

FORWARD BLOC

A POLITICAL WEEKLY

Editor :—SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

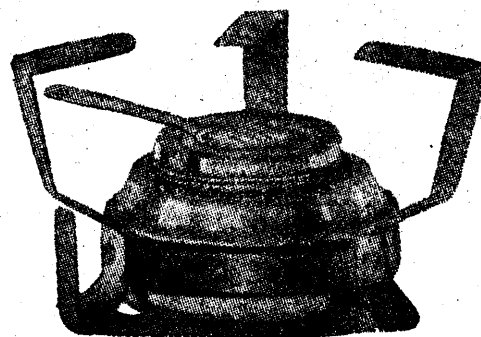
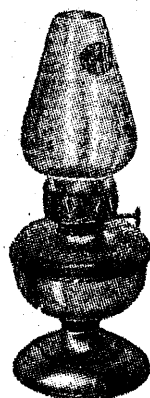
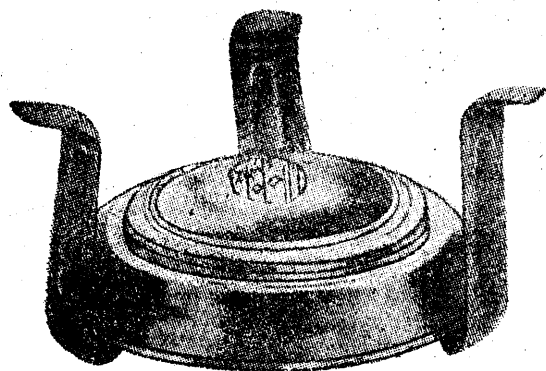
VOL I. No. 19

CALCUTTA, SATURDAY DECEMBER 16, 1939

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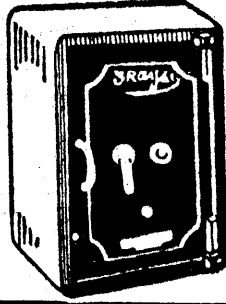
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Bombay Visit.



Babu Amrita Lall Kumar Proprietor of **BHARAT OIL MILL** who started for Bombay on his business purpose on the 27th Nov. has returned Calcutta on 12th Dec. by the Bombay Mail which reached Howrah at 10-39 A. M. (Calcutta Time). He was given a hearty welcome in the Howrah Station.

FORWARD BLOC

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16

A Reminder

It may be remembered that soon after the inception of the Forward Bloc we had declared that in addition to working out the detailed programme adopted by it, the Bloc would aim at achieving a three-fold objective in the immediate future—firstly, Left-consolidation; secondly, conversion of the Congress to its own point of view and the establishment of real unity within the Congress and thirdly, the resumption of the national struggle in the name of the Congress. No occasion has arisen for altering this immediate objective in the light of subsequent events and in particular, the developments since September last. But a slight modification has become necessary. Owing to the pressure of events the tempo of our movement has perforce been accelerated. We cannot therefore wait till we can convert the majority in the Congress to our point of view and initiate a forward move in the name of the Congress. On the one hand, speedy action has become absolutely necessary, and on the other, the task of winning over the Congress majority has been made more difficult by the persistent drive against the Left and by various constitutional devices as well as executive acts of the Rightist leaders. The endeavour to convert the Congress majority will undoubtedly continue, as also the attempt to get the Congress to launch a forward move. But what if they do not fructify at once? Time and tide wait for no man and the world today is now advancing like a roaring cataract. In the present critical situation the Forward Bloc must be prepared to launch a forward move and to act in a dynamic way in the event of the Congress Working Committee holding back or staying its hands. We cannot afford to wait on the doorstep of Time for the day when we shall secure a majority in the Congress or succeed in having a forward

move adopted by the Congress itself. It sometimes happens in history that the vanguard has to act in advance of—and perhaps in temporary isolation from—the rest. Desperate situations need desperate remedies at times.

Two arguments will be advanced against such a policy. It will be argued by doctrinaire disciplinarians that if the Left-wing or the vanguard acts in this manner it will violate discipline and destroy organisational unity. By pseudo-pragmatists it will be argued that if the vanguard acts thus, it will isolate itself and thereby reduce itself to impotency—whereas it should in reality seek to isolate the Right-wing leadership from the rank and file.

To the first argument, our reply is that unity and discipline are not ends in themselves but means to an end. They have value in so far as they strengthen us for action and struggle and they are meaningless if they reduce us to inaction. To the second argument, our reply is that while there is a possibility that the vanguard may isolate itself from the rank and file if it adopts a dynamic policy—it is equally possible that in a crisis when action is paralysed owing to the influence of political Hamlets, a bold move on the part of the Left-wing may break the stalemate, bring the eager rank and file into the vortex and thereby isolate the Right-wing leadership from its erstwhile following. It would be a mistake to suppose that the isolation of the Right-wing Leadership can come only through steady propaganda or through local struggles in different parts of the country. It would be equally wrong to suppose that we should first bring about the isolation of the Rightists before we can look up to the Left-wing to launch a forward move on a national scale. We should never forget that under certain circumstances, the isolation of the Right-wing leadership can best be brought about by the Left-wing taking a leap in the dark, as it were, and initiating a dynamic policy. This may be an adventure of some sort—but not necessarily adventurism.

But how are we to judge if an adventure of this kind will lead to

the isolation of the Right-wing or of the Left-wing? It is difficult to answer such a question. It is largely a question of political instinct or intuition.

Today it is possible for us to cogitate as to what would have happened if Lenin's adventure had failed in 1917. What would have happened, we may also ask, if the Irish adventurers of 1916 had brought about their own political death by their rash and hasty action, instead of digging the grave of the Redmondite Party?

Consider again Mahatma Gandhi's Satyagraha of 1919 which not only misfired but landed the country in the Jallianwallabag tragedy. And what about Hitler's Munich Putsch of 1923 which was ridiculed by the whole world including the Germans themselves?

There is no similarity between such variegated scenes as those of Moscow, Dublin, Delhi and Munich—but the underlying moral is the same. There is no royal road for isolating an effete leadership. More often than not, bold action on the part of the vanguard becomes indispensable for bringing about such a consummation. And without the isolation of a worn-out leadership further progress is impossible of achievement.

For the new-born Forward Bloc the ninth of July was a formidable hurdle. There were many who apprehended an early death for the Bloc when it faced this hurdle so early in its career. But we were optimistic because we could feel the public pulse. Our anticipations were justified. The Forward Bloc emerged out of the ordeal with added strength and prestige. Subsequent persecution of our members has only speeded up our progress. The Bloc has come to stay and it has already become a factor in the public life of India which cannot be ignored—not even by the "Friend of India."

We had declared at the outset that the Forward Bloc was the product of historical and dialectical necessity. So it really is. But the "Forward Bloc" has to be forward in policy and in action if it is to justify its existence in future as

well. And if the "Forward Bloc" continues to be forward, everything will be well for the country and for itself.

Sulaiman Sulaiman

Builders of a New Order

Last week two universities held their annual convocation to which two persons of different kinds of distinction were called upon to deliver addresses. The speech of Mrs. Sarojini Naidu at the Nagpur University was, quite naturally, a jewelled mosaic of poetic sentiments clothed in appropriate language. She appealed to the students to break the narrow bounds of life, to look at things from an empyrean height and seek to refashion not only their own country but the whole world in a new mould. The world today is perceptibly in the throes of a new birth; visions of the Order-to-be have been bursting on us with an overwhelming force. The sound of its impending advent has touched the core of our heart and tingled into our veins. Should the students, Mrs. Naidu has asked, turn away from those inspiring visions and waste their youth, generous impulses and idealism in the cloistered seclusion of study-rooms? What is study for if it fails to galvanise life into noble activities? So the poetess has urged the students to rescue themselves from the thralldom of selfish calculations, to expand themselves, and project their beings into greater and greater heights. For this, complete dedication to the highest ideals of life is necessary. "I am a Brahmini" Mrs. Naidu has concluded her message, "I want 'bhiksha' from you, 'bhiksha' of your lives dedicated to the service of the country and the humanity.

The poetess, true to her vocation, has given the students more a glimpse of the Heaven than of the Earth below. She has sung, so to say, a celestial song. Sir Mahammed Sulaiman, who delivered address at the Lucknow University convocation, may be said to have supplemented Mrs. Naidu and filled in the picture. The two addresses,

taken together, have set forth a complete ideal to the students. A great scientist, Sir Sulaiman has talked practical things in almost matter-of-fact accents. He has not soared up to the sky, but has kept close to the earth. The ideal that he has held up to the students is more concrete, more true to the realities of life than the ivory abstractions of the poetess. "The vital problems of life in the country," the scientist has said, "call for a national solution in which individual gains and losses alone donot signify much. The great problem of Indian poverty, for instance, cannot be solved by adding a few more wealthy people to the community. The root causes which go to encourage wasteful habits and uneconomic living have to be removed." As we have said before, both these ideals must join together to make one whole. Abstract idealism, divorced from mundane realities, may fret, foam and at last waste itself in the thin air of the sky; on the other hand, mere practicality, torn away from the bracing expansiveness of the empyrean, may degenerate into crass earthiness. Science has got to be poetised. Idealism has to be infused into the dry bones of realities to create a new vision for the youths of today to which they will strive to give a practical shape in the Order of the Morrow. Not that each of the addresses had not the implications of fullness in it. But the one shed more light, more colour on the other. So, though each important in its own way, the two together had the distinction of unique comprehensiveness of idealism.

The world, as has been said before, is now in a travail due to the surge of a new spirit. The students of our country, as elsewhere, shall have to address themselves to the inspiring task of threshing out order from the chaos. It is the peculiar luck of the youths of the present generation and they should thank their stars that they have been born at the threshold of a new era from where they may hear the rumblings of impending revolutionary changes. Let them forge ahead, strike at the untruth with all their might and help in building a fresh world on the foundations of

love, justice, freedom and equality. The Heaven from above is bending down to meet the Earth, let the youths come forward to celebrate their glorious nuptial. May they not lag behind now and then repent afterwards :

Beauty the Pilgrim
Came to my door ;
But I was busy
Counting my store ;
And when I looked up
Where day had shone,
My store was withered away
And Beauty gone.

Russia and The League

"Beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye." Had Jesus Christ been alive today he would surely have said this to the honest England, France and the Liliputian Latin American States, who, due to the unbearable sting of conscience for defending a helpless nation like Finland from the claws of a Devil, have merrily slammed the door of the Holy Temple, the League of Nations, on the face of Russia with a bang. Russia has no right to trample the stairs of this sacred temple so long he does not forsake the ignoble spirit of aggression. Russia has been condemned as a Phillistine by the chosen Disciples of Europe and America and this indictment Russia has welcomed without even faintest stir or murmur. The Tribunal of Nations has delivered its judgment and the criminal accepts that in toto.

We had had lofty ideals of the *civitas maxima* of mankind before, of the glorious Parliament of Man and Federation of the World, of morality in International Law and such other things. We had had enough of these sickening cants and sentimental oozings when the League of Nations was born amidst the applause of the victorious and the wailing of the vanquished Nations. We have watched since its birth its growth of what it is today. We need not re-iterate them in details here as they are too green in the memory of the world. What is the League of

Nations? It is mainly a facade of Internationalism which the British and French ruling classes use to hide their imperialist interests. The League, as it is, has no sovereignty of its own, save the collective sovereignty of different nations. It ought to have been a League with a Will to international peace and security composed of the individual wills of nations. But there is a wide gulf between what it ought to have been and what it is today. Today it is a playground of rampant inequity. Today it is an instrument in the hands of a few nations, interested neither in peace nor in democracy, but in the subjugation and exploitation of nations. If there was any State which tried to give it its true shape, it was Soviet Russia. Since 1934, Russia has been endeavouring to fulfil its aims of peace and democracy, but it has miserably failed. We have heard the ravings of Simon, Hoare and Halifax at Geneva. We have seen Manchuria, Abyssinia, Spain, Czecho-Slovakia, sanctimoniously sacrificed at the altar of the Big Powers at Geneva. That is too tedious a story to repeat here. What is significant is that the League has been sabotaged, mainly by Britain and France, despite the repeated attempts of the Soviet Union. Britain and France, to be frank, have so long tried to turn the League into an anti-Soviet League of Nations. So, Russia has been disillusioned about the Democracies. Once Russia joined the League out of its own will and with an aim. Today it is hounded out of the League against its will. Never the less, its aim remains unchanged. The world knows, nay, it is the verdict of history, that an ideal, if it is true and just, never dies. Halifax may whine and Kallo may whimper. The sham ideal of Democracy and Peace which has lived in dust, will, by the marching humanity be, finally, trampled into dust and die. The red horizon of a new morning woos the people of the world today and they will move on. Russia will live and lead.

CURRENT COMMENTS

An Ominous Speech

The speech which his Excellency Sir John Herbert delivered in reply to the address of welcome presented by the European Association is the first political utterance by the new Governor of Bengal. We regret he has not deviated from the beaten track. One part of his speech, however, is ominous, namely his reference to the menace of terrorism. He thanks the European Association "for your assurance of support should revolutionary activity once more become a menace to the peace of the province." His Excellency goes on to say: "It is no use being blind to the fact that there are still in India those who have not abandoned the prospect of attaining their political objectives by ultimate, if not by immediate, violence; there are also those who, if internal disturbances were to accompany a period of war-time stress, would be sorely tempted to adopt at an earlier stage those methods of violence which in more normal times, their own prudence would counsel them to postpone."

We have said that this part of his Excellency's speech is ominous. It may be a hint of a spell of repression. His Excellency has been in this province only for a few weeks, and he cannot have any personal knowledge of its politics. He should have known that the political prisoners and detenus who have only been recently released have abjured faith in methods of violence, and those of them who do any political work have deliberately accepted the method and the creed of the Indian National Congress. If passion for independence and normal Congress activity are "revolutionary activity," well, it is there. It is no use distorting facts. Articles in the *Statesman* have laid the ground for repression. And this speech before the European Association may be read as a hint and a shadow of coming "events." Already the "unremitting vigilance" of the underlings of the police has made the life of political workers a tiresome burden.

Bengal's Dietary.

In recent years the attention of the Bengali people has often been drawn to the poor dietary of the people of the province. The appeals made so far to improve the dietary have come from experts and propagandists and have not, so to say, gone home. Rabindranath has now added the weight of his name to this appeal, and it cannot go unheeded. If Bengal must live, it is not enough that she should show the value and the vitality of her intelligence and culture. Her people must possess ample physical strength and feel their life in every limb. In the course of an address at the Corporation Commercial Museum Rabindranath said that among their various national activities the improvement of their dietary should occupy a prominent place. "It would not do to forget that owing to the deficiency in the nutritive value of their daily food their vitality was being sapped. Fine milled rice, mustard oil crushed in mills, and too many spices have robbed the daily food of the Bengali people of its nutritive value. "In life's struggle," said Rabindranath, "Bengalis were being left in everything, big or small," and he attributed this calamity to the loss of strength caused by consumption of unnutritive food. The improvement of Bengal's dietary has become a national problem.

The Study of History

Dr. R. C. Mazumdar, as president of the third session of the Indian Historical Congress, has said that history, if it is to be of value to mankind, must be written and studied as a science. It must have an all-embracing view, and it must regard the unity of the world, and the unity and the continuity of world affairs. The historian is not only a story teller but a witness bound to tell the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Dr. Mazumdar has laid special emphasis on Indian history and the dangers and difficulties that beset the historian of India, and the student of Indian history. Let us quote the words of Dr. Mazumdar:

"The Provincial outlook, in historical studies as in political and

economic life is a growing menace in India to-day, and we should make an earnest effort to remove it before it is too late. In view of the risk of provincialism one might desire that history should have a nationalist outlook. But that has also its own dangers. Indian history already shows signs of being affected by the passing currents of the national movement. Some have deliberately sought to use our ancient history as an element in our national fight, and reconstructed it with a view to maintain that everything in our past was beyond cavil or criticism, and that it contained almost all the elements of progress which we notice in the modern world. The same spirit manifests itself in a slightly modified form in what is known as communalism. This seeks to interpret history in terms of the deep-rooted beliefs and sentiments of a community, and is guided more by sentimentalism and prejudices than by sober reason. The Wardha scheme demands that Indian history should be taught with a view to emphasising the superiority of non-violence in all its phases. This does not differ, in essential principles, from the direction given by certain local governments that textbooks used in schools should not mention certain facts, not because they are untrue, but because they are calculated to rouse communal passions in the impressionable hearts of boys."

The history with a bias warps truth. Dr Mazumdar says there are historians who are in a position to rise above religious and communal prejudices, and "it is for them to give the lead to others by insisting upon a study of history according to correct scientific principles."

What About India

Lord Samuel has regarded the resignation of Congress Ministries as "an error of judgment". "We were at a crisis in the civilisation of Europe and the whole world", said Lord Samuel. "There were two conflicting philosophies which were at grips and if the cause for which we stood—that of liberty and justice—was defeated, it would be calamitous for the whole of

mankind." This is admirably stated. "It was deeply to be regretted", said Lord Samuel with reference to India, "that the impression should be given to the whole world that members of the British Commonwealth were not united." Lord Samuel might well have addressed these words to the government of his country. "Liberty and Justice" are valued not only in Europe but in India as well. Why does not Britain unambiguously declare in favour of India's right to liberty and justice? Why all these vagueness and prevarications?

The Will To Win

In the course of a speech in London Lord Halifax said that the present war would not be won by armaments but the organised will-power of nations and peoples. All the same, the nations of the world were engaged in a mad, competitive race for armaments. The will to destroy is more in evidence than the will to win. Among the Allies there is certainly the will to win. In Germany, we may presume, there is also the will to win. We don't know how to measure the comparative intensity of wills.

FORWARD BLOC NEWS

FORWARD BLOC IN C. P.

Decision To Hold Conference

Mr. H. V. Kamath, Secretary, All-India Forward Bloc, addressing a public meeting at Nagpur on the 10th. instant last, criticised the inaction of the Congress Working Committee after the resignation of the Congress Ministries.

Later, Mr. Kamath had informal discussions with local Forward Bloc workers when it was decided to hold a provincial conference in C. P. (Marathi) during January next under the presidency of Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose.

TIPPERA FORWARD BLOC

Office-Bearers Elected

On the 9th inst. at a meeting of the members of the Forward Bloc, the Tippera District Sadar Sub-divisional Forward Bloc Executive Committee was formed, with Moulavi Abdul Latif in the chair. The following office-bearers were elected:—President: Moulvi Taru Mea, Vice-Chairman, Comilla Municipality; Vice-Presidents: Nibaran Chandra Ghose, M.A.B.L. and Moulavi Jamiraddin Master; Secretary: S. Hirendra Nath Nandy M.A. Assistant Secretaries: Sjs. Jyotindra Roy and Rabi Goswami.

PROTEST AGAINST PROFITEERING

Meeting under the auspices of the Forward Bloc

A largely attended public meeting under the auspices of the Calicut Town Congress Forward Bloc was held a few days ago in the Mananchira Maidan to protest against profiteering. Mr. C. R.

Kunhuni presided. The president in his speech after referring to the exploitation of capitalists and British Imperialism, stressed the need for supporting the Forward Bloc which stood for the uplift of the masses.

Cms. V. S. Keraleeyan, Vidwan V. K. Panikkar, K. N. Hussain, Imbichi Bava, N. Mohamed Koya and K. Raman spoke criticising the policy of merchants in increasing the price of food-stuffs.

Resolutions were passed criticising the profiteering of merchants in the name of war and requesting the Government authorities and others concerned to take immediate and adequate measures to stop profiteering. Another resolution entering an emphatic protest against the arrest of Mr. K. V. Nurdin of Ponnani was also passed.

BENARES FORWARD BLOC

Committee formed

The Provisional Committee of the City Forward Bloc has been replaced by a duly constituted body consisting of the following members and office-bearers.

1. Sjt. Asgar Hussain
(Member, City Congress Comtt.)
President.
2. Sjt. Ramgati Ganguly
(Member, Prov. & City Congress.)
Secretary.
3. Sjt. Gajanan Sharma
(Member, City Congress Comtt.)
4. Sjt. Bindsawari Pathak
(Member, City Congress Comtt.)
5. Sjt. Jagadish Ch. Bhatyacharya
(Member, City Congress Comtt.)
6. Sjt. Makhlanal Roy Choudhury
(Co-opted.) Publicity Off.

Swami Sahajanand Saraswati Writes on :

CANE LABOUR STRIKE AT BIHTA

We are here busy with the demon of the South Bihar Sugar mills, Bihta, which is creating havoc here. Last January saw the marvellous scene of a most successful strike in the Mills and within 48 hours, as if, mills shook to their very foundations and there was a compromise between the management represented by Chakleshwar Kumar Jain and Babu Shayannandan Singh M. L. A., president. Labour Union, Bihta Mills, which completely vindicated the position of the Union and made us victorious. But shortly after that the *millwallas* began to victimize the most militant workers in open defiance of the agreement, with the result that not less than 300 workers were either refused employment or discharged without any reason. It had been expressly mentioned in one of the clauses of the agreement that any complaint against any worker would first be brought before a tribunal consisting of the managing agent and the president of the Union.

The result is the boycott by the Kisans of the mills. They have refused cane supply. But other mills, especially Dalmia mills at Dehri-on-Sone are co-operating with this mill and wagons containing cane are supplied by them.

The Union attempted a labour strike after an ultimatum of 72 hours which expired on the evening of 3.12.39. But it could not succeed, only about 150 workers participating. The fact is that the workers are virtually leading a jail life, there being extreme victimisation and terror which no outside agency can check. In all, there are 1900 workers of whom about 1500 are under the mill directly and the rest under some sort of a contract system. For these 1300 or most of them, who are not local, the management has erected quarters within the mill gate now and we cannot approach them. There are shops inside the mill gate and workers are not allowed to come out generally. So there is almost no access to them. It is why the strike could not succeed. But on the 4th instant we began picketing of wagons and 74 picketers were arrested between 3 and 4-30 a.m. of the next day and three lorries

loaded with police have taken them to lock-up. Arrests stopped that day and police forcibly remove our men only when they go before wagons. Police force has surrounded the line and with its help new wagons are passing in. On the 6th the mill did not work as there was no cane. Hence the police help. The S. D. O. and D. S. P. had come here on the 5th and 6th.

We may not win. But we would not give in easily. Let there be at least a few hundred arrests if not more for which we are ready. The police is helping bodily in removing the wagons inside the mill gate. There waited many thousand people on the line near mill gate before the wagons late after midnight and the police did not interfere. But most of them went away disappointed, thinking there would

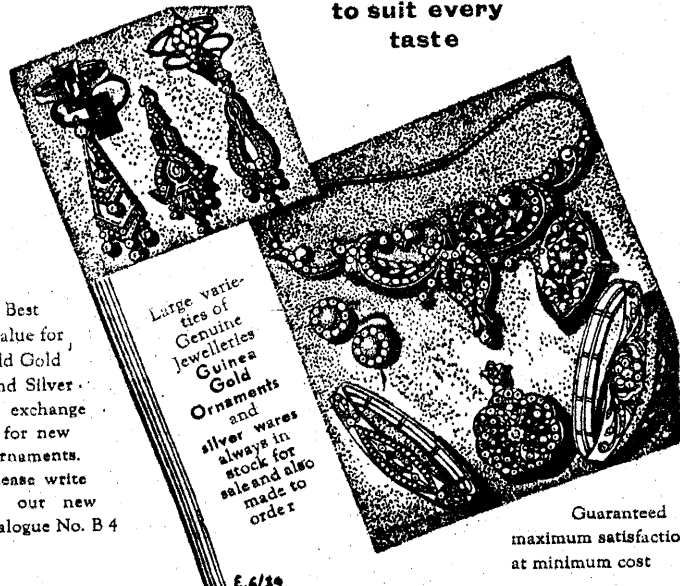
be no arrest, only a few hundred still remaining at the place. It was then that the arrests started after 3 a.m. on the morning of the 5th. The entire atmosphere has been now electrified and we hope to give a good account of ourselves. The secretary of the Union is already in lock-up and even the president, a Kisan M.L.A., may be taken in any moment. I, too, am bent upon courting arrest if and when necessary.

The strike started on the 25th November and continued till 30th, the day when ultimatum to the management was delivered by the Union. For three days we allowed the Kisans to fetch cane to mills if they so chose. Now again from the evening of the 3rd instant the strike has been continuing and local supply has totally stopped.

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IMPORTANT NOTICE

It is hereby notified for information to all concerned that the office of the Forward Bloc has been removed to 62, Bowbazar St. (second floor) CALCUTTA from the 1st December. All communications intended for the Forward Bloc should hence-forth be sent to the new address.

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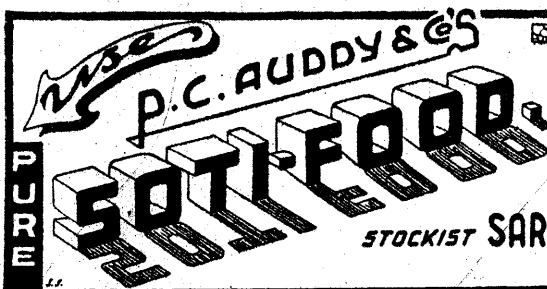
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SEARCHLIGHT ON FINLAND

By "VANGUARD"

The question of Finland has produced the most amazing reactions. Fascist Italy and Japan are condemning "wanton aggression"; the Soviet Union is denounced for having betrayed the international working class and Molotov is accused of imitating Goebbles in fomenting war with the small "democracy of Finland, the northernmost outpost of western civilisation."

There is a good deal of genuine confusion as well as deliberate misrepresentation about the real state of things in Finland. What are the actual facts behind the present conflict? For an answer to that question, one has to trace back the history of modern Finland.

Since 1809, Finland was part of the Russian Empire. In that prison of nations, Finnish economic and cultural developments were suppressed in the interest of Tsarist autocracy. But the revolutionary movement in Russia had its echoes in Finland as manifested in the "National Strike" of 1905. In the first years of the War of 1914 the Finnish nationalist movement grew in strength, just as the revolutionary movement in Russia was fast reaching its maturity.

After the overthrow of Tsardom in the February Revolution of 1917, the movement for national liberation came to the forefront, but Kerensky's Provisional Government was prepared to grant only partial autonomy through a form of Representative Government in which the Socialist and Middle-class parties were equal in strength. When the Bolsheviks came to power in the October Revolution, the Finnish Government proclaimed Finland's independence. The Bolsheviks, under the guidance of Lenin, at once recognised the right of self-determination for Finland.

But the struggle in Finland was not yet over. The reactionary upper classes, most of whom previously were—like the Princes in India to-day—alarmed at the upsurge of the mass movement and the growing struggle of the Socialists and Communists in Government. In 1918, they called in German help to crush the People's Government. Mannerheim, a

Swedish Finn, who had been a cavalry commander in the Tsarist Army, was the leader of this counter-revolution, playing the same role as Franco has done in Spain. In the ensuing White Terror, Finnish democracy was drowned in blood, 15,000 Socialists and Communists were slaughtered, and 74,000 imprisoned. The White Guard which was 100,000 strong, has been retained ever since, serving the same purpose in crushing democratic liberties as the Nazi Storm Troopers and Italian Blackshirts.

In the Diet which was formed in June 1918, the Socialists were totally excluded, many even disfranchised. The Diet was strongly pro-German and decided to set up a monarchy offering the crown to a brother-in-law of the Kaiser. He accepted, but with the collapse of Germany, the plan fizzled out, and Mannerheim established himself as the Regent. In 1919, despite relentless persecution, 80 out of 200 seats were captured by the Social Democrats. The White Government, however, remained in power, crushing every vestige of popular liberties, till 1921 when it was succeeded by an Agrarian Coalition, which was a little less reactionary. In the 1922 election and following years, the Communists gained considerable representation in Parliament. In 1925, a Social Democratic Government was formed, but the Agrarians returned to power in 1927. Though a coalition has been the feature all along since then, the Government has moved more and more to the Right, giving free hand to the Fascist organisations within the country. But the Communist Party was suppressed, though it has all along been a very underground.

Finland's external relations have always been a source of concern to the Soviet Union. During 1918-20, Finland was one of the bases of foreign intervention against the new Socialist State. When in 1918, the British and the French occupied Archangel and Murmansk, and supported a White Guard revolt, Finland's reactionary regime was a source of great help to them. Later on, Finland was an useful ally to the counter-revolutionaries, when Yudenich assailed the very gates of Petrograd

(now Leningrad). It was only the heroism of the Petrograd workers which repulsed the invaders. Molotov certainly was not conjuring up an imaginary excuse when he stated that the Finnish guns were a menace to the security of Leningrad.

By the Treaty of Dorpat in 1920, diplomatic relations were opened between Finland and the Soviet Union. But Finland has never been very friendly towards her great neighbour. Her foreign policy has generally been defined by her economic dependence on foreign powers. Britain and U.S.A. are the chief buyers of Finnish exports while, more than one-third of Finnish imports, used to come from Germany. In 1931, Finnish dependence on British market was clearly shown when she was forced off the gold standard along with Britain. It is therefore significant that the present situation in Finland has greatly unnerved the governing circles in Britain and U. S. A. Molotov also referred to this when he complained that foreign pressure was at the back of Finland's stubbornness.

With the rise of Hitler, Nazi penetration into Finland became a menace. The powerful 'Lappo' Fascist Party, which some years ago was already on the point of seizing the Government, had strong links with Germany, while the governing military oligarchy has been equally pro-German. A representative of the reactionary Finnish military organisations (the 'Volunteers') takes part in October 1933, in the secret meeting of Goering with the Swedish Nazi leaders at Castle Rockelsta. The creation of an anti-Soviet bloc consisting of Germany, Hungary, Poland and Finland was actually discussed at the Romintern meeting in East Prussia in September 1935, at which Goering and Mannerheim were present. *The Times* Berlin correspondent at that time wrote: "It seems to be feared...that not only air arrangements have been discussed, but also that naval and military ideas have been exchanged; and that Bulgaria, Finland (whose strategical position for naval operation is talked of) and even Rumania...have been drawn in.

Even Japan is suspected of fighting in these dreams of the future."

Thus Finland was one of the earliest satellites of anti-Comintern orbit. In a Nazi war against the Soviet Union, Finland would have served as a convenient base of attack. During the Anglo-Soviet negotiations, British Government refused to guarantee the independence of Finland and other Baltic States on the ground that their Governments did not want it—thus a loophole was left open by which Germany could attack the Soviet Union without Britain having to come to the aid of Russia. This, as the Polish rejection of the Soviet offer of the Red Army protection led to the breakdown of the negotiations, and, according to the Soviet analysis, completely changed the situation. Then came the Soviet-German Pact (to the complete bewilderment of London and Paris) which checked the dangers of a war between the Soviet Union and Germany and thus localised the sphere of the coming war.

The Nazi dreams of attacking the Soviet Union by way of the Baltic having vanished, why then the recent Soviet demands on Finland? Since the march of the Red Army into Eastern Poland, German strongholds in the Baltic have, one by one, been demolished; the pacts of mutual assistance with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have led to the withdrawal of the so-called German "Baltic Barons" who owned nearly the whole country keeping the native peasantry in a kind of slavery, and who saw in Hitler the salvation of the world and their landed interests. The control of strategic points in Finland would have completed the ring of defence and closed the Baltic to any aggression from the West. What the Soviet is fearing to-day is not a Nazi attack, but a general line-up of capitalist states on the morrow of a revolution in Germany. Finland's strategic importance as the only possible base for an anti-Soviet offensive thus becomes clearer. Besides, the guarantees to other Baltic States also could not be left with Finland remaining a potential danger.

The amazing obstinacy of the reactionary governing clique at Helsinki had clearly confirmed the Soviet suspicion that outside pressure is at the root of the trouble. If Finland too goes over to the side of Moscow, no attack on the Soviet

Union would be possible by way of the Baltic or the White Sea. The Statement of a Helsinki Foreign Office statesman on December 9 is significant: "The defeat of Finland would mean much more to Britain, France and the world, than the defeat of Poland."

The triumph of the Soviet in the present conflict will therefore have three important results: first, the liberation of the Finnish people from the tyranny of their government. The Mannerheims and the Kallios would have to depart in the same way as did the Baltic Barons from the neighbouring states. Secondly, the British and American interests wane on the Baltic; this would hit Britain severely as the Scandinavian countries are in the status of semi-colonies of British capital. It is significant that the expulsion of the

Soviet Union from the League is being moved by the petty South American States which also form another group of dependencies of the City of London. Thirdly, the prospect of an attack on the Soviet Union from the North would be reduced practically to nil.

It is mischievous propaganda to brand this Soviet move as "Red Imperialism." The Helsinki government by its own obstinacy has brought about this conflict. A Government which has crushed the liberties of its own people and has encouraged foreign imperialist penetration deserves no support; while the U.S.S.R., trying to liberate the Finnish people from oppression and tyranny, should command the approbation of the peoples struggling for their own freedom.



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On The Literary Front

A SURVEY OF RECENT LITERARY ACTIVITIES IN CHINA

—By CICIO MAR

In China writers have always proverbially despised one another. Perhaps this notoreity was gained in the Wei and Ch'in Dynasties; for at that time the great misery of the people and the political confusion, the strife and decadence, disillusioned the writers. They became drunkards and spent their time in empty gossip. Then it was that an author would pick out the fault of another in language or style and laugh away the whole day.

But this tradition died the death it merited in the Republic. World events and particularly China's recognition of the relationship, her existence bore to that of other nations encouraged more serious and more positive views. Then Writers became absorbed in discussions of world outlook and the defence of culture, not only in China, but throughout the world.

And with the mass meeting of writers on April 27, 1938, in the wartime capital, Hankow, the Federation of Chinese writers was formed. This organization, which includes every important writer in China and represents widely varied points of view, leads the defence of culture on the China front against the vandalism of fascist aggression.

To-day the Federation has its head quarters in Chungking. There the Standing Committee executes the business of the organisation. Throughout the cities and fronts of China its branches and members carry on the fight; by writing, publishing and teaching, *Literature and the War of Resistance* (*Kang Chen Wen* 1), the Federation's Journal, is issued in Chungking every fortnight.

A Study Sub-Committee serves as reference and guiding body for the members. It comprises three sub-sections: A Fiction Study Section, headed by the novelists Ouyang San, Hsu Yin and Lo Feng. The group selects the best stories, reportage and sketches for publication and gives due criticism and advice to younger writers. The Drama Study Section counts among its committee members Sung Chi-ti and Kuo Yi-hung

with such good playwrights in other cities as Hung Shen, Hsia Yen and Chen Pei-chen. The group aids in development of and education in the new criticism and new techniques best suited to wartime drama. The Poetry Study Section is headed by Fang Ying, Yuan Pu and Cheh Min. It is not alone concerned with the writing and publication of new poetry and criticism but encourages as well composition of new songs and the mass singing movement. Many well-known composers, such as Ho Lutting and Jen Kwang, are committee members and chiefly concerned with this latter work.

Chinese Writers is the English organ of the Federation. Therefore it is no publication of a few writers or of a clique. It will publish all the different kinds of writing being produced in China. *Chinese Writers* aims at showing international readers the growth of modern Chinese literature and with that true pictures of life in China today. At the same time the Federation hopes to take note of new developments in literature abroad, new criticism. Comments on our writing and the movement by fellow writers throughout the world is welcomed and invited.

Contrary to our expectation, this journal cannot have a large format and numerous pages. Wartime financial distress prohibits expensive publications. And too, Chinese writers are known for their poverty. Royalty fees were low before the outbreak of the war; but today they are even lower and many have to write without payment of any sort. Behind the Japanese lines, in the guerrilla bases, our writers not only produce great quantities of stories, plays, reportage and poetry for the people but at the same time they carry guns and fight. How can they pay membership fees to the Federation? Likewise our organisation has many tasks, and *Chinese Writers* is but one. Therefore we count on our readers and friends abroad for subscriptions. Five thousand paid subscriptions will guarantee our

magazine and will enable us to present more writing than this contains.

At the outset of the war, the planned wholesale destruction of China's cultural centres and the blockade of the sea coast resulting in shortage of paper, rendered publication of writing so difficult as to be almost impossible. But this has meant no decrease to production. On the contrary the spirit of resistance has stimulated writing, so that today the output is more prosperous than ever before. It is true, that the exigencies of the war make for lack of polish and technical skill; but the national struggle on the other hand is producing hundreds of young writers. Chinese cultural institutions have moved to the West and the use of local coarse papers has given new life to publications of writing.

To-day there are three leading magazines which enjoy wide circulation in China. *Literature and the War of Resistance*, is published by the Federation and printed on Szechuan hand-made yellow paper. The monthly *Literary Front* (*Wen I Chan Hsian*) is edited in Yen-an, North China and published by the Life Book Publishing Company. The majority of the younger writers contribute to its pages; and the magazine stresses the activities of cultural workers behind and near the Japanese lines in the North. The third, the fortnightly journal *On the Literary Front* (*Wen I Chen Ti*) was formerly edited in Canton but now has its offices in Kweilin. Likewise published by the Life Book Publishing Company, it is most representative of the writing done in Central and South China. In addition to these three, there are dozens of lesser literary magazines edited either by affiliates of the Federation in the various cities or by groups of writers themselves. Many newspapers, too, carry literary supplements and play an important part in the movement.

No statistics have been made of the actual quantity of literary production during the war; but some idea of the

work of the past year can be gained from an analysis of the contents of *Literature and the War of Resistance*. This one magazine has published in twelve months: 32 stories, 46 poems, 66 pieces of reportage, 13 sketches, 42 essays and 6 plays. In addition there have been 13 translations and articles on writers abroad, 39 editorials and 3 book reviews. Two special numbers commemorating the anniversaries of Gorky's and Lu Hsun's deaths have contained all special articles; while 20 miscellaneous discussions, collective writings, village stories and the like make a grand total of 322 single works. More than 200 writers have contributed these pieces.

Of late there have been two noteworthy developments. Two groups of writers have been sent by the Federation to such provinces under nominal Japanese control as Hopeh, Shantung, Shansi, Kiangsu, Kiangsi and Chekiang. The first group is headed by Professor Shelley Wang, who returned from England but a few months ago and is now serving on the editorial board of this journal. His group includes Yuan Pu, Fang Ying, Young Sauand Young so—all well-known poets; novelists Lo Feng, Yeh Yi-chun and Li Hui-ying; playwrights Sung Chi-ti and Kuo Yi-ying; women novelists Pai Lang and Chang Chow; and the young essayist and painter Chen Hsiao-pu. The second group was simultaneously sent out by the Yen'an affiliate of the Federation under the leadership of Liu Pai-yu and P'an Chi-lin, novelist and poet. This group comprises the best novelists, playwrights, poets and essayists of North China, such people as Sha Ting, Ho Chi-fang, Ai Wu and Fang Mei.

According to Professor Wang, these writers plan to collect materials for writing, bring cultural life to the fronts and the rear bases, set up new centres of literary activity in the Japanese occupied areas gain first hand knowledge of the life of the national defenders at the fronts and behind the Japanese lines, and closely observe conditions behind the Japanese fronts. In their work the writers will train themselves by collective work and disciplined life. They plan to send their reports to the Headquarters of the Federation in Chungking and *Chinese Writers* will publish the best.

The second event is the appointment of Chou Hsiu-hsia, a young novelist, to

the magistracy of En-ping county in the province of Kwangtung. He made his name as a progressive writer in the years 1930-1932; and to-day he is reported to be a very 'humane', 'honest' and 'model' official. Readers familiar with history of Chinese literature will remember the story of the great pastoral poet, Tao Yuan-ming (A. D. 327-421), who was made a magistrate of Pen Tseh county, now in the province of Kiangsi. But Tao was a poet and would not deign to bow to the government messenger who

brought him his monthly allowance of five bushels of rice. He turned the official seal over to his superior and retired to his poor village where he lived the simple life, tilling the land with the peasants. Even in the Republic, writers have followed this tradition of the 'pure' and 'lofty' profession of writing. But now Mr. Chou retains his position and is doing a good job. Indeed writers to-day have as great responsibilities for their country as do all conscientious men.

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IS THE SOVIET IMPERIALISTIC ?

—By NIHARENDU DUTT-MAZUMDAR
(General Secy., Labour Party, Bengal)

The Soviet has, of late, been the villain of the peace. The Soviet is Imperialistic, Fascistic, aggressive and so on. The invasion of Finland has unnerved the pluto-democrats on either side of the Atlantic. The anti-imperialist Mr. Chamberlain has shed tears on this latest exhibition of Russian Imperialism. I call Mr. Chamberlain anti-imperialist advisedly, because has he not lately declared in Parliament that if Imperialism means suppression of liberties in another country and the exploitation of one country by another, then that is not the characteristic of Great Britain? The colonial empire has been kept, he has told us, primarily for the benefit of the colonial people. We wonder why he did not add that the colonial empire has been acquired peacefully and without oppression. Such a moralist, Mr. Chamberlain has a right to be shocked at Russian Imperialism and Russian oppression. But strange to tell, quite a number of Nationalists and newspapers are also in the flutter and even some of our so-called leftists. Let us, therefore, examine the question of Russian Imperialism and Russian aggression.

After the Bolshevik Revolution the Soviet Government publicly recognised the right of Finland and other dependencies of the old Czarist Government to self-determination. (We are not aware that any other power emancipated its colonial empire after the war. Finland became independent. The Soviet Union, since the Revolution, has consistently pursued a policy of peace, but could not prevent the armed interventions by the powers, which hated the only Government of the toilers of the world. Internally, it became a Union of autonomous Soviet Republics and, according to the Stalin Constitution, everybody in the Union has the right to food, to education, to rest and to the defence of the country and the different Republics have the right to secede. (Can we say the same about India)? Where is Russian Imperialism? Stalin himself, who sits in the heart of Russia and is the keyman in the Soviet Union, comes from Georgia, where lan-

guage and even script are different from Russian. In the Supreme Soviet at Moscow representatives from the different autonomous Republics, which were formerly colonies of Czarist Russia, can speak in their own mother language and collectively determine the destinies of the entire Soviet Union. This would indicate to what extent the Soviet Union practises the principles of democracy and cultural autonomy and how far removed it is from Imperialistic ideas of domination. In fact, the Soviet Government encourages the development of the distinctive cultures which form a mosaic in the Soviet Union, and administration is also largely decentralised, while, of course, in political and economic organisations, the Soviet Union is one whole. It is a real democracy in the sense that it is not only a political democracy based on universal suffrage, but is also an economic democracy. In other words, being a socialist country, there is no such accumulation of wealth in private hands, which, in capitalist countries largely nullifies the benefits of political democracy. Public opinion is, to a very large extent, controlled in capitalist democracies by the wealthy classes in the community, by the press-lords and so on. The toilers become the dupes of capitalist propaganda. Political democracy becomes a shadow. The point is that there can be no real democracy unless it is based on socialist economy. The only country of the world where there is no *capitalist class* to profit by Imperialism is accused by Imperialism, by partisans of capitalism. Imperialism, as everybody knows, is a phase in the development of capitalism, when the exploitation of colonial countries becomes necessary in the interest of private capital. This capitalist class has been extinguished in the Soviet Union. To think of Imperialism without there being any basis of capitalism, is like picturing a tree without roots. But the capitalist propaganda is not concerned with its own absurdities.

In regard to foreign policy the Soviet Union has been consistently following a policy of peace. While the so-called democracies were playing with

Fascism and Nazism, the Soviet Union stood practically alone in its efforts to build up a peace front against them. The successive conquest of Manchukuo, Abyssinia, Austria, Spain and Sudetaland have revealed the repeated valiant, but growing attempts of the Soviet Union to quarantine Fascism. The Soviet Union is generally interested in peace. It believed that if world peace could be maintained for even a decade or so, then Russian industrial strength would reach enormous height because of the unlimited scope offered by the socialist system of production, as opposed to the capitalist system, under which production is controlled and conditioned by the interest of the private profiteer, irrespective of the needs of the community. The spreading of world socialism, which alone can usher in real democracy, would after that be a simpler matter. But this was not to be. The last straw on the camel's back was Poland, which refused to permit the Red Army to enter Poland even to aid her. When it is considered that the best interests of existing imperialism are served by getting a rival imperialism and Bolshevism to fight and smash each other, the curious policy of certain Governments professing love for peace, freedom and democracy becomes clear as noonday. But the Soviet Government is nothing if not dialectical and its next move in the given situation resulted in the non-aggression pact with Germany. This turned the table on international anti-socialist conspirators. They were dismayed when they found that in pursuing their diabolical policy against the Soviet, they had over-reached themselves. But then it was too late. The Soviet, of course, has not been pardoned for not obliging those, whose only religion in life was and is the annihilation of the Soviet, the only home of Socialism in the world.

The Soviet Union has been accused of aggression against Poland and Finland. The story about Poland is well-known. The net result of that aggression was the inauguration of Socialism in Eastern Poland, whereby millions who have been under a feudalistic-cum-capitalistic econo-

my were brought under the blessings of the socialist economy. It is the first socialist revolution in the world without bloodshed. If this constitutes aggression, then we donot know what emancipation is.

Let us take the Finnish issue. Finland, during recent years, has not been very friendly with the Soviet, although she was given independence by the Soviet. She has been suspected in Russia to be a willing tool of powers hostile to the Soviet. Even last year when Finland wanted to fortify Aaland Islands it was feared that Finland was willing to act as a spring-board for an attack on the Soviet by other powers. This suspicion was not allayed by the behaviour of the Finnish Government or of the class which controls the Government. The economic ties of Finland with capitalist democracies like British and America were greater than her ties with the Proletarian democracy of the Soviet Union, which is her neighbour. British capital is sunk in Finnish nickel, mines, as *Reuter* reports. The interest of Britain, America and other capitalist countries in the Finnish question is understandable. Leningrad has a population equal to that of the whole of Finland. Knowing the consistent and accumulated hostilities of certain powers to the Soviet Union, it would be strange if the Soviet had not made every effort to safeguard Leningrad from attack by foreign powers, using Finnish bases. If the Finnish Government were mindful of the lives and interests of their toilers, it is not clear why they should not resign and make way for the people's Government, which represents the interests of the masses and wants to establish both political and economic democracy. It is significant that according to *Reuter* several big Finnish landowners placed their whole estates at the disposal of the Finnish Government, when the dispute was getting acute. The truth of the matter is that in many countries at the present moment the real struggle is between the exploiting and exploited classes.

Lord Halifax has suddenly remembered that the failure of the Anglo-Soviet talks was due to the British refusal to barter away the independence of the Baltic states. If the contemporary reports in the British press are read, it will be seen that it was precisely the Soviet which wanted that the integrity of Baltic states should

be guaranteed jointly by Britain and the Soviet in case of *either direct or indirect aggressions*. The British Government agreed on the question of direct aggression but dis-agreement ensued on the question of indirect aggression. The Soviet suspected that Britain wanted to keep a loopwhole for escaping from obligations. It will be seen whether the Soviet was or was not genuinely interested in the integrity of the Baltic states. The talk failed. But it is obvious that the Soviet cannot agree to be itself a victim, and if it cannot find others to jointly maintain peace, it has to safeguard its own interests single-handed. It is natural that this should displease powers, which are hostile to Soviet.

In assessing the morality of a war or an aggression, it is necessary to know the motive of it. We condemn Hitler's attack on other countries because it meant to enslave those countries and to convert them into colonies for economic exploitation. Colonial expansion by certain countries in the past, which has been based on aggression, has provided the model for Hitlerian aggression. One cannot blame the one without blaming the other. But there can be such a thing as a war of liberation, where an attack on a Government, which is based on economic injustice, is designed to abolish economic oppression and to emancipate the people in the real sense of the term. Lincoln's efforts to emancipate the Negroes involved the United States in war but Lincoln has not therefore been condemned. It should be remembered that the Soviet Union stands for the economic emancipation of Man, without which political democracy may be rendered a mockery and a trap. Its Red Army, not so long ago, had its oath of allegiance to the International toiling masses. It has never accepted the Mahatmic brand of non-violence, leading in the long run to untruth, quibble, deception and compromise with Imperialism. It has to protect the interest of the only Government of the toiling masses of the world with armed might, if necessary. Its downfall will be a disaster for the oppressed humanity and retard the light of approaching dawn for a long time to come.

Everybody who desires both political and economic emancipation of mankind should bear the following in mind :—

1. The interests of the Soviet Union are inseparable from and coincident with the interest of the international toiling masses and all those who wish to live by honest manual or intellectual labour.
2. The interest of the toiling masses in different countries cannot be opposed to one another. In so far as the working class of one country is hurled against the working class of another country, it is done not in the interest of the toilers, however high-sounding the slogan may be.
3. None but the oppressors and exploiters need be afraid of the growing might of the Soviet Union.
4. The toiling masses and all those who value political, economic and intellectual emancipation, must have a united front with the Soviet Union under all circumstances.

If the above criteria are applied, much haziness will disappear. Sometime after the outbreak of the war, there was a considerable amount of confusion even among some communists abroad owing to the non-application of these criteria. Many, however have now found their bearings and the arrow mark of holy phrases can now hardly conceal the stigma of decaying capitalism from the observant sections of mankind. India can fail to understand the significance of the processions of international events only at her own peril. The volume of anti-Soviet propaganda is bound to increase in geometrical progression, and news agencies and newspapers will contribute to a rising tide of anti-Soviet lies, and India must be on her guard. However loud and great the travail, there is no doubt that in the end truth and justice will prevail

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—By Mrs. TATIANA SAHA

Just before the Revolution medical help to the population in Russia was organised in the same way as in all other capitalist countries. There were very few government hospitals, many private hospitals and doctors. But practically, the most poor and the largest part of the population remained always without any medical help. The most pitiable and most disastrous thing in this matter was the conditions of the countryside where heavy labour and epidemics were taking hundreds and hundreds victims yearly. The conditions were just parallel to those in India to-day.

At present, in Soviet Russia, the whole medical system is totally re-organised and changed. It comes to be headed by the Peoples' Commissariat of Health (*Narkenzdrav*) and is solely under the government authority. All workers of plants, factories, collective and state farms and other government institutions are held under the control of *Narkenzdrav*, which is specially taking care so that workers should work only their proper time (working time is 7 hours). For all those who like to work more in order to get higher remuneration—as for extra hours of work, government pays double salary. *Narkenzdrav* has put some limitations in this matter, so that overwork may not act in an unfavourable way upon the health of workers.

Narkenzdrav is inspecting so that workers should fulfil their duties in favourable sanitary conditions as for example they should get enough light, sufficient space, cleanliness, fresh air etc., should work in well-ventilated rooms. If work is done in poisonous atmosphere—as it becomes often in chemical department and laboratories,—workers should get special diet during their break-fast.

Children under 18, cannot be admitted into any work in any collective farm or any factory and if *Narkenzdrav* discovers any youngster at any heavy duty, guilty persons in this matter are severely punished with imprisonment or with heavy fine.

Pregnant women workers in departments of Industry, are temporarily released from their duties two months before and two months after deliveries, with full

remunerations in the form of their average salaries for all this time.

A large net of the free government hospitals and nurseries is being established in all towns and rural districts, and the number of those hospitals and nurseries is progressively increasing. Thus in 1929, the number of the hospital-beds in the U.S.S.R. amounted to 246,100, while in 1932, towards the end of the first Five-year period, it amounted already to 405,800 beds. In the cities the number of the hospital-beds increased by 58 p.c. and in the country side by 90 p.c. As regards the nurseries, in 1928 there were 43,600 places in nurseries, in towns and in 1932 the number was 286,400, that is 65 times as many. In the agricultural districts the figures are respectively 4,700 and 435,500—92 times as many.

Big cities are divided into several regions and every region has its own hospital and nursery. All government workers as well as their families get free medical help at any time. If any worker gets ill and cannot join his duty, he is bound to inform the regional government hospital by phone or through somebody and on that very day a free government doctor will come to his house, will render him medical help necessary and will provide him with a special certificate of his illness. A sick person taken under the care of any government hospital will be visited by a doctor on every third day in case of ordinary illness and every day and even twice daily in case of serious danger, till his perfect recovery. The day when he is again to join his work will be fixed by the doctor. Coming to his job, the worker is to submit to the administration, certificate of illness signed by the government doctor and indicating the period of his illness and then he will get 75 p.c. of his salary for this period, if he is an unskilled worker and full salary if he is a skilled labourer, engineer or professor. Non-serving family members will be provided with medical help in the same manner, but only the official certificates of illness will not be given to them as they have no need of it.

If illness of any worker continues for more than two months, he will be considered as Temporary Invalid and after

getting his two months' salary, will get government pension for all the rest of the time upto his full recovery, when he will be able to join his work again. Government pension, however, will be considerably less than usual salary.

In any serious case, as epidemic diseases or surgical emergencies, the person concerned will be taken under special government care to a government hospital, where he will remain until his illness will be satisfactorily cured. Medical help, bedding with fresh linen, daily meal, all other services, and if necessary any kind of complicated operation, will be at the disposal of the patient without any charge. Whatever patient be taken to the government hospitals and the clinics, he or she shall have no right to refuse the practising medical students to analyse and study his or her illness. He or she may be several times carried to the Demonstrator's Hall, where the students in groups will hear the lectures of their professors about the process of his or her illness with practical demonstrations of the body. In some cases even the operations may be done by the practising students under the directions and explanations of a professor.

Children have their special hospitals, where everything is arranged for their enjoyment during the time they stay in the hospital for the necessary treatment.

Women have gynecological clinics and maternity houses. Special consulting hospitals are established in every region for pregnant women, where they are provided with necessary medical advice and treatment and where their health during the period of their pregnancy is taken under the special care of doctors. In any serious case, any woman, once being registered at the Consultation Hall, may demand the help of any reputed specialist. All deliveries generally, take place in maternity houses, in the well-arranged sanitary conditions and under medical assistance. Health of mother and child for the necessary period will be under medical survey. Maternity houses as well as other government medical institutions are available free of charges.

In the same way free medical help is given to all over the distant rural

districts. In order that many doctors and even good specialists may find it possible to join their duties in the remote villages, government grants to these doctors very handsome privileges such as high salaries, allowances for the preliminary equipment of their lodgings, free travelling expenses for them and for their family members, etc.

All these arrangements for medical help to the population certainly required and do always require huge expenditures. It will be enough to say, for example that in 1928 expenditures for health protection in the U. S. S. R. by all sources (including capital investments) amounted to nearly 626 million Rubles and already in 1932 rose to 20,775 million Rubles. But Soviet Government have solved the problem of financing all the expenditures more or less easily. As all men and a considerable number of women are government employees, Russian Government is obliging every one of the government employees to pay a regular monthly tax out of his or her salary for the purposes of the *Narkenzdrav*. This tax, however, is very small and being included within the general tax for cultural purposes, does not exceed from 5 to 10%. In this way government gets sufficient revenue. If extra expenses for *Narkenzdrav* are needed they are recovered from the Government Fund.

For immediate help in cases of accidents viz., tram or automobile accidents, poisoning, any serious injury and the like, there are special arrangements in so-called hospitals of immediate help. Five minutes after the phone-call, a car from such hospitals will stand at the door of your house or at any other place as required.

It is also necessary to note that besides large number of regional hospitals serving patients coming in and at their houses, there is a considerable development of the network of medical stations and so-called ambulatories, for the service of the workers of large plants and factories at the places of work. As regards the data we can indicate that in 1928 there were 1,580 such stations and in 1932 their number increased to 5,874. The functions of these stations include immediate help to the workers in any urgent case (viz. sudden and severe pain), any injury during the work, vaccinations at the time of epidemics, dental treatment, etc.

Besides free medical clinics, there are a number of paying government hospitals, so-called poly-clinics, where no practising students are allowed but well-known doctors and professors. Charges from the patients are taken from their salaries according to the grade of salaries—it being less in case of a lesser salary. Free government hospitals serve only the persons living within the region in which it is situated, but paying poly-clinics can be entered by all, irrespective of the place of living and of working.

All doctors joining government jobs are given the right to practise privately at their homes in hours excluding those of their respective services. Still I should state that there are only a few private professors or doctors. A majority of them are too busy in extra work in their clinics (govt. of course), as well as in different investigation. Moreover High and Middle medical personnel are too well provided by the government and no body desires to call a private doctor while free government doctors are easily available.

For medical investigations there exist many research institutions belonging to the system of *Narkenzdrav* that are given much care and good financial attention by the government. Medical students are allowed to make their investigations in the Poly-clinics. Medical research institutions can be entered only by the well-known professors of exceptionally talented young doctors.

Such an arrangement of medical help to the population and of health protection in general is easily the most efficient in the matter of administering medical benefit to all citizens both in the cities and in the countryside. This arrangement should be considered as one of the biggest achievements of Soviet Russia;

The Soviet government provides the people not only with proper medical help but it has initiated a system of leave comparable in beneficial value with the medical system. By the by, every worker, according to the new Russian Law, has one month's leave during a year of work. Research workers, teachers, medical practitioners, all classes of intellectual labourers, high rank graduates (M. Sc., D. Sc.) etc. have their period of annual recess extending over 2 to 3 months. A net work of sanatoriums and health-resorts have been created by the Soviet Government in palatial buildings belonging before Revolution to the princes and landlords. It is useless to say that the majority of these palaces was situated in the most beautiful and healthy corners of Russia. Such, for example, is Workers' Sanatorium at Yalta (Crimea), formerly palace of the Count Verenzov-Dashkev. Worker's and Peasants' House of Rest at Abbass Tuman (Caucasus Hills) was formerly the territory of the Earlom of the Duke Michael, Tzar's noble brother. Others may also be mentioned. These sanatoriums are being constantly increased and many new palatial buildings are being

raised. Only in the course of the Five-Year plan period the number of health-resorts increased by 100%. In 1928 five hundred and eleven thousand persons availed themselves of the rest homes and sanatoriums at the expense of the Social Insurance Fund, while in 1932 the number exceeded one million persons.

As a result of this great care the Russian Government is continually progressing along the path of social welfare.

GROWTH OF THE POPULATION (in million of persons).

1926	1928	1932	Increase from 1926 to 1932. (in number)	Increase from 1926 to 1932. (in percentage)
147	154.2	165.7	18.7	12.7

The total increase in the population of U. S. S. R. exceeds the combined population of Australia, Belgium and Switzerland. The 160 millions of the U. S. S. R. population shows the same annual increase as the 360 millions of population of the countries of European Continent.

The mortality among the population of U.S.S.R. fell 31.5 p.c. as compared with the year 1913.

In Tzarist Russia, when the largest portion of the population was exploited by a small group of capitalists and lived in the most insanitary conditions, the average life of a man according to the data of 1907-10, was only 31.9 years. In the Soviet Union the average rose to 41.4 years as early as 1926-27. The average life of a woman was 33.9 years in 1907-80 and 46.9 years in 1926-27.

Soviet medicine has played an important role in bringing up a new, strong healthy and energetic young Russian generation. Soviet medicine as a Science is occupying one of the first (if not the first) places in the World. Specially in the departments of ordinary and plastic surgery Russian medicine has made an achievement, which may seem to be miraculous to other countries.

Russia shows how much generally a country can be benefited, if all the capital and the resource of the States are in the hands of the Government or at least under the control of the Government. Development of Soviet Russia can not be thought as a miracle, but is naturally as a result of full reconstruction of society and of the whole basis of life and work.

We heartily desire that our mother-country India will take from Soviet Russia all that may be adjusted and will create such conditions when our poor and unhappy people can be thoroughly re-educated and provided with the amenities of life conducing to general culture.

BOOK REVIEWS

SOVIET POLICY ANALYSED

Light on Moscow By Dr. D. N. Pritt, K. C., M. P. Published as a "Penguin Special" by Penguin Books Ltd.

This is one of the most popular books recently published in England. Two and a half million copies of the book were sold within one week of its publication date. The author of the book, Dr. Pritt, is a Labour M. P. and also Chairman of the Society for Cultural Relations with the U. S. S. R. In this book the writer has endeavoured to explain the position and policy of the U. S. S. R. and the attitude of the British Government towards that state. Moscow being the centre of gravity of world politics today, a study of its policy and the policy of other nations in relation to it, would indeed be much helpful in the evaluation of the diplomatic manoeuvres now prevalent.

In the introductory chapter the writer deals with the earlier relations of Italy and Germany with Russia and says that these states were sympathetic, and not hostile, in their foreign and business relations to the Soviet Union. "On balance," says the author, "both before and after the advent of Hitler, Germany is entitled to more good marks for friendly conduct towards the U. S. S. R. than we are; and it is not even more than partly true to say that she should also be given more bad marks for unfriendly conduct." But the attitude of the Soviet Union both to the Democracies and the Fascist States was completely different. It kept its door open for all nations, Fascists or Democracies, to enter into commercial agreements and non-aggression pacts with it. It was even too much optimistic about the sincerity of the Democracies in their attachment to Peace and opposition to Fascism and it joined the League of Nations in 1934 to re-establish collective security and to rally the anti-Fascist States in a United Front against Fascism in Europe. But Russia, as subsequent events amply proved, was completely disillusioned by the significant anti-Soviet gestures of Great Britain and found that, far from crying halt to Fascism, Britain was con-

spiring to build up an anti-Soviet Front in Europe and to drag Russia into the War, mainly by embittering German-Soviet relations. So, Russia had to take certain practical steps. It switched off the Five-year plan and directed its attention to the preparations of War. It could not sleep in peace when the capitalist butchers were sharpening their knives to murder it from behind. When the Anglo-Soviet negotiations broke down due to the doggedness of Britain and the stupidity of Poland, Russia could not but enter into a non-aggression pact with Germany as the last step from its side for not being embroiled in war, which also, it must be remembered, was never something unexpected, but a natural outcome of the Rapallo Treaty. Hard on the heels of this Pact the war was upon us and today Anglo-French imperialism stands on the witness-box awaiting the final verdict of the world public opinion. Like a criminal sentenced to death British Imperialism is nervously stammering today the worn-out slogans of "Democracy" and "Peace." British people are terrorised, bluffed and hoaxed and are again being seduced with that emotional penumbra of patriotism, to sacrifice their lives for extending the lease of life of their "dear old masters".

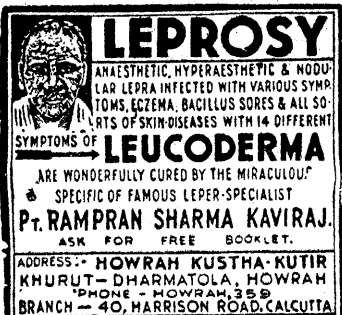
Dr. Pritt has written this book inspired by the motive of fighting out the vicious propaganda of the British National Government and he has enough materials and official documents at his disposal, some of which have been included in the book, to show that the cause of the break down of the Anglo-Soviet negotiations is the superciliousness of Britain, that the National Government has declared this War not with the consent of the people of Britain, that British Government is not fighting for Peace or Democracy, that the British public are constantly being dragooned in support of the War and that the Soviet Union has consistently fought for peace and democracy. We believe that this book will not only help in the disillusionment of the British people, but will help the people of India too to study Britain and Russia side by side.

B. G.

BENGALI

Srestha Galpa—Edited by Ramendu Gangopadhaya. Published by Bharati Bhaban, 11 College Square, Calcutta. Price Re. 1-8-0.

The book is a collection of best short stories in Bengali. Within the short compass of a handy book it is not possible to include the best writings of all writers. But the editor has shown his power of literary judgment in the selection of the stories and the writers also. There are stories of Kedar Bandopadhay, 'Parashuram', 'Banaful', Manoj Basu, Swarna-Kamal Bhattacharya and others. The stories are absorbingly interesting and reflect the latest developments in the technique and theme. The publication of the book, we can say, is in keeping with the reputation of *Bharati Bhawan* for publishing books of high literary value. The editor of the book should be congratulated for his fair judgment and genuine literary taste. We believe any man having interest in literature will not be able to resist his temptation of possessing a copy of it.



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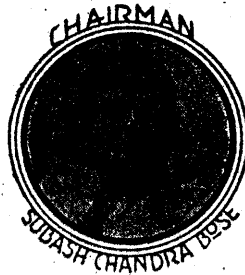
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Letter To The Editor

The Cult of Charkha and Independence

To

The Editor, Forward Bloc

SIR,

It is the burning problem of the day, whether the Gandhian cult of Charkha (spinning wheel) can or cannot herald India's freedom. It is to be decided, whether it can be effective as a weapon for securing the economic and political independence of India. No amount of irrelevant pressure should deter one from making a sane and bold examination of the issues involved. The future of the Nation is at stake.

Funny arguments are advanced by the Gandhians or the acceptance of the cult of Charkha. One such argument is that Gandhiji is the General of the Congress Army and all his orders must be carried out. The advocates of Charkha giving this argument forget the difference between an "Order" and an "Ideology." Even if Gandhiji is democratically elected the General of the Congress Army, the ideas of civil liberties do not demand that the members of the Army should necessarily have the same ideology as the General. Democracy does not mean killing democracy. An Army is bound to accept the orders of the General, but it is an absurd requirement that the religion or ideology of the General and the soldiers constituting the Army should also be the same. French people fight for their Nation without surrendering their ideologies and their General does not demand of them political suicide. An English General leads his followers without caring for the ideological convictions of Englishmen. It is sufficient, if one is patriotic enough to fight for his Father or Motherland in a disciplined way. What his beliefs are regarding the economic structure of the society is no concern of his General.

There is another aspect of this question. Respect for the principles of democracy demand that a General should possess military powers only. It is wrong to think even of investing him with authority to control the democratic decisions on the political and economic issues.

In very few countries do the Generals possess all kinds of powers. And in the countries in which they do possess, Fascism has come to stay. If such a thing is acted upon in India, it will virtually amount to inviting Fascism in our country.

The economic aspect of the problem be now considered. Emphasis is laid on the spinning wheel as a weapon of Rural Reconstruction. The writer asserts that it has singularly failed in this sphere of life as in other spheres. The net result of the last two decades, labour is the springing up of the branches of the *Spinners' Association* (Charkha Sangha) in some prominent towns with an injunction restraining the people from patronising Khadi except that sold by the said Association. The average villager interested in Khadi production is merely a yarn producer, or in some cases, a producer of Khadi for the All India Spinners' Association. The Rural reconstruction remains where it was—practically at a standstill.

Due to the advent of the modern machinery, the Spinning Wheel has not the ghost of a chance of success. The peasants and workers, who constitute an over-whelming majority of India's population, cannot afford the luxury of paying for the hand-spun and hand-woven clothes. By its adoption, India shall remain dependent on other countries for even the bare necessities of life. The economic backwardness shall not be removed. If the patronage that has been accorded to the Spinning Wheel since 1920 and been given to the Indian Mill Industries, the programme of the boycott of the foreign cloth would have been much more successful. If the attention bestowed on it by the Gandhians had been bestowed on the proper organisation and strengthening of the Indian working class movement, the goal of Independence would have been much nearer today.

It is no use placing too much emphasis on the cult of Charkha. It can be of no assistance to the Indian Freedom Movement. It may be of some subsidiary help to some people. Even this aspect is not very encouraging. The energy involved in the process of spinning by hand is so

great that much work and little profit is bound to be the deplorable consequence.

It is suggested that the Spinning Wheel makes a man disciplined. The writer wishes to know the type of work which does not add to one's sense of discipline, if done regularly and honestly. There is no special significance attached to it. It's spinners are really at a disadvantage so far as the opportunities to be disciplined and the problems affecting the organisation of labour are concerned. Consciously or unconsciously, he works not for the advancement of civilization, but to take back humanity to the primitive times. He is an idealist, whose ideology seems to attach too much importance to his clothings. He spends time and energy in spinning at the cost of thousands of things, which are essential for the existence and progress of the human race. He lowers the standard of living. He works for the capitalists' theory of the *status quo* and crushes the spirit of the Labour and Kisans. He introduces slave mentality in them. He sows his lonely furrow and the sense of discipline in him cannot be so great as that in a man who works in combination with his fellow-workers in an industry. The latter comes into an intimate touch with men and their affairs making it possible to form strong Trade Unions. All this results in disciplining the working class; not only for its own benefits but also for the benefit of humanity. It enables the workers to make their contribution towards the emergence of a new order.

In answer to the question how Charkha would lead to Independence, a brilliant exponent of Gandhism declared the other day that no body could gauge at the very outset the efficacy of a weapon recommended by Gandhiji, and all that the people had to do was to have implicit confidence in his leadership. Firstly, it is wrong to ask people to accept a proposition without assigning cogent reasons in support of it. It is authoritarianism run mad. Secondly, there is no question of imagining things in support of Charkha at the very outset. The efficacy of the spinning wheel was tested in the economic and the political laboratory of the country. The experiment proved a miserable failure. It is, therefore, an irony of fate, that the Gandhians are insisting on the acceptance of the creed of Charkha. They want the nation to repeat the folly of the last two decades.

Never was a more irrelevant issue introduced into public life than when the Gandhites declared that the Spinning Wheel would lead automatically to the emergence of situations essential for the attainment of Independence of India. The most unfortunate result is that the real issues confronting the nation have been side-tracked. The sooner all talks regarding the importance of Charkha in the struggle for freedom ceases, the better it is for the economic and political independence of this great land.

Dehra Dun
10-12-39.

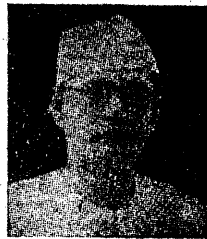
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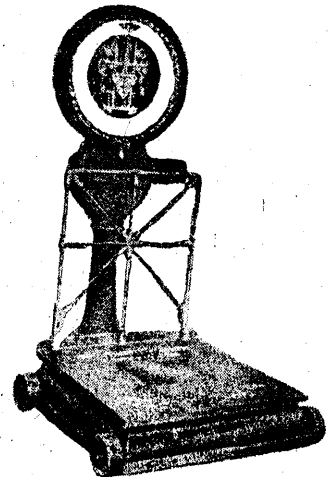
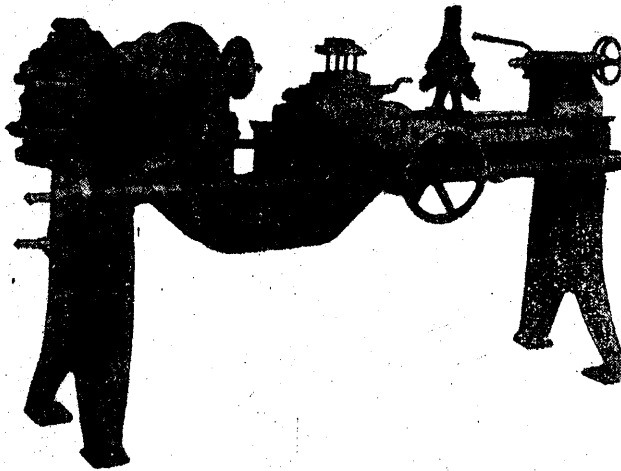
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