

FAILURE OF PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY WILL RESULT IN REBELLION, ANARCHY AND COMMUNISM

In this speech, delivered before the students' Parliament of the D. A. V. College, Jullundar City (Punjab) on October 28, 1931, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar lucidly explains the Parliamentary Democracy.

He said,

"Principal, the Hon'ble President and Hon'ble Speaker,

I am, indeed, thankful to you for the great honour done to me of asking me to address the special session of your Parliament. During my whole life, I have been, so to say, a wanderer, from subject to subject, from profession to profession. I began my career as a Professor of Political Economics in the Government Commerce College, Bombay, in 1919, after my return from England. But I soon felt that the Government service was no good for a man who wishes to do public service. A government servant is bound by rules of discipline. He is hampered at every stage in his work of public service. I then went back to England and qualified for Bar. After my return I practised for a short period and then accepted the post of the Principal of the Government Law College at Bombay. I came back to the profession of teaching. I worked as the Principal of the Law College for five years. Then, the 1935 Government of India Act came into being, which brought the popular legislatures in existence for the first time. I then thought of taking a jump into the politics and I left the service and took to politics. Since then I have alternatively been doing legal practice and serving the public. Legal practice and public service are, thus, the alternating currents in my life ; and I do not know on which current my life will end whether A.C. or D.C.

I am very fond of teaching profession. I am also very fond of students. I have dealt with them. I have lectured them in my life. This is the first opportunity I have got to address the students since my resignation from the Cabinet. I am very glad to talk to the students. A great lot of the future of this country must necessarily depend on the students of this country. Students is an intelligent part of the

community and they can shape the public opinion. I, therefore, take special pleasure in addressing you, the members of the Parliament, and I am really thankful for this opportunity given to me.

When your Principal wrote to me requesting me to address you, he did not indicate any particular subject. I also had nothing in my mind about the topic on which I shall speak to you this morning. But suddenly, as it usually happens in my case, at the flash of moment the subject became clear to me, and I have decided to speak a few words with you on the subject of Parliamentary Government. The time at my disposal is very short and I will, therefore, be able to give only a brief analysis of the subject.

During the discussion in the Constituent Assembly there was a variety of opinion as regards the nature of the Constitution that we should have. Some preferred British system ; some American system. There were others who did not want either of these two types of Government. But after a long discussion, a large majority of members came to a conclusion that the system of the Parliamentary Government as it is in Britain is best suited to our country.

There are some sections of people who do not like Parliamentary Government. Communists want the Russian type of Government. The Socialists are also against the present Constitution of India. They are agitating against it. They have declared that if they come to power, they will modify it. Personally speaking, I am very greatly attached to the Parliamentary System of Government. We must understand what it means and we must preserve it in the Constitution.

What is meant by Parliamentary Government ? There is a book on English Constitution by Walter Bagehot. It is, indeed, a classic treatise. It was later expanded by other authorities on Constitutional Government like Laski and others. He has put the conception of the Parliamentary Government in one sentence. He says Parliamentary Government means Government by discussion and not by fisticuffs. You will always find in British system of Government that they hardly ever resort to fisticuffs while taking any decision. The decision is always taken after discussion. Nobody introduces element of disturbance in British Parliament.

Look at the French Politics. Decision are arrived at more than often by knocking knock-out blows. You will find that this system is hardly adequate to those not born in that system. It is an alien institution to them. We must learn, understand and make it a success.

Parliamentary Democracy is unknown to us at present. But India, at one time had Parliamentary Institutions. India was far more advanced in ancient times. If you go through the '*Suktas*' of *Mahaparinibbana*, you will find ample evidence in support of my point. In these '*Suktas*' it is stated that while Bhagwan Buddha was dying at Kusinara (Kusinagara) a message to the effect was sent to the Mallas who were sitting in session at that time. They were devoted to Parliamentary Institutions. When they received the message about Buddha, they decided that they shall not close the session, but would carry on with their work and will go to Kusinara after finishing of the business of the Parliament. There are innumerable references in our literature to prove that Parliamentary System of Government was not unknown to us.

There are many rules about Parliamentary Procedure. May's Parliamentary practice is generally followed. One rule that is invariably followed everywhere is that there can be no discussion without a motion. That is why there is no discussion on a question. This rule was also practised in our land in ancient times. The system of secret ballot now in vogue is also not new to us. It was followed in Buddhist *Sanghas*. They had the ballot papers which they called '*Salapatraka Grahakas*'. Unfortunately, we have lost all this past heritage that was good. Historians of India must tackle this question as to why these Parliamentary Institutions disappeared from our land. But I find that they cannot or do not want to find out the reasons for it. Ancient India was the master of the World. There was such intellectual freedom in ancient India as was nowhere else to be found. Then why this ancient civilisation went to dogs? Why was India subjected to autocratic monarchies? We were familiar with Parliamentary Institutions. We know about votes, voting, committees and other things related to Parliamentary Institutions. Today, Parliamentary System of Government is alien to us. If we go to village, we will find that the villagers do not understand what

is vote, what is party. They find it something strange, something alien. It is, therefore, a great problem as to how to preserve this institution. We will have to educate public, we will have to tell them the benefits of Parliamentary Democracy and of Parliamentary System of Government.

We know what Bagehot means by Parliamentary Government. But today his definition is of no use, it is utterly inadequate. There are three main things inherent in the Parliamentary System of Government.

Parliamentary Government means negations of hereditary rule. No person can claim to be hereditary ruler. Whoever wants to rule must be elected by the people from time to time. He must obtain the approval of the people. Hereditary rule has no sanction in the Parliamentary System of Government.

Secondly, any law, any measure applicable to the public life of the people must be based on the advice of the people chosen by the people. No single individual can presume the authority that he knows everything, that he can make the laws and carry the Government. The laws are to be made by the representatives of the people in the Parliament. They are the people who can advise the men in whose name the law is proclaimed. That is the difference between the monarchical system of Government and the Democratic System of Government. In monarchy, the affairs of the people are carried on in the name of a monarch and under the authority of a monarch. In democracy, the affairs of the public are carried on in the name of the head of the State : but the laws and the executive measures are the authority on which the Government is carried on. The head of the State is the titular head ; he is merely a symbol. He is a consecrated 'Murti.' He can be worshipped but he is not allowed to carry out the Government of the Country. The Government of the country is carried out, though in his name, by the elected representatives of the people.

Thirdly and lastly, Parliamentary System of the Government means that at a stated period those who want to advise the head of the State must have the confidence of the people in themselves renewed. In Britain, formerly, the elections to the Parliament were every seven years. The Chartists agitated against this. They wanted

annual elections. The motive behind this agitation was very praiseworthy, indeed. It would have been best in the interests of the people if annual election were held, had it been possible, of course. But, Parliamentary elections are very costly affairs. So some sort of compromise was arrived at and five years period was supposed to be a responsible period at which the Legislators and the Ministers were to go back to the People and obtain the fresh renewal of their confidence.

This is also not enough. Parliamentary System of Government is much more than Government by discussion. There are two pillars on which the Parliamentary System of Government rests. These are the fulcrums on which the mechanism works. Those two pillars are (i) an opposition and (ii) free and fair elections.

For the last 20 or 30 years, we acclimatised to one single political party. We have nearly forgotten the necessity and importance of 'opposition' for the fair working of Parliamentary Democracy. We are continuously told that opposition is an evil. Here again we are forgetting what the past history has to teach us. You know that there were '*Nibandhkaras*' to interpret the Vedas and Smritis. They used to begin their comments on '*Slokas*' and '*Sutras*' by stating firstly the '*Purva Paksha*' the one side of the questions. They used to follow up by giving the '*Uttar Paksha*'- the other side. By this they wanted to show us that the question raised was not an easy question : it is a question where there is dispute, discussion and doubt. Then they used to give what they termed as '*Adhikaran*' where they used to criticise both the '*Pakshas*'. Finally, they gave the '*Siddhant*', their own decisions. Here from we can find that all our ancient teachers believed in two party system of Government.

One important thing in the Parliamentary Democracy is that people should know the other side, if there are two sides to a question. Hence, a functional opposition is required. Opposition is the key to a free political life. No democracy can do without it. Britain and Canada, the two exponents of Parliamentary Systems of Governments recognize this important fact and in both countries the leader of 'opposition' is paid salary by the Government. They regard the 'opposition' as an essential thing. People of these countries believe that the 'opposition' should be as much alive as the Government. The Government may suppress the facts, the Government may have only one-sided propaganda. The people have provision against this eventuality in these two countries.

Now the question arises as to whether there is any desire on the part of the party in power to permit any opposition to be created. Congress does not want any 'opposition'. Congress is attempting to gather people of sundry views under one canopy. I ask you whether this is a desirable trend in the political life of this country ?

Free and fair elections is the other pillar on which Parliamentary Democracy rests. Free and fair elections are necessary for the transfer of power from one section of the community to the other in a peaceful manner and without any bloodshed. In olden times, if a king died, there was at least one murder in the palace. Revolution used to take place in palace resulting in murders before the new king used to take the reigns of his country into his authority. This has been the history of India. Elections must be completely free and fair. People must be left to themselves to choose those whom they want to send to the Legislatures.

What about free and fair elections ? We must not lose sight of the fact that 'Big Business' is trying to play a great part in political life of this country. The amount that is being contributed to the Congress on behalf of the 'Big Business' is very dangerous thing. If moneyed people try to influence the elections by contributing to the election fund of any political party, what will be the result. If the party to which they have supported financially comes into power, they will naturally try to extract concessions for themselves either by modifying the present legislation or by influencing the party in power to legislate in such a manner as would be beneficial to their interests. I ask you gentlemen, whether under these circumstances there is any hope left for the Parliamentary System of Government to do any good to the country. I would like you to refer to the Mahabharata. During the battle between the Pandvas and the Kaurvas, Bhishma and Drona were on the side of Kaurvas. Pandvas were in the right and the Kaurvas were in the wrong. Bhishma admitted this. When somebody asked Bhishma as to why he was supporting the Kaurvas if he found the Pandvas to be in the right. Bhishma replied that memorable sentence :

"I must be loyal to the salt : If I eat the food of the Kaurvas, I must take their side even if they might be in the wrong."

Today the same thing is happening. Congress is accepting the financial help of the Banias, Marwaries and other multi-millionaires. Congress is eating their food and it follows, therefore, naturally that Congress will have to take the side of these 'Big Business' at all crucial times.

We also find that the Government servants are influencing the elections in favour of the party which is feeding them and their dependants. No less a personality than Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, at the inaugural session of the Bhartiya Jan Sangh at Delhi recently, openly charged the Government servants of helping the Congress and thereby nullifying the elections from being free and fair. Under these circumstances, do you, gentlemen, think that there is any hope for the Parliamentary Democracy to succeed.

If Parliamentary Democracy fails in this country and it is bound to fail for the reasons mentioned by me, the only result will be rebellion, anarchy and Communism. If the people in power do not realize that people will not tolerate hereditary authority, then this country is doomed. Either Communism will come, Russia having the sovereignty over our country, destroying individual liberty and our independence or the section of the people who are disgruntled for the failure of the party in power will start rebellion and anarchy will prevail. Gentlemen, I want you to take note of these eventual certainties and if you wish that Parliamentary System of Government and Parliamentary Democracy prevail in this country, if you are satisfied that we will be assured of our liberty of thought, speech and action, if we should preserve our independence, if we cherish the inherent right of individual liberty, then it is your duty as students, as intelligent community of our country, to strive your utmost to cherish this Parliamentary System of Government in its true spirit and work for it.

Gentlemen, I have done. I thank you for having given me this opportunity to address this August gathering.¹

¹ : Lokrajya : Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Special Number, April 16, 1981 Pp. 45-48.

IF OUR TRUE REPRESENTATIVES ARE NOT ELECTED, INDEPENDENCE WILL BE A FARCE

Dr. Ambedkar's Speech during Election campaign in Ludhiana, on 28th October 1951.

He said,

Dear brothers and sisters,

This is the first time that I have visited Ludhiana to speak to our people. Many times before I proposed to visit this place but due to certain unavoidable circumstances, I could not do so. What an auspicious occasion it is that you all have gathered here!

You know in two-three months elections are going to be held in which many parties are taking part. The Scheduled Castes Federation is also putting its candidates for the election. We will contest all the seats reserved for the Scheduled Castes in the State Assemblies and the Union Parliament and also some general seats where we have sufficient number of votes. I hope that our candidates will be successful. Our candidates' success depends mostly upon our own people. If all our people voted for our candidates, I am sure of our success, I would therefore urge that all the Scheduled Caste people should vote for the candidates put by the Scheduled Castes Federation, which is the only organisation of the Scheduled Castes and other Backward Classes.

I want to tell you how the British people have deceived during the period of their rule over India. They were successful in establishing their Raj in Hindustan although they were hundreds of miles away. First of all when the East India Company came to India its purpose was only to do business but by and by the Britishers became anxious to establish their *Raj* here. How were they able to achieve that objective? They had no army of their own in India. Nobody has so far been able to tell how the Britishers were able to subdue all the *Rajas* and *Maharajas* of India without army of their own. I am now going to answer this question. The British people became the rulers of India with the help of the Scheduled Castes people, who were called the Untouchables; who were illiterate and with whom the

CONDITIONS PRECEDENT FOR THE SUCCESSFUL WORKING OF DEMOCRACY

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was invited by the Members of the Poona District Law Library on 22nd December 1952 for :

- (i) Unveiling the portrait of late Shri L. R. Gokhale.
- (ii) For declaring open the collections of books donated by Shri A. B. Sethna and Shri H. V. Tulpule, two senior members of the Bar and preserved as separate sections in the Law Library.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and Mrs. S. Ambedkar were kind enough to accept this invitation.

Shri P. C. Bhat, District and Sessions Judge, Poona who as the President of the Poona District Law Library presided over the function.

Sangeet Kalanidhi Master Krishnarao Fulambrikar sang a welcome song in honour of Dr. and Mrs. Ambedkar. The welcome song was composed by one of our brother pleaders Shri S. G. Bhat.

The Vice-President Shri K. S. Choubal delivered a welcome speech.

Shri V. B. Gogate, Hon. Secretary read the report of the Library.

Shri B. D. Bal requested Dr. B. R. Ambedkar to unveil the portrait of the late Shri L. R. Gokhale and to declare open the sections of the books donated by Shri A. B. Sethna and H. V. Tulpule.

Then Dr. B.R. Ambedkar unveiled the portrait of late Shri L. R. Gokhale and also declared open the said sections.

On that occasion President Shri P. C. Bhat observed as follows :

"Ladies and Gentlemen, members of the Bench and the Bar

I have a pleasant function to perform and that is to request the Chief Guest to speak a few words on the subject of today. You will kindly excuse me for not making a long speech because of my ill health. I now request the Chief Guest to address us on the subject."

Dr. Ambedkar's Address

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

When the invitation came, I wrote to your Secretary that I would very much like to know what are the subjects in which the members of this District Library are interested, because I may come here and speak on a subject in which they may have no interest. If so, the visit would be of no value either to you or to me. He was kind enough to send me a list of four subjects. He said "You can select anyone of them." I was in a hurry to reply to him and could not convey to him my actual decision as to what subject I would select. But I told him in a general way that I would select one of the four and if I did not select one of the four, I will not travel beyond the ambit of the four which he had prescribed. The one subject which attracted me which he had mentioned was Parliamentary Democracy, and I thought that that was a subject on which I might speak. The subject which I have selected is not Parliamentary Democracy, but something which is very closely associated with Parliamentary Democracy and which from my point of view, and I believe from the point of view of the country, is a very important subject. Now, the subject which I am going to speak to you this evening is according to my wording of the subject: "Conditions Precedent for the Successful Working of Democracy." What are the conditions precedent which must exist in order that the democratic form of Government may continue to work without any kind of hindrance. That is the subject on which I propose to make a few observations.

Setting for the Subject

Now, before I actually deal with the subject-matter I propose to make a few preliminary observations in order to provide, what I call, a setting for the subject.

The first preliminary observation I propose to make is this that democracy is always changing its form. We speak of democracy, but democracy is not always the same. The Greeks spoke of Athenian Democracy. But as everyone knows, the Athenian Democracy was as different from our modern democracy as chalk is from cheese. The Athenian Democracy consisted of people

474 50 per cent of whom were slaves. Only 50 per cent were free. The 50 per cent who formed slaves had no place in the Government at all. Surely our democracy is quite different from the Athenian Democracy.

The second thing to which I would like to draw your attention by a preliminary observation is that even in the same country democracy is not always the same. You take the history of England. Nobody can say that the English Democracy before the English Revolution of 1688 was the same as the English Democracy which came after the revolution of 1688. Nor can anyone say that the English Democracy as existed between 1688 and 1832 when the first Reform Bill was passed, is the same as the democracy that developed after the passing of the Act of 1832. Democracy keeps on changing its form.

The third thing that I would like to draw your attention is that democracy not only undergoes changes in form; democracy always undergoes changes in purposes. You take the ancient English Democracy. What was the purpose of that democracy? It was to curb the King, to prevent the King from exercising what we now in law call his prerogative rights. The King even went to the extent of saying that although parliament may be there, as an enactment making body, "I as a King have got the prerogative to make the law and my law shall prevail." It was this kind of autocracy of the King which made democracy to come into being.

Today what is the purpose of the democracy? *The purpose of modern democracy is not so much to put a curb on an autocratic King but to bring about the welfare of the people.* That is a distinct change in the purpose of democracy. You will therefore see that in the title which I have given to my subject, I have deliberately used the words "conditions precedent for the success of modern democracy."

Democracy Defined

Again what do we mean by democracy? Let us have a clear understanding before I proceed to my subject. Democracy has been defined, as you know, by various people, writers of political science and philosophers, sociologists and so on. I take only two for the

475 purpose of illustrating my point. I do not know whether any of you is acquainted with that famous book by Walter Bagehot on the English Constitution, the first modern attempt to give a clear picture of democracy. If you refer to that book of Walter Bagehot, his definition of democracy is "government by discussion." That is how he defines democracy. Take another illustration that is of Abraham Lincoln. In his famous Getisburg speech which he made after the conquest of the Southern States, he defined democracy as "A government of the people, by the people, and for the people." Well, many other definitions could be added in order to give an idea what people mean by democracy. Personally for myself, I define democracy in a different way, in a much more concrete way, I think. My definition of democracy is "a form and a method of government whereby revolutionary changes in the economic and social life of the people are brought about without bloodshed." That is my definition of democracy. If democracy can enable those who are running it to bring about fundamental changes in the social and economic life of the people and the people accept those changes without resorting to bloodshed, then I say that there is democracy. That is the real test. It is perhaps the severest test. But when you are judging the quality of a material, you must put it to the severest test. And this is how I propose to define democracy at any rate so far as today's address is concerned. Now, how can such a democracy be successful? This is the main subject matter of my address. Now, unfortunately there are no dogmas laid down by any of the authors who have written about this subject of democracy which can give us any idea in concrete, as to what are the conditions precedent according to their judgement to make democracy a success. One has to read history and as a result of reading history to find out the break-down period in democracy's life in the different parts of the world where it had functioned and come to one's own conclusion.

Condition No. I

The first condition which I think is a condition precedent for the successful working of the democracy is that there must be no glaring inequalities in the society. There must not be an oppressed class. There must not be a suppressed class. There must not be a class which has got all the privileges and a class which has got all

476 the burdens to carry. Such a thing, such a division, such an organization of a society has within itself the germs of a bloody revolution, and perhaps it would be impossible for the democracy to cure them. Lincoln once said, although people have not understood his meaning, in the same Gettysburg's speech that "a house divided against itself cannot stand." He was of course referring to the conflict between the Southern States and the Northern States. He said, "If you of the Southern States and we of the Northern States are divided, we shall not be able to stand together when a foreign enemy comes." That was probably the meaning that he wanted to convey when he said that the house divided cannot stand. But I think that phrase of his or sentence of his is pregnant with much deeper meaning and it means, as I understand it, that the deep cleavages between class and class are going to be one of the greatest hindrances in the success of democracy. Because in democracy what happens? In democracy, everybody, even the oppressed, the suppressed, those who are deprived of their rights and those who carry the burden, they have the right to vote in the same way as those who have all the privileges, and probably those who are privileged are fewer than those who are unprivileged and since we adopt a majority rule as the rule of decision, it is quite possible that if the privileged few will not willingly and voluntarily surrender their privileges, then the distance between them and the lower orders will destroy democracy and bring into existence something quite different. There is, therefore, no doubt in my mind that if you examine the history of democracy in various parts of the world, you will find that one of the causes for the breakdown of democracy is the existence of these social cleavages.

Condition No. II

1000 The second thing which a successful working of democracy requires is the existence of opposition. Now, I have seen many people not only in this country but in England condemning the party system. I was just recently reading, just before I came, a small little book published by the Hansard Society on the party system in England and here is one whole chapter devoted to this question whether the party system is a good system and should be tolerated. There is a variety of views. Now, it seems to me that all

477 those who are against the party system and who must be taken also on that very account to be against opposition, seem completely to misunderstand what democracy means. What does democracy mean? I am not defining it. I am asking a functional question. It seems to me that democracy means a veto of power. Democracy is a contradiction of hereditary authority or autocratic authority. Democracy means that at some stage somewhere there must be a veto on the authority of those who are ruling the country. In autocracy there is no veto. The King once elected is there with his inherent or divine right to rule. He does not have to go before his subject at the end of every five years to ask them, "Do you think I am a good man? Do you think I have done well during the last five years? If so, will you re-elect me?" There is no veto on the part of anybody on the power of the King. But in democracy we have provided, that at every five years those who are in authority must go to the people and ask whether in the opinion of the people they are well qualified to be entrusted with power and authority to look after their interest, to mould their destiny, to defend them. That is what I call veto. Now, a democracy is not satisfied with a quinquennial veto that the Government should go at the end of five years only to the people and in the meantime there should be nobody to question the authority of the Government. Democracy requires that not only that the Government should be subject to the veto, long-term veto of five years, at the hands of the people, but there must be an immediate veto. There must be people in the parliament immediately ready there and then to challenge the Government. Now, if you understand what I am saying, democracy means that nobody has any perpetual authority to rule, but that rule is subject to sanction by the people and can be challenged in the house itself. You will see how important it is to have an opposition. Opposition means that the Government is always on the anvil. The Government must justify every act that it does to those of the people who do not belong to its party. Unfortunately, in our country all our newspapers, for one reason or other, I believe, it is the revenue from advertisements, have given far more publicity to the Government than to the opposition, because you cannot get any revenue from the opposition. They get revenue from the Government and you find columns after columns of speeches reeled out by members of the

ruling party in the daily newspapers and the speeches made by the opposition are probably put somewhere on the last page in the last column. I am not criticising what is democracy. I am saying what is the condition precedent for a democracy. *The opposition is a condition precedent for democracy.* But do you know that in England not only is the opposition recognised, but the leader of the opposition is paid a salary by the Government in order to run the opposition. He gets a secretary, he gets a small staff of stenographers and writers, he has a room in the House of Commons where he does his business. In the same way, you will find that in Canada the leader of the opposition gets a salary in the way as a Prime Minister does, because in both these countries democracy feels that there must be someone to show whether the Government is going wrong. And this must be done incessantly and perpetually and that is why they do not mind spending money on the leader of the opposition.

Condition No. III

I think there is a **third condition** which may also be called a condition precedent for the success of democracy and that is equality in law and administration. One need not at this stage delite too much on equality before the law, although there might be cases here and there when there is no equality before the law. But what is important is equality of treatment in administration. It is quite possible for good many of you to imagine or to recall cases where a party Government is carrying on the administration for the benefit of the members of the party. At any rate, I can recall a great many instances of this sort. Suppose there is a law which says that nobody shall deal in a particular commodity without a licence. Nobody can quarrel with that law because it is universal. There is no discrimination in that particular piece of legislation. But let us go further and see what happens when a man goes to a particular officer or to the Minister with an application for licence in trading in a particular commodity. I do not know, it is quite possible again that probably the Minister may first look at his hat. What sort of a coloured hat he is wearing? If he is wearing a hat which appeals to him and it assures him that he is a party man and another man goes with another sort of dress or belonging to another party and in making his decision the licence is given to the first and refused to

the second, although both of them on merits are equally qualified to have that licence, then obviously this is a discrimination in administration and there is no equity. Of course the question of licence, i.e. the granting of this privilege and that privilege is perhaps small thing and affects only a very small class of people. But let us go further and see what would happen if this kind of discrimination enters administration. Supposing a member of a certain party is being prosecuted for a certain offence for which there is abundant evidence, and suppose the head of the party in that particular area goes to the District Magistrate and tells him that it is not right for him to prosecute this man because he belongs to his party and says, "well, if you don't do it, I shall refer the matter to the Minister and get you transferred from this place to some other place." You can just imagine what chaos and injustice would result in administration. The sort of a thing which used to happen in the United States which is called a Spoil System, that is to say, when one party came in office, it removed all the employees that were employed by their predecessor including even the clerks and the peons and they filled their vacancies by those gentlemen who helped the new party to go in power. The United States as a matter of fact, had no administration worth speaking of for a number of years. Subsequently, they themselves realised that this was not helpful to democracy. They abolished this Spoil System. In England, in order that administration should remain pure, impartial, away from politics and policy, they have made a distinction between what is called political offices and civil offices. The civil service is permanent. It serves all the parties whichever is in office and carries out the administration without any kind of interference from the Minister. Such a thing at one time did exist in our country when the British were here. I recall very clearly an incident in my own career as a member of the Government of India. You perhaps will recollect that every Viceroy has got in Delhi some street or club named after him. The only Governor General who does not get his name attached to some street or institution is Lord Linlithgow. His Private Secretary was my friend. I was then in charge of P. W. D. and there were plenty of works I was in charge of. He came and quite said to me "My dear Dr. could you do something for naming some institution or work after the name of Lord Linlithgow?" He

said it is looking very glaring that everybody's name is there but not his. I said "I will consider." I was then discussing the construction of a barrage over Jamuna in order to provide water to the city of Delhi in summer, because it goes dry in summer, I told my Secretary who was a European by name Priar. And I said, "Mr. Priar look here, this is what the Secretary to the Governor General has said to me. Do you think we can do something?" What do you think was his reply? His reply was "Sir, we must not do any such thing at all." Such a thing at any rate in this country to do would be quite impossible. For any officer to say something which is contrary to the wishes of the Minister is, to my mind, utterly impossible. But in those days it was quite possible, because we too in India like Great Britain had made that wise decision that administration must not be interfered with by the Government, and that the function of the Government was to lay down policy but not to interfere and not to make any discrimination. This is very fundamental and I am afraid we had already departed from that and may completely abnegate and abolish the thing we have had so far.

Condition No. IV

The fourth condition precedent, in my judgement, for the successful working of democracy is the observance of constitutional morality. Many people seem to be very enthusiastic about the Constitution. Well, I am afraid, I am not. I am quite prepared to join that body of people who want to abolish the Constitution, at any rate to redraft it. But what we forget is that we have a Constitution which contains legal provisions, only a skeleton. The flesh of that skeleton is to be found in what we call constitutional morality. However, in England it is called the conventions of the constitution and people must be ready to observe the rules of the game. Let me give you one or two illustrations which come to my mind at this moment. You remember when the 13 American colonies rebelled, their leader was Washington. It is really a very inadequate way of defining his position in the American life of that day merely to say that he was a leader. To the American people Washington was God. If you read his life and history, he was made the first President of the United States after the constitution was drafted. After his term was over, what happened? He refused to stand for the second time.

I have not the least doubt in my mind that if Washington had stood ten times one after the other for the Presidentship, he would have been elected unanimously without a rival. But he stepped down the second time. When he was asked why, he said, "My dear people, you have forgotten the purpose for which we made this constitution. We made this constitution because we did not want a hereditary monarchy and we did not want a hereditary ruler or a dictator. If after abandoning and swerving away from the allegiance of the English King, you come to this country and stick to worship me year after year and term after term what happens to your principles? Can you say that you have rightly rebelled against the authority of the English king when you are substituting me in his place? He said, "Even if your royalty and fidelity to me compels you to plead that I should stand a second time, I as one who enunciated that principle that we should not have hereditary authority, must not fall a prey to your emotion." Ultimately, they prevailed upon him to stand at least a second time. And he did. And the third time when they approached him, he spurned them away. Let me give you another illustration. You know Windsor Edward the VIII whose serial story has now been published in the Times of India. I had gone to the Round Table Conference and there was a great controversy going on there as to whether the King should be allowed to marry the woman whom he wanted to marry, especially when he was prepared to marry her in a morganatic marriage, so that she may not be a queen or whether the British people should deny him even that personal right and force him to abdicate. Mr Baldwin was of course against the King's marriage. He would not allow him, and said, "If you do not listen to me, you will have to go." Our friend Mr. Churchill was the friend of Edward the VIII and was encouraging him. At that time the Labour Party was in the opposition. They had no majority and I remember very well the Labour Party people considered whether they could not make capital out of this issue and defeat Mr. Baldwin; because there was a large number of conservatives who in their loyalty wanted to support the King; and I remember the late Prof. Laski writing a series of articles in the 'Herald' condemning any such move on the part of the Labour party. He said, "By our convention we have always agreed that the king

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must accept the advice of the Prime Minister and if he does not accept the advice of the Prime Minister, the Prime Minister shall force his ejection." That being our convention, it would be wrong on our part to defeat Mr. Baldwin, on an issue which increases the authority of the King. And the Labour Party listened to his advice and did nothing of the kind. They said, they must observe the rules of the game. If you read English history, you will find many such illustrations where the party leaders have had before them many temptations to do wrong to their opponents in office or in opposition by clutching at an issue which gave them temporary power, but which they refused to fall a prey to, because they knew that they would damage the constitution and damage democracy.

There is one other thing which I think is very necessary in the working of democracy and it is this that in the name of democracy there must be no tyranny of the majority over the minority. The minority must always feel safe that although the majority is carrying on the Government, the minority is not being hurt, or the minority is not being hit below the belt. This is a thing which is very greatly respected in the House of Commons. Good many of you must be remembering the results of elections in England in 1931 when Mr. Ramsay Mac Donald left the Labour Party and formed the National Government. When the election came, the Labour Party which I think numbered somewhere about 150 or so, had only 50 members out of 650 with Mr. Baldwin as the Prime Minister. I was then there. But I have never heard of a single instance of this small minority of 50 members belonging to the Labour Party under the huge majority of the conservatives ever complaining that they were denied their due rights of speech, or opposition or making motions of any kind as you probably know. You take our own Parliament. I am not justifying what the members of the opposition are doing by constantly bringing in motions of censure or adjournment motions. It is not a very happy thing to work in parliament to be constantly dunning these adjournment motions. All the same, you must have noticed that there is hardly any motion, whether of adjournment or censure which has been admitted for the debate. It surprises me considerably. In my reading of the English parliamentary debates I have very seldom come

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across a case where a demand for adjournment has been refused either by the Speaker, provided of course it is an order by the Government. When I was a member of the Bombay Legislative Assembly, there were a few of our friends Mr. Morarji, Mr. Munshi and Mr. Kher and others who were in office. They never allowed a single motion of adjournment to be discussed. Either our friend Mr. Mavlankar who was then the Speaker helped them by ruling it out or as he admitted, the Minister objected to it. You know what happens when a Minister objects? When a Minister objects, the man who proposes the adjournment motion has to produce 30 or 40 people, whatever the quota is. It may be that if Government were constantly to oppose adjournment motions of the small community which is represented in the house by a group of few members such as 4, 5 or 6, such small minorities can never get a chance to ventilate their grievances. What happens is that these minorities develop a contempt for parliamentary people and develop a revolutionary spirit something unconstitutional. It is therefore necessary that when democracy is working, the majority on which it is based, must not act in a tyrannical manner.

One other point I will refer and then close. I think that democracy does require the functioning of moral order in society. Somehow, our political scientists have never considered this aspect of democracy. Ethics is something separate from politics. You may learn politics and you may know nothing about ethics as though politics can work without ethics. To my mind it is an astounding proposition. After all, in democracy what happens? Democracy is spoken of as a free Government. And what do we mean by free Government? Free Government means that in vast aspects of social life people are left free to carry on without interference of law, or if law has to be made, then the law maker expects that society will have enough morality in it to make the law a success. The only person who, I think, has referred to this aspect of democracy is Laski. In one of his books he has very categorically stated that the moral order is always taken for granted in democracy. If there is no moral order, democracy will go to pieces as it is going now probably in our own country.

486 democracy? Do you see any trace of it there now? It has all gone. It has all vanished. They are probably under the dominance or surveillance of other countries. There is no democracy left. Take some of the most recent examples. Syria had got a democratic government. After a few years there was a military rebellion and the Commander-in-Chief of Syria became the ruler of Syria and democracy vanished in air. Take another example. What happened in Egypt? There too, they had been a democratic government beginning right from 1922 for 30 years. In one night Faruk had to leave and Nagib became the dictator of Egypt and he abolished the Constitution.

With all these examples before us, I think we ought to be very cautious and very considerate regarding our own future. You ought to consider whether we ought not to take some very positive steps in order to remove some of the stones and the boulders which are lying in our path in order to make our democracy safe. If, as a result of these few observations I have made, I have effected in you a consciousness that this is a problem on which we cannot afford to sleep, I think I would thank myself for the work I have done. Now ladies and gentlemen, I do not wish to detain you long and I thank you for the kind attention with which you have listened to what I have said."

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KNOWLEDGE IS THE FOUNDATION OF MAN'S LIFE

On December 24, 1952, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar addressed the annual gathering of the students of the Rajaram College, Kolhapur. In the course of his speech he observed :

" Knowledge is the foundation of a man's life and every effort must be made to maintain the intellectual stamina of a student and arouse his intellect." He asked the students to develop their thinking power and make use of the knowledge they had gained.

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Elections Lapses

The election reversal of the Scheduled Castes Federation in the Bombay Legislative Assembly were not due to any weakness in the organisation, but to lack of companions.

It would be a pity if anybody could prove that the Scheduled Castes Federation was weak. Its candidates secured hundred per cent votes from the Scheduled Castes people.

Mr. P. V. Rajbhoj, General Secretary of the Federation, who presided over the meeting, announced that the Executive Committee of the Federation would meet in Delhi in January, 1953.

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