

Our Problem

# FORWARD BLOC

A POLITICAL WEEKLY

Editor :—SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

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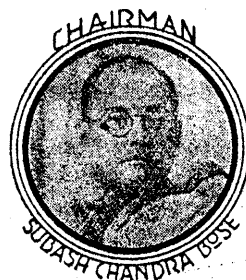
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**FORWARD BLOC**


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SATURDAY, JANUARY 20

*Our Problem*

The All India Conference of the Forward Bloc was held in Bombay on the 22nd. June, 1939 and the Constitution and Programme of the Bloc were adopted there. We have, therefore, had a little more than six months to organise ourselves throughout the country. What have we been able to achieve within this period?

At the outset, it should be noted that from July last we have been the target of a vehement drive against us from the Congress Working Committee. They have not given us any breathing time and during the last six or seven months, we have been actually fighting on a double front.

There are occasions when it is comparatively easier to fight foreign Imperialism than Indian Reaction. This is perhaps one of such occasions.

Nevertheless, we can legitimately claim that today "Forward Bloc Zindabad" (Long live Forward Bloc) has become a mass-slogan. Its message has reached the remotest villages and has roused the sympathy and support of the masses everywhere. The Forward Bloc has, moreover, an All India organisation at its back today.

The mass-sympathy that the Forward Bloc has met with from the very start has been quite phenomenal and has surpassed our fondest expectations. One wonders how this has been possible, especially when one remembers that there

has been persistent and widespread opposition from interested quarters. The only explanations available is that the masses have instinctively felt that the Forward Bloc stands for something bold and dynamic—something forward and progressive.

The Bloc has stopped the drift towards constitutionalism and compromise in the Congress and has thereby stemmed the rot that had set in. The Congress is consequently much stronger today than it would have been without the Forward Bloc. What is more, today it is possible for the Forward Bloc to stand up before the British Government and the Congress High Command and tell them that in the last resort, the Forward Bloc is prepared to go ahead and launch a struggle, should the older leaders fail us in this crisis.

But the real problem that faces us is an organisational one. Our organisational development has not been able to keep pace with our growing popularity.

Perfecting an organisation and building up a new cadre need time and money—perhaps time more than money. We have had very little time at our disposal and the international crisis overtook us very early in our career. But we cannot put off facing the crisis boldly, till we have perfected our organisation. The crisis has to be met with such resources as we now possess. National Struggle and organisational development must proceed hand in hand. There is no other option before us.

Meanwhile let us always remember that our chief problem today is an organisational one. We have to face the coming struggle boldly and at the same time go on with our task of organisational develop-

ment as best as we can. Perhaps, with good luck, we shall emerge out of the struggle with a perfected organisation.

*Sukhan Chandabera*

**INDEPENDENCE DAY**

The 26th January is again almost upon us. Once more Congressmen all over the country will be called upon to renew their vow of attaining Purna Swaraj. Independence, that was once the dream of a handful of idealists, was accepted by the Congress as its goal ten years ago. Since then it has toiled, suffered and sacrificed a tremendous lot for reaching its destination. But the goal is not yet. Hurdles have yet to be crossed and march continued. Let there be no stepping back, no wavering, no falling on the wayside. Let us once more resolve, and resolve grimly, that we will not stop till we burst into the glory of the Promised Land as quickly as possible.

The Working Committee is now in session at Wardha. The Viceroy's Bombay speech has given rise to an intriguing situation which it shall have to deal with. Disquieting rumours are in the air. It is said that the Congress is bent on bargaining a settlement with the Government. We are further told that an influx of prominent Congress leaders to Delhi is shortly to begin. Lord Linlithgow's speech has been put to a searching scrutiny in the light of the National Demand and found wanting. We cannot make out how it can be any basis for settlement. Not that we don't want it and thus avoid a

racking conflict. But any squaring up of accounts with the Government must presuppose the unqualified and straight recognition of India's right of self-determination. The foreign power must stand off the scene. It must neither dictate nor manoeuvre things in its own interest. In the matter of framing the Constitution there must be no temporising or make-believe. A hodge-podge body, composed of various conflicting interests, must not be entrusted with this task. The teeming millions of the country, the destitute and trodden masses of this great land, must have the final say in the matter. No quibbling, no casuistry must be allowed to creep in. The Working Committee should make the position of the Congress absolutely clear. Will a settlement be possible on this basis? It is for the British statesmanship to answer. The Government has to make the first move and settle things.

If the Demand in its entirety is not acceded to, the Congress must decide on a struggle. There is no other conceivable alternative. It has been said that there are tides in the affairs of a nation; yea, there are golden moments in its life too. One such moment, a unique opportunity, has now arrived for us. We must not let it slip by and thus allow the nation to lapse again into the backwaters. Let no metaphysical cant, no fanciful obstacles deter us. Let us unite, forge ahead and achieve our destiny. We have to remember, realise and take to heart today the slightly altered adage of Edmund Burke that little minds and great purposes go ill together. It hath a lesson of supreme value for us at present. We must purify ourselves and be steeled anew with unbreakable determination. That

is the message of the 26th January which we shall be celebrating within a few days. May we prove fully worthy of this inspiring message.

### As an Englishman Sees it

This is the title of a dissertation that Mr. F. E. James, M.L.A. (Central), a stalwart of the European Association, delivered recently at Madras on the present War and India. The speech is not much different from the Viceroy's recent peroration at Bombay and if we have taken it up for comments it is only to show how an influential Englishman, usually residing in this country and unencumbered by any exalted office, views the situation that faces both Britain and India today. For all practical purposes, as has been mentioned before, Mr. James's voice is indistinguishable from that of Lord Linlithgow and its explanation is not difficult to make out. However much Englishmen may boast of their individuality, they are ever ready to cast off that inconvenient thing when imperial issues are their concern. Then they speak with one voice—the voice of the imperialist Albion. It is commonly said that by scratching a Russian you will discover a Tartar; similarly, by scratching an Englishman you will discover a *Bania*. Britishers as a race, according to the estimate of all impartial observers, are always cautious, calculating and bargaining. They themselves pass off this national characteristic of theirs as a shrewd sense of realism. They hold fast to their possessions and part with them in a piecemeal way only under inexorable pressure or at the lure of greater gains in a different way. The history of Britain in

relation to India bears the most unmistakable testimony to this fact.

Our country has been demanding Swaraj for long and England has sought to stem the march of the nation to its goal by throwing out sophs and repeating specious pleas and platitudes *ad nauseum*. Britain had been going that way and thinking that all would be right in time. In this way she would be able to carry on for an indefinite length of time. It remained, it seems, too complacent to ignore the lessons of history. Then the War broke out which upset its applecart. Verily, it has been a grave difficulty to England as it has been an opportunity to India. Now the accents of the Britishers have been changing, though slowly, as the War has been growing in its menacing proportions. The Viceroy's recent utterances as those of Mr. James and other Englishmen, for whatever they are worth, would have been inconceivable, say six or eight months ago. The Englishmen, it appears, have realised the truth of the well known Indian proverb that when everything is at stake, the wise man should give up the half and they are now ready to act up to it.

But the imperialist ways, with their peculiar British leaven, will take long to die. So to Mr. James the Constituent Assembly is an impracticable proposition. He is still for the Britisher's traditional game of divide and rule with a view to retain England's grip on India and sponge on her resources. So various sectional and conflicting interests have been brought up by him, but the broad, all-important national interest, the interest of the Indian masses irrespective of communities, has been conveniently given the

go-by. To Mr. James and numerous other Englishmen of his way of thinking we say, the War has no doubt opened their eyes but it has only made them "see" half clearly. Mist still hangs about their vision which is bound to disappear shortly. India of today firmly refuses to be put off its birth-right any longer. No half-measures will do. And after all, even to an Englishman it *should* appear that a free and friendly India is far better than to have none of it.

## CURRENT COMMENTS

### The Sukkur Slaughter

Even in this unfortunate riot-ridden land of ours, Sukkur has verily made history. According to the recently published official report, on the lowest computation no less than about two hundred lives were lost and properties worth lakhs of rupees destroyed there. As we went through this harrowing tale of carnage and loot we wondered whether the Allah Bux Ministry, usually liberal in its communal outlook, had for the time being abdicated its authority leaving the field entirely to the hordes of bestial hooligans. Otherwise, how could such a ghastly state of things happen under its very eyes? We do not believe that it willingly connived at this horrible communal frenzy, but that does not absolve it of incompetence to deal with the situation. At present we do not propose to go into the sources of the tragedy, either open or subterranean. But it should be made absolutely clear that a repetition of Sukkur or anything of its kind must be prevented in future at all costs. The Congress Working Committee in its present sitting has this tragedy as

one of its items on the agenda. We wait to see how it decides to proceed about the matter. A sifting enquiry by an impartial body must be the first essential preliminary step in the procedure. The sinister forces operating behind the curtain have to be tracked down, correctly localised and appropriately dealt with. Nothing less will do.

### Strange Indeed !

To the chorus of approval and acclamation of the Viceroy's Bombay speech, Mr. Savarkar has, strangely enough, added his voice. The Mahasabha leader is no believer in the Constituent Assembly. According to him, "the best and most practical way would be that the British Government should frame a Constitution on the broad and universally accepted principles of democracy after consulting all parties and interests in India in general." Mr. Savarkar, it seems, has not learned or unlearned anything about the traditional diplomatic game of the Britishers. Otherwise, how can it escape him that given a free hand in meting out even justice to the various interests, the Government will not hesitate to play the proverbial Monkey's role? Not that we believe in the brand of Constituent Assembly advocated by the Working Committee. More than once we have made that abundantly clear. Real democracy can only come through a Constituent Assembly after the nation has won the right of self-determination, it can never be a gift from an alien power. Out of Mahasabha atmosphere, Mr. Saverkar might have easily realised this simple truth. But alas! he is not now his old self.

### Pandit Jawaharlal's Metamorphosis

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, it seems, is fast developing into a *pucca* Congress bureaucrat. Till Tripuri he hang about the aerial zone with his professed Leftism and intrinsic Rightism. But after that he has been making staggeringly rapid strides towards his real place in the Congress organisation. Now the wheel has come the full round and his metamorphosis is complete. A member of the homogeneous Rightist Cabinet, a socialist believing in the mystic efficacy of charkha as the supreme weapon in the national fight for freedom, really, we wonder, what is left of old Jawaharlal? His latest fiat forbidding Cogress Committees in U. P. "to dissociate themselves from any tours or visits of leaders who undertake them independently of official Congress sanction" will undoubtedly come on many as a shocking surprise. Poor Pandit, how has he failed to understand that "courtesy and consideration" to an illustrious visitor cannot go together with dissociation from functions organised in his honour? And as regards "opposition to or denunciation of the Congress policy or programme," the country needs hardly be told anew who have dragged down the fair name of the Congress to the mire. Considering the pace of Panditji's "advance," it is not difficult to anticipate that ere long he will be found to completely out-Herod the Herod. Is it not just honest of him to make a public declaration of his change of faith from Socialism to full-fledged Gandhism? We think that has been overdue.

### Not a Mystery

War has its mysteries, enigmas, etc. in any member. They are

generally international in character. Light shines on them only to make a mystery a blinding many-coloured haze. The inner politics of British democracy, however, is not supposed to be so puzzling. The politicians share their problems and decisions with the public. But can the British people tell us why Sir Hore-Belisha, their War Minister, was dismissed? Then they can read more than what language would tell. In the Minister's half-uttered reference to democratisation of an army which was fighting for democracy we are asked not to place any emphasis. The Jewish origin of a British minister is not of much importance too. Sir Hore-Belisha's abilities are admitted. But these very qualities are said to require his resignation. But how? The reply would perhaps be another volley of such Parliamentary compliments and eloquence.

#### Italian Neutrality.

Three great 'neutrals' in the present war may shape it differently. They are America, Japan and Italy. Of them Italy is nearest to the war zone and has interests in the war which are plain. Her claims on the Mediterranean, particularly on the French possessions of Tunisia, Corsica, etc. are well-known facts. Italy are not so loudly voiced—at least we do not hear the demands being echoed by the foreign press. But certainly Mussolini is not the man to forget it. For the moment the Balkan must be rescued from the shadowing menace of Bolshevism and the danger of Anglo-French alliance slowly extending through Rumania and Turkey. The Balkan is being thus shaped by Italy into an independent bloc,—of course, to

be dependent on Italian leadership. This meaning of Italian "neutrality" is made plain by the recent utterances of the new Secretary of the Fascist Party. With such "neutrals" in the neighbourhood, the warring nations of course have to be very 'considerate' at every step.

#### Cloud In Far East

Japan is the neutral *par excellence*. She is still officially not at war with China. The "neutral" of the Far East observes neutrality with care, and, so the belligerents have also to be careful about her. Britain cannot obviously offend her. Germany does not forget that a damaged "Axis" would be of no value to her at this hour. But the "Axis" has to be repaired with some thing else. The old "anti-Comintern" mortar would not hold the structure together. The retirement of the Abe Cabinet and coming in of the Yonai Cabinet with General Arita as its Foreign Minister, is probably a recognition on the part of Japan that the "Axis" must be kept in order, and possibly on a pro-Soviet

policy. So, a Soviet understanding is expected soon, and, as the latest messages indicate, this may cancel the Red fury in China and, also thereby force Chiang Kai Shek into the Japanese parlour. If the Yonai ministry accomplishes such a 'liquidation' of the 'Chinese affairs', it will be a great triumph for Japan, a questionable relief for China, but, above all, an anxiety for Britain.

#### Late Khagendra Nath Chatterjea.

Death from high blood pressure deprived the country of one of the most valued workers, Khagendra Nath Chatterjea of Baranagore, at the age of 48. Like many other sons of Bengal, Khagendra Nath was a revolutionary from his teens and passed three terms in jail—internment without trial. His strong physique and wit and winning manners made him a pleasant figure everywhere and lightened the heaviness of his companions in jails. The *Forward Bloc* lost in him an active member, and the void will not be easy to fill.

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# DELHI STUDENTS' CONFERENCE

## Sj. BOSE CORRECTS MISREPRESENTATION

I have noticed in the press several reports about the recent Delhi Session of the All India Students Federation Conference which are not wholly correct. The comments on such reports are even more misleading. Since I presided over that Conference, it would be well to say a few words about the deliberations and the resolutions of that Conference.

In the first place what struck me at the outset was that the vast majority of the students were Leftist in their political persuasions. The followers of the Rightist leaders were comparatively few in number.

Apart from resolutions on non-controversial student problems, there were a few resolutions on what one may call political topics. These related to War, Constituent Assembly, Independence Day and Revolutionary Leadership. I participated only in the debate on the War Resolution. On no other resolution did I speak.

The original War Resolution contained a paragraph demanding the speedy termination of the present war. Though a large number of Leftist students pressed for this paragraph in accordance with their conception of peace, I considered it to be based on a wrong notion of peace and I therefore advised its deletion. My point of view was ultimately adopted by the Conference.

The resolution on Constituent Assembly which was ultimately adopted was a condemnation of the recent resolution of the Congress Working Committee and of the new and strange interpretation of Constituent Assembly now being put forward by the C. W. C. The preamble to the original resolution contained a clause to the effect that a confusion was being created in the minds of the people by a section of the national leadership. This preamble was amended to the effect that confusion prevailed in the minds of the public regarding the meaning of a Constituent Assembly. The Amendment to the preamble which was carried was supported by some Leftists of Communist and Socialist persuasion as well as by the

Rightists. The intention of the amendment was to avoid casting any reflection on the present Congress Working Committee and naturally took many people by surprise.

The same desire to avoid criticising the Congress Working Committee revealed itself when the resolution on Independence Day was moved and discussed. There was a clause in the resolution to the effect that the Conference deplored the stress laid on spinning in the Independence Pledge. This clause was deleted by the joint votes of members of Communist, Socialist and Rightist persuasion. This sort of voting on the part of members of Communist and Socialist persuasion naturally gave rise to both surprise and adverse criticism. One could understand the Rightists who openly stood for the spinning clause in the Independence Pledge, but one could not understand the Communists and Socialists who did not believe in it.

The resolution on Revolutionary Leadership contained a paragraph which criticised the present Leadership of the Congress and its weak and vacillating policy. This paragraph was omitted by the joint votes of Communists, Socialists and Rightists.

The voting on the political resolutions did not indicate by any means the strength of the Rightists among the students. They were comparatively few in number and would not consequently

have been able to carry any resolution or amendment with their own votes. That is why they invariably joined hands with Communists and Socialists over the above amendments.

What gave me the most unpleasant surprise was the argument put forward by some students of Leftist persuasion to the effect that the platform of the Students Federation should be a non-party and non-political one. As long as political resolutions sponsored by them were carried by the house, no such argument was thought of. But the argument was preferred when a political resolution was moved which they did not approve of. Personally I hold the view that students are not only entitled to participate in Politics; but to discuss political resolutions at their Conference if they so desire.

### Liquidation of Forward Bloc

*Sj. Bose Contradicts report*

During my recent tour in South India and Western India it was brought to my notice that the press had reported that I had made a statement to the effect that under certain conditions I would be prepared to liquidate the Forward Bloc. This report is entirely wrong. I have never made such a statement nor can I do so. The future of the Forward Bloc rests with its members and not with me as an individual member; consequently no one should believe such a statement.

*A Prisoner*

*Just out !*

*Just out !!*

**= মুখর বন্দী =**

BY

**BHUPENDRA KISOR RAKSHIT-ROY**

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**Speaks**

## Determinism ?

2

By JYOTISH JOARDAR

Now, for a clear understanding of the subsequent developments we would rather touch upon the phenomena of Radiation at the start. It is indeed a queer thing that we know least about our most familiar thing—'Light'!

Sources of light are obvious to us. The study of the passage of Radiation from immense distance to our immediate vicinity lead us through a host of phenomena classifiable under two mutually hostile heads: (1) corpuscular or particle-view of light, (2) wave-view of light.

The establishment of the Electro-magnetic theory of light extended the field of observation to an enormous extent. As, after this, the phenomena of heat, wireless radiation, light, ultra-violet light, x-rays,  $\alpha$ - $\beta$ -,  $\gamma$ -rays, etc., merge their apparent individuality into one common stream of radiation.

Spectroscopic observation of electrical discharges through gaseous atoms of different elements, study of the Phenomena of Ionisation (i.e., liberation of electrons from the structure of normal atoms under bombardment of electrons etc.), the study of the Photo-electric phenomena (i.e., the liberation of electrons from the surfaces of metals under the effect of incident light or 'Photon', X-rays and the study of the radiation of  $\alpha$ -,  $\beta$ -,  $\gamma$ -rays from Radio-active elements, Uranium, Thorium, Radium, etc.), all point towards the one or the other of the two heads (corpuscle or wave). This puzzling situation naturally demands the establishment of one view to the exclusion of the other; as anything to be a particle and the wave at the same time seems simply impossible, yet that is what the physical observations force upon us.

In the case of the visible range of the Electro-magnetic radiation (i.e., ordinary light), Wave theory alone can give a satisfactory interpretation of the following phenomena:

1) Defraction (i.e., the bending of a ray-of-light past an opaque barrier in front;

2) Polarisation (i.e., the assumption of a sheet like plane of vibration by light originally of multi-directional planes of

vibration after its passage through certain crystals, e.g., Tourmaline etc.);

3) Interference (i.e., periodic reinforcement and annihilation of Light-disturbance in the form of alternate lines or bands of light and darkness). Again, the Corpuscular theory only can account for the photo-electric phenomena of light in which electrons are knocked out of the surfaces of metals as light falls upon them. And the paths of the resulting projectiles, as it were, can be photographed like the passage of colliding billiard balls.

And the following phenomena admit of interpretations in the light of the Wave theory as well as in the light of the Corpuscular theory:

1. Reflection. 2. Refraction. 3. Rectilinear propagation of light.

But, if we could find a suitable medium of vibration (fondly called *ether*), which we must try in any case for the phenomena of Defraction, Polarisation etc., we would safely reject the Corpuscular theory; and that would mean an end of much of the trouble. And photo-electric phenomena would remain the only stumbling block for the time. We would boldly face the future! But, alas! the 'Ether' refused to work wonders—it cannot vibrate rigidly, and simultaneously in all possible ways without damping or offering the least possible hindrance to the passage of the greatest of the heavenly bodies in its course through space with its tremendous speed. And, that Ether of our requirement remains for ever 'the night-mare of the mad Engineer.'

(To be Continued)

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# FROM LAHORE TO WARDHA

## 1930

We believe that it is the inalienable right of the Indian people, as of any other people, to have freedom and enjoy the fruits of their toil and have the necessities of life, so that they may have full opportunities of growth. We believe also that if any Government deprives a people of these rights and oppresses them, the people have a further right to alter it or to abolish it. The British Government in India has not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom but has based itself on the exploitation of the masses, and has ruined India economically, politically, culturally and spiritually. We believe, therefore, that India must sever the British connection and attain Purna Swaraj or Complete Independence.

Politically, India's status has never been so reduced as under the British regime. No reforms have given real political power to the people. The tallest of us have to bend before foreign authority. The rights of free expression of opinion and free association have been denied to us, and many of our countrymen are compelled to live in exile abroad and cannot return to their homes. All administrative talent is killed, and the masses have to be satisfied with petty village offices and clerkships.

Culturally, the system of education has torn us from our moorings and our training has made us hug the very chains that bind us.

Spiritually, compulsory disarmament has made us unmanly and the presence of alien army of occupation, employed with deadly effect to crush in us the spirit of resistance, has made us thing that we cannot look after ourselves or put up a

## 1939

"We believe that it is an inalienable right of the Indian people, as of any other people, to have freedom and enjoy the fruits of their toil and have the necessities of life, so that they may have full opportunities of growth. We believe also that if any Government deprives a people of these rights and oppresses them, the people have a further right to alter it or to abolish it. The British Government in India has not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom but has ruined India economically, politically, culturally and spiritually. We believe, therefore, that India must sever the British connection and attain Purna Swaraj or Complete Independence.

"We recognise that the most effective way of gaining our freedom is not through violence. India has gained strength and self-reliance and marched a long way to Swaraj following peaceful and legitimate methods, and it is by adhering to these

## OUR INDEPENDENCE PLEDGE

India has been ruined economically. The Revenue derived from our people is out of all proportion to our income. Our average income is 7 pice (less than 5 cents) per day, and of the heavy taxes we pay, 20 per cent are raised from the land revenue derived from peasantry, and 3 per cent form the salt tax which falls most heavily on the poor.

Village industries, such as hand-spinning, have been destroyed, leaving the peasantry idle for at least four months in the year, and dulling their intellect for want of handicrafts: and nothing has been substituted, as in other countries, for the crafts thus destroyed.

Customs and currency have been so manipulated as to heap further burdens on the peasantry. The British manufactured goods constitute the bulk of our imports. Customs duties betray clear partiality for British manufacturers, and revenue from them is used not to lessen the burden on the masses but for sustaining a highly-extravagant administration. Still more arbitrary has been the manipulation of the exchange ratio, which has resulted in millions being drained away from the Country.

defence against foreign aggression, or even defend our homes and families from the attacks of thieves, robbers and miscreants.

We hold it to be a crime against man and God to submit any longer to a rule that has caused this fourfold disaster to our country. We recognise, however, that the most effective way of gaining our freedom is not through violence. We will therefore prepare ourselves by withdrawing, so far as we can, all voluntary association from the British Government and will prepare for Civil Disobedience, including non-payment of taxes. We are convinced that if we can but withdraw our voluntary help and stop payment of taxes without doing violence even under provocation, the end of this inhuman rule is assured. We therefore hereby solemnly resolve to carry out the Congress instructions issued from time to time for the purpose of establishing Purna Swaraj."

BANDE MATARAM.

removal of the grinding poverty of the masses. We shall, therefore, spin regularly, use for our personal requirements nothing but Khadi and so far as possible, products of village handicrafts only and endeavour to make others do likewise.

"We pledge ourselves to a disciplined observance of Congress principles and politics and to keep in readiness to respond to the call of the Congress, whenever it may come, for carrying on the struggle for the independence of India."

methods that our country will attain Independence.

"We pledge ourselves anew to the Independence of India and solemnly resolve to carry out non-violently the struggle for freedom till Purna Swaraj is attained.

"We believe that non-violent action in general and preparation for non-violent direct action in particular, require successful working of the constructive programme of Khadi, communal harmony and removal of untouchability. We shall seek every opportunity of spreading goodwill among fellowmen without distinction of caste or creed. We shall endeavour to raise from ignorance and poverty those who have been neglected and to advance every way the interests of those who are considered to be backward and suppressed. We know that though we are out to destroy the imperialistic system we have no quarrel with Englishmen, whether officials or non-officials. We know that distinction between the caste Hindus and Harijans must be abolished, and Hindus have to forget these distinctions in their daily conduct. Such distinctions are a bar to non-violent conduct. Though our religious faith may be different, in our mutual relations we will act as children of mother India, bound by common nationality and common political and economic interest.

"Charkha and Khadi are an integral part of our constructive programme, for the resuscitation of the seven hundred thousand villages of India and for the

## FORWARD BLOC NEWS

### DACCA FORWARD BLOC Preparing for Independence Day Celebration

The Dacca District Forward Bloc Committee are busy making arrangements for the Celebration of the Independence Day in accordance with the instructions issued to the press by Sj. Subhas Chandra Bose. The Committee have arranged a meeting of the leftists of this district to be held at the Dacca Forward Bloc office at 6 P.M. on 18-1-40 in order to find out a common line of action for the observance of the Independence Day and for the coming struggle.

The Committee have arranged a number of tours throughout the district. The tours are being undertaken by prominent Forward Bloc Workers who are touring round different villages and meeting local workers. In each such gathering the role of the Forward Bloc in the coming struggle is being explained and the local workers are being given instructions as to the nature of observance of the Independence Day.

### FORWARD BLOC WORKERS on tour in Dacca Villages

Sj. Jyotish Chandra Joarder, Secretary Mymensingh District Forward Bloc, and Sj. Nikunja Sen, Secretary Dacca District Forward Bloc accompanied by prominent Forward Bloc workers from Dacca visited a few villages in Vikrampur on 14-1-40. They met local workers of Sirajdigha, Rajdia, Tajpur and other villages and explained to them the role of the Forward Bloc in the coming struggle. Sj. Madhu Sudan Bhattacharjee, a prominent Forward Bloc worker of Vikrampur who organised this tour took a leading part in the discussions.

### FORWARD BLOC IN BARISAL Gradually gaining ground in the District

Sj. Subhas Chandra Bose formally opened the office of the District Forward Bloc, Barisal at 11 A.M. on the 29th December, 1939. All the prominent workers of the Forward Bloc of the District were present at the ceremony. Subhas Babu was garlanded by the President of the Forward Bloc, Sj. Rohinilal Roy, pleader. Due to heavy engagements elsewhere Subhas Babu could not devote much time here.

In a short inspiring speech he exhorted the workers of the Forward Bloc to carry the message of struggle and freedom to the remotest villages. He pointed out that the task before the Forward Bloc was not to preach against Gandhiji or any Rightist leader personally but to save the Congress from the weak compromising policy of the Right wing leadership. Sj. Rohinilal Roy, President District Forward Bloc, Sjs. Suresh Gunguly, Deben Ghosh Secretary, District Forward Bloc and Sj. Hiralal Das Gupta District organiser of the Forward Bloc were present on the occasion. Great enthusiasm prevailed among the mofussil representatives of the Forward Bloc.

About two thousand members have been already enrolled. The lists from the subdivisions were not received at the time of Subhas Babu's visit. Taking all the lists together the total number of Forward Bloc members enrolled in the District would be approximately five thousand. At Jhalakathi the office of subdivisional Forward Bloc was formally opened by Sj. Bose when he visited the town. Subhas Babu's recent visit has given a fresh impetus to the Forward Bloc movement in the Barisal District—wide response is very encouraging.

### TIPPERAH FORWARD BLOC Office-bearers elected and Executive formed

The members of Tipperah District Congress Executive, who have signed the Forward Bloc pledge, met on the 3rd January, 1940, at 7-30 p.m. in the District

Congress Office, Comilla, under the Presidency of Shri Basanta Kumar Mazumdar, to elect office-bearers and Executive of the Tipperah District Forward Bloc. The office-bearers and Executive were elected as follows:—

1. President—Moulvi Ashrafuddin Ahmad Choudhury 2. Vice-presidents—(1) Sj. Kamini Kumar Dutta M. L. C. (2) Moulvi Mukbul Hossien M. L. A. (3) Sj. Aswini Kumar Chakravarty (4) Moulvi Taru Mia, Vice-Chairman, Comilla Municipality. 3. General Secretary—Moulvi Abdul Malek. 4. Secretaries—(1) Sj. Asutosh Sinha B. L. (2) Sj. Hirendra Nath Nandi B. A. 5. Asst. Secretaries—(1) Sj. Biswa Sen (2) Sj. Rabi Goswami. 6. Treasurer—Sj. Jatindra Kumar Choudhury B. L.

Members of the Executive:

7. Sj. Basanta Kumar Mazumdar 8. Sj. Hemoprova Mazumdar M. L. A. 9. Sj. Ashutosh Maity 10. Sj. Haridas Sen 11. Sayed Abdul Hai 12. Sj. Nibaran Chandra Ghose M. A. B. L. 13. Kazi Abdul Latif 14. Moulvi Musaraf Hossein Khan 15. Munsif Azizur Bahman 19. Sj. Paresh Ranjan Das Gupta 17. Kazi Samsuddin Khadem 18. Moulvi Abdul Aziz 19. Moulvi Serazul Islam Khan 20. Pandit Jamiruddin Bhuyan 21. Moulvi Mahammad Hossein 22. Sj. Nilmoan Ghose 23. Moulvi Hekim Abdul Halim 24. Dr. Monoranjan Bhattacharjee 25. Sj. Jatindra Mohan Roy 26. Sj. Manindra Kumar Sen. Sj. U. Roy Choudhury G. D. A. was appointed auditor of the Committee.

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## A LETTER FROM A MUSLIM WORKER TO MR. JINNAH (2)

[The first letter of this series appeared in the last issue of our paper. The writer, as has been noted before, is a retired Muslim I. E. S. One more letter will follow—Ed. F.B.]

DEAR MR. LEADER,

In my last letter I promised to tell you how the hymn of communal hate which you started as a sole song, but which under your great leadership has assumed the proportions of a full orchestral score, is creating serious difficulties for me and for other Muslim workers in urban areas, whose condition, already none too good, is being very much worsened by it. In fact, it is hitting our very livelihood. And as Shakespeare says :

"You take my life  
When you do take the means whereby  
I live."

But before I relate my tale of woe, I beg leave to make a few observations.

It seems that in modern times every enterprise is so collectivised or socialised that the individual worker, howsoever good and efficient, is lost in the crowd and the entire credit of the collective effort goes to the leader or leaders who may have had no active part in the undertaking. For instance, on the battlefield the credit for the victory is appropriated partly by the High Command and partly by the ministers who mostly sit at home or in their snug offices, and the real heroes of the fight are mentioned only in confidential despatches which seldom come before the public eye. Now to my workman's intelligence this seems to be most unfair, for as a worker, I think that when I do a bit of good work the credit for it should be all mine and not my overseer's. I therefore, with due deference to you, have to express my admiration for the Raja of Pirpur and for the roaring Lion of Bengal, of whom I feel particularly proud, because he carries so many non-Muslim leaders in his spacious pockets, and also for the lesser Leaders who have all spent their invaluable time and precious energy in raking up the evil deeds of the Congress governments and have published and broadcasted the results of their profound researches. I, of course, do not agree with those who scoff at this historical quest after truth, and who suggest that the misdeeds of a government to-day do not require any Livingstonian

explorations. They say that these misdeeds can be of three kinds :—

1. Of Legislation, which can be traced in the printed reports of the respective legislatures ;

2. Of administration, which are usually embodied in the circular orders of governments ; and

3. Of connivance at the malpractices of subordinate officials, which can never be established except where government has failed to take proper action against the culprit when he has been found out.

Now these gentlemen seem to have forgotten the fable of the wolf and the lamb and its great moral, viz, that in a quarrel truth must be subordinated to expediency, and that the winner is he who succeeds in showing his adversary to be in the wrong. To-day this great moral has become the basic principle of international politics.

To return to the Raja of Pirpur and the Lion of Bengal, now if the object of these gentlemen's selfless labours were not merely to show the adversary to be in the wrong, and thereby incidentally to raise themselves in the hierarchy of leadership, but it were humanitarian, that is, to discover the oppression and persecution from which the poor Muslims and incidentally non-Muslims also—I say incidentally because a great communal leader is first a communalist and then a human being—are suffering at the hands of their own communal brethren, I would have respectfully suggested to the Raja Shaib that he might do just a little bit of research in the living conditions of his own tenants, and he would discover an amount and depth of human misery and wretchedness before which the most inhuman tyrannies of the Congress governments or, for that matter, of any government, should appear trivial and insignificant. And here my cricket, which is a by-product of my association with cricketers, asserts itself and I am forced to give reluctant credit to the satanic Congress governments for doing what, under their limitations, they could, to better the condition of your serfs and the serfs of your brother landlords ; although the

net result of their efforts cannot, in the very nature of things, be substantial. For the ills of our agrarian economy can be cured not by petty reforms, but by a revolution in our entire economic and social structure which should include not only radical changes in our agricultural and Industrial production and relationships, but also a very great extension of our cultural and health services. Similarly, I would have requested the Premier of Bengal to just go and peep into the industrial areas of Calcutta, where, I am sure, he would see sights of human suffering and distress that might shake even a less sensitive person than he, out of his heartless complacency and self-centred egotism.

Now to my personal tale. I think I should first tell you who I am. I am a worker by profession, Sheikh by caste and a Muslim by religion.

I have given the first place to profession, because I have learnt from experience that a man's vocation is three fourth, if not the whole of his self. It is not only the means of his livelihood, the only barrier between him and his family on the one side and starvation and death on the other, but it also demarcates and defines his class, i. e. his social world. It also determines his intellectual level i. e. the character of his understanding which in the absence of a truly liberal system of education, such as would counteract the crippling effect of the modern division of labour, is necessarily formed by his employment. As Adam Smith has said, "The understanding of greater part of men are necessarily formed by their ordinary employments. The man whose whole life is spent in performing a few simple operations has no occasion to exert his understanding...He generally becomes as stupid and ignorant as it is possible for a human creature to become."

I have placed religion last, for I have found that whatever bearing religion might have on the life in heaven, it has little or none on the life on this earth. The only factor that seems to count in our terrestrial lives to-day is the economic factor and religion does not help one here.

For instance, in my vocation I haven't yet met a brother-Muslim, even among the rich, who out of brotherly affection or regard has offered to give me a pice more than what he, in his rich man's infallible judgement, considers my due which, of course, never depends on what he can conveniently give to a brother in distress, or even on a fair estimation of the quantity and quality of the work done, but on what my circumstances compel me to accept. Nor have I come across a Muslim who is or considers himself socially my superior, and who would condescend to treat me as his equal, much less as a brother. On the contrary, I have seen many a rich brother (son of the same parents) treat his poor brother more or less like an out-caste. So all this talk about "brother-hood-in-Islam", which might have had a meaning in the early years of Islam when the Muslims, like the early Christians, were communist society—that is, they pooled their resources and then shared them on the principle, "from each according to his capacity to each according to his need" has no real, objective significance to-day.

I believe this must be your experience also. For you must have realised that you have much more in common with the non-Muslim members of your own social class than with your Muslim cook or bearer. Again, I am sure, none of your class, Muslim or non-Muslim, would even entertain the idea of his daughter's marrying a poor member of his own community, however worthy otherwise and even closely related; not that the good girls themselves, brought up as they have been in class traditions and prejudices, would ever think of such impossible declassé alliances.

Thus it seems to me that all this noise about, "Islam in Danger" is intended to cloud our minds and to confuse the real issue which, in its final analysis, is the class issue, that is, the eternal issue between the haves and the have-nots. And you are following the traditional device of the exploiters to divert the attention of the exploited from the heartless exploitation of which they are the helpless victims.

There is, however, some truth in the slogan, if you mean thereby that your class, viz., the haves among Muslims, under the inexorable laws of capitalist economy,

are fast and inevitably passing into the ranks of the have-nots. And my worthy leader, when you talk about safeguarding and protecting the economic interests of Muslims, by which you, of course, mean the interests of the haves, for the have-nots are beyond redemption, you seem to have no clear conception as to how the haves can possibly conserve what they have, not to mention how they can increase it. The due or proportionate share in state services which you emphasize, even assuming that the capable have the necessary means to qualify themselves for that share, will affect only an infinitesimal proportion of the population and will give us a very negligible share in the wealth of the country. In any case, this does not directly concern the overwhelming majority of the Muslims who belong to the class of the have-nots, and whose Islam consists in inert ice-bound faith which nobody going to snatch away from them.

And as to the so-much-talked about culture, that again is the monopoly of the haves and the have-nots have practically no share in it. And then the culture of the haves among us has very little Islamic about it, for they do not know Arabic which is distinctly the language of Islam, and their acquaintance with Persian and Urdu, the languages of adoption, is also limited. In fact, their culture, like that of the haves among the other Indian communities, is only a miserable copy of the English culture. And from the point of view of intellectual content, it seems to me, that all cultures, under the overpowering new cultural forces, the Cinema and the Radio, are merging into one culture, which may be designated as "modern Culture."

And the caste which has hitherto been a vital force in Indian life, is also fast losing ground even among the Hindus, owing not so much to the reformist movements started by men like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Swami Dyanand, of which the latest manifestation is Mahatma Gandhi's Harijan movement, as to the advent and rapid development of capitalism in India, of which the various reformist movements may be regarded as but inevitable results. Here we have a striking illustration of the well known saying, "History repeats itself." The Brahma Samaj, the Arya Samaj and the Harijan Movement are historical replicas of Luther's protestantism and the subsequent liberal reforms in the Christian

church which were necessitated by the replacement of the feudalist by the capitalist economy in Europe.

As I said, I am a Sheikh by caste. An uncle of mine always tells me with a certain amount of pride that we are Sheikh Quraishis and that our ancestors came from Arabia. And I notice that among my Muslim friends and acquaintances, there is hardly one who does not claim a pure and direct Arab lineage. This only illustrates how a man's self-conceit is tickled by even borrowed plumes. In the present instance, however, the fable of the crow and the peacock seems to be reversed. Here the peacock seems to take pride in the crow's plumage. The Arab civilization in Arabia, even at the best of times, was never superior to the Indian civilization, and now that both the Arabs and the Indians are practically in a state of national servitude, a family connection with the Arabs can offer no solace to the painful sense of personal, or national inferiority.

In any case, whatever be the truth about my friends, as regards myself I am inclined to think that some proud and sensitive forebear of mine who could not stand the arrogance of his Kshatri or Brahmin overlord, embraced Islam in the fond hope that he was entering an equalitarian community. But what must have been his disappointment and even dismay when after the first public rejoicings over his conversion were over, he was quietly relegated to the place to which he belonged in the economic structure of the society. I do not know when in the history of the family it was considered necessary or desirable to assume the Arab descent. It must have been at the time when some lucky ancestor had gathered sufficient property to entitle him to a seat on a higher rung of the social ladder. But the assumption of an Arab descent, of whatever use it might have been to this ambitious ancestor, has not helped his present descendants. For to-day no body seems to care for caste or creed except at the time of elections, when the poor voters are reminded by the contesting candidates of their religion, caste, tribe, and *bradari*, which are appealed to as the only ties that count in life. And the ignorant voters not infrequently respond to these appeals, for they imagine that the victory of a candidate belonging to their caste or tribe is their own victory and that somehow or other they will be partners in his gain and glory. But no sooner has the victory been won than all the tribal ties are forgotten and till the approach of the next election, the poor members of the caste or *bradari* are denied even the *darshan* of their tribal chief and are otherwise treated with scant courtesy not only by the chief himself, but also by his menial servants.

I am afraid this letter has much exceeded the proper limits of epistolary composition. I will, therefore, stop and give you the rest of my story in my next letter.

Yours admirably  
A Muslim Worker

## THE U. S. S. R. AND THE WAR

By "VANGUARD"

The signing of the Soviet-German Pact brought the inter-imperialist contradiction into sudden prominence, thus giving a death-blow to the Munich policy of bringing about a war between Nazi Germany and the land of socialism.

With the continuation of the war and the march of the Red Army into Eastern Poland the imperialist powers felt a certain sense of nervousness at the struggle and mastery of the people's diplomacy of the Soviet Union. They found themselves threatened by the very menace which they had been trying to wipe out for years. The war instead of pulling Chamberlain's chestnuts out of the fire, helped to pull the proletarian chestnuts out of the fire. Instead of being an onslaught upon the land of the Soviets, it brought about an enlargement by peaceful means of the Soviet State.

This was the problem which faced the imperialists in London, Paris, Rome and New York in the first fortnight of the Second Imperialist War. What was to be done to prevent this upsetting of imperialist calculations? Chamberlain and his group decided upon a new policy to meet the changed situation. They began to get ready for all eventual attack upon the Soviet Union—the driving force behind the new Anti-Comintern Axis came not from Berlin but from London, and the hero of this unholy crusade was not Ribbentrop but Chamberlain.

To prepare for an eventual attack upon the U. S. S. R., the imperialist diplomats began consulting their old maps of the days of Intervention—the old theatres of war where Yudenich, Denikin and Kolchak made their mark, began to be studied in London and Paris. The Baltic, the Black Sea and the Far East suddenly gained prominence in the place of the Western Front and the North Sea. Feverish diplomacy began on each of these three sectors, and an almost regular tug-of-war developed between the imperialist powers on the one hand and the Soviet Union on the other, to gain diplomatic control of these areas.

It is in the above context that we should study the events, political and

military, in the Far East, the Black Sea and the Baltic.

Let us take the Far East first. Since the break-up of the anti-Comintern Axis, Japan is faced with a new situation. There is no longer any illusion about a concerted attack against the Soviet Union. Besides, the difficulty of subjugating occupied areas, mainly because of Chinese guerilla tactics, as well as the economic drain of the war, made the prospect not very rosy for Japan. Moreover, the period of stalemate (the second of the three stages that Mao-Tse-Tung enunciated at the beginning of the war, viz, the offensive by the aggressor, the stalemate, and the counter-offensive by the victim) was fast giving place to the period of counter-offensive by China. Besides, the experience in Outer Mongolia has confirmed the worst suspicions of the Japanese High Command about Soviet strength. So, the Soviet proposal for a non-aggression Pact on the basis of no onslaught on China and the Soviet Union and onslaught upon other foreign interests (namely, British and American), would not be unlikely. But against the Soviet overtures, Britain is trying to have a pact with Japan (note, how Britain is trying to placate Japan by surrendering concessions in North China, Tientsin) and then force Chiang-Kaishek to break the United Front and make China a base of attack against the Soviet Union. But the difficulties on the way are not easy to overcome. First, it is difficult to smooth over imperialist rivalries with Japan—like Hitler, Japan might have an unlimited stomach. Moreover, America is a jealous watchdog against any growth of British interests in the Far East. Thirdly, Chiang-Kaishek is too much involved in the United Front to extricate himself unless he is prepared to meet with the same fate as that of Wang-Ching-Wei. As a matter of fact, Soviet-Chinese relations are being strengthened, the evidences of which are the Chinese trade delegation to Moscow, the opening-up of Chungking-Moscow air service, and Comrade Stalin's message to Chiang-Kaishek on his own (Stalin's)

birthday. But in spite of these, the possibilities of a Far Eastern Munich are not out of the question.

Let us now come to the Baltic. As soon as the Nazi advance to the East was checked by the Red Army march into Eastern Poland, something in the nature of a revolution took place in the diplomatic circles of Eastern Europe. The smaller powers which had so long looked upon Berlin as their friend, philosopher and guide, now had to turn to Moscow. The fate of Czechoslovakia and Poland had convinced them of the value of British guarantees, while Hitler's way to the Balkan and the Baltic States was blocked by the Red Army in Eastern Poland. There started the feverish diplomatic exodus to Moscow. Overnight these Small States became the satellites of the Kremlin instead of the Wilhelmstrasse. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, partly through internal popular pressure, partly through the experience of Poland, were glad to have Mutual Assistance pacts with the Soviet Union. The Baltic Barons, the advance guard of the *Swastika* had to depart, the Fascist elements weeded out as soon as these Small States came within the generous ambit of the Soviet Protection. Instead of remaining as convenient tools of Nazi imperialism, they breathed the free air of the Soviet guarantee—no longer to be victims of imperialist designs.

But something different happened in the case of Finland. The U.S.S.R. offered the same Mutual Non Aggression Pact to Finland. But the Finnish ruling class, following the inglorious footsteps of Beck and Smidgley-Rydz, refused all offers. The imperialist Powers of the West, since the fall of Poland, had pegged all their hopes on Finland—their semi-colony. Regardless of the popular voice, and ungrateful to the Bolsheviks, the Finnish ruling class was so reactionary as to sacrifice their land and the people for the sake of starting a war against the land of the Soviets. One by one they refused all offers of Moscow—even their spokesman was furious when Moscow announced the actual Soviet proposals. That Finland was obviously prepared as

a jumping-off ground against the U.S.S.R. is borne out by the fact that the Mannerheim Line, like the fortifications in Eastern Poland was constructed with a view to a war against the Soviet Union. Petsamo was once offered to Hitler in the good old days when the Nazis used to brag about their coming Bolshevik Crusade. British finance capital had willing tools in Finland in the persons of Rytis and Tanners, and anti-Soviet Saviour of Finland, Mannerheim was there to lead the Great Crusade in spite of the virulent Crusade of the imperialist press. It is clear that Finland deliberately provoked the war. This is obvious from Molotov's speech before the Supreme Soviet on 31st October, where he gave out the reasonable Soviet terms. Moreover, it was clear that the imperialist Powers were fast making Finland a Munition Dump in readiness for a hit out against Russia in spring next—so that the attack might coincide with an expected change of balance of forces in the war in the West. So, the Soviet Union had to act and to act quick in spite of the winter difficulties. The promptness with which the imperialist acted (the expulsion from the League, Franco-British military aid in spite of their own war in the West, Mussolini's volunteers, America's help against the barbarian danger, Citrine and Jonhau's concern to stop Stalin's imperialism)—all these show that the Soviet Union has not acted a day too early in defence of the Glorious Socialist Fatherland.

Lastly, let us come to the Black Sea region—another possible base for a counter-revolutionary attack. Here, Turkey plays an important strategic role. When Sarajoglu was at Moscow, the U. S. S. R. offered a Pact of Mutual Assistance, with the stipulation that the Black Sea should be closed to the warships of non-Black Sea powers. Here too, Britain and France strained their every nerve to keep Turkey out of the Soviet orbit. In Turkish politics, there had always been two sections—the pro-Soviet and the pro-Franco-British. Kemal and Sarajoglu represent the former, Inenu and Orbay the latter. For the moment Inenu and Orbay succeeded and the Anglo-French-Turkish pact has been signed. Molotov

has warned Turkey about the dangers of this new pact, for it certainly affects Turkish neutrality and draws Turkey precariously into the folds of the developing Imperialist war. The British plan is to form a South-Eastern Bloc of Balkan powers which would be useful in a war against the Soviet Union. The efforts in this direction are still now feverishly proceeding.

Parallel to this British effort is going on the efforts of the rival imperialist designs of Fascist Italy. Mussolini is faced with the two problems—the growth of British influence through the Turkish pact, and the spectre of Bolshevism with the expansion of the Soviet territory in the agrarian Eastern Poland. Hence, we find Rome's concern at the growth of Communist menace—and to exploit it to form a Danubian and Balkan bloc under its own hegemony. Hence, the recent Ciano-Csaky Talks and Rome's appeal to Hungary and Rumania to make up their old quarrels in face of the common Red menace. If these plans materialise, Rumania might prove another Finland. But the Soviet diplomacy is not inactive.


The recent trade pact with Bulgaria is a clear proof of that. Moreover, the peasant population of Eastern Europe, particularly that of Bessarabia, are greatly impressed by the metamorphosis brought about in Eastern Poland under the Soviet system. This would greatly affect the internal discontent in these regions. Finally, the conflict of rival imperialisms in this region, as much as in the Far East, might confound the enemies of the Soviet Union.

This, in brief, is the international prospect to-day. The War in the West is deliberately kept in a state of stalemate so that these plans might fructify. The desire of the imperialists is to turn this imperialist war into a counter-revolutionary war against the Soviet. To that, the answer of the world working class should be—turn the imperialist war into a different channel. The colonial people's movements should exert themselves to the utmost, not only for the defence of the only State free from capitalist exploitation, but also to win their own freedom—two things which are inextricably bound up.

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## UNITED STATES AND GREAT BRITAIN

By S. UPADHYAY

Profuse were the encomiums showered upon the American people by the English Press for the reception accorded to the King on his visit to America. And the visit was considered historic for the first reigning monarch set his foot on the soil of the land that had defied the King long back. The discerning mind could easily read the meaning of the visit, and astonishing enough, it was to find America netted on the side of Great Britain. Early in 1939 Britain was oppressed by the fear of a major war and the question of Britain's future diplomatic relation was discussed by the *New Statesman and Nation* and it advised Britain to smooth out differences between United States and Soviet Russia for the future of the world would be fashioned by these powers. The idea of an Anglo-Soviet alliance was scouted down and the socialist state was forced into isolation. In the past United States feigned isolation from the old world and this isolationist attitude was fought down by the introduction of *'case and carry'* principle. The revision of American neutrality has twofold meaning; firstly it will give fillip to American heavy industries, secondly it is supposed to be a brake upon the unimpeded march of Fascism over Europe. Now comes the question: was President Roosevelt really inspired by the desire of seeing democracies shielded against Fascist aggression? And the answer would be in the negative since the prime motive is economic domination and the compelling idea is of American supremacy over Britain. Nearly sixty years back Gladstone made a prophetic utterance about America's domination over England:

It is she alone who at a coming time, can and probably will wrest from us our commercial supremacy. We have no title. I have no inclination to murmur at this prospect. If she acquires it she will make the requisition by the right of the strongest and best

An analysis of succeeding events will strengthen this utterance to a certainty. Both America and Britain are capitalist countries and competition is basic to the very system. And their real motive has all along been hidden under the varnish of

humanitarian phrases parroted by the statesman. The World must be drilled to a way of realistic thinking to discover the true nature of Anglo-American relations and the forces at work in the countries. United States captained by President Wilson joined the last war and the victory of the allies was due to the presence of U. S. A. The treaty was engineered by Wilson and hostilities ceased. But the League was lamed in the cradle by its author and the objective was defeated. To many this act of U. S. A. might be baffling; but it was in keeping with America's principle of economic domination. During the war debts to America mounted to \$ 12000 million of which British was \$ 4715 million. Exports of the United States rose from \$ 23000,000,000 in 1914 to \$ 6200,000,000 in 1917 and to \$ 78000,000,000 in 1919. This represents purchases of foodstuffs, cotton, munitions, ship and machinery. The last war really brought America into lime light on this side of the earth and Britain was found chained to the *Wall Street*. In the sphere of international trade United States and Britain are rivals and instances of rivalry are too numerous to be catalogued down.

*'Oil is as necessary as blood in the battle of Tomorrow'* Diplomatic policy of United States has been moulded by it. America lends support to companies in tracing oil-reserves abroad. For Washington believes "he who owns the oil will own the world." United States has about 12 percent of the world reserve, while Britain within the Empire has only 6 per cent. The two powers control greater portion of the world-reserve of oil. *Britain and America fight for the supremacy and it is a struggle between the America capitalists and the London Government.* The international oil melodrama started on the land hallowed with the memory of Christ and spread to different parts of the globe. Britain blocked the American acquisition of foreign oil-reserve. *The situation created a basic conflict between American and British companies and would ultimately resolve itself into a struggle between United States and Britain over the worlds'*

*patroleum reserve as a determining factor rivalry for commercial and naval supremacy.*

Rubber is essential to the present motor-age. About thirty years back the total production of rubber from wild and plantations was estimated at 7000 tons. By 1928 it rose to 700000 tons and Britain was the captain of this industry. But the rapid development of the American automobile industry outdistanced the British enterprise. The value of American rubber goods export increased from \$ 62 to 73 million in the three year period, 1926-1928. Britain was left to dominate the whole rubber world and America was the longest consumer.

Britain passed Acts restricting raw rubber export from British possession in the East. America reacted to it and Mr. Hoover stimulated the research in synthetic rubber and other substitutes. In 1928 forty million pounds of reclaimed rubber and hundred million pounds of scrap and old rubber began entering the market. United States owns the best, rubber-growing lands in the Philippines, Liberia and Brazil. In trade competitions United States is winning and Britain is losing. Rubber exports of U. S. A. rose from \$ 62 to \$ 73 million in three years, 1926-1928 while that of the United Kingdom declined from \$ 43 to \$ 37 million.

Economic prosperity of a country depends upon the supply of raw materials to feed its factories. "The fight for raw materials plays the most important part in world politics, and even greater role than before the war,"-said Dr. Schacht. America is said to be the largest consumer of world's raw materials. The total output of United States can hardly be equalled by any other country. Some years back it was valued at \$ 400 million. Of world's total output U. S. A. produces in bauxite 30 per cent, aluminium metal 40 p. c., copper ore 52 p. c., iron ore 45 p. c., lead 38 p. c., coal 39 p. c., mica 47 p. c., and petroleum 71 p. c. And U. S. A. can run its industries independent of foreign materials whereas the United Kingdom lacks all the major minerals with the exception of coal and iron.

The present war has offered U. S. A. another opportunity of pooling capital in Europe. The utterance of President Roosevelt is indicative of his readiness to shape the course of events to come. The feeling of isolation is wearing out and United States is again entering the arena of strife as it did in the last war. Introduction of the bills to provide for Finland \$ 100 million amounts to active participation in the hostilities. Britain, France and Finland would be again chained to the *Wall Street*. And the world would once more find Europe invaded by the *Yankee*.

### Reign of Terror in Gwalior

Swami Sahajanand Saraswati has issued the following Statement :—

From the reports and news received in the office of the A. I. K. Sabha it appears, a terrible repression has been set on foot in right earnest in the Gwalior State and the last three months have witnessed the imprisonment of the president himself of the State Kisan Sabha, Dr. H.C. Chabue and five other active and influential Kisan-Mazdur workers, comrades Girdhar Lal Thakkar, Mangaliprasad, Bam Guru, Kusum and Swami Ramanandji. Moreover, comrade Balkrishna Sharma of Laskar and eleven others, some of whom are prominent members of the Executive Committee of the State Kisan Sabha and Labour Union, have been gagged for full two months and they have been further ordered not to participate in any public activity. But the matter does not rest here and the authorities are bent upon creating a terrifying impression on the people by humiliating and torturing those in their custody. The treatment meted out to them, it is reported, is simply inhuman. They are supplied with the most ordinary and rotten diet only, one blanket each inspite of the biting cold and that too, is worn out and full of infectious disease germs, with no materials to read and write. It is further reported that two of them, when they fell ill, were dragged in ropes to hospital. And all this simply because of their unpardonable crimes in organising successfully the Mazdurs in demanding their war bonus etc, and to help the Kisans to stand erect and resist the oppression set in full swing in various forms in the State.

I intend to put a straight question to the ruler of Gwalior: Will he read the signs of the time and draw lessons therefrom before it gets too late and retrace? Or will he invite his ultimate ruination by continuing to resort to such wild repressions? He should remember that he can not keep in perpetual bondage the toiling masses and their surging discontent will sweep him off one day which may not be far off.

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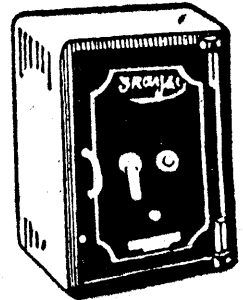
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## BOOK REVIEWS

**Observations on the "Man Behind the Plough"**—by Probha Nath Singha Roy and Sachin Sen. Published by British Indian Association, 18, British Indian Street, Calcutta. Re 1.

This brochure, as the authors point out, seeks to discuss and prove "the extent and nature of statistical misrepresentation and the historical inaccuracies, as are found in the book. "The Man Behind the Plough," by the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Azizul Huque, Speaker, Bengal Legislative Assembly, and Vice-Chancellor University of Calcutta." The book of which it is a criticism, naturally attracted wide notice from the public and the authors here have brought in a rich array of facts and figures to refute some of its assertions and conclusions. Whether the present criticism is justified or not, can be left only to competent readers to judge. We invite their attention to this brochure and hope that they will go into the subject dispassionately and ascertain where lies the truth.

**Deshagaurab Subhas Chandra** By Srimati Sudhira Sarkar, B. A. Published by Sarkar & Co., 7 B, Ballyganj Place, Calcutta. Price one rupee.

The book under review, as the title implies, is a short life-sketch of Subhas Chandra Bose. It starts with a brief account of the eventful life of the Leftist leader, sets forth its salient features, and gives a reprint of his important recent writings and pronouncements. Written in simple and clear English, it has thrown ample light on the inner springs of Subhas Chandra's stupendous public activities—the inspiring ideals behind them and the channels through which they have flown. Subhas Chandra's letters to his friend Hemanta Kumar Sarkar, written in early youth at the first flush of idealism, constitute the most arresting feature of the book. We congratulate the authoress on this valuable and interesting publication and we hope it will meet with deserving reception from the reading public. We have come across some printing mistakes in the book which, it is expected, will be set right in the future editions.

## HINDI

**Soviet Constitution**—(Soviet Bidhan) Translated by Rahul Sankrityayan.

For years Rev. Rahul Sankrityayan roamed over the wide earth with the avidity of a true scholar bent upon opening up the new frontiers of Buddhist Psychology and Philosophy. Rev. Rahul entered the forbidden land of Dalai Lama and unearthed the treasures of Buddhist lore hidden therein. And his contributions, truly speaking, to the richness of Buddhist philosophy can hardly be equalled by few orientalist of the present age.

Idealist philosophy stressed the mundane as being against the spiritual. But Rev. Rahul is a living protest against the popular conception of philosophy and has never been slow to realise the realities of the society that make and remake man, mould and remould his thought process. The philosopher is changed into a fighting socialist and is dedicated to the greatest of men's credos—the liberation of oppressed humanity.

Rev. Rahul visited Soviet Russia and on return wrote two books on Soviet. The present book is a free translation of the New Soviet Constitution. In 1917, on March 12, the inglorious reign of the Tsar ended and a new government was brought into being by the Duma backed by Prince George Lvoff which functioned until its reorganisation on May 16, 1917. Kerensky formed his cabinet on August 6, which was reorganised on October 8, and functioned until November 7 when the Military Revolutionary Committee of the All Russian Congress of Soviets seized the power.

At the eighth Congress of the Soviets on December 5, 1936, a new constitution was hammered out. According to the New Constitution the U. S. S. R. consists of 11 republics. And it is a socialist state of the workers and peasants; the highest organ of the state power is the Supreme Council. It is divided into the Council of the Union and the Council of Nationalities. The Council of the Union is elected by the citizens of the U. S. S. R. on the basis of one deputy for 300,000 citizens.

The Council of Nationalities is composed of deputies selected by the Supreme Council and the autonomous Republics and the Soviets of the Toilers' Deputies of the autonomous regions: 10 deputies from each Union Republic, and 5 deputies from each autonomous region. Deputies are elected on the principle of *universal suffrage* and *by secret ballot*. The first election under the New Constitution was held on December 12, '37 and 91,113,153 persons recorded their votes.

Students of contemporary social history would do well to read the book. The language of the book is easy and instinct with life.

## BENGALI

**Chikitsha and Pathya Bijgan**—by Dr. Sachimohan Chaudhuri, B. Sc. (Homeopath). Published by the author from Jatindra Mohon Avenue, Chittagong. Price Re. 1.

The author of the book is a reputed Homeopathic practitioner of Chittagong and the Principal of the Central Homeopathic College of that town. In nine chapters he has here dealt with some of the important aspects dietary in relation diseases. His treatment of this vitally important subject is not only clear and concise but amply documented with suitable quotations from authorities. Handy publications of this nature will fulfil a household need in a land where diseases are unhappily rampant and, as such they deserve high commendation from all.

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## Letter to The Editor

# New Independence Pledge

To

*The Editor, Forward Bloc*

Sir,

As required by the Congress Working Committee's resolution of the 22nd December 1939, regarding the Independence Day pledge I have to inform you that I cannot conscientiously take the revised pledge in its entirety, for I do not subscribe to the portion relating to what is called the "Constructive programme" which comprises the promotion of Khadi and of Communal harmony and the eradication of untouchability. My reasons are:—

1. The Khadi movement, in my opinion, has not even the remotest connection with our struggle for independence. The idea, if it is still entertained by any sane people, that the boycott of Lancashire cottons will ruin Lancashire and thereby bring Britain to her knees, is only an illusion. In any case, the social and economic assumptions underlying the Khadi movement appear to me to be fundamentally wrong and unsound.

(a) It seems to ignore the well-known principle of what is called in economics "socially necessary labour", which lays down that any labour spent in producing an article over and above what is necessary under the given social conditions which include the particular stage that the technique of production has reached creates no value and is therefore an absolute waste. Just as today it would be nothing short of madness to think of preparing a ten acre field for cultivation by digging with a spade (even though it may create work for all the present unemployed labour) similarly it should be absurd to insist on spinning with a distaff and spinning wheel when the self-acting mule is the implement in general use for spinning. Even as far back as 1832, it was estimated that with a self-acting mule spindle  $2\frac{1}{2}$  operatives could spin 183 seers of cotton with 150 hours labour, or 15 days labour of ten hours each, while with a spinning wheel, a handspinner could convert the same weight of cotton into

yarn with 2700 days labour of ten hours each or 27000 hours labour; and since then the efficiency of the spinning machinery has immensely increased. This is what Marx called a shameful squandering of human labour-power.

(b) It is a symbol not of economic independence, but of primitive man's helpless dependence on the forces of nature and his environment. It is a mark of man's ignorance and a virtual denial of all the scientific and technological discoveries and inventions which have enabled man to master nature and to produce with one hour's labour what his ancestors could not with a whole year's drudgery.

(c) It is a feeble recrudescence of the old revolt against machinery, which fails to distinguish between machinery and its employment by capital, and which should be directed not against the materialist instruments of production but against the mode in which they are used.

(d) It assumes the feasibility of the revival of the old domestic industries which is obviously an economic impossibility unless all the machinery in India is destroyed and the country is then absolutely cut off from the rest of world, or the whole body of Indian population is transported to some other planet whose inhabitants, if any, are at the "Adam-delved & Eve-span" stage of their technical and economic evolution.

(e) It seeks to perpetuate and even widen the present gulf between the city and the country, between the handworker and the brain worker. It condemns the villager to the incessant drudgery of producing his two primary needs—food and clothing—leaving him little or no time for cultural and recreational activities. In other words, it condemns him for ever to a low standard of life combined with perpetual intellectual and cultural inanition and desolation.

(f) It seems to assume that the mass of the population is destined to drudge at the production of the necessaries of life for itself and others and that a small

minority is destined to rule. In other words, it envisages a society in which there will be two castes instead of four, viz, the intellectual rulers and magnates of commerce and industry on the one hand, and the toiling masses on the other. And the conflicting interests of these two will be reconciled by keeping the latter contented and soothed with the narcotic of religion, supplemented by the benumbing drudgery of the plough and hoe during the day and of the spinning-wheel and the handloom during the night.

2. As regards Communal harmony my view is that its political significance has been unduly exaggerated. Its importance seems to depend on the illusory assumption that our kind masters would make us a gift of Swaraj, as they say, only if we would behave like good children and cease quarreling among ourselves. Otherwise, if we study the question analytically it reduces itself to an insignificant proportion. Surely, not at all the forty crore inhabitants of India are quarrelling over the so-called communal issues. On the contrary the overwhelming majority of the population is not even conscious of any communal differences, real or imaginary. The conflict is practically confined to two numerically insignificant sections of the several communities, viz.;

(a) The so-called politicians and leaders whose ambition and appetite for power is increasing in direct proportion to the increase in the opportunities for satiating that appetite. These gentlemen only want power—in most cases the power of office with all its privileges and material benefits and in a few cases the power and glory of popular leadership—and they would as readily put on a national garb as today they wear the communal mask, if they find that the former is more helpful than the latter in the attainment of their selfish ends. Now apart from the fact that their number is negligible, it is apparently futile to try to make them agree to any proposition in which they cannot see a continuation and enhancement of their personal prestige, power and privileges.

(b) The second group is that of the intellectuals who are in service or are seekers after service. The former uphold communalism because it offers better opportunities of promotion than seniority or merit and the latter have pinned their faith on communal proportions which,

they fondly imagine, would solve their problem of unemployment. But the number of such deluded intellectuals is fast decreasing, for they are beginning to realise that both promotions and posts are scanty, and that even these few are becoming the monopoly of the leaders' own kith and kin.

That leaves the great mass of population who may be said to be entirely free from the taint of communalism. There are, no doubt, occasional outbursts of fanaticism in villages and in towns, but they are almost invariably engineered and provoked by the politicians and their agent provocateurs. The predisposition to incitement is however there, which, is partly due to unintelligent static faiths of the people, which, if anything, are being intensified by the intellectuals professed faith in political-wizards and miracle-men who, in their turn, profess a deep faith in Providence that, they hope, would intervene and induce our benign rulers to drop, on a fine morning, the rosy apple of Swaraj into our laps. But the main cause of the excitability of the man in the street is physiological, viz. his frayed nerves due to overwork, combined with perpetual destitution and consequent under-nourishment and chronic ill-health. What wouldn't a man do in such a condition?

The remedy for the communal discord lies in dissociating the leaders from their duped following by arousing and intensifying the class-consciousness of the peasants and the workers as well as of the low-paid and unemployed intellectuals. This alone can free the people from the pernicious influence of the selfish leaders who hoodwink and mislead them by appealing to their religious passions and by playing on their frayed nerves, and hide their exploitive activities and personal ambitions under the cloak of communal zeal. This is also the only possible means of awakening the political consciousness of the people and of establishing real unity i.e. the unity of interests among the mass of population.

3. Unouchability also cannot be removed by mere preaching or by temple entry or by occasional public manifestations of fraternal affection for the Harijans. The only effective remedy lies in raising the economic, the social (and today the social status of a man is determined

by the length of his purse and not by the length of the sacred thread or by the shade of the vermillion on his forehead,) and the cultural level of the depressed classes and their liberation from the dirty work. I dare say the most orthodox Hindu today would not hesitate to shake hands or even dine at the same table with Dr. Ambedkar or Mr. Raja, while the latter gentlemen are likely to refuse to have any kind of social intercourse with a poor Brahmin cook or any other member of a high caste who is economically and culturally much below them.

My principal objection to this so-called "constructive programme" is that it diverts the public mind from the fundamental problem, viz. political freedom, the solution of which requires :—

(a) The formation of a highly disciplined party of leaders who should be drawn not only from the class of intellectuals but also in large proportion from the peasants and manual workers.

(b) The masses should be drawn into active politics. It must be realised that freedom will not come as a free gift from our rulers, but that it will have to be won, and that this can only be done by the masses and not by the handful of intellectuals alone who at present dominate the political movement.

The great emphasis laid on the so-called "Constructive programme" is an unmistakable indication of the fact that the Congress has lost its revolutionary mentality and has become a purely constitutional and reformist movement. Among the intelligentsia fears are even entertained that the movement is changing its political colour and is deteriorating into a mystical, quasi-religious organisation with a spiritual head whose opinions are hailed as divine revelations and whose behests are obeyed as divine commandments.

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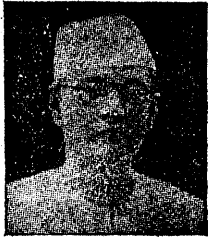
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