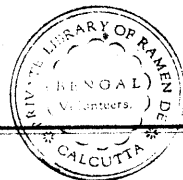


FORWARD BLOC

A POLITICAL WEEKLY

Editor : SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE



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CALCUTTA, SATURDAY, JUNE 1, 1940

ONE ANNA

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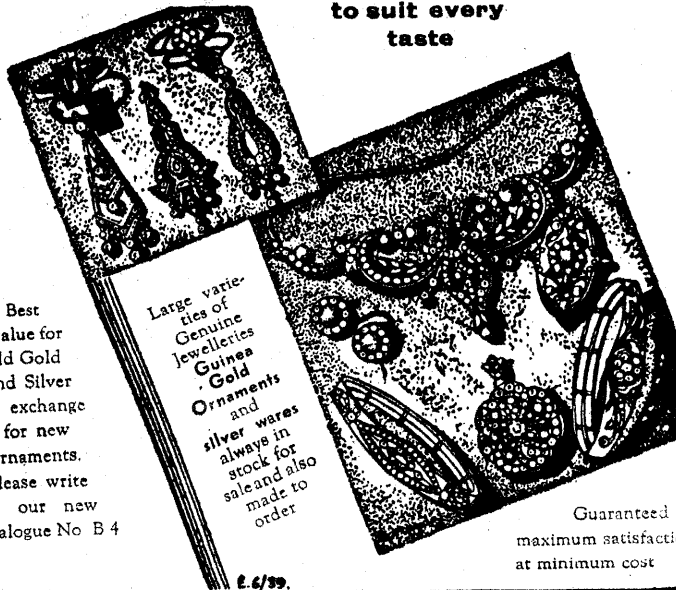
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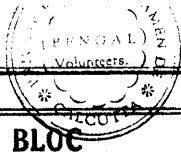
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SATURDAY, JUNE 1

Forward, Bengal!

It is not generally known outside Bengal that after the outbreak of war in Europe, Emergency Ordinances were promulgated in that province which virtually strangled public life there. In the matter of rigour and ruthlessness, the "Ordinance Raj" introduced in other provinces administered by Congress Ministries could not stand a moment's comparison with what obtained in Bengal. The Bengal Provincial Congress Committee waited for nearly five months to see if the Bengal Government would alter their ways and the latter were actually advised by influential quarters to do so, but to no avail. During these five months, the Congress Working Committee had to be approached three times for permission to start Civil Disobedience as a protest against the Ordinances.

By the middle of January, the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee reached the limit of patience and it decided to start a campaign of Civil Disobedience before the month was out. The most obnoxious feature in the "Ordinance Raj" was the banning of public meetings, demonstrations etc. throughout the province of Bengal, whereby public activities were virtually brought to a stand-still. The first public meeting in defiance of the Ordinance was convened by the writer on the 31st January at the Shradhananda Park in Calcutta. Politically-minded Bengal was bursting with excitement on that day in the expectation that wholesale arrests would be made and that the Gov-

ernment would endeavour to put down the movement by force.

Nothing of the sort happened. For inscrutable reasons, the Government surrendered and everything went off peacefully. From that day onward, the Ordinance was defied by the Provincial Congress Committee and its supporters all over Bengal. In consequence thereof, the 'status quo' prior to September was automatically restored and such Civil Liberty as existed in this enslaved land before the outbreak of war was recovered by the people. The magnitude of the B. P. C. C.'s success was unexpected and unprecedented. Arrests made by the Government for violation of the above Ordinance were, however, comparatively few in number. But perhaps for that very reason, the success achieved by the B. P. C. C. though substantial, was not spectacular.

This is how the B. P. C. C. has behaved since January last. But what about the Gandhites and the neo-Gandhites, viz., our National Fronters? It is reported that the authorities banned a Gandhite Conference in Arambagh Subdivision in Hooghly District and the local Gandhites did not think of violating that order. In Nadia District, the neo-Gandhites wanted to hold a meeting. But when the authorities did not permit it, they demonstrated that discretion was the better part of valour and abandoned their project. On May Day, the Provincial Trade Union Congress held a rally in Calcutta with Governmental permission, but the meeting and rally arranged by the B. P. C. C. on that very day, was done without any reference to the authorities.

In May, Bengal stood in need of a fresh spurt. The struggle for the restoration of Civil Liberty had

proved successful. The attempt of reactionary elements like the Ad Hoc Committee (the creature of the Congress Working Committee), the Hindu Mahasabha and the treacherous newspapers like the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* and the *Yugantar* to down the B. P. C. C. had failed miserably. People were looking forward eagerly for a further lead.

To furnish that lead, a Special Session of the Bengal Provincial Conference was held at Dacca on the 25th and 26th May. It was indeed a brilliant idea to have convened that Conference. The number of delegates who attended was considerable, viz., nearly 600 and they all came with great alacrity. Dacca gave a wild and tumultuous reception to the President-Elect and the writer on the 25th May. The main Conference drew a vast crowd of visitors and side-shows like the Students' Conference, Workers' Conference, Kishan Conference and Women's Conference were also successful. Everybody returned from Dacca with hope, confidence and buoyant expectation.

What was it that inspired those who attended the Dacca Conference? It was the bold and clear lead given there. The call of Dacca was a call for the intensification of the struggle and the widening of the fighting-front. But it was not an appeal addressed to subject race. The Indian scene having changed beyond recognition during the last few months, the clarion-call was sent out to a people who had regained their self-respect and self-confidence and had begun to think, feel and act in terms of an independent nation.

The Conference, therefore, urged the people to cast off and demolish all emblems of political servitude

which militated against the newly awakened consciousness of Free India. The Holwell Monument in Calcutta which advertises the slavery of the Bengalis in the very heart of the city must now go. So also must disappear another symbol of our subjection, viz., political prisoners in jail and in restraint. And all this as a prelude to wiping out from the face of Free and Fair India all the stain of the past two centuries!

The Dacca Conference struck another much-needed note of warning to the Indian people. With kings and kingdoms toppling down overnight, power appeared to be within sight and within reach. To seize that power and to retain it for all time, national unity and national solidarity seemed essential and indispensable. An appeal was, therefore, made for the restoration of unity within the Congress and for a lasting solution of the Hindu-Muslim problem. In a word, the direction of the Provincial Conference was "Struggle and Unite"—struggle against alien Imperialism and unite among yourselves—if you want to win freedom and preserve it.

All this great and noble endeavour has to be made under the rallying-cry of "All power to the Indian people". "All or none" is to be our principle and there is no room for compromise or half-way halt.

Satish Chandra Bose

GANDHIJI'S GAME

That was not very long ago. At the outset of the present war Mahatma Gandhi once shivered to his very core at the dark prospect of the beautiful Westminster Abbey

being razed to the ground by the Nazi bombs. He then solemnly declared that he would not embarrass Britain in that hour of her sore trial. Since then much water has flown down the Thames and here down the Ganges too. The war began to take a slow and meandering course. It did not unleash its full furies and the Mahatma's Satyagrahi conscience was greatly relieved of tension. As a result Wardha began to speak in a somewhat strident voice. It started by demanding of Britain an elucidation of her war-aims. Journeys to Delhi followed. Britain's war-aims were explained by the Viceroy, but apparently not to the satisfaction of the Mahatma. He sulked but did not lose heart and kept waiting for one more call from Delhi, but in vain. His gloom deepened and out of sheer desperation he ordered that the country should get ready for Satyagraha; when, that was to be decided by the Mahatma himself. Brisk preparations were set on foot; Satyagraha camps cropped up in plenty; Charkha—the chief weapon in the armoury of the Mahatma—was dragged out of obscurity and began to be emblazoned in all its attributed glory; leaders appeared in shorts and shirts and the help of camera was requisitioned to flash it in newspapers, evidently with the object of reviving the country's drooping spirits. People found a gleam of hope in the encircling darkness and were assured.

The wheel has now come round. The war is now revealing its most ruthless phases and the Mahatma has again been seized by a gush of humanitarianism with the result that he has come out with the declaration that "England will be embarrassed in the prosecution of the war if there is anarchy in

India; that the Congress will never do so long as it is under my discipline." Good Heavens! is India to desist from her fight for national freedom because Britain is faced with a peril? Let us not be misunderstood. We sincerely believe—and we have expressed it more than once quite unreservedly—that Nazi aggressiveness is a source of potential danger to the whole world. But we, like the overwhelming masses of our countrymen, are just human and our human-ness does not shrink from attempts at wresting freedom from a nation which, even in the face of a grave danger, will not relax its iron-grip on a far-flung empire. We claim to have some familiarity with history and do not know of a single country in bondage which fell back from its onward march to liberty in consideration that the ruling power might thereby be "embarrassed." But we forget, the leaders of those countries were ordinary men and not Mahatmas and the difference is not certainly negligible.

Now it is crystal-clear that the war resolutions adopted by the Congress were meant to be no more than mere hoax by Gandhiji and his faithful crew, the vociferous sponsor there of, we mean Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, not excepting; for they must have foreknown that the war in Europe in which imperialist Britain would be involved, would not be fought by words, sweet, sobbing or angry, or by Charkha and peaceful defiance of laws by Satyagrahis. They carried the resolutions knowing full well that wide-spread carnage and devastation would follow in the trail of that war. Then why this ignominious retreat now? Had it been due only to considerations of humanitarianism, our regret would

have been mellowed with a sense of pity. But Gandhiji is not merely a Mahatma, but a shrewd politician as well. Beneath the 'idyllic altruism of his present decision there is a diplomatic method which can not fail the discerning eye and the evidence thereof hangs in the middle of the sentence we have quoted above. "If there is anarchy in India"—ah! there's the rub. In that case it is not only England that will be "embarrassed" but the Rightist leadership too! Gandhiji knows it too well for it is not 1921 or '30 now. Tremendous forces have now burst on the Indian scene—forces which were conspicuous by their absence ten or twenty years ago, and the Mahatma is shrewd enough to realise that if a movement is started today, the mighty mass-upheaval that it will release, will burst all his ethical bonds and ultimately endanger the present reformist leadership of the Congress. That the Mahatma is not going to allow with his eyes open. He, therefore, wants, as far as possible, a peaceful transference of power from the British bourgeoisie to the Indian bourgeoisie that now constitutes the leadership of the official Congress. This is evidently Gandhiji's plan and however much he may try to hide it behind the smoke-screen of diplomatic verbiage, the Indian masses, we believe, have seen through his game and become alert. They are perceptibly becoming impatient of the Mahatmic brand of "discipline" dominating the Congress.

CURRENT COMMENTS

Belgium Surrenders

German *Blitzkrieg* will now mature into *Deutschland*, a composite Netherlands State, including Belgium, Luxemburg, Holland and

other groups, an ideal for which the *Verbond Van Deutsche National-solidaristen* was set up by the Nazis in the Low Countries, after the disgraceful (?) defection of King Leopold. Despite the militant protest of Belgian Ministers and all their sentimental outpourings from a safe castle in Paris, beyond the danger zone of Belgium, it is hardly believable that King Leopold, on whom the Anglo-French Press showered torrents of flummery the other day for defending the country gallantly, has welcomed today willingly the humiliation of surrender to the Nazis and left his throne vacant for an inhuman German Gauletier. Whatever may be the actual fact behind the "News Blockade", there is scarcely any doubt that the Low Countries have been laid low by the simultaneous charge of German tanks, firing of machine-guns and the indiscriminate bombing of speedy fighters and bombers. German Army will now advance towards the Channel Coast, and from an enemy, baptised in *Blitzkrieg* and with convenient bases at Boulogne, Calais, Dunkirk, Ostend and Zeeburgge, the British Isles will receive a terrible convulsion, perhaps for the first time in her long solemn history of security and peace.

Britain, therefore, now faces a peril, unparalleled in her long majestic life of imperial sunshine. Whether the sun has set or not yet set, surely the hour of final trial has come. On one side of the Coast now frets the frivolous child of Macdonald and Chamberlain with all vicious weapons of carnage at his disposal, and on the other side a motley crowd of Labour, Liberal and Conservative are being huddled together for the sake of national unity under the supreme direction of a brilliant and unlucky statesman,

Mr. Winston Churchill. It is really painful to conjure up cruel visions of German fighters¹ and bombers careering across the sky over the Buckingham Palace, Westminster Abbey, Downing Street and London, but it is much more heart-rending to reconcile the facts, that while Britain has staked her all to defend a noble cause and to kill the cancer of civilisation she is persistently putting forward pernicious pleas to India in defence of her out-worn imperialist policy. Britain must purge herself of all these sickening shams, before she can persuade the world to give credence to her cause and policy in this deadly War.

Anglo-Soviet Trade Talk

Months have passed since the Anglo-Soviet Trade talk started and in the intervening period-momentous changes have taken place all over Europe. The theatre of war is widening; under Mr. Churchill Britain is being schooled to the realities of the war. The Cabinet has begun reconstructing the national economy and its latest achievement is *national socialism*. In the past ideological differences blinded the British Cabinet to the growing need of the hour and Mr. Chamberlain did blunder in putting off the Soviet trade talk. In the early days of the Finnish war the Soviet Union was herded with the totalitarian regime by the hostile press and any co-operation with it was regarded an act of sacrilege and a direct aid to Hitler. Now the virtuous wrath has cooled down. The British Cabinet has roused itself from the political apathy into which it has been lulled and without illusion is facing the crisis. Sir Stafford Cripps is sent to Moscow to finish the talk. For long Great Britain endeavoured to reduce the

Soviet Union to nonentity and it has rebounded upon Great Britain with the disastrous result of its supremacy being injured. Mr. Churchill though a hard boiled conservative has practical insight into the things of the world and the Soviet trade negotiation might prove a prelude to other changes to come about. For behind the trade agreement lay the hope of repairing friendship with the state that was baffled and angered by Britain. The latest report about the mission of Sir Stafford however is not heartening and the possibility of its being translated into action is ruled out. Step by step and day by day humanity is being remorselessly and fatuously conducted to the blind alley. The world is sick of holocaust and craves for peace. Let Britain once more extend sincere cooperation to the Soviet Union in building up the bulwark against war and aggression.

The Call of England

A dismal atmosphere pervades in England today. Aside the English Channel simple folks are hurriedly evacuating their villages, and far beyond the bombing-range of the ghoulis enemy, the flabbergasted children are making a new comradeship with their compeers. The helmsman of the new Government has urged the people of England to face the gravest catastrophe with perfect complacency, and all the heroic deeds and tales of by-gone days have been recalled and rechanted to rouse the citizens from slumber. The Ministers of the Labour Party, supposed to be the representatives of the working people of England, have lent their whole-hearted support to this policy of Churchill's Government, and are driving myriads of workers to the factories to speed up the production of war materials and at the same time are persuading them to put aside their legitimate demand for higher wages to meet with higher costs of living. The obvious result is swelling discontentment among the common people, specially the workers, who live beyond the emotional penumbra of patriotism, and are accustomed to reality-consciousness. A few Labour

M.P.'s called a private Conference at Bournemouth to express their emphatic disapproval of this iniquitous policy of the Labour Ministers. They have made an appeal to the Government to negotiate peace, not as peace-at-any-price men and 'calamity-howlers', but as the accredited spokesmen of British working class. The Labour Ministers did not pay the slightest heed to it, because national crisis did not allow them to do so. The workers must forego all their claims ungrudgingly, that is the national demand.

This is, therefore, not the time for the workers to reason why and to indulge in petty squabbles of day-to-day grievances, but to obey meekly the command of the rulers of their national destiny. They must accept the hard fact that economic militarisation is the only defensive against the Blitzkrieg of a crazy tyrant. Reason is an ineffective weapon to combat madness. Will the workers of England submit to it, or they will search out from the dim corners of their national history a glorious chapter of their life when the streets of England echoed with their choral Chartist song:

"Then rise, my boys and fight the foe,
Your arms are truth and reason,
We'll let the Whigs and Tories know,
That Union is not treason."

Lead from Dacca

The special session of the Bengal Provincial Conference that recently met at Dacca was on all counts an event of exceptional importance. It was held under unique circumstances and gave a remarkably wise and bold lead to the country. It was fortunate in having as its president no less a man than Prof. Jyotish Chandra Ghosh, whose record of service to the cause of the country is an example and inspiration to many. He rose to the full height of the occasion and the address delivered is a weighty political document worthy of careful perusal and consideration of all who have the best interests of the country at heart. The sheaf of resolutions passed in the Conference (printed in this issue) bear the unmistakable stamp of clear thinking, political foresight and

courageous decision. We particularly call the attention of our countrymen to the resolution on National Struggle. A fight is already on in our midst and the alert and the alive cannot certainly have missed its stir. Courting arrest in defiance of lawless laws may be a quiet affair, but it has its moral dynamics nonetheless. Now it is up to all to widen the base of the existing struggle and add tremendously to its momentum. No better choice of the issues for fight could have been made than the two picked up by the Conference. The Holwell Monument has been a concrete reminder of our national bondage and as such a glaring emblem of national humiliation. A fight on the score of its demolition or removal will, it is expected, be able to rally all the bold elements in the province, irrespective of communities. Another issue for struggle selected by the Conference will also be of wide appeal to all sections of people. The problem of political release has loomed large before us but we have not as yet been able to get back our dear comrades in our midst. But they have to be released and a concerted drive has to be made to that end immediately. So far about Bengal for the present, but the struggle must not remain confined to a particular province. It has to assume an all-comprehensive national shape for which it must start in all parts of the country on issues of local importance which will develop and finally converge into one mighty whole. A golden opportunity has to-day presented to us for winning back our national freedom and it must on no account be allowed to slip by.

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BY GOPAL HALDAR

THE FLOOD REPORT,—FAILS IN FUNDAMENTALS

The Report of the Land Revenue Commission of Bengal, popularly known as the Flood Commission, deserves careful consideration. The Permanent Settlement of 1793, i.e. the Zamindari system of Bengal and all that it implies, sub-infeudation, etc.—was in the dock, and the Commission has been forced to pass its verdict on the system. *It is to go.* Not that the recommendation is unanimous. Everyone who knows the composition of the Commission on which powerful and capable Zamindars sat to protect their time-hallowed interests, anyone who remembers how they are represented in the very heart of the present Hug Government that was compelled to appoint this Commission, and, all who understand why the erstwhile Praja Prime Minister took the step—to redeem not so much his *last election pledges* to the rayats, but to insure his *next election prospects* among them—would not expect that a Commission like this would be unanimous in recommending an abolition of the Zamindari system. It would be useless to examine these minority reports in this paper, and, as the main findings and proposals of the majority of the Commission are fairly known, we should limit ourselves only to a brief review of the main proposals here, only the fundamentals which the Commission could not boldly face or grasp.

A stamp of diffidence marks the Flood Report, as anyone who reads it can see. The Settlement of 1793 must go; and, the rayats are to hold land direct from the state;—this is their first and foremost conclusion. But at the same moment they are doubtful of the future of this proposal, and, devise a second best instead—an income tax on land profits is to be imposed, not merely for the intermediate period of transition to the new system, but in case the recommendation for the abolition of the Zamindari system cannot be given effect to. This is neither bold nor sincere. The system, they find, must go. Go it must then. Why leave to it a chance again to prolong its baneful days? The Commission betray a divided mind here and a weak will. This weakness leads them in fact to make more and more concessions and prevents them from facing the situation. Thus they fail in fundamentals.

Compensation or Development Scheme?

A Section of the Government of India Act against expropriation of interests, for example, is relied on by the Commission to recommend a compensation to all superior land interests at the flat rate of 10 p.c. the nett profit and an elaborate scheme is drawn up for a sinking fund of about 100 crores of rupees spread over sixty years. The Government of India Act or its Sections, the Commission forget, are not sacrosanct against time and social changes. At a moment when all private property and persons are declared to belong to

the State even in the sacred land of individual rights and private proprieties, we would not waste our breath to argue the point. The principle of compensation itself cannot come in in this particular point. Or, if it comes in at all, it would apply in a reverse way in making these superior interests "disgorge", as the *Bengal Provincial Kisan Sabha* resolution points out, the vast profits they have made in as much the land in India was never owned by them; at least the new landlords created by the Regulation of 1793 had no title to it; they have made since then each year many times more than the one-eleventh of the nett collection that was to be their commission, as was supposed in 1793. And, in failing to give the same privileges to their rayats that were given to them and in failing to improve the land etc., as stipulated, these Zamindars have broken the contract and forfeited any title to the land that the Regulation might have conferred on them. These are basic considerations not lightly to be cast aside as the Commission appears to do. That alone would be *real compensation*. And this recommended compensation would benefit none. It would be eaten up by the Zamindars and the vast swarms of middle interests. They can justly demand for the easier transition of the society some consideration. And *the ends of that can be met only by a National Development Plan* raised by loan that would employ the *expropriated* middle classes.

The Commission then in devising the scheme for compensation does a graver injustice to the cultivators. In the long run who will pay the 100 crores to compensate the Zamindars? The same rayats no doubt who are impoverished. It is their irony of fate to have paid for what was theirs but never belonged to them legally since 1793. The same irony pursues them now when they are asked to pay again for what would belong not to the rayats but to the State. And this implies that they must *not have any relief from the present rent* they pay. The Commission clearly says that the present rate of rent, until further inquiry, should be taken as equitable. So, what interest would the rayat of Bengal evince for a proposal that gives them no relief from their present rent but only transfers the land from the ownership of the landlords to that of the State? The sad example of the *Khas Mahal* administration and the failure of *rayatwari* system in other provinces in India, which is thus to be installed in Bengal in place of the Zamindari system, would rather drive the Bengali rayats to vote in 1942 for retention of the Zamindari system than for its abolition.

Rent or Land Tax?

Unconsciously, therefore, the Commission has probably decreed for furtherance of the Zamindari system by not tackling the problem of the rent in the

true scientific way. Rayatwari system with rent is no solution. Here they again fail in the fundamentals. For according to their Commissions' own showing, the conditions of the agriculturists in other provinces are pitiable. They pay a higher level of rent; they are worse off than our peasants, they crowd into our industrial areas and leave our shores as emigrant labour. The recommendation therefore would merely augment the income of the State—hardly responsible to the people as yet—but not improve the condition of the rayats.

It is here that we reach the crux of the problem, and here the proposals of the Bengal Provincial Kisan Sabha boldly throw the light for all students of peasant economy. **"Rent must go. In place of rent we must have the agricultural tax. Like the income tax the agricultural tax must be graded, and, like the income tax, the agricultural tax should only be leviable above a minimum nett income."**

Debts and Moratorium

Failing in these two fundamental points, the Commission's other recommendations are shorn of their decided appeal. They are just in recommending that the *barjans* should acquire the right to the land they cultivate and the under-rayats should acquire the status of direct rayats; their prescriptions against sub-letting and fragmentation and sub-infeudations of lands are likely to be helpful and the proposals for the beneficial palliatives like improvement of agriculture, starting of rural industries etc., are quite fair. But again, when boldness is called for in order to face the question of agricultural indebtedness, they avoid the issue and fail in the third fundamental too. Not the co-operative credit societies alone, or the land-mortgage banks, but a *moratorium of all debts* for a period is now an imperative necessity, as we know.

So, the Bengal Provincial Kisan Sabha in its examination of the Report have also found Bengal cultivators need

1. Abolition of Zamindari system and all rent-receiving interests and encouragement of collectivised and cooperative cultivation.

2. Abolition of all rents by a graded land-tax to be collected by democratically elected peasant committees, who are also to disburse the loans etc.

3. Scientific price-fixation of crops etc.

4. Moratorium of all debts and establishment of co-operative credit banks, land-mortgage banks, etc.

5. A National Development Plan, instead of any compensation scheme, for the employment of the expropriated interests in irrigation, construction, agricultural marketing, sanitation, education etc.

By N. C. MEHTA

MR. CHURCHILL AND INDIA

Reconstruction of the British Cabinet is an outstanding event and it is likely to determine the future course of the war. Mr. Churchill though aging possesses indomitable courage and thorough knowledge of international affairs and is the right man to lead the British Cabinet in these perilous days. A born conservative, Mr. Churchill has always fought the cause of the Empire and his speeches are decked with imperialist joke. He prizes the security of the Empire above all and in the past he conducted a tearing campaign against the 'lagging programme' pursued by the Cabinet. For he believed—nothing could save England if she will not save herself. If we lose faith in ourselves, in our capacity to guide and govern; if we lose our will to live, then indeed our story is told. His *Arms And The Covenant, Step By Step* unfold the instances of vacillation and lack of courage on the part of Great Britain to rescue the weaker and bludgeoned nationalities. Years back Mr. Churchill had the earnest of the darkening scene and the night of barbarism descending upon Europe. And his speech on the annexation of Austria on November 16, 1934 was an appeal to the British Cabinet to pool opinion and efface the differences to work out a plan of mutual defence. But his attitude towards colony is truly conservative. His speeches on Indian questions are couched in frigid restraint and give the expression of iron determination to govern India. Mr. Churchill clings to the belief of divine mission in India :—

"At present the Government of India is responsible to the British Parliament, which is the oldest, the least unwise and the most democratic parliament in the world. To transfer that responsibility to this highly artificial and restricted oligarchy of Indian politicians would be a retrograde act. It would be a shameful act. It would be an act of cowardice, desertion and dishonour. It would bring grave material evils, both upon India and Great Britain; but it would bring upon Great Britain a moral shame which would challenge for ever the reputation of the British Empire as a valiant and benignant force in the history of mankind.

"The faithful discharge of our duty in India is not only a cause, but a symbol. It is the touchstone of our fortunes in the present difficult time. If we cannot do our duty in India, be sure we shall have shown our ourselves unworthy to preserve the vast Empire which still centres upon this small island. The same spirit of unimaginative incompetence and weak compromise and supine drift will paralyse trade and business and prevent either financial reorganisation or economic resurgence. What we require to do now is to stand erect and look the world in the face, and do our duty without fear or favour. A decisive opportunity may soon be at hand. Victory may once again reward the Conservative party. Let it be a victory with a real meaning behind it. Let it be a victory which proclaims to all the world that the heart of the Empire is true and that its hand is just and strong."

In 1919 when the Simon Commission had completed its enquiry Lord Irwin met Indian leaders of various schools and made an announcement that was treated as an indirect guarantee of Dominion Status. The announcement galled Mr. Churchill and in an article in the *Daily Mail* he summed up his opposition to granting Dominion Status to India :—

"It is therefore the duty of public men and of political parties to make it plain without delay that the extension of Dominion status to India is not practicable at the present time and that any attempt to secure it will encounter the earnest resistance of the British nation. There is no need, indeed we have no right, to close the long avenues of the future; but the idea that Home Rule for India or Dominion Status or full responsible government for India can emerge from anything that is now being done or inquired into is not only fantastic in itself but criminally mischievous in its effects. A warm sympathy for the peoples of India, spreads throughout the United Kingdom. We hail with gladness every sign of their progress to civilisation, competence, and self-discipline. But an immense journey lies in front of us all before they could undertake, without hideous disaster to hundreds of helpless millions, the supreme and plenary control of Indian affairs. We need not attempt to measure this journey in

years or generations. The speed with which it is accomplished depends upon the self-discipline and self-regeneration of the Indian peoples themselves. Our faithful and friendly aid will not at any stage be denied them. But Dominion Status can certainly not be attained by a community which brands and treats sixty millions of its members, fellow human beings, toiling at their side, as 'Untouchables,' whose approach is an affront and whose very presence is pollution. Dominion Status can certainly not be attained while India is a prey to fierce racial and religious dissensions and when the withdrawal of British protection would mean the immediate resumption of mediæval wars. It cannot be attained while the political classes in India represent only an insignificant fraction of the three hundred and fifty millions for whose welfare we are responsible."

And then Mr. Churchill pictured the anarchy that will follow when Britain has left the shores of India. While the R. T. C. was holding its session in London some liberal politicians were roped in and promise of Dominion Status was held out to them. The conservative mind was frightened and it thought that the great organism would pass at a stroke out of life into history. Underneath the democratic platitudes Mr. Churchill wanted to carry on the Government rigorously or revolution would stalk over the land :—

"The withdrawal or suspension of Britain's control means either a Hindu despotism supported by an army of European mercenaries or a renewal of those ferocious internal wars which tortured the Indian masses for thousands of years before the British flag was hoisted in Calcutta. Left to herself, India would rapidly degenerate to the condition of China at the cost of measureless suffering among three hundred and fifty million people. I do not believe there is any responsible and independent man among the thousands in this country who are well acquainted with India, who will dispute these facts."

Critically speaking Mr. Churchill has been leading an organised opposition against the movement of national liberation in India. He knows what India is to Britain. Strip of the dominion, deprived of international trade, overburdened with debts Britain would sink to the level of a third rate power and nothing of its glory would remain. Mr. Churchill defined the duty of the conservative in India on March 18, 1931. He was against any surrender to Gandhiji since he stood for the expulsion of Britain from India. He asked the Macdonald Government to move back while there was time and strength. He offered a parallel theory about India. Recent years that have witnessed some sort of departure from the fundamentals of conservatism have failed to effect any change in the outlook of Mr. Churchill.

Task Ahead of Us—Intensification of Struggle

The following are some of the important extracts from the presidential address of Prof. Jyotish Chandra Ghosh at the special session of the Bengal Provincial Conference at Dacca.

"The country is in a perplexed situation to-day. Half of the country has drifted to a course suing compromise and settlement. They have no faith in the strength of the masses and they plead that the country is not prepared to launch a struggle. Here is a tendency to lead the country in a different path and in the name of constructive work, we are told that Swaraj is to be spun out and charka is the only means for the attainment of our goal.

MASSES PREPARED

"The gentlemen who have assembled here would realise that the masses of India are quite conscious and awakened to-day. They are eager to jump into the struggle for independence of the country if only the leader were better prepared to give the command. The greatest need of the time is an expert and seasoned general. The question was never so imperative as it is now since the European war has made every moment precious. Never before in the history of our Nation such opportunity came and it is doubtful whether it would ever come in the future. In this great crisis, thanks to Swami Sahajanand and S. Subhas Bose, who have left no stone unturned to end this "masterly inactivity" by their combined efforts. Swami Sahajanand is clapped into prison because he wanted to spur the forward march of the awakened masses and our co-workers and those who followed him in the task are meeting with the same fate in numbers."

TASK AHEAD

"Our foremost duty to-day," said Prof. Ghose "is to discuss how the struggle which is slowly but steadily going on in the country can be intensified to make it irresistible. Our task to-day is to set up such a machinery or organisation that would immediately see that our decisions in this respect are translated into action."

OUR GOAL

"It is stated that the national goal of India is to achieve full independence. Eleven years ago, the Lahore Congress decided full Independence to be the goal of the our national movement. Prior to that, Swaraj, Dominion Status and other vague terms were used to refer to our goal. But after the Lahore session, the National Congress has year in and year out excited the imagination of the people by declaring Full Independence as the goal of the Nation.

But it is a pity that when by natural and inevitable law of progress the people are about to realise their life's dream the leaders appear to be halting. They seem to be doubtful of the strength of the masses and without realising their

own weakness, are taking to devices to maintain their supremacy and hold on the Congress as an institution, even at the sacrifice of its highest ideal. The dangerous gamble has gone far enough and as a consequence the Congress is divided and the issues are clouded.

"It is on you to defeat the move for such drift and to maintain consistency between the ideal and the action and to devise means to uphold the national ideal and its fundamental programme."

Implications of Independence

Analysing the nature of Independence aimed at, Prof. Ghose declared, "Political Independence means freedom from foreign bondage which might have only one object i.e. severing all connections with British Imperialism and the only means to attain that object is to follow without question the will of the awakened soul of the Nation. The will of this liberated soul of the Nation can manifest itself only by the composite unity within the Congress platform of the representatives of the nation elected by the vigilant and conscious masses free from any undue influence.

Due to internal commotion, the All-India Congress has shut out that course and it is heartening to me that Bengal has volunteered sufferings and sacrifices to uphold that ideal. I hope the special session of the Bengal Provincial Conference will rightly inspire the nation in order to guide her in the path of glorious success."

Dwelling on the wide implications of Independence, the speaker continued,

"Independence also means economic salvation. The colonial policy has caused much loss. The economic condition of the country is anything but satisfactory. Famine, premature death and unemployment have become the order of the day and the permanent land settlement as promulgated by the English, created a new aristocracy in our society, who nourished themselves on a share derived from the labours of peasants."

Referring to the Bengal Government's attempts to reform land laws to alleviate the hardships of peasants as inadequate, he exhorted his audience of resolve to haul up these systems of exploitation and economic slobery along with the political yoke.

Further Prof. Ghose stressed that our independence should also mean freedom from social inequalities and disabilities. He instanced many of the social customs that had outlived their utility and how the caste rigours, lack of female education, inequality of rights between men and women, the devil of dowry system are all the black spots in our body politic.

After dealing in details with the various problems that face us, Prof. Ghosh protested against the Government's action to drag India into war without consulting public opinion here.

He said, "The Governor-General has promulgated Defence of India Rules which have circumscribed the civil liberty of the people with rigours, searches, arrests and detention. Responsible public men and workers are interned or externed or clapped into prison. The editors and printers of newspapers are prosecuted and security deposits are forfeited for no understandable reason."

Referring to the internecine strife within the Congress, Prof. Ghosh said, "S. Subhas Bose as representative of advance politics in all provinces as well as the workers who have been the life and soul of the freedom movement, has for months together explained the activities of different parties before the general public of the country and the verdict received has proved that the responsibility for the internal conflict is not ours. The main responsibility for the present distressed situation is of the High Command and their hangers-on."

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FORWARD BLOC NEWS**Mr. V. D. TRIPATHI AWARDED
3 YEARS R. I.**

Unao, May 25.

Mr. Vishambur Dyal Tripathi, M. L. A., General Secretary of the All-India Forward Bloc, who stood charged with two offences, namely, sedition and promoting enmity between classes of His Majesty's subjects in connection with three speeches delivered by him, was convicted and sentenced to three years' rigorous imprisonment on each count, the sentences to run concurrently. The accused was awarded "A" class.

Judgment was delivered in jail by the District Magistrate, Unao.

PANDIT P. MALAVIYA**Allahabad Forward Bloc Secy. Arrested**

Allahabad, May 29.

Mr. Padam Kant Malaviya, Secretary of the local Forward Bloc and Chairman of the Health Committee of the Municipal Board and Mr. Kedar Nath Malaviya have been arrested by the local police under the Defence of India Rules. Their houses were also searched by the police.

MR. GIRDHARIAL THAKKAR**Bombay Forward Bloc Dictator****Sent To Jail**

Bombay, May 29.

Mr. Girdharial Thakkar, the first Dictator of the Forward Bloc here, who was arrested on May 18 for defying the order of the Police Commissioner forbidding meetings in the city in connection with the "Sahajmanand Day" celebrations, was to-day sentenced to eight days' imprisonment.

Mr. Chunilal Sakal Lal Janin who also was arrested in the same connection, was awarded a similar sentence.

MR. K. S. PONNU MENON**Madras Forward Bloc Volunteers'****Chief gaoled**

Madras, May 29.

The Chief Presidency Magistrate to-day sentenced K. S. Ponnu Menon, Captain of the Forward Bloc volunteers, to 9 months' rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 250/- for failure to obey an order served on him by the Government under Rule 26 of the Defence of India Rules asking him to leave Madras within 24 hours and reside in his native place in Malabar.

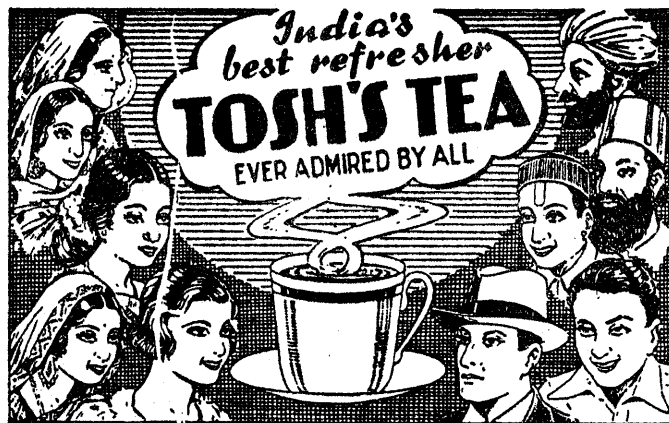
SJ. M. GUPTA ON HUNGER-STRIKE

(From Our Own Correspondent)

Allahabad, May 28.

Sj. Manmathanath Gupta, ex-Kakori prisoner, who has been on hunger-strike since the 20th instant in Naini jail lost 19 pounds in weight and was bedridden.

Two Forward Bloc prisoners, Mohd. Alam and Hazarilal, aged 25 and 18 respectively, who were placed in C Class went on hunger-strike on the 22nd instant. Mohd Alam, it is said, is not taking even water and his condition is reported to be serious.

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By Manmathanath Gupta

ON MY HUNGER-STRIKE

[Mr. Manmathanath Gupta, an ex-Kakori case prisoner was re-arrested on May 10 in view of the dismissal of his appeal before the High Court against his sentence under sec. 124A. He is now undergoing two years' R. I. He has been on hunger-strike since May 20. This article was written just on the eve of the writer's arrest.]

The struggle against imperialism does not end with one's entry into jail; in fact it is then that it enters upon its grimmest phase. All sense of decency, fairness, and humanity is quite unknown in these jails. From the moment the prisoner enters the jail-gates, he is subjected to every form of humiliating and brutal treatment. It was in these imperialist jails that an erudite scholar like Savarkar was put into fetters; Pt. Parmanand was whipped and Sardar Prithvi Singh was long confined into a cell. This gives but a rough picture of what jail life is. These are not things of the past; they have been there even to this day. In 1921, Chandra Shekhar Azad was whipped, fifty provincial leaders were mercilessly beaten. The memory of the stormy days of 1930 and 32 and of the treatment in jails in those days is still fresh in our minds.

It should, however, not be forgotten that the political prisoners did not take all this lying down. They, on the other hand, fought against this barbarism as best as they could, of course each in his own way. In the Andaman Jails, there was a gaoler named Mr. Bari who was very rude and harsh towards political prisoners. One day, Pt. Parmanand and Ashutosh Lahiri dashed him to the ground, and mounted his breast. Often a prisoner made a bold bid for liberty by attempting to effect his escape. Sardar Gurmukh Singh and Pt. Gainda Lal are the examples. Many prisoners even refused to work and to be confined into cells. Some raised various slogans. Briefly speaking, each did what he considered best. Many resorted to hunger-strike, the only effective weapon in the hands of political prisoners.

The political prisoners have put forward the demand that they should be

treated as political and not condemned as so many thieves, dacoits and murderers. This the Government practically always refused to accede to, evidently to crush the spirit of these prisoners. Against this attitude of the Government the political prisoners have always waged a bitter fight that still continues and promises to hold on so long as political will continue to exist. In one of my books I have described in detail how the fight against imperialism is carried on within the jails. It would be out of place to narrate it here. Suffice it to say that though for their individual demands, many political prisoners have fought so far, yet the Kakori prisoners were the first to take up in 1926 the cause of all the political prisoners, demanding for all of them better treatment and greater facilities. The Government at first recognised their status as equivalent to that of European prisoners but when they were sentenced to various terms of long imprisonment and lodged in different jails, they again began to be treated as ordinary criminals. So they declared hunger-strike. The Congress intervened. It was only when the late Pt. Ganesh Shankar-Vidyarthi, came up to their rescue, and assured them of the whole-hearted support of the Congress, that the prisoners broke their strike. Sjt. Manjit Singh tried to move in the U. P. Legislative Assembly a resolution to the effect that the Kakori prisoners should be given special facilities, but the Governor, exercising his special powers, disallowed it. Then followed a period of relative calm. But soon Sardar Bhagat Singh and the Lahore Conspiracy Case prisoners took up the struggle where it was left by the Kakori prisoners. Sjt. Jatindra Nath had to lay down his life. Commissions were set up to investigate the whole case; hunger-strikes were broken. But when even after a few months no result seemed to come out, hunger-strike was re-started. Besides the Lahore case prisoners, three of the Kakori prisoners also joined it. While the struggle was yet in progress, the Government by a communique dated February 19, 1931, announced that "no class of prisoners will

be eligible for any additional privilege on grounds of race." The prisoners were classified into A, B, C, classes. This classification was not the thing which the political prisoners had fought against for it was based entirely on the financial condition of the prisoner, his political status having been left out of account. Now a European ruffian could get easily a B class if his financial condition allowed it. Surely, Jatindra Nath had sacrificed his life not that he wanted that a political prisoner should be classified on the basis of his financial position; and then how many such moneyed men were they who in practice took part in the national struggle? Sjt. G. S. Vidyarthi came to their help and held out that this classification of prisoners into A, B, and C classes was bound to have a demoralising effect on the movement itself.

As I have repeated times without of number, individually (not in a mass struggle) one may be placed in 'A' or 'B' class; but when a mass struggle is on, it is highly undesirable that a handful of men should be placed in 'A' or 'B' classes, while practically 99% of them should rot in 'C' class. This will prove beneficial neither to the movement itself nor to those who carry it on. It is really shameful to note that the Congress has not declared any definite policy in this matter. Majority of the congressmen come from poor classes. Therefore, of these that will be sent to jail, 99% will be all herded into 'C' class. This being so, no declared policy of the Congress in this respect is entirely wrong and it becomes crystal-clear that a few Congressmen at the helm of affairs are keeping mum over such a burning question, only for some personal advantages. The need of the hour is that from the top to the bottom, the whole Congress must raise its voice and give out a precise and clear-cut direction in this matter.

In spite of the Government declaration of no discrimination between a Whiteman and an Indian as regards their treatment in jails, this discrimination still holds on today. A white-skinned vagabond though nominally in 'C' class is, in practice, given all the treatment that is accorded to 'B'

class prisoners. It is really the height of injustice that an European who can not even produce a security of Rs. 200 is treated as a 'B' class prisoner, though registered as a 'C' class ones whereas Indian political prisoners are mercilessly thrown into 'C' class. It is really an insult to our national sense of self-respect and prestige if we let it go unchallenged. Even the Congress Government while in office did not take any step to remove this evil, though everything lay in their power at that time. They should have framed rules providing special facilities to the 'political prisoners'.

Since the outbreak of the present war, political prisoners are pouring into jails. Barring a few, all are put into 'C' class. This is really intolerable. I, therefore, decided to write to the I. G. of prisons, but in the same old, bureaucratic fashion it was replied that "nothing was possible!" What I wrote to him was that 'C' class political prisoners must receive the same treatment as is meted out to 'C' class European prisoners; they must also be provided with all those facilities that were given to the 'Tabarra prisoners.' But my demands remained unheard-of. On the other hand, the Government hastened to arrest me. Let Imperialism know that I am not going to suspend my struggle against it because I am behind the prison walls. Only the front has changed. My conscience does not permit me that I should enjoy the facilities of a 'B' class prisoner, while those, who are as much fighters for the freedom of the motherland as myself should suffer all the disadvantages in the 'C' class. I have therefore, been forced to decide that I must resort to hunger-strike and continue it till my grievances are redressed. My demand is:—

1. That 'C' class political prisoners must receive the same treatment as is meted out to 'C' class European prisoners; they must receive all those facilities that were given to the 'C' class 'Tabarra prisoners'.

I have a firm faith in the justice and fairness of my cause. Let it be remembered that I do not propose that all of them should be placed into 'A' class, though it would be really better if this practice of classification was done away with and the political prisoners were put into the same class.

My demands are just. The method I have chosen is also just. I shall not be sorry if for the success of my cause I have to lay down my life.

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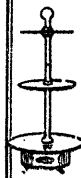
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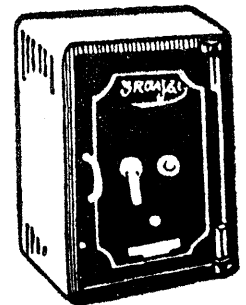
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BOOK REVIEW

Reviewed By—A. C. N. NAMBIAR (Paris)

THE RISE OF MODERN EGYPT

Independent Egypt. By Amine Youssef Bey. Preface By Wickham Steed. John Murry : London. 15s.

Certain countries, in the light of historical and geographical considerations, are of special significance for India. Egypt is one of them. There are as well, reasons other than political and geographical, suggesting a care from India to modern Egyptian history. There is a similarity in various internal problems. Egypt also furnishes a striking instance of a country strongly and closely influenced by weighty international currents.

Egyptian history is a long one. But the modern phase of it is a comparatively short one, reckoning it from the time that Turkish hold weakened and British power over Egypt assumed an effective character. The latter happened in 1882. Egypt at this time was in a weak condition. The peasantry—*fellaheen*—who constituted near to ninety percent of the population, remained oppressed and neglected. This found expression in the absence of a broad-based nationalist movement of advancement. Things commenced to change greatly with the opening of the present century. The care for self-determination began to gain and grow and an interest of wider sections for it brought forward a popular national movement. The last thirty years have marked Egyptian history taking a course of much vigour. An account of this course forms the central topic of the volume "Independent Egypt" by Amine Youssef Bey.

Amine Youssef Bey has been a very active figure in Egypt since the last one quarter of a century. Contenting to work often and especially in critical periods behind scenes, he has escaped publicity and remained less known, particularly outside Egypt, than many others in the country who have played smaller parts. Though he did not actively or strictly belong to any party and never assumed Cabinet rank, he still exerted profound influence upon the advance of political life and changes in administration. His marriage with the niece and adopted daughter of Zaghoul Pasha in ways added to his influence. There is no mistaking the competency of Amine Youssef Bey to

present an account of the rise of Modern Egypt and it is not surprising that his book, though meant as an autobiographical study, reads more as a history of Egyptian affairs during the last twenty-five years.

Egyptian history presented a comparatively tranquil turn in the years soon after 1882 that saw Lord Cromer at the head of affairs in Cairo. Cromer was followed in turn by Sir Eldon Gorst and Lord Kitchner. Efficient in their own way, they lacked imagination in directions and failed to catch the nature of popular currents tending to rise. The nationalist movement kept an attitude of wanting to cooperate with Britain in expectation of good-will meeting Egyptian aspirations. Zaghoul Pasha, who latterly was to be the popular hero of Egypt as defender of Egyptian claim for independence, himself stood in the political arena or entered it earlier, as a member of Cromer's Government. Egypt saw the breaking out of the war of 1914 with hopes of the war leading to improvement in British approach to Egypt and being followed by a satisfactory readjustment in the relations between the two countries.

Egypt in regard to these, one is told, was to experience a disappointment. Amine Youssef Bey writes of this period with keen regret. A rough time apparently prevailed. "Everywhere we saw falsehood, self-seeking, despotism, injustice, violence, not only practised but even preached". Meanwhile the Wafd Party had grown, out of the old nationalist movement initiated by Orabi Pasha, championing Egypt's cause for self-determination. Zaghoul Pasha had come up as the head of the Wafd. He wanted to go to England to present Egypt's case. Permission was refused. Lord Curzon who was then the Foreign Secretary in London, belittled the position and power of Zaghoul. Before long the latter was arrested. This action, it is indicated, strengthened the Wafd and the Egyptian national movement led by it. "We Egyptians were turned into a nation which was hurt in its feelings, mistrustful, antagonistic and united."

Then followed the period marked by

the Milner Mission boycotted by the Wafd and the subsequent grant of a set of reforms. The reforms fell far short of the demands of the Wafd. The election that took place shortly after brought a great majority to the Wafd and the party took up office with Zaghoul Pasha as Premier. Amine Youssef Bey states that from the point of view of the Wafd, this was technically a mistake in as much as the Government which it represented did not have real power. As special factors that weakened the Wafd's position in this period, he refers to a bureaucratic opposition, the mistake made of drawing popular persons in provincial centres to the capital, and the absence of an official press-organ. Liberal leadership, he thinks, could have been counteracted in its opposition by some of its members being drafted away to the Senate.

The death by violence of Sir Lee Stack resulted in the overthrow of the Zaghoul Government. If the popularity of Zaghoul did not diminish as a result of acceptance of office, it is suggested as reflecting the individual greatness of the man and the potential strength of the national movement. A period of great rigidity now ensued. British authorities were furious and declared "never again would they allow Zaghoul to be the Prime Minister and democracy or no democracy, they did not propose to allow it."

Zaghoul Pasha died in 1927. A lengthy period of wrangles followed with the Residency representing the British Government directly, the Palace, and the Wafd, as the three parties. After many attempts at negotiations for a new settlement that failed principally as they did not bring the full or necessary recognition to the weight assumed by the popular aspirations, finally and also in the wake of an enhanced prominence gained by Egypt in association with the Abyssinian issue, the Treaty of 26th August, 1936, that fixes the present status of Egypt, was concluded.

Egypt has gained technically its independence. Amine Youssef Bey does not overlook reservations that impose limitations on this independence. But he

expects that these can undergo timely alterations, with extension of good understanding between London and Cairo, and Egyptian sovereignty with that advance to fuller measure, to the advantage of both British and Egyptian peoples. The present international struggle finds Egypt in a closely concerned state. Egypt has to be attentive and alert. The granting of the claims advanced by Zaghoul and the Wafd earlier, it is projected, would have left Egypt to be in a stronger position in the matter of development of its protective resources. The suggestion is one of valuable time lost in an important period. Amine Youssef Bey, however, stresses that Egyptian attention should be kept well to the future now—the time is sufficiently serious—and learning alike from past experiences and failures, the concerned parties should devote all care to the advancement of a constructive policy along a progressive line.

Amine Youssef Bey supplies in his volume appreciative and critical estimates of many who have been in the front-line of Egyptian history in recent period. Special mention may be made of his account of the role played by Madame Zaghoul as an active supporter of her husband and participator in Egyptian national struggle. Certain reports dealing with some of the tasks assumed by the author carry a wider value of very practical character. To this category belong his work in connection with the co-operative movement, controlling of prices and development of trade and tourism. His volume also contains some amusing sketches. As for instance, when he turns to talk about his work as Egyptian Minister in Washington where he had to do with Legation Secretaries chiefly concerned about attending to the social side of their work. The First Secretary—"he came to the Legation at 11 or 12 o'clock in the morning, having spent two hours over electric massage treatment and other aids to his health and appearance which no doubt helped him in his social life." And another—"he was a good dancer and bridge-player, and unjustifiably extravagant, which undoubtedly made him socially popular." One is also given a very considerate account about the love episode—hot entirely without some political reactions—of the aged Tewfik Nessim Pasha with a young Viennese girl that will be remembered as having evoked a

while back great sensational interest. Youssef Bey apparently has not been unmindful of the idea of a nearness in interest between Egypt and India, for at a place one reads, that while in London—it was at the time when the Indian Round Table Conference was on—and he had received telegraphic instructions from Cairo to leave immediately for Egypt he "ventured so far to disobey orders as to stay a few days for what he regarded as a very important purpose." The "important purpose" was meeting Gandhiji and other Indian nationalist leaders then in London.

He did meet Gandhiji and "have a very interesting talk with him for two hours."

Wickham Steed has written a preface to the volume. This recalls the story of Amine Youssef Bey's first visit to him. Steed at that time was the editor-in-chief of the "Times" and he began by looking upon Amine Bey who had much difficulty to see him more or less as one out for mischief. In the preface to Amine Youssef Bey's book Steed very cordially writes of the author as one needing no special introduction quoting the proverb "good wine needs no bush."



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STRUGGLE IS ON.—WIDEN AND INTENSIFY IT

The following resolutions were passed by the Special Session of the Bengal Provincial Conference held at Dacca on the 25th and 26th May last :—

"This meeting of the Bengal Provincial Conference expresses its deep sorrow at the deaths of Sudhangshu Kumar Bose Assistant Secretary, B. P. C. C., Khagen-dra Nath Chatterjee, Ananda Kishore Majumdar, Rev. Andrews, Maulvi Mujibar Rahaman, Mahim Chandra Das, Jitendra Lal Banerjee Birendra Nath Majumdar, Monoranjan Banerjee, Jyotirmoy Bhowmik, Manoj Mohan Das, Utsab Rauth, Siben Majumdar, Baidyanath Sarkar, George Lansbury, Hazra Sing, Bhupen De, Rohini Bhadra, Ava De, Dwarka Nath Goswami, Bhupen Banerjee, Com. Eusuf, Com. Sibnarayan, Dinabandhu Barman, Nishi Kanta Bhattacharji, Subodh Majumdar, Md. Waris, Bistu Das, Promotha Banerji, Kali Mohan Ghosh, Dhirendra Nath Sarkar and conveys full sympathy to their bereaved families."

Repressive Policy

"In view of the fact that after more than three years working of provincial autonomy, about eighty political prisoners convicted long before the inauguration of the Government of India Act of 1935, are still in prison and the Bengal Ministry has not cared to release them, this conference strongly condemns the reactionary policy of the Bengal Ministry for their continual incarceration.

"This conference further condemns the policy of the Ministry of Bengal for promulgating the Defence of India Rules and adopting a policy of suppression of civil liberty in form of arrests, extortions of Kisans, Congress, Labour and Student workers of the province as also by arbitrary application of restrictive and prohibitive orders upon the Press and people.

"This conference heartily welcomes the lead given by B. P. C. C. in launching a movement for reinstating civil liberty on January 31, 1940, and congratulates Maulavi Asrafuddin Choudhry, Sj. Trailokya Chakravarty and others on their bold stand against the repressive policy.

Citizens' Defence Corps

"This conference views with grave concern the rapid developments in the war-theatre of Europe and their probable repercussions in India and the Far East. In the changed situation that has over-taken India and the world, it has become imperative for the Indian people to put their house in order, to close up their ranks and to stand united as one nation. This will enable them to win freedom for themselves and to bring about the peaceful transference of power to the Indian people.

"In order to help this task of developing

and maintaining national unity and solidarity and in order to preserve peace and harmony among the Indian people themselves during the period of crisis and transition, it has become absolutely necessary to organise at once a Citizens' Defence Corps, on a thoroughly non-party basis. This conference, therefore, urges the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee to take the initiative in this matter and bring this Citizens' Defence Corps into being as soon as possible.

High Command's Fiat

"The Bengal Provincial Conference met at Jalpaiguri in February, 1939. Since then, kaleidoscopic changes have shaped our freedom's struggle. The Jalpaiguri conference gave a direct lead by a resolution known as the famous Jalpaiguri Resolution which, in view of the grave international situation, was in favour of giving a six months' ultimatum to British Imperialism. But unfortunately the Indian National Congress at Tripuri did not care to consider the ultimatum and prepare the country for a National struggle during the period of six months.

"Tripuri Congress, instead of giving a direct lead, passed the Pant resolution that has brought about an unwholesome dispute over the formation of Congress Working Committee, eventually culminating in creating fissures in the Congress front. National Unity, when so badly needed, was destroyed beyond all repairs by a deliberate policy of anti-left drive and the left with a desire to fulfil historic role of leading the National movements on the track of struggle progressively emasculated and the building up of a joint front inside the Congress turned to be an impossibility. Situation was made worse by the Congress Working Committee when it adopted the resolutions that sought to put a severe brake upon the direct action movement. The Left Consolidation Committee which grew as a result of this deliberate policy of exclusion adopted by the High Command, fixed July 9th as a day of protest against the emasculating resolution. The steam-roller of disciplinary action against persons and organisations began. Leaders like Sj. Subhas Chandra Bose and Swami Sahajanand came under the axe of the Working Committee under the false plea of system and discipline.

Foisting 'Ad hoc' Committee

"Bengal has always been, as she still is, in the vanguard of our National Struggle and is also the strongest base of the progressive forces in the country. The Congress High Command bent upon entering into a deal with British imperialism and at the same time determined to tighten their grip over the Congress organisations in order to further pursue its reformist policy foisted, in indecent

haste, upon Bengal an unwanted 'Ad Hoc' Committee in supersession of the B.P.C.C. which enjoyed and still enjoys the confidence of the people of the province. Things did not stop there. The Working Committee eventually did go so far as to suspend the popular provincial organisation of Bengal Congressmen and thereby creating a deep cleavage in the rank and file of Congressmen in the province.

"In view of the above statement of facts this conference declares with no uncertain mind, that the people in general and the Congressmen of Bengal in particular will have nothing to do with the offspring of the "Ad Hoc" Committee which is trying to function in Bengal as a provincial body of the Working Committee.

"This conference further urges upon all Congressmen and organisation in Bengal to stand solidly behind the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee in their bold and determined stand to vindicate the legitimate and constitutional rights of the provincial Congress organisations and to preserve their internal democracy.

National Unity

Twelve months ago when the breach between the Bengal Congress and the Congress High Command became apparent, it was felt that the one problem before the Indian people was the question of launching the national struggle for the attainment of India's independence. Since the commencement of the European war, such lightning changes have taken place in Europe that as a result thereof, the situation in India has altered to a certain extent and the people now feel more than before that they are within sight of power. Consequently along with necessity of a National Struggle for seizing that power the necessity of developing and maintaining national unity and solidarity during this critical period for the purpose of retaining freedom when it is won, is being increasingly felt. This conference, therefore, appeals to all sections of people in Bengal to sink their internal differences, and face boldly the new situation which may soon lead to the peaceful transference of power to the people of India, so that the Nation may stand united in its struggle for National liberty and in its resolve to preserve the independence that we shall win. This conference, further, appeals earnestly to Hindus and Muslims and all those who claim to repre-

sent them to make another serious attempt to solve the Hindus-Moslem problem on an all India basis.

"Award" Condemned

"This conference is of opinion that in Bengal so far as the Hindus are concerned, one of the main obstacles in the path of a Hindu-Moslem settlement is the existence of the so-called Communal Award. This conference condemns the so-called Communal Award which has done injustice to the Hindus of Bengal at their expense, has favoured the Europeans beyond measure. The Congress, as National Institution of the people, undoubtedly stands for the interest of the people as a whole, but it also stands for the legitimate interests of every section of the people including the Hindus and Muslims so far as they do not militate against larger interests of the Nation. Consequently, the Bengal Congress can never be blind to the legitimate interest of either the Hindus or the Moslems of Bengal. This conference, therefore appeals to the Hindus and Moslems of Bengal and to their leaders to lose no time in bringing about settlement of the Hindu-Muslim problem through the goodwill of both the communities. This agreement, if thus arrived at in time, will be embodied in the new constitution that will be framed for the liberated people of India. If a permanent solution of the Hindu-Muslim problem is arrived at soon, it will help to a considerable degree in fostering National unity and the solidarity at this critical juncture, which will be conducive not only to the speedy achievement of independence but also to this preservation in future.

"This conference also requests Congressmen of all shades of opinion to sink their differences, restore unity within the Congress on the basis of a dynamic programme of struggle and present a united front to British Imperialism. It appeals further to the Working Committee and to Mahatma Gandhi to take necessary steps in this behalf.

National Struggle

"This conference whole-heartedly endorses the resolution on 'National Struggle' passed by the All-India Anti-Compromise Conference held at Ramgarh in March, 1940, and the similar resolution passed at the All-India Kishan Conference at Palasa. Since then the political situation in India accentuated by the international crisis has increased the necessity of co-ordinating and enlarging all local struggles into a gigantic struggle on an All-India basis and on an All-India front. This conference, therefore, calls upon all the district, town, subdivisional and village Congress Committees, 'Forward Bloc' organisations, Kishan Sabhas, Labour

Unions, and other anti-Imperialist organisations and individuals who believe in the necessity and potentiality of this struggle, to do everything possible to implement the resolutions of the Ramgarh and Palasa conference without any further loss of time. This conference hopes that all these anti-Imperialist organisations and individuals will organise and continue the struggle on all possible fronts, such as Kisan, Labour, Student, youth, state peoples' fronts, through Councils of Action set up in every district, town and village. To this end, this conference desires that the resolutions of the Ramgarh Anti-Compromise Conference and the Palasa Conference be further popularised among the masses.

This conference congratulates the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee on the struggle it launched on the 31st January 1940, under the leadership of S. J. Subhas Chandra Bose for the restoration of civil liberty which had been infringed by the War Ordinance and this conference expresses its gratification at the signal success attained by the B. P. C. C. in that struggle. It deplores the conduct of those rightists and pseudo-leftists who have endeavoured to sabotage the work of the B. P. C. C. by holding from time to time meetings and demonstrations with the permission of the Governmental authorities.

"It is necessary to go out among the masses with a new slogan—a new rallying cry—which will inspire them to further suffering and sacrifice which is indispensable if we are to attain complete independence. Let the slogan, the rallying cry, in the next phase of the struggle be—"All Power To The Indian People." With this new and inspiring slogan let the masses proceed to widen the front of the national struggle and to intensify it.

"The task of intensifying the struggle and of extending in scope has been rendered more imperative by the rapid change in the international situation, by India's speedy advance towards the goal of Purna Swaraj and the professions of the British Government with regard to its war-aims. All these developments have brought

about such a change in the situation that the Indian people to-day cannot but think, feel, and act in terms of a free nation and endeavour to assert the status of the independent nation.

Emblems of Subjection

"In order to assert fully the status of free nation it is essentially necessary for the Indian people to cast off the emblems of slavery which have become galling to them more than ever before, and which now militate more and more against their increasing sense of self-respect. To this end, it is necessary and desirable that a beginning should be made by demanding the demolition or removal of the Holwell Monument in Calcutta which is to the people of Bengal—both Hindus and Muslims—a symbol of national humiliation. This conference requests the B. P. C. C. to take the necessary steps for securing the demolition or removal of the Holwell Monument.

Release of Politicals

"This conference is further of opinion that another emblem and perhaps a more significant emblem of servitude is the continued incarceration of our political prisoners.

"This conference resolves that considering the circumstances now prevailing in the province and the past commitments of the B. P. C. C., the time has arrived when the B. P. C. C. should launch a campaign for demanding and securing the release of political prisoners.

"This conference requests the B. P. C. C. to devise the necessary ways and means and launch a struggle for securing the release of political prisoners. The conference also urges the B. P. C. C. to implement the resolution of the Haripur Congress.

Other Resolutions

Resolutions on the report and recommendation of Flood Commission, Bengal Jute Ordinance, labour strikes and Tripura States' peoples' agitation were referred to B. P. C. C. for consideration.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

INDIAN FREEDOM IS TO
BRITAIN'S INTEREST

To

The Editor, Forward Bloc

SIR,

The sufferings and distresses of many small nations in this most cruel war reach this far-off land and we are profoundly moved. Humanity and justice urge us to fight this great Nazi menace and all the evils thereof. But we are a people in subjection, a nation in beggary. We are palsied and sick at heart. How can we fight this menace to humanity while we are pinioned and shackled to the yoke of thraldom?

To Indians, British diplomacy is puzzling and enigmatic beyond measure. For while it professes that it is waging a holy crusade for freedom and democracy, it seeks to maintain its grip on India with clenched fists. While it admits that "we are a people for ages civilized and cultivated, cultivated in all the arts of polished life, whilst they were yet in the woods," it denies to us even the elementary right of self-determination. Can duplicity go further?

Many Indians today hope that Mahatma Gandhi would lead our country to freedom from the sappy coils of British imperialism. But Gandhiji does not want to embarrass Britain. Evidently, he hopes that the heart of Britain can be changed by persuasion and reasoning. But it is a nation whose heart has waxed gross by continued domination and exploitation. The great Mahatma tries to charm this nation! Britain will not give India freedom unless pressure is brought to bear upon her. This, the Mahatma and his trusted crew can never achieve by persuasion and unmeaning, therefore never-ending preparations.

A free India would be a powerful ally for Britain. But India in chains would only be a stumbling-block to her. It is to Britain's own good that we should win our freedom as quickly as possible.

Alleppey (Travancore)

26th May.

A. Eappen

NATIONAL FRONT PUZZLES

To

The Editor, Forward Bloc

SIR,

I frankly confess that I am unable to grasp the high politics of the National Front group. The following puzzles have defied all my attempts at their solution:

1. The National Frontiers fiercely attack the line of action of Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose, and assert that any movement launched by the latter would be a factional one. At the same time, they have signed the Gandhian Satyagraha pledge; a pledge which definitely reduces the movement contemplated therein to a factional affair.

2. Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose has not imposed any irrelevant restrictions on his movement. It is his desire, at least, to develop his line into a mass movement. This intention is lacking in the case of

the Gandhian plans. And yet the National Frontists would even kill their conscience in order to be entitled to recruitment in the Gandhian forces.

3. The National Frontiers argue that they would develop the Gandhian struggle into a movement of the people. Admittedly Mr. Subhas Bose's movement is superior, both qualitatively and quantitatively, to the one visualised by the Gandhists. And if the National Frontists mean what they say, what can prevent them from supporting Mr. Bose?

4. Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose has offered to carry out his views, while the Gandhians may never start their Satyagraha. But the National Front group is determined to oppose the former and co-operate with the latter.

The National Frontiers seem to be engaged in their Post-Graduate Research Work on Leftism.

Dehra-Dun

20th May

SHIB CHANDRA KANWAR.



DESHA-GAURAB
Subhas Chandra Bose
 at
 Adhyaksha Mathur Babu's
SAKTI OUSHADHALAYA
DACCA.



"I visited the Sakti Oushadhalaya Dacca, to-day and was very kindly shown round the premises. Indigenous medicines are prepared here on a large scale and in accordance with Ayurvedic principles. The institution reflects great credit on Babu Mathura Mohan Chakravarty, whose enterprise has brought Ayurvedic medicines within the reach of the poor. I wish all success to the institution which he has built up after so much enterprise and hard labour for a long period. The success of Sakti Oushadhalaya, Dacca, means the popularity of Ayurveda throughout the country and this in its turn means the relief of suffering humanity."

Props :—Mathuramohan, Lal Mohan, and
 Phanindramohan Mukhopadhyay Chakravarty }

Sd/- Subhas Chandra Bose.
 Dacca, 6-6-1939.

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