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A POLITICAL WEEKLY

Editor :—SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

VOL I. No. 8

CALCUTTA, SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 23, 1939

ONE ANNA

## 'ECONOMIC FREEDOM'

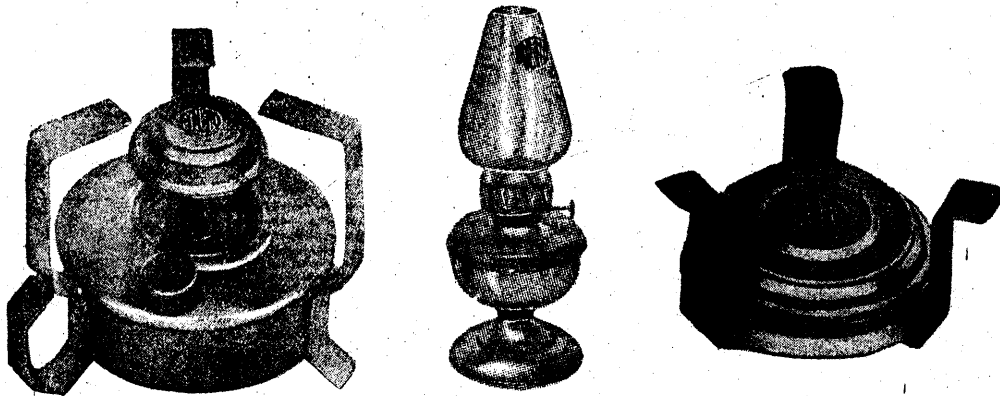


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Sd/- Subhas Chandra Bose.

## FORWARD BLOC

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

*War and Science*

Herr Hitler's recent threat of employing "a weapon, not yet known, and with which we could not ourselves be in general to speculate about that" military secret for which humanity should not blame the Fuehrer, when the time comes to use it. What could this be? In the last war gas was appealed to, to save Germany from the allies. But they too in their turn proved fairly equal to the task of using it against the Germans. Bottled up in the Kiel, the German navy was in a safer position as far as submarine warfare went. Ludendorff even regretted that German submarines were not allowed to do their job as thoroughly as they should have done from the beginning. The sinking of the *Athenia* shows that the Nazis have not forgotten the Ludendorff gospel and are alive to their "duty." But anti-submarine measures are understood to be more effective now; so, the sea would probably decide the war, as it did the last, by a successful blockade of Germany. Poison gas is so much thought of and provided against with a free supply of masks, that Hitler would not take recourse to it. For, he knows he is not civilizing the Abyssinians here. Bacteriological warfare would give a new turn to things; but Germany is not immune to similar attacks from others. For, Hitler's military secret is something novel, something for which Germany alone has taken a patent for herself from the unknown store-house of Science.

Science, it is evident, will now be at the service of the War God. It is sad to contemplate this fate for the only branch of human knowledge which is said to hold out any hope to humanity. For, if God has been crowded out of our general light, science, we had thought ourselves after a Freud or a Marx, would come in to fill in the void. But there is no void left. We have only too many gods now, the social hierarchy has created its own sacred deities of power and profit of the glorification of the Herd and the creation of the new myth. The magic-makers must serve the god or gods; and,

in scientists we have our new magic-makers. Thus, science has proved a hand maid to social forces, and, has been made to social order while silently and indirectly changing the social order in existence. "The disinterested pursuit of knowledge"—that beautiful illusion on which Pure science prided itself is a hollow talk to us, and, even scientists of the day are ready to admit that social forces and social requirements worked underneath the scientific inspirations and aspirations of our epoch making inventions and discoveries.

They were epoch-making because the epoch was ready to be born, the times called for the pre-natal arrangements that the scientists of the period performed with care and credit, and,—with profit too. So, in a world in which war has been the ruling idea, the necessity for exploitation and domination of the basic structure, scientists will but play the role of the willing henchmen of the reigning order. Science helps exploitation of the natural resources and the human element in the process. Science tries to maintain and spread the competitive capitalist economy—and is restricted by the monopolistic trusts and cartels which find scientific discoveries more and more costly for the purpose. Science undertakes to uphold and extend the political domination of the contending national groups—and breaks down in the process the geographical and racial barriers that nursed the very national groups into existence. For all this science is rewarded—in cash and in an extension of its own frontiers. So, science flourishes at the flourish of the war god's trumpet.

In this war-maddened and war-stricken world of the present, it is interesting to read how war too has helped science. Prof. J.D. Bernal's book, *Science in War*, may be turned to for the purpose. It is a sober and honest account of the progress that science has made in obedience to the needs and urgencies of the states and their periodic orgy of destruction. "The majority of significant technical and scientific advances owe their origin directly to the material requirements of war." Gun powder, study of the gases, smelting of iron by means of coal, large scale production of steel, and the methods of communication and transport, telephone, wireless, motor

transport and above all, the aeroplane, would either come very slow or would never come but for anxious nations in arms who would finance any new scheme to worst the enemy. The last war recorded the first inauguration of the era in which science was to prove the deciding factor, the tanks, the gases, the aeroplanes, the wireless—and the silent progress in surgery, in chemistry, in physics, and from aerobiotics to stratosphere, and, from the atom to radio-activity—at, even to psychopathology, with which the post-war scientists have presented the post-war world, are an indirect tribute to that last holocaust and to the present one for which this civilization prepared so blindly, so feverishly, so zealously from after that day. War researches were the best investment for nations. They realised, best investment even for the private capitalists as they found—and scientific researches for war were always well financed.

Of course, it is no tribute to human intelligence that its best efforts were called forth by the need of destruction. But, at the same time it would be fair to remember that the researches were not solely intended to invent the newer and more sweeping methods of killing alone. War is the art of killing, no doubt, but war is the art of self-protection too. And the art and science of self-preservation, of healing, of warding off the attack have happily been not lagging behind the destructive efforts and inventions. The Fuehrer of the Nazi science may ignore it; but the world knows, the defence weapons in general cancel out our offensive efforts, and much as the Fuehrer may warn us, his Death Ray or his harnessing of the atomic explosiveness would not defeat the other efforts of science. Science heals more than it kills—even under this present anarchical order. And if a "New order" is born, an order that will wipe out the mad clashes, the wild mania for exploitation of fellow men, the wild fury for domination—? Science will be freed in a planned world to plan and record its real progress.

It is here again science is driving the world to admit planning as its own method. Mechanisation of all forms of warfare, the tanks, the machine-guns, the transport vehicles, aeroplanes, and the gases, gasoline explosives etc., all call

for a gigantic stride in industrial development. Only highly industrial countries can wage modern war effectively. The lesson is admitted even by an Indian bureaucracy today which is ready to encourage the existing and potential industries of India to help its mechanisation and modernisation of troops and the manufacture of wagons and engines. Again, war has at once stepped in to eliminate competition or private initiative, management etc. It is realised, all industry is trust, a national trust—and, war has unavoidably decreed the planning of all national resources, a *war-time nationalisation*.

Is it too difficult to read what peace would mean, when peace dreams on these blood-red fields of our globe? Will Peace be defeated again as it was defeated? And science remains a slave when it has practically helped itself to freedom, helped society to burst its own chains of exploitation and destruction?

## Hindu Divorce Bill

Dr. Deshmukh's Hindu Divorce Bill has been refused a Select Committee. By 32 voters to 15 the motion for its reference to the Committee has been lost. The Bill has, therefore, automatically gone to board. The result was almost a foregone conclusion in the absence of the mover, who as a member of the Congress Assembly Party has been abstaining for some time past. But it is doubtful if his own presence and the attendance of the party to which he belongs would have made the result different, although the margin in voting might have been greatly reduced. There are various reasons for this presumption. In the first place, the Bill was not a party measure and there can be no knowing if it would have won the support of all Congress members. In the second place, except the Muslim section in the House, practically every other group was opposed to it.

On the Government side, the Bill was previously opposed by Sir N. N. Sircar, the then Law Member. That opposition was continued in the present session by Mr. Thorne, the Home Member. The fate of the Bill is however a sorry reminder to us that though the country is making rapid political strides, its social

conscience has not yet been properly roused.

In making this observation it must not be supposed that we are blind to the defects from which the Bill suffered. It had them and some very glaring too; for instance, while it sought to arm women with the right and privilege of demanding divorce under certain circumstances, it denied the same privilege to men who may sometimes find, and quite reasonably too, that marital companionships are so many oppressive burdens. But this and other lesser defects might have been remedied in the Select Committee. It could have retouched the Bill, added something here, dropped something there and put it in form. There is no justification whatever as to why the Bill should have been dropped midway on the roadside and be left to die there in cold neglect.

From the woman's point of view, the Bill, it appears to us, was quite unexceptionable. It provided for separation on the part of Hindu wives from their husbands on the latter's second marriage, change of religion or desertion for three years or more. On all these grounds a divorce is certainly justifiable. It needs hardly be pointed out that the life that the Hindu wives—specially in the lower middle and the lowest classes—have to live sometimes, is no idyllic tale of happiness and bliss. Pathetic stories often appear in the press setting forth how cruelly they are treated in their homes. But what appears in print is but a small fragment of the infinite woes that are borne by them silently in the seclusion of their hearths and homes.

They drag on their corroding fetters till death rings down the curtain over their tragic existence. Had the Bill been passed into law, it might have offered relief to those poor souls who might have courageously sought it. With the premature death of the Bill that happy possibility has disappeared, at least for the present.

It is often contended that a law of this nature would be liable to gross abuse as is exemplified by the West which should serve as a warning to us. We think this apprehension is without any substance. Hindu women, wedded to the traditional ideal of restraint and self-abnegation, are not expected to fall easily to the lure of

unbridled life which has already become a problem to all serious minds in Europe and America. Hindu wives have a deep attachment for settled home life which they will certainly refuse to abandon just for the fun of specious and perilous novelties. Therefore, that apprehension need not bother us too much. Dr. Deshmukh's Bill has gone for the present, but let not reforming legislators like him rest on their oars. Moreover, let not the Hindu public sleep over a question of such vital and far-reaching importance to the society. A reform like the one contemplated by Dr. Deshmukh's Bill is a crying need and has been long overdue. Happily, the Government too, have assured their support to a well thought out and comprehensive measure in future which has such reform in view.

## Current Comments

### Next A.I.C.C. Meeting

As at present arranged, the next meeting of the A.I.C.C. will take place at Wardha on the 7th October. It needs hardly be said that the decision of the Working Committee in regard to war was rather indecisive. It simply wanted to know the war-aims of Britain and asked if the principle of democracy which it professes to fight for, will be applied to India as well. Happily, the Anglo-Indian press and a section of the British press have acclaimed the statement of the Committee as a fair and fitting document. But both Whitehall and Simla have as yet maintained a sphinx-like silence about the matter. Mr. Chamberlain's declaration of war-aims has strangely made no reference to India whatsoever. The Congress thus stands faced to-day with an uncertain and rather difficult situation. It is not possible to anticipate whether any reply to the statement of the Committee will be forthcoming before the A.I.C.C. meets at Wardha; it is far less possible to forecast the nature of that reply. At any rate, the A.I.C.C. shall be called upon to give a definite lead to the country in this fateful hour of its existence. Complete unity in the ranks of the Congress must be maintained by all means. May the A.I.C.C. rise to the height of the occasion.

### Muslim League and War

The Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League has had its say on the war. The statement it has released for publication is a thoroughly disappointing document. In its greed for an unjustifiably large share of governmental authority in exchange for co-operation with Britain, it has conveniently cast even the canons of logic and consistency to the four winds. That is why in the same breath it has declared for freedom of the country as well as for adequate safeguards to protect Muslim interests. Again though the League is never tired of vaunting the democratic spirit of Islam, its Working Committee has in a most unabashed way proclaimed that India is not fit for democracy! It seems that the bogey of Hindu supremacy—that phantom creation of Muslim communal imagination—has deplorably muddled the wits of the League. The charge that the Muslims do not get a square deal in the Congress-governed provinces is no new one and its truth has been challenged before by more than one Congress premier; but no convincing evidence has been put forth in return. Even *The Statesman* has been constrained to observe that the Pirpur report which the League has capitalised so much in this respect, does not provide any substantial ground for the charge. Yet instead of being silenced, the League would argue still! Indeed, not only this point or that, but the whole statement is overlaid with rank communalism. It is, therefore, heartening to find that Mr. Asaf Ali has sounded a timely call to the nationalist Muslims all over the country to repudiate the claim of the League to speak on behalf of the entire Muslim community.

### Sardar Patel on discipline

In the course of a recent speech Sardar Patel is reported to have said, "The weapon of discipline is our own only weapon." Congressmen have realised the truth of the statement to their bitter cost even without Sardarji confessing it so openly. It is this "weapon" that has been set in motion to rid the Congress machinery of all inconvenient elements who have refused to come up to the pattern and even at the present critical hour when unity in Congress ranks is most called for, the "weapon" has not

been any the less active. What has most amused us in the statement is that Sardarji, usually a blunt and straight sort of man, has of late developed a subtle artistic sense. Yes, like a true artist in expression, he has left here much to the imagination of the readers to fill in and make up the sense. Had he been his old self, he would have certainly added "for self-preservation" in order to make the sentence complete.

### Partition of Poland

The fall of Poland was not unforeseen. It was known that she could have no direct help from her allies. So, if Poland is to win, she will win on the Western Front and on the seas. But the events that signalised or accompanied the Polish disaster, are certainly disconcerting to men and nations. The Soviet had struck no bargain formerly with Germany regarding Poland as their present negotiations prove. The Soviet move, swift and decisive, was timely and opportune—from the Soviet point of view. For, otherwise Polish White Russia and Ukraina would pass off under Hitlerian heels; and once the Nazis were planted there, the Soviet plan of joining the two to their respective Soviet States would be defeated for long. While, therefore, the Soviet's was a masterly stroke in defeating and barring Nazism, it would be a handle to the critics of the Soviet. Even socialists of England and France are put into difficulty in supporting the Soviet conduct at this hour. Poland, to a certain extent by her own hunger for lands belonging to other nationalities, has brought about her partition again. Let us hope Polish liberty will revive some day though Polish aggression is ended for ever.

### Rumania—in and Outside

These are critical hours for the smaller peoples on or near to the Nazi lands. Rumania in particular, is in danger. After the Czech annexation, she had to save herself by admitting Nazi domination of her economic and industrial life. German shortage of oil and foodstuff must certainly make Germany tighten the grasp on Rumania now. So, the murder of the Premier M. Callinescu by the pro-Nazi "Iron Guards" may serve as a signal for the internal disorder that would offer Hitler the excuse for direct Nazi handling of the Rumanian affairs. Of

course, that would but be the beginning of the German plan to harness the Little Entente partners and the Balkan peninsula to her own wheels when the blockade operates against Germany more and more. But, is not this Rumanian and Hungarian scheme of Germany brought to nullity again by the Soviet appearance on the borders of the two countries, through occupation of Polish Ukraina, which has closed the way of Germany to these lands? Again, Stalin has gained a victory of non-aggression on Hitler.

### Balkan Tinder-box

The Balkan is the tinder-box of European politics. Different interests play their cards there adroitly. Except in Bulgaria, the Nazi and Fascist combination predominates. British influence only gained a footing in Greece and Turkey on the Mediterranean and Rumania. How the politics of the region is now shaping itself, it is difficult to apprehend. Withdrawal of Italian troops from the Albanian frontier points to an understanding between Italy and Greece—a significant thing for the Powers interested in the Mediterranean. The Soviet-Turkish negotiations are not without meaning. Bulgaria is said to have reacted favourably to this. Besides proving the strange diplomatic capacity of Stalin who can, in one month free himself from the German threat and Japanese threat, the Soviet activities in the regions might acquire a bigger and deeper implication. Is it intended to bar the Nazi-door to the Balkans and thence to the Mediterranean and the Near East that was supposed to be Nazi programme after Poland? Is it the beginning of the Soviet penetration into the Balkans? Bolshevising the Balkans by influencing the native pro-Soviet elements when the two other chief contending forces are fighting themselves? But this is then too early—these nations might not be so fools as to suffer all this. If this be the programme, well, *listen slowly*, comrade Stalin, *hasten slowly*.

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## INDIA—A FULL EQUAL

### BRITISH PAPER'S COMMENTS

The "Manchester Guardian", in a leader under the caption "Indian Opinion", says: "The attitude of India towards the European war, in which Britain is involved, is necessarily more complicated than that of this country. From great many Indians in British India and from virtually all the princes have come offers of every kind of assistance which have been spontaneous, ungrudging and generous. In many parts of British India, particularly the Punjab, there is the same unconditional readiness to help. Spokesmen from all parts have added their individual appeals.

"But India is only involved directly in this war because of her connection with this country and those who are opposed to British connection cannot necessarily grant their support without much heart searching. The Congress in particular is in a dilemma and the Muslim League also, though not to the same extent. There are two currents in recent Indian history, which makes it difficult for the Congress to take the simple path of harassing Britain in her crisis in the hope of ultimate benefits.

"One is that Congress leaders have seen in Fascism, particularly Nazism, a far more truculent form of imperialism than the present British edition. The second is that on the whole the policy of guarded co-operation with Britain has worked well not only for the Congress as a party, but for India as a whole. On the other hand it must not be assumed that the Congress is willing to swallow its words about "Imperialist War" without more ado. Like the United States its sympathies may be definite and deep but its grievances persist. Not only because of possible Congress objections but because of our own welfare, India deserves now to be treated as a full equal. It is widely recognised in India that India would suffer if Britain and France were defeated. She must understand that she will gain from their victory."

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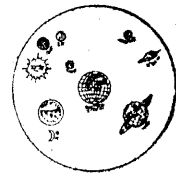
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## HOW IT STRIKES A CONTEMPORARY

By GIRIJA PROSANNA GANGULI

Was it not Proust who said that a book should not be criticised until it had acquired a posterity? It follows as a corollary from the thesis that an author should not be criticised until he is duly decomposing under a crumbling tomb. But frankly I don't see Proust's point. Proust was afraid that contemporary criticism was liable to error owing to lack of sufficient data of correct information and that, therefore, there could not be any finality about such criticism. But frankly, again, I don't see the point. I don't know that there can be anything like finality in matters aesthetic. And as for sufficiency of information it is difficult to believe that we can ever know enough about anything, particularly about any man. Every man is a puzzle to his neighbour and we see the people nearest ourselves as through glass darkly. That is why we ought to take even our history with a grain of salt—preferably with a grain of Epsom salt as Aldous Huxley would say.

Contemporary criticism oftentimes goes wrong, but so does other criticism. Illustrations are superfluous. And then there is another thing. This is a peculiar bite, a race about contemporary criticism which lack to the respectable criticism of the academic kind whose business is to serve a sort of show-case the mummified spirit of dead authors. Green's green-eyed comments on Shakespeare are to me as valuable as any latter-day Shakespearean criticism. And certainly they tickle me more.

It is pleasure to observe the tremendous pullulation in Bengali literature of the day. Our literature has been steadily growing in depth and width. Fiction, drama, verse, familiar essay as well as scientific and philosophical dissertation, lyrical drama and original research—it is within the competence of our younger writers—I omit the elders to deal with every form. But the prose section of our contemporary literature is undoubtedly richer than its poetic part. If there were a compiler with a fine critical nose and eye he could make out of the recent short stories that lie scattered in various journals

and magazines—also collected occasionally in book form—an anthology that could speak to any similar foreign production hat on head. But the cleverest compiler would be hard put to it to produce an anthology of current Bengali verse which would come anywhere near the other anthology in point of bulk or quality. It would after all be a lean affair—as lean as any malaria-stricken Bengali. Of our contemporary poets—for I shall deal with a few of our poets only—Mr. Buddhadev Bose automatically comes to the mind first. He is not the best of them all. He is hardly the second best. But he is most definitely the cleverest. He has a deft touch which comes in useful whatever his subject or his form. He can turn a neat verse, can produce fine filigree—work in the shape of a familiar essay or write a psychological story which will remind you of Browning's method in verse. Among the younger set he possesses the finest critical style. Many of the readers of 'Kavita'—the poetry quarterly published under Mr. Bose's editorship—skip the verses which pretend to form the principal content of the journal to arrive to the critical essay which appends itself as a regular tail-piece to it. This penetrating and alert prose moves from point to

point and idea to idea with astonishing nimbleness.

As for Mr. Bose's verse, it seems to me to be hardly poetry. He is hardly a poet; he is a poetic craftsman. Poets are, as a rule, dull people. But Mr. Bose is too intelligent to be dull and a poet. Of course his technique is almost always impeccable. But poetry is not all technique. For, is not the raiment more than the body? Mr. Bose lacks the 'body.'

Mr. Bose has a series that we may call the 'Kankavati' poems. One poem of the series, by reason of the use of the word 'Kankavati' as a hemistich in it, irresistibly suggests a comparison with Tennyson's 'Oriana.' The English poet shows great mastery in the manipulation of the name-word, using it in all the cases, subjective, objective and vocative. But Mr. Bose uses his name-word only in the vocative case and that too rather unnecessarily. This results in a certain monotony. In another poem of the series also the name-word appears with disagreeable frequency much as a straw might be constantly thrust up by a boiling well. Mr. Bose's poem has all the bubbling self-repetition of the well but not its boiling madness. As a rule, however, his does not let him down.

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Mr. Jibanananda Das is probably the most poetic of the modern poets. He lives a 'life of sensations rather than of thoughts.' He is a primitive astray in our world. Unlike any other modern he knows nothing of the progressive cult and his poetry has no social content. He is a pre-Raphaelite in his attitude to art and life. He is a Keats minus his colours and a Morris minus his 'socialism. Take, for instance, his 'Mather Galpa'—a fine representative piece. To create his magic he requires nothing more than rotten egg-shells, decaying leaves, spider's thread and all the stuff that can claim no poetic pedigree—no tiger-moth's deep-demask'd wings or fading muskrose filled with dewy wine. But it is sad to have to say that some of his poems are disfigured by wilful eccentricities which is a point of pride with some of the moderns.

These 'wilful eccentricities' however have done the greatest harm to Mr. Bishnu De. Mr. De has one or two good poems to his credit and almost always he has a fine phrase or two. But he is incapable of what we may call 'whole-meal' poetry. He must adulterate it with eccentricities of all kinds. The muses grant him fine thing—bits of real gold and ivory or a peacock's wing. But he flings them away. So desperately is he in love with his own whims which his friends pamper by calling him 'learned'. It is, however, a curious kind of learning which prompts its possessor to trot out his rudimentary knowledge of Greek and Roman mythology in season and out of season and enables him to borrow Eliotian tricks to pass them as his own or even to introduce a foreign stanza-form. Mr. De's complacency is appalling. It were better if he could feet at moments as Benedick rightly said of himself, "No, I was not born under a rhyming planet nor under a non-rhyming."

I would end with Mr. Sudhindra Datta. He is really a learned man but his learning is a serious impediment to his reputation. It is difficult to get one's teeth into his turgid prose. *One could engage the Maginot Line with better chance.* But he is a poet with rare intellectual gifts. I cannot interpret his poetry for I do not understand it either. But through the barriers of his words I have seen a 'golden city' like Priestley's shepherd. I wish I could come back like him and 'murmur' to the world 'golden things.'

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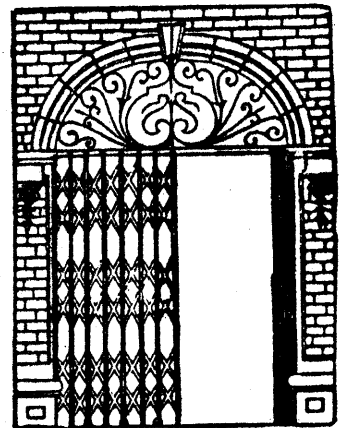


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## THE RUSSO-GERMAN PACT

By PARIMAL KUMAR ROY

If the present war is going to make any epoch-making changes in the world-structure and a reorientation of human society, the Russo-German Non-Aggression Pact will find a place in History as one of the contributory factors that led to that war. For, the almost simultaneous happening of the two events—the conclusion of the Non-Aggression Pact and the German invasion of Poland—is more than a mere chance coincidence. By guaranteeing her security on the eastern front Germany was afforded an opportunity to accomplish her long cherished objective in Poland and she did not fail to avail of it at the earliest moment.

The question that troubles us is what led M. Stalin to suddenly withdraw his hands extended to the imperialist democracies and to hold them before Germany knowing it for certain that thereby he would be helping Hitler to begin afresh his acts of aggression. It is, indeed, difficult to read into the mind of the Russian Dictator. It might be that one of his objectives was to bring the rival groups of imperialist powers face to face on a trial of strength. But what is more obvious is that the security of his "fatherland" was his primary consideration. One who is acquainted with the map of Europe need not be told of the vulnerability of Russia on her western front. The long-stretched frontier running from the Arctic to the Black Sea and unprotected by any natural barricade is a source of constant anxiety to Russia. Although she has no contiguous boundary line with any powerful State, nevertheless, the possibility that the smaller states ranging from Finland to Bulgaria might either themselves join an enemy country or fail to prevent the enemy from using their territory as bases of operations against her, is ever present in her mind. Specially, the danger from the north-western sector in a possible war with Germany, who has kept no secrets about her territorial ambitions in Russia, is obvious. Russia cannot view with equanimity a hostile Germany in alliance with or in occupation of the Baltic States. Moreover, Finland, a State carved out of Russian territory in 1917, is suspicious of Russia

and has a pro-German leaning. Germany would never fail to take this advantage in her conflict with Soviet Russia. From the Finnish mainland German forces can not only endanger Murmansk, Russia's only ice-free open-sea port but also the Lenin-grad—Murmansk strategic railway as well as the Stalin Canal linking the Baltic with the white Sea. Again, hostile forces in occupation of the Aland Islands, which were given to Finland by the League of Nations in 1921 and were neutralised and demilitarised, can bottle up the Russian Navy in the Gulf of Finland, and, further prevent any help from coming to Russia by way of the Baltic Sea. The unfortified island will easily fall a prey to German fleet and air force even if Finland remains neutral.

Of course, Russia is now one of the great military powers of the world and foreboding the danger from the West, she has been building the Soviet 'Maginot' line along her entire western front. Yet the Russian military strength remains as yet untested. Russia wanted to remove the possibility of attack on her western front and with this end in view she entered into staff-talks with Britain and France. Apprehending the danger from Finland and the Baltic States she stressed on the guarantee of their integrity by the powers of the Peace-front. But seeing Britain

and France unwilling to give that guarantee and marking time on flimsy grounds, Russia had to make a momentous decision for her national safety and, leaving aside all questions of ideological differences, turned to Germany. There was nothing inconsistent or illogical in this step. Hers was a choice between two groups of capitalist countries which were equally opposed to her social philosophy and economic system.

The Pact is a masterful stroke of statesmanship on the part of both the Dictators. It testifies to the urgency of the immediate needs. The ideological differences are forgotten or shelved for the time being. The territorial claims of one upon the other are forsaken and all theoretical wranglings pushed aside. Both the countries stand to gain by the Pact. Germany is much relieved on her eastern front; while, Russia's danger on the western front is gone at least for some time to come. Both the Dictators have acted as realists. What is more important to us is the attitude of Russia. M. Stalin is a practical statesman. He adopted, when faced with danger, the 'safety first' principle. He saw quite clear that by this Pact he would be encouraging Hitler to overrun Poland and other States in South-East Europe.

For the moment he threw overboard his idea of internationalism.

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## OUR LITERARY FRONT

By NAREN SARKAR

Apropos the process of fermentation our socio-economic relationships are undergoing to-day, a great thing is happening in the domain of letters,—the emergence of a literary 'front'. Slow but sure, the new movement—at first no bigger than a man's hand,—has come to assume all-pervasive proportions. On a surface-view it is a counter-blast to our existing literary convention,—both in matter and in manner. Aphoristically, it is a war-cry of the have-nots against the haves. The immediate aim of the literary leftists is, of course, the socialisation of letters, the diffusion of the literary output into what is to-day the substratum of society, the establishment of an 'entente' between the literary man and society at large. In the nature of things, the 'front' is out to fight the static, egoistic, belle-lettristic vogue in the field of literature.

So, the contest is big. Behind, lies a literary heritage with its quota from theocracy, presbyterianism, and aristocracy. Right up to the present day is discernible a mental make-up characterised by an other-worldliness which is really the sublimation of a frustration neurosis born of grievous social maladjustment. Under the main current of the refined literature sponsored by the privileged classes exists a folk literature which, unable to pin its faith to the concrete possibilities of the solid earth, mostly dwells on the mysterious, the occult ties that have been taught to be subsisting between the visible and the invisible, the life ante and post-mortem. From this eerie height our philosophers and eremites have perpetually disseminated on earth a popular, comprehensible brand of negativism which have effectively side-tracked the palpable misery of the masses.

The impact with the West is credited with having opened up a new vista before our mind's eye. It is true that a new intelligentsia,—a batch of bottle-fed babies as it were of the West cropped up. An effort was noticeable to cogitate, to interrogate. But the end-result happened to be that the sentimental liberalism, rather than the tantalising neo-rationalism of the imported stuff came to stay, because the former fitted in nicely with the

mystical humanism evolved and bequeathed for good by the early Vaishnavas. In the field of literature, we welcomed Wordsworth who refused to pen a line for those who wore fine clothes and Shelley the strange but delectable blend of Plato and Phry Magdalene. Our enthusiasm knew no bounds when we discovered that the neo-romanticism which came from afar was only a newer, authorised version of the existing androgynous brand our muses subsisted upon. The pith of the matter is that our literary conventions, apart from quality or technique, remained unaffected by the Western invasion. What is Tagore, if not a mighty torch-bearer of age-long traditions? The same subjectivity, mysticism and lyricism is there plus, perhaps, the quasi-critical Victorian complacency, born out of battering capitalism which saw that 'God's in His heaven, All's right with the world.'

The '*magnum opus*' of our literary front is then a tough fight with this tradition which is basically anti-social. Sentimental liberalism must be replaced by a plea, for the emancipation of the masses based on observation, analysis and scientific formulation of the principles of social transformation. The bogey of sentimentalism can be conquered only with a correct estimation of the irreducible elements of society. A plea for social justice can only be effective when the real causes of inequity are laid bare and contending interests are exposed. It appears that our literary leftists have not yet apprehended this main plank of their platform. The effect is likely to be the evolution of a rhapsody in which

Bergson and Ibsen, Freud and William James—each at his third hand—will continue to speak.

It is obvious that our literary front must possess a buoyant faith in the coming society, a proselytes' zeal for the advent of a new order. It is not enough that it calls a spade a spade, and mercilessly unmasks the conceits of the decaying haves. There is indeed a good deal of difference between ordinary realism and what may be called socialist realism. In the latter there is no place for the individualist or the pessimist who is in conflict with society. Through infinite travails the socialist realist looks wistfully to the resolution of antithetical elements of society into a wonderful new synthesis.

There is no gainsaying the fact that many of our new men lack this positive faith. For them it is well to remember what a critic has pronounced of Lenin. "He (Lenin) was decidedly no narrow doctrinaire. He knew how to discern, for example, the basic revolutionary in the aristocratic Tolstoy and the philistine in Upton Sinclair. Nor did he hesitate to brand as rubbish and nonsense the ballyhoo of 'Proletarian Culture.' The apotheosis of the have-nots is not merely an intellectual process. Cerebration without the requisite sympathy is apt to transform the new movement into a vogue or a fad. In the penumbra of sentiments our literary leftists should cherish no lurking suspicion about their ultimate objective. In the literature of to-morrow there will be absolutely no room for the escapist or the epicure."

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## CONGRESS AND WAR

**I**N course of a circular letter to all Provincial Congress Committees, the War Sub-Committee says that the Working Committee has given the most earnest consideration to the recent world developments and issued a statement in which they have clearly laid down India's attitude.

The Sub-Committee invites attention to this statement so that the Provincial and Local Committees and all Congressmen should appreciate the position only.

### Text of circular

Following is the full text of the circular letter that has been issued to all Provincial Congress Committees by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Sardar Vallabhai Patel :—

Dear Comrade, for many years past all of us have lived in the verge of a world crisis and pre-occupied as we are with our vital national problems, the Congress has often given thought to the approaching crisis and laid down our broad policy in regard to it. Now the crisis has come and War rages in Europe in addition to the Far Eastern War which has now been going on for two and half years. Every Congressman has been deeply moved by this turn of events and given earnest consideration to our duty at this juncture. Not only the directions of the Congress during these past years but also the very basis of the Congress and its reason for existence compel us to play a worthy and effective part in the development of events. We have not been onlookers to the events in India passively adopting ourselves to what has happened. The Congress has essentially been a body of action and struggle in the cause of India's freedom and has shaped India's destiny for many years. That grave responsibility has to be shouldered afresh by the Congress in this crisis which affects India as well as the rest of the world. As you are aware, the Working Committee has given the most earnest consideration to these developments and issued a statement in which they have clearly laid down India's attitude. We invite your attention to this

statement so that your provincial and local Committees and all Congressmen should appreciate the position fully and act in accordance with the advice given. That statement is a dispassionately worded document, clarifying the issues as they affect India in simple language and indicating the road that India has to travel in these troubled times. The implications of that statement and possible developments must be clear to you.

### Widest perspective

The Committee viewed the crisis in the widest perspective and considered the cause of Indian freedom in relation to world freedom. We who claim to labour for great ends in India cannot lose sight of these perspectives. This crisis will not pass, as the Working Committee say, leaving the essential structure of the present day world intact. The world is going to be refashioned and India is going to play her part in this refashioning.

### Day-to-day activities

Many questions arise as to our day-to-day activities, more especially during this period when our final decision has not been taken. We shall endeavour to answer them as these are put to us. As you are aware, a special Sub-Committee, consisting of us three, has been appointed to deal with the War emergency and we shall always be at your disposal for reference or advice. Our Sub-Committee will of course, be guided by Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress President Sree Rajendra Prasad.

### Call for Unity

Two matters however have to be borne in mind for they are of essential importance. Whatever the developments might be, we can only face them with dignity and strength if our organisation is well prepared and has put an end to internal controversy and conflict. No lover of the Congress and of Indian freedom may do anything which impairs our unity and

joint will for action. We have all to rise above our petty selves and become in this crisis of our destiny, true soldiers of India, speaking and acting together, with dignity and forbearance and in accordance with the ideals and principles we have cherished. Our first duty is to tune up our organisation and keep it in a fit condition for whatever demands might be made upon it.

Secondly, we must not individually or severally act or speak hastily, precipitating a development before its proper time. We must function in accordance with the spirit of the Working Committee's statement and not overreach it or belie in our words or deeds. It would be a disservice to the large cause we seek to serve, as well as to this unity, which is essential in our ranks.

### No Individual Action

Your Provincial and local Committees should give the widest publicity to the Working Committee's statement, and explain its implications, more particularly, the essential need for tightening up our organisation and preparing it for all difficulties and trials we may have to face. Unity and discipline have to be emphasised as well as that the final decision has not been taken yet and this will depend on the circumstances and developments. Our position has been frankly and clearly stated before India and the world, to that we shall adhere and seek, above all, to follow the paths which lead to world freedom and reorganisation which must be based on our freedom and reorganisation. But any action taken by individual Congressman, which goes beyond the Working Committee's statement, will not only lead to a loosening of our discipline but to a weakening of our cause and to controversy when we have to present a united front. This has to be avoided. Strength will not come to us by individual action or by brave speeches, but by discipline and united effort. The hour of trial has come again upon us. Let us be worthy of it."

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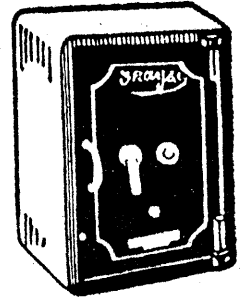
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## THE RUSSIAN INVASION

### NEHRU'S VIEWS

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru addressed a gathering of about ten thousand people at Allahabad on Sept. 20, for about two hours, on the present international situation. At the outset, Pandit Nehru said that the whole world was passing through a revolutionary phase and we in India, occupied as we were with our own affairs, must not forget that political and economic happenings in any one part of the world affected the whole. We might feel that these events were remote or distant from us and our interest in them might tend to be only theoretical, but all these new things were not only theoretical. It was necessary that we should look at the happenings of the past few years with practical comprehension. The Congress had been laying down its foreign policy for the last eighteen years or so, at least since the 1927 session in Madras. Our different resolutions on the war had also been taking shape according to the changing world conditions.

Pandit Nehru traced the causes of the last war, explaining how its root causes were embedded in the great industrial advancement of the western countries throughout the nineteenth century, and the consequent struggle for the raw materials and possessions in Asia, Africa and China.

Referring to Russo-German Pact Pandit Nehru said that it was a non-aggression Pact. Russia had made such non-aggression pacts with other powers also, but the way in which these pacts came into existence was not beyond suspicion. This pact was a very clever move, and assured Hitler of safety from attack on one frontier. One thing was clear, said the Pandit, that this pact had brought about war, even though perhaps ultimately it could not have been avoided.

Referring to the Russian invasion of Poland, Pandit Nehru said that the situation was not clear. It might be that the invasion was really undertaken for fear of Germany becoming too strong. No one could say clearly at present what it means. We would know about it by and by.

England and France economically were better off than Germany. It was

likely that America would ultimately be dragged into the war on Britain's side, if not actively at east with war materials, food and money. England and France were better equipped for a prolonged war, which would wear out Germany.

Whatever the result of the present war, new forces will come into being after it. We should not in this moment of tension and excitement take a step, which we might not be able to implement in the eyes of the world. All these matters were before the Congress Working Committee when they after long discussions issued a statement. I would require you all to read it well and follow its argument.

### MAULANA AZAD ON WARDHA STATEMENT

The assertion, that the Wardha resolution was the best under the circumstances, and that there could be midway between co-operation and non-co-operation, was made by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in the course of an interview to the United Press.

The Maulana, explaining the implication of the Congress war resolution, said that two things were clear, namely that the Congress demanded a clear and an unambiguous announcement by the authorities, admitting India's right of self-determination, and substantial action which should demonstrate the British Government's bona-fides in this respect immediately. He added that fulfilment of these two conditions would lead to the Congress co-operation in the war.

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## HITLER'S GERMANY WILL CRUMBLE DOWN

By BENYO GHOSE

The death-knell of Fascism is sounded in Europe. Never before a boomerang was so timely and so successfully released, as it has been done by Germany. After signing up a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union in hot haste, the German Dictator rashly decided upon launching at war. In doing so Hitler undoubtedly misread the policy of the Soviet Union, found wrongly and ironically in her an unconcerned watcher of his rapacious brutality as he will now realise from the march of the Red Army in Eastern Poland. Nevertheless, the decision was inevitable. It was forced upon Hitler by the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union seeing all her hopes of crying halt to Fascism face to face being shattered, hit upon the policy of letting all the forces that make up Fascism loose. In the present war if Nazi Germany is crushed, and she will be, this policy of the Soviet Union will be recorded in red-letters in the diplomatic history of the world. It will then be revealed to the world that the Soviet Union has neither tricked with Peace or Democracy or Socialism, nor she has crawled into the Fascist camp to master the mischievous art of a blackmailer, but that she has paved the way for the coming of Peace and Democracy and Socialism by kicking the shell of Fascism to roll down quickly and to crash on the crag of discontent of the people below. Already there is hum inside Germany and it is rising in crescendo. The final uproar is nearing.

To wage this war successfully is the one thing Hitler cannot do. We can emphatically say this because the mad theory of *Blitzkrieg* or "lightning war" propounded by the Nazis can be howled down by all the experience of the Great War and of the Spanish and Chinese Wars. "Give me 20,000 airplanes, and I'll be master of Europe in a week," is said to be Goering's confident brag. But this military stratagem of startling *coups* will land Germany to the marsh in which Nazism will flounder to finish. The dream of a sudden attack, delivered without warning, of which the Nazis have talked so glibly of late, and which is supposed to blast the enemy's air force out of the skies, cripple his commerce and communi-

cation, completely break down his civilian morale, and bring about his speedy capitulation, will surely be proved within a short time as a nonsensical chimera. Why?

It is said that Germany and Italy will start a knock-out blow from the air at the various bases of British and French navies and snatch off the oceans from them for their own raiders and submarines. This blow will then be turned against the British and French aerodromes; arms factories and thickly populated centres with a simultaneous land attack on France from several directions. But this estimate of the Axis Powers is wrong because the anti-aircraft fire has remarkably advanced since Great War days when it brought down one out of five of the planes, whereas it brought down four out of five in the Spanish War. Today, the anti-aircraft defence of Britain and France is formidable and their battleships have been fitted with heavier deck armour. They will soon be back at their 1918 production of 5000 planes a month which the Axis Powers cannot conceive of. Again, the hope of a sweeping land attack against France by tanks, motorized artillery and infantry will be miserably frustrated. These tanks cannot survive the "asparagus beds," the grass-covered marshy pits and the underground mines of France and even if they do they cannot escape the field guns and the new high-velocity anti-tank rifles. These and such other facts clearly point out that despite the brilliant schemes of the knockout blows from the air, the mighty sea power will still play its traditional role in the present warfare and German and Italian strength will be sapped to the last drop if war continues. Italy, the only partner to be counted upon by Germany, is already strained to the breaking point to keep up the appearance of a Great Power in peacetime. She has few of the sinews of modern warfare and economically she will be left completely dependent on Germany. And if Great Britain and France can build up an 'Economic Front' against Germany, her entire economic structure will fall through due to a miserable shrinkage of raw materials.

To surpass all, the psychological situation in Germany today is more like 1917 than 1914. Men and machines have been worked at war tempo in season and out of season. The exultation into which the youth has been whipped, the elation over the well-timed *coups*, the fomentation of discontent in the German border populations and the gearing of the country's entire economy to war production—these are the forces which together made up the 'dynamic' of the Nazi movement. But saner heads like Von Neurath in the diplomatic sphere, Schacht in the economic and Von Fritsch in the military sphere who doubtlessly pursue the same expansionist aim, watched mightier forces at work behind and watched with concern. They tried to stem the fatal drift, but failed. They were deposed and the result is that today the Nazi leadership will be deposed.

Thus a portion of the world will surely be set free for which Kremlin certainly can claim lion's share of credit. Of course, the public opinion of the world will warmly receive the Democracies of Europe, Great Britain and France, if they can successfully hoot out Fascism from the West and can purge Europe of all the sickening cancs of People's Government. Meanwhile, let us hope, for there is no harm in hoping.

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## THE CONFLICT OF IDEOLOGIES.

By NARAHARI KAVIRAJ

Every liberal political institution in the world to-day is predominantly under the influence of two conflicting ideologies—the one is democracy in its entire connotation or *socialism* as we presently call it and the other is democracy in its partial extent or *constitutional democracy* as it is popularly called, which again is not always immune from the risk of being further limited in extent or of deteriorating into what may be called a *Dictatorial attitude*.

The Indian National Congress, as it exists to-day, is distinctly a representative and democratic political institution which aims at the establishment of a truly democratic and national government. The High Command that sits at the head of the National Congress and directs its policy, had for a few years past been noted for being inspired with the ideals of democracy; but curiously enough, with the growth of a radical left wing in the Congress in comparatively recent years, the High Command is becoming more and more dictatorial in its desperate attempts to stick to power, sometimes gagging the mouth of its critics and sometimes appealing to popular sympathy with moral and personal considerations which have nothing to do with its active policy whatsoever. Under the circumstances, it is no use denying that a conflict of ideologies has sprung up in the ranks of Congressmen; on the contrary, it is worth while to discuss the fundamental points of difference involved, with a special reference to its repercussions on the day-to-day administrative tactics of the Congress High Command in most recent years.

By far the most remarkable effect of the rise of a radical left wing, far more revolutionary than the party in power could ever dream of, is the gradual shrinkage of even that much of revolutionary zeal which was its own. The history of the Congress for a couple of years and more had been the history of an opposition group against the established Government which sought to wring more and more concessions from the British Government by a constitutional agitation for better and more radical reforms. Quite in accord with popular expectations, the Congress does often in very

strong terms denounce a particular design of British Imperialism, but curiously enough it sometimes accepts that very design with a slight and often very ineffective modification. As to the merit of the new Constitution there is hardly any divergence of opinion among Congressmen. They know that it is a snare set up by Government, but the Congress under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi did at long last accept it. The ostensible object was, as we were told, to wreck it; subsequent events, however, point to a very different attitude. The Ministers are more busy at working it than at wrecking it.

What surmise can we make out of this attitude of the Congress High Command? Would it be wrong for us to infer that the High Command is becoming more and more authoritarian in tendency—its faith in the strength of a mass movement is going to be slackened? The attitude of the Congress towards the popular movements in the States is as half-hearted as it is vacillating. A series of popular movements which arose spontaneously in the different States against the Feudal Princes did hardly receive anything else than a passive sympathy from the Congress. The few cases in which the Congress actively intervened, left matters worse confounded. The peoples' struggles in Rajkot and Satyagraha in few other States were called off; over the Rajkot issue Mahatmaji even observed a fast; but did the people of these States derive any advantages by the active intervention of the Congress? Mahatmaji himself described the Rajkot affair as a great personal defeat. The suspension of Satyagraha in a few other States and the suggestion to adopt a method of negotiation have only checked the growth of the freedom movement and have postponed the attainment of their goal to a still future date.

The Congress High Command has squarely refused to sympathise with the rising tide of workers' and peasants' movements. It approaches all matters, political and economic, from its old and traditional middle class point of view. It seeks to curb the fighting power of

the working class and peasants and is apathetic to linking up these forces with the Congress. As a result, the Congress policy as regards all political issues, however important and all-embracing they might be, is shaped and determined by an influential coterie of aristocrats who are mostly landlords and business magnates. The interests of innumerable working men and peasants who represent by far the largest section of public opinion, are not at all considered. The inevitable effect of this is that the solution of any political issue is never full and complete. Sometimes temporary and artificial solutions are effected, sometimes no solution becomes possible at all.

One very remarkable result of this attempt on the part of the Congress to throttle mass movements and isolate the workers and peasants, is that an opposition is growing daily in volume as well as intensity. The more the opposition grows in strength and unity and struggles for the capture of power, the more the party in power is left in a consternation. It seeks to curb the opposing forces by high-handed measures. In their desperate attempts to extricate themselves from an embarrassing situation, the Rightist leaders put forth their best efforts to weaken the forces of opposition. The leaders of opposition are attacked, punished and banned on the most trivial plea. Cries for disciplinary actions rend the air. A purge becomes absolutely essential for orderly administration. Mr. Nariman and Dr. Khare who could not sympathise with the caprices of the Patel Group must by all means be disabled and debarred from exerting any influence on the Congress policy. Mr. Bose, who because of his honest revolutionary zeal proved an obstacle to peaceful perpetration of a constitutional *coup de etat* of the revolutionary struggle, could not but be an admirable target for attack. The authoritarian method of purging the undesirables and gagging the mouth of critics by resolutions which began with the disciplinary action against Mr. Nariman, has been applied again in the case of Dr. Khare and cannot be expected to

(Continued on page 16)



## AFTER THE WAR

By Anil Kumar Sinhaw

The war has come at last dealing a rude shock to the whole world. The passion for slaughter which was growing stronger and stronger within Germany these long twenty years after the Treaty of Versailles has now exploded in the shape of an annihilating aggression upon the Polish nation. War or no war, Germany was determined to have Poland under her aegis but could find no other easy means to subdue the determined Poland save the present onslaught. Had Poland expressed any desire to voluntarily surrender herself to Germany like Austria and Czechoslovakia, it would never have resorted to War. Germany never wanted nor yet wants any war if her land-hunger is satisfied. But Poland's daring reply to Germany caused her blood boil to the highest point. Her temper shot to the climax, her ferocious talons fluttered in barbaric excitement and the war has come in consequence.

It has been evident during recent years that Germany has gone wild with impious passion to destroy the peace of the world. She must have territory after territory under her power and who can dare say that her greedy eyes are not wandering afield? Herr Hitler has been after a far-flung German Empire, day and night howling for expansion with an wolfish defiance. We fully agree with Mr. Chamberlain when he says that Nazism and Fascism should be rooted out from the face of the world.

The war has come like a gigantic monster crushing under its elephantine feet the human dreamland. Humanity, Morality, Civilization, Literature, Science and Industry, in fact, everything is likely to face an overhaul after the war. Buildings, houses and huts—all will be blown miles away by cannon-shells and bombs. Corpses of men, women and children will lie rolling in the dark debris. Their stench will load the air. Nevertheless, the war will run its mad course, utterly callous to what it leaves behind.

Today the whole world shudders at the sight of the dead shadow of War. The thought of terrible havoc makes our hairs stand on their ends. The creations

of ages will perhaps crumble down to dust. The science created and nurtured by men is today being employed to ruthlessly murder the very same human species. What a tragic irony of fate!

No doubt, Herr Hitler is responsible for the present war which has caused a hurricane of consternation from one end of the world to the other. And if it really continues for years, it will reach the apex of absolute wreckage. Until Fascism, that nefarious scourge of humanity, is crushed, there would crop up another war in near future even if the present war is discontinued after the rape of independent Poland. The world needs no more of avarice, bloodshed, cruelty and enmity but Peace, Holy Peace, calm as a lake, clear as crystal. It reminds us of Bertrand Russell who has written in his *Road to Freedom*: "The world that we seek is a world in which the creative spirit is alive, in which life is an adventure full of joy and hope based rather upon the impulse to construct than upon the desire to retain what we possess or to seize what is possessed by others. It must be a world in which affection has free play, in which love is purged of the instinct for domination, in which cruelty and envy has been dispelled by happiness and the unfettered development of all the instincts that build up life and fill it with mental delights. Such a world is possible, it waits only for men to wish to create it. Meantime, the world in which we exist has other aims. But it must pass away, burnt up in the fire of its own hot passion, and from its ashes will spring a new and younger world, full of fresh hope with the light of morning in its eyes." Is it a mere dream or chimera? Are we not to see the new and younger world as envisaged by Russell? Let the aggressive nations answer.

(Continued from page 15)

be discontinued after being applied once more in the case of Mr. Bose or Sahajananda. Many others are yet to be victims. Events of the last two years point sufficiently to a reactionary change in the policy of the Congress. The unforeseen obstinacy with which they refused to accept a duly elected President, the wicked Pant resolution by which they attempted to reduce the President to a mere figurehead, the unconstitutional means by which they set up a new President, the uncompromising attitude which they assume against the suggestion of a composite Cabinet, the ill-intentioned resolutions by which the voice of criticism has been stifled, are not certainly democratic measures; they are worse than dictatorial ordinances.

The logic by which Gandhites attempt to justify all these dictatorial measures and the pleas which they employ to lay the whole blame on the shoulder of the opposition, are as unnatural as they are ridiculous. The doctrine of *Satya* and *Ahimsa* is an infinitely elusive and elastic doctrine which can be applied with advantage against dissentients on very slight difference of opinion. The dictates of an individual conscience, the voice from within or from above, are too abstract for any earthly creature and too impractical to extract any appreciation from the rational and sceptical minds of the present age. The vision of a *Ramrajatya* (a mythical golden age) which they profess to establish by leaving the distress of the working class and peasant masses almost where they were, hardly appeals to the practical mind of a twentieth century man.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

**Communism and a changing civilisation** by Ralph Fox. Kitabistan, Allahabad and London. Rs. 1-8 as.

The author of the book under review was himself a communist and was killed while leading the International Column into action at Cordora—a fact which has invested the publication with a pathetic interest. But it will be a mistake to suppose that this sentimental consideration constitutes the chief claim of the book to popularity among the readers. It is really creditable on the part of the author that within the short compass of 150 pages he has not only been able to give a complete theoretical exposition of communism, its growth and development, but also an account of the way in which it has been changing lives of the people in different countries. For communism is not merely an intellectual theory, merely a subject for chamber discussions; it is vitally linked up with life which it seeks to change. Without this supremely important aspect communism becomes, to a very great extent, a lifeless thing and a meaningless word.

The prevailing capitalist system in the world today has resulted in wide-spread economic crisis and overlapping chaos in every layer of society. The author has summed up the whole situation in the following significant words, "What is the explanation of the bloody career of the twentieth century, which in just over thirty years has claimed more human victims and caused greater material destruction, than any preceding century of human history? Unless we are to go into the dark places of religious mania and see here the punishment for some mysterious sin, there can only be one explanation, that these things arise out of the structure of human society itself." But this capitalist system is sure to topple down due to the sheer inherent contradictions within itself; and Fascism which seeks to buttress it up in its present tottering state, is bound to have its days numbered because human affairs can not but submit themselves to the inexorable scientific laws of evolution. As such the present blatant tones of Fascism can only strike one as its death-yell and its ruthless aggression as the frantic desperation of a

system heading for a collapse at no distant date.

Attempts have been made to rationalise capitalism by divesting it of its excesses and the author has noted how "the London School of Economics, wishing to refute Marxism, was compelled to mobilise not one, nor even two professors, but a whole pleiad of philosophers, historians, lawyers, biologists, physicists and chemists." The attempt of the School and for that matter all similar attempts have not been able to register much of a success for these have failed to dissolve the contradictions noted above. The author has also shown how economic class struggles form the very essence of communism and by drawing on elaborate and authoritative facts and figures has proved how the theory has been unjustifiably distorted by some of its interpreters who have pointed to the millenium of a classless society through virtual class collaboration and parliamentarianism. Evidently their latent bourgeois sentiments recoiled before the grim spectre of downright conflicts among various classes. No other explanation, as the author has rightly said, is possible.

In the course of discussing things in colonies and dependencies, the author has deservedly devoted a few pages to India. He has made the following observation in reference to the Congress, the greatest political organisation of the country: "The Congress party in India is in fact but a little caucus of landlords, factory-owners, lawyers and militarists, in fact a caricature of the Democratic Parties which arose in Europe to fight feudalism between 1830 and 1848." This account, unfortunately does not correctly represent the Congress today. It is now an anti-imperialist organisation in the true sense of the term and among its adherents it can count legions of peasants and workers whose number is growing rapidly and steadily. Of course, the elements noted by the author are still there and have an important voice in its affairs, too; but when freedom will come and social reconstruction on democratic lines will begin, they will automatically drop into their proper places. We think

the book requires some modifications in the light of the facts put down by us.

The book, which is on a subject of absorbing interest today, is quite well-written, well-documented and comprehensive. Print and get up leave hardly anything to be desired in consideration of which the price is very moderate.

**The Bengali P. E. N. News** July, 1939. Edited by Prof. Priya Ranjan Sen and published by Mr. P. C. Roy from Sri Gauranga Press, Calcutta.

The P. E. N. is an international organisation of writers. It counts as its members some of the most distinguished men of letters of the modern world. Some time ago a branch of this organisation was formed in Bengal which has now undertaken the publication of a monthly bulletin setting forth all relevant news. In the number under notice there is a short but very well-written article on "Bengali literature and its possibilities" and other news regarding P. E. N. both here and abroad. We hope the organisation will be able to attract in increasing number suitable elements in its fold. We also wish a prosperous career for the *Bengali P. E. N. News* whose subscription has been fixed at the very modest sum of Rs. 2/- only annually (including postage) while the members of the P. E. N. will get it free.

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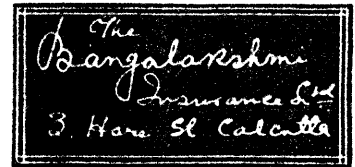
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## Letter To The Editor

# RUSSIA AND JAPAN

To

*The Editor, Forward Bloc*

SIR,

In reply to a letter which appeared in your esteemed weekly on the 9th September, I am placing before you facts based on Russian as well as American sources which will belie the statements contained in it. The border conflict is always located on the Amur river i.e. Manchukao's river boundary on the north and its land boundary on the east runs due south from Pogradichnaya down to the Japan Sea. The islands and deltas at the confluence of Amur and Ussuri and its junction with Sungari together with adjoining lands covering an area of more than 25 miles close to Khabarovsk the administrative and military centre of Far Eastern Siberia constitute the main theatre of war between Russia and Japan. These regions are highly fortified. When Moscow proclaims to the world that "it will never cede an inch of land to Japan or Manchoukao, it has in mind primarily and essentially this strategic delta." The Russo-Japan border conflict covering an area of 18 miles in today's Reuter news (15th September) is also located here. The victories were always with the Japanese in these Border Conflicts. The Lung Ku Feng hillock affairs and subsequent clashes have proved beyond any shadow of doubt the superior military prowess of Japan and it is a matter of common knowledge that Mr. Galen (Mr. Vassily Blucher, the commander-in-chief of the Far Eastern Red Army) has been recalled to the Kremlin due to these failures. The Japanese wrested from Russia a few concessions (i.e. Sakhalin island oil concession and the revival in toto of the Treaty of Plymouth) as the result of Japanese military successes culminating in the amicable settlements of all claims in these border conflicts. Therefore Mr. Das Gupta confuses the issues and distorts facts when he speaks of Russian successes in these regions.

Mr. W. H. Chamberlain, an American authority, reveals that Japan gave up the

plan of annexing Siberia to make the newly established Soviet Russia develop her country peacefully and as a gesture Japan dismissed between 1922 and 1924, 1,800 officers and 36,000 soldiers from active service in Korea. Meanwhile Russia organised her peasants and workers with military training. This gigantic military training and expansion alarmed Tokyo and its repercussion is keenly felt today. Therefore, Mr. Das Gupta's plea for making Russia an apostle falls through as well.


The expression "Soviet form of Government in Mongolia" is really amazing in view of the latest political doctrine of Stalin's Neo-Imperialism as displayed in the day to day administrative enactments in outer Mongolia and Hsinking.

Mr. Das Gupta is deliberately suppressing facts when he writes to say that Japan's "China incident" is due to her reverses at the hands of Russians. Long before the outbreak of China incident the five provinces of China, Hopei, Chahan,

Sinyanan, Shantung and Shanshi represented a sort of Japanese economic preserve when Chinese central Government exercised little authority and control. When this military side of the present "incident" gives way to a period of peaceful reconstruction Japan will recognise the integrity of China including all these provinces as before. The genesis of the conflict is to be found elsewhere. The real cause of the China incident will be buried for some years to come in the archives of the Foreign departments of the independent countries. An intelligent observer of the Far Eastern situation might draw inspirations from "the long-Distance-Economic-Blockade-Policy" and the "Hinterland Policy of Encirclement" against Japan for ascertaining the remote cause of this "China Emergency."

By force of circumstance and of self-protection and self-preservation Japan is crusading against corruption and chaos in China and is seriously attempting at the revival of Sino-Japanese friendship which is understood in the West as Yellow Peril. For brevity I close my letter here.

R. Roy.



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