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A POLITICAL WEEKLY
 Editor :—SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

VOL I. No. 10

CALCUTTA, SATURDAY OCTOBER 7, 1939

ONE ANNA



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 at
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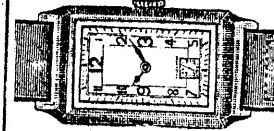
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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7

India's Demand

For long years preceding the Lahore session of the Indian National Congress, the demand for Indian independence came from solitary voices uttering the language of a dream. They seemed like a child's cry for light. They were the idealists' cry for what seemed impossible and unrealistic. The cry rose from the heart of a submerged people. In the December of 1928 in Calcutta, the cry became like a passionate chorus. It was loud and insistent. A substantial section of Congressmen proclaimed their faith in the ideal of Indian independence. They could not be ignored or laughed out.

Next year in Lahore the idealists triumphed. The Congress itself stood for the ideal of independence. Independence was no longer the demand of an irrepressible minority—it is the demand of the Indian National Congress, chosen instrument of the will of the Indian nation. Since then this demand for complete independence has been re-stated and reaffirmed in every session of the Congress. It has taken shape and colour. It has become part of the creed of Congressmen. This faith in independence has formed part of the life of the Indian people, of their activities and of their dreams.

Attempts have been made from time to time to whittle down the content of independence. For influential people it has meant only the 'substance' of independence. For irresponsible people it has meant even what is called Dominion Status. For the rank and file of Congressmen, for the masses of the Indian people, independence has meant what it is, independence, unmistakably independence.

Will the mission to Simla and Delhi bring for the Indian people their charter of independence? The rank and file of Congressmen have been asking this question and have been groping for an answer. Back from the Viceregal house, the Mahatma was 'optimistic.' So is Pandit Nehru. And so is Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the Congress President. Meaning smiles greet the enquiring pressmen. Significant reticences leave the country to think,

and wonder, and wonder again. Optimism, it seems, is in the air about Simla and Delhi. The people in the centre of the stage, the people who count, are optimistic—but not so the millions who groan away their daily lives under the heavy and the weary weight of wrongs and disabilities. In their lives they find no reason to be optimistic. It is not that they have abandoned hope. Simla and Delhi do not inspire them.

In the stress of events notable persons in Great Britain, including journalists, have learnt to be 'generous and sympathetic' towards India. The *Manchester Guardian* and the *New Statesman and Nation* have put in a word for the new India. Mr. H. N. Brailsford has written eloquently, "Some test we must choose. For me it will be India. India has put the question to us. She has published it more than a fortnight ago, but it has been smothered by our press. It is easy and pleasant to liberate oppressed peoples under the enemy flag; not so easy for one's own subjects of another race. If we do it the world will listen with respect when we talk about the new democratic order we wish to establish."

In the language of Hamlet, these are "words, words, words." They read well. They do not mean much. People in power in Great Britain have been more cautious and less effusive. Many of them have spoken about the coming world order—but about the order in India they talk the "language of the eighteenth century."

The new India does not look up to them. It has reasons to look suspiciously on the goings to and fro between Wardha and Delhi. Will the mission to Delhi bring to the Indian people their charter of independence? No one in the country seems optimistic. There can be no whittling down of the demand for complete independence. The country will look to Wardha for a true and clear lead.

Political Prisoners

A press note recently issued by the Director of Public Information, Bengal, states that nine political prisoners have already been released and orders of release have been passed on another batch who have refused to buy their liberty in exchange for an undertaking. They were, it is reported, asked to state in clear terms

that they would in future cut off all connections with the "terrorist" organisations and abjure violence before they would be allowed to pass out of jail-gate into a fresh life of freedom. As a result of this demand from the Government, the whole matter has now gone into a stalemate. It is extremely regrettable, to say the least of it. It really passes our comprehension as to why the Government should have thought it fit to tack on their belated act of fairness the sting of an unnecessary provocation. Is there any ground for it? We think there is none.

The history of the political prisoners in Bengal is too well-known to the public to call for repetition. It is known how the inauguration of provincial autonomy raised justifiable hopes of liberty in them which however, were not fulfilled. They burned with the desire of serving their dear country in a new setting and along new channels. Hopes deferred maketh the heart sick. Ultimately they were seized with desperation and launched on a hunger-strike. That only resulted in their shifting from the far-off Andamans to the local prisons. Months after months rolled by but still they were left to rot in jails without any specific assurance of release within certain period.

Mahatma Gandhi put forth his best efforts but he broke on the obduracy of the Government. The prisoners assured the Mahatma and through him the countrymen at large and the Government that they were convinced of the futility of their old ways and henceforth they would work under the broad banner of the Congress. But all went in vain. In deeper desperation they again launched on a more determined hunger-strike before which they repeated the assurance to all concerned that henceforth they would serve the country as full-fledged Congressmen. Finally, through the intervention of Mr. Subhas Bose they gave up the strike on being given to understand that all their cases would be sympathetically reviewed within two months. Naturally they put an optimistic interpretation on the formal and covert official jargon and felt assured.

Those two months have almost passed and now they are being presented with the offer of release on undertaking! This, to our mind, betrays not only want of grace but even something worse on the part of the Government. Have not the past avowals of the prisoners satisfied them?

To the best of our knowledge, "terrorism" has no existence in reality to-day, although it seems to cling on to the frenzied imagination of the Government. We would solemnly ask them to rid themselves of this scare. Does the conduct of the released prisoners testify that they are still holding on to their old ways? Then, why this hurtful condition precedent to release?

Mahatma Gandhi

Mahatma Gandhi has crossed another milestone of his historic life—he has now stepped on to seventy-one. With the innumerable glowing tributes of respect and love that have been offered to him, we too, join ours. More than two decades ago he burst on the field of Indian politics after his eventful career, at South Africa and took the whole nation by storm. He sounded the death-knell of the comfortable arm-chair brand of politics that had been in vogue before and gave the nation a new baptism in love and sacrifice. Not only the classes, but also the masses became imbued with a new life. The Congress was made to cast off its prayerful mood and under his inspiration grew infinitely larger and aggressively militant. The nation knew its redeemer and bowed its head to him. Since then the General has led the country from one victory to another. On the anniversary of his birth-day we remember with profound gratitude the priceless services that he has rendered to the Indian nation.

But the goal is not yet. The barge of the nation has still to steer a long way through troubled waters. The tremendous mass-energies that the Mahatma has himself unleashed, have grown impatient to-day. The people of India demand the full prize of a resurgent nationhood. They are steeled with determination. They are prepared for any sacrifice. They stubbornly refuse to drop down to rest on the way-side. Their appeal is to the chosen leader of the nation to illumine the path with wisdom and courage. The fog of mysticism repels them because their gaze is fixed firm on the destination. The Mahatma, the prophet of universal love and anity, belongs to the world and to the morrow. But the Mahatma, the Generalissimo of Indian nation, is of to-day and solely ours. May God grant him many

more years to fulfil both these missions. That is the prayer welling up today from the heart of the country. May it not go in vain.

Current Comments

Our New Political Pleiad

Our new political Pleiad is a curious assortment drawn from various parts of political sky,—we mean the cluster that has issued a statement questioning the *bona-fides* of the Congress. Sir Chimanal Setalvad, Sir Cowasji Jehangir and Mr. V. N. Chandravarkar belong to the Liberal Federation; Mr. V. D. Savarkar comes from the Hindu Mahasabha; Dr. B. R. Ambedkar is called at least by himself a Depressed classes leader; while Mr. Jamnadas Mehta and Mr. N. C. Kelkar are possibly neither fish, flesh, nor good red-herring. Yet all these seven worthies have displayed a striking unity in non-conformity. We shall only say to them that political influence is gained by showing other records than those of hunting after spurs and ribbon or playing an obstructionist game at Round Table Conferences or by drawing a sour face over the Congress prestige. To Vir Savarkar we shall say that it has been a shock to us all to see him troop in such company. However, we hope, now that he has been invited by the Viceroy to an interview, he would use this opportunity to put national interests above communal.

Reticence that speaks

While no light has yet come from Simla as to how things are shaping there, two short questions by Mr. Gallacher in the House of Commons have drawn forth replies from Mr. O'Neill, the Under-Secretary of State for India, which are quite meaningful in their vagueness, evasion and silence. Answering the first question as to whether the Government proposed any measures to satisfy the demands of the Working Committee, the Under-Secretary said that the Governor-General was keeping in the closest touch with the situation and seeing leading members of the Committee and other important leaders. The public know as much even without Mr. O'Neill's favour of a reply. But when the member came to the more crucial question as to whether the Government was aware of the existing feeling in regard

to war aims and if it would not help to clarify matters if India had a Constituent Assembly, Mr. O'Neill chose to maintain a sphinx-like reticence. Silence in golden no doubt, but the Under-Secretary should have remembered that sometimes it may let one down in a very bad way.

Master of the Baltic

The Soviet does its job thoroughly. After Estonia comes the turn of Latvia, Finland and Lithuania. The Baltic sea has again been regained by Russia through the occupation of the new Estonian bases for her navy and air force. Latvian and Lithuanian agreements with the Soviet will further ensure to Russia the use of the Baltic ports and a passage to the Baltic by raid. So, Herr Von Ribbentrop is feted and returns from Moscow agreeing to the Soviet domination of the North Eastern Europe, and the Latvian and Lithuanian Governments are invited to send their representatives to Moscow to assent formally to their change of political masters. Nazism had overshadowed their politics for the last few years; they had even refused to have anything to do with any assurance from a 'Peace Front' and now the encircled Soviet of the post-Munich era has entirely turned the table on the Nazi diplomats. The Nazis are to retire from the Baltic sea board; they are on the retreat from the Balkans, too. Within one month of the war the "greater Germany" of Nazism is a faded dream; and, 'world Revolution' of Sovietism is taking instead a recognizable shape.

Turkish Trials

M. Sarajoglu of Turkey is still at Moscow standing his trial along with the Latvian and Lithuanian ministers. In the nervous days when Hitler seemed to be stalking over the Danubian basin to appear finally at the Black sea, Turkey accepted friendship with Britain and France, who thus had the gates of Dardanelles assured to them for their fleet if Rumania required its help. In their recent agreement with the Soviet, Turkey considered herself doubly insured in the same policy i.e. against aggressive Nazism. But within a fortnight aggressive Sovietism has made room to aggressive Sovietism. So, at Moscow M. Sarajoglu is in difficulty; he would not repudiate the engagements Turkey has made with Britain and France. The Soviet probably assures that no such thing is necessary; but Dardanelles

has to be closed to other powers ; Turkey has to enter into closer economic alliance with the Soviet, and all that this implies. M. Sarajoglu awaits instructions from Ankara in his trial at Moscow. From the Baltic to the Black sea the shadow of Stalin has replaced that of Hitler, and Turkey probably feels as uneasy under the one as under the other.

"Community of Interests"

Mr. Churchill is perhaps the most brilliant man in the present British Cabinet and brilliantly he presents the facts in the Commons reviewing the progress of the war. Nothing but his experience could have helped him to appreciate the action of Soviet Russia in Poland. Years ago he was known to be the implacable enemy of the Soviet; he was greatly responsible for the crusade against the new-born Soviet on its defence then. To-day he discovers a "community of interests" with those flaming Communists. The existence of the Soviet was then to Mr. Churchill a menace; now the expansion of the Soviet is to him a hope and satisfaction. The Soviet could not but forestall the Nazis in Poland; it was "necessary in the interests of Russia"; and it has thus warned Hitler off his Eastern dreams. Of course inscrutable are the ways of Moscow. "It is a riddle wrapped up in mystery inside an enigma," confessed Mr. Churchill. "But through the fog of confusion and uncertainty we may discern quite plainly the community of interests which exists between Britain, France and Russia. These are to prevent the Nazi giant to put itself upon the shores of the Black Sea or overrun the Baltic Sea." But if only the British Cabinet had discovered this truth before the German-Russian Non-Aggression Pact! Today the declaration of this common truck with Moscow does not bring the Soviet so close as Mr. Churchill would desire and the interests would require.

Stalin's cat's-paw

Bernard Shaw, who still retains his flair for flashing up the less obvious side of a question, had long read the Soviet riddle. He hailed the Russo-German Pact as a good omen for, he said, 'Hitler would be now under the powerful thumb of Stalin whose interest in peace is overwhelming.' Many could not accept Shaw's reading then and the German aggression on Poland together with Russian advance

into defeated Poland had tended to confirm their suspicions. Yet Shaw has stuck to his own opinion and said that Stalin has no objection to using Hitler as his cat's-paw. That Stalin is using Hitler for his own purposes is evident from the reports that come from Russia and Germany. Ribbentrop had to break bread with Jewish officers in Moscow and Hitler has been releasing

daily thousands of German Communists from German prisons and camps. Thaelmann, leader of the German Communist Party, was among the first to be released. So it appears that Hitler, who once directed that all Communists should be made to swallow castor oil so as to be purged of their Communism, is getting purged of his own Nazism.

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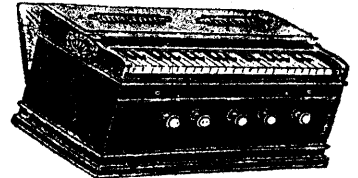


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