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A POLITICAL WEEKLY

Editor :—SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

VOL I. No. 2

CALCUTTA, SATURDAY AUGUST 12, 1939

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FORWARD BLOC

SATURDAY, AUGUST 12

The Role of Forward Bloc

After a number of preliminary skirmishes, the left-wing under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi succeeded in capturing the Indian National Congress in 1920. That was the signal for several of the erstwhile leaders like Messrs. Jinnah, B. C. Pal and B. Chakravarti to walk out of the Congress. The left-wing became the dominant party in the Congress and for a time commanded an overwhelming majority. With the suspension of the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1922, a rift occurred within the majority party and, over the issue of carrying the fight into the Legislatures, it split into two groups—the Swarajists and the No-changers. After a time, the differences were made up through the Congress accepting the Swarajist plan of extending the fighting front to the Legislatures.

With the publication of the Nehru Committee's Report in 1928 in which the majority of the members advocated a Constitution for India based on Dominion Status, a left-wing emerged in the form of the Independence League. At the annual session of the Congress held in Calcutta in December, 1928, the members of the League endeavoured but failed to induce the Congress to alter its creed so that Independence would be declared in unmistakable language to be the goal of the Congress. The opposition to this move came from the main body in the Congress led by Mahatma Gandhi. The conflict with the Independence League went on for a year, till at the Lahore session of the Congress held in December, 1929, the Congress, at the instance of Mahatmaji, adopted Independence as its goal.

This compromise enabled all sections in the Congress to join hands and march shoulder to shoulder in the Civil Disobedience Campaign which was launched in 1930.

The suspension of the struggle in 1933 and the adoption of a parliamentary programme by the All India Congress Committee in 1934 provoked a revolt from the Left. The Congress Socialist

Party then came into existence and, thanks to its timely appearance and its dynamic activity, the drift towards Constitutionalism was checked to a large extent. The Congress Socialist Party soon became the rallying-centre for the leftist elements in the Congress.

From 1934 to 1937 the Congress Socialist Party made considerable headway both in numbers and influence. But in 1938, at the Haripura Session of the Congress held in February, it was found that the C. S. P. was no longer forging ahead. In my Presidential Address at the Haripura Congress, I observed that the role of the C. S. P. within the Congress should be an anti-imperialist left-wing role and not a Socialist role and only by playing the former role, would it continue to make headway.

Socialist and Communist friends with whom this matter was discussed after the Haripura Congress agreed with this view. It was generally felt that all progressive, radical and anti-imperialist elements in the Congress, who might not be ready to join the Socialist or Communist Party, should be organised on the basis of a common minimum programme. I felt, further, that only by that means could the onslaught of the Right be resisted and the soil prepared for the growth of a Marxist Party.

The Gandhi Seva Sangha, which may be regarded as the "steel frame" of the present majority party (or Gandhi Party) in the Congress, held an important Conference at Delang in Orissa in March, 1938. At this Conference the Gandhi Seva Sangha decided to launch an offensive against the Left. The Sangha decided, among other things, to send its agents into the labour field with a view to ousting those trade-unionists who stood for a class-conscious trade-union movement in this country. It decided also to depute its prominent members to capture provincial and other Congress organisations in the country.

The parliamentary programme adopted by the All India Congress Committee in 1934 found its culmination in the acceptance of ministerial office in the provinces in 1937. This enabled the Right-wing to so consolidate its position and strengthen its influence and prestige as to launch an offensive against the Left in 1938. Against this determined attack, the Left could hope to preserve its existence, only if it were consciously organised and disciplined.

If all the progressive, radical and anti-imperialist elements in the Congress had rallied together on the platform of the Congress Socialist Party, then matters would have been greatly simplified. But this did not happen. Because of this, the idea of a Left Bloc for organising all the left elements on the basis of a common minimum programme was mooted after the Haripura Congress. If the existing Leftist Parties had undertaken the responsibility of developing the Left Bloc (now renamed as the Forward Bloc)—then the task of Left-consolidation would by now have proceeded apace.

But though individuals or groups may fail us, the cause cannot be allowed to suffer to be neglected. Hence the Forward Bloc has been formed with such left elements as are now available. There is no doubt that the Bloc will grow and expand with unprecedented rapidity, despite the many obstacles that beset its path. And the time will soon come when even those who are hesitating to join to-day, will shake off their vacillation and take plunge. Left-consolidation, winning over the majority in the Congress, and resumption of the national struggle—these represent the three-fold task before the Forward Bloc and before the Left in the Congress. Let those who criticise us or pick holes produce a better alternative. We shall not hesitate to accept it. We are afraid, however, that no other alternative is possible.

The Congress has to be saved from the clutches of the Right which has given up the idea of a struggle and is now thinking in terms of Constitutionalism and Reformism. Only the Left can preserve the revolutionary character of the Congress and bring about an early resumption of the fight for national freedom.

Today, in certain quarters, the word "Socialism" has become cheap. One can even find Socialists in some provinces who are the henchmen of the Ministers. Let us therefore beware of Rightists who masquerade in the cloak of Socialism. What is wanted is deeds not words. Genuine Socialists must play an anti-imperialist left-wing role in their day to day activity. Uttering leftist slogans and making spicy speeches will not suffice by themselves.

Forward Bloc will rally all progressive, radical and anti-imperialist elements in the Congress, whether they be Socialists

or not. Through this consolidation, the people will equip themselves for the anti-imperialist struggle that will bring India her birthright of liberty. But the attainment of political Independence will not mean the dissolution of the Bloc. It will only mean a new phase in its life and activity. And that phase will undoubtedly be a Socialist one.

Subhas Chandra Bose

CONGRESS AND CRITICISM

The little boy in Heine, whose father had taken him to witness the splendours of a review, breathed out a profound truth 'these soldiers were once men'. They are now without will, without soul and without hope, cogs in a machine to which they have been taught to bow down without a thought, and without a murmur. Heine's little boy might have pointed out to us in his own imperious and unanswerable manner: 'you are only Congressmen', cogs in a machine. Only Heine's little boy—he is below eighteen years of age and is imprudent—is not admitted in our company. He speaks bluntly—and he hates uniformity. He differs from our view of ourselves.

We need to be told the naked truth. "I hear the tic-tac of the mill, but I see no flour", said Verlaine with reference to poetry of mere words and sounds. In politics, which should demand thought and action, only the tic-tac of the mill is apt to be irritating, because it is immediately harmful. In the Congress of to-day we hear only the tic-tac of the mill; it has been reduced into an election machinery. The ideals which imbued it, the aspirations of men which made it the instrument of their will, the energy of faith which kept it very much alive, have been shoved into the lumber-room of unnecessary things. They have receded into the background; in the foreground is the mill, the tic-tac of the mill, and men busy oiling the machine and keeping it trim for election contests. "It is time to cleanse the

Congress if the country is not to be polluted", says Sardar Vallabhai Patel, and the cleansing work is going on with a zeal and a thoroughness which should give heart to the most thorough-going authoritarian. The Congress of Sardar Patel, the Congress that has taken to the cleansing work, has shut its door on the highway

and the open road of life. Within its walls interrogation is not allowed. The spirit of enquiry is discouraged. The spirit of adventure is regarded as suspect. The voice of criticism is hushed. The note of dissent is silenced or suppressed. The other man's point of view enters there as a whiff of hot, uncomfortable air. You protest at your peril. You question at the risk of being misjudged and misrepresented. The ideal of its rule of conduct is homogeneity, a dull, deadening uniformity. "Accept" all ye who enter here. Unquestioned acceptance of whatever is there, unquestioned acceptance of whatever *they* think to be good for you, and him, and me, and that no man's land, the country, is the rule of discipline. But this discipline has failed to take note of the imponderables of politics. It has not extinguished the true fire of life. It has not suppressed the murmurs of discontent. Neither the devastating logic of Jawaharlal nor the devastating contempt of Sardar Patel has suppressed these murmurs altogether. The high dudgeon of Mr. Kripalani and the familiarrodomontade of Mr. Satyamurti will never do. Where logic has failed, no magic will ever succeed. "Great God" wrote Voltaire, "what a misfortune it is to walk in a wood through which the Queen's bitch or the King's horse has passed! how dangerous to look out at a window! and how difficult to be happy in this life!" This really is the feeling of the protestants. It were better, for the Congress and the country, if our High Command learnt to undertake, to use the challenging words of Savonarola, a "bonfire of vanities." That alone will save the Congress. And we want the Congress to be saved—for democracy. And we want it to undertake the good fight for independence. No organisation, and no movement, can subsist on the programme of cleansing the stables.

as the members acted under the inspiration of Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose. The Working Committee however leaves it open to the provincial organisations to take action if they think it necessary for the proper observance of discipline and especially if the offending members do not express regret for their indiscipline. The Committee further empowers the President to take disciplinary action against such members who instead of expressing regret for their conduct of indiscipline persist in it."

This Discipline!

"The Congress Working Committee has given most anxious consideration to the action of Sri Subhas Bose, the erstwhile President of the National Congress, in connection with two resolutions of the last meeting of the A.I.C.C. known as "Satyagraha in the Provinces" and "Congress Ministries and P.C.C.S." The Working Committee also considered the long letter of Subhas Babu in this connection.

The Working Committee with great sorrow and reluctance has come to the conclusion that he has wholly missed the main point raised by the President of the Indian National Congress as clearly set forth in his declaration. As an ex-President he should have realised that after having received peremptory instructions from the President it was his clear duty as the servant of the nation to obey implicitly even though he differed from the ruling of the President. It was open to him, if he felt aggrieved by the ruling, to appeal to the Working Committee or the A.I.C.C. But he was bound, so long as the President's instructions stood, to carry them out faithfully.

This is the first condition of the proper functioning of any organisation, much more so of a vast organisation like the National Congress, which is engaged in a life and death struggle with the best organised and most powerful imperial corporation in the world. If what seems to be Mr. Subhas Bose's contention in his letter that every member is free to interpret the Congress constitution as he likes, prevails, there will be perfect anarchy in the Congress and it must break to pieces in no time. The Working Committee has come to the painful conclusion that it will fail in its duty, if it condones the deliberate and flagrant breach of discipline by Subhas Chandra Bose.

The working Committee resolves that for his grave act of indiscipline Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose is declared disqualified as the President of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee for three years as from August 1939.

The Working Committee trusts that Subhas Babu will see the error of his way and loyally submit to this disciplinary action.

The Working Committee has taken note of the indiscipline of many other Congressmen including responsible officials and it has refrained from taking any action

(Continued on Column 2)

CURRENT COMMENTS

Sound Advice

"I have no doubt in my mind," said the inimitable Mr. Satyamurti to a Madras audience, "that if the British Government want the Indian States to join the federation they will join it." An uncharitable critic comments upon the statement as a clear case of wish being father of thought. We however are disposed to take it as a piece of disinterested advice regarding the powers and duties of the British Government apropos of their federal Scheme. The British Government will oblige Mr Satyamurti by asking the princes to join federation.

The Jamshedpur Award

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the arbitrators in the Jamshedpur Labour Dispute, have given their award. We have read it with all the care it deserves and frankly confess that we have been disappointed. The award has all the precision of a balanced court-judgment; nay, it is almost faultless in its judicial rigour. But there is not much of the humanitarian touch, none of the socialist's fervour that we have learnt to associate with Pandit Jawaharlal. "Dignity, courtesy, caution and discipline" are all good and admirable virtues to preach a sermon about but these have hardly any chance of an adequate bloom in the dark, dreary and often violently provocative atmosphere in which labourers have to live and work. If this fact is lost sight of, the whole perspective becomes blurred and judgment is muddled. This has unfortunately been the case in regard to the Jamshedpur award. An ungenerous out look, or the want of an outlook, has thoroughly vitiated it.

The Illusion of Dr. Benes

There was a distinct ring of pathetic sincerity in the speech that Dr. Benes delivered recently at the Liberal Summer School, Cambridge. The conduct of Democracies in relation to Axis Powers formed the main burden of his dismal song. The tragic victim of Munich which resulted in the sell-out of his dear motherland, roundly charged the Democracies with "lack of belief and faith in their own principles" and regretted that there is no serious attempt on their part to resist the aggression of the Dictators. The repeatedly weak-kneed surrender of Mr. Cham-

berlain and Daladier at the most crucial hour has reduced the Peace Front against Fascist aggression to a farce. Democracies are merely bargaining and speculating while the Dictators are merrily stomaching one weak state after another. Real democracy and peace have today been buried fourteen fathoms deep and it is therefore no wonder that the hope of their ultimate victory sounded rather hollow in the mouth of such a confirmed idealist as Dr. Benes.

Jute Rule

"Who rules Bengal?" In the pre-autonomy days, the simple folk in the villages knew, it was jute that ruled their life; the man in the street knew, it was the Jute millowners on the Hughli that ruled the province. But these are different times. We have a new regime that has supplanted the old one. It is no longer the old rule, for it is now only a *misrule*. When jute ruled the village life, the people at least got a return for their labour. Under the present misrule that has been the result of the old, the villager is a starving victim. The whole industry is in a hopeless quandary. The vagaries and tyrannies of this indirect rule are too patent to deceive any one. By a system of thoughtless exploitation the Jute Mill Association made a fortune for their millowners and ruined the cause of jute in the world market. Astonishing profits were piled up and they can pay dividend even if the mills would not work for some time.

Self Examination

"Functions ostensibly generous and democratic cannot be discharged by a body whose composition is autocratic"—said Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya. And Pandit Jawaharlal said, "They did not want a tyrannic authoritarian type of organisation." We think the two distinguished leaders allowed themselves the indulgence to think aloud and will not have the courage to fling these descriptions of the Congress (these are descriptions of the Congress) to the face of the Working Committee and the A. I. C. C.

Othello's Occupation

Mrs. Sorojini Naidu, addressing the students of Dacca, said, "They should resist the attempts of the so-called leaders to exploit youth for their own purposes. They should not allow themselves to be

that students should not take part in political activities. If she meant that, she was only contradicting all her past utterances on the duties of students. Possibly in warning the students against being "carried away by mere slogans". She only warned them against being carried away by a certain type of slogans, namely that type of slogans to which she and her political friends do not subscribe.

Spain under Franco

With the handing over of power to Falange Espanola in Spain by General Franco, the country has bloomed forth into a full-fledged fascist state. The Falangist organisation has lived and thrived under the thumb of Germany and Spain's close link with the Axis is now a plain, well-proved fact. Treading in the footsteps of Hitler, Franco has already begun a purge of immense magnitude. Arrest, concentration camp, bayonet and bullet have already been set in full operation to weed out inconvenient elements. A letter published in the *Manchester Guardian* reveals the shocking fact that no less than 800,000 people have been safely lodged in concentration camps. Even this does not complete the tragic tale. Intellectuals, who are responsible for filling the workers' heads with 'dangerous ideas' have become the special target of Franco's vengeance. Instead of letting them rot in dark cells and grow more explosive in thought, Franco has sought to make a short shrift of the potential danger by shooting them down one after another. History, it seems, has been a bad teacher for Franco.

Congress M. L. A'S

The Congress Working Committee, it seems, is dissatisfied with the war policy of the British Government. And as a measure of protest it has asked the members of the Central Assembly "to refrain from attending the next session of the Assembly." It is good so far as it goes. But the Working Committee might have placed on record the country's dissatisfaction in the matter of the extensions of the life of the Assembly. The Government are hatching the federation into being—but the Working Committee will only "combat" federation when we have all begun to work it! In putting off the offensive, the Congress is betraying the country into the grip of what will, before long, be a settled fact.

THE LEFT LOSES JAWAHARLAL

By GIRIJA PROSANNA GANGULI

At one time Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru used to be regarded as the 'coming man' of India, being in fact almost the second man in importance after Gandhiji. His resilient intellect, his broad mind which he kept open as a throughfare for all progressive ideas, his spirit tinctured with the idealist's melancholy, his limber strength and his sincerity ringing clear as a bell—all these had made him a riband in the cap of youth. And what great things had he done! Chief among these were two distinct ideological contributions of first rate importance to the Indian movement. Gandhiji's map had never known more than three countries, India, England and Africa; and he had never thought except in terms of the first. It was Panditji who battered down the barriers that had walled in our view. It was he, who taught us to think that our fate was inextricably bound up with that of the rest of the world; that if you but cast a pebble anywhere it disturbs the equilibrium of the earth. His message that the frontiers of our battle lie not only in India but also in China and Spain has burnt itself in the memory of young India. This sudden opening out of our political horizon we owe more to Panditji than to any other single man. He was the man, in short, who brought our Congress up to date.

The other great contribution of Panditji was the slow filtering of the congress with radical ideas. This task Panditji achieved by means of a co-ordination of the two opposed elements in the thought of the Congress—Conservative and Radical. Panditji was almost our tower of Pisa standing ever with an incline. While its bottom rested on a conservative foundation its trunk had a remarkable Radical lean. And Conservative and radical could claim it equally. Yet it must be admitted that prior to Tripuri this task of Panditji was not a particularly difficult one. Up till then Right and Left were, for all practical purposes, merely two terms living their quiet lives in the region of dialectics. At the utmost they shook the tea-table. Since Tripuri they have developed into live practical issues and have shaken the Congress. And unfortunately for us our

Pisan tower too, has begun to behave queerly. It has almost wholly corrected its bias and already stands pretty upright upon its bottom.

This re-orientation in Panditji's position has been caused principally by his polar attraction to Gandhiji's personality. There has probably been no more incisive critic of Gandhiji than Pandit Nehru. But across all his criticism of Gandhiji cuts one profound feeling namely that Gandhiji is not a logician but a magician. And it is common psychological knowledge that when it comes to action mere intellectual realisation does not carry one any part of the way against the admonitions of the emotions; it is then the heart that rules and the head that subserves.

This was, however, no cause for anxiety while there was unity in the Congress and while Gandhiji continued in his own person to symbolise its aspirations. But, as it is, things have changed in Indian politics of late and Gandhiji has clearly ceased to be the symbol he was. He is now a shrunken god dominating only the 'Right'. This has altered Panditji's position too.

The change in Panditji was first marked in his statements in connection with the Presidential election issue of January last. When the Right had set up a mighty ululation over the alleged aspersions upon itself by S. J. Subhas Bose, the Left in particular and the country in general looked to Panditji to take a correct stand in the matter. Contrary to all expectations, however, Panditji chimed in with the Rightist chorus. He issued a statement that was *ex parte* and *ex cathedra* in character. He demanded an unconditional withdrawal of the 'aspersions' from S. J. Bose and dropped altogether the uncomfortable other side of the matter. Sardar Patel's damning of S. J. Bose was not as much as mentioned. This was all unlike Panditji's great and gracious ways. In that hour Mr. Kamath alone had the courage to speak up and face the Rightist ire.

His next step away from his independent and unattached position was taken

when on S. J. Bose's re-election he boggled out of the Working Committee in Rightist company. His statement at the time had rung hollow.

The nerve-wrecking strain of the troublous session of the A. I. C. C.—almost wholly caused by the Rightist intransigence—sent Panditji into silence for a while. All was bitterness and vexation of spirit. And Panditji tried to divert himself by watching the coming of the monsoon and he took thought. For the rift in the Congress was well-nigh complete and his old middle position had become impossible. Panditji was passing through a crisis. His well-known article 'The A. I. C. C. and After'—a typically Romantic piece marked by the Romantic symptoms of effusiveness, indecision and idealistic melancholy—was an expression of the agonising process of the transformation he was undergoing. In the article, however, Panditji was writing off his melancholy—a Goethean process—and at the end of it he had emerged from his crisis. After that first thing Panditji opened fire on the Forward Bloc in a speech at Cawnpore. His shots at the time were of wool rather than of lead though since then Panditji has warmed up to his shooting practice and has loaded his gun with the harder material. Yet his upright position was not yet completely achieved for his target was the Bloc—not the entire Left. By the time of the Bombay session of the A. I. C. C., it is clear, the little remaining slant in Panditji finally disappeared. While the anti-democratic measures on Satyagraha and criticism of Congress ministries were evoking sparks and flames for and against themselves from debaters Panditji sat yawning with his hands in his pockets. He has told us since that he had a mind to speak against the measures. But that does not alter the fact that he had somehow found it worth while to keep his mind to himself. Evidently Panditji's role as a Rightist had begun.

Then followed another onslaught on the Forward Bloc in the shape of Mr. Kamath's removal from the Secretaryship of the Planning Committee. Panditji's letters to Mr. Kamath were altogether blameless in point of sentiments and expression. A suspicion, however, persists

(Continued on page 8)

O. G. P. U.

By SUDHI PRODHAN

Union States Political Administration, a title abbreviated to OGPU or GPU (Gay Pay Oo)—is a name which 'causes an involuntary shudder even in a passing foreigner'. So says an American writer on Soviet Russia. The fascist and quasi-fascist press is continuously spreading slanderous lies against OGPU for its 'arbitrary arrests and summary executions, the horrors of nerve-racking investigations and the widespread anxiety and gloom caused by its net-work of spies'. The unearthing of treachery revealed in the three successive trials of the notorious Trotskites and Bukherinites has added to this myth and OGPU has been represented to be the repository of un-heard of power, torture, machinations and mysterious frame-ups.

It is absurdly utopian to suggest that Soviet Russia can dispense with the service of an organisation of secret police at a time when half-a-dozen western powers are assiduously trying to smash the first Socialist Republic from within and without. Therefore the primary function of OGPU is to maintain the revolution by suppressing all counter-revolutionary activities including not only murder, sabotage, sedition and treason, but also any form of banditry, riot or serious public disorder.

But there is other side of the shield which represents features peculiar in their usefulness and constructivity. Some of them are stated briefly here.

Traveller's Friend

There are public offices of the GPU in all cities and other considerable urban centres, often at the railway station, to which any traveller is recommended to apply in difficulty, where information, advice and assistance are courteously supplied on any subject whatever. Here is a testimony of an American writer. He writes: The American working in Russia will probably find the GPU to be at all times to him a friend in need. When transportation is difficult, the GPU will give him space reserved especially for that. Should trouble arise concerning his passports, the GPU will always be found willing to help.

Should he feel himself persecuted or hindered by his trust officials, communists

or non-communists, the all-dreaded GPU can be relied upon to alleviate the difficulty.

Prison Reforms

In addition to the government prisons, the GPU maintains at Bolshevo, in the Moscow oblast, a remarkable reformatory settlement, which seems to go further, alike in promise and achievement, towards an ideal treatment of offenders against society than anything else in the world. There is an extensive establishment accommodating a thousand inmates. It is situated on the pleasant country estates of an expropriated millionaire industrialist, where it combines manufacturing production with agriculture. Walls or locked gates interfering with inmates' freedom to leave is an uncommon feature there. Those, who are selected as likely to be reformable out of the mass of persons who have been at least twice convicted for larceny, burglary or robbery with violence are simply set to work on piece-work wages to be spent freely at the various departments of prison shop; allowed to smoke and to talk, to enjoy music and theatre, and to spend their leisure, within reasonable limits as they choose. After a certain period, they may invite their wives with them. Thus the colony steadily grows as a self-supporting mixed population now containing nearly 3000 convicts and free men. Nor does Bolshevo stand alone. There are in the U.S.S.R. ten other reformatories on the same plan. M. Guibound-Riband, a French advocate who was allowed to make flying visits to any of the Soviet prisons he liked, found that the prison and the treatment of prisoner were human and rational and far superior to those of France.

Child Rescue Works.

The former Head of the G P U, Djerjinsky, was a great lover of children and he gladly accepted the task of capturing and reforming hundreds of thousands of 'homeless waifs'—the sad product of civil war and famine. Djerjinsky and the G P U officials established and maintained the institutions in which these boys and girls were, with a high degree of success, reconditioned and then placed out in the industrial world as self-supporting and law-abiding citizens.

Constructive Works.

During the past few years the G P U has been engaged in many constructional works, partly as a means of employing the engineers, technicians and manual workers whom its tribunals have condemned for counter-revolutionary activities. In many cases special housing facilities have been arranged for people working in this manner. It has been stated by an American writer that the famous engineer, Professor Ramzin, the central figure in the Industrial Party Trial of 1931, was not kept in gaol but sent back to his lecture-room every day at first under guard and then unattended. 'He lost his house, his automobile and his prestige but not his job. If he continues to do that, well, his prestige will return'. Innumerable such instances can be cited to prove that skilled technicians or engineers convicted for high treason has been gradually entrusted to responsible constructive works through the initiative of O G P U.

The latest example of constructive work of the G. P. U. will strike the student of public institutions of any country, as even more remarkable than its prison reforms or child rescue work. The construction of an artificial water-way from Leningrad to the White Sea—this huge operation was entrusted, not to a contractor, not even to one of the state departments or trusts dealing with heavy industry or performing other civil engineering works. Maxim Gorky, the greatest proletarian writer of all ages came with this glowing tribute for G. P. U. in the pages of "Moscow Daily News" of August 14th, 1935. He wrote: Out of the ranks of law breakers, of 15 years there was salvaged, in the colonies and communes of the O G P U, thousands of highly qualified workers and more than 1000 agronomists, engineers, physicians and technicians. In the bourgeois country such a thing is impossible How does the process of reconstructing the now socially dangerous, but potentially socially useful, people on the Baltic White Sea Canal show itself? The army of prospective wrestlers with nature, not being of homogeneous social origin, could not all be of one mood. But it so happens that in the O G P U's correctional camps they teach not only reading and writing but

(Continued on page 18)

THE LEFT LOSES JAWAHARLAL

(Continued from page 6)

in the public mind that the fate would not have overtaken Mr. Kamath if he had the merit of belonging to Panditji's political persuasion and if he had employed his free hours in running down the Bloc. The public is free to put two and two together. It knew of the contrary positions taken up by Mr. Kamath and Panditji with regard to the 'aspersions' as it now knows of their respectively pro-and-anti-Bloc attitudes. Of course Panditji pleaded principles as he has done later in the matter of the 9th July demonstrations. But some of the blackest things in history were done in the name of principles and the secret of tyranny has always been to cover itself with the most unimpeachable sentiments.

Panditji's statement is curious in that it opens on a note of panic and ends on one of threat. He says in effect that these demonstrators are going to prepare a rod for their own backs. But by a strange freak of fate Panditji happens to be one of the first offenders against the principle of discipline in whose behalf he has issued the hated plea. All India knows of his article 'The Lapses of the U. P. Ministry' which is surely nothing else than criticism of a Congress Ministry.

In his latest attack on the Bloc made at Colombo Panditji strips himself of his customary grace of taste and does great injustice to the critical penetration generally associated with him. He describes the Bloc as a 'group of opportunists' and 'fascists' and 'God alone knows what it exists for'. By what kind of word-play those who by their political actions have incurred the displeasure of the majority firmly entrenched in office and are avowedly out to fight fascism in the Congress, can be called by the names Panditji gives them is really incomprehensible. The Bloc has undoubtedly furnished a common meeting ground for the majority of the Leftists in spite of a Roy scuttling off at a tangent and a Joyprokash Narayan swaying eternally in the balance and its growing popularity has obviously got upon Panditji's nerves. At Cawnpore he had vented a supercilious bantering contempt for it. 'As for myself I don't attach much importance to it.' The infant Bloc survived Panditji's banter. Now his hard words would not break its bones.



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In preparing M. S. S. for the Press correspondents are requested to write on one side of the paper only.

The Editor cannot be responsible for the return of rejected communications, though, as far as practicable they will be returned when stamped and addressed envelopes are enclosed.

If Panditji were a friend of the Left—he even an independent progressive—he would not have stood aloof and booed them for their inability to merge up or to act in concert; or when they were fairly on the way to unity, would not have made their progress difficult by making unsympathetic attack. He would then have lined up with those who are trying desperately to educe order out of the Leftist chaos. The fact is the Left has lost Panditji. And Panditji too has lost the Left. The Pisan tower stands upright.

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"CONGRESS FETISH"

By A STUDENT OF HISTORY

Lately there has been considerable loose talking and confusion of ideas about discipline and disciplinary action. Etymologically the word discipline has its origin from disciple or scholar. The word has various meanings assigned to it but we are concerned in its relation to the system of the rules of conduct. Discipline connotes mental and moral training as well. If I feel and am convinced that anything has been said or done which is false, or wrong or harmful, the cause of truth demands that I must protest and speak out. To keep silence or submit to it without protest would be immoral. Discipline must be subject to reason which must always be permitted to exercise its function without restraint. It has been said by a great thinker centuries ago, there is nothing, however useful, however sacred it may be that can claim exemption from the searching examination of the Supreme Tribunal of criticism which has no respect of person. The very existence of reason depends upon this freedom; for the voice of reason is not that of a dictatorial and despotic power, it is rather like the vote of the citizens of a free state, every member of which must have the privilege of giving free expression to his doubts, and possesses even the right of veto.

If one refers to history of the Congress itself one will be amazed at the dogmas and doctrines which are now being propounded by some Congressmen in their cry for the "pound of flesh" without little thought and self-inspection.

It is really surprising to think in cool moments to what length people in their anxiety to gain and retain power and position can go.

Public memory is short. But it is not so short as to forget events of considerable importance in the history of the Congress which happened only a few years ago. One has only to refer to the memorable statement issued by Deshabandhu immediately after the session of the Congress of Gaya, when every reasonable proposal for compromise was rejected, and recollect the events that followed. Although Desabandhu resigned his presidency, did he resign from the A. I. C. C. and did the other members of the A. I. C. C. (a considerable number indeed) who jointly signed the manifesto and formed the Congress Khilafat Swarajya Party resign from the A. I. C. C.? Let the Congress High Command answer. Was any action taken against them? If not, why not? Let the stalwarts of the Congress pause and consider. If one recalls to his mind the events which happened in the first six months of 1923 he will be astonished and ashamed at the attitude of some of the stalwarts of the present Congress High Command. Shri Raja Gopalachari not only flouted the resolution of the A. I. C. C. held at Bombay but openly declared himself "a rebel" against the A. I. C. C. at its next meeting. Did he resign from the

THE ALL INDIA KISAN DAY**MAKE IT A GRAND SUCCESS**

The 1st of September, the ALL INDIA KISAN DAY, is fast approaching and unless we awake betimes, be up and doing and make adequate and necessary arrangements from now for the successful observance befitting the occasion we shall betray the cause of the Kisans we claim, and are out, to serve. This is the fifth A. I. Kisan Day and with the phenomenal awakening amongst the Kisans along-side of the progressive deterioration of the agrarian condition and the consequent gradual deepening of the all-round crisis and also of the impending world conflagration the Day has assumed a growing importance of its own. Its success is, therefore, to be counted only if it truly mirrors and echoes the actual state of affairs of the peasantry and the country by holding gigantic meetings and demonstrations on the 1st of September, on an unprecedented scale in every nook and corner of the country and by reiterating the demands and the resolutions of the ALL INDIA KISAN SABHA adopted from time to time and declaring the resolve and the impatience of the Kisans to fight the freedom's battle to an early finish.

I appeal, therefore, to all the organisations of the Kisans, the Kisan workers, their sympathisers and the public in general to move in the matter in right earnest without further loss of time and strain every nerve to make the Day rightly a tremendous success.

Bihta, Patna
8-8-39.

SWAMI SAHAJANAND SARASWATI

General Secretary
A. I. K. S.

A. I. C. C. or was any action taken against him? What was the attitude of Shri Rajendra Prasad who disobeyed the same resolution? How did he conduct himself? It is for them to answer. Will the Congress High Command look up the records of the Congress and find out what happened then? What did the no-changers do? What happened then can happen again.

What is the crime or sin committed by the Congressmen who associated themselves in the protest against the two resolutions passed by the majority of the A. I. C. C. dominated by the Congress Ministers of eight provinces at its last meeting in Bombay? They have simply followed the unequivocal advice given by Mahatma Gandhi. "We must avoid Congress becoming a fetish. I love the idea of every body becoming a Congressman and everybody yielding willing and intelligent obedience to the congress. But I abhor the idea of anybody becoming a Congressman merely because it is an old or a great institution or yielding obedience to its resolutions whether one likes it or not. The rule of majority has a narrow application, i. e., one should yield to the majority in matters of detail. But it is slavery to be amenable to the majority, no matter what its decisions are."

jealously guarded. I, therefore, believe that the minority has a perfect right to act differently from the majority so long as it does not act in the name of the Congress.

But not only do I think that a Congressman is not bound by the resolutions when he does not approve of, he is also entitled always to go beyond the Congress resolutions, provided that he does not violet the creed and if he does not act in the name of the Congress. Supposing that the restrictions put by the Congress do not suit a particular province, that province has even voted against them, that province finds that it can look after itself, it has every right to go forward and justify its rebellion by success. The Congress will find the highest common factor, but it may conceivably be far short of the requirements of a particular province. That province may, if it has confidence and if it is not likely to jeopardise any Congress interest, certainly go on with its own programme on its own responsibility and at the risk of a vote of censure from the Congress. This, in my opinion, is what the spirit of democracy requires. What I have stated is an illustration of domestic Civil Disobedience. Thus and thus only shall we save ourselves from false idolatry."

"Democracy is not a state in which people act like sheep. Under democracy, individual liberty of opinion and action is

INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

By AMIYA NATH BOSE

Our struggle for freedom is now entering its decisive stage. We are today thinking in terms of actual capture of political power. The Gandhian technique of negotiation has been discredited and to-day it stands condemned. This being the position, it is necessary for us to clarify our ideas and plan our struggle. I shall attempt in this article to deal briefly with only one aspect of our problem. This aspect, it may be remarked, is a highly important one and has to be tackled realistically by every political party striving to capture power. Our foreign policy is undoubtedly one of the burning questions of the day and we sincerely feel that we are not giving sufficient attention to this aspect of our problem. We are often uninformed or misinformed about the real situation in the world and it is indeed a tragedy that even some of our front-rank leaders betray colossal ignorance of international affairs. Some of them are too sentimental to be able to understand the hard realities of life. But we, socialists, cannot afford to be and need not be sentimental. Socialism is based on a scientific study of society and socialist method arises out of a realistic analysis of objective historical conditions. Socialism and sentimentalism are fundamentally contradictory. We must, therefore, approach this problem of our foreign policy from the point of view of socialist realism.

There are indeed two fundamental things which guide the foreign policy of a nation:—(1) self-interest and (2) geographical position. National self-interest is or ought to be the basis of our foreign policy. All our activities should, therefore, be directed to further this supreme objective. There is nothing immoral in this proposition. National self-interest is the basis of Soviet foreign policy. By following this policy Soviet Russia is also furthering the cause of world freedom. For, the existence and strengthening of Soviet Russia is to the interest of the workers all over the world. Again, our interests will be served, if socialist and democratic forces are strengthened in the world. We should, therefore, sympathize with and, if possible, support those democratic forces. But we must never forget

our own limitations and lose all sense of proportion.

National self-interest being the basis of our foreign policy, we must analyse foreign affairs from this angle and try to utilise every favourable international situation. We should realise that, other things being equal, weakness of British imperialism is our strength. It is also our duty to strike, if possible, precisely when Great Britain is in danger. We have, therefore, reached the following conclusions:—

- (1) In the field of foreign politics our policy should be such as to strengthen our position, *vis-a-vis*, British imperialism.
- (2) Other things being equal, Great Britain's danger is our opportunity.

We submit that the time has come to raise the problem of our freedom to the level of international politics. Through persistent propaganda we must make the question of Indian independence an international issue. International sympathy is vital for our movement. It will facilitate international recognition when we will capture political power. It is indeed difficult to over-emphasize the importance of this question of recognition. It must be admitted, however, that this question will not arise, if there is a slow transference of political power to the people of India through the Gandhian technique of negotiation. But we know that this technique of negotiation will lead to slavery and not to freedom; it will mean strengthening of British imperialism and not its

overthrow. Freedom can come and will come only through struggle.

We have already remarked that geographical position vitally affects the foreign policy of a nation. A further explanation of this point is perhaps necessary. Geographical position often determines the alliances of a country. It is, however, not necessary for us to deal with this question of alliances before we actually capture political power. But we should, at this stage, attempt to cultivate friendly relations with our neighbouring countries. We cannot afford to have unfriendly neighbours. We cannot obviously have any political relations under present conditions, but there is no reason why we should not promote cultural contacts. We might send cultural missions to countries like Afghanistan, Iran and Nepal. We might also arrange for exchange of professors and students. If ground is prepared from today, friendly political relations will follow in due course.

We have seen that we are often uninformed or misinformed about the real situation in the world today. It is clear, however, that we can never follow the correct line unless we are well informed. We must not only have correct, full informations, but we must also be able to interpret them from the point of view of our national interest. For this reason, we feel that a full-fledged Foreign Office is a vital necessity. The international

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PLANTATION LABOUR IN ASSAM

By S. UPADHYAY

Tea industry served by the mammoth army of workers has been the source of huge profits to the British planters; beginnings of the industry date back to the early eighties of the last century. At present nearly six lakh workers are found working in the plantation area of Assam under conditions the mere revelation of which might have shocked mediæval despot. Regular supply of labour is essential to the well being of the industry and the numerous plantation Acts guarantee only regularity. Government has never tried to secure the workers human rights and end their life of squalor and degradation. Government's indifference to their problems is equalled by the colossal ignorance of their life and condition. Trade Union does not benefit the plantation workers, for they have not the freedom of movement and speech and can not be united to voice their grievances. The rising disputes between the employers and the workers are symptomatic of simmering unrest beneath the calm surface of things.

Planters relation with workers.

Planters' relation with workers, can hardly be said to be happy. It has occasioned much bitterness in the past and often led to open rebellion against managers. Gnawed by a sense of injustice workers are found resorting to strike only to protest against the existing state of

things. Industrial disputes were not uncommon even in the last century. But in the post-war period disputes and strike became common phenomena, and the reason is purely economic. The rate of wages was low in the beginning and remained unchanged for years. After the war the cost of living had gone up and it failed to respond to the increase. Besides depression in tea industry led to the stoppage of all overtime work and the worker were deprived of the little additional income. The situation was further aggravated by the sudden rise in the price of paddy from Rs. 2.22 to Rs. 3.37 per md. And there was a plethora of strikes. The climax was reached when the workers of Chargola valley had walked out and were joined by thousands. Disputes and assaults continued and 1607 workers were imprisoned for illegal assembly. Origin of dispute and strikes can be traced to a number of economic causes of local nature. First, forced work on sunday, excessive work when there is shortage of labour. Second, illegal deduction from wages by the clerks and occasional stoppage of wages by managers.

Third, poor qualities of rice and shortage in the measurement. The Assam Labour Enquiry Committee of 1921-22 had enquired into the above and found the allegations true. 'Plantation workers,' observes a leading Indian economist, 'are incoherent and unorganised masses without the liberty of thought and discussion'. But planters are an organised force ever alert to guard their vested interest.

Sanitation & Health.

Existing in the midst of deep forest infested with malarial germs, tea gardens are dreaded by outsiders. Lack of modern medical aid leaves life to the mercy of nature and the highest death rate is found among the plantation workers. Malaria carries havoc, hookworm and anaemia are rampant. Cooli-lanes made of bamboo and straw are quite unfit for human habitation. The best proof of health is low death rate. In 1928-29 death rate in the Assam tea gardens was 21.5 per mille. This heavy mortality is due to several reasons. Upper India workers are used to wheat diet and the sudden change to a diet of rice is sure to have its deleterious effect upon their system. The most vital is "the want of proper house, overcrowding, unhealthy sites, insufficient food, impure water and want of proper medical allowance."

Remuneration & standard of living.

The system of remuneration in tea gardens is varied and includes wages, concessions and bonus. Managers and his assistants are only entitled to bonus. The workers get wages based upon piece-work determined by quality and quantity. The unit of rate-making is according to season, location and nature of work. Hoeing and plucking are most important in plantation area. The unit of measuring hoe is a 'nal' equivalent to 12 to 13 ft. Days work consists of 25 sq. nals in the case of light hoeing 16 sq. nals in the case of deep hoeing, plucking varies from 20-24 lbs. a day. Formerly payment was made

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AN APPEAL TO SOCIALISTS

By NIHARENDU DUTTA MAZUMDAR

In these days of mutual suspicion and distrust it is difficult to say or write anything without being misunderstood and without injuring unwittingly the cause of unity. Yet I am deeply convinced that when I appeal to all socialists to join the Forward Bloc, I do so from a sense of duty to the very cause of unity.

Socialists have not joined the Forward Bloc. Certain socialists are even hostile to the idea of left consolidation. This seems particularly strange when we remember, as Randive has pointed out in the August issue of New Age, that the idea of a left Bloc is essentially of socialist origin.

The reasons why socialists have not joined Forward Bloc are many. The foremost among them is, that the Forward Bloc has developed as a reaction against the splitting tactics of the Right Wing: it is good in so far as it opposes the splitting tactics, but dangerous in so far as it seeks to alienate the personnel of the Right Wing.

This argument by itself rather suggests the remedy that socialists join Forward Bloc and fight to preserve the heritage of struggle in Congress without narrowing its basis (a la Right) or splitting away from the Right (after the fashion of the "inverted Right" Leftist).

But another reason stands in the way of socialists joining the Bloc. Before Tripuri Congress, the socialists were unquestionably at the head of the Left. But to-day the socialists are outnumbered by Left nationalists, and it is the latter who are at the head of the Left. If socialists join the Forward Bloc to-day they would be swamped by Left nationalists, who would carry the day and drag socialism along its trail.

This view point is too weak-kneed to be termed socialist, if by socialism we mean genuine, revolutionary socialism, the socialism of the working class, the socialism of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Dimitrov. These great masters teach us that revolutionary socialism is superior to all political doctrines, not because the greatest number of people follow it or are even aware of it, but because it is the only theory based on science, on a

real view of the world. They teach us that it is the most powerful weapon in a struggle, because it is the political theory of the working class, the most revolutionary class of modern society even though that class is a minority of the people.

I do not prefer to be an authority on theoretical socialism. But with all due respect to my better equipped socialist comrades, and yet with supreme conviction, I claim that if socialists join the Forward Bloc, they would not only be swamped, but actually outstrip the "inverted rights" in every way, because even as national revolutionaries, socialists in every colonial country extel "pure" nationalists. Socialism is the theory of the working class, a class which has no interest it cannot sacrifice for the sake of national freedom, while nationalism properly belongs to the bourgeois who in the last analysis loves his property dearer than his freedom. Why is then this fear of being swamped, of being outdone?

There is another aspect of the question. Socialists advocated the Left Bloc, not because of some electoral defeat, or any particular conspiracy of the Right. Their idea of Left Bloc arises from their political analysis of the period of which the chief components are (i) the slowly gathering imperialist attack, (ii) the willingness of the masses to retaliate and (iii) the policy of capitulation of the leadership

based on an illusion of lasting compromise with British Imperialism. This analysis led them to advocate a Left Bloc, whose function would be to mass the revolutionary force of the people against imperialism and isolate the capitulatory leadership.

But the rank-and-file left-winger has not been led to the idea of a Left Bloc so much from a deep analysis, as from an elemental reaction against the shameless capitulation of the leadership against every attack of imperialism, of the vested interests. The left swing is elemental, and consequently on a mass-scale.

Would it be correct for socialists to regard this elemental swing to the Left on a mass-scale as a dangerous tendency crowding out the socialists? Why, some have even begun to look upon the Forward Bloc as a kind of Frankenstein's demon, raised by socialists, and overpowering them. This is fantastic. The Left is discontented and is groping for a correct lead. For the socialists to leave the Left to its own fate by refusing to join the Forward Bloc would be as incorrect, as harmful to themselves.

Some would argue: the Left nationalists are growing no longer. They have found a way and found the wrong way. Let them lead themselves astray, why should socialists join?

This is a false estimate. The groping of the left for a lead would naturally put them sometimes on the right, and sometimes on the wrong track. To exaggerate every mistake, and belittle the success of

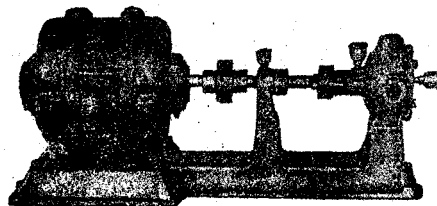
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AN APPEAL TO SOCIALISTS

(Continued from page 12)

the Left would be harmful to the cause of unity. In any case, if the socialists are confident of their own correct approach, why not let the Left have the benefit of that?

A dissent would be voiced. The socialists are ready to lead, but the Left does not listen. Our lead is not followed.

My reply is : people learn more from action, from actual struggle than from pure discussions. People know their leader through struggle. I believe the socialists, if they follow the socialism of Marx, Lenin and Stalin can achieve greater success in a struggle than any other political group. Socialists have an unbroken international revolutionary heritage. Socialists are the leaders of the most revolutionary class of society. If they are socialist in deed, as they are in words, if they fight every struggle in the socialist way, they would establish their unquestioned leadership over the Left.

Another point is stressed by Comrade Randive that relates to qualitative demarcation of the socialists from the Left nationalists. I support him with all emphasis in so far as the principle of the thing is concerned, but would like to draw somewhat different practical conclusions.

The Forward Bloc is still a Bloc, and not a Left Nationalist Party. The constitution of the Bloc does not require a Socialist Party to merge into the Bloc. The separate existence of the Socialist Party is not only a necessity, but a *sine qua non* to the socialists' joining the Bloc.

It is this Party which distinguishes the socialists from the Left nationalists. The stronger the party, the clearer is the line demarcating socialists from other progressive elements in society. The wider the organised influence of the party over the working class, the deeper the organic contact, the clearer is the line demarcating the working class from non-proletarian revolutionaries. The more all-embracing the Socialist Party, the more decisive is the influence of socialism over the whole people. That brings us to the important task of building up a United Mass Proletarian Socialist Party.

It is absolutely correct to say that unless we put our energies in the direction of building up the United Mass Proletarian Party in all its aspects, we would not prove of decisive influence in the national movement. But to find in this an insuperable obstacle to our joining the Forward Bloc is, in my opinion, wrong.

The positive formulation should be : we join the Bloc, in order to unite the Left, for preserving the fighting heritage of the Congress ; and in order to succeed in this task, we strengthen ourselves, we strive as never before, to build up the United Mass Proletarian Socialist Party.

I appeal to all socialists to deliberate coolly over these issues and criticise my views to which I should only gladly submit. I Appeal to all socialists to join the Forward Bloc.

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PLANTATION LABOUR IN ASSAM.

(Continued from page 11)

both in cash and in kind. At present it is made in cash, only and from time to time. In 1935-36 a Surma Valley worker earned Rs. 6-12-2 pie and a Assam Valley worker Rs. 5-11-11 pie every month.

Standard of living implies provision for the necessities of life without which life is impossible. Rightly speaking, plantation workers have no standard of life. They live under sub-human conditions. Workers are huddled in lanes, that are crowded, built close to one another and without ventilation. This insanitary living largely contributes to mortality. Members of a family live together and few houses have any accommodation for adults and children. There is no sanitary arrangement of water-supply. Now comes the most vital question of food and clothing.

India is ill-nourished and the most ill-nourished are the plantation workers. Quality, quantity these are said to be the determining factors of standard diet and universal criteria of diet is still to be evolved. The quantity of food nevertheless, gives some idea of the standard life. A family of three adults and two children, according to the census of 1921, consumed 41 mds. 16 srs. of food, or 849 lbs. per person annually. In the same year the food consumed by a Madras prisoner was 741 lbs. Clothing is meagre verging almost on indecency and insufficient for health. A family of five members including two children is said to have spent 12% of total income upon clothing. Their life is rendered all the more unhappy by the consumption of alcohol and narcotics that drain away the greater part of their income. A family spent 23% of total expenditure upon liquors. In recent years increase in the consumption of liquor has been marked. Tea gardens are colonies where workers work and live with their family. But strange it is that there is no provision for educating their children.

The greatest hindrance to its success is the absence of free and compulsory system of education.

"Our view is that," wrote Messrs. Percell and Holdsworth, "despite all that have been written, tea gardens of Assam are virtually slave plantations, and in Assam tea gardens, the sweat, hunger and despair of a million Indians enter year by year." Are the lines of two eminent British trade unionists not a commentary upon the sorry state of things in Assam? Would the Congress Government think of the desirability of introducing Bills guaranteeing the freedom of movement and speech that may give the sincere trade unionists an opportunity of serving the workers? Let the Congress fulfil its pledge by granting human rights to the plantation workers buried away in the forest of Assam.

IN CEYLON

By K. BOSE

Since the resolution passed in All India Congress Committee on the repatriation of Indian labourers from Ceylon and subsequent visit of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, all eyes seem to be on Ceylon.

It is not the first time that the Congress is taking interest in the Indians who live abroad. It was in the year 1894 on the occasion of the disenfranchisement of Indians in Natal that the Indian National Congress for the first time took keen interest in the fate of Indians abroad. Since 1894 when impetus was given by Mr. Gandhi to redeem the misery of Indians in Africa, the politically conscious Indians are seriously thinking of how they can help their own people who are living abroad. It was the late Mr. C. R. Das who first thought that Indian National Congress should have a well-thought-out policy and plan of action so that Indian politicians at home can fight and safe-guard the position, right and interest of the Indians abroad. The formation of the League of Asiatic People was the corner-stone of that policy.

Mr. C. F. Andrews said in 1938, 'The last year has been on the whole, a very difficult one for Indians residing overseas. In many directions their interests have been attacked and still more their rights and privileges have been curtailed.' Anti-Indian drive and Anti-Indian legislation are beginning to rear up their monstrous head, so it is high time that both the Congress and Government should take up the immigration problem in right earnest so as to save our unfortunate countrymen in the far off foreign soil.

Let us look into the Ceylon problem intimately. The Government of Ceylon on the plea of Ceylonisation of Services in its departments, gave notice to 1000 Indian workers, who were employed after 1931, that their service would be discontinued from the end of July 1939 and 8000 labourers who were employed before 1937 were to be discharged by the end of this year. Over and above this the Board of Ministers contemplate legislation to compel private employers to employ certain percentage of Ceylonese labourers.

To understand the present implications and entanglements of the problem, we have to go back to the days when Ceylon was administered from Madras. An attempt to

apply the Madras Revenue System and the employment of a host of Malabar collectors led to rebellion; and in 1798 Ceylon became a Crown colony. The Treaty of Amiens in 1802 ceded Ceylon to Great Britain and in the following year Kandy was invaded and occupied. It was not till 1815, however, that the Candy chiefs invoked the aid of the British to rid themselves of these tyrants of Malabar whose cruelty surpassed endurance.

The opening up of the mountain country by the construction of roads led immediately to a great incursion of Low Sinhalese, Mohamedan and Hindu traders and also European coffee planters. These latter penetrated into the forest area and aided in the task of clearing by the Sinhalese villagers carved out estates for themselves. The indigenous inhabitants declined to work for a meagre wage on the European estates and so it was found necessary to import as voluntary immigrants a large number of Tamil coolies from the arid districts of southern India.

The special peculiarity of the political situation in Ceylon is that this small island contains a very heterogeneous population. In the country the Sinhalese number about 2,000,000 the Kanadyans 1,000,000 the Ceylon Tamils about 5,00,000 most of them coolies on tea and rubber estates, Ceylon-born Moors 250,000 Indian-born Moors 33,000, Burghers and Eurasians 30,000 and Europeans slightly more than 8,000.

The Indian community, the majority of whom were brought into Ceylon by the Europeans on the assurance of equal treatment with the local population have had no trouble until Dunoughmore Reforms were promulgated. The Sinhalese were slaves without any power in the administration—so were the Indians. Naturally one slave sympathised with the other. But when Dunoughmore Reforms came, the Sinhalese found that the political power gained through the abolition of the communal representation and through the universal suffrage could be utilised for their own benefit. They began to show their desire for complete political domination by the Sinhalese without due consideration for other communities residing in the island.

BRITAIN FIDDLES

By BENOY GHOSE

Germany is fermenting a fresh cup of trouble to hand out to Europe and we are quite confident that despite the series of guarantees given to the Eastern European countries of late, Hitler will make a fool of England and France once more as he has always done. Reports of fleet manoeuvres, hot speeches, "Heimwerr" patrolling and mobilisations are pouring in, indicating that to British statesmen Danzig is not big enough for a catastrophe and the situation is quite ripe for Hitler's next coup. It is fairly certain that the crisis will not precipitate a war. Mr. William Strang will play exactly the same role which Runciman did during the last Czechoslovakian crisis. The Hudson episode, with its talks of economic agreement with the Reich, removes the last vestige of hope. The British Premier is a crack hand both in conjuring up and exorcising the ghost of war. In the meanwhile there will be a great deal of sabre-rattlings, peace masquerades, and then respite once more.

The strategical position of the Baltic States, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia in relation to the 'forward' policy of Germany has so long been relegated to the back ground, and there have been few references to it, but it assumes a new importance in international affairs today. If Germany moves further towards the Baltic, Russia will have to defend these states which constitute her natural bulwark. Upon the maintenance of her trade communications with the Scandinavian Powers, and particularly with Sweden, largely depends Germany's ability to carry on war. And any munitions traffic between Sweden and Germany can be most effectively brought to a stand still by the light, speedy squadrons and the impressive flotilla of submarines of Russia. This is a contingency of grave concern to the German Naval Staff. That is why the primary aim of Germany's naval strategy would be to bottle up the Russian naval forces in the Gulf of Finland so rigidly that even a single submarine may not find a way to the open sea. To achieve this aim Germany must have the use of some bases to gain control over the Gulf of Finland. These bases she does not possess at present. Danzig and Memel will not adequately serve the

purpose. Riga in Latvia, and Tallinn and the Dagoe Islands, both under Estonian sovereignty, would best serve the purpose. It is obvious, therefore, that after Danzig Hitler will push into the Baltic and such a move will almost reduce Russia to a mere non-entity in the naval strategical sense. So Russia cannot promise assistance to Great Britain and France, should Poland and Rumania be attacked, unless Britain and France promise assistance to her, should the Baltic States be attacked. To this proposal Britain and France have not yet explicitly condescended. They like Russia to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for them. Russia, on the other hand, wants a genuine defensive alliance as a solid foundation for the various pacts that are being made. In plain words, Russia desires reciprocity which Britain and France do not approve of. And the proposed "Peace Front" in Europe is likely to be shelved *sine die*.

This dilatoriness in the matter of Anglo-Soviet negotiations has encouraged Japan in the Far East to a blockade of the British Concession in Tientsin, which is tantamount to an act of war. Previously Japan bullied a little now and again, shot a British official, or damaged a British ship, but her attitude, in general, was one of great caution. As soon as Munich had definitely shown that it was possible for Hitler to catch Britain (and France) napping for a considerable period of time, Japan changed her attitude to her and landed her troops near Hongkong. If the Japanese at all conquer China they must rule it and will not allow the foreigners to interrupt them in any way. So Japan has dealt a severe blow to the whole system of concessions. She has launched attacks against Tientsin, Swatow, Poochow and Wenchow. Secret negotiations are proceeding between Britain and Japan. Tokio has placed her terms on the table. The British, the Americans and the French must recognise the Japanese conquest of North China in return for which Japan will reopen Yangtze Valley to their trade. These terms have already found favour in London. And the ignominious preparation for a "Far Eastern Munich" is clearly reflected in this.

This is all good Fascism which need not be wondered at. There is again the talk of setting up the new Publicity Department of the British Foreign office with the pro-fascist Lord Perth at the head. The

British Premier has placated the Labour Opposition with the assurance that there will be no interference with the Press of this country in peace-time and the new publicity will simply develop the existing agencies for the "objective presentation" overseas of British policy. We are fed up with Chamberlainian assurance of this sort. The motive behind the setting up of the new Ministry is to have a fascist system of propaganda and to express unceasingly the point of view of National Government, to control the Press and coagulate public opinion in favour of general conscription and to make the attitude of the country more loyal to the present pluto-fascist Government. It is definitely a totalitarian measure and the essential qualities of democracy are thus being steadily wheedled away.

Is there any way out of this foul-smelling cesspool of Fascism? Yes, there is. There is a way, and only one way, out of this dirty mess. Organised Labour should immediately take up the leadership and force the present Government to resign or to reverse their policy. A clear warning should be delivered by the Opposition in the House to the effect that supported by country-wide demonstrations they will strongly protest against any form of conscription, either military or industrial, until they have a Government with a foreign policy worthrelying upon. No Government can launch at war without the whole-hearted cooperation of organised Labour, and organised Labour should bluntly refuse to fight for Imperialism. If the Labour party of Great Britain shakes off parliamentary mentality and proceed along this way firmly, it would be possible for Britain to join hands with Russia on the lines suggested by the latter, to assist China for resistance to Japanese aggression and to pave the way to the formation of the proposed "Peace Front." The fascists will then be cowed down because they are all giants with feet of clay. And even if war breaks out, there is nothing dark in it. War must break out sooner or later. That is the considered logic of history. But the more it is delayed, the better. In the meantime Russia will gain sufficient financial and military strength and the progressive forces of different countries will be consolidated, to meet successfully the final onslaught of Imperialism. Capitalist democracy cannot effectively prepare itself for war. To destroy democracy and save capitalism means Fascism. The days of Fascism are numbered. To destroy capitalism and to save democracy means Socialism. The days of Socialism are nearing when we will be led out of the Valley of Death to the new world of Democracy and Peace.

INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY*(Continued from page 10)*

situation will be examined carefully by a body of experts under the direction of our Foreign Office. This body will collect relevant informations and will also be responsible for interpreting them correctly. The supreme objective of our Foreign Office will be to examine the position of British imperialism, *vis-a-vis* other reactionary and revolutionary forces. If this is done successfully, it will help us immensely in the conduct of our struggle. The Foreign Office will also be the training-ground for our future diplomatic officials. With the Declaration of Independence, it will be necessary to have immediate diplomatic contacts all over the world. For this reason we will need a body of trained men as soon as we will capture political power. We should, therefore, do our best to train them now.

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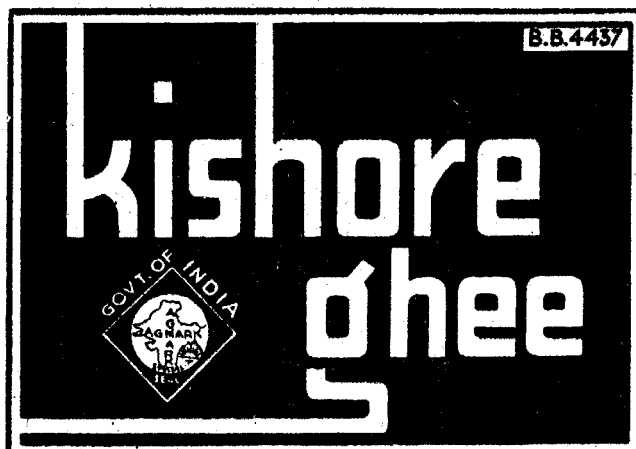
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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

FORWARD BLOC—A HISTORICAL NECESSITY

To

The Editor, Forward Bloc

SIR,

The *Forward Bloc* owes its origin to a state of things that is too painful to bear detailed reiteration. It is well-known how S. J. Subhas Chandra Bose stood for re-election as president against the express desire of Mahatma Gandhi and the High Command and scored a decisive victory against their nominee; how Gandhiji reacted to the situation and the Rightist rump set about hatching plans to upset the verdict of the polls; how Tripuri registered the infamous Pant resolution and after a long course of epistolary communication between Gandhiji and S. J. Bose in which the latter made earnest, even pathetic efforts to maintain unity in the Congress, Calcutta practically forced resignation on him and installed a new president with the most unceremonious haste and in the most unconstitutional manner. The drama that was enacted before the public gaze with a quick succession of painful surprises, had a larger psychological background which calls for thorough unravelling today.

It is clear that the rot that has now set in at the top of the Congress is due largely to the manner in which the Congress Ministries began to work the Constitution under the inspiration of the present High Command. The Faizpur mandate that enjoined upon the Congress to combat the Constitution, was set at naught in practice and under the specious plea of constructive activity, a sort of neo-reformism was set up in the heart of the Congress which aimed at throttling out the revolutionary urge in the country in a deliberately scientific manner. Faizpur sent out a call to the nation to get speedily ready for a mass-struggle against British Imperialism and to undertake country-wide preparations for the same. But in practice the extra-parliamentary activities of the Congress were gradually shoved into comparative insignificance and popular surge for freedom was sought to be retarded with the help of the newly-acquired administrative authority, as has been amply proved by the repression meted out to the Kisans by Bihar and U. P. Ministries and to the mazdoors by the Bombay

Ministry. Buttressed up by a comfortable majority in the Congress, the Ministries were gradually emboldened to cast off all pretence and sometime ago S. J. Rajagopalchariari made the frank confession that to work the present Constitution for what it is worth, is the decided policy of his Cabinet; they never meant seriously to wreck it. So far about the provincial autonomy; and as regards the Federation that is now dangling before the country, well, the significant observation of Mr. Bulabhai Desai that provincial autonomy without control at the Centre is a senseless anomaly, should not escape the notice of all discerning observers. Outside the legislative sphere, after the Rajkot comedy, the growing struggle in the States has been suddenly stopped by the operation of Gandhiji's 'new technique'. The unmistakable signs of a deadening lull are perceptible on all sides and the country is fast being doped into a state of static complacency. A bold thrust, a relentlessly vigorous push is now needed to put the Congress, back on the right track from which it has strayed far away. The Congress needs a rude awakening from its fatal stupor. S. J. Subhas Chandra Bose scented the danger much before and it is quite probable that he pressed on the High Command the imperative necessity of gingering up the Congress activities. But his healthy advice evidently fell flat on the authoritarian caucus and evoked, on the other hand, angry reactions from it. In this context Sardar Vallabhai's reference to S. J. Bose's election as "harmful to the country" is quite understandable. But those who feel that the Congress under present leadership has been following a suicidal policy, cannot be expected to rest happily on their oars. They owe it to themselves to mobilise public opinion and convert the majority of the Congress to their way of thinking. This psychological urge, this restless yearning to forge ahead, is the impelling motive behind the *Forward Bloc*. It is the *raison d'être* of its existence, its justification and defence.

The time has come to deliver a bold challenge to the prevailing belief that freedom can come by instalments, by shreds and pieces and through a gradual process of compromises. Freedom is a whole, a complete thing and like dawn it bursts out dispelling the dark around by a mighty push. If a vantage-ground is captured in the course of the struggle, that should only be utilised for directing renewed and more determined attacks on the citadel of the enemy and not for dropping into a satisfied rest in complete forgetfulness of the ultimate mission.

Some tinkering reforms here and there, however valuable they may be in themselves, are not worth much when viewed against the broad perspective of national independence. Therefore the *Forward Bloc* has proposed to concentrate all its energies in harnessing the national forces for a bold and determined onslaught against British imperialism. It seeks to set up closer relations between the Congress and other anti-imperialist organisations like the Kisan Subhas, Trade Unions, Youth Leagues and Students' Federations. It aims further at weeding out mysticism from Congress politics that has often in the past put a brake on the onward march of the nation. Over and above everything, it will try to exorcise the reformist mentality that has invaded the Congress at its topmost rung and now threatens to engulf the whole organisation. To sum up, it will spare no efforts to revive the vital spark, the dynamic urge of the Congress that has been overlaid by the lumbbersome growth of constitutionalism. It does not make any bid for drastic novelty but will only seek to implement the accepted resolutions of the Congress which under present dispensation have been deliberately cast to the four winds for the sake of entrenching constitutionalism in a safe position. The Congress, it needs be reminded again and again, is a fighting organisation and in abjuring struggle, it has bartered away its very soul. It, therefore, behoves all genuine Congressmen to rescue it from the rut into which it has fallen and restore it to its original character.

The adherents of the *Forward Bloc* have to remember that the way that lies ahead of them is not strewn with roses. Already there has set in a restless flutter in the small group that in the words of S. J. Subhas Bose "now dominates the Congress and the Congress Ministries with the help of a packed majority." There is every indication that the ruling coterie is determined to steam-roller all opposition to a dead level of uniformity. The recent Bombay resolutions provide the latest and clearest commentary on its attitude. The progressives in the Congress are today faced with an unprecedented crisis. If they fail, the great national organisation is sure to die of sheer inanition. It is utterly wrong to suppose, as the various pronouncements of S. J. Bose bear out unmistakably, that the *Forward Bloc* means to engineer a split in the ranks of the Congress. Unity is the supreme need of the hour, but there must be "unity of action and not of inaction." The *Forward Bloc*, as the accredited harbinger of a Leftist Rally within the framework of the Congress, should be hailed as a very timely and salutary move. It is clearly destined to fulfil a historical necessity. If in its noble task of rejuvenating the Congress there be a forced parting of ways, the *Bloc* has still to forge ahead with increasing vigour, armed with the faith that out of seeming evil often comes immense good.

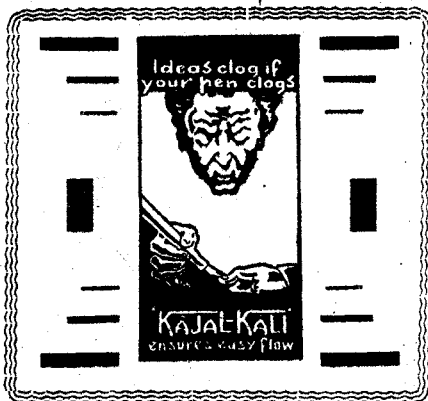
B. Sen.

O. G. P. U.

(Continued from page 7)

also political wisdom. Man is by nature quick-witted and it is very seldom that stupidity is conditioned by one's physical make-up. More often than not, it is the result of bourgeois class violence There were many who at once grasped the importance of such a work for the State, and the physically healthy were eager to exert themselves. The widely flowing rivers and swamps of Karelia, her fields and woods covered with huge boulders—here was something to struggle against."

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BOOK REVIEW

WHAT ARE WE TO DO ?

By JOHN STRACHEY

(GOLLANCZ, LONDON, 10s. 6d.)

The title of this book reminds us of what Lenin asked in 1902 in his famous work **WHAT IS TO BE DONE ?** At the beginning of the 20th. century the Russian Labour movement confronted a similar situation which confronts us all today. And insofar as the Labour movement is an effective instrument of desirable social change and the book tries to discover whether, and if so, under what objective conditions it can be so, it is an attempt at a contemporary answer to the most significant question: "What are we to do?"

Capitalism right up to 1914 was never a closed system. In the economy of 19th. century capitalism, the pre-capitalist, agricultural hinterland played a most important role. The constant exodus from Britain provided an outlet for British capitalism as the under-developed West provided for American capitalism. The rise of new large-scale industry itself opened up a new avenue for small commodity producers and this has been, and still is, a further factor of much importance both in Britain and America, tending to counteract the general pressure of capitalist relations of production towards the formation of working-class organisations. Today the counter-process of the invasion of these outlying spheres of production themselves by large-scale industry has already begun, with the result that capitalism, both in Britain and America, has become a closed system, which has removed all considerable ways of escape to small independent owner-producers, and has thus made work for wages the unavoidable way of life of by far the greater number of their inhabitants. And once this critical period is reached, Mr. Strachey says, "... the resultant Labour movement must either rapidly grow to a point at which it is capable of reconstructing human society, and at which it actually does reconstruct it, or be forcibly suppressed." This is the central theme of the book in a nutshell.

The author then traces the emergence of the modern British Labour movement through its various stages. Consisting originally of non-political pre-conscious Trade Unions of eighteen-fifties it passed into the first stage of working-class political development between 1865 to 1895. But the idea of independent working-class politics was still absent. Then the political needs of the Trade Unions became so important, and the Unions became so much subject to capitalist onslaught that, led by early Socialists an independent working-class political party was founded. This new party had no distinctive ideology of its own. Gradually, this ideology which Mr. Strachey reluctantly calls "British Socialism," appeared in its original form in the minds of the Fabians. The Fabians took Socialism as a continuous process going on all through the parallel process of the transference of political power to the workers. The chief advocates of Fabian Socialism were Bernard Shaw and Sydney Webb and it is founded on a gross miscalculation of the deep implications of the class division of society and of the conflicts which this division engenders. Naturally, being unable to offer adequate guidance to the Labour movement, British Socialism foundered on the rock of the social conflicts of the post-war world. It dissipated the then prepondering strength of the Labour movement with the consequence that political initiative returned to the capitalists and the workers were everywhere on the defensive. British Socialism has been in fact, though never in form, deserted by the leadership of the movement. In 1933 this leadership forced the movement to accept the policy of accommodation to capitalism, which it has been pursuing steadily since then and the pursuance of which is now, in 1939, hanging in the balance. Thus the wheel has come full circle. What are we to do then?

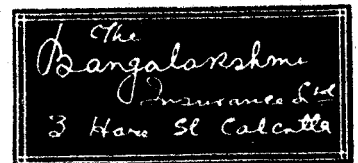
The bankrupt and inadequate ideology of British Socialism must be replaced by Scientific Socialism. For this a revolutionary change in the organisational structure of the movement and a progressive programme are needed. Working class parties must be built upon a new model. Parties built upon this new model must have at least, according to Mr. Strachey, five distinguishing characteristics. First, they must possess an ideology known as Scientific Socialism. Secondly,

they must not possess any other ideology. In other words, they should not allow within their ranks the co-existence of incompatible opinions. In this denial to tolerate the co-existence of two incompatible opinions, the "new model" parties will simply assert the claim that socialism is scientific. Thirdly, they must undertake any and every kind of activity on behalf of the working-class movement. Fourthly, they must be centralised. This principle of democratic centralism is indispensable to the "new model" parties. Ideological unity is the first essential no doubt, but in itself it is not sufficient. A "new model" party must have a practical unity of activity, so that all its forces can be thrown into one decisive phase of the general struggle at a given moment. Fifthly, and finally, the "new model" political parties must possess a special quality of leadership. These "new model" political parties should replace no part of the existing Labour movement but try to add an indispensable part hitherto lacking in these movements. In the same way the Labour movement is only a part, though a principal part, of the entire popular forces which are boiling in the cauldrons of such capitalist societies as Britain and America. The next step in the struggle of the Labour movements of such societies is to rally all these popular forces round them in some form of progressive alliance or People's Front.

This is the answer to our initial question of what are we to do.

Among writers of socialist literature John Strachey is one of the most popular. He needs no introduction to those who are interested in the progressive movements of the world. And the book reviewed is an indispensable guide to all who are associated with the Labour movement of our country.

B. Ghose



SOME SUPPORT SWADESHI FOR
'ECONOMIC FREEDOM'

SOME GO FOR QUALITY ALONE
WE SATISFY BOTH.

TABLE LAMPS



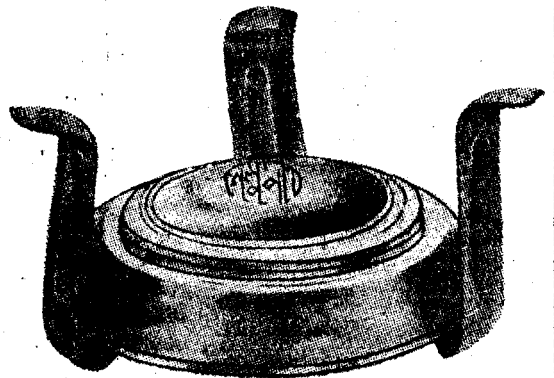
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DESHA-GAURAB
Subhas Chandra Bose
at
SAKTI OUSHADHALAYA
DACCA.

—*—



I visited the Sakti Oushadhalaya Dacca, to-day and was very kindly shown round the premises. Indegenous medicines are prepared here on a large scale and in accordance with Ayurvedic principles. The institution reflects great credit on Babu Mathura Mohan Chakravarty, whose enterprise has brought Ayurvedic medicines within the reach of the poor. I wish all success to the institution which he has built up after so much enterprise and hard labour for a long period. The success of Sakti Oushadhalaya, Dacca, means the popularity of Ayurveda throughout the country and this in its turn means the relief of suffering humanity.

Dacca,
6th. June 1939.

Sd/- Subhas Chandra Bose.

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