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A POLITICAL WEEKLY

Editor :—SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

VOL I. No. 11

CALCUTTA, SATURDAY OCTOBER 14, 1939

ONE ANNA

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SCIENCE AND NATIONAL PLANNING

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INDIA AND HER DEFENCE,  
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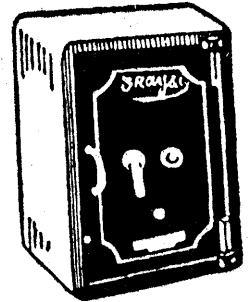
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## FORWARD BLOC

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 14

*The New India*

To be certain, the Resolution of the Congress Working Committee on "India and War", just issued from Wardha, is not a rehash or a mere condensation of its earlier thesis issued last month. After floating in the air for a good while, it is descending upon the *terra firma*. The present resolution shows a new outlook altogether. Its tone and temper are also different. But there is hesitation still, and indecision, an unmistakable tendency to ignore reality and shoot up in the clouds. This change is healthy and is welcome, and it should be expected that in the near future the Working Committee will considerably get round, and talk less of an undefined world order and more of Indian independence. What however is necessary is that the Left should consolidate itself over this issue and keep the ideal constantly and steadfastly in its view.

What exactly transpired at the Delhi interviews between the Viceroy and the Congress leaders is not definitely known. Had the Viceroy any definite, clear offers to make to them? On the Indian side, there can be only one demand, that of complete Independence. These unintelligent talks about freedoms and democracies, about a new order somewhere in the making, about a revised old order, are apt to confuse issues and muddle incautious minds. European imperialisms are not dead, and cannot be expected to die of themselves out of sheer inanity.

It cannot be denied that Gandhiji's offer of unconditional co-operation has considerably weakened the Congress position. And the vacillation and indecision of the Working Committee have made the position worse. As we have said above, the Congress can have only one demand to make, that of complete Independence. War or no war, war or peace, the Indian nation must win its independence. So far as India is concerned, the *London Times* has stated the British war and peace aims quite firmly and clearly. The reaction to the present Wardha resolution of a Calcutta journal

misnamed the *Statesman* proclaims a moral which should not be misunderstood. A new world order is alright so long as in India it is the old wine in a new bottle. These people who take the language of the nineteenth century do not understand the new India. The theory of gradualness, so cleverly stated, is insulting to the self-respect of India. And the new India is not particularly anxious to put up with the British tutelage still the greek *Calends*. Peace or war, India must have independence. India must recover her own soul.

## HOPE VANISHES

It is now more than a week that Herr Hitler thundered forth his demands on the fulfilment of which he was prepared to call off war. The world listened with grave concern to the words of the proud Dictator who has thrown Europe into the present conflagration. With characteristic frankness the Fuehrer declared that so far as Poland was concerned, it was a closed issue—he would not yield even a sod of land from the country that he had conquered. Even there he did not stop; in plain and unequivocal language he pressed the claims of the colonies which Versailles had torn away from the vanquished Germany more than twenty years ago.

No body had any doubt about the fate of these proposals. They threw out a direct challenge to the *status quo* of Europe. If peace were bought for that price, the map of Europe would undergo great changes. Not only that, Germany growing from strength to strength and with its traditional enmity to Britain and France, would remain a perpetual source of danger to the Allies, ready to pounce on them when the hour would strike. On the very face of them, the proposals were too exacting to arouse any sympathetic interest. The French and the British Press howled at them. They would have no truck with Germany as long as it would continue to be ruled by that demoniac Fuehrer. Czecho-slovakia was dragged out of its ashes and make a live issue; Poland was too fresh to be forgotten. So, peace could not be thought of as long as Hitler did not disgorge the conquered territories.

But hope dies hard. The prospect of

a long-drawn war naturally disconcerted many. They were eager to patch up things between the contending parties and restore peace in Europe. After Hitler's proposals were mooted, Signor Gayda made the first appeal for peace which was echoed from various other quarters. Even the *London Times* which is usually believed to represent the views of the British Government, chose to strike a somewhat different note from the general British Press and in the course of an editorial made the following significant observation, "There is much that is plausible in the so-called proposals." Mr. Chamberlain took time to consult his colleagues and the Dominions and wavered a few days between prudence and valour.

But who could play the peace-maker, was the question. Mussolini could, if he liked. But since the outbreak of the war, the Duce has maintained an enigmatic silence. The mighty events and the mightier possibilities of the situation have left him apparently unaffected, although he stands at the centre of the stage. Strangely enough, his fairly lengthy peroration after Hitler's speech made no mention of the latter whatsoever. Failing him, all eyes turned on President Roosevelt who could fill the role quite successfully. But without the express desire and specific request of the belligerents he refused to intervene. In the meantime, the Fuehrer's usual game of blustering continued. He was in no mood to quieten down, at least for a few days when his terms were being considered. Soaked out and out with military zeal, he again thundered in a recent speech, "We developed our ideology in war and in war it will prove itself." These are certainly not the words of one sincerely desiring peace. Hitler is determined either to dominate or go down. There is no third alternative for him.

His brag and bluster proved too much for the Allies. They were convinced that Hitler would not stop midway, that temporary peace would only give a further fillip to his ambitions. So they finally made up their mind to arrest the march of the swaggering Germany. When M. Daladier said "No" to Hitler, it could almost definitely be anticipated that Mr. Chamberlain too, would follow suit. Now the British Premier has come out with his announcement rejecting outright the proposals of the Fuehrer. An aggressor,

Mr. Chamberlain has virtually said, can never be trusted. Further, Germany must "right the wrongs" done to Czecho-slovakia and Poland before any peace plan can be seriously considered.

Pious sentiments no doubt, but it is difficult to take them at their face value. One can not help wondering why the Allies sent their conscience to complacent slumber when Germany swooped on Czecho-slovakia and swallowed it so easily. And it is naturally considered doubtful whether they would have put up a stiff face had Poland been the only issue today. As has been hinted before, other and far more vital issues are also involved in the present conflict. *Le journal*, a prominent French paper, has summed up the whole situation with unexpected frankness in the following significant sentences, "We can not give in. If we yielded regarding Poland, we should condemn to death Hungary, Yugoslavia, Rumania, Denmark, Switzerland, Belgium and Holland and also ourselves. (Italics ours). That is the crux of the matter. Germany and Russia, equally aggressive, seem to be bent on dividing the greater portion of Europe between themselves and reducing England and France to comparative impotence and insignificance. Even their own possessions may ultimately be at stake. This the Allies are not going to concede without a blow.

Be that as it is, Mr. Chamberlain's speech has put out the flickering hope of peace after a short spell of war. The conflict, it now seems, will be much bigger in magnitude and of indefinitely long duration. It can hardly be foretold how it will end and with what consequences.

## Current Comments

### Profiteering in villages

Thanks to the Government ordinance and Police vigilance, the unscrupulous dealers of Calcutta have met a rude setback in their game of profiteering. Of course, the prices of certain food-stuffs have slightly looked up, but we are not sure if that is not due to natural causes. At any rate, that has not pressed too heavy on us. But reports have been reaching us that the ordinance has not been operating as effectively in the villages as here and

the profiteering gang have been squeezing as much out of the poor population there as they can. Their wiles are evidently proving too much for the District Committees that have been formed to deal with the matter. The petty police officers in the villages and their pettier subordinates—the immediate protectors of the folks—have never been credited with a clean reputation. And if, as the Bengali proverb goes, the seeds that are to exercise the ghost, become themselves possessed with it, how can things be helped? We hope the controlling authorities will take immediate steps to cope with the situation. The rural population, normally hard-pressed, even starving, must anyhow be saved from the wolves.

### The Puja

Whatever view one may take of the Puja as a religious ceremony, it can hardly be gainsaid that it is the greatest social attraction, at least in Bengal. People in this province await its advent with almost feverish eagerness because it affords a respite, however temporary, from the tyranny of year-long routine and invites them to a rich repast of hearty social functions. At present the Puja is upon us, its spirit is widely abroad. That is evident, among other things, from brisk shopping and crowded Railway stations. The rapidly depleting villages will now put on a gay appearance for a few days, to which the phenomenally bright and bracing weather of the autumn will make an appropriate setting. Hindus and even unsophisticated Muslims, whose number is still a legion in the villages, will unite in the festivities, as has traditionally been the custom in Bengal, thus testifying to the fact that the Puja is not merely a Hindu festival but a national ceremony as well. In spite of the war, economic depression and other attendant evils, we wish for these few days abundant joys for all and even a little *bonhomie* if possible.

### They fight for democracy (?)

We have heard of the arrest of 37 Communist Deputies in France uptil now. Some of the Communists have been hounded out of France, some are missing. After the illegalisation of the Communist Party some Deputies reconstituted it under the name "Workers and Peasants

Party," and that too, very recently, has been declared illegal. These are all disheartening news. The Daladier Government of France have not deemed it their duty to make known the reasons of this merciless purging and scavenging of the Communists from the country. The war is only a few weeks old and indeed it cannot yet be said to have commenced. At this stage it is certainly disgraceful on the part of France to take recourse to these measures which are in vogue in totalitarian regimes. We have been told that Britain and France are fighting for democracy and freedom. We have heard the French Premier declaring in mellifluous tone that France will fight to the finish to save Europe from the menace of Fascism and to make the foundation of democracy unshakable. These are all tall talks, but alas! tall talks break no bone. To drive out the elected representatives of the French people who have got every right to voice their grievances and wishes and thus to smooth out the ways of the Government to strangle inconvenient voices is a crime which, we know, the totalitarians are accustomed to commit. Now that the French Government are hurrying along that 'forbidden' path, is it not pertinent for the people to ask them what they are really fighting for.

### Change in Japanese attitude

Japan's recent attitude towards British and other Western peoples will strike something like an anti-climax after her performance at Tientsin. She seems to have suddenly quietened down and why no body can say definitely. One can only hazard certain guesses. One of the reasons that have prompted her to the present attitude seems to be the notice by the United States Government that the Treaty of 1911 will terminate with the beginning of 1940. This may have struck consternation in her for she imports 50 P. C. of the raw materials for the manufacture of her armaments from America. Another is that 75 P. C. of her exports go to the United States and to the empires of Britain and France for which she dares not be too harsh to them. Another inference too, is possible. Japan may have secured some sort of an assurance from Britain and France that they will not back up China as enthusias-

tically as before. After all, China is her immediate concern.

### Russia in the Baltic

Russia was carrying everything before it in the Baltic but in Finland it seems to have met a stumbling-block. This small State dared to offer stiff resistance to Russian penetration and the whole issue is now being sought to be settled through negotiations. Finland's feat struck everyone as desperate, particularly in view of the fact that the neighbouring States such Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania yielded readily without even a show of resistance. Now the source of Finland's courage has been traced. It is reliably stated that America is ready, if necessary, to throw diplomatic weight into an effort to preserve the peace of the Baltic. It is further reported that Denmark, Norway and Sweden too, are prepared to take similar action. Will it put back the pace of Russia in the Baltic? If it does not, will the situation finally force America to come out of the shell of neutrality and range itself on the side of the Allies? In that case, Russia too, shall have to come to the field as an active belligerent and possibly join hands with Germany. The present conflict will then grow tremendously in magnitude and its terrific outcome can better be imagined than described.

### German Women in fury

If the press reports are to be believed, there appears to be no end of troubles for Hitler. It is said that all is not well in Fuehrer's land and even the fair ones there have grown desperate at having to be snatched off from their spouses. Nothing, it seems, can now induce the German ladies to liven up their men and fortify them with courage to brave the grim ordeal. Frau Ziegler, the Nazi Women's leader, who took to the holy task of reminding them of their duty, was given a sound thrashing which sent her to hospital. There is nothing to wonder at it. Hitler has always taught German women to be clinging domesticated doves, instead of full-fledged citizens, prepared to shoulder the responsibilities of the country. And if today they have failed to come up to the mark, the fault is that of the Fuehrer, not theirs. Hitler has now to reap as he had sown before.

### BENARES FORWARD BLOC

A meeting of the members of the Benares Forward Bloc was held here sometime ago under the Presidentship of Maulavi Abdul Kasim, a prominent Congress leader and a member of the District Congress Committee. A Provincial Committee was formed with 18 members of which 5 belong to the local Town Committee and District Committee. S. Ramgati Ganguli, a member of the Provincial Congress Committee and a prominent Congress leader, was elected president of the committee.

### CONGRESS DEMAND May Be Ratified At Special Sessions of Legislatures

It is understood that the Congress Ministries may convene the usual sessions of their respective legislatures earlier or even summon special sessions to record vote on their demand as also to expedite disposal of other work.

It is expected that the Bombay and Behar Assemblies may lead the other provinces in this respect.

## NOTICE

The Editorial and Managerial Departments of the 'Forward Bloc' will remain closed from the 18th to the 25th October. The next issue of the 'Forward Bloc' will come out on the 28th October.

Correspondents please note that we pay prompt attention to all communications and our delay or failure to attend to them is due to postal disorder or some other unavoidable inconveniences for which we cannot be held responsible. Correspondents are also to note that all communications should be addressed either to the Manager or to the "Forward Bloc" (49 L, Dhurramtola Street, Calcutta).

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## The Coming All-Party Central Government

By "OLD MUSSAFIR"

There is a triangular contest by the 'Big Three' parties to get hold of the Central government of the country. No government can possibly be stable without their consent and consolation. Every one is in a threatening mood. One of these three is composed of so-called spiritualists, and the other two of ritualists. Each one is at loggerhead with the other two. Except on the Day of Judgment the trio will probably never meet.

Each of these 'Big Three' claims the 'throne' of India, as the only rightful custodian of the mute millions. On good grounds, each of them is busy formulating the future administration of the country. Why not?

At the present juncture, the British Government naturally seek all possible help from all the 'Big Three' parties. The following scheme will satisfy all of them, as the only natural solution of the present difficulty. It will disappoint nobody. So here is the scheme.

Let there be three sets of government by rotation, each party electing its own 'Premier' and the 'Assembly' members. Let each party 'rule' the country one third period of each week. On taking office, each party would organise their 'administration' as per usual. One party would be in charge of Monday, Tuesday and up to 8 A. M. Wednesday; the second party from 8 A. M. Wednesday to 4 P. M. Friday; and the third party from there on to the midnight of Sunday. The whole idea has a simplicity which is sure to appeal to every body and will not offend any body.

Just think! Once a week your party in power, the nation saved; the millenium here!! Only two thirds of a week, every week, to wait for the country to be rescued from disaster—the 'rascals' turned out and the 'patriots' put in. No more threats, no more pining, no more foaming for years to get into office. Every third whirl of the 'national-rat-cage,' each week and an administration appears that meets with your approval! And look at the checks and counter-balances such a splendid system would have! Each administration quickly correcting the mistakes of the preceeding one, no

administration will be able to do much harm in the third of a week.

But the question may be asked,—what would the Premiers and their Assembly do while awaiting their turns? Well, it is well known that politicians are always good weavers of yarns in and out of any new question that comes up. May be that's why Mahatmaji has such a great faith in the *Charka*, to make every politician accustomed to weaving yarns. So in their off days, the Premiers and the members of the Assembly can very

profitably turn the spinning wheel and knit political cobwebs, to be produced in their own session at the next turn.

Three cheers for the coming Premiers of India!!! Shall they be, to begin with, Patel, Jinnah and Savarkar? Rightly, Bombay can claim the first Premier, where the seed of political freedom of India was planted by the late Mr. W. C. Bonnerji, half a century ago.

I hope all the political parties will now see the beacon-light in the horizon. Their dark night is about to be dawned! Freedom and good-will will reign from now onwards! Kingdom of Heaven will come down on India, and milk and honey will flow for all!! Amen!

Directed By Sir P. C. Roy

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## THE RED ARMY

By Mrs. TATIANA SHAHA

Russian Red Army—the army of so-called Eagles—born in the fire of Revolution and Civil War,—is organised on the principles of fraternity and friendly relation between ordinary fighters and the military commanders. Russia is the first country in the world to create the new principles in the military discipline, to create a new conscious and well-organised army. All the "Red Army" fighters (there is no soldier in the Russian army at present), are literate and politically educated. When they go for any fight, they know the aim for which they are to fight, they are conscious of the political reason of their fighting. "We do not want an inch of foreign land, but even an inch of our own land we shall not give to anybody"—such is the main slogan of the Soviet Army. The meaning of this slogan is that Soviet Russia is against any kind of aggression against other countries but she will put forth the best possible efforts to protect her own land, her peaceful life and her new achievements.

To be enlisted in the Red Army is considered an honour by All Russian youngsters. According to the Soviet law, service in the Red Army is compulsory for 1½ years for all healthy youngsters from 19-21,—whatever they may professionally be—engineers, constructors, assistants, simple workers, sons of the peasants, or anything else. After 1½ years everybody is free either to remain in the Army or join any other calling. However, being once trained for military service, everybody remains prepared to place his services to the cause of the country when the call comes. It may be noted that among Russian new population 85% are trained soldiers, whether actually serving or not in the army at the time of peace. Participation of ladies in the military service is not however compulsory and the per centage among them is not so high.

Not only the youngsters themselves join the Red Army with such enthusiasm. Mothers and fathers too, send their sons to the army with ready alacrity. "My son is a red fighter"—every Russian woman will say with pride, and in this very

sentence you can read unlimited love for the country. Younger brothers feel jealous when their elders go to join the army. "When I shall be grown up I shall be a military commander...a hero...hero of the Soviet Union"—is the yearning of every Russian boy. Military life is a life of glory to him.

Army is the main power of a country. If this power is blind, as it was in Tzarist regime, when almost all the soldiers were thoroughly illiterate, it may put a country into a great danger. Blindly obeying their commanders, without understanding, soldiers easily may turn to a Power against their own motherland, if by chance commanders turn out to be traitors. Treachery is a thing of the past in modern Russian army. Red fighters know well how to sacrifice life for the the country, they never let it down under any circumstances.

At the same time it is a well-known fact that during the fight large military resources in machines, armaments etc. do not alone suffice. The most sure mortgage of conquest is the mental strength of the army, its enthusiasm. In the "War and Peace" of Leo Tolstoi is given an excellent account how in 1812 after entering Moscow with his Great army, Napoleon Buonaparte lost all his strategic positions mainly because the enthusiasm of his army ran out. A brighter example is given by Russian Civil War of 1919-1920. How and why was it possible that the unorganised fighters of the Red Army, rotten and hungry, with daggers in hands instead of guns, could conquer well-organised army of the White Party, army of so-called "White Eagles," possessing first class military armaments, well trained military commanders, and amply backed by foreign help? It was only due to the unlimited enthusiasm of the Red Army, who in their burning zeal to become free from thier slavery under the Tzar, were ready to sacrifice their lives, to die in the battle-field but not to turn their backs on the foes. The Tzar possessed unlimited powers in the country. He was an autocrat out and out, there was none to control his actions. And he was respected as God by

the lower classes of the society, who were utterly blind in their illiteracy. So Russia, a country occupying 1/6th of the whole world, was going on according to the caprice of a single man, irrespective of how he was. By his birthright he was a king. And so, many landlords, merchants, manufacturers, high grade military commanders who were surrounding this emperor, were also tempted to use autocratic powers towards their henchmen and dependents. Landlords ill-treated the surrounding peasants, manufacturers the workers of their factories and military commanders their soldiers. Of course, the life of the Russian cultivators, who formed overwhelming majority in the country, were full of gravest sorrows. Russia of their days was purely an agrarian country. Only peasants with their heavy labour were to provide all those higher classes of the old Russian society. "God will save, peasants will maintain"—used to say the Russian zamindars. But they had gone beyond the limit that human patience can bear. The rope became too stretched and broke suddenly.

Russia of to-day, a free country, remembers with deep sorrow those days of humiliation. Through blood-shed, through deprivations, Russia has today reached the standard of one of the first class industrial countries in the world. She will not give up her achievement so easily.

As all the other advanced countries, Russia is paying great attention to her army, giving them many kinds of special privileges. Red army fighter is well accommodated with lodging food and clothing by the Government. They have free tickets for all gardens, 50. P. C. reduction of fare in the trams, buses etc. As generally Soviet law provides for compulsory primary education for both the male and the female in all parts of Russia, all Russian youngsters come to the army with an amount of literacy. In such a way, it is very easy to pass general military tests. It is also compulsory for the fighters to study many branches of science, such as mechanics, anatomy, chemistry, politics, mathematics...etc.

But beyond the common care for the military people, Soviet Government take special care to grant to the fighters the most pleasurable and cultured life. Red

Army fighters spend their winter in the towns. After working day (8 hours), is finished fighters are free to have rest and enjoyments. They take rest under the care of special military doctors. For enjoyments they have special military clubs, with different kinds of sportive games, such as football, tennis, cricket, with cabinet games such as draught, chess etc. They can read in any free public library under the guidance of special librarians. They can form among themselves different groups of musicians, writers, poets, dramatical players, songsters... Special professors are provided for them. Songsters of the Grand opera and other Theatres often come to their aid. Commanders, as soon as off duties, become simple comrades of ordinary fighters, spending their time together with them quite freely.

Now-a-days one of the groups of Russian Red army songsters under the guidance of Prof. Aleksandrov, has risen to great fame, not only in Russia but in many other European countries, through which last year it had taken a tour. Members of this group are not conventional artists, they have come from the heart of Russia, from villages, from wild hills. But when they begin their singing, you forget that they are not highly trained songsters. Whoever you may be, best friend or bitterest enemy of Russia, their simple and sincere songs will touch your heart deeply. And once more you will feel what unlimited love for the mother country have these people, these simple Russian fighters.

#### Song about the Mother Country

My mother country is a very large one  
So many forests, fields and rivers !  
I do not know any other country  
Where life is more free and more happy.  
We wish good for every body,  
We do not want to begin fight the first,  
But we shall meet enemies with fire,  
If they will come to attack us.  
We love our land  
As our dear mother,  
We shall care for her  
As for our sweet bride.....

#### Field

Field, field, large field !  
Who is running there with horses ?  
Our brothers, Red army fighters,

Our own heroes.  
Our girls, our ladies  
Looking behind them and smiling,  
Never weeping, never afraid,  
Our young girls and ladies.....

The winter goes by. As soon as under the tender touch of the spring sun, forests are dressed with leaves, fields covered with grass, rivers become free from ice and run murmuring within their shores, Red fighters leave hot and dusty towns and pitch their camps in the most beautiful corners of the different parts of Russia. Then they take their military training in the open and fresh air. They take their rest under the shadow of excellent Russian forests. And after finishing their duties they enjoy all kinds of pleasures which Nature can offer to them. In such a way Russia has built up a strong, healthy and well educated army.

The following story will be interesting in this connection. It was in the winter of 1935 in Crimea. Near the town of Ghursuf was taking place one mock fight for the cinema pictures between two parties of the Red fighters, one playing "Russian" another as "Japanese"—an episode of Russo-Japan war of 1905. That very year one Russian regiment had made its camp on the top of a high hill, just by the side of Tibetan boundary. By night suddenly a big Japanese army surrounded the hill. It seemed there remained no hopes for Russians. But necessity is the mother of inventions. Just behind there was a big lake from which soldiers used to take water, making holes under the ice, which covered the lake. This very night they went to the lake, brought much water, threw it by the side of the hill and it turned to ice. The Russian soldiers worked whole night and when the morning sun rose, there was no way for the Japanese to get up the hill... All were icy slippery fields. Two hours after the Russian army came for rescue.

This episode of the war, it was necessary to catch by cinema. One hill was chosen near Ghursuf town which was nicely covered with ice. Russians were on the top, and the Japanese were waiting down. All decorations were made excellently, any one could have the impression of real Tibetan Hills. Two cinema apparatus were ready to start their work as soon as morning sun would be out. Nothing was forgotten....., except one

## "NO COMPROMISE"

### Sj. Bose's Speech at Delhi

Addressing a meeting this evening, Sj. Subhas Chandra Bose referred to the international situation and said that he is much regretted to say that the statement of the Congress Working Committee on war indicated a policy of indecision. Sj. Bose thought that there could be no compromise on the question of Indian freedom.

Sj. Bose, continuing, said that Britain had entered the war to save Poland against Nazi aggression and enable her to retain her freedom. But the question of Indian freedom had not received consideration. He particularly referred in this connection to the official statement declaring India's readiness to co-operate with Britain in the war.

Sj. Bose declared that he was opposed to Hitlerism, whether in India, within the Congress or any other country, but it appears to him that Socialism was the only alternative to Hitlerism. Sj. Bose expressed the view that all European countries would come under the influence of Socialists.

Referring to the situation in India, the speaker said that they in India were concerned with the problem of achieving Swaraj. For India as a free nation could decide her policy to the war in Europe. Internal differences in the Congress would vanish, declared Sj. Bose, if the Congress were to secure its objective.

Explaining the circumstances leading to the formation of the Forward Bloc, Sj. Bose said, the refusal of the Rightists to co-operate with the Leftists, coupled with their opposition to the Congress engaging itself in Parliamentary activity to the exclusion of other activity, were mainly responsible for the birth of the new group.

Sj. Bose, concluding, observed that a self-governing India alone would be able to solve her domestic problems to the satisfaction of the minorities. He urged members of different communities to think in terms of Indians first and work together for their common objective.

thing, there was no fort which could not be taken by the Red Russian fighters... And as soon as morning sun rose up, the faked Japanese, without being prevented, began to climb up the hill. Falling down and getting up again with jolly songs they were climbing higher and higher and what was impossible for the real Japanese appeared quite possible for the Russian Japanese as a matter of simple play. The picture was so excellent that none could stop at once the cinema operations. Only few minutes after the Japanese were ordered to get down,

Such is the Russian Red Army of heroes, formed and united on the new principles of "Fraternity".



## WAR RESOLUTION PASSED BY A. I. C. C.

The Congress Working Committee's resolution on War, moved by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru at the A. I. C. C. yesterday, was carried this morning after prolonged discussion, by 180 votes against 58.

The Socialist amendment of Mr. Jaiprakash Narain, stating that India could not accept any settlement of freedom issue which pledged in advance her support in the War, was defeated by 181 votes against 64.

All other amendments, numbering about 25, were either negatived or withdrawn.

The Congress Working Committee has passed a resolution to be placed before the All-India Congress Committee when it meets here this afternoon. The resolution seeks the All-India Congress Committee's approval of the Working Committee's statement, issued from Wardha on September 14 on the war situation, and repeats the invitation contained therein to the British Government to state their war aims and peace aims.

The following is the full text of the resolution :—

"The declaration of war in Europe has created an international situation of the gravest import to the world and to India and the A. I. C. C., charged with the heavy responsibility of guiding the people of India in this moment of world crisis, has sought guidance from the principles and declarations of the Congress in considering this grave situation. The Congress has been guided throughout by its objective of achieving the independence of the Indian people and the establishment of a free Democratic State in India in which the rights and interests of all minorities are preserved and safeguarded. The means that it has adopted in its struggles and activities have been peaceful and legitimate and it has looked upon war and violence with horror and as opposed to progress and civilisation. In particular the Congress has declared itself opposed to all Imperialist wars and to the domination of one country over another. In spite of the repeated declarations of the Congress in regard to war, the British Government have declared India a belligerent country without the consent of the Indian people and various far-reaching measures have been hurried through the Legislatures, vitally affecting them and circumscribing and limiting the powers of

the Provincial Governments. The A. I. C. C., however does not wish to take any decision precipitately and without giving opportunity for the war and peace aims of the British Government to be clarified with particular reference to India.

"The Committee approves of and endorses the statement issued by the Working Committee on September 14, on the war crisis and repeats the invitation contained therein to the British Government to state their war aims and peace aims. While the Committee condemns Fascism and Nazi aggression, it is convinced that

### "This belated effort is bound to fail."

#### SJ. SUBHAS BOSE ON WAR RESOLUTION

In a statement on the proceedings of the All-India Congress Committee at Wardha S. J. Subhas Chandra Bose says :—

According to the ruling given by Dr. Rajendra Prasad, after the disciplinary action taken against me, I am no longer a member of the All-India Congress Committee or of the Provincial Congress Committee, though according to the Congress constitution an ex-President is an ex-officio member of both these bodies. I could not therefore attend the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee and what I shall now say will be the basis of newspaper reports. At the outset I cannot help expressing my regret that our appeals made since last year were not taken seriously by the Congress authorities.

"My second regret is that a declaration on behalf of the Congress was not made immediately after the war started. At that time the British Government did not know what India's reaction would be. Consequently if the Congress declaration had been the first in the field it would have had a considerable effect on the Government and the latter might have considered seriously the desirability of meeting the Congress demands.

peace and freedom can only be established and preserved by an extension of democracy to all colonial countries and by the application of the principle of self-determination to them so as to eliminate imperialist control. In particular India must be declared an independent nation and present application must be given to this status to the largest possible extent.

"The A. I. C. C. earnestly trust that this declaration will be made by the British Government in any statement that it may make in regard to its war and peace aims.

"The Committee desire to declare afresh that Indian freedom must be based on democracy and unity and the full recognition and protection of the rights of all minorities which the Congress has always pledged itself.

"The Committee approves of the formation by the Working Committee of the War Emergency Sub-Committee and authorises the Working Committee to take such steps as may be necessary to give effect to this resolution and to their statement on the war crisis."

"My third regret is that while on the one hand the Congress remained mum, Mahatma Gandhi proceeded to meet the Viceroy without caring to consult those who have influence within the Congress or without. Though he spoke in his personal capacity, any statement of Mahatma Gandhi even when made in his personal capacity is bound to have far-reaching repercussions in view of his outstanding public position in this country.

"My fourth regret is that though Great Britain declared war on the 3rd September and to-day is the 10th October, the Congress has not yet been able to make up its mind.

"In the early days of the war the British Government was naturally encouraged to hope that the Indian National Congress would co-operate with the British Government in its war efforts. The Working Committee adopted a resolution last month which is now being endorsed by the All-India Congress Committee. But this belated effort is bound to fail. A similar effort which according to Press reports is being made by the Labour Party will not meet with a better fate.

"There is now a fresh opportunity before us. If we rise to the occasion and avail ourselves of it we shall still achieve our political emancipation."

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## INDUSTRIAL PLANNING AND ECONOMIC AUTARCHY

By Prof. BENOY KUMAR SARKAR.

Considerable confusion prevails in India in regard to the use of the three following terms: 1. Industrial Revolution, 2. Industrial Planning and 3. Industrialization.

Industrial Revolution has not been achieved in India as yet. The existence of several big industries in India does not prove that we have consummated our Industrial Revolution, just as single swallows do not make a summer. A necessity of the hour is an estimate of India's present position in comparison with that of other industrial countries. It should be possible to establish some equations of comparative economics on the basis of chronological distances. One is likely to be convinced that

India is some 90-100 years behind Britain	
" " " 70-80 "	" Germany
" " " 50-60 "	" France
" " " 40-50 "	" Japan and Italy

This may be proven by the indices of technocracy, railway business, insurance premium, bank-capital and industrial output etc. per head of population and per square mile of territory.

### Planning, Sovietic and Non-Sovietic

Dealing with the second category we should say that there are two types of "planning", the Sovietic and the non-Sovietic. Technocratically speaking, both these types are alike. They have a specific objective to be attained within a specific time-limit. Besides, each involves an ear-marked budget of quite a few crores of rupees to be commandeered as almost a military necessity. Ideologically however, there are fundamental differences, as the Soviet system allows no profiteering and indeed no profits at all. The non-Soviet or capitalistic type is best illustrated by Germany, Italy and Japan and to a certain extent also by America, Britain and France. But whether capitalistic or non-capitalistic, industrial planning presupposes a dictatorial and centralized drive for the fulfilment of the plan from the side of the state. It is essentially estatistic.

One is entitled to ask: where is the dictator in India today to serve and to command all the four hundred millions

and commandeer all their resources that we talk glibly of "planning"? No Indian revolution has yet produced a Lenin or a Mussolini or a Hitler. And of course in India there is no Roosevelt or even Chamberlain, and indeed neither the *Front Populaire* of France nor the *Sei-yu-kai* party of Japan. Where, besides, are the crores of rupees to come from in order that they may be commandeered or ear-marked with the object of operating the totalitarian plan? This also is a relevant query.

Economico-technocratically as well as socio-politically, India is too far behind the modern world to employ the language of the latest economic strategy and tactics used by the industrial "adults" of mankind. India is still in some of the earlier stages of the first industrial revolution whereas the leading countries of Eur-America are consummating their second industrial revolution. Indian economic statesmanship should have to be satisfied as a rule with the categories prevalent among the pioneering and go-ahead sections of the Eur-Americans, say, some 60-75 years ago, when the very alphabet of "planning" was unknown and when indeed they had no dictators, capitalistic or non-capitalistic. But, of course, should some of the Indian intellectuals want to indulge in the luxury of displaying their acquaintance with the up-to-date words and phrases of present-day Eur-America, hyper-industrialized as some of its countries happen to be, they are at liberty to write learned monographs on the far-off divine event towards which India may somehow some day be made to move. Such monographs may be appreciated as contributions to Indian economic speculation.

### Industrialisation—a comprehensive category

So there remains the third item, Industrialization. This is a simple category implying nothing more than the establishment of new industries or the extension of the existing ones. It implies, besides, as a matter of course, the promotion of banking, insurance, foreign and internal trade, shipping and other transport systems as well as the improvement

of agriculture. Further, it is comprehensive enough to include cottage, small and medium industries, i.e., business organization on all scales. Every new factory or trading establishment or agricultural enterprise,—be it with a capital of 500, 5,000, 50,000, 500,000 or 5,000,000—is a solid and effective contribution to the industrialization of India. There is no metaphysics in industrialism, and it excludes no economic activity. The primitive and elementary efforts of which the Indians are in the main capable at the present stage, do not require such bombastic words as "industrial revolution" and "industrial planning". The proper category is industrialization or economic development. *A Scheme of Economic Development for Young India* furnished with minute details, was published by the present author from Italy in Chittaranjan Das's *Forward* early in 1925 and subsequently several times in various forms—and propagated through the dailies, weeklies and monthlies.

### Bengali Autarchy

So far as Bengal is concerned, it should be treated as an independent economic unit just as the Bengali people is known as an independent cultural unit. It is on a provincial basis that Indian economic planning—whatever it may mean—should be investigated and worked out. This does not imply that Bengal should separate herself from the All-India system. The place of the Bengali people in the Indian complex should be envisaged as similar to that of the French, Italians, Germans, etc. in European polity. We have to profit by the international agreements regarding rivers, railways, postal and other services, etc. by which the states of Europe co-operate with one another. But still France is France and Italy Italy. The European states maintain their economic self-sufficiency and each organizes its own planning on independent foundations in spite of the Anglo-French Entente, the Little Entente, the Franco-Russian United Front, the Berlin-Rome-Axis, and Pan-Europa or Pan-America ideologies. Bengal should try as far as possible to be economically autarchic,

according to the ideals of her glorious Swadeshi revolution of 1905. But she should make it a point also to join the All-India system of industry, finance, marketing, labour and defence. Bombay, Madras, Punjab, Assam, indeed each one of the provinces ought to do the same, i.e., try to make herself autarchic in the first instance, and then look for All-Indian co-ordination, centralization or federalization according to requirements. It ought to be emphasized that in order to avoid duplication and wastes as well as to promote rationalization, All-India Boards will have to be instituted in all spheres and function permanently.

#### Unconscious Autarchy

From the pre-historic times for thousands of years down to the discovery of America, nay, to the end of the eighteenth century, exports and imports between different countries of the world and even of the same continent were very little in quantity and variety and confined mostly to what might be described as the luxuries of life. Both in East and West every country, sometimes every village and every town, was economically self-sufficient. Autarchy was an actual fact of the economic conditions prevailing among the diverse tribes, races, or nations. That old-world, millennium-long autarchy may be described as unconscious autarchy.

#### Mercantilist, Protectionist and Swadeshi Autarchies

International trade, as we understand it today, is barely a fact of not more than a century and a half. Exports and imports between countries or between continents and between the two Hemispheres have grown immensely since the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. The commercial tendency of mankind has been moving towards the establishment of a world-economy, i.e. inter-dependence of regions, states or peoples in the requirements of daily life. But during this same period the theory and policy of autarchy has been no less prominent than the fact of autarchy during the primitive, ancient and medieval epochs. Autarchic ideology has been embodied, first, in the mercantilist concept of promoting exports with the object of importing gold, and secondly, in the protectionist tariff activities of Napoleon, Hamilton and List and others in Eur-America down to the *Swadeshi* move-

ment of Bengal and other parts of India since 1905.

The autarchistic ideas associated with the *swadeshi* of national industry complex have been the most prominent features of the tariff policy of every country, old and new, since the end of the Great War. Autarchy has been the ideology as much of the Gosplans in Soviet Russia as of the non-Sovietic plans in other countries comprising the protective and preferential customs duties of the British Empire-economy and the French Colonial Empire.

#### The New Autarchy

The third phase of autarchy, which may really be described as a continuation of the second, is to be seen in the Italian economy since the Abyssinian War. Under the pressure of the "sanctions" or boycott exercised by the League of Nations, Italy has been compelled to develop her economic possibilities to the furthest limit. Another instance of the latest form of autarchistic ideology and policy is furnished by Germany. Because of the high protective tariffs of the industrial nations, large, medium and small, which restrict the importation of German manufactured goods, Germany has been forced on account especially of currency and exchange considerations to restrict the purchase or importation of foreign goods to the extent of her exports abroad. For instance, Germany can afford to buy more cotton from India in case India cares to buy more manufactured goods from Germany.

The new autarchy, as observed in Germany, does not base itself specifically on protectionism and high tariffs. Nor, of course, does it seek the splendid isolation such as was preached by the German philosopher Fichte in his *Der Geschlossene Handelsstaat* (Closed Commercial State) in 1800. It attempts, on the other hand, to foster foreign trade by all means,

bilateral agreements, barter system, different kinds of currency and what not.

#### Autarchy an Impossibility

Autarchy as an ideal or as a fact is then almost eternal, no matter in what form. But inspite of mercantilism, protective tariffs, boycott movements, preferential treatment and restrictions on imports, every country has imported more and more from foreign countries. The volume and value of exports and imports have been growing tremendously from decade to decade during the last four or five generations. Commercial internationalism and world-economy have not been killed by the *swadeshi* movements of the nations. In other words, autarchy as a socio-economic fact has been becoming more and more of an impossibility under modern conditions.

#### Autarchy Desirable as a Slogan for India

The values created by the trade between nations are quite substantial and are enjoyed by both the partners to the commercial transaction, although not always to the same extent. The mutuality of the benefits rendered and the furtherance of the development of undeveloped areas are two of the greatest consequences of international trade. They are well calculated to keep it going and to lead mankind further and towards the solid ties of world-economy. But "Buy *swadeshi*," "Buy Indian," "Buy Bengali" ought by all means to be encouraged as a slogan, as an economic war-cry. The economic statesmen of India must know, however, who to adapt this autarchic idealism and nationalistic inspiration to the pressing demands of understanding between nations and agreements between regions in regard to finance, labour and goods.

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# INDIA AND HER DEFENCE

By DHIRENDRA MOHAN MAJUMDAR

India wants protection from air raids. She is badly in need of measures which will save her from sudden air invasion. At present, she is exposed to this menace on three sides of the peninsula. India's natural barrier by mountain and sea is no longer a sufficient security against havoc-dealing balls from the air which can wipe out civilised existence of any important town within a few hours. We cannot dismiss this as a day-dream of the visionary. There are some who still fondle with the hope that as India is far away from the scene of action, there is little possibility of her falling a victim to an attack from the air. But in these days of rapid communication and scientific inventions, the distance of time and space has indeed shrivelled to an amazing extent. The record speed of a giant bomber is 400 miles per hour. News comes from U. S. A. that she is equipped with squadrons of giant patrol bombers and the U. S. A. air fleet is capable of non-stop flight of 3000 miles. There comes another news from London that the British Government possess a new type of aeroplane that would revolutionise modern warfare. These aeroplanes are so huge and constructed in such a way that they can carry a number of tanks and go to any part of the world. Considered in the light of the modern inventions in air flight, India cannot claim her proverbial impregnable position which she used to have when scientific warfare was unknown in the world.

India is still not in a position to protect herself in case she suddenly falls a victim to a mass air-attack. A few weeks ago the Military Chief of India stated in clear words that the position of the country was far from being hopeful having regard to the fact that there was likelihood of her being attacked from the direction of the Eastern Frontier. This admission of danger by no less a person than the Commander-in-Chief of India has created a nervous flutter throughout the length and breadth of the country and we are now face to face with the reality of the situation. The question that naturally haunts the minds of the people is how to save the civilian popula-

tion from a wholesale destruction in case India is actually exposed to aerial bombing.

There are people among whom there are many experts who opine that there can be no effective prevention against a sudden air invasion. Use of sand bags, gas masks, underground cellars and the like cannot solve the problem. In spite of the use of these precautionary measures, civilian population remain exposed, as before, to air-attack and the consequent wreckage that will follow in its trail. We cannot expect people during business hours to be in constant possession of masks; as for little-children, the difficulty of getting them habituated to their timely use is almost insurmountable. The violence of high explosives used in modern warfare is terrible beyond all calculations and a little thinking brings home to us the futility of measures like sand-bags, air raid shelters or masks.

We can thus easily imagine the havoc that will be caused to a substantial portion of the civil population by these messengers of death. Again, there is practically no protection against indiscriminate use of incendiary bombs. And it is easy to visualise the spectre of a populous and prosperous town in the midst of flames which pass from house to house and continue for days together and ultimately reduce it to a titanic pile of ashes.

This is no figment of imagination. Those who read the tragic fate of Warsaw from a series of mutilated news-items which reached us, can conjure up no brighter vision.

Whatever may be the opinion of the experts on the utility of precautionary measures, India cannot remain idle. She must solve her own defence problem and that is admittedly no easy task. Already we are far behind the Dominions in this respect. In the matter of defending India, the British Government should take the country into its confidence and decide upon measures in consultation with her statesmen.

The defence of India is in itself a great problem, with 7000 miles of coast-line, thousands of miles land frontiers—an area of about one and a half million square

miles and a population of about 400 millions.

There could be little doubt as to the importance of the North-Western Frontier for the protection of the country. It is becoming increasingly clear that Soviet influence will get upperhand in South-Eastern Europe. It is quite possible that the Soviet sphere of influence may extend up to the border of India. The growing power of Japan in the East brings to the forefront the defence of the Eastern frontier and the sea-frontier. At present the Singapore Base is the only hope of India in the East. The defence of North-Eastern Frontier and the sea-frontier are of great importance in view of the growing strength of Japan and the changing condition in the Far East. Adequate defence of India's Eastern Frontier is causing grave disquiet among the military authorities. In a recent statement the Commander-in-Chief of India threw out the ominous hint that India's Eastern Frontier with a number of great cities, were not absolutely secure from aerial bombing, although the much-talked-of Singapore Base is there to protect it from foreign aggression.

The Chatfield Commission had all these matters before them when they made their recommendations on India's defence problem. Rapid progress, we are told, has been made in beginning the equipment and organisation of India's defence into line with modern conditions. The scheme in operation is thorough-going and will cost Rs 45 crores. One of the chief modernisation schemes now being carried out is the mechanisation of the cavalry and of the first-line transport of a large portion of the infantry. The re-equipment of the four bomber squadrons of the R. A. F. is now in progress and provision is made for the complete re-equipment of the remaining R.A.F. in India and also the naval forces. Yet much remains to be done and unless Indians are entrusted with real power and authority to evolve their own defence, they can hardly feel secure over this grave life and death question of theirs. In the matter of defending India, a great responsibility lies on Great Britain and, she should approach the problem in a spirit of confidence and good-will. Only that can shake off the *panic* which has naturally seized the Indian public.

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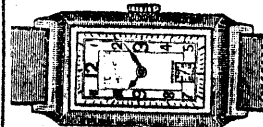
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## SCIENCE AND NATIONAL PLANNING

By Prof. MEGHNAD SAHA

[The following is the summary of a speech delivered by Dr. Meghnad Saha at the 4th. Annual meeting of the Indian Science News Association at the University College of Science]

At the outset Prof. Meghnad Saha referred to the last year's annual meeting when the Association had the privilege of having as its guest Sj. Subhas Chandra Bose who was then the President of the Congress. Sj. Bose had been taking a good deal of interest in the Journal of the Association and he wrote an article for its earlier issue. He was one of the few leaders in India who appreciated modern scientific civilisation. His last year's action as the Congress President was quite true to what he said at their meeting. As President of the Indian National Congress Sj. Bose took no time in bringing into existence the National Planning Committee which has been carrying on its work under the distinguished chairmanship of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. In Pandit Jawaharlal they had got another leader who without any reservations recognised the benefits of science.

### National Planning Committee

"You are probably aware" said Prof. Saha "that the National Planning Committee had been sitting for a number of months and it has appointed a number of sub-committees about eight of which were dealing with industrial and scientific subjects. In these sub-committees you may notice the most of our editors and editorial co-operators are serving the National Planning Committee either as President or Secretary or members. That shows that we have been thinking ahead in matters of application of science to problems of national planning in this country and I think that the articles which have been written in our journal by the various experts and scientific men will be found very useful for sketching out plans for national reconstruction in the years to come. We are living in a troublesome time. We have got a war hanging about us and nobody knows how far this war will take us. The task of the Government of India by Indians might come earlier than we thought. I pointed out at Allahabad during the last meeting of the National Planning Commi-

tee that the first duty of the National Government would be to work out a plan for industrial organisation, whose necessity we are feeling all the more urgent now that the war has dislocated to some extent our normal business.

If you read newspapers you will find that they do not treat scientific subjects and news seriously and they never attempt to give an intelligent analysis of the way in which science enters into national life and industrial life. You will hardly come across any article that deals with the scientific aspect of the development of power and machinery industry, manufacture of heavy chemicals and how these affect industry. But science not only provides the basis for the reconstruction of the industrial life of the ethical basis on which new human life in the world should be reconstructed. It is the object of this journal to show that science can also afford all those ethical principles which were so long associated with religion and other forms of mysticism."

### Other Problems

Proceeding Prof. Saha referred to other problems which had been discussed scientifically in the "Science and Culture," problems such as India's Mineral Wealth, Bengal Fisheries, Calendar Reform and National Planning in Sweden. He referred to the correspondence with the eminent Swedish Physicist Prof. Siegbahn who reading their articles in the journal got himself interested in them and opined in course of a letter that they were giving right direction to the country and he

drew their attention to national planning in Sweden. "It appears" said Prof. Saha "after the last wars, Sweden was in a very bad state because it did not get foodstuff and coal. After the war they mobilised all their scientific men and started national planning and as a result of the last 25 year's work, Sweden has attained Autarchy, i.e., self-sufficiency in all matters essential to life. I wanted from Siegbahn an account of the national planning in Sweden and he was very kind enough to refer me to book—"Democratic Planning In Sweden." The interest of the book lies in the fact that it tells us that planning can be done even in democratic countries and very efficiently. After the war the Swedish people put their heads together and planned their national life and have made a very fine contribution not only to industry but also to science."

Prof. Saha concluding referred to the pioneering efforts of the Tatas towards industrial regeneration of India and also to the centenary of the founder of the Tatas. In an article to their journal, said he, Prof. J. C. Ghosh had told them how Tata about 50 years ago thought about all those plans of industrial development which were engaging the attention of the public now. He also referred to the foundation of the Indian Institute of Science by the Tatas and complimented that Tatas might be called the Rockefeller and Carnegie of India. "We hope" concluded Prof. Saha "when the industrial life of India blooms in the fullest vigour we shall have much help from scientific research. A country which can produce a Tata cannot despair of its future. When the national government comes, it will be its first duty to organise the industries of India and it will have to complete the work which was started by the late Mr. Tata on a nation-wide scale and from the point of view of the nation's interest."

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## WHITHER POLITICALS?

By Bhupendra Kishore Rakshit-Roy

It was not long ago that some hundred young men of Bengal, bold and determined, were hovering between life and death in their solitary cells of prison. Emotional Bengal was then roused to a high pitch. Protest meetings were repeatedly held all over the country; the streets of Calcutta were paraded by multitude of students with warring slogans on their lips; ladies were witnessed in big gatherings with animated faces; masses of men, assembled hither and thither, seemed to be agitated over the issue; leaders delivered speeches emitting fire and fury. Rajendraprasad and Desai rushed forth to Calcutta. Gandhiji issued statements. Men of prominence tried their utmost to persuade the hunger-strikers to give up their vow. At last, Subhas Chandra had to step forward and intervene and he became successful in averting a major calamity by inducing the determined young band to yield to the public demand for the suspension of their strike. They were given to understand that the burden of their cause was taken up by the country. And, that if within two months from that time they were not released by the government of Bengal, a Satyagraha movement of stupendous magnitude would be started to force the hands of the ministry in accepting the demand of the nation—the unconditional release of our political prisoners.

The prisoners gave up the hunger-strike. They were glad that their cause was taken up by the country. They felt immensely assured that countless fighters were getting ready to rush forth to jails just to secure the release of those who were pining behind the prison bars.

Bengal heaved a sigh of relief. Her beloved boys-in-chains were saved. She was thinking that agitation should not be relaxed. It ought to be carried on with vigour and more vigour till the release of her dear ones was an accomplished fact.

All on a sudden the scene changed. The attention of man was shifted to a different centre—the bugle of War brought bewilderment. Man lost his interest in anything else. His mind is now preoccupied. He feels and thinks in terms of War.

Agitation for the release of politicals has receded to the background. It has shrunk in importance. We forget our promise. Fettered youngmen are left to their fate. We have simply wiped them out of our memory and kept ourselves busy in buying war-specials.

Gandhiji and Pandit Jawaharlal issue statements. They are out to save 'humanity'. They have to think for 'twenty-five nations'. They shed tears for democracy, groaning under the heels of the Dictators, in Central Europe. And a Gandhi or a Jawaharlal has no time at disposal to bring out nation's own soldiers of freedom from the grip of Linlithgow's legions.

Let these leaders go as they like. We, at this juncture, want to impress that big issues blessed by them ought not to have shrouded a problem that is uppermost here at our home.

The movement for the release of political prisoners must be approached from a perspective which, we are sure, has hardly been done till now.

From the very inception, the movement took a wrong course. The entrance of the Mahatma in the arena and his activities around it gave a hard hit to the very basis of the movement. Mahatma told us that on humanitarian grounds he felt for the prisoners and came down to Bengal to their rescue. His move emanated from no other motive—political or quasi-political. He was given to understand that these youngmen abjured violence and gave up the path they had trod so long. This gave the Mahatma a further dose of inspiration and he took the trouble of visiting the prisoners just to acquaint himself, first hand, of the facts and their psychology. Gandhiji was at last convinced that the tigers, for good, have changed the colour of their skin. He began to try in his own way for the release of these new recruits

to non-violence. But, release he could not secure.

The people were so long misled. They made a mess of things without having a clear idea of the fight. They wanted their 'prodigal sons' back to their hearth and home. They held high hopes in Gandhiji and his Congress, only to be disillusioned before long.

The release question must be considered from a different angle altogether. The public must be clearly told that the question of humanitarianism or any altruistic motive can never creep in this connexion. We demand this release on political grounds. This release of our so-called convicted politicals must be a release—political. Along with the change of government or with the inauguration of political reforms, in every country, and for all time, the first move happens to be the release of all political prisoners of the old regime with no condition imposed. But the British India stands apart with a queer pose. Its conduct is an exception to the rule. Blessed must be our constitutional change—a much-talked-of autonomy in provinces!

Those who rebel against a government, do so under the existing pressure of circumstances and environment. Any constitutional change, changes the old order, and the revolting element sometimes melts away, sometimes it chalks out a newer path in terms of the newer environment. Hence is the general custom, followed everywhere, of release *en masse* without any reference, whatsoever, to the political opinion of a particular prisoner. The withholding of a 'political release' means the absence of a real transference of power. We are given to understand that because of the transference of power in the provinces the Congress has ultimately accepted the ministries. But, to our utter disillusionment, we find that no 'political release' ever occurred even in the Congress-controlled areas. The prisoners through the inglorious purgatory-process of repentance and confession had

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to get themselves recognised by the ministries as newly initiated devotees to non-violence and it was then only that their release was made possible.

In Bengal, even this little bit of thing did not materialise. Our callous ministry, too weak to follow even the tame track of the Congress ministers, still keep the prison-gates closed. And, our young men are allowed to rot in the dark cells of Alipore and Dum-Dum.

The public must understand that they shall have to demand the release of these people on political grounds, pure and simple. They must not allow the elected ministry to flout their opinion repeatedly focussed from one end to the other of the country. They must not hesitate to decry this bureaucratic temper of the ministry and that with effect.

The people in demanding the release of these gentlemen must state in clear terms that even if these men in prison have not changed, even if they still believe in violence—their release has been overdue, if it is admitted that a substantial dose of reform has been inaugurated; for, it is sure that they on their release will find no such atmosphere to nurture their creed any more. It ought to be understood that the youngmen in chains have no axe to grind. They had always been leading the people of the country to action through self-immolation, heedless of dread and danger. This day, too, when they find from behind the prison-wall that the so-called provincial autonomy has hypnotised their countrymen, the big bosses of the National Congress—they refuse to remain inactive in cells. Even at the cost of their dear lives they resolve to give a blow to the perverse mentality of the highpriests so that the real issue may become clear—that the little amount of power transferred in the provinces yields not on the petty question of release of political prisoners on political grounds. And, a glaring truth—the autonomy of sand falls flat on the hard ground of reality.

Anyhow, we were then roused. Young Bengal took up the prisoners' cause, nay, the cause of theirs—the cause of the Political India. Thus the purpose of this hunger-striking hundred met a splendid success for the time being.

But, now, the roused public-opinion seems to be at its low ebb. We are again

falling back in stupor. The thought of the political prisoners is fading into oblivion. Are we to forget them? And, forget our responsibility?

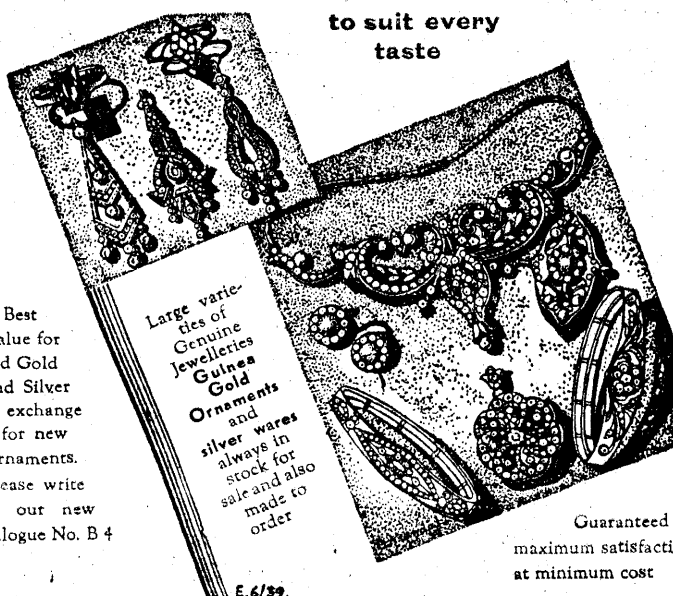
The public must again be told that these prisoners fought on no personal issue. Their fight was on principle. And no amount of 'international embarrassment' or thought for 'twentyfive nations' can minimise the importance of their cause at home. If we lag behind in implementing the promise we gave them, these bold and determined souls will

again resume their hunger-strike which no one in this country will be able to stop unless each of them droops down. The recent refusal to purchase a release on conditions imposed, by these soldiers of freedom, sufficiently testifies to the mettle they are made of. Hence is our sincere query: are we to await that black hour for the nation when in sheer impotence and utter helplessness we shall have to witness the brave march of these brave souls from the realm of life to the valley of death?

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## BOOK REVIEWS

(BENGALI)

**Pratham Prasna** by Raimohan Shaha  
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The book under review is a problem-novel and the author, a new comer in the literary field, deserves plaudits from all for this timely venture. The caste-system sits heavily on the chest of our country, under which we wriggle and squirm and scarcely get the air and light to breathe freely. At every step of our lives we stumble on outworn social prejudices, conventions and taboos, which stand in the way of all sorts of national advancements. These undoubtedly hamper the nation's struggle for political and social emancipation. A nation cannot be called free unless her men and women are freed from the shackles of superstitions and are not looked down for the simple reason of their being placed in the lower rung of social hierarchy.

The author has nicely put all these burning questions of the day and replied to them in course of his treatment of an absorbingly interesting plot, interwoven with beautiful love episodes and interesting situations. There is a glow of life in all the characters of the book, which act and react quite promptly in the midst of varying circumstances. We congratulate Mr. Shaha for his new endeavour and believe that he will be contributing to the cause of social welfare with more and more writings of higher perfection.

**Kavita** (Special Puza Number) edited by Sjs Buddhadeva Bose and Samar Sen and published from 202 Rash Behari Avenue, Ballyganj, Calcutta. 8 as.

This quarterly magazine, devoted solely to poetry and its criticism, has already attracted wide notice from the discerning students of Bengali literature. Through this periodical is regularly served up the pure gold of poetry that is produced in Bengali, and not merely the stale verses that lumber the pages of ordinary magazines. This special Number contains some of the best poems of those who have made their mark in Bengali literature. Articles by Sjs Pramatha Chaudhuri, Buddhadeva Bose, Atul Gupta and Ajit Dutta have added to the value of this issue. Print and get up are excellent. It is really a thing to be bought, read carefully and preserved. In view of the quality of the Number, the price is very moderate.

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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### "The Inner Voice"

To

*The Editor, Forward Bloc*

Sir,

No man attaches greater value to the dictates of the 'inner voice' than Gandhiji. Each and every great action of his is often the result of the injunctions from within. If he decides to fast unto death, it is often undertaken at its behest. If he flings a jibe at Civil Dis-obedience—his own gift to Indian politics—it is the outcome of the dictates from within. And, on the other hand, if he wants to start mass satyagraha, he is inspired by the same 'inner voice.' His every great action is the result of "an intense introspection, searching of the heart and waiting upon God." He relies for his guidance more upon instinct than intellect.

He exalts his 'inner voice' even above reason and judgment. And the fasts which he keeps at its command are different from ordinary fasts. In a statement to the press a few years back, he had observed :

"Fasting for light and penance is a hoary institution. It can be observed commonly in Christianity and Islam, while Hinduism is replete with instances of fasting for self-purification. Having made a serious attempt to attain self-purification, I have developed some little capacity to hear correctly and clearly the 'still small voice within.' My present penance I have undertaken in obedience to this voice... The fast which I am approaching was resolved upon in the name of God, for His work, and, as I believe in all humility, at His call."

And when he fasts, he does not allow or desire any one to fast with him in sympathy. He has told in an interview : "I felt impelled by a voice from within to offer resistance with the whole of my being... I urge everybody not to fast in sympathy. I have undertaken it at God's call, and therefore, unless there is a similar definite call to these people, they have no business to fast."

Gandhiji surrenders himself unreservedly to this 'voice.' He neither reasons it nor argues it out. When the call comes,

he forgets he has judgment, and begins acting without the least doubt or thought.

About his Rajkot fast, he writes in a letter to his private secretary : "How mysterious are the ways of God! This journey to Rajkot is a wonder even to me. Why am I going? Whither am I going? What for? I have thought nothing about these things. And if God guides me, what should I think, why should I think? Even thought may be an obstacle in the ways of His guidance."

The call comes to him 'in a flash' often at nights.

In the past there were many great undertakings at this imperative "call" and in some he did succeed. But in recent times the "call" has led Gandhiji wrong more than once. Possibly it has been due to the indistinctness of the voice; or more probably due to misinterpretation of its dictate. I do not mean by this to belittle the greatness of the Mahatma—not in the least. Who can doubt his tremendous sincerity?

With due respect to Gandhiji, I must say that he should no more be led by the inner voice—without questioning. It is better to be not advised than ill-advised.

Since public memory is notoriously short, I shall refer to certain recent activities of Gandhiji which were based entirely on the behest of his inner voice. Unfortunately, all of them failed.

Early last year, Mahatmaji went to see Mr. Jinnah with a view to bring about a compromise and to strive for communal harmony. Forget not, it was prompted by his inner voice! He went all the way from Wardha. Lots of discussion and correspondence followed. What was the result? I need not give the answer, for every one of us knows it. Still no one can question Gandhiji's earnestness.

Then take again the unforgettable Presidential contest. Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramya was set up against Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose. Again it was done as per the instructions of his inner voice. Though Gandhiji did not say it openly, it should be understood he does nothing without previous sanction from within. We all know, unluckily what turn the

events took at the elections. Dr. Pattabhi had the misfortune to be defeated by Subhas Babu. And Gandhiji immediately came out with a statement confessing the defeat to be his and not Pattabhi's.

And let us consider finally the heart-rending episode of Gandhiji's going to Rajkot. This was the most untimely and imprudent dictate ever given to him by his inner voice. Yes, it was the most inopportune moment for him to go. The weeks following the Presidential election were hot with party feelings and sharp differences between the two groups, the triumphant and the vanquished. Things had gone too far and re-union seemed almost impossible. But it would not have been a difficult task for Gandhiji to patch up the differences and bring the two contending forces to a compromise. Every one hoped that he would take the matter into his hands and save the national organisation from a ruinous split. But the inner voice, as has been said, gave him an untimely dictate. All on a sudden he decided to go to Rajkot—again at the call from within. He wrote of this journey, "You must not be perturbed over my decision. It was taken purely in answer to the voice of God... I am going there as God is taking there. Within me is joy and hope. I know that I will not return from Rajkot with hopes blasted."

When the call came, he forgot the more vital things. He could not say no to it. He flew to Rajkot leaving the whole Congress affair to worsen and stagnate at Tripuri where the Congress President lay on his sick-bed fighting with death. Tense and anxious moments they were. Gandhiji's name was hawked and the verdict of the polls reversed. 'When the devil of party entered the window, humanity fled through the door.' Means, fair and foul were employed to re-establish the vanquished leadership. Had Gandhiji only taken reason into account, a great catastrophe could have been avoided. 'The Congress history would have been written differently.' Just consider, what was Rajkot affair after all when compared to the national organisation whose unity and solidarity were at stake? Had Gandhiji only thought! But leaving the Congress affairs at that sorry pass Gandhiji ran to Rajkot for something which, compared to that grave issue, was negligible, if not nothing.

For five days and nights he fasted—once again at the dictate from within. But with no results. In his own words he returned from Rajkot with "hopes blasted" and "empty-handed."

So whatever action Gandhiji has undertaken recently at the guidance of the inner voice, has ended in failure. Inner voice is good so long as it stands the test of reason and judgment. And if otherwise, it is worse than useless.

A. A. RAVOOF

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