buildings. While Government will not fail to do their duty in regard to this matter, it is obvious that public and social opinion must exercise the greatest influence in the solution of any difficulties which may arise in any part of the province. Government appeal most strongly to all sections of the public to ensure full support to the members of the scheduled castes in the peaceful enjoyment of their fundamental rights in this respect”.

“District Officers were reminded of the provision of Section 374 of the I. P. C. which makes it penal to ‘unlawfully compel any person to labour against his will,’ and they were advised to make a judicious use of the section to prevent the extraction of ‘Begar’ from Harijans by the Zamindars. A special campaign against drinking was instituted among Harijans. Harijans were exempted from the payment of fees in all Government institutions and the attention of non-Government institutions was drawn to the desirability of taking a similar step. The number of seats reserved for Harijans in Teachers’ Training institutions was raised from 15 to 96. The number of libraries specially meant for Harijans was raised from seven to ten.

“(C) There used to be a special expenditure of Rs. 1,96,000 on Harijans. This was raised by Rs. 1,25,000. Provision was made for giving scholarships to 8,000 Harijan students from the Primary to the University stage and for giving textbooks and writing materials to about 40,000 Harijan students. A number of Co-operative Credit Societies were floated exclusively for the Depressed Classes, with a capital of Rs. 2,50,000, and 1800 sq. miles of reserved forest land were offered to Shilpakars. Under this scheme of Rural Development a special

grant of Rs. 30, 000 was made for water supply to Harijans. The Allahabad Harijan Sevak Sangh was granted 20 acres of land at a nominal rent of Rs. 10 per acre per annum which I believe, was later reduced to Re. 1 per acre. I am not quite sure on the point, however.

“(2) Our relations with Harijans including those not elected on a Congress ticket were on the whole quite friendly. Rai Bahadur Hari Prasad Tamta and Ram Prasad Tamta were quite friendly and even Dr. Manak Chand who was our principal critic among the Harijan M.L.As. had not much fault to find. Considering the small number of suitable men available the number of officers appointed to the various branches of Government service could not be considered unsatisfactory. In addition to Sub-registrars, Excise Inspectors, Rural Development Inspectors, Co-operative Supervisors and teachers, two Harijans were appointed as Deputy Collectors and one as a Deputy Superintendent of Police. It may be pointed out that out of 11 Parliamentary Secretaries originally appointed 2 were Harijans”.

In Bihar, besides increased grant of scholarships and free studentships to students of scheduled castes Rs. 50,000 out of a total provision of Rs. 125,000 made for rural water supply was earmarked for Harijans. Disqualifications preventing members of the Legislature from being members of local bodies were removed for Harijans specially. Also a special drive was initiated for their recruitment to Government service. Forced labour was abolished. A series of special measures were adopted for the uplift of the aboriginal tribes of Chota Nagpur.

In Orissa, some of the scheduled castes are classified as Criminal Tribes and their movements are subject to police surveillance. The Congress ministry relaxed these rules and took special steps to reclaim them through education and propaganda. In Assam, these classes benefited greatly by the Opium Prohibition Scheme of the ministry.

## AMBEDKAR'S ATTACK

In Bombay, an Act was passed enabling the Trustees of any temple to declare it open for worship. Administrative orders were issued to enforce free use by Harijans of wells, schools and other public amenities.

Taken all in all, the cause of the Harijans advanced during these two years of Congress ministries more than in any previous decade. Though Dr. Ambedkar claims that nearly half of the scheduled caste members of the various legislatures did not belong to the Congress, he has not been able to show that they had any grievance against the Congress ministries. If he had sufficient material to make out an indictment he would not have missed the opportunity.

It should not be imagined that the campaign against untouchability was relaxed from the non-official side. The work of the Harijan Sevak Sangh will be discussed in the next chapter. Gandhiji's fast and the Poona Agreement had released forces which were working spontaneously in remote corners of the country. One of the most impressive effects was the great Proclamation of His Highness the Maharaja of Travancore on November 12, 1936, opening to Harijans all temples in the State.

It is necessary to remember that the country of Malayalis, including British Malabar, Travancore and Cochin, was and to some extent still is the worst region in the matter of untouchability. This great act of the Maharaja gave a mortal blow to this ancient but evil practice. The reader is referred to *The Epic of Travancore* by Mahadev Desai for an account of the events connected with this Proclamation and Gandhiji's pilgrimage in the beginning of 1937 to the sacred shrines in Travancore. Between 1932 and 1937 many temples all over India were opened by purely non-official effort and public opinion. Dr. Ambedkar has quietly passed over these events assuming an attitude of lofty indifference to the significance of opening temples to Harijans. He has, however, not scrupled to make po-

litical capital out what he thought was the luke-warm attitude of Gandhiji and Syt. Rajagopalachari regarding temple entry legislation in 1934. How true is the proverb, "every gesture of a wife is hateful to a displeased husband."

## CHAPTER VII

### A CALUMNY

Chapter V of Dr. Ambedkar's book dealing with the Harijan Sevak Sangh is easily the most spiteful chapter of all. It starts with a slander and closes with a calumny. It is called "A Political Charity" and the sub-heading is "Congress Plan to Kill Untouchables with Kindness." The Harijan Sevak Sangh was started when the Congress was not functioning and most Congress leaders and workers were in jail. It has never had any sort of organisational connection with the Congress. Its President, Mr. G. D. Birla, has never been a member of the Congress. Its Secretary, Mr. A. V. Thakkar, is one of the oldest of the life members of the Servants of India Society founded by Gopal Krishna Gokhale, the greatest of the Indian Liberals. It is well-known that the Servants of India Society has been a persistent critic of Congress policy since 1920. The majority of the members of the Central Board of the Sangh have always been non-Congressmen. The Sangh has received no grants from the Congress and has never been obliged to submit to the direct control of the great national organisation. According to the rules of the Sangh, no whole-time paid worker of the Sangh can take part in any political activity. Dr. Ambedkar himself says on page 143: "It is true that the original intention was to keep the Sangh scrupulously aloof from politics". Is it not necessary to adduce adequate proofs if in spite of all these evidences of the non-political character of the Sangh, it is attempted to show that, it was used "for bringing the Untouchables into the Congress fold, make them accept Congress politics and impress upon them Congress ideologies, especially when the sense of gratitude for services rendered, no matter how petty, would make them receptive for such processes?" So far as the Congress is concerned, it claims it as a right and duty to draw the scheduled castes

into its fold in the same way as it seeks the support of other communities. It would forfeit its claim to be a national organisation if it did not do so. But the Sangh has never tried to dabble in politics, to set up candidates to the legislatures or in any way take part in political agitation of any sort. It strictly confines itself to constructive work for doing which Dr. Ambedkar finds fault with it. Dr. Ambedkar has given the text of a letter he wrote to Mr. A.V. Thakkar dated November 14, 1932, in which he advocated that the real activities of the Sangh should be propaganda and civil disobedience for obtaining for the scheduled castes civic rights and other privileges. I do not suggest that this would not have been a good thing but it would have been impossible to adopt a programme of that kind without the Sangh becoming a political organisation.

To justify his assertion that the Sangh has become a sort of political proselytizing agency of the Congress, Dr. Ambedkar gives three instances. He says that a conference of the Sangh workers held at Poona in 1939 "had planned to pass a resolution asking Government to change the voting under the Poona Pact by substituting the distributive system for cumulative voting." Dr. Ambedkar is careful to say that a resolution was planned. He does not explain why it was not passed. I have not been able to ascertain the facts but probably someone must have objected that it was outside the scope of the activities of the Sangh and consequently the resolution must have been dropped. Assuming that such a resolution had been discussed and even passed, how does it show that the Sangh was doing anything for the Congress or against the interests of the Harijans? Dr. Ambedkar repeats the false statement that "after its surrender marked by the Poona Pact, the Congress insisted upon the adoption of the distributive system of voting". It has already been pointed out that the Congress did not take part in any of the constitutional discussions between 1930 and 1935 except during the brief episode of Gandhiji's presence at the Second Round Table Conference. It never

presented any memorandum to the Franchise Committee or any other committee on distributive voting or any other matter. As the 1937 elections proved, the cumulative voting suited the Congress quite well for it left Congress free to instruct the voters to distribute their votes or cumulate them according to circumstances. It was in non-Congress constituencies that the difference between the two systems had any significance. By allowing non-Congress caste Hindu voters to cumulate their votes for candidates of their own caste, it took away the incentive of these voters to consider the claims of the scheduled caste candidates; nor had the caste Hindu candidates the compelling necessity to seek the suffrage of the Harijan voters as would have been the case if the votes were distributed. If in 1939 the Congress wanted a change of system, it could have got it made through the Congress ministries: it need not have depended on the assistance of a conference of Harijan Sevak Sangh workers. This piece of evidence is altogether silly.

I wish I could say the same thing of the other two instances.

Dr. Ambedkar says: "I am in a position to state that the Bombay branch of the Harijan Sevak Sangh had followed the policy of blacklisting some of the Untouchable communities residing in Bombay on account of their anti-Congress attitude. Students from communities which were blacklisted were refused scholarships and other educational aids. The Mahar community, which forms the spearhead of the political movement of the Untouchables and has all along fought the Congress was blacklisted and Mahar students were generally subjected to discrimination unless the student proved that he did not share the anti-Congress sentiments of the community." As one seeking to represent the entire scheduled castes, Dr. Ambedkar would have done well not to disclose to the world that he was a leader of the Mahars first and then only of the other scheduled castes. But his charge

of blacklisting and discrimination had never any existence except in his feverish political imagination. Out of a total of 34 scholarships given in 1942-43 by the Sangh in the Marathi speaking areas, 23 went to Mahars. In 1943-44, they got 40 out of 62 scholarships and in 1944-45, 32 scholarships out of 53.

The third example of political partisanship is an outright calumny against Mr. A.V. Thakkar, Secretary of the Harijan Sevak Sangh. He is affectionately called Thakkar Bapa by those who know him and his work. He has been a life-long servant of the aboriginals, scheduled castes and backward classes of India. In his general anger against everything and everyone connected with Gandhiji, Dr. Ambedkar has thought fit to indulge in a reckless allegation against one of the purest and most disinterested workers of the poor and oppressed in India. It is necessary to examine the allegation in some detail to show the spirit in which the whole book has been written. Dr. Ambedkar says: "The last instance I would refer to has reference to Mr. A. V. Thakkar, General Secretary of the Harijan Sevak Sangh. Mr. Thakkar is also a member of the Backward Classes Board of the Bombay Government. It was established in 1929. It meets periodically and advises Government on matters affecting the Untouchables and other backward classes.

"Mr. Thakkar brought a resolution at a meeting of the Board recommending that the scholarships set apart by Government for Untouchable boys should not be given to the Mahar boys alleging that the Mahar community had become very much advanced in education and was appropriating or according to him misappropriating the share of Government funds which ought to be reserved for other Untouchable communities. The resolution was sent down for investigation of the facts on which it was based. The inquiry showed that the facts were wrong and that the Mahars, instead of being forward were really backward in education as compared with other Untouchable communities. The resolution was nothing but a political



manouvre by no less a person than the General Secretary of the Harijan Sevak Sangh to punish the Mahars for their anti-Congress politics."

After reading this astounding charge, Mr. Thakkar wrote as follows to the Backward Classes Officer, Bombay Province, on August 29, 1945 :-

**SERVANTS OF INDIA SOCIETY**

Sandhurst Road,  
Bombay, 29th August '45.

From

Shri A.V. Thakkar,  
Joint Secretary,  
Harijan Sevak Sangh,  
DELHI.

To

The Backward Classes Officer,  
Bombay Province,  
POONA.

Dear Sir,

Re: Information about the Resolutions moved in the Backward Classes Board Meeting.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar has recently published a book called "What Congress and Gandhi have done to the Untouchables". On page 144-145 of his book Dr. Ambedkar alleges that I brought a resolution in a meeting of the B.C. Board recommending Government that scholarships set apart by Government for Untouchable boys should not be given to Mahar boys as Mahar community had become very much advanced in education and was etc. etc.

I do not remember having brought forward such a resolution at any time before the Backward Classes Board whenever I happened to be a member thereof.

I wish to contradict this publicly but before doing so I would very much wish that my statement is supported by records in your office. May I, therefore, request you to reply to the following questions in this connection :-

(1) Please state the periods during which I was a member of the B.C. Board since the year 1937.

(2) Please see if a resolution was put before any meeting of the Board I attended, to the following effect : "A resolution recommending to Government that scholarships set apart by Government for untouchable boys should not be given to the Mahar boys alleging that the Mahar community has become very much advanced in education and was appropriating the share of Government funds which ought to be reserved for other untouchable communities".

(3) Was any such resolution sent down to you or any other department for investigation of the fact on which the above resolution was founded?

I shall be obliged by an early reply.

Yours obediently,

Sd. A.V. Thakkar.

The following was the reply :-

No. B.C. 26,

Poona, 24th November, 1945.

To

A.V. Thakkar, Esq.,  
Harijan Sevak Sangh,  
Kingsway, Delhi.

Subject :- Resolutions moved in the B.C.  
Board meetings

Sir,

In continuation of this Office letter of 29th August '45 and reminder of 19.11.45, I have the honour to inform you that you were first nominated as a member of the B.C. Board with effect from 1st April 1943 and that you were not a member of the B.C. Board at any time from 1937 to 31st March 1943.

No resolution such as that quoted by you in your letter of 29th August 1945 is traceable on the records of the Board,

Since no such resolution has been moved or passed at any meeting of the Board the third question put by you in your letter referred to above does not arise.

Your obedient servant,

Sd. STREATFIELD

Backward Classes Officer,  
B.P., Poona.

The reader may wonder how Dr. Ambedkar came to invent the story of a resolution which was moved at the meeting of a body of which the alleged mover was not a member. In 1939, Mr. Thakkar read in the Press of a resolution by the Scheduled Castes Education Committee of Bengal allotting Rs. 10,000 for the supply of school books and slates for primary school children of scheduled castes having the lowest percentage of literacy. Liking this idea, he wrote to Dr. A. W. Jenkins, the then Director of Public Instruction of Bengal, congratulating him upon this allotment. At the same time, Mr. Thakkar forwarded copies of this letter to several of his colleagues in other provinces for similar action. Among them was Mrs. Hansa Mehta, who was then a Parliamentary Secretary in the Government of Bombay. A copy was also sent to the Backwards Classes Officer of the Bombay Government with the suggestion that the more backward castes among the Harijans should be given preference. This letter contained the following paragraph: "It is noteworthy that in the scramble for education amongst Harijans, the higher castes like Namasudras in Bengal, Mahars in Bombay and Pasis and Dhobies in Bihar, get most benefit of all sorts of concessions, and the more backward Harijan is left behind, not taken care of by anyone concerned. Under the circumstances, it is good that the Bengal Scheduled Castes Education Committee has seen its way to watching the interests of those Harijan Castes who have the lowest percentage of literacy." It is these sentences in the letter that have been converted into a resolution against the Mahars by Dr. Ambedkar. Dr. Ambedkar

goes further and says that after investigation, it was found that the Mahars were not forward in education. How then did it happen that they became the spearhead of the political movement? The following are the figures of literacy for the Mahar caste :—

Name of Harijan Community	No.of Persons Literate Per 10,000
1. Dheds or Mahars of Gujerat	53
2. Mahars of Maharashtra	29
3. Bhangis of Gujerat	29
4. Chambars of Maharashtra	29
5. Mangs of Maharashtra	16
6. Madigs of Karnataka	7

This matter was brought up in the Maclagan Committee appointed in 1943 to prepare and recommend schemes for the utilisation of a special allotment of Rs. 25 lakhs for the benefit of Harijans, Aborigines and other Backward Classes in Bombay. Mr. Thakkar was a member of that Committee and at its meeting held at Poona on March 17, 1943, he made the following proposal:—

“Among the Scheduled Castes, Mangs, Madigs and Bhangis and such other backward castes; among the Aboriginal tribes such more backward tribes as Katkaris, Thakurs, and Warlis, and among other Backward Classes such castes as Bedars, Ramoshis, Tilori Kunbis and Waghri who are specially backward, should be given preferential treatment during the preparation of schemes and in the matter of concessions, over more advanced communities of their groups. The Backward Classes Department and the Education Department should keep this principle in mind in the day to day administration of benefits and concessions to Backward Classes”.

After discussion, the Committee resolved as follows:—  
“The Heads of Departments concerned should be requested to note the principle that the more backward communities among the three sections should be given

preferential treatment in granting various facilities provided for them."

In his eagerness for supporting the Mahars, Dr. Ambedkar forgot his main thesis that the scheduled castes formed a single separate element from the rest of the Hindus. He has admitted that this is a fiction and that they are divided into castes in the same manner as the rest of the Hindus.

From its inception, the Harijan Sevak Sangh has been conceived as an effort, however inadequate, of the caste Hindus to atone for their injustice to the Harijans and, therefore, the main responsibility for the running of the Sangh should be with the leaders of the caste Hindus. It is, however, not correct to say that "it is now the policy of the Sangh to exclude Untouchables from the management and higher direction of the Sangh." In the Central Board of the Sangh, there are today several Harijan members, viz., Messrs. (1) N.S. Khajrolkar of Bombay, (2) Karan Singh Kane of the U.P., (3) F.D. Ghodke of Karnataka, (4) M. Govindan of Kerala, (5) Radhanath Das of Calcutta, and (6) B. S. Moorthy of Andhra.

It is needless to refer to the abusive terms used by Dr. Ambedkar towards the Harijans who are co-operating with the Sangh. In spite of the efforts of the worthy Doctor to misrepresent and vilify the Sangh, its work has been expanding. For the information of the reader a short note prepared by the Secretary of the Sangh has been added to this book as an Appendix.

## CHAPTER VIII

### TIRADE AGAINST GANDHIJI

The last two Chapters of Dr. Ambedkar's book constitute a rambling tirade against Gandhiji and his teachings. There is no attempt to reason or persuade. The author has staked all his reputation on reckless abuse and misrepresentation. To attempt a detailed and serious refutation is a wholly unprofitable task. It is enough to indicate the nature of the tirade and let the reader judge for himself. The indictment falls into two parts. Chapter X entitled "Beware of Gandhi" is a vicious rehash of all the false statements, insinuations and misrepresentations of the previous chapters. The Harijans are presumed to hate and distrust Gandhiji. Various questions are asked in the spirit of the lawyer who seeks to confound a witness by asking, "why do you tell an untruth," hoping that the jury will take it for granted that the witness was giving false evidence. If he were not sure that most of his readers were ignorant Dr. Ambedkar would have been more circumspect. Thus on pages 253-4 he puts 14 questions about Gandhiji's work. Each one of them is based on false assumption or unwarranted inference. Thus question 14 asks why Gandhiji disapproved of the appointment of Mr. Agnibhoj as minister by Dr. Khare. The answer is that Gandhiji did not disapprove of the appointment but, he disapproved of Dr. Khare's other actions as Prime Minister and as this disapproval was shared by the Congress Working Committee Dr. Khare had to resign. The question of Mr. Agnibhoj's appointment did not arise at all. The 13th question is why Gandhiji did not keep up the gentleman's agreement of the Poona Pact and instruct the Congress High Command to include representatives of the scheduled castes in Congress ministries. There was no gentleman's agreement about ministries in the Poona Pact and as a matter of fact, representatives of the scheduled castes were includ-

ed as ministers and parliamentary secretaries in many Congress governments. The ministries were formed by the local legislative parties according to the circumstances of each province, and the Congress High Command interfered only when there were disputes. It is not the habit of Gandhiji to give instructions to the Congress High Command on any matter. He has consistently played the role of adviser when consulted.

Question 12 is instructive as it gives the clue to Dr. Ambedkar's fury. I quote it in full: "After having accepted the Poona Pact, why did not Mr. Gandhi keep faith with the Untouchables by telling the Congress not to despoil the politics of the Untouchables by contesting the seats reserved for the Untouchables, by getting such Untouchables elected as were prepared to become the tools of the Hindus?" Every clause of this question is a perversion. The Poona Pact was never meant to segregate the Harijans from the Congress. If it was it would have been the greatest disservice to the Harijans as well as to the country as a whole. The Congress as a national organisation, would have stultified itself if it did not seek the support of the Harijans as of every other community. It is a foul accusation that Harijan representatives elected on the Congress ticket were tools of the Hindus. For the first time, they established their claim of absolute equality with the highest of the caste Hindus and the claim was cheerfully conceded. If Dr. Ambedkar thought that because of the Poona Pact, the Harijans would be left out of the national movement and allowed to be exploited by those who worked against the freedom of the country, he was living in a world of self-delusion for which he has to blame only himself. Even if there had been no Poona Pact, the Congress would have attempted to capture the Harijan seats and there is no doubt that the number of non-Congress Harijans in the various legislatures would have been less than in 1937. The Ramsay Macdonald Award gave only 71 seats as against the 73 seats claimed by Dr. Ambedkar as being the strength of non-Congress Harijans in the pro-

vincial legislatures in 1937. In Bombay, he could not have got 11 supporters as the total representation given to that province by the original Communal Award was only 10.

Other questions repeat the senseless allegations about the Tilak Swaraj Fund in 1921 and Gandhiji's failure to do things between 1922-24 when he was in jail. Question No. 8 refers to the Congress Party in the Central Assembly in 1932 when no such party existed as the Congress party had withdrawn from the previous elections and its members were in jail in 1932. Another question asks why Gandhiji did not permit the use of Satyagraha in the cause of Harijans. This is not true as his support of the Vykom Satyagraha showed. Whether a particular Satyagraha is desirable or not depends on circumstances. In reply to a question, Gandhiji said: "I would not advise the Sangh as an organisation to offer Satyagraha against Savarna Hindus but I would certainly not only advise but expect members of the Sangh in their individual capacity to organise such Satyagraha in their respective places."

That Gandhiji is not opposed to the idea of Harijans resorting to law courts for justice can be seen from the following question and his answer to it reported in the *Harijan* of 10-5-42.

"Q. Harijans are legally entitled to send their children to any educational institution as also to draw water from public wells. But public sentiment still militates against this being put into practice. Should Harijans resort to the law courts for justice in these matters or wait patiently until the caste Hindus are converted?"

"A. Where there is no danger of violence being done to them, the Harijans should exercise their legal right and where necessary resort to law courts. Harijan workers must continue agitation among caste Hindus and not rest content with mere legal rights."



Writing in the *Harijan* of June 15, 1940, about the opposition of the so-called caste Hindus in the sub-Himalayan districts of Garhwal in the U. P. against the Harijans carrying their brides and bridegrooms in Dola-Palki (Palanquin), Gandhiji remarked:

“Let us hope that the labours of the reformers will bear fruit and Harijans will no longer need police protection. But they need not wait for the success of the reformers’ labours. *They must assert their right even if it be by seeking police protection.* (Italics mine).

### THE KAVITHA INCIDENT

Dr. Ambedkar quotes in full Mr. Thakkar’s report (1935) on the oppression by the so-called caste Hindus of the Harijans in a village called Kavitha in Gujerat. Gandhiji’s opinion on this report is also given in full. It was the question of admission of Harijan children in the common school. The so-called caste Hindus proclaimed a social boycott against the poor Harijans. Studying the situation, Gandhiji advised the Harijans of Kavitha to migrate. Dr. Ambedkar asks, “why did he (Gandhiji) not advise Mr. Thakkar to prosecute the Hindus of Kavitha and help the Untouchables to vindicate their rights?”

In fairness to Gandhiji, the learned Doctor, who has taken so much trouble to hunt out this reference from the files of the *Harijan*, should have also discovered and quoted another article of Gandhiji in the same connection, also published in the *Harijan*. What the Doctor has presented is only one side of the picture. To know the other side, we have to refer to Gandhiji’s article “On its last legs”, *Harijan*, 26-10-35.

“Some critics have not hesitated to observe that it was preposterous for me to claim, in answer to Dr. Ambedkar’s threat to accept some other faith rather than die a Hindu, that untouchability was on its last legs in spite of Kavitha. Indeed Kavitha itself supports

my claim. Kavitha had gone on ever since its birth peacefully till an over-zealous worker, not knowing his own limitations, had put up Kavitha Harijans to dare to send their children to the local school, though he knew that there was opposition from some Kavitha Savarnas. He had hoped, as had happened elsewhere, that Harijans would successfully assert their right to send their children to public schools. But Kavitha Savarnas showed that they had not recognised the time spirit.

“Only a few years ago the Kavitha incident would have attracted no notice. There were very few reformers then. The few were to be found mostly in towns and cities. Now, thank God, their number is increasing and presently every village will have its quota. But a few years ago Harijans could not be induced to resist untouchability on any account whatsoever. It was part of their faith as it was of Savarnas’ faith. These columns contain sufficient evidence of the weekly progress made by the campaign against untouchability. Phenomenal though the progress has been, Kavitha and the like show that it has not yet affected the majority of Savarnas in many places. The fact is a warning to the reformers and the Harijans that much has yet to be done before the hard hearts of Savarnas are melted.

“Let it be further observed that *it was Savarna reformers who advertised the Kavitha tragedy and gave it an all-India importance. It has agitated Savarna conscience more than it has angered the Harijans.* I have to note with shame and sorrow that even Kavitha Harijans no longer want to agitate for their rights. *They have meekly submitted to the Savarna impudence. In spite of all the help offered to them, they would not leave Kavitha.* It is easy enough for the few that are there to earn their bread by honourable toil elsewhere. The attempt of the reformers to induce them to leave Kavitha under their protection has failed.

“Even if change of faith, not on account of its inherent inadequacy but because of the unreasoning prejudice

of many of its followers, were justified, in the present instance it can but defeat the cause intended to be served.

“Secession of stalwarts like Dr. Ambedkar can but weaken the defences of Harijans. We know, as a matter of fact, that non-Hindu Harijans, no matter how eminent they may be, are not able to help Hindu Harijans. Indeed, they are a class apart still in their adopted faith. Such is the hold untouchability of the Indian type has on the people in India.

“Let not Dr. Ambedkar's just wrath deject the reformer, let it spur him to greater effort. For whilst it is true that the number of workers against untouchability has greatly increased, there can be no doubt that the number is yet too small to overtake the prejudice of ages. Nevertheless a movement which has attained the proportions that the anti-untouchability campaign has attained and in which the slightest untoward incident can attract world-wide attention cannot but be on its last legs. Humanity will not suffer it any longer.” (Italics mine).

This was not the only occasion on which Gandhiji advocated such an exodus. A sincere worker for Harijans put a question to him in June 1935 :—

“Could we ask them (Harijans) to leave their wretched abodes and settle in our midst?”

Gandhiji replied :

“This is more easily said than done. If all caste Hindus become reformers your question won't arise. To-day the reformers would be powerless to defend Harijans from molestation if they settled in Savarna quarters. But I would advocate exodus by Harijans from where they are persistently persecuted, as by the Nattars (in Tamil Nad) for example.”—*Harijan* 15-6-35.

Thus it was not tenderness to Savarnas that made Gandhiji advocate exodus of Harijans. That is none of the methods of non-violence. He does not want to bring about reform by force. He wants a genuine change

of heart in the caste Hindus in order that the reform may be a permanent one.

If, in spite of Gandhiji's explanations, the Doctor persists in imagining sinister motives on the part of Gandhiji, no one can help it. Certainly Gandhiji's methods differ from those desired by the Doctor.

Village conditions being what they are it is very difficult to launch a suit and succeed through a court in cases when not one person but a large group is involved and the ways adopted by the oppositionists are subtle and indirect.

Yet, in spite of all this, it is a happy thing to note that the Harijans of Kavitha were ultimately successful because of the boldness of one single caste Hindu, a Rajput named Nathabhai belonging to the same village, who at great personal risk remained with the Harijans all these days. He undertook (and actually did it) to carry on his shoulders a Harijan boy to school in order to protect him from mischief on the part of caste Hindu boys. Mr. Nathabhai used to visit the Harijan locality daily and this gave the Harijans courage. It was again the 'caste Hindu' workers of the Sangh who often visited and also stayed in the midst of the Harijans in order to put courage into them.

Moreover it is a fact that Mr. Thakkar approached the then District Magistrate of Ahmadabad (Mr. G.G. Drew, I.C.S.) in this connection. But the latter hardly took any step in this matter. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel personally went and also reasoned with the caste Hindus.

However, that is past history. Now more than 20 Harijan children regularly attend the school. There is no trouble whatsoever, not only in this village, but in several villages round about Kavitha.

## CHAPTER IX

### CARICATURE OF GANDHISM

The second line of attack taken by Dr. Ambedkar in his tirade against Gandhiji is to caricature Gandhiji's ideas and teachings regarding *Varnashrama Dharma* and rural economy. It may be conceded that the last Chapter of the book entitled "Gandhism" is written in a more temperate style than the others. But the spirit in which it is written is the same. There is no attempt to understand or portray fairly Gandhiji's views before criticising them. Anyone who has read Gandhiji's Autobiography or reflected on his experiments with truth in the various Ashrams he founded in South Africa and India will have no hesitation in admitting that Gandhiji has never observed distinctions of caste, race or religion in his dealings with men and women. The idea of birth as conferring inferiority and superiority has been always abhorrent to him. He has almost idealised the sweeper and the bhangi for doing which he is blamed by Dr. Ambedkar as much as for advocating an idealised caste system. Nor have his ideas been rigid in this matter. His views on interdining and intermarriage afford an interesting illustration. It is true that twenty years ago Gandhiji was not inclined to support them. Food and sex being among the chief distractions of man in his spiritual pursuit, any restrictions placed on them serve, in his opinion, to help spiritual growth. The limitation of marriage within the same caste should be considered as a call to look upon the rest of womankind as mothers and sisters. But Gandhiji has never thought that prohibition of interdining or intermarriage was essential to the caste system of his conception. "I do not believe that interdining or even intermarriage necessarily deprives a man of the caste status that birth has given him. The four divisions, Brahmin, Kshattriya, Vaishya, and Shudra define a man's calling; they do not restrict or regulate social intercourse. The divisions define duties;

they confer no privileges. It is, I hold, against the genius of Hinduism to arrogate to oneself a higher status or assign to another a lower status. All are born to serve God's creation—a Brahmin with his knowledge, a Kshatriya with his power of protection, a Vaishya with his commercial ability and a Shudra with his bodily labour." This is Gandhiji's own description of his views at that time. In these 25 years, his views have been changing. He has had to admit that caste in India survives more by what he has called its excrescences than by what he thinks are its virtues. He has recently said that it is an anachronism and the taboos against interdining and intermarriage should be abandoned. As a matter of fact, no other individual in Indian history has been responsible for erasing caste and other social distinctions as Gandhiji has been. His practice in his Ashrams has had more effect than his ideological interpretation of caste. His great movements of Satyagraha have provided opportunities on a grand scale for workers of all castes and creeds to come together inside jails and outside on a plane of absolute social equality and this has led to the abandonment of caste distinctions to a greater extent than could be effected by previous social reform movements. It is no exaggeration to say that as a result the taboo against interdining has disappeared except in rural areas where the masses are still illiterate. Inter-caste marriages have become more frequent than before, though it cannot be said that they are numerous enough to bring about any degree of homogeneity in Hindu society.

The issue here is not whether Gandhiji's views are right or wrong. No one will question Dr. Ambedkar's right to oppose and even condemn them. The objection is to the unfair presentation of Gandhiji's views. Having given the reader to understand that Gandhiji's views were static from the time of *Hind Swaraj*, Dr. Ambedkar had to explain the recent statement of Gandhiji that caste was an anachronism. I shall simply quote the reaction of Dr. Ambedkar to this radical change and leave the reader to judge for himself: "Those who are

carried away by this recantation of Mr. Gandhi, forget two things. In the first place, all that Mr. Gandhi has said is that caste is an anachronism. He does not say it is an evil. He does not say it is an anathema. Mr. Gandhi may be taken to be not in favour of caste. But Mr. Gandhi does not say that he is against the *Varna* system. And what is Mr. Gandhi's *Varna* system? It is simply a new name for the caste system and retains all the worst features of the caste system."

Really, Gandhiji's views on caste have no relevance to the issue of untouchability. Gandhiji has declared war on untouchability and has never compromised on it. When the untouchables have become one with the rest of the Hindus, the reform of Hindu society will be speeded up. The entire thesis of Dr. Ambedkar's book is that the Harijans should be treated as a separate element, and therefore should be politically separated from the rest of the Hindus. It cannot be doubted that this political separation will tend to confirm and strengthen social segregation and, therefore, caste in its worst aspects. Thus while, theoretically, Dr. Ambedkar indulges in diatribes against caste, his practical policy is to support it, while it is exactly the reverse in the case of Gandhiji who, in spite of his theoretical support of *Varnashrama Dharma*, has struck by his campaign against untouchability the greatest blow to the existing structure of Hindu society.

If Gandhiji's views on social reform have been misrepresented, his economic ideas have been hopelessly distorted. Here, again, it is not a question of agreement or disagreement. There is no doubt that Gandhiji wants to preserve and if possible resuscitate the simple rural life of India through Khadi and village industries. Dr. Ambedkar argues that without labour-saving machinery, there can be no leisure for the masses, and without leisure there can be no growth of culture. It is a legitimate view to take, though the other view that complication of life in the name of culture does not make life better in quality is not so absurd as Dr. Ambedkar thinks. If Gandhiji

## CARICATURE OF GANDHISM

has erred, he has done so in the company of great men like Ruskin and Tolstoy. But there is absolutely no warrant for the statement on page 285, "Gandhism insists upon class structure. It regards the class structure of society and also the income structure as sacrosanct with the consequent distinctions of rich and poor, high and low, owners and workers, as permanent parts of social organisation." While Gandhiji has supported *Varna* in an idealised form, he has never supported economic classes. He has prescribed the charkha and the vow of poverty for all irrespective of birth. He has always held like Jesus Christ that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for the rich to attain the kingdom of God. But he had to apply his teachings to a society in which the distinctions of rich and poor existed. He could have advocated their extirpation by violence. As an apostle of non-violence, he does not do so. He has tried to minimise, if not eliminate, the evils of the inequalities of wealth in two ways. To the masses, he preached the doctrine of self-help so that they might make it impossible for the rich to exploit the poor. To the rich, he continuously appealed to act as trustees of their wealth for the good of the people at large. Dr. Ambedkar pours ridicule on this doctrine of trusteeship. If he did it as a convinced communist bent upon nationalisation of all means of production, there would be some meaning in it. Gandhiji has never objected to legal methods of limiting the exploitation of peasants and workers. He has conducted many strikes in Ahmedabad and secured for the mill-hands in that city a strength which no other group of Indian factory workers possesses. It is a sheer slander to say that Gandhiji has preached the rule of poverty to one class only. It may be argued that few would listen to his plea for poverty. Like all religious teachers of this world, he has placed before all who would listen to him the ideal of non-violence, truth, poverty, chastity and self-suffering. Though only a few might be able to conform strictly to these vows, they have permeated Indian society in various forms to varying extents. The



rich men of India are less fond of ostentation and luxury than before the advent of Gandhiji. The Kisans have asserted their rights all over India, and when the Congress ministries introduced drastic legislation against landholders and moneylenders, the richer classes had hardly the courage to oppose openly. They resorted to legal tricks and appealed to the Governors and the Governor-General to make use of their special powers.

Gandhiji has always objected to the word Gandhism. He has disclaimed the idea of preaching any hard and fast system of philosophy, economics or politics. His supreme aim has been to popularise the method of non-violent approach to all human problems. It is his fundamental teaching that any attempt to remove existing evils through violence only creates more evils and the vicious circle can never be broken unless the use of violence for bringing about political, social or economic changes is abandoned. He would be the first person to object and the last to approve any attempt to enforce his ideas of *Varnashrama Dharma* or economics through force or even legislation. During his tour in South India at the end of 1927, Gandhiji was asked many questions which Dr. Ambedkar has put in his book. The late Mr. Mahadev Desai has given an interesting resume of these questions and answers in the *Young India* of November 27, 1927. I content myself with three of them.

Q. So long as you do not destroy *Varna*, untouchability cannot be destroyed.

A. I do not think so. But if *Varnashrama* goes to the dogs in the removal of untouchability, I shall not shed a tear. But what bearing has *Varna* as defined by me on untouchability?

Q. But the opponents of reform quote you in support.

A. That is the lot of every reformer. He will be misquoted by interested parties, but you also know that some of them want me to relinquish Hinduism. Others would banish me from the Hindu fold. I have gone nowhere

to defend *Varnashrama Dharma* though for the removal of untouchability I went to Vykom. I am the author of a Congress resolution for propagation of Khadi, establishment of Hindu-Muslim unity, and removal of untouchability, the three pillars of Swaraj. But I have never placed establishment of *Varnashrama Dharma* as the fourth pillar. You cannot therefore accuse me of placing a wrong emphasis on *Varnashrama Dharma*.

Q. Do you know that many of your followers distort your teachings?

A. Do I not know it? I know that I have many followers only so-called.

Is it not ridiculous after such an explicit disavowal of any desire to establish *Varnashrama Dharma* even through a Congress resolution, that Dr. Ambedkar should paint a lurid picture of what will happen "should Gandhism become the law of the land?" In this picture, he allows his imagination to run riot. He says: "Under Gandhism the Untouchables may study law, they may study medicine, they may study engineering, or anything else they may. So far so good. But will the Untouchables be free to make use of their knowledge and learning? Will they have the right to choose their profession? Can they adopt the career of lawyer, doctor or engineer? To these questions the answers which Gandhism gives is an emphatic 'NO'." Foreigners ignorant of India may get an impression that Gandhiji or his followers are trying to establish a legal system by which the right to practise professions will belong to castes by birth. This is an utter perversion of truth. Even in the old *Varnashrama Dharma*, there were poets, doctors, astrologers and others from all castes, including the scheduled castes, though the main body of members of a profession belonged to a particular caste or sub-caste, as obtained in all medieval societies. The following resolution on fundamental rights and duties was adopted at the Karachi session of the Indian National Congress in 1931 and remains the authoritative statement on the status of Indian citizenship in an Independent

democratic State of India for which Congress and Gandhiji are fighting :

(1) Every citizen of India has the right of free expression, the rights of free association and combination, and the right to assemble peacefully and without arms, for purposes not opposed to law or morality.

(2) Every citizen shall enjoy freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess and praise his religion, subject to public order and morality.

(3) The culture, language and script of the minorities and of the different linguistic areas shall be protected.

(4) All citizens are equal before the law, irrespective of caste, creed or sex.

(5) No disability attaches to any citizen by reason of his or her religion, caste, creed or sex, in regard to public employment, office of power or honour and in the exercise of any trade or calling.

(6) All citizens have equal rights and duties in regard to wells, tanks, roads, schools, and places of public resort maintained out of state or local funds or dedicated by private persons for the use of the general public.

(7) Every citizen has the right to keep and bear arms in accordance with regulations and reservations made on that behalf.

(8) No person shall be deprived of his liberty nor shall his dwelling or property be entered, sequestered, or confiscated save in accordance with law.

(9) The State shall observe neutrality to all religions.

(10) The franchise shall be on the basis of universal adult suffrage.

(11) The State shall provide for free and compulsory primary education.

(12) The State shall confer no titles.

(13) There shall be no capital punishment.

(14) Every citizen shall be free to move throughout India and to stay and settle in any part thereof, to acquire property and to follow any trade or calling and to be treated equally with regard to legal prosecution or protection in all parts of India.

A fuller statement of Congress political objectives is contained in the recent election manifesto which is printed as an Appendix.

It is not my desire to explain or justify Gandhiji's social or economic teachings. All that I have tried to do here is to show that Dr. Ambedkar's version of what he calls 'Gandhism' is not a reliable or unprejudiced account of Gandhiji's views and, therefore, any judgement based on his stray quotations and unwarranted conclusions will be erroneous and unjust.

## CHAPTER X

### CONCLUSION

In the foregoing chapters, some of the main allegations of Dr. Ambedkar against the Congress, the Harijan Sevak Sangh and Gandhiji have been examined. It has already been said that it is not the object of this volume to enquire into every allegation. It would have made the book tedious and bulky. It should not, therefore, be imagined that statements and charges not refuted here have any solid basis. The reader has been given a sufficient number of instances to realise the recklessness and irresponsibility with which Dr. Ambedkar has tried to defame India's national organisation and its great leader. It is no exaggeration to say that the attack amounts to a stab in the back of Indian nationalism just at the moment when it was recovering from the heavy repression of its imperialist opponent. There are internal evidences that even Dr. Ambedkar felt some occasional uneasiness about his work. In Chapter VII, he has attempted an elaborate defence against the obvious charge to which he would be liable, viz., that he is fighting against Indian freedom and for the continuation of foreign rule. He tries to show that all that the "Untouchables" want are some constitutional safeguards. This contention cannot stand any scrutiny. If Mahatma Gandhi, the Indian National Congress, and the 250 millions of Hindus are all consciously determined to oppress the scheduled castes and keep them in perpetual slavery, it is altogether impossible to protect them by constitutional safeguards in any democratic system of government. Only the continuation of a foreign government can, if at all, help them. Any constitution which places the majority under the domination of the minorities will not be worth the paper on which it is written.

Dr. Ambedkar has drawn an analogy between the position of Negroes in the U.S.A. and Harijans in

India. If he had pursued it in a disinterested and rational manner, it would have led him to some useful and conclusions. He contends that having used them in the

Civil War, the Republican party betrayed them, the position of the Negroes is worse than ever. There can doubt that the present plight of the Negroes in the U.S.A. leaves much to be desired. But the white people of America fought among themselves for the abolition of slavery. Continuous attempts have been made by American statesmen and political parties to remove the disabilities under which the Negroes suffer. If taking their cue from Dr. Ambedkar, the Negroes of the U.S.A. should attack and discredit all the Americans as a people, question the motives of all reformers who are fighting for justice to the Negroes, what would they gain by it? Against a united American people, the Negroes have no chance whatever. Their hope lies in the fact that, however weak and fitful they may be at present, the conscience and intelligence of large numbers of the American people will make the nation realise that their own human dignity requires the complete emancipation of the Negroes. Substantially, this is true in the case of Harijans in India. The analogy is not on all fours. The Harijans in India are far larger in numbers. They do not differ in race, colour, customs or religion from caste Hindus. There are no insuperable difficulties other than superstition and custom against their merging indistinguishably with the general body of Hindus. Yet, it seems as evident as any mathematical proposition that the only way of emancipation for the scheduled castes is to line with the progressive forces among the Hindus and fight against the reactionary elements.

The Harijans do not form an all-India community with a common language, religion or any other special characteristics. They interdine or intermarry only within their own local castes and sub-castes. They are distributed evenly in all districts, talukas and villages and form a minority everywhere. Under any system of provincial autonomy, their main interests will be bound up with the provincial governments. Dr. Ambedkar would

like to make them a coherent all-India community like the Muslims, Anglo-Indians or Indian Christians. It is a social and political impossibility.

The same may be said of the Hindus generally. It is altogether wrong to call the Hindus a community. They form a people and the hope of successful democracy in India lies in this. Hindus cannot think or act communally except perhaps in opposition to exaggerated communal claims of Muslims or other communities. In international matters, they cannot but think nationally. In all-India matters, they tend to think in terms of regional interests. In the provincial field, they may sometimes think in terms of caste, especially where the social and economic interests of a caste coincide. But nowhere and on no conceivable ground does a Hindu think that he must have a right or privilege because he is a Hindu. It is not to the interest of the Harijans to drive him to that necessity. If Harijan leadership were wise, it would make common cause with the fight of the landless labourers for a living wage and land, with the poor peasants for the abolition of landlordism and with the factory workers for forming powerful trade unions and for social security. To the extent the Harijans get segregated from the sections of Hindus which are close to them in poverty and educational backwardness, their fight for emancipation will be more difficult and more prolonged. If they conceive of their struggle, as stated by Dr. Ambedkar, to be one "against Hindu Raj in which the governing class would be the Bania and the Brahmin with low class Hindus as their policemen, all of whom have been the hereditary enemies of the Untouchables", their prospect must be bleak indeed. On the other hand, if they place before themselves the objective of a social revolution by which caste and creed will be swept away and give place to the conception that human equality must prevail among all the Hindus and that the so-called "Untouchable" is not a whit inferior in theory or fact to any other, they will have

time, reason, nationalism, all the great men of India and the good wishes of humanity with them.

No responsible Hindu will pretend that Untouchability has disappeared from India owing to the gigantic efforts of Gandhiji and the Congress during the last thirty years. Legally the Harijan suffers from few difficulties, if at all. Opinion is unanimous that the very possibility of legal discrimination should be excluded by a careful formulation of fundamental rights. But between legal and social and economic equality, there is a big gulf to be bridged. Universal and compulsory education, minimum wages, social security and large-scale industrialisation will emancipate the Harijans to a great extent. Their claim to preference to fallow land which may be brought under cultivation under new irrigation schemes is unchallengeable though I think it is not wise in their own interests to push it so far as to negate the claims of the landless backward classes who may not be included in the present list of scheduled castes. Special facilities for technical and higher education and representation in public services are undoubtedly legitimate short term measures.

But it is a fatal proceeding to lose the long-term objective of absolute and indistinguishable merger of the scheduled castes with the Hindu people in the pursuit of momentary privileges. Dr. Ambedkar knows that he was not the only opponent of Gandhiji's fast against the Macdonald Award. Many conservatives among the Hindus thought that the small special representation given to Harijans in the award was a convenient way of disposing of the scheduled castes. Even now they would join with Dr. Ambedkar for the restoration of special electorates with representation in proportion to population. They know that this would be the best guarantee against a rapid change of the existing social structure. I do not think that even then Dr. Ambedkar could become the sole spokesman of the scheduled castes or the head of a political organisation of the scheduled



castes like the Muslim League. If power is transferred under a system which adds political segregation of the scheduled castes to their existing social segregation, the last state will be worse than the first. The Sanataniists will be the only party to gain.

Dr. Ambedkar, like any other representative of the scheduled castes, is entitled to be angry, to condemn and to revolt against a system which has condemned for centuries millions of human beings to intolerable humiliation and degradation. No one will quarrel with him for being impatient of the slow progress of the emancipation of the scheduled castes.

But it is neither necessary nor just that he should distort facts, pervert truth, slander the Indian National Congress which symbolises the struggle for freedom of the Indian people irrespective of religion, caste, creed or community and defame the unique personality who has restored to Indians their self-respect and made them realise that freedom from external domination is real and valuable only to the extent that it is coupled with freedom from spiritual slavery to fear and superstition. The future historian is bound to record that even Dr. Ambedkar's attack was one of the consequences of Gandhiji's fight against untouchability. The Puranic story that the first fruit of churning the ocean for nectar was poison is true of all human awakening. Past injustice becomes particularly galling when it is in the process of being rectified. Hatred of British domination is flaming fiercely just when the British are offering to end it peacefully. Muslim renaissance in India is taking the form of fanatical urge for isolationism. It is not, therefore, surprising that the ablest intellectual of the scheduled castes should have yielded to passionate hatred of those very agencies which hold out the promise of emancipation to the suppressed sixth of Indian humanity.

It is a mood which will pass. In fact, it is already passing among the majority of scheduled castes. In

spite of the repeated assertions in his book that the "untouchables" have no faith in the Congress and Gandhiji, Dr. Ambedkar did not think it worth his while to resign his post and lead the scheduled castes in the provincial elections. I do not believe that it is love of money or office that held him back from that obvious step. He knew that there would be a landslide in favour of the Congress among the scheduled castes. In many provinces, Congress candidates to the scheduled class seats have been returned unopposed. The scheduled castes have placed their faith in the promise contained in the Congress manifesto that "it has stood for the rights of all those who suffer from social tyranny and injustice and for the removal for them of all barriers to equality." The strength and quality of Indian nationalism will depend a great deal on the speed and thoroughness with which this equality is established not as a mere formality but as a living principle of action in public and private life.

I feel it a great pity that in his anger against the Hindus and eagerness to secure a separate communal status for the scheduled castes, Dr. Ambedkar should have missed the opportunity of a rational exposition of the many far-reaching problems of social and economic reconstruction which he has touched upon in his book. The most important of them is the future of caste. Can Hinduism exist without caste? What will be the consequences of the destruction of the caste system on Hindu society? Though the system is breaking down before our very eyes, the learned author asserts it as an axiom that it cannot go. In an eloquent passage, he says: "The social psychology of the Hindu Communal majority is dominated by the dogma which recognises not merely inequality as the rule governing the inter-relationship among the various communities. This dogma of graded inequality is absolutely inimical to liberty and fraternity. It cannot be believed that this graded inequality will vanish or that the Hindus will strive to abolish it. That is impossible. This graded inequality is

not accidental or incidental. It is the religion of Hindus. It is the official doctrine of Hinduism. It is sacred and no Hindu can think of doing away with it. The Hindu Communal Majority with its religion of graded inequality is not therefore a passing phase. It is a permanent fact and a menace for ever."

If this is so, then it becomes the sacred duty of Dr. Ambedkar to fight this menace and not to make peace with it by accepting a few crumbs of communal representation which will not materially affect the Hindu Communal Majority. Fortunately for India and the world, the demon is largely a fiction created by Dr. Ambedkar's imagination. Graded inequality is the universal basis of every medieval society in which the objective conditions for enforcing social equality are lacking. As for its being the religion of the Hindus, it will go the way of many other things which constituted their religion in the past. Orthodox brahmin families are cheerfully accommodating themselves to low caste and non-caste brides. As I write, it is reported that a high class Hindu has requested Mahatma Gandhi to find a Harijan bride for him. As caste has no legal basis and the graded inequality rests entirely on individual habits and family custom, it is bound to take time to disappear. But as a doctrine, it is wholly repudiated by the Indian National Congress which is strongly socialist and equalitarian. As a superstitious practice, it has been given a mortal blow by Gandhiji who has just performed a pilgrimage to the ancient and sacred temples of Madura where, surrounded by a party of Harijans, he worshipped the deity and was offered honours which were customarily due only to the most orthodox religious heads. Gandhiji once wrote that if it was a choice between the death of Varnashramadharma and the maintenance of untouchability, he would unhesitatingly prefer the former. It can be said similarly that if it is a choice between graded inequality and disappearance of Hinduism, all enlightened Hindus will prefer the latter. But through three thousand years of their history, Hinduism and Hindu society have passed

through so many phases and shed so many doctrines and practices that they are quite capable of adjusting themselves to the fundamental need of modern times. In fact, the very words "Hindus" and "Hinduism" have been coined for the convenience of separatist religious communities afraid of assimilation in the manner of Buddhism, Jainism, and other pretestant and even atheist movements. If Dr. Ambedkar really believes that there is no prospect of equality for the scheduled castes among the Hindus of whom they are an integral and inseparable part, he destroys all hope of emancipation for them, and the sooner the scheduled castes free themselves of his leadership, the better will it be for them.

## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX I

### THE HARIJAN SEVAK SANGH

BY MR. A. V. THAKKAR, SECRETARY, HARIJAN  
SEVAK SANGH

Dr. Ambedkar has made some astounding statements regarding the Harijan Sevak Sangh. He writes: "The branches of the Sangh are being closed every year. The Sangh is contracting, and contracting so rapidly that very soon it will have only centre and no circumference. He (Gandhiji) has allowed the Sangh to languish. It is dying peacefully and may perish even during the lifetime of Mr. Gandhi."

One is rather surprised at this conclusion of Dr. Ambedkar. What grounds has he to say that the Sangh is dying peacefully? It is in fact growing peacefully and unostentatiously. There is no question of the work of the Sangh contracting. It is expanding, and expanding every year, as will be shown by facts and figures later on in this note. We have now a larger number of institutions run by the Sangh than a few years ago. We now award a greater number of scholarships to Harijan young men and women receiving education in schools and colleges. We have now much less opposition from orthodox sections of Hindus to our reform movement. (The Sangh has to its credit great achievements already. The temple entry movement in Tamil Nad was the work of the Sangh and it has succeeded wonderfully.) A large number including one of the biggest temples in the south, an area considered to be the seat of orthodoxy, have been thrown open to Harijans, and every day hundreds and thousands of Harijan pilgrims visit those temples with other Hindus and offer worship. (This great phenomenon achieved in the year 1939 has practically dealt a deathblow to untouchability in Tamil Nad. Why has Dr. Ambedkar ignored this fact which

is as plain as anything? Temple entry in Tamil Nad is not a myth but a glorious fact.

Here are some figures to show that in most of the Provincial areas the work of the Sangh has been expanding and more and more money is being spent annually.

Name of the Linguistic Province	Amount spent in the first year of the Prov. Branch			Amount spent in the latest year for which figures are available			Remarks
	Amount	Year		Amount	Year		
i	2	3	4	5	6		
1. Andhra	Rs. 19,871-	as. 1-	p. 5 1932-3	Rs. 59,860-	as. 8-	p. 11 39-40	
2. Mysore State	1,599-	14-	6 do	15,675-	3-	7 43-44	
3. Tamil Nad	21,715-	8-	6 do	64,460-	13-	7 43-44	
4. Kodambakam H.I. School	(about) 6,000-	0-	0 33-34	17,061-	0-	2 44-45	Started in '33. Budgeted figures given
5. Malabar	2,966-	0-	0 32-33	7,842-	9-	0 44-45	Figures in column 4 are for 10 months only
6. Maharashtra	8,252-	0-	0 do	38,325-	0-	0 do	
7. Bijapur (Dt. Karnatak)	3,114-	13-	3 33-34	12,074-	5-	0	
8. Gujerat	11,536-	0-	0 do	57,662-	0-	0 43-44	
9. Kathiawar States	18,515-	0-	0 34-35	26,058-	2-	11 do	
10. Central India States	1,735-	7-	6 32-33	13,376-	4-	6 44-45	do
11. Harijan Udyogshala, Delhi.	9,253-	3-	0 36-37	62,697-	0-	0 45-46	Started in March 1936. Budgeted figure for 45-46

The above table throws much light if columns 2 and 4 are compared. It is true that this is not exhaustive information. But the area covered up by the provinces

mentioned here form nearly half the area of the country and as such indicates fairly the progress of work.

The number of institutions run by the Sangh has also increased steadily. There are now about 120 hostels run by the branches of the Sangh in different parts of the country as against 46 in the first year of the Sangh (1932-33). The following table gives some comparative figures showing very great progress in institutional work in the Provinces.

Province or District	No. of hostels run by the Branch in 1932-33		No. of hostels run by the Branch in 1944-45		Remarks	
	For boys	For girls	For boys	For girls		
1. Andhra	12	1	23	5		
2. Tamil Nad	3	nil	18	6		
3. Mysore	nil	nil	8	1	Besides the Sangh's hostels there are some hostels run by sister insti- tutions in most of the areas.	
4. Hyderabad State	nil	nil	4	nil		
5. Maharashtra	2	nil	6	2		
6. Gujerat	nil	1	7	1		
7. Karnatak	5	1	11	1		
8. Bihar	nil	nil	4	nil		
9. U.P.	2	nil	6	1		
10. C.I. States	nil	nil	2	nil		
	24	3	89	17		

Besides the figures shown in the above table, there are the following hostels of the Sangh working in other parts of India.

1. Assam	1
2. Orissa	5
3. Delhi	1
4. Madras City	1



5.	Kathiawar	1
6.	Cutch	1
7.	Malabar	3
8.	Chhattisgarh	
	Dists. of C. P.	1
9.	C. P. Marathi	} Correct figures not available
10.	C. P. Hindi	
Total		14

### Progress of Temple Entry Movement.

In Tamil Nad: In the year 1939 a great agitation was carried on by the Sangh and after a strenuous period of work the great temple of Sri Meenakshi in Madura was thrown open to Harijans. Many big temples, famous and ancient, followed suit, and in all about a hundred big temples including one dozen prominent ones, are now accessible to and visited frequently by Harijans. As a consequence of this agitation and due to the public feeling created, one of the most popular shrines in the South, the Palni Temple, was thrown open by the Trustees who have been empowered to do so by a law passed by the Congress Ministry. The result is marvellous beyond imagination. Lesser disabilities have vanished like mist before the sun, though they still linger in remote villages.

The big and prominent temples thus thrown open to Harijans are:—

1. The Meenakshi	Temple in	Madura	Dist. Madura
2. The Dandayudhapani	" in	Palni	-do-
3. The Alagar	" in	Alagar Koil	-do-
4. The Brihadeeswarar	" in	Tanjore	Tanjore
5. The Khudalagar	" in	Madura	Madura
6. The Kalameghaperumal	" in	Thirumur	-do-
7. The Kattalainathaswami	" in	Courtallam	Tinnevelly
8. The Kasi Visvanathaswami	" in	Tenkasi	-do-

In Travancore : The Maharaja's noble Temple Entry Proclamation covers 1,526 temples managed or controlled by the State. Of these 155 are major temples, including 12 wide-famed shrines of All-India importance,

like those of Cape Camorin, Suchindram, Trivandram, Janardan of Varkala, Haripad, Ambalapuzaha, Vaikam, Aranmula, Chenganoor, Nayyatinkara and Kalady. The fact is there are few temples of any importance outside Government control in Travancore.

In Gujerat: (1) All State temples in Baroda city.

(2) Temples at Karodi, Surat.

(3) Thinunath Temple at Ahmedabad.

In Sind: The greatest temple of Sindh, Sri Sadhbhella of Sukkur, was thrown open to Harijans in May 1945.

In Maharashtra: About 37 temples have been thrown open to Harijans. Some of the important of these are :

(1) Amabai Temple of Kolhapur, a large and famous temple owned by Kolhapur State.

(2) Amabai Temple of Aundh, a large and beautiful temple owned by Aundh State.

(3) Shri Ram Temple—newly built, in Satara Dt.

In Karnatak: (1) All the State Temples in the State of Sandur, Bellary Dt.

(2) 12 private temples in Mysore State.

(3) About 15 private and public temples in Bombay Karnatak, including the newly built magnificent Laxminarayan temple at Bankikonda in North Kanara Dt., built out of the 'Laxmi Narayan Charities' endowed by Mr. M.N. Kulkarni of the Karnatak Press, Bombay.

In Central India: 1. All the State temples in Indore State.

2. All the State temples in Gwalior State. The total number of temples thrown open to Harijans is about 150,

**In Delhi:** The magnificent Laxmi Narayan Temple constructed by Raja Baldevdas Birla in New Delhi is open to Harijans.

**In Bihar:** More than 250 temples, including some of the most important and richly endowed shrines, e.g., the Raj Temple of Surajpura, and Sahu's temple of Muzaffarpur, have been thrown open to Harijans.

**In Orissa:** It is true that in Orissa no temple of importance has yet opened its gates to Harijans. But fortunately, by the efforts of the Sangh, the right of temple entry has been secured for Harijans at the following temples:

- Cuttack Sadar:** (1) Ganesh Mandir, (2) Chaitanya Math, (3) Paresh Mandir, and (4) Laxminarayan Mandir at Kujang.
- Jaipur:** (1) Sri Anandeswar Temple at Purshottampur.
- Sambalpur:** (1) Narmadeshwar Temple, and (2) Kali Mandir.
- Bhadrak:** (1) Raghunathji Temple, (2) Gopinathji Temple, (3) Agarpada Temple, and three other temples in the village of Malstria.
- Ganjam:** (1) Bhapur Temple.
- Orissa States:** (1) The Raja Saheb's temple in Hindol State.

#### Removal of other Civic Disabilities.

Below are given extracts from the reports of the Provincial Secretaries of the Sangh, prepared in August 1945, on the Civic Disabilities of Harijans and how far they have been removed.

**In Tamil Nad:** There has been only one chief activity, namely the solution of the Nattar-Harijan dispute. The Harijans in 96 villages were prohibited from wearing

shirts, using shoes and umbrellas and building tiled houses. Their women were not allowed to wear blouses and gold ornaments or use brass vessels. The Nattars (owners of the land) punished the Harijans for any breach of this "rule". But by the negotiations carried on by the workers of the Sangh during the last 3 years, this problem, which had caused many murders, was solved amicably. The Harijans now enjoy all these rights.

**Wells:** public wells in 'Caste Hindu' quarters are not still accessible to them. Special efforts were made at Gobi in Coimbatore District to secure this right and after a legal fight with caste Hindus, as also with the police and the magistracy who issued orders under section 144 I.P.C., which were quashed later, we established the right of Harijans to draw water from the public wells right inside the Brahmin Agraharam.

**Schools and Colleges:** Practically every school is open to Harijans. According to the latest report of the Government, only one or two out of every hundred schools in the whole province of Madras do not admit Harijan children and these are in remote villages. So far as High Schools and Colleges are concerned, they are all not only open to Harijans but practically do not charge any tuition fees. Only private institutions charge fees, and they too charge only half fees. Colleges, including professional and technical colleges, also do not charge tuition fees for them.

**In Maharashtra:** (1) More than 100 public wells have been thrown open to Harijans. They can draw water from the tanks in a few villages and from municipal *hounds* and taps in almost all towns.

The hot spring in Rajapur in the district of Ratnagiri :

In April 1945 a movement was started by Harijans themselves to assert their right of bathing in this spring which is (locally) considered sacred. They had the sympathy of many caste Hindus of Rajapur. It was decided to launch Satyagraha for the purpose. About 700

Harijans led by Appa Saheb Parwardhan and other prominent caste Hindu leaders offered Satyagraha on April 14, 1945. They were offered strong resistance by the orthodox Brahmin priests. But the Harijans were successful and had their bath in the holy spring to their great rejoicing. This was a very important event in the Maharashtra Harijan movement.)

(3) In some towns and villages caste Hindu house-owners have let their houses to Harijans. The following are a few examples:

Town	No of such house-owners
1 Jalgaon	1
2 Dhulia	7
3 Nasik	1
4 Dindiri	1
5 Malgaon	1
6 Sholapur	2
7 Shahada	1
8 Sakri	1
9 Nandurbar	1
10 Akluj	1

(4) Hotel Entry: After the Congress Ministry made it compulsory for all hotel keepers to admit Harijans to their hotels, there was a propaganda to make such hotels actually opened to Harijans. This propaganda is still going on and as a result Harijans are allowed admission into a few hotels in big towns and cities, such as Poona Sholapur, Dhulia, Ahmednagar, Nasik, etc. One such hotel at Kurla, in Bombay Suburban District, was voluntarily thrown open in April 1945.

(5) Propaganda for persuading the owners of hair-dressing saloons to admit and serve Harijans in their saloons has been undertaken, and very recently all saloons at Sholapur and four at Nasik have been thrown open to them.

In Gujerat: (1) Wells: No public wells worthy of note have yet been opened to Harijans. However, there

is one at Dohad constructed by the District Board which is being used both by Harijans and non-Harijans.

(2) Primary Schools: All primary schools in Surat and Broach districts in Br. Gujerat and Navasari prant in Baroda are open to Harijan children and there is no oppoition to Harijan children freely attending such schools. Sufficient progress has been noted in Kaira and Ahmedabad districts, especially after the Congress regime, when Primary Education rules were amended to the effect that "if no pupils belonging to the scheduled castes are actually attending a school, it will be presumed that admission is refused to such pupils." It was further provided in those rules to stop grants to schools which no Harijan children were actually found attending.

The caste Hindus of Napa and Delmi villages filed a suit against the D.L.B., Kaira, contesting their right to close a school which had no Harijan children on its rolls. The District Court upheld the right of the D.L.B. This had a salutary effect on other villages. Since 1939, however, owing to the high cost of living and owing also to want of enough pressure on the part of officials after the exit of the Congress Ministry, a lull has again set in.

Harijan children are not freely admitted in State Schools in Mahasana District as many of the schools are located in village temples.

Harijan children have for the first time been admitted to the A.V. School at Mansa in Mahikanth, a very conservative area. Similarly they are now admitted in Balisinor and Lanawada High Schools in Revekantha.

(4) Attempts to secure for Harijans the right to travel in public buses have been fairly successful. There was some opposition in some parts of Mahasana District. A regular crusade was carried on. It was successful. Still, however, local Harijans yet hesitate to enjoy such rights.

In Kathiawar States: Before the H.S. Sangh was started, Harijans were not allowed to enter courts, schools, hospitals, and vegetable markets or to ride in public buses. In Kathiawar untouchability was so much observed that a separate compartment was reserved for Harijans in railway trains. Now these disabilities are practically a matter of past history. Harijans enjoy all these civic rights.

Harijans have one seat in each of the State legislatures of Venkaner and Porbandar.

In Cutch: H.H. the Maharaja of Cutch has recently accorded to Harijans in Cutch State the right to ride in public buses and has abolished the system of having a separate compartment for Harijans on the Cutch State Railway.

In Central India: Practically most of the civic disabilities have been removed in the States of Indore and Gwalior by the proclamations of the respective Maharajas. Riding on horses and putting on jewels and fine clothes which were formerly banned by custom are now allowed to Harijans. About 500 wells are also open to them. Some people who did not allow Harijans to draw water from such wells have been punished by courts of law. Harijans have access in Indore to hotels, Dhamshalas, cloth shops and shaving saloons. Harijans have also been taken on Municipal and Panchayat Boards in Indore State.

It is true that in most of the smaller States in Central India conditions have not improved appreciably.

In Mysore State: Though the curse of untouchability still persists we feel on the whole that, in spite of many forces working against us, we are gradually making ourselves felt. The Harijan masses have learnt to value the words of our workers to a considerable extent. Our workers have been able to attract Harijans to the pure Hindu religion. It is a joy to see large and enthusiastic gatherings of Harijans witnessing marriages,

Namkaran and other ceremonies, conducted by our workers on purely Vedic lines and listenings to the words of explanation with keen interest. Our headquarters at Bangalore has been a centre for uniting Harijans and other Hindus. All sections of Hindus gather in numbers on special occasions like Gandhi-Jayanti, Dayanand-Nirvanantsav, etc., meet and eat together.

All State and State-aided schools and colleges admit Harijans without any restriction and generally scholarships are awarded by the Government to Harijan students in all stages of studies.

In Bihar: 1. Wells: More than a thousand wells were thrown open to Harijans in the caste ridden areas. The Province never had this problem in an acute form, and now even in villages matters have improved.

2. Educational Institutions: Now there is no bar existing in any of the schools or colleges to admitting Harijan students. Harijan students sit with the caste Hindus on the same benches in schools and colleges and even in hostel messes, offices and residences in towns and remote villages. They use common roads.

In Orissa: by the efforts of the Provincial H. S. Sangh all the District Board and Municipality wells are freely accessible to members of the Harijan community. So also are the wells and ponds belonging to schools and such other public institutions. A large number of private individuals who have sympathy for the Harijan cause have opened their wells to the Harijans, but it must be admitted with great regret that, as a rule, Harijans are debarred from utilising the wells belonging to private individuals. Harijan students had no difficulty, even before the inception of the Harijan Sevak Sangh in Orissa, in getting admission into schools and colleges, where caste Hindu boys were studying. Their only difficulty related to their stay in hostels along with caste Hindu boys. Partly for this reason and partly for providing them with free boarding and lodging, separate Harijan



hostels were started by the efforts of the Harijan Sevak Sangh. But the situation in this respect has improved now and owing to the keen interest taken by the Education Department of Orissa in this matter, there is no difficulty in getting accommodation for Harijan boys in hostels where caste Hindu boys stay.

The other civic disabilities of Harijans, like taking food in hotels frequented by caste Hindus, still persist and no determined efforts have yet been made to remove the same.

In Berar (4 Dists. of C.P. & Berar): 1. Schools and Colleges.

In Berar even before the starting of the H. S. Sangh there were no restrictions on admission to Harijan students. Further Harijans are not charged any fees in Government schools in the whole of the C.P. and Berar since 1933, nor fees for High School Certificate Examinations.

2. Civic Disabilities. In all public places of entertainment, sports and public associations or clubs there are no disabilities imposed on Harijans in Berar. As regards hotels and restaurants there are restrictions on the entry of Harijans, if deliberately intended, as the hotels are run by private individuals. In towns this is slowly disappearing. In villages social mixing in private places is still not tolerated. As regards public processions, etc., there is no ban on Harijans joining them on any occasion. But rare cases still occur in villages. So far as Ganesh Chaturthi processions are concerned, the Harijan 'Ganapati' processions in all towns in Berar take a respectable place along with those of the other Hindus.

On the whole, the orthodox feeling of discrimination is very much less acute than before. The spread of education, the political consciousness of Harijans in Berar, their entry into services and schools, and the change in the habits of the community, have cumulatively tended

during these thirteen years, to soften the attitude of the other Hindus towards Harijans.

In Andhra: Unfortunately we have not received the latest report from the Provincial Sangh. But we can say from our experience and from old records that Andhra is one of the most progressive provinces in the matter of education of Harijans, both boys and girls. A large number of boys and girls receive education. The work of social reformers like the late Rao Bahadur K. Viresalingam, the late Dr. R. Venkataratnam Naidu and the progressive family of Pithapuram Estate as well as the activities of the Labour Department of the Government of Madras for over 20 years besides our own humble work, has advanced Harijan education in Andhra considerably. But the problems of temple entry and other civic disabilities remain unsolved.

In Bengal, Assam and the Punjab: The problem was never acute in these provinces. There were very few disabilities for Harijans. This matter has already been dealt with.

In U.P: For this Province, we quote some extracts from the Provincial Census Report of 1931, written by A.C. Turner, M.B.E., I.C.S. It is unfortunate that an accurate survey of conditions of Harijans of the province at the present day is not yet made. However, the following extracts show that even in 1931 conditions were not bad. Since 1931 U.P. has made progress along with other provinces in the removal of civic disabilities of Harijans.

Extracts from the Note on 'Untouchable, Depressed and Backward Classes' (Page 629 of U.P. Census Report, 1931):—

“The children of the Depressed Classes are now very largely admitted to the ordinary schools and it is a common sight in the villages to see them sitting with high caste children and no one objecting on the score of pollution by contact.

“Brahmans are gradually performing priestly duties for more and more of the untouchable and depressed classes.

“The exclusion of Untouchables from the use of the village well is another practice which is now declining. Formerly where the Untouchables had no separate well they had to sit by the village well and wait until some kindly disposed member of ‘clean caste’ came, drew water and filled their ‘lotas’ for them. They were not allowed to draw water with their own vessels. In some parts wells are now open to all, but generally speaking the disability still exists in the case of the Bhangi because of his unclean occupation.”

The report given above indicates that most of the civic disabilities of the Harijans in a major portion of India are disappearing gradually but steadily. At this rate, will it be too long before Harijans living in every part of our country are treated as equals by the rest of the Hindus?

### Spread of Education

Spread of education among Harijans by award of scholarships and by running hostels forms the chief welfare activity of the Sangh. Every year hundreds of Harijan boys and girls are helped by the Sangh to prosecute their studies.

### The Central Office

This office takes the lead in the matter of award of scholarships. The following amounts have been disbursed by this office as scholarships to Harijan students in colleges.

### College Scholarships

Year.	Amount spent.		
	Rs.	as.	p.
1934-35	7,877	13	0
1935-36	15,560	14	0

Year.	Amount Spent.		
	Rs.	as.	p.
1936-37	14,620	2	0
1937-38	12,673	11	0
1938-39	7,907	3	0
1939-40	8,644	12	0
1940-41	9,638	8	0
1941-42	10,353	2	0
1942-43	10,094	15	0
1943-44	13,218	13	0
1944-45 (9 months up to June 1945)	10,916	0	0
Total Rs.	1,21,505	13	0

#### Vocational Scholarships

Since 1940 some scholarships are being awarded by this office for Vocational Training. The following figures show the amounts spent so far on this account :—

Year.	Amount.		
	Rs.	as.	p.
1940-41	613	1	9
1941-42	858	8	10
1942-43	899	5	9
1943-44	1,665	15	9
1944-45 (9 months up to 30th June)	1,307	12	0

Thus it will be seen that the help rendered by the Central Office for vocational education is growing steadily. Previous to 1940-41, help was being given to students learning tanning, which is a hereditary occupation of a big section of Harijans. The following figures give the the amount spent on this work :—

1934-35	Grant to Cottage Tanning Institute	Rs. 1,000
„	Scholarships for tanning students	504
1935-36	do	430
Total		Rs. 1,934

## Girls' Scholarships.

A large number of Harijan girls from the Upper Primary classes right up to University classes are being helped since 1939-40 with scholarships from two earmarked funds, the 'Sumitra Devi Birla Harijan Girls' Scholarship Fund' and the 'Thakkar Jayanti Harijan Girls' Scholarship Fund'.

## Sumitra Devi Scholarships.

Year.	Amount.		
	Rs.	as.	p.
1939-40	14	0	0
1940-41	5,200	0	0
1941-42	4,311	2	0
1942-43	3,392	10	3
1943-44	2,307	12	10
1944-45 (up to June)	4,925	0	0
Total	Rs. 26,150	9	1

## Thakkar Jayanti Scholarships.

Year.	Amount.		
	Rs.	as.	p.
1939-40	298	0	0
1940-41	2,163	8	0
1941-42	2,225	7	9
1942-43	2,205	3	0
1943-44	1,826	2	0
1944-45 (up to June '45)	1,140	6	0
Total	Rs. 9,858	10	9

Besides awarding scholarships as shown above, this office gives students some assistance to buy books and pay examination fees.

The Provincial and District Branches also have been awarding scholarships from their own funds, though on a smaller scale than the Central Office.

The Bombay City Branch of the Sangh, confined as it is to a city, spends most of its money on scholarships to Harijan boys and girls. The following amounts were spent by this Branch on this account.

**Bombay City H. S. Sangh Scholarship.**

Year.	Amount.
	Rs.
1939-40	6,803
1940-41	7,813
1941-42	4,256
1942-43	3,828
1943-44	3,696
1944-45	5,098
Total	<u>31,599</u>

Unfortunately, figures for the years before 1939-40 are not now available. The amount sanctioned for the year 1945-46 is Rs. 7,000.

It is rather difficult now to extract from old records and accounts separate figures of amounts spent on scholarships alone by the Branches. Otherwise many interesting facts could have been mentioned here.

**Industrial Education.**

In addition to awarding scholarships to students receiving vocational training the Sangh conducts industrial schools for teaching Harijan young men handicrafts in order to enable them to become self-reliant and earn their livelihood. A brief account of these institutions is given below.

**(1) Harijan Industrial Home, Delhi.**

This was started in March 1936 with 25 boys. Now it has provision for 175 boys. The number on rolls in September 1945 was 130.

The Home has developed considerably since 1936. All the Harijan boys are fed and educated free. About 10 per cent 'other Hindu' boys are also educated here, but on payment. The handicrafts taught are (1) Leather works, (2) Carpentry, (3) Tailoring, (4) Spinning and Weaving, (5) Paper making and book-binding, and ((6) Smithy. The annual expenditure at present comes to over Rs. 60,000.

(2) Harijan Industrial School and Hostel, Kodambakam:

This is at present situated in Kodambakam near Madras City, but will have a building of its own in a couple of years in Madras City itself. A site in an important locality of the city has been secured for about Rs.15,000 for this purpose. The school was started in 1933 by the private efforts of Mr. S. Ganesan, and was taken up by the Sangh for management in 1935. Carpentry, Rattan work (furniture, etc., with cane), smithy and paper making are the handicrafts taught in this school. About 60 boys are receiving training here. Both tuition and mess are offered free to Harijan boys.

(3) Harijan Ashram, Allahabad.

This is a busy bee-hive of various activities for the welfare of Harijans. General education as well as training in agriculture and handicrafts is imparted. There are two hostels, one for boys and the other for girls. The hadicrafts taught here are leather-works including tanning, making cane articles and tailoring.35 students are now receiving training. In the boys' hostel there are 43 boarders and in the girls' 36. Out of the 36 girls, 35 are Harijans and one 'other Hindu'. The girls receive general education as well as training in domestic and household affairs such as cooking, sewing, knitting, house-keeping, gardening and music. This Ashram now spends over Rs. 55,000 per annum.

(4) Leather Works in Navasari Ashram, Baroda State.

A small school for making shoes was started in the Harijan Ashram at Navasari in 1929. It developed slowly and a tanning section was added. About 8 Harijan boys trained here have gone to British East Africa and joined tanneries there. A sum of about Rs. 20,000 has been invested in this concern and there is an output of 5,000 pairs of chappals annually. This institution is working under the auspices of the Gujerat Branch of the Sangh.

(5) The Harijan Industrial School and Hostel, Conjeevaram, Madras Province.

This is a special type of school recognised by the Government of Madras where the main subject taught is agriculture. The boys work in the field for 4 to 5 hours a day. They are also taught village carpentry, spinning and weaving, poultry farming, bee-keeping and paper making. Many of the young men trained here have been employed as workers in Dt. Boards and Municipalities. The present strength is 30.

(6) Gandhi Ashram, Devkokottai, Madras Province.

Here the boys of our own school as also pupils from other schools are given practical lessons in agriculture. They themselves cultivate about 5 to 6 acres and produce 50 per cent of the food grains required for their consumption.

(7) The Kallupatti Tannery, Madras Province.

This was started seven years ago and is now a full blown institution. Tanning and shoe-making employ nearly 20 people and the annual turn over is Rs. 30,000. We are taking boys from the villages and giving them lessons in tanning and shoe-making. We have registered this as a co-operative society and have the advantages of easy capital and ready sales. Two of our workers who are 'other Hindus' got themselves trained under Satish Babu in Calcutta and are running this institution.



## (8) Leather Works Institution, Taravada, Kathiawar.

Though this is not directly run by the Sangh, it is conducted in co-operation with the workers of the Sangh. It is an efficient and well-equipped tannery. About Rs. 100,000 has been invested in this so far. 20 students, both Harijan and non-Harijan Hindus, are at present receiving training in tanning here.

Some of the Girls' Institutions of the Sangh.

## 1. Harijan Kanya Vidyalaya, Sabarmati, Ahmedabad.

This institution was started in 1941 and a new building was constructed for it and occupied in 1942. Besides about 150 day-scholars, there are about 40 Harijan girls in the Hostel attached to the school. These girls are fed and educated free. The annual budget for 1945-46 is for Rs. 18,000. The institution is an Upper Primary School.

## 2. Harijan Balika Sadan, Hubli.

Started in 1933 by the efforts of Mrs. Nagamma Patil, M.L.A., at Hubli in Karnatak (Bombay Province), this hostel provides free residential facilities to about 30 Harijan girl students.

## 3. Harijan Kanyashala, Bijapur (Karnatak).

This was started in 1937 by the Bijapur district H. S. Sangh, the soul of which is Kaka Saheb Karkhania, a whole time, devoted worker in the cause of the removal of untouchability. There are at present 25 Harijan girl students receiving free residential facilities in this hostel.

## 4. Anjanadevi Harijan Girls' Hostel, Bezwada, Andhra Desa.

This is one of the biggest Harijan Girls' Hostels directly under the management of the Sangh. There are at present about 65 Harijan girl students residing in this hostel. Located in a centrally situated town in Andhra Desa, this hostel has been of immense help during the past

decade in advancing the cause of Harijan girls' education. There is another good Harijan Girls' Hostel run by the Sangh for about 30 girls at Ellore, less than 40 miles from Bezwada. This has also been in existence for about 12 years and has been of great help to Harijan girls.

(5) Balika Ashram, Ahmednagar, Bombay Province.

This Harijan Girls' Hostel is the result of the praiseworthy efforts of a Brahmin lady, Mrs. Jankibai Apte. It has been in existence for over two years now and has a building of its own. There are 22 girl students residing in it now, of whom 18 are Harijans and 4 'other Hindus.' Harijan girls and the 'other Hindu' girls interdine. Ladies of the town belonging to 'other Hindu' castes visit the hostel often and mix with the Harijan girls freely. One only wishes there were more women workers of the type of Mrs. Jankibai Apte.

6. Kanya Chhatralaya, Dulia.

Like the one at Ahmednagar, this is also run under the auspices of the Maharashtra branch of the Sangh. There are at present 35 Harijan girls receiving free boarding facilities in this hostel.

7. Kasturba Balika Ashram, Okhla, Delhi.

This is a new institution started by the Central Office of the Sangh in April 1944 at Okhla near New Delhi. It is a fully residential school for Harijan girls. There are at present 40 girls receiving free tuition as well as free boarding in this Ashram. It has a decent building of its own, donated by a generous so-called Caste-Hindu who desires to remain anonymous. The budget sanctioned for the year 1945-46 is for Rs. 26,224.

The above list of seven hostels is an incomplete one. But it gives a fairly correct idea of the nature of the work of the Sangh for Harijan girls. There are 20 such hostels in different parts of the country, as shown below :—

Province	No. of Harijan Girls' Hostels of the Sangh	No. of H. Girls' hostels run by other bodies but aided by the Sangh	Places at which the hostels are located
1. Andhra	5	1	Bezwada, Ellore, Vizianagaram, Nellore, Hindupur, and Guntur.
2. Tamil Nad	6	—	Madura, Devakottai, Usilampatti, Vellore, Melur and Gobi.
3. Mysore	1	—	Chitaldurg.
4. Malabar	1	—	Calicut.
5. Karnatak	2	—	Hubli & Bijapur.
6. Maharashtra	2	—	Ahmednagar & Dhulia.
7. Gujerat	1	—	Sabarmati (Ahmedabad).
8. Delhi	1	—	Okhla (Ishwarnagar P.O.)
9. U.P.	1	—	Allahabad.
Total :	<u>20</u>	<u>1</u>	

### General Report about Expenditure.

Unfortunately we have not yet secured all the figures from all the provinces about the amounts spent by them in their respective areas on Harijan welfare and removal of untouchability and other civic disabilities of Harijans. However, whatever accurate figures are available are given below in tabular form. This should be an eye-opener to the critics of the Sangh, including the learned Doctor who is wishfully thinking aloud that the Sangh is slowly dying.

Name of the Branch of the Sangh	Total amount spent (so far as figures are available)	For how many years is the figure given in column 2?	From what year to what year does the figure in column 2 stand for ?	Remarks	
1	2	3	4	5	
Central Office	Rs. 8,98,465	as. 9 6	p. 12 years	32-33 to June 45	From general funds alone excluding earmarked funds
Tamil Nad	5,17,549	9 9	12 ,,	32-33 to 43-44	
Mysore State	1,54,449	13 3	12 years 10 months.	32-33 to July 45.	
Maharashtra	2,68,124	0 0	do.	do.	
Berar	22,210	8 6	do.	do.	
Gujerat	4,85,102	0 0	do.	do.	
Kathiawar	2,22,449	2 4	10 years 10 months.	34-35 to July 45.	
Bombay City	1,17,820	5 2	11 years	32-33 to 42-43	
Central India States	97,194	4 0	12 years 10 m.	32-33 to July 45.	
Delhi	17,065	5 9	12 years.	32-33 to June 45.	
Bihar	1,44,100	0 0	10 years 10 m.	32-33 to July 45.	Approximate figure
Bengal	96,214	7 6	do.	do.	
Orissa	80,790	0 5	12 years	32-33 to June 45.	
Andhra	2,42,252	7 10	8 years	32-33 to 39-40	
Karnatak	1,10,880	9 7	do.	do.	
Kerala (Malabar, Travancore & Cochin)	1,26,175	11 11	do.	do.	
Madras City	57,604	1 3	do.	do.	
Punjab	1,44,604	15 9	do.	do.	
Chhattisgarh (3 Dists. of C.P.)	16,000	0 0	do.	do.	Approximate figure
Rajputana	1,15,616	0 0	do.	do.	Incomplete figure—under-estimate
<b>Total</b>	<b>39,34,669</b>	<b>0 6</b>			

## APPENDIX II

### ELECTION MANIFESTO OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS ADOPTED AT THE MEETING OF THE WORKING COMMITTEE AT CALCUTTA ON DECEMBER 11, 1945.

For sixty years the National Congress has laboured for the freedom of India. During this long span of years its history has been the history of the Indian people straining at the leash that has held them in bondage, trying to unloose themselves from it. From small beginnings it has progressively grown and spread in this vast country, carrying the message of freedom to the masses of our people in the towns as well as in the remotest villages. From these masses it has gained power and strength and developed into a mighty organisation, the living and vibrant symbol of India's will to **FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENCE**. From generation to generation it has dedicated itself to this sacred cause, and in its name and under its banner innumerable countrymen and countrywomen of ours have laid down their lives and undergone sufferings in order to redeem the pledge they had taken. By service and sacrifice it has enshrined itself in the hearts of our people; by its refusal to submit to any dishonour to our nation it has built up a powerful movement of resistance to foreign rule.

The career of the Congress has been one of both constructive effort for the good of the people and of unceasing struggle to gain freedom. In this struggle it has faced numerous crises and come repeatedly into direct conflict with the armed might of a great Empire. Following peaceful methods, it has not only survived these conflicts but has gained new strength from them. After the recent 3 years of an unprecedented mass upheaval and ruthless suppression, the Congress has risen stronger than ever and become more loved by the people by whom it has stood through storm and stress.

The Congress has stood for equal rights and opportunities for every citizen of India, man or woman. It has stood for the unity of all communities and religious groups and for tolerance and goodwill between them. It has stood for full opportunities for the people as a whole to grow and develop according to their own wishes and genius; it has also stood for the freedom of each group and territorial area within the nation to develop its own culture within the larger framework, and it has stated that for this purpose such territorial areas or provinces should be constituted, as far as possible, on a linguistic and cultural basis. It has stood for the rights of all those who suffer from social tyranny and injustice and for the removal for them of all barriers to equality.

The Congress has envisaged a free, democratic State with the fundamental rights and liberties of all its citizens guaranteed in the constitution. This constitution, in its view, should be a federal one with autonomy for its constituent units, and its legislative organs elected under universal adult franchise. The federation of India must be a willing Union of its various parts. In order to give the maximum of freedom to the constituent units there may be a minimum list of common and essential federal subjects which will apply to all units, and a further optional list of common subjects which may be accepted by such units as desire to do so.

## FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS.

The constitution shall provide for fundamental rights, among them the following:

1. Every citizen of India has the right of free expression of opinion, the right of free association and combination, and the right to assemble peacefully and without arms, for a purpose not opposed to law or morality.
2. Every citizen shall enjoy freedom of conscience

and the right freely to profess and practise his religion, subject to public order and morality.

3. The culture, language and script of the minorities and of the different linguistic areas shall be protected.

4. All citizens are equal before the law, irrespective of religion, caste, creed or sex.

5. No disability attaches to any citizen by reason of his or her religion, caste, creed or sex, in regard to public employment, office of power or honour, and in the exercise of any trade or calling.

6. All citizens have equal rights in regard to wells, tanks, roads, schools and places of public resort, maintained out of State or local funds, or dedicated by private persons for the use of the general public.

7. Every citizen has the right to keep and bear arms, in accordance with regulations and reservations made in that behalf.

8. No person shall be deprived of his liberty, nor shall his dwelling or property be entered, sequestered, or confiscated, save in accordance with law.

9. The State shall observe neutrality in regard to all religions.

10. The franchise shall be on the basis of universal adult suffrage.

11. The State shall provide for free and compulsory basic education.

12. Every citizen is free to move throughout India and to stay and settle in any part thereof, to follow any trade or calling and to be treated equally with regard to legal prosecution or protection in all parts of India.

The State shall further provide all necessary safeguards for the protection and the development of the

of backward or suppressed elements in the population, so that they might make rapid progress and take a full and equal part in national life. In particular, the State will help in the development of the people of the tribal areas in a manner most suited to their genius, and in the education and social and economical progress of the scheduled classes.

### CONTENT OF FREEDOM.

A hundred and fifty years and more of foreign rule has arrested the growth of the country and produced numerous vital problems that demand immediate solution. Intensive exploitation of the country and the people during this period has reduced the masses to the depths of misery and starvation. The country has not only been politically kept under subjection and humiliated, but has also suffered economic, social, cultural and spiritual degradation. During the years of war this process of exploitation by irresponsible authority in utter disregard of Indian interest and views, and an incompetence in administration reached a new height leading to terrible famine and widespread misery. There is no way of solving any of these urgent problems except through "freedom" and "independence". The content of political freedom must be both economic and social.

The most vital and urgent of India's problems is how to remove the curse of poverty and raise the standard of the masses. It is to the well-being and progress of the masses that the Congress has directed its special attention and its constructive activities. It is by their well-being and advancement that it has judged every proposal and every change, and it has declared that anything that goes in the way of the good of the masses of our country must be removed. Industry and agriculture, the social services and public utilities, must be encouraged, modernised and rapidly extended in order to add to the wealth of the country and give it the capacity for self-growth, without dependence on others. But all this must be done with the



primary object of benefiting the masses of our people and raising their economic and spiritual level, removing unemployment, and adding to the dignity of the individual.

For this purpose it will be necessary to plan and co-ordinate social advance in all its many fields, to prevent the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of individuals and groups, to prevent vested interests inimical to society from growing, and to have social control of the mineral resources, means of transport and the principal methods of production and distribution in land, industry and in other departments of national activity so that free India may develop into a co-operative commonwealth. The State must, therefore, own or control key industries; and waterways, shipping and other means of public transport, currency and exchange, banking and insurance, must be regulated in the national interest.

### LAND AND AGRICULTURE.

Though poverty is widespread in India, it is essentially a rural problem, caused chiefly by the over-pressure on land and other wealth-producing occupations. India under British rule has been progressively ruralised, many of her avenues of work and employment closed and a vast mass of the population thrown on the land, which has undergone a continuous fragmentation, till a very large number of holdings have become uneconomic. It is essential, therefore, that the problem of the land should be dealt with in all its aspects. Agriculture has to be improved on scientific lines and industry has to be developed rapidly in its various forms—large-scale, medium and small—so as not only to produce wealth, but also to absorb people from the land. In particular, cottage industries have to be encouraged both as whole-time and part-time occupations. It is essential that in the planning and the development of industry, while maximum wealth-production for the community should be aimed at, it should be borne in mind that this is not done at the

cost of creating fresh unemployment. Planning must lead to maximum employment, indeed to the employment of every able-bodied person. Landless labourers should have opportunities of work offered to them and be absorbed in agriculture or industry.

The reform of the land system which is so urgently needed in India involves the removal of intermediaries between the peasant and the State. The rights of such intermediaries should, therefore, be acquired on payment of equitable compensation. While individualist farming or peasant proprietorship should continue, progressive agriculture as well as the creation of new social values and incentives require some system of co-operative farming suited to Indian conditions. Any such change can, however, be made only with the goodwill and agreement of the peasantry concerned. It is desirable, therefore, that experimental co-operative farms should be organised with State help in various parts of India. There should also be large State farms for demonstrative and experimental purposes.

### BALANCED ECONOMY.

In the development of land and industry there has to be proper integration and balance between rural and urban economy. In the past, rural economy has suffered, and the town and city have prospered at the cost of the village. This has to be righted and an attempt made to equalise, so far as possible, the standards of life of town-dwellers and villagers. Industry should not be concentrated in particular provinces, so as to give a balanced economy to each province, and it should be decentralised, as far as this is possible without sacrifice of efficiency. Both the development of land and of industry, as well as the health and well-being of the people, require the harnessing and proper utilisation of the vast energy that is represented by the great rivers of India, which is not only largely running to waste but is often the cause of great injury to the land and the people who live

on it. River commissions should be constituted to undertake this task in order to promote irrigation and ensure an even and continuous supply of water, to prevent disastrous floods and soil erosion, to eradicate malaria, to develop hydro-electric power, and in other ways to help in raising the general standard of life, especially in the rural areas. The power resources of the country have to be developed rapidly in this and other ways in order to provide the necessary foundation for the growth of industry and agriculture.

### **SOCIAL SECURITY AND SERVICES.**

Adequate arrangement should be made for the education of the masses with a view to raising them intellectually, economically, culturally and morally, and to fit them for the new forms of work and services which will open out before them. Public health services which are essential for the growth of the nation should be provided for on the widest scale and in this, as in other matters, the needs of the rural areas should receive special attention. These should include special provisions for maternity and child welfare. Conditions should thus be created in which every individual has an equal opportunity for advance in every field of national activity and there is social security for all.

Science in its innumerable fields of activity has played an ever-increasing part in influencing and moulding human life and will do so in even greater measure in the future. Industrial, agricultural and cultural advance, as well as national defence, depend upon it. Scientific research is, therefore, a basic and essential activity of the State and should be organised and encouraged on the widest scale.

In regard to labour, the State shall safeguard the interests of industrial workers and shall secure for them a minimum wage and a decent standard of living, proper housing, hours of work and conditions of labour in conformity, as far as economic conditions in the country permit,

with international standards, suitable machinery for the settlement of disputes between employers and workmen, and protection against the economic consequences of old age, sickness, and unemployment. Workers shall have the right to form Unions to protect their interests.

Rural indebtedness has in the past crushed the agricultural population, and though, owing to various causes in recent years this has grown less, the burden still continues and must be removed. Cheap credit must be made available through co-operatives. Co-operatives should also be organised for other purposes both in rural and urban areas. In particular, industrial co-operatives should be encouraged as being especially suited for the development of small scale industry on a democratic basis.

### URGENT PROBLEMS

While the immediate and urgent problems of India can only be effectively tackled by joint and planned attack on all fronts—political, economic, agricultural, industrial and social—certain needs are of paramount importance today. Owing to the gross incompetence and mismanagement of the Government an incredible amount of suffering has been caused to the people of India. Millions have died of starvation, and scarcity of food and clothing is still widespread. Corruption in the services and in all matters pertaining to the supply and control of the vital necessities of life is rampant and has become intolerable. These urgent problems require immediate attention.

In international affairs the Congress stands for the establishment of a World Federation of Free Nations. Till such time as such a federation takes shape, India must develop friendly relations with all nations and particularly with her neighbours. In the Far East, in South-East Asia and in Western Asia, India has had trade and cultural relations for thousands of years and it is inevitable that with freedom she should renew and develop these relations. Reasons of security and future trends of trade

also demand closer contacts with these regions. India, which has conducted her own struggle for freedom on a non-violent basis, will always throw her weight on the side of world peace and co-operation. She will also champion the freedom of all other subject nations and peoples, for only on the basis of this freedom and the elimination of Imperialism everywhere can world peace be established.

### CONGRESS BATTLE-CRY.

On the 8th of August 1942, the All-India Congress Committee passed a resolution, since then famous in India's story. By its demands and challenge the Congress stands today. It is on the basis of this resolution and with its battle-cry that the Congress faces the elections.

The Congress, therefore, appeals to the voters all over the country to support Congress candidates in every way at the forthcoming elections, and to stand by the Congress at this critical juncture, which is so pregnant with future possibilities. In these elections petty issues do not count, nor do individuals, nor sectarian cries—only one thing counts, the Freedom and Independence of our Motherland, from which all other freedoms will flow to our people. Many a time the people of India have taken the pledge of Independence; that pledge has yet to be redeemed, and the well-beloved cause for which it stands and which has summoned us so often, still beckons to us. The time is coming when we shall redeem it in full. This election is a small test for us, a preparation for the greater things to come. Let all those who care and long for freedom and the independence of India meet this test with strength and confidence and march together to the Free India of our dreams.