

# FORWARD BLOC

A POLITICAL WEEKLY

Editor :—SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

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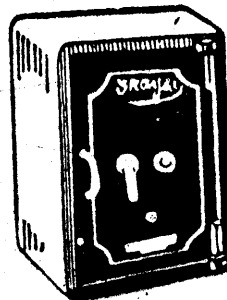
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## FORWARD BLOC

SATURDAY, JANUARY 27

*Our Goal*

On the 26th January millions of India's sons and daughters, including Indians living abroad, took with solemnity the Independence Pledge.

"We believe that it is the inalienable right of the Indian people, as of any other people, to have freedom and to 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."

The people of India also solemnly "pledged themselves anew to the independence of India" and resolved "to carry on...the struggle till Purna Swaraj is attained."

The pledge is a reminder of India's present status and of her determination to end that status by attaining Purna Swaraj or Complete Independence.

Even while we take the pledge an influential section of the Congress has been plotting behind the scene to sabotage the struggle for independence and to accept something less than independence. Even while we take the pledge we are being told of "a distinct offer from Great Britain" on the basis, not of the independence of India, but of Dominion status of a variety. It is being preached to us that our goal is not the attainment of Purna Swaraj or Complete Independence and the severance of the British

connection, but that our "goal should be Independence of British Constitution"!

"The goal of the Congress"—we have it from Sri Rajagopalachari "was something different from Dominion Status. *But it did not mean that at any particular time, the one or the other (Dominion Status or complete freedom) was not the wise thing to take up.* That should be left for the politicians to decide." (Italics ours).

The millions of India's sons and daughters who read the Independence Pledge on the 26th January must beware of the "wise" things that are being hatched in the politicians' conclaves. The decision has been made by the Indian people, the decision is Purna Swaraj or Complete Independence. The decision has been made for the Indian people by the Indian people. Nothing is left for the politicians to decide.

The millions who took the Independence Pledge on the 26th January must see that they are not betrayed into the shoal of "wise" compromises. They pledged themselves to "sever the British connection" and "to carry out the struggle for freedom till Purna Swaraj is attained." They must see that they stand true to the pledge which they took and do not deviate from the goal which they have set before themselves. We must be prepared to fight out all unworthy compromises. The plot of a great betrayal has become a real menace to-day. We are told, in the house of Commons, that "negotiations were going on between Mr. Gandhi and the Viceroy." The real nature of these "negotiations" may be clearly understood from the insidious propaganda that is being carried on by Sri Rajagopalachari who is known to act in close collaboration with the Congress High Command. While we read the solemn pledge of Independence, Sri Rajagopalachari defines our goal in these terms :

"Their goal should be Independence of British Constitution. Dominion Status to-day might be equivalent to complete freedom. It might be even better because they got a navy without paying for it."

This is a proposition which is unworthy of the great Congress organisation to put forward and of the Indian people to accept. Our appeal is to the millions of India's sons and daughters who took the Independence Pledge. They must be prepared to guard against this menace of a betrayal of their Cause.

**"STORM IN SHANGHAI"**

The war robbed Japan and her "China Incident" of some of the unholy glamour that was theirs. For, a close student of Western diplomacy as Japan is, she seemed to be at her wits end when 'the strange war' burst on our globe, heralded by the strangest of all diplomatic 'upsets'—the Soviet-German Pact of August 23 last. It took the world by surprise however much the Soviet trend of diplomacy pointed to this possibility, of a Soviet-German understanding. It sent Japan into a feat of indignation and anger. She had put her faith in the Anti-Comintern professions of Germany; she had joined the 'Axis'—the solitary crusader in the East—to watch on their behalf the menacing Enemy on the outer Mongolian and Manchurian borders and on the pacific coast. And the Tenton was now gone over to the Enemy, had sold his soul to mephistopheles. The basis of Japanese foreign policy of the Hironuma Cabinet seemed to give way, and, it made way for Abe ministry (September 28) which was avowed to be an "appeasement" Cabinet. The "Axis" was to remain, if necessary, but neither the Soviet nor British, American or French Powers are to be any more alienated so that the 'China Incident' may be brought to a successful close without their obstruction. For, Japan must liquidate the Incident in order to reap the best harvest in the East during the War.

Perhaps, the Abe Cabinet was attempting too much or, by its very character, as *centrists*, it was too timid to attempt too much. For, inherent in the Japanese position in the Far East are certain difficulties which made her understanding

with the Soviet and the Western Powers that had acquired interests in China highly problematic.

The Soviet, it was known, was in all respects a barrier and threat to Japan. Ideologically, they stood for two entirely different systems. On the Amur river, on questions of Shakhalin mining rights, and that of fishery, the two powers were constantly ready to measure the strength of each other. Border incidents could blaze up any moment as they were about to do on the Amur in 1936, on the Manchukuo border in Oct. 1938. Japanese thrust through inner Mongolia met the Soviet watch in Outer Mongolia. The region might serve as the fields for the two forces to clash. And, when a Sino-Soviet understanding was reached, and Soviet supplies of war materials traversed the long track to reach the Chungking Government, the Japanese knew that the Soviet was the potential enemy behind and an anti-Comintern alliance the last policy for Japan.

It was not difficult to see also that the 'China Incident' when it reached its logical termination in the contemplated 'New Order in the Far East' would mean a domination of the vast continent of China economically and politically by "the little islanders" of the East. Necessarily, therefore, it would put an end to the political and commercial hold of those Western Powers who had found a weak China accommodating them with Settlements and Positions. Soon enough, the Open Door principle would have to be given the go-bye; and, these foreign interests would lose the market in China. The powers most affected thus by the possible Japanese success in China would be Great Britain, France and the United States. For the moment, as Japan knew, none of them could take any positive action against her in Asia. They were trying frantically to save their lives in Europe or at home in America; their Asiatic belongings must be left at the mercy of strong highwaymen. So, Japan knew, and, acted accordingly—acted strongly and intelligently, as she had trained herself in the school of Western diplomacy. The Powers, she knew would be moral

supporters of Chiang-Kai-Shek; but would dare not strike on his behalf. The European Fascist forces would naturally be Japan's concern as a counterpoise against any possible combination of Britain—France and America behind Chiang-Kai-Shek, Japan, therefore, should join the "Axis" with Germany and Italy.

The "Axis" grew stronger day after day. It was bound both by principle and actual political necessity. Its partners as Fascists were avowedly imperialists in aim, and, therefore, anti-Communists in principle. Late in the field, they cried for a redivision of the world to allow them a share in its colonial exploitation. They were the 'Have-nots' of the imperialistic faith and order. Everywhere they found their path blocked by the great "Haves" of the same hallowed seat—Britain, France and the United States of the same tenets and practice, they therefore, found themselves in mutual conflict, and Japan knew well-enough that both by principle and necessity of diplomatic position, she belonged to the camp of the "Have-nots."

For the time being, however, the "China incident" left her no scope to play a big role. In fact China was bigger than all other possible roles. It would signify her entry in the imperialist's theatre in all honour and might once the affair was concluded. She was mistress of the Chinese sea ports. She had occupied maritime Provinces and she had locked up the Sea gates of China. But from the far-off seat at Chungking, Chiang-Kai-Shek refused to yield and even in the "occupied" zones outside the stations, the Japanese sway was very insecure. Military glory had lost the usual glamour and military leaders of the Kwantang Army no longer could count on crushing China so soon. Economically Japan was receiving herself and running through her rich accumulations. Financially China was still a loss. Foreign traders had added to this loss, by their support of the Chinese national currency which prevented the Japanese from dragging the conquered territories within the "Yen Block" they were construct-

ing. Thus, Japan entered the third phase of the "China incident"—when she decided to consolidate the conquests and began simultaneously the drive against the Western powers. The brunt of this attack was to be borne by Britain as the Tientsin Blockade and Kowloon landing of Japanese marines showed. Japanese press launched a campaign which in its bitterness and determination reminded one of the Nazi press achievements. Simultaneously almost, the Outer Mongolian borders witnessed another spurt of Soviet-Japanese engagements at Nonmonhan area. And, to understand Japanese politics in its proper relations we have to remember that both the ventures were undertaken by the Japanese army leaders in China on their initiative without any regard for the foreign policy of Arita at home. For, the then Naval minister (now premier) Admiral Yonai and M. Arita had turned down their Army's strong proposal for a military alliance with Germany. The Army wanted the politicians to force into that position now by these two-fold measures—anti-Soviet engagements in the field, and anti British (and French-American) drive in the occupied China. The latter, they were emboldened to hope, would in the present condition of the Western powers accomplish another end. Britain would act once more in relation to China as she had done in that of Czechoslovakia, and a "Far Eastern Munich" would complete what Japanese army, had failed to do—establishment of the New Order in the Far East.

All these hopes were dashed to the ground when Germany signed away anti-Comintern principles on Aug. 23. Japan had to take stock of her position. The Abe ministry proved its first success with the Soviet-Japanese truce of September 15, reached "over a cup of tea" on the Outer Mongolian-Manchurian borders. Tension with Britain and America eased. A "Far Eastern Munich," the cabinet probably calculated, would be easier to secure with a friendly Britain. But in the battle fields the Japanese armies, in spite of success, were met by resolute and better equipped foes. Time was on their side. Ot the

home front the Japanese economy worsened; prices soared higher in reaction to the New War and rice was dear. It became evident that America was keeping a big navy in the Pacific and the speech of Ambassador Grey at Tokyo and the abrogation of the Commercial Treaty of 1911 that is to expire January 26, again falsified all hopes of understanding with Western Powers and of their help in the solution of the Chinese tangle to Japan's advantage.

So, the Yonai Cabinet comes with its policy of better relation with the Soviet, ending of China incident, repairing of the "Axis", and of reaching an understanding with the Western powers.

The implications of this policy are becoming clear. Certainly for Japan the primary consideration is now to solve the China problem—solve it in their light by the establishment of the New Order in the Far East. It is being pushed in two ways—through the puppet. Central China regime of Wang Chiang-wei, who pretends to show that Japan is now offering "reasonable terms" for settlement; and through perhaps an attempt at depriving Chiang Kai-Shek of the war supplies and the help of the Chinese Red army by an understanding, if possible, with the Soviet. A Soviet friendship, it is found, will no longer cost the German alliance and Italy, anti-Comintern as she is, has signified to retain the 'Axis' connection. Count Ciano has telegraphed to stand behind the puppet regime of Wang.

Two things, therefore, would weigh on the mind of any observer of the Far East. If these alliances succeed, what about China then? Would the Soviet, ready as it must be to be relieved of anxiety in the East at this moment, leave at last the Chinese in the lurch? Would the Western Powers suffer the same and thus agree to their own extinction finally in the East politically, economically and even morally? The second question arises in this connection: How does Japan view the British, French (and American) block? Perhaps in the furious outburst against the *Asama Maru's* arrest and in the Tokyo distribution

of anti-British pamphlets we see how that policy is taking shape.

Indeed, the war clouds darken and darken and if a Moscow-Rome-Berlin-Tokyo "Axis" materialises the storm may burst over the East as well.

## CURRENT COMMENTS

### Independence Day Celebrations

India observed her Independence Day yesterday with unprecedented enthusiasm. Ten years ago the practice was started of observing the 26th of January as India's Independence Day, and year after year the national pledge formulated for the purpose has been re-iterated in countless meetings by countless millions of the land's freedom-hungry population. The pledge originally shaped has through all these years been sanctified with the blood and broken limbs of many martyrs, and round it has grown a mass of sacred traditions. Unfortunately, however, Mahatma Gandhi chose this year to super-add to the original pledge two new-fangled clauses on Charkha and Khadi and Harijan which have had the effect of calling forth from the Leftist ranks a chorus of protests and of further accentuating the difference between the Right and the Left at a moment when India stood in the sorest need of united action.

But the Leftists all over the country have displayed a commendable spirit by deciding to stick fast to the original pledge and quietly cut the Gandhian appendage.

The Independence pledge as it was re-affirmed yesterday, has had its peculiar significance this year in view of the political situation in India and outside. While the complications of international politics have opened up before India the glorious Pisgah prospect of the Land of Promise, our Moses has been fumbling pitifully on the mountain-top—for a formula of compromise. And we are in danger of being cut off from the vision. Our gaze is sought to be directed to a lower ideal and our national demands reduced. It is in flat contradiction to the pledge India uttered yesterday and has uttered

from year to year with a sense hourly approaching victory.

Let all the Leftists in the country pool their energies together and put forth a final effort to finish the last lap of our journey that takes us to our clear purposed goal. Let us all assure Mother India:

"thou hast great allies;  
Thy friends are exultations, agonies  
And love, and man's unconquerable  
mind."

### Mystery of Satyagraha

Mahatma Gandhi has said that satyagraha now prompts him to co-operate with the government. The rider "on honourable terms" is no better than a mere face-saving and white-washing device. The Congress stands committed to the pledge of complete independence and the Viceroy's Bombay speech has only adumbrated Dominion Status for India. Then, again, there is no reference in the speech when that promise will take shape and how much watering-down it will undergo as a result of adjustments of the various conflicting interests on which British diplomacy is evidently banking. We have heard of giving a bad name to a good thing to hang it. But Mahatmaji, in this case, is going to give a good name to a bad or unsubstantial thing to embrace it. What is particularly puzzling to ordinary men like ourselves is the Mahatma's conception of his pet satyagraha. Urged on by it he has so long lent his full support to the Congress creed of independence. Now, again, at the instance of the same thing he has chosen to shift his ground. Will Mr. Kripalani and Dr. Patthabhi, the accredited commentators of Wardha scriptures, enlighten us as to how satyagraha can be consistent with co-operation with an imperialist government? To the teeming uninitiated millions of the country it invariably strikes that satyagraha comes conveniently to accord its sanction to anything on which the Mahatma sets his heart at any time. It is really his slave and not his master and guide as he often tells us.

### Language that Conceals

Away from Wardha and the hypnotic presence of the Mahatma,

Pandit Jawaharlal has again begun to roar and Mr. Rajagopalchariar spin out specious cobwebs about Independence. "There can be" the Pandit has said "and will be no settlement in India except on the basis of Indian independence and India's right to frame her own Constitution without any intervention from outside." And Rajaji has virtually vented himself in the same strain in the following pithy sentence, "The nation's goal should be complete freedom nationally" It is useless to face them with the pertinent query that if this be their real position, how could they persuade themselves to tender sheepish acquiescence to the Mahatma's formula of a settlement on the basis of the Viceroy's recent pronouncement. Evidently, they themselves, too, know it quite well that these utterances are not meant to be taken seriously. Both of them have again dilated on the necessity of complete unity in Congress ranks. On reading it we can hardly resist a smile and are forced to mutter within ourselves, 'verily, language has been invented to conceal thoughts and not to express them.'

#### Time to Choose and Decide

The mind of Mr. Jayprakash Narain, the Socialist leader, has indeed become a fit subject for pathological study. He is conscious that he is a Socialist and the Rightists are Gandhians and as such ideologically he is bound to stand apart from them. But like his guide and philosopher Pandit Jawaharlal, he cannot tear himself away from the apron-strings of the Gandhians. Himself illogical to the core, he has not, however refrained from having a lot of flings at those who have dared to be logical in their words and deeds. In one of his recent statements he has opined, "If, however, there is to be no action and a settlement is reached and freedom remains in the distance, the obligation for discipline vanishes and we are free to choose our own path of advance." If this be his real stand, where are his differences with us and why has he been creating so much hubbub over them? For, have we not made it clear times without number that as soon as marching orders will be given, the

ranks will be closed up and all will stand like disciplined soldiers at the back of the Generalissimo? But Mr. Jayprakash Narain must be living in a fool's paradise if he still thinks that Gandhiji is going to lead a struggle. Indeed, the situation has today become too urgent to admit of quibbling and vacillation. Mr. Jay Prakash Narain and those whom he represents should now choose and decide their course. And if they can not summon up courage enough to act up to their convictions, they should at least be honest enough to observe the golden silence.

#### Fair Hopefuls Speak out

The resolutions adopted by the All-India Women Students Conference in its recent sitting at Lucknow are happily characterised by a refreshing boldness. They range over a large field, from merely educational to domestic, social and moral. We are particularly glad to find that Miss India of 1940 has not chosen to go the way of her predecessors in raving against the tyrannies of the mere male. Freedom, whether social or political, can never be a gift from others; it has to be striven for, asserted and won. Not that we do not realise the value of propaganda for its sake, for, the ground has to be suitably prepared for nursing the delicate plant of freedom. At Lucknow the fair hopefuls of India spoke with wonderful frankness. We admire them for it, because, hard knocks are needed to whip up the sleeping social leviathan. We can assure our young sisters that if they are earnest about their freedom—we doubt not they really are so—then the fetters will fall off their feet in no time. The time-forces are in their favour and they need not despair. Let them, however, remember that the attainment of political emancipation is of paramount importance for all, irrespective of sex and age. History bears out the fact that it is the mightiest lever to social emancipation as well.

#### Madaripure

Under the auspices of the local Congress Committee Independence Day was observed and the national flag was hoisted by Sita. Sarala Devi.

## INDEPENDENCE DAY COUNTRYWIDE CELEBRATION

### CONGRESS URGED TO LAUNCH FIGHT

#### Sj. Subhas Bose's Speech At Lucknow Meeting

Addressing a largely attended meeting organised under the auspices of the Provincial Forward Bloc where the 1930 Pledge was read, Sj. Subhas Chandra Bose said "Swaraj cannot be achieved through the plying of Charka and by using khadi. It would come only through mass organisations and sacrifices."

Continuing Sj. Bose pointed out how the Congress demand for complete independence had been relegated to the background and the Constituent Assembly with separate electorate and convened by the British Government had taken its place.

Sj. Bose also observed "We do not want the power and position of office. What we want is that the Congress should launch the fight for independence, and the moment it is launched, our difference would vanish."

#### CALCUTTA

##### At B. P. C. C. Office

Maulvi Ashraffuddin Ahmed Chowdhury unfurled the national flag at quarter to eight at the office of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee at Prem Chand Baral Street. Lusty shouts of "Bande Mataram" accompanied the hoisting of the flag.

##### At "Forward Bloc" Office

Amid shouts of "Bande Mataram" Sj. Sarat Chandra Bose hoisted the national flag at the "Forward Bloc" office at the Indian Association Hall. The function was followed by "Bande Mahataram" song.

##### At Gurudwara Park (Kalighat)

Sj. Satya Gupta hoisted the National flag in the morning at Kalighat Park in the presence of a large gathering.

##### At Sradhananda Park

Numerous processions organised by different Congress Committees, Students' Organisations, Kisan Sabhas, Labour Party, and the League of Radical Congressmen, paraded the main thoroughfares and terminated in the Sradhananda Park in the evening where the Independence Pledge of 1939 was read by Sj. Rajendra Chandra Dev, President B. P. C. C.

By Harendra Nath Mukerji

## AN ANSWER TO PANDIT NEHRU

A little while ago Pandit Nehru wrote an article called "What of Russia Now?" The Pandit is very annoyed with Russia (by which we suppose he means the Soviet Union), because it has not been behaving in the kind of way Pandit Nehru likes. A lot of people in Bengal have read his article, because the *Statesman* has quoted extracts and made jubilant comments, and the editor of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* has been kind enough to reprint it whole, of course, out of pure zeal for the truth and with no malicious desire to sneer at the Soviet Union. So perhaps the Pandit's question, though intended to be rhetorical, deserves an answer.

Unfortunately it is difficult to answer it without being a little unkind to Pandit Nehru. For the truth is that the Pandit has not bothered to find out the facts. We may let pass his remarks on the great Soviet treason trials which followed the murder of Kirov, because they are not the main subject of his article, which is Finland. We would only remark in this connection that a man who does not realize the vast network of espionage, and the preparations for an imminent capitalist attack, revealed at those trials, will hardly understand why the Soviet Union today regards as so urgent the defence of the Gulf of Finland. But let us get on to Finland itself.

Here the Pandit reveals his knowledge of the subject almost from the start. Finland, he declares, is a united democratic country, the brutal attack on which by the Soviet Union has lost it India's sympathy. More than this, the Soviet Union has been false to its ideal of peace and betrayed "the ideals of innumerable human beings."

Let us examine this statement in detail.

First Finland, the "United democratic country." We would very humbly ask Pandit Nehru: "In what other 'United democratic country' is it necessary to keep 100,000 armed thugs called 'Protective Guards' to hold down the civil population? In what other 'United democratic country' do the President of the country and the President of the Reichstag both get kidnapped by Fascists in the same

year?" Of course, anyone who is not a fool, ignorant or biased, know that Finland is nothing of the kind. It has the forms of democracy, but so has France under Daladier. That has not stopped both countries from being in fact dictatorships of finance capital, the difference being that the Finn ruling class openly murders and slugs its opponents while Daladier uses decree laws or the army instead.

Now the question of aggression. We would begin by pointing out that Finland has been partly consistently attacking, or intriguing to attack, the Soviet Union for the last twenty years. Its "National liberator" Mannerheim—in the intervals of permanently "liberating" about 60,000 Finns with a bullet through the head—assisted the British Fleet to Sinarh, the Estonian Soviet Republic; ended the Allied Murmansk expedition and the advance of Yudenitch on Petrograd; raided Soviet Karelia in 1921 with two

## ON RUSSIA

divisions; intrigued with the British all through the twenties; in 1935 plotted with the Premier of Hungary and the great Polish landowner Prince Radziwill for a concerted attack on the Soviet Union. In 1937 the Finnish Ministry of Agriculture tried to lease Petsamo to the Germans as a "fishing concession", the Finnish working class, however, was of the opinion that the only "fish" the Germans were interested in was torpedoes, destined for the labours of Murmansk and Archangel, so they made such a row that the thing had to be dropped. In 1938 Finland suddenly decided (in defiance of a treaty) that she wanted to fortify the Aaland Islands which hold the entrance to the Gulf of Finland. This would also have been grand for Germany, so Britain and France, which were still in the "appeasement" stage, promptly agreed; but the Soviet Union quickly put a stop to it.

So now, after a long history of threats

and menaces, blameless little Finland comes to the present dispute. In September of last year Moscow opened negotiations with Helsinki for a pact of mutual assistance similar to those concluded with the Baltic countries, which had stopped any possibility of Hitler going north-east and had safeguarded those little states from any possibility of future attack—whether by Hitler or anyone else. The Soviet Union also requested certain concessions, for which she was prepared to make an adequate return. What those terms were no one knew for quite a time, because the Finnish Government took very great care not to tell the "United democratic country" until the fighting had actually started. (Why, Pandit Nehru?)

Molotov, however, having a free Soviet people to consider, was not so secretive, and his speech of October 31 revealed them. First and foremost was the need to safeguard Leningrad. Leningrad is only

20 miles from the Finnish border, well within the range of a modern gun, so as things stood Mannerheim's bright boys could any morning start using the second city of the Soviet Union for target practice.

Comrade Molotov proposed that the frontier should be carried back some miles in the Karelian isthmus. He offered in return twice the area in Soviet Karelia, a country rich in timber and mineral deposits which has long made the Finnish capitalists' mouth water. Secondly, it was equally necessary that Leningrad should be secured from the sea, for Kronstadt is too close to be complete protection. He therefore asked for the cessation of one or two Islands in the Gulf of Finland, which was quite useless to the Finns, again offering territorial compensation. Finally, in order to achieve real security in the Gulf, the Red Navy needed a box at its northern mouth. They already had in Paldiski (Port Baltic) a base leased from Estonia in the south. If Finland allowed them to lease the Hangoe peninsula, the two bases would then command the entrance with their guns. In return for the lease (not cessation, mind) of Hangoe for definite period (i.e. long enough for the

Hitler nuisance to be eliminated and to prevent any Allied "crusade for the preservation of Western Civilization") the Soviet Union was prepared to withdraw its objection to Finland fortifying the Aaland Islands, so long as she did it herself and did not let some other power have a hand in it. In this way Finland would gain complete command of the Gulf of Bothnia.

When these terms were revealed, the capitalist press—which was already committed to supporting Finland right or wrong—tried to make out that their acceptance would have compromised Finland's independence. Such was not the view of the Finns, or at least of their Premier Cajander, for in a broadcast on October 13 he described them as "not constituting any threat to Finland's independence." (You will remember that he was thrown out of his job later.) They would certainly not have been regarded as unreasonable by the Finnish workers, or why were they never allowed to hear of them? They are not even thought unreasonable by Pandit Nehru. Why then were they rejected?

The reason was that Cajander was in abject fear of a Fascist rising. Until very recently the country had been under direct Fascist rule, but a little while ago popular pressure had become so great that a milk-and-water "Peasant and Labour" Coalition had taken office. For the peasants and labours it had done nothing. Finnish wage-levels are only half those of Norway, Sweden and Denmark, but the Soviet Democrat Ministers did nothing about that. They simply sat trembling in their chairs, not daring to offend anyone and even so expecting to be overthrown by force at any moment. When the negotiations started they were given very plainly to understand that surrender would mean an immediate *putsch*. What is more, as Claude Cockburn revealed in *The Week*, they were informed by the Allies that London and Paris would suggest the *putsch*. Faced with the choice of acting as agents of the reactionaries or irrevocably throwing in their lot with the workers, the Soviet Democrat leaders, as usual, preferred the capitalists.

Then came Molotov's speech of October 31. Now the cat was out of the bag, for very soon the Finnish people would

come to know where the real truth lay. Time was running short for the Mannerheim gang. They already had seven divisions in the Karelian isthmus and over 300,000 men under arms, with promises of money, guns and volunteers from abroad. So on November 6, Mannerheim coolly opened fire with heavy artillery on the Soviet Frontier outposts at Manila in Karelia. (An eye-witness account will be found in *National Front* of January 21.) This was not the first time that outrages of this kind had occurred on the Karelian border. In fact in Karelia, as on the borders of Manchukuo, these have been continuous frontier incidents for years. It was, however, the first time heavy artillery had come into action against entirely peaceful troops. The Red Army not unnaturally asked its Government for leave to deal with the matter as they had dealt with the Japanese at Changkuteng.

What was the Soviet Government to do? If it did nothing the next shells would probably land in Leningrad. Besides, the incident showed that attempting to such terms with the Finns was quite hopeless, that they were arming to the teeth and meant to fight. Doubtless Pandit Nehru would have started spinning *khadi* on the boarder and asking Mannerheim to join him. Somehow this idea did not occur to the Soviet Government.

The Finns, of course, having made a conflict inevitable, offered arbitration. Even the capitalist press has not said very much about that, because anyone who is not a complete fool knows what that offer was worth. What arbitrator among all the nations of Europe would have given the Soviet case—fair hearing? As the *Hindusthan Standard* remarked: "For more than a century international arbitrament has proved to be the judgment of the Great Powers imposed upon weaker peoples against their will and to the detriment of their interests." No, the only possible course was to cease dealing with the Finnish assassins and assist the Finnish people in setting up a new, democratic and responsible Government.

Pandit Nehru, while admitting much of the Soviet case, denies that the Soviet Union was sufficiently threatened to justify hostilities. It seems necessary to remind him of a few more facts. On October 1 a letter appeared on the main page of *The Times* calling for "an alliance with the better elements in Germany against the real enemy—Russia". On October 11 the Paris press threatened that "in the event of a Russo-Finnish war, Britain and France would not respect Soviet neutrality." On October 31 the *New York Herald Tribune* stated that the object of the war was not to destroy Germany but to "save it for western civilization." On November 1 the United States recalled its ambassador from Moscow. On November 19 Italy threatened to turn the Balkans into a second Spain (and has since sent large numbers of "volunteers" and aeroplanes to Finland). On November 30 (before fighting had started) the British National Defence Public Interest Committee, which includes Labour Members, was coupling Poland and Finland already as victims of aggression. In India the Government, the European Association and the police are already behaving as though we were at war with the Soviet Union. The censorship is enlisted against the Soviet and in favour of the Finns. A great anti-communist drive in Bengal took place this week.

Therefore, we do not agree with Pandit Nehru that the Soviet Union has betrayed the ideals of unnumbered millions, or the ideal of peace. We believe that there was no peace, but a war situation of infinite menace; that by her prompt and vigorous action the Soviet Union has taken steps to forestall that holocaust which was intended to come when Hitler fell, the united capitalist attack on the Socialist fatherland. And we believe that the unnumbered millions to whom Pandit Nehru refers, who have no desire to die in such a war for the convenience of their capitalist rulers are profoundly grateful.

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# THE PRESENT SITUATION AND LEFT UNITY

—By NIHARENDU DUTT-MAJUMDAR  
General Secretary, Labour Party.

The issue of compromise or no compromise with British Imperialism has come into the centre of the stage. The need of the hour is the clearest possible analysis of the present situation. An uncompromising attitude to Imperialism is not only essential for national independence but also for the next stage of marching to socialism, which any form of British connection (whether Dominion status or otherwise) will actively prevent in alliance with the Indian bourgeoisie. The formation of a Soviet India is not possible so long as even a vestige of connection with imperialist Britain exists. The issue of *complete* political independence is therefore clear and precise and admits of no compromise.

If we reflect on the role of the different classes comprising Indian society in relation to the coming struggle, it will be clear that all sections of the Indian community are vitally interested in an *uncompromising* anti-Imperialist struggle except the bourgeoisie represented by the present Working Committee of the Congress and their Rightist supporters, the princes and other feudal elements. We stress the word "uncompromising" in the above sentence, as the Indian bourgeoisie are undoubtedly in conflict with British capitalist interests and to that extent are their opponents. The Indian bourgeoisie are similarly in conflict with the interests of the exploited and toiling masses of India. *The attitude which the Indian bourgeoisie would take up in a given situation is therefore determined by the balance between these two conflicts.* In the present situation the bourgeoisie are fearing a militant mass movement in the country, which might lead not only to the extinction of British capitalist power in India but also to the overthrow of their own capitalist interests. Besides, from the points of view of (1) huge war profits, (2) the possibility of socialist revolution in

Western countries and (3) the rising power of the Soviet, these bourgeoisie are with the Imperialists and are to that extent opposed to the forces working for peace and socialism. They are therefore eager for such a compromise with Imperialism, as would assure to them a large increase in their political power and in their share of the economic exploitation of the Indian people while ensuring to themselves the political and military support of Imperialism as against the rising temper of the toiling masses of India. The concrete form of such compromise is Dominion Status within the Empire, which would suit these gentlemen best. That is why Dominion Status is being already stated to contain the "substance of independence." That is why the concept of Constituent Assembly is being vulgarised as an assembly to be called under the auspices of British Imperialism. That is why compromise is stated by the Mahatma to be of the very essence of Satyagraha. War requirements, the expected German offensive in spring, the increase in economic distress of the general people and the rising tide of Leftism in India—all these factors are also tending to induce Imperialism to come to terms with the Indian bourgeoisie represented by the Congress Working Committee. In the present situation a compromise between Imperialism and the Indian bourgeoisie is almost certain and the nature of the compromise will be conditioned by the extent to which Imperialism is willing to concede the political and economic demands of the Indian bourgeoisie. In order to induce British Imperialism to make as much concession as possible, the Congress Working Committee has from time to time to use hot words and threaten revolt. The Mahatma, the master strategist of the bourgeoisie in this country, has also to consider that he may have, under certain conditions, to fall

back on a mass movement to enforce certain minimum concessions from British Imperialism. In order to ensure that in such a contingency the mass movement may not break the non-violent and reformist bounds and may not come under the influence of uncompromising anti-Imperialists, the Mahatma has to see that the reformist and diversionist spirit of the Charkha and spinning may permeate the movement, that all militant Leftists are ruthlessly excluded from the Congress leadership and even from the Congress organisation in the sacred name of discipline and that his personal leadership of the movement remains unchallenged. That is the significance of the redoubled emphasis that the Mahatma is laying on Charkha and on discipline in the present juncture. The Mahatma has just confessed with disarming frankness that he is out for compromise, that he is thinking of "neither strikes nor of no-tax campaign", if *at all* the struggle has to be started. It is perfectly clear that if, in the last resort he is compelled to launch a struggle in order to enforce minimum concessions from British Government (which appears extremely unlikely at the moment of writing), he will either try to stop it as soon as those concessions are obtained or try to sabotage it if it begins to be militant even if those concessions are not obtained. He will rather have the *status quo* than have, as he says, "anarchy and red ruin". He has publicly stated that he would oppose civil resistance, if it is launched by anybody but himself. The position, therefore, is this—firstly, the Mahatma is very unlikely to launch a mass movement, and, secondly, even if he does so, he will try to sabotage it as it tends to be militant. It will be clear from the foregoing that the Indian bourgeoisie as a class are *not uncompromisingly* anti-imperialistic but may join an anti-imperialist struggle only

under certain circumstances. To rely on the *certainty* that the bourgeoisie can be *forced* to launch an anti-imperialist struggle by the pressure of the Leftists and not to launch the national struggle unless the Congress Working Committee launches it, is not only not Marxism but dangerous lunacy. Such an attitude leads objectively and logically into the camp of counter-revolution.

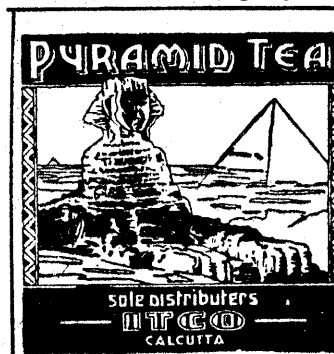
This peculiar "forcing theory" has recently been developed by the leaders of the "National Front" group, who, we are told, call themselves communists. They declare that nobody except the Congress Working Committee has the right to launch a *national* struggle. All that the Leftists can do in the meanwhile is to carry on scattered partial struggles and force the Working Committee to start the struggle. Even if the horse does not want to drink the water, he must be made to do so. We have shown above from an objective analysis of the present situation that, *from their own interests* the bourgeoisie are unlikely to launch the struggle. The "National Front" leaders have gone so far with this "forcing theory" that they would not consider even the possibility of the movement being launched by any organisation other than the Working Committee. They are irate with the Forward Bloc for preparing to launch and lead the nation-wide struggle. To the question as to what is to be done if the Working Committee cannot be "forced" to launch the struggle, there is no answer. Such supineness in leadership would have been unbelievable, if it were not true. The Labour Party has never taken an uncompromising attitude to the bourgeoisie but has wanted them to be in the anti-imperialist movement so far as they will go, but has refused to rely on the certainty that the Congress Working Committee can be "forced" to launch the national struggle. The 'Forward Bloc' represents and was formed to represent not a particular party but the largest body of *uncompromising* anti-imperialists as opposed to compromising anti-imperialists represented by the Congress Working Committee. As such, it was the duty of all Leftists including Left Nationalists, Socialists and Communists to join and strengthen the 'Forward Bloc' unreservedly, while retaining their own organisations. While the "National Front" leaders lent

their unwilling support to the "Forward Bloc" at the beginning, they have consistently refused to join it and make it a "bloc" of all Leftists and have recently been actively opposing the right and duty of the 'Forward Bloc' to launch a nation-wide movement in case the Congress Working Committee does not do so. The right course of genuine communists would obviously be to join the "Forward Bloc" as the *largest uncompromisingly anti-imperialist* front in India and then by their own work, drive, and energy to place the working class at the head of the national movement and thus become the core and the driving force of the entire national struggle. This simple path the "National Front" leaders have deliberately rejected and they have pursued curious policy of suicidal sectarianism on the one hand and trailing at the tail of the Working Committee on the other. P. C. Joshi of the "National Front" has even accepted the Charkha portion of the independence pledge and now even Dr. Rajendra Prasad has given the right to Congress members to omit that portion of the pledge. Some students under their influence even indirectly voted for the Charkha clause at the Delhi meeting of the All-India Students' Federation. All this has caused unparalleled confusion in the Left ranks, when an invincible Left unity was needed. And this unity has been wrecked on the rock of the "forcing theory", on the rock of vain attempts at unity with the Rightists. This has been called Communism. This has been called Marxism. We do not know then what Menshevism is. And the strange part is that these same "National Front" leaders have dubbed the Labour Party as economist and ultra-Leftist, that is to say, as fire and water at the same time. These same leaders have stated that the 'Forward Bloc' is a compromising organisation and

that it follows the Gandhian tactic, when S. Subhas Bose has combated almost single-handed the most powerful compromising clique in India and has even protested against the calling of the Constituent Assembly until after the final removal of Imperialism. The position of these leaders must be rather weak for them to stoop to what they know to be base and unworthy lies against the Forward Bloc'.

This is, however, written in no carping spirit. The crisis is too great to admit of quarrels. We would appeal to the "National Front" leaders to retrace their steps when they are finding that their entire "forcing theory" stands discredited. They have been making mistake after mistake since 1932. They opposed the Labour Party in 1933, called it economist, when it was formed *in order* to build up a *political party* of the working class throughout India. After attempting to sabotage the Labour Party by every means, now they are feeling the need of an open All-India Proletarian Party and are speaking of proletarian hegemony of the national movement. This hegemony they could have helped to build to-day, if they had joined the Labour Party in all sincerity. Once they did join it only to incur the hostility of the proletarian members of the Labour Party by insisting that proletarians will not be allowed a majority in the Labour Party Executive. And these people are to-day speaking of proletarian hegemony.

If the "National Front" leaders do not retrace their steps, it is high time that their rank and file analysed the present situation anew and (1) built up Left Unity in spite of leaders and (2) joined the 'Forward Bloc', while retaining their own organisation. That alone can ensure victory. Leaders who cannot accept it must be dismissed without a drop of tear.



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## INTOLERANCE, NEPOTISM & JOBBERY RAMPANT

### BEHAR ENQUIRY COMMITTEE'S REPORT

*The following is the full text of the report of the Behar Enquiry Committee on the state of affairs in the Congress of the province on the eve of the Hariपुरa Congress :—*

There were serious departures from the basic policy of the Congress during elections of delegates to the Hariपुरa session of the Indian National Congress. Acts of violence and corrupt practices were witnessed on a large scale. The Provincial Working Committee was flooded with complaints. It was felt that the supreme political organisation, which under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, had fought nonviolently British Imperialism and achieved not insignificant successes would go to pieces, if Congressmen swerved from the path of truth and non-violence. The Working Committee, therefore, appointed us not only to enquire into specific complaints, but to find out the causes of such dangerous manifestations, and to suggest means for preventing their recurrence.

#### LACK OF CO-OPERATION

We were considerably hampered in our work by lack of co-operation from the parties concerned. Those who had tried to manipulate Congress elections to maintain their power did not welcome the enquiry. Where both parties were at fault, enquiry was regarded as unnecessary by them. The complainants who had succeeded in being elected did not worry about the enquiry at all. The witnesses would not appear. In some cases we were not quite satisfied that the accused had got notice of our enquiry from the party that had managed to retain power and through whom we had to approach the parties concerned and it was impossible for us to pronounce any judgment on exparte evidence. Oral evidence on both sides was of the usual type in the criminal cases of mofussil courts, full of exaggerations, embellishments and patent falsehoods. Our criticism of the evidence in the course of discussion of the specific cases will show how deliberately Congressmen have deviated not only from the high standard set by Mahatma Gandhi but from ordinary political standard and how unsafe it was to rely on their evidence. We have, however, decided on the materials before us, a large number of complaints, practically all the cases of Darbhanga, which was the storm centre, discussed with a number of people of various schools of thought and also

with the people who are not politically-minded but interested in the good name and growing powers of the Congress, examined documents and witnesses, visited a number of places in those districts that cared to co-operate with us and formed conclusions which we shall record below.

#### Lure of Gain

What is the cause of this sudden outburst of the worst passions of the people? There had been no such serious trouble on such a scale ever before in Congress elections. How is it that people were suddenly seized with a desire to capture the Congress organisation at all costs? We feel that the cause is not very far to seek.

So long as the Congress was a fighting machine, it was functioning on a high moral plane. It was, as Mahatma Gandhi puts it, like an army in action following a strict moral discipline. Even while it was not engaged in fighting a common enemy, it was animated with a spirit of service which expressed itself in carrying out unostentatiously the constructive programme of the Congress. It was inspired by an idealism and by a faith in the efficacy of truth and non-violence and although it was difficult to live up to those high ideals, there was an attempt to observe them in practice as far as practicable. At any rate, there were no violent departures from them. It was because we think there were no material temptations before them and only such people sought elections as were devoted to the cause of freedom and to the cherished principles of the Congress. And the only gain they could think of was self-satisfaction and good opinion of fellowmen. Since the acceptance of office by the Congress,

great temptations came in the way.

Those who had advocated it had thought that it would open vast opportunities for service and sacrifice, would consolidate the position gained so far and intensify the struggle for freedom. It no doubt did bring some relief to the people. But it also started attracting opportunities and political adventures. It demoralised even old Congressmen who felt that now was the time for reward for the sacrifices made by them in the past. They also claimed a share in the spoils and there was heart burning if in the distribution of spoils some went without their share. Khadi, which was a symbol of non-violent revolt against British Imperialism and a badge of service and which represented truth and non-violence, became a qualification for its wearer to secure jobs. The various Congress Committees, instead of becoming organs of struggle for independence, became platforms for addressing petitions to the Ministry. There was a widespread desire to capture Congress organisations by all kind of people so that the position of advantage might be used for capturing local bodies.

#### Greed and Violence

When the spirit of service and sacrifice and the burning zeal to win freedom inspired by Mahatma Gandhi was replaced by a desire to capture the Congress organisation for other ends, there was bound to be violence and corruption in the Congress. That is why all sorts of objectionable tactics were used, factionalism, groupings, doubtful pacts and alliances exploitation of caste sentiments, enrolment of bogus members for the purpose of retaining and grabbing power became rampant. Heads were broken, riotous mobs were led to the polling stations and inside the polling room, gransas and lathies were displayed and in some cases used, arms were collected under 'daris' near polling stations, ballot boxes were taken away, windows of polling rooms were smashed and papers destroyed in fighting elections. Abuse and threats were very common. The pity of it is that responsible officials of Congress were not free from such practice.

### Polling staff's behaviour

The polling staff behaved with blatant partiality and partisanship. They were also guilty of gross dereliction of duty as will appear from a study of the specific cases. In case No. 1 from Darbhanga the polling officer deliberately made a false statement and confessed to having signed a false report and left his post of duty at a critical occasion. In case No. 2 from Darbhanga, the allegation against the presiding officer was that when voters of one party came to record their votes he would easily find out the number and give them ballot paper but when the voters of other party came, the number could not be found. We wanted the presiding officer to meet this definite allegation of partisanship made against him and although we stayed in Darbhanga for five days, he did not appear before us nor did he care to reply to our letter which we wrote to him on our return to Patna. In case No. 3 from Darbhanga from the west Warisnagar constituency, there were two candidates Lachmi Narayan Rai and Jadunandan Thakur, a kisan sabait. Although all the papers were taken away in an affray, the presiding officer and the Returning Officer by mere guess work satisfied themselves that Lachmi could defeat Jadunandan and therefore they declared Lachmi to be elected. An extraordinary procedure!

### Some more cases

In case No. 9 from Darbhanga in the South West Sadar constituency, one of Dhanraj Sharma's men spoke in an objectionable manner to the presiding officer. Only 40 votes had been recorded till then 5 in favour of each candidate. The presiding officer left his post of duty and went away. Admittedly Sharma's men went to the presiding officer, fully acknowledged the offence of the agent, and implored him to resume work, but he ordered the voters to disperse. On the receipt of the report of the presiding officer the returning officer suspended election, and declared Dhanraj's rival to be elected. On what basis was this done we fail to understand. The D. C. C. at a meeting endorsed this grossly unconstitutional action of the Recruiting Officer and sent the resolution to the P. C. C. for approval. And the Working Committee has referred the case to us. Again in case No. 11 where rival candidates were Rampratap Thakur and Jamuna Karjee, although there were no papers, the Returning Officer on representations made to him by Rampratap Thakur satisfied himself that Rampratap was leading the poll and therefore he declared him elected. As to who was leading will appear from a perusal of the decision of of this given below. But whoever may be leading it is not permissible for the Returning Officer to declare a person elected on sheer speculation. We cannot but too strongly condemn the unconstitutional impropriety of such a procedure.

The case No. 2 from Purnea shows the amazing conduct of the Returning Officer. He delegated his authority to

his younger brother. Keshav Lal to do the job for him. Keshav's behaviour was very improper and he submitted a palpably false report. To appreciate the state of affairs our Judgment in this case has to be read.

### Difficulties of Administration

We have not the slightest doubt that corruption has entered the Congress organisation. A careful study of our comments and judgments in the specific cases will show how deep the evil has penetrated. The question is how to eliminate corruption and enforce truth and non-violence. The difficulty is as to who will administer truth and non-violence. Very few people seem to be capable of doing it. Non-violence has been defended as violently as it has been attacked. Disciplinary action must be taken against those who are found to be guilty of violence. But the position in the words of Shakespeare is "if each one of us had his deserts, which of us would escape whipping." There are very few people who have genuine faith in non-violence. We issued a questionnaire to the members of the P. C. C. and several others and one of the questions was to find out if persons could be available in each district who could be said to have living faith in the efficacy of truth and non-violence and who were trying to ob-

serve them in practice and who could be trusted to rise above personal and party considerations in stormy times. We received very few replies. We wonder if the lack of response was due to the difficulty of answering this question. Our apprehension is that such persons cannot be found. This means that Congress has failed to respond to Gandhi's idealism even to a limited extent and has not created even ten Satyagrahis in each district. That is why Gandhiji, while suspending the civil disobedience movement, said that non-violence had been adulterated during the course of transmission and he was the only expert left capable of practising civil disobedience. The tragedy of the situation is that Mahatma Gandhi was nearly right in his analysis. We feel that if ten Satyagrahis are found in each district, the situation would be completely transformed. As it is, we think there are some whose profession of Gandhism is hypocritical. There are others who believe in it as matter of policy. Some press non-violence into service to stifle inconvenient criticisms. Now in this state of affairs we think unless an impartial tribunal is set up it would be dangerous to take even disciplinary action against an erring Congressman, for no one can ascertain whether the action is being taken to enforce non-violence or for party reasons.

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We, therefore, recommend that an impartial tribunal should be set up for the purpose of investigating deviations from the principle of the Congress.

#### Party Spirit

On the growth of party spirit Mahatma Gandhi has commented in a recent article holding that Congress has been a homogenous body since 1921 with one aim, one policy and one discipline. It is said that the growth of parties inside the Congress has created the trouble.

Now although there has been a complete agreement among Congressmen about the achievement of independence by legitimate and peaceful means, it has been always divided into two sections on some major issue or other.

There were Congressmen who were called no-changers, and who were opposed to entry into legislatures and stood for complete non-co-operation with the governmental machinery and there were others who wanted to occupy all strategic positions. Again there were those who wanted severance of British connection and those who wanted freedom within the empire if possible and without it, if necessary. There were always two sections one more extremist than the other.

We think, therefore that differences of opinion with regard to the programme of even ideology have not led to violence. But the fact remains that most of the exhibitions of violence were witnessed in those constituencies in which a Kisan Sabha leader was opposing an orthodox Congress candidate.

#### Grievances and Suspicions

There is no doubt there is a widespread feeling among the kisans, however engendered, that those in power in the Congress have betrayed them and have entered into alliance with reactionary and opportunist elements. The general impression is that the Congress has not implemented its programme of revolutionary social legislation because of its doubtful pacts. It was alleged that in selection of Congress candidates in certain constituencies influential Zaminders with no history of Congress work behind them were preferred to those who had fought and sacrificed for the Congress. The same preference, it was alleged, was shown in selection of delegates as also of candidates for election to local bodies. It was further alleged that the Ministry has developed love of power and intolerance of criticism. Charges of nepotism and jobbery have also been made.

The result is that the whole atmosphere is surcharged with suspicion and men in

power are distrusted. There are rumblings of discontent. We are not in a position to say how far the criticism and suspicions are justified. Some criticism has proceeded from malice, others from ignorance. There has been some straightforward and honest criticism also, not intended to run down the Ministry, but to uphold the position of the Congress. Be that as it may the Congress cannot afford to ignore or suppress them. That would be very much like the old bureaucratic method.

We suggest the way to remove discontent and suspicion is to examine the grievances impartially and sympathetically and in a manner likely to inspire confidence. It is not enough to remove grievances. It's necessary to create an impression that grievances have been removed. There should be also a searching self-examination on the part of the authorities to find out if they are following truth and non-violence and are fulfilling their election pledges. The Ministers, as Gandhiji puts it, should be like Caesar's wife, above suspicion. Resorting to police or military force to suppress discontent or disorder is a proof of political bankruptcy and the failure of non-violence to tackle a serious problem. We suggest that a committee of Congressmen commanding general confidence but unconnected with the running of the Congress machinery or administration should be appointed for dealing with the grievances of the people.

We have now to consider whether any changes in the Congress constitution and its electoral machinery are necessary to prevent outburst of violence. The changes cannot possibly be removed because of violence, they can only prevent it or reduce its intensity.

#### Constituencies

So far as the electoral machinery is concerned, we do not know if there are any electoral rules. We asked for a copy of the rules, but we are not supplied with any and at certain places we were told that Congress authorities were following the Government electoral rules. The practice seems to be that a Returning Officer is appointed for a district. He calls for nomination papers and he is authorised to declare the validity or otherwise of the

nomination. The constituencies are not fixed. They vary according to the number of members enrolled in the district as the number of the delegates allotted to a particular district depends upon the number of members subject to a fixed maximum. This leads to the gerry-mandering of constituencies. This should be stopped.

#### Polling Staff

We do not know who appoints Returning Officers. We have found that Returning Officers are themselves candidates within their own jurisdiction. Where there is mutual suspicion and party feeling, such officers are not likely to inspire confidence. And besides the arrangement is unfair to the officers themselves. The Returning Officers appoint the polling officers who appoint their own assistants. We have commented on the behaviour of the polling staff. We think that utmost care should be taken in selecting the polling staff to ensure impartiality and efficiency.

#### Polling Booths

So far as the polling booths are concerned, we found two systems at work. In many constituencies, particularly in the district of Darbhanga there was one polling booth for each constituency and it was expected that 18 to 19 hundred voters would be able to record their votes between 10 a. m. and 5 p. m. This was absolutely impossible. In elections to the legislatures, between 1,000 to 1200 votes were recorded every day. That could be possible only under elaborate arrangements made by the Government, with a trained polling staff and adequate police arrangement. We do not think that more than 500 voters can record their votes conveniently in a day at one polling booth. The second system was to provide a polling booth for each constituency, but the efficacy of the arrangement was impaired by allowing voters to vote whenever they like, with the result that the system provided facilities for bogus voting and overcrowding at one particular booth where feelings ran high. We suggest that a polling booth should be provided for every 500 voters, who should be permitted to vote at that particular polling booth and at no other.

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### Conducting Elections

In conducting elections the presiding officers must not suspend polling unless grave disorders make it impossible for the elections to go on. In some cases, as has been pointed out, polling was stopped for trivial reasons. If in spite of all precautions, serious disorders occur there should be an immediate enquiry by the tribunal we have suggested. If on enquiry, it transpires that both sides are to blame, then both the candidates should be disqualified. And the Constituency may have to go unrepresented as a penance for their misbehaviour. If only one party is to blame then the candidate of that party should be disqualified and his rival if there is only one, should be declared elected. Similarly if there is any charge of corrupt practice, it should be enquired into at once and if the charge is established the offending candidate should be disqualified.

### Constitutional Changes

So far as the changes in constitution are concerned we feel that persons who wish to enter legislatures and local bodies, should not be permitted to hold offices in Congress organisations. Our analysis has been that corruption has entered the Congress because Congressmen have succumbed to temptations. Therefore temptations should be removed from their path, so that only those who are

devoted to the cause of freedom and cherished principles of the Congress would care to join the Congress and others would be scared away.

We also feel that there should not be as many as three elections during the course of a year by the primary members. And necessary changes in the constitution should be made for this purpose. It seems to us that a separate election to form a District Congress Committee is wholly unnecessary. The members of the P. C. C. from the District and the presidents and secretaries of the Thana Congress Committees could easily form the D. C. C. We would also suggest that presidents and secretaries of the different Congress committees should not seek election to the Committees of which they happen to be president or secretary, but should automatically become member of the committee for the next years.

We would suggest the setting up of a Board to conduct and supervise Congress elections and to select candidates for the legislatures and the local bodies. This Board should not be a very large one and should be elected by votes of all the members of the District Congress Committees. Every member of a District Congress Committee should send only such names by post as are likely to inspire general confidence. One third of the members of the Board should be balloted out every year. The chairman of the P. C. C. shall

be the chairman of the Board, but the members must not hold any office either in the Congress or in the Government and must not be members of legislatures or local bodies. The Congress Committees should have nothing to do with holding and conducting Congress elections. This suggestion if adopted would leave Congress Committees to carry on constructive programme, which no Congress Committee has been doing for a year, preoccupied as it is with the troubles and responsibilities of various elections.

We have already suggested that constituencies should be fixed to prevent gerrymandering.

We feel that to eradicate violence it is absolutely necessary that those who advocate non-violence and truth should practise them and those who do not, should be persuaded to practise them.

The Congress must recapture once again the spirit which Mahatma Gandhi inspired in 1921 if it is to play its destined role.

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Sd. R. K. L. Nandkeolyar.

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## The End of Militarist Japan

—By *BENOY GHOSE*

The war between China and Japan has been in progress for a few months less than three years. This war would have been the beginning of an international struggle for priority in China more deadly than in the nineteenth century, if the imperialist nations of Europe were not forced to declare war so soon. The European war has changed the entire complexion of the Far Eastern politics and the second corollary of the Sino-Japanese war now awaits fulfilment—the beginning of the end of militarist and imperialist Japan. The possibilities of Japan being embroiled in the European conflict and the intervention of Europe in Far East are still far from excluded. But taking all possibilities into consideration the end of Japanese militarism and imperialism is in sight. An analysis of the situation would make it clear.

At the beginning of the war Japan publicly and privately bragged that China would collapse in three months. The vanity of the Japanese militarists precluded any acknowledgment that the Chinese people could successfully withstand the Japanese Army with better arms and that the morale of the Chinese people could not be so easily broken down. China would be terrorised, the Chinese government would be forced to reconsider its anti-Japanese attitude, North China would be a vassal state of Japan,—with these dreams as yet unrealised Japan went off blithely on what even officially was labelled the China "Incident."

There is no denying the fact that geographically the Japanese have had victories. They hold all of North China and a greater portion of Central China. They have won battles, driven off Chinese armies, bombed open towns and villages, looted and slaughtered helpless non-combatants, raped women, captured cities and provinces, but the Japanese have not been able to put the People's Army of China out of action. They have won battles, except Chinese acknowledgment of victory and they have occupied territories except the surrender by China of its sovereignty over that territory. So their victories are a liability to them.

The war has acted as an amalgam in China, and Japan has this accomplishment to its credit, dubious though it is from its point of view. The threat of national enslavement has thrown together the hitherto warring factions in China, the Communists and the Nationalists. A compromise peace on terms suggested by Japan through the arch-traitor and renegade Wang Ching-Wei, has been contemptuously discarded by the Chinese people, as its acceptance would be tantamount to the Chinese surrender of sovereignty. The resolutions on "Resistance and Reconstruction" passed in a recent session of Kuomintang at Kwantung make it crystal clear that China has made it a point to prolong the war as much as possible. This prolongation of war, China knows, would squeeze out the last drop of Japan's economic strength and demoralise Japanese Army. In these circumstances a straight-out military victory for Japan is remote, if not impossible, and the question of a compromise from the standpoint of the Chinese people is absolutely irrelevant.

Time has already defeated Japan. The totalitarian methods are failing within. The national mobilisation law with the centralised control of all the resources and economic activities of the nation and their deflection for war purposes, have been set in motion to meet the demands of the 'Incident.' The measures adopted by the government and the militarists are directed toward "giving industry a one-sided war direction; developing to the utmost the production of goods necessary for war and not for consumption by the population; restricting to the utmost the production and, especially, the sale of articles of general consumption," as Com. Stalin said at the 18th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The so-called three-year plan for raising Japan's production capacity has made matters worse. The sum to be invested in heavy industry is 15,000 million yen that is, a sum approximating Japan's annual national income prior to the "China incident." It is intended primarily to extend the production of pig iron, steel, coal and iron ore. It is proposed

to produce 12 million tons of steel by the end of 1941, 9.5 million tons to be produced in Japan proper, 2 million tons in Manchuria, and 500,000 tons in North China; 12—13 million tons of pig iron and up to 70 million tons of coal by the end of 1941. How strenuous Japan's efforts in this direction have been may be seen from the fact that 92.5 p. c. of all capital investment during the first 18 months of war in China have gone exclusively into the iron, steel and heavy industries.

Another highly important factor in the present stage of the militarisation of Japanese economy is the understanding of the Japanese capitalists with the militarists of Manchuria. The Okura, Mitsui, Mitsubishi, and Sumitomo firms have long been casting greedy looks on Manchuria. Okura is an "old timer" in Manchuria, his speciality being military construction (arsenals, barracks, airdromes, army hospitals and the like). The Mitsui concern incidentally holds the cement monopoly in Manchuria as well as in Japan and Korea. The Mitsubishi firm, which dominates in Japanese machine-building industry has also penetrated into Manchuria. Sumitomo specialises chiefly in light metals, steel tubes, etc. These firms have made huge profits out of war orders.

As regards loans, the total debt in March 1939, was close to 18,000 million yen. The 1939 budget provided for the floating of loans amounting to approximately 6,000 million yen. It must also be remembered that loans amounting to 2,038 million yen provided for in the 1938 budget remained unrealised. At the same time elements of inflation threaten to assume increasing proportions as time goes on. The Japanese Government has so far succeeded with the assistance chiefly of the Bank of England, in maintaining the yen at its former rate of one shilling and two pence, but at present it would not be possible to secure that help for the European War. In the summer of 1937 the gold backing of Japanese currency amounted to 49 p. c. whereas in December 1938 gold coverage dropped to only 17 p. c. It is quite probable that the gold coverage of Japanese currency has dropped to zero by this time. The exports declined by 500 million yen in 1938 and the condition of export trade is extremely grave today.

Washington has given notice to abrogate the Treaty of Commerce and Navigation and if no agreement takes its place this month, trade between the two countries will be in danger of higher tariffs and shipping will be liable to levies and restrictions. Japan imports from United States largely necessities, including munitions and raw materials. There is a strong movement in U. S. A. today to ban these exports to Japan. Amid these unfavourable circumstances Japan is speedily moving toward an economic crisis, culminating in a far-reaching political upheaval.

The swift 'shuffling' of the Japanese Cabinet is due to the pressure of these political and economic factors. The present Yonai Cabinet is the fourth cabinet since the China "incident" began. General Abe, whom General Yonai succeeds, took office at the end of the last August when Baron Hiranuma resigned amid the confusions caused by the Soviet-German Pact. Abe tried to hammer out a moderate policy for Japan but failed before the challenging attitude of U. S. A. and the complete liquidation of the anti-Comintern Pact. With these complications the internal economic troubles, high prices, low wages and the like, were mounting up speedily and the situation demanded a more or less definite foreign policy which the General failed to shape due to his lack of statesmanship. General Yonai has declared that Japan must have a definite foreign policy by straightening out and not straining its relations with the Soviet Union.

How far Yonai succeeds in solving these difficulties it still remains to be seen. There are facts which call for more urgent and serious consideration. The tense economic situation prevailing in Japan, finds an outlet in what the Japanese newspapers call "the growth of deliberate crimes in economy." The workers and peasants of Japan, even the petty and middle bourgeoisie are extremely dissatisfied with the line of policy adopted by Japanese government. These dissentients have been arrested and persecuted in large numbers in recent months for "diverse economic crimes and violations." The tension is reaching its culminating point and it is likely that the Japanese proletariat will seize this opportunity for their liberation. That would mean revolution in Japan. The aim of the revolution in Japan would be the overthrow of militarism and imperialism in Japan and withdrawal from participation in the international imperialist war. The favouring circumstances of the revolution are the protraction of the Sino-Japanese war, the crisis of imperialism as manifested in the present war, and the marching proletariat of the powerful Soviet Union for the liberation of international proletariat.

Are not these circumstances with Yonai's forced pro-Soviet policy, sufficient for the Soviet Union to conclude a pact with Japan? Of course, if that is at all necessary?

By Swami Sahajanand Saraswati

## MISERIES OF THE CANE-GROWERS IN BHOPAL

Swami Sahajanand Saraswati, General Secretary, A. I. K. Sabha has issued the following statement:—For the last two years a sugar factory is working at Sihore in Bhopal State which is a *defacto* State concern. It was declared twice by the Ruler of the State before the factory began actual working that it was for the benefit of the Kisans. But what do the facts prove? The Kisans of the area, who grew cane even from before, are in a miserable plight because of this factory. All the employees and officials of the State including the personal servants of the Ruler himself resort to various devices in order to force the cane-growers to supply their canes to that factory and not to manufacture *Gur* which was being prepared upto now, only the well-off and influential growers being able anyhow to evade this pressure. And what is the price paid for the canes supplied under pressure? Only five annas a maund while the Bihar and U. P. cane growers are getting more than double the amount. Not only this. The same quantity of cane when used for preparing *Gur* yields Rs. 42/- while it fetches Rs. 13/- only if and when supplied to the sugar mill.

This is a loot, pure and simple. The "Kisan" of Ichaver, Bhopal has proved to the hilt every thing in detail and thrown considerable light on the rottenness of the state of affairs obtaining there. The President of the Bhopal State People's Conference, Pt. Chatur Narayan Malaviya, has after a searching enquiry, endorsed all these facts in his statement. Oppressed Kisans have given vivid descriptions of the tyrannies heaped upon them through letters bearing their thumb-impressions.

May I, in the circumstances, ask a plain question? Will the State authorities and the Ruler, who is said to be an enlightened prince, mark the writing on the wall and mend their ways? Or will they call upon themselves a grim disaster by continuing these and the kindred *zulums* on the cane-growers and others? It is for them to choose. But one thing is certain. The rising tempo of the mass movement is bound to catch on the Bhopal State people also and it will drown this tyranny and all those perpetuating it in the bottomless ocean of mass-fury if those responsible for it do not awake betimes and set matters right to the satisfaction of the oppressed.

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## Book Reviews

**Germany's War Chances**—by Dr. Ivan Lajos, Victor Gollancz Ltd. London. 3s. 6d.

Post-War Germany has been nourished on *Drang nach Osten* and it has been echoed and re-echoed by leading Nazi thinkers. And the present war is a partial realization of the *cliche* that is said to have banded the Germans into an organic whole. The slogan of ethnological relations with other people is only a cloak to hide the real motive and Germany's problem boils down to one of dearth of raw materials and expansion of market. The book under review though written before the outbreak of the war is an illuminating study of Germany's war-time problems. The author is a Hungarian and a critic of the Nazi regime. About the author, the English press published a startling story; Nazi dudgeon descended upon him and he was spirited away.

In modern times soldiers fight on belly and the victory in a protracted war is determined by the supply of food stuff. Nazi economy was remodelled on war basis and the entire system was harnessed to the service of the war dog; but the problem of food remained unsolved. The author has offered a critical analysis of problems related to food provisions in war-time. In recent years there has been a steady decline in total agricultural output in Germany and the figures are staggering. In 1933 the wheat harvest, was of 576530 tons, in 1934, 467630 tons, in 1935, 47940 tons, in 1936, 455030 tons and in 1937, 4490000 tons. And the cost of agricultural product rose considerably above the receipts. In the economic year 1936-1937, while expenses rose by 335000,000 R.M., the total rise in receipts was given as only 163000,000 R.M. The shortage of necessary supply of labour makes the question all the more complex. In 1938 the shortage of workers was estimated at 381000 and it was covered by the foreign aid, particularly by the army of unemployed Italian workers. The author's observations on the economic position of Germany in the event of a major war should merit close attention. Projection of war economy on to the

plan of food supply has heavily told upon the health of the workers. Heavy work without proper nourishment would mean complete exhaustion in war-time.

'Oil is as necessary as blood'. 'He who owns the oil owns the world.' And rightly had Winston Churchill observed that the allies sailed into the harbour of victory on the waves of oil. A modern world would be a struggle of motors and the life-blood of motor is oil, without which armies are to be condemned to immobility. Germany is notoriously deficient in oil-reserve and her total amount of natural oil is estimated at 550000 tons and the experiment on extracting oil from coal is too costly to meet the enormous demand of war. In war-time Germany will require approximately 40 millions tons of oil. She cannot depend on imports from overseas and the Romanian supply cannot meet the total demand, since it is limited and has to be distributed amongst Britain and France.

In the event of a major war Germany will have to establish relations with neutral countries to cover military demands and a vast reserve of gold is essential for it. Germany's gold reserve is poorer while Britain and France have piled up huge quantity of gold. This makes the prospect of German victory bleak.

The book is well documented and throws into bold relief the conflicting forces at work in Germany.

**The Journalist** (A monthly journal) December Number, edited by P. G. Rao and published from 25 Dalal Street, Fort, Bombay. Each Number 6 as.

The publication of a journal of this kind had been long overdue in our country and we congratulate the gifted editor of the *journalist* on bringing out a paper devoted entirely to the craft of writing. Journalism is not yet an adequately developed profession in our country and it has yet failed to attract the best talents. The reason is that it is not properly remunerative as yet. But the profession has admittedly a bright future before it. It is entirely wrong to suppose that one has simply to sit down with pen and paper to get up something worthy of publication. Like every other craft it requires training of a special kind. A trained journalist can even today earn a good deal by his pen from British and American press where, as the editor notes, Indian contributions are much in demand. From the present

Number of the *journalist* it appears that the paper will be very much helpful to the aspiring practitioners of the writing craft. We make here a suggestion for the consideration of the editor. Along with specialised articles on different branches of journalism, the paper should offer detailed information regarding the demands of the British and American press (preferably with the names of the papers) which competent Indian writers can possibly fulfil. We wish the *journalist* a long and prosperous career.

### BENGALI.

**Tathapi**—By Swarnakamal Bhattacharji—Published by Kishore Granthaiaya, 195/1 B, Cornwallis Street, Calcutta. Price Re 1-4-0

Sj. Swarnakamal Bhattacharji has already made his mark among the contemporary literateurs of Bengal. In his novel "*Antyeshthi*" he has evinced his originality in theme—the demoralisation of the decadent middle class. The requiem of the middle class illusion vibrates through the pages. But the novel under review "*Tathapi*" differs from the first in all respects. The central theme of the novel is the tremendous force of sex in the nature of man and in man's life. Old theme no doubt, but in a new light. Kalyani, the heroine of the novel, is a dumb girl, whose all sense organs being mute, the sex instinct pervades. That instinct drives her almost irresistibly to entwine her husband Pranabesh with all its force and when Sujata intervenes to choke the stream it bursts forth over the dam with all its primal vitality, sweeps Sujata away, makes Bhabatosh and others fall out of the line, and finally Pranabesh bow down before it. A momentary triumph of instinct it may be and Nature's choir which touches the soul and makes it echo, is undoubtedly for the time being. And there ends the story of the dumb girl with all the loveliness of comedy—a comedy that casts in reader's mind the dark shadow of a tragedy repeating itself. Here lies the excellence of the author, where the girl bathes in the pool of pity amid the sunshine of her happy victory at home.

The novel will surely be widely appreciated.

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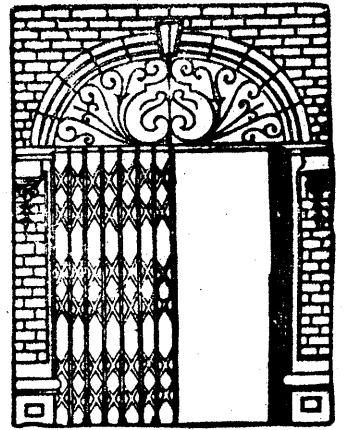
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## EXTRACTS FROM S.J. SUBHAS BOSE'S RECENT UTTERANCES

Our quarrel is with imperialism and not with the people of England. If British imperialism was destroyed, imperialism in other countries would vanish in a short space of time. Although British people said that they were out to obtain freedom for the oppressed peoples of the world, they cared not to give freedom to India and they talk of some understanding with us all the same. But no understanding was possible between freedom and slavery. Indians should, however, avail of the present situation and this was an opportune time when we should press our claim. In fact, if the people of India wanted to live, they must secure Swaraj, which would be a real source of happiness. Democratic Swaraj was what was wanted. In these days of advancement, foundation of old imperialism had been severely shaken. Its prestige and strength had gone.

Apart from the question of the coming struggle what was causing anxiety was as to how the Leftists should frustrate the attempt at a compromise with the British Government involving the restoration of the Congress Ministries. They had no hope that the Congress High Command would launch a national struggle of an uncompromising character. All that they hoped and prayed for was that they might not enter into a compromise with British Imperialism. If the official Congress did not launch a struggle then some other organisation had to do it. That task could for instance be undertaken by the Forward Bloc. In those circumstances it would naturally inform the Congress High Command, the British Government and the public at large before taking any final step. It was possible that such an act

might be regarded as an act of indiscipline by the High Command with its consequences including expulsion from the Congress.

What has caused us the greatest concern is not the unfair and improper tactics but the present policy which is drifting towards an unworthy compromise as evinced by the substitution of the National Demand for what I call a faked Constituent Assembly.

The British foreign policy responsible is for the present state of things in Europe. But for that, things that were happening there now would not have happened. Today it was not France's foreign policy that dominated Europe but it was British foreign policy that did it. Britain was today on the horns of a dilemma. Hitler's victory or Hitler's fall—none could be welcome to England. With the fall of Hitler there might be a chance for the whole of Germany, and, after that, France going Communist. And England could never welcome the idea of being threatened with the menace of Communism. So far as Soviet Russia was concerned, it had pursued a peace policy for the last fifteen or sixteen years.

The members and sympathisers of the 'Forward Bloc' in different parts of the country are now engaged in taking stock of the present situation in the country and in the Congress and are also doing a bit of heart-searching. Reports have been reaching us from several provinces that our members are not getting a square deal at the hands of the Rightists. My own

belief that by honest hard work we shall be able to convert the majority in the Congress to our point of view has been considerably shaken of late. We now find that the Rightists are determined to maintain their present ascendancy in the Congress by hook or crook. And they will not scruple to go to any length in order to suppress or persecute us. The Congress is therefore becoming the close preserve of the Rightists—even as the Indian Association of Calcutta has been the close preserve of the Liberals for a long time.

We could have voluntarily submitted to the domination of the Congress by the Rightists if they had pursued the correct line and had taken country forward along the path of struggle. But not only are they not doing so, they are, in addition, adopting wrong measures and wrong tactics which are confounding the public mind and which will ultimately land the country in disaster. I am referring among other things to a demand for a faked Constituent Assembly and to the introduction of the spinning clause in the Independence Pledge.

The political significance that is being given to spinning now and the manner in which it has been quickly converted by the Congress High Command into a method of political struggle, need unequivocal condemnation. Consequently members of the 'Forward Bloc' would be perfectly justified in organising separate meetings and demonstrations on the Independence Day.

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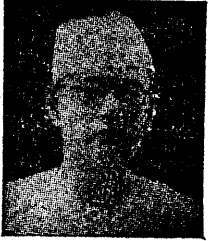
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