

Stem the Rot

FORWARD BLOC

A POLITICAL WEEKLY

Editor :—SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

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FORWARD BLOC

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10

Stem the Rot

The air is thick with rumours of persistent efforts at a compromise between the Congress High Command and the British Government. Circles in close touch with our Ex-Ministers are greatly interested and feel optimistic about an early return of the Congress Ministries. There are two theories afloat at the present moment. Some surmise that the Ramgarh Congress will be presented with a *fait accompli*. Others hold that the Ramgarh Congress will vest the Working Committee or Mahatma Gandhi with plenary powers and that the compromise will follow and not precede the Congress session. The first theory appears to us to be improbable. Whether the second will fructify remains to be seen. What is certain is that both Mahatma Gandhi and the British Government are keen on a compromise. Gandhiji wants to win Swaraj without a fight. The Government would welcome a compromise before the Spring offensive on the Western Front begins. At the time of writing it still appears unlikely that the British Government will concede the minimum that Gandhiji would demand for effecting a compromise. We are referring to Gandhiji alone, because the Working Committee has made him the Sole Dictator.

What is troubling the British Government and is preventing it from going far enough in the direction of meeting the Indian demand is its impression that the Congress will not ultimately show fight. Despite the new situation created by the European War, the British Government has not discarded its age-long habit of making concessions too inadequately and too late. We also know from experience that even when concessions do come, they are granted half-heartedly and they consequently lack generosity

and good grace. Consequently, it is quite on the cards that despite the keenness of both parties, the proposed compromise may not come off.

Another thorn in the path of a compromise is the attitude of the British Government towards the Indian minorities: The former is not yet ready to give up playing with the latter or using them as a lever against the Congress. But the latest reports go to show that if a compromise with the Congress High Command could be arranged the Government would be prepared to let down the Muslim League. The recent editorial comments in the *London Times* and other British journals lend colour to this view. Should the British Government come to an understanding with Gandhiji behind the back of the Muslim League, it appears to us inevitable that both the Congress and the Muslim League will split. Within the Congress, Gandhiji and all those who stand by him will line up with British Imperialism. On the other side, the loyalist elements in the Muslim League, being under the thumb of the British Government, will break away from Mr. Jinnah and the progressive section who are influential in the League Council today.

It is high time that we seriously contemplated what would happen in the event of the Congress High Command compromising with the Government. It is but natural that in the name of unity and discipline, the Rightists should try to force the compromise down the throats of dissident members. The former hope that a majority decision will silence the latter, just as the campaign against the acceptance of ministerial office in the provinces was liquidated as soon as the All India Congress Committee decided in favour of office-acceptance. But what will the dissenting Leftists do on this occasion?

It would be hazardous now to make a prediction on behalf of the entire Left. For the present, we shall speak only on behalf of the Forward Bloc. The Bloc cannot accept a compromise with British Imperialism. This would be altogether inconsistent

with our goal of Purna Swaraj. We shall therefore be constrained to declare that we are not bound by the compromise and that we shall continue the fight for independence. The compromise-wallahs will, in our view, be guilty of two crimes—firstly, abandoning the objective of independence and secondly, giving up the method of non-cooperation and Satyagraha. We shall, therefore, be perfectly justified in declaring that the compromise-wallahs having given up the essentials of the Congress, automatically cease to be Congressmen. Should they persist in their folly or in sticking to the Congress, we would be further justified in expelling them from the Congress.

For the Congress is essentially and fundamentally an organisation which stands for complete independence and the method it has adopted is that of non-cooperation and Satyagraha. If a Congressman abandons these essentials and fundamentals he automatically ceases to be a Congressman. And if the Congress to-morrow gives up its fundamental objective and method, it will cease to be the Indian National Congress with which we have been familiar since 1920. With the voluntary withdrawal or expulsion from the Congress of the compromise-wallahs, the Congress will be restored to its former status and will become once again the revolutionary organisation that it should always be. Why should we secede from the Congress and allow the back-sliders to inherit the name and the traditions of that body? The latter should be expelled and it will be for them to set up a parallel organisation if they so desire. The Congress should belong exclusively to those who stand for independence and carry on the struggle for it.

We realise that the compromise-wallahs may not voluntarily withdraw from the Congress and may, with the help of a packed majority, continue exploiting the name of that body. In that event one can visualise two Congresses. It will then be for the people—for the masses—to decide and declare which is their Congress. About their answer, we have no doubt

in our minds—for the masses are with us. The united Left has a very much larger following than the united Right, despite the prestige of Mahatma Gandhi's name. What, after all, is the following of the present Congress Working Committee without the support of the Left Wing. It does not command the confidence of the organised peasantry, of the organised workers, of the organised youths, of the organised students and of the minorities. Consequently, with such a slender following, can they deliver the goods on behalf of the Indian people? The answer is obvious.

Without waiting for the day when the Rightists will succeed in effecting a compromise, we should, from now, try our level best to frustrate all efforts in that direction. With a view to that end, an Anti-compromise Conference is being arranged at Ramgarh at the time the Congress is to meet. All Leftists and Leftist organisations in the country should muster strong at Ramgarh on the 18th and 19th March and help to make the Anti-compromise Conference a complete success. We have no doubt in our minds that if this Conference proves to be a success it will automatically put an end to all efforts at a compromise and it will thereby save the Congress and the country from a national calamity.

The Bihar Provincial Kishan Sabha is organising a peasants' rally at Ramgarh which will be attended by two lacs of Kishans. It is also proposed to hold the All India Conference of the Forward Bloc at Ramgarh at or about the time the Congress meets. The occasion may therefore be opportune for holding an All India Anti-compromise Conference. We hope that this Conference will be held and the Leftists and Leftist organisations all over India will muster strong with a view to make this Anti-compromise Conference a complete success. This Conference will serve to end all talk of a compromise and stem the rot that has set in.

Meanwhile may we not appeal to Mahatma Gandhi to give up

these long and tiresome journeys to Viceroy's House and to come and stand at the head of his countrymen as he did in 1920?

Sukhdev Dutt

A PERTINENT QUERY

The Independence Pledge has made the *Statesman* angry and naturally in two of its recent editorial articles it has ranted and raved to its heart's content. The four-fold ruin that the British conquest of this country has brought in its trail has been characterised by the "Friend of India" as a "foul and abominable lie" and it has gone on to propound the thesis that Britain's possession of the vast and fabulously rich Eastern land and her continued holding on to it has been an act of pure altruism on her part and that India has profited tremendously by her subjection to a nation from the far-off Isles. We are not, however, amazed that our contemporary, bred on the true Kiplingian tradition, has ventured once more to put forth this myth of an argument in defence of British imperialism gripping on India; it has been dinned into our ears so often that we have almost become used to it. But what has really surprised us is that although the Pledge has stood for a decade, although it has been repeated from thousand platforms by millions of freedom-hungry population from year to year with all the solemnity of a religious ceremony, why has the *Statesman* lapsed into an unbridled fury *this time* and indulged in vituperation exceeding the limits of bare decency? Coming events, they say, cast their shadows before and has this exponent of vested British

interests been appalled at the impending loss of India on whose vast resources countless Britons have sponged at will and fattened themselves? How else to explain these rabid outbursts on the part of our contemporary?

The *Statesman* has sought to make out a case for British rule in India by pointing its finger to a page of our history. That our country fell on dark days just on the eve of the advent of the Britishers, is denied by no body today; that the liberal ideas that they brought along with them quickened our moribund national life, is an admitted fact. But even on this score Britain has not much to be proud of. Ideas are not in the nature of trade monopolies and the wave of liberalism that swept over Europe at that time would have broken all barriers, crossed the seas and reached the Eastern shores a day sooner or later. It is a stark truth that Englishmen did not come to this country primarily on a cultural or philanthropic mission and left its shores when this laudable task was done. Their chief object was to drain off the wealth of the land and with this end in view they went on tightening their grip on it by and by till they succeeded in stepping on to the supremely privileged position of the administrators. From that time on economic exploitation has proceeded along with cultural doping, the latter as an aid to the former. Lord Macaulay, that scurrilous calumniator of the Indians, pushed on vigorously with his mission of anglicisation. But some spiritual giants in the persons of Ram Mohun, Vivekananda, Dayananda, Vidyasagar and others appeared in time to stem its onrush which had already thrown many an Indian off

his feet. The soul of India thus survived the subtle strangulation, gradually recovered itself and has today become fully triumphant. The *Statesman* has observed that it is not complimentary to the Indians themselves that they succumbed to an alien culture. We agree. But it was not unnatural for the weaker spirits to have yielded to the sedulous propaganda that all that the Englishmen stood for was good and noble and the culture of India was no better than a bundle of irrational prejudices. Further, the temptation of material advance as a result of ready conversion to English ways had also its part in the game of seduction. Even today there are men and women among us who take an abnormal pleasure in aping the manners of the rulers. They are the waifs of the society and the awakened nationhood of India is really ashamed of them.

This is only one side of the picture. The *Statesman* has also described graphically how England sends the very flowers of her youth to India and gets back some pitiable wrecks—parched in brains, perverted in nature, in fact, some extremely sorry specimens of humanity who are insufferable nuisances even to their own servants. There is nothing to wonder at it. Dr. Tagore in one of his memorable poems has said that slavery is a double-edged evil, it debases both the serfs as well as the masters. People here will testify that their degradation begins as soon as they arrive in this country and start on their professional career. Either pressed to an uniformly boorish pattern by the bureaucratic machine or pampered beyond all deserts on the score of skin, they become thoroughly spoiled before they set

out for their home. And if, as the *Statesman* asserts, India has been a losing concern to Britain for the sacrifice of the best manhood that this country calls forth, in spite of the piles that she carries off from here, can it not be quite pertinently asked why this pathetic eagerness on the part of Englishmen for clinging on to the Indian soil and having the upperhand in the affairs of this country? Is it not better for them to leave India bag and baggage so that she may achieve her destiny in an unfettered way

CURRENT COMMENTS

"Bengal Congress Day"

The 11th February has been fixed as the Bengal Congress Day. We hope Congressmen all over the province will faithfully carry out the instructions issued by the secretary of the B.P.C.C. The authoritarian methods of the Wardha Rump have brought the great national organisation to a very sorry pass. It appears clear that the High Command is bent on a compromise with British imperialism resulting in a sabotage of the National Cause. That is the reason of the present ruthless drive against the Left in all provinces and specially in Bengal which is proud to have the largest Leftist contingent. An unbending stand has to be taken against the present drift of the Congress and its true character restored, for, as the exponent of the Nation's hopes and aspirations it is greater than any particular leadership that may for the time being hold the field. The 11th February will provide an occasion to all Congressmen in Bengal to register their emphatic protest against the compromising

ways of the High Command. May they rise to the height of the solemn occasion

Whither Congress?

How can it be explained, legions of puzzled people have queried us that on return from the Viceregal Lodge the other day Gandhiji gave out that the difference between the Government and the Congress was "vital" and yet only a few hours after at Jhansi he declared that the talks were "only suspended" and still he was hopeful of Swaraj without a struggle? We frankly confessed to our interrogators that we, too, fully shared their confusion. But as days are going by, we seem to be approaching a solution to the riddle. The Government is adamant so far as its withdrawal from the scene of constitution-making is concerned, as is evident from Lord Linlithgow's renewed assurance to Mr. Jinnah to safeguard the "legitimate interests" of the minorities. But that does not matter much. There has been taking place a definite climb-down on the other side. The steady rapidity with which the idea of a Constituent Assembly is undergoing dilution, can leave no doubt whatsoever as to which way the wind is blowing. Some time ago Shri Rajagopalchariar talked of a small body to frame a constitution for India and the inimitable Mr. Satyapuri gleefully jumped on the scene to say ditto to it. Sardar Patel opined a few days ago at Surat that "if a Constituent Assembly elected by an electorate based on adult franchise is considered impracticable, a substitute on the basis of the present provincial franchise will do." As the Congress demand is watering down apace, it seems that if the Government is not found agreeable even to this modest proposal, there

may be a fresh offer from the other side to settle things through a Gandhi-Jinnah-Ambedkar meeting. It is not difficult to anticipate its outcome. The whole show may fizzle out. And if a settlement can be threshed out, possibly that will be sought to be passed off as Purna Swaraj.

Pandit Nehru's 'Indignation'

The *National Herald*, Pandit Nehru's paper, has given the following picturesque description of one of the recent speeches of its Boss. "Pandit Nehru's voice quivered with indignation when he referred to those who talked of Dominion Status." It is neither unusual nor surprising. For it has been seen on innumerable occasions that away from Wardha the Pandit roars, then on its way he begins to cool down and when he reaches the place he turns into a veritable lamp. We would like to put in a simple query to our Allahabad contemporary: if the Pandit is such an indignant protestant against Dominion Status, how could he lend his support to the proposal empowering Gandhiji to negotiate terms on the basis of the Viceroy's Bombay speech? Let it think out a plausible explanation which will at least save the face of its Boss, even if it can not convince the public.

No Peace in Sight

"We rejoice to think" Mr. Chamberlain has said, "that the help given from England has been of real value to Finland. Further aid is on the way." It is clear that Britain has now thrown off the mask and is going to help Finland openly. A few days ago M. Daladier too, openly assured French support to the Finns. This intervention of the Allies in the Russo-Finnish scuffle can have only one

effect: it will throw Stalin more closely into the arms of the Fuehrer and Russo-German *entente* will be greatly cemented. In view of this fresh development in the war situation, the hope of early peace seems to be but a mirage. And Goering's reported offer of a six-point settlement strikes as nothing more a catching newspaper scoop.

Excess Profits Tax

The proposed Excess Profits Tax has raised a furore in the Indian Big Money circles. Frankly speaking, we have hardly been able to account for it. There is no denying the fact that to the commercial magnates the excess profits caused by the war have been in the nature of an unearned increment—a veritable windfall. Their owners have hardly done anything

to deserve them. And if there be no getting away from a tax to help on the war finances, what can be more taxable incomes than those on which it has been levied? Of course, some mitigation of its heaviness may be pleaded for with some justification, for 50 p.c., after all, is too much. But that does not take away the essential reasonableness of the proposed tax. One of our contemporaries has been somewhat surprised at Sj. Bhulabhai Desai's downright condemnation of the tax. How can the Congress, it has argued, which has identified itself with the poor man, have any objection to this imposition? We are no less surprised than our contemporary at its naive credulity. Really, things are not always what they seem and test cases come occasionally to prick the bubble.

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By Spartacus

NOTES ON FINLAND

Previous articles in this journal have dealt adequately with the causes of the Soviet decision to assist the Finns in overthrowing their reactionary government. No one with intelligence is at this date likely to believe the account being sedulously put about by the capitalist Press. Rather do we find extremely diverting the crocodile tears wept by the *Statesman* over the Soviet Union's "betrayal of socialism"—of which the *Statesman* has been so wellknown an advocate. Nor are we surprised to find the Indian nationalist Right newspapers outdoing even the imperialists in their scurrilous attacks upon the workers' republic. This was to be expected. At the present stage it is essential to capitalism that the workers and the colonial peoples should be misled as far as possible by their own leaders. Hence the position of Attlee and Citrine in Britain and of the Congress "compromisers" in India as the sergeant-majors of imperialism.

But though no one, whose class-interest does not blind him to the facts now believe a word of what the newspapers have to say about Finland, it is still necessary to expose their accounts, for some may not realise the extent of the fraud now being put across. Moreover, even in a tangle of lies it is occasionally possible to find a glimmering of the truth by reading between the lines, a task which in conditions of war-time censorship is very necessary. The present article—or rather series of notes—is an attempt to do this.

Propaganda

From the moment that hostilities began, a stream of propaganda poured out of the Finnish Embassy in London. Photographs of "atrocities" and so forth were distributed wholesale. Claude Cockburn in *The Week* revealed the origin of this material. The earliest photographs, he said, were so badly done and in such a hurry that you could see where the atrocities were painted in. Remember that the next time the papers publish photographs of "havoc caused by Russian bombers."

Then the "Riga correspondents" chimed in. The method of recruiting Riga correspondents was revealed by one of them a short time ago. He never saw Riga in his life. The News Editor presented him with a lot of cuttings from the "morgue" and told him to "work them up into a story with a Riga date-line." The *Times* is almost unique in possessing a Riga correspondent who actually exists. His name is Mr. Urch. He has been virulently anti-Soviet for many years and has been responsible for more misinformation about the Soviet Union than any man alive, not excluding Trotsky. Riga, being a centre of currency and jewel smugglers, as well as "White Guardists," *saboteurs* and spies, is not a bad place for picking up atrocity stories.

After the war got going, this sort of thing was no longer so necessary, because the British Government openly started intervening on the Finnish side by dispatching war material. From then on, the propaganda could be done through official channels with the use of the censorship to block any attempt to refute it. Now-a-days, *Reuter* hardly ever even telegraphs out the Soviet *communiques*.

Terror in Finland—

Nevertheless it is possible to find out a little of what is going on in Finland. Estonian newspapers report that the Ryti "government" (direct nominees of the Bank of England) is ruthlessly hunting down and shooting supporters of the People's Government. The evacuation of Helsinki was less intended as a measure of protection against air-raids than as a drastic police measure. Thousands of people were driven homeless into the freezing snow of the countryside, where they could be handled by the 100,000 "Protective Guards" who swarm in the rural areas. Even so, the Helsinki authorities are so frightened of revolt or sabotage that citizens who remained have been in many cases forbidden to leave their houses.

What is going on in the rural areas is revealed by the Parkino incident. When the Red Army entered Parkino village

they found hot half-cooked food on the stoves, every sign of a hurried evacuation, and a dead man in the street still bleeding from a revolver wound in the forehead. Some hours later the villagers began trickling back. They had been forced to leave at the pistol-point. The dead man, who objected, had been immediately shot, and the officer who shot him had yelled, "That is what will happen to all who don't follow us". The villagers had obeyed and given the White Guards the slip later.

The White Guards forcibly evacuated every one from the islands occupied by the Red Fleet. They slaughtered all the livestock, including dogs and cats, destroyed all houses, boats and so forth, set fire to a lighthouse on Hogland and attempted to do the same at Seiskaari. The extent to which the Finnish people is already in revolt against its masters is naturally difficult to estimate. But in every town entered by the People's Army and their Red Army allies, the new People's Government has been enthusiastically proclaimed.

Bombings—

Day after day the press is filled with denunciations of "the Soviet Government's ruthless air war on defenceless civilians." Only now-a-days they don't often publish the casualties. It would be too revealing.

Five days after the outbreak of the fighting, to judge by Finnish accounts, Abo and Hango had been practically wiped out and Helsinki badly battered. But the Finns were silly enough to mention that only 76 people (and their figures, mind) had been killed. Since, again following the Finnish account, the Soviet planes had concentrated on the "working class quarters",—it is difficult to see why more damage was not done by a single fifty kilogramme bomb.

By the beginning of last month the Finns had increased their figures; so on January 4 the Soviet Embassy in London considered it necessary to point out a few discrepancies. Finnish estimates, said the statement, were not borne out by an

agency report of December 29 which put the casualties at 200. M. Maisky compared these figures with the results of a single Japanese raid on Chungking last May. He also caustically remarked that the number of Soviet tanks alleged to have been destroyed in Finland compared favourably with the number of Soviet aeroplanes alleged to have been brought down by the Japanese during the summer fighting on the Mongol-Manchukuo frontier.

On January 22 *Reuter* reported as follows: "The important port of Uleaborg in Finland's waist was raided on Saturday by 20 bombers. Telegraph wires were badly damaged, but there were no casualties." The use of that word "but" is an education in capitalist journalism. An important munitions port, a perfectly legitimate military objective, is bombarded. The account makes it clear that exceptional care was taken to avoid injuring civilians. "But there were no casualties"!

Of course, if you are the Riga correspondent of the *Times* or the editor of the *Statesman*, you will prefer to believe that this was due to bad Russian marksmanship.

"Bad Marksmanship."

These lines were actually written before we cut this gem from the *Statesman* of January 27:

"The figures published by the Finnish Government showing the results of Soviet air raids in Finland provide evidence of the wastefulness of aerial bombing and speak poorly for the efficiency of the much-vaunted Red Air Force. In the course of the week covered by the review, 6,667 bombs in all were dropped in non-fighting areas, resulting in little material damage and only 18 people killed and 109 injured."

If, instead of referring to Finland, these figures had been put out by the Germans about the British raids on Heligoland and Sylt, the *Statesman* would have, quite rightly, congratulated the Royal Air Force on doing its job without causing unnecessary loss of life. It would also, equally rightly, have dismissed the remark that little material damage was done as an enemy lie.

But apart from this, the writer shows himself completely ignorant of the "modern theory" of bombing civilians as worked out by the Germans in Spain. If your

object is to kill people you don't have to aim; in fact, aiming is a disadvantage, because even an expert bomber very rarely hits what he is aiming at. You fly over the town in formation dropping bombs at regular intervals of time. The law of averages does the rest.

In contrast to this systematised slaughter it is quite obvious from printed accounts that the Soviet pilots are confining their attacks to military objectives, including munitions factories and industries vital to prosecution of the war. Hence, of course, all the nonsense about bombing "working-class areas". It does not occur to a capitalist journalist, who lives in Ballygunge or Alipore, that, the average worker cannot afford to live further than an anna tram-ride from his job (usually not even that), and that therefore munitions centres are also "working class areas."

In addition to attacking only military objectives, the Soviet pilots are obviously taking exceptional care to avoid loss of life. They are not such fools as to believe that loss of life can be completely avoided. Whatever may be the British and French view, the Soviet Command is not of the opinion that the best way to deal with an armaments factory is to drop leaflets down the chimney.

What the struggle is about.

Finally, a few words about strategy. On this the press of India, imperialist and nationalist, has let out a perfect shriek of ballyhoo, praising Finland's "brilliant defence" and deriding the Red Army. Every time a Finnish patrol cuts off a Soviet platoon and magnifies it into a regiment, we hear that another Red offensive has broken down, that there is a plot to overthrow Stalin in the Ukraine and that half the Red Army has been shot for treason. Some of the people who say

this even believe it, because they do not know what the struggle is about.

Even if the Red Army had been as inefficient as its critics say, it could, by blood and iron, have smashed through Finland long ago. The business might have taken longer than the Germans took to overrun Poland, because Finland is geographically difficult for mechanised troops. But it could have been done.

But if it had been done, the world would rightly have looked upon it as a piece of naked "Red" imperialism. Also, a huge number of people would have died. It was not done, because this is not a piece of "Red" imperialism.

Day after day the Soviet radio has been trying to din into the heads of the scatter-brained "Left" intelligentsia, duped as usual by capitalist lies, that the Red Army is not invading Finland but assisting the People's Government to establish its authority. The speed of advance of the Red Army is therefore dependent upon the People's Government's success in doing this. Where there is a White Guard concentration, the Red troops naturally attack it. But, as in all that they have done, the object of the Red commanders is to avoid killing people, whether Finns or Soviet citizens, the advance is necessarily gradual, for it depends upon the Finns themselves.

Stalin said long ago that every country must make its own revolution. Any attempt to impose one from outside, though it might succeed for a time, would ultimately fail. Stalin is not Hitler. He does not establish "Protectorates" as a disguise for robbery with violence. Behind the Finnish Revolution is the full might of the workers' republic, unstintingly at its service. But that revolution must be made by the Finns.

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Whither Jawaharlal Nehru ?

(An Open Letter from An Indian Student)

DEAR JAWAHARLAL NEHRU,

Last week, as I took the Independence Pledge along with thousands of my countrymen, my mind travelled back to the time when we celebrated our first Independence Day and responded to your stirring call to pledge ourselves to the struggle for India's freedom.

Ten years have gone by, ten long years that have seen unprecedented developments in India as well as the world abroad. We have witnessed the growth of new forces in these years, the waning of many old ones, the rise of the power of evil as well as of good, the advent of barbarism and the forces of destruction as well as the strengthening of the people's solidarity and determination in building up a new social order. In our country too, we have moved forward, our Congress has not only accepted Independence as its creed but has marched a long way towards that goal. A new sense of confidence, of freedom and of coming triumph has distinctly permeated the minds of the masses. From the historic moment when you proclaimed on the banks of the Ravi, Independence as the objective of the Indian nation, we of the younger generation regarded you as our friend and leader. We reposed our trust and confidence in your leadership, and always looked up to you to give the correct lead at a critical situation. For, your pronounced views generally reflected the thoughts of Young India. You were no votary of a narrow nationalism; your internationalism always led you to sympathise with liberation movements in different parts of the world. Your views on social inequalities and the evils of the acquisitive society helped to popularise socialistic ideas among the youth of India. Many of us might have moved a long way from those beginnings, but we acknowledged with gratitude your lead in the direction of a new line of thought in the minds of our countrymen.

Through your activities also in these early days, you registered a protest against age-long ideas and beliefs. In spite of sentimental attachments, you did not

subscribe to the views of the old school on social and economic problems. You gave a definite socialist orientation to at least certain sections of the Congress. When you came back from Europe in 1936 to assume the office of the Congress President once again, you advocated unity among all the anti-imperialist forces in the country. In your speeches, writings and activities, you tried to make the Congress a real United Front to which should be attached the peasant and the worker as much as the student and the middle-class. This was also the time when our national movement was strengthened by the growing influence of Kisan and Mazdoor organisations as also the stirrings among the States' people. Although the moment was opportune for the purpose, and the Congress was feeling the necessary mass pressure, nobody would deny that the success of the United Front in those days was to a large measure due to your leadership. The Congress became endeared to the masses—and the masses gave strength and vitality to the Congress.

You have, during your terms of office, made the Congress recognise its real allies beyond the frontiers of India. You have, by concrete examples, helped us to realise that our movement is part of a general Freedom movement going on all over the world. We have thus felt a sense of comradeship with the fighters against imperialism and reaction in Abyssinia, Spain and China. Those of us who had the good fortune to watch you personally during your visits abroad, know how intensely you felt for the soldiers in Freedom's battle in Spain and China when you met them at the actual war-zones, with what passionate sincerity you condemned the rape of Czechoslovakia. Your name became a guarantee abroad that a Free India would throw all her weight on the side of the progressive and liberating forces throughout the world.

Such a clear stand on your part in defence of freedom and social justice, both on the national and international planes leads one to expect you to give a bold lead to-day when we are once again in the

midst of a grave crisis. The hour has come for the final settling of accounts with Imperialism, and you certainly realise that that can be possible only through a nation wide struggle. Imperialism has dragged us into this war which is hitting every section of the population. The rank and file are getting impatient for the marching order. But the Congress leadership to-day is not only vacillating but positively thinking in terms of a compromise. They are now holding back the struggle lest that they themselves might be thrown out as the tempo of the movement would rise. Under the pretext of discipline, they are trying to muzzle all democratic criticism, and deliberately provoking a split in the United Front. The edifice that has taken so many years and so much sacrifice to build up is being threatened by the dangerous manoeuvres of the Right Wing. You have seen with your own eyes in China what a tremendous force can be wielded through national unity, and how one has to guard against splitting tactics compromisers and vacillators. It is therefore all the more unfortunate that you should side with those elements which are trying to break up our national front. More than once, you have expressed your disagreement with their views on many questions, but you have put those differences aside for the sake of national unity. It is not time now that you should stand up and resist these attempts at splitting and compromise? You command a singularly important position in our national life: your responsibility, therefore, is the greatest to-day.

In your recent speeches and utterances on international affairs, you have betrayed the same vacillation and lack of self-confidence that characterise your line on the national problems. You have rightly pointed out that this war is an imperialist war, that it is being waged in the interest of rival imperialisms. One fails to understand, in that case, how we can pledge our support to Britain in this war even if there be a settlement of the Indian question. For one thing there can never be a real settlement of the Indian question

so long as Britain remains an imperialist power, and Britain would not have entered this war if she were prepared to discard her imperialism. There can therefore, be no bargaining with British imperialism on the question of our opposition to the war. Many of us are not quite clear as to what is your definite view in the matter, but you seem to subscribe to the opinion of the Right Wing that we should support Britain in this war as soon as a way-out is found of the Indian tangle. But an imperialist war is an imperialist war, and we having no interest in the perpetuation of imperialism in this world, should dissociate ourselves from it.

What has staggered us most, however, is your latest pronouncement on Russia. You admit that you support the great socialist experiment in the U.S.S.R. and you also seem to concede that the menace of capitalist intervention against the Soviet Union is greater to-day than ever before. But in spite of these, you hold that the Soviet-German Pact was a shock to you, and came to the conclusion that the Soviet Union "lined herself with aggressor nations and thereby was false to the tradition she had herself nourished for these many years" by taking up arms against Finland. It is not necessary here to deal with the question of the Soviet-German Pact, since there is no doubt to-day that by this masterful piece of diplomacy, the Soviet Union by one stroke shattered the Anti-Comintern Axis and exposed the game of the imperialist powers to embroil the U.S.S.R. in a death-grapple with Germany.

As for Finland, it is becoming clearer every day that the imperialist powers, in the hope of diverting the present war into a war against the Soviet Union, were making hectic preparations in Finland: there was no such thing as the independence of Finland with Mannerheims and Rytis and Tanners as tools of foreign imperialisms. It was against all those interests that the Red Army marched out and not against the Finnish people. To-day there is fast developing a war between the only Socialist State and the ring of capitalist powers, and one should have no difficulty in deciding on which side his sympathies should lie. It is unfair to brand Russia as an aggressor, since a socialist state by its total elimination of exploitation, has no interests

in war and land-grabbing. It takes up arms only in defence of its sacred frontiers or in aid of a people struggling for its own liberation. No power show a cleaner record in international dealings than the Soviet Union. It is the only power that has all along stood against aggression. Even to-day millions in China look up to the U.S.S.R. in gratitude as the only country that has consistently helped them in their struggle against Japanese imperialism. While you warn us to beware of imperialist propaganda, you yourself seem to fall a victim to it. While you admit that the news about Finland is garbled and grossly distorted, the next moment you go on to say that "there can be little doubt that the Finnish people are resisting the invasion as a united nation and both the Finnish Trade Unions and the peasantry are backing this resistance." On the whole, this article of yours is remarkable for its contradictions and one is baffled to find out where exactly you stand. Instead of trying to counteract the propaganda in the imperialist press, you have only

helped to make the confusion in the public mind worst confounded.

What conclusion can we draw from all these? To-day it is distressing to find the old pioneer of the United Front giving way to the compromisers and splitters, and the champion of the oppressed and exploited joining in the reactionary chorus of condemnation against the Land of Socialism for having taken up arms in face of capitalist menace. By your wobblings and indecision, the nation, it seems, is going to lose in you a great leader at this hour of trial. Hard times are ahead of us requiring bold and decisive leadership. This is the test for you. There is yet time for you to rally the forces and guide the nation. But you seem to move further and further in the opposite direction, forfeiting the trust of your people and the respect of those abroad who are fighting in Freedom's front-line trenches.

Whither Jawaharlal Nehru?—is the question that many of us are asking to-day. We pause for your answer.

Yours respectfully,
An Indian Student

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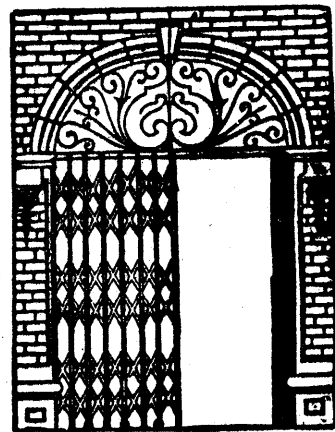
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HIGH COMMAND UNMASKED

WHY THIS VENDETTA AGAINST LEFT

MR. NARIMAN'S SEVERE INDICTMENT

The following address was delivered by Mr. K. F. Nariman as President of the C. P. and Berar Forward Bloc Conference held recently at Betul.

After briefly surveying the recent political situation leading up to the formation of the 'Forward Bloc' about a year ago, Mr. Nariman said it would be appropriate on this occasion to take stock of the activities of the new group since its inception.

It was started with triple object :—

- (1) To restore Democracy in Congress and to resist Fascist inroads and Dictatorship, to make organisation with its political and economic goal of Purna Swaraj and strip it of spiritual and mystical environments.
- (2) To prevent the downward drift towards Constitutionalism and pure Reformist Parliamentarism and to restore its original character of Democratic mass revolutionary political organisation.
- (3) And thirdly, to achieve the above objects, to bring about a complete consolidation of the Left Wing by amalgamating different groups.

Those who had wished and predicted that 'Forward Bloc' was but a temporary phase due to momentary political excitement, and would die out in course of a few months, must have been sorely disappointed to find this last-born political child daily growing in strength, power and potentiality, and even threatening very soon to outgrow its political parent.

If 'Forward Bloc' and Leftists had a fair and square deal and if the votaries of Truth and 'Non-violence' had practised what they preached, if the fight in the political arena was straight and above-board, and if Democracy was allowed a free and unfettered scope, there is no doubt that the Rightist High Command would have been long overthrown and

'Forward Bloc' and Left Consolidation would have been the National Congress itself. Every effort is made to keep out Leftists by all means, fair and foul, straight and crooked so as to keep the national organisation a closed preserve for one political class of blind Gandhiji's votaries, transforming the political organisation into what is aptly described as a 'Gandhian Math'.

The Case Of Bengal

Since victimisation of individuals does not serve their purpose well, and has not completely stemmed the rising tide of Left, they have now resorted to ruthless and shameless persecution of whole Leftist Committees, the latest outrage being the B. P. C. C. of Bengal. By one vindictive and most unfair stroke of the pen, the biggest slice the Leftist Bloc is cruelly clipped off, leaving the field open and safe for the present holders. If there was a vestige of Democracy left and any sense of fairness, truth and justice, the proper course should be to leave these disputes to be settled by verdicts and final judgments of the electorates of the Province, instead of imposing the will and command of an obviously hostile, partial and interested Tribunal.

In the recent Bengal outrage, if I were convinced of the bonafide intentions of the High Command, that the drastic and unusual action was actuated by the commendable desire to maintain purity in Congress administration or to safeguard Congress Funds, I, for one, in spite of my present political differences, would have backed and supported that decision; but when we find that on the one hand, they deliberately wink at and refuse to take any notice of all the crimes and sins of the Rightist individuals or Committees, but their sense of purity and justice is

suddenly aroused, only when a Leftist by hook or crook is caught in their trap, we cannot help coming to the inevitable conclusion that the so-called disciplinary action and organisational penalties are but convenient, handy and crooked handles, to wipe off the Leftists and leave the arena free for their autocratic pranks.

Three Instances

However unpleasant and painful this conclusion, still in the interest of truth and justice we have to publicly announce it. I may mention only 2 or 3 instances, personally known to me: I can vouchsafe for its truth and challenge any body to disprove them.

Two or three years ago, I as President of B. P. C. C. (Bombay) officially brought to the notice, both of the High Command and Gandhiji, outrageous frauds and criminal misappropriations of very large amounts from Bombay Congress Funds by responsible officials of B. P. C. C. I submitted detailed reports together with all necessary vouchers, documents, entries in Account Books and Auditor's report and it did not require the Chief Justice of India to detect them but any man of honesty and commonsense and justice could have but one verdict of guilty. Large amounts were removed by cheques from Congress Accounts to private accounts and from thence disbursed to meet private losses of officials concerned in Share Bazar. If the matter had gone to a Criminal Court, there was no escape: but so far as Congress Tribunal was concerned, it was a shameful 'hush up,' so much so, that alleged offenders were not even dealt with or disciplinary action taken and to-day the perpetrators of the fraud are qualified to occupy offices of trust and responsibility in the Congress, but I am unfit even to be a member of the Committee. The fact

that they were Rightists is enough to exonerate them from any penalty.

Vain Protests

Similarly an angelic lady in Bombay as President of a Ward Committee, whose concern is simply to restore purity in Congress administration and is not interested in parties or even politics, in vain protested and complained about gross irregularity in accounts, much worse than what is alleged against Bengal Committee. But she protested and complained in vain. Again the same maxim applies. In the eyes of the present High Command, like the King of England, Rightists can do no wrong.

To-day, I am compelled to seek protection of a Criminal Court in Bombay and much against my will have to drag Congress financial affairs to the Police Court, because the Congress President and Highest Authorities refused to move in the matter against a Ward Secretary, though very serious offences of forgeries and misappropriations and breach of trust were levelled against him by Congress officials and substantiated by documentary and oral evidence.

And lastly, speaking about Congress Funds, has Parliamentary Sub-Committee and particularly its Chairman rendered any account either to Congress or to anybody else of lakhs of rupees collected in the name of the Congress and for Congress work? Although Congress Constitution clearly lays down that proper accounts must be kept and audited balance sheet and auditor's report published, although in pursuance of that provision, every year, before the annual session, an audited Statement of Accounts is published and placed before A.I.C.C. containing detailed statement of small items of few annas and pies, still for the past three years or more, since the election, the Parliamentary Sub-Committee has never submitted any account. When I was a member of the A.I.C.C., last year, I moved resolutions at three or four Committee meetings successively calling upon Parliamentary Sub-Committee to submit an account, as they were bound by the under Constitution, but these resolutions never reached and hence till to-day nobody knows as to how these lakhs of rupees collected have been disbursed. There have been instances to my knowledge where thousands of rupees have been subscribed without even official receipts or private receipts.

Abusing Its Power

Thus in view of such glaring instances of discriminations and partiality, our conclusion is that the Rightist High Command is simply abusing its power of disciplinary action for the purpose of victimisation of 'undesirable' and 'troublesome' Leftists and thus managing to keep up an artificial majority.

I have referred only to a few recent instances within my personal knowledge in Bombay. There are similar lapses in other Provinces that go unnoticed and unpunished provided the offenders belong to their group; on the other hand, most ridiculous charges are cooked up against the Leftists. They neither care for purity nor honesty nor even discipline; their only desire is to maintain an artificial majority, to enable them to carry on unhampered, retaining power and patronage.

Still, we can make bold to say that in spite of all these difficulties, handicaps, persecution and injustice, if a genuine, free and unfettered verdict is taken, preserving the sanctity of the Ballot Box, that verdict would undoubtedly be in favour of the Leftists. Being conscious of that disastrous result, they take all steps in advance to prevent such a free, democratic and honest verdict.

If this rot was confined to organisational or administrative side, but the general body-politic was sound, perhaps the situation might have been still hopeful and redeemable.

Hypocrisy in Politics

But there is similar duplicity and hypocrisy also in politics. The celebration of the Independence Day a few days ago, betrayed such unreality in Congress politics. In one breath, there was an appeal not only to Congressmen but to the whole of India, to renew the pledge of complete independence i.e., severance from the British Crown. In response to that appeal, millions of gullible crowds all over the country, most solemnly took that pledge. At some places enthusiasm ran riot and crowds burnt effigies of Dominion Status.

Simultaneously in the next breath, as if to make the whole solemn show a mere hoax and a cruel political joke, the Generalissimo, who according to them, alone can lead to the goal with his mystic weapon of Charkha, that very Boss of Independence, entered into fresh negotiations with the Imperialistic Agent, the Viceroy, to clarify the position with regard to Dominion Status of Westminster pattern. The whole thing was a stage-managed show. The draft of the Viceroy's Bombay speech was conveyed through the future Prime Minister of the New British Dominion and was delivered after it received the Shegaon seal of approval.

Thus it is clear both from his recent writings and actions that the 'Field-Marshal' is plumbing for Dominion Status and Complete Independence is a political 'bunkum' just to fool masses and keep up the tempo of excitement, and false show of revolutionary mass actions.

"Arm-Chair Warriors"

As our leader Subhas Babu has rightly said, there is no difference between Liberal Federation and present-day Congress Leadership. The revolutionary fighting spirit has disappeared and is fast evaporating, giving place to constitutional mentality, making them arm-chair warriors. In spite of Pandit Jawaharlal's serious but futile protests, Complete Independence has become a mere phantom, the immediate objective is Dominion Status; the only difference between the two organisations is that the Congress leadership is sailing under false colours and has assumed deceptive mask of democratic fighting revolutionary organisation, whereas the Liberal Federation is at least honest enough to acknowledge and own the limitations. Forgetting that honesty is the best policy in politics, Gandhiji has knocked more often at Viceregal door than all others combined.

This mass fooling cannot last long the terrible reaction is bound to come very soon. In any other country, such a desperate position would have led to internal civil war. There would have been an open rebellion in the Congress But the Leftists have adopted the most constitutional and democratic and peaceful methods. A complete consolidation of all the Leftist groups is the first and primary necessity. It is deplorable that the seriousness of the situation is not yet gauged and appreciated. Instead of all Leftists pooling together and presenting a united front, petty jealousies, group squabbles and short-sighted affiliations, still keep them asunder; the High Command with the resources, power and wealth at its command, is playing the imperialistic game of Divide and Rule and Leftists often fall an easy prey in that game.

"A Clean Fight"

There is no personal element in this internal struggle. There is no selfish design to hanker after jobs or 'crumbs.' It is a clean fight for sound principles. If the present High Command changes its way and adopts a correct, fair, democratic and fighting line of action, Subhas Babu has openly declared that he will be the first to follow them as a common soldier.

Could any honest critic or fair opponent doubt his bonafides and sincerity? His clean and brilliant political record is a guarantee both for sincerity and patriotism of this organisation, the Forward Bloc. If truth, honesty and justice is to prevail and succeed in the long run, the mission of Forward Bloc must be fulfilled ere long.

In the meantime, our duty is to mobilise, organise, unite and agitate and I hope that the Provincial Conference will give a correct lead in those directions so far as this Province is concerned. We are assailed on both sides from enemies without and opponents within but the greater the difficulties, greater ought to be our efforts and determination and having faith in our righteous cause, we must triumph in the end.

Vande-Mataram.

By Swami Sahajanand Saraswati

BETRAYAL PURE AND SIMPLE

Despite the opposition of the Kisan Sabha and some of the statements of mine to the contrary, the Government have reduced considerably the prices of cane of a good number of districts of Bihar and the United Provinces on the plausible plea of cane diseases. The result is that the growers have received double blows. The diseased canes being comparatively of smaller weights their yield per acre is naturally low in tonnage and hence fetches generally less price which has been further reduced by the Government without any justification, and thus the Kisans have been penalised both ways. Yes, there is no justification for price reduction, since I am informed from reliable sources that the sucrose-content (sugar-percentage) of the so-called diseased canes is equal to that of others. That is why, I am further told, the sugar mills in South Bihar have made a strong representation to the Government to grant them rebates of equal amounts so that the mills purchasing cheaper canes may not be economically in an advantageous position. Will the Government retrace while it is yet not too late?

Further, my information is that the Govt. of Bihar have circularized the officers concerned not to hold *gur* demonstrations in the reserved areas. They must be aware that there are places like Bihta in such areas which export lakhs and lakhs of maunds of *gur* annually and Bihta is one of the few best *gur*-producing centres in the country. I had, therefore, requested the Agriculture Department to demonstrate to the Kisans of this area the superior methods of *gur* manufacture which are advantageous and profitable to the Kisans and the Asst. Director of Agriculture had personally promised to me to arrange the demonstration and be present on the occasion. But despite my repeated requests, he could not see his way to meet and discuss the results of what he had arranged. For my part I may safely say that my original request remains still unfulfilled. Now should I take it that this circular is in reply to that request of mine? Further, will the Govt. please tell me whether they want to kill one of the biggest village industries

in South Bihar? And if not, what else can be the meaning of this move of theirs? Sugar mills are surely out to ruin it and the Govt are, as if, patting them on their back for the same—that is the implication of the circular. And yet they maintain a huge show of Village Industries Department and *gur* marketing, etc.

There is yet another move, I am informed, to subordinate the entire cane department of the Government to the sugar mills and some of the superior officers highly favour it. If it is true, there cannot be a more sinister move to serve the mills even at the cost of growers. The cane-growers have, every now and then, to fight with these mills and the department is naturally expected to remain neutral in the matter, so that it may help the wronged side and pull up the wrongdoers. Will it be able to do it if it is made a mere appendage to those mills? Moreover, it cannot in that eventuality tender independent advice and instruction in the best interests of the growers, and even the most necessary and healthy criticism of these mills on the part of the department will be stifled. Surely, it is not meant to serve the mills alone and they too are not blameless so far as their dealings with the Kisans are concerned. Then why this partiality? And will not the life of honest and independent-minded officers of the department thus be rendered a veritable hell? They will not be able to serve the Kisans to the best of their abilities. Certainly this will, like the frequent transfers of officers and employees of the department directly connected with the Kisans in their daily dealings, virtually nullify whatever little utility this department possesses.

One thing more deserves close consideration. It was announced the other day on behalf of the Bihta Mill management that the early ripening varieties of canes 211 and 313 were not available for seed as the Government had definitely refused to supply them. But here *gur* is prepared early in October and November and 331 cane ripens not before December when *gur* market here is almost closed. Is it proper and justified on the part of the

Government to adopt such an attitude? Do they mean to suggest again that the *gur* industry should starve to death? Or do they wish that the canes 210 and 213, which are rightly feared to be affected should be sown this year also? If not, why all this emphasis on cane 331 alone?

Taking all these facts into consideration, if one is driven to the conclusion that the Government are simply betraying the Kisans in general and the cane-growers in particular, who will blame him? There is no gainsaying the fact that all these show the way the wind blows.

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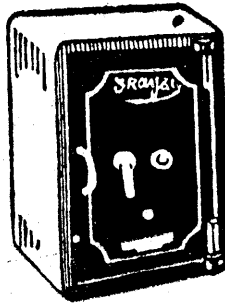
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A LETTER FROM A MUSLIM WORKER TO MR. JINNAH (4)

[*This is the fourth and the last letter of the series. The other three letters, as our readers must have noticed, appeared previously—Ed. F. B.*]

Dear Mr. Leader,

I now come to the most vital part of my story. I have to tell you how your communal zeal is affecting my life and the lives of millions of other workers like me. Now, I know that you, in your unfathomable wisdom, are trying to straighten out the political relations between the Hindus and the Muslims. But at the same time, without of course knowing it, you are seriously complicating their economic and social relations which for the average citizen are much more real than the so-called political relations. And what are these political relations, but the fixation of communal proportions in the legislatures and the Cabinets, which are the be-all and end-all of Muslim politics (The Non-Muslim politician seems to be looking to something beyond), and the direct and even the indirect benefits of which are mainly confined to the leaders and their own kith and kin, and do not and can not, as the experience of provincial autonomy has shown, filter down to the mass of the population? Before these communal squabbles began I had plenty of work and a steady income. The majority of my patrons and employers were naturally more Non-Muslims than Muslims. I say naturally because the proportion of moneyed people among the Non-Muslims is very much larger than among the Muslims. Then, as a worker, I got my tools and other materials largely from Non-Muslim traders who always allowed me a certain amount of credit. Similarly as a consumer I had to depend for my primary needs on the Non-Muslim grocers and clothiers who in time of need helped me with cash credit also. And a worker, as you can not know, has largely to live on credit. For instance, there have been times when we had nothing in the house—not a morsel and not a piece to buy a piece of dry bread—and I shudder to think what might have happened if the kind grocer hadn't come to our rescue. Since the political tug-of-war started my Non-Muslim patrons began gradually to drop off, and the grocer and the clothier became less generous in their

dealings. This was bad enough. Still somehow or other we managed to carry on. And now have come your heroic efforts to save Islam from the destructive designs of the Hindus, which I am afraid, must end in our complete undoing.

I know, great minds think synthetically, that is, they see the wood and not the trees. But, as a worker, who has to do his work piece by piece, I think analytically—that is, I must see the trees before I see the wood, for in fact, it is we that plant the wood. Thus to me a community is not a complete homogeneous whole but a combination of different groups or classes which have distinct and even conflicting interests and which live, so to speak, in different worlds. Now, for instance, the Muslim community can be roughly divided into the upper, the middle and the lower strata. And it is not quite clear which class or classes of Non-Muslims are attacking and which class or classes of Muslims are being attacked. So far as my workman's limited intelligence can see, there is complete harmony and friendship among the upper strata of all communities. The princes are united to suppress any attempt on the part of their subjects, whether Muslims or Non-Muslims, to reduce the rigour of their servitude. Similarly the landlords of all communities are united to oppose any the least mitigation of the ruthless exploitation of their starving tenants—both Muslims and Non-Muslims. In the same way, the Capitalists, i. e. the industrialists are united to resist any increase in the wages, or any decrease in the working hours of their employees, whether Muslims or Non-Muslims. Here you have fundamental conflicts which are based not on communal but on class antagonisms. Here are your two nations, (which a much greater man, viz, Disrealie discovered long ago), the rich and the poor, the exploiters and the exploited, the oppressors and the oppressed. And there are Muslims as well as Non-Muslims in both the nations—an insignificant number in the former, an overwhelming majority in the latter. Then,

as the poor are known to be more religious than the rich, one would say that the latter are much better Muslims or Hindus, than the former. Now Mr. Leader, whose cause do you plead? Surely you can not jumble the robber and the robbed together and treat them as one party, to the case. They are two distinct and hostile parties and you have to select one or the other for your advocacy. The former may promise better fees, but the latter, being by far the more numerous and oppressed, would mean greater glory.

To resume my analysis. The capitalists who are the rising and growing class are uniting, (if not united), to remove the landlords and the other vestiges of the decaying feudal system, from the path of their political and economic advance. Here an essentially class struggle takes a communal colour from the incident that while the proportion of Muslims among the landlords is still considerable (though it is palpably diminishing) it is almost nil among the capitalists. Thus the struggle between the capitalists and the landlords for political supremacy (the outcome of which History has already foretold) is given a communal significance by the unintelligent or interested Muslim landlords, who see whatever power and influence they have so far wielded slipping from their hands.

The next class (i. e. next below the capitalists) is the lower middle class of intellectuals, some of whom have been and are being assimilated in the upper strata. This is the most important class not in point of numbers, but because it constitutes the head or the brain of the National organism. And to the greatest misfortune of the country, this is the class that provided the soil on which the tree of communal discord was planted, grew and flourished. And the seed was the hunger for Government service, which in a poor agricultural country—which was still further impoverished by foreign exploitations—was the only means of satisfying the new intelligentsia's craving and ambition for power and wealth. This

gave the third party the opportunity to intervene and play off one community against another by throwing a few dry apples to one and then a few more to the other. This also became the source of the country's greatest good fortune, as it brought into existence the great Congress which commenced its national struggle by demanding an adequate share for Indians in the administration of the country.

Now, this strife in both its national and communal aspects, has lost much of its original significance. At the Centre as well as in the provinces the communal equilibrium in the services has been, or is being, restored, by an equitable distribution of posts. Then the number of available posts being very much smaller than the number of aspirants, a scramble has started within each community. And where selection is not by free competition (within the community), or the rigidity of competition has been tempered by a viva-voce, the majority of posts are being appropriated by the privileged classes, who have the further advantage of possessing the necessary means for equipping themselves with higher educational and professional qualifications.

Thus this class also is losing its communal illusions and prejudices and has begun to see that its own salvation as that of the mass of the population lies in the political and economic emancipation of the country not only from external exploiters, but also from its own internal parasites and blood-suckers. Accordingly, this class forms the main body and the vanguard of the national movement.

The lowest class which consists of peasants and workers and which, at a very modest estimate, forms at least 95% of the total population of the country, owing to unemployment, under-employment, and their ruthless exploitation by the upper classes are living in a state which in a civilised country would be regarded as brutal and intolerable even for cattle.

This more or less inert mass of humanity is remarkably free from the taint of communalism. In fact, they are not even conscious of any communal diffe-

rences, real or imaginary. And if once in a while there is a so-called communal riot or scuffle in a town (in the countryside all riots have either an economic or a party basis), it is almost invariably engineered and provoked by the disappointed politicians and their agent provocateurs. The pre-disposition to incitement is however, there, which is mainly due to physiological causes, i.e. to frayed nerves which are the result of perpetual destitution, chronic semi-starvation and constant worries. What wouldn't a man do in such a condition?

Now, Mr. Leader, if you are too old to take a new viewpoint—please don't take offence. Old age is after all old age. And old men are known to hold far too obstinately to their own ideas. That is why the natives of Fiji islands used to kill their old men. And I have heard many a young man say—what wouldn't have India gained if a similar practice were in vogue in this senile country to-day? Yes, I was saying if you still retain some of your intellectual freshness you will begin to see that there is no such thing as real communal or religious strife in India or, for that matter, in any other part of the world. There is strife and very serious strife indeed. But it is essentially what the economists call class-struggle, the eternal struggle between the rich and the poor, the exploiters and the exploited. Now it is evident that you are fighting for your own class, viz, the landlords and capitalists, and what you want is that they should have a share in political power and the administration of the country. The present leadership of the Congress also seems to be fighting for the same end, with this difference that they would like to keep the landlords out of it. They are, however, anxious to close their ranks so as to be able to fight against the threatening surge of the peasants' and workers' revolt against their ruthless exploitation. Thus there are no fundamental differences between you and the leaders of the Congress. And if you try to think clearly, and approach the question in a reasonable frame of mind, a settlement on the question

of proportionate share in political power i.e. the semblance, or as the Congress leaders would put it, the substance of it, (for you cannot get real power by supplications or even by impotent threats) is not only possible, but positively certain. And in case you fail to settle the question now, it will solve itself automatically by the gradual elimination from the struggle of the class you represent.

The Muslims, as you must be aware, have no share in banking (which is the indispensable basis of capitalist economy) and a very insignificant share in large industrial and commercial establishments. How insignificant you can see from the following illustrative figures taken from the statistics of the large Industrial establishments in India, published in 1927.

1. Textile industry (i.e. spinning and weaving) is the largest industry in the country. It employs an average number of 569,000 workers daily. Now out of more than 500 such factories in India there are apparently only four mills belonging to Muslims, with an average of 810 workers (i.e. 0.14 per cent of the aggregate number of workers daily employed).

2. The next largest industry is the jute industry which employs an average number of 309,000 workers daily. Of the jute mills not one belongs to Muslims.

3. The third industry is the Cotton ginning, and baling industry which employs an average number of 182,000 workers daily. In this case out of a total number of more than 2700 factories, the Muslims own only 42, with a total working strength of 2563—i.e., about 1.4 per cent of the total number of workers employed. And of all industries this is the one in which the Muslim position is the strongest.

And the landlords, both Muslims and Non-Muslims, have to go—the former sooner (because of the repeated partition of land at each succession, and the extravagance of the young which is a necessary concomitant of unearned incomes) than the latter. For the land is already so overburdened that even now it can hardly provide the barest subsistence for the

(Continued on page 18)

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STRANGE SCENES AT SOLEMN FUNCTION

RIGHTISTS' BULLYING GAME

A correspondent has sent us the following account of what happened at Raipur (C. P.) in connection with the last Independence Day Celebrations.

"The following is a very interesting incident which occurred here in connection with the Independence Day.

"The local C.S.P. in conjunction with the 'Shramajivi Sangh' and Students' Federation decided to take out a separate procession of Majdoors and Students and hold a meeting at the same place (Gandhi Chauk) where the Rightists' meeting was to take place ; accordingly the decision of the Socialist party was proclaimed in the labour quarters of the town on the night of the 25th instant. This sent a flutter through the Rightists camp and more so because Mr. R. S. Shukla, the Ex-Premier, C. P. was present here. Some of them tried their best to frustrate the Socialists' attempt to take out a separate procession. In the morning of the 26th Jan, at the Jhanda Vandana celebration attempts were made to dissuade the people joining the Socialist procession and meeting.

"In spite of the best efforts of the rightists the Socialist procession of Majdoors, Kisans and Students started from the Ramsagar Para School headed by Sj. Choube (of the Socialist party) Sj. Sanyal, Sj. Dixit, Sj. Harshool Sj. Dube and other prominent Socialist workers at 3 p. m. The procession gained in strength and volume as it proceeded its way. It was spectacular to see that red flag and the Tricolour fluttering side by side, a big portrait of Sj. Subas Chandra Bose profusely garlanded, the processionists crying Jais of Subas Babu and the socialists' slogans of 'Kisan Majdoor-Jindabad', 'Inkelab Jindabad' etc. when the procession reached its destination' the Gandhi Chauk it had swelled to about

2000 persons. The Socialists then started to hold a meeting. Sj. Harshool was proposed to the chair. The first person to speak was Sj. Kranti Kumar ; he criticised the spinning clause in the pledge and asked the audience not to take such a "false" pledge ; next to speak was Sj. Joshi ; he had not finished his speech when the rightists procession reached the spot headed by Pandit Shukla, Mahant Laxminarayan, Sj. Daga and others. It was not an impressive show.

"The rightists were very much annoyed to see the leftists holding their meeting on their (Rightists) own platform. Some of them demanded the meeting to be stopped just then ; the leftists said that they would take only 15 minutes and would stop the meeting only after they had explained to the audience why they objected to the new spinning clause in the Independence pledge. This made the rightists impatient. They mounted the platform and tried to stop the meeting by force. A clash seemed imminent. Police came on the scene. Fortunately, no untoward incident happened, only because the President of the day, Sj. Harshool, was calm and unruffled, in the face of great provocation. He calmly read out the pledge of 1930 and the audience took it ; he then stopped the Socialist meeting.

"As soon as Sj. Harshool vacated the chair Mr. Shukla mounted the dais and threats were hurled at the Socialists, forgetting the Independence pledge and the solemnity of the occasion. The Socialists had decided before hand that they would not mar the importance of the day by creating any disturbance even if the rightists behaved in a provocative manner. It was the calm attitude of the Socialists that alone prevented a clash that day ; the rightists who were bent on teaching a good lesson to the Socialists".

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(Continued from page 16)

producer, much less create a surplus value for the parasites.

And as to the professionals who thrive on the landlords and the industrial and commercial magnates, their future prospects are not brighter than those of their patrons.

Thus with communal representations and communal electorates, even if they last, you will only have impecunious Muslim legislators and ministers who will be, like many a Muslim legislator and cabinet minister of today, at the beck and call of their Non-Muslim creditors and pay-masters.

That leaves the impoverished intellectuals and workers and peasants who form more than 99% of the community, and in whom you are not and cannot be interested. And even if you be, you cannot help them. Our only solace is that our numbers are fast increasing partly on account of rapid procreation which, according to economists, is a necessary concomitant of poverty and a low standard of living, and partly due to a steady and regular percolation from the upper strata of the community. And the inviolable ties of poverty and of common suffering and oppression are cementing us with the impoverished intellectuals, workers and peasants of the other communities. And a class-feeling is rising among us and we cry to you and your class with one of Shakespeare's characters :

"Have we not eyes? Have we not hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? Fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as you? If you prick up do we not bleed? If you tickle us do we not laugh? If you poison us do we not die? And if you wrong us shall we not revenge?"

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COMPROMISE OR STRUGGLE ?

Mr. ANNAPURNIAH'S STRAIGHT QUESTION TO STUDENTS

"Struggle, an intensive, uncompromising, nation-wide struggle, till the attainment of Purna Swaraj or a path of negotiation and compromise with British Imperialism, which of the two, do you choose?" This was the question put to the students, by S. M. Annapurniah, member, All-India Forward Bloc Working Committee, and President, Andhra Forward Bloc, in the course of his presidential address to the West Godavari District Students' Conference held recently at Undi.

Continuing, S. Annapurnaiah said that the former viewpoint was today most firmly represented by Sri Subhas Chandra Bose, while the latter is most ably represented by Mahatma Gandhi, who clearly clinched the issue in a recent issue of the "Harijan" wherein he pleaded guilty to the "charge of Subhas Babu that he (Gandhiji) was eager to have a compromise with Britain" and justified his (Gandhiji's) stand on the ground that he "had not lost faith in Britain".

S. Annapurnaiah congratulated Mahatma Gandhi for having presented the implications of the present controversy on a thoroughly impersonal level and asked young India, particularly the students, who are but the citizens of the morrow, to think clearly and decide for

themselves whether a leadership which "has not lost faith in Britain" or one which has completely lost its faith in Britain, should be in charge of the nation's affairs.

The speaker felt glad that Mahatmaji's clarification gave the lie direct to the false and malicious propaganda carried on by interested persons and journals that the controversy between Subhas Babu and the Working Committee was only a "personal feud".

Referring to the magnificent receptions given to Subhas Babu everywhere, S. Annapurnaiah observed that one could understand the surging enthusiasm of the crowds, if the honoured guest was the Congress President or a member of the Congress High Command, but when the recipient of such fervent popular honours is only a person discarded by the highest tribunal of the land, the Congress Working Committee, it can have only one meaning, namely, that today, he is the most articulate symbol of the discontent of the masses and that he is the one person, the throbbings of whose heart are in complete unison with those of the masses. To desert such a person, at this critical juncture, is to desert the national struggle itself.

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Book Reviews

Indian Population Problems Edited By G. S. Ghurye. Karnatak Publishing House Bombay 2. Rs. 5/-

Recent growth of population in India is alarming and it must needs be solved scientifically or the nation would be doomed to inanity. And heartening it is that the question of rapid growth has engaged the attention of the serious-minded people and is being studied in a spirit of detachment. Far from adding to the total strength of the country, the rapid growth has created additional difficulties and the discomfiting aspect of the problem is revealed by the heavy mortality and unemployment. Recent years have recorded greater percent of dependence upon agriculture while the area under cultivation has not increased proportionate to the growth of population. In 1911 the percentage of agricultural population was 71 and in 1931 it rose to 73. And the book under review is a scientific study of the much vexed problem and contains reports and proceedings of The Second Indian Population and The First Family Hygiene Conference.

Today India faces the problem of acute unemployment and poverty and a comparative study of figure indicates an ascending trend. In 1901 the total number of unemployed males was 7 millions which constituted 71 per cent of the total able-bodied male population. And the present number is estimated at about 18 millions and the percentage is double that of 1901.

An analysis of the total agricultural and industrial population would bring out the true nature of the problem. And on the growth of population and development of agriculture few words of Sir John Russell are worth reproducing :

During the period 1908-09 to 1917-18, 0.89 acres per head of population were devoted to food crops while during the period 1928-29 to 1932-33 the acreage had sunk to 0.79 per head. The population increased by 28.7 millions but the area under food crops went up only by 2.6 million acres, only 0.09 per head.

Even the Agricultural Credit Department of the Reserve Bank has admitted that profit in agriculture as is carried on in the majority of holdings in India, is more often than not a droughtful quantity. The people stick to agriculture even when

they are losing money, simply because they have nothing else to do. And on the cause of unemployment and poverty Mr. P. K. Watal has made some important observations in his presidential address :

It is unnecessary for me to mention what those other causes are in the presence of a body of experts, but you will obviously call to mind the influence of factors such as inefficient production, inequitable distribution, commercial and financial policy, rent and revenue laws etc.

Now comes the question : Can the problem of poverty and unemployment be solved by arresting the rapid growth of population? Would the introduction of birth control at this stage be effective? Prof Karve has answered it very briefly :

While medical men and others specially interested in the movement for birth restriction might be left to move what they can out of their well-intentioned efforts, economists must continue to urge the inter-connection between the will to live better, the prospect of realising this will, the stage of industrial evolution and the great need to unite all efforts to hasten the process of modernization of society. Only as a part of this general movement of national progress will an intelligent population be possible. This will be after and not before a successful Industrial Revolution in the country.

Papers on housing problem, birth control, sex and anxiety are highly instructive. To the students of sociology the book is a mine of informations and we hope it would command a wide sale.

lend it all their support so that it may continue to serve the culture of the country in ever increasing measure.

Prabuddha Bharat (January) Published from 4, Wellington Lane, Calcutta. Single copy 7 as.

With the Number under review the journal enters the 45th. year of its existence. On glancing through its pages the reader will come across a rich repast of thoughtful stuff. The editorial article in the present issue provokes much reflection. The outside contributions which are mostly from eminent thinkers of our country, have uniformly maintained a high cultural standard. We wish the journal increasing success in its useful career.

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Chaturanga (A Bengali quarterly) edited by Messrs Humayun Kabir and Budhadeva Bose Price 12 as. each copy.


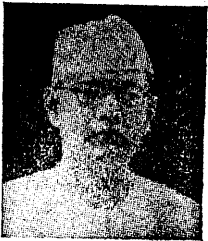
Since its inception the *Chaturanga* has been serving regularly rich fares of literary output to its readers. The *Pous* Number which is before us has kept up its usual standard. All the contributions, articles, stories, poems and criticisms, are marked by certain intellectual depth and felicity of expression. The special articles on literature, music and cinema constitute one of the most attractive features of the journal. We hope the reading public will



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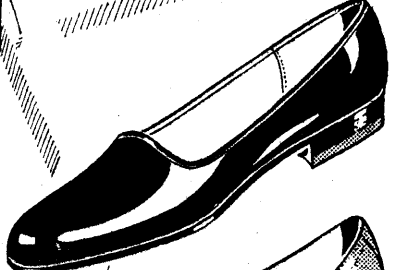

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