

CHAPTER - V

Towards a renewed claim for separate Electorate and the variety of Colonial Response (1932-45)

The Communal Award provided for reservation of seats for the Depressed Classes. But it did not make any precise definition of the classes or castes or categories which would be entitled to vote in the special Depressed Class constituencies.⁽¹⁾ The Poona Pact also did not make any definition of the Depressed Classes. The term had been in use to indicate social and educational backwardness. But such vague assertion could little help especially when such category has to be vested with some specific constitutional privileges. There were of course great difficulties in making a clear definition of the term and considering the varieties of customs in different localities one could not easily find an identifying mark for all of them which would be acceptable to all. The British Government's policy of classification of certain elements of the population as Depressed Classes could be traced back to the Census of 1901 when some of the Hindu castes were so classified on the basis of 'social precedence as recognised by native public opinion'.⁽²⁾ In the Census of 1911, the provincial Census Superintendents were instructed to enumerate those castes and tribes who were earlier classed as Hindu but who did not conform to certain standards of Hinduism or were subject to certain disabilities. The Census Commissioner had laid down ten specific categories

so as to include those 'who were not hundred per cent Hindus' and only five among them were supposed to belong to the Depressed Classes.⁽³⁾

The question of identifying the Depressed Classes according to a given definition received public attention in course of discussion on a resolution moved by M.B.Dadabhoj in the Imperial Legislative Council in March 1916.⁽⁴⁾ It was then felt that the term should not be treated as synonymous with the expression 'Depressed Classes' which was much more comprehensive in its meaning. In 1917, Sir Henry Sharp, the Educational Commissioner of the Government of India, in his Seventh Quinquennial Review of the Progress of Education in India for the years 1912-1917, used the term 'Depressed Classes' to mean only Hindu untouchable castes. But he noted at the same time that the term was also used to mean the educationally and economically backward Hindu castes who were not 'absolutely outside the pale of castes'.⁽⁵⁾ The Franchise Committee of 1918-1919 divided the Hindu community into three classes and grouped the untouchable castes under 'Hindu-others'.⁽⁶⁾ In the Census of 1921 the population of the Depressed Classes was enumerated without any attempt to define the term because it was apprehended that making of such social distinction in public report might be deemed invidious. In 1928 when the Indian Statutory Commission asked the Government of India to 'give a critical account of the total number of depressed classes in British India', the Government stated that no caste or tribe had been officially defined as Depressed and 'the question whether or not any group of the community

is socially depressed is a matter of local custom'.⁽⁷⁾ The Statutory Commission used the term to mean only the Hindu untouchable castes i.e. those castes who cause 'pollution by touch or by approach within a certain distance' and excluded from its scope the 'aboriginals who are definitely outside the Hindu fold'.⁽⁸⁾ In their memorandum to the second session of the Round Table Conference both Ambedkar and Srinivasan held that the Depressed Classes should be strictly defined as meaning persons belonging to communities which are subjected to the system of untouchability. In place of Depressed Classes they suggested some alternative nomenclatures such as 'Non-caste Hindus', 'Protestant Hindus' and 'Non-conformist Hindus'.⁽⁹⁾ In the Census of 1931, the provincial Census Superintendent decided to confine the term to the Hindu untouchable castes by excluding from its scope Muslims, Christians and 'hill and forest tribes who had not become Hindu but whose religion was returned as tribal'.⁽¹⁰⁾ In the Census of 1931 the same parameter was retained.

The Indian Franchise Committee tried to define the word in more categorical terms. "We consider...that the term depressed classes should not include primitive or aboriginal tribes, nor should it include those Hindus who are only economically poor and in other ways backward but are not regarded as untouchables". The Committee preferred to keep the term strictly confined within the limits of Hindu untouchables.⁽¹¹⁾

When the Poona agreement was signed the need for defining the term was more keenly felt for it was quite certain that

the Poona recommendations would be incorporated in the forthcoming Government of India Act and the parties would have to participate in the contest for election. But given the Indian social situations the term Depressed Class would sound odious and "it was not the intention of the government to label any particular caste or tribe with the stigma of untouchability or depressed character."⁽¹²⁾ Hence in a White Paper published by the government in March 1933 the term Depressed Class was replaced by another nomenclature Scheduled Caste.⁽¹³⁾ The value-free term 'scheduled' was adopted, as the castes concerned would be entered into a schedule for electoral purposes.⁽¹⁴⁾ Thus without fixing any criteria for the definition of castes the schedule enumerated a list of them which were to be treated as such.⁽¹⁵⁾ Finally according to the first, fifth and sixth schedules of the Government of India Act 1935, His Majesty in Council issued the 'Government of India (Scheduled Castes) Order in Council dated 30th April, 1936 containing a list of castes, races or tribes who were to be treated as Scheduled Castes.'⁽¹⁶⁾ It was moreover stated that such castes, races or tribes as were included in the schedule would correspond to the classes of persons formerly known as the Depressed Classes. It is interesting to note in this connection that the schedule accommodated also the names of certain tribes who were supposed to be not professing Hinduism. In Bengal the schedule included such tribes like Ho, Koch, Lodha, Mech, Munda, Oraon, Santal and the like. The inclusion of tribal element was definitely an indication of British sense of equanimity by which justice

was made to people hitherto disowned both by the Hindus and the Untouchables. But the inflated number of scheduled caste components resulted in further reducing Hindu seats - a phenomenon considered to be politically desirable by the colonial masters.

II

In the Government of India Act 1935 the provisions of the Poona Pact were almost fully embodied, with three additional seats for Bihar and Orissa.⁽¹⁷⁾ The allocation of seats in the provincial legislatures under the new Act was as under: ⁽¹⁸⁾

Province	Total Seats	GENERAL SEATS	
		Total of general seats	General seats reserved for Scheduled Castes
Madras	215	146	30
Bombay	175	114	15
Bengal	250	78	30
U.P.	228	140	20
Punjab	175	42	8
Bihar	152	86	15
C.P. and Berar	112	84	20
Assam	108	47	7
N.W.F.P.	50	9	-
Orissa	60	44	6
Sind	60	18	-
Total	1585	808	151

The Act also provided for 19 reserved seats for the erstwhile Depressed Classes out of a total of 250 seats in the Federal Assembly and 6 seats in Council of States having a total number of 150 seats. Further details regarding the mode of election and franchisal qualifications involving the vital interests of the depressed people were laid down in the relevant Schedules of the Act.

Before the election to the new legislatures could be held the need was felt for political mobilisation through parties in whose banner the Scheduled Castes may require to contest the election. In October 1936 Ambedkar had founded the Independent Labour Party of India which was to fight election as representative of the Scheduled Castes in Bombay. Elsewhere in India prominent Scheduled Caste leaders like M.C. Rajah, G.A. Gavai and V. Kurmiah held parleys with Gandhi in order to frame an election strategy on behalf of their community. Gandhi advised them to join Congress only if they were unable to build up a separate organisation of their own, strong and loyal to the country. "Your immediate goal", Gandhi advised these leaders "is to vindicate your status of absolute equality which is denied to you..." and for that Gandhi advised them first to organise "one undivided party" failing which "you will ally yourselves to that party which gives you the greatest advantage. In my opinion such a party is undoubtedly the Congress".⁽¹⁹⁾ A large number of Scheduled Caste candidates, therefore, contested their seats on the tickets of Congress which fielded its nominees on the

all-India level. There were also regional parties which contested for such reserved seats like the Madras Justice Party, People's Party, Depressed Classes League (Bengal), United Party and Nationalist Party (Orissa), National Agriculturist Party (U.P.), Non-Brahmin Party and Nationalist Raja Party (Central Provinces) and the like. (20)

Out of 146 constituencies in which 151 seats were reserved the Scheduled Caste voters constituted minorities in all constituencies except 8 of which 7 were in Bengal and 1 in the Punjab. (21) Among the 146 constituencies there were provision for three seats in 12, four seats in 9 and only two seats in 125 of such constituencies. The province-wise distribution of reserved seats was as under (22):

Madras	Bombay	Bengal	United Pr.	Punjab	Bihar	Central Pr.	Assam	Orissa	Total
30	15	30	20	8	15	20	7	6	151

The Congress had prepared a general analysis of the electoral performance of the party in different Provinces including the Assembly and the Council. The party had won an absolute majority in the Legislative Assemblies of 5 provinces, namely, Madras, U.P., Bihar, the Central Provinces and Orissa. It also emerged as the biggest single party in four other provinces namely, Bombay, Bengal, Assam and the N.W.F.P. In the Assemblies

of Sind and Punjab the Congress was in a comparatively small minority. As for the performance of the party in the Scheduled Caste reserved seats the following analysis will speak for itself⁽²³⁾:

p r o v i n c e	No. of S.C. reserved seats.	Total no. of seats contested.	Total no. of seats won.
Madras	30	26	26
Bihar	15	15	14
Bombay	15	8	4
United Provinces	20	17	16
Bengal	30	17	6
Central Provinces	19	9	5
T o t a l	129	92	71

Out of 151 Scheduled Caste seats, Congress contested in 139 seats and non-Congress parties and individuals (Indipendants) contested in 137 seats. Out of 26 uncontested seats the Congress could win 14 while the non-Congress candidates bagged 12 seats.⁽²⁴⁾ That there was no contest in 26 seats indicated the political backwardness of the Scheduled Castes and want of qualified candidates among them to contest. Out of the 151 reserved seats Congress won 78 as against 73 won by the non-Congress elements.⁽²⁵⁾ According to Ambedkar's analysis of the election results the Congress while winning majority of the

Scheduled Caste seats, won a minority of the Scheduled Caste votes. Ambedkar's findings had made it clear that the Congress won majority of Scheduled Caste votes in 38 seats, won 13 seats solely with the help of caste Hindu votes, 8 seats owing to the splitting of the Scheduled Caste votes and 19 seats on account of the lack of interest shown by the Scheduled Castes in election to their seats.⁽²⁶⁾ Another curious feature of 1937 election is that in many cases in two-member or multi-member constituencies the caste Hindu voters showed a lack of interest in the election of the Scheduled caste candidates. Ambedkar had previously pleaded in favour of plural member constituency which according to him could best ensure the interest of the Depressed Classes in a joint electorate system.⁽²⁷⁾ But it was later found that due to the adoption of cumulative voting system the caste Hindu voters had in many constituencies used their option not to cast any vote to the Scheduled Caste candidates and give all their votes to the caste Hindu candidates. This was even openly admitted in a nationalist gathering like a conference of Western and Central India Harijan Sevaks held under the presidency of shrimati Rameswari Nehru in the first week of June 1939.⁽²⁸⁾ Once again this being a selfish game in politics is a clear indication that a large section of Congress voters considered the caste groups as political categories to be forestalled by all means and with the help of all the stratagem available in their arsenal. As a matter of fact the process of politicization of caste had become almost complete in 1937. The colonial policy of 'protective discrimination' had borne its expected results and at least in Bengal a movement which started in the late 19th and the early 20th centuries with 'social

aspirations and a spirit of protest against the existing social imbalances, ultimately turned into what may be called a politics of reservation'. The election results in Bengal would clearly reveal that while the alienation of the Scheduled Caste people from the mainstream politics was almost complete in 1937 their leaders gradually became more interested in concessions that could hardly benefit the masses 'whose socio-economic backwardness was ironically their major political capital'.⁽²⁹⁾

At the time of the Poona agreement the leaders of the Depressed Classes expressed their apprehension that under a system of joint electorate they would be on a total rout by the electoral operation of the caste Hindu majority. At the same time the caste Hindu voters were also quite sure that they would never fail to show utmost interest in the election of the Scheduled Castes. The election results of 1937 proved that none of such assurance and apprehension was wholly true. Again while the Congress gains in the 1937 elections have been said to be spectacular it is also to be noted that the performance of Ambedkar's Independent Labour Party was also in no way very insignificant. It had put up 17 candidates, 13 for Scheduled Caste reserved seats and 4 for general seats and of these 11 reserved and 3 general seats were won plus 4 of 19 reserved seats in Central Provinces and Berar. The success was, according to some interpretation, due to the fact that in the years from 1936 through 1942 Ambedkar and the Dalits were caught up in waves of 'economic and political radicalism'. Also the I.L.P. was projected boldly "as a party of

workers and peasants: the fight against casteism was taken as a necessity for creating worker-peasant unity; and the Congress was condemned as a party controlled by exploiting classes which would neither end exploitation nor fight vigorously against British imperialism". However it is interesting to note in this connection that the early radicalism of the I.L.P. soon frittered away when the demand for separate electorate once again received the uppermost consideration of the leaders more significantly since when the Scheduled Caste Federation was formed at the initiative of Ambedkar. (30)

III

Ambedkar gave his grudging consent to the Poona Pact for he was afraid that he might be held responsible for any untoward event arising out of Gandhi's epic fast. But the 1937 election results had further embittered his mind because he felt that the poor performance of the Scheduled Castes was mostly due to the unsatisfactory terms of the Poona Pact. Even M.C. Rajah who had lent support to Gandhi and the joint electorate system had now changed his mind. The "Congress Party men in Madras", he complained, "deviated from the Pact, so much so, that our community in the Legislative Assembly have to follow the Caste Hindus blindly". (31) So the demand for separate electorate in total rejection of the Poona agreement reappeared soon after the election was over. The demand began to grow more forceful as a result of the outbreak of the World War II which whetted the political aspirations of the subject people.

India was dragged into the so-called 'war to save democracy' against her will. The Congress was not unwilling to join with the British and the Allies in their combined fight against Fascism. But the party demanded that the saviour of democracy should save the subject people in their own colony in India that is to say the government should make a formal declaration of Indian independence before commandeering her resources for the purpose of the war.

The Congress demand raised the question of how to determine the political future of India together with what concessions might be made to its demand. It was then found that there was great division among the political parties themselves. The Viceroy was warned 'not to be misled into the position enunciated by Mr. Gandhi or to regard the Congress and the Muslim League as representing the whole or even the bulk of India'.⁽³²⁾ Ambedkar felt sceptic about the future constitutional status of the Scheduled Castes. In his talks with the Viceroy on 9 October 1939 he complained that the Poona Pact had been far from satisfactory from the standpoint of the depressed people and that in the absence of multi-member constituencies they had not been able to secure adequate number of seats in the legislatures. He had also very categorically held that unless some method of securing the real representatives of the Scheduled Castes was adopted he would insist on separate electorates for them. On 11 October 1939, Rao Bahadur Srinivasan, M.C. Rajah and N.Sivaraj issued a statement in Madras along with some non-Congress leaders which repudiated the

Congress party's claim to represent all classes and communities of India.⁽³³⁾

The division among the Indian leaders had afforded an opportunity for the government to fall back on the old policy of divide and rule. Lord Linlithgow declared that the Dominion Status was the goal of India. It was also stated that at the end of the war, His Majesty's Government would be willing to undertake modification of the Act of 1935 after 'consultation with representatives of the several communities, parties and interests in India and with the Indian Princes'. With regard to the demand for immediate transfer of control to Indian hands, the Viceroy said that he was willing to set up a 'consultative group' of representative Indians immediately to be associated with him, in an advisory capacity, in order to discuss the conduct of the war.⁽³⁴⁾ The viceregal statement of 17 October 1939 was almost reiterated in the August offer of the government (8 August 1940) in which it was stated that the government would establish self-government in India at the end of the War in consultation with the 'various communities, parties and interests'. But the August offer was rejected by the Congress owing to an underlying mischief in the scheme which was spelt out by the Secretary of State, L.S. Amery in his speech (14 August 1940) in the House of Commons - "India cannot be unitary in the sense that we are in this island... India's future house of freedom has room for many mansions".⁽³⁵⁾ However, the Sikhs, the Scheduled Castes and other organizations declared their willingness to accept the offer.

The most unfortunate part of the August offer was the attempt to bolster up the claim of the minorities and to pitch them against the Congress. The British authorities gave undue weightage to the anti-Congress stand of the separatist Scheduled Caste leaders particularly that of Ambedkar and held that the Depressed Classes as a community were opposed to the Congress. The authorities also enlisted such leaders' co-operation for the war efforts. Thus B.R. Ambedkar and M.C. Rajah were appointed as the members of the National Defence Council which was constituted on 21 July 1941. The rationale of the British policy of supporting Ambedkar and his followers as against the Congress is quite clear. However it may be noted here that at the same time when Ambedkar was chosen for the British favour he was coming into conflict with the British government on a number of issues and in August 1941 in a 'Mahar-Mang-Vethiya' conference held at Sinnar he had openly thundered against the government - "I shall direct attacks a hundredfold more bitter, more virulent, more deadly against the British than I have ever done against the Hindus". But then he had also met the Bombay governor in early July and he evidently had expectations of being given a post in the Viceroy's Council. It seems strange politics that he "was getting angrier and threatening ever stronger action but at the same time maintaining his government links (for example his place on the Indian Defence Council).."⁽³⁶⁾ However it may be noted in the present context that Ambedkar himself did not represent all shades of opinions within his own community. The All-India Depressed Classes League, a nationalist (in the sense joint electorite) organisation of the

Scheduled Castes endorsed the Congress party's stand on war and independence. The Executive Committee of this association, in its meeting held at Allahabad on 24 October 1939 under the chairmanship of Babu Jagajivan Ram, resolved that Congress was the one single political organisation which had a legitimate right to represent the various communities and interests in the country. The meeting further resolved that Ambedkar's statements did not represent the views of the Scheduled Castes as a whole and that his idea of repudiating the Poona Pact was harmful to them as well as the country.⁽³⁷⁾

The August offer was rejected by the Congress. The British policy of relying on the support of the Congress adversaries including the Scheduled Castes could also little help the government to overcome the crisis. In the meantime Japan's victorious entry into the eastern sector of the war coupled with further changes in the global situations (marked by Chiang Kai Shek's visit of India and President Roosevelt's categorical assurance that the Atlantic Charter was applicable to the whole of the world - both events having taken place in February 1942) had necessitated reconsideration of Indian demands. On March 22, 1942, Sir Stafford Cripps came to India with fresh proposals to resolve the Indian political deadlock. The Draft Declaration, as the proposal was called, conceded to the Indians the right to make their own constitution, but the constitution was to be framed at the end of the War by a constituent assembly consisting of representatives elected by the members of the lower houses of the

provincial legislatures and the representatives of the native states. It was also stated that a treaty shall be negotiated between His Majesty's Government and the Constitution-making body and the said treaty shall contain adequate provision for protection of racial and religious minorities in accordance with the past undertaking given by His Majesty's Government to the Minorities. During the interim period and pending the framing of a constitution a large share of responsibility would be handed over to the Indians who would be accommodated in the Viceroy's Executive Council.

While being condemned by Gandhi as a trifle, 'a post dated cheque on a crashing bank' the Draft Declaration appeared to be equally unacceptable to the Scheduled Castes. In a statement issued to the Press Ambedkar held that the Depressed Classes had been betrayed in the Draft Declaration. He argued that the constituent assembly promised in it would not protect their interests as their representatives would not only be 'a hopeless minority' in this body but also mere nominees of the Congress rather than their real representatives. He further pointed out that the proposed constituent assembly would be dominated by the Congress whose leader Gandhi, 'in spite of his endeavours in the matter of the social uplift of the Depressed Classes' was 'totally opposed to giving political recognition to the Depressed Classes in the constitution as a separate and distinct element in the national life of India'. The treaty proposed to be signed between the constituent assembly and His Majesty's Government, he further

pointed out, could not safeguard the interests of the Depressed Classes, because if India became independent the British Government would have no means to enforce the treaty. (38)

There were men in the official circle who also seemed to be in secret sympathy with Ambedkar. Sir D.T. Monteath, Permanent Under-Secretary of State for India and Burma for example while expressing his doubt as to whether the Draft Declaration would be acceptable to the Depressed Classes confessed to Amery that the Depressed Classes were not granted as much effective safeguards as were granted to the Muslims and the Sikhs. It was further confided that "the influence that the depressed classes are likely to exercise in a constituent body composed on the basis proposed is not likely to be very effective - for the 'depressed classes' have not a long purse on which to draw". (39) Monteath's reading of the situation was substantially correct. On behalf of the Depressed Classes, Ambedkar and M.C. Rajah met Cripps on 30 March 1942. They pointed out that under the existing system of joint electorate their men would not be able to return their real representatives. Cripps allayed their fear by referring to the scheme of the negotiated treaty with the government which was proposed to be framed along the lines of the League of Nations' Minorities treaties. But the veteran emissary was not himself very confident about the effectiveness of such a treaty - "though this form of protection might no doubt seem to them inadequate, once granted the idea of self-government and self-determination for India, there was no other possible way by which we could intervene to protect any minority in India". (40)

Cripps was nevertheless hopeful that although not entirely satisfied Ambedkar and Rajah would not oppose the Draft Declaration. But in their letter to Cripps, Ambedkar and Rajah informed :

"We are all of us absolutely convinced that the proposals are calculated to do the greatest harm to the Depressed Classes and are sure to place under an unmitigated system of Hindu rule...

We request you to convey to His Majesty's Government our deepest anxiety regarding the future of the Depressed Classes and to impress upon them that we must look upon it as breach of faith if His Majesty's Government should decide to force upon the Depressed Classes a Constitution to which they have not given their free and voluntary consent.."(41)

Disappointed with the Draft Declaration, Ambedkar lost enthusiasm for co-operation with the government's war efforts and once out of sheer disgust he had even thought of resigning from the National Defence Council. Sir R. Lumley, the Governor of Bombay in one of his confidential communications to Linlithgow had further informed that Ambedkar felt bitterly disillusioned when "he had been as good as told that the Congress and the Muslim League were the only bodies which counted, and that if they agreed to the proposals, it would not matter what he or the Depressed Classes thought about them".(42) Such a flat assertion of the imperial policy combined with the fact that he could not be till then accommodated in the Viceroy's Executive Council embittered the mind

of Ambedkar. As a result he was no more 'really keen to help' the government.

In the meantime, Ambedkar and some other Depressed Class leaders decided to organise an all-India platform for the Scheduled Caste through which they would start to mobilise and fight out their case. A conference of such people was held at Nagpur on 18, 19 and 20 July 1942 which was attended by representatives from all parts of India. In his address to the conference Ambedkar straightway accused the government of its differential treatment with the Scheduled Castes. He described the attitude of the British Government to the Depressed Classes as a Munich mentality, the essence of which was to save oneself by sacrificing others. He said that the Cripps proposal had clearly given to the League the right to create Pakistan. But no concessions were made to the just demands of the Scheduled Castes. According to him the Cripps proposals "were the result of a loss of nerve and of a sense of principle, a breach of faith and a sudden volte-face".⁽⁴³⁾ It was then pointed out in no uncertain terms that the Scheduled Castes would not accept any new constitution unless it had their consent, recognised them as a 'distinct' and 'separate' element and contained provisions for their reservation through separate electorates. Simultaneously with separate electorate Ambedkar also demanded separate village settlements for the Scheduled Castes. This is radicalism or rancour manifest in its worst excess. But Ambedkar had his own arguments. He believed that so long as the Scheduled Castes lived in the outskirts of traditional villages

they would continue to remain untouchables and subject to the tyranny and oppression of the Hindus and would not be able to enjoy free life.⁽⁴⁴⁾

It may be noted now that in spite of the bitter reaction of Ambedkar against the Draft Declaration, the Secretary of State and the Viceroy still counted on his support. This is because the British officials felt that Ambedkar's bitterness was to some extent also due to some personal factors - he could not obtain a position in the High Court which he aspired for long, he was also in a state of indebtedness and such failures must have kept him disconcerted for sometime. Lumley was quite sure that Ambedkar would change his anti-government stance if only he could be rescued from the state of his great mental frustrations, "I would very much like to see something done for him, and I hope that, if a further expansion of your Council is now possible, he will be included, - not on personal grounds alone, but so that we may retain the interest of the Depressed Classes".⁽⁴⁵⁾ The Viceroy also was in full agreement with the governor of Bombay - "As you know I have Ambedkar very much in mind, and I hope that it will be possible for me to do something for him - he has behaved very well so far as I am concerned,..."⁽⁴⁶⁾ Linlithgow kept his promise. On 2 July, 1942 it was announced by the Government that Ambedkar would be appointed as the member of the Viceroy's Executive Council and nearly three weeks after, on 20 July Ambedkar telegraphically took charge of the Labour portfolio in it.⁽⁴⁷⁾ Curiously the offer came on the same day when Ambedkar thundered against the anti-Depressed Class

policy of the government in a conference held in Nagpur. Entry into the Executive Council soon mellowed his temper and since then he became more a critic of the Congress than of his colonial masters. The metamorphosis was first noticed when Ambedkar devoted his attention to the task of formation of the Scheduled Caste Federation. It was a step backwards from the 1930 radicalism. Thus turning away from the effort to form a broad political party with a vision of revolutionary social transformation Ambedkar and his Federation now set out to function "as the political representative of Dalits, as a special interest group within a statist-capitalist democratic structure".⁽⁴⁸⁾

The proposals of the Draft Declaration were however suddenly withdrawn on April 11, 1942. This was a shock to the Congress. The way in which negotiations failed was sufficient to lend weight to the widely held belief in India that the proposals were made not with the intention to part with any power, but to pacify the international critics at the time of the British policy in India. As a matter of fact even Churchill never wanted that Cripps may succeed in his mission. He was only anxious to prove "our honesty of purpose ... If it is rejected by the Indian parties ... our sincerity will be proved to the world". For him, therefore, "it mattered not so much that something should be done as that some attempt should be seen to be made".⁽⁴⁹⁾

The failure of the Cripps Mission leading to the Wardha Resolution of the Congress (14 July 1942) and launching of the Quit India Movement (8 August 1942) had necessitated further change in

British attitude to the political parties of India. Congress had to be counteracted by all means and for this purpose the Depressed Classes ever sore about the Congress seemed to serve as a natural ally for the government. So a deal of mutual give and take was arranged. The government would support the Depressed Classes' claim for separate electorate and in return to receive their support in its campaign to outmanoeuvre the Congress. The British government, therefore, sought to justify their opposition to the Congress party's demand for independence on the plea that the party did not represent such important elements of Indian national life as the Muslims and the Scheduled Castes and the States. On 31 July 1942, the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill wrote to Roosevelt, President of the U.S.A. : "The Congress party in no way represents India, and is strongly opposed by over 90 million Mohammedans, 40 million Untouchables and the Indian states comprising some 90 millions to whom we are bound by treaty."⁽⁵⁰⁾

Both the Secretary of State and Viceroy considered it politically expedient to treat the Scheduled Castes as a minority community like the Muslims obviously with a view to counteract the Congress. This was clearly laid in one of Amery's communications to Linlithgow :

"It does seem to me as if it would be well worth while giving them a substantial leg-up and assimilating their position increasingly to that of the Muslims. There are, after all, politically very considerable

advantages in having two substantial minorities to whom consideration has to be paid,.."⁽⁵¹⁾

Nearly two weeks after the said communication Linlithgow replied, "I think there is a good deal in the point you make as to the political importance of recognising so great a minority as the Depressed Classes undoubtedly are".⁽⁵²⁾ Once again a month after Amery wrote to Linlithgow that the Scheduled Castes should be granted as much protection at least as representation in the Executive, and as for protection in the form of separate electorate, he remarked:

"Possibly too, after Gandhi's death, it might be worth considering whether the present anomalous electoral arrangements for the Scheduled Castes should not be altered and a direct communal basis substituted, as originally suggested".⁽⁵³⁾

The colonial patronage for the separatist claim of the Scheduled Castes was more clearly exposed when mainly under the persuasion of the Viceroy Ambedkar had submitted a memorandum (29 October 1942) on the grievances of the Scheduled Castes. The major political demand set forth in the memorandum was the adequate representation of the Scheduled Castes in the Central Legislature as well as the Viceroy's Executive Council in each of which they had only one representative at that time. The government expressed full sympathy for the demands laid down in the said memorandum.⁽⁵⁴⁾

Encouraged by the open support of the government the separatist Scheduled Caste leaders especially Ambedkar now came to fulfil his pledge to the government. Lumley wrote to Linlithgow (24/27 August, 1942), "Dr. Ambedkar responded to your suggestion by a very downright denunciation of Congress on behalf of the Depressed Classes".⁽⁵⁵⁾ On 21 July, 1942 he made a strong speech declaring civil disobedience at that time as 'treachery to India' and 'playing the enemy's game' and urging all Indians as a patriotic duty "to resist with all the power and resources at their command any attempt on the part of the Congress to launch civil disobedience".⁽⁵⁶⁾ Like Ambedkar, M.C. Rajah also responded to the bureaucratic suggestion and issued a statement at Madras on 15 August, 1942 criticising the Congress programme of action. He expressed surprise over the agitation of the Congress, because according to him, the substance of independence had already been promised by the government.⁽⁵⁷⁾ Imperialism was therefore apparently successful—the vigorous support lent by the Scheduled Castes was a clear indication that the Congress' equation with the Indian nation to which the British rulers would hand over state power, could not yet be taken for granted.

But one need not look askance at their efforts because the Scheduled Caste largely responded in a way the colonial government expected them to. Of course the British sought to bolster up the separatist movement among the Scheduled Caste in a manner to suit their own imperialist ends. But the separatist demand of the Scheduled Castes was to a large extent the result of a desperate attempt to uphold the human rights of a people who believed that they had no other means of getting their rights recognised than using the tools

of separatism. To the Depressed Classes Welfare Association at Delhi, Ambedkar announced on 23 August, 1942: "I want to put the Depressed Classes on terms of equality with the other communities in India, I want to place the reins of government in your hands. You should share in the political power of the country on terms of equality with the Mussalmans".⁽⁵⁸⁾ In the winter of 1942, Ambedkar raised the question of the Depressed Classes in an international conference at Mont' Trablant in Quebec in Canada. He presented a paper on the problem of the Depressed Classes which was read out by Sivaraj in the said conference. The gist of the paper was that while asking the British Government to grant independence, the Congress should ensure justice and fair play for the Depressed Classes. He gave a counter challenge to the Congress which had thrown a challenge to the British Government for immediate grant of freedom. Ambedkar had even questioned the validity of a freedom which would scarcely ensure the liberty of the masses.

"Now everybody in India outside the Hindus knows that whatever may be its title it is beyond question that the Congress is a body of middle class Hindus supported by the Hindu Capitalists whose object is not to make Indians free but to be independent of British control and to occupy places of power now occupied by the British. If the kind of Freedom which the Congress wants was achieved there is no doubt that the Hindus would do to the Untouchables exactly what they have been doing in the past".⁽⁵⁹⁾

In the meantime, the second session of the All-India Scheduled Castes Federation which was held at Kanpur on 29 and 30 January, 1944 under the presidency of Sivaraj, once again passed

the resolutions of the Nagpur session of July 1942, and submitted further demand for the special treatments of the Scheduled Castes in the post-war scheme of economic reconstruction.⁽⁶⁰⁾ He then concluded his speech by appealing to the youths of his community "to forge sanctions by developing organisational strength...so that no party not even The British Government, would dare refuse to recognise their importance in the future scheme of India's constitutional development".⁽⁶¹⁾

Questions of constitutional settlement for India remained in a stalemate position so long as the Quit India Movement was at its height. But the tempo of the movement gradually receded and on May 6, 1944 Gandhi was released from the prison so that negotiations may start once again for an early settlement of the question. To the Viceroy Gandhi offered to withdraw the civil disobedience if the government issued a 'declaration of immediate Indian independence', and formed a national government responsible to the Central Legislature. But the Viceroy refused to agree on the pretext of the crisis of war situation which was still continuing. Worst still was his offer which contains not merely a repetition of the August proposal of 1940 but also made a specific reference to the problem of the Depressed Classes whose solution was demanded by the government before any settlement of the constitutional deadlock in India. Curiously not even the Draft Declaration of March 1942 contained a pointed reference to the Depressed Classes, it having mentioned only a broad-spectrum category i.e. the 'racial and religious minorities'. The addition in Wavell's offer it was later known, made at the instance of the Viceroy's political boss, Sir Winston Churchill.⁽⁶²⁾

Having failed in his negotiation with the Viceroy, Gandhi next started to negotiate with M.A.Jinnah. But here again as Jinnah announced (27 September, 1944) "it had not been possible to reach the agreement". The only result of this fruitless discussion was that it had aroused fear in the mind of the depressed people. The Working Committee of the All-India Scheduled Castes Federation expressed disapproval of Gandhi-Jinnah talks on the ground that a settlement between these two leaders would be a settlement between only the Hindus and the Muslims and therefore would be no better than a 'communal settlement of a sectional character'. Ambedkar brought a more serious charge. He said that the Congress was ready to be very generous to the Muslims, but at the same time held an "attitude of studied silence and cold indifference" to the Untouchables. (63) He, therefore, demanded that the future constitution of India 'must be a tripartite constitution, a constitution in which Hindus, the Scheduled Castes and the Muslims will have equal place and equal authority'. He had further proclaimed that the Scheduled Castes would not accept a constitution in which they 'had no place', 'no power'. The communal problem, Ambedkar held, "was not merely a problem between the Hindus and the Muslims" and he warned that Gandhi would not be allowed to lionise the League by cutting out the legitimate shares of the Scheduled Castes. (64)

In June 1945, Ambedkar published his famous work *What Congress and Gandhi have Done to the Untouchables*. The book was an indictment of the attitude of Gandhi and Congress towards the Scheduled Castes. In it was presented argument in support of the political and constitutional recognition of the separatist claims of the Scheduled Castes. In this book Ambedkar attributed ulterior motives

to the efforts of Gandhi and his followers who were believed to have worked for the uplift of the Scheduled Castes. He held that the 'Harijan Sevak Sangh' was a 'charitable organisation only in name.' In reality it was a 'political organisation, the aim and objective of which are to draw the Untouchables into the Congress fold' and 'scotch any movement by them... to free themselves from the social, religious, economic and political domination of the Hindus'. He tried to prove that Gandhi was basically a conservative who sought to perpetuate the traditional social order of which untouchability was a part.⁽⁶⁵⁾ Ambedkar also challenged the claim of Congress to represent the Scheduled Castes. He showed how in the election of 1937 though Congress got majority of the Scheduled Caste seats in the provincial legislatures, only in 38 seats the Congress candidates got majority of the Scheduled Caste votes. As for the most reasonable solution of the problem of the Depressed Classes he expressed his preference for the original provisions of the Communal Award to the Poona Pact. He further maintained that as there was no possibility of disappearance of untouchability in imaginable future, the only way to safeguard the interests of the Scheduled Castes was to treat them as a separate element which alone can protect them against the possible inroads of the Hindus.⁽⁶⁶⁾

It may be noted however that the invectives used against Gandhi do not seem to be really based on a sound judgment. What appeared to be most uncharitable is that Gandhi was even criticised for being not himself sufficiently serious and sincere in his Harijan welfare work. But in reality he had attached topmost priority to this programme so much so that he was even criticised by ardent Congressmen including

Nehru who thought that Gandhi had distracted the attention of the nation from a major issue like Civil Disobedience for little gains on Harijan welfare programme. However, for Ambedkar with a different frame of mind, it was not unlikely to find fault with Gandhi.

Ambedkar's thesis for the treatment of the Scheduled Castes as a separate and distinct element in the future constitution of India did not go unchallenged. Chakravarti Rajagopalachari pointed out that the Scheduled Castes were evenly distributed all over India, in every village, in every town, in every district and in every province and were about ten per cent of the population. Their amalgamation with the rest of the population was so perfect that they 'have to be part of the general population and cannot isolate themselves into a separate democracy'.⁽⁶⁷⁾ He alleged that Ambedkar did not see 'the intrinsic difficulties of a revolutionary task' like the removal of untouchability and therefore underrated the achievements of Gandhi and Congress without any justification. To Rajagopalachari it appeared that Ambedkar represented the educated vested interests among the Scheduled Castes, who wanted to enjoy special benefit by retaining the 'Scheduled status'.⁽⁶⁸⁾

Besides Rajagopalachari, there were men even among the community of the Scheduled Caste itself who disagreed on many points with Ambedkar. Thus Babu Jagajivan Ram speaking on behalf of the pro-Congress Scheduled Caste people expressed the desire of being treated as part of the Hindu society with such electoral facilities as may be available under the Poona Pact. His demand for the freedom

of the Depressed Classes and for an early redress of social, religious and economic exploitation in a manner that would enable them to 'stand for equality in Hindu society' did not prevent him from lending open support to the Congress party's demand for freedom.⁽⁶⁹⁾ Another Congress leader K. Shanthanam also wrote in refutation of Ambedkar's argument in support of separate electorate. According to him "the Harijans do not form an all-India community with common language, religion or any other special characteristics" and the vast majority of Hindus did not constitute 'a purposeful master class resolved to deal with the untouchable as a mere slave'. "The political segregation of the Scheduled Castes", Santhanam held further, "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". The true remedy of their problem and the real salvation of the Scheduled Castes lay, according to him, in rapid industrial development of India by which these luckless people would become merged in the main body of Hindu agricultural and industrial workers.⁽⁷⁰⁾

While such intolerable wrestle was going on for obtaining shares in the future government of India a non-official body of public leaders constituted by the Liberal leader Sir Tejbahadur Sapru in November 1944 devoted itself to the task of drafting a constitutional scheme for India that might be acceptable to all. This was indeed hoping against hope and when the recommendations of the Committee were published shortly after Wavell's brief departure for London (8 April 1945) it was found that the Sapru Committee proposals could

satisfy none. The Scheduled Castes were particularly bitter for they were to take seats in the Viceroy's Executive Council as part of the Hindus. Of course the Committee considered their representation in the Government of India Act, 1935 to be inadequate, but without fixing the number of increment in the quota of future representation the Committee left the issue for settlement by the constitution making body. Then again the Poona Pact scheme of election was also left unalterable for the next ten years. Ambedkar had already his misgivings for the Committee and although inclined at first to co-operate he later withdrew his consent because he 'disliked the composition of the Committee'.⁽⁷¹⁾ Naturally he opposed the recommendations on the ground that the Scheduled Castes held a minority position in the Committee. The All-India Scheduled Castes Federation, also in its Bombay session held on 7 May 1945 expressed its dissatisfaction with the Sapru proposals. The meeting passed resolutions by which it adhered to all its earlier demands as constituting "an irreducible minimum of the protection essential for the safety and security of the Scheduled Castes against the tyranny and oppression which is sure to follow in the wake of the rule of the Hindu communal majority".⁽⁷²⁾

By the middle of 1945 political situations in India were on a threshold of great change. The war in Europe had ended, but the war with Japan still continued. Attention was now focussed on the eastern front. India's strategic position in the war with Japan, once again came into prominence, as it did in 1942, when Sir Stafford was sent to India. Now that the hands of the British Government were

comparatively free, it was felt that a fresh attempt should be made to bring India whole-heartedly into the War. It is also believed that there was possibly some pressure from the Russian Government for ending the deadlock in India within an earliest possible time. Moreover the general election has been ordered in England. There was a general accusation from the Labour Party that the Churchill Government was thoroughly incapable of arriving at an amicable settlement with the Indian leaders. Churchill wanted to disprove this charge by showing that he was really very eager to solve the Indian deadlock. On June 4, 1945 Wavell returned from London after having his preliminary talks with the Home government. Ten days after his arrival, a new solution was offered on behalf of the British Government for ending the Indian deadlock. In a broadcast speech dated 14 June 1945 the Viceroy declared that this proposals were "designed to ease the present political situation and to advance India towards her goal of full self-government". The essence of Wavell Plan was to make a quick settlement in India with a largely extended Executive Council.⁽⁷³⁾ The extended Executive Council, it was proposed should consist of an equal number of Muslim and Caste Hindu representatives (five each) plus one number to represent each of the communities i.e. Scheduled Castes, Sikh and other groups.

Gandhi objected to the use of the expression 'Caste Hindu' in the speeches of the Secretary of State and the Viceroy and in his interview with the Viceroy on 24 June 1945 he claimed on behalf of

the Congress the right to choose any Muslim or Scheduled Caste candidate for the Viceroy's Council.

The Viceroy was aware that further discussion might be necessary to settle the constitutional problems and he arranged a Conference of the Indian leaders (including Gandhi, Jinnah, N. Sivaraj and Master Tara Singh, the Akali leader) which was proposed to be held on 25 June 1945 at Simla. But even before the Conference was to begin criticism of the Viceregal declaration was forthcoming at many quarters. Ambedkar regarded the scheme of the extended Council to be most unfair, unjust and a 'death-knell' for the Scheduled Castes. He wrote to Wavell on 7 June 1945 in which he gave a bit of his mind :

"Five seats to 90 millions of Muslims, one seat to 50 millions of Untouchables and one seat to 6 millions of Sikhs is a strange and sinister kind of political arithmetic which is revolting to my ideas of justice and common sense."

Ambedkar demanded that at least 3 seats should be given to the Scheduled Castes.⁽⁷⁴⁾ Even the Secretary of State received many telegrams from various Depressed Class organisations in which his intervention was prayed for a little increase in the number of Scheduled Caste representatives in the Viceroy's Executive Council. At one time Amery seemed to have become sympathetic to the prayers of the Depressed Classes, and it came to be known that he thought for making provision of two seats for them. But the idea never

materialised. Amery was cautious about not to offend Gandhi whose recent objection to the use of the term 'caste Hindu' and whose strenuous opposition to the scheme of separate electorate at the time of Communal Award was still fresh in his memory. He did not, therefore, think it wise to give any concession which may be interpreted as granting 'separate representation for the Depressed Classes as a community.'⁽⁷⁵⁾

The question of representation of the Depressed Classes was raised once again at the Simla Conference. Sivaraj objected to the Congress claim to nominate representatives of the Scheduled Castes. He said that they represented a separate element in the national life of India and had been recognized as such. He felt very strongly that the representation of Scheduled Castes in the Executive Council should not be less favourable as that allowed to the Muslims. Of course he did not press for parity but he insisted that the number of the Scheduled Caste members "should bear the same ratio to their population as the Muslim members bore to theirs". He wished to consult the Working Committee of his Federation before he could give his specific suggestion to the members of the Conference.⁽⁷⁶⁾

The Simla Conference continued for about two weeks, from June 29 to July 14, 1945. It was then found that the plan was not acceptable to Jinnah. Master Tara Singh suggested that the differences between the Congress and the Muslim League should be put to arbitration. Sivaraj once again harped on extended representation of his community. But ultimately it was Jinnah who created the deadlock.

Disgusted at the obstinacy of the League Rajagopalachari remarked that 'the negative attitude of any particular group should not be allowed to stand in the way' of arriving at a settlement. (77) Even Maulana Abul Kalam Azad felt unhappy for the vacillating attitude of the Viceroy - it 'ought not to have given the right of veto to any particular group to hold up the progress of the country'. (78) But no amount of persuasion bore any fruitful result. The Viceroy took upon himself the sole responsibility for the breakdown of the Conference and on July 14, he formally announced the failure of the meeting. The tragic end of the Conference and the way the negotiations were allowed by an onlooking Viceroy to end most abruptly may naturally create a suspicion that the Wavell Plan was nothing but an election stunt arranged by the Conservative Government. Probably the British Government was no longer keen for a settlement because the general elections in England were over by that time. Next after the failure of the Simla meeting a conference of the provincial governors was held in August 1945 and decision was taken to hold General Elections in India very soon. The fate of the Depressed Classes remained undecided no less than the political destiny of the country which remained inscrutable at the time.

NOTES

1. See Clause IX of the Communal Award in Sitaramayya p., *op.cit.*, Appendix VI, p. 657.
2. *The Imperial Gazetteer of India, The Indian Empire, Vol. I, Descriptive*, p. 324.
3. *BPSA*. p. 43.
4. Note to the Chief Secretary, Government of Bengal dated 12 May 1916. G.B., General (Education), no. 1E-8, January 1917, Progs. nos. 14-17.
5. *IFC*. Vol. I, p. 109.
6. *Fifth Despatch on Indian Constitutional Reforms (Franchise) 23.4.1919*, p. 5.
7. Memorandum submitted to the Indian Statutory Commission by the Government of India. *SCR*. Vol.V. part II, pp. 1353 and 1340-1341.
8. *SCR*. Vol. I, Survey, p. 40.
9. *IRTC (Second Session) 7 September 1931 - 1 December 1931. Proceedings of the 'Federal Structure Committee and Minorities Committee' (Vol. III)*, Appendix VII, p. 1411.
10. Hutton J.H., *op.cit.*, p. 193.
11. *IFC. Report*, Vol. I, Chapter X, p. 109, paragraphs 282 and 283.
12. Bandyopadhyay S., *op.cit.*, p. 76.
13. *Joint Committee on Indian Constitutional Reform (Session 1933-34)*, Vol.I, part I, Report, Appendix IV and V of White Paper, p.350.
14. G.B. Appointment, no. 8L-62, B May 1933, Prog. no. 37 K.W., pp.2-3.
15. *Joint Committee on Indian Constitutional Reform (Session 1933-34)*, Vol.I. part I, Appendix VIII, White Paper, pp.376-380.

16. Government of India Act 1935, Schedule I, part I, Section 26(1).
17. Ambedkar B.R., *op.cit.*, p.94. Bihar and Orissa hitheto a single province was split in two.
18. Government of India Act 1935, Schedule - V.
19. Gandhi M.K., 'Harijan and Elections' in Harijan, Saturday June 27, 1936. See HN Vol. IV. p. 156.
20. 'A Brief Analysis of the Election Results', IAR. Vol.I (1937), pp.168(a) - 168(p).
21. Ambedkar B.R., *op.cit.*, Appendix XIV(3), Bengal, p. 359 and Appendix XIV(5), Punjab, p. 361.
22. *Ibid.* Appendix XIV, pp. 357-365.
23. IAR. Vol. I (1937), pp. 168(a) - 168(p). Figures for Punjab, Orissa and Assam were not furnished in the analysis. For C.P. statement for only 19 seats were available.
24. Ambedkar B.R., *op.cit.*, p. 160. Table 14.
25. *Ibid.* p. 155.
26. *Ibid.* Table 10, p.156, Table 11, p. 158.
27. BPSA. p. 170.
28. Harijan 5 August 1939. HN Vol. VIII. p. 227, para 13.
29. Bandyopadhyay S., *op.cit.*, p. 182.
30. Omvedt G., *Dalits and the Democratic Revolution*, pp. 194, 217.
31. BPSA. p. 176.
32. Menon V.P., *The Transfer of Power in India*, New Delhi, 1970,p.65.
33. Lele P.R. (ed.), *War and India's Freedom*, Bombay, 1940, p. 98.
34. Menon V.P., *op.cit.*, pp.66-67.
35. *Ibid.* pp. 92-93, 95.

36. Omvedt G., *Dalits and the Democratic Revolution*, pp. 215-216.
37. The Times of India, 28 October 1939. Quoted in Pradhan A.C., *The Emergence of the Depressed Classes*, Bhubaneswar, 1986, p. 271.
38. Ambedkar B.R., *op.cit.*, pp. 336-343. Appendix IX, 'Objections to the Cripps proposals'.
39. T.P. Vol. I. p. 287. Document no. 210. Minutes by Sir D. Monteath and Mr. Amery.
40. *Ibid.* pp. 552-553. Document no. 442. Note by Sir S. Cripps.
41. *Ibid.* p. 603. Letter of Dr. Ambedkar and Mr. Rajah to Sir S. Cripps dated 1 April 1942. Document no. 487. The text of this letter was also sent to Amery in telegram.
42. *Ibid.* p. 846, 847. Extract of correspondence from Sir R. Lumley to the Marquess of Linlithgow dated 24 April 1942. Document no. 684.
43. Keer D., *op.cit.*, pp. 342-343.
44. BPSA. p. 260. 'The Political Demands of the Untouchables'. Resolution no. IV.
45. T.P. Vol. I. p. 846. Document no. 684.
46. *Ibid.* p. 873. Linlithgow's letter dated 30 April 1942 to Lumley. Document no. 711.
47. Keer D., *op.cit.*, p. 353.
48. Omvedt G., *Dalits and the Democratic Revolution*, pp. 217-218.
49. T.P. Vol. I. pp.394-395. Also Tomlinson B.R., *Indian National Congress and the Raj 1929-42*, p. 156. Quoted in Raychaudhury L.M. (ed.), *The Quit India Movement 1942*, Calcutta, 1993, p. iv.

50. Quoted in *Ibid.* p. 12.
51. *T.P.* Vol. III. p. 390. Document no. 280. Letter from Amery to Linlithgow dated 16 December 1942.
52. *Ibid.* p. 456, para 14. Document no. 315. Linlithgow's letter to Amery dated 5 January 1943.
53. *Ibid.* p. 633, para 6. Document no. 437. Letter dated 8 February 1943.
54. *Ibid.* p. 166, para 3. Document no. 125. Ambedkar's letter to Linlithgow dated 29 October 1942.
55. *T.P.* Vol. II. p. 805. Document no. 624.
56. *Ibid.* p. 436. Document no. 310.
57. *The Times of India*, 19 September 1942. Quoted in Pradhan A.C., *op.cit.*, p. 278.
58. *IAR.* Vol. II (1942), p. 22.
59. *BPSA.* p. 258.
60. *IAR.* Vol. I (1944), pp. 207-208.
61. *Ibid.* pp. 208-209.
62. *T.P.* Vol. IV. p. 1165. Document no. 630. See also *Ibid.* p. 1162. Document no. 629.
63. Ambedkar B.R., *Mr. Gandhi and the Emancipation of the Untouchables.* *BPSA.* p. 272.
64. *IAR.* Vol. II (1944), p. 234.
65. Ambedkar B.R., *op.cit.*, (What Congress and Gandhi...), Appendix XI, pp. 144-145.
66. *Ibid.* pp. 181-198.
67. Rajagopalachari C., *Ambedkar Refuted*, Bombay, 1946, p.5.
68. *Ibid.* pp. 33-34.

69. Presidential speech of Jagajivan Ram in the 8th session of the All-India Depressed Classes Conference held at Meerut on 1 February 1942. IAR. Vol. I (1942), p. 349.
70. Santhanam K., *Ambedkar's Attack*, New Delhi, 1946, pp.75, 20 and 21.
71. Menon V.P., *op.cit.*, p. 175.
72. IAR. Vol. I (1945), p. 324.
73. For the text of Viceroy's broadcast speech see Menon V.P., *op.cit.*, pp.459-461.
74. T.P. Vol. V. p. 1095. Document no. 483.
75. *Ibid.* p. 1149. Document no. 533. Telegram from Amery to Wavell dated 22 June 1945.
76. Menon V.P., *op.cit.* p. 204.
77. *Ibid.* p. 210.
78. *Ibid.*p. 212.

"The world's great age begins anew."

- P.B. Shelley. Hellas.

The elections of 1946 held soon after the breakdown of the Simla Conference proved that the dissenting Scheduled Caste leaders outside the Congress were unable to win the poll. It then became clear that the schemes of social welfare for the Untouchables had to be geared through the Congress which unlike the followers of Ambedkar claiming separate electorate stood for unity of the country and assimilation of the Depressed Classes into the national mainstream. But the separatists did not seem to be ready to accept the verdict. Consequently they first took to satyagraha and then to further mobilising political opinion in England in support of their claim. However, most of such endeavours scarcely proved fruitful in the long run.

At a time when the dissenting leaders were pursuing their separatist scheme a few of them were accommodated first in the Constituent Assembly and finally also in the Interim Government. The critics of power-that-may-be became co-sharers of power themselves and together they ensured two foremost measures for the building of future India - universal adult franchise and abolition of Untouchability. With the transfer of power a new India was born, a sovereign, democratic republic assuring equality of rights for all.