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A POLITICAL WEEKLY

Editor :—SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

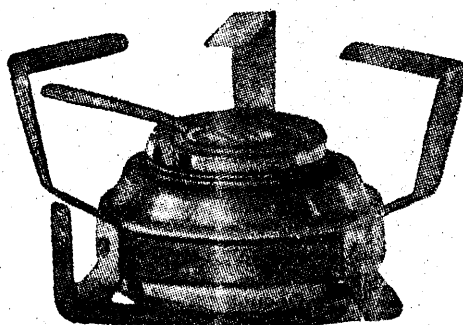
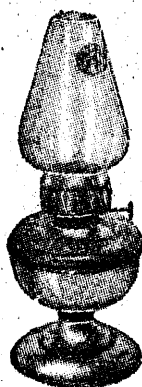
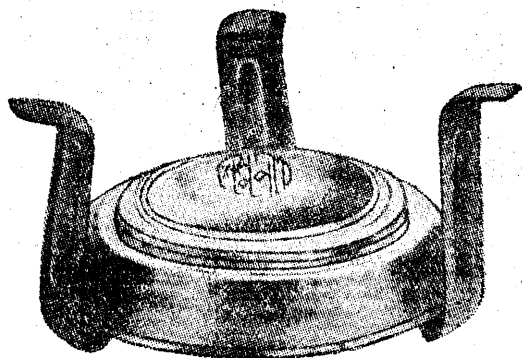
VOL I. No. 16

CALCUTTA, SATURDAY NOVEMBER 25, 1939

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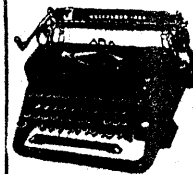
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## FORWARD BLOC

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 25

*Whom they fight?*

As I glanced through this morning's papers, certain incongruous things struck my eye. On the first page—and perhaps in order of importance—comes the resolution on the Congress attitude towards the British Government. Then follows the time-table of the Rangarh Congress. Thereafter we come across a lengthy resolution on the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee.

The most significant sentence in the first resolution is as follows:—"The Working Committee will continue to explore all means of arriving at an honourable settlement, even though the British Government has banged the door in the face of the Congress", which when paraphrased should read "We shall continue to lick the feet of the British Government even though we have been kicked by them."

This is not Politics as we understand it or as the modern world understands it—but perhaps it is in accordance with Biblical or Vaishnavic traditions. Such a policy may appeal to one or to a few persons—but will it be acceptable to the nation that is more interested in freedom, which is a life-and-death question, than in the whims of individuals? It remains to be seen if the Indian people will repudiate a policy that demands that we should lick the feet that kick us.

In the same resolution appears the following:—"The Working Committee desire to make it clear that the true test of preparedness for Civil Disobedience lies in Congressmen themselves spinning and promoting the cause of Khadi to the exclusion of mill-cloth and deeming it their duty to establish harmony between the Communities by personal acts of service to those other than members of their own community and individual Hindu Congressmen seeking an occasion

for fraternising with Harijans as often as possible. The Congress organisations and Congressmen should, therefore, prepare for future action by promoting this programme....."

When we came to this part of the resolution, we rubbed and rubbed our eyes and once again glanced at the date of the paper—November 24, 1939. So in the year of grace 1939, a political party of the stature and importance of the Indian National Congress can put forward such a wonderful plan for preparing the country for Direct Action. There is no reference to enlistment of volunteers—no talk of cadres for a programme of Direct Action. There is no appeal to one's higher self which can send a thrill through his nerves and steel him for suffering and persecution. There is not a word about collection of funds either, which are the sinews of war, whether violent or non-violent. There is no direction, either, to wind up other unimportant affairs and clear the decks for action. We are told instead that the preparations for the Rangarh Congress, including the election of delegates, Presidential election etc. are to go on apace—as if nothing has happened or is to happen. But the Indian people are no longer as politically ignorant or unsophisticated to lay as they were some time back. Does not even a child know today that in a war emergency, the first step to be taken by any Government or Party is to postpone elections *sine die*?

Against this background stand in bold relief the statements issued from time to time by prominent members of the Working Committee, including Dr. Rajendra Prasad, to the effect that they hope and trust that it will soon be possible for the Congress Ministers to go back to office. What longing, tearful eyes they must still have to continue thinking of the vacant chair in such an atmosphere and in the midst of such an emergency. One wonders if they are losing all sense of national self-respect. And one is surprised and pained beyond measure to be reminded that in the midst of this tragic scene stands the lone figure of the ex-revolu-

tionary, ex-Leftist leader of India who had once emphatically declared to a worshipping world that in no circumstances would he accept a seat on a homogeneous Cabinet, whether of the Right or of the Left. Who can tell us if this solemn declaration could be reconciled with his present stand—his complete identification with the Rightist elements in the Congress and his complete disavowal of the Left-movement in the country?

Let us therefore be perfectly plain and brutally frank, despite the danger of treading on others' corns. Nothing will be gained by mincing matters in this fateful hour of our national history. Such resolutions of the Working Committee are mere verbosity, calculated to hoodwink and bluff the innocent people of this country. Mahatma Gandhi has been consistently telling us for a year or more that a national struggle is out of the question and that the country is not prepared for it—though it is a moot question as to who is not prepared, the country or the shining lights of the Working Committee. If the Mahatma had stood for a struggle from the beginning, much of the present controversy and dispute between the Right and the Left would not have arisen at all. Consequently, it would be futile to hope that at this late hour that he will go back on all that he has said and all that he has stood for, during the last twelve months. Pressure of events and the force of public opinion may make him do a lot, but they cannot induce him to launch a nation-wide struggle. It is one thing to take a plunge and enter a swimming-bout, it is quite a different thing to be pushed into the water from behind when the sight of it gives you cold hands and feet. Compare the inspiring articles of *Young India* of 1921 with the stuff that is now-a-days served out by the weekly *Harijan* and you will at once see the difference. It is a changing world that we are living in and as the world changes, so do the personalities who dominate it.

The problem today is not merely one of launching Direct Action. This has to be done effectively—if at all—otherwise it will amount to 'sabotaging' and not launching

Direct Action. There is also the further question of pursuing it to a victorious end and avoiding any half-way house along our path. Let us be perfectly frank once again and say that even if Direct Action is started by the present Working Committee, the Left will nurse the apprehension that Chauri Chaura and the Harijan Movement, or rather new forms of them, may appear any time and scotch our movement when it gathers strength and volume.

Is this apprehension justified—we may be asked? Of course, it is—otherwise the drive against the Left would not have continued with unabated ferocity even after the declaration of War. From all provinces news continue to pour in of this drive against the Left and in the case of the Forward Bloc it amounts to a vendetta. Naturally, the wrath of the Working Committee is concentrated on Bengal and the Bengal portfolio has been taken over by the President himself. The word has gone round throughout the province that one has only to send in a complaint direct to the Working Committee or to the President from any remote corner and he can rest assured that the Provincial Congress Committee will at once be summoned to the dock. The impartial observer consequently finds lip-homage paid to the ideals of unity and discipline in lengthy press statements but in actual practice, suppression and persecution of political opponents within the Congress. In the case of the British Government, you may undertake repeated pilgrimages to Viceroy's House and lick the feet that kick you. In the case of your Leftist colleagues, you may nevertheless consistently with your principles of Truth and Non-Violence, refrain from any demonstration of toleration, goodwill and generosity and continue with full wrath and ferocity a policy of vendetta.

What is the moral of this sordid story? It is this that for the Rightists, British Imperialism is a lesser enemy than Indian Leftism. You can compromise with the former, but in the case of the latter, war to the bitter end. And perhaps if British Imperialism strikes at Indian Leftism our Rightist friends will have no cause for regret.

"If India is to be freed, let her be freed by us or not at all"—so says a Bengali adage and so think our Rightists today.

Subhas Chandra Bose

### Role of Youths in India

Our youngmen are not to dream dreams, nor our old men see visions. In a land like ours we have learnt to our bitter cost that dreams and visions are dangerous things. They have an "explosive quality" about them which may burst our shell of narrow existence. So, there is a social Explosives Act to keep us away from all dreams and visions—and, therefore, from "mischief".

But even the best of plans for peace are found to fail. And so even in India dangerous thoughts appear; forces, almost primaeval in character and urge, fight their way from unknown depths into the socio-economic life; our youths eagerly accept that "baptism of fire" and even our old men are kindled to their soul with a new light and a new hope.

So our youngmen dream dreams and our old men see visions—even though both are forbidden to do it. No, they must not do it:—they are the youths of an emasculated people, of an impoverished country; should they indulge in dreams? They are the citizens in a disarmed and enslaved nation, in a land where hungry mouths go without bread and die without regret; should they lose their head in weaving visions?

True, very true. But there is India, India of the Twentieth Century, India of 1939,—India at the crucial point of her history and the history of the world. Dreams come to youngmen, dreams come to the old—dreams that are more potent than the dirt of poverty and deadliness of bondage.

We are reminded of this noble truth as we read the Presidential Address of S. J. Sarat Chandra Bose at the Dhubri Students' Federation. Here is a man, no longer young in years, inviting in the quiet, forceful language of his mature thought his youthful hearers to the newly opened land of dreams and visions—of "constructive statesmanship."

Referring for this purpose to Kemal Ataturk, S. J. Basu reminded his Assamese friends:

"We also want that kind of foresight and vision, more especially because our goal will not be attained in a day, but will have to be striven for through years, in successive waves of active effort and organization. Such a campaign requires staying power, depending in its turn on constructive work, which alone can develop the full powers of the nation. This kind of work requires not only inherent gifts, but also training and habit. We cannot expect a far-reaching programme of national reconstruction to be conceived and carried through by persons who on getting the opportunity allow themselves to be so enmeshed in details and red tape that they feel like welcoming the first occasion when they would be relieved of their responsibilities. Nor can such a task be shouldered by men whose zeal for national reconstruction is satisfied with sanctioning some tube-wells here, a few charitable dispensaries there, and a dozen elementary schools at other places".

Boldly to conceive and more boldly to continue—that is what Indian reconstruction needs. And S. J. Basu avows: "It is here that I pin the greatest faith in the coming generation... I do not believe in isolating the youth of a country from public affairs". It is a pity that he has still to argue for this. They would not require it in Britain or hear it in Bohemia or Moravia where thousands are today dying for Czech liberty. Still S. J. Bose has to argue it:—"Without the vitalizing contact of public affairs youth is likely to become anaemic, morally speaking and wither in lackadaisical inanition. Athenians of the greatest age used to look upon a man who took no interest in public affairs not only as a harmless man but also as a useless one. I have found from experience that young men who have never felt about them the keen and bracing atmosphere of public affairs inevitably tend to lose their robustness, as also the highest attribute of youth—its activism. I do not want our young men to become over-protected and delicate hothouse plants.

"On the other hand, public affairs

gain a lot by keeping in touch with the idealism and fervour, and I may also add, even the impetuosity of youth. Practical politics, with its makeshifts and compromises, is one long second best in whose swirls those who are engaged with it often tend to lose their sense of the relative value of things and more often confuse means with ends. To them youth's criticisms come as a reminder of the true purpose of their activities. No one who is in politics will willingly forego that stimulus, although the flagging spirit of the elders might at times find the critics too meddlesome".

And the "constructive statesman" who can see such visions winds up with a bold word of caution that is as necessary for youths: "I do not like to see them used as political cannon-fodder." And, "We must not impose a preconceived and external system of values on youth, depriving them of free and responsible choice."

Freedom, therefore, youth must possess—and this freedom is perfectly consistent with discipline. "Discipline is a spontaneous and free-willed acquiescence in a higher moral law, through which alone are our anarchic and anti-social egotistical impulses permanently tamed. External compulsion never can and never will create this spirit. But faith, conviction and devotion, born and fostered in freedom, will. When in the life of an individual, this spirit is present, everything falls in its place—duty to one's fellow-men to one's country, to oneself; sacrifices become easy if the call comes; even without it life acquires a new meaning and value as if it was nourished from an eternal and invisible spring".

This spirit indeed is abroad in India—waiting to be "awakened to its full and fragrant bloom." So our youngmen dream dreams—the dreams that are to come true.

## CURRENT COMMENTS

### Repression is Rampant

While the Working Committee has been talking and talking and straining its ears for one more call from Delhi, Government has not

stopped pursuing a policy of repression with unabated zeal. Arrests, house searches and seizure of books on socialism have become the order of the day. Messrs. V. D. Tripathy, Maumatha Gupta, Bhagat Singh and a number of others have already fallen victims to this policy and it may be taken as certain that many more will gradually come under its broadening sweep. Ordinances have been promulgated in industrial areas in Behar with a view to suppress labour discontent and there is hardly any doubt that more of them will be set in operation in different parts of the country to gag "inconvenient" voices and draft away "unruly elements" from the scene. And the most tragic and shameful part of the story is that the Congress High Command, even in face of these circumstances, think of keeping the door open for—negotiation? Or repression?

### A Stupid Excuse

To people in general the War has been an evil but to Sir Muhammad Saadulla and men of his ilk it has been a veritable boon. After being hounded out of the Ministerial *guddee* he was sitting on the fence, biding time and waiting for his chance. Now the opportunity has arrived and he has again stepped into the breach created by the resignation of the Bardoloi Ministry. But circumstanced as he is, Sir Saadulla is not destined to know rest and peace. As soon as he became installed in the *guddee*, no less than 59 members of the Opposition tabled no-confidence motions against his Ministry. Sir Saadulla, on his part, discreetly preferred to beat a hasty retreat before the stupendous onslaught, and, rather than fall shaft-ridden on the floor, he managed to get the Assembly adjourned for about 3 months. This has given him some breathing time and a chance to strengthen the ranks of his supporters by extension of patronage—a process that has already begun. The device has been too apparent to deceive anybody, but yet Sir Saadulla has now come forward with a face-saving explanation in support of his action. He has said that had the Assembly continued its session at present, the Congress Party would have brought

forward a resolution on War *which he does not approve!* (Italics ours) A more stupid excuse can hardly be conceived. According to all parliamentary canons, a motion, provided it is approved by the Speaker or the President, must have its way in a representative Assembly, no matter what the Premier and his Ministry may think of it. Could not Mr. Hockenbull, Sir Saadulla's patron, guide, philosopher and protector, invent a more plausible excuse for him?

### Unity and Discipline

For some time past, Congressmen in general have been treated to lengthy sermons on unity and discipline by the High Command, including Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Nehru, Sardar Patel and others. Even the resolution adopted by the Working Committee at Allahabad has laid particular emphasis on the need of these two sublime virtues at the present critical hour. But it seems that according to the notion of these leaders, unity means conformity to a set pattern and discipline weeding out of all elements in the Congress that refuse to fall readily in line with them. We firmly believe that unity can be achieved in the course of a single day if the present leadership, instead of knocking again and again at the gate of the Viceregal lodge, takes a bold stand on the Congress resolutions on war and means seriously to implement them. If it cannot call up requisite courage for it, what is the use of these hollow wails about want of unity in Congress ranks? By the way, Pandit Jawaharlal was till the other day an uncompromising exponent of a composite Cabinet. But why has he now trooped into a homogeneous Rightist Cabinet? Will he please lay bare to the public the reasons of this *volte-face*?

### Power of a Joke

The other day the German News Agency broadcast a joke of the Fuehrer. It is said that Herr Hitler in a recent speech asked jocularly of Britain, consistently with her professed "war aims" to grant complete independence to Ireland, India, Egypt—in fact, to all her

colonies, dependencies and protectorates. It may be remembered that some time ago the German Dictator made a reference to India alone practically in the same context. But then he spoke in grim seriousness, possibly because he was in a temper at the time of that peroration. Now it has dawned on him and quite appropriately too, that the matter is not worth more than a joke; for British imperialism is not going to liquidate itself at the bidding of even a Dictator. We have heard of the power of a lie, but it seems that even a simple joke can sometimes be quite terrible in its effect. We trust that this particular joke of the Fuehrer has been a deadly thrust at the heart of British imperialism—no less deadly, though morally and not physically, than German aeros, bombs, cannons and submarines. After Hitler's previous reference to India we heard somewhat less of the British "war aims." Will the present taunt, we wonder, stop the wagging tongues of the British statesmen more effectively than before?

#### V. D. Tripathi

Pt. Bi-hambhar Dayal Tripathi, M. A. L. L. B. Advocate of Unao has been recently arrested under the sections 124 A, 153 and 108 I. P. C. For about 25 years he has been devoting his whole time for the Congress work in U. P. and particularly in Unao District. Before his arrest he was the Secretary of the All India Forward Bloc, President of U. P. Provincial F. B. and a member of the War Council recently appointed by the U. P. Provincial Congress Committee. Last year he was elected chairman of the District Board Unao. Before this he had been to jail for several times in connection with Congress work.

#### M. N. Gupta

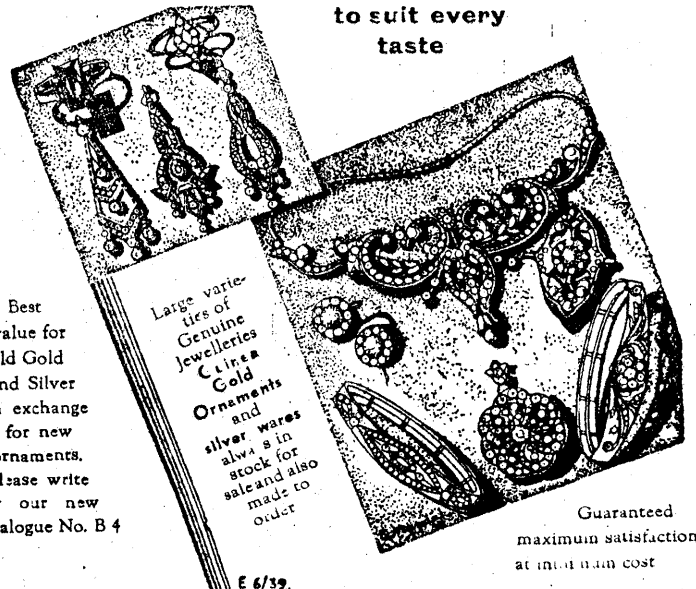
Com. Monmatho Nath Gupta ex-Kakori conspiracy case prisoner of Allahabad has been recently arrested at Allahabad under section 124 A. I. P. C. He was one of the members of the U. P. Provincial Forward Bloc Working Committee. He has written several books in Hindi, one of them *Kranti Yug Ke Sansaran* has been proscribed by the U. P. Govt. Since his release (in 1937 after Congress had accepted the Ministry) he has been doing Congress work in U. P. and is very popular among the youths.

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# QUO VADIS, GANDHI ?

Time was when Mahatma Gandhi used to say that he would non-co-operate, even if he were in a minority of one. Today, twenty years after, we hear from the great protagonist of mass civil disobedience that he would resist Satyagraha, if started, were the country not prepared for it. The pertinent question arises: By what signs and omens, which are absent today, could Mahatmaji gauge the preparedness of the nation on previous occasions when he called the people to battle? I cannot help recalling that *annus mirabilis*, 1930, when as a student in London, on reading with a shock of delight that the Mahatma had started on his now historic march to Dandi, I remarked to some of my Indian friends that the entire nation would march after him and that the movement would engulf the whole of India. But they laughed me to scorn and said that the "ridiculous trek" would collapse and end in fiasco. Subsequent events however showed that they were wrong. The truth of the matter seems to be that you cannot be absolutely sure that the people are prepared for war, be it violent or non-violent, until it is actually launched. Especially so is it the case with a war of national independence, because people are then borne on the crest of a billow, as it were, inexorably towards the goal.

"Eternal spirit of the Chainless Mind,  
Brightest in dungeons Liberty, thou art!  
For there thy habitation is the heart,  
The Heart which love of Thee alone  
can bind." ...

Let us try and analyse Gandhiji's doubts and misgivings. It is sad to note that while accusing the British Government of raising the communal bogey as an argument against Swaraj, he should himself be using it as an argument against a fight with the British Government for Swaraj. Some people have unjustly remarked that Mahatmaji, by saying that mass Satyagraha in the present circumstances will lead to communal rioting, is unconsciously but unfortunately creating an atmosphere where such bitterness may

become possible. What grounds are there today, I ask, for presuming that Satyagraha will be fraught with such disastrous consequences? There may not be an understanding or a settlement with the Muslim League, but did one exist in the past when the nation marched to battle? Surely we cannot make a fetish of unity. In every age and in every clime it is only a resolute minority that has been in the vanguard of the struggle for national emancipation. So was it with the Jacobins in France, the Carbonari in Italy, the Sinn Fein in Ireland, the Bolsheviks in Russia, the Young Turks in Turkey and the Kuomintang in China, and so will it be with the Congress Party in India if today it goes forward, like a well-knit army with a will steeled to the acceptance of death rather than the abandonment of its birthright. What matters it if the intransigence of the Muslim League over jobs, seats and such other trivialities is barring the way to a

By

H. V. KAMATH

settlement with it? Let us put first things first. Let us seek first the Heaven of Freedom, and all other things will be added unto us.

After all, the Muslim League represents a mere fraction of our Mussalman brethren. What about the Ahrars, the Congress Muslims, the Ulemas, the Shias, the Momins and in Bengal, the Krishak-Proja Party who are not only not in the League but are diametrically opposed to it? These, I am sure, will not lag behind in our onward march. In the circumstances the Muslim League cannot possibly turn hostile to the freedom movement. It may remain indifferent or neutral, but even that is doubtful; for by adopting such an attitude it will be discredited in the eyes of the nation as well as of Mussalmans the world over, inasmuch as its professed object, alongside the Congress, is the attainment of independence for India. Moreover to one who swears

by the Quran that proclaims the brotherhood of man, there is no sin so heinous as slavery. I heard it from a Muslim friend of mine only the other day that in parts of Arabia the Indian Muslims are looked upon with hatred and contempt, taunted with the accusation that they, slaves themselves, fought in the last war and robbed others too of their freedom. It is well-known how Kemal Ataturk, in the days of the Khilafat agitation dismissed some of our Indian Muslim leaders with scant courtesy asking them to mind their own business of becoming free. "There is no oppressor and oppressed in the world" he advised them, "there are only those that allow themselves to be oppressed." If the Muslim League does commit the folly of joining hands with the British Government and abetting the crime of suppressing, albeit in vain, our struggle for freedom, it will be signing its own death warrant. Such an act of treachery will bury it a thousand fathoms deep whence there can be no resurrection. Of its possible, though not probable, neutrality or indifference, we need not be afraid, for in every revolution a section of the population has remained apathetic.

I therefore consider that the Mahatma's fears on this score are ill-founded. The second obstacle in his opinion is the existence of "indiscipline and disunity" within the Congress. If however we review, without prejudice, the recent history of the Congress, we find to our pain and sorrow that the seeds of this "indiscipline and disunity" were sown by the Right Wing when, after Subhas Bose's re-election as Congress President, they initiated a systematic and ruthless drive against the Left Wing. So many, and among them are honoured names that will live in the Pantheon of Indian history, were warned, "disciplined," dra-gooned, hounded out and expelled. And pray, what was their crime? Having had the temerity to assert that the nation was prepared for a struggle, that the spirit of constitutionalism was rampant and leading the country into a morass, and to differ from the powers-

that be on questions of principle affecting the very existence and vitality of the Congress as a fighting mass organisation and as the revolutionary instrument of the people's will to freedom. If today the High Command stays its hand, quashes all the disciplinary action thoughtlessly taken so far, and calls the nation to battle, they will be agreeably surprised to see that the Congress is united as never before and that "indiscipline and disunity" were a hollow unreality. That is the only way to carry the Congress and the nation forward today!

Mahatmaji has, in his magnanimity also observed that there can be no civil disobedience so long as the Viceroy is exploring the avenues of a settlement. He will respond as often as the call comes from the Viceroy. Such zeal on his part is surely worthy of a better cause. The British Government can easily mark time till the Greek Kalends. It is passing strange that Gandhiji who has declared non-co-operation with the British Government by withdrawal of Congress Ministries, still clings to the hope that Freedom will descend, like unto the gentle rain from heaven, as a Royal gift borne in a Viceregal oballice! We appeal to Gandhiji to turn his back on Delhi and Whitehall and the entire nation will be at his back.

I venture to assert that the country is to-day far better prepared for a struggle than at any time in the past. From a needy bus driver in Bombay to a poor Kisan on the outskirts of Nagpur and an exploited mazdoor in Jubbulpore, I have been given one and the same assurance: that, though unable to understand what exactly Right and Left mean, they are ready to plunge in freedom's battle. A Congress ex-minister of the Central Provinces declared at a meeting in Jubbulpore the other day that the nation was ready for a fight. Even so should all Congress ex-ministers and M.L.A's assure Gandhiji that they, who entered the Legislatures and took office with the sole purpose of wrecking the Constitution, have during their tenure prepared their constituencies and the country for the next struggle. It would be a slur on them to say otherwise. Similar assurances should come from the people at large in meetings assembled in every nook and corner of the country. If unfortunately Mahatmaji and some others still believe that the nation is not

prepared, let them deem it their sacred duty to prepare the people for an effective non-violent battle during the next two months. Let us give a two months ultimatum to the British Govt, and in the event of our National Demand being turned down, let us launch a big offensive on January 26, 1940, the day sacred in our annals, the day on which we pledged ourselves to wage a relentless fight for independence!

I have heard it remarked in certain uncharitable quarters that Mahatmaji refuses to launch a struggle, just because he has all along maintained that the country is not prepared for it, whereas Subhas Babu and some other Leftists have held a contrary view, and because if the struggle were successful, he would

be proved wrong with the consequence of another Subhas's victory and his defeat. I however refuse to believe that Gandhiji can be moved by such trifling considerations of prestige, when India's freedom is at stake. I am confident that he will yet lead us into another battle, more grim and more fierce than the last, where no quarter will be given on either side. Hundreds of thousands marched into the jaws of Death at Gandhiji's call in the past! To-day the Congress is far more powerful, far better organized and far, far stronger. Does the Mahatma really think that a call to battle today will evoke little or no response? Perish the thought!

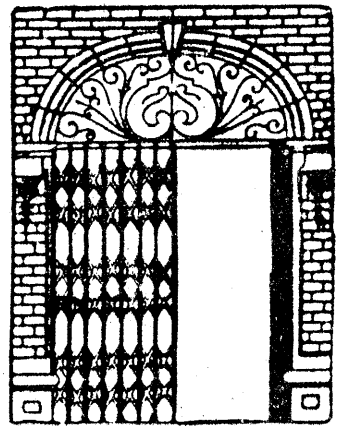
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# A REVIEW ENDING IN HOPE

By HEREZO

The present situation in Europe and other parts of the world reminds one strongly of a fight once witnessed in Circular Road, that famous thoroughfare in the Second city of the Empire, between two gang-foremen of road repairers. They stood on opposite sides of the road when they declared war upon each other. They opened with machine gun fire, but soon the muttering of the machine guns deepened in the boom of artillery and the street was loud with their noise. They stepped on the gas and the stream of vituperation and threats accelerated to a reckless speed, accompanied by violent gestures, which were at once belligerent and obscene. Evidently this speed increased their blood circulation, which called for action and they began walking towards each other across the road in an alarmingly threatening manner. They met almost in the middle of the road and shook their fists at each others' noses in a most blood-curdling manner. By accident the fist of one lightly tapped the nasal organ of the other, then immediately began a strategic retreat: one was afraid that the tap might be followed by a harder blow, the other feared retaliation. They soon regained their former positions of vantage across the road—the Maginot and the Siegfried Lines. From there artillery boomed, howitzers and Long Toms and Big Berthas let forth a pandemonium of sounds. Sporadically they advanced towards each other and when they came in contact, retreated in splendid order, strategically and gloriously, to their former positions.

That represents the exact positions of the armies on the Western Front, where the British Expeditionary Forces lie invisible and are likely to remain invisible, so far as we can make out. But the war is going on and the British Forces are doing good work. From the meagre reports that come to us, it is evident, that fifteen Britishers have been killed, about sixteen are missing and about half a hundred have been wounded. These figures seem certain and accurate, so far as one may gather from communiques released from W. H.

Q.—there might be more, it is hard to say when one remembers that the first communique of the Jalianwallabagh disaster stated "5 killed and 15 wounded." History has a bad habit of repeating itself.

The position at home is similar. War to destroy imperialism and establish democracy was declared. Congress immediately joined issue and wanted to know the ultimate aim of the war with regard to India. The Congress machine guns muttered. Simla replied with a battery. Congress fired a Howitzer in the form of a threat of non-co-operation, but the aim was deflected by the Mahatma's declaration of unconditional co-operation, and so the shell passed over Simla and fell as a spent force on the doorstep of the India Office in London. When Sir Samuel Hoare picked up the shell and curiously examined it, then promptly loaded one of the old cannons lying in the London Parks for the edification of a warlike people, and fired off a sharpnel filled with old declarations. This burst in Wardha to the consternation of the expectant High Command, now habituated to fascist obedience. Then a war council was held and a Big Bertha was fired off in the shape of declaration of non-co-operation. Lord Zetland of ancient fame, dived into the archives of the India Office and fished out the ammunitions of 1919—promises of Dominion Status, Communal unity, etc, etc, and fired a broadside. Now Congress has replied with non-co-operation, not the common garden variety of non-co-operation but a brand new Gandhian non-co-operation, a MENTAL AND MORAL Non-Co-Operation! There is some fear in certain quarters, that if India Office replies to this terrible attack, Mahatma Gandhi may retaliate with a still more horrible variety of non-co-operation,—to wit, an ASTRAL NON-CO-OPERATION. Such a thing is most terrible to contemplate. This will throw the whole thing out of the material world into the spiritual and we know just what damage "soul force" has done. We shall be able to co-operate materially, but never, *no*

*never*, spiritually, lest our astral bodies suffer and become still more attenuated. *Horrible dictu!* Let us not think further along these lines, lest the "inner voice" begins to speak—then surely all will be lost. Let us here remark *sotto voce*, it has been said that the "inner voice" of the great leader is the ventriloquism of the redoubtable Field Marshal of the High Command. However that is by the way.

Speaking of the attenuation brings to mind a man who is positively afraid to see the Mahatma again. He gives his reason thus. The first time I saw Mr. Gandhi, he had just passed out as a Barrister and was dressed in the height of English fashion. Next time I saw him, he wore the foreign clothing but tied a turban. The next time I saw him, he was dressed in Indian clothing but had shed his shoes. The next time I saw him, he was in loin cloth only. Thus I have seen the sartorial evolution of the Mahatma—and I am afraid to see the next step in the evolution!

However, we must not be discouraged and lose hope. This modern war is one of camouflaged positions, long distance guns, complete invisibility and maximum non-violence accompanied with the minimum shedding of human blood. The figures given above are not of naval warfare. The losses caused therein of human life has been due more to natural than human agencies. Besides in this modern war, one does not count loss in terms of human lives and ships lost, but in the terms of tonnage and seized contrabands. After deducting the loss of one's own tonnage and contrabands from those of the enemy, the remainder represents the results of naval warfare. Thus the loss of the Allies has been a minus quantity, in fact a heavy gain, thus a great victory. The sinking of the number of the ships do not count, nor indeed the number of human beings killed or drowned in these days of invisible troops and mental and moral non-co-operation and there still remain hopes of Dominion Status, Independence—if not a material one, at least an ASTRAL one; and one looks to our Subhas Babu to tie some weight to it and bring it down to this gross and material plane on solid earth.

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# CONFUSING THE ISSUE

By **ABDULLAH RASUL**  
GENERAL SECRETARY, BENGAL KISAN SABHA

The present situation in India in connection with the War and the Congress has given rise to widespread confusion. It is a state of suspense and stalemate on the Indian side. Meanwhile the British caravan passes on almost undisturbed, as if unquestioned. Confusion in such a situation means forced inaction which is often more terrible and weakening in its effect than failure or defeat.

Writing on "The Next Step" Gandhiji, I am afraid, clouded the issue rather than clarified it. He says that the "Working Committee alone should have the right to declare and regulate civil disobedience" if at all it is launched and that he has "undertaken to guide the Working Committee"—which means that Gandhiji is the only man with whom lie all power, authority and right to decide whether civil disobedience is to be started and, if at all, when; how it is to be conducted; and when and under what circumstances it should be brought to an end.

What is of real importance in this connection is the question whether Gandhiji will represent the exact viewpoint of the Working Committee in all his actions regarding the big move if it is launched. It was only a few weeks ago when a sharp and fundamental difference was manifest between the two parties, viz, Gandhiji and the Congress. Gandhiji was strongly in favour of unconditional support to Britain in the War while the Working Committee unanimously expressed its inability to accept his viewpoint which resulted in the present negotiations and controversies.

And now after these few weeks Gandhiji himself admits that the Working Committee "could not honestly take up that position," namely, that of giving unconditional support to Britain. His admission goes further: "Events have shown the prudence of the course adopted by the Working Committee." Was then Gandhiji mistaken in his theory of unconditional support? Is he not apt to make similar mistake any more? Such a mistake will be fundamental and all-

important in that on it will rest a great deal of the fate of our future national struggle. In case of such a mistake, what will the Working Committee do? It is not probable that Gandhiji will always realize it as he did in the recent case, at least not soon enough to rectify it in time.

Civil disobedience on a national scale will naturally be a mass movement of the Congress. The contact that the masses have with the Congress is through the workers, mostly scattered all over the country. They, that is those who have the closest contact with the masses, have the best and most intimate knowledge of the present condition and outlook of the people who are to be drawn into the movement.

It is an admitted fact that during the past few years, since the last civil disobedience movement, particularly since the inauguration of the so-called Provincial Autonomy, vast changes have taken place in the countryside as well as elsewhere. Socialist ideology has had no mean part to play in bringing about these changes and the way of its influencing the popular consciousness is vastly different from the old ways.

Another factor which has considerably strengthened the case of the Socialist worker or propagandist is the continued deterioration of the economic condition of the masses since 1929 or 1930—the time of the beginning of the world economic collapse. The interpretation of its causes and remedy is more in keeping with the class-line of the Socialist propagandist than with the old patch-work line of the Liberal-bourgeois politician.

And the workers who are in touch with the masses are mostly influenced by Socialist ideology. Thus the frame of mind and the way of thinking of the masses have of late undergone immense changes. Will the same old leadership and the same old methods be fruitfully applied to the enormously changed present?

The question does not end here. It is not merely a matter of unchanged leader-

ship and unaltered methods. More serious, perhaps more ominous facts are to be taken into sober consideration before you attempt an answer. Gandhiji says he is "cut off from all outward contact with the masses," that he does not know personally the present Congress workers, that he never meets them, and that his correspondence has to be restricted as much as possible. He confesses that after the resignation of Congress Ministries "the next step is by no means clear". Yet he prescribes "the preliminary inaction" of which he wants all Congressmen to perceive the necessity. He also prescribes consolidating the Congress organization purging it of all weaknesses—weaknesses by which he of course means the absence in any Congressman of non-violence in thought, word and deed.

Gandhiji's favourite "constructive programme" has to be stressed. He wants the charkha to become universal.

This is about all that we have so far had for a programme in our fight for independence. The General has left the offensive to be taken by the British Government (Imagine this in a mass fight, while we should not even prepare for anything but inaction!) He does not "wish for the defeat of the British or, for that matter of the Germans." We know the Soviet Commissar Molotov proposed peace which the British Premier has discountenanced, probably because he is not in favour of cessation of war.

In most of Gandhiji's recent writings and utterances, non-violence seems to be the most important word. It poses to be the inevitable and absolute condition for whatever action he suggests and whenever the question arises of a big move or struggle, the condition becomes all the more persistent.

It is no use concealing the fact that whatever Gandhiji means by non-violence, appeals but to few members of the Congress. Most people are left mystified or flabbergasted by every new interpretation that he now puts on the conjuring word. It has thus succeeded in aggravating the

prevailing confusion rather than aiding to dispel it.

It is not merely the ordinary Congressman, the rank and file but even the High Command, including members of the Gandhi Seva Sangha or the Working Committee, who are not all ardent votaries of non-violence in the sense the leader wants them to be. Indeed, if my memory serves right, Gandhiji once, not very long ago, was loath to give the latter that credit. Moreover, the fact that the Working Committee refused to accept his theory of unconditional support, which surely Gandhiji propounded in the highest spirit of non-violence, is a pointer to that direction.

So it comes to the unhappy fact that Gandhiji's absolute condition of non-violence, which according to him is the only sure guarantee against failure or defeat, has not the ghost of a chance of fulfilment by the average Congressman, the common soldier who has always been the mainstay of the Congress. Neither will the highest personages in the Congress satisfy the leader who probably declared in 1934 that he was the only *Satyagrahi* in the whole Congress and there was no other *Satyagrahi* among the thousands of men and women who followed him and suffered imprisonment and hardship in the C. D. movement.

What then is the prospect for a Congressman in the present turmoil? He cannot be "truly" non-violent in Gandhiji's sense. He is hardly inclined to make the Charkha universal which he did not very much think of doing in the past twenty years when the wheel had a far greater appeal to popular sentiment.

What then is to be done now? The issue requires to be defined first. It seems to me that under present circumstances, non-violence in the Gandhian sense and civil disobedience can not be made to tally. The choice certainly is between non-violence and struggle. Put in other words it stands like this: Rigid and absolute Gandhian non-violence cannot offer anything more attractive and effective than supreme inaction which will hardly advance the country towards its goal of independence; while the Congress must be active and fight its battle of freedom, in a non-violent manner and in its best tradition.

Sincere Congressmen naturally yearn for the achievement of complete independence and for this they believe in the efficacy of mass action. As regards mass action there are now two fundamentally

different opinions. One set of Congressmen, the bulk of whom are adherents of the Gandhi Seva Sangha consider it an impossible venture. The other set, particularly the rank and file, believe it to be possible, necessary and urgent.

The difference is fundamental in that to Gandhiji non-violence is the sole objective, both immediate and ultimate, while to the believers in struggle mass action is the immediate objective and non-violence is only an essential condition for its achievement. The anomaly is therefore clear. How can it be solved?

Whatever may be the sincere opinion of Gandhiji about non-violence, it is not correct to say that all his professed adherents in this matter are true believers in the creed in his ethical sense. There is another vital interest which makes them pose to be champions of non-violence. To them non-violence is only a garb with which they find it convenient to cover their antagonism to the interests of the masses. They are hostile to all mass action as they know very well that any mass movement for India's freedom is bound to organize the masses of the country more strongly.

A stronger organization of the masses, of the labour and the peasant forces, under the banner of the Congress must weaken the present feudal and capitalist influence in the great national organisation. Hence the idea of struggle or mass action is to-day detested by many and disliked by most of the staunch followers of the Rightist leadership.

The feudal and capitalist interest has taken shelter behind Gandhiji's non-violence not because the interested people really have faith in its efficacy, but because under its cover they can protect their interest against any onslaught of the progressively conscious and discontented masses. The conflict of class interests is, therefore, the most important fact which does not allow the two distinct classes in the Congress to come together in the realm of inaction. Since, however, the Rightist leadership holds decisive authority and the Leftists are eager for struggle, Congressmen of all camp can be united as soon as a decision to launch mass action is taken. Appeal for unity and harmony on any other basis will be in vain.

Granting that Gandhiji's *bona fides* are above question, in effect however his insistence on the theory of non-violence and consequent inaction, despite his prescription of constructive programme, practically amounts to sabotaging the Congress as a mass organization by rendering its fighting forces inactive. His theory is being taken advantage of by the wealthy classes to checkmate any forward move. The amazing (but not inconceivable) thing is that the national leadership does not deem it necessary to voice the sentiments of the national forces against this unfortunate development. How long will this process of suppressing mass interest in the Congress continue unchallenged.

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## On Re-reading Gulliver

—By BUDDHADEVA BOSE

*Gulliver's Travels* is popularly considered as a children's fairy tale, not only by us, but by English-speaking people as well. Who of us has not read this book (one of the greatest of the world) as a child, but how few of us return to it in our maturer years! The very name *Gulliver* invokes in the minds of most of us a light-hearted volume in large type, and perhaps a coloured picture of the giant figure of Gulliver waddling across the sea, drawing after him the entire fleet of Blefuscu. And that is about all. It is a happy tale of dwarfs and giants, for the children's editions stop with the Brobdingnagian adventures. And for this reason, many of us have yet to discover the country of the Houyhnhnms, while Lilliput and Brobdingnag have become household words.

To read the whole of *Gulliver* as an adult is a profound experience which none of us should miss. Specially today, when the whole world, to quote the words of the drunkard in Sean O'Casey's play 'is in a state o' chassis', *Gulliver* has a poignant significance for the whole of humanity. Perhaps it is only today, after the lapse of two hundred years, that we can fully realise how great a man Swift was. Yes, he was a great man and a writer, and therefore a great writer. His contemporaries understood him only partly; the romantic nineteenth century completely misjudged him (Scott found the account of Houyhnhnms-land 'horrid'), but to us who have the history of the rise and fulfilment of capitalist economy behind us, Swift seems a major prophet, a gigantic figure striding fearlessly into the future, compared to whom the noisy set of statesmen, clergymen, noblemen who rule the world are no more than Lilliputians.

He loved liberty, he hated oppression in all forms, and because he was a passionate man by nature, with uncompromising sympathies and antipathies, he has been branded insane and a misanthrope. But he was no more of a misanthrope than any other rational man must be, if he is really rational. Fact is, most of us are, as yet, far from rational,

as Swift conclusively demonstrates in his legend of the Houyhnhnms, and such is our perversion that Swift's simple desire to see a better and happier race of men appears to us insanity, some disease of the brain. It has been said that Swift might have been the greatest political leader of contemporary England, but politics, for a powerful country (as England already was) involves the absorption of the wealth of smaller countries and backward peoples, and that was a type of activity which moved Swift to savage indignation. Ireland is a case in point. An Irishman by birth, but more English than an Englishman by temperament, Swift hated Englishmen for their oppression of the Irish people, and despised the Irish people for submitting to it. But it was inevitable that he should throw his lot with that of the Irish people, for, so far as an oppressed nation is concerned, politics is just the biological impulse to survive. He made the Irish cause his own, wrote his bitter *Modest Proposal*, rose in revolt against Wood's notorious half-pence, all for the sake of humanity. He saw everything from the strictly human standpoint, unlike the usual run of politicians who are only concerned about the interests of one particular nation, sect or class. To say that such a man was a hater of humanity, is the height of folly. And this folly has persisted just because Swift was not a crooked diplomat, but expressed himself with amazing honesty. He knew no compromise; he was downright, unequivocal, terrific. And that is why savage indignation lacerated his heart to his dying day:

The wonder is that *Gulliver* seems a document of modern life. Its problems are those of today. Swift was a prophet because he foresaw the coming disaster. Living in Walpole's England, at a time when European imperialism was still a creative force in world history, he had, what seems to us, the incredible foresight and sanity of seeing through the empire-builder's game. He foresaw that the problem of economic distribution will lead to series of wars. The incessant

strife between England and France, which he so mildly satirised in the war between Lilliput and Blefuscu, disgusted him; and warfare is practically unknown among his noble race of horses. His hatred of abstract knowledge is notorious, but it is not hatred of science that we find in his description of Laputa, it is hatred of the despicable and destructive uses to which foolish man has put the power that science has given him. Had science been used rationally, for the benefit of the whole of humanity, the world would have been paradise by now. It has even been suggested that modern agro-biology can be an adequate substitute for empire markets; but knowledge is useless unless it can be, and is applied, for the good of the people. We are living in a world where, thanks to the resources of science, it is possible to make every single individual comfortable, free and happy, but we are having instead slavery and poverty, not to mention cyclic slumps and wars. Swift was right, therefore, in holding that knowledge in itself can do no good; it must be energised into action, and action of the right type. He conceived of the necessity of world peace long before the phrase was invented.

Swift wrote *Gulliver* as he himself said, not to amuse, but to inform and instruct mankind. If ever there was a book written with a purpose, this is one, and if it had not had the influence it deserves to have, it only proves that we are still unmitigated Yahoos, with only the faintest glimmering of reason. He held up before us a race of animals who live simply by following reason at every step; for instance, they do not say the thing that is not, just because language is meant to inform, and not to confuse. 'Who', he says, 'can read of the virtues I have mentioned in the glorious Houyhnhnms, without being ashamed of his own vices, when he considers himself as the reasoning, governing animal of his country?' But, of course, no amount of writing can change the world, as Swift himself knew. He knew that he was utterly lonely in a world of 'lying, shuffling, deceiving, equivocating, so deeply rooted in the very souls of all my species.' He alone was destined to be consumed by the pure flame of his rage, while the world went its own way. ...But perhaps it is not too late even now? Perhaps it is only the beginning of the new type of civilisation that was born with the Renaissance. If this civilisation is not to be wiped out, if it is to fulfil its rich promises to all, men must learn to be rational. Yahoos as we all are, the least we can do is to strive towards that end.

*A Mysore Correspondent Writes On***CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS IN MYSORE**

The long expected reforms were announced last week. All persons who expected a generous advance in so far as transfer of power to the hands of the representatives of the people is concerned, have been sadly disappointed and moderates who expected a very small advance in that direction have also been surprised.

Nowhere other than the unfortunate Native States of India, can a constitution like the one proposed be put before the country. The British Parliament is afraid of putting forth a constitution of that type. But in Mysore the public life is at such a low ebb that the Government is free to do anything it likes. The Government of India Act of 1935 is in every respect better than the Mysore Constitution.

The Chartered High Courts of British India have a status which by itself commands confidence and respect. But the Mysore High Court has not the same position. The reason given that the Judiciary is never influenced by the Executive is not convincing. Not merely should it be so in fact, but there should not be even a chance for its being so influenced. It is needless to take shelter behind the incorruptibility of the Judiciary, the members of which are servants of Government. The constitution can itself make it clear that no such scope for influence exists. Then it would be above suspicion and the confidence in the High Court would not merely rest on the faith that it cannot be influenced but on the solid foundation in the constitution itself.

The Legislative Council and the Representative Assembly have been enlarged both in their composition and duration but with no real powers. Instead of thanking the Government for these reforms, the poor subject of the State realises that he has been committed to a greater waste of money on these mock representative bodies. The vesting of the power of veto in the Dewan and the right given to him to address representatives

whenever he chooses, reminds us of the Governors and the Governor-General. They are responsible to Parliament but the Governor under the Mysore Constitution has no such responsibility. The appointment of two more Ministers according to the constitution does not depend upon the choice of the representatives of the people. So that the posts can only be taken as favours to be conferred by Government on well-behaved representatives of the people or representatives who promise to be well-behaved. This has become more a source of corruption so far as public life in Mysore is concerned. There is no lack of it as it is today.

There is no influential non-official that otherwise can be a real representative of the people, who is not in one way or other under the influence of the Executive. The inferiority of the non-official is due, firstly, to the fact that economically it is the Government servant that is better than a non-official. There can be no comparison between official salaries and the income of the average individual in the State. This is a vital weakness. In all ways possible including using the influence of relations who happen to be officials of Government or who will be so, they are coerced to depart from the path they are convinced is right. In spite of all its non-official activities for the last 20 years or more, Mysore be it said to the credit of the administration, has not been allowed to produce one sincere, honest, and incorruptible public worker. But I am sure there is many an honest public worker who is unhappy over the quarrels with himself and his conscience. The visitors to Mysore, including the Congress leaders, only look to the beauty and the calmness of the places they visit. But they cannot realise the fact that people in general have no share in their making. To them economic problems are all important. No doubt one wants beauty, art etc. but are they not secondary to the need of food which the masses want? Do they want electricity for their villages or do they prefer reduction of taxes? They want reduction of taxes and capacity to pay for electricity before they get it. It is happy to find that though Rajaji as Premier of Madras had nothing to say about Mysore, he had some caustic remarks to make on its Press a few days ago when he laid down the reins of office. The Press in Mysore is a muzzled Press. If an article or for that matter an inconvenient bit of news appears in a newspaper, it is not unusual for the District Magistrate to send a warning to the editor of the paper. If there be any persistence in giving out the blunt truth, the punishment comes in

the shape of denying Government advertisement and circulars. Departments and officials do not subscribe to the paper. These steps tell effectively on the paper. In fact, any newspaper that thrives in Mysore must count on Government support. Otherwise its existence is shaky. The influence of Government has spread visibly to newspapers of Madras also.

Separate electorates for Mohammedans is a folly against which Sir S. Radhakrishnan also spoke in October last at Mysore. A few weeks prior to the introduction of reforms Sir S. Radhakrishnan perhaps could not think that bureaucracy is as base here as the bureaucracy of white men in British India. Bureaucracy in the States has a garb which give an impression that the administration there is for the good of the people. It is a commonplace of administrative maxim that people are allowed to look after themselves than individuals, however well-intentioned they may be, will govern them. What the Britisher is intentionally doing in British India in the shape of policy of divide and rule, is being done by the Brown Bureaucrat in the States in their own interests.

Mysore is said to be in the good books of all—Britishers, Europeans, Americans and even the Congressmen. The propaganda system of the Mysore Government is wide-spread and effective. Of course, here we have men like Rajaji and Sri Krishna Sinha saying bitter things about Mysore. Pandit Jawaharlal has no doubt his own theory about the extinction of the States and amalgamation of all these primitive and mediaeval units with British India. This is, of course, the best and the ultimate solution of the various ills to which the Native States have been subject.

What is known as the best of the Native States has proposed for its subjects a constitution which no self-respecting people can accept. The future of the unfortunate subjects of the Native States in India is very gloomy. It would be something if Mysore adopted the several reforms that the Madras Government has carried out during the course of the last 2 months by way of Prohibition, Temple Entry, Salary cuts, Hospital reforms, Educational reforms, etc. in the first instance. This with the industrial progress of Mysore, which is due in a large measure to the unlimited enthusiasm and indefatigable energy of a single individual, i.e., the present Dewan, will give the people some satisfaction at least.

However, it is earnestly hoped that the present constitution will give place to another in the course of the next five years.



## Subhas Chandra Bose—

From Karnatak the scene shifts to Gujerat but before I invite the reader thither, I have to indulge in a digression. Early in July, before leaving Bombay for Maharashtra and Karnatak, I ran up to Jubbulpore on a flying visit. A Conference had been organised there by our sympathisers and supporters and that was the occasion for my going there—the real object being to popularise the Forward Bloc in Mahakoshala Province (i.e. C. P. Hindustani Province). On that occasion, there was something like a rally of Forward Bloc-ers from different districts of Mahakoshala and we were able to make a good start with our organisation there.

I had been to Jubbulpore in 1932 but only as a prisoner and I had lived in Jubbulpore Jail for some months. My next visit there was in the capacity of Congress President, but I went to the Tripuri (near Jubbulpore) Congress as an invalid and returned as such. As a matter of fact, I had to be carried on a stretcher and in an ambulance car and saw practically nothing of Jubbulpore or Tripuri or the Tripuri Congress. I was only informed by friends that the

Presidential procession was a magnificent affair and my absence was keenly felt by the multitude from the surrounding countryside. But it was one thing to go as a Congress President and with all the halo that surrounds him. But it was quite a different proposition to go as a mere Congressman and with the label of a rebel against the Congress High Command. Till then I had not done anything which could be stigmatised as an act of rebellion—I had simply resigned the Congress Presidency and joined the Forward Bloc. Nevertheless, in official Congress circles it was regarded as a revolt and proclaimed as such. Jubbulpore was the first place I visited after the All India Conference of the Forward Bloc and consequently there was an added significance in my experience there.

As soon as my train steamed into the Central Province I realised what sort of welcome I would have there. There were crowds—enthusiastic crowds—at the wayside stations and it was clear that the stigma given by the official leaders of the Congress had not affected them in the

least. The slogan "Forward Bloc Zindabad" (Long live Forward Bloc) was vociferously shouted everywhere and when we reached Jubbulpore, there was a seething mass of humanity. All doubts were set at rest.

There was no procession from the station, but it had been fixed for a later hour. Ordinarily I dislike processions immensely—they are a waste of time and often cause considerable strain and discomfort, especially in the day-time. But in another sense they are useful. They afford us a peep into mass psychology and with all my political preoccupations, I have not been able to abandon my interest in Psychology or in Philosophy. Perched on a throne-like chair in a lorry or on the hood of a car or in a gaily decorated horse-drawn vehicle, one has a rare opportunity of watching crowds of men and women and studying their psychology. No doubt one feels funny and awkward at times, as perhaps a doll in a show-case would, if imbued with life. Nevertheless, at times the experience is worth having.

And so it was in the case of Jubbulpore. The mammoth procession revealed to me in an unmistakable manner the affection of the crowds and their spontaneous

the All-India demonstrations we had planned for the 9th July. As the reader will remember, the All India Congress Committee which had met in Bombay towards the end of June had passed two resolutions to which we Leftists had taken serious exception. One of them had prohibited Congressmen from offering Satyagraha or Civil Disobedience without the previous sanction of the Provincial Congress Committee, while the other had made the Congress Ministries in the provinces virtually independent of the Provincial Congress Committees concerned. In the view of the Leftists, these resolutions were calculated to strengthen the position of the Rightists and to take the Congress away from the path of mass struggle and it was consequently felt desirable and necessary to voice our protest against them. The observance of an All-India Day on the 9th July for this purpose had accordingly been decided on by the Left Consolidation Committee—and not by the Forward Bloc alone.

Behind the statement of Dr. Rajendra Prasad was the veiled threat of disciplinary action and nobody could miss it. As soon as I read the statement, it appeared necessary to convene a meeting of Left Consolidation Committee to consider it.

Representatives of the Socialist Party, National Front Group, Radical League and Forward Bloc accordingly met and considered the statement and also reviewed the general situation. We found no

reason to alter our previous decision. Arrangements were therefore set on foot for a proper observance in Bombay.

An attempt was thereafter made by Mr. M. N. Roy to countermand this decision on behalf of the Radical League and also to influence the Congress Socialist Party to that end, through the medium of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru—but in Bombay, as in most places in India, the demonstration was held under the joint auspices of the above four organisations and of the Kishan Sabha.

This was the first open clash between the Left and Right after the formation of the Left Consolidation Committee and people in Bombay were exceedingly curious and anxious to see how the general public would respond to the call of the Left. There were also vague rumours of the supporters of the Rightists coming to break up our meetings. But nothing untoward happened. All the meetings held in Bombay were eminently successful. I attended the one at the Framji Cowasji Institute Hall which was packed to its fullest capacity, with a large overflow crowd waiting outside. The enthusiasm of the public was at its highest pitch.

So we crossed the first hurdle.

(To be Continued)

## GLIMPSES OF MY TOUR (4)

response to the cause I was advocating. The public meeting was also an undoubted success and according to local friends, both the procession and the meeting were on a par with the best records of Jubbulpore.

Not less important than these demonstrations was the small, closed-door Conference of workers from different districts of the province. A skeleton organisation was set up there and we had the satisfaction of leaving behind something permanent. From Jubbulpore I paid a hasty visit to Mandla by car. There under the scorching midday sun of May was a large and expectant crowd. It was perhaps mid-summer madness to wait under the scorching sun for hours to hear a rebel, but there was something noble, something sacred in this type of madness which makes one oblivious to sun or rain.

Coming back to Bombay from Jubbulpore I found once again eager crowds at intermediate stations where short speeches had to be made. I could not help regretting that the visit to Mahakoshala had to be so short.

On reaching Bombay on the 7th June a surprise was in store for me. This was the statement of the Congress President, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, virtually banning

# RALPH FOX—A Writer in Arms

Edited by John Lehmann, T. A. Jackson, C. Day Lewis. Published by Lawrence and Wishart, London.

Born in a comfortable middle-class home in Halifax in 1900, Ralph was endowed with that amount of literary genius by which he could at ease slip into the ivory tower of pure intellectualism and keep himself aloof from the hum of day-to-day life or dry politics. Instead Ralph was found amidst the famine-stricken area of the Soviet Union in 1920. Instead he joined the Communist Party and died at 36, fighting against the rebels in Spain. And his death was, as Harold Laski has written, "a fulfilment. It was, for him, simply a necessary service to his ideal." In Ralph we find a magnificent alliance of mental and manual worker in the fight against Fascism and War, a combination of qualities that can make both pen and sword equally mighty. In the death of Ralph we therefore do not see "a tragic waste." That is not any tribute to comrade Fox or to other comrades, who died for the cause of democracy, freedom and peace on the Spanish Front. They live again, in the way that we will now be working hard for the victory of Spanish democracy, that

"Still freedom yet, thy banner  
torn but flying,  
Streams like a thunderstorm  
against the wind."

Apart from his knowledge of history and valuable contributions to the history of past and present, Ralph's aesthetic sense, literary taste and artistic criticisms deserve special attention today of that vicious section of Pseudo-Marxists, who distort both Marxism and Marxist philosophy of art by explaining them in their own curiously perverted ways. They may be referred to Ralph's *The novel and the people* where they will find these lines: "It is the lights and colours, the forms and shapes, the breath of the winds, the scents of life, the physical beauty or the physical ugliness of animal life, including the lives of human beings, the acts, the thoughts, the dreams of actual men and women, including the creator

himself, that form the stuff of art. Milton demanded three things of poetry, that it be simple, sensuous and passionate. But does not Marxism claim that works of art are merely a reflection of economic needs and economic processes? It will be objected. No, this is not the view of Marxism, though it is the view of a number of materialists of the nineteenth century of the positivist school whose view have nothing in common with Marxian, dialectical materialism."

These are the words of one of the most distinguished Marxists of the world. Should we not listen to him with respect? Marxism certainly believes that the material mode of life in the end determines the intellectual. But Marxism never claims that the connection between the two is direct and mechanical. Marxism never lends support to this theory that because capitalism replaces feudalism, and socialism replaces capitalism, therefore all great artists must in consequence reflect the needs of capitalist class and then the proletariat class, and capitalist art stands on a higher level than feudal art, and proletarian art is superior to capitalist art. Such crude, perverted and vulgar views are foreign to the whole spirit of Marxism.

Ralph Fox's political writings form the greater bulk of his work. His two volumes on *The class struggle in Britain* *Colonial Policy or British Imperialism*,

his pamphlet *Marx and Engels on the Irish Question*, and his *Lenin, a biography* were all the product of his term of service in the Marx-Engels Institute in Moscow. He has shown his power in his *Lenin and Communism* and in his *Genghis Khan* he has reached his full strength. Ralph can never be condemned as heretical and freakish. In his writings he was able to break away from the two besetting sins of the old, pre-war British Marxist writers, the substitution of a Party jargon for living style and the substitution of fossilized and frozen concepts for real thinking. Before meeting with Engels' stern protest, "to many of our comrades the Materialist Conception of History is an excuse for not studying history"—Ralph Fox was eager to adventure into and explore phrases and aspects of Marxism and concrete applications of the Marxian method. Ralph really injected life into the dry bones of history and made Marxist literature exquisitely beautiful, flexible, living and charming.

The book reviewed contains fragments from his works, and articles to papers now defunct. As such, it is not only worth-buying, but we believe, it will be read with deep interest and great benefit even by those who have a curiosity of knowing the philosophy of Marxism in all its aspects—political, economic, literary, historical, and social. B. G.

## NOTICE

It is hereby notified for information to all concerned that the office of the Forward Bloc will be removed to 62, Bowbazar St. CALCUTTA (second floor) from the 1st December next. The opening ceremony of our new office will take place on the 25th. November. All communications intended for the Forward Bloc should henceforth be sent to the new address.

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# War in France is War on France

—By Gopal Haldar

A German propaganda leaflet, addressed to the French, warns the neighbours on the Rhine: "England will fight Germany to the last Frenchman." The propaganda will fail to hit its mark, especially as the Frenchmen see their Gamelain at the head of the British troops massing in their own *Maginot Line*, and, the Supreme War Council of the Allies which met last show closer merging of the two fighting forces on all fronts, military and economic, in a united effort to ward off the Prussian menace. But the propaganda is an indication of the German line of war-time diplomacy. It will aim at detaching France from Britain. Germany declares that she has no scores to settle with France, who is being made to fight Britain's battle. It may be a war *in* France, but not a war *on* France. This war tactic of the Nazis, no less than the Rhine floods and the winter difficulties of their motorized army, explains why the threatened offensive on the Western Front did not come off. Germany had all along desired to avoid a war on two fronts, East and West, which frustrated her plans in 1914. The Soviet-Nazi agreement has presented her with the desired condition. But the imminent offensive is stayed for sometime.

Germany is attempting to break the blockade rather than break through the *Maginot* barrage into France. It has been evident from the very first that Germany has treated the Western Front as comparatively secondary and aimed her blows more on Britain. There have been fewer air attacks on France, even fewer attempts on the French positions in the interior, than on Britain, and of course, the "U-Boat" campaign is a direct attempt at thwarting the British rule of the waves and the world too. The "mine warfare" is an answer to the Britisher—and to the neutrals who are forced to submit to the British dictation at the sea.

Thus, the war, called 'strangest of all wars' by Mr. Chamberlain, has in spite of everything come to be regarded as a war between Britain and Germany, between

British Imperialism and the imperialist ambition of Germany, and France has been taken to be more or less a minor partner in the game. The Germans at any rate want the world to believe that left to herself France would certainly object to be the cockpit again of the two forces, and French people would refuse to undergo again the brunt for others. But their diplomatic subservience to Britain today leaves them no option but to accept this terrible fate: they are more a victim than willing sacrifice.

French diplomacy has undoubtedly had a minor role to play in the affairs of Europe for the last few years. The post-war era was the era of French supremacy in the Continent. France was secure because of the Versailles Treaty. The foundations laid there in 1918 were considered to be very strong. France began to build up a system of alliances with the powers around the Weimar Republic. The offsprings of Versailles naturally looked on her as their protector. The rise of France eclipsed Britain on the Continent which had to fall back on the traditional British policy of isolation from the continental entanglements, and, thus retire practically from European politics. Only Mussolini stood out as a new-risen challenge to French supremacy in the Mediterranean world and southern Europe. France stamped the continental policy, and successfully withstood the onslaught of the economic depression in 1930, when even Britain had to go off the gold. She seemed to be solid like a rock on the Versailles foundations. The rise of Hitler in this world of Europe was, however, bound to close this era of Versailles. But French orthodoxy would not yield so easily. It tried to save itself by a chain of alliances which redounds to the great credit of one of her premiers, M. Laval. The Abyssinian adventure of Mussolini offered France the opportunity for patching up with Italy. The wisdom of it was undeniable in a world in which idealism was defeated as early as 1918, and, now French national interests were to suffer defeat from Nazism. The Laval-Hoare proposals were a proof of French realism and British fellowship in a dishonour. It was a betrayal no doubt of the sacred principles of the League. But who wanted loyalty to the League to stand in the way of the political interests of his states? Sir Samuel was a temporary sacrifice to British democratic outcry, only meant to be re-installed with due recognition of his service to Mr. Chamber-

lain and the ruling classes of Britain. But the Laval policy was not disowned. Abyssinia was the price for the Italian friendship which France secured and Britain retained, in spite of their playing at the Sanctions. French diplomacy pushed on in the line; Poland and Czechoslovakia were more closely tied; in a common interest in Czechoslovakia, France and Russia found themselves closer than ever since the Russian Revolution, and, the *Little Entente* was still retained under the French guardianship. M. Laval kept the Versailles facade in repairs.

The break came as France with the Nazi occupation of Rheneland looked to Britain for co-operation and united action. More and more, France began to believe in the Baldwin dictum that the British frontiers are no longer at Dover, but on the Rhine. Airways and air war were abolishing the distances and the Channel was no more. Britain was no longer the "tight little island", but Continental; and Great Britain and France bound by their strategic position, were bound to be partners in defence if any of them are attacked. This loosened the Laval links in the French chain of alliances; and, British friendship came to be more and more the sheet-anchor of French policy. Spain proved to be the test for France— independent pursuit of French continental diplomacy was replaced now by the Franco-British joint moves—or joint inaction. The Nazi menace had proved too much a strain on the French nerves in spite of their long line of alliances encircling Germany. The guarantee of the British Empire came therefore to be highly prized under the circumstances. Spain was more essential to French national existence than anything else. Still the Republic was allowed even by M. Blum to be slaughtered for the sake of the British alliance. Britain had never viewed with gladness the French influence on the Continent. One by one, these were now knocked out. Finally went the Russian relation and France declined diplomatically into a vassal of the British foreign policy.

This position of France is sought to be banked on by Germany. Hence France is painted as a victim—and not as the Enemy. Germany ironically even refers to the "democratic right of self-determination for the French people against British imperialism." But French realism knows too much of Hitler to be taken in by this ruse.

And once there is War in France it would at once prove to be War on France—and that in all its nakedness and brutality.

## Forward Bloc News.

### Karnatak Workers' Conference

A meeting of the Forward Bloc workers of Karnatak Province was held on the 19th November when Ramdurg and Mysore problems came under discussion. The possibility of calling a Provincial Political Conference was also considered and a resolution adopted in this connection.

### Muzaffarpur F. B.

A meeting of the members of the Forward Bloc, Muzaffarpur District, was held some time ago at the residence of S. J. Jaimangal Sharma, Pleader, under the Presidentship of S. J. Amaresh Dwivedi. The Provincial Organising Committee was dissolved and the District Committee was formed, which in its turn elected the Executive Committee for this term as follows:—

1. S. J. Durgadut Panday      President.
2. " Jannardan Prasad  
    Vinayak      ... Vice-President
3. " Jaimangal Sharma      "      "
4. Com. Shiva Kumar  
    Sinha      ... Gen. Secretary

### S. J. Sarat Bose's Speech at Dhubri

A strong plea for a more dynamic policy on the part of the Congress leadership was put forward by S. J. Sarat Chandra Bose, leader of the Bengal Congress Parliamentary Party, while presiding at the first conference of the Dhubri Students' Federation held at Dhubri on Sunday (November 19).

"I do not subscribe to the view," remarked S. J. Bose in course of the speech "that the country is not ready to make a fresh effort for achieving national independence. The fitness of a people for launching a struggle for freedom may be variously measured. In such a matter, all criteria cannot be satisfied by all men. Instead of expecting an inhuman standard of perfection, we should judge the people broadly by their spirit as a whole. By this standard, I consider the people of India as qualified for claiming and striving for freedom as any other people on the earth."

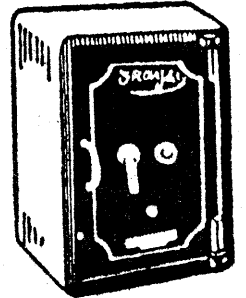
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## Letters To The Editor

### Why Indian India Prefers the Forward Bloc ?

To

*The Editor, Forward Bloc*

SIR,

The vacillating and retrogressive policy of the Congress towards the Native States has caused serious repercussions and political catastrophes in them at a stage when these States were expectantly looking for guidance and inspiration from the great and the only political organisation striving for the social, economic and political emancipation of the nation. The Indian India comprising more than six hundred Native States, both small and large, though demarcated by boundaries, is indivisible from British India and the struggle for Responsible Government in these States is only part of the great struggle going on for the liberation of whole India. Hence freedom-loving men of India for a moment cannot but think of the political uplift and freedom of these States.

There has now set in some unrest in the placid condition of the States. But the autocratic rulers thereof who are bound by treaties with the Paramount Power and who are the true agencies for perpetuating British Imperialism, are not prepared to grant full Responsible Government in their States, as that will materially weaken their autocratic rule and give power to the popular element in the administration. As a result of the agitation for Responsible Government, the States' people are now being subjected to most inhuman repressions of various kinds.

Though some sort of constitutional reforms in the name of Responsible Government have been inaugurated in some States, these hollow reforms instead of promoting autonomy in them, have only retarded their political advance and well-being. In some States like Cochin and Rajkot these reforms have caused deadlocks and retrogression in the political field. The States' rulers and their opportunist friends may laud these reforms to the sky, but an unbiased and discerning man will declare unambiguously that these reforms are not

at all a panacea for the innumerable disabilities of the States' people. But the voice of the States' people is helpless. The rulers can resort to any sort of repression to put down the agitation for Responsible Government, as there is none to question their egocentric and inhuman discretions. The British Government will only buttress up these rulers to maintain the *status quo*.

In these circumstances, the greatest representative political organisation of India like the Indian National Congress should, without hesitation, directly interfere in the affairs of the States and further the struggle for freedom. But unfortunately, the Congress has not hitherto rendered substantial help to the Native States. The decision of the Tripuri Session of the Congress leaving the States to their pitiable lot was most disappointing and detrimental to the people there. The request of the States people for Congress interference ended as a cry in the wilderness. As a result of opinions expressed from various radical Congress circles demanding Congress interference in the States, the Haripura Session passed a much more forward and worthy resolution about the States. But Congress High Command was not prepared to implement that resolution when occasion arose.

Why is it so? The answer is that the militant spirit of the Congress has undergone a "progressive deterioration" and it has of late degenerated from a fighting organisation into a machinery for running elections and taking disciplinary actions against sincere champions of the National Cause. This lull and inaction coupled with the most disastrous and retrogressive policy of the High Command, have led to the formation of the Forward Bloc. The bloc, as its name implies has a most forward and definite policy and programme. Its timely decision to directly interfere in the affairs of the States is welcomed by all freedom-loving people not only in the States themselves but in British India as well. In the matter of India's

freedom the Bloc is not prepared to strike up any base and dishonourable compromise with the British Government. There are other reasons also for States' favouring the Bloc. The Bloc champions the cause of the workers and the kisans. Its aim is the ultimate consolidation of all leftist forces and as a result it will be able to bring about a radical change in the policy and programme of the Congress. The Indian India is eagerly awaiting that inevitable and essential change by which only she will be able to weed out the feudal and autocratic order and attain complete freedom.

Cochin,

C. R. KUNHUNNI

15th November.

### Mystic Attitude in Politics

SIR,

There was a time when religion dominated politics. In Europe it was the time when the Church and the State were the parts of one organisation. But in later times politics shook off the shackles of religion and became a separate and distinct entity in human activities. It is strange that today Gandhiji declares that religion and politics are inseparable with him. But this is hardly in keeping with modern thinking. Our spiritualists who generally detest politics and regard it as a sordid game, sometimes come forward and maintain that here is our special contribution to the world. People not subscribing to this view are generally looked down upon by them. The other side too, in its turn, is persisting in its attitude. Thus bitterness grows.

Many of our nineteenth century political leaders in India were believers in vedantism or had mystic inclinations but they did not bring those things in politics. With the coming of Gandhiji mysticism along with its Ashramic paraphernalia has been introduced in political sphere. This has certainly muddled things. In the interest of political progress and welfare, a scientific attitude should be brought to bear on politics.

Malgaon,

S. S. KHANOLKAR

Bombay Presidency.

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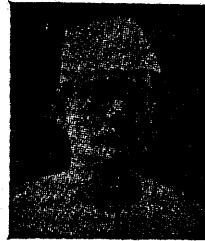
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